

**Migrant Scribes and Poet-Advocates: U.S. Filipino Literary History
in West Coast Periodicals, 1905 to 1941**

**by
Jean Vengua**

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Professor Genaro M. Padilla, Chair
Professor Tom Leonard
Professor Mitchell Breitwieser**

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Abstract

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Much of the earliest prose and poetry published by Filipinos in the United States appeared in the many periodicals published and edited by Filipinos from 1905 through the end of the Great Depression. Today, these periodicals function as historical "archives." However, they also document U.S. Filipino literary heritage from the first half of the twentieth century, especially in forms of persuasive writing such as editorials and feature essays, and also in poetry, short stories, reviews, and literary criticism. The periodicals nurtured Filipino writers as they struggled to find their voice in the foreign nation that employed them as non-citizen workers, and had colonized and exploited the material resources of their homeland, the Philippines. A study of these texts may help to add breadth and depth to our research and understanding of Filipino writing in the U.S., both its literary production and history, as well as its contemporary forms.

This dissertation is a preliminary survey of writing found in eight U.S. Filipino periodicals in the Western U.S. during the early 20th century. It articulates several broad functions of these newspapers and magazines in relation to the production and support of U.S. Filipino writing. While U.S. Filipino periodicals constituted their own social spheres, providing venues and reading constituencies for writers, the work they published also narrated and thus reinforced the formation of Filipino communities—both migrating or localized—as well as group and individual identities, although the effects varied, in terms of the writer's gender. This study examines the historical and material contexts for this writing, exploring the lives of the writers themselves, as well as specific examples of texts that they produced.

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Introduction

Migrant Scribes and Poet-Advocates: U.S. Filipino Literary History in West Coast Periodicals, 1905 to 1941

When I entered graduate school in the 1990s, there seemed to be a consensus in Asian American studies that Filipino American writing had its genesis primarily in the early writings of Carlos Bulosan; *America is in the Heart* was the most often cited of his works. It was first published in 1943, and resurrected in 1973 by Carey McWilliams during the beginning of the Third World Strikes of the 1970s. Among writers or academics unfamiliar with Filipino American literature in the 1990s, the genre seemed barely to exist, or was thought to be in its earliest stages. We now know that Filipinos have been writing and publishing in the United States since at least January 24, 1899, with Felipe Agoncillo's *Memorials* to the U.S. Secretary of State and the U.S. Senate, published by the American Anti-Imperialist League.¹ In "Filipino American Literature," Oscar Campomanes has pointed out that prose written by Filipinos can be found "from 1905 onward," including the work of "Juan Salazar, Juan Collas, and Marcelo de Gracia Concepcion in the 1910s–1920s, Greg San Diego and the brothers Jose and Teofilo del Castillo in the 1930s–1940s."²

Much of the earliest prose and poetry published by Filipinos in the United States appeared in periodicals published and edited by Filipinos from 1905 through the end of the Great Depression. In his study of "The Filipino Press in the United States," sociologist Emory Bogardus took note of "the prolific nature of the Filipino press" in the 1930s, noting "six or eight newspaper-magazines in Los Angeles..." alone.³ Enya P. Flores-Meiser has estimated twenty newspapers published by Filipinos from 1931-1940, although she does not specify region.⁴ I have found either microfilm copies or reference to at least forty-four periodicals published during the period 1905 to 1941. During that period, these publications were examined by sociologists in order to understand and report on the migratory and social patterns of Filipinos. Today, these periodicals function as historical "archives."⁵ But, as I argue here, they also document U.S. Filipino literary heritage⁶ from the first half of the twentieth century, especially in forms of persuasive writing such as editorials and feature essays, but also in poetry, short stories, and literary criticism. A study of these texts may help to add breadth and depth to our research and understanding of Filipino writing in the U.S., both its literary production and history, as well as its contemporary forms.

Filipino writing on the West Coast was fueled by a group of writers who were community leaders, intellectuals, and labor organizers. To Oscar Campomanes' list of writers we can add Victorio Acosta Velasco, J.C. Dionisio, P.C. Morante, Simeon Doria Arroyo, D.L. Marcuelo, and many others. Together they formed a collaborative network of "traveling" editors and writers, or "scribes" as more than one reporter called them, many of whom were migrant workers for at least part of each year, and students for the rest of the year, who paid their tuition and lodging through service work or agricultural and kitchen labor. A few were lucky enough to have the funds to start businesses, or were savvy at social networking and able to find patrons. Their newspapers and magazines provided a reading constituency for emerging U.S. Filipino writers

who were rarely published in the mainstream media. The periodicals also provided the beginnings of a critical dialogue about Filipino literature written in the U.S.

This dissertation is a preliminary survey of writing found in eight U.S. Filipino periodicals in the Western U.S. during the early 20th century.¹ This study articulates several broad functions of these newspapers and magazines in relation to the production and support of U.S. Filipino writing. These functions include providing writers with venues and readers, helping to unite communities and to cohere group and individual identities through various types of reports, narratives, and poems. In the process, I examine the historical and material contexts for this writing, exploring the lives of the writers themselves, as well as specific examples of texts that they produced.

The writing samples include essays, editorials and op-eds, testimonials, short stories, poems, reviews of books, film, and dramatic performances, and literary criticism. The newspaper or magazine setting—comprised of reportage, ads, juxtaposition with articles, number and placement of columns, and typography—are important indicators of meaning and emphasis in the writings by Filipinos of this era. The study is necessarily limited by time and geographic constraints, and the apparent dearth of legible originals and copies in California. In some cases, print or microfilm copies were incomplete, “mutilated” or otherwise only partly legible. In one university library, copies of the *Philippine Advocate* listed in the library catalogue were found after a two-week search, rubber-banded and rolled in the corner of a shelf. As I made photocopies of the dry, browned pages, they began to crumble and fall apart on the glass. Nevertheless, in other parts of the U.S. where Filipinos migrated in large numbers, there are collections of their periodicals in both public and private collections, which may provide sources for further historical and literary study.⁷

The survey moves away from the topic of Filipinos as objects of purely historical or sociological study (which may contribute to viewpoints such as the one that begins this chapter), toward a consideration of —not if, but how—the Filipino literary arts and letters flourished during a period in which the existence of Filipinos on the West Coast became increasingly embattled.

Chapter I begins with an introduction and summary of the historical development of the Philippine press and the relationship between the American press in Manila, and the development of Philippine literature in English. It is important to present a historical background of the Philippine press since many of the U.S. Filipino editors were trained as editors and writers while working for newspapers in the Philippines, and literary criticism by Filipinos in the U.S. was tied to specific developments in literature in the Philippines during the 1930s and early 1940s. Furthermore, the status of the Philippines as a colonial “dependency” greatly affected the status and experiences of Filipinos in the U.S. during that period.

I relate this background to the emerging Filipino print publications in the United States with the the earliest student magazines: *The Filipino Students' Magazine*, and *The Filipino Student*, published in Berkeley, California. These were edited by *pensionado* students attending American universities and initially subsidized by the Philippine government and the American Anti-Imperialist League.

Chapters II through IV examine the historical and material contexts for the production of five newspapers and one magazine, giving examples of editorials, essays, poems, reviews, and short fiction (the latter published only in the *Philippine Commonwealth News*) that appear in their pages. These periodicals were published during the 1920s and 1930s, beginning with *The Philippine Independent* in 1921 in Salinas, California, ending in 1941 with the *Philippine-American News Digest* just prior to the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. The latter period marked a change in editorial outlook calling for a “unifying” trend among Filipinos in U.S., nationally, as new legislation was introduced affecting the citizenship status of Filipinos. As the American public began to perceive differences among Asians, and to view Filipinos as allies against the Japanese, there was a shift from critical to positive—if troubled—attention from the mainstream media toward Filipino writers.

The periodicals under consideration—five newspapers and three magazines—were published in Seattle (Washington), and Berkeley, Stockton, Salinas, Los Angeles, and Santa Maria, (California). They reflect a geographic range from urban to suburban and rural; a political range from mildly conservative to progressive and radical; the education and class of editors and writers range from working class (high school education only, with training in the newspaper business) to Ph.D., with financial support from government, family, or business ventures.

During the mid 20th century, several studies were written about Filipino newspapers in the U.S. Most were sociological studies. In 1934, sociologist Emory S. Bogardus characterized the U.S. Filipino community of that period, claiming that “what differentiated each [newspaper] from the other was a “distinctly ...leadership phenomenon.”⁸ He suggested a more democratic approach, citing the need for Filipinos of apparently disparate concerns to “unite their interests and resources, and find a common ground for sharing the responsibility of a newspaper-magazine.” Trinidad Rojo in 1941 summarized nine of what he thought were some of the outstanding or interesting U.S. Filipino newspapers, including *The Philippine Interpreter*, edited by a Filipino and Filipina, Pat Megino and Estela Romualdez de Sulit.⁹ Larry A. Lawcock’s PhD dissertation, “Filipino Students in the United States and the Philippine Independence Movement, 1900—1935,” (1975) provides valuable information about the earliest student periodicals published by Filipinos in the United States, and the political context for their creation. Howard A. DeWitt’s “Anti-Filipino Movements in California” (1975) discusses U.S. Filipino newspapers within the context of the labor and civil rights struggles of Filipinos in California. 1977 saw the publication of Donn V. Hart’s “The Filipino-American Press in the United States: A Neglected Resource”¹⁰ and “A History and a Contemporary Survey of Filipino-American Periodicals, 1900-1976,” (Master’s thesis) by Amelita Besa.¹¹ Hart’s article comprised a brief survey of Filipino newspapers up to the 1970s; Besa’s thesis was an in-depth study characterizing the Filipino press as “in constant flux.”¹²

In 1987, Enya P. Flores-Meiser’s essay, “The Filipino-American Press” provided an overview of the U.S. Filipino Press, outlining some of the editors and periodicals. Flores-Meiser points out that the U.S. Filipino newspapers were “linked together through multiple editorships for various newspapers, [displaying] more unity in cause and style than the many Filipino-American groups it continually sought to integrate. [A] reciprocal pattern of serving on each other’s newspapers solidified a network of individuals who exercised a major role in the integration of Filipino-American communities, particularly in the states of California and Washington.”¹³ Her observation suggests—not just an arbitrary coming together of writers and editors—but ongoing attempts to forge a “network” of interaction to support publishing and distribution. These

newspapers did not just report the news; groups of writers and thinkers formed around the production and distribution of the newspapers, and these communities in turn nurtured Filipino writers, and helped develop local reading constituencies for their work.

In 1998, *The Filipino American Experience Research Project*, edited by Alex Fabros, Jr., published on CD selected articles from the *Philippines Mail*, and collected poems from the “Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society” (associated with the newspaper), for the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS), adding to our knowledge of the importance of the *Philippines Mail* as a locus of both labor and civil rights activism and early Filipino writing that was outspoken and courageous, given the violence experienced by Filipinos during the Depression Era.

During the 1990s to the present, scholars in social history such as Donald L. Guimary,¹⁴ Erik Luthy,¹⁵ Mark Mabanag,¹⁶ and Michael S. Brown,¹⁷ have contributed to our understanding of the role that the U.S. Filipino newspapers have played in shaping Filipino communities in the first half of the 20th century. Their studies have been in the fields of sociology and social history.

Studies on U.S. Hispanic literatures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have been especially helpful in delineating strategies for recovery of early U.S. Filipino literature, in particular, Edna Acosta-Belén’s “The Building of a Community: Puerto Rican Writers and Activists in New York City (1890s—1960s)” in *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage*, edited by Ramón Gutiérrez and Genaro Padilla, and A. Gabriel Meléndez’ *So All Is Not Lost: The Poetics of Print in Nuevomexicano Communities, 1834—1958*, which examines the history of newspapers in the Mexicano communities of the Southwest. The larger *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage* project strongly suggests to me the continuing importance of archival research and recovery of early U.S. Filipino texts in order to present a larger, more in-depth view of the history and literature of Filipinos in the United States.

The idea of “community” comes up often in this study. In using the term, I stress that U.S. Filipino writing during the early 20th century was not an anomaly (as Carlos Bulosan’s early writings often seem to be characterized), nor a series of disparate individual projects, but rather a mutual endeavor nurtured within the social sphere of the periodicals, with their influence and support. The Filipino newspapers were the voice of a migratory community. It struggled to make itself heard within the larger fabric of American society that characterized the Filipino community, in many cases, as null or defective.

Indirectly, some Asian Americanists have effectively characterized the Filipino American community similarly to the sociologist Emory Bogardus, through its critique of only a limited number of texts, and a failure to encourage archival research. The emphasis has been on Bulosan, Santos, and more recently, Garcia Villa. Citing Carlos Bulosan’s novel, *America is in the Heart*, and Bienvenido Santos’s short story, “The Day the Dancers Came” (1967), Sau Ling Cynthia Wong points to a “sense of terminal stranding and paralysis” where the migrant’s mobility is “deprived” of any sense of “epic adventure” or “spiritual invigoration,” noting that the “endless looping” of his narrative suggests both “inability to sustain a home and achieve a communal culture.”¹⁸ She rightly links this sense of alienated mobility to the disruption of the formation of the fledgling Philippine Republic by American imperialism, to the migratory nature of the work available for Filipino “nationals”¹⁹ in the U.S., and the racist policies that forced Filipinos into marginal status. However, if we delve into the Filipino social, material and literary matrix within which Bulosan, Santos and other U.S. Filipino writers existed during the early 20th century, we see that, despite a sense of alienation within the American society at large, a “communal culture”

among Filipinos was very much alive. If we read Bulosan alone, his work appears as an anomaly; if we read it within the context of both fellow Filipinos writing and working on the West Coast, as well as white writers of the Popular Front, exposed to and engaging in dialogue about both modernist and Popular Front literature, his multi-vocality begins to make more sense.

The often-referenced multi-vocality of Carlos Bulosan's novel, *America is in the Heart*, illustrates a continuing concern for what is perceived as the Filipino American community's lack of "cohesion." However, in "The Filipino Writer in the U.S.A.," E. San Juan, Jr. has written that studies of the historical development of the Filipino community have been "sketchy" and "flawed," because of a prevailing "reliance on the expertise of white male sociologists whose strategy of "blaming the victim" is still repeated in numerous textbooks, and the common sense wisdom echoed by opportunistic Filipino leaders."²⁰ In addition, some U.S. Filipino critics during the Depression Era inadvertently added to this discourse of "blame" in articles that expressed the anxieties of internalized racism and the classic "split colonial subject" sometimes apparent in their writing.

In, *Communities of Journalism*, David Paul Nord writes of the community-making (and sometimes breaking) function of newspapers and journalism.²¹ I argue that Filipino periodicals themselves were centers of coherence and community (as well as debate) for Filipino writers, even while the writers and editors migrated from job to job. Interest in writing also created much-needed cohesion through communication via letters, meetings in cafes, bars, union or church halls, and through newspaper articles and testimonials. Even subscription drives, culminating in a dance to award the "most popular" young lady who garnered the most subscriptions, helped to create a sense of community and readership.

Yet, how can we truly call a group of Filipino writers during the pre-WWII era—many of whom worked as seasonal and *migrating* laborers—a community? According to Raymond Williams, "community" derives from the Latin *communitatem*, the "community of relations or feelings...the quality of holding something in common, as in community of interests, community of goods; a sense of common identity and characteristics. In the 19th century, the sense of locality became more important "within the context of industrialized societies."²²

The older, Western sense of a "community of relations or feelings" and "holding in common" various aspects of history and culture come *close* to defining the Filipino sense of community. Aspects of the 19th century idea of locality "within the context of industrialized societies" apply also, despite the marginalized and migratory experience of Filipinos in the U.S. For, even though Filipinos were often made to feel that they did not "belong" locally, yet they came together in specific places: in cities and neighborhoods, small towns and rural areas, in cafes, union halls, and barber shops. Much of their writing was a response to events that transpired in specific locales, but were spurred by changes due to modernizing processes, especially in agriculture and economy. Furthermore, while Filipinos during the Depression era may have felt powerless to influence policy at the broadest levels, they continued to advocate for their rights locally. Still, Williams' definition does not address the diasporic and translocal migratory experiences of Filipinos in the early 20th century United States.

Several important and widely used and related terms (also commonly used as prefixes and suffixes in more than one Filipino language) illuminate the extent to which the Filipino sense of community may differ from the Western term as described by Raymond Williams. *Bayanihan* describes *both* a communal location (village, town, or nation) and cooperative act -- not just

identifying with a place, or sharing similar ideas, but a *process* of actively working towards shared goals – with undertones of selfless, even heroic, action, and if necessary, *pakikibaka*, or resistance. *Kapwa* refers to the shared sense of identity, and *loob* refers to the center of power in each individual which is by nature considered relational and reciprocal.^{23 24} Thus, community relations or feelings are closely linked to both community feeling and shared *action* as contributing to a sense of personal and individual power and identity.

In a more contemporary sense, “community” has become a loosely-knit and fluid network of communal relations, as often described of the internet—the medium that has crucially linked the modern-day Filipino diaspora. But in the case of U.S. Filipinos during the early 20th century, this “fluidity,” “flux,” or “mobility” was a result of the disruptions of a burgeoning modernity, the industrialization of agriculture, of the everyday circulation (at times forced, dislocating, and alienating in nature) of migrating Filipino workers, and the short-lived but constantly re-created newspapers and magazines they produced whenever their editors were able to linger in a town long enough to raise money and publish them. The U.S. Filipino periodicals catalyzed a sense of shared interest, community, and identity, and to varying extents, a tradition of journalistic advocacy.

¹ Felipe Agoncillo, *Memorials from Señor Felipe Agoncillo and Constitution of the Provisional Philippine Government* (Boston: Anti-Imperialist League, 1899), np.

² Oscar Campomanes and N.V.M. Gonzalez, “Filipino American Literature,” in *Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, ed. King-Kok Chung (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 75.

³ Emory Stephen Bogardus, “The Filipino Press in the United States,” *Sociology and Social Research* 18 (1934): 581, 582.

⁴ “The Filipino-American Press,” in *The Ethnic Press in the United States*, ed. Sally M. Miller (New York, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987), 92.

⁵ “The Filipino American Experience Research Project,” begun in 1992, documents the history of Filipinos in America, primarily through material collected from Filipino-American newspapers and photographs from the period, 1906-1953. Alex S. Fabros, Daniel P. Gonzales, Danilo T. Begonia, Annalissa Herbert, *Filipino American Experience Research Project*, Filipino American Newspaper Collection, 1994, 1995.

⁶ Oscar Campomanes credits Cynthia Liu “for shortening ‘Filipinos in the United States’ to what he sees as “the more felicitous phrase, ‘U.S. Filipinos.’” In “The New Empire’s Forgetful and Forgotten Citizens: Unrepresentability and Unassimilability in Filipino-American Postcolonialities,” *Critical Mass* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 175

As compilations of the *Filipino American Experience Project* at San Francisco State University bear out, the name ‘U.S. Filipinos’ seemed to have currency in 1930s Filipino American journalism. An August 1933 editorial of *The Philippines Mail* carries the head ‘What is Wrong with U.S. Filipinos?’ (Fabros and Herbert 1994: 22).” In my own research, I have found: “U.S. Filipinos To Get A ‘New Deal,’” (J.C. Dionisio, *Filipino Pioneer*, July 1, 1938: 1).

⁷ A list of some of these sources is appended to this dissertation.

⁸ Bogardus, “The Filipino Press,” 582.

⁹ Trinidad Rojo, “Social Improvement Among Filipino Immigrants,” *Philippine Commonwealth Times*, Dec. 18, 1941.

¹⁰ Donn V. Hart. *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 54, 1977.

¹¹ Amelita Besa. M.A. Thesis, Temple University, 1977

¹² Qtd. In Donald L. Guimary. “Filipino-American Newspapers: A Never-Ending Study.” FANHS. Vol. 3, 1994 (53).

¹³ Flores-Meiser, “Filipino-American Press,” 90.

¹⁴ Guimary, “Filipino-American Newspapers,” 53.

¹⁵ Erik Luthy, “Victorio Velasco, Pioneer of Filipino-American Journalism,” Seattle Civil rights and Labor History Project. http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/victorio_velasco.htm

¹⁶ Mark Mabanag, "The Filipino Forum: The Founding Years, 1920-1930," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project. <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/news-mabanag.htm>

¹⁷ Michael S. Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco: An American Life*, (New York: Hamilton Books, 2008).

¹⁸ Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, "The Politics of Mobility," *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 126, 127.

¹⁹ Filipino "nationals" were able to enter the United States at this time in order to contribute to its work force, but they were denied citizenship.

²⁰ Epifanio San Juan, "Mapping the Boundaries: The Filipino Writer in the U.S.A.," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 19, no. 1, (1991): 120.

²¹ David Paul Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Journalism and Their Readers* (University of Illinois Press, 2001).

²² Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983): 75-77.

²³ For a Tagalog to English translation of these terms, see Leo James English, C.Ss.R., *Tagalog-English Dictionary* (Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1986). During discussion of Filipino terms for "community" on the Pagbabalik-Loob listserv (8-9-04), the poet, Barbara Jane Reyes, suggested "bayanihan," and e-mail communication with Leny Mendoza Strobel on the same date reminded me of "loob" and "kapwa," also mentioned in Strobel's book, *Coming Full Circle: The Process of Decolonization among Post-1965 Filipino Americans* (Quezon City: Giraffe Books, 2001).

²⁴ See also Katrin de Guia, "An Ancient Reed of Wholeness – The Babaylan." *Babaylan: Filipinos and the Call of the Indigenous*, ed. Elenita Mendoza Strobel (Davao City: Ateneo de Davao, 2010), 85-96.

Chapter I

The 19th and early 20th Century Press in the Philippines and the Filipino Student Magazines

U.S. Filipino literature drew from both the nationalist and revolutionary literature of the Philippines, as well as from “Popular Front” and social realist literature of the United States. Early U.S. Filipino literature had in common with the emergence of Philippine literature a popular movement to rectify injustices to its people, the support of Filipino Freemasonry, a tradition of debate, a strong sense of community, the ambivalent influence of academia, and the support of writers and proliferation of their work through newspapers. For these reasons it is important to sketch out the historical background of the 19th century Philippine Press and its Propaganda Movement.

It’s impossible to discuss the literature of the Philippines without relating it to the development of Philippine journalism as a nationalistic response, first, to Spanish colonialism in the archipelago, and second, to American imperialism and the influence of American communications infrastructures, English language instruction, trade policy and exploitation of Philippine resources.

Early U.S. Filipino literature exhibits continuities with Philippine literature in its valuing of traditions and paradigms of community and interrelationship (such as *bayanihan*, *kapwa* and *loób*), advocacy and debate, as well as colonization and modernity affecting Filipinos in both countries. However, discontinuities arise with the migration of the writers within the Western states, (although, after WWII the migratory, diasporic process becomes all too familiar and continuous) and the differing local political and social contexts to which Filipinos were exposed.

Salvador P. Lopez, the Philippines’ progressive journalist and author of the influential book on Philippine letters, *Literature and Society*, observes that Philippine newspaper printing (using movable type) began with the publication of the newspaper, *Del Superior Gobierno*, edited by the Spanish Governor General Folgueras in August 1811. This journal existed primarily to inform Spanish colonial readers of events in Spain. Lopez writes that “official censorship was the first important factor that determined the course of journalism in the Philippines during the entire period of Spanish rule,” although the official Board of Censorship was not formed until 1856.¹ Nevertheless, as early as 1821, *La Filantropia* argued for separation of the Philippines from Spain, probably influenced by news of the separation of Mexico from Spain won during the same year. According to Dominador D. Buhain, the first daily, *La Esperanza*, established in 1845, “camouflaged its criticisms of Spain in essays on religion, history, and philosophy.”² Higher education was denied most Filipinos, so censorship was directed primarily at Spanish colonial writers.

Within this repressive atmosphere, the Filipinos who wrote produced mostly religious or romantic prose and poetry; those who had a subversive or nationalistic message were forced to write allegorically. This is widely thought to have been the case for the long, courtly love poem, *Florante at Laura* (*Florante and Laura*), written in Tagalog by the Filipino poet, Francisco “Balagtas” Baltazar sometime between 1835 and 1842. Although the courtship of the Christian lovers, Florante and Laura seems to be at the forefront, a political reading is often applied to the

text, flowing from Florante's patriotic fervor for his country, "Albania" (read: Philippines):

Sa loob at labas, ng bayan cong saui
caliluha,i, siyang nangyayaring hari
cageling,t, bait ay nalulugami
Ininis sa hucay nang dusa,t, pighati.

(All over my hapless country
treason has established its reign,
while goodness and wisdom lie prostrate
buried alive in the grave of grief.)³

In this case, "grief" can be interpreted as "buried" expressions of patriotism and nationalism, a result of Spain's repressive regime.⁴

Lumbera links the development of a popular literary movement, accessible to "the masses" with the emergence of a nationalist journal, *Diariong Tagalog*, a bilingual Spanish/Tagalog newspaper first published in June, 1882, which lasted less than a year. The co-founder and editor of the Tagalog section was the poet and "zealous propagandist" for national reform, Marcelo H. del Pilar.⁵ According to Jesuit historian, John N. Shumacher S.J., the newspaper was reform-minded, and promoted a "moderate" nationalist stance. Del Pilar translated Jose Rizal's influential essay on the "natural" sentiment of longing and concern for one's nation, "El Amor Patrio" ("Love of Nation") for Tagalog readers.⁶

The content of Del Pilar's poetry was more politically challenging than the content of *Diariong Tagalog*. As Lumbera notes, while "other propagandists aimed their works at the Spanish administrators..." Del Pilar "recognized the need to involve the masses in the movement for reforms. His poetry was a valuable service to the movement." As a poet, del Pilar was known for his keen sense of irony and satire. A good example of this is his poem, *Pasióng Dapat Ipag-Alab*, a parody of *Casaysayan nang Pasióng Mahal ni Jesucristong Panginoon Natin na Sucat Ipag-Alab nang Puso nang Sinomang Babasa*, or *An Account of the Sacred Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ which should Inflamm the heart of Every Reader*. This "blasphemous" poem satirized the revered *pasions*, portraying the life and death of Jesus Christ:

Prayle na lubhang suwail,
Wala munti mang panimdim
Ang parati mong hangad din
Ang lumigaw at maningil
Siya mong minamagaling.

(Most impudent friar,
Without the least compunction,
Your constant desire
Is to loaf around and collect money,
These things you deem good.)

Di ka nagdalang awa

Sa bangkay ng maga dukha,
 Ang gawa mo'y pawing daya
 Mang-ulol, mang-upasala,
 Manglupig, mangalunya.

(You never took pity
 On the impoverished dead,
 Your deeds are those of deceit:
 To mislead, to slander,
 To oppress, to covet another man's wife.)

Kristiyano, pagkatiningin
 Budhi mo at panimdim,
 Tahimik mong pagbulayin
 Ang chirping daratnin
 Kung ang prayle'y di alisin.

(Christian, look hard
 Into your heart and mind;
 Contemplate in silence
 The suffering in store for you
 Unless you put the friars away.)⁷

Del Pilar's satire highlighted the corruption of the friars; the author (who graduated in law from the Jesuit University of Santo Tomas) "capitalized on the shock value of his use of the *pasion* stanza for profane ends."⁸ His "Pasiong" and other poems were published in the form of mock "prayerbooks" and "religious" tracts, and provided a precedent, more than a decade later, for newspaper satire of the American government in the Philippines.

The problem of censorship led members of the Propaganda movement to publish their journal, *La Solidaridad*, in Madrid. In Spain, Del Pilar went on to become the second editor of the journal, and under his leadership, it became more bold in its advocacy for reform. While the brilliant scholar and national martyr, Jose Rizal,⁹ is often considered to be the most eloquent voice of the Propaganda Movement and nationalist reform of the Philippines, Marcelo H. Del Pilar was perhaps equally important as an energetic force who worked tirelessly to keep the concerns of the Movement in print. In his introduction to the Fundación Santiago edition of *La Solidaridad*,¹⁰ Fr. John Schumacher describes Del Pilar as "the heart and soul" of the newspaper.¹¹

La Solidaridad

Quincenario democrático

AÑO III	MADRID 15 ENERO DE 1891	NUM. 47
PRECIOS DE SUSCRIPCIÓN En España, trimestre. Ptas. 0'75 Extranjero..... » 1'25	REDACCION Y ADMINISTRACION Atcha, 43, pal. izquierda TELEFONO NUM. 983	Comunicados y anuncios á precios convencionales. No se devuelven originales. Número suelto 15 céntimos.

Fig. 1 Masthead, *La Solidaridad*, 1891¹²

As in *Diariang Tagalog*, articles in the the *Soli* focused often on criticism of the frailocracy in the Philippines; there were also articles countering negative views of Filipinos (for example, Jose Rizal's "On the Indolence of the Filipinos"), articles on labor, language, and education, as well as short stories and poetry.

A quick glance through several issues in Volume II of the *Soli* reveals an attempt to present a balanced selection of articles, letters, reportage, poems and brief stories. I found, for example, a reprint of Rizal's essay, "Love of Country," a bibliography on "The Races of the Philippine Archipelago," a "New Orthography of the Tagalog Language," and Del Pilar's article on an "Electoral System for the Philippines." In the "Arts and Letters" section are found poems and prose, some wholly romantic, but many with reformist or nationalistic overtones, for example, a story by Juan Antonio Luna (a.k.a. Taga-Ilog) on the harassment of a progressive Filipina teacher by a friar, and a poem by Del Pilar (a.k.a. José Hernandez Crame) entitled "Libertad" ("Liberty"):

...De entonces, ni un solo día
 Me abandonó tu recuerdo,
 Adorada patria mía;
 Y de tí siempre me acuerdo
 Con pena y con alegría.

Y en la social convulsión
 En que la idea se agita
 De esta misera nación,
 Es tuyo mi corazón
 Y tuya mi alma infinita.

(Since then, I have not

Abandoned thy memory a single day,
 My adored country;
 Of thee always, I remember
 With pain and with joy.

In the social convulsion
 Of this miserable country
 Agitates the idea of liberty.
 Thine is my heart,
 Thine, my infinite soul...)¹³

Members of the Propaganda Movement, most prominently Marcelo H. Del Pilar, Jose Rizal and Isabelo de los Reyes, were concerned not only with political reform, but with various tasks including biological studies of the flora and fauna of the Philippines, ethnography, language study, and poetry. Due to the impetus of their energetic efforts, *La Solidaridad* and the newspapers published later, during the “Golden Age” of Philippine Journalism—which Salvador Lopez defines as “the twenty-year period between 1889 when *El Ilocano* was founded, and 1910 when *El Renacimiento* finally stopped publication”—became, not just newspapers reporting the “news,” but vessels for an emerging national literature and culture.¹⁴

European Freemasonry also played a part in supporting the efforts of the Filipino editors of the *Soli*. Fr. Schumacher points out that “A very large proportion of the Filipino nationalist leaders were at one time or another Masons,”¹⁵ although he tends to downplay its role in nationalist movements.” Because of the secretive aspects of its activities, it’s difficult to determine the extent of its influence. Del Pilar, however, established a Filipino Masonic order, christened “Solidaridad,” in Madrid. Jose Rizal was a Mason.¹⁶ Schumacher quotes propagandist Mariano Ponce’s description of the function of Masonry for Filipinos in Spain:

to give our people a school which would provide it with models for cooperative action (normas de sociabilidad) and accustom it to live as a collectivity. In the bosom of Masonry we have learned to live a life of association; in the midst of that brotherhood we have communicated to one another our impressions, our thoughts, our aspirations, and we have made ourselves apt to unite our desires and our acts.¹⁷

Thus, Masonry helped to further consolidate a sense of community, fraternity, and mutual (nationalist) aspiration. Schumacher, however, points out that they also raised funds for the Propaganda campaign and its activities.¹⁸

The community of Filipino writers in Madrid, and their efforts to disseminate progressive ideas through *La Solidaridad* made possible the clandestine publication and distribution of Jose Rizal’s subversive novels, *Noli me Tangere*, and *El Filibusterismo*, and Pedro Paterno’s “ethnographic” novel, *Ninay: Costumbres Filipinas*. One hundred sixty issues of *La Solidaridad* were published before it folded due to lack of funds in 1895.¹⁹ In 1896 Del Pilar died of tuberculosis in Barcelona, and Jose Rizal was deported to the Philippines and executed in Manila for inciting rebellion (despite the fact that he did not advocate revolutionary means for reform) because of his activities in the Propaganda Movement, and his subversive novels.

While the propagandists published in the more liberal atmosphere of Spain, provincial Filipino newspapers and magazines began to circulate from 1884 through 1893. The fortnightly journal,

El Ilocano, was founded in 1889 by the prolific journalist and labor leader, Isabelo de los Reyes. It was the first newspaper to be published in the Ilocano language,²⁰ and the first regional paper to publish fiction and poetry.²¹ *El Ilocano's* manifesto was one of service to the people: "We have no other object than to serve our beloved people by contributing to the enlightenment of the Filipinos as a whole, defending their interests, but never entering into a commercial venture. That is why we do our mission without expecting monetary reward."²² The values of *El Ilocano* would later be echoed in the trilingual (English/Tagalog/Ilocano) newspaper, *The Three Stars*, published in Stockton, California, during the 1930s.

The seeds of modern class struggle and socialism were introduced to the Philippines by de los Reyes after he was imprisoned in Barcelona in 1897 because of his alleged involvement in the 1896 revolution against Spain. Deported to prison in Spain, he was there exposed to European anarchists, socialists and revolutionaries. He went on to spread the word about unionism in various expatriate periodicals, and in the Philippines, organized the Union de Litografos e Impresores de Filipinas, and the larger Union Obrera Democratica. He edited the Union newspaper, *La Redencion del Obrero*.²³ In 1902, he led a general strike of factory and farm (tenant) workers against American business monopolies.²⁴

By the early 20th century, Filipinos were no longer isolated from world political events. An influx of information about labor movements and socialism had arrived, not only from Europe, but also the United States. In the tens and twenties, there were many chances for literate Filipinos, from both the working class and elite, to be exposed to proletarian thought through subversive plays, newspapers, magazines, labor organs, proletarian novels and essays. Lucila V. Hosillos writes that readings of "Marx, Bakunin, Fourier, Zola, Spencer and others" may even have contributed to the "flowering of prose fiction in Tagalog."²⁵ Many union and pro-labor newspapers were published: the Tagalog language *Katwiran*, and its Spanish language counterpart, *Razon*, the Union de Sastres de Filipinas weekly, *Oras Na*, were published in 1916; *Trabajo* was published by the Federacion del Trabajo de Filipinas, and there were many more.

Newspapers published both in the Philippines and in Spain after *La Solidaridad* and through the earliest years of the American occupation, took on an increasingly revolutionary tone, evident in their titles: *La Independencia*, *El Heraldo de Revolucion*, *Republica Filipina*, *Kalayaan* (*Liberty*), *El Nuevo Dia*, and *El Renacimiento*." In his essay, "Ang Kalayaan," Dr. Pio Valenzuela, an editor of the journal of the same name, claims that the single issue of 2000 copies was enough to expand the membership of the secret revolutionary society, the Katipunan, from 300 to about 30,000. The editors made it appear to have been published in Japan, although it was in reality published in Manila. The issue included an article by Emilio Jacinto, author of the "Kartilya ng Katipunan" ("Teachings of the Katipunan"), "urging the Filipino people to revolt as the only recourse to secure liberty."²⁶

Luis V. Teodoro states that *La Solidaridad* "marked...the single most important event in the 19th century in the making of the Filipino Press."²⁷ His claim that the tradition of advocacy was "...the single most important characteristic of the Filipino press as the fortunes of the Revolution waxed -- and waned..." seems to carry through -- although at times, tenuously -- into the American period in the Philippines, and indeed into Filipino newspapers published in the United States.²⁸

The elite Filipino propagandists in Spain advocated for reform and equal representation in the Spanish *Cortes*. They hoped for a continuance of a European-style education for all Filipinos, in

which Spanish was the language of choice (although Isabelo de Los Reyes and Marcelo H. Del Pilar favored native languages). The Philippine American war would change those hopes radically. This was reflected in the change of publishers, shifts of financial support, and content in the newspapers. Debates about language and education policies appeared; articles changed from Spanish language to English, although some newspapers stubbornly hung on to Spanish, briefly.

The American Period

After the Philippine-American War began in 1898, economic policies were introduced that began to change the trade patterns of the Philippines. The Payne-Aldrich Act (1909) and Underwood Simmons Act (1913) created “free-trade” policies in the Philippines that slowed down industrialization, while natural resources were mined and farmed primarily for the benefit of foreign investors and the ruling class of Filipinos. Exports led trade, and the economy became dependent upon the American market. Because exploitation of workers increased alarmingly, there was also rapid growth in the formation of unions.²⁹ At the same time, the United States colonial government developed a communications infrastructure that established the Philippines as a peripheral, economically dependent state. Gerald Sussman observes:

“Colonial rule and private American media and telecommunications established in the Philippines the physical infrastructure and standards, technical and political, that led to commercial exploitation of these extremely valuable resources.” Even today, “The cultural-informational milieu is also structured by American or American style news content...This is the result of generations of American tutelage in organizing the press and in the training of Filipino journalists in the gathering and the reporting of news. Associated Press, UPI, and American weeklies such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* still control most of the international news that reach Filipino readers.”³⁰

This American style, “cultural-informational milieu” was made possible mainly through writing, journalism and literary programs offered in the secular University of the Philippines. This institution was founded by the Americans in 1908, and used as a kind of “laboratory” for experimentation with English-language based teaching in a colonial setting.

Lucila Hosillos, author of *Philippine-American Literary Relations*, writes that, while the Sedition Law (passed in 1901) prevented Filipinos from advocating publically for independence, and from writing and publishing in Spanish, it:

“...in effect stimulated writing in Philippine languages, especially Tagalog, which were not readily understood by censors. In the bilingual (Spanish/Tagalog) newspapers, the most militant of which were *El Renacimiento* and its Tagalog counterpart *Muling Pasilang*, Filipino nationalists attacked American rule, capitalists, the capitalist system, and the carpetbaggers-turned business-tycoons.”³¹

Years later in the 1930s, several of the more politically-oriented U.S. Filipino newspapers continued the practice of bilingual or even trilingual reporting, which seems to have been a conscious reference to the continuing disjunctions in Philippine culture caused by colonialism.

The development of proletarian newspapers and organizations, (founding of the Philippine Communist party in 1930) and labor newspapers in the Philippines further helped to spread

nationalism down through the ranks of the literate worker. One important and popular venue was *Sakdal*, a Tagalog language newspaper founded by Benigno Ramos in the 1920s. Noel V. Teodoro writes that “The Tagalog newspaper which was sold for five centavos a copy and was therefore within the reach [of] poor Filipinos was responsible, to a large extent, for the promotion of nationalistic sentiments among the rural masses and the growth of the movement.”³²

El Renacimiento stood out for its courageous reporting, which resulted in the infamous sedition trials of its editors in 1906 for the Filipino editors’ exposé of the cruel treatment of prisoners by the American military and Philippine Constabulary during the “reconcentration” of the Filipino population in Cavite, and in 1908 when the newspaper was charged with libel and eventually shut down for its criticism of Secretary of the Interior, Dean C. Worcester, in a scathing editorial entitled “Aves de Rapiña,” or “Birds of Prey.”

In “The Rise and Fall of *El Renacimiento*,” Vicente F. Barranco describes the editor, Fernando Maria Guerrero, as a nationalist “revolutionary” and poet who had been a member of the Propaganda Movement. Feature writers included men who would later become members of the Independence Mission in the United States, among them, Jaime C. deVeyra, Teodoro M. Kalaw, and Fidel A. Reyes. Like Marcelo H. del Pilar, Guerrero had a reputation for fearless crusading. The articles that brought the sedition suit focused on the arrest of 600 to 1000 residents of Bacoor, Cavite. Barranco writes:

...without mincing matters, the newspaper narrated repulsive details of the arrest and the detention of the citizens, both rich and unknown, including women and children. It stressed to shocked readers that the writ of habeas corpus had been suspended. The residents were summarily seized and herded together in a compound of only 400 square meters or less than a square meter for each of them, on the ground floor of an old convent which was used as a garage floor and partly, as a stable. The place was filthy and reeked of horse manure...in the course of the trial, many other cases of police and PC (Philippine Constabulary) atrocities were brought to public knowledge.³³

The newspaper was acquitted in 1906, and the editors were celebrated by Filipinos as heroes. “*El Renacimiento* was hailed as the guardian of civil liberties and defender of the oppressed.”³⁴ However, the Secretary of the Interior and zoologist, Dean Worcester,³⁵ initiated one of the most famous Philippine newspaper libel suits of the decade when he sued *El Renacimiento* with slander for P1000,000 pesos and won P60,000.³⁶ When the Worcester libel trial began, Teodoro M. Kalaw was the editor. The report in question, “Birds of Prey,” was written by the City Editor, Fidel A. Reyes. Worcester filed suit because the article reflected badly on his reputation:

...there is a man, who, besides being like the eagle, also has the characteristics of the vulture; the owl and the vampire.

He ascends the mountains of Benguet ostensibly to classify and measure Igorot skulls, to study and to civilize the Igorots, but at the same time, he also spies during his flight, with the keen eye of the bird of prey, where the large deposits of gold are...and then he appropriates these all to himself afterward, thanks to the legal facilities he can make and unmake at will, always, however, redounding in his own benefit...He presents himself on all occasions with the wrinkled brow of a scientist who has spent his life deep in the mysteries of the laboratory of science; when in truth his only scientific work has been the dissection of insects and the importation of fish-eggs, as though fish in this country are of

so little nourishment and savoriness that they deserve replacement by species from other climes.³⁷

The defeat of *El Renacimiento* resulted in imprisonment and fines for Martin Ocampo and Teodoro Kalaw. Worcester then filed a civil suit against Ocampo and Kalaw, and seven of the writers and staff. That final suit, which the editors and staff members lost, resulted in the closing of *El Renacimiento* and its auction. The final blow, as Kalaw relates, took place when Worcester acquired at auction the names and publishing rights of the press.³⁸ The legal proceedings for both suits lasted over six years, into a new and more liberal presidency in the United States. Although *El Renacimiento* lost the suit, the new, pro-Filipino Governor General Francis Burton Harrison granted full pardons to Martin Ocampo and Teodoro Kalaw.

The University of the Philippines and the Philippine Press

As the American administration slowly quelled the resistance of the “insurrectos” and began to build a colonial infrastructure in the 1910s—1920s, American education drastically affected the development and character of Filipino writing during this period, through the establishment of the mandatory use of English language in Philippine primary and secondary schools, and the development of English language writing and literature curriculum. Salvador P. Lopez explains that his cohort:

“... had to get used to the idea and live with it. English started in the schools during the first American decade. The University of the Philippines was established in 1908, and it was at the UP that the Americans experimented with a completely English-based academic program at the tertiary level. There were, of course, Santo Tomas, the Ateneo and Letran, but they were pre-existing Catholic colleges that had to resolve the problem of converting from the Spanish system of education to the American....But the UP started from scratch, and was able to adjust to the idea of a wholly English-oriented system of education almost instantly. This it could do without difficulty since it was secular and non-sectarian.”³⁹

U.P. held “preeminence” for a long time, Lopez writes, “in the early years of Philippine writing in English...We had American teachers there, or Filipino teachers educated in England or the USA.”⁴⁰ U.P. English professors such as George Pope Shannon and A.V.H. Hartendorp (briefly influential editor of the *Manila Times*, and the *Philippine Magazine*) dispensed literary knowledge that valorized the western canon; Shakespeare was *de riguer*.⁴¹ Nevertheless, at least one Filipino tradition survived, the *balagtasan*—named after Francisco Baltazar, also known as Balagtas, author of the first subversive romance, *Florante at Laura*)—or poetic debate, with indigenous roots in tribal poetic debate.⁴²

Virgilio S. Almario marks the birth of the modern *balagtasan* on March 28, 1924 in the Instituto de Mujeres, in Tondo, Manila. It was to celebrate Balagtas day. The first debate focused on nationalism (“Bulaklak ng Lahing Kalinis-Linisan” or “The Purest Flower of the Nation”). Almario notes that “Balagtasan...served a higher social and political function. More than mere entertainment, it enhanced the traditional role of the poet as purveyor of truth for the people...poets during the American period wrote columns in verse where, like editors and columnists today, they expressed their opinions about current events and issues.”⁴³ Casiano T. Calalang reports that the first *balagtasan* in English was between Jose M. Hernandez and Alvaro

Martinez; it took place at UP, and was reported in the *Herald* magazine in 1927. “There were so many balagtasans held then. That was the time when we were all engrossed in our works.”⁴⁴ Elynia S. Mabanglo explains that:

Save from the fact that one has to reason and argue in verse, the balagtasan is similar to an ordinary debate. Two master poets are assigned to defend the pros and cons of an issue and the lakandiwa or moderator acts as the judge...The art...became less popular due to the advent of television, movies, and more recently, the computer. The form, however, is being revived in various schools and other cultural programs by way of re-enacting famous balagtasans scripts. The media helps out in preserving balagtasans through print or visual recording of some performances. Example is the famous balagtasan on whether the US bases should stay in the Philippines or not in the late 1990s performed by poets Teo Antonio (son of Emilio Mar. Antonio) and Mario Cabling.⁴⁵

Mabanglo also explains that this form has been performed in print. Further study of the balagtasan, which is enjoying a revival among young Filipino American spoken-word, slam and hip-hop performers, may yield some connection between this ancient form and the tradition of advocacy in Philippine and Filipino American journalism and other forms of writing.

From 1900 to 1940, sedition laws⁴⁶ in the Philippines sent the more radical newspapers underground, and the first of the modern mainstream dailies, modeled after American and English newspapers, emerged—and thrived—in Manila and in several other large cities in the archipelago. As early as 1898, (during the Treaty of Paris), Thomas Gowan began to publish the *Manila Times* in English, knowing that colonial rule would soon shift from the Spaniards to the Americans. In “Looking Back at 50 Years of Philippine Journalism,” F. Theo Rogers, an early co-editor of the *Philippines Free Press* mentions other leading newspapers that emerged during the 1920s, including *The Philippines Herald*, financed and edited by Filipinos; *Liwayway* (the first newsmagazine in Tagalog), which started as a 30-page pictorial; the weekly *Graphic*, and the monthly *Philippine Magazine*, edited by American journalist and professor of English at U.P., A.V. Hartendorp; the magazine “enjoyed wide readership among the intelligentsia.”⁴⁷

The University of the Philippines began offering the formal degree in journalism and communication in 1919. U.P. faculty and administration developed close ties to the more prominent Manila newspapers and magazines, which offered jobs at all levels of the business. Students worked as proofreaders, printers, newsboys and reporters. Bienvenido Santos, whose post-World War II novel, *What the Hell For You Left Your Heart in San Francisco* chronicles the experiences of a Filipino newspaper reporter, writes, “I worked through college as a proofreader at the *Philippines Herald*...Later I worked as a messenger boy for Consuelo Fonacier, for a magazine...called *The Woman’s Outlook*... I mailed the magazine; I collected subscriptions, and also collected from advertisers. I did all sorts of jobs.”⁴⁸

These Manila journals attracted U.P. students who had writerly ambitions. Edilberto N. Alegre writes that “the literary sections of the magazines were edited by Filipino contemporary writers – as with the *Herald* and the *Graphic*, and even the *Free Press*.”⁴⁹ In fact, Fernando L. Leano recalls, “the U.P. Writers group...”were in the top bracket at the *Free Press*” which was published by McCullough Dick.⁵⁰ The newspapers were both a means of employment for writers, and a way to further their careers. Initially, the press was funded by outside money coming from the British and the Americans, who hired Filipinos as technical apprentices, later promoting them to editorial positions. The *Free Press* journal was pivotal in encouraging the

work of Filipino writers, but also in developing the Filipino short story form.

F. Theo Rogers writes that R. McCullough Dick, a Scot, published the *Philippines Free Press* in 1908, and describes the weekly as “a textbook and general arbiter on English throughout the Philippines for almost half a century.”⁵¹ The first Filipino poem published in English, Justo Juliano’s patriotic “Sursum Corda,” appeared in the *Free Press* in 1907.⁵² Maria Luna Lopez highlights the importance of this journal, noting that, for the youthful writer, getting published by the *Free Press* for the first time “was like going to heaven... you felt that you were made...you had arrived.”⁵³

While publishing Filipino writing in English and providing editing experience for many, the *Free Press* was criticized by Filipinos for its American-centric bias and mediocre content. Rizal’s biographer and translator, Leon Ma. Guerrero, complained about the *Free Press*’s “stupid formula stories,”⁵⁴ and poet Jose Garcia Villa unfavorably compared its content to that of America’s *Saturday Evening Post*: “Mediocrity, the height of mediocrity...”⁵⁵ Thus, some Filipinos had already developed a critical perspective of American literary education and its affect on Filipinos. In “The Rise of the Short Story in the Philippines,” Garcia Villa calls the *Free Press* “the periodical which had established the short story in the Islands,” despite his claims that “its editors were reputed to be the most stubborn lot, defying progressive short story writers, rejecting their work, accepting only stories of the lowest level.”⁵⁶ The editors who accepted these stories, he notes, were in fact “journalists...and not literary men at all.” In fact, the *Free Press* published Garcia Villa’s story, “The Fence,” in 1927, the tale of two women who, out of bitter jealousy towards each other, destroy the lives of their own children.⁵⁷ The story falls neatly into local-color genre, situated in the rural Philippines, and telling the story of simple people of the land. It is not unlike many of the published pieces of younger writers of that era; a number of U.P. writers were influenced to write folk tales and local color by the folklorist, Dean Fansler, who taught at U.P., and the local periodicals readily published their work.

The popular print media – magazines and newspapers – were perhaps most influential in shaping Philippine prose in English during this period, for good or ill. And the literature they produced was that which fit most readily into the more compact magazine and newspaper format.

Bienvenido Lumbera writes that the daily newspapers of the 1920s were rated primarily on the quality of their serialized novels;⁵⁸ these novels tended towards romantic themes, as might be expected of periodicals catering to a popular readership.⁵⁹ Even Lope K. Santos’s satirical socialist novel, *Banaag at Sikat (Sunrise)*, revolved around the romantic dilemmas of several male radicals (one of whom is a poor newspaperman) and their sweethearts. Nevertheless, Lumbera writes that *Banaag at Sikat* “is a landmark in Philippine literature for it showed subsequent authors that the social novel under the new conditions created by American colonialism ought to focus attention on the social inequities that had been sharpened by the advent of modernization”⁶⁰

Despite the emergence of Philippine novels in the vernacular, it was the short story in English that flourished prior to World War II, having, as Leopoldo Y. Yabes⁶¹ writes, “a remarkable, almost phenomenal, growth.” Newspapers and magazines published and encouraged the short story form, rather than the novel. *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940*, edited by Leopoldo Y. Yabes, claimed to present “the best short stories written in English by the more important Filipino writers before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific.”⁶² Each of the short stories in the anthology was first published in one of the periodicals mentioned above. Yabes suggests that

publication in 1925 in the *Philippines Herald* of Paz Marquez Benitez' "Dead Stars," a subtle tale of manners about a doomed romance, marks the year that the Philippine short story was born. While local color tales like Loreto Paras's "The Bolo" are well represented, a number of the periodicals rose above the "mediocre" level of the *Philippines Free Press* to take some risks. In particular, the *Graphic* dared to publish Jose Garcia Villa's experimental "Untitled Story" in 1932,⁶³ whose modernist form would've been challenging to any magazine at that time.

Clearly, the newspapers and magazines listed above, were influential in creating the careers of Filipino writers in English, and in helping to shape Philippine literature in English.

Short story writers and poets came under the influence of the American writers who were popular during that period. Fernando L. Leano notes that, on campus, the students had access to *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harpers*, and *The New Yorker*.⁶⁴ Manuel Arguilla states that "Poe's method of achieving a single intended effect through organic unity lies deep in the Filipino short story, for 'who was the Philippine writer, from the twenties to the forties, not influenced by Edgar Allan Poe?'"⁶⁵ Leano reports that writing groups were discussing "...the style of Wilbur Daniel Steele, and of William Saroyan, who was experimenting with ways of using English. Also the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, and Amy Lowell; and the plays of Bernard Shaw, Vidal Tan, Carlos P. Romulo – and each other's stories and poems...[the sessions took place] almost every day."⁶⁶ Poet Carlos Angeles reports that his first encounter with a poetry magazine was Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*, found in the Philippines National Library.⁶⁷ Hosillos writes that Earnest Hemingway "first reached Filipino writers through *Men Without Women*, *The Sun Also Rises*, and *A Farewell to Arms*, leaving "unmistakeable imprints on the Filipino short story in English."⁶⁸

If some Filipino journalists lost the thread of advocacy while writing to please the public during the 1920s, others admired the muckraking journalists, led by H.L. Mencken, and his periodical, *American Mercury*. He was considered:

"[a] dangerous radical because of his irreverent clamor and attacks on convention...Mencken's excoriation of entrenched hypocrisy, plain ignorance, and stupidity in all aspects of American life did not spare the moribund traditionalism and intellectual timidity of professors and universities. These and the policy of the *American Mercury* to satirize the mass mind pointed out to Filipino writers and intellectuals undesirable aspects of American culture that were being introduced in the Philippines...He also named American writers who could promote his crusade: Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, Sinclair Lewis, and Carl Van Vechten."⁶⁹

By 1940, Salvador Lopez had written *Literature and Society*, "a collection of essays inspired by Ludwig Lewisohn, Upton Sinclair, Michael Gold, Max Eastman, Granville Hicks, and other proletarian-oriented writers." The influential title essay advocated for a narrative and proletarian literature, as opposed to "art for art's sake." E. San Juan expands on these influences with a reading list of authors read during the 1930s, including American anti-Establishment writers like Upton Sinclair, John Steinbeck, Erskine Caldwell, John Dos Passos, and James Farrell.⁷⁰ Filipino writers focused on Filipino content, writing about their own social issues against the backdrop of Philippine locales, but this was a learning period during which the required English language ushered in modern, Western forms of writing.

