Foreign Forms: Modernism and Anglophone Philippine Literature

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Abstract

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Following modernist studies' broad aims to respond to the methodological and epistemological challenges of globalization, including reconceptualizing transnational and plural modernisms, critiquing the limitations of world literature, and redefining its most basic critical vocabulary, this dissertation argues that the corpus of early Anglophone Philippine literature provides both a rich supplement to the expanding canon of global modernism and a persistent challenge to the discipline's assumptions about the influence and diffusion of modernist forms from so-called "centers" in Europe and the United States. Drawing from contemporary formalist and narrative theory, postcolonial studies, and scholarship on the nation-state, this dissertation reads between the overdetermined canon of Anglo-European modernism and an under-examined Anglophone Philippine literature to intervene in the ongoing evaluation of modernism as a meaningful category of transnational and comparative literary studies. Motivating each primary reading is an inquiry regarding the value and limitations of historicizing literature's relationship with their imperial and colonial contexts—both the violence they commit and the generative possibilities they enable.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements i
Introduction 1
Philippine Encounters of the Literary World 3
Form and Comparison 6
Chapter Overview 15
Chapter 1: American Visions in *The 42nd Parallel* and *America Is in the Heart* 20
The Novel's Form and the Novel's Protest 21
Realism and the "Third World" 26
Personal Histories 32
The Honest Proletariat and *Bildung* 36
"The Speech of the People" 42
The American Character 55
Chapter 2: The Self-Poetics of José Garcia Villa and Gertrude Stein 80
Modernism's Grammar Book 83
The Honor Roll and the Construction of Taste 95
The Nation as "Adjectival" 102
Villa's Arrival 110
Stein's Departure 122
Chapter 3: National Pastoralism and the Weak Man in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and Manuel Arguilla's *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories* 128
The Place of the Short Story Collection 132
The Abundant Land 136
Relational Disharmonies 142
Strongmen 147
Modernity's Emasculation 152
Pessimistic Social Organization 168
Character-Space 179
Chapter 4: History, Aesthetics, and Exile in the *Portraits* of James Joyce and Nick Joaquin ... 196
Formal Development and Stunted Growth 197

The Bad Infinity of Repetition 207
Integrity, Harmony, Effulgence 219
Contra Mundum 226
Coda: The Edge of the Word 235
Bibliography 240

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Introduction

After the 1955 publication of the short story "Fairy Tale for the City" in *This Week Magazine*, Cebuano writer Estrella D. Alfon was censured by the Catholic Women's League and eventually taken to trial in what is casually remembered as the "first" obscenity case in the country. The story, which concerns a married man having an affair with a young woman, discomfited conservative readers, despite the story's relative tameness. Alfon herself remembered that the young woman's coaxing, "Press me! Press me hard!" as the line for which the CWL "crucified" her.[1] Bearing witness in her defense were contemporaneous writers who would themselves become fixtures in Anglophone Philippine literature: Fransisco "Franz" Arcellana, N.V.M. Gonzalez, and Ricaredo Demetillo, among others. Reflecting on the aftermath of the public infamy, which included being blacklisted by publishers and a fine of three hundred pesos after a two-year long trial, Alfon described the event as a setback to both her career and her confidence as a writer, and it would be several years before she could get her subsequent stories published. As for "Fairy Tale for the City," it had an injunction not to be printed again.[2]

Although the story's moment of sexual frankness shocked Catholic sensibilities, those in her circle of writer confidants would have likely been amused at the correlation between the story's controversy and the writer's brazenness. Prior to this scandal, Alfon was the only woman in the Veronicans, an informal connection of Filipino writers loosely united in their propensity for English and aesthetic tastes. Alfon notes with humor that while the public mission of the

1. Estrella D. Alfon, *Estrella Alfon: Her Life in Her Own Words*, ed. Edna Zapanta Manlapaz (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1997), 119.

2. Herminia Santos-Bas, "Estrella D. Alfon: A Literary Biography," in *The Estrella D. Alfon Anthology*, Vol. 1-Short Stories, ed. Herminia Santos-Bas (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2000): 23.

Veronicans was, like Veronica wiping the face of Jesus Christ only to reveal his image to the world, to picture "the true face of man," the real reason for the name was "that Arcellana owned a small printing press, that he called St. Veronica's press."[3] The deflated motivation notwithstanding, these writers adopted a bohemian lifestyle: rollicking in drink and food, hastily banging out manuscripts on a typewriter, criticizing institutions, and talking endlessly about art at weekly gatherings at Ocampo's home (41). Many would go on to have successful, even canonical, careers as Anglophone authors, poets, playwrights, and critics. Alfon, having come from the "sticks," considered herself the least learned and experienced and felt intimidated by the rarefied literary knowledge that her male compatriots seemed to display, juxtaposed to her own instinctive taste in texts:

> Did I feel anything about it? That had been for me the staff with which to measure, the lamp with which to recognize. I had not yet learned to open a book saying, this is Faulkner or Wolfe, he is a great author, I must see what he says here. No, it had been to me—to pick up a book, a newspaper, any rag that had any sort of writing on it, read, and open my mind and heart to all sorts of memories, all manner of feeling that I had had in the past that now seemed to have been touched upon. Associating with these people now—it seemed a shame, I knew no one, had read nothing worthwhile. I listened wide-eyed to all the discussions, for the first time knew there was such a thing called technique, and resolved in my secret heart to look for Mann and Doestoevsky and remember Joyce and Caldwell, and Steinbeck. Many other names rang through my head, my poor abashed head. I made a great show of not caring, of not wishing to be anything other than what I was. But actually, I was appalled at the ignorance I had, of the utter blankness of my knowledge. (43)

Unlike her colleagues—possessors of that writer's library of "secrets," not only of the names of authors and texts, as well as quotable passages from canonical works, but also of the *techne* of literature—Alfon had at hand only an appetite for reading and the tools of experiential appreciation. It's not until she is "given a reputation" by A.V.H. Hartendorp that she begins to

3. Alfon, *Her Life*, 39.

own the challenge of being a writer.[4] On other occasions the Veronicans would meet at Manuel and Lydia Arguilla's residence, "a beautiful Spanish house with a tiled roof and upper floor."[5] There writers would also meet; she brushed shoulders with the likes of José Garcia Villa, Paz Latorena, and Amador Daguio. After a prolific prewar career, she died in 1983 on stage acting as a judge for the Metro Manila Film Festival.

Philippine Encounters of the Literary World

Alfon's story in many ways serves as a microcosm of the early development of a literary field in English in the Philippines. The two generations that followed the failed Philippine Revolution against the United States made a complex negotiation with not only English but the broader forces of a Western consciousness. Like many of her contemporaries, Alfon grew up in a multilingual household textured by an imperial history (her trilingual father spoke both Spanish and Cebuano at home and was fairly proficient in English), went to public schools where English was enforced as a medium of instruction, and conceived of literary influences outside of the Philippines, usually at cost of rendering vernacular and oral traditions invisible and unthought. All the authors who inspire a sense of abashment in Alfon, from Faulkner to Joyce to Wolfe to Mann, are metonymies of literary prestige and a worldly education, for which the rise of English created a persistent desire to emulate, belong to, and surpass.

Not that this kind of colonial learning was ever unilaterally passive, derivative, aspirational; nor did this generational "miseducation," to borrow Renato Constantino's provocative formulation, escape self-criticism and eventual appropriation. Luis Francia notes that

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4. Chapter Three of this dissertation considers in some more detail Hartendorp's influence on other Filipino writers.

5. Alfon, *Her Life,* 46. Arguilla's short fiction is given extended attention in Chapter Three.

while it was “natural” that texts from the Western canon were taught and studied and that he and his peers were misled into looking upon their “own literature in English as a poor relative, to be visited from time to time as an act of charity,” in time the texture of Anglophone Philippine literature came to be appreciated for the polysemous imbrication that it always was.[6] The sting of Alfon’s embarrassment at her ignorance of a Western tradition is perhaps an unfortunate consequence of this purported miseducation, but, Francia notes, the accusations of self-forgetting, of “lacking a clear-cut, well-defined cultural sensibility” is its own misappraisal, for such criticisms are undergirded by the assumption of the presence of a “real” literary culture, which is “the complete antithesis of living Philippine culture, an attempt to pasteurize and sterilize it” (xiii). The deterritorialized Alfon, like her deterritorialized co-writers, engaged in “the literary equivalent of guerilla warfare, using the very same weapon that had been employed to foist another set of foreign values upon a ravished nation, but now as part of an arsenal meant for conscious self-determination and the unwieldly process of reclaiming psychic territory from the invader.”[7] For Francia and other critics, the results of this warfare have, in the contemporary

6. Luis Francia, “Mr. and Mrs. English Travel with a Rattan Suitcase,” in *Brown River, White Ocean: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Philippine Literature in English*,” ed. Luis Francia (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993), x.

7. Francia, xiv. A brief account of Alfon and deterritorialization can be found in Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, *Filipino Woman Writing: Home and Exile in the Autobiographical Narratives of Ten Writers* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2015). Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guittari describe deterritorialization in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

moment, led to an indigenized English of a unique and vibrant character, no longer anxious of its own belatedness or callousness on an international literary scene.[8]

Indeed, the question of how to respond to the seeming infinitude of the world beyond the national or ethnic borders has motivated numerous research agendas in the narrower field of modernist studies, affecting both the scope of field and the applicability of its terms. Harsha Ram notes that the two competing models of world literature—the world-systems model and the network model—offer two general paradigms for approaching global modernism, or really any phenomenon of transnational scale. The world-systems model, developed by Franco Moretti, Pascale Casanova, and others, posits a dynamic global order of centers and peripheries that abide by their own operational laws, sometimes quite distinct from the material, political, and social forces that are often appealed to for explanations of cultural emergence.[9] The world-system is a "profoundly uneven totality, allowing us to view the multiply differentiated space-times that coexist in the global present as produced by the imbalances constituting the world system as such."[10] Arguably, many of the writers examined in this dissertation seem to have grasped an informal version of world-systems theory, if only in recognizing peripheral, dependent relationship on the importation of English and, generally, a Western literary tradition. As Francia

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8. Francia summarizes this transformation in a metaphor. English in the Philippines is a traveling train that, as it traverses the country, becomes filled more with "rattan travel cases" (xv), content that is indisputably Filipino.

9. See Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 1, no. 1 (2000): 54–68; Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

10. Harsha Ram, "The Scale of Global Modernisms: Imperial, National, Regional, Local," *PMLA* 131, no. 5 (2016): 1372-1373.

noted in the above paragraph, no Filipino writer in English could fully ignore the cultural difference that the U.S.'s presence sharpened and eventually permanently altered. Even the very category of nation-states, the nominal "Philippines" and "United States," is continually reinforced by the "territorial logic" of center-periphery (1373). The network model, contrariwise, derives its cogency less from dynamics of power and more from dynamics of exchange. The purely theoretical simultaneity of the world-system swapped for the possibility of "acknowledging the force of creative agency and historical contingency, as well as interactive dynamism of cross-cultural dialog in contradistinction to political and economic power."[11] Proponents of this lateral description of the global literary order such as David Damrosch and Susan Stanford Friedman are not willfully ignorant of the profound and enduring inequalities of the globe, but rather inviting the possibility of untethering the "periphery" from an ontological dependence on the center and acknowledging the agentive capacities of authors and their cultural contexts.[12]

Form and Comparison

It seems, then, that critics interested in cultural production on an international scale and sensitive to the deeply cutting inequity of the world need to choose between the two modes of encountering the world. Or do they? This dissertation argues that early and mid-twentieth

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11. Ram, 1374. For a sharper critique of world-systems theory, see Taylor Eggan, "Regionalizing the Planet: Horizons of the Introverted Novel at World Literature's End," *PMLA* 131, no. 5 (2016): 1299–1315. For a reconsideration of historical and national contexts in undergirding literary analysis and interpretation see Christopher Bush, "Context," in *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism*, ed. Eric Hayot and Rebecca Walkowitz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 75–95, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hayo16520.9.

12. See David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Susan Standford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

century Anglophone Philippine literature in English contributes to an expanding corpus of global modernism, but a kind of modernism that is only fully graspable in the crossing lines of exchange on the coordinate plane of uneven world powers. The critic does not have to choose between critiquing the centrifugal domination of the periphery from the center and emphasizing the rhizomatic spread of culture. There is, of course, no place and no time that is absent of power, but nor can inequity subsume everything and all that the so-called peripheries create. To return briefly to the case of Alfon, it can be seen how the imposition of English and the displacement of the vernacular, as well as the economic dependencies that the U.S. created and amplified, shaped the profile and capacities of a "the Philippine writer in English." But it is also apparent that the youthful energies of the Veronicans were directed to more than defensive reactions of cultural inferiority: a desire to not only own and master foreign material but also adapt it for local concerns. Moretti's formulation that the novel emerges when literary cultures compromise between foreign forms and local content is a provocative insight into the spread of the *techne* of a genre, but the systematicity of distant reading is, of course, designed to eschew granular close reading that forms the much of the labor of this project. In opposition to this metaphorical distance between text and critic, this investigation into the development of an early Philippine literary modernism in English rests on the assumption that the texts of writers like Alfon, her accompanying Veronicans, and the other writers of this study are persistently at risk of being un- or misread in a vast world-system or globalized literary schema.

But why compare Anglophone Philippine literature to the canonical texts that have for decades been fixtures in the typical modernist canon? And why focus on form? Part of the challenge of doing modernist scholarship under the aegis of the global turn is that the style of scholarship has internalized the "accounts of dynamic rupture in both the literary and historical

sphere," as Michaela Bronstein writes persuasively in *Out of Context: The Uses of Modernist Fiction*.[13] As literary scholars set out to write the historiographies and draw the maps of other literary traditions, there is a nagging requisite to *always historicize*, as Fredric Jameson and others have succinctly described the scholarly obligation. But how are rupture, novelty, and anti-traditionalism—features of both modernism proper and proto-literary cultures such as the ones that emerge from cultural contact, benign or otherwise—squared up with this normative historical awareness? An always-on historicizing applied with the most cavalier attitude may lead to a historical reductivism that blunts the force of proto-modernist and modernist texts. In the case of Anglophone Philippine literature, it has often been particularly difficult to grasp its disputatious mood and experimental assays because its literary-aesthetic qualities have been subsumed by its often-overt politicization, underwritten especially by a recognition of colonialism and imperialism as conditioning forces. In other words, the joint irruptions of English and a U.S. imperialist project are difficult to extricate from the particularities of Philippine literature in English in the early half of the twentieth century, not only because they have real explanatory power, but also because, like a historical heuristic of sorts, they simplify down to an origin point of a complex social and cultural phenomenon.

The shape of this problem, while sharpened to a point for modernist critics, is really shared across the entire discipline: the responsibility to be historically informed, to feel the constraining and productive force of historical contingency, while at the same time the desire to appreciate the ostensibly timeless and transportable features of texts from other times and other places (6). Drawing from Caroline Levine's *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*,

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13. Michaela Bronstein, *Out of Context: The Uses of Modernist Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 4.

Bronstein notes that perhaps what is needed to fully grasp modernist texts that scholars have already categorized or, alternatively, to *find* such work among hitherto ignored or under-explored archives of the world, is to recognize that a byproduct of the logic of rupture is that texts "make" their own place or are "made" to fit. Formalism gives scholars a set of tools to broach this metaphor of spatialization, to see what forms texts "look like outside that moment [of production]: forms, in other words, need a little bit of room to breathe as their abstract selves before we fix them down into new political contexts and meaning" (6). When literary forms are "stripped of their political contexts and 'original' meanings," they can be appreciated as "the most useful things about the texts of the past for the readers of the future…" (8). The feeling of timelessness in an exemplary text is precisely this moment of cultural transportation.

The portability of forms, when recognized as such, permits a more capacious and creative endeavor than what a narrow historicizing project can provide. But this recognition does not reify the apolitical quietism that many modernist writers have been censured for. Bronstein's aim to untether political significance from the historical forces of production informs the comparative nature of this dissertation, which takes as its primary focus *the politicization of form* as it opens paths into and out of the intertwined histories of Anglophone modernism in its familiar and unfamiliar locales. In a broad sense, this dissertation seeks an alternative path between the "usual" aims of critique and its anti-suspicious responses.[14] Comparison reveals that these texts,

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14. The debate between critique and "post-critique" is informed by many sources. Some touchstone texts that have influenced this dissertation include Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Series Q. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (2004): 225–48, https://doi.org/10.1086/421123; Michael Warner, "Uncritical Reading," in *Polemic: Critical or Uncritical*, ed. Jane Gallop (New York: Routledge, 2004), 13–38; Rita Felski, *The Uses of Literature* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2008); Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction,"

especially in neo- and postcolonial contexts, comprise an already built-in suspicion which, when inherited by readers, form the foundation of praxis.

Recent scholarship has emerged over the past decade that supplements a reorientation away from a diffusionist/developmentalist model of Anglophone literary production in the Philippines toward two broad aims: an appreciation of English indigenization in the Philippines on its own terms and a more lateral, post-national "planetary" style of literary analysis and historiography. The "global turn" in modernist studies and world literature has been quite active if publications in the United States may attest. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough's *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* drives "beyond the national paradigm" toward a trans- or international scope through under-described and minor literatures around the world, although the authors concede that the widening of the world is not merely additive: "a global conception of modernism requires more than the geographical additional of previously ignored or marginalized traditions."[15] At the same time, the "historical reality" of nations still demands analytical attention, no matter how strenuously the support beams of national thinking are bent under pressure. Furthermore, fundamental to this expansion of the field is a meaningful distinction between being *modern* and being *modernist* (11). The anxiety over the affixes to *modern* is not only a desire for a normative clarity, but also an invitation to *test* the scope of the terms that have

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Representations 108, no. 1 (2009): 1–21, https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2009.108.1.1; Fredric Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism* (New York: Verso, 2013); Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); and Joseph North, *Literary Criticism: A Concise Political History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

15. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

become thoroughly naturalized.[16] If modernism were merely the cultural expression of modernity, then what purchase does the term have? Wollaeger and Eatough's qualified response is a cautious and principled refusal of an essentializing definition: "What is needed, then, is not a static definition that attempts to specify the *sine qua non* of modernism, but something more like…Wittgenstein's family resemblance, a polythetic form of classification in which the aim is to specify a set of criteria, subsets of which are enough to constitute a sense of decentered resemblance."[17] While such a response may be disappointing for the absence of a positive determiner of modernism's emergence in other locales, it is a revealing signal of a deep suspicion that alternate modernisms in early to late stages may be considered derivative or belated, while simultaneously acknowledging in a strictly practical sense a foreign influence.

Most fields in the humanities have, in fact, needed to confront this "spatial turn" that alights, with varying degrees of insight, globalization, as Susan Stanford Friedman notes in her

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16. Peter Brooker et al. attempt to avoid the problematic of causation between modern*ity* and modern*ism* by writing that "… modernism has been (and continues to be) reconfigured in an ongoing process of redefinition that takes its cue from analyses of a modernity that is increasingly seen in globalizing and thus transnational terms. When 'modernity' is the prior term, 'modernism'—of whatever kind—becomes its expression, though this slightly awkward formulation is not to be understood in 'reflective' terms. If modernism expresses modernity in some sense, then this notion is to be conceived not on a base–superstructure model but on the principle of multiple interactions across social and geographical locations and of a non-linear, non-progressivist view of temporality" (3-4). Generally, the authors agree that a singular modernism (or singular modernity, for that matter) cannot be soundly justified, although it is at least theoretically possible that a singular modernity can still incorporate and describe profound material inequalities. See Peter Brooker et al., "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, ed. Peter Brooker et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1–13, https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199545445.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199545445.

17. Wollaeger and Eatough, *Handbook of Global Modernisms,* 12.

essay in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*.[18] Friedman is critical of a passe cosmopolitan internationalism, which was "profoundly caught up in the logic of Western colonialism in locating the sites of modernist cultural production exclusively in Western metropoles and in regarding non-Western cultures primarily as the raw material to be transformed into modernism's avant-garde rupture of Western bourgeois conventions and art" (501). The critical response to this narrowness of approaching the non-Western Other has enlivened a rich critical vocabulary of borders and border-crossing, hybridity, mimicry, appropriation, indigenization, cosmopolitanism, diaspora, world literature, and postcoloniality. Each term has its own purchase, relevance, and merit, but in each one can find the concern implicitly voiced by Wollaeger and Eatough: that whatever the paradigm the "spirit of worldliness" may be "overtaken by the reassertion of Western culture as the 'measure of all cultures,' as universal, originary, and with primary claim to modernity" (501).

To circumvent this persistent issue of hierarchy, Friedman and other critics have turned to comparison, which she pithily describes as the "capacity to see difference in the midst of sameness and sameness amidst difference" (504). Even more than this chiasmic construction, comparison involves the recognition of irreducibility, that in two different texts, for example, there may be an irreducible sameness along with an irreducible difference. Such contradictory tension may partially describe why scholarship on Anglophone Philippine literature can so deftly incorporate previously established language of modern and contemporary theory and literary criticism, while at the same pay meticulous attention to local contexts and constraints. Of

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18. Susan Stanford Friedman, "World Modernisms, World Literature, and Comparativity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 499 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195338904.013.0021.

Friedman's four strategies for advancing a non-hierarchical comparative practice, "re-vision" promises the greatest insight (508). While she suggests that by itself re-vision "does not challenge in any substantial way the center/periphery world-system in the cultural sphere," a lateral comparison of two texts can actually lay the groundwork for alternative, more satisfying formulations of a globalized literary world order.

Eric Hayot and Rebecca Walkowitz's edited collection, *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism*, notes in its introduction that "intellectual paradigms" change and emerge when critics move away from the European center.[19] Attachments to parochial borders, great traditions, or imperial histories have hitherto stifled new manners of scholarship, new terms of analysis. As the editors suggest, their collected essays are influenced by a "critique of Europe-as-center and its attendant narratives of aesthetic development, including Eurocentrist,…diffusion…, and parity, and the "old" words of literary criticism like *form, context,* and *tradition* take on a new register in new archives and locations (3). These foundational terms are not just applied but tested as well. The project of globalizing modernism and modernist studies rests on an assumption that modernism is, by virtue of its definition, a global phenomenon, as the modifier *global* is a safeguarding redundancy until scholars come to a consensus that modernism "happened" everywhere under the right conditions, just in different ways and in different times. But it is still perhaps controversial to write of still "one" modernism, as Hayot and Walkowitz concede: "Weakly defined, fluid, internally differentiated, this modernism is nonetheless singular, we claim, insofar as it corresponded to a set of historical circumstances that have not

19. Eric Hayot and Rebecca Walkowitz, "Introduction," in *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism*, ed. Eric Hayot and Rebecca Walkowitz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 2, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hayo16520.4.

happened exactly this way before and that have carried in their wake a variety of social changes (capitalism, secularization, modernity) that, for now, seem to define a period and a state of affairs" (8). In other words, there is still one modernism insofar as there is one world that encountered and continues to be shaped by the same set of conditional historical facts.

The diasporic collection of scholars working in Philippine Studies has also in the past few years experienced its own reckoning, a metareflection on the aims, goals, and methods of Philippine Studies from within and from without the archipelago. Martin Manalansan and Augusto Espiritu's *Filipino Studies*: *Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora* takes as its central metaphor the cross-written document born from necessity and scarcity. It is a fitting image not just for analogizing the multidirectional lines of force that characterize scholarship informed by a postcolonial attitude, an attitude continually seized in a moment of struggle, but also for that ethic of repurposing that so often is one of the estimable features isolated in (post)colonial literatures. They palimpsest informs the collected essays which all try to "uncover the mercurial 'layerings' or shifting stratigraphy of power that obscure or erase and at the same time resurrect specific historical, cultural, and political experiences."[20] The overlaps of text that cut away from

20. Martin F. Manalansan and Augusto Espiritu, eds., *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 2, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=4045262. Earlier scholarship on the Philippine diaspora and Filipino American literature and identity has influenced the palimpsestic character of Filipino Studies. In one of the more influential treatments of exile and diaspora, Oscar Campomanes writes that the exile is a defining feature of Filipino-American writing, as well as "[motifs] of departure, nostalgia, incompletion, rootlessness, leave taking, and dispossession," with the imagined Philippines as the place of departure or arrival (51). See Oscar V. Campomanes, "Filipinos in the United States and Their Literature of Exile," in *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*, ed. Shirley Lim and Amy Ling (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 49–78, muse.jhu.edu/book/9488. In a later essay, Campomanes problematizes the shift from Philippine Studies to Filipino Studies, noting that globalization and large-scale migration patterns have rendered the nation-state inadequate. See Oscar V. Campomanes, "The Vernacular/Local, the National, and the Global in Filipino

its preceding pattern also aptly characterize Philippine Studies that after "occupying a vexed and ambivalent position in area studies and Asian American studies," has finally emerged as a "trenchant and vibrant academic presence" (2). And just like the erased lines underneath the new ones, this collection is aware that in speaking for some it does not speak for others, that it threatens to obscure as much as it reveals; the included essays cannot "represent" in a naïve sense the character of the Philippines, its inhabitants, or its literatures, instead seeking "capacious ways to calibrate the dangers, pleasures, and possibilities of cutting across knowledge formations and traditions to then set them against the geographic reach of Filipinos scattered all over the world" (8).

Chapter Overview

Chapter One, "American Visions in *The 42nd Parallel* and *America Is in the Heart*," takes up two authors who wielded the novel form as a kind of social protest: John Dos Passos and Carlos Bulosan. In implicitly recognizing the modernist features of collage, non-

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Studies," *Kritika Kultura*, no. 3 (2003): 5–16. In a similar manner, Denise Cruz writes that of early Filipino American literature, the following are defining patterns: "exile and alienation; gendered and classed tensions within the transnational community; iconic representations of male laborers or idealized women; same-sex or nonnormative affiliations; and the use of literary form and narrative strategies in contending with the repercussions of empire, racism in the United States, and the popular circulation of Filipina and Filipino bodies" (151). See Denise Cruz, "Filipino and Filipina Voices," in *The Cambridge History of Asian American Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 139–54, https://doi-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/10.1017/CHO9781107284289.008.This dissertation does not seek to theorize the term *Philippine* or *Filipino* at length but recognizes from the outset that each term is provisional and contingent, implicating not just geographical boundaries but also racial and ethnic identity, linguistic community, ideological commitment, and/or cultural affiliation—each differently emphasized for a critic's particular purpose. For more on the differences between "Philippine literature in English," Filipino American literature," and "Anglophone Philippine Literature," see Rocío Davis, "Introduction: Have Come, Are Here: Reading Filipino/a American Literature," *MELUS* 29, no. 1 (2004): 5–18, https://link-gale-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/apps/doc/A117864532/AONE?u=wash_main&sid=AONE&xid=1dc6098f.

simultaneity, and polyvocality in narrative technique, this chapter's analysis of *The 42nd Parallel* (1930) and *America Is in the Heart* (1946) is uninterested in simplistic "apolitical" prerequisites of modernist categorization. Instead, a richer understanding of these two novels foregrounds that a commitment to form even for tendentious ends constitutes a significant if denigrated aspect of modernist novelistic technique. For in these two novels readers encounter an America in urgent danger, one whose sociopolitical equipage is one of increasing uselessness. What can the sensible US inhabitant do to counter the tides of nativism, war-hungry nationalism, and social dispossession that characterized the first half of the twentieth century? Both Dos Passos and Bulosan perhaps surprisingly reach the same conclusion: that the novel's tutelary and ataractic capacities equip implied readers with an image of a new dispensation, one that symbolically reconciles reality with potential. The huddled characters of *The 42nd Parallel*, from the working-class would-be radical Mac to the naïve "all-American" J. Ward Moorehouse, are facets of a dissatisfying U.S. intermittently limned by the cacophony of newsprint discourse and the speech of the people. Meanwhile, the hopeful Allos of *America Is in the Heart*, the autobiographical avatar of the author himself, faces the economic precarity and anti-Asian racism of the Pacific Northwest, only to overcome these challenges to be a socially conscious activist and labor organizer who, despite everything, comes to love the fecund, maternal image of the United States. The novels' tendencies toward irony, doublespeak, and allusion disinvite a passive, untrained reading, offering instead the requisite work of imagining a future that one hopes will come to pass.

Chapter Two, "The Self-Poetics of José Garcia Villa and Gertrude Stein," turns to the poet-critics Gertrude Stein and José Garcia Villa, whose shared haughtiness and sometimes obfuscating prose belie a deep commitment to the consolidation of the critic-as-cultural arbiter.

Both sought to complete a language of self-mastery and a mastery of language in their critical and artistic output. In their canonical essays, which have been served as touchstones in the various literary histories of their respective corners of the Anglophone literary world, they expand the business of the critic to include translation, not in the strictly literal sense (both authors being, in fact, hostile to linguistic pluralism), but in the sense of possessing the secret cipher of the glyphs of experimental poetry and the puzzle of literary excellence: who has it, where to find it, and what it means. In this self-making project, both Villa and Stein reveal the insistent presence and pressure of the nation and national belonging, of linguistic homogeneity, and of the limits of cosmopolitanism.

Turning away from the internationalist positioning of both Villa and Stein, Chapter Three, "National Pastoralism and the Weak Man in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and Manuel Arguilla's *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories*," focuses on the regional affordances of the short story cycles of Manuel Arguilla and Sherwood Anderson. Their respective canonical collections, *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories* (1940) and *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), are indicative of the politicization of form. This chapter argues that the short story cycle has unique purchase in both studies of regionalism and post-coloniality, because the genre's primary features attend to the psychosocial and formalistic properties of burgeoning nationhood and of the confounding tension between the urban and the rural. In each collection there remains a persistent awareness of shifting political arrangements and ideological formations. There also remains a pained nostalgia for organic community that is already lapsing into a mythologized past. The organic community, having once enjoyed a productive and socially oriented relationship with the land itself, becomes increasingly alienated from it. These thematic concerns are contoured by the structuring forces of the short story

collection, whose polyphony, which is often multiply narrated by various narrators that need not share any conceptual sameness, as well as the shifting valence of interconnection and autonomy of any single short story, are rich illustrations of the sense of the “meanwhile” that is usually associated with the novel and of the imagined community of the nation. Drawing from scholarship on the pastoral and the intersections of nation and gender, this chapter suggests that the respective short story collections of Arguilla and Anderson not only supplement a recognition of the short story form’s dominance in early Anglophone Philippine literature but also demonstrate how these authors link form and politics to advance alternative visions of communal living.

The fourth and final chapter, “History, Aesthetics, and Exile in the *Portraits* of James Joyce and Nick Joaquin,” turns to two “portraits”: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) by James Joyce and *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* (1950) by Nick Joaquin. As the later text, Joaquin’s play makes an obvious callback of Joyce’s seminal novel of an artist’s coming into being, but beyond the superficial titling of both texts is a complex rendering of what might be termed “useful time.” For both texts are frustrated by a stubborn history that refuses satisfactory utility. The young Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* reaches artistic consciousnesses at the height of Parnellite nationalism and an ongoing Gaelic revivalism, both of which are distasteful for their overt moralism and empty rhetoric. For Stephen, the escape from these unsatisfying pursuits is through a rarefied aesthetics that never quite gets off the ground. This chapter shows that both the miniature aesthetic treatises in the novel and its shift from conventional novel to the quasi-epistolary comprising of Stephen’s journal entries register a modernist negation of the past only to fail to elaborate a paradigm of a satisfying future. Joaquin’s play, similarly, shows characters trapped in the past, futilely pantomiming the days of

old, even as their way of life comes under the threat of total, war-torn ruin. The titular portrait of Joaquin's text, both a prolific metaphor and centralizing feature of its *mise en scene*, is suggestive of a generational stagnancy and stalled development, dual anxieties for many Filipino writers in English.

Throughout the dissertation is an ongoing challenge to acknowledge in its myriad complexity the inextricable colonial relationship between the United States and the Philippines in shaping the latter's literary field in English, while simultaneously gesturing to what Gemino Abad calls a "native clearing" of these Philippine authors in the transnational field of global modernism, a clearing that is most richly made when intertextual connections are brought to light. The texts compared here, of course, tell not the whole story of either Anglophone modernism or twentieth century Philippine literature, but instead mark productive moments, sometimes of violent collision, sometimes of happenstance connection, when often the most vital literary experiments are forged and found.

Chapter 1: American Visions in *The 42nd Parallel* and *America Is in the Heart*

On January 9, 1900, Indiana senator Albert J. Beveridge, in his first address to Congress, laid for the United States wide claim on the Philippines, China, and the Pacific Ocean, inaugurating for his peers his congressional reputation as a staunch imperialist. The Philippines "are ours forever," he claimed, as are China's "illimitable markets,"[1] indicating that the Philippines might serve as a gateway for the United States' broader economic interests in Asia. Strategically situated at "the most commanding commercial, naval, and military points in the Eastern seas, within hail of India, shoulder to shoulder with China, richer in its own resources than any equal body of land on the entire globe, and peopled by a race which civilization demands shall be improved" (707). the Philippine archipelago, personally traveled as he alleges, was simply too much of a valuable location to be given up, hence the appeal to hold on to the Philippines interminably. By pairing a racial identification of Filipinos, whose demonym had only recently acquired its modern nationalist designation by the time of his speech, to economic and militaristic interests, Beveridge also introduced a racial logic of incapacity, advancing that the racial makeup of Filipinos currently denied them the capacity to self-govern and thus required the political and cultural tutelage of the United States—a "benevolent assimilation," as President McKinley famously proclaimed it two years earlier.[2] Beveridge partially blamed the

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1. Senator Beveridge, speaking on policy regarding the Philippines, on January 9, 1900, 56th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record 33*, vol. 1 pt. 1: 704. A member of the American Historical Association, Beveridge was also a historian and outside of his political career is best known for his four-volume *Life of John Marshall*. He set to work on an equally lengthy biography of Abraham Lincoln which was left unfinished after he died in 1927.

2. William McKinley. "Benevolent Assimilation." Presidential Proclamation, December 21, 1898.

"weak, corrupt, cruel, and capricious"[3] centuries-long rule of Spain (1521-1898) for failing to establish the foundation of effective (that is, U.S.-approved) political culture and thus reaching for a political and social justification for the Philippines's backwardness, but he also said that "[t]hey are not a self-governing race" but are "Orientals [and] Malays" whose foreign blood might resist the "alchemy" that will "set the self-governing currents of the American pouring through their Malay veins" (708). Even if their blood were amenable to this figural transfusion of blood, Beveridge characterized the journey to self-rule as arduous and long; it still took Anglo-Saxons "a thousand years… to reach" (708) the racial capacity for autonomy, including the literacy required to comprehend the Constitution and demand the rights it articulates and protects. Sovereignty, like the political and cultural achievements of the Anglo-Saxons, is sacrosanct, not to be freely given or easily earned, but acquired "after centuries of study and struggle and experiment and instruction and all the elements of the progress of man" (708). Bereft of centuries of experiment and study, as well as the racial capacity for autonomy, Filipinos, doubly behind the United States' political sophistication, ought to be subject to American governance, which by Beveridge's formulation is both a dehistoricizing and a deracializing enterprise, a volitional extension of God-driven "master organizers of the world [that will] establish system where chaos reigns" and of harbingers of the "spirit of progress" hitherto denied to Filipinos by historical contingency (711).

The Novel's Form and the Novel's Protest

Beveridge's speech typifies both anti-imperialist and imperialist rhetoric characteristic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. If not for its zealousness, his words might not

3. Senator Beveridge, speaking on policy regarding the Philippines, on January 9, 1900, 56th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record 33*, vol. 1 pt. 1: 708.

have significant purchase or historical particularity. Almost exactly thirty years later, however, they reappear, in mediated form, in the first Newsreel section of John Dos Passos's *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), itself the first installment in the sprawling trilogy *U.S.A.* Assembled in the style of montage, the first Newsreel captures, among other images, black U.S. soldiers fighting in the Philippines, by morphing violence into popular song:

It was that emancipated race
That was charging up the hill
Up to where them insurrectos
Was afightin fit to kill….
For there's many a man been murdered in Luzon
and Mindanao
and in Samar."[4]

Sandwiched between these lyric passages is Beveridge "responding to the toast," as if he were heeding the popular song within the diegesis of the text, proclaiming that the "*twentieth century will be American. American thought will dominate it. American progress will give it color and direction. American deeds will make it illustrious*."[5]

Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart* (1946) also begins with war, but a war that is far off, irretrievable by popular war song or lyric remembrance. Instead, war emerges in the pastoral distance when Allos/Carlos, the narrator/author, sees his older brother Leon returning home after having fought in an unnamed war in Europe. Tending the farm with his father, the young Allos partially recognizes his older brother taking measured and silent steps toward the house, greets him as "soldier," and witnesses him gently and smoothly make a transition from

4. John Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 1, 3 (italics original). *Insurrectos* was a term used by U.S. forces to describe Filipino revolutionaries who fought against them during the Philippine-American War.

5. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 3 (italics original).

soldiering abroad to plowing the field, the "common earth that fed our family for generations," with the *carabao*.[6] The proximity between war and meager subsistence—shadowed by the world-shifting events engineered by distant nation-states in Europe—is not lost upon Allos, who, speaking in the diegetic future, imbues the moment of affectionate homecoming with an acrimonious futurity: "The sudden, sweeping years that later came to my life and pushed me into the unknown, the vital, negative years of hard work and bitter trials oftentimes resurrected his face for me with great vividness… I was to go back again and again to this moment for an assurance of my righteous anger against the crushing terror that was filling my life in a land far way…." (4). As Leon, who figures overall as a minor character of the narrative, returns home, Allos thinks of the "land far way," the United States: the ambivalent locale that is simultaneously throughout the novel an ersatz home filled with prohibitive and exclusionary individuals and policies, and that which fundamentally "replaces" the Philippines as the connective trope of the nation-people "in the heart." The initial homecoming of Leon thus prefigures the novel's fundamental narrative strategy of exploring Allos's contradictory experiences in America through a continuous dialectical movement between the United States and the Philippines.[7]

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6. Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart: A Personal History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), 4.

7. Daniel Kim and Crystal Parikh suggest that the defining features of the umbrella genre of "Asian American literature," which must be defined so as to include the early Anglophone writings of Filipinos, are best understood as a "refraction of historical currents that have shaped the Asian presence in America and the America presence in Asia" (xxii). Kim and Parikh's general assumption is apt considering Bulosan, who never returned to the Philippines after immigrating as a teenager, and in light of *America Is in the Heart*, whose title implies a permeability of boundaries between the United States and its foreign inhabitants. See Parikh, Crystal, and Daniel Kim. *The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2015).

Allos's contradictoriness and the suasive use of assembling news headlines, speeches, and clips of articles and essays that constitutes the defining feature of Dos Passos's text indicate the problematic of "Americanness" for early twentieth century authors, especially as it becomes a revisited literary trope within the narrower context of U.S.-Philippine relations. The nexus point of Bulosan and Dos Passos's formally complex texts that seem to sit orthogonal to each other—the former an autobiography or "personal history," the latter a modernist collage, although both varyingly connected to the genre of realism and political interest in the laboring class—along with co-circulating imperialist and nationalist rhetoric that relied on dubious if not untenable logic, occasion a response to the ongoing ministrations of literary and postcolonial theorists skeptical that previous terminology and methods may no longer be suitable to either ethical or theoretical demands in the present moment.

These texts in particular rest in tension along the expanding genealogies between *realism* and *modernism* and between *colonialism* and *postcolonialism*. All four of these terms have undergone considerable revision and confusion in the decades since the publication of either novel, and the operative assumption of this chapter is that a comparative reading clarifies such confusion. In following this through this assumption, this chapter involves weaving together strands of several issues, each resting on the basis of the preceding one: the continuing oscillation between *realism* and *modernism* especially as it structures the motivations of comparative, transnational analyses of literary texts and literary history; the corollary issue of nationalism or nationalist expression within literature; and the assumption that attention to form offers a viable and persuasive framework for understanding these two novels.

Much of the crossing between *formal/generic* concerns, from the principles of selection and categorization of realist versus modernist texts to the necessity of the pluralizing and

contextualizing adjuncts indicative of location and language, and between the *normative concerns* of cultural studies and postcolonial studies, finds one of its polemical catalysts in the writing of Fredric Jameson, himself indebted to the Marxist humanism of György Lukács, whose lasting, if now historical, critique of the supposed cleave between modernism and realism set the stage for an investiture of realism's political capacities in the later twentieth century. "The Ideology of Modernism" outlines his salutary elevation of realism over modernism. Although he concedes a lack of meticulousness regarding technical definitions of either genre or the texts he compares, he criticizes Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) (in unfavorable comparison to Mann's *Lotte in Weimar* [1939]) for its static, because senselessly and unendingly stimulatory, character: "The perpetually oscillating patterns of sense and memory-data, their powerfully charged—but aimless and directionless—fields of force, give rise to an epic structure which is *static*, reflecting a belief in the basically static character of events."[8] For Lukács, the literary representation of events as static runs against the basic Marxist project that must narrativize history and imbue it with human meaning; otherwise, it becomes not only incomprehensible but unable to be wrested by its primary agent, the proletariat. In Lukács's view, modernism, rather than embracing a social struggle, obsesses over alienation and psychological pathology and refuses to entertain the social quality of man's existence, offering instead solitude as the default human condition (189). In its overemphasis of technical stylistic perfection and its sensuous isolation from history, modernist texts are furthermore unable to illustrate the realizable potentiality of its readers and

8. Lukács, György. "The Ideology of Modernism," in *The Lukács Reader*, ed. Arpad Kadarkay (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 188.

result, apocalyptically, in an “attenuation of actuality,” an “escape into nothingness,” and finally a “negation of art.”[9]

Realism, according to Lukács, avoids modernism’s static consequentiality by uniting humanity with its history and assuming “the unity of the world it describe[s]” and seeing it “as a living whole inseparable from man himself (204). Unburdened from a self-conscious but disconnected reflexivity, the realist text is capable of grasping actual human potential and performing the heuristic operation of sketching a “new typology” for each phase of society and representing the “contradictions within society and within the individual in the context of a dialectical unity” (198). Whereas modernism can only register the enervating incomprehensibility of experience (even when elegantly mediated through the confines of a single mind or individual) such that time and place are nightmarishly inexplicable, realism always and finally returns the reader to a meaningful situatedness. Within the dialectical framework that Lukács describes, realist literature beckons for social participation as it generates the conditions of its potentiality.

Realism and the “Third World”

The immediate political implications of choosing realism over modernism were surely obvious to Lukács, and subsequent theorists have expanded his generative binary to the issues of a rapidly globalizing world and the lingering and yet-unfolding histories of empire and colonialism. For Jameson, joining *modernism* and *imperialism*, while smuggling in *realism* under the shadow of the former, opens up the second axial preoccupation: namely, the literary cultures of the so-called “Third World,” to which the Philippines at the time begrudgingly belonged, and the applicability of conventional literary-critical terminology to non-European contexts. Jameson

9. Lukács, “The Ideology of Modernism,” 193, 197, 209.

suggests that "imperialism also makes its mark on the inner forms and structures of that new mutation in literary and artistic language to which the term modernism is loosely applied."[10] Turning away from unpersuasive characterizations of modernism as apolitical and ideologically bound to nothing except art's "autonomy"—critical distortions of modernism that resemble segments of Lukács's anti-modernist critique—Jameson instead links the origins of European modernism's representative style to a world-historical moment wherein the imperial Other was increasingly un-representable, blocked from surfacing by a suppressive unconscious unable to map the far-flung and utterly foreign contours of empire. Without spatial surety, art could not but have a "fresh and unprecedented" response characterized "by way of formal, structural, and linguistic invention" (50). Modernist style is "a new spatial language" and the "marker and substitute…of the unrepresentable totality" (59).

Modernism is thus characterized as an aesthetic response to the psychic traumas of imperialism—which, from Jameson's perspective, is only the appurtenance of the real and only driving force of modernity, *capitalism*—and with which colonial writers have an uneasy relationship. Controversially, Jameson hesitantly assumes that modernism may not be locatable in the Third World because rather than the aporia of the European and American writer, the colonial writer has is in a constant fit of agony. Imperialism does not throw up distorted mirrors and vanishing horizons in its colonies; there is no problematic of vision of visibility. Imperialism

10. Jameson, Fredric. "Modernism and Imperialism," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 44.

involves instead brute force, naked power, [and] open exploitation,"[11] without disclosing the private and puzzling machinations of the First World.

Jameson is rightly criticized for taking for granted the loaded categories of the First and Third World and for homogenizing the latter.[12] Jameson's argument implies a suspicious parallel between realism/modernism and colonialism/postcolonialism, a coincidence that forms a central problematic in postcolonial and new modernist studies: while in the "First-World," modernism has superseded realism under the developments of modernity, decolonized nations of the "Third World" were resigned to rely on more traditional modes of literary representation, "lagging behind" their coolly modern or postmodern First-World antecedents. The simplistic developmentalist model and its attendant rhetoric of belatedness, derivation, and imitation have been strenuously challenged since Jameson and Lukács's writing, from within and beyond former metropoles and by a plurality of contextually distinct voices. In his introduction to a

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11. Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," 59-60. Jameson offers Ireland as an exception to this hypothesis.

12. Neil Lazarus provides a defensive account of the controversy, suggesting (with noticeable vexation) that Jameson's postcolonial critics have thoroughly misread the essay where Jameson further articulates the socio-political conditions of possibility for "Third-World" literatures, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," first appearing in a 1986 issue of *Social Text*. Lazarus surveys various responses to Jameson's systematic characterization of *all* Third World literatures as *necessarily* allegorical of the nation, describing Aijaz Ahmad's response as the most damaging and paradigmatic. In Lazarus's view, Jameson's essay is salvageable, commendable even, in its attempt to dispel the myopic apprehensions of the "Third-World" from the perspective of the "First-World intellectual," chalking up the contexts of the vehement critiques of Jameson as frankly colonialist to a time of "fervid identity politics" (100). Lazarus reads Jameson's text as sensibly enfolding the Third-World in the world-system and legitimating their nationalisms as ingenious, daring, and experimental, rather than merely neoconservative or chauvinist. See Lazarus, "Fredric Jameson on 'Third-World Literature': A Defence," in *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). See also Patke, Rajeev, *Modernist Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013) for an account more in line with the consensus critique of Jameson's theorization of "Third-World" literatures.

special issue on "peripheral realisms," for example, Joe Cleary rejects the developmentalist model which places the "Third World" inevitably behind the "First" and which blocks the expansion of terms of *modernism* or *realism* beyond their parochial borders. Cleary argues that modernism is less "the antithesis of realism" than a shifting term "for a wide variety of literary experiments that collectively registered the beginning of the dissolution of the old Paris-centered literary world-system and that sought to bring into being either radical new types of literature or radical new roles for literature, and in effect therefore to inaugurate some new literary dispensation or world- system in place of the old."[13] Realism, on the other hand, "did not disappear or merely become calcified" but "underwent further major mutations after modernism and developed along classical-traditionalist and populist or 'lowbrow' as well as socialist and proletarian or subaltern trajectories."[14] Cleary's introduction and the attendant essays are ultimately attempts to complicate realism's legacy beyond either a less-refined antecedent of

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13. Joe Cleary, "Realism after Modernism and the Literary World-System," *MLQ* 73.3 (2012): 261. Of interest is also Jameson's afterword to the issue, "Antinomies of the Realism-Modernism Debate," wherein he contemplates if realism, because of its emergent novelty, might be another "kind of modernism" (476), a hypothetical revision that has since been inflected with issues of gender, ethnicity, race, and class. For Jameson, surely cognizant of his prior contributions, what matters is not dispensing with the binary—an impossibility, according to him—but an invitation to keep debating and discussing these terms in their plural contexts. See Fredric Jameson, "Antinomies of the Realism-Modernism Debate," *MLQ* 73.3 (2012): 475-485.

