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Pompas y Solemnidades: Church Celebrations in Spanish Manila and the Native Theater

DOREEN G. FERNANDEZ

Philippine folk theater exhibits an exuberant spirit kindred to that of feasts and celebrations. In the *sinakulo*, for example, scenes of the Creation, Transfiguration, Resurrection, and Ascension are lit by sparklers (*luisis*) and involve ingenious stage devices and special effects. The entrances and exits, the tournaments and battles in the *komedya* are done to music, with marching and flourishes, with grandiloquent taunting and boasting. Costumes are sequinned, spangled, plumed, studded with medals. The parties and feasts embodied in most *sarsuwelas* are as grand as budget and folk imagination can make them. Dramatizations like the *Salubong* and the *Panunuluyan* are replete with statues, actors, singers, angels descending, verses, music, and special machinery.

The study of these folk drama forms has led to the question: Where does this spirit, this native theater aesthetic come from? Almost surely, some of it comes from native pretheatrical forms like rituals, ceremonies, celebrations, songs and dances—the *Pagana Maranaw*, rituals of betrothal and wedding, feasts like the Igorot *cañao*, even ceremonies of battle and death. But, what did the colonial experience contribute to this native aesthetic? Did the Spanish regime and the American occupation mediate this spirit, influence it, bring about changes?

In an attempt to answer this question, this study of church celebrations was begun. Since Manila (especially Intramuros and its many churches) was the center of the colonial church, its celebrations were often documented and recorded in great detail. A close look at these records yields insights into an aesthetic contributory to that of folk theater. The Manila celebrations were, of course, echoed all over the islands, in communities large and small, with relevant and interesting variants and variations. A complete study would certainly need to take all these into

account. As a preliminary step in the study, however, this inquiry focuses on church celebrations in Spanish Manila, which have been studied for historical purposes, but not with a view to discovering their relationship to or influence on the aesthetics of Philippine folk theater.

The pages of Philippine history are studded with accounts of feasts and celebrations, starting in, occurring in, or initiated by the churches of Spanish Manila. As early as January 1597, for example, there was "rejoicing and festive show as had never been known before in the islands when the relics of 155 martyrs, including those of 20 Popes, and of Sta. Potenciana, patroness of Manila, were installed in a richly decorated tabernacle in a new church.¹ The fiesta was celebrated with:

... solemne procesion general, Novenario, y certamen Poetico . . . colgadas de las Ventanas ricas y costosas tapicerias; apropiacionadas [sic] distancias estaban construidos arcos triumphales, fuentes de varios licores . . . venian en la Procesion en proporcion en seis Andas y catorce relicarios de costoso adorno, las Santas reliquias en hombros, manos de Sacerdotes, Prelados, Prebendados, y Religiosos graves, revestidos de Capas de Coro, ricamente guarnecidas de Perlas, Joyas, Cadenas de Oro, en cantidad, y calidad abundantes . . . acompañaban todas las Cofradias, comunidades, y estados, festejando a trechos la funcion alegres danzas de varias naciones y trages: estaba la iglesia de el Collegio adornada de colgaduras exquisitas, pinturas, y poesias . . . ofrecieron los Padres de San Agustin con musica escogida, y predicaron eminentemente con espiritu . . . el ultimo dia hubo justa Poetica.²

The solemn masses and eminent preachers, processions, novenas, jewelled robes and ornaments, rich banners and hangings, triumphal arches in the streets, literary/dramatic performances, the music of voices and instruments, dignitaries and the faithful in procession soon came to be the standard elements of a church celebration in Spanish Manila. It was invariably with pride that friar-chroniclers recorded the pomp and solemnity with which the "M.N. y S.L. Ciudad de Manila" celebrated its feasts. These included both religious and civil occasions, since church and state were so inextricably linked. Church feasts inevitably included

1. Fr. Pedro Chirino, S.J. "Relation of the Filipinas Islands and of what has there been accomplished by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus," in Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 12, p. 246.

2. P. Juan de la Concepcion, *Historia General de Philipinas 1788-1792* (Manila: Impr. del Seminar. Conciliar, y Real de S. Carlos, 1788), Tomo III, pp. 318-20.

civil authorities (at the very least attending, but more usually involved). Civil or state feasts always started in the church, at least with a Mass and a *Te Deum*, but more usually with the Archbishop and the clergy as well as the faithful involved in novenas, sermons, processions, and related activities.

One of the earliest notes on such celebrations, for example, was made in 1571, after the conquest of Manila, when "those Moros or Tagals received the peace offered them, and rendered homage to King Don Felipe . . . and to his successors, the sovereigns of España." This was done on the feast of St. Andrew, patron saint of Manila, and the *adelantado*, Legazpi, unfurled the standard, which was then carried about with great pomp, and attended by processions, masses, and preaching, with religious and secular dignitaries participating.³

In 1595, a letter from Felipe II to Don Francisco Tello details quite explicitly the procedure of receiving the royal seal:

. . . you shall go . . . accompanied by the auditors, the fiscal, all the soldiers in military array, the citizen encomenderos, my officials, and all others in public positions. The . . . seal will be contained in a box borne under a canopy, the supports . . . carried by the regidores of the city. The box will be borne by a horse, richly caparisoned . . . All . . . shall go straight to the cathedral with bared heads, where the archbishop will be waiting, clad in His pontifical vestments, together with all his clergy. . . . There you shall place the box, and the archbishop shall repeat His prayers, beseeching our Lord to direct the founding of the . . . Audiencia for His good service, and the pure administration of justice.⁴

Both examples show how special state occasions (not yearly events) assumed the participation of the Church and its people.

RELIGIOUS FEASTS

The more usual festive occasions included, first of all, religious feasts, of which there were a number each month, including feasts for the whole church (such as Christmas and Easter), feasts special to Spanish subjects (e.g. "San Tiago Apostol"),⁵ and those particular to the diocese, region,

3. Fray Juan de Medina, O.S.A., "Historia de la orden de S. Agustin de estas Islas Filipinas" [1630], in Blair and Robertson, Vol. 23, pp. 199-200.

4. Letter from Felipe II, Blair and Robertson, Vol. 9, pp. 190-91.

5. Tabla general de todas las fiestas y vigalias de este obispado de Nueva Caceres, manuscript, 1735.

or congregation (e.g. San Andres, chosen patron saint of Manila because on his feastday the city was delivered from Limahong's blockade, and St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus).