University classrooms, cafes and restaurants, like the Panciteria Antigua, near U.P., were

gathering places for budding writers, where they would read the current magazines and newspapers, and comment on their colleagues' published articles and stories.⁷¹ With opportunities opening up for publication, shared experience in the pressroom or composing room, and shared literary aspirations, came a sense of a community among writers. Edilberto N. Alegre writes: "What comes down to us is the camaraderie. There was always this availability of editors, and the young writers discussing among themselves as a community." In the same interview, Loreto Paras Sulit says of the writers published by the *Graphic*, and members of the Writer's Guild that "we had luncheons, not only w/the Graphics, but the Writer's Guild as well...we read each other's stories in the *Philippines Herald*, and then we discussed them."⁷²

Eventually, loose-knit writing communities became more cohesive. Some acquired a kind of "official" status as literary clubs or guilds; a hierarchy was being established, aided and abetted by the structure of American education at U.P., and opportunities for internship, employment and publication that were offered. Leopoldo Yabes notes that in the early 1930s, "The U.P. Writers Club was the most important club at that time"⁷³ The Writers Club also had its own journal, *The Literary Apprentice*, which was the first Filipino literary magazine in English. Fernando L. Leano describes the U.P. writers as

"...technocrats who knew how to get the news, write and edit the stories, and prepare the pages for printing. I was reporter, staff editor, literary editor or editorial writer. Ralph Hawkins taught me desk editing, and I taught some of the others. Prof. Vicente Lontok, secretary of President Rafael Palma and adviser of the *Collegian* and *Philippinensian*, asked every new editor of the *Collegian* to have in the staff at least one of the U.P. writers group."⁷⁴

The period of modernization and Westernization included a growing awareness among Filipinas of Western style feminism and the limitations imposed upon them by a patriarchal society since the Spanish colonial period. Filipinas felt the need for a writing club just for women. Maria Luna Lopez cites their purpose as, "Well, nothing except to show the men that there were women who could write. The feeling was that only the male writers were recognized. You felt as though something was holding you back."⁷⁵ In the United States, the few Filipinas who would write for U.S. Filipino newspapers and magazines would continue to speak for women, although the task would prove to be difficult.

One might expect that an education in American exceptionalism would have ill-prepared these Filipino writers and soon-to-be editors for entering the world of American journalism in the Depression Era United States, where racism would be rampant, and jobs for Filipinos would be few. However, many of these writers, schooled in the press room, were current on world affairs, especially those of the United States. Because they were intimate with all levels of the journalism trade, they knew the debates around the Sedition Law and censorship simmering in the Philippine press. Filipino students, writers and journalists had read Mencken and Dos Passos; they had been exposed to *Lipag Kalabaw's* satirical lampooning of the American colonial administration, and followed with fascination the infamous sedition trials of the editors of *El Renacimiento*, in 1906.



Fig. 2 (*Lipag-Kalabaw* masthead)⁷⁶

While literary influence from the United States was strong in the Philippines, Filipino subversive playwrights, journalists, poets, and short-story writers countered with a voice and agenda of their own, tempering to some extent the Filipino emulation of American authors. Still, the extent of the racism they encountered was daunting.

Pensionados in the U.S.: *The Filipino Students' Magazine* and *The Filipino Student*

At the turn of the century, Filipinos began traveling to the United States in several capacities: as privately funded students, as *pensionados* funded by the Philippine legislature to be educated in the United States (the Pensionado Act of 1903), or as part of the Philippine Independence Mission, charged with the duty of countering negative press about Filipino culture, and to argue the case for an independent republic. Among the latter were members of the delegation of the Philippine Republic, including brother and sister Sixto and Clemencia Lopez,⁷⁷ whose essays and speeches were also given a forum in conferences or published in pamphlets by the Anti-Imperialist League, or by American magazines like *The Nation*, which were sympathetic with the Independence project. Their articles and transcribed speeches were among the earliest Filipino texts in English to be published in the U.S.

Sixto and Clemencia, both patriotic,⁷⁸ charismatic, and outspoken, were taken up by the Anti-Imperialist League, who published their speeches and writings on Philippine independence. The League even published a book of letters written by the Lopez family, when members of their family were imprisoned by American forces in the Philippines.⁷⁹



Fig. 3. Clemencia Lopez⁸⁰

“Who came to seek justice at the hands of the President for her imprisoned brothers.”

On May 29, 1902 Clemencia Lopez addressed the annual meeting of the New England Women’s Suffrage Association, to speak for the women of the Philippines, in order that the listeners “may form a different and more favorable opinion of the Filipinos, than the conception which the generality of the American people have formed.” She began by stating: “I believe that we are both striving for much the same object—you for the right to take part in national life; we for the right to have a national life to take part in.” She explained that the Filipino people were already civilized prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonizers. After explaining how Filipino women passed their day, the kinds of clothing they wore, and their occupations (mostly concerned with domestic life), she discussed their traits of loyalty, describing how,

Both in the war with Spain and in the war with America, many soldiers’ wives followed their husbands to the field, traversing mountains and forests, and facing every danger that they might not be separated from their husbands, but might prepare their food, and care for them if ill or wounded. An example of this is the fact that the wives of General Aguinaldo, of Luchan and of Malvar were in the field, as were the wives of many other officers. A great many Philippine patriots have given up the struggle earlier than they would otherwise have done, because of the dangers to which their wives were exposed by their devotion, who suffered from hunger and the attacks of the enemy. It is also interesting to see how faithful the Philippine women are when some member of the family is imprisoned, whether it be a husband, a father or a brother.⁸¹

In the last sentence, she was referring to her three brothers who were imprisoned by Americans in the Philippines, it was believed, because of their relation to her brother, Sixto, who was in the U.S. as secretary of the delegation for Philippine independence. Noting how much freedom American women have to come and go on the streets, Clemencia Lopez then noted, “I am the first Philippine woman to leave my home and travel so far alone.”⁸² Her bravery in traveling so far must have added some poignancy to her appeal to the New England women who attended that day, but it is also an example of the rhetorical skills that both she and her brother, Sixto, could wield in the service of family and country.

A little more than a year later, on November 9, 1903, ninety-eight Filipino *pensionado* students arrived in San Francisco to study in the United States, under the Pensionado Act (Act. 854).⁸³ William Alexander Sutherland, President Taft’s first Education Agent, had arranged for their entrance into high schools, colleges and universities, according to their abilities, and the U.S. colonial government in the Philippines was their sponsor. Many of the students—if not all—were of the elite class; their parents could afford to send them to university.⁸⁴ They were accustomed to some privilege, and accepted (sometimes grudgingly) a tutelary relationship with their American professors and employers.

Emily Porcincula Lawsin points out that those who received sponsorship to study in the U.S. were required by the Act to return to the Philippines and serve in some government capacity for the same number of years that they had studied abroad. She writes:

The first group of pensionados, characteristically of the elite class, were appointed by Philippine governors and American superintendents of schools. After 1904, the majority of the pensionados were selected on the basis of examination, while some were still appointed. . .

The pensionados/as were obliged to return to the Philippines; many later occupied prominent positions within the government or schools.⁸⁵

The group arriving in November 1903 added to a small, already-existing population of privately funded Filipino students in the United States. At this time, there were already nine Filipino students attending U.C. Berkeley.⁸⁶ Benjamin Ide Wheeler, president of UC Berkeley, oversaw and advised the Filipino students in their university education; he acted as trustee for the funds they received from the Philippines for schooling, and also provided letters of recommendation to further their graduate studies and other pursuits.

The earliest (prior to the 1920s) Filipino periodical in the western U.S. was inaugurated in 1905 in a quarterly published at U.C. Berkeley, called *The Filipino Students’ Magazine*. Its first manager and editor was Felipe Buencamino, Jr. In 1906, the editors described it as the “Official Organ of the Filipinos” in the U.S., and it projected this image through its professional design, and an impressive list of associates, which included “District Managers, Representatives, Officers and Staff” distributed through fifteen states in the U.S., the U.K., and “Special Agents” in nine provinces of the Philippines. This was not a fly-by-night student publication; it had the monetary backing of the Anti-Imperialist League of Boston, and William Alexander Sutherland, who supervised the Filipino students in the United States.⁸⁷



Fig. 4. *Filipino Students' Magazine* (front cover)⁸⁸

The magazine's content consisted largely of essays, letters, articles, and occasional speeches in English and Spanish, concerned with Filipino student life in the U.S., Philippine independence, and responses to representation of Filipinos by Americans in the media. The three concerns were intertwined, because how the Filipinos were perceived (as ignorant and illiterate savages, or as educated and intelligent human beings) by Americans would purportedly decide the independence question and the "Philippine problem." An excerpt from V.L. Legarda's editorial of the July 1906 issue illustrates the fact that the war with the U.S. and the colonial occupation still weighed on the minds of the students:

We believe that, dealing with a journal which shall defend us in America, and which shall reveal our interests and aspirations among the true Americans, 5,000 or more subscriptions could be secured immediately in these islands [the Philippines].

If we had some organ to defend us in America from the very first days of the American occupancy of these islands, probably the American legislators would not have sanctioned laws such as those that have been passed by Congress as affects the Philippines. The Payne Bill itself would not have been published in the terms related to us by the wires.

Courage, therefore, and forward for it is better late than never.⁸⁹

The students who were managers and editors of the periodical were not just youthfully earnest in their intent. Ponciano Reyes, one of the editors of the Spanish and English sections, was the first Filipino law student in the U.S. in 1905 to be accepted to the American bar, and had already been in the country for nine years.⁹⁰ Martin de Veyra had given a speech for the New England Anti-Imperialist League in Boston's Faneuil Hall, and had been threatened with deportation because he advocated Philippine independence.⁹¹ Vicente Legarda, the self-professed "Republican" of the group had already worked for some years as an apprentice and journeyman in the shipyards of Glasgow, and had graduated from Glasgow college of Naval Architecture.⁹² So, besides the involvement of younger students, those who held managerial positions for the magazine were

already quite worldly and experienced in dealing with Western culture and business.

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Fig. 5. *Filipino Students' Magazine*, ad page.⁹³

Advertising in the *Filipino Students' Magazine* was primarily in English, with a few ads in Spanish (Fig. 5). Handsome full and half-page ads, like those for Henshaw, Bulkley & Company's machinery, and the California-Manila Lumber Commercial Company were often directed toward the student and businessman, while clothing ads posted by Roos Bros., Neuhaus & Company, and Stetson hats purveyed by O.M. Bennett sought to draw the upper-class Filipino students. Such advertising seemed to underline the promise of Pacific trade and future business opportunities between the U.S. and its colonial "protectorate."

Initially, Felipe Buencamino, Jr., managed the publication. Jaime Araneta and Ponciano Reyes edited the English and Spanish sections, respectively. Both editors had studied in prominent universities in California. Ponciano Reyes was the son of the "seditious" playwright, Severino Reyes, who wrote the zarzuela,⁹⁴ "Walang Sugat" ("Unwounded") "an anti-American propaganda vehicle in 1903."⁹⁵ Not surprisingly, the arrival of the students to the U.S. came on the heels of a period of intense journalistic and literary activity and resurgence in the Philippines, marked not only by a growing awareness of new intellectual and social issues and the production of new poetry, "seditious" plays, short stories and novels, but also by a rise in "muckraking" and subversive reporting in newspapers like *El Renacimiento*, *Lipag Kalabaw*, and *Muling Pasilang*—newspapers that "attacked American rule, capitalists...and the carpetbaggers-turned-business-tycoons."⁹⁶ This period was also marked by continuing guerrilla resistance against American forces in the Philippines, and violent suppression of any type of activity by Filipinos deemed nationalistic or rebellious.

With "muckraking" and otherwise critically and emotionally charged publications still present in their minds, the Filipino students at U.C. Berkeley were challenged to represent themselves and

their country in a manner befitting their educated and more or less privileged station in life. Simultaneously, however, some felt a responsibility to express their critical views about their host government and its imperialist relationship with the Philippines. This perspective was aided by members of the Boston-based American Anti-Imperialist League. As Larry A. Lawcock points out, while the first issue of *The Filipino Students' Magazine* “disclaimed participation in politics” the editors admitted “It is almost unavoidable to let race feeling enter when one’s people are unjustly criticized.”⁹⁷

The students who became involved with the *Filipino Students' Magazine* would find their editorial voices constrained by the surveillance of their American hosts in the universities and the American public. One way that the editors got around the dilemma of unofficial censorship was by including sympathetic articles by leading non-Filipino (white) “men of experience and prominence in public life.”⁹⁸ In June, 1905, Erving Winslow, national secretary of the Anti-Imperialist League wrote an article that stated his position on the extent to which the students should be free to express themselves:

The Filipino students who are pursuing their studies in various institutions of learning in the United States need not consider themselves hampered or bound by any debt of gratitude to the officials of an administration which is drawing large revenues by taxation without representation from the Philippines. It is their own countrymen who are really paying the expenses of these young men...Think well, young men...It may be that you yourselves...will yet speak the word which shall shame the United States.⁹⁹

In the March, 1906 issue, Benjamin Ide Wheeler publicly presented his position on the subject in a letter to the editors. He claimed that “While the study of politics as a study of governmental mechanism and usages is highly desirable, I [cannot] believe that supreme attention to politics in the other and more common sense of agitation, is the best field for the Filipino students of today...”¹⁰⁰ In the same issue, William Lloyd Garrison, Secretary of the American Free Trade League and son of the celebrated abolitionist of the same name, contributed an article entitled “The Worst Form of Self-Government Better Than the Best Form of Forced Government,” which advocated for Philippine independence. Of the ten feature essays in the July 1906 issue, four were written by Anglo-Americans, and they were by far the longest pieces in the magazine. James A. LeRoy’s patronizing essay, “Who are the Friends of the Filipinos?” was six pages, and positioned as the first article in the issue. LeRoy’s article sought to identify, among those who called themselves Anti-Imperialists, those who actually had the good of the Filipinos in mind, and furthermore, to urge the educated and elite class to attend to the needs of those Filipinos less fortunate:

I am asking Filipinos that they be not so ready to accept as their true friends those who flatter their pride and who accept Filipino desires as evidence of Filipino achievement; that they shall not believe, without inquiry or analysis on their own part, everything that comes from such sources; and that they shall not be so ready to take up with any scatter-brained project or proposition of some of the ‘cranks’ pure and simple and accept it as if it were something which really had solid backing in American political life...

The great charge that can be thrust in the face of the Filipino aristocracy today—and I mean by “aristocracy” those Filipinos who have education without any considerable amount of property as well as those having both wealth and education—is their lack of sympathy with the uneducated mass of their own countrymen, their lack of effort to

improve the condition of these masses. In what single line of activity today are the Filipinos of social position doing anything of consequence in this work of social improvement. This is a grave reproach to them, but a reproach which I believe they can not fairly answer.¹⁰¹

Thus, the youthful editors and writers of *The Filipino Students' Magazine* found themselves already embroiled between opposing camps on the issues of freedom of speech and Philippine independence during their sojourn in the United States, and asked by both sides to question how they were using their education and privilege.

As LeRoy seemed to suggest, not all Anti-Imperialists had the Filipino's best interests at heart. Jim Zwick, creator of the *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935* and *Sentenaryo/Centennial websites*,¹⁰² wrote that "one of the points upon which there has been the most agreement in studies of the League is that there was little concern felt by American anti-imperialists about the Filipinos and, although both advocated Philippine independence, scant cooperation existed between the movements in the United States and the Philippines." This is based on the League's "claim that its primary goal was the preservation of republican democracy within the United States. 'Much as we abhor the war of 'criminal aggression' in the Philippines, greatly as we regret that the blood of the Filipinos is on American hands, we more deeply resent the betrayal of American institutions at home.'"¹⁰³

The editors and writers of the *Filipino Students' Magazine* had studied English, but as members of the Filipino elite, they also had a thorough knowledge of Spanish language and literature. Thus, the magazine usually contained a "Seccion Castellana" with its own editorial, a section of "Noticias y Comentarios," and various essays and articles. In the July 1906 issue, the Spanish language editorial focused on the symbolic importance of celebrating Jose Rizal's birthday, and the essay in Spanish was on the right to govern independently ("El Derecho Por El Gobierno Independiente") written by David G. Haskins, Jr., Treasurer of the Anti-imperialist League.

Of this generation of Filipino students, Lucila Hosillos writes that their "mastery of Spanish assured [them] the creation of artistic works along Spanish literary traditions; but [their] shrinking audience augured...futility...The writer in English had the advantage of rich traditions and an assured future audience, but hazards lay in his rudimentary knowledge of the language which makes his use of it faltering and awkward."¹⁰⁴

The magazine often featured short pieces about the English language, grammar, and its idiosyncracies. These were sometimes as mundane as making distinctions between *will* and *shall*, or *would* and *should*. However it was not uncommon for a note of irony to appear in some of these pieces. Underlining the shift from colonial Spanish to colonial English, one brief article with questioned if English was not "a Poetical Language." In comparing the scientific description of a "blush" in English with a love letter describing the "burning" passion of the writer by Spanish writer Lope de Vega from the Spanish, the result was humorous:

'And so I sleep,--if sleep it be,--with my arms around you, with my lips whispering your dear name, with the words of your letter burning always before my eyes...' (Lope de Vega)

'A blush is a temporary erythema and calorific effulgence of physiognomy, actiologized by the perceptiveness of the censorium when in a predicament of unequilibrium from a sense of shame, anger or other cause...' (a doctor's description in English)

Although the author did not editorialize much on the difference, the simple juxtaposition highlighted English humorously as a “practical” language, lacking in emotion and sentiment, but well-suited, apparently, to scientific or commercial matters. While brief essays like this presented an ironic or humorous view of writing in English, there was yet no consciousness of the formation of a Filipino literature in the U.S.—only a sense of that initial grappling with the language in order to communicate the Filipino concerns of the day.

Other articles illustrate one of the overarching issues facing Filipinos in both the United States and the Philippines: the problem of “modernity” and “progress.” Often, anxieties about modernity seemed to be projected as a concern for the behavior of the contemporary Filipina. In the first two issues of *The Filipino Students’ Magazine*, modernity was addressed in the form of articles about “Feminism in the Philippines” and the danger of exposure of Filipinas to American suffragettes; it became evident that Filipinos and Filipinas might have differing views on the topic. While M.P. de Veyra stressed that “to be a good mother is the ideal of the Filipino woman,”¹⁰⁵ Genoveva Llamas’ article counters with this observation: “[I] heard a foolish father saying – ‘The women are destined to govern the home and take care of the children, [and] consequently do not require an education...’” This she followed up by pointing out that “a woman has as keen intellect as a man.” She used her exposure to American culture to point out that “one proof of [America’s] rapid progress in civilization is the place given to woman. She has all the advantages of man. This proves to us the mental capacity of woman.”¹⁰⁶

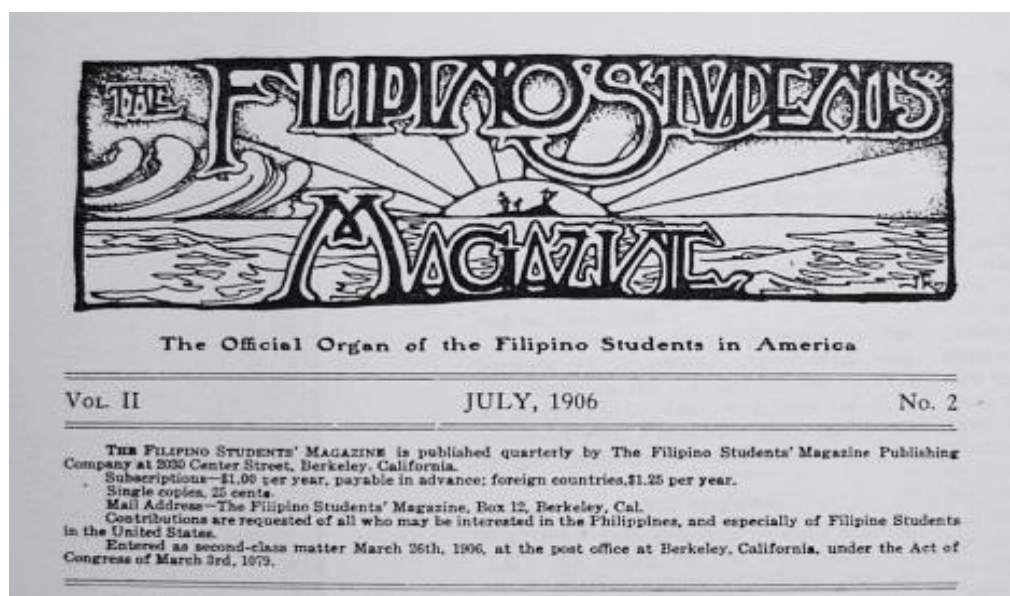


Fig. 6. First page masthead, July 1906 issue.¹⁰⁷

In the July 1906 issue, Cathalena Rovelto’s essay on “The Spirit in the School-Room” uses more conventionally “feminine” language to discuss the proper attitude of a female teacher toward her students. But first she apologizes for her supposed lack of experience, “I have become as a little child in thought, word and deed, and, therefore, I hope I shall be pardoned if I do not attempt to use expressions other than the simplest.”¹⁰⁸

Both Llamas and “Señorita” Rovelto wrote in a manner that suggested a genteel and well-educated background. According to her bio, Rovelto had studied in American schools, and although her father was Filipino, he had married “a New Yorker.”¹⁰⁹ During the 1920s and 30s, women—especially white women—writing for the U.S. Filipino newspapers would often assume a much more populist voice. Issues about the ability of women to take on important roles in society continued to be addressed during the Depression Era when Filipina writers, confined (with a few exceptions) to writing for society columns, were given a limited forum in which to voice their opinions in the Filipino newspapers published on the West Coast.

A report in the same issue of the magazine drew the Filipino students into a fateful event felt throughout the Bay Area: the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.¹¹⁰ Instead of feeling part of the city and community, however, the students felt even more like outsiders:

“The earthquake and fire of San Francisco did not spare our countrymen living in that great city of the Pacific Coast. Their properties and homes were turned to ashes, their business paralyzed, and hunger, with all its terrific attributes, became very familiar to them. The helping hand extended by the government was not for them; they were forgotten, despised and segregated from the people who were especially selected to receive help...It is said that the government sent succor to everybody, no matter what their nationality or color; but the officers seem to have obeyed with hearts and minds full of prejudice and partiality.”¹¹¹

In a paragraph following the earthquake report, sentiments were voiced that would be repeated often throughout the many Filipino periodicals published in the following decades of the Depression era—but used for different ends—the unnamed writer of this paragraph (perhaps the more conservative Vicente Legarda) mentions the 19th of June as the birth date of Jose Rizal. Recalling his life and martyrdom at the hands of Spanish executioners, the writer attempts to steer the cynical reader to what he perceives as more harmonious and thus prosperous ends:

We overthrew the Spaniards, we fought the Americans; but it was the spirit of Rizal that animated us, and now we desire peace, but it is his teachings that soothe us for a quiet life, progress and prosperity.¹¹²

Nevertheless, a letter posted to the editorial staff (then located in Chicago) shows that the Filipinos found it necessary to raise, through private means, the money to help their fellow students who were suffering the effects of the earthquake:

On the day after the great earthquake and when the San Francisco fire had burned more than one-half of the city, we all thought of the ‘paisanos’ who lived in that section of the city which had already been burned. And as we thought of them the thought struck us that we might give them a helping hand. Then Mr. Jaime Araneta proposed to me to call all the boys together and try and raise enough money to send telegrams and cablegrams to all those who might be directly interested in the Filipinos, asking them for relief for those who had been affected by this calamity. We counted up the cost, and a few seconds afterwards collected \$12.35, sent a cablegram to yourself and one to Mr. de Vayra Jr. [sic]. The cablegram read: ‘Insular Government, Manila: Filipinos San Francisco destitute. Send relief. Filipino Magazine, Berkeley.’¹¹³

The group formed a committee to be in charge of distributing funds, and to visit “thirty Filipino refugees” that were reported to be in need.

The articles in the early issues of the magazine seemed to vary in sentiment toward or against immediate independence. Some articles seemed to take a cynical and even embittered stance toward the United States, advocating immediate independence of the Philippines, while other writers seemed to counsel patience. Perhaps the most volatile area of concern (which continued to play out in the 1930s) was that of American representation of Filipinos in the media, both in the United States and in the Philippines; this topic was of course tied to the larger issue of imperialism, the movement to gain Philippine independence from the colonizer, and related issues of racist legislation and labor rights for Filipino and other minority workers. In 1905, the immediate concern of Filipino editors and writers in the pages of *The Filipino Students' Magazine* was often focused on Americans' heavy-handed characterizations and exploitation of Filipino culture in books and exhibits. This concern may have partly been influenced by an editorial published in the subversive periodical, *El Renacimiento* (date), which addressed the problem of the exhibition of Filipinos, under the direction of William Alexander Sutherland, who also happened to supervise the education of Filipino pensionados in the United States:

Mr. W.A. Sutherland, the Superintendent of the Filipinos now receiving their education in the United States, has arrived. Mr. Sutherland has come especially and expressly to arrange for a Philippine exhibit at Jamestown, Va. The idea is certainly very good, as such an exhibit might give the United States a chance to see our industries, our products and their capabilities, but we are most decidedly opposed to Mr. Sutherland's again taking over a group of the Igorrotes. We shall always protest against a recurrence of that exhibition. We [cannot] understand his insane mania for it. What object have the promoters in view of this exhibition, which began by being local in its proposed scope, later became a national affair, and finally an international event?¹¹⁴

Letters in the Benjamin Ide Wheeler collection of the Bancroft library, U.C. Berkeley, suggest that a 1906 editorial in the *Filipino Student's Magazine* was influenced by more personal experience. A letter written in the summer of 1904 mentions the "boy," Felipe [Buencamino, Jr.], who was about to journey from Berkeley to St. Louis for the first time, to attend the Exposition, and meet with the director of the Philippine exhibit.¹¹⁵ He would be part of a large group of pensionados to visit the Exposition. The writer, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, had to make sure that Felipe had enough money for food, board, and pocket money, most of which was sent to his account from the Philippines. Buencamino managed the April 1905 issue of *The Filipino Students' Magazine*,¹¹⁶ and was on staff even when Legarda took over management in the following year.

In July 1906, an unsigned editorial railed against advertisements of "Igorrotes, Head Hunters representative of [all] Filipinos" which created in the writer an "impulse...to tear the paper into thousands of pieces and let the waste basket be its final fate."¹¹⁷ The author's concern was not so much for the Igorots themselves, however, as much as his fear that Filipinos in general would continue to be stereotyped as "wild" and uncivilized, and that this perception would be linked to the Independence question. Whether or not the article was written by Felipe, there was clearly a critical attitude among the editors regarding exhibition of Filipinos after the St. Louis Exposition opened. In an article dated December 4 of the same year, the problem of Filipino exhibitions was addressed again. Referring to an incident in Boston where a Black woman was placed in a cage "representing a wild woman as a Filipino girl caught in the Philippines." Anger was voiced for "this contemptible traffic in human flesh," noting that President Taft compelled "the Philippines to pay for this type of exhibit...especially in Virginia, where the Negro question is

prominent.”¹¹⁸ Clearly, the connection to slavery was not lost on the writer. This legacy of exhibition and equation of Filipinos with “uncivilized” tribes would continue to haunt U.S. Filipino writers and journalists throughout the early 20th century.¹¹⁹

There was a constant turnover of staff for the magazine as students moved on, went to study in other schools, graduated, returned home, or found work elsewhere. Felipe Buencamino left Berkeley to study law at Stanford University.¹²⁰ Those early pro-independence issues of *The Filipino Students' Magazine* would be eclipsed, for a time, by the conservative editorial policies of its later editors, especially in the more conservative *Philippine Review* (which the *The Filipino Students' Magazine* was renamed after the transfer of its editorial base to Chicago), and *The Filipino*,¹²¹ the Washington D.C. based student publication, published and briefly edited by William Alexander Sutherland, the president of the Philippine Exposition Company.

Essays presented in the magazine were not always specifically political. Occasionally the literary imagination was allowed to take flight. “A Pipe Dream,” (which gave its writer’s name only as “The Dreamer,” takes us into the mind of a student who has just successfully completed his graduation thesis, and has time to sit alone in his room with thoughts to himself. In the day’s mail, he receives a newspaper from home; reading the articles, he falls into a meditative mood. Like all the pensionados, he knew that he would eventually return to the Philippines to fulfill his responsibilities, “Thoughtful of its past history and reverently hopeful for its future.” He chooses to muse first about “The Probable Future of the Philippines,” which becomes partly a nostalgic reverie, and part a projection of optimistic dreams about his homeland; he imagines (or dreams) of his return, and is amazed “by the many changes and improvements,” including a “new Rizal Public Library.” He “flies” over the country, stopping in various towns to see how things have changed. One by one, he sees the members of his student cohort as they might be in their future roles, and he mentions them by name:

My next flight was to Benguet to visit the popular sanitarium, owned by Pacifico Laygo, (island commissioner on sanitation), and managed by Miss Honoria Acosta, assisted by an able staff including Miss Clemente Asturias and Miss Eleanor de Leon as nurses, and P.C. Guazon, A.G. Sison, and L.P. Gomez as successful physicians. Before leaving the province I found that the opportunities for travel were being wonderfully improved by the earnest endeavors of the Reyes and Roco engineering concern...

I stopped long enough in Cebu to congratulate Andres M. Aguilar, Geo. Bocobo, Mariano Osmena, and Alijandro Santos, who held responsible positions in connection with foreign commercial houses.¹²²

Commenting on an imagined celebration of the returning of the chief of the Philippine Navy, he dwells happily on the bright future, and waxes poetic:

It was the dream of my life and as I gazed thoughtfully toward the eastern sky I repeated audibly these lines:

‘Build thee more stately mansions,
O my soul
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more

Vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's un-
Resting sea!

And in this gem of poetry I trust I uttered the sentiment of every Filipino student in America.”¹²³

While “The dreamer’s” dream seems on one hand to urge the young student towards greater endeavors, it is also clearly the dream of a member of the elite class, with its focus on “stately mansions” and temples, nothing like the thatched roofs and huts of the Philippines’ “low-vaulted past.” A “dome more vast” than heaven sounds a note of almost imperial hubris. He dreams that the Filipinos might, through the creation of such Westernized architectural wonders, finally outgrow its previous slow-paced life, before modernity, and take its place among the modern independent nations.

Other Filipinos had dreams too, though perhaps fueled by more humble desires. In 1906, Hawaiian labor contractors arrived in the Philippines and began recruiting workers to work for the Hawaiian plantations. By 1912, Filipinos had already begun to migrate to the U.S. on an average of 2000 a year to find employment working in the agricultural fields and fisheries of the west.¹²⁴ This group consisted primarily of working and middle class Filipinos. In time this constituency would shift the political focus of Filipinos in the West, from concern with Philippine independence, to often intense involvement with local labor and racial issues. Along with these changes would come increasing awareness that the small, tightly knit communities of Filipino students were breaking up, and dispersing to other areas of the United States. Some of the students—those without any contract to return to the Philippines—would travel north to work in the Alaskan fishing industry, or in the agricultural fields of the West.



Fig. 7, The Filipino Student (front cover)¹²⁵

In 1912, *The Filipino Student* appeared in Berkeley, California, under the editorship of Acting Editor Canuto O. Borromeo and Tomas Confesor, Acting Manager. Confesor's father, Julian, had been executed as an "insurrecto" by American forces.¹²⁶ The plural possessive pronoun in the title was changed to the singular, and it was now a monthly, rather than a quarterly. The editorial presented its editors' intent to cover subject matter over a "wide range –historical, scientific, economic, literary, and so on." The articles would be written mostly by Filipino students; in fact, its first issue featured only one article by a non-Filipino, "Sketches of Native Life in the Sulu Archipelago," by Professor David P. Barrows, who had formerly been the Director of Education in the Philippines, but at the time of publication was head of the Political Science Department at UC Berkeley. The editors were taking note of the changing demographics:

Again, we believe there is a real call for a publication of this kind. Year after year, the number of Filipino students coming to this country increases. They are scattered all over the various states. At present, there is no means by which they could interchange ideas. There is no channel through which a student conceiving a useful plan or laudable project for the interest and welfare of his fellow students could be disseminated among the rest and be worked out to realization. In other words, there is no common organ that takes care of student interests and work. This will, therefore, be the official organ of the Filipino students in America. It will work for their common good.¹²⁷

Thus, the editors saw the magazine as having a very important role. They cited the need to have a journal that could "serve as a unifying force" for those students: "We sincerely wish to see that all Filipino students here be kept in close touch with one another. We need to know and understand each other. Our community of interests demands so."¹²⁸ Like the editors of the earliest issues of the *Filipino Student's Magazine*, these editors felt that "it would be unwise and unpatriotic policy to be mute and silent...we cannot tolerate misrepresentations and falsehoods when spoken against the Philippines...We are not going to enter into [discussion] of partisan politics but at the same time we do not want to deprive ourselves of expression on topics political."¹²⁹

In issue No. 3, Vol. 2,¹³⁰ the editorial continues the concerns of earlier issues with comments about American "misrepresentation" of Filipinos, and even more stridently, "putrid Americanism," giving as example, the lyrics of a song sung by the Order of the Carabao, a military fraternity composed of American veterans of the Filipino-American war, headquartered in Washington, D.C.:

Damn, damn, damn the insurrectos,
 Cross eyed Kakiack ladrones;
 Underneath the starry flag,
 Civilize 'em with a Krag,
 And return us to our own beloved
 Homes¹³¹

The Filipino editors and writers associated racist and stereotyped representations of Filipinos with "Americanism," or American exceptionalism, which later, during the Great Depression on American shores, would transform into American "nativism," another reason to reject the Filipino "nationals."

In the March 1913 issue, a local newspaper, the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, is criticized by the editors for reproducing “a picture of a savage [Filipino] person wearing a feathered headgear...sitting in front of a Victor talking machine” with the caption, “Canned music [was] still regarded with suspicion by the natives.” The author refers to the *Gazette*'s logic as a “rash and impudent misrepresentation of facts and in so doing the ‘*Gazette*’ had bowed down so low as to commit an infamy against the Filipinos.”¹³²

Maximo Kalaw, editor of one of the early Filipino periodicals published in English in the Philippines (*The College Folio*), and manager of the New York City based journal, *The Filipino People*, gave a stirring speech at the Lake Mohonk conference in 1912.¹³³ His entire speech advocating for Philippine independence is reproduced in the March 1913 issue. Entitled “The Young Filipinos and the Independence of the Philippines,” Kalaw’s speech was of special interest to the young editors of the *Filipino Student*, and his words must surely have stirred them to continue to advocate for Independence:

...Such was the fierceness and desperation of the struggle of the Filipinos for the recognition of their independence, and such is still their determination in fighting for the same cause with the implements of peace. Now, can you expect the young Filipinos of today to lose that spirit which animated their fathers and elder brothers in that bloody struggle which still animate them in their present work for the freedom of their country? Is the independence battle cry to be drowned and forgotten amidst the influx of American culture and civilization?¹³⁴

The 1912 and 1913 issues of *The Filipino Student* were even more concerned than the 1906 issue with the threats of “modernity” as a problem of Americanization. This paralleled similar concerns voiced in Philippine newspapers about the introduction of modern, American culture into Filipino society. The Philippine graphic journal, *Lipag Kalabaw*, satirized urban Filipino students copying the dress and mannerisms of Americans, and Filipino country bumpkins reacting in amazement to the introduction of modern inventions, such as the telephone.

While in *The Filipino Student* consciousness of modernity under American surveillance manifested in more acceptable articles about scientific inventions and modernization—such as Valentin Confesor’s article, “Hydro-electric Development and the Philippines’ Agriculture”¹³⁵—it was also expressed in an ambivalent concern about how American modernity was changing the social and community values of Filipinos in the U.S. In Vol. 1, No. 1, the editors acknowledged that “the movement for woman suffrage [had] been sowed in the Philippines,” however, in a rather paternal gesture, they took it upon themselves to warn Filipinas “not to take example from their English and American elder sisters in breaking windows, mobbing public officials and disturbing meetings in order to get a hearing for their cause”¹³⁶ Although Filipino women were not as socially constrained as the women in other Asian or Southeast Asian countries, modern American trends were not wholeheartedly assimilated, but rather approached with some caution; at this time, Filipinos of the upper class (most of whom were tri-lingual, speaking Spanish, Tagalog and English) still subscribed to traditional roles for women derived from Spanish culture.

Vol. 1, No. 1 contained photographs of typical streets in Berkeley. There is “A University Campus Scene,” And a sunset view over Berkeley.



Fig. 8 “University Campus Scene”¹³⁷

The people are few or distant in the photographs, which are so calmly composed that they look like stage sets for a play. It’s difficult to imagine Filipinos walking the streets. The photographs seem emblematic of the marginalization of the students, who self-admittedly seemed very conscious of the necessity of applying themselves in this foreign country, and perhaps a bit intimidated:

We are living side by side with inventors, great scientists, and noted scholars. We witness the living factors of free government in full sway and turning out results worthy of study. Vast works and great tasks are exhibited all the time. We are assured to be inspired by them, and whatever inspiration we may get from them we shall try to translate them into words and thus communicate the same to our brothers and sisters at home. We have come over to study and learn something. If out of the multifarious happenings and movements of things that we see every day we should fail to cull out some lessons and profitable experiences, we would defeat our foremost purpose of coming over here—education and training.¹³⁸

By the 1930s, columns such as “I Cover Chinatown” in the *Philippine Advocate* show that Filipinos had finally claimed a place of their own in the U.S., but it was not in the tree-lined, manicured neighborhoods of places like North Berkeley. Rather, they found their neighborhoods and communities in the segregated and sometimes dangerous streets of the Chinatowns and Manilatowns of the West.

Attention was turned to the influx of Filipinos migrating to the United States for school or jobs. It was noted that “several hundred Filipinos” had arrived from Hawaii to work under contract in Alaska in the salmon canneries, and that most of them had come from laboring in the Hawaiian sugar plantations.¹³⁹ With perhaps not a little pride of class and educational privilege, the pensionado writers warned workers to “Beware of ‘modern evils!...Unless a student is well prepared and quite advanced in his academic training he would be handicapped here in the

States, and temptation is sure to grapple him and dissipation is his attainment.”¹⁴⁰ Means of survival were discussed for self-supporting students, and potential “dissatisfaction” with America was mentioned, due to racism (“sometimes one is not welcome unless his skin is white”), as well as the high cost of education and lodging.¹⁴¹ Thus, in these later issues of *The Filipino Student*, the earlier days of tutelage and benevolent surveillance are reconnoitered with a slightly more jaundiced eye.

In the three issues of the *Filipino Students’ Magazine* that I read, there were few if any articles devoted to literary matters, such as book reviews, at this time. The occasional humor articles on the “idiosyncracies” of English grammar made it evident that the pensionado writers still considered themselves students of English; but while much of their reportage and essays were in English, they were not yet expert enough to discourse on literature and writing in the new language. Furthermore, non-Filipino writers were given the most column space in the magazine for their essays. In Volume II, No. 2, non-Filipinos (three white authors, one Japanese) were given fifteen pages (two columns each) for essays. Filipinos were given twelve pages, three of which were editorial. Five pages of the magazine were written in Spanish (one page of which was written by one of the white American authors). Inclusion of white authors most likely arose as a gesture of reciprocity to those who helped subsidize the magazine, but in most cases their words were also utilized to support the cause of Philippine independence, and in some cases to defend the Filipino writers’ right to voice their opinions. Thirty pages were devoted to essays of varying size, and three pages to editorial. In other words, persuasive prose had priority over reportage; opinionated and persuasive writing would continue to have an edge in the U.S. Filipino periodicals of the 1920s-30s, in terms of the sheer number of opinion pieces, as well as the intensity of their rhetoric.

In contrast the three issues of *The Filipino Student* that were available to me (published in 1912 and continuing publication until 1914) reveal that Filipino student writers dominated the content of the magazine; only one non-Filipino, David P. Barrows, contributed one article of approximately three pages (out of twenty-four), on the topic of “Native Life in the Sulu Archipelago,” which actually focused primarily on the native *vinta*, or boat, and boat-building. All articles were in English. I was unable to ascertain if *The Filipino Student* received funding from the Anti-Imperialist’s League; however, an appeal to the reader for “financial support” and “your personal help” presented on page 1 of the first issue—along with the obvious lack of articles by League members—suggests that the League did not subsidize the periodical. Editorials and other articles in the issue promote the importance of building up and modernizing industry in the Philippines, while the editors and writers continued to support and argue for Philippine independence.

From the 1910s through the 1920s, Filipinos of the working class in the Philippines were often victims of the feudal tenant farmer system—a situation made worse for the poor farmer in the Philippines by the American introduction of large-scale farming and new trade policies. They now traveled to the U.S. to seek employment in order to supplement the family income at home, or to benefit from both learning and prestige afforded by an American education. Rick Bonus notes that, due to recruitment by the Hawaii Sugar Planters’ Association (HSPA), the numbers of Filipino farmworkers in Hawaii increased “from 15 in 1906 to a peak of 44,000 in the 1920s...” however, after 1926, recruitment in the Philippines by the HSPA ended. The number of Filipinos on the U.S. mainland in 1920 was 26,634, and by 1930 it had increased to 108,260.¹⁴² These migrants had often a spotty American education; some were illiterate; they were the most

vulnerable to American racism and exploitation of contract workers. However, these Filipinos were not always naïve about labor exploitation: Larry A. Lawcock reports that the “first known Filipino strike in America occurred aboard the U.S. Cablesip Burnside in August 1909.”¹⁴³ With little money to support the family back home, the Filipino workers were the most likely to remain in the United States. From this group would come a new wave of Filipino editors and publishers of non-student newspapers and magazines on the West Coast.

In the pensionado periodicals, the tradition of advocacy was consciously emulated, and applied to the problems the young Filipino writers and editors encountered in the United States, especially the ongoing question of Philippine independence, unofficial censorship, and racist stereotyping of Filipinos as “savages.” In addition, they tackled issues of modernity—especially that shaped by American culture—often reflected in the attitude of Filipino men toward the behavior of modern Filipino women. Youthful, educated, and for the most part privileged, they had yet to turn their writing to issues concerning the working-class Filipino.

¹ Salvador P. Lopez, *Literature and Society: essays on life and letters*, (Manila: Philippine Book Guild, 1940), 183.

² Dominador Buhain, *A History of Publishing in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Rex Book Store, Inc. 1998), 19-20.

³ Bienvenido Lumbera, *Tagalog Poetry 1570-1898, Tradition and Influences in its Development*, (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1986), 125.

⁴ This is Lumbera’s example of a “political” stanza.

⁵ Lumbera, *Tagalog Poetry*, 139-40.

⁶ Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement 1880-1895*, (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila, 1997), 106.

⁷ Lumbera, *Tagalog Poetry*, 144.

⁸ Lumbera, *Tagalog Poetry*, 143.

⁹ Jose Rizal was the author of the subversive novels *El Filibustero*, and *Noli me Tangere*, which were critical of the Spanish frailocracy and colonial government in the Philippines; he was executed for his purported revolutionary activity against the Spanish colonial government. In fact, he was relatively conservative reformist, advocating for Filipinos to have full citizenship status under Spain. The anniversary of his death, December 30, has often been commemorated as “Rizal Day” by Filipinos in the U.S.

¹⁰ There exist seven volumes of one hundred sixty issues of *La Solidaridad*; the Library of Congress holds all seven volumes, U.C. Berkeley has Vols. I and II),

¹¹ *La Solidaridad III, 1890*, trans. Guadalupe Forés-Ganzon, (Quezon City, University of the Philippines, 1973), iii.

¹² *La Solidaridad III, 1891*, 14.

¹³ *La Solidaridad II, 1890*, 106.

¹⁴ Lopez, *Literature and Society*, 186.

¹⁵ Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 173-4.

¹⁶ In 1900, Henry Hooker Van Meter, who did a study of the formation of the Masonry in the Philippines, writes: “As the President of the Republic of Mexico is the supreme head of the Masonic order in Mexico, who were the leaders of the reformers in the Philippines—Free Masons—foremost among them being the renowned Dr. Rizal, hero, patriot, and martyr, who pleaded most bravely for his people till he fell victim to the fury and treachery of the friars.” *The Truth About the Philippines, from Official Records and Authentic Sources*, (Chicago: Liberty League, 1900), 53.

¹⁷ Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 178.

¹⁸ “Nilad” translates to: “indigo” plant. Perhaps also related to “nilay” or contemplation/meditation. Schumacher (1997), 178.

¹⁹ *La Solidaridad. Vol III, 1890*, iii.

²⁰ Buhain, *History of Publishing*, 22.

²¹ Buhain, *History of Publishing*, 23.

²² Lopez, *Literature and Society*, 186.

²³ Noel V. Teodoro, “Radical Philippine Literature,” in *Nationalist Literature: A Centennial Forum*, Elmer A.

- Ordonez, ed. (Manila: University of the Philippines Press and PANULAT/Philippine Writers Academy, 1996), 54, 55.
- ²⁴ Noel V. Teodoro, "Radical Philippine Literature," 55.
- ²⁵ Lucila V. Hosillos, *Philippine-American Literary Relations 1898-1941*, (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1969), 35.
- ²⁶ Pio Valenzuela, "Memoirs of 'Ang Kalayann'," in *The Filipino Press and Media, Democracy and Development*, ed. Luis V. Teodoro and Melinda Q. De Jesus, (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2001), 39.
- ²⁷ At the time of this writing, Luis V. Teodoro was Chair of the Journalism Department of the College of Mass Communication (Philippines), and co-editor of *The Filipino Press and Media, Democracy and Development*.
- ²⁸ Luis V. Teodoro, "The Philippine Press: Between Two Traditions (1998)." *The Filipino Press and Media, Democracy and Development*, (2001), 32.
- ²⁹ Noel V. Teodoro, "Radical Philippine Literature," 54.
- ³⁰ Gerald Sussman, "Transnational Communications and the Dependent-Integrated State," *The Journal of Communication* 45, no. 4, (1995): 96-97.
- ³¹ Hosillos, *Philippine-American*, 33.
- ³² Teodoro, "Radical Philippine Literature," 75.
- ³³ Victor Barranco, "The Rise and Fall of *El Renacimiento*" in *The Filipino Press and Media, Democracy and Development*, ed. Luis V. Teodoro and Melinda Q. DeJesus, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2001), 64.
- ³⁴ Barranco, "The Rise and Fall," 65.
- ³⁵ McCoy and Roces, editors of *Philippine Cartoons: Political Caricature of the American Era 1900-1941*, described Worcester as "a blunt man whose incomplete scientific training inspired a confident racism" (1985), 174.
- ³⁶ Teodoro Kalaw, "The 'El Renacimiento' Libel Suit (1950), in *The Filipino Press and Media, Democracy and Development*, ed. Luis V. Teodoro and Melinda Q. DeJesus, (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2001), 56.
- ³⁷ Teodoro Kalaw, "'El Renacimiento' Libel Suit," 53.
- ³⁸ Teodoro Kalaw, "'El Renacimiento' Libel Suit," 56.
- ³⁹ Salvador P. Lopez, qtd. in Alegre, Edilberto N. and Doreen G. Fernandez. *Writers & Their Milieu: An Oral History of First Generation Writers in English. Part I*. (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1984), 157.
- ⁴⁰ Edilberto N. Alegre and Doreen G. Fernandez, *Writers & Their Milieu: An Oral History of First Generation Writers in English Part I*, (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1984), 161.
- ⁴¹ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 51.
- ⁴² See Resil B. Mojares, *Waiting for Mariang Makiling: Essays in Philippine Cultural History*, (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press), 258.
- ⁴³ Virgilio S. Almario. "Art and Politics in the Balagtasan," in *Maganda Magazine*, 17, (January 19, 2004): 55-57.
- ⁴⁴ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 16.
- ⁴⁵ Ruth Elynia S. Mabanglo, "Balagtasan: The Tradition of Debating in Verse," University of Hawaii at Manoa. <http://www.hawaii.edu/filipino/BalagtasanByRuth.html> (Feb. 28, 2004).
- ⁴⁶ Sedition and Brigandage Acts.
- ⁴⁷ F. Theo Rogers, "Looking Back at 50 Years of Philippine Journalism," in *The Filipino Press and Media, Democracy and Development*, ed. Luis V. Teodoro and Melinda Q. DeJesus (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2001), 50, 51.
- ⁴⁸ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 237.
- ⁴⁹ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I* (1984), 205.
- ⁵⁰ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I* (1984), 132.
- ⁵¹ Rogers, "Looking Back at 50 Years," 47.
- ⁵² Princess Orig, Kayumanggi vs. Maputi: 100 Years of America's White Aesthetics in Philippine Literature," in *Mixed Blessing: The Impact of the American Colonial Experience on Politics and Society in the Philippines*. Ed. Hazel M. McFerson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press: 2002), 111.
- ⁵³ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 146.
- ⁵⁴ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 74.
- ⁵⁵ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 299.
- ⁵⁶ Jose Garcia Villa, "The Rise of the Short Story in the Philippines." *Philippine-American News Digest* 1, no. 5 (1940): 20.

- ⁵⁷ Jose Garcia Villa, "The Fence," in *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940*, ed. Leopoldo Y. Yabes (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1975), 44.
- ⁵⁸ Bienvenido Lumbera, *Revaluation: essays on Philippine literature, cinema & popular culture*, (Manila: Index, 1984), 43.
- ⁵⁹ Serialized novels were never featured in any of the newspapers in this study. I suspect this is because of the nature of migratory life for the Filipino worker in the western U.S., its limitations on time and money, as well as the influence of Popular Front culture during the 1930s.
- ⁶⁰ Lumbera, *Revaluation*, 46, 47.
- ⁶¹ Yabes in 1975 was listed as "professor of English and Comparative Literature and of Philippine Literature and Institutions and holder of the U.P. Endowment Foundation professorial chair in literature, college of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines" in *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940*, ed. Leopoldo Y. Yabes, (1975), 545.
- ⁶² *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940*, xviii.
- ⁶³ *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940*, 175.
- ⁶⁴ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 131.
- ⁶⁵ Qtd. in Lucila V. Hosillos, (1969), 54.
- ⁶⁶ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, (123-4)
- ⁶⁷ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu II*, 14
- ⁶⁸ Hosillos, *Philippine-American*, 73
- ⁶⁹ Hosillos, *Philippine-American*, 65
- ⁷⁰ Epifanio E. San Juan, Jr., *Reading the West/Writing the East: Studies in Comparative Literature and Culture*. American University Studies, Series III, Comparative Literature, v.44. (New York: Peter Lang. 1992), 34.
- ⁷¹ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 284.
- ⁷² Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 272.
- ⁷³ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 315.
- ⁷⁴ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 124.
- ⁷⁵ Alegre, *Writers & Their Milieu I*, 148.
- ⁷⁶ Lipag-Kalabaw 2, no. 58, 1908: front cover.
- ⁷⁷ Felipe Agoncillo and Sixto Lopez actually fled the Philippines to avoid arrest. Clemencia Lopez joined them later. Jim Zwick, "The Anti-Imperialist League and the Origins of Filipino-American Oppositional Solidarity. Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935, Syracuse University." [Wysiwyg://252/http://home.ican.net/~fjzwick/ail/zwick98a.html](http://252/http://home.ican.net/~fjzwick/ail/zwick98a.html) (no longer available).
- ⁷⁸ Both Sixto and Clemencia Lopez knew and actively supported Jose Rizal, and the 1896 Revolution against Spain. When the U.S. colonized the Philippines, Sixto refused to pledge his allegiance, and instead went into exile, and did not return to his homeland until its independence was declared in 1946.
- ⁷⁹ Canning Eyot, *The Story of the Lopez Family: a page from the history of the war in the Philippines*, (Boston: James H. West Company, 1904).
- ⁸⁰ *The Story of the Lopez Family*, ed. Canning Eyot (Boston: James H. West, Co., 1904), frontispiece.
- ⁸¹ Clemencia Lopez, "Women of the Philippines," *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*, ed. Jim Zwick, [wysiwyg://221/http://home.ican.net/~fjzwick/ailtexts/clopez02.html](http://221/http://home.ican.net/~fjzwick/ailtexts/clopez02.html) (no longer available).
- ⁸² Clemencia Lopez, "Women of the Philippines."
- ⁸³ The number of students chosen is given by Lawcock (1975), 92.
- ⁸⁴ Michael Cullinane distinguishes between "Municipal elites" (those who hold high political offices in local municipalities); "Provincial elites" (large landholders who have attained wealth, status, and power over the municipal elites, and who have influence over the larger society (Sixto and Clemencia Lopez were members of this group); "Urban elites" (those hailing from the largest cities in the Philippines—often from creole families in Manila, or "commercially-oriented Chinese mestizo communities of the late 18th century...transformed in the 19th century into multi-ethnic urban elites"—with influence, property and large land-holdings in both the cities and provincial areas. Felipe Buencamino and Vicente Legarda are examples from this group); and "Urban middle sectors" (Filipinos from a "variety of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds that included long-time urban dwellers (from every ethnic community) and in-migrant Filipinos whose origins ranged from the provincial and municipal elites to the peasantry." Michael Cullinane, "Ilustrado Politics: the Response of the Filipino Educated Elite to American Colonial Rule, 1898-1907," Ph.D. Dissertation, (University of Michigan, 1989), 21-26.
- ⁸⁵ Emily Porcincula Lawsin, "Pensionados, Paisanos, & Pinoys": An Analysis of the Filipino Student Bulletin, 1922-1939, in *Filipino American National Historical Society 4*, (Seattle: FANHS, 1996): 33.

