
The claims made by this book are dramatic. It purports to be the "first systematic treatment" and "most comprehensive account" of the Filipino "Theology of Struggle." It is billed as a "thorough, lucid, and sharp presentation of this important current and discourse" (back cover).

The seven chapters of this study present the (1) Context, (2) Theological Construction, and (3) Method of the "theology of struggle," which is "the struggle of the whole Filipino people for self-determination and national liberation" (p. 3). It also aims at "interpreting the Filipino experience in the light of the Christian tradition" (p. 5). Are these claims and goals achieved? This reviewer is forced to reply negatively.

Perhaps the greatest failure of this volume is the glaring absence of the works of many Filipino women and men who have published significant articles, books, and doctoral dissertations on the very range of subjects treated by Eleazar Fernandez. Authors such as J. Bernas, W. Fabros, R. Intengan, A. Lambino, B. Nebres, R. A. Ocampo, A. Pernia, M. Ramirez, R. Tano, and L. Tagle are never mentioned nor are their works considered. Other authors (C. Arévalo, B. Beltran, F. Claver, H. de la Costa, J. de Mesa, D. Elwood, E. Garcia, V. Gorospe, J. Labayen, M.J. Mananzan, etc.) receive a mere mention once or twice, but their thought is never presented or engaged. Such exclusiveness seriously undermines the credibility of Fernandez's work.

This reviewer, writing out of the Philippine context, totally agrees that "Filipinos must attempt to theologize from their own experience" (p. 2). Therefore, it is unfortunate to see the limits of this volume, particularly when so much fine theological literature by Filipinos is available. Western and non-Filipino authors and analysis predominate. One example suffices. In the section "Jesus and the Politics of Struggle" (pp. 106-123) which seeks to show how "the Filipino suffering and struggle resonate well with the Jesus of the gospels" (p. 106), all the sources used are non-Filipino. The author quotes over 100 Orbis Books that are published in New York, but misses pivotal literature written and published in the Philippines. In the entire work, non-Filipino sources outnumber Filipino references nearly five-to-one.

The prose is heavy and often confusing; "deconstructive critique of western logocentrism" (p. 146); "Solidarity with Exteriority to Protest Ecclesiocentric Totalization" (p. 148). The author has a superficial grasp of Vatican II and the Catholic Church in the Philippines; several anti-Catholic assertions are found (pp. 45, 104, 136, 139, 159). There is no significant analysis of the 1986 "peoples' power" movement/struggle
— in a book published eight years later in 1994! The relation of women, scripture, christology, and Filipino spirituality to the “theology of struggle” receives no adequate treatment. Ecclesiology, which the author holds is a pillar of the “theology of struggle,” is weak; interpreting the church as a “Prophetico-Critical Movement” (pp. 148 ff.) betrays an ideological bias. The section on the “method” for this type of theology does not satisfy (pp. 158-187).

This volume needs a serious “reality check” with other Filipino authors. The genuine material on the “theology of struggle” presented here is probably sufficient for one modest journal article; it is thinly stretched into a generally disappointing book.

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This review aims at reminding theological readers of Lonergan’s two contrasting horizons of human experience as heuristic tools for understanding meanings in the natural sciences insofar as these interact with theology. The first horizon is concerned with empirical data from the physical and biological sciences that methodologically prescind from data that cannot be analyzed in their calculability, predictability and legitimacy of their causal inter-relations. The second is broader and is concerned with empirical data derived not only from the outer senses but also from inner consciousness. Contrast is not necessarily conflict.

However, the title of this book suggests conflict. Holton pointedly devotes large portions of his sixth and final chapter to “creationism” as proposed in Texas by biblical fundamentalists who robustly maintain that evolutionary thinking is satanic and anti-Christian. Holton’s preceding five chapters convincingly establish his indisputable mastery of physics and its achievements in relativity and quantum mechanics, and a fair grasp of their social implications in American culture. He is impressed with Einstein’s scientific achievements which he sees (on p. 138) as in harmony with religious worship in “one who is in love.”

But he also sees “anti-science” as a “reminder of the Beast below” who will undoubtedly awaken some day to “make its true power known.” This last sentence sounds like pseudo-biblical animism not systematically included within the horizon of physics. Even if this is merely metaphorical, it may indicate one reason why Holton fails to appreciate Einstein’s personal concept of a “thought experiment.” This