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Gerald T. Burns



In a previous article in *Philippine Studies* I explored the "repatriate theme" in Philippine second-language fiction from Rizal's novels through F. Sionil Jose's *The Pretenders* [1962] (Burns 1992: 3-34). This second article brings the treatment up to the present.

During the contemporary period the repatriate theme has received expression mainly, although not exclusively, in short stories rather than novels. Despite this alteration in literary form, certain obvious continuities are evident in the recent additions to the genre which I have been able to identify. Not only does the familiar scenario of a protagonist returning to the homeland in search of a whole personal and cultural identity and intent on bettering the lives of his or her countrymen frequently recur in these texts; somewhat less regularly, this plot dynamic is accompanied by the distinctive configuration of structural-symbolic elements characteristic of earlier narratives, i.e., the lover as embodiment of one set or another of cultural values, the parental figure in distress as personification of Philippine society, the motif of illness or barrenness as additional social trope, and the native activist as counterweight to the repatriate's foreign-inspired vision of betterment. However, notable differences also appear. The most striking of these involves the tension between foreign and indigenous claims on the repatriate protagonist's cultural identity and plans for sociopolitical action. Whereas before this tension tended to be resolved by the hope, at least, of some dialectical balance being struck as a synthesis of these contending sources of inspiration, of late no such outcome seems to be envisioned in any overt manner. In fact, the very possibility or desirability of this kind of merger, and therefore of a role for the repatriate in bringing it about, is expressly rejected in nearly all the recent texts. Significantly, the rejection takes place on two different, and opposed, narrative and ideological grounds.

These alternative new handlings of the repatriate theme are most clearly exemplified in the short stories "Bitter Country" by Ninotchka

Rosca (1970), and "Selmo Comes Home" by Benjamin Pascual (1988). The following analysis focuses on these two texts, treating each of them in a separate section; each section, in turn, closes with a brief discussion of analogous works. A conclusion attempts to take stock of the changes reflected in both types of recent narratives, and, measures those changes against the continuities, both obvious and more subtle, that also appear, to assess the ongoing evolution of Philippine repatriate fiction.

The Nationalism of Nonparticipation: "Bitter Country"

Marah Pais, the protagonist of Rosca's "Bitter Country," differs from the majority of her predecessors in the genre in that the venue of her expatriation has been Europe rather than the United States, she also differs from them all in being a woman. Certain substantive features of her repatriate experience, as it unfolds over the course of the story, stand out as well. When analyzed, these features reveal an altered set of ideological premises concerning the relation between Philippine and foreign sources of value, and therefore also the nature of the Filipino repatriate's role.

As a returnee, Marah is more conspicuously a fish out of water than any of the earlier figures. Having spent the greater part of her life in the "Old World," she commands only a handful of Filipino words, and her "European accent and fair mestiza skin" (p. 3) constitute an intrusion in whatever gathering she joins. Moreover, as a married (to another repatriate, an academic) but still childless woman, she attracts instant opprobrium in a fertility-conscious culture. Her problems of adjustment are complicated by an allergy to the heat and dust of Manila, an ailment she in fact "cultivate[s]" (p. 18), to the point that her husband is forced to seal off the house and install central air conditioning. The expedient creates an environment that recalls the Alpine climate of her Swiss boarding school days and establishes a kind of "internal country" for Marah, outside of which she rarely ventures.

This protagonist is further set apart from earlier repatriates in that, even less than Tony Samson does she arrive with a compelling vision, a concrete plan for imparting change to—and creating a role for herself within—the society to which she returns. It is true that, on the basis of her few years at finishing school in Europe, Marah's suggestions for running a community nursery school are sought out

and implemented by society matrons with an eagerness that would have been the envy of an Ibarra or a Martin Romero. However, her reaction to being received in what she senses ironically to be the heroic role of "bringer of gifts from abroad" (p. 18) again marks her off. Discovering the "particular destructiveness of her presence" (p. 18) on the nursery school board, Marah cuts her association with the project and retreats ever more deeply into the hermetic world of her "internal country."

There is one other path that leads this repatriate toward a possible engagement with Philippine society, and that on more fundamental grounds than those occupied by the nursery school. She is given her initial glimpse of that path by an elderly, arthritic *propetora*, a woman on her way to retirement and death who appears to hold something of the place of the sick father in this female-centered narrative, and to whom Marah is strangely drawn. It is this woman who calls attention to the condition of the social environment around them, speaking in Biblically prophetic terms of a "doomed city." When a shaken Marah asks of her, "What can we do?" the woman replies, "Why, nothing, my dear. . . . Nothing at all" (pp. 15-16).

