



The Geopolitics of Passing in Carlos Bulosan's *All the Conspirators*

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Abstract. Carlos Bulosan's mid-twentieth-century noir novella *All the Conspirators* stages a conflict between guerrillas and collaborators in the postwar Philippines, illustrating a "geopolitics of passing" that examines the triangulation of borders through acts of racial, ideological, and imperial passing. Through the trope of passing, the transgression and eventual reconstitution of these borders is shown to be an alibi for the expansion of U.S. empire.

The crime writer Dorothy L. Sayers had early observed, "the detective story had to wait for its full development for the establishment of an effective police organization in the Anglo-Saxon countries" (12). On this symptomatic reading, detective fiction captures the tumultuous process of industrialization and urbanization during the nineteenth century and, in particular, the emergent opposition between the trained criminal and the modern police (Mandel). Although the threat of criminality has always been the *raison d'être* of the police, neither figure has remained static. The gentleman thief or criminal mastermind of early detective fiction has permuted into the terrorists and serial killers that populate the contemporary thriller, whereas the fumbling constabulary has matured into a bureaucratized and technologically adept police force, particularly after World War II (Scaggs). But the expansion of police powers has also been premised upon less dramatic justifications than the lurking sociopath, and upon more mundane facts such as the criminalization of vagrancy (Nicolazzo) and Blackness (Hall).

Against the backdrop of the transimperial Philippines, this opposition between criminal and police takes the particular form of an ongoing struggle between guerrillas and collaborators. Between the strategies of repression and collaboration, as Vicente Rafael posits,

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