การตามหาความฝันแบบอเมริกัน: ประสบการณ์ของชาวฟิลิปปินส์-อเมริกันในผลงานคัดสรรของคาร์ลอส บุโลซัน และเบียนเวนิโด เอ็น ซานโตส

นายพัชรศร น้อยพันธ์

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IN PURSUIT OF THE AMERICAN DREAM: THE FILIPINO-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN SELECTED WORKS BY CARLOS BULOSAN AND BIENVENIDO N. SANTOS

Mr. Phatcharasorn Noipann

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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พัชรศร น้อยพันธ์ : การตามหาความฝันแบบอเมริกัน: ประสบการณ์ของชาวฟิลิปปินส์-อเมริกันในผลงานคัดสรรของ คาร์ลอส บุโลซัน และเบียนเวนิโด เอ็น ซานโตส. (IN PURSUIT OF THE AMERICAN DREAM: THE FILIPINO-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN SELECTED WORKS BY CARLOS BULOSAN AND BIENVENIDO N. SANTOS) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ผศ. ดร. คารินา โชติรวี , 141 หน้า.

ความปรารถนาและความใฝ่ฝันที่จะมีชีวิตที่ดีขึ้นกว่าเดิมเป็นแรงดึงดูดผู้อพยพหลากหลายชาติพันธุ์ ให้มาใช้ชีวิตในสหรัฐอเมริกามานานนับศตวรรษ ซึ่งแก่นเรื่องความฝันแบบอเมริกัน (American Dream) นี้ ปรากฏอยู่ในวรรณกรรมหลายชิ้นทั้งที่ประพันธ์โดยชาวอเมริกันและผู้แต่งที่เป็นชนกลุ่มน้อยทางชาติพันธุ์ซึ่งรวมถึงผู้แต่งที่เป็นชาวอเมริกันเชื้อสายฟิลิปปินส์ด้วย คาร์ลอส บูโลซาน และ เบียนเวนิโด เอ็น ซานโตส จัดว่าเป็นผู้บุกเบิกงานเขียนของชาวฟิลิปปินส์ – อเมริกัน ซึ่งงานเขียนของพวกเขาสะท้อนแนวความคิดที่มีต่อความฝันแบบอเมริกันของชาวฟิลิปปินส์ที่อพยพไปยังสหรัฐอเมริกา และบรรยายการเดินทางเข้าไปตั้งถิ่นฐานในประเทศนั้นของคนฟิลิปปินส์เพื่อตามหาความฝันแบบอเมริกันในช่วงต้นศตวรรษที่ 20 นับเป็นเวลานานกว่าครึ่งศตวรรษ สภาพความเป็นอยู่ที่ยากลำบากในช่วงการตกเป็นอาณานิคมของสหรัฐอเมริกาในต้นศตวรรษที่ 20 และการปลูกฝังความฝันแบบอเมริกันผ่านการศึกษาแบบอเมริกันและความมุ่งหวังโอกาสต่างๆเมื่อไปถึงสหรัฐอเมริกา กลายเป็นสิ่งจุดประกายความหวังและความใฝ่ฝันเพื่อชีวิตที่ดีกว่าเดิมให้แก่ชาวฟิลิปปินส์ และสาเหตุนี้เองทำให้ชาวฟิลิปปินส์จำนวนมากพากันอพยพไปยังสหรัฐอเมริกา ตามที่ คาร์ลอส บูโลซาน ได้นำเสนอไว้ในส่วนแรกของนวนิยายกึ่งอัตชีวประวัติของเขา เรื่อง *America Is in the Heart* (1946) อย่างไรก็ตาม ชีวิตในอเมริกามิได้สวยงามดุจความฝันแบบอเมริกันที่วาดหวังกันไว้ ในช่วงทศวรรษที่ 1920 – 1930 ชาวฟิลิปปินส์ต้องเผชิญกับความยากลำบาก การถูกเอารัดเอาเปรียบ และการเลือกปฏิบัติ ขณะที่ดิ้นรนต่อสู้เพื่อให้ได้มาซึ่งความฝันแบบอเมริกันของพวกเขา ซึ่งเหตุการณ์เหล่านี้พบได้ใน *America Is in the Heart* และเรื่องสั้น เรื่อง “The Romance of Magno Rubio” นอกจากผลงานของบูโลซันแล้ว ผลงานคัดสรรจากรวมเรื่องสั้นชุด *Scent of Apples: A Collection of Stories* (1979) ของ เบียนเวนิโด เอ็น ซานโตส ยังแสดงให้เห็นถึงผลกระทบจากการตามหาความฝันแบบอเมริกันของผู้อพยพชาวฟิลิปปินส์ โดยซานโตสนำเสนอความพยายามของคนฟิลิปปินส์ที่จะทำตัวให้กลมกลืนและยืนยันการมีตัวตนอยู่ในสหรัฐอเมริกาในช่วงระหว่างและหลังสงครามโลกครั้งที่ 2 ยังนำเสนอความสิ้นหวัง ความโศกเศร้า ความรู้สึกแปลกแยก ความโหยหา และความต้องการที่จะสร้างความสัมพันธ์กับชาวฟิลิปปินส์คนอื่นๆและกับอดีตของตนเองเมื่อครั้งยังอาศัยอยู่ที่ประเทศฟิลิปปินส์ด้วย

ภาควิชา ภาษาอังกฤษ ลายมือชื่อนิสิต .....

สาขาวิชา ภาษาอังกฤษ ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก .....

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The prospect of having a better life has attracted immigrant groups of various ethnicities to the United States for centuries. This American Dream has manifested itself in various works of literature by mainstream American authors and ethnic minorities that include Filipino-Americans. Writings of prominent and also considered as pioneering Filipino-American authors, Carlos Bulosan and Bienvenido N. Santos, reflect the general Filipino immigrant perception of the American Dream and present the journey of Filipino immigrants in the United States in search of the American Dream, encompassing more than half a century, starting during the early twentieth century. The rural life conditions of Filipinos during the American colonization in the early twentieth century and the implanting of the American Dream into the minds of Filipinos through American-based education and stories about greener pastures in America, fueled the hopes and aspirations of Filipinos for a better life, which led to a wave of Filipino immigrants to the United States as presented in the first part of the semi-autobiographical novel, *America Is in the Heart* (1946) by Carlos Bulosan. Life in the United States did not turn out to be as the myth of the American Dream promised it to be. Filipino immigrants experienced physical struggles, exploitations and discrimination in their pursuit of the American Dream in the United States during the 1920s-1930s, which is explored in the subsequent parts of *America Is in the Heart* and in the short story "The Romance of Magno Rubio". Finally, selected works from *Scent of Apples: A Collection of Stories* (1979), a collection of short stories by Bienvenido N. Santos, depict the effects of the pursuit of the American Dream on Filipino immigrants; their struggle in assimilating and gaining recognition in the United States during and after World War II, their feelings of alienation, displacement, nostalgia and the need to reconnect with other Filipinos and with their past in the Philippines.

Department: English Student's Signature .....

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

– Emma Lazarus, inscription on the base of the Statue of Liberty

The theme of the American Dream in American literature has seen many an interpretation and representation with classics such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* having been written with the theme revolving around the American Dream and its effect on people aspiring for the dream and its effect on society. The American Dream has a special meaning to American citizens and immigrants alike, the driving force behind these people's actions and sacrifices, the same dream that promises them of a better future in America.

In the case of the Philippines, since the American colonization of the island nation in the late nineteenth century to Philippines gaining its independence in 1946 and seven or so decades later, the Filipino immigrant population in the United States grew from mere thousands to being an estimated 2.8 million Filipinos and four

million Americans of Filipino ancestry to date living in the United States, making the Filipino population the second largest immigrant group in the United States, with the Mexicans the largest, and the United States the country that has the largest Filipino immigrant population in the world ("Fact Sheet"). With the English language being spoken throughout the world and the massive population of Asian immigrants in the United States, Asian-American literature has established itself as part of the wider scale of English literature, and with the publishing of *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers* in 1974, Asian American literature has a testament to its growing importance.

It is interesting to explore how the American Dream entered the Filipino consciousness, the effects of this dream on the mentality of the Filipinos and their experiences in their pursuit of the American Dream through the times through the study of literary works in English by Filipino writers who had first-hand experiences in America. The scope of this thesis is to study works written in English by Filipino-born authors who migrated to the United States in the twentieth century. This will include a study of the concept of the American Dream, how it became an ideology that has captivated people's minds and emerging as one of the stand out selling points of America. The American Dream will be then studied in the context of literature, in this case, selected works by prominent and well-known Filipino-American writers, who in their own right can be called as representatives of their periods. The stories selected should be of acclaimed status and form a linear time line, following the Filipino immigrant experience starting from the period of the American colonization of the Philippines, the inculcation of the American Dream to the actual pursuit of the American Dream in the United States. In adherence to these criteria, Carlos Bulosan

and Bienvenido N. Santos have been chosen. The pre-World War II era will be examined through Carlos Bulosan's novel *America Is in the Heart* (1946); part I will involve the factors that drove Filipino immigrants to pursue a better life in the United States while the remaining parts and the short story "The Romance of Magno Rubio" will focus on the experiences of Filipino immigrants in the United States before the Second World War. For the period during and post-World War II, we shall explore Bienvenido N. Santos's fictional works from his collection of short stories in *Scent of Apples* (1979) namely "Scent of Apples" and "The Day the Dancers Came". This will provide insight on how the American Dream is represented in their works by determining the similarities and differences in outlooks from the aforementioned writers by taking into account the time period, the writers' social and educational background to show that the "dream" is deeply rooted in the Filipinos' psyche.

The American Dream and Its Beginnings

The United States as we know it today is a country made up of immigrants. Immigrants from various countries went to the United States in pursuit of the "American Dream". To understand this term, one has to look back at the history of the United States. The foundation of the American Dream started with the colonies that settled in the United States starting with the Puritans who fled from England to America. The Puritans left Europe because people in England and the Church of England, in the words of John Winthrop, "have begun to embrace sinful ways". He also opined that "[It] will be an important service to the Church to carry the Gospel into those parts in the world and to raise the barrier against the kingdom of the Antichrist…which Roman Catholic priests labor to build up in those parts" (Smith

14). So, for the freedom to practice religion, the first known form of the American Dream, the Puritans set forth to the New World, aspiring to set up a "city upon the hill".

After the settlers that arrived in the New World had established colonies, problems started to extricate the colonists from their original country, Britain. In the eyes of the mother country, the main purpose of the colony is to further enrich the mother country. To achieve that goal, British had enforced many acts, benefiting themselves and exploiting the colonies in America. One example of these was the "Wool Act", forbidding America from exporting wool, thus preventing America from competing with British made products. Furthermore, the British government enforced collection of more taxes from the colonies. Exploitations by the British on the Americans led to the war for independence and the American Revolution.

The main reason for the American Revolution was the call for equality and self-governance. The people wanted freedom and equality, not slavery to the British. The birth child of the American Revolution, the most crucial document in understanding the American Dream, is the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson and the founding fathers of the United States of America in 1776 (Smith 45). In this document, Jefferson sought to "dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, …" He also proclaimed that "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are *Life*, *Liberty*, and *the Pursuit of Happiness*" (qtd. in

Cullen 38, my italics). This phrase, especially the italicized words, became one of the building blocks and core of the American Dream. With this declaration, thirteen States formed a union to become a nation, a new theory of government introduced and independence declared, and thus came forth another transformation of the dream that would later become the modern American Dream.

The United States of America then became the first nation in the world to experiment "on a broad, popular self-government" (Smith 93), the framework that became the pattern for other countries to follow. And from the notion of equality amongst men, the belief that man can free themselves from tyranny, ignorance, poverty, exploitation, that man can lift their well-being by their own self became one of the American mindsets. This became the dream of upward mobility, the belief that a person can achieve great things through sheer hard-work and perseverance embodied and demonstrated by American icons such as Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America, and Abraham Lincoln, a lowly farm boy who later became the President of the United States who abolished slavery in America through the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

Liberty and equality also became an important concept to the Americans, from the freedom and independence attained from the revolution. The emancipation of the slaves brought on the problem of inequality among African-Americans and Anglo-Americans, as Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) predicted even before the abolition of slavery, "If I were called upon to predict the future, I should say that the abolition of slavery in the South will, in the common course of things, increase the white repugnance for blacks" (qtd. in Cullen 113). As early as 1883, an action that could be

seen as the first steps towards the Civil Rights Movement occurred when Frederick Douglass articulated his desire of equality through "making the nation's life consistent with the nation's creed" (qtd. in Cullen 114), which was equality. On August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr., in his famous speech delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, proclaimed his belief that "all men are created equal" and hoped that one day everybody would "live in a nation where they [people] will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character". This was his dream, a dream that "is deeply rooted in the American dream" (Smith 93). As the American Dream centers on equality of man, the dream promises the opportunity of equal education to people of all races and sex and equal chances in careers. In the 1800s education for women was available, although limited to reading, writing and basic mathematics. Further studies were available to women but mostly to those from well to do families (Smith 115). Americans were slowly living their own dreams. The Americans Dream believes in the mythos of rags to riches bringing to success which stems from the Puritanism of hard work (Smith 24-6). Cotton Mather, a New England Puritan minister, mostly famous for his role in the Salem Witch Trials, once said that with diligence a man can do marvelous things. This quote by the Puritan clergyman and author reflects this Puritan mind set. A prominent person of American history by the name of Benjamin Franklin also contributed towards this mind set, "God helps them that helps themselves… Never leave that till to-morrow which you can do to-day" (Smith 256).

The other central theme of the American Dream, the pursuit of happiness, has also undergone changes through time. This phrase took on a more materialistic aspect which included homeownership, a notion pertaining to the objective of the pioneers

and settlers that first set foot on American soil: to establish a place they could call their “home”. Furthermore, owning a white picket-fenced house is a symbol of success and achievement for the owner, and that he/she has established herself in society. In addition to homeownership, owning a car, an American invention that has become a symbol of upward mobility, and material wealth are now also considered part of the modern American Dream which has in turn transformed the dream into a consumerist ideology.

The American Dream as an Ideology

The American Dream is a term not easy to define. *The Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* states that it has no fixed definition because "it means whatever its user has in mind a particular time" (Shaw). It symbolizes the power of man, to change his fortune, by ways one can and doing all his best, to free the shackles that bind them. It promises a land of open opportunity, for all race, sex or creed, from the Puritans, who were the first settlers in the New World to the immigrants who sought refuge in the United States in the twentieth century. The promise of equality among men and the chance to build or reinvent their own lives is an enticing endeavor to all, captivating people of all nations to come to the land of the free, the home of the brave, to seek out new chances to fulfill their dreams and follow the footsteps of people who came first to this country. The term “American Dream”, popularized by James Truslow Adams, promises a brighter future to people. Adams described the “American Dream” as a

> dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with the opportunity for each according to ability

> or achievement… It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (404)

This means that America promises a life where people could have achievements without any restrictions. This way of life, the equality and freedom, appeals to many people from nations where people are persecuted for their beliefs and exploited because of their status in society and where freedom and equality are only meaningless words.

The American Dream is described by Jeremy Rifkin in his book *The European Dream* as being a fusion of two European traditions, which at first glance seem to be contradictory, of spiritual ethics, represented by John Winthrop, and Benjamin Franklin's "practical guidance" (24). Franklin fuses his idea of the American dream with the concept of the European Enlightenment Period (Age of Enlightenment/ Age of Reason) which emphasizes on "materialism, utilitarianism and individual self-interest in the marketplace" (24). Rifkin further states that while Winthrop "offered salvation, Franklin offered self-improvement" (25). The American Dream can thus be seen as the uniting of "secular utilitarianism of the Enlightenment with older Calvinist religious tradition" (Rifkin 26). The merging of the two has passed the test of time, opined Rifkin, because it "speaks to the two most basic human desires – for happiness in this world and for salvation in the next world" (Rifkin 25). This dual nature is also reiterated in the book *Immigrants and the American Dream* by William A.V. Clark, in

which he describes this as its enduring quality (4). Clark further elaborates on the spiritual-material duality of the dream, that the dream embodies both material well-being and internal personal satisfaction (4) and "embodies aspirations and avenues by which it can be realized" (5). These aspirations and opportunities act as a psychological magnet in drawing in immigrants who are hoping and dreaming of a better life.

The American Dream and Immigrants

In his book, William A.V. Clark indicates three points which are fundamental in understanding the immigrant waves to the United States: the concept of the American Dream that draws immigrants, how it attracts these immigrants and how well they do once they arrive in America (1). He states that the American Dream is life improvement, to do better and central to the dream is "the elusive search for improvement" (3). Jennifer L. Hochschild, a Harvard University professor, defines the American Dream as "a set of tenets of achieving success" (qtd. in Clark 4). Achieving success is one part, but also is the idea that anyone can succeed no matter how poor or how low their abilities are. The main elements of the American Dream are "fair chance of succeeding" and having avenues in doing so (Clark 4). The attraction that there is an opportunity and avenues available to realize their dreams is what motivates the immigrants and is what brings them to the United States (Clark 5). The motivating impetus for immigrants is the belief that their hard-work and perseverance will ultimately be rewarded with a better life. Clark opines that "attaining the American Dream is in essence a process of becoming middle-class" (6), of moving up the social ladder or the chance of upward mobility. With such enticing proposition, immigrants

from Europe and other continents and regions including, notably, from the Philippines, flock to the United States.

From the Philippines to the Land of Opportunity

The Philippines' colonial past could be seen as an important factor in the migration of its people to the United States. The island nation's geographical location made it an "easy conquest for colonizers" (Litton 83) and this has been proven to be true. Ever since Ferdinand Magellan landed on the islands, which was later named Philippines in honor of King Philip II of Spain, in the sixteenth century, the country has twice been colonized, first by the Spanish from 1565 to 1898, then by the United States of America from 1898 to 1946, with a brief period of occupation by the Japanese during World War II. Colonialism has therefore influenced the Philippines in various aspects such as "identity, language and education" (Litton 83). For over three centuries the Spaniards ruled Philippines, bringing in their values and beliefs to the nation. They implanted their imperialist ways, the Spanish language and most of all the Catholic faith. For all the time that they ruled the country, the Spanish failed to ingrain their language to the majority of the people of the Philippines, as the Americans used just over one sixth of the time that the Spanish had in introducing English and making it a main language in the Philippines. The Spaniards were imperialist and "disdained any notion of democracy" (Francia x), unlike the Americans who came and brought with them their democratic beliefs. The Spaniards showed that "cross-cultural pollination" is unattractive and in a way made a huge gap between the rulers and the indigenous people living in the Islands (Francia x). Although the Spanish had established an educational system, it was mostly for

Spaniards who were training for priesthood while schools for the natives were "inadequate" (Litton 86). Another factor that delayed the emergence of the Spanish language as a full-fledged language in the Philippines was the American-Spanish war in the late nineteenth century (Francia ix). But the most important reason why the Americans were successful in making the people of this country embrace English is how they implemented plans to spread the language.

American Influence

Once the Americans had won the Spanish-American war in 1898, the colonization of the Philippines changed hands from the Spaniards to the Americans. One of the United States' policies was to impose English as the official language (Bernad 145). Through this way, the United States could easily instill their colonial values, "Americanizing" the native people. By opening government-operated public schools and operating many measures and plans, the English language spread throughout the country. Some of these measures were short term plans such as using U.S. soldiers who were stationed in the country to teach conversational English to the people living in provincial capitals, who then in turn became temporary teachers. Then came the "Thomasites"; the first group of teachers from the United States on board the ship USS Thomas. They were distributed to major cities and provincial capitals to teach English. With them came not only the language but also American values, beliefs and attitudes (Bernad 146). Edmundo F. Litton states in his paper that "education was used as a tool for molding Filipinos to adhere to the image of an ideal American" (87). If the American teachers were seen as foot soldiers in spreading the English language, their weapon was the public schools, where the medium of

instruction was in English, and it was the only permitted language. These schools were open to everyone and the fees were minimal because it was tax-supported. Though Spanish was still taught, it was only contained to a limited few private educational institutions and attended mostly by the social elites. Gradually, English replaced Spanish.

The Philippines' emancipation from the Americans was described by eminent South-East Asia historian Stanley Karnow as "the first time in history, an imperial nation was voluntarily relinquishing a possession…" (qtd. in Litton 84). Karnow further states that this friendly departure is "one of the reasons why many Filipinos continued to treat the Unites States as a 'friend' after the era of colonization" (Litton 85). Although America's colonization of the Philippines spanned a period of only 50 years, America's influence in the Philippines is clear, with Filipinos embracing America's "democratic ideals and American style of dress, music and arts" (Litton 85). Litton further states that after years of being a colony of the United States, Americans have projected the image of America as "the land of milk and honey" which has been implanted in the psyche of the Filipinos (Litton 90).

Filipino Immigrants as Part of the Immigration Wave

Immigrants from many nations have journeyed to America to settle down, or at least, to work and make a living in the country and send money to relatives back home. Filipinos have been one of the largest groups of immigrants in the United States. The first record of Filipino immigrants started in the sixteenth century with the Spanish command that landed at Acapulco, Mexico which started the Manila-Acapulco route. They were called the "Manilamen" and are considered the first wave

of Filipino immigrants in the United States. But the massive influx of immigrants to the United States started in the twentieth century. In the 1900s the second wave of Filipino immigrants reached the shores of the United States. These Filipinos went to the United States as laborers to help the need in sugarcane and pineapple plantation crisis in Hawaii and to be farm hands in the United States mainland, doing menial work such as picking vegetation, mostly along the west coast. Coinciding with the economic condition in the Philippines at time, the prospect of a better life abroad was enticing. These immigrants were dubbed the "Pinoys[1]". Part of this wave is a rural boy named Carlos Bulosan, who later will be one of the pioneers of Filipino-American literature. The next wave of Filipino immigrants was called the "Pensionados[2]", scholars under the support of the government to pursue higher education. As the newer generation of immigrants arrived in America, the "older" Pinoys were then called the "Manongs" – or older brother in Ilocano, an indigenous language in the Philippines and were subsequently called the "Old-Timers" (Evangelista, "The Manongs" 160) whose lives were chronicled in many short stories by Bienvenido N. Santos. In addition to the increasing demand for laborers in the United States, the numerous good reports on the life of Filipino immigrants in the United States by these two groups of Filipino immigrant waves helped boost the influx of Filipino immigrants to the United States with the promise of better livelihood, from hundreds to thousands. But these immigrants later wave found life difficult. The lives of people in this time have been represented in many literary

[1] Pinoys: A monicker for Filipino immigrants in the United States and is now used to call Filipinos in general.

[2] Pensionados: Students granted with government funded scholarships to receive education in the United States as a result of the Pensionado Act of 1903.

works by Filipino writers who either went to America to continue their education, like Bienvenido Santos, or those who went to America to try to make a living, like Carlos Bulosan. At present, there is still a constant stream of Filipino immigrants moving to the United States, legally and illegally.

Philippine Literature in English

Philippine literature in English grew thanks to the encouragement of the colleges and universities through publishing undergraduate journals. In the late 1920s, the Writer's Guild was formed. Private colleges and universities also began to publish their own journals thus providing more outlets for aspiring writers. A lot of the writers at that time were either undergraduate students or graduates who were in their twenties. This youthful exuberance was reflected in their writing. Miguel A. Bernad explains that in this period the young writers brought "idealism, optimism, impatience, aspiration resilience of the young" to their works. But with it also comes immaturity from their youthfulness and most of their works had themes that would appeal to young people (149). The writings from the beginning until 1935 were of rural settings, with some exceptions. After the Pacific War, the trend shifted to urban settings. Early Philippine writings were strongly influenced by the Americans; writers, values and mindset, much owed to the education given upon the Filipinos by the Americans (Bernad 150).

Filipino literature in English reached a level of maturity with "His Native Soil" by Juan C. Laya, concerning about the changes in society and the problems it brings (Kintanar 29). The outbreak of World War II decelerated the progress of Filipino literature in English. The Japanese occupied the Philippines and due to their

"regionalism" propaganda, Tagalog use in literary works was encouraged. After the war and as the Philippines regained its independence, Filipino literature in English came back on track and started where it left. The late fifties and sixties saw the boom in Filipino novelists (Kintanar 33). In this period came the prominent writers such as N.V.M Gonzales, Nick Joaquin, Carlos Bulosan and Bienvenido Santos, with the two latter writers being Filipino immigrants in the United States (Kintanar 34).

