

EURAMERICA Vol. 40, No. 1 (March 2010), 1-29  
http://euramerica.ea.sinica.edu.tw/  
© Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica

## Jose Garcia Villa —Critique of a Subaltern Poetics\*

E. San Juan, Jr.

W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University  
117 Davis Road, Storrs, CT 06268, U.S.A.  
E-mail: philcsc@gmail.com

### Abstract

The case of Jose Garcia Villa, an exiled Filipino poet who lived in the U.S. from 1930 to 1997, illustrates the predicament of the subaltern, neocolonized artist embedded in what Pierre Bourdieu calls “the literary field” (see *The Rules of Art*). The significance and ultimate value of Villa’s accomplishment, as epitomized in *Doveglion: Collected Poems* (2008), can only be fully appraised by contextualizing the genesis and structuring of his themes, styles, and artistic manifestoes in the fraught historical-political relations between the imperial hegemon, the United States, and the dependent, peripheral socioeconomic formation, the Philippines. Underlying this colonial subsumption is the global relations of nations and peoples within the inter-state system of global capitalism between the 1930 Depression in the US, World War II, and the Cold War period marked by the communist victory in China, the Korean War, the IndoChina War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Middle East conflicts. Complicating this grid, further

---

Invited article, Received June 24, 2009

Proofreaders: Ming-chieh Chen, Hsin-wen Fan, Ying-tzu Chang

\* Thanks to Andy Chih-ming Wang for his valuable help in preparing this article for publication.

historical specifications concerning the function of artistic organizations, the language question, and the arguments between groups advocating the individualist art-for-art's sake ideology and its antitheses (civic morality, religious metaphysics, revolutionary socialism), should be factored in to arrive at a fully determinate, processual, and historical-materialist assessment of the Villa phenomenon as an example of an ethnic, subaltern poetics articulated within the uneven, contradiction-filled transition from modernity to postmodernity.

**Key Words:** Filipino nationalism, neocolonialism, transnationalism, historical materialism, subaltern