- ⁸⁶ Larry Arden Lawcock, "Filipino Students in the United States and the Philippine Independence Movement: 1900-1935." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1975), 92.
- ⁸⁷ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 106.
- ⁸⁸ *The Filipino Students' Magazine*, (hereafter cited as *FSM*), 2, no. 2, July 1906: front cover.
- ⁸⁹ "Important Notice." *FSM* 2, no. 2, July 1906, x.
- ⁹⁰ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 108.
- ⁹¹ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 109-110.
- ⁹² Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 115. Legarda at the time of his editorship appears to have been a businessman, and it's not clear from Lawcock's report if he was also a student.
- ⁹³ *FSM* 2, no. 2 (July 1906): xv.
- ⁹⁴ Zarzuela: a Spanish satiric dramatic form introduced to the Philippines in the late 19th century, used primarily in subversive plays during the early American occupation.
- ⁹⁵ Lawcock "Filipino Students," 108.
- ⁹⁶ Hosillos, *Philippine-American*, 33.
- ⁹⁷ Lawcock "Filipino Students," 110.
- ⁹⁸ *FSM* 2, no.1, March 1906): 6.
- ⁹⁹ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 111.
- ¹⁰⁰ Letter from Benjamin Ide Wheeler, *FSM* 2, no. 1, (Mar. 1906): 29.
- ¹⁰¹ James A. LeRoy. "Who Are the Friends of the Filipinos?" *FSM* 2, no. 2, (July, 1906): 7.
- ¹⁰² Jim Zwick was also editor of *Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire: Anti-Imperialist Writings on the Philippine-American War* (1992) and had published numerous articles about Twain's anti-imperialist writings. His websites, Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935 and Sentenaryo/Centennial, are no longer available, but they provided impetus and inspiration for this chapter, especially the paragraphs on the Lopez family. More information about Jim Zwick can be found at <http://www.twainweb.net/jimzwick.html>
- ¹⁰³ Jim Zwick, "The Anti-Imperialist League and the Origins of Filipino-American Oppositional Solidarity," *Amerasia Journal* 24 (Summer 1998), 1.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hosillos, *Philippine-American*, 41.
- ¹⁰⁵ *FSM* 2, no. 3 (Oct. 1906), 15.
- ¹⁰⁶ *FSM* 2, no. 1: 19.
- ¹⁰⁷ *FSM* 2, no. 2: 1.
- ¹⁰⁸ *FSM* 2, no. 2: 23.
- ¹⁰⁹ *FSM* 2, no. 2: 24.
- ¹¹⁰ Ironically, the man who took command of San Francisco immediately after the earthquake was Brigadier General Frederick Funston, who strongly promoted American expansionism, and led a number of American attacks against Filipino "insurgents" during the Philippine-American war. His forces captured the President of the outlawed Philippine Republic and leader of its military, General Emilio Aguinaldo.
- ¹¹¹ *FSM* 2, no.2: front page.
- ¹¹² *FSM* 2, no. 2: 2
- ¹¹³ *FSM* 2, no. 2: 32-33.
- ¹¹⁴ "The Filipinos Do Not Want the 'Wild Tribes' Exhibited" *El Renacimiento*, Jan 3, 1907, in *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*, ed. Jim Zwick, (Syracuse University, 1995-1998), <http://home.ican.net/~fjzwick/vof/er010307.html> (no longer accessible).
- ¹¹⁵ Larry A. Lawcock details the 1904 trip by train on which pensionados were taken to see the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in August of that year. An article in *The Boston Herald* caused Harvard student Jose P. Katigbak to send an indignant letter to the Bureau of Insular affairs complaining because the students apparently were slated to be part of the exhibit, along with Filipino indigenous tribal groups. Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 98.
- ¹¹⁶ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 109.
- ¹¹⁷ *FSM* 2, no. 2 (July, 1906): 2.
- ¹¹⁸ *FSM* 2, no. 4 (Dec.1906): 10-11).
- ¹¹⁹ For a discussion of Filipinos' shared history of empire and racial violence with other subjugated peoples, see Nerissa S. Balce, "Filipino Bodies, Lynching, and the Language of Empire," in *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, ed. Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr., edgardo V. Gutierrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 43-60.
- ¹²⁰ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 114.
- ¹²¹ The first issue of *The Filipino* was published in January, 1906. Vicente Legarda was a contributor.

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- ¹²² *FSM* 2, no. 1 (July 1906): 13.
- ¹²³ *FSM* 2, no. 1 (July 1906): 14.
- ¹²⁴ Grace Mateo, "Filipino Migrant Workers in California," in *The Philippine History Site* 1999-2001, <http://opmanong.ssc.hawaii.edu/filipino/cali.html>. Accessed May 28, 2010.
- ¹²⁵ *The Filipino Student* (hereafter cited as *FS*) 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 1.
- ¹²⁶ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 136.
- ¹²⁷ "Editorial," *FS*, 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 15
- ¹²⁸ "Editorial." *FS*, 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 15
- ¹²⁹ "Editorial." *FS*, 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 15
- ¹³⁰ *FS* appears to have been published from 1912 to 1914, five issues per year. The listing for the magazine at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library notes that it "Ceased with v. 2, no. 4 (Jan. 1914)."
- ¹³¹ *FS* 3, no. 2 (July, 1913): 10
- ¹³² *FS* 1, no. 4 (Mar. 1913): 19.
- ¹³³ Lawcock "Filipino Students," 139.
- ¹³⁴ *FS* 1, no. 4 (Mar. 1913): 6.
- ¹³⁵ *FS* 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 11-13.
- ¹³⁶ *FS* 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 16.
- ¹³⁷ *FS* 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 1
- ¹³⁸ *FS* 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 16-19.
- ¹³⁹ *FS* 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1912): 14.
- ¹⁴⁰ *FS* 1, no. 4, (Mar. 1913): 11.
- ¹⁴¹ *FS* 1, no. 4, (Mar. 1913): 11.
- ¹⁴² Rick Bonus, *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity & the Cultural Politics of Space*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 36-37.
- ¹⁴³ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 476.

Chapter II

The Northwest: Victorio Acosta Velasco and the *Philippine Advocate*

Many Filipinos entering the United States as early as the 1910s arrived at the Port of Seattle. As with the *Filipino Students' Magazine* in Berkeley, the earliest Northwest Filipino newspaper—the *Philippine Seattle Colonist*—got its start in an educational institution: the University of Washington (U.W.) Seattle campus. However, Filipino journalism and writing in Seattle and Washington State took on some of the rough-and-tumble attitude of groups like the radical I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World, or “Wobblies”), and the Northwest labor movement. Filipino students at UW were also influenced by the university’s emphasis on sociology and its journalistic approach to academic writing.¹ Articles, featured editorials, essays, and poetry published in the newspaper reflected the need to tackle labor issues and negotiate the multicultural tensions during that period and within that geographical area.

The *Philippine Advocate*, edited by Victorio Acosta Velasco, was one of several U.S. Filipino newspapers published in Seattle. Neither radical, nor conservative—but somewhere in between—the *Advocate* sought a sometimes tenuous balance between cosmopolitan internationalism, and local advocacy for the Filipino worker, while reporting news that concerned Filipinos all over the northwest. In the May 1935 issue, its header announced, “Published in the Interest of Filipino American Goodwill.” Maintaining this social balance may have been a complicated task, especially since the publisher, Pio de Cano, was a powerful labor contractor. As editor, Velasco was an important but sometimes ambivalent figure in the development of the Filipino-American writing community in the Northwest; an aspiring poet, he clearly used the newspaper as a platform for presenting the work of his peers, as well as himself; he published Filipino poetry in the *Advocate* on a regular basis. Velasco worked hard to give Filipinos in the Northwest a sense of community. As he wrote for the first anniversary edition of the Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc., “In the early 30s, Filipino organizations in Seattle and vicinity had grown up like mushrooms. To foster cooperation among all these Filipino organizations in the interest of the whole Filipino population was the next natural and logical desideratum.”² He also provided a venue for sociological and cultural essays and debate among writers about Filipino issues in the Northwest. He claimed to maintain high standards of objectivity in his newspaper, but his subjective opinions were often apparent in his editorials. Nevertheless, he often printed essays and op-eds by writers with whom he disagreed vehemently. The August 1935 issue contained a boxed quote by Voltaire in the masthead: “I do not agree with you, but will defend with my life your right to make the statement.”

Entering the Fray: Multicultural Ferment and Labor Activism in the Northwest

Vancouver and Seattle were important ports of arrival for most Filipinos entering the United States during the early twentieth century. But the area had witnessed increasing immigration both externally (Asians) and internally (African Americans). Quintard Taylor notes that the period between the Spanish-American War and World War I provided African-Americans with an opportunity for employment.³ But this changed with the loss of shipbuilding contracts after the War, the onset of the Great Depression, and the influx of new Asian immigrants. The American Federation of Musicians, Local 18257, an African-American union, included some Filipinos. The

Chinese arriving in the area during the 1860s felt the first full brunt of Asian racism and legislation with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited them from immigrating to the U.S., and was in force to varying degrees until 1943.⁴ The Japanese arrived during the 1890s, and had a significant presence in the City and outlying areas; as early as 1910, they far outnumbered all nonwhite minorities in Seattle, even through WWII.⁵

From 1906 through the 1920s, Filipino workers had been traveling to Hawaii as contract workers in the sugarcane and pineapple fields. Their numbers increased after the armistice of World War I. By 1910, a surge of economic growth in the United States from its colonial ventures spurred the development of new industry and exportation. Simultaneously, labor gained the power to organize on a larger scale. This was fueled by the influx of migrant workers and immigrants. In 1932, the demand for pineapple dropped in the U.S., so the workers began to arrive in larger numbers to the mainland U.S. and the Northwest.⁶ Labor activism in the Northwest had a huge impact on the lives of the Filipino writers in the northwest, lured by the rumors of jobs, and the promises of Filipino contractors; the hardship of cannery or agricultural work, as well as the racism they experienced, became recurring themes.

By 1910, Seattle and the Northwest had a marked reputation for radical activism. The earliest Filipinos to arrive in the Northwest often worked in the lumber industry, and witnessed the rise of the I.W.W. (or “Wobblies”) in Seattle and in the rural areas. Generally against American participation in the World War, Wobblies were often viewed as unpatriotic, or even as traitors.⁷ Because they were more welcoming to non-whites, they provided an alternative to the closed unions. Shortly after the World War I armistice, the Seattle shipyard unions authorized a strike in 1916 that eventually led to the nationwide General Strike of 1919 to establish trade union collective bargaining for coal miners, railroad workers, iron and steel workers—the trades most crucial to the health of industry in the United States. It was the largest general strike in U.S. history, continuing until 1922. From the beginning, there was a sense of a more radical and potentially revolutionary feeling among the workers in the Northwest.

Many young U.S. Filipino writers became involved in union organizing; some led a divided life, migrating between intellectual studies in a college or university, where they paid for lodging by janitorial work and dishwashing, and the life of the laborer—hard, dirty work in agriculture or in canneries), under unsafe conditions. Despite early exposure to American colonial culture in the Philippines, the passage of Filipinos to the American northwest marked a process of disruption from family and community, and later, disillusionment with American opportunities.

Victorio Acosta Velasco arrived in Seattle’s Chinatown in the spring of 1924. His background was more or less representative of that for many U.S. Filipino editors and newspaper writers of that period: During his youth in the Philippines, he had been exposed to “the poems of Longfellow, Bryan, Emerson, Lowell, and other 19th century American poets” in high school, and aspired to become a writer. He read the *Philippines Free Press*, and one day submitted a poem to the *Free Press* that was later published. He studied in the School of Journalism in the National University, and he also worked as a cub reporter on a number of prominent Manila newspapers. In the United States, he intended to further his studies and earn an advanced degree. Unlike the pensionados, however, he did not have a stipend to pay for his schooling.⁸

With a background in journalism, it was natural for Velasco to think of getting work in the newspapers. Unable to find employment in the field in which he had trained, he worked as a cook, a house boy, and in a saw mill, (even though, as Erik Luthy writes, he “had more education

than the majority of his white counterparts in the United States”).⁹ Filipino students usually worked on campus in service jobs, such as dishwashing, janitorial work, or house-cleaning. Like most Filipinos in the Northwest, soon (one month) after his arrival, Velasco signed up for a season in the Alaskan canneries. Initially, it seemed an exciting adventure for him, as he noted in his diary of Jun 21, 1924:

Worked in the ship unloading salmon cans at 75 [cents] an hour. It was my first time in America to work. Worked exactly ten hours. Donning the overall for the first time in my life, handling the wheelbarrow, and carrying salmon boxes, was a thrill and an unforgettable experience – and the first one, too – I could note down...¹⁰

He soon learned that working conditions were often dreadful, and the recompense comparatively much less than the wages he received in the Philippines. Sometimes he traveled to pick hops or berries. While working at these types of jobs, he found little time to work on his personal writing projects—of which he had many—and had to be content with daydreaming during his long work hours, as he wrote to a friend: “I now find myself sweating in Montana’s sugar beets fields, while my fancy takes flight in the land of memories and soars on Ambition’s wings to undreamed-of heights...”¹¹

Nevertheless, Velasco was determined to see his work published. He had a strong, outgoing personality that in some cases, helped to overcome the racial divide. While attending college in Bellingham, he contributed articles to a student newspaper, *The Weekly Messenger*; he became managing editor of a literary magazine, *The Red Arrow*, and was a member of the Scribes club.¹² He continued his journalistic and literary endeavors when he entered the University of Washington, where he pursued an undergraduate degree in education, and published the *Philippine Seattle Colonist*.

Filipino Students at the University of Washington

Velasco entered the University of Washington campus when it had a relatively liberal administration; it even made room for socialist faculty and a small group of leftist radicals—who were, however, watched closely.¹³ The then president of the University of Washington, Henry Suzzallo, was the son of Portuguese immigrants. An educational reformer who was generally sympathetic to labor, he advocated for an eight hour workday for lumber workers. Over the protests of the U.W. students, he was eventually ousted by the University Regents under the direction of Governor Hartley—a staunch anti-labor conservative—in 1926. During a time of competition for scant resources, the race issue was never far from the public mind. Suzzallo was described by *Time* magazine as an “Italian” who had been “rudely fired by his Nordic enemy.”¹⁴

For pinoy¹⁶ who were able to continue their education in the Seattle area, the University of Washington became a locus for their hopes, although the path through American higher education was often daunting. The first Filipino to receive his Ph.D., Pedro Guiang, did so after “eight years of struggle and persistence.”¹⁷ Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony has detailed the racist attitudes toward Filipinos during the Depression era, and Trinidad Rojo confirmed that Filipinos experienced a segregated campus at the University of Washington (it was worse, he relates, for African Americans.) Nevertheless, especially before the 1930s, U.W. enjoyed a good reputation among Filipino students.

Despite the increasingly Spartan and even anti-intellectual atmosphere of the administration during the Great Depression, Filipino students managed to hang on. The presence of Filipinos, Japanese, and other “orientals” at the University of Washington during the 1920s and 1930s was to some extent engineered by the faculty. Henry Yu explains that “Honolulu, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago were sites for the production of knowledge about the exotic.”¹⁸ The head of the sociology department from 1929 to 1932 was Roderick Duncan McKenzie, one of a group of influential Chicago sociologists who were studying Asians and their migratory activities in the U.S., and theorizing about how American immigration laws affected Asians on the Pacific Coast.¹⁹ Jesse F. Steiner, head of the Department from 1933 to 1947 authored a book on Japanese social life and customs, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, published in 1943. University President, Henry Suzzallo himself specialized in educational sociology. A number of Filipino students took their degrees in sociology. Trinidad Rojo, a sociology student at U.W., contributed many articles treating the representation of Filipinos by both Filipinos and Anglo-Americans in *the Philippine Advocate*. Yu writes,

“although the [sociology] genre was strict in its emphasis on the detachment and objective viewpoint of the author’s perspective, it also encouraged the realistic description of modern literature. In many ways, the eye of the sociologist resembled that of the investigative journalist.”²⁰

During the 1930s through World War II, this background in social awareness and realistic description paralleled the rising popularity of social realist literature in the U.S.

According to Cynthia Mejia-Giudici, by 1924, there were enough Filipino students at U.W. to support Velasco’s publication of the *Philippine Seattle Colonist*, a student newspaper claiming to be the “Only Paper of the Filipinos in the Pacific Northwest.”²¹ With this newspaper, Velasco had hopes of uniting the Filipinos in that region. By 1928, they also had a Filipino student clubhouse.²² Doug Chin notes that Velasco was responsible for upgrading the name of the clubhouse fund from “Seattle Filipino Clubhouse Fund” to “Filipino Community of Seattle,” which made it much more inclusive of the entire Seattle Filipino community.²³ While the *Colonist* was a student periodical like UC Berkeley’s *Filipino Student’s Magazine*, the *Colonist* was a product of more financially uncertain times, and did not have the FSM’s prestigious support. It was also structured as a local newspaper, rather than a student magazine. Publication of the *Colonist* ended in 1927.

Newspapers in Washington State

Seattle during the 1910s was large enough to support many newspapers large and small, representing various communities of interest. There were six major newspapers: the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and the conservative *Seattle Daily Times* were purchased by William Randolph Hearst during the early 1920s.²⁴ The long-lived *Post-Intelligencer* began as a rough-hewn, opinionated paper in the late 19th century, but gradually became more conservative, with a reputation for factual reporting and community involvement.²⁵ Other important papers included the *Seattle Sun*, *Seattle Star*, the pro-labor *Seattle Union Record*, and the socialist *Commonwealth*.

Ethnic communities also published their own newspapers. Quintard Taylor writes that, in 1916, “five Japanese-language newspapers served Seattle’s Nihonmachi and the population beyond the

city. The largest newspaper, *Hokubei Jiji* had a circulation of 7,000 and was distributed throughout Washington.²⁶ *The Seattle Republican* was published by ex-slave Horace Cayton, serving its community for 19 years.²⁷ *The Jewish Voice for the Pacific Coast* was published in 1919, and lasted for one year; however, *The Jewish Transcript*, “the voice of Jewish Washington,” was published in 1924, and served its community for over 80 years.²⁸ The American Indian newspapers, *The Quileute Independent*, and *Quileute Chieftain* operated out of La Push, Washington from 1908–1910.²⁹

In 1929, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reflected the Anglo suspicion of Filipinos when it reported Seattle Police Chief Louis J. Forbes’ claim that relations between white women and Filipino men represented the “chief evil” of the city’s dance halls.³⁰ According to Michael S. Brown, reports of Asians (especially Chinese) in the *Bellingham Herald* during the mid-1920s focused on “sensational headlines” that “nursed lurid stereotypes about Orientals.”³¹ Besides indulging in such reports, Northwest readers were also drawn to political problems that arose due to the colonial relation of the Philippines to the U.S., and perhaps even more to the influx of Filipino workers into the Northwest. Filipino journalists in Washington State often felt a responsibility to challenge and iradicate representations of them as a “problem” population. They soon learned that they could not count on the support of Labor Unions to help change these stereotypes.

During the 1910s, the *Seattle Union Record*, the union organ in central Washington, exhibited concern about the “oriental problem.” Despite claims of fraternal unity and brotherhood, writers for the *Record* viewed the entrance of Asians into the area as a definite threat to white labor.³² Such attitudes and actions illustrated the marginalization of Filipinos generally, in the early 20th century through the early 1930s, and also within the larger unions during the Great Depression. These issues would eventually spur Filipinos to break away and form their own labor organizations. The Filipino Cannery Workers’ and Farm Laborers’ Union Local (CWFLU) 18257, or Local 37, was formed in 1933 (simultaneous with the formation of CWFLU in California) to eliminate the exploitative contracting system among Filipino workers.

The Local 37 published its own newspaper *The Filipino American Tribune*, edited by Emiliano Francisco. The newspaper lasted for 60 years, and included both labor and local news.³³ Velasco’s *Philippine Advocate* was the *Tribune*’s rival. It was published by a group defining itself as “the Filipino Protective Laborers Association, which represented the labor contractor, Pio de Cano.”³⁴ In 1937-38, many Filipinos still affiliated with the AFL left because of race discrimination against Asians, and formed UCAPAWA (United Cannery, Agricultural, Packinghouse, and Allied Workers of America) as members of the CIO.

Velasco founded the bi-weekly *Filipino Forum* in 1928.³⁵ Its publication ended just before World War II, but resumed when the war was over, lasting until 1969.³⁶ He also contributed articles to another Seattle newspaper, the *Philippine Review*, beginning in 1930. Somehow, Velasco also found time to juggle his duties at College with his newspaper responsibilities, and he obtained a B.A. and a Master’s degree in Education from the University of Washington.

Velasco himself aspired to literary heights. Perhaps like other Filipino writers who worked in the fields, writing provided him with a welcome outlet for his frustrations, as well as for his more lofty feelings. The occasional acceptance of his submissions by various magazines and anthologies also gave him hope to carry on, as he wrote in his diary while working in Montana:

While in the... clutch of adverse circumstances, I still find delight and consolation in the encouragement that I am given by publishers. Some of my poems will appear in “Modern

American Poetry – 1933,” which will be off the press before Xmas this year. Some of my lyrics have also been accepted for inclusion in “Contemporary American Lyricists,” which will be published in San Francisco. Already my poems have appeared in “Poets and Poetry of 1931,” which was published in Hollywood in 1931. This recognition given me, although modest and quite insignificant, gives me the encouragement so much needed by my soul that is almost dwarfed by the pangs of adversity.³⁷

Despite “pangs of adversity,” and the social displacement that seemed to go hand in hand with migratory fieldwork, Velasco found ways to reach out to others, and to further his goals of creating community through his newspapers. To this end, as reported in the October 1935 edition, A Filipino press club was organized “composed of men and women identified with newspaper work and those who are in sympathy of the objectives set forth for the club.” It was noted that the club’s objective was “to be ever awake to community responsibilities and civic obligations” and also to “cooperate with other organizations in the promotion of community enterprises”³⁸

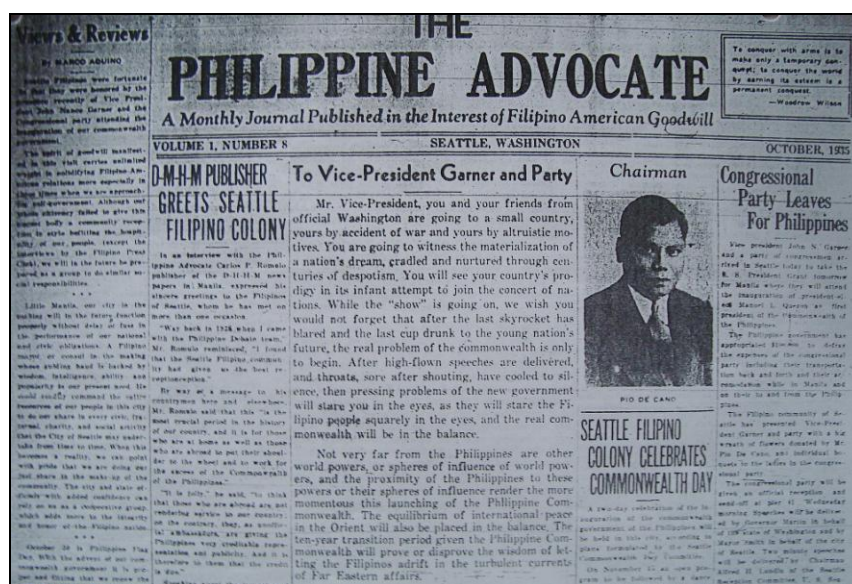


Fig. 9 Photograph of *Philippine Advocate* publisher and labor contractor, Pio de Cano³⁹

The Philippine Advocate

The Philippine Advocate was published by Pio de Cano, “the foremost Filipino businessman in Seattle [with] the greatest number of cannery contracts,”⁴⁰ and edited by Victorio Velasco, along with associate editor Marco A. Aquino. Their business manager, Vicente O. Navea, also had his own clothier business, and was an agent for American Mail Line (a steamship carrier); he advertised prominently in the newspaper. Other writers included Diosdado Yap, who was their Washington D.C. correspondent and director of the Philippine Information Bureau;⁴¹ various writers reporting on campus news (an important column in all U.S. Filipino newspapers); Trinidad Rojo, who wrote about social and cultural issues; and Larry Miranda, whose column tackled “Philosophic Reflections.”⁴² Trinidad Rojo eventually became the president of the Filipino Labor Union (CWFLU), and J.C. Dionisio (who would go on to edit the *Filipino Pioneer*—based in Stockton, CA), became president of FALA—the Federated Agricultural

Laborers' Association. *The Advocate* also published the work of Simeon Doria Arroyo, a good friend of Velasco's whose poems and columns championed the "working stiff."

With some writers advocating for the contractor's "protection" system, and others advocating for a union independent of both contractor and the AFL-CIO, tensions among the staff became apparent, as evidenced in a carefully worded announcement in the April 1935 issue "To the Packers." The article assured the Alaska salmon packers that "most" Filipino cannery workers (associated with the Filipino Labor Protective Association, which published *the Philippine Advocate*) were not associated with any potential strike that might be fomented by the CWFLU, which (according to the article) was attempting to keep workers from going to Alaska without becoming members of CWFLU. In the same column, the editor claimed that the character of the "Filipino Labor Protective Association is one of spotless character and sound integrity. If it remains true to its ideals and objectives, this association could do much to alleviate the miserable condition of Filipinos in this country and to promote their welfare, morally and materially."⁴³

Another example of these differing positions can be seen in the November 1935 issue, in which both the editorial (presumably written by Victorio Velasco) and an adjoining op-ed by Trinidad Rojo present opposing views on the continuing occupation of the Philippines by the United States, and the extent to which Filipinos should trust the United States to have their interests at heart. The "debate" was likely spurred by the coming inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth in November of the same year, which would leave the country still under American occupation for at least another decade. The editorial stated that,

Calm reflection upon the recent Sakdalista uprising in the Philippines will only show that it has been prompted by a small political faction which has, perhaps, in mind the courting of the public eye toward its existence and activities.

...The recent approval by President Roosevelt of the constitution for the commonwealth government of the Philippines has intensified the desire of the SAKDALISTAS for absolute and immediate independence and their aversion toward American occupation in the Islands. To demonstrate this desire and this aversion, the Sakdalistas have taken that unfortunate recourse of rising against constituted authority and of proclaiming their glorious ambition for a liberated motherland.

Furthermore, the editorial made evident the alignment of the publisher and editor with the Filipino businesses that want to maintain smooth relations with the U.S.:

Responsible Filipino leaders in our community are, in cooperation with American professional and business men in Seattle, formulating plans for the creation of a PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN SOCIETY which will have for its main objective the promotion of goodwill between the Philippines and the United States through a closer and more harmonious trade relationship."⁴⁴

In contrast, Trinidad Rojo writes, in "The Philippine Uprising" that

Many Filipinos...doubted and still doubt the sincerity of the United States congress in granting us independence through the Hare-Hawes Cutting bill or through the Tydings-Mcduffie law, which is virtually a re-enactment of the former. Several members of congress, in their discussions against the measure...predicted that it will cause hardships and uprisings in the Philippines...adopting a policy of limiting Philippine exports to the U.S., and adding increasing tariffs during the transition years (from commonwealth status

to full independence) would create a handicap that would “[defeat] the very objective of the period of transition for which it was railroaded to...the measure was not passed by [the American people], but was passed mainly through the powerful pressure of lobbyists from certain vested interests. Hence, although the law is idealistic in its pretensions, it is in reality an ingenious creation of self love.”⁴⁵

Rojo’s reference to the new laws as “idealistic... pretensions,” and an “ingenious creation of self love,” is both ironic in its understanding of the political implications, and incisively bold. The more conservative writers and editors working for *The Advocate* had in Trinidad Rojo a formidable opponent of words. Rojo was at the time a student pursuing and eventually earning degrees in Comparative Literature with a minor in English and Drama, and would later earn a Ph.D. in sociology at Columbia. His research monograph, “The Language Problem in the Philippines,” published by the Philippine Research Bureau in 1937, had as its editorial committee such reputable scholars as Edward Sapir, Harold Bender, and Carleton Brown.

Nevertheless, Velasco and Rojo had frequent verbal altercations, Michael Brown observes that Rojo was critical of Velasco’s journalism, and “Velasco responded to Rojo’s criticisms with self-righteousness and suggested that Rojo was self-aggrandizing. Ostensibly taking the high road, Velasco told Rojo that he himself—presumably in contrast to Rojo—adhered to the highest traditions of journalistic impartiality and objectivity.”⁴⁶

Thus, *The Advocate*, which sought the support of Filipino subscribers and readers with varying opinions, had to work hard to balance its presentation of those opinions, if it wanted to maintain a respected position within the community.

Aside from news articles, *the Advocate* published feature articles, some of which, like “The Public Pulse,” were opinion columns, but hewed close to a factual model; others were characterized by plain yet colorful language that drew from literary sources, including columns—such as “Little Manila” and “I Cover Chinatown”—that focused on local places and issues. One column, “Sound and Color” functioned as an “overheard” column, that humorously sketched dialogue heard on the street. Each issue contained several examples of Filipino poetry. In every issue there was a book or film “review,” often very brief, although occasionally lengthy. There were also occasional reviews of speeches or plays. Holidays and special events, such as mother’s day or Rizal day also prompted historical and philosophical essays and theme poems as well as reproductions of Rizal’s own writing.

Advertising in *The Advocate* covered approximately two or three pages of every issue, with a number of inserts placed here and there among the article columns; many ads, like those for Nakamura’s Grocery or for Dr. James Unosawa (“Special Attention to Filipinos”), were for Japanese businesses, but also included some ads for Chinese- and Filipino-owned businesses; a few ads, such as that for Rosenthal’s Jewelry Co., (“recommended by V. O. Navea”) or Bauer’s Sport Shop, “where all Filipinos Buy,” were not owned by Filipinos or Asians, but made it clear that they were welcome. Ads seeking to contract Filipinos for laboring jobs, such as picking hops or working for the Alaskan canneries, were also frequently posted, and announcements like those for the American Mail Line steamship company, made it clear that Filipinos were welcome, or were even employed as part of their staff. Contrasting the ads in the *Filipino Students’ Magazine*, those in *The Advocate* tended to appeal to the working man, with many neighborhood minority businesses represented, offering inexpensive medical services, meals in small cafes, and clothiers with “greater values,” and “easier credit terms.”

The literary “life” of the newspaper was evident not only in the self-consciously “literary” pieces (poems, personal essays, book reviews), but also in the way reportage or even brief mention of writers and the youthful intelligentsia both in the Philippines and the U.S. Articles about Filipino writers and students could be found in every edition; the latest in campus news showed readers that Filipino students were active at the Universities. In the December 1935 issue, an article proudly reported that “Carlos P. Romulo, publisher of a string of newspapers in Manila” had received his honorary law degree at Notre Dame, along with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.⁴⁷ Romulo, a professor of literature at the University of the Philippines, and author of “the Tragedy of our Anglo-Saxon Education” (1923) was also an important Filipino intellectual of the pre-World War II period.⁴⁸ He later became President of the UN General Assembly, and Chairman of the United Nations Security Council.

Commonwealth Cosmopolitans

Migratory field laborers are often equated with the rural spaces in which they work, stereotyped by urban or suburban residents as inarticulate, uneducated country folk. Yet, despite the rural and migratory environment that comprised Velasco’s working life (upon which he depended to bolster funds for both his university education, and his newspaper), his newspaper had a transnational and cosmopolitan sensibility. This is perhaps not so strange, however, for a man raised in the city of Manila, who had worked for that bustling city’s newspapers.

In the 1930s, *The Advocate* seemed very aware of its role of articulating the Filipino experience in the U.S. with an eye toward promoting an appreciation of Philippine history and the Philippines in modern world events. The front page of the December 1935 issue reveals, reports, and celebrates “The New Commonwealth” of the Philippines, the creation of its National Defense Council, Japan’s limit in textile exports to the Philippines, the inauguration of an air express between Manila and Davao, and the fact that President Quezon “Favors Training of Filipinos in Diplomatic Work.” An editorial on the Philippine martyr, Jose Rizal, is given an important place in the newspaper, where it is prominently mentioned that he “wrote extensively for the dissemination of correct knowledge about his country and people.” “Correct knowledge” of the Filipino people continued to be an important issue in pages of the *Advocate*.⁴⁹

Let us ask ourselves if it were not better that, to give due honor to Rizal, we should emulate his courage of conviction, his devotion to lofty principles, and his fortitude to endure suffering in the sweet name of our ‘land adored.’⁵⁰

The question conflates Rizal’s life (and death) struggles with that of the reader; it suggests that a similar noble idea exists within the reader, and reaffirms ties with the homeland. Indeed, it equates the sacrifices of the Filipino worker in Depression-era U.S. with that of the martyr.

Even during the era of the Great Depression, Seattle was in the process of becoming a cosmopolitan city, internationalized despite its parochial past, and intending to have an important role in the United States’ trade with Asia and the Pacific islands. The *Advocate*, spurred by the launching of the Philippine Commonwealth celebrated at that time, seemed conscious of its participation in Seattle’s transition. Its “Views & Reviews” column attests to the hunger of its editors and writers to be fully participant in an urban, democratic Seattle community; at the same time, noting in one editorial (“What the Pacific Coast Needs”) that Filipinos “have been stigmatized...as unabsorbable in American society” (in fact, their status as “nationals” effectively kept them at a distance),⁵¹ they viewed themselves—not as *assimilated* or even

assimilating into American culture—but as Filipinos with both a transnational and cosmopolitan cultural identity.

In the 1920s, Seattle pinoyos became part of a segregated, yet thriving Asian community in an area south of Pioneer Square that was built on reclaimed tidal flats. In the *Advocate*, Marco Aquino (who described himself as a “humble scribe”⁵²) claimed the area as the Filipino section, centering on King street, Maynard, Jackson and Sixth avenue.”⁵³ Seattle’s “Little Manila” neighborhood was characterized in “Views & Reviews” as “our city in the making,” with its own “Filipino mayor, or consul in the making.”

When this becomes a reality, we can point with pride that we are doing our just share in the make-up of the community. The city and state officials with added confidence can rely on us as a cooperative group, which adds more to the integrity and honor of the Filipino nation.⁵⁴

While forced to be separate, Filipinos in Seattle yet insisted on being part of the community as much as possible, an intent that seems in line with the values of *kapwa* and *loob*, which emphasize awareness of one’s interrelationship with the community, as well as a strong sense of self within that community. Thus, *the Philippine Advocate*, with its interests in both its mother country of the Philippines, and the experiences of Filipinos in the U.S., declared itself equal to the transnational realities and challenges of the City.

The editors’ interest in stretching *The Advocate’s* coverage between two continents is evident throughout its pages. It was a bi-national newspaper, reporting in English on events among Filipinos in the U.S., as well as pertinent and related events in the Philippines. Teddy Nolasco maintained a column entitled “Washington at Random,” remarking on news emerging from the Capitol—everything from rumors about the failure of General MacArthur’s trip to the Philippines, to the formation of several campus organizations for Filipino students at George Washington university (in D.C.). The “Campus News” regarding the achievements of Filipino college students, was a mainstay of each issue.

Reports on the Philippines covered such issues as the status of indigenous tribes (“Provinces Under Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes to Be filipinized Soon”);⁵⁵ worries about the Japanese presence in the Philippines (“Japanese Protest Cancellation of Land Sub-Leases”)⁵⁶ Yet, local issues were not stunted, and the comings and goings of cannery workers, as well as events concerning labor organizing were reported. Legislative acts concerning Filipinos, such as the Repatriation Act of 1935, which would provide free travel to the Philippines for unemployed Filipinos were discussed in depth.

City within the City: “I Cover Chinatown” and “Little Manila”

The *Advocate’s* resident scholar, Trinidad Rojo, was also one of its more critical voices. Rojo summarized the newspaper’s content ambivalently for its “Matured and dignified editorials, acceptable poetry, [and] serious articles,”⁵⁷ but he faulted some of the content for its gossip about ‘blondes and brunettes,’ as well as for its coverage of the “hectic and colorful nightlife” of Chinatown. His comments illustrate the self-consciousness of some Filipino writers about their ability to write well in English, as well as about the seedier aspects of their lives in America—including gambling, and taxi-dancing—and the split they felt between the two different drives to represent themselves as intelligent and cosmopolitan people (thus correcting the negative stereotypes generated by Anglos), and as members of a community, some of whose members engaged in problematic activities.

However, two columns in the *Advocate* transformed this “seedy” aspect of life in the neighborhoods into local color tourist narratives, which also highlighted neighborhood pride. They focused on two little “cities” within the larger city of Seattle: Little Manila and Chinatown. In the very first issue of the *Philippine Advocate*, Simeon Doria Arroyo sought to validate, ambivalently, the identity of the Chinatown enclave:

Chinatown is essentially [as much] a part of the American city as its Fifth Avenue of Broadway. Fifth Avenue and Broadway give a prevision of the glittering aspects of American life—but still, the shadows of Chinatown beckon American society, for it has a superficial grandeur of its own which the superficial American wants to experience and possess.

...American tourists in omnibuses fail to observe the Chinatown in its most microscopic detail. Unless they are Chinatown addicts they have to come close to the glass windows to marvel at the salted dried fishes of rare biological collection, which, more or less, give the impression of a museum. Barbecued pheasants, chicken and pork arouses the gluttonal lust...⁵⁸

In the “Little Manila” column, Marco Aquino reported mostly on the social milieu of the Filipino community in Seattle. He functioned in some ways as a booster, discussing gala events sponsored by various organizations like the Filipino Veterans of World War I, or The Filipino Women’s Club. He announced important visitors, such as Manila publisher Carlos Romulo, Sebastian Abella, then the former editor of the *Philippine Review*, or James Wingo of the *Philippines Free Press*. Little Manila was not just a neighborhood, according to Aquino. Rather, “It is the city of Manila in the making, our city in this foreign land where a mayor is our titular leader. Seattle’s Filipino population, scattered as it is...”⁵⁹

The columns used a more informal language than the rest of the newspaper, often employing American slang. “Howdy everybody!” Marco Aquino begins his November 18, 1935 column. His Americanized rhetoric seems to claim a slightly more familiar sense of identification with the American scene than did the *Filipino Students’ Magazine*. Neighborhoods were verbally painted in urbanized “local color,” describing the character—as well as the characters—of their own community. The focus on the people of these segregated neighborhoods may also have drawn courage from Popular Front literature, valued by progressives at the time. Chris Vials writes that F.D.R.’s vice president, Henry Wallace “attempted to express the antiracist pluralisms of Bulosan and Caldwell with the labels “The Century of the Common Man” and “The People’s Century.”⁶⁰ Thus, to write from the position of the commoner and his/her neighborhood carried a progressive edge. “While the lives of these writers were relegated by their work and ethnicity to ethnic enclaves or to migratory routes, often, the writers seemed to revel in a freedom to literally and imaginatively navigate, observe, and celebrate their community, as in Emily Angelo’s “I Cover Chinatown” column:

It is modern China, modern oriental people enjoying life with ease and contentment as in any down-town metropolis.

King Street—and what a city! Her bright lights glittering compares with Broadway, neon signs, limousines and cars parked along the sidewalks, Chop Suey houses, cafes and stores packed to capacity with eager people and satisfied customers; laughing, dancing to the music of syncopated jazz.

The afternoons are even gayer, oriental people, Filipinos dominating, are lazy and carefree basking in the sun, some cooling on the corner, talking, joking, content and happy. On towards Maynard and Jackson streets the scenes are the same.⁶¹

The tone is celebratory, even proud of the urban ethnic milieu of the area.

Despite the tone, a third, critical, function of this writing emerges, as if the topic created an uncomfortable self-consciousness in its writers: there was an attempt by some to publicly address the more disturbing problems and issues evident in these ethnic neighborhoods: taxi dancing, prostitution, gambling, drinking, petty thievery, and violence. Emily Angelo's description of Chinatown nightlife, often enthusiastically lyrical, was also unapologetic, defending her community and its people, including those who might have been considered by some to be "lowlife."⁶²

According to her own report, Angelo (who was white) was not only a column writer for *The Advocate*, but also a taxi-dancer. Her "society column" often boldly reported the comings and goings of fellow taxi-dancers and their customers, all referred to by name, much as any society star or matron might be mentioned in the pages of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, or the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. In several issues of *The Advocate*, a lively debate was presented when Simeon Doria Arroyo criticized taxi-dancing as a degrading and unhealthy practice.⁶³

Angelo countered in the next issue with her own defense of taxi-dancing,⁶⁴ stating that "a man in gambling can certainly lose more in fifteen minutes... than in six hours of dancing." She observed that in "dancing we can derive relaxation of mind and a source of exercise and poise." While Arroyo takes on the persona of the reporter "slumming it" with a moralistic stance, Emily Angelo writes from within the scene reporting from the dance floor. While she avoids the sordid details, her gossip reveals how important were the working and friendly relations among fellow taxi-dancers, customers, and indeed even local businessmen; her column also functioned as advertisement:

The Moonlight Café is not such a bad place at that. If you appreciate a home cooked meal served the way you want, Moonlight is the place. Taking pride in patronizing our own people's business is one that needs serious consideration. The existence of these Filipino enterprises needs patronage of none other than Filipinos.⁶⁵

The fact that *the Philippine Advocate* would employ a self-described taxi-dancer as a columnist was risky for its time, and it seems to illustrate the newspaper's sympathy for the worker. Such a free attitude toward what is usually considered "low-life" activity could not have been expressed, had it not been for the existence of Popular Front literature, which enabled writers to turn to the activities of the working masses with more than objective interest.

Perhaps because of the mythically rough nature of the work that Filipinos tackled in the Northwest (especially in the fishing industry of Alaska), and the cold climate, *the Philippine Advocate* tended to a masculinist view, contemporary with that of American newspaper and labor writing at that time. It may be that its editor (who was notorious for his womanizing) viewed Filipinas patronizingly as too feminine for newspaper work, while white women were viewed as

more outgoing by nature, and thus “masculine” enough to write for the paper. Filipinas were more often presented as subjects of news, rather than as writers and communicators. This differentiated the newspaper from other Filipino newspapers that occasionally sought the contributions of Filipinas (for example, the *Philippines Mail*), and even as column writers. Ironically, in the Philippines, Filipina writers were published in the newspapers with more frequency.

Scribes and Dishwashers: the Filipino Intelligentsia in Seattle

The characterization of Filipino communities also encompassed the “intelligentsia,” as described in yet another “local” column, “Random Ramblings,” by “Staff.” Beginning, literally, with a description of the writer’s navigation through the community—this time, Little Manila—the reporter tells of his encounter with a group of writers:

Headed up the street to where the old Manila Hotel was and up eighth avenue... I was told that the Filipino intellegencias and the elites make the Rizal Hall [t]heir evening headquarters [sic]. Taken “in tow” by my friend Willy Torrin, I was indeed given a swell treat and had quite an experience. The booths, as he explained to me “were especially reserved for the Seattle scribes.”⁶⁶

The writers had a special place within the urban Filipino community, and the *Advocate* created a venue for them on numerous levels. In its pages, their essays, news reports, poetry, and occasionally, humor, might be published. The *Advocate* and other Filipino newspapers provided--not a blank slate--but a journalistic frame within which to nurture the writers’ aspirations, allowing them to flex their abilities in several directions. At the same time, the literary seeds took root within a context of everyday events and community life that must often be defended, and values that spurred dialogue and debate.

Feature essays in the *Advocate* often started out as two columns, and went to four or as many as six columns on a second page. Strongly opinionated (from conservative to progressive) on topics of politics, culture, the arts, and labor, the writers—often graduate students— frequently addressed the problem of the stereotyping of Filipinos, and legislation affecting them. The newspaper exhibited a constant, even “self-conscious” awareness of itself as representative of Filipinos, as a historical and literary document, and even an archive. In the November 18, 1935 edition, it was noted proudly that the University of Washington had requested “a complete file of all previous issues” of the newspaper.

While editorials and feature articles in the *Advocate* retained a veneer of “reportage” (in that they often dealt with objective events and facts), like most texts of that type, they were strongly opinionated, and at times rhetorically “colorful”— even when discussing journalistic, literary, social and political issues, or ethical values. Simeon Doria Arroyo, a personal friend of Victorio Velasco, represented this trend of writing in the *Advocate*. In the Rizal Day issue of December, 1934, the editor categorized him as “a modern poet...revolutionary... distinctly individualistic,” who “had already been published in several national anthologies, including “Oregon Poets,” and “the Atlantean Anthology,” published by Columbia University.⁶⁷ He held strong opinions, evident in his essays and editorials (he also wrote poetry). Addressing the role of the newspaper

editor and journalist (apparently referring to something he'd read in another newspaper), Arroyo (himself a student at UC Berkeley) defends Filipino students in the U.S., while making it clear that editors have a special responsibility to understand the context of pinoy workers:

It takes a malicious fool-of-an-editor to editorialize a prejudiced opinion on the supposed failures of our college graduates, who find themselves unemployed in a foreign land where racial prejudice and misunderstanding undermine the providential utility of their college training and degree.

...The Filipino community deserves the sort of editorials that can bring pressure into its realm of consciousness through which it must strive to deliberate and contemplate its national amelioration.⁶⁸

Arroyo attempts to place the plight of the Filipino worker within the context of the racial prejudice they experience, and suggests that the editor keep in mind the larger goal of Philippine nationalist aims.

In another article, Arroyo gives the reader a glimpse into the life of a dishwasher; the essay is autobiographical, subjective, and in this case also concerned with showing the reader that dishwashers can be critical thinkers;

So you see, I am dishwashing not because it is the only work I can do. It is a freak of existence, in a land where our opportunities are accidental, and where we must survive in a way very very ridiculously ironical.

In my moments of philosophical contemplation, I feel the humility of accepting this imposition of America's delusion of grandeur. But, I cannot help voicing my contempt against the commercial and educational propaganda which in glowing terms of "golden opportunities abroad" that spurred my soul to plunge into this fatal adventure.⁶⁹

Both Arroyo and Trinidad Rojo are examples of Filipino writers of this period who had long since discarded any naivete that they may have had upon first setting foot in the U.S.; they had begun to see through its veneer of idealistic "propaganda." From his perch in the kitchen, Arroyo makes himself into a literary—almost tragic—character on a "fatal adventure." He goes on to describe the patrons of the restaurant, "the average American rushing at noon for lunch: stenographers, office-clerks, salesmen and saleswomen, bankers, and store proprietors." But his "ironical" position also allows him to view them with a critical eye. He notes their mannerisms and social blunders, the "outrageous fraternity" of "bachelors and married men" who importune waitresses for dates; the woman who sprinkles salt from the saltshaker on her tongue, rather than on her food. Arroyo even goes so far as to evaluate the reading material (by suggestion placing himself in the 'intelligentsia') that "old bachelors and married men" bring to the table:

I seldom see a considerable number who read *Esquire*, the *American Mercury*, the *Forum*, *Scribner's* or the *American Spectator*. Of course, I should highly appreciate one who reads the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's* and *Liberty*.

Strange as it may seem, sex-mania finds self-expression in their reading material. They read ponderously of the dime novels and sexy magazines like *Whiz Bang*, *Police Gazette*, *Eye Opener*, *Parisiene Nights*, etc. These offer no intellectual enjoyment.⁷⁰

Arroyo's essay begins on a proletarian note, as he describes the life of one worker (himself) who, while at the bottom of the employment heap, still harbors higher literary aspirations. His critical view of the customers' reading materials seems an attempt to level the playing field.

In the "Time Out for the Editor" column of November, 1935, Velasco announced that J.C. Dionisio had just joined the staff of the *Advocate* as a columnist. He was assigned the "Trivia" column; however, his opinions were also aired in letters and editorials, for he had a strong interest—and a depth of understanding—about transnational political matters that exceeded that of most other contributors to *The Advocate*. In 1935, his contribution to the "Public Pulse" column was a letter written to the Philippine Commonwealth's new President Manuel Quezon. All too familiar with the plight of Filipino laborers in Washington State, Dionisio advocated for the worker, noting that the Sakdalista uprising in the Philippines (in which workers were killed by the constabulary) was a result of "economic caciquism."

"...Industrialism is a good thing but industrialization means the rise of big business and big business exploits and oppresses workers. Profit, Mr. President, unless taken out of big business—which is impossible—will not 'give way to the supremacy of human existence.' A sort of central regulation and control is essential. Perhaps you have already worked [it]out in your mind. Not the 'fascist' sort of regulation and control...but a regulation that would insure the rights of workers to good wages and to form associations for collective bargaining."⁷¹

Such letters really functioned as public editorials. Dionisio was well connected in the Philippines, and his articles revealed not only his proletarian leanings at that time, but also his breadth and depth of knowledge about the relationship of government and labor.

By this time, Dionisio had already written a number of short stories, including stories about his sojourn in the U.S., for the *Philippines Free Press*, under James Wingo, and had been the editor of the short-lived *Philippine Monthly*, published in Seattle. He was then a student in the school of journalism in Seattle.⁷² The Rizal Day Issue of 1934 characterized J.C. Dionisio as "comparatively young in years...mature in his thinking," with a note that his article, "Anent Virgins and Such," might "raise some objection." The article addressed women's right to vote as unnecessary, and pointed out the naivete of one Filipino writer who believed that there existed pure women in the Philippines untouched by modernity in the form of emancipated sexuality. In the mid to latter part of the 1930s, Dionisio published the bi-weekly *Filipino Pioneer* while he resided in Stockton, California, and where he had a local business. In 1952, he would become the Philippine Consul General in Hawaii until 1962.

According to an interview with Trinidad Rojo by Carolina Koslosky when he was 73, Rojo traveled to the U.S. from Ilocos Sur when he was 24 years old. His father was a farmer and merchant. While attending college, Rojo worked as a houseboy in Seattle, then went to work in Alaska. He got his bachelor's degree in English and Drama, with a minor in Sociology in 1939.⁷³ Somehow, between stints in Alaska and working various jobs, he managed to continue graduate studies at Columbia University in Anthropology.

In the Rizal Day issue of 1934 (the first issue of *the Philippine Advocate*), Trinidad Rojo was characterized as a recognized scholar who was studying sociology at the University of Washington, and had already published articles in the U.S. and the Philippines. In the same issue of *The Advocate*, he was chosen to write what appears at first glance to be a historical feature on “Jose Rizal’s Greatness.” In reality, it was a response to whites who claim that Rizal’s “greatness” was due to the fact that he had “white and yellow strains” in his blood.

Such a logic, if it is logic at all, is a chameleon logic, which, for the advantage of the user, changes its color according to the environment. It is due to superiority complex intensified by chauvinistic and imperialistic impulses which are bent on proving the incapacity and inferiority of the subject race as an excuse for indefinite domination.⁷⁴

Despite his differences with Velasco, Rojo was given significant column space in the newspaper, as well as in other Filipino newspapers on the West Coast.⁷⁵ He frequently contributed essays that dealt with issues of Filipino representation in many forms: legislative, cultural, and textual. What distinguished him from the other writers was—not only his advocacy of the Filipino people—but also his understanding of the larger picture of the Philippines colonial relationship with the U.S., and how Americans often used a racial and developmental rhetoric to characterize Filipinos as inferior. His column for the *Advocate* was ironically entitled “Wild Notions,” a title that initiated a critical dialogue about the representation of Filipinos as “uncivilized.” But, in the September 1935 issue,⁷⁶ he took an uncharacteristic route, by examining the then current crop of American writing – which he found wanting in terms of its lack of knowledge about Filipinos:

In view of the surprising proportion of unreliable books on the Philippines, a student or a statesman who studies the Island in a library in America or in Europe ought to read as many books as possible on the subject. For if he reads only three or four references, and he does not have the fortune to get the reliable ones, the chances are that his opinion about the Philippines will be less accurate than before reading the books. A victim of such misrepresentation is Mr. Winston Churchill, whose article, “The National Defense in the Pacific,” published in... *Colliers*, December 17, 1932, is based largely upon “The Philippines – A Treasure and a Problem” by Nicholas Roosevelt who follows the footsteps of Katherine Mayo, a very unreliable writer.”⁷⁷

Mayo at that time was well-known for her unflattering portrayal of Filipinos as an unsophisticated people, unprepared to govern themselves. While Rojo often approached such issues from the stance of a sociologist, he was also participating in an already heated critical dialogue about literature, emanating from literary circles in the Philippines, and taken up also in the U.S., where Filipinos were beginning to think about how Filipino writing in the U.S. differed from writing in the Philippines.

In 1939 Rojo was elected president of the Cannery workers and Farm Laborers Union (CWFLU) in Seattle. After World War II, he became a research fellow at Stanford University to finish his Ph.D. in 1947. For The Philippine Research Bureau, directed by E. Llamas Rosario (editor of the *Philippines Digest Magazine*), Rojo published a monograph on “The Language Problem in the Philippines,” which advocated for Tagalog as the primary language of education in the Archipelago. He seemed to range fairly widely in his interests and also wrote poems, humor, and even plays; “The Living Dead Man” was produced in a church auditorium in Seattle in 1934, and “Three Heroes at a Time” was produced in San Francisco, also in 1934.⁷⁸

The Poet and the “Corner Newsboy”: Filipino Poetry in *The Advocate*

The Advocate published two or three poems in every issue. Its poetry section was entitled “Filipino Poetry.” Clearly, it intended to provide a venue for Filipino literary writers, as well as reporters.

