Considering the purpose and nature of his work, Fr. Beltran, as he himself said (p. 204), could only make "introductory remarks concerning Filipino Christology." A great service that he (or some other theologian) can do for the Philippine Church is to flesh-out a full-blown Filipino Christology based on the "prolegomena" he has discussed in chapter seven of his work.

Fr. Beltran gave great importance throughout his work to the need for an inculturated Christology that would "give special attention to the religious sensitivity of Filipinos, to their need for personal and religious experience, and to the rise of nationalistic feelings and aspirations... not only to maintain the real meaning of ecclesial doctrines... but also to clarify how dogmatic pronouncements can become a transforming power in Filipino culture" (p. 261). Fr. Beltran has made a very able and competent start in this project, but it remains the great challenge to Filipino theologians today.

Finally, there is the vexing problem of inculturation and reception — "the perennial validity of dogmatic thought-forms and linguistic structures as these are translated and received into cultures and societies with no exact equivalents for the concepts and categories used" (pp. 88-89). But can inculturation be truly achieved without using the languages of the Filipino people? It is to be hoped that many more theologians will contribute to developing a Filipino Christology no longer written in foreign languages but in our very own tongue.

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The last sentence of this book is printed thus: "And as long as there is a cult devoted to Her, there will be people who will speak with the Goddess face to face." Notice how the pronoun "Her" is capitalized. (Except for this concluding paragraph, pronouns referring to Mary are never capitalized throughout the rest of the book.) In ending this way, the author seems to be affirming his personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, lest some readers suspect him of despising Marian devotion in earlier chapters.

Precisely because of his devotion, he diligently adheres to the important and difficult task of distinguishing fact from pious fiction. Perceptive readers will be convinced that psychoanalytic method and theological discernment can both be fruitful in this interdisciplinary enterprise.

This approach is carried out in two parts subdivided into nine chapters. Part One includes a discussion of the central insight that Oedipal tendencies have a strong influence on religious devotion. This insight, explicitly Freudian, points to a strong, but strongly repressed, desire for the mother in sons, and
this desire is combined with a strong need for group cohesiveness. Next, it shows how this cohesiveness was achieved in the fifth century in a cult centered around a mother goddess disassociated from sexuality.

One psychoanalytic tool he uses in Part Two is the hypothesis that Marian apparitions are most frequently reported in communities where "the prevailing form of family organization produces in sons the especially strong and strongly repressed desire for the mother that has always been the psychological wellspring of Marian devotion." Such families, he observes, are "father-ineffective families." He finds this verified, for example, in the father of Lucia Santos of Fatima as having "a heavy dependence upon alcohol." Likewise, François Soubirous, the father of St. Bernadette of Lourdes "had a hard time holding on to money, and who spent a large portion of what they did have on drink... François was even arrested for theft."

The task of distinguishing fact from pious fiction is also applied to the problem of evaluating reports of apparitions, non-committally classified here as either hallucinations or illusions. Evaluation could be facilitated if the independence of individual witnesses could be assured. Frequently, this was not the case, for initial reports rapidly became contaminated by excited speculations within social groups.

Similar psychoanalysis is undertaken in the discussions of other Marian apparitions in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Ireland, Mexico, United States and Philippines.

Carroll's approach may not be acceptable to those who feel that their faith may be endangered or desecrated by scientific analysis. Nevertheless, an interdisciplinary investigation is needed to counterbalance the pious exaggerations in some devotional accounts.

Carroll's interdisciplinary achievement is commendable and necessary but insufficient for a holistic grasp of the entire set of phenomena successively associated with Marian devotion. How can this be enriched? One conceivable step would be a deeper hermeneutics of biblical "faith" regarded, not merely as a codified creed, but as the "substance of things hoped for" wherein hope is symbolized in dream-like experiences, wherein hope is psycho-dramatized in the indigenous rituals of each culture. From time to sacred time, both dream and drama are enkindled with the heavenly light that brightens every cult and culture in world religions in the unfolding of salvation history.

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