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, for example, was celebrated in 1619 with nineteen days of bullfights, masquerades, nightly illuminations and fireworks, and the concerted and competing efforts of all the religious congregations:

On the first day . . . Sunday, December 8 . . . there was given a drama on the beauty of Rachel. On Monday the religious of St. Francis held their fiesta . . . In the morning one of the grandest processions ever seen in this vicinity set out from their house . . . First came the whole force of Manila in perfect order, the arquebusiers and musketeers firing their pieces at intervals. Next came a rich standard bearing the image of the conception of the Virgin, and at her feet Escoto [Duns Scotus] . . . After the standard . . . a lay friar called Fray Junipero . . . regarded as a holy and simple man . . . was dancing, and calling out a thousand silly phrases about divine things. Now followed banners, crosses, and candlesticks. After these came on floats eight saints of this order, so richly adorned that the people did not know whether to marvel most that there should be so large a quantity of gold, jewels, and precious stones in Manila, or that the fathers should have collected so many of them. These saints were accompanied by eight groups of Indian dancers . . . One represented canons, one cardinals, another pastors, etc. . . . Last of all came the most holy Virgin of the conception. The procession reached the cathedral and the fiesta was held. In the afternoon they presented a very devout drama, on the martyrs of Japon.

On Tuesday the fiesta of [the Augustinians] . . . began. . . . On Wednesday we of the Society began our festivities; and although we had no procession, as is our custom, the celebration at night was by no means inferior. . . . there was burned a great quantity of illuminations. . . . Our people played a thousand musical instruments. During the day we held mass, in our impressive manner, and then had a sermon; and in the afternoon we presented a remarkable drama on the conception. All the people said they had never seen anything like it.

On Thursday the fiesta was again held in the cathedral. In the afternoon there was another drama . . . On Friday the Augustinian Recoletos began their fiesta. In the morning there was a great procession. . . . In the afternoon was presented the drama of the Prince of Transilvania. . . .

On Sunday there were two fiestas. One was held in the cathedral . . . while the other was at our house—where it seemed expedient to hold it in order that the cathedral and the religious of St. Francis should not monopolize the entire celebration, and acquire such a right for the future. . . . At nightfall our collegians of San Joseph formed a procession remarkable enough to have appeared in Madrid . . . all . . . on horseback two by two, wearing their usual robes of brown silk with facings made of fine scarlet cloth, and with shoulder-

stripes of lace. Their caps were a blaze of gold and precious stones. About their necks they all wore many chains and jewels. Each of the prominent nobility of the city had ahead of him, as a bodyguard, six or eight servants, with large tapers of white wax in their hands. They carried staffs having upon them large placards with various pictures, letters, and hieroglyphics, all appropriate to the occasion. . . . Finally came a very beautiful triumphal chariot drawn by two savages, and decorated with many arches of flowers and gilded figures of angels. In the midst of these and among a great number of lights went, enthroned, a beautiful carved figure of Our Lady of the Conception. Before the chariot was a band of clarion-players. They followed eight children dressed in silk garments and carrying silver candles. They represented angels . . . singing and reciting in praise of the Virgin. After the chariot came Original Sin, tied with a chain, and so well made up for his part that he became a mark for the blows and pinches of the people. Next day there was another very magnificent fiesta, in which a dance was given by more than sixty Japanese, who danced and sang to the accompaniment of various instruments, according to their custom.

After this, on Sunday, the order of St. Francis began their eight-day fiesta. Another was held at the port of Cavite in which, as in Manila, all the orders took part—except one, which during all this time did not leave its house, enter the cathedral, nor display illuminations. About this there was no lack of gossiping in the city.⁶

The above is reproduced in some detail, because it not only contains the standard elements, religious and otherwise, for festivities mentioned earlier, but also emphasizes one other that came to play an important part in all Philippine feasting—fireworks, rockets, and illuminations. The attitude displayed by the anonymous friar, moreover, is telling. His admiration for the “great magnificence” reveals the standard for celebration—pomp and solemnity or, in more contemporary expression, *bongga*, compound of visual splendor, symbol and allegory, *pasikat* and important personages, richness, music, theater, and exotic dances, and an undeniable spirit of competition or *pasiklaban* between the religious orders. We cannot help but smile at his almost wicked aside that one of the religious orders, easily identifiable, did not take part, and became the object of gossip in the city. If it all sounds familiar, it is because it is this

6. “Relation of Events in the Philippine Islands, 1619-20,” Blair and Robertson, Vol. 19, pp. 63-66. For other celebrations of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, see Casimiro Diaz, O.S.A., “The Augustinians in the Philippines,” Blair and Robertson, Vol. 37, pp. 212-13; “Events in the Filipinas Islands,” Blair and Robertson, Vol. 18, p. 80; *Descripcion del Novenario* . . . , 1855, MS; Compania de Jesus, *La Inmaculada a Traves de los Siglos*, 1904.

kind of feasting and celebrating that sets the standard for the years that followed, the spirit filtering into, joining and reinforcing our criteria for celebrations, our fiestas, and our theater aesthetics.

ROYAL FEASTS

Aside from religious feasts, cause for celebration was also provided by events in Spain that reverberated in her colonies, especially those relating to royalty. The accession of Philip IV in 1623, for example, called for festivities attended by the entire town, civil and political,⁷ and that of Carlos II in 1677 occasioned four "sermones panegiricos," an "octavario," and a booklet describing the royal feasts.⁸ The majority of Carlos II of Spain (1677) had sermons from the different orders, bullfights, *comedias*, and "a beautiful and splendid masquerade, with magnificent costumes, and parades of servants in costly liveries. The most distinguished citizens of Manila went therein, two by two, representing the realms of the monarchy . . . with shields and mottoes proper for each kingdom."⁹

At the feasting for the birth of Prince Luis Felipe Fernando in 1710, there were *toros* (fifty on each of two days), a novena, special *villancicos* by the Jesuits, *fuegos* (" . . . cinco mil bombas, setenta docenas de voladores y busca pies, veinte quatro nudos grandes, trescientas peloteras de Sangley y trescientas peloteras de acero fueron los principales elementos de un solo castillo . . . Hubo ademas buques de fuego no menos estupendos . . ."), indios and *mestizos de sangley* in "escaramuzas, parejas, caracoles y otras habilidades," *comparsas*, comedias, *loas*, races, a literary competition, and a sermon that detailed the expenses on the Philippines of His Majesty the King of Spain.¹⁰

The celebrations were obviously not limited to Spanish subjects or customs, since at the accession of Carlos IV in 1790, aside from the pontifical Mass and *Te Deum* at the cathedral, levees (*besamanos*, or court days, for the nobility to "kiss the hands of the king"), banquets, comedias and bullfights, Fray Manuel Barrios describes Chinese lions

7. Blair and Robertson, Vol. 12, p. 182 (footnote).

8. Francisco Moya y Torres, *Lealtad Empeñada / Finezas de Amor* . . . , in Mauro Garcia, *Philippine Rariora* (Manila: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, Inc., 1982), pp. 71-72.