14. Cleary, "Realism after Modernism," 267. In another reconsideration of tradition's relationship to modernism, Rachel Adams notes that while it may be commonplace to describe modernism as an aestheticized break from tradition, it is equally necessary, especially with respect to modernism's global plurality, to identify the "regionally specific nature" of modernism's relationship to tradition, or, more generally, its temporality. Writing of Mexican literary modernism, Adams notes that the political and artistic avant-garde can be backward-looking and recuperative, rather than iconoclastically anti-traditional, through its indigenous relays that were activated for revolutionary goals. See Rachel Adams, "Tradition," in *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism*, ed. Eric Hayot and Rebecca Walkowitz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 233–47, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hayo16520.18.

modernism or a second-tier, repressed genre for literary analysis and theorizing—a legacy that is all the more striking when, as Jed Esty and Colleen Lye persuasively argue in the same issue, realism remained a dynamic form responsive to a variety of cultural and political ends for much of the "Third World"; rather than being seemingly devoid of nuance or skepticism, realism was, in fact, uniquely able to address issues of representation, totality, and the meaningfulness of history as the cathexes of nationalism and decolonization put enormous pressure on the literary aesthetics of non-European and non-U.S. cultures.[15]

Postcolonial and post-national discourse has disclosed the ways that the transfusion of blood and the rewriting of history form components of the fantasies of racial and cultural assimilation, which themselves mobilize the ideological machinery of empire. In such renderings, the "colonial subject," emptied of particularity beyond its abject status, is reckoned as a psychic arena where the forces of empire and resistance—hypostatized numerously in education, war, and capitalism—continuously meet, even after, perhaps especially after, the graduated moments of decolonization have passed. The relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines is representative. As Beveridge suggests, constituent differences between members of the colony and those of the metropole are alchemical, underneath mere appearance of skin and language The fantasy of assimilation, both pressed upon and deemed impossible, implies an uncontroversial and predictable belonging to form, whether it be racial sameness or shared cultural competence, and for imperialists like Beveridge the United States' political culture served as not only a preferable but exemplary model of transcultural sociality. The markers of assimilability for Filipinos—language, race, class, geographic origin, to name but a few—were

15. Jed Esty and Colleen Lye, "Peripheral Realisms Now," *MLQ* 73.3 (2012): 272-274.

vexing concerns for imperialists like Beveridge and anti-imperialists at the time, and their shared anxiety is analogous to aesthetic anxieties present in much of the formally challenging literature of the modernist period. This chapter interrogates the crossings between form, nationalism, and racial politics, especially as they appear literarily in urban, cosmopolitan renderings of America and suggests how both Bulosan and Dos Passos attempted to wrest from the form of the novel a compensation for unrealized political and varyingly nationalist goals, as well as a coming to grips with the expanding borders (figurative and literal) of "America."[16] The autobiographical chronicle of Allos's plight and the eventual founding of a new literary dispensation are framed through the typification of that narrator's painful experiences, patterned within a narratorial voice that ironically distances itself from Allos's trauma while returning problematically to a triumphalist embrace of a heart-held America. Such charismatic suffering and grace are absent in *The 42nd Parallel*, which denies the "singular duality" of *America Is in the Heart* in favor of a mixture of genres whose tension develops a roughly impersonal and pessimistic atmosphere of exchangeable characters and direction-less public discourse. Tenuous moments of irony, juxtaposition, ambivalence, and narrative silence register as analogs to the tensions of national belonging made particularly salient in the early twentieth century by mass migration, multilingualism, progressive politics, and the onset of global war. By revealing what the term

16. The scholarship uniting cosmopolitan and modernism is voluminous, but see, for example, Jessica Berman, *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Community* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Rebecca Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially Janet Lyon's entry, "Cosmopolitanism and Modernism," 388-412; and Susan Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time*, Modernist Latitudes, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

American fails to obtain and what it enables, both texts solicit the politicization of their audiences by illustrating how, in *The 42nd Parallel*, the cityscape becomes the arena of impartial and inhuman capitalistic forces within which individuals struggle in futility, while in *America Is in the Heart*, the narrator-author-speaker Allos initially finds urban America a hostile environment while simultaneously having it serve as an incubator of his artistic and political consciousness.

Personal Histories

Before these claims are substantiated, it is necessary to outline the two novels' structural and plot-level differences. Chronologically prior, *The 42nd Parallel* is the first volume of the *U.S.A.* trilogy—uncontroversially considered Dos Passos's most important work—and inaugurates the four "modes" or sections of the text. The most conventional of these modes are the character narrative chapters that follow the lives of a single character whose name serves as the sections' headers. Fainy "Mac" McCreary, who will have the closest resemblance to Bulosan's autobiographical self, is a working-class Irish immigrant who tenuously and unsatisfactorily involves himself in the labor movement, particularly as a "Wobbly" member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), across the country and eventually in Mexico. Mac's character is roughly transverse to J. Ward Moorehouse, a stereotypical "American boy" whose intelligence and charisma become the vapid conduits of anti-union and pro-capitalist rhetoric. He is eventually joined by Janey Williams, an initially demure young girl who becomes Moorehouse's admiring stenographer, and Eleanor Stoddard, a germophobe socialite and would-be artist who eventually becomes Moorehouse's lover in subsequent volumes of the trilogy, *1919* (1932) and *The Big Money* (1936). Rounding out the characters is Charley Anderson, whose single chapter is coterminous with the end of the novel and narrates his shambling journey into World War I. Stylistically, each of these chapters reproduce the generic traits of third-person

narrative focalization characteristic of realist literature, making apparent each character's local idiom through free indirect discourse. They tend to lack narrative closure or display any significant character growth, nor, with the exception of the Janey-Moorehouse-Eleanor triangulation, do the characters interact to any appreciable degree.

Interspersed among these sections that focalize on any one of these five characters are the more experimental modes developed into maturity in his earlier novel *Manhattan Transfer* (1925). These include "Newsreels," snippets of headlines, popular song, and other discourses deliberately arranged that roughly set the diegetic timer in the absence of clocks and calendars. Beyond their chronological function, the Newsreels aim to capture what Dos Passos claimed to be the Being of the United States—its speech. They also juxtapose the capricious goings-on of the world, generating a gestalt profile of U.S. culture and provisional sense of national simultaneity. Against the direction-less and public Newsreels are the Camera Eye sections, which Dos Passos claimed to be his subjective outlet in an otherwise panoramic and "objective" novel. Most scholars have tended to read the Camera Eye narrator, who speaks in an associative, elusive, and syntactically unmoored mode, as the veiled author, coming into political and artistic consciousness as he witnesses world-historical events unfolding metonymically in local incidents in his life. Finally, *The 42nd Parallel* includes what might be called prose-poem biographies of famous industrialists, politicians, scientists, and activists, which serve as foils to the characters and as ambivalent poetic renderings of a failed or failing socialist ethos.

America Is in the Heart is more straightforward generically, although no less compelling. Subtitled *A Personal History*, it purports to be an authentic autobiography that illustrates the historically particular character of Filipino migration into America in the early twentieth century—a consequence of exclusionary, nativist immigration policy and colonialism, not the

least of which included the forced integration of Filipino communities into an exploitative capitalist agribusiness upheld by migrant and seasonal farm work.[17] Part critique and part uplift, *America Is in the Heart* involves repeated episodes of Allos suffering nigh intolerable working conditions, destitution, and the ever-lingering specter of white nativist racism after poverty engineered by wealthy, land-owning Filipinos forces Allos (and three of his brothers as well as thousands of other Filipinos) to emigrate from his home in Binalonan, Pangasinan to the United States. The narrator lays bare critiques of U.S. exclusionism and nativism, frequently (although not unproblematically) switching to a distancing, critical voice that self-reflexively moralizes the repeated injuries to body and mind his fellow migrants face even (also problematically) as he consistently returns to a faith-based and affectionate belief in the goodness of America and the opportunities it might provide. Parallel to this heightened tension between Allos's repulsion and attraction is his coming into being as both a labor organizer and conscious poet; *America Is in the Heart* thus joins the proletarians' material concerns with their aestheticizing impulses—in short, a novelistic demonstration of praxis. Thus, E. San Juan Jr. reads the "heart" of the novel as a "polysemous vehicle that signifies either inclusion or exclusion—a fantasy/romance metaphor…integral to the task of adumbrating a community within the treacherous, alienating, heartless metropolis."[18]

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17. On Filipino migrants and migrant labor in the early twentieth century United States, see Lucie Cheng and Bonacich Edna, eds., *Labor Immigration under Capitalism: Asian Workers in the United States before World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Dorothy Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

18. San Juan Jr., E. "An Introduction to Carlos Bulosan" in *History and Form: Selected Essays* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996). In a similar vein, the 2019 edition of the landmark anthology *Aiiieeeee: An Anthology of Asian American Writers* includes an essay by

While critics have found inconsistencies between Bulosan's life and the events narrated in *America Is in the Heart*, to read the novel strictly as autobiography mistakes truthfulness as the primary goal of autobiographic writing and, more seriously, narrowly delimits its literary potentialities. As Nicholas Henson suggests, autobiographic writing, especially for expressly tendentious goals, raises questions less about verisimilitude and more about the "distinct role public discourses can have in shaping a personal history."[19] For Bulosan, a victim of the violence of colonization and anti-Filipino sentiment in America, social history is dutifully captured with and through personal history. While personal experiences are not subject to full external verification but are subject to embellishment and exaggeration, the rhetorical implication of *America Is in the Heart* is that Allos's experiences, rather than simply verisimilitudious, are *typical* of thousands of Filipino immigrants coming to Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States as unskilled farmhands and cannery workers. It is through this typicality which Bulosan and other decolonizing writers have attempted to historicize their social conditions.[20] This chapter less interested in the success of Bulosan's effectiveness—after his modest literary fame in the 1940s, his writing was not widely read until Asian-American scholars revisited it in the

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S.E. Solberg, which in glowing terms describes *America Is in the Heart* as the "epic representation of the pinoy" that glimpsed the mythic truth of the Filipino migrant's resilience in the face of the most unrelenting class-based antagonism. See S.E. Solberg, "An Introduction to Filipino American Literature," in *Aiiieeeee!: An Anthology of Asian American Writers*, ed. Frank Chin et al., Third Edition, Classics of Asian American Literature (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 40–59, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvr339x8.7. Notably, the first, 1974 edition of *Aiieeeee!* suggested there was no such thing as Filipino American literature, a claim that has been since roundly criticized.

19. Nicholas Henson, "Glimpses of Ecstasy: The Public Shaping of Personal History in Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*," *DisClosure: A Journal of Social Theory* 21 (2007): 3.

20. See Yoon Sun Lee, "Type, Totality, and the Realism of Asian American Literature" *MLQ* 73.3 (2012): 415-432.

1970s, and even today his texts enjoy widespread readership only in comparatively smaller literature-focused Asian American Studies an American Ethnic Studies departments—but rather in Bulosan's narrative technique as a proletarian *bildungsroman* and *künstlerroman* in relation to Dos Passos's different but equally tendentious collage technique of *The 42nd Parallel* and the three-part *U.S.A.* trilogy that covers the first half of the twentieth century. A committed leftist political writer with socialist and communist tendencies (which would fizzle out and eventually regress into McCarthyism late in his life), Dos Passos wrote *The 42nd Parallel* with transparent political sympathies to the socialist Left, despite the novel generally withholding a positive or triumphalist embrace of the United States' progressive politics. But, as with *America Is in the Heart*, to read *The 42nd Parallel* only to ascertain its politicizing commitments undermines how its structure relates to social milieu in which the text circulates and informs. *The 42nd Parallel* similarly attempts to historicize social conditions, particularly the ambivalence of socialism other progressivisms in the shadow of accumulating capitalism.

The Honest Proletariat and *Bildung*

This ambivalence is especially visible in the first half of the novel that primarily follows Mac in his character narrative chapters. An Irish immigrant first living in Connecticut, Mac inherits the spark of his leftist sympathies when he hears the broad anti-system rhetoric of his Uncle Tim, a Fenian sympathizer while in Ireland, as he tries to console Mac's father who has previously lost his job in a strike dispute:

> "But it ain't your fault and it ain't my fault… it's the fault of poverty, and poverty's the fault of the system… Fenian, you listen to Tim O'Hara for a minute and Milly you listen too, cause a girl ought to know these things just as well as a man and for once in his life Tim O'Hara's tellin' the truth… It's the fault of the system that don't give a man the fruit of his labor… The only man that gets anything out of capitalism is a crook, an' he gets to

> be a millionaire in short order… But an honest workin' man like John or myself we can work a hundred years and not leave enough money to bury us decent with."[21]

The externalization of individual failure to poverty and ultimately to inhuman capitalization coincides with the novel's externalization of character and voice. Just as it would be absurd to locate the reasons of, for example, poverty and inequality in the behavior of idiosyncratic individuals, as Tim implies, it would be inappropriate for *The 42nd Parallel* to privilege interiorized, personal history over the durable documents of history. The filmic collage of the famous (and structurally foundational) Newsreels and Camera Eye sections that interrupt the realist narratives of the five main characters—Mac, Janey, Eleanor, Moorehouse, and Charley—is the first and fundamental difference between *The 42nd Parallel* and *America Is in the Heart*.[22] While the former de-centers individual speech and narrative by including newspaper headlines and impressionistic, non-linear glimpses of life and labor in the city and ultimately the entire

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21. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 10. Fenians were members of the Fenian Brotherhood, an Irish nationalist organization that was active in the United States since the 1850s. Opposition to British rule coordinated sentiments between the U.S. members and those in Ireland, although they frequently clashed over issues of leadership, use of funds, and revolutionary tactics. Fenians practiced a certain degree of secrecy, so their exact dealings and strength can be difficult to approximate. Their secrecy, coupled with their short-lived vitality and relative importance in U.S. cultural politics (evident in politicians' frequent efforts to flirt with Irish nationalism to court the Irish vote, for example), continues to attract scholarship and research. That Mac is named after the Fenians is apropos his narrative arc.

22. Recent scholarship on Dos Passos's literary technique has begun to challenge a critical consensus that reads novels like *U.S.A.* and *Manhattan Transfer* as indebted to Eisensteinian montage or, more generally, to the language of film. In reading the latter novel, Beeston Alix instead offers a historicist account of the primacy and influence of theater (especially the Ziegfeld Follies) in the "intervallic" style of the novel. Alex Murray, in a similar historicist vein, suggests provocatively that W.H. Bates's alternative, pseudoscientific treatment for improving eyesight was an influence for Dos Passos prior to film technique. See Alix Beeston, *In and Out of Sight: Modernist Writing and the Photographic Unseen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) and Alex Murray, "'To See Clearly': John Dos Passos and Vision," *Textual Practice* (2018): 1-20.

country, the latter privileges personal history as persuasively metonymous to a shared social experience. The implications of this difference in form will have salient implications for the respective solicitations for their imagined audience members.

Uncle Tim's rhetoric is characteristic of *The 42nd Parallel*, most obviously in the character narratives in which the individuals struggle to bend to the rhythm of quickly changing middle- and working-class conditions. Similarly, Allos in *America Is in the Heart* knows, even at an early age, the false consciousness of self-interested provincial leaders. In Binalonan, Pangasinan, where Allos grows up in a family of peasant tenant farmers, the government is controlled by conservative, self-seeking Filipinos despite increasing nationalism and separatism from the United States:

> But the Philippines was undergoing a radical social change; all over the archipelago the younger generation was stirring and adapting new attitudes. And although for years the agitation for national independence had been growing, the government was actually in the hands of powerful native leaders. It was such a juicy issue that obscure men with ample education exploited it to their own advantage, thus slowly but inevitably plunging the nation into a great economic catastrophe that tore the islands from their roots, and obfuscated the people's resurgence toward a broad national unity.[23]

Similarly volleying critique at "the system," a young Allos discerns the self-interest of the "powerful native leaders," especially the widespread, abusive land tenancy that was a direct consequence of Spanish and U.S. colonial rule. This early narrative distancing, wherein Allos assumes a remote third-person perspective to comment on the historical conditions of the Philippines, introduces the primary mode of narration in the novel. More specifically, the narration often shifts between Allos narrating his experiences and explicating the social and historical forces that shape those experiences. The dualism of narration, akin to a doubling of

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23. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 5.

Allos's, allegorizes the shift between the colonial and the enlightened nationalist subject. The un-self-conscious use of *national* terms indicates an image of the Philippines moving together *as* a nation, toward modernity (even as it is blocked by the interests of provincial elites) to which Allos yokes himself. Despite an already present criticism of provincial cooperation with the colonial status quo, Allos early in the novel fatefully casts his lot with modernity. For example, in what he describes as a "primitive" custom, his older brother Leon carries his wife away to test privately her virginity by either lighting or not lighting a fire to send smoke up from the house. Sympathetic to his new *tiya* who fails her "test," Allos describes the custom as "cruel" and "backward," that, like other signs of primitivism, is "yielding to new ways of the younger generation that were shaping out sharply from the growing industrialism" (7). Allos's unreflected irony is telling and presages his ultimate embrace of America, its affective location "in the heart": despite an initial class-conscious disdain for the profiteering *hacienderos* and, when in America, continued abuse and precariousness justified by a dominant ideology, Allos frequently attaches affectively to the cultural meme of America as boundless opportunity and modernization. That the novel is in English rather than Bulosan's native language Ilokano similarly indicates his history with colonization. Unlike Bulosan, the poor Allos does not receive public education, a "new and democratic system brought by the American government" to the Philippines, which is for Allos a nation "hitherto illiterate and backward" (14). But he will eventually learn and write in English, revealingly through a literary education consistently overseen by white female tutelage.

What Allos leaves out in his brief description is that U.S.-led public education in the Philippines had decidedly more complex implementation and consequences—particularly, that public education in English was generally a pacification strategy, rather than "benevolence" or

disinterested dissemination of knowledge.[24] However, the cultural and linguistic obstacles present in *America Is in the Heart* ought not to invite an uncritical dismissal of Bulosan or Allos as complicit colonial subjects, "little brown Americans" duped by U.S. rhetoric. That dismissal, in fact, actually evacuates both the political potential and literary generativity of the novel. To read linguistic imposition as unilaterally totalizing mischaracterizes its scope and consequence.[25] Rather, *America Is in the Heart* is productively read not as Allos's indoctrination as a colonial subject, but activation as a community leader and cultural translator whose primary gift to his audience is an enabling literacy that grants access to universalist rights of freedom and equality.

Literacy, then, more fundamental than education because it is the condition of possibility for formal pedagogy, is what the Philippines, particularly its most vulnerable peasant class, lacks. The narrative of *America Is in the Heart* is explicitly shaped by Allos's promise to himself and national brethren to uplift them from ignorance through the bestowal of literacy and critical sensibility such that they will no longer need to be made aware of shared struggle and subordination. In this sense, *America Is in the Heart*, like all projects of *Bildung*, is a self-defeating text of class consciousness, needed only insofar as it supplements an awakening of revolutionary spirit. Seen in this spiritualizing manner, Allos becomes a messianic figure of suffering and redemption. Allos's Christlikeness is apposite considering *America Is in the Heart*'s rhetorical motivation, but it is also illuminating for the structure of the novel, which

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24. See In Shik Bang, "The Colonial Effect of U.S. Modern Technologies: Focusing on Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart,*" *The Journal of Humanities* 38 (2015): 1-24; Malani Schueller, "Negotiations of Benevolent (Colonial) Tutelage in Carlos Bulosan**,**" *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 18, no. 3 (2016): 422-449.

25. See Vicente Rafael, "The War of Translation: Colonial Education, American English, and Tagalog Slang in the Philippines." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 74, no. 2 (2015): 283–302.

constantly pits Allos against the inhuman forces of capital, xenophobia, and racism, as well as the internal traumas of loneliness, depression, and terminal illness. In one episode, Allos joins a crew of Filipino apple pickers in Yakima Valley and witnesses a violent altercation between a bookkeeper and Julio, a fellow worker, when it is revealed that Paez, the crew leader, had allegedly run off with the crew's pay. After witnessing Julio furiously punch the bookkeeper, Allos feels steeled by the brutality and acknowledges his own increasing desensitization, admitting that he "became as ruthless as the worst of them" and fears that he "would never feel like a human being again."[26] However, Allos's bleakness is quickly balanced by a faith that keeps him "from completely succumbing to the degradation into which many of [his] countrymen had fallen" (109). Like the doxological Christ-made-human transformation, Allos possesses the human capacity of temptation and error, while maintaining an ultimately redemptive grace that protects one from irrevocable sinfulness. Shortly after this episode of the apple pickers, Allos vows never to be unkind to another Filipino again, reinforcing his position as their equal but exemplary guide toward a higher ethics and critical sensibility (112). The pattern of grace rejuvenating Allos after repeated experiences with precarious working conditions and transience is the foundation of the autobiography's form. Arguably, the novel sacrifices innovative style to enforce its didactism, thus resembling a primary strategy of sentimental literature which frequently includes repeated trauma that the protagonist experiences, learns from, and overcomes. But what separates both *America Is in the Heart* and *The 42nd Parallel* from sentimental literature is the commitment of both to illustrate collective identity

26. Bulosan, *America*, 109.

rather than merely personal worldview. *Personality* factors little in either text but is especially absent in *The 42nd Parallel*, whose formal innovation roundly denies the personal.

"The Speech of the People"

The curiously impersonal and non-specific character of *The 42nd Parallel* (opposed to the sensuous first-person of *America Is in the Heart*) is legible if its imbrication in the historical project of nation-building is foregrounded. Benedict Anderson's influential *Imagined Communities* offers a theorization which unites form and nationalism that, despite subsequent challenge and revision, remains useful, perhaps even more so after the "transnational turn" in literary and cultural studies. Anderson provides a historicist account of nationalism, suggesting that in order for *nation* to become a culturally legitimate and usable concept, it required the development of new modes of apprehending the world, especially the apprehension of a community's movement through time. Nationalism requires a simultaneity that is "transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar."[27] The nation is maintained by its default time-setting of "meanwhile," the phenomenological sense that the "whole nation" is proceeding simultaneously through the same empty, unfolding time, a sense that is *textually mediated* through the novel and the newspaper.[28] Anderson cites three texts as supporting evidence (and another as counter-evidence), one of which is Rizal's central *Noli Me Tangere* (1887), considered a foundational

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27. Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 24. Anderson relies on Benjamin's concept of "homogenous, empty time" to describe the modern feeling of simultaneity that is distinct from the cosmological time scale of Christianity, whose tenets fundamentally involve an eschatological apprehension of time because it unites human history with cosmology. The beginning, procession, and end of time are sensible insofar as they map on to the momentous events of God's divine actions.

28. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 26.

nationalist novel by the "founder of Filipino nationalism." According to his reading, the opening lines of the novel un-self-consciously "confirm the solidity of a single community, embracing characters, authors, and readers, moving onward through calendrical time" (27). Apparently, through the act of reading (disseminated by the forces of print capitalism), readers easily, perhaps inevitably, sense that thousands of self-same readers are replicating the acts of reading and comprehension, and it is on this dim sense of similarity that the horizontal comradeship of the national is built.[29]

Anderson's insights are locatable in the Newsreel and Camera Eye chapters of *The 42nd Parallel*, which illustrate Dos Passos's mature collage technique first developed in his early novels. Incorporating numerous news headlines, the Newsreel sections attempt to fulfill the promise of articulating the "U.S.A." described in the novel's preface that sets into motion an interrogation of the United States' being. Fulfilling an initial description of the U.S.'s ontology as "speech that clung to the ears,"[30] the final paragraph of the preface widens the range of definitions until reverting to a speech-discursive one:

> U.S.A. is a slice of a continent. U.S.A. is a group of holding companies, some aggregations of trade unions, a set of laws bound in calf, a radio network, a chain of moving picture theaters, a column of stockquotations rubbed out and written in by a Western Union boy on a blackboard, a public-library full of old newspapers and dogeared historybooks with protests scrawled on the margins in pencil. U.S.A. is the world's greatest rivervally fringed with mountains and hills, U.S.A. is a set of bigmouthed

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29. Anderson offers the daily newspaper as an even more mediating form for the sense of the "meanwhile," because the juxtaposition of world or local events is not sheer temporal coincidence but related through its interest for an imagined community of readers. Like the novel, reading the newspaper gives a sense of a whole community moving through time at the same time; this communal act among complete strangers resembles a "mass ceremony" in which "each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion" (35).

30. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, xiv.

> officials with too many bankaccounts. U.S.A. is a lot of men buried in their uniforms in Arlington Cemetery. U.S.A. is the letters at the end of an address when you are away from home. But mostly U.S.A. is the speech of the people.[31]

The last paragraph of the preface previews several aspects of the novel, both structural and thematic. The anaphoric, declarative syntax—"U.S.A. is *x*"—broaden ways of knowing the nation: through its economics and labor history, its mediation through technology, its print cultures, its geographies, its militarism, and its claim of affective attachment as home. The preface's conclusion also hints slightly at Dos Passos's play with language, shunting words together seemingly at random to create simple compound terms. But most importantly, the conclusion provides a discursive definition of the United States. As if to deny or subvert the previous declarative definitions, the last sentence has the encompassing effect of locating the ontology of the country in the speech of the people.

These two terms *the speech* and *the people* require further investigation. The use of the definite article *the* for both nouns articulates specificity even as both nouns deny exactness. What speech? Which people? What are they saying? How and when are they saying it? To whom are they speaking? The content and rhetorical situation of the preface's final definition of the U.S. are only partially filled in by the Newsreels and Camera Eyes. As writing, the Newsreel headlines are technically not speech, but a second order recording of it.[32] However, they are not inferior or derivative to contemporaneous conversation. In fact, their preservation and collage

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31. Ibid. Dos Passos wrote this preface in 1937 after the trilogy was published as one volume by Harcourt, Brace. See Donald Pizer, *Dos Passos' U.S.A.: A Critical Study* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1988) for more on the bibliographic and publishing history of *The 42nd Parallel* and its sequels.

32. And the historical newsreel is not mere speech either, but a short film of current events that trailed or preceded films at the movie theater.

mimic the sense of speech, especially the non-direction of public discourse wherein everyone can substitute each other as addresser or addressee. Indeed, that fluidity of addresser and addressee is seized upon when the novel suggestively places Beveridge as the heeder of an ironically deflected war song. These are linguistic glimpses into a country's spirit that has for Dos Passos gone awry. However, the speech of the people and the technology used to capture it threaten to be totalizing rather than liberating, as might be the implied tendentiousness of the novel. Both Dos Passos's decision for collage and the definite "the speech of the people" are ambivalent. *The 42nd Parallel* embraces "the people" as the politicized unity of the middle- and working-class, but the viewpoint from the scale of society requires a concomitant look at its contours, including its limiting and even damaging forces. *The people*, no matter how idealized, cannot exist outside history. For *The 42nd Parallel*, the agent of history can be summed up as exploitative capitalism. Thus, the definition of U.S.A. as the speech of the people marks simultaneously idealized political unity—national belonging—and the forces that would impinge upon it.

The proliferation of forms in the novel written to capture the "speech of the people" are in negative relation to the novel's unrealized political futures. These forms, Colin Hutchinson writes, "are effectively the compensation for the apparently doomed prospect of leftist aspiration whose utterance in literary form provides the fuel for a renewed (albeit tentative) sense of negation."[33] It is no surprise, then, that in the Newsreels, the speech of the people is rife with incidents that are inimical to its flourishing. In *Newsreel IV*, sentimental song, labor violence, and Russian history collide breathlessly:

I met my love in the Alamo

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33. Colin Hutchinson, "The Complicity of Consumption: Hedonism and Politics in Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day* and John Dos Passos's *USA*," *Journal of American Studies* 48, no. 2, (Oct. 2014): 185.

When the moon was on the rise
Her beauty quite bedimmed its light
So radiant were her eyes
…………………………………….

GENERAL STRIKE NOW THREATENS

one cherub every five minutes market for all classes of real estate continues to be healthy with good demand for factory sites residence and business properties court bill breaks labor

…………………………………….

BLOODY SUNDAY IN MOSCOW
…………………………………….

STRIKE MAY LEAD TO REVOLT IN RUSSIA[34]

Formally, the Newsreels produce a jarring effect that exposes contradictions between, for example, popular culture in a famous tune composed by Harry Lawson Heartz and the Bloody Sunday massacre in January 1905, when the Russian Imperial Guard fired on unarmed demonstrators in St. Petersburg. The reaction to the violence included massive strikes and set the tone for the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. However, the tumultuous labor disputes in the late 19th and early 20th century, as implied in the "GENERAL STRIKE" headline, indicate that newspapers, despite their frequently local purview, capture in the coincidence and parallelism of their headlines the progression of world history, a progression that for Dos Passos and for classic Marxism, is a *telos* that leads to a proletarian dictatorship and eventually communism. *Newsreel IV* echoes in a conversation between Mac and Ike, a socialist sympathizer and kindred transient. Assuming a role as a mentor (not unlike Allos for his less intellectual Filipino compatriots), Ike casually summarizes the plot of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888), a

34. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 44-45.

national bestseller that recounts the story of a man named Julian West who, after falling into a deep sleep, awakes in the year 2000 and has explained to him how the United States has transformed into a socialist utopia that includes that nationalization of industry, reduced working hours, high-speed delivery of goods, and equal distribution of wealth. Buying into the utopianism of *Looking Backward*, Ike muses that the fantastic future is closer than initially believed and is waiting merely for the cognizance of workers: "'All you'd need would be a general strike and have the workers refuse to work for a boss any longer…God damn it, if people only realized how friggin' easy it would be'" (49). The ease of proletarian revolution actualization notwithstanding, this moment in the novel thematizes how literature, newspaper, pamphlets, and other forms of print culture organize their readers, writers, and circulators in a co-constitutive network of ideas. It also discloses the uneasy promise of the future of classic Marxist teleology. Although there is an assumption that the overthrow of capitalism is inevitable, the steps toward that future are either shunted by the weak will or ignorance of the people or unable to escape the realm of fiction like *Looking Backward*.

The historicization of "the people" demands a demystifying attitude like what Allos develops through his experiences as a Filipino immigrant in America. The end of Part II and the majority of Part III narrate Allos's specifically nationalist and activist consciousness built on a foundation of reading exemplary political and literary texts. These texts actualize in Allos the progressive and anti-racist attitudes *America Is in the Heart* purports to actualize in its readers. By the middle of the novel, Allos, having repeatedly experienced mob and vigilante violence and homelessness, encounters the socialist Pascual and a radicalized fellow migrant Filipino worker

José who are working with Allos's brother Macario and another immigrant Felix Razon.[35] Macario quotes at length the broad tenets that solidify Allos's own radicalization. The long speech that closes Part II of the novel functions as a pivot between pre- and post-radicalization and endows Allos with a mission of reclamation, of "winning the backward elements over to our camp," not only the moderate and uneducated Filipino immigrants but eventually the illiterate masses back in the Philippines.[36]

Introduced in Macario's speech, Allos's newfound responsibilities are actualized in literature, anticipating texts like *The 42nd Parallel*: "We must achieve articulation of social ideas, not only for some kind of economic security but also to help culture bloom as it should in our time. We are approaching what will be the *greatest achievement of our generation: the discovery of a new vista of literature*, that is, to speak to the people and to be understood by them" (188, emphasis added.) That Macario, ventriloquizing the *Bildung* of the novel, considers the "new vista of literature," rather than the literature's outset political goals, as the "greatest achievement" of his generation, obtains for the novel a metafictional stress on the primacy of

35. Besides Leon, Allos has two three older brothers—Luciano, Macario, and Amado—and a baby sister Francisca. All meet generally lugubrious fates. Luciano, first introduced as a member of the Philippine Scouts, a detachment of the U.S. Army first formed to combat the Philippine revolutionary forces during the Philippine-American War, becomes sick and disillusioned with his work and the provincial government, and is one of Allos's first teachers of both reading and aesthetic sensibility. When Allos decides to leave for America for the promise of financial opportunity, Luciano gravely warns Allos not to return to the Philippines lest he suffer a similarly stunted adulthood. He later dies off-page of tuberculosis. Macario is educated in the U.S.-established public schooling system and receives almost all the financial support Allos's poor family can muster. He too emigrates to the U.S. and energizes much of Allos's political growth, even as the novel depicts him as ineffectual and pensive. Macario encourages Allos to become a writer. Amado, the most Americanized, becomes a criminal in the U.S., bootlegging and defrauding gamblers, eventually joining the Navy and supporting Allos's literary ambitions.

36. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 188.

literature, and text in general, above and prior to the revolutionary spirit or idealism that Allos, at this point in his narrative, cannot yet name. Like *The 42nd Parallel*, which tries to find an "objective portrait" of the United States through what materially circulates within it, Allos's journey toward political radicalism and historical consciousness must first be founded on its textualization. The antecedents of nationalist sentiment, as Anderson suggests, are textual mediations that effect a feeling of collectivity, a dim but powerful recognition of a community's simultaneous being in the world.

This literary project involves both the creation of life and a destruction of "false ideals."[37] Political freedom, as Pheng Cheah writes in *Spectral Nationality*, is fundamentally the transcendence of the finitude of life, since it secures the greater autonomy of future political subjects, and it is this access to the transcendence of mere life that Allos is charged with.[38] Agents of history like Allos must strive "to find in our struggle that which has a future," since literature is "a living and growing thing" but, in its sickened state, "does not die by itself."[39] Through this life-affirming framework, Macario diagnoses America as a biological organism whose democracy is corrupted by a "malignant disease corroding at its very heart" (188). By denying freedom—life itself—to its subjects, America is both death-dealing and itself dying, since neither the nation nor state can survive without members allowed to thrive. Here, Macario's speech pivots to cast Allos and his sympathetic Filipinos as the cure. But this medicinal reversal of America's sickness is not external to its component parts; rather, the

37. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 188.

38. Pheng Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Freedom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003) 17-208.

39. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 188.

integrated Filipino is more like a white blood cell than medicine, since it is already constitutive of the national body. In arguing this, Macario radically inverts the form of the relationship between immigrant and native, between American and non-American. As the line between the constitutive binaries blurs in Macario's speech, the term *America* undergoes a swift and decisive ontological change:

> "It is but fair to say that America is not a land of one race or one class of men. We are all Americans that have toiled and suffered and known oppression and defeat, from the first Indian that offered peace in Manhattan to the last Filipino pea pickers. America is not bound by geographical latitudes. America is not merely a land or an institution, America is in the hearts of men that died for freedom; it is also in the eyes of men that are building a new world. America is a prophecy of a new society of men: of a system that knows no sorrow or strife or suffering. America is a warning to those who would try to falsify the ideals of freemen.
>
> "America is also the nameless foreigner, the homeless refugee, the hungry boy begging for a job and the black body dangling on a tree. America is the illiterate immigrant who is ashamed that the world of books and intellectual opportunities is closed to him. We are all that nameless foreigner, that homeless refugee, that hungry boy, that illiterate immigrant and that lynched black body. All of us, from the first Adams to the last Filipino, native born or alien, educated or illiterate— *We are America*! (188-189)

The 42nd Parallel's prologue exploration of the meaning (or location) of "U.S.A." repeats Macario's stress that *America* refers not to mere geography, land, or institution. Fundamentally, for Macario and for Allos, *America* is affective attachment and historical realization, "in the hearts of men that died for freedom." It is also a promise of a future, and, against the ideology of white Americans involved in the racial violence toward Filipino workers, it is also *within* the immigrant's story, especially in their alienation and struggle. Macario's vision of America resembles, as Schueller argues, a "decolonial imagined community of exploited labour and racial minorities."[40] It is precisely when the new literary dispensation is understood in context of U.S.-

40. Schueller, "Negotiations," 445.

Philippine relations that the yearning for the nation or nation-ness acquires a critical, rather than disenabled and assimilationist, edge.

Despite its climactic tone, Macario's speech to Allos betrays several present and unavoidable tensions. To a remote degree, Macario's speech might anticipate popular rhetoric that America is a "land of immigrants" or melting pot of culture. Macario seems blinded by a sentimentalism that avoids the historical realities of the namelessness, homelessness, illiteracy, and even death of its constituent, largely unwanted, immigrant population increasingly threatened by racist U.S. nativism. But Macario's speech implies that neither a foundational, awakening literature nor a re-emphasis on the affective underpinnings of national identity alone can serve as the foundation of revolution without a proper grasp of lived historical reality. The frequent collision of bleak headlines and sentimental songs in the Newsreels of *The 42nd Parallel* similarly indicate a critical stance against what Allos will later in the novel describe as the "sterility" of unengaged writers. What is ultimately assumed in both texts is the constitutive power of literature to alter the political realm in which it circulates.

It is after this speech at the beginning of Part III in the novel that Allos fully invests in the labor movement and refines his own historicization. This section of the novel tracks Allos's involvement in the Salinas Lettuce Strike of 1934; the formation of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA); support for his compatriot Felix who joins the leftist, anarchist, and communist Republicans in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); the formation of the Committee for the Protection of Filipino Rights (CPFR); and the eventual inter-faction tension that would undo most labor progressivism among his peers. In doing so, Part III of *America Is in the Heart* resembles conventional proletarian realist literature. The narrative is redolent with Allos's continued struggles in finding work, maintaining moral

righteousness, and casting his lot with the collective worker, together with whom he hopes for a better life: “from this day onward my life become one long conspiracy, working in the daytime and meeting other conspirators at night. I was so intensely fired by this dream of a better America that I had completely forgotten myself; but when I discovered myself again, I found that I was still a young man though broken in health.”[41] At this junction, between a revolutionary awakening and Allos’s poor health, the mode of *America Is in the Heart* veers from a strictly immigrant narrative or a realist proletarian novel, but a quasi-decolonial story of an artist’s coming into being in a land and through a language that are not “his own.” The narrative had earlier established Allos’s proclivity toward reading and introspection but up to this point had forgone a comprehensive development of his writing vocation to foreground both his precarious life and an ironic critique of American exclusionism. However, Allos is diagnosed with tuberculosis and is committed to a hospital and sanitarium for several years. Unable to participate in mobilizing workers, he instead redirects his energy to mobilize writing and the ideas that could be productively contained therein.

To his surprise, Allos discovers that some of his poems have been published in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, edited by Harriet Monroe.[42] He also begins reading literary and philosophical works that include several exemplary names: Crane, Cowley, Faulkner, Sandburg, Lindsay, Wolfe, Proust, Rilke, Toller, Lorca, Heine. He also encounters Leftist publications like *New Masses*, *Partisan Review*, *The New Republic*, *Left Front*, *Dynamo*, and *Anvil*. Allos is also

41. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 205.

42. Bulosan did, in fact, have several of his poems published in *Poetry*, including the long poem “The Unknown Quantity,” in *Poetry* 47, no 5; “The Young Man Lost” in *Poetry* 50, no. 6; “These Are Also Living” in *Poetry* 52, no 5; “Letter in Exile,” “Sunset and Evening Star,” and “American History,” all in *Poetry* 60, no. 1.

particularly fond of Russian writers Gorki (his favorite), Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Chekov. These names and publications, just a few among many more, are rarely explored within the text of *America Is in the Heart*.[43] Unlike the newsreels of *The 42nd Parallel*, all taken from issues of the *Chicago Tribune*, which aim to capture an "objective" textual panorama of the United States, the literary and philosophical cataloging of Allos's self-directed education amounts to an index of cultural learning and refinement of a critical sensibility. The purposiveness of the catalog reminds readers, whom the text is constructed to focus into a collective form, that a mediating technology like literature is the foundation of political organization. Formally, the narrative would be overburdened with an exploration of each author deemed relevant to Allos's growth as not only a writer but also an organizer and community reader, so the text productively uses Allos's disabled body as a parallel to his enabled mind, as much of this literary education takes place during Allos's convalescence in a sanitarium. Nevertheless, the text does veer from Allos's personal enjoyment of these texts to synthesize them into the established themes of the novel. Allos frames the poets Sandburg and Lindsay, for example, as beacons of knowledge that could lift the illiterate and disenfranchised Philippine population out of their ignorance: "I could arrive at a positive understanding of America, then I could go back to the Philippines with a torch of enlightenment. And perhaps, if given a chance, I could help liberate the peasantry from ignorance and poverty."[44] Allos never does return to the Philippines (nor does Bulosan), but that does not matter thematically. The modal *could* suggests

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43. The list of the authors' names that Allos reads is as long as the character of their writing is varied. A few other authors of interest include John Gould Fletcher, Erich Remarque, Jack London, Mark Twain, William Saroyan, Thomas Mann, R. Palme Dutt, Lewis Morgan, Robert Briffault, and Friedrich Engels.

44. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 228.

not only opportunity but also possibility. An unmade future, the liberation of the peasantry belongs neither to Allos nor any individual, and thus Allos's imagined, messianic return to the Philippines is actually an invitation extended toward the enlightened reader to actualize the future Allos imagines while bedridden. The *I* becomes *you*—a *you* that can, if able, aspire to a similarly engaged intellect as Allos demonstrates through his directed tutelage.

The spirit of liberation is directed not only toward a Philippine future, but also toward American present and past. In reading Whitman, to whom Allos consistently returns, Allos learns about Whitman's "passionate dream of an America of equality for all races" and wonders if it "would be possible for an immigrant like me to become part of the American dream? Would I be able to make a positive contribution toward the realization of this dream?" (251) The implicit call to action is thus not simply a return to the Philippines but also a realization of an idealized America, supposedly without the discrimination and xenophobia that Allos has currently and will continue to experience. A racially equitable America is poised, like the "liberation" of the Philippines rhetorically, this time as an explicit question rather than a possible future, but the effects between the two types of speech are identical. The *I*-become-*you* is also a *me*, as the indefinite noun *immigrant*, emptied even in this utterance of cultural specificity, functions as a stand-in for any immigrant in Allos's position. Two immigrant stories are mentioned in *America Is in the Heart* to underscore this point: Younghill Kang's autobiography *The Grass Roof* and the life of Yone Noguchi, a Japanese houseboy-turned-poet.[45] Allos also admires greatly Hart Crane's *The Bridge*, describing it as the poet's attempt to "find a faith strong enough to challenge

45. Younghill Kang first published *The Grass Roof* in 1931 (later republished in 1966) and Yone Noguchi published a book of poems, *Seen and Unseen* in 1897 and the novel *The American Diary of a Japanese Girl* in 1902.

modern chaos. The bridge, the symbol of his faith in America, an ecstatic conjuration against false gods and legends, was also a myth he tried to create out of the turmoil of modern industrialism."[46] Whether Allos is misreading the "faith" present in Crane's difficult epic poem is less important than that he finds solidarity in his aspirations and the apparent success of *The Bridge*. It is precisely the "modern chaos" from which such reading and writing are to provide respite.

The American Character

These plot elements relate to the purpose of the *U.S.A.* trilogy and in particular *The 42nd Parallel*. The troubled awakening of revolutionary consciousness in Mac has already been discussed. His unsure path toward socialist doctrine, I.W.W. membership, and eventually the Mexican Revolution in *The 42nd Parallel* traces a similar path to Allos's humble origins to literary-minded labor organizer. Similar too are the numerous prose-poem biographies that Dos Passos intersperses among the character narratives, camera eyes, and newsreels. These characters range from heroic politicians and thinkers—Eugene Debs, Luther Burbank, "Big Bill" Haywood, and Robert "Fighting Bob" LaFollette—who nevertheless succumb to the forces of crony governance and capitalism, to industrialists—Minor Keith, Andrew Carnegie—whom Dos Passos subjects to irony-laden critique, and sympathetic figures who are unknowingly exploited or contribute to a system of exploitation—William Jennings Bryan, Thomas Edison, and Charles Proteus Steinmetz. The inclusion of these biographies and their being written in a kind of free verse poetry are transparent components the novel's overall dour panorama of American life and are almost always critical of some social failing, whether it be a lack of critical sensibility or a renege of socialist or anti-capitalist praxis. All are negative portraits of either consistency or

46. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 245.

lasting consequence. Carnegie's prose-poem biography, ironically titled "Prince of Peace," ends with the following lines after recounting his humble beginnings as a Scottish immigrant, famed parsimony, and diversified business interests in railroads, oil, and steel:

> Andrew Carnegie gave millions for peace
> And libraries and scientific instruments and endowments and thrift
> whenever he made a billion dollars he endowed an institution to promote universal peace always
> except in time of war.[47]

The hyperbole of Carnegie's profits and bathetic deflation of his promotion of peace undercut the sympathetic portrait of the influential industrialist, even as the biography admits his philanthropic contributions. Camera Eye 22 directly follows "Prince of Peace" and juxtaposes Carnegie's war support with Britain's entry into World War I, itself juxtaposed to the comparatively calm fishing boats along the coast waiting eagerly for an announcement:

> At noon there was just enough sun to ripen bakeapple and wildpear on the moorlands to warm the bayberry and sweetfern mealtimes in the boardinghouse everybody waited for the radio operators the radio operators could hardly eat yes it was war
> Will we go in? will Britain go in?
> *Obligations according to the treaty of…handed the ambassador his passports* every morning they put out the cod on the flakes spreading them even in the faint glow of the sun through the fog (208)

Bryan's prose-poem biography is a sharper example of *The 42nd Parallel*'s irony and more fundamentally indicates the risk of abuse and perversion that language faces—a theme that Bulosan's novel shares. Donald Pizer notes that within the *U.S.A.* trilogy, Dos Passos illustrates the emptiness of the positive discourse of America, a discourse that has "undergone a profound corruption in the twentieth century, one equal in significance, as well as complementary to, the

47. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 208.

failure of language and political belief."[48] Sandwiched between Newsreel XII, which previews the 1908 and 1912 U.S. presidential elections, and the first chapter of J. Ward Moorehouse, an eventually unscrupulous public relations worker and the central figure in the latter half of *The 42nd Parallel*, "The Boy Orator of Platte" announces Bryan's political rise as a Democratic leader (and three-time presidential candidate) at the 1896 Democratic National Convention and cites extended passages of his famous "Cross of Gold" speech, in which Bryan staunchly supported bimetallism and depicted himself as a defender of the common person's interests. The "silver tongue of the plain people," as the text figuratively describes Bryan "charmed the mortgageridden farmers of the great plains, rang through weatherboarded schoolhouses in the Missouri Valley, melted men's innards like the song of a thrush or a mockin' in the gray quiet before sunup, or a sudden roar in winter wheat or a bugler playing taps and the flag flying."[49] A "silver tongue," seductive as it is duplicitous, serves as both a pun for Bryan's campaign for "free silver" and for his unreflective support for "Pacificism, Prohibition, Fundamentalism" and "setting back the clock for the plain people" in his religious resistance to Darwinism and scientific empiricism generally (136). "The Boy Orator of Platte" thus condemns Bryan not so much for being a fundamentalist Christian, but for mixing religious metaphor with progressive, democratic rhetoric and spoiling its consequence for the "plain people." Bryan's speech, in fact,

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48. Donald Pizer, *Dos Passos' U.S.A.: A Critical Study* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1988), 53. An older account of the moral perversion of nationalist-oriented language, influential both for this chapter and Pizer's persuasive study, is found in David L. Vanderwerken, "U.S.A: Dos Passos and the "Old Words," *Twentieth Century Literature* 23.2 (1977): 195-228. See also Stanley Corkin, "John Dos Passos and the American Left: Recovering the Dialectic of History," *Criticism* 34.4 (1992): 591-611 for a similar but more politically oriented argument of the critical mode of the trilogy.

49. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 135.

tends to swell rhetorically precisely when Biblical language is included. Bryan begins his speech addressing his audience with a "defense of a cause as holy as the cause of liberty—the cause of humanity."[50] This holy cause is essentially an articulation of a populist economic freedom framed by the coinage of silver:

> The man who is employed for wages is as much a businessman as his employer. The attorney in a country town is as much a businessman as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis. The merchant at the crossroads store is as much a businessman as the merchant of New York. The farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day, begins in the spring and toils all summer, and by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of this country creates wealth, is as much a businessman as the man who goes upon the Board of Trade and bets upon the price of grain.[51]

The necessity of working- and middle-class energies in the production of wealth, Bryan declares, is a wide-ranging defense of "our homes, our families, and posterity."[52] Also a supporter of an income tax, whose constitutionality was at the time contested, Bryan criticizes those who would not shoulder the burden of financing government as "unworthy to enjoy the blessings of a government like ours."[53] At the speech's close, Bryan strikes a parallel between the gold standard and Christ's crucifixion, declaring that "you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."[54] Thus, adhering to the gold standard is akin to "crucifying" not just the laboring classes of the country

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50. William Jennings Bryan, "William Jennings Bryan's 'Cross of Gold' Speech: The Full Text," in *Milestone Documents in American History: Exploring the Primary Sources That Shaped America*, ed. Paul Finkelman and Bruce A. Lesh (Dallas: Schlager Group, 2008), n.p.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

but the totality of humanity. For the critical stance that *The 42nd Parallel* has established, Bryan's silver tongue is mistakenly given to conservative, religious speech—glibly described as the "tottering word" and the "plain prosperous comfortable word of God"[55]—and to narrow monetary policy, even as it advances a progressive platform.

