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## The Dark Center

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of the book of a point which has not really been investigated in depth. Was it true that the almost universal support that, according to American military commanders, the guerrillas received in some provinces was due to the terroristic practices of the guerrillas towards those who failed to support them, or was it due to secret sympathy with guerrilla aims on the part of the population?

If the reviewer finds the treatment of the above questions less than satisfactory, the study nevertheless provides considerable light on various other aspects of the subject. Gates makes clear that the initiative towards an American policy of attraction for Filipinos came from the military, specifically, General Otis. Moreover Otis appears in a much more favorable light as an enlightened military governor, even if not so successful a military commander. In this view, the subsequent actions of Taft and the civil government towards the promotion of education and other progressive reforms as a means to attracting Filipino support were merely a continuation on a more permanent basis of the directions already taken by Otis. Conversely, Taft appears at times to have been even more ready to advocate the use of harsh measures than some of the military. Indeed, some of the earliest advocates of severity were *Americanista* Filipinos like Felipe Buencamino. Another point on which Gates challenges the traditional view is the importance of the capture of Aguinaldo towards bringing the war to an end. Rather than this signalling the turning-point in the war, such a turn had already come a few months earlier, with the surrender of such leading Filipino generals as Mariano Trias.

The book will prove useful therefore to the historian who is aware of its limitations, particularly the fact that it is not what its subtitle seems to announce, a history of American military operations in the Philippines, but rather a history of the evolution of American military policy with respect to the problem of ending Filipino opposition to American rule. It is to be hoped that some of the questions it raises will lead towards a badly-needed adequate and comprehensive history of the Revolution and the Filipino-American War. The opportunities offered by the availability of the Philippine Revolutionary Records (Philippine Insurgent Records) in this country after their long detention in Washington, have hardly begun to be systematically exploited.

*John N. Schumacher*

**THE DARK CENTER. A Process Theology of Blackness.** By Eulalio P. Baltazar. New York: Paulist Press, 1973. 181 pp. \$4.95 paper.

In the psychological association of the average Filipino Christian black symbolizes something negative — evil, sin, the devil — and white, something positive — good, grace, God. Is it possible that this color association could be due to one's Christian upbringing? The colonial-minded Filipino

was made to think that the white race is superior to the black or brown race, that Western thought, because it is rational and scientific, is better than Eastern thought, which is imprecise and mysterious (think of the byword, "the inscrutable Oriental"). Could it be that this inferiority complex because of race or color is also due to the teaching of Christianity?

Though concerned with the problem of racism in the United States, Professor Baltazar, a native born Filipino who teaches at Federal City College (an all Negro college) in Washington, D.C., wanted to investigate whether the Christian faith in which he was brought up was racist (p. 167). The result of his study is this new book, one of the so-called "black theology" books that have come into vogue since the race problem in the United States came to a head. The main conclusion of the book is that neither the Bible nor the Christian faith as a whole is racist but that one Western "white" version of Christianity is partly and theoretically (on the level of ideas) responsible for racism.

In the first part of the book, the author shows that the problem of racism has its roots, not merely in social, economic, and political inequality, but in Western "white theology" and "white Christianity" which supports on the authority of the Bible a religious symbolism that separates white from black as good from evil. The philosophical root in turn of this "white theology," according to Baltazar, is Greek Apollonian philosophy which makes 'light,' 'clarity,' 'reason,' 'form,' 'system,' the primary categories of truth and reality, thus making theology 'rational' and 'scientific.' After presenting the scriptural passages upon which the white theology of blackness is based (Ch. 1), the author describes how the theological symbolism of black as negative is transferred to skin color (Ch. 2), notes how this religious symbolism is secularized and extended to non-religious literature and to the economic sphere (Ch. 3), and finally outlines the psychological effects of the Western symbolism of color on both whites and blacks brought up in Western culture (Ch. 4).

