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### Writing the Nation

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# **Writing the Nation**

## **Transculturation and Nationalism in Hispano-Filipino Literature from the Early Twentieth Century**



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**PhD Dissertation, Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis,  
University of Amsterdam**

Cover artwork: Carlos V. “Botong” Francisco, *The cockfight*, 1948.

Pencil and Water Color, 12.6 x 16.9 in (32 x 43 cm)

**Writing the Nation**  
**Transculturation and Nationalism in Hispano-Filipino**  
**Literature from the Early Twentieth Century**

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## Introduction

In 2016, the Spanish TV series *El Ministerio del Tiempo* [The Ministry of Time] dedicated two episodes to the Siege of Baler (1898-1899), a battle in the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898) against the Spanish colonial empire. The two episodes, called *Tiempo de Valientes I y II* [Time to be Brave I and II], were filmed outside Madrid in November 2015, turning the cold Spanish winter into the tropical Philippines of 1898. The episodes tell the story of how a Spanish battalion fighting the Filipino independence guerrilla garrisoned the church in the village of Baler (on the eastern coast of Luzon Island) and resisted Filipino rebels for 337 days. Cut off from communication with the Spanish government, the soldiers were unaware that, during this time, the Spanish-American War had ended in Spanish surrender and the annexation of the Philippines Islands by the Americans. The Spanish soldiers could have avoided their ordeal if they had not been led by the stubborn Captain Martín Cerezo, who, rather than believe the news of the end of war brought by the (possibly conspiring) Tagalog, decided to stay in the church, where his men struggled with illnesses, hunger, deaths and internal conspiracies.<sup>1</sup> Since these episodes aired on public Spanish TV, the Philippines has reappeared in public conversation, prompting interest in this bit of relatively unknown history that connects Spain and the Philippines.<sup>2</sup>

Traditionally, in Spanish history textbooks, the Philippines appear only as the third element in a formulaic enunciation about the crisis of 1898 caused by the loss of the last three Spanish colonies: Puerto Rico, Cuba *and the Philippines*. Teachers of Spanish also do not tend to mention the Philippines, as it is not among the 21 official Spanish-speaking countries in the world. Spanish in the Philippines is not and never was the language of communication

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<sup>1</sup> In 1945, film director Antonio Román made a film about the same story entitled *Los Últimos de Filipinas* [The Last of the Philippines], coining an expression that is now used by the Spanish to refer to someone who arrives fashionably late. In 2016, Salvador Caso, the scriptwriter of *El Ministerio del Tiempo*, directed a remake of this film called *1898. Los Últimos de Filipinas* [1898, The Last from the Philippines], further contributing to the resurgence of interest in the relationship between Spain and the Philippines.

<sup>2</sup> On the national Spanish television channel RTVE, about 80% of the TV programs and telenovelas are currently historical. Popular instances include *Isabel*, which recounts the biography of the catholic queen Isabel (1451-1504), *Águila Roja*, which depicts Golden Ages monarchical intrigues in Madrid, *La Señora*, about the II Republic, *Cuéntame*, about the Franco dictatorship and *El Ministerio del Tiempo*, which mixes history with science fiction. In the latter, a time travelling team composed of a 2015 young ambulance doctor, a soldier from the sixteenth century who fought against the Flemish, the first woman to enter university in Cataluña and even a member of the Inquisition attempt to maintain history the way it has been written. Sanctioned to travel through time by a state ministry and provided with smartphones, the team catches criminals who wish to change history. Even if these historical television programmes are still told from the perspective of the Spanish, they bring “forgotten” or “unknown” histories into current conversations and allow for a certain reflection on Spanish colonialism and its lingering imprint.

among the majority of the population. At most, it was the language of the metropolis, the colonial government and the creole elite.

The focus of this study is not a single “forgotten” event of colonial history in the Philippines, but the way in which Spanish-speaking authors in the early twentieth-century Philippines used the language of the former coloniser to shape and assert a new cultural and national identity for the country, which was still under American rule but aspired to independence. The study of Hispanophone literatures is mainly concerned with the peninsular and Latin American texts that constitute the canon. Literature in Spanish written by peripheral writers of the past and the present (including second-generation migrants in Spain) is still relatively unexplored and invisible in most Spanish curriculums.<sup>3</sup> This study aims to bridge that gap by shedding light on a little-known corpus of texts written in Spanish by Filipino authors.

Three of the works I analyse in this study belong to the collection of *Clásicos Hispanofilipinos*, a project of literary revival started by the Cervantes Institute in Manila in 2009. Adelina Gurrea Monasterio (1896-1971) inaugurated the classics collection with a work entitled *Cuentos de Juana, leyendas malayas de las islas Filipinas* (1943) [Juana’s stories. Malayan Legends of the Philippine Islands] (Figure 1).<sup>4</sup> The book is a collection of short stories set in the colonial Philippines, on the central islands of Los Negros, where the family of the author lived and where she grew up before moving to Spain at the age of 25, never returning to the Philippines. *Cuentos de Juana* recounts her childhood memories and the stories that her nanny, a Malay Filipina called Juana, told her and her siblings. In addition to *Cuentos de Juana*, I will also analyse some of Gurrea’s poems from the collections *En Agraz* (1968) [Before Time] and *Más Senderos* (1867) [More Paths], and a play entitled *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* (1951) [Philippines: a Historical-Satirical Allegory].

The second work from the classics collection is a novel written by journalist, poet and novelist Jesús Balmori (1887-1946). Entitled *Los pájaros de fuego, una novela filipina de la guerra* [Birds of Fire, a Filipino War Novel] (Figure 2), it was written in 1945 but not published until 2009 as part of the classics collection. The novel is believed to be one of the few novels written in the Philippines during World War II. It tells the story of an aristocratic

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<sup>3</sup> See Ana Rueda’s *El retorno/el reencuentro. La inmigración en la literatura hispano-marroquí* (2010) and Critián H. Ricci’s *¡Hay moros en la costa! Literatura marroquí fronteriza en castellano y catalán* (2016) or the narratives of the Ecuatorial Guinean authors Juan Balboa Boneke (1938-2014) and Donato Ndong (1950- ) (*El Metro*, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Most of the literature that constitutes the corpus has not been translated into English, with the exception of Gurrea’s *Cuentos de Juana*, the translation of which was the focus of Perla Palabrica’s doctoral dissertation (1999). All translations in this study are, therefore, my own unless otherwise indicated.

family of Spanish blood living in Manila in the years leading up to the Japanese occupation (1942-1945). Additionally, I analyse Balmori's poetry, focusing on three poems contained in the poetry collections *Rimas Malayas* (1904) [Malayan Rhymes] and *Mi casa de Nipa* (1941) [My house of Nipa].



Figure 1



Figure 2

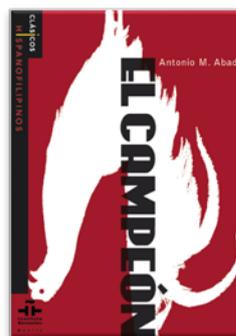


Figure 3

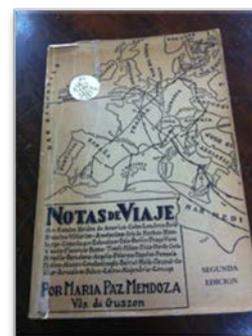


Figure 4

Figure 1: *Cuentos de Juana. Narraciones Malayas de las Islas Philippinas*. Ed. Clásicos Hispanofilipinos. Ilustración Miguel Lasa, 2009; Figure 2: *Los Pájaros de fuego. Una novela filipina de la guerra*. Ed. Clásicos Hispanofilipinos. Ilustración Miguel Lasa, 2010; Figure 3: *El Campeón*. Ed. Clásicos Hispanofilipinos. Ilustración Miguel Lasa, 2012; Figure 4: *Notas de viaje*. Ed. Benipayo Press, 1946.

The third title from the collection is *El Campeón* (1940) [The Champion] (Figure 3), written by one of the most committed *hispanistas* of the American period in the Philippines, Antonio Abad (1894-1970). Abad was a professor of Spanish at various universities, a journalist and a writer. *El Campeón* is a fable about Filipino cockfighting set on the island of Cebu, the rural birthplace of the author and the place where he spent most of the 1940s, fleeing the agitated life in Manila in the years leading up to WWII.<sup>5</sup>

The final work in my selected corpus has not been reedited since its first publication in 1929. It is thus not part of the classics collection but was located during my fieldwork in the Philippines. *Notas de viaje* (1929) [Travel Notes] (Figure 4) is a compilation of travel notes written by Maria Paz Mendoza Guazón (1884-1967) on a trip around the world (visiting the US, Cuba, Europe and the Middle East) that lasted for almost two years. Mendoza was one of the first women to graduate in medicine from the University of the Philippines. She was a professor in Medicine and a feminist who wrote essays and columns in Spanish-language newspapers and magazines published in Manila. She travelled the world on two occasions, writing extensive notes that she sent back to the Philippines, where they were

<sup>5</sup> In the course of this research there has been new addition to the collection, a compilation of chronicles and fiction stories published in newspapers from 1919 until 1932 by journalist Enrique Laygo (1897-1932), entitled *Relatos* [Stories].

published in newspapers. Although she travelled on her own expenses, she was encouraged by the University of the Philippines and the government to collect materials for educational purposes. *Notas de viaje* gathers her travel notes and, in 1930, was awarded the Zóbel Prize, the only award recognising literary works written in Spanish by Filipinos that existed during her lifetime. All four authors I selected for this study received the Zóbel Prize.<sup>6</sup>

Taken together, the works in my corpus offer a variety of voices, male and female, from Spain and the Philippines, describing a variety of contexts, urban and rural, as well as, in the case of Mendoza, countries across the world. What all the texts have in common is an explicit concern with defining Filipino cultural and national identity at a moment when the Spanish language and the colonial heritage connected to it was being threatened by the presence of the US in the archipelago and the promise of impending independence (the Republic of the Philippines was established in 1946).

By engaging with the works of a fairly unknown generation of Filipino authors who wrote in Spanish I am not only retrieving and giving visibility to these texts, but analysing them as a form of peripheral literature offering an alternative cultural discourse within Hispanic studies that opens up a new perspective on the official history of the end of Spanish colonialism and its lingering imprint. Specifically, I will look at how the themes of nationalism and cultural identity, which are equally contested in today's globalized world and still controversial within the Philippines, were addressed by this generation of Hispano-Filipino authors, who, I will argue, to various degrees approached Filipino identity as transcultural, as characterised by the complex relationships between multiple cultures, indigenous and colonial.

In the remainder of this introduction, I will first outline the issues that arise when researching Hispano-Filipino literature; then I will contextualize my corpus within the study of Filipino nationalism in works written in Spanish. I continue with a brief discussion of certain anxieties about Filipino identity that persist until today, followed by an explanation of the central theoretical concept of this study, Filipino transculturation. I end with a chapter outline.

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<sup>6</sup> The Zóbel Prize was founded by Enrique Zobel de Ayala (1877-1923), a Spanish intellectual born in Madrid in 1842 from a marriage uniting two aristocratic families of Spanish and Danish descent. He moved to Manila in 1882 and turned his home into a centre of cultural and intellectual life that later would become the *Casino español*. Nowadays, the *Casino español* is located next to the Cervantes Institute in Manila in the poor district of Ermita where Spanish is still spoken. In 2001, Lourdes Brillantes published a book in Spanish collecting the works and biographies of all the authors who won the Zóbel prize between 1922 and 2000. In 2006, an English version was published in Manila.

### Researching Hispano-Filipino Literature

Most Spanish readers and *Hispanistas* alike are surprised when they hear about the existence of a tradition of Filipino literature written in Spanish. The history of the Philippines and of the Spanish colonial presence there (1521-1898) is relatively unknown. However, Filipinos are aware that Spanish was once spoken in the archipelago. Nowadays, the language is associated with a dying generation<sup>7</sup> and with a decadent colonial past of Catholic oppression that was given a particularly bad reputation by American propaganda during the US occupation (1898-1946). Notwithstanding, Spanish is also related to the earliest nationalist movements in the Philippines, led by José Rizal (1861-1896). A young medical doctor best known for being one of the first nationalist writers, Rizal used the colonial language to challenge colonialism and became a national hero after being killed by the Spanish, who considered his novels *Noli me Tangere* [Touch me Not] from 1894 and *El Filibusterismo* [Subversion] from 1896 anti-clerical and subversive. And, indeed, they were. They show the decadence and corruption of the colonial government, which had become a puppet of the clergy. While waiting for his execution in prison, Rizal wrote a poem entitled “Mi último adios” (1896) [My Last Farewell] that is still quoted in Spanish by some elderly Filipinos who were obliged to memorize it before Spanish stopped being compulsory in schools in 1986.



Figure 5: *Martyrdom of Rizal* by Carlos “Botong” V. Francisco, 1960. Mural in Rizal’s Shrine, Intramuros, Manila.

<sup>7</sup> See the article in *El País* from 9 May 2016 entitled “Los últimos del español” [The last of the Spanish language].

Most Filipinos (not just the elderly) can quote the opening verse of Rizal's poem: "Adiós, patria adorada, region del sol querida" [Farewell, beloved country, land loved by the sun]. However, what they are less aware of is that 25% of the words that are part of their everyday vocabulary either come directly from Spanish - *zapatos, cuchara, platito, puede* [shoes, spoon, little plate, can, like] - or are free phonetic transcriptions of Spanish, as in the greeting *kumostá*, derived from "¿cómo está?" [how are you?] and words like "*kultura nasyonal, kargo de konsiyensiya, rebolusyon*" (Donoso 2012: 336) [national culture, guilt, revolution]. Some Filipinistas compare the role of Spanish in the Philippines to that of classic Latin in romance languages: "*El español es el latín de Filipinas: no lo habla ya nadie, pero está detrás de todo lo que decimos*" [Spanish is the Latin of the Philippines: nobody speaks it anymore, but it is behind everything we say].<sup>8</sup> For the majority of Filipinos, however, a mix of Tagalog, English and Spanish is simply their way of speaking.

The Philippines, composed of approximately 7,000 scattered islands populated by different ethnic groups that speak a range of languages catalogued into 70 different linguistic groups and spoken in 200 dialects (Ortiz 2009: 12), has undergone many linguistic and cultural turns, of which Spanish colonialization, resulting in the emergence of a Hispano-Filipino literature, is only one. The arrival of the US in 1898 implied a decline in the use of Spanish by a group of writers who had undergone their education in Spanish but reached intellectual maturity when it was of little use and their own children would likely not be able to read their texts. These historical circumstance, in addition to the marginal geopolitical location of the Philippines within the Hispanophone world, the fact that Hispanic scholars rarely work in Asia and Asian scholars do not work in Spanish (Lishfey 2013), and the difficulty, up to now, in accessing primary texts - which mostly remained in library archives and private collections - have led to Filipino literature in Spanish being largely neglected. Moreover, the country's colonial past, the historical developments of the twentieth century (independence movements, WWI and WWII) and the complex geography and multiple languages of the Philippines have contributed to the peripherality of *all* Filipino literatures.

Yet, similar to what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari note in their article "What is Minor Literature?" (1983) with regards to Kafka's use of German, the Philippines in the early twentieth century present a context in which a minority (Hispano-Filipino writers) uses what can be considered a major language (on a global scale) in a minor location to counter the dominant forces of Americanisation. Deleuze and Guattari write that "a minor literature is not

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<sup>8</sup> Carlos Madrid, director of the Cervantes Institute in Manila, quoted in an interview published in *El País*, 9 May 2016.

the literature of a minor language but the literature a minority makes in a major language” (1983: 16). According to Daniel W. Smith (1997) what Kafka did by using German instead of Czech was “rather than writing in a minor language, he, instead, invented a minor *use* of the major language” (xlvi). The use of minor literatures in major languages is, consensually agreed by Deleuze and Guatari, a political one:

The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of the language, the connection of the individual and the political, the collective arrangement of utterance. Which amounts to this: that "minor" no longer characterizes certain literatures, but describes the revolutionary conditions of any literature within what we call the great (or established). Everyone who has had the misfortune to be born in the country of a major literature must write in its tongue, as a Czech Jew writes in German, or as an Uzbek Jew writes in Russian. (19)

The use of Spanish by Filipino authors fits Deleuze and Guatari’s description of minor literature whose political aspirations concern the imagination of an independent nation.

Pascale Casanova, in *The World Republic of Letters* (2004), offers another theoretical framework to look at the position of Hispano-Filipino literature in the context of World Literature. Together with David Damrosch and Franco Moretti, Casanova has taken up the discussion of World Literature that started with the classic texts by Goethe and Marx.<sup>9</sup> Damrosch, in *What is World Literature?* (2003), defines World Literature as the circulation, production, reception and translation of literary works that travel outside their national borders. Moretti approaches it from a more socio-economic point of view. Following Immanuel Wallerstein’s “world systems theory,” Moretti understands World Literature like international capitalism “as a system that is simultaneously *one* and *unequal*: with a core and a periphery (and a semiperiphery) that are bound together in a relationship of growing inequality.” (2000: 56). Moretti agrees on the existence of one literature (in the singular sense of Goethe’s *Weltliteratur*) but one that “is profoundly unequal” (56) and the relationship between centres and peripheries is tied to an uneven value of literary works. Casanova also draws on Wallerstein but suggests a global literary space that is partly autonomous from economic and political power structures, organised according to its own literary logic:

Let us say that a mediating space exists between literature and the world: a parallel territory, relatively autonomous from the political domain, and dedicated as a result to questions, debates, inventions of a specifically literary nature. Here, struggles of all sorts - political, social, national, gender, ethnic - come to be refracted, diluted,

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<sup>9</sup> Goethe coins the term *Weltliteratur* in his *Conversations with Eckermann* (1827); Marx and Engels address the question of a world literature, prompted by their ideas of culture as a global property, in their *Communist Manifesto* (1847).

deformed or transformed according to a literary logic, and in literary forms.  
(Casanova 71-72)

Casanova's literary world is characterised by an uneven circulation of works of literature according to their perceived literary value (what she calls 'literariness'), which functions as a form of cultural capital in Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) sense. According to Casanova, because different literatures have historically been assigned different degrees of cultural capital, the World Republic of Letters manifests as a system of centers and peripheries, with Paris as the most central metropolis:

The world of letters is a relatively unified space characterized by the opposition between the great national literary spaces, which are also the oldest—and, accordingly, the best endowed—and those literary spaces that have more recently appeared and that are poor by comparison. (83)

At the risk of reproducing a Eurocentric rhetoric, Casanova maps out the World Republic of Letters according to the ongoing tension between centres and peripheries. Since peripheral literatures have little currency of their own, they have to rely on the power of the centre to grant them the status of 'literariness.' Peripheral literatures can be centralised, but only by engaging with central models in modes of assimilation or differentiation, and only if the centre's prominent authors or publishers endorse these modes.

Keeping in mind the debate about World Literature and Casanova's theory of the dependent relationship between the periphery and the centre, which I will discuss further in Chapter 1, I set out to discover what strategies (assimilation and differentiation, but also transculturation) are employed in my corpus of Hispano-Filipino literature in order to position this literature in relation to the European centre (Spain but also France) and the other Spanish-language periphery of Latin America. I will show how concerns about language, translation and circulation are crucial in the Hispano-Filipino texts I discuss. The texts in the Hispano-Filipino classics collection, for example, have been re-published in Spanish without a translation into Tagalog or English, which means that most Filipinos are unable to read them. At the same time, the collection has very little visibility in the main Spanish-speaking markets, mostly because it is not a commercial endeavour and because readers will not look for titles they do not know exist. Whether Internet access, academic research and translation can make Hispano-Filipino literature more central in the world republic of letters that Casanova conceptualises remains to be seen.

The collection of Hispano-Filipino classics is sponsored by the Ministries of Education and Culture of Spain, and by other institutions, including the AECID (Agencia

Española de Cooperación Internacional) and the Colegio San Carlos from Mexico. However, it was only made possible in the first place because of the efforts and passion of a small number of researchers<sup>10</sup> who have retrieved the texts from library archives, contacted the estates of the authors, dealt with the editing process, copyright issues and other legal difficulties, and obtained (limited) funding to publish the texts in annotated editions with critical essays. The books in the collection are (cheaply) available in some (university) bookstores in Manila and in art galleries and cultural centres. In the wider Spanish-speaking world, as noted, the collection has had a very limited circulation. However, since 2014, the texts used in this study and many other Hispano-Filipino texts that survived the humidity of tropical libraries have been digitalized and made available through open access via the Cervantes Library hosted at the University of Alicante.<sup>11</sup> This initiative (which began shortly after I carried out my archival research in the summer of 2013 in Manila) is giving a new virtual life to Hispano-Filipino literature, enabling interested readers from across the world to download and read the available texts, and will hopefully foster further interest in Hispano-Filipino literature.

Research on Hispano-Filipino literature has traditionally attempted to offer a panoramic view, tracing it from its beginnings to the present day. *Letras en Filipinas* (1999) by Ortiz Armengol is a chronological account of the relationship between literatures from Spain and the Philippines from the first travel chronicles to modern authors such as Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) and Ramón del Valle-Inclán (1866-1936). *Historia cultural de la lengua española en Filipinas: ayer y hoy* (2012) and *Literatura Hispano Filipina actual* (2010), two volumes edited by Isaac Donoso, offer a collection of essays and literary criticism describing the history, genres and works of the most relevant Hispano-Filipino authors from the sixteenth century onwards. Both volumes include excerpts from novels and full poems. Álvarez Tardío (2010) explains that, traditionally, most anthologies of Hispanic literatures have included very few works by Filipino authors (other than the seminal works of Rizal, which tend to be studied as propaganda manifestos rather than as literary works) due to the small volume these works represent compared to the prolific Hispanophone literatures coming from Spain and Latin America. Significantly, Spanish was just one of the many languages spoken in the Philippine Islands (Donoso & Gallo 2010), whereas Spanish represents almost the whole literary tradition in Latin America.

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<sup>10</sup> Isaac Donoso, Andrea Gallo, Beatriz Álvarez Tardío, Louisa Young, Salvador García and, outside the classics project, Filipinistas such as Jorge Mojarro, Rocío Ortuño Casanova, Fernando Zialcita, Wytan de la Peña and the cultural attaché of the Cervantes Institute in Manila, José Maria Fons y David Sentado.

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/literatura\\_filipina\\_en\\_espanol/](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/literatura_filipina_en_espanol/).

In addition to these anthologies there are some contemporary online magazines focusing on Hispano-Filipino literature. *Revista Filipina. Revista trimestral de Lengua y Literatura Hispano Filipina* (<http://revista.carayanpress.com/>) is an online magazine launched in 1997 by Edmundo Farolán Romero, probably the most active Hispano-Filipino writer in the diaspora (he lives in Canada). The online magazine *Kritica Kultura*, published by Ateneo University in Manila, features research in comparative literature, including, sporadically, works from the Hispanic period.<sup>12</sup>

It was precisely the lack of visibility of Hispano-Filipino literature that inspired David Sentado in 2012 to coin the term *zombie literature* to describe this literary tradition in the Filipino cultural magazine *Perro Berde*, published in Manila.<sup>13</sup> My interest in this project started when I read Sentado's article during a visit to Manila in August 2013. The article, titled "Literatura zombie" [Zombie literature], opens with the following fragment in Spanish, English and Tagalog:

Las lenguas, como las religiones, se alimentan de sus herejías, crecen y se desarrollan a partir de sus errores. Una lengua muerta, en la que nadie tiene derecho a hacer faltas, está cerrada asimismo a la evolución que suponen las innovaciones que tensan y amplian a los idiomas en uso. Ésa es la tragedia de la variedad filipina del castellano.

Ésa es también la tragedia de la literatura filipina en español. Sin hablantes nativos, sin lectores, sin tribunas públicas, los escasos escritores que en ella resisten se debaten entre la deslocalización alientante de la Red o el nutrirse de una tradición cadavérica. El resultado es lo que algún escritor hispanofilipino ha calificado de literatura zombie. (50)

Languages, like religions, live on heresies, they grow and develop from their mistakes. A dead language, where no one has the right to make mistakes, is also closed to changes involving innovations that strengthen and extend the language in use. That is the tragedy of the Philippine variety of Spanish language. This is also the tragedy of Philippine literature in Spanish. Without native speakers, with no readers or public platforms, the few writers in Spanish that persist are torn between embracing the internet and continue living off a ghastly tradition. The result is what some Philippine-Spanish writer called zombie literature. (50)

Whereas heresies bring change and evolution, silence brings death to a language, argues Sentado, who furthermore suggests that Spanish in the Philippines is in a state of decomposition that can only feed some vultures not interested in eating living (new) things. Even though some *Filipinistas* such as Isaac Donoso and Andrea Gallo insist on negating the

<sup>12</sup> <http://journals.ateneo.edu/ojs/index.php/kk/issue/view/KK2013.020>.

<sup>13</sup> In Spanish, the saying "*ser más raro que un perro verde*," which literally means "to be stranger than a green dog," speaks of something highly unusual and extraordinary. Note how the magazine uses the Tagalog spelling of "verde" (green) with a "b."

total death of Hispano-Filipino literature, the sporadic publications that see the light thanks to their efforts are perhaps not enough to claim a *living* tradition.<sup>14</sup> At the peak of production in the 1910s, “there were three million speakers of Spanish in the archipelago but with each successive generation this number was quickly decreasing” (Teodoro M. Kalaw qtd. in García and Young 23).

“Zombie literature” thus seems to be an appropriate term for Hispano-Filipino literature as a tradition that is more dead than alive. One of the aims of this study is to give it a new (academic) life as something more than a zombie or a corpse for vultures to live off. Less metaphorically, the present study is a step towards highlighting the contribution Hispano-Filipino literature can make to thinking about the intersection of literature and nationalism, particularly in a complex colonial context.

### **Filipino Nationalism in Hispano-Filipino Literature**

The majority of works in Spanish by Filipinos dates from the last decades of the nineteenth century. The first part of the twentieth century coincided with the end of Spanish colonialism (1521-1898) and the American period (1898-1946). The first generation of Filipino scholars, which included Pedro Paterno (1857-1911), TH. Pardo de Tavera (1857-1925), Isabelo de los Reyes (1864-1938) and Rizal (1861-1896), addressed the question of independence and Filipino nationalism on the basis of European ideas. Having received a Western education from the Jesuits and the Dominicans in Manila, and having travelled extensively to study and work in Europe, these educated Filipinos adopted similar methodologies to European scholars to conceptualize nationalism in the Philippines. Megan C. Thomas (2012) calls this first generation of Filipino scholars who wrote in Spanish “Orientalists, Propagandists and *Ilustrados*.”<sup>15</sup> She argues that they not only appropriated knowledge and methodological tools coming from the colonial metropolis (such as orientalism and nineteenth-century social sciences such as anthropology, folklore, philology and history) to configure their nationalist

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<sup>14</sup> Andrea Gallo is publishing a series entitled *Oriente* containing works of Filipino authors in Spanish with various publishers (Ediciones Moreno Mejías, Arcibel Editores). I bought a collection of poetry by Daisy López, a Spanish and Italian professor at the University of the Philippines, published in 2009, while Guillermo Gómez Rivera’s *Con Címbalos de Caña* (2011), a collection of poems, is available from Amazon.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas calls this generation of orientalist scholars as they engaged with orientalist discourses, especially with regards to people’s classification, hierarchically as well as horizontally: “some beliefs are more advanced than others, more modern than others, better than others” (2012: 5). *Ilustrados* and *propagandists* are common terms to refer to this early generation of the Filipino intelligentsia, treated as proto-nationalists. While the *ilustrados* wanted a reform that would grant Filipinos full rights as Spanish citizens, the *propagandists* aimed at a revolution. In both cases, their efforts have been perceived by later historians such as Teodoro Agoncillo (1912-1985) and Renato Constantino (1919-1999) as politically weak: “the *ilustrados* were self-interested elites, and the *propagandists* were at best tragically incomplete prefigurative voices of the collective will” (Thomas 2012: 13).

thought, but also used these for liberatory projects that delineated alternative political paths to Filipino nationalism. For instance, in rethinking the possibility of articulating nationalist thought beyond the word “nation” and alternatively “expressed in terms of people’, ‘culture’ or ‘race’” (Thomas 2012: 8).

Thomas’ work highlights the complexity of conceiving a nation in the context of the Philippines at a time when it was not yet independent. The absence of a nation-state means that we should understand Filipino nationalism as a primarily cultural phenomenon, as I will show in my analysis of my corpus. The scholarly work of the *ilustrados* in the 1880s and 1890s was among the first Spanish-language writings seeking to study the Philippines and to surpass the discourses of the colonisers: “In the case of the Philippines, these ‘European’ knowledges [Orientalism and the emerging human sciences] were largely absent from the coloniser’s repertoire and travelled to ‘the colony’ on the colonized’s terms” (Thomas 2014: 4).<sup>16</sup> Unlike in other contexts, in which the colonial metropolis would be the preferred destination for the few colonised who were allowed to travel, study and work abroad, Filipinos not only went to Madrid but also and often to “Paris, London, Berlin, Leiden and elsewhere where modern sciences were advanced” (Thomas 2014: 15).

The epistemological transference of European thought to the Philippines frequently overlooked Spain, as Thomas explains: “young colonial subjects positioned themselves as modern scholars and intellectuals in a broader field in which their colonizers, the Spanish, often lagged behind” (4). Indeed, at the end of the nineteenth century, while in France, England and Germany a bourgeoisie had established itself, in Spain a weak upper class had just emerged in an almost illiterate and reactionary country that was barely industrialised, immersed in economic and social decadence, and still boasting of an empire that was already in decline.<sup>17</sup>

Early Filipino *ilustrados* did, nonetheless, nurture their thoughts with the work of Spanish scholars and authors,<sup>18</sup> whose perspective on nationalism was quite different from that of the majority of the impoverished Spanish (and non-urban European) population and

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<sup>16</sup> The term *ilustrados* comes from the Spanish name for the Enlightenment, *Ilustración*. Sometimes, *ilustrado* just means educated; at other times, it is used pejoratively as a variation of *afrancesado* or bourgeois.

<sup>17</sup> According to Viñao (2009), in 1860 the literacy rate in Spain was only 19.9%.

<sup>18</sup> Rizal went to the University Complutense of Madrid between 1882 and 1884, coinciding with Miguel de Unamuno, with whom he shared a sense of nostalgia and national pride towards their oppressed lands, the Philippines and the Basque Country: “Debí de haber visto más de una vez al tagalo en los vulgarísimos claustros de la Universidad Central, debí de haberme cruzado más de una vez con él mientras soñábamos Rizal en sus Filipinas y yo en mi Vasconia. (Unamuno qtd. in Viñas-Valle, 2013) [I must have seen the tagalog more than once in the exemplary vulgar patios of the Central University, I must have run into him more than once when we dreamed, Rizal with his Philippines and I with my Basque Country].

the clergy that controlled their country. With their influences coming from various parts of Europe and also from Latin America, the label “worldly colonials” (Thomas 2014) is apt. The title of Resil B. Mojares’s book *The Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge* (2006) summarises the historical context and the mood in which this early generation of Filipino intellectuals grew up, as well as outlining their concern with finding a place for the Philippines within European ideologies of nationalism and modernity. Mojares establishes their status as cosmopolitan *ilustrados* through their biographies and so does Benedict Anderson. The latter demonstrates the influence of the global connections shared by José Rizal and Isabelo de los Reyes as early as during the Philippine Revolution (which started in 1896 against the Spanish colonizers and ended with a war lost to the US in 1898). The life and work of Isabelo de los Reyes opens Anderson’s book *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (2005), illustrating how these embryonic (Anderson entitles the prologue “The Rooster’s Egg [...]”) scholarly Filipinos engaged with emerging European academic disciplines, among which folklore was considered a “new science” (12), an early modern way of thinking about the Humanities and, therefore, of studying the Philippines. Making their country of birth an object of study (or of the literary imagination) through Western sciences in a Western language would be a way to construct it as a nation with specific features - of “saber popular” [local knowledge] (Anderson 2005: 12) - that all Filipinos would recognise as their own.<sup>19</sup> While Spanish served their ambition to place the Philippines on the global map, they ignored, however, that most Filipinos could not understand this language.

Anderson not only highlights the exchanges between Rizal, his countrymen and others in the Philippines and Europe, but also links the Philippine Revolution to developments in other Spanish colonies, specifically Cuba:

The near-simultaneity of the last nationalist insurrection in the New World (Cuba, 1895) and the first in Asia (the Philippines, 1896) was no serendipity. Natives of the last important remnants of the Spanish empire, Cubans ... and Filipinos did not merely read about each other, but had crucial personal connections and, up to a point, co-ordinated their actions - the first time in world history that such trans global co-ordination became possible. (2005: 2)

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<sup>19</sup> One of the earliest works of Filipino ethnology, following Western methodologies but focusing on the Philippine regions of Ilocos and Malabón, was Isabelo de los Reyes’ *El Folk-lore Filipino* (1889).

Anderson points out how global interconnectedness allowed for an exchange of ideas available in circulating printed texts that prompted nationalist ideologies to arise simultaneously, in this case connecting the last remnants of the Spanish Empire.<sup>20</sup>

The focus of this study is on a later generation of Filipino intellectuals, born at the end of the nineteenth century and educated in the American Philippines but using Spanish as their mother tongue. They belong to the period known as the “*Edad de Oro*” [Golden Age] of Filipino literature in Spanish (Armengol 1999). Spanish for them was also the medium to convey their nationalist aspirations. After all, the worst colonial oppressors in the eyes of Spanish-speaking Filipinos, the clergy (which Rizal called the “*cancer* of the country” in the subtitle of *Noli Me Tangere*), had gone. Even though the colonial structure on which the Church had a strong hand was still very much there, the Hispano-Filipino writers of the ‘golden age’ could, in their nationalist writing, be nostalgic about *mother* Spain rather than angry at her.

This new generation differs from the earlier one and shares with Tagalog writers of the same period a feeling of mistrust and rejection towards the Americanisation of the Philippines.<sup>21</sup> They feared that a new forced transculturation would erase their ‘native’ culture, which, for Spanish-speaking Filipinos, was predominantly Hispanic. According to literary critic Bienvenido Lumbera, the second generation of Tagalog writers was still too young during the Philippine Revolution to be “deeply imbued with the militant temper of their elders” (1984: 34). Consequently, in their literary works they toyed with the themes of “Country” (nationalism) and “Love” (frivolous topics), showing a “definite preference for the theme of Love” (1984: 34). Lumbera focuses on poets writing in Tagalog and makes no reference to Spanish-language authors, who, I will show in this study, occupied a different position. For Filipino authors writing in Spanish in the first half of the twentieth century, the topic of ‘Love’ does not overshadow that of ‘Country’ but the two become fused in expressing a desire to love one’s country in whatever shape they can imagine it, but most insistently as an independent, transcultural realm that nevertheless (and somewhat paradoxically) remains Spanish-speaking, Catholic and ‘modern’ in the hegemonic western sense of the term.

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<sup>20</sup> Connections between the Philippines and Latin America had existed for more than 300 years, as part of the commercial route that brought Asian goods to Spain via Mexico was the Galeon Manila route between Acapulco and Manila.

<sup>21</sup> For a historic review of Filipino literature that includes a synchronic perspective of works in Tagalog, Spanish and English, see Bienvenido Lumbera’s *Revaluation Essays on Philippine Literature, Cinema & Popular Culture* (1984).

In the works of Balmori, Abad, Gurrea and Mendoza that I study here, Filipino nationalism, specifically the necessity of defining a shared identity capable of serving as a ground for a sense of belonging and a vision of the future, occupies a prominent position, which is not surprising given the fact that independence seemed on the horizon. The question of conceding independence to the Philippines already arose in 1902, just after the Filipino-American War (1898-1902), but was abandoned with the establishment of the Insular Government of the Philippine Islands (1902-1935), followed by a Filipino Commonwealth (1935-1946) interrupted by the Japanese occupation during WWII (1942-1945). The archipelago finally became the Republic of the Philippines in 1946 with Manuel Roxas (1892-1948) as the president.<sup>22</sup>

I argue that the writers I discuss express their concerns about the past, present and future of the Philippines not by means of militant political nationalism but through a form of cultural nationalism. I follow the definition of cultural nationalism provided by Eric Woods (2014) collecting the key ideas about cultural nationalism to which I return to in Chapter 5 in relation to Abad's novel *El Campeón*:

Cultural nationalism generally refers to ideas and practices that relate to the intended revival of a purported national community's culture. If political nationalism is focused on the achievement of political autonomy, cultural nationalism is focused on the cultivation of a nation. Here the vision of the nation is not a political organisation, but a moral community. As such, cultural nationalism sets out to provide a vision of the nation's identity, history and destiny. The key agents of cultural nationalism are intellectuals and artists, who seek to convey their vision of the nation to the wider community. The need to articulate and express this vision tends to be felt most acutely during times of social, cultural and political upheaval resulting from an encounter with modernity. (Woods 2014: 1)

In line with this definition, I see literature as a tool by which Filipino intellectuals articulate their vision of the Philippines' identity, history and destiny in the convoluted historical moment they live in. These writers are caught between empires, ruled by a neo-colonial government and aspire to become part of the global modernity they feel is emerging elsewhere. Their vision of the nation is, however, limited by the concerns of their own community of Spanish-speaking, upper-class Filipinos. As cultural nationalists, these authors convey a strong attachment to the Hispanic heritage (mostly in terms of religion and language), which they believe should underpin the future independent nation. At the same time, as I will show, they are critical of their own tendency to look to other (modern) nations,

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<sup>22</sup> On 4 July 1946, the US government and the government of the Republic of the Philippines signed the Treaty of Manila, by which the US conceded and recognised the full independence of the Philippines (United Nations Treaties 1947). See: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%207/v7.pdf>.

most notably Japan and the US, for models to emulate instead of engaging with the Filipino people. The form of Filipino cultural nationalism articulated in the selected literary texts from the early twentieth century projects the imagination of the nation onto the future, asking how the Philippines can become modern. The different texts come up with different answers as to whether it should achieve nationhood on its own terms as a transcultural realm with a double history of colonialism or by following the model of already established nation-states, based on creating a homogeneous identity. It is the complex cultural entanglements implied by the doubly colonised context of the Philippines, acknowledged by all the authors I discuss, that prompt me to use the notion of *transculturation* to trace and analyse the variety of sometimes conflicting and sometimes harmonious cultural attachments manifested in the literary texts.

### **The Question of Filipino Identity**

The impact of a double colonisation and the existence of various pre-Hispanic cultures in the archipelago<sup>23</sup> has made Filipino society one in which many cultures intermingle and in which past influences, such as those of the Malay, the Hispanic, the American and also the Chinese and the Japanese, retain a certain presence until today. This is noticeable in many aspects of Filipino culture: in language and religion - but also in food, folklore and ethnicity. These influences, it can be argued, are simultaneously present and absent, haunting Filipino cultural and national identity, and causing it to be perceived negatively as non-authentic. Whereas it can be said that notions of cultural and national identity are always rather unsettled and unsettling, formulating an answer to what it meant to be Filipino in the early twentieth century was particularly complicated, necessitating a continuous negotiation of various attachments to and detachments from native, colonial and other cultures.

Fernando Zialcita, in his book *Authentic Although Not Exotic* (2005), explains this anxiety about Filipino identity as an ongoing crisis of recognition. He argues that even in the twenty-first century Filipinos tend to negatively describe their cultural mix with the word 'bastard' - "lo que tenemos es una cultura 'bastarda' o 'imitativa'" (qtd. in Donoso 2012: 513) [what we have is a 'bastard' or 'imitative' culture] - instead of using, for instance, the word 'mestiza/o,' broadly and positively employed in Latin America to denote a hybrid

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<sup>23</sup> These cultures include the Malays, the tagalog, the barangay and panpamgo, the Chinese traders that came to Manila Bay, and the 'Negritos' living in remote areas in the north of the Philippines. See Nick Joaquín's *Manila, My Manila* (1990) for a short history of Manila from the early pilgrims until independence.

identity.<sup>24</sup> Zialcita claims that the negative view of Filipino identity among Filipinos is due to several reasons:

Filipinos love their way of life. However, problems appear when they reflect on their identity and try to explain this to themselves, to fellow Filipinos, or to outsiders. This is not helped by the readiness of biased Anglo-Americans and fellow Asians who scorn the Filipino for not being truly Asian. These problems and biases stem from (1) a demonization of Spanish influence, (2) a limited menu of binaries for interpreting culture, and (3) reductionist interpretations. (11)

According to Zialcita, then, the crisis of recognition emerges from the need to explain oneself to the ‘self’ and to ‘other(s)’ while lacking a language to grasp a reality that escapes existing classifications. The notion of being ‘Asian’, for example, is not adequate for all those who live in Asia or even South-East Asia, and is particularly restrictive when it comes to describing the Philippines, which, because its specific history of double colonisation, tends to be regarded as an ‘anomaly’ within Asia. The baroque churches that are part of Filipino heritage, for example, are seen as an “aberration in Asia” when compared with Buddhist stupas, Hindi temples or mosques (Zialcita 11). For Zialcita, these architectural examples demonstrate that there is no cultural unity in Asia<sup>25</sup> and, furthermore, that the Philippines does not conform to the idea of the ‘authentically Asian’ that other countries have attached their national identity to, which also implies being exotic, presumably to the orientalisering eyes of the West.

This study aims to show that the tension Zialcita perceives in relation to contemporary Filipino identity is also present in the Hispano-Filipino literature of the early twentieth century, expressing itself in the way the texts I analyse attach and detach themselves from the various cultures that could be considered part of Filipino identity while never reaching full identification. For example, Paz Mendoza’s initial admiration of the overt nationalism prompted by Italian fascism is due to the fact that she wants to envision a similarly inspiring sense of national unity for the Philippines. Yet, she is also aware of what dictatorial policies mean and how propaganda coerces national identification in undesirable, exclusive ways.

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<sup>24</sup> Mestizaje describes the hybridity of Latin American culture and is perceived as a productive sign of identity rather than as just an invented category. See, for instance, Mexican scholar Gloria Anzaldúa’s *From Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), in particular “Chapter 7: La consciencia de la mestiza: towards a new consciousness,” where she elaborates an empowering image of the mestiza woman.

<sup>25</sup> “En el campo arquitectural no hay nada común entre un templo confucionista, una estupa budista, un templo hindú y una mezquita. Entonces, ¿cómo se puede declarar que la iglesia barroca de Filipinas es una aberración en Asia, si ‘Asia’, como unidad cultural no existe?” (Zialcita qtd. in Donoso, 2012: 522) [In the architectural field there is nothing in common between a Confucian temple, a Buddhist stupa, a Hindu temple and a mosque. So how can one declare that the baroque church of the Philippines is an aberration in Asia, if “Asia” as a cultural unit does not exist?].

Similarly, Jesús Balmori's fascination with the strong Japanese national identity and the devotion to Japanese culture demonstrated by the heroic acts of the samurais shows a similar type of attachment to the idea of a united, homogeneous national community. In both cases, these imaginations are torn apart by the realities of Italian fascism and Japanese imperialism. Because of the presence of this tension between identification and disidentification, I suggest that notions of attachment and detachment are more useful to understanding the formation of Filipino national identity in early twentieth-century Hispano-Filipino literature than rigid dichotomies such as Asian/Hispanic, central/peripheral, modern/postcolonial.

### **Filipino Transculturation**

Over 300 years of Spanish colonial rule (1521-1898) and another 50 of American occupation (1898-1946) produced complex processes of transculturation in the Philippines that Magellan could not have foreseen when he landed on Cebu in 1521, opening a new global trade route. The Cuban anthropologist and philosopher Fernando Ortiz coined the term 'transculturation' to describe the cultural transformations that took place amongst the indigenous, the European and the African populations in Cuba. Transculturation for Ortiz emphasizes the agency of all cultures in contact; unlike acculturation, often used to denote the effect of colonisation on the colonised culture, it includes a sense of both what is lost (through deculturation) and what is created in the process of transformation (through neoculturation):

I am of the idea that the word *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transformation from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as *deculturation*. In addition, it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called *neoculturation*. (Ortiz 1995: 102-3, my emphasis)

In this study, I consider the idea of attachment as pointing to either acculturation (the acquisition of some aspects of another culture) or neoculturation (the creation of something new from the combination of cultures in contact), whereas detachment is linked to deculturation (the loss or abandonment of aspects of one's own or other cultures).

Part of Ortiz's interest in conceptualising transculturation is to avoid downplaying the actions of the marginalised, in which case he talks of a failed transculturation. Following this affirmation of agency on the part of the non-dominant, Mary Louise Pratt (2010) describes transculturation as expressing a method of cultural reinvention. It indicates

how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subjugated people cannot readily

control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to various extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for. (6)

The interplay that occurs between cultures in contact results in an appropriation and reinvention of dominant practices by the subordinated. Pratt raises the question of how metropolitan modes of representation are received and adapted on the periphery. She indicates that one can speak of a transculturation that proceeds from the colonies to the metropolis. The argument that European/Western development has never been ‘detached’ from the world, and particularly not from its colonies, has also been put forward by other scholars, who have stressed “the reciprocal condition of two geographical ‘entities’ such as ‘Asia’ and ‘Europe’” (Brosious and Wenzlhuemer 2011: 4). suggest using the idea of transculturation as a methodology because its heuristic nature opens individual disciplines and regional competences up to new approaches, “spurring fresh discussions about globalization, colonization and modernity” (10). Using transculturation as a lens through which to analyse cultural phenomena implies leaving the firm ground of clearly defined concepts - particularly those associated with ‘origin’, ‘indigeneity’ and ‘authenticity,’ which, as Brosious and Wenzlhuemer explain, “carry with them highly problematic elements of essentialism and reduction, and have always done so” (9) - in favour of a form of research that uses Georges Marcus’ concept of “multi-sited ethnography,” which underlines the existence of multi-centred modernities (Brosious and Wenzlhuemer 2011: 8).

The most important aspect of transculturation in these definitions is the role it assigns to the cultures perceived as weaker, insisting that the subjects of those cultures have agency in the ways they receive and appropriate the dominant culture. An example of transculturation in the context of the Philippines can be found in the syncretism between Spanish Catholicism and local Filipino religious practices, which produced a vernacular Filipino Catholicism. The best-known practice of this syncretism is that of *Pasyon*, the crucifixions that take place during Easter parades, but it also exists on a more everyday level, for instance in the combination of religious faith with gambling activities like cockfighting, as I will discuss in Chapter 5 in relation to Abad’s novel.

Vicente Rafael (1988) explains the process by which Catholic transculturation happened in the Philippines by using the metaphor of fishing. According to him, the act of catching fish is comparable to catching the meaning of a word carried out by actively listening to the Catholic preachers as they spoke to the indigenous audiences from the pulpit.

Filipinos thus appropriated Catholicism by attaching their own imaginings to those words that they could not fully understand, filling the semiotic vacuum with new meanings.

Pratt further expands the term transculturation with regards to the cultural transformations that are enabled by travel writing in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (2010), revealing the basis on which travel writing was appropriated by colonialism as it formulated discourses on difference and contributed to the politics of colonial expansion. She locates transculturation in what she coins as ‘contact zones,’ that is, the spaces, real or imaginary, where cultural contact takes place. In her own words: “I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures, meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt 1991: 34). In this study, I show how the Philippines appears in the literary works that I analyse as a contact zone where the outcome of the transformative contact is determined by the specific cultures involved and the relationships specific (groups of) people are able to develop to these cultures. For instance, in Gurrea’s *Cuentos de Juana*, Filipino-Malayan mythology meets the Catholic faith. In the eyes of the Spanish, the former is considered a form of superstition, but in the experience of the mestizo children growing up with both cultures (in a differently shaped and experienced contact zone) it becomes entangled with Catholicism and, as such, causes new meanings and forms of knowledge to emerge.

Since Ortiz developed the idea of transculturation in the 1940s (although he first mentioned it in his 1923 essay “Contrapunteo cubano del Tabaco y del Azúcar” [Cuban Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar]) it has been widely appropriated by other scholars. Angel Rama, in his book *Tranculturación narrativa en America Latina* (1984), focuses on the work of ‘escritores transculturados’ [transcultured writers], who, in the fashion of the Peruvian writer Juan José Arguedas, used European narrative techniques with vernacular languages and themes, creating the genre known as *indigenismo*. According to Rama, Arguedas’ *indigenismo* is best illustrated by his novel *Yawar Fiesta* (1941), in which he attempts to reveal the transcultural fabric of Hispanic-Andean Peru by juxtaposing the ‘local’ and the ‘foreign’ voices that enter into conflict around the practice of Andean-style bullfighting.<sup>26</sup> For Rama, another form of literary transculturation that also draws from ‘indigenismo’ is magic realism in the manner of Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa. In Chapter 1, I will explain how Hispanic Modernism, as transported to the Philippines

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<sup>26</sup> Yawar Fiesta (Blood Fiesta) is a practice among the Andean people that is even bloodier than the already bloody corrida, which is why the authorities attempt to eradicate it.

from Latin America, can also be read as a form of transculturation, re-appropriating the orientalist, exoticising aesthetics of French modernism.

My use of transculturation in this project combines elements from Ortiz, Pratt and Rama's conceptualizations, allowing me to understand Filipino transculturation not only as the outcome of colonial exchanges (Ortiz 1923; Pratt 1992) and global modernity-coloniality (a pair that for Walter Mignolo is inseparable),<sup>27</sup> but also in terms of an active desire for transformation. That transculturation exists in more passive and more active forms is conveyed by the difference between the adjectives *transcultured* and *transcultural*. The Hispano-Filipino writers I discuss in this study, I will suggest, are not only *transcultured* writers (Rama) but also, to different degrees, *transcultural* or even *transculturating* ones.

Arianna Dagnino (2012; 2013) uses the term 'transcultural literature' to refer to literature written while living across various cultures, languages and even national territories as a consequence of contemporary global mobility. The transcultural writers Dagnino refers to are established writers, mostly part of a global elite that is 'on the move' by choice.<sup>28</sup> If Ortiz and Pratt understood transculturation as the result of forced cultural contact brought about by colonialism, Dagnino sees it as an effect of the increased mobility that globalisation and late capitalism engendered. It is not my intention to equate colonialism with globalisation as that would mean neglecting the violence of colonialism. However, what is relevant for my project is the position Dagnino assigns to the transcultural writer as particularly capable of discerning complex processes of cultural transformation and making them accessible to others through their writing:

Transcultural writers seem to be tuned into a different wavelength and thus are able to capture the first still embryonic, still incoherent, still mostly unexpressed or intercepted symptoms (signals) of a different emerging cultural mood/mode. In other words, these writers are developing an alternative discourse that in any case is perceived by both mainstream parts (let us call them the assimilationist and the multiculturalist stances) as destabilising the perceived *status quo*. (2012: 4)

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<sup>27</sup> For Mignolo and other scholars of decolonial thinking, colonialism and modernity cannot be thought separately. The parasitic relationship between the two explains coloniality (not colonialism) as the power of modernity's logic, that is, any modern project is carried out at the expense of a colonising enterprise. See *The Idea of Latin America* (2005) and *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (2011).

<sup>28</sup> The transcultural writers Dagnino refers to are Pico Iyer, Alberto Manguel, Amin Maalouf, Michael Ondaatje, Ilija Trojanow and Brian Castro. To this list Amitav Ghosh, Zadie Smith, David Mitchell, Haruki Murakami and Salman Rushdie could be added, as well as a filmmaker like González Iñárritu. All have been seen as examples of world or global literature (see Barnard 2009; Cheah 2016).

Dagnino emphasizes these writers' transcultural sensibility (at the risk, however, of undervaluing the sensibility of other 'types' of writers), which she links to their capacity to recognise cultural patterns and quickly apprehend cultural moods.

The Hispano-Filipino writers selected for this study reveal certain aspects of this type of transcultural writing conditions. First, as part of a creole elite, Hispano-Filipino writers from the first and second generation are cosmopolitans (educated, multilingual, multi-ethnic, well-travelled and economically independent), and second, being caught in a position of outsider/insider in most of the cultures they inhabit enables them, like the writers cited by Dagnino, to infuse their writing with a new "cultural mood/mode," in this case one of (trans)cultural nationalism that challenges the colonial powers of Spain and the US to various extents.

The nationalist discourse of this second generation of Hispano-Filipino writers offers an alternative to that of the earlier generation by introducing a more nuanced engagement with their complex historical context, one in which various external powers (such as the US and Japan) were imposing their cultures in the Philippines, producing, in these writers, a fear of deculturation and a simultaneous disgust at the Filipino intelligentsia, which continued to reproduce the (Spanish) colonial system. The way the writers counter these developments is through active transculturation: by attaching and detaching themselves from the different cultural influences affecting them and by desperately trying to establish, in their literary works, a truly Filipino perspective and national identity.

This is captured in the title of Balmori's play *Filipinizar a los Filipinos* (1940) [Filipinize the Filipino people], which calls for an homogeneous identification on what it is to be Filipino. Similarly, Abad's indignation at the obsession some Filipinos have with emulating American culture instead of the more desirable Mexican culture (which he feels to be closer to the Filipino culture) demonstrates his cultural attachments and detachments: "No nos atrevemos a copiar a Mejiico y Colombia porque estamos empeñados en copiar a los Estados Unidos. Y nuestras copias se parecen demasiado a las caricaturas" (Abad qtd. in Young and García xxix) [We do not dare to copy Mexico and Colombia because we insist on copying the United States. And our copies look too much like caricatures]. For Abad, imitating the US is inauthentic while copying Mexico would be genuine. Moreover, in this quote Abad can be said to be looking through a transcultural lens in which "all cultures look decentered in relation to other cultures including one's own" (Dagnino 2012: 2). There is a sense of *out-of-placeness* in his comments: both the US and Mexico are geographically far from the Philippines, yet being part of the US officially makes the Philippines part of the

(Western) centre. Conversely, Abad's attachment to Mexico by means of the Spanish language de-centres Filipino identity from its geographical location in Asia. This transcultural sensitivity, the ability to forge attachments to what is far away and to detach from what is closest, emerges from the sense of "dislocation" produced by moving "physically, virtually and imaginatively outside one's cultural and homeland borders" (Dagnino 2012: 2).

Transcultural writing thus incorporates foreign and familiar voices from different cultures that are alternatively centred and decentred in relation to the self. The proliferation of selves and others - and the way certain cultures shift from being accepted as part of the self to being rejected as foreign to it - is at the core of transcultural writing and appears in all the works of Hispano-Filipino literature I look at in this study. Reading Hispano-Filipino literature as efforts of transculturation emphasizes how this literary tradition moves, consciously and unconsciously, literally and metaphorically, in-between and across national, linguistic, ethnic and cultural boundaries in order to inspire new imaginaries of nationalism.

To sum up, the aim of this study is to explore the intersection between literature and nationalism in the complex context of the early twentieth-century Philippines. Through close readings of the selected texts, I will, on the one hand, shed light on a largely neglected literary tradition and, on the other hand, trace the struggle of Hispano-Filipino writers to formulate a notion of Filipino identity able to serve as the basis for their imagined nation, adequate to its status as a transcultured and transcultural realm.

Before providing an outline of the five chapters that compose this study I want to explain my approach, which is that of cultural analysis, as developed by Mieke Bal. Cultural analysis is an "interdisciplinary research practice" (Aydemir 2008:38) attending to the dynamic relationships between cultural objects and conceptual theories. One of the most important aspects of doing cultural analysis is the emphasis it places on close reading. Jonathan Culler defines close reading as the detailed examination of a text in all its dimensions, which in literature means unfolding the multilayered structure of a literary work attending to the text's tendency to "resist easy comprehension or description in terms of expected themes and motifs" (2010: 3). Accordingly, I look at the ways my corpus engages and, most crucially, disengages from "expected" literary themes and motifs, and other restricting conceptual classifications. For example, I show the extent to which Balmori's poems can be read within and beyond the paradigm of Latin American modernist writing and the innovative ways in which orientalism and nostalgia appear in Gurrea's poems.

Cultural analysis is preoccupied with generating new meanings produced by the critic's situatedness in the social and cultural present (Bal 1991: 1), which allows the object

to speak: “no text yields meaning outside of the social world and cultural make up of the reader. [...] A text does not speak for itself. We surround it, or *frame* it, before we let it speak at all” (Bal 2002: 8). It is the encounter between the object and the researcher that yields the conditions for them to become co-creators of new cultural meanings in the present. Concretely, by bringing the framework of transculturation into dialogue with the selected Filipino texts in a series of close readings, I show how these texts expand concepts such as orientalism, translation and (cultural) nationalism in new ways by developing forms of transcultural orientalism, working towards intercultural translation and putting transculturation as an active, future-oriented process in the service of nation-building. I am, therefore, most concerned with how my objects destabilise the theories I read them through. Cultural analysis’ focus on the present is particularly relevant for my attempt to ‘bring back to life’ a literary tradition that has been diagnosed as ‘dead’ by some. My aim is not to produce a genealogy of Hispano-Filipino literature to be studied in its historical and social context but to reveal how Hispano-Filipino literature from the early twentieth century interacts with contemporary debates and theories.

### Chapter Outline

In Chapter 1 I focus on the poetry of Hispano-Filipino author Jesús Balmori (1886-1946), which expresses transcultural attachments to the Philippines (as a meeting place of indigenous and Spanish culture) and to Japan in an orientalist mode. Balmori’s poetry is considered as an example of Filipino modernism that clearly follows Hispanic modernist aesthetics in terms of its orientalist themes and style. Consequently, it provides a fertile ground to look at the role orientalism played in the attempt by Hispano-Filipino authors of the early twentieth century to imagine and present the Filipino nation. Given the geopolitical circumstances of the Philippines as a Hispanized culture located in Asia, it is not surprising that the modernist orientalism found in its literature is shaped in two ways: as a form of self-representation and as the idealisation of other locations in the Far East, specifically Japan. This demonstrates a significant change in terms of what and who is being orientalised and by whom. In the chapter, I identify and analyse the various types of orientalism articulated in Balmori’s poetry, focusing on three poems contained in the poetry collections *Rimas Malayas* (1904) [Malayan Rhymes] and *Mi casa de Nipa* (1941) [My house of Nipa]. My argument is that Balmori’s poems engage with the two models of orientalism conceptualised respectively by Edward Said and Araceli Tinajero: as a hegemonic discourse promoting assimilation to Spanish colonisation and Western modernity, and as an expression of literary modernism that

re-inscribes the poet's assimilation of Hispanic and French aesthetics. Crucially, in some of his poems Balmori also moves beyond these models by giving voice to what I call *Filipino transcultural orientalism*. This form of orientalism articulates Filipino identity as both orientalised and orientalising, with texts variously attaching to and detaching from the various cultures that have historically constituted it, as well as the forms of representing the orient specific to these cultures and their literary expressions.

In Chapter 2 I expand on the concept of transcultural orientalism by arguing that Adelina Gurrea's work emphasises its *transcultural* dimension over its *orientalist* one. I look at three of her texts: a satirical play entitled *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* [Philippines: A Historical-Satirical Allegory], which was staged in Valladolid, Spain, in 1951; a selection of poems from the collections *En agraz* [Before Time] (1968) and *Más senderos* [More Paths] (1967)<sup>29</sup>; and a story called "El Talisay," part of the collection of short stories *Cuentos de Juana. Narraciones malayas de las islas Filipinas* [Juana's tales. Malayan stories from the Philippine Islands]. I will show how, like Balmori's poems, these texts draw on various cultural influences in order to orientalise the Philippines. However, rather than establishing a hierarchy of cultures or following modernist aesthetics, Gurrea orientalises the Philippines in three different ways that represent a move towards a more transcultural position. First, the satirical play revisits Filipino colonial history by having allegorical characters - The Philippines, Mother Spain, Uncle Sam and Mrs. History - discuss their role in the transculturation of the Philippines, and orientalises the country by infantilising it and presenting it as grateful to both Spain and the US for shaping it through their colonial rule, while also, through its satirical bent, including mild critiques of the colonisers. The historical perspective of the play shows transculturation as a colonial heritage in which various cultural traits are visible but not entangled (for example, young Philippines has inherited, on the one hand, the industrious and pragmatic mentality of American culture and, on the other, a spiritualist view on the world derived from a Catholic education). Second, Gurrea's poems, written in Spain during Franco's regime, approach the Philippines through what Svetlana Boym (2005) calls reflective nostalgia, a nostalgia that is used to imagine a new transcultural future. Third, the short story "El Talisay" uses a narrative structure that supplements the orientalising perspective with that of the orientalised in order to challenge binary oppositions

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<sup>29</sup> Both *En Agraz* and *Más Senderos* were published by the author and the editions available online in the Cervantes Virtual Library at the University of Alicante date from 1968 and 1967 respectively. Gurrea died in 1971, so those editions are probably not the first ones, but I have been unable to find other publication dates. In *En Agraz*, it says that the collection includes poems written between 1916 and 1926, indicating that these poems belong to Gurrea's early work.

such as native/foreign, orient/occident and religion/superstition. The terms of these oppositions are instead presented as deeply intertwined in everyday cultural practices in the rural Philippines.

In Chapter 3 I elaborate the concept of *active transculturation* on the basis of the imagination of a future, modern, independent Philippines based on the comparison with other countries around the world that Paz Mendoza conducts in her *Notas de viaje* (1929). Mendoza's rich and provocative travel notes are the departing point for my analysis of her construction of a peripheral vision of modernity as an active process of transculturation. I build on the work of Fernando Ortiz, Angel Rama and Marie Louise Pratt, in which transculturation appears as a dynamic process of intercultural connections that creates possibilities for transforming one's own community by appropriating parts of other cultural systems. Mendoza's text exposes the active attachments to and detachments from foreign influences - especially around the idea of modernisation - that affected Filipino culture during the Spanish-American period. I argue that, in the travel notes, transculturation does not appear as an outcome of past colonial contact, as in Balmori's poem and Gurrea's play, but as a strategic tool to compose a future vision of an independent Philippines. At the same time, her text and its ambivalent reception (it was criticised for making unrealistic proposals) shows the tension between the imagined transculturated future of the Philippines and its cultural and political realities: as long as it is not yet an independent country, no decisions can be made and, more crucially, it continues to be perceived, both in other countries and within the Philippines itself, as incapable of governing itself.

