

# philippine studies

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## **On The Theology of Mary: The Question of Mary**

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content with the existing social and economic structure which the privileged classes, according to Communist propaganda, were conniving with the Japanese to preserve.

Gillin also disputes Johnson's contention that the Communists moderated its agrarian reform program in the interest of maintaining unity against the Japanese. Under the guise of organizing resistance against the enemy, the Communists although refraining from openly redistributing the land, introduced other reforms which effectively altered the social structure in Shansi. By banning usury, the Party freed millions of nominally independent but permanently indebted peasants. By forcing the wealthy to shoulder virtually the whole cost of war and making confiscation of land the penalty for failure to pay taxes, the Party gained a pretext for altering the patterns of landholding.

Gillin's study of the Shansi area by no means discredits the whole of Johnson's work. Johnson's conclusions about the origins of Communist power in Hopei and Shantung stand until someone can do for these areas what Gillin has done for Shansi. Gillin's study points out, however, the need to test theory against facts.

Johnson and Gillin disagree over the stimulus that mobilized the Chinese masses. Johnson's concluding observation, however, seems to depend less upon what mobilized the peasantry than upon the fact that the mobilization was an indigenous achievement. If the Communist Parties of China and Yugoslavia show signs today of being less amenable to Soviet control, the explanation, according to Johnson lies in their independent rise to power. The Chinese and the Yugoslav Communists did not have to appeal to Russian arms for authority, nor to orthodox ideology for legitimacy. As a result, they have enjoyed greater freedom than the Eastern European satellites to adapt what was after all Soviet *national* Communist ideology to their own interests. What is difficult to determine is whether and how far intrabloc ideological conflict among the three National Communist States is permitted to modify the ultimate objectives of Communism. The question of the extent to which Communist ideology affects the National Communist states, as Johnson points out, should be the subject of continuing investigation.

EDILBERTO C. DE JESUS, JR.

## ON THE THEOLOGY OF MARY

THE QUESTION OF MARY. By Rene Laurentin. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965. 161 pp.

Fr. Laurentin tackles the problem of supplying Catholic devotion to Mary with an authentic theological foundation. The problem is vast, according to Laurentin, because many Mariologists have involved themselves in exaggeration and biased thinking. In their attempt to exalt the glories of Mary, they have divorced themselves from the rest of the theology: interpreting Scriptural texts according to their own rules; defining theological concepts (particularly grace, redemption, merit) in a different way from all other theologians; divorcing themselves from the "life of the Church."

The Marian movement today is still the remnant of the anti-Reformation reaction which characterized Catholic thinking since the 17th century. Where the biblical, liturgical, and ecclesiological movements strive for reunion (ecumenism) and a return to Scriptural and Patristic sources, thus compensating for the one-sided emphasis of the last 300 years; Mariology continues to ignore the new insights derived from a more accurate study of Scripture and the Greek Fathers.

Laurentin develops this thought in his study of the present situation (chapter 1), a historical survey of Mariological development (chapter 2), an analysis of the opposing tendencies which clashed at the Second Vatican Council (chapter 3), and a comparison with Protestant and Orthodox theology on Mary (chapter 5). This last chapter especially is enlightening, as it shows how and why the Orthodox, for all their devotion to Mary, are disturbed by the definition of Mary's Immaculate Conception and by the Catholic acceptance of Mary's co-redemption and spiritual motherhood.

The problem is proposed very emphatically and I would say that some authors deserve the sharp rebukes that Laurentin aims at them. Perhaps the picture presented here is a bit too pessimistic (Fr. Jose de Aldama, S.J., felt constrained to counter Laurentin's pessimism with a book of his own: *De quaestione mariali in hodierna vita Ecclesiae*, Rome, 1964). But the book certainly succeeds in "provoking thought" and hastening, we hope, the formation of a more balanced Mariology.

Laurentin himself proposes a few principles for a solution (chapter 4). The guiding principle of Mariology, one which synthesizes the doctrine of Scripture, the Fathers, and the magisterium, is that "through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, Mary is totally relative to God and totally correlative to the Church." That is, all her privileges must be shown as gifts of Christ which Mary receives in faith and humility, and by which she is linked to the Church both as member and as Mother. And in defining Mary's relation to God, we must always remember that she is a creature, gratuitously redeemed as we are, cooperating in her own salvation in the spirit

of faith (no beatific vision), possessing no hierarchical functions (she is a woman). For a more worked-out example of Mariology according to these principles Laurentin refers the reader to his earlier book, *Court traité de théologie mariale (Queen of heaven, Dublin, 1956)*.

Laurentin proposes the problem very forcefully. Unfortunately I find his solution sadly deficient. Neither of Laurentin's books mentioned above explains what is meant by Mary's spiritual motherhood or her mediation. Fr. Laurentin actually seems embarrassed by these doctrines. He mentions them only to censure those who would impose exaggerated meanings on these titles. But he proposes no positive explanation of his own. And this, I think, is the main flaw in Laurentin's position. For if he would bridge the gap between Marian devotion and true Marian doctrine, Mary's spiritual motherhood should be the central focus of his explanation. For it is on this point that the two main schools of Mariology never fail to clash. The Church looks on Mary as its "Mother". And the Catholic must be made to see how this doctrine detracts nothing from Christ's unique mediation. As long as this question is not met, there can be no organic unity in the Church's Mariology. Curiously enough, Laurentin's fundamental principle cited above furnishes the key to a positive solution such as that expounded by Fr. Schillebeeckx in his book, *Mary, Mother of the redemption* (New York-London, 1964). Perhaps Fr. Laurentin does not pursue the question to its final conclusion, because he does not wish to "arouse internal opposition nor give ecumenical offense." But then how else can we unravel the knot that Laurentin himself spotlights so clearly in his book?

EDUARDO P. HONTIVEROS, S.J.

## FILIPINO ENGLISH POETRY: A DOUBLE ALIENATION

PHILIPPINE CONTEMPORARY POETRY. *The Beloit Poetry Journal* 14:4 (Summer 1964).

How universal after all is the difficulty of recognizing poetry, how it is after all everywhere elusive! Rare is the knowledge of poetry: rare has it ever been, rare now, rare (it seems) shall it always be—here, there, everywhere, wherever human beings are, wherever moves the spirit, rare. And even more rare, the power to create it—for if poetry is not anything, it is not uncreated.

Consider these twenty-eight poems written in English by sixteen Filipinos. Wasn't it Sartre who said you speak in your native tongue