9. Diaz, "Augustinians," Blair and Robertson, Vol. 37, p. 166.

10. Fr. Nicolas de San Pedro, "Sermon/que en las fies-/tas Reales . . ." in Wenceslao Retana, *Aparato Bibliografico* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Succora de M. Minuesa de los Rios), Vol. 1, pp. 225-31.

spitting fire, and a serpent [dragon] fifty cubits long swallowing fire and dancing through the streets, the distribution of ₱3,000 in alms to widows, orphans, and undowered girls, and one Pedro Galarraga who "carried to the stars the name of his august sovereign, by means of a large aerostatic globe, which crossed the bay and was lost to sight among the clouds," and also "flung to the people a quantity of coin bearing the stamp of the new monarch."¹¹ On the same occasion, the Filipino poet, *alferez real* Luis Rodriguez Varela, decorated his house fittingly:

... en cuyo frontispicio ... un hermoso Palacio, ... dividido en tres cuerpos diferentes ... En el primer cuerpo se registraban unos Salones magnificos conbalcones [sic], galerias claraboyas, y ventanas en Simetria admirable, y en sus lienzos se veian pinturas finas y extraordinarias ...

En el segundo cuerpo se veian unas columnas de orden compuesto, y en medio de ellas entre colgaduras de Damasco debajo de pabellon de ceda guarnecido de galon de plata, se manifestaban los Reales Retratos en quadro obalado, y a sus pies el Cetro y la Corona, todo dorado de Oro ... En la parte inferior del quadro se leia la siguiente inscripcion.

De CARLOS REY sin igual
el merito, y la grandeza
proclama el Alferez Real;
y de Luisa liberal
la incomparable belleza.

En el tercer cuerpo sobre barandillas doradas se elevaba una Cornisa ... en cuio centro se veian de pintura fina las armas de la Corona Española ...¹²

Still other such royal occasions included the arrival and installation of the portrait of Fernando VII in 1825, the proclamation of Isabel II in 1834 (5500 *lucos*, *cucañas* or greased poles, *carros triunfales* from Tondo, Binondo, Sta. Cruz, Ermita, Malate and Dilao drawn by *zagalas*, in front of which danced other *zagalas* "en traje morisco" or "vestidas a la indiana," boat races, dances, banquets, regatas, declamations, and of course theater), a royal wedding in 1874, the birth of Don Alfonso de Borbon in 1858, which was the occasion for the construction of what

11. "Events in the Filipinas, 1764-1800," [compiled from Montero y Vidal, *Historia de Filipinas*], Blair and Robertson, Vol. 50, pp.66-67.

12. Manuel Barrios, "Descripcion de la proclamacion y jura ..." in Retana, *Aparato*, Vol. 1, p. 423.

became the Teatro del Principe Alfonso in Arroceros, three days of games, races and feasting, and prizes given to babies born on the same day.¹³

A royal funeral, that of Prince Balthassar Carlos, in 1649, was given special, lengthy attention in a publication printed by Simon Pinpin. The announcement had arrived in July 1648. In it the king "ordered the demonstrations of sorrow to be made on the same scale as if intended for his own person." People changed into mourning garments, and the whole community "became a theater of grief." Expressions of condolence were given at the halls of the Royal Audiencia and Assembly, which were draped in funeral adornments. The bells of all the churches were tolled, and all the religious communities assembled "with their crosses, priests, deacons, and subdeacons, clad in their vestments," in the garrison royal chapel, where a "royal tomb" and mausoleum had been erected. From there the august procession left to express condolences to the Governor General, in the order of strict protocol.

A processional next accompanied the royal crown to the chapel of the royal camp for solemn vespers and the funeral oration. It started with some 150 orphan boys from San Juan de Letran, holding pure white wax candles. Then the confraternities with their pennants and banners, the suburban parishes with their crosses and black-cloaked *curas*, the college students with *becas* turned back as token of grief, the Sta. Misericordia in black surtouts and hats, bearing small bells, the holy orders, the ecclesiastical cabildo in black choir-cloaks, the cabildo and the judges' tribunal, bearing maces and insignia, and the nobility in flowing black mourning cloaks, the royal standard carried by Captain Gabriel Gomez del Castillo assisted by *alcaldes*, the Royal Audiencia with the Governor followed by the government and court secretaries, and the gentlemen and pages of the palace.

At the Plaza de Armas was the royal regiment of the Spanish troops: 486 infantrymen, their arquebuses held with butt-ends reversed. The royal crown was placed on the catafalque, "or rather a funeral pyre of fire, crowned with candles as is the firmament with stars, where the brilliant and the majestic glowed in competition." The account ends with a detailed description of the royal catafalque, with its columns, entablatures, friezes, architraves, cupola, canopy, cushions, inscribed verses,

13. Retana, *Aparato*, Vol. 2, pp. 530-32; p. 430; pp. 555-58; *Programa / de los festejos y manifestaciones piadosas / con que . . . celebran el natalicio / del Principe de Asturias / Don Alfonso de Borbon* (Manila: Imprenta y Litografia de Ramirez y Giraudier, 1858).

symbolic figures, candles, obelisks, and escutcheons—and with the funeral poems and eulogies in Latin and Spanish.¹⁴

The “pomp and circumstance” were for a prince the people had not known nor seen, but surely the detail and grandeur of the ceremonies were impressed upon the observers, suggesting “the royal way” of doing things, of mourning, or remembering, of sealing a person’s importance—and thus creating a mental set, a lasting impression, or at the very least a vivid memory.

CITY FESTIVALS

Festejos were also called for by events important to the life and welfare of the City of Manila. Thus, the loss of the galleon *San Felipe*, and the martyrdom of San Pedro Bautista and his [Franciscan] companions were the occasion for rituals in 1597. The Franciscan church was decorated by the *ciudadanos* with rich hangings of damask and brocade, and by the indios with their “invenciones piadosas de tejidos de palmas y flores,” making the convents and streets look like spring. For three days the religious orders, the town, the civil and military officials were in attendance at the cathedral for the *Te Deum* and procession in which were carried a painting of the Holy Martyrs and the casket of relics, the solemn High Mass and sermon on the glorious martyrdom, and the installation of the relics in a place of honor.

The reestablishment of the Audiencia (suppressed some years earlier) in 1598 was marked by a procession in which the royal seal was taken from the monastery of San Agustín to the cathedral upon a horse caparisoned in crimson and gold, under a canopy borne by the regidores of the city, clad in crimson velvet and white silver cloth, followed by the president and auditors, afoot and bareheaded, with a throng of citizens in gala dress and the soldiery with drums and banners. They walked along streets adorned with tapestry, finery and triumphal arches, to the music of flutes, trumpets and other instruments, and were received at the cathedral door by the archbishop in pontifical robes, and by the chapter and clergy. The seal was taken to the main altar and placed on a brocade-covered stool, as the singers intoned the *Te Deum Laudamus*.¹⁵

14. “Royal Funeral Rites at Manila,” Blair and Robertson, Vol. 36, pp. 23-43; “Aparato Funebre, y real Pyra de honor . . .” in W.E. Retana, *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino* (Madrid: Casa de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1896), Tomo II, pp. 105-58.