In the fourth chapter I examine how Balmori's novel *Los pájaros de fuego. Una novela filipina de la guerra* (1945) [Birds of Fire, a Filipino War Novel], a family melodrama set in Manila, instead of imagining a hypothetical future for the Philippines on the basis of the positively conceived models of other countries, uses the historical developments of the early 1940s, leading up to the Japanese invasion, to address the potential negative effects of uncritically seeking to emulate other countries. This chapter, then, is about the limits of active transculturation. The bleak ending of Balmori's novel, which sees the main protagonist, a former Niponophile, and most of his family killed, suggests that there is no future for the country, at least not unless the Philippines stops aspiring to be like Japan, fighting for/with the US and refusing to let go of the Hispanic colonial legacy. To analyse how past and present events (the rise of fascism in Europe, the emergence of Japan as a pan-Asian power, the American rule of the Philippines and the Hispanic colonial legacy) are woven together in the novel, I use the concept of translation, which I understand as a technique of

transculturation capable of creating new meaning from a pre-existing one. This approach to translation, inspired by the work of Rey Chow (1995; 2008) and Vicente L. Rafael (1999; 2000) entails a rejection of translation as merely a linguistic process that renders words in one language intelligible in another; instead, it conceives of translation as a complex process of reinterpretation, appropriation, expansion and exchange between cultures, across national borders or within them. I use Chow's conceptualisation of translation as an exercise of simultaneous betrayal and mourning towards the 'original' to investigate how Balmori's novel translates various cultural influences into a conception of the Filipino nation. In addition, I look at how the novel takes up Rafael's notion that Filipino nationalism was translated into Spanish and circulated among the Hispanic elite.

In Chapter 5, finally, I analyse Antonio Abad's *El Campeón* (1940) [The Champion], an animal fable about a cockfighting rooster that presents an allegory of the Filipino nation as it tries to define itself in the wake of a double colonialisation. *El Campeón* tells the life story of Banogón, a champion fighting cock who, after a successful career in the urban arenas, returns to a chicken coop in the village where he was born. Upon his return, he struggles to fit into the local community. The struggles of Banogón and the other poultry characters with the transformations that are taken place on the farm (most notably the arrival of American leghorns) metaphorically illuminate Abad's vision of Filipino society - as affected by political, cultural and identity-related crises - and his concerns with reconfiguring Filipino national identity. Where Mendoza's *Notas de viaje* (1929) and Balmori's *Los Pájaros de fuego* (1945) sought to develop Philippine nationalism primarily by comparing their country to other European nations, Japan and the US, Abad's novel, in contrast, locates a basis for nationalism in Filipino rural culture, using the long-standing Filipino tradition of cockfighting - which is at the same time presented as a transcultural practice - to propose an alternative view on Filipino national identity. Ultimately, the novel argues for the impossibility of smoothly translating the prevailing European ideologies of the nation-state, based on cultural homogeneity, racial supremacy and masculinity, to the doubly colonised, deeply transcultural context of the Philippines. By presenting cockfighting, from the perspective of the human characters in the novel, as a traditional Filipino practice that survived the various colonial attempts, on the part of both the Spanish and the Americans, to eradicate it, Abad transforms the practice of cockfighting into an anti-colonial metaphor. In my analysis of the novel, I also reflect on the relationship between masculinity and cockfighting by reading the classic article by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1972) on Balinese cockfighting in dialogue with Jerry García's (2007) interpretation of the importance of the cockfight for Chicano (masculine)

identity in the US. I argue that the novel, despite its complacent ending, presents a different type of masculine hero that also allows for a different, transcultural mode of national identity.

## Chapter 1

### Writing a New Orient: Filipino Transcultural Orientalism in the Work of Jesús Balmori

*Mindanao, princesa mora vestida de plata y cubierta de perlas, reclinada en una vinta de labrados remos, de velas de encendidos colorines, banderas y alas de su ornato exótico.*<sup>30</sup>

(Balmori 1945: 39)

[Moorish princess, dressed in silver and covered in pearls, reclined on a sailing boat with engraved oars, with burning colors, flags and wings of her exotic ornaments.]

#### Introduction

Since Edward Said wrote *Orientalism* in 1978 his concept of orientalism - explaining how Western knowledge about the East has been produced as an academic and popular discourse - continues to be discussed. New ideas have been added by Said himself as well as by other critics in various disciplines,<sup>31</sup> helping to expand his theory towards new contexts. Araceli Tinajero's *Orientalismo en el Modernismo Hispánico* (2004) draws on Said's theory of orientalism in order to examine the vision and relationship with the Orient that prevails among Latin American modernist writers, specifically focusing on travel writers. With her study, Tinajero has revealed another route of cultural approximation between two (assumed) peripheral contexts: the Far East and Latin America. More specifically, she argues that the type of orientalism expressed in the travel diaries of modernist authors such as Juan José Tablada (Mexico, 1871-1945) and Enrique Gómez Carrillo (Guatemala, 1873-1927) seeks to establish a cultural exchange, a dialogue between two peripheries, instead of a monologue that reinforces binary oppositions of self and other, West and East. Orientalist modernist writing from Latin American authors in the early twentieth century, according to Tinajero, responds to a desire for *experiencing* the Orient, factually, by travelling there, rather than *imagining* it.

However, even if the establishment of cultural hierarchies that Said attacks in his *Orientalism* is arguably less prominent or even overturned in the representations of Chinese and Japanese culture in the Mexican and Guatemalan texts that Tinajero explores, both forms

<sup>30</sup> Mindanao is the largest island in the South Philippines, as well as the name of this region. It has the largest Muslim population of the Philippines and was an important Sultanate in the pre-Hispanic period.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Linda Nochlin "The Imaginary Orient" (2005), in which she analyses orientalism in French painting from the nineteenth century, Behad and Gartlan's edited collection *Photography's Orientalism New Essays on Colonial Representation* (2013) or Varisco's *Reading Orientalism: Said and Unsaid* (2007).

of orientalism (that produced between a centre and a periphery, and that between two peripheries) continue to mark a difference between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Tablada and Carrillo’s travel accounts, for example, are framed by an ethnographic curiosity that is problematic when taken as a form of knowledge production, as much as it includes the voice of ‘the other’ as an informant rather than as a muted object. To challenge (if this is possible at all) the perpetual othering that is part of doing orientalism (or any of the *-isms* that exist in area studies: *occidentalism*, *hispanism*, *filipinism* or even *mediterraneanism* (Varisco, 2007)), in this chapter I will explore the idea of orientalism as it emerges in various ways in the poetry of Hispano-Filipino author Jesús Balmori (1886-1946).

Balmori’s poetry is considered an example of Filipino modernism that clearly shows Hispanic modernist aesthetics in terms of its themes and style. Balmori was very familiar with the work of Rubén Darío (1867-1916), the Nicaraguan poet to whom the invention of literary modernism in Spanish has been attributed.<sup>32</sup> Among other characteristics, modernist Hispanic literature features abundant oriental motifs and represents ‘the orient’ as a trope that provides a stimulus for the poetic imagination. This literary rhetoric travelled from France to Latin America, Spain and the Philippines. Given the geopolitical circumstances of the Philippines as a Hispanized culture located in Asia, the modernist orientalism found in its literature is shaped in two ways: as a form of self-representation and as the idealization of other locations in the Far East, specifically Japan. This demonstrates a significant change of perspective in terms of what and who is being orientalised, and by whom.

In this chapter, my aim is to identify and analyze the various types of orientalism articulated in Balmori’s poetry, focusing on three poems contained in the collections *Rimas Malayas* (1904) [Malayan Rhymes] and *Mi casa de Nipa* (1941) [My house of Nipa]. My argument is that these poems engage with the two models of orientalism conceptualized respectively by Said and Tinajero: as a hegemonic discourse promoting assimilation to Spanish colonization and Western modernity, and as an expression of literary modernism that

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<sup>32</sup> Darío’s poem “La Sonatina,” included in *Prosas Profanas* (1895), is one of the best examples of modernism. According to O’Brian in *Manifesto of Modernism* (1982):

“Sonatina” contains all the chromatic, sensual, opulent, and exotic elements that, once coalesced, gave form to the Modernist movement in Spain in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The fundamental purpose of Modernism is an appeal to the senses, a reaction to the false sensibility and prosaic and rhetorical style of the Realists and Naturalists. [...] The theme of the princess, a literary motif dating from the Middle Ages, serves as the focal point of the poem and provides a point of departure for Darío’s “poetic trip,” in which opulence and sensuality are combined with the exotic and the rare around the princess’s silent world of sadness. As the poem develops it is graphically enriched by the addition of other devices popular with the Modernist poets, such as color, imagery, synesthesia, erudition, and musicality. (134)

Notably, Balmori wrote a short play entitled *La Princesa está Triste* (1919) that takes the second verse from Darío’s “Sonatina” as a departure point.

re-inscribes the poet's assimilation of Hispanic and French aesthetics. Crucially, in some of his poems Balmori also moves beyond these models by giving voice to what I call *Filipino transcultural orientalism*. This form of orientalism articulates Filipino identity as both orientalised and orientalising, with authors variously attaching to and detaching from the various cultures that have historically constituted it, as well as the forms of representing the orient specific to these cultures and their literary expressions.

The first poem by Balmori that I will analyse in this chapter, titled "Blasón" [Code of Arms], assigns the cultures of the pre-colonial Philippines to an orientalised realm that is seen as having been "improved" by colonialism. As such, the poem can be read as an example of Said's conceptualization of orientalism as a hegemonic discourse, promoting assimilation to Spanish colonization and Western modernity. In contrast, the second Balmori poem I look at, "Rima Malaya" [Mayan Ryme], shows how Filipino modernist oriental writing effects a transculturation of Hispanic and French aesthetics. Lastly, I discuss the poem "La Gueisha" [the Geisha] as an illustration of how Filipino transcultural orientalism can distance itself from foreign aesthetics and orientalising discourses to create a new version of the Orient and of Filipino identity.

### **Orientalism as a Hegemonic Discourse**

Said's *Orientalism* (1978) seeks to "understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (3). It reveals the process through which the Western world forged an image of the East - mostly the Middle East - as inferior, with the aim of domination. Said explains how the image of the *other* was constructed based on a discursive system of binary oppositions such as Orient/Occident, Catholic/Muslim, science/religion, progress/underdevelopment, knowledge/labor and law/superstition.<sup>33</sup> These oppositions defined both the East and the West, and supported western power. Said's idea of cultural dominance through orientalism is supported by Antonio Gramsci's theory of power as hegemonic. Gramsci's main claim is that a hegemonic relation of dominance is supported by both force and what he calls 'consent,' an individual agreement to power that prevails in non-totalitarian regimes (2009: 210-16). In the

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<sup>33</sup> Said conceptualises discourse in a Foucauldian manner as a way of thinking expressed and recognised through the use of a specific language (vocabulary, expressions, and even style) that discloses the field of knowledge it refers to (see Foucault 1972).

case of orientalism, this translates into the acceptance of the West as unquestionably superior and advanced - as something to look up to and forward to - both in the West and outside it.

Said identifies orientalism in the fields of history, literature, art and politics, disclosing the elements that helped construct the image of the East as exotic, mythical, barbaric and anchored in the past.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the West is perceived as progressive, powerful and desirable. By elucidating orientalism as a form of discourse Said insists on the complexity of the phenomenon and offers a way to acknowledge its viral-like spread, affecting academia as well as popular culture. Providing an historical overview of how accounts of the Orient came into being, Said draws on examples of the earliest colonial and imperial enterprises carried out by the West, which go back to the eighteenth-century Napoleonic invasion of Egypt. The relationship between orientalism and colonialism is evident, as Ania Loomba points out: “Orientalism [...] was an ideological accompaniment of colonial ‘power’” (42), in which the making of the *other* is essential for the establishment of a colonial system that forged the roles of the colonizer and the colonized, parallel to those of West and East.

Joan Torres-Pou’s book *Asia en la España del siglo XIX* (2013) [Asia in Nineteenth-Century Spain] is one of the few works that focus on cultural exchanges between Spain and Asia in a century that, in Spanish studies, has traditionally been considered a time of closure and isolation, leading to and affected by the loss of the last colonies. Importantly for this study, Torres-Pou analyses the Spanish colonial discourse about the Philippines and the representation of the Orient by Spaniards in diplomatic reports, letters, journal articles, examples of travel writing and also literature, including a travel novel by Juan Valera (1824-1905) called *Morsamor* (1899). Torres-Pou’s research confirms the existence of an orientalist colonial discourse in accounts by Spanish intellectuals that justified Spanish imperialism based on a notion of racial inequality. Thus, Sinibaldo de Mas (1809-1869), who was the ambassador of Spain in Beijing in 1844 and consul general in Hong Kong in 1848, wrote a report entitled “Informe sobre el Estado de las Islas Filipinas” (1842) [Report on the State of the Philippine Islands] in which, in addition to presenting a scientific classification of what he had observed in the Philippines (populations, topography, agriculture, language, climate, flora and fauna), he repeatedly attempts to prove his conviction of “pertenecer a una raza

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<sup>34</sup> Nochlin’s “The Imaginary Orient” (2005) illustrates how Orientalist French painting, such as that of Jean-Léon Gérôme, who painted *The Snake Charmer* (ca. 1870), which was on the cover of early editions of Said’s book, fed the imagination of the orient as atemporal, untouched and unpolluted by producing images that seem objective and realist but in fact contain meaningful absences, such as that of the white man (colonisers, travellers, even tourists), of art itself, of ordinary activities and, crucially, of history.

superior” [belonging to a superior race] (Torres-Pou 2013: 15). These testimonies from within Spanish colonialism are symptomatic of the colonial institutionalisation of power over the Orient that Said denounces in *Orientalism*, and that was transmitted, as in the case of French and English imperialism, through the channels of intellectual and political writing.

Said’s study identifies a generation of French and British pilgrim writers such as Chateaubriand (1768-1849), Edward William Lane (1801-1876), who translated the *1001 Nights* into English, and Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888-1935), better known as Lawrence of Arabia, as orientalists. However, he explains that their way of doing orientalism was different from Napoleon’s, as they were driven by a philological and aesthetic aim rather than a political and colonial one:

French pilgrims did not seek a scientific so much as an exotic yet attractive reality. This is obviously true of the literary pilgrims, beginning with Chateaubriand, who found in the Orient a locale sympathetic to their private myths, obsessions, and requirements. Here we notice how all the pilgrims, but especially the French ones, exploit the Orient in their work so as in some urgent way to justify their existential vocation. (Said 170)

With this new wave of orientalists, the Orient became for European writers a source of inspiration that propelled their imagination and justified their “vocation,” leading to the creation of an orientalist discourse that was uncontested by reality and constricted by the limitations of the western cultural lens of travel writing and literary inspiration. The creation of a twentieth-century orientalist literary discourse is thus conceived by Said as a consequence of artistic creation - not empirical but imagined.

In the Spanish-speaking world, orientalist travel writing originated with the generation of modernist Latin American writers Tinajero studies, which will be discussed in the next section. What needs to be addressed at this point is the relationship between travel writing and orientalism, which has at least two aspects: first, travel writing is at the origin of orientalist discourse because the voyage generates a series of contact zones that open *the imperial eye* - to borrow Mary Louise Pratt’s metaphor; and, second, travel responds to an desire to experience, directly, the otherwise abstract entity called the Orient.

Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1997), finds illustrative examples of Said’s orientalist discourse in the travel accounts of British colonisers in Africa and Alexander Humboldt in Latin America. According to her, the landscape descriptions that western travellers, ethnographers or anthropologists offer in the nineteenth century have three recurrent characteristics: the landscape is aestheticised (presented as exotic, mysterious and seductive), a notable density of meaning is created through an extreme use of adjectives

denoting “material and semantic substance,” and “a relation of mastery between the seer and the seen” is constructed that positions both the writer and the reader as “the monarch of all I survey” (Pratt 1997: 204-5). The absolutism of the monarch’s view and the language that is used to describe the landscape form the basis of how it is captured, becoming the primary source, the archive or the discourse that nurtures subsequent rewritings and representations of that very nature (and culture) by others, whether they are natives or foreign. In this way, Pratt succinctly demonstrates how a particular orientalist discourse is created and becomes entrenched.<sup>35</sup>

Pratt also develops an understanding of transculturation based on how the colonised engage with such received orientalist knowledge. In this context, she highlights the stylistic characteristics of how a writer constructs his/her text. This can be connected to the way modernist poetry traveled from France, Nicaragua and Spain to the Philippines, and how it was transformed by each ‘local’ writer that appropriated it through the process of transculturation, which, as explained in the introduction to this study, implies leaving things behind (*deculturation*), adopting new things (*acculturation*) and producing new meaning (*neoculturation*). This is not simply an intertextual phenomenon but also a sociopolitical one “scripted into a network of heterogeneous cultural representations generated by the forces of both authority and aesthetics” (Behad 1994: 136), which, in the case of Filipino writers, served as a form of self- and national affirmation, as my analysis of Balmori’s poems will show.

In addition to the hegemony of orientalist modernism having undergone a process of transculturation in the various locations that engaged with it, the growing awareness of the omnipresence of an orientalist discourse in Western academia, art and popular culture has prompted calls for the empowerment of the oriental subject, which has produced a counter-discourse leading to a self-redefinition. Nowadays, a call for a remapping of cultural epistemology as response to the lingering of orientalism as a hegemonic discourse has given voice to scholars that have been conditioned to see their academic research, itself essentially a Western tradition (see Appadurai 2000), through the prisms of orientalism. Thinking about

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<sup>35</sup> Said explains the scientific discursive process as follows: “There is a rather complex dialectic of reinforcement by which the experiences of readers in reality is determined by what they have read, and this in turn influences writers to take up subjects defined in advance by readers’ experiences. A book on how to handle a fierce lion might then cause a series of books to be produced on such subjects as the fierceness of lions, the origins of fierceness, and so forth. Similarly, as the focus of the text centers more narrowly on the subject - no longer lions but their fierceness - we might expect that the ways by which it is recommended that a lion’s fierceness be handled will increase its fierceness, force it to be fierce since that is what it is, and that is what in essence we know, or can *only* know about it” (94, emphasis in text).

orientalism from the East, or from other peripheries, raises questions about the terms in which people in these locations see, explain, create and imagine the West and themselves, and, consequently, about the role of orientalism as a hegemonic discourse.

Chen Xiaomei (2002) perceives the imposed dominance of western thought as a prompt to carry out an exercise of introspection:

As a result of constantly revising and manipulating imposed Western theories and practices, the Chinese Orient has produced a new discourse, marked by a peculiar combination of the Western construction of China and the Chinese construction of the West, with both of these components interacting and interpenetrating each other. (2)

As Chen claims, the sociopolitical circumstances of specific spatio-temporal locations in which actors produce their cultural texts are essential elements in the production of a counter-hegemonic knowledge that does not necessarily position itself against the dominant discourse, but engages with it.

Iris Zavala (1992) notes that, for Latin American authors, orientalist writing “sought to construct the Orient as other while establishing national identities. Rather than a discourse of power to create, incorporate, or control Oriental spaces, Latin Americans sought to affirm their own identities through discourses against power, created through creolized visions and polyphonic hybridized strategies” (Zavala 84, qtd. in Shulman 2013). In the context of the Philippines, Megan C. Thomas (2012) points to the potential of the orientalist European research in linguistics, philology, folklore and ethnology young Filipinos from the 1880s and 1890s engaged with when producing their own work, and how it was sometimes “put to anti-colonial ends” (3). This confirms that orientalism can also be appropriated to serve as a form of national affirmation.

To summarize, three aspects are important when looking at orientalism as a hegemonic discourse. The first is that it is created, supported and expanded through the use of a specific vocabulary that supports a powerful ideology by which the orientalist and the orientalisé are put in a hierarchical relationship that ends up being reproduced by both parties. Second, it is used to justify colonial enterprises, which are translated into a project of civilising the uncivilised, of bringing progress to backward places and of improving the living conditions of the ‘other.’ Third, and highly relevant for the study of Hispano-Filipino literature, travel writing, through the centuries, has contributed to the emergence and maintenance of an orientalist creative aesthetic. Orientalist modern literature positions the orient as exotic, pure and anchored in the past (traditional), a view that is often internalised

by the orientalised as well. However, this (auto)orientalisation can also generate a form of self-affirmation and resistance against (colonial) power.

### **Latin American (Peripheral) Orientalism**

There are many studies that focus on how the Orient and Orientals are represented in Latin American literature, but only a few use the term ‘peripheral’ to refer to the type of orientalism put forward in these works.<sup>36</sup> Most importantly, Tinajero’s *Orientalismo en el Modernismo Hispánico* (2005) defines Latin American modernist writing as a type of peripheral orientalism because it emerges from what is considered, from a European perspective, a periphery. She explains that the relationship established between Mexico and Guatemala and Japan and China is one in which two peripheries are connected and put into dialogue. While this definition of peripheral orientalism refers to the geopolitical location from which orientalism is made, I want to go one step further and ask what type of orientalism the periphery (Latin America) produces and how it differs from the European orientalism described in Said’s work.

Before answering these questions, it is useful to clarify why most orientalist works from Latin America concern the Far East rather than the Middle East, which is the focus of the hegemonic orientalism explored by Said. There is an historical explanation for this. The relationship between Latin America and the Middle East was mediated through Spanish orientalism, which, as a result of “721 years of Islamic occupation, which left its mark in the language, culture, infrastructure, and political institutions of the Iberian Peninsula and colonial Spanish America” (Camayd-Freixas 2), has othered the ‘moors’ under a different discourse than that of orientalism. The old battles between ‘Christian and Moors’<sup>37</sup> have determined how the Hispanic world perceives Middle Eastern and North African countries, extending to today’s racist discourses on migration from these areas to Spain.

From their own periphery, Latin American orientalists such as Darío, Tablada and Gómez Carrillo found in the Far East, *el lejano oriente*, an appealing space which they could

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<sup>36</sup> One of the most complete recent works on Orientalism in Latin American literature is the volume edited by Erik Caymad-Freixas entitled *Orientalism and Identity in Latin America: Fashioning the Self and Other from the (Post) Colonial Margin* (2013), from which I discuss Zoila Clark’s and Ivan A. Schulman’s work in this chapter. Another interesting work is Torres-Rodríguez’s “Orientalising Mexico: *Estudios indostánicos* and the Place of India in José Vasconcelos’ *Raza Cosmica*” (2015), which connects with Caymad-Freixas’s discussion of the construction of a cultural link between Asia (mostly China and Japan) and Latin America by Latin American intellectuals, including Octavio Paz.

<sup>37</sup> The most famous Spanish literary text concerning the battles between Christians and Moors is the epic poem *El Cantar del Mio Cid* (ca. 1200), which narrates the battles of the Christian knight Cid Campeador. A study by Svetlana V. Tyutina (2013: 178-197) argues that this text is the “founding paradigm of Hispanic Orientalism.”

use to resist the self-proclaimed superiority of Western man - an orient with which Latin America did not share a history of conflict but with which they could forge a connection through the foundational myth that Amerindians<sup>38</sup> had come from the East (Camayd-Freixas 1). Peripheral orientalism as practiced by Latin American modernist writers is therefore first defined by the distance of both Latin America and the Far East from the European centre, and second by a desire to connect with an 'other' perceived as equal (and, for some, the same).<sup>39</sup> This removes the sense of cultural superiority that characterises the orientalism from the centre described by Said. Latin American modernist travel writers declared themselves different from the French and English modernists in writing in a "spirit of veneration and respect for the Orient" (Gómez Carrillo). In my analysis of Balmori's poems, I will show how the idea of a cultural hierarchy does not completely disappear but is reversed through a sublime idealisation of the Orient (specifically Japan).

As noted, Tinajero, in response to Said, elucidates a new paradigm for understanding Latin American modern orientalism. Her critique of Said's orientalism is mainly directed at its Eurocentrism. She argues that his theory is insufficient to describe Hispanic orientalism for two main reasons. First, she points to a geographical displacement, a shift between centres and peripheries that occurred in Hispanic literary modernism, a literary tradition in the Spanish language that emerged in Latin America, enabling a dialogue between two so-called 'peripheries': Latin America and countries from the Middle and Far East. Second, she identifies a temporal junction in the twentieth century that opened up a dialogue between postcolonial subjects leading to a new perception of what studying the orient means and how it should be carried out. This junction is the emergence of modernity, specifically literary modernism. One of the characteristics of modernist literature - in the French tradition that coined the term - is the stylistic exercise of escapism provoked by a sense of dissatisfaction with the modern world.

It is necessary to clarify at this point that Said's work explains orientalism mainly as a discourse of power that can be traced in various sources, literary and non-literary. Tinajero, on her part, views orientalism in the Latin American context as a modernist literary style that

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<sup>38</sup> The term *indio* accidentally connects the two peripheries through a colonial misunderstanding. Columbus, thinking that he had arrived in India, used the word to refer to the American natives and by (colonial) extension the word *indio* was used to refer to all people colonised by the Spanish empire, including those of the Philippines. Throughout this study, the word *indio* will appear in various texts, usually referring in reductionist terms to the natives of the Philippines.

<sup>39</sup> A foundational essay that addresses the idea of peoples being part of one and only interconnected race, and therefore often used to argue against racism, is Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos's *La Raza Cosmica* (1925).

derived from the appropriation of French writing by key authors such as Théophile Gautier, Pierre Loti and Alphonse de Lamartine by an emerging bourgeoisie in the South American capitals of Santiago and Buenos Aires:

Aquí surgió una nueva burguesía adinerada y elitista, que hizo gala de derroche: copió modelos de París, llámense éstos palacios, salones, lujo, carruajes o moda. Poco a poco fueron copiando estructuras aristocráticas, arquitectónicas o grandes decorados, de moda entonces en París, produciéndose un trasplante de la cultura francesa al Sur del trópico. (Llopesa 1996: 176)

[Here [in South America], a new rich and elitist bourgeoisie emerged that boasted of wasteful spending: copied Parisian models, in the form of palaces, ballrooms, luxury, carriages or fashion. Little by little they began to copy aristocratic structures, architecture and furnishings that were fashionable in Paris at the time, transferring French culture to the South of the tropics.]

Ricardo Llopesa (1996) uses the word “trasplante” [transplant] to talk about the phenomenon of bringing French orientalist culture to “a tropical south” via a bourgeois lifestyle in which the oriental motifs are, in fact, oriental precious metals and stones such as gold, silver, ivory, diamonds and emeralds, translated into a literary aesthetic (178).

Octavio Paz has argued that in Latin American modernism escapism (as a feature of orientalism) constituted an attempt to enter the European modernity that was believed to be temporally ahead. This accords with the longstanding perception of Latin America as a backwards territory situated in an *off-modern* time, always trying to catch up with Europe. Pratt (2002) explains the consequences of this perceived temporal lag between modernity and the periphery in the following terms:

It has been common to assume that “progress” in the periphery has the same meaning as “progress” in the center. The center’s normative interests are served by this equation, but in the periphery, it becomes apparent that “progress” in such senses as “bettering the human condition” or “moving towards greater plenitude” is not the same at all as in the sense of “catching up” or “reproducing what has already happened elsewhere”. The latter teleology, as many critics point out, imposes a permanent identity crisis. (34)

The “permanent identity crisis” that Pratt refers to here has been thoroughly discussed in postcolonial literary studies. It pervades postcolonial literature in the form of a persistent questioning of belonging, nationhood, roots and ethnicity, while also producing new meanings that speak of specific processes of transculturation in the various peripheries.

Pratt usefully comments on the variety of terms that Latin American scholars have come up with to designate the crisis of living an *off-modernity*. Octavio Paz talks about “pseudomodernidad,” José Guillermo Nugent of “contramodernidad” and the Argentinean

scholar Nestor García Canclini, in *Hybrid Cultures* (1995), argues that subjects are “entering and leaving modernity.” Canclini’s dynamic metaphor takes us back to Paz’s idea of entering European modernity with the option of also staying outside it. In this light, it is possible to think of orientalism made in the periphery as encompassing the hegemonic European orientalist mindset, but with a twist. This twist, indicated by the prefixes *pseudo-* or *contra-*, invokes a difference and a resistance that it is dismissed, however, by the negative, Europe-centred prefix *off-*.

The idea that Hispanic modernism imitated French writing - of poets such as Baudelaire (1821-1867), Mallarmé (1842-1898) and Valéry (1871-1945) - as a way to enter European modernity calls for a questioning of the meaning of ‘imitation’ through the framework of postcolonial theory. Homi Bhabha’s concept of ‘mimicry’, expressed in his seminal “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” (1994), expands the idea of colonial mimicry from plain imitation to an act of resistance - resonating with the abovementioned prefixes attached to peripheral modernities. Bhabha borrows the term from biology, but for him mimicry is not just a strategy of survival through camouflage; rather, it is an act of mockery, irony and resemblance, which menaces that which is being mimicked by an uncanny version of itself. The power of colonial mimicry lies in how it reveals both desire and ideology in an ambivalent way. First, from the perspective of the coloniser, who attempts to force his image of himself onto the other yet cannot allow that other to become exactly the same. In his most cited sentence, Bhabha expresses this idea of colonial mimicry as “the desire for a reformed recognizable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite” (122). Second, from the point of view of the colonised, mimicry ‘writes back’ to the colony, revealing the very ideology projected onto it and its own desire to be transformed by it.

Following Bhabha, when Hispanic poetry is accused of *afrancesamiento* (frenchification), it reveals precisely that it is *not French* but only *French-like*. Latin American modernist writers are not simply reproducing French models, but undermining the (colonising) canon and its power by producing a new literature that questions the ‘original.’ Hispanic modernism is thus an example of transculturation that can be understood through the lens of mimicry’s double articulation: it is modern (assuming this term to refer to the canonical, colonising French literary movement) but it is also *contra-modern*, *pseudo-modern*. Yet, from a nationalist perspective, Filipino poetry that assimilates French, Spanish or Nicaraguan modernist aesthetics is often perceived to stand against Filipino nationalism.

This is an important critique that I will address in more detail in the next section when discussing how Balmori's poetry was received.

Pascale Casanova provides yet another understanding of Hispanic modernism as an example of transculturation through the framework of the World Republic of Letters, explained in the introduction of this study. As noted there, the relationship between centres and peripheries in Casanova's model is dynamic, so that sometimes peripheral literary movements can enter and even set the tone for the centre. Thus, *modernism* was an important avant-garde movement in global Spanish letters that came not from Spain but from Nicaragua through the work of Rubén Darío. According to Casanova, Hispanic modernism can 'enter' the centre of the World Republic of Letters (which, for her, is Paris) by means of an "expropriation of cultural capital":

It is in these terms that I would analyse the advent of modernismo in the Spanish-speaking countries at the end of the 19th century. How to explain the fact that this movement, which turned the entire tradition of Hispanic poetry on its head, could have been dictated by a poet from Nicaragua, on the far reaches of the Spanish colonial empire? Rubén Darío, captivated from boyhood by the literary legend of Paris, stayed in the city in the late 1880s and, logically enough, was enthused by the French symbolist poetry that was just making its mark. He then carried out an astonishing operation, which can only be called an *expropriation of literary capital*: he imported, into Spanish poetry itself, the very procedures, themes, vocabulary and forms looted by the French symbolists. This expropriation was asserted quite explicitly, and the deliberate Frenchification of Spanish poetry, down to the phonemes and syntactic forms, designated 'mental Gallicism'. *The diversion of this capital towards inextricably literary and political ends was not, then, carried out in the passive mode of 'reception', and still less of 'influence', as traditional literary analysis would have it. On the contrary, this capture was the active form and instrument of a complex struggle.* To combat both the political-linguistic dominance of Spain over its colonial empire and the sclerosis that was paralyzing Spanish-language poetry, Darío openly asserted the literary domination exercised by Paris at that time. (Casanova 2005: 88, emphasis added)

Darío's importation of "the very procedures, themes, vocabulary and forms" of French symbolism is heralded by Casanova as an act not of passive "reception" or "influence," but of overt anti-colonial resistance through expropriation. This struggle transculturally surpasses Frenchification by subverting Spain's political, linguistic and cultural domination in Latin America. Significantly, Casanova's argument implies a triangular move rather than a bilateral relation between coloniser and colonised: the strategic use of one centre (France) against another (Spain) in the interests of the periphery (Nicaragua).

Both Bhabha's colonial mimicry and Casanova's expropriation of literary capital help to redefine the idea of imitation by the postcolonial or the peripheral as a process of transculturation that empowers rather than subjugates. Tinajero complements this dynamic further by reflecting explicitly on how orientalising for Latin American writers constituted a plural method of engaging with Latin America, Europe and the Orient:

Para el modernista [latinoamericano] el acto de *orientalizar* no significaba encontrar una respuesta opuesta a los conceptos éticos, morales o estéticos de la sociedad europea. Tampoco se trataba de dar una respuesta al orientalismo europeo finisecular ni mucho menos de imitar a ciegas su producción literaria. Esto lo enfatizó Aníbal González al proponer que los modernistas sabían exactamente lo que hacían cuando en un mismo texto combinaban referencias al Lejano Oriente con aquéllas de las culturas indígenas y al mismo tiempo citaban autores europeos (54). En ese sentido los miembros del movimiento “dialogan” con orientalistas europeos, pero eso no quiere decir que la razón por la cual los primeros se aproximan al Oriente esté basada en ofrecer exclusivamente antagonismos a la visión europea sobre esa parte del mundo. (Tinajero 19, emphasis in text)

[For the [Latin American] modernist the act of *orientalising* did not mean finding an opposite answer to the ethical, moral and aesthetic principles of European society. Neither did it aim at responding to the European orientalism of the fin-de-siècle or at blindly imitating its literary production. This was emphasised by Aníbal Gonzalez's suggestion that modernists knew exactly what they were doing when, in the same text, they combined references to the Far East with ones to indigenous cultures, while at the same time citing European authors. This does not mean, however, that the reason why the members of the movement engaged in a dialogue with the European orientalist was based on an attempt to exclusively antagonise the European vision of that part of the world.]

As this quote suggests, Latin American modernist orientalist knew of European orientalism but did not approach the Orient solely to refute this European discourse. Instead, they incorporated both the European and 'their own' view of the Orient in the form of a transcultural style based on pastiche, cultural exchange and historical recognition.

Tinajero moves from the early Latin American orientalist modernists to a later group of writers that viewed the European orientalist literary imagination (mostly French and English) as fake and pretentious, and followed their impulse to know 'the Orient' beyond its imagination. Juan José Tablada and Enrique Gómez Carrillo travelled to Egypt, Japan and China. Tablada kept a diary during his trips to Japan in the 1900s. In the following excerpt, he comments on the way he perceives texts from the French tradition:

Concluyo de leer por segunda vez la *Madame Chrysanthème* de Loti y a la vez que me encanta los prestigios del delicioso escritor me exaspera la frivolidad de sus juicios, la perfecta incomprensión del verdadero tipo japonés. (qtd. in Tinajero 10)

[I have finished reading Loti's *Madame Chrysantheme* for the second time and as much as I love the praise of the delightful writer, the frivolity of his judgments, the perfect incomprehension of the true Japanese exasperates me.]

Tablada is enchanted with Loti's s delightful writing while at the same time critical of him for remaining superficial, frivolous and uncomprehending of the "true Japanese."

The following fragment, published in the Mexican newspaper *La Patria* in 1900, illustrates the mentality and role of these Latin American travel writers as peripheral orientalists:

José Juan Tablada parte mañana para el Japón. El poeta realiza su sueño de toda una juventud... ¡Ve, artista! ¡Ve, escogido!... Estudia y fructifica, y que tu labor acrisolada en la palpación de la más sugestiva de las artes plásticas, porque es soberanamente original, sea simiente fecunda en nuestra tierra... Cuando contemples arrobado flotar en un mar de oro el témpano de nieve del Fusiyama , sueña en el lejano y augusto Citlaltépetl. (qtd. in Tinajero 32)

[Tomorrow, José Juan Tablada will depart for Japan. The poet will accomplish his youthful dream... Go artist! Go, you chosen one! Study and be fruitful, and may your noble work on the most suggestive of plastic arts, because it is profoundly original, be fertile in our land... When, enchanted, you behold a snowflake from Fusiyama floating on a golden sea, dream of the distant and peaceful Citlaltépetl]

The comparison made here between a Japanese and a Mexican volcano establishes a new route from the Far West to the Far East that will serve as fertile soil for a new form of cultural expression. But the directionality of this new form of cultural expression is clear from the newspaper fragment: it is not so much about *them* (the Japanese) as it is about what *we* (Mexicans) can learn from them.

Gómez Carrillo's commentaries on his trip to Asia, published as *De Marsella a Tokyo: Sensaciones de Egipto, la India, la China y el Japón* (1906), illustrate how a neutral location such as the ocean can become the contact zone for cultural exchanges between two travellers.<sup>40</sup> The author was travelling by boat to Egypt when he encountered a Chinese man whom he describes as "no vulgar, un mercader, un banquero, no, ni siquiera un diplomático, sino un sabio chino, un chino doctoral" [not vulgar, not a banker, not even a diplomat, but a wise Chinese man, a doctoral Chinese!] (qtd. in Tinajero 39). This Chinese man spoke various European languages, including Spanish, and was writing a book demonstrating that America had not been 'discovered' by Christopher Columbus but by a Chinese admiral. Interested by this new version of history, Gómez Carrillo continues conversing with him and

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<sup>40</sup> In Chapter 3 of this study I explore, in relation to the work of Paz Mendoza, how travel writing produces a new space for cultural encounters in which orientalist Asian stereotypes are challenged when travellers from different parts of the world engage in conversation and try to explain themselves to each other.

eventually informs his interlocutor that he has discovered that the Chinese and the Mexican calendars are identical, and that the same is the case with most of the religious and philosophical beliefs in ancient China and pre-Columbian Mexico:

la transmigración de las almas, las atribuciones de las divinidades domésticas, los amuletos, la creencia en que el dragón devora al sol en sus eclipses, las reglas monásticas, que son idénticas en la China antigua y en el antiguo Méjico. (qtd. in Tinajero 40)

[The transmigration of souls, the attributions of domestic divinities, the use of amulets, the belief that the dragon eats the sun in its eclipses, monastic rules, they are all identical in ancient China and ancient Mexico]

Once in Egypt, Gómez Carrillo talks to an Egyptian judge and writes the following:

[El Viejo Egipto] no estaba muerto. Los musulmanes y los ingleses han podido dominarlo pero no transformarlo. Un soplo nacional fuerte, bastaría para hacer desaparecer los turbantes y los cascos coloniales. (qtd. in Tinajero 41)<sup>41</sup>

[[The old Egypt] was not dead. The Muslims and the English may have been able to dominate it, but not transform it. A strong gust of nationalism would be enough to make all the turbans and colonial helmets disappear.]

Gómez Carrillo chooses to incorporate the voices of Asian and Middle Eastern people, especially the well-educated, in his travelogue and sees these voices as subverting the master narratives of colonialism. Identification occurs through a perceived shared history with another peripheral oriental.

Julia A. Kushigian, a specialist in Hispanic orientalism whose work precedes and inspired Tinajero's, explains in *Orientalism in the Hispanic Literary Tradition: In Dialogue with Borges, Paz and Sarduy* (1991) that Latin American orientalist literature prompts an "opening, dialectics and identification with the orient," seen as a "complementary cultural source" (106). Gómez Carrillo's text demonstrates this cultural identification: understanding Mexican pre-Columbian cosmology facilitates comprehending the teleology behind the Chinese horoscope, Mexico and China share cultural and religious artifacts, and Latin America and Egypt can survive their specific histories of colonisation in similar if not identical ways.<sup>42</sup> While Tinajero presents Gómez Carrillo as an example of someone writing

<sup>41</sup> One of the arguments put forward by the Indian scholar Partha Chatterjee (1993) on postcolonial nationalism is that colonial administrations may have dominated the 'material realm,' but never fully penetrated the 'spiritual realm'; this sentiment is echoed in the judge's insistence that "the old Egypt" has survived.

<sup>42</sup> Ania Loomba (1998) stresses that the term "post-colonial" carries different meanings in different places and refers to different temporalities. She further argues that the term "post-colonial" not only fails to reunite, as an umbrella term, the temporal and spatial disjunctures of decolonisation, but also obfuscates important inequalities within the same community:

on the basis of experience (i.e. actually travelling to Japan), Zoila Clark argues that a “negotiation between intentions and expectations, on the one hand, and experience, on the other” takes place, leading to a text that leans towards the first and “fits into his (and the audience’s) expectations of the Japanese,” particularly in its idealised portrayal of Japanese women (114).

As my examples illustrate, peripheral orientalism dismisses the cultural hegemony that Said’s identifies in European orientalism as a colonial discourse. Even if the relationship with the orient expressed by Latin American modernist writers, as examples of peripheral orientalists, continues to be one based on a search for identity and self-definition through the other, this oriental other is perceived not as an inferior but as a cultural counterpart. At the same time, it has become clear that each instance of peripheral orientalism should be looked at carefully to decide whether it merely replicates European orientalism (as a hegemonic discourse) or whether it uses orientalism in a different way. The fact that orientalism is coming from the orient does not automatically make it subversive.

In the next section, I return to the initial questions I posed concerning the type of orientalism that is produced in the Philippines and who it orientalises by looking at Balmori’s poetry. I will argue that his poems show very clearly that peripheral orientalism can stay very close to orientalism as a hegemonic discourse, but can also move further away from it, towards what I will call transcultural orientalism, in which the *other* is located within the *self*. Consequently, transcultural orientalist texts simultaneously articulate orientalised and orientalising perspectives.

### **Filipino Transcultural Orientalism in Balmori’s Poetry**

Jesús Balmori was born in 1886 in Ermita, Manila, which was the centre of Hispanic life during the colonial period. He studied at the Municipal Ateneo and obtained his bachelor diploma in 1900 from San Juan de Letrán College. He worked as a lawyer for a while but dedicated most of his working life to journalism and writing, at a time when Spanish was at its peak as the medium of the Filipino press. Balmori was one of the most active contributors to Spanish newspapers such as *La Vanguardia*, *El Debate* and *Voz de Manila*, as well as the weekly *Revista Filipina*, in which most of the Spanish literary production of the Philippines - poems, stories, essays and novels - was published. Under the pseudonym “Batikuling”

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The term [post-colonialism] is not only inadequate to the task of defining contemporary realities in the once-colonized countries, and vague in terms of indicating a specific period of history, but may also cloud the internal social and racial differences of many societies. (13)

Balmori published numerous pieces of satirical poetry criticising the government and fast-changing Manilean society. Many of the columns he wrote were compiled in a book entitled *El libro de mis Vidas Manileñas*, published in 1928, which Donoso describes as a “truly delicious book about the socio-political life of his time” (2012: XVI).

Besides his work as a journalist, Balmori was also known as a much-lauded poet; he was a competitor and admirer of Manuel Bernabé (1890-1960), another key author in Hispanic Philippine literature. Together, they wrote *Balagtasán*, a type of poetry duel for which they won the Zóbel Prize in 1926. Balmori’s early novels, *Bancarrota de almas* (1910) [Bankrupt souls] and *Se deshojó la flor* (1915) [Leafless flower], criticize the influence of American culture on Filipino society, specifically women. His last novel, *Los Pájaros de fuego, Novela Filipina de la Guerra* [Birds of Fire, A Filipino War Novel], written in 1945, is considered his best work in prose. I will analyze this novel in Chapter 4. Here, to delineate the characteristics of Filipino transcultural orientalism, I focus on three of Balmori’s poems: “Rima Malaya” [Malayan Rhyme], from a collection of poetry Balmori wrote when he was 17 years old entitled *Rimas Malayas* [Malayan Rhymes] (1904), and “Blasón” [Code of arms] and “La Gueisha” [The Geisha], both from *Mi casa de Nipa* [My house of Nipa], published in 1941.

My analysis of “Blasón” [Blazon of Arms] will show how, in this poem, Filipino identity is attached to historical, racial and religious elements in a way that reiterates an orientalist colonial discourse:

“Blasón”

*Soy un bardo indohispano. En mi pecho cristiano  
mi corazón es vaso donde mezclada está  
la sangre de Legazpi, el capitán hispano,  
con la sangre tagala de la hija del Rajah*

*Con el talón hundido en olas y en espumas  
esperé sobre el mar el galeón español  
y España, al encontrarme, besó las áureas plumas  
que en mi frente temblaban como rayos de sol.*

*Era hermosa, era buena, era plena de amores;  
puse a sus pies mis lanzas, mis espigas, mis flores;  
le di mi corazón salvaje y oriental;*

*Y desde entonces va en mi pecho desnudo  
sirviéndome de férreo y de glorioso escudo  
con su idioma divino y su sangre inmortal.*

[I am an Indo-Hispanic poet. In my Christian chest / My heart is a vase in which the blood of Legazpi, the Hispanic captain/mixes with the Tagalog blood of the daughter of the Rahá / With my heel sunken in the foam of the waves, / I awaited on the sea the Spanish galleon / And Spain, when she found me, kissed the golden feathers / That trembled on my forehead like rays of sun / She was beautiful, she was good, she was loving / I laid my spears, my thorns and my flowers at her feet / I gave her my wild oriental heart / Since then I carry her on my naked chest / Serving me as a glorious iron shield / With its divine language and immortal blood.]

“Blason” mobilises several identity attachments. The narrator describes himself as an Indo-Hispanic poet,<sup>43</sup> a mix between the Spanish coloniser Legazpi (the leader of the first Spaniards to arrive in Manila) and the Tagalog daughter of a ‘Rajah.’<sup>44</sup> The poem includes Filipino cultural and racial heritage by recognising elements of pre-Hispanic cultures (Islamic and Tagalog), but privileges the Hispanic elements, as indicated by the contrast between the reference to a named historical Spaniard (Legazpi) and the one to the nameless Tagala, daughter of an unidentified Muslim king (“rajah”). A feminised Spain described as “Hermosa,” “buena” and “plena de amores” [beautiful, good and loving] arrives to the coast of the Philippines, where an expectant ‘native’ surrenders to her, putting down his weapons (spears, thorns) and, most remarkably, giving her his “salvaje corazón oriental” [wild oriental heart]. The wild heart may refer to a heart wild with love or to the literal wildness of the ‘native,’ thus orientalisising him through a colonial discourse that justified its ‘mission’ as one of civilizing the ‘wild.’<sup>45</sup> Either way, the voluntary act of surrendering the narrator’s weapons and heart to Spain dismisses the violence of the first colonial encounter and suggests that the speaker’s attachment to Spanish colonialism is a positive one. This suggestion is reinforced by the reference to the way the narrator now carries Spain and its “divine language” and “immortal blood” like a shield.

The retelling of Filipino history proposed in this poem contrasts greatly with how official history relates the arrival of early colonisers from Spain: Ferdinand Magellans (1480-1521) in Cebu and Manuel Lopez de Legazpi (1503-1572) in Manila. Having survived the majority of men that participated in the first expedition to circumnavigate the globe under the command of Sebastian El Cano, Magellan arrived on the island of Cebu in 1521. Shortly

<sup>43</sup> Filipinos identify themselves as belonging to the Malay peoples, which also populated Indonesia and Malasia; they often use the short form ‘indo.’

<sup>44</sup> In the pre-Hispanic Philippines, most of the chieftains were called Rajah, the Arab term for ‘king.’ Islam was the most widespread religion and its terminology was used for many elements of government. See Isaac Donoso’s “El islam en las letras Filipinas” (2007).

<sup>45</sup> The idea of colonisation as a moral mission was rapidly adopted among religious orders, for which it became missionary work.

after, he was killed in the battle of Mactan against the Malayan chief Lapu-Lapu, who had refused to be converted to Christianity. Later expeditions arrived to Manila, where Rajah Sulayman (1558-1575) ruled. Suleyman resisted subjugation to Legazpi and waged a war against the Spanish. In the Philippines, both Lapu-Lapu and Sulayman are iconic figures of resistance against the Spanish.

The description of the first colonial encounter in Balmori's poem dismisses its violence, praising instead what it has produced: a new-born Filipino<sup>46</sup> who has inherited Spanish "immortal blood" and the "divine language" that allows him to write this poem. The opening line of "Blasón" recognises the hybrid identity of the Filipino poet as Indo-Hispanic but what follows sees the Indo part as surrendered to Spain and glorifies only the Spanish part of his heritage. The indigenous man is reduced to the recipient of an 'oriental heart' that is willingly offered to the coloniser. Thus, this poem stands as an example of peripheral orientalism that sees the colonised repeat the colonial discourse.<sup>47</sup>

The second poem I want to analyse is "Rima Malaya," contained in one of Balmori's earliest poetry collections entitled *Rimas Malayas* (1904). Donoso (2012) describes the collection as a key text in Filipino modernism. I will read Balmori's appropriation of European and Hispanic modernism as an example of transcultural orientalism. "Rima Malaya" describes a romantic scene; the male speaker of the poem tells how he secretly enters the chamber of his beloved and persuades her to run away with him:

"Rima Malaya" (1904)

*Era la noche tropical de oriente  
Alumbrada por una luna soñolienta  
Brillaban fugaces mil relámpagos  
Y el trueno retumbaba con violencia  
Mudo el jardín, las aves dormitaban  
En sus nidos de plumas y hojas  
Y las auras calladas susurraban  
Girando entre los lirios y las rosas  
Con pie dudoso y vacilantes manos  
Trepé la verja de dorados hilos  
El céfiro traíame en sus alas  
El trémulo rumor de sus suspiros.*

<sup>46</sup> It was only after colonisation that the word 'Filipino,' after the Spanish King Felipe, was used to refer to the indigenous peoples of the islands.

<sup>47</sup> One explanation for the glorification of Spain and Spanish in this poem could be that, at the time it was written, in 1941, over forty years had passed since the US became the new coloniser. Most Hispano-Filipino writers resisted the Americanisation of the Philippines as another form of colonialism and attached themselves to their Hispanic heritage, especially the language, as a form of resistance (Donoso 2012).

[It was the tropical night of the orient / Illuminated by a somnolent moon / A thousand fleeting lightning bolts were shining in the sky / thunder resounded violently / Mute was the garden, the birds were asleep / In their nests of leaves and feathers / And quietly the wind whispered / Twirling around the lilies and the roses. / With doubtful foot, hesitant hands / I climbed the fence of golden threads / The zephyr brought me in his wings / The tremulous murmur of her sighs.]

The opening stanza locates the action of this poem in an abstract oriental space referred to as “la noche tropical de oriente” [the tropical night of the orient]. Although it is possible to infer that the narrator is referring to the Philippines from the poem’s title, it is not until its last stanzas (11 and 12) that local Filipino elements appear:

*Es decir, sí, me iré pero contigo  
Allá al bosque oriental de verdes ramas  
Donde las mayas rimen nuestro idilio  
Donde te aguarda un lecho de sampagas.  
[...]  
¡ Oh! vente, Vente Carmencita mía,  
Si no sabes amar, yo allí á tus plantas  
Cantándote el vals de los Kundimans  
Coronaré tu frente de champakas.*

[I mean, yes, I will go but with you / Back to the oriental forest of green branches / Where the *mayas* rhyme our idyll / Where a bed of *sampagas* awaits you. [...]  
Oh! Come, come with me my beloved Carmencita, / If you do not know how to love, I'll be there at your feet / Singing the waltz of the *Kundimans* / I will crown your forehead with *champakas*.]

In the eleventh stanza, the narrator suggests running away to an ‘oriental forest’ populated by “*mayas*,” a general term for small birds such as sparrows used in the Philippines, where the lovers may rest on a bed of “*sampagas*,” the national flower of the Philippines, and the narrator will entertain his lover by singing the vals of the *Kundiman*, a traditional Filipino love song, and crowning her with “*champakas*,” a type of magnolia from South East Asia. Significantly, the tropical forest to which the lovers want to run away is identifiably in the Philippines, whereas the image of the garden that opens the poem is constructed with non-indigenous elements and metaphors: lilies and roses, feathered “*aves*” (the generic name for birds, fowl) and Zephyr, the God of the West wind in Greek mythology.

The central part of the poem describes how the narrator/lover climbs up to a balcony from which he walks towards the room of his beloved. The poem does not identify her home as a palace, a castle, a tower or a Nipa house, but the narrator does explain that to get to the room where his “white” beloved (holding a Spanish name *Carmencita*) was peacefully

sleeping he had to cross one thousand rooms, surrounded by the quietness of sleep, darkness and shadows:

*Llegué al balcón; saltando para adentro  
Crucé indeciso mil salas en penumbras,  
Todo sueño alrededor y calma,  
Todo tinieblas, sombras y mis sombras.  
Era su lecho, dormía recostada  
medio vestida aún, blanca y hermosa,  
Agitaban su seno los ensueños  
Y sonreía su entreabierto boca.*

[I reached the balcony, jumping inside / I crossed undecided a thousand rooms in the shadows / All around me was asleep and quiet / All darkness, shadows and my own shadows. / It was her bed, she slept lying down / Half-dressed still, white and beautiful / Her chest was being shaken by her dreams / And she smiled with her mouth half-open]

This section of the poem invokes elements of the western romantic tradition, such as the garden, the white, princess-like character in her secluded bedroom and the gothic-like description of the dark dwelling. The landscape and characters are richly described using humanising qualifiers that make nature seem very much alive: fleeting thunder, doubtful feet, hesitant hands, a trembling murmur, the golden threads of the fence, a divine perfume, a virginal smell, gigantic butterflies, cruel madness. The combination of themes (lovers eloping), settings (the garden versus the tropical forest), characters (a white princess-like figure, flowers, songs and humanised nature) and the dense, lyrical use of the Spanish language make this poem, I want to argue, an example of transcultural orientalism, where the indigenous elements are not subsumed to the European ones, as in “Blasón,” but presented at the same level: they are all part of an idealised fantasy world. More importantly, the indigenous forest is preferred over the western garden, as it is where the lovers flee to. The poem ends with a distinctly transcultural image: the “white” princess and the presumably indigenous narrator united in the forest. She, the foreigner/coloniser is brought into the world of the indigenous/colonised. In contrast with “Blasón,” in which the Indo-Hispanic poet/narrator begins by bringing up his transcultural heritage only to dissolve it into the glorification of Spain, “Rima Malaya” shows the two cultures coming together while remaining distinct. This emphasises dynamic cultural interaction - potentially leading to neoculturation - over cultural erasure (deculturation) and cultural appropriation (acculturation).

The practice of modernism in the Philippines was criticised, as it was in Latin America, by contemporary critics who considered the dwelling on romantic words an

imitation of foreign (French) poetry and therefore an anti-nationalist gesture. For some, this type of baroque poetry betrayed the local in favor of the foreign, demonstrating assimilationist colonial practices. W. E. Retana, one of the few Spanish literary critics who wrote about the Philippines in the early twentieth century, points out that the abuse of lilies and violets by some Filipino poets was regrettable since these flowers are not native to the Philippines: “it is as if the Filipinos find the Flora of their country unworthy” (Retana qtd. in Donoso 6). Retana’s critique does not, however, apply to this poem, where the indigenous Filipino landscape is chosen over the western garden, but also transculturated through the coming together of the lovers in it. Moreover, Balmori’s literary *indigenismo*, displayed in the incorporation of vernacular Malay words (*sampaguitas*, *champakas*, *mayas*, *kundiman*) into a Spanish poem, produces a very specific transcultural Filipino identity. In “Blason”, it is the native who becomes Spanish; here, it is the princess-like figure that is, to an extent, indigenised by the narrator.

Retana, however, insists on highlighting the foreign aspects instead of the local ones in Hispano-Filipino works. In the following acerbic quote, he explicitly attacks the superficial and “excessive modernism” of the young Balmori:

Á Jesús Balmori, uno de los poetas más jóvenes, le incluyo entre los que más llegarían á valer; pero el ataque de *modernismo fulminante* que padece no sé si le dejará seguir viviendo. Balmori no ha salido de su patria, y, sin embargo, vive mentalmente en París, en el París misterioso, trágicamente bohemio, del Barrio Latino... Balmori quiere a toda costa ser un parisino enfermo, y enfermo se ha puesto, por pura espiritualidad, porque no concibe ser poeta si no es muriéndose de tristeza, de tristeza parisina. [...] He cargado la mano de la censura en Balmori, porque Balmori tiene el alma de poeta, vale, y se está tirando a matar á consecuencia de haberse creado a sí mismo un ambiente falso y antifilipino; y la crítica justa debe pedirle cuentas de tan sensible aberración. En Balmori luchan en espíritu, que es el de un buen patriota, y el cerebro, que es el de un parisense de doublé: y como pone su voluntad al servicio del cerebro, resulta que muchas de sus composiciones son... un verdadero dolor. (qtd. in Donoso 17-18)

[To Jesús Balmori, one of the youngest poets who I would add to my list of most promising; however, the attack of fulminant modernism that he suffers from may not let him live long. Balmori has never left his country, but mentally he lives in Paris, in the mysterious, tragically bohemian Paris of the Quartier Latin... Balmori wants, above all things, to be a sick Parisian and thus he has become sick by virtue of pure spirituality, because he cannot conceive the idea of being a poet without dying of sadness, of Parisian sadness. [...] I have censured Balmori because he has the soul of a poet, and yet, he is throwing all his talent away as a consequence of having created himself in a false environment, one that is anti-Filipino, and a fair critique must demand payment for such a profound aberration. In Balmori fight the spirit of a good patriot and the brain of a doubled Parisian; since he puts his will at the service of his brain, many of his compositions are... a true pain.]

Retana's (unfair) critique derives from his conviction that literature in the Filipino Hispanic tradition should be conceived of not only as an aesthetic practice but also as a political tool to be used in the imagination of a new independent nation. Modernist writing in Spanish in the Philippines should move, according to Retana, towards the configuration of *filipinidad*: the idealisation of the Philippines based on a discourse that served political and national assertion as well as cultural expression.

In my reading, Balmori's poetry does not fully subsume the "spirit of a good patriot" to the "brain of a doubled Parisian," but rather creates its own form of *filipinidad* by combining the two and having them inflect each other in a process of transculturation. The cultural syncretism of indigenous and foreign motifs, and of literary styles (Hispanic and French modernism), exemplifies what I call Filipino orientalist transculturation. I thus contend that Filipino modernism produces a form of peripheral orientalism that is both aesthetic *and* political; the exoticisation of the Philippines responds *not only* to an attitude of literary escapism *but also* to a desire of national affirmation. Balmori, like Darío, is "expropriating cultural capital," as Casanova (2005) puts it, to create something new. If Darío's modernism was a form of resistance against both European modernism and the Spanish lack of a comparable literary form by a Central American author, Balmori's transcultural orientalism can be considered as the Filipino expropriation of European and Latin American literary modernism in the service of an emergent nationalism.

Donoso explains his views on the nationalist function of Filipino modernist literature in Spanish as follows:

En el caso de Filipinas, la estética del modernismo será el vehículo fundamental en la creación de una estética propia que contenga in ideario político basado en la idea de nación. El creador modernista filipino, no necesitaba la evasión a paraísos exóticos y orientales, es decir, *no necesitaba crear un Orientalismo desde Oriente*. El Modernismo, en el Archipiélago, idealiza un imaginario filipino y lo convierte en un elemento de afirmación nacional en el proceso de construcción del propio nacionalismo. (Donoso, XVIII, emphasis added)

[In the case of the Philippines, modernist aesthetics will be the fundamental vehicle for the creation of a particular aesthetic containing a political ideal based on the idea of the nation. The modern Filipino creator did not need to escape to exotic oriental paradises, that is, *he did not need to create an Orientalism from the Orient*. Modernism, in the archipelago, idealises a Filipino imagination and transforms it into an element of national affirmation in the process of constructing its own nationalism]

While, like Donoso, I understand Filipino modernism as having its own modernist aesthetics, I do not agree with his negation of the necessity for an "Orientalism from the Orient" as a form of imaginative escapism. Even if Balmori, who lived in the Philippines, does not have to

‘imagine’ the Philippines as a realm to escape to, he still represents Filipino nature and culture as exotic when referring to “a bed of *sampagas*” and the “tropical night of the orient.” In addition, there is Balmori’s undeniable orientalising of the self, revealed in the profound attachment to a colonial discourse displayed in “Blason.” I would argue, then, that Balmori’s poetry shows that there was, at this time, indeed a need for an “Orientalism from the Orient,” but that this orientalism is not necessarily a straight imitation of European orientalism; in certain cases, as in “Rima Malaya,” it appears as a transcultural orientalism that, like the modernism hailed by Donoso, acts as a national affirmation and forms the basis for a new Filipino nationalism.

The last poem by Balmori I will discuss in this section shows another aspect of transcultural orientalism by abandoning self-orientalisation and drawing on Japanese and European elements to make visible the Orient as a dramatised representation rather than as objectively described. Balmori, like some of the Latin American and European travellers mentioned earlier in this chapter (Loti, Tablada, Gómez Carrillo), found in Japan a source of inspiration for modernist exoticism, yet their motivations are different. As noted earlier, in contrast to the writings about Japan produced by French authors, which were designed to stimulate the imagination, Tablada and Gómez Carrillo were driven by a desire to ‘truly’ understand the Japanese (and other orientals), although, as Clark notes, they were also heavily influenced by their preconceived images of them and had to negotiate between their expectations and experiences. Balmori’s position with regards to the orientalising of Japan is different again. On the one hand, as a writer, he also uses idealised stereotypes (national symbols such as golden temples, geishas, cherry blossoms) to develop a positive image of Japan; on the other hand, like many Filipinos in the period leading up to WWII, he admires the perceived strength and consistency of the Japanese sense of nationhood, which he feels is lacking in the Philippines.<sup>48</sup>

I will briefly discuss a fragment from Balmori’s novel *Los Pájaros de fuego* (1945), to be analysed in more detail in Chapter 4, to show how the admiration for Japan on the part of the Hispano-Filipino elite (which the novel ends up portraying as naïve through its account of the Japanese invasion of Manila in 1943) is expressed and how it contrasts with the transcultural orientalism I will identify in the last poem I will look at, “La Gueisha.” The main character of the novel, Don Lino Robles, professes a blind admiration for Japan (and Japanese women) based on a trip he took to the country. At one point, he talks to his brother

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<sup>48</sup> I will elaborate on Balmori’s attitude towards Japan and his views concerning Filipino nationalism in Chapter 4.

