

Modern Philippine Poetry in the Formative Years: 1920-1950

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In the dawn
I shall talk to you of the Homeric sweep
Enfolding mountains and the sounding sea¹

MODERN PHILIPPINE POETRY in English originated in the 1920's and began to come of age in the 1930's. Although at the outset the poetry was overly sentimental and imitative, by the mid-1930's several poets had developed their art to a promising degree. Then advancement of Philippine poetry was halted by the Japanese occupation of World War II and by chaotic conditions in the first few post-war years. It was not until the 1950's, therefore, that the poetry finally matured. This curve of development in Philippine letters can be traced in the early works of three of the greatest Philippine writers of the modern period: Bienvenido N. Santos, N. V. M. Gonzalez, and Carlos Bulosan.

I

A man who got his start as a writer by penning love letters for friends² might naturally be expected to turn next to poetry: of an unpromising sort. This could even more confidently be predicted were we told that the models for his works were, in the beginning, Longfellow, Poe, and Bryant. Such was the case with Santos:

But those of us who write in English have had models; we cut our teeth on Hemingway, and Faulkner, Longfellow, Edgar Allan Poe. So we tended to like what was sing-song: "the melancholy days are here, / The saddest of the year, / Of wailing winds and

naked woods and meadows brown and sere, / Deep in the hollows of the grove autumn leaves lie dead / And they rustle to the gust and to the rabbit's tread." And that's the way we said it. William Cullen Bryant did that with the flowers. We didn't know anything about the changing of the seasons; never saw snow, either.³

Precisely in keeping with this background, Santos's early poems exhibited none of the characteristics which would, in the estimation of so discriminating a critic as Miguel Bernad, qualify his one published book of verse, vis-à-vis the poetry published by other authors in 1956, as "the most sophisticated."⁴ Instead, Santos affected a Poeian melancholia:

At Night

The ghosts of long, forgotten sins
Come haunting me at night;
They trail about my midnight dreams
In forms of ghastly white.

Out of their lips flow ragged tones —
They tremble on my soul —
Why didn't you sigh? Why did you sing
Those words I can't recall?

Their laughter rings across the dark
And scars my dizzy brain —
Why didn't you cry? Why did you laugh?
I caused you so much pain.

They come to me, bend o'er my bed
And smile with sunken eyes —
Why didn't you weep? Why did you smile
When all my words were lies?

These ghosts of long forgotten sins
Come haunting me at night;
They trail about my midnight dreams
In forms of ghastly white.⁵

This combination of the Gothic twilight hallmarked in *A Christmas Carol* and the Byronic frenzy of *Manfred*, stemming from a mysterious misdeed in the distant past, is made even fuzzier by the gap between the emotional demands of the piece and the occasion for them. The ghosts of sins berate our narrator, not for

a hideous offence, but for failure to cry, sigh, and weep, and for indulgence in laughter, singing, and smiling. Similarly, the almost comic expression "trail about" suggests nothing so much as a group aimlessly meandering. One usually thinks of ghosts, even in dreams, as being more purposive and forceful.

The bathos of the plaintive melody "Far, Far Away" is nearby in "Tale":

Within my house the light is pale
 And dim; but here have I returned
 To whisper to these walls the tale
 Of hate and love that nearly burned,
 And seared my heart on Christmas day
 Some years ago, far far away.

The night is cold; and up I rise
 And feel the chill December wind
 Blow o'er my face; and to disguise
 My sorrow, and this anguish keen,
 I smile and say with feigned delight:
 Oh, what a merry Christmas night.

I feel the breeze pass through the thin,
 And tattered piece of cloth I wear;
 I hear the clanging bells that din
 The night — cold notes upon the air —
 A joy is sweeping o'er the land —
 I know, I feel, I understand.

The bells ring on and melt away,
 And still the pain is in my soul,
 But even then I smile and say:
 A merry Christmas to you all.
 And with the words there drop the tears
 That I have kept through these years.

