

Preface

When I first started the research upon which this book is based, I had no idea that I would soon be living the traveling life I was seeking to know in greater depth. For my dissertation, I went to the Philippines and lived there, for the first time in nearly two decades, from 1995 to 1996. I came to the United States in 1976 as an immigrant, and I had lived a comfortable life in Los Angeles. A few years later, I found myself at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where I have been privileged to work among brilliant and supportive colleagues and friends. But my wife remains two thousand miles away in California, as do both of our families. Like many of my colleagues, I am torn between two loves and two homes, and I have become a traveler between two worlds.

Hence I have grown fond of the expatriate Filipino American intellectuals whom I chose as the subjects of this book, *Five Faces of Exile: The Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals*. My title echoes Matei Calinescu's *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (1987), and the book looks at a different experience of the movements Calinescu describes, especially from the standpoint of those repressed "others" of modernity, colonialism, and nationalism.¹ The five intellectuals studied are Carlos P. Romulo (1899–1985), Philippine emissary to the United States from 1942 to 1985, and author of over fifteen books on U.S.-Philippine relations; Carlos Bulosan (1911–1956) and Bienvenido N. Santos

(1911–1996), two authors whose stories of Filipino workers and exiles scattered throughout the United States in the 1930s and 1940s have become required reading in Asian American Studies courses; and José García Villa (1908–1997) and N. V. M. Gonzalez (1915–1999), two Philippine National Artists whose poetry, fiction, and literary theory—although still unknown to many in academia—have decisively influenced Filipino, Filipino American, Asian American, and other literary communities over the past two decades.² At first, I was interested in Filipino American expatriate intellectuals as pioneers and precursors of the Filipino American intellectual communities of the post–1965 Immigration Act era, especially those exiles and U.S.-born Filipinos who resisted the Marcos dictatorship. Now my intellectual subjects have become valuable to me not only from a genealogical standpoint but also from an existential one, because their struggles mirror my own migrant life and provide visions of what the future might hold.

It turns out that more and more people today are traveling between the United States and Asia (despite economic crises and flu epidemics), which makes these early twentieth-century Filipino American experiences all the more relevant. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, we find ourselves in a world increasingly in flux. People are in motion on a larger scale than before, whether in search of economic opportunities and political freedoms or displaced by forces beyond their control. Filipino American intellectual expatriate lives combine both this search for mobility and freedom and the sense of loss that thousands, if not millions, of overseas contract laborers, refugees, domestic workers, and long-distance commuters are feeling.³

The subject of this book is how Filipino American intellectuals imagined the Philippines, Asia, and the rest of the world from their exile in America. Their story begins in the 1920s, when the United States ruled the Philippines as a colony, continues through the Japanese occupation, and concludes in the postcolonial era, when Filipinos and other subject peoples around the world were decolonizing under the banner of nationalism. Indeed, Filipino American expatriate intellectuals too, more than once in their lives, were caught between two loves and two homes, between an America that offered material wealth, intellectual challenge, and spiritual solace and a Philippines that commanded their allegiance and called out to them with

memories of a cherished past. They too had to navigate between these two poles, and in the process, they became transnational travelers.

Out of the deracination and sojourning of Filipino American expatriate intellectuals, several common themes emerge. First, one finds the persistence of nationalism and other discourses of the nation in their self-representation, which overlapped or competed with discourses of American colonialism, ethnicity, race, and class.⁴ Second, Filipino American expatriate intellectuals acted as a “bridge of understanding,” to use the apt phrase of the Japanese American historian Yuji Ichioka.⁵ Their thoughts and actions exhibited concern for cultural translation and diplomacy that brought “East” and “West” together and melded cosmopolitanism with the Philippines’ “archipelagic” cultures.⁶ Third, their constant shifting between two languages and world-views led to what Thorstein Veblen called “divided allegiance,” or to the kind of double consciousness that Edward Said likened to contrapuntal reading and the counterposing of diverse cultural experiences.⁷ Fourth, Filipino American expatriate intellectuals can also be grouped by a common tendency to favor a political approach that emphasized negotiation and evasion over confrontation, although there were exceptions. Such a view was consistent with their understanding of the importance of patronage and sponsorship in the Philippine-American context, upon which their survival as artists depended. Finally, performativity, especially as “practical consciousness” and as a process of “rearticulation” or “resignification,” played a crucial role in the making and the expression of Filipino American expatriate intellectual identities.⁸ Moreover, Philippine oral and theatrical traditions influenced their articulation of aesthetic and political ideas and sharpened their sensitivity to shifting audiences and sites of enunciation.⁹ As I argue in the Introduction, these common attributes of Filipino American exilic intellectuals can only be understood in the context of the Philippines’ history of colonialism, patron-client relations, nationalist assertion, and cultural dynamism, and of twentieth-century American wars, political developments, and artistic movements.