Ramón, who is skeptical of the ‘superiority’ of Japan that his brother defends. Don Lino tells Ramón about his beloved Haruko San, a woman he met in Japan after the death of his first wife but had to leave in Kyoto when he returned to the Philippines:

—¡No! Se quedó en su casa de papel, como una muñeca perdida entre los cedros y los criptomeros de Kyoto. Es de allá. Se llama Haruko San. Bella como un templo de oro, suave como la seda y los pétalos de las flores del cerezo. Me hizo feliz con su amor tímido y reverente. Esas mujeres saben amar. Si alguna vez necesitas a tu lado una mujer amante, ¡búscate una japonesa!

[...] De tarde en tarde, recibo cartas de ella. Aún me sigue siendo fiel, me quiere, no me olvida. El día en que la dejé cayó ante mí llorando silenciosamente, abrazada a mis rodillas, besándome los pies. ¡Pobre Haruko San! ¡Pobre "musmé" dulce y enamorada! La dejé varios miles de "yens" y la promesa de volver muy pronto... (*Los Pájaros de fuego* 126)

[No! She stayed in her paper house, like a doll lost among the cedars and the Japanese ciders of Kyoto. She is from there. Her name is Haruko San. Beautiful like a golden temple, soft as silk and the petals of the flowers of the cherry blossoms. She made me happy with her timid and reverential love. Those women know how to love. If you ever need a loving woman by your side, look for a Japanese!

[...] Every so often I receive letters from her. She is still faithful to me, she loves me and does not forget me. The day that I left her she fell on me, crying quietly around my knees, kissing my feet. Poor Haruko San! Poor “musme” sweet and loving! I left her various thousands of “yens” and the promise of returning soon...]

In this passage, the beauty of the Japanese woman is compared to that of a golden temple, to the softness to a doll and to the petals of cherry blossoms. All these comparisons evoke, in an idealising manner, national symbols and archetypes of Japanese culture. However, the reference to the money that Don Lino gave Haruko San, combined with the promise of returning, may be read as a critique (in material terms) of such idealisation. The implication is that she will only remain faithful as long as the money lasts and if his return does not take too long. Three chapters later, Don Lino receives a letter in which Haruko San explains that she has married someone else and is about to give birth. At this point in the novel begins the collapse of the idealised image of Japan, which will be completed by the savage attack of the Japanese troops on Manila in 1943.

The twenty-ninth poem in Balmori’s collection *Mi Casa de Nipa* (1941) presents another example of transcultural orientalism, this time by appropriating the figure of the Geisha:

## “La Gueisha”

*Es de noche, es un salón, y son las once.  
 Suena un gong como un violón de viejo bronce.  
 Se descorre la cortina de oro y grana,  
 Y en la escena que simula un nuevo Oriente  
 Se adelanta quedamente, lentamente,  
 La muñeca de esmaltada porcelana.*

*Se dijera un gran aroma de resedas  
 Toda envuelta entre sus oros y sus sedas  
 Bajo un ritmo musical que sube y sube.  
 ¿Es un ave? ¿Es una flor? No es flor ni es ave,  
 Es la Gueisha langorosa, dulce y suave,  
 Como el paso tembloroso de una nube*

*Va a bailar. Es una danza misteriosa.  
 Es un vuelo, es el capullo de una rosa  
 Que a la luz de los faroles se hace flor.  
 No se pueden ver sus pies bajo sus galas  
 Solo mueve sus dos manos blancas alas,  
 Blancos remos de un ensueño bogador.*

*Bajo el triunfo de la música que rima  
 Todo el baile es una grave pantomima.  
 Y la Gueisha soberana y tornasol.  
 A los sonos de las flautas, sonriente.  
 Se levanta en espirales de serpiente.  
 O se dobla como un loto bajo el sol.*

[...]

[The night has fallen, inside the room, the clock strikes eleven / The sound the gong is heard resonating like a double bass old bronze / The gold and red curtain are drawn / And on the scene that simulates a new Orient / Comes forward quietly and slowly/ The doll of varnished porcelain.

She smells like the great aroma of mignonettes / All wrapped in gold and silk / The music rises in crescendo/ Is it a bird? It is a flower? It is not a flower, not a bird, / It is the geisha, languid, sweet, soft, / Like the flickering walk of a cloud.

She is going to dance. It is a mysterious dance. / She can fly, she is like the rosebud / That blooms when illuminated by some lantern / Her feet cannot be seen under her clothes / She only moves her hands like white wings / like the white paddles of a sailing dream.

Under the triumph of rhyming music, / The whole dance is a serious pantomime / And the Geisha, sovereign sunflower / Smiling at the sounds of flutes / Rises like spirals of a snake / Or bends her body like a lotus in the sun.]

The poem talks about an evening performance in a theatre. The main character of the “pantomime” is a Geisha, who, through a dance, tells the audience about her (fatal) love story. The Geisha’s fiancé - her *prometido* - has departed in search of “fame” and “fortune” while she, like Penelope, waits for his return. However, when he does not return, the Geisha

sees no other ending to her sorrow than to die. The poem concludes with the vanishing of the flute music, the sound of the gong and the gold and red curtains being closed again.

In the opening stanza, we are told by the narrator that the stage “simula un nuevo oriente” [simulates a new orient]. The drama, therefore, does not take place in Japan, in the Philippines or in Spain, but in a simulated or staged orient in which the Geisha performs (or is performed) accompanied by music. The Geisha is compared in her movements to a porcelain doll, a snake and a lotus. In the third stanza, it is announced that she is going to dance “una danza misteriosa” [a mysterious dance] in which she twists like a (dangerous) snake or bends with the flexibility of a lotus in the sun. The narrator then asks the reader to interpret her movements in order to find out what her story is:

*¿Qué nos dice en sus solemnes movimientos?  
¿Qué nos cuentan sus menudos pasos lentos?  
¿Qué oriental historia es esta de la danza,  
Que al abrir la media luna de sus ojos  
Se dijera traspasada en los abrojos  
Como pobre mariposa su esperanza?*

*¿Es tristeza? ¿Es alegría lo que siente?  
¿Qué misterio perfumado del Oriente,  
¿Qué divino mago rito religioso  
Desenvuelve como en ondas de un aroma  
Esta flor, esta mujer, esta paloma,  
Con el ritmo de su cuerpo cadensioso?*

[...]

(*Mi Casa de Nipa*, 127-8)

[What does she tell us in her solemn movements? / What do her slow steps tell us? / What oriental story is there in this dance? / When she opened the crescent moon of her eyes / her hope was pierced in the thistles/ like a little butterfly/  
Is it sadness? Is joy what she feels? / What scented mystery of the East / What divine magician, religious rite / Develops in fragrant waves / This flower, this woman, this dove, / With the rhythm of her steady body?]

Only the music will tell you what her story is, “el tan-tan os lo dirá,” says the first verse of the seventh stanza. The rhetorical questions written in the present tense suggest that the narrator knows the story and is retelling it to the reader while also asking the reader to interpret it. The poem explicitly includes the reader by using the first-person pronoun “nos”: “¿Qué nos dice en sus solemnes movimientos?” [what is *she telling us* in her solemn movements?] (my emphasis). It continues: “¿Qué oriental historia es esta de la danza? [...] ¿Es tristeza? ¿Es alegría lo que siente? [...] ¿Qué misterio perfumado del Oriente?” [What

oriental story is behind the dance? Is it sadness? Is it happiness what she feels? What fragrant mystery of the Orient?]. In referring to her as a mystery of the Orient, the narrator reveals his own doubts about interpreting her movements and also evokes a familiar orientalist motif, that of the Asian as inscrutable and mysterious. The mystery, however, is in the end not very enigmatic, as the Geisha is the protagonist of an archetypal narrative (not specific to the Orient) of waiting in vain for the return of one's great love. In this way, the reader of the poem is prompted to reflect on his or her own investment in orientalist motifs.

The elements that Balmori juxtaposes in this simulated orient are oriental and occidental - the gong, the porcelain doll, the snake, the lotus, the Geisha and the mysterious dance versus the double bass, the rose and the Penelope-like story. At the same time, the framing narrative of the poem's speaker viewing the performance brings to the fore the artificiality of the oriental pantomime and reveals the ability of the author to braid together the cultural elements that constitute the "new orient" into a scene that does not aspire to be authentically Japanese but only playfully so.

Here, unlike in the other two poems, Balmori's transcultural orientalism does not refer to the history of colonisation affecting the Filipino self. Instead, the poet looks to *another orient* as a source of inspiration, while also thematising orientalism and playing with the expectations it fosters in the reader. In the end, "La Gueisha" does not orientalise Japan in a hegemonic way, as "Blason" does with the Philippines, or show aspects of the Philippines (sampagas, mayas, Kundiman songs) and the West (the white princes and the castle) coming together as a way of achieving national affirmation, as happened in "Rima Malaya." Instead, "La Gueisha" is an example of a transcultural orientalism that works through playfully combining elements from Japanese and Western culture in order to critique orientalism itself as an artificial mode of stereotyping and othering.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have conceptualised orientalism as a hegemonic discourse (on the basis of Said's work), as an expropriated modernist literary style emerging from the peripheries (using Tinajero) and, in Balmori's poetry, as a transcultural mode capable of critiquing colonialism and orientalism itself. Balmori's poems incorporate the 'native' and 'the foreign' (whether Spanish, Malay, Muslim or Japanese), and engage with the received ideologies of East and West in order to imagine a new Philippines. In this, they go beyond Donoso's exclusively nationalist vision, which, he argues, does not require an "Orientalism from the Orient." Elements of orientalism are indeed perceptible in Balmori's exoticisation of local

nature and their idealisation of the Spanish colonial influence. Yet this does not mean that Balmori merely reiterates orientalism as a hegemonic (European) discourse. As my analysis of the poems has shown, orientalising the Philippines or Japan from within Asia can lead to a new vision of the orient. Through a process of transculturation, the oriental (real or imagined) Filipino landscape becomes a trope of national and historical affirmation. Seeing the island of Mindanao as a “Moorish princess,” as the opening quote of this chapter does, is both a symptom of poetic exoticisation derived from the influences of French and Hispanic literary modernism, and a way of making visible the historical Muslim influence on the Philippines that marks it as a transcultural realm rather than a timeless oriental fantasy world.

The work of Balmori, I contend, weaves a complex network of significations. Cultural objects and symbols that belong to the East and the West, and that together constitute his received cultural capital, are mixed, re-interpreted and conveyed from different perspectives to affirm the transculturation of Hispano-Filipino culture. Unlike the Latin American peripheral orientalist described by Tinajero, who attempted to ‘truly’ understand another Orient through travel writing, Balmori’s approach to Japanese culture does not respond to a necessity of knowing or a desire to establish an intercultural dialogue, but constitutes an act of expropriating its figures (specifically the geisha) for his own literary experimentation, which ultimately aims to articulate a new transcultural Filipino national identity. While in his poetry the various cultural attachments that constitute Filipino transculturation tend to be depicted as harmoniously entangled, as in “Rima Malaya,” Balmori’s novel *Los Pájaros de fuego* (1945), which will be further discussed in Chapter 4, highlights the dangers of looking to other cultures for models of national becoming.

The work of Adelina Gurrea, which I will analyse in the next chapter, also relies on a form of transcultural orientalism, but instead of orientalising the Philippines (in various ways) from the Philippines, as Balmori does, she looks at the Philippines, where she grew up, from Spain, where she lived most of her life. Gurrea’s work, in bringing together orientalism with the notions of memory and nostalgia, offers another perspective on the lingering and competing influences of American and Spanish colonialism, as well as an account of experiences of transculturation - specifically the dynamic interaction of indigenous and Catholic beliefs - in the rural Philippines.

## Chapter 2

### Nostalgia for the Orient: Transcultural Representations of the Philippines in the Work of Adelina Gurrea Monasterio

*Por las noches, antes de acostarnos, o en las siestas cálidas y soporíferas, mientras planchaba la blancura de las ropas tropicales, [Juana] nos contaba cuentos de reyes y princesas españoles o los terroríficos de duendes malayos*  
(Gurrea 1943: 50)

[In the evenings, before going to bed, or else during the hot and lazy siestas, while she ironed the whiteness of tropical clothing, she would tell us stories of Spanish princesses and kings or terrifying ones about Malay spirits]

#### Introduction

In this chapter I continue to use the concept of transcultural orientalism to analyse the work of Adelina Gurrea Monasterio (1896-1971), a Filipino author who lived in Spain for most of her life. Gurrea was born in a small town called La Carlota on the Island of Negros Occidental (Visayas) to a family of mixed heritage. Her grandfather was a Spanish military official who settled in the Philippines and worked in the sugarcane industry, the more established form of production in Central Philippines. Gurrea's father married a Tagalog-Mestiza and continued the family business until 1921, when the whole family with six children migrated to Spain. Despite the fact that she was not from a creole family, Gurrea's family's fortune allowed her to have the "social and economic privileges of a creole elite of Spanish origin" (Álvarez 5).

Before the family went to Spain, Gurrea completed a bachelor's degree in Humanities at Santa Escolástica School in Manila, which followed the English-language curriculum that had just been implemented as part of the American education policy. Despite the exposure she had to English and English literatures, Gurrea considered Spanish her mother tongue and preferred to use Spanish to write. As a college student in Manila, she wrote part of the literary section for women of the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, which she also edited for three years. In Madrid, she engaged in literary activities through associations such as the *Asociación de España-Filipinas* in 1934 and the *Círculo Hispano-Filipino*, which she founded in 1950.

Despite her urge to write and be part of the literary scene in Spain, Gurrea's career as an author was not very prolific. She attempted different genres, including short dramas, narrative, magazine articles and poetry. In her work, the common themes of postcolonial literature, such as nationhood, memory, heritage and politics can be found, along with other

concerns drawn from her personal experience - most notably an emphasis on the importance of education and the role of women in society. Her style, like that of most Filipino writers of her time, offers a mix of romantic lyricism and rather timid political and historical claims.

In this chapter, I look at three of her works: a satirical play entitled *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* [Philippines: A Historical-Satirical Allegory] that was staged in Valladolid, Spain, in 1951; a selection of poems from the collections *En agraz* [Before Time] (1968) and *Más senderos* [More Paths] (1967)<sup>49</sup>; and a story called “El Talisay,” part of a collection of short stories that she published in Madrid in 1943 with the title *Cuentos de Juana. Narraciones malayas de las islas Filipinas* [Juana’s tales. Malayan stories from the Philippine Islands]. By looking at these works by Gurrea I want to show how, with regard to transcultural orientalism, she puts the emphasis on the *transcultural* aspect rather than on *orientalism*. Like Balmori’s poems, Gurrea’s work draws from various cultural influences in order to orientalise the Philippines. However, rather than establishing a hierarchy of cultures or following oriental modernist aesthetics like Balmori, Gurrea orientalises the Philippines in three ways: 1) by infantilising the Philippines as a young country shaped by its colonial heritage; 2) by approaching the Philippines in a nostalgic way that puts this nostalgia in service of imagining a new future; and 3) by using a narrative method that incorporates orientalised and orientalising perspectives in order to challenge binary oppositions such as native/foreign, orient/occident and, in particular in “El Talisay,” religion/superstition.

I will first discuss Gurrea’s poem “Epaña, América, Filipinas” (1918) [Spain, America and Philippines] from the collection *En Agraz* (1968) as an example of her use of orientalism as a hegemonic discourse attached to colonialism by which the colonised perceive the colonisers as benefactors. To explain how this works, I adapt Vicente L. Rafael’s notion of “contracting colonialism” to “contracting orientalism.” Gurrea’s poem is put in dialogue with the satirical play, which, like all her work, was written in Spain during Franco’s dictatorship. At first sight, the play seems to evoke the same discourse as the poem, as it repeatedly attempts to reconcile the colonial history of the Philippines by looking at the way Spanish and American colonialism helped shape the contemporary Philippines, while dismissing any pre-Hispanic influences. Yet the satirical tone of the play also undermines this discourse to arrive at a more critical position towards Spain and its colonial influence on the

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<sup>49</sup> Both *En Agraz* and *Más Senderos* were published by the author. The editions available online from the Cervantes Virtual Library at the University of Alicante date from 1968 and 1967 respectively. Gurrea died in 1971, so those editions are probably not the first ones but I have been unable to find other publication dates. In *En Agraz*, it is noted that the collection includes poems written between 1916 and 1926, indicating they belong to Gurrea’s early work.

Philippines. Second, I will look at how the poems “Carabao”<sup>50</sup> (1967), “Campesino de Negros” (1967) [Peasant of Negros] and “Rebeldía Nostalgia” (1967) [Nostalgic resistance] express an orientalist nostalgia towards the Philippines. I explain the emphasis on nostalgia as a strategic move that works in two ways: first, because Gurrea is living in Franco’s Spain, she cannot afford to be overly political about the Philippines, only nostalgic, with this nostalgia operating, following Svetlana Boym, in a reflective rather than a restorative mode; second, Gurrea uses nostalgia for the past and the rural Philippines as a way to question dominant notions of modernity and progress, associated with the present and the city.

In the last section of this chapter, I will focus on “El Talisay,” the final story in *Cuentos de Juana*, to show how a mix of Catholicism and Filipino spiritual beliefs shapes the relationships between coloniser and colonised in the rural Philippines of Gurrea’s childhood. The story challenges binary oppositions such as east/west, coloniser/colonised and, specifically, religion/superstition as the narrator brings to the fore multiple perspectives on the dynamic coexistence of various cultures in the colonial Philippines. In all nine stories contained in *Cuentos de Juana*, but most particularly in this one, Gurrea combines figures that are part of the Hispanic heritage (friars, princesses, kings) with elements of Filipino mythology (Malay spirits), as the opening quote of this chapter indicates.<sup>51</sup> These are presented as complementary and as interacting with each other rather than as antagonistic or irreconcilable. Ultimately, “El Talisay” stresses the transcultural dimension of transcultural orientalism by representing the rural Philippines not as undergoing a process of acculturation and deculturation (by which foreign cultures are appropriated and the “own” cultures lost), but as a dynamic space of neoculturation in which foreign and local beliefs reshape each other and new beliefs and forms of knowledge emerge.

### **Contracting Orientalism**

*Contracting Colonialism* (1988) is the title of one of Vicente L. Rafael’s seminal books on Filipino history and culture; it uses the concept of translation to analyse the transculturation of Catholicism (which Rafael calls “Christian conversion”) in the Philippines during early Spanish rule. Rafael’s metaphor suggests that contracting colonialism is an act of acquiring ideology into the body. I want to argue that a similar form of transmission also carries

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<sup>50</sup> *Carabao* is the Hispanised version of the Visayan word ‘Karabow.’ It refers to a domestic animal native to the Philippines that is used to plough the fields, fishing and other agricultural tasks. It is commonly translated in English as water buffalo.

<sup>51</sup> The critical edition of the collection that I am working with here was made by Álvarez Tardío and re-edited in 2010 with useful notes, including a two-page section with information about the ‘spirits’ that are most common in Filipino mythology from the Visayas, the islands where the stories take place and the birthplace of Gurrea.

orientalism, as a symptomatic aspect of colonialism, into the body (and, in the case of authors, the body of work) of those who are orientalised from a European perspective, as became clear from my analysis of Balmori's poems. Here, I will focus on two texts by Adelina Gurrea - "España, América, Filipinas" a poem from the collection *En agraz* (1968) believed to have been written in 1918 and the play *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* [Philippines: A Historical-Satirical Allegory] (1951) - which show symptoms of having contracted the hegemonic type of orientalism that sees the oriental invigorated by contact with the occidental.

In the poem, the speaker perceives the Philippines as a trophy for the two colonisers of the sixteenth and the twentieth century, arguing that it did not have something taken away but was instead rewarded with cultural gifts - American strength and Spanish sensibility or passion - that also became part of the Filipino heritage:

"España, América, Filipinas" (1918)

[...]

Por eso, desde días muy remotos  
fuiste de los monarcas ambición,  
y de tu historia hábiles pilotos

te dieron, como premio y galardón  
como herencia y unión de lazos rotos,  
músculo America, y España corazón.  
(Gurrea in Álvarez 182-3)

[This is why since remote days / you have been the ambition of monarchs / and as skilled pilots of your history / they gave you, as a prize and honor / as an inheritance and union of broken bonds / muscle from America and from Spain, a heart] (Álvarez 36).

This part of the poem describes the Philippines as an object desired by monarchs. Earlier, Spain is described as "ELLA! La enamorada del Oriente" [She, the one in love with the orient], while the US is referred to as a "TESORO" [treasure] that [...] "abriste para el mundo las puertas de una ciencia que nació" [opened to the world the doors of a science that was being born]. The two nations, then, are seen as respectively the embodiment of emotion and of science/rationality, and as having "rewarded" the Philippines with their cultural qualities. The coming together of these qualities, kept apart by the rivalry between the two imperial powers, in the Philippines produces a united body ("unión de lazos rotos" [union of broken bonds]). The speaker in this poem thus expresses a positive attachment to the

Philippines's double colonisation and puts the US and Spain on an equal level as the providers of different but positive and complementary aspects (muscle and heart, strength and sensitivity) to the Philippines, who is the receiver (or, in line with the metaphor of contracting colonialism, the patient).

Forty years later, in 1951, Gurrea wrote a short drama dealing with the same theme from a different position. *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* [Philippines: A Historical-Satirical Allegory] is a historical satire in which the personified national characters of Spain, Philippines and the US (appearing as Uncle Sam) engage with the character of History, who wants a record of their colonial history, to reflect on their evolving relationship. In a humorous manner, the three national characters discuss, prompted by History's questions, the good and bad things Spain and the US brought to the Philippines.

The play opens with Uncle Sam waiting for more than an hour for the other three characters. He is standing on the stage checking the time on four different watches he carries in various pockets and on both wrists. He becomes impatient and says: "I know Latins and Orientals are not punctual but the delay is quite long."<sup>52</sup> He also calls "Mrs. History!" repeatedly and looks for her on the stage. "I am wasting my time, my precious Yankee time," he complains (98). Tired of waiting, he starts reading a newspaper. Then Mrs. History arrives, excusing her lack of punctuality by arguing: "History must be late. It is her duty. [...] Yes, it is my duty Uncle Sam. I must arrive when everything is finished, when everything is said, when the waves have calmed down and facts are settled at the bottom of clear waters so I can see and register them" (99). Uncle Sam disagrees, arguing that "things must be noted as they transpire" and throwing the newspaper on the floor. In response, Mrs. History suggests that, with such urgency, history would also end up "thrown on the floor" (99). This opening discussion between the two characters provides a good sense of the tone of the play, which has stereotyped national characters (Uncle Sam is impatient, efficient, business-like; Spain and Philippines are always late) talk to each other contemptuously, revealing their idiosyncrasies.

Once the two other characters arrive, a "young" Philippines and her "mother" Spain, the meeting that they were called to attend begins with Mrs. History saying: "It is time for me to start collecting data from all of you. Tell me what I have to register in my pages" (100). Philippines starts recounting facts about the country's pre-colonial history, producing dates, dropping famous names and carefully explaining the internal struggles that occurred between

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<sup>52</sup> For the quotes from the play, I am using the English translation that appears in Álvarez-Tardío's edition.

indigenous peoples of the archipelago and neighboring countries (Malaysia, China, Formosa).<sup>53</sup> “What a lot of history,” exclaims Uncle Sam, impatiently asking for his turn to speak. After both Spain and Uncle Sam have talked, Mrs. History explicitly asks them to explain what they have left to the Philippines:

HISTORIA: Y además de la Religión, ¿Qué más dejaste en ella?

ESPAÑA: Dejé mis apellidos y nombres preclaros para que los usasen los filipinos, dejé mi cultura que es un compendio de las culturas griega, romana y árabe fundidas en la mía propia.

TIO SAM: ¿Cuántas escuelas abriste en Filipinas?

ESPAÑA: Abrí una escuela en cada parroquia y algunos colegios en Manila. Además de la muy Antigua Universidad de Santo Tomás...

TIO SAM: Números, números... ¿cuántas escuelas y cuántos maestros?

ESPAÑA: No he medido nunca el saber y la virtud en cifras.

TIO SAM: Muy bonita respuesta, pero muy poco práctica. Y ¿qué enseñaste en esas escuelas de parroquia?

ESPAÑA: Enseñé al hombre a conocer a Dios, le enseñé a considerar al individuo como obra especial del cielo y no como un instrumento de vida o de poder. Le enseñé lo que era la dignidad, el honor y el sentido de la libertad en el ser humano.

TIO SAM: Bueno, no nos entendemos... Dime si les enseñaste Geografía, Aritmética, Cálculo mercantil, Física, Química, modos de hacer dinero, forma de conquistar amigos y manera de ser felices en el matrimonio.

ESPAÑA: No, esas últimas asignaturas no las he enseñado nunca.

[...]

TIO SAM: ¡No os comprendo! ¡No os comprendo! Pero a fin de cuentas, España no puso casi escuelas, no os dejó carreteras, puentes, fábricas; no combatió las epidemias, no os enseñó higiene, y por no enseñaros ni siquiera os enseñó su lengua.

ESPAÑA: Estaba mandado en la ley 18, título 1, libro 6 de las “Leyes de las Indias”, que se abriesen escuelas para enseñar castellano a los naturales, pero efectivamente, esta ley no se cumplió en Filipinas y solo unos pocos aprendieron el castellano.

TIO SAM (a Filipinas): ¿Por qué no aprendisteis el castellano?

FILIPINAS: Talagá, Talagá.<sup>54</sup> Era más fácil hablar nuestros dialectos y...ya lo aprendieron los filipinos estudiosos para entenderse con España, en nuestro nombre. Y ya lo aprendieron los frailes para enseñarnos el catecismo. (Gurrea in Álvarez 250-252)

[HISTORY: And besides religion what else did you leave here?

SPAIN: I left my surnames and my illustrious names for the Filipinos for their own use; I left my culture that is a compendium of Greek, Roman and Arabian culture melted with my own.

UNCLE SAM: How many schools did you open in the Philippines?

SPAIN: I opened one in every parish. There were several in Manila, most notable of all, the Universidad de Santo Tomas.

<sup>53</sup> The character of the Philippines describes how the “Negritos” (the indigenous people that were named this by the Spanish because of their physical appearance) were marginalised and displaced to the mountains in the fourteenth century by the Sri-vishayam, a Buddhist Empire of Malay origin. After two centuries, the Malay empire was overthrown by Muslims from Malacca, who governed until Magellans reached Cebu in 1521.

<sup>54</sup> Talagá, talagá, explains Álvarez, is an expression used to add emphasis to a sentence denoting surprise, as a synonym of “really?” or, in this case, to agree with what has been said, something like “true, true!” (252).

UNCLE SAM: Figures, figures... How many schools and how many teachers?

SPAIN: I have never measured knowledge and virtue in numerical terms.

UNCLE SAM: Very pretty answer but not very practical. And what did you teach in those parochial schools?

SPAIN: I taught the students to know God. I taught them to consider the individual as a special work of Heaven and not as a tool for life nor for power. I taught them what dignity and honour were, as well as the meaning of freedom for human beings.

UNCLE SAM: Well, I don't think we are going to understand each other... Tell me, did you teach them Geography, Arithmetic, Commercial Calculus, Physics, Chemistry, means of making money, ways of conquering friends and the manner of living a happy marriage?

SPAIN: No, I have never taught those last subjects.

[...]

UNCLE SAM: I can not understand you, I really can not understand you! But in the last analysis, Spain hardly put up any schools. She didn't leave you with roads, bridges, factories... She didn't fight epidemics, didn't teach you hygiene. And speaking of teaching, she didn't even teach you her language.

SPAIN: It was ordered under law number 18, 1<sup>st</sup> section, 6<sup>th</sup> book of the "Laws for the Indies" that schools should be opened in order to teach Castilian to the natives. Unfortunately, that law was not followed in the Philippines, so, few learned Castilian.

UNCLE SAM (to Philippines): Why didn't you learn Castilian?

PHILIPPINES: Talagá, talagá. It was easier to speak in our languages and dialects, and so it was the Filipino scholars who learned Castilian on our behalf so as to understand and be understood by Mother Spain. And the priest learned to teach us the catechism in our native tongue.] (Álvarez 106-107)

In this fragment, Uncle Sam is extremely precise; he insists on quoting numbers, discussing practical matters and emphasising productivity. "How many schools? and how many teachers?" he asks Spain repeatedly. The character of Spain, on the other hand, does not talk about education in terms of numbers but in terms of its content, stressing the value of religious education and proudly proclaiming that she taught the meaning of honour, freedom and respect for all divine creatures. The benign impression of colonisation given in her speech clashes with the Black Legend<sup>55</sup> of Spanish colonialism mentioned earlier in the play.<sup>56</sup> By evoking this contrast, the play illustrates the gap between colonial rhetoric and practice.

However, the play also attempts to understand this gap through the type of historicism it produces. The satire contextualises the events of history through the characters'

<sup>55</sup> The "Black Legend" refers to the anti-Spanish discourse that emerged during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the basis of the abuses of the colonisation of Latin America and the violent Inquisition.

<sup>56</sup> In the play, Spain says that there were "bad men" as well as "good men" who respectively abused and defended the interests of the colonised. As examples of reformed men (colonisers that sided with the colonised), she names Bartolome de las Casas in Latin America and Antonio de Morga (1559- 1636) in the Philippines. The latter wrote one of the first critical works about colonisation in the Philippines entitled *Sucesos de las islas Filipinas* (1609).

explanations about what happened and about how the respective colonial programs shaped the present, allowing Mrs. History to pass judgment. This way of narrating from different perspectives is recurrent in Gurrea's work and particularly prominent in the stories contained in *Cuentos de Juana*. It marks her writing as originating from a transcultural perspective that is simultaneously orientalisating and orientalisated, even though the texts do end up taking a specific position towards the perspectives they present. An example of this is the characterisation of Philippines as "young" and the emphasis put on education in the characters' dialogues. The play's presentation of the Philippines as a child in need of being educated or, in other words, as a project of civilisation remains unquestioned.

Towards the end of the play, Mrs. History asks Philippines to draw a conclusion about who has had a "better" influence on her upbringing. This reveals the perspective on colonialism as an educative process that, moreover, is carried out by family members - Uncle Sam and Mother Spain:

HISTORIA: ¿Tienes algo más que decir, Filipinas?

FILIPINAS: Pues para final - y esto va muy en serio - debo decir noblemente que *no tengo más que motivos de agradecimiento hacia mi madre España y mi Tío Sam. Yo perdono y olvido todas las debilidades, todos los defectos de su comportamiento conmigo*. En el otro platillo de la balanza ¡es tanto y tan bueno lo que he recibido de los dos! Sobre los conocimientos cristianos y de nobleza humana que me legó España - su cultura, sus costumbres, su sangre, sus nombres, amalgamados con todo lo mío que quedó intacto en su valor bueno, *borrando lo vicioso* - sobre esta formación completa que es también armazón, además de base; colocó, América, su dinamismo y su músculo y me dotó de lo material para hacerme fuerte y moderna y me hizo libre después de enseñarme normas de democracia que garantizasen mi libertad. Y a ambas les estoy intensamente agradecida y a ambas las quiero. (*España y América la rodean con sus brazos*) (255, emphasis added)

[HISTORY: I think we should wrap this up. Have you anything else to say, Philippines?

PHILIPPINES: Well, to put an end to this... Seriously, there is no reason for me not to thank my Mother Spain and Uncle Sam. I forgive and forget all their weaknesses, all the wrongs they have done against me. On another scale, there are indeed so many good things that I have received from both of them! Aside from our Christian foundations and the thoughts on human nobility, Spain bequeathed me her culture, habits, blood and names amalgamated with those things of mine. These ways of living whose better aspects we continue to celebrate but whose vicious possibilities we have tried to erase. On top of these, America offered its dynamism and strength towards endowing me with those material things to make me strong and modern. It gave me freedom after teaching me the rules of democracy that have truly guaranteed my freedom. And to both, I'm immensely thankful. Both I love (*Spain and America embrace her*) (Álvarez 110)

The play thus concludes by asserting that neither of the colonisers was better or worse; they are both equally part of the history that has made the Philippines what it is now: an exemplary young, strong, dynamic and modern nation that knows mathematics and calculus as well as the meaning of freedom and democracy, that is aware of her history and has been provided with the spiritual guidance of Catholicism. Consequently, the young Philippines is not resentful but, on the contrary, “intensamente agradecida” [immensely grateful] for the colonial heritage given to her. This conclusion places the Filipino people in a submissive position, as they accept and acknowledge “the better aspects” of the foreign cultures and magnanimously profess to “forgive and forget all their weaknesses, all the wrongs they have done against me.”

Even though pre-colonial history was referenced by Philippines at the beginning of the play, no elements of this history are accounted for as making up who she is now. Drawing on the metaphor that I used to open this section, young Philippines has indeed contracted (the ideology of) colonialism and, in the process, given up what she had before. Gurrea’s play does not seem to contend or resist colonial history in any sustained way, refuses to establish a hierarchy of colonisers (the US is no better or worse than Spain) and dismisses pre-colonial attachments. In silencing this heritage, the play can be said to espouse a hegemonic discourse of orientalism in which the exotic is only there to be contrasted with and infected by the civilised cultures of the west.

Yet both the play and the poem (“España, América, Filipinas”) also evoke transculturation in producing an image of the Philippines as a body that harmoniously contains and unites different colonial attachments (linking to Spain through its heart and to the US through its muscles). The play lists the qualities inherited from both colonisers, presenting them as complementary rather than as in conflict. In both examples, however, Filipinos seem to engage only passively in the process of transculturation, submitting to it rather than participating in it.<sup>57</sup>

While Spain is heralded as having given the Philippines a heart, a closer look at its role in the play reveals elements of a critique of Spanish colonialism, specifically focusing on the role of Catholic friars on the islands. The “vicious possibilities” that are to be forgotten by young Philippines point to the system of “*frailocracia*,” a term coined to describe the abusive power of the clergy in the colonial Philippines, which was fiercely attacked in José

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<sup>57</sup> In Chapter 3 I look at how Paz Mendoza’s travelogue displays a form of *active transculturation*. While Mendoza looks at the future possibilities Filipino transculturation offers, Gurrea presents it as a process completed in the past.

Rizal's incendiary novels *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891).<sup>58</sup> One of the main issues in the Philippines under Spanish rule was that Spanish was not taught in the systematic way that English would be taught under American regulation. The Spanish colonial system lacked the infrastructure to implement a national education system, leaving basic education to priests, who, according to Philippines in the play, "learned to teach us the catechism in our native tongue." In answer to Uncle Sam's question about why Filipinos did not learn Spanish, she notes: "It was easier to speak our own dialects and [Spanish] was learnt by scholarly Filipinos to communicate with Spain in our name." Only the Filipino elite (creoles and some mestizos) and the priests spoke Spanish so that the commoners would remain in obscurantism and be kept from calling for emancipation and independence. The idea was to ensure that the masses would *contract colonialism* without being able to question what exactly was being transmitted to them.

While the critique of the clergy contained in Gurrea's play would likely pass unnoticed by audiences in 1950s Spain unfamiliar with the details of colonial rule, the text itself, because of its satirical mode, is also very ambivalent. The harmony that appears to be propagated at the play's surface could be regarded as an early variation of what Simon During refers to as 'reconciliatory post-colonialism,' a perspective that attempts to disregard the residual negative effects of colonial processes on colonised societies by focusing, instead, on the unifying cultural transformations that are derived from global exchange:

In the end, reconciliatory post-colonialism figures colonialism as a kind of tragedy with a happy ending - tragic because it was partly based on destruction and ethnocide; happy in the sense that the world historical outcome - which we now name globalisation - unifies and de-spatializes the world in ways which supposedly render colonial repression obsolete. (392)

However, while the play ostensibly has a happy ending - a tripartite embrace initiated by Spain and America - it is difficult to see it, in During's terms, as rendering victimising and repressing colonial discourses obsolete. Instead, the play needs to be read in the historical context of 1950s Spain and with a keen eye to its sarcastic and playful tone, which renders the statements of the allegorical characters ambivalent.

The apparent passive reconciliation with history that repeats the colonial discourse (hence merely 'sounding' orientalist) is better explained according to Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry, discussed in the introduction to this study. For Bhabha, mimicry expresses the

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<sup>58</sup> Early Filipino scholars who studied in Europe and returned to the Philippines had to fight the power of the clergy and the decadent creole elites to defend the need for political and social reforms (Thomas 2012). Such is the case in both *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891).

ambivalence of a colonial discourse that turns into a form of resistance when it is voiced by the colonised. In order to explain how it operates in Gurrea's play, I need to call attention to two important aspects. First, the fact that Gurrea explicitly calls the play a 'historical satire.' Satire is defined as "the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices."<sup>59</sup> It uses mockery, often by mimicking the very object that is being critiqued, and is therefore entertaining but also profoundly critical. Second, staging a satire in front of a Spanish audience during Franco's dictatorship, when any piece of art, and specifically theatre, had to commit to the laws of censorship,<sup>60</sup> leading most writers to use strategies of self-censorship and discreet resistance, was a daring act.<sup>61</sup> Together, these aspects make it possible to see the interaction between a *pretend* Uncle Sam, a *pretend* Spain and a *pretend* Philippines as staging a mocking of official colonial history, cleverly and ambiguously conveyed through an accepted form of patriotic propaganda in fascist Spain.

It may be argued that one of the reasons that propelled Gurrea to opt for a 'happy ending' was a cautionary self-censorship exercised in order to protect her precarious position as a Filipino female writer in fascist Spain. From that perspective, Gurrea's work reflects the 'baroque discourse of the three "p's": Purity, Poetry and Patriotism' propagated by the Franco regime, described by Carbayo (1998) as follows:

The patriarchal family formed the microcosm version of the state apparatus. The women were considered, not only the basis of the biological reproductive system, since they were responsible for the future heroes of the fatherland, but also for the ideological reproduction. Thus, they were at the same time victims of the system. We speak about the official discourse, which was monolithic and autarchic, and stood on what we have called the baroque discourse of the three 'p's': Purity, Poetry and Patriotism (...). The poetry is a direct reference to the Baroque style, as the medium for discerning the myths of the common culture, and for the expression of the historical memory, of the symbols and traditions. (qtd. in Álvarez 26)

<sup>59</sup> *Literary Terms*. 1 June 2015. Web. 3 Nov. 2016. <<https://literaryterms.net/>>.

<sup>60</sup> There were several institutions in charge of carrying out censorship in the media and arts, among them the *Ley de Prensa de 1938* and later the *Junta Nacional de Teatros y Conciertos (Orden 5-XI-38)*. A key figure in the censorship system was Minister of Education and Tourism Gabriel Arias-Salgado, whose book *Textos de doctrina y política de la información* (1955) is a key text for studying government policies of censorship. For specific information about theatre censorship, see Garcia Ruiz's article "Los mecanismos de censura teatral en el primer franquismo y Los pájaros ciegos de V. Ruiz Iriarte (1948)" (1996).

<sup>61</sup> During the late 1940s and 1950s there appeared a subgenre in theatre called "la comedia de la felicidad" [the comedy of happiness], which avoided dealing with any controversial themes. A notable exception to this was Antonio Buero Vallejo's social realism or "teatro de la esperanza" [theatre of hope], which was very successful. Vallejo's *Historia de una escalera* [History of a staircase] was staged in 1949 and opened a new road in how to deal with social problems under Franco. Gurrea is likely to have seen Vallejo's play in Madrid and was aware of both the official and underground tendencies of theatre in post-war fascist Spain. Still, it could be argued that Gurrea's play is in fact more daring than Vallejo's in the sense that it explicitly deals with the history of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines, mobilising global attachments, while Vallejo addresses the stagnation and immobility of postwar Spain through the individual lives of the neighbouring families that share the building's staircase.

Instances of the three “p’s” can easily be found in Gurrea’s work. *Poetry* in the baroque lyricism of some of her poems (as I will show in the next section); *Purity* in her notion of poetic creation as method of self-expression: “a válvula de escape a los vapores comprimidos del corazón, pero nunca con miras a obtener gloria ni renombre, ni si quiera con intención de ser publicados” [an exhausting valve for the vapors held within my heart; but never with the ambition of glory and renown, not even with the intention of being published] (1954: 2); and *Patriotism* as revealed in the preface to her poetry collection *A lo largo del camino* [Along the way] (1954: 2), where Gurrea declares that writing is for her a form of payment of a patriotic debt incurred by the Philippines as a result of everything Spain gave to it, particularly the language to write in:

If, finally, I do it [publishing her work], after a meticulous selection and a few retouches, it is only for my homeland, the Philippines, to count with another representative of its Spanish speaking poets. (...) The book has just one intention: to be a volume of verses written in Castilian and published by a Filipino, thinking of Spain and the Philippines. I believe this end has been achieved. Because, by singing in Spanish I return to Spain the debt for that glorious heritage that is Cervantes’s language. So, I render the service of helping to draw back the oblivion of the seed on the sown field. (qtd. in Álvarez 9)

The expression of gratitude towards Spanish for the “gifts” of colonialism returns in many Hispano-Filipino literary works; it is, for example, a central theme in Balmori’s poem “Blasón,” discussed in Chapter 1. Although this gratitude can be interpreted as a sign of an assimilationist attitude, which, in Gurrea’s case, can be explained by her situation in Franco’s Spain, I argue that linguistic appropriation can also be a form of resistance, especially when it reveals a new vision of colonial history.

The poem and the play discussed in this section show how Gurrea uses specific literary forms and the Spanish language to engage with the historical processes that contributed to the transculturation of the Philippines. Despite observing that her work manifests symptoms of a contracted orientalism (in presenting the Philippines as a dependent and infantile nation that ignores her oriental heritage), some resistance is expressed in it through the satirical use of mimicry to make fun of Spain and the US, exposing, for example, their pomposity, which contrasts with Philippines’ modesty. The analysis of these two works has brought to the fore a recurring theme in Gurrea’s oeuvre: a reflection on Filipino history attempting to capture the various cultures that shaped it and the complex relations between them. This theme is sometimes also personalised, in Gurrea’s nostalgic reflections on her own memories of the Philippines, as I will show in the next section.

### Nostalgia for the Orient

One reason for authors to seek out orientalism was a felt need to escape the disillusionment of modernity. In the case of the Philippines, the sensation of waiting for a never arriving modernity (which many Hispano-Filipino writers saw in operation elsewhere) was reinforced by the denial of independence and democracy under US control, and by the maintenance of a residual colonial structure that prevented social and economic progress. Many Hispano-Filipino writers also shared in a global disenchantment with the historical events that occurred in the first part of the twentieth century: the rise of fascist regimes leading to two world wars and a civil war in Spain, as well as the shortcomings of an idealised modernity. Gurrea's writings about the Philippines respond to both circumstances; on the one hand, the Philippines as presented in these writings functions as a counterpart to social disillusionment in post-war Spain and the instability of global politics,<sup>62</sup> while, on the other hand, Gurrea's texts allow her to express her personal nostalgia for the Philippines as a homeland that provides her with a fertile ground for orientalist modernist writing.

In his book *Ignorance* (2002) Milan Kundera describes the concept of nostalgia as the "pain that the unfulfilled crave of return causes to someone" (14). He arrives at this definition by dissecting the Greek etymology of the word: *nostos* meaning return and *algos* meaning pain. *Nostos*, however, specifically refers to a non-completed return (in the sense of Odysseus' stalled journey back to Ithaca). Thus, etymologically, nostalgia is the feeling of pain caused by the (impossible) return home, which, in English, is called *homesickness*. As Svetlana Boym outlines in her seminal study *The Future of Nostalgia* (2005), the Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer, in his medical dissertation from 1688, affirmed nostalgia as an illness, a melancholic condition defined as a 'hypochondria of the heart' first diagnosed in displaced peoples.<sup>63</sup> To be cured of nostalgia, one must return home or to the object that causes the pain. The unfulfilled return to that object is what causes one to be nostalgic. In this section, I will argue that Gurrea's orientalised view of the Philippines can be considered as a form of nostalgia for her birthplace.

In the collection *Mas Senderos* (1967) [More paths] Gurrea includes several poems dedicated to elements of the Filipino rural landscape that she orientalises and uses symbolically. The poem, "Mi Isla de Negros" [My Island of Negros], for example, is

<sup>62</sup> This is clear, for example, in the poem "El Nido" [The Nest] from the collection *En Agraz* (1968), which is about the Spanish King Alphonse XIII's reaction to the events of the First World War.

<sup>63</sup> "Among the first victims of the newly diagnosed disease were various displaced people of the seventeenth century, freedom-loving students from the Republic of Berne studying in Basel, domestic help and servants working in France and Germany and Swiss soldiers fighting abroad" (Hofer, qtd. in Boym, 2005: 19).

dedicated to the volcano Canlaón, which is a famous landmark on the island. In the poem, the speaker compares her heart to the volcanic shape.<sup>64</sup> In the poems “El Carabao” (78-81) and “Campesio de Negros” [peasant of Negros] (86-89), the speaker finds in the figure of the Carabao (a domestic animal native of the Philippines used for agriculture and fishing)<sup>65</sup> and in the image of the Filipino peasant working in the rice fields and living in a nipa hut symbols of hospitality, noblesse, humility and a capacity to endure considered unique to the Filipino people.<sup>66</sup> *A lo largo del Camino* contains a poem about a Filipino beach (“Playa Filipina” 39) containing lines that describe it as a ‘song of palm trees’ and a ‘kiss of light from the tropics.’<sup>67</sup> Just a page before “Playa Filipina” is a poem called “Nostalgia” expressing the speaker’s desire to return to the mountains and the beach on which she can listen to the “caracolas malayas” [Malayan seashells] and watch out (“atalayar”) for her ‘cradle over Filipino sand.’<sup>68</sup> The *sampaguita* flower, considered a national symbol in the Philippines is also described according to an orientalist poetics. In a poem called “Sampaguita,” the speaker addresses the flower directly in a composition of nine stanzas enumerating the reasons why the *sampaguita* is worth writing a poem about. Each stanza starts with the word *because* followed by metaphors of what a *sampaguita* *is* and *is not*. Thus, the *sampaguita* is worthy of the verses because she is ‘the star that lightens the fields of her homeland’ (“patria”), ‘like a kiss’ or like ‘the wind that caresses the faces of the “dagalas” [young women].’ In addition, the *sampaguita* is defined as ‘nostalgia,’ as a ‘cry’ and as a ‘childhood dream’ that the

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<sup>64</sup> ¡A Y mi Isla de Negros, mi Isla de Negros! /Se me ha hecho el corazón / de la forma volcánica / del Canlaón. (75). [Oh, my island of Negros, my Island of Negros! / My heart has become / the volcanic shape / of the Canlaón]

<sup>65</sup> Cigno cabalístico del suelo malayo, / Nigromancia clara de la sementera, / estampa grabada sobre el arrozal, / en la paz del campo eres el soslayo / de la angustia urbana, / la paz placentera/ a la sombra ingenua del cañaverol. [...] Encierras los sueños de toda una raza / que labra la tierra mirando hacia el cielo / y lleva una estrella posada en la frente, / la hospitalidad abierta que abraza / y ofrece sus / flores, sus frutos del suelo, / con un corazón sentido y caliente. Y eres para el hombre testimonio austero / de la Oceania misteriosa, arcana, / conciencia serena con auras marinas, / glebas soleadas, luces de sendero, / susurro en las cañas... gama soberana / que ennoblece el alma fiel de FILIPINAS (78-81). [Kabbalistic sign of the Malay soil, / clear necromancy of the sown field, / engraved print on the rice field, / in the peace of the countryside you are the sideline / of the urban anguish, / the pleasant peace / in the innocent shade of the cane-field. [...] You enclose the dreams of a whole race / that labors the earth looking towards the sky / carrying a star on the forehead, / grand hospitality that embraces / and offers its flowers, its fruits of the earth, / with a warm and sincere heart. And you are for manhood the austere testimony of the mysterious Oceania, hidden, / serene conscience with marine auras, sunny crops, light in the path, whisper in the reeds ... sovereign range / that honors the faithful soul of the PHILIPPINES]

<sup>66</sup> En su casita de nipa / vive soñando pobrezas / el labrador de la Isla. / Su corazón de gacela / lleva el paisaje del mar / verde del cañadulzal (86).

<sup>67</sup> Dice su amor la espuma/una canción de palmeras / el beso de luz del trópico / incandeece las arenas. (36).

<sup>68</sup> Me voy, me voy a las playas / a escuchar las resonancias / de las caracolas malayas. [...] Y atalayar, de muy lejos / tras fulgores o neblinas / las espumas de mi cuna / sobre arenas filipinas (37-38).

speaker treasures and carries deep in her heart.<sup>69</sup> These examples illustrate how the nostalgic wish to return is aimed at an orientalised version of the landscape of the Philippines.

Boym distinguishes two types of nostalgia, which she calls ‘reflective’ and ‘restorative.’ ‘Reflective’ nostalgia is a type of nostalgia grounded in longing, contemplating and remembering, “a positive force that helps us explore our experience, and can offer an alternative to an uncritical acceptance of the present” (41). In addition, Boym notes that it is an “imperfect process of remembrance,” proceeding through the imagination (41). As much as we can be nostalgic about our schooldays, thinking of them as idyllic, we forget that sometimes we hated going to school, she claims. In accordance with the mode of reflective nostalgia, the speaker of Gurrea’s poems fills the gaps in her selective memory with only positive images of the absent object, creating a picture postcard collection of idealised images of the Filipino landscape and its oriental landmarks (carabaos, sampaguitas, beaches, vulcanos and peasants laboring in rice fields).

In contrast, ‘restorative’ nostalgia, according to Boym, is not about memory and the imagination, but about heritage and tradition. It is an imposed, official discourse that provides people with a coherent vision of the past:

Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to build the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance [...] Restorative nostalgia manifest itself in total reconstruction of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, the dreams of another place and another time. (41)

Boym sees a danger in restorative nostalgia, as it constitutes an attempt to (re)construct a common past that brings communities a sense of group (be)longing. Far from an individual experience, restorative nostalgia is a sort of planned nostalgia from which commercial profit and exclusive nationalism can be derived. To illustrate this, Boym refers to official monuments built to commemorate past events and create an authoritative national history. The sample poems discussed here are not examples of restorative nostalgia since they do not dwell on traditions or political symbols. Neither do they convey, at least not explicitly, an official national discourse. At the same time, however, Gurrea’s poetry collections do constitute attempts to “build the lost home” and to restore a sense of national belonging, especially when the Philippines is identified as “la patria” [the fatherland].

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<sup>69</sup> Porque eres todo eso; / penumbra y llamarada,/ nostalgia, llanto y vuelo, / “ahora”, “ayer”, “mañana”.../ porque eres un ensueño, / de mi niñez dorada, / te llevo muy adentro, / muy adentro del alma (36).

As I noted at the beginning of this section, Gurrea's nostalgia for the Philippines is linked to her rejection and resistance of modernity. This is most obvious in the poem "Rebeldía Nostálgica" [Nostalgic Resistance], contained in *Más Senderos* (1967) [More paths], which radically rejects modernity for being artificial, pompous and flighty. According to the poem's speaker, the masses in modern societies have lost their uniqueness and simplicity to the reign of the universal, which governs, manages and reduces them to a single thing, a homogeneity represented in the poem by the ugly sound of a frog's croak. Individuality has been replaced by a "madness of quivering puppets":

*"Rebeldía Nostálgica"*

*Ya nada suena a entonces, nada suena...  
 Todo chirría ahora su estridencia,  
 La música es bramido de tambores  
 Ahogando suavidades de cadencia.  
 Solo aguijón contiene la colmena,  
 La miel no se hizo o se secó en las flores.*

*El cerebro encabrita su pirueta  
 Con rebrincos hacia lo original  
 Y ambicionan la gracia del poeta  
 Agrias caricaturas de verso existencial.*

*Ya nada suena a entonces, nada suena.  
 La charca tiene ranas, ranas, ranas.  
 Y todo es charca... sin lagos y sin mar;  
 Mar con su luna llena  
 O rocío en la luz de las mañanas.  
 Sólo charcas...  
 Charcas con su croar, croar, croar.*

*Ya nada suena a entonces,  
 hasta el ultramoderno genial predicador  
 Exhorta con cornetas y con bronces,  
 Sin esquilas que llamen al amor.  
 Se pretende rezar y no se reza  
 Pues la oración reclama aquel acento  
 Sencillo de la paz y de la pobreza,  
 Lejos del tono agrio y del resentimiento.*

*Ya nada es como antes  
 La humanidad se entorbellina el corazón  
 Con locuras de títeres tremantes,  
 Los unos se hacen cientos, los cientos se hacen miles,  
 Para un solo rebaño en frustración.*

*Todos somos iguales,  
 Se extinguió la ordenada variedad.  
 Todos queremos molicies, carnavales...  
 Todos somos iguales...  
 ¡Ruines payasos de la Humanidad!  
 (Álvarez 194-5)*

[Now nothing sounds like before, nothing... / Now everything squeaks its shrillness, / Music is beaten out by drumming, / Stifling the rhythm's sweetness. / The beehive holds nothing but the sting

Honey is not made; it dries up in the flower / The brain leaps pirouetting / Aspiring to originality, / And the bitter caricatures of existential verses / Crave for the grace of the poet.

Now nothing sounds like before, nothing. / Frogs, frogs, frogs croaking everywhere in the pond / And everywhere is pond... no lake, no sea; / No sea lit by a full moon rising / No dew in the morning light, only ponds / Ponds filled with croaking, croaking, croaking.

Now nothing sounds like before, / Even the brilliant prophet of fashionable modernity / Preaches out sounding brass and clanging cymbals / Without the bells which summon love. / He pretends to pray, yet is unable to, / For prayer demands the quiet simplicity / Of the poor and humble / So different from his bitter tone.

Now nothing is like before. / For the madness of quivering puppets / Mankind has thrown its soul into the whirlwind, / Ones have become hundreds, the hundreds thousands / Becoming a single herd of discontent.

We are all the same / We have extinguished ordered diversity / We all desire delight and pageantry / We are all the same... / Petty clowns of Humanity!] (Álvarez 46-48)

The first two verses of the poem make a negative comparison between the present and the past. Nothing sounds *now* (“*ahora*”) like *then* (“*entonces*”). Music has become noise, a cacophony that “chirria” [scrapes] our ears. Poetry, love and humanity have lost their substance to become false imitation, pretence, caricature. The present has transformed the necessary and noble conditions of ‘poverty’ and ‘peace’ into ‘resentment’ and ‘bitterness,’ erasing the possibility of keeping faith in humanity and God. The present, moreover, offers a frantic carnival of maddened puppets that preach to and resent each other. Life has become a carnival in which humans are only “ruines payasos de la Humanidad” [despicable clowns of humanity]. The speaker of the poem is the singular observer of the masses’ contemptible behavior, making her nostalgia an act of resistance, as the title also indicates.

Significantly, the (French) poets that led literary modernism, including Baudelaire, were also inspired by the textures of the masses and the urban, but instead of being nostalgic for the past, they were passionate about the fleeting present. For the first generation of modern poets, the city was vibrant and crowded, and full of poetic inspiration. Baudelaire expresses the urgency and beauty of the fleeting moment in a poem about falling in love with a passer-by (“À une passante,” in *Fleurs du mal* 1868). Boym (2005) calls the poetics of the

fleeting possibility of falling in love with a stranger ‘love at last sight,’ reinventing the idiom in the light of a nostalgia for the moment that has just evaporated as the object of love is dissolved into the crowd.

Against these early modernists, who disapproved of nostalgia for the past in favour of capturing the fleeting present and its provocations, Boym claims that a new generation emerged, which she calls *off-modernists*, a nomenclature that matches the sentiment of “Rebeldia nostalgica.” The poem is *off-modern* because it rejects (instead of happily dwelling in) its very source of inspiration: modernity and progress. According to Boym, *off-modernist* nostalgia consists of a felt necessity to look to the past in a reflective manner, especially following the painful history of the first half of the twentieth century, in search of ways to (re)construct the present and the future:

The *off-modernists* mediate between modernists and postmodernists, frustrating the scholars. The eccentric adverb *off* relieves the pressure of being fashionable and the burden of defining oneself as either pre- or postmodern. If at the beginning of the twentieth century modernists and avant-gardists defined themselves by disavowing nostalgia for the past, at the end of the twentieth century reflection on nostalgia might bring us to redefine critical modernity and its temporal ambivalence and cultural contradictions. (31)

The position of the narrator in “Rebeldia Nostalgica” is that of an *off-modernist* because it is critical of modernity but also inspired by it. In the poem, the speaker bitterly concludes that individuals have lost a sense of diversity and originality - ‘we are all the same’ - and have become incapable of paying attention to the simple pleasures of life. Against this, the poem expresses a longing for the specific rather than the universal. For Boym, a longing for the particular is what characterises the nostalgic individual:

What is crucial is that nostalgia was not merely an expression of local longing, but a result of a new understanding of time and space that made the division into “local” and “universal” possible. The nostalgic creature has internalised this division, but instead of aspiring for the universal and the progressive he looks backward and yearns for the particular. (11)

Yearning for the particular is precisely what Gurrea’s orientalist poems do. Instead of focusing on the impossibility of capturing the present or being inspired by modern technologies (such as trains, cars or typewriters, as is the case in much Spanish modernist poetry),<sup>70</sup> they channel Gurrea’s *off-modernist* nostalgia into praise for the particular Filipino symbols invoked by her memory.

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<sup>70</sup> The Spanish modernist poet Pedro Salinas (1891-1951) wrote a poem called “Underwood Girls” in 1931 (the original title is in English) inspired by the most popular brand of typewriters in the late 1920s, Underwood. In the poem, the 26 letters of the alphabet (plus other graphs such as the Spanish letter ñ and punctuation signs) are

Having established how in Gurrea's poems the orientalisation of the Philippines is an effect and tool of a nostalgia that, in its reflective form or as it appears in *off-modernism*, can also have a critical dimension, in the next section I explore how *Cuentos de Juana* puts the emphasis on the transculturation of the Philippines rather than on its orientalisation by means of nostalgia. The *Cuentos*, I argue, focus on the dynamic interaction between colonising and indigenous cultures, especially with regard to spiritual and religious beliefs.

### Transcultural Faiths

*Cuentos de Juana. Narraciones malayas de las islas Filipinas* was written in Spain and published for the first time in 1943. In 1951, it received a literary award (Premio de Literatura de la Unión Latina) and it was reedited in 1955. The most recent edition of the book is from 2009, leading the collection of *Clásicos Hispanofilipinos* from the Cervantes Institute. For this study, I used a copy of the 2009 edition with the critical preface and annotations by Beatriz Álvarez Tardío.

The core of *Cuentos de Juana* consists of nine stories: "Juana," "El Tamao," "La doncella que vivió tres vidas," "El Tic-Tic," "El Vaquero del Calatcat," "La leyenda del Carná-Camá," "El Bagat," "Mala Suerte," "El lunuk del remanso verde" and "El Talisay."<sup>71</sup> Each story deals with the misfortunes suffered by people at the hands of malevolent spirits called *asuangs*, mythical figures belong to the tradition of Malay and Filipino storytelling.<sup>72</sup> *Asuang* is the general Filipino term to refer to an abstract evil that can manifest itself in various ways. *Asuangs* can adopt the shape of different creatures, human, animal or both (for instance as a woman with bat wings or as a goat-man). Depending on their shape, they are called different names: *Tamao*, *Tic-Tic*, *Cama-Cama* or *Bagat*. The *tamao* appears in both the first and the last story, leading Cruz-Lucero (2013) to declare that this figure frames the whole collection and stands as the boundary where various worlds of significations come together.

Most of the stories featured in *Cuentos* start with an introduction by the

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described as 30 uniformed girls "redondas, blancas" [round and white] whose rhythmic tapping is described as "fantasías de metal" [metal fantasies]. In his early years, Salinas, like the other poets from the 1927 generation, was fascinated by technologies that inspired surrealist images such as the one described in "Underwood Girls". See Arturo Ramoneda's *Antología de Literatura Española del S.XX* (1988, 2001).

<sup>71</sup> Juana, The Tamao, The Maiden who Lived Three Lives, The Tic-Tic, The Cowherd of Calatcat, The Legend of the Carná-Camá, The Bagat, Bad Luck, The Lunuk of the Green Pool, The Talisay.

<sup>72</sup> For more information on the use of Filipino mythology in *Cuentos*, see Cruz-Lucero's "Gods, Monsters, Heroes, and Tricksters in Adelina Gurrea's *Cuentos de Juana*." For more general information on Filipino mythology, see Filomeno Aguilar Jr.'s *Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island* and Francisco Demetrio's "The Engkanto Belief: An Essay in Interpretation."

autobiographical narrator (supposedly Gurrea), who contextualises the events and gives information about the characters. Then a second narrator takes over, allegedly Juana, the nanny who worked in the hacienda owned by Gurrea's family in the village of La Carlota (province of Negros) and took care of the children. *Cuentos de Juana* is, thus, a frame narrative presented as a compilation of the stories that Juana, the indigenous Filipina, used to tell the children of the Spanish coloniser.

“Juana me contó estos cuentos” (Gurrea 41) [Juana told me these stories] is the first sentence of the collection, followed by: “Todos ellos son de Filipinas: de la isla de Negros. Juana era una criada nativa que conocí en mi hogar desde que comencé a darme cuenta de las cosas de este mundo” (47) [They are all from the Philippines, from the island of Negros. Juana was a native maid that I've known in my home since I started to understand things from this world]. This voice is that of Gurrea as the autobiographical narrator, speaking as an adult in Spain writing down the stories in the mid 1940s.