Within my house, the light is pale
 And dim; but here have I returned
 And whispered to these walls the tale
 Of hate and love that nearly burned.
 And seared my heart on Christmas day
 Some years ago, far, far away.⁶

The general aura of wispieness about the poem, produced by the "dim" "pale" lighting, the "whispered" tale (whose content

is not revealed), that "nearly" (meaning almost? close by?) "burned," and the distancing of the tragic tale in years, is of course a stock effect.

And the Philippine milieu during Santos's formative years was conducive to this archaic effusiveness. The six poems presented by Hadwen Williams in an inexcusably chauvinistic (even bigoted) and sneering article⁷ nonetheless do show the deleterious results produced by a combination of factors in the intellectual environment of the late 1920's: the florid legacy of Spanish verse, the struggle for mastery of the English language still underway by the practicing poets of the time, and the (probably unconscious, at least for the most part) carryover from practices in dialect poetry. Two examples of the extremes produced by these forces should demonstrate that Santos was not at all in the worst way with his poetic practice at the time:

SOMEBODY'S SISTER

(by Eusebia Pablo)

Do leave her alone,
Betray her not:
For innocence is sweet
And kindness is blest.
Wrong her not,
Thou wouldst know
Of the bitter tears that flow.
Let purity remain;
'Tis a gift divine.
In her heart will be enshrined.
Cause no regrets
Be sincere and true;
remember EVERY GIRL
IS SOMEBODY'S SISTER!

Awakening

(by Luis Dato)

'Tis time this heart indiffererent —
To love so long,
Should rise from slumber innocent
And stroll among
The gardens that are heaven-sent.

The butterflies' unholy quest
 From vase to pot
 For wine within the petals' nest,
 Will guide me not
 As it profanely guides the rest.

But it is time this heart so long
 Indifferent
 For years and years should stroll along
 Where cupid went
 One day and listened to his song.

The *non-sequitur* in the last two lines of "SOMEBODY'S SISTER" fortunately does not have a parallel in "Awakening," but the latter's echo of Emily Dickinson in its second stanza is not accompanied by the charm of "I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed." The resultant triviality of the ascription of moral agency to a butterfly narrowly misses unintentional humour.

II

N. V. M. Gonzalez's poems in the January 1934 issue of *Poetry* magazine,⁸ on the other hand, reflect the best achievement of Philippine poetry in English at this period. But even Gonzalez's direction was uncertain. Instead of composing his own music, he was performing the arias of others. Still, we can be grateful for a poem like "Circus Song." Had he been content with only the first two stanzas:

I am a juggler
 Of hazardous moments.

My oranges are real oranges,
 And I eat them all
 when my show is over

we could have been convinced that the Filipino Wallace Stevens was among us. A casual comparison of these five lines to Stevens's "Someone Puts a Pineapple Together" should convince us that the similarities are deeper than the selection of a fruit for a subject. James Baird has put his finger upon the central consideration: "The vision of the object *qua* object recalls the method of Cézanne, not that, certainly, of the cubists. There is movement

here, as opposed to cubist stasis."⁹ Not only is the motion pronounced, but, as Baird goes on to explain on the next page, "No matter what the degree of his delight in geometric order, Stevens always holds to the plane, or like Cézanne, to the cone and the sphere as elements of structure beneath the artist's play of light and shadow, colour and movement, over the face of nature." From the conical structure of the orange and from the apparent tragedy recounted, however casually, in an otherwise superfluous last stanza ("My daggers — ah, / One of them pricked the heart of / my Antoinetta") we can detect the same mistrust of a world constructed with a protractor.

The ambiguity of Gonzalez's poem is also strikingly Stevensian, because of Stevens's acquiescence in "... nature ... with Stevens it moves in a pattern willed by the observer's self alone, and it displays nothing save the reality made by the imagination."¹⁰ If we take the first stanza of "Circus Song" to mean "I am an arranger (in control) of hazardous moments" we can see the second stanza as concrete proof of the juggler's manipulation of the counters of reality (his powers are not merely sleight-of-hand) and the third stanza not as a fatal slip, but as a description of an affective success along the lines that Cupid's darts are customarily assumed to make.