Thus Marah's concern does appear to be aroused by the spectre the old woman conjures up. But before she can go on, as we might expect, to articulate some vision latent in her European experience for the social and moral rectification of her homeland, Marah meets someone who already possesses a vision of this kind, albeit one derived from a different source. "He," as this character is exclusively known, is a young man, one of her husband's students, virginal but intellectually passionate, hailing from an archetypal provincial locality referred to simply as "the village." "He," in short, is the male equivalent of Maria Clara, Edad, Mameng, and Emy. Marah finds herself attracted to him both as a lover and, it seems, as a surrogate child. At the same time, the young man does not share the manifest passivity of these feminine embodiments of native virtue; for he also reincarnates the Elias figure, the vigorous home-bred activist possessing his own vision of change. Just as Elias through his life story illuminates for Ibarra areas of Philippine reality left in the "shadows" by the "light" of his European books, this character "takes" Marah, through his words, to "a place she had never seen" (p. 20): the village. This ancient settlement, it turns out, has been laid waste by some sort of military action, but is "not dead"; it only awaits a "shower of blood" to be revived (p. 21). Thus the young man's words at once invoke the familiar metaphor of the barren land

and identify his goals with those of the armed insurgency gaining momentum in the Philippines at the time the story was written.

In spite of her willingness by this point to at least contemplate direct sociopolitical action ("What can we do?"), Marah finds it difficult to relate to her new acquaintance's cause. In the first place, relying on her European experience, she responds clumsily to revelations of his intentions: "You mean, something like Sorbonne?" (p. 19) she asks, referring to the Paris student uprising of 1968. Moreover, when the young man, after indulging her inadequate image of revolution in the Philippine countryside, nevertheless expresses interest in what she can tell him about Sorbonne, Marah's answers make the event seem even more irrelevant, even fraudulent. Some time later, she is faced with a more existential opportunity to relate. "He," striking out for the village, presumably to begin his insurrectionary work, asks her, as the only one among the university set in Manila "who would care" (p. 24), to see him off at the railway station. Although—or perhaps because—she reads more into the request than that, Marah is unable to bring herself to comply. She gets only as far as the terrace outside her sealed-up house, where she imagines herself at the station, wishing a passionate farewell to her "lover" and "son" (p. 24). Yet even in the reverie she addresses her declaration only to a darkened train window that may or not be his, and at the close of this interlude, enacting in imagination the decision she is making in life, "poor Marah Pais" runs from the platform and exiles herself once more into her private "country," hearing the "locks and chains falling into place behind her with a cold iron finality" (p. 24).

Like Tony Samson, then, "poor Marah" cuts herself off from the person (in Tony's case it was two people) who represents a genuinely Filipino identity, the possibility of love and new life, and a dynamic commitment to sociopolitical change. Her personal fate, also, is not dissimilar to Tony's, the final retreat being tantamount, in the judgment of two critics of the story, to self-"entombment" (Lumbera 1970, v; Casper 1987, 94)). Yet as in the case of *The Pretenders* and other earlier narratives, the story makes a rebound of sorts from this point. Standing on the terrace outside her house, her head cleared of the original fantasy, Marah experiences a bonafide vision of almost mystical intensity, in which the village appears, at the moment of the young man's projected arrival there, magnificently transfigured by a "shower of flames" (p. 25). The passage, rhetorically linked with the earlier prophecy of the "shower of blood,"¹ suggests the onset

of the ostensibly regenerative violent revolution. Once again, then, on the other side of personal failure and apparent hopelessness, there arises a glimmer of possibility.

However, Rosca's "Bitter Country" differs from earlier narratives which manifest the same pattern in that the repatriate's contribution to the hopeful possibility is by no means clear. Even in the cases of the literally deceased Ibarra/Simoun, Dante Bustamante, and Tony Samson, the effects of their lives' efforts and/or the manner of their deaths could be seen to be triggering, however indirectly, movement toward the goals that they had sought. But what does Marah Pais, in the words of her own question to the elderly *propesora*, "do" to bring on or support the convulsive social change that the end of the story seems to tell her is at hand?