In the second and main part of the book, Baltazar attempts to construct a "process theology of blackness" (sub-title of the book) in which black is seen as a positive symbol of Christian faith and life. This new theology is grounded on a progressive or evolutionary philosophy which makes room for 'darkness,' 'imagination,' 'mystery,' 'myth,' 'mysticism,' and for a theology that is also 'mythical' and 'mystical.' As a reaction to white theology many black theologians went to the opposite extreme of making white symbolize evil and black, good. According to the author, this reverse symbolism is reactionary, dualistic, equally racist, and therefore counterproductive. There is solid evidence that black and white are ambivalent cross-cultural symbols in various cultures (Ch. 5), in mythic and ordinary experience (Ch. 6), in philosophic thought which is dynamic and evolutionary (Ch. 7), and in the Bible (Ch. 8). On the weight of this cumulative evidence and on the basis of a philosophy which regards thought and reality as evolutionary, the author is able to construct a new theology of blackness, showing that knowledge from the scriptures is through hearing (black theology) rather than sight (white theology) whose object is "symbol" rather than "form" and in which God is symbolized as

marked by widespread atrocities, his answer essentially is that it was accomplished by a military policy of benevolence and progressive reforms, combined with judicious use of military force.

Gates has done research in an impressively large number of manuscript collections, both official military records and published reports, and papers of individuals involved in the Filipino-American War, as well as in the so-called Philippine Insurgent Records. He sees the period from the occupation of Manila till the outbreak of the war in February 1899 as one in which the American Army set up a reasonably progressive and efficient government in Manila, which was to be the prototype of its later efforts in the provinces after they had been brought under American control. By the end of 1899 American military men felt that the war which had begun in the early part of that year was substantially over, now that Aguinaldo had dissolved the regular army and proclaimed guerrilla warfare. Hence the task for the American army was to pursue the task of organizing local governments in the provinces, and instituting health measures and schools, so as to attract both the subject population and those still in the field to the advantages of a benevolent American rule. By the end of 1900, however, most became convinced that the policy must be reevaluated. In spite of apparent pacification, the guerrillas continued to operate with widespread support from the populace under American rule, even from those who were local officials of the American-sponsored governments. At the end of 1900 General Arthur MacArthur, while rejecting pressure from some military men for a policy of terror to discourage collaboration with guerrillas, outlined a policy which envisaged sterner measures than heretofore, putting the burden of proof on Filipinos of showing their loyalty to the United States. Protection against the guerrillas was to be provided for those living in occupied places, but at the same time severe punishment was to be meted out to any who continued to supply money, intelligence, or other support to the guerrillas. In applying the policy, he said, "the more drastic application the better, provided, only, that unnecessary hardships and personal indignities shall not be imposed upon persons arrested and that the laws of war are not violated in any respect touching the treatment of prisoners." Under this policy widespread arrests took place. Though Gates admits that cruelties and abuses were increasingly practiced by the American military during 1901, those who did so "represented only a fraction of those in responsible positions in the Philippines. The official policy . . . was one of benevolence." (p. 216.) For the U.S. Army continued its efforts to establish schools, improve sanitary conditions, and take other measures for the improvement of life in the provinces, and thus persuade people of American benevolent intentions.

The Balangiga massacre in September 1901, where the American garrison was almost wiped out by the inhabitants of this Samar town in cooperation with nearby guerrillas, threatened to ruin the whole program of pacification. For in reaction to it, General Adna Chaffee, who had succeeded MacArthur, took an increasingly harsh attitude, and his subordinate, General Jacob Smith, proceeded with his program of making Samar "a howling wilderness." According to Gates, Smith's policy of terror in

Samar was ineffective as far as putting an end to guerrilla warfare, and only succeeded in goading already-pacified Leyte into new unrest. A "more benevolent" policy after February 1902 finally brought an end to the war in Samar after the capture of General Vicente Lukban. This post-February "benevolent policy" was a copy of the program then being successfully employed by General J. Franklin Bell in Batangas, the other major guerrilla stronghold. While not advocating torture or burning, Bell proposed a policy of reconcentration of people in American-garrisoned towns, while pursuing everyone outside these areas with relentless severity. The psychological terror and economic pressures soon completely disrupted guerrilla operations and brought about the surrender of General Miguel Malvar in April 1902.