Filipino-American Writers

Carlos Bulosan is regarded as one of the most prominent Filipino writers and "the most famous Manong"(Evangelista, "The Manongs" 161). His works show the oppression and racism faced by Filipino immigrants in the United States during his time. Bulosan went to America as a teenager, only eighteen years of age, to escape the harsh rural life in his hometown Binalonan in the province of Pangasinan, with America, a place, to him, symbolizing freedom, equality and a land of "soaring ideals", a better quality of life as the American Dream promises (Christian Science Monitor). He immigrated with limited resources and education, was part of the Filipino immigrant wave called the "Manong" wave - a term meaning "brother" or a term used in calling elderly male in Ilocano, a regional language in the Philippines - laborers from the Philippines sent to the United States to do menial labor in plantations and farms. But the "land of the free" was not kind to him and his race. He had to endure poverty, no roof above his head, struggling to survive the oppression and racism vented towards him. His experiences were put into words in the form of novels, such as his autobiographical memoire *America Is in the Heart*, and short stories such as "The Romance of Magno Rubio".

Bulosan went to America in search of a better life, a pursuit of happiness. Bulosan found out the harsh truth about the life in America, the dream, the promise was nowhere to be seen. Filipino immigrants were often oppressed, made to work long hard hours with inadequate pay. Prejudice against them was everywhere, with their rights limited, the moniker “land of the free” is a terrible joke on all people who believed them. This served, to Magno Rubio, the character in the short story to be discussed, and to other people who were dreaming of the American Dream as a wake-up call. The realization of this is of frustration and disappointment.

In Carlos Bulosan’s “The Romance of Magno Rubio”, the American Dream is presented as beautiful and enticing but is ultimately just a mirage. Once it dissipates, what is left is disappointment. Magno Rubio is a Filipino immigrant who escapes the harsh conditions in then feudal Philippines to America, the land of new opportunity. Through this short story, Bulosan portrays the life of the Filipino immigrant in the United States, a quasi-vignette of their lives and their experiences. In her essay, Elaine Kim explains how Bulosan tries to “give voice to thousands of agricultural and menial laborers of Asian America.” Bulosan’s impetus in writing is his “grand dream of equality among men and freedom for all. To give literate voice to the voiceless one hundred thousand Filipinos in the United States, Hawaii and Alaska” (Kim, "Carlos Bulosan" 4). He wanted to see the dream of democracy and equality become true, to fulfill the potential that the country promised. His fellow contemporary countrymen were the subject of oppression and racism. They had limited rights. The anti-miscegenation law prevented them from inter-racial marriage. Filipino workers had to work long hours but were rewarded with a low salary. Thus were the circumstances that Magno had to face. Clarabelle, the symbol of America, breaks the heart of

Magno, seen to be a representative of the Filipinos, a symbolic representation of the anguish that America as a country made the Filipinos feel, naively believing the ideal life in the land of "supposedly" golden opportunity. Max Gissen once wrote an essay stating that "Bulosan knew America first as a dream. The reality is one of the most sickening social truths confronting a minority in the United States" (2).

Carlos Bulosan's semi-autobiographical novel *America Is in the Heart,* considered by *Look Magazine* as "one of the fifty most important American books ever published" and "as his key work" (Kim, "Carlos Bulosan" 5), depicts his peasant life in the Philippines to his life as a struggling immigrant in the United States after escaping from the hardship and oppression in the Philippines. His life in the United States was not a bed of roses with most of the time spent on doing menial labor from one place to another. He later joined the union force in the United Cannery and Packing House Workers of America (UCAPAWA) (Kim, "Carlos Bulosan" 6), a move which Elaine H. Kim thinks "made Bulosan feel he had become an American" (Kim, "Carlos Bulosan" 9). In his book *Asian American Literature*, Trudeau describes Bulosan as an author who is remembered for his writing that acknowledges "class oppression and racism" endured by immigrant Filipinos during the Great Depression, World War II and after World War II "in search of the American dream" (1). In his article, Max Gissen states that Bulosan's description of his native land will come as a shock to "people who have always imagined a land of little, happy, brown brothers" (2). To this point Bulosan boarded a ship heading towards the United States. Bulosan pictured America as a land full of hope and opportunities for people of all races from the books he had read and from what his elder had learned at school and subsequently retold to Bulosan. Elaine H. Kim added on this point in her essay, Bulosan escaped

from the “poverty and desperation” in the Philippines to America “having heard about American democracy and equality” (Kim, “Carlos Bulosan” 7). *America Is in the Heart* is to an extent an autobiographical account of Carlos Bulosan’s life. In his essay “Carlos Bulosan: The Politics of Literature”, Petronilo Bn. Daroy describes Bulosan as akin to D.H. Lawrence, both an autobiographical writer. He further explains that Bulosan’s writings show his social and political inclination and views (3).

Many criticisms have been directed at *America Is in the Heart,* mostly on the narrator-Bulosan aspect. It is widely accepted that *America Is in the Heart* is an autobiographical piece, describing the life of Allos from his childhood in Binalonan to his life in the land of the free. But critics such as the aforementioned Daroy have delineated that Bulosan edited his biography to accommodate his “identification with the working class” which was a result of his own identification not of status from birth (3). He further explains that though the narrator in *America Is in the Heart* is described as a peasant with his family seemingly being toilers, very poor and having a hut made from grass as their house, the facts point to the contrary. It should be noted that the grass hut is in fact “a big wooden house” and that Bulosan is of the “provincial middle class” (3). Through his deliberate revision of his own life, Bulosan, according to Daroy, reconstructs “not his own life, but the general condition of the working class” (3) Elaine H. Kim also reiterates this point, stating that *America Is in the Heart* is a representation of the “Filipino American life in California in a general way” and a “composite portrait of the Filipino American community” (“Carlos Bulosan” 6). Furthermore, Bulosan’s decision in presenting it as an autobiography is to strengthen the novel’s and its message’s “veracity and impact”.

Bulosan is quoted in *Twentieth Century Authors* regarding his impetus in writing is his “grand dream of equality among men and freedom for all. To give literal voice to the voiceless… and to translate the desires and aspirations of the whole Filipino people in the Philippines and abroad…” (Kim, “Carlos Bulosan” 4).

Bulosan’s view regarding the American Dream is that of hope and optimism. To Bulosan’s narrator in *America Is in the Heart* and to an extent Bulosan himself, from Elaine H. Kim’s essay, America “is the unrealized potential, the unfulfilled dream”, which can come into fruition “through labor of Filipino immigrants and other Americans” (“Carlos Bulosan” 8). In Kim’s conclusion, she states that Bulosan’s works are “a testament of one who longed to become part of America” (“Carlos Bulosan” 10).

One of the social truths that Filipino immigrants faced in America is the nostalgia, isolation and alienation of being far from home, which will be discussed in the two short stories by Bienvenido N. Santos, “Scent of Apples” and “The Day the Dancers Came”. Bienvenido N. Santos is one of the most acclaimed English-language Filipino writers, his works also centering on Filipino immigrants in the United States. Bienvenido N. Santos, in contrast with Carlos Bulosan, hails from a more affluent family, having gone to the United States to continue his studies at Columbia University in the 1940s (Casper 402). He received Philippines’ highest literary awards and was a recipient of the prestigious Rockefeller writing grant and a Guggenheim fellowship (Yamamoto 406). He would also later become an Exchange Fulbright Professor (Kim "Multiple Mirrors" 410). Maxine Hong Kingston stated in her essay that Ethnic studies courses in America have been ordering Santos’s works and that

"Filipino-Americans now have a book", establishing Santos's prominence and importance in Filipino-American literature (Yamamoto 406).

While Bulosan writes as a voice for the working class immigrants searching for equality, Santos's works are focused on being the voice to the exiles (Kim, "Multiple Mirrors" 407). Lawrence J. Trudeau's introduction to Santos's reviews and criticisms explain that these exiles whom Santos dubbed as "Pinoys" or "old timers" are Filipinos who migrated to the United States and lived there long enough that their ties to their native land have been cut. Trudeau explains that these two terms as "Filipinos who have lived in the United States for so many years that their ties to their homeland are almost completely severed" (Trudeau 402). Santos himself is an exile in some way, though not having the same experience as those whom he is writing about, as Trudeau noted, during the Marcos era in the 1970s when Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law. He further notes that Santos "feels a unity with them as he records their lives" (406). In "Introduction to *Scent of Apples: A Collection of Stories*", Leonard Casper adds to this point, explaining that Santos's separation from his family "brought him closer to fellow exiles" after touring America to lecture to Filipinos on their "worth and stamina" as allies in the war (402). The Filipinos' isolation, as Casper explains, has turned into an "extension of the pain of separation", a separation on the physical and psychological level between Filipinos and their motherland (403). He further notes that the problem that these exiles face is "[t]he difficulty of reconciling the Filipino dream of solidarity with the American dream of individualism…" and this said problem is presented in the short stories of Santos, many of which are also published in Santos's *Scent of Apples: A Collection of Stories*, a book described by Maxine Hong Kingston in her essay "Precarious Lives" as a

representation of 35 years of the lives of Filipinos in America (Kingston 405). Santos's stories are, according to Elaine H. Kim, a "portrait of Filipino American life… a journey from buoyant innocence to degraded experience" ("Multiple Mirrors" 407). She also added that this progress from "innocent, hopeful young Filipino immigrants" to "a community of lonely exiles" is "gradual and irreversible" ("Multiple Mirrors" 407). Leonard Casper has pointed out that Santos's work reflects the importance of being "Filipino at heart… while at the same time trying to make a life out of being temporary "permanent residents", a recurring theme in Santos's book (405).

The settings of the short stories in *Scent of Apples* are scattered all over the United States, stretching from the west coast to the east coast, places poignantly described by Kingston as "places where Filipino men… make precarious American lives" (405). Stories from this collection of short stories such as the titular story "Scent of Apples" and "The Day the Dancers Came" have been available in many anthologies and are described by Hisaye Yamamoto as classics (407). "The Day the Dancers Came" also won the *Philippine Free Press* annual short story contest in 1966 (Kim, 408). Another short story in this compilation, "Immigration Blues" is in Ted Solotaroff, an American writer and critic's "100 most distinguished short stories of 1977" (Yamamoto 407).

"Scent of Apples", from the book of the same name, presents Santos' experience while he was in Kalamazoo, Michigan. On the night he addresses a college crowd, he meets a Filipino farm owner named Celestino Fabia, who invites him to dinner with his family in his farm thirty miles from the city. Through this meeting,

the narrator has a chance to know more about the well-being of Filipino immigrants in the United States. “Scent of Apples” presents the longing of Filipino immigrants in the United States for the reconnection to their “lost country”. As recurring themes in Santos’ works, alienation and nostalgia are also represented in the short story “The Day the Dancers Came”, which is one of his works that appears in many Filipino literature anthologies (Yamamoto 407). “The Day the Dancers Came”, one of the stories in *Scent of Apples,* chronicles the story of Fil and his encounter with a group of dancers coming from the Philippines who comes to the United States to tour and perform.

Although Carlos Bulosan and Bienvenido Santos are from different ends of the social spectrum, Bulosan coming from a poor economic and financial background and had limited education in contrast to Santos, they both contribute in being the voice of the Pinoys of the early to mid-twentieth century, sharing their views on the situation and circumstances confronted by the Pinoys in America.

From the works of Carlos Bulosan and Bienvenido N. Santos, who were of different social and educational backgrounds, a quasi-chronicle of the Filipino immigrant’s pursuit of the elusive American Dream is presented. The stories that these authors tell act as a roadmap showing the journey of the Filipino immigrants’ pursuit of happiness, starting from the first wave of immigrants whose pursuit is plagued with social oppression and are faced with the problem of finding ways to survive to the subsequent waves of immigrants who are faced with a different scenario of assimilation and self-identity. Though there is no definite final destination, the journey of Filipino immigrants’ search for the American Dream, and their general

attitude towards it in each period could be seen from the authors mentioned. The American Dream still is the magnetic force that draws many an immigrant to the land of milk and honey. It will be interesting to see how other authors in the future will present the American Dream and the journey of the immigrants chasing it.

CHAPTER II

BEFORE THEY WERE DREAMERS: THE FILIPINO AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

> What impelled me to write? The answer is – my grand dream of equality among men and freedom for all…. Above all and ultimately, to translate the desires and aspirations of the whole Filipino people….
>
> – Carlos Bulosan

To understand the Filipino diaspora, "the dispersion or spread of any people from their original homeland" (Oxford Dictionary Online), especially to the United States and Hawaii, with 52,810 Filipinos migrating to Hawaii and 45,263 Filipinos to the United States between 1907-1926, it is essential to delve first into how the American influence – political and social – entered the Philippines and, with just one sixth of the duration of the Spanish colonization, how America effectively captured the desires, aspirations and imaginations of an entire nation that has lingered even up to the present day. It is also imperative to explore the socio-economic changes brought about by American colonization which had a direct effect on Filipino migration to the United States. To give a clearer depiction of the time period during the early twentieth century up until the period of the Great Depression, Part I of *America Is in the Heart*, a semi-biographical novel by Carlos Bulosan, will be explored as this particular literary work not only covers this time period during which Allos, the protagonist and the literary counterpart of Bulosan, experiences the socio-economic changes during the American occupation but *America Is in the Heart* also touches on the salient points regarding the conditions which had an effect even up to the present-day diaspora of Filipinos.

America's entry into what was then called the Philippine Islands came during the late nineteenth century when Spain's status as a great colonial empire had declined, losing many of its colonies in the New World with Bolivia, Venezuela, Mexico, Peru and Colombia already declaring independence from Spanish rule (Dolan 15) before the Spanish-American War, and facing battles in many fronts with revolutions erupting in Cuba and in the Philippine Islands. At that time, the Philippine Islands, the only Spanish colony in Asia, had been under Spanish rule for well over three centuries resulting in a deeply rooted Catholic-based Spanish culture. Due to the growing number of the educated elite resulting in rapid social changes in Filipino society which led to mutinies and propaganda movements against the Spanish authorities, the growing Filipino nationalism spearheaded by Jose Rizal[3] and other *Ilustrados* – Spanish meaning "educated" or "enlightened", a group of middle to upper class Filipinos many of whom had been educated abroad and who had taken in European liberal ideals – coupled with the constant unrest erupting within the lower class Filipinos such as Andres Bonifacio's[4] rebellion group the *Katipunan*[5] or *KKK*, the Spaniards were under the threat of an impending revolution that endangered their rule. In 1896, the inevitable happened; a revolution broke out, started by the aforementioned *Katipunan*. In 1898, the sudden and mysterious explosion of the USS Maine stationed in Havana, Cuba to help US citizens during the conflict between

[3] Jose Rizal: Born José Protacio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda, Rizal is the National Hero of the Philippines. Rizal was a doctor, ophthalmic surgeon, novelist, poet and propagandist. One of the major spokesmen against Spanish colonial rule and Philippine nationalism, he was arrested by the Spaniards and executed on charges of rebellion, sedition and conspiracy on December 30, 1896.

[4] Andrés Bonifacio y de Castro: Filipino nationalist and the leader of the Katipunan. He is also known as "the father of the Philippine Revolution."

[5] Katipunan or Katastaasang Kagalanggalangang Katipuanan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (Highest and Most Honorable Association of the Children of the Nation): An anti-Spanish revolutionary society founded by Andres Bonifacio which had a great influence in the Philippine Revolution.

Spain and Cuba, forced the involvement of the United States which then declared war on Spain, who the Americans blamed for the sinking of its ship, thus, starting the Spanish-American War. Furthermore, the liberation in the Spanish colonized Cuba was causing a dilemma to the Spaniards as they had committed most of their army to the suppression of the rebellions in Cuba (Chandler et al. 272). The Americans attacked Spain's island colonies including the Philippine Islands in a maneuver which was spearheaded by Commodore George Dewey. Waging war in three fronts inevitably resulted in Spain's defeat to the United States and with the Treaty of Paris dictating that Spain ceded the Philippine Islands in exchange for a fee of $20 million to the United States.

The transition from the hands of Spain to being annexed by the United States was not well accepted by all Filipinos, as they were under the impression of having come close to receiving their much awaited independence. Despite President William McKinley's proclamation to the Philippines, promising a sovereignty of "benevolent assimilation[6]", the Americans faced resistance from the alliance formed between the *Ilustrados* and Emilio Aguinaldo[7]. The Americans were able to split this alliance by offering to create a new government for the Philippines, weakening the stance of the *Ilustrados* – the educated middle and upper class – which caused tensions and conflict

[6] This term was used in the Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation by then US President William McKinley during the Philippine-American War in 1898 stating the altruistic intentions of the United States in occupying the Philippines. It is referred to in the statement: "Finally, it should be the earnest wish and paramount aim of the military administration to win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines by assuring them in every possible way that full measure of individual rights and liberties which is the heritage of free peoples, and by proving to them that the mission of the United States is one of ***benevolent assimilation*** substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule."

[7] Emilio Aguinaldo: First President of the Republic of the Philippines (1899-1901) and leader of the Filipino resistance.

of the ideological and class status kind with Aguinaldo and his provincial followers. A mutual deal was made with the *Ilustrados*; the Americans needed the *Ilustrados* to help quell the local resistance and at the same time to "demonstrate American altruism" (Chandler et al. 276) while the *Ilustrados* needed the Americans to "achieve hegemony politically, dominance socially and security economically" by giving the *Ilustrados* power, permission to hold office and the ability to establish themselves in the shaping of policies in the country that adhered to their ambitions (Chandler et al. 276-8).

The Americans subsequently spread their influence on the island nation, rationalizing their actions as providing guidance and tutelage to the Philippines so it could govern itself in the future, Jacob Schurman, then head of the Presidential Commission, thus described this endeavor "[t]he destiny of the Philippines is not to be a State or territory… but a daughter of ours – a new birth of liberty on the other side of the Pacific… a beacon of hope to all the oppressed and benighted millions of Asia" (qtd. in Chandler et al. 276). This mission underlined McKinley's Manifest Destiny[8] policy, giving the Americans justification in colonizing the Philippines.

The Americans planted the roots of their influence and values through providing a colonial education for the Filipinos; teaching English to the Filipinos, a masterstroke that facilitated the transfer of American values and beliefs to the Filipinos, a strategy that had not been used by Spain in their over-three-century rule which resulted in only having less than three percent of the population being able to speak and communicate in Spanish (Thompson 16).

[8] Coined by newspaper editor John O'Sullivan in 1845 describing the mindset that Americans- racially and culturally superior to other civilizations- were obligated to expand across the continent.

In accordance with the United States' "benevolent assimilation" policy, American soldiers were ordered to start building facilities such as roads and schools in the areas they occupied. The soldiers themselves were the teachers in those schools with English being chosen to be the medium of instruction because it was deemed that local languages "would not open the doors to the world of knowledge" and English was regarded as a "tool to enrich, ennoble, and empower Filipinos from every walk of life" (Thompson 20).

To address the problem of inadequate teachers and instructional textbooks, the United States government sent US Army Transport the USS Thomas with 600 teachers on board to the Philippines. These teachers were later known as the "Thomasites", a term used to refer to all colonial period teachers (Francia x). The curriculum was laid down in accordance with US educational policies and theories, with the textbooks being the same one used to "inculcate" immigrants in the United States (Thompson 21), Filipinos were, therefore, introduced to American culture through the teachers and the textbooks. Students at that time were obligated to sing the United States National Anthem "The Star Spangled Banner" alongside the Philippine National Anthem. They learned proverbs, memorized and recited important literary pieces such as Abraham Lincoln's 1863 "The Gettysburg Address." The use of English was mandatory, with students who spoke local languages at school being punished (Thompson 23). The influence of the English language was so prominent that it later became one of the official languages of the Commonwealth Philippines (Thompson 27). English also earned the status of a unifying language in the Philippines. With over one hundred indigenous languages and dialects, English

became the medium used by Filipinos who spoke different languages to communicate and later became one of the country's official languages up until the present day.

Bienvenido Lumbera, a famous Filipino poet, critic and dramatist, reiterates and affirms the selection of English as the language of instruction and the use of American textbooks as a major factor in the inculcation of the Filipino mind in accepting and internalizing American ideals and beliefs, stating that "although there was some debate as to whether or not a language native to the Filipinos ought to be the language of education, the architects of the colonial educational system quickly decided it would be to the advantage of the U.S. to make English the medium of instruction in all Philippine schools… English opened the floodgates of colonial values through the conduits of textbooks originally intended for American children" (qtd. in Francia x).

The Americans would eventually succeed in transforming the Philippines by infusing American ideology to all social classes through education as already mentioned. In his essay "The Miseducation of the Filipino", Renato Constantino, a national scholar of the Philippines stated that "the most effective means of subjugating a people is to capture their minds" and that "[T]he molding of men's minds is the best means of conquest. Education, therefore, serves as a weapon in wars of colonial conquest" (2). He further criticized the use of English in educating Filipinos, branding it as a form of "miseducation", used only as propaganda, serving to the benefit of the colonial master.

> The first and perhaps the master stroke in the plan to use education as an instrument of colonial policy was the decision to use

> English as the medium of instruction. English became the wedge that separated the Filipinos from their past and later to separate educated Filipinos from the masses of their countrymen. English introduced the Filipinos to a strange, new world. With American textbooks, Filipinos started learning not only a new language but also a new way of life, alien to their traditions and yet a caricature of their model. This was the beginning of their education. At the same time, it was the beginning of their mis-education, for they learned no longer as Filipinos but as colonials. (Constantino 4)

Filipinos were "Americanized" through public education and through American textbooks, were fed with American values, beliefs far remote from their own and a very optimistic perspective of the United States as the land of riches and opportunities. Constantino reiterated further that this "mis-education" of the Filipinos was instrumental in assimilating or Americanizing them because this education "de-Filipinize(d) the youth, taught them to regard American culture as superior to any other, and American society as the model par excellence for Philippine society" (qtd. in San Juan Jr. *Toward Filipino Self-Determination* 42).

The Filipinos would from that period onwards be "forever imagin[ing] the ethereal beauty of white Christmases, Coca-Cola bottles in hand" (Francia x), as Filipinos of latter generations still see the United States of America with rose-tinted glasses and dream of someday living and settling in the United States, a direct reflection of this can be seen through the current number of Filipino immigrants in the United States; a census in 2008 suggests that 2.9 million members of the Filipino diaspora are located in the United States and that between 2000-2009 there was a

thirty-three percent increase in the number of unauthorized Filipino immigrants in the United States ("Filipino Immigrants in the United States").

The American Dream's promise of upward mobility was in a way represented by the education given by the Americans as unlike the Spaniards, who refused to provide mass public education to the Filipinos, the Americans offered the opportunity to proletarian Filipinos access not only to grammar school but also the chance to attain higher tertiary-level education. The once affluent-student-populated colleges were being filled with people from lower social status, giving people from the lower echelon of society a chance to pave their own path in improving their lives financially and socially as education can open opportunities in various jobs that are more rewarding to the poor citizens. This gave the Filipinos the opportunity of "economic and social mobility" (Francia x). The postcolonial education that Filipinos received acted as a medium in transplanting traditions considered to be superior to the native traditions or what is called "cultural imperialism". By internalizing the notion of American superiority, the beauty of its society and the chances of a better life it offers, many a Filipino would thus be enticed to migrate to America.

Carlos Bulosan was no different from other Filipinos who had been fed with this illusion of greener pastures in America as will be discussed later on. Considered the pioneer of Philippine-American literature, Carlos Bulosan was born to a destitute family in Binalonan, a town in the province of Pangasinan during the "high point in the colonial relationship" (Evangelista, *Carlos Bulosan* 2). The aforementioned Thomasites had already arrived for more than a decade and with them American education which was available in many areas of the country. The developments

happening in the Philippines such as the pensionado program – ending Filipino scholars to the United States for further education – and American style education resulted in a growing faith in American democracy, belief and education, which could be considered as an opportunity for social mobility. Susan Evangelista appropriately describes this period as a time when a "colonial mentality was taking root" (*Carlos Bulosan* 2). Bulosan's profile is shrouded with uncertainty with facts about his life such as his birthdate not being thoroughly proven. But to focus on these aspects of his life would not be as essential as centering on his experience that made him the writer he was.