The answer is the one the old woman gives: "nothing." But nothing in this narrative may be just the thing. That is, by not aiding the young man in his mission, in spite of his asking, Marah may be making the most important contribution she has to make to the success of that mission. For recall the previous context in which this repatriate's assistance had been solicited for a local undertaking, i.e., the management of the community nursery school. There she had quickly inferred the "destructiveness" of her European-derived suggestions from the very eagerness of the Filipina matrons to accept them, much as they would clamor for the latest "imported bag" (p. 19): to the detriment, presumably, of the local article, in this case educational ideas drawn from and adapted to Philippine conditions. If this principle should apply to an ameliorative project on the scale of the nursery school, so much the more, perhaps, might it hold in the higher-stakes enterprise of revolution, especially when the Western model is seen to be inappropriate, and when the native revolutionary possesses the vision and other qualities requisite to the task. It is interesting to note again in this respect the fictional precedent of Rizal's novels, in which the repatriate Ibarra, after a period of insulation, misunderstanding, and ineffectuality owing to his European background, is allowed to side with and eventually, as "Simoun," to commandeer the indigenous movement initially spearheaded by Elias—with disastrous results. Marah Pais' nonparticipation in her young man's cause could then be seen, in contrast to Simoun's role and to her own inputs into the school scheme, as *non-interference*, an ultimately constructive option, in spite of the unquestionable toll in emotional impoverishment it entails for her.

Of course, whether nonparticipation is truly an "option" for Marah, something she voluntarily chooses, is another question. The text gives no direct evidence that her staying clear of the revolution is motivated by the same nationalist scruples that earlier prompted her to withdraw from the educational initiative. Indeed, it is at least equally probable that she is governed in the later instance by the weakness, the inability to act that characterizes many of the bourgeois protagonists in Rosca's fiction from this period (Lumbera 1970, v-vi; Casper 1987, 93). But whatever ultimate judgment is to be placed on the motives of this protagonist, the narrative bottom line in "Bitter Country" is that a revolution is initiated in the Philippines and that Marah Pais, fresh from her extended experience abroad, has nothing directly to do with it. Unlike the texts which precede it in the genre, then, the story holds out no prospect of a desirable, if unachieved, synthesis of indigenous and foreign energies, ideas, and values; the unachieved here is the desirable. Nor does it envision any positive participatory role for the repatriate "bringer of gifts" from other, presumably more sophisticated civilizations. In this narrative, the place of the repatriate in the struggle for a Filipino destiny is, at most, a far more modest one: simply to "care" and to witness.

"Bitter Country" is not alone in its nationalist handling of the repatriate theme. Other recent texts, perhaps not coincidentally also set in the Marcos era, similarly invalidate the importance of metropolitan experience and nullify the role of the repatriate, at least as repatriate, in the transformation of Philippine society. In Azucena Uranza's *Bamboo in the Wind* (1990),² protagonist Larry Esteva has earned his degree at an American university and spent time afterwards traveling in the U.S. and Europe. But unlike Tony Samson, whose *curriculum vitae* this one closely resembles, the time abroad for Larry has not been the "beginning of wisdom." Having initially gone only in obedience to his father's wishes, he found "no point in prolonging his stay in a foreign land . . . [h]is place was home" (p. 1). Moreover, returning to Manila and joining the opposition to a regime about to impose martial law, this protagonist does not make overt use of any ideal or tactic picked up from overseas sources. In fact, after the first several pages of the novel no further mention is made of his expatriate experience and it is as if he had never been away. Another work that might be placed beside Rosca's story, although not technically a repatriate narrative, is Sionil Jose's *Mass* (1983). Protagonist Pepe Samson refuses in most respects to take the

steps up the educational ladder that had led his father to leave the country and "sever his roots." The Pepe who leaves his Manila university in the early 1970s, intending to foment revolution in his native Rosales, could, if such intertextual connections were possible, almost be Marah Pais' anonymous "young man."

Disaffection: "Selmo Comes Home"

A narrative and ideological thrust in some ways opposite the one found in "Bitter Country" and related works is most clearly manifested in Pascual's "Selmo Comes Home," a story first published in 1988 but likely composed some time earlier.³ Apparently one of the original "Pinoy," Selmo (the text does not give him a last name) returns home after an interval of some thirty years, intending—in one of the many attitudes and features of experience that link him with other repatriate protagonists—to stay. In fact, Selmo had indulged many fond yearnings for his homeland during his residence abroad, and as his journey nears its end he becomes excited by the prospect of being once more "in the bosom of the town of San Miguel" (p. 115). The "bosom" conceit has a maternal dimension to it: homecoming reunites the character with his now elderly mother, making him the first repatriate protagonist to have dealings with an opposite-sex parental figure. The father, on the other hand, is no longer living, but his presence may be suggested by the story's opening image of a large mango tree hovering over the family house. Selmo invests this image with associations of stability and protection and it appears to stand in his mind as symbol for some essence of the Philippine life he had left behind and to which he is now returning.