This does not mean that we can dismiss the surface meaning, that the circus performer, like Jay Gatsby fumbling with the clock he nearly knocks from the mantelpiece in Fitzgerald's unforgettable scene, has a very tenuous fingerhold on events. In this latter case, the second stanza serves as a graphic reminder that the juggler's sustenance comes in the material (real) world, not in the abstract and thus elusive realm of time. How incapable the human is in these matters may then be deduced from the third stanza, which shows the loss of control any human being may experience in his surroundings, even in a palpable environment. The subtle touch of "pricked" rather than, say, "pierced," in line seven contributes to this way of seeing the poem. The slip is slight, the mastery just out of reach. In this second reading, we might be inclined to inquire why the juggler selects hazardous moments for his act when his control is not assured. Why does he not stick to oranges, instead of going in for dangers? Again, ever so subtly,

one word offers an answer: "all." The show, if confined to organic entities, is self-consuming; if one confines his "act" to materiality he will soon exhaust its possibilities (that is unless "when my show is over" is assumed to mean "when the final curtain of life is dropped").

"At Puerto" overextends its controlling personification: "Like a cigarette, / the lighthouse sits between the lips of the harbor, / and the smoker spreads his arms upon the sea / to receive the shadow of ships." The last two lines of this sequence border upon unintentional parody. But the last line of the poem, "to frighten the ghost of little sea-horses," taken together with the striking visuality (and the particular setting) of the first two lines, shows the author's evolution from the tradition of H.D. to the modernism of *To the Lighthouse*. "Virginia," again, lunges for its meaning instead of arriving gracefully at it, and so also risks seeming overly cute: ". . . the dawn that draws / its stealthy feet / upon the hills, and leaves / but the wetness on the grass / to tell of the mists that have settled and gone." This is too close for comfort to a Sandburgian fog approaching on cat's feet. Fortunately these last five lines are arresting enough to distract attention from the opening statement of the obvious: "You have a secret / but you are silent about it."

Questioning of the logic, even allowing duly for poetic license, must also be extended to "The Lady on the Operating-Table," which introduces us to a Tennysonian idealized lady with golden hair. We begin exquisitely, but flirtatiously close to the precious: "she is asleep / on the arms of night, / and the fingers of dreams / are playing upon her hair." Although this sounds suspiciously like a levitation act of the kind that might have been made a part of "Circus Song," we need not quibble. Night and dreams are normally related and it is not too much to ask the reader to assume that both be considered parts of the intangible body which nature here assumes. Even the cliché which opens the second stanza ("Her hair is golden / Like the tassels of young corn"), might be forgiven, but the next two lines pose a difficult comprehension problem. What are we to make of "but the fingers of dreams are violet for want of the blood of reality"? Does this mean that the dream fingers do not contain blood? If so, we would expect them to be

blue, perhaps, or white; but why violet? Or does this mean that there is blood in these fingers, but that it is violet rather than the usual red? If so, what is the significance, symbolic or otherwise, of this phenomenon?

The next stanza confronts us with an unpalatable image hardly in keeping with the dreamy, soothing picture painted by stanza one: "Transfuse the blood of my love / into the body of her dreams." Not only does this make the Lady in question appear to have been the victim of an accident, but it also raises the question of what "the blood of my love" is precisely. Is love to be taken as "blood," metaphorically? Or is "blood" only one (but perhaps the most important) of several components of "love"? Is our narrator giving only the "blood" of his love (while retaining whatever other ingredients are left) or is he giving his love because it is "blood"?

The fourth stanza only adds to the confusion. After "she will awake / upon the light of morning," which is fine, we get "with the blush of sunshine on her cheeks." One might more reasonably attribute the rise in colour to the extra pint of love flowing in her dreams, if he has been following the progression of the previous few stanzas. How does sunshine produce the blush? This, admittedly, is a minor objection, except that it sets up an irresistibly funny (and almost certainly accidentally so) concluding stanza: "But, without the blood of my love, / what shall I be?" This is trivial, an all too literal statement of the moment of doubt experienced by the potential donor before yielding to the importuning of blood drive workers. Our response to this not necessarily rhetorical question is likely to be "a bit weak for a few minutes, perhaps."

