

philippine studies

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

Poverty and Development, by Castro and Crollius

Review Author: Joseph A. Galdon, S.J.

Philippine Studies vol. 45, no. 3 (1997): 434–436

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.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Rousseau, following a line of thinking that dates back to Plato, offers a contrasting vignette. In his *Emile*, he deliberately did not inoculate his protagonist in order to declare that life *per se* was not the issue—the real issue is how we live our lives and their duration is only secondary. To take another example, the Apocalypse as imagined in Christian writings is both a quantitative and a qualitative event, a moment combining massive death and cosmological meaning. Of the subjects traditionally related to the quality of life (including religion, politics, and culture), only poverty plays a major role in his presentation. De Bevoise states that he deliberately downplays political issues because they have dominated Philippine historiography and because his narrative subordinates these matters to a different set of problems.

2. For one such attempt, which draws on Michel Foucault's work and emerging trends in the area of Cultural Studies—and which therefore contrasts with De Bevoise's approach (see next paragraph of the review)—see Warwick Anderson's "Excremental Colonialism: Public Health and the Poetics of Pollution," *Critical Inquiry* 21 (Spring 1995), pp. 640-69.

3. Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (London: Frank Cass, 1977).

David Keck
Department of History
Ateneo de Manila University

Poverty and Development: The Call of the Catholic Church in Asia.

Edited by Loreta N. Castro and Arij A. Roest Crolius, S.J. Rome: International Jacques Maritain Institute, 1995. x, 189 pages.

The editors' foreword to this collection says: "This volume contains the proceedings of an international symposium organized by the International Jacques Maritain Institute in collaboration with Miriam College and held in Quezon City, Philippines, from February 22 to 24, 1994. The symposium was part of a wide-ranging program of research into the Bishops' teachings on ethics and economics. The Maritain Institute has been engaged in this research program for some years now, believing that the Bishops are often in the front line of the struggle for justice, and that the Church has now a great interest in promoting ethical values in view of the problem of poverty and development in our time" (ix-x).

In his introductory remarks at the seminar, Fr. Arij Crolius, vice president of the International Jacques Maritain Institute, said that "the philosophical foundation of the Seminar is to create a civilization of Love. In order to accomplish that, three important tasks have to be carried out. They are a widening of the concept of humanism, a purifying of the truth of love, and a deepening of the concept of [the] person" (p. 7).

The proceedings of the seminar are divided into three sections. The first section is devoted to a general introduction and an overview of the key themes and issues raised in the documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops (FABC)

with regard to the different problems of Asian development. It includes the documents of the FABC and an economic assessment by Stefano Zamagni. Some of the key themes of the documents of the FABC are integral liberation, human dignity and solidarity, preferential option for the poor, reduction of poverty, grassroots empowerment, sustainable development, and the Church's transformative and prophetic role.

The second series of articles, "An Analysis of Episcopal Teaching and Corresponding Church Initiatives," deals with the teachings of the Catholic bishops from various countries of Asia on the issues of poverty and development. The countries included are India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. The article on the Philippines comes from Bishop Francisco Claver, S.J., who takes a brief look at our situation today, reviews the latest pastoral letters and statements of our bishops, discusses the Church's social action work in various dioceses in the Philippines, and comments on the previous areas of discussion in the seminar. Bishop Claver says on the Philippine economic situation:

The government claims that there has been a great improvement since President [Fidel V.] Ramos took over from Mrs. [Corazon] Aquino in June 1992. The incidence of poverty has been reduced from a high 49 percent in 1987 to something like 40 percent now. But critics say that the reduction is accomplished by government's simply redefining what poverty is and by arbitrarily excluding certain items from the older list of poverty indicators. The Cardinal of Manila recently came out with a broadside along the lines of the same criticism, calling the Ramos administration's claims "development by press release" or, as some commentators write, "development by praise release" (p. 116).

The second section of the seminar also includes a discussion of the Church's initiatives in order to respond to the challenges of Asian realities—conscientizing the faithful, lending assistance to socioeconomic organizations of the poor for self-reliant development, and supporting people's movements for human rights, etc.

The third section addresses the need for a "One World Development Strategy," a path that is based on the dignity of the human being despite religion, racial class and gender differences. The ideas highlighted in this section include those of social redistribution, growth with equity, sound management of natural resources and the environment, international cooperation and economic interdependence, participatory development and special attention to poverty reduction.

