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D'Arcy: No Absent God

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Two stories should serve as a final illustration of the poles of reactions to which the reader is shunted by Professor Arcellana's unpredictability. "Tanabata's Wife," Sinai C. Hamada's prewar story which seems to be a favorite among his contemporaries, is found side by side with Juan C. Tuvera's "High into Morning." Hamada's story exemplifies the failure of many early Filipino stories to rise above the stature of an anecdote while Tuvera's is, as Professor Arcellana himself says, "one of the finest Filipino short stories ever written." Applied to such a story as "High into Morning," the editor's encomium is nothing more than a recognition of fine craftsmanship. The story of a Filipino scriptwriter for the USIS in Saigon, "High into Morning" takes up the current theme of alienation and tells of an illusionist's poignant attempt to connect with life. But Luis the protagonist reaches out too late. The woman for whom he reaches out is another illusionist (she is a photographer) and she refuses to commit herself to life, thus leaving Luis with a memory that is "a burden and a joy through the cold and shapeless days." With "High into Morning," Tuvera proves those critics right who saw him when he first appeared in the literary scene as one of the most significant postwar writers. Coming from a writer who once spat out some pretty hard words at critics whom he called "professional 'wordlords,'" the story reveals that the author's antipathy for critics is not a shield for a vulnerable literary practice, but rather a self-confident disdain for those who would presume to teach him a craft he has already mastered.

Modern Philippine Short Stories and *The Philippine PEN Anthology of Short Stories 1962* represent two widely differing concepts of the anthologist's art. In Dr. Casper we have an excellent guide during an educational tour while in Professor Arcellana we have an urbane companion during a pleasure trip. One does not have to choose between the two. He avails himself of the services of either according to his needs. The teacher, who puts instruction above pleasure, will undoubtedly take Dr. Casper. The general reader, for whom pleasure comes before the history of Philippine writing or the sociology of anthologizing, will delight in Professor Arcellana's company.

BIENVENIDO LUMBERA

HUMAN SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND INFINITE LOVE

NO ABSENT GOD, THE RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND THE SELF. By Martin C. D'Arcy. New York: Harper and Row, 1962. 157 pp.

This volume is the fifth of the series entitled *Religious perspectives*, edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen. The aim of the stories is "a quest for a new understanding of man in the hope that this knowledge will point the way to a rediscovery of God.... [It] attempts to show the fallacy of the apparent irrelevance of God in history; ... that no convincing image of man can arise without a philosophy which does not exclude God." The authors presented are of all faiths, Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Moslem.

Fr. D'Arcy himself is a Catholic and a Jesuit, and is well-known in Catholic circles for the philosophical and theological books that issue almost yearly from his fertile mind. This book (based on the Danforth lectures, given at Cornell University in the first semester of 1959) shows how man ceases to understand himself, what he is or should be, when he thinks of himself outside the context of God.

The first chapter dissipates aprioristic biases against God's existence. The second examines and defends the argument for God's existence from conscience. The third defends the cosmological argument against its critics, both believers and unbelievers. Only after this preliminary spadework does Fr. D'Arcy embark on his thesis, showing the failure of empiricists, existentialists, and modern analysts in their search for man apart from God. The seventh chapter stoops once more to dissipate the cobwebs, by pointing out the essential difference between Christianity and pagan mythology, which seeks to indulge the imagination at the expense of right reason.

The final chapter seeks the positive explanation for man's need of God in order to know himself. Fr. D'Arcy finds it in man's independence from everything outside himself, in his personal "pitch" by which he receives all external stimuli in a way different from any other man. It is this independence which reveals man's true dignity; and only in the light of the Infinite can this independence be understood. It is, in fact, an act of aspiration towards the Infinite and the Absolute, and reveals in man the imprint ("the stress and instress") of God's creative activity, God's *energeia*. Human dignity, then, draws its origin and worth from God and becomes a fiction when totally separated from Him. Personal identification, too, ultimately rests on a confrontation with God.

"To some extent the self, when it tries to examine itself by peering into its own mystery, becomes confused and suffers from illusions. It ceases to have an objective and external standard for judgment. In ordinary life external experience helps to knock us into shape, and we cannot afford to live on a fictitious image of what we are.... All doubts are removed when we are recognized, when a friend says, 'It is you,' and calls us by our name. But such recognition is only the surface truth covering a deeper sense of recognition; for just as we are measured by absolute

standards of truth and beauty and moral duty, so on the plane of personality we measure ourselves in the presence of infinite love, and in that mirror of another's love we come fully to be ourselves."

The steps of the final argument are not spelled out as clearly as Scholastic philosophers would demand. But then, Fr. D'Arcy warns us that only those who have eyes to see can penetrate into this deeper insight. It is really a matter of obliquely perceiving both finite and Infinite in one glance.

The book's main worth, even more than in its positive message, lies in Fr. D'Arcy's constant comparison of his own observations with the statements, theories, and objections of other philosophers and analysts, and even poets (the insights of Gerard Manley Hopkins play an important role in the final synthesis). These comparisons and contrasts help to situate the Catholic position within the modern context, and they highlight the strength and weaknesses of the arguments for God's existence with reference to the modern patterns of thought that the scholar must face in the universities. And the final solution of the book gains in stature, because it draws from the genius of many minds; it appeals to the reader not so much because it is original, but because it is complete.

EDUARDO P. HONTIVEROS

SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND N. V. M. GONZALEZ

LOOK, STRANGER, ON THIS ISLAND NOW. By N. V. M. Gonzalez. Manila: Benipayo Press, 1963. 200 pp.

Look, Stranger, On This Island Now, N.V.M. Gonzalez's latest book, is a collection of ten short stories written over a span of seven years. The title of the volume is the opening line of one of W. H. Auden's poems.

Because the epigraph of the book is taken from Rizal's diary, the publisher's blurb concludes that Rizal is the stranger who is being asked to reflect upon "the changed and changing Philippine society." This may be true. However, the epigraph was actually intended only for "Buenavista," the first part of the book. The first stanza of the same poem from which the title was taken had been chosen as the epigraph for "The Other Shore," the second part of the book, but permission for the reprint did not come in time.

According to the publisher again, the epigraph is an excerpt from an entry Rizal wrote in his diary when he stopped at Romblon. The