

THE PLAYS of Three

by ESPERANZA

The Plays of Tan

DR. VIDAL A. TAN is a man of many interests. Although he is a mathematician by training and profession he wields some literary skill which expresses itself not only in articles of current interest but also in short plays. The four plays studied here attest to his literary ability.

The play "The Meeting in the Town Hall" is an episode from the **Social Cancer**. The said meeting discusses the plans for a coming fiesta and the young men, the liberal group, desire a more sensible approach to the celebration. Fiestas have always played an important part in the social life of the Filipinos. The usual way of celebrating fiestas in the Philippines, down to the present day, is the noisy and extravagant way — fireworks, rockets, banquets, dances, etc., and families think nothing of debts staring them in the eye the whole year so long as they can splurge for a week at fiesta time. The young liberals in the play propose simple amusements and games, prizes for the best farm producers, and a tidy sum set aside for the construction of a schoolhouse. But the gobernadorcillo throws a monkey wrench into their plans. He brings the news that he has acceded to the curate's wishes — an extravagant affair with all the trimmings, or else!

The same playwright takes another episode from the same book

for another play, "Souls in Torment" — the famous story of the tragic Sisa. Her two sons, Basilio and Crispin, are accused of stealing some valuables from the convent and are held in custody. When the two boys escape from the convent, the mother is arrested. The poor mother is tormented with the thought of the cruel accusation and the uncertainty of the whereabouts of her sons. Her grief overcomes her; and nature, many times kinder than man, takes over. Sisa becomes insane.

"The Husband of Mrs. Cruz" is a comedy about elections, in three acts. Rodolfo is a promising young lawyer who is married to a rich girl. In the first act, he decides on two things—to run for Congress and to live apart from his in-laws for the sake of his self-respect. The wife is torn between a life of luxury and love for her husband. She finally decides on the latter and goes after her spouse. In their new life, love smoothes out the bumps. Cheerfully the wife adjusts to her new home while Rodolfo is busy with his election campaign. Still, they are so deep in debt that they resort to the ruse of evading bill collectors by pretending to be servants of the house. This is the turn of events when Rodolfo's father comes to help him in his campaign and is horrified to see his son appa-

rently insane because Rodolfo fails to recognize him. Then Rodolfo is arrested on a false charge filed by his political rival, the two fathers arrive on time and arrange a payment for the bond. The usual flurry of elections — free rides, bands, eats and drinks, lies and promises, — are all portrayed. After a thrilling suspense, a recount of the ballots declares Rodolfo the winner.

"A Daughter of Destiny" is a historical comedy in three acts depicting the fortunes of a family against the thrilling background of the Philippine Revolution. The love triangle is represented by two brothers in love with the same girl, the ward of their father. The father proposes to decide the matter by lot, the fortunate one to be given the first chance to court the girl. Luck falls on the elder brother, and the younger is constrained to be silent. The elder's luck still holds out, although the girl is secretly in love with the other brother. Thus preparations for the wedding are under way when the revolution breaks out with the "Cry of Balintawak." Everything else is forgotten and the two brothers march to the front. Returning to the house one night in disguise, the younger brother brings news of his brother's death. Reeling from the shock, the old father puts up a brave front and is given a little happiness when he learns that his remaining son and the girl are in love. All of a sudden, Spanish civil guards enter the house before the son can escape. Pretending to be a sick servant, he lies down on the floor, covered by a tablecloth. The trick is discovered and the three are made prisoners. Just as their captors are drinking to celebrate their good luck, Filipino insurgents enter the town and rescue the family. #

The Plays of Remulo (SEE PAGE 36)

Filipino Playwrights

A V. MANUEL

The Plays of Montano

SEVERINO MONTANO has done some creditable work in the drama, particularly the arena stage. What the arena stage is, is explained in the "Foreword" to Montano's book **Three One-Act Plays:**

This is a revival of the ancient classic arena theatre in which the players and the audience are one, forming a unity, as the spectators sit in circles around the space left for the performers, while the actors walk on and off the scene through a lane left open in the midst of the audience.

