

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

---

## **Quito: La Notion de la Liberte Participee Dans la Philosophie de Louis Lavelle**

Rudolph H. Visker

*Philippine Studies* vol. 19, no. 1 (1971): 248–249

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>  
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

an age which demands ever increasing responsiveness to people and situations.

MAUREEN MCCARTHY

## PERSONALISM AND CONCRETE FREEDOM

LA NOTION DE LA LIBERTÉ PARTICIPÉE DANS LA PHILOSOPHIE DE LOUIS LAVELLE. By Émérita Quito: Studia Friurgencia, Nouvelle Série No. 49. Fribourg, Suisse: Editions Universitaires, 1969, xii, 115 pp.

It must be seen as an important event that this "modeste travail" was accomplished. The author has expressed as her hope that it will call attention to a philosopher who is being neglected too much at present. And, we can add, she appears to be the first one who has tried to remedy that situation in the Philippines. One cannot but agree with the author that Louis Lavelle (1883-1951) has not yet received the attention he deserves.

We meet here one of the instigators of the philosophical movement, known as the "Philosophy of Spirit." Although this very name may give rise to suspicion when, for instance, one is set on ideas of secularization, further acquaintance with the goals and achievements of the movement can convince all that its message is worth listening to. One thinks here especially of the contribution which a Platonic and an Augustinian trend of philosophy could present to a world which critically looks at the usefulness of a Christianized Aristotelianism in its midst.

The theme of this study is the question of freedom, a problem which in the eyes of Lavelle himself is a central one. For he confesses that "the secret of the world lies in the relation between God's freedom and man's freedom." In this way the study aims at the same time at a crucial human problem and at the heart of Lavelle's philosophy. Both Lavelle and Dra. Quito are aware of the enigma of man's freedom when he is called a "created creator." The reader finds himself taken up with the difficulties of keeping balance. Colin Smith in his *Contemporary French Philosophy* uses a fitting metaphor when he says that Louis Lavelle dangerously walks a long tight-rope between the recognition of a sole Creator and a free activity on the part of man.

This work, as other studies done about the same philosopher, proves again that one cannot take up one topic without placing it in the context of Lavelle's entire metaphysical account. This required, in the present case, that almost half of the study was devoted to the treatment of intricate subjects, such as, "Univocity of Being," "Being and Act," and

"Participation and Possibility." Instead of having to consider this as an unfortunately needed and long introduction, one may find himself surprised to find here contemporary themes like freedom, anxiety, and self-determination. Indeed, they seem to have been seriously treated by Lavelle even before we find them in Heidegger and Sartre.

The author has preferred to make a critical reflection on Lavelle's idea of participated freedom from the Thomistic point of view. What does it mean when the result of such a comparison appears to be that, on the essential points, Lavelle's thought approaches that of Thomas Aquinas? (p. 109) Not merely, it appears, that Lavelle stated similar things in a different way. The author points at the differences between "participation" in Thomas Aquinas and in Louis Lavelle (pp. 110-111). But one feels like adding another distinctive of both Lavelle's philosophy and personality, a distinctive which should make him welcome in this country. Somebody described the traffic on the streets in Manila as typically Filipino, that is to say, as personalistic. Louis Lavelle's philosophy is inspired by such personalism and by respect for that concrete freedom which one recognizes in every other as in himself. One can only hope that Dra. Quito's study succeeds in breaking the silence about Louis Lavelle.

RUDOLPH H. VISKER, S.J.