There were usually several poems by Filipino writers (mostly by members of the Filipino Press Club) in each issue. The editors of the *Advocate* rarely dwelled on topics of literature, and in this case just let the poems speak for themselves. In line with the interests of the editors and their working readers, they often exhibited a concern for economic class disparities. In “the Corner Newsboy,” Victorio Velasco meditates on the poverty of one newsie, against the backdrop of a raucous and uncaring city:

Shout aloud your merchandise, loud, louder,
Till your frozen voice melts in the revelry of the party
That has been breaking silver glasses to awaken life
In their lives already made lifeless with sin.

Shout your news, shivering newsboy:
The latest suicide, gangsters’ war, kidnapping, [sic]
Lynching, safe-cracking, race persecutions:
Shout these till the half-asleep metropolis
Awakes to smile and find breakfast appetizer
In these savage headlines.

I shall dig into my pocket with half-frozen fingers
For a tiny dime for you,
A dime for your Sunday paper, brave corner-newsboy,
And as you fold your Sunday paper and reach for my
 dime,
Only Heaven knows whether you shiver with cold
or quiver with joy,
there here is a dime for a loaf of bread
your family will need for this winter morning’s
 breakfast⁷⁹

Velasco’s “The Corner Newsboy” lacks the rhymed nostalgia of many poems published in the Filipino newspapers. In free verse it visualizes a vulnerable and shivering newsboy against the backdrop of metropolitan modernity, symbolized by the daily newspapers, whose “savage headlines” announce that the world in which he lives is full of violence, racism, and greed, with little regard for the working man, or in this case—child. In free verse the poem exhibits not only the poet’s interest in revealing class disparities, but also his experience with many facets of newspaper production and sympathy with news workers, from the lowly newsboy to the editor and publisher. In “City Shadows,” he contemplates further the nature of the city and its inhabitants:

Tall giants of stone and steel
 stand firm on their feet facing the sun,
 fearless, defiant, triumphant
 like a soldier receiving a “croix de guerre”

Small two-legged creatures
 whose little hands raised them
 to imperial height among the clouds,
 crawl and plod under their legs
 swallowed in their sinister shadows.

There is want and [wailing] of songless souls
 in the midst of plenty and contentment;
 There are suspicious shadows crossing each other
 while the sun floods with light these giants’ heads.

There is the faint and feeble voice of a starving soul
 begging for bread, drowned in the motor noise
 of a big limousine.
 My soul falters with fear, awed to see
 that under city shadows contemporary drama
 is enacted: histories, comedies, tragedies.⁸⁰

In this prosaic poem, Velasco’s city skyscrapers are depicted as if on a stage set, lit with bright light from the sun. The towering edifices are cold and “imperial”; they rise up heroic and “triumphant,” but seem to have lost their connection with the people below, who have built them. Those people do not even seem human. To someone of wealth looking down from above, they appear only as “tiny creatures,” like ants. The poet here is a witness, reminding the reader that, in the shadows of these dramatic buildings, real people have their own dramas and histories too. Michael S. Brown, author of *Victorio Acosta Velasco*, explains that the poem also expresses Velasco’s sarcasm:

The last line sarcastically asserted that cities represented ‘the acme of civilization.’ The words revealed that the poem was not just about urban vices; it was also a refutation of the notion that modernity represented the highest of human ideals, and it was a bitter social and political commentary on American cities.⁸¹

But poetry of “the masses” was not the editor’s only interest. Many poems utterly lacking in political voice appeared too. Velasco could also write poems dwelling on more lyrical moods, as in “Fragrance”:

Though crisp and dry
 These petals still retain
 ‘Their hue when in full bloom
 And were strangers to pain.

A careless finger
 After a moment of delight
 Has crushed this rose in a book
 And bid it goodnight.

These petals came to strange hands
 Thumbing the book by chance;
 A soothing sweetness long imprisoned
 Caught and left me in a trance.⁸²

The three stanza poem, more subtle than the previous two, shows us that Velasco was capable of more sensitive expression; his mind was not always on current events or the plight of the working man. "Fragrance" is rhymed on the second and fourth lines, in line with the more lyrical subject, which dwells on a chance encounter (the flower left in a book). The poet releases the "long imprisoned" fragrance of the scent and the pressed flower, evoking lost love and delight. Michael S. Brown also notes that, although it wasn't always noticeable to the reader, some of his lyrical poems contained symbols that reflected the realities of Velasco's life. Hence, a flower found pressed between the pages of a book could well have expressed his memory for a specific woman, or even for memories and scents of the country from which he was exiled.⁸³ The poems published in the *Advocate* seemed to echo the issues most frequently on the minds of the readers. Many poems were addressed to loved ones far away in the Philippines, or to new loves in America, as in this poem by Lomy M. Rosal:

Anodyne

Had I a whole world of sighs,
 They'd find peace in your fond eyes;
 Had I a whole world of fears,
 They'd vanish in your tears.
 Like a shipwrecked man at sea
 Neither spar nor sail can see;
 Your dear eyes will be the light
 Rescuing me from storm and night.
 Let those eyes to others be
 Cold and grey as the grey sea;
 Still they tell me
 What we know so rapturously.⁸⁴

Rosal's poem is similar to many Filipino poems published in the U.S. at this time. Its rhymed stanzas are focused on a loved one at a great distance, painfully separated from the poet by the cold Pacific ocean. "Anodyne" is a medicine or drug that kills pain; thoughts of the special person far away are the only balm to that pain. The common fear that the loved one might find another is reflected in the hope that the eyes of his love, a reassuring beacon for the poet, will be to others "Cold and grey as the grey sea."

The May 1935 issue published Simeon Doria Arroyo's version of love lost:

Nocturne

The pale, full moon
 Is walking like a sorrowing widow
 Across the desert sky;
 While the sad glimmering shadows
 Are rehearsing in my heart
 The melancholy tales of love
 Of long ago.⁸⁵

Written in free verse, Arroyo's poem feels more modern than does Rosal's. The brief poem presents a striking metaphorical image of the moon, as "sorrowing widow," walking its nightly path across the sky. Both the widow, and the desert symbolize emptiness and loss, but the poet realizes that the sadness he feels in his heart also borrows its emotions from ancient romances that he has read.

In the March 1936 issue, there is a "Literary Section," featuring several poems orally recited by Delphine Brooks.⁸⁶ This took place during a banquet at the Kin Ka Low Café, in honor of Pablo Benitez, who was returning to the Philippines (probably under the Repatriation Act). The poem itself was written by Victorio Velasco, and dwells on feelings of nostalgia for the homeland. The fact that a white woman was chosen to express these nostalgic sentiments may be related to her intimate relationship with Velasco at that time.⁸⁷ Juxtaposed next to an article, "Filipino Repatriates May Come Back Under Immigration Quota,"⁸⁸ noting that "Filipinos who return to the Philippines under the provision of the Repatriation Act are eligible to come back to the United States under the immigration quota provided for in the McDuffie-Tydings Law," seems ironic, since the quota severely restricted the ability of Filipinos to return to the United States, once they left it to go back to the Philippines. The article foregrounded the seeming finality of any decision made to return to the Islands, and those who decided to stay in the U.S. must have found it a painful decision to make.

The bold headline running across the top of the same page announces "There Are Savages in All Races," reference to the opinion voiced by Filipino Commissioner Quintin Paredes in response to Judge Sylvain Lazarus, who had written a statement claiming that "Filipinos, scarcely more than savages, come to San Francisco, work for practically nothing, and obtain the society of these [white girls]. Because they work for nothing, decent white boys cannot get jobs..."⁸⁹ The headline further underlined the racism, liminality and insecurity that was the fate of Filipinos who did not return to Philippines, and found it necessary to remain in the U.S.

Yearning for Home

Oh, my heart is yearning, longing to be home once more,
 Home with my folks and friends in a nipa hut by the shore.
 I long to lie in a hammock under the shady acacia trees,
 And enjoy the tropic sunset and the balmy evening breeze.
 Oh, take me home again, home to my Sunkist Philippines,
 Where Nature paints her [loveliest] pictures and spring never ends.
 I wish to view once more the charming falls of Pagsanhan

And the rice terraces of Baguio, wonderful work of primitive man.
 I long to stroll on the silver sand in old Lingayen beach,
 And look out on the gulf as far as the eye can reach.
 I'd love to watch the fishermen combing the sea with their oars
 And the men pulling in their net [full] of fishes to the shore.
 I yearn for the peace of eventide as twilight spreads too soon,
 And the spell of magic hours, and romance under the tropic moon.
 Oh, I long to be home again, where the sweet camia flowers
 Bloom overnight and waft perfume in the early morning hours.
 I think of the Ilang-ilang, of sampagitas on the ladies' hair,
 And the fragrant [dama] de noche that sweetens the evening air.
 I'd love to sit and dream under the full moon's mellow light,
 And listen to the lovers serenading in the silence of the night.
 Oh, take me home again, for my tired soul yearns and prays
 For those lovely scenes that delighted me in my younger days.⁹⁰

When juxtaposed with disturbing headlines, Velasco's sweetly nostalgic poem is seen in contrast to political realities that affected the Filipino nationals. While the poem must've provided Pablo Benitez with happy thoughts of his return to the Philippines, it was likely for others only a sad reminder of the gulf that separated them from their homeland.

Editors and writers, frequently migrating north and south, became quite familiar with each other, contributing articles and poems to newspapers that were far away. In September, 1935, Greg S. San Diego contributed a poem that poked gentle fun at the idiosyncracies of two publisher editors, Venerando Gonzalez of the *Philippines Mail* in Salinas, and Victorio Velasco, of the *Philippine Advocate* in Seattle. The poem was reprinted from the *Philippines Mail*:

The Mail Family

When villains meet and dine with rice
 The place becomes a lousy Paradise;
 Men speak of love and other dirty things;
 Each one believes that he can dream and sing,
 While dishes break and drinking glasses fall,
 Since diners drink and, drinking, lose their soul.
 I know old Ven whose grey hair tells a page
 Of vanished years and fast approaching age;
 He is the man who, loving life to live,
 Has learnt to take where taking means to give;
 For while he earns his daily bread with news;
 He offers still what he may gain to lose.
 That's why among Salinas "shots" he knows
 To keep his friends while others have their foes.

The fun of being funny with a song
 Sure makes it right and righteous to be wrong.

...Oh, love can never be a silent lyre,
 Nor song long buried with insane desire;
 I know Victor who, mad 'bout Lucy's eyes,
 Once spoke of love as costlier than a vice.
 Such happens where the suitor is a sap
 Who broaches love with roses, gifts, and nuts.

Why this is so, good Aggie yet may tell
 Since long in love with Becky fond he fell.⁹¹

San Diego's poem is proof that, while there were many serious things to consider in the life of the U.S. Filipino, they were certainly not without humor. The poem seems to have been written after a raucous dinner and drinks in a restaurant with the editors and writers of the two newspapers. It reveals that editors can be "villains" as well as dreamers, but in either case, they might be better off sober, and keeping their secrets to themselves. Velasco's various romantic and tumultuous affairs were well known, and apparently he took the poetic ribbing in good stride, publishing it in his newspaper.

Simeon Doria Arroyo's Letters to Victorio Velasco

Most of the earliest writing by Filipinos published in the United States emerged under the auspices of Philippine or U.S. institutions, for example, the Philippine legislature and Filipino Central Committee, or American educational institutions such as universities and colleges; the U.S. government; or private and religious groups, such as the Anti-Imperialist League, and the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.).

In many ways, opportunities for publishing in the U.S. mimicked the venues available to Filipinos in the Philippines during the earliest years of American colonization; they were fostered within the print media infrastructure that was created by colonial institutions, or for groups (Anti-Imperialist League and the Philippine Legislature) that saw themselves as opposing policies generated by government-sanctioned institutions. Nevertheless, these groups drew some of their ability to vocalize their opposition from their own connections to colonial power and influence.

Some writers, however, did not arrive in the U.S. with such influential connections. It became important for them to form connections among the writers that they encountered in college, or while working in the fields and canneries, in union meetings, or cafés, or in the pages of Filipino newspapers.

Letters written between Velasco and his friend and fellow writer, Simeon Doria Arroyo, attest to the important connections made through the newspaper community. Their common interest in helping each other attain "published" status, also give us some sense of the authors that Filipino writers were reading, and what publishers they approached when submitting their own work. Arroyo, who often contributed to columns such as "I Cover Chinatown" in the *Philippine Advocate*, also conveys something of the peripatic, colorful, yet often desperate lives led by these writers. In a letter of December 2, 1931, just prior to Velasco's college graduation, Arroyo complains of the distractions of working in a kitchen:

I was bored to death and did not have any moment to rest, read and write. The inharmonious ringing of plates, silverwares, kettles and pans were so harassing that I could not make up myself believe that I was just helping in an ordinary American kitchen.⁹²

He presents a list of “approachable publishers” that Victorio might submit his “collection” to. It was clear by this time, that Velasco was already “firing a set of volleys at the different literary markets.” The list included Barse & Company (“General books and poetry”), Nicholas L. Brown (“specialty of belles-lettres” and “foreign books in translation”), Henry Holt & Company (“Good fiction and serious books, also poetry”), and Swedenborg Publishing Association (“Serious books, poetry and educational books”).

Always disdainful of literary nostalgia, Arroyo reminds Velasco that “the highest achievement is of the spirit and intellect and not of mere will-o-the-wisp of bygone-unforgettable-memories.”⁹³ In the same letter, Arroyo noted that he planned to join the “season crew” (probably in Alaska) so that he could afford to continue school the next year. This was a familiar scenario. In the June 1934 issue of *The Filipino Students* (Filipino Students’ Christian Movement in America), Velasco (then the editor) writes in his article, “The Call of the ‘Silver Horde’”:

... Working in the salmon canneries of Alaska is most convenient to Filipino students in the Pacific Northwest, as the recruiting of most laborers usually falls in June almost immediately following the close of schools for the summer vacation, and the work lasts until the end of August, a few weeks before the opening of schools again for the fall term. College students, who don’t enter school until about the end of September, have a few weeks to spend on the farm and earn a few extra dollars.⁹⁴

In December 16, 1931, Arroyo noted that their letters were not just “mere convention,” but

“we are growing to be creative and rendering...new kaleidoscopic [sic] lines to its simple features. [The letters are] growing to be a miniature newspaper with its varied aspects and contents, ranging from facts, observations, psychological responses, criticisms and hard-boiled-editorial-like-pen-strokes. Come on! Let us render some rough clay models from our literary-conscious-minds.”⁹⁵

The newspaper format had so infused their “literary-conscious-minds” that it seemed a natural analogy to use it to describe their creative processes.

Such behind-the-scenes letter writing also provided a way to discuss the current literary criticism, and views of the emerging Filipino American literature. Arroyo’s concern about Jose Garcia Villa’s criticism of M. de Gracia Concepcion’s collection of poetry, *Azucena* (strongly influenced by the work of Edgar Allan Poe, this was the first poetry collection by a Filipino published in the United States) begins to delineate a difference between an elite Philippine poetry, and a U.S. Filipino sensibility:

Yes, I’ve read Jose Garcia Villa’s article in the *Free Press* on the Filipino poetry. Have you noticed the way he considered M. de Gracia Concepcion’s poetry. He showed an authoritative indifference; without giving a due recognition to the “first Filipino poet”

recognized by America. Villa is learning to be self-conceited. Perhaps it is the criterion of a budding critic.⁹⁶

Letters in February of 1932 reveal that Arroyo had tired of his living quarters in a “basement and kitchen,” and had taken up a “tramp-like livelihood” living with the assistance of his friends; friendship, he noted, was his “only capital.” Forced into transciency, his barkada (community of friends, and in this case also of writers and editors) pulled together to help him survive. It should not be assumed that these workers were necessarily isolated in the farming communities in which they worked. Given the tough circumstances of labor and race relations in the northwest at this time, the existence of numerous radical, progressive, and labor-related periodicals in the area, and the fact that Filipino workers (some of whom were writers and editors) migrated seasonally up and down the west coast, from Los Angeles to Fairbanks, it is not surprising that trends in both Filipino and American progressive writing were noted, shared through letters and periodicals among these travelers, and adapted.

“Just Drop the Womanisms”: A Masculine Aesthetic

Today, the early U.S. Filipino writers are often viewed almost solely within the context of labor and what their writing can tell us about the history or social patterns of labor activism; however, during the 1920s and 30s, *as writers* they were also developing an aesthetic adapted to the times. This aesthetic had a masculinist quality, influenced in part by newspaper writing (viewed then as primarily a masculine vocation),⁹⁷ realism and the Popular Front, including the works of American writers like Earnest Hemingway, John Fante, and “progressive” journalists and social realists like H.L. Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, and John Steinbeck—all of whom were also read in the Philippines. As Simeon Doria Arroyo urged Victorio Velasco, “let us render some rough clay models from our literary-conscious minds. Just drop the womanisms...” [Arroyo’s emphasis]. Arroyo’s quote of H.L. Mencken in his “Are You Telling Me?” column (devoted to brief quotes) further underscores the realist aesthetic in its most rough-hewn tones:

There are men in the world and some of them are not unintelligent men, who have a natural appetite for the untrue, just as there are others who have a natural appetite for the ugly.”

The former are frauds while the latter are artists.
Their presence makes the world interesting.⁹⁸

The rough aesthetic was also a good fit for the Northwest, historically viewed as a geographically challenging region that attracted pioneer types. Such a viewpoint likely limited the opportunities for Filipina writers who may have wanted to contribute to the *Advocate*, but were not seen in its pages unless they were subjects of gossip, or objects of beauty, participating in local popularity contests or related subscription drives for newspapers.

* * * *

The *Philippine Advocate* first appeared as a one-off publication celebrating Rizal Day. It did not mention subscription rates or advertising. However, Velasco was urged by the Filipino community to inaugurate a new newspaper, which he did with labor contractor Pio de Cano in 1935. During the lean years of the Great Depression, especially during the mid-1930s, Filipino periodicals (and thus their writers) received support from labor contractors, Filipino Masonry

such as the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang Lodges, unions, and from Filipino women who, by participating in “queen” or popularity contests, raised money for subscriptions.

For reasons owing to “the pressure of his own business,” De Cano ceased financial support in 1936. Velasco took over the role of publisher. He continued to publish the *Advocate* until 1937. He also continued to publish the *Filipino Forum*. He worked in Alaska nearly every summer, until his death in a cannery fire in 1968. Between his arrival in Seattle and his death, Velasco would continue to write, and to be involved in many Filipino and Asian American community projects. Aside from establishing several Filipino newspapers in the Northwest, he became a community and labor leader,⁹⁹ and provided encouragement and support for many Filipino writers located in the Northwest.

Velasco’s most important role as a newspaper man emerged in his efforts to unite the Filipino community on various levels. According to his biography at the University of Washington, “he represented the Filipino community in local and state-wide organizations” serving as president of the Filipino Community of Seattle, member of the board of directors of the Jackson Street Community council, and the Advisory Council to the Washington State Board Against Discrimination. He also worked as “Secretary of the Cannery Workers’ and Farm Laborers’ Union, Local 7; Secretary of the Seafood Workers’ Union; and as a delegate for the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union, Local 37.”¹⁰⁰

While interactions with other writers and members of the Filipino community were sometimes less than harmonious, Velasco is still remembered as a communicator and voice for the Filipino in the Northwest. A poem written by Benjamin Domingo in 1968 (just as a new wave of Asian American labor and civil rights activism was surging forward) memorializes and sums up the contributions, life, and times of Victorio Velasco, whose newspapers reported on every facet of Filipino life, from the salmon fisheries of Alaska and labor boardrooms of Seattle, to family weddings and neighborhood barbecues:

NOT YET, VICTORIO, NOT YET
 The Filipino saga in America is still not writ,
 The Song of the Alaskero remains uncomposed,
 Descendants of Filipinos have yet to ascend
 To high office and more glorious callings;
 Our compatriots, struggling from the past,
 Have still to find a place in the American sun.
 Not yet, Victorio, not yet.
 Yakima Filipinos, Portland Filipinos,
 Ketchikan Filipinos, Seattle Filipinos!
 Who shall now speak for them?
 Bremerton Shipwrights, King Street Barbers,
 Wenatchee Apple Growers, Boeing Engineers,
 Merriacre Nurses, Maynard Aids and Doctors!
 Not yet, Victorio, not yet.
 Where shall workers of labor locals turn
 When unsympathetic ears to their pleas are heed
 Or, emboldened from out of labor’s humble role.
 They roar as lion for more rewards of toil?

How shall we watch again the drama of tax agent
 And Tax evader resolve their doubts with the Forum?
 Not yet, Victorio, not yet.
 Who shall write history for them –
 A Bainbridge wedding, a picnic at Seward Park,
 A trophy for a Seafair princess
 A son born at Saint Francis Cabrini's,
 A baptism at Sacred Heart Chapel,
 Or a barbecue party at Beacon Hill?¹⁰¹

As editor, writer, and community activist, Victorio Velasco helped to tell the story of the “Filipino saga” of the Northwest. Benjamin Domingo in 1968 realized that, thanks to Velasco, a Filipino history was being written, although yet incomplete. In Central California, during the Great Depression, another saga of U.S. Filipinos was being written in the pages of several newspapers. That story was perhaps less cosmopolitan than that featured in Velasco’s Seattle newspaper, but no less challenging, and perhaps even more dramatic.

¹ Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: migration, contact, and exoticism in modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 95.

² Victorio Acosta Velasco, “Brief History of the Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc.,” *Filipino Community of Seattle, Inc., First Anniversary Edition* (December 10, 1966), (np).

³ Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle’s Central District, from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*, Seattle: University of Washington Press: 1994 (51)

⁴ Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony. *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 88.

⁵ Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle’s Central District, from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*, Seattle: University of Washington Press: 1994 (108).

⁶ Fujity-Rony. *American Workers, Colonial Power*, 84.

⁷ Marilyn P. Watkins, *Rural Democracy: Family Farmers and Politics in Western Washington, 1890-1925*. Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1995 (166).

⁸ Velasco, “Looking Back over the Years: An Autobiography.” Velasco Files. Access No. 1435-003 1-15, Box/Fold 1/1 (Biographical Features), University of Washington, Seattle.

⁹ Luthy, Erik. “Victorio Velasco, Pioneer of Filipino-American Journalism.” Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project. http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/victorio_velasco.htm

¹⁰ Velasco, Diary entry, June 21, 1924, Velasco Acc. No. 1435-003 1-15

¹¹ Velasco, Letter. Access #?

¹² Michael S. Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco: An American Life* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2008).

¹³ Patrick Farrell, “Henry Suzzallo, militarism, the University of Washington and labor politics from 1915-1920,” Seattle General Strike Project. <http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/farrell.shtml>

¹⁴ “Education: In Seattle.” *Seattle Times*, Mon., Oct. 18, 1926, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,729606-3,00.html>

See also *New York Times*, “FIGHTS FOR OPEN SHOP: Hartley makes that his issue in Washington state campaign,” on anti-labor Hartley (Sept. 1, 1916):

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9E01EED6173BE633A25752C0A96F9C946796D6CF>

¹⁵ Suzzallo was succeeded by Matthew Lyle Spencer, who was tasked with downsizing the campus programs. He resigned in 1932. In the depths of the Great Depression, his replacement, Lee Paul Sieg, epitomized the spartan and anti-intellectual atmosphere of the Washington State government at that time: “American Universities are off on the wrong foot,” he told a reporter, “they teach too much.” “Education, Hugo, Gobsie and Beartrap,” *Time*, June 11, 1934. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,762210-1,00.html>

¹⁶ A slang word often used to mean “Filipinos.”

¹⁷ *The Philippine Advocate* (hereafter cited as *PA*), Jan. 1936.

- ¹⁸ Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, 6.
- ¹⁹ Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, 211. See also Rodrick Duncan McKenzie, *Oriental Exclusion: the Effect of American Immigration Laws, Regulations and Judicial Decisions Upon the Chinese and Japanese on the American Pacific Coast* (Charleston: Nabu Press, 2010, 1927).
- ²⁰ Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, 120.
- ²¹ From the *Seattle Philippine Colonist* letterhead.[access #?]
- ²² Cynthia Mejia-Giudici. Filipino Americans in Seattle.
http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=pf_output.cfm&file_id=409 (accessed 26 September 2008)
- ²³ Doug Chin, *Seattle's International District: The Making of a Pan-Asian American Community*. (Seattle: International Examiner Press, 2001), 50.
- ²⁴ Sharon Boswell and Lorraine McConaghy, "Labor pains, gains," *The Seattle Times* 1896-1996, May 26, 1996.
<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/centennial/may/pains.html>.
- ²⁵ Post-Intelligencer Staff, "Character of P-I's content changed as Seattle grew up." Seattlepi.
<http://www.seattlepi.com/facts/pihistory.shtml>
- ²⁶ Taylor, *Forging of a Black Community*, 119.
- ²⁷ Taylor, *Forging of a Black Community*, 19-20.
- ²⁸ Rachel Blanchard, "The Jewish Transcript, 1924-1926," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.
<http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/news-blanchard.htm>
- ²⁹ "Seattle's Ethnic Press," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.
<http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/press.htm>
- ³⁰ Michael S. Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco: An American Life* (New York: Hamilton Books, 2000), 51.
- ³¹ Velasco attended Washington State Normal School in Bellingham between Fall 1926-Spring 1927. Michael S. Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco*, 3.
- ³² Chad Seabury quotes one writer's viewpoint: "...white men were compelled to compete with Asiatics for a chance to live, and any protest against working with the yellow man was met with the command to go to the office, and two more Chinks would take his place. Having been born in this country, and my ancestors having fought in all the battles for freedom and for this government, the fact of being forced into competition with the Coolies was rather humiliating."³² Chad Seabury, "Perceptions of Race in the Seattle Union Record," Seattle General Strike Project.)
- ³³ Doug Chin, *Seattle's International District*, 50.
- ³⁴ Chin, *Seattle's International District*, 50.
- ³⁵ Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco*, 52.
- ³⁶ Chin, *Seattle's International District*, 50.
- ³⁷ Diary dated October 30, 1933, Stevensville, Montana, Velasco Collection, Box 2 of 15, Acc. No. 1435-003, University of Washington, Seattle.
- ³⁸ *PA*, Oct. 1935.
- ³⁹ *PA*, Oct. 1935.
- ⁴⁰ *PA*, Oct. 1935.
- ⁴¹ Yap also wrote society and review columns.
- ⁴² *PA*, June 1935.
- ⁴³ *PA*, April 1935.
- ⁴⁴ Editorial, *PA*, April 1935.
- ⁴⁵ Trinidad A. Rojo, "The Philippine Uprising," *PA*, May, 1935.
- ⁴⁶ Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco*, 67.
- ⁴⁷ "Roosevelt and Romulo are Recipients of Doctor of Laws from 'U' of Notre Dame," *PA*, Dec. 1935.
- ⁴⁸ Augusto Fauni Espirito, *Five Faces of Exile: the Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals*, Stanford University Press, 2005, 14.
- ⁴⁹ *PA*, Dec. 1935.
- ⁵⁰ *PA*, Dec. 1935.
- ⁵¹ "What the Pacific Coast Needs," *PA*, Oct. 1935.
- ⁵² Marco Aquino, "Little Manila," *PA*, Sept. 1935.
- ⁵³ Aquino, "Little Manila," *PA*, Jan. 1936.
- ⁵⁴ *PA*, Oct. 1935.
- ⁵⁵ *PA*, (Dec., 1935).
- ⁵⁶ *PA*, (Oct. 1935).
- ⁵⁷ Trinidad Rojo folder (speeches and writings), Velasco Files, Box 3 of 15, Acc. No. 1435-003 1-15, University of

Washington, Seattle.

⁵⁸ Simeon Doria Arroyo. "Chinatown...As it Looks to An Interested Bystander," *PA*, Dec. 1934.

⁵⁹ Aquino, "Little Manila," *PA*, Nov. 18, 1935.

⁶⁰ Chris Vials, *Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and U.S. Culture, 1935-1947* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), xxiv.

⁶¹ Emily Angelo, "I Cover Chinatown," *PA*, Sept. 1935.

⁶² We know little of Emily Angelo, except that she was from Kelso, WA, and the name was a pseudonym for Irene Hook, as she herself reported in the December 1935 "I Cover Chinatown" column. Curiously, her reference to "our people's business" in this quote seems to purport that she is Filipina. This raises the question: was she white? If so, why did she use the pseudonym?

⁶³ Arroyo, "I Cover Chinatown," *PA*, April 35, 1935.

⁶⁴ See Linda N. España Maram for a discussion of the working lives of taxi dancers, and their Filipino clientele: "Brown Hordes in McIntosh Suits: Filipinos, Taxi Dance Halls, and Performing the Immigrant Body in Los Angeles," in *Generations of Youth: Youth Cultures and History in Twentieth Century America*, ed. Joe Austin and Michael Willard (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 118-135.

⁶⁵ Emily Angelo is the pseudonym of Irene Hook, as she herself reported in the December 1935 "I Cover Chinatown" column. Her reference to "our people's business" in this quote seems to purport that she is Filipina. This raises the question: why did she use the pseudonym?

⁶⁶ Filipinos often worked side by side with Italians and people of other ethnic groups; in the process, they often picked up and used foreign words as slang.

⁶⁷ Staff, "Random Ramblings," *PA*, June 1935.

⁶⁸ Arroyo. "On Filipino Journalism." *PA*, (April, 1935).

⁶⁹ Arroyo, "Observations of a Dish-Washer," *PA*, April, 1935.

⁷⁰ Arroyo, "Observations," *PA*, April, 1935.

⁷¹ Juan C. Dionisio, "Letter to President Manuel Quezon," *PA*, (Sept. 1935).

⁷² According to Quintard Taylor, Dionisio was also studying Filipino migration patterns in the U.S. See Quintard Taylor, "Notes," *The Forging of a Black Community*, 271.

⁷³ Trinidad Rojo, interview by Carolina Koslosky, 1975, Washington State Oral/Aural History Program. Washington State Archives, Olympia Washington. Accession No. FIL-KNG 75 – ck.

⁷⁴ Trinidad Rojo. "Rizal's Greatness—Is It Due to the White and Yellow Strains in His Blood?" *PA*, Dec. 1934.

⁷⁵ In the April 1935 issue, Velasco and Rojo's opposing opinions on the Sakdalista uprising in the Philippines appeared side by side. *PA*.

⁷⁶ Rojo, "Wild Notions," *PA*, Sept. 1935.

⁷⁷ *PA*, Sept. 1935.

⁷⁸ Rojo, "Preface," T.A. Rojo's Collection of Short Plays. T.A. Rojo file, F.A.N.H.S., Seattle, WA.

⁷⁹ Velasco, "The Corner Newsboy," *PA*, Nov. 1935.

⁸⁰ Velasco, "City Shadows," *PA*, October, 1935.

⁸¹ Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco*, 61.

⁸² *PA*, Jan. 1936.

⁸³ Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco*, 61.

⁸⁴ Lomy M. Rosal, "Anodyne," *PA*, June, 1935.

⁸⁵ Simeon Doria Arroyo, "Nocturne," *PA*, May, 1935.

⁸⁶ Michael S. Brown has written about Brooks' romantic relationship with Velasco. However, no information is given about her background or other interests. Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco*, 57-59.

⁸⁷ Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco*.

⁸⁸ "Filipino Repatriates May Come Back Under Immigration Quota," *PA*, Mar. 1936.

⁸⁹ Victorio Velasco, "There Are Savages in All Races," *PA*, Mar. 1936.

⁹⁰ Victorio Velasco, "Yearning for Home," *PA*, Mar. 1936.

⁹¹ Greg S. San Diego, "The Mail Family," *PA*, Sept. 1935.

⁹² Arroyo, written correspondence to Victorio Velasco, Dec. 2, 1931.

⁹³ Arroyo to Velasco. Dec. 2, 1931.

⁹⁴ Velasco, "Call of the Silver Hoard," in *The Filipino Students*, XII, no. 8 (June, 1934).

⁹⁵ Arroyo to Velasco correspondence, Dec. 16, 1931.

⁹⁶ Arroyo to Velasco correspondence, Feb. 13, 1932.

⁹⁷ See Nicole Smith, “A History of the Roles of Women in Newspapers: Media, Gender, and Journalism,” Article Myriad, http://www.articlemyriad.com/women_newspapers_media_history.htm

⁹⁸ H.L. Mencken qtd. by Simeon Doria Arroyo. *PA*, April, 1935.

⁹⁹ Despite his editorial support of Pio De Cano’s conservative vision for the newspaper, Velasco became increasingly involved in labor organizations during the late 1930s until his death.

¹⁰⁰ Victorio A. Velasco Files, Accession No. 1435-3. Manuscripts and University Archives, University of Washington, Seattle.

¹⁰¹ Benjamin Domingo, “Not Yet, Victorio, Not Yet,” in *Filipino Forum*, (August 1968, xxxx, no. 8), 2.

Chapter III

Central Coast: *the Three Stars, Philippines Mail, and the Filipino Pioneer*

Unlike Victorio Velasco's *Philippine Seattle Colonist* and the *Philippine Advocate*, the three Filipino Central Coast California newspapers of this study did not receive support from a university, and had little direct connection with large and influential educational institutions in the area, although a few of their contributors were university students. The University of California at Berkeley and Stanford University were located approximately eighty miles from both Salinas and Stockton. Nevertheless, the elite *Filipino Students' Magazine* and *The Filipino Student* published years earlier in Berkeley might be seen as precursors to the *Three Stars* and the *Philippines Mail*, in the sense that they set the precedent for Filipino publications in California and the U.S. The student magazines had limited readerships, and were primarily concerned with Philippine independence and representing Filipinos as educated intellectuals attending some of California's finest educational institutions. However, that discourse found its limits when, during the Great Depression, universities withdrew support of visiting Filipino students, while increasing their tuition fees. U.S. Filipino newspapers during the Great Depression did not have the backing of government or educational institutions. Howard DeWitt points out that "Colleges which had assessed resident tuition fees reclassified the Filipinos and billed them for tuition at the elevated non-resident rates. The immediate, and probably hoped for effect, was a decline in registration of Filipino students."¹

The *Three Stars* and the bi-monthly *Philippines Mail* (Salinas) were the most progressive of the three Central Coast newspapers, and were greatly concerned with issues of labor, and Philippine nationalism. Although the editor of *the Filipino Pioneer* (Stockton) was deeply involved in union work, the *Pioneer* was apparently reserved for more "objectively reported" news. The three journals also typify collaboration on political and labor issues, as well as cross-influences among the writers. By the late 1920s, the *Three Stars*, edited by D.L. Marcuelo and Luis Agudo, and the early issues of the *Philippines Mail* (then the *Philippine Independent News*), edited initially by Luis Agudo, followed by Delfin Cruz, favored a more labor-related discourse. The circumstances of migration, displacement, violence, and poverty, along with the promise of betterment through labor organizing, proved to be strong influences shaping early 20th century U.S. Filipino writing in California. Feature essays, columns and editorials in Central California are marked by a strong realist and polarized Popular Front discourse. Its writing was geared toward a focus on the common worker, and support of specific labor projects and goals. Frequent cross-collaboration between newspaper editors and writers was evident in every issue.

Labor and Migration in Central California

Migration, transnational politics, and the often violent vicissitudes of working as a Filipino national in the U.S. provide the historical backdrop for the production of newspapers in Central California. Previously a territory of Spain and Mexico, California was, and is a border area where nationalisms have competed, and notions of race are frequently redrawn. This was the case especially after the influx of Chinese during the Gold Rush. During the 1920s, organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, designed to

defend white dominance and California “nativism,” were active in the area. California did not have as strong or consistent history of radical labor organizing as did Washington, and when the labor movement hit the state during the 1930s, reaction in California was extreme.

California experienced several waves of Asian migrants to its shores, beginning with the Chinese during the Gold Rush of the 1840s, followed by Japanese around 1868. After the famine of 1899 in India, Sikhs from the Punjab area migrated to both Washington and California. Like the Filipinos, Koreans were recruited to the Hawaiian plantations between 1903 and 1905. Initially spurred by the violence of the revolution, and then to fill the labor shortage created by the dearth of men in the U.S. during World War I, Mexicans were also arriving in large numbers; F. Arturo Rosales writes that “Between 1910 and 1930, the number of Mexican nationals living in the United States increased from 219,000 to close to one million.”² California became a magnet for migrants in search of work because of its port accessibility, its abundant natural resources and warm climate, and its burgeoning and rapidly modernizing agricultural industry—famously criticized by John Steinbeck in his books, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *In Dubious Battle*.

At the end of the 1920s, the labor situation changed once again as white workers during the Depression migrated in large numbers from the Midwest. They began driving and hitching rides west in search of jobs in agriculture—competing with Filipinos and Mexicans for work—and settling primarily in Kern county. Their arrival added greatly to the confrontative atmosphere among various groups of laborers that were vying for scarce jobs in the state. Indeed, violence against Filipinos was more intense in California – the “vegetable basket” of the United States – than in the Northwest.

Although Filipinos are reported to have first entered California on a Spanish galleon in Morro Bay in 1587,³ it was not until the 20th century that they arrived in significant numbers, and in two waves, beginning with the smaller group of pensionados coming to the mainland during the Philippine-American war; in 1903, Filipino workers (mostly bachelors) were hired to work the Hawaiian plantations.⁴ Fujita-Rony writes that “in the years from 1925–1929, California received 24,123 Filipinos. Of these arrivals, 22,767 were male, and 1,356 were female. Over four-fifths of both men and women were under thirty.”⁵

Often lacking the funds to return home, making barely enough to get along—much less pay for a secondary education; denied the right to purchase land by California’s Alien Land Law (1913); declared a “national” by the Hawes-Cutting Act (1932) and unable to attain citizenship; and formally deemed “aliens” when the Tydings-McDuffie Act (1934) closed off immigration to the U.S. from the Philippines, the Filipino worker’s life in California was one of constant, forced mobility, manual or demeaning service labor, and migration.

Rural Communities, Urban Hub

Although Salinas and Stockton may have seemed like rural or semi-rural backwaters in the 1920s and 1930s, Filipinos editing and writing for periodicals in those areas often had some schooling in the San Francisco Bay Area (as well as in Manila), and were influenced by its political and cultural climate.

The International Hotel on Kearny St. was the centerpiece of Filipino life in “Manilatown,” located on the edge of Chinatown. In its second incarnation after the 1906 earthquake, it housed international visitors, including Japanese naval officers. After the Philippine-American war,

Filipinos began migrating to San Francisco and the Bay Area, and lived in the hotel; by the 1930s, its fortunes had dwindled.⁶ Nevertheless, the hotel remained an important urban center of Filipino life in San Francisco up through the 1970s and the infamous I-Hotel Strike.⁷ The Strike, which rallied around elderly Filipino manongs who had lived in the Hotel for decades—helped to inspire a new generation of Filipino-American writers involved in the Ethnic Studies movement at San Francisco State, and the formation of the farmworker’s movement in Delano. The latter was initiated by the elder Filipino farmworkers—many of whom had also been part of the Central California labor movement in the 1930s. With some access to major universities and colleges like UC Berkeley, Stanford, and San Francisco State, the city and Bay Area was also an intellectual resource; a place where Filipinos could seek education, or at the very least get updated on the latest news and cultural events.⁸ The *Three Stars*, *Filipino Pioneer*, and the *Philippines Mail* were regularly delivered to San Francisco’s Manilatown businesses, where they found eager readers.⁹

San Francisco during the 1930s became a center of labor union organizing, especially around the city’s port areas. In 1935, the union activity culminated in the infamous Bloody Thursday Strikes—spurred by dockworkers who wanted the right to form their own union. There were a number of violent episodes during the strike, which literally shut down business in San Francisco for about a week in 1934.

During the “Red decade” (1930s), the Bay Area was dominated by the *Chronicle* and *San Francisco Examiner*. *The Record* (Stockton) and *Sacramento Bee* provided news for the agricultural northern Central Valley, while the *Monterey County Herald* was read by most Monterey residents, and Salinas residents read the *Salinas Index* and *Salinas Record*. Most of Central California’s mainstream newspapers supported the farmers, rather than the laborers.¹⁰ Thus the Filipino newspapers of the Central Valley that I discuss here stand out as progressive, if not radical, supporters of the California labor movement, especially for Filipinos.

Salinas Valley

The Salinas Valley is some 100 miles south of San Francisco. Made famous by John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* and *Cannery Row*, it is an extremely fertile area with a Mediterranean climate, cooled by its location near the coast. Nearby Monterey was once the Spanish capital of Alta California, but in the 1920s it was dominated mostly by Anglo-Americans who owned the big farms and ranches (all increasingly industrialized), and ran the fishing industry. Monterey at one point tagged itself as the “Sardine capital of the world.” The Salinas Valley was a natural spot for Filipinos to migrate in search of jobs in agriculture and the fishing industry. Originally, land in the valley had been used for cattle ranching and growing wheat. After World War I, the land was turned to agriculture, farming sugar beets and green produce such as lettuce, broccoli, and artichokes.¹¹ Larry Arden Lawcock points out that the new lettuce industry “thrived on the increased immigration of Filipinos.”¹² Despite that,

In Monterey and Pacific Grove there was a movement to exclude Filipinos from local cannery industry. The leaders in this drive were the Monterey and Pacific Grove Chambers of Commerce. The common argument used by exclusionists was that the Filipinos were taking jobs away from local citizens. The *Monterey Peninsula Herald* constantly referred to “crowding” when it editorialized about the Filipino in the cannery industry.¹³

With the influx of Filipinos, their own local newspaper kept them informed about news from home, and locally; moreover, labor contractors advertised in its pages, as well as those businesses that should be patronized because they were some of the few that welcomed Filipinos. Luis Agudo founded the *Philippine Independent News* in 1921, in Salinas, and he was still listed as the editor in 1934.¹⁴ Originally an organ of the fraternal order of the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang (a Masonic order), it was the first known Filipino newspaper to be published in the U.S. As was common with many Filipino newspapers of that time, it was discontinued due to lack of funds. However, it emerged in other forms: *The Salinas Valley Mail*, *The Mail*, *The Philippines Mail*, and *The Mail-Advertiser* in October 1935, then owned by Manuel M. Insigne and Venerando C. Gonzales, co-partners in Insigne-Gonzales (Igpuco) Publishing Company. Eventually the title reverted back to the *Philippines Mail*, under the editorship of Delfin Cruz.¹⁵



Fig. 10, Front page and masthead, *Philippines Mail*¹⁶

Agudo was “a trained engineer turned social critic and newspaperman,¹⁷ who had also been a teacher in the Philippines.¹⁸ There is little biographical information on Agudo, but his essay in *The Three Stars*, “Filipinos Digging Their Own Graves” suggests that he was a pragmatic person who didn’t mince words. Unlike the owner and editors of the *Philippine Advocate* in Seattle, he seemed very clear about America’s role in the Philippines, and did not seem particularly concerned with maintaining harmonious “Philippine American” relations for the purposes of business and otherwise:

Let us not be sentimental. Principles of democracy are now thrown in the air. The idea that “all men are created equal” has been supplanted by the principle of “might makes right.

America is conscious of the promise she made to the Filipino people. She knows they are capable of governing themselves. But viewing the question of Philippine independence from all angles, America will never grant the Filipinos their political freedom for the following reasons:

1. –America needs the Philippines as a naval base.

2. –The Philippine Islands are a good depository for America’s surplus products.”
3. –The Philippine Islands are a good source of supply for raw tropical materials for America
4. –America needs the Filipinos as wage earners and consumers.

Agudo observes that “America’s administration of the Philippine government tapers to the point to her favor” and concisely outlines the relationship of the Philippines to the U.S.:

Since the outset of Spanish occupation of the Philippines, we had been artificially brought up and we are still undergoing artificial mental development and artificial leanings and tastes under the “benevolent” tutelage of America. Our country is also undergoing artificial economic development. And what would be the inevitable outcome of all this? And what would happen with the artificially, economically developed Philippines with its artificially developed people?

We must bear in mind that America has become a strong and powerful nation in the world today because she controls over 90 per cent of her national wealth. All leading industries are in the hands of the American people. All her lands are preserved for her future generations. This is the reason why peoples ineligible to American citizenship are barred from owning and leasing lands in the United States.

...The granting of our independence depends upon ourselves. We can either hasten or delay it. And to hasten it means to go back from where we started. To go back is a very much shorter way than to go ahead with our present expensive method of fighting for our freedom.¹⁹

The “Stars and Roses” column of January 8, 1934 describes Agudo glowingly as an “unsung hero” and the “brain-trust of the local Filipino Community...great organizer...public tongue...spell-binding orator.”²⁰ Agudo’s staff (some of whom also supplied funds to keep the newspaper going) was comprised of B.L. Lozares, P.M. Olivete, Gabriel D. Javier, and Philip Barreras.²¹ One of his writers, Gabriel Q. Arellano, had been part of the group led by the fiery Pablo Manlapit, who initiated the Filipino Labor Union (FLU) in Hawaii in 1919,²² and campaigned for establishment of the union in California as early as 1928. Manlapit was arrested and charged with plotting to recruit Filipinos into the Communist party.²³ Arellano’s editorials were described as “hard-hitting, anti-capitalist, pro-labor editorials.”²⁴ With Agudo, D.L. Marcuelo, the managing editor of the *Three Stars* in Stockton, took up the cause, and founded the Filipino Laborer’s Union, incorporating it in Salinas in 1933.

Following the Japanese and Chinese fishcutters’ strike of 1920, Filipino workers were hired to work in the sardine canning industry, and their numbers increased in Monterey County as it became an important stop on their migratory route. Later, during the Great Depression, community leaders in Pacific Grove and Monterey (about 20 miles west of Salinas) worried that Filipinos might settle in the area; they cited a labor imbalance, claiming that Filipinos were taking up jobs that should go to “local” workers. In 1930, carefully negotiating between various ethnic and class factions in the area, Luis Agudo—acting as “a Filipino representative”—suggested that Filipinos be hired only after local workers were employed, “or in such positions as white laborers cannot or would not fill.” Soon after, a resolution was passed by Pacific Grove and Monterey Chambers of Commerce, giving priority to hiring “local” [white] laborers.^{25 26}

Agudo's diplomatic concession may have been an attempt to soothe the white population. Vigilantism was on the rise; in the same year, the infamous Watsonville anti-Filipino Riots took place, another example of the growing racism and resentment against Filipinos in California during the Great Depression. The events culminated in sniping incidents and the killing of Filipino fieldworker and labor activist Fermin Tobera. Howard De Witt notes that, in fact, Agudo "on September 13, 1930...complained about the Monterey business communities attempt to exclude the local Filipino population from good paying employment."²⁷ There was no reason, Agudo complained, for such an organized hostile reaction to the Filipino. "...The Monterey Filipino, Agudo stated, was as American as anyone in the Monterey-Pacific Grove area."²⁸

In the January 29, 1934 edition, the newspaper announced an "important change in ownership," which reveals some of the many partnerships and shifting roles that it took to keep the newspaper alive: "Following the dissolution, by mutual consent, of the partnership existing for many months between Luis Agudo, Frank Connor, Delfin F. Cruz and Venerando C. Gonzales, publication of the paper was taken over by a company headed by Rufo C. Canete as manager and Miss Consuelo Antonio as treasurer. Miss Antonio represents her father, Mr. Francisco Antonio." Agudo and Connor remained editors, but "Mr. Cruz . . . asked for and has been granted an indefinite vacation."²⁹ Nevertheless, Cruz later returned, and eventually became the newspaper's primary editor.

By virtue of its unusual stability, its deep involvement in local politics and labor, and its function as a "training ground" for Filipino reporters, according to staff writer Jose de los Reyes, *The Philippines Mail* provided models for other aspiring Filipino writers and editors. Alex Fabros, Jr. (the son of Alex Fabros, Sr.) writes that Cruz

...championed the cause of exploited Filipino workers. His editorials influenced sympathetic Americans to reassess their opinions of Filipinos. He pointed out the inequity of the two tier wage system, then prevalent in California. White American farm laborers received a "living wage" of 50 cents an hour. Filipinos were grudgingly given only ten cents an hour, a dollar a day.³⁰

The newspaper handled a wide variety of news, but its editors were deeply involved in local labor and migration issues and concerned about the many violent confrontations that beset Filipino workers in the area; thus the editorials and articles tended to be outspoken.

Delfin Cruz hailed from Tarlac province, in the Philippines; he was Ilokano—a connection he shared with most of the Filipino field laborers that arrived in California during the Depression era. He worked briefly in the fields, had no newspaper background, yet soon found himself devoting most of his time to editing the *Philippines Mail*. While Cruz was the guiding voice behind the newspaper, Alex Fabros Sr. did much of the writing, including political articles and editorials, although his byline was rarely seen, except in a social column entitled "Stars and Roses." According to his son, Alex Jr., he often used pseudonyms when the writing staff dwindled (there was frequent turnaround of writers, who often disappeared in order to follow the crops).³¹

Both Cruz and Fabros Sr. were unusually adept at networking; Cruz had friends who owned local businesses, and he was good at bringing in ads. A number of his extended family members lived in major cities across the U.S., and they acted as his contacts for national Filipino news (The *Philippines Mail* rarely published news items that were not related to Filipinos in some way). Fabros had come to the U.S. as a pensionado, and attended Hartnell college, where he edited the

college sports paper, and was a member of the Filipino Club; he was articulate and outgoing, and used his College friendships to make inroads into the white community. There were frequent references to Hartnell College events in the newspaper. Employed as a caretaker for an influential local dentist, Fabros Sr. made contacts through his employer that were useful to the newspaper.

As the Great Depression deepened into the 1930s, and as Filipino workers began increasing strike action to raise their wages, there were increasing terrorist attacks on them, making it obvious they were no longer welcome. The May 15, 1933 issue reported Filipinos and Mexicans of the Cannery and Lettuce Workers' League had banded together in Pajaro Valley to demand a wage increase of 35 cents per hour, over the 15 cents per hour that they were being paid. There were fears of violence, and the kicker³² under the headline announced that the "Strike Area [was] Guarded As Situation Becomes Intense."³³ In Escalon, later that summer, "Nightriders" broke into a camp bunkhouse. "Nine of the 21 Filipinos were asleep in the house when the 'Nightriders,' unmasked, appeared and gave them '24 hours to leave town,'" according to a deputy. "The white men started to leave when their leader is reported to have said, 'let's get them out now.' They returned." The bunkhouse was trashed, and the farmworkers were dragged out and beaten, resulting in broken bones on at least two of them; others fled.³⁴

The Filipino Repatriation Act of 1935 convinced roughly 1600 Filipinos to return to the Philippines. But the *Philippines Mail* reported on the "Exodus" of Filipinos as early as May 15, 1933:

Discouraged by the prevailing slack demand for labor, low rates of wages being offered, and slurs, such as the law forbidding marriages to Caucasians [sic] and the Dickstein deportation bill, California Filipinos have started an extensive exodus to their former homes in the Philippine Islands.³⁵

Nevertheless, many Filipinos remained, and struggled to survive in the U.S., as well as to defend their civil rights. The *Philippines Mail* published "Our Code and Credo" in the Monday, September 11, 1933 issue. Calling the newspaper a "humble four-page fortnightly" with a five-person staff, they announced that they worked without salary "as the Mail is not making enough to support itself." In response to President Roosevelt's policy to "restore prosperity by stimulating industry, increasing buying power and putting more people to work," the staff saw their role similarly, asking readers to spend their earnings within their local communities "to enable these communities to put more unemployed people to work." This credo goes against the grain of the usual practice of sending most of one's earnings home to family. Filipino workers were struggling to make changes in both local and national legislation; they were working hard to oppose or to push legislation affecting Filipinos, and to fight for the rights of Filipino laborers. In effect the Credo announced that they were feeling much more invested in events happening in the U.S. and locally.

Testimonials and Plays

Throughout 1933 and 1934, the *Salinas Index-Journal* (Salinas' newspaper of record) reported—often in banner front page headlines—on increasingly agitated labor protests occurring in San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle. On July 2, 1934, as Filipinos prepared for the Salinas lettuce strike, the *Index Journal's* front page story announced that in San Francisco, the "Dock Crisis

Draws Thousands to Piers,” and “Violence Feared as Deadline Nears.”³⁶ The dockworker’s strikes in San Francisco soon turned violent as the newspaper reported that the National Guard had been brought in: “Soldiers May Mass Along Waterfront to Quell Pier Battles.”³⁷ On July 9, it was reported that the important “Harvest of Sugar Beets Started Today.”³⁸ Filipinos were the primary agricultural workers in the beet fields south of Salinas.

Luis Agudo organized Filipinos to participate in the Salinas lettuce strike of August 1934—the first strike of the Filipino Laborer’s Union, even as the *Index-Journal*’s front page reported, “TONG WAR FEARS FELT HERE.” The Salinas Chinatown area—where many Filipinos lived, and where their union hall was located—was reported to be “under close guard.”³⁹ The Filipinos teamed up with Anglo workers in another attempt to bring fieldworkers a living wage. The *Philippines Mail* announced it as “the biggest strike of Filipino field workers in the history of Filipino labor in California.” The event drew violent repercussions, but these were not unusual in the experience of the Filipino farm worker. In September 21, 1934, the “Green Gold Valley Camp” of contractor and progressive Filipino labor organizer Rufo Canete was torched by white vigilantes, who were allowed to proceed with impunity.⁴⁰ The newspaper presented photographs and first-hand testimonials of the vigilante attacks on field workers. Rather than simply letters, or quoted reports, the accounts came from readers; their reports were shaped into short, finished pieces that amounted to essentially short feature articles with strong emotional content. Mrs. Margarita Vitacion wrote about the panic and fear she experienced:

The whole night was a horrible nightmare to me. I felt life was ebbing away every passing minute, especially when bullets continuously whizzed by my ears, shoulders and back. The first bullet that went through our room grazed my scalp slightly and burned part of my hair on the left side. Hardly had I recovered from the shock, when another one, with weird shrilling sound, swiftly passed through my hair again. I was almost unconscious. My husband pulled me out of the room. He was running—Dragging me along. I was taken to the volleyball court where everyone had gathered.