Gonzalez, however, was not a fully-accomplished poet in the 1930's. In his two very good poems, "At Puerto" and "Circus Song," he tried to do too much. "Virginia," conversely, attempts too little; it is a nice thought, but one that easily could have graced the pages of a popular home magazine. "The Lady on the Operating Table" suffers a breakdown in logic, though its latent possibilities are manifest. We need only recollect Eliot's "evening spread out against the sky / like a patient etherized upon a table" to see what might have been. These, however, are effects rather

than causes. Gonzalez, not at all astonishingly, considering his age, had not settled upon his poetic direction. He took one tentative step to meet Stevens; he advanced the other foot toward Virginia Woolf; he took a step backward in the direction of either Tennyson or Edna St. Vincent Millay. The result was a performance virtuoso in terms of promise but uneven in execution. Santos, for his part, was at this stage perfectly sure of his way, but it was the wrong way.

III

Philippine poetry, however, did not remain long at this stage. With the onset of the Commonwealth, as poetry shifted from accolades for the "sunsets over Manila Bay" to the tough-minded business of social commentary, its writers took a long step toward parity with respected European and American practitioners of the art. If no other beneficial result can be attributed to the "proletarian" turn which Philippine literature took in the 1930's, at least one is undeniable: the guiding of poets away from the shoals of metronomic rhythm and tinkling rhyme. Verse blank to the point of being prosaic became fashionable, although the best of the poets with this orientation heeded Salvador P. Lopez's warning not to sacrifice technique on the altar of theme. His *Literature and Society*¹¹ remains must reading for anyone who wishes to understand the *raison d'être* of works such as Carlos Bulosan's "Night-Piece," the first stanza of which reads:

Mysterious, profound, mute,
The night sprawls under moonlight —
Knotless cables tied to the streets,
Synergy of truth ever present, giving
Time to what Hope delays!
O City of strangled throats and deep-set eyes,
Give meaning to the muffled cry of millions
Who perish behind screened windows, answer
The namelessness of these young faces!¹²

The first four lines, in particular, possess enough evocative power to more than compensate for the eighteenth-century personifications later in the stanza, and for the forest of exclamation points which are a certain indicator of the anticlimax of stanza two.

Scattered felicities from other poems corroborate the point at issue here: Philippine poetry's not-to-be-sneezed-at achievement and much-to-be-cultivated promise by the later 1930's. In "Biography" Bulosan controlled the exclamatory, even hysterical tone which invaded so much of his work. The poem begins with quiet assurance:

There was no end of sadness.
 When winter came and sprawled over
 The trees and houses, a man rose from
 His sleep and kissed his wife who wept.
 A child was born. Delicately the film
 Of his life unfolded like a coral sea,
 Where stone is a hard substance of wind¹³

Although the rest of the piece unfortunately does not maintain this even keel nor does it again foment a simile with the impact of the one in the last three lines quoted here, this portion does exhibit talent realized, at least in small compass.¹⁴

Without stumbling, Bulosan's "No Story"¹⁵ risks pathetic fallacy along with personification for two lines: "Grass repeats the story of the wind. / It bends down on glassy knees and whispers to the earth." But in line three we get the clumsy tongue twister "The earth laughs lovelily and poisons its leaves." How the poisoning is done we never find out. Line four works, but in line five we are informed, with all seriousness, apparently, that snow "is spineless." Not terribly profound, nor does this get us very far with theme. Bad becomes worse next: "When the sun burns / Its stoves, it emerges into the earth." "Emerges" is, baldly, a malapropism for "merges," and "sun burns / Its stoves" make it sound as though the stove itself, rather than the combustible material customarily consumed within it, is what goes up in flames. We begin with Wordsworthian increase in knowledge from proximity to nature, but quickly are befuddled and shocked with stories of earth poisoning its leaves, the sun burning its stoves (before "emerging" into the homicidal earth) and then, after this excursus, we find out that, after all, the sun has nothing to say, although it does appear to consent to "give the words / Of a story that the earth whispers to the grass." We are never privileged, however, to hear this story. We might well ask whether the

thematic game is worth the reading candle in this poem. The problem here is simply divided direction. If what is closest to the poet's heart is allegory, then the poem must unabashedly proceed in that genre. If a pastoral of some description is at the back of the poet's brain, then he must deliver himself of that, unmixed with an incompatible ingredient of allegory. As it stands, the poem is intriguing (or at least a challenge to puzzle out), but its value is debatable.