To escape from the harsh conditions of abject poverty he describes in his fiction, Bulosan migrated to the United States in 1930, with this dream of greener pastures, as accumulated from his colonial albeit short education, on a ship embarking for the West Coast. In his novel, *America Is in the Heart*, Bulosan illustrates to his readers the conditions that became contributing factors in his and other Filipinos' migration to the United States.

Published in 1946, *America Is in the Heart* presents the experience of a Filipino immigrant in the United States during the 1930s. Considered to be the best known and most taught Filipino American novel, *America Is in the Heart* is as much an autobiography of Bulosan as it is a collective biography of Filipino immigrants during that period, with Elaine Kim describing, "it is a composite portrait of the Filipino American community" (qtd. in Libretti 27). The novel follows Allos, Bulosan's fictional alter-ego, through his life in the Philippines, living with his family

in harsh conditions, to his passage to the United States and his participation in workers' labor unions in the United States.

Filipino migration to various countries resulting in a social phenomenon called "the Filipino diaspora", especially to the United States could be accredited to various "push" and "pull" factors visible in Bulosan's narrative. The "Push-Pull Theory"[9] is one of the oldest theories of international immigration and is considered as an invaluable tool in perceiving Asian Trans-Pacific migration to the United States (Min 8). Push-pull factors can be defined as the motivating factors essential to migration. A "push" is the force that encourages or "pushes" the immigrant to leave the one's country of origin to a target country with a "pull" factor, which acts as incentive drawing the immigrant to that country (Walker 5).

Although the "push-pull" theory facilitates the understanding of immigration, it is not without its pitfalls and problems. A significant problem with this approach is that it does not consider the structural factors and changes in policies which have a direct effect on the flow of immigration. The "push-pull" theory, though not entirely incorrect, is therefore considered to be "incomplete and historically static" (Garza and Diaz 314). Another problem pointed out in the *Encyclopedia of Asian American Issues Today Vol. 1* which has direct relevance to the study of the Filipino diaspora is that because the influence of America on the structure of education and politics in the Philippines had built a "strong and deeply rooted connection" between Filipinos and Americans and factored significantly on the shaping of American cultural influence in

[9] Push-Pull Theory is a theory pioneered by Ernest Ravenstein, who analyzed internal migration in England in 1871-1881. This theory was later refined by American demographer Everett Lee, who formulated it as a general theory of migration for both internal and international migration.

the Philippines, the "push-pull" theory is more suited in analyzing twentieth century immigrants from Europe (27).

This model, its aforementioned faults notwithstanding, is still beneficial and can help facilitate in the understanding of the factors and urges that have driven many a Filipino to leave their families and homes to pursue a better life on foreign shores, at the very least, on a basic level, as presented in Bulosan's semi-biographical novel.

The first part of *America Is in the Heart* illustrates vividly the various "push" and "pull" factors that could be seen as the driving force behind the migration of Filipino immigrants to the United States. The usual suspects in the "push" category include but are not limited to social, political and economic instability, much of which was brought on by American colonization. Furthermore, this part of the novel also presents limited opportunities and sudden change in personal fortune as "push" factors.

The novel begins during the childhood of Allos, acknowledged to be the fictional counterpart of Carlos Bulosan. The first chapters open with a typical depiction of rural agriculture life and poverty, Allos's father, who has been working since the break of dawn on their land, plowing his field with a water buffalo and the surrounding fields "were dotted with men plowing and harrowing and raking weeds into the river" (Bulosan, *America* 3), and thereby the reader is introduced to the general condition of the country and its people through the lives of the Bulosan family. The Bulosans, like numerous other families in the Philippines, are deeply mired in poverty and in dire economic instability.

Allos and his family are typical Filipino agricultural workers who remain impoverished despite their engagement in endless toil. Allos narrates about their rural farm life in Mangusmana, located in the province of Pangasinan, where people live in *nipa* huts, work with carabaos (water buffalos) in farms and fetch water in communal wells using empty petroleum cans and earthen drinking jars. Though owning four hectares of farming land, a considerable piece size by Philippine standards, but compared to other landowners of the rice plains in the Central Luzon area who possess pieces of land ranging from hundreds to thousands of acres, these four hectares seem miniscule. It could be argued that four hectares of land hardly constitutes to the possession of a peasant, but as P.C. Morantte states in his book *Remembering Carlos Bulosan, America Is in the Heart* is "30% autobiography, 40% case history of Pinoy life in America, and 30% fiction." He also posits the idea that Bulosan was "self-mythologizing" with the purpose of making his life more exciting and interesting (31-2). The Bulosans possession of four hectares of land is hardly adequate in providing support and staving off starvation, though crop rotation helps the family alleviate their condition, this also depends on uncontrollable factors such as the weather.

In addition to the expenses for living sustenance, the family has to shoulder Macario's school expenses. Macario, who is Allos's third oldest brother, attends high school in Lingayen. Although free education was offered to the Filipino population, there were additional expenses which burdened families like the Bulosans. Allos explains that "We had free education, but the school was in Lingayen…Going to school in Lingayen… took plenty of money. The students paid for their room and board; and sometimes… they paid for their laundry" (Bulosan, *America* 14). Upon the

shoulders of these students lie the hopes and aspirations of their respective families in finding a way to climb the social and economic ladder, to dig themselves out of poverty. But sending a family member to school requires many sacrifices such as pooling all the earnings of the entire family in support, and being only able to afford one "chosen" member to high school, a predicament that the Bulosan family finds itself in. With the fear that their children might not finish school, and with it their route to a better life, parents and family members do whatever it takes to support their chosen "savior".

The irony in the free education that the Americans had provided to the Filipinos is that although education can be seen as a means of improving the livelihood of the family, to attain this goal is to put the family in dire situations, plunging them deeper into poverty and difficulty. As in the case of the Bulosans, already deprived of all forms of leisure and simple luxury just to support Macario's increasing educational expenses, they are forced by circumstances, in fear of Macario not being able to finish high school, to be in debt to moneylenders. This ultimately results in them selling their treasured piece of land, hectare by hectare, until the only piece of land remaining in their possession is the strip where their house stands and the piece of lot owned by Leon, Allos's eldest brother who had left Mangusmana to reside with his wife (Bulosan, *America* 22).

To mitigate their financial instability, Allos's family is required to work harder, with the family being split into two; Allos's father toiling in the farm in Mangusmana and his mother selling products in neighboring towns and villages. Allos and his elder brother Amado help clear the five hectare piece of church land

their father was able to negotiate from the men in the church, with an agreement that a third of everything Allos's family raised belongs to the church and will only gain an equal share once they enter the third year. It is in this section that the toll of the severity of life conditions in rural Philippines on the people can be seen. Amado and Allos, while working to clear the church land, encounter a problem with their water buffalo when it stops and starts to sink slowly into the mud. Amado beats the carabao with a stick which leads to a falling out with his father and is slapped across the face, and in a moment of "blind fury", Amado raises his hand in retaliation before throwing away the stick. Amado then leaves his family and walks away. It is one of the major events that had an impact on Allos. At this young age, Allos does not fully understand the implications of this occurrence but through hindsight and his experience accumulated later on in his life, he comprehends the incident, which he describes as an event from which "Amado entered my consciousness and stayed there like a firebrand for years"; that Amado is in fact "running away from the cruelty of our hard peasant life" (Bulosan, *America* 16-7). This incident is a metaphorical image of the Bulosan family's hardships they have found themselves in, plunging deeper in dire poverty, struggling to come out of this circumstance like the water buffalo stuck in the mud, one of the many obstacles that they have to endure in their tumultuous peasant life. Amado would later find employment as a janitor in Binalonan and help pay for Macario's school expenses.

At a young age, Allos contributes much to assist the family in every way he can, not only does he help his father in their piece of borrowed land, but also his mother in selling salted fish and doing odd jobs. Not long after Amado leaves Mangusmana for Binalonan, Allos goes to live with his mother who also lives in

Binalonan. It is here where Allos starts doing various jobs to contribute to the payments of Macario's expenses. He even climbs coconut trees to earn some small amounts of money which he gives to his mother who then in turn gives it to Macario for his expenses. During his stay in Binalonan, Allos secures work on the construction of the overland highway, which passes Binalonan, connecting the capital city, Manila with Baguio, the summer city up north, where he later goes. His earnings from this work went toward the payment of their land to the moneylender.

With Allos's father working in the fields in Mangusmana, Allos's mother has to take care of Allos and his siblings in Binalonan while doing menial work to provide much needed additional income for the entire family. A hard-working persevering woman, Allos's mother struggles to make ends meet by selling *bagoong* or shrimp paste, filling them in earthen jars and peddling it in villages. She and Allos sometimes barter with peasants who do not have money to pay for their purchases, receiving instead cups of rice, beans, chicken or eggs in return. Their enterprise does not stop with just selling salted fish; they walk tens of kilometers to sell beans in a town called Puzzorobio, sometimes braving torrential rains during their excursions there and during the *mongo* season, Allos and his mother go to the nearby town of San Manuel to harvest *mongo*, or yellow beans, during weekdays to earn some more money to survive.

The annexation of the Philippines brought in various political and social changes in the country as already mentioned earlier. America's subjugation of the Philippines and their attempt to mold the country into their image caused social instability, which would be another factor in pushing Filipinos out to seek new

pastures. Not only did these changes cause social instability, it also had an effect on the economic instability and hardships touched upon earlier.

In *America Is in the Heart* and also in other essays and articles, it appears that Bulosan is critical about absentee landlordism. As Epifanio San Juan Jr. informs us in *On Becoming Filipino: Selected Writings of Carlos Bulosan*, "What the rhetoric of the book wants to elide but cannot… is the U.S. colonial violence… that subjugated the natives, reinforced the oppressive structure Bulosan called 'absentee landlordism,' and drove him and tens of thousands Filipinos to permanent exile" (Bulosan and San Juan Jr. 15). Bulosan grew up helping his family survive each and every day, a hand-to-mouth livelihood under the condition described by Bulosan himself as worse and more oppressive than feudalism (during the Spanish regime) – absentee landlordism (San Juan Jr., "Man and Mask" 2).

Like many other rural Filipino families during the early twentieth century, the Bulosans suffered economic disparity due to the said absentee landlordism, a condition which Carlos compared to being a slave (San Juan Jr., "Man and Mask" 2). San Juan elaborates that the retrogression in social status of Bulosan's family from being a "small farmer to serfhood and finally slavery" can be considered as representing the "disintegrating of socio-economic structure of the country" (2).

As he looks in hindsight with a matured perspective gained from his various experience of destitution both in the Philippines and in the United States, Allos describes the situation in which Filipinos faced during that period, "peasants had been the victims of ruthless exploitation for years, dating back to the eighteenth century… So from then on the peasants became poorer… and the landlords became richer… the

better part of it was that the landlord was always away, sometimes merely a name on a piece of paper" (Bulosan, *America* 23). During the first decades of colonial rule in the Philippines, the United States "coopted the landed elite in administering minor local affairs" – fostered absentee landlordism which tormented the country, "There were no usury laws and we the peasants were the victims of large corporations and absentee landlordism. When the church took part in the corruption, the consequences almost tore the Philippines from its economic roots" (Bulosan, *America* 23). Allos further describes absentee landlordism as "crippling the peasant economy." Most of the farmers planted rice, the main staple in the Philippines, but "each year the landlords demanded a larger share, until it became impossible for the peasants to live" (Bulosan, *America* 58). This was caused by the rapid progress occurring in the Philippines – the boom in population and capitalism, which had entered before the American colonization but gained speed during that period (Kerkvliet 17-8). The consequence that ensued was the dispossession of Filipino peasants' lands which in turn factored in the degradation of society, as Allos recalls his uncles' predicament and the pitiful aftermath,

> Some of my uncles were already dispossessed of their lands, so they went to the provincial government and fought for justice, but they came back to the village puzzled and defeated. It was then that one of my uncles resorted to violence and died violently, and another entered a world of crime and criminals. (Bulosan, *America* 23)

Absentee landlordism rears its head towards the Allos's family as they lose the church land they had painstakingly cleared and used as an outlet of income when "a

man came from nowhere to our house and presented my father with a paper purportedly signed by the church people" (Bulosan, *America* 26). The paper is a notice declaring that the land is no longer owned by the church but by a rich man in Manila. Like his uncles, Allos's father walks to Lingayen in an attempt to regain the land he has lost and like his relatives, Allos's father comes back "a defeated man", beaten by poverty and by the system. In another incident, when the moneylender Allos's family owed money to confiscates their land, Allos sees another transformation, but now much closer to home. Luciano, Allos's second oldest brother who served in the Philippine Scouts division of the United States Army, turns to underhanded tricks by sabotaging cars that run through Binalonan to earn money by fixing the tires of the cars. It is another evidence of the decay in personal moral values brought on by absentee landlordism and such was the effect of absentee landlordism that Allos branded as "dehumanizing" (Bulosan, *America* 24).

Resulting from oppression suffered by Filipino peasants under absentee landlordism, sporadic rumors about uprising and revolts arise, as Allos posits, the "cancer of exploitation was intolerable" that it forced the peasants to "take matters into their own hands and they resorted to anarchistic methods" (Bulosan, *America* 23-4). But the unorganized revolt in the south is easily suppressed, with the rebels thrown in medieval dungeons for their mutiny. In another revolt in the town of Tayug, Allos sees at first hand, the repercussions of oppression and hardships on the poor peasants of the country. The uprising in Tayug recounted by Allos, who was in Tayug to work on the farm lands, alludes to the true event that occurred in 1931. The revolt in Tayug was led by the Colorum Party, described in the novel as "a fanatical organization of dispossessed peasants that terrified Luzon." The Colorum Party was led a by "college-

bred peasant who had become embittered in the United States" (Bulosan, *America* 60). The Colorum Party seizes the *presidencia* – the town city hall –and puts up their flag. These rebels were later suppressed easily and the flags of the Philippines and the United States appeared as the gun shots and shouts subsided and became silent. The incident in Tayug raises Allos's awareness of the adverse circumstances that Filipino peasants around him were facing and ultimately becomes one determining factor in his decision to leave this condition: "…the revolt in Tayug made me aware of the circumscribed life of the peasants through my brother Luciano, who explained its significance to me. I was determined to leave that environment and all its crushing forces…" (Bulosan, *America* 62). This leads to his decision to move away from the harsh life in rural Binalonan and move to the city of Baguio.

These revolts and uprising are symptomatic of the instabilities that were crippling the country, aptly described by Allos as symptomatic of a "malignant cancer that was eating away the nation's future security and negatively influencing the growth of the Philippines… into a gigantic industrial country" (Bulosan, *America* 24). The US colonization of the Philippines brought in with it modernization and industrialization and consequently, the middle-class. Allos first encounters the new middle-class in the Philippines in one of his trips with his mother to Puzzorobio. He describes the young middle-class girl, who Allos thinks came not to buy anything but to show off her social status to the peasants, with words of admiration, "She walked like a queen… She was like a fawn dancing before the doe…" (Bulosan, *America* 37) but this elegance disappears when the young girl intentionally strikes the basket of beans Allos and his mother are selling and walks away. Allos would later perceive the middle-class, their social attitude and standpoint regarding the peasant problem which

resulted in planting in him the hatred of their "arrogance and their contempt for the peasantry" (Bulosan, *America* 38).

Allos looks back at the period when the middle class began to rise with the current of change that was blowing through the Philippines. New corporations, banks and the like began to accumulate wealth, joining the large companies, banks and the church that held financial power, and the boom of the industry benefited to a select few

> But some were favored by this sudden upsurge of industry. The sons of the professional classes studied law and went to the provinces, victimizing their own people and enriching themselves at the expense of the nation. In a few years these lawyers were elected to the national government... they also took part in the merciless exploitation of the peasantry…. (Bulosan, *America* 24)

The passage above shows how the educated and haves of the Philippines have no qualms about exploiting their own countrymen, and with most of the money going to the coffers of a selected few "the peasants and workers become poorer" (Bulosan, *America* 24). The exploitation of Filipinos by their own educated countrymen is a topic touched upon again by Bulosan in his short story "The Romance of Magno Rubio", with the illiterate titular character being duped by his Filipino co-worker, Claro, in giving him large amounts of money to write love letters in exchange, and early in *America Is in the Heart*, Allos reflects on the "radical social change" that was happening in the Philippines and criticizes the exploitation brought on by his fellow countrymen

> …the Philippines was undergoing a radical social change; all over the archipelago the younger generation was stirring and adapting new attitudes… 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… plunging the nation into a great economic catastrophe that tore the islands from their roots…. (Bulosan, *America* 5)

The two passages presented above also depict the nepotistic behavior, favoritism and the abuse of authority by men of power. This could be seen much clearer in the event of the election for president or mayor described in *America Is in the Heart*. The new elected mayor dismisses all old employees except for those who has supported him and goes on to employ his own relatives and supporters (Bulosan, *America* 47).

The instabilities and changes that shook the Philippines encourage Allos and many other Filipinos to leave their home and take their chances in other pastures. Poverty and the difficulty in climbing the social ladder, with chances few and far between, drove peasants to migrate in search for more income and an opportunity at a better life. In *America Is in the Heart*, we see Allos's migration from Mangusmana to Binalonan, then to Baguio and ultimately to the United States of America. The uprising and the instability of the country which at the time could not yet govern itself provided its people impetus to move abroad, specifically, to the United States, as Allos pertinently concludes, "Those who could no longer tolerate the existing conditions ventured into the new land, for the opening of the United States to them

was one of the gratifying provisions of the peace treaty that culminated the Spanish-American War" (Bulosan, *America* 5).

The chance of being able to freely go to the United States as a "national" was a premium but other factors can be seen as pivotal in pulling Filipinos towards America. The "pull" factors are often the "mirror images" of the "push" factors (Gibney and Hansen 489). The United States could offer better prospects – more economic opportunities, equality, freedom to pursue one's goals without discrimination and oppression no matter who they are and where on the social ladder they belong to as long as they aspire to it – all encapsulated in the American Dream, which was inculcated over to the Filipinos by US colonization.

In his article "The Marriage of Maria Clara and Uncle Sam: Colonialism and the Education of Filipinos", Edmundo F. Litton compares, rather aptly, the relationship between the United States and the Philippines to the marriage of Maria Clara[10] to Uncle Sam[11], and highlights the impact of this relationship between colonial master and subject on the education of the Philippines (83-4). Education is thus used as an instrument in shaping Filipinos into the mold of the ideal American. Through US public education administered in the Philippines, American influence is reflected by Filipinos' democratic ideals, adoption of American values and culture, and use of the language which has had an effect and could still be perceived up to the present.

[10]Maria Clara: The mestiza heroine from Jose Rizal's famous novel *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not). Maria Clara later became synonymous with the ideal traditional Filipina – virtuous, religious and endowed with beauty and grace.

[11] Uncle Sam: The personification of the United States, supposedly originating from the War of 1812 named after Samuel Wilson. The initials of Uncle Sam also coincide with the initials of the United States (U.S.).

In *America Is in the Heart,* Allos first experiences this internalization of American values by Filipinos when he goes to town with his father to meet his older brother, Macario, for the first time. Instead of kissing their father on the hand, a traditional Filipino gesture of respect to elder people, Macario, the son who has been away from home for a long time, goes to shake hands with him as "he was being educated in the American way", an uncommon gesture in Allos's young eyes (Bulosan, *America* 20). The postcolonial "othering" is evident in the following interaction between Macario and Allos,

> 'Well, let us go home and I will cut your long hair,' said Macario to me. 'Don't you ever cut your hair, brother?'
>
> I was speechless. I was *ashamed* to say anything. [my italics] (Bulosan, *America* 20)

Macario offers to cut Allos's long hair, a physical feature seen as unclean or savage and maybe to a point as being less than human – a topic also brought up in "The Romance of Magno Rubio" as the titular character is constantly described as an animal of some sort. In order to transform so as to be befitting of a gentleman, Macario asks his brother "Wouldn't you like to be a gentleman, Allos?" (Bulosan, *America* 21) This, in a way, illustrates the effectiveness of the Americans' strategy. American values, which would soon be considered more civilized and superior, should be internalized and followed if one wants to be a proper human being, to have the proper "self", while indigenous tradition and culture are deemed to be inferior and uncivilized. Allos's shame in having long hair and looking unkempt, not having a polished civilized look, can be seen as a minor success on the part of American

education as the inculcation of American ideals and cultural superiority are conveyed to those who did not even attend high school and are being internalized, and ultimately "mimicked". As Philip Vera Cruz opines, "Because of our colonial education we looked up to anything American as good" (qtd. in San Juan Jr., *Toward Filipino Self-Determination* 30).

Though Allos has not been able to continue his studies, he shows enthusiasm on every opportunity he receives in broadening his horizon. His brief stay in school sees Allos being very attentive and eager to quench his thirst for knowledge. Though he faces being taunted by other children for being unkempt, walking three miles to school barefooted and having long hair and being called "Igorot" – a native mountain tribe often used as a derogatory word – Allos ignores them and their stones that are thrown at him, being "too absorbed" with his book. Knowing he would not remain in school for long, he listens in class attentively and tries to absorb as much knowledge as he could (Bulosan, *America* 48).

To Allos, American education is seen as a path toward the awakening of an "illiterate and backward" Philippines (Bulosan, *America* 14). American education has instilled students with "invigorating ideas of social equality and of equal justice before the law" (Bulosan, *America* 24). When he is off school, he learns from Macario who brings books back for him and Luciano who reads to him when Allos suffers from a broken leg after falling off a tree. High schools in that period used educational materials sent from the United States and in those books, America is invariably depicted as the "land of milk and honey" (Litton 88). These books instilled

in the sub-conscience of the Filipinos who, directly and indirectly, internalized these portrayals – the promise of America.

In a foreshadowing of things to come for Allos, Macario reads to Allos the eighteenth-century adventure novel *Robinson Crusoe* written by Daniel Defoe, and advises Allos to incorporate in himself the characteristics of the titular character,

> You must remember the good example of Robinson Crusoe…. Someday you may be left alone somewhere in the world and you will have to depend on your ingenuity…. Maybe you will be thrown upon some unknown island someday with nothing to protect you except your hands and your mind…. (Bulosan, *America* 32)

Indeed, Allos would later find himself in such an "unknown place", America, where he would be faced with various trials and hardships and requiring his ingenuity to survive. It is also noteworthy that the book Macario brings home for Allos is a canonical novel with imperialistic overtones as suggested by numerous prominent scholars and writers in academia such as Karl Marx, who noted that Crusoe is "the ideal bourgeois capitalist" and James Joyce, who described Man Friday as "the symbol of the subject races" (qtd. in Pupavac 120), a strategy presumably implemented by the United States to justify its colonization of the Philippines. The titular character Robinson Crusoe goes forth to an adventure and seeks fortune in foreign lands and not unlike Crusoe, the United States crossed the Pacific to colonize the Philippines. Furthermore, the relationship between Robinson Crusoe and his servant Man Friday resembles the relationship between the United States and the Philippines. Crusoe rescues Man Friday from his cannibal captors, employs him as a

servant, requires him to call Crusoe as “master” and teaches him English. Analogously, the United States, in a sense, “rescued” the Philippines from Spanish rule, consequently became their colonial “masters” and brought with them the language and education system which became the foundation for present day Philippines. With both Crusoe and the United States using civilizing education as a rationalization for their colonization of their respective “subjects” and both Man Friday and the Philippines being faithful in their servitude to their masters, one can assume that *Robinson Crusoe* can be a loose allegory of US-Philippine relations.

Apart from the books and education, Allos’s experience interacting with Americans strengthens his belief of the promise of America. Allos goes to the city of Baguio to work and earn enough money for his anticipated passage to the United States. It is here that he meets Mary Strandon, one of the most influential female American figures he encounters. She takes him in, employing him to cook and do general housework. Strandon has errands done for her which also includes picking up books from the library. Learning about Allos’s fascination with books, Strandon arranges a job for Allos at the city library, and in that place Allos finds pleasure. Allos describes this incident, “A whole new world was opened to me” (Bulosan, *America* 70).