Vera Zamagni Negri summarizes the "Outstanding Lessons of the Last 40 years in Asia," which include her thoughts on growth with equity, incentives to private initiative, a role for public action, and international cooperation. She emphasizes the fact of education as a key to self-sustained

growth and the fact that the active role of women is indispensable. "Women," she says, "being at the center of families everywhere, are the most important vehicle for the transmission of values and habits of life and give a crucial contribution to economic growth, both directly and indirectly. The education and active contribution of women in the development process has, in every case everywhere, proved to be indispensable for self-sustained growth. In the countries of Southern Asia, there is still widespread discrimination against women in educational facilities and even nutrition. This is not only contrary to the dignity of the human being, which extends to men and women alike, but also against development" (p. 148).

Other writers provide interesting insights into the problems of poverty and development in Southeast Asia. Thomas Lawo analyzes the "Strategy of Participatory and Self-Reliant Development." He concludes that "The promotion of people's participation and the struggle for genuine self-reliance of people's organizations at the grassroots can and should be promoted from the outside." M. S. Rao discusses the role of the international economic institutions and the responsibility of the international community in the problems of poverty and development. Moreover, Howard Handy analyzes the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Southeastern Asia.

Finally, the volume concludes with general assessments on the foregoing discussions and presentations, on one hand posing questions, and on the other hand offering further suggestions and challenges to the Church in Asia.

The final remarks in the seminar were from Sergio Bernal, S.J., who listed and commented on the ideas which were most impressive (pp. 186 and 187). They include the fact that the Catholic presence in Asia offers the image of a "lively church, and a prophetic church." The Church in Asia has also made a clear option for the poor, and the need for alliance of the church with political, social and economic powers. Bernal says that the church is also "a clergy-dominated church in which the majority are considered and treated as a minority, voiceless and immature. This calls for a new ecclesiology and for a redefinition of roles." Closely linked with this problem is the "empowerment" of the people. Churches in Asia, Bernal says in summary, have also opted for social analysis, a useful methodology for getting the desired goals. Bernal concludes, as does the seminar, by saying that "The Social Doctrine of the Church becomes evident the more we reflect on global economy and global culture" (p. 188).

This collection of proceedings from the International Jacques Maritain Seminar in the Philippines in 1994 provides an excellent survey of the development of the Asian Church's concern with poverty and development. The reports from the different Asian nations are a good summary of what has been happening in the Church in Southeast Asia. The reflections and the analyses by various scholars of these events and data also provide a stimulating challenge for new thoughts and new ideas in the area of libera-

tion, human dignity and solidarity, preferential option for the poor, poverty reduction, grassroots empowerment, sustainable development and international cooperation. It is a challenge both to the Catholic Church and to the governments of Southeast Asia.

Joseph A. Galdon, S.J.
Interdisciplinary Studies Program
Ateneo de Manila University

Imagining the Nation in Four Philippine Novels. By Maria Teresa Martinez-Sicat. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1994.

Imagining the Nation in Four Philippine Novels is one of very few critical works by a Filipino critic that uses a poststructuralist framework. Its objects of study are Maximo Kalaw's *The Filipino Rebel: A Romance of American Occupation in the Philippines*, F. Sionil Jose's *Po-on*, Linda Ty-Casper's *The Three-Cornered Sun*, and Alfred A. Yuson's *Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café*. Because there is a dearth of such works, the importance of this volume comes from its being one of very few in such an important field. Its use, however, is limited. It may be valuable to students who are meeting up with poststructuralism for the first time. It is also a good illustration of how to locate ideology—the deeply ingrained, sometimes only partially conscious habits, beliefs, values, ideas, and lifestyles of a particular time and place—within a text. Students raised in the humanist tradition, those trained to spot irony or to evaluate plot structure but who are only beginning to get interested in poststructuralism will find *Imagining the Nation* to be a useful, even eye-opening first encounter. A disciple of poststructuralism, however, might have little use for this work since it oversimplifies the many new and complex ideas and theories of poststructuralism.

The first chapter of this book gives us the thesis, framework and an explanation of terms. The thesis reads:

In the Philippine novels in English about the Revolution against Spain and the War against America, the concept of the nation is one that is free of foreign oppression but one that accepts native oppression. The concept of the nation is appropriated by the elite for the hegemonic project of integrating the masses in an unjust political and social system. In the ideological and hegemonic "power-laden significations" that are the novels, the socio-historical forces—*ilustrados* and the *pobres y ignorantes*—are present, but the exploitative relationship between them is absent. (p. 4)