It is thus poignant for *The 42nd Parallel* that Moorehouse's character is developed after Bryan's biographic poem. Moorehouse contrasts most sharply with Mac: the latter an unsure if earnest I.W.W. member, Debs supporter, and socialist sympathizer, the former a typical believer in the rhetoric of the "American Dream," born on the Fourth of July, and eventual capitalist opportunist. Moorehouse's character arc from a "bright boy" from Delaware to the head of a public relations firm that is antithetic to labor activism and uncritically supportive of the U.S.'s entry of World War I is the richest and most nuanced exploration of at-risk language and the beliefs they admit.[56] The text's brief telescoping of Moorehouse's early childhood in conventional prose actually forms an ironic and distanced narrative, foreshadowing both the historical events and culture in which he will participate. Skilled at marbles in public school, he displays an early penchant for profiteering, "rent[ing] out ages to other boys for a cent and a

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55. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 137.

56. Dos Passos wrote the following in "The Writer as Technician" about the necessary importance of words like *liberty*, *humanity*, and the like in 1935:

> The words are old and dusty and hung with the dirty bunting of a thousand crooked orations, but underneath they are still sound. What men once meant by these words needs defenders to-day. And if those who have, in all kinds of direct and devious ways, stood up for them throughout history do not come out for them now to defend them against the thuggery of bosses and the zeal of the administrators, the world we be an even worse place for men, women and children to live in than it is at present. (172)

See John Dos Passos, "The Writer as Technician" in *John Dos Passos: The Major Nonfiction Prose*, edited by Donald Pizer (Wayne State University Press, 1988): 169-172.

week for ten."[57] The young Moorehouse and his family also flee from the alleged threat of the Spanish fleet during the Spanish-American War (April-August 1898), and later Moorehouse graduates from high school as "head of the debating team, class orator [with a transparent juxtaposition to Bryan] and winner of the prize essay contest entitled 'Roosevelt, the Man of the Hour'" (139). The narrative flatly describes Moorehouse's aspirations as a young adult to indicate the flatness of his conscious life: "He was twenty and didn't drink or smoke and was keeping himself clean for the lovely girl he was going to marry, a girl in pink organdy with golden curls and a sunshade. He'd sit in the musty little office of Hillyard and Miller, listing tenements for rent, furnished rooms, apartments, desirable lots for sale, and think of the Boer war and the Strenuous Life and prospecting for gold" (140). Ambitious and patriotic, Moorehouse uncritically and passively attends to a dominant middle-class acquiescence.

These aspirations are expectedly turned on their heads, demonstrating that language, belief, and actuality are rarely, if ever, confluent within *The 42nd Parallel*. Frequently in the novel, the contradiction between language and life is depicted through juxtaposition, mediated public discourse (the Newsreels), and narrative irony, especially through the motif of unfulfilling love and sex. The "girl in pink organdy" is at first Annabelle Strang, upper-class daughter to a famous doctor, on a train to Ocean City, Maryland. The text contrasts Moorehouse's idyllic future wife with Annabelle, a "darkeyed girl in a ruffled pink dress and a wide white leghorn hat….considerably older than he was and looked like the sort of fashionably dressed woman who'd be in a parlorcar rather than in a daycoach" (142-143). The text reveals Moorehouse's cognizance of her supposed class distinction from him but eventually he "[guesses] he must be

57. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 138.

falling in love" (146). Moorehouse's boyish coyness, indicated by his uncertainty of his own feelings toward Annabelle, contrasts with her own sexual independence. Later, after swimming with her naked, kissing, and eventually having sex, Moorehouse overhears two bellhops talking and learns that Annabelle has a reputation for promiscuity. Moorehouse's reaction is characteristic and curious, informed by a deep feeling of betrayal and by an opportunistic rhetoric of investment:

> For a while he thought he'd go down to the station and take the first train out and through the whole business to ballyhack, but there was the booklet to get out, and there was a chance that if the boom did come he might get it on the ground floor, and this connection with money and the Strangs; opportunity knocks but once at a young man's door. He went back to his cottage and locked himself in his bedroom. He stood a minute looking at himself in the glass of the bureau, the neatly parted hair, the cleancut nose and chin; the image blurred. He found he was crying. He threw himself facedown on the bed and sobbed. (152)

In the next paragraph, the two are married. Moorehouse considers his relationship with Annabelle in the vocabulary of business, return, investment, and risk, rather than in the expected (but no less conventional) language of love. The critical stance that the text takes on Moorehouse, and all the characters in the novel, generally resemble this form of ironized misperception communicated within the idiom of the principal character, who is always more of a type than token. Their marriage falls apart, and Moorehouse's lettered response to Annabelle begging him not to disclose the details of their relationship—Annabelle's promiscuity and an abortion her chief reasons—to protect her father's medical practice continues to imply the business interest of their personal relationship. He writes that "when the divorce is satisfactorily arranged I shall be entitled to some compensation for the loss of time, etc., and the injury to my career that has come through your fault. I am leaving tomorrow for Pittsburgh where I have a position awaiting me and work that I hope will cause me to forget you and the great pain your faithlessness has caused me" (161).

Later in the novel, Moorehouse marries again and works as a public relations counselor.[58] It is through this job that the text's irony reaches its apogee. Moorehouse is invited to meet with several people, including a labor reformer, G.H. Barrow, regarding the appropriate shape the media narrative of the labor movement should take. What sounds like an invitation to cooperation and understanding between employers and labor actually resembles "disguising the victimization of labor and the public."[59] Moorehouse inaugurates the catalogue of falsehoods against which the modes of *The 42nd Parallel* take a critical stance:

> Capital and labor," he began in a slow careful voice as if dictating, "as you must have noticed, gentlemen, in the course of your varied and useful careers, capital and labor, those two great forces of our national life neither of which can exist without the other are growing further and further apart; any cursory glance at the newspapers will tell you that. Well, it has occurred to me that one reason for this unfortunate state of affairs has been the lack of any private agency that might fairly represent the situation to the public. The lack of properly distributed information is the cause of most of the misunderstandings of the world… The great leaders of American capital, as you probably realize, Mr. Barrow, are firm believers in fairplay and democracy and are only too anxious to give the worker his share of the proceeds of industry if they can only see their way to do so in fairness to the public and the investor. After all, the public is the investor whom we all aim to serve.[60]

Moorehouse's speech is a caricaturist spin on the complex and ambivalent relationship between capital and labor at the height of the labor movement. Public perception of the "unfortunate state of affairs," including numerous violent strikes, lockouts, and retaliations from both armed forces and private security, and an ersatz cooperation matter more than correcting injustice and

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58. His second wife, Gertrude Staple, is also affluent, with connections to the Rockefeller fortune. The text implies that she is also a hypochondriac and deeply suspicious of Moorehouse's relationship with Eleanor. At the close of *The 42nd Parallel*, their marriage is briefly repaired as all parties revert to their patriotic duties at the declaration of war.

59. Pizer, *Dos Passos: A Critical Study*, 126.

60. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 212.

exploitation. The criticism of Moorehouse's duplicitous rhetoric is confirmed by Dos Passos's personal politics, but textually the criticism is manifest in the disjunct between the speech, full of euphemism and doublespeak, and Barrow's caution which is mocked by another guest, Judge Planet:

> "I am sure that organized labor would cooperate in such a movement," said G.H. Barrow, leaning forward on the edge of his chair. If they could only be sure that…well, that…"
>
> "That they weren't getting the wool pulled over their eyes," said the judge, laughing."
>
> "Exactly." (213)

Moorehouse's narrative arc will depict him as actively contributing to an anti-labor media campaign, an "oral crusade that will drive home to the rank and file of the mighty colossus of American uptodate industry" meant to shift public support away from organized labor (214). The values of *cooperation*, *fairplay*, and *democracy* are exactly what are at risk through the perversion of the words themselves. *The 42nd Parallel* satirizes the characters who might pervert the idealized form of this language, while simultaneously exposing the limitations of idealizing any facet of American life. That Moorehouse ascends to become a central figure in the trilogy as manipulator of public discourse attests to vulnerability of the "truth" to reach members of the public and to the short-circuiting of an equitable national collective.

America Is in the Heart consistently participates in a similar exposure of picturesque Americanness through the narration of Allos's migrant experiences. But like *The 42nd Parallel*, this exposure is also textual and linguistic, within the form of the novel. Concomitant with Allos's literary tutelage and his "torch of enlightenment" is also his literacy, both literal and cultural. Crucial to the structure and theme of *America Is in the Heart*, Allos's adoption of English is the ground on which the national specter of America rejects him and his efforts to integrate in a futile double bind. If he can speak and write fluently, then he is somehow

corrupting the language; if he cannot, then it is proof of the immigrant's inassimilability and inferiority and justification of their exclusion. Both facets, really the same coin of xenophobia integral to American thought in the early twentieth century, are consistently displayed in *America Is in the Heart*. As Joshua Miller notes, "Anglo-Americans worried that the nation was being transformed by inassimable races and weakened by hemispheric overreaching."[61] Written partly in response to these nativist sentiments, *America Is in the Heart* is "not merely nonconformist, antistandardization literary experimentation," but also a portrayal "of diverse speech practices as attractive, exciting, creative sources for U.S. literature, viable and vibrant segments of the modernist linguistic heterodoxy" (278).

Unfortunately for Allos, this heterodoxy of language and culture is offered spuriously as the justification of his disenfranchisement. The contest of language is established in Part I of *America Is in the Heart*, which depicts Allos's family of tenant farmers who are exploited by rich provincial elites. When his illiterate father tries to legally win his family's land back after a dispute, Allos's narratorial voice knowingly interjects by commenting on both colonial languages as barriers to his father's legal success: "He had no money and the wise men at the court spoke to him in Spanish and English. What could a poor and ignorant peasant like my father do in an organization such as the provincial government of Pangasinan? He came back and stayed on in town, sitting around in the house until he was driven to drunkenness."[62] The dual colonial languages—Spanish and English—serve as means of both access and denial. It is the inability to speak, read, and write in the "proper" language that partially maintains the oppressive

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61. Joshua Miller, *Accented America: The Cultural Politics of Multilingual Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 283.

62. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 58.

structure of peasant dispossession in the Philippines that also maintains the structure of the novel, as it is eventually this dispossession that will compel Allos (and several of his brothers) to leave his family and begin his adult life in the United States.

Simultaneously, Allos admits freely throughout the novel various shades of the sentiment that popular education and the learning of English "opened up new opportunities" and allowed a "nation hitherto illiterate and backward" to "awaken."[63] One of the first encounters with English is his other brother Macario reading to Allos Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* when he is injured after falling out of a tree. The titular character, figured as ingenious in the face of adversity, clearly presages Allos's time in the United States. Similarly, he also learns from an American woman Dalmacio—the first of Allos's several women teachers—of the life of Abraham Lincoln, whose rise from humble log cabin origins to presidency coincides with the origins of his critical consciousness and optimism in the reality of social mobility. The figure of Lincoln becomes one of Allos's talismans against a deterministic, stratifying class system: "Deep down in me something was touched, was springing out, demanding to be born, to be given a name. I was fascinated by this story of a boy who was born in a log cabin and became president of the United States" (69). At this and several points in the novel, Allos seems vulnerable to the type of America that Moorehouse (and to a lesser extent the other characters of *The 42nd Parallel*) fall prey to. But the linguistic barriers within America are swift reminders of his second-class status and the nearly numerous historical obstacles immigrants faced. In one passage he is arrested without cause, severely beaten, and later jailed:

> "Are you Filipino?"
> "Yes."

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63. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 14.

Crack!
It was that quick and simple. (156)

Several passages later, a homesick Allos, spurred by the nostalgia of a French proprietor of a hotel he is working for, calls out to home and his family in a rare instance of reverting to his native language while in the United States: "*Ama*! *Ina*! *Manong*! *Ading*! *Sicayo*! [Father! Mother! Older brother! Sister! You all!] The sound of home! Home among the peasants in Mangusmana!"[64] This incident hearkens back to the early portions of the novel, where the narrator's interspersed use of Ilokano and Filipinized Spanish terms within conventional English give the novel a multilingual register and, as Miller notes, illustrates "the institutionalization of English by demonstrating how the imposed language takes root by partially displacing Ilocano as a language of memory."[65] Part II of *America Is in the Heart* is saturated with such episodes of racial violence that form a counterpoint to the young Allos's optimism, naïveté even. As has been discussed, eventually the naivete about English and America mostly dissolves in a radicalized Allos, and the former will be weaponized against the latter through using English to speak to power and organize exploited workers through performance and writing.

However, the conventional movement for naïveté and youth to wisdom and maturity does not happen evenly or consistently in *America Is in the Heart*. A formalist criticism of the novel could easily identify places where the text violates the linear development of the *bildungsroman*'s protagonist. While the protagonist may be at any point in the novel misled or mistaken, those moments of error are to be lessons in their overall pattern of growth. Furthermore, earned wisdom, when established as truth, cannot be lost or taken away, because if

64. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 172 (translation mine).

65. Miller, *Accented America*, 305.

it can, then it was not actual truth to begin with, but merely an ersatz truth whose falsity takes the protagonist in the correct direction. What may be frustrating for readers of *America Is in the Heart* is that Allos does not seem to consistently strike a distinction between the ahistorical, experiencing *character* and the historically informed *narrator* narrating events after they have happened, between the unreflective, illiterate young Allos not yet cognizant of the cultural battleground of the American West coast, and the older, wiser Allos who possesses a historical knowledge and intellectual breadth capable of understanding social forces and competing ideologies. In tackling this question, Sue-Im Lee usefully explains the difficulty the text has in negotiating the balance between the consonant, experiencing character and the dissonant (that is, removed), narrating narrator, arguing that

> Shifting from dissonant narration to consonant narration affects more than the construction of the character; the narrator himself seems to be an entirely different entity—a different person—embodying life experiences, political knowledge, historical awareness, and a worldview drastically different from those appearing just a few sentences before. This shift in form has immediate ideological consequences, for the reliability of the narrator is directly linked to the realism of the character, and both contribute to the testimonial dimension of the novel.[66]

Previous sections of this chapter have identified some of the places where the "two entities" of Allos arise, especially when the narrator "steps in" to provide historical or social context to the events of the novel. What is potentially problematic is when Allos "withhold[s] the historical attitude that attended other instances of injustice and oppression."[67] Numerous examples of an inexplicable absence of historical attitude abound in *America Is in the Heart*. In Baguio, a tourist

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66. Sue-Im Lee, "'It's Badly Done': Redefining Craft in *America Is in the Heart*," *Analyzing World Fiction: New Horizons in Narrative Theory*, ed. Frederick Luis Aldama (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 214.

67. Lee, "'It's Badly Done,'" 215.

destination and home to some affluent Europeans and Americans in the Philippines, Allos willfully subjects himself to a racializing, Orientalist gaze to make some money: “One day an American lady tourist asked me to undress before her camera, and gave me ten centavos for doing it. I had found a simple way to make a living.”[68] Allos, furthermore makes himself “conspicuously ugly” whenever he sees a white person in the market to increase his chances of receiving money. Even as he continues his grotesque act, he acknowledges that he is less “exotic” than the naked Igorot women and children whom the photographing tourists find more sexually titillating. What is surprising about this incident is not the banal objectification of Filipinos, Christianized and non-Christianized alike, but the *absence* of a historical attitude to counterbalance the young Allos’s abjection. Where is the dissonant, historical narrator who could surely criticize the exploitation and cultural ignorance of the white tourists? This passage comes shortly after how the narratorial voice with a characteristically historical attitude (1) explains how Spanish colonialism intensified conflicts between Muslims in the southern Philippine islands and the lowland natives converted to Christianity, (2) describes his family’s disenfranchisement due to exploitative landowning laws, and, perhaps most bafflingly, (3) indicates a young Allos’s awareness of the “circumscribed life of the peasants” an awareness effected through his learning of the Colorum uprisings in Tayug (62). Arriving in America, Allos and his Filipino co-travelers are described as “half-naked savages” and “monkeys,” also without any commentary or even any description of Allos’s reaction (99). The historical attitude is also silent when Allos overhears his brother’s white employers who believe that Filipinos are “sex-crazy” and would rather hire “niggers and Chinamen” because “*they* don’t have a college

68. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 67.

education but they know their places" (141). Even so, the text also indicates Allos's explicit ability to think historically and collectively; Allos squarely states that the disdain toward Filipino immigrants "was generated by a confused personal reaction to dynamic social forces," and that his search for truth "inevitably led me to take on an historical attitude. I was to understand and interpret this chaos from a collective point of view, because it was pervasive and universal" (143-144).

Allos also still questions the "paradox of America"—"Why was America so kind and yet so cruel? Was there no way to simplifying things in this continent so that suffering would be minimized? Was there no common denominator on which we could all meet?" (147)—despite narrating earlier, in historical fashion, that some of the persecution of Filipinos, at least on the labor front, were instigated by nativists who "feared the unity of white and Filipino workers" (107). Even when Allos, pushed to his limits, is fired by a white employer Opal and screams that he will kill him, he remains confused about his racialized retaliation: "I tried to find a justification for my sudden rebellion—why it was so *sudden*, and black, and hateful. Was it possible that, coming to America with certain illusion of equality, I had slowly succumbed to the hypnotic effects of racial fear?" (164). In perhaps the most perplexing illustration of the disjunct between the experiencing and narratorial voice is when he visits a white woman's house after meeting her at the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce where he previously discussed the socioeconomic issues he has fully committed himself to as a labor organizer. He is drawn to her material comfort, especially a white rug "as white as the clouds in the skies of Mangusmana." (286). While leaving her house, Allos displays both a collective consciousness and an inexplicable blindness to the origin of his materialistic desire:

> This I knew: Filipinos worked and lived in national terms, so that when they were maligned they thought their whole race was maligned. And so it was with me—with this

> slight difference: my deepening understanding of socialism was destroying my chauvinism.
>
> But it was strange that when I emerged from the house, I thought of the white rug in the living room with yearning. There was a comforting, delicious feeling in me. As I walked farther from it, I was possessed by a strong desire to buy a rug like it someday. (287)

Like Allos's fluctuating but eventually triumphant hope for America, his desire to buy a rug, despite everything he has experienced and has advocated for, is bound up in the conflicting streams of unreflected desire and historically-informed awareness. The young, naïve Allos who strips for ogling tourists and is enamored with Crusoe and Lincoln persists in the older, self-educated Allos victimized by white vigilantes and radicalized into proletarian consciousness. Lee argues that the apparent lack of a consistent and intellectualized pattern of experience and narration is resolved when *America Is in the Heart* is read as taking a critical stance against the idealization of America, and that the "striking discord between the two narrative situations" can "undermine the optimism, hope, and desire that the protagonist cultivates in his vision of America" (216). In other words, rather than attributing the silence of the historical narratorial voice to inferior craft, Lee identifies a persistent irony in *America Is in the Heart* that documents the ahistorical, experiencing entity to expose its limitations.

Lee's argument compellingly argues that ethnic minority literature is productively approached on its own terms—she describes this as the text's "self-generated craft"[69] drawn from Richard Wright's defense of his own novel *Native Son*—rather than evaluated by external standards of formal consistency in top-down fashion. However, even if the ironic, critical stance of the novel is identifiable through the silence of the narratorial voice and the absence of historical explanation of Allos's experiences, the persistence of hope endures to the point that

69. Lee, "'It's Badly Done,'" 203.

seems to undermine the text's critique. The novel's proclamatory ending could be dismissed as an abortive assimilation that locates an idealized America "in the heart" rather than in the forces that produce it and its members, despite Allos's (and Bulosan's) intellectualization. The recourse to hope is almost as consistent as the inconsistency between the experiencing and narrating voice. "As long as there was a hope for the future somewhere I would not stop trying to reach it,"[70] Allos proclaims, as he distances himself from his brother Amado and his compatriots who have given into vice and petty crime.

Allos's curiosity about his brother Macario is revealing and provides some answers to the text's alleged inconsistency. They are looking for housing and are continually denied for no other reason than anti-Filipino prejudice. Allos is perplexed at his brother's insistence: "I have often wondered why he seemed so blind to the open prejudice of the people. Perhaps his good education and correct upbringing in the Philippines and his association with educated and well-meaning Americans made him forgiving. I do not know what made him tolerant, because even now, when he is once more in the Philippines, he writes to tell me how much he has missed America" (256). Speaking historically and narratively, Allos identifies a resemblance between his brother and his own ahistorical, experiencing self, the entity that lacks the critical consciousness necessary to reflect upon that which it experiences. In the next paragraph, Allos continues this mode and differentiates himself from his persistent brother, explaining that his attitude "was conditioned by my experiences" and that perhaps "I succeeded in *erasing* the sores, but the scars remained to remind me in moments of spiritual vicissitudes, of the tragic days of those years. And even now, when I can look back without the black fury of hate that I had, still

70. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 124.

double my fists."[71] The silences of critique and historical awareness are not passive absences, but erasures effected by the text whose affective value is precisely the double-fisted anger that the historical Allos feels. Macario's naïve persistence mirrors the ahistorical Allos's inexperience, and Allos's silence toward his brother—for he does not say anything to Macario about his fruitless attempt to find fair and decent housing—mirrors the text's silence toward some but not all Allos's experiences. In effect, the novel, despite its realist mode and its triumphalist conclusion, is subtly critical that either truth-seeking or wizened critique are capable of effecting change. In some cases, the only tolerable response is "black fury" reduced to silence. The novel's ending, then, is less a recourse to America's fanciful and partial idealization but an invitation to critique that is to be fulfilled by readers of the text. "To become part of her great tradition" and "to contribute something toward her final fulfillment" may be read as assimilationist but may also be read as an opportunity for politicization (327).

The 42nd Parallel's plot continues in its sequels, *1919* (1932) and *The Big Money* (1936), but itself terminates around the declaration of war in World War I, wherein Charley Anderson, the character of last chapter of the novel, ships off to fight in France. The inclusion of the war in novel is salient for its own invitation to critique, particularly for how the reaction to total war is generally depicted as a shamefully uncritical enthusiasm. There are three characters obliquely involved—Moorehouse; Janey, his admiring assistant; and Eleanor Stoddard, whose relationship with Moorehouse develops from professional office designer to erotic partner. Each character's involvement with the war, either in their proximity to its actors or their responses to changing conditions of the European theater, communicates a failure to puncture the hysteria and state of

71. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 256-257 (emphasis added).

exceptionalism that distract from a moral awareness. Janey, whose narrative arc from shy girl with a domineering father, unsure office worker, to, by the end of the novel, an assured woman comfortable inhabiting male-dominated office spaces, illustrates a reversal of Allos's intellectualization, as she seems to abandon a keen historical attitude for conventional middle-class acquiescence, not unlike Moorehouse, whose natural charisma and intelligence are bent toward supporting capitalistic exploitation. But unlike Moorehouse, whose ascension in the manipulation of public opinion dovetails neatly with his masculinist confidence and "plain speech," Janey's stunted consciousness is varyingly proportional to her femininity, at times confluent and at other times divergent. As a young girl who likes to play with her brother Joe—later a character with his own narratives—and the other neighborhood kids, Janey is fondest of the moments in her life when "the boys treated her as one of them" (108). She also develops a youthful attraction to Joe's best friend Alec and takes up reading popular novels like *The Inside of the Cup*, *The Battle of the Strong*, and *The Winning of Barbara Worth*. On a canoeing trip with Joe and Alec, her competing desires are instantiated between wanting to touch Alec's sweating, shirtless body and feeling happy "because they included her when they talked just like she was a boy too."[72] The lack of reciprocation from Alec—he never knows of Janey's feelings and dies a short time later in the novel in a car accident—and the onset of her adolescence signified through her menses, form the beginning of a series of false-start relationships with other men, including an incident of sexual assault from a co-worker Jerry Burnham while she worked as a typist for patent lawyers Dreyfus and Carroll. It is at this time when she begins "to read the paper every day and to take an interest in politics" (119) even as her traditional mother criticizes her for

72. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 112.

working, which is both unladylike and demeaning. By the end of her second chapter, Janey takes up smoking and playing bridge and "wasn't afraid of men any more and kidded back and forth with young clerks in the elevator about things that would have made her flush the year before….She knew just how to catch a boy's hand by the wrist and push it away without making any scene when he tried to get too intimate"(131).

Despite her independence, her subsequent chapters demonstrate her culpability to militaristic suspicion and willful ignorance of complexity of contemporary social and political problems. It is characteristic of the narrative chapters of *The 42nd Parallel* to imitate the local idiom of its chief character, and Janey's suspicion of her employers' alleged German sympathies indicates little more than her being swept up in mildly xenophobic anxiety: "Round the office there got to be more and more foreigners and talk there took on a distinctly pro-German trend that she didn't at all like….Janey kept thinking of the ruthless invasion of Belgium and the horrible atrocities and didn't like to be working for a Hun, so she began looking around for another job" (223). Foreignness, Germanness, and military atrocities are seamlessly associated with one another, without any self-awareness or discernment. She briefly encounters Barrow, the labor organizer who met with Moorehouse earlier in the novel, whose political pamphlets in his room "didn't interest her" (226). Through Barrow, whose supposed advances she will reject with a terse letter—"Let's just be friends" (272)—she meets Moorehouse and is smitten by his charm and affluent lifestyle. Like a young Moorehouse, she also dreams of materialist and familial comfort, wishing "she was a wealthy married woman living in Chevy Chase, Maryland and waiting for her limousine to come by and take her home to her husband and children and a roaring open fire" (227). Janey's attraction to Moorehouse and her unquestioning acceptance of his duplicitous plans for establishing "cooperation" between capital and labor (and, to a lesser

extent, her rebuffing of Barrow and his politics) suggest the pervasive desirousness of both capital and the eradication of its opponents. Through Janey, Moorehouse becomes the avatar of materialist success, a success that is thoroughly gendered as male.[73] With her stoic, mildly disapproving friend Alice, Janey gushes at Moorehouse's "handsome boyish blue eyes" and youth despite "his prematurely gray air" but also obsesses over his "silver teaservice" and "the open fire and the silver cocktail shaker and the crystal glasses."[74] She too gets caught up in the zealous enthusiasm for war when the *Lusitania* is sunk, reading the papers eagerly and participating in the workplace gossip of "German spies and submarines and atrocities and propaganda" (270). Moorehouse later hires her for a sinecure position as an "executive" in his new public relations firm.

Eleanor falls into a similar trap of the desiring machines of capital and war, but her chapters articulate a dissatisfaction of idle intellectualism and snobbery more than a gender-inflected credulity. Her initial chapter establishes her character type as an aesthetic snob interested in art only for its sterility rather than its social or political implications. Initially, her sterility is coded as a phobia of contamination. Her early childhood is marked by "[hating] smells and the sight of blood" (165) and dreams saturated with whiteness invaded by a red speck of the bodily fluid that causes her to wake up screaming. Eleanor is also superficially interested in

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73. Generally, Dos Passos's writing discloses a relatively consistent analogy between male intellectualism and action and female frivolity and inaction. For more on this, see Janet Casey, *Dos Passos and the Ideology of the Feminine*. Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Barry Maine, "Representative Men in Dos Passos's *The 42nd Parallel*," *Clio* 12 no. 1 (1982): 31-43; and Donald Pizer, "The Camera Eye in *U.S.A.*: The Sexual Center," *Modern Fiction Studies* 26 no. 3 (1980): 417-430.

74. Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*, 228.

European literature and culture and, at the behest of her English teacher, takes classes at the Art Institute of Chicago, particularly because she can enjoy the experience of looking at art in solitude. Her feelings of superiority in knowing intimately the art housed here is mildly dampened when a French painter Maurice Millet denies the specialness of Eleanor's favorite artists, "refusing to look at any of the paintings in the Art Institute and saying that he thought it ought to be burned down and used a lot of words like cubism and futurism that Eleanor had never heard before" (174). Her brush with the avant-garde continues later, when she and her friends attend the Armory Show "and had a photograph of Brancusi's Golden Bird over the desk in the office and copies of the *Little Review* and *Poetry* among the files of letters from clients and unpaid bills from wholesalers" (185). She and her friend Eveline Hutchins eventually open an interior decorating company, and Eleanor comes into the employ of Moorehouse, whose relationship with her becomes intimate in the sequels of *The 42nd Parallel*, although the two of them deny any attraction between themselves, despite frequent gifts and flirtatious notes exchanged between them. Like Janey and Moorehouse, she too is swept by patriotic fervor, bursting into tears as she and Moorehouse "talked about Sacrifice and Dedication" (276) and pronounces that "Civilization demands a sacrifice…from all of us" (281) as she contemplates joining the Red Cross to aid soldiers in France.

The aesthetic potential in Eleanor's character is betrayed both to mundane instrumentalism through her becoming an interior decorator instead of a "serious" artist and to her unquestioned complicity in both Moorehouse's employ and the total war effort. Ironically, the participation in war temporarily repairs his and Gertrude's marriage and gives Moorehouse and Eleanor a chance to consummate their extramarital relationship. Eleanor's haunts in the near-empty viewing rooms of art exhibits and the pristine offices of public relations counselors are

poor incubators of radicalization, unlike the streets that Mac roams as he inconsistently navigates I.W.W. and socialist praxis. Eleanor's flat and disappointing development, juxtaposed to increasing fervor documented in the Newsreels, especially Newsreels XVIII and XIX, further secures the novel's indictment of the inability to interrogate the complexities of public discourse. Unlike Allos in *America Is in the Heart*, none of these characters are at all capable of the "distancing" of voice and perspective. There seems no sustained, intra-diegetic vantage point outside the characters' ideological formations.

In contrast to the reactions of Moorehouse, Janey, and Eleanor, Allos's reaction to WWII is tinged with irreversible loss, the "end of life here in America"; however, it also establishes more opportunities for the novel to sharply differentiate patriotism against its failed actualization. Near the end of the novel, the coming of war to America is announced, not by print, but by the airwaves. But his defensiveness is directed toward his family rather than the nation or the state, feeling "deeply sad" at the deaths of his father and brother Luciano, both soldiers, and the whereabouts of his eldest brother Leon, who had also fought in an unnamed war in Europe. Allos feels an "acute remorse"[75] that there might not be anyone to take care of his mother and sisters and regrets not writing to them "when there was plenty of time" to do so. Furthermore, the war also rekindles his and his Filipino compatriots "with a queer poignancy" (316).

His queerly poignant loneliness and familial regret are eventually countered by a patriotism that reminds him of his inferior class status. Despite being a colonial possession of the United States, Filipino citizens were prevented from serving in the military. Allos comments on

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75. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 316.

this, saying that "we were classified as aliens in the National Selective Service Act"[76] and thus refused at recruiting offices to which he had rushed. After this initial denial, Allos and others work together to draft a resolution to allow Filipinos to participate, and Allos marvels at the fact that "for once we were all working together; even those who had opposed our fight for citizenship were now wholeheartedly cooperating" (319). The Fall of Bataan[77] coincides with Allos's publication of his book of poems, *Letter from America Is in the Heart*, a triumphant indication of his acquisition of the master language and a capsule of Allos's previous, irretrievable life: "I know that I would not write the same way again. I had put certain things of myself in it: the days of pain and anguish, of starvation and fear; my hopes desires, aspirations. All of myself in this little volume of poems—and I would never be like that self again."[78] The symbolism of *Letter from America* as both beginning and end of aspects of Allos's life capture an ambivalence of experiencing life in America. Amado tells Allos that he intends to join the Navy and, in a letter, congratulates Allos for his successful publication, writing that he knows that "a little volume of poetry can give something to the world" (322).

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76. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 318. Allos is referring to the Selective Service Act of 1917, which allowed the President to increase the size of the military through conscription. At the time Filipinos were classified as resident aliens. In 1941, days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and an outpouring of nationalism, President Roosevelt allowed Filipinos in America to join the U.S. armed forces.

77. The Battle of Bataan (January 7-April 9, 1942) was an intense and conclusive episode in the campaign of the Japanese invasion of the Philippines in World War II and resulted in the surrender of tens of thousands of U.S. and Filipino soldiers. It was followed by the infamous "Bataan Death March," marred by war crimes of abuse and murder. The loss and subsequent abuses figure prominently in WWII histories of the Philippines and U.S.

78. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 320.

Both *The 42nd Parallel* and *America Is in the Heart* "give something to the world" each imagines it circulates within—the affective and ideological tools necessary for political action. However, both novels resist a strictly polemical or instrumental role, as each implies the salience for rigorous aestheticization prior to politicization. The seeming naturalness of the cacophony of the Newsreels and Camera Eyes in *The 42nd Parallel* are consequences not of documentarian realism but of piercing insight granted by the filmic techniques of collage, while the autobiographical mode of *America Is in the Heart* is really only a generic setup for the clash between narrative voices. Both endings of both novels are somewhat unsatisfying on either a formal or ideological criterion, but this dissatisfaction more sharply articulates the ambivalence of political organization that requires a filtering of personal idiosyncrasy. It is perhaps because of this implication that both *The 42nd Parallel* and *America Is in the Heart* are less invested in character and more invested in type, in collective rather than in individual. The implication of this formal rendering of (im)personality is a fundamental problematic of literary studies: the primacy of the text to that which it textualizes. For these polemical novels, their political knowledge requires a mediating technology like print culture to circulate. Affective and nationalist attachments are empty and referent-less until language becomes shared among conspirators. It is by no means secured; language is always in danger of misuse and deception. In particular, "being American," which has in the contemporary moment gained an even greater significance, makes and remakes itself in both novels to suggest a theme that actualizing any word is fraught with danger—physical, social, emotional—but also invites pleasure, belonging, and wisdom.

Chapter 2: The Self-Poetics of José Garcia Villa and Gertrude Stein

Whereas Dos Passos and Bulosan held parallel concerns—as politicized radicals—with the nation as community framed by affective belonging and collective action usurped by corruption, racism, and an impotent political will, and—as authors—with new literary dispensations for that community, the texts of these next authors, José Garcia Villa and Gertrude Stein, stand in seeming opposition to the marriage of art and politics. In fact, the names and works of these two latter authors have served and still serve as units in a conventional (but not uncontested) narrative of literary history that describes modern(ist) literature as generally apolitical, either through the author's negative politics or through the text's aloofness, obscurity, or autonomy.

This picture of modernism continues to have purchase. However, this chapter strives to shift the conceptual understanding away from a lack of politics toward a self-interested insistence of discovery and mastery evident in the poetics of both poets. As this chapter will show, this self-styling involves the deeply mediated identities of these authors, themselves corroborators and opponents of various forms of racist, sexist, and nativist interpellation. Even though these authors did not come into contact with each other, a comparison of these two resists charges of eclecticism since both were, roughly at the same time, seeking a programmatic language with which to assert their literary-critical expertise when the cultural dominance of the metropole was gradually but irreversibly losing its claim to global surety.

The force of this argument is built upon a consideration of not only the poetry of these two poets, but also the criticism of these two critics, so often marked by a personal wariness of one's own position in a stratified field of cultural production. For Stein—a gregarious, expatriate, Jewish lesbian—writing poetry in response to her own liminal and sometimes denigrated status

resulted, perhaps necessarily, in a type of writing resistant to interpretive transparency, formal standardization, or general readability—traits that have been ridiculed and revered by subsequent writers and critics in roughly equal measure. Villa, a queer Filipino expatriate who appointed himself the lodestar Philippine letters in English, wrote with an inconsistent recognition of the quickly changing political times of both the Philippines and U.S., and his assured dismissal of anything political marked his writing with both an admirable confidence and a staggering lack of empathy for any positive social cause.[1]

To understand how these two authors' poetry situated themselves obliquely to their social and political milieu, it is necessary to engage with their poetics within their essays of criticism and theory: in particular, Stein's retrospective *Lectures in America* and Villa's "Best of" series of Anglophone Filipino literature. Arguably just as famous—and in Villa's case, possibly more famous for generations of Anglophone Filipino writers—as their actual literary output, these cogitations on the nature of writing, the qualities of "good" poetry, and the shifting politics of their time are a valuable meeting point between the poets' formal experimentation and their self-perceived mastery of that form. This chapter argues that it is within the idiom of assured explanation that the poems might be more deftly approached. To make this argument is not to subsume completely the poetry to aesthetics—that is, to prioritize the explanation before the poem. But this approach does cast doubt on the validity of readings that assume or imply a poem's autonomy, its special and principal existence in itself. In fact, both authors' proximities to the notion of autonomy within their criticism seem to be in telling contradiction to their most

1. On the relationship between modernism and queerness, see Brian Glavey, *The Wallflower Avant-Garde: Modernism, Sexuality, and Queer Ekphrasis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190202651.001.0001.

exemplary work, a contradiction that has parallels to the structuring contradictions at the national and linguistic scale.

Reading together these extensive commentaries by Villa and Stein puts into sharp relief the image of a poet-critic grasping for sure footing on the contested grounds of literary merit, indeed literariness itself. Stein, while far less concerned in *Lectures in America* with canons or, excepting Chaucer and Henry James, with identifying rival or precursor writers, acknowledges that one's recognition is proportionate to one's responsiveness to tradition, even if that responsiveness involves a radical departure. Apart from its analogs to cubism, which both Stein and subsequent critics have identified, Stein's poetics resist a linear genealogy.[2] Villa, more self-conscious of the "standards" set before himself, is more likely to appeal to contemporaneous authorities of formalist or aesthetic principles—H.L. Mencken, Edward J. O'Brien, Mark Van Doren, John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren, and Irwin Edman, to list only a few directly named—while recording his meritorious contemporaries but remaining silent on any of *his* forebears. Both figures, then, undertake implicit tasks of an artist coming into being, of spontaneous auto-generation concomitant with a definitive clarity of their own work that never quite arrives satisfactorily for most readers or critics.

The obfuscation of both writers has been integral to their legacies. For Stein especially, there have been numerous attempts to "decode" texts like *Tender Buttons* (1914), to which this chapter will return. Marjorie Perloff, Richard Bridgman, Michael Hoffman, Allegra Stewart, and

2. See Jamie Hilder, "'After All One Must Know More than One Sees and One Does Not See a Cube in Its Entirety': Gertrude Stein and 'Picasso' and Cubism," *Critical Survey* 17, no. 3 (2005): 66–84, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41556130?seq=1. Hilder's essay, partially a critique of Perloff's reading of Stein's "THIS IS THIS DRESS, AIDER," does not naively attempt to presuppose and apply a coherent, external aesthetic of cubism to Stein's poetics, but to "locate Stein's literary portraiture inside her own ideas about cubism and literary portraiture" (67).

others set in the 1960s and 1970s the now-common paradigm of reading Stein via an interpretation of her "indeterminacy" and "linguistic codes." Perloff, to cite just one such example, writes that the meaning of Stein's poetry "remains latent, impossible to translate into something else" and that the priority of reading is not to establish a fixed meaning for any one item here…but to see how carefully [she] has structured the whole sequence."[3] Stein is a master maze-maker who "offers us certain threads with which to take us into her verbal labyrinth, threads that never quite lead us out on the other side," and her linguistic codes remain "tentative and buried" (42).

However, another way to approach these authors productively without backsliding into critiques of eclecticism or an untenable universalism is to think about how the forms of Villa and Stein's poetics are made legible by their own enabling conditions: what may be described as the form(ation) of form. What this chapter proposes is that both Stein and Villa can be read by considering issues of language, national context, and liminality, as expressed through their own self-poesis. This approach promises to be exciting because both Stein and Villa conceived of themselves as coming up with novel forms for poetry. Villa was delighted to announce his own experimentalism with little irony: reversed consonance, the comma poem, and the collage-inspired adaptations are the most important. Stein, on the other hand, is conscious of her Cubist lineage but also considers most of what she tried to do as obvious to any reader.

Modernism's Grammar Book

Some of Stein's most important essays on aesthetics are foundational to the historical literary avant-garde, and they continue to evince her enduring legacy as an experimental writer

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3. Perloff, Marjorie, "Poetry as Word-System: The Art of Gertrude Stein," *The American Poetry Review* 8, no. 5 (1979): 41.

and poet. Originally published in 1935, Stein's *Lectures in America* introduced to a wider reading public her innovative yet recondite principles of literature, which can be broadly described as a turn away from both the indexicality of the word and the external commitments of literature. In these dismissals of the English writer's traditional métier, Stein describes a different kind of text, oblique to the material world that the author inhabits. Furthermore, for the purposes of comparing Stein to Villa, equally if not more brazenly a spokesperson of a personal brand of poetics, these reflections in *Lectures in America* disclose a connection to the development of a visual-literary idiom that is revealingly naturalized in critical parlance.

This audit of Stein's poetics begins with "What Is English Literature?," which posits a developmentalist account of English literature maturing from mimetic realism to less referential genres. English literature's historical defining feature was, according to Stein, its depiction of what she calls "daily island life," meaning roughly the ordinariness of experience that might concern an English author: "description simple concentrated description not of what happened nor what is thought or what is dreamed but what exists."[4] English literature's pretense of describing "daily island life," has proceeded "from Chaucer until now," but, crucially and alternatively, poetry comes not from the written illustration of ordinary experience but from what is "shut up" or "shut in" in "simply daily island life" (15). Stein is somewhat elusive on what exactly is "shut up" or "shut in" in this account of English literature, but it must be special since, in a telling national chauvinism, she claims that English literature has enjoyed a complete existence in and of itself "in a perfectly extraordinary degree compared with other literatures," giving it "its complete solidity, its complete imagination, its complete existence" (16). In this

4. Gertrude Stein, "What Is English Literature?," in *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 15.

insularity, the choice between "serving god or Mammon"—which Stein intends to mean using words directly or indirectly to describe life—evaporates since the completeness of daily life circumvents the need to choose. The metaphor is not religious in any significant sense, despite the borrowing of religious monikers, and prior to the Elizabethan era, the completeness of daily life was such that the realms of experience were neatly and unambiguously divided: "What was outside was outside and what was inside was inside, and how could there be a question of god and mammon, when what is inside is inside and what is outside is outside there can be no confusing god and mammon[?]"[5]

However, by the Elizabethan era, this seeming completeness gave way to having to make a choice between serving God or Mammon. Stein's historical account of this major shift in an English author's decision-making is undeveloped, but she locates the origins of the rift in the Norman Conquest, which introduced words "that had not been there before" (22), challenging daily English life's complete existence unto itself. Stein claims that this introduction of new words made a "separation" that culminated in Elizabethan prose and has since then given literature its primary "bother": the constant choosing of words that "makes the literature that it is" (25). The implication is that, prior to this separation, daily life did not require the choice among words—again, no choice between God or Mammon—nor demand much else beyond what Stein calls description and explanation. Post-separation, daily island life ceased "to be quite so daily" and the English "were beginning not to know everything about owning everything that was existing outside of their daily living" (47). For U.S. literature this decision-making was

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5. Stein, 21. Stein abhorred question marks (along with other punctuation like commas and quotation marks), considering them utterly superfluous since the act of a sentence is according to her always obvious. For the most part this study preserves Stein's (and all authors') punctuational choices, except in places of possible needless confusion.

intensified by the presumption that U.S. life was far less complete; there is, in fact, no such thing as a daily life in the U.S., leading to the paragraph, rather than the sentence or phrase, being the dominant unit of literary meaning.

This proliferation of choice of words accompanies a shift in the primary semantic unit of literary text, from word to phrase to sentence to paragraph. Whereas authors like Chaucer only had to choose words to describe their insular culture, later authors found words alone no longer relevant and turned to more complex grammatical constructions. By the nineteenth century, phrases became necessary to fulfill the depictive duty of words, and by the time of Henry James, even phrases "were no longer necessary to make emotion emotion to make explaining explaining" (47). And then, perhaps in a moment of her self-motivated inclusion in the English tradition, Stein suggests that the contemporary literature has replaced the semantic function of words, sentences, and phrases with the paragraph, which she describes as "emotional," in the sense of being able to "express" an emotion (48). The paragraph can satisfy "what anybody could mean" (49) as daily life becomes more complex and less complete unto itself.

Whereas "What Is English Literature?" focuses on the ambit of England's once insular culture and its effect on the nation's literature, "Pictures" develops Stein's visual idiom and the medium specificity of painting. A life-long admirer of oil paintings particularly, she confesses that even a bad oil painting is enjoyable to look at. More interesting than her penchant for the genre, she reiterates that the reference of the sign—the paint on the canvas—has no bearing on the painting's level of enjoyability or even its status as a painting: "whether it is intended to look like something and looks like it or whether it is intended to look like something and does not look like it really makes no difference, the fact remains that for me it has achieved an existence

in and for itself, it exists on as being an oil painting on a flat surface and it has its own life."[6] Whatever relationship beyond mere resemblance is for Stein "nobody's business," and what might seem to be the "business" of the painting, the enjoyable sensation of recognition, amounts to nothing more than a "pleasant human weakness" (79).

Acknowledging the temptation of recognition is but one aspect of art appreciation; so too must one be submissive to the painting's paintedness: "you must accept a face as a face. And so it is with an oil painting" (80). While the lay public might feel "annoyed" at modern painting's varying refusal of indexicality—at, for example, the confusingly blended textures of Gris's *Still Life with Checkered Tablecloth* (1915) or Picasso's analytic reduction in *Ma Jolie* (1911)—Stein locates the cause of annoyance from the strangeness that the world should proceed the painting at all: "I think the annoyance comes from the fact that the oil painting exists by reason of these things the oil painting represents in the oil painting, and profoundly it should not do so, so thinks the oil painting, so sometime thinks the painter of the oil painting, so instinctively feels the person looking at the oil painting" (84). In other words, the feeling of annoyance arises from the dim recognition that the painting need not usher forth from its antecedent subject, even as the image seems to do so. The painting need not refer to anything outside itself at all—and without the clue of the title in the most analytic examples like *Ma Jolie*, does not—yet most viewers tend to feel the pull of their "weakness" of desiring a rational or representational connection to something in the empirical world outside the frame, even as they oblige the painting in their "submission."

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6. Stein, "Pictures," in *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 61.

Even more troubling for Stein is that an oil painting "always will have a tendency to go back to its frame, even if it has never been out of it" (85). This is Stein's way of restating the central problematic of all modern painting, the relationship between the content of the painting to its being framed. This problematic might unite the writer and the painter, both of whom must address the "boundary" of their work, but Stein rebuts by saying that the two creators stand opposed:

> A painter's literary idea always consists not in the action but in the distortion of the form. That could never be a writer's literary idea. Then a painter's idea of action always has to do with something else moving rather than the center of the picture. This is just the opposite of the writer's idea, everything else can be quiet, except the central thing which has to move. And because of all this a painter cannot really write and a writer cannot really paint, even fairly badly. (89-90)

The painting generally has a static "center" and a moving "periphery," while literature has just the opposite in a moving center and static periphery. By this Stein intends to mean that the author and painter work in different media, and the genesis of either the author or painter's artwork, the "literary idea," differs in its execution in either genre. Whereas a standard novel will be populated with characters, plot, dialog, and action—in short, *movement*—the painting remains static while what is outside the frame "moves" without consequence, regardless of possible interpolative narratives or events within a still image.

Common sense affirms that a painting and a novel have numerous differences—duration of experience, method of consumption, materials used, sensory activation, the posture of viewer or reader, and so on—nuanced enough to be their own topic of analysis; however, Stein complicates her own theory further when she presents her own "literary portraits" of people she admired and observed. Written intermittently but first appearing as a collection in *Portraits and Prayers* in 1934, these word portraits blur the distinction between portraiture and text. While their titles refer to discernible, well-known figures—Cezanne, Picasso, Matisse, Juan Gris, for

example, are cited in “Pictures,” although Stein painted many such portraits of other things and people—the body text seems divorced from its referential title, made even more estranged by Stein’s radical departure from conventional grammar and syntax. Take, for example, two early published word portraits appearing in the August 1912 issue of Alfred Stieglitz’s *Camera Work* and “depicting” Matisse and Picasso. Despite *Camera Work’s* devotion to “the demonstration of the possibilities of Photography as a medium of Self-Expression,” this special issue is dedicated to Stein’s word portraits, its “true *raison d’être*,” according to Stieglitz’s acclamatory editorial.[7] Stieglitz writes further that Stein’s artistry matches that of the Post-Impressionist painters by its unintelligibility to the untutored observer. However, in Stieglitz’s estimation, Stein’s work poses a slightly less daunting challenge to fresh eyes, if for no other reason than the fact that the average observer is at least familiar with the “raw materials and rough practice” of language—words and grammar—even if Stein uses them in decidedly un-average ways. Stieglitz’s savvy and affirmative comparison between Stein and avant-garde painters reaffirms the vanguardism of his publication (a rhetorical gesture replicated in his other famous outlet, *291*) and the exclusivity of the refined aesthetic appreciation demanded by these artists’ work. Accompanied by photographic reproductions of Matisse and Picasso’s sketches, paintings, and sculptures, this publication serves as a “chronotope,” a modernist moment of movement-making, shifts in novelty, cross-medium exchange, and the hitching of parties to the wagon of revolution.[8]

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7. Alfred Stieglitz, ed. “Editorial,” in *Camera Work*. Special Number: Matisse, Picasso, and Stein (1912): n.p.

