

philippine studies

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

Nakpil: Woman Enough

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Philippine Studies vol. 12, no. 1 (1964): 174–176

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

of which the forms and categories are examples, always stands before experience. However, von Hildebrand strikes a note reminiscent of Kant and even Hume. For he avers that an essence may be necessarily so in a way that even without experience one can grasp it. For instance, given the essence of orange, red and yellow, even before seeing orange, one can conclude that it stands between red and yellow. It is in reading such passages that one finds it extremely hard to classify von Hildebrand. Is he an essentialist or an existentialist? For he also advances the need for experience and the necessity of the existence of the object before any study of it is possible, especially if a material being is in question. But several pages down, he speaks of "ideal existents", like justice, which are too true to require real existence. Later, he asks us, in terms that smack of existential flavor, to delve into reality. We cannot resolve the question here on the basis of this book alone, but it certainly provides food for thought.

Like most good philosophers, von Hildebrand presses hard on the value of insight as a most important tool of the would-be philosopher. There is no substitute for this. Some things are never deduced, only pointed out and, in the last analysis, all knowledge consists in each man seeing for himself. Von Hildebrand uses insight himself, and one deep insight of his concerns philosophy's meaning to man. Here also he finds some practical use for the subject. Philosophy, he says, is the "preamble to faith". Indeed this is true. No one can practice his faith strongly, persevere in it if that faith has no solid foundation. And philosophy gives this basis through the intellectual grasp of truth. That is why von Hildebrand philosophizes, and how he must love it.

In conclusion, after reading the book and reflecting on it, there is one last thing we have to say about von Hildebrand—indeed he must love Wisdom so. And his love seems to be contagious, for we leave his book feeling refreshed. It is always a refreshing experience to encounter "man-thinking".

JOSE MARIO BUÑAG

THE FILIPINA IN PERSPECTIVE

WOMAN ENOUGH AND OTHER ESSAYS. By Carmen Guerrero Nakpil. Quezon City: Vibal Publishing Company, 1963. vii, 149 pp.

This collection of essays was not originally intended to form one unit; most of the pieces, if not all, were written under pressure of newspaper

or magazine deadline. Yet in its published form it reveals such a striking unity that one may claim that it was Mrs. Nakpil's purpose to present snatches of Philippine life and values. The overall impression that the reader cannot escape forming is that the Philippines and her people are the results of a series of influences, the major ones being the Malayo-Asiatic, the Spanish, and the American.

Woman Enough is divided into five sections—"Woman," "Politics and Manners," "Perspective," "Humor," and "Reminiscence." The first section, "Woman," provides a composite picture of the Filipina, drawing its materials from the pre-Spanish, the Spanish, and the American periods. "For the Filipina is a woman with a past—a long, unburied, polychromatic, delicious past which is forever returning to color her days. There have been three men in her life, her Asiatic ancestor, the Spanish friar, and the Americano, and like Chekhov's *Darling*, she echoes all the men she has known in her person." Mrs. Nakpil is alternately serious, sarcastic, cynical, whimsical, brittle, at times even downright condescending, yet always refreshingly realistic. But no matter what the mood or the attitude, she is lucid and precise.

"Politics and Manners" provides insights into some aspects of Philippine social life. It begins with a brief historical introduction to the origins of community life in general and Philippine political life in particular, discussing the party system as it works in this country. It moves on to a sketch of the many faces of "charity": the organized Christmas drives by the newspaper offices draw some touching reactions from some of Manila's needy ones; the efforts of society/club women to distribute relief to the poor is a biting commentary on "Charity" drives that have little or no real love for the poor. The comic and the garish are also represented. The love for fanfare is wittily revealed in the tale of how Barrio Addition Hills (in San Juan, Rizal) got its trash cans.

The *Santacruzán* (a secular procession with religious overtones) is, in the author's mind, perhaps the only truly indigenous "folk-art." As such it is a source of insight into values held by a majority of the people. Mrs. Nakpil holds it up as a mirror of present day values, just as previously it was a reflection of past attitudes and beliefs.

.... In times that are frivolous, materialistic, confused and ignorant, the *Santacruzán* is idle, profane, sex-conscious and stupid.... The whistling crowds, the impious perversions are merely the malaise on the surface of a deeper trouble—a misunderstanding of the standards of value. The *Santacruzán* will remain what it has become until some change comes over the temper of the people to whom it belongs. Till then it shall continue to reflect the spirit of the times, a mission which, whatever it is worth these days, it cannot now escape.