Yet in spite of this initially positive disposition, Selmo becomes disaffected with his homeland—more disaffected, in the end, than any of his predecessors. To begin with, at the same time that he yearns for the kind of stability promised in the mango tree, he expects to see some evidence of social and material progress in San Miguel, and is disappointed not to find it. Further, while, like Marah Pais, Selmo returns to the Philippines with no overt vision or plan for transforming the life of his countrymen, it is clear that he identifies, and that the reader is to identify him, with a cousin who had earlier returned vowing to "make a paradise" (p. 121) of San Miguel. In pursuit of this dream cousin Bestre, in collaboration with

other repatriates, had launched a series of projects in the meliorist tradition of the genre: an electric plant, a rural cooperative, and a bakery. Selmo, manifestly experiencing some of the same dissatisfactions with the local state of affairs that had motivated these projects, shows a keen interest in their fate. He learns that they have all failed due to irresponsibility and shortsighted self-interest on the part of the townspeople. What is more, these economically dysfunctional traits prove to be of a piece, in his mind, with the culturally mandated behavioral norms that plague him in his dealings with family members and the larger social network of the community: smooth interpersonal relations at the expense of truth and fairness; various kinds of freeloading in the guise of claiming the obligations of hospitality; the tyranny of proper appearances and traditional expectations over individual desires.

In the one explicit objective that this repatriate sets himself, things work out no better. Selmo, having been betrayed by his wife in the States (who thus joins the ranks of faithless American or Americanized women, although she happens to be of Mexican descent), returns to the Philippines intent on remarrying; thus the bosom metaphor, feminizing the homeland, evidently has a sexual dimension as well. However, given the identification between culture and the person of the lover that we have seen established in the genre, and given this protagonist's and the story's dim view of the customary ways of the place, it hardly comes as a surprise that no self-effacing but morally solid and ultimately worthy Filipina maid appears within the environs of San Miguel. (In this light the "Mexican," presumably Filipino-like identity of the bad wife may take on symbolic import.) The closest the narrative comes to providing a local love interest occurs when Selmo escorts two young schoolteachers to their homes one afternoon. But the episode is presented only indirectly, and in fact it turns out to be the straw that breaks the camel's back, as far as Selmo's disaffection is concerned. The community presumption that he must be courting both women moves him from moderate exasperation to the point of anger and "loathing" (p. 123) toward his compatriots.

The nostalgic vision of his homeland that exercised such a fascination over him while he lived abroad now "shattered into unpiecable bits" (p. 123), Selmo packs his suitcases for yet another return trip. "My home is in America," he insists to stunned family members, a surge of "liberation" overpowering the remorse he feels at leaving his aging mother (p. 123). In a parting blow, which refocuses

attention on the image of the story's opening lines but invests that image and all that it may stand for in traditional Philippine life with the contrary signification of illness, or more precisely terminal decay, Selmo tells his sister:

Sanang, the roots of the mango tree are rotting away. In a year or two, it may tumble down. Better have it hewn down before it causes injury (p. 123).

Like Marah Pais, then, Selmo retreats, but not to an "internal country": rather all the way back to the land from which he had thought to repatriate himself. Similarly, like "Bitter Country," "Selmo Comes Home" envisions no presently frustrated but ultimately feasible synthesis of foreign and indigenous potentialities; here, though, the unachieved is the unachievable, or perhaps simply not worth the aggravation that would be required even to make a beginning. Finally, while both narratives leave the returnee from abroad with no viable role in the home society, Pascual's story suggests that the person of the repatriate, and not the society, will benefit from the severance of the connection.