The framing narrator continues with a description of Juana, who is said to have a big body, dark skin, thick lips and reddish teeth from chewing *buyo* (tobacco). Regardless of this unflattering description, it is noted that “fea, como era, tenía un atractivo especial para los hombres malayos y europeos” (48) [as much as she was ugly, she had a special appeal to both Malay and European men]. In addition to her voluptuous and unconventional beauty, Juana is said to have a strong personality; the narrator affirms that she was not a common servant but an “institution” in the house:

En mi hogar era una institución. Resultaba mucho menos ignorante que el resto de las mujeres del rancho, por su trato con los españoles en casa de mi abuela y en la de mis padres. Hablaba el castellano, pero se olvidaba de él tan pronto como se la reprochaba alguna mala acción o falta en el cumplimiento de su deber. Entonces no se encontraba modo de evitar que diese sus pródigas explicaciones en el dialecto bisayo. Como todo filipino escuchaba las órdenes e instrucciones que se le daban con un gesto de complacencia, cual si fuese a cumplirlas al pie de la letra, y luego hacía lo que mejor le venía en gana. En el momento de las explicaciones, largaba su discursito en visaya; pero a veces se encontraba con réplicas que eran más que palabras. Cosas de la colonización. Para Juana no era denigrante el golpe en la mejilla o el cachete. Si era el ama quien se los daba, el ama podía hacerlo. (Gurrea 50)

[She was an institution in my house. She was much less ignorant than the rest of women in the ranch due to her exchanges with the Spanish in my grandmother's and my parents' house. She spoke castellano, although she would forget it as soon as she is reproached for some bad deed or failure to do her duty. Then there was no way to prevent her from giving his lavish explanations in the bisayan dialect. Like every Filipino, she listened to the orders and instructions that were given to her with a gesture of complacency, as if she was going to follow them to the letter, and then she did what she pleased. Sometimes she found herself with a response that was more

than words. Those were colonial times. For Juana, a slap in the face was nothing denigrating. If it was the master who gave it, the master could do it].

This description indicates that Juana was seen by the colonisers (the parents and the young Gurrea) as both removed from and elevated above the other native servants by her command of the Spanish language and customs. At the same time, “like every Filipino” (a group the narrator explicitly does not identify with), Juana is perceived as discreetly - and vexingly - rebellious. Cruz-Lucero (2013) explains that this description of Juana’s personality conveys a common depiction of the ‘natives’ as tricksters:

All the indio, or native, characters in Juana’s stories are trickster characters, because their roles—big or small—are precisely to show up the Spaniards, if not actually turn the tables on them. Juana’s very personality is quintessential trickster. (118).

Cruz-Lucero’s affirmation that all ‘native’ characters are portrayed as subversive suggests that, in *Cuentos de Juana*, Gurrea, despite being one of the colonisers (Cruz-Lucero often refers to her as the daughter of the coloniser), wants to destabilise the coloniser’s perspective through the trickster’s ability to mock and challenge the coloniser.

The above passage also suggests that native servants in the Philippines could not get away with certain things and could be easily silenced by their masters “with more than words.” Significantly, the reference to Juana’s physical abuse is made very casually and matter-of-fact, suggesting that this was just what “colonial times” were like. This remark and the suggestion that Juana would not find a slap in the face denigrating constitute a justification on the part of the framing narrator of the everyday violence of colonialism that contradicts the critique Juana’s stories mount of the colonisers. In the end, various perspectives on colonialism can be found in *Cuentos*, seeking to dominate each other while also, in their interaction, emphasising the dynamic, mutual process of transculturation that colonialism provoked in the Philippines.

The framing narrator concludes her introduction to the stories by explaining that she will be retelling Juana’s stories faithfully, only to immediately impose her own ideas on the first story by giving it a title:

Yo lo relato como Juana me lo narró, sin poner ni quitar nada y sin obligar a nadie que crea las explicaciones de aquellas personas que lo comentaron. Juana no me dio título para esta historia, pero como los cuentos con título son más bonitos, vamos a llamarla “La doncella que vivió tres vidas.” (Gurrea 55)

[I relate this as Juana narrated it to me, without adding or leaving anything out and without compelling anybody to believe in other people’s interpretations. Juana did not

give me a title for this story, but since a story is nicer with a title let's call it "The Maiden that Lived Three Lives"]

The framing narrator makes the reader part of the decision about the title by using the plural "vamos a llamarla..." [we shall call it], indicating that the intended audience of the story collection is expected to identify with the framing perspective rather than with Juana's.

Significantly, however, the two perspectives are not always kept distinct. Throughout the collection, there are multiple slippages - in the form of clarifications, justifications and identifications with the characters - that blur the voices of the two narrators, emphasising that neither one of their perspectives is objective. In her classic study *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1985; 2009), Mieke Bal says the following about the attempt to be objective in narration:

It is possible to try and give an "objective" picture of the facts. But what does that involve? 'Objectivity' is an attempt to present only what is seen or is perceived in some other way. All comment is shunned and implicit interpretation is also avoided. Perception, however, is a psychosomatic process, strongly dependent on the position of the perceiving body; [...] Perception depends on so many factors that striving for objectivity is pointless. To mention only a few factors: one's position with respect to the perceived object, the fall of the light, the distance, previous knowledge, psychological attitude towards the object; all this and more affects the picture one forms and passes on to others. (142)

According to Bal, perspective is inherent to our perceiving bodies and therefore "striving for objectivity is pointless." Declaring oneself objective thus points to something else, namely to "present only what is seen or is perceived *in some other way*." The initial declaration of objectivity by the framing narrator of *Cuentos de Juana* affirms her desire not to be held responsible for the narrated facts. This desire responds to a felt need to distance herself from what is "seen." Two reasons for this may be discerned. First, Gurrea is both the narrator who "sees" and the object "seen" (she was the child that used to listen to Juana's stories and occasionally appears as a character in them). This means that her perspective as a child and her perspective as an adult sometimes diverge. More specifically, the framing narrator writing about her childhood memories in the Philippines claims a preference to stay, objectively, out of them because she does not always agree or identify with what was then part of her everyday life: uneven colonial power relations and the conflicts between the cultures put in contact by colonialism. Second, by attributing the narration to Juana *Cuentos* incorporates and privileges a 'native' narrative perspective, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the conflicts the stories represent.

However, neither the claim to objectivity nor the clear separation between narrative voices is maintained in the stories. A blurring of voices occurs in two ways. First, the use of first- or third-person pronouns allows the narrator to identify with some characters (“nosotros/yo” [we/I]) and to separate herself from others (“ellos” [they]). Second, explanations are frequently inserted into the story that interrupt the narration attributed to Juana to address a readership unfamiliar with certain cultural aspects of the colonial Philippines.

In the introduction to the story called “El *lunuk*<sup>73</sup> del remanso verde” [The Lunuk of the Green Pool], for example, the framing narrator marks a difference between *us, the children of the hacienda* (her and her siblings) and *they, the natives*:

*Los indígenas [ellos] sabían que el lunuk era la morada de un tamao [an malign spirit]. De un tamao poderoso y vengativo. [...] Los chiquillos de la hacienda íbamos [nosotros] a bañarnos junto a la poza [...] pero si alguna vez el torrente nos llevaba a la poza del lunuk, nadábamos deprisa para salir de ella, repelidos por el miedo. (Gurrea, 196-7, my emphasis)*

*[The natives knew that the lunuk was the dwelling of a tamao, a powerful and vengeful tamao. [...] We, children of the hacienda, used to go swimming near the pool [...] but if the current would take us to the pool next to the lunuk, we would hurriedly swim away, repelled by fear.]*

Here, the “indígenas” or ‘natives’ are said to know of the existence of a *tamao* that lives in the tree, keeping them from swimming nearby. The children of the hacienda, in contrast, have been led to fear the *tamao* by their parents and caretakers in order to make them avoid dangerous situations such as drowning. The “indígenas” possess a knowledge of and belief in the *tamao* that the children of the hacienda, as non-natives, lack, but they still fear and avoid the *lunuk*, showing the effects of transculturation.

The “natives” feel it is their duty to teach the children of the coloniser about the existence of the various spirits to avoid catastrophes. The following fragment belongs to the same story and is purportedly narrated by Juana. The Spanish house owner has passed away and the servant of the house, Cadio, is convinced he died because he disturbed the *tamao* that inhabited the *lunuk* by cutting the tree to extend his plantation. Cadio wants the son of the deceased Spaniard to grow up believing in the power of the spirit, fearing and respecting it, and therefore staying safe:

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<sup>73</sup> *Lunuk* is the Visayan name of the otherwise known as *Ficus Elastica* or banyan tree. In the Philippines, these trees are believed to be inhabited by spirits and therefore never cut or cropped (Gurrea 195).

Y en las horas más medrosas de las noches más oscuras, en las fechas fantasmales religiosas, como el día de las Ánimas, durante los comentarios en torno a crímenes o sucesos misteriosos, en los epílogos luctuosos que sucedían a grandes catástrofes sísmicas o meteorológicas, tifones, riadas, terremotos, Cadio aprovechaba el fenómeno psicológico del miedo para hablar al muchacho del tamao y el lunuk e inculcar en él un terror desmesurado hacia el lugar y el duende. (Gurrea 205)

[And in the most fearful hours of the darkest nights, the ghostly religious dates, such as the Day of the Souls, during the commentaries on crimes or mysterious events, in the mournful epilogues that followed major syismic or meteorological disasters, typhoons, floods, earthquakes, Cadio took advantage of the psychological phenomenon of fear to talk to the boy about the tamao and the lunuk and instill in him a disproportionate terror towards the place and the goblin]

Significantly, this excerpt refers to supernatural entities inhabiting both cultures - the Catholic nights of the Animas and Filipino meteorological catastrophes often explained by the agency of *asuangs*. Juana's narrative thus establishes a parallel between the Catholic faith and local myths, presenting them as feeding into each other rather than being hierarchically arranged. It is implied that only the locals (including the children of the coloniser) are capable of appropriating the world of significations from both cultures and transform it into a new one, part of a transcultural system of meaning. Since this is Juana's voice, the framing narrator can distance herself from what is being recounted; within Juana's story, she is one of the children of the *hacienda*, assimilating this transcultural system of beliefs unreflectively, while, as the framing narrator who has made it clear that she will not intervene in Juana's stories, she can avoid the question of whether she believes in *asuangs*.

As noted earlier, the framing narrator at times cannot help but enter into Juana's narration with a clarification that reinforces an us/them opposition between the Spanish colonisers (and readers) and indigenous Filipinos. In the following fragment, for example, it is supposedly Juana who is telling the story of "El Vaquero del Calatcat" [The Cowherd of Calatcat], whose protagonist is competing with a richer man for the love of a woman:

Era un rival demasiado poderoso para Blas, porque los padres de Doric eran pobres y llevaban mucho tiempo soñando con el precio de la hija. *Digo esto sin ánimo de escandalizar a nadie. Los hijos suelen tener siempre un precio, más o menos disimulada la venta, según las pretensiones de civilización que-tenga cada país. Las fortunas de los pretendientes, en los países europeos se cotizan siempre, y las dotes sirven para la compra de un marido. También se ha instituido que las almas den dinero, en algunos casos, para ser esposas del Señor. Pero no es culpa de las almas ni del Amor, sino de los mercaderes del templo.* Los padres de Doric eran buenos mercaderes. (Gurrea 96-97, my emphasis)

[He was too powerful a rival for Blas, because Doric's parents were poor and had long dreamed of the daughter's price. *I say this without scandalizing anyone. Children*

*usually have a price, more or less concealed in the sale, according to the pretensions of civilization that each country has. The fortunes of the suitors in European countries are more in demand, and the dowries serve for the purchase of a husband. It has also been instituted that souls give money, in some cases, to be the Lord's wives. But it is not the fault of souls or love, but of the merchants of the temple. Doric's parents were good merchants.]*

The italicised sentences do not seem to convey the words of Juana, who is unlikely to have possessed detailed knowledge of European courtship customs. It is the framing narrator who feels the need to address readers' sensibility about the idea of children having a price in the eyes of their parents and society at large - apparently less taboo in Asian cultures than in the West. She warns the Spanish readership by acknowledging what she considers to be an unspoken truth. The fragment continues with a poignant criticism of a global (gendered) class system, followed by a bitter remark against the clergy - said to set a price for saving people's souls. Again, it seems improbable that this would come from Juana, who, as a servant, would be reluctant to openly criticise the customs of the Spanish colonisers or point to the economic abuses of the Church.

The following example from the same story is also ambivalent as to who is saying what. Three pages in, we find the following comments with respect to the character of "the natives":

Llegada la hora de comenzar [Blas] había pasado un rato de angustia indefinida. Los de Caiñamán no venían. Ningún grupo comentaba el motivo. *El carácter oriental de los nativos les baña en una pusilanimidad fatalista que les aleja de las extrañezas y de las alusiones ante hechos que no revistan demasiada gravedad.* Pero Blas había esperado la llegada del grupo con un deseo abstracto y se impacientó al no verles venir. (Gurrea 92, my emphasis)

[When it was time to begin [Blas] had been for a while affected by indefinite anguish. Those of Caiñamán did not come. No-one commented on why. *The oriental character of the natives bathes them in a fatalistic pusillanimity that distances them from the strangeness and allusions to facts that do not show too much gravity.* But Blas had expected the arrival of the group with an abstract desire and became impatient not to see them coming.]

The explanatory section emphasized in the quote suggests, first, that the "natives" behave in specific ways, different from non-natives, and, second, that this behavior derives from their "oriental" character. In this case, it is suggested that "native" Filipinos do not easily make a drama of a setback because they are fatalists, accepting whatever must happen without worrying unnecessarily. Yet, this fatalistic attitude towards life appears in the text next to pusillanimity, suggesting that the acceptance of one's fate might be also an act of cowardice and lack of will. This is a common stereotype of orientalism as a colonial discourse that some

Latin American used to posit shared roots between Amerindians and Asian peoples. Argentine sociologist Carlos Octavio Bunge (1875-1918) wrote that the foremost psychological trait of the Asian empires in contrast to the European was “without a doubt it is the passivity of the large masses of men, the resignation to their fate... Indeed, Oriental fatalism constitutes the characteristic trait of Mexicans and Peruvians” (Bunge qtd. in Camayd-Freixas 2013: 7).

In the story, Blas is waiting for the arrival of a family from another village, Caiñamán, to celebrate the *fiestas*. The Caiñamán family has a daughter whom Blas is in love with. Given that Blas is an “oriental native,” it is implied that he will not have worried too much about the late arrival of the family. However, the fragment indicates that Blas did in fact become a little impatient, suggesting that he is not reacting as a stereotypical oriental character. The story, thus, both presents the orientalist stereotype and counters it by portraying the “native” characters as not always acting according to expectations.

The explanatory note is sandwiched in the middle of the paragraph, increasing the difficulty of knowing which of the narrators is speaking. What is clear, though, is that the speaker is thinking transculturally. If Juana is making this comment (and Gurrea, as the autobiographical narrator, simply remembers it as part of the story), she would have been trying to explain the behavior of the “natives” to the children of the coloniser who are listening to her story. This would put the children in the “non-native” category and also distance Juana herself from the “oriental natives.” While, given the use of words like “pusillanimity,” it is unlikely that the quoted fragment conveys Juana’s direct speech, if it did, it would show her as able to see things, like the autobiographical narrator, from both an “orientalist” and a “native” perspective.

The last story contained in *Cuentos*, “El Talisay”, remained unpublished until Álvarez’s edition in 2009. It was not included in the 1943 and 1955 publications of the collection. The main characters in “El Talisay” are Gurrea, Juana and the cooks of their house (Epifanio) and the convent (Ticong). Unlike the other stories, this one is not preceded by an introduction by the framing narrator. Rather, it has Gurrea, as the autobiographical narrator, retelling her own story as a flashback: first reflecting on events that happened when she was nine years old and later on events that took place when she was sixteen.

The story told by the narrator concerns Father Javier, a Jesuit priest who came to the Philippines to escape his past. As a young man, living in Spain, he had fallen in love with a woman, Rosario, with whom he never managed to have a relationship. Eventually, she got married to another man and Javier decided to become a priest and left for the Philippines.

Years later, he begins receiving letters from Rosario and they maintain a correspondence for many years. One day, her letters start to make him “sick”, according to Ticong, the cook of the convent where Father Javier lived, who tells the story to Juana.<sup>74</sup> Father Javier starts to feel unstable because as a Catholic priest he is breaking his vows by maintaining a romantic relationship with a woman. At some point, Rosario informs him that she has convinced her husband, a military diplomat, to take a position in the same post as Father Javier, and that she will be arriving in the Philippines shortly. News of a shipwreck reaches the convent, confirming that Rosario and all the other travelers were swallowed by the sea. The news devastates Father Javier, who becomes sick, insane and eventually dies. According to Tinong, his death might have been due to a spell from an *asuang*: “¡El pari Javier era tan bueno! luego se trastornó, o se enfermó o algún asuang le echó mal de ojo” (255) [Father Javier was so good! Then he became deranged and got sick, or an *asuang* cast the evil eye on him].

Years later, Epifanio, the cook at Gurrea’s house is repeatedly frightened by the vision of two spirits, a man and a woman who ask him to do them a favor as he passes an enormous talisay tree in the sugar cane plantation Gurrea’s family runs. The man who appears to Epifanio is the spirit of Father Javier, inhabiting the talisay. The woman (“una mujer palida con una cabellera de oro que flotaba tambien sobre las aguas” (245) [a pale woman with golden hair that also floated on the water]) is Rosario’s spirit, who dwells in an “imbornal,” a simple sewage system that uses a stream of water to carry waste. When Juana has had enough of Epifanio’s stories and hallucinations, which she believes at first to be part of his devotion to *tuba* - an alcohol made from palm leaves, she decides to go and see for herself. Before the story goes on with Juana’s visit to the talisay, the autobiographical narrator writes:

Esto sucedía cuando yo tenía nueve años<sup>75</sup> y vivía en la casa nueva de la hacienda azucarera. Los amos eran mis padres, y éramos seis hermanos. A mi curiosidad infantil le intrigaban mucho los cuentos de Epifanio, pero como Juana no los confirmaba, poniéndolos siempre en duda, la curiosidad se hacía débil y se difuminaba en los juegos y en el interés por otras cosas. (Gurrea 244)

[This happened when I was nine years old and lived in the new house on the sugar estate. The masters were my parents, and there were six of us children. I was very intrigued by Epifanio's stories, but as Juana did not confirm them, and always put them in doubt, curiosity grew dim and faded into games and interest in other things.]

<sup>74</sup> In “El Talisay,” Ticong takes the place of Juana as the “native” and framed narrative voice, whereas Juana is a character in the story.

<sup>75</sup> According to Álvarez’s calculations, this sets the story in 1905.

The narrator confesses then that she was too young to find this mystery interesting but the text also says that Juana judged her too young to understand what was happening. It is also suggested that Ticong is weary of interfering in the affairs of the colonisers: “Yo no me atreví a ayudarlo, porque los *castilas* se enfurecen cuando nosotros los nativos nos damos cuenta de que también tienen debilidades” (255) [I did not dare to help him, because the *castilas* (the Spanish) are enraged when we natives realize that they also have weaknesses].

On Juana’s visit to the talisay, the spirits do appear and ask her to burn the mysterious letters (the correspondence between Father Javier and Rosario), which she does not yet know about. After this encounter, Juana promises Gurrea that when she turns sixteen she will reveal what she saw at the talisay and what she was requested to do. In the meantime, Juana manages to convince Ticong to tell her the story of the love affair and the spirits’ purgatory in the tree. Afterwards, she persuades him to help her liberate them from their imprisonment. Ticong, however, feels torn between doing what Father Javier wants and obeying the *asuang*:

—Juana, hay dos fuerzas dentro de mí que luchan y me empujan para un lado y otro. Dos voces que me mandan. Una viene del *pari* Javier la otra del *asuang*. El *pari* quiere que entierre las cartas; el otro me impide que lo haga. Y yo sufro. (266)

[Juana, there are two forces inside me that fight and push me one way and then the other. Two voices that give me orders. One comes from Father Javier and the other from the *asuang*. The father wants me to bury the letters and the other prevents me from doing it. I am suffering.]

This shows how the locals, as well as people who grew up in the colony, are directly affected by the two (or more) cultures to which they are attached - here, the *asuang* and the souls of the Spaniards dwelling in the tree. Ticong’s words illustrate why transculturation is an apt term to understand the process of cultural interaction and transformation produced by colonial coexistence. His predicament makes clear that he has not fully given one culture up, fully assimilated to another or created a whole new culture, but, rather, is living them transculturally.

Since Ticong will not help her, Juana needs the help of a ‘castila,’ a Spaniard with access to the convent where Father Javier hid the letters. Gurrea fulfils these criteria: “Juana sabía que sólo con la ayuda de un blanco podría llevarlo a cabo. Y el único gran amigo blanco que tenía era yo. Por eso tuvo que esperar a que cumpliera dieciséis años” (250) [Juana knew that only with the help of a White person she could carry out her plan. And the only good white friend she had was me. That is why she had to wait for me to turn sixteen.] Juana and Gurrea need each other to solve the problem, suggesting that their worlds are entangled and that they are in a position of mutual dependency.

But there is more to the story. Father Javier has taken the place of an *asuang* in the talisay, making the evil spirit furious. The talisay, like the *lunuk*, are believed to be inhabited by spirits as well as being animated. Animism is the belief that inanimate objects, including plants and other natural elements, have a spirit of their own. The word “animism” comes from the Latin “anima,” which, in Spanish, evolved into “alma,” translated in English as “ghost,” “spirit” or “life.” Cruz-Lucero explains that animism in the context of Juana’s tales has its origin in pre-Hispanic mythology:

The Malay population of pre-Christian Negros and Panay had a highly complex and elaborate belief system, revolving around the concept of *dungan*, the closest Western equivalent of which is the “soul.” The *dungan* was the root of “origin myths, explanations of illness, the antagonism of spirits to humans, the contests of *dungan*, the tribal *datu*’s leadership, and the *babaylan* priest’s centrality” (Magos 50 qtd. in Cruz-Lucero 113).

According to Cruz-Lucero, the ‘natives’ believe in a primal respect for anything’s or anyone’s *dungan* (soul), acting thus in a less confrontational way than other cultures do, out of respect for everyone and everything’s soul. The character of Gurrea has appropriated this belief as it is shown in her description of the talisay tree as having *dungan*. “El Talisay” starts with an animist description of the tree. The narrator talks about the tree as if he acted like a person: “Soleaba su follaje en los días de sol ardiente o cabeceaba humillado bajo el zarandeo de los tifones” (241) [He used to sun its foliage in the days of burning sun or nodded humiliated under the shaking of typhoons]. The narrator also assigns feelings to the talisay, noting that he had felt happier in other times, before she met him: “no habia estado siempre tan solitario como cuando le conocí” (241) [has not always been as lonely as when I met him].

In the story, while the love affair remains a secret, the illness, insanity and death of Father Javier, as well as the decadence of the talisay are attributed to the agency of the *asuang* and its supernatural powers. In this case, however, there has been an unusual turn of events, since people’s spirits do not normally inhabit the trees, and certainly not white people’s spirits. Consequently, the *asuang* has been angered and is damaging the tree, as well as, in the shape of a *bagat*,<sup>76</sup> bringing evil to the humans that pass by it:

—Sus, María, Usep —volvió a invocar Juana—, tú estás loco, las almas de los castilas se van al cielo o al infierno pero no a los talisays.

<sup>76</sup> The *bagat* operates by standing on roads and misdirecting travellers. Álvarez explains that the name *bagat* was used to refer to the messengers that pre-Hispanic kings would use to connect with their territories. The Spanish began using the name to speak of the devil and to stigmatise the messenger as a misleading one (Álvarez 26).

—Rayo de mujer —gritó exasperado Ticong— no estoy loco y te diré otra cosa. Si alguien pudiera enterrar al pie del talisay una caja que contiene las cartas de aquella mujer, el pari se vería libre de su cárcel dentro del árbol y además el bagat no podría ya nunca tomar posesión de él. (258-9)

[- Jesús Christ! - invoked Juana again - you are crazy, the souls of the *castilas* go to heaven or hell but not to the talisays!  
- Damned woman! - cried Ticong with exasperation - I am not crazy and I'll tell you something else. If someone could bury at the feet of the Talisay a box that contains the letters from that woman, Father Javier would be freed from his prison inside the tree and also, the bagat will no longer take possession of him.]

“The souls of castilas go to heaven, not to the talisays,” Juana insists to Ticong, who is utterly convinced that the bagat (the shape adopted by the *asuang*) in the tree has possessed the soul of “pari” Javier. “Pari” is the Filipinisation of the Spanish word “padre,” here meaning priest. Together with the transformation of the exclamation “*Jesús, María y José*” into Juana’s “Sus, Maria, Usep” this can be read as an example of linguistic transculturation. Additionally, the word “cristo” used by Juana as a charm against the spirits reflects the cultural syncretism of the context in which the stories are set: “anulada por el terror [Juana musitaba] su letanía profane-religiosa: ‘Cristo’, ‘Cristo’, ‘Cristo’” (274) [consumed by terror, Juana murmured her profane-religious litany: “Cristo”, “Cristo”, “Cristo”]. In “El Talisay,” then, the syncretism produced by processes of transculturation as people from different cultures live together affects the way in which the characters make sense of their spiritual worlds and the Catholic and indigenous dogmas belonging to them.

As the quote suggests, Ticong is certain that only by burning the letters at the foot of the tree the curse can be undone. In the end, Gurrea and Juana manage to burn the letters (on a stormy night when all natural and supernatural forces seem to be agitated) and liberate the spirits from their sufferings. The bagat, Father Javier and Rosario are set free, Juana and Ticong are no longer presented with visions of the wandering souls, and even the talisay becomes happier. “El *talisay*, por esa o por otra causa, parecía feliz, muy feliz.” (277) [For that or some other reason the talisay seemed happy, very happy]. Crucially, this last comment is ambiguous, leaving open the possibility that the tree recovers its vigor due to something else than the burying of the letters. The narrator continues by saying that the tree has overcome this ordeal because he is blessed with innocence and purity of heart. The tree is capable of loving because it is a creature of God: “[el cura] se había merecido aquel amor extraordinario y sobrenatural del árbol de Dios” (277) [the friar had deserved that extraordinary and supernatural love from the tree of God]. This shows the narrator working within a transcultural network of significations in a way that allows her to believe that the

wrongdoings come from the *asuang*, while the beneficial elements can be ascribed to the God of Catholicism.

However, the narrator cannot find an explanation to how the supposed bagat appeared in front of her and Juana in the shape of a male goat that literally disappeared in front of her eyes: “El bicho no huyó ni se ocultó bajo la vegetación de los lados del camino, no, se esfumó y se borró luego repentinamente y esto es lo que ponía esa palpitación de miedo también en mi corazón.” (276) [The animal did not flee or hide under the vegetation on the sides of the road, no, it vanished, it was suddenly erased and this is what put that palpitation of fear in my heart too]. No explanation that would be fully rational or that would fit completely within a Catholic framework is available.

The narrator, referring to herself at sixteen years old, explains that, by then, she had become aware of the differences between religion and superstition, between children’s fairy tales and adult realities (Gurrea 248), but that she was nonetheless unable to forget or dismiss what she learned from Juana. “Ya no era una curiosidad infantil la que me intrigaba y me hacía partícipe del misterio del *talisay*” (248) [it wasn’t anymore my curiosity as a child that intrigued me and made me a participant in the mystery of the *talisay*]. At sixteen, Gurrea was no longer the child fascinated with enigmas but wanted to find a complementary rather than conflicting explanation for the world she was living in:

Mis padres habían negado siempre rotundamente la existencia de *asuangs*, aunque muchas veces reconociesen que ocurrían cosas muy extrañas. Yo tenía mi fe flotante entre dos aguas, la exterior, la cristalina de las creencias de mis padres y la otra, oscura y misteriosa de los indígenas, pero por enigmática y ultraterrenal quizás más obsesionante, y me debatía en esos momentos zarandeada por su oleaje. (276)

[My parents had consistently denied the existence of *Asuangs*, although they often recognised that very strange things happened. I had one foot on each side, the outside, the crystalline of my parents’ beliefs and the other, dark and mysterious of the natives but because I could not figure out its ultra-terrestrial characteristics, the latter was perhaps more haunting. I struggled in moments of doubt shaken between the two.]

To put a stop to the tension she feels, the narrator (from the point of view of her sixteen-year-old self) draws a parallel between the two systems of beliefs according to their dogmatic nature: Catholic dogmas such as the necessity to believe in heaven and hell (and the devil) are a question of faith, just as believing in the Filipino *asuangs* is. Neither of them can be apprehended through the bodily senses, only through one’s soul:

Yo sabía que había un Dios, una Madre suya, muchos ángeles y muchos santos, pero todo esto pertenecía a lo invisible, a ese mundo que los sentidos no captan pero que pone una sed escocida en esa otra cosa impalpable que se llama el alma. Pues si nos

habían enseñado en el regazo maternal y en las aulas del colegio, que existía este mundo así poblado, también podían alentar en el mismo otras cosas y otros seres que acompañasen la existencia material de los hombres, con mandatos, con susurros, con bendiciones y también, ¿por qué no? con influencias maléficas, maldiciones y venganzas. También existía el diablo y el diablo había de tener asimismo su cortejo infernal. (248)

[I knew that there was a God, his Mother, many angels and many saints, but all this belonged to the invisible, to that world that the senses do not capture but that makes that other impalpable thing that is called the soul burn with thirst. If we had been taught in the maternal lap and in the classrooms of the school that the world was inhabited, we could also encourage other things and other beings to accompany the material existence of men, with commands, with whispers, with blessings and also, why not, with evil influences, curses and revenges. The devil also existed, and the devil was to have his infernal entourage.]

If God exists, the existence of his opposite is also possible. If the devil exists, then he would need an infernal entourage that could include *asuang*s. Only through such reasoning is the narrator capable of merging both worlds of signification, incorporating the indigenous supernatural system of thought into the western Catholic one.

“El Talisay,” through its different narrators, brings to the fore the way the characters, Spanish and indigenous, are affected by processes of transculturation. While the narrator incorporates the ‘native’ beliefs into her own Catholic faith, Juana and Ticong translate elements of Catholicism into theirs, for example by appropriating the word *Cristo* as a charm to get rid of the *asuang* or by explaining the story of the friar through the agency of an *asuang*. The talisay tree is the space where all narratives come together, constituting the line where the two worlds touch. It stood there before the colonisers arrived and was not removed by them despite the transformations of the land to establish the sugar plantations.<sup>77</sup> In the story, the arrival of the “gentes blancas” (243) [white people] did, however, lead to the destruction of the family house that had stood under the shelter of the talisay tree.

The transformation of the island’s geographical map meant, according to Cruz-Lucero, “a restructuring of its people’s cognitive map” that, however, “did not so much mean the loss of the people’s teleological world view as its dispersion into the Spanish world of

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<sup>77</sup> In a process called *reduccion*, people living on the newly bought land were relocated to form small villages within which a church was also erected; the labourers would live on the plantation in specially built housing: “The *reduccion* was a process in which the conquered natives were brought into settlements, also called ‘*reducciones*,’ which eventually became *pueblos*” (Corpus 161 qtd. in Cruz-Lucero). In “El Talisay” there is an allusion to the fact that the ‘natives’ (labourers) could not go to church every Sunday since they had to walk four kilometres to the village church. This also explains the popularity of the cockfight as a form of (cheap) entertainment very popular among the ‘natives,’ as I will discuss in Chapter 5 in relation to Antonio Abad’s novel *El Campeón* [The Champion] (1941).

significations” (112). This process of dispersion, appropriation, entanglement and re-signification is what I see as the basis of transculturation. In my view, Spanish colonialism as represented in *Cuentos de Juana* (specifically the Spanish plantation economy and Catholicism as its spiritual dimension) does not so much *overwrite* the previous indigenous world, as Cruz-Lucero suggests through the metaphor of the palimpsest, as *rewrite* or translate it, with the indigenous cultures also, simultaneously, transforming aspects of the Spanish belief system.

### Conclusion

My aim in this chapter has been to show how the work of Adelina Gurrea presents an example of transcultural orientalism that, in comparison to Balmori’s poetry discussed in Chapter 1, places a greater emphasis on the transcultural than on the orientalist, with the latter, however, still present.

My analysis of Gurrea’s poem “Epaña, América, Filipinas” (1918) [Spain, America and Philippines] in conjunction with the play *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* (1951) [Philippines: A Historical-Satirical Allegory] showed that, whereas the poem reflects the hegemonic type of orientalism attached to a colonial discourse in having the colonised consent to and valorise the civilising colonial mission, the play engages with the same idea of the Philippines as the grateful recipient of Spanish (and American) culture, but also mocks it through its satirical tone. The play mimics colonial history to reveal its arrogance and absurdity (for example through the fight over who was a better coloniser), and also critiques some specific aspects of Spanish colonialism, such as the role of the clergy. On the basis of an analysis of some of her poems I argued that, for Gurrea, orientalising the Philippines is not so much an exercise of literary modernism as an effort of transcultural orientalism by which the Philippines is imagined and remembered as the oriental homeland in a mode of reflective nostalgia. Symbols of the Philippines, especially its landscape, are nostalgically evoked to act as a catalyst for Gurrea’s poetic expression and to express her (rebellious) disillusionment with modernity. Based on her childhood memories of growing up on the island of Negros, Gurrea’s *Cuentos de Juana* presents, as I have shown, a critical account of the processes of transculturation that occurred in the Philippines under Spanish colonialism, told from the perspective of both Spanish colonisers and indigenous Filipinos. The framed narratives question the borders between these perspectives and reveal both as ultimately transcultural and deeply intertwined. As Cruz-Lucero notes: “Over and over again, the Spanish colonizer’s daughter tells us that she and the native storyteller are one and the same” (112).

While Gurrea and Balmori use their work to diagnose transculturation as the condition of the Philippines, induced by its colonial past, and are concerned with how people - of Spanish and indigenous descent - negotiate the different cultural attachments it has produced, Paz Mendoza, whose work I discuss in the next chapter, proposes an *active project of transculturation* for the Philippines, designed to make it fully modern in its future as an independent nation.

### Chapter 3

#### Imagining a Modern, Independent Philippines: Active Transculturation in Paz Mendoza's *Notas de viaje* (1929)

La satisfacción del que viaja no es precisamente visitar los cabarets, museos y ver una ciudad después de otra, sino en ver de cerca cómo piensa, trabaja y lucha la humanidad. (Mendoza 1929: 103)

[The satisfaction of the traveler is not precisely to visit cabarets, museums and see one city after another, but to see closely how humanity thinks, works and fights.]

#### Introduction

Through the engagement of Filipino writers with orientalist/colonialist discourses, western models of culture and thought also became a point of reference for the imagination of their own community. Specifically, the ideal of European modernity guided the Hispano-Filipino imagination in the construction of its national identity during the puzzling period following independence from the Spanish empire and the US occupation of the Philippines (1898-1946). Right in the middle of this period, Maria Paz Mendoza Guazón, a Filipino doctor and Professor of Medicine, published *Notas de viaje* (1929), a compilation of travel notes gathered on a world trip she completed between 1926 and 1927, in which she visited over 21 countries in Europe, America and the Middle East<sup>78</sup> as part of an educational project supported by the Filipino government. Mendoza contributed to this project with detailed reflections on foreign customs observed during her trip. She introduces her account as follows in the preface:

Mirado desde el punto de vista externo, o sea del indumentario literario, el libro posiblemente no tenga nada de galano, y si hoy lo publico, no me anima otro propósito que el de ceder a los ruegos de algunos amigos, y sobre todo, al impulso de un deber moral y cívico de dar cuenta a mi pueblo de cuanto he visto, observado y aprendido fuera de la tierra donde he nacido. [...] el relato de mi viaje podría ser de algún provecho para los míos, presentando ante sus ojos, reflejando en su mente todo lo bueno y útil de los demás pueblos, *que su espíritu pudiera asimilar para fortalecerlo, sin perder el sello característico de su individualidad, mejorando lo poco o mucho bueno que tenemos como pueblo oriental moldeado por los ideales y la cultura de Occidente* (Mendoza iii, emphasis added)

<sup>78</sup> Her travel notes are organised in the form of diary entries by country visited: US (Washington, New York, Key West), Cuba, England, France (Paris, Nice, Marseille, Corsica), Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Austria, Italy (Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples), Spain, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine/Israel and Egypt.

[From an external point of view, that is of the literary form, this book possibly lacks some elegance, and if I publish it today, I am only encouraged by yielding to the entreaties of some friends, and especially, to the impulse of the civic and moral duty of giving account to my people of all I have seen, observed and learned outside the land where I was born. (...) the story of my trip could be of use for some of my people, presented in front of their eyes, reflecting in their mind all that is good and useful from other peoples, *hoping that their spirit could assimilate in order to gain strength without losing the characteristics of its individuality, improving as much or as little good we have as an oriental people moulded by the ideals and culture of the west*]

Starting by establishing the social and political dimension of her writing as a moral and civil duty, Mendoza expresses the hope that her travel notes will benefit [*“ser de algún provecho”*] her people as an educational text. Her intentions to enlighten her people are attached to ideas of assimilation and improvement that can be read as derived from a spirit of achievement or, given the colonial conditions of the Philippines, as expressing a felt necessity to become something foreign perceived as superior. For Mendoza, Filipinos “are an oriental people modeled by the ideas and cultures of the West,” for “good or bad,” who could benefit from “assimilating” to something else that will “strengthen their spirit.”

Mendoza’s rich and provocative travel notes are the departing point for my analysis of her construction of a peripheral vision of modernity as an active process of transculturation. I will build on the concept of transculturation as I have used it so far by looking at the work of Fernando Ortiz, Angel Rama and Marie Louise Pratt, where it appears as a dynamic process of intercultural connections that creates possibilities for transforming one’s own community by appropriating parts of other cultural systems. In Pratt’s words, transculturation designates “how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subjugated people cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to various extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for” (1992: 6). Mendoza’s travel writings expose the active attachments to and detachments from foreign influences - especially around the idea of modernisation - that affected Filipino culture during the Spanish-American period, and allow me to map the itineraries of these attachments and detachments, which here appear not so much as outcomes of past colonial contact, as in the work of Balmori and Gurrea, but as strategic tools to compose a future vision of an independent Philippines.

*Notas de viaje* will help me to expand the concept of transculturation, most of all in terms of its temporality. I argue that transculturation can not only be read as a consequence of cultural mixing observable in “real life” after cultural contact has occurred, as happens, for

instance, with transcultural architecture (Hernández, Millington and Borden 2005) and “regional” literature (Rama 1997) in Latin America,<sup>79</sup> but can also be interpreted as a precedent to cultural transformation, an aspiration *to be like others* perceived as superior. As an impulse to imagine the possible transformations that contact with others could bring to one’s own community, transculturation produces a hypothesis about the future that incorporates past and present perspectives. In *Notas de viaje*, this hypothesis, concerned with the question of how to conceive modernity in the Philippines, is based on evocations of the past and visions of the future enabled by Mendoza’s present experience of travelling the world. The tentative condition of this hypothesis and the global reach of Mendoza’s journey are what lead me to view *Notas de viaje* as an active transcultural project.

After discussing some of the relevant literature on the genre of travel literature, including from a postcolonial perspective, I will analyse significant fragments from *Notas de viaje* to identify the elements that Mendoza considers worth “assimilating to” and the different forms of attachment to (identification) and detachment from (contestation) the places and people she encounters. What attitudes does *Notas de viaje* reveal towards foreign and local forms of modernity? How does Mendoza conceive of the idea of a Filipino national identity in the present and in the future? How can *Notas de viaje* be read as an active project of transculturation?

### **Travel Literature and (Post)Colonial Theory**

My interest in using a piece of travel writing to explore the concepts of attachment and detachment in the context of (post)coloniality/modernity lies in the approach and themes with which travel writing is concerned: its traditional association with imperialism, its inevitable construction of otherness and the subjective gaze of the traveller/writer. Travel writing has been regarded as a by-product of imperialism that helped Europe and North America to justify and develop colonial enterprises. Two seminal works have emphasized this, albeit in different ways. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1987) and Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) both reveal the basis on which travel writing was appropriated by colonialism as it formulated discourses on difference and contributed to the politics of colonial expansion. While Said focuses on the idea of a spreading oriental

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<sup>79</sup> Rama (1997) uses the theory of transculturation to explain Latin American literature, specifically the narratives by what he describes as “regional” writers like Márquez, Carpentier and Vargas Llosa, who applied foreign techniques and styles to re-articulate the realities of their countries. Hispanic modernism is also an example of transcultured literature, a re-expropriation of French and Spanish canons attributed to Rubén Darío, as I showed in Chapter 1.

discourse that constructed the idea of Western superiority, Pratt identifies the aesthetics of specific travel narratives, their capitalist/colonial agendas and their assumed universal knowledge production. Having already discussed some aspects of Said and Pratt's work in Chapter 1, in my analysis of Mendoza's travel writing I will expand on some of the terms that Pratt elaborates, particularly the 'contact zone' and 'transculturation,' respectively defined as the location where cultural contact takes place and the process of cultural transformation that such contact produces.

A more recent work, *Postcolonial Travel Writing Critical Explorations* (2010), edited by Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund, aims to differentiate imperial travel writing - seen as exoticising by most critics - from postcolonial travel writing - perceived as an attempt to decolonise knowledge. It highlights the multi-directional approach of the latter narratives in contradistinction to the uni-directionality of the former.<sup>80</sup> The essays contained in the collection (especially those inspired by the works of Amitav Gosh and V.S. Naipaul) demonstrate that postcolonial travel writing is a more complex and varied textual form. It is a genre that articulates the position of the travelling subject in relation to issues derived from border narratives, such as place and space, belonging, identity, nation or race. It also aims at pluralising knowledge by "articulating experiences and ontologies that are often removed from dominant European or North American productions of knowledge" (Edwards and Graulund 2). In postcolonial travel writing, peripheral narratives challenge assumed ideas of the centre(s) as a form of "writing back" (Edwards and Graulund 2).

Mendoza's *Notas de viaje* stands in a special relation to the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks in terms of the historical context of its production: it was written at a time when the Philippines was an ex-colony of the Spanish Empire (since 1898) but a neo-colony of the US. Thus, it is neither a postcolonial text nor strictly an imperialist one - despite the fact that, in places, it participates in colonial and orientalisating discourses, much like other examples of early twentieth-century Hispano-Filipino literature. As I will show, *Notas de viaje* undermines neat geographical and political distinctions such as centre/periphery and colonial/postcolonial.

The construction of otherness that earned travel writing its bad reputation is an essential part of the genre, even in postcolonial or contemporary narratives.<sup>81</sup> Debbie Lisle

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<sup>80</sup> I offered an example of how postcolonial writings open up new narrative routes in Chapter 1 when looking at Latin American modernist writing as a form of peripheral orientalism.

<sup>81</sup> See Edwards and Graulund's *Postcolonial Travel Writing: Critical Explorations* (2010) and Debbie Lisle's *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (2006). The latter explores the hegemonic representation of national characters (for instance, the Mexican as inferior and the American as superior in Paul Theroux's *The*

(2006) puts it as follows: “Travel writers still need *other* places and people to visit and write about - which means that travel writers must always engage in the production of difference” (24, emphasis in original). What needs to be asked about travel writing’s inevitable *othering* is how these narratives of difference are constructed, that is “how travel writers produce, project and pass judgment on this difference” (Lisle 24). Lisle offers a productive method for examining how Mendoza’s position towards contemporary issues in her own country and in the countries she visits is represented in *Notas de viaje* in a way that is not exclusively imperial, postcolonial or cosmopolitan.

With regards to literary travel writing, Mary Baine Campbell (2002) offers a useful summary of its most discussed features:

Formal issues that have been fully explored with relation to travel writing in recent decades include the nature and function of the stereotype, lexical matters such as the hidden etymologies (...), the subjective presence of the author(s) in texts of knowledge, truth value in narrative writing, the independent or hard-wired shape of narrative itself, the rhetorical nature of ‘fact’, ‘identification’ in reading (with its consequences in social and political life), the representation of time, inter-cultural ‘translation’, and the function of metaphor and other figures. (263)

The questions of subjectivity, representation, truth, knowledge and cultural translation that Baine lists are constitutive of most artistic works, yet the interplay of these aspects in travel writing is particularly complex. Travel writing accounts - especially in the imperial narratives that constituted the basis for Western epistemologies - were ascribed objectivity and truth value. However, just like there is no *objective* narrative (as I explained in Chapter 2 using Bal’s *Narratology*), there is no truth value in travel writing but only the construction of a particular vision based on the travel writer’s subjectivity.

Locatelli (2012) describes the ability of the travel writer to mobilise certain images among his/her readership with the term ‘eloquence’:

The “author” of travel literature re-created a journey that is not simply a referential account of visited places, but is “eloquent” to the point of moving the reader’s imagination, by informing him/her about places in such a way they appear (i.e., they emerge from the obvious, i.e., from the “un-seen” which is under everybody’s eyes). (67)

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*Old Patagonia Express: By Train through the Americas* (1979)) as proof of the colonial heritage present in the gaze of contemporary travel writers through what Lisle calls the “colonial vision.” In contradistinction, Lisle refers to the celebration of differences in positive terms, as in Bill Bryson’s *Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe* (1998), as the “cosmopolitan vision,” which, according to her, may simply be “a blander mutation of the colonial vision,” as it still consolidates and reproduces the privileged position of the traveller (3).

With the “obvious” or “un-seen” Locatelli refers to that which is no longer noticed by the inhabitants of a place but is perceived by the traveller, who makes them stand out. The quote suggests, moreover, that the travel writer will emphasise those particular elements that the potential reader will find meaningful.

Locatelli notes that ‘eloquence’ is particularly important in postcolonial literatures because of the way postcolonial writers appropriate another language to express their own view of the world. Rather than seeing this as a mere symptom of assimilation, I contend that using Spanish to describe the reality of the Philippines as a referential cultural code to express a particular worldview, is an act of re-appropriation that creates space for contestation. In this chapter I will look at how Mendoza’s language and her articulation of cultural stereotypes, cultural translations, facts, comparisons and metaphors acquire deeper meaning when read in the context of her own narrative ‘eloquence.’ I offer an analysis of *Notas de viaje* that traces Mendoza’s journey from beginning to end, culminating in the reception of her book in the Philippines. I show how Mendoza’s account ‘eloquently’ reveals her preoccupations and interests (in education and the modernisation of the Philippines) but I also point to certain ambiguities that challenge the consistency of her project of active transculturation.

### **Departure: The Question of (In)dependence**

The historical context and personal circumstances in which Mendoza wrote *Notas de viaje* are key to understanding the text in terms of its content, approach and style, as well as the author’s concerns. Mendoza traveled around the world on two occasions: first in 1921 in the company of her husband (who died in 1924), and again in 1926 with one of her younger sisters. The Philippines had been independent from the Spanish Empire since 1898 and had started to see the results of modernisation policies implemented by the US, most prominently English-language education. However, the nationalist movements for independence in the Philippines had not ceased to exist. The period between 1901 until 1935, right after the independence war from the US (1898-1901) and the establishment of a ten-year Commonwealth Government (1935-1946), the Philippines became a territorial government of the US (Insular Government of the Philippine Islands) governed by US President William Howard Taft. This period was characterised by intense negotiations between the US government and Filipino nationalists such as Manuel L. Quezón, who would become the first Filipino president of the Commonwealth period, and Sergio Osmeña, who would become the fourth president of the Philippines after WWII, from 1944 to 1946. Filipinos supported the

Americans during WWI but continued with the independence campaign after. Among the agreements that were reached thanks to the push of Filipino nationalists was the Jones Bill (1912), which asked for the independence of the Philippines within 7 years. This bill was, however, renegotiated and passed again, no longer setting a timeframe for independence but insisting on ‘favorable conditions’ for independence (Wong 1982). This made not only Filipino politicians but also many well-educated Filipinos and intellectuals, such as Paz Mendoza, consider what would make a strong argument for independence, while at the same time envisioning alternative futures for their country that did not involve continued foreign management. It was in the middle of the regency of the Insular Government, between 1921 and 1929, that Mendoza took her two world trips.

At the time of her second departure in June 1926, Mendoza was Regent of the College of Medicine of the University of the Philippines, a respected academic in the field of pathology, the editor of the Spanish and English women’s magazine *La Mujer*, and one of the founders of the Filipino Women’s Association. She was, then, a prominent public figure who earned the support of the Filipino government to go overseas as a representative of her country. Mendoza was determined to collect a compendium of ideas to be implemented upon her return to the Philippines. She wrote over three hundred pages of notes that include private thoughts, historical, political and social reflections, anthropological comments, descriptions of monuments, reflections on urbanism and hygiene, rhetorical questions and hypotheses about the situation home and abroad, and occasional anecdotes that remind the reader that she was also a tourist.

At the beginning of Mendoza’s trip, she attended a conference in Williamstown, New York, on Filipino Independence, which, as noted above, was the dominant problem in American-Filipino relations. Mendoza quotes the speeches of different congressmen, amongst whom J. M. Wainwright from New York is particularly relevant as he touched directly on themes of global politics such as the world’s colonial race (in which the Philippines were an attractive trophy wanted by both England and Japan) and the question of Filipino independence. Mendoza quotes Wainwright expressing a desire to keep control over the islands, claiming that if it were not the US it would be some other nation controlling the territory:

Hay otras naciones que también desean poseer Filipinas como Inglaterra y Japón. No cree prudente el echar a las islas en el caldero de las cuestiones hirvientes del Este. Cree que no es Japón quien ambiciona Filipinas sino Inglaterra, porque Filipinas está en el camino a China, mientras Japón ambiciona Australia. Relató que había encontrado un oficial inglés en Borneo, quien le comunicó que si algún día Japón

intentara llegar a Filipinas a la hora de la cena, Inglaterra estaría en Filipinas a la hora del almuerzo. (24)<sup>82</sup>

[There are other nations that wish to possess The Philippines, such as England and Japan. He does not believe that is prudent to throw the islands into the boiling pot of issues concerning the East. He thinks that it is not Japan which wants The Philippines but England, since The Philippines is on the way to China; meanwhile, Japan has its eyes on Australia. He told us that he had encountered a British official in Borneo who told him that if on any day Japan attempted to reach The Philippines by dinnertime, England would be in The Philippines by lunchtime]

Mendoza continues by quoting Wainwright's remark that the US had gained sovereignty over the Islands and that Filipinos had reacted "espléndidamente" [splendidly] to the American initiatives (Mendoza 25). On the question of Filipino independence, he explains that it was only a fair request, "puesto que así se les había hecho creer" [since they were led to believe so] (Mendoza 25). Then he suggests that the Philippines have brilliant men who could rule their nation as an independent territory, but counters that the brilliant men he met in Manila were not "los verdaderos representantes de las masas" [true representative of the masses]: "*Los Filipinos de Manila difieren mucho de los de los campos. Ahora bien, ¿están estos acaso preparados para ser independientes?*" [Filipinos in Manila are very different from those in the countryside. Therefore, are they ready to be independent?] (Mendoza 26, emphasis in original). Wainwright continues his speech by addressing religious issues, such as the division between Muslim Filipinos ("moros") and Christian Filipinos, claiming that the former were more inclined towards remaining American whereas the latter, as a result of the Spanish colonisation, favoured independence. Mendoza expresses skepticism about the meaning of the American "sympathy" for the moors, suggesting that rather than religious and cultural aspects, it was Mindanao's economic value as "the land of rubber" that provoked the sympathy of the Americans (25).

These notes reveal Mendoza's deep engagement with the political, social, religious and class tensions that affected the Philippines in the early twentieth century. Numerous conflicts divided the islands: rich vs. poor, urban vs. rural and Muslim vs. Christian. These oppositions ran parallel to other dichotomies, such as rich and educated city-dwellers (Spanish-speaking, pro-independence Filipinos who wanted to get rid of the Americans and their unfulfilled promise of liberation) versus poor, uneducated rural populations (speaking either Tagalog or other dialects), who had been led to believe that the new colonisers were benefactors. Mendoza's position within these divisions is not easy to pinpoint. She does not

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<sup>82</sup> The original speech was in English but Mendoza paraphrases it in Spanish in her travelogue.

regard the Filipino people through the lens of colonial dependency; ideologically, she aligns herself with the Filipino *ilustrados*, who defended the idea that Enlightenment would grant freedom and independence, while also, as *Notas de viaje* demonstrates, wanting to enlist the help of foreign powers, not so much in the form of direct intervention but as models of progress that the Philippines could then follow as an independent country.

Unlike Wainwright, who focuses on the divisions within the Philippines, Mendoza insists that the Philippines are indeed ready to be independent, as she explains to an American reporter of the *Boston Transcript* in Washington:

Esta ansia y clamor de mi pueblo por la independencia demuestra claramente que mi país no es un país de salvajes, y que mi pueblo es un pueblo culto y educado. Un pueblo inculto no puede aspirar a ser independiente porque teme lo desconocido, obra según la tradición e ignora qué es ser libre. (3)

[This yearning and cry of my people for independence clearly demonstrates that my country is not a country of barbarians, and that my people are cultured and educated. An uneducated nation cannot aspire to be independent because it fears the unknown, acts upon tradition and ignores what it is to be free.]

Mendoza sets out to challenge preconceived notions of the Philippines in the US (and elsewhere) as a tribal land of barbarians at constant religious war, also in order to justify her own position as a female doctor from South East Asia travelling the world in the early 1920 - a time when most European universities did not accept women yet. Mendoza, like most of the Hispano-Filipino writers of the time, belonged to one of the ‘anomalous’ communities in the islands, existing, in the words of Henry James, as ‘Aliens at home.’<sup>83</sup> She was too Filipino to be Hispanic (or American for that matter) and too Hispanic to be Filipino, as Álvarez notes (2014).<sup>84</sup> Mendoza writes that she is grateful for the liberal political agenda the USA brought to the Philippines, which granted, for instance, women like herself access to education (36). But she is equally proud of the Catholic education brought by the Spanish. This reveals the tension between her attachment to her colonial heritage (in terms of language, religion and education) and her desire for national emancipation.

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<sup>83</sup> In his travel book *The American Scene* (1907), James starts questioning the legitimacy of the term “American” when observing the wave of European immigrants: “Which is the American... which is *not* the alien?” (qtd. in Carr 80).

<sup>84</sup> Most Filipinos have a Spanish first and last name because they were purposely renamed during the Spanish colonial period for the purpose of the census. Mendoza, however, received her name by family ancestry. Her father, Isidro Mendoza, belonged to a wealthy Spanish family and her mother was the daughter of the Governor of Pandakan (Alzona 5). Alzona describes Mendoza as having a “fair complexion, wavy brown hair” and measuring “five feet and four inches” (25), which suggests that she was of mixed Spanish and Filipino heritage.

### Explorations: Cultural Exchanges and Cultural Stereotyping

As a tourist, Mendoza recalls being hassled in Nazareth by groups of poor children, whom she tries to get rid of while murmuring to other tourists that they are “pordioseros prematuros” [premature beggars] (269). The aggressive behavior of her Egyptian guide, who, in challenging the unskilled tourists to ride a camel, deliberately causes trouble in order to ask for a rescue reward, provokes Mendoza to write, angrily: “¡Cuántas ganas tuve de tirarle a la cara todas las monedas que tenía, no por caridad o premio a su servicio, sino para castigar su salvajismo!” [I just felt like throwing all the coins I had into his face, not as charity or to reward him for his services, but to punish his savagery] (283). Mendoza feels irritated by the guide’s behavior and by the begging children, but her choice of words brings further connotations. Her claims that the children are “premature beggars” portrays them as having a preconceived destiny, whereas her wish to punish the guide’s “savagery” elevates herself over the locals as more civilized. This contrasts with her comments concerning multilingual, cosmopolitan travelers, whose company she enjoys, appreciating the intellectual exchanges that hours of sea and land travelling<sup>85</sup> bring her:

La franqueza con la que se expresan estos occidentales me encanta y subyuga. Para nada tienen en cuenta que su opinión no coincida con la de su interlocutor, ni les importa el odio de este; no se ve en su fisonomía ese esfuerzo de agradar y de demostrar que todo cuanto oye y ve le satisface, aun cuando interiormente sienta lo contrario. (41)

[I find the honesty with which western people express themselves both enchanting and threatening. They do not care if their opinion doesn’t coincide with that of their interlocutor, neither do they care about any ill feeling from him or her; it is impossible to derive from their body language a confirmation that they kindly agree and are satisfied with what they hear and see, even when inside they are feeling otherwise]

Uno de los turistas, un viejo millonario holandés, viendo a los bogadores semirecostados en sus botes y hablando tan fuerte como si estuviesen peleando, interrumpió mi meditación: “Doctora” me dijo, “este es el Oriente, donde todos hablan y pasan el tiempo discutiendo sin entenderse unos a otros”. “Tiene usted razón”, le contesté, “pero este es el Cercano Oriente, no el Lejano de donde soy. Allá no se discute mucho, los orientales sólo sabemos trabajar y obedecer. En prueba de ello usted a las posesiones holandesas en Java, Sumatra y otras”. (254)

[One of the tourists, an old Dutch millionaire, watching the rowers lying down on their boats and speaking loudly as if they were having a fight, interrupted my meditation: “Doctor,” he said, “this is the East where some speak and spend their time arguing without understanding each other.” “You are right” I replied, “but this is the

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<sup>85</sup> Mendoza spent quite some time on steamboats from New York to Southampton and from Cairo to Niza, as well as on extravagant train rides, such as the Berlin-Baghdad Express, which she describes as “the golden dream of Germany” (259).

Middle East, not the Far East where I came from. Over there, we do not argue so much, we Asians only know how to work and obey. The Dutch possessions in Java, Sumatra and elsewhere are proof of this.”]

These passages show how much of the travelling experience is an exercise in confirming or negating pre-existing stereotypes about oneself and others (Occidentals are frank and prone to arguing intellectually with others, while Orientals are loud and non-confrontational, drawn to work and obedience). The comment made by the ‘Dutch millionaire’ is not retold in Mendoza’s notes as an attack on her own identity or place of origin; on the contrary, she makes sure that she establishes a difference between the Far and the Middle East with regards to their way of speaking - loud versus quiet - challenging her travel companion’s assumptions and placing the negative stereotype on someone else: Mendoza may be Asian but she is not *that* kind of Asian. Her following comment about East Asians being submissive and docile benefiting Dutch colonisation in Indonesia is also ambiguous. Rather than bringing up a counter-narrative about exploitation, she refers to Asian people’s (perceived) consent to colonialism. Here, she is provocatively suggesting that western domination happened not because of the strength of the West but because of the character of Asian people.

Mendoza views colonialism not as a one-directional phenomenon that exclusively brought exploitation and abuse, imposing one culture on another, but as accompanied by a civilising process that was also profitable to the colonised: [Vemos otros que al] “conquistar pueblos mucho más débiles y primitivos que ellos, vigoriza a éstos con su sangre y su espíritu, y así ejercen una influencia bienhechora y civilizadora. Por ejemplo Roma y España” (260) [Some [people], when conquering much weaker and primitive people than themselves, invigorate those with their blood and spirit, thus exercising a beneficial and civilizing influence. For instance, Rome and Spain]. This comment sounds shocking, but reveals some important characteristics of Mendoza’s thinking. First, it speaks to her scientific gaze; as a Darwinist, she distinguishes ‘primitivism’ and ‘civilisation’ as stages in a process of evolution in which the idea of ‘blood mixing’ is perceived as a way to improve humanity: the fittest (most adaptable) will survive. However, as her comment suggests, not all cultures are equally tolerant of racial and ethnic mixing. For Mendoza, the ones capable of colonising are the fittest. This idea exposes her attachment to an opposition between what she perceives as ‘civilised’ societies (mostly European) and as ‘savage’ ones (such as that of the Egyptian guide), which, in turn, justifies her search for transferable cultural models within the ‘civilised’ world. Second, this quote exposes Mendoza’s ambivalent (dis)identification with her own *Asianness*. On the one hand, she challenges the Dutch millionaire’s stereotype about

*all* Asians being loud, while confirming it of *some* Asians, namely those from the Middle East (who happen to be the workers on the boat that she is travelling on). On the other hand, her personal circumstances - her class, education and ethnicity - allow her to talk about Asians but also to identify as one: ‘we Asians.’

Mireille Rosello (1998) explains the practice of entering and leaving stereotypes as “declining the stereotype,” which means producing, on the one hand, “delicate decisions [...], potentially strident political statements” or else “apparently innocent and quite socially meaningless activity” (10), and, on the other, a variety of contextual meanings through form and grammatical function:

declining a word means acknowledging the various formal identities that one element of language must adopt depending on its position and role within a larger linguistic unit [...] it involves paying attention to the formal characteristics of the stereotype so as to control its devastating ideological power. (10-11)

Using Rosello’s linguistic metaphor, Mendoza “declines” the stereotype of the Asian by playing with the fixed root ‘Asian’ and the variable endings ‘obedient,’ ‘civilized’ and ‘wealthy.’ Mendoza perceives herself as Asian, but not (quite) the type of Asian that speaks loudly (and is powerless). Rather, she likens herself to the “obedient” Indonesians (which are powerless but “civilized” by colonisation). At the same time, however, she levels up with the (educated) Dutchman by engaging in a political conversation with him, very much unlike the “non-argumentative” Asians that she claims to identify with. The fact that both the Dutch millionaire and the Filipino doctor are tourists with a similar social status brings them closer together than the distance between the geopolitical locations in which they were born.

Cultural exchanges and cultural stereotyping are instrumental for Mendoza to reach an understanding of what she is seeing and to ultimately produce her vision of the ideal Filipino nation. Many times, she incorporates into her travel notes examples of contemporary life in other countries that enable her to confirm the national stereotypes she associates with different countries - and ultimately, the ideological power of these stereotypes that Rosello alerts us to. “Now that I know the English a bit better, I think that their commercial success is based on their honesty” (46) [...] you can take the word of an English man, those are of leather” (47, English in the original), Mendoza writes, for example, while visiting London. Her confidence that the Englishman working at the shoe store she visits is not lying about the material of the shoes leads her to think that honesty will produce commercial success. Later in *Notas de viaje*, she generalises about Norwegians, Czechs and Germans:

La solidez de las rocas negras que destilan agua constantemente, sus cascadas y fiords, (rías altas entre las rocas), sus colinas y montañas cubiertas de nieve y, sobre todo, el verde azul de los mares que se refleja en sus ojos, parecen haber modelado ese espíritu aventurero, pero firme, reflexivo y tolerante de los noruegos. (88)

[The solidity of the black rocks that constantly distill water, their waterfalls, their fjords, their mountains covered in snow and, especially, the blue-green color of the sea that is reflected in their eyes seem to have moderated the adventurous but firm spirit, reflexive and tolerant, of the Norwegians.]