But while these common patterns connect Filipino American expatriate intellectuals, their diverse responses to the nation and their expatriation illustrate a rich variety of responses that signal the complexities of transnationalism. In Chapter 1, “Expatriate Affirmation,” I adopt Carlos P. Romu-

lo's designation of exile as "expatriate affirmation." A student at Columbia University from 1918 to 1921, Romulo came to regard displacement from home and overseas travel as constituent parts of Filipino nationalism. For him, exile, especially during World War II, when the Japanese occupied his homeland and prevented his return, conferred a sense of the differences between national cultures. It also made intellectual expatriates like Romulo, as well as Bulosan, Villa, Santos, and Gonzalez, who were similarly exiled, better appreciate their country's uniqueness, and it encouraged them to express their nationality in ways they had never thought possible. Exile, particularly in the colonial American motherland, also provided space for the performance of masculinity and the making of national heroes whose actions abroad and return home strengthened political careers in the Philippine colony. Romulo's political education between the University of the Philippines and Columbia and his travels among Asian nationalists, Western academics, and American politicians cemented these views of exile and nationality. Finally, his relations of indebtedness and reciprocity with Philippine Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon and (Philippine) Field Marshal Douglas MacArthur shaped not only his future political role but also his political discourse. Romulo understood Philippine-American relations in terms of *utang na loob*, or debt of gratitude, a pre-Hispanic Filipino value that helps explain his durability, despite charges that he was insincere and condemnation of his pro-American stances.

Carlos Bulosan and José García Villa arrived in the United States a decade after Romulo, and Chapters 2 and 3 describe their personalities, identifications, and responses to expatriation. In Chapter 2, "Suffering and Passion," I show how Bulosan interpreted the history of his Filipino countrymen on the West Coast, and his own social role, through the idiom of the *pasyon*, the Philippine folk Christian version of the suffering, death, and rebirth of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ Excluded from the company of Filipino intellectual elites by distinctions of class, by a plagiarism charge, and by a virulent anti-Communist movement, Bulosan came to see himself as a Christlike martyr figure, whose sufferings helped to heal the social divisions and racial exploitation faced by his fellow countrymen in exile. Bulosan fused oral culture and traditional religious elements with the civil rights activism, labor radicalism, and proletarian literary values for which he has been posthumously acknowledged.

In Chapter 3, “Artistic Vanguard,” I explore Villa’s expatriate life against the backdrop of his rebellion against family, elite social class, and national culture. Villa left the Philippines for New York, where he lived a solitary life as an artist, disdainful of politics and propaganda, and symbolized the values of modernism for young Filipino writers. Yet Villa’s rebellion against tradition, like all reversals, reinscribed what he opposed. While he rejected the tyranny of his father, who sought to control his career aspirations and to limit his inheritance, he became at times just as tyrannical toward his students and budding Filipino writers, who suffered from his cruel mind games and personal criticism. And while he sought to squash all traces of nationality, his love for the theatrical in everyday life hearkened back to earlier Filipino nationalist intellectual performative traditions. Likewise, his attack on American food and his defense of Filipino traditional cuisine suggests that alongside his self-perception as a member of the artistic vanguard, there was a latent nativism in him.

N. V. M. Gonzalez and Bienvenido Santos, the next two Filipino American expatriate intellectuals discussed, arrived in the United States over a decade after Bulosan and Villa and a generation after Romulo. In Chapter 4, “Nativism and Negation,” I argue that Gonzalez’s abiding literary and ethnic impulses were self-consciously nativist. Gonzalez drew upon the rich and diverse Philippine oral and literary traditions and languages—which he regarded as superior to the hybrid, middle-class, urban, or expatriate Filipino cultures that had alienated his generation—to describe the folk dwellers of his Mindoro frontier home. He was the oldest among Filipino American expatriate intellectuals at the time of his first American visit (he was thirty-three), and he was deeply influenced by the New Criticism and myth criticism practiced by his teachers, and, perhaps just as important, by their regionalist sensibilities. While Gonzalez lived in the United States for several decades, he denied being influenced in any profound way by his sojourn. He maintained his sense of Filipino nationalism, his Filipino citizenship, and his self-identification as Philippine writer. The realities of his life lived in two worlds, however, especially during the period of the Marcos dictatorship, when both he and Santos were intimidated from traveling to their homeland, placed great strains upon these attempts to fashion a mythology of geographic fixity and cultural authenticity.