15. Dr. Antonio de Morga, “Sucesos de las islas Filipinas,” Blair and Robertson, Vol. 15, pp. 133-35.

The Spanish victory over the Dutch in 1610 was marked by the ringing of church bells, a solemn procession from the cathedral to the Jesuit church, where a sermon was preached, a Mass and sermon in the Franciscan church, and the erection of a catafalque (to commemorate those who had died in the battle) of three storeys in a church hung with different colored silks and "signs of gladness rather than of weeping." The spoils were distributed right after, in an interesting mixture of the religious and the worldly: "a quantity of silk and silver (not to mention the hulls of the vessels, the ammunition, and more than fifty pieces of artillery, and other things such as wine, oil, etc.)—all worth three or four hundred thousand pesos."¹⁶

Especially interesting from the point of view of "practical" civil matters as the impulse for church festivities was the defeat of Cachil Corralat (Sultan Kudarat) by Governor General Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera in 1637. The fact that Corralat was Muslim and that much has been made through our Spanish history of the "infidels" in the south suggests the religious dimension of the victory. However, the fact that this was one of the few victories over the courageous Mindanao Filipinos, hard-won after a long siege, proves that the triumph was definitely and primarily a military one.

Corcuera had arrived in the Philippines in 1635, with express orders from Philip IV to punish the Muslim pirates severely and stop their raids in the Visayas and Luzon. His victory over Kudarat in May 1637 had climaxed a long campaign begun in February, and in which Jesuit missionaries and his chaplain, Fr. Marcello Mastrilli, S.J., had played more than priestly parts, bearing news, recruiting Visayan soldiers, and finally accepting the submission of the *datus*. With troops consisting of Spaniards, Pampangos, and Visayans, Corcuera's assaults forced Kudarat to withdraw to a stronghold on a hill (*cerro*), which was finally taken.

When Corcuera entered the bay on 24 May, "Manila [had] prepared a Roman triumph for the conquistador," and his ship was met by decorated sampans, which escorted it to a special landing place. A triumphal procession passed through the royal gate, Puerta Real up Calle Real, past the Jesuit college and its triumphal arch to the cathedral. The procession included Nicolas Gonzalez's company that had won the battle of Punta Flechas, carrying the captured standards, the seamen of

16. Fr. Gregorio Lopez, S.J., "Relation of Events in the Filipinas during the Years 1609 and 1610" Blair and Robertson, Vol. 17, pp. 124, 127.

the expedition, with the Chinese and Filipino captives liberated in the campaign, the Maguindanao prisoners with the women and children walking free, and the men in chains, the service troops carrying stacks of captured weapons, the Pampanga troops, Corcuera's artillery dragging captured guns and finally Corcuera himself "preceded by six boys dragging in the dust in front of him the captured standards of Kudarat."

Corcuera was received at the cathedral by the members of the audiencia, the cathedral chapter, and city corporation—without the archbishop. He entered the church and, humbly prostrate on the floor, "offered a prayer of considerable length, attributing his entire success to God." Afterwards he addressed the army, which gave him a general salute. The master-of-camp hosted "a bountiful and choice repast," walls were illuminated, sky-rockets were fired, and at night "the soldiers in masquerade went through the streets on horseback with many torches, to display their joy; both men and horses were elegantly and splendidly adorned."

There were also a city masquerade, huge bonfires, illuminations, solemn funerals for those who had died in the war, eight altars erected, with masses beginning before dawn and filling the morning, a thanksgiving fiesta, Mass and sermon at the cathedral, a procession with dances, floats, instruments and two portable organs, and Father Mastrilli carrying a banner depicting, standing back to back "that figure of Christ which had been stabbed and insulted by the enemy," and St. Francis Xavier, through streets adorned with arches, branches and hangings.

It is this same celebration that produced a significant sidelight: children playing "Moros y Cristianos" on the walls of Intramuros, inspiring Fr. Hieronimo Perez, S.J. to write the play *gran comedia de la Toma del Pueblo de Corralat, y conquista del Cerro*, a Spanish comedia about real Filipino *Moros* and *Cristianos* in battle (all subsequent vernacular *komedya* were about imagined Moors and Christians of Europe.)¹⁷

One might also mention the following events, commemorated in the city by both church and state: the victory over the Chinese (more than 1300 Sangleyes killed in a hill above Calamba by a company of Spaniards and some Indios), celebrated with a *Te Deum* in 1639; yearly

17. Fr. Juan Lopez, S.J., "Corcuera's Triumphant Entry into Manila," Blair and Robertson, Vol. 27, 330-40; Horacio de la Costa, S.J., *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 386; "Events in the Philippines, 1637-38," Blair and Robertson Vol. 29, pp. 38-39; Doreen G. Fernandez, "Historical Notes on the Jesuits and Early Philippine Theater," *Philippine Studies* Vol. 29 (1981):386-89.

commemorations of the victory over Limahong on the feast of St. Andrew; a disastrous earthquake in 1645 (processions, public prayers, many acts of penitence "as in Holy Week," and general confessions); the fortifications of Manila against the pirate Koxinga (public prayers, reception of relics of martyrs, processions, octave festival in the cathedral); the arrival of a new governor general and of new religious (two triumphal arches with "ingenious emblematic allusions in Latin and Castillian verse, and very expressive aludations" and processions in 1684)—and many other similar occasions when the *ciudad de Manila* was pleased, blessed, or saved, mentioned but not always described in the *relaciones*, *memoriales*, reports, letters, and other friar accounts, that chronicle the events of the Spanish years.¹⁸

CHURCH EVENTS

Still and all, church events liturgical and otherwise were the principal motive force for festivities composed of varihued and multilayered events that provide the principal or auxiliary models and eventually perhaps some of the aesthetics for most Philippine celebrations that followed through the years—church feasting, civic celebrations, town fiestas, and theater. Wenceslao Retana, writing of publications that describe royal fiestas in the Philippines, says that these have a double interest: literary, which is considerable and "el concerniente a las costumbres sociales, que no es menor."¹⁹ He obviously meant the social customs of those times, but this article suggests that these feasts and celebrations help us understand the social culture of our own day, since they set patterns and models that we still follow in part or in spirit in our time.

OTHER ASSORTED FEASTS

There are a few more occasions that one can mention as contributing to this canon of feasting. Not related to liturgy, nor to the Spanish crown, nor to events directly affecting the life of the city of Manila, they are relevant or at the very least peripheral to one or two, or all of the three.

18. "Relation of the Insurrection of the Chinese," Blair and Robertson, Vol. 29, p. 215; Fr. Joseph Fayol, "Affairs in Filipinas, 1644-47," Blair and Robertson Vol. 35, p. 218; "Events in Manila 1662-63," Blair and Robertson Vol. 36, pp. 218-60; Diaz, "Augustinians," Blair and Robertson Vol. 42, pp. 229-30.