"Monuments" is in precisely the same predicament. It begins very well indeed, presenting us such breathtaking phrases as "silence stood without shoes":

All night the sun rushed in monosyllables
 To the shore, where rocks and reefs loomed
 Majestically and silence stood without shoes;
 And the foam crept to the edges of darkness
 Burning its inflammable garments . . .

Unaccountably, however, the poet, without any warning whatsoever, injects the formal diction and syntax of a political oration, shattering the quietude of tone and the relaxed assurance of the verse movement. What we get by way of substitution is leaden, artificial, static:

Water activities showed delight and humor.

Silence, imperial silence, I have felt your beauty
 In the hour of formlessness; it cupped me up
 Like an autumn wind moving into space.
 Monumental silence, I too have something to tell,
 I too have a passion to arise, and the honor
 To possess this passion —¹⁶

It would take a far greater poet than Bulosan to succeed, in 1936, with not one, but two, apostrophes to silence. And when the grandiloquence of the qualifiers "imperial" and "monumental" has had its way, the poet's task is what is monumental. This is more so after the effete "Water activities showed delight and humor." What water activities? How can activity "show delight and humor"? A completely undefined personification simply has no chance to have any positive impact, particularly when accompanied by a narrator who seems to have come straight from Jane

Austen: "I too have a passion to arise, and the honor to possess this passion — ." Writing with an imprudent and unaccustomed level of diction and stiff syntax, Bulosan loses control over his thought. How one can "feel" beauty in an hour of formlessness, even if one surrenders all rational preconceptions in the hope of being transported by this synesthesia, I simply cannot imagine. Nor is it easy to do much with "an autumn wind moving into space," as though it were a space probe.

But Philippine poetry, as these examples from Gonzalez and Bulosan show, did take an enormous step forward in the decade 1925-1935. There is every indication that, had the Japanese Occupation not intervened to halt, for all practical purposes, at least, Philippine literature for four years and alter its course permanently, the works which just missed excellence by world standards in the later 1930's would have heralded a literature for which no apologetic qualifiers would have been necessary in just a few more years.

IV

During the Occupation, poetry in the Philippines was forced into a holding pattern. Since "it was impossible at the moment to externalize what one felt and thought," a great majority of the verses published during the Occupation cannot be looked upon as poetry.¹⁷ Santos's poetic career followed the development curve of Philippine poetry in general. He was caught in the United States for the duration, but still suffered arrested development as a poet during the war. Perhaps the overwhelming emotional involvement of the war effort, or the continuous anxiety about conditions at home, account for this interlude, which one would not have expected, granted the stimulation and increased knowledge made available by his M.A. work at the University of Illinois and the vastly enlarged stock of visual perspectives made possible by his travel around the country, making speeches on behalf of the Philippine government-in-exile.

However this may be, a few lines from a poem like "The March of Death" suffice to show how little above the level of, say, Fred Ruiz Castro's "Bataan"¹⁸ Santos's verse of this period generally is:

Were you one of them, my brother,
Whom they marched under the April sun
And flogged to bleeding along the roads we knew and loved?