El Czech es de caracer franco. Después de algunos minutos de conversación con él; dáse una cuenta de que el chech [sic] y el alemán son como el agua y el aceite. (126)

[The Czech citizen has an honest character. After a few minutes of conversation with him, one realizes that the Czech and the German are like water and oil.]

The basis for the idea of Norwegians having adventurous but firm spirits is located in their rugged environment. “¿Tiene acaso alguna relación la geografía del suelo y la lucha por la existencia con la manera de ser de los habitantes de un pueblo?” (88) [Is there indeed any relationship between the geography of a place and the fight for existence with the manner of being of its inhabitants?], she wonders. Following this question (which provides yet another example of her Darwinist approach to science and, by extension, culture), Mendoza derives the national character of the Germans (now assessed more positively than in the comparison with the honest Czechs) from the urban planning of Berlin:

Berlin me pareció al principio el reflejo de la cara adusta y severa de Bismark o del ex-Kaiser Guillermo II. Sus calles largas, anchas, asfaltadas y limpias, sus edificios solidos, sus monumentos que representan no la desnudez mórbida y coqueta, sino todo aquello que inspira amor a la ciencia, respeto a los gobernantes, veneración a los héroes nacionales, estímulo al desarrollo físico, emulación al valor y admiración por la gloria, dicen al visitante que está en una ciudad donde el orden, la disciplina, el estudio, la seriedad forman el armazón del carácter de sus habitantes. (109)

[Berlin seemed to me at first to be a reflection of the plain and severe face of Bismarck or the ex-Kaiser Willem II. Its long, wide, clean and paved streets, its solid buildings and its monuments, which do not embody a morbid and coquettish nudity, but all that inspired love for science, respect for the rulers, veneration of national heroes, stimulation of physical exercise, emulation of courage and admiration of glory, inform the visitor that he is in a city where order, discipline, study and seriousness constitute the core of its inhabitants.]

Patriotism and national pride are seen to run through Berlin’s statues of ‘national heroes,’ which are reminders of a ‘glorious past’ and inspire ‘respect for the rulers,’ as they do through German citizens’ minds. In Mendoza’s eyes, Berlin’s past is monumental and is monumentally inscribed in the city’s aesthetics: solid, ordered, and serious. The idea of a

national consciousness emanating from the city's past and present echoes Svetlana Boym's idea of 'restorative nostalgia' (2001), discussed in Chapter 2 as an attachment to the common national past (in opposition to the individual experience of it) produced by the institutionalisation of history - visible in its commemorative monuments - that legitimates the State's official ideology.

Mendoza cannot but encounter European nationalisms as she visits countries like Germany and Italy in the period between the wars. It is perhaps understandable, given the struggle for Filipino independence, that she dedicates twenty-nine pages to Germany's history, education, industry, government laws, tax systems and transport infrastructure, and a remarkable fifty-three pages to Italy, mostly on history and architecture, as both these nations were being re-built, literally and metaphorically, upon their past:

La primera vez que vine a Europa no pude visitar este país, porque en él reinaba el caos. En cambio, ahora, cualquiera puede viajar en tren tranquilamente, y al final del viaje le presentan la cuenta incluyendo la propina. Lo mismo sucede en los hoteles y restaurantes. Creo que todo este orden se debe a Mussolini. (189)

[The first time I came to Europe I couldn't visit this country for it was chaos. Now, however, anybody can travel there by train in peace, and at the end of the trip one is handed the bill including the tip. It is the same in hotels and restaurants. I think all this order is thanks to Mussolini.]

For Mendoza, Mussolini is "bringing Italy out of chaos" through setting up safe railway systems, implementing taxes and "unifying" Italy with one language:

Entonces le hablé [a la Condesa de O, de Viena] de Italia, de Mussolini. "Un país que como el antiguo imperio austro-húngaro estaba compuesto de diferentes razas y cada una de estas con su tradición y lenguaje no es fácil de gobernar. Mussolini es una gran figura de actualidad" dijo ella. (144)

[Then she [the Countess O, of Vienna] talked about Italy, about Mussolini. 'A country that, like the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, was constituted by several races, each of them with its own tradition and language, is not easy to govern. Mussolini is a great figure nowadays', she said]

¡Ojalá que el esfuerzo del Gran Mussolini, el tribuno moderno, el hombre de hierro, de unificar a todos los de civilización latina, se vea coronado con éxito! (168)

[I wish the effort of great Mussolini, the modern magistrate, the iron man, to unify all people of Latin civilization to be successfully attained!]

Mendoza's positive comments are, on the one hand, influenced by her transitory experience of the country as a tourist: she finds it more comfortable to pay bills including taxes and tips than to haggle with interpreters and merchants as in Constantinople's Gran Bazar. On the

other hand, she identifies the historical existence of ‘several races, each of them with its own tradition and language’ and the need to improve the country’s infrastructure as issues that resemble those of her own country. Mendoza sees in Mussolini’s Italy a united and independent community, and imagines the same for her country. Her attachment to the idea of a unified nation emerges with her admiration of nationalist movements in Germany and Italy, but also of other more peripheral communities, such as, for instance, the Catalans and their struggle for independence and the Zionists in Palestine. In a brief account of four pages dedicated to Spain, Mendoza includes a conversation she had with a Catalan proponent of independence:

El catalán se considera catalán y no español, prefiere hablar el catalán que se parece al francés, simpatiza con los ideales del pueblo filipino, porque también aspira a ser independiente. “¿pero no sois españoles?” le decía a uno que era un furibundo filipinista e independentista. “No, señora, Cataluña comprendía Gerona, Barcelona, Tarragona y Lérida en España y Rousillón en Francia. Antes del siglo XV teníamos nuestro rey, pero cuando Fernando de Aragón se casó con Isabel de Castilla, la Católica, formamos parte de España y perdimos nuestra independencia. Cataluña es rica e industriosa y puede gobernarse sola.” (201)

[Catalans think of themselves as Catalan, not as Spanish; they prefer to speak Catalan, which is similar to French, they sympathise with the Filipino people because they also want to be independent. “But, are you not Spanish?” I asked a man who was a filipinista and independentist. “No ma’am, Cataluña was Gerona, Barcelona, Tarragona and Lerida in Spain and Rousillon in France. Before the fifteenth century we had our king, but when Ferdinand of Aragon married Isabel of Castilla we became part of Spain and lost our independence. Cataluña is rich and industrious and can govern itself.”]

These passages show how Mendoza attaches herself to what she perceives will be useful examples for her people in building a Filipino nation. Again, however, there is also ambiguity, as when, despite describing the admirable respect and faithfulness that Germans profess towards their nation, Mendoza recognizes the mechanisms of demagogic politics undertaken through nationalist propaganda. She notes that in German cinemas, once the film has finished, portraits of the greatest German men dead or alive are shown, as well as:

Al terminar la película se exhiben los retratos de los grandes hombres alemanes vivos o muertos con una reseña corta de sus vidas. Sus industrias, sus pueblos y puertos también, así es que el alemán cree que casi todos los inventos y descubrimientos del mundo han salido de cerebros alemanes. Esto queda tan impreso en la mente alemana que en una tertulia por poco me hicieron tragar que todos los inventos en medicina fueron hechos por alemanes. Esto explica esa fe ciega en su lema “Deutschland uber alles”, Alemania por encima de todo, Alemania, bien o mal, es lo primero en el corazón y mente alemán; después viene su compatriota, y, después, otra vez Alemania. De este amor fanático nace el “superiority complex” la idea de superioridad, del super homo de sus filósofos. (113)

[At the end of the film portraits of the great German men dead or alive are shown with a short review of their lives. [Germany's] industries, its towns and even its ports, so that the German believes that almost all inventions and world discoveries have come out of German brains. This is so well imprinted on the German mind that, during a talk, they almost made me believe that all the discoveries made in medicine were German. This explains the blind faith in their slogan "Deutschland uber alles," Germany above all. Germany, for good or bad, is the first thing in the heart and mind of the German person; followed by his compatriot and then again by Germany. From this fanatic love comes the "superiority complex," the idea of superiority, of the superman, of its philosophers.]

Mendoza's description of Nietzsche's "superman" and the German "superiority complex" as "ideas" founded on "fanatic love" and "blind faith" (all pejorative terms) demonstrates her detachment from this element of German nationalism. In addition, she is clearly alerting the reader about the dangerous extremism of the constructed German nationalist discourse when, touching on her own field of expertise, she claims that "en una tertulia por poco me hicieron tragar que todos los descubrimientos en medicina fueron hechos por alemanes" (112) [they almost made me believe that all the discoveries made in medicine were German].

In the following passage, Mendoza describes a similar experience in an Italian cinema that ends, however, differently:

Antes de dejar Roma, entramos una tarde en un cinematógrafo para ver en la pantalla la vida de Garibaldi y encontramos que la mayoría del público se componía de niños de seis a doce años. Cuando terminó la función todos se levantaron para cantar el himno nacional italiano y dieron vivas a Italia y a Mussolini. ¡Viva! Gritamos nosotras también con la esperanza de que estos se unirán algún día cuando cantemos nuestro himno nacional y gitemos ¡Viva la independencia de nuestra amada Filipinas! (191)

[Before leaving Rome, we entered a cinemascope to see on the big screen the life of Garibaldi and found that most of the audience were children between six and twelve years old. When the show finished they all stood up and sang the Italian national anthem and praised Italy and Mussolini. ¡Viva! We also screamed, hoping that one day they will join us when we sing our national anthem and claim, ¡Long live the Independence of our beloved Philippines!]

The image of Mendoza and her sister standing amongst the Italian children and joining their nationalist chant while dreaming of an independent Philippines is less an expression of support for Italian fascism than a vision of future solidarity between two independent nations. It is also an implicit act of insurgency against the US government that Mendoza allows herself to commit on foreign ground, safe from retaliations. The transitory experience of reality in the traveller's shifting contact-zones enables such acts of resistance and

imagination. In the end, the affirmation, contestation and declining of cultural stereotypes, especially when accumulated, as in *Notas de viaje*, make it possible to challenge assumptions about both the other and the self. The distance from home and the juxtaposition of the familiar with the foreign prompt an active process of cultural translation - or transculturation - from which new meanings and possibilities can emerge.

### **Equivalence and Difference in the Philippines of the Future**

Travelling and travel writing involve constant exercises of translation, of finding equivalences and establishing differences. Mendoza's 'eloquence' - the narrative power of her subjective gaze - conjures surprising equivalences: a comparison between Hong Kong and Oslo with regards to the "scale-like arrangement of their home lights" (Mendoza 87); a remark on the business opportunities that industrial borrowings between Holland and the region of Laguna in the Philippines could accomplish in the cheese making industry (66); and a comment on the architectural style of Milan's cathedral resembling, in terms of its length and the accumulation of columns, a coconut forest. Bhabha's idea of "mimicry" reminds us that imitation always entails both similarity and difference, that it creates a "partial" reality that results in a game of *trompe l'oeil* (126). Imagination, deception and nostalgia are all at play in the exercise of cultural translation enabled by travelling:

A primera vista, los rascacielos y las casas apiñadas de la Habana con sus arcos y sus verandas, me recordaron Port Said y Hong Kong; pero luego, a medida que los ojos contemplan más de cerca tan lindo conjunto, el viajero se da cuenta de que se trata de verdaderas obras de arte donde campea por su estilo la arquitectura latina e hispana. (8)

[At first sight, the skyscrapers and the crowded houses of Havana with their arches and their verandas reminded me of Port Said and Hong Kong; but then, as the eyes contemplate such a lovely ensemble closely, the traveler realizes that they are truly art works championed by Latin and Hispanic style architecture.]

In this quote, Mendoza compares instances of modern and colonial architecture from Havana, Port Said and Hong Kong. Perhaps at first sight these cities are indeed similar, also to other harbour cities, such as Shanghai or Mumbai, where colonial architecture prevailed. Regardless of what empire they belonged to, colonial buildings were adapted to the warm climate of most colonies with high ceilings, fans, arches and verandas. However, a closer look at "such a lovely ensemble" reveals the different imprints of Latin, Hispanic or British architecture. In Bhabha's terms, they are the same but not quite. Through her narrative eloquence, Mendoza allows her readers to see the world, outside their ordinary perspective,

as similarly haunted in different places by colonialism, as manifested in its architecture, which lingers even after independence.

Sometimes while travelling, juxtapositions of familiar and unfamiliar images disturb the imagination confusing the traveller who has the feeling of being home:

Al llegar a Kantara [...] el panorama que se desenvolvió en nuestra vista se parece mucho al de Filipinas: campos cubiertos de verde, el arado y la noria, y este parecido tomó cuerpo de realidad por la presencia del carabao. Lo considerábamos tan nuestro que no esperamos encontrarlo en otra [sic] panorama fuera de Filipinas. Pero bien pronto la ilusión se disipó, porque al lado del carabo estaba el ubicuo camello con su giba sepiterna, cuello largo, y carita chata y deforme. (279)

[When we arrived in Kantara, the panorama that was unveiled in front of our eyes was very much like The Philippines: green fields, the plough and the waterwheel; and this resemblance became a reality through the presence of the carabao. We thought it belonged to us, so we did not expect to see it in another landscape outside the Philippines. However, the illusion was soon dissipated, as next to the carabao there was the ubiquitous camel with its perpetual hump, long neck and flattened and deformed face.]

In this fragment, Mendoza pairs rural Egypt with the rural Philippines; seeing the Egyptian countryside makes the Filipino travellers believe that they are back home, as the landscape presents them with familiar references: the instruments of rural farming and the presence of a carabao. Mendoza and her sister had always thought the carabao belonged to “them,” as if the animal was exclusively Filipino. At the view of the Egyptian rural landscape, including the perceived national symbol, Mendoza confesses: “el espectáculo evocó en mi mente el paisaje filipino, poéticamente descrito por Cecilio Apostol en los siguientes versos” [the spectacle brought to my mind the Filipino landscape, poetically described by Cecilio Apostol]” (280).<sup>86</sup> She proceeds to quote four stanzas from Apostol’s poem describing, in a pastoral manner, the landscape of the rural Philippines. Echoing the nostalgia of Gurrea’s poems that I analysed in the previous chapter, the poem is sprinkled with images and words referring to local animals, sun-kissed fields and the occasional sight of a nipa house (the most common Filipino house on stilts, made with bamboo canes and a roof of woven nipa leaves, nipa being a type of palm found in the South Pacific). The contemplation of the Egyptian landscape and its agricultural practices, in conjunction with the memory of Apostol’s poem, transports Mendoza and her sister, mentally, to the Philippines. However, the “illusion” that Egypt and the Philippines are

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<sup>86</sup> Cecilio Apostol (1877-1938) was a journalist, lawyer, writer and active independentist who joined the Filipino Revolution in 1896. He was also one of the most respected poets of the Hispanic period. A collection of his poems entitled *Pentélicas* was published posthumously in 1941 and was used as a compulsory reading in Spanish lessons. His style inspired later poets such as Balmori and Gurrea, especially its vivid descriptions of the Filipino landscape (*Revista Filipina*, see: <http://vcn.bc.ca/~edfar/revista/yankee.htm>).

exactly the same is dispelled by the figure of the camel, which causes an immediate feeling of detachment.

Michel de Certeau claims that the familiarity and routine practices of the everyday prevent us from actually seeing how things really are and that the traveller/voyeur should therefore “disentangle himself from the murky intertwining daily behaviors and make himself alien to them” (93). In the cited passage from *Notas de viaje*, Mendoza is looking for the familiar, which stops her from seeing what Egypt is really like. Only the alien sight of the camel jolts her into acknowledging that the illusion of being back in the Philippines was precisely that, an illusion. This does not mean that travel cannot reflect on the homeland. Referring to Levi-Straus and Heidegger, de Certeau argues that travelling is in fact like taking a detour to one’s own roots by reading a different code:

Travel (like walking) is a substitute for the legends that used to open up space to something different. What does travel ultimately produce if it is not, by sort of reversal, “an exploration of the deserted places of memory”, the return to nearby exoticism by way of a detour through distant places, and the recovery or relics and legends (...) in short, something like and “uprooting in one’s own origins (Heidegger)?” (de Certeau 107)

The idea is that travel allows one to see one’s home and one’s past in a different light. Thus, it should not be about equating Kantara and the Philippines, but about allowing the view of Kantara to change how one sees the Philippines. In accordance with this, Mendoza constantly refers to the Philippines, imagining what applications could be given there to her findings in other countries. The passage about Kantara, then, is an exception; a rare moment in *Notas de viaje* in which Mendoza seems to feel slightly homesick, but a moment that she also quickly dismisses herself as unproductive.<sup>87</sup>

Following these reflections, Mendoza is asked by a fellow tourist, Mr. Vogel from the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, for her opinion on European colonialism (281). Mendoza, hesitant, writes that, having been “educada en un ambiente oriental que me oblige, a pesar mío, a oír antes de expresar mi opinion ante extraños [educated in an oriental manner that obliges me, despite myself, to listen before giving my own opinion in front of strangers] (281), she feels compelled to return the question to her interlocutor for him to answer first. Mr. Vogel claims that the Philippines are in a much better position than the other countries he has visited from the Pacific to the Mediterranean, since in those countries “se ve ensguida las

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<sup>87</sup> Another moment of homesickness occurs upon arrival at Key West in Cuba, where the plants “have the perfume of the tropics” and Mendoza writes: “¡Con qué deleitación recordábamos sus nombres haciéndonos la ilusión de que estábamos en nuestra propia tierra! (6) [We remember with great delight their names [of the plants] wishfully thinking that we were in our own land!].

fuertes huellas de la dolorosa explotación” [the painful traces of exploitation are quickly perceived] (281). For Mr. Vogel, it seems, American colonialism is less exploitative than its European counterpart. Mendoza agrees that “better” colonial conditions persist in the Philippines, but also reminds Mr. Vogel to not forget the early civilising task of Spanish colonialism, without which, she argues, Filipinos would be in the same unfortunate situation as their neighbours in “Borneo, Java, Sumatra and Formosa” (281).

The sense that Egypt is exactly like the Philippines is quickly dissipated in *Notas de viaje* by other elements entering Mendoza’s narrative gaze, such as the camel and the conversation with Mr. Vogel. In the end, what is important to Mendoza is not what the Philippines already is, but what the Philippines could become if it were to adopt and adapt certain elements of foreign cultures, just as it did with the education offered by the Spanish. Thus, when visiting the Netherlands, she reflects on what the Philippines could learn from the Dutch struggle against the North Sea:

La lucha formidable que mantiene Holanda contra el Mar del Norte me sugiere muchas cosas [...] Si los once millones de Filipinos dragáramos los ríos y abriésemos canales por los distintos pueblos que baña el Pasig y la Laguna de Bay, en Aparri que siempre está amenazado por el Mar de China y en los pueblos rivereños en el valle de Cagayán, indudablemente que evitaríamos muchas desgracias en la época de grandes avenidas; protegeríamos los sembrados, las carreteras y los pueblos contra las inundaciones; ahorraríamos muchos millones de pesos en reparaciones; evitaríamos muchas enfermedades y la salud pública mejoraría. Filipinas, la perla de Oriente, con su eterno verdor y sus tesoros escondidos en su suelo y en sus mares, sería un verdadero Edén.

Hotel Victoria, Amsterdam, Holanda

Octubre, 1926

(70)

[The formidable fight that Holland wages against the North Sea evokes many things to me [...] If the eleven million Filipinos dredged our rivers and dug canals across the different towns along the Pasig river and the Laguna Bay in Aparri, which is always threatened by the China Sea, as well as in the riverside villages in the valley of Cagayan, undoubtedly we would avoid many catastrophes in the time of the big rains; we would protect the crops, the roads and the villages against flooding; we would save many millions of pesos in repairs; we would avoid many illnesses and public health would be improved. The Philippines, the pearl of the Orient, with its eternal greenness and its treasures hidden in the soil and seas would be a true Garden of Eden.

Victoria Hotel, Amsterdam, Holland

October, 1926]

Mendoza’s future hypothesis (expressed through the word “if”) constitutes the core of her active transcultural project of bringing the best parts of the different locations she visits back to the Philippines and implementing them there in a way that would suit the specific

circumstances of the country. The Filipinos might also become professionals capable of fulfilling the demands of the new nation if they were trained as “academic citizens” like in Germany and Denmark:

Si nuestra juventud optara por otras profesiones mucho más útiles que las de farmacéutico, abogado o ministro de alguna religión, ganaríamos mucho económicamente. Pero para ello importa que nuestro sistema de enseñanza se reforme, esto es, que estimule las escuelas vocacionales y también que la gente de dinero invierta su capital, no en lujo, sino en crear industrias para fomentar tales profesiones útiles. (66)

[If our youth opted for professions much more useful than pharmacist, lawyer or minister of some religion, we would gain a lot economically. For that to happen, it is important that our system of education be reformed, that is, that vocational schools be stimulated and also that people with money would invest their capital in creating industries to foment such useful jobs, instead of investing it in luxuries.]

These visions of a future Philippines, crafted on the basis of a selective repertoire of possibilities gleaned while visiting different countries, are at the core of Mendoza’s project of active transculturation, which, as the next section will show, is intimately tied to ideas of modernity.

### Visions of Modernity

Mendoza’s travelogue has a very specific objective beyond the literary; as a woman of action, her agenda is to learn about practical things; hence, she is fascinated by technology, urbanization and hygiene for instance as elements that demonstrate urban modernity. However, Mendoza’s visions of modernity are not restricted to European countries but also take in Cuba, which at the time of Mendoza’s visit had already become an independent republic. After the Cuban War of Independence against the Spanish (1895-1898), the Cuban government was handed to the US temporarily until 1902 when the Cuban Republic was established. Early nationalists from both Cuba and the Philippines shared a transpacific relationship, being similarly caught between empires. As Anderson points out (2005), it was not an accident that the movements for independence reached their peak at a similar time in both islands. The Cuban writer, journalist and leader of the independence movement José Martí (1853-1895) was very aware of the work of José Rizal and vice versa.<sup>88</sup> In fact, Rizal was apprehended by the Spanish prior to his assassination on the charge of *filibusterismo*

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<sup>88</sup> See Maria Theresa Valenzuela’s 2014 article “Constructing National Heroes: Postcolonial Philippine and Cuban Biographies of José Rizal and José Martí.”

(political dissidence) when he was traveling by boat to join the Cubans as a doctor in their own independence war from the Spanish.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Latin American writers saw in Asian countries a cultural counterpart with whom they shared a history of colonialism and (an idealized) national model that supported their resistance against westernisation. However, the Philippines were Hispanic enough to disappoint their orientalist imaginaries. If, for some Latin Americans, the Philippines was not ‘typically oriental,’ for some progressive Filipinos like Mendoza the signs of modernisation observed in Cuba, which she calls “la republica hermana” (7) [the sister republic] provide positive input for her project of transculturation, because the proximity of Cuban and Filipino realities made it more likely that these modernisations could be reproduced in her homeland.<sup>89</sup>

In Cuba, Mendoza mostly gathers information regarding urbanism and hygiene, to be put to use under the hypothetical condition of independence from the US, which Cuba, having already been granted it, leads her to feel more hopeful about:

He pensado que si Estados Unidos nos concediera la independencia y consignase en dicha concesión, como garantía, la cláusula sobre sanidad como en Cuba, ¡qué haríamos los filipinos para cumplir esa condición! (103)

[I have been thinking that if the United States gave us independence and included in such a concession as a guarantee the same health clause as in Cuba, what would we, Filipinos, do in order to fulfill such condition!]

El tráfico en las calles constituye uno de los puntos que absorben mi atención en los viajes. Todas mis observaciones sobre este particular pongo a disposición de las autoridades municipales de Manila, porque la regulación del tráfico moderno es una ciudad es, para mí, un signo de eficiencia en este siglo de las máquinas. (10)

[Street traffic constitutes one of the points that absorb my attention when travelling. All my observations on this topic I make available to the municipal authorities in Manila because the regulation of modern traffic in a city is, in my opinion, a sign of efficiency in this, the century of machines.]

As Mendoza mentions in this quote, the regulation of traffic is one of her main concerns, not simply as a sign of efficiency but, as she writes elsewhere, because it prevents accidents and would serve to educate Filipino citizens, who have the bad habit of “cruzar y zigzaguear las calles por donde les dé la gana” [crossing and zigzagging the roads in any way

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<sup>89</sup> Mendoza also writes that, upon arriving to Havana’s harbour, she told the other Cuban travellers on the boat from the US that “se sentía como si llegase a la casa de una hermana a quien no había visto desde el día de su boda, que estaba ansiosa por conocer sus alegrías y sus penas, sus luchas y sus triunfos” (7) [she felt as if she was coming to the home of a sister she had not seen since her wedding day, who was eager to know her joys and sorrows, her struggles and her triumphs].

they want] (11). The discipline with which drivers and pedestrians in Havana obey “la combinación de luces de varios colores” [the color-coded combination lights] (10) fascinates her. As a tourist, she admires prominent feats of architecture (monuments, churches, temples), but she remains most concerned with housing and urban planning. Being a doctor, she knows that hygiene issues are related to housing construction: “Teniendo en cuenta que las viviendas son la base principal de la labor sanitaria tropical, voy a intentar describir el estado de nuestros pueblos en este respecto, que más vivo se le presenta al viajero cuanto más lejos está de su país” (103) [Keeping in mind that housing is the principal sanitary task in the tropics, I will describe the state of our towns in this regard, which comes more clearly to the mind of the traveler the further he is from his country]. Mendoza also observes that the materials, the climate and the organisation of urban developments (following systems like “zonificación,” a separation of institutional, commercial, residential and working areas of the city common in Europe) are essential to lowering the high mortality rate in the Philippines, which, she argues, is wrongly attributed to the climate instead of to the “estado insano, casi primitivo que existe en muchos pueblos, salvo quizás en las grandes ciudades” [unhealthy, almost primitive state of a lot of villages, with the exception of big cities] (104).

Mendoza’s reflections on hygiene and urbanism, even though presented as based on common sense and scientific fact, nevertheless echo the orientalist and colonial discourses that used hygiene as a justification for carrying out a civilising task that masked economic exploitation. Mendoza disparages the conditions in the Philippines (the prevalence of slums, irregular housing, and overcrowding), which she wishes to transform so that Manila could hypothetically resemble the villas of London and Paris, perfectly aligned “con su jardín delante y su huerto atrás” (105) [with a front garden and a vegetable yard]. Nowadays, only some colonial houses in the Philippines have remained as majestic as Paris and London villas, while most of the countryside only has a basic infrastructure and slums prevail on the outskirts of main cities. New developments such as Fort Bonifacio in Manila do not resemble Paris, London or Berlin but the ‘global cities’ that are so prolific in fast-developing countries in Asia.<sup>90</sup> In addition, urban and rural areas in Europe in the 1920s were not composed exclusively of the ordered, functional and aesthetically pleasant villas that Mendoza selectively describes in *Notas de viaje*; by neglecting to comment on the poverty and scarcity

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<sup>90</sup> See the classic work on global cities by Saskia Sassen (2001) and, more specifically about the Asian context, Tsung-yi Michelle Huang’s *Walking between Slums and Skyscrapers: Illusions of Open Space in Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Shanghai* (2009).

that the First World War had brought to Europe, she is showing her attachment to a colonial vision that idealizes the western metropolis.

Speeding up the industrialisation process of the Philippines is, for Mendoza, imperative in order to be competitive on the global market, which some Asian countries had already entered. Technology, expertise and capital are considered necessary to extract and commercialise Filipino resources, and attract tourism. To learn about industrialisation, Mendoza visits cheese factories in Holland, Murano glass and marble factories in Florence, and import and export businesses in Havana. She notes that most products in Havana are foreign and writes:

Ya que nuestra industria de tejidos de algodón se encuentra en un estado primitivo de desarrollo, ¿por qué nuestros ricos no forman una sociedad que se encargue de dar el necesario impulso a esta industria para poder competir con los tejidos extranjeros, importando máquinas modernas y hasta expertos o técnicos, y así poder obtener productos baratos y en cantidad comercial? Este es el procedimiento que empleó el Japón para desarrollar sus empresas industriales y la manera como formó sus propios expertos. (20)

[Since our industry of cotton textile is in a primitive state of development, why don't our rich people form an association that provides the necessary impulse to our industry in order to compete with foreign textiles, by means of importing modern machinery and even technical expertise that will allow the production of cheap products in commercial quantities? This is the process that Japan employed to develop their industrial enterprises and the way it trained its own experts.]

Advanced capitalism could be brought to the Philippines, Mendoza feels, as it had become the main economic model not just in Europe, but also in Cuba (under the protectorate of the US) and Japan.

Japan also provides a model of internationalisation, another marker of modernity. During a stroll through Florence on a sunny day, prompted by the sight of tourists carrying umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun, Mendoza conjectures that on the rare occasions when young girls in the Philippines are seen carrying sun umbrellas, the label "Made in Japan" could probably "con pena" [sadly] be read on them (166). The presence of Japanese products in the Philippines leads her to wish for the internationalisation of Filipino manufacturing: "¿Cuándo tendríamos y usaríamos con orgullo los 'Made in the Philippines?'" (166) [When would we have and proudly use the "Made in the Philippines?"].

Signs of modern globalisation are perceived in the presence of Japanese products in Asia, but also in the presence of other Asians in the West. Mendoza cannot help but admire the Chinese restaurants in London for imposing their dishes on Europeans: "El chino con su

‘pansit, gulay’, la morisqueta tostada compite con el europeo, imponiéndole su arte culinario, sin tener que devanarse los sesos para preparar manjares al estilo occidental” [The Chinese with their “pansit [noodles], gulay [vegetables]”, and morisqueta tostada [fried rice] are imposing their culinary art on the European instead of thinking hard about ways to prepare western-style delicacies] (52). Filipinos should be able to do the same, she claims, “una vez educados a comer lo nuestro” [once we are educated in eating our own food] (52). Initially, Mendoza proudly suggests that Filipino food could also be consumed abroad, but further reflection makes her realise that Filipino food is in fact constituted by many different foods (American, Mexican, Chinese), which problematises its identity and the attachment Filipino people have to it.<sup>91</sup> Mendoza recognises that most Filipinos are fans of the Chinese noodle shops, but perceives the assimilation of Chinese food in the Philippines as “esa invasion silenciosa, pero decisiva, de nuestros primos del otro lado del mar de la China” [the silent but decisive invasion of our cousins on the other side of the China Sea]. Consequently, she encourages her Filipino “compatriotas” not to allow others “competencia en una cosa tan sencilla” [competence on such a simple thing] (52). Filipino food culture is thus presented as resulting from a process of transculturation, which Mendoza perceives negatively as yet another form of colonialism, “a silent but decisive invasion” that disrupts any national project based on establishing a uniform modernist identity for The Philippines.

### Returning Home

The first edition of *Notas de viaje* contains a preface by the author and letters from three fellow Filipino intellectuals: Teodoro M. Kalaw, the director of the National Library of the Philippines (February 1930); Pedro Aunario, editor of the newspaper *La Patria* (October 1929); and Hugo Salazar, a contributor to other Spanish-language newspapers (October 1929). According to Kalaw, *Notas de viaje*’s main achievement is its excellent and intense educational tendency, as well as its being, by virtue of the various fields and numerous countries that Mendoza includes, “un interesante manual del saber cosmopolita” [an interesting manual of cosmopolitan knowledge] (viii). In addition, he notes that *Notas de viaje* represents a step forward in the Filipino feminist movement, in which Mendoza was a recognised figure:

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<sup>91</sup> In his book *Authentic Though Not Exotic: Essays on Filipino Identity* (2005) Fernando Zialcita claims that Filipinos struggle to recognise and identify with their own food, often claiming that “there really is no Filipino cooking” (2). He further notes that “some Filipinos’ tendency to denigrate, without basis, their major cultural symbols show in other realms, and work against us” (2).

La Dra. Mendoza debe ser felicitada. Este es un trabajo que no tiene desperdicio, el libro de viajes más concienzudo escrito por un filipino hasta hoy, y, viniendo de la pluma de una mujer, constituye un fuerte alegato en favor del feminismo que - ¡Gracias a Dios! - se está abriendo paso en nuestro país debido a sus propios merecimientos. (viii)

[Dr. Mendoza must be congratulated. This is a valuable work, the most thorough travel book written by a Filipino up until now, and, coming from the pen of a woman, it constitutes a strong defense in favor of Feminism, which - thanks to God! - is making its way in our country due to its own merits.]

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Mendoza was the editor and a columnist of the English and Spanish magazine for women *La Mujer* and founded, in 1922, the *Liga Nacional de Damas Filipinas* [National League of Filipino Women], with which she championed women's suffrage. She also edited a collection of essays written in English and Tagalog entitled *My Ideal Filipino Girl* (1931) and wrote *The Development and Progress of the Filipino Woman* (1951), discussed by Denise Cruz (2011) as an example of 'transpacific Filipina feminism.' As a feminist, Mendoza argues that "the Filipino woman of the modern type cares less for flattery, but demands more respect; she prefers to be considered a human being, capable of helping in the progress of humanity, rather than to be looked upon as a doll, of muscles and bones" (qtd. in Cruz 21). Her works underscore the advancements of Filipinas in fields of "medicine, nursing, social science, and the humanities and repeatedly emphasize the transpacific Filipina's rightful place as a leader in the new Philippines" (Cruz 21). This detaches Mendoza from the recurrent orientalisating and exoticising images of women - literally presented as dolls - found in some of the works studied in this project, especially Balmori's poems. Mendoza's feminine ideal is, moreover, based on the claim that Filipina women were independent and considered equal to men in the Malay past: the woman "we are told, was her brother's equal in the home, in society, in government, she could hold positions of honor and prestige like him" (Mendoza qtd. in Cruz 23). According to Cruz, the works of transpacific Filipina feminists like Mendoza "feature precolonial, indigenous women as models of feminism with triumphant rhetoric that valorizes *indias*" (Cruz 24), rather than puritan Catholic or liberal Americans.

Cruz explains that part of the US government (colonial) policy of "benevolent assimilation" was the creation of transpacific fellowships "centered on the education of proper Filipino subjects and in reproducing examples of the benefits of American democracy" (20). The aim of these programs, which brought educated Filipinos such as Mendoza to the US (Cruz refers to an earlier visit of Mendoza than the one transcribed in

*Notas de viaje*), was for Filipino men and women to earn “graduate-level degrees, and [...] to return as Americanized triumphs” (20).

Mendoza records the gratitude she feels towards US initiatives towards women’s education to a journalist during her visit to Buck Hill Falls. He inquires about the way Filipinos perceived the influence of the US in their country and Mendoza responds:

Creo que ningún Filipino puede odiar los ideales que nos habéis enseñado y esto lo digo por mí, porque jamás hubiese llegado a ser doctora en medicina si hubiésemos continuado bajo la soberanía española. (36)

[I do not believe that any Filipino hates the ideals that you have taught us and I say this based on my own experience. I would have never been able to become a doctor of medicine if we had remained under Spanish sovereignty.]

This comment brings out Mendoza’s ambiguous attachments to and detachments from the Philippines’ complex colonial history, this time praising the US and implicitly critiquing the Spanish education system for keeping women from fully participating in society. Her comments on Filipino independence discussed earlier reveal a much more critical view on the US role in the Philippines. A factor that may explain Mendoza’s double articulation of respect for and exasperation with the Americans is that she is writing the travelogue in Spanish and sending fragments of it to the various ministries that could make use of her notes.

*Notas de viaje* was received with great ambivalence by the Filipino (Spanish-speaking) government and other intellectuals. While her travelogue, seen as carried out with “la devoción de misionera del saber de las letras” [missionary devotion towards knowledge and letters] (Aunario ix), received much praise, it also received serious criticism, mostly directed at the impracticability of her proposed modernisation project. In his letter, Salazar questions the usefulness of Mendoza’s book:

¿Qué se puede esperar de un simple relato que usted hace de los procedimientos políticos o sociales, agrícolas o industriales, sanitarios o educacionales que usted expone a la consideración de su pueblo para que los imite y los asimile? (xv)

[What can we expect from the simple account that you give of the political or social, agricultural or industrial, sanitary or educational matters that you suggest for the consideration of your people in order for them to imitate or assimilate them?]

Salazar’s skepticism towards the potential of Mendoza’s travel diary to transform Filipino society brings back the paradox governing the genre of travel writing discussed earlier in this chapter between its supposed truth or practical value and the subjectivity of its narrative gaze.

Mendoza's narrative 'eloquence' fails to capture the imagination of critics such as Salazar, who perceive her work merely as a series of "felices observaciones" [happy observations] and see the notion that the ideas presented could be imitated and assimilated by Filipinos as wishful thinking. The way Salazar refers to the concepts of "imitation" and "assimilation" contrasts with Mendoza's own use: while she affirms the possibility of assimilating, in a process not of identical replication but of adaptation, elements from multiple other cultures, Salazar questions the malleability of Filipino culture on the basis of the example he gives of three foreign enterprises that failed to be successful in the Philippines.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, where Salazar sees cultures - or at least Filipino culture - as rigid and unable to mix, Mendoza's project of transculturation is founded on the idea of 'cultural plasticity' (Rama 2009). For Rama, transculturation between Latin American urban and regional spaces was possible thanks to the cultural plasticity of the latter: "modernizing impulses mediated through the cities were able to be integrated within the regions' own rearticulated structures" (159). Mendoza's rearticulation of Filipino future modernity similarly integrates the impressions gathered in the European, American, but also Cuban and other urban centres she visited into the Filipino culture (which occupies the place of the regions in Rama's account), which she considers to be sufficiently adaptable, given that it has already integrated elements of different cultures in being twice colonised.

With respect to the notion of cultural adaptability or plasticity, Hernández, Millington and Borden (2005) offer a valuable re-examination of the idea of transculturation using Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome. The rhizome is a figure appropriated from biology but used in philosophy to oppose traditional tree-like thought structures represented as foundational, linear and hierarchical in favour of "a dynamic structure that has no point of origin and is capable of establishing multiple connections with any other kind of system while at the same time avoiding stratification" (Hernández, Millington and Borden xv-i). The most important qualities of the rhizome are *connectivity*, *heterogeneity* and *multiplicity*, as well as resistance to traceability: "the dynamism of the rhizome prevents it from being traceable, [rhizomes] are anti-genealogical and cannot be traced but mapped" (Hernández, Millington and Borden xvi).

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<sup>92</sup> The three examples cited by Salazar as demonstrating the difficulty of copying foreign industrial models are Japanese-style fishing in the Bay of Ragay, the local production of castor oil and the attempt to develop the piña textile industry by the Pacific Commercial Company, led by a US businessman (xiv). The failure of these attempts, according to Salazar, was ultimately caused by: (1) the hospitable living conditions of the Philippines, which "make life easy so that it is barely necessary to struggle in order to survive" (xvi); and (2) the alleged indolence Filipinos have irreparably inherited from the colonial system.

The many complex attachments to and detachments from other cultures that can be traced in *Notas de viaje* can be seen to demonstrate a rhizomatic capacity on Mendoza's part to think across cultural boundaries. Organic and unpredictable variation, interconnectedness and multiplicity are seen to apply not only to larger structures such as society and economy, but also to the individuals operating within them. As a rhizomatic map - "detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification" (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Hernández, Millington and Bord xvi) - *Notas de viaje* reflects the connections, always in flux, between places and people, and reveals the multiplicity that characterises each culture (showing obedient and loud Asians, poor and rich Europeans, Muslim and Christian Middle Eastern people, and the concurrence of modern and traditional elements within a single country). Mendoza's emphasis on the plasticity of cultures configures the constant becomings of culture as a rhizomatic system as processes of transculturation. Travel writing, itself grounded in continuous movement, is particularly suitable for showing these processes and for channeling them in a particular direction, in this case in the direction of a vision of a modern future for the Philippines.

However, as Hernández, Millington and Borden emphasise, rhizomatic structures are not unrestricted but bound by power relations:

cultures have rhizomatic characteristics, they are assemblages of multiplicities that are always in the middle, always in the process of becoming. In their process of becoming, cultures establish simultaneous multiple connections with other cultural formations. As a result, cultures regenerate, change in nature, and recreate themselves constantly. However, these processes are conditioned by institutions of power. Such institutions have a great impact on the way connections are established, and the very notion of unrestricted connectability can be jeopardized by power formations that tend to construct a model of order by stratifying everything. *This is what occurs in the majority of transcultural relations: a power takeover disrupts the rhizomatic nature of processes of cultural becoming by stratifying everything within foundational totalizing systems.* (xvii-xviii, emphasis added)

Stratification and totalisation, effected by institutions of power, limit the otherwise endless process of cultural interconnection. In *Notas de viaje*, too, transculturation does not appear as an endless or boundless becoming; for Mendoza, the predetermined end of the processes of transculturation she seeks to set into motion is the particular version of modernity measured against European modernity that Pratt describes (2002). The goal of cultural exchange, for Mendoza, is to (learn to) become like the mostly western cultures that she perceives as already modern. This underlines my argument that transculturation in *Notas de viaje* constitutes a deliberate, active project, meant to be finalised. Mendoza's imagined future for

the Philippines, based on cultural assimilation, will ultimately interrupt the dynamics of rhizomatic cultural transformation by imposing European modernity as a totalising social structure of power supported by a united, well-defined Filipino identity.

In his book *The Future as a Cultural Fact* (2013) Arjun Appadurai articulates a difference between an *ethics of probability* and *the ethics of possibility*. The ethics of probability comprise a dominant discourse of calculations based on rationality, management, costs and benefits according to which “a genuinely democratic politics cannot be based on the avalanche of numbers—about population, poverty, profit, and predation—that threaten to kill all street-level optimism about life and the world” (299). Salazar’s critique of Mendoza’s project is based on how it does not follow the ethics of probability: Mendoza’s facts are not presented in a quantifiable way. On the other hand, Appadurai defines the ethics of possibility as:

those ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that increase the horizons of hope, that expand the field of the imagination, that produce greater equity in what I have called the capacity to aspire, and that widen the field of informed, creative, and critical citizenship. (295)

This, I want to suggest, captures the spirit of Mendoza’s active transculturation as an attempt to imagine, anticipate and aspire to a different future for her community.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have read Paz Mendoza’s travel notes as an example of active transculturation. *Notas de viaje* has allowed me to present transculturation not only as a form of hybridisation resulting from past colonial contact, but also as an active attempt to imagine cultural transformation for the future by (post)colonial subjects. The experience of travel, Mendoza’s work shows, facilitates new contact-zones in which arbitrary and ephemeral interactions with the other can produce new meanings, capable of challenging entrenched stereotypes. Mendoza’s own hybrid cultural identity and social status, for example, allows her to “decline” cultural stereotypes about Asians, as I showed in my analysis of her conversation with the Dutch millionaire. I have located the narrative ‘eloquence’ of Mendoza’s travel writing in her ability to establish multiple, flexible connections between the Philippines and other cultures across the world, including non-western ones.

Unlike Balmori and Gurrea, who diagnose the Philippines’ transculturation mainly as an effect of colonialism, for Mendoza transculturation is a future-oriented project. As such, it is based on the question of what the Philippines *could or should be like* as a modern,

independent nation. Mendoza measures the modernity to be achieved in the Philippines against Western modernity and selects what she perceives as signs of progress that could be assimilated in her country, including German and Danish education, Italian manufacturing, Dutch farming and cheese industries, and Parisian and English urban design. In contrast, she rejects what she believes to be signs of backwardness, most notably in the accounts of her visits to Egypt and Turkey. A notable exception to the way Mendoza questions the superiority of the West over the rest are her positive comments on Cuba. These comments can be explained not only by the historical ties and shared nationalist sentiments in Cuba and the Philippines, but also by the fact that adopting the (peripheral) modernity Mendoza perceives in Havana's traffic control system, urban management and hygiene regulations in the Philippines seems feasible given the similarities between the countries, including their shared double colonisation by Spain and the US.

*Notas de viaje* shows how the unpredictable nature of travelling may also trigger nostalgic and nationalist emotions, such as Mendoza's illusion in Egypt of being transported back to the rural Philippines or her enthusiasm for the Italian nationalism displayed in the cinema. Comparing the Philippines to other countries also leads Mendoza to attribute certain shortcomings to it. Examples of this are her negative reflections on Filipino food and cultural identity as not sufficiently distinctive and homogenous, and her positioning of the Philippines as lagging behind other Asian countries such as Japan (which is selling its manufactured goods internationally) or China (which is bringing Chinese food to the world) in the global marketplace. Even though, in the end, Mendoza remains attached to the idea of achieving - as a teleological project - the hegemonic form of modernity that propagates Europe as its centre and is intimately linked to coloniality and the global spread of capitalism, at the same time *Notas de viaje* consistently envisions the Philippine as a site of cultural plasticity, opening it up to ongoing processes of transculturation.

Unlike Salazar, Mendoza believes in the plasticity of cultures which can not only be transformed by external influences such as colonisation but internally by envisioning possible ways to transform it according to one's own criteria. However, Mendoza is trying to enter the realm of central modernity from her periphery by picking and choosing idealised models and sometimes ignoring the problematic aspects of the cultures taken as models (such as fascism in Italy and Germany). A text like Mendoza's, then, is significant in demonstrating the possibilities of thinking transculturally while, at the same time, showing that transculturation cannot be made into a global project but requires an engagement with the given conditions at a local level.

In the next chapter I show how Balmori's war novel *Los Pájaros de fuego* points to the limits of active transculturation, suggesting that taking another culture as a model should not mean ignoring less attractive aspects of that culture, in this case Japan's imperialism.

## Chapter 4

### Translation Strategies in Jesús Balmori's *Los Pájaros de fuego. Una novela filipina de la guerra* (1945)

¡Oh, cielo azul! ¡Oh, mar azul de Ermita, la señorial y hermosa! ¿Sería posible que aquellos pájaros, semejantes a los que sobre la rama florida de un cerezo enseñaron a los dioses asiáticos el amor, se trocaran alguna vez en pájaros de odio, en pájaros de fuego que fueran a hundirnos en la ruina, en la muerte, en el dolor?  
(Balmori 1945: 22)

[Oh, blue sky! Oh, blue sea of Ermita, the noble and beautiful! Would it be possible that those birds, like those on the branch of a blooming cherry tree, taught the Asian gods about love, would ever be transformed into birds of hate, birds of fire that would sink us into ruin, into death, into pain?]

#### Introduction

Don Lino Robles, the main character of Jesús Balmori's novel only employed Japanese gardeners to work in his hacienda during the early 1940s because he considered them the most skilled.<sup>93</sup> Don Lino's admiration for Japan as an exceptional country of divine origin (Balmori 15) turns, however, into hatred when Japanese imperialism reaches Manila at the outbreak of WWII, as becomes clear at the end of the novel. The story of the Robles, a wealthy Spanish-speaking family shattered by the war, is central to *Los Pájaros de fuego*, allowing it to explore the gradual deterioration of the transcultural attachments of the Philippines in the late 1930s.<sup>94</sup> The narrative focuses on the decadence of the Hispanised Filipino elite, which resists American modernisation and idealises Japan.

Balmori's novel captures the tensions of this puzzling historical moment in which complex feelings towards a number of foreign nations, Western and Asian, fed into the imagination of an independent Filipino nation. In Chapter 3 I analysed how Paz Mendoza's *Notas de viaje* based the ideal of an independent and modern Philippines on a project of transculturation aiming at a distinct (Eurocentric) version of modernity. In this chapter I demonstrate how, at a different historical conjuncture, the idea of independence continues to be a primary preoccupation for Filipino intellectuals who perceive the previous forty years of American occupation as having produced further fragmentation within Filipino society, problematising the consolidation of a unified sense of national identity. In the face of this,

<sup>93</sup> 'Don' (and, for women, 'doña') is a polite, respectful form of address now considered old-fashioned but common in the period in which Balmori's novel is set.

<sup>94</sup> When referring to the novel in the rest of the chapter, I will shorten the title to *Pájaros*.

Balmori's novel suggests that long-standing relationships towards different, real and imagined, communities within and beyond the Philippines, in particular Japan, are rapidly being transformed, leading to a situation of impasse that can only be overcome by an apocalyptic double ending: the collapse of the Robles family and the destruction of Manila during WWII.

The Robles are an aristocratic family whose wealth springs from landownership going back to the Spanish colony. Don Lino has two children. Natalia and Fernando embody respectively an emergent pragmatic and progressive Americanisation and a residual Hispanicness: romantic, dutiful and patriotic. Ramón Robles, Don Lino's brother, is unmarried, hardworking and sturdy, and does not delight in the same pleasures as his brother, namely, Japanese gardening and poetry. Don Ramón expresses the domestic and international realities that the other characters remain oblivious to until it is too late. He is the only surviving member of the Robles family at the novel's close. Natalia is gang raped and killed in the family house by a Japanese squadron in front of her father, who loses his sanity and dies shortly after. Fernando also perishes, killed by a stray bullet while fighting with the American troops. Natalia's husband-to-be, Sandoval, a professional journalist working for an American newspaper, dies in a hospital after having been injured in the attack on Manila. Besides Don Ramón, only Marta, the peasant Filipina who was to be Fernando's wife, survives.

There are numerous works of Filipino literature that deal with the Pacific War, both in English and in Tagalog, mostly retelling the experiences of victims and survivors.<sup>95</sup> To my knowledge, however, there are only three novels dealing with WWII in the Philippines written in Spanish: Benigno del Rio's *Siete días en el infierno en manos de la gestapo nipona* [Seven Days in Hell in the Hands of the Japanese Gestapo] (1950); Jesús Balmori's *Los Pájaros de fuego* (1945) and *Fíame* [Trus in me] (1946) by Mariano L. De la Rosa.<sup>96</sup> The first is an autobiographical text written in the form of a diary by Benigno del Rio (1907-1969) after he was released from a Japanese concentration camp where he was secluded for seven days under false accusations. Del Rio was a Filipino journalist who had already been put under surveillance in the Philippines by Franco's regime, suspected of political dissidence. His account of the war exposes the violent and inhuman conditions of a Japanese

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, Elena Polo, *The Negating Fire vs. the Affirming Flame: American and Filipino Novels in the Pacific War* (2000).

<sup>96</sup> For other literature on WWII in Spanish, see Ortuño Casanova's forthcoming article "Los sonidos de la II Guerra Mundial en Manila: ruido y autorrepresentación en 'Nuestros cinco últimos días bajo el yugo nipón' de María Paz Zamora-Masculana." I thank Ortuño for sharing her manuscript with me through private correspondence.

concentration camp, and aims to give a detailed account of both the camp guards and the Filipino prisoners.

The other novel in Spanish about the Philippines during WWII, *Fíame*, was written before, during and after the War. De la Rosa was a judge and an amateur creative writer less known in Filipino literary circles than Balmori (Lifshey 2012). His novel, which focuses on two love stories, each between a Filipino and an American living in Manila, engages more explicitly with politics, specifically the relationship between the Philippines and the US. This relationship, like the love stories, is seen to require trust. The novel's title, *Fíame*, means "Trust in me." Grammatically, it should be *Fíate de mi*, but De la Rosa cleverly uses the one-word title to symbolically link, through the first syllables of their names, *Fi-lipinas* and *Amé-rica*. The novel ends happily with a double marriage and the overcoming of racism by the Filipino characters after they move to the US. Significantly, Adam Lifshey (2013), in his critical article on *Fíame*, argues that the novel's symbolic plot (the two love relationships) "develops subtly subversive relationships between the US and the Filipinos before, during and immediately after the War" (1). This, argues Lifshey, can be connected to the American Filipino identity represented in other texts such as the National World War II Memorial in Washington DC (which includes recognition of the Filipinos who died in the service of the American forces) and Carlos Bulosan's novel *America is in the Heart: A Personal History* (1946), one of the first autobiographical fictions to talk about Filipino migrant workers in the US.

Balmori's novel, on which I focus here, barely survived the war; according to Donoso (2009), Balmori hid the manuscript in glass bottles that he buried in his garden. After the war, the manuscript was bought by the Filipino government, which kept it unpublished for decades, perhaps because of its critical nature or as a gesture towards eliminating the final remnants of cultural production in the colonial language. In addition to the appeal of the almost lost and possibly suppressed manuscript story, a more substantial reason why *Pájaros* deserves more attention than it has so far been given is the trenchant critique it offers of Manilean society, a community spatially confined within the walls of Intramuros - the area in Manila where rich *hacendados*, politicians, journalists and other intellectuals lived - but ideologically deeply engaged with other, foreign countries rather than with the rest of the Philippines. Balmori depicts this Filipino bourgeois class as decadent, frivolous and corrupted, a combination that led, in his eyes, to the collapse of Filipino ideals built on the idolatry of an orientalised Japan and a colonised vision of self.

In Chapter 1 I discussed the role that Japan played for Latin American orientalists

(Darío, Tablada and Gómez Carrillo) and equally for Balmori, who saw in the sophistication of Japanese culture a source of inspiration to write orientalist poems. Japan as a representative of the Orient in modernist literature is, in contrast to the image of the Middle East that European orientalists constructed, idealised and assigned an equal or superior position in the cultural relationships to Latin America and the Philippines that modernist works of poetry (Balmori, Rubén Darío, Tablada) and travel memoirs (Gómez Carrillo, Tablada) establish. In *Pájaros*, through the character of Don Lino, the novel incorporates the idealisation of Japan not only as an aesthetic literary tool but also in terms of the political discourse by which Filipinos saw in Japan a model of modernity worth assimilating to. The blind faith of Don Lino and his consequent disillusionment presents a trenchant critique of the Filipino elites that engaged with this discourse, including (the young) Balmori himself. The novel can thus also be read as a form of auto-criticism.

Adam Lifshey's "Allegory and Archipelago: Jesús Balmori's *Los Pájaros de fuego* and the Global Vantages of Filipino Literature in Spanish" (2011)<sup>97</sup> analyses *Pájaros* as an example of national allegory. Lifshey argues that it is only through the allegory of a family melodrama that Balmori could address the global dimensions of WWII in the Philippines. The article carefully reveals the implicit references made in the novel to the three powers battling each other, with the Philippines as one of the stakes: the US military under General McArthur (in service from 1903 to 1951); the Japanese imperial project in Asia (known as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere) carried out by Hirohito, the 124<sup>th</sup> Emperor of Japan; and the independent politics of Manuel L. Quezon, the first Filipino to be elected as president of the transitional government before independence (The Filipino Commonwealth 1935-1946). During the Japanese occupation, Quezon's government was reduced to a puppet government at the service of the Japanese.<sup>98</sup> According to Lifshey, a way to address the "hyperbolic context" (12) of such an incommensurable global event is to focus on the wartime experience of everyday people in the Philippines, even when in both novels he discusses this category is restricted to the Hispano-Filipino elite from Manila.

I see *Fíame* as a depiction of transculturation that places the emphasis on the assimilation of the Philippines to the US (confirmed by Lifshey's comparison of De la Rosa's

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<sup>97</sup> The article appeared in *Kritika Kultura*, a journal published by the Ateneo University in Manila. In the same journal, Lifshey has another article on De la Rosa's *Fíame* (1945), which locates the novel in the American literary tradition and strongly emphasises that, unlike Balmori, De la Rosa recognises the attachment of the Philippines to the US (Lifshey 2012).

<sup>98</sup> In this regard Agoncillo (1965) talks about how the use of English between the Filipinos in government and the Japanese became an empty code repeating the rhetoric of Japanese imperialism was repeated and affirmed. As a result, Spanish became more emphatically a language of nationalism shared by the Filipino elites.

novel to other Filipino-American texts), whereas in this chapter I will consider *Pájaros* as a comment on the failure of transculturation in the Philippines in the run-up to WWII, attributed to the persistent attempt on behalf of Hispano-Filipino elites to emulate other nations, most prominently Japan. In the three previous chapters I have argued that the transculturation of the Philippines is represented in Hispano-Filipino literature of the early twentieth century in two ways: on the one hand, through my analysis of Balmori's poetry and Gurrea's work, as a legacy of the colonial past; on the other hand, through my reading of Mendoza's travel notes, as actively producing a future image of a transcultured Philippines. In this chapter I examine how Balmori's novel addresses the potential negative effects of uncritically taking other culture(s) as a model for the future of the Philippines or, in other words, his novel's concern with the limits of active transculturation. Its violent ending suggests that there is no future for the country, at least not until the Philippines detaches itself from other countries and its elite stops aspiring to be like Japan, fighting for/with the US in the War and clinging onto the Hispanic colonial legacy.

In order to analyse how past history (the Hispanic colonial legacy) and the events of the 1930s and early 1940s (the rise of fascism in Europe, the emergence of Japan as a panasian power and the continuing American rule of the Philippines) are interwoven in the novel, I use the concept of translation, which, because of its potential to create new meaning by departing from an existing one, I understand as a technique of transculturation. This approach to translation implies a rejection of translation as the linguistic process of rendering words in one language intelligible in another. Instead, it views translation as a much more complex process of reinterpretation, appropriation, expansion and exchange between cultures or within different temporalities in the same culture. My use of translation in this chapter will draw on the concepts of cultural translation elaborated from two different perspectives by Rey Chow (1995; 2008) and Vicente L. Rafael (1999; 2000). The various cultures coexisting in the Philippines during the Japanese occupation stand as the 'original' text and Balmori's depiction of the Filipino nation in the novel as the translation.

Chow understands cultural translation as a simultaneous act of betrayal and mourning (2008) with the translator functioning as a cultural mediator. What is lost in the translation and what is new in it is respectively mourned for or perceived as betraying the supposed 'original.' From a different perspective specific to the Philippines, Rafael sees translation in two ways: as a strategy of survival for the colonised masses that created their own transcultured practices by creatively extracting meaning from the colonising languages and as a practice of nationalism designed to spread a new ideology in Spanish among the Filipino

elites during the American period. Both authors emphasise that there is no equivalence to be achieved through cultural translation, which is either a process of mourning/betrayal or one of re-appropriation, reinterpretation and transculturation.

In my reading of Balmori's novel, I look at what type of strategies of mourning and betrayal appear in its specific translation of the transcultural attachments and detachments of the Hispano-Filipino elite before and during WWII. I will show how, by having the characters appear as embodiments of the various political discourses circulating at the time, *Pájaros* suggests a mournful vision of the nation as overly attached to both the Hispanic past and the naïve idealisation of other nations, thus betraying the Filipino people.

### **Translating to Betray, Mourn and Survive**

Chow's conceptualisation of translation in her essay "Translator, Traitor, Translator, Mourner (Or Dreaming of Intercultural Difference)" (2008) does not adhere to the restricted idea of carrying meaning from one language to another but considers translation as an approximate signification, as a process of rendering an object into another system of meaning without dismissing the role of the translator. The act of translation is, as Chow explains, a creative process through which intellectuals attempt to render an aspect of culture embedded in a particular context legible to another culture or within the same culture. Legibility does not allude to the literal translation of meaning but to the possibility of establishing equivalence at the level of language, but most importantly, at the level of culture. This implies gaining something and losing something, hence the metaphors of mourning and betrayal. In an earlier article, "Film as Ethnography: or, Translation between Cultures in the Postcolonial World" (1995), Chow argues that, regardless of the type of translation made, traditions always need to be translated (reinterpreted, reshaped, reconstructed) in order to survive: "How is tradition to be transmitted, to be passed on, if not through translation?" (1995: 183). Hence, she asserts that there is no such thing as a single 'original,' only an ongoing process of transmission enabled by cultural translation.

With a view to my analysis of *Pájaros*, Chow's most illuminating idea is her elaboration of cultural translation as the reinterpretation of aspects of one's own culture into modern time, that is, the attention she pays to the temporality of translations within a culture. She perceives translations as creative and critical re/visions of the customs and traditions of the past scrutinised by the translator, whom she perceives as a creator - an artist - rather than simply as the medium that conveys equivalence or reproduces a faithful version of an original. In her view, any piece of art analysed as a translated cultural object cannot dismiss

or obscure the translator's mediation. Thus, Balmori's decision to write in Spanish must be perceived in the light of his desire to remain attached to his Hispanic heritage. This attachment on the part of Spanish-speaking and - writing Filipinos has been described by some as an "anachronistic" phenomenon, a clinging on in the face of the inevitable demise of Spanish after half a century of American presence (Lifshey 2011).

To illustrate the pitfalls of the ideal of intercultural translation, Chow analyses two representations of China and Chinese traditions. First, she refers to the aesthetic eye of the filmmaker Zhang Yimou, criticised in China for producing art objects adapted to the taste of western audiences and thus betraying the "authentic" China with a foreign vision of it. Second, she retrieves a scene from the film adaptation of the novel *The Family* (1931) by Ba Jin,<sup>99</sup> which depicts China's mourning tradition in a caricatured way as backwards and incomprehensible. In one scene in the movie, a group of women mourn the death of the family patriarch; orchestrated by signals that point to the arrival of guests, the women's exaggerated shrieks - not accompanied by any tears - compose, according to Chow, an absurd scene that remains simply noise or spectacle. The translated object in these two examples rejects the 'original,' betraying it and simultaneously mourning its loss.

Chow adopts the term "traitor" because of the shared linguistic root in Italian: *traduttore* meaning translator and *traditore* meaning traitor. She believes that the translator as traitor is seen to betray his or her culture by translating it as out of time or as unfamiliar, foreign and other:

Understood in these terms [translator/traitor], the figure of the translator foreshadows the predicament faced by the native intellectual in a postcolonized situation, in which to be a mediator between cultures is, as the idiomatic expression *traduttore, traditore* would have it, to be a traitor—in particular, a traitor to one's native culture. That is to say, if the agency of the postcolonial intellectual (native speaker, writer, thinker, educated person, professional, culture worker) is defined as the capacity to act among and across languages/ literacies, such agency also places such an intellectual in the position of a cultural translator/arbiter. The task of this cultural translator/arbiter is not faithfulness to the original (the colonized native culture) but rather that of an explicit betrayal: the disavowal and intercepting of the original as out of sync and out of place is now deemed a sine qua non for the native culture's survival. (2008: 570)

Here, Chow points to the particular condition of the 'original' culture of the postcolonial subject, whose native culture is a colonised one.

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<sup>99</sup> Ba Jin belongs to the May Fourth generation, a term referring to the movement engendered by the protests of Beijing students against the Chinese government on 4 May 1919. This movement is considered the beginning of a Chinese nationalism positioned against imperial power and in favour of western ideals such as democracy. Its demands included breaking with the old feudal China and its patriarchal traditions.