Realizing that the arena stage was becoming very popular in the United States and seeing its practical possibilities here in the Philippines, Montano initiated and popularized the movement here in the Philippines after his return from the United States towards the end of 1952. It may be mentioned in passing that the arena stage was the stage used in the presentation of early Philippine dramas in the vernacular and Spanish; however, it gradually lost its appeal with the coming of the more formal stage platform erected for the purpose. It is still in use in many parts of the Orient, most particularly in Southeast Asia.

While in the United States, Montano spent his time studying in the Graduate Department of Drama at Yale where he got his Master of Fine Arts degree and studied later the economic side of theatrical production. A grant from the Rockefeller Foundation gave him the opportunity to study the different centers of art and drama in most countries of Europe and the countries of India,

Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaya in the East.

Severino Montano launched his career in playwriting after his return to the Philippines with the publication of his book **Three One-Act Plays**. The three plays are summarized as follows:

"**The Ladies and the Senator**" is an amusing comedy which takes a dig at Filipino officials who junket to America. The ladies in the story, members of a women's club, are preparing a party for a visiting senator. They belong to a "class of artificial, over-sophisticated women who are full of pretentious ostentation." As usual, while waiting for the guest-of-honor's arrival, the women gossip. Their favorite topic is the conduct of our officials abroad and of some Filipino women as well. When the senator arrives with his gallantry and flattery, the ladies forget themselves and are all ears to the old gallivanting adventurer. They hang on his every word and are so pleased with his extravagant praises that they forget their party. Instead they rush out with the senator to his hotel for a gay time. The writer of the play slyly takes potshots at our lawmakers who go abroad supposedly in the interest of the Filipino nation, but who really travel in order to take a fling, intent only on adventure and a good time. There may be some truth to this accusation as our newsmen comment with raised eyebrows on the qualifications of some of our officials who are sent on missions.

"**Sabina**" represents "a tragedy of simple barrio life." Life deals harshly with a simple lass of a barrio who

is trusting and naive in her love for a traveling American trader. Hence, she suffers the shame of the betrayed when she finds out that the foreigner is married. Too frail to cope with her cruel fate, she ends her life. When it comes to the affairs of the heart, the barrio maid is still the innocent one. She gives her confidence so easily that many times she nurses a broken heart and a ruined reputation. More often than not, such a girl exists in many a village.

Our foremost national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, is the principal character in the third play, "**Parting at Calamba**." The action takes place a few months before the hero's martyrdom; the scene is the living room of the doctor's family in Calamba, Laguna. Visiting the poor and treating the sick, Dr. Jose Rizal is closely watched by the civil guards. His brothers and his father have all been taken away and, except for himself, all the adult members of the family present are women. Laughter is a stranger in the house, for the abuses and cruelty of the Spaniards have left their mark on the family. At the start of the play, a niece is stationed at the window as a lookout for Rizal's book the "Reign of Greed" which has been banned is in the house. The mother pleads with her son to meet the Spaniards halfway but Saturnina, one of the daughters, sides with the hero. Father Dalmacio arrives from Manila to see Jose about the banned book. The priest offers a bribe in return for a retraction of the hero's statements against the Spaniards. When the visitor realizes his remonstrations are in vain, he is enraged. He threatens the family before he leaves. It is then that Jose decides to go away that evening; he feels he can serve his countrymen better if he can work unmolested.

(Continued from page 5)

The Plays of Romulo

POSSIBLY, Dr. Carlos P. Romulo is the most widely known Filipino abroad. He has carried with distinction the name of our country in the halls of international councils and conferences. He is an international diplomat. Not only many articles of national and international import have come from his pen, but novels and plays also have caught his interest. Romulo wrote a few plays when he was a faculty member of the State University. These plays were not intended for publication but were written for the UP dramatic club. Since he abandoned playwriting before he perfected or mastered the technique, his plays are not ideal, as he himself has admitted.