*March, my brother, march!
The springs are clear beyond the road
There is rest at the foot of the hill.*

We were young together,
So very young and unafraid;
Walking those roads, dusty in the summer sun,
Brown pools and mud in the December rains;
Ran barefoot along the beaten tracks in the canefields,
Planted corn after the harvest months.¹⁹

Blank verse was never suited to the poetic proclivities of Santos, particularly when it was used as the vehicle for an occasional poem. Santos's forte is the universal, not the particular (which might more reasonably be left to poets sharing the commitment of, for instance, Amador Hernandez), the ritual, not the habitual. Small wonder, then, that the result is so utterly prosaic, even pedestrian. Notwithstanding that one might make some allowance for the call of duty in writing poetry at this time, especially for *Philippines* magazine, the flowering of the poet was to be postponed until the post-war era.

Striking, however, is the celerity with which the transformation occurred. No sooner was the Pacific war ended when Santos's lyric gifts could blossom, even in a poem still directly tied to the events of the world conflict just ended:

Hasten My Dream

Rome was too far, like a lonely road curving
away from my heart
And farther north was nearer
Where the bells ring loud like thunder clap
And death lies quiet under the tall grass.

Now I hear, it's London
Where the fog lifts after forever;
And soon after, home again, the lonely road,
the bright curving road leading to my
heart.

Hurry, hurry now
 Before the summer pigeons look elsewhere for
 crumbs beneath trees
 More shady, more green;
 Hurry, hurry now
 Before the tan of my skin gives way to the
 paleness of waiting.²⁰

Although stanza two is typical newspaper poetry and the first and third stanzas still contain remnants of the technique of the early thirties, the improvement over the work of a decade before is dramatic and the signs of what was to come in the next ten years are everywhere apparent.

Unfortunately, Santos cannot help but construct "a lonely road curving away from my heart" (a vein perhaps?), nor can we get through a poem even of this length without reference to pallor. But the classical allusion which soon established itself as an indispensable feature of the verse of the mature Santos nearly redeems the metaphor (allegory? analogy? It is hard to be sure), with its compact reversal of the "all roads lead to Rome" slogan. Too, there may be a Christian meaning in the place name, as well as a reference to the change in official political allegiance from Axis to Allied. Why the narrator is located somewhere to the north, looking south along the road, I have not been able to determine. But proximity to Rome (spiritually, no doubt, as much as geographically) is a virtue, as it is in "Maecenas": "Maecenas, give me just a room, it need not be clean / And well lighted nor stand beside a Roman river."²¹ And so, in at least one other poem, is "north": "the lure of northern lakes under the moon, / Footprints on driven snow, strange blooms and ways: / And you have the answer to all seeking, / Why the heart alone never loses count."²² The features of nature so familiar in *The Wounded Stag* poems (e.g., in "Epilogue to Betrayal," where "Here in my cell in the dying April / I have wished for green wood and the dry"²³) are also introduced here. The Marvellian green world is one of life, growth, and vitality, and the debt to the author of "To His Coy Mistress" could hardly be discharged more publicly than with "Hurry, hurry now," as an immediately succeeding line to "More shady, more green."

When bells ring, peace is signalled, again in obvious observance of Christian (even specifically Christmas) custom. Although death is present, it lies "quiet" under reassuringly "tall grass" (violence has not been present for some time). In "Ministry"'s obviously religious context, the line "praying for peace deeper than bell sounds" speaks for itself. Earlier, we are told of "an electric bug weaving / Its aimless way under the dimming lights / Of green mansions." These edifices might as well have been "bright mansions above," granted the heavily Donne-like (in the sense of the Holy Sonnets) character of the first stanza. In "Music For One"

There is hope that perhaps tonight you may
 Yet behold beauty in all the graces
 That beauty takes when music means
 And music tells what truly youth faces
 When the night is over and a shadow leans
 On a ruined tower as the bells
 Keep tolling the melancholy hour
 Past all hope is what the music tells.²⁴

Although it is "the melancholy hour" and the tower is "ruined," a sense of peace, rather than sadness, again accompanies the "tolling" bells. The night is over and there is hope that beauty may be beheld in all its graces. In the last three lines, one can even imagine that melancholy hours are what are being tolled out of existence and that "Past all hope" means "beyond our fondest expectations" rather than "after all hope has been exhausted." Tranquility is pervasive; "a shadow leans" in a way that makes sense granted that in this poem "music tells what truly youth faces / When the night is over": "Music slumbering upon her instrument." "Indeed Green is Magnificent" has a lizard "Come forth to seek with hungry soul the sound / Of tolling bell ringing in the morning."²⁵ Here again, "tolling" is not ominous; the otherwise redundant "ringing" is inserted to make that clear. In "Credo" the conjunction of bells and peace is directly stated: "Meanwhile across the lakes the bells rang in / The peace, twice ringing, louder each time."²⁶

