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The Innermost Mind of Aurobindo: The “Psychic Entity” In Aurobindo’s the Life Divine

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world, who did everything in order to save the world, and who, every-day, sends his son (this is you), his only beloved daughter, in whom he is well-pleased (this is you), into the world to save it."

And again: "The whole Christian adventure is to attempt to give birth to God in the world. Have you given birth to your husband, your life, your children?... You will have to begin believing in them anew. Even when they seem the least deserving, they will be poor helpless things who are begging for deliverance, who beg you to comfort them for having been so undeserving... They need to be loved in order to be good."

The book abounds in insights like these. And although there seems to be a certain disjointed quality in the sudden transitions of thought within a chapter, this very quality makes the book readable on almost any page opened at random.

Excellent spiritual and meditative reading for the layman, many religious will also find in it much to ponder.

SR. MARY JAMES WILSON

THE INNERMOST MIND OF AUROBINDO

THE "PSYCHIC ENTITY" IN AUROBINDO'S *THE LIFE DIVINE*,
by Roque Ferriols, S.J. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1966. vii, 157 pp.

The work under review is a welcome addition to the growing mass of literature purporting to expound Sri Aurobindo's rather erudite mind. The author of the book aims "to understand Aurobindo in his own terms," and he has written this book primarily for the non-professional. To the present reviewer, the work is a magnificent excursion into the innermost mind of Aurobindo, particularly as it devotes the whole volume to the most important aspect of his spiritual preoccupations during his lifetime: the "psychic entity".

The work covers a wide range of concepts that were brought into the discourse as aid to the basic understanding of the subject. All these—rebirth, supermind, overmind, etc.—however, lead to Aurobindo's ideal of the psychic entity, a good comprehension of which lies in his unconscious advocacy of one of the most important of all Vedantic or perhaps Upanishadic ideals. The key to this is expressed precisely in Father Ferriol's re-statement of the theory, e.g., "His [Aurobindo's] theory on the psychic entity is a prolonged meditation on the ultimate self of man." There is no more significant manifestation of this theory than Aurobindo's founding of an *ashram*

in Pondicherry, South India, in which he conducted meditations for achieving unity with the Absolute. These prolonged meditations are not entirely *yogic*; rather these are undertaken even while the disciple is performing his assigned tasks in the hermitage.

The present reviewer, having been an active ashramite in the Aurobindo hermitage realized the supreme importance of the concept, after being detached, after looking back objectively into those intense moments of meditation, and on re-reading Aurobindo even only in a book designed to aid the layman to understand him. This is more or less expressed in a brief piece the reviewer wrote as a hermit on March 8, 1960:

Footfalls in the dark that lead,
The wanderer in search for his Soul,
Dwelling in the core of Nothingness.

Whispers in the quiet of Noisy Riot,
Seek the lost conscience ensouled,
Bound in the abyss of Unknowing.

Visions in the darkness of the Midday Sun,
Beacon the Unknowing to Consciousness,
Still fettered in unbelief, insentience.

Feelings unfelt in the pain of Numb Sensation,
Bring consciousness to dead thoughts,
Still slumbering in the Submental state.

Nothingness dwells in the Thingness,
Finding the unsearched revealed,
Reborne in the Conscious Supermind.¹

Looking at the concept as a whole, in terms of the discourse by Father Ferriols, it seems that it is merely a question of identity: the identity of the individual self with the Ultimate Self, the identity of the individual mind with the Supermind. These, furthermore, illustrate Aurobindo's re-interpretation of the Vedantic concept derived from the Upanishadic "great formula" (*mahāvākya*), "that thou art" (*tat tvam asi*).² The identity of the *thou* with *that*, is no other than man's self and the Ultimate. According to Vedantic ideas and in terms of Aurobindo's understanding, this (*tat tvam asi*) means "thou art to be aware of the identity of thine inmost essence with the invisible substance of all and everything." This is interpreted in the context of the concept of "psychic entity", the ideal of the unity of the individual self and the Ultimate Self.

¹ *The Diliman Review*, XII, 2 (April 1964), p. 241.

² *Chandogya-Upanishad*, VI, 8.

It is hoped that the book is just the beginning of more studies on Aurobindo's works. There are yet hundreds of commentaries (*bhāṣyas*) that should be written to elucidate his many profound thoughts. As it is, the book under review deals with only one of the concepts in *The Life Divine*.

JUAN R. FRANCISCO

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIAN ECONOMICS

SOCIALISM AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE IN EQUATORIAL ASIA: The Case of Malaysia and Indonesia. By Roger A. Freeman. Stanford, Calif.: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University, 1968. xiv, 130 pp

"As we advance well into the second half of the United Nations' "Development Decade," disillusion about its promised world of plenty—and doubts about achieving such a world—are supplanting the earlier hope and enthusiasm. A few years ago it was expected that the gap between the major industrial powers and the less developed or backward countries would narrow substantially in the 1960's. The living standard, and the economic prospects, of the lower two-thirds of the world's population would rise in absolute as well as relative terms; increasingly, it was thought, wealth and prosperity would become more evenly spread.

"This has not happened. To be sure, production and income are rising in most countries, but the rate of progress in many is far slower than that planned...." p. v.

In an effort to discover why it has not happened, Roger Freeman made a comparative study of Malaysia and Indonesia, "two comparable nations with more or less similar natural conditions, one of which has followed free enterprise and the other the path of socialism" (p. ix). His findings and conclusions are outlined in this book. His general conclusion is:

"...the fact that capitalistic Malaysia has succeeded and socialistic Indonesia has failed, cannot be attributed simply to coincidence, accident, or luck. Policy played a major role. This does *not* necessarily mean that Indonesia would now be prospering had it adhered to capitalism or that Malaysia