19. Retana, *Aparato*, Vol. 1, p. 231.

There are, for example, feasts observed by individual religious orders (Augustinians, Recollects, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits) of the country. The canonization of Saints Ignatius and Francis Xavier and the beatification of Aloysius Gonzaga in 1623, for example, did not only affect the Jesuit order but the whole city, which, as the Spanish saying goes, "threw the house out the window," covering Xavier's statue with "more than 15,000 precious stones, of which 1,000 were diamonds and that of Ignatius with more than 20,000 stones, of which 800 were diamonds." San Jose and Sto. Tomas students presented plays and the city corporation a bullfight. The archbishop was petitioned to declare the feasts of both saints holy days of obligation for the Spaniards of the archdiocese "in view of the many and great favors which these islands have received from God our Lord by means of the sacred order of the Society of Jesus, and in recognition of the great debt of gratitude . . . [owed] to the same holy order" because of educational and other services rendered. The petition was granted for Manila and Nueva Caceres, and later for Nueva Segovia and for Cebu dioceses as well.²⁰

Because of the canonization of the twenty-one Japanese martyrs (three were *dogicos* of the Augustinians and the others were Franciscans) in 1630 by Pope Urban VII, there were eight days of feasting, the preparations for which took six months, and cost two million reales. "The religious marched in glittering vestments, all at the cost of the pious and religious inhabitants of Manila." The orders invited one another. There were grand processions, the first bullfight in the islands, *comparsas*, *fuegos y castillos*, and also dances and comedias which made the festival so magnificent that it "could have been envied by the best cities of España."²¹

Fr. Francisco Marcelo Mastrilli of the Society of Jesus, already mentioned with reference to Corcuera, was seized, tortured and beheaded in Japan (1637), and because of this martyrdom *Te Deum* were sung, bells rung and illuminations prepared, while the dean, the archbishop, the Royal Audiencia, the orders and a great crowd of people "celebrated the glory and virtues of the holy father Marcelo, with tender tears, for he was generally loved and regarded as a saint."²²

20. de la Costa, *Jesuits*, p. 365.

21. Medina, *Historia*, Blair and Robertson Vol. 24, pp. 174-75; Fr. Felix de Huerta, *Estado Geográfico, Topográfico, Estadístico, Histórico-Religioso* . . . (Binondo: Imprenta de M. Sanchez y Ca., 1865), pp. 15-19. The latter details who was in the procession, in what order, bearing what statues or effigies, and conducting the orchestra.

22. "Events in the Filipinas, 1637-38," Blair and Robertson Vol. 29, p. 33.

The sudden death in Pila of Doctor Don Fernando Montero, eminent preacher, in 1645, as he was preparing to assume the office of archbishop of Manila, turned the triumphal parade that had been prepared into a funeral procession, while the death of Archbishop Don Miguel de Poblete in 1668 is remembered by a booklet of "llorosa descripcion" which includes funeral declamations and poems.²³

One of the most detailed sources of data on drama of the period is a rare booklet called *Sagrada fiesta:/ Tres Vezes Gran-/de: que en el discurso de tres dias zelebro el convento de/Sancto Domingo de Manila, primera Cafa de la Prouincial del Sancto Rosario de Filipinas . . .* and published in 1677 upon the beatification of Sts. Pius V, Diego de Berbana, and Margarita de Castello. It describes the altar, the decoration of the church, the Latin and Spanish verses, labyrinths and anagrams, the feasts and sermons, the *entremeses*, the loas (personages: Cuidado, Verdad, Diver-timiento in one and Imposible, Obediencia, Petrus currit in the other) and the new comedias, all in verse, and all written by a Dominican, who had been ordered to clean up some improprieties "bien intolerables y mal sonadas" in "la Comedia antigua."²⁴

Even excommunication rites in 1718 called for "the greatest solemnity that has been seen in these islands," and featured banners, white and black crosses on the capes and mantels worn by the familiars, who marched in procession through all the city accompanied by eminent citizens in gala attire on caparisoned horses with "many lackeys wearing rich livery." The ceremony of excommunication itself consisted of a reading of the edict on one day, and on the next a reading of the letter of excommunication in a ceremony "that strikes fear and terror into the hardest heart."²⁵

The killing of Don Fernando Manuel de Bustillo Bustamante, governor general, and his son, called for a public funeral "so ostentatious that in it . . . [were] consumed seven and a half quintals (or hundredweights) of wax" and costing a thousand pesos "taken from the goods of the deceased," and with "the great pomp usual in such cases."²⁶

23. Diaz, "Augustinians," Blair and Robertson, Vol. 27, p. 162; Garcia, *Rariora*, p. 47..

24. Retana, *Aparato* Vol. 1, pp. 154-55.

25. Diaz, "Augustinians," Blair and Robertson, Vol. 37, pp. 281-83.

26. De la Concepcion, *Historia*, Blair and Robertson, Vol. 44, pp. 159-60; "Noticias de lo sucedido en la ciudad de Manila en Octubre de 1719" in Retana, *Archivo*, Tomo V, p. 145.

The Sixth Centenary of St. Thomas Aquinas (1874), and the Fifteenth of the conversion of St. Augustine (1887) were celebrated by all Manila, as was the Fourth Centenary of the discovery of America (1892).²⁷ The inauguration of the church of St. Ignatius (1899) called for five days of masses, sermons, decorations, music, choirs, lights, Academia Literaria and Velada Musical, dialogues and theater, magic acts and acrobats, new masses composed for the occasion, bands, and programs.²⁸ The inauguration of the *aguas potables* (1882), however, eclipsed all the above, since its five days of celebration included an order by the Governor to illumine the facades of houses and keep them lit from dusk to 10 P.M., a reception at the Palace, the inauguration of the Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad, a Misa de Gracia by the archbishop and a *Te Deum* at an especially-built altar at the Sampaloc rotonda, music and games all over the city, arches and fireworks, the *salon de Luneta* decorated with "arcos, telas, foliaje," alms for the poor and special treats for prisoners, races and prizes, a formal ball, weddings and baptisms, with prizes for children born that day, many of them named after Queen Ma. Cristina (whose birthday it was).²⁹

This kind of feasting filtered down to individual and even personal levels—scaled down to the occasion or the budget. For example there was the beatification of a saint, Beato Alonso de Orozco (1882), or the feast of St. Thomas in the same year, or a feast given by the St. Casa de Misericordia for Governor General Mariano Ricafort (1825), which featured a speech, dances, the recitation of poems, and a ceremonial gift to the Governor. On this occasion, Retana makes an aside: "It deserves notice that all Spanish poetry written in the Philippines is detestable, and especially so are those meant to honor [*loar*] authorities."³⁰

Special notice might be given to the feast of the Third Centenary of St. Theresa of Jesus (1882), because a new element was added to the three-day celebration (13-15 October)—the first Art and Industry Exposition organized in the Philippines. The program details the difficulties encountered, the scaled-down expectations that resulted in (only) 253 exhibits

27. P. Vindel, *Catalogo Sistemático e Ilustrado de la Biblioteca Filipina . . .* (Madrid: Calle de Prado num. 9, 1904), entry 1253; entry 1244; Retana, *Aparato*, Vol. 3, p. 1085.

28. *Reseña Histórica de la Inauguración de la Iglesia de San Ignacio de Loyola de Manila en 1889* (Manila: Imprenta y Litografía de M. Perez, Hijo, 1890).

29. D. Francisco de Mas y Otzot, *Carriedo y sus Obras* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico de Ramirez y Giraudier, 1882).