Like "Bitter Country," "Selmo Comes Home" appears to be one of a distinct subset of recent repatriate narratives, similar in fictional outcome and/or spirit and tone. Perhaps the closest parallel to Pascual's story is to be found in Gracianus R. Reyes' "Paculan's Homecoming" (1989). While the title character here returns to a city (Baguio) rather than a small rural town, and while he confronts the spectacle of rapid disintegrative change rather than stagnation, the nature of his reaction is much the same as Selmo's: bafflement followed by revulsion. Similar, too, is his course of action, departing the country of his birth, where he had hoped to remarry and retire, for his adopted home in the United States. An even more precipitous departure is taken by the character of the "brother" in Paulino Lim, Jr.'s "Homecoming" (1985), who scarcely carries his return further than a room at the Hilton. Now, since the "brother" is not the protagonist of Lim's story, nor is his "homecoming" intended to be permanent, this story cannot be considered a repatriate narrative according to the criteria set forth at the outset of this study. What is more, the perspective the text brings to bear on this character, largely through the values of the stay-at-home narrator, partakes more of the nationalism of "Bitter Country," et. al., than the disaffection of "Selmo" and "Paculan." Still, the depiction here of the

returnee's response to perceived realities of the contemporary Philippine scene—"as if he were shell-shocked, benumbed by some undiagnosed injury" (p. 43)—gives it an affinity with the latter two texts. Likewise with "Balikbayan" by Michelle Cruz Skinner (1988). While the young woman at the center of this fiction has only ventured back to the Philippines for the purpose of attending her grandmother's funeral, her alienation from her family and their Filipino ways is acute and, at least until a final, ambiguous gesture of reconciliation, unrelieved.

Conclusion

What do these two exemplary and their cognate texts—admittedly only a small and unsystematic sampling of recent repatriate narrative—suggest about the direction of the theme/genre since 1970? Obviously, both the uncompromising nationalism represented by "Bitter Country" and the despairing rejection of Filipino life and values most vividly revealed in "Selmo Comes Home"⁴ are signal developments in their own right. Yet with regard to defining any overall trend it would seem that the two more or less cancel one another out. A surer basis for generalization may lie in the near-unanimous refusal, albeit for different reasons, of the works in both clusters to hold out the prospect of an eventual synthesis of native and imported ways, and therefore of a significant intermediary role for the repatriate. To this it could perhaps be added, since in the past such a prospect served as a major focal point of narrative resolution, and no doubt as an animating impulse behind the writing of this type of fiction, as well, that the refusal may signal a waning interest in the repatriate theme *per se*, may constitute a portent of the future decline or discontinuance of the genre. This entropic scenario draws additional plausibility from the observation that the strength and even the presence of a foreign-inspired vision of change seems diminished in recent texts; further, except in Rosca's and Pascual's stories, the once-characteristic "configuration" of structural-symbolic motifs appears fragmentarily at best. Indeed, in the very recent *Bamboo in the Wind*, the theme as a whole is reduced to the bare narrative situation of a protagonist returning from abroad; it functions purely as a convention, devoid of fictional content.

However, there are reasons to be chary of accepting either of these two, related propositions as final conclusions: reasons in addition to

the limitations of the text "sample." To take the second proposition first, whatever may have been happening in recent years to the repatriate theme in Philippine fiction, it has remained very much alive in Philippine life. If Marah Pais either refuses on principle or proves unable to bring lessons learned abroad to the cause of revolution in her homeland, for Carolina "Bobbie" Malay, a student returned (like Marah) from Paris in 1969 and subsequently arrested as a leader of the Philippine Communist Party, foreign exposure appears to have been pivotal in forming a commitment.⁵ A still better-known example of a recent real-life repatriate is, of course, Benigno Aquino. Moreover, we have Luis Teodoro's testimony, referred to in the earlier article, to the continued influx of returnees from the "developed" world, fired by visions of "economic progress, political stability, peace for all time, and even a postal system that works" (Teodoro 1990, 23). If, as I have argued, the repatriate theme is rooted in the soil of Philippine historical experience, then it seems unlikely, unless and until the composition of that soil should be drastically altered, that fictional treatments of the theme will cease to bloom.

