

philippine studies

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

On the Diversity of Philippine Geography: The Philippine Island World

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Philippine Studies vol. 17, no. 3 (1969): 646–647

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

value of revelation for man. This testimony of the act of theological reflection is not the same as that of preaching or the kerygma, but it has its own special place in the fullness of the life of the Church and ultimately serves the Church's subsequent preaching by its distinctively scientific character". Again, many phenomenological attempts to reach an understanding of a dogma provide an excellent introduction to the theology of the doctrine in question. "But they do not come anywhere near the real problem of the dogma...The playing with concepts which characterized later scholasticism has nowadays frequently been replaced by a kind of literary playing with phenomenological ideas...I am of the opinion that a state of balance has by no means as yet been achieved in this eager recourse to phenomenological analysis, however necessary these may be in theological renewal. It is here, I believe, that the critical point of the new theology can be found — the point at which theology will either go on to make a new, authentic flight or else be fatally grounded in a complete emptying of content of the Catholic faith".

This is a book which provides some solid norms for a really critical evaluation of much that is being published in theology today.

JOSEPH F. MURPHY, S.J.

ON THE DIVERSITY OF PHILIPPINE GEOGRAPHY

THE PHILIPPINE ISLAND WORLD: A Physical, Cultural and Regional Geography, by Frederick L. Wernstedt and Joseph E. Spencer. Berkeley and Los Angeles: the University of California Press, 1967. 742 pp.

One who has been inquisitive about the geography of the Philippines puts this book down — having perused it — with a sense of awe and an admiration for its authors not unlike idolatry. Its virtues are countless. First of all, it is a handsome volume flawlessly edited. It is formidably learned; there are seventy-three pages of "notes" chapter by chapter which incidentally provide an ambitious bibliography of the subjects covered. As is stated in the subtitle, the book's chief preoccupations are with physical, cultural and regional geography. Part One focuses on the physical environment, Part Two on the cultural and economic environments; but the most impressive part of this generally impressive work is Part Three, the regional environments.

Instead of accepting the eleven regional areas used by the Bureau of the Census and Statistics, the authors break the country down into

twenty-three distinctive regions, six of them in Mindanao alone. Right at the start they declare that "the keynote of Philippine geography is diversity. . . . Seldom does a territory so small as the Philippines possess so many varied and unusual characteristics." These are grouped under diversity in physiography, in climate, in soils and flora, in cultural settings and in the distribution of population. "In a world in which people are becoming self conscious about looking at other places and people, we have sought to present the geography of the Philippines *not* or *for* Filipinos, but as and for non-Filipinos who live elsewhere but who may, perchance, have wondered, "What is it like there?" This is modest. People who live here will find the volume enormously informing.

One more virtue: besides its tables, the book contains ninety "figures" practically all of them maps, largely originals, every one of them clear and useful. In brief, it is far and away the most detailed geographic study ever done of the Philippine archipelago. It fills a big, widely recognized gap. We have needed it.

The judgments expressed in the book, — like, "in general, the Philippines has been a healthy environment" — are sane and evoke the accord of an informed reader.

No fault is to be found with what the book takes up and discusses. It seems ungrateful even to wish for more. Although Part Two addresses itself to the economic environment and Part Three bulges with regional economic lore, one misses a coherent discussion of the many disadvantages of tropical climate, of Manila as the primate city, of problems of conservation of soil, forests, water and fisheries, of defective systems of power, communications and transportation. Not that all these topics are omitted; what is missed is their coherent, compact, systematic discussion. Neither systems of power nor communications appears in the splendid subject-index. No mention at all is made of the archipelago's potential for recreation and tourism.

But let us hasten once again to praise good men and their work. Who else could have done it so well? It will be regrettable if the cost of the volume (\$20.00) keeps it as rare and unknown a book as it is at this moment. It merits the widest possible circulation in an economical edition financed by a patriot and vigorously advertised by the local book-sellers.

MICHAEL MCPHELIN