Returning to the example of Ba Jin's perceived position of betrayal in relation to his own culture, it is opportune to refer to a temporal anxiety, an anxiety about being left behind that leads Chow to describe the translator as a mourner "whose betrayal of the native culture is an inevitable by-product of inequitable cultural contacts" (571). The translator as mourner is the one who, observing the inequity between cultures (and the impossibility of ever catching up with the west, positioned as superior), laments the loss of the traditions affected through a certain melancholia.<sup>100</sup> Contrary to the translator-traitor, this side of the translator mourns the observable loss rather than dismissing it as other, unfamiliar, old-fashioned or ridiculous.

To sum up, Chow's perspective on translation illustrates the contrasting approaches that can be adopted by artistic representations of transcultural contexts like the Philippines: the translator as traitor betrays the 'native' traditions by depicting them as out-of-synch, backwards and foolish in relation to the modern time-space in which he lives (whether the time lapse derives from colonialism, capitalism or globalisation); meanwhile and sometimes simultaneously, the translator as mourner provides a melancholic view of the past and its traditions to compensate for the lack of prestige his culture is granted in the present. Both types of translations are seemingly unavoidable forms of othering that encourage Chow to advocate for an alternative type of intercultural translation that focuses on attaining intercultural equivalence based on the idea of the coevalness of cultures - the fact that cultures coexist *in* the same time:

In this regard, equivalence brings to mind Johannes Fabian's well-known concept of coevalness, a sharing of time that is "not given but must be accomplished [and can be denied]," (27) and that is predicated less on a presumed contemporaneity of all cultures than on an ever-renewable and ongoing project of constructing such contemporaneity. Like coevalness, equivalence in this instance is not a mere assertion of temporal or spatial coexistence but a vision, one that, predictably, will be met with obstruction and sabotage at regular intervals, but that will always retain within its operating premises the fundamentals of exchange and reciprocity that underlie intercultural transactions. (Chow 2008: 575)

Intercultural translation (or the task of finding intercultural equivalence) thus represents for Chow a challenge that will face obstacles, but should nevertheless be pursued in order to increase recognition of the fact that transculturation is always a bi-directional process in which cultures mutually influence each other.

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<sup>100</sup> With regard to the idea of melancholia, Chow refers to Freud, who "attributes this interminable pathological affect to the melancholic subject's essentially unfinished relationship with the lost/death ones" (571).

I use Chow's notions of translation as betrayal, mourning and equivalence as tools to understand what kind of translation Balmori provides of late 1930s and early 1940s Manila society in *Los Pájaros de fuego*. How does the narrative betray its native culture(s) or mourns for its loss of values in a fast changing society? How is tradition codified and transmitted in the novel, and whose tradition is this? What are Balmori's translation strategies in terms of the novel's formal characteristics, the language used (Spanish as opposed to Tagalog or English), the invoked social and political context, and the intended audience? In addition, I will explore what transcultural attachments are at play in Balmori's novel and how such attachments - to Hispanic, American and Japanese culture, as well as others - are translated by the novel's characters as parts of their individual identities and as feeding into a vision of national identity for the Philippines.

Like Chow, Rafael focuses on translation as an inevitable mode of transmission and survival in transcultural contexts. In *Contracting Colonialism* (1988), he presents translation as an ongoing effort aimed at the survival of native culture by referring to the attempts made by Filipino natives, to understand the religious sermons in Latin and Spanish they were exposed to during the Hispanic colonial period. Rafael explains that listening to the Catholic sermons presented them with the challenge to "fish out discrete words from the stream of the sermon arbitrarily attaching them to their imaginings" (1988: 2). He further explains:

the response of the natives was not a matter of boredom, indifference, or rejection. In fact, they anxiously attend to Damaso's voice [a priest from Rizal's novel *Noli Me Tangere* (1886)] hoping to catch some words that are thrown their way. It is as if they saw other possibilities in those words, possibilities that served to mitigate the interminable verbal assaults being hurled from the pulpit. (1988: 3)

This process of creative oral translation, consisting of catching scattered words and articulating new meanings that would then be connected, haphazardly, to the listener's existing belief system, is referred to as the "Tagalog strategy of de-contextualization" (Rafael 1988: 3). Words taken out of the original (con)text acquire new meanings through random associations. This indicates yet another sense of translation, different from translation as treachery or mourning. Here, translation appears as a spontaneous and arbitrary interpretation that necessarily betrays the 'original' because it does not understand it. What is relevant for me in Rafael's work is the idea of de-contextualization as a translation strategy that allows one to imagine alternative meanings for words and the realities they signify. In my analysis of Balmori's novel I will show how de-contextualized translation, rather than functioning as a creative strategy leading to a transcultured Tagalog Catholicism, is seen to lead to

miscommunication.

The second significant aspect of Rafael's work on translation has to do with his account of the emergence of Filipino nationalism. He claims that translation played a major role in the early Filipino nationalist movement (1898-1903) as the process by which emerging political ideas were codified into a new cultural system that attempted to recognise the multicultural aspects of Filipino society:

[nationalism as a practice of translation is] understood first as the coming into contact with the foreign and subsequently its reformulation into an element of oneself, is about the discovery of an alien aspect residing within colonial society and its translation into a basis for future history. (1999: 88-89)

Here, nationalism is defined as a process of estrangement, of discovering an alien aspect residing within, and, at the same time, of an identification through which the 'foreign' becomes the 'self' and the new (translated) self comes to serve as the basis for a (decolonised?) future. Rafael's conceptualisation of nationalism as a form of creative, future-oriented translation dismisses the type of nationalism that, in a mode resembling that of translation as mourning, remains fixated on the claim to an essential indigenous identity and a vision of a glorified, stolen, authentic pre-colonial 'original' past that is considered recoverable. Instead, nationalism as a transformative practice of translation strategically uses the plurality of the community and the self as comprising the foreign and the familiar in order to create a new identity.

The texts I have examined for this project, including Balmori's, present examples of such future-oriented Filipino nationalism that fail, however, to incorporate the full plurality of Filipino identities, instead remaining unsettled by the estrangement of self and other, and, as a result, ending up betraying and mourning inherited selves rather than, as Rafael suggests, successfully translating them into a new national identity. As I will show in the remainder of this chapter, Balmori mournfully holds on to the Spanish inheritance even as he accuses those who adopt the American and the Japanese model of betraying Filipino culture.

### **Translating Conflict: Global and Local Affects**

Balmori's novel translates the global dimensions of WWII into the local by having the characters in the family melodrama embody political discourses, national and international. Specific examples of this include two characters that befriend the Robles family: Dr. Fritz Kauffman, the family doctor, a German immigrant who spent most of his life in the Philippines, and Professor Bruno Anselmi, an Italian music teacher who embodies the figure

of the *Filipón*: a western man from a low class background who presents himself as of noble ancestry (in the novel Anselmi says he is a relative of Mussolini) in order to move up in society and, with a bit of luck, marrying into a wealthy family. Additionally, *Filipones* were also suspected of making their livelihoods (while waiting for a good marriage) by living of “rentas de negocios turbios” [profit from dubious business] (Donoso 2009: 36). Anselmi is a melodramatic, hyperbolic character who speaks a mix of Italian and Spanish; his “Santas Madonnas” and “Porcas Miserias” legitimise his authority over the “medianamente civilizados” (*Pájaros* 33) [moderately civilized] Filipino people, as Anselmi describes them. Kauffman’s increasingly threatening citation “Deutschland Uber Alles” (Balmori 71, German in the original) and Anselmi’s nationalistic claims about the supremacy of Italy gain importance as the novel progresses, eventually overwriting their friendly links with the Robles’ family. “El individuo debe desaparecer en aras de la nación. Y el amor propio “individuale”, debe sacrificarse por amor a la patria. Los Anselmi de allá estaban al lado de los Kauffman” (98) [The individual must disappear in favour of the nation. And personal honour must be sacrificed by love to the motherland. The Anselmis were next to the Kauffmans over there [in Europe]], explains the narrator in a chapter in which the story of the progress of fascism in Europe coincides with both characters turning against the Robles family - especially Anselmi, whose mask of benevolence as a piano teacher is removed as he attempts to seduce Natalia. Their European ancestry and alignment with fascist regimes does not help Anselmi and Kauffman, as they had expected, when the Japanese attack Ermita in February 1945. Both characters are killed in a bloody scene towards the end of the novel.

Juxtaposed to the frivolity of Anselmi and Kauffman, Natalia and Fernando, Don Lino’s children, appear as the embodiment of the ideal Filipino youth in which the colonial past and present come together. Fernando has inherited the passion for adventure and romanticism of his father, but mostly his love of reading:

Odiaba los estudios. Al diablo con la Física y el Griego. Únicamente la retórica le merecía algún respeto. Todo lo demás fueron lecturas de “Las mil y una noches”, los libros de aventuras de Salgari y las fantásticas narraciones de Julio Verne. (24)

[He hated to study. To hell with Physics and Greek. He only felt some respect for rhetorics. The rest of his education came from reading *One thousand and one nights*, Salgari’s adventure books and the fantastic stories of Jules Verne.]

The three literary references here are examples of European orientalist literature, either translated from the oral Middle Eastern tradition into European languages like the *1001 Nights* or written by Europeans and set in other parts of the world, like the works of Jules

Verne (1828-1905) and Emilio Salgari (1862-1911). Salgari's most famous character, Sandokan, is a Malaysian pirate from Borneo, famously called "The Tiger of Malasya" (Marrone et al. 2007: 464). That Fernando's ideals are a translation of orientalist adventure literature demonstrates how the Hispano-Filipino class he represents is holding onto a colonial imaginary.

Natalia, on the contrary, "era una muchachita muy moderna, práctica, muy a la americana, devota de los deportes y las cosas útiles. Nada de sueños ni romanticismos." (17) [was a young modern girl, practical, very much in the American way, she devoted herself to sports and useful things. No dreaming and no romanticism]. She prefers cinema to literature and dancing to taking piano and singing lessons - which she only does to please her father. The representation of Fernando and Natalia powerfully depicts a society in transformation where people's identities, at the heart of one family, are being challenged by the conflicting aspects of its past colonisation and present modernisation. The novel's critique of the present American influence on the Philippines pertains to its morals; this is made explicit through descriptions of the evenings held at the Manila hotel where young, rich, Americanised Filipinos enjoy themselves dancing, drinking and smoking instead of worrying about defending the country as the rumours of an immanent conflict become more serious. In contrast, Fernando, representing the ideal of the Filipino man as engaged and courageous, joins the combined American-Filipino Army established by the Government of the Commonwealth under the name USAFFE<sup>101</sup> to fight against the Japanese. His old-fashioned behavior (romantic and patriotic) is, however, ridiculed by the new type of Filipino youth, who translate it as an act of vanity.

Fernando meets "the bohemian" Carlos Andrade, a journalist and chief editor of the Spanish paper "La Linterna" [The Lantern] (84) in the "Club Nocturno" [Night Club], where a new generation of young (professional) bourgeois are drinking champagne and smoking cigarettes:

Andrade conocía a todo el mundo. Era el editor social de "La Linterna". Ésas eran las de Pérez, las de Santos y la de Claraval. Ellos, la flor y nata profesional del país, todos doctores. Gutiérrez, médico; De la Cruz, abogado; Martínez, óptico; Peláez, dentista;

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<sup>101</sup> The developments of the international conflict in Europe and its consequences in the Pacific as Japan negotiated with the Dutch, the British and the Americans over the control of Malaya (Indonesia), Singapore, Hong Kong, Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines increased the fear of the American government, which decided to ask the Philippines to join the US Army. General McArthur initiated this idea, eventually producing an army of forty-five to fifty thousand men named the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) (Agoncillo 1965: 61). Once the fear of war became a reality, the combined army called for further help, opening a voluntary listing, which is most likely what Fernando joins.

Melendres, profesor de la “Yu Pi”; y Rocha, veterinario. Lo más granado de la sociedad. (84)

[Andrade knew everyone. He was the social editor of “The Lantern.” [The girls] were those of Perez, those of Santos and of Claraval. They were the best professionals of the country, all doctors. Gutiérrez, doctor; De la Cruz, lawyer; Martinez, optician; Peláez, dentist; Melendres, professor at the “Yu Pi” [University of the Philippines]; and Rocha, veterinarian. The cream of the crop]

The Pérez sisters and the rest of the group had just been laughing at Fernando’s attire:

¡Miren ustedes que ingresar en el Ejército, podrido de dinero como está! ¿para qué habrá ingresado ese hombre en el Ejército?

-¡Para lucir el uniforme, chica. Están más guapos de uniforme! (85)

[- It is unbelievable that he joined the Army, buried in money as he is! Why on earth has this man joined the army?

- To show off his uniform! He looks more handsome in his uniform!]

The novel’s omniscient narrator claims that the new educated youth are only worth “varios miles de pesos en deudas y trampas” (85) [various thousands of pesos in debts and gimmicks] and, therefore, are even less likely to represent hope for the nation than the rustic peasant girls and the ignorant labourers from the hacienda. Mimicking Don Lino’s words at the sight of a sad Fernando sitting at the “Club Nocturno” looking resentful at the young people who were laughing at his uniform minutes before, the narrator says: “¡Vaya una esperanza de la patria! ¡Vaya una juventud! ¡Valiente primavera de vida! ¡Cuánto más dignos aquellas rústicas campesinas y aquellos ignorantes gañanes de la hacienda!” (86) [What hope for the nation! What youth! The spring of a life! How much worthier are those rustic peasants and those ignorant laborers in the hacienda!].

The novel portrays the degree of attachment to American culture as differing between the generations. For the older generations, enjoying a modern American lifestyle is seen as negative, whereas joining the American-Filipino army, especially as a young rich man, represents an admirable patriotic gesture. In contrast, for the young generations, the American lifestyle is liberating, freeing them from the old Catholic morals, while fighting in a war seems not only old-fashioned but altogether pointless, especially for someone living a comfortable life. Fernando is the only young Filipino in the novel who sides with the older generations. The uniform he wears, which Natalia considers a costume, is for him a way of recognising himself as a Filipino national, a patriot and a hero, even though he is fighting for the Philippines as an American:

[Habla Natalia a su hermano] Pareces un príncipe...Pareces un general de Hollywood.

Otro hombre sí, completamente nuevo y diferente al Fernando de los juegos de corbata modernistas y la rosa amarilla y el clavel encendido en el ojal de la chaqueta blanca. Otro en cuerpo y sobre todo en espíritu desde que se sintió ceñido por la coraza kaki que parecía aprisionarle en una nueva dignidad y un nuevo honor. Ahora podía llamarse filipino plenamente. Ahora podía sentirse verdadero patriota. Y hasta cuadrarse marcial ante el Héroe de la raza, ante todos los héroes nacionales. (80)

[[Natalia speaking to her brother] You look like a prince ... You look like a Hollywood general. Another man, yes, completely new and different from the Ferdinand of modernist tie suits and the yellow rose and the burning carnation in the buttonhole of the white jacket. Another in body and especially in spirit since he was girded by the khaki cuirass that seemed to imprison him in a new dignity and a new honour. Now he could be called Filipino fully. Now he could feel like a true patriot. And even stand martial before the Hero of the race, before all national heroes.]

Fernando's self-reflection projects the image of a new man, a 'real Filipino.' He likes the idea of fighting as a Filipino and, spiritually, feels elevated to the Parnassus of other national heroes<sup>102</sup>; physically, however, the khaki cuirass seems to trap or imprison him (*pareciera aprisionarle*). Fighting alongside and under the command of the US is perceived as paying off a debt contracted at the moment of liberation from the Spanish - hence the feeling of oppression - but, in Fernando's mind, it also becomes an imagined patriotic act. The novel does not make clear what Fernando's uniform looks like exactly, whether it was the Commonwealth Filipino uniform<sup>103</sup> (which would make him feel patriotic) or the American one (which would be more likely to prompt Natalia to compare him to a Hollywood actor), but whatever nation it symbolises, the uniform is presented as both oppressive and liberating.

The narrator's negative descriptions of the Americanised aspect of Filipino society in *Pájaros* invoke Chow's notion of translation as betrayal. The same goes for Fernando's identification as part of the army: it is prompted by his personal desire to be a patriot but the narrator suggests that he can only ever be a pseudo-American, ridiculed by his fellow Filipinos. The narrator himself also occupies an ambivalent position. In rejecting the American identities adopted by Natalia and Fernando as inauthentic and longing instead for

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<sup>102</sup> The national heroes that Fernando is referring to here are named in an earlier scene in the novel. As he announces that he has enlisted in the army, Don Lino's initial disapproval prompts a discussion about Filipino patriotism in which Fernando remembers the deeds of other Filipinos who died fighting against invaders. He lists the early Malay chiefs Kalipulako, Lakandula, Sikatuna and Solimán, and the modern heroes José Rizal, Andrés Bonifacio, Mabini and Antonio Luna (Balmori 56).

<sup>103</sup> Louis Morton (1995) explains that "Commonwealth forces coming under United States control would retain their national integrity; they would have their own uniforms, rations, military law, scale of pay, and promotion list" (25). The Philippines was at the time under the rule of the US, which had promised to accelerate the process of independence as a payback for Filipinos joining the US to fight against the Japanese. In this case, therefore, there was no "national integrity" to be retained.

certain aspects of Spanish colonialism, he fits the mould of translation as mourning, but he also praises the Americans for having freed the Philippines from the Spanish:

España no debería ser extraña a nuestra suerte. [...] España puso los cimientos formidables de nuestra estructura nacional y América coronó más tarde el edificio con sus modernas galas y sus adornos prácticos. A las dos les debía Filipinas su orgulloso pasado y su triunfal presente. Las dos tenían derecho a mirar por su historia y su mañana. Sobre todo América, a la que aún nos unían lazos de gobierno y la gratitud eterna y enorme de una libertad que solo nos costó pedir y sólo nos costó querer, a diferencia de otros pueblos, de todos los pueblos, de los propios americanos, que tuvieron que conquistar su libertad a tiros. (27)

[Spain should not be foreign to our luck [...] She put the formidable foundation of our national structure and America crowned the work with its modern attire and its practical accessories. The Philippines owes to both countries its proud past and its triumphal present. Both had the right to look after its history and its future. Especially America, to which we were united by government as well as the eternal and great gratitude for our freedom, which we only had to ask for, unlike other countries, most countries, even the Americans themselves, who had to conquer their freedom with gunpowder.]

This quote clearly shows the persistence of colonial attachments in the narrator. Using the metaphor of a building under construction, he praises the “foundation” constructed by the Spanish and their civilising mission, which America then further enhanced. America is also effusively praised for liberating the Philippines, at their request, from Spain through the Hispano-American war of 1898. The resolution of this conflict is presented by the narrator as a non-violent transition towards freedom. However, the US occupation of the Philippines was not without violence at all, as the resistance of the Philippines to the US led to the Philippine-American War (1899-1902), with flares of conflict until 1913 (Agoncillo 1965). The narrator’s comment “we only had to ask for it” could also be a reference to the contemporary situation of the early 1940s, when negotiations towards independence were at the center of the relationship between the Philippines and the US. The promise to grant independence was used as a negotiating chip by the Americans as they tried to persuade the Filipino army to join them in WWII. President Manuel L. Quezon makes this clear in a speech he gave in June 1941:

Should the United States enter the war, the Philippines should follow her and fight by her side, placing at her disposal all our man power and material to help her in achieving victory, for the cause for which America would fight is our cause... Our stake in this war is more than the continued existence of democracy and individual freedom in the world... our stake is our own future independence and the assurance that that independence may endure... (qtd. in Agoncillo 1965: 59)

Here, the destiny of the Philippines is tied to its close attachment to the US in WWII, which is thus a strategic attachment motivated by the desire for independence and by a dedication to ideals of democracy and freedom that would themselves challenge the idea of a continued colonial relationship.

About twenty pages later, an anti-colonial stance against the Spanish is voiced in the novel:

aquellos caballeros de la Iberia que vestidos de hierro arribaron en sus naos soberbias a las playas de Luzón y Bisayas.

De muy lejos, del Destino y los designios del cielo, llegaron a nosotros por los verdes caminos del océano. Y poderosos como eran, disimulando el oro de las cadenas con guirnaldas de flores, nos ataron las manos. Cadenas de oro, pero al fin ¡cadenas! Entonces perdimos lo mejor que nos había dado Dios ¡la libertad! Y desde entonces velamos en la noche y el día expiando el momento de poder romper los grillos. (56)

[those knights from Iberia, with their iron dresses arrived on their proud ships to the beaches of Luzon and Bisayas.

From far away, from Destiny and the intentions of heaven, they reached us by the green paths of the ocean. Powerful as they were, concealing the golden chains with flower garlands, they tied our hands. Gold chains, but chains nonetheless! Then we lost the best God had given us, freedom! Since then, we watch over day and night, awaiting the moment to break the irons.]

Significantly, here (as well as in the passage about the Americans freeing the Philippines from the Spanish cited above) the narrator's third-person voice becomes entangled with the collective "we" of the Filipino people during and before colonisation. The slippages between presenting the Philippines as an oppressed colonised space (the narrator speaks of invasion, enchainment, deprivation of freedom and the desire to break the irons) and presenting it as owing gratitude to the colonisers (with regard to the Spanish civilising task and the American liberation without violence) reflect the conflicting views held by different parts of the Filipino population, with the narrator sometimes speaking for one group and at other times for another. As in Gurrea's *Cuentos de Juana*, analysed in Chapter 2, Balmori's text introduces ambivalence regarding who is speaking and on whose behalf. The narration, then, is *out of focus* or, more precisely, itself a site of ongoing translations between the different perspectives that make up the transcultural realm of the Philippines, which has no single (nationalist) voice.

The following passage starts with the omniscient third-person narrator describing Don Lino's thoughts but eventually the focus shifts to the voice of Don Lino (in the form of an inner monologue), who adopts the first-person plural to refer to a collective "we"

(presumably comprising Filipinos of his class) that he presents in opposition to another collective of Filipinos - “they, the masses, the people”:

Don Lino, al igual que muchos ricachones filipinos, no simpatizaba con los americanos ni estaba conforme con la política de independizar el país. [...] La independencia suponía la ruina del pueblo filipino. Solo podían desearla los cuatro encumbrados títeres a quienes pudiera beneficiar. Al pueblo, no. *El pueblo no estaba, ni estaría en mucho tiempo preparado* para tan grande responsabilidad. Las masas solo sabían invocar a cada paso sus derechos, ignorando por completo sus deberes. *Abusaban de las libertades* concedidas con una impunidad procaz. Y andaban por sus tierras desunidos, divididos en partidos políticos y fracciones religiosas, enemistándose a cada instante, riñendo, y esgrimiendo como argumento contundente el puñal fratricida. América creyendo *hacernos* un gran bien, *nos estaba* haciendo un mal muy grande. *Darnos* la libertad completa y absoluta en el año 46. Poner en manos de un chiquillo travieso una bomba de dinamita.

Si venía en Japón, vendría a ser la salvación de Filipinas. Las lecciones amargas que *nos pudiera dar*, acabarían siempre con el libertinaje de las costumbres, con *la irresponsabilidad de nuestra vida*. El país necesitaba un dómine austero, una política dictatorial, una mano dura para conducirlo a los más altos destinos y las más dignas empresas. Hasta ahora el gobierno de Filipinas venía resultando un gobierno de opereta. Y la nación que al otro lado de los mares se lo imaginaba creado a su imagen y semejanza, una víctima voluntaria del más grande espejismo...Que venía el Japón. Por Don Lino, mejor; que llegara en buena hora. Que viniera cuanto antes! (134, my emphasis)

[Don Lino, like many other rich Filipinos, did not sympathise with the Americans, nor was he content with the policy of giving the country its independence. [...] Independence would mean the ruin of the Filipino people. Only a few privileged puppets benefiting from it would want it. Not *the masses*. *The people* were not and would not be ready for a long time for such great responsibility. With every step they took, the masses only knew how to evoke their rights, ignoring their duties. *They* abused their granted freedom with obscene impunity. *They* wandered on their lands segregated, divided into political parties and religious fractions, disputing each other at any given moment, arguing and using as a forceful argument the fratricidal dagger. America, believing that she was doing *us* a great good, was, on the contrary doing *us* a greater evil. And if God did not remediate this on time, she [America] was getting ready to do a worse evil. Giving us complete and absolute freedom in 1946 was like putting a dynamite bomb in the hands of a mischievous little boy.

If Japan came, it would be the salvation of the Philippines. The bitter lessons that it could give *us* would end the debauchery of manners, the irresponsibility of *our* life. The country needed an austere commander, a dictatorial policy, a hard hand to lead it to the highest destinations and the most dignified enterprises. Up to now the Philippine government has been turning into an operetta government. And the nation [the US] that on the other side of the seas imagined it and created it in its image and likeness was a voluntary victim of the greatest mirage. If Japan was to come, much better, according to Don Lino, it would be welcomed, the sooner, the better.]

This quote highlights the ambivalent discourse concerning the idea of independence in the Philippines, which led some people to favour the arrival of Japan as a better alternative. The

unpredictable consequences of becoming independent are compared with putting a dynamite bomb in the hands of ‘a mischievous boy.’ The infantilisation of the Philippines here contrasts with the one Gurrea depicts in the 1951 play *Filipinas: auto histórico satírico* [Philippines: A Historical-Satirical allegory]. Far from being a child with a bomb in her hands, Gurrea depicts young Philippines as well-educated and well-equipped nation thanks to her assimilation of the better aspects of her colonial heritage. The major difference between the texts, of course, is that in 1951 the Philippines was actually an independent country.

What is also suggested in the quote from Balmori’s novel is that an authoritarian regime facilitates civilisation/modernisation by imposing a totalising ideology that erases differences that may lead, otherwise, to internal conflict. This idea echoes Paz Mendoza’s empathy with Mussolini’s Italy as a model for a postcolonial state that would enforce Filipino national unity. The analysis of Filipino society offered in this fragment shows Don Lino’s attachment to the discourse of western cultural imperialism, which constructs the eastern other as uncivilised, unable to understand itself, fratricidal and whimsical. From Don Lino’s elite perspective, America is projecting an image of herself onto the Philippines that privileged Filipinos like Don Lino do not think the Filipino population as a whole is adequate to, leading him to reject it as a mirage, a delusion. With becoming like the Americans not an option for the Philippines, becoming independent under the leadership of the Filipino people would ruin the country. To prevent this catastrophe, Don Lino suggests allowing Japan, as the new cultural superior, to provide “bitter lessons” and even a “dictatorial policy” to lead the Philippines to “the highest destinations,” which, in time, might include independence. This passage exemplifies the difficulty of attaining intercultural equivalence through translation, as delineated by Chow. Instead of incorporating the principle of coevalness (which insists that all cultures exist *in* the same time, with none running ahead or behind a constructed standard), Don Lino translates Filipino culture as unequal to other cultures, positing the country as not ready yet to rule itself or to become modern on its own terms. Don Lino’s is not the only perspective represented in the novel but it is the one that is most critically scrutinised by showing him to have been wrong about Japan, which, in the end, did not seek to lead the Philippines to greatness but to violate it.

### **Lovable Japan: Literary Orientalism and the Pleasure of Misrecognition**

There are inescapable similarities between Balmori’s and Don Lino’s niponiphilia that turn the novel into a form of autobiographical self-criticism. Don Lino develops his fascination with Japan after a trip to the country, just like Balmori did after travelling to Yokohama in

1902 (Donoso 2009: xxxiii). In 1932, Balmori gave a full conference in verse entitled *Nippón* at the Japanese Association of the Philippines, presenting a justification of Japan and Japanese civilisation carried out with an “exquisite modernist exoticism” (Donoso 2009: xxxiv). Partly based on experience and partly imagined, the exoticisation of Japan that characterises Balmori’s poetry, as I showed in Chapter 1, is also present in *Pájaros*.

In the novel, Don Lino’s admiration for Japan is given ample space, with full paragraphs charting his praise for the sophistication of Japanese culture. In the opening two pages, for example, Don Lino wanders around his garden and notes of his Japanese gardeners: “¡Gente asombrosa! ¡Nadie como ellos para convertir en frondosos árboles y maravillosas flores los troncos más raquíuticos y las raíces más ingratas” (13) [Amazing people! No one like them to turn into leafy trees and wonderful flowers the stunted trunks and the most ungrateful roots]. It is the return of these gardeners to Japan in order to attend to “importantes asuntos domésticos” [Important domestic business] (Balmori 51) that announces the beginning of the end of Don Lino’s adoration of the country. By having Don Lino use the same modernist rhetoric Balmori used in his conference, the novel unmasks its inconsistencies and deceptiveness - its basis in fantasy rather than reality. The way in which Don Lino translates Japan into a model for his own country is one of betrayal: by idealising Japan and wanting to translate Filipino culture into Japanese culture, he is betraying his own culture.

Don Lino’s admiration for Japan exemplifies orientalism as I defined it in Chapter 1, attached to colonialism and establishing a hegemony of cultures, in this case placing Japanese above Filipino culture. The superiority of Japan is conveyed by political idolatry and also frequently through exoticisation. Affectively the idealisation of Japan hinges on a sense of love. Sara Ahmed’s 2004 study *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* understands identification and idealisation as forms of *love for the nation*. She writes that “identification is a form of love; it is an active kind of loving that moves subjects towards another. Identification involves the desire to get closer to others by becoming like them” (126). In the 1930s, some Filipinos saw in the prosperous Asian country of Japan a model of progress rooted in a (perceived) strong and homogenous sense of nationhood that, if adopted by the Philippines, would erase that country’s ambivalent attachments to Spain and the US. In the novel, this loving admiration of and desire to become like Japan is seen to ignore the realities both of Filipino society, which is presented as heterogeneous and indolent, and of Japanese imperialism, which makes Japan not a model to follow but a threat. Still, Don Lino’s love for Japan, albeit ultimately exposed as misguided, is not presented as a personal folly. Rather, the

novel portrays it as a prevalent affective attachment among Filipino intellectuals prompted by various stimuli: literary orientalism, the contemporary political discourse circulating among Filipino *ilustrados* and what Rafael has called “the pleasure of misrecognition” (2000), which occurs when one is mistaken for another national perceived as superior.

As I noted in Chapter 1, numerous works of Hispano-Filipino literature, including Balmori’s early poetry, are influenced by European orientalism and Hispanic modernism, producing a form of transcultural orientalism that engages with western narratives in terms of genre and form while using oriental motifs. In *Pájaros*, Don Lino uses a romantic and orientalist tone to praise the beauty of Japan, as in the scene I already discussed in Chapter 1, where he describes his beloved Haruko San as supremely beautiful and offering eternal devotion. In other passages, he refers to Japan’s imagined pure, divine origins, the Japanese sense of honor and the spirit that has caused Japan to be called to the position of “el soberano de una nueva Asia” (42) [sovereign of a new Asia]:

No se trababa de un pueblo de mercaderes ni mestizos de otras razas nacionalizados ingleses o americanos. Japón era el espíritu de dioses encarnados en fibras de “shogunes”, “samuráis” y “daimios”. (43)

[[Japan] was not a nation of merchants or of mixed-race people naturalised as English or American. Japan was the spirit of Gods embodied in the fibers of ‘shoguns’ ‘samurais’ and ‘daimios.’]

De ahí viene mi gran afecto por Japón y todo lo que sea japonés. Las mejores horas de mi vida las he vivido allí. Japón es un pueblo que ama a los niños, a las flores, a los ciervos, a las aguas y a los pájaros; que tiene por única y verdadera religión el honor, y por único y verdadero altar, la patria; que no le importa sacrificar la vida y la gloria de su imperio; que está llamado por su fuerza terrible y su espíritu indomable, a ser el dueño del Pacífico, el amo del Oriente, el soberano de la nueva Asia. (42)

[My great affection for Japan comes from Japan and everything that is Japanese. The best hours of my life I spent there. Japan is a nation that loves children, flowers, deer, water and birds; its only and true religion is honour and its only and true altar is the nation; it does not care about sacrificing its life and the glory of its empire; by virtue of its overwhelming strength and its indomitable spirit it is called to be the owner of the Pacific, the master of the Orient, the sovereign of a new Asia.]

The first quote mobilises an image of Japan that is ‘pure’ and divine, in contrast to the mixture of races found in the Philippines, whose people do not have their own nationality but have to adopt that of their colonisers. Don Lino perceives hybridity, brought about by miscegenation or through trade, as effecting a dissolution of the divine purity retained by the

Japanese and their military and political traditions (represented by the *samurai*, *shogun* and the *daimios*). The second quote proposes Japanese nationalism, expressed as a fervent, exclusive love for one's own country, as the *raison d'être* of the Japanese and as spurring their domination of Asia, which is conceived in terms of a calling that cannot be refused rather than as aggressive imperial expansion.

Through Don Lino's affirmations of Japanese culture runs a deep identification with those who are perceived as the same - com-patriots. Defending the nation "in the name of love" for ourselves (Ahmed 2004: 122) produces hatred towards the other, in this case towards the non-Japanese. In light of this, a question arises that Don Lino seemingly never asks: how could Japan be the ruler of a new Asia that would also include non-Japanese? How could it become the ruler of others in the name of love exclusively for its own?

Through Don Lino's character, *Pájaros* incorporates a political discourse that circulated among parts of Filipino society before WWII. Japan's escape from colonialism is perceived as what makes its people equal and united. The perceived homogeneity of Japanese nationalism and its valorisation of the collective over the individual are taken as reasons for its supreme power in Asia. Additionally, Donoso (2010) explains that, between 1898 and 1945, for many Filipino intellectuals Japan emerged as a model of an Asian nation that the Philippines could aspire to as a way to counteract American colonialism. The populist aspects of the discourses used to justify Japanese expansionism, such as those concerning the fight against "western materialism," the recuperation of "lost oriental values" or the "courage, endurance, thrift, diligence and industry" (B. Vargas qtd. in Rafael 2000: 105), were undoubtedly attractive to a society attempting to assert its own Asianness and sense of nationhood. Rafael summarises the political imagination of Japan as a model nation as follows:

Herein lies a fundamental element in Filipino attitudes toward Japan prior to the Pacific War: Japan was seen as another *nation*, that is, a place free from colonial control and sovereign in its capacity to determine its own history. It symbolized what the Philippines sought to become. It is this aspiration for nationhood that animates, I think, Filipino remarks such as "affinities of race," "common interests," and "same destiny" between Japan and the Philippines. The future tie they envisaged with Japan was not one of subordination to a superior race but one characterized by relations of mutual deference and reciprocal obligations. In other words, it was Japan's ability to re-mark its difference from other countries—an ability that constituted its nationhood—that Filipinos emulated. (2000: 105)

What Filipinos envisioned when looking to Japan, in other words, was not a relationship of oppression but one of love, not in the mode of idealisation but identification. As Ahmed outlines, love as idealisation is based on “loving what is not me” (127) and therefore on wanting to have the loved object because of its difference from the self (127). This is the form of love typical of literary orientalism, where “loving-as-having” (Ahmed 126) appears in the desire to possess the exotic other. Thus, Don Lino wants to have Haruko San because she is different from and therefore more desirable than Filipino women. Love as identification, in contrast, is a form of “loving-as-being” or love for sameness (Ahmed 126). The political discourse described by Rafael, which highlights the similarities between the Filipino and the Japanese ‘race,’ ‘history’ and ‘destiny’ can be read as an example of “loving-as-being”: I love what I am or, in this case, what I, too, could be (as a form of aspiration). Significantly, Ahmed emphasises that love as identification does not mean wanting to be other but wanting to be in the other’s place: “it is the desire to take a place where one is not yet,” a “love towards” the object (126). This is crucial to understanding the pro-Japanese discourse prevalent in the Philippines before WWII; the Filipino subject moves towards the Japanese love-object in an anticipatory, future-oriented temporality, perhaps realizing that true mutuality and reciprocity with Japan will never be possible, but seeking to derive hope from the example of an Asian nation “free from colonial control and sovereign in its capacity to determine its own history” (Rafael 2000: 105).

The idea of identification as a form of love aligns with Rafael’s notion of the “pleasure of misrecognition,” which refers to the fantasy of being mistaken for a national of a country perceived as superior. To illustrate this phenomenon, Rafael recounts an anecdote about José Rizal, who, while visiting an exhibition of Japanese paintings in Paris in 1883 was mistaken “as one of Japan” by a group of French people (Rizal qtd. in Rafael 2000: 106). This misrecognition can be described as a “pleasure” because Rizal perceives it as positive; in his account, the idea of being Japanese opens up a fantasy that takes him away from his received (colonial) identity. However, this momentary identification does not last forever; the love spell ends when he is asked by a French lady to read the Japanese ideograms written on the artwork. Instead of confessing that he is not Japanese, he makes up an excuse, stating that he does not read Japanese because he was sent overseas while very young to learn the culture of the West. As Rafael notes,

“Japan” affords Rizal the opportunity to realize the arbitrariness of colonial boundaries and the prospect of slipping away from received identities. With “Japan” comes the exhilarating possibility of reimagining a different history, however fanciful, for the indio self. (Rafael 2000: 107)

For Rizal, the “indio self” is a performative identity that grants him the pleasure of being (mis)recognised as a Japanese man for *looking like* one to the French. The image of Rizal that the French tourists project back to him (in their orientalist inability to distinguish between different Asian peoples) ignites in him the possibility of exorcizing the colonial attachments that haunt the indio self and of performing, through translation, a new identity free of a contested past history. This leads him to happily betray his actual identity as a Filipino.

The “pleasure of misrecognition” opens up a new perspective on transcultural attachments: Rizal does not fancy himself a Spaniard or an American but a Japanese, challenging the relationship between coloniser and colonised by a desire to not be like one or the other but to forge another translation of the self, one based on love as identification. Additionally, I see in this “pleasure of misrecognition” an example of translation that can only be understood in its context. To the French, Rizal can translate himself into a Japanese, so the “pleasure of misrecognition” is situated away from the place of origin.

Having shown that Don Lino’s adoration of Japan is not a personal quirk but a widespread strategy among Filipino intellectuals, including Rizal, propelled by the desire to escape the fact that the Philippines, unlike Japan, was colonised, I will now discuss how Balmori’s novel portrays the demise of this strategy. The collapse of the mythical image of Japan occurs through war and through heartbreak. As the novel advances, we learn that Haruko San did not keep her promise to wait for Don Lino’s return and instead married a Japanese official. Don Lino, devastated by the news, starts to feel the consequences of the blind love that had prevented him from seeing clearly, confessing to his brother: “Te confieso que he sido un candido. Ahora me estoy temiendo todo del Japón” (94) [I must confess I have been naïve. Now I fear everything from Japan]. He continues:

Se había acabado todo, quimera y esperanza, paloma y nido, ídolo y fe. Sólo tenía por delante el panorama triste de una solitaria vejez y un abandono de afecciones, encerrado en este moderno palacete de Manila, o en el vetusto caserón de la hacienda, sin más regalo, ni más consuelo, que este jardín que aquí se estaba marchitando y los campos de allá llenos de pájaros y espigas... (100)

[Everything was over, chimera and hope, dove and nest, idol and faith. All he had ahead of him was the sad perspective of a lonely old age and deprivation of affection, locked in this modern palace in Manila or in the ancient house of the hacienda, with no other present, no more comfort than the withering garden and the faraway fields full of birds and thorns.]

Don Lino conflates his story of unrequited love ('dove and nest') with that of political disillusionment ('idol and faith'). All his love for Japan is lost when, first, the Japanese gardeners return home under the family's suspicion that they were spies and, second, Don Lino loses his children when the war breaks out. As a result, both the garden of the house and Lino himself start to wither.

With regard to the story of the gardeners, Donoso (2009) explains that, before the war, many Japanese spies infiltrated the Philippines. Agoncillo (1965) provides a more nuanced explanation of this phenomenon, referring to the political and historical reasons for the Japanese presence in the Philippines and the changing attitude of the American government and the Filipino people towards them. The Japanese had established a sort of "Japanese colony" (47) in the region of Davao, where, since 1910, the American government had encouraged investment and migration from Japan in order to develop the economy. At the time, the Japanese were considered better workers than the Filipinos and the Chinese. However, as they gained control over the land in Davao, exploiting primary sources and managing their businesses through Japanese companies, the Filipino Commonwealth government (1935-1946) started issuing bills that controlled the arrival of foreigners on the islands and required the migrant population to be registered and have their fingerprints taken. Agoncillo explains:

The law was obviously intended to prevent the commission of sabotage by aliens, notably by the Japanese, who were almost everywhere in the capital as "fishermen", "shopkeepers", "owners of refreshment parlours", and "gardeners". The law, did not, for obvious reasons, finger out the Japanese, but the situation and the context in which it was passed showed that the assembly intended it to be more against the Japanese than, say, the Chinese. As a result, some 53,000 aliens in Manila alone were reported to have been accounted for the end of July. (52)

The attitude towards the Japanese, thus, quickly changed from welcoming their investments and manpower to suspecting them of conducting a new economic colonisation. In the public discourse, this suspicion turned into fear of an actual Japanese occupation as WWII approached. Balmori introduces this social circumstance in the novel, suggesting that the gardeners working in the Robles' hacienda were either spies (as the rumour went) or deported for political reasons when they became illegal immigrants under the new laws.

Through its portrayal of Don Lino, *Pájaros* criticizes the tendency of elite Hispano-Filipinos to look for outside answers to solve internal problems, criticising the way in which this elite disrespected the Filipino people, who are recurrently silenced and referred to as indolent masses. For most of the novel, the voice of the Filipino people also remains lost in

Balmori's own translation of Filipino society, but it does appear for a brief intervention towards the end.

### Lost and Betrayed in Translation

At the beginning of my reading of *Pájaros*, I emphasised the novel's cosmopolitan focus on international characters and the transcultural elite. This is not surprising given Balmori's own social background. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that non-elite Filipinos mostly appear in the novel only in their collectiveness to illustrate particular political views held by the elite, as in Don Lino's monologue referring to "the masses" of peasants incapable of governing themselves (and thus better ruled by Japan) and in the narrator's anti-American speech that idealises the "workers of the hacienda" and the "rustic peasant girls" (85) as better national figures than young unpatriotic professionals like Natalia's boyfriend Sandoval or Carlos Andrade, the opportunistic editor of the social section of a popular newspaper. The next passage, told from the perspective of Don Lino, is also typical:

Habían partido los magos floricultores, y ya nadie sabría arrancar a la tierra el secreto de su pompa vegetal. [Don Lino] *Pensó en los nuestros*, en los jardineros del país, pero enseguida desechó la idea. Eran unos ignorantes, *unos bárbaros sin noción de arte*, ni delicadezas de artista. Estaban bien para plantar sembrar lechugas y cultivar tomates. Ninguno entendía nada de jardinería. (53, emphasis added)

[The flower-wizards had departed, and no one would know how to wrest the secret of their vegetable pomp from the earth. [Don Lino] *thought of ours*, the gardeners of the country, but he immediately dismissed the idea. They were ignorant, barbarians with no notion of art, no artistic delicacy. They were good at planting lettuce and growing tomatoes. None of them understood anything about gardening.]

To Don Lino, the "the gardeners of our country" are barbarous and unsophisticated next to the Japanese, who can extract the best qualities from the earth.

Once the gardeners are gone and the myth about Japan starts collapsing, however, there is a scene describing Father Elías storming into the hacienda to warn Don Lino that the Japanese have taken the village and are on their way to his house. Don Lino, skeptical of the possibility that the Japanese would use violence, invites the priest to have breakfast. Even as the Japanese soldiers are entering his house, he tells Father Elías that he shall have a word with them because "estos no son los brutos que son los blancos... Éstos están supercivilizados..." (173) [these are not as brute as the whites... They are supercivilised]. The omniscient narrator picks up on his naïve words to start describing the most horrific scene of the book: "A los pocos minutos los "supercivilizados" tomaban por asalto la mesa del

desayuno” (173) [Within a few minutes, “the supercivilised” were storming the breakfast table]. They plunder the house and, most terribly, gang rape a pregnant Natalia in a locked room with Don Lino able to hear her screams. They leave her dead body in a puddle of blood the sight of which maddens Don Lino. Shocked and delirious, he runs from the house and gets lost in the forest to be found dead on his farmland two days later.

Immediately after the assault on the house, Pablo, the foreman of the hacienda workers, enters the property to ask Don Lino and Father Elías to join them in forming a guerrilla force to kill the Japanese, but he only finds Father Elías running from the scene:

-Con nosotros, con toda la gente de la hacienda, que somos cientos y seremos miles. Vamos a los montes, a formar guerrillas, a matar, a morir. Estos bandidos han destruido nuestros hogares, han violado a nuestras mujeres, han torturado a nuestros hombres, han asesinado en masa poblaciones enteras. ¡Se han figurado que les tenemos miedo! ¡Se creyeron al vernos postrados que estábamos ante ellos de rodillas! ¡Canallas ...! ¡Ya verán, cuando llegue el momento, quiénes son los filipinos! (179)

[Come with the people of the hacienda, we are hundreds but we will be thousands. We are running to the hills, to form guerrillas, to kill and to die. Those bandits have destroyed our homes, have raped our women, have tortured our men, have murdered complete populations. Do they think that we are scared? They may have thought that we kneeled in front of them as they saw us bowing. Bastards! They will see, when the moment comes, who are the Filipinos!]

Although this moment comes too late for Don Lino, it signals the novel’s turn towards the Filipino commoners, who, as the ones willing to fight the Japanese, are vindicated against Don Lino’s portrayal of them as unworthy of independence. The novel also envisions the commoners and the elites joining forces, as Fernando abandons the American army and joins Pablo, to become a captain in the guerrilla. Fernando’s patriotism has finally found a clear direction now that he can fight with and for the Philippines. In contrast, Andrade betrays Filipino nationalism by voluntarily becoming a puppet of the Japanese occupying government:

Elevaron al pobre diablo de Andrade al puesto de director de “La Linterna”. Y Andrade, sintiéndose más japonés que Tokio, se dedicó desde el primer instante a loar en todos los estilos y por todos los medios las fantásticas glorias del Asia oriental más grande. Empezó públicamente a comer en cuclillas, renunciando a los cubiertos por los asiáticos palillos, aprendió a chapurrar el “nipongo” con una vieja hetaira japonesa; y sin perjuicio de lamer las zancajas a los nuevos gobernantes filipinos, erigió en lo más destacado de su hogar un altar shintoísta para adorar al Mikado y demás accesorios. No se satisfacía con publicar libelos en el periódico. Deambulaba por toda la ciudad predicando con la palabra y el ejemplo el amor, el fervor y la gratitud que el pueblo filipino debía a sus estevados conquistadores. (183-4)

[They elevated the poor devil of Andrade to the post of director of “La linterna”. Andrade, feeling more Japanese than Tokyo, dedicated his efforts from the first moment to praise in all styles and by all means the fantastic glories of the largest East Asia. He publicly began to eat squatting [instead of sitting], renouncing all cutlery but the Asian chopsticks, learned to patter the “nipongo” with an old Japanese hetaera [prostitute]; And without prejudice he started to suck up to the new Philippine rulers, erecting as the highlight of his home a shintoist altar to worship the Mikado and other accessories. He was not satisfied with publishing libels in the newspaper but wandered all over the city preaching with word and example the love, fervour and gratitude that the Filipino people owed to their steadfast conquerors.]

With this description of Andrade’s complicity, the novel’s denouncement of the Filipino assimilation to the Japanese, perceived as the highest treason to Filipino nationalism, comes to a climax.

However, the narrative in *Pájaros* takes another turn denying revenge to the Filipinos as victims of war and portraying the Filipino national resistance as short-lived. Fernando is convinced by Father Elías to abandon his post as captain of the Filipino guerrilla with the argument that he is being blinded by a desire for revenge rather than doing justice to his people as he believes. According to Father Elías, Fernando is simply leading a gang of rebels seeding terror against the law. Most crucially, Father Elías makes Fernando believe that only a good Catholic seeking peace rather than revenge can be a good patriot:

Usted fue siempre un buen cristiano y una gran patriota. Infortunadamente, ha dejado usted de serlo. Porque vivir como usted vive, consagrando el alma y vida a una venganza, por muy nobles, por muy altos, por muy santos que sean los motivos, es volver a levantar la cruz de Aquél que en el Gólgota [Monte donde crucificaron a Jesucristo] perdonó a sus verdugos. (197)

[You were always a good Christian and a great patriot. Unfortunately, you have ceased to be one. Living as you do now, consecrating your soul and life to vengeance, however noble, however high, however holy the motives, is to raise the cross of The One who on Golgotha [mount where they crucified Jesús Christ] forgave his executioners.]

Father Elías stirs Fernando’s conscience by suggesting that he is only seeking revenge, a weakness in the eyes of a good Christian. He asks Fernando to forgive the Japanese and let “The Lord” decide the destiny of the Filipino people (197). Patriotism here is linked back to Catholicism and therefore to the Hispanic heritage that the novel never truly betrays but insistently mourns. Even though the episode of Fernando and father Elías questions this

affirmation because Fernando is killed when he returns to Manila after leaving the guerrilla behind. It is rather the ending with Ramón than confirms the mourning of Catholicism.

### **Found and Mourned in Translation**

After abandoning the guerrilla force, Fernando returns to the city in search of Marta and his uncle Ramón, only to be killed by a stray bullet during the terrible events of February 1945 in Manila.<sup>104</sup> In the novel, the climax of WWII in the Philippines thus overlaps with the demise of the Hispano-Filipino bourgeois family represented as oblivious to geopolitical changes and still romantically glorifying the Hispanic past. According to Lifshey, the novel erases all three alternative future paths for the Filipino elite allegorically envisioned in the three marriages rendered impossible by the war: joining the Americans, joining the Japanese or becoming independent. Natalia's boyfriend Sandoval, representing an Americanised future, dies; Don Lino's Japanese lover Haruko San marries a Japanese man; and Fernando does not survive to marry his beloved Marta, the indigenous Filipina that would symbolise the independence of the archipelago. This apocalyptic pessimism makes *Pájaros*, according to Lifshey, an "escathological text," "a processing through fiction of the wrenching social end of a useless Spanish speaking elite nearly half a century after Spain itself had been ejected from the islands" (13).

Indeed, Balmori's translation of the convoluted social and political background of the Philippines before and during WWII is a pessimistic one that forges transcultural attachments only to break them: it abandons the dominant discourses of American patriotism, Japanese Imperialism and, most crucially, the emerging discourse of Filipino nationalism. In contrast, and perhaps this is what Lifshey does not stop to consider in his analysis, the betrayal of these possible alternative 'happier endings' is carried out at the expense of a mourning of the Hispanic colonial heritage in the novel's enigmatic final scene.

With all the main characters of the novel dead, *Pájaros* closes with the only survivor from the Robles family after the Manila attack, Don Ramón, stranded on a beach in a semiconscious state. There, he has a vision of Christopher Columbus setting foot on the beach in the Caribbean - in what is now the Dominican Republic. The novel describes Don Ramón's vision in detail: Columbus kneels and admires the virginal beauty of the untouched beach, while Ramón praises Columbus for bringing "redención para los pueblos sin libertad,

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<sup>104</sup> The American air force and Japanese troops, who after three years of occupation realised they were losing the war, engaged in one of the bloodiest fights in the Pacific, leaving Manila with 100,000 deceased and making it the second most devastated city after Warsaw in World War II (Gruhl 2010: 97).

firme sostén para la humanidad caída, pan y vino de amor para los que han hambre y sed de justicia, lecho herido” (210-11) [Redemption for peoples without freedom, firm support for fallen humanity, bread and wine of love for those who have hunger and thirst for justice, [from their] wounded bed]. Columbus is thus perceived as the savior, the one bringing redemption through faith (bread and wine) instead of quenching a thirst for revenge to alleviate pain. This vision translates Catholicism, brought by (a recommencement of) Hispanic colonisation, into the only salvation for the Filipino people. Thus, the novel’s ending culminates in translation as mourning for what shall not be lost: the Catholic faith and the behaviour it prescribes. Rather than imagining a new future in which the Filipino people - with the non-elite in the vanguard - defend their country and define themselves as a nation, Balmori’s novel sides with the remnant of the Hispanised elite and suggests that the only future for the Filipino nation is through keeping its Catholic faith.

As an example of cultural translation, therefore, *Pájaros* simultaneously betrays and mourns different cultures, fully engaging with Chow’s conception because what is betrayed is not the same as what is mourned. Following Rafael, Filipino nationalism in Spanish as depicted in the novel translates a nationalist ideology that expresses a desire to be independent and break from the control of the colonising forces of the US and Japan, while maintaining a strong cultural attachment to its Hispanic heritage, in particular Catholicism. The various transcultural attachments in the novel, however, do not come together in a transcultural vision of Filipino nationalism, which leads me to conclude that *Pájaros* rejects the possibilities of active transculturation, except perhaps in the way some everyday customs and traditions are depicted.

Tradition appears in the novel as the best example of translation as simultaneous betrayal and mourning. *Pájaros* puts under scrutiny the arbitrary acquired tastes of the elites, suggesting that the ‘local’ is rejected in favor of the ‘foreign’:

En Filipinas, tierra de flores, los petimetres se florojalaban con claveles de trapo; las mujeres buscaban el perfume de los frascos de París, despreciando el collar de sampaguitas que embalsamaba el pecho de la abuela. (53-54)

[In the Philippines, land of flowers, dandies adorned their buttonholes with paper carnations; women searched for Parisian perfumes, despising the necklace of sampaguitas that embalmed the chest of their grandmother.]

Here, the traditional is betrayed by rejecting it in favour of a more modern and global fashion (Parisian perfumes), while also mourning the Filipino flowers that have been replaced. It is significant, however, that the allusion to the traditional is made through an image in which

live flowers lie on the chest of an embalmed (dead) grandmother. Another example of how the way traditions are perceived through notions of translation as mourning and betrayal in the novel is with regards to music and dancing. During Natalia and Sandoval's wedding party, Don Lino complains about how the frenetic and sensual dances of the present have erased the traditional ones:

Se iban multiplicando las parejas en una mareadora y sugestiva sucesión de tangos, rumbas y danzas exóticas. [...]Era un espectáculo grotesco, sin ninguna elegancia, ni ritmo, ni arte. ¿En dónde estaban nuestros bailes? ¿Nuestros hermosos bailes propios, aquellos que bailó la abuela meciéndose como una flor apenas sostenida, mostrando apenas bajo la fimbria de la saya la breve punta de su chapín dorado? ¿El elegante vals, la dulce mazorca, la lánguida polca, toda aquella melodía acompasada como un poema, que más que un carnal deleite fue elevación del alma al arte, en dónde estaba? (113)

[Dancing couples were multiplying in a provocative and head-spinning succession of tangos, rumbas and exotic dances. [...] It was a grotesque spectacle, with no elegance, rhythm or art. Where were our dances? Our own wonderful dances, those danced by our grandmother swaying like a suspended flower, barely showing the tip of her golden shoes under the hem of her petticoat? The elegant waltz, the sweet mazurka, the languid polka, all those melodies rhythmic like a poem rather than a pleasure of the flesh, an elevation of the soul to the category of art, where were they?]

What is remarkable here is that none of the dances mentioned are 'originally' Filipino. The modern tangos and rumbas are rooted in Argentina and the Caribbean as a mixture of European, African and American traditions, while the waltz, mazurka and polka are of German and Polish origin. Yet the latter dances are associated by Don Lino with a traditional Filipino past, one that only the upper educated classes, mostly descending from Europeans, can consider their own. The analogy of the dances points not only to a generational gap, but also highlights Don Lino's refusal to consider any non-Hispanic Filipino tradition worthwhile. With his mournful claim to bring back something that was once familiar (to him and the rest of the elite) comes the realisation that this, too, like the modern dances, was a translation of a tradition coming from somewhere else.

The novel heartbrokenly laughs at Don Lino's (and by extension the Hispanised elite's) decadent attachment to a vanishing past and dismissive attitude towards everything not Hispanic-Filipino and elite. In doing so, *Pájaros* distances itself clearly from the elitist way of thinking embodied by Don Lino (and later on Andrade) that promotes assimilation, a form of acculturation, to Japan and also (through Fernando's uniform and the critique of the American lifestyle) to the US. Notwithstanding, through its ending, Balmori's novel

demonstrates a lingering attachment to Hispanic Catholicism rather than a truly transcultural nationalist vision of the Philippines' future.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated how Balmori's novel *Los Pájaros de fuego* enacts Chow's notion of cultural translation as a simultaneous act of betrayal (towards an 'original' culture) and mourning (towards the loss of that 'original'). Having taken as the 'original' the cultural heterogeneity that constituted Filipino society in the years leading up to the Japanese occupation, what Balmori's translation shows is that Filipino nationalism, in part, is based on a recurrent mourning of Catholic values, embodied in the characters of Father Elías, Fernando and Don Ramón. Simultaneously, translation as betrayal appears in the novel's criticism of Filipino nationalists' uncritical assimilation of Japanese, American and European, as portrayed in the characters of Don Lino and Andrade, Natalia and Sandoval, and Don Anselmi and Dr. Kauffman. By having the characters appear as embodiments of the various political discourses circulating at the time, *Pájaros* suggests a mournful vision of the Hispanic-Filipino elite, in their imagination of the nation to come, as overly attached to both the Hispanic past and the naïve idealisation of other nations, thereby betraying the Filipino people.

The novel also shows the potential dangers of the way early Filipino nationalism manifested as a practice of translation that re-defined and appropriated other forms of nationalism into Spanish (as most intellectuals could communicate, secretly, in Spanish during the American and Japanese periods). In *Pájaros*, the outcome of what Rafael calls 'translation as a practice of nationalism' is not a homogeneous manifesto of national ideology but rather an ambivalent expression of political and social disillusionment as the last remnants of a Spanish-speaking Filipino elite disappear. Filipino nationalism in Spanish as depicted in *Pájaros* is thus a translation failure.

In the end, Balmori's novel is a critical and pessimistic comment on transculturation, which is perhaps why it finishes by endorsing, in the scene of Don Ramón's vision, a return to Spanish colonialism. Its focus, crucially, lies with the process of transculturation in the present - what happens in the translation between different cultures as these cultures also contest each other on the geopolitical stage - rather than in the past or as a project for the future. In the next chapter, I analyse Antonio Abad's novel *El Campeón*, which I argue is more hopeful and more positive about the potential of transculturation as a ground for Filipino nationalism, even though its ending is also ambivalent.

## Chapter 5

### Cultural Nationalism in Antonio Abad's *El Campeón* (1940)

Apenas tocaron el suelo los dos gladiadores, Tabás se lanzó sobre Banogón con la velocidad del rayo. Se oyó un chasquido, y los dos cuerpos cayeron sobre la arena (...) como si una fuerza los lanzase simultáneamente, ambos se encontraron de pronto a tres pies sobre el suelo, batiendo el aire con alas y chocándose violentamente. Cayó una nube de plumas, pero al llegar al suelo ninguno demostró haber quedado herido. La multitud rugió de entusiasmo.  
(Abad 1940: 142)

[As soon as both gladiators touched the ground, Tabás launched himself over Banogón with the speed of thunder. A snap was heard and both bodies fell on the arena. [...] As if a foreign force threw them simultaneously in the air, they found themselves facing each other three feet above the ground, beating the air with their wings and crashing violently. A cloud of feathers fell, but on the ground, none of them showed a sign of having been injured. The crowd roared with enthusiasm.]

#### Introduction

The two gladiators engaged in combat in this passage are Tabás and Banogón, two of the gamecocks that feature in Antonio Abad's (1894-1970) novel *El Campeón* (1940) [The Champion]. *El Campeón* is written in the form of an animal fable that tells the story of a cockfighting champion named Banogón who returns to a chicken barn in the village where he was born after a successful career in the arenas. Upon his return, he struggles to fit into the community, having to find a new role in it. The various social roles of the other chicken characters and their struggles with the transformations that are taken place in their society allegorically illuminate Abad's vision of Filipino society - as one affected by a political, cultural and identity crisis - and his concerns with reconfiguring Filipino national identity. The novel addresses questions of class, gender and ethnicity in the Philippines, and argues for the impossibility of smoothly translating the prevailing European ideologies of the nation-state, based on cultural homogeneity and racial supremacy, to the colonised context of the Philippines. Through its ending, it articulates the necessity to give voice to an alternative type of nation imagining. Abad's portrayal of the culture of cockfighting through the eyes of the human characters of the novel offers a view on the 'sport' as a traditional Filipino practice that survived the various colonial policies that attempted to eradicate it. In this way, the novel presents cockfighting as an anti-colonial metaphor that not only captures a certain ethos of Filipino culture (at least among the exclusively male audiences that it attracts) but also occupies an important social and even educational role in rural Philippines.

Paz Mendoza's *Notas de viaje* (1929) and Jesús Balmori's *Los Pajaros de fuego* (1945), discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, sought to develop Philippine nationalism primarily by comparing their country to other European nations (including Spain), Japan and the US. Abad's novel, in contrast, locates a basis for nationalism in Filipino rural culture. Mendoza's travelogue calls for a form of cultural emulation (aspiring at modernising the Philippines' institutions and educate its people according to western/universal models) by formulating hypotheses about what the Philippines *could be like if* its industries, education system or national identity were more like those observed in Germany, Italy or Japan. Balmori's novel, in contrast, focuses attention on the impasse that emulating these foreign nations, including the Spanish and American colonisers, had produced in the Philippines, and on the way the imagined alternative of taking Japan as a model ended up shattered by WWII. Abad, a contemporary of Balmori's, shows a similar disappointment with the Filipino intelligentsia and its insistence on perpetuating the unfruitful task of idealising, translating and emulating other nations. The key difference, however, is that in *El Campeón* Abad uses the long-standing Filipino tradition of cockfighting - which is at the same time presented as a transcultural practice - to propose an alternative view on Filipino national identity.

My argument that *El Campeón* can be considered an example of Filipino cultural nationalism is substantiated by Abad's position as an intellectual aiming to excavate the 'essence' of what would constitute the future Filipino nation. He locates this essence in the tradition of cockfighting in the rural Philippines. On the one hand, cockfighting is depicted as a traditional practice that resists Catholic dogmas while reinventing its rituals of blood and martyrdom and contesting the modernising policies of the US, which considered the sport barbaric. On the other hand, the arrogance of the gamecocks is used to criticise western nationalism and the Filipino technocrats who obscure the alternative voices of Filipino people, represented by the village chicken barn. In my reading of the novel, I argue that, at its end, the figure of an ideal national hero is revealed, based on an alternative vision of Filipino masculinity.