The one disturbing note in "Hasten My Dream" is the men-

tion of thunder, but it is safely muffled in a simile, so that it does not carry the destructive potential of "Moments of Thunder":

This is another moment of thunder
 Mushrooms shooting up the earth
 Frightened into growth. Young tendrils
 That kill, gather them to your breast,
 But be gentle, be soft
 And there will not be another such moment —
 Only this blinding rain and tears
 For long for long.²⁷

One can almost imagine this frightening tableau as surrealistic if he accounts for the absence of "through" after "up" in line two as meant to suggest that the mushrooms "shoot up the earth" in the same sense that the villains in a cowboy movie "shoot up the town." The effect is more startling when the ambiguous reference of "Frightened into growth" is taken into account. Perhaps it is the earth that is "frightened into growth," a not impossible reading granted Santos's assertion in the title of another poem of "Growth a Nightmare."

By age 34, Santos had turned to the devices and the themes which sustained the poetry of his maturity. Upon his return to the Philippines, he found that poetry there was also on the threshold of a breakthrough.²⁸ Although Gonzalez and Bulosan turned primarily to fiction, other poetic voices were prepared to "talk to you of the Homeric sweep / Enfolding mountains and the sounding sea."

NOTES

- 1 "In Fair Exchange," *The Wounded Stag* (Quezon City: Capitol, 1956), p. 24.
- 2 Colleen Criss Brown, "Past Lunarcy," *Wichitan* 2, no. 11 (November 1975), n.p.
- 3 Interview with L. M. Grow, Wichita, Kansas, April 1975.
- 4 "Philippine Bibliographical Survey: 1956," *Philippine Studies* 5, no. 1 (March 1957), p. 81.
- 5 *Philippines Free Press* 27, no. 23 (June 10, 1933), p. 65.
- 6 *Philippines Free Press* 26, no. 50 (December 10, 1932), p. 106.
- 7 "Philippine Poetry," *Poet Lore* 40 (June 1929), pp. 288-94.
- 8 Vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 198-99. Fortunately, the early spelling of his name as "Gonzales" has not created bibliographical confusion, since "N.V.M." is a unique combination of initials.