30. Vindel, entries 1259, 1255; Retana, *Aparato*, Vol. 2, pp. 527-29.

and the accompanying Masses and triduum, litanies and *salves*, apostolic blessing and procession, preachers and prize-winning poets, including the "indigena filipino" Pedro Paig, and the rains and hurricane that interrupted the festivities.³¹

One notices that of the feasts mentioned above, only two are truly secular—the centenary of the discovery of America, and the inauguration of the aguas potables. The rest were church-related. This suggests what a force for celebration the colonial church came to be. Aside from the above, one must further consider the feasts celebrated yearly, like Christmas and All Saints Day, and the feasts of the patron saints of individual barrios and suburbs of Manila and of all the towns and barrios throughout the islands.

All these—inside and outside Intramuros—provided year-round pomp and splendor. For example, there were the glittering Maundy Thursday and Good Friday processions, in which jewels glinted among velvet and satin mourning garments, and statues of the Virgin were surrounded by globes of light, silver and flowers. De Huerta mentions that the Santo Entierro had always come out of the Franciscan church, the first missionaries having founded "la hermandad de Nuestra Señora de la Soledad," but that the honor (of the procession) had later been ceded to the Dominicans.³² In time the natives, priests and laymen, came to participate more closely and frequently in the preparation and execution of these activities, and this could well be where the native and colonial aesthetics came to meet and meld.

Pastoral visits were also events celebrated with routine solemnity, even though occasionally the circumstances could be quite unusual. When Governor Pedro Manuel de Arandia died in 1739, Bishop Miguel Lino de Ezpeleta of Cebu filled the position, and was reluctant to give it up when Manuel Antonio Rojo was named Archbishop of Manila (and *ex officio* was expected to fill the post). After some trouble, Archbishop Rojo eventually was able to assume the post and go through the process: "Auto de Visita, Edicto General, Residencia, Publicacion de la Mision y Jubileo, Visita de la Santa Iglesia Catedral, Visita de Sagrario, Reconocimiento de Reliquias, Ornamentos y demas Muebles," etc.³³

31. Retana, *Aparato*, Vol. 2, pp. 932-934; *Descripcion de las solemnnes fiestas . . . Tercer Centenario de la gloriosa virgen y doctora mistica Sta. Teresa de Jesus . . . Octubre de 1882* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico de Ramirez y Giraudier, [1882]).

32. de Huerta, *Estado Geografico*, p. 19.

33. Pilar Elordi Cortes, "Una visita pastoral de arzobispo Manuel Antonio Rojo a la diocesis de Manila," *Missionalia Hispanica*, 38: 14, 1981, pp. 319-91.

Surely the pomp and solemnity with which church ceremonies were conducted at every level, from the saying of Mass to the visit of an archbishop or the canonization of a saint, must have added up to continuing statements through the centuries of just what grandeur meant to the church, and therefore to her faithful.

FRANCISCAN CELEBRATIONS

It might be interesting to take a look not just at one individual celebration, but at some related observances through the years within the Franciscan order, since it seems safe to assume that analogous events happened within the other orders.

On the occasion of the Chinese revolt of 3 October 1603, St. Francis is said to have appeared on the *muralla*, defending the city with a sword of fire. This was attested to in the juridical inquiry by very respectable witnesses, including 400 (enemy) prisoners who had been sentenced to death, and accepted baptism, at which they were all named Francisco. St. Francis was then named "Serafin Custodio de Manila," with the ecclesiastical and secular Cabildos promising to celebrate his feast yearly as it was celebrated in 1604, with all dignitaries assisting. The miraculous statue was venerated in the Sta. Clara monastery, and was brought out on 4 October of each year in majestic procession, with Masses, sermons, and packed churches.

The first statue of the same saint that had been brought to the Philippines in 1577, was venerated in a chapel of the same church. During the earthquakes of 1645, D. Alonso Cuyapit, *indio principal* of Dilao, had taken it to his house to use in the processions of the Third Order, and there this statue was seen away from its niche, kneeling at a window overlooking Manila, and shedding tears through all four days of earthquakes. Many people saw this, and wet their handkerchiefs in its tears. A procession was formed to take the statue back to Manila, at which point the quakes ceased. A wind came up, but the candles did not go out.

The statue was declared miraculous, and St. Francis was named patron and protector against earthquakes. In 1742, when a galleon failed to arrive, this statue, now called San Francisco de las Lagrimas, was taken out in procession, accompanied by the crosses of all the parishes, the orders, the Real Audiencia, and the Governor.³⁴

34. de Huerta, *Estado Geografico*, pp. 12-13; "Relacion de la Forma y modo que Salio en Proseccion [sic] General, Ntra. SSmo. Padre, San Francisco de las Lagrimas, el dia 22 de Octubre, de 1742," Manuscript.

In 1689, however, the Archbishop Fray Phelipe Pardo, a Dominican, had forbidden the celebration of its feast, and had posted letters of excommunication on the doors of the church, so that the faithful could not enter. Fray Joseph Torrubia, Chronista General and Procurador General of the Franciscans, wrote a *Memorial al Rey*, petitioning his Majesty to allow the feast to continue to be celebrated on 4 December, saying that the prohibition was meant "to mortify the [Franciscan] community," and that although they were aware of the intention to trim down the Calendar of Feasts of Manila, the number being excessive, this feast should stay, because of its significance to the city.³⁵

In the next century, a footnote to the above is suggested in the dedication of a new church of St. Francis in Sampaloc, commemorated with a rare and fragile book of 143 pages, its dedication written by the Franciscan Provincial, and a message by the chanter of the Cathedral. In it is described in luxurious detail one of the five "vistosos Arcos Triunphales," with its structure and decor, the procession with "innnumerable Gentio de el Vulgo," sermons, and a "Solemne Accion de gracias dadas a Dios por la venerable Orden Tercera de Penitencia de NSP San Francisco" in a very festive and luminous dedication of the church of Our Lady of the Angels of the Convent of the Discalced Religious of the "Seraphico Patriarcha de esta Ciudad de Manila," so named, as we have seen, in 1603, and still extravagantly honored a century later, although one wonders how San Francisco de las Lagrimas fared with the King.³⁶

A very interesting ceremony, purely secular and political, but with links to the above, occurred when Carlos Maria de la Torre y Navacerada came to Manila as Governor General in 1869. Pedro Gutierrez y Salazar called it "la primera manifestacion politica en Manila," Montero y Vidal dubbed it "una serenata," and Fr. Casimiro Herrero said it was "una manifestation, la primera conocida en Filipinas, pero con señales marcadas de oposicion a nuestra bandera y a nuestra dominacion." Gutierrez says it was:

... Verdadera farsa de Carnaval por su forma, fue por su organizacion y significacion esa manifestacion el atentado mas grave que se ha cometido en

35. Fray Joseph Torrubia, *Memorial al Rey*, 1689.

36. *Sagrados Triumphos, Celebres Expresiones, y Festivos Aplavsos ... de Mayo de el Año de 1743* ... (Impressos en el Convento de Nuestra Señora de Loreto, del Orden Seraphico, en el Pueblo de Sampaloc Extramuros de la Ciudad de Manila, Año de 1743).

estas Islas, desde su descubrimiento, contra la integridad de la Nacion Española.

