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Epic and Romance: The Epic Quest

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latter interweaves, so to speak, with the practical judgment in the inspired writer's composition of Scripture.

In a similar manner, Benoit clarifies and broadens the concepts of revelation and inspiration. Revelation must not be restricted to the passive reception of infused ideas or species. Revelation may also bear on representations acquired naturally and on judgments already formed by the natural exercise of the intelligence. Thus, revelation and inspiration are seen to be "intimately bound up in the same concrete activity of the mind." They are two facets or two moments (if you will) of one and the same charism.

It would be hard to measure the value of Benoit's contribution to the advance of theological reflection on inspiration in the Bible.

There is, however, one glaring omission in Benoit's analysis. (Alonso-Schökel has suggested this in his book *The Inspired Word*.) The element of intuition, a most significant part of the literary process, is all but totally neglected by Benoit. If one can believe the testimony of writers concerning their own art, intuition is extremely pertinent to literary production. And if form criticism has taught us anything, it is to tell us that the Scriptures are fundamentally literary forms. Thus, a psychology of inspiration which puts exclusive emphasis on the judgment is bound to give rise to a less than balanced treatment of the charism in question.

But as far as the role of the judgment is concerned, Benoit's analysis is perhaps unsurpassed.

A. LAMBINO, S.J.

EPIC AND ROMANCE

THE EPIC QUEST: Studies in Four Old French Chansons de Geste, by William Calin. Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966. vii, 271 pp.

To the average student of literature, the term *chanson de geste* is very often associated only with the *Song of Roland*. And to most of the world, the two are synonymous. Thus, it is a pleasantly revealing experience to read William Calin's *The Epic Quest* and re-discover that there are *chansons* other than the *Roland*; to realize that these various "songs" together provide a fuller picture of that French literary age to which the *trouvres* and *troubadours* belong.

It is not Calin's idea to downgrade the *Roland*; neither is it his wish to play up the other "songs" at the expense of the first. Rather,

it would seem that it is the author's aim to seek but a just approach to the study of a distinct literary tradition.

The Epic Quest consists of a series of essays on four French epics composed roughly within the same period of time: 1190-1230. All have different themes; "all diverge from the heroic pattern of earlier *chansons de geste*."—Perhaps the only thing they have in common is the period of their composition.

The first *chanson*—*Aymeri de Narbonne*—Calin classifies as the "quest for the Woman and the City." But the "woman" is not the hero's primary object. Here, the hero Aymeri seeks and wins his lady only after he has triumphed over the Saracens in the battle of Narbonne and becomes ruler of that city. And the primary theme (at least of the first part of the story) is service to God as represented in the crusade against the traditional foes of Christianity—the Saracens.

The second "song" is *Ami et Amile* or as the author would have it the "quest for the Absolute." It is the story of two men who are "conceived, born, and baptized the same day and resemble each other to the point of identity." It is not surprising then that such like personalities should develop such a loyalty and generosity towards each other that even life itself is secondary to the demands of friendship. But "although the epic contains divergent spheres of values, the heroes traverse them to arrive at an absolute—the will of God."

Gaydon treats of the "quest for comedy." In Calin's terms, the author of *Gaydon* "pokes fun at the knights as well as the proletariat and clergy." In one sense, this tale parodies "certain traditional literary characters and motifs."

The last of the epics is *Huon de Bordeaux*—the "quest for adventure." It "illustrates, perhaps more than any other French epic, the archetypes of romance." It has inspired that rich tradition which has given rise to such works as Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Weber's *Oberon*.

In a final chapter, Calin sums up his critical analysis of the four epics and of the *chanson de geste* as a literary form. He affirms the value of the historical approach even as he stresses the advantage of applying the principles of modern literary criticism to the study of the French epics. For "once the uniquely historical considerations have been taken into account, and providing that the critic makes use of whatever aid historical scholarship can give, he then has a right to approach a text from within, seeking to determine what makes it a work of art—its structure, imagination, world, tone."

The Epic Quest does provide a broad appreciation of the *chansons de geste* as well as a clearly analytical approach to the study of a dis-

tinct literary genre. It should please both layman and scholar. Perhaps, it remains for the perceptive reader to discover the great wealth of the epic tradition.

MARIA TERESA COLAYCO

ON SINO-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS

THE CHINESE IN THE PHILIPPINES. Volume I: 1570-1770.

Edited by Alfonso Felix, Jr. Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1966. viii, 287 pp. Maps. Illustrations.

This volume, number IX in the series published by the Historical Conservation Society, is a symposium on the subject, divided into four parts. The first part, entitled "How We Stand", presents the views of the editor, at least as of the writing, on the contemporary issues of Chinese assimilation and "loyalty", together with an explanation of how the present volume relates to those problems.

The second section, the bulk of the book, is called "Historical Background". Here we find five miscellaneous contributions, mostly about what is already the best-known aspect of Chinese life in the Philippines: the Manila Parian of the 16th-18th centuries. Once again we tread familiar ground, courtesy of Blair and Robertson. However, Father Alberto Santamaria provides some relief by interjecting new material from the Dominican Archives in his long article on the Parian. Dean Cesar Majul's account of "Chinese Relationships with the Sultanate of Sulu" furnishes new (to me, at least) information on this fascinating and slightly examined topic, but is ultimately unsatisfying because the author fails so often to record his sources.

Part III, "Special Aspects of the Report", differs from Part II by emphasizing economic or social features of the general subject. Thus, Director Serafin Quiason discusses the "Sampan Trade"; Lourdes Diaz-Trachuelo, on "The Role of the Chinese in the Philippine Domestic Economy," presents much new information from Spanish Archives, and clearly the most original study in this collection (although her conclusion that Chinese commercial operations "affected even the most remote towns" is not supported by her evidence); Professor Ricardo Zarco hypothesizes about Chinese family structure before 1770; and Aurora Roxas-Lim contributes an anomalous piece on Chinese pottery and Philippine pre-history.

In the final section, Chinese scholars have their way, through a translation of the Ming Annals and some miscellaneous studies by Liu Chi Tien, a veteran educator and leading local historian of the Philippine Chinese.