- ⁹ *The Dome and the Rock: Structure in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1968), p. 83.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- ¹¹ Manila: University Publishing Company, 1941.
- ¹² *Poetry* 50, no. 6 (September 1937), p. 327.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 326.
- ¹⁴ In a sardonic twist of real-life irony which will be appreciated by anyone who knows Bulosan's *America Is In The Heart*, the poems are consistently attributed to the mythically anglicized "Carl Bulosan" by *Poetry* magazine in its issues of 1936 and 1937; "Carlos Bulosan" emerges in August 1938. Ironically enough, granted the totally different ideological bearing of the two, Bulosan's works share some of the same flaws as the works of Gonzalez, and (coincidentally?) it is in *Poetry* magazine where "Gonzalez" is converted into "Gonzales." Both poets suffer a sea change in identity while their works are crossing the Pacific for publication, and their works are among the first to be prominently featured in an American poetry journal of major stature.
- ¹⁵ *Poetry* 47, no. 5 (February 1936), p. 266.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 266-67.
- ¹⁷ Teodoro Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years: Japan's Adventure in the Philippines, 1941-1945*, II, 613, 614.
- ¹⁸ *The Washington Post*, May 7, 1944, Section II, p. 1B; orig. pub. *Philippines* (March 1944).
- ¹⁹ *Philippine Review* 1, no. 3 (May 1943), p. 41.
- ²⁰ *The Washington Post*, September 15, 1945, p. 6.
- ²¹ *The Wounded Stag*, p. 71.
- ²² "Anniversary," *The Wounded Stag*, pp. 62-63. The "winter wonderland" atmosphere of enchantment and exoticism points to the symbolic content of the climate.
- ²³ *The Wounded Stag*, p. 41.
- ²⁴ *This Week Magazine* (of the *Manila Chronicle*), September 11, 1949; rptd. in *The Wounded Stag*, p. 42. "Ministry" appeared in the (Manila) *Evening News Saturday Magazine*, March 22, 1947, and was reprinted on pp. 16-17 of *The Wounded Stag*.
- ²⁵ *The Wounded Stag*, p. 44.
- ²⁶ (Manila) *Evening News Saturday Magazine* 3, no. 30 (April 24, 1948); rptd. in *The Wounded Stag*, p. 66.
- ²⁷ *The Wounded Stag*, p. 30.
- ²⁸ Two landmark events in the first few post-war years were the publication of anthologies compiled by Manuel A. Viray: *Heart of the Island: An Anthology of Philippine Poetry in English* (Manila: University Publishing Company, 1947) and *Philippine Poetry Annual: 1947-1949* (Manila: Barangay Press, 1950). The former, for instance, contains no fewer than nine Santos poems, including a number of his best.
- Viray's influence on the post-war literary milieu was pivotal because of his periodical contributions as well. His articles appeared frequently and, since they were often printed "on the pages of such magazines as the *Herald Mid-Week Magazine*, *This Week*, the *Sunday Times Magazine*,

and similar publications,"²⁹ reached the entire audience at all interested in literary affairs, not merely the academic few. The titles of his articles in *This Week Magazine* in August 1948 alone suggest wide appeal: "Filipino Writing in English" (August 8, pp. 12, 30, 35); "A Measure of Greatness" (August 15, pp. 12, 31, 34); "A Writer's Responsibility" (August 22, pp. 12, 13, 31, 34); and "Writing and Reality" (August 29, pp. 12-13, 36).

But, valuable though these articles were, they were quasi-journalism. Until the early 1950's, Philippine poetry suffered from the lack of a matrix of literary scholarship. As even David Quemada, one of the most positive and constructive figures in the rise of Philippine literary criticism, was forced to admit: "Much of the confusion in Filipino poetic standards and the growth of bad poetry in the Philippines today has been caused by inadequate editors and critics."³⁰ Then such journals as *Philippine Studies*, *The Diliman Review*, and *The Silliman Journal* were founded.

Viray was among the leaders in the movement to establish a solid base of literary scholarship in the Philippines. He contributed significant articles to *The Literary Apprentice* in 1951 ("New Vesture and Meaning," pp. 92-95) and 1953 "'Contingency' and 'Insight' in Some Filipino Stories," pp. 62-75) and *Pacific Spectator* in 1952 ("Certain Influences in Filipino Writing," v. 6, no. 3, Summer 1952, pp. 292-99). When new journals sprang up to provide space for serious dialogue about literary matters, Viray was often contributing to the issues of the first year of publication. Such was the case with the short-lived *Philippines Quarterly* ("Writing Then and Now," v. 1, no. 1, pp. 442-46), the equally evanescent *Philippine Review* ("Writers Without Readers," June 1952, pp. 16, 18-21), and *The Diliman Review* ("A New Perspective for Philippine Writing," v. 1, no. 4, October 1953, pp. 359-72). Viray's acumen is as impressive as his prolific output. He was among the first to appreciate Santos, for instance, and his early *Diliman Review* article ("The Poetry of Bienvenido N. Santos," v. 1, no. 3, July 1953, pp. 281-91) remains well worth reading.

²⁹ Ricaredo S. Demetillo, "The State of Philippine Criticism," in *Brown Heritage: Essays on Philippine Cultural Tradition and Literature*, ed. Antonio P. G. Manuud (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1967), p. 702.

³⁰ "Major Influences on Seven Leading Philippine Poets in English," *The Silliman Journal* 1, no. 3 (July 1954), p. 55.