Componiase de una llamada comision de hijos del pais, con algunos estudiantes, parte seglares y parte clerigos, unos cuantos dependientes de los Juzgados de esta capital, algunos municipales de los arrabales de Santa Cruz, Quiapo y Sampaloc, y unos pocos indios y mestizos . . . con tres charangas y una musica de cuerda para acompañar un himno patriótico, que se canto, con banderolas y faroles de papel del peor gusto.

. . . se elimino por completo al elemento peninsular; no tomaron parte en ella los propietarios, comerciantes, Abogados y empleados de cuenta, españoles, filipinos, ni aun los mestizos e indigenas de valor.

Hubo sus vivas a la libertad y a la Constitucion, a la Soberania Nacional, a Filipinas con España y por España. . . . Un himno patriótico filipino y su recepcion en Palacio, en la cual S.E. y doña Maria Gil y Montes de Sanchiz obsequiaron a porfia y tendieron y estrecharon fraternalmente su mano, y aun les sirvieron refrescos y dulces, a los que tomaron parte en la manifestacion, y muy particularmente a los individuos de la llamada Comision de los Filipinos.

Montero y Vidal adds that the General and his wife courteously received the "demonstrators," who sang a patriotic hymn, after which there was a toast, and the Señora de Sanchiz read a poem. Casimiro Herrero says that "se vertieron ideas contrarias a las instituciones que conservaban aquel Archipiélago para España." *Eco Filipino* adds that the group went to a lot of trouble to get the proper permits, and had bands of music and "infinidad de emblemas," including two transparent ones on which were written VIVA ESPAÑA CON FILIPINAS, Y VIVA FILIPINAS CON ESPAÑA. They marched through the principal streets of the city, and in front of the balconies of the Palace, in the middle of a silent crowd, sang a hymn written by a "director de un taller de carruajes" (therefore "not a correct literary product"), but a frank expression of the sentiments and aspirations of the Filipino nation, while the leaders (the *comision*) were received by Governor La Torre. After this, the group dispersed "in equal order and composure," leaving the governor to comment that he had never seen anything like it in other analogous gatherings.³⁷

Why is this demonstration included in an account of feasts? Because although the purpose was not religious, or royal, or related particularly to Manila, the political statement was choreographed with the same

37. Jeremias Rebanal y Ras, "El Gobernador de Filipinas Carlos Maria de la Torre y Navacerrada," *Missionalia Hispanica*, 38:112, 113, 114, 46-55.

solemnity and ceremony as a religious procession. The comision of leaders replaced the civil and church dignitaries. The emblems and banners replaced the *estandartes*, *lienzos*, and statues of saints. The nationalistic hymn and the little bands took the place of religious songs and their accompanying instruments. There were *faroles* in hand instead of candles. The silence while the hymn was sung, and the respectful courtesy with which the leaders met the Governor and his lady, drank a *brindis*, and heard her recite a poem, partook of the form and punctilio of a standard church ritual.

As a result of this "demo," notes Gutierrez y Salazar, the members of the comision, who had never before set foot in it, began to frequent the Palacio de Sta. Potenciana, the Spaniards and other government staff started to withdraw their regard (distance themselves, would be the modern expression) from the Governor, and the Governor began to foster a resentment against the peninsular and official sector, a feeling in turn exploited by the "new and heretofore unknown friends of His Excellency and his lady." The members of this comision, whom Gutierrez calls "gente de poco valor" included, among others, Joaquin Pardo de Tavera, doctor of laws, Jose Icaza of the Royal Audiencia, Jacobo Zobel, Regidor of the Ayuntamiento, Lorenzo Rochas, artist, Fr. Jose Burgos, doctor of laws and Cura Parroco of the Manila Cathedral, Angel Garchitorena, Andres Nieto, Vicente Infante, etc. In the shocked and indignant tones of the chroniclers, who read in the "serenata" and hymn—

Ese dulce y armonico acento
que respeto y cariño pregoná,
es de un pueblo que ufano blasona
de ser fiel al Gobierno español.

"subversive" ideas to threaten the establishment, the contemporary Filipino can see; prefigured, current establishment phobia for all mass actions and their banners or statements.

The above "manifestacion" did not mark the end of feasts of the old type. Our attention is called by a thick publication called *La Paz y el Ayuntamiento de Manila*, or *Relacion de los festejos realizados con motivo de la terminacion de la guerra en Filipinas*. In it are detailed the feasts with which the Spanish community celebrated in December 1897 the peace with General Emilio Aguinaldo and also the newspaper and other accounts after the event. It is lavishly illustrated with photographs of the young King, the Queen Regent, the Governor, the Alcalde, the

Comision de Festejos, and the Casas Consistoriales (exterior and interiors). Even more interesting to note is the program (30 January to 2 February which, right after the Filipino revolution against Spain, again had bands playing the streets from morning till midnight, *cucañas* with prizes, *festejos populares* in Bagumbayan, where just a year earlier Rizal had been shot, and where now stood "puestos de feria, fondas, tios-vivos, bazares-rifas, teatro y circo al aire libre, y toda clase de diversiones y recreos." Afternoons featured boat, horse, sack, bicycle and obstacle races (exclusively for *batas* insulares . . . en su traje o en camisa chinica"). Evenings were for concerts, zarzuelas and comedias, *fuegos artificiales*, *á funcion de gala* in the Gran Circo Filipino, honoring the army, and for the elite, a *baile de etiqueta* in the Casas Consistoriales.

Almost half of the publication is taken up by the latter—photographs and descriptions of the building and its decorations, from the vestibule with its lights to the salon with the Spanish flag, the seal of Manila, the portrait of the Reina Regente, etc.; to the dining rooms where the buffet was laid (catering by the *Restaurant de Paris*); and even the *salon de descanso* for the ladies, with its decorations, mirrors and laces; and the dance itself, breathlessly described, each single guest named.

POMPAS, SOLEMNIDADES, PISTAHAN, BONGGAHAN

What then can be read in all this religious feasting through the centuries? First of all, it surely did not go unnoticed by the Indios, the native Filipinos who walked in the processions and carried the candles, filled the churches during masses and *Te Deum*, listened to the poems declaimed, and the sermons by illustrious preachers from the five religious orders, watched the fireworks and the burning *castillos*; plaited the palm leaves, garlanded the flowers and hung the fabrics to decorate the streets, climbed the greased poles and ran, rowed, rode, or cycled in the races, absorbed the music (from morning *diana* to evening concert) and the drama (from entremes and *sainete* to comedia and zarzuela), decorated and pulled the *carrozas* in processions. Considering what moral ascendancy anything Spanish had because of colonial dominance and example, certainly all these had their effects on the Filipino mentality.