8. Laura Recker, “Pitting ‘Matisse’ Against ‘Picasso’: Gertrude Stein’s Companion Portraits,” *Arizona Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (2016), 44.

Stieglitz also sees in these word portraits a “decipherable clew” to the “intellectual and esthetic attitude” of the current artistic revolution.[9] What “clew” might readers expect to find? Stieglitz’s editorial is silent on the answer to that question, although his spinning of Stein’s difficulty belongs to a genealogy of a critical move to read Stein’s texts as both encoded and decodable. As Laurel Recker observes, the co-published portraits are “companion pieces” through which Stein participated in the painters’ rivalry by moving “to legitimize Picasso and discredit Matisse.”[10] Recker’s attention to the texttual materiality of the two portraits and the celebrity intrigue surrounding these three artists usefully resembles Stieglitz’s own move to consider Stein’s work as a particular instance of a general revolution in art. Recker’s own “decoding” sees Stein as negotiating passage from a superseded Matisse to a current and vibrant Picasso and as inviting readers “to contemplate the relationships between the portraits as texts and between the subjects as characters” (46). Matisse’s portrait seems to ironize the artist’s doubt by incessantly emphasizing his “certainty” and his “struggle” to express something within, while Picasso’s rival image is contoured by his work ethic and consistent production.

Recker’s emphasis on the uniterable, material instant of the two portraits stands against classical Stein criticism that reads her poetry (primarily) as a relatively self-sufficient word game, coded language pried open by the ingenious literary scholar.[11] But Recker’s attention to

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9. Stieglitz, *Camera Work*, n.p.

10. Recker, “Pitting ‘Matisse’ Against ‘Picasso,’” 27.

11. See Richard Bridgman, *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Wendy Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance: The Literary Portraiture of Gertrude Stein* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Marjorie Perloff, “Poetry as Word-System: The Art of Gertrude Stein” *The American Poetry Review* 8, no. 5 (1979): 33-43; and Randa Dubnick, *The Structure of Obscurity: Gertrude Stein, Language, and Cubism* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984) as paradigmatic examples.

the portraits *in media res*, as an emblem of a modernist vanguardism and self-promotion, and further as a watershed moment of interdisciplinary proximity, also differs from Stein's own explication. For what matters to Stein in the making and observing portraits is not momentousness but movement, which in daily existence is imperceptible. Stein explains further in "Portraits and Repetition" that "the strange thing about the realization of existence is that like a train moving there is no realization of it moving."[12] Her immediate concern is describing how a generation sees itself "moving" through time, but her realization that existence as movement across time did not imply repetition (in contrast to a commonsense notion that an object is self-identical from one moment to the next) appears in her portraiture: "in my way I have tried to make portraits of this thing. If this existence is this thing is actually existing there can be no repetition. There is only repetition when there are descriptions being given of these things not when the things themselves are actually existing and this is therefore how my portrait writing began" (170). In a difficult leap of logic, Stein argues that, for the making of these portraits, repetition is a non-issue and that the emphasis is on the portrait's presentness. Furthermore, the writing of the portrait "has nothing to do with remembering any one or anything."[13] But precisely the difficulty of Stein's admission is that even a cursory observation of, for example, "Matisse" or "Picasso" seemingly discloses that the two portraits abound with repetition and, following critical readings of these portraits, a kind of "resemblance" to the artists.

To work around this apparent contradiction between what's seen in her writing and what's meant by her style, Stein employs the technics of cinema to explain her own art. "Funnily

12. Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," in *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 165.

13. Stein, 175. It will be this kind of motivated forgetting that will inform *Tender Buttons.*

enough," she writes, "the cinema has offered a solution of this thing [the problem of bothersome remembrance]. By a continuously moving picture of any one thing there is no memory of any other thing and there is that thing existing, it is in a way if you like one portrait of anything not a number of them" (176). Repetition only seems like repetition, when it is really insistence across time. The twenty-four images that flash across the screen in a single second indiscernibly merge in the human brain; without the technology of freezing the image, there is no splitting them apart or "remembering" one frame against another. So it is with the portrait: its successive emphases resemble not repetitions of words and phrases but instances across time that form a composite image.[14] Stein finds it exciting that she can potentially discover a new dispensation for words that does not serve the same representational or substantializing information that they normally would. Instead, she finds the power of words to make the word portrait resemble itself rather than carry "in them any quality of description."[15]

Stein's thoughts on the repetition, temporality, and immanence of her work are positively appraised as provocative dicta of modernist art. "Poetry and Grammar," Stein's effort to aestheticize punctuation and grammatical categories, however, resembles at times the most jejune comprehension of the mechanics of writing as poetically meaningful. Among the least "interesting" parts of speech is the common noun, which, once given to its referent, becomes an

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14. Stein herself was unsure of what she had accomplished in her early portraits: "I had to find out what it was inside any one [of the portraits], and by any one I mean every one I had to find out inside every one what was in them that was intrinsically exciting and I had to find out not by what they said not by what they did not by how much or how little they resembled any other one but I had to find it out by the intensity of movement that there was in any one of them" (183).

15. Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," 191.

inert dangler that "does not go on doing anything" and is "not good for anything else."[16] Similarly, because adjectives modify nouns, they too are dull. Contrariwise, verbs and adverbs are interesting, foremost because they can "be so mistaken," implying that they can have a wider range of effects unlike the limited noun (211). The crown jewel of English's grammatical categories is the preposition, stated ironically in a sentence that almost completely lacks prepositional phrases altogether: "Prepositions can live one long life being really being nothing but absolutely nothing but mistaken and that makes them irritating if you feel that way about mistakes but certainly something that you can be continuously using and everlastingly enjoying. I like prepositions best…" (212). The preposition seems contentless, defined and identified only by its function in a sentence to express relation to another element, rather than by its referent or by what it describes. It is because of this "being absolutely nothing" that Stein can find prepositions serving wider and more complicated roles in literature. Perhaps surprisingly, articles also merit praise; while they definitize nouns, they are not as burdened by a noun's representational shackles and "do what a noun might do if a noun was not so completely unfortunately the name of something."[17]

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16. Stein, "Poetry and Grammar," 210.

17. Stein, 212. Traditional grammars treat articles as a subclass of adjectives, but modern grammars describe them as a separate category of speech because of some distinct differences. For one, articles are not gradable: compare *blue-bluer-bluest* to the ungrammatical *the-theer-theest* or *more the* or *most the*. Determiners also have a distinct place before noun phrases modified by adjectives: while *large* and *expensive* can be interchanged in the noun phrase *the large, expensive sapphire*, the determiner *the* would be ungrammatical in any other place. Among the best descriptivist accounts of English grammar Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey Pullum, *A Student' Introduction to English Grammar* (Cambridge UP, 2005) and is relied upon for all linguistic explanations of grammar or syntax.

However, in a marked shift from these previous comments about the dullness of nouns, she later describes it as central to the challenge of writing poetry. In one of her more quotable moments, she writes,

> Poetry is concerned with using, with losing and wanting, with denying with avoiding with adoring with replacing the noun. It is doing that always doing that, doing that and nothing but that. Poetry is doing nothing but losing refusing and pleasing and betraying and caressing nouns. That is what poetry does, that is what poetry has to do no matter what kind of poetry it is. (231)

As this chapter will show, the entire project of *Tender Buttons* might be described as trying to create a thing without naming it, to gesture toward a name without deferring to its straightforward referentiality.

Punctuation, because it has the power to shape the line, regulate rhythm, and place emphasis, creates a similar problematic to the parts of speech. The punctuation analog to the noun is the question mark, completely uninteresting to Stein, because a sentence's type as an interrogative is self-evident in writing. Her assuredness in the self-evidence of clause type makes the question mark "positively revolting" and would help explain why her writing almost completely lacks the question mark at all (214-215). And because Stein's style privileges continuity and the successive embedding of phrases and clauses, she also criticizes the stopping power of commas, colons, and semicolons, holding that since the beginning of her writing she felt that "writing should go on, I still do feel that it should go on but when I first began writing I was completely possessed by the necessity that writing should go on and if should writing go on what had the colons and semi-colons to do with it, what had commas to do with it, what had periods to do with it what had small letters and capitals to do with writing going on which was at the time the most profound need I had in connection with writing" (217). Commas, in particular, are "servile," with no life of their own, comically personified as an obsequious servant holding

one's coat or putting on one's shoes (220). In a similar register of elitism, Stein suggests that commas reduce the pleasure of a complex sentence by making it too easy, which should be easy enough anyway, since it is the responsibility of the reader, rather than the author, to place the pause and dictate the pace of reading: "at the most a comma is a poor period that it lets you stop and take a breath but if you want to take a breath you ought to know yourself that you want to take a breath" (221).

The Honor Roll and the Construction of Taste

The invective against commas would have perhaps rankled José García Villa, one of the first and foremost poet-critics of the Philippines, given his mid-career experiments with proliferation commas in his verse. Nor would Villa have appreciated someone else's capacity for making arguably even more gnomic statements about poetry and the English language. Still, Stein's insistence in "Poetry and Grammar" of language's completeness unto itself and, in the same essay, endorsement of monolingualism recall Villa's contentious linguistic legacy and seeming disengagement with the socio-political turbulence that indirectly launched his career. As a critic, Villa is in Jonathan Chua's view "the man who transformed Philippine poetry in English" who birthed a generation post-WWII poets following his lights like Ricaredo Demetillo, Cirilo Bautista, and Luis Francia (the last of whom wrote the introduction of Penguin's 2008 anthology of Villa's poetry) and was a lightning rod of criticism in the tone-setting debates about the future and commitments of Filipino literature in English.[18] This section focuses on the "Best Of" series Villa penned between 1927-1940 to isolate programmatic statements about Anglophone Filipino literature and the artist's own poetics to measure

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18. Jonathan Chua, ed., *The Critical Villa: Essays in Literary Criticism by José Garcia Villa* (Quezon City, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002), 1.

significant shifts in the priorities of Filipino literature in English and, more broadly, to gesture toward an analysis of a kind of global modernism.

Overestimating Villa's critical influence is difficult. Early criticism in Philippine letters was "consciously and primarily a social, if not political, practice; that is, literary works were treated not autotelically as objects of art but contextually as productions inseparable from their milieu" (7-8). Chua (and others) have read such letters intervening decades between American colonization and neo-colonization as a symbolic counterbalancing of the U.S.'s unceasing influence. These writings served as both preservation of local culture and a moral pedagogy for the community. The critic is a moral agent, interested in preserving national sentiment as much as literary exemplarity.

Villa manifested a different sort of critic, one who was "resubjectified from being a vanguard of nationalism to an evaluator of taste" (12). By the time he had moved permanently to the United States (first New Mexico and then New York), he had already secured a reputation as somewhat of a provocateur, having been expelled from the University of the Philippines after a publicized wrist-slapping after publishing sexually explicit poetry.[19] The "Best of" essays and lists similarly reflect his contentious personality and express in the clearest terms his theory of

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19. The scandalous poem, "The Coconut Poem," is reproduced below:
The coconuts have ripened,
They are like nipples to the tree.
    (A woman has only two nipples,
    There are many women-lives in a coconut tree.)
Soon the coconuts will grow heavy and full:
I shall pick up one…many…
    Like a child I shall suck their milk,
    I shall such out of coconuts little white songs:
    I shall be reminded of many women.
…………………………………………………
I shall kiss a coconut because it is the nipple of a woman.

exemplary literature. The first entry of 1927, published in *Philippines Herald Magazine*, opens with a shot at the entire genre of the Anglophone Filipino short story: "It has been asserted several times by well-meaning persons that the Filipino short story in English is devoid of literary qualities. *Truthfully speaking, the majority of stories are published are so, although there are a few that are not*."[20] Still less kind: "[ninety-five] percent" of the stories he personally read are "pure unadulterated literary trash" even as the genre "considerably improved" from its previous status (36). For Villa, a detestable, mawkish sentimentalism has spoiled the genre, and the reader shares blame with the writer for having a "weakness for flowery language" and an undeveloped ken of literary excellence (37).

This first entry also introduces the anchor of Villa's rubric, the test of "substance and form," in the humanist register of exceptional endeavor and a scalar mode of depth:

> The test of substance requires a magnificence of subject—delicate selection of facts. Genuine substance is achieved when a pulse beats through the correlated facts, however tender or brutal its rhythm may be….The test of form requires vitality and structure and literary finish. Technique plays a great part here. Technique is the method of execution in an art; it is acquired through practice rather than by study. (38)

Intriguingly, Villa relies on a Western definition of the short story, via one Clayton Hamilton, *A Manual of the Art of Fiction* and prior writings in *Bookman* and *Reader*. As for evaluation, Villa relies on another interlocutor, Edward J. O'Brien, for the test of substance and form. Such is par for the course of much of the "Best Of" preamble to the lists of best and worst texts, either short stories or poetry, depending on the flavor of the installment: a somewhat precious and elusive appeal to universalist standards of excellence and a brash sacking of any author or text

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20. Jose Garcia Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories of 1927," in, *The Critical Villa: Essays in Literary Criticism by José Garcia Villa* (Quezon City, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002), 35, emphasis original.

considered inferior, lobbied westward across the continental U.S. and Pacific Ocean to a small but growing English reading public in the Philippines. Villa no doubt saw the important role he assigned himself, as both interpreter and tastemaker of Filipino literature in English. Like Stein in "What Is English Literature?" Villa takes a retrospective look, writing in the second installment of a cautious awareness of the short story's room for development and of an agnostic fate of its growth or demise.[21]

By 1930, Villa had redoubled the lofty definitions of literature as art, seeing in literature a unification of artistic autonomy, suffering, and greatness. Writers perform their craft in harmonizing a "spiritual chaos," thereby afflicting themselves with a hurt that "leaves behind an autonomy of the spirit."[22] However, Villa temporarily breaks away from his universalist standards, praising author Antonio Bayot's "local color" and "use of native terms" (52). In an even rarer moment, Villa defends the criticized from other evaluators who fail to recognize the strides Anglophone Filipino literature has made in only three decades. The stories these writers have produced are "not only worth the name, but worthy, not only of [other critics'] admiration, but of the rest of the world's….They depreciate us, at the outset; we are, to them, something to be *bewared* of" (53). This is a telling moment of both an unreflected and unselfconscious rhetoric of a shared community of *we* and *us*. Despite Villa almost never considering any Filipino writer *his* peer, he nonetheless gestures from vantage point of the Anglophone Filipino writing public and, perhaps, the Philippine nation.

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21. Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories of 1928," 40-44.

22. Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories of 1930," 52.

Villa's ambivalence between the espousal the universalist rubrics of literary excellence and evaluation of a specifically Filipino corpus of texts is, in fact, the most urgent of pattern of his series, because it reveals Villa not so much as a gatekeeper (although he is undeniably so) but as a translator of whatever merit is to be found in this body of writing. Villa carves out a place for Filipino literature in a slowly forming "global canon" paradoxically crowded by Western exemplars, apart from whom Villa consistently struggles to write. He can simultaneously recognize new trends in American writing, name dropping luminaires like Eugene Jolas, Ernest Hemingway, Kay Boyle, Erskine Caldwell, and Katherine Anne Porter, and note with pity the "deadening traditionalism" of the Philippines in the same ethno-national community idiom described earlier. The criticism of literary institutions also evinces his inheritance of a distinction between high and low culture, between legitimate art and cheap entertainment. The editors he lambasts do not realize that "great literature is predicated on a far higher, nobler concept: the concept of sublimation, of transfiguration. Great art is the spiritual sublimation of the unassimilable reality: it has to do with spiritual experience, with internal crucifixions, with visions transcendent. True literature is the notation of incommunicability of the soul."[23]

The year 1931 marks the first time that Villa began his foray into poetry criticism, seeing himself "in the absence of other critics" to take up this task for Philippine poetry in English.[24] In this initial entry, Villa slides the test of substance and form, originally applicable to prose, onto poetry: a genre involving more than "superficial versification," but the "creation of emotion" (63). The effusive poet, meanwhile, puts words into place to "cut out forms for the enchantment

23. Villa, "Again Graphic Leads," 59.

24. Villa, "The Best Poems of 1931," 62.

of the mind—to conquer it, to subdue it for the benediction of the heart" (63). The evocation of emotion and the image-effecting force of words constitute a poem's "substance"; its form is essentially its demonstration of "cadence," "symmetry of movement," and "wingedness of flow."[25] This last phrase begins to betray Villa's rhetoric of angelic ascension, indicative of a kind of apotheotic metaphysics that would frequently serve as the image of much of his criticism and poetry. Writers need "vision—the ascensive spirit to give us the universal breadth of the universal breath… to see life as it should be seen—from the greater angel, from the higher peak. When man has achieved this vision, then man shall be greater than man: truly he shall become part of the divine."[26] From a heavenly viewpoint might lowly poets transcend their limitations. That Villa possesses this cosmic knowledge of "universal breadth" and "universal breath" is both charming for its wordplay and its telling of his enlarged role as an unimpeachable reader.

One of the longer, more sustained essays of the series, the second installment of criticism in 1933 sets an even stronger tone as a gatekeeper, demanding a certain awareness from the reader, most of whom lack both the "spiritual capacity" and "literary training" to appreciate good, serious literature or even to recognize literature as such.[27] He also spares no criticism for formulaic literary authors, "academic pontiffs" who treat writing literature like following a recipe, "as if the creation of literature were merely sticking to the rules" (85). This is also the first entry to feature the "Criminal Record": the negative counterpart to the best short stories of the year that listed the texts Villa considered to have failed his test of substance and form. The

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25. Villa, 63. As for the poems themselves, the only work that passed Villa's test was that of Angela Manalang Gloria, an affirmative judgment that Villa would later reverse.

26. Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories of 1932," 72.

27. Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories of 1933," 82.

essay mainly discusses *form* in greater detail, which he distinguishes sharply from notions of template or container. Villa, who had by now invested heavily in guiding short story criticism for years, found it crucial to come up with a clear definition of form. Form is "the *adequate and beautiful externation of substance*…not a mold or a prison, but the liberation of the creative spirit" (86).

What does Villa mean by the "*externation of substance*"? For Villa, it seems to mean creation realized in bounded materiality, but he also suggests problematically that from relates to "beautiful expression." This is problematic precisely because form and expression are distinct, non-overlapping terms. Form is prior to expression; in fact, in the broadest sense, form is what enables expression to be recognized as such, since without the governing range of possibilities of communication, expression is meaningless. In "Form, Plot, Etc.," technically the third installment of the "The Best Short Stories of 1935," Villa provides more commentary on form as something that is posterior to content: it "*arises from the need of the tale*" and "*is generated by content*." These statements fly against the standard theoretical accounts of form, either the equivalence model wherein form is defined as, and identical to, content, or the form-primary model wherein form is superior to content and the primary object of analysis. He also distinguishes literary English from merely correct English: "*mere grammatical correctness is not what constitutes good writing*."[28] Villa cites the interlocutors in this section, including Croce, Ortega y Gasset, Eliot, and Baudelaire, positively to clarify the development of genre, the perilousness of blind adherence to principles, the superfluity of traditional writing, and the "*eternal and immutable*" half of art (150). Navigating this apparent confusion of terms requires

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28. Villa, "Form, Plot, Etc," 141.

recognizing that Villa, far from parroting his Western interlocutors, is vying for a unique position as a critic with access to a language of criticism through an operation of translation that paradoxically reveals how provincial purportedly universalist accounts of literature can be.[29] The passages from Mencken, Lewisohn, O'Brien, Huxley, and others, however locally expedient in the canons of their home languages, are for Villa in need of supplementary explanation provided through his self-assured knowledge of literary exemplarity. This is not to argue that Villa or any other critic's statements are equally valid or relativist, but to argue instead that Villa's impressionistic theorizations indicate an activity other than the passive assimilation of a foreign discourse "benevolently" bestowed on a generation of Filipinos.

The Nation as "Adjectival"

The apotheosis of the poet-critic would be challenged after a controversial and much-regarded clash of political commitments with Salvador P. Lopez, whose work Villa had regarded favorably and whose nationalism crossed with Villa's aestheticism. The first inklings of such a confrontation are found in an uncharacteristically patriotic tone that Villa takes toward the development of the Filipino short story in English:

> I think that I can state, without the least qualm, and although I am by nature a very unpatriotic man, that the Philippine short story makes me feel proud of the country. In rereading the stories that I have chosen for this year's Roll of Honor, a pride upsurged in me, a delight and satisfaction with the country that could produce such stories. This feeling is the exact opposite of what I feel when read the country's "poetry." the country's poetry is phooetry, and our poetry are not poets but phooets, only that they are not conscious of it.[30]

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29. Indeed, as Rebecca Beasley argues, what is central to the pluralism of modernisms (as opposed to a singular modernism with merely different shades of local content under the aegis of a global capitalist integration) is an analysis of the flow of "cultural material," a task to which translation and translation theory are uniquely suited to investigate. See Rebecca Beasley, "Modernism's Translations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 551–70, 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195338904.013.0023.

30. Villa, "Best Philippine Short Stories," 99.

Nation and nationalism (or, more modestly, patriotic pride) are even difficult for Villa to perpetually avoid, even as he actively resists them. In “Good, Better, and Best/Why Good Stories Are Good,” Villa repeats in more succinct terms the irrelevance of nation, culture, or ethnicity in the appreciation of a truly universal art, while simultaneously jabbing pedestrian American critics preoccupied with national literatures: “I have never pleaded for the *Filipino* short story as American ‘critics’ plead for the ‘Great American Novel.’ That, to me, is sheer mediocrity of mind and myth of bad critics. American or Filipino, Scandinavian or Swiss, the nation is merely adjectival to true art…”[31] National origin or identification is simply incidental, a meaningless gesture to a location of a map; true art knows no color, race, or identity and transcends culture and language.

Lopez offers a different analysis of language, one that emphasizes its instrumentality rather than its abstracted beauty. Reading an early Villa poem, “Poems for an Unhumble One,” Lopez primarily criticizes Villa’s nonsensical violation of the fundamental rules of language and, likening grammar to the laws of nature. Villa’s poems “fail to register not only in the understanding but in the emotions.”[32] Lopez is similarly unimpressed with Villa’s posturing as an elitist disdainful of the masses, caricaturizing the poet as a zealot performing for “a select cult” in possession of a “magic prism by which alone the light of their supra-mundane inspiration can be broken into the separate perceptible colors of the rainbow” (145). The gnomic

31. Villa, “Good, Better, and Best/Why Good Stories Are Good,” 168.

32. Salvador P. Lopez, “So No: A Theory of Poetry,” in *Literature and Society: Essays on Life and Letters* (Manila: University Publishing Co., Inc., 1940), 144.

performances are simply a mask for a lack of knowledge. By the end of the essay, Lopez doubles down on the practical use of language as communication.

The debate between universal aesthetic exemplarity and social commitment becomes pitched in 1938, when Villa responds directly to Lopez's charge that Villa remains ensconced in ivory tower aestheticism and lacks sympathy for the political and economic turbulence of the Philippines. Villa writes that although he has a politics—he aligns "Left…literally…politically and economically"—he does not "mix" his political and economic beliefs with his art or art criticism.[33] "I do not believe," Villa continues, "the economic readjustment of society to be the function of literature," because the primary goal of literature is to achieve its own artfulness (179). If literature happens to be politically useful, then that is a supplementary benefit. At a time when artists from both the Philippines and U.S. were experimenting with naturalism, documentary realism, and revolutionary commentary, Villa remains loyal to literature's apparent purity and dismisses these socially inclined developments as faddish and pseudointellectual activity, resulting from talentless artists' incessant "hunting for the social spark" (180). Even the most sweeping social changes are defined by passing values, and writers ought to concern themselves only with an evergreen art.

Despite these disagreements, Lopez remained on somewhat amicable professional terms, even penning the introduction to his 1939 collection of poems *Many Voices*, published in the Philippines by the Philippine Book Guild. There, Lopez acknowledges Villa's indelible influence on a generation of writers and even introduces a racial logic of whiteness by quoting a

33. Villa, "The Best Short Stories of 1937," 178.

description of Villa as the "white hope of Filipino literature in English."[34] Lopez notes an influence among American writers, including Whitman, cummings, and even Stein. The rubric of his comparison lies in, as developed earlier, a description of unintelligibility. Lopez is dismissive of cummings's "arbitrary splitting of words as if the poet was too lazy to place a hyphen at the end of the line or begin a line anew" and Stein's "equally arbitrary stringing together of words in utter disregard of all rules of syntax" (158). Lopez also offers perhaps his harshest criticism: that despite the flourish of Villa's poetic experiments, underneath them is an uninteresting emptiness, that "after a while, Villa becomes somewhat of a bore" (159).

To his credit, Lopez's criticism is not entirely negative, and he develops his own materialist theory of literature in essays like "Literature and Society" and "Proletarian Literature: A Definition." In these essays, Lopez develops the notion that an apolitical, alienated art is an inferior one, and radicalization only requires sensitivity to the unfolding of world events. The primary functional operation of literature is an attestation of those events. The writer may respond positively to historical progression by serving as an "interpreter of hope and despair" or negatively by abandoning society through a "deluded aestheticism which regards art solely as the quest of formal beauty and nothing more."[35] Preoccupation with technique and form are distractions from proper political orientation and class-consciousness. If there is any artfulness in the ideal literature that Lopez is describing, then it is in the clever disguising of the determined fate of the world adduced through a class-conscious analysis: "the object of propagating an idea or espousing a cause must appear incidental and yet at the same time a necessary consequence of

34. Lopez, "The Poetry of Jose Garcia Villa," 152.

35. Lopez, "Proletarian Literature: A Definition," 217.

the work as a whole. The idea itself must never be preached but should emerge as the logical and natural result of the circumstances related and the characters portrayed" (224-225). The result of this kind of artifice is a literature that is simultaneously optimistic, revolutionary, and pragmatic, whereas the artfulness of "bourgeois writers," can only lead to aporetic reflections on class, an intensified celebration of bourgeois values, or a paralyzing nostalgia for a utopic past (226).

The opposition of Villa's formalist aestheticism and Lopez's political aestheticism has been useful for historical episodicity. In its simplest, it is a narrative between two heroic writers fashioning a program for contemporaneous and future generations that have followed in both writers' paths. But their opposition has obscured their joint belief in the transformative power of words: to be the externation of substance or the laying bare of materialist predetermination. Such a connection helps explain why Lopez considered both Villa and Stein as unintelligible. They are unintelligible insofar as they, per Lopez's perspective, misapprehend the meaning of meaning.

Cognizant of Villa and Lopez's debate and the contexts in which it emerged, much of the subsequent critical literature about Villa ambivalently assesses his protracted abstractions as echoes of colonial discourse while holding out for the possibility of his subversion of that discourse. That Villa wrote about and to the Philippines while living in the U.S. in seeming disregard of the Commonwealth project of sustainable development, nation-building, and cultural preservation, and further, wrote about rarified concerns of substance and form rather than *content*, affirmed for his critics his political impotence and hermeticism.[36] Theorizing from a Marxist angle, E. San Juan Jr. remains highly suspicious of the first generations of Filipino authors in English who were "[r]emoved from the sufferings and struggles of impoverished

36. See Caroline S. Hau, *Necessary Fictions: Philippine Literature and the Nation, 1946-1980*, (Quezon City: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 2000).

peasants and workers, handsomely subsidized by the state or living off rentals and inheritances" and became "products of U.S. tutelage and the mock 'Filipinization' movement promoted by William Howard Taft, the first American civil governor, and subsequently by Francis Burton Harrison, whose administration (1913-1921) provided the seductive simulacra of neocolonial self-determination."[37] Denise Cruz writes about Villa's *Footnote to Youth* that he is "certainly interested in the effects of Philippine-U.S. contact, but the fictional products of these intersections are strikingly—even maddeningly—disparate."[38] Conchitina Cruz offers a more balanced appraisal of Villa's liminality, but noting still that the aesthete Villa is still "easily co-opted by or actively submitting to the status quo, which only proves the limitations of art for art's sake."[39]

However, in other essays San Juan Jr. is far more salutary of Villa individually, who he identifies with a series of firsts: Villa "single-handedly founded modern writing in English in the Philippines"; "inaugurated the first self-conscious theoretical literary and art criticism in the Philippines"; and "[initiated] the project of endeavoring to fuse U.S. modernism… with a nascent Filipino sensibility in his poems, short stories, and critical discourse."[40] Reading Villa's work and its "literariness" symptomatically, as a discursive objects latticed by the intersecting

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37. E. San Juan, Jr. "Dialectics of Philippines—United States Literary Relations," in *History and Form: Selected Essays* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996), 43.

38. Denise Cruz, "José Garcia Villa's Collection of 'Others': Irreconcilabilities of a Queer Transpacific Modernism," *Modern Fiction Studies* 55, no. 1 (2009): 12.

39. Conchitina Cruz, *Authoring Autonomy: The Poetics of Art for Art's Sake in Filipino Poetry in English* (Dissertation 2016), 66.

40. San Juan, Jr. "Homage to José Garcia Villa," in *History and Form: Selected Essays* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996), 98.

imaginaries of the U.S. and the Philippines, San Juan Jr. considers the poet-critic as a resistant contradiction "between a subaltern artist adopting the colonizer's tongue for emancipatory individual and (by extrapolation) collective ends" and "the hegemonic constraints of a culture that reduces the Other to an instrumentalized object" (110). Villa's ethico-cultural value is his impressionistic and idiosyncratic use of English that emerges between a displaced Spanish culture and "suppression of indigenous revolutionary forces" unfolding within U.S. imperialism on the islands (112-113). By seizing power through and from an imposed language, Villa resembles a "decolonizing artist" (125) for San Juan Jr. and other sympathetic critics.

In a more recent account, Martin Ponce considers Villa as both queer and modernist not just through formal innovation but also through "equally experimental logic of nonnormative eroticism—including homoeroticism—that deprivileges heterosexual coupling and procreation, and prioritizes a poetics of interiority and an ethics of intersubjectivity."[41] By suspending judgment of his use of English and apoliticism, critics might discern how Villa challenges "accounts, pervasive in the postcolonial period, that read [his] formal experimentalism as a suspect bid at 'universality' or worse yet, a collusion with U.S. imperialism" (592). Like San Juan Jr., Ponce reads Villa symptomatically and contextually and attempts to balance his colonial subject-formation with the implicit potentialities of his poetics.

Despite these recuperative appraisals of Villa's subject position and work, the most recalcitrant censures toward him are difficult to refute wholly, especially considering his nomination of the honor of National Artist the Philippines by the Philippines's National Center for Culture and Arts (NCCA) in 1973, one year after martial law was declared by then-president

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41. Martin Joseph Ponce, "José Garcia Villa's Modernism and the Politics of Queer Diasporic Reading," *GLQ* 17, no. 4 (2011): 577.

Ferdinand Marcos. For Villa's critics, his designation as "national artist" by a brutal dictatorial rule indicated in the most charitable view his political cooptation: a "safe bet" whose rarified and therefore inert work would not foment any resistance toward or suspicion of the regime. The Marcos regime likened their own claims to eternal universalism in Villa's aesthetic, and in this context, the award invokes "the universal in order to validate the Marcos regime that offers itself as the absolute destiny, the *Tadhana*, of the Filipino people and nation."[42]

And yet Villa is quick to adopt the language of revolution to advance his own argument. In "The Best Filipino Short Stories of 1937," Villa writes that the "revolution of the internal personality of man" validates the work of art as art.[43] Literature is furthermore "the drama of the human soul" (179). It seems curious why "committed" literature and the effusive *agon* of human spirit should for Villa remain distinct, since social realism involves if nothing else the exposure and critique of generalized obstacles to humanity's flourishing. Villa's previous comments, betraying an ambivalence about nation and nationalism when paired with his rejoinders in the so-called "Villa-Lopez controversy," speak to the difficulty of cordoning art off from its social and political contexts. This is especially true for the Filipino writer in English, whose vehicle of communication shares the enabling conditions of colonization that inspired waves of social resistance in the 1930s. In one of the last issues of the "Best of" series, Villa attests to the complexity of this bilingualism:

> Perhaps the difficulty for Filipino writers in mastering the niceties of English lies in the fact that *they do not think in English*. The Filipino writer—probably to the same extent as his nonwriting brother—uses English only when he writes, or when he is in the classroom; but his thoughts come to him in a different tongue, that of his native dialect.

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42. Charlie Veric, "The Radical Jose Garcia Villa," *Pilipinas: A Journal of Philippine Studies*, 44 (2005), 59.

43. Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories of 1937," 179.

> This duality of his speech relegates his English to a merely academic or educational position, and his English thus remains an external idiom. The Filipino writer has not assimilated the English language as he has assimilated the art form he is using.[44]

The Filipino writer in English is incompletely assimilated, able to master the mechanics of written English but lacking a swift naturalness. English remains "external" because it is distanced from expression articulated as untranslated thought.[45] The "life-force" of a language is "untranslatable" on paper, and any attempts at translation always fail to match completely the original.[46] Villa captures a fundamental truth about translation's imperfection and unintentionally attests to his own status as a translator of literary taste, excellence. Arguably, Villa's acts of cultural translation, especially his defensiveness of the "best" *Filipino* writers in English and his strenuous appeals to their belonging to the canons of great world literature, undermine his political reticence. Exemplary literature is a nation's asset, and if it is valuable to a nation it can be repurposed for national interests.[47]

Villa's Arrival

Although it follows several of Villa's publications, *Have Come, Am Here* (first printing in 1941) audaciously announces Villa's "arrival," on the U.S. literary scene with one hundred twenty-seven numbered, untitled poems. Much of the early poems in the cycle include heroic

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44. Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories for 1940," 214.

45. Villa, of course, did not have access to the deconstructive critiques of the hierarchy of increasingly truer and unmediated expression that places writing below speech and speech below thought.

46. Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories for 1940," 215.

47. In the last of the "Best of" series, Villa writes, "Poetry is the very gold of a nation's literature, and it is well then that we give our proper encouragement." Villa, "The Best Filipino Poems of 1939-1940," 230.

renderings of contests against the Christian God, often ending with the poet-speaker besting the deity and exerting his will upon Him, as in

> I will break God's seamless skull,
> And I will break His kissless mouth,
> O I'll break out of His faultless shell
> And fall me upon Eve's gold mouth.[48]

Here, the violence rendered unto God is less indicative of an atheistic or secular refusal, and more indicative of an expansive poetic identity that considers itself omnipotent and deserving of the spoils of battle, even as it considers the opponent's "shell" without fault and "skull" without seams. Appeals to Villa's egotism may be unnecessarily subordinate to biography, but the parallels between killing one's god while helming Filipino literature in English from a sort of cosmic exile are telling. It is furthermore difficult to ignore in light of how Villa's "disciples" waited with anxiety for his latest installment of the "Best of" series where they might see their names listed—a precious sign of their development and of their leader's blessing. More importantly, the early poems, collected under "Lyrics" I-IV, brandish a remarkable confidence in the cooptation of English and the poetic conventions of the lyric.

Yet the speaker in other poems is simultaneously cognizant of having come from God, of becoming denuded and humbled in His company:

> When I shall the first time seek my Life
> O God's three eyen shall burnen me,
> Till my clothes begin to fail
> And I his beginning nude am made.
>
> The first time shall burnen me
> His thee eyen shall piercen me!
> Till at last my eyes in shreds
> I my beginning Life shall see.

48. Villa, "I will break God's seamless skull," in *Have Come, Am Here* (New York: Viking Press, 1942), 1-4.

…..[49]

In marked contrast to thrashing God in the earlier poem, the speaker here acknowledges the penetrating sight of God and his ability to shed all but what is essential to those who approach him. The unclothed speaker, eyed over, is granted a form of God's omniscience—"I a Nude and He my eyes!" (10)—and the dexterity to live spiritually. The figure of God plays here a more conventional role as guarantor of humans' capacity to live.

The poem includes nonstandard forms of nouns and verbs—*eyen*, *burnen*, *piercen*—to develop a contrastive relationship between the speaker and God. *Eyen* is an archaic pluralization of *eyes*, while the two nonstandard verbs appear to be Villa's own creation. "Futurity's equivalence to Now" in the "Divine Poems" section of *Have Come, Am Here* also employs nonstandard combinations of stems and affixes with a similar motif of the subjugated God:

> First, God, if you can remember
> He is not undiscriminate love.
> Unmythed God.
> I unchurched Him and charged
> Him manfully.[50]

Villa opts for his *undiscriminate* for the more conventional *indiscriminate*. *Unmythed*, "removed from myth," "made to be non-mythical," or other approximations, is legible as the speaker's repeated challenge to God, despite a nonstandard construction; the same can be said for *unchurched*, suggesting a removal of God from the head of the institutions within which his believers gather and receive religious service. *Manfully* bespeaks to the speaker's (and Villa's) masculinity, evinced in both speech and act. In one last, smaller example, the assonantal

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49. Villa, "When I shall the first time seek my Life," 1-8.

50. Villa, "Futurity's equivalence to Now," 6-10.

"Always and always the amaranth astir" uses both a rare (though at the time of publication, still circulating) term for food and a novel construction for *lover*: "Aliment of another air another star / Amator of all the alive and of attar."[51] Such examples of tweaking English indicate Villa's rehabilitative approach to the language: not necessarily a "making it new," but a search for refreshing expression in poetry, one that does not appeal to "correct" lexemes. In "Form, Plot, Etc.," Villa notes, "I have many times before stated that *merely correct English is not always good literary English*…that *mere grammatical correctness is not what constitutes good writing*."[52] Villa's comments can be read negatively as a kind of gatekeeping, protecting a creative "literary English" from merely mechanically correct writers. Unlike himself, inferior writers "*do not think in English*" whose classroom-oriented bilingualism "relegates [their] English to a merely academic or educational position."[53] English remains an "external idiom" to those unable to make English one's own (214). On the other hand, it may also be read as an attempt to situate the English of Philippine writers on equal footing with other Englishes, through his poetic neologisms, Villa might have claimed the "imaginative force" that springs from a possessed fluency (215).

Villa's "imaginative force" would be found not just in lexical play, but in what he considered new forms for poetry: reversed consonance, comma poems, and versifications of prose he called "adaptations." Villa included the first of these innovations in *Have Come, Am Here* with a brief explanation with characteristic aggrandizement: "The author is pleased to

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51. Villa, "Always and always the amaranth astir," 5-6.

52. Villa, "Form, Plot, Etc.," 141.

53. Villa, "The Best Filipino Short Stories for 1940," 214.

introduce in this book a new method of rhyming, a method which has *never been used in the history of English poetry, nor in any poetry*."[54] Instead of altering consonants around a rhymed vowel sound, reversed consonance involves taking the last consonants of an end word in a line of poetry and reversing them in the last syllables of the next rhymed line. Villa's own examples show that *light*, with pronounced consonants *l* and *t,* might be reversed consonant rhymed with words like *tell* or *tale*, with a reversed *t* and then *l*. Villa considered this "new" rhyme scheme as "subtler and stricter" and "less obtrusive on the ear" than "regular" vowel-oriented rhyming (152). Villa included seven examples of reversed consonance in *Have Come*, *Am Here*. "In my desire to be Nude" demonstrates this rhyming (shown at the end of each line) while towing the familiar lines of Villa's poetry—rebirth, godhood, and sensuality:

> In my desire to be Nude (n-d)
> I clothed myself in fire:-- (f-r)
> Burned down by walls, my roof, (r-f)
> Burned all these down. (d-n)
>
> Emerged myself supremely lean (l-n)
> Unsheathed like a holy knife. (n-f)
> With only His hand to find (f-n)
> To hold me beyond annul. (n-l)
>
> And found Him found Him found Him (h-m)
> Found the Hand to hold me up! (m-p)
> He held me like a burning poem (p-m)
> And waved me all over the world. (w-r)[55]

The speaker, again denuded, is transformed by God, figuratively sublimating into a poem after sacrificing to fire all that would serve as a barrier to his flourishing. The reversed consonance is

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54. Villa, "Author's Note Concerning Versification," in *Have Come, Am Here* (New York: Viking Press, 1942), 151.

55. Villa, "In my desire to be Nude," 1-12.

consistent until the last line, wherein the speaker transcends local boundaries to become global, omnipresent like the God waving him around. Benjamin Kahan reads Villa's reversed consonance strongly to locate a queerness within it, one that creates "new possibilities for coupling,"[56] displays a "queer promiscuousness" (656) and eschews "fixed points of departure and arrival" in favor of "neighborhoods, regions, and adjacencies" (659). Kahan is particularly interested in the transpacific salience in Villa's poetry, meaning its relation to the unfolding histories and "geopolitical juxtapositions" between the U.S. and Philippines specifically (652).

As significant a figure that Villa is in this "transpacific" exchange, it is perhaps embarrassing to Villa's spirit that, while such a supposedly audacious poetic technique was received warmly by Villa's peers, reversed consonance never enjoyed widespread influence or use. Nor did his "comma poems" rise to acclaim in a later collection *Volume Two* (1949), also including an explanatory note that emphasizes that the commas are used "*functionally*" and "*poetically*."[57] These commas, which replace the usual space between all the words in the poem, are "integral" to the poem, "regulating…verbal density and movement…enabling each word to attain a fuller tonal value, and the line movement to become more measured" (78). Despite their aesthetic significance, Villa allows the disconcerted reader that they can read and ignore the commas to see for themselves the "essentiality" of this punctuation proliferation (78). Villa

56. Benjamin Kahan, "José Garcia Villa's Transpacific Queer Aesthetics: Reversed Consonance and Combinatory Orientalism," *Journal of American Studies* 52, no. 3 (2018): 656. See also Denise Cruz, "Transpacific Modernisms," in *The Cambridge Companion to the American Modernist Novel*, ed. Joshua Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 35–51, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781316018729.004.

57. Villa, "A Note on the Commas," in *Doveglion: Collected Poems*, ed. John Cowen (New York: Penguin Classics, 2008), 78, emphasis original.

attempts to dignify his admittedly "strange innovation" by striking an analog between his commas and Seurat's pointillist technique in painting.

Villa's comma poems show greater attention to lineation and line shape, an attentiveness he had already begun to show in poems like "roses racing with rabbits" in "Lyrics IV" of *Have Come, Am Here*. Here, Villa uses parentheses to interject an interlocutor's voice—whether it belongs consistently to the speaker (as in thought or private speech) or another individual is impossible to know—to relate a playful and amorous adventurousness around a church.

> roses racing with rabbits
>
> around my favorite church
> (nowhere) yet we will all
>
> go there (I love you, with
> roses and rabbits and roses
>
> I love you) we will climb
> the beautiful steeple and
>
> watch (perhaps ring bells
> whose bells who knows)
>
> …………………………[58]

One can see clearly a stylistic influence from cummings, with whom Villa shared mutual respect and admiration. cummings's poem "Doveglion," which was Villa's *nom de plume* combining *dove*, *eagle*, and *lion*, attests to the originality of its subject, who sees "not something outside himself / not anything inside himself / but himself."[59] cummings describes Villa as a "noone(who is everyone)" (12) against the chiasmic pair "some anyone" (10) and "any someone" (11). The

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58. Villa, "roses racing with rabbits," 1-9.

59. e.e. cummings, "Doveglion," in *Complete Poems, 1904-1962*, ed. George J. Firmage (New York: Liveright, 1991), 6-8.

poem also appears *un*characteristic of Villa, who spared no critique for the vapidity of love topoi in the lyric poetry of Philippine English, yet who writes here of roses and rabbits—familiar images of love, bounty, fertility—and unironic proclamations of love.

An even greater focus to lineation prior to the comma poems is found in "sky wrote me blackbirds," which reads in part,

> that were gold (perhaps God
> laughing, strolling upside down)
> I replied,
>   Impossible
>   even for
> a miracle! Then God
> strolling upside down (perhaps
> roses skiing)
>   said,
>   Possible
> We (Love and I) saw dwarfs
> in Mars, and a marriage
> of lemons…[60]

This poem extends the use of parenthetical interlocution in favor of a greater attention to line shape. The poem continues to describe the speaker arm in arm with a laughing God after witnessing the fantastical images. The speaker moves from incredulity to friendship, and conversion parallels an inversion with both the speaker and God strolling upside down, an impish image aligning with much of the Christian-inflected poems of *Have Come, Am Here*.

The comma poems share much of the content of *Have Come, Am Here* but indicate Villa's increased willingness to try novel techniques. Like his previous forays into poetry, the poems of *Volume Two* illustrate Villa's relationship to the English poetic tradition as a kind of self-creation, a godly becoming without precedent. "When,I,was,no,bigger,than,a,huge," one of

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60. Villa, "sky wrote me blackbirds," 2-14.

two poems Villa reproduced without commas to demonstrate the reduction in quality sans their proliferation, reads in full:

When,I,was,no,bigger,than,a,huge,
Star,in,myself,I,began,to,write,
My,
Theology,
Of,rose,and

Tiger: till,I,burned,with,their
Pure,and,Rage. Then,was,I,Wrath-
Ful,
And,most,
Gentle: most,

Dark,and,yet,most,Lit: in,me,an,
Eye,there,grew: springing,Vision,
Its,
Gold,and
Its,wars. Then,

I,knew,the,Lord,was,not,my,Creator!
—Not,He,the,Unbegotten—but,I,saw
The,
Creator,
Was,I—and,

I,began,to,Die,and,I,began,to,Grow.[61]

The imagery depicts the speaker as a burning star possessing one's own "theology" and realizing that it is its own "Creator." In that realization is the capacity to live, to die, and to grow. That the act of self-creation is also an act of writing (for the "springing,Vision" that leads to speaker's realization comes immediately after the writing of one's own theology) bespeaks Villa's own self-insertion as an artist, critic, and cultural translator, even as he disidentifies with any explicit antecedents. The concrete lineation of this poem invokes images of growth, flight, and ascension:

61. Villa, "When,I,was,no,bigger,than,a,huge," 1-21.

perhaps a tree, birds taking flight, winged angel. Or each stanza resembles a delicate equilibrium on a fulcrum, counterbalancing the Biblical God-before-man narrative with a man-before-God riposte. In either case, the conspicuous use of commas and concrete approach to lineation announce the birthing of poetic genius, a sentiment echoed in several of forty-eight "Divine poems" of *Volume Two*, like "*Parthogenesis of Genius*," one of the few poems for which Villa provided a title.[62]

The other poem that Villa provided without commas has a more familiar form of five unrhymed tercets and describes a counter-Christ figure, "Not,Christ,the,Fox,not, / Christ,the,Lord…. But,Christ,Oppositor, // Christ,Foeman: The,true,Dark,Hero,"[63] The "true,Dark,hero" in this poem can be seen as an intermediary figure between the jovial laughing God of "sky wrote me blackbirds" and the disavowed Creator of "When,I,was,no,bigger, than,a,huge," receiving the praise of the speaker as an alternative to available, pre-existing doctrine. "[Who],can,gaze,unburned? Who, / Can,stand,unbowed?" (13-14) the poem rhetorically asks near its conclusion, suggesting that that the influence of this alternative Christ is a formidable presence, a veritable challenger to the conventional Christ figure. These comma poems display not only Villa's grasping for an unmarked space to call his own among poets writing English. Despite explicit statements regarding the uselessness of national or cultural concerns to an aesthetic commitment to art, Villa's own commentary and poetry suggest the difficulty of thinking outside canons, nations, or traditions. But the stickiness of these

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62. Villa's "*Parthenogensis of Genius*" describes genius as an asexual reproducer, springing from "*Un-*, / Light,and,lighting-like!" (1-2). Its auto-creation breaks "the,genetic,economy" (3) and is akin to an "Immaculate,conception, // Beyond,physiology— / Too,swift,for,prophecy, / Too,slow,for,tabloid,history" (6-9).

