

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

Recollections of a Voyage to the Philippines

Review Author: Jose S. Arcilla, S.J.

Philippine Studies vol. 34, no. 3 (1986) 393–394

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

the general reader. For this reason, factual accuracy is to be expected, not just in the "cataloguing" of incidents, but more importantly in their interpretation or narration. This, of course, is the prerogative of every writer, to describe his hero as he sees him. And to Carlos Quirino, Charles A. Parsons was the master spy who did his duty heartily and wholly "without a single regret" (p. 119).

Jose S. Arcilla, S.J.
Department of History
Ateneo de Manila University

RECOLLECTIONS OF A VOYAGE TO THE PHILIPPINES. By J. de Man. Translated by E. Aguilar Cruz. Manila: National Historical Institute, 1984. xii, 116 pages, illustrations.

Travel books tell more of the author than the places reached. Not everything can be seen or understood within the limited time of a passing visit, and impressions are necessarily one-sided and superficial.

J. de Man's *Recollection of a Voyage to the Philippines* is no exception. Written in answer to requests from his friends, he makes no claims that his is a "proper book," although he hopes he can entertain his readers with it.

There are twenty-four brief chapters, with the section on the Philippines beginning only with chapter 8. The first seven relate the trip from France, with stops at Aden, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Singapore, and Hongkong.

The opening pages set the tone of the book. Emphasis is on the novel or the bizarre. With ill-concealed disdain for things non-European, the author betrays a gullibility bordering on the naive. It is, therefore, not surprising that he exaggerates and makes some egregious errors.

The most obvious is his description of a volcanic eruption in 1871 (pages 57 to 58). Two eruptions occurred this year, one of Mayon volcano, the other in Camiguin Island, whose capital is not Cotta-Bato, as the author wrongly says. A Jesuit missionary happened to sail by the island a few days after the first explosions in Camiguin Island. A new crater had opened and dark clouds towered over the island, and people, some with only their clothes on their back, frantically sailed away to safety in their tiny bancas. But, although silenced by the awesome power of nature, his description is much more subdued and less sensationalized than J. de Man's, but truer! Is the tourist's story, perhaps what Freudians call a case of someone with subconscious desires of being a hero? A chapter titled "One Night with Cannibals" is not a report of the author's experience, but his translation of an account published in the *Diario de Manila*. Why this was included in a book supposedly of one's personal experiences, is not clear. Or is it precisely to underline the mystery

and the novelty of the Far East which, Halleluyah! J. de Man has seen for himself?

Each writer is, of course, free to publish what he wants, even "ego-trips." For the Filipino reader today, this book is a testimony of the nineteenth-century European attitude best seen in the scramble to cut up China and Africa in order to assure sources of raw materials and markets for the finished products of the industrialized West.

Jose S. Arcilla, S.J.
Department of History
Ateneo de Manila University

FILIPINA 1. By WOMEN (Women Writers in Media Now). Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1984. 149 pages.

FILIPINA 2. By WOMEN. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985. 206 pages.

Filipina 1 and *Filipina 2* are anthologies of the work of Women Writers in Media Now (WOMEN), edited by Mila Astorga Garcia, Marra Pl. Lanot and Lilia Quindoza Santiago. *Filipina 1* includes works of poetry, drama and fiction; *Filipina 2* is dedicated to personal and journalistic essays that have been published in current periodicals and magazines. The foreword by Nick Joaquin is printed in both volumes. "The wonderful thing about our gifted women," he says, "is that their writing is done . . . on no money and in no room of one's own." He explains:

It's not private writing or solitary speech . . . It's done all over the house, while stockings are mended, stews are minded, dishes are washed, children are put to bed. It's done in offices, to the clatter of the machines and the chatter of colleagues. It's done out on the streets, amid crowds, the traffic, the avid commerce, the angry demos. It's writing of, for, and by the public, because our women writers . . . are such public persons (p. viii).

Filipina 1 features poems by Denise Chou Allas, Marra Pl. Lanot, Anna Leah de Leon, Babeth Lolarga, Migen L. Osorio, Lilia Quindoza Santiago, and Aida F. Santos; a drama by Sol Juvida; and fiction, some of it published earlier and quite well known (Estrella Alfon's "Magnificence," Gilda Cordero Fernando's "A Secret Aging," Lualhati Bautista's "Gapo,") and some less familiar to the average reader (Joy Dayrit's "Unfinished Story," Fanny Garcia's "Arrivederci" and Norma Japitana's "1026 L. Guerrero").

Filipina 2 is a collection of essays published in recent times in such publications as *Bulletin Today*, *Mr. & Mrs.*, *Panorama*, and the *Observer*.