Even Santa Claus does not escape attention. In the piece on Christmas gift-giving and Santa, the author proposes that in borrowing alien customs to build up local traditions, care should be taken that the customs and the rituals be meaningful to the borrower.

To put things in their proper places is the aim of "Perspective." In touching on an episode in the pre-Spanish past, it plays up a heritage of daring that could arouse pride in the reader, washing away an apologetic attitude for his non-white ancestors. For the "greatest navigator of all time" (Magellan) met his equal "in an obscure Malayan chieftain, Rajah Lapu-Lapu, whom Western historians have called with undisguised annoyance 'a naked savage.'" But realistically, it cautions the dreamer-nationalist that to ponder on the what-might-have-beens had Magellan not landed on Mactan is plain wishful thinking. For he did, and Spain ruled the Philippines for 300 years.

"Perspective" does not limit itself to considering only things Philippine. It also analyzes the position of Joseph, the Carpenter of Nazareth, in the Catholic Church, and holds him up as the model for all Common Men of the world. In another familiar essay, "Perspective" describes the English spirit—seen in the many faces of England—as it reveals itself to admiring non-English eyes. It cites the many qualities that give the English a stability and an order that is characteristic only of them.

"Humor" combines five personal essays all of which are funny because their author has an eye for the ludicrous and a gift for witty description. One is on the troubles of a mother whose children, having "acquired an advanced Western sentimentality for pets," keep a variety of them, though she was much inclined to "the older, Eastern view: animals should be eaten, hunted down or cast in gold and worshipped." Another is a whimsical essay on the curiosity of a wife about her husband's life before she met him and the escape-device he creates—a delightful "roommate" about whose escapades he can freely talk without in any way committing himself. The last, however, is somewhat different. It is also a sharp criticism of some "high society parties"—revealed in a turn-about costume party held by the animals on a farm; they come dressed as humans.

Finally, there is "Reminiscence." Here, the essays recreate for the reader much of the old-world charm of Manila when she "was a gentle, graceful city and Ermita . . . [her] most charming borough." The author glows with a warm sentimental aura as she focuses on people, her family, her old tutor, and on many of the historic spots of old Manila. For those who are old enough to remember, she brings back sadly-sweet recollections of an Ermita that is no more; for the younger generation, she reproduces, briefly, an almost story-book setting heavy with Castilian flavor.

In *Woman Enough* Mrs. Nakpil has succeeded in catching glimpses of Philippine life and manners. And if the average reader forgets some of the incidents or sketches he may have read in the collection, he will surely remember this much—the essays are well written and they are full of insight into Philippine culture. For the *Filipina*, however, the most striking thesis in the collection and one which she may well agree with is that being a woman is enough...for a woman.

MARIA TERESA COLAYCO

MORAL APPROACH TO BUSINESS

MORALITY AND BUSINESS. By Henry J. Wirtenberger, S.J.
Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962. 307 pp.

For many years there has been a growing need for a textbook on business ethics from the Catholic point of view. The complaint has been that the treatment of the moral problems of businessmen found in general and special ethics and moral theology textbooks has been inadequate and has not been kept up to date with the new and multiple ethical situations which have arisen in the modern business world. Today it has become increasingly difficult to know what is right or wrong with a lot of business practices and businessmen themselves feel that moral theologians have not really come to grips with their concrete and specific problems. Fr. Wirtenberger's book, the fruit of ten years of teaching a course on morality and business in the School of Commerce, University of Detroit, is a modest attempt to fill the need of a Catholic textbook for business students and to remedy the lamentable failure of moral theologians in the past to provide a realistic consideration of modern business problems and adequate moral guidance for honest and sincere businessmen.

The moral approach Fr. Wirtenberger takes has the chief advantage of combining both the approach of moral theology and that of ethics into a hitherto much desired synthesis of moral principles based on both reason and revelation. In this respect the spiritual and ascetical dimension of business is also a noteworthy feature of the book. The main purpose of the book is to bridge the gap between general moral principles and actual business practice in the United States. No moral theologian should prescribe a priori moral norms for businessmen until he is sure of his facts. It is here on the level of facts about some actual American business practices that Fr. Wirtenberger makes a limited but fresh contribution. Since business is a very wide field, the book is understandably selective in its choice of topics. Part I and Part II review the fundamental and social moral