...While sitting in our car at the volleyball ground I was half-dazed by the shock and nervousness. I was thinking of the fate that might have befallen upon our only son, Ubing. We have not seen him since the camp was set on fire.

We stayed at the volleyball court all night. At 3 o’clock in the morning we were again attacked by a band from behind the garage. The men were shooting very low. My husband and I jumped off our car and ran to the ditch. There we stayed the rest of the morning hours.⁴¹

Ciricaco Carrillo reports how violence erupted within the context of an ordinary work day:

I was living at the last bunkhouse of Mr. Canete’s labor camp, which was the focal point of attack and the first house that was set on fire on the night of Sept. 21st.

At 8 o’clock that evening, after engaging in a conversation with some boys at the kitchen, I went to my room and got ready to go to bed. I had about 40 minutes chat with my room-mates before preparing to retire. We were relating stories that happened in the Philippines. We were all having a jolly time and never thought that anything was going to happen at the camp that night.

At about 9 o’clock I was taking off my shoes when I heard people talking at a distance. Their conversation was audible, but not comprehensible.

A few minutes after, I heard a volley of shots. Some bullets went through our window, broke the glasses [sic] and hit the walls of our room. I managed to get out—rolled myself out of the door as bullets were hissing by. If I walked out standing I knew I had no chance to escape being hit, as bullets were coming thick and fast.

The attackers were scattered at the rabbits' yard. From the door I crawled towards the chicken coop. While crawling a bullet hit my cap and carried it away. I then laid flat on the ground and rolled towards the chicken coop, near the pig pen. There I remained motionless for some minutes.

While at the coop—only a few yards from where the attackers were—I was struck with fear when I saw a good number of men. I believed they were over 50. They were making a lot of noise. They were all white men. I could see them very clearly but I could not recognize any of them.

While others were shooting, some were throwing bottles of ___ or gasoline at our bunkhouse. This was followed by lighted bottles which were stuffed, I believed, with rags to light the gas-bathed bunkhouse.

A few moments later, I saw our bunkhouse on fire. As it started to burn the invaders aimed their guns and rifles at the fire to prevent anyone from putting it out.

At this time, I looked around and ran to a place of safety. I then joined later with my panic-stricken fellow countrymen.⁴²

I left the chicken coop as I was afraid they would see and shoot me. Oh! That was the most terrible night in my life...

Six testimonials were published in that issue of the *Mail* during a period of fear and turmoil within the Filipino community in Salinas. The reports, however, were read in many Filipino communities in California and the northwest. Crossing the line between journalism, personal communication, and essay, they report personally and subjectively on historical and traumatic events. As John Beverley points out in his essay on the Latin American "testimonio," the genre "affirms the relation between the individual and group."⁴³ Similarly, the published Filipino testimonials helped to bond Filipinos immediately after the attacks, and in the events that followed.

The Salinas Index-Journal reported its own versions of the events. The headline in bold of the September 21 report announced: [Sheriff] "M'KINNON SLASHED BY FILIPINO" in a picket line incident that had happened earlier on the day of the attack on the camp. Subheads beneath it confirmed: "Deputy Sheriff Knifed In Arm During Early Morning Skirmish," "Missiles Hurlled by Fieldhand Pickets," and "Crowd Is Held Back By Pistols in Hands of Authorities."⁴⁴

The front page headlines of the September 22 edition, announced "Canete Camp Blaze Will Be Probed," and "Sheriff Says Whites Did Not Start Flame." The article explained,

It was believed in some quarters that the fire was planned by whites, but Sheriff Carl H. Abbott and some growers and shippers were of the opinion that the blaze was started by Filipinos.

Sheriff Abbott said this morning that he believed Filipinos who were enemies of Canete had staged the "party."

Some growers and shippers, who claimed they were well-advised, said Filipino contractors were instructed by whites to “get Canete’s camp” because of the islander’s active participation in the strike, which has resulted in grave danger of Filipinos being barred from Salinas valley fields.⁴⁵

The October 1, 1934 front page editorial of the Philippines Mail eloquently conveyed the indignation and fears of the Filipinos in the Salinas area following the attack:

Law Must Be Respected

The foundation and structure of all civilized and enlightened countries is a code of laws for their government. Without laws everything would be chaos and anarchy. Even the most primitive tribes have laws for their government.

The laws of the United States of America are fashioned after the laws of England and Great Britain, but we do not have the same law and order in the United States as in England and Great Britain, for the simple reason that the people of this country have not the same respect for the law as they have in those countries. Nor do the governmental agencies of this country enforce the law with the same vigor as do the governmental agencies in Britain. Hence, vigilante outbreaks with lawless attacks on inoffensive people, accompanied by shooting and burning of dwellings, such as the recent vigilante attacks on the Filipino workers in the vicinity of Salinas during the past week.

The cancer that is eating at the heart of the American Republic is disrespect for the law, non enforcement of the law by governmental executive officers, resulting in vigilante outrages. No government can stand under these conditions.

Kidnapping and holding for ransom has become a highly lucrative profession in this country earning its operators millions of dollars annually, paid in tribute by American citizens. Forty years ago the press of this country regularly printed articles of the banditry in the Balkan States of Europe and Turkey, but those states are like quiet peaceful New England villages in comparison with the United States today.

The deplorable part of the recent attack on the home of R. C. Canete is that the men who made the attack and burned down his bunkhouses occupied by over 60 Filipino field laborers were bent on murder of the most brutal and atrocious type—shooting and burning alive. They shot into the private dwelling house of Canete, occupied by Canete, his wife and two young children, who narrowly escaped death.

It brings back to memory the Indian raids of murder, rapine and burning of the early days on the western plains of the United States.

That men of education, wealth and social position should revert to acts of primitive savages in this day and age is beyond all comprehension. But the people of the Salinas valley should take stock of this situation and call on their officers to enforce the law before an act is done which shall shock the community and disgrace them before the world.⁴⁶

Prior to the Canete camp incident, fears of violence and riots sparked by labor unrest (not only in the Salinas area, but also in major cities on the West Coast) were rampantly, even hysterically, headlined in bold font in *The Salinas Index-Record*, nearly every day. The Lindbergh kidnapping

trial was also much in the news, thus the reference to “kidnapping and holding for ransom,” although it was also another way to point to a general sense of mid-Depression Era chaos. In this editorial, the writer attempts to remind the reader that laws are in place to provide some basis for reasonable action, and that they must be observed.

Emotions had already been high in the Filipino community during late 1933, and early 1934 as workers established the Filipino Labor Union and began organizing and preparing for the Salinas lettuce strike. Such events demanded community involvement, and Filipinos dramatized their situation in a way that echoed the “seditious” plays so popular in the Philippines during the Philippine-American war period.⁴⁷ As in most Filipino communities of that era, the annual Rizal Day events reflected the immediate concerns of the participants as well as the audience. Plays about Rizal were a frequent part of this. While the scripts were not excerpted in the newspaper, the “reviews” illustrate the emotional significance of the plays to the community during this difficult time, as well as the continuing importance of Rizal as a symbol of courageous and selfless action on behalf of nation and community.

In December 1932, the *Mail* reported on the front page that rehearsals were being held for a three-act play “in elaborate detail,” put on by the Filipino Women’s Club about the prison yard execution of Jose Rizal: “Historic Event in [Luneta] Prison Grounds Will be Presented in Elaborate Detail by Full Cast of Amateur Actors. With elaborate scenery, stage settings and costumes, and with a cast of characters that will include the best Filipino amateur talent...” Two members of the Filipino Women’s Club, Mrs. C.C. Morales (President), and Mrs. H.S. Civil (Vice President), were cited as having important roles in shaping and presenting the play to the community.⁴⁸

The Rizal Day play of December 1933, was a major event for the community, well-attended “Admist a surging ground of 2000 people,”⁴⁹ according to a long and extremely detailed article, and it apparently reflected the mood of the audience:

Drama Portraying Martyrdom of Patriot Brings Tears to Eyes of Many People in Vast Audience in Civic Club Auditorium...

“The heavy downpour which occurred during the latter part of the day, and continued in the early hours of the evening, did not stop [people] from coming [to join] the immense throng that assembled to see the program. Every available standing space of the hall was occupied...[Stage] settings portrayed two epochs of Philippine history—Spanish period and the period of the Filipino revolution against Spain...The 14-piece orchestra of Luis Luengo attracted many an admiring eye. Members of the band wore military caps...The first scene of the play vividly portrayed the picture of Rizal when he received his death sentence from Civil Governor Polavieja.”⁵⁰



Fig. 11. Front page of Dec. 25, 1932 issue of *Philippines Mail* showing headline for “Women’s Club Rizal Day Feature.”

The mood of the play, with its setting during the revolutionary period, was military, but its focus on Rizal’s execution by the Spanish was designed to create an emotional bond within the Filipino community. The topic of Rizal’s martyrdom was especially appropriate within the context of the violence Filipinos had been experiencing in the central California area for the previous several years. Ironically, in the middle column of the same page, there was a report of “race fighting” in Sacramento. The headline read: “Knives Flash During Fierce Race Fighting.” The two kickers beneath it summarize the encounter and its results: “Filipino New Year’s Eve Celebrants are Attacked By Mob in Sacramento as They Start Jolly Parade,” “5 Persons, Including One Policeman, Sent to Hospital With Stab Wounds.” The report went on to detail how approximately 50 Filipinos and “an even larger crowd of Americans” were involved.⁵¹ It’s not surprising, then, that the play seemed to be urging its audience towards courageous action.

The article summarized all of the major scenes in the play, describing each change of set, naming all the actors and their roles, and describing the audience response:

With an open field, trees and mountains as the background, the execution of Rizal on Bagumbayan field by a Spanish squad was realistically re-enacted. Unlike the first scene, strict silence reigned supreme in the audience. Sadness was readable in every face. The Spanish medical officer approached Rizal, felt his pulse and reported, “Pulse normal.” The priest, following strictly the roman Catholic ritual, put his right arm around Rizal’s

shoulders and requested him to confess and pray. As both the priest and Rizal were praying, a voice, low and sweet, was heard reciting Rizal's "My Last Farewell." Sobs and sighs were audible from the audience. There were tears in every eye. And as the final hour of the hero approached, the silence was abruptly disturbed by the command of the commanding officer, "Blindfold him." Rizal refused to be blindfolded, as "I am not a traitor." He was then turned with his back to the soldiers. But as the command "Prepare, aim, fire" was given, Rizal wheeled around facing the soldiers. As he was lying prostrate on the ground, taps were sounded. The medical officer felt his pulse and reported "He's dead."

The characters of the second scene were: Commanding officer, Roman Aliado; Rizal, S. Soria; Priest, G.D. Javier; Physician, V.C. Gonzales. Ray Camcam, Sam Camcam, Tirso Babliera, B.C. Taclay, J. Bartolome, B. Ramos, P. Villanueva, M. Lale and G. Gonzales were members of the Spanish squad.

The statue of the "Cry of Balintawak," Rizal's tomb, mountains, trees and palms formed the scene of the last act. The oriental scenery on the canvas was painted by F. Lomongo, of Salinas.⁵²

The importance of the event was further underlined by the guests who were present. Among many others, this included: Luis Agudo, founder of the *Philippines Mail* and co-founder of *The Three Stars*; Pastor Juan Callao, who gave an opening invocation; former state senator C.C. Baker; Mrs. C.C. Morales, President of the Filipino Women's Club; Rufo Canete, President of the Filipino Labor Union (whose camped would be attacked by vigilantes in September, 1934), along with a musical trio, a vocal quartet, and two bands: The Malayan Syncopators, and the *Mail's* Blues. Truly, the whole community wanted to be involved in the production.

While the *Mail* rarely published the writing of women in its pages—aside from their poems—it reported occasionally on their creative and scholarly successes. On this occasion an "editorial" review commented on the drama created entirely by Filipinas, juxtaposing their project with that of the male-oriented organization of the Filipino Labor Union:

Two events of the last month of the Old Year are outstanding. First, it was the men, who organized the Filipino Labor Union to deal collectively with employers when it comes to formulating wage scales and hours for the 1934 harvest season. Next it was the women, represented by the Filipino women's club, who sponsored the Rizal day observance here Saturday evening, Dec. 30. It is with the women, bless their hearts, that this article is principally concerned.

Featuring their program with a three-act drama depicting realistically the martyrdom of Dr. Jose Rizal, beloved Filipino patriot, they did something, and did it successfully, never before attempted on this side of the broad Pacific, and probably not on the other side either. Of course all Rizal Day exercises are interesting, but to those who have attended them year after year there has heretofore been noticeable about them a little of what we might call 'sameness...'"

In staging the drama the women got at the very heart of the subject in a way that proved not only interesting, but also highly instructive and deeply inspiring....

The Filipino Women's Club deserves credit for introducing this new feature of Rizal day programs...⁵³

The juxtaposition strongly suggests that the successful production of the play had an important function in raising the political consciousness of the community, and furthermore the writer considered it to be an important first for Filipino theater in the U.S.⁵⁴

Not all the plays were serious. In August, 1933, the *Mail* reported on a three-act comedy, “Three in One,” performed in San Francisco. It was written by Trinidad Rojo---who had contributed essays to the *Advocate*, and many Filipino newspapers published in California. The director was A. Nolasco, who lived in San Francisco. According to the report, the play, “based upon a native Philippine story,” about a young woman and her suitors, was “‘highly’ commended by a mixed audience of Americans and Filipinos as the most entertaining comedy ever played here by a Filipino in years.” Although the comedy was staged in San Francisco, it was sponsored by the Filipino Christian Fellowship of Salinas, to raise money for a community building in that town.⁵⁵ Thus, the plays, whether serious or comedic, often had pragmatic goals: to inspire courage and action during times of need and anxiety, or to lighten spirits with humor, and to raise funds for community projects.

The Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society

The poems featured in the *Philippines Mail* rarely tackled labor issues head-on; instead they focused on the emotional undercurrents felt by Filipinos in the U.S. And those undercurrents, often voiced by still-youthful writers seemed primarily to be about love, the loss of love, or of sentimental longings for homeland and family. While sentimental poems were often published they were not always appreciated, and that type of content was occasionally criticized.

In order to support local Filipino poets, editor Delfin Cruz and a number of writers for the *Philippines Mail* decided to create a poetry club, in order to introduce more literary material into the newspaper, as well as to work on their own poetry-writing skills. The poetry club went through several name changes, starting with the “Shakespeare Club,” then the “Rizal Poetry Society,” and finally, the ironically named “Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society.” Obviously influenced by John Steinbeck’s novels about farmworkers; the hispanized “Juan” claimed a non-white place in the primarily white focus of Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*, in an area where many of the farmworkers (the subject of the book) in California at that time were either Filipino or Mexican. Alex S. Fabros Jr. notes that

“the writers of the Philippines Mail would gather together on Sunday afternoons at the Juan de la Cruz Café on Pajaro Street in Salinas’ Chinatown. Here they would share a ‘chop suey’ dinner and fellowship. A small cup was passed around the table. As each person received the cup, the individual had the choice of telling a poem, a joke, a very short story or else downing a very bitter tasting Chinese tea. Mr. Delfin Cruz often printed the best of these literary gems that sprang forth from these dinners.”

Steinbeck’s work documented the lives of migrant fieldworkers in California, and as such reported the news through realist fiction. The coupling of Filipino poetry with the hispanization of Steinbeck’s given name suggest that Filipino writers saw poetry—even romantic and nostalgic poetry—as somehow linked to the prevailing social realist literary movement. Andrea Pitzer’s January 2010 article, “Poetry as Narrative Journalism? You’d Be Surprised” considers more contemporary collaborations between news writing and poetry. While poetry may not be able to confirm and document the details of a story, it can summarize and provide telling images of

events, and convey the emotions stirred in such events in a concise manner. She observes that “Poetry seems unlikely to replace standard print narratives and even less likely to supplant the inverted pyramid, but its future and the future of news may be bound together at the margins.”⁵⁶

According to Alex Fabros Jr., the poems written for the Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society were sometimes written for Filipinos not fluent in English who wished to pen poems to their sweethearts or family members. Hence, many of the poems expressed all the emotions one might expect of family members, friends, or lovers separated by time and long distance. Some of these poems were even published in the *Philippines Mail*, in sections reserved for literary work, such as “With the Muses.” The poems usually fell under several categories. Romantic poems were frequently full of longing, regret, or sadness. Often written by young writers still in college, these were youthful expressions of love and passion. Helen Santiago’s melancholy poem raises the kinds of questions that those who have been separated ask about love:

QUESTIONS

Can gray ashes be rekindled,
 Or old rose dust bloom again?
 Do we recapture melodies
 Of once dreamed of refrains?
 Does dead love bud into new life?
 Will you come back to me?
 I know through tears
 That such things live
 Only in memory.⁵⁷

When separated by thousands of miles of ocean, the possibility of rekindling love comes down to hard reality; the poet concludes that time and distance effectively put an end to such dreams. Poems were written in free verse (as in Helen Santiago’s poem) or (more often) in conventional rhyme. Gregorio S. San Diego’s “To Leonora” contemplates in rhymed iambic tetrameter the love and loyalty of martyr Jose Rizal’s sweetheart for eleven years, Leonor Rivera. Because Rizal at that time was known as a “filibustero” or revolutionary (even though his political intent fell short of “revolution”), her parents forced the two to part, and Leonor instead married a British man of her mother’s choice.

TO LEONORA: RIZAL’S FAITHFUL SWEETHEART

Oh, fond relations sometimes cease
 When Fate does break the binding tie,
 That even life remains one wish—
 And hopes too often die.
 But this you knew: “Love does not part,
 It lives—and living suffers too—
 That, in the patience of one’s heart,
 Love’s pain is sweet when true.
 And so, Leonora, you could meet
 Life’s mundane woes with silent song; --
 You’ve died believing Death was sweet,
 But Love was never wrong.

For like an everlasting flower,
 Your faith was ever strong—and so
 To him you're ever true.
 Ah! I still remember where you once
 In youth your young beau did divine,
 Though cruel years belied Love's power,
 When passion's budding in his breast
 He thought: "You're only mine."
 As you had seen a god in him,
 For sure he saw a soul in you; --
 He thought and sang and always dream'd
 Like you who loved and knew.⁵⁸

During the Depression Era, poems written by U.S. Filipinos about Rizal were almost always didactic, dwelling on values and characteristics that Rizal embodied, such as loyalty, courage, and strength of principal. This poem differs in its empathy with the sweetheart whose love is suppressed. The iambic stresses illustrate the insistant feelings of Leonora's love. Yet, differing from Helen Santiago's poem, it has a more formal, mournful tone, reminiscent of the old Spanish era, that recognizes the impassable gulf that parting creates.

Poems addressed to an absent mother were frequently published in the *Philippines Mail*, as well as in other U.S. Filipino newspapers (often on Mother's Day). In my readings I have not yet found a poem addressed to a father. In a culture thought to have been matriarchal prior to colonization, the "mother" image is highly symbolic for Filipinos, and has often functioned as a national symbol of the Philippines as motherland, especially during a period when Filipinos were still fighting to have the independence of the Philippine republic recognized.

It was common for Filipinos working overseas to hear of a parent's death far away in the Islands, as in this poem by Gregory San Diego:

ON MOTHER'S DEATH
 We'll die tomorrow: soon the Earth will show
 Where we will lie. Things living stay awhile—
 Like us—till show, like setting stars they go,
 And come no more. E'en Nature lends a smile
 In Spring; then summer comes and passes by—
 To fade in Autumn when the winter's nigh.
 Yes, we will go and pass where others pass'd.
 Who will return? He can not tell for sure.
 Who will remember? This we may know at last
 When life with love, while dying, yet endures.
 When we have lost this Life's brief afterglow,
 We may yet think that Death has lived now.⁵⁹

San Diego's twelve-line poem is written in iambic pentameter, and like a sonnet, suggests a conundrum to be solved—that of our limited life on earth. The rhyme scheme, which begins with AB AB in the first four lines turns on the change of seasons from spring and summer, to autumn and winter, when the rhyme shifts to CC, then DE DE, ending on FF. Like Santiago, he asks

questions, stressing the liminal status of the national and migrant worker, and the need to deal with separation, psychologically. Lack of money makes it difficult to say with certainty when or if one could return home. His poem suggests that, if a mother's love has been lost, at least the memory of it lingers.

Poems of disillusionment with life in the U.S. along with nostalgia for home comprise another category of poems commonly found in the *Philippines Mail*. This poem was attributed only to "J. A. F.":

DEFERRED PAYMENT

Thanks be to God, the lady sings,
 And pudgy hands with diamond rings
 Call upon the well-fed choir
 To chirp sweet thanks for blessings higher.
 Thanks be to God for roses red,
 But where am I to find a bed?
 Thanks be to God for lovely night—
 With nothing warm or dry in sight?
 Thanks be to God for love divine
 With such a gift why should I whine—
 Who only have to stand and take
 What Christians give for His dear sake;
 Thanks be to God? For what, say I?
 Perhaps when I arrive on high
 And stand before the judgment seat,
 I'll thank Him for enough to eat.⁶⁰

Using iambic tetrameter and a conventional and cliché rhyme scheme, the poem contemplates with some sardonic bitterness the difficulty of trying to better oneself in a racist society that does not provide a living wage. One can imagine the poet biting his tongue while accepting a handout from the local Salvation army, in the meantime composing these ironic lines.

"Our Poetic Humdrumness": Critical Voices

Gregory San Diego was one of only two Filipino students at UC Berkeley deemed "honor students." He was a junior majoring in philosophy. Both students were "self-supporting to a certain extent, either working in the city or in the farm during summer vacation" according to an article of Sept. 24, 1934. He occasionally provided a critical, literary voice in the *Philippines Mail*, as well as in other U.S. Filipino newspapers. In "Our Poetic Humdrumness" he promotes the values of nationalism over sensual romanticism or "mere sexual love" in poetry. The poems and criticism appeared during an important political period. As the issue's editorial announced, "the date of the inauguration of the government of the Philippine commonwealth approaches." However, the archipelago would not see actual independence until after World War II. The editorial also noted that the U.S. was stepping up its involvement in the mining of Philippine natural resources:

Some years ago, way back in 1926, when I was about to leave my beloved town of Morong I wrote a poem in Tagalog; and looking over my files again I read:

NATY KO

N-gayon-ko natahong sa lilim ng langit
 A-y walang pag-asa kung walang pagbig;
 T-uloy mangyayari ang boong pasakit,
 Y-aman ng Ligaya'y pilit mawawaglit.
 K-ung walang kasuyong sa init ng halik
 O-o kung magtampo't yakap kung magalit.

N-guni't ngayon ko rin nawaring wala na
 A-t lubos na yata ang pagka-u-lila,
 T-umawag man anong may buntong himinga—
 Y-akap mo at lambing ay ngayoo'y salat na.

K-aya't kung kahima'y ako ay malayo
 Ang bawa't bilin ko'y gawin mong pangako,
 O-o mong sinangla'y dapat mong itago
 Sa dibdib ng luha't sa Puso ng Puso.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to retain the initial capped letters of each line, which spell out the loved one's name in this translation:

DEAR NATY

Now I experienced beneath the heavens
 That there is no hope without love;
 Pain will continue to happen
 The richness of joy will be lost.
 If there is no loved one in the heat of a kiss
 Yes, an embrace when sulking.

But now I have realized the emptiness
 And the utter loneliness
 To call out with a sigh
 Your embrace and love now gone.

So, dearest, if I am afar
 Each of my instructions make into your promise
 Yes, the shame you have must be hidden
 In the breast of tears and the heart of hearts.⁶¹

This, of course, is characteristic of Filipino poetry. But here the reader will readily notice, how, like most Tagalog rhymers, I humbly bowed to the task of narrowly revolving my thoughts around an old disease of love-making. For out of her name I composed this bit of poetry; and love evidently was the sole inspiring spur that senselessly led to this. It is this love that blindly inspires the heart to sing.

Nevertheless, I have come to conceive that it is this form of love-disease of many a Filipino poet that sometimes limits—and it limits unfavorably—the range of his visions,

visions which are often archaic and [therefore] leads to bad usage. In the April 30th issue of the *Philippines Mail*, I have noticed—in the Student’s Corner—some poems imbued unfortunately with this love-disease of ours. In fact like my poem above most of them testified to, and so breathed under, the grip of romantic illusion. It is this sort of illusion that we wish to avoid. For under the spell of that delirious fancy of mere sexual love, which is commonly found among budding Tagalog poets but [this is an] old and over-used method, the one is liable to indulge in [for] beautiful effects...which often remind us of a seemingly nefarious humdrumness.

With humble apology, therefore, let me suggest that we write, not in a manner many of us are addicted to, nor in the peculiarly romantic tone of those love-sick swains who sing either in English or in any of our native dialects, but under the inspiration of a desire to [revel] in the beauty, not, I say again, of the opposite sex, but of our country; let us exalt the loveliness of our scenic Philippines. For, perhaps, we can think of love in a different way, because love does not always imply nor pre-suppose sex hunger. Perhaps love is the greatest motivating force that has driven genius to write immortal songs; nevertheless love has many forms, and if we write under the urge of mere sexual love we are sure to suffer, again and again, that poetic humdrumness common to us all. Lately I have come to believe so strongly against this Filipino trait of writing for the sake of merely extolling feminine qualities, that while composing this short informal essay I wrote a sonnet, “LAS ISLAS FILIPINAS,” in which I said:

Have ye, who sing of Clara’s lovely eyes,
 Forgotten Earth’s fair lilies on the seas?
 Or, breathing perfumes floating in the breeze,
 Known sweetness coming where the sun doth rise?
 Perhaps you’ve never [known] this Paradise,
 This haven of the pearls the blue depths mold,
 These ISLANDS sleeping where the waves unfold
 Rare rainbows flashing old Phoenician dyes.

For like our village lasses shy at love,
 Earth hides a thousand charms we never know;
 Yet here she waits half luring us to prove
 If love be known. True, we’ve loved and so

Of love she heard us singing long ago,
 But still we, Love’s believing, do not know.⁶²

The first poem, NATY KO, is an acrostic poem spelling out the loved one’s name. Acrostic poems were popular forms commonly used by Filipinos for writing love poems. While the *Mail* published its articles and essays in English, it often published poems both in English and Tagalog (untranslated). In fact, often, the Tagalog poems were dedicated to young women who were the recipients of ardent emotions. San Diego’s essay may seem contradictory in its criticism of the Tagalog poem as too romantic and “archaic” (seeming to link it also to the more lyrical language of the Spanish colonial period), while simultaneously advocating for a literature that promotes a romantic nationalism—in English. However, he argues that—even 30 years after the Filipino

American War—nationalism should remain a high ideal, one more important, even, than the sentiment of “mere sexual” love, which San Diego saw as “humdrum,” like the acrostic: only a novelty. Both poems were written as fourteen-line sonnets, but since love of nation was for him a higher expression of love, it would seem to have better fulfilled the poetic form.

San Diego may have been influenced by an essay written in the December 25, 1932 issue of the *Mail* by Trinidad Rojo. In what is perhaps the earliest Depression Era essay written in the U.S. to discuss how Filipino literature should develop after successive colonial periods, Rojo discusses what can yet be salvaged:

Borrowing of cultures there must be, but they must not warp and annihilate the native spirit, as American materialism has crushed the Hawaiian nation and civilization to the verge of extinction. As the sun shine, the air, and the water give nourishment to the plant, so cultural importation, if they are to benefit humanity should nourish, stimulate and invigorate natural maturation.

The Filipinos should not slavishly allow themselves to be Americanized, they should discriminate between what is appropriate and inappropriate for them, and Filipinize the Americanism they assimilate, and utilize it to promote a healthful and proportional development of what is central in the national genius.

Rojo links the development of literature to nationalism, and clearly situates Philippine independence as a requirement for the creation of that literature:

In other words national greatness is a priority to literary greatness, Great literatures are the product of great national moments, of periods of great vitality. Due to the condition of their births, all great literature[s] are national literatures. A great literature must portray the personality of the nation that produces it; it must depict what is particular and individual in the national life and characters. To be sure there must be universality in a great literature, but the universal must be grounded and fashioned by the local and the particular—the things which endow it with an individuality distinct and different from any other literature.

For Rojo, another requirement for creating a great national literature is familiarity with the language, and in this essay, he begins to articulate what would become for him an important project, to make Tagalog the national language of the Philippines:

As the language is exotic, ideas and thoughts expressed are frequently the reverberations of exotic ideas and thoughts, for thought has, to some extent, the tendency to follow the beaten tracks of language...History shows that no nation has ever attained its golden age in literature while using a foreign language as its medium and as long as it does not have a national language of its own.⁶³

Despite having to deal with many challenges to their civil rights in the U.S., Filipinos on the West Coast still identified strongly with the Philippines during the early to mid-Depression era. Conceiving of a Filipino literature that drew directly from life and language in the United States seemed almost tantamount to a betrayal of the aims of Philippine independence.

A more common approach to the issue of literary development is evident in an opinion piece published in the *Mail* in April 1934 by D.L. Marcuelo, editor of the *Three Stars* in Stockton. Here, he uses strong language to condemn the effects of colonization, but at the same time uses a

self-critical developmental discourse that is perhaps strongly influenced by U.S. rhetoric of individualism, and racist exceptionalism:

“For 400 years the Filipino race has been kept under slavery, like mere chattels handed from one Master to another. During these years they had not only been enclaved corporally, but had also been enslaved mentally, the worst retribution that could be inflicted upon a race. Thus the development of the individuality of the race was dwarfed and the power of self-expression was robbed of an outlet.

This explains...why the Filipino race, despite the evident fertility of its mentality, has not developed their literature, culture, psychology.”⁶⁴

Marcuelo’s piece—while succumbing in part to a Western developmental stereotype of the Philippines, does underline the importance of creating a literary oeuvre.

J.F. Galian’s “Reflections” column focused on various neighborhood scenes, as well as on the writer’s thoughts about the latest books and films. His approach is similar to the “Little Manila” and “I Cover Chinatown” columns in the *Advocate*; allowed some literary latitude, his subjective language made for a more literary description, as in his July 10, 1933 column:

The appearance of celebrities and glamour of success arouses the innermost longings and secret aspirations of the man in the streets, who forgets the camouflage of a creased suit that is shiny from constant wear. Denizens of the underworld meet the elite and panhandlers are lost in a crowd of brokers, tellers, scavengers and specialty salesmen. The inevitable newsboys in congested corners are oblivious of the deafening roar of traffic as they shout the latest extra...Uniformed theatre attendants announce with microphone tested voices the seats awaiting your occupancy within. Derelicts, who haven’t the slightest intention of making a world tour, step at steamship window displays [to] trace the Mediterranean on the map. To the city’s inhabitants yesterdays are drowned, todays are survived, and nothing remains but the most distant future.⁶⁵

Galian’s book reviews were brief, one-sentence summaries, but, as he noted in “Reflections” on July 24, 1933, they did convey a concern with distinguishing “the masterpiece from the mediocre.” Reflecting the current trend, his tastes tended toward the realist, and included Jane Austen, H.G. Wells, and mystery writers such as Edgar Wallace, Earl Derr Biggers, and Sax Rohmer. He wrote that “‘Zest’ by Charles G. Norris, excites the imagination to further inquiry”... and mentioned that “One of my favorite authors [is] Sinclair Lewis.” He dismissed Filipino modernist poet Jose Garcia Villa by saying simply yet ambiguously, “No writer has ever conceived Jose Garcia Villa’s idea of ‘Originality.’”⁶⁶

A few Filipino women—among them, Helen Rillera and Gertrudis Vera—contributed poems or articles; they dealt specifically with what then constituted women’s issues. Gertrudis Vera wrote an article entitled “What Does Marriage Mean To Me” (an essay on a wife’s proper behavior within marriage), and Helen Rillera contributed a longer essay on “The Filipina In Filipino Society.” While the former presented a safe and conservative view, Rillera’s article, as she claimed, came “straight from the heart,” to address a “disagreeable” topic, describing the difficulties of being a young Filipina in the U.S. during the 1930s, one of only a few, and as such, having to deal with the pressures and “inconsiderateness” of Filipino men. She writes about the irony and cruelty of being flattered and idealized on one hand, and fought over to the point of violence and “open warfare” on the other hand :

Another hurt that the Filipina is likely to suffer is unjust talk. From the minute she becomes known in the community, her every step is measured and judged—her faults are exaggerated, her good points mocked. No matter how sweet she may be, no matter what good aims and thoughts she entertains in her mind, there is always something wrong, or so it seems to those who always find something to criticize. Constructive criticism is a beneficial thing, but it should never be used to the extent that it hurts.

Some girls...have lived to be abused and mistreated. It is these girls who, believing the whole world is wrong, have also followed the wrong path, and have made their lives miserable...I have observed enough, I feel, to enable me to write this article. I, too, was taken away from baby dresses to evening gowns—playgrounds to dances—playmates to admirers. But I am a Filipina, and I want to make my Filipino brothers know me and understand me for what I am. I am anxious to do what I can so that a mutual understanding and no hard feelings may exist between them and myself. And I believe that is every Filipino girl's thought. She means well; but if her good meanings are not considered, she, too, becomes rebellious.

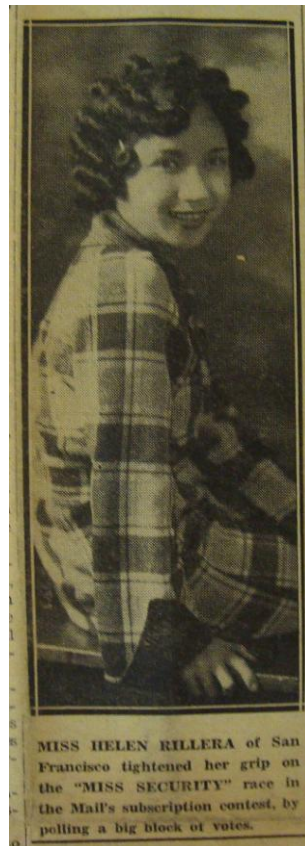


Fig. 12 Helen Rillera⁶⁷

This is an appeal to you, Filipino brothers. Your Filipino sisters want you to treat them as your real sisters—be protective instead of injurious—be considerate instead of fault-finding. They want to be your comrades. They want to be able to speak of you with their heads held high. Would you give them reason to?⁶⁸

Rillera's essay is one of very few by pinays who questioned the effects of placing the Filipina on a pedestal, and speaking about her only in the most idealistic terms. Filipinas were often mentioned when they achieved a scholastic honor, won a beauty contest, or sold the most newspaper subscriptions through the annual popularity contests. An article of May 29, 1933 shows that Filipinas worked very hard to raise funds for the newspapers:

Heavy Work in Salinas

Two popular young girls are engaged in heavy work in Salinas and vicinity. One, Miss Mary Looy, is campaigning silently but effectively. Miss Looy has organized a strong campaign force aided by her sister, Mrs. J.B. Sampayan of Spreckels, and Salinas Filipinos are rallying numerously to her support. Her campaign manager is F.U. Lopez.

The other, Miss Virginia Dubin, has an effective campaign organization, with Florendo Galvez of Watsonville, Cornelio Patacsil of Carmel and Socorro Camcam of Salinas as her managers in their respective districts. She is also planning to go to Palo Alto and Santa Maria with a view to organizing those communities in her support.⁶⁹

But little was said about the pressures and contradictions that Filipinas faced in the U.S., as a minority within a minority, making up only 5.6 percent of the 24,123 Filipinos entering the U.S. in the late 1920s.⁷⁰ Although it was not mentioned, Rillera's essay appeared about a year after an infamous crime in the Stockton area, in which a Filipina was beaten and brutally murdered after reportedly having been judged harshly as an adultress by a group of Filipinos (even though her own husband had forgiven her). Reports of the event reveal an already self-critical Filipino community under harsh scrutiny by the white population.⁷¹ The event as reported in the mainstream newspapers resulted in even harsher stereotyping of Filipinos as practitioners of "voodoo" and members of "fanatical cults,"⁷² a response that echoed the characterizations of Filipinos as "savages" as reported in early issues of the *Filipino Students' Magazine*.

Collaboration in Popular Causes

Kevin Starr writes: "Highly socialized, Filipino men tended to travel, hire out, and share living expenses together in groups that numbered from seven to twenty."⁷³ Given their transience, it's not surprising that the *Filipino Pioneer*, located in Stockton, listed California, Oregon, and Washington as publishing sites; while it illustrates that the newspaper had a wide-ranging readership, the range of cities also represented way-stations in the editors' peripatetic lives, following the crops. The editors of the *Three Stars* in Stockton and, about 200 miles away, the *Philippines Mail* in Salinas frequently collaborated on projects, and wrote articles and editorials appearing in each others' newspapers. This was often spurred by common causes.

The Monday April 24, 1933 edition of the *Mail* shows how editors from the different newspapers collaborated on events of interest. In "Rousing Welcome Given to Manila Militant Scribe," both Luis Agudo (then editor of the *Philippines Mail*) and D.L. Marcuelo (editor of *Three Stars*) as representatives of Mga Anak Ng Bukid, Inc. (sons of the farm) which was based in Stockton, welcomed the socialist editor of the Philippine newspaper Sakdal. The event was followed by a "general mass meeting" in Salinas on April 29, where they expected over one thousand Filipinos to attend, and organize to form a Filipino laborer's union.⁷⁴

In summary, the editors and writers of the *Philippines Mail*, like *The Advocate*, also addressed broad-ranging and recurring themes covered in so many U.S. Filipino newspapers: Philippine

independence; discriminatory immigration legislation; labor issues and the problem of low wages; the changing Filipino identity; and representation of Filipinos in the mainstream American press. They also discussed the state of Filipino literature, and published poems and to a lesser extent critical essays and brief book and film reviews. By contrast, Sally Miller observes, “The emphasis of the early Japanese-language press was on news of Japan.”⁷⁵ However, because violence and racist discrimination toward Filipinos was nearly unrelenting during the 1930s, *The Mail* necessarily focused on these issues in their local manifestations, reflecting the editors’ and writers’ passionate involvement in the labor movement.

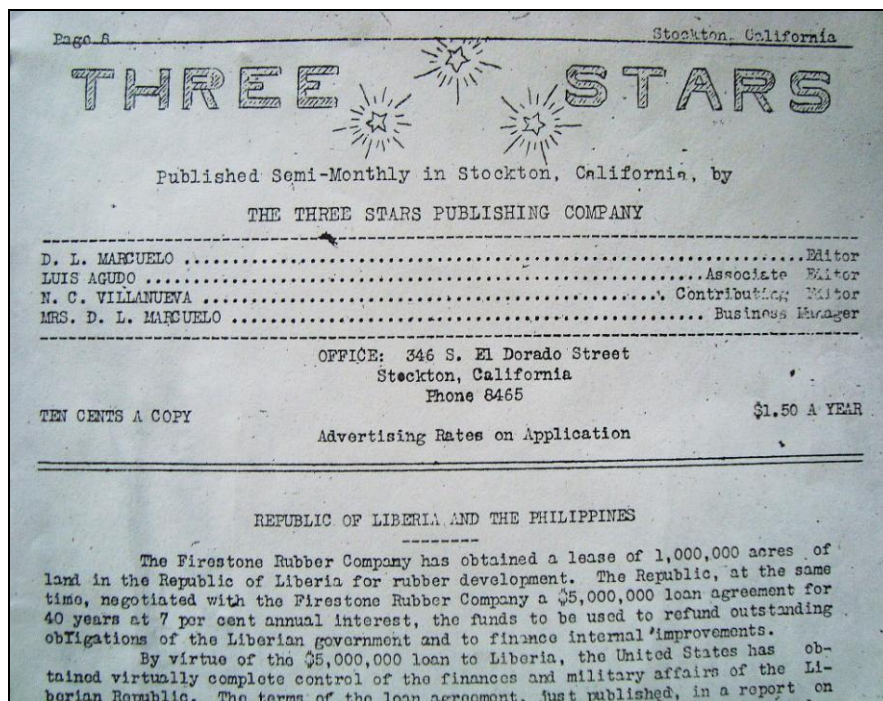


Fig. 13, Three Stars, hand-drawn masthead.⁷⁶

Stockton and the *Three Stars*

In *Filipinos in Stockton*, Dawn Mabalon and Rico Reyes note that an influx of sakadas (Filipino sugar plantation workers in Hawaii) arrived in the Stockton area during the 1920s, and that they comprised the largest group of farmworkers in that area by the end of that decade.⁷⁷ About two hundred miles north of Salinas, and one hundred miles north of San Francisco, the warm and fertile Sacramento and San Joaquin Delta areas provided another employment opportunity for Filipino workers in the rice and asparagus fields, and in the fruit orchards around the cities of Stockton and Sacramento.

With editor-in-chief D.L. Marcuelo and N.C. Villanueva, Luis Agudo co-founded the “semi-monthly” *Three Stars* in Stockton in 1928. The stars in its title referred to the three stars in the flag of the Philippine republic, which represented the north, central, and southern sections of the Philippines. Agudo was also founder and editor of the *Philippine Independent News* (later the *Philippines Mail*), which he founded in Salinas in 1921. The *Three Stars* differed from the *Philippines Mail* and the *Advocate* in the ambitious scope of its international reporting, its

frequent use of the feature essay, its inclusion of well-known white writers, and its more extensive use of articles and poems in English (primarily), Tagalog, and Ilokano. The latter was more accessible to the larger numbers of Filipino agricultural workers from the northern Philippines (many of them sakadas) who migrated to California. Unlike literally all of the other newspapers in this study, I saw very few reports of queen contests and subscription drives in *The Three Stars*.

The newspaper made frequent use of graphic images, photographs, or hand-drawn black and white portraits or cartoons, and even ads illustrated by one of the staff members. The *Philippines Mail* and *Three Stars* had in common their support of the Filipino laborer, and their nationalist sentiments for the Philippines, which influenced their outlook on literature, the arts, and political issues.

The Three Stars editors outlined their intent in the first issue:

In view of the number of Filipino workers residing in and out of San Joaquin Valley, with Stockton as their headquarters, we therefore have felt the necessity of putting out this paper with the view to keep them in touch with the vital problems of their homeland and news as well, and to keep them informed of the substantial and educational questions of America and other nations. Then and only then can we hope to develop a broader perspective in human affairs—develop public opinion more wholesome, requisite in the perennial and ennobling principles of democracy.

From the beginning, the newspaper highlighted global politics and related them to local issues. The editors were especially interested in pointing out the problems of imperialist exploitation of natural as well as labor resources. D.L. Marcuelo was a former pensionado and an ardent Philippine nationalist.⁷⁸ An outspoken, and articulate attorney, he was a respected and important community figure. An active member of the Filipino businessmen's association, he also—with Luis Agudo, and the support of many Filipino workers—founded the Filipino Labor Union (F.L.U.), as promoted by Pablo Manlapit, in 1933—not an easy project, since those involved with the project were often subject to attacks.⁷⁹



Fig. 14. Photo of Damiano L. Marcuelo in *the Three Stars*⁸⁰

Howard Dewitt observes that Marcuelo “credited his ideas and organization to [Jose] Rizal, and modeled *The Three Stars* after Rizal’s publication, *La Solidaridad*.”⁸¹ Marcuelo reminded California Filipinos that Rizal’s writings and his life exemplified the virtues of Philippine nationalism. In fact, the *Three Stars* featured Rizal’s diary of his California travels in serial form; placing him historically in California enabled readers to further identify with the values of the national hero.⁸² The *Three Stars* frequently addressed the issue of Philippine independence, as well as local labor issues, and included articles by people who had also contributed years earlier to the *Filipino Student* at U.C. Berkeley. The *Three Stars* more deliberately crossed class and ethnic boundaries, drawing contributors from white politicians and writers, and liberal activists, as well as from other racial and ethnic groups.

The importance of the support of local organizations was evident in the newspaper. Mga Anak Ng Bukid (Children of the Fields) was frequently mentioned. Both D.L. Marcuelo and Luis Agudo held important offices in the organization. According to the Sept. 1, 1928 issue, the organization began as a labor contractor supplying The Free Employment Bureau in Stockton with Filipino workers, and arranging their transport from Hawaii to California. In time, it seems to have become a more militant organization that represented the workers. A Sept. 15, 1928 article in *the Three Stars* reports on N. C. Villanueva’s speech representing Mga Anak Ng Bukid to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. Villanueva was listed as Contributing Editor for the *Three Stars*, and was the President of the Filipino Welfare Association, which served as a board of arbitration between Filipino workers and their employers.⁸³ His opinion was solicited about the effect of a law that would limit immigration of Filipinos to the U.S. At one point, the organization could boast its own chaplain and even a “symphony” orchestra.⁸⁴

There were typically two or three references to various Filipino Masonic organizations in each issue of the *Three Stars*; these included brief reports of events, installation of officers, and

highlights of speeches. The January 1, 1929 issue, dedicated to Jose Rizal, mentioned that “Mr. Marcuelo [had] delivered a welcome address” to a meeting of the “A.F. & A.M., Inc., a local Filipino Masonic organization.” In the speech, Marcuelo “discussed some high points of Masonry, as leading to Universal understanding and peace.” Another speaker at the meeting, P.D. Lazaro reminded members that “It was the Filipino Masonic Organization which first kindled the first Filipino Revolution against...Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines.”⁸⁵

Jose Rizal, the subversive novelist and nationalist martyr, was also a Mason, and his journal, “Solidaridad” was named after his Masonic Lodge.⁸⁶ The fact that the managing editor of the *Three Stars* was an active member of the Masonry may have enabled the staff to make connections to the white community, businessmen, politicians, and writers who could give their support.⁸⁷ For Marcuelo and other Filipino members, Masonry may have also been a way of associating themselves with the Philippines’ revolutionary history, as well as with the elite group of free-thinking men who sparked the revolution against the Spanish colonizers. John Shumacher points out that the literary and artistic endeavors of the Philippine *Ilustrados*—of which Rizal became the symbol—was geared toward promoting a national consciousness that was “distinctly Filipino.”⁸⁸ With Rizal as their ideal, Marcuelo, Agudo, and other Filipino editors in the U.S. continued to espouse the nationalist path (as the Philippines struggled to win independence back from the U.S.), but applied this fervor also to their labor activism and their editorials, essays, critiques, and poetry.

The *Three Stars* seemed constantly to be a work in progress, likely reflecting its financial status. The column widths, style of typeface, article headlines, nameplate, and logo changed frequently, and sometimes drastically. The September 1, 1928 issue (No. 1) had a magazine-like cover illustrated with a large, full-page illustration, by M. Luna, of an unnamed Filipino man—possibly Jose Rizal—brandishing a bolo and holding a Philippine flag. The text as well as the headers were in Times serif typeface. By October 15, Nos. 4 and 5 (the Philippine Flag Day issue), the entire text was hand-typed. The nameplate, and the largest headers were hand-drawn and printed. The whole issue appears to have been reproduced on a spirit duplicator or mimeograph. In Vol. 1, No. 7 (1929), the advertisements, too, are drawn by hand (often charmingly cartooned by M. Luna), with typed text. Vol. 2, No. 1 (July 2, 1929) was fully typeset with a simple serif font; the nameplate “Three Stars” included an illustration of the sun high in the sky, an airplane, three stars, and two American landscapes, one urban, and the other rural. By No. 11, May 1929, all illustrated elements of the nameplate were gone, replaced by a simple title, “The Three Stars,” in large serif font. By February, 1930, the sun was moved down to the horizon, and the simple serif font was replaced by Old English style, still used in newspapers today. As time went by, the newspaper took on a more professional look, well into the 1930s, and its heading and typography style stabilized. There was more frequent use of photographs.

“In the Interest of Exploited Peoples”: Editorials and Essays

News reports in the *Three Stars* were generally brief and objective; but its editorials and essays—frequently concerned with questions of capitalist exploitation in the Philippines and elsewhere—were often didactic and opinionated. Because of the downturn of the economy, and resultant job losses, 1930 was a particularly difficult year for Filipinos in central California. In January of that year, farmworker Fermin Tobera was killed by vigilantes in Watsonville.⁸⁹ A few

days later, the Superior Court of Los Angeles ruled that marriages performed between Filipinos and whites since 1921 were invalid. On January 29, two white men bombed the Filipino Federation building in Stockton. In the Imperial Valley there were also attacks on Filipinos and a bombing.

Editorials and op-eds tended to be detailed and to present more facts and statistics than the other Filipino newspapers. The editorial, “Republic of Liberia and the Philippines,” criticized the Firestone Rubber Company’s purchase of Liberian land; it is a good example of the newspaper’s global perspective and anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist discourse:

The loan agreement and the acquisition by the Firestone Rubber Company of 1,000,000 acres of lands, place Liberia on a status of dependent colony of the United States. In other words, the Republic of Liberia, with all that it has, is mortgaged to the Firestone Rubber company [and] the government of the United States, through its president, is acting as a trustee of the Company. The loan agreement, since it came into effect, deprives the people of Liberia of the rights to negotiate with other countries for a loan and such other things as would be beneficial to the welfare of the Liberian government.

Quezon and Osmena and other Filipino leaders who advocate free flow of American capital into the Philippines should not overlook to take note of the Liberian affairs... Gradual control of our land and our leading industries by the American capitalists through the highest American representative in the Philippines would work to gradual eternal control of our country by the United States.⁹⁰

Capitalist exploitation and the necessity of independence from colonial rule was a continuing theme in the newspaper. The writer uses the example of capitalist exploitation of Liberia to show its parallel to the situation in the Philippines. In another article, “Gandhi Lends Sharp Contrast to P.I. Leaders,” the writer extols Gandhi as the “new leader” of “the oppressed peoples of the world,” a “spirit standing triumphant over the head of the imperial lion whose fire and ferocity once terrorized the heart of subject human beings of the Orient.”⁹¹ An underlying romantic vision accompanies the materialist, socialist discourse.

Opinion pieces tended to dominate the content in any one issue. Without apology, articles in the *Three Stars* employed emotional rhetoric to get their point across.

Sometimes, in the guise of reportage, writers employed various devices such as setting and mood to dramatize the significance of an event. Showing unusual support for a woman, the July 15, 1929 issue celebrated the arrival of Ines S. Villa, who came to promote women’s suffrage in the Philippines. Her arrival received a large heading, “MISS INES VILLA WINS CALIFORNIA BY ELOQUENT APPEAL,” which stretched across five column widths of the newspaper, showing that oratorical skills continued to be extremely important to Filipinos during the 1930s. A sub-heading quoting her words, “Philippines Should Belong to the Filipinos, and For Every Filipino Man, There is One Good Filipino Woman,” proclaimed her “the Great Commoner.” The author began by describing the tenor of the day, and her effect upon it: “The sun was scorching hot”... “However, amidst the hustling and bustling of humanity, Miss Villa of the Philippines came unexpectedly like gentle raindrops from heaven... Her discourse on the social and labor problems of the Filipinos was one of power, persuasion, and eloquence.” Phoebe Zoe Umbay observed in the *Cebu Daily News* of April 18, 2010, that Ines Villa was the first Filipina to advocate for women’s suffrage in a “long and stirring article” published in the *Manila Times*; she also spoke to the delegates of the constitutional convention in the Philippines. Filipino

women received the vote in 1937, and Ms. Villa then participated in the elections by running for governor of Cebu.⁹²

In the February 5, 1930 report by on the killing of farmworker activist Fermin Tobera by vigilantes, D.L. Marcuelo's rhetoric was especially strong:

The rushing, mad tide of mob spirit which reigned supreme, wresting the law from the hand of Justice at those lonely regions of Watsonville and [Pajaro], has so far subsided after the sacrifice of a youthful, innocent life—that of Fermin Tovera [sic], a Filipino worker. Nevertheless, it leaves an imprint of the most diabolical and degrading type of human tragedy, and humiliation, blackest in all history—abhorrent to the sense of common decency, fair play, and justice.

... With due respect to the robes of justice which he wears, Judge Rohrback's dissertation on the Filipino question, hurling invectives and ugly epithets, hurting the soul of the Filipino race, appealing on the sentiment by suggesting violence to the mob mind, is an exhibition of real narrowness and vapidness unbecoming the dignity of the Bench.⁹³

The point is not the extent to which Filipino writers in the *Three Stars* and other Filipino newspapers departed from the standards of "objectivity" that were increasingly assumed (though not always followed) by mainstream white journalists, but rather the fact that declarations of strongly held opinions and advocacy were wielded frequently as a way to forcefully counter misrepresentation by the white population and media. Furthermore, the pattern of strong rhetoric followed upon Filipino traditions of oratory and debate, and journalistic advocacy in the homeland. It was upheld by the romantic ideals of independence and democracy as promoted in the Filipino Masonic organizations, of which the martyr Jose Rizal was the symbol and embodiment.

