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## Studies on the Municipality of Manila

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lawyer and childhood friend named Manuel Acuña Roxas. Long after Manuel Roxas became president, states the biography, Jovita's diaries give substantial evidence that that love always remained. But such was the strict, unmuddled sense of morality and refinement in her Catholic upbringing that not a breath of scandal touched the life of this artist. Shimmering shreds of young memories were to remain with Jovita Fuentes all her life — a lantern left by her sweetheart's window to prove his loyalty, a wild flower received and treasured, a crucifix hanging on a gold chain he wore till his death, because it was once hers — but she remained unswerving in her refusal to feed the gossip mills with any act that might be misinterpreted. In later years the diva would be thrown in the company of President Roxas and his family, but whatever emotions smouldered in her artist's heart, the bearing she showed the world was always confident and poised.

Lilia Hernandez Chung includes in this handsome volume reproductions of the many admiring reviews printed in the major European cities where Jovita Fuentes performed and photographs of the lovely diva in various stages of her life as well as in operatic roles that she essayed.

Thus does this niece-biographer conclude her graciously written tribute to a truly devoted and gifted woman — a woman for whom principles in life, love and art are to be held in strict but graceful dignity, who, as she moved across the concert halls of the world in “the cadenced walk of a ‘princesita tagala’,” “beautifully brown, dainty, and modest,” captured the hearts of discerning critics and knowledgeable opera-goers, to become the greatest Cho Cho San of them all and one of the greatest sopranos ever.

*Nenita O. Escasa*

STUDIES ON THE MUNICIPALITY OF MANILA. By Luis Merino, O.S.A. Translated by Rafael López, O.S.A. *Views* 5,1 (June 1978), 96 pages; 6,1 (January 1979), 146 pages (Iloilo City: University of San Agustin).

These two issues of the University of San Agustin journal, *Views*, are completely devoted to three historical studies by Fr. Merino, part of a continuing series of monographs under the same general title. All deal with the social and institutional history of the Spanish city of Manila. They are based principally on a study of documents from the Archivo General de las Indias in Seville, most of them hitherto unexploited by historians. Though many examples of this type of institutional history of the Spanish colonial society exist for Latin America, it has hardly been attempted previously for the Philippines.

The first volume comprises the study “Municipal Government and Society: A Socio-Demographic Analysis of the Spanish Population of Manila (1571-1800).” It contains both a quantitative analysis — the number of Spa-

nish residents in Manila at different points in time from the end of the 16th to the end of the 18th century – and a qualitative analysis of that population. Under the latter heading data are given on such matters as social status, economic status, the economy of the *encomienda*, the mortality rate, as well as an interesting section on the shipment of criminals from Mexico to Manila to augment the “Spanish” population of the Philippines. Reproduced in the appendix are two lists of the principal Spanish inhabitants in 1599, with descriptions of their social and economic status, as well as the complete census for 1634 of Spanish citizens, with the numbers of their respective families. Among other interesting points which emerge from Merino’s analysis is the fact – too often ignored by modern historians – that the Spanish population before the 19th century, apart from the missionaries, was extremely small and its rate of mortality high. In most of the 17th century there were less than 300 “householders” (I presume this term translates *vecinos*) in Manila, and in the latter half of the century the number went as low as 30. In this period, as Merino remarks, Spanish Manila practically ceased to be an organized city at all.

The second volume contains two studies: “Alcaldes and Regidores: Accession and Succession to the Positions in the Cabildo and the Sale of Municipal Office in Manila (1571-1816)” (pp. 1-78), and “Propios y Arbitrios: The Municipal Economy and Public Service” (pp. 79-146). The first of these deals with the origin and vicissitudes of the *cabildo* or *ayuntamiento* and its operations under the *alcaldes ordinarios*. The discussion of the sale of municipal offices makes the significant point that by putting offices up for sale at auction not only was money raised but the sale removed these positions from the appointive power of the governor. This constituted one of the few limitations on that all-powerful royal official. The appendix gives lists of *alcaldes* and *regidores* for the period up to the end of the 17th century.

The third study deals with the means by which the cabildo raised revenues for the administration of the city. During the 17th century its uncertain revenues came chiefly from levies on the Chinese in the Parian. In the 18th and 19th centuries the cabildo gradually gained other sources of revenue and became correspondingly more active in public works, such as bridges, promenades, a cemetery, a municipal school. Various documents in the appendix on expenses and revenues of the cabildo are also of interest for gauging the value of money in the period covered, as may be deduced from wages paid and other such items.

Fr. Merino has done painstaking work with the scattered documentation from the archives, and his studies will be of interest to professional historians. These studies, of course, deal professedly with only the Spanish colony, and the only non-Spaniard who emerges in these pages is the wealthy Chinese mestizo Vicente Dolores Tuason, who, in spite of offering one of the largest

amounts ever paid for municipal office in 1803, failed to break the Spanish monopoly of the *cabildo*. Nonetheless, the perceptive historian will find much between the lines, as it were, which is valuable for the understanding of the wider history of the Philippines. Historians will welcome the continuation of this series of careful studies by Fr. Merino.

*John N. Schumacher, S.J.*

THE PARVENU: A LOVE STORY. By Florentino Dauz. Manila: Regal Publishing Company, 1978. 118 pages.

A persistent echo in Philippine literature has been the theme of romantic escapism. In the post-war period this theme has been fused with that of the journey in search of self. The reader of Florentino Dauz's first novel (he has published poetry and essays — *Caligula, Brodsky and Others, Essays of a Decade, The Survivor of Warsaw, and The Beheaded Sun*) recognizes the genre immediately. For Dauz's hero is out of the Horatio Alger and Nora Aunor tradition of rags to riches: "Julian Braga was his name. He was the son of the most industrious land-owning farmer of Alicia and his misfortune was that his father, perhaps to exorcise some private demon, had taken to drink until he became too weak to work the land. The fourth among six children, Julian alone in the family was able to escape the curse of illiteracy by dint of hard work and a passion for learning." (p. 8) At the age of fourteen, "he became an expert at cards, an education he obtained from an ambulant mosquito-net peddler from Batangas who told him about the thrills of Manila, about the theaters, the neon-lights, the fun and glitter of Dewey Boulevard." (p. 9) A high school English teacher introduces Julian to the *Sermons of Edmund Burke* and, as a high school student, he reads Spencer, Thoreau, Kant (whom Dauz ingenuously says he did not understand until he was twenty — but kept on reading anyway), Voltaire, Rizal, Zola, and Tolstoy. (He later reads Eliot and a host of others, as well as *Time, Newsweek, and The Reader's Digest*). He transfers to a Central Luzon Agricultural College where he saves ₱10,000 in three years with which he moves to Manila to complete his education. After college he works as a proofreader and as a waiter at the Manila Hotel, where he learns the language and manners of the upper class, and finally joins an advertising agency where he becomes an assistant vice-president in a year and a half. By this time he is living in his own apartment in Ermita and owns his own car. He speculates with a hectare of land in Ayala and in one year he has made "a few million pesos." (p. 37) He enters the money market and makes \$2 million in three months. "At the age of 25, Julian earned the right to be called a business baron." (p. 38) But then Julian discovers "that the hardest thing in the world to make is not the first million but the first hundred