I substantiate these claims in the five sections of this chapter. First, I shall explain the main aspects of cultural nationalism, including in the context of the Philippines, and the role of literature as its tool. Second, I will give a brief overview of Abad's work in order to contextualise *El Campeón* and to identify Abad's most important political and social concerns. Third, I will elaborate on the anti-colonial aspects of cockfighting in order to justify its appeal to nationalist writers, in the wake of influential figures such as José Rizal, who dedicates a chapter of his seminal novel *Noli Me Tangere* (1886) to the cockpit, emphasising

its potential for fermenting political dissidence. In the fourth section, I look at the relationship between masculinity and cockfighting, which is addressed by numerous studies on cockfighting and also plays a significant role in Abad's narrative and vision of nationalism. Most of the literature notes that cockfighting is an all-male practice that reinforces heteronormative ideas of masculinity as based on strength, power, honor and domination, but also skill and intelligence. In what is undoubtedly the most-read and -discussed article about cockfighting, "Deep Play: Notes on Balinese Cockfighting" (1972), anthropologist Clifford Geertz highlights the symbolic identification of men with their gamecocks. He claims that cockfighting can be seen as a meta-narrative of Balinese society, reproducing its social hierarchy and acting out a range of values with which the Balinese identify. Without going further into Geertz's theory here, it is important to see the relationship between the cockfight and masculinity as a form of identification between men and the symbolic narratives the cockfight, as a sport and as an aesthetic practice, produces. It is this identification that accounts for its popularity. Looking at *El Campeón* shows that, in the context of the Philippines, the relationship between masculinity and cockfighting can be extended to include a consideration of nationalism and colonialism.

In the fifth and final section, I focus on the last three chapters of the novel, which see Banogón returning to the barnyard, to demonstrate how Abad proposes a new form of Filipino national identity by presenting Banogón as a hero in the mould of Filipino myths of martyrdom, but one no longer exclusively tied to a heteronormative masculinity. In contrast to the nationalist models from Europe, the US and Japan, founded on fascist and imperialist ideologies that base the nation-state in ethnic, linguistic and cultural homogeneity, the Filipino hero, through individual sacrifice, fosters a sense of community in a spirit of tolerance and acceptance of the community's transcultural heterogeneity.

To sum up, in this chapter I will explore the cultural nationalism *El Campeón* mobilises through its appeal to the historical and cultural functions of cockfighting. The novel's use of and reflection on the association of cockfighting with masculinity allows me to read Banogón's return to his rural home as a crisis of masculinity. This crisis symbolically invokes the struggle with the conflicting attachments produced by colonialism that characterises the emergence of a Philippine national imagination. Even though the novel to some extent remains attached to the dominant ideal of a patriarchal nation, its narrative also challenges foreign ideologies of nationalism and their relationship with a virile form of masculinity, instead suggesting a new, local Filipino national ethos that does not imagine itself as pure but as fundamentally mixed.

### **The Cultivation of the Nation**

According to Catalan scholar Monserrat Guimbernau (2013) nationalism is “the sentiment of belonging to a community whose members identify with a set of symbols, beliefs and way of life, and have the will to decide upon their common political destiny” (74). Literature can be a tool employed to the fostering of such sentiment of belonging to a national community and, together with other cultural practices, can constitute cultural nationalism. As an abstract form of community awareness, cultural nationalism can be said to stand in opposition to political or military nationalism, although the lines that separate these forms of nationalism are thin.

Eric T. Woods (2015) highlights the difference between these forms of nation building by contrasting political nationalism’s focus on the achievement of political autonomy with cultural nationalism’s focus on “the cultivation of a nation” (1). Cultural nationalism does not imagine the nation as a political organisation, but as a cultural community grounded on the specific recasting of the nation’s identity, history and destiny. Cultural nationalism is generally perceived as a stage preceding political nationalism, one in which the conscience of a national identity is formed on the premises of retrieved local cultural elements. Hroch (2007) associates it with gestation in his three-stage description of the temporality of national movements:

(a) gestation, where intellectuals excavate cultural remains and reconstruct them for their own sake, with no national claims in mind; (b) patriotic agitation, where cultural claims such as language recognition are tied to political demands by nationalist organizations, led by a middle-class intelligentsia and attempts are made to awaken the masses; and (c) mass mobilization, where nationalism mobilizes urban and rural masses, often with separatist political demands. (qtd. in Hutchinson 2013: 89-90)

This sequence seems logical, but the reality is that most nationalist movements combine elements of the three stages and that appeals to cultural aspects such as language or historical memory also occur in long-established nation-states, especially at times of national crisis. Cultural nationalists aim at rethinking the community’s political status with regards to the nation-state when the nation feels threatened or new political agendas appear. In the case of colonised societies, cultural nationalism mobilises an awareness of the self in opposition of the oppressor, underpinning the shared community among the oppressed that serves as a tool for self-definition and ultimately becomes a political tool, usually in the call for independence.

Regardless of how questionable Hroch’s linear description of national movements is, the three aspects he underscores are useful to identify the role literature can play in them.

Rather than promoting “patriotic agitation” or “mass mobilization,” as fictional literature, the Filipino writers in Spanish I discuss in this study aim to contribute to the period of gestation of Filipino national identity by offering alternatives to the dominant history constructed by the colonisers. As I showed in Chapter 4, Vicente L. Rafael (1988) uses translation as a strategy of nationalism among Spanish-speaking Filipinos. However, the type of nationalism constructed by Filipino writers in Spanish remains problematic, as I argued in the previous chapter, because it is limited to the elite group that can read and write Spanish. It can therefore not be considered truly ‘democratic’ literature.

Hispano-Filipino literature as a tool of cultural nationalism does feature an aspect central to both Hutchinson’s and Hroch’s descriptions of the workings of cultural nationalism, namely the attempt to retrieve the “essence” of the nation, the original condition from which to configure the nation-state paradigm. This retrieval is carried out by intellectuals and artists, an “elite” of cultural “revivalists,” and philanthropists armed with innovative research methods, all seeking to “excavate cultural remains” in search of a possible ground that will help to reconfigure or regenerate the idea of the nation based on cultural heritage and past history (Hutchinson 2013: 86). Moreover, Hutchinson argues that the archetype of the cultural nationalist is that of an ‘outsider’ whose “connection to the nation was being challenged” (87). The cultural nationalist belongs to an educated elite but his or her outsider status derives from being “of mixed ethnic descent and conscious of this” (Hutchinson 2013: 87) or from living in exile or in diaspora. I want to suggest that this makes the cultural nationalist not just an outsider but an insider/outsider. This is how I see the position of the Hispano-Filipino authors I discuss. Their double perspective arises not only from their mixed ethnicity (racial, but importantly also cultural) but most crucially by their privileged cosmopolitan, multilingual upbringing and their attachment to the Spanish language. As Balmori’s novel demonstrates, this makes them insiders/outsideers both in relation to the Filipino elite and other groups within the Philippines.

I will argue that *El Campeón* can be read as a form of cultural nationalism because its subject matter, the cockfight, and its practice in the Filipino countryside, are examples of a transcultural tradition that finds a narrative in history capable of providing a sense of continuity through “a connection with previous generations, at the levels of both the individual and the community that he or she identified with” (Hroch 2006: 6). Significantly, however, the novel does not conceptualise the search for a connection to the past that links up with the present in terms of a romantic retrieval of an original, purely indigenous Filipino culture, but rather in terms of the recognition of Filipino national identity as a hybrid of

Hispanic and Asian traditions that foster a sense of belonging compensating for a feeling of cultural loss.

The novel was finished in 1940, in the advent of WWII, with Japanese troops knocking at the doors of *Intramuros*, the walled city in the centre of Manila where most of the creoles lived, which was occupied by the Japanese only two years later, in 1942. Under these circumstances Abad refuses, in *El Campeón*, to imagine a possible independent Philippines, but he also refrains from presenting an apocalyptic vision like that of Balmori's novel. Perhaps because he had already written an urban novel, *Nathan's Sheep* (1936), in *El Campeón* Abad chooses to position local traditions as counterweights to the impasse he felt urban intellectuals had reached in their thinking of Filipino identity, especially in Manila, which he chooses to leave to settle temporarily in Cebu, his place of birth. Before analysing the novel as a work of cultural nationalism, it is necessary to examine Abad's background and nationalist views.

### **Transitory Hours**

Antonio Abad (1894-1970) feared that American modernisation would eradicate the Philippines' Hispanic heritage, most importantly in terms of the language and the Christian rituals that he perceived to be at the core of Filipino identity. Abad studied at the religious Colegio San Carlos in Cebu, where he completed a Bachelor of Arts. He wanted to become a priest and began religious studies at the same school but never completed them. Instead, he decided to take on a more engaged task, working as a journalist for several national newspapers, including *La Opinión*, of which he became chief editor (Young and García 2013), as a fiction writer and as a professor of Spanish. He devoted his life to researching, writing and teaching Spanish, writing Spanish textbooks and dictionaries. He died leaving a Spanish - English - Cebuano - Tagalo dictionary unfinished. His work resonates with the explosion of philological work that characterised cultural nationalism in late nineteenth-century Europe referred to by Hutchinson.

Daisy Young and Salvador García (2014) argue that Abad's dedication to the Spanish language was his way of claiming a Filipino identity and of standing up to American colonialism. According to them, Abad believed that the 'essence of being Filipino' resided in the use of a common language and culture, which, in his view, had to be Spanish:

Como escritor católico entendía la palabra sagrada y la literatura como medio de expresión de Dios en el mundo caótico, huérfano de ideales, y estancado en la miseria que percibía a su alrededor. [...] Para Abad, la religión, cuya expresión más palpable era el lenguaje, se constituía como el elemento de identidad necesario en un

país que buscaba por todos los medios posibles encontrar su propia voz ante las incursiones tanto estadounidenses como japonesas, que trataban de adherir el Archipiélago a sus territorios. [...] No sólo se trataba de luchar por impedir la muerte de un idioma, sino de fomentar además la lengua que haría a los filipinos reconocerse como tales, hallar su esencia, hermanarse con otros semejantes, con aquellos que sueñan y viven y aman en español. (Young and García 2013: xxix)

[As a Catholic writer, [Abad] understood the holy word and literature as the means of expression of God in a chaotic world, devoid of ideals and stagnant in the misery that he perceived around him. The Gospel had arrived in the Philippines in Spanish. To Abad, religion, most tangibly expressed as language, constituted the necessary identity element in a country that was, by any means, looking to find its own voice among the incursions of the American and the Japanese, who were trying to add the Archipelago to their territories. [...] It was not only a question of fighting against the death of a language, but of promoting the language that would make Filipinos recognise themselves as such, find their essence, unite with their fellow men, with those who dream, live and love in Spanish.]

This quote highlights Abad's belief in the intimacy between language and nation, or, more precisely, in a sense of national belonging produced by the use of a common language. For Abad, this meant privileging Spanish (which he felt was intimately linked to his Catholic faith), but also Tagalog and Cebuano (the local language spoken on the island of Cebu and by Abad himself) over English. He felt that Spanish and the Filipino languages already established in the country before the arrival of the new American coloniser constituted the foundation of Filipino identity. He even wrote scientific articles about the phonological similarities between Spanish and some of the native languages of the Philippines to support his defence of Spanish over English (Young and García 2013).

*La Oveja de Nathan* (1922) [Nathan's Sheep] is Abad's best-known novel and the one for which he was awarded the Zóbel Prize. Its latest edition, dating from 2010, is currently sold at major bookstores in Manila in a bilingual English-Spanish edition. Its story is more explicitly political than that of *El Campeón*. *La Oveja de Nathan*, in a similar way to Balmori's work, criticises the general lack of agency and desire for autonomy on the part of intellectual Filipinos, who, despite witnessing a new invasion by the US, have remained passive. The main character of the novel, a young lithographer who fights for the Allies during WWI as part of the US army, returns to the Philippines and finds a job working for an American company. Eventually, he resigns as a gesture of rebellion against the Americans, giving priority to his nationalist political ideals, despite the difficulty of getting another job. In portraying this individual heroic gesture, Abad calls for small but decisive steps towards social and political transformation, criticising the lethargy and hesitation of those who are

unable to imagine other possible forms of life than the one provided for them by colonial discourses.

This is the same attitude he criticises in an essay from 1940 called “De la Hora Transeúnte” [Of the Transitory Hour]<sup>105</sup>:

¿Se han fijado los lectores que en que hace tiempo que en Filipinas nadie discute? ¿Y se ha ocupado alguien de saber por qué? Porque se atiende ante todo a la dogmatización. El dogma es lo único que no admite la discusión. Se es y basta. Y entre nosotros se dogmatiza porque hemos llegado a un punto en las ideas han quedado estandarizadas. Fuera de la idea de dogma no existe la verdad. (Abad, “De la Hora Transeúnte”, 1940, qtd. in Young and García, xxviii)

[Have you noticed, dear readers, that for some time now nobody has been discussing anything in the Philippines? Has anyone tried to find out why? It is because there is an overall tendency towards dogmatism. Dogma is the only thing that is not open to discussion. It is and that is it. Among us, dogmatism occurs because we have reached a point at which our ideas have become standardised. Outside the standard idea, there is no truth.]

In this essay, Abad calls for individuals to awaken and act against the undisputed, standardised dogmas that have come to govern people’s lives. The essay’s title, “Of the Transitory Hour,” speaks to Abad’s perception of time as fleeting. Time should not be allowed to pass by without things being discussed. Instead, action should be taken to challenge dogma before it is too late. However, the temporality of the action required is ambiguous. On the one hand, Abad seems to call for a future-oriented revolution against standardised rules based on dialogue rather than on dogma. On the other hand, however, he expresses nostalgia for the Hispanic past and seems to want to anchor the revolution in this past, which never actually existed, as Spanish was never the common language of the Philippines. Such ambiguity is perhaps better understood from the perspective of cultural nationalism. As a nationalist enterprise, it looks at the future but its cultural revival has to be anchored and follow a past narrative, even if the nation’s history “offers material for this task on multiple and competing pasts” (Hutchinson 2013: 91).

In 1960, Abad wrote another novel, *La vida secreta de Daniel Espeña* [The Secret Life of Daniel Espeña], likely one of the last novels written in Spanish in the Philippines and sadly one that has so far not been found in library archives or private collections. Abad died

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<sup>105</sup> “Transeúnte” is a difficult word to translate. As a noun, it refers to a passer-by and in some contexts it is thus translated as *pedestrian*. It can also refer to a temporary resident, such as a student on a visa. As an adjective, it means *temporary* or *non-permanent*, which is slightly redundant in combination with the word *hour*. Translating “De la Hora Transeúnte” as “Of the Temporary Hour” seems too rhetorical, so I have chosen “Of the Transitory Hour.”

in 1970, having witnessed the arrival of the US, the two World Wars and the independence of the Philippines in 1946, and outliving most of the Hispano-Filipino authors of his generation.

In the context of Abad's life and work, *El Campeón* represents a moment of inner exploration facilitated by the author's return to rural Cebu, where he grew up. The novel tells a similar story of homecoming, following Banogón the rooster from the moment he is discovered on the small-town, church-owned farm where he was born until his return to another farm in the same town years later. The story begins when the church keeper, Gervasio Balongoy, who happens to be a cockfighting specialist, witnesses a quarrel between young Banogón and another male, and notices the skills and physical disposition to fight that Banogón displays. Gervasio asks Father Nicolás, the newly arrived priest, for permission to train Banogón as a gamecock. Father Nicolás agrees after much hesitation, for the Catholic Church opposes cockfighting. After months of training, Banogón starts a career as a fighter in arenas in neighbouring villages on Cebu and in Manila. In Manila, he wins his last fight, permanently injuring one of his legs. Having killed his opponent, he maintains his status as a champion but has to be retired. Banogón returns to Cebu, his life spared so that he can produce future champions. He struggles to adapt to his new life in the small-town chicken community and is unable to fulfil his breeding task, but eventually he gains the respect and affection of his peers. In the final chapters of the book, he re-encounters Bakiki, his first sweetheart, with whom he shares his life story; she also tells him hers and recounts what has happened in the town in his absence. The novel ends with the two old friends celebrating life and motherhood on Christmas Eve.

In what follows I will carry out a detailed analysis of the novel as an allegory of cultural nationalism. First, I will look at the way the novel represents the social and political role of cockfighting in the Philippines, through the eyes of the human characters. Second, I will analyse the relationship between masculinity and cockfighting in the novel, using Clifford Geertz's article on Balinese cockfighting and Jerry García's article on cockfighting in Chicano communities in the US. Last, I will focus on the final part of the novel, which tells the story of Banogón and Bakiki's reunion on the farm, in order to elucidate the alternative, transcultural vision of nationalism, connected to established notions of heroic martyrdom but less reliant on traditional masculinity, proposed in *El Campeón*.

### The Victory of the Underdog

Los hay quienes convierten la gallera en centro de su vida. En vez de ser un medio lo consideran un fin. Esos son los viciosos de todas partes, los que, los días sin gallera, se reúnen en cualquier parte para jugar. La gran mayoría la compone el pueblo que va a estos centros a distraerse como los ricos se distraen en el teatro, en el cine, en las carreras o en sus clubs. Allí el pobre se encuentra con otros pobres, con quienes cambia impresiones, les cuenta sus problemas, les comunica sus deseos y esperanzas, les expone sus opiniones acerca de cosas y personas; allí se entera de los sucesos del día y los comenta y adoba a su modo, allí se consuela de sus fracasos y dolores, y allí se piden y dan consejos, discutiéndolos libremente en un ambiente libre de suspicacias. Se ha dicho más de una vez que la gallera es el deporte del pobre, y es verdad. Pero los que lo afirman, no han visto más que lo más exterior, lo más visible del deporte, que es la parte que mira a la diversión. La parte más sana de él es que el hombre del pueblo, que no ha recibido ninguna instrucción, aprende allí lo que de virtuoso debe cultivarse y fomentarse en todo deporte. (48)

[I confess that there are some who make the cockfight the centre of their lives. Instead of seeing it as a means, they see it as an end. Such vicious people are everywhere; they are those who, on the days that there is no cockfight, gather anywhere in order to gamble. But these people are not the majority. The large majority is constituted by the people [*el pueblo*], who go to these centres to find some distraction, just like the rich enjoy themselves in the theatre, in the cinema, at the races or in the clubs. There, the poor man meets other poor men, with whom he exchanges opinions, talks about his problems, expresses his desires and hopes, expresses his opinions about things and people; there, he finds out about the daily events and discusses them, seasoning [*adoba*] them in his own way; there, he finds consolation for his frustrations and pains, and advice is given and taken, discussed openly in an atmosphere free of suspicion. It has been said more than once that the cockfight is the sport of the poor and that is true. But those who say this have only seen the most external aspect of it, what is most visible of the sport, the entertaining part of it. The healthiest aspect of it is that the common man, who has not received any education, learns there what is virtuous and what should be encouraged in any sport, [...] the virtue of tolerance.]

This is one of the speeches Gervasio, Banogón's first trainer, gives in defence of the cockfight. In this passage, he discusses his views on the cockfight with Father Nicolás in an attempt to inform the latter of "qué mal se propone combater antes de ir a lanzarse al combate" [what sort of evil he is about to fight before getting into combat] (52). Gervasio describes the cockpit as a social and educational space for rural Filipinos who have no access to other forms of leisure. For him, the social aspect of cockfighting is based on the exchange of personal and public affairs (individual pains, desires and frustrations but also daily events, gossip), "discutiéndolos en un ambiente libre se suspicacias" [discussed in an atmosphere free of suspicion]. The latter comment is reminiscent of Abad's critique of the political and social apathy in "Of the Transitory Hour," where he observes that nobody discusses anything

anymore in the Philippines. In contrast to the urban locations frequented by intellectuals, the cockpit is seen to facilitate an area free from political and social surveillance - by the colonial government and the Church - even though Gervasio's speech reduces the topics discussed in such a space to vague generalisations: daily events, current affairs, opinions, problems.

To understand the role of cockfighting in the novel, it is imperative to look at the way it has been entwined with colonial projects and anticolonial resistance in the Philippines and elsewhere.<sup>106</sup> Numerous scholars who have written about cockfighting have drawn attention to the relationship between this transnational blood sport and colonial politics. With regards to the Philippines, Scott Guggenheim (1982) and Janet Davis (2013) address this relationship. Guggenheim offers a historical review of the perception of cockfighting under Spanish rule, US occupation and the later Marcos government (1965-1986). Davis focuses primarily on the US period, drawing comparisons with other US territories such as Cuba and Puerto Rico, as well as invoking the role of animal protection in ideologies of US nation building. She argues that cockfighting can be read as an anticolonial metaphor, whereas other blood sports such as bullfighting (with its permanent arenas [*plazas de toros*], expensive fighting bulls [*toros de lidia*] and strict protocol) are a much more elitist pastime and a symbol of the Spanish Empire. Both Davis and Guggenheim emphasise how central cockfighting has been to Filipino politics and draw attention to the continuous tension between attempts to curb its practice as part of 'development' projects imposed on the islands by colonial powers and the resistance mounted by cockfighting enthusiasts.

According to Guggenheim (1982), cockfighting legislation in the Philippines changed over the course of the history of colonisation. During the Spanish period, one of the first moves of the colonial government was to establish permanent, privately owned cockpits with the objective of forcing "dispersed, rural populations into permanent, nucleated settlements which could be guarded and taxed" (Guggenheim 1982: 137). Attempting to make the islands self-supporting, the Spanish passed legislation to tax and regulate cockfighting, issuing expensive licences and fining those who did not follow the law. These cockfighting taxes produced important revenues for the government and kept the working classes and peasants that frequented the cockpits "under control" (Guggenheim 1982: 138).

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<sup>106</sup> Cockfighting is believed to have originated in South East Asia, but it has long been considered a "local" sport in countries such as the Dominican Republic, Spain, England and indeed the Philippines, where it was already practiced in pre-Hispanic times (Guggenheim 1982). Alan Dundes' *The Cockfight: A Casebook* (1994), in addition to the articles by Davis and Guggenheim about Philippine cockfighting discussed here, contains articles about cockfighting in Ireland, California, London, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Argentina.

The Catholic Church benefitted from the cockfighting tax but still condemned the sport because of its cruelty to animals (it was seen as a challenge to God to kill his divine creatures) and its association with vice and procrastination. Father Nicolás expresses the views of the Church as follows:

¿No te parece una crueldad - le decía- el contemplar desde la seguridad de los tendidos, con esa vuestra ruidosa alegría, cómo se despedazan dos gallos? Dios al criarlos, les ha regalado para que gocen de ella, el supremo don de la vida, y vosotros se la quitáis con crueles demostraciones de entusiasmo. (47)

[Don't you think it is a cruelty - he said - to contemplate from the safety of your seat, with loud joy, how the roosters tear each other to pieces? In creating them, God has given them the supreme gift of life, and you take it away with cruel demonstrations of enthusiasm.]

El juego es un vicio, y el que se deja dominar de él sin hacer ningún esfuerzo para contrarrestar su influencia ofende gravemente a Dios. En el juego se pierde dinero, que es un instrumento dado por Dios para sostener al hombre y mantener a su familia. Tú estás al servicio de Dios, y lo ofendes cada vez que entras en una gallera. (47)

[Gambling is a vice, and those who let themselves be dominated by it without making any effort to resist its influence are seriously offending God. In gambling, money is always lost, and money is an instrument given by God to support man and sustain his family. You are at the service of God, and you offend him every time you enter the cockpit.]

Gervasio keeps quiet while listening to these comments from his superior, even though, as the omniscient narrator informs us, for him “Eso de la crueldad era para el sacristán una cuestión de puntos de vista” [cruelty was a question of perspective] (47). In his opinion, the roosters do not die pointlessly: “Después de todo, los gallos no morían inútilmente: el vencido paraba irremisiblemente en la cocina y con él se hacía un delicioso guiso” (47) [After all, the defeated inevitably ended up in the kitchen producing a delicious stew]. For Gervasio, the gamecocks, like common chickens, ultimately serve the noble purpose of feeding men, with the difference that at least they are awarded a moment of redemption and potential glory by fighting for their life.

Later in the novel, we learn that Father Nicolás' predecessor was the one who introduced cockfighting in the village, driven by his passion for the game and the boredom of life in the countryside. In the same vein, Gervasio asks Father Nicolás: “¿Qué iríamos a hacer en este pueblo triste, donde todo transcurre en medio de la mayor monotonía, si no fuera por la ilusión dominguera de la gallera? Un gallera de pueblo es donde el pobre hace su vida social” (47) [What would we do in this sad village where everything happens by means of the

greatest monotony if it wasn't for the excitement of every Sunday's fight? A village cockpit is where the poor have their social life]. The contrasting attitudes towards the cockfight of Father Nicolás and his predecessor demonstrate the existence within the Catholic Church of an ambiguous religious morality. It is clear, however, that *El Campeón* favours the view that in the rural Philippines cockfighting combats boredom and isolation, and is not in conflict with being a good Catholic.

Notably, there are numerous examples in the novel of a close interweaving of cockfighting and Catholic ritual. A major breakthrough in Banogón's career, for example, occurs during the religious festivals in honour of the local Saint, *La Virgen de la Regla* [The Virgin of Regla] in the village of Opón. On this occasion, Gervasio asks Inggoy, another servant in the house of the priest, to help him to bring Banogón to Opón for a fight without Father Nicolás, who is travelling with them, finding out. Inggoy reacts with enthusiasm at the idea of seeing his rooster fight while presenting his faith to the revered saint:

¡Ir a las famosas y legendarias fiestas de Nuestra Señora de Regla y asistir otra vez al triunfo de Banogón, "nuestro gallo", según acababa de declarar Gervasio Balongoy! ¿Podría él aspirar a otra dicha mayor? Y si ganaba, que sí ganaría sin duda alguna, ¿qué haría si no encender una vela ante el altar de Nuestra Señora? (135)

[Going to the legendary and famous festival of Our Lady of the Regla and witnessing again the triumph of Banogón, "our cock," according to the very words of Gervasio Balongoy! Could he aspire to a greater joy? And if he [Banogón] won, although he [Inggoy] was sure that he would, what better thing to do than to light a candle at the altar of the miraculous image of Our Lady?]

Here, religious devotion and enthusiasm for cockfighting are not antithetical, but come together seamlessly, supporting and reinforcing each other in defiance of the official position taken by the Church.

The novel also shows how cockfighting is intimately related to pagan beliefs, such as fortune telling. Gervasio's reputation as a cocker is based not only on his expert knowledge of the sport but also on his ability to predict the favourable days for Banogón's fights and his opponents' odds, which he does by invoking old Chinese teachings of "*un horóscopo infalible* (89) [an infallible horoscope] inherited from his father. Gervasio's father had copied the Chinese horoscope from Captain Laloy, a legendary gambler who made a fortune following the writings of an old Chinese merchant he worked for as a servant. This enigmatic Chinese gambler, says the narrator, arrived in the village pushing a trolley full of bags filled with gold and silver coins. Upon his deathbed, he gave his loyal servant Laloy the horoscope

that brought about his fortune. Captain Laloy learned Chinese only to translate the manuscript into Bisayan (the local dialect of Cebu) and subsequently became the richest man in the area.

In addition to depicting cockfighting as intertwined with Catholic practices and pagan beliefs, including beliefs originating from another culture, Gervasio presents it to Father Nicolás as offering a necessary escape from the hardship of agricultural work:

Y en los pueblos pequeños como el nuestro y en las comunidades de los barrios, la gallera no es el centro del vicio, sino el lugar donde el Labrador, *curvado toda la semana sobre la aridez de la gleba*<sup>107</sup> que le da su morisqueta, busca encontrarse con su igual, conoce a otros como él, y con todos hace vida social que en estos lugares sin la gallera sería nula. Y usted mejor que nadie sabe que *el instinto sociable* es innato en el hombre culto, lo mismo que en el palurdo. (49, emphasis added)

[In small villages like ours and in city neighborhoods, the cockpit is not a centre of vice, but the place where the farmer, *after a whole week of bending his body to work in the dry field that supplies his rice*, looks forward to meeting his equals; he meets others like himself, and carries out his social life *in places where there would be no social space without the cockpit*. And you know better than anyone that the social instinct is as innate to the educated man as to the ignorant.]

Working in the fields is presented here as a hardship compensated only by the enjoyment of attending a cockfight and socializing with one's 'equals' on Sundays. Gervasio's comment is crucial to understanding the novel's valorisation of the cockfight's space and culture as something that, especially in the rural peripheries, is essential to maintaining people's "social instinct." Without being as openly critical of the exploitative colonial systems, *El Campeón* shows rural life and rural poverty as made bearable and discussable with others only through a practice, cockfighting, discouraged by the Spanish colonisers and the Catholic Church.

Moreover, the quote from *El Campeón* that opens this section brings the class dimension of cockfighting to the fore: while the rich are said to go to the "theatre, the cinema, the races or the club," the poor - constituting the majority of the population - go to the cockpit. This socioeconomic divide, however, is complemented in the novel by a geographic divide between cockfighting as practiced in the urban centres and in the rural peripheries. Gervasio specifically distinguishes cockpits in villages from those in the big cities, arguing that the belief that the cockpit is a place for gamblers to waste their time, money and energy is informed by the arenas of the big cities, "Pero ustedes no piensan que las galleras de las grandes ciudades son la excepción, no la regla. [...] Confieso que las galleras de la ciudad no

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<sup>107</sup> In the Spanish original quoted below, Abad writes *la aridez de la gleba*. *Gleba* refers to a piece of land that is being cultivated, but it is an archaism closely related to the expression *siervo de la gleba*, which means "servant of the land." This expression refers to being condemned to work a piece of land perpetually for its owner; in sum, a form of slavery.

tienen más objeto que la explotación del juego como fuente de ingreso de unos cuantos capitalistas” (49) [But you have not noticed that cockpits in the big cities are the exception and not the rule [...] I must confess that the cockpits in cities have no other objective than the exploitation of gambling as a source of income for a few capitalists]. According to the novel, therefore, cockfighting aficionados are split into two groups: the poor people in the rural peripheries who attend the fight to socialise versus the richer public of the urban centres, which has corrupted the game.

The Spanish colonial government’s attempt to control and dissuade cockfighting rather than banning it outright (which they feared would drive it underground) was attacked by American protestant missionaries, who saw the rituals of the cockfight and those of the Catholic mass as “complementary forms of dependency, emasculation and ‘savagery’ - in which wine and blood comingled in a ‘pagan’ credo of substantiation” (Davis 2013: 560). The Eucharistic ritual of eating Christ’s body and drinking his blood is equated to the bloodshed in the cockpit and the subsequent consumption of the dead rooster. Notwithstanding the grotesque imagery, Davis’ comment again demonstrates a degree of syncretism between the two rituals. Catholicism in the Philippines is a prime example of religious syncretism as the contemporary Filipino admiration for the bloody crucifixions that form part of the staging of the *Pasyon* [passion] of Christ during the Easter Crucifixion Parade demonstrates. It also resonates with the use of bloodletting as a symbolic gesture among “Filipino nationalist heroes opposing foreign occupation (USA, Spain, Japan)” (Rafael 2000: 112).

Peter Bräunlein (2009) offers an illustrative description of how so-called Philippine ‘Calvary Catholicism’<sup>108</sup> has come to be one of the distinct expressions of national Filipino identity aided by the mediatisation of national politics, the press and tourism, which have given it visibility:

Semana Santa, as the main religious celebration of the year, and the bloody Lenten rites give occasion to politicians, representatives of the Catholic Church and journalists to release statements about the meaning of Christ’s death for the communal

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<sup>108</sup> Bräunlein follows a sociological study of religion to understand how the flagellation and crucifixion ritual in the Philippines has come into being, proving that it is not a combination of indigenous rituals with the inherited Catholic idea of flagellation as a way of “monastic exercise (disciplina)” (896), he argues that the ritual of self-mortification was unknown in the pre-Spanish Philippines (896). However, he does claim that “self-flagellation has been an interrupted tradition for more than 350 years up to the present day” (896), thus being distinctively recognised as a Filipino tradition. Bräunlein explains that it was in the 1960s that the first enacted public crucifixions took place as a result of the emergence of the New Mysticism embedded in New Religious Movements (NMR). According to these beliefs, the martyrs (the ones crucified) are seen as provided with healing powers by their proximity to God via their sacrifice, thus changing their status from stigmatised subjects (who initially resist participation in the ritual) to charismatic ‘ideal-typical’ prophets in Max Weber’s sense.

whole, for the nation, for “being Filipino.” The sense of “togetherness”, of unity, of a shared cultural heritage and destiny, is evoked and affirmed. Thus cultural identity is negotiated through the interpretation of passional Catholicism. (914)

The US occupation government, however, saw in the cockfight an excuse for not granting Filipino independence. Davis quotes the American Presbyterian missionary Arthur Judson Brown saying that “the warm climate, coupled with the lure of easy money at the cockpit, made the Filipino unfit for self-government or future US citizenship” (557). The president of the League of Moral Progress for Filipinos (established in 1906), Mr. Kinkaid, similarly wondered: “How can people who allow themselves to be known by the barbarous sport of cockfighting be allowed to govern themselves?” (qtd. in Guggenheim 139). The cockfight thus offered a way to validate a discourse of national supremacy that opposed the ‘civilised’ US to ‘barbaric’ Filipino cultural practices viewed as signs that the country remained attached to the Spanish Empire. A similar discourse was evoked in response to Paz Mendoza’s *Notas de viaje*, as I discussed in Chapter 3.

Davis summarises the relevance of cockfighting for the American project of exceptionalism and republicanism, and for Filipino nationalism as follows:

Yet this form of fraternal leisure [cockfighting] was also highly political. [...] Supporters and opponents alike mapped gendered, raced, and classed ideologies of nation and sovereignty onto the bodies of fighting cocks to stake their divergent political and cultural claims about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and national belonging. Cockfighting enthusiasts were cultural nationalists—indeed, cockfight nationalists—who defended their right to fight as a right to preserve their cultural heritage and a right to citizenship and self-determination. Similarly, anti-cockfighting activists implemented their own culturally inflected ideals of proper assimilability and nation building to create an empire of benevolence and animal kindness, which, in turn, bolstered exceptionalism ideologies of the United States as a republic, not a traditional empire like Spain. (550-1)

Thus, American nation-builders and Filipino cultural nationalists alike appropriated the cockfight - as either to be abandoned or preserved - in order to construct competing visions of the imagined national community. These antagonistic visions are brought into the narrative of *El Campeón* through the dialogues between Father Nicolás and Gervasio in the first part of the novel, and between Banogón and Bakiki towards the end, as I will show later on.

Early in the novel, Father Nicolás invokes the discourse of “animal kindness” referred to above and suggests introducing other, more wholesome pastimes to the islands. However, while the American authorities attempted to make baseball an antidote to the moral wrongs of the cockfight (Davis 2013), Filipinos continued to prefer the cheaper, local sports through which they were able to cultivate different sets of values and ideas of community and

sportsmanship. As the novel shows, such values included tolerance and acceptance of life's setbacks:

-[Gervasio] En la gallera, el hombre del pueblo aprende a practicar la virtud de la tolerancia

-[Father Nicolás] ¿Y en qué consiste eso?

-Consiste en la capacidad de poder aceptar sus derrotas con el mismo espíritu ecuánime con el que recibe sus victorias (48)

[...] - Es la primera vez que oigo hablar así a alguien de la gallera.

- Porque es la primera vez que usted se pone en contacto con y se adentra en el pensamiento de un hombre que conoce la razón de ser de su arraigo en el pueblo.

- Pero aún dando por buenas todas las razones que aduces, los tiempos modernos han traído nuevos deportes, más sanos y menos expuestos que la gallera. ¿Por qué no se ha de sustituir esta por aquellos?

- ¿Por qué? Porque en primer lugar todos esos deportes son costosos y, en segundo lugar, porque no apelan a las exigencias psicológicas del pueblo.

- No te entiendo.

- Voy a tratar de explicarme. (49)

[[Gervasio] In the cockpit the village man learns to practice the virtue of tolerance.

[Father Nicolás] What does that consist of?

- It consists of accepting one's defeats with the same unbiased spirit as one receives one's victories]

[...] I never heard anybody talk like that about the cockfight.

- That is because this is the first time you are getting in touch with and trying to understand the way of thinking of a man who knows the reason why [cockfighting] is deeply rooted in the village.

-Well, despite the good reasons that you allege, modern times have brought new sports, healthier and less demonstrative than the cockpit. Why can these not replace it?

-Why? Well, in the first place because all those sports are expensive, and second because they do not appeal to the psychological needs of the people.

-I do not understand.

-I will try to explain.]

Gervasio continues by asserting that, for a common farmer, "there is nothing cheaper than raising and training a gamecock" (50), after which he elaborates on the ways cockfighting fulfils the "psychological needs of the people":

- Además, ¿no se ha fijado usted que nuestro pueblo, a pesar de su legendario amor a la paz, ama el peligro y adora a los valientes que mueren peleando? En los deportes importados no existe el elemento de peligro que el pueblo encuentra en el combate entre dos gallos que se engarzan. Por eso jamás se harán perpetuamente populares en nuestro país. ¿Se ha fijado usted en la prontitud con la que se agrupa la gente de la sementera alrededor de cualquier fanático que predica doctrinas absurdas que ella no entiende pero que, por instinto, sabe que son aborrecidas por el gobierno? ¿Y por qué ese fanático conquista adeptos? Porque éstos ven en él la encarnación del valor temerario, del que desprecia el peligro sabiendo que las fuerzas del predicador podrían ser aplastadas por la ley en cualquier momento. Así

es igualmente la gallera en las oscuras y anónimas preferencias populares: una encarnación, un símbolo del valor personal, del valor que desconoce el miedo y no siente escalofríos ante el espectáculo de la sangre que tiñe de rojo la arena del ruedo.

- Tú no eres hombre vulgar, Gervasio - comentó el P. Nicolás cuando su sacristán hizo una pausa para dar una chupada a su cigarro - tú, seguramente, has estudiado. (50)
- [Have you not noticed that our people, despite their legendary love for peace, love danger and adore the brave ones who die fighting? In imported sports there is not the element of danger that the people [*el pueblo*] find in the combat between two roosters. That is why they will never be perpetually popular in our country. Have you noticed how quickly people that work in the fields gather around any fanatic who preaches absurd doctrines that the crowd does not understand but knows, by instinct, to be abhorred by the government? Why does such a fanatic man gain followers? Because they see in him the incarnation of reckless courage, one that despises danger while knowing that his preaching could be crushed by the law at any moment. Such is the cockfight in the dark and anonymous preferences of the people: an incarnation, a symbol of personal courage, the courage that knows no fear and does not shiver when contemplating the spectacle of blood that dyes the arena of the ring red.
- You are not a common man, Gervasio - commented Father Nicolas when his sacristan paused to take a drag of his cigarette - you must have surely gone to school.]

Father's Nicolás can only justify his astonishment at Gervasio's convincing, eloquent words by exclaiming that he is 'not an ordinary man,' but 'must have gone to school,' highlighting, once again, the emphasis the novel places on the value of education, which, crucially, unlike Father Nicolás, he sees as not only taking place in schools, but also in the cockpit. Gervasio describes how Filipinos may be perceived as peaceful people (a stereotype transferable to all Asians), but actually enjoy it when normal life is interrupted by violence and dissidence, especially if an underdog is challenging the status quo. A preacher of absurd doctrines whom nobody understands epitomizes the "obscure preferences" of the people, who know, instinctively, that he is pushing his luck. It does not matter that his words are not understood; what matters is the danger inherent in his actions. If the underdog, the fanatic preacher, happens to succeed, he will be a hero; however, if he loses, he will comply with another image of Filipino national pride, that of sacrifice and martyrdom. The literal interpretation of the 'founding myth' or master narrative of Christianity, the crucifixion of Jesús, allows for a different mode of identification (Braunlein 2009). Moreover, the most well-known Filipino literary and political figure José Rizal came to exemplify the myth of the heroic, Christ-like martyr after being killed by the Spanish for writing two anti-clerical novels: *Noli Me Tangere* [Latin for Touch me not] (1896) and *El Filibusterismo* [Buccaneering] (1872). In the words

of Benedict Anderson: “This book [*Noli Me Tangere*] earned him martyrdom in 1896 and later, eternal status as Father of his Country and First Filipino” (2005: 9).

Rizal was the first Filipino nationalist to propose the cockpit as a space of potential anti-colonial dissidence. In the following fragment from *Noli me Tangere* (1886), two brothers are trying to decide if they should join a raid on the Spanish barracks while attending a cockfight in which an underdog defeats the favourite to a loud scream from the crowd:

Whoever heard it from afar would have understood that the favourite had lost. So it is among nations. The small nation that achieves a victory over a larger one tells it and sings it forever after. (qtd. in Guggenheim 1982: 138)

By reading the cockfight as an allegory of (anti-colonial) war in which the unusual but nonetheless possible victory of the “small nation” becomes a story sang “forever after,” Rizal confirms his view of the cockfight as a space for leisure where the enactment of a deadly struggle may also foster political resistance. Yet, at the same time, Rizal loathed the sport, considering it “enervating and parasitic, sapping men of their money and judgment” and not worthy of a “Philippine republic founded on moral virtue” (Davis 557). Abad picks up on both sides of Rizal’s ambiguous view of the cockfight in *El Campeón* through various characters’ viewpoints but he clearly privileges its significance as a space of community formation and potential anti-colonial resistance, as well as emphasising the Church’s double morality towards the cockfight.

It is easier and faster to read in the cockfight an allegory of masculinity than one of anti-colonialism, and this is an aspect that is given importance in *El Campeón*, which does not just present cockfighting as an enactment of masculinity but also draws attention to the gender control that fowl populations are subject to. In the next section, after revisiting key academic discussions on cockfighting, I will address how, in the novel, masculinity is attached to the idea of the patriarchal nation and gendered national roles.

### **Cocks and Chicks: Masculinity in National Discourses**

It is impossible to avoid the question of masculinity when writing about cockfighting, not only because of the many times I have had to write the word ‘cock’ (and think about alternative words that would remove the easy puns) but also because the cockfight is in most contexts an exclusively male practice (Geertz 2005; Marvin 1984) that produces further images generally associated with masculinity: sportsmanship, courage, strength, militarism, domination. Most of the literature that studies cockfighting addresses its relation to masculinity. The three texts I will discuss in this section, by Clifford Geertz (2005), Alan

Dundes (1994) and Jerry García (2007), all focus on the intimate relationship between men and their cocks through a language filled with *double entendres*.

In his psychoanalytical reading of the cockfight, Dundes argues that the cockfight, as a folklore performance, acts out a taboo, bringing the unconscious into consciousness through “a public masturbatory, phallic duel” (1994: 275). He compares cockfighting with other blood sports and asserts that “in all-male sports, one male demonstrates his virility, his masculinity, *at the expense of the male opponent*. One proves one’s maleness by feminizing the opponent. Typically, the victory entails (no pun intended!) penetration” (Dundes 1994: 250). In cockfighting, penetration of the other’s body is achieved by the razor that is attached to the bird’s leg and that literally cuts into the opponent’s body.

The symbolism of the birds fighting and the metaphorical identification of the men with their animals are also at the core of Geertz’s anthropological interpretation of Balinese cockfighting. He claims that the metaphorical becomes partly real due to the enormous amount of time that handlers, breeders and trainers spend with their own and other men’s cocks. This intimacy leads him to describe the handling of gamecocks in a homoerotic manner:

Half or more of them [Balinese men] will have a rooster in his hands, holding it between his thighs, bouncing it gently up and down to strengthen his legs, ruffling its feathers with abstract sensuality, pushing it out into a neighbour’s rooster to rouse its spirit, withdrawing it again towards his loin to calm him again. Now and then to get a feel for another bird, a man with fiddle this way with someone else’s cock for a while, but usually by moving around to squat in place behind it. (61)

Here, Geertz paints a homoerotic picture that departs from common references to the birds’ engagement in their dance-like fight, in which the violence and desire to dominate the other male body also evokes a sexual engagement. By transferring the homoerotic relationship to the birds’ owners, he substantiates his claim that his study of the cockfight is in fact a study of men: “understanding men by understanding cocks” (2005: 62). In addition, Geertz argues that aesthetic enjoyment is derived from the masculine spectacle of the cockfight as a manifestation of honor, competitiveness, courage or strength, and that, as such, the cockfight provides the men watching it with a space for self-recognition and the formation of subjectivities. The narrative of the fight creates a communal ethos that produces a similar emotional and intellectual reaction to the one that drives Westerners (Geertz writes “us”) to go to see *Macbeth* (2005: 84). Accordingly, “what he [the Balinese] learns is what his culture’s ethos and his private sensibility (or anyway certain aspects of it) look like when spelled out externally in a collective text” (Geertz 2005: 83). In the end, for Geertz, “nothing

really happens to anybody” (except for the birds that is) as the men rejoice in a spectacle reflecting and rendering readable, but not challenging, Balinese (masculine) culture.

Cockfighting might indeed create the conditions for participants to come to recognise certain aspects of their culture in a similar way to a play, a music performance or a film, but it is important to acknowledge that the cockfight’s audience, in Bali and elsewhere, does not comprise the entire community: women do not generally attend the fights, nor do all men. Yet in Abad’s novel, Gervasio’s comparison of the fascination with cockfighting and that with a fanatic preacher refers not only to Filipino men but to the Filipino “people” as a whole, *el pueblo*. Cockfighting in Abad’s novel is thus seen to say something about an entire culture, just as in Geertz, where the cock stands for the man and the man for all of Balinese culture. More specifically, Abad uses cockfighting as an allegory for the Filipino fight for nationalism, expanding the possibilities for identification with the victorious underdog cock (against the champion cock, who stands for the colonial power) to all Filipinos.

García (2007) interprets cockfighting as a cultural practice that expresses a form of resistance to domination and ties such resistance closely to masculinity. Looking at cockfighting in the Chicano community in the US, García associates it with the formation of a “resistance masculinity” that challenges cultural erasure and emasculation in migrant or diasporic communities. His interest in cockfighting is motivated by his male family members’ passion for the fight. As a second-generation Mexican living in the South West of the US, his article is an attempt to understand the meaning of cockfighting for the Chicano culture he grew up in and, specifically, his father’s and uncle’s attachment to its practice. His article begins with the suggestive sentence “I have no memory of the first time I saw my father measuring his cock” and continues as follows: “I remain, however, keenly aware that at a young age I was initiated into a world of manliness unlike any other” (109). With regard to my analysis of Abad’s novel, what is relevant in García’s analysis is, on the one hand, his association of the macho masculinity displayed by Mexican men around cockfighting with a response to the disempowerment associated with being an immigrant in the US and, on the other, his view of the sport as producing a sense of community belonging among Mexican immigrants. He quotes several scholars who argue that macho attitudes, such as hyper-masculine bravado, confrontation, abuse, dominance and posturing (Klein 2000), are often the result of “a futile attempt to mask a profound sense of impotence, powerlessness and ineptitude, an expression of weakness and a sense of inferiority” (Mirandé qtd. in García 118). Thus, Latin machismo, as expressed in relation to the cockfight, can be understood as a form of masculine overcompensation engendered by a sense of powerlessness. In *El*

*Campeón*, this masculine overcompensation appears in Banogón's confident behaviour and inflated sense of self while he is still a champion fighter. At the same time, the novel highlights the literal and symbolic emasculation to which this overcompensation is a response: male chicks are castrated to obtain quickly fattened young meat and Banogón is forced into abstinence as a fighting cock, causing him to fail at his breeding role upon his return to the coop.

Another relevant aspect from García's article is that it shows how, in the context of US Chicano culture, cockfighting is not a spectacle for the male masses (as in Bali or the Philippines) but a subculture in which a macho ethnic identity is asserted against normative white masculinity. Looking at cockfighting as a form of 'resistance masculinity' works at two levels: it allows an affirmation of Mexican (macho) masculinity against white American masculinity, while simultaneously creating a sense of belonging to the Chicano community. For Mexican immigrants in the US, García claims, cockfighting keeps alive a tradition associated with the homeland, slowing down the process of cultural erasure and challenging the claim to superiority made by white American culture:

Elements of masculinity as defined by Mexican culture are kept alive within the arena of the cockfight. [...] Mexicans males who see masculinity as a positive mechanism for overcoming discriminatory structural forces in the US display a form of assertiveness, responsibility and selflessness. As a result, the cockfight, the means by which Mexican males are able to create a space of their own in a world far from their origins, in some way, slow down the process of assimilation. This "resistance masculinity" becomes a defensive mechanism against the devaluation of the Mexican culture. (García 133)

Cockfighting as represented in *El Campeón* echoes this idea of building a communal identity capable of resisting hegemonic culture within the space of the cockpit, although in the Philippines the cultural erasure that is being fought is that of indigenous and traditional Filipino culture enforced by (resilient) colonialism. In addition, the novel points out how, in the end, the aggressive, hyper-masculine fighting cocks are not successful at resisting those who oppress them; they end up killing each other for the entertainment of others, while the title of "champion" does not convey any real power, as Banogón's story makes clear.

Masculinity in the novel is recurrently conceptualised in terms of virility: the gamecocks display a belligerent-aggressive, dominant form of masculinity (encouraged by forced sexual repression) that makes them good fighters and the roosters' masculinity is virile-fertile-protective, as their role is to reproduce and defend the harem, helping to "perpetuate the species" (261). At the same time, the majority of the male chicks are deprived

of their virility by castration at birth in order to stimulate their fattening - turned into capons, these chickens are depicted in the novel as submissive and lacking willpower: “Toda su ambición consistía en alimentarse bien, enriquecer el tejido adiposo y entregarse sin protesta al sacrificio (238) [all their ambition is to eat well, enrich their fat tissue and deliver themselves without protesting to the sacrifice].

Banogón, upon his return to the chicken yard, observes “the horrific reality” that follows castration:

En un momento olvidó sus hermosas teorías de poco antes para no ver más que la realidad horripilante de unos gallos que, al quedar privados de la virilidad, habían sido condenados hacía tiempo a muerte sin gloria (272)

[He quickly forgot about the wonderful theories as he could only see the horrific reality of some roosters, who, deprived of their virility, had been condemned long ago to a death without glory.]

The ‘wonderful theories’ referred to are the arguments justifying Banogón’s aspirations for glory and the significance of his life as a cockfighting champion as opposed to the lives of other members of the community. ‘Deprived of their virility,’ the capons are condemned to die without glory, that is, without having the chance to fight for their lives and to remain alive in men’s memories; instead, they meet their end “bajo el filo de un infamante cuchillo de cocina” [under the blade of a disgraceful kitchen knife] (231). Such a death without glory is most feared by Banogón, who is repeatedly led to believe that gamecocks belong to a “raza superior” [superior cast] (215) destined to higher deeds than simply becoming food for men:

Tú mismo dime con franqueza: ¿recuerdas los nombres de los que contigo se criaron en aquel corral? Y si de ellos no te acuerdas tú, ¿cómo quieres que sus nombres se perpetúen en la mente de los hombres? En cambio el nuestro perdura aun después de nuestra muerte y lo recuerdan con cariño. ¿Qué nombre de gallo vive en la memoria de los hombres más tiempo que el nuestro? [...] Saben de nuestro valor y destreza, y nuestro nombre es para ellos como un gallardete, como un símbolo de victoria. Nosotros Banogón, somos los privilegiados de nuestra raza, la aristocracia de nuestros semejantes. Si supieras que para ser como nosotros, renunciarían con gusto a todo... [...] Quien no esté dispuesto a aceptar todo esto que no aspire a pertenecer a nuestra nobleza, porque para tal osadía no hay más que una pena, y es la muerte. (179-80)

[Tell me honestly, do you remember the name of anyone that grew up with you in that henhouse? And if you do not even remember them, how can you expect their names to live on in the minds of men? However, ours last even after our death and they remember them fondly. [...] They know about our courage and skills, and our name is for them a prize, a symbol of victory. We, Banogón, are the privileged of our race, the aristocracy among our fellow chicken. If only you knew that to be like us, they would gladly give up everything... [...] Whoever is not ready to accept all this should not

aspire to belong to our nobility; there is only one punishment for such audacity, and that is death.]

In this fragment, an older champion, Pulá, attempts to encourage Banogón to continue fighting when he has a crisis, a moment of doubt about his deadly and demanding profession. Pulá's words reveal the classism the novel addresses, also in relation to Filipino society by incorporating different discourses so as to reflect on how the elitist mentality of upper class Filipinos (founded, in the text, on the discourses of glory, racial superiority and masculinity) comes into being. In having Banogón turn away from this elitist mentality, the novel critiques those collaborating with the colonial regime and gives voice to others who are in opposition to these ideals. Those in the lower parts of society are feminised, another strategy of othering for colonialism to justify its enterprise, the weaker (women and colonized people) have to be protected by the masculine coloniser.

The controlled masculinity of the fowl population results in a sort of gender transformation evidenced by physical changes and a feminisation of the capons' habits:

Extirpada la virilidad, jamás sintieron la necesidad de la hembra y, desviado el instinto sexual, perdían rápidamente las características de la masculinidad. La cresta, símbolo de mando, palidecía y menguaba; la cerviz se humillaba, los ojos se despojaban de su habitual fiereza, la voluntad se quebraba y, apagado en la garganta el grito de guerra con que afirmaban los gallos su personalidad, en vez de cantar, cacareaban al primer atisbo de la aurora o bajo la modorra de la siesta. Estos eran, para Bakiki, los parias de la población, y a tal grado llegaba a veces la desviación de sus instintos que ella conoció capones que se prestaban gustosos a sustituir a las gallinas, cuidando, muchas veces mejor a ellas, de los pollitos demasiado temprano privados de la protección de sus madres. Conocían su destino y lo aceptaban con sumisa mansedumbre (238)

[Having had their virility removed, they never felt the need for a female, and deprived of their sexual instinct, they rapidly lost the qualities of their masculinity. Their crest, a symbol of command, paled and diminished; the backs of their neck sank, their eyes lost their usual ferocity, their will declined, and the war crowing with which roosters affirm their personality weakened in their throats, so that, instead of crowing, they clucked at the sight of dusk or during the drowsy hours of the afternoon siesta. These were for Bakiki the outcasts of the population, their deviation from masculinity was such in some cases that she met some capons who would gladly substitute for the hen, taking care, sometimes better than them, of the little ones who lacked the early protection of their mothers. They knew their destiny and accepted it with submissive docility]

These are the words of the only female protagonist of the novel, Bakiki, who perceives the gender role change caused by the use of biotechnologies in the coop as a threat to her own maternal role, a form of social destabilisation and, most importantly, as leading to the

stigmatisation of the little “outcasts” who seem to be unable to contest their effeminate role but accept it as their “destiny”.

Masculinity - in its various forms: belligerent, dominant, reproductive, protective or effeminate - is mobilised in Abad’s novel allegorically to reflect on the social structure of the Philippines as a result of colonialism. Colonialism and imperialism, like blood sports, are based on the idea of conquest and possession, where subduing the other is conceived of as an act of imposing one’s masculinity over a feminised opponent. This power dynamic is at the core of the second half of Abad’s novel, from the moment Banogón returns to the coop and observes how the chicken community is socially organised with the most masculine at the top and the most feminine at the bottom. Through the character of Banogón, this idea is challenged; he has to find its place at the bottom and imagine a community that is transcultural.

### **A New Form of Heroism**

Banogón is retired to a farm on Cebu Island owned by a journalist. This journalist is the first-person narrator who writes down Banogón’s story as he hears it from the farm’s caretaker, a young man called Andrés. Andrés claims that he can understand the language of the chickens and has overheard Banogón tell his life story to the chicken population. Here we have a frame narrative with multiple frames that goes from Banogón to Andrés and from Andrés to the journalist and owner of the farm. The first-person narrator presents the story in the following way in the novel’s preface:

La historia que os voy a contar es un relato fiel de la vida y hazañas de un viejo campeón del ruedo, tal y como la oyó Andrés de Banogón y tal como me la refirió a mí. Os la transmito sin añadir nada mío, excepto el método con el que deben ir, en mi opinión, hilados sucesos y acontecimientos, para que la historia, por su ordenada y lógica trabazón, sea interesante para el lector. (17)

[The story that I am going to tell is the faithful account of the life and deeds of an old champion in the arena, just as Andrés heard it from Banogón and related it to me. I am transmitting it without adding anything of my own, except for the method by which, in my opinion, the events should be woven together, so that the story, logically arranged, becomes interesting to the reader.]

The story of Banogón is thus framed by the professional pen of the journalist, who ‘logically arranges’ it for the benefit of the reader. In the story itself, Banogón’s early years and his career as a gamecock appear as flashbacks, recounted from the perspective of his retirement on Cebu.

On the farm, Banogón struggles to live the life of a common rooster, which he initially perceives as inferior. He misses the devotion with which his trainers treated him and is unable to abandon his old habits, such as fighting the other chickens for the grain the caretakers throw on the floor. Moreover, as noted earlier, he becomes aware of “the horrific reality” of castration and the social stratification it produces. His disappointment with his new life increases as he realises that he is viewed as an old nostalgic rooster, ignored by the hens and bullied by the younger males:

Iba el viejo campeón arrastrando la tragedia de su pata inútil camino de la casa que consideraba su último refugio y pensando en la brevedad de sus días de gloria, apenado de su soledad. Allí, en medio de aquel mísero corral, ningún gallo había visto los laureles que coronaban su frente jamás abatida por la derrota, ninguna gallina se fijaba en la gallardía de su figura de una raza superior. (220)

[The old champion dragged the tragedy of his worthless leg on the path to the house, which he considered his last shelter, while thinking about the brevity of his glorious days and saddened by loneliness. There, in the middle of that miserable farmyard, no rooster had seen the laurel that crowned a forehead never debased by defeat, no hen admired the bravery of his body of a superior race]

Even worse than being unrecognised as a glorious champion is Banogón’s inability to fulfil his new duty: to provide the owner of the chicken farm with an offspring of future champions. Affected by old age, a permanently injured leg and his inexperience in physical love, Banogón is incapable of impregnating any of the hens. The severity of his crisis of identity, which is ultimately a crisis of masculinity, leads the reader to expect a violent outburst or even a rebellion in the fashion of Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945). However, the story does not culminate in conflict but in a reconciliation based on Banogón’s reconsideration of his role in the community.

On the farm, Banogón reconnects with his old friend Bakiki, who explains to him how things work in the community and what has happened in his absence. In the penultimate chapter, entitled “*Bakiki cuenta su historia*” [Bakiki tells her story], she explains how the arrival of a new species, the American leghorn, has transformed the coop. With regret, she admits her own (enforced) role in the transformation:

Bakiki confesó haber tenido veinte o treinta descendientes de esta raza, habidos de uno de los más ostentosos leghorn del corral. No tuvo más remedio que aceptarlo, ya que no quedaba gallo hábil de su propia raza, y la llamada de la especie era más fuerte que su odio. No sintió mucho la separación de sus hijos blancos cuando ocurrió la desbandada. Pero era eso su gran pecado: haber colaborado en la obra de exterminio de su propia raza (244)

[Bakiki confessed having had twenty of thirty descendants of that race, the offspring of one of the most ostentatious leghorn in the coop. She had no other option than to accept this, since there was no competent cock of her own race, and the call of the species was stronger than her own hate. She did not feel very sorry about separating from his white children when the disbandment occurred. However, her biggest sin was having collaborated in the work of extermination of her own race.]

Bakiki's confession obliquely blames the 'extermination' of the local population on the absence of 'competent cocks of her own race' from the farm. This may be read as a comment on the defencelessness of the (repeatedly) colonised: it is easy for the leghorns to dominate with, on the one hand, most of the local males dispossessed through castration and, on the other, the roosters who became gamecocks having become infertile through years of sexual restraint and injuries. At the same time, the incapacity of the gamecocks to reproduce is also due to the "conciencia de su superioridad" [awareness of their superiority], which causes most gamecocks to not allow themselves to "enamorarse" [fall in love] with any of the hens offered to them (241). This comment applies to Kabiara, another gamecock who retired to the farm before Banogón. Kabiara's inability to adapt earned him and those who followed him the disdain of the community. Banogón only ends the novel as a hero because, unlike Kabiara, he manages to overcome his sense of superiority and chooses to become part of the collective, making it stronger. Considering his story as an allegory of colonialism, this reinforces the idea that a communal voice needs to be developed through which the whole population of the Philippines can come together, resisting the unproductive and ultimately complicit models of heroism offered by the colonial oppressors.

Bakiki's remarks can be seen to question Filipino technocrats and the upper classes, who, in order to lead the comfortable life provided by their collaboration with the American government, ignored or were unable to address the social problems affecting the majority of Filipinos. These elites are the people who do not "discuss things any more" and are unable to think outside the standardised dogma's Abad refers to in his essay "The Transitory Hour." With this implicit critique of the Filipino upper classes, the novel shows a tendency to praise the common man (hardworking, religious, morally virtuous and capable of enduring hardship through resignation), demonstrating what Hroch considers a quality of romantic nationalism: "the idealization of the common man, usually a peasant or countryman, as the vehicle of elementary, universally human, national values" (2007: 6).

Although Bakiki feels guilty about her "contribution" to the "extermination of her own race" and presents blood mixing as a form of cultural erasure and cultural dominance expressed in racial terms, the novel also makes clear that there is no complete erasure or full

cultural dominance on the part of the American leghorns, as Bakiki's children come out not white but multi-coloured:

En el plumaje de sus hijos se repetía la anárquica multiplicación prodigiosa de los colores que caracterizaba los primeros tiempos del corral del cura, indicio, si no de pureza étnica, de abigarrada autoctonidad. Desde el metálico negro de obsidiana que no conseguía delustrar la continua exposición al sol y a las lluvias, al blanco impoluto que le recordaba el dominio de los leghorns, y desde el rojo agresivo del cobalto, con motas negras y amarillas, hasta el gris perla realzado por un pico negro y unas patas de color marfil, todos pregonaban el triunfo de lo indígena. Cada uno tenía su propia individualidad, y aquella algarabía de colores era, para Bakiki, un constante reto a la vulgaridad del color uniforme y único, característica de las gallinas llamadas de raza. (244)

In the feathers of her children the prodigious and anarchic multiplication of the colours that characterised the early days in the farmyard of the priest was repeated, not with ethnic purity but with autochthonous heterogeneity. From the metallic obsidian black that would not lose its glaze from continuous exposition to the sun and the rains, to the spotless white that reminded her of the hegemony of the leghorns; and from the aggressive red of cobalt with black and yellow dots, to the pearly grey enhanced by a black beak and ivory coloured legs, they all proclaimed the triumph of the indigenous. Each of them had their own individuality, and such a symphony of colours was for Bakiki a constant challenge to the vulgarity of the single, even colour of a chicken of pure race.