White contributors to the *Three Stars* helped to reinforce the messages of independence, sacrifice for one's country and countrymen, and the importance of monitoring and countering misrepresentation of Filipinos. Charles Edward Russell, the well-known politician and journalist (branded as "prince of the muckrakers")⁹⁴ wrote an article especially for the *Three Stars* on "Rizal, the Great Spirit." Russell pointed out that Rizal "...was one man that went through life without a selfish ambition, that had but one aim and purpose, which was to do good, and without hesitation, regret or a tremor, took his life and laid it upon the altar of his country... He put aside every temptation to glory, fortune, enjoyment or success that he might take his life in his hand and go back to serve Filipinas."⁹⁵ Miguel de Unamuno contributed an article in Spanish on "Rizal the Writer," reflecting on his literary qualities: "Rizal was a compound, we could say, of Hamlet and Quixote, repelled by the impurities of reality. His feats were in his books, his writings; his heroism was that of a writer."⁹⁶ Unamuno's article must have moved some of the Filipino writers who read it to think of how their own writing might contribute to some heroic effort. For the place and times in which they lived in the U.S. certainly required courage.

The sociologist Emory S. Bogardus contributed an article on "American Attitudes Toward Filipinos." While espousing a "bootstrap" path to success for Filipinos, he observed that "Public opinion regarding Filipino immigrants [was] especially important [at that time, since] The success or failure of his movement will depend upon public opinion."⁹⁷ Publishing essays by reputable white writers helped to enlarge the readership of the newspaper, and perhaps also to keep open the channels of communication between the Filipinos and white readers who could offer support.

“Amidst Enfolding Darkening Night”: Poems of Struggle

The *Three Stars* did not publish poems frequently; when they did, it was generally one or two poems per issue, and these were always in the service of independence, nationalism, and wholesome creativity or “spirituality.”⁹⁸ The following poem characterizes the Americans as intruders upon the archipelago (gendered female), and utilizes metaphors suggesting “rape.”

Poems that were not in English tended to be worded particularly strongly, such as the following, written by Manuel B. Viray:

SUGPUIN ANG DAYUHAN SA PILIPINAS SUBDUE THE FOREIGNER IN THE PHILIPPINES

Ang bayan tang kinagisnan	The country where we saw light
Sa may dakong Bilanganan	Over in the east
Siya'y Perlas sa dagatan	She is the Pearl of the seas
Tala na PAUNAWA SA man ng Oriental.	A star of light among orientals

Ang bayan tang sakdal yaman	Our country which is so endowed
Sagana sa kagandahan	So blessed in beauty
Sa ating Kapabayaan	In our complacency and abandon
Dayuhan ang nakikinabang.	Has been taken by foreigners

Ang bayan ta'y kung malasin	Look at our country now
Ang malawak niyang bukirin	The wide open fields
Hitik at sagana sa pananim	Where plants teem with fruits
Dayuhan lamang ang kumakain.	Are sapped by foreigners.

Ilibot mo ang iyong malas	Just let your gaze wander
Sa bayan tang Pilipinas	In our country, the Philippines
Ang magagandang bulaklak	All the lovely flowers here
Dayuhan ang pumipitas.	Are pluck[ed] by foreigners

Tingnan mo ang kayamanan	Look at all the richness
Ng mina sa ating bayan	Of the mines in our country
May ginto, pilak at bakal	There is gold, silver, and steel
Dayuhan lang ang bumubungkal.	Yet only foreigners mine them

Tingnan mo't nakalulugod	See the marvelous scenery
Mulang bukd hanggang bundok	From the fields to the hills
Halaman ta'y mahihinog	Our plants have ripened
Dayuhan ang mga nabubusog.	Yet only foreigners feast on them.


Ngayong iyong napagmasdan	Now that you have seen
Ang lagay ng Inang Bayan	Our Motherland's plight
Ay dapat mong pag-aralan	You must think about
Ang pagtataboy ng dayuhan.	How to drive these foreigners away. ⁹⁹

In English, the poet, Viray, might be a bit hesitant to speak so bluntly, but in Tagalog, he can play the role of ardent nationaly more freely, and suggest that it is necessary to “subdue” the foreign American. He impels the reader to imagine again the beautiful homeland with its “lovely flowers,” rich resources, and marvelous scenery, only to juxtapose the thought that it is the foreigner, rather than the native, who is reaping the bounty of the motherland to enrich another country, the U.S. The sentiment is in line with the editors’ strongly nationalist and anti-imperialist message.

Some poems, like the following on the next two pages, by Marino B. Madamba, originally in Ilokano, were prescriptive, discussing issues, such as gambling, that were thought to be shameful. Figures 15 and 16 show the graphic quality added to the poem through the illustrated initials. It looks similar to Filipino acrostic poems, although the initials here do not spell out words. The constraints of a printing machine would have made this difficult to reproduce, but since these pages were obviously printed by hand and reproduced on a mimeograph or spirit duplicator, they were able to be more creative with the design. Note also the hand-drawn ads for local restaurants that “Welcome All Filipinos.”

DANIW NGA MAIPA-AY KENCA NAPALANGUAD

- (N)** ANANUNAN tayon bulan nga panagri-rigat pamayac
Ta simardongen daguiti lugar nga pangluan piraac
Gay-yem pamuntem daguiti ling-etmo ken rigat
Dica i-busen ta cuarterm ti ub-baw a gasat.
- (S)** UGAT amoc unay nga isut mangi-dadanes
Isut namnamaen nga pagapitan nga Ep-pes
Lipatom tapno saancanto nga agdaquos
Mangigurud kenca inganat mapugsat-, a-anges.
- (P)** AGUIMBAGAM pamuntem ta isut nasayaat
Pacaidoyawan awanto kencat macaic-cat
Patuladam daguiti ca Filipino-am-, Pacsan-gasat
A panag panpanunotdan, isut cuna nga Inaplat.
- (A)** MMOC nga sa-wen daguitoy ta siac nagdalanac
Sumagmamano nga tawen ni rigat tinagtaguibi-nac
Panagsugalco ti gapuna a maibus nasapsapulac
Apal a dakes cadaguiti agsugal, naquicad-duno.
- (B)** ABALAWEM ta casaso-odmo no nailaw-anco
Nga agur-uray gasatmo tapno incanto tumama
Cadaguiti nadumaduma a pagsugalan naitang-gaya
A nacaibusan daguiti cuarterm nga immumuna.
- (A)** MMOEN gay-yem nga awan makita a rumang-ay
Nga agsugal no diquet isudat naca-rapay
Uray piraacat adu nga inca maquita a nar-ruay
Bigat isudat dumawat quencat asi-panmaranay.
- (A)** GSARDENGCA! Agpamuntem! Dica agpalang-guad
No ita nang-guedm nacaatamasat piraac nawad-wad
Panna cagastunat awan pagpape-ayanna inca agalwad
Tapno ita taraon ta baguin isut agnansyon nawadwad.



Manasarop at Sari Sariang
Pagkain Pilapins. Ma-
nalo-ala Niyo ang
Ating Bayan kung Matik-
man Niyo ang Aming
Lata

348 E. El Dorado, Stockton
Phone 7963

MAYON RESTAURANT

NATIONAL POOL ROOM

Soft Drinks, Cigars, Cigarettes
El Dorado and Lafayette Streets
Stockton, California

FILIPINO RENDEVOUS OR ASSEMBLY
PLACE OF HIGH STANDING

Phone 8717

Fig. 15. Poem by Marino B. Madamba ¹⁰⁰

Stockton, California

13

(N) O adal ti gaguemo nagbusuran inayan
 Ditoy America tapno isat inca pagrig-rigatan
 Sugal ngarud rebhengna nga inca i-dian
 Tuluyen ta ghatmo tapno di mabayag agawidcan.

(D) AGA nga macyanacm isu quencat agur-uray
 Tulungmot mangted quencunat pinagmamey
 Pangwayawayana arapa-apeimon mangituray
 Ta-o a narruay agnanyonda agapasungad si-uray.

(B) ANAG ti Ina tayo a Filipinas inna pannachipusay
 Turay sabali a daga tapno bucuannan ti mangsalayay
 Pagulngan tayo a Filipinos tapno intay rumang-ay
 A cas mayen a Nacion nga awan quen cunat mangituray.

1411 Tulare St.,
Fresno, Calif.

--- MARINO B. MADAMBA

LIWAYWAY NG DIWA

NGAYO'Y NASAAN KA?

"Liwayway ng Diwa" ikaw ay nasaan?
 Hinahanap kita'y dika masumpungan;
 Tinawag na kita'y di ka rin nadinggon.
 Mang kahi't bahayang tugon mo man lamang,
 Ang nangyari'y ano? Ako'y pagtapata't
 Sa manga dusa mo ay handang dumamay.

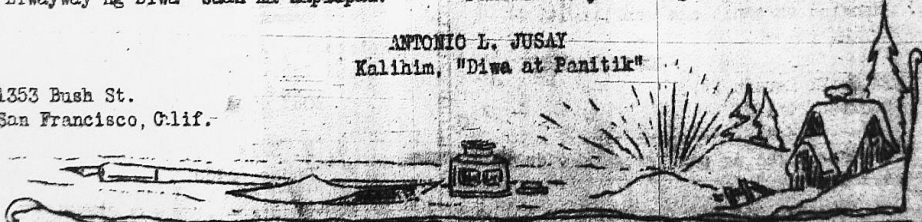
Nasasaan kaya sa iyo'y nagtansod,
 Upang sumalanga sa agos ng ilog?
 Bakit babago pa sa kamay ang good,
 Iilan pang sagwan ng pakikihanok
 Sa inakala mong galak pagkatapos
 Nangasaan sila't naglubag ang loob.

Di ba't kaagapay kita sa paglakad
 Na isa sa manga kawal ni Balagtas?
 Bakit ng mapansin ako ay nasindak
 At ng tawagin ta'y puso ko'y nawasak
 Sa hindi pagtugon, kay saklap ng palad!
 "Liwayway ng Diwa" saan ka napadpad.

"Liwayway ng Diwa" ngayo'y nasaan ka?
 Kahi't iyong tugon ay ligaya ko na;
 Kung nawalay ka man sa titig ng mata
 At sinasadya mo'y sa aki'y ano pa;
 Nguni't kung sa ulap ay napatago ka
 Panitik ko'y handang bumasag sa kanya.

ANTONIO L. JUSAY
Kalihim, "Diwa at Panitik"

1353 Bush St.
San Francisco, Calif.



Phone 515
NEW GRAND CAFE
 LUPONG INSEK AN
 AMERIKANO
 Masasagap na Chop Sany ang in-
 yong matilikman dito.
 Open From
 8 A. M.
 10 M.
 37 E. Market St. Stockton

LINCOLN THEATRE
 28 S. El Dorado St., Stockton
 Phone 374
 New Picture Every Day.
 A Show That Is Bound
 to Please.
 WELCOME ALL FILIPINOS.

Fig. 16. Poem by Antonio L. Jusay. 101

The poem is addressed as if to a kababayan (close friend and townmate) familiarly, but perhaps also to one young and inexperienced; the poet acts as “older brother” (kuya, an important role in Filipino families), advising the gambling Filipino that it is worthwhile to give up the vice, in favor of struggling toward a higher goal. To control one’s impulses is to gain inner unity and freedom, and to establish sovereignty over oneself; at the same time, such actions help establish the Philippines’ sovereignty. The poem illustrates the Filipino value of *loob*, in which sovereignty over oneself is the same as sovereignty of the people over their country.

DANIW NGA MAIPAAY KENCA NAPALANGUAD
A POEM FOR YOU, RECKLESS ONE

We have reached a month of trying times
Because sources of money have closed down
My friend, think hard of all your labor and hard work
Do not squander your money in tough luck

Gambling, I know, will pull you down
Here is where you reap hopelessness
Forget it, so you will not be damned
And lead you to lose your own breath

Think of your well-being for this is good
Your honor will never be taken away
Do not be like fellow Filipinos – unfortunate
their bad choice is what they got

I say all this now because I know, I have been through it
Hardship reared me for several years
Gambling is the main cause why I lost all my money
The envy of gamblers makes one truly wretched

Take care of your lot in case you get hooked
Hoping for luck so that you can win
In different gambling dens that sprawl
Where all your money has gone earlier

Know this my friend, that there has never been
A rich gambler, they are all poor
Even if you rake [in] money which is good
Hardship will trail you, everyone will always beg charity

Stop now, think, do not be reckless
Take very good care of where you put your money
Spend not on things that are valueless
Get food instead which your body needs to become healthy

If it is education that you are here for, go ahead
 You can work hard for it, here in America
 So then you can forget gambling, you must avoid
 Go on with your studies and soon you can go home
 The land of your birth is waiting for you
 You must help her attain progress
 Freedom is the goal that must be sought
 There brave people are there, hoping, waiting

The aim of our country, the Philippines is to establish
 Sovereignty, so that we can tell our own story
 Then to unite us Filipinos, so we can move on and progress
 As one nation ruled by no one else as justice reigns¹⁰²

Romantic discourse was acceptable if the object of the poet's ardent feeling was somehow connected to the love of country in the following poem by Anthony L. Jusay (See Fig. 16 above).

LIWAYWAY NG DIWA
 NGAYO'Y NASAAN KA?

SPIRIT'S DAWNING
 WHERE HAVE YOU GONE?

Spirit's dawning where are you now
 I have been looking for you but I could not find
 I tried calling you but I could not hear
 Not even a hint of your answer.
 What indeed happened, tell me the truth
 I am all too ready to join you in your suffering.

Were we not together as we walked
 Hand in hand as disciples of Balagtas?
 Why is it, that when I looked, I was shocked
 And when I called, my heart was broken
 Because you did not answer, O what misfortune
 Spirit's dawning where have you gone?

Where is the spirit that launched you
 To go against the river's flow?
 Your hands were new when you took to row
 Handling an outrigger for just a few struggles
 You thought you would be happy after
 But where have they gone, why have they mellowed?

Spirit's dawning, where are you now?
 Your mere answer will bring me happiness

If I had lost my gaze upon you
 What else would your goal be upon me?
 But if you are hidden somewhere beneath the clouds
 My pen is ever ready to break through and see.¹⁰³

“Spirit’s Dawning, Where Have You Gone?” is significant because its apparent object, the muse, or spirit, represents not only the spirit of creativity, but also of revolution. It refers, at one point, to Balagtas, the Philippines’ first “subversive” poet, whose poetic fantasies of faraway lands were disguised critiques of the power wielded by Spanish friars in the Philippines. The hands of the Filipino handling the outrigger are also the hands of the writer, and the hands that launch the boat “against the stream.”

A historical essay, the “Life History of Andres Bonifacio, Father of the ‘Katipunan,’” was published in the November 1931 issue of the newspaper. Bonifacio, “the great plebian,” is known as the initiator of the Philippine revolution against Spain. His impulsive leadership was usurped by a more strategically minded and ambitious Emilio Aguinaldo, who had Bonifacio imprisoned and executed. The more conservative Jose Rizal eventually took the foreground to become the symbol of Philippine independence.

Centered within the 4-column, two page essay, was a poem by M. de Gracia Concepcion, entitled “Balintawak.” M. de Gracia Concepcion was listed on the staff of the *Three Stars* as an editor in 1931. He was the first Filipino poet to have his collected poems published as a book in the U.S. Published in 1925 by G.P. Putnam’s Sons, the book was entitled *Azucena*, named after a lily found in the Philippines.

Life History of Andres Bonifacio

Father of the "Katipunan"

Two years after the birth of Rizal, the greatest of all Filipinos, Andres Bonifacio was born in Tondo, Manila. His father was Santiago Bonifacio and his mother was Catalina de Castro. His family was poor and Bonifacio had to struggle hard for his education. He studied in the college of Guillermo Osmena of Sughu. This seems to be his only school training but we must remember that a man may be trained and educated without attending a college. Bonifacio was this man. He had been trained not in school rooms but outside of school.

When Bonifacio was fourteen years old, his father and mother died, and he was left to look after his three younger brothers and one sister. He could not go to school any more. He entered the business world by selling homemade canes and paper fans.

Later on he was employed in Fleming's store. Afterwards he was made seller of pitch and other articles.

From Mr. Fleming's store he became a worker in Fresse! Company. There he stayed until the outbreak of the revolution in 1896, the time that made his name always remembered by all his countrymen.

Bonifacio's love for his country was intensified by reading a book entitled, "The French Revolution." A chapter, "Memories of a Soldier," of the book was read and re-read by him, and he greatly admired the soldiers who gave his life for the defense of the rights of men.

Ever since the memorable year of 1872, the Filipinos began feeling that good reforms could not be obtained. Because of this they began entertaining the idea of separation. New societies led by educated Filipinos were formed. The Katipunan, the shortened name of the Association, "Kataastaasan, Kagalanggalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan" (The Most High and Respectable Association of the Sons of the Country), was one of these societies. It was founded by Andres Bonifacio. Some of the aims of the society were: to make the Philippines independent; to promote union among the Filipinos; to redivide the friars' lands; to fight against the tyranny of the Civil Guards; to fight against the force labor, against the friars' conduct and harshness; and to work for the release of Rizal.

Some of the doctrines of the association are: "Life, that is not consecrated to a just and high aim, is like a tree without a shadow; if not a poisonous herb." "Defend the oppressed, fight against the oppressor."

"In the spiny path of life, the man is the guide of his wife and children. If he guides them toward evils, those guided will become bad; but if he directs them toward good, they will become loyal and useful."

The society spread rapidly and, in 1894, Emilio Aguinaldo was admitted as a member. Committees in different places were

councils. The society made a rapid progress not only in Manila but in many parts of the Philippines. After a few years its influence was felt throughout the country.

Not long after its organization a press was brought and Emilio Jacinto, the fiscal of the Association, Bonifacio, and Pio Valenzuela, worked together. Afterwards the Society published a paper, "Kalayaan" (Liberty). In this paper Bonifacio showed that he possessed some literary ability. Some of the important articles he wrote were, "What the Filipinos Ought to Know" and

eral, just and opposed to all forms of violence. He did not believe that there was a conspiracy against the government, but when Polavieja, the successor of Blanco, came, Pio Valenzuela and Aguedo del Rosario were arrested. The number was increased to three hundred in less than a month. Many were executed. Some were deported, and on December 30, 1896, Dr. José Rizal was shot.

On August 20, 1896, the members of the Katipunan, fired with the desire to make their country free, cried in Balintawak, "Long live the Philippine Republic!" This dated the life of the Philippine Republic. On March 23, the Spanish army and the Filipino forces met. The revolution began and bloody battles were fought.

Under the auspices of the Katipuneros, the Philippine Republic was established and the following were elected: Emilio Aguinaldo, President; Mariano Trias Closas, Vice-President; Artemio Ricarte "Bivora," Commanding General; Emiliano Riego de Dios, Secretary of War; Pascual Alvarez, Secretary of the Interior; Jacinto Lumbreras, Secretary of State; Baldomero Aguinaldo, Secretary of Commerce and Public Works; Severino de las Alas, Secretary of Justice.

Because the meeting was held in Cavite in which the influence of Aguinaldo was great, Bonifacio was not elected to any office although the erection of the Philippine Republic was the fruit of his work.

After the election, Bonifacio gathered his forces in Barrío Limbon, Indang, to prepare to leave Cavite in order to resume his operations in San Mateo mountains. While at Limbon, Severino de las Alas and Colonel José Coronel presented Aguinaldo the following charges preferred against Andres Bonifacio:

That Andres Bonifacio was paid by the friars to organize the "Katipunan" in order to bring the defenseless mass of Filipinos into the pit of war only to be killed by the well organized and equipped Spanish army.

That Andres Bonifacio instructed his men to burn the church and convent of Indang should this town be taken by the Spaniards.

That the army of Bonifacio, through force and violence, is

(Continued on page 15)

BALINTAWAK

By M. de Gracia Concepción

You raised your cry for
freedom's light
Amidst enfolding darkening
night;
When breathed decaying in
dungeon's womb
The reeking anguish of the tomb.

You raised your eyes bloated
with pain,
Imploring Mercy's hand to drain
The cup of bitter woes refilled
Till tortured life is stilled.
Imprisoned in stifling darkness,
Enchained to gruelling grimness
Ah, yet! you thrilled your world
entire—

Your soul, a winged dart afire.

We live by grace of your
largess,—
Alas, we know not now to pray;
We let the mold and dust to prey
Upon your silent ashes.

created. Ranks of membership were classified. There were three ranks. The first degree was called "Katipunan" and its sacred word was "Anak ng Bayan" (Son of the Country.) The second degree was called "Kawal" (Soldier), and used as its sacred word "Gom-Bur-Za," which represented the three priests, Gomez, Burgos and Zamora. The third degree was called "Bayani" (Fearless) and used the word "Rizal" as its sacred word.

The association had a supreme council composing a president, a secretary, a fiscal and a treasurer, and presidents of general

"Love of Country." The paper, however, did not live long. Only two numbers of the paper were distributed.

Bonifacio, seeing that his plan was successful, and thinking of Rizal, who was then at Dapitan, sent Dr. Pio Valenzuela to Dapitan to confer with him about a revolution against Spain. Rizal opposed the plan. Valenzuela, instead of staying there for a month as planned, sailed from Dapitan the following day.

On August 9, 1896, the association was discovered. Ramon Blanco was then the Governor and Captain General. He was lib-

Fig. 17. The poem, "Balintawak," centered in an article about Andres Bonifacio. 104

BALINTAWAK

You raised your cry for
 freedom's light
 Amidst enfolding darkening
 night;
 When breathed decaying in
 dungeon's womb
 The reeking anguish of the tomb.
 You raised your eyes bloated
 with pain,
 Imploring Mercy's hand to drain
 The cup of bitter woes refilled
 Till tortured life is stilled.
 Imprisoned in stifling darkness,
 Enchained to grueling grimness
 Ah, yet! You thrilled your world
 entire—
 Your soul, a winged dart afire.
 We live by grace of your
 largess—
 Alas, we know not now to pray;
 We let the mold and dust to prey
 Upon your silent ashes.¹⁰⁵

Both the essay and the poem are revisionary. After Bonifacio's death, the revolution was taken up by Filipinos (Aguinaldo and Rizal) of the elite class. In contrast, Bonifacio was born poor, and struggled to lift himself out of poverty, to educate himself, and finally to free his country from its oppressors. The essay and poem together mourn Bonifacio's sad death—his execution by his own compatriots—and simultaneously valorize the plebian, the uneducated worker who struggles to lift himself out of the dark.

Despite his progressive and “realist” politics, De Gracia Concepcion was a romantic poet whose greatest influences, he wrote, were Edgar Allan Poe, Rabindranath Tagore, and Lafcadio Hearn. The poems in *Azucena* reflect the nostalgic, and at times slightly morbid cast of Poe; in some ways they are an appropriate expression for the migrant's loss of home. Similarly De Gracia Concepcion's gothic voice in “Balintawak” expresses the bitterness of Bonifacio's previously unappreciated and lonely end.

De Gracia Concepcion's exit from the United States was itself perhaps a bitter one. On July 4th, 1931, the *Three Stars* reported that the poet was attacked without provocation by Los Angeles police officers. Taken from his dinner in a restaurant, he was shaken, pushed around, and received “contusions” from the police—who did not even ask his name—and then taken to the police station; what took place at the station was not reported. However, he was eventually released with “apologies.” Only one month after this report, another article appeared, with the large headline, “Filipino Poet on His Way Home.”

“After twelve years of ‘vagabondage’ throughout the country, M. de Gracia Concepcion, the poet, left on the American Mail Line steamer, the S.S. President Jefferson, by way of

Seattle on the 11th of July for the Philippines...Strangely enough, he is going home thoroughly himself, the poet and the dreamer—a virtual outcast within this material civilization of ours.”

In its farewell to M. de Gracia Concepcion, the *Three Stars* remembered the poet for “his unconventional blaze in the literary firmament both here and in the Philippines,” while pointing out that he had published two books, *Azucena* and *Bamboo Flute*. At the same time, it marks him as someone of whom it “could be said to be the least contaminated by the American sense of value and speed,” which may be a reference to the impositions of modernity and imperialism upon the Filipino and the Philippines. He nevertheless must have been quite experienced in the ways of American life, after twelve years in the U.S., a freshman year at the University of Washington, and a summer working in the canneries of Alaska.¹⁰⁶

In contrast to its essays on global issues of labor and nationalism, the *Three Stars* printed few book reviews or articles about writers, although the editors seemed aware of the dearth of Filipino publications in the U.S. Its occasional reviews focused on novels or non-fiction treating “oriental” subjects, for example, Manuel Komroff’s anthology, *Oriental Romances*. The unnamed author of the review noted that “oriental stories” were “once considered as trash literature, and not worth the task of the youthful librarian,” thus its publication was a good thing. However, while “Persians, Hindus, Chinese and Arabs” were included, there were no Filipino writers, and the author hoped that one day Komroff would see fit to include some “Balagtas Epic Poetry.” In this way he advocated for Filipino writers to receive more critical attention.

However, one lengthy essay occupying a full page and a half, “Filipino Humor,” by Jose T. Enriquez, approached the development of Filipino literature and arts in an unexpected way. Enriquez viewed humor and satire as important contributions to the Filipino literary, theatrical and graphic arts, and his essay attempted to give an overview of the genre. Citing Balagtas and Rizal, he pointed out that Filipino literature had a rich foundation in humor and satire. The essay was also critical; he felt that 20th century Filipino humorists needed to develop and refine their art; often comparing it to American humor, he complained that Filipino humor was often “either too shallow, not penetrating below the surface of things, or too wild and boisterous” and even “altogether too wordy.” Enriquez also sought to distinguish Filipino humor from American:

One cause of laughter is the distinction between social groups. In [America], the Negro is often the target of humor. In the Philippines the patient Celestial—much as we may regret it—is often the butt of these attacks.¹⁰⁷ Nor is the innocent provinciano safe from the shafts of humor. It may appear foolish and unreasonable, but it is the truth that native humor often heaps fun upon the provincial citizen in much the same way that ‘the comedy of the Restoration, taking town life as its standard poured ridicule on the country gentry.’¹⁰⁸

In mentioning Filipino satire on the stage, he notes that “the lighter comedies and the farces, together with the moro-moro plays,¹⁰⁹ formed an integral part of the social life of the people in former days. Hardly an important festivity took place without the participation of stage players. Like the Greek comedy, the native play was born in the village revel.”¹¹⁰ The influence of American modernism had a deleterious effect on the native theatricals, he observed: “Pitted against the movies, the native stage suffered a setback from which it may never recover.”¹¹¹

At one point, Enriquez almost seems to foresee the coming wave of talented comic book artists in the Philippines who have illustrated and written many comics and graphic novels both in the

archipelago and the United States. He mentions the subversive Philippine comic journal, *Lipag Kalabaw*, whose satiric barbs and unflattering caricatures were frequently pointed toward the American colonial administrators in the Philippines. Enriquez views the comic form as art, mourns the loss of the comic journals, and writes that “while we have drawn isolated humorous cartoon[s] of high artistic order, we can not boast as yet of consistent and extended treatment of the humorous in picture form.”

Enriquez did not speak of, nor seem aware of the emergence of a U.S. Filipino literature, humorous or otherwise. Nevertheless, the essay’s appearance in a U.S. Filipino newspaper assumes a Filipino literary readership in the States, and seems aimed at writers for whom a historical and critical background of Filipino satire would be useful.

The editors of the *Three Stars* were politically minded activists who sought both through words and actions to make a real difference in the lives of Filipinos living and working in the U.S. As D.L. Marcuelo pointed out in a brief editorial,

“... We are driven from our peaceful homes and work—insulted and killed brutally and the criminals generally are left unpunished. But the law is never too late to apprehend a Filipino even in a most insignificant violation.

Our race of which we are proud and to be always—has been made the object of ridicule in society as well as in courts. Indeed, we have been subjected to every sort of bitter humiliation [imaginable]. We are facing the most critical period of Filipino history—in California.

The situation imperatively demands a more UNITED SOLID FRONT to fight against our common enemy.

Personal differences, no matter what proportion, must be buried and forgotten for the sake of the majority of our countrymen.

Let us therefore join hand and hand—stand shoulder to shoulder and fight for the HONOR, RIGHTS and SAFETY of our people.”¹¹²

It’s clear that Marcuelo took personally the harm done to all Filipinos; the violence and humiliation they endured in California in the early 1930s was to Marcuelo so unprecedented that he saw those events and the Filipino response to them as the “most critical” in Filipino history, and ironic that it should take place in California.

The *Three Stars* seemed to have more of an overarching intent or program than other Filipino newspapers. They were keenly aware of public scrutiny, and endeavored to correct misrepresentations of Filipinos by publishing writers who were highly educated, in some cases well-known, and articulate. They did not, however, shy away from “muckraking,” and seemed to believe that strong opinions were necessary in order to advance an argument. In their feature articles and poetry, the editors provided models for writing that were in-depth and challenging for their time, and geared to what the editors viewed as their higher causes: legislation that would grant the Filipina/o worker fair wages, the freedom of autonomy and citizenship in the U.S.; relief from racist stereotyping and violence; and ultimately national independence for the Philippines.

Toward a New Life and Identity: the *Filipino Pioneer*

Also published in Stockton, *the Filipino Pioneer*, founded and initially edited by J.C. Dionisio (who had also contributed writing to Seattle's *Philippine Advocate*) declared on its header that the newspaper served California, Oregon, and Washington. In 1938, Antonio E. Hamoy became the managing editor when Dionisio became involved with the Pioneer Publishing Company in San Francisco. Along with writer P.C. Morante, Dionisio continued as an associate editor of the newspaper, which was written entirely in English. *The Filipino Pioneer* endeavored to simply print the news of the Filipino community. It did not appear, at least at first glance, to have overarching political concerns, and its writers did not seem to be imbued with idealistic fervor. In some ways, it fit the image that some critics had of Filipino newspapers as mostly social in nature, and its editors may have maintained its "light" content as a counter to the more "serious" content of the neighboring *Three Stars*.

Yet, the more "social" approach to the news in the *Pioneer* created more visibility for women. Filipinas provided much support for the *Pioneer* through subscription drives disguised as popularity contests, and photographs and brief articles about Filipinas involved in various community projects were often featured. It also featured a Filipina columnist who dubbed herself "L.A. Pinay."¹¹³ L.A. Pinay's column seemed set on presenting a "cheery" tone, and focused on a variety of topics which seemed inspired by the arts and social life in Los Angeles; she gossiped about characters in her L.A. scene, gave brief reviews on films. She praised Doroteo Ines for his film, "A Filipino in America," described as "telling frankly the hardships met by Filipinos on their arrival in America," and she also gave her attention to

plays. In the July 1, 1938 issue, she praised a theatre group in Los Angeles:

Dramatic Hit

Rupert de Castro and his Philippines Little Theatre are to be congratulated for the splendid showing they made on May 29. It was the best dramatic production staged in Los Angeles for many a year. Congratulations also to Claro Candelario, who with Rupert, did a swell job of directing.

Praises to Andy Lucas, Mari Juntilla and Pedro Regalado for their excellent performance. Thanks to Margarita Nilan for her inimitable trucking; to the charming Navarres sisters for their graceful dancing of the Carinosa; to Francisca Padilla and Conchita Juntilla for the naturalness with which they played their roles; to Luis Lazo for his interpretation of "Romeo" and to all others that helped make "THE QUEEN" the success it was.¹¹⁴

L.A. Pinay's July 1 column was her first, and, despite the fact that the column was titled "Viewed From a Woman's Angle," the editor's note described her as "a lovely Filipina girl in Los Angeles who, from time to time, will write this column. She has recently joined the Pioneer Staff and we consider her a 'find.'"

There is little information available on Antonio Hamoy.¹¹⁵ According to an article reporting the shift in editorial duties, Hamoy graduated from the University of Nebraska's School of Journalism in 1937, where he worked on the University paper. A member of a national professional journalists' fraternity, Sigma Delta Chi, he was co-editor of the *Filipino Student Bulletin*, which was an "organ of the Filipino Students Christian Movement in America." The *Bulletin* served primarily the pensionado students; it endeavored to provide a Christian network, and to smooth communications between the Filipino students and Americans.

Much more information is available for Juan Dionisio, Jr., who in later years became the Consul General of the Philippines, and the country's ambassador in Hawaii. Juan arrived in San Francisco in 1926, on the President Cleveland, following his father, also named Juan, who at the time was "one of the eldest Filipinos in Seattle." He had arrived by steamship in 1912. Juan Sr. worked in many jobs related to the lumber industry. He worked in logging camps, and in industries related to logging, such as box factories. He also worked in the fields, picking beets or other crops. Juan was an early member of the Caballeros de Dimas Alang, the Philippine Masonic organization, which acted as a mutual aid society, supported Philippine independence, and various projects such as newspaper publication. J.C. notes that his father was probably one of the first Filipinos to bring that organization into the United States. When Juan Dionisio Jr. migrated to the U.S., he shared steerage with four hundred other Filipinos, three hundred of which were Sakadas who had been hired to work on the plantations of Hawaii. Dionisio notes that four of them died on the way, and were buried at sea.¹¹⁶ "Juanito's" first job was cleaning in a house of prostitution in San Francisco, before moving to Seattle,¹¹⁷ where eventually he attended the University of Washington in 1930, and graduated in 1933. Every summer he worked in Alaska, and used the money for tuition, room, and board to finish high school, and then college. He attended the University of Washington in 1929, and stayed for six years, "...borrowing money from the school for [his] tuition." While in Washington state, he became involved in union activities.

While Dionisio's life was full with editing and labor union activities, he was also a short story writer who chronicled the difficulties of Filipino life in the U.S. during the 1920s and 1930s. An excerpt from his story, "Cannery Episode," published in the Philippines, illustrates the hardships and racial conflicts experienced by Filipino cannery workers. In the following excerpt, a young cannery worker is taken sick, and his Chinese "straw boss" insists he continue working. Another worker, Pete, defends the sick man:

If the "Supe" or the foreman found the non-white personnel loafing or not doing the work properly, he did not reprimand or correct them. He told Chong, who told the straw bosses, who chewed out the men. It was like that.

Pete still refused to start the machine. Instead he took a step toward Chong, his face in a rage.

"Goddam you!" he hissed. "Can't you see this boy's dying? He's sick, see? Flu or pulmonia, maybe. He's sick one week now. He's going to cut his hand. "Look---" he gestured towards the knife. "Look at that sharp knife. How do you like to cut your hand with that?"

Chong was taken back momentarily; but if he was scared, he didn't show it. We sensed what he was thinking: there was no telling what these goddamned Filipinos would do, but I must show I'm the boss. He began gesturing with his hands, talking rapidly in Chinese and pidgin English.

"Evelly time sick! Evelly time sick! What the hell he signed this butcher job for? He think he come Alaska for picnic?"

Pete snatched a stale chum from the table and started for Chong.

"You take this man away and send him home to bed, or I smash your head with this dog salmon!" We been working here since five this morning and now it's almost

midnight. Eighteen hours work steady. Every day for two weeks. Even fat healthy men like you get tired, see? But this boy's dying of pulmonia!" Pete was shaking with rage.¹¹⁸

Dionisio's talent for writing is apparent, as well as his empathy for the worker. With his long experience living and working among Filipino laborers on the west coast, he was an ideal writer to portray Filipino life in the United States. In "The Life and Times of Carlos Crisostomo," he focused on a group of pensionados self-dubbed "the Invisibles of Greek Row," who met in a small colloquium to read each other's writing and give feedback:

Manuel was saying, "Consider, my friend, unless you top your journalism class—and not even then, I think—what chances have you as a pinoy journalism graduate to get a reporter's job with the Seattle Post Intelligencer or the Seattle Times? Or any other newspaper for that matter. But I do not want to discourage you, Carl. Take both. I mean, if you want to stick to journalism, do so. Take all the required courses and make English your minor. Journalism is writing, and writing is using words, and the use of words is what literature is all about. If you want to write, journalism will sharpen your mind in the use of words; literature will enable it."¹¹⁹

In a practical sense, the dividing line between "writing" and "journalism," according to the character Manuel, is almost non-existent. In the world of the "Invisibles,"—whose identities were either pathologized or non-existent to the dominant white population—and who had little likelihood of getting published outside of the Filipino newspapers, journalism is a tool to sharpen the more subjective literary skill, and the two enhance each other. Dionisio's "Invisibles" may be the first literary reference to the phenomenon that would later be known as "Filipino invisibility" in the U.S.¹²⁰

The first newspaper Dionisio published was *Filipino Bayanihan*; this was followed by the *Philippine Journal* in Seattle, which was later based in Stockton. The *Philippine Journal* was an organ of the Filipino Agriculture Laborers Association (FALA), which had 30,000 members, and of which Dionisio became president in 1941. Because of his involvement in labor issues and strikes, he had difficulty in getting advertising for his newspapers.¹²¹

Contributing writer P. C. Morantte hailed from Leyte, where he attended high school. He also attended the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, but soon quit. He arrived in the U.S., where he studied at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. However, Morantte did not seem suited for college studies, and he eventually dropped out again. A writer with many social connections in the Filipino literary community, Morantte was frequently called upon to give his opinion on many topics for the Filipino newspapers, especially on literature and the arts. In the "Shop Talk" column of the *Pioneer*, he was called the "Roaming Scribe," "for PC roams around quite a bit. He does not write of the hidden secrets of mankind or of the forbidden lot; he writes of the ordinary, simple things that you and I have probably seen." In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Morantte became embroiled in literary debates published in the *Philippine Digest*, during a period when it became apparent that a new Filipino literature was beginning to emerge in the United States. He is now known as Carlos Bulosan's biographer; the two of them were close friends.

In addition to Dionisio, Hamoy, and Morantte, the newspaper had correspondents who contributed from other areas of the United States, including Alaska, and Washington D. C. Contributing writers included Trinidad Rojo and Manuel Adeva, and "Veteran Scribes" L.M. Sarmiento (Los Angeles) and David Del Pilar (Chicago).¹²² A young female reporter, Helen

Mantele, was their correspondent in Denver; her “ambition [was] to be a crack police reporter some day.”¹²³

A survey of the *Filipino Pioneer* in 1938 reveals a conservative editorship, with what appears to be even-handed and “objective” reporting of the news. There were few flashy editorials and feature essays. Headlines, even for labor news, seem humble both in content and size, compared to the dramatic headlines often posted in the *Philippines Mail* and *the Three Stars*. Content in the *Pioneer* tended to focus on positive events, such as achievements by Filipinos, art and museum exhibits, sports tournaments, plays, and the like. Contests, editorials on Filipino journalism, reports on Filipino involvement in community events, as well as in conventions and conferences dealing with Filipino problems and issues in the U.S. suggest that the publishers and editors were ambitious and active in promoting the welfare of Filipinos, but were more diplomatic in their approach.

Like *The Three Stars*, the *Pioneer* (calling itself the “National journal of Filipinos in America”) reported both national and some international news, but its editors seemed to leave most of the strong editorial writing to the *Philippines Mail*, the *Three Stars*, and the *Philippine Journal*. They clearly did not have the anti-capitalist bent of D.L. Marcuelo and Luis Agudo, and they did not give significant space in the *Pioneer* to analysis of events outside of the U.S. Nor did they publish many poems or essays—although they did hold a poetry contest (for poems written in English only), co-sponsored by the Filipino Poets League of America, which was founded by Sylvester Saturday, one of the *Pioneer*’s contributors.

Nevertheless, the *Pioneer*’s editors were not unaware of the difficulties of being Filipino in the U.S., and this was evident in its editorials; after all, J.C. Dionisio was also the editor of the *Philippine Journal*, published by the labor association, F.A.L.A. (the Filipino Agricultural Laborers’ Association), which would organize seven thousand Filipino workers to strike (successfully) in the asparagus fields in April, 1939.¹²⁴ P.C. Morante was cognizant of how Filipinos were misrepresented in American news, and he felt that a shift in the focus of Filipino newspapers from the local to the national would help, especially with the introduction of new bills in Congress considering citizenship for Filipinos then living in the United States. In the issue of March 14, 1938, with the shift in managing editorship to Antonio Hamoy, and purchase of the newspaper by the Pioneer Publishing Company, he explained the newspaper’s position in “Why We Need a National Journal”:

The American people are open to sound suggestion and conviction. But of recent years we have allowed them to witness unchallenged certain flagrant abuses and misrepresentations of our people. Consequently they have come to know us in the light of what goes wrong with some of us rather than in the light of what remains fundamentally good with all of us. Thus clearly do we see the need of a paper that can present to the American people our better qualities. It is our immediate duty to rectify their wrong impression by interpreting to them the best in us. To refrain from doing so would mean to sanction misunderstanding and invite prejudice...

With a national journal that can sound the honest reaction of Filipinos in this country, it would be easy for us all to know definitely what we want. The folly of trusting the American people in choosing by guesswork what is best for us will not happen. For there will be a united front, possessed of strong ideas capable of influencing the actions of those who try to shape our destiny. And... last but not least, we Filipinos in America

will cease to be considered as adolescents with no minds of their own and we will be treated with utmost respect and consideration befitting the dignity of responsible [adults].¹²⁵

Despite the evidence of several successful strikes and the formation of numerous Filipino organizations and unions in the face of racist legislation, violence, and misrepresentation, the theme that Filipinos themselves were to blame, that they were not united enough, or lacking in other ways, would be repeated often during the 1930s, until World War II. The criticism was an expression of Filipino anxiety borne of several hundred years of Spanish colonization, followed by American imperialism. Despite the hope that American democracy engendered in the Filipino migrant, s/he carried that colonial anxiety to American shores, where it was exacerbated by racism. Morante places much of the responsibility for such misrepresentation and mistreatment on Filipinos, citing what would often be repeated by other critics of Filipino society, that Filipinos are not “homogeneous” enough.

It is in Morante’s call for a “National” Filipino newspaper in the U.S., however, that we begin to hear a new discourse about Filipino identity, one that, by this time, was shaped by the experiences of Filipinos who, collectively, had been working and publishing their writing in the United States for some thirty years. This hoped-for homogeneous identity was, according to Morante, to be brought together through the newspaper media and its content.

In fact, the homogeneity of the newspaper was such that it did not reflect a characteristic rhetorical style, as did the *Philippines Mail* and the *Three Stars*. The editors attempted to be a “mainstream” newspaper writing within and for a marginalized community. It separated itself out from the other newspapers through its more diplomatic (and some might say concessional) discourse toward the problematic representation of Filipinos by the mainstream American press.

The significance of the newspaper seems to lay, not so much in the daily content, but rather in its search for an identity that did not embody the struggle, anxiety, and bitterness of the previous decades, but rather looked forward toward a new life and identity.

Further to the south, in Santa Maria, California, writers for the *Philippine Commonwealth News* were also struggling with anxieties of identity and self-representation, much more openly. But, in light of new legislative proposals affecting the civil rights of Filipinos, they were also beginning to advocate that Filipinos unify themselves on a more national level.

¹ The University of Washington Filipino enrollment plummeted from over one hundred in 1928-29 to 32 in the spring semester of 1930. Enrollment at the University of California at Berkeley dropped from 67 in 1934-35 to 34 in 1935-36. Howard A. De Witt, *Anti-Filipino Movements in California: A History, Bibliography and Study Guide*. R&E Research Associates, (San Francisco and Saratoga: 1976), 490-91.

² Arturo F. Rosales, *Testimonio: A Documentary History of the Mexican American Struggle for Civil Rights*. (Houston, TX: Arte Publico, 2000), 76.

³ Maria P. P. Root, *Filipino Americans: transformation and identity* (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 1997), 21.

⁴ Uma Anand Segal, *A Framework for Immigration: Asians in the United States*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 49, 57.

⁵ Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 88, 89.

⁶ Estella Habal, *San Francisco’s International Hotel: mobilizing the Filipino American community in the anti-eviction movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 9.

⁷ Thousands of people took part in the strike during the 1970s to protest the eviction of elderly Filipinos who still lived in the hotel when it was purchased by the Four Seasons company for development. Although the residents

were evicted and the building torn down, a new I-Hotel was finally built in the same place in 2005 to serve the Asian American community.

⁸ However, increased fees, as well as increasing anti-Filipino sentiment and legislation contributed to a steep drop in Filipino college students in California during the 1930s. Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 490.

⁹ Alex Fabros, personal communication, Jan. 2010.

¹⁰ Anne Loftis writes, "In the Central Valley most of the smaller papers followed the lead of the Bakersfield Californian and the three dailies in the McClatchy chain in Sacramento, Fresno, and Modesto. Anne Loftis, *Witnesses to the Struggle: Imaging the 1930s California Labor Movement* (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1998), 13-24.

¹¹ "A Brief History of the City of Salinas," City of Salinas. <http://www.salinas.net/history/index.html>

¹² Lawcock, "Filipino Students," (1976), 486.

¹³ De Witt, "Anti-Filipino Movements," (1976), 71.

¹⁴ Enya P. Flores-Meiser dates Agudo's editorship between 1921-1926. However, he was listed as editor in the January 29, 1934 issue.

¹⁵ Enya P. Flores-Meiser, "The Filipino-American Press" in *The Ethnic Press in the United States*, ed. Sally M. Miller (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 90.

¹⁶ *PA*, July, 1933.

¹⁷ Flores-Meiser, "Filipino-American Press," 8.

¹⁸ Lawcock, "Filipino Students," 475.

¹⁹ Luis Agudo, "Filipinos Digging Their own Graves," *The Three Stars*, (July 4, 1931): 4, 33.

²⁰ "Stars and Roses," *Philippines Mail* (hereafter cited as *PM*), Jan. 8, 1934.

²¹ Flores-Meiser, "Filipino-American Press," 8.

²² Melinda Trias Kerkvliet, "Pablo Manlapit's Fight for Justice," http://efilarchives.org/pdf/social%20process%20vol%2033/kerkvliet_manlapit.pdf.

²³ Ted Gabales, "The Impact of Filipino Farm Labor & Organization on San Joaquin County Agriculture," Independent Study Working Paper (July 30, 1985), 6.

²⁴ De Witt, "Anti-Filipino Movements," 475

²⁵ Connie Y. Chiang and William Cronon, *Shaping the Shoreline: Fisheries and Tourism on the Monterey Coast* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2008), 92

²⁶ Chiang, *Shaping the Shoreline*, 91, 92.

²⁷ Agudo's diplomatic response seems out of character; he was the "Vice National Commander" of an activist labor group, Mga Anak ng Bukid (De Witt translates it as "Filipino Peasants Association," but a closer translation would be "Children of the Earth – or Farm").

²⁸ De Witt, "Anti-Filipino Movements," 72, paraphrasing from the *Evening Pajaronian* (Jan. 27, 1930): 2

²⁹ "New Publishers in Charge of Mail," *PM*, Jan. 29, 1934.

³⁰ Alex Fabros, "Eulogy in Memory of Delfin F. Cruz" (presented at Salinas, California on 7 May 1994), The Filipino American Experience Research Project, Oct. 3, 1998.

³¹ Alex Fabros, Jr. Personal communication, Nov. 2009.

³² A "kicker" is a smaller title beneath the headline of the article.

³³ "Pajaro Valley Farm Laborers Declare Strike," *PM*, May 15, 1933.

³⁴ "Two Seriously Hurt As Escalon 'Nightriders' Forcibly Eject 21 Filipinos From Their Bunkhouse," *PM*, Aug. 14, 1933.

³⁵ "1600 Filipinos Sail for Home, Exodus Starts." *PM*, May 15, 1933.

³⁶ "Dock Crisis Draws Thousands to Piers," *Salinas Index-Journal*, July 2, 1934.

³⁷ "National Guard Stands by For Emergency in S.F. Dock Strike," *Index-Journal*, July 4, 1934.

³⁸ "Harvest of Sugar Beets Started Today," *Index-Journal*, July 9, 1934.

³⁹ "TONG WAR FEARS FELT HERE," *Index-Journal*, Aug. 9, 1934.

⁴⁰ In 1930, according to the report, Canete's teenaged bride, "'golden brown curls falling to her shoulders, and blue eyes filled with tears,' was dragged into Salinas court on 1 July for marrying Rufo Canete." This may have been at least part of the justification that fueled the torching of his camp. Richard B. Meynell, quoting article from *Salinas Index-Journal*, 11 August-24 September 1930, in "Remembering the Watsonville Riots," *Model Minority*, http://modelminority.com/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=271:remembering-the-watsonville-riots-&catid=40:history&Itemid=56

⁴¹ Margarita Vitacion, "Victims of Vigilante Attack Upon Rufo Canete's Labor Camp Sept. 21st Tell Harrowing Experiences," *PM*, Oct. 1, 1934.

- ⁴² Ciriaco Carrillo, *PM*, Oct. 1, 1934.
- ⁴³ John Beverley, *Testimonio: on the Politics of Truth*. Minneapolis (London: University of Minnesota, 2004), 41.
- ⁴⁴ "M'KINNON SLASHED BY FILIPINO," *Index-Journal*, Sept. 21, 1934.
- ⁴⁵ "Canete Camp Blaze Will Be Probed," *Index-Journal*, Sept. 21, 1934.
- ⁴⁶ "Law Must Be Respected," (editorial) *PM*, Oct. 1, 1934.
- ⁴⁷ Doreen G. Fernandez, "Seditious and Subversive: Theater of War," National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2003. <http://www.ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/articles-on-c-n-a/article.php?i=70&subcat=13>
- ⁴⁸ "Realistic Scenes of Patriot's Death Are to be Re-enacted," *PM*, Dec. 25 1932.
- ⁴⁹ "2000 Are Inspired By New Feature Of Salinas Rizal Fete," *PM*, Jan. 8, 1934.
- ⁵⁰ "2,000 Are Inspired," *PM* (Jan. 8, 1934): 2.
- ⁵¹ "Knives Flash During Fierce Race Fighting," *PM*, Jan. 8, 1934.
- ⁵² "2,000 Are Inspired," *PM*, Jan. 8, 1934.
- ⁵³ "2,000 Are Inspired," *PM*, Jan. 8, 1934.
- ⁵⁴ Dawn Bohulano Mabalon reports that another play was successfully staged in Stockton in 1937, "lauded as the first Filipina/o stage production." It featured the work of Filipina playwright Lucia F. Cordova, *Walang Kamatayang Pagibig (Love Eternal)*. "Beauty Queens, Bomber Pilots, and Basketball Players: Second-generation Filipina-Americans in Stockton California, 1930s to 1950s," in *Pinay Power: Peminist Critical Theory: Theorizing the Filipina/American*, ed. Melinda L. de Jesus, (New York: Routledge Tayler & Francis, 2005), 109.
- ⁵⁵ "Filipino Players Stage 3-Act Play," *PM*, Aug. 28, 1933.
- ⁵⁶ Andrea Pitzer, "Poetry as narrative journalism? You'd be surprised," in *nieman storyboard* (January 21, 2010). Filed under audio narratives, images, print narratives, <http://niemanstoryboard.us/2010/01/21/poetry-and-narrative-journalism-you-d-be-surprised/>
- ⁵⁷ *PM*, Nov. 27, 1933.
- ⁵⁸ Gregory San Diego, *PM*, Dec. 31, 1934.
- ⁵⁹ Gregory San Diego, *PM*, April 1, 1935.
- ⁶⁰ J.A.F. *PM*, Oct. 16, 1936.
- ⁶¹ Translated by Rhett V. Pascual, July 23, 2010.
- ⁶² Gregory San Diego. *PM*, June 25, 1934.
- ⁶³ Trinidad A. Rojo, "Individualism, Nationalism, Language and Literature," Dec. 25, 1932, in The Filipino American Experience Research Project, (Oct. 3, 1998), 32-34.
- ⁶⁴ D.L. Marcuelo, "Salvame!" *PM*, April 9, 1934.
- ⁶⁵ J.F. Galian. "Reflections," *PM*, July 10, 1933.
- ⁶⁶ J.F. Galian. "Reflections," *PM*, July 24, 1933.
- ⁶⁷ Photo of Helen Rillera, *PM*, June 24, 1935.
- ⁶⁸ Helen Rillera, "The Filipina In Filipino Society," *PM*, Aug. 13, 1934.
- ⁶⁹ "Interest Keen In Mail's Drive For New Subscribers," *PM*, May 29, 1938.
- ⁷⁰ Fujita-Rony, (2003), 88, 89.
- ⁷¹ The Grand Jury verdict on July 29 acquitted all those accused. Melchizedek Maraon Solis, "Barangay: A Study of Filipino American Community With Implications For Church Strategy" (ph.d. dissertation, San Francisco Theological Seminary), May 1, 1985.
- ⁷² See for example, "No Fanatical 'Cults' Among Filipinos, Reports Branded Untrue." *PM*, April 10, 1933.
- ⁷³ Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 1997), 64.
- ⁷⁴ "Rousing Welcome given to Manila Militant Scribe," *PM*, April 24, 1933.
- ⁷⁵ Sally M. Miller, *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 197.
- ⁷⁶ *TS*, Sept. 1928.
- ⁷⁷ Dawn B. Mabalon and Rico Reyes. *Images of America: Filipinos in Stockton*. Charleston, Chicago, Portsmouth, San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2008.
- ⁷⁸ Arleen De Vera, "The Tapia-Saiki Incident," in *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, ed. Valerie J. Matsumoto and Blake Allmendinger (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 203.
- ⁷⁹ Ted Gabales, "The Impact of Filipino Farm Labor," Independent Study Project working paper (Juan Dionisio files, unmarked folder, FANHS, Seattle: July 30, 1985).
- ⁸⁰ *TS*, Oct. 1931.

