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More Philippines Plays:

More Short Plays of the Philippines by Jean Edades

Review Author: Miguel A. Bernad

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MORE PHILIPPINE PLAYS

MORE SHORT PLAYS OF THE PHILIPPINES. Edited by Jean Edades. Published and copyright by Jean Edades. Printed by the Benipayo Press. Manila. 1957. Pp. vi, 204.

ALTHOUGH there is no professional theatre in the Philippines—a fact bemoaned by Father Reuter in his excellent review of Nick Joaquin's *Portrait* in the September 1956 issue of this Quarterly—there is nevertheless a vigorous and widespread interest in the drama, an interest as keen here as in other countries. The number who attend Father Reuter's own drama "workshops" at Padre Faura every summer, and the number of plays, both imported and home written, produced in such workshops, are an indication of this interest. There are numerous other "workshops" of that kind, operating during the summer or during the school term. The theatrical guilds of the various colleges and universities have undertaken some rather ambitious productions, some of them with credit. More significant still is the number of private theatrical clubs (among adults and among the young) that are presenting competently directed and competently staged plays.

Amateur theatricals of this nature are perhaps far more healthy than the commercialized presentations of the professional theatre groups in other countries. The validity of this opinion may of course be open to question, but the existence of this widespread interest in drama is a fact that should be noted, encouraged and directed.

Among the many who have taken a hand in this encouragement and direction is Jean Edades who has combined the work of dramatic critic, director, teacher, editor and publisher. She has published a volume called *Short Plays of the Philippines* and another (with Carolyn Fosdick) called *Drama of the East and West*. The work under review is the third such collection and contains seventeen plays.

The title is well-chosen: they are plays from and about the Philippines and all of them are short. Perhaps that is the difficulty with some of them: too short to be hardly more than sketches, with the drama suggested rather than played out. "The Papers" by Evangelina Quiambao, for instance, ends where the drama really begins. But that play, like most of the others, shows considerable promise—and this is where Jean Edades' contribu-

tion to Philippine drama is most valuable: she gives encouragement to young and relatively obscure writers just when they need encouragement most, viz. when they are just beginning to write well.

To praise Mrs. Edades' work is of course not to endorse every play in the collection. Nor is this the place to undertake a detailed review of each play. One or other selection deserves especial notice. "The Technique is the Thing" by Amadea E. Medina is a good portrayal of character. "Cowards Die a Thousand Times" exploits an excellent dramatic situation. On the other hand we may be pardoned if we raise an eyebrow over the rather unusual Latinity displayed in the first selection in the book ("The Stake") where we find *meterne Deus* (for *eterne Deus*) *visite atque defendat* (for *visitet*), and *habitanculo* (for *habitaculo*). But it is a clever play otherwise.

Two plays in this collection seem especially powerful: "The World is an Apple" and "Cadaver" both by Alberto Florentino, who, at the time of publication, was a student in the University of the East. That writer is worth watching. He has considerable talent.

One other point worth noting. The plays in this collection are not only competently written, but they also show a high moral tone and an awareness of the social and psychological problems of the Philippines. With the rise of juvenile delinquency in Manila and the other cities, it would be well for well-to-do parents to see a presentation of "The Angry Sea" by Elisa Tabuñar. She hits the nail on the head: juvenile delinquents are bred at home, when parents are always lurching out and dining out and there is no home-life for the children.

To Jean Edades, our hearty congratulations for a good selection of plays.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

SPLENDID NEW POET

TIME WITHOUT NUMBER. By Daniel Berrigan. New York. Macmillan. 1957. 53 pp.