63. Villa, "Much,beauty,is,less,than,the,face,of" (1-2, 4-5).

imaginaries enables Villa's poetics of auto-poesis, concomitant with linguistic novelties that, *pace* Kahan, are shaped by the "geopolitical juxtapositions" of the U.S. and the Philippines. While Villa never comprehensively theorized his own colonial status, he very much played the concomitant roles—translator, interlocutor, experimenter, imitator, and transformer.

One final set of examples can demonstrate the poet's alchemical and translating roles for English. Some of Villa's last important work is his "adaptations" collected in *Selected Poems and New* (1958). Like reversed consonance and the comma poem, these experiments come with their own explanatory note. They are, as Villa explains, the "conversion of prose, through technical manipulation, into poems with line movement, focus, and shape, as against loose verse"[64] and essentially resemble the now historical avant-garde technique of deriving poems from mundane and commercial prose found in magazines, letters, newspapers, and editorials. He describes some of these poems as collages, taken from two or more prose sources. Villa characteristically does not acknowledge the historical occurrence of this technique in poetry, and the rhetorical gesture of the note is akin to an announcement of something new. Whether Villa was totally ignorant of his predecessors seems to matter less when his performance of genius that has already been described earlier is considered.

The adaptations are unique for highlighting Villa's recognition of his own performance as a cultural translator and mediator. They also demonstrate Villa's own recognition in the racialized performance of others. For example, "*Dame Edith Sitwell Sitting*," derived from an

64. Villa, "A Note on the Adaptations," in *Doveglion*, 147.

essay by Gerald Weales in the literary magazine *New World Writing*, is an acclamatory, if somewhat wry poem that describes the titular poetess's entrance a "masterpiece"[65] and

> With the face of a sensitive
> Horse: she always wears an
> Exotic robe: this one red
> Cut through with gold… (7-10)

The poem goes on to describe the figure of Sitwell chameleon-like, putting "aside / Exoticism as a quick-change / Artist discards a hat or / Mustache! / and becomes tweedily / English" (17-21). In her putting aside of exoticism and in her "becoming tweedily English," Sitwell ironically shows cultural identification through sartorial gestures to be tenuous and mutable, indicative of a strategic self-fashioning, much like Villa's own de-emphasis of his Filipino racialization and elevation of a de-racialized aesthetic. By the end of the poem, Sitwell has achieved a "two- / Way metamorphosis between / Chinese empress and Margaret Rutherford" (34-36), completing the ambiguous racial transformation.

Villa reduplicates his own sort of *chinoiserie* with another adaptation of *Life* magazine, commenting on long disappeared, hallucinogenic Chinese fungus that

> …survives in the form of
> A scepter
>
> Usually fashioned of carved
> Jade but may be of fold,
> Ivory or rare wood: called
> *Ju-i* which means "As
> You would
> Wish."[66]

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65. Villa, "*Dame Edith Sitwell Reading*," 1.

66. Villa, "The early Chinese probably," 6-13.

The anthropological gist of the letter to the editor is subsumed under the transcribing of the lines into a poem-like lineation. In both adaptations, Villa made almost no changes to the words themselves, opting instead to break up the prose through a consideration of line shape rather than something like cadence or rhyme. Whether the mere "versification" of prose counts as legitimate poetry (or whether it is *good* poetry) remains an open question. Here, what is emphasized is an alternative attempt by Villa to situate himself within the substrate of literary discourse and popular ephemera.

Villa's strenuous attempts at legitimation are revealing for an American modernism that could only barely tolerate Villa's otherness. Despite Villa's colonially inflected desire for inclusion in a global English canon, the dominant strains of modernism in the U.S. could, in Timothy Yu's persuasive argument, "only adapt to the phenomenon of a Filipino modernist writer by placing him squarely within the Anglo American literary tradition."[67] Critics and fellow writers were mostly blind or ignorant of his race and nationality, Yu finds, but it is also true that Villa's own racial effacing through aestheticism contributed greatly to his public image and subsequent reception. Rather than be measured as Villa's entrance to a modernist ethos, his conscious bids at experimentation, most apparent in the comma poems, "[expose] the contradictions" of race and language that the poet inhabits" (56).

Stein's Departure

Such trials indicated for Villa a radical newness and laudable undertaking to advance the technics of poetry, recall that Stein considered commas servile and superfluous, in heteronymous relation to the words around them. Stein also believes confidently in the autonomy of English, its

67. Timothy Yu, "'The Hand of a Chinese Master': José Garcia Villa and Modernist Orientalism," *MELUS* 29, no. 1 (2004), 42.

completeness unto itself, especially prior to the fragmentation of "daily island life." The way she describes the instrumentality of language belies the imperial discourse pulsing through her commentary and works like *Tender Buttons*. It is not merely that Stein "uses language as a medium to destabilize thought" and meant to focus on the word-as-thing rather than word-as-word as Cristanne Miller has recently written.[68] It is certainly true that Stein's rejection of poetic lineation parallels a rejection of mimesis, in the sense of line-as-representation; instead, the poetics of *Tender Buttons* is that an one of obliqueness, of intentionally "missing the mark" rendered by an indexical relationship between word and referent so that intuitive or heuristic cognition is significantly undermined.

But this destabilization, the toying with indexical relationship between word and referent, is more sharply ascertained in relation to Stein's "syntax of politics," as Janet Boyd's useful essay on Stein's "What Is English Literature?" calls it, and arguably connected to the agitated boundaries between inside and out, between the imperial center and the colonial periphery.[69] Literature's aggregate shift from sentences to phrases, Boyd suggests, mirrors the ever-increasing recognition that colonial holdings threaten to destabilize at-home communities and cultural harmony. She writes further of England and the United States' literary trajectories in the 19th and 20th centuries:

> England did not permit its colonies to be self-determined entities that participated equally in the affairs of the greater empire. Therefore, the British colonies cannot be understood as sentences united in an expansive paragraph but instead must be relegated to the status of phrases governed by the grammar of the sentence. In contrast, the States, though united by a controlling power, are granted degrees of sovereignty and participate

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68. Cristanne Miller, "(Women Writing) The Modernist Line," *Transatlantica* (2016), 8.

69. Janet Boyd, "Gertrude Stein's Geographical History of Literature," in *Primary Stein: Returning to the Writing of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Janet Boyd and Sharon J. Kirsch (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), 205.

> relatively equally in the affairs of the nation; together they make up the content, tone, and complexity of the paragraph. (210)

In her argument, Boyd clarifies what Stein's prose struggles mightily to do: that form follows the flows that carry it across oceans to foreign continents and reflects a national mode.

How might any of these analyses be evident in *Tender Buttons*? For all its opacity and "secret language," it is plausible to describe it broadly as tracing the vectors of movement inside and out. The collection of descriptions tries to see "beyond" and "through" a normalized reality of mundane objects, decompose and digest food, and drift in and out of rooms. The titular "Objects" of the first section of *Tender Buttons* is thematic of the entire collection, focusing on the "feeling" of composition—the coming together of an object as a referent in consciousness:

> Within, within the cut and slender joint alone, with sudden equals and no more than three, two in the center make two one side.
> If the elbow is long and it is filled so then the best example is altogether.
> The kind of show is made by squeezing.[70]

Objects come into consciousness by great if unrealized effort, a "squeezing"; their familiarity obscures the unnoticed labor of their naturalization. A similar insight is reached in both entries "A Box." In one, the agentless speaker finds that "it is so rudimentary to be analysed and see a fine substance strangely, it is so earnest to have a green point not to red but to point again" (13). There is a perhaps unhelpful understatement here, since the kind of "analysis" of *Tender Buttons* does not seem even to the most skilled reader to be "rudimentary," although the strangeness, the apparent foreignness under the magnification, of the "seen" (described) substance is fairly clear. In the second "A Box" object, the speaker acknowledges the inherent duplicity of any container to conceal what it contains; a box is "handily made of what is necessary to replace any

70. Stein, *Tender Buttons: The Corrected Centennial Edition*, ed. Seth Perlow (San Francisco: City Light Books,. 2014), 22.

substance" (16). The arena of essentialism—interiority—is metaphorically scrutinized and shown to be no longer guaranteed to synchronize with the outside: "the plainer it is made the more reason there is for some outward recognition that there is a result" (16). Not all cogitations are so sobering, however. "In Between" achieves a similar perceptiveness through a thinly veiled sexual raillery:

> In between a place and candy is a narrow foot path that shows more mounting than anything, so much really that a calling meaning a bolster measured a whole thing with that. A virgin a whole virgin is judged made and so between curves and outlines and real seasons and more out glasses and a perfectly unprecedented arrangement between old ladies and mild colds there is no satin wood shining. (26)

Such descriptions are visual but also tactile (and, in the case of "Food," olfactory and gustatory), preserving and hinting "the liminal space where the inhabitants of such categories touch and, in this tactile exchange, both exceed and mark their limits."[71]

In fact, the entrance of substance into oneself in the mundane activity of eating reaches a new urgency when it becomes contextualized as a de-stabilizing rather than nourishing exercise. Both descriptions of "Eating" employ repetition and onomatopoeia to transform eating as a familiar activity for nearly all people into a laborious exercise with no clear end. One "Eating" riffs on the rhymes between *eat* and *heat* and alludes to the repetitive nature of chewing:

> Is it so a noise to be is it a least remain to rest, is it a so old say to be, is it a leading are been. Is it so, is it so, is it so, is it so is it so is it so. Eel us eel us with no pea no pea cool, no pea cool cooler, no pea cooler with a land a land cost in, with a land cost in stretches. Eat he heat eating he heat it eating, he heat it heat eating. He heat eating.[72]

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71. Chad Bennett, "Scratching the Surface: *Tender Buttons* and the Textures of Modernism," *Arizona Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (2017), 34.

72. Stein, *Tender Buttons,* 56-57.

The second "Eating" refocuses on the subjective experience of watching others engaged in this act, remarking, "[it] was a shame it was a shame to stare to stare" (57). Self-preservation becomes not only shameful, but also devoid of creative autonomy. Modestly defending Stein from critiques of political quietism, Maayan Dauber describes the style of *Tender Buttons* as a particularly rich example of the fragmented modernist subject, or, more particularly, a "conception of the world" that "seems too fragmented to participate in politics at all."[73] The topics described by the non-organizing consciousness of *Tender Buttons* "seems generated not by some governing principle or idea but by the play of language itself," a play that seems unable to manifest as a political will (131). Political matters are simply unable to be registered, except, as Lopez's critique of bourgeois writers suggests, in an impassible, loss-tinged confusion, such that a global event like World War I seems inexplicably meaningless and endless. This paralysis persists in the domestic sphere, where banality meets a hopeless recurrence, for which sex and play seem the only alleviating responses.[74]

73. Maayan Dauber, "Gertrude Stein's Passivity: War and the Limits of Modern Subjectivity," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 58, no. 2 (2016), 130. The issue of Stein's collaborationist history is taken up influentially in Barbara Will, *Unlikely Collaboration: Gertrude Stein, Bernard Faÿ, and the Vichy Dilemma*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

74. Julie Goodspeed-Chadwick has a fairly more optimistic reading, suggesting that Stein's technics, specifically her naming practices, encourage us to grapple with how we understand names as markers of identifications, even though these names signify identities that are always in flux, in terms of language and representation and in terms of changing entities in the real world" (9) and that *Tender Buttons*' style "may disturb and cause a disturbance because it promotes and sanctions multiple ways of living and loving" (20). See Julie Goodspeed-Chadwick, "Reconfiguring Identities in the Word and in the World: Naming Marginalized Subjects and Articulating Marginal Narratives in Early Canonical Works by Gertrude Stein," *South Central Review* 31, no. 2 (2014), 9-27.

To read both Villa and Stein in this way is not to resign to a flattened determinism that takes political context as the arbiter of these authors and their texts, to a create a sort of meta-author. Instead, one of the aims of this comparative reading is to deepen an understanding of these authors' critical idiom, especially considering their writing that is conventionally labeled modernist or avant-garde and their roles as self-conscious critics, theorists, and gatekeepers, all the same time. Furthermore, such a comparison adds nuance to the checkered legacies of Billa and Stein, who have received consistent critique, some of which remains justified, as well as situate both to a global modernism theoretically yoked to the waning of the imperial metropole.

Chapter 3: National Pastoralism and the Weak Man in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and Manuel Arguilla's *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories*

In the introduction of Manuel Arguilla's 1940 collection of previously published short stories, *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories*, editor A.V.H. Hartendorp penned a glowing appraisal of the Ilokano author, averring that he remained committed to regionalist authenticity while writing in a non-native tongue. In the editor's estimation, Arguilla, unlike less skilled Anglophone Filipino writers, broke out of a cycle of imitative literary experiments derivative of English and American imports and instead used "English as almost as it were a Philippine dialect—so adequate he finds it for his purpose."[1] By characterizing English as a "Philippine dialect," Hartendorp—whose outsize influence in the early development twentieth century Anglophone Philippine literature merits its own extended study—simultaneously maintains the supremacy of English's reach *and* designates a non-English author as a highly-skilled manipulator and contributor to that language. Prepackaged tropes, idioms, and linguistic forms of English are disassembled and rebuilt with a dash of "local color" to occupy what Gemino Abad has influentially described for Anglophone Filipino poetry a "native clearing,"[2] a cultural and linguistic field that Filipino authors make their own. The

1. A.V.H. Hartendorp, "Introduction," in *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories*, ed. A.V.H. Hartendorp (Manila: Philippine Book Guild, 1940), 9.

2. The term formed part of the title of a collection of then-contemporary poems, *A Native Clearing: Filipino Poetry and Verse from English Since the '50s to the Present: From Edith L. Tiempo to Cirilo F. Bautista*, in whose introduction Abad wrote in defiant terms that if "language fixes the forms of the world we inhabit and forges there our sense of our own native reality, then it can be said that through Spanish and English *as we have adopted them to our purposes*, we have in fact shaped our Filipino consciousness, with much the same forces as through our own native tongues. Indeed, our own *vernaculars* had also in their own way indigenized the alien grammars so that, over time, the native Indio freed himself through a kind of spiritual homesteading in the imperial backcountry" (9). See Gémino H. Abad, "Introduction: The Language of Our Blood," in *A Native Clearing: Filipino Poetry and Verse from English Since*

double-move of receiving (sometimes enthusiastically) English and transforming it seems to be a strong pattern among Anglophone writers, legible in a much larger cultural project of rehabilitating language to suit a rapidly changing world. For the Philippines during Arguilla's most productive period, this rapid change was none other than the seismic, traumatic reorganization of society due to the colonial presence and influence of the United States during the Commonwealth period.

And yet this unavoidable social transformation is met with some resistance in the imagined relationship with the land itself. Hartendorp interprets the rural lands about which Arguilla writes as materially bountiful and thus propitious for writers seeking literary material from a historical crosscurrent of several cultures and traditions:

> That life is compounded of a blood ancestry to which the aboriginal pigmies and the successive waves of invading Indonesians and Malays, Chinese traders, later the conquering Spaniards, and recently also the Americans, contributed; of social cultures that stem from Southeastern Asia, India, Indo-China, China, Spain, Mexico, and the United States of America, embracing religions that include the lowest forms of fetishism and polytheism, a corrupted Mohammedanism, a medieval Roman Catholicism, and a more recent Protestant sectarianism, and political forms that include the datuism of the South, the tribal and clan organizations of the pagan peoples, the feudal status that still survives in agricultural regions, and the modern government structure, purportedly democratic, but largely controlled, and under the circumstances necessarily so, by a vigorous and inspired leader [Manuel Quezon] who has assumed the task of shaping this heterogeneous complex into a nation.[3]

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the '50s to the Present: From Edith L. Tiempo to Cirilo F. Bautista, ed. Gémino H. Abad (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1993), 1–27. Like Hartendorp, Abad sees English not as supplanting indigenous expression but itself indigenized, although the valorization of Filipino poets in English comes with the risk of privileging English as a kind of cultural savior and sidestepping the uncomfortable political questions of vernacular languages' displacement. Abad revisits these claims and the meme of the title in Gémino H. Abad, "Filipino Poetry in English: A Native Clearing," *World Englishes* 23, no. 1 (2004): 169–81.

3. Hartendorp, "Introduction," 11.

Hartendorp's expansive tour through Philippine history suggests that to be a Filipino writer is not really to be "Filipino" at all in a homogeneously unique sense, but to be the product of migrants from neighboring Southeast Asian peoples and subjects of empire—religiously syncretic, economically uneven, and politically promiscuous. The editor also fuses premodern and contemporaneous, suggesting that within the Philippine population can be found "Negrito savages" (11), rice-terrace builders, fishermen, Moro pirates, as well as exploited factory workers, political elites, and worldly cosmopolitan Manileños. Rendered as a surplus as social, political, and cultural determinants, this copious image of the Filipino is strongly associative with the plentitude of the land, a subject about which Arguilla has written masterfully and "objectively" (12), according to Hartendorp. It is this objectiveness that gives Arguilla's fiction a valuable hardness and edge, not just in the exposure of the "evils of land-tenantry and absentee land ownership and…the evils of the new industrialism" (12), but in the embrace of "a robust and often sensual zest for life in its commoner aspects" (12). Both critical and sensual, the stories in this collection are deeply suspicious of modernity and enamored with the sights, smell, and sounds of a peasant humanity.

Hartendorp's mediation of Arguilla's reprinted stories participates in a state-sponsored nationalizing discourse of Philippine letters burgeoning during the Commonwealth period, a discourse that was later radicalized as anti-colonial and anti-authoritarian in the 1960s onward.[4]

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4. See, for example, Nicanor Tiongson, *Kasaysayan at Estetika Ng Sinakulo, at Ibang Dulang Panrelihiyon Sa Malolos* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1975); Virgilio Almario, *Balagtasismo versus Modernismo: Panulaang Tagalog Sa Ika-20 Siglo* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1984); E. San Juan Jr., *Toward a People's Literature: Essays in the Dialectics of Praxis and Contradiction in Philippine Writing* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1984); and Bienvenido Lumbera and Cynthia Lumbera, eds., *Philippine Literature: A History and Anthology* (Mandaluyong: Anvil, 1997).

In attempting to limn a national identity through the apparatus of literature, the Philippine Book Guild, the publisher of *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife*, triangulates the new Filipino subject within nationalism, literary institutions, and literary form, especially the short story, regarded by many critics as the most exemplary and popular genre for Anglophone Philippine writers during this time. Arguilla's stories contribute to a consciousness of inter- and intra-cultural difference, one that is situated ambivalently both to U.S. influence and urban modernization. This contribution is both thematic, in the content of the structurally simple tales of seasonal patterns, domestic strife, and the awakening of political consciousness; and formalist, in the use of the short story cycle to represent aesthetically the heterogeneity of social experience.

Writing in the US and decades before, Sherwood Anderson's canonical *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), seems to have anticipated much of this discourse, although his influence is complicated, and commentary directed toward the Philippines non-existent. What little there is on Anderson's distant relationship to the Philippines or Philippine authors is actually centered on the American author's influence on José Garcia Villa.[5] The arguments for this influence, especially in the critical deployments of grotesquerie, are convincing, but consideration of arguably the most accomplished short story writer of English *in* the Philippines during the American colonial

5. See Edward J. O'Brien, "Introduction," in *Footnote to Youth: Tales of the Philippines and Others*, ed. Edward J. O'Brien (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 3–5.; Leopoldo Y. Yabes, "Pioneering in the Filipino Short Story in English (1925-1940)," in *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940*, ed. Leopoldo Y. Yabes (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1975), xix–xlv; Lucila V. Hosillos, "Philippine-American Literary Relations, 1898-1941" (Dissertation, Bloomington, Indiana University, 1964); Roger J. Bresnahan, *Angles of Vision: Conversations on Philippine Literature* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992); and Denise Cruz, "Jose Garcia Villa's Collection of 'Others': Irreconcilabilities of a Queer Transpacific Modernism," *Modern Fiction Studies* 55, no. 1 (2009): 11–41.

period seems equally merited. In fact, the primary goal of this chapter is to sketch a shared concern of both authors to mold the form of the short story into what is termed here a "national pastoralism" that ambivalently signals a return to a rural imaginary uncomplicated by the intrusion of modernity.

The Place of the Short Story Collection

Comparatively reading these short story collections contrasts with the dominant strain in both postcolonial and print culture studies to analyze the novel as the literary technology of national subject formation.[6] As Victoria Kuttainen writes in *Unsettling Stories*, the short story collection "lacks a real place in critical discourse,"[7] even though the short story collection, especially those that emerge from either former settler or exploitative colonies attends uniquely to the "precariousness of cultural and territorial borders inside the nation-state" (1). Postcolonial critical discourse has perhaps lapsed in finding unity in a national voice in their agendas. For postcolonial writers, Kuttainen argues, the national cannot be part of a progress narratives for those who have been silenced or marginalized because those narratives still "serve the interests of majority stakeholders" who have benefitted from imperialism and continued forms of domination of Indigenous peoples. What is serendipitous about the complex form of the short story collection is that, by virtue of its constitutive parts being both autonomous and connected,

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6. The term *short story collection* is at odds with the more typical *short story cycle*, but the former term gestures more toward its social potentialities rather than its structural interconnectedness. Other terms, such as *short story composite* and *composite novel*, have also competed for use but have not quite taken hold. See Jennifer J. Smith, *The American Short Story Cycle* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1tqxb3j.5 for a critical overview of the varying attempts to justify a name for the genre.

7. Victoria Kuttainen, *Unsettling Stories: Settler Postcolonialism and the Short Story Composite* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 1, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=1114380.

it can engage issues of "unity, fragmentation, collocation, and coherence" (3). In other words, the genre is equipped to deal with the muddled complications of colonial legacies. Kuttainen's main concern is with the settler postcolonies of Canada, Australia, and the United States, but her intervention aptly addresses the forces of Philippine neo-colonialism.

What purchase does the "nation" have for formal and generic analyses of the short story collection in light of post- and transnational reorientations away from the nation-state? If the nation is not read merely as the endpoint of Indigenous or vernacular erasure, but more as a pliable ideological trope, then it has the potential to be creatively and subversively used. It can be antagonistic rather than hegemonic. This potential plays out in both *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife* and *Winesburg, Ohio*, since, as Kuttainen argues, collections around the small town or single setting "have historically been read as metonyms for the composite nation" (14). The short story collection can re-evaluate "myths of cultural homogeneity" just as they can re-evaluate "myths of colonial provincialism and…the terms and forms to articulate a new place and its affiliative community" (88). In possibly espousing positively affiliative communities and going against the grain of official nationalist discourses, the short story collection possesses two competing claims: one of regional authenticity, and another of resistance against homogenizing nationalist narratives.[8] Although Kuttainen's study is strictly about the complexities of settler postcolonial literature, the texts of both Anderson and Arguilla show broadly "traces of anxious relations to authority, authenticity, Indigeneity, narrative, and to community and structures of

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8. See Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/reader.action?docID=653022&ppg=231.

kinship."[9] Because the short story collection seems to textualize the conditions in which it is produced, the genre gravitates toward developing a sense of location as an anchoring point around and within which fictional events transpire. The small-town or single-setting collection thus contains a host of contradictions—a place to uphold or to break tradition, a canvas of progressive imagining or cultural backwardness, the warm intimacy of tight community or the stinging isolation amplified by one's closest peers.

All such features of the small-town short story collection—the revival of idealized place pregnant with meaning, the orbiting around center and periphery, the proliferation of voice, the displacement of unifying cause and effect, the duality of autonomy and interconnection—are exemplified in both Arguilla and Anderson's collections. However, the sense of the village or small town requires some degree of qualification, given that, for both *Leon* and *Winesburg, Ohio*, there is more than just one meaningful setting used for varying purposes. To make fullest sense of either text's relation to place and national discourse, the processes by which place becomes either emblematic, allusory, or metonymic must be pried open. As a preamble to this investigation, consider Anderson's rationalization of the short story collection for the planning of this novel. The literary myth surrounding *Winesburg, Ohio*, which Anderson himself helped propagate in his letters, recounts how he frantically wrote the entire series in one sitting without any meaningful edits in a "novel" form that he created since the novel was unsuitable for an American writer:

> I have even sometimes thought that the novel form does not fit an American writer, that it is a form which had been brought in. What is wanted is a new looseness; and in *Winesburg* I have made my own form. There were individual tales but all about lives in some way connected. By this method I did succeed, I think, in giving the feeling of the

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9. Kuttainen, *Unsettling Stories*, 9.

> life of a boy growing into young manhood in a town. Life is a loose flowing thing. There are no plot stories in life.[10]

These few lines raise several queries, including why the novel does not fit an American writer, where it came from, why the short story collection is superior, how the people in these stories are connected, and why it seems equipped to narrativize this connection. The novel, despite all its purported abilities to depict the pluralism of life in the varyingly consequential interactions of characters and to induce a sense of temporality pregnant with meaning, does not capture for Anderson the "looseness" of life nor impart the feeling of a young boy maturing into a man. And while the novel does generally explore the complex connections among people, events, and ideas, what Anderson implies here is that the commitment to plot results in a lack of verisimilitude; life, it seems, cannot be plotted by the mediating techniques of the novel.

But if the corollary assumption is that the short story collection can more truly depict life, then the mythical, associative quality of the stories—one might call them "tales"—of Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* poses a significant. Plausibly, Anderson may simply not be thinking rigorously about either his own work, the novel, or the short story collection, but the disjunction between what the author thinks of their work and how critics subsequently read it is more profitably seized as a productive tension rather than dismissed as one's idiosyncratic meditations or personally motivated interpretation, not to mention a generalized inevitability of entire project of criticism.

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10. Sherwood Anderson, "Waiting for Ben Huebsch," in *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942), 289. On how Anderson purportedly wrote *Winesburg, Ohio* in such a brief span of time, see William M. Phillips, "How Sherwood Anderson Wrote Winesburg, Ohio," *American Literature* 23, no. 1 (1951): 7–30, https://doi.org/10.2307/2921429.

The Abundant Land

Truthfulness to life is actually less urgent to either of these short story collections than truthfulness to *community*, no less airy and amorphous than the term *life*, but acquiring a political content through the implications of belonging, shared responsibility, the allocation of resources, deference to leadership, the delegation of tasks, and mutual protection. A major trend in both collections is a vision of the community as organic, in productive stewardship of the land. There is a temptation to call such texts "pastoral," in the broad sense of literary texts that sing the hymn of the shepherd. It is a term that feels perhaps dated at best and anachronistic at worst, and, originating in classical antiquity, displaced in analyses of Philippine literature in English.[11] It is also a term that seems limited because of its generic reach that grasps any text that seems to be about some meaningful relationship to unfettered nature. The following discussion argues that the sense of *pastoralism* pertinently addresses both the short story collection and the problematic of nation sketched above as the term usefully broaches the tension between urban and rural communities, especially the encroachment of modernity and the violent restructuring of class relationships, to which the stories in both collections most vigorously respond.

William Empson's somewhat elliptical *Some Versions of Pastoral* strikingly describes the pastoral as "proletarian literature," because one of its central features is a creative combination of class such that the theme expressed is both universal and purified to be the best expression. More than just focusing on the lives of farmers or other caretakers of the land (although that is an undeniable and obvious feature of nearly all the stories), these stories also involve a sort of folk theorization discernible about what Empson describes as the "trick" of implying "a beautiful

11. On the Philippine pastoral, see John D. Blanco, "The Pastoral Theme in Colonial Politics and Literature," *The Diliman Review* 52, no. 1–4 (2005): 18.

relation between rich and poor…to make simple people express strong feelings (felt as the most universal object, something fundamentally true about everybody) in learned and fashionable language (so that you wrote about the best subject in the best way)."[12] The worker in proletarian art is a "mythical cult-figure" that isn't quite symbol or propaganda, but idealized to the extent that they are in complete harmony with their work and the products their labor produces, in a natural state that will "naturally" lead to prosperity because the worker labors in the realm of the true and the good. However, in this unity there should be no mistake of unproblematic harmony; rather, the pastoral "gives a natural expression for a sense of social injustice" (17) by focusing on a person outside or on the fringes of society, a position where a critical perspective can be fashioned. The condition of powerlessness of the fringe or exilic spaces of society enables a certain irony, since it is within this powerlessness that the autonomy of the steward is put into sharp relief. In turn, this irony can be mobilized for a critical, rather than merely opposed, assessment of the community from which the pastoral character stands apart. As Empson sees it, the pastoral/proletarian text invests in "poetic statements of human waste and limitation, whose function is to give strength to see life clearly and so adopt a fuller attitude toward it" (19).

Paul Alpers's perhaps more conventional *What Is Pastoral?* notes that the generic features most commonly associated with pastoral, including a nostalgic yearning for a so-called "Golden Age," the synthesis of art and nature, the espousal of a contemplative and rustic life, and a hostility to urbanity, have calcified as a result of Renaissance writers who, in looking back to the idylls of antiquity, applied the characteristics of the most exemplary extant work, such as those of Theocritus or Virgil, to the entire category, leading to confusion about its post-classical

12. William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1950), 11.

relevance and its essential features.[13] In order to give a "coherent account of tis various features—formal, expressive, and thematic" and to "provide for its historical continuity," Alpers reconfigures Kenneth Burke's idea of a "representative anecdote," a metacritical term that refers to an account of reality that self-consciously selects from and reduces that reality.[14] The "representative anecdote" can be understood as a unit of any theoretical or critical discourse, one that is provisional, experiential, personal, and narratological, not a "paradigm or authoritative example, but…a 'summation' which has generative powers."[15]

For Alpers, the "representative anecdote" of the pastoral, that which gives it categorical specificity and continuity, is not, as perhaps expected, the idealization of landscape, but the story of herdsmen and their lives. With this summation of the genre, the pastoral can extend beyond its historical confines of either antiquity or Renaissance revival, because the notion of a *herdsman* can be representatively diverse. To refocus the pastoral on character rather than setting recalls Empson's class-conscious reading of the genre in that the "dramatis personae of pastoral can be extended to include other rustics or socially inferior persons on the grounds that they are the equivalent, in a given society or world, of shepherds, or that they more truly have the representative status that traditional pastoral ascribes to its herdsmen" (27). Worrying terms like *genre* and *mode*, and drawing from classic texts of literary criticism such as Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature* (1956) and Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Alpers

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13. Alpers, 10. He says further that "Renaissance poetics fails to tell us much about pastoral, because any scheme or survey of the whole of poetry inevitably emphasizes what is considers the major forms. Given this bias, it is not surprising that much Renaissance criticism of pastoral occurs in prologues or prefaces to pastoral works…"

14. The text in question is Burke's "Scope and Reduction" in *A Grammar of Motives*.

15. Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?*, 14.

suggests that the pastoral is only partially understood as a category of texts similarly concerned with the rustic lives of shepherds but united in "outer form and inner form" (45), respectively the structure or subject matter of the text. To deal away with "mode" being uncritically denotative of either structure or subject matter, Alpers writes that mode is the "literary manifestation, in a given work, not of its attitudes in a loose sense, but of its assumptions about man's nature and situation." As a display of man's aptitude in his given context, the pastoral implicitly probes man's "human strength, possibilities, pleasures, [and] dilemmas." With its "consciously modal interests," the representative shepherd or herdsman condenses "man's strength relative to the world" (50).

Put schematically, the pastoral mode or the mode of pastoralism is identifiable by its approach to man's strength relative to the fictive world he inhabits. This definition has the unfortunate limitation of cordoning off the non-human form from its domain; pastoralism becomes a strictly humanist genre, its criticism equally humanist. Furthermore, because of its strong association with antiquity and Renaissance revival, the pastoral also feels Eurocentric, or at least "East-absent." One way out of this thicket is to read the inhabited world as similarly empty of denotative content, able to be stretched to mean any socially meaningful habitation of expanding horizons. For both Anderson and Arguilla, then, the "strength relative to the world" might be considered the level of agency within the shifting boundaries of nation-state, ethnocultural group, country, or local community. The literary treatment of *agency*, connotative of power, creation, and action, is certainly a topic in many kinds of literature, pastoral and non-pastoral alike; the meaningfulness of the landscape, despite Alpers's qualm, still helps to distinguish pastoral and non-pastoral modes. Mark Buechsel's *Sacred Land*: *Sherwood Anderson, Midwestern Modernism, and the Sacramental Vision of Nature* stands in modest

contrast to Alpers's humanism, focusing instead on specifically the United States' early twentieth century spiritual reconsideration of the Midwest as a kind of "pastoral myth," a "great American garden in which independent family farmers lived dignified, happy lives, providing for their households' needs abundantly by cultivating the rich and rewarding soil, leading lives free from care, and being preserved in virtuous character through honest labor" (4). Thus, the pastoral myth seems anodyne to modern economic development, wherein humans are alienated not only from the products of their labor but from the natural setting in which they toil, subordinate to abstracted equilibria of supply, demand, cost, and profit.

Buechsel reads an essentially religious component to the Midwestern modernists' responses to this development, a mostly negative appraisal of the country's failure to "establish a sound cultural relation to human nature and to the so recently claimed fertile land" (10) and a reversion to what he calls a "sacramental worldview" (12). The strain of Protestantism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the US resulted, among other things, in the relocation of the hermeneutic authority of Scripture in Scripture itself, rather than in an intermediary such as a priest or the Church. Literalism thus became a powerful way of interacting with holy texts and increased the reader's "astonishing epistemological confidence" in the referentiality of the sign (18). A sacramental worldview rejects the mere materialism or physicalism of creation and instead sees reality as "containing and conferring spiritual…presence" (13). It is, however, not a presence fully accessible to humans, flawed with flesh and sin as they are, who thus require a ritualistic performance of the sacraments. The sacraments are in turn endowed with divine potential precisely because of its performers' limited nature. Positioned against Emersonian romanticism, whose Platonic idealism hinted at attainable omniscience, and Calvinism, whose predestination and relation to industrial capitalism led to an insistence of rigid discipline and

self-perfection, Midwestern writers reconceptualized the pastoral myth to highlight the specialness of a uniquely vibrant, fecund, and sexual abundancy of the soil on which they stood (15, 22). The land offered the promise of self-sufficiency, independent cooperation with natural resources, the very material of community and nation, and a fresh start to a flourishing humanity.

Although the Midwest modernists of the U.S. were neither expert historians, cultural commentators, or even uniformly devoutly Christian, they reached a stable consensus against "systematic thought lacking in a sacramental or 'natural' openness to mystery, to the elusive, symbiotically physical and spiritual reality of life itself" (28), and militated against "[i]ntellectualism, idealism, capitalism, materialism, mechanical culture, literalism, conventionality, any kind of abstraction, any categorically defined ideological systems, as well as actual Calvinism" (28). They also drew upon existing cultural criticism of Van Wyck Brooks and Waldo Frank that was already pointing to the soulless dissatisfaction of a Protestant materialistic culture (60). The land itself resisted its own subordination, existing as a surplus, in excess of economic exploitation, intellectual comprehensiveness, or its being a mere repository of pragmatic resources (69). The Midwest seemed to feel the fall of this ideal most intensely because it was the region thought to most literalize that ideal, or at least be capable of literalizing it. But, as Buechsel argues, the resistance of the land is that it cannot be literalized. At this point of failure, the land, the "misguiding material of pastoral dreams," achieves its greatest cultural augury, offering "glimpses of insight that lead to a new relational openness to the mysteries of all that is Other" (68). As will be shown, both *Winesburg, Ohio* and *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories* establish as their shadowy foil a pastoral vision, one in which

members of an organic community could form and desire meaningful connection, a habit of life that is violently disrupted by modernization.[16]

Relational Disharmonies

Anderson's "Hands" provides a useful example of a resonant failure to build community with the Other. Living not in Winesburg but "near the edge of a ravine near the town,"[17] Wing Biddlebaum remains separate from the ersatz organicist unity of the "village." Wing is close enough to the road so that he can hear a passing wagonful of berry pickers, youths, and maidens who tease Wing for his thinning hair on his balding head. The intense scrutiny of Wing's baldness, held in contrast to the sexually associative berry-picking maidens, displaces Wing as a sexual outcast, ineligible for the implied fecundity of nature and those who tend to it. Wing's self-imposed exile, resulting from a traumatic and ambivalent incident in Pennsylvania, locates him proximate to but removed from others, despite having lived near the town for over twenty

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16. See Molly Gage, "Winesburg, Ohio: A Modernist Kluge," *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (2011): n.p. James Nagel also writes of the short story's pessimistic responsiveness to modernization writing that

> The form of the short story matured during Modernism, and many of the innovations these writers brought to fiction, especially to the methods of narration, gave renewed interest to the genre. The subjects of the age--the new stress on ethnicity, cultural duality, and poverty--spoke to the social concerns of the moment, while the emphasis on the formation of a sense of identity revealed the growing psychological insight in society at large. American culture had begun to question its own standards, particularly with regard to civil rights for people of color and equal opportunities and freedoms for women, and these subjects were starting to move beyond the fascinations of literary entertainment toward the intense cultural concern that was about to change American society in the 1960s. (45)

See James Nagel, *The American Short Story Handbook* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2015), https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=1901848.

17. Anderson, "Hands," in *Winesburg, Ohio: Text and Criticism*, ed. by John H. Ferres (New York: Penguin, 1996), 27.

years (27). The young George Willard, loosely read as the "protagonist" of the collection despite some major structural challenges of the collection and the unevenness of his presence, is often treated by the characters as someone who provides respite from self-doubt, inauthenticity, silence, and suppression. Speaking not only with his voice but his hands—"the slender expressive fingers, forever active, forever striving to conceal themselves in his pockets or behind his back, came forth and became the piston rods of his machinery of expression" (28)—Wing dreamily recounts an image that will be consistently returned to in different ways:

> Out of the dream Wing Biddlebaum made a picture for George Willard. In the picture men lived again in a kind of pastoral golden age. Across a green open country came clean-limbed young men, some afoot, some mounted upon horses. In crowds the young men came to gather about the feet of an old man who sat beneath a tree in a tiny garden and who talked to them. (30)

The durable characteristics of the pastoral are all here: the open country, idealized masculine figures, husbandry, generational harmony, and the calming tending of nature. Wing's recompense, as it were, for his self-imposed removal from society is a fantasy that reconciles the real world through utopian imaginaries.

Reality quickly interrupts this dream as Wing "raised his hands to caress the boy" (30) and then anxiously restrains them, providing a transition to the story of Wing's hands. Their expressiveness with his male students involves touching his students' shoulders and hair, physically intimate incidents that are ambiguously narrated. A "half-witted boy of the school became enamored with the young master" and "imagined unspeakable things" in his sleep, later reporting such so-called dreams as factual (32). These accusations, in turn, transform into belief the "hidden, shadowy doubts" (32) that emerge from Wing's behavior. After being nearly lynched, Wing is allowed to escape by pitying members of the mob and externalizes his trauma

into his hands, “the medium through which he expressed his love of man” (33) and anodyne to his loneliness.

The story ends curiously, depicting a kneeling Wing rapidly picking up bread crumbs from the floor and in so doing resembling a priest in the middle of a religious service and “devotee” dexterously fingering the beads of a rosary: “A few stray white bread crumbs lay on the cleanly washed floor by the table; putting the lamp upon a low stool he began to pick up the crumbs, carrying them to his mouth one by one with unbelievable rapidity” (34). An otherwise unacceptable and illegible sensuousness of touch is reconfigured into a mechanical quirk and celibate devotion. While Wing’s hands are mechanically useful—he is a rapid strawberry picker, of heightened importance in a rural, agricultural community dependent on the harvest—they are emptied their non-monetary value of establishing physically intimate connections, and it is precisely this that makes “more grotesque an already grotesque and elusive individuality.”[18] Wing can make legitimate contributions to the harvest but not to his surrounding human beings. The pastoral vision of harmony, within which is enfolded a vision of organic community, is perverted by a despicable solitude amplified by the self-fulfilling prophetic anxieties of one of its most idealistic dreamers.

Another sort of trauma is available in Arguilla’s “Morning in Nagrebcan.” It begins with an atmosphere of calm at sunrise in a narrative mode typical of Arguilla’s ruralist fiction:

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18. Anderson, “Hands,” 29. Stamatina Dinakopoulou notes that when “Anderson’s characters find the means to express themselves, their redemption is always destructive; he solipsism of the man of ideas is almost a surreal paroxysm where despair mixes with irrationality in his wish to sweep everything away” (182). See Stamatina Dimakopoulou, “‘Crude and Broken Forms’ in America: Avant-Garde and Modernist Affinities in Winesburg, Ohio,” in *Sherwood Anderson’s Winesburg, Ohio*, ed. Precious McKenzie (Leiden, Netherlands: BRILL, 2016), 175–200, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=4355992.

> Before long the sun would top the Katayaghan hills, but as yet no people were around. In the grey shadow of the hills, the barrio was gradually awaking. Roosters crowed and strutted on the ground while hens hesitated on their perches among the branches of the camachile trees. Stray goats nibbled the weeds on the sides of the road, and the bull carabaos tugged restively against their stakes.[19]

Prefiguring the nature-laden patterns of this story, this quietude is quickly and violently interrupted by Tang Ciako, a domineering father to two young boys Baldo and Ambo, the former of whom has bonded with a young puppy from a litter of five. After some childish bickering and a physical altercation between the two sons, their father emerges from their nipa hut and savagely beats the boys with a piece of firewood and kills the dog as punishment for their disruptive loudness. Tang Ciako disappears back into the house, cursing his neighbors and accusing his wife of being a whore. The two disconsolate boys find the dead puppy among a neighboring cornfield and bury it before returning home.

More poignant for the story is not so much its explicit physical violence, but its ostensible being out of place amid the morning solitude. The seeming disjunction between atmosphere and action is textured by a perverse return to nature bridged by death and violence. After having killed the puppy, Tang Ciako initiates its return to nature, picking it up by its hind legs and flinging the corpse toward "the tall corn behind the house" (34). Later, Baldo and Ambo find the discarded body while "Pollen scattered like gold dust in the sun, falling on the fuzzy green leaves" (35) and bury it, erecting a makeshift cairn with a stone atop the freshly dug mound. The scene is a narrative recompense for the puppy's mother who returns to suckle the rest of her young but "did not seem to miss" (34) the dead one. The shared trauma of the two brothers, joined by a consoling Baldo putting his arm around the shoulder of the younger Ambo, suggests

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19. Arguilla, "Morning in Nagrebcan," in *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories*, edited by A.V.H. Hartendorp (Manila: Philippine Book Guild, 1940), 24.

at best a modest reconciliation, and the story ends sometimes at noon or thereafter, completing the images of the story's initial sentence: "The sun had risen up above the Katayaghan hills, and warm, golden sunlight filled Nagrebcan. The mist on the tobacco fields had completely dissolved" (35). In its "return" to nature, "Morning in Nagrebcan" recognizes that death and the order of the father are in some way related to the natural flow of life. Nature is often seen as chaotic and untamable, while simultaneously evincing a remarkable, though still inhuman, regularity. There is no escape from either death or harm, only the will to grace and forgiveness.

The difference between the two stories might thus be characterized by one accepting implicitly a redemptive familial solicitude to remaining life and another melancholically noting a "grotesquerie" of fractured social relationships. Both stories situate themselves in ironic distance from a pastoral vision. Some commentary has taken for granted this generic classification. As Alpers notes, the difficulty in knowing what pastoralism refers to through the channels of literary history has been further confounded by a discourse that identifies the mode through its most representative examples, whose exemplarity evinced a stable definition. Joseph Galdon, in an early essay about Arguilla's fiction, defines the pastoral as "piece of literature dealing with life in the country, especially a poem or story that treats of the rustic lives and loves of shepherds in a conventionalized, artificial manner" and emphasizes the "rural qualities of peace, simplicity, naturalness and quiet." [20] The chief literary effect of Arguilla's rustic simplicity is a profound belief in the impact of the narrative, the forcefulness of the story's image (433). The cost of such a blunt literary effect is the uncomplicated, simple happiness of the characters. Arguably "flat" and "underdeveloped," these basically anonymous types occupying familiar situations becomes a

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20. Joseph Galdon, "Philippine Pastoral: Tradition and Variation in Manuel Arguilla," *Philippine Studies* 23.4 (1975): 430.

"device for literary inversion" wherein the complex is rendered through simplicity: uncomplicated lives swelled with profound yet easily comprehended emotions, communicating a "much deeper and more profound reality" (445).

Strongmen

Just what exactly is the "deeper and more profound reality"? Part of the appeal of Arguilla's stories is a kind of localized anthropologizing of peasant Filipinos: suppositions of how real life was lived in the real world. The claim of regionalist storytelling such as Arguilla's is actually the significant burden of truth-telling, of accurate reportage. But sophisticated accounts of realism have powerfully disclosed how realism is anything but unmediated access to the real, itself already under immense pressure in literature in the Anglo-American tradition. It is the mediation itself that seems discernible in attempting to draw the contours of the real. This mediation consolidates for Arguilla in the image of the strong man, sexually charged and emblematic of cultural trope of *malakas*, which is in turn debilitated and repressed by the city and new middle-class values. In Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, the mediation is not so explicitly gendered, although the pattern is still present in different ways.

The much-read and much-anthologized "Midsummer" by Arguilla depicts a sensual connection between a man and woman in a natural setting, without much conflict or intrigue beyond the gradual ratcheting of erotic, aestheticized, heterosexual desire. The opening of the story focuses on a man who, like his accompanying carabao, is narrated with pure instinct, without interiority, at home where one is, and protected from the existential dread, paranoia, and boredom commonly associated with modernity: "He struck the bull with the slack of the rope. The animal broke into a heavy trot. The dust stirred slumbrously. The bull slowed down, threw up his head, and a glistening thread of saliva spun out into the dry air. The driving rays of the sun

were reflected in points of light on the wet, heaving flank."[21] He is joined by a quiet but seductive woman walking to a well to fill a jug for herself and her mother. Described as a fleshy, refreshing drink amidst the dry landscape, "surprisingly sweet and fresh amidst her parched surroundings" (16), she is, like many female characters in the literature at the time, idealized in several competing ways. She is both representative of the land but essentially distinct from it. Her clothing—a "homespun bodice of light red cloth" and similarly humble skirt—suggest earthy self-reliance, although the chance meeting has an almost mythical, Edenic quality in its singularity. Her shirt, wet from the splashing water, "instantly clung to her bosom, molding the twin hillocks of her breasts, warmly brown through the wet cloth," and completes the more tantalizing and straightforward metaphorization of woman as nature (17). As he gathers the courage to speak to her, the man invites her to lunch with him (a simple meal consisting of a hardboiled egg, salt, dried shrimp, rice, and water in the same bucket from which the carabao Kabuntitiao drinks), and, after her initial polite refusal, offers to help her collect water from the well. The coyness around the refilling of the bucket of water structurates their initial touch, brimming with timidity but also temptation:

> But when he caught hold of the bucket and stretched forth a brawny arm for the coil of the rope in her hands, she surrendered both to him quickly and drew back a step as though shy of his touch. He lowered the bucket with his back to her, and she had time to take in the tallness of him, the breadth of his shoulders, the sinewy length of his legs. Down below in the small of his back, two parallel ridges of rope-like muscle stuck out against his wet shirt. As he hauled up the bucket, muscles rippled all over his body. His hair, which was wavy, cut short behind but long in front, fell in a cluster over his forehead. (21)

That the man's muscles are described as "rope-like" forms part of an extended metonym, where the prospect of erotic touch is hinted at as the woman grasps the physical rope tied to the bucket,

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21. Arguilla, "Midsummer," 16.

pushed further when she allows him to drink from the bucket at her behest, which he does gladly and noisily. The final tableau is of the figure of the beautiful woman, who has invited the man to meet her mother and who in turn feels his masculine strength revivified by her open warmth: "Her hands swung to her even steps. He threw back his square shoulders, lifted his chin, and sniffed the motionless air. There was a flourish in the way he flicked the rump of the bull with the rope in his hand. He felt strong. He felt very strong. He felt that he could follow the slender, lithe figure ahead of him to the ends of the world" (23). One sees the rope-as-body as a kind of monism with nature, a spiritual but also sensuous unity with the woman, the bull, and the surrounding natural environment. Like the rope itself, the man is strong, sturdy, purposeful, dependable, and life-giving (allowing access to water). Its phallic properties are also in full display.