In Chapter 5, “Fidelity and Shame,” I explore the life of Bienvenido San-

tos, who shared Gonzalez's valorization of Philippine traditional cultures. Unlike Gonzalez, however, Santos genuinely enjoyed America, even as he professed his love for the Philippines. He obtained American citizenship in 1976, although this was in part to safeguard his well-being in the martial law era. Moreover, he embraced the rising American ethnic movements of the 1960s and was not averse to aligning himself with them. Nonetheless, his enjoyment of American comforts and his elevated class position in America filled him with shame (*biya* in Tagalog; *supog* in Santos's Bicolano). Santos's Filipino nationalism continually brought to the surface questions of loyalty to the nation and memories of the past. All of these found literary expression in gendered themes of fidelity and betrayal, which infused his portrayals of friendship, class relations, and colonial encounters. Various images of traditional Filipino womanhood, particularly of the Virgin Mary, provided a recurring symbolic equivalent for the articulation of his nationalist ideals.

Finally, in the Conclusion, "Toward a Transnational Asian American Intellectual History," I argue for the importance of a Filipino American and an Asian American intellectual history that is simultaneously national and transnational. U.S. intellectual history remains sadly afflicted by American nationalism, a defensive stance toward transnational theories, and positive valorizations of "empire," ignoring the voices and perspectives of colonial and postcolonial subjects and intellectuals. American intellectual historians have also marginalized Asian Americans in the field of intellectual history. The challenge, I argue, is to construct a sound intellectual history that both brings together a concern for the nation and transpacific relations and connects Asian experiences on the American continent and in the Pacific world with critical histories of colonization, race, class, gender, ethnicity, and empire.

One will find in this book an approach that combines social history (especially as a reading of relations of patronage and reciprocity) with close, noncanonical readings of autobiographical and fictional texts. I have tried to analyze the important social and political relationships of my chosen Filipino American expatriate intellectuals, especially to the extent that such relationships impinged on their writings. I have paid particular attention to the elucidation of their texts for several reasons. First, there remains a need for synoptic readings that introduce the full range of Filipino American intellectual perspectives. Second, I strongly believe in the importance of high-

lighting Filipino American self-representations, not only because of their literary and aesthetic value, but also because postcolonial history and criticism cannot be taken seriously without the crucial perspectives of colonized intellectuals and a competent critical inventory of their ideas. And, third, I believe that intellectual historians must risk more readings of texts that respect their literary, aesthetic, and figurative properties but at the same time question unfounded claims to literature's autonomy from society and politics, which only isolate literature from history and vice versa.

This book would not have been possible without the active interest and participation of people from two continents and from the universities that provided me with positive intellectual environments. A postdoctoral fellowship from the University of California, Berkeley, Chancellor's Program in Academic Diversity, where I was resident from 2001 to 2002, was invaluable. I thank Waldo Martin, Paula Fass, Jon Gjerde, and Tyler Stovall of the Department of History and Ling-chi Wang of the Ethnic Studies Department for their encouragement and support.

I thank my colleagues in the History Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for providing such a conducive atmosphere for intellectual life and historical research, and particularly for their abiding interests in nationalism, transnationalism, colonial studies and postcolonial criticism, and the discourses of race, gender, and class, all of which have helped to enrich my own theoretical perspectives. I especially thank Jim Barrett, Antoinette Burton, Dave Roediger, Fred Hoxie, Poshek Fu, Clare Crowston, Chip Burkhardt, Peter Fritzsche, Mark Leff, Nils Jacobsen, Kristin Hoganson, Cynthia Radding, Ken Cuno, Caroline Hibbard, and Fanon Wilkins. In Asian American Studies, I would like to thank Martin Manalansan, whose work has inspired my own, Kent Ono, and Sharon Lee.

I would also like to thank Valerie Matsumoto, King-Kok Cheung, and Michael Salman at UCLA for their patience, wise counsel, and guidance over the years. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Michael Salman for his intellectual brilliance, his labors, and his boundless generosity. A special thanks also to Vicente Rafael, Carol, and Jack.