During his employment under Strandon, Allos meets an Igorot boy named Damalcio. Damalcio is befriended by Allos and shares the same goal of going to the United States. Allos learns from him that to gain passage to America money is not essential, “You don’t need money… English is the best weapon”. He then proceeds to teach Allos not only speak English but how to pronounce words “like the Americans”

(Bulosan, *America* 69) presenting the Americanization of the Filipinos and their wish of becoming part of them.

Not only does his meeting with Dalmacio raise Allos's awareness on the importance of English, he also learns about a person, whom he would be obsessed with and who would forever galvanize and infuse him with the belief in the American Dream. The book both the boys are reading is the biography of the iconic Abraham Lincoln. Damalcio explains to Allos who Abraham Lincoln was

> He was a poor boy who became a president of the United States, he said. He was born in a log cabin and walked miles and miles to borrow a book so that he would know more about his country.
>
> *A poor boy became a president of the United States!* Deep down in me something was touched…. I was fascinated by the story of this boy who was born in a log cabin and became a president of the United States. (Bulosan, *America* 69)

Allos seeks more information about Lincoln from Strandon, who obliges to tell him about the great historical figure and what Lincoln had done for the United States, "Well, when he became president he said that all men are created equal" (Bulosan, *America* 70) and she also tells Allos that Lincoln died for Negro slaves. From that moment on, Allos becomes obsessed with and inspired by Lincoln and starts reading books given to him by Strandon. It is understandable why Allos would be so fascinated by Lincoln. As stated earlier, Lincoln's "The Gettysburg Address" was being recited in classes and there is no doubt that his life history was also taught to Filipino students, as Evangelista reminds us that even in the distant areas of the

Philippines, the "American type of education, complete with emphasis on the heroics of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln", was accessible (*Carlos Bulosan* 2). Lincoln is indeed the epitome of the American Dream as his life presents to Allos the limitless possibilities that are available in the United States. The success of a poor peasant rising to become the most powerful person in the country and helping those who are in need and dies for it, inspires and gives direction to Allos. And like many before and after Allos, the American Dream ideology entices countless immigrants to pursue their own dream in the land of possibilities which is the United States of America.

An additional reason that pulled Filipinos into the idea of going to America is the numerous so-called "success" stories of Filipinos in America, a concept so true today as much as during that period. Susan Evangelista elaborates that during the 1920s, numerous articles about the success of Filipino workers in the United States were published, presenting stories such as how a lettuce picker became a contractor, or how a bellboy becoming rich through tips (*Carlos Bulosan* 2). In addition, she also points out that these articles also suggested that Filipinos in cities experience a better social life than in the Philippines (*Carlos Bulosan* 2-3). A dream sequence in *America Is in the Heart* presents Allos's childhood memory of meeting the chief of police who has a friend, "a maker of songs in America" (Bulosan, *America* 282). This is the first time Allos hears about America. The success stories of Filipino immigrants in the United States fueled the aspirations of Filipinos – dreaming of one day setting foot on the country that promises material abundance and a better life and becoming a success story themselves.

As seen in Allos's experience presented in the first part of *America Is in the Heart*, Filipino peasants endure harsh conditions due to several factors: poverty, absentee landlordism and social changes to name a few. Poor Filipino peasants like Allos have to make ends meet by toiling in farms or selling farm produce in nearby towns travelling by foot for kilometers on end. Though industrialism has modernized the country, the poor are still plunged into a seemingly eternal state of poverty while a group of selected few became much richer by exploiting the peasants. The circumstances that the family of Allos faces are typical for peasants of rural Philippines. The dispossession of lands with almost no way of getting them back shows the lack of freedom in the Philippines. These factors pushed the Filipinos like Allos to migrate, some move from town to town or what is called internal migration, and for some the escape is to migrate to another country which can provide the immigrants with open opportunity to fulfill their dreams of having a better life and where they can have social equality. The country that provides all of these enticing proposition, all encapsulated in an easy to instill ideology, is the United States with its promise of equality, limitless opportunities and freedom to pursue one's dream – the American Dream. The American Dream's potent pulling power is suitably summed up by James Loucky in *Immigration in America Today*, "The concept of the 'American Dream' combined with that of Manifest Destiny, and soon America was attracting thousands of new immigrants…" (333). The American Dream was inculcated by Americans to Filipinos through US public education – teachers and educational materials from the United States help in spreading this ideology, this myth of the land of equal opportunity, as part of their imperialist agenda. America colonized the consciousness of the Filipino people, convincing them that they are

inferior to the Americans and only through the American's guidance and protection and adherence to American culture, values and beliefs, the lives of Filipinos shall improve. Through this, the United States, her citizens and all things American are looked up to and adored by Filipinos. Failures of the American Dream notwithstanding, Filipino immigrants like other immigrants, Americans even, are blinded by the hope that the American Dream offers. This is even more accurate with those who are financially unstable or in need, as it is human nature to cling to something that gives us hope. The American Dream tells us what we want to hear and by this means it subjugates us with its enthralling captivation. Success stories of Filipino immigrants only helped to further cement the prospects that the American Dream promises in the minds of the Filipinos back home. With all these factors combined, Filipinos in the thousands paid their passage to the United States to escape the harsh realities in the Philippines and pursue what they were not able to in their homeland, "the American Dream", unbeknownst to them that the façade the American Dream had conjured would later unveil the austere reality that is hidden behind the myth. The revelation of a side of America that Filipinos of that period have never seen or heard of is explored in the subsequent parts of *America Is in the Heart* and "The Romance of Magno Rubio", presenting the experience of Filipino immigrants in the Depression Period America as they struggle on tenaciously to achieve the American Dream.

In conclusion, in the first part of the *America Is in the Heart* Bulosan shows the various factors that he perceived to have "pushed" Filipinos to migrate to the United States in search for a better life. Like many other immigrant waves to the United States preceding them, Filipino immigrants fled from poverty, inequality and

oppression in their country and due to numerous accounts of success stories being published and talked about, the values instilled by the Americans through the public education they provided and the special status of Filipinos as “nationals”, the United States became the ideal destination for these Filipino immigrants. The following chapter, covering the remaining parts of *America Is in the Heart* and “The Romance of Magno Rubio”, will discuss the experiences of these immigrants in the United States as they aspire to attaining this so called dream, highlighting their physical struggles and travails which shows the transformation of this dream turning into a nightmare of sorts.

CHAPTER III

PINOYS NOT ALLOWED: THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND PRE-WORLD WAR II ERA

> Do you know what a Filipino feels in America? I mean *one* who is aware of the intricate forces of chaos? He is the loneliest thing on earth. There is much to be appreciated all about him, beauty, wealth, power, grandeur. But is he a part of these luxuries? He looks, poor man, through the fingers of his eyes. He is enchained, damnably to his race, his heritage. He is betrayed, my friend.
>
> – Carlos Bulosan, May 2, 1938 *Letters*

During his convalescence in Los Angeles County Hospital, Bulosan's fictional alter ego, Allos, ponders silently as he reads books by Walt Whitman on the subject of Whitman's "passionate dream of an America of equality for all races." Allos contemplates on the American Dream and the inclusion of immigrants like him, asking himself one of the oft pondered questions, "Would it be possible for an immigrant like me [Allos] to become a part of the American dream?" (Bulosan, *America* 251) As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the American Dream ideology has attracted thousands of immigrants to the United States and with Filipinos' special status as "nationals" or colonial wards, Filipino immigrants fled their homeland to strike riches in the land of milk and honey and try to achieve the American Dream. P.C. Morantte informs us that before their arrival in the United States Filipinos were "veritable dreamers" (71). Young people in the Philippines all dreamed of one day arriving in the United States, a new world full of hope. These people took every chance they came upon to embark to the United States, whether it is through recruitments by agents of Hawaiian sugar plantations, Californian growers or through employment on ships heading to America as payment for their passage.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the surge of Filipino immigrants to the United States rose dramatically, especially in Hawaii and California. The increase in influx of Filipino immigrants owed not only to the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred Chinese immigrants entry to the United States, the implementation of the National Origins Act, limiting the number of immigrants allowed entry (Boyd 48), but also the crucial shortage of labor hands in plantations and mills in Hawaii (Frazier and Tettey-Fio 272) and farmhands along the American West Coast.

The restriction of Chinese, Japanese and South Asian immigrant workers opened up work employment opportunities for Filipinos, as an alternative to Japanese and Chinese labor due to Filipinos' special status as "American Nationals" dictated by the 1916 Jones Act or the Philippine Autonomy Act, giving Filipinos freedom of entry to the United States albeit without the privilege of eligibility for full US citizenship status (Frazier and Tettey-Fio 272). This resulted in the constant migration waves of Filipino immigrants to the United States, mainly to Hawaii and along the Pacific Coast due to geographical reasons, during the 1920s up until mid-1930s. And through this means, Carlos Bulosan ventured into the United States.

On July 22, 1930, Bulosan arrived in Seattle, Washington State. With only three years of education, though some might refute that he was able to attend high school (San Juan, 4), hardly able to speak and communicate effectively in English and with the socio-economic conditions of 1930s United States, Bulosan struggled to survive in the United States.

The 1930s is defined as a period of severe economic downturn. This economic downturn dubbed "The Great Depression" was caused by a sudden collapse of the US stock market, major bank failures and economic structural weaknesses in the United States in 1929, represented by the sudden crash of the New York Stock Exchange (Traynor 107), a couple of years prior to Carlos Bulosan's arrival in the United States. The crash in the United States sent repercussions throughout the world, with Sidney Pollard, an economic historian, describing it as an "avalanche" that dragged other economies into a deep chasm (qtd. in Traynor 107). The economic downturn proved to be disastrous; with the international trade dropping 50% and unemployment in the United States increasing 25% (Frank and Bernanke 98). Bulosan could not have chosen a worse time to immigrate to the United States, stating himself that "I arrived here at the time when the crisis was at its height…" (qtd. in San Juan, "Man" 3). The statement's validity could be confirmed as historians believe that the first couple of years of the crash were the worst (Traynor 111).

Due to the economic turmoil, work was hard to come by. The number of unemployment rose dramatically, from 8 million in 1931 to at least 13 million in 1932 (Traynor 111), prompting not only fierce competition for positions available but also contributing to the discrimination of migrant workers such as Bulosan himself. Filipinos faced racial oppression from mainstream Caucasian Americans during the Great Depression. In his article about Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*, Tim Libretti explains that the anti-Filipino brigade occurred when unemployed white workers started to "[desire] these otherwise undesirable jobs" (25). Carlos Bulosan toiled in various low-paying, menial labor jobs; from working in coffee shops in Seattle, harvesting in fields in California to working in canaries in Alaska, where he

was paid a measly thirteen dollars for the whole season (San Juan, "Man" 4) (not in chronological order).

Bulosan faced many hardships in the United States; economic difficulties and racial abuse took a toll not only on his health but also on his perception of the United States. Bulosan had a history of being sickly, and therefore, the living and working conditions, including the climate in the United States were too much for his delicate health to handle. Bulosan was diagnosed with tuberculosis for which he had to undergo thirteen surgeries, suffered the loss of most of his right ribcage and a shorter left foot resulting in a limp (San Juan, "Man" 5).

It was during his recuperation from one of his lung surgeries in Los Angeles County Hospital that Bulosan started to educate himself, which he was keen to do when he was still young in the Philippines by learning from his elder brother. He delved into and learned from "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (San Juan, "Man" 5) as he perceived education and knowledge as essential in providing him with the opportunity to lift his social status and livelihood, and through his exploration of American Literature, Bulosan believes "could follow the path of these poets, [the American poets] continue their tradition and… arrive at a positive understanding of America" (qtd. in Kim, "Carlos Bulosan" 9). Through the aid of his liberal minded female friends, Sanora and Dorothy Babb, Ruth McKenney and *Poetry* editor Harriet Monroe, to whom he became acquainted during his work with "New Tide" – a bi-monthly worker's magazine by the union, Bulosan gradually expanded and developed his intellect through reading one book a day indulging himself with

various forms of literature, thus commencing his journey of following his vocation of being the voice for the voiceless Filipino immigrants.

Bulosan's literary works ranged from editorials and poetry to short stories and novels. For a decade, starting from 1936 onwards, Bulosan wrote feverously and published a number of literary works such as *Letters from America* – a compilation of poems, *Voice of Bataan*, *Laughter of My Father*, the short story "The Romance of Magno Rubio" and arguably his most famous work *America Is in the Heart*, a chronicle of his life in the Philippines and in the United States, painting a vivid picture of the Filipino-American immigrant experience.

Having first-hand experience of and seen the oppression suffered by his fellow countrymen, such as brutal beatings from bands of Caucasians and policemen and lynchings amongst other things described in *America Is in the Heart*, Bulosan became involved in labor unions with his brother and friends he made in the United States, advocating for the equality and the cease of oppression towards migrant workers, as a writer for the union publication. Bulosan's active participation in this cause was not limited to writing, he also had a hand in the founding of the UCAPAWA (United Cannery and Packing House Workers of America), depicted in the latter parts of *America Is in the Heart*, during the mid-1930s (Kim, "Carlos Bulosan" 6) and also an organizer for the Congress of Industrial Organization which the UCAPAWA was under (Libretti 24).

Bulosan pursued in giving "voice to thousands of agricultural and menial laborers of Asian America" through writing, an impetus stemming from his "grand dream of equality among men and freedom for all. To give literate voice to the

voiceless one hundred thousand Filipinos in the United States, Hawaii and Alaska[12]" (qtd. in Kim, "Carlos Bulosan" 4). And through his works, Bulosan was able to convey to readers the story, a pseudo-history of Filipino Immigrant(s) as the stories are not an exact illustration of one Filipino immigrant but a collage of experiences of Filipino immigrants as a collective, who were, at the time, facing financial hardship and social and racial discrimination.

Through depictions in Bulosan's works – namely "The Romance of Magno Rubio" and notably, *America Is in the Heart* – not only can the reader perceive a veritable portrait of the lives, frustration and destitution of Filipino immigrants as they pursue the American Dream, but also a view of the United States itself. Filipinos knew the United States as a country of possibility; the American Dream's promise of equality, freedom, open opportunity to work and better one's life through hard work and perseverance permeating in their consciousness, but the dream's true visage underneath the façade of false ideology turns this dream into the "American Nightmare".

Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*, exhibits this experience matter-of-factly and with much more detail and horror. The first person perspective in this semi-autobiography gives the reader first-hand view of the hardships that accompanied Filipino immigrant life in the United States.

With part I in chapter II covering Allos's childhood prior to his passage to the United States, the subsequent parts of *America Is in the Heart* – with the second part described as the "most novelistic section" (Lumbera) – cover Allos's

[12] Hawaii and Alaska were not recognized as states of the United States of America until 1959.

experience in the United States, beginning with his trip to the United States and tracing his steps as he tries to survive Depression era America, moving from town to town, state to state, living in drudgery amid racial discrimination and oppression. The novel culminates in Allos's transformation into the socially conscious and educated writer Carlos Bulosan.

Allos arrives in the United States, and before even setting foot on America, he sees the country with much optimism and surprisingly does not feel like going to another country but is akin to a homecoming – returning to a home away from home,

> My first sight of the approaching land was an exhilarating experience. Everything seemed native and promising to me. It was like coming home after a long voyage, although as yet I had no home in this city. Everything seemed familiar and kind…. With a sudden surge of joy, I knew that I must find a home in this new land. (Bulosan, *America* 99)

For Filipino immigrants, as posited by Morantte, the Philippines was "an extension of America, even if it seemed but a neglected backyard" (51) This is not too difficult to fathom as the Philippines was being modeled after the United States, whether it is city plans, government system or colonial education, with the American flag being hoisted up in every school and government buildings the Philippines could really be considered as an annex of the United States.

In one of his correspondences, Carlos Bulosan gives an insight as to why Filipino immigrants such as himself were shocked with what America had in store for them,

> Western people are brought up to regard Orientals or colored peoples as inferior, but the mockery of it all is that Filipinos are taught to regard Americans as our equals. Adhering to American ideals, living American life, these are contributory to our feeling of equality. The terrible truth in America shatters the Filipinos' dream of fraternity. (qtd. in Kim, "Carlos Bulosan" 49)

Carlos Bulosan does not spare the reader any detail as he conveys the harrowing events, the terrible truth and what Max Gissen describes in his essay as the "sickening social truths confronting a minority in the United States" (2) through his vivid narrative – the discrimination and oppression rooting in racism in the purported "melting pot", exploitation from Caucasian Americans and their own countrymen, harsh living conditions not unlike in their homeland, from which they had fled. Their search of the American Dream resulting in the decay and degradation of their personal morals and values, and the feeling of hollowness amid being obstructed in their claim of a piece of the dream is also presented in *America Is in the Heart*.

Allos's experience of these horrors started before he had even disembarked in Seattle, Washington. While sailing across the Pacific in steerage, more befitting to animals than human beings, Allos meets Marcelo, who comes from the same province as Allos, and both experience "othering[13]" from a young American girl. She hypocritically describes Filipino passengers who are on the ship's deck without wearing shirts on as "half-naked savages from the Philippines", though she herself is wearing a swim suit. This was the first but not the last time that Allos experiences this

[13] Othering: The practice of judging people who are different as inferior and treating them as less than fully human (Tyson 420).

kind of derogatory remark. Allos's mature narrative voice tells us what is to be expected in the United States,

> I was to hear that girl's voice in many ways afterward in the United States. It became no longer her voice, but an angry chorus shouting:
>
> *Why don't they ship those monkeys back where they came from?* (Bulosan, *America* 99)

Attributing Filipinos immigrants to animals, as already mentioned previously, is common. This "othering" knows no boundaries; people of authority and law enforcement such as police detectives are also known to use racial slurs as shown in an incident when a Filipino immigrant is arrested, "Listen to the *brown monkey* talk… He thinks he is a white man" (Bulosan, *America* 136 my italics). Subalterns such as Filipinos are seen by their colonial masters as inferior. From this incident and also from Magno Rubio's case, which will be later discussed, they are not even considered as human beings. Macario's treatment, "as though he were a domestic animal", under the employment of an American movie director leads Allos to contemplate about running away not being able to bear to see his brother working under people who "were less human and decent than he". Allos becomes aware of how Americans see his kind and later vehemently declares his determination in not being under their subjugation, "I will never let them touch me with their filthy hands! I will never let them make a *domestic animal* out of me!" (Bulosan, *America* 142 my italics)

Not long after his arrival in Seattle, Washington, Allos encounters exploitation, and surprisingly, not from Americans. As Morantte points out, Filipino immigrants were targeted by Filipino swindlers and racketeers, misleading their naïve

and inexperienced countrymen. This incident is common enough that it could happen to any unsuspecting Filipino immigrant (52). Similar to Magno Rubio, Allos is taken advantage of by Filipinos in Seattle, when he, Marcelo and their companions are duped by "old-timers[14]" into playing "a strange kind of card game" and leaving never to be seen again only after winning all their money (Bulosan, *America* 99). Filipinos swindled fellow Filipinos with loaded dice and rigged cockfights to mention a few (McWilliams). Allos and his friends are then later "sold" to a Filipino contractor of a fish cannery in Alaska for five dollars per person by the Filipino proprietor of the hotel they were residing in. The irony of this incident is that Pinoys are being dealt with in a fashion similar to slavery, being sold to work in drudgery in the land purported to be a country of equality and freedom, when slavery had already been abolished since 1865.

Not unlike Magno Rubio's experience with exploitation from a fellow countryman, which will later be discussed, Allos encounters a Filipino contractor who has almost eight hundred Filipino immigrant workers under his control. Similar to Claro in "The Romance of Magno Rubio", Cabao, the aforementioned Filipino contractor, is educated but at a higher level, illustrated through his college diploma hanging on his wall. Fleeing from exploitation by fellow Filipinos in the Philippines, Allos and his fellow Filipino immigrants are still hounded by them in the United States; he and his fellow immigrants are sold "by a Visayan from the island of Leyte to an Ilocano from the province of La Union" (Bulosan, *America* 101). The leader of Allos's crew in Moxee City runs away with their hard earned money causing much

[14] Old-timer = refers to the Pinoys (Filipino immigrants) who have migrated to and stayed in the United States for some time.

frustration and anger within the camp, with Allos's compatriot turning to violence, hitting their bookkeeper, to vent his anger. Allos's statement, "It was exploitation everywhere, even among ourselves. It was the same thing I had known years before" (Bulosan, *America* 274) is undeniably befitting, with Carey McWilliams positing that "their worst exploiters, perhaps were Filipino labor contractors" (Introduction to *America).*

Exploitations that Filipino immigrants endured during that period resulted in harsh living and working conditions, which, as stated earlier, contributed in the decline in Bulosan's health. The economic depression, with factories and businesses laying off employees, made work difficult to come by. Pinoys' propensity for drifting, a distinct traits of Filipino immigrants of that time, prompted in Filipinos' penchant in toiling in drudgery from place to place in order to survive their plight. In *America Is in the Heart*, Allos travels to Seattle, Alaska, Stockton, Lompoc, San Luis Obispo, San Diego, Bakersfield, Santa Barbara and Salinas to name a few, evidence of how Filipinos tend to move around, never staying in one place. Pinoys became seasonal farmworkers, often moving to towns where a particular crop is being harvested such as picking peas in California. Washington State was also frequented by Filipino immigrants and some traverse to Alaska to work in fish canneries. Living conditions were not befitting. Filipino workers in Alaska were housed in bunkhouses that Allos describes as "unfit for human habitation", with bad lighting systems and the powerful scent of ammonia causing occupational hazards such as accidental severing of workers' extremities or health related problems symbolized by the juxtaposition of a cut off arm of a co-worker and the cut off head of a fish (Bulosan, *America* 101) California bunkhouses were crowded with male immigrant workers, as also seen in

"The Romance of Magno Rubio". The unemployed and homeless had to either find public places such as wooden benches, in churches or to find refuge in old filthy theaters paying five cents a night to escape from the cold as Allos later does in the book. Earning a miniscule amount of money compared to the long hours of toiling, with Carey McWilliams recounting seeing Filipino workers working at four o'clock in the morning in fields to cut asparagus (Introduction to *America*), Filipino immigrants like Allos had to endure much starvation, often alleviating his hunger by entering gambling houses to drink only tea.

These harsh living conditions were brought on by discrimination and oppression openly practiced in the United States. As previously stated, the Depression prompted Caucasian Americans to seek out menial jobs they would normally not consider and this competition for work was often the origin of violent altercations with some escalating into fatalities. Jobs normally given to immigrants were desired by Caucasian Americans, seeing Filipino immigrants as threat to their livelihood and survival, this caused friction between Americans and their colonial subalterns, which then leads to the violent persecution, discrimination and oppression of Filipino immigrants. These incidents are recounted vividly and explicitly in *America Is in the Heart*.

Prior to Allos' arrival in the United States, Filipino immigrants were already being persecuted by Americans, notably the expulsion of Filipinos in Yakima Valley during the late 1920s (Evangelista, *Carlos Bulosan* 4). Allos presents to us the murder of two Filipino apple pickers on the road to Sunnyside (Bulosan, *America* 107). Ruthless persecution of Filipino immigrants escalated during the Depression period,

serving as elimination of labor competition, with accusations that Filipino immigrants, coming in bulk, caused the diminishment of labor wages and "overstepping racial limitations" as justification for their actions (Evangelista, *Carlos Bulosan* 4). Allos experiences a Filipino "witch-hunt" in Moxee City when a group of white Americans armed with guns, clubs and iron bars attacks the farm where they are employed. Not only do these Americans try to drive out Filipino immigrants, they also attack fellow Americans who were kind enough to house and employ Filipinos as illustrated in the burning of the house of an American farmer in Wapato (Bulosan, *America* 107).

Allos recounts the event that escalated and accelerated the anti-Filipino sentiment which was the marriage of a Filipino to a Caucasian American in Pasadena. The case brought in degradation to the Filipino character and lineage; as Allos puts it, "the lives of Filipinos were cheaper than those of dogs" (Bulosan, *America* 143) and the anti-miscegenation thus included Filipinos. Regarding this premise, Susan Evangelista reminds us that sexual relationships of Filipinos became more problematic. With Filipino immigrants' propensity for having a good time when they had money, Pinoys went out with white women, with some falling in love and getting married, this was, in Evangelista's words, "the final affront to the white man's pride; he would rather lose his job than his sexual "property" (*Carlos Bulosan* 4). The competition for jobs and anti-miscegenation law culminated into various uprisings such as the "Watsonville Riot" in 1930.