Rather than a simple quasi-erotic tale of the mythical man and woman, purified into ideals of sexual definition and potentiality, "Midsummer" is the distillation of the strong man enlivened by both purpose and the gratifying fulfillment of that purpose. The other stories in the first part of *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife* are similarly concerned with man's place among his fellows and nature: In "Ato," for example, the terse Ato is a towering hunter whose quiet and noble demeanor is exaggerated in his stoic action. An unmovable object except by his own accord, Ato moves through nature unencumbered and can cross a river by walking "under the water"[22] with a carcass slung over his shoulders without the help of balancing bamboo poles. Ironically, the river through which Ato walks dreamily is the same river that has "taken" his pregnant wife Marta. Moved initially to rage and brandishing his *talunasan* (a long

22. Arguilla, "Ato," 39.

blade with a scabbard), Ato relents and walks into the river, sinking below while calling her name until he disappears from sight. Ato becomes a kind of urban legend, in which he is still walking on the bottom of the riverbank. Now having become part of nature, rather than merely exerting impartial mastery over it, Ato exceeds his tragedy to become an ambivalent sign to those who can hear him: "And it is also told that in the night when the wind grieves through the hollows of the Katayaghan hills and above the valley of Nagrebcan, one may yet hear Ato's great voice booming through the air like far-off thunder" (46). "The Strongest Man" follows a somewhat similar pattern, with the similarly romanticized Ondong wooing the narrator's aunt Onang.

Another story "Heat" narrates a prelude to a sexual encounter between the swarthy Mero Cruz and the modest Meliang. Their eventual intimacy is patterned with strong parallels to seasonal bounty and vivacity discernible through nature's wall of sight and sound—fields of tobacco plants, the chirping of crickets, the cries of nightbirds. In this effusion of nature Mero "knew he had not ceased thinking of Meliang. She seemed close to him here among the tobaccos that were so silent and unmoving. He wished a wind would blow."[23] The discomfort caused by the titular heat has an unavoidable sexual connotation, and the final tableau of the story is the two young adults in intimate union after a brief but relenting resistance from Meliang, waiting for Mero "in the shadow of the duhat tree" (52). While it deemphasizes the hypersexual man, "A Son Is Born" follows similar seasonal patterns but also introduces the temporal cycles of Christianity. The story recounts the birth of the narrator's brother Jesus, born on Christmas and

23. Arguilla, "Heat," 51.

on “the year that the locusts came.”[24] To amplify this coincidence, the first shrill cry of the infant is heard on the first moment the bells of the midnight mass ring. In all of these fairly simple stories is a consistent depiction of romanticized male-female sexual relationships, the quietude of nature, and naturalistic eruptions of violence and death.

The males of *Winesburg, Ohio* are not so fortunate to be treated idealistically.[25] In fact, except for George Willard who achieves a climactic “sophistication” with Helen White at the end of the collection, nearly all of the male characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* are sexually frustrated and locked in a pattern of repression and failed expression. The literature clarifying this durable pattern in the collection has generally placed Anderson in ambivalent relation to contemporaneous gender roles. For some commentaries, Anderson espouses a romanticized return to the truth-seeking and truth-telling male and thus heralds an essentially conservative privileging of gendered speech; for others, the text of *Winesburg, Ohio* is situated more ironically to traditional heteronormativity, suggesting that American culture is bereft of the “real man,” whose therapeutic modeling of sensitivity and self-awareness run counter to empty discourses of manliness which Anderson found disappointing.[26] Whether Anderson is traditional or progressive is an important albeit secondary concern here. The critical discussions have usefully gestured to a strong relation between culture and form discernible in *Winesburg, Ohio*

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24. Arguilla, “A Son Is Born,” 53.

25. See Mark Whalan, *Race, Manhood, and Modernism in America: The Short Story Cycles of Sherwood Anderson and Jean Toomer* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015070752152.

26. See William M. Etter, “Speaking of Manhood in Winesburg, Ohio,” in *Sherwood Anderson’s Winesburg, Ohio*, ed. Precious McKenzie (Leiden, Netherlands: BRILL, 2016), 77–106, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=4355992.

especially. The debilitation of several male characters in the collection is in stark contrast with the most pastoral characters of Arguilla's fiction who possess resolute physical strength, assured sexuality, and an unproblematic social standing.

Modernity's Emasculation

What might explain this difference? An answer may be found by taking a detour to another context that in distinct from but contemporaneous to that of the Philippines. Writing about India's coming into modernity, Partha Chatterjee asks rhetorically how, in just a few generations after the introduction of English education in 1873, the people of India could grow feebler, sicklier, and less likely to live long lives than the previous generations.[27] Chatterjee goes on to reject the uncritical premise of that question as a "baseless idea," considering instead the real question at hand: why does this historical fiction persist?[28] What subtends a skewed comparison of worse present days and the better old days is a recognition that modernity is neither universal nor universally applicable. The perception of the declining social body emerges from a naïve adoption of foreign culture; by "imitating uncritically the forms of English modernity," India has brought upon itself "environmental degradation, food shortages, illnesses, caused by excessive labor, and an uncoordinated and undisciplined way of life" (140). The implied optimism of the unfettered spread of modernity, undergirded by Enlightenment ideals, rings as suspicious to the postcolony when increased access to education, technology, and cultural refinement does not reap its implied benefits. Because of the often-violent marriage

27. Partha Chatterjee, "Our Modernity," in *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 136–139. Partha Chatterjee, "Our Modernity," in *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 136–139, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/chat15220.10. Here, Chatterjee is responding to Rajnarayan Basu's observation of India's' apparent enervation.

28. Chatterjee, "Our Modernity," 139.

between colonialism and modernity, colonial and postcolonial subjects are the first victims of such a union and have "never been quite able to believe that there exists a universal domain of free discourse, unfettered by differences of race or nationality" (146). "Somehow," Chatterjee continues, "from the very beginning, we have made a shrewd guess that given the close complicity between modern knowledges and modern regimes of power, we would forever remain consumers of universal modernity; never would we be taken seriously as its producers" (146). But modernity is produced even by the unwilling; it will just be negotiated in various ways. In Chatterjee's example, becoming-modern for India involved an imagined past of flourishing in response to a present moment "marked by incompleteness and lack of fulfillment" (152).

Social histories are imagined in equal measure to contemporary cultural norms. In another essay, Chatterjee notes that part of the strategy of Indian nationalism was a glorification of the nation's past and its traditions to supplement a critique of modernization as a mortified aping of Western manners. But the so-called "women's question"—the set of urgent issues dealing with gender and sexuality in the matrix of political power—seemed to have dropped out of such critiques, only to be found again in modernity's separation of material and spiritual spheres, the latter of two superior in its authentic self-presence. The separation of the world and the home supervenes on this distinction: the world is external, the home is internal, and therefore the latter is the representation of one's inner self and authentic being. With respect to Indian nationalism, the spiritual home was the domain that required the most trenchant defense from contamination or appropriation and needed to "remain unaffected by the profane activities of the

material world—and woman is its representation."[29] The discourse of nationalism thus affixed a strong difference between the expected roles of men and women. Modern women were railed against for their spiritual profanities in dress, education, and leisure, whereas traditional women were praised for maintaining their families and household, as well as modesty and the cultivation of decorum. Culture thus became political (or was shown that it always was and could be), a tool for negotiating one's trajectory in the sweeping tide of modernity.

Chatterjee's observations unite nationalism and gendered practices as mutually constitutive. As nationalism ferments, either in the wake of or in resistance to colonization, inevitably displacements of culture manifest themselves as divergences from the status quo. What Arguilla and Anderson show most broadly is a deep questioning of the nature and the place of traditional masculinity in either the modern US or the modern Philippines. For example, the "queer" Elmer Cowley is an anomaly in Winesburg, working in a shop that "sold everything and nothing"[30] with his father. His desire to not be queer and to articulate specifically to George Willard that desire— "'I will not be queer—one to be looked at and listened to…I'll be like other people'" (194)—amounts to a rejection of his family lineage, as both his parents possessed their own queerness in dress and profit-making. Elmer initially can say these things only to the so-described half-wit Mook, who putters happily about repeatedly mumbling the same phrase, "I'll be washed and ironed and starched" (196). In one of the most comical bathetic moments of the collection, Elmer, facing George in a climactic moment, can find no words except Mook's

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29. Partha Chatterjee, "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question," in *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 121-122, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/chat15220.10.

30. Anderson. "'Queer,'" 191.

humble mantra. Rather than disappearing into the crowd as "indistinguishable" (199), Elmer then beats George and jumps on a train car. He feels proudly satisfied in "showing" George that he "ain't so queer" (200). The story's ironizing of Elmer's queerness manifests in his inability to communicate effectively. His vexation manifests first in incoherency, then violence. What relative clarity Elmer possesses lies not in him but the non-diegetic and semi-privileged voice of the narrator.

The story makes clear that Elmer is queer not because of his obstacles to articulation—that trait actually suggests an affinity with the other members of Winesburg—but because he simply lacks a place. He is, furthermore, an unproductive member of society and hence unfit for the growing economic rationalization and industrialism that define modern American life.[31] Elmer's queerness manifests as the complex result of his desire to be an anonymous nobody in the tight social strictures of small-town life and the external pressure to be an economically useful individuated worker. The disjunction between "inside" and "outside," between personal yearning and social obligation, is also featured in "The Thinker," wherein Seth Richmond, his reticence mistaken for a introspection like his father's, is in reality aimless: "No great underlying purpose lay back of his habitual silence, and he had no definite plan for his life."[32] Despite in

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31. Martin Bidney analyzes how the figure of the androgyne characterizes many of the characters of the play and attests to the collection's intertwining of gender and labor. Many of the characters in *Winesburg* "characteristically overcompensate for their frustrations of imposed or felt passivity by a blind rush into some form…of activity. Rebelling against feeling 'female'—and this applies to men as well as women—they try, desperately and ineffectually, to assert their 'maleness.' But afterward they fall back into their original passivity, or else their 'male' and 'female' qualities simply persist, together but separate, in mutual antagonism" (264). See Martin Bidney, "Anderson and the Androgyne: 'Something More Than Man or Woman,'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 25, no. 3 (1988): 261–73.

32. Anderson, "The Thinker," 133.

proximity to the fecundity and seasonal bounty of the land, he is disenabled by his lack of direction, regretting "that he could also not laugh boisterously, shout meaningless jokes and make of himself a figure in the endless stream of moving, giggling activity that went up and down the road" in merry enjoinment with the "wagon-loads of berry pickers" that pass by him (128).

Seth is, however, given purpose in a rare reversal of the vector of attention with respect to George. It is a noticeable pattern that the characters of *Winesburg* see the young reporter as the person to whom they can communicate their deepest truths to shed their grotesquerie in mostly futile attempts to live authentically. Despite some major structural obstacles in the collection, because of the putative availability of George as a kind of secular confessor, he is often read as the "protagonist" of *Winesburg, Ohio*. While there are a few other stories wherein the recipient of an epiphanic flood of language is not George—Tandy in her titular story, the Bentley family in "Godliness," Dr. Reefy and George's mother Elizabeth in "Death," Ray Pearson and Hal Winters in "The Untold Lie"—in "The Thinker," George, immobilized by his own hesitation, requests that Seth speak to Helen White in the only time he asks anyone to do anything for him. Seth, meanwhile, is himself attracted to Helen, who in turn has been "beset with a madness for writing notes which she addressed" (139) to him, some of which he has found among his schoolbooks.

What results in Helen and Seth's meeting in the evening is a vexation in the inability to act, ironized in the respective misapprehensions of both characters against the background of pastoral elements. Seth, dizzy with his attraction to Helen, struggles to make George's feelings about her known underneath a sycamore tree, where "weeds were abloom with tiny purple blossoms and gave forth an overpowering fragrance" and where "bees were gathered in armies,

singly as they worked" (140). Instead of leaning over to kiss Helen, Seth "lay perfectly still, looking at her and listening to the army of bees that sand the sustained masterful song of labor above his head" (140). Helen, unaware of both Seth's reluctance and competing motivations, approves of Seth's manly assertion of leaving Winesburg to start his own life. He strikes her as a "strong, purposeful man" (141), and she too feels vague, inchoate feelings "invading her body" (141). Their mutual desires are eventually unrealized, however, when Seth comments that this may be the last time they see each other after exhausting everything he has to say. Helen walks home alone while Seth feels the need to run after her but merely looks silently at her retreating figure. Dejected, Seth imagines a future where when "it comes to loving some one, it won't ever be me. It'll be some one else—some fool—someone who talks a lot—some one like that George Willard" (142). As with "'Queer,'" "The Thinker" marks the insufficiency of language as a replacement for action and implies that an idealized masculine self-satisfaction is unachieved by woeful attempts at autonomy and sexual aptitude.

Helen attracts another young man Tom Foster in "Drink." Unlike Elmer, Tom can pass unnoticed, having an unimaginably soft voice and being "himself so gentle and quiet that he slipped into the life of the town without attracting the least bit of attention."[33] Growing up in Cincinnati, he seems to be loved by the dregs of society, including prostitutes and gangsters. Tom is arguably the most assured member of Winesburg, able to stand "in the shadow of the wall of life" and staying "unmoved and strangely unaffected" (212) by the vice around him. In matters of sex, he is both untutored and, in comparison to other adolescents in the collection, uniquely unagitated:

33. Anderson, "Drink," 211.

> In Cincinnati, when he lived there, Tom had found out many things, things about ugliness and crime and lust. Indeed, he knew more of these things than any one else in Winesburg. The matter of sex in particular had presented itself to him in a quite horrible way and had made a deep impression on his mind. He thought, after what he had seen of the women standing before the squalid houses on cold nights and the look he had seen in the eyes of the men who stopped to talk to them, that he would put sex altogether out of his own life. (215)

Winesburg, however, will not let Tom forget about sex, as he sees all around him "youth making love" and he himself a youth. Helen's beauty is only amplified in the surrounding area, especially tempting for anyone of a sensitive nature: "The trees along the residence streets of the town were all newly clothed in soft green leaves, in the gardens behind the houses men were puttering about in vegetable gardens, and in the air there was a hush, a waiting kind of silence very stirring to the blood" (216). Such images preoccupy Tom as he becomes drunk on whiskey for the first time. George rescues him in his drunkenness one night, only to be indirectly insulted by Tom's desire to make him suffer by lying that he has made love to Helen. In Tom's own explanation, the lie is an attempt to make himself suffer, "to be hurt somehow…. because every one suffers and does wrong" (219). Other attempts, he reasons, only hurt someone else. His lie is also pedagogical, as Tom says that the suffering has "taught me something" (219).

What is it that Tom Foster learns in his self-inflicting lie? Tom's reasoning indicates that a shared vulnerability to suffering, something that "everyone" possesses, is necessary for enjoining a community. Or, at least, it is the ability to share publicly that one is suffering that places one in a community of sympathetic members. The characters of *Winesburg, Ohio*, are relegated to grotesquerie to the point that their disclosures are aborted, belated, or misinterpreted. Outside of George and Helen's reversion to animality in "Sophistication," no other character outside of Tom and Dr. Reefy and Elizabeth in "Death" comes close to this realization. The opposite of alienation is not merely small-town life or the utopian imaginings of pastoral, pre-

industrial agrarianism, both of which the text readily shows to be oppressively constraining and parochial. Rather, the opposite of alienation is a society that enables authentic discourse rather than the empty words that fill the mouths of modern man.[34]

This notion of "free speech" is most audibly articulated in Part One of "Godliness," centered on the zealous Jesse Bentley, who is called back to help his father on their farm after his three brothers die in the Civil War. Born "out of his time"[35] and ignorant of what he wants out of life, Jesse's grotesquerie amounts to being unable to articulate his desires or sculpt a vision for his life. His self-image becomes thus perverted, and he begins to think of himself as an "extraordinary man, one set apart from his fellows" (69). Jesse becomes the semi-tragic figure of the hyperworked Calvinist most famously theorized by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. How Jesse combines the idea of salvation (which is predestined rather than attainable by good works) and relentless self-sufficiency renders the accumulation of wealth as the only meaningful human activity outside of fervent worship of God; all material and human relationships transmute into mere means of making a profit and convincing oneself that one belongs to God's chosen, while the sense of self, buoyed up in an egoistic drive to *believe* in oneself as saved, becomes enlarged. In a prayerful moment, Jesse convinces himself as a maker of a new race of men in a richly significant land: "In fancy he saw himself living in old times among old peoples. The land that lay stretched out before him became of vast significance, a place peopled by his fancy with a new race of men sprung from himself" (70). This is of course

34. See Aaron Colton, "Metafiction, Literary History, and the Limits of Industrial Identity in *Winesburg, Ohio*," *Studies in American Fiction* 45, no. 1 (2018): 61–89, https://doi.org/10.1353/saf.2018.0003.

35. Anderson, "Godliness," 67.

the fantasy of all conquering peoples: a subjugated territory, expansive ownership, and community homogeneity that promises consistency and self-affirmation. The fantasy is only further intensified by the stamped approval of being the Lord's work, evidenced by the "halo of Godly approval" (70) that Jesse sees hanging around himself.

The transpiration of events in "Godliness," specifically the spiritual bankruptcy of Jesse in inverse proportion to his growing wealth, is a critical portrayal of Protestant-inflected capitalism. In the same part of "Godliness," Anderson takes a lengthy narratorial detour to explain that Jesse would be hard for modern day women to understand because of seismic changes to social, political, and economic life—in short, due to the uneven but inexorable progress of modernity:

> A revolution has in fact taken place. The coming of industrialism, attended by all the roar and rattle of affairs, the shrill cries of millions of new voices that have come among us from overseas, the going and coming of trains, the growth of cities, the building of the interurban car lines that weave in and out of towns and past farmhouses, and now in these later days the coming of the automobile has worked a tremendous change in the lives and in the habits of thought of our people in Mid-America. Books, badly imagined and written though they may be in the hurry of our times, are in every household, magazines circulate by the millions of copies, newspapers are everywhere. In our day a farmer standing by the stove in the store in his village has his mind filled to overflowing with the words of other men. The newspapers and the magazines have pumped him in full. Much of the old brutal ignorance that had in it also a kind of beautiful childlike innocence is gone forever. The farmer by the stove is brother to the men of the cities. And if you listen you will find him talking as glibly and as senselessly as the best city man of us all. (71)

The proliferation of print cultures stands out in this relatively rare and out-of-place exposition. Technological advances have engendered new habits in both the distribution and consumption of information, leading to the end of a "childlike innocence" that is suspiciously proximate to an anti-intellectualism. The men of the city talk "glibly and senselessly," and, worse, the farmer or village dweller feels compelled to mimic them. Those men, before the coming of the book, were of a different breed, or at least of a different habitus. They had "no desire for words printed upon

paper" (71). They instead deferred to another word—that of God, specifically His Word to "control their lives. In little Protestant churches they gathered on Sunday to hear of God and his works. The churches were the center of social and intellectual life of the times. The figure of God was big in the hearts of men" (71). Cut from this older cloth, Jesse allows the image of God to dictate the contours of his life, to serve as the explanatory power of its events. He blames his three dead brothers for not having worked harder to achieve more and believes in "the conviction that all of the Ohio farmers who owned land in the valley of Wine Creek were Philistines and enemies of God" (73). This critique of Protestant industrialism and acquisitiveness advances in the same direction as that of other critics at the time like Van Wyck Brooks and Waldo Frank, adding to that critique a suspicion that with modernity comes the proliferation of words that alone are insufficient means to communicate and uniquely challenging to the still potent image of an idealized masculinism.

The middle stories arranged in *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife* proffer basically the same thesis, differing importantly in imbricating the tension between the vacuous "city talk" and the stoic authenticity of the countryside with the complex rearrangements of the United States' presence in the Philippines. These seven stories—"Mr. Alisangco," "Though Young He Is Married," "The Maid, the Man, and the Wife," "Elias," "Imperfect Farewell," "Felisa," and "The Long Vacation—make up the so-called "marriage cycle" and share a common theme of male characters struggling to adjust themselves to middle-class domesticity and in varying unsatisfactory marriages. As wry, sarcastic musings on newly acquired middle-class values, they are, as critics have generally agreed, the weakest of the stories, failing to reach either thematic depth or political import, but their defining characteristics, as well as their location in

the deliberate arrangement of the collection, stand in telling contrast to the romanticized pastoralism of the initial stories and the consciousness-raising of the masses in the last cycle.

"Mr. Alisangco" establishes the tone for these middle stories. The titular main character is a high school teacher in the city. In a jocular fashion, he admits to his wife Luisa that one of his students Araceli may be in love with him. Luisa is initially jealous of this admission, and Mr. Alisangco responds with a confused defensiveness: "'Why should you be? She's a mere kid and doesn't mean a thing to me. The whole silly business is very amusing, not to say irritating.' He couldn't quite rid himself of his classroom manner." [36] To cope with another woman destabilizing a conventional monogamous marriage, the couple treats the infatuations of Araceli as a sort of running joke. She becomes "our student" to Mr. Alisangco and Luisa and becomes the topic of daily conversation between the two (108). Mr. Alisangco is satisfied with the pacification of her wife, and neutralizing Araceli in this ostensibly inoffensive way seems to be the "civilized, sophisticated things to do" (108). He furthermore sees himself and Luisa as a "civilized, broad-minded couple" (108). Without over-determining what it means to be *civilized*, the priority seems not so much to keep the marriage intact or without scandal, but to *appear* healthy and respectable, broad-minded enough to entertain disgrace without being vulnerable to it. The pleasure of the joke (for Mr. Alisangco especially) is the satisfaction of the fantasy of sexual liaison with a student without paying the price of lapsing, as well as the sharpening of his own self-image, his "masculine sense of importance" (109).

Expectedly, the disarming force of the joke cannot indefinitely contain Mr. Alisangco's erotic desire, and he keeps secret a school Christmas party for teachers and students so that he

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36. Arguilla, "Mr. Alisangco," 107.

might be alone with Araceli. He tells himself that Luisa, having a "unique gift" (111) in enjoying the small pleasures of school functions—a student program, gift-giving, dancing—would in fact not enjoy herself and later lies about it being a surprise party to which she would otherwise have been invited, while the "real truth" remains unsaid. The narratorial disclosure of the real reason underneath the ostensible reason is the defining separation between the pastoral cycle and the marriage cycle. In the pastoralism of texts like "Midsummer," there is almost no perceptible deception, no incoherence between interiority and exteriority, save for a coyness in admitting sexual attraction and a courtly appreciation of male and female physical beauty put on natural display in the fulfilling labor of working in and with the land. What is arguably present here is a tacit assumption that rural life is more authentic and truthful, less susceptible to (self-)duplicity. These characters with discomfited interiors are overall rendered more complexly than their rural counterparts, if for no other reason than the existence of a mental dimension. But it seems that this additional complexity leads mostly to internal strife opposite the pastoral ideal.

With "prodigious efforts to keep the joke alive and going" (112) despite receiving some thoughtful gifts from Araceli, dancing with her, admitting that he is in love with her, and teasing that they have shared a kiss, Mr. Alisangco almost ruins his marriage, although he and Luisa eventually reconcile until the end of the school year, after which Araceli will graduate and be out of their lives. The final tableau of the text is Mr. Alisangco having a "sudden vision of Araceli's red lips and dimpled chin, her long throat—and with a sick feeling in his heart realized that a week still intervened before the final closing of school, before Araceli would go away, out of his life for good" (115). Not only is such longing unsatisfied, but it is also ineffectual, unable to bring about the future it purports to describe. Much like Anderson's "city man," Mr. Alisangco talks cheekily and in doing so reveals his own glibness and senselessness.

The circulation of talk is more textured in “Though Young His Is Married,” a story that similarly recounts marital problems but more consciously adduces the relationship of such problems to modern culture imported by the US. The unnamed main character wakes up “with a consciousness of extra-ordinary well-being”[37] and next to his wife, whom he caresses and tries to kiss. Rebuffing his physical intimacy, she causes him to desist, in broad difference to the lively, wakeful appreciation of women’s bodies in the pastoral cycle. Getting out of bed, he looks upon his things in the dark room, including Picasso’s *Absinthe Drinker* (1901) “which he had cut out of an issue of *Vanity Fair*. The colours were as of yet indistinguishable” (117-118). In the brooding figure of the painting one can a weighty loneliness. The woman, hunched over with one arm propping up her head and the other curled around her body, postures deep contemplation and reticence, closed off from other patrons who may plausibly exist but are not in frame. The lines of the face are sharply straight, in contrast to the curvaceousness of both the woman’s figure and the seltzer bottle and the glass from which she is drinking. That the painting is a reprinted reproduction from the popular magazine *Vanity Fair* indicates how the newly emergent English middle-class in the Philippines stands in ambiguous relation to the proliferation of Western print culture and aesthetics. The act of cutting out the picture from the publication an adoption of and participation in discourse, as well as a modest form of cultural appropriation and accumulation. It passes as a small detail in the overall story and makes no great impact on the trajectory of events, but it is precisely in its being mundane, interesting enough to isolate but not comment upon that exerts a pressure on the story to be read in light of its ruminating gaze.

37. Arguilla, “Though Young He Is Married,” 116.

Dissatisfied with the lack of physical intimacy, the man (also a high school teacher) leaves the house despite his wife's pleading and goes into the city. Again, the story divulges in the crossed paths of the Philippine and the West, especially its military presence: "When he looked up, Manila Bay lay before him, a leaden gray with lighter streaks in great acute angles. The American warships at anchor in the Bay seemed part of the still waters, what with their grey colour and the fine mist that had arisen during the night" (118). The colonial optics of swimming in the shadow of hulking US warships are striking, even perhaps lacking in artfulness, but powerfully reinforces the themes of the story. He meets another swimmer in the bay, and the two men race evenly matched until the main character pulls ahead. The energetic swimming, coded as a sublimation for sexual activity since it is usually the main character and the wife who "usually come out swimming together early in the morning" (120), is temporarily gratified, both in winning an impromptu race and finding the other man genial. This other man works downtown but is unmarried unlike the main character who looks "too young" to be married (121). In an odd triangulation of desire, the other man admits that he would like to meet the wife who herself likes good swimmers and has fine form. After he has returned home, the man sees his wife dressed to go out: "His wife was coming out fully dressed, very trim and pretty. There was a hint of pink on her smooth brown cheeks and her lips were as red as can be. As she stepped out through the door, she neither looked at him nor spoke." (122). Both spouses "step out," so to speak, dissatisfied in each other's ability to meet the other's needs.

Intimate dissatisfaction is its most despairing in "The Long Vacation," a story about a man's suicide after his wife's death, and in "Imperfect Farewell," wherein the narrator recounts the days that lead up to the death of his lover. By plot alone these stories lack the nuance of the other marriage stories or the ruralist technique of the pastoral stories, but within their cohort they

indicate Arguilla's conscious tuning of the constraints of narrative. In the former story, Arguilla experiments with omitting quotation marks to flatten the distinction between dialog and narration. Leon, the main character, is asking for a time off to embark on a "long vacation" in San Fernando city of La Union, a thinly veiled euphemism for his throwing himself of the cliffs of the beach. The narration shifts in and out of the mind of Leon, thinking both privately and aloud about the death of his wife and his plans. Mr. Ruiz, his compassionate but uninformed boss, molds the irony of Leon's clandestine admissions:

> And you know, Mr. Ruiz, Leon said, I feel that doing all these things, I shall not be alone. You know what I mean.
>
> Mr. Ruiz nodded but did not say a word.
>
> And when I go down the cliff of Poro, she'll be with me.
>
> But this last, Leon did not say aloud and he smiled to think that Mr. Ruiz did not hear it.
>
> It was, too, the most important thing.[38]

As with stories like "Mr. Alisangco" and "Though Young He Is Married," a heightened sensitivity to interiority pervades "The Long Vacation," and thus too does a capacity for deception, omission, and silence haunt its two characters like the specter of Leon's wife.

The disconsolation of the story, furthermore, finds balance not only in death's promise of the end of earthly suffering, but also in the return to the beautiful serenity of nature. Leon explains to Mr. Ruiz growing up in San Fernando, or San'do as he casually calls it, going to school under the shadows of neighboring madre-de-cacao whose boughs are "coved with cluster and clusters of pale violet flowers" (171). A moonlit "paradise," the land juts out into the ocean, cradling a lighthouse where there "are no houses, no people, only the lighthouse keeper and his wife and a lame boy, their only son. The place is as wild and lovely as you could wish" (171).

38. Arguilla, "The Long Vacation," 174.

The nourishing placidity of these escapes toward the water recalls the collection's pastoralism. Education, life in the city (Leon works in Manila), and middle-class routine have no answer to the incomprehensibility of death, nor even a way to make peace with that incomprehensibility. Acting in accordance with nature—climbing hills, swimming in the sea, shading under camachile trees—endows life with a spiritual capacity to reconcile with the inevitability of time's passing.

"Imperfect Farewell" treads similar territory, but instead of opting for a kind of free indirect discourse, it develops a retroactive narration that recounts a brief romance and plays with memory and remembering through a conspicuous proliferation of sensory description. The narration, in second person, mobilizes a voice addressed to *you*, the narrator's deceased lover, an alluring woman whom the narrator figuratively drinks up: "And a pleasantness as of intoxication from finest wine spread through your being. You looked into her eyes (her eyes were liquid with pure merriment), and you knew that life was simple and beautiful and held not the dark and giddy terror of death."[39] This story marks Arguilla's most extended attempt at aestheticizing the atmosphere of love both of nature and in nature, describing the relationship between the unnamed man and woman in the same language of seasonal growth: "The love that you bore here was like a tree inside you, and as you walked along the shore that day, it seemed to give forth burst after burst of luminous white flowers" (155).

The sourness of the story is two-fold. First, as is typical in the marriage cycle, the man initially struggles to overcome his grim self-doubt— metaphorized as "Death's dark footfalls, softer than the falling grains of sand" (156)—and express his love. Second, when he does admit his feelings, the man reads in the woman's posture and face a less than affirmative answer. He

39. Arguilla, "Imperfect Farewell," 152.

copes with the thought that reciprocal love can be revisited “some other time” (157), but the woman dies before they can consummate their relationship. The deflation of the story’s conclusion recurs a melancholic idea that is “not easy to die” (157), in much the same way that it is not easy to speak. The intimidation of language is such that it might be falsified by why it fails to do, as here, or that it might amount to nothing at all, as in *Winesburg*.

Pessimistic Social Organization

In Anderson there is a persistent reminder in both internal and external constraints that delimit the flourishing of the characters. Arguilla’s most complex and urgent deployment of this reminder is in the last cycle of stories, the so-called “social cycle” that attends specifically to issues of class. These five stories—”Caps and Lower Case,” “The Socialists,” “Epilogue to Revolt,” “Apes and Men,” and “Rice”—are in sum Arguilla’s attempt at dispensing a kind of literary justice that is found neither in the static countryside or the stifling city. Instead, at the nexus of these two sites the stories emerge in critical opposition to either hard-nosed traditionalism, peasant backwardness, or an uncritical embrace of modern social organization. The first story “Caps and Lower Case” narrates the drollery of Santos’s work as a proofreader for *Illustrated Weekly*. Beset with an undisclosed illness like consumption, Santos spends his frustrating days climbing up and down stairs for an irascible and impossibly demanding boss, Mr. Reyes. The narrative establishes a naturalist pattern that makes vivid Santos’s brutish, material reality and a swarm of negative sensation. In the publisher’s building, fatigue drags Santos’s body “like a heavily weighted cloak” while breathing in the stifling office air, “inert from its day’s load of [40]soot and dust.” His home, an *acessoria* or kind of apartment building, is equally debilitating, depicted as hostile and decrepit, with windows opening to a “bleak prospect

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40. Arguilla, “Caps and Lower Case,” 175.

of quarreling roof-tops of rusting corrugated iron" that resemble "torrid emanations from the throat of a giant furnace" (176). Nature is seen as a palliative to this oppressive urban sprawl; to soothe his acute pain and dissatisfaction, Santos "tantalized himself with the thoughts of swimming in cool, green lakes, or lying naked under palm trees beside the wide, blue sea, the salty breezes cooling and caressing him" (176).

Beyond the pressures of the job and the "bleak prospect" of his home life, Santos also struggles with the many false promises of upward social mobility. Initially thankful for his decent salary of forty-five pesos, he and his wife Marta are cross at the fact that the man whom Santos replaced was not only paid more but left for an even higher-paying job working for a government bureau, although Santos has both relevant work experience and a college education. Furthermore, Marta herself is mildly concerned with appearing middle-class through conspicuous consumption, specifically the ability to buy and use American knock-off goods: "They had gone out one night to Quiapo and bought them after a good deal of haggling in the Chinese stores along Calle Echague. Then she had bought him two shirts, one blue, and the other white, at a peso and twenty centavos each. Unless you looked at the trade-mark you would almost think that they were the expensive American-made kind that sold at five pesos!" (178-179).

The pressures of the job and the weight of supporting his wife leave Santos in an unhealthy state, wherein his anxiety appears as intensified somatic symptoms: a knot in the chest, blood rushing to the head, burning face and ears. He is "constantly haunted by the fear of some glaring typographical errors escaping him" (184). Exploitative and ill-compensated labor renders Santos nearly incoherent at times, and the disarticulation that capitalism is wont to induce expresses itself in a meta moment when the word becomes unreadable:

> He found himself staring at a word in a title unable to make any sense of it. He read the word over and over but it had become a strange, unrecognizable thing. He strove to tell whether it as the correct word or not, but since it had ceased to mean anything to him, he felt suddenly lost and panic-stricken. Then a film seemed to be withdrawn from before his eyes, and he could see the word again for what it was, a simple, familiar thing. (184-185)

Santos's incoherence exposes the contradictions of the emergence of a para-professional class of laborers. The prospects of fair compensation, financial independence, and gratification in one's prodigious efforts are nowhere in Santos's grasp. The world and word are unreadable, and despite the film withdrawing before Santos's eyes, there is little assurance that the aporetic lapses in the suffocating office subside.

Unfamiliar with the human machinery of publishing and noticing Santos's declining physical health, Marta exaggerates Santos's importance as a proofreader and demands that he asks for a raise from Mr. Reyes. Within this confrontation, "Caps and Lower Case" builds layers of asymmetry between the employers and employees, wherein the middle management is only marginally better off than its subordinates; the true brokers of power remain shadowy and untouchable. Circulating within these layers are the skeptically apprehended words of labor organization. Santos and Marta, for example, "talked of the Newspaper Guild of America, admired and praised its leaders, talked of forming a similar organization locally" (188). The two are intrigued by words like "*collective bargaining, the right to organize, social justice, fair balance between effort and reward*" (188), and Marta herself is pleased when she hears that unionized workers at the rope factory in Binondo are striking. Mr. Reyes, whose consciousness is partially revealed in the third-person narration, views Santos contemptuously, as a pushover employee in need of some toughening up, which helps explain his own disdainful attitude toward his work. He denies the raise, thinking privately to himself that he is also just another employee, "a paid servant at the beck and call of a master" (195). He recalls his own experience with the

owner of the paper, Don Vicente. Mr. Reyes, "infected with Leftist tendencies," actually sided with his subordinates in a fight for higher wages, only to be met with coolly veiled threats of hostility and retaliation from the owner. Reyes's own disempowerment is passed off as contempt for Santos, despite the ironic alignment of their goals. Crestfallen after the rejection and Mr. Reyes's limp promise of returning to the discussion of a raise, Santos coughs up blood in the bathroom, and at the sight of his yellowed teeth stained with blood, he feels an "overwhelming sense of disaster, futility, and hopelessness" (199). The final image reads like an attempt at establishing a viscerally horrifying mood:

> The reek of urine and human waste came to his nostrils; in his ears was the roar and throb of the presses now in full blast. They were telling him to hurry, hurry. A sob tore itself from his throat; he fought back the others that threatened to follow. He must hurry… On his table the page-proofs lay under a lead paper weight. He took them, held them under his arm. Then, his eyes blinded by tears, he began the long climb down the stairs. (199)

Like the majority of the characters in the marriage cycle, social inequality and strife appears as corporeal enfeeblement. Like his own proofs laid down by a lead weight, Santos is just one anonymous victim crushed under the burden of modernity. Arguilla's ambivalent response in "Caps and Lower Case" contrasts with the idyllic, satisfying labor of the peasant countryside, where alienation from labor is rare, if present at all.

But it would be a mistake to read Arguilla as idealistic or naively praising of rustic peasants. In fact, Arguilla, like many Anglophone writers in the Philippines, internalized rather acute differences between more worldly, educated class and the peasant working class, taken for granted the historical forces that contributed heavily to this general socioeconomic, class division. Arguilla's intervention in this class division is most complexly examined in "The Socialists," wherein a group of young, educated students tour the slopes of Mount Arayat in Pampanga to get a sense of how socialist thought is spreading among the rural classes. The story

opens with a man in a woolen suit—not quite dressed for the weather—reciting Edward Markham's "The Man with the Hoe,"[41] interpreted then as now as a kind of protest poem about

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41. The full poem is as follows:

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes.
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the Dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this —
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed —
More filled with signs and portents for the soul —
More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in the aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Powers that made the world.
A protest that is also a prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?

the peasantry but generalized to cover the plight of all workers. First published in the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1899, the poem is itself an intertext of *L'homme à la houe* (1862) by French realist painter Jean-François Millet. In this painting, a male worker leans over a wooden hoe in a pensive, exhausted state, "bowed by the weight of centuries" as the poem says. The dirt and nettle around him suggest a long day's work of tilling the ground, evoking a dignity that nevertheless seems fleeting and uncompensated. The use of intertexts here, both the poem and the painting, characterizes the circulation of discourse in the story, as the foreigners who have come to Pampanga ostensibly desire to spread Marxist thought.

The man in the woolen suit reciting Markham's poem is joined by another man who, in a humorous meta moment, is also leaning on a hoe and dressed in homespun clothes. With the "emptiness of ages" on his face, he begins to recite the poem aloud to a crowd in a heavy Pampangan accent.[42] Arguilla reproduces the accent in the spelling of the words—"*Is dis da Ting da Lord God made and gabe / To habe dominion ober the sea and land; / To trace da stars and sirch da hiben for power, / To feel da passion ob eternitee?* (200)—which the narrator describes

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How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream,
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands
How will the Future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings —
With those who shaped him to the thing he is —
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world.
After the silence of the centuries?

42. Arguilla, "The Socialists," 200.

as lacking but whose “obvious defects” were compensated by “a great deal of sincerity” (201). The peasant orator is joined by a third man, blind, strumming musical accompaniment on an “ancient-looking guitar” (201). Down the hillside stand a motley crowd, described in the “country costume of thin, gauzy *camisa* with gat silk *panuelo* tied around the head or draped over the shoulders, and bright-coloured skirt under the brighter-hued *tapiz*” (201). The crowd cheers in multilingual approval, cheering in Tagalog, Pampangan, and English. One of the men separates himself from the crowd, his look and accoutrement immediately conspicuous: “perfectly creased white wool trousers and glossy double-breasted alpaca coat,” a copy of *Das Kapital* tucked under his arm, and an expensive German-made camera hanging from a leather strap from his shoulder (203). This “Comrade” Lirios is joined by a few others clearly not part of the peasant gathering, including two attractive mestizas, a blue-eyed American woman, and a “handsome Jewish boy” (204). They stand in strange sight, almost like tourists in the countryside. One girl begins to sing the *Internationale*, the adopted anthem of the Second International, then hurriedly performs an agitating speech. Comrade Lirios, unable to understand Pampangan, asks the reciter of “The Man with a Hoe,” Comrade Bautista, to translate: “‘Why do rich peepul become richer and da poor peepul poorer? Why do we see dem growing fatter and fatter as dey ride by in beautiful automobiles? Why do dey wear beautiful clodes and eat eggspensive foods when we are in rags and dying of starbation? Dis is all wrong. It should be changed. Away wid da present order. We must habe a government where ebbribody is rich and happy’” (207). A Sakdalista is invited to speak, and Comrade Bautista explains a possible coalition between the Sakdals and the radicalizing peasants.[43] These initial tableaus of “The

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43. The Sakdal Movement began a local, unorganized agrarian unrest that cohered into a brief political movement with the charismatic leadership of Benigno Ramos, the son of a minor

Socialists" is the collection's finest illustration of the intertexts that shoot through the lives of Filipinos in Arguilla's time. It is a poignant crossing of East and West, heralding major geopolitical events that affect not only the Philippines but the world at large through the discordant tones of accented translation and mutual misunderstanding.

Haughtily disdainful of the radicalizing peasants who have gotten socialism "all wrong,"[44] Comrade Lirios and his other compatriots belong to the Socialist Club of Manila. "The Socialists" thus depicts the inter-class tensions that contradict the utopian promises of socialism. The story develops this contradiction through the trope of heat, which beats down oppressively on Comrade Lirios throughout. "If only a breeze would start up," he says, while observing that the "shadows of the trees and shrubs were grotesque cut-outs pasted on the brown earth" and that the "scorched ground underfoot sent up a strong musty reek that he could almost taste" (212). Reminiscent of "Caps and Lower Case," "The Socialists" directs sociopolitical unease parallel to physical discomfort. Lirios looks plaintively at the long stretches of unoccupied lands beyond the rice fields before returning his attention to the crowd, whose politics are wrongheaded because

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bureaucrat who had a varied early career that included writing nationalist poetry in Tagalog, working for newspapers, and entering civil service. Critical of the Quezon presidency's accommodationist policies with the U.S. and building a platform of around peasant-friendly issues of tax abolition and communal ownership of land, the Sakdals under Ramos's leadership surprisingly gained momentum, winning seats in the House, gubernatorial races, and even threatening to disrupt the 1935 Constitutional Convention. The movement culminated in a swiftly crushed peasant uprising that had neither the weaponry, training, nor organization to effect any coup or overthrow. See David R. Sturtevant, "Sakdalism and Philippine Radicalism," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 21, no. 2 (1962): 199–213, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2050522; Motoe Terami-Wada, "The Sakdal Movement, 1930-34," *Philippine Studies* 36, no. 2 (1988): 131–50, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42633076; and Greg Bankoff, "Dangers to Going It Alone: Social Capital and the Origins of Community Resilience in the Philippines," *Continuity and Change* 22, no. 2 (2007): 327–55, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0268416007006315.

44. Arguilla, "The Socialists," 208.

they are so naively earnest. At the end of the story Lirios is struck by an ironic contrast between an imagined sight of a massive swell of radicalized peasants and the quaint lunching and endless talk of his socialist peers:

> His eyes encompassed the crowd of listeners caught in varied poses of attention. They, too, were dead earnest. Not in a thousand years could it have occurred to any one of them that they were--comic. Comic? Comrade Lirios had a sudden vision of 16,000,000 people of the same cast and mold, capable of the same direct, unself-conscious, child-like simplicity and earnestness. They till the soil and plant rice and they know the quality of rain and sun. the feel of pure honest earth is in their work-hardened hands; they stand on it with bare feet, toes spread apart. What then if they sang the *Internationale* and recited Edwin Markham's poem upon a burning hillside under the midday sun?
>
> Comrade Lirios now saw himself and his friends pouring beer down their throats in air-conditioned rooms in the City, biting into liverwurst sandwiches the size of shoeheels and costing 25 centavos apiece. He heard his voice and their voices smoothly juggling with words and phrases: planned economy, Marxian dialectics, labor and capital, society of the free and equal, et cetera, et cetera. (213-214)

The circulation of meaningless words divorced from political realities concludes another story of pathetic deflation. Translations only brush against the surface of meaning, and the history-changing words of Marx are used to shade a vexed man's scorched forehead from the incessant sun. The distastefulness felt by the focalized Lirios marks in the story the failure of radical politics not only to emancipate, but to unite. Language fails to bridge the gap between people because it refuses an ease of correspondence and is unable to annihilate its own purpose for being. The hunched peasant of *L'homme à la houe*, tellingly alone in the foreground, remains bowed over, with only his tool to lean on, rather than his fellow laborers.

Although "The Socialists" renders an ambivalent image of radicalization by widening the distance between Marx's putative cognoscenti and the peasants most acutely aware of their own exploitation, the other stories in this last cycle offer relatively more sympathetic portraits of economic and political struggle. Sakdalistas make another appearance in "Epilogue to Revolt," wherein four pardoned Sakdals—Julian, Binong, Inggo, and Ansel—are welcomed home in a

public celebration. Ansel, the most bitter because his other brother Portenciano was killed in the uprising, resists the town president's conciliatory speech that reiterates the men's return as "law-abiding citizens"[45] and kowtows to President Quezon's "kindness and generosity" for allowing the former revolutionaries to enjoy again "the freedom of the earth and sky" (223). In response, Ansel disrupts the vivacity with a sober remark on those who have lost their lives: "We pray for the souls of the dead….Then we stuff ourselves with food bought with money that is borrowed. We do these things better than anything else I can think of. This is what I have learned. Just so long as we can pray and gorge on pig's flesh and chicken meat, the dead can rot in their graves…" (224). Unavenged, the dead haunt the return of these men, whose gratefulness of being alive is tempered by the abrupt failure of the Sakdal movement, but the spirit of the dead lives on as Ansel's speech and reassertion of his being a Sakdal attract a few nearby children who wave pointed sticks "intent and eager" (224), suggestive of a generational passing of revolutionary sentiment. Binong scolds one of the children, reminding him that being a revolutionary is a good way to get shot. With this concluding admonition, the story refuses a unilaterally salutary depiction of revolt, indicating continued agitation without forecasting the future of agrarian unrest, which historically responded to economic precarity through increased insurgence committed by mostly landless tenants.

"Apes and Men" follows a group of factory workers on strike; its central metaphor shows the resemblance between the animal and human, specifically the disenfranchised or disempowered laborer. Nearby, a monkey in a cage is given peanuts by a passing couple. A larger monkey, taking advantage of its size, steals from the smaller one—transparent allusion to

45. Arguilla, "Epilogue to Revolt," 223.

the exploitative relation between labor and capital. Mariano, the focalized character, is dimly sympathetic to the older monkey, under the same instinctual pressure to survive like the younger one. Sensing the increasing futility of the strike and the precarity of his family, Mariano considers crossing the picket line and battles a “hopelessness arising from a sense of battling incomprehensible forces” (232). After an altercation between the strikers and newly hired factory workers arriving on the jobsite, Mariano is fatally shot in the neck by the police, and many of the strikers are detained in the ensuing violence.

It is within the political compass of these stories that the “forces” leading to Mariano’s death are “incomprehensible.” Like the agitator’s speech in “The Socialists,” rife with rhetorical questions why inequality not only persists but increases, the senselessness of one’s browbeaten position as a caged animal is taken up in “Rice,” where a group of tenant farmers prepare to burgle a truckload of rice in defiance of overwhelming and usurious debt obligations to their landlords. Andres, one of the farmers, reasons to the main character Pablo that nigh unpayable and volatile rates of interests are themselves a kind of robbery, although Pablo is initially resistant to theft since it is a crime (that would only incur more debt through monetary penalties and possibly imprisonment). But Pablo is acutely aware of the incoherence of his own poverty, unable to register his own dilapidated housing: “Pablo did not see how squalid it was. He saw the sagging nipa walls, the shutterless windows, the rotting floor of the shaky *balatan* [skin, bark, cover], the roofless shed over the low ladder, but these were unfamiliar sights that had ceased to arouse his interest.”[46] To further add to his existential confusion, Pablo’s wife Sebia is caught harvesting snails in the rice fields that they tend to by a watchman and has to pay a *multa*, a fine,

46. Arguilla, “Rice,” 237.

only adding to their destitution. The story ends as Pablo decides to join Andres and other farmers to take back the harvested rice that is by one definition already theirs.

Character-Space

These stories' aporetic reflections of class inequality and dispossession offer little consolation for readers but as Kuttainen and others have suggested, the stories enjoin form and politics in a gambit to confront the enduring issues of the world and to envision a more bearable one. This encounter of the world appears in another way, in the fluctuating connections across the short stories in their respective collections. Specifically, both collections develop a hallucinatory sense of anonymity through the chance and unspoken crossing of characters through multiple stories. Rather than endow these meeting points as significant developments of causal plot development, the collections instead create a mood of being one of many, fluidly entering and exiting provisional groupings with ever-changing commitments and motivations. The proliferation of identical characters appearing across stories furthermore complicates the tensions and possibilities of the short story collection form.

