

America is in the heart critique essay

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



I. Authors Biography

Carlos Bulosan is said to be one of the earliest and most influential of Asian American writers. ¹ He was a Filipino born on November 2, 1911 in Pangasinan to a rural and peasant family in the village of Mangusmana located near the town of Binalonan. His family strived to make both ends meet to make a living and send their children to school like many other Filipinos at that time of economic turmoil; brought by the increasing wealth and power possessed by the elite. Carlos, committed to help support his family, went searching for a better life for himself, continued his education, and made the choice to travel to America with high hopes to reach his ambitions.

II. Summary

American is in the Heart is the autobiography of Carlos Bulosan, who begins his story by narrating his childhood life in his town Mangusmana. He lives alongside his father in a farm where they both work in. On the other hand, his mother lives in the city with one of his brothers and younger sister. Because of this living arrangement, Carlos has never met some of his older siblings. One of the sons Macario is said to be "the hope of the family". They hope that when he graduates he will return home and find a teaching job to help support their family and pay their debts. He attends high school in another village, and because of this their family pawns their land one hectare at a time in order to compensate for his expenses. Unfortunately, things don't go as the family hopes for and Macario loses the teaching job.

Due to the harsh economic conditions at that time, children like Carlos were working and doing what they could to help support their families. Carlos, at five years of age eventually moved to Binalonan to work in the fields. His salary goes to his mother for paying the moneylender, and to Macario's schooling. When he isn't working the fields, he is with his mother, assisting her with her barter business that allowed him to travel to neighboring villages with her. In these villages, Carlos observed the middle class and their way of life, and later on he grows a loathing towards them.

Whilst in the Philippines, Amando, Macario, and Carlos were made to believe that America stood for equality and justice, and ultimately they all separately make their journey to America. Upon their arrival in America, they are faced with the brutal reality of the great exploitation that the Filipinos are subjected to by the Whites. Carlos is amazed by ruthlessness and inhuman treatment that the Whites have shown toward Filipinos, and is forced to move place to place due to one misfortunate event after another. Carlos struggles to sustain a job with a close to nothing salary and with unsanitary living conditions, but his job and stay is always immediately cut short when conflict stirs between Filipinos and Whites forcing him to flee to another town. To add to his pitiful state, many times he is beaten and assaulted because of the discrimination the Americans have toward the Filipinos.

Ultimately Carlos and his companions develop a sense of activism, and fought for the Filipinos and their rights in Filipino labor and rights movements. Their effort to assemble the workers brought them right into the conflict involving agricultural interests. Their labor movement ultimately

became associated with revolutionary units. In the succeeding events of his life, Carlos is diagnosed with tuberculosis, and was said to be confined in the hospital for a period of two years.

Once he was released, he and his friends grew to be greatly involved in the movement for Filipinocivil rights. They then assembled a group of Filipinos with the ambition of achieving American citizenship for Filipinos in America. Unfortunately their efforts were not enough and they loose the fight. When the time came that World War II erupted, Carlos and his fellow Filipinos were prohibited from enlisting in the army. Even to the point where the Philippines was being occupied and seized, they were still disallowed to enlist. Due to this, the Filipinos where forced to start a movement fighting for their desire to join the armed forces, which eventually resulted with the United States president giving a special proclamation that would allow Filipinos to do so.

III. Analysis

America Is In the Heart being an autobiography novel, it didn't have that much symbolism. It was a straightforward novel and the author Bulosan, narrated the events of his life clearly and vividly. Throughout the story, you can't help but feel sorry for him (Buloson) and all the tragedies and struggles he encountered. To rate this novel, I would say that I have nothing too criticizing to comment about it.

The plot is very similar to other stories involving the struggles of Filipinos whilst under the power of oppressors. Overall, the novel was a good reminder and eye opener on the reality of discrimination showed toward Filipinos, which is still very much relevant today. Also, it reminds us of the

strong fighting spirits that Filipinos possess. This novel is certainly a good piece of literature that is purely and truly Filipino.

IV. Insights

The life story of Carlos Bulosan in “ America In The Heart” is something I can greatly empathize with. I like himself, went to America at a very young age of nine, with a hopeful heart that America was a land of opportunity. In school I was thought that America fought for equality and everyone was given the same opportunities. I thought, I could go see all the places that I saw in movies, and I generally thought my family and I would have a better life. My naïve nine-year-old heart was shattered after a few months, when I learned that America isn't all that beautiful, as it seemed, especially for Filipino Migrants.

Finding work was hard even with an undergraduate diploma. Filipinos were looked down on because of how “ uncivilized” the Philippines was. And based on observation, some Americans really do tend to show a bias toward Filipinos. At that point, I then missed our comfortable home and lifestyle back in the Philippines. We had time to go out with the family and enjoy the good things in life; while in the States my parents rarely were home at the same time due to work, and the main agenda was paying the bills.

Sometimes we Filipinos complain a whole lot about our country. We aspire for the western life, and what it can give to us. I think a big reason why this is so, is because throughout history we have always been so oppressed by these western nations. We were made to believe that these nations will always be better, but if there's one thing that I've learned it's that: we

Filipinos are hardworking, loyal, and God fearing people, and possessing these attributes bring us far and past the hardships given to us.