- ⁸¹ Howard A. Dewitt, "Jose Rizal and the View from California," in *The Philippine Revolution and Beyond, Vol. II*, Elmer A. Ordonez, ed., (Manila: Philippine Centennial Commission National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1998), 849.
- ⁸² Dewitt, "Jose Rizal," 849.
- ⁸³ \$200,000 Filipino Clubhouse Will Be Built in Stockton. *TS*, Feb., 1929: front page.
- ⁸⁴ *TS*, Nov. 1, 1928).
- ⁸⁵ *TS*, Jan. 1, 1929).
- ⁸⁶ John N. Schumacher, S.J., writes at length about the influence of European Masonry upon the Filipino *Illustrados* and revolutionaries of the late 19th century in *The Making of a Nation: Essays on Nineteenth-century Filipino Nationalism* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991).
- ⁸⁷ Aleksandr Piatigorskii notes that American Masonry during the early 20th century occupied an intermediary position both religiously and socially to its members. He quotes Lynn Dumeril: "in the beginning of the twentieth century...the Lodge...filled the gap between the exclusive clubs of the wealthy and the saloons of the poor. Qtd. in Aleksandr Moiseevich Piatigorskii, *Who's Afraid of Freemasons?: the Phenomenon of Freemasonry* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1997), 188.
- ⁸⁸ Schumacher, *The Making of a Nation*, 120.
- ⁸⁹ "Fermin Tobera (Hero of Peace and Tolerance) Killed by mobs at Watsonville, as a result of race-riots, January 22, 1930," *TS* Feb. 5, 1930.
- ⁹⁰ "Republic of Liberia and the Philippines." *TS*, Sept. 1928.
- ⁹¹ A.B. Legislator, "Gandhi Lends Sharp Contrast to P.I. Leaders," *TS*, July 4, 1931.
- ⁹² Qtd. by Sofia Logarta Madilena de la Cerna, "Women in politics," *Inquirer Global Nation*, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/cebudailynews/opinion/view/20100418-264956/Women-in-politics>
- ⁹³ D.L. Marcuelo, "Watsonville's Problem, It's Causes and Solution," *TS*, Feb. 5, 1930.
- ⁹⁴ Rob Miraldi. New Paltz. State University of New York, "Charles Edward Russell," http://www2.newpaltz.edu/~miraldir/miraldi_Russell.html
- ⁹⁵ Charles Edward Russell, "Rizal, the Great Spirit," *TS*, Dec. 1931.
- ⁹⁶ Miguel de Unamuno, "Rizal, the Writer," *TS*, Dec. 1931.
- ⁹⁷ Emory S. Bogardus. "American Attitudes Toward Filipinos: Educational Ambition of Filipinos Brings Them Friends in the United States." *TS*, July 4, 1931.
- ⁹⁸ Consistent with Masonic values, formal religion was never held as an ideal in the *Three Stars*; however, "spiritual" endeavor or belief, in the service of a higher cause such as independence and nationalism, was encouraged.
- ⁹⁹ Manuel B. Viray (M.A.N.B.), translated by Lilia Quindoza Santiago, U. of Hawaii.
- ¹⁰⁰ "Daniw nga Maipa ay etc," Fig. 15, *TS*, Dec. 1, 1928.
- ¹⁰¹ "Liwayway ng Diwa," Fig. 16, *TS*, Dec. 1, 1928.
- ¹⁰² Marino B. Madamba, *TS*, Dec. 1, 1928. Translated from Ilokano by Lilia Quindoza Santiago, U. of Hawaii.
- ¹⁰³ Antonio Jusay, *TS*, Dec. 1, 1928. Translated from Tagalog by Lilia Quindoza Santiago, U. of Hawaii.
- ¹⁰⁴ Marcelo de Gracia Concepcion, "Balintawak," *TS*, Nov. 1931. fig. 17.
- ¹⁰⁵ "Balintawak," *TS*, Nov. 1931.
- ¹⁰⁶ "Filipino Poet on His Way Home," *TS*, Aug. 1931.
- ¹⁰⁷ "Celestial" refers to friar or priest.
- ¹⁰⁸ Jose T. Enriquez, "Filipino Humor," *TS*, Nov. 1931. Enriquez did not cite the quoted material.
- ¹⁰⁹ Moro-moro: a Philippine folk theatrical, involving mock-battles between Muslims and Christians.
- ¹¹⁰ Jose T. Enriquez, *TS*, Nov. 1931.
- ¹¹¹ Jose T. Enriquez, *TS*, Nov. 1931.
- ¹¹² D. L. Marcuelo, *TS*, Sept. 1931.
- ¹¹³ "Pinay" is a term referring to Filipino women, or Filipinas.
- ¹¹⁴ L.A. Pinay, "Viewed From a Woman's Angle," *The Filipino Pioneer* (hereafter cited as *FP*), July 1, 1938.
- ¹¹⁵ By coincidence, however, I found Hamoy's name and a San Francisco address in my father's notebook, which he kept during the 1930s.
- ¹¹⁶ Juan C. Dionisio, Interview by Ben Menor, June 27, 1981, Juan Dionisio Jr. folder, FANHS archives, Seattle, 1-9.
- ¹¹⁷ Trinidad Rojo and other friends called him "Juanito."
- ¹¹⁸ Dionisio, "Cannery Episode," Juan C. Dionisio Jr. folder, (FANHS) archives, Seattle, 3, 4. There are two versions of this story; this version is held by FANHS, and gives no date or publisher. The second version was published in slightly different version, 1936, in the *Philippine Magazine* (Manila).

¹¹⁹ Juan C. Dionisio, "The Life and Times of Carlos Crisostomo," copyright 1990, by Juan Dionisio. Juan C. Dionisio folder, FANHS archives, Seattle.

¹²⁰ "Filipino Invisibility" has been a commonly cited trope in Filipino-American studies. Elizabeth H. Pisares observes that "Filipino American identity is characterized by a sense of metaphorical invisibility: though the second-largest Asian American group, Filipino Americans are not represented in mainstream culture as often as other even smaller and more recently arrived Asian American groups." Elizabeth H. Pisares, "Do You Mis(recognize) Me: Filipina Americans in Popular Music and the Problem of Invisibility," in *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, Ed. Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr., Edgardo V. Gutierrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 173.

¹²¹ Juan C. Dionisio, Interview by Joan Cordova and Fred Cordova, "The Forgotten Asian Americans, The Filipinos and Koreans," Demonstration Project for Asian Americans, March 28, 1981. Manuscript.

¹²² Sarmiento graduated from USC, and contributed articles to the *Los Angeles Times* magazine, and the Manila *GRAPHIC*. Del Pilar had held other editorial positions, and was associate editor of the *Associated Oriental Press* in Chicago.

¹²³ Helent Mantele, "News from Denver," *FP*, March 14, 1938.

¹²⁴ According to Veltisezar Bautista, "On April 7, 1939, the Filipino agricultural Laborers Association, headed by Dr. M. Bautista, president, and Juan C. (Johnny) Dionisio, vice president, struck against asparagus growers in the San Joaquin delta. The strike involved about 6,000 workers. The union, 36 hours after it staged a strike, gained the wage hike for asparagus cutters." Veltisezar Bautista, *The Filipino Americans from 1763 to the Present: Their History, Culture, and Traditions*, (Farmington Mills, MI: Bookhaus Publishers, 1998), 135.

¹²⁵ P.C. Morante, "Why We Need a National Journal," *FP*, March 14, 1938.

Chapter IV
War and the Irony of “Unity”: *the Philippine Commonwealth Times*
and the *Philippine-American News Digest*

The Philippine Commonwealth Times and the *Philippine-American News Digest* present us with some of the first articles to articulate a U.S. Filipino literary discourse. Its emergence may have been due largely to the presence of Carlos and Aurelio Bulosan and a small group of influential Filipino writers and editors also in dialogue with Anglo American writers who were part of the progressive movement in the Los Angeles area during the late 1930s.

At this time, Filipino newspaper editors, both in the U.S. and the Philippines, were beginning to recognize that Carlos Bulosan was an important writer, perhaps the first Filipino fiction writer to address in depth the issues of the Filipino worker in the U.S. Another reason for the emergence of the discourse at this time came from the literary debates then going strong in the Philippines. These unfortunately often took the form of a developmental discourse weaving through a polarized dialogue assessing the strengths or weaknesses of “progressive” or modernist writing vs. social realism. The debates crossed the Pacific and intersected with discussions among Filipino writers and readers on the West and East Coast. While some of these discussions emerged in letters and brief commentary in various U.S. Filipino newspapers in Washington, Oregon, and California, they seemed to find their most public and articulate voice in the Los Angeles area just before and during America’s involvement in the Pacific Theatre of World War II.

John Wiener points out that the great California strikes, which were the largest agricultural strikes in American history— involving not only Filipinos, but also Whites, Japanese and Chinese—culminated in southern California, in the San Joaquin Valley. They inspired many non-fiction works, as well as social-realist essays, novels and poems. Production of the film version of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) brought the issues to the foreground of American consciousness. Certainly these works inspired Bulosan, as they did other Filipino writers.¹ Later, as the U.S. geared up for war in the Pacific, the government began to see the strategic importance of publicly characterizing Filipinos as allies. Filipino writing began to be published more often in the U.S., outside of the Filipino newspapers, and Carlos Bulosan was seen as representative of the Filipino experience in the U.S.—and, with publication of *Laughter of My Father*, in the Philippines. In literary dialogue and debate among Filipinos, Jose Garcia Villa was often juxtaposed with Bulosan, comparing the modernist approach of the former with the social realist approach of the latter. In fact, Bulosan’s writing drew from both modernism and social realism, and the differences are perhaps less marked than they have been portrayed.

The *Commonwealth Times* was edited and published by Mariano G. (M.G.) Alviar, of whom there is little biographical information available. Associate and contributing editorial positions in the *Times* seemed to shift with the wind. Various editors included (beside Aurelio and Carlos Bulosan) Trinidad Rojo, Al Fajardo, P.C. Morante, and Marili Morden.² The *Commonwealth Times* under Alviar’s editorial management was a progressive newspaper; it strongly advocated for the civil rights of aliens (especially through its promotion of the American Committee for the Protection of Foreign Born), citizenship (or naturalization), and fair wages; yet it was published

in an area—southern California—that was generally conservative, and where there was a larger gap between rich and poor than in other areas. Many Filipinos worked in service jobs in Los Angeles and Hollywood, as valets, maids, cooks, and gardeners. Some found work in the film industry as actors or extras, especially after World War II commenced in the Pacific and the Philippines. They could also find fieldwork in the San Joaquin and Imperial Valleys, picking grapes, cotton, or fruit.

Turning Points: *Philippine Commonwealth Times*

The *Commonwealth Times* emerged in an area (Los Angeles and nearby Santa Maria) that was dominated by the newspaper dynasty of the *Los Angeles Times*. Anne Loftis writes that Los Angeles' most powerful newspaper, "*The Times*...had a long history of warfare with labor unions, originating with the policies of its conservative republican founder, General Harrison Grey Otis—appointed Brigadier General of Volunteers in the Philippines during the Philippine-American war."³ Under Otis' management, with his son-in-law Harry Chandler, the Los Angeles Times became a conservative booster for development in Los Angeles, and was staunchly anti-union.⁴ Otis' successors, the Chandlers, kept the newspaper conservative through the Depression era and into World War II.⁵ When socialist author Upton Sinclair ran for governor in 1934, the newspaper attacked him daily.⁶ In *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law the Making of Race in California*, Peggy Pascoe observes that "on slow news days" the Los Angeles Times reported on issues of marriage license applications between whites and Filipinos and blacks as a way to point to what they viewed as an alarming trend.⁷ Saverio Giovaccini points out, however, that the 1930s saw a huge increase in the population of Los Angeles; along with that came an influx of intellectuals from Europe, who were fleeing the Nazis, and from New York:

For the first time since its founding, Los Angeles had a lively intellectual milieu, based in cafes, salons, and cultural organizations. Carey McWilliams, an attentive and passionate observer of California mores since his arrival there in 1922 from his native Colorado, noted in the Pasadena Panorama that the most striking feature of those salons, and in particular those based in Hollywood, was their increasing seriousness.⁸

This change in the cultural community of Los Angeles and Hollywood would have its effects on many levels, including in the content of films produced in that area. Filipino writers also found themselves interacting with an exciting mix of writers, artists, and cultural influences.

Like the *Filipino Pioneer* writers, the editors and writers of the *Philippine Commonwealth News* began to feel, toward the end of the 1930s, that activism on the local level was not quite enough. Filipinos had long been involved in local struggles to raise wages, but they continued to be oppressed by legislation on state and national levels aimed at restricting their freedom and categorizing them as aliens. Aurelio Bulosan wrote about the situation for the newspaper in his column, "United Front":

We remember that in the past a number of our fellowmen were murdered, rioted and driven out of the agricultural camps, ruthlessly violated by vigilantes. These "incidents" are not concealed facts... We know it. America knows it. It is written in our history...

Now we see the importance and necessity of UNITY. We know that in unit you can have power and strength. We can at least diminish the monstrosities of injustice. And

to this extent, it is glorifying to know that there is a movement of unity among us. It is important that this movement of unity among us must be supported by all. We should rally behind the unification of all our people. Unity is a force necessary in our struggle for justice.⁹

By the late 1930s, Filipino writers were beginning to gain some perspective on the conflicts they experienced in the West throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century. That perspective was enabled by the chronicling of the events in their newspapers through news reports, testimonials, editorials, essays, and poems. It had now become their “written history.”

Aurelio Bulosan’s column was the voice of unity in the *Philippine Commonwealth Times*. Strongly worded, but measured, and less hyperbolic than the language used by writers in other Filipino newspapers, Aurelio in the late 1930s had begun to realize—with the intimation of possible war with Japan—that citizenship would be the path to increasing civil liberties for Filipinos. In the November 15, 1939 issue, he supported the Vito Marcantonio Bill to give the right of citizenship and naturalization to Filipinos. He mocked those who “want to remain Filipino and die...Filipino” as an attitude “indicative of ignorance of the whole issue and the problems surrounding them.”¹⁰ Further, he favored the more inclusive American trade unionism (UCAPAWA) over the independent, rogue Filipino Laborer’s Union (FLU), which he felt would isolate the Filipino from the larger, more established (and therefore more influential) American labor unions, specifically the CIO.

Aurelio could also turn his political opinion to social fiction, as he did in his column published in the December 22nd issue. Here he wrote of a young man counseled by his doctor to relax, get “a little rest and peace, a change of scene.” Following his doctor’s advice, he wanders into the Mexican neighborhood:

Although it was the conventional siesta hour, they didn’t seem to be doing much relaxing. The stall keepers looked worried. Business wasn’t much good, one of them told him, when he stopped to buy some cactus candy. Little boys who should have been playing out in the fresh, country air were dashing around, asking people if they wanted their shoes shined. They darted here and there in a business like way, with little black boxes slung over their shoulders and solemn faces. A mother with a harassed expression walked by. Three brown babies were tugging at her skirt and the young man could tell by the tone of her voice that she was scolding them, though he couldn’t understand the words. There wasn’t any peace here, he decided.

Later, the narrator witnesses a terrible car accident, which kills one of the children. He walks about aimlessly trying to forget what he’s seen, but the anxiety follows him, even when he sits on a park bench, watching the jobless men around him.

Some of them never raised their eyes from the tattered grass in front of them, yet there was something in the atmosphere which suggested an all pervading tension. He began to tighten up inside and, remembering the doctor’s advice, he got up and walked across the square...The doctor had been right in his diagnosis, but the modern world no longer had the materials with which to fill the prescription.¹¹

Aurelio’s story highlights the way in which modernity separates people and communities, and disorients them from the larger society. As was common with all non-white ethnic minorities in all major American cities in the United States during the 1930s, the Filipinos settled in a poverty

stricken section of downtown. The area, located between Main and Los Angeles Streets, became known as “Little Manila.”¹² Outside of Little Manila, in another ethnic enclave, the narrator finds no relief—only more worry and tragedy. The narrator’s neighborhood ramble differs greatly from Emily Angelo’s “I Cover Chinatown” stroll written for the Seattle *Philippine Advocate*. In that column, a spirit of fun and adventure still existed for the writer, a white female, working as a taxi dancer in one of the more “exotic” neighborhoods of the Northwest. But in embattled California, in the late 1930s, Aurelio’s voice represents the accumulated frustration and cynicism of the era, and the great desire to move on to something better after the long struggle. The writer realizes that the plight of Filipinos is also the plight of all “alienated” minorities in America.

White Women and Other Alliances in the Popular Front

In the issues of the *Commonwealth Times* that were available for review (1938, 1939, 1940, 1941), there were no Filipina writers, save one, Nelly X. Burgos. However, white female writers were published fairly frequently or otherwise mentioned in the *Times*. In June 1, 1938, a short article announces that Sanora Babb, a close friend of Carlos Bulosan and “a friend of Filipinos” had an article published in *New Masses*. A 1969 collection of *New Masses* writing positions the journal “at the vortex of the cultural upheaval of the 1930s.” The journal was a central text of the American Popular Front, “the magazine of the period.” Sanora Babb’s publication in the magazine placed her in the company of such writers as Langston Hughes, James Agee, Richard Wright, Meridel LeSeuer, Ernest Hemingway, and other well-known progressive writers. While many have commented on the frequent sexual and romantic escapades between Filipino men and white women during the 1920s-30s, their relationships were surely much more complex, no less because they risked widespread disapproval, harassment, and even jail, by associating with Filipino men.

In “Refugees,” one of the rare poems to deal with this subject, Claro R. Candelario, an editor and contributing writer for the *Times*, views both himself and his loved one as courageous figures going against the grain of a violent society that treats them as outcasts:

Do you remember how the living sun
Gave the strength our happiness needed?
Brave and strong, we’ve surrendered
To the rising tide of poignant unity.
Then we found we’re one...
Two tangled souls under the sun.
 Into the blood-streets of this life
We ploughed the sorrows of the earth;
Sick and feeble, ignored—beaten, and unwanted
Maimed by man’s greed—ignorance, prejudiced.
Pursued and starved, we screamed...
Why O Why are we denied to live!
O bestial dictated—cunning law of man!
Behold the injustice you have done...
Our home is wrecked...you have stifled
The voice of our love into the streets
Of cruel stare. We’ve lost our only identity.

When shall we know the promised happiness
 That we, of God's creation, are denied?
 Man-made laws are feeble and strangled.
 Tear us apart, what gain you may...
 But we're united. God's children in one
 We've risen with the living sun.¹³

Candelaro's emotionally wrought poem rails against the laws that "stifle" a love and union that he feels is natural, a product of "God's creation." Such a union, he seems to suggest, creates what could be a new, hybrid "identity," but the laws reinforce society's prejudiced views, making it difficult to maintain the relationship.

Iris Brown's "Confessions of a White Wife" recounts at length the bittersweet memories of a Rizal Day celebration with her Filipino husband in Casper Wyoming—a rare glimpse into the lives of a bi-racial couple. They drive into Casper to attend a banquet and dance. Listening to the speeches, she hears "Filipinos reiterating their pride of race and country, their gratitude to the United States, their plea for American Good Will and Understanding..." Later, the crowd disperses to the dance floor:

The town's best orchestra. The state's best ballroom. And the treat is on us!

--They push, --they shove, they mock and ridicule --White men's elbows arrogantly in their Filipino hosts' faces!

Fear catches me, squeezes my heart in iron fingers. I know Filipino tempers—that might strike out in blind fury, only to impale their insides on the cruel spikes of race prejudice and mob hysteria.

The couple escapes the threatening scene, and her husband, driving too fast, plows the car into a snow bank; however, they emerge unscathed, and the incident spurs them to reiterate their love for each other:

"Still, I would have never met you then my sweet! You make up for everything!" he grabbed me fiercely, and in that kiss, we both forgot, for a while.

Laughing, we struggled in the wind and snow, turned the car and headed back down the mountain, comforted now and shielded from all the winds of hate. Rizal Day is over.

Tomorrow night the christening party. Lights and laughter, good food and good friends. Rhythm that catches you, swings you into the old stream of the old joys. We do have something you can never have—you whites. You have lost the joy of living and have gained no jewel one half so precious.¹⁴

Shunned because of their involvement with Filipino men, white women were forced to identify more closely with the Filipinos—to the point of perceiving whites as the other. Whether the reasons for excluding, or limiting writing by Filipinas to light, "social" topics such as those found in the *Filipino Pioneer* were due to the dearth of Filipinas in the U.S.—and thus Filipina writers—or due to their relative lack of access to educational resources, Filipino men often had long-term and meaningful relationships with white women, and these emotional ties frequently became the tie that bound them to the U.S..

Marili Morden was introduced to the *Times* readers as “a young American girl” who “did not know Filipinos,” but was “interested in the fight for recognition of our civil rights.” The introduction preceded her portrait of a young bourgeoisie girl who becomes politicized, “Introduction to Miriam Webster.” In the same issue they published two untitled impressionistic poems by Morden. In December of the same year, Morden—clearly well-read and articulate—had her own column, “The World I Breathe In,” in which she reviewed the film, “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.” An excerpt illustrates how she used the rhetoric of her progressive viewpoint to present a positive review:

America has its persecuted minorities—Japanese, Chinese, Hindus, Filipinos, Jews, Jehovah’s witnesses—in abundance. It has its refugees—wandering hoards [sic] of men, women, and children, from the dustbowl, searching for a place to live. We have our little dictators—not officially, but in fact, in the South. The sharecroppers, both negro and white are under the economic domination of the plantation owners. And because economically dominated, their whole existence is reduced to slavery to their landlords. Frank Capra goes to town with “Mr. Smith goes to Washington.” Don’t miss it. This picture is an eye opening criticism of certain good old American practices which don’t usually get the publicity they deserve.¹⁵

Writers like Sanora Babb or Marili Morden also provided access into the world of progressive politics, literature, and arts that was more accepting to Filipinos than the mainstream. In many ways, friendly or intimate relationships with white American women was a defining act of both U.S. Filipino identity and authorship, drawing Filipinos further into personal and emotional investment in American society.¹⁶

Alliances were formed in other ways besides those with White women. Organizations like the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born were supported by the newspaper through editorials. Generous quarter-page ad space was devoted to promoting the organization’s progressive books. Ernest Hemingway was the co-chairman, which lent the Organization further credence among writers politically allied with the racial minorities.¹⁷ As the respected social realist writer, Salvador P. Lopez, notes in an interview, Hemingway was widely read by Filipino writers, and he had visited Manila prior to World War II, and met with writers at the University of the Philippines:¹⁸

I still have a copy of Hemingway’s book [For Whom the Bell Tolls] with his dedication, because when he came to Manila in 1938, the book was on sale here. Everybody got him to sign their copies. That was the milieu; how could one have escaped it?¹⁹

Writer and social researcher Carey McWilliams also became an important connection for Filipino writers and labor activists. McWilliams in 1939 held the position of Chief of the Division of Immigration and Housing in Los Angeles, and was supportive of Filipino laborers’ civil rights. When McWilliams’ book, *Factories in the Field*, was published in 1939, he was given editorial space to articulate his views on alien-baiting and the need to combat anti-alien bills on the Congressional table.²⁰ In “Portrait of America” he characterizes those who support the Registration Act as “hysterical” and vouches for those who would be effected negatively by the Act:

Once the American people have been made aware of the dangers contained in this law, they will rise up in protest against the Registration Act of 1940 just as our ancestors did in 1799 when they wiped the Alien and Sedition Acts from our statute books.

Meanwhile, our 3,500,000 non-citizens will prove by their law-abiding observance of the Registration Law, by their persistent efforts toward naturalization, by their constant striving to achieve unity with our citizenry, that they are devoted to democratic procedure. They will prove that they are Americans in every sense of the word even if, because of existing difficulties in the naturalization procedure, they have not as yet found it possible to secure citizenship.²¹

The present wave of hysteria can be defeated as anti-alien campaigns in the past were defeated by refusal of the American people to lend themselves to any program that tends to nullify the Constitution of the United States.

McWilliams aligns Filipino protest with that of the early American colonial subjects who protested the alien and Sedition Acts in 1799, thus conflating the aims of the American revolution with those of the Philippines.’ This narrative act tends to obscure the colonization of the Philippines by the U.S., while highlighting the Filipino desire for citizenship. Nevertheless, he was viewed as an ally to the Filipinos, especially in his advocacy for the agricultural worker. In the same issue, McWilliams’ book was reviewed by a staff writer, who observed that “Everyone who wants to understand the problems of agriculture and agricultural workers in California today and its history should read McWilliams’ absorbing book, *Factories in the Field*.”²²

McWilliams’ essay and other published writings, as well as his support of labor and the *Commonwealth Times* (and decades later he would edit and publish Carlos Bulosan’s *America is in the Heart*) helped give hope to Filipino writers. Affiliation with progressive Americans and national labor organizations that were becoming more inclusive of minority groups encouraged Filipinos to see beyond their community enclaves, to imagine a possible future as American citizens, and thus to be absorbed into the nation as “Filipino-Americans.” There were many contributing factors toward this shift in consciousness. One of them was President Quezon’s approval of the Marcantonio bill to grant Filipinos and other eligible aliens citizenship. Another factor was the realization that America’s deeper involvement in the Philippines with the onset of a Pacific war was going to be a game-changer. Once Japanese forces occupied the Philippines, many Filipinos would have to make a choice about becoming citizens or returning to the homeland. The arrival of war to the Philippines’ shores and the need for alliance with Filipinos forced at least a temporary resolution to the conflict between Filipino labor in the U.S. and those “alien-baiters” who wished to limit their rights and restrict their entry to the country.

Identification with the democratic values espoused by the United States government and its war media seemed to provide an outlet for the frustrations of the Filipino laborer and the writer alike. With that shift in authorial identity came a subtle shift in the perception of the still-emerging literature produced by Filipinos in the U.S. Their writing had been shaped by several decades of struggle in the Western U.S., a struggle that shaped the writers themselves. Carlos Bulosan became the embodiment of that struggle, both physically and symbolically.

Carlos Bulosan: “THE PEOPLE OF MY WORLD”

In the mid-1930s, Carlos Bulosan was hospitalized and underwent major surgery for complications of tuberculosis. His recuperation in the hospital took three years, a process that he detailed in *America is in the Heart*. An “Appeal” to help Carlos by his friend, P.C. Morante in the *Filipino Pioneer* illustrates the extent to which Bulosan had come to symbolically embody the plight of the Filipino worker in the U.S.

This is the story of Carl Bulosan. But it could be your story. It might become your story. So do not ignore this plea.

Carl is a young man. But even as an adolescent, he had already a desire to live. Live a useful life. It was his ambition: To live that he might give. Give the beauty of his gift. Gift of songs. Songs for the minds of Men and women who are not afraid to live.

He came to America. He worked. He studied. And he wrote with fire. He wrote poems that stirred the minds. And echoed in the hearts of struggling men and women.

Morante’s “Appeal” explained that Bulosan had been “fighting a disease,” had “pulled through” and needed a “lifting hand. For he has no home to go to. Nor rich relations to live with. Nor a job. And he wants to write. Pieces that would delight us. Awaken us. Afire us with the spirit of life.”²³

Carlos had arrived in Seattle in 1931, and traveled to California where his brothers Aurelio and Dionisio were living. While staying in Lompoc with Dionisio, he worked as a dishwasher and in time learned about the violent atmosphere in which Filipinos existed in Central California. He got involved in labor union work through his friendship with labor leader and newspaper editor Chris Mensalvas.²⁴ Later, Carlos moved to Los Angeles to live with Aurelio, who was nine years older, also a writer, and something of a father-figure to him. Carlos’ editorship (with brother Aurelio) of the *New Tide* exposed him to progressive writers such as Richard Wright, William Saroyan, and Charles Adamic.²⁵

Carlos and Aurelio were important contributors to the editing and writing featured in the *Philippines Commonwealth Times*. They each took on various editing and staff positions, and Carlos continued to contribute stories and essays to the newspaper after his hospital stay. He was at one point “City Editor,” and his brother was “Managing Editor.” In July 1941, neither of the Bulosans were on staff. In December of the same year, Bulosan was a “contributing editor” along with P.C. Morante and Trinidad Rojo, but Aurelio was not listed on staff.

Carlos Bulosan’s essays were given a lot of column space in the *Times*, more than any other contributor. In 1937, the *Times* published his critique of Capitalism, “Labor and Capital: the Coming Catastrophe,” in 1937, confirming his immovable position against the capitalist industrialist, and for labor and unionism:

Labor and capital are sharp enemies. There never was any amnesty between them and there never shall be. One or the other stay[s]. The most disastrous proposal is compromise between them. This will never do: it only means the demoralization of the workers, the betrayal of these advanced groups working among the exploited and oppressed.

Unionism is one way of fighting for a better living condition. We are lucky to have in this country a considerable strong group which is fighting for us workers. But this is only a stepping-stone available in democracies. Unionism is a way to economic freedom. But

we must have political freedom also. We could have this through unionisms. We must have everything or nothing.²⁶

His short story, “To a God of Stone,” was given five columns, filling the page. Although the antagonist of the story seems initially to be the frustrated novelist, Dan, who murders two musicians—in fact the real villain is America’s capitalist system, which offers no support to those who are talented but poor, and must desperately beg from friends to survive:

At Tong King Low’s I lost all my money. I went up to my room and lay down in my bed, face upward, thinking of my losses. But thinking of my losses in gambling made me think of my losses in life. What have I done? Where am I headed for? What do I know about the world? Yes, I said to myself. You live in the big city and you forget how little you are. You forget time. Hundreds are killed in Europe, but you do not feel their agony. You forget man. You do not even look at the newspaper headlines. Shanghai is invaded by the Japanese. Does it mean anything to you? Can you see how your country is involved? What are you? And where are you?

...It was pitiful, the way Dan was. It was pitiful, the way the living cried. Everywhere you turned was a wall of discontent, insurmountable. Everywhere you went was misery, and you were afraid. Everywhere was the hunger of the living man, and you were helpless.

I began to feel the helplessness of the living. The tenements rose darkly before me, mocking me. I began to hear the cry of the living.

The gambling narrator and Dan are alienated from society, and have both lost their compass and all meaning for their lives. They have lost a connection to the value of human life. Their actions don’t make sense. They live in a system which has deprived their lives of meaning. Only Dan, the murderer, has some sense of who he is, and what he needs to do, but it is insanity that drives him, forcing him to resort to desperate means in order to pursue his vocation.

Eventually, Dan commits homicide and is sent to jail where, finally, he is given the time to write the novel, and the narrator is left to remember “how the gods of stone are crushing the spirit of our decency forever.”²⁷

“Look at All These Women,” may be one of the more remarkable essays written by Carlos Bulosan for the *Times*. Women seem to be less focus of the essay than the range and variety of people encountered, making the title a bit puzzling. By virtue of naming of all these characters, the essay seems to articulate his burgeoning “world” or community of writers, the “intelligentsia” of Bulosan’s neighborhood. “Look at All These Women” took up five columns—nearly the entire page—and the editor noted that the original was three times longer than what was printed; the remainder would be published in a future issue.

The lengthy narrative follows Bulosan, accompanied by M.G. Alviar, as he takes a reporter named George through his neighborhood to meet “THE PEOPLE OF MY WORLD.” The essay is curiously transparent. Bulosan notes that his older brother, Aurelio, counseled him not to have it published. This advice may have been directed to the fact that the many characters that crowd the text are all mentioned by name, and not a few become inebriated in the course of the narrative.

The account, as Bulosan takes the reporter and the reader in and out of cafes, bars, pool halls, and hotel rooms is reminiscent of the language used in his novel, *America is in the Heart*—often rambling and crowded with characters. We meet numerous men and women, some desperate, some opportunistic, and often at the edge of some emotional and financial crisis. Many Filipino writers were encountered or mentioned on their route:

Near the tunnel on second and Hill streets, I stopped to talk to Jose Reyes, the honor and anthropology student. Alfonso Santos came into our discussion, but I reminded Reyes that J.C. Dionisio is perhaps the most equipped Filipino writer in the United States, not excepting P.C. Morante, who did not have a definite understanding of the function of literature in society, and Jose Garcia Villa who, in spite of his wonderful facility with language lacks the breadth and vision of a definitely superior writer. Alviar said: “They are confused intellectuals, and they are dangerous because they prostitute their art for something inane. They prelude the horrible rising of fascism.”

This exposé also functions within the story as literary and political critique. Bulosan introduces us to waitresses, librarians, newspapermen, editors, photographers, scene writers for movie studios, and one memorable “whore,” as well as writers like John Fante, and even Nelly X. Burgos, who reviewed Bulosan’s poems for the *Times*. George is constantly put off from interviewing Bulosan. In *America is in the Heart*, Bulosan writes that “Fante’s obscure background and racial origin aroused in me a sense of kinship...but at the same time I feared that, because he lacked a positive intellectual weapon with which to cope with his environment, he might eventually lose the vigor of his peasant heritage.”²⁸ It is apparent, then, that Bulosan’s interest in a community of writers is not just as a means of getting published, but rather as a way of exposing himself to different viewpoints, through which he might find resonance with ideas that would enable him to voice his concerns. Finally, in Carlos’ hotel room, George is able to thumb through the writer’s papers; Bulosan begins to speak about his world when asked, “*Tell me how you really feel?*” Bulosan begins by revealing that he identifies with the journalist, his need to know, and to talk to the people:

Very slowly I talked to him because talking to him was like talking to myself. I said: “There is something tragic in the life of Filipinos. I want to know what it is. I go to these places and talk to these people. It is there. I think I know how to interpret it for the world. If I did not write about it, I know I would burst with anger.”

Bulosan’s understanding of literary and artistic form intersects with his role as a writer, which he interprets as a political act:

...A great work of art is at once a criticism and an affirmation of life. There is no art for art’s sake at a time like ours, when the very foundations upon which the art must stand are shaken and endangered. The writer must be the child and the man of his time—a child because he likes its whims and fancies, a man because he is mature with the experience of humanity to rationalize its contradictions. There are only two alternatives in the life of a writer: To work toward the complete freedom of man, and to work toward the complete slavery of man. No writer can follow both alternatives, because he cannot love and hate freedom at the same time and neither can he hate both at the same time.²⁹

Like Emily Angelo and Gregory San Diego’s “I Cover Chinatown,” Simeon Doria Arroyo’s view of American society from his dishwasher’s perch at the café’s kitchen sink, and Aurelio Bulosan’s anxious neighborhood exploration, “Look at All the Women” is a kind of anxious and

yet earnest first-person travelogue and exploration through territory rarely tracked by the upper class bourgeoisie—unless they have already been politicized and converted to progressive thought. It valorizes interaction—getting to know—the worker, and the common man and woman.

The many encounters embody through emotions and actions of the characters the desperation, anxiety, and sexual desire of the locals. The essay also reveals the fact that Bulosan and his fellow Filipino writers comprised a progressive intelligentsia of writers, thinkers, activists, and artists, which overlapped and interacted with white progressives.

By mid-1941, the U.S. was sending tens of thousands of its military forces to the Philippines and recruiting Filipinos. Both Bulosan and Villa had begun receiving critical notice from influential American critics, such as Alfred Kreymborg. Bulosan, viewed as a social realist or “political” writer, was chosen to edit *Chorus for America: Six Philippine Poets: An Anthology of Filipino poetry*, published by Wagon and Star, in 1942. Considered a modernist writer, Jose Garcia Villa’s collected poems in *Have Come, Am Here*, was published by Viking Press in the same year. Garcia Villa was by then located in the U.S., attending the University of New Mexico. As an ex-patriot, he would eventually live out his life in New York City.

Nelly X. Burgos and Her Critique of Bulosan

Victorio Velasco, Gregory San Diego, and other Filipino writers had been struggling to find publishers for their writing since the beginning of the Great Depression. But after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942, American publishers began to focus on Bulosan. Chris Vials writes that

“Between 1942 and 1946, he published three collections of poetry and two fictionalized biographies, *Laughter of My Father* and *America is in the Heart*, all of which met general acclaim from journals ranging from the communist *New Masses* to the (then) conservative *New York Times*. In addition to his essay in *Saturday Evening Post*, his stories also appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Town and Country*, and *Harper’s Bazaar*.”³⁰

Bulosan was already recognized as an important writer by Filipinos, both in the Philippines and in the U.S. In 1941, the *Philippine Commonwealth Times* published an unusually lengthy review of Carlos Bulosan’s poetry, written by Nelly X. Burgos, who was a professor of English in the University of the Philippines. She was a member of the “Bachelorettes,” the women’s section of the influential writers’ group, the Veronians, of which the modernist writer Jose Garcia Villa was a member.³¹ In a note accompanying the review, the editor explained that most of Bulosan’s political views were published in the *Times*, and that he was “the only Filipino writer of the social struggle.” Burgos was perhaps the first to characterize Bulosan as an anomaly, singularly concerned with social struggle, despite the fact that he was surrounded by overlapping communities of Filipino writers, all communicating about similar issues. The review’s publication in the *Commonwealth Times* signaled Bulosan’s importance as a U.S. Filipino writer, as well as claiming his relevance to Philippine writing.

Burgos noted that while Bulosan’s poetry was at times “harsh and bitter” when he focused on the subject of “injustice and intolerance” he was yet “the continuation of a literary tradition as established by Balagtas in Tagalog and Rizal in Spanish. . . His experiences are vital and representative not only of the Filipino expatriates but also of the masses of America.” Mention of

both Balagtas (for whom the Balagtasan poetic debate form was named) and Rizal, positioned Bulosan as a political writer whose primary concern was with the welfare of Filipinos.³²

Early on, Burgos identifies the “journalistic” tone that runs in Bulosan:

Almost journalistic is Mr. Bulosan’s followup of current events. He misses no event of economic or political importance. The war ravaging the world today, the fall of the Spanish Republics, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, unemployment, strikes, starvation, the inhuman treatment of the Jews,--- these are the subjects of his poems through which run, sometimes concealed, a consistent challenge of the present social order.³³

As first mentioned previously (chapter 2), the “journalistic” tone runs, as well, in many of the early U.S. Filipino writers. Often written by newspapermen who were often also deeply involved in labor issues and concerned with righting social wrongs, many poems, and especially essays,³⁴ documented the social scene, as well as social ills. The newspaper, providing the social matrix and community for early U.S. Filipino writing, also influenced its language and content, especially that of the prose writers.

Burgos found Bulosan’s collection of free verse “disconcertingly uneven...with phrases...frequently...worn bare by socially conscious political leaders.” Some of the poems, with their “quotations from the films *Blockade*, *Juarez*, the *grapes of Wrath*...lengthy references and numerous italicizations,” underline his modernist leanings, his awareness of modernity’s disruptions.

It’s not hard to imagine that Bulosan may have been influenced by a writer such as Dos Passos—a friend of his—who frequently referenced films and newspaper content in his novels. In reflecting on Dos Passos, in 1961, critic Milton Rugoff described his work as “a montage of fiction, impressionistic biographies, brief quotations from newspapers, and an investigator’s interviews.”^{35, 36} The United States of the 1920s and 30s, with its many newly arrived migrant populations was in fact a fragmented nation, despite its claims of unity, and newspapers themselves were the very heralds of its disrupted histories. On the other hand, Burgos also points to Bulosan’s best poems as having a “wealth and richness of associations.” Here, Burgos seems to reflect her own regard for modernist lyric and voice, the “economy of means...harmonious blend of metrical verse and cadenced prose” appreciated by the Veronican poets, and especially Jose Garcia Villa.

Timothy Yu writes about how the critic Alfred Kreymborg’s pairing of Garcia Villa and Bulosan set their positions relative to the American canon:

This is a harbinger of how Bulosan would be incorporated into American literature, as part of a tradition of literature of social protest, Which would also become the ground for his status as a founding father of Asian American literature...(18)

Bulosan belongs to the realm of politics, while Villa belongs to the realm of metaphysics-and aesthetics. It is this dichotomy that has long delayed Villa's acceptance as an Asian American writer. (5) But it is also this dichotomy that allowed Villa, and not Bulosan, to be incorporated into the modernist canon. Villa had to be removed from history to be adopted into modernism, a move that Villa himself endorsed.³⁷

The dichotomy represented by the Garcia Villa/Bulosan pairing would be played out further in the literary criticism of the *Philippine News Digest*. In fact, Garcia Villa himself seemed to promote the generic divide between the two.

In the June 1, 1938 issue of the times, M.G. Alviar recounted his excitement upon hearing that “two brilliant writers from the Philippines were coming to the United States to attend the American Writers’ Congress in New York City.” His friend and colleague, J.C. Dionisio, confirmed their arrival through a letter. The two writers were the *Manila Tribune* columnist Federico Mangahas and Salvador Lopez, then columnist of the *Manila Herald*. Alviar identifies Lopez as a force behind “the new upsurge of radical thought in the P.I.,” and notes that he had turned the *Herald Sunday Magazine* into “a progressive weekly.” Maria Luna Lopez was also coming to the U.S. to represent Filipino women writers. Most exciting of all was the fact that a Philippine Writers’ League had been formed, with the blessing and financial support of President Manuel L. Quezon, and that the organization would be affiliated with the League of American Writers, which was centrally located in New York City, but had offices in other American cities, including San Francisco and Los Angeles. Membership was “limited to writers of progressive tendencies.”

The Philippine Writers’ League used its funds for a contest to select the ‘best’ writers in “poetry, novel, drama, history, biography, essay, and [short] story,” with 1000 pesos given to the best submissions.

...I was surprised to learn that the Filipino writers in the United States are included in the...literary contest sponsored by the government. But I wanted to suggest [to Mangahas] that the Philippine Government should commission six writers on the West Coast to make a survey of Filipino life, giving enough monthly salary so that they could go on with their creative work...the writers in this country are helped by the government under the Federal Writers’ Project, but the Filipinos are not included because they are not American citizens. I believe that most of the Filipino writers here are destitute and therefore in need.³⁸

The formation of the progressive Philippine Writers’ League, its affiliation with the American Writers’ League, and the inclusion of U.S. Filipino writers in the contest, held great significance for the development and direction of U.S. Filipino Literature.

An open letter in the newspaper from P.C. Morante to editors of the *Philippine-American News Digest* begins to roughly articulate the divisions—primarily political—that were already beginning to emerge in the new literary discourse. Morante faults the *Digest* for its criticism of the government-sponsored Philippine Writers’ League contest; the *Digest* subtitled the article “Danger of Government Literary Contest in a Democracy”:

Where is the danger of which you are alarmed? Somehow in an attempt to answer this question, you allude to ‘the fact that in the Philippines today there are recognize [sic] writers and journalists who have Communistic leanings. Every so often they identify themselves directly or indirectly, and in between the lines, with their cry against the democratic form of government now abuilding in the Far East.’

This line of reasoning is decidedly weak and insupportable. I am quite familiar with the writings of all Filipino writers and journalists of recognized standing in the Philippines and I am sure I can not point out one who has published a ‘cry against the

democratic form of government now abuilding in the Far East.’ You seem to confuse the men of the pen with professional politicians, some of whom identify themselves even with Bolshevism and dare to carry out subversive activities against the Commonwealth.³⁹

The writers and journalists with “communistic leanings” were in fact the very writers and journalists who formed the League, and the *Digest’s* article (not available to this researcher) seems to have been alluding to their sponsorship by the “democratic” government. The concern illustrates the anxieties about such affiliations as the likelihood of a Pacific war increased.

Morante’s response, however, suggests how differently U.S. Filipinos in his milieu had come to view “democracy” while sojourning in their American “home”:

To a great many of us, democracy has become a platitude. Our understanding of democracy has been dulled by trite repetition of the word. Our knowledge of its real import in life is so superficial that on many occasions we utter it indiscriminately to make an assertion plausible or to lend truth to a vague idea. When you assert, “of the danger of a government literary contest in a democracy,” I can not help but suspect that you do not know what you are talking about.⁴⁰

Morante later became a regular contributor to the *Digest*, writing about literature from his perspective as a Filipino living in the U.S. Jose Garcia Villa, the modernist writer, was also given a lengthy section in which to discuss his view of Filipino literature. The juxtaposition of the two writers articulated—at times a bit harshly—the state of Philippine and U.S. Filipino literature at the end of the Great Depression era, as America looked increasingly toward war, and the Philippines looked forward to finally achieving independence.

“War Jitters” in the *Philippine News Digest*: Jose Garcia Villa and P.C. Morante

An “Editorial Interlude” in the September 1940 issue of the *Philippine News Digest* notes that had been “in existence even before 1925, the inceptual year of the Filipino short story.”⁴¹ The editor wanted to point out that “the editor has only now caught up with early progressive writers—ten years after,” perhaps as segue to Jose Garcia Villa’s “Rise of the Short Story in the Philippines” in that issue.

Despite the reference to the magazine’s long life, I was able to find only three copies, available at the Bancroft Library, U.C. Berkeley. The copies, however, provide us with some texts that define both the perception of Philippine and U.S. Filipino literature at a turning point in its development, as well as the trajectory of what would eventually be called Filipino-American literature.

The periodical was edited by E. Llamas Rosario, affectionately called “Bert” by his friends, which included both Carlos Bulosan and P.C. Morante. Rosario had introduced the two writers to the Filipino Labor Commissioner in Washington, who encouraged both men to expand their writings into novels (Bulosan took his advice, and produced *America is in the Heart*).⁴² Rosario owned the Pioneer Publishing Company, located in San Francisco, which took ownership of the *Filipino Pioneer*. He also worked for the San Francisco *Sun Reporter*. Rosario is mentioned briefly as one of the characters in Bulosan’s story, “Look at All These Women” in the *Commonwealth Times*. Rosario was born in Pangasinan province in the Philippines. He graduated from the University of the Philippines in Business Administration, traveled to the U.S.

as a pensionado, and studied at New York University, where he received a graduate degree in Business and Finance. He also got his Master's degree in Science of Commerce from Columbia University. Rosario's obituary notes that "Because of the discriminatory laws that existed in 1933, Mr. Rosario was unable to get a job on Wall Street, a desire that he had hoped to realize after receiving two advanced degrees. At this time, he turned to his second love, journalism."⁴³ He was also director of the Philippine Research Bureau, based in New York City. The Bureau published Trinidad Rojo's study of "The Philippine Language Problem."

The *Digest* was published by the Philippine-American Foundation in magazine format, twice a month, and according to the editor, "an occasional mid-number supplements the monthly." Its offices were located in Los Angeles. The magazine presented a very polished, almost slick, appearance, with a photograph of a beautiful Filipina gracing each cover. Three women held editor positions: Esther Mary Brannen was the Advisory Editor, Marjorie Payton Ramos and E. Jane Stublely were Associate Editors. While I could find no information on the three women, the content of their essays suggest that their roles as editors were related to the task of propagandizing America's War effort.

All articles in the *Digest* were in English. True to its title, the journal was occupied with events both in the Philippines and the United States. Its "Public Affairs" articles offered historical essays, and analysis of current events affecting the Philippines and Filipinos. There was a section devoted to "Commerce – Economics – Industry," which, in the June-July 1940 issue, included a large section on Labor news, edited by Lamberto C. Malinab, for "Labor is a big question mark with a lengthening shadow in Philippine-American relations. From the time the *Philippine-American News Digest* was conceived, the editors recognized this to be a serious fact."⁴⁴ There was a "Pacific Digest" section, presenting "Excerpts From the World Press," and "Collectanea," with essays on literature and arts.

In the two issues available—June 15-July 15, 1940, and August, 1940—*The Digest* devoted significant space to Jose Garcia Villa's assessment of "The Rise of the Short Story in the Philippines" and P.C. Morante's new column "Writing and Reading," which replaced their old "Books" column.

Jose Garcia Villa was, and even now after his death, continues to be, an important figure in both Philippine and Filipino-American literature, especially poetry. His arrival on the Philippine literary scene was marked by his youthful editorship of the influential *Philippine Short Stories: Best Short Stories of 1928* (in English). He has also been controversial and rebellious, with stubbornly held opinions that often made him enemies, as well as disciples. Villa was suspended from the University of the Philippines after he published a series of erotic poems. In the same year, 1929, he won a prize for best short story from the *Philippines Free Press*. Soon after, at the age of twenty-one, he traveled to the United States, it is said, to escape from his father. He enrolled in the University of New Mexico, where he became editor of the magazine, *Clay: A Literary Notebook*. Only the first issue of *Clay* was available to me through University California libraries. The journal was published quarterly, and was "devoted solely to the short story and poetry."⁴⁵ Clearly published on a budget, the magazine was mimeographed. In the opening essay, "Advice to a Young Man About to Lose His Shirt" Kyle Samuel Crichton, an editor of *Scribner's*, used a jocular and tongue-in-cheek tone to characterize the *Clay* audience as those writers or readers "who live in the Southwest...[or are] members of the families of the authors who appear in CLAY." Yet the magazine, he noted, could "afford a respectable amount of white

space for the works of writers who would otherwise not appear.”⁴⁶ Crichton was briefly a registered Communist and a member of the progressive League of American Writers; he contributed articles to the *Daily Worker* and *The Masses*.⁴⁷ His political stance couldn’t have been farther from Garcia Villa’s, who felt that art should transcend politics and the “everydayness” of life.

Yet, Garcia Villa’s editorship of the first issue was remarkably even-handed. He included two lengthy works of realist fiction (Erskine Caldwell and Arthur Shumway), and two experimental fiction pieces (Moe Bragin and Garcia Villa). The poems, by Witter Bynner, Grace Stone Coates, David Cornel de Jong, Norman MacLeod, and Catherine Stuart MacLeod, were in the modernist vein (free verse, strong imagery, rhythms based on musical phrase, and concise form), but could hardly be called experimental. Garcia Villa published no writers of color in that issue other than himself. His choice of writers did not fit in precisely with Crichton’s “writers who would otherwise not appear,” for all but one had been previously published, or were associated with the editorship of other journals.⁴⁸ Norman MacLeod was editor of *Left*, and *New Masses*, and a contributor to *Scribner’s* and *The Nation*; Erskine Caldwell’s second novel was due to be published; Arthur Shumway was a newspaper columnist; Witter Byner was an established poet “of international fame.” In 1933, C. Scribner’s Sons published a collection of his short stories, *Footnote to Youth: Tales of the Philippines and Others*. Thus, Garcia Villa’s editorship helped him to gain access into the literary circles of the U.S. that were dominated by white writers.

In the meantime, he continued to have his work published in American and Philippine journals, and during the 1930s became one of the most influential critics espousing experimental, modernist “art for art’s sake” writing in the Philippines, continuing to wield power through his selections of the *Best Stories* and *Best Poems* of the year until 1941. Jonathan Chua writes about Garcia Villa’s mystifying “tests of substance” such as “vitality of subject” and “profound reading of life.”⁴⁹ He notes that, “Moreover, [Garcia Villa’s] critical essays helped set the canon of Philippine writing in English. The stories he named the best of each year are found in reading lists, anthologies, and textbooks.”⁵⁰

Garcia Villa’s “short story” published in the Autumn 1931, No. 1 issue of *Clay*, illustrates his experimental approach to prose in “Wings and Blue Flame, a Trilogy”:

I. UNTITLED STORY

15

The boy’s name was David. He was poor and he wore slovenly clothes but his eyes were soft. He was like a young flower.

16

When David was sick I watched over him.

17

Afterwards David would not go anywhere without me.

18

Of nights David and I would walk thru the streets and he would recite poetry to me.

“Sunset and evening star

And one clear call for me...”

This was the slowness of David, the slowness of the sunset, of the evening star.

19

One night David came to me and said he was returning home the next morning. He could not earn enough money on which to go to school.

20

I died in myself.

This excerpt is just one in a series of events depicted in the piece, beginning with the narrator’s departure from the Philippines because he was “afraid” of his father. He goes to school in New Mexico, and then leaves for New York. This section seems to suggest a homosexual relationship, however, other sections depict the narrator’s various problematic relationships (both amorous and platonic) taking place in New Mexico, with women, and various friends. The piece consists of brief numbered vignettes, taking the shape of a prose poem. With a modernist’s attention to form, the sentences are extremely short and declarative, reminiscent of Hemingway’s style. Both the content and the form, for that period, are challenging, even risky. No other Filipino writer of the period wrote in a manner that questioned the boundaries of prose and poetry, as well as sexuality. At the same time, the piece, which progresses in a series of disjointed time frames seems to embody the aimless wandering and alienation often experienced by Filipinos in the U.S. during the Great Depression, but without specific reference to the demanding issues of labor and the plight of the working poor of that period:

69

Had I bidden myself goodbye?

70

Afterwards I walked thru the town as if I had gone out of myself. I looked for myself vainly. I was nowhere. I was now only a shell, a house. The house of myself was empty.

71

My god had flown away and carried with him my gorgeous purple flower. Will Father laugh now?

72

Where had my god fled? Where was he taking my purple flower which my father had refused?

The writing in this excerpt reflects Garcia Villa’s disciplined approach to the sentence; no word is included that does not have its place. And yet the “gorgeous purple flower” and the young “god” who is the writer’s object of attention suggest a perspective very different from the materialist minimalism of Hemingway. Garcia Villa’s language is used in service of a

metaphysical poetics. Epifanio San Juan characterizes Garcia Villa's sojourn in New Mexico as one of isolation and deracination.⁵¹ The alienation recorded in "Untitled Story," however, seems to contain an added element with the shifting sexual orientation that places the author even farther along the periphery of a society and world that has left him bereft even of himself.

In the 1960s Garcia Villa was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, which he lost to Wallace Stevens. Over the years, he became quite influential among the writers in the Philippines, especially those who subscribed to the idea of "art for art's sake." So revered was his opinion that writers annually submitted their work to be chosen for his selections of the best Filipino short stories and poems of each year, hopefully to be announced on his "Roll of Honor" and "Yearbook Index," where he coded their work with a single asterisk (fair), two asterisks (good), or three asterisks (excellent). Stories he thought bad were placed on the "Criminal Record."⁵² It may be difficult to understand why he had this effect, given his reputation for focusing his caustic criticism—frequently aired in major Philippine magazines such as the *Graphic*, *Philippines Free Press*, and the *Philippines Herald*—on other writers. However, Garcia Villa offered Filipino writers a new and exciting approach to their craft. His dicta ushered in the literary age of modernism to the Philippines, and its effects were double-edged. According to Jonathan Chua,

Under Villa's influence, the writer was given a new province to work in, called 'the creative,' 'the imaginative,' or 'the essential.' But the writer was also limited to that space. Anything beyond this was considered, pejoratively, 'didacticism' or 'propaganda...' In effect, Villa's critical essays blunted the subversive edge of literature, which in the Philippines had been instrumental in the struggles for sociopolitical control and change.⁵³

Garcia Villa's lengthy article on "The Rise of the Short Story in the Philippines" appeared in Vol. 1, No. 4 of the *Digest* that announced "War Jitters" in its "Public Affairs" editorial page.