Although concerned primarily with the novel, Alex Woloch writes that literary theory has run up against a strange dilemma: while it seems naively true that character and characterization are central to the novel (and to many other kinds of literary texts, including the short story), analysis has shied away from engaging literary characters as implied persons, limned such that they seem capable of possessing the superabundant complexity of really lived lives uncapturable on the page and through narrative structures. For Woloch, cognizant readers' persistent attacks on the naivete of character-as-person have actually occluded larger structural issues: characters compete for figurative space in the novel and that "literary character is itself divided, always

emerging at the juncture between structure and reference."[47] Thus, the novel is understood as a sort of arena in which character-spaces crowd out others, become central, submit to a protagonist, and/or fade into obscurity, all while working through the tension between seeming like an implied person and performing their operative role in the narrative. The "novelistic character system," Woloch continues, "turns, above all, on the dynamic orchestration of, and relationship between, dominant and subordinate elements within the narrative construct" (304). The finitude of any narrative means that figural space is itself finite, and each character may be, in comparison to others, "functionalized, compressed, exiled, contained, distorted, [or] abstracted" (307).

Woloch's analysis usefully elaborates on an element of form to its overarching structure but remains silent on the proper short story collection. This genre poses challenges to reading character-spaces as competing for the reader's attention for two reasons. First, taking both *Winesburg, Ohio* and *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife* as examples, character-space doesn't persist as durably as it does in a traditional realist novel. The latter collection lacks any easily discernible central character or protagonist. Each story in Arguilla's collection instead opts to either focalize a single character with minor exposition on the interiors of others or narrate in the first person. In neither case is there an unproblematic traversing of a character into more than one story. *Winesburg, Ohio*, on the other hand, seemingly centers on George Willard, and the short stories are, when taught or read as a whole, mostly proximate to a loosely structured novel that begins with the prefatory, ground-clearing "The Book of the Grotesque" and ends with a mature George Willard leaving, perhaps permanently, Winesburg with a newfound independent

47. Alex Woloch, "Minor Characters," in *The Novel*, ed. Franco Moretti, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 299.

manhood and without any more meaningful ties to that community.[48] However, there are several obstacles to this loose "novelization" of the collection, including the fact that George sometimes does not appear at all in the stories, the "Godliness" stories being the most significant exceptions, nor does he even act centrally in a fair number of other stories. Furthermore, the stories collected in *Winesburg, Ohio* were not consciously written to be a self-contained short story collection, as many of the stories were published in little magazines prior to the first printing of the entire collection.

Despite having these divergences from the novel proper, both collections sharpen the sense of the delicacy of minor character-space for a similar structural reason that the novel depends on character-spaces' fluctuation to drive its primary tensions: the disjunction among short stories reinforces minorness of their characters because the finitude of a short story is empirically smaller than that of a novel. With even less figural space in which to compete, all characters, even semi-protagonists like George Willard, are at greater risk of becoming functionalized or even entirely absent in any single narrative, while their appearances, especially when characters definitely appear in more than one story, take on a new valence in light of their spatial precarity. All short story characters are in some sense minor, and it is their minority status

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48. David Humphries notes that George functions more than just the adhoc narrator of *Winesburg*; more fundamentally, his characterization induces the sociality of the collection, serving as "the nexus between the reality of the newspaper as it is produced locally and its meaningful fictiveness as it is read anonymously, and his work as a reporter shows how communities are imagined into existence in specific social and historical conditions" (62). See David T. Humphries, "Failed Adventures and Imagined Communities in Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio," in *Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio*, ed. Precious McKenzie (Leiden, Netherlands: BRILL, 2016), 51–76, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=4355992.

that reinforces the short story collection's often disidentifying moves against homogeneity, authenticity, and cohesion.

Arguilla's pastoral stories show the most interesting development of competitive character-space. Major and minor characters bleed into each other's stories in this cycle. Bystanders mentioned in passing are elevated into narrators and vice versa. At other points, characters are named but otherwise have little to do with the stories in which they appear. Names themselves are reused but may, in fact, not refer to the same character as an implied person. The effect of these fluctuations is a gesture to two related but divergent commentaries on the pastoral countryside: it is imagined place of cultural and temporal homogeneity, occupied by persons who inhabit the same "meanwhile" of intertwining, plural timelines; and it is a place of timelessness and stasis, where life doesn't so much as change but simply happens. In returning to "Morning in Nagrebcan," for example, it can be seen how Nana Elang, the mother of Baldo, ties this story to another, "The Strongest Man." Nana Elang appears as minor in both stories. In the former, she is simply performing a highly functional role—a thin, hardened, bony woman whose described actions include maneuvering in an untidy kitchen, washing rice, cooking a medley of vegetables and fish, and calling out to her sons at various points in the narrative. She is also rendered impassive, powerless to stop Tang Ciako's savage beating of Baldo and Ambo and the killing of the puppy, although she attempts to console the two children afterward and feeds the mother dog when she returns.

Nana Elang also appears in "The Strongest Man" although she seems to be much changed, described as "fat" and possessing a more assertive personality. She frequently smokes

cigars and teases the main character Ondong by calling him an "'ungelded bull carabao.'"[49] She is also invited to sing latter in the story, using her "broad, mellow voice that had chuckles in it" to sing a song "about and old man and his wife promising each other to stop fighting since there were better things they could to together" (79). The sexual raillery contrasts sharply with the nearly blank appearances of impassivity found in "Morning in Nagrebcan." One can fairly wonder if these two Nana Elangs are even the same person, or, for the sake of expediency, Arguilla merely reused the same name. This may certainly be true, but the pressure of coherent connectedness that the short story collection imposes on itself compels a different reading, a more unifying explanation that nonetheless accepts rather unexpected character appearances and transformations. Reading the same, rather than different, Nana Elang identifies Baldo as the narrator of this story, the older, more perspicacious child in "Morning in Nagrebcan," who is himself the narrator of the story "How My Brother Leon Brough Home a Wife." The stretching of character-space becomes apparent in the brief mentioning on Leon when Nana Elang urges Baldo to get warmer clothes for themselves for the cold weather: "I went into the house quickly, put on the sweater that my brother Leon brought home for me from Manila, and came down with the shawl wrapped around my head" (86). The phrase "my brother Leon" resonates loudly with the title of the titular story. What has thus happened in reading shared character-space is a surprising expansion of the nuclear family. The four members in "Morning in Nagrebcan" are now connected to Onang, Baldo's aunt in that story; Ondong, the idealized, courtly man who romances Onang; a sister, Aurelia, who is mentioned only in passing in "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife; and Leon's beauteous wife Maria in the same story. This connection also

49. Arguilla, "The Strongest Man," 71.

tempers the menacing image of Tang Ciako, for if he is the same father in “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife,” then he is less a brute a more a sympathetic figure, contemplatively smoking tobacco while inquiring about Leon’s new wife from the city. This collection of characters faces the dual fates that Woloch mentions: either as an “implied person with the plot or story-world itself” or “…as a potential narrative site of attention with a precarious, contingent, and always dynamically developing space in the narrative discourse.”[50] The major alterations in characterization—Nana Elang from gaunt and demure to fat and garrulous, Tank Ciako from vicious to introspective, Baldo’s family from nuclear to expanded—have the literary effect of retroactively complicating previously simple character types because “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife” follows “The Strongest Man” which in turn follows “Morning in Nagrebcan.”

The shifting of character-space also allows Arguilla to interrogate a Spanish colonial legacy in ironic fashion. The story “Heat” has near its conclusion a scene where Lacay Julian is conversing with other men over drinks “talking about the time of the Revolution, of the Spaniards he killed.”[51] He continues in dialog, “‘There was a fat priest whose belly quaked with terror, but I soon put an end to that with my bolo…He had a beautiful mistress’” (52). In “Heat,” Lacay Julian’s anecdote frames the sexual encounter between the main character Mero and the young woman Meliang. Sexual prowess parallels both conquest and resistance; the Spanish priest, acting and understood as the administrative functionary of Spanish colonialism, is both killed and plundered by Lacay Julian. His story shades the contours of Mero’s own “conquest” of

50. Woloch, 296.

51. Arguilla, “Heat,” 52.

Meliang's body, although the narrative distinguishes Lacay Julian's brazenness with Mero's desirousness through Meliang's eventual relenting to Mero's advances. Again "The Strongest Man" supplements this personal story with further detail, adding the following through Baldo's narration: "Lacay Julian and Ondong's big father, Tio Ato, were already telling their stories of the Revolution, of the fat priest and his beautiful mistress, and of the great pit at Bacnotan where the Spanish *cazadores* came upon the Filipinos drunk and asleep, and killed them like pigs."[52] The effect of these additional details recasts Lacay Julian's story from bibulous swagger to heroic retaliation. This connection also reinforces the sense of regional locality that textures the collection, especially the pastoral cycle of *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife*, as well as the fictive simultaneity that both of these short story collections establish. This simultaneity comprises the perception of organic community and, by way of tales of the revolution, of a national teleology stretching from subordination to liberation.

Ato is also mentioned in here in the narration of "The Strongest Man" as a mere listener of Lacay Julian's story but occupies significantly more space in his titular story discussed earlier. There, in "Ato," he too is highly functional, serving as an emblem of romanticized, industrious manhood, a typical trope of pastoralism. When Ato returns from hunting in "his own" story, his pregnant wife Marta does not, as expected, greet him. A young mother, Ol-le, laughs nervously, then bursting out "the river!"[53] Ato becomes distraught with worry, flashing his talunasan and demanding to know the location of Marta. Ina Albin says kindly, "'Ato, Marta is gone. The river took her. No one saw how it happened. She went to the river bank every afternoon to wait for

52. Arguilla, "The Strongest Man," 76-77.

53. Arguilla, "Ato," 44.

you. One evening she did not return. Perhaps she became dizzy and fell into the river. We do not know. Her body has not been found'" (45). Ato then wades into the river, mimicking his superhuman crossing earlier in the story, to search for his wife, disappearing under the surface of the water as he calls out for her.

The conclusion of Ato seemingly completes a tightly wound naturalist tale of physical strength overcome by both the impartiality of death and humans' emotional frailty. While residents circulate legends of Ato's booming voice rolling "through the Katayaghan Hills and above the valley of Nagrebcan" (46), the end of the story leaves little doubt of Ato's physical death, as well as the deaths of Marta and his unborn (and ungendered) child. Yet he, or another sharing his name, appears in "The Strongest Man," not only as a listener to Lacay Julian's story-crossing anecdote, but as father to Ondong, the main character of *this* story and occupant of a nearly identical character-space. That is, he fills the role of protagonist, both figuratively and literally towering over every other character—the strongest man heroically romancing and defending the narrator's aunt Onang, who is late in the story assaulted by another man Roque. He resembles his father in every way—in strength, calmness, capacity for violence, exalted silence, decisiveness in action—except both Ondong and his woman Onang are jointly successful in crossing a body of water in the story's final tableau:

> Ondong carried my aunt Onang to the raft. Tall and straight and without a word to say, he waded into the waves. Around his waist foam hissed and swirled and in his arms my aunt Onang lay quiet and unmoving.
>
> My fat Nana Elang chuckled, the twins laughed.
>
> And by and by the hand of my aunt Onang came out from under the arm of Ondong and went up his shoulder and held him there.[54]

54. Arguilla, "The Strongest Man," 95.

Unlike that of “Ato,” this story’s conclusion gratifyingly promises a fecund continuation of life. Ondong and Onang’s implied future union is warmly received by the narrator, already argued as the same narrator of “Heat” and “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife” and a protagonist in “Morning in Nagrebcan.”

If these two Atos are in fact the one in the same, which is to say that the imaginative capacities of the form of the short story collection allow for character-space to extend across stories, then the transition from “Ato,” arranged earlier in the 1940 published collection, to “The Strongest Man” undercuts the pathos of the former by indicating the survival of both Ato and his unborn son, since Ondong is introduced as Tio Ato’s son. This parental connection is mentioned despite “Ato” making no mention of Ato and Marta having a son, although in the story he wonders if Martha is pregnant with a male.[55] Their survival also duplicates character-space, as Ato and Ondong fill basically the same character type and animate their own narratives as principal agents in both stories.

Such an undermining of the impact of “Ato” appears to particularize either a more general blunder in textual design, or a blithe repetition of names and character types, but at the interstices of these stories, the structural absences with which reading critically a collection must contend, a particular kind of literary effect finds itself. Alone, the pastoral cycle of Arguilla’s stories might have uncritically produced the simplifying gestures toward the rural peasantry that render it idealized and uncomplicated, confined to essentialist position from a distant vantage point of, in Hartendorp’s words, Arguilla’s “easy authority”[56] of first-hand experience. Lacay

55. Arguilla, “Ato,” 41.

56. Hartendorp, “Introduction,” 10.

Julian, Baldo, Ato, Nana Elang—these may be just convenient names given to innumerable, unremarkable faces that populate farms and fields. But the entire collection of *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife* does not stop in the countryside. It travels to the city and back again, showing in the other two cycles that modernity is no less filled with its own bland, negative types: the sexually unsatisfied and leering husband, the disaffected intellectual, the exploited farmer and factory worker, the idealistic activist. A paradoxical richness of typification persists everywhere in Arguilla's fiction, with the consequence of de-emphasizing the exceptional perfection of the countryside and the ameliorative developments of modernity heralded by the United States. Arguilla's characters—dilated, contracted, functionalized—share the same ambivalent possibilities, dying only to inexplicably come back to life, dramatizing an idyllic romance only to meet a somber death, achieving class consciousness only to remain politically powerless. The tensions within *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife* do not proffer a comfortably unified Philippines, as the award of the Commonwealth Literary Prize might suggest; instead, they indicate the myriad consequences of the really felt contradictions experienced by their readers.

The minor characters-spaces in *Winesburg, Ohio* jostle for primacy against the space of George Willard, who in traditional readings of the collection assume the role of protagonist in a loosely arranged *Künstlerroman*—a writer's coming into being from provincial inexperience to realized independence. But George's elevation is not without its formal challenges. Early critics like Malcolm Cowley standardized the perception of the collection as somewhere in between the "mere" compilation of stories and a novel. Survey courses and anthologies of U.S. literature usually select one or two stories from the collection, suggesting that the stories may be at least semi-autonomous (not to mention that several of the stories appeared as independently in small

magazines). The now-forgotten original subtitle of the publication—*A Group of Tales of Ohio Small Town Life*—suggests some kinship among the stories, sharing a location and setting, but *group* does not possess any strong determination of inseparability or continuity. Nor, in fact, do many of the stories have much to do with each other, except in generally occurring within the boundary of the town and roughly the same time, excepting the prefatory "The Book of the Grotesque" and the four-part "Godliness" story that begins with the conclusion of the Civil War. And although the *Winesburg, Ohio* does usually take place in the titular village, the narratives, unlike the characters they narrate, often escape from their parochial confines to the big cities of Chicago, Cincinnati, and New York. In regard to this looseness, George is typically the glue that binds the stories together, either as the major focalized character, a passive observer or listener to the story's currently focalized character, or entirely absent.

Daniel Davis Wood has written recently on these textual challenges, focusing not so much on George but on the narrator itself as a kind of *metatextual character* whose personality and affect is found piecemeal through all the stories. This metatextual character has a special but fluctuating interest in George, which partially explains why he sometimes figures prominently in some stories and not at all in others. This focalizing consciousness is simultaneously omniscient since it can peer into the innermost thoughts of the characters and also provide survey views of the entire town. It orbits George "like a satellite and is periodically drawn towards him as if caught in his gravitational pull, only to emphatically distance itself from him whenever it seems to have drawn too close and then, after a breath, to draw close once again."[57] The pattern of

57. Daniel Davis Wood, "Winesburg, Elsewhere: George Willard and the Literary Formalization of Obsession in Small-Town America and Abroad," in *Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio*, ed. Precious McKenzie (Leiden, Netherlands: BRILL, 2016), 31.

intense focus and disengagement bares traces of the narrator's personality, characterized primarily by its obsessiveness. Hence, for Wood *Winesburg, Ohio* demonstrates a "literary formalization" (43) of obsession, an inscription of personality into literary form, that is, the patterning of an implied person in the arrangement of short stories into a meaningfully ordered collection.

In a similar fashion to *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife*, the genre of *Winesburg, Ohio* invites the possibility of forging cross-story continuity and simultaneity. But unlike Arguilla's stories that utilize various character types to alter character-space, Anderson's stories animate a problematic of unified narratorial voice. Wood's argument assumes that the metatextual character is singular; while it arguably vacillates in its investment in George, the narrator remains individual, generally consistent across all the stories. But how durable is this assumption, not only for *Winesburg, Ohio*, but any short story collection with weakly described narrators?

"The Book of the Grotesque" operates as the purported "frame story" of the rest of the collection, if for no other reasons that its placement before the rest of the stories and its introduction of grotesquerie as a recurring trope across the collection. The writer, an elderly man who hires a carpenter, himself aged not only by time but by war, to make his bed level to his window, has a literary sensibility framed as a perplexing feminine presence that would be impossible to explain further:

> Perfectly, still he lay and his body was old and not of much use any more, but something inside him altogether young. He was like a pregnant woman, only that the thing inside him was not a baby but a youth. No, it wasn't a youth, it was a woman, young, and wearing a coat of mail like a knight. It is absurd, you see, to try to tell what was inside the

> old writer as he lay on his high bed and listened to the fluttering of his heart. The thing to get at is what the writer, or the young thing within the writer, was thinking about.[58]

The oddity of this initial description has been extensively read. The narrator has several moments of acquiescing to the difficulty of the object of its narration. Unable or unwilling to extend the narrative exploration of the complex state of the old man, the narrator frustrates reading for the plot. But in exchange, the disinclined narrative voice establishes another pattern of foregrounding the artifice of narrative voice and perspective. The success of the writer is not in explaining away "the thing inside" that resides within all narratives, but in attempting to render its puzzling presence in artful ways.

Indeed, this is the metafictional achievement of the writer in "The Book of the Grotesque" who, after he imagines "the young indescribable thing within himself was driving a long procession of figures before his eyes," crawls out of bed and painfully write but does not publish the titular book of the story. Only the unnamed narrator has read or simply seen it, and from his experience he learns that grotesquerie results from failing to adapt one's lived-by truths to changing conditions of life. In explaining the experience of this book, the narrator is both discouraged at its coverage—"I will not try to tell you all of them," it says, referring to the numerous truths of the text—and comically bathetic at the sight of the man, whom the reader might mistake for having "unpleasant dreams of perhaps indigestion" (25).

Readers have attempted to unify the strangeness of the initial story by imagining the narrator to be an older George Willard, one who, after an unknown level of success after departing Winesburg with a newfound masculine maturity, returns in old age to the very grotesques he encountered as a young man. But these readings have been mostly thematic, driven

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58. Anderson, "The Book of the Grotesque," 24.

in large part by the fact that most of the character vignettes in *Winesburg, Ohio* are explicitly described as grotesque and who tend to display the tragicomic debility of always transfiguring truth into falsehood. Several examples across the stories reveal that narrator's responsiveness to the unfolding of the plot, as well as its wavering commitment to that unfolding, complements a unified reading. Like the narrator in *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife*, which adds complexity to its sense of simultaneity or the "meanwhile" in revisiting and revising previously narrated events, the narrator (or narrators) of *Winesburg, Ohio* similarly ponders, contemplates, and reconsiders. Take, for example, "Hands," where the narrator initially describes Wing's fluttering hands like "the beating of the wings of an imprisoned bird," an observation given by "some obscure poet of the town."[59] Suffusing Wing's hands with meaning is expected (considering the title of the story), but this "obscure poet" becomes a prominent structuring absence; the narrator continues by saying that the full story of Wing's hands is worthy of its own book and would " tap many strange, beautiful qualities in obscure men," but that writing that book is "the job of a poet," not, the narrator implies, its own (29). The narrator's surrender suggests a division of labor: the narrator is not a poet and thus unfit to give readers a fuller account of Wing's hands. This is a refusal like that of "The Book of the Grotesque," where the denial of plumbing the absurdity of the old man's figurative pregnancy amounts to a prolonged invitation of ambiguity to remain.

The narrator knows itself to not be a poet; it also knows its readers too, or at least their capacity to follow along. In "Respectability," recounting to lurid origins of Wash Williams's ironic squalor and deeply felt misogyny. Working as a telegraph operator, Wash is the "ugliest

59. Anderson, "Hands," 28.

thing in town," whose physical grotesquerie—immense girth, thin neck, feeble legs, unclean everything—merits a characterological demotion to thingness. In describing this ugliness, however, the narrator admits that it "goes too fast" and then concedes that Wash's hands are indeed clean.[60] The narrator also seems to know when background information would be charitable for the reader, as in "The Untold Lie," where we are told that Hal winter is *not* Ned Winter's son, but Windpeter Winter's son, the "confirmed old reprobate" who died in extraordinary circumstances. After describing how Windpeter drove his team of horses against an oncoming train and how young boys like George secretly admire his "foolish courage" and brazen acceptance of a "glorious" death, the narrator then says that "this is not the story of Windpeter Winters nor yet of his son Hal who worked on the Wills farm with Ray Pearson. It is Ray's story. It will, however, be necessary to talk a little of young Hal so that you will get into the spirit of it."[61] The logic of the narrator seems curious. Hal Winters's disidentification from Ned Winters's lineage seems entirely inconsequential, given that Ned Winters makes no other appearance in the story nor seems to have any tangible effect on any meaningful literary effect. The divergence into Windpeter's story feels similarly disjointed, although it does capture the youthful immaturity of George and fits well into allegorical readings of *Winesburg Ohio*'s resistance to industrialism: animal power meets steam power head on, losing handedly and dying for its loss, but commemorated as an inspiring interruption of the futurity of "humdrum lives" boys like George seem destined to lead in a provincial town (203). Finally, this tangent seems only to lead to another tangent, as the narrator says that it's necessary to move to Windpeter's

60. Anderson, "Respectability," 121.

61. Anderson, "The Untold Lie," 203.

son Hal "so you will get into the spirit of it." The narrator's associations are sensible considering the introductory paragraphs where Ray Pearson is first introduced, followed by Hal Winters, but the latter's family line seems inconsequential, Hal's being the worst of the three sons and "always up to some devilment" notwithstanding (203).

At other times, the narrator demonstrates a relaxing of emotional restraint. It is gladdened by Tom Foster's grandmother in "Drink": "What a life the old woman had led since she went away from the frontier settlement and what a strong, capable, little old thing she was!"[62] The narrator is even speculative in, for example, "The Teacher" when it assumes metafictively that George and Reverend Hartman's thoughts about Kate Swift drive her out into the snow.[63] "The Strength of God" and "The Teacher" are unique in *Winesburg, Ohio* in their mutual proximity of the central characters who are nonetheless oblivious to the depth of each other's turbulent thoughts. The two stories literally strike a parallel when, at the conclusion of "The Strength of God," Hartman waves his bloody fist in George's face and admits that he smashed the window by which he has been observing Kate. She, in turn, is inflamed with "the passionate desire to be loved by a man," leans toward George's physical advances but then beats upon his face with her fists and runs away, leaving George both confused and enraged (165). It is at this precise moment that Hartman enters George's orbit and makes his admission. Outside of George's tenuous centrality as a protagonist and the oblique persistence of Winesburg as the principal setting, the triangulation of Kate, Hartman, and George is the most enduring novelistic tendency in the collection.

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62. Anderson, "Drink," 210

63. Anderson, "The Teacher," 160.

Hartman describes Kate's body (and her unintended seduction) as an "instrument of God, bearing the message of truth," but all such characters are in a sense truth-bearing in the short story collection. In both Arguilla and Anderson's short fictions there is a persistent tension between character and setting that principally animates their special claim to politicized form, whether it be an attempted reintroduction of pastoral coherence, a futile leveling of class, or indeed an intervention into the imagining of the nation. It is perhaps paradoxical that the "new looseness" of form that Anderson sought would be realized in regionalism and its parochial borders and traditions, but that looseness subtends his pessimistic irony toward a careless belief in the rhetoric of progressive industrialism. Arguilla framed the same perspective, using a "colonized English" to interrogate the very language of middle-class thought that was quick to forget both its origins and possible futures.

Chapter 4: History, Aesthetics, and Exile in the *Portraits* of James Joyce and Nick Joaquin

At first blush, the two authors Nick Joaquin and James Joyce share little and merit no obvious comparison. The former, while undoubtedly one of the most significant writers in English in the Philippines of the post-war era, the author of influential prose and insightful non-fiction, has had until recently received dedicated but comparably modest critical attention outside of Philippine critical circles. Joyce, on the other hand, stands as a pillar of high modernism, an international literary superstar who, much like the image of God paring his fingernails that Stephen Dedalus describes in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, resides exalted above most of his peers. Without inuring oneself to the pomposity of literary celebrity culture, one can still look with suspicion at a comparison that involves two authors who wrote in different times and places, with different languages and cultures swirling about them, to vastly different audiences that have just begun to find overlap.

Yet after dwelling for only a brief time in each other's proximity, these texts do not wholly counter their emergent similarities. As Bob Vore writes in what is to date one of only a few pieces of scholarship expressly comparing Joyce and Joaquin, the two authors experienced similar ethno-national and religious contexts, relationships to urbanity, and tensions related to an uneven and contested linguistic pluralism.[1] This chapter expands on Vore's insight by tracing how Joyce and Joaquin approached the problematics of their shared conditions and elucidating how both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* respond despondently to the failures of parochial nationalism to usher in a new aesthetic dispensation

1. Bob Vore, "The Literature of James Joyce and Nick Joaquin: Reflections of National Identity in Ireland and the Philippines," *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 9, no. 1 (1995): 1–9.

through the trope of the exilic artist, whose separation from society at large imposes a costly decision between participation in cultural life and intellectual sovereignty.

Formal Development and Stunted Growth

The formal and thematic features in these two texts reveal themselves as enduring components of colonial expansion. One is faced with a monumental challenge of parsing the myriad effects of colonization on the very fabric of social and intellectual life among both the colonized and colonizer. Simultaneously, however, it must also be acknowledged that the cultural, historical, social, and political contexts of (post)colonialism cannot alone be the terminal reductions of literature, let alone culture at large, which persistently finds ways to confound simplifying attempts to wedge texts into developmental schema and systems. A decisive intervention in such discourse, Jed Esty's *Unseasonable Youth* stands in modest skepticism against the standard notion that the bildungsroman waned in the late twentieth century and that modernism avoided or subverted its conventional features that were no longer viable to render the lived experience of an accelerating capitalist and global order of uneven development. In contrast to the "bad infinity" *pace* Hegel—an empty temporality of infinite, spurious, and stochastic branching paths—novels, especially those of development, give a pleasurable sense of a personalized beginning and end, a telos that usually coincides with or parallels the beginning and guaranteed future of a nation. Tracking a series of British writers—Joyce among them—Esty suggests that modernism can be historicized as possessing "the tension between the open-ended temporality of capitalism and the bounded, countertemporality of the nation" which "plays out in fictional or symbolic form as a vivid struggle between youth and

adulthood…"[2] The normative arrangement of oneself to time and history impinges upon an irreducibly temporal art form. Historically specific motifs of youthfulness, maturation, adulthood, and aging intersect moral valuations of being belated, too early, or never realized: dominant concerns for modernist and postcolonial writers in Esty's view. Under this rubric of periodization, then, the phrase *uneven development* can register more than geopolitical dominance and economic dependence, additionally acquiring a literary-historical connotation. In the Philippines, the still-conventional historicization of letters in English resonates with self-conscious recognition that early literary examples were derivative and imitative, whereas later examples—wherein Joaquin occupies a somewhat privileged place—are praised as "mature," indicative of an indigenized, naturalized, and non-imitative Philippine English.

Take, for example, Filipino literary critic Leonard Casper's 1983 review of Joaquin's *Tropical Baroque* (1979) which reprinted canonical texts such as *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, "Summer Solstice," and "Three Generations." The success of these stories leads Casper to suggest Joaquin has a "permanent role as both historian and mediator among several cultures which have defined 'the Philippine experience.'"[3] Joaquin's literary successes cement his legacy as not just an author, but a recorder of events, storyteller, and translator. Passing achievement in these cultural vocations is possible with linguistic competence but excellence—permanence, in Casper's formulation—requires mastery. The critic's brief laudations of Joaquin are contextualized by his larger point about the Filipino's welcome and ongoing project of the

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2. Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*: *Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.

3. Leonard Casper, "The Opposing Thumb: Recent Philippine Literature in English," *Pacific Affairs* 56, no. 2, (1983): 301-309, 306. Casper, an influential critic himself, was also a translator of sorts, reviewing in English many Anglophone Philippine authors now considered canonical.

indigenization of English. Against the nationalistic calls for a nationalized "Pilipino" language, Casper welcomes the literary achievements in English and the challenges those achievements overcome. To him, English is not evidence of the Philippines' withering grip but an "opposing thumb" with which members of the nation grasp their national experience, all the more necessary and urgent as they face an authoritarian regime (301). With this dexterity, Filipino writers have learned "to adapt the Malayo-Indonesian indirection to the subtle subversion of Spanish/American/Japanese regimes" and continue to write against the Marcos propaganda and censorship (307). The English literary production of Joaquin and company is an indication that while the Philippines is not free it is "still longing for freedom."[4] English literature written by Filipino/a authors is thus transfigured from a holdover of (neo)colonial determination to the very tools of emancipation and historical consciousness. Casper's analogy suggests, furthermore, that the "opposing thumb" of English occupies a somewhat privileged position, enabling the Filipino subject to grasp their experience in a way that the other "fingers" cannot.

Casper's liberalism notwithstanding, the issue with this developmental model, against which Esty's and similar critics' responses are written, is that it narrows the text to its historical circumstance and may too hastily accept as natural a developmentalist model of literary language. No doubt linguists have made such empirical accounts of world Englishes in various contexts, and authors and literary critics themselves are often swayed by the influence of this narrative.[5] Joaquin's own image of the Philippines is one of deferred maturity and vibrancy,

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4. Casper, 308. Among the other influential authors reviewed are Gregorio Brillantes, N.V.M. Gonzalez, F. Sionil Jose, Edith Tiempo, and Linda Ty, to name a few.

5. See, for example, Edgar Schneider, *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), which attempts to examine English acquisition along theoretical, political, descriptive, and applied grounds. While attentive to criticisms on the

under a tension force pulling from two ends of the arrow of time. The indelible legacy of Spanish colonization, which established a cultural minority of mestizo elites discomfited both by their distance from the masses and by the perceived shadows cast by the global cultural centers of Europe and the United Sates, seems to freeze the characters of the play, especially the aged "heroes" of the Philippine Revolution. Unable or unwilling to confront the contemporaneity of their own possible annihilation in the Pacific War, they instead cling to classic poetry, tertulia, and convivial toasts to the days of old. But the unrealized yet looming future pulls in the other direction, sharply and violently when Bitoy Camacho, a dramatic narrator and character, concludes the play after the bombs have fallen and the scenes of the play lie in ruins, without any character having been able to demonstrate any resistance to the monstrous consequences of an attenuated historical and cultural consciousness.

Indeed, the arc of *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* fails to involve any sense of closure or unification of the meaningfulness of events. This is of course its aesthetic and literary achievement: to render its characters tragic because of their inability to grow, change, or mature. The literariness of stunted growth, of failed development, of deferred maturity—all these are arguably dominant strains in modernist and postcolonial literatures, central to the research agendas of the "new" modernist studies of the past two decades which has made politically necessary strides in coming to grips with the challenging connections between modernism and

concept of nativeness, norms of correctitude, and the ideologically charged debates about World Englishes' representation in scholarly literature, Schneider's own "dynamic model" of postcolonial English posits that it emerges from "processes of convergence" after a period of persistent differentiation (26-31). For many Anglophone writers of the Philippines, the implied trajectory from tension to relaxation may seem too neat with respect to their own fraught and situated subject positions.

imperialism.[6] As mentioned earlier, within the nested discourses of Anglophone Philippine literary studies, the critical story of Anglophone Philippine literature still mostly assumes a developmental model, wherein Filipino authors move from imitation to an "authentic" Filipino expression after a period of familiarization, tutelage, internalization, and experimentation.[7] While this developmental model remains both familiar and influential, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* seems to cast doubt on the surety of progress and that viability of "maturity" in the world-system of literary forms. The play itself raises the question of what the phrase "artistic maturity" even signifies. For the characters of the play the answers vary: social utility, aesthetic exemplarity, bold experimentalism, and a discerning relationship to tradition. To be sure, all such

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6. The "new modernist studies" arguably has its origins in Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz's so-titled essay in *PMLA* in 2008, although the critical reorientations announced by the *new* have antecedents in various examples of then-contemporary scholarship among modernist scholars in the 1990s. Regardless of exact origin point, the new modernist studies are succinctly described by Mao and Walkowitz as embracing three types of expansion: critiquing the historiographic categories of modernism and extending its usual dates, casting a wider net to capture other parts of the world and their unheralded traditions and cultures, and considering texts that may not be conventionally modernist. Indicative of this banner's continued critical force, a new edited collection of it has appeared in 2021; see *The New Modernist Studies*, ed. Douglas Mao (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). See also Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz, "The New Modernist Studies," *PMLA* 123, no. 3 (2008): 737-748. See also a critical response to new modernist studies' alleged political quietism in Max Brzezinski, "The New Modernist Studies: What's Left of Political Formalism?" *The Minnesota Review* no. 76 (2011): 109-125 as well as a response to Brzezinski in Martin Puchner, "The New Modernist Studies: A Response" *The Minnesota Review* no. 79 (2012): 91-96. Another important text that for the most part aligns with the new modernist studies paradigm is *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). This own dissertation remains indebted to the political and ideological reformations of the new modernist studies, even if, like all critical regroundings, its most programmatic claims at times appear too broad and generalized.

7. Patke and Holden, "Filipino Writing to 1965," in *The Routledge Concise History of Southeast Asian Writing in English*, ed. Rajeev Patke and Philip Holden (New York: Routledge, 2009), 64.

achievements are broadly conceivable in any mature literary and artistic culture, including that of the Philippines during Joaquin's generation.[8]

However, the meta-critical reflection of this narrative stands at odds with the "arrestedness" of the play itself, which bespeaks of the very failure of this progress narrative to materialize. Perhaps the recognition of failure is itself an indicator of progress or at least self-awareness typically associated with the self-knowledge of maturity. It is not an exaggeration to note how Joaquin himself elevated the status of Philippine writing in English with his literary and non-literary writing alike, as indicated by numerous posthumous reflections on his career.[9] A more revealing inquiry, however, emerges not from deciding whether the Philippines has "matured," whether its literatures have "developed" according to competing (usually

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8. For more on the connection between Philippine drama written in English and its connection to the maturation of Anglophone forms, see Doreen Fernandez, "Philippine Theater in English," *World Literature Today* 74, no. 2 (2000): 318–22.

9. One example among many may suffice. Deemed a National Artist in 1976, Joaquin is lauded by National Commission for Culture and the Arts as a writer:

> "Nick Joaquin… is regarded by many as the most distinguished Filipino writer in English writing so variedly and so well about so many aspects of the Filipino. Nick Joaquin has also enriched the English language with critics coining 'Joaquinesque' to describe his baroque Spanish-flavored English or his reinventions of English based on Filipinisms. Aside from his handling of language, Bienvenido Lumbera writes that Nick Joaquin's significance in Philippine literature involves his exploration of the Philippine colonial past under Spain and his probing into the psychology of social changes as seen by the young, as exemplified in stories such as 'Doña Jeronima,' 'Candido's Apocalypse,' and 'The Order of Melchizedek.' Nick Joaquin has written plays, novels, poems, short stories and essays including reportage and journalism. As a journalist, Nick Joaquin uses the nom de plume *Quijano de Manila* but whether he is writing literature or journalism, fellow National Artist Francisco Arcellana opines that 'it is always of the highest skill and quality.'"

See "Order of National Artists: Nick Joaquin," National Commission for Culture and the Arts, https://ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/culture-profile/national-artists-of-the-philippines/nick-joaquin/.

universalized) standards of excellence or according to its rationalization within the nodes of a literary world-system. The more revealing insights instead follow from interrogating this will to narrativize progress (or lack thereof) itself. The near-constant deferment of a normative Philippine culture in *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* parallels historical effects of disappointment and betrayal, themselves felt by the characters of the play. In a kind of doubling that is deeply thematic of the play, both the text itself and the resolution of dramatic conflict within the play leave open the question of what, borrowing Casper's analogy, the Filipino author really grasps.

Joyce's novel also negotiates the relays between stunted growth and the markers of maturity like intellectual autonomy and personal independence. In many ways, Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* resembles a typified protagonist in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, although criticism has levied significant challenges to that categorization.[10] Contemporary Joyce scholarship has sought to adjudicate whether works like *Portrait* specifically indicate an apolitical and internationalist position or an anti-national and anti-imperial one. Stephen's great refusals throughout the novel—negations of tradition, of paternalism, of Catholicism, of cultural nationalism, and of a practical life—render the outline of a stoic aesthete placing artistic beauty above all other concerns. Nonetheless, Stephen does

10. Examples of the recent political and postcolonial turns in Joyce criticism can be found in the found in the following texts: Dominic Manganiello, *Joyce's Politics* (London: Routledge, 1980); Seamus Deane, *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature, 1880-1980* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Wake Forest University Press, 1987); Enda Duffy, *The Subaltern Ulysses* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Vincent Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1995); Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes, eds., *Semicolonial Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Colin MacCabe, *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word*, Second Edition (New York: Palgrave, 2003), among others.

literally try to grow and change in relation to the notion of Irishness to which he ambivalently belongs. Stephen's maturation is contextualized within a narrow image of the artist whose growth is in proportion to his ability to pursue personal visions of artistic expression in the face of external pressures of state exigency and normative emphases on rational efficiency.

For all Stephen's articulations of heroic acts of flying by nets and forging race-consciousness, however, his actual achievements are few and far between. Like *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, Joyce's novel illustrates failure much more clearly than success, specifically a repetitiveness of Stephen trying but never succeeding in following through disavowing gestures and proclamations of independence. Again, it is possible to read the endless deference of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as commensurate with the total literary effect of the novel; ironic readings of Stephen's stalled development have a strong foundation in the novel's critical tradition. But it is also possible to witness in this patterning an as-yet undetermined historical realization of a normative Ireland suitable to the likes of Stephen or his more nationalistic peers. Jed Esty has called this kind of "stalled development" the "master trope" of Joyce's novel.[11] Equally applicable to Joaquin's play, this notion of frozen maturation elevates the relationship between these two texts beyond mere cultural-historical resemblance but instead places them squarely within the long, still extant ripples of colonial/imperial time.

Stephen and Don Lorenzo's exile from the patterns of the everyday are direct consequences of this failure of growth. Out of place, disjointed, and without clear ways of performing socially meaningful roles, these characters seem to have opted out of responding vibrantly to their present moments. These characters share differently articulated desires to step

11. Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*, 128.

outside of time in a kind of cosmic exile, where the past can be either disregarded or viewed with impartiality, without the commitment to have to live within its effects. *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* ironizes such disconnection by equating it with oblivion. Don Lorenzo's silent appearance and general air of mystery conform more closely to a tragicomic belatedness, whereas Stephen's departure, stitched together by the novel's turn from stream-of-consciousness narrative to epistolary, romanticizes the artist's self-dignifying search for autonomy. In either case, the rapidly changing impositions of imperial temporalities necessitate that such individuals feel crowded out by their cultural conditions that spurn them for their great refusals. It is thus little wonder that both figures are rendered incapacitated—Stephen sickly, beset by ineffectualness, Don Lorenzo aged and disabled following a nearly fatal accident—since their lack of interest in being productive members of society figures for their peers as a disreputable lack of rational efficiency.

As such, the failed coming-into-being for both artists registers as particularly upsetting to those closest to them: Stephen all but loses the support of both his friends and family, while Don Lorenzo, while still admired by his contemporaries and half of his children, is disdained by the other half and eventually blasted out of material existence. The total impression of either text, however, does not remain uniformly tragic or pitiable. Hugh Kenner is somewhat responsible for developing an ironic stance toward Stephen's development, describing Stephen's turn to aesthetics as lacking the "humility" proper to artists who recognize that within tradition greatness has already come before them. Stephen, meanwhile, is convinced in his own arrogance that a yet-unprecedented beauty will emerge from his own soul.[12] However, Kenner was convinced that

12. Hugh Kenner, "The 'Portrait' in Perspective.," *The Kenyon Review* 10, no. 3 (1948): 369.

"Joyce was detached from what he was doing, and understood fully that only an Icarian fall could end Stephen's flight to the Paterian never-never land," suggesting in other words that Joyce intended Stephen to be ironic and pitiable, rather than commendable (370). Indeed, the final version of Stephen at the end of the novel is "insufferable," lacking the cool humor that Kenner characterizes as the most mature response to the cultural and artistic dissatisfactions Stephen faces (380). The ironic detachment between the author and character opposes both the seeming invitation of the novel to consider Stephen as the literary treatment of Joyce himself and the dignifying gestures of self-portraiture. In a later essay, Kenner describes Stephen as a "tedious cliché, weary, disdainful, sterile," having completed in the novel only one art-object, a "conventional" love poem.[13] The cycle of *Portrait*, emplotted at its most general level on Stephen's attempts and failures—either to make art, cleanse himself, speak up, make love, or escape—is ultimately frustrating but nonetheless dovetails neatly with an almost cathartic appraisal of the character after his self-imposed exile.

Joaquin's own ironizing devices in *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* stand apart from Joyce's, more deeply inflected by a complex appreciation of history and a baroque sense of time. For while Joyce sets up Stephen as an ultimately troubling character because of his arrogant self-satisfaction, Joaquin colors not Don Lorenzo but his daughters as slavishly trapped by their own inability to act outside the designs set by someone else. Without the depth of psychological characterization of Stephen, Don Lorenzo cannot properly be the protagonist of the drama, and

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13. Kenner, "Joyce's *Portrait*—A Reconsideration," in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Norton Critical Edition, Ed. John Paul Riquelme (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007): 360. This essay follows the influential "The 'Portrait' in Perspective," published seventeen years prior. Kenner revisits the formally invited ironic reading of Stephen while thematically uniting *Portrait* with both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.

thus cannot be the primary intended target of the audience's frustrations or desires. Nonetheless, he acts as a kind of stumbling block for both Candida and Paula, the last undone knot of their breaking free from a no longer useful or generative past, a ghostly image of what paradoxically "follows" a non-future. Whereas Stephen's contemptibility stems from the ungainly shape he finally takes, Don Lorenzo's results from his acting as that which prevents Candida and Paula from maturation or sensibility. Through the portrait of himself, which can justly be compared to Stephen's own inflated sense of self, Don Lorenzo's own act of aesthetic egoism falls tragically on his own daughters and admirers who fade into ruin, commemorated only by a sentimental speech.

The Bad Infinity of Repetition

The literary effect of temporality of the texts differs significantly: Joyce's resembles a stream of consciousness *künstlerroman*, while Joaquin's play is a realist three-act play that proceeds unproblematically through diegetic time. In tracing the rhythmic yet uneven psychic development of Stephen Dedalus, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* tracks what Tobias Boes describes as the "tension between conjunctive and disjunctive," between the epiphanic rupture of self-discovery and unifying recollection of individuation in leitmotif.[14] Indeed, rather than subscribe to the convenient classification of the Joyce's novel as a *Bildungsroman*, Boes notes that the cycle of failed or at least ambivalent resolutions of the novel distinguish it from a novel of proper development. When, for example, Stephen buckles under the weight of his own licentiousness in Section III of the novel, it follows as a consequence of hemic abandon. "His blood was in revolt," the narrative states, and because of this revolt, he paws around, moaning

14. Tobias Boes, "*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and the 'Individuating Rhythm' of Modernity," ELH 75, no. 4 (2008): 769.

"to himself like some baffled prowling beast."[15] He wants, furthermore, "to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin" (87). What follows Stephen's prowling is a typical Joycean display of rhetorical virtuosity, a passage filled with rhetorical devices of repetition, onomatopoeia, foreshadowing, and alliteration:

> He felt some dark presence moving irresistibly upon him from the darkness, a presence subtle and murmurous as a flood filling him wholly with itself. Its murmur besieged his ears like the murmur of some multitude in sleep; its subtle streams penetrated his being. His hands clenched convulsively and his teeth set together as he suffered the agony of its penetration. He stretched out his arms in the street to hold fast the frail swooning form that eluded him and incited him: and the cry that he had strangled for so long in his throat issued from his lips. It broke from him like a wail of despair from a hell of sufferers and died in a wail of furious entreaty, a cry for an iniquitous abandonment, a cry which was but the echo of an obscene scrawl which he had read on the oozing wall of a urinal. (87-88)

Joyce's narrative style places order upon the chaos of Stephen's lust. The murmurous murmuring of the temptation surrounding and filling Stephen are, despite their inchoateness, ordered by the regularity of its sound. The alliterative "clenched convulsively" and "teeth set together" seal Stephen hermetically within his own being, although only to prepare the forcefulness of his moral failing. The ultimate consequence of that failing—eternal damnation—echoes within his cry and presages the next section of similitudes and Stephen's temporary repentance. And the cry is itself another kind of echo, the articulation of an obscenity etched on a bathroom wall. The unidentified word or words lack signification or referent; they are but the cry of the animal.[16]

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15. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. John Paul Riquelme, Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007). 87.

16. This provocative term is inspired by V.N. Voloshinov's description of un-ideologized speech, that is, hypothetical speech that would be uttered outside of social and ideological structures. Here, in Stephen's case, the young protagonist comes dangerously close to falling outside society's norms coded as moral and sexual restraint. See V.N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

The style of the narrative imposes a persistent irony throughout by imposing regularity and pattern upon that which is typically rendered and felt as disorderliness. The architecture of Joyce's portrait indirectly alludes to Eliotic fragments shored against ruins. Woven complexly together, the narrative of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* attempts to make sense of what is a dissatisfying ending: a secular prayer for hope without any promise of completion.[17] Dublin to Trieste cannot be read as beginning to end but rather the absence of closure that associates strongly with the ambivalence of freedom.

Joaquin's portrait has its own ruins for which it bears witness. *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* limns the distinction between the "past" and the "present" in Bitoy's soliloquy at the beginning of the play. Joaquin's own virtuosity, textured by Castilian as critics have argued, presents an elegy for the crumbling walls of Intramuros destroyed by war but also the weight of its own stasis, its stubborn refusal to be in the present. Bitoy begins (unseen by the audience according to stage directions) with a catalog of commerce, Christianity, and culture, for which Manila stood as epicenter:

> Intramuros! The old Manila. The original Manila. The Noble and Ever Loyal City… To the early conquistadors she was a new Tyre and Sidon; to the early missionaries she was a new Rome. Within these walls was gathered the wealth of the Orient—silk from China; spices from Java; gold and ivory and precious stones from India. And within these walls the Champions of Christ assembled to conquer the Orient for the Cross. Through these old streets once crowded a marvelous multitude—viceroys and archbishops; mystics and merchants; pagan sorcerers and Christian martyrs; nuns and harlots and elegant marquesas; English pirates, Chinese mandarins, Portuguese traitors, Dutch spies,

17. And, if we read across to Stephen's appearance in *Ulysses*, it is only the beginning of a temporary exile the ends in repatriation, if only temporarily within the "Telemachus" chapter of the novel.

> Moro sultans, and Yankee clipper captains. For three centuries this medieval town was a Babylon in its commerce and a New Jerusalem in its faith…"[18]

Bitoy's historical tour fantasizes the authentic storied history of Manila, which is filled with the bustle of trade, the clash of cultures, and the putative glory of conquest and conversion. Bitoy weaves a mosaic of sheer difference that cuts across both race, language, and class; the images of his memory become romance, the city suffused with a certain regale and glory, only to become victim to its own inequality. No longer a fabled city, the old Manila had become by Bitoy's childhood a "slum-jungle" whose death, he continues, was already foretold even before the war (294). The baroque excess of Manila can only have been sustained for so long.[19]

Yet there was one house that resisted death paradoxically by insisting on not changing, by "fighting stubbornly to keep itself intact, to keep itself individual."[20] The Marasigan household, where the entirety of the play is staged, resembles all the other tenements but possesses an atmosphere of another age, an "Age of lamplight and gaslight, of harps and whiskers and fine carriages; an Age of manners and melodrama, of Religion and Revolution" (295). The patriarch, Don Lorenzo Marasigan, was a respected hero of the Philippine Revolution whose strange painting dedicated to his spinster daughters Candida and Paula reignite the interest of the public which has mostly discarded its revolutionary heroes of the past. Like *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* deals not only with an artist's

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18. Nick Joaquin, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino: An Elegy in Three Scenes*, in *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic* (New York: Penguin Books, 2017), 293.

19. On Joaquin's baroque literary style, see Philip Holden, "The 'Postcolonial Gothic': Absent Histories, Present Contexts," *Textual Practice* 23, no. 3 (2009): 353–72, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502360902753013.