Undeniably, native feasts like those for San Isidro Labrador, patron saint of farmers, or those for the Virgin Mary in her many names and attributes through the Islands, or those celebrated in Manila, the most Spanish of Philippine cities and towns, derived elements from pre-

Hispanic feasts, which merit a separate study. However, the elements of Spanish feasting, secular and religious, as explored above, almost surely set a standard for celebration and, in derivative form, were reflected in native fiestas.

While a native feast, such as one for harvest, may have originated from a community occasion, this was soon joined to the religious motive, to make a Philippine fiesta. Thus the feasts always start with a Mass honoring the patron saint, and a sermon outlining his virtues, while the evening komedya might start with a loa in his honor. "Arcos triunfales" are always a prominent feature, but no longer with columns and cornices, pyramids and poems. Instead, inexpensive and readily available bamboo is used, bent and tied and shaped, with the curls and curlicues it is possible to make with this material and the humble instruments available.

Always, there is music as in the church celebrations—perhaps a diana in the morning, and a band around town. If the town can afford it, there might be a komedya or sarsuwela to reflect all those "funciones de teatro," and the beginning loa (in the vernacular now) speaks not only of the *patron*, but of the mayor, or the *hermano mayor*, or town personalities. If there is funding, there surely will be *kuwitis* (*cohetes*) and *luis* (*luces*) and *paputok* (*bombas; fuegos artificiales*), even a *castillo*, or the Blessed Virgin, or the face of a politician in lights, if the donor is generous, or the town has the technology of, say, Bocaue, Bulacan, fireworks center.

Not only the physical attributes of the fiesta, it seems, were influenced, added to, or confirmed by Spanish "pompas y solemnidades." Not only the arches, lights, and drama do we owe to the Spanish, but surely some of the attitude. The exuberance reflected in everything from royal funerals to state visits, is visible in the fiesta preparations, in the Easter morning *Salubong*, which marks the end of Mary's mourning, and in the Christmas Panunuluyan, the folk interpretation of the search for an inn. The attitude to decoration—splash and glitter, bravura and *bonggahan*—develops from the draped, strewn streets of the Spanish era, the lighted houses hung with portraits and poems, the *estandartes* in procession, into the houses hung with lights and star lanterns at Christmas, and those hung with fruits and *kiping* in May, to the banners dipping and greeting in the *bati* of the *Salubong*, and the bunting strung through the streets of a tiny barrio celebrating its fiesta. Civic and religious officialdom in procession, caparisoned and stately, have now become the *Reina Elena*, her *Constantino* and her motley court in the Santacruzán (which started out as drama, and fizzled into sheer show); or the *Sunduan* of the town's

dalagas, which in some regions precedes the komedya.

A detailed analysis of the ethos of the town fiesta would show how much can be traced to a nativization of the Spanish-period celebrations. Certainly the arrangement, or design of the fiesta, was on the Spanish model (church observances, fused to celebrations, games, music and theater, with town dignitaries in attendance) and so was its spirit. Those grandiose sermons in elegant Spanish, which few Filipinos could probably understand, even as late as the end of the nineteenth century (the law and arrangements for compulsory education coming only in 1863, with the Educational Reform Act), washed over the listening Filipinos in great splashes of rhetoric and bombast, sounding important and grand and musical, but without necessarily communicating ideas. In the same way do present-day crowds listen to political speeches (waiting for "bomba" after the statement of political platforms), and even to the long verses of komedya, in which love and war occur in a purely rhetorical register, dodecasyllabic quatrains tumbling out in relentless rhyme and rhythm, the audience relishing the deliciousness of the rhetoric, and not necessarily the weight of ideas or the heft of dialectic.

The fiesta may thus be said to have inherited from church festivities actual physical elements—Mass, sermon, band, theater, arches, parades (processions), fireworks, the benign presence of dignitaries or leaders, etc.—but even more significantly, the spirit of centuries of church-related festivities.

Also in the same line, I would suggest, sharing the same forebears would be the aesthetics of our native theater. Not only do the verses of *sinakulo* and komedya tumble over themselves in enthusiastic profusion, endlessly and luxuriantly, like a preacher's Castillian rhetoric. They also outline worlds heard about in Spanish feasts—the kingdoms of Europe, the households of nobility, the courtships and intrigues of the zarzuela, the Romans and the Jewry and the holy cast of the Passion and the Bible. The favorite scenes of rural theater audiences focus on romance and battle, and on out-of-this world effects like *magia* in the komedya and *artipisyales* in the *sinakulo*. That is "showtime" all over again, as in the rituals and celebrations of Spanish Manila, when architectural wonders, drapes and decorations, magicians and acrobats, games and declamations, fireworks and other dazzle made people forget the humdrum and the workaday. One also remembers that in the *sinakulo* all the special, "miraculous" scenes like Christ ascending to Heaven, angels descending, the Virgin rising to meet the Holy Trinity in the clouds, God creating Adam and Eve, the Transfiguration, etc., are punctuated and illuminated

by *luisis*, artificial light (“*fuegos artificiales*”) always marking moments of grace and wonder in the native aesthetic.

Covering statues with jewels and streets with damask and brocade marked important occasions. Embroidering with sequins and beads and hanging galloons and epaulets marks the garb of royalty in the *komedya*, and the *horror vacui* of native art, which characterizes house decoration, the setting of fiesta buffet tables, and the general native idea of ornamentation. If the quelling of revolutions, the ceasing of earthquakes, victories over pirates and foreign invaders and the beatification and canonization of saints provided occasion for celebration in Spanish Manila, then on barrio level the harvest, the fiesta, Holy Week, Christmas, a wedding to come, the birth of an heir, a death in the family, a graduation from college provide occasion for *komedya* or for going into debt in order to prepare a *handa* for the community.

And since no feast was complete without prelates and priests, governor and regidores, military officers and civil officials, no wonder no fiesta or evening of folk theater can begin without the mayor's remarks, the *hermano mayor's* speech or the *hermana's* bow, and the parish priest, as well as a *politico* or *konsehal* or two in the audience, since one of the responsibilities of the dignitary is to shed light and dignity on community occasions with his importance.

Finally, because all feasting traditionally begins in, is motivated by, or includes, the church, most native feasts and much native theater begins in, is motivated by, or includes the church as well, from the church-originated *sinakulo* and *Salubong* with their folk apocryphal interpretations, to the love-and-war *komedya* in which Christianity triumphs and all mix-matched couples get properly married in the end, to the quite secular but church-linked *Sunduan* and *Santacruzán* (now only in name connected to the finding of the Holy Cross).

CONCLUSION

This preliminary study of church celebrations in the “ever loyal and most noble city of Manila” takes a first step towards an inquiry into the connection between feasting in colonial Philippines and Philippine feasting and theater. It proposes that within this framework of celebration, between the pealing of bells at dawn and the final burst of fireworks at midnight, lie elements of the rhyme and the reason of Philippine *pistahan* and *paputok*, the rhetoric of *bonggahan*, the ethos of *pagdiriwang* and *pagbubúnyi*, the aesthetics of Philippine fiesta and theater.