Even law enforcement officers had a hand in the expulsion of Pinoys as illustrated when Mariano, Allos's friend, was driven out of Santa Barbara by the police (Bulosan, *America* 134). Wherever Allos goes, the predicament of Pinoys were

the same; Pinoys were being hunted by local whites with shotguns in Calipatria, a small Filipino dragged outside a restaurant and beaten unconscious with pieces of wood and fists, a labor camp being burned to the ground, a little Filipino shot in the back by two police detectives just for being a Filipino – events showing the cold-hearted brutality rooted in racism. The latter uncompassionate action is, as explained by a Filipino who was near Allos at the scene of the incident, as just the police's way of "having fun", often beating or kicking the first Filipino they see, without provocation (Bulosan, *America* 129).

Allos is not an exception of this brutality as he also is a recipient of police violence in Klamath Falls, when Allos is questioned whether he is Filipino, an affirmative answer resulted in an unprovoked attack, "Crack! It was that quick and simple. His right fist landed on my jaw felling me instantly" (Bulosan, *America* 156). He is brought to a prison cell and then beaten up and robbed of the two dollars he has hidden in his shoes. The incident where a Filipino is shot to death without no apparent reason other than being Filipino, as "though killing were a part of their day's work" (Bulosan, *America* 129), evokes Allos to reflect "Was it possible that these men enjoyed cruelty?" (Bulosan, *America* 156) a perplexing question indeed as law enforcement authorities themselves, entrusted with the serving and protection of the people in America, are betraying their own primary directive. Moreover, Allos is beaten up on many occasions by restaurant and hotel proprietors as he tries to search for a job in California.

Being Filipino during that time not only brought on to them violence and brutality but also racial discrimination and prejudice, hindering them in their search

for a better livelihood. Many towns in the West Coast were segregationist, among them Lompoc, where Bulosan had spent time employed as a dishwasher. Lompoc's population of approximately five thousand, as Morannte delineates, was comprised mostly of agricultural workers – notably Mexicans, Japanese, Filipinos and white vagrants. Nevertheless, the confinement of Filipinos, Mexicans and Oriental immigrants in poor residential areas were publicly supported by the local authorities (56). Accommodation and services were not available to Filipino immigrants. In *America Is in the Heart,* Allos is refused rental in hotels causing him to have to spend the night on a bench at a ferry station and is also refused service in a drugstore even though he has money to pay. Morantte reminds us that money was not the key to entering respectable establishments such as high class restaurants (71). Blatant discrimination on Pinoys is illustrated in another incident involving Allos and his brother Macario, an incident which "almost broke [Allos's] heart". Allos recounts the incident as they are searching for a new apartment to live in after Allos is released from his confinement in Los Angeles County Hospital. On the moment the landlady sees that the siblings are Filipinos, she goes on to take the "For Rent" sign away and brings it inside the house. The next woman they encounter also refuses to lease the house, explaining awkwardly, "The sign is nailed to the wall and it's hard to pull out. Maybe you can find one next block." The worst came when a landlady, not as discreet as the previous, straightforwardly says, "We don't take Filipinos" (Bulosan, *America* 256). Such was the predicament that the only establishments that would accept them were either non-American operated establishments or nefarious sections of towns full of criminals, pimps, gamblers and prostitutes, where suicides and murders were rife, as Allos elaborates, "[t]here was no other district where we were allowed to reside,

and even when we tried to escape from it, we were always driven back to this narrow island of despair" (Bulosan, *America* 134).

Not even in establishments such as hospitals are they free from racial discrimination though the perpetrator is not a member of the medical staff. The hospital is the place where Allos begins to deliberate on the paradoxical nature of America. It is here where he experiences America's kindness, when doctors and nurse save the life of his friend, Jose, whose leg is run over by a train, chopping his leg off. It is also the place where Allos begins his education on America and her people, claiming to read a book each day during his two-year confinement and convalescence from tuberculosis. Allos is denied eligibility to go to a sanitarium by the Social Service Department because of alleged technical reasons such as arriving in the United States as a minor. That racism also exists in the hospital and is made clear when a Social Service Department official states, "You Filipinos… ought to be shipped back to your jungle homes" (Bulosan, *America* 253).

Apart from competition from Caucasian Americans coveting the same employment, racial discrimination and prejudice also played a part in constantly frustrating Filipino immigrants in finding respectable jobs to sustain their lives. After taking a civil service examination, Macario knows instantly that he is not likely to land the job, explaining that "California doesn't employ Filipinos in civil service jobs" and that it is due to "personal interpretation of [Filipinos'] status in the United States" (Bulosan, *America* 202). Filipinos, as "colonial wards" and "nationals", were not considered as U.S. citizens and were ineligible for citizenship and therefore were excluded from respectable employment positions as they were seen as inferior.

Therefore, Filipino immigrants had to suffer under drudgery with very low income due to the presumption that as Orientals, they had a standard of living much lower than Caucasian Americans. Those who were fortunate enough to have landed on an employment suffered discrimination under American employers (Morantte 56). Macario's American director employer, as already mentioned, is, in Allos's words, "less human and decent than [Macario]" (Bulosan, *America* 142). The director and his friends discriminate other non-Caucasians, stating that "You can hire these *natives* for almost nothing… They are only too glad work for white folks" (Bulosan, *America* 141 my italics). They go on using derogatory racist stereotype remarks such as Filipinos being "sex-crazy", calling African-American as "niggers" and purporting that Chinese were opium addicts (Bulosan, *America* 141). With the scarcity of accommodation, employment and money, Filipinos were forced to stay in groups, sometimes over a dozen, in apartments that would allow them boarding.

The discrimination and oppression suffered by Filipino immigrants culminated in the formation of various labor movements such as the Filipino Workers' Association and work strikes calling for social equality. One of the medium was through a print magazine "New Tide", for which Allos/Bulosan was a writer. With the United States proclaiming to be the "land of the free", the call for social equality should have been reciprocated without much difficulty and hindrance. Ironically, it was the contrary. These labor movements, as seen in *America Is in the Heart*, are sabotaged by Americans. Helen, a female American, claiming to be helping with the labor union turns out to be affiliated with "self-styled patriotic organizations that considered it their duty to terrify the lives of minorities in the state" and is sent to sabotage various unions from inside the union itself, "curtail[ing] the trend of

agricultural workers toward the labor movement" (Bulosan, *America* 200). On being under suspicion of being an anti-union agent, she retaliated, "I hate Filipinos as deeply as I hate unions! You are all savages and you have no right to stay in this country!" (Bulosan, *America* 203)

Allos's involvement with the labor union and the calling for equality brings onto him the brutality of the anti-Filipino sentiment. Allos and his friend Jose are kidnapped by white Americans in San Jose. They are physically abused and tortured, beaten up while being tied to a tree by these drunk Americans. Allos is severely injured in this incident notably to his left knee.

Bills favoring Filipinos in Congress and state Legislature were also killed by racist citizens in the state of California. A Congressman backed by farmers and allies lobbied against the bill introduced by Vito Marcantonio, a US Congressman supporting the labor union, and succeeded. Groups such as Liberty League of California, Daughters of the Golden West and even the Parent-Teacher Association worked in alliance in depriving Filipinos of equal rights, ironic as the United States was, in Allos's words, "founded upon this very principle" i.e. having the right to live as freemen (Bulosan, *America* 287). The deprivation of equal rights towards immigrants resulted in the departure of some individuals such as Dora, a Russian immigrant carrying the baby of Nick, who is a friend of Allos. She reasons that a Filipino child "wouldn't have a chance in America, just as Nick has never had a chance" and wants to give birth to the child "*in a land without racial oppression*" (Bulosan, *America* 227 my italics).

The indignation and suffering that was caused by racial discrimination and oppression pushed Pinoys into a darker world. Their pursuit of the American Dream plunged a number of Filipino immigrants into deterioration and decay of their personal morals and values. Bulosan effectively captured his own countrymen's descent in social values, illustrating the degradation provoked by "the evil forces in American society" (Morantte 57). *America Is in the Heart* is laden with vivid examples of the distortion of the social values of the Pinoys. Frustrations and disillusionment from being oppressed and living in destitute conditions thrust Pinoys into life of decadence, crime, violence and dishonesty.

As previously mentioned, Filipino immigrants who went to the United States were predominantly male and young, ranging between 16-30 years of age. Lest we forget, men in this age demographic, as McWilliams noted, without social and familial ties, have a penchant for gambling, drinking, chasing women and have a tendency to get into trouble no matter what their races are (Introduction to *America*). Compounded with Americans' discrimination and with the fact that they were not accepted in various establishments, Filipinos were frequenting in gambling houses, dancehalls and whorehouses, as a proprietor says to Allos, "If you are looking for your brother… go to the dance hall. That is where you *always* find them" (Bulosan, *America* 127 my italics). Pinoys earned notoriety and were stereotyped as gamblers, drunkards, pimps and sex-crazed woman chasers. Not long after coming back to Seattle after being shanghaied to work in Alaska, Allos finds himself in a dance hall where Filipinos frequented to spend their hard-earned wages. Allos points out later that it is due to Filipinos not having any other place to go. Therefore, they throw their money on gambling, liquor and prostitutes. Due to Filipino immigrants' notoriety

involving women, policemen checked on Filipinos who were driving whether they had a woman with them as "they think every Filipino is a pimp" (Bulosan, *America* 121). In a section of the novel, a local businessman says to Allos that the stereotyping of Filipinos as decadent people was brought upon by the Filipinos themselves. This incident illustrates the hypocrisy in America. Allos retorts back that the gambling and prostitution in the town is run by three of the most respectable citizens of the town. Earlier in the novel when Allos is in Seattle, Claro, a Filipino who helps and feeds Allos, states that the dance halls and whorehouses are operated by Americans. Furthermore, Daro, Allos's friend, claims that while every Filipino is thought of as pimps by Americans, there were more American pimps than "all the Filipinos in the world put together" (Bulosan, *America* 121). This is evidence that Americans and their hypocrisy are also to blame for the decadence of Filipinos.

The degradation of morals and values does not stop with just the vices mentioned previously. In their desperate plight, many Filipino immigrants turned to a life of crime and violence. As P.C. Morantte points out, Filipinos have been involved in many law violations such as robberies, shootings, stabbings and murders (58), many of which Bulosan has fictionalized in *America Is in the Heart*. In her article, Dulce-Marie Flecha calls this degradation the brutalization of America, "twist[ing] the initial outrage and disappointment of the downtrodden into something significantly nastier and more violent" (16). Allos admits to not seeing this brutality in the Philippines as Filipino immigrants became ruthless and brutal towards each other (Bulosan, *America* 109). Allos has seen first-hand the evolution of the Filipino mindset caused by the hardships and discrimination in the United States. One such example is his acquaintance, Mariano, who had previously worked as an agent for a

failed clothing company, became “disgusted and bitter” after his girl runs away with another Filipino farmworker. Mariano consequently turned to a life of crime “that drove him to the very edge of insanity” (Bulosan, *America* 134). Filipino immigrants murdering fellow Pinoys was also not uncommon, and in several cases the cause was a woman. Another engaging example from *America Is in the Heart* is Max Smith.

Max Smith is regarded by Allos as the embodiment of the “violence and hate, living in a corrupt corner of America.” A Filipino immigrant, Max Smith, as noted by Allos, strangely calls himself exclusively with an American name. Max becomes Allos’s partner in crime, committing various crimes together – notably robbery and mugging. Max brutality culminates with him murdering “the white bastard who lives with [his] wife!” (Bulosan, *America* 166-7) Allos comments on Max Smith’s violent external demeanor, “Max pretended to be bold and fearless, but his bravado was only a shield to protect himself, to keep the secret of his cowardice” (Bulosan, *America* 164) a remark true not only to Max Smith but also to the numerous Filipino immigrants who have endured discrimination in the United States.

Allos experiences many tragedies in his life in the United States, seeing his fellow countrymen’s brutality, violence and decadence emerge from the ashes of their persecuted selves, even he and his brothers could not escape this eventuality, no matter how hard Allos tries not to succumb to it. Amado is the first of his siblings that he meets in the United States. On their first encounter in America, Allos notes the drastic changes that have befallen on his brother as Amado suffers under the same circumstances as other Filipino immigrants. Amado does not recognize Allos at first and almost kills Allos but the siblings reconnect with each other as they talk about

their mother. Amado has been, in many ways, Americanized. He starts calling Allos's Christian name "Carlos" and speaks English perfectly. But this external change could not be compared with how much he has changed internally. "Life is tough, Carlos… I had a good job for some time, but the depression came. I had to do something. I had to live, Carlos!" though not immediately comprehended by Allos, it is understood that drastic circumstances lead to drastic measures. Allos later finds out what Amado meant. Amado is part of a bootlegging business with his partner Alfredo. Amado invites Allos to join him in his business but Allos refuses the offer. This encounter brought tears to Allos's eyes as his "brother was no longer the person I had known in Binalonan. He was no longer the gentle hard-working janitor in the presidencia." (Bulosan, *America* 125-6) Amado would later give up bootlegging to venture into gambling, even once asking money from Allos for capital in cheating Filipino workers of their money. Furthermore, he develops a habit of drinking and is later incarcerated. Such is the effect of America's brutality on the Filipino immigrants that it can turn a good-hearted person into a ruthless criminal. Allos's other brother Macario is also a victim of this degradation but not as much as Amado. Allos notices that like Amado, there are changes in the way Macario speaks English. He also chain-smokes and is always agitated.

Inevitably, Allos conceded to the degradation and decay of his surroundings, after trying to hold on to Filipino values for some time, the catalyst being the demise of his father back in the Philippines

> I had tried to keep my faith in America, but now I could no longer. It was broken trampled upon, driving me out into the dark

> nights with a gun in my hand. In the senseless days, in the tragic hours, I held tightly to the gun and stared at the world, hating it with all my power. And hasting made me lonely, lonely for beauty and love, love that could resuscitate beauty and goodness…. But I found only violence and hate, living in a corrupt corner of America. (Bulosan, *America* 164)

Allos, therefore, "as time went by… became as ruthless as the worst of them, and [he] became afraid that [he] would never feel like a human being again" (Bulosan, *America* 109). The strain of the suffering and destitute life in the United States and combined with the death of his father proved too much for Allos to manage and temporarily drives Allos to behave in the way racial discriminatory characters in the book would expect of Filipino immigrants. Allos turns to crime and vices in his time of loss and frustration. Allos participates in criminal activities with a Filipino friend, the aforementioned Max Smith. Their first undertaking is robbing an intoxicated Japanese. But the most concerning period came when Allos himself proposes an idea that "driv[es] [him] like a marijuana addict when it seized [his] imagination": to rob a bank (Bulosan, *America* 165). He focuses his energy in devising a plan for the robbery. Fortunately, the plan is not executed as Max Smith causes trouble at a gambling house that forces the duo to leave town. Allos later turns to gambling, earning much money through this means. He becomes more ruthless even to his countrymen, not hesitating to turn to underhanded tactics such as cheating and being disinterested whether "they were laboring men or not", Allos only wants to "win their money… I had to play with them, and cheat them, when I had the chance.

Cheating was an imperative of the game" (Bulosan, *America* 178) and commits petty crimes to which his compatriots have succumbed to.

Though having suffered various degrees of cruelty, Allos, in the end of the novel retains in some degree the optimism he once had on the day of his arrival in the United States. Embedded throughout the novel are presentations of a side of the United States worthy of the phrases "land of the free" and "land of opportunity" and worthy of Allos's belief in America. His first contact with an American whom he has a special relationship with is Mary Strandon, mentioned in Chapter II of this thesis. She is the person responsible for introducing the America to which Allos aspires to become a part of and in which he has put great belief. The second person with whom Allos has a special bond is Marian. He happens upon Marian after he is physically abused by a group of white men. She takes him in and helps the battered Allos. She also later gives Allos money to be used for his studies. The most noteworthy of all is his relationship with Eileen Odell, who is the America Allos is searching for, "She was undeniably the *America* I had wanted to find in those frantic days of fear and flight, in those acute hours of hunger and loneliness. This America was human, good, and real" (Bulosan, *America* 235). Their relationship spans several years as she assumes the role of Allos's "caretaker" during his convalescence. Eileen visits him and brings him books to educate himself and broaden his horizon. Furthermore, not only does she engage him with pedagogical conversations about the literary world but she also provides him with a source of platonic affection and warmth that has continually evaded Allos, "… my hunger for affection, because of the lack of it in America, had driven me blindly to Eileen" (Bulosan, *America* 236).

These encounters with kindness of Americans reveal the other side of America that Allos has been searching for. Though having to endure hardships and cruelty, the aforementioned events present Allos a glimmer of hope that America can be changed and enables Allos to regain his undying faith and belief in America. The title of the novel is taken from a speech given by Macario addressing Allos and his friends summarizing and reflecting the America which has always been in the heart and mind of Allos:

> 'It is 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 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 also the nameless foreigner, the homeless refugee, the hungry boy begging for a job and the black body dangling on a tree…. 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! (Bulosan, *America* 189 my italics)

Morantte reminds us that for Carlos Bulosan "America was to him the people: all races and creeds, rich and poor, beautiful and ugly, sick and healthy, gathered in a body to celebrate life and its promise of flowering in freedom and equality and justice

as envisioned by those first settled in the new land and founded a new nation" (96). After years of suffering and poverty in the United States, Allos realizes that the America he had heard as a boy, a fully formed and evolved United States, does not yet exist. It is still a work in progress and the outcome of what America will be is in the hands of the people living there. He wants to be part of this undertaking, "to be a part of something vitally alive in America" (Bulosan, *America* 226) and "to become part of her great tradition, and to contribute something toward her final fulfillment" (Bulosan, *America* 327) even though he has to experience great travail and agony along the way as also reflected in Macario's speech,

> …Great Americans worked with unselfish devotion toward one goal, that is, to use the power of the myriad of peoples in the service of America's freedom. They made it their guiding principle. In this we are the same; we must also fight for an America where a man should be given unconditional opportunities to cultivate his potentialities and to restore him to his rightful dignity. (Bulosan, *America* 188-9)

"The Romance of Magno Rubio"

Another work written by Carlos Bulosan that portrays the Filipino immigrant experience in the pursuit of the American Dream is "The Romance of Magno Rubio". Unlike the realistic nature of Bulosan's *America Is in the* Heart, "The Romance of Magno Rubio" is a satirical short story about a Filipino immigrant named Magno Rubio who is portrayed as chasing his own version of the illusive American Dream, a great romance with a Caucasian American female. Bulosan shows how the American

Dream, though beautiful and enticing, is just a delusion. Once it dissipates, what is left is disappointment and pain. In “The Romance of Magno Rubio”, the narrator, Nick, helps out a co-worker/friend, Magno Rubio, in writing letters to Clarabelle, a white American woman from Arkansas. Magno finds her from the “Lonely Hearts” section of a magazine and starts to communicate with her through mail. Before asking Nick for help, Magno goes to one of his other co-workers, Claro, asking him to be Magno’s scribe, penning letters to Clarabelle, as Magno is illiterate. Claro agrees but not without a price. The payment for Claro’s services starts from a jug of wine, to a flat rate of five dollars per letter and from then on the price goes up exponentially. Clarabelle writes back to Magno thus starting the supposed romance between both of them.

Magno falls in love, for the first time in his life, to this person he has not yet met. This “love” transforms Magno both mentally and physically. Magno starts to work hard to earn money so he could shower his love interest, Clarabelle, with all her needs. He works harder with added vigor, and goes through a transformation. He is, in a sense, humanized from his previous state as described by the narrator, Nick, as being dirty and unkempt, wearing the same rag which he seldom washed all the time, and his features and characteristics are compared to the ones of animals such as having a turtle head, fish-eyes, laughing like a horse or grinning like a goat. In one scene, in a verbal altercation with Claro over Clarabelle, in which Claro asked Magno, “You mean to tell me that a girl like Clarabelle loves a donkey like you?” and again emphasizes this when Claro said, “Don’t you know that you look like a monkey?” (Bulosan, “Magno” 39) Magno’s character can be best summarized by Nick’s description of Magno:

> Magno Rubio seldom washed his clothes, if he ever did. He had the same rags on him all the time, even when he is in bed. It was insufferable to sit beside him at the dining table. He smelled of mud, sweat, and filth, and more, he smelled like a skunk… he just didn't know how to be clean. (Bulosan, "Magno" 37)

With these descriptions, it seems that Magno "is even not worthy of being categorized as a full-fledged human being" (Chotirawe 3). Magno Rubio's description as animal-like signifies the status of Filipinos in the United States at a time when Filipinos are seen as savages, sub-human or animals even, with some establishments going as far as having signs hung with "No Dogs and Filipinos Allowed" written on them. Furthermore, this also signifies the difference in level compared to the Caucasian Americans. Magno changes himself, cleaning up his character and leaving behind his old habit of being a "Juan Tamad[15]" as Nick narrates "[Magno] used to stay in the bunkhouse all day…" or would stay out of work claiming that "he was suffering from arthritis" (Bulosan, "Magno" 37).

As Carina Chotirawe notes in her article "Humor and Pathos Filipino Diaspora Drama: Carlos Bulosan's 'The Romance of Magno Rubio' and Chris D. Martinez's 'Welcome to Intelstar'", "Magno's object of affection is not only in the figure of Clarabelle but America itself" (3) The image of Clarabelle as described in the story symbolizes everything that is quintessentially American. From her physical features: blonde and tall, to the ideal of happiness and fulfillment that the marriage with her

[15] Juan Tamad: A character in Filipino folklore who is extremely lazy. The stories about his laziness act as cautionary tales to children. The name translates to English as "John the Lazy" (Juan is the Spanish equivalent of the name John; tamad is the Filipino word for lazy)

promises. She is the symbol of the life that is pursued by Bulosan's Magno, – described repeatedly as

> Magno Rubio. Filipino boy. Four-foot six inches tall. Dark as a coconut. Head small on a body like a turtle. Magno Rubio. Picking peas on a California hillside for twenty-five cents an hour. Filipino boy. In love with a girl he had never seen. A girl twice his size sideward and upward…. (Bulosan, "Magno" 34)

– the typical physical description that would fit numerous Filipino immigrants in America at that time doing menial work such as harvesting apples, peas and other odd farm jobs; the hope of a beautiful life, dreaming of settling down and being able to achieve upward mobility from the class he originally belongs to, the hope of ultimately achieving the American Dream.

Magno tries to pursue his dream of obtaining Clarabelle through the ethos of industry and frugality, a basic concept in the pursuit of the American Dream which deems that anything can be accomplished as long as the person toils and perseveres for it. Magno works hard, even borrowing money from the foreman to achieve his dream of marrying Clarabelle, spending and sending ludicrous amounts of money and gifts that Magno himself can ill afford to Clarabelle, showering Clarabelle with three hundred dollars-worth of luxury items such as an engagement ring, a pair of suede shoes, clothes and a diamond bracelet amongst other things. Spending large amounts of money in exchange for happiness with a woman could be considered a type of prostitution, albeit not of the conventional kind. While Filipino immigrants of that period are wont to soliciting prostitution for sexual/physical pleasure, Magno on the

other hand desires emotional fulfillment, exchanging money with the hope of marriage through his correspondence with Clarabelle. She adversely reciprocates false hope comparable to her real world counterparts who commodify meaningless short-lasting physical relationship in exchange for money. Magno and Clarabelle's relationship has therefore turned into a business transaction which Bulosan satirizes as love and romance. Clarabelle eventually accepts the proposal for marriage but says she has to stay home to take care of her sick mother and asks Magno Rubio to send her the ticket money and some extra for expenses, which Magno duly obliges. Magno's dream marriage seems to be always put off as Clarabelle manages to come up with some excuse, such as the illness and death of her mother and how she has to take care of her siblings who were under 10 years old, to not only delay their meeting and wedding but also to ask Magno for more money. Magno is described as working "like a carabao but lived like a dog" (Bulosan, "Magno" 38). The semblance to a carabao – Filipino for "water buffalo" and the Philippines' national animal – is an accurate description of Magno, as the carabao is seen as an industrious animal, though lacking in intellectual prowess and also a beast of burden, toiling through hard manual labor. It is quite clear that Magno is being played in a long con by Clarabelle. Like the American Dream is to immigrants and Americans, Clarabelle stands as a huge alluring figure in front of Magno, but is always out of reach. But to Magno, this – unbeknownst to him illusive and elusive – dream and ideal is worth all the wait, hard work and perseverance.