20. Joaquin, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, 294.

difficult genesis but also with the social utility of art to allocate for society a sense of itself in relation to its place in history. Both Stephen and the Marasigan household are stuck, either in a perpetual cycle of realization and failure, or in a pathetic commitment to obsolescent ideals, respectively. For the Marasigan household and for the play as a whole, the action is inaction. Whereas Stephen struggles consistently to realize the artist's vision of freedom, Candida and Paula are unable to imagine a future without their father or the aristocratic identity with which they grew up.

Bitoy, under ulterior motives to grant access to his friends to view the painting, visits the Marasigan household and prefaces his visit with a nostalgia that typifies much of the dialog. He remembers how the old aristocratic order of Don Lorenzo's friends would gather for tertulia on Friday evenings to informally discuss affairs and engage in light merrymaking. An early scene depicting Bitoy's surprise visit to see to two sisters quickly turns from niceties to a performance within a performance, a play within in play, so to speak, as all three gaily reenact these Friday nights during the days of the Philippine Revolution:

> PAULA: More brandy, Don Pepe? Some more brandy, Don Isidro? Doña Upeng, come here by the window, it is cooler! What, Don Alvaro—you have not read the new poem by Darío? By, my good man, in the latest issue of the "Blanco y Negro, of course! Doña Irene, we are talking about the divine Ruben! You have read his latest offering?....
> BITOY [*in voice of a ten-year-old*]: Tita Paula, Tita Paula—I wanna go to the small room!
> PAULA: Hush, hush, you little savage! And just look at your nose!
> CANDIDA: And how many times have we told you not to call us Tita! (301-302)

The fond remembrance of bygone days is cut across by a refined Iberian literary culture that exists as a shell of its former self in the Commonwealth years that can only be revisited in a pantomime of time travel. These memories, the play goes on to show, are paeans that disconnect the Marasigan household from the "present." Bitoy's infantilization—he is a generation younger than the two sisters and remembers the "old guard" from a child's perspective—presages the

codependence that the two sisters will have on both each other and their mysterious father, whose "entrance" into their performative *mise en abyme* actually serves as the entrance of the eponymous portrait that dominates both the theme and character blocking of the play. The stage directions place the portrait as the invisible plane between the audience and the stage, so that the members of the audience are looked upon by the actors whenever they view the painting. The three characters' first viewing of the painting within the events of the plot deflate the mirthful play-acting: "*The* PORTRAIT *is hanging on the wall right in front of them; and as they become aware of it, the rapture fades from their faces, their bodies droop, their hands fall to their sides. The game is ended; the make-believe is over*" (302). Upon Bitoy's sobered inspection, the details of the painting become clearer:

> BITOY: Yes, I know. "A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino." But why, why? The scene is not Filipino… What did your father mean?
> [*He holds up a hand toward* PORTRAIT.]
> A young man carrying an old man on his back…and behind them, a burning city…
> PAULA: The old man is our father.
> BITOY: Yes, I recognize his face…
> CANDIDA: And the young man is our father also—our father when he was young.
> BITOY [excitedly]: Why, yes, yes!
> PAULA: And the burning city---
> BITOY: The burning city is Troy.
> PAULA: Well, you know all about it.
> BITOY [*smiling*]: Yes, I know all about it. Aeneas carrying his father Anchises out of Troy. And *your* father has painted himself as both Aeneas and as Anchises. (303)

The central trope of the *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* is thus a conceit of doubling that usurps the linear flow of time and the coherent succession of generations. As Candida and Paula surmise later, the portrait is a "punishment" for their blaming him for their destitution suffered as adults (384). Unlike some of Don Lorenzo's peers, who have cooperated with American interests and thus handsomely set themselves up, Don Lorenzo establishes no such cooperation, and the

painting is purportedly a reminder both of Candida and Paula's transgressions and of Don Lorenzo's apparent suicide attempt after their confrontation.

However, the private meaning of the painting comes only after repeated attempts of others trying to determine its meaning and even then seems to accord no privileged status as the painting's authentic reading. What is clear to the characters of the play is that the image of Don Lorenzo carrying himself is both frozen and freezing—stuck in time as a static image but also so mystifying as to arrest his grown daughters from determining their own lives separate from himself or the past to which he belongs. That the painting alludes to a mythologized yet disconnected event in classical antiquity only baffles viewers even more. Paula remarks that the portrait is a *self*-portrait: Don Lorenzo is "an artist *and* a Filipino," after all (304). But the slippage from *as* to *and* is telling. Whereas *as* indicates supplement, a forged connection between two entities, *and* connotes simultaneity and equivalence among constituent entities. Don Lorenzo can obviously be both an artist and a Filipino; indeed, unless either category can be repudiated, he cannot *not* be both, unless, for example, he was to stop painting, die, or otherwise cease being one or both. But artist *as*… implies a deliberate addition to a categorical being that allows the peculiar doubling of the play to remain sensible. Don Lorenzo cannot be "Don Lorenzo *and* Aeneas (or Anchises)" but can be "Don Lorenzo *as* Aeneas (or Anchises)": one an equivalence, the other a substitution.

The painting, having attracted local attention, has led to unwelcome visitors becoming a daily occurrence for the Marasigan daughters who constantly must dismiss reporters and photographers, as well as a potential U.S. buyer whom the daughters' tenant, a vaudeville pianist named Tony Javier, knows is interested in purchasing it. Bitoy's own reasoning for visiting is to give access to some of his friends who work for a serial publication and want to write a piece on

the portrait. Their jaded comments about the meaninglessness of both the painting and their shopworn critique of its decadence indicate their failure to imagine any meaningful future for themselves of the culture at large that seems without purpose. Coming from a more socially conscious and politically active segment of society, the young writers Pete, Eddie, and Cora offer little commentary outside their own dissatisfaction:

> EDDIE: I don't care what he says. This picture's not worth two cents to *me*. I don't understand all this fuss about it. I don't think it's worth writing about at all. Oh, why did I ever learn to write!
> CORA: Darling, whoever said you did?
> Eddie: Come on, Pete—help me out.
> PETE: It's east as pie, Eddie. Just be angry with this picture; just pile on the social-consciousness.
> EDDIE: I'm sick of writing about social-consciousness!
> CORA: And besides, it's not fashionable anymore.
> PETE: You could begin with a punchline: "If it's not Proletarian, it's not Art" (321).

The three writers rehearse the then-classical debate between aesthetics and commitment.[21] But Eddie's vexation and Cora's offhandedness betray the limitations of choice between only two alternatives. Much like the earlier performance of a bygone tertulia, the three writers perform their own show, this time an ironized mockery of their own worn-out politics that clash with the supposedly inadequacy of the painting:

> BITOY: He dreams about the Trojan War—
> PETE: The most hackneyed them in all Art!
> BITOY: And he celebrates with exaggerated defiance values from which all content has vanished!
> CORA: He looks back with nostalgic longing to the more perfect world of the Past!
> PETE: And he paints this atrocious picture—this sickly product of a decadent imagination!
> CORA: Of a decadent *bourgeois* imagination, Pete.
> PETE: Of a decadent bourgeois imagination, Cora.
> EDDIE: Will you idiots stop fooling and let me think!

21. See Chapter Two, "The Self-Poetics of José Garcia Villa and Gertrude Stein," for more information.

PETE: But we're not fooling, Eddie, and you don't have to think! Your article practically writes itself. Just compare this [*waving toward* PORTRAIT], this piece of tripe with proletarian art as a whole. Proletarian Art—so clean, so wholesome, so vigorous, in spite of the vileness and misery with which it deals, because it is revolutionary, because it is realistic, because it is dynamic—the vanguard of human progress, the expression of forces which can have but one—only one!—inevitable outcome!
CORA: Paradise!
BITOY: Heaven itself![22]

Just as the painting is a stern reminder to Paula and Candida of their transgression, it is also a reminder to Pete, Eddie, and Cora of the lapsing of a promised socialist revolution. The spirit of progress has become for them another sort of posturing, "[just] yap-yap-yap from a safe literary distance," Eddie says a few lines later (324). They belong to the generation of Filipinos who absorbed the likes of Sinclair Lewis, H.L. Mencken, and James Branch Cabell, who were the "Champions of the Proletariat," and the "Spearhead of Progress" (324). The three find the painting reprehensible not because it is bad art, but because its existence confirms that they still wait for progress to come. Simultaneously, any sense of the new or novelty that members of this generation can experience emerges far away in the United States, where, Bitoy says, their "fashions are always made" (325). Frustrated by the loss of a unifying vision and a persistent reminder of a staid past, Eddie reacts bitterly to the thought of the Revolution: "And that's how the revolution ended! *That's* how the Revolution ended! Groups of embittered envious old men gathering in dusty bookshops and bankrupt drugstores and broken-down tenements like this one! Just look around this room—what does it proclaim? Failure! Defeat! Poverty! Nostalgia!" (328). The writers' initial scene ends with perhaps the most stinging insult to an artist like Don Lorenzo: that he is obsolete (328).

The constant doubling in *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, from the pantomiming on

22. Joaquin, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, 322-323.

the stage, the reenactment of a moribund Hispanic colonial culture, not to mention the painting itself, compensate futilely for the inability to connect oneself to a meaningful future that, because of the onset of global war, is figured as the survival of a country and its people. However, for those like Don Lorenzo, there is another option to redefine an even *older* past as present. Don Perico, one of Don Lorenzo's friends who has come to visit the Marasigan daughters in the second scene, defends the classical past as not only valuable but interwoven in the refined imagination of the Philippine cognoscenti, in contrast to the beat writers who ridicule the painting's decadence. Don Perico implies that anchoring Philippine literary culture in the tradition of antiquity is as invigorating as any political project. "The past was not dead for us—certainly not the classic past," he says, claiming ownership of the legacy Homer, Virgil, Augustine, Dante, Cervantes, Byron, and Hugo (358-359). More specific to the painting itself, Don Perico states that "Aeneas and Bonaparte were equally real to us, and equally contemporary" (359). In this counternarrative of historical significance, ownership and kinship are claimed in spite of suspicions of undermining purportedly Filipino causes or concerns. While Don Perico seems to have cast his lot with this counternarrative that preserves both the legitimacy of his friend's artistic vision and the Marasigans' clinging to the past, it is a short-lived vindication when he, like Tony, urges Candida and Paula to put the painting to beneficial use by donating it to the government in exchange for payment. It would be a "patriotic" gesture but also a way to rescue Candida and Paula from poverty.

The two remain unmoved by his apparent generosity and instead criticize Don Perico for abandoning his artistic ideals: "Are we to abandon this house as *you* abandoned poetry? Go on, senator—tell us. Who could advise us better than you?" (363). For Candida and Paula, their suffering is dignified as retribution for their sins and, at the same time, as a commemoration of a

romanticized past. Don Perico, on the other hand, has lost the rose-colored view of art, seeing that aesthetic commitment would have amounted to a choice between "scribbling pretty verses" and letting his family starve (365). Don Perico then transitions to a lengthy speech that rehearses the choice between an artful life and a practical one and anchors the entire second scene as one the most extended musing on aesthetics of the play. In it, Don Perico strives to defend his transformation from minor poet to wealthy politician, saying that he "dreamed of bringing the radiance of poetry into the murk of politics" and that he "continued to think of myself as a poet a long, long time after I had ceased to be one, whether in practice or in spirit" (365). But conditions do not permit Don Perico to become a successful poet, and he laments that "too often, one is only an innocent bystander at one's own fate" (366). To him, poetry is driven forward by its successive uptake in future generations—a poet "must be conscious of an audience—not only of a present audience but of a permanent one, an eternal one, an audience of all the succeeding generations"—but there would have been no audience left for Don Perico had he chosen to remain a poet. The claim to a universal, eternal audience implies the preservation of transhistorical significance and value. Here, the rubric of literary merit or genius requires a timeless audience that history, specifically an unrelenting global integration, has not rendered possible, because today's poets do not share the same lineage as the previous generation:

> The fathers of the young poets of today are from across the sea. They are not our sons; they are foreigners to us, and we do not even exist for them. And if I had gone on being a poet, what would I be now? A very unhappy old man, a very bitter old man—a failure and a burden. The choice before me was between poetry and self-respect; I had to choose between Europe and America; and I chose—No I did not choose at all. I simply went along with the current. Quomodo cantabo canticum Domini in terra aliena?[23]

23. Joaquin, 366-367. The Latin translates to "How can I sing the song of the Lord in a foreign land?"

Don Perico's turn to politics is rendered a tragic relinquishing of artistic sovereignty and a failure to "sire" the next generation of Filipino poets, all of whom seem to have taken influences from elsewhere.

As is typical of Joaquin's writing, there is a sly and resistant taking of liberties; there is, likewise, a paradoxical rendering of history. Although Joaquin displays a Hispanophile nostalgia by privileging the ineluctable legacy of Spanish in his cultural imagination,[24] he also turns the narrow developmentalist and diffusive networks of literary influence on their heads by characterizing literary and artistic influences as having already become a part of the Philippine cultural landscape. Against the coolly ironic distancing of the likes of Cora, Eddie, and Pete, who disidentify with bloodless aestheticism while they also simultaneously voice their cynicism of the political investment, the Marasigan household, their allies, and the painting itself stand in stubborn relation to pragmatic and local necessities.

Nonetheless, there is also a frustrating tension in the play's reminder that what John D. Blanco calls "usable past" is always being sought after by its cast of characters.[25] What's potentially jarring for *Portrait* is not so much that Don Lorenzo and Don Perico's artistries are thoroughly informed by Western influences, but that this is the only "usable past" that is available to them. The counternarrative of a generative, pre-colonial past—the mythos of which often nourished the nationalist rhetoric and historiography—is nowhere to be found (12). It is not

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24. Marie Rose B. Arong, "A *Native Clearing*: The English Language in Anglophone Filipino Novels," *Postcolonial Studies* 22, no. 4 (2019): 499.

25. John D. Blanco, "Baroque Modernity and the Colonial World: Aesthetics and Catastrophe in Nick Joaquin's *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*," *Kritika Kultura* 4 (2004): 6.

an undue simplification to suggest that the vexing search for some centering locus of history and culture characterizes the conflict of *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*.

Integrity, Harmony, Effulgence

In Stephen's case in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the fate of his commitment is unresolved as the novel ends with Stephen having accomplished little in terms of actual artistic creation. He does not have a chance to be left behind, cast aside, or misinterpreted by future generations, nor does he opt to ensconce himself from failure in the self-serving realm of public office. Unlike Don Perico, who sees civic duty as a better option than ineffectual aesthetics, Stephen strengthens his apolitical commitment in times of political urgency. What transpires among Stephen and his colleagues at Trinity College elaborates on what it means to be Irish and claim and Irish culture. While Stephen struggles at Trinity College to feel connected to anything greater than himself, thinking himself to be nothing "but a shy guest at the feast of the world's culture," a political discussion regarding Czar Nicholas II's *Rescript for Peace* irritates him even further. Stephen winces at the high-minded pabulum of universal peace and brotherhood, disarmament, and utilitarian harmony. Because Stephen admits plainly that none of this grandstanding has any interest to him whatsoever, MacCann, one of Stephen's colleagues, asks whether he's a "reactionary" and digs further into Stephen's smallness, calling him a "minor poet" who is "above such trivial questions as the question of universal peace."[26]

Stephen's coolness contrasts with the naïve fervor of Davin, who "worshipped the sorrowful legend of Ireland" and whose nationalist tendencies are figured in the narrative as a kind of spiritual peasantry (158). The "myth" of Ireland fixes Davin in an "attitude of dullwitted loyal serf" and closes him off from the rest of the world's affairs except those that directly

26. Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 174.

concern his native country (158). Davin emphasizes his being an Irish nationalist, to which Stephen indicates the irony of possessing a Fenian handbook while signing a declaration of peace. As if being Irish were a matter of pride, Davin asks, “What with your name and your ideas…Are you Irish at all?” (277) Stephen’s response is both conciliatory and self-affirming: “This race and this country and this life produced me…I shall express myself as I am” (178).

From the frustrated reactions of his addressees, however, it seems like simply having experienced life inside Ireland and being one of its race is not enough. What might be enough for “Irishness” to be a viable category for Stephen? Language is not enough since he has dropped out of lessons by the Gaelic League. History, furthermore, attests to linguistic disruptions that happened long before Irish nationalism was even a question: “My ancestors threw off their language and took on another…They followed a handful of foreigners to subject them. Do you fancy I am going to pay in my own life and person debts they made? What for?”[27] Davin suggests that being Irish is just a matter of pride, or, more precisely, that Stephen’s pride is simply getting in the way of his true nature, that in his heart he is really an Irishman but that his “pride is too powerful” (178). If there is some truth to this, then it lies in Stephen’s disappointment with the theme of betrayal prevalent in contemporary Irish history. “No

27. Joyce, 178. Patrick Bixby suggests that Joyce’s positioning against British rule and Irish nationalism is influenced by Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*. Bixby’s connection is based partially from biographical evidence, specifically a letter by Joyce to George Roberts that he signed “James Overman.” While this seeming, brief lapse into flippancy may not be enough to motivate an entire reading, Bixby notes persuasively that the “self-affirmation of Nietzsche’s philosophy also seemed at least an interesting response to a semicolonial and Catholic Irish cultural ‘malaise,’ one riddled with anxieties about masculinity, British rule, and manly sovereignty” (47). See Patrick Bixby, “Becoming ‘James Overman’: Joyce, Nietzsche, and the Uncreated Conscience of the Irish,” *Modernism/Modernity* 24, no. 1 (2017): 45–66, https://doi.org/10.1353/mod.2017.0002. See also Bahee Hadeagh and Siamak Shahabi, “Joycean Nationalism in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*,” *Forum for World Literature Studies* 8, no. 3 (2016): 506–22.

honourable and sincere man," Stephen says, "has given up to you his life and his youth and his affections from the days of Tone to those of Parnell but you sold him to the enemy or failed him in need or reviled him and left him for another. And you invite me to be one of you. I'd see you damned first" (178).

The relentless pursuit of authenticity turns Stephen away from the ambivalences of Parnellite Irish nationalism, whose episodic history is replete with betrayal and false promises. The sordid affairs of politics and the grim drollery of high-minded civic talk are pushed away in Stephen's mind by the purity of Aristotelian and Aquinian aesthetics, wherein the boundaries of things can be preserved. Stephen's art parable of the basket of apples, silhouetted by its own objectness, "selfbounded and selfcontained," opposes the quotidian grandstanding of Stephen's peers (187). Unlike Ireland or its internal conflicts, doomed to its own autosarcophagy, the boundary of the apple basket possesses a "rhythm and structure," absolute in its "thingness" against the backdrop of the universe. Stephen's confidence in the *quidditas*, or the "whatness" of the basket of apples, pits its idealism against the inauthentic grandiosity of concepts like universal peace (187). The art-object's autonomy stands in sharp contrast to the inchoate and dissatisfying world. In its disconnected and illusory nature, the art-object can serve as a powerful critique of both politics and culture.

A rich critical commentary has emerged from Stephen's complex lecture on aesthetics, which contrasts sharply from Aquinas's own thought by suggesting that the movement from *integritas* to *consonantia* to *quidditas* finally is described as sequential phases of aesthetic apprehension rather than existential qualities of the object itself.[28] The root of Aquinas's

28. Frank L. Kunkel, "Beauty in Aquinas and Joyce," *The Thomist* 12 no. 3 (1949): 266-267. Beyond the sources directly cited, other illuminating scholarship on the connection between

aesthetics in *Summa Theologica* (and the Thomist commentary that has emerged since) is ontological. What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of beauty? Are these conditions immanent to beautiful objects, or are they extant in the mind of the viewer? Or, perhaps, is beauty a certain combination of both the object itself and the mental activity of the beholder? As one scholar notes, Stephen's purpose is "to establish beauty in the objectivity of the art-work rather than in the subjectivity of the artist" by suggesting that proper aesthetic experiences emerge from a viewer's stasis, and that the proper exerting power of the work of art is to induce that stasis.[29] Like any good critic, Stephen rationalizes a hierarchy of aesthetic merit, not only distinguishing the beautiful and the ugly, but also the correct, learned way to apprehend beauty through intellection rather than merely emotional reaction. In this oft-quoted passage, Stephen distinguishes between the improper kinetic emotions—one that inspire metaphorical movement toward or away from the art-object—and proper static ones that arrest us in objective appreciation:

> The tragic emotion, in fact, is a face looking two ways, towards terror and towards pity, both of which are phases of it. You see, I use the word *arrest*. I mean that the tragic emotion is static. Or rather the dramatic emotion is. The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire and loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something, loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. These are kinetic emotions. The arts which

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Joyce and Aquinas specifically include Shiv K. Kumar, "Bergson and Stephen Dedalus' Aesthetic Theory," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 16, no. 1 (1957): 124-127; Thomas W. Grayson, "James Joyce and Stephen Dedalus: The Theory of Aesthetics," *James Joyce Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1967): 310-319; Cordell D.K. Yee, "St. Thomas Aquinas as Figura of James Joyce: A Medieval View of Literary Influence," *James Joyce Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (1984): 25-38; James Walter Caufield, "The Word as Will and Idea: Dedalean Aesthetics and the Influence of Schopenhauer, *James Joyce Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (1998): 695-714; H. Marshall McLuhan, "Joyce, Aquinas, and the Poetic Process," *Renascence* 64, no. 1 (2011): 89-99; and Stephen Kern, *Modernism after the Death of God: Christianity, Fragmentation, and Unification* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

29. Maurice Beebe, "Joyce and Aquinas: The Theory of Aesthetics," *Philological Quarterly* 36 (1957): 24.

> excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The esthetic emotion (I use the general term) is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing.[30]

For Stephen, the immanent qualities of the beautiful object are fixable points in the coordinate plane of the worldly experience. They are worthy of reverence and contemplation because they transcend the petty affairs of his colleagues marked by "desire and loathing."

Thus, true art possesses a negative productive value because it redirects desire toward the processes of intellection rather than action. This was the achievement of modern art that Theodor Adorno praises in his incomplete *Aesthetic Theory*, which can be summarized as a re-examination of the idealist context of art, its "law of form" as he frequently describes it. Like Stephen, Adorno contemplates whether anything about art can be understood: "…nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist."[31] Adorno ultimately does insist that a certain kind of art has the right to exist, specifically one that possesses and gives credence to autonomy, a feature of artworks to "detach themselves from the empirical world and bring forth another world" (1). What is the power of art's autonomy? What gives it the ability to transcend the empirical? For Adorno the simple answer is its form, through which art can "[turn] against the status quo and what merely exists just as much as it has come to its aid by giving form to its elements" (2). In other words, it is by the form of the artwork that one can grasp its historical moment *after that moment has already passed*. The work of art is conditioned and situated, determined by its historical contexts, and it "acquires its specificity by separating itself from what it developed out of" (3). This is the "law

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30. Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* 180.

31. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 1.

of form" that allows art to persist through time and throw light on its own conditions even as those conditions come under an erasure that negates the artwork's own pragmatic use-value.

Importantly, Adorno, disidentifying from prior influences from Kant and Hegel primarily, does not, as Stephen seems to do, endorse transcendence, because immanent to art is its own negation: "Art and artworks are perishable, not simply because by their heteronomy they are dependent, but because right into the smallest detail of their autonomy, which sanctions the socially determined splitting off of spirit by the division of labor, they are not only art but something foreign and opposed to it. Admixed with art's own concept is the ferment of its own abolition" (4). Even if art remains contingent and perishable, it can retain its negation toward reality and thus introduce a kind praxis for a better world than the one currently known or experienced. This negation is a "refusal to play along" and an optative recourse to "form a praxis beyond the spell of labor" (12). The artwork's relationship to praxis is its refusal to be subordinate to the ruthless rationalizations of the status quo; art's ability to dispel us from self-preserving preoccupations is its maintenance of its connection to subsequent contexts to which it has no deterministic relation.

And yet for all his repudiation of this self-preserving logic around him, Stephen is constantly hounded by the mundane reality he hopes to repudiate. If the artist is akin to God paring his fingernails, then Stephen has not been able to reach his apotheosis. After the conflict with his peers, he turns to his thoughts of Emma and attempts to write a villanelle for her. The image of her purported flirtations with a priest, interruptive to his creative process as they are, preoccupy Stephen, striking him as an indication of a lost, or at least threatened, feminine purity. The gendered discourse of Stephen's contemplation indicate that the meaning of the Irish race is prefigured on a particular conception of female sexuality:

> He had told himself bitterly as he walked through the streets that she was a figure of the womanhood of her country, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness, tarrying a while, loveless and sinless, with her mild lover and leaving him to whisper of innocent transgressions in the latticed ear of a priest. His anger against her found vent in course railing at her paramour, whose name and voice and features offended his baffled pride: a priested peasant, with a brother a policeman in Dublin and a brother a potboy in Moycullen. To him she would unveil her soul's shy nakedness, to one who but schooled in the discharging a formal rite rather than to him, a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life.[32]

Through her lost innocence, Emma serves as all Irish women awakening to their own sex and serving both as temptation and muse for Stephen who feels frustratingly envious that her literal and figurative nakedness is revealed to someone else other than him, although he later pities her for her own entrance into womanhood as he remembers his own lost innocence.

It is by the poem that he writes (but does not give) to Emma that he reclaims her for himself, through her that the act of creation becomes embodied and visceral: "Her nakedness yielded to him, radiant, warm, odorous and lavish-limbed, enfolded him like a shining cloud, enfolded him like water with a liquid knife: and like a cloud of vapour of like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech, symbols of the element of mystery, flowed forth over his brain" (196). The villanelle that follows this passage concludes this section of the novel and precedes Stephen's self-imposed exile. The narrative's weaving through these disparate episodes—the tense conversation around Czar Nicholas's rescript, Stephen's aesthetic philosophizing, the private composition of a poem, to the need to "fly by" the nets that bind in exile—complicates the triangulation of nationalism, aesthetics, and the gendered body. Art is Stephen's escape from politics until it runs up against the politicized female body, emptied of psychological content save for the basic social controls of shame and embarrassment and

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32. Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* 194-195.

indicative instead of soul of a country. Indeed, for all its idealism, Stephen's aesthetics continually return to the national body, as well as the religious precepts to which it generally abides. The female body haunts as well, enfolding Stephen ambivalently. The villanelle's dual motifs of a question and imperative—"*Are you not weary of ardent ways*?" and "*Tell no more of enchanted days*"—do not expressly indicate an addressee. Given its situatedness in the narrative, the poem seems dedicated to and therefore addressed to Emmy Clery, but the connection between Ireland as a "sow" and the collective womanhood of the country suggest that it is Ireland itself that the villanelle concerns. The feminized country is lured by seraphim—that is, a paralytic Catholicism—while at the same time able to "*set man's heart ablaze*" in patriotic fervor (197). The "enchanted days" of religious and cultural traditions, of the "*sacrificing hand* [that] *upraises / The chalice flowing to the brim*," are of no consolation to the speaker, whose persistent questions imply their own dissatisfaction with the ardent ways.

Contra Mundum

It seems like one really cannot escape the nightmare of history, which is a compelling reason for Stephen's inconclusive flight from Dublin. The Marasigan household in Joaquin's text fares no better, but rather than languish mutely over the interposition of the political subject and artist, the Marasigans futilely pretend that some semblance of the past can persist into an accommodating future, while at the same time refusing to believe that the inevitable—the end of an already bygone era of Hispanized, colonial, elite cosmopolitanism—will come not by the quiet passage of time but by the onset of war. Candida and Paula blame their father for stunting what could have otherwise been full adult lives, but the play tells a different story of everyone frozen like the image of the titular painting, denied generational continuity and stuck repeating historical episodes.

This discontinuity is reflected at the beginning of the third scene of the play, where Bitoy mirrors the first scene by acting as a dramatic narrator looking back on the wreckage of history. The views from the Marasigan household, from the street decorations for the feast of La Naval de Manila to the slum-tenements, haunt the opening scene and exist only in memory. Old Manila is "obliterated forever," Bitoy announces, "except in my memory…where it lives…still young, still great, still the Noble and Ever Loyal City."[33] The romance of "October in Manila" fades away as the second "Intramuros curtain" opens to Candida pacing around the sala, preparing for what was traditionally the largest celebration along the street. Bitoy's comments on time raise the tension between moving forward in time and being trapped in a cycle of repeating history:

> But the emotion [a pant of childhood happiness] so special to one's childhood, seems no longer purely one's own; seems to have traveled ahead, deep into Time, since one first felt its pang—growing ever more poignant, more complex: a child's rhyme swelling epical; a clan treasure one bequeaths at the very moment of inheritance, having added one's gem to it….And Time creates unexpected destinations; history raises figs from thistles: yesterday's pirates become today's roast pork and paper lanterns, a tapping of impatient canes, a clamor of trumpets…" (397-298)

Bitoy's prefatory comments resign themselves to the mutability of the present. Time is not an entity that can be fought against or resisted. Rather, one can meet its onward march in step, inherit the experience of past generations, and confer one's own hard-earned sagacity to the future. Such contemplativeness is ironized by the fact that the bombs have already fallen and the Marasigan household—purportedly along with its inhabitants and its enigmatic painting—have been annihilated by the time of Bitoy's dramatic narration.

The painting's own demise comes that the hands of Paula, who overcomes Tony's duplicitous seduction of her. Her whereabouts initially unknown, Paula surprises everyone by

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33. Joaquin, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino,* 396.

reappearing and admitting that she has torn and burned the painting so that nothing remains. Paula exultantly admits that she has set herself free, in contrast to the "slavery" of the world of Tony, who recognizes in the destroyed painting only a lost fortune (417). While Tony's version of freedom is the libertine promises of American dollars, Paula's vision of freedom is one that paradoxically unites daughter and sister with father in a transformation that is ambivalently new and old. In some sense the painting is a test of daughters' resolve to shed their weak wills, to become something else with a "final, absolute, magnificent, unmistakable gesture" (419). With such a gesture, Paula and Candida (by Paula's explanation, equally responsible for the painting's destruction) are free of their own guilt and resentment toward their father and bravely exposed to destitution. Indeed, with respect to the development of the character of the two daughters, their reckless abandon contrasts sharply with their naivete and dependency on the charity of others. Because it is no longer secure, their future has been re-enabled to be something *other* than internalized guilt and helplessness.

At the same time, however, the distancing between the daughters and the painting coincides with a recommitment to Don Lorenzo "*contra mundum*" (420). The dedication is no longer filial, as the acquiescing Candida explains, but duty-bound, based on an allegiance against the rest of the world:

> CANDIDA: But now we stand with him as persons; we stand with him of our own free will, knowing what we do and why we do it. Oh, we did not know before, Paula. We loved him only because he was our father and because we were his daughters. But now we are no longer his daughters—no…And how I shiver with terror. We cannot resume the past, Paula; we must work out a new relationship—the three of us. Something has happened to the three of us—and to father most of all. Paula, do you realize that we do not know him anymore? He is no longer the charming artist of our childhood; and he is no longer that bitter broken old man who jumped out of the window. Something has been happening to him all this year. He has come to terms with life; he has made his own peace; he has found a solution. We will be facing a man risen from the grave…Oh Paula, how I shiver! And yet I can hardly wait! I can hardly wait to face him, to show him these new creatures he has made for us! We are no longer his daughters; we are his friends, his

disciples, his priestesses! We have been born again—not of his flesh but of his spirit! (420)

The promise of “something” to disrupt the daughters’ servility to both Don Lorenzo and the painting itself deflates with the ironized arrival of the patriarch’s old visitors, frequent patrons of the old tertulia, who have come to pay respects to the Virgin Mary for possibly the last time. For there is “all this talk of war, war, war!” (422) exclaims Don Alvaro, while another visitor Dona Irene admits fears that everything of what they once loved about Manila will be gone. Their wistful demeanor and their tattered but dignified apparel are mildly tragic, needing the Marasigan household, as well as its associated memories, to serve as a vain “symbol of their permanence” (425). Gaiety and resignation form two sides of the same coin as the daughters commit to tertulia every Friday and Don Ariesto toasts the Virgin Mary in Spanish. Pepang and Manolo, incensed by what they perceive as inanity from their siblings and their guests, stand witness to the first and only appearance of Don Lorenzo in the play. His annunciatory entrance forecloses the possibility of any difference for the daughters and instead heralds both the literal and thematic end of their character-lives:

> BITOY [*suddenly shouting; with astonished gesture toward doorway*]: *AND HERE HE COMES! HERE HE COMES!*
> PEPANG [*staring; gripping Manolo’s arm*]: Manolo, look! It’s *father*!
> [*Chorus of “Lorenzo!” and “Here comes Lorenzo!” and “Hola, Lorenzo!” from the visitors as they all gaze, amazed, toward doorway. Candida & Paula, who have their backs to the doorway, turn around slowly & fearfully. But, suddenly, their faces light up & lift up; they gasp, they smile; they clasp their hands to their breasts.*]
> PAULA & CANDIDA [*in ringing, rising, radiant exultation*]: *OH PAPA! PAPA! PAPA!*
> [*From the street comes a flourish of trumpets as the band breaks into the strains of the Gavotta Marcha Procesional; and as Bitoy Camacho steps forward to his usual place at left front of stage, the “Intramuros Curtain” closes in on the sala scene, everybody inside remaining frozen.*] (430)

The presaging appearance of Don Lorenzo gives a silhouette to the absence of futurity. Don Lorenzo’s figure, unblocked in the stage directions and indicated only by both the fearful gaze of

his company and a triumphant blare of trumpets, turns on its head purportedly normal genealogical progression of children succeeding their parents. Instead, Lorenzo's debilitated return negates the possibility of newness or change for his four children, of whom Paula and Candida cling tragically to the past even as it is about to be literally erased from existence by the conflagration of war.

Bitoy remains as the dramatic narrator to spiritually preserve this existence in memory. Bitoy's nostalgia is delivered with a verbal decadence: the final lines of the play read like an exaggerated eulogy redolent with familiar tropes of bygone times and lasting legacies. In lamenting the ruins of his childhood getaway and the inhabitants of the now destroyed Marasigan household, Bitoy conciliates between admitting the stubbornness of the Marasigans and revering their resolve. Even though "they were destroyed," he says, "they were never conquered" (431). Bitoy concedes that it is probably fitting that they met their end in refusing to acknowledge the urgent threat—both militaristic and existential—of the present, as they "could never have survived the death of the old Manila" (431). But the recompense for their death that supersedes the Marasigans' mortality vaguely persists: "Your city—my city—the city of our fathers—still lives! Something of it is left; something of it survives, and will survive, as long as I live and remember—I who have known and loved and cherished these things!" (431). As a reminder and remainder of the past, Bitoy carries on where the Marasigans left off, although the tellingly broad indefinite pronoun *something* indicates the uncertainty of what merit or lesson can be gleaned from lifeless, war-torn ruins. Bitoy concludes that it is his "vocation" to sing the song of this oblivion—a survivor's obligation to make meaning of one's place in the passage of time.

The elegiac conclusion of *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* ambivalently oscillates between Joaquin's own Hispanophile sentiment and the ironic potentiality of the text. The

conclusion of the story may be read as an effusive remembrance of a glorified past, one of genteel refinement, baroque beauty, and a less complicated geopolitical reality, or as a sobering illustration of the consequences of an irresponsible wistfulness. As Blanco writes, "Bitoy's gestures toward this baroque landscape refuse to contemplate the future of the Philippines' reconstruction or redemption. Indeed, his attention to ruins almost bespeaks a devaluation of that concern, in order to highlight a process of reflection in which experience acquires meaning in a world devastated by catastrophe."[34] The "stark ruins" that remain as the lights dim and the curtain closes on Bitoy suggest at least the steep cost of a dogged clinging to the old ways and the insecurity that marks the radical openness of both the now and the later. Bitoy's speech thus analogizes a larger problematic in both colonial modernism and postwar Philippine historiography: the cleaving of the "now" into the old and new and the desiderata associated with the division.

The conclusion of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* possesses the same ambivalence between the old and the new but lacks the temptation of nostalgia found in Bitoy's climatic eulogy. Instead, the cathexis of Stephen's departure does not manifest in his desire to remain in place and in time, but to escape the demanding strictures of a parochial Irish Catholicism, as well as educational and familial obligations and expectations. The final few pages of Joyce's *Portrait* turn from stream-of-consciousness narration to dated diary entries enumerating the days before Stephen's departure, although the narrative preserves the psychological impressionism most strongly associated with the novel. Stephen's departure comes at the end of a long discourse with Cranly wherein he admits he has lost his faith and must leave,

34. Blanco, "Baroque Modernities," 16.

even at the cost of total isolation. Both his mother and father encourage him to stay not only in Ireland but along the conventional path set out for him. Stephen's mother accuses him of having a "queer mind" and of reading too much,[35] to her a consolation that his mental restlessness will return him to the faith. A few days later, Stephen's father interrupts a chance encounter between Davin and Stephen at a cigar shop. His disappointed father, approving of Davin (arguably because of the "Irishness" apparent on his demeanor), says Stephen has a "good honest eye" and encourages him to study law (222). In both cases, the parental figures of authority claim to know the inner mind of their son, who in turn rejects both their claims to knowledge and their claims over his agency. His infatuation with Emma also does not deter him, but he does appear to himself silly in explaining his interim plans, like a "fellow throwing a handful of peas up into the air" (223). In these examples, personal ties are severed along with the public ties of overt nationalism and religion.

The rejection of others' intimacy and proximity has been typical to the novel's characterization of Stephen as an exilic artist and discomfited intellectual. At the same time, however, he feels emboldened by the promise of his freedom and even intimates another kind of fraternity with those who have journeyed the same as he will:

> The spell of arms and voices: the white arms of roads, their promise of close embraces and the black arms of tall ships that stand against the moon, their tale of distant nations. They are held out to say: We are alone. Come. And the voices say with them: We are your kinsmen. And the air is thick with their company as they call to me, their kinsman, making ready to go, shaking the wings of their exultant and terrible youth. (224)

The arms that hold themselves out to Stephen contrast with the cloistering atmosphere of Ireland. It is the possibility of opportune freedom, not people themselves, that heralds kinship for

35. Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 220.

Stephen. This kinship elucidates the initially puzzling and famous lines of the novel—"I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race"—that are especially rich and commented upon. The use of the word *race* has unavoidable connotations to the sociobiological logic of racial classification, although the term can also be understood non-biologically to something like a clan or tribe, and, in Stephen's case, to Ireland itself. Opposed to those who read *Portrait* as either primarily aesthetic or primarily "semicolonial," Pericles Lewis reads this final line of the novel as a unification of the personal and political, in that Stephen's own transfigured soul becomes a kind of secular substitution of God, playing "the role of Christ in this nationalist theology, redeeming by reshaping the conscience of his race."[36] The final line crystallizes but does not entirely resolve a fundamental structural tension in the novel between a radically free soul and historical conditionedness, which the text as a whole stylizes as a "complex interplay of personal identity and social role within a newly liberalized, industrial society" (460). In announcing such an abstracted goal to create the uncreated "conscience of my race," Stephen points to a comprised, acceptable relationship to the nation: not as a slavish purveyor of slogan and ideology, but as a kind of cultural leader that awakens the "spirit" of the people who are connected via a group membership prior to material associations like language, culture, religion, or politics (466). Unlike Davin and others, who see performative pride and social displays of nationalism as service to Ireland, Stephen recognizes that an individual relationship to the nation is both sufficient and preferred to overt nationalist sentiment. And while this version of the social

36. Pericles Lewis, "The Conscience of the Race: The Nation as Church of the Modern Age," in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Ed. John Pal Riquelme, Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007): 453.

utilization of art forms a common component of nationalism, Stephen's proclamation is, within the diegesis of the novel, an unrealized attempt to satisfy the tension between the existential necessity of an artist's isolation and the inescapable marks of land, religion, and country that tie together populations for better or worse. This is to say that Stephen's departure is more possibility and reality, an intangible future that compensates for the dissatisfaction he has felt growing up.

It is the same dissatisfaction that Bitoy and the Marasigans feel in *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*. Indeed, Stephen's optative going forth connects rather neatly with Bitoy's recognized vocation to sing the memory of the Marasigan household. Both the unrealized encounter with the "reality of experience" and an elegiac remembrance through song are the questionable consequences of artistic integrity. While it may be overly pessimistic to suggest that Stephen, Don Lorenzo, and, to a lesser extent, Bitoy, are failed artists who collapse under the weight of the quotidian normality and convention surrounding them, these artists' own commitments seem not to offset what the commitments have cost. But despite what they have failed to gain in material terms, their seclusion from the world around them grants them a vantage point from which a better praxis may be attained. The valuation of exile for the artist does not solely relate to ideological freedom to pursue what one wants, but the ideological freedom to contend with what is normally missed in normally lived life. The occlusions of religious faith, capitalist rationalizations of time and labor, and shallow social pledges can be lifted in the realm of literature, painting, and song. Although *transcendent* freedom, either for the artist or the work of art, remains both philosophically and materially untenable, both *Portraits* flirt with its possibility and remind their reader/viewers of the negative utility of art's autonomy.

Coda: The Edge of the Word

In 1952, Carlos Bulosan edited the yearbook of the Local 37 chapter of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), whose editorials and news reports from the labor front are fraught with urgency and disappointment, as well as persistent calls for solidarity in the face of capitalist terror. Lamenting the rollback of New Deal programs to President Truman's "Fair Deal" and the passing of the anti-labor, anti-union Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, Filipino labor organizer and president of ILWU Local 37 Chris Mensalvas nonetheless writes that the unions are "getting stronger each day because of their militant leadership and because they are democratically controlled by the rank and file."[1] The year of the yearbook's publication is marked by an increasing militancy of the working people who heroically choose to "fight rather than crawl before the industry and our enemies" (5). Mensalvas characterizes the IWLU, whose ranks are filled with Filipino laborers, as the vanguard of the wider working class in this revolutionary struggle against its oppressors.

While the rhetoric of Mensalvas's opening editorial is balanced with topical concerns and recently transpired events of the labor movement, ILWU Local 37's secretary Matias J. Lagunilla's article moves in a different direction, reaching not only toward the heightened momentousness of the present but also the enduring wellspring of historical narrative evident through the Filipino's traits of "patriotism and loyalty."[2] Filipino workers in the Pacific

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1. Chris D. Mensalvas, "Taking the Offensive," in *International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 37 Yearbook, 1952*, ed. Carlos Bulosan (Seattle: University of Washington, 1952), 5.

2. Matias J. Lagunilla, "The Struggles and Victories of Local 37," in *International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 37 Yearbook, 1952*, ed. Carlos Bulosan (Seattle: University of Washington, 1952), 6.

Northwest and the East Coast have shown “indomitable courage and bravery” (6), as well as resilience in the face of hardship, astute opportunism, fearlessness, and a “prodigious ability to learn under the most adverse conditions and circumstances” (6), led as they are by the bright stars of both Jose Rizal and Apolinario Mabini and inspired by the martyrdom of Virgil S. Duyungan, another Filipino labor organizer murdered in 1936. Duyungan’s death did not intimidate Filipino workers, but instead vivified their struggle for an “emancipation from the awful darkness of the past…full of terror and abuse” (6).

Much of the yearbook proceeds in one or both of these two fashions: recounting the militant resolve of the IWLU and other “good union men” in the present or appealing to the unique assortment of traits immanent to Filipino laborers who have achieved class consciousness through a protracted historical process. The divergence between contemporaneity and essentialist characteristics that persist through time has always been central to not only the labor movement but also to reflections of literature and culture, which has always had to decide between, at least in the initial moment of critical intervention, the emergent complexity of the thing itself in relation to adjacent objects and the complex conditionedness of its existence. One cannot forget the labor immanent to all texts and cultural artifacts, as well as the ebb and flow of affects, values, and ideas that can, as with Duyungan’s assassination, cost as much as a person’s life. Nor can one forget the editorial hand of Bulosan, who reflects on the uses of the genre of the yearbook. “I believe that a Yearbook,” Bulosan writes, “is a powerful weapon in the present fight against the hysteria to destroy our civil rights and liberties.”[3] But this yearbook is not just the

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3. Carlos Bulosan, “To Whom It May Concern,” in *International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union Local 37 Yearbook, 1952*, ed. Carlos Bulosan (Seattle: University of Washington, 1952), 21.

consequences of the sword but the pen also, a teaching tool that "will enlighten the public as to the true character of the drive" of the hostile Immigration Department intent on deporting many union members (21). The yearbook is also a discloser of falsehoods concocted by the enemies of labor to disrupt, confuse, and stymie organization efforts. Even more, the yearbook is an authentic snapshot of the working class that does not discriminate nor have any consort with "undemocrtatic organizations to subvert the government of the United States" (21). Bulosan's own editing labor is, finally, full-throated support of the "unconditional unity of all workers" (21), the last and only weapon against the "evil designs of imperial butchers and other profiteers of death and suffering" (21) that may engineer and exploit a possible third world war.

Bulosan manifests in the yearbook a whole range of politically sharpened goals—it is a document of recordkeeping, a weapon wielded in defense of civil and labor rights, an apology for the union's efforts, a rescript for peace, and a recruiting and retention tool. At its most conceptual level, Bulosan's editorial work assumes that the word—carefully selected, arranged, amended into meaningful form—possesses an impressive range of power. The ideology of literary modernism shares this assumption, and the modernists texts discussed in the preceding chapters have all similarly assumed responsibility for doing things with words shaped in artful and experimental ways. For Dos Passos, the "old words" encrusted in the rhetoric of American democracy require dutiful maintenance through literary technique; for Stein and Villa, language and grammar themselves have untapped aesthetic potential to respond creatively to systems of power and representation; for Joaquin and Arguilla, centrifugal "interpreters" who wrote in the Philippines *toward* the U.S., language holds up a mirror that shows perverse and alluring images of readers to themselves and others; for Anderson, Joyce, and Bulosan, words limn the horizon of utopia, either espoused or relentlessly satirized. For all these authors, language and the forms

in which language is furnished are immanently adversarial, contested, and wielded to purposiveness.

But why imagine that literature or the general field of writing can *do* anything at all or have any positive impact on its readers? The novelization of the proletariat in *The 42nd Parallel* and *America Is in the Heart* seem ever more diminished in the wake of neoliberal globalization. The modernist grammars of *Tender Buttons* and *Have Come, Am Here* pale in comparison to the inanity of mass media discourse and have arguably given credence to the shrinking trust in public institutions' official communication. The pastoral dreams of *Winesburg, Ohio* and *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories* have not resurrected or sustained organic communities that have been continually erased by capitalism. And the folk historiographies of *A Portrait of the Artist ad Filipino* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* have not made history hurt any less. Do all these texts, exemplary and representative as they might be, connected as they are in the larger webs of imperialism and colonialism, ironically reveal that politics must be more than textual to be efficacious?

This dissertation has sought to correct the pessimism of such queries by offering a reconsideration of literary forms, both its temporal and geographical portability, its "thinginess," and its affordances for political and ideological mobilization. This dissertation has also intervened in and supplemented the discourse of global and transnational modernisms, which constantly requires vigilance against replicating the imperial and colonial structures have hitherto sustained it (and, perhaps, still continue to). Finally, this dissertation gives some space to reflect on the real labor of the writers, reviewers, and readers of the early Anglophone Philippines especially, which has thankfully been and continues to be "yearbooked"—shown, recorded, celebrated—noy only in the material and textual histories evident in, for example, Bulosan's

editorship of the ILWU's recent history, but also in the numerous texts that have informed these very words. The excess of the chronicle of world events, indeed the world itself, is only sensible, only meaningful, insofar as the work to shape them is undertaken. As Paul Nadal has recently argued, form is useful because it is "neither a fixed condition nor a reified medium, but a cognitive ability in its own right; form embodies the way a writer has phenomenologically organized and made sensible the complexity of the social reality he or she has set out to describe."[4] Form supervenes on literature and, indeed, all objects of culture, from labor mobilization materials, modernist poetics, folk histories (written or otherwise), and stylized ironies of the nation and nation-state. It is merely by historical accident that the case of Anglophone literature of the Philippines, as well as the adjacent Anglophone modernisms of Europe and the United States, shows with such urgency what is at stake with which forms to use, when to use them, and how, but it is the same story with all such deployments of *techne*. The stories themselves only need, always and constantly, to be broached.

4. Paul Imatong Nadal, "Remittance Fiction: Human Labor Export, Realism, and the Filipino Novel in English" (Dissertation, Berkeley, University of California, Berkeley, 2017), 6.

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