

**“Carlos’s” American Dream**  
—The Inscription of “Self” in Carlos Bulosan’s  
*America Is in the Heart*

*Shyh-jen Fuh*

Department of English, National Dong Hwa University  
No. 1, Sec. 2, Da Hsueh Rd., Shoufeng, Hualien 97401, Taiwan  
E-mail: fsjen@mail.ndhu.edu.tw

**Abstract**

Carlos Bulosan’s *America Is in the Heart* represents the diasporic experience of Filipino migrant workers from the thirties to the forties in a quasi-autobiographical mode. This paper studies Bulosan’s unique appropriation of the genre of autobiography in his inscription of the collective life of Pinoys, investigates the relationship between auto-bio-graphy and “reality,” and explores Bulosan’s politics of writing. Part One of this paper discusses the formal invention of *America Is in the Heart*, which traverses the boundaries of autobiography, fiction, and ethnography. Part Two delineates the perspective in which Bulosan re-presents the collective history of Pinoys. Part Three investigates the apparent contradiction embedded in this work, which repetitively articulates the faith in America through Carlos’ autobiographical self while the American experience inscribed in the narrative is one of total victimization. Part Four adopts Derrida’s view of self-identity as “plurality of masks” to observe how the work demonstrates Bulosan’s negotiations with the various forces operating in the historical context and reveals Bulosan’s unique politics of ethnic writing. Part Five concludes this paper by pointing out the transnational and cosmopolitan tendency in Carlos’s “American Dream.”

**Key Words:** Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, Pinoys, American Imperialism, Filipino American literature