One could only imagine what kind of pain Magno has to endure after finding out the reality in the end. In the end, the American Dream which Magno has longed for only brings him nothing but disappointment. Magno's downfall could have

stemmed from his naivety and ignorance of the situation. Time and time again, he is cheated and extorted for his money. He is not only duped by Clarabelle but also is exploited by his co-workers and countrymen such as Claro, the scribe who charges him at first for "a gallon of wine" ten cents for each word in a letter. The letters are long and contain words that to Magno are "too long and deep." There is a sense that Magno is suspicious about Claro's real motive, questioning Claro's actions "And again I say: how would I know if he hadn't been writing for himself?" Claro has been indeed writing to benefit himself, as he is also courting Clarabelle. Having enough of Magno's day-dreaming that a girl like Clarabelle would fall for an "illiterate peasant" such as Magno, Claro loses his temper and has an altercation with Magno. This altercation leads to Claro producing a supposed lock of hair from Clarabelle of which Magno also has in possession and saying, "There, monkey! That's the real proof. And it's not from her head, either!" (Bulosan, "Magno" 40) This should have been enough evidence proving that Magno is being conned, but he waived it as being inconclusive, bringing out a picture of Clarabelle saying that the picture is "something definite". Claro produces one himself. Magno turns animalistic, raging with anger and has a physical confrontation with Claro, losing his re-humanized image, transforming into what Nick describes as "The coconut head sunk into the turtle body. The fish-eyes shone… The ugly mouth snarled. Then the gorilla legs leaped… he was like a mad dog…" (Bulosan, "Magno" 40). The altercation is a depiction of what those in pursuit of the American dream, or any other objective for that matter, have to face in achieving their goal in a world where the predominant mindset both in the evolutionary and literal sense is the survival of the fittest. In a Filipino immigrant

context, this could be seen as a representation of the fight and struggle of Filipino immigrants fighting each other for a piece of the American dream.

Magno's blind faith in this ideal may have also stemmed from his naivety, a sentiment shared by P.C. Morantte, "Filipinos are great dreamers, perhaps more naively so than any other nationality." (47) He is portrayed as a simpleton, "looking with dreamy eyes at the pages of dime magazines" (Bulosan, "Magno" 37), the same magazines where he first finds Clarabelle, a magazine that could be seen as an "advertisement" of the American Dream, or for a lack of a better term, "propaganda".

The magazines filled with pictures that Magno looks at might serve to remind us of the mail order catalogs that were quite popular during the American occupation of the Philippines. These catalogs showing pictures of American goods sold through mail order demonstrate the "material abundance of America" (Morantte 49). As people wanted to own goods that were American, they would order shirts, shoes and other American goods. The desire to own something American acted as a stimulant on the Filipinos, leading them to work and toil harder in the fields to earn the money that they had to pay once the merchandise arrived, resulting in the increase of agricultural yield. Similar to his compatriots back home, Magno wants something American, and finds what he wants in a magazine with pictures. Magno desires Clarabelle, wants love, a piece of America and its promise of the American Dream. He orders the item by writing letters and working harder and harder to be able to save money for the payment. Unlike those in the Philippines, Magno pays several times without what he ordered being delivered to him. This emphasizes Magno's intellectual level and illiteracy as these magazines consist mostly of pictures.

Credit has to be given to Magno for being patient and faithful, "[w]here most men would have given up long ago, he kept on beyond belief and all reason" (Bulosan, "Magno" 38). In a country where it is believed that honesty, industry and individualism are characteristics that present the pursuer the opportunity to rise from mediocrity, to have a better life and better social status, to achieve the American Dream, it is a cruel joke that it leads to disappointment. In the book *The American Dream*, Lew Smith discusses at length the immigrant experience in the United States and explains that the immigrants travel to America as it is "a country whose culture would support an incredible variety of customs and habits" (293). The reasons behind their travels varied according to their conditions back home. Some to flee the political oppression and some like Magno, to escape the harsh conditions of poverty and of being hindered from social mobility in then feudal Philippines.

Through "The Romance of Magno Rubio", Bulosan intricately and successfully portrays in a satirical way all the predicaments that Filipino immigrants of his time endured such as poor working conditions in low income jobs such as being a dishwasher, farm hand and other blue collar jobs etc.. The name of the short story itself is both a satire and parody. Barbara Fuchs states that "romance is a slippery category" (Fuchs 1) and proposes a non-fixed definition to romance (Fuchs 2). Nevertheless, she gives a basic definition of romance which could be summarized as a tale depicting chivalric adventures especially of knights or of high social status and associated with love affairs, in the broadest term, (Fuchs 3-4) and courtly love (Fuchs 43). Magno's story is as far from courtly love as it could be. Instead of a handsome gallant knight in shining armor going out in search adventure, the story presents a pea picker with grotesque features doing manual labor, day in and day out in California,

hardly constituting a grand adventure. His damsel, the object of his quest, is a blond American whose agenda is to extort money from the innocent and unknowing Magno Rubio. The resulting "romance" or, as Magno would describe it, "love" is obviously one-sided with Clarabelle only doing just enough to show and convince Magno the credibility of her reciprocation of his love. Looking further into the title is Magno Rubio's name which comes from two languages; *Magno* or *magnus*, Latin for "great" as in the word *magnitude* "greatness of size and character" and Rubio, Spanish for "blonde" and when put together form "Great Blonde", a reference to the "great" United States, a country with much power and wealth, having established their status as one of the great nations in the world and its vast area, encompassing 9,826,675 km^2 compared to the Philippines' 300,000 km^2. The title itself alludes to the "romance" or the optimistic feeling that Filipino immigrants of their generation had for the United States and the American Dream.

Magno Rubio's fixation on and fascination with Clarabelle and, to an extent, other typical American girls represented by his subscription of magazines with photographs of American women, can be better understood when it is put into the social context of 1930s America. Filipino immigrants who came to the United States were mostly male and the majority of those were males between the ages of 16-30 years old (Espiritu 9). These immigrants were not allowed to bring their wives with them to America even if they had any (Boyer and Dubofsky 52). This also applied to the earlier waves of Asian immigrants to the United States. The Chinese immigrants that predated the Filipino immigrant wave of the early twentieth century were also mostly men due to traditional Chinese culture and values, high expenses in travelling to the United States and the Chinese men's fear of racial violence that may occur to

their wives and families. This led to the rise of prostitution in mining outposts, agricultural towns and railroad worksites in California due to the number of male immigrants in the areas (Sridharan).

The lack of female companionship explains the head-over-heels love that Magno has for Clarabelle. Clarabelle is one of the many white female characters in Bulosan's work, a point touched upon by Elaine Kim in her article, "Carlos Bulosan: A Filipino American Community Portrait", pointing out that "[i]t is often a white woman who symbolizes America to which Bulosan's Filipinos want to belong" (8). This is indeed the case with Magno Rubio, for whom marrying Clarabelle, to quote Kim, "would free him from sexual oppression…, give him the possibility of a stable family…. entry into the mainstream of American life" ("Carlos" 8). Through Clarabelle, Bulosan tackles the implication on Filipino immigrants of the anti-miscegenation sentiment in the United States, a law forbidding inter-racial marriages between Caucasians and people of different ethnicities and races passed in various states such as California (Frazier and Tettey-Fio 272). The constant evasion and avoidance in meeting Magno can also signify the situation that Filipinos faced due to the anti-miscegenation law. Filipinos could not have a relationship with American women and those who did have secret relationships with American women encountered problems such as financial penalties (Frazier and Tettey-Fio 272). Those who were lucky enough to find a partner and possessed enough money had to get married in states that allowed inter-racial marriages as described when Nick tells Magno that "You'll have to get out of the state to get married, you know" and "You can't marry here… You can't marry in the whole state of California. You must go to New Mexico or Washington…" The anti-miscegenation law, therefore, factored in

Filipino immigrants having to live in an almost exclusive male society devoid of female contact. Magno can be seen as a parody of Filipino immigrants' behavior towards women. With Clarabelle characterized as a typical Caucasian female, the short story mirrors the situation the Filipino immigrants were in. Frequently referred to as "blonde chasers", Filipino immigrants, this sentiment was not insofar the result of American racism towards Filipinos, as P.C. Morantte admits to Filipino immigrants having inclination towards white American females

> Filipinos tend to like white women insofar as they represent a type of feminine beauty of Hellenic standards: stately form, fair skin, light or blonde or brown hair, shapely nose, limpid blue or brown eyes, sensual lips. Long immersed in an aesthetic appreciation of Western culture, Filipinos always incline toward a chauvinistic ideal of the American glamor girl. (18)

Therefore, it is not peculiar and out of character for Magno to aspire for Clarabelle, who fits the description stated in the passage above. Showering gifts to white female Americans they were fond of, as Magno is seen doing, is also a typical trait of Filipino immigrants as presented in a 1930 national report by the US National Committee on Law Observance. The report argues that Filipino immigrants "needed to put on airs (e.g., fancy clothes, a nice car) and shower white women with expensive gifts to gain their attention" (Baldoz 123).

In addition, Magno's obsession with "dime magazines", filled with pictures of women in compromising postures and clothing, and containing few words, clearly shows Magno's level of intelligence as Morantte reminds us that "less educated

Filipinos in those days were often drawn [to Caucasian American women] for the sensual pleasure or sexual fulfillment" (18) and for a dime per edition, it is an affordable outlet for sexual frustrations for lonely men of that era, especially male Filipinos such as Magno who earned twenty five cents an hour. Magno, compared to his other compatriots of that time who, due to lack of close physical contact with females, spend their hard earned salary on prostitutes, takes the moral high ground of courting a woman, though he ultimately spends more money on Clarabelle and receives less reciprocation than those who chose more dubious but practical way.

The adulation, fascination and dedication which Magno Rubio naively bequeaths to the woman he regards as a "goddess" is clearly Bulosan's way of illustrating the unwavering devotion to the American Dream by the Filipino immigrants. This concept is reiterated by Susan Koshy in her book *Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation.* She asserts that the relationship between Magno Rubio and Clarabelle is an allegory of the Filipinos' "continuing faith in the promises of an American democracy that has betrayed him time and time again" (113) as Filipinos like Magno do not really have equal opportunities. The Filipinos at that time were not included in America's democracy, having to survive poverty, fascist violence from Caucasian Americans and with Filipinos' aforementioned special status as American Nationals not US citizens, they were outsiders looking into a democracy they were not allowed to be a part of. "The Romance of Mango Rubio" exemplifies, though in a mixture of satire, morose and humor, the hardship and rejection thousands of Filipino immigrants confronted in their pursuit of the American Dream signified by Clarabelle and her fictitious and elusive promise of love and marriage, and charm which enticed innocent immigrants

like Magno, who falls head over heels but in the end is betrayed by it. Clarabelle's heartless and apathetic treatment towards Magno echoes the typical Filipino immigrant experience in search for the American Dream. Not only is "The Romance of Magno Rubio" a compact, abridged version of the life of Filipino immigrants in the United States it can also be seen as a representation of the relationship between immigrants and the American Dream as well as the romanticized relationship Filipinos have with the United States. Through Magno Rubio one could perceive Filipinos' the aspiration to become as much as possible like Americans themselves, to be able to a part of the great dream, or if not, to become the object of their love and affection as in a romantic relationship symbolized by the romance between Magno and Clarabelle.

Bulosan wanted to see the dream of democracy and equality become true, to fulfill the potential that the country promised. His fellow contemporary countrymen were the subject of oppression and racism. They had limited rights. Filipino workers had to work long, hard hours but were rewarded with low wages. Thus were the circumstances that Magno has to face. In the end, Clarabelle, the symbol of America and Americanism represented by her fixation on material wealth and money, callously breaks the heart of Magno, the representative of the Filipinos, swindling his money, seeing Magno as a gold mine to exploit: "Her blue eyes flickered. The promise hill of gold reappeared… the vein of gold was not a mirage after all" (Bulosan, "Magno" 42) and exploiting his emotional investments without even spending time alone with Magno. This is a symbolic representation of the anguish that America as a country made felt to the Filipinos who naively believed the ideal life in the land of "supposedly" golden opportunities.

Even after being betrayed and enduring anguish from not realizing his dream, Magno Rubio still maintains his optimism and composure. He looks forward to the future, not dwelling on the despair he had just experienced, "I guess we'll start picking the tomatoes next week, Nick…" This reflects Carlos Bulosan's view on the American Dream. Although having faced much torment and difficulties, Bulosan still loves America and the dream it promises. This is discussed further in his semi-autobiographical book *America Is in the Heart*, which also explores the "sickening social truths" realized by Filipino immigrants in the United States.

Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart* vividly captures the very essence of the Filipino immigrant experience and their predicaments as they search for the American Dream befitting the semi-autobiography's former title *In Search of America*. Bulosan's search for the "true" America unveils the austere reality that has plagued Pinoys. Through the autobiographical narrative he chose to write with, a genre defined by the retrospective narrative of transformation of the protagonist or the persona that the author constructs, Bulosan chronicles the journey he undertook, presenting the reader his own persona's transformation from the wide-eyed peasant boy, Allos, in the Philippines to the socially aware and literate author that is Carlos Bulosan. His education, implied here as from life rather than from a proper educational system, became the mode of his transformation through which the goal of "synthesiz[ing] the heart-breaking tragedies [of Filipino immigrants] [he] had seen, and to project [himself] into their core so that [he] would be able to interpret them objectively" (Bulosan, *America* 152) he tried to achieve. Through the persona of Allos and the experiences he had acquired, Bulosan was able to reflect on his past experiences and understand with more clarity "what had happened to [him] in those

tragic years" (Bulosan, *America* 152). Though, as could be expected from an autobiography, Bulosan may have amplified or simplified aspects of his story, he was able to integrate his experience and of other Filipino immigrants, and convey them to the reader.

The more humorous tone in "The Romance of Magno Rubio" only presents the premise of the hardships of Filipino immigrants as a satire to stimulate the reader to see through the façade the American Dream has built. Filipinos of that period were persecuted by the white population, hunted down like animals for a crime they did not commit. Carlos Bulosan once wrote: "I feel like a criminal running away from a crime I did not commit. And this crime is that I am a Filipino in America" (qtd. in Introduction to *America*), and is reiterated by Allos, "I came to know afterward that in many ways it was a crime to be a Filipino in California. I came to know that the public streets were not free to my people" (Bulosan, *America* 121). The "land of the free", the land of milk and honey was not really available to the Filipino immigrants, turning the dream that they always had aspired to into a hellish existence in a nightmare. Fleeing from inequality and harsh conditions in the Philippines Filipino immigrants were denied their basic rights of freedom. Working in drudgery, moving from place to place had to suffice, even for Filipino immigrants who graduated at tertiary level, not unlike their predicament in the Philippines. Wherever they went, they suffered under discrimination, with some establishments not welcoming Filipinos. They were treated as inferiors, not even considered as human beings by the evil forces that ran amok in United States' society. They were hunted down and attacked, and in many instances, without any provocation. The brutalities and indecencies broke the dreams and aspiration of Filipino immigrants driving the Pinoys

to decadence and degradation with some going further to a life of serious crimes as retaliation and even exploiting their own fellow compatriots. Pinoys thus were stereotyped, as expected by Americans, as drunkards, gamblers, hypersexual beings which lead to further hate and oppression, a vicious cycle that is hard to break out of. The irony of the predicaments of Pinoys is that the underlying reason for situation is the hypocrisy of Americans who project to them the decadent habits that Americans are also wont to do. Without any proper government to help them, Pinoys were exiled. Their exile existence is further emphasized by Bulosan, "I know deep down in my heart that I am an exile in America" (Bulosan, *America* 173). The "lostness" that came down upon the Filipinos prompted Allos to reflect upon his people's circumstance, "But my lostness was deeper because I was lonely among men. This loneliness was to encircle my life, to close around it, marring my vision, so that my thoughts were filled with melancholia" (Bulosan, *America* 252).

In essence, both the novel *America Is in the Heart* and the short story "The Romance of Magno Rubio" present the physical struggles and travails that Filipino immigrants faced as they pursued the American Dream. In the land of equal opportunity, all they found was exploitation, racism and violence targeted at them. These circumstances drove numerous Filipino immigrants to life of decadence and disillusionment. They became people lost in a vast country, adrift in a sea of poverty and without the support system they might have enjoyed at home. This is exacerbated by the Pearl Harbor incident which resulted in the participation of the United States in World War II. Filipino immigrants could not return home and instead became "exiles" and "hurt men", dubbed by author Bienvenido N. Santos whose works –namely "Scent of Apples" and "The Day the Dancers Came"- to be discussed in the next

chapter expand on Bulosan's statement of being an exile in the United States, focusing on the feeling of alienation, nostalgia, melancholy and disillusionment of Filipino immigrants during the course of their existence in the United States.

CHAPTER IV

EXILED HURTMEN: NOSTALGIA AND ALIENATION

> Many of the old Filipinos in the United States, as in these stories, never return, but in their imagination they make the journey a thousand times, taking the slowest boats because in their dreamworld time is not as urgent as actual time passing, quicker than arrows, kneading their flesh, crying on their bones.
>
> – Bienvenido N. Santos

The Pearl Harbor bombing of Hawaii mentioned in the final part of *America Is in the Heart* prompted the United States to participate in World War II. The war played a great part in the relationship between the United States and the Philippines, making the bond between the two countries portrayed at times as a romance between the two countries as mentioned in the previous chapter, even closer, with the United States again becoming the hero who liberates the damsel in-distress Philippines. It is during World War II that the Philippines showed its loyalty to the United States. As explained by Samuel K. Tan in his book *A History of the Philippines*, "…the most impressive show of loyalty to American ideals was the Filipino commitment to the fight with and for American ideals during the Pacific War (1941-1946) at the sacrifice of over a million Filipino lives and the destruction of Manila…" (78) Furthermore, Filipino leaders also refused Japan's offer of independence and opted to rebel against the Japanese through the guerilla movement. Tan considers this action by the Filipinos as "the highest demonstration of Filipino loyalty to the American cause" (79). During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, Filipinos joined the military to fight the war with the Americans, led by General Douglas MacArthur, whose immortal quote "I shall return", his promise to the Philippines as he left the country for Australia under the orders of the United States to plan an American offensive

against the Japanese, resonated in every Filipino's minds, pinning their hopes of being rescued on the United States.

Subsequent to the Pearl Harbor bombing, a proclamation issued by then President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, warranted the Filipinos the eligibility to serve under the U.S. Army which resulted in approximately 80,000 Filipino immigrants in the United States enlisting in the military to fight the war and liberate their home country from Japanese occupation, serving under the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East. The Filipino contribution in the USAFFE proved to be vital in the defeat of the Japanese Empire in the Pacific Theater (Tiongson, Gutierrez and Gutierrez 97). Jon Sterngass wrote in his book *Filipino Immigrants*, "the Filipino men who fought with the Americans in the Philippines took an oath of allegiance to the United States as if they had enlisted in the U.S. Army" (55), showing the loyalty and trust that Filipinos were willing to give to the United States. Filipino immigrants who enlisted and served under regular components of the United States Armed Forces were considered as members of the United States Army and as war veterans, subsequently, through another proclamation issued by Roosevelt in 1942, were granted privileges, being eligible for permanent citizenship. The remaining U. S. based Filipino immigrants during the war could not go back home as immigration was temporarily interrupted due to the dangers of crossing the Pacific. Bienvenido N. Santos, whose work this chapter focuses on, was among those stranded on American soil.

After World War II, the Philippines received its long awaited independence, with the United States ceding its sovereignty of the island nation on 4th July, 1946.

The independence of the Philippines precipitated the change in immigration laws; no longer considered "nationals", Filipinos joined other Asian nations in the quota system for green cards and the introduction of the Luce-Celler Bill of 1946 presented Filipinos the right to become naturalized citizens. These changes, as Susan Evangelista notes, "isolated the *Pinoys*[16] who at that point were gradually aging into *Old-Timers*" ("The Manongs" 163). Evangelista reminds us that these "old-timers" were once Pinoys – Filipino immigrants who arrived on American shores to pursue the dreams of a better life. This wave of Filipino immigrants was then followed by a newer wave, thus making the earlier wave *manongs* or older brother in the dialect. These manongs would then later become the so called "old-timers" or OTs ("The Manongs"162-3). It is this group of people, the old-timers, that Santos wholly associates himself with and the focal point which constitutes the bulk of Bienvenido N. Santos's work.

Bienvenido N. Santos, considered to be part of the "second wave" of first generation Filipino writers in English, was born on March 22, 1911. He was a product of the English language based education under the public school system implemented by the United States during their occupation of the Philippines. He became an editor and publisher for the magazine "Outlook" when he was 19 and later went on to become editor of the "Herald". Like his predecessor, Carlos Bulosan, Santos's literary works cover a wide spectrum. He created numerous novels, poems, collections of short stories and other non-fiction works. His most notable works include the novels, *The Man Who (Thought He) Looked Like Robert Taylor* (1983), *What the Hell for You*

[16] Pinoys: A term originally used to call Filipino immigrants in the United States but later has included all Filipinos.

Left Your Heart in San Francisco? (1987), short story collections *You Lovely People* (1955), *Brother, My Brother* (1960) and *Scent of Apples: A Collection of Stories* (1979), considered as his most renowned work.

In 1941, Santos took the Philippine Civil Service Exam, a government competitive exam for advanced education abroad, and was subsequently sent to the United States as part of the *Pensionado*[17] program, as a cultural envoy to promote cultural understanding between the Philippines and United States, and to study English and American Literature prior to the outbreak of World War II. Bienvenido N. Santos was called upon during his stay in the United States by the Philippine Embassy to tour the United States, lecture on the Philippines in teacher-education institutions and establishments and relay information about his country to Americans whose sons were detained in concentration camps in the Philippines during World War II. This experience soon became the premise for his short story "Scent of Apples." During his stay in the United States, Santos became enthralled by his people's plight in the United States. Being an "exile" in the United States as a result of the war, Santos set to study the plight and experiences of Filipino immigrants during that period, inspecting their physical and emotional well-being, or as Elaine H. Kim pertinently described as "the Filipino heart" ("Multiple Mirrors" 266). Analogous to Carlos Bulosan, who was a mouthpiece for voiceless immigrants,

[17] Pensionado: Students granted with government funded scholarships to receive education in the United States as a result of the Pensionado Act of 1903. This is due to the Americans wanting to gain the support of the Filipino elite while also teaching American ideals to Filipinos. The U.S. government passed the Pensionado Act which entails funds to qualified students for education in the United States. (Min, 182)

Santos became a voice of the "exiles[18]" ("Multiple Mirrors" 265), and for which he is best remembered. The theme of permanent exile is developed and serves as the nucleus of his various works such as "Scent of Apples" and "The Day the Dancers Came" which will be discussed in depth in this chapter. These exiles, or sometimes known as "hurt men[19]", are characterized by their dislocation and alienation from their past, and their idealized view of home and its people. Kim therefore describes Santos's works as "tales of men wandering, sometimes lost, in a hostile and sterile climate. It is a journey from buoyant innocence to degraded experience, which can only be endured because the exile still cherishes his memories of home" ("Multiple Mirrors" 266). Pervading in his works, the elegiac longing for the company of one's countrymen and the desideratum for the severed bond with their home country to be restored are apparent. In her thesis, Nenita Victoria S. Rico characterizes the works by Santos as full of "moving compassion, imaginative truthfulness and a disarming simplicity" (2). Santos placed great emphasis on the inner sufferings of Filipino immigrants, their emotional and psychological loss and as Rico states, "what goes on in the Filipino heart as a result of social crises" (1). A nostalgic atmosphere is also obvious in Santos's fiction, a feeling many Filipino immigrants experience as they try to assimilate and connect with their adopted country while also trying to reconnect with their birth country. Furthermore, Rico suggests that Santos's documentation of the "exile" experience of Filipino immigrants illustrates the "core of social and

[18] Exiles: A term used by Santos to describe Filipino immigrants, who while pursuing a better life in the United States never became a part of America and the return to the Philippines is not possible. They are straddled in the middle between the "new" and the "old".