Romulo is represented by two dramas in this study — "The Hidden Symbol" and "Daughters for Sale." The first is a play in two acts with patriotism as the theme. A veteran of the Philippine Revolution and hacendero, Don Emilio is harassed by an unscrupulous but influential leader of the town who has come from nowhere. The stranger is aided by his son, a lawyer and labor leader, who is courting Don Emilio's daughter. As head of a society he has organized, "The Fighters of '96" this man derides Don Emilio for his apparent lack of patriotism. Furthermore, his son stirs up the mill laborers of Don Emilio's farm. As a consequence, the mill is burned down and the old man and his farm manager are accused of arson and consequently imprisoned. When he is bailed out, the manager gathers enough evidence to convict the real culprits, Don Felipe and his son. All's well that ends well. The manager also wins Don Emilio's

daughter.

In "Daughters for Sale," an old widower, Don Pelayo, is a "sabungero," meaning a cockpit addict, who would like to marry off his three daughters to rich husbands and thus have enough money to indulge in his vice. Amparo, his youngest daughter, entertains the same thought for her sisters. She manages to convince Don Juan, a wealthy landowner, that Maria, her man-hating sister, is in love with him. Flattered, the rich man comes to call on Maria, who insults him. The second sister, Rosario, is annoyed over her sweetheart's failure to answer her letters and in retaliation puts a husband-wanted advertisement in a newspaper. Meanwhile Amparo breaks off her engagement to an ambitious young man to "give him a shock that will awaken all his talent potentialities," in her own words. Two men answer Rosario's advertisement — the town barber and a Chinaman, both of whom are dismissed in no time. Don Juan again pays a visit and makes known his intentions of marriage to the father. Overcome by his sincerity, Maria at last gives in. On the other hand, Miguel, Rosario's lover, arrives and angrily confronts the woman with the advertisement. When reminded about the letters he did not answer, he explains they were all received in a batch just a few days before because there is no mail in the hacienda where he is working. And now he has come to take her with him, after they are properly married. Fortune does not forget to smile on Amparo too. Her lover also comes back to claim her after having landed a lucrative position as assistant manager. #

A Newcomer in USC

(Continued from page 21)

on Java. This may give us a better understanding about Philippine life in pre-Spanish times. We know from linguistic data that there was rather much contact between Indonesia and the Philippines. All this is mate-

rial which can throw much light not only on many dark spots of Philippine linguistics, but also on the vague and dim areas of Philippine history and civilization in pre-Spanish times.

Sanskrit is not an Indonesian language. Nevertheless its study is very useful in many respects. For

The CCAA

(Continued from page 29)

Right on the heels of the three tall men are old reliables Maximo "Republican" Pizarra, Julian "Killer" Macoy, Edgar Galdo, who made Chile veteran 'Emong' Bas look cheap in an exhibition game, Bobby "the befuddling feint" Reynes, Reynaldo dela Cruz the two-handed set shooter, Esmer Abejo, the fireball and ball hawk of the Warriors and the "little coach" of the team, Manuel Bas. To add able support there are jumpshot artist Ben Reyes, sentinel Gerard del Rosario and new acquisitions Patricio Palmares, a former Panther who's a whiz at jumpshots, Narciso Monceda, a Baby Jaguar in his prep days, and newcomer Tomas Aguirre.

SPORTS SHORTS

Fr. Lawrence Bunzel, SVD, is the newly-appointed Athletic Moderator. Being an "old hand" in San Carlos, Carolinian sports fans expect smooth sailing ahead.

The CCAA prep circuit opened last Sunday, July 12 and the Senior Circuit followed suit, Sunday, July 19, 1959 with a loud bang...

USC Sluggers, runner-up in last year's CBL, are still in the process of building up. Will be up next issue...

On the soccer football front, it's so quiet that you can hear a pin drop. Wake up, fellows! #

one thing, we have many loanwords from Sanskrit. This is the case with even the most common words. DALA in Bisaya and Tagalog, a very common word, is a Sanskrit loanword. The same is true of the Tagalog SALITA, etc. These loanwords can teach us very much about the development of Philippine languages.

The study of Sanskrit also affords us the advantages mentioned before in connection with Old Javanese: we meet again another highly interesting civilization. And we can study the rather strong Indian influences here in the Philippines.

The study of Old Javanese and Sanskrit, while interesting and useful, is, however, by no means necessary for research work in Philippine linguistics. With a thorough knowledge of only structural linguistics we shall be able to make remarkable progress. A wide, virginal field lies open for exploration and new, fascinating discoveries. #