Here, the novel subverts the colonial discourse of white supremacy, as well as the nativist discourse that seeks to return to an unblemished precolonial time, through the image of a 'triumph of the indigenous' that is based on heterogeneity rather than on the 'vulgarity of the single race.' What is proposed here is a Filipino national identity founded on a fundamental multiplicity and the recognition that the influences of colonialism cannot simply be dispelled, even after independence (anything else would mean the exclusion of those who, like Bakiki's offspring, result from the mixing of the indigenous and the colonial). This idea is reinforced by other aspects of *El Campeón*, such as the harmonious way in which it portrays different nationals coexisting in the Philippines: the Chinese gamblers, the Spanish politician and the priest, the Filipino workers on the farm. This emphasis on the heterogeneity of the Filipino people can be read as signalling *El Campeón's* move from cultural nationalism to transcultural nationalism.

Although the narrative repeatedly portrays anything American as a threat, from the American leghorns taking over the farm to the Texan gamecocks who are the fiercest fighters in the cockpit, in the realms of food and music some American influences are seen in a positive light. Thus, it is noted that "Toda la ciudad se preparaba a celebrar las Pascuas haciendo acopio de los comestibles de rigor: jamones y tocinos de China, de América o

Australia, embutidos y turrónes de España, nueces, castañas, higos, pasas y loterías de todas clases” [The whole city was preparing to celebrate Christmas gathering the required food: ham and bacon from China, America or Australia, cold meats and nougat from Spain, walnuts, chestnuts, figs, raisins and lotteries of all sorts] (256). In a similar vein, the novel emphasises that (Spanish or indigenous) tradition and (American) modernity can be balanced, especially by the young:

Aquel año *los jóvenes de la vieja ciudad* habían acordado resucitar costumbres arrinconadas por la invasión victoriosa de los blues y foxtrot. Asistirían, como antaño, a la misa, y luego, al salir de la iglesia, se dirigirían a una casa elegida de antemano, donde desayunarían con *poto maya*, *bibingka* y chocolate, o con *manga* y *budbud*,<sup>109</sup> ya que aquel año los máncales habían rendido una abundantísima cosecha. Y para que no se dijera que su regresión a lo antiguo era completa, llevarían una orquesta cuyos sonos les recordarían que la tradición, aunque respetablemente hermosa, ya no vigía con tan rígida exactitud para excluir todo obsequio a la modernidad. (255-6, emphasis added)

[That year, the *young people of the old city* had agreed on resuscitating some customs neglected by the victorious invasion of *blues* and *fox trots*. They would attend the mass, like in the past, and then go to someone’s house as previously arranged where they would have a breakfast consisting on *poto maya*, *bibingka* and chocolate, or mango and *budbud*, since that year the mango trees had rendered an abundant crop. In order not to spread the word that their regression to the ancient was complete, they would bring an orchestra whose rhythms would remind them that tradition, even though it was respectfully wonderful, did not prevail with such a rigid accuracy as to exclude all rewards to modernity.]

The idea of merging the old and the new by recognising Filipino traditions as transcultural (Hispanic, Filipino and American) takes on a prominent role in the last chapter of the novel and responds to the urge that Hutchinson finds in the work of cultural nationalists to find a new voice, one that actively seeks to combine tradition and progress in mapping a new national identity:

I argue that the significance of cultural nationalists is that they present populations with new maps of identity and political prescriptions that claim to combine the virtues of historical tradition and modern progress at times of crisis when established practices and identities were shaken. (2013: 87)

Bakiki and Banogón come out of their identity crisis by rethinking their roles in the community in terms of fostering an inclusive sense of belonging and a communal spirit. Significantly, Hutchinson claims that cultural nationalists often employ an idiom of

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<sup>109</sup> *Poto maya* (nowadays spelled with a “u” “puto maya”), *Bibingka* and *Budbud* are sweet breakfast foods made of glutinous rice with coconut milk and sugar. The latter is wrapped in a banana leaf (Young and Garcia 255).

regeneration as part of their method of nation imagining, which relies on a reinterpretation of the traditions and cultural ethos from the present rather than on a total revolution in the future. In Hroch's words: "the search for a new collective spirit need not necessarily have the character of a revolutionary dream of a new society: it can lead to a community of a new kind—namely, the nation" (2006: 7). *El Campeón* indeed attempts to reconfigure the rural Philippines as a 'community of a new kind' instead of 'dreaming of a new society' like Paz Mendoza did in *Notas de viaje*, with the new community it envisions incorporating past and present influences, viewed as regenerative forces rather than burdens, in a project of transcultural nationalism.

This new Philippines emerges at the end of the novel when Bakiki no longer sees herself as having participated in the destruction of her race but rather as the unconditionally loving mother of all her children: "Los amo por igual, y cuando me los quitan es como si a mí misma me quitaran la vida" (259) [I love them all the same, and as they take them away from me, it is as if they take my own life]. She confesses this to Banogón as the Christmas celebrations and the accompanying sacrifice of the chickens she has mothered approach. Banogón, however, has never felt the pain of a loss, not in a fight and not in losing someone he loved. Listening to Bakiki, he realises that he has never truly loved as neither he nor the people for whose amusement and profit he fought ever cared for others, especially not those defeated in the arena: "En su carrera de artista del homicidio, no había visto nunca derramarse ni una sola lágrima sobre el cadáver del vencido" (259) [In his career as an artist of the homicide, he had never seen a tear being shed over the corpse of the defeated]. In Banogón's life as a cockfighting champion he never truly had a reason for living outside himself, caring only about prospering at the cost of his opponents:

¡Vivir! Banogón, que paseaba sus meditaciones por el campo a la sazón inundado de sol, se paró sobre la robustez, todavía atlética, de su pata sana. ¿Qué representaba para él la palabra vivir? ¿No era allí donde radicaba la diferencia fundamental entre su concepto de la vida y el de su amiga? Mientras para ella la vida era un ejercicio cotidiano de excelsas virtudes —la de vivir ella más y mejor para mejor proteger la vida de sus descendientes—, para él era una constante y enérgica afirmación de su propio derecho a ella y una negación hostil de este mismo derecho a los demás, a los adversarios que tuvieron la osadía de ponerse frente a él. (261)

[To live! Banogón, who was strolling while meditating under the blazing sun on the barn field, suddenly stopped, standing on his robust, still athletic, healthy leg. What meaning did the word life hold for him? Wasn't it there where the most fundamental difference between his concept of life and that of his friend [Bakiki] lay? For her, life was a quotidian exercise of excellent virtues - that of living longer and better to protect the life of his descendants -, whereas for him it was a constant and assertive affirmation of his right to it and a hostile negation of that right to others, the

adversaries that would dare to stand in front of him.]

For Banogón the sense of continuity and community preservation is meaningless, for his life has been a sequence of encounters with death, forcing him to rely on his survival instinct and fighting skills. Following this moment of meditation, Banogón heroically defends a little chick from a bird of prey, thus asserting his new role as father-protector of the community:

Ese pollito salvado por mí ya es hijo mío, ¿comprendes, Bakiki? ¡Es ya hijo mío! Tan hijo mío como si lo hubiese engendrado yo mismo, porque lo he engendrado en el corazón...este corazón tan egoísta, que si hasta ahora ha palpitado por la gloria de mis laureles de campeón, de ahora en adelante palpará para él únicamente. (266)

[The little chick that I have saved is already my son, do you understand Bakiki? He is now my son! As much as if I had engendered him myself because I have engendered him in my heart... this selfish heart, that has beat until now for the glory of my laurel as a champion, from now on it will beat only for him.]

For Banogón, kinship is no longer something that only happens by blood but something that can also occur through a cultivated sense of belonging.

Following his rescue of the chick, he turns into a fatherly figure not only capable of physically protecting the community but also dismissing his own desire for glory. He comes to see himself as a spiritual leader:

Porque es ahora - se sinceró el viejo ex monarca de las galleras- cuando he podido dar un nuevo sentido a mi vida. Así como tú eres la madre real y verdadera de todos los que componen la población de este corral, yo voy a ser desde ahora su padre afectivo, su defensor contra todos los peligros. Tú los engendraste según la carne y yo lo he engendrado en espíritu. (267)

[It is now - confessed the old ex-monarch of the cockpits - when I have been able to give new meaning to my life. Just like you are the real and true mother of all who constitute the population of this coop, I will be from now on, their affective father, their defender against all dangers. You engendered them according to your flesh and I have done so in spirit.]

The idea of the “affective father” adds a new notion of masculinity to the ones already presented in the novel, which, when read as an allegory of nationalism, replaces the monarchy with a sovereign king with a family model regulated by a regime of care rather than violence. It also suggests that nationalism is fostered not just by being born of a country or by blood but that it requires a certain spirit or sense of community like the one proclaimed by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (1991), where he emphasises national belonging as comradeship and fraternity: “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible” (1995: 6-7). The verticality of the hierarchical Filipino social structure expressed in the early parts of the

novel is challenged by Banogón's symbolic descent to become a protector of and guide for the defenseless youth. In the novel, however, it is not fraternal love of those who see each other as equals (horizontally) that produces the sense of national identity but the identification with the father - except in the comradeship between Bakiki and Banogon, which also offers an alternative gendering of national belonging as not exclusively masculine. Despite Banogón's changed attitude, the novel thus maintains the idea of patriarchy at the core of nation building.

The idea of the nation as a family in the novel also continues to be defined by traditional gender roles: the woman remains linked to the procreation of the nation, while the man is seen as providing a spiritual sense of community and its physical defense. The masculine role is, however, reconfigured in as far as the novel calls for a father figure providing leadership, presence and affection. Affection and presence are qualities normally attributed to the female and stand in opposition to the dominant (colonial) idea of masculinity and equally against the Latin American notion of machismo.

Banogón's transformation calls for a new type of Filipino national hero who is a balanced figure as much a fighter as a caring father, but at the same time it calls for a stereotype of Filipino heroism modelled on the premises of Filipino Catholicism and sustained by the symbolism of suffering and martyrdom. Bräunlein (2009) elaborates on the symbolism of suffering in Filipino Catholicism as exemplified in the rituals of crucifixion during the Easter parade in particular areas of the Philippines: "Suffering as evidence of being chosen by God transforms suffering into salvation," he explains, "Jesús, the original charismatic and stigmatic exemplified such fundamental changes of spiritual power and status by altering his position from a slave to a world conqueror" (905). Banogón frees himself from the slavery of the cockfight to become a spiritual leader of his community by sacrificing his egocentric aspirations of glory and adopting what Bräunlein calls a 'pathos of humility' (*Demutspathos*), associated with "the rhetoric of sacrifice, martyrdom, self-denial, enforced charismatic authority, which is diversely illustrated in early Christianity" (905). Banogón's heroism at the end of the novel derives from his surrender to the community, humbling himself to endure with the others. He suffers physically from his injured leg and castration, but is perceived as a hero precisely because of this. Bakiki's expression of unconditional love for her offspring, regardless of how they look, is also an example of this 'pathos of humility.' This conception of Filipino heroism/nationalism is, in the end, an example of acculturation instead of transculturation. The figure of the Filipino patriot has assimilated the values and symbols of Catholicism (fraternity, sacrifice, humbleness).

The novel ends with Banogón's words of consolation in response to Bakiki's sorrow over the approaching killings of her children on Christmas Eve:

“No llores más, que tus lágrimas parecen repudiación de tu nobilísimo destino. ¿No oyes cómo las campanas se han echado al vuelo? Es que acaba de nacer el Niño Dios. ¡Cantan el himno glorioso de la Santa y Fecunda Maternidad!”(274)

[Do not cry anymore, your tears seem a rejection of your noble destiny. Don't you hear how the bells toll? The child of God has just been born. They sing the glorious hymns of the Holy and Fertile Maternity!]

Closing with this celebratory image of motherhood and fertility, and ultimately the acceptance of the two characters' destiny (serving as “regio regalo al apetito de los hombres” (743) [great gift to men's appetite]) suggests a Catholic Filipino fatalism. The novel endorses the Catholic values of resignation and peaceful resistance (the Lord is to decide), with the main character abandoning any type of fight: the cockfight from the top of the social hierarchy and the liberation of the chicken community (symbolically a fight for Filipino independence) from the bottom. Despite the moments in which *El Campeón* gestures towards an imagination of the Filipino nation as a transcultural realm, such as when describing the mixed-blood chicks and when representing the cockfight as entangled with Catholic and Chinese rituals, the novel is prominently an example of Filipino cultural nationalism tied to Catholicism and, by implication, the Spanish colonial influence on the country.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated how Antonio Abad's novel *El Campeón* contributes to the repertoire of literary texts written in Spanish that may be considered as seeking to foster a Filipino cultural nationalism. As such, it can be located within the gestational moment of nation building the main objective of which is not to implement social and political change in order to achieve a state-oriented national project, but to cultivate a sense of national belonging. An important trait of Abad's novel as an example of cultural nationalism is his retrieval of cockfighting as a rooted Filipino practice that connects the past colonial history with the present. Abad presents cockfighting in the novel as an anticolonial metaphor, pointing to how it has historically resisted modernisation policies from both the Spanish clergy and the US reformists that sought to eradicate it and positioning it as a site of potential political dissidence that capitalises on the Filipino sensibility towards supporting the underdog, as well as the central space for socialising, educating and entertaining in the rural Philippines.

Through the fable of the rooster, the novel questions the concept of ethnocentricity, instead celebrating hybridity. It addresses the link between masculinity, colonialism and nationalism, and proposes a more balanced model of masculinity in which strength is combined with affection. The story of Banogón also challenges the role of the technocrats, the elite of ilustrados that settled at the top of the colonial hierarchy and refused to adapt to the changing realities of the rural Philippines. The transformation of Banogón from a gamecock seeking glory to a spiritual guide is the novel's nuanced translation of what form of national leadership Abad believes is needed in the Filipino context.

*El Campeón*'s imagination of the nation gives voice to a new form of Filipino national identity that is not singular but multi-coloured, masculine and feminine, Asian, Hispanic, (selectively) American and modern, while also being unequivocally Catholic. The novel's lingering attachment to Spanish (Catholic) values, without showing the Filipino people's agency in reinventing these values, prevents it from fully embracing a transcultural model. In this, it resonates with Balmori's *Pájaros*; neither text shows (non-Hispanic) Filipino characters, except very peripheral ones like Inggoy, who creatively combines his idolatry of the Virgin with his love of the cockfight, having agency in their own transculturation

## **Conclusion**

In this study, I have analysed a selection of texts by Hispano-Filipino authors of the early twentieth century (when the Philippines was under American rule) in order to explore how they imagine the country's future as an independent nation with its own cultural identity. Central to all these imaginations is the question of how to forge such a cultural or national identity in a space that, because of its double colonisation and its position in a globalising world, was a space of transculturation. Transculturation had produced, especially in the Spanish-speaking elite on which my corpus focuses, enduring attachments not just to Spanish and US culture but also a tendency to look to other nations for inspiration and guidance. All the works I have explored, to various degrees and with different results, reflect on and engage with transculturation as a process that may be situated in the past or conceived of as a project for the present and future, and that can take the shape of acculturation, deculturation, neoculturation or a mix of these.

Throughout my chapters, I have argued that my corpus, far from belonging to a “zombie literature” that is all but dead, in its engagement with transculturation, has an important contribution to make to rethinking the history of Filipino nationalism and to thinking nationalism and cultural identity in general. I have shown how transculturation, in the work of Jesús Balmori, Adelina Gurrea, Paz Mendoza and Antonio Abad, is variously presented as the result of cultural contact, derived from colonialism, and as an active desire for cultural transformation geared towards achieving not just independence but also (western) modernity. Transculturation, as it appears in my corpus, is understood as an ongoing and creative process that is not just about the uncritical adoption of foreign cultural paradigms and the loss of one's “own” culture. Crucially, Ángel Rama, besides affirming the creative function of transculturation, also recognises it as an idiosyncratic quality of Latin American culture with a double function:

por una parte registra que la cultura presente de la comunidad lationamericana (que es un producto largamente transculturado y en permanente evolución) está compuesta de valores indeosincráticos, los que pueden reconocerse actuando desde fechas remotas; por otra parte corrobora la energía creadora que la mueve haciéndola muy distinta de un simple agregado de normas, comportamientos, creencias y objetos culturales, pues se trata de una fuerza que actúa con desenvoltura tanto su herencia particular, según las situaciones de su propio desarrollo, como de las aportaciones provenientes de fuera. (34)

[on the one hand, it records that the present culture of the Latin American community (which has long been a transculturated and ever evolving product) is composed of idiosyncratic values, which can be recognised from remote dates; on the other hand, it corroborates the creative energy that moves it, making it very different from a simple aggregate of norms, behaviours, beliefs and cultural objects, because it is a force that acts out with ease both its particular heritage, according to the situations of its own development, as well as contributions from outside.

In my analyses, I have illustrated the difference between these two functions: the recognition of Filipino culture as both transculturated (as an outcome of the colonial past) and transcultural/transculturating (as a present condition). This can be seen, for example, in Balmori's poem "Blason" and Gurrea's poem "España, América, Filipinas," which highlight the mixed heritage of Filipino society and show its transculturation as forged in the past and negotiated in the present. Mendoza's *Notas de viaje* takes a step further to explore the possibilities of transculturation as a future project, one in which the "aportaciones provenientes de fuera" [contributions from outside] are actively looked for and appropriated for the imagination of a future independent nation. My corpus, significantly, not only points to the potentialities of taking up transculturation as an active process but also to the risks involved, most crucially the danger of idealising other cultures because they are only partially perceived or perceived through stereotypes and entrenched literary modes like orientalism (Japan in the case of Balmori's poetry and the character of Don Lino in *Los Pájaros de fuego*, and fascist nations in the case of Mendoza).

Rama's explanation of the two functions of transculturation is followed by an explanation of the circumstances and places where the workings of transculturation appear:

Es justamente esa capacidad para elaborar con originalidad, *aún en difíciles circunstancias históricas*, la que demuestra que [la transculturación] pertenece a una *sociedad viva y creadora*, rasgos que pueden manifestarse en cualquier punto del territorio que ocupa, aunque preferentemente se los encuentre nítidos en las capas recónditas de las regiones internas. (34, my emphasis)

[It is precisely this capacity to elaborate with originality, *even in difficult historical circumstances*, that shows that [transculturation] belongs to a *living and creative society*, traits that can manifest in any part of the territory it occupies, although they are most outstandingly found crystal clear in the remote layers of the inner regions.]

In the case of my corpus, the difficult historical circumstances in which most of the texts I analyse (except for Gurrea's) were written - in the Philippines under American rule, with the threat of another world war looming, as well as the promise of immanent independence, and with Spanish no longer the dominant language - produce originality but also show a struggle

with how precisely the Philippines as a realm of transculturation should be dealt with and given shape. As I have shown, this struggle is not necessarily resolved in the texts, which sometimes, as in the endings of Balmori's and Abad's novels, shy away from fully embracing transculturation in favour of a reaffirmation of Hispanic culture and Catholicism. However, the creative engagement with the Philippines' multiple cultural attachments found in most of the texts I have discussed confirms that Hispano-Filipino literature in the early twentieth century was by no means dying but was very much alive and developing original, if ambivalent ideas about the shape of the nation to come.

Rama's argument that traits of transculturation can manifest anywhere but tend to be more vivid in the "regiones internas" [internal regions] of the country is also supported by my corpus, with the most positive portrayals of the Philippines as a realm of transculturation occurring in Gurrea's stories, set on La Carlota on the Island of Negros, and Abad's animal fable, on a small village on Cebu. Both Gurrea and Abad emphasise how, in rural areas, Catholicism is creatively combined with indigenous mythologies and traditions like cockfighting.

Significantly, although the texts I have explored display an ongoing attachment to the Spanish language, Catholicism and, in some cases, even Spanish colonialism, contemporary Spain and Spanish writers largely absent from the map of attachments. Characteristically, Mendoza's travelogue does not present Spain as a nation on which the Philippines should model itself, but identifies instead with the Catalan struggle for independence. In contrast, there are strong transcultural attachments to Latin America, perceived, for instance, in the resonances between Balmori's poetry and that of the Nicaraguan Rubén Darío, in Mendoza's positive comments about Cuba and in Abad's insistence that Filipinos should imitate Mexico instead of the US. Similarly, Rama has noted how the originality of Latin American literatures after independence relied on an eagerness to be nurtured by international sources ("un afán internacionalista") as well as local ones ('indigenismo'), while skipping "el acueducto español" (Rama 1982: 11) [the Spanish aqueduct] in order to underline their emancipation from the 'mother' cultures of Portugal and Spain.

In my corpus, the lingering attachment to the Hispanic heritage, predominantly in the form of Catholicism and anchored in the past (as is emphasised by the curious vision of a return to the beginnings of Spanish colonialism that closes Balmori's novel) is balanced by a detachment from Spanish peninsular culture in the present, as evidenced not only in Mendoza's travelogue but also in Gurrea's use of satire to overcome the censorship of the Franco regime. Yet, it must be acknowledged that the expression of resistance to the (former)

coloniser in the texts I have analysed is not as radical and revolutionary as that of, for example, José Rizal, who directly challenged the Spanish colonial authorities. This is mainly due to the fact that, in the early twentieth century, the US had taken Spain's place as the occupier (the texts are noticeably more critical of the encroachment of American culture than of the Hispanic legacy). I would argue, however, that these texts are nevertheless worth reading, precisely because of their articulation of the struggle, specific to the Hispano-Filipino elite, to carve out a space for themselves and their culture and language under American rule and in imagining the independent, transcultural nation to come.

In the preceding five chapters, I have traced how the texts in my corpus present this struggle, in more or less critical ways, through their portrayal of cultural attachments to (as assimilation, acculturation or, in cases of creative combinations with other attachments, neoculturation) and detachments from (as a loss of, distancing from or deculturation) Hispanic, American, Japanese and other cultures, including, most notably in Gurrea's and Abad's work, the indigenous cultures of the islands.

In my analysis of the poetry of Jesús Balmori in Chapter 1 I have contended that writing orientalist poems does not mean doing Orientalism in the hegemonic sense denounced by Said or as a mere imitation of French literary exoticism. Balmori's orientalist poems demonstrate that the Orient, rather than being a static object of (self-)study, inert and silenced can be an interactive repertoire of literary motifs serving the aims of aesthetic experimentation but also a political purpose (national self-affirmation and differentiation from others). Moreover, while in his poetry the various cultural attachments that constitute Filipino transculturation tend to be depicted as harmoniously entangled (as, for example, in the love story between the indigenous speaker and the Spanish princess in "Rima Malaya" and in the playful staging of a new orient in "La Gueisha"), Balmori's war novel *Los Pájaros de fuego* (1945), discussed in Chapter 4, highlights the dangers of looking to other cultures for models of national becoming. By having the characters in the novel appear as embodiments of the various political discourses circulating in the early 1940s Philippines, *Pájaros* suggests a mournful vision of the nation's elite as overly attached to both the Hispanic past, the American present and an idealised Japanese future, which constitutes a betrayal of the Filipino people, whom the novel portrays as ready to fight for their country.

Adelina Gurrea engages with the transcultural conditions that characterise life in the rural Philippines. Based on her childhood memories of growing up on the island of Negros, *Cuentos de Juana* presents, as I have shown in Chapter 2, a nostalgic but also critical account of the processes of transculturation that occurred in the Philippines under Spanish

colonialism, told from the perspective of both Spanish colonisers and indigenous Filipinos. The framed narratives question the borders between these perspectives and reveal them as deeply intertwined. My analysis of Gurrea's poem "España, América, Filipinas" (1918) [Spain, America and Philippines] in combination with the play *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* (1951) [Philippines: A Historical-Satirical Allegory] has shown that, whereas the poem reflects the hegemonic type of orientalism attached to a colonial discourse in having the colonised valorise the civilising colonial mission, the play engages with the same idea of the Philippines as the grateful recipient of Spanish (and American) culture, but also mocks it through its satirical tone. The play mimics colonial history to reveal its arrogance and absurdity, and also critiques some specific aspects of Spanish colonialism, such as the role of the clergy. On the basis of an analysis of some of her poems, moreover, I have argued that, for Gurrea, orientalisating the Philippines is not so much an exercise of literary modernism as an effort of transcultural orientalism by which the Philippines is imagined and remembered as the oriental homeland in a mode of reflective nostalgia. Symbols of the Philippines, especially its landscape, are nostalgically evoked to act as a catalyst for Gurrea's poetic expression and to express her (rebellious) disillusionment with modernity.

Whereas Balmori's poetry and Gurrea's works predominantly situate transculturation in the past, for Paz Mendoza it is a future-oriented project based on the question of what the Philippines *could or should be like* as a modern, independent nation. *Notas de viaje* measures the modernity to be achieved in the Philippines against Western modernity and selects what Mendoza perceives as signs of progress that could be assimilated in her country, while rejecting what she believes to be signs of backwardness. Mendoza is trying to enter the realm of central modernity from her peripheral location by picking and choosing idealised models, sometimes ignoring the more problematic aspects of certain cultures, such as the fascist ones of Italy and Germany. A text like Mendoza's travelogue is uniquely significant, I have suggested, in demonstrating the possibilities of thinking transculturally while, at the same time, showing that transculturation cannot be made into a global project but requires an engagement with the given conditions at a local level.

I have read Antonio Abad's novel *El Campeón* as an expression of cultural nationalism that retrieves the rooted Filipino (but also transcultural) practice of cockfighting to connect past colonial history with the present and to imagine a new future for the country based on its own traditions. Through the fable of the rooster Banogón, the novel questions forms of ethnocentricity based on homogeneity, celebrating hybridity instead. The novel addresses the way a particular form of masculinity acts as a symbol of colonialism and

nationalism, and suggests a more balanced model of heroic leadership in which strength is combined with care and affection, and power with passive endurance, in line with the Catholic notion of martyrdom. Despite its rather complacent ending, *El Campeón*'s overall imagination of the nation recognises Filipino national identity as thoroughly transcultural: multi-coloured, multi-gendered and mixing Asian, Hispanic and (selectively) American traditions and customs.

The common denominator of my corpus is the way the texts expropriate elements from other cultures to produce their own meanings. My contention is that this is not a form of subjugated imitation (between colonial/central and postcolonial/peripheral) but a creative reworking. In terms of the system of literary centres and peripheries presented by Pascale Casanova, then, Hispano-Filipino literature of the early twentieth century does not assimilate to or radically differentiate itself from the centre (whether that of French or Latin American literature) but develops its own voice by innovatively recombining elements, such as in Balmori's transculturally orientalist poems. In relation to Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of minor literature, invoked in the introduction of this study, my analysis of early twentieth-century Hispano-Filipino literature has shown that the use of Spanish is minoritarian, serving to convey discontent with American rule and aspirations to independence, but simultaneously signals a lingering attachment to the ideologies of Spanish as a major language. Daniel W. Smith, in his introduction to Deleuze's *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1997), writes:

Minor languages are not simply sublanguages (dialects or idiolects), but express the potential of the major language to enter into a becoming-minoritarian in all its dimensions and elements. Such movements, to be sure, have their own political ambiguities, since they can mix together revolutionary aspirations with reactionary and even fascistic tendencies (archaisms, neoterritorialities, regionalisms) ... The acquisition of power by a language and the becoming-minor of that language, in other words, are coexistent movements that are constantly passing and converting into each other in both directions. (xlvi)

The use of Spanish by Filipino nationalists, as noted above, bears out this ambiguity, as it combines its demand for independence from the US with an archaic valorisation of the Spanish colonial legacy (especially Catholicism) and, in the case of Mendoza and Balmori, positive assessments of fascist and imperial regimes. The position of Spanish as becoming-minor, also in relation to the encroachment of English in the Philippines, is thus coexistent and in tension with its position, on a global scale, as a major language standing for a major (western, Christian) culture.

In addition to presenting an argument about the role of literature in prefiguring Filipino national identity, my other important aim with this research has been to bring back to

life what has been called a “zombie” literary tradition. This is the first research project in English or Spanish to analyse in detail the collection of Hispano Filipino classics of the Cervantes Institute and other works by Hispano-Filipino authors of the same period, laying bare their shared concerns with the past, present and future of an emerging nation situated at the intersection of various cultures. Whether digitisation, academic research and translations can make Hispano-Filipino literature as a whole more central in the World Republic of Letters that Casanova conceptualises remains to be seen, but I hope to have filled a gap in the field of Hispanic studies by close reading some central but little-known works of early twentieth-century Hispano-Filipino literature in order to show their relevance for thinking both the past and the present, with regard to questions of (emerging) nationalism and transculturation.

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## Summary

### **Writing the Nation: Transculturation and Nationalism in Hispano-Filipino Literature from the Early Twentieth Century**

This thesis is a study of a selected corpus of Hispano-Filipino literature written in the first half of the twentieth century. It approaches the imagination of an independent Filipino nation expressed in texts by Jesús Balmori (1887-1946), Adelina Gurrea (1896-1971), Paz Mendoza (1884-1967) and Antonio Abad (1894-1970) through the concepts of nationalism and transculturation. The immanent approach of independence, finally achieved in 1946, made the identification of the characteristics of a self-defined Filipino nation a primary concern of this corpus. Yet, at the same time, given the historical conditions of a double colonisation, first by Spain and then by the US, and the Japanese occupation of Manila during WWII, it was a struggle to define Filipino cultural and national identity in relation to the many cultural influences that shaped the archipelago. It is on the various ways in which this struggle manifests in the texts that this study focuses.

My approach is that of cultural analysis, which, as developed by Mieke Bal, privileges close reading and sees the encounter between the object and the researcher, who frames the object from her situation in the social and cultural present, as yielding the conditions for the co-creation of new meaning. Accordingly, by bringing the framework of transculturation into dialogue with the selected Filipino texts in a series of close readings, I show how these texts expand concepts such as orientalism, translation and (cultural) nationalism in new ways by developing forms of transcultural orientalism, working towards intercultural translation and putting transculturation as an active, future-oriented process in the service of nation-building. Rather than producing a genealogy of Hispano-Filipino literature to be studied in its historical and social context, this study seeks to reveal how Hispano-Filipino literature from the early twentieth century interacts with contemporary debates and theories.

All the texts I analyse conceive of the Philippines as a realm of transculturation, variously considered as a process achieved in the past, negotiated in the present or actively pursued for the (independent) future. Fernando Ortiz, the Cuban anthropologist, first used the term transculturation in the 1940s to combine previous conceptualisations that aimed at describing the transformations derived by cultural contact, mostly as a result of colonisation. According to Ortiz, transculturation encompasses *acculturation* (assimilation), *deculturation*

(loss) and *neoculturation* (innovation). I rely on Ortiz's definition and on further elaborations of the notion of transculturation by literary scholars such as Ángel Rama (1982) and Mary Louise Pratt (2002) to analyse the ways in which the intersection of transculturation and nationalism is portrayed and evaluated in my corpus, paying specific attention to the forms - assimilation, loss, innovation - transculturation is seen to take in the Philippines of the early twentieth century and the attachments to and detachments from a variety of cultures (Spanish, American, Japanese and many others) it involves. Significantly, I understand Filipino transculturation not only as the outcome of colonial exchanges and global modernity-coloniality, but also in terms of an active desire for transformation. That transculturation exists in more passive and more active forms is conveyed by the difference between the adjectives *transcultured* and *transcultural*. The Hispano-Filipino writers I discuss in this study, then, are not only seen as *transcultured* writers (Rama) but also, to different degrees, as *transcultural* or even *transculturating* ones.

To summarize, the aim of this study is to explore the intersection between literature and nationalism in the complex context of the early twentieth-century Philippines. Through close readings of the selected texts, I will, on the one hand, shed light on a largely neglected literary tradition and, on the other hand, trace the struggle of Hispano-Filipino writers to formulate a notion of Filipino identity able to serve as the basis for their imagined nation, adequate to its status as a transcultured and transcultural realm.

In **Chapter 1** I focus on the poetry of Hispano-Filipino author Jesús Balmori (1886-1946), which expresses transcultural attachments to the Philippines (as a meeting place of indigenous and Spanish culture) and to Japan in an orientalist mode. Balmori's poetry is considered as an example of Filipino modernism that clearly follows Hispanic modernist aesthetics in terms of its orientalist themes and style. Consequently, it provides a fertile ground to look at the role orientalism played in the attempt by Hispano-Filipino authors of the early twentieth century to imagine and present the Filipino nation. Given the geopolitical circumstances of the Philippines as a Hispanized culture located in Asia, it is not surprising that the modernist orientalism found in its literature is shaped in two ways: as a form of self-representation and as the idealisation of other locations in the Far East, specifically Japan. This demonstrates a significant change in terms of what and who is being orientalised and by whom. In the chapter, I identify and analyse the various types of orientalism articulated in Balmori's poetry, focusing on three poems contained in the poetry collections *Rimas Malayas* (1904) [Malayan Rhymes] and *Mi casa de Nipa* (1941) [My house of Nipa]. My argument is that Balmori's poems engage with the two models of orientalism conceptualised respectively

by Edward Said and Araceli Tinajero: as a hegemonic discourse promoting assimilation to Spanish colonisation and Western modernity, and as an expression of literary modernism that re-inscribes the poet's assimilation of Hispanic and French aesthetics. Crucially, in some of his poems Balmori also moves beyond these models by giving voice to what I call *Filipino transcultural orientalism*. This form of orientalism articulates Filipino identity as both orientalised and orientalising, with texts variously attaching to and detaching from the various cultures that have historically constituted it, as well as the forms of representing the orient specific to these cultures and their literary expressions.

In **Chapter 2** I expand on the concept of transcultural orientalism by arguing that Adelina Gurrea's work emphasises its *transcultural* dimension over its *orientalist* one. I look at three of her texts: a satirical play entitled *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* [Philippines: A Historical-Satirical Allegory], which was staged in Valladolid, Spain, in 1951; a selection of poems from the collections *En agraz* [Before Time] (1968) and *Más senderos* [More Paths] (1967)<sup>110</sup>; and a story called "El Talisay," part of the collection of short stories *Cuentos de Juana. Narraciones malayas de las islas Filipinas* [Juana's tales. Malayan stories from the Philippine Islands] (1943). I will show how, like Balmori's poems, these texts draw on various cultural influences in order to orientalise the Philippines. However, rather than establishing a hierarchy of cultures or following modernist aesthetics, Gurrea orientalises the Philippines in three different ways that represent a move towards a more transcultural position. First, the satirical play revisits Filipino colonial history by having allegorical characters - The Philippines, Mother Spain, Uncle Sam and Mrs. History - discuss their role in the transculturation of the Philippines, and orientalises the country by infantilising it and presenting it as grateful to both Spain and the US for shaping it through their colonial rule, while also, through its satirical bent, including mild critiques of the colonisers. The historical perspective of the play shows transculturation as a colonial heritage in which various cultural traits are visible but not entangled (for example, young Philippines has inherited, on the one hand, the industrious and pragmatic mentality of American culture and, on the other, a spiritualist view on the world derived from a Catholic education). Second, Gurrea's poems, written in Spain during Franco's regime, approach the Philippines through what Svetlana Boym (2005) calls reflective nostalgia, a nostalgia that is used to imagine a new transcultural

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<sup>110</sup> Both *En Agraz* and *Más Senderos* were published by the author and the editions available online in the Cervantes Virtual Library at the University of Alicante date from 1968 and 1967 respectively. Gurrea died in 1971, so those editions are probably not the first ones, but I have been unable to find other publication dates. In *En Agraz*, it says that the collection includes poems written between 1916 and 1926, indicating that these poems belong to Gurrea's early work.

future. Third, the short story “El Talisay” uses a narrative structure that supplements the orientalisising perspective with that of the orientalised in order to challenge binary oppositions such as native/foreign, orient/occident and religion/superstition. The terms of these oppositions are instead presented as deeply intertwined in everyday cultural practices in the rural Philippines.

In **Chapter 3** I elaborate the concept of *active transculturation* on the basis of the imagination of a future, modern, independent Philippines based on the comparison with other countries around the world that Paz Mendoza conducts in her *Notas de viaje* (1929) [Travel Notes]. Mendoza’s rich and provocative travel notes are the departing point for my analysis of her construction of a peripheral vision of modernity as an active process of transculturation. I build on the work of Fernando Ortiz, Angel Rama and Marie Louise Pratt, in which transculturation appears as a dynamic process of intercultural connections that creates possibilities for transforming one’s own community by appropriating parts of other cultural systems. Mendoza’s text exposes the active attachments to and detachments from foreign influences - especially around the idea of modernisation - that affected Filipino culture during the Spanish-American period. I argue that, in the travel notes, transculturation does not appear as an outcome of past colonial contact, as in Balmori’s poem and Gurrea’s play, but as a strategic tool to compose a future vision of an independent Philippines. At the same time, her text and its ambivalent reception (it was criticised for making unrealistic proposals) shows the tension between the imagined transculturated future of the Philippines and its cultural and political realities: as long as it is not yet an independent country, no decisions can be made and, more crucially, it continues to be perceived, both in other countries and within the Philippines itself, as incapable of governing itself.

In **Chapter 4** I examine how Balmori’s novel *Los pájaros de fuego. Una novela filipina de la guerra* (1945) [Birds of Fire, a Filipino War Novel], a family melodrama set in Manila, instead of imagining a hypothetical future for the Philippines on the basis of the positively conceived models of other countries, uses the historical developments of the early 1940s, leading up to the Japanese invasion, to address the potential negative effects of uncritically seeking to emulate other countries. This chapter, then, is about the limits of active transculturation. The bleak ending of Balmori’s novel, which sees the main protagonist, a former Niponophile, and most of his family killed, suggests that there is no future for the country, at least not unless the Philippines stops aspiring to be like Japan, fighting for/with the US and refusing to let go of the Hispanic colonial legacy. To analyse how past and present events (the rise of fascism in Europe, the emergence of Japan as a pan-Asian power,

the American rule of the Philippines and the Hispanic colonial legacy) are woven together in the novel, I use the concept of translation, which I understand as a technique of transculturation capable of creating new meaning from a pre-existing one. This approach to translation, inspired by the work of Rey Chow (1995; 2008) and Vicente L. Rafael (1999; 2000) entails a rejection of translation as merely a linguistic process that renders words in one language intelligible in another; instead, it conceives of translation as a complex process of reinterpretation, appropriation, expansion and exchange between cultures, across national borders or within them. I use Chow's conceptualisation of translation as an exercise of simultaneous betrayal and mourning towards the 'original' to investigate how Balmori's novel translates various cultural influences into a conception of the Filipino nation. In addition, I look at how the novel takes up Rafael's notion that Filipino nationalism was translated into Spanish and circulated among the Hispanic elite.

In **Chapter 5**, finally, I analyse Antonio Abad's *El Campeón* (1940) [The Champion], an animal fable about a cockfighting rooster that presents an allegory of the Filipino nation as it tries to define itself in the wake of a double colonialisation. *El Campeón* tells the life story of Banogón, a champion fighting cock who, after a successful career in the urban arenas, returns to a chicken coop in the village where he was born. Upon his return, he struggles to fit into the local community. The struggles of Banogón and the other poultry characters with the transformations that are taken place on the farm (most notably the arrival of American leghorns) metaphorically illuminate Abad's vision of Filipino society - as affected by political, cultural and identity-related crises - and his concerns with reconfiguring Filipino national identity. Where Mendoza's *Notas de viaje* (1929) and Balmori's *Los Pájaros de fuego* (1945) sought to develop Philippine nationalism primarily by comparing their country to other European nations, Japan and the US, Abad's novel, in contrast, locates a basis for nationalism in Filipino rural culture, using the long-standing Filipino tradition of cockfighting - which is at the same time presented as a transcultural practice - to propose an alternative view on Filipino national identity. Ultimately, the novel argues for the impossibility of smoothly translating the prevailing European ideologies of the nation-state, based on cultural homogeneity, racial supremacy and masculinity, to the doubly colonised, deeply transcultural context of the Philippines. By presenting cockfighting, from the perspective of the human characters in the novel, as a traditional Filipino practice that survived the various colonial attempts, on the part of both the Spanish and the Americans, to eradicate it, Abad transforms the practice of cockfighting into an anti-colonial metaphor. In my analysis of the novel, I also reflect on the relationship between masculinity and cockfighting by reading the classic article

by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1972) on Balinese cockfighting in dialogue with Jerry García's (2007) interpretation of the importance of the cockfight for Chicano (masculine) identity in the US. I argue that the novel, despite its complacent ending, presents a different type of masculine hero that also allows for a different, transcultural mode of national identity.

My study concludes that in all the texts I have examined there is a lingering attachment to the Hispanic heritage, predominantly in the form of Catholicism and anchored in the past. This attachment, however, is balanced by a detachment from Spanish peninsular culture in the present, which can be taken as a discreet form of critique of the former coloniser. Still, it must be acknowledged that the expression of resistance in the texts I have analysed is not as radical and revolutionary as that of, for example, José Rizal (1861-1896), considered the first Filipino who directly challenged the Spanish colonial authorities with his novels. The reason for this is that in the early twentieth century, the US had taken Spain's place as the occupier; hence, the texts are noticeably more critical of the encroachment of American culture than of the Hispanic legacy. I would argue, however, that this particular juncture is precisely where the interest in reading these texts lies: their articulation of the struggle, specific to the Hispano-Filipino elite, to carve out a space for themselves and their culture and language under American rule and in imagining the independent, transcultural nation to come.

In addition to presenting an argument about the role of literature in prefiguring Filipino national identity, the other important aim of this study is to bring back to life what has been called a "zombie" literary tradition. This is the first research project in English or Spanish to analyse in detail the collection of Hispano Filipino classics of the Cervantes Institute and other works by Hispano-Filipino authors of the same period, laying bare their shared concerns with the past, present and future of an emerging nation situated at the intersection of various cultures.

## **Samenvatting**

### **Het schrijven van de natie: transculturatie en nationalisme in Spaans-Filipijnse literatuur uit de vroege twintigste eeuw**

Dit proefschrift is een onderzoek naar een geselecteerd corpus Spaans-Filipijnse literatuur geschreven in de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw. De concepten nationalisme en transculturatie worden gebruikt om de visies van een onafhankelijke Filipijnse staat te verkennen zoals die worden beschreven in teksten van Jesús Balmori (1887-1946), Adelina Gurra (1896-1971), Paz Mendoza (1884-1967) en Antonio Abad (1894-1970). Vanwege de aanstaande onafhankelijkheid, uiteindelijk bereikt in 1946, speelt het vaststellen van de eigenschappen van een zelf-gedefinieerde Filipijnse staat een grote rol in dit corpus. Tegelijkertijd bleek het, gezien de geschiedenis van een tweevoudige kolonisatie, eerst door Spanje en daarna door de VS, en de Japanse bezetting van Manila in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, lastig om een culturele en nationale Filipijnse identiteit te definiëren in het spanningsveld van de vele culturele invloeden die de archipel gevormd hebben. In dit onderzoek staat dan ook de verscheidenheid aan manieren waarop deze zoektocht terugkomt in de teksten in het corpus centraal.

Ik gebruik in dit onderzoek de methodiek van cultural analysis, zoals ontwikkeld door Mieke Bal, waarbij de nadruk ligt op close reading en de ontmoeting tussen het object en de onderzoeker, die het object benadert vanuit haar eigen socioculturele situatie en zo de voorwaarden schept om een nieuwe betekenis te creëren. Door het raamwerk van transculturatie in een serie close readings in dialoog te brengen met de geselecteerde Filipijnse teksten laat ik zien hoe deze teksten concepten als oriëntalisme, vertaling en (cultureel) nationalisme verder ontplooiën door nieuwe vormen van transcultureel oriëntalisme te ontwikkelen die toewerken naar interculturele vertaling en die transculturatie inzetten als een actief, toekomstgericht proces in dienst van de natievorming. Dit onderzoek is niet zozeer gericht op het ontwikkelen van een genealogie van Spaans-Filipijnse literatuur, bestudeerd binnen de historische en sociale context, maar op het blootleggen van de interacties tussen Spaans-Filipijnse literatuur uit het begin van de twintigste eeuw en hedendaagse discussies en theorieën.

In alle teksten die ik analyseer, worden de Filipijnen gezien als het resultaat van transculturatie, ongeacht of dit proces in het verleden wordt geplaatst, in het heden wordt onderhandeld of actief wordt nagestreefd voor de (onafhankelijke) toekomst. Fernando Ortiz, de Cubaanse antropoloog, gebruikte de term transculturatie voor het eerst in de jaren '40 van de twintigste eeuw om verschillende bestaande conceptualiseringen van de transformaties die optraden door cultureel contact, voornamelijk als gevolg van kolonisering, samen te brengen. Volgens Ortiz omvat transculturatie elementen van *acculturatie* (assimilatie), *deculturatie* (verlies) en *neoculturatie* (innovatie). In mijn analyse van de manieren waarop het raakvlak van transculturatie en nationalisme wordt beschreven en beoordeeld in mijn corpus gebruik ik zowel de definitie van Ortiz als het werk van literatuurwetenschappers als Ángel Rama (1982) en Mary Louise Pratt (2002), die voortborduren op het concept transculturatie. Ik kijk vooral naar de verschillende vormen van transculturatie (assimilatie, verlies, innovatie) die worden beschreven met betrekking tot de Filipijnen in het begin van de twintigste eeuw en naar de verbondenheden met en distantiëringen van een scala aan culturen (Spaans, Amerikaans, Japans en vele andere) die hiermee gepaard gaan. Ik beschouw Filipijnse transculturatie niet enkel als het resultaat van koloniaal contact en wereldwijde moderniteit-kolonialiteit, maar ook in termen van een actief verlangen naar transformatie. Dat er passievere en actievere vormen van transculturatie bestaan, blijkt uit het verschil tussen de Engelse adjectieven *transcultured* (passief) en *transcultural* (actief). De Spaans-Filipijnse schrijvers die in dit onderzoek centraal staan, worden niet alleen gezien als *transcultured* schrijvers (Rama) maar ook, in verschillende mate, als *transcultural* of zelfs *transculturating*.

Kort gesteld is het doel van dit onderzoek het verkennen van het raakvlak tussen literatuur en nationalisme in de complexe context van de Filipijnen aan het begin van de twintigste eeuw. Door middel van close readings van de geselecteerde teksten belicht ik, ten eerste, een grotendeels onbekende literaire traditie en traceer ik, ten tweede, de pogingen van Spaans-Filipijnse schrijvers om een idee van Filipijnse identiteit te formuleren dat kon dienen als basis voor hun verbeelde natiestaat en dat recht zou doen aan diens status als een *transcultured* en *transcultural* gebied.

In **Hoofdstuk 1** wordt de poëzie van Spaans-Filipijns schrijver Jesús Balmori (1886-1946) besproken, waarin transculturele verbondenheden worden uitgedrukt met de Filipijnen (als ontmoetingsplaats van inheemse en Spaanse culturen) en, op een oriëntalistische wijze, met Japan. De poëzie van Balmori wordt gezien als een voorbeeld van het Filipijnse modernisme, dat wat betreft oriëntalistische thema's en stijl in de traditie van de Spaanse modernistische esthetiek staat. Dit maakt het uitermate geschikt voor een analyse van de rol

die oriëntalisme heeft gespeeld in de pogingen van Spaans-Filipijnse schrijvers in de twintigste eeuw om zich een Filipijnse natiestaat voor te stellen. Gezien de geopolitieke context van de Filipijnen als een door Spanje beïnvloede cultuur in Azië is het niet verrassend dat het modernistische oriëntalisme in de literatuur op twee manieren wordt vormgegeven: als een vorm van zelf-representatie en als de idealisering van andere plekken in het Verre Oosten, met name Japan. Dit laat een belangrijke verandering zien met betrekking tot wat en wie er worden georiëntaliseerd en door wie dit gebeurt. In het hoofdstuk identificeer en analyseer ik de verschillende soorten oriëntalisme die te vinden zijn in de poëzie van Balmori. Hierbij staan drie gedichten uit de gedichtenbundels *Rimas Malayas* (1904) [Malayan Rhymes] en *Mi casa de Nipa* (1941) [My house of Nipa] centraal. Ik stel hier dat de gedichten van Balmori spelen met twee verschillende modellen van oriëntalisme zoals respectievelijk beschreven door Edward Said en Araceli Tinajero: oriëntalisme als een hegemonisch discours waarin de assimilatie van Spaanse kolonisering en Westerse moderniteit worden gepromoot, en oriëntalisme als uitdrukking van literair modernisme, waarin de assimilatie van de Spaanse en Franse esthetiek door de dichter wordt bevestigd. Het is hierbij belangrijk om op te merken dat Balmori in sommige gedichten ook aan deze modellen voorbijgaat door uiting te geven aan wat ik een *transcultureel Filipijns oriëntalisme* noem. Deze vorm van oriëntalisme articuleert de Filipijnse identiteit als zowel passief als actief, waarbij de teksten zich ofwel verbinden met of distantiëren van de verschillende culturen die deze identiteit historisch hebben beïnvloed en de verschillende vormen waarin in deze culturen en hun literatuuruitingen de Oriënt wordt gerepresenteerd.

In **Hoofdstuk 2** ga ik verder in op het concept transcultureel oriëntalisme door te stellen dat in het werk van Adelina Gurrea de *transculturele* dimensie meer wordt benadrukt dan de *oriëntalistische* dimensie. Ik analyseer drie van haar teksten: een satirisch toneelstuk, *Filipinas: Auto histórico-satírico* [De Filipijnen: een historisch-satirische allegorie], in 1951 opgevoerd in het Spaanse Valladolid; een selectie gedichten uit de bundels *En agraz* [Voor de tijd] (1968) en *Más senderos* [Meerdere paden] (1967)<sup>111</sup>; en het verhaal “El Talisay,” uit de verhalenbundel *Cuentos de Juana. Narraciones malayas de las islas Filipinas* [Juana’s verhalen. Malayaanse verhalen van de Filipijnse eilanden] (1943). Ik laat zien hoe deze teksten, net als de gedichten van Balmori, gebruik maken van diverse culturele invloeden om

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<sup>111</sup> Zowel *En Agraz* als *Más Senderos* zijn door de auteur gepubliceerd, maar de edities die online beschikbaar zijn in de virtuele Cervantes-bibliotheek van de Universiteit van Alicante zijn respectievelijk gedateerd 1968 en 1967. Aangezien Gurrea in 1971 is overleden, zijn dit vermoedelijk niet de eerste edities, maar ik ben er niet in geslaagd de originele publicatiedata te bepalen. In *En Agraz* wordt genoemd dat de collectie gedichten bevat geschreven tussen 1916 en 1926, wat aangeeft dat deze gedichten tot het vroege oeuvre van Gurrea behoren.

de Filipijnen te oriëntaliseren. Echter, in plaats van een culturele hiërarchie tot stand te brengen of een modernistische esthetiek te volgen, oriëntaliseert Gurrea de Filipijnen op drie verschillende manieren, die samen een beweging naar een meer transculturele positie representeren. Ten eerste blikt het satirische toneelstuk terug op het koloniale verleden van de Filipijnen door allegorische personages (The Philippines, Mother Spain, Uncle Sam en Mrs. History) te laten discussiëren over hun rol in de transculturatie van de Filipijnen. Het toneelstuk oriëntaliseert het land door dit als kind op te voeren en het dankbaarheid te laten uiten aan zowel Spanje als de VS voor het vormen van het land tijdens hun koloniale overheersing, terwijl door de satirische insteek tegelijkertijd de koloniale machten subtiel bekritiseerd worden. Het historische perspectief van het toneelstuk toont transculturatie als een koloniaal erfgoed waarin verschillende culturele eigenschappen zichtbaar zijn, maar niet zijn samengesmolten (zo heeft het jonge personage van de Filipijnen bijvoorbeeld aan de ene kant de ijverige en pragmatische mentaliteit van de Amerikaanse cultuur geërfd, maar ook het spirituele wereldbeeld van een katholieke opvoeding). Ten tweede benaderen de gedichten van Gurrea, geschreven in Spanje tijdens het regime van Franco, de Filipijnen met wat Svetlana Boym (2005) reflectieve nostalgie noemt, een nostalgie die gebruikt wordt om een nieuwe transculturele toekomst voor te stellen. Ten derde wordt in het korte verhaal “El Talisay” een narratieve structuur gebruikt die het oriëntaliserende perspectief aanvult met dat van de geöriëntaliseerde partij, om zo binaire tegenstellingen als lokaal/buitenlands, Oosters/Westers en religie/bijgeloof uit te dagen. De elementen van deze tegenstellingen worden juist gepresenteerd als nauw verweven in de alledaagse cultuur van het Filipijnse platteland.

In **Hoofdstuk 3** werk ik het concept *actieve transculturatie* verder uit, op basis van de verbeelding van een toekomstige, moderne, onafhankelijke Filipijnse staat gebaseerd op de vergelijking met andere landen die Paz Mendoza uitwerkt in haar *Notas de viaje* (1929) [Reisaantekeningen]. Mendoza's rijke, provocatieve reisaantekeningen vormen de basis voor mijn analyse van haar constructie van een perifeer beeld van moderniteit als een actief proces van transculturatie. Ik bouw hierbij voort op het werk van Fernando Ortiz, Angel Rama en Marie Louise Pratt, waarin transculturatie wordt gepresenteerd als een dynamisch proces, waarin interculturele verbindingen mogelijkheden creëren om de eigen gemeenschap te transformeren door delen van andere culturele systemen over te nemen. Het werk van Mendoza laat de actieve verbondenheden met en distantiëringen van buitenlandse invloeden zien, vooral met betrekking tot het idee van modernisering, waarmee de Filipijnse cultuur ten tijde van de Spaans-Amerikaanse periode te maken kreeg. Ik stel dat, in deze

reisaantekeningen, transculturatie niet wordt gepresenteerd als het resultaat van koloniaal contact in het verleden, zoals in het gedicht van Balmori en het toneelstuk van Gurrea, maar als strategisch middel om een toekomstvisie van een onafhankelijke Filipijnse staat vorm te geven. Tegelijkertijd laten haar tekst en de ambivalente ontvangst ervan (het werd bekritiseerd wegens het doen van onrealistische voorstellen) zien dat er een spanning bestaat tussen de verbeelde transculturele toekomst van de Filipijnen en de culturele en politieke realiteit: zolang het nog geen onafhankelijke staat is, kunnen er geen beslissingen worden genomen en, nog belangrijker, blijft het beeld dat het land zichzelf niet kan besturen bestaan, zowel in andere landen als in de Filipijnen zelf.

In **Hoofdstuk 4** bestudeer ik Balmori's roman *Los pájaros de fuego. Una novela filipina de la guerra* (1945) [Vogels van vuur, een Filipijnse oorlogsroman], een melodramatisch familieverhaal dat zich afspeelt in Manila. Ik bespreek hoe deze roman niet zozeer een hypothetische toekomst van de Filipijnen schetst op basis van positief beoordeelde modellen uit andere landen, maar juist de historische ontwikkelingen uit het begin van de jaren 1940, in de aanloop naar de Japanse invasie, gebruikt om de mogelijke negatieve gevolgen te bespreken van het zonder kritische noten emuleren van andere landen. Dit hoofdstuk gaat dan ook over de grenzen van actieve transculturatie. Het troosteloze slot van Balmori's roman, waarin de hoofdpersoon (een voormalige Japan-liefhebber) en een groot deel van zijn familie omkomen, suggereert dat er geen toekomst is voor het land, in ieder geval niet zolang er wordt geprobeerd op Japan te lijken, voor of met de VS te vechten, of vast te houden aan het Spaanse koloniale erfgoed. Om te analyseren hoe gebeurtenissen in het heden en verleden (de opkomst van het fascisme in Europa, de groei van Japan tot pan-Aziatische grootmacht, de Amerikaanse overheersing van de Filipijnen en de Spaanse koloniale geschiedenis) in deze roman door elkaar gevlochten worden, maak ik gebruik van het concept vertaling, wat ik zie als een vorm van transculturatie die het mogelijk maakt om nieuwe betekenissen te vormen op basis van een bestaande betekenis. Deze benadering van vertaling, geïnspireerd door het werk van Rey Chow (1995; 2008) en Vicente L. Rafael (1999; 2000) gaat gepaard met het afwijzen van vertaling als simpelweg een taalproces waarbij woorden van de ene taal worden omgezet in een andere; in plaats hiervan wordt vertaling gezien als een complex proces van herinterpretatie, appropriatie, uitbreiding en uitwisseling tussen culturen, binnen nationale grenzen of over zulke grenzen heen. Ik gebruik Chow's definitie van vertaling als een handeling van zowel verraad als rouw jegens het 'origineel' om te verkennen hoe de roman van Balmori verschillende culturele invloeden vertaalt naar een beeld van een Filipijnse staat. Bovendien bespreek ik hoe dit verhaal Rafaels

idee dat Filipijns nationalisme werd vertaald naar het Spaans en de ronde deed onder de Spaanse elite verbeeldt.

Tot slot analyseer ik in **Hoofdstuk 5** Antonio Abads *El Campeón* (1940) [De kampioen], een dierenfabel over een vechthaan die een allegorie vormt van de manier waarop de Filipijnse staat zichzelf probeert te definiëren na een geschiedenis met twee koloniale overheersers. *El Campeón* vertelt het levensverhaal van Banogón, een kampioen vechthaan die, na een succesvolle carrière in de steden, terugkeert naar de kippenren in zijn geboortedorp. Na zijn terugkeer heeft hij moeite om zich aan de lokale gemeenschap aan te passen. De problemen van Banogón en de andere gevederde personages als gevolg van de veranderingen op de boerderij (met name door de komst van Amerikaanse hanen) drukken op metaforische wijze Abads visie uit op de Filipijnse maatschappij (geplaagd door crises op het gebied van politiek, cultuur en identiteit) en zijn zorgen rondom het opbouwen van de Filipijnse nationale identiteit. Waar Mendoza's *Notas de viaje* (1929) en Balmori's *Los Pájaros de fuego* (1945) het Filipijnse nationalisme voornamelijk ontwikkelden aan de hand van vergelijkingen met Europese landen, Japan en de VS, lokaliseert Abads roman de basis voor een Filipijns nationalisme in de Filipijnse plattelandscultuur. De roman gebruikt de lange traditie van hanengevechten (welke tegelijkertijd ook wordt gepresenteerd als een transculturele praktijk) om een alternatieve kijk op de Filipijnse nationale identiteit te bieden. Uiteindelijk betoogt de roman dat het onmogelijk is om de dominantie Europese ideologieën van de natiestaat, gebaseerd op een homogene cultuur, raciale superioriteit en mannelijkheid, direct te vertalen naar de tweemaal gekolonialiseerde, diep transculturele context van de Filipijnen. Door het hanengevecht te presenteren, vanuit het perspectief van de menselijke personages in de roman, als een traditioneel Filipijnse bezigheid die zowel de Spaanse als de Amerikaanse koloniale periodes heeft overleefd, ondanks pogingen om deze uit te roeien, transformeert Abad het tot een antikoloniale metafoor. In mijn analyse van de roman kijk ik ook naar het verband tussen mannelijkheid en hanengevechten aan de hand van het klassieke artikel over Balinese hanengevechten van antropoloog Clifford Geertz (1972), in dialoog met Jerry García's (2007) interpretatie van het belang van het hanengevecht voor de (mannelijke) Chicano identiteit in de VS. Ik beargumenteer dat de roman, ondanks het berustende slot, een ander soort mannelijke held presenteert en ook ruimte biedt voor een andere, transculturele benadering van de nationale identiteit.

Uit mijn onderzoek blijkt dat er in alle teksten die ik heb bekeken een verbondenheid met het Spaanse erfgoed blijft bestaan, voornamelijk in de vorm van het katholicisme en verankerd in het verleden. Deze verbondenheid wordt echter in balans gebracht door het

nemen van een zekere afstand van de hedendaagse Spaanse cultuur, wat kan worden gezien als een discrete vorm van kritiek op de voormalige koloniale overheerser. Desalniettemin moet worden opgemerkt dat de uiting van weerstand in de teksten die ik heb geanalyseerd niet zo radicaal en revolutionair is als die van bijvoorbeeld José Rizal (1861-1896), gezien als de eerste Filipino die met zijn boeken de Spaanse koloniale autoriteiten direct uitdaagde. De redenen hiervoor zijn te zoeken in het feit dat in het begin van de twintigste eeuw de VS de rol als overheerser van Spanje had overgenomen; de teksten zijn merkbaar kritischer op de groeiende invloed van de Amerikaanse cultuur dan op het Spaanse erfgoed. Ik ben echter van mening dat dit specifieke historische moment precies is waarom het interessant is om deze teksten te lezen: vanwege het perspectief dat ze bieden op de strijd van de Spaans-Filipijnse elite om ruimte af te bakenen voor henzelf en hun cultuur onder de Amerikaanse overheersing en om een toekomstige onafhankelijke, transculturele, Filipijnse staat te verbeelden.

Naast het presenteren van een argument over de rol van literatuur in het vormgeven van een nationale Filipijnse identiteit, heeft dit onderzoek als tweede belangrijk doel nieuw leven te blazen in wat wel een literaire ‘zombietraditie’ wordt genoemd. Dit is het eerste onderzoeksproject in het Engels of Spaans dat een diepgaande analyse uitvoert van de collectie Spaans-Filipijnse klassiekers van het Cervantes-instituut en andere werken van Spaans-Filipijnse auteurs uit dezelfde periode, waarbij hun gedeelde interesses in het verleden, het heden en de toekomst van een natie in ontwikkeling, die zich op het ontmoetingspunt van diverse culturen bevindt, wordt blootgelegd.