[19] Hurt men: Also the title of one of Santos's short story, is used to describe Filipino immigrants as they are disconnected from their home country and consequently experiencing physical and emotional pain and suffering.

cultural deprivation" of these immigrants, forming a nexus with Carlos Bulosan who recorded Pinoys' socio-political problems (72). Santos's fiction can thus be considered as a pertinent inclusion in the continuity of the Filipino immigrant experience canon pioneered by Carlos Bulosan.

Selected for discussion on the themes mentioned previously are Santos's seminal short stories "Scent of Apples", one of the most read Philippine-American short stories and considered as "the most representative of Santos's work in short fiction, with its controlled, evocative depiction of the Filipino exile in the midst of less deeper than economic or cultural deprivation" (Rico 3) and "The Day the Dancers Came" described by Elaine H. Kim as "a concise and unified expression of the conditions of Filipino exiles in America and their confrontation with the ideal that has sustained them through their years of exile" ("Multiple Mirrors" 408). Both short stories share the common theme of "unhomeliness", the need to connect once more with the homeland Filipino "exiles" have left behind while living in their adopted country, where they have not yet been able to establish their identity. As posited by Victor Bascara in his article, Santos's stories manifest "not only the recovered lives of forgotten Filipinos, but also the complex histories that made them difficult to remember" (65). These exiles, who built their new lives under difficult conditions, attempt to seek validation and recognition of their existence in both the Americans' and the new generation Filipinos' consciousness is impeccably dramatized in both works as is the inner conflicts consuming the exiles. Santos's juxtaposition of the past and the present in his fiction is effective in his portrayal of these conflicts, lucidly illustrating the conflicting emotions of the characters in both works.

A story about a Filipino narrator who goes to the United States to give information about the war in the Philippines and meets a Filipino immigrant, Fabia, who has settled down in America, “Scent of Apples” depicts the longing of Filipino immigrants in the United States for the reconnection to their “lost country”. As with much of Santos’s other literary works, it also centers on the loneliness and reminiscence of home after years of separation, and for Fabia, the central figure of the short story, the reconnection to his past presents itself at a situation in which he has dinner with the narrator of the short story.

In the story, the narrator meets Celestino Fabia at a gathering aimed at presenting information about the Philippines which at that time was one of the Asian battlefields of World War II. The crowd present at the auditorium is mostly comprised of women, presumably Americans, eager to learn about the situation of their sons in the war front as the Philippines has become a “lost country”: “Everywhere in the land the enemy stalked. Over it a great silence hung; and their boys were there, unheard from…” (Santos, “Scent” 22). The nostalgic theme pervades right from the outset of the short story. The narrator takes note of the atmosphere around him on a cold October night

> Gold and silver stars hung on pennants above silent windows of white and brick-red cottages. In a backyard an old man burned leaves and twigs while a grey-haired woman sat on the porch, her red hands quiet on her lap, watching the smoke rising above the elms, both of them thinking of the same thought perhaps, about a tall, grinning boy with blue eyes and flying hair, who went out to war: where could he be now

> this month when leaves were turning gold and the fragrance of gathered apples was in the wind? (Santos, “Scent”21)

The passage above with its poignant description of the atmosphere and the emotion felt by the two characters set the tone pertinent to themes of nostalgia, alienation and melancholy. The story is set during World War II and the war has separated the family of that man and woman as their child has gone to fight the war, presenting the dissociation of familial ties which will be later compared with that of Celestino Fabia’s experience of disconnection to his own family back home.

Eager to learn some news from his home country, Fabia attends the open forum on the moment he learns that Santos, a fellow countryman, is going to address the crowd in Kalamazoo. Fabia could be regarded as a representative of the Filipino immigrants of his time. He has left the Philippines to work in the United States, fleeing his homeland as a result of an undisclosed action but serious enough to have left a large scar in his family, severing his familial connections back home, “… I broke their hearts… saw my mother cry wordlessly as father heaped his curses upon me… my brothers and sisters took up my father’s hate for me and multiplied it numberless times in their own broken hearts” (Santos, “Scent”26). Fabia has lived in the United States for twenty years and admits himself that he might never go back, invites the narrator to dinner at his home some thirty miles from Kalamazoo. Renowned Chinese-American author Maxine Hong Kingston comments on this meeting and the invitation to have dinner with the Fabias in her essay “Precarious Lives”, observing that “an evening with a countryman is all the farmer and his family can have of the Philippines” (Kingston 405); with the circumstance that Fabia is in,

not being able to go back to the Philippines due to his past, this is the only remaining alternative in reestablishing this dissociated bond.

The audience at the forum, whose sons or husbands have been deployed in the Pacific Ocean theater of World War II to help protect the Philippines from and fight against the invasion of the Japanese armada, wants to know the current situation in the Philippines and the difference between American women and Filipino women, but Fabia's query, "I want to find out, sir, are our Filipino women the same like they were twenty years ago?" shifts the focus of the narrative from the present to the past and throughout the short story, this juxtaposition of present and past and the people caught in between, in this case Fabia, contributes towards the readers' understanding of the nostalgic essence present in Fabia. The raging war in the Pacific Theater, i.e. the present, is the main purpose of the forum and should be the focus of story as it is relevant to the current affairs of that time. But the importance of this topic diminishes, as the war explicitly inferred to at the beginning, becomes implied and surpassed by the past which is the longing for the homeland. Through his question, Fabia seeks confirmation of his memories about the Philippines, as the narrator notes, "Surely, all these years, he must have held on to certain ideals, certain beliefs, even illusions peculiar to the exile" (Santos, "Scent"23). Fabia still clings on to the idealized image of the Filipino woman – "our women were nice, they were modest, they wore their hair long, they dressed proper and went for no monkey business. They were natural, they went to church regularly, and they were faithful" – such attributes that could be related to Maria Clara, who as explained in the previous chapter is the prototypical ideal "Filipina". This is not so much a yearning for the idealized Filipino woman as for their romanticized notions of their home country. The Filipina, to Fabia, is the

personification of the country he has left dishonorably. He longs for a reconnection and absolution for hurting his family, especially his mother, the only person who has not “heaped… curses upon [him].”

During the narrator’s visit, he sees a “faded figure of a woman in Philippine dress…although the face had become a blur.” Fabia explains that he picked up the picture, which is now “yellow and soiled with many fingerings”, in a room in Chicago many years ago. Fabia’s attachment to the picture reflects his attachment to the Philippines glorified in his memory, a preserved relic reminding of the Philippines he has left. The blurring of the image symbolizes the passage of time, the fading memory that links him to his homeland and the disintegration of this ideal Fabia is trying to hold onto and only the confirmation from a fellow countryman would restore and preserve this ideal.

Fabia’s sentimental attachment to the image of the Filipino woman is epitomized in his American spouse, Ruth, who is described by the narrator as “a fat blonde woman… had a clean apron around her shapeless waist.” The narrator notices further “how rough [her] hands, how coarse and red with labor, how ugly! She was no longer young and her smile was pathetic” (Santos, “Scent”26), a description so contrary to the blonde, young, beautiful and delicate American woman Filipino men fantasize about that it could be said that Ruth is “un-American.” Ruth is characterized as not so much an American as a Filipino woman. She is portrayed as a traditional housewife who tends and welcomes the narrator heartily, “She kept coming in and out of a rear room..” and “[even] as we ate, Ruth kept standing, and going to the kitchen for more food” (Santos, “Scent”28). She lives with Fabia in destitute conditions and

even at their most troubled time as a couple, Ruth does not abandon Fabia, as he recounts his bout with acute appendicitis. Not too well herself, being pregnant at that time, Ruth devotedly "bundled him in warm clothing and put him on a cot near the stove. She shoveled the snow from their front door and practically carried the suffering man on her shoulders, dragging him through the newly made path… meanwhile snowflakes poured all over them…" and reassuring Fabia that he will not be abandoned, "I won't leave you, I won't leave you," (Santos, "Scent"28) It is implied in the story that they had lost a baby as this pregnancy occurred a few years before Roger was born. Nevertheless, Ruth stood by Fabia and even worked in the hospital "scrubbing the floor and washing the dishes and cleaning the men's things" to the extent of spending the night in the hospital corridors as they could not afford the hospital expenses. With all the tumultuous events in their lives, willing to work "like a slave", which is a statement mostly attributed to immigrants, Ruth's loyalty and devotion to Fabia is certainly reminiscent of her biblical namesake, who in the Book of Ruth, remains with the mother of her late husband and follows her to Bethlehem. Ruth's characteristics are appropriately described by Fabia, "Ruth's a nice girl… like our own Filipino women", acting as a surrogate of the "Filipina" Fabia longs for. Ruth has become, in Fabia's exile existence, his solace, a proxy of his homeland, a sentiment shared by Leonard Casper, "[i]n their enforced loneliness, some Filipinos earned a reputation as 'blonde chasers'; others sought in American women the virtues of fidelity and tenderness which they associated with the half-remembered, half-romanticized motherland" (402). With the choices for spouses limited, as most Filipino immigrants prior to and during that time were comprised mostly of men, they aspire for American women. These women, including Ruth,

epitomize the object of the American Dream. By aspiring to and achieving their love, Filipino immigrants hoped to experience the sense of being part of America. Nevertheless, these Filipino immigrants still sought the characteristics of the Filipina in American women as a form of reconnection to their homeland.

The theme of the exile is fascinatingly outlined by Santos, from the setting of the story, the dichotomy of Fabia and the subverted character i.e. the boy who left for the war and the narrator himself. The location of Fabia's house and farm, a distance of thirty miles from town, symbolizes this isolation and alienation. Santos describes the house as standing "all by itself as though by common consent all the *folks that used to live here had decided to stay away, despising it, ashamed of it*. Even the lovely season could not color it with beauty" (Santos, "Scent" 26 my italics). Furthermore, this passage infers the rejection that Fabia feels, highlighted by the italics. Fabia's nostalgia, pervasive in the narrative, can be seen in his constant recollection of the Philippines. He reminisces about his homeland during the drive to his new home in the United States, describing his "old Visayan" hometown complete with sights, sounds, smell and touch, "In this old Visayan town, the streets are narrow and dirty and strewn with corral shells… There is smell of chickens roosting on the low-topped walls, there is the familiar sound they make and you grope your way up a massive staircase, the banister smooth upon the trembling hand" (Santos, "Scent" 25). He vividly remembers how it is back home; unfading unlike the picture of the Philippine lady he owns and still longs for, "I miss that house… I miss my brothers and sisters… I would remember the great live posts, massive tree trunks from the forest" (Santos, "Scent" 26). This reminiscence is not reciprocated by the narrator as he does not share anything about his past to Celestino. Fabia's dishonorable departure from the

Philippines is juxtaposed with the departure of the implied character, the boy who goes to war. The boy, in the narrator's opinion, is missed by the old couple he sees in the outset of the story, wishing for his safe return while Fabia is not welcomed back home as he faces antagonism from his father and siblings, who bear much more hatred than their father. The Filipino exile, who cannot go back as there is no one left who will welcome him, thus feels more anguish than the American exile, who cannot go back to his homeland as he is on an honorable duty of fighting for a great cause. The narrator, implied to be Bienvenido N. Santos, can also be seen as an exile himself. Not being able to travel back home due to the war, he goes to open forums to discuss matters about his home country. He meets a fellow countryman but could not relate to him, an opinion also shared by Maria Stella Valdez in her article (208). When asked whether the new generation Filipina is different than that of the older generation, the narrator, himself part of the newer generation, has to first ask how the women of twenty years ago were, something he should know of as they are presumably the same age as his mother. The narrator also displays a lack of knowledge about American women when he could only speak about them with "vagueness". This is evidence of the narrator's disconnection from his country's past, a sentiment to be discussed further in "The Day the Dancers Came".

Analogous to his fellow Pinoys, Fabia goes to the United States to have a clean slate, start fresh and escape from his falling out with his family in the Philippines. Fabia does not explain why he came to America and does not recount his experiences when he first set foot on American soil. It could be implied that he came to America to obtain a better life like any other Filipino immigrant. It seems that he has achieved the American Dream and with that should have a happy and contented

life; he now owns a farm and an apple orchard, has a house and is married to a blonde American woman. But upon close inspection, it is seen that the dream is not achieved to its full capacity. Although he has a house and farm, it is in a dilapidated state, "all but ready to crumble in a heap on the ground, its plastered walls were rotting away, the floor was hardly a foot from the ground" (Santos, "Scent" 26) and the orchard is not doing well as the prices have been low and Fabia "[has] been losing on the trips" (Santos, "Scent" 27) these apples are then discarded to feed the pigs. Fabia, though wearing decent attire, the condition they are in woefully reflects his financial state, "He was wearing an old brown tweed jacket and worsted trousers to match. His shoes were polished, and although the green of his tie seemed faded, a colored shirt hardly accentuated it" (Santos, "Scent" 24). His wife, though American, does not conform to the blonde beauty ideals that Filipino immigrants chase after. The flawed dream has proven to make him nostalgic and long for a reconnection to his roots as seen in his query concerning Filipino women and his need to share dinner with a fellow Filipino.

By entitling his story "Scent of Apples", Santos implies the importance of the fruit to the Filipinos both in the United States and in the Philippines. For many English learners, apple is one of the first words memorized as the letter "A" is often matched with the word "apple". It is quite likely that this is also the case for Filipinos during that time and from the outset of their English education, Filipinos form a subconscious tie to America, to which many would later aspire. From New York's nickname "the Big Apple" to the legend of Johnny Appleseed, the person credited for the introduction of the apple to various parts of the United States, apples, therefore, can be associated with the United States. In addition, due to the Philippines being an agricultural country, the apples could represent not only the agricultural life of the

Filipinos but also represent the type of employment that most Filipinos laborers did at the time in the United States which is agricultural work and intensive labor such as planting and picking fruits and vegetables. Santos uses the sense of smell to evoke the characters' nostalgia and longing for home, acting as a memory trigger. At the beginning of the story, the narrator mentions "the fragrance of gathered apples was in the wind" (Santos, "Scent" 21) as he observes the old couple who are thinking of their child. The scent of apples represents the exile existence, loneliness and isolation of the characters. The scent of apples reminds Fabia, the narrator and even the implied character – the soldier – of their respective homeland, albeit in different ways. The absence of apples, which are generally found and grown in cold-climate countries such as the United States, in the Philippines presents the presumable longing for home of the American soldiers who left the United States to fight the war. To the narrator, the apples represent something that is not present back home in the Philippines, stating that "No such thing in our own country", but nevertheless remind him of it. The narrator admits that this remark of his is unkind as he later sees that the apples also must have evoked nostalgic and melancholic emotions in Fabia countless of times as shown in the following passage,

> It touched him off on a long deserted tangent, but ever there perhaps. How many times did the lonely mind take unpleasant detours away from the familiar winding lanes towards home for fear of this, the remembered hurt, the long lost youth, the grim shadows of the years; how many times indeed, only the exile knows. (Santos, "Scent"25)

The apples and Fabia's apple orchard can also, to an extent, symbolize the American Dream. As already mentioned in Chapter II, any item originating from the United States is deemed valuable by the Filipinos, the "apple", which can be seen as a representation of the United States is therefore valuable, as it is not natively grown in a tropical country like the Philippines but can be found in abundance in the United States. Similar to the countless of immigrants who aspire for the American Dream, Fabia strives to have a share of this dream. He is able to settle down with an American wife and has his own orchard to grow apples; he has, in essence, obtained a slice of the proverbial apple pie. Despite achieving the dream, represented here by the apples, it is half-fulfilled as he is seen to be feeling hollow, and yearns for his homeland to fill this vacuum. This hollowness and lack of fulfillment is symbolized by the backroom half-filled with spoiled apples shown to the narrator by Fabia. Some comparison can be drawn from Fabia and one of the most well-known characters in American literature, Jay Gatsby. Both characters, though having different backgrounds, strive for the American Dream and in the course of the stories depicting them have seemingly achieved this dream. Nevertheless, there is still a vacuity in both of them that still could not be filled; for Gatsby it is his love with Daisy and for Fabia his love and yearning for his "Philippines".

The hurt and longing for a past long gone could only be understood by an exile, and the narrator understands this only after meeting Fabia. Santos's stay in the United States studying these exiles, as Leonard Casper posits, "brought him closer to fellow 'exiles" (Casper 402), exiles such as Fabia, whose circumstance in the United States is aptly summed up by Elaine H. Kim's statement, "The illusion of America is replaced by a fleeting dream of the homeland, pastoral, lyrical, and no longer

accessible to them" ("Multiple Mirrors" 267). Fabia, though seemingly achieving what many have failed, has a deep chasm in his heart which could only be filled by reconnecting with the Philippines as seen by his invitation of Santos to his house. Nevertheless, the chasm and his predicament could not be rectified as the Philippines, which he has etched in his memory, is no longer attainable.

As recurring themes in Santos' works, alienation and nostalgia are also represented in the short story "The Day the Dancers Came" one of the most anthologized works by Santos (Yamamoto 407) and most read next to "The Scent of Apples". "The Day the Dancers Came" is a story about Filemon "Fil" Acayan and his encounter with a group of dancers from the Philippines who comes to the United States to tour and perform as cultural ambassadors of sorts. Fil lives in Chicago, one of the most immigrant-populated cities in the United States (Smith 293), with his friend Antonio "Tony" Bataller, a former Pullman porter. Fil, a U.S. citizen, is a former corporal, honorably discharged in 1945, the year of the end of World War II. He has acquired the much coveted U.S. citizenship as a result of serving in the U.S. Army. Filipinos at that time could serve for the U.S. Army and are able to obtain permanent residence through this means (Campomanes 76). So a large number of Filipinos went to America on this basis (Gonzales 67). After getting his U.S. citizenship, he goes back to work but the life for new citizens is cruel and not unlike the life Pinoys, the constant drifters, had previously endured, "To a new citizen, work meant many places and many ways: factories and hotels, waiter and cook… A timeless drifting…" (Santos, "Dancers" 44). Fil drifted from one job to another, a plethora of work and work places, not atypical of Filipino immigrants of this time, who moved to the United States in search of a better life. In "The Day the Dancers

Came", Santos moves the setting from the rural abode of Fabia in the middle of the Midwest to the much urbanized city of Chicago. Analogous to "The Scent of Apples", the setting and atmosphere in "The Day the Dancers Came" also establishes the mood and tone of the short story. Set in Chicago, the city is portrayed as a "sandman's town, sleepy valley, drowsy gray, slumberous mistiness from sunup till noon… and the skyscrapers became monsters with a thousand sore eyes" (Santos, "Dancers" 113) befitting the United States' modernity, a place where dreams are made, but simultaneously, through the dreary description of the city, reeks of disillusionment and irrelevance of the immigrants residing in it. Fil eagerly awaits the arrival of the young Filipino dancers, and somewhat too eagerly; he cleans his car in the expectance of his Filipino guests "he had soaped the ashtrays, dusted off the floor boards and thrown away the old mats, replacing them with new plastic throw rugs" (Santos, "Dancers" 116). His eagerness in expecting the chance to reconnect with his "old country" comes out also in the form of humming tunes from his "old country" while washing his car, an American invention which can be seen as a symbol of social upward mobility, social status and Fil's achievement. He also plans to prepare dinner for the dancers, cooking typical Filipino dishes such as *adobo*, probably the best loved in Filipino cuisine, and *chicken relleno*, a dish mostly served during Christmas festivities and on special occasions, and for Fil this special occasion is the visit from the cultural dance troupe. Moreover, he also wants to spend time with them listening to them conversing in their local dialects and hearing *kundiman* or traditional Filipino love songs sung in Tagalog. His high expectations provide a powerful effect on the reader once he eventually meets the dancers and faces what is tantamount to rejection.

It is this point that Fil's longing for the Philippines is laid out to the reader. Using the dancers as proxy of himself, Fil projects his emotional needs to the dancers. The food that he plans to prepare, as already mentioned, are typical dishes of the Philippines, which the dancers probably would not wish to taste as they are in the United States and would probably prefer sampling American delicacies such as apple pie, hotdogs, hamburgers and spaghetti. Furthermore, eating American food would confirm that the dancers are already Americanized. Fil desires to eat Filipino food in the company of fellow Filipinos to relive his past experiences and to feel at home away from home, a kind of reconnection to his roots. The irony of this situation is that although the dancers are a cultural group representing the Philippines, its people and tradition, they are much more Americanized than Fil, who has been in the United States for quite a while and is already a US citizen.

Bienvenido N. Santos further engages the reader by using only two characters put into a situation so common that it could have happened to any Filipino of that period and symbols to convey his themes of disillusionment, nostalgia and displacement, evoking such a sense of sympathy, empathy and catharsis in readers that "[Santos] has involved [the reader] so completely in their hurts that you hurt as much as they do" (Oloroso 195). The first of these symbols used by Santos is the snow that falls on the day the dancers arrive in Chicago, unusual for the month of November. The snow signals the arrival of the dancers, who signify hope for Fil; the hope of reconnecting to his homeland. The snow also symbolizes youthful exuberance and the delight of seeing something unfamiliar. Fil thinks that the snow will bring the dancers happiness, like it did to him, as it is absent in the Philippines, similar to the absence of apples as previously mentioned, thus explaining his childlike reaction and

excitement when he sees that it is snowing “Now there was a brightness in the air and Fil knew what it was and he shouted. ‘Snow! It’s snowing’” (Santos, “Dancers” 113). As he goes to his car he wipes off the snow covering his car and “he felt light and young, like a child at play and once again, he raised his face to the sky and licked the flakes, cold and tasteless on his tongue” (Santos, “Dancers” 119). As the snow falls that morning, Fil is full of hope and excitement, overwhelmed with a child-like behavior and outlook on life. Fil would like to show them around, “walk with them in the snow, watch their eyes as they stared about them… They would pick up a fistful of snow, crunch it in their fingers or shove it in their mouths. He had done just that the first time…” (Santos, “Dancers” 115) Furthermore, the snow reminds Fil of home and the simple pleasures of life, the joy of having grated ice sold by a Chinese near the town plaza.

As he goes to the hotel where the dancers are staying, he meets these dancers and cannot but feel awe with what he sees; the sight “seemed too much for him who had all but forgotten how beautiful Philippine girls were” (Santos, “Dancers” 119). It is this encounter with the dance troupe that Santos shows distinctly the alienation of the old timers. He fails in gathering the courage to come up and speak to them, “for what he wanted to say, the words didn’t come too easily, they were unfamiliar, they stumbled and broke on his lips into a jumble of incoherence”, he wanted to shake hands with the first boy but instead “Fil put his hands in his pocket” (Santos, “Dancers” 120) as he now realizes that he does not belong to this new generation of Filipinos. Fil’s “greater mastery” of the dialect and his “florid, sentimental, poetic” style notwithstanding, he is unsuccessful as the new generation Filipino dance troupe speak mostly in English. Fil suddenly feels his displacement among his own

countrymen, feeling “he was in the center of a group where he was not welcome” (Santos, “Dancers” 120). He could only fantasize addressing the young dancers with one of his “flamboyant speeches”, like those he has recorded in his tape recorder, “Beloved country men, lovely children of the Pearl of the Orient Seas, listen to me. I’m Fil Acayan. I’ve come to volunteer my services. I’m yours to command. Your servant” (Santos, “Dancers” 120). Once he gathers the courage to talk to the dancers, in his native dialect, every person he encounters rebuffs his advancement one way or another, either ignoring or rejecting him as if they are repulsed by the old timer, rousing a feeling of “sharpness inside him.” The only time a Filipino dancer approaches him is when Fil stands in the way while they are taking pictures in front of the hotel. He fails in befriending them and stands alone in front of the hotel, with only the “double exposure of himself” as his only companion. The snow further dramatizes Fil’s inner pain from rejection. Later, as the dance troupe are getting on the bus, the harsh truth that Fil is isolated from his fellow countrymen slams him in the face and the snow once again reflects this “it was melting fast in the sun and turning into slush” (Santos, “Dancers” 121), his high hopes of a wonderful and memorable encounter with his Filipina/o compatriots turns into despair and disappointment. His plan of reestablishing the bond with this homeland is hindered by the dance group’s indifference and disregard towards Fil; his need of validation of his existence in the memory of his fellow countrymen – a desire expressed during a dream sequence, “They would tell their folks: We met a kind, old man, who took us to his apartment…” – trampled upon by the dancers. Instead of fulfilling his dream of not being alone anymore, his encounter with the young dancers only causes him more pain and disillusionment.

