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Liberalism and Islamic Identity, by Bauzon

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Book Reviews

LIBERALISM AND THE QUEST FOR ISLAMIC IDENTITY IN THE PHILIPPINES. By Kenneth E. Bauzon. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press/Durham, N.C., U.S.A.: The Acorn Press, 1991. xx, 219 pages.

The author sees the conflict between the Philippine Government and the Philippine Muslim minority as centered on the problem of national identity (or "nationality formation" as he calls it). For Muslims nationality is determined by membership in the religious community of Muhammad, for non-Muslims normally by allegiance to a particular sovereign state. In a country where Islam is the state religion the citizenship status of non-Muslims is limited, since they are not qualified to share in making or administering laws or to occupy office in the government. In this situation the Qur'ān (9: 29) also obliges Jews and Christians to pay a special poll-tax and to be "humiliated." The *Shari'ah* (Sacred Law), when ideal conditions permit its full application, specifies this "humiliation" as the wearing of distinctive clothing and other forms of discrimination.

The notion that "objectivity in social research is fiction" (p. ix) is illustrated in Chapter Two which describes "certain beliefs purveyed by scholastics and mystics" as supernaturalism. "Supernaturalism premises that God manifests Himself . . . through some form of magical act . . . (as in 'miracle') . . . in violation of a natural order. . . ." The correct type of religion, according to Bauzon, is that in which "neither a prophet nor a saint would be obliged to persuade God [by magical means] to reveal Himself, because God is already revealed through His creation" (pp. 19-20).

The principle, "Sovereignty resides in the people," stated in Art. 2, first section, of the Philippine Constitution and in Jefferson's axiom, "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," sums up the political philosophy of Bellarmine and Suarez. This in turn supposes a participation by the people, civilly united, in the absolute sovereignty of God. But Bauzon follows the conservative Muslim theologians who would reject any such participation by a human agency. For them God's power must be the *immediate* authority behind all authority in the civil state. In conservative Muslim theory the people have no part in transferring this

authority to an individual or a group for its actual use, even though the ruler may claim to rule in their name. "In the absence of a transcendental being at the top of the hierarchy, . . . the logical culmination was the inauguration of the state vested with authority in the name of the community or nation. . . ." (p. 161). The ruler is urged to engage in consultation (*shūrā*, Qur. 3: 159/153 and 42: 38/36) with the community, but he does not have to follow their advice. "The people are sovereign but their sovereignty is restricted by God because He assumes ultimate authority over them" (p. 30). Briefly, in Bauzon's theory, as in conservative Muslim teaching, the will of the people can never be the determining force of the government.

In speaking of Ibn Sina's metaphysics Bauzon says, "He postulated that in every being existence and essence are separated" (p. 27). This should be reworded as "He postulated that in every [finite] being existence and essence are really distinct." In saying (p. 23) "the *Tasawwufs* . . . denied the value of meditation," the author seems to take them for persons. The term *tasawwuf* means the act of devoting oneself to the mystical life. Far from denying the value of meditation, its practitioners were criticized by their opponents—among them Ibn Hanbal, the famous jurist—for overemphasizing meditation at the expense of prescribed oral prayer. Ibn Rushd (Averoes) is cited as upholding "*ta'wil* (reason) over the literal interpretation of the revealed texts" (p. 49). The word *ta'wil* means, not reason, but the allegorical interpretation of the Qur'an used by the Mu'tazilites to oppose anthropomorphism. *Dhimmi* (p. 147) is not an equivalent of "people of the Book," but signifies a free non-Muslim subject living in a Muslim country. "People of the Book" is a Muslim term for people (Jews and Christians) having a Scripture which Muslims recognize as divinely revealed.

The author has devoted much work to advocating Muslim separatism, but much of it is not careful work.

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AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF READINGS FOR
THE INTEGRATED STUDY OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN
LITERATURES: WITH A PERSPECTIVE AND PREFACE.
By Sonia H.C. Choa. Manila, 1990.

Ms. Choa's new bibliography of African and Asian literatures would seem to have a natural appeal to us academicians in the Philippines at a time when we are revelling in our "Third World-ness." The title would be especially attractive to high school literature teachers, who are expected to teach their second year students a year-long course in Afro-Asian Literature. On closer examination, however, one sees that the book is more a scholarly background study for the very practical tasks of devising syllabi, probably more appropriate to academics than to the high school classroom teacher.