This instance of Bell in Batangas points up one of the major defects of the book. The policies of Otis, MacArthur, and Bell, though representing an escalating degree of severity and harshness are all classified here as "benevolent." Compared to the atrocities committed under Smith's orders in Samar, Bell's policy could be considered relatively more benevolent, but surely this is violating the entire meaning of the word. When it is remembered what a devastating effect Bell's reconcentration policy had on the agriculture of Batangas, and the large numbers who died of epidemics in the reconcentration centers, it is difficult to accept the qualification of Bell's policy as benevolent. After all, it was the application of precisely this policy by Weyler in Cuba which had served as one of the ultimate pretexts for American intervention there against the Spaniards. The constant assertion — in generalities more than in specific analysis of actual action taken — throughout the book, besides being overly repetitious, fails to convince because it is unclear just what is being asserted. Though I think it is quite clear from the evidence presented that there was a "benevolent policy," propounded not only by civil officials but by some of the military, the extent to which such a policy was actually embraced by all, and what is more important, the extent to which it was implemented in fact, is not thoroughly investigated. For better or worse, large numbers of Filipinos did find something attractive in American policy; sheer terror on the part of the Americans could not by itself have brought about pacification, as the experience of the Japanese war later showed. In the reviewer's opinion, though giving solid evidence of this fact, Gates falls into the opposite extreme of underplaying the reality of American military repression in the latter part of the war. Though he admits the existence of atrocities, particularly in the case of Smith, he dismisses them rather perfunctorily with the remark that the perpetrators were punished. If Smith's "punishment" is typical, (he was retired, but without further penalty) one cannot feel the deterrent was very effective. Had the outcry in the United States not been so strong, it is doubtful if Smith would even have been court-martialed.

It would be naive, of course, to believe that Filipino guerrillas were not also guilty of atrocities. The history of guerrilla warfare and its repression has always been a history of terror and counter-terror, of atrocities and reprisals in kind. But this fact accentuates the importance for the thesis

Divine Darkness and Christian faith as a saving darkness. The author explains the title of the book in the Introduction (p. 3):

Darkness is the source of life and energy at all levels of being. As the source of green life is dark soil and as the source of light energy is the dark center of the sun, so the source of life for theology is the darkness of mystery and myth and the source of the life of grace for the Christian is the saving darkness of faith which hides the Divine Darkness. Both western theology and the Christian life have undergone a bleaching process, driven by the fear of their respective *dark centers*. (under-scoring mine).

Though a few critics may think that Professor Baltazar may be stretching a theology of blackness too far or that he may have an axe to grind, no one can gainsay the fact that his book is indeed a pioneering work and the evidence he presents in support of his thesis, far from being biased or contrived, does make a very good case for a process theology of blackness. For example, the scriptural evidence he presents to show the positive symbolism of night as the time of divine presence, of darkness as the symbol of the abode of God, of dark clouds as a manifestation of God's hiddenness, of the shadow as a sign of divine protection and of blackness as a sign of beauty (p. 149), is not only impressive but exegetically defensible. Since Professor Baltazar is more of a professional philosopher than a theologian, and inasmuch as his main thesis is largely based on Teilhard de Chardin's process or evolutionary philosophy (he is the author of *Teilhard and the Supernatural*), there is quite understandably more philosophy than theology in his book, and eminent theologians today from both the West and the East may find the theology part of his book minimal, wanting, and in need of further development from theological sources other than scripture. The author's interpretation and application of Teilhard's methodology and process thought-pattern to a theology of blackness seem more like Hegelian dialectics than Teilhardian Christogenesis.

In the view of this reviewer, one of the merits and strengths of this book lies in its Teilhardian *non-dualistic* approach to the problem of white as opposed to black theology, a process or evolutionary perspective that avoids or plays down the dualisms of truth and reality that have plagued Western philosophical and theological thought. And it is this evolutionary perspective which is relevant and instructive in the theoretical solution of problems within an Asian and Philippine context. One type of dualism is to characterize Western thought as abstract, analytic, rational, objective, and Eastern thought as concrete, synthetic, affective, and subjective; the Western man as scientific and technical, the Asian man as religious and spiritual. In confronting the problem of de-Westernization and Asianization or Filipinization, e.g., in the evolution of a national language, in criticizing the harmful effects of colonialism in our system of government, education, economy, and religion (Spanish or American form of Christianity), in the Filipinization of the Church in the Philippines, we must

avoid being over-reactionary and thinking and acting from one extreme to the other. Any solution that is dualistic is unrealistic and impractical because it does not conform to the law of change, which is evolutionary. Change is a process and is never a complete overthrow of the past or a complete development out of the past, nor is it an entirely new creation out of the future, but a process from the past into the future. A process philosophy or theology will not automatically solve the problem of Filipinization on the level of action, but it undercuts the theoretical underpinning of all dualistic solutions to this problem, of racial prejudice and discrimination against minorities, and of the rejection of everything that is Western.

*Vitaliano R. Gorospe*