Neither will it do to conclude over much with regard to the "synthesis" of cultural values and sociopolitical vision. If such an outcome, or hope, can no longer be taken for granted in recent narratives, neither is it entirely absent. For example, in *Mass* Pepe Samson has available to him not only certain native traditions of populist resistance, exemplified in the lives of his grandfather and great-grandfather, but also his father's Harvard-written critique of the Filipino elite, "*The Ilustrados*," rescued from destruction and published by his father's wife, Carmen Villa Samson. While Pepe for a long time avoids reading the book, during the course of his radicalization he does, according to one critic, "live its ideas" (Cruz 1989, 13). Thus Jose's later novel leaves a place after all—granted it is a slender one—for Western-derived "wisdom" (and for the repatriate who conveys it) in the transformation of Philippine social structures. In a text from the other subcategory of recent narratives, "*Balikbayan*," the protagonist's ambiguous reconciliatory gesture—a gift to her maiden aunts of sampaguitas originally sold to her for the purpose of adorning a religious statue—might be seen to symbolize some sort of compromise or blending of Western-associated secularism and traditional Filipino family values.⁶

On the other hand, and finally, in making this argument for the persistence of the synthetic ideal it is not necessary to deny that it has become increasingly possible of late for Filipino writers to imag-

ine the repudiation of either foreign models or native realities, or both. What's more, this imaginative propensity undoubtedly has its own roots in the substratum of culture and collective experience. Further, if the synthetic ideal has been a major thrust and even a motivating impulse of repatriate fiction in the past, it hardly follows that there can be no other, comparable source of interest capable of powering individual narratives, or the genre as a whole. The spectacle of "repudiation" itself might constitute one such source. Indeed, the weaving together of both disaffected and nationalist attitudes into the fabric of a single story, Lim's "Homecoming," suggests the potential for further complex fictional explorations of the matter.

In any case, change as well as continuity is to be expected in any literary historical phenomenon on the order of the repatriate theme in Philippine second-language fiction. The changes and continuities observable in this sampling of recent texts, reflective of both shifting and stubborn realities in the larger context of Philippine life, will help to shape this enduring theme as it evolves into the future.

Notes

1. Another allusion is also possible in this passage, one reaching back to the elderly *propesora's* warning about the "doomed city" (text, p. 15), a warning which drew upon the Biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah. The "shower of flames" of Marah's vision might also be invoking the destruction by fire and brimstone of these places, and by extension of the Philippines (or is it only Manila that the words "doomed city" single out for the possible wrath of divine judgment?). However, the fact that the Biblical destruction scene is not made explicit in the text, that not a "city" but specifically "the village" constitutes the site of the vision, together with the presence of certain other circumstantial and rhetorical indications, suggest a primary linkage of the passage with the earlier revolutionary scenario.

2. For a critical commentary on Urraza's novel see Edel E. Garcellano, "Bamboo in the Wind and the Strategy of Containment," *Diliman Review* 38, no. 4 (1990): 41-51.

3. Edilberto P. Dagot, foreword, Pascual, *Selmo Comes Home and Other Stories* (1989) vi, indicates that the writer's stories have been composed over the course of a lifetime and only lately begun to be published. The setting of "Selmo" appears to be sometime in the 1960s, when a "Pinoy" would have returned after an approximately thirty-year absence (see below in the text), and when there was still such a thing in the Philippines as a one-peso bill (that would satisfy a young nephew as *pasalubong*!). The absence of any conscious historical perspective in the text suggests a similar date of composition.

4. A word of clarification regarding Pascual's work. His other stories do not appear notably "anti-nationalist" or disaffected with traditional Philippine ways. Indeed, they seem to display a sure feel and at times an affection for the rhythms and textures of provincial life. "Selmo Comes Home" appears to be simply a story that takes the perspective of the imagined character at the center of it.

5. According to a newspaper account, while working in the Philippines as a reporter, Malay was "unresponsive to the problems and the reforms needed by the country." "It was only when she returned home after studying in Paris in 1969 that she was conscientized by the problems besetting the country, particularly the dominance of foreign interests and the oppressive rule of the elite . . ." (Sison 1991, 3).

6. The question that has been raised concerning the "synthetic ideal" might also be raised about the *pasyon*-like pattern of success (or the hope of it) through tragic "failure," equally pronounced in earlier repatriate narratives. Obviously a protagonist who refuses to participate in a cause to the point of martyrdom, or who pulls up stakes and leaves his or her homeland without putting any transformation in motion, disrupts this pattern. However, an answer similar in form to the one just given in the text is also possible in this connection. Not only does the case of Ninoy Aquino suggest the continuing resonance of the *pasyon* myth in the wider reaches of Philippine culture and history, but the outlines, at least, of a Christ-like sacrifice are evident in the fate of Rosca's Marah Pais and, more dimly, in Ruth of "Balikbayan" (whose final action enables her to compare herself to a self-abnegating Jesus).

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