At the University of California, Irvine, I thank Yong Chen, Ketu Katrak, Linda Vo, and Glen Mimura; Douglas Haynes, David Theo Goldberg, Philomena Essed, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o for their support and friendship.

Various academic intellectuals in the Philippines provided invaluable help and welcomed me into their classrooms and offices. At the Ateneo de Manila, I thank the late Doreen Fernandez, Maria Luisa Torres Reyes, Cynthia Lumbea, Susan Evangelista, and Soledad S. Reyes. At the University of the Philippines, Diliman, I thank Gémino Abad, Franz Arcellana, Corazon D. Villareal, Priscelina Patajo-Legasto, Elmer A. Ordoñez, and Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo. I also thank the staff of the Philippine-American Educational Foundation, especially Alex Calata.

I sincerely thank members of the Romulo family, including Beth Day Romulo, Roberto Romulo, and Ricardo Romulo, who took time out from their busy schedules for interviews and also provided helpful leads for further research. I likewise thank Gigi, Amparo, and I. P. Santos for their hospitality, guidance, and enthusiasm for this project and introductions to the Romulo family.

My thanks go to the family and friends of the late Bienvenido N. Santos in Camarines Sur and Albay provinces who warmly received me and gave so generously of their time and energy: Arme Santos Tan, Lina Santos Cortes and Jean Oreta Cortes, Lourdes Santos and family, and Dr. Aster Mancera-Reganit. I thank Tomas Santos for his encouragement and insights, as well as Michele Santos for sharing her recollections of her grandfather.

I thank Eustaquia Bulosan, who showed me around the home of his older brother Carlos Bulosan in Binalonan, Pangasinan Province. The late P. C. Morante deserves special thanks for sharing his profound insights about his friend Carlos Bulosan, as well as for sharing articles and other writings. Morante intimately knew all the intellectual expatriates I have chosen to write about.

Finally, special thanks to the late N. V. M. Gonzalez, who was a formidable, loving, stimulating, and thoughtful friend; Narita Gonzalez, with whom I was fortunate to spend many a wonderful occasion in California, Manila, and Mindoro; Chitty-Chitty and Bang-Bang in Diliman, Quezon City, and other members of the Gonzalez family in Mindoro. I especially thank Michael Gonzalez at Stanford, who has been of invaluable support.

Special thanks go to the staffs of various Philippine libraries: the American Historical Collection, in particular Lewis Gleeck; the José Rizal Library Filipiniana Collection, Ateneo de Manila; the University of the Philippines Library Archives; the National Library, especially Director Adoracion M.

Bolos; Aquinas University (formerly Legazpi College) Library; and the University of Nueva Cáceres Library. Special thanks also go to Cherry Puruganan, curatorial assistant at the Ayala Museum, for her invaluable help with the Carlos P. Romulo Papers.

In the United States, I thank Karyl Winn, University of Washington, Manuscript Archives, for his patience and support for research on the Carlos Bulosan Papers, and the staff of the Wichita State University Manuscript Archives Collection for their meticulous care and research assistance with the Bienvenido N. Santos papers. Thanks also go to Fred Cordova and Dorothy Cordova of Seattle's National Pinoy Archives, and to Barbara Posadas.

I wish to thank the late José García Villa, with whom I corresponded, with the help of Luis Cabalquinto and Carlos Angeles. I thank Luis Francia for an early draft of his excellent essay on Villa. I send a special thank you to Hilario S. Francia in Manila for sharing his insights on Villa and his collection of articles. I also thank Robert King and Arthur Vanderborg, former Villa students and poets, for their candid recollections. My special thanks go to John Cowen, Villa's student, friend, and literary executor, for his invaluable insights into the "master," and his sharing of books and articles. I also thank Leonard Casper, Linda Casper, and Jessica Hagedorn for sharing their ideas and/or agreeing to be interviewed.

Members of my family helped to sustain me throughout this period of writing. I thank my mother and father, Michael and Concepcion Espiritu, for their patience, their support, their invaluable recollections of language, family, and history, and their research assistance. I also thank the rest of my extended family—the Espiritus, the Rosanos, and the Lorescos—for their belief and support. I thank Gil Gonzalez for his love and support, as well as Concepcion Bernardo, and the Gonzalez, Sison, and Robledo families.

Lastly, there would be no book without Anna K. Gonzalez whose love and companionship, and commitment to these five special Filipino men made all of this possible. Over the years, I have been fortunate to share in her passion for ideas, her commitment to social change, and her sense of humor. It is to her that this book is dedicated.