Santos uses another symbol in fusing the past and the present in illustrating the limbo that Fil is stranded in: Fil's tape recorder or "magic sound mirror". Fil uses the tape recorder to capture sounds of his surroundings as a way of remembering and reliving the past,

> He had experimented on recording sounds, like the way a bed creaked, doors opening…. He played all the sounds back and tried to recall how it was on the day or night the sounds had been recorded. Did they bring back the moment? He was beginning to think that they did. (Santos, "Dancers" 117)

As Rico posits, "For Fil the way to survive is through memory" (125) therefore, the device functions as a time machine to bring Fil back to the past to alleviate his homesickness. Such is his yearning for a connection to home that he brings the "magic sound mirror" to the dance performance to record the sounds of his native country; "I'm going to keep their voices, their words and their singing and their laughter in my magic sound mirror" (Santos, "Dancers" 117). Fil fantasizes that with his recording, he will not feel lonely again and that he could relive the moment once more, "I shall listen to your voices with my eyes closed and you'll be here again and I won't ever be alone, no, not anymore after this" (Santos, "Dancers" 124). Unfortunately, Fil's preservation of his memories of the Philippines fails as he inadvertently erases the tape's contents, erasing, irretrievably, his ties to the past. The tape recorder thus functions like its moniker "sound mirror", not bringing back the past, as Fil hopes it does, but rather acting as an actual mirror, which presents only the present, the only sounds remaining are

> …the dull creaking of the tape on the spool and meaningless sounds that somehow had not been erased, the thud of dancing feet, a quick clapping of hands, alien voices and words: *in this country… everything… all of them… talking eyes… and the scent…* a fading away into nothingness, till about the end when there was a screaming, senseless kind of finale detached from the body of a song in the background…. (Santos, "Dancers" 127)

The magic sound mirror takes Fil away from his fantasy and brings him back to reality; the voices of what was once familiar have become "alien" and "meaningless" to him, the past that Fil dearly clings on is swallowed into the background, into nothingness. This also reminds the reader of the dull and irrelevant existence that Fil is in and most importantly it reminds Fil that the only thing both the past and the present agree about is pain and loss are constant to them. The only thing remaining in his life is his friendship with Tony, who is terminally sick. The dream sequence, in which Tony tries to share to Fil a new way to stay afloat indefinitely in case of a shipwreck, "in an emergency, you're stranded without help in the middle of the Pacific or the Atlantic, you must keep floating till help comes…" (Santos, "Dancers" 123) can be seen as a potent reminder that in the shipwreck that is their lives in the United States, where they are stranded, the only way to survive is their reliance on each other, represented by Tony trying to share his new discovery to Fil.

Fil is a representation of the Filipino of his time, even his name "Fil", a derivative from the word Filipino and an alternate spelling for the common English name "Phil", clearly suggesting that. Tony's description of Fil gives more proving

evidence, “That’s the important thing, your mug. It’s your calling card. It says Filipino. Countryman.” (Santos, “Dancers” 116) Fil is the representative of the vast number of Filipinos who are no longer in the Philippines or are trying to hold on to their “Filipino-ness”. Elaine Kim writes in her essay that “[Fil’s] life, emblematic of the lives of thousands of other Filipino men who came to the land of golden opportunity to eke out a living on its fringes…” (“Multiple Mirrors” 408-9). America, as already mentioned, is thought to be a country where the variety of cultures and habits that the massive wave of immigrants bring to the country can flourish harmoniously. The possibility in America is endless, so it is said in the American Dream. But to Fil, the life in America evokes longing for his homeland and estrangement. Pervading throughout the story is the yearning for a reconnection to his roots, presumably stemming from his lost youth, the time when he felt happy and content; a time that has passed him by. In his opinion, time was the “villain”. “In the beginning, the words he often heard were: too young… but all of the sudden, too young become too old, too late. What had happened in between?” (Santos, “Dancers” 116). He seemed to be in one moment young, then in an instant old, the life in between had not had the chance to develop. Kim comments in her article that Fil’s life “has passed him by unaware like an aborted foetus” (“Multiple Mirrors” 409). In one of his employments, Fil comes upon a shelf of bottles containing “a stage of the human embryo in preservatives” and “sometimes in his sleep, Fil dreamed of preserving the stages after infancy.” His dream projects his frustration of not having really experienced youth, as being an immigrant in the United States he has had to work to survive, not being able to enjoy youth.

Through the Filipino cultural dance troupe, Fil expects to reconnect to his homeland, to ease his nostalgia and regain his lost youth. To the exile such as Fil, just the sight of the "forgotten" beauty of the Filipina dancers brings him back to his memories of the Philippines, "their laughter came to him like a breeze murmurous with sounds native to his land" (Santos, "Dancers" 119). The perfume worn by a dancer reminds him of a fragrance "long forgotten, essence of *camia,* of *ilang-ilang* and *dama de noche*" (Santos, "Dancers" 121). The exclamation of some people in this dialect conjures up his past memories of "playtime, long shadows of evening on the plaza, barrio fiestas, *misa de gallo*" (Santos, "Dancers" 120). The scents of flowers native to the Philippines growing in abundance back home and Filipino traditions such as fiestas and midnight mass brings him back to his time as a child in the Philippines. Fil comes up with the idea of recording the sounds of the performance, to take it back with him, so he could reminisce the moment and to be "back home" again and relived his youth over and over again. As the nostalgia and longing for his homeland connection is so strong, he fantasizes about the meeting with the dancers and dreams about telling it to Tony. In his dream, he reminisces and talks about his time as a youth like the dancers "You see, I was like them once. I, too, was nimble with my feet, graceful with my hands; and I had the tongue of a poet" (Santos, "Dancers" 124). But all this "trying to reconnect back to his roots" through the dancers ended up in disappointment and he suffers a feeling of alienation.

For Filemon Acayan, the "melting pot[20]" does not exist; if it does, his exclusion from the ingredients is perceivable as he is not able to blend in. He changes

[20] Melting pot: A theme Israel Zangwill, a British playwright, tackles in his play "The Melting Pot". The title of the play is derived from Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur's "Letters from an

jobs and work places, has no other friends other than Tony. They belong to a minority instead of belonging to the "Americans". Their citizenship means nothing as they are only physically part of the Americans but not mentally and spiritually as they are not accepted by others. The worst part of it all is that even his own kind, his own countrymen do not accept him. One cause of his nostalgia might have stemmed from the want to belong to something. And as the dancers came, it is the only way remaining. He is shunted by the dancers and at that moment feels isolated and alienated "he felt as if he was in the center of a group where he was not welcome" (Santos, "Dancers", 120). This rouses his feeling of wanting to leave but "he seemed caught up in the tangle of moving bodies that merged and broke in a fluid strangle hold" (Santos, "Dancers" 120). Fil dreams about this encounter and tells Tony in the dream that the dancers ignored him. He thinks that the dancers thought of him as garbage to them, unclean and that "they were ashamed of me" (Santos, "Dancers" 124). To them he did not exist. It is as if Fil is now stranded on an island with nothing around him, not belonging to either side, completely isolated. He does not belong to America nor could he go back to the Philippines for his family is all gone. Fil still clings on to his memories of home and to his Filipino-ness despite the changes happening around him; the dancers, as already mentioned, are much more Americanized than him, even his best friend, the more realistic and cynical Tony, accepts their circumstance and concedes to the present. The disease that causes Tony's skin to become white and causes abdominal pain as if dull scissors were

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American Farmer". He describes a melting process that will unite "individuals of all nations" forming a new race. In the play "The Melting Pot", the United States is described as the place where immigrants of all nations are given the chance to become an American (Smith 304).

scraping them can symbolize his Americanization. His acceptance of his impending death due to the disease represents his acceptance of the situation he is in.

Leonard Casper explains in "Introduction to *Scent of Apples: A Collection of Short Stories*" that the old timers, or Pinoys "may suffer from three kinds of distances at once: between themselves and their homeland; between themselves and their children who have known only America; and between themselves and recent arrivals whose Philippines, in some ways is drastically different from their own" (Casper 404). Fil belongs to the first and the third, being far from home, living in a country thousands of miles away and not being able to connect with the young Filipino dancers. In the end, Fil turns to the only person he knows he belongs to, his fellow exile Tony, who is the voice of reason to his fantasy. Tony questions Fil on his planned philanthropy to the dancers "What for you want to spend? You've been living on loose change all your life and now on a treasury warrant so small and full of holes, still you want to spend for these dancing kids who don't know you and won't even send you a card afterwards" (Santos, "Dancers" 116-7). Tony accepts their fate in America and acts as a reminder to Fil that their lives are in the United States and it is no use to dream incessantly about the Philippines.

The American Dream superficially seems to promise everything that a person in this life needs, but to the Filipino immigrants in the stories the dream teaches them a painful lesson, that not everything that is promising will be beautiful, from Magno who received cruelty from believing in the dream, Fabia whose nostalgia comes from his pursuit of finding happiness in the United States, to Fil whose stay in the purported land of opportunity, freedom and equality full of promise of happiness only

led to being isolated and alienated by it. The day the dancers came is supposed to be a day that promises delight and happiness for Fil, but in the end it turned out to be a day of realization and acceptance of his predicament. For both Fil and Tony, it has been a day of death; the death of the Fil's dream of reconnecting with his past and confirmation of Tony's impending death, as it is presumed that his meeting with his doctor will confirm that Tony is suffering from cancer. A comparison could be made between the new generation Filipino in "Scent of Apples" and in "The Day the Dancers Came." In "Scent of Apples", the narrator tries not to shatter the ideals Fabia holds dear, "I did not want to tell a lie yet I did not want to say anything that would seem platitudinous, insincere… I must give him an answer that would not make him so unhappy" (Santos, "Scent" 22-3). The Filipino dancers, on the other hand, avoid Fil and reject his approach. Fabia has the opportunity to show to the narrator what he has achieved in the United States, though whether he receives the validation he expects is ambiguous. Contrastingly, not only does Fil not receive any validation of his achievements and existence, the dancers do not even give Fil the chance to show the accomplishments built from his hard work in the United States.

As stated by Leonard Casper, Santos's works is pervaded with one single persistent dream: "the return of the Philippines to the man, whether or not a return to the Philippines is ever managed" (405), and through his simple yet dramatic and spirited approach to writing, the reader is introduced to the conflicts that Elaine Kim describes as the focal contradiction in Filipino immigrants of that period – "alienation or feelings of displacement" ("Multiple Mirrors" 408). While Carlos Bulosan presents to his readers the socio-political problems and the physical hardships Filipino immigrants endured, Bienvenido N. Santos chose to intimate the psychological

conditions of Pinoys as they struggle to find a definition to their existence in their adopted country, trying to reach out to the past, back to their romanticized motherland. Their hopes and expectation of establishing a reconnection and receiving recognition for their "achievements" in their aspiration for the American Dream in the United States were not reciprocated as they have been exiled for too long that the gap between Pinoys and the new generation of Filipinos is too wide resulting in their psychological exiled existence. They are stranded in a country that does not yet wholly accept them and at the same time not being able to return to the Philippines because too much time has elapsed that they became beings "lost in time". Therefore, these Filipino immigrants have no other alternative but to continue with their existence, huddled with fellow exiles and endure an emotional pain which is difficult to dissipate, accepting their status as "hurt men".

To summarize, through the short stories "Scent of Apples" and "The Day the Dancers Came", Bienvenido N. Santos presents the psychological and emotional conflict that Filipino immigrants experience as they live their new lives in a new country. Although attaining some level of their aspirations for the American Dream, this dream is not fully realized. In their decision to pursue the American Dream, along the way, they have severed the connections they once had to their homeland, causing chasms in their hearts that they could not fill, even with their attained dreams. Their new existence in the United States is incomparable to the one they had back home, as they are unable to fully assimilate, or would rather not fully assimilate to their new milieu leading them to live a life of straddling between the two shores of the Pacific, alienated and floating adrift, stranded in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As defined and enumerated in the previous chapters, the American Dream is the ideal that supposedly posits America as the land where people of all sexes, classes and races can have freedom and equal opportunity to improve their lives in pursuit of happiness and this ideal is one of the reasons responsible for generations of immigrant waves to the United States. The American Dream's inception can be traced back to the Puritans, who themselves can be considered as the first wave of immigrants. These pioneers, disappointed by the Old World and the actions of the Church of England, braved the perilous Atlantic seas with the determination to establish a new society where they could have the freedom to practice religion in the way they intended to, through strict, disciplined observance of God's teachings. Then, through the words of the founding fathers of the United States written in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the American Dream became much clearer and more tangible. The words life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness derived from the declaration, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are *life*, *liberty*, and the *pursuit of happiness*…" became the core of the American Dream which would later undergo many interpretations.

After the independence of America, the focus of the dream switched from religion to achieving improvement for one's self. The idea of rags-to-riches, starting from almost nothing to achieving great things through hard-work and perseverance became synonymous with the American Dream. Self-made men like Benjamin

Franklin and Abraham Lincoln, who from a lower social class rose to prominence, became the personification of this progressing dream and became the archetype for people striving for this dream to look up to. After the emancipation of the slaves came the transformation of liberty and equality into what would later lead to the Civil Rights Movement. African-Americans, after receiving their freedom, sought for equality amongst Caucasian Americans. Similar to freedom and equality, the tenet of "pursuit of happiness" has also gone some transformations along the years, evolving into a more materialistic ideology. Possession of material wealth has become the core of this goal. The first thing that comes to mind is homeownership. Owning a house has become a mark of achievement and of the modern American Dream. It symbolizes the status of a person, his achievements and concurs with one of the pioneers of America's main objective when they first set foot upon these shores; to find a place where they could call their own, their own home. The modern rendition of the American Dream has come to include the ownership of cars, which has risen into prominence in the last century, and luxury items. This can be seen as a symbol of upward mobility which the American Dream promises and also resulting in a more consumerist mindset.

The American Dream entered the consciousness of the Filipinos through the education provided by the Americans during their colonization of the Philippines. Furthermore, due to being a colonial subject of the United States, the Philippines developed, as stated in the previous chapters, a special relationship with the United States and this makes them differ from other immigrant groups in the United States. In addition, due to their ties with their homeland, Filipino immigrants, as stated by Jonathan M. Okamura, "should be viewed as a diaspora, rather than only as an ethnic

minority, because of their significant transnational relations with their homeland that differentiate them from other ethnic minorities in the United States" (ix).

The topic of the American Dream, as already mentioned, has seen many manifestations in various American literary works such as *The Great Gatsby* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Two of the most prominent Filipino-American writers that have been discussed in this study are Carlos Bulosan and Bienvenido N. Santos, whose different backgrounds and experiences are reflected in their literary works spanning many decades of the twentieth century.

Carlos Bulosan, with his peasant background and limited education, escaped his homeland to pursue a better life in the United States. Considered one of the pioneers of Philippine-American literature, he captured the Filipino immigrant experience in their fight for survival in the United States. Through *America Is in the Heart*, readers can trace how the ideology of the American Dream has captured the minds of the Filipino immigrants and fueled their desires to migrate to the United States to greener pastures. Furthermore, *America Is in the Heart* and also "The Romance of Magno Rubio" present to readers the predicaments of Filipino immigrants and their hardships during the 1930s up to the outset of World War II. Both his works discussed in this study feature predominantly the physical hardships that the first waves of Filipino immigrants suffered in their pursuit of the American Dream due to their first-hand experience of living in Depression-era United States. Despite the hardships that Bulosan had to endure, he still maintains his love and belief in the America he was introduced to as he was a child in Mangusmana, echoing the sentiment of Morantte,

> …Carlos loved America. However, it was a kind of idealistic love, with a tinge of romanticism, as one would love a beautiful girl…. All Carlos could do was adore her at a distance, in secret worshipful detachment, with a strong feeling of loyalty and awe…. He was inwardly excited at the sight of Lady America holding a torch in one hand and a book of freedom and justice in the other. The symbol portended not the hopelessness of the situation but the promise of fulfillment, the fulfillment of the dreams of all those coming to her shores. (95)

Bulosan's love for America, his optimistic outlook and the composite experience of Filipino immigrants of his period are portrayed vividly by the two protagonists in both works discussed in this study.

Both works by Bulosan portray the lives of Filipino immigrants in search of the American Dream and in many ways draw comparison to John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, especially *American Is in the Heart*. The protagonists from *America Is in the Heart* and *The Grapes of Wrath* leave their home to escape abject poverty and journey to a land full of promise: for Allos, the United States and for the Joad family, California, which is also where *America Is in the Heart* is mostly set. Both protagonists, Allos and Magno Rubio, suffer from destitute conditions and oppression not unlike the Joad family who are at the receiving end of hostility from locals and fellow migrant workers. In addition, Allos and Magno are subjected to exploitation and oppression by both Americans and fellow Filipinos as they try to fulfill their dreams. The goals of Allos and Magno Rubio may seem different but both are of the

same nature. Allos's dream is to have a better life, thus, his migration to the United States as he has read and heard of various success stories during his time in the Philippines and he sees the United States as the place where everything is possible. But upon setting foot on the shores of America, he is thrust into a milieu he has never imagined. The countless oppression, exploitation, racism he and his folks have endured leads him, his brother and many other Filipino immigrants to life of decadence not unlike Jay Gatsby from *The Great Gatsby*. His self-education during his convalescence brings him to strive for equality not only for himself but for the entire Filipino immigrant group that migrated to the United States following his role models such as Abraham Lincoln. Analogously, Magno Rubio, a typical uneducated Filipino farm hand in California, aspires for the hand of the embodiment of the American Dream, Clarabelle. He works harder than ever to achieve this dream. Throughout the course of his romance, he is exploited and duped by both his fellow countrymen and by Clarabelle. In addition, like what Allos and thousands of other Filipino immigrants had to face, Magno Rubio has to live in sub-human living conditions.

Despite all the hardships and travails both protagonists have to encounter and tolerate, they still maintain their optimism toward America and the American Dream. The end of the *America Is in the Heart* sees Allos declare that "… no man could destroy [his] faith in America that had sprung from all [their] hopes and aspirations, *ever"* (327). Magno Rubio, after realizing that he had been duped by Clarabelle, brushes this event aside and looks forward to the future, "I guess we'll start picking tomatoes next week, Nick" (Bulosan, "Magno" 43), his faith still unwavering. Prevalent in the works discussed is a romanticized relationship that Filipinos have

with America. One notes in the titles of the works by Bulosan studied here, words such as "in the heart", "romance" or even in Santos's works such as "scent", that they convey a sentiment that captures not only this perceived special relationship but also the unique feelings Filipinos have towards Americans, unlike perhaps any other country. It is precisely this sentiment, one could surmise, that differentiates Filipino immigrants from other immigrant groups, and how, to them, the American Dream is perhaps more nuanced. To other immigrant groups, aspirations for attaining the American Dream is aimed more toward material wealth, success and greater convenience not possible in their original countries but for Filipinos, it is the aspiration to become as much as possible like Americans themselves or if not, to become the object of their love and affection as in a romantic relationship as could be seen in the Bulosan's "The Romance of Magno Rubio".

Considered as one of the most prominent Filipino-American writers, Bienvenido N. Santos presents another side of the pursuit of the American Dream and can be seen as a continuation of the works of Bulosan as *America Is in the Heart* ends before World War II while the works of Santos, especially those which are selected for this study, are set during and after the war. Dissimilar to Bulosan, Santos was an educated Filipino who received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of the Philippines. While Bulosan saved money for his passage to the United States, Santos was sent to the United States as a cultural envoy and returned to the United States several times for his fellowship. He was stranded in the United States during the Second World War, and it was at that time that he studied the lives of Filipino immigrants, whose experiences he used as source for his works. Santos's works, thus,

revolve around the emotional struggles of Filipino immigrants living amidst the milieu of rugged individualism; nostalgia, melancholy, alienation and unhomeliness.

In “Scent of Apples”, we are introduced to Fabia, a Filipino immigrant who seems to have achieved what many have dreamed of: owning a home, being married to an American and running an apple orchard, in a sense, the American Dream. Despite achieving his dream, Fabia still needs to reconnect to his past and home country. He is still in need of validation of his achievements from a fellow countryman. Analogous to Gatsby, Fabia also feels hollow despite attaining the American Dream. Fabia feels alienated and is in a state of unhomeliness as he cannot go back to the Philippines and it seems that he cannot fully integrate and adapt himself to the United States symbolized by the isolation of his house. Analogously, Fil, the protagonist from “The Day the Dancers Came”, lives with a sense of hollowness despite attaining the much coveted American citizenship and it is his U.S. citizenship which severed his connection to his compatriots. Like Fil, Fabia still clings to the past, to his memories of the Philippines and needs validation for his achievements from the cultural dance troupe. But his approach is rebuffed and rejected many times over. He still sees himself as a Filipino, his citizenship notwithstanding, and not unlike Fabia, experiences unhomeliness[21] as he does not see himself as an American, and is rejected by the dance group and could not go back home to the Philippines. Furthermore, one can assume that due to the characters’ inability to assimilate to their new milieu, this nostalgic feeling arises as the tension of

[21] Unhomeliness: The state of being in between cultures, belonging to neither and being in a psychological limbo resulting from trauma of cultural displacement is referred to by Homi Bhabha and other postcolonial critics as “unhomeliness” (Tyson 421).

the *need to belong* strains Fabia and Fil. As they turn to their "home", instead of a warm homecoming, the realization that the new generation Filipinos are far gone dawns on both characters resulting in their state of exiled hurt-men.

To summarize, Filipino immigrants like many other immigrants have been enticed by the American Dream and have set forth to attain this in the land of opportunity. However, with their perceived special relationship with the United States, they have gone to think that they were equals of the Americans as stated by Bulosan, "…Filipinos are taught to regard Americans as our equals. Adhering to American ideals, living American lives, these are contributory to our feeling of equality" (qtd. in Introduction to *America*). But the harsh reality set in when these dreamers set foot on American shores. Exploitation, oppression and racism were seen everywhere, practiced not only by Americans but also Filipino immigrants who turned to life of crime and violence due to the hardship that they had to endure just to eke out a living. The American Dream has turned into the American Nightmare for many Filipino immigrants. The focus of Bulosan's era was the fight for survival of Filipino immigrants. In both works discussed in this study, the protagonists do not attain the American Dream, though both still maintain their belief in the United States, especially Allos, who states it unequivocally at the end of the novel. The subsequent period chronicled by Santos, namely during and after World War II, present another aspect of Filipino immigrants. The focus is now not on the physical aspect but on the emotional. The protagonists of both discussed short stories have achieved, to an extent, what others have been striving for. Although realizing their dream, they feel hollow and still yearn for their homeland. These Filipino immigrants, or the so-called "exiles", long for their return to the Philippines as Carey McWilliams has stated,

"[m]ost of them did not come to this country as immigrants, that is, to become citizens and permanent residents. Most of them thought they would reside here for a limited period and then return to the Philippines…" (Introduction to *America*). Santos also echoes this sentiment and addresses this issue, "All exiles want to go home" (Santos xx) but as he later admits "[m]any of the old Filipinos in the United States, as in these stories, never return" (Santos xx). With ties severed, returning to the Philippines is no longer an option for these exiles. They are stuck in the United States without fully assimilating leading them to a state of unhomeliness. The nostalgia and alienation that they experienced made their achievements devoid of meaning. Jim Cullen statement at the end of in his book *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* aptly summarizes the American Dream as pertaining to Filipino immigrants and to those who strive to attain this dream: "the real problem is that any American Dream is too incomplete a vessel to contain longings that elude human expression or comprehension. We never reach the Coast we think we see. Still we go on dreaming" (182). The American Dream is thus like any other dream; a fleeting mirage in a vast desert that eventually cannot be fully realized.

With the American Dream one of the most oft tackled central topics in immigrant literature, this could be pursued further with the exploration of other works by Carlos Bulosan, Bienvenido N. Santos and other Filipino-American authors such as Jessica Hagedorn, one of the most prominent contemporary Filipino-American authors. A comparative approach of the study of the American Dream with the focal point on immigrant experience can also be delved into by studying works by authors of other immigrant groups in the United States such as Younghill Kang. By studying the American Dream in works by other ethnic minority groups, a better understanding

of this ideology and its effect on immigrants who strive for this elusive and illusive goal can be achieved.

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