Japanese naval and military authorities seem to be certain that the war will spread in the Far East. Feverish precautions are being undertaken everywhere... WAR WHICH MIGHT BREAK AT ANY MOMENT! When it does the United States and the Philippines can no longer escape. As the islands lie athwart Japanese movement of colonial expansion, they will undoubtedly feel first the brunt of the blow.⁵⁴

In that issue, a large, full-page map of the Pacific is presented, with the proposed route of Japanese expansion highlighted. The map is followed on the next page by an article on Japan's "Monroe Doctrine," by E. Jane Stublely. Stublely stresses the "precarious position" of the Philippines, and differentiates the "Asiatic Doctrine" with the America's Monroe Doctrine, the former characterized as imperialist expansionism, and the latter as a product of "brilliant statesmen" which formulated America's isolation policy from 1883 to 1914, a policy, Stublely notes, that has been "disappearing" (because no longer necessary).

Stublely's article is followed by a lengthy historical article by Marjorie Paton Ramos, "That Day Manila Fell," which rewrites the moment of betrayal, when Dewey's guns initiated the Battle of Manila Bay. As she explains, the United States in winning that battle, ordered troops to Manila and various parts of the archipelago "to complete the occupation," instead of handing the reins of power to the already established Philippine Republic. According to Ramos, the occupation consisted of "a feeble attack that constituted more of a reproof than a challenge."⁵⁵ The following encapsulates America's rewriting of that moment in a way that would be useful for the coming war effort:

The balance of the story belongs to history. Americans opened fire on Fort San Antonio at 9:35 a.m. on August 13, 1898. An hour later the Spanish ran up the white flag. Thus the fortunes of Spain, wrested in the days of her reckless roving explorers and buccaneers, passed from her careless hands to the grasp of her vigorous successor.

The world has moved onward since Dewey stormed Manila and inflicted unfading scars in the stone walls of Fort San Antonio. The Philippines and its people, awakened out of a three-hundred-year slumber have fallen into step in the march of progress with a tempo unequaled in the history of educating mankind.⁵⁶

Thus, the discourse of war, and the rewriting, or reassertion of America's "benevolent" relationship with the Philippines and Filipinos ignores the betrayal of the Treaty of Paris and the ensuing battles of the Filipinos against the U.S. military forces. The narrative precedes a reevaluation of Filipino literature in the issue, especially focusing on the genre which is said to mark the Filipino's proficiency and fitness to utilize the language: the short story.

Jose Garcia Villa's essay, which ran for several issues, is important because it signals the readiness of Filipino writing in English to participate in the wider world of literature. Published in Los Angeles, rather than in the Philippines, the essay implicates U.S. Filipino writers, although it does not mention them specifically. In the first installment, Villa takes note of the literary inroads made by Jose Rizal's novels in Spanish. Rizal, he writes, "was in possession of a creative, imaginative instinct," but "he was essentially and primarily a patriot... a man with the good of his country first in his heart." However that readiness Garcia Villa refers to is predicated on facility with the English language to the extent that the writer may use it "imaginatively":

...And so we find, after a period of general well-being, and after the Filipinos have had a chance to learn the English language moderately—a period covering about a generation, reared in this new peace, and taught English in the public schools, ready, if still untrained to essay into imaginative literature. This chance was afforded and especially encouraged when, in 1925, *The Philippines Free Press*, a weekly in English and under American editorship, invited Filipino writers to contribute imaginative work, especially in the field of the short story. Here really begins the history of the short story in English in the Philippines.⁵⁷

He observes that those most influenced were the younger generation: "it is through the work of these young people, as they studied the art of the short story and progressed, that the Filipino short story came to be." The short story in English thus gathered "momentum," and more and more newspapers and magazines published the work.

The second installment of Villa's essay appeared in issue No. 5, in which the *Philippine-American News Digest* announced the Philippine Writers' League contest. Entitled "Philippines Goes Literary in a Big Way," the first paragraph then turns the phrase around, stating, "the Philippines has turned literary in a grandiose way." The opinion of the *Digest* editors, who did not like the socialist leanings of the contest founders,⁵⁸ seems to emerge in that little twist of language. The president of the League, Federico Mangahas, was described as "capable." It also notes that the contest was in fact a "three-language literary contest, covering the fields of novel, history, biography, short story, essay, drama, and poetry." Neither Marcelo de Gracia Concepcion, Jose Garcia Villa, nor Carlos Bulosan were mentioned among the winners. P.C. Morante received honorable mention for his biography, *Filipino Life*. The judges, comprised of a mix of Filipino and American writers and scholars, and explained one of their guiding

principles, that “Prose rather than poetry is the touchstone of a people’s mastery of a given language—especially a language not their own.”⁵⁹

The judges’ viewpoint seems to confirm that of Jose Garcia Villa. He begins the second installment by discussing barriers and the issue of “duality”:

In order to write literature in a given language, it is essential to think in that language, to have its imaginative force spring in that language: the creative life-force of a language being non-translatable. This deficiency still is true even with most of those writing today, and will perhaps remain the main obstacle of the Filipino writer writing in English. His duality of speech—one for the home, and one for outside—will, unless he overcomes it by ceaseless study, mainly through the reading of good books in English, prevent him from achieving a complete grasp of English speech. The more serious and assiduous of present-day Filipino writers have, I think, quite overcome this, and are writing English with the full force of its capabilities. Some of the works of these few writers have already found their way into periodicals outside their native land.⁶⁰

In the last sentence, Villa may well have been speaking of himself. For his work was at that time being published fairly frequently in U.S. periodicals and anthologies. His assumption here is that in order to enter the world of “a living, valid literature,” the Filipino writer must write in American English; and “duality of speech” is posed as a barrier to that validation. He goes on to note that early stories written by Filipinos suffered from “lack of any literary background or training.” He seems to be referring to the relative lack of literature that emerged during the Spanish period, however, he does not count journalism as a training ground. In fact, he faults the editors of these early pieces because, “if the truth must be spoken, they were journalists of the third class and not literary men at all, with neither the external nor internal ear for true literature.”⁶¹

According to Villa, those writers who studied the art of the short story writing “without hope of pecuniary profit or gain and instigated purely by the artistic spirit” were able to succeed in producing true works of literary art. “...they studied the masterpieces of foreign masters, both past and contemporary, reading the works of Maupassant, Balzac, O. Henry, Poe, Katherine Mansfield, Chekhov, Gorky, Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, et al, in order to gain a true knowledge of the art.”⁶²

Villa then devotes several long paragraphs to lambast “American editors” whose “ignorance and stupidity⁶³ provided “the greatest obstacle which the Filipino short story writer had to fight against.”^{64, 65} It was only when “capable literary editors in the Filipino-owned journals” who were “intelligent [and] serious” took over that there was an improvement in the form. “Henceforth the Filipino short story was free, free to grow intelligently; freed from its servility to ignorance; freed from the dominion of the reigning incompetents.”⁶⁶ Villa ends the second installment on this note:

The implantation of the English language in the Philippines is at last bearing fruit. And it is a significant fruit, for literature forms a nation’s most stable contribution to civilization. The new literature of the Filipino is in English, and it is a new literature decidedly well worth watching.

The essay suggests that the validation of Filipino (and thus U.S. Filipino) literature lay in its facility with English prose. Villa’s dedication, however, was to the art, and to mastery of the

art—he had no particular dedication to Americans, nor to the Filipinos, as national entities. To reiterate Timothy Yu,

... Villa belongs to the realm of metaphysics--and aesthetics. It is this dichotomy that has long delayed Villa's acceptance as an Asian American writer. (5) But it is also this dichotomy that allowed Villa, and not Bulosan, to be incorporated into the modernist canon. Villa had to be removed from history to be adopted into modernism, a move that Villa himself endorsed.

This call for a “removal from history” through adaption to the English language is aptly juxtaposed with the rewriting and obscuring of the conflict between Filipinos and Americans during their colonial war in the Philippines, as illustrated in Marjorie Paton Ramos’ essay on “The Fall of Manila.” Jose Garcia Villa’s dedication was to whatever gave him the freedom to write and explore his chosen medium and content.

Pitting a literary “lion” like Jose Garcia Villa against relative unknown P.C. Morante in a literary debate seems like an odd move for the *Philippine-American News Digest*. Garcia Villa, though youthful, claimed his place of authority with all the confidence of one born to the mansion. Morante, the social realist, was a relative unknown, a name that happened to receive one star in Garcia Villa’s Yearbook Index of October 1939 – September 1940, and received an honorable mention in the Philippine Writers’ League Contest of 1940. However, he did have a definite opinion about Garcia Villa’s work.

P.C. Morante’s appearance in the *Philippine Digest* also seems ironic after his “Open Letter” criticism of the *Digest*’s wariness toward the involvement of “progressive” elements in the Philippine Writers’ League contest. However, editor E. Llamas Rosario was part of the friendly group of L.A. Filipino writers and editors, the “intelligentsia” that included Carlos and Aurelio Bulosan, and Morante himself. So it is not unreasonable to assume that some friendly resolution was made which allowed Morante to become a contributor to the magazine, and to air his opinions.

In the Vol. 1, No. 3 issue (1940), Morante had a column entitled “Writing and Reading,” to which he contributed book reviews on Richard Wright’s *Native Son*, Eugene Lyon’s expose, *Stalin: Czar of All the Russias*, and Vardis Fisher’s *Children of God*. Morante’s review of *Native Son* was critical; while he viewed Wright’s “story of Negro life in America” as “vivid, poignant and compact,” he felt that the portrait of Bigger Thomas was “too much a sample of moral disintegration and less a symbol of race vigor.” While he understood that “poverty, race prejudice, social injustice, and color scheme” were contributing factors, he found the book too imbued with “hysterical bitterness.”⁶⁷

In issue No. 4, Morante’s column had expanded greatly, and, as he informed the readers, this issue would deal with “WRITING.” Editor E. Llamas Rosario had given him “wide latitude,” and he used the space to provide a list of his many literary acquaintances (none of them Filipino), including Carey McWilliams, and Louis Adamic, Konrad Bercovici, and many others. He discussed the discomfort a writer feels upon being asked to talk about the writing process, and finally he ended the piece with a brief review of *Readings for Creative Writers*, edited by George Williams.⁶⁸ The column “drops names” as if to establish his credentials, suggesting a possible conflict between Morante’s proletarian values, and his need to claim a place in the literary scene. His voice, quite straightforward and articulate within the progressive milieu of the

Commonwealth Times, suddenly seems ambivalent and uncomfortable under the eye of the *Philippine News-Digest* editors.

Morante's column in issue No. 5 took on a decidedly more critical and challenging stance toward Filipino writing in the United States. He summarizes Filipino writing in the U.S. during the 1920s and 30s as having been "journalistic":

In volume and quality Filipino writings in America have not yet reached a degree of importance worthy of being summed up with high, critical respect. For the past twenty years, Filipino works—meaning in this particular case, journalistic pieces of outstanding appeal as well as purely literary productions—put out by reputable American publishers or published in American periodicals of national standing, have been sketchy, erratic, and noticeably inadequate. There are many reasons for this sporadic output and somewhat barren manifestation of our Filipino writers in English, that is, as far as being published in America is concerned. But it is enough to say—and this may be taken as an apology—that the language used in this instance is virtually alien to the Filipinos and one which demands of them an indulgent period of development before a measurable amount of their genius for creating Filipino literature in English could be appreciably realized and duly esteemed by leading American critics. After all, in the republic of letters, no less than in the state of human growth, prolonged infancy is a necessary antecedent for the writer.⁶⁹

Morante's critique here is in fact, an apologetics for the then current state of Filipino writing (despite its "outstanding appeal") in the U.S., attributing some of its lack to the Filipinos' inadequate grasp of English. He then goes on to criticize Marcelo de Gracia Concepcion's failure "to follow his initial triumph with productions of a more commanding interest." De Gracia Concepcion's "wistful and nostalgic beauty" was negatively compared to writers like Carl Sandburg, Robinson Jeffers, and Hart Crane, whose poems were "explosive and self-analytical and intensely explorative of American scenes, American history, and dynamic forces actively shaping the destiny of the American nation," in other words, Morante favored a more realistic, masculine, and exploratory, American style from the writer.⁷⁰

Morante follows this with an even harsher critique of Jose Garcia Villa, declaring that "as a short story writer he died with the dead-note appeal of his book *Footnote To Youth*." He admits that Villa already has a few advocates among the Anglo-American literati—leading critics such as William Lyon Phelps. Others, such as Clifton Fadiman, and Otis Ferguson of *The New Republic*, are unimpressed. He points out that social realist John Fante, who had written for the *Atlantic Monthly*, and *American Mercury* under H.L. Mencken's editorship, found Villa a "literary dud." In comparing Villa to writers more deserving of praise, Morante cites "the grim toughness we read in Ernest Hemingway's tales; the vivid characterization and social significance we discern in John Steinbeck's stories; the rugged realism we find in Erskine Caldwell's and in James T. Farrell's writings..."⁷¹ Jose Garcia Villa, he writes, "had already become too intellectual and metaphysical to be acceptable as a charmingly understandable short story writer."⁷² With his references to "rugged realism" and "grim toughness," Morante seems to find Garcia Villa's writing lacking in the kind of "masculine" language then deemed appropriate among American progressive writers.

Morante devastatingly ascribes these "failures" to "innate weakness." "Of course," he continues, "they are not peculiar in this way, for the same characteristic is marked among all Filipino

writers who have already appeared in the better class American periodicals.”⁷³ In a comparatively brief section near the end of his critique, he mentions Filipino writers “who should continue writing,” among them, Vicente Villamin, who had written for a number of the U.S. Filipino periodicals on the West Coast, including the *Three Stars*; Carlos Bulosan, who he thought should expand “his name as an important poet in the direction of other American publications carrying respectable poetry.” He also mentions favorably Manuel Arguilla and Salvador P. Lopez, leading social realist writers located in the Philippines.

What do we make of this devastating and at times ham-fisted critique of Filipino writers in the U.S., and the work of two Filipino writers—one of whom (de Gracia Concepcion) escaped violence at the hands of American police to return to the Philippines, and the other (Jose Garcia Villa) who remained in the U.S., was nominated for a Pulitzer, then forgotten, to live an isolated life in the midst of New York City, dying mostly unknown to the American literati? Morante faults U.S. Filipino writers generally as “inadequate.” He criticizes Villa and de Gracia Concepcion both for their metaphysical tendencies, their lack of “toughness” and inability to incorporate historical breadth and depth into their work; yet he ascribes these faults to an essential, racialized, and gendered error of blood, a “prolonged infancy” which needs time to develop.

Morante’s perspective might be categorized by internalized racism and the now oft-used term, “colonial mentality,” a rift or duality in one’s sense of identity, which becomes evident when one’s culture is destroyed by an externally dominant culture that replaces and denigrates one’s home culture and traditions. The tensions inherent in the relationship between the Philippines and the United States were surely brought to the foreground as the two countries prepared for war with the Japanese. Such a rift seems to become painfully transparent in Morante’s essay, “Filipino Life,” which was based on the essay for which he received honorable mention in the Philippine Writers’ League contest, and featured in the same issue of the *Digest* in which his critique of de Gracia Concepcion and Villa appeared. The essay immediately followed the critique in the column, and is worth excerpting at length:

I HAVE just chronicled the story of a Filipino life. On the surface, it is my own story. But so typical are the forces surrounding my native world that our national character can easily be identified through my own personal reactions.

In the Filipino character, however, there is something that does not go deep into this origin. In myself I am often at a loss to account for the genuine native. Sometimes I am disturbed. To be sure, I have the physical quality of my race; but I feel that the composition of my soul is thoroughly soaked with the alien spirit.

My people in general are not aware of this thing that disturbs me. Perhaps it is because they have not thought much about it, if at all. Perhaps they have reflected on it in passing, only they believe that their soul is at peace with the nature of their surroundings.

Of course there are a great number of my people who are aware that even their virtues are borrowed and that their thinking, their dreams and their aspirations have been influenced so much by the American and Spanish ways that the indigenous substance of their true beings has been crushed or lost.

If one tries to delve deeper into the essence of my narrative, one immediately perceives that I do not belong: I am a Filipino, but a creature that has been an [offshoot] of the

strange elements outside the pale of my native world. My actions and reactions, my thoughts, my ideals, and even my complexes and inhibitions—all this seems to revolve around a foreign pattern, a pattern that is easily recognizable as intrinsically of the West.

With me, it is a sort of spiritual or psychological bondage. But though it is impossible to retrieve the lost virtue of my origin and revert to them, I believe it is a wise course to work for an integration and harmony in my being of all the desirable traits of mankind, no matter from what blood or source they originate. In choosing this course I feel that I am evolving a way of life that is of no other country but the Philippines.

With us Filipinos, there is need for courage and for self-determination, there is need for hope that we should be able to face boldly the issue of our strange development with confidence in our ability to overcome our physiological handicaps and become completely adjusted to the good foreign things we have already absorbed and are still absorbing and eventually emerge as a nation with a happy destiny.⁷⁴

Morante's "Filipino Life" is disturbing in its transparent struggle to deal with his loss of identity to a "foreign pattern," and—as the threat of war loomed—to find some way to come to terms with the increasing weight of that "foreign" government's inroads into the structures of life in the Philippines, accompanied by its rhetoric of American exceptionalism, which emerges, even in his own words—as well as in the words of his fellow writers, from Bulosan, to Garcia Villa. That exceptionalism frames the literary discourse in these issues of *The Philippine-American Digest*, and the "weight" of it seems to press in upon both Villa and Morante. The latter has come to feel that the very physiology or racial composition of Filipinos is a handicap, and the only path is through "adjustment" and "absorption."

In the Los Angeles area, and in the pages of the *Philippine Commonwealth Times*, and the *Philippine-American News Digest*, the force and influence of the American Popular Front writers and intellectuals met and mingled with Filipino writers and intellectuals toward the end of the Depression era, with mixed results. While empowering in many ways, this meeting also opened Filipino writers to a wider audience, aided finally and ironically by the war effort, which sought to incorporate their voices into its rising propaganda campaign. Carlos Bulosan appeared in *Who's Who of American Writers*; American publishers printed his *Letter from America* (1942, collected essays), an anthology of Filipino poetry edited by Bulosan, *Chorus for America* (1942), and his *Voice of Bataan* (1943). Increasing calls for a larger sense of unity and incorporation of workers into more established unions, vs. smaller, localized groups, as well as legislation to allow Filipinos to become naturalized citizens, influenced Filipino writers to revise their perception of themselves as potential American citizens with, however, their sense of alienation intact. Many of the writers, including Morante, de Gracia Concepcion, Bulosan, and Garcia Villa, would end in relative obscurity; Villa managed to maintain a small group of students and admirers in his Greenwich Village neighborhood. Although most American writers by the end of the century would not recognize his name, he was still considered the most important and influential writer in the Philippines; Bulosan, angry over American reviewers' perceptions of *The Laughter of My Father* as comic stories, went on to write *The Cry and the Dedication* (a subversive novel about guerrilla fighters in the Philippines), and *The Philippines is in the Heart*. The voice of the Filipino laborer in *America is in the Heart* (originally published in 1943) would be resurrected again in the 1970s, for the Third World Movement, and the emergence of "Filipino-American literature."

- ¹ John Wiener, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Verso, 1997).
- ² Morden was a young white woman who co-owned a record shop in Hollywood called The Jazzman.
- ³ Anne Loftis, *Witnesses to the Struggle: Imaging the 1930s California Labor Movement*, (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1998).
- ⁴ "Californians and the Military: Major General Harrison Gray Otis, U.S.V." *California State Military Museum*, <http://www.militarymuseum.org/Otis.html>
- ⁵ "Harrison Gray Otis." *Inventing L.A. The Chandlers and Their Times*, *Public Broadcasting Service*, <http://www.pbs.org/kcet/inventing-la/characters/index.html>
- ⁶ "Upton Sinclair," *Inventing LA: The Chandlers and Their Times*, Public Broadcasting Service, <http://www.pbs.org/kcet/inventing-la/characters/characters.html#sinclair>
- ⁷ Peggy Pascoe, *Naturally: Miscegenation Law the Making of Race in California*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 153.
- ⁸ Saverio Giovaccini, *Hollywood Modernism: film and politics in the age of the New Deal*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 14.
- ⁹ Aurelio Bulosan, "United Front," *Philippine Commonwealth Times* (hereafter cited as *PCT*), June 1, 1938.
- ¹⁰ Aurelio Bulosan, "United Front," *PCT*, Nov. 15, 1939.
- ¹¹ Aurelio Bulosan, "United Front," *PCT*, Dec. 23, 1939.
- ¹² Mae Respicio Koerner, *Filipinos in Los Angeles*, (Charleston SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 9.
- ¹³ Claro Candelario, "Refugees," *PCT*, June 1, 1938.
- ¹⁴ Iris Brown, "Confessions of a White Wife," *PCT*, Aug. 18, 1940.
- ¹⁵ Marili Morden, "The World I Breathe In," *PCT*, Dec. 22, 1939.
- ¹⁶ I credit this idea to Patricia Chu's *Assimilating Asians: Gendered Strategies of Authorship in Asian America*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 42.
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- ¹⁸ Salvador P. Lopez, in *The Writer and His Milieu: an Oral History of First Generation Writers in English, Vol. 1*, ed. Edilberto N. Alegre and Doreen G. Fernandez, (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1984), 164.
- ¹⁹ Salvador P. Lopez, in *The Writer and His Milieu, Vol. 1*, 173.
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- ²² Staff writer, "Factories in the Field," *PCT*, Nov. 15, 1939.
- ²³ P.C. Morante, "Filipino Writer Makes an Appeal," *The Filipino Pioneer*, May 16, 1938.
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- ²⁵ Epifanio San Juan, *On Becoming Filipino*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 5-6.
- ²⁶ Carlos Bulosan, "Labor and Capital," *PCT*, June 15, 1937.
- ²⁷ Carlos Bulosan, "To a God of Stone... a short story," *PCT*, (November 15, 1939): 9.
- ²⁸ Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1973), 266.
- ²⁹ Carlos Bulosan, "Look at All These Women," *PCT*, Nov. 14, 1941.
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- ³² Nelly X. Burgos, *PCT*, Sept. 25, 1941.
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- ⁴⁶ Kyle S. Crichton, "Advice to a Young Man About to Lose His Shirt," *Clay: A Literary Notebook*, ed. Jose Garcia Villa, (Albuquerque: Jose Garcia Villa, 1931), i-iv.
- ⁴⁷ "Kyle Crichton: Peale's Most Famous Son?" Peale, Pennsylvania, 1883-1912, http://krygier.owu.edu/krygier_html/peale/peale_crichton.html
- ⁴⁸ Francisco Arcellana notes that William Saroyan was first published in *Clay*, a poem entitled "Robin in the Reading Room." *Writers & Their Milieu, An Oral History of Second Generation Writers in English*, ed. Edilberto N. Alegre and Doreen G. Fernandez, (Manila: De LaSalle University Press, 1987), 47.
- ⁴⁹ Jonathan Chua, "'Colonialist or Critic: Revaluating Villa,'" in *The Anchored Angel: Selected Writings by Jose Garcia Villa*, ed. Eileen Tabios, (New York: Kaya Press, 1999), 179.
- ⁵⁰ Chua, "Colonialist or Critic," 180.
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- ⁵² Jonathan Chua's *Critical Villa: Essays in Literary Criticism by Jose Garcia Villa*, documents Garcia Villa's Rolls of Honor, Yearbook Indexes, and Criminal Records for the years 1927 through 1940. (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002).
- ⁵³ Chua, 182.
- ⁵⁴ "Washington-Manila. War Jitters," *PAND* 1, no. 4 (August, 1940): 5.
- ⁵⁵ Marjorie Paton Ramos, "That Day Manila Fell," *PAND* 1, no. 4 (Aug. 1940): 8.
- ⁵⁶ Paton Ramos, "That Day Manila Fell," *PAND* 1, no. 4 (Aug. 1940): 9.
- ⁵⁷ Jose Garcia Villa, "The Rise of the Short Story in the Philippines," *PAND* 1, no. 4 (August, 1940): 21.
- ⁵⁸ This was addressed earlier in this chapter, in the *PCT* section.
- ⁵⁹ "Philippines Goes Literary In a Big Way," *PAND* 1, no. 5 (Sept. 1940): 18.
- ⁶⁰ Jose Garcia Villa, "The Rise of the Short Story in the Philippines," *PAND* 1, no. 5, (Sept. 1940): 20.
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- ⁶² Jose Garcia Villa, "The Rise of the Short Story," (Sept. 1940): 20.
- ⁶³ Jose Garcia Villa, "The Rise of the Short Story," (Sept. 1940): 21.
- ⁶⁴ Jose Garcia Villa, "The Rise of the Short Story," (Sept. 1940): 20.
- ⁶⁵ Although Garcia Villa does not make it clear who exactly these American editors were, he was likely referring to A.V.H. Hartendorp of the *Philippine Magazine*, and to the Filipino editors and writers of the American-owned *Philippines Free Press*, such as Cornelio Faigao, who criticized, and even parodied, his poems in the magazine. His complaints however, should be taken with a dose of irony considering that both periodicals published his poems and essays. See Chua's notes in *Critical Villa*, on Garcia Villa's criticism of Faigao, and Faigao's parodies of Garcia Villa's poetry, 305.
- ⁶⁶ Jose Garcia Villa, "The Rise of the Short Story," 20, 21.
- ⁶⁷ P.C. Morante, "Writing and Reading," *PAND* (June-July 1940): 3.
- ⁶⁸ Morante, "Writing and Reading," (Aug. 1940): 23.
- ⁶⁹ Morante, "Writing and Reading," (Sept. 1940): 22.
- ⁷⁰ Morante, "Writing and Reading," (Sept. 1940): 22.
- ⁷¹ Morante, "Writing and Reading," (Sept. 1940): 22.
- ⁷² Morante, "Writing and Reading," (Sept. 1940): 23.
- ⁷³ Morante, "Writing and Reading," (Sept. 1940): 23.
- ⁷⁴ Morante, "Filipino Life," *PAND* (August 1940): 23.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The viewpoints offered by P.C. Morante and Jose Garcia Villa in the summer 1941 issues of the *Philippine-American News Digest* are disturbing, even tragic, for their internalized racism, as well as for the undercurrent of emotional resistance that nevertheless emerges in their critical discourse. It's a difficult note on which to end the study. Writing just at the start of U.S. involvement in the Pacific War, the articles in the *Philippine News-Digest* seem to take us back full circle to the early period of the American colonial administration, when the U.S. government rewrote its history with the Philippines, modernized the communications infrastructure, instituted an American style educational system, and enforced English as the language of instruction. Once again, pressure was placed upon the Filipino voice to adjust and remodel itself to Western standards. In Garcia Villa we see a writer whose oppositional dicta may have "served the colonial dispensation."¹ Morante's statements of reluctant assimilation attest to a sense of lost cultural identity, but they lack a sense of finality, seeming almost queries or pleas to the reader, inviting revision or argument.

In documenting the U.S. Filipino literary heritage through the media of newspapers and magazines, it's evident that the physical, economic, psychological, and linguistic disruptions of the United States' initial and long-lasting encounter (as well as those of the Spanish colonization) with the Philippines echoes through the pages of the U.S. Filipino periodicals published early in the 20th century. The formation of a Filipino literature in the U.S.—no matter how "different" its geographic and cultural contexts may be from Philippine literature—cannot be viewed as separate from the imperial and post-colonial experience.

To examine the documents of these early Filipino literary efforts in English within the journalistic context is to see them initially (in the Philippines) within the project of the imperial re-casting of the country's communications media, where editorial policies, as Garcia Villa observed, removed "difficult" writing in favor of that which would please the popular readership while making the imperial narrative palatable. After 1908, when the University of the Philippines was founded, the literary aspirations of Philippine writers, and even the structures of language, literary form, and genre were guided and shaped, not only by the U.S. colonial educational system, but perhaps even more thoroughly by its introduction of modern communication infrastructures, and legislation designed to quell subversive communication and control or influence the production and editorship of newspaper media, which partnered with the educational system. The pressures of this colonial apparatus on Filipino writers, editors and publishers must have been immense, even while it provided new and interesting avenues of literary expression.

When the U.S. colonized the Philippines in 1899, Filipinos had already developed a journalistic practice of advocating reform (as exemplified in the journals, *La Solidaridad* and *Kalayaan*, respectively). Luis V. Teodoro has written that "The tradition of advocacy [in Philippine newspapers] was...the single most important Filipino characteristic of the Filipino press as the fortunes of the Revolution waxed--and waned..."² Although suppressed, the practice of advocacy in the Philippine press endured, adding home-grown strategies to what Filipino writers

learned about revolution in Europe, and from muckraking reporters and progressive American fiction and non-fiction writers, thus providing the basic experience and journalistic values for U.S. Filipino editors and writers, many of whom learned their craft working for the Manila newspapers.

Contributors to the first Filipino student magazines in the U.S. did not seem to give much thought to the possibility of a U.S. Filipino literature. If anything, like the unnamed Filipino student who wrote “A Pipe Dream” for the *Filipino Students’ Magazine*, their future dreams were based on returning to the homeland and helping to build an independent Philippine Republic. Nonetheless, their articles and essays clearly forecasted issues that the Filipino “nationals” would encounter in the 1920s-30s with even more intensity: racism, “invisibility,” segregation, violence (for pensionados this was mostly the violence of racist misrepresentation, as, for example, in the international expositions where they and their indigenous counterparts were exhibited, but also for some, the more literal violence stemming from effects of the U.S. military in the Philippines, as in the case of the Lopez family) and the transnational effects of imperialism both in the homeland and in the U.S.

Aside from the important task of conveying the news to its mostly Filipino readers, the periodicals in this study appear to have had several broad functions related to writing. These functions, however, did not apply equally to all U.S. Filipinos. In both participating in and narrating community and identity, Filipinas were limited, as women, to certain “acceptable areas,” and as Helen Rilleres’ article made clear, the Filipina often found it difficult to negotiate the roles set by Filipinos.

Venues and Reading Constituencies

Throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century, these periodicals nurtured Filipino writers as they struggled to find their voice in the foreign nation that employed them as non-citizen workers, and had colonized and exploited the material resources of their homeland.

U.S. Filipino newspapers and magazines provided writers with venues in which to publish their work, and thus potentially to gain a readership and further publication. Moreover, the periodicals also influenced and shaped the emerging literature, as much as did the writers’ experiences of economic deprivation, cultural disorientation, and racism on the West Coast (and for that matter, throughout the United States during the Great Depression), as well as friendships, community involvement, and more intimate relations with white Americans. The newspapers provided not only a venue for budding writers and journalists—and thus a readership—but also a network of fellow writers and editors who shared strategies, discussed one another’s writing, kept each other updated on literary news, and simply provided much-needed support during times of great economic and social stress.

Writing Communities and Collaborators

The writing and social communities of U.S. Filipinos at this time were multiple in shape and constituency, mobile, and *constantly sought and re-created*. A study of Filipino newspapers at this time suggests that, despite the migratory lifestyle of many Filipinos, a clear—if embattled and migrating—sense of community did exist. Early on, efforts to cohere a sense of Filipino community can be seen in editorials and letters regarding the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, when the editors of *The Filipino Student* realized that Filipino victims would not be among those to receive help during the post-disaster relief efforts. The interest in pulling together the disparate

interests of Filipino nationals in order to effect common goals (*bayanihan*) continued in all the newspapers and magazines examined here. Victorio Acosta Velasco, for example, used his writing and his position as editor and publisher to promote community efforts among Filipinos, as well as within the larger Asian community in Seattle.

Opinions varied on the Philippine independence question, but all Filipino nationals were anxious to correct racist legislation and racist misrepresentations of Filipinos; to promote better pay, and civil rights; although they sometimes disagreed on how to do this, their mutual interests often led to effective organizing, even against great odds—as in the Salinas lettuce strike of 1934, which was supported in *The Philippines Mail* and *The Three Stars* with daily reports and passionate editorials. There was an awareness of groups and communities of writers, the “scribes” and “the intelligentsia,” many of whom were also labor organizers and activists of varying class backgrounds. Some were students who also worked in the agricultural fields during the summers to pay for their tuition; some, like Carlos and Aurelio Bulosan, were autodidacts; others, like J.C. Dionisio, operated small businesses or labor contracting services, even while they had publishing duties, and contributed editing, or writing.

Like the student journalists and writers of the University of the Philippines, Filipino editors in the United States would also form writing groups and clubs, such as the Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society, and in the spirit of *kapwa* and *bayanihan*, they would find ways in which to support poets, fiction writers and essayists in the pages of the newspapers. They reported on the successes or problems of various writers, announced the arrival of visiting authors, editors or publishers from the Philippines, and reviewed their work, as well as the work of other writers in the U.S. Young and inexperienced writers were sometimes given a chance to contribute to columns, or to write essays and op-eds. The production of scripts and plays was also encouraged, and although these were not published in the newspapers examined in this study, the resulting small theater productions were reported on and reviewed. Where Filipinos were terrorized by vigilantes, testimonials were published, helping to unite and strengthen the Filipino community. Collaborations and friendships formed, providing encouragement, and information on publishers who might accept submissions from Filipinos. At times, writers and editors also gave and received criticism, not always happily.

Because Filipinos in the western states frequently migrated to follow jobs and crops, editors and writers often collaborated, and there was a cross-fertilization of editorships and writing, as well as of ideas and activism in regard to labor issues, strikes, and new legislation.

Narratives and Poetics of Community and Identity

While U.S. Filipino periodicals constituted their own social spheres, the writing they published also narrated and thus reinforced the formation of Filipino communities—whether migrating or localized—as well as group and individual identities. In the newspapers and magazines examined here, writing was influenced by the editors’ and publishers’ aims and ideals, as well as their literary ambitions and political views. Poetry—transmitting the emotions, tone, and imagery of Filipino experience in the U.S.—was a regular element in *The Advocate*, as it was in the *Philippines Mail*, and to a lesser extent in the *Three Stars* and the *Philippine Commonwealth Times*. Personal narrative, testimonials, and the occasional short story, were strongly flavored with social realism—a result of the growing discourse between U.S. Filipino writers with both Philippine progressives and American Popular Front writers.

Thus, although there were sometimes individual squabbles and more serious group conflicts (as,

for example, between contractors and labor unions, Chinese and Filipino workers) these narratives tended to have stabilizing effects, helping to cohere a sense of identity for the Filipino in unfamiliar territory. They could also have oppositional or galvanizing effects, when Filipino activists organized to protest labor or civil inequities, to raise funds for events and community buildings, to advertise new businesses to patronize, and generally to foment change in support of the community and its individuals. These actions were often encouraged through reports, essays, and even poems that focused on local or homeland identification; labor issues, strikes, and measures to defend against violence.

Soon after the murder of farmworker and activist Fermin Tobera by vigilantes in 1930, there is evidence that Filipino writers on the West Coast were beginning to realize that they were taking part in a shared experience—often frightening and enraging—which was particular to Filipino nationals living and working in the U.S. during the Great Depression. This was expressed in various ways. The hybrid naming of the “Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society” carries an ironic connotation that could only have been produced by Filipinos writing in the West Coast; columns such as “I Cover Chinatown” and “Little Manila” in the *Advocate*, as well as stories such as “Look at all these women” by Carlos Bulosan, and poems about the anxieties of Filipino-white romances showed a growing identification with local neighborhoods and greater involvement with North Americans (The ratio of Filipino men to Filipino women migrating to the mainland was unbalanced,³ resulting in more close relationships between white women and Filipino men); the passionate editorials and personal risk exhibited in local labor and civil rights activism indicate deeper investment in concerns that were also shared with other ethnic minorities in the U.S. Carlos Bulosan became the locus of a growing awareness in the U.S. and the Philippines of the formation of a literature that took as its subject the experiences of Filipinos in the U.S, rather than in the Philippines.⁴ Nelly X. Burgos’ lengthy review in the *Commonwealth Times*, “The Poetry of Carlos Bulosan: A Study,” is a crucial document in this discourse, defining how Bulosan’s work was viewed by writers in the Philippines, observing at length the “journalistic” quality of much of his writing, as well as his focus on the plight of the Filipino “national.”

Between 1939—1941, the formation of the Philippine Writers’ League began a more concerted critical and often polarized literary discussion on both shores. In the *Philippine-American News Digest*, edited by E. Llamas Rosario, opposing arguments were cast by Jose Garcia Villa (already a powerful literary force in the Philippines), who maintained that his sometimes mystifying modernist poetics provided the only true standard for literary excellence, and who claimed that journalist editors (especially Americans) too often had their readership in mind—not to mention subscriptions—and therefore did not encourage “imaginative” writing. P.C. Morante, a close friend of Carlos Bulosan, upheld the social realist view, and criticized both Garcia Villa and de Gracia Concepcion for their lack of masculine assertiveness and disinterest in a literary exploration of the American scene through their writing.⁵

In reflecting on what they had written about their experiences in the United States over the previous three decades, some of their writings were angry and reactionary, and there were moments of internalized racism,⁶ influenced by decades—even centuries—of colonial rule. Nevertheless, one finds a rawness, vibrancy, and courage in the writing of U.S. Filipinos in those early years—the first three decades—especially on subjects treating imperialism, Philippine independence, and labor and civil rights.

Although the photographs of Filipino women could often be found on the front and interior pages of the U.S. Filipino periodicals, their roles in relation to the newspapers and the Filipino

community, were transparent in one aspect, and hidden in another. Their photographs were prominently displayed whenever there was a subscription drive, announcing to the mostly male Filipino readers that the young Filipinas would be selling tickets to increase subscriptions for the newspapers (and the women would also win prizes for selling the most tickets). On the other hand, the opinions of Filipinas on topics of labor, business, or civil rights was rarely sought. Serious articles like Helen Rillera's "The Filipina in Filipino Society" were few, however compelling. Dawn Mabalon observes that the ethnic press, which "devoted pages of ink to the social activities of the small population of Filipina immigrants and their daughters" also "created an environment in which immigrant and second-generation Filipinas were carefully surveilled." Moreover, Rillera's "The Filipina in Filipino Society" seems to confirm what Mabalon calls the "culture of surveillance" that Filipinas experienced at this time in the U.S.⁷ The male editors, who were also writers, tended toward a patriarchal and masculinist view of writing (journalism itself at that time was generally deemed a masculine domain of writing). Filipinas and white women occasionally wrote for them, but the roles they played in the life of a publication and the messages their appearance in newspapers conveyed to readers was constrained, stereotypically gendered, and (especially for Filipinas) conflicted.

Nevertheless, women were important in the dissemination of certain kinds of content, and in maintaining or advancing the circulation of the periodicals. As illustrated by the *Philippine News's* lengthy and appreciative responses to the Rizal Day play and performances, Filipinas were also active in the arts, organizing dramatic plays, and musical performances; they contributed poetry to the arts sections of the *Philippines Mail*, and were members of its Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society. Their roles in the publication of newspapers seemed important, but were mostly valued for the support they gave behind the scenes.

Some aspects of the Filipino community may have been obscured from the eyes of sociologists and non-Filipinos. Discussion with F.A.N.H.S. (Filipino American National Historical Society) historian Jess Tabasa, the nephew of J.C. Dionisio (an important writer/editor whose work is addressed in Chapter 3), suggests to me that the influence of the *Caballeros de Dimas-Alang* (a Filipino Masonic association with roots in the Propaganda movement's masonry—the Filipino nationalist martyr, Jose Rizal, took "Dimas-Alang" as his Masonic name)⁸ and the *Legionarios del Trabajo* were more pervasive in the western United States than first thought, out of sight of the general populace, their fraternal activity taking place "underground." Furthermore, Tabasa claims that funding and support for a number of early U.S. Filipino periodicals came from this sector.⁹ My own experience, through the activities of my parents in the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang, supports the idea that the influence of fraternal, Masonic-style organizations was an important, yet (as of this writing) little discussed cohesive force in the early U.S. Filipino community.

Certain factors continually worked against the effort at stabilizing and cohering community. These factors include the colonial narrative, upheld by its control of media and other communications infrastructure, with its tendency to re-write or efface the colonial relationship between the Philippines and the U.S., and often mis-representing Filipino subjectivity; legislation that limited the activities and opportunities of Filipinos in the U.S., creating situations of "forced mobility," making it difficult for Filipinos to settle, start businesses, and raise families; and violent and racist attacks on Filipinos, breaking up attempts to cohere, or unite in positive action. Nevertheless, the burgeoning, ever-renewing, and yet short-lived nature of most of the newspapers, newsletters and magazines produced by the migrating Filipino editors and writers

attests to the importance of the U.S. Filipino periodical in their lives – as cultivator and organizer of the Filipino community, as publishing venue, and later as an archive of some of the earliest examples of U.S. Filipino writing.

U.S. Filipino literature developed in the Western states in dialogue with the rise of progressive and modernist literature in the Philippines, and the popularity of social realist and Popular Front literature and arts in the U.S. During the mid-to late 1930s, Filipinos began to socialize more often with white progressive writers, especially in the Los Angeles area. The publication of poetry and short essays and stories in the newspapers and magazines, appearing in juxtaposition with “objective” reportage, tended to reinforce the realist style, and pragmatic social content. Viewed as an important Filipino writer in the early 1940s, even Bulosan’s poetry was seen as “journalistic” by reviewer Nelly X. Burgos, and Bulosan himself spoke of identifying with the reporter’s “need to know” in “Look at All These Women.” But beyond such references to journalism, there is simply the fact that many of the poems, essays, and short fiction pieces appearing in the newspapers were written by Filipinos who were journalists and newspaper editors themselves, and who had interned or written for newspapers in the Philippines before coming to the U.S. This meant that they were well-informed about current events, and it was natural that such events would have a place in their writing, whether in essays, fiction, or poetry.

Garcia Villa might be a notable exception. While he benefited greatly from publication in newspapers and magazines, he rebelled against “non-imaginative,” popular and populist journal venues. Nevertheless, one of his short stories, “Death of a Child,” a dark comment on the impoverished life of one family, was published in the Bulosan brothers’ progressive *New Tide* journal.¹⁰ Conversely, Carlos Bulosan’s rambling narratives and multi-voice has not been immune to modernist influence; the line between modernist and social realist is not always so clear or polarized as it often seems.

Given this journalistic influence, the writing published in the eight periodicals examined in this study can be said to blur the line between the reporting of news, and the subjective personal narrative. John C. Hartsock defines narrative literary journalism as “those true-life stories that read like a novel or short story...”¹¹ In other words, they narrate true events, but without the “objective” language prescribed for daily news reporting. Hence, they take on the rhetorical strategies of literature, using descriptive and metaphorical language to enhance the reader’s experience of the narrative, and draw on their readers’ sympathies (through sensationalism, melodrama, or details that incite empathy) to support a cause. This was aided by the tradition of advocacy in Philippine journalism, where, in less flattering terms, many opinionated articles might have been called “yellow journalism.” Examples of this type of narrative as short “fiction” can be found in Aurelio Bulosan’s story about the man (which could’ve been himself) walking through the Mexican neighborhood near Manilatown; in Carlos Bulosan’s “To a God of Stone” in the *Philippine Commonwealth Times*; and in the testimonials given by victims of the vigilante attack on Rufo Canete’s camp, published in the *Philippines Mail*. These pieces attempt to convey the violence and inequities experienced by Filipinos and other minorities in the U.S. through a first-person narrative that presents the narrator and subjects in melodramatic and heightened emotional states—which, in many cases simply reflects the reality of the moment.

The citizenship status granted to Filipinos, and recognition of Filipinos in the U.S. during and after World War II would seem to have bettered the lives of the U.S. Filipino writers. However, the fortunes of Carlos Bulosan and Jose Garcia Villa may give us pause. When the war ended, Bulosan found his publication opportunities diminished, especially after he began to write a

novel, *The Cry and the Dedication*, about left-wing guerrillas in the Philippines. Blacklisted by the FBI,¹² his ability to make a living compromised, he died nearly penniless in Seattle. Jose Garcia Villa received some recognition as a nominee for several major prizes including the Pulitzer, and maintained a respected reputation in the Philippines. Over the years, although he maintained a small coterie of devoted students who attended his workshops in Greenwich Village, he was generally forgotten in American literary circles, and most American writers, at the time of his death would not have recognized his name.

As the war years passed and the period of the Third World Strikes in the 1970s arrived, many people of the “Flip” generation, influenced by Bulosan’s work, initiated writing projects and groups, fought to create Ethnic Studies departments and curricula, and encouraged both the reading and writing of “Filipino American” literature within the context of Asian American studies. Today, both the Flip generation and younger Filipino American writers are strongly linked to local literary and ethnic communities, and community grassroots publishing efforts. In Central California, early projects include BAPAW (Bay Area Pilipino American Writers), Filipino membership in the Asian American publishing collective, the Kearney St. Workshop, and publication of the earliest “grass-roots” anthologies, *Liwanag*, *Time to Greeez*, and *Aiiiiieee!!!* In the late 1990s, writing and arts communities formed around the arts and activist-based Pusod House in Berkeley (now closed), the S.O.M.A.R. (South of Market) Filipino American literary/arts community (with roots in BAPAW and Kearny St. Workshop), the Bindlestiff Studio, connecting Filipino American performing arts groups in the Tenderloin area of San Francisco, and Bayanihan, a low-cost housing project for the elderly, also in the Tenderloin, which now serves as an increasingly important venue for performing and writing arts. The prolific poet and publisher, Eileen Tabios is arguably one of the most transnational of Filipino American writers, making use of the internet as an important medium of her publishing¹³ and collaborative writing projects, in a conscious effort to enhance diverse, fluid, yet cohesive communities of writing and the arts. Many Filipino writers would agree that there has lately been something of a renaissance in Filipino writing and publishing in the U.S. The sense of “invisibility” however, still lingers as a well-known phenomenon among Filipinos. Elizabeth H. Pisares writes:

Filipino American identity is characterized by a sense of metaphorical invisibility: though the second-largest Asian American group, Filipino Americans are not represented in mainstream culture as often as other even smaller and more recently arrived Asian American groups. Indeed, the fact of Filipino Americans’ status as the second-largest Asian American group is usually received with surprise and skepticism...¹⁴

Thus, the complaints by pensionados after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake about Filipinos being passed over when others were being helped still seems to ring true, and seems also commensurate with the continuing effacement of the Philippines’ colonial and post-colonial relationship with the United States.

This study makes no claims of essential connections between the U.S. Filipino periodicals of the pre-WWII era, and the Filipino writers in the U.S. today. Nor is this an attempt to raise the estimation of U.S. Filipino writing to some standard set within the global literary marketplace. Rather, its concern is with the archival material itself, and I have attempted to articulate in some detail and depth the highlights of one small group of U.S. Filipino periodicals—their historical and material contexts, their significance to the migrant community, the editors and writers, and the editorials, essays, poems, and reviews they contributed— for their own sake, in order to

stress the importance of recovering what is apparently a much larger oeuvre of U.S. Filipino writing, if we only look to the newspapers and magazines they produced so prolifically in the first half of the 20th century.

¹ Jonathan Chua, "Colonialist or Critic: *Revaluing Villa*," in *The Anchored Angel: Selected Writings by Jose Garcia Villa*, ed. Eileen Tabios, (New York: Kaya, 1999), 181.

² He continues: "That tradition was to be suppressed during the country's American captivity through, among others, the draconian libel laws which made it a crime to be critical of the colonial government and its agents, and the sedition laws which criminalized the advocacy of Philippine independence... During the period of formal U.S. colonization, in the place of *La Solidaridad* and *Kalayaan* tradition was erected the American press tradition, which, its own muckraking and progressive past notwithstanding, was in the Philippines only a pale copy of the original." Luis V. Teodoro, "The Philippine Press: Between Two Traditions," (1998), 32-33.

³ Elliott Robert Barkan writes that the ratio of Filipinos to Filipinas in the U.S. during the 1930s averaged 14 to 1. "Filipinos," in *A Nation of Peoples: Sourcebook on America's Multicultural Heritage*, edited by Elliott Robert Barkan, (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1999), 206.

⁴ In the late 1940s and 50s, he would again turn his attention to events in the Philippines with the collection of short stories, *The Laughter of My Father*, and later, his novel, *The Cry and the Dedication*, focusing on left-wing guerrillas.

⁵ Despite his "wistful" and darkly nostalgic writing (influenced by Poe), de Gracia Concepcion's politics were progressive, and pro-labor.

⁶ Filipinos were also not immune from occasionally expressing their own racist views of other ethnic groups, such as the Chinese and Japanese, in articles found in the periodicals examined in this study.

⁷ Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, "Beauty Queens, Bomber Pilots, and Basketball Players: Second-Generation Filipina Americans in Stockton, California, 1930s to 1950s," in *Pinay Power: Peminist Critical theory: Theorizing the Filipina/American Experience*, Melinda L. de Jesus, Ed., (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 105-106.

⁸ See John N. Schumacher, S.J., Chapter 9: "Filipino Masonry," in *The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997), 171.

⁹ Conversation with Jess Tabasa, March, 2004.

¹⁰ Jose Garcia Villa, "Death of a Child," in *The New Tide* 1, ed. Carlos Bulosan, (Oct.-Dec. 1934): 3.

¹¹ John C. Hartsock, *A History of American Literary Journalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 22.

¹² Marilyn C. Alquizola and Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, "Bulosan's Laughter: The Making of Carlos Bulosan," in *Our Own Voice*, ed. Remé-Antonia Grefalda, (March 2006), <http://www.oovrag.com/essays/essay2006a-5.shtml>

¹³ See for example her "Tiny Books" project to benefit Heifer International, an organization devoted to eliminating world hunger.

¹⁴ Elizabeth H. Pisares, "Do You Mis(recognize) Me: Filipina Americans in Popular Music and the Problem of Invisibility," in *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, ed. Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr. and Edgardo V. Gutierrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 173.

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Philippine-American News Digest (Los Angeles, CA)

Philippine Commonwealth Times (Santa Maria, CA)

Philippines Mail (Salinas, CA)

Three Stars (Stockton, CA)

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APPENDIX

Selected Newspapers and Magazines, 1905 to 1946.

Mentioned in other newspapers, or listed in archival collections.

Ang Bantay (Los Angeles, a weekly newspaper, Lauro M. Portillo, editor)

Clay (Albuquerque, Jose Garcia Villa)

Commonwealth Times (Portland Oregon, Pablo Manlapit)

Cosmopolitan Courier (Seattle)

Equifilibricum News Service (Los Angeles, Hilario Moncado)

The Filipino (Washington, DC, William Alexander Sutherland)

Filipino Independence Journal (New York, NY, Jose A. Manibo, Jr.)

Filipino Nation (Los Angeles, Hilario Moncado)

Filipino News (Lihue, Hauai, Hawaii, Filipino News Ltd.)

Filipino Forum (Seattle, Victorio Acosta Velasco)

The Filipino People (New York)

Filipino Pioneer (Stockton, J.C. Dionisio)

Filipino Student's Magazine (Berkeley, Chicago)

Filipino Student (Berkeley, Chicago, 1912-14)

Filipino Student (Formerly the *Filipino Student Bulletin*, New York, 1931-39)

Filipino Student Bulletin (Seattle, 1922-1939s, Leopoldo T. Ruiz, et. al.)

Hawaii Filipino News (Honolulu)

New Quaadra Gossip

New Tide (Los Angeles, Carlos Bulosan)

Philippine Advocate (Seattle, Victorio Acosta Velasco)

Philippine Journal (Stockton, F.A.L.A.)

Philippine American Chronicle (Seattle, Frank Alonzo aka Emiliano Francisco)¹

Philippine-American News Digest (Los Angeles, E. Llamas Rosario)

Philippine American Tribune (Seattle)

Philippine Commonwealth (Washington D.C., Diosdado Yap)

Philippine Commonwealth Times (Santa Maria, M.G. Alviar)
Philippine Examiner (Stockton, G. Sotto)
Philippine Independence Journal (New York?)
Philippine News (San Francisco)
Philippine Newsletter (Seattle)
Philippine Pictorial Magazine (San Francisco, Pioneer Publishing Co., Trinidad Rojo)
Philippine Record (Los Angeles, Simeon Doria Arroyo)
Philippine Independent News, later changed to *The Philippines Mail*, and the *Mail-Advertiser* (Salinas, Luis Agudo, Delfin Cruz,)
Philippines Enterprise (Santa Maria, The Philippines Enterprise Pub. Co.)
Philippines News Herald (Los Angeles, V.N. Ramajo)
Philippine Republic Press (San Francisco, Stockton)
Philippine Review (formerly the *Filipino Students' Magazine*. Berkeley)
The Philippine Journal (Stockton, J.C. Dionisio)
Philippine Interpreter (Los Angeles, Pat Megino and Estela Romualdez de Sulit)
Sakdal (Stockton, Benigno Ramos)
Three Stars (Stockton, Luis Agudo, D.L. Marcuelo)
The Torch (Stockton)
Ti Silaw [The Light], (Honolulu)
United Filipino Press (Chicago)

¹ "Emiliano Francisco" is the pseudonym for Frank Alonzo, as reported in the *Philippine Advocate* 1, no. 5 (July 1935).