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Book Review. - Literatur

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BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63118.

POETIC VISION AND THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE. By R. A. Durr. Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1970. xv and 275 pages. Cloth. \$9.00.

The purpose of the author is to demonstrate that the imaginative and the psychedelic experiences are strikingly similar, and he has succeeded in doing so. Emerson vaguely saw the reason when he said: "The poet knows that he speaks adequately only when he speaks somewhat wildly . . . not with the intellect used as an organ, but with the intellect released from all service and suffered to take its direction from its celestial life."

The first chapter holds that in both psychedelic and poetic experiences imagination perceives the unity of all things in God. The second chapter treats enlarged awareness and heightened sensitivities. The third chapter shows how both psychedelic and poetic experiences lead to a deeper understanding of time as the eternal now. The fourth chapter deals with depersonalization as the ego is absorbed in experience. The chapter on cosmos deals with ego as inseparable from the rest of the world. The last chapter emphasizes joy and playfulness as the most desirable approach to life.

The author is descriptive and analytic. He does not deal with the problems of psychedelic drugs. He does argue the value of legitimate insights. He quotes extensively from Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Eliot, Dante, Hopkins, Whitman, Yeats, Pound, and other writers, oriental and occidental. These are compared with reports of psychedelic experiences in Huxley, Alpert, Leary, and medical journals.

Evaluations of the findings will undoubtedly occupy literary critics, religious leaders, scientists, and doctors for some time to come.

ERWIN L. LUEKER

TRIAL POEMS. By Daniel Berrigan and Thomas Lewis. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970. 30 pages. Cloth. \$17.50.

This book contains poems and drawings Berrigan and Lewis created while they awaited trial for their symbolic destruction of draft records in the Customs House in Baltimore, Md., on Oct. 27, 1967. Artist Lewis sketched graphic lines to match the poetic expressions of Berrigan. The result is an effective blending of visual and poetic art.

The book is interesting for a number of reasons. It is a small demonstration of the interrelationship of the arts. The style of both art and poetry is a kind of reflected surrealism that follows mood rather than logical intellect. Items from present, past, and the universal are bunched according to mood. The material on which the poems and the art were originally recorded is such crude material as was available in prison.

Neither the poetry nor the art indicate extensive reworking. There are some beautiful, poetic lines; for instance, "at night, the moon / striped like a tiger / leaps on us with a cry". Or, "the judge's tic-toc is time's steel hand / summoning / come priest to the temple. everything else / is a great lie."

ERWIN L. LUEKER

RELIGION AND THE SCIENTIFIC FUTURE. By Langdon Gilkey. New York: Harper & Row, 1970. 136 pages, notes, and index. Cloth. \$5.95.

What Gilkey's big book, *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969) did for the story of religious language in the past two centuries, this one does in reflecting on its present and future. Gilkey analyzes transcending aspects of such language, and factual ones, and assumes that the former have given

up the task of affirming the latter, hence "myths." This situation is involved in the passing of the authority of the Bible to provide "facts." Gilkey regards Biblical myth as inescapable. "The Judeo-Christian symbols of the *creatureliness* of man and yet of his status as *imago Dei* may make more sense than does this contradictory modern picture of man as helpless patient . . . and yet as mighty doctor" (p. 85). Interesting is the stress on the myth as phenomenal and partial, while metaphysics speaks of the transcendent and universal. Myths are still important in a scientific culture, and two are under way now: cosmic and historical progress, and historical dialectic moving toward a communistic ideal. The author affirms (and so practices) that the myth expressing the dimension of ultimacy in experience needs philosophical language to raise it to the necessary level of "generality and universality where the transcendent genuinely appears." (P. 125) RICHARD R. CAEMMERER SR.

ICH WERDE MIT DIR SEIN. By Alfons Deissler. Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1969. 156 pages. Plastic. DM 9.50.

Deissler offers exegetical and meditational aids for 14 pericopes from the Pentateuch dealing with God and the people of God, God and the patriarchs, God and primeval time. Each study consists of the text printed in red, a short division, *Ort* (place), in which items like the Pentateuchal sources and bibliography are discussed, and a longer section, *Wort* (word), containing exegetical and expository comments. This book is a stimulating attempt by a Roman Catholic critical scholar to interpret the Old Testament for contemporary Christian use.

Deissler tries to read the text on its own terms. Although Genesis 3 is often seen only as God's emphatic no to man's rebellion, for example, he nevertheless points out positive notes of God's abiding faithfulness in: (a) a highly modified "protevangel"; (b) the delay in man's death sentence; and (c) God's clothing mankind.

RALPH W. KLEIN

COME, LET US PLAY GOD. By Leroy Augenstein. New York: Harper & Row, 1969. 150 pages. Cloth. \$4.95.

Augenstein is a Michigan State University biophysicist keenly aware of the implications the current biological revolution has for ethics. He is able to ask most of the right questions, and he also possesses the specialized competence to show the reader that nothing less than the Christian understanding of man is at stake in the application of biological advances pertaining to genetic defects, organ transplants, death, population explosion and control, abortion, and the dangers arising from the control of decisions by technicians or agencies of government.

The problem to which Augenstein addresses himself is really not new, but the tools used to deal with these topics are new. This is the author's point. He very much fears that the modern biological advance will tempt men to "play God" in a manner so horrendous that the demonic possibilities may actualize new dimensions of human corruption in the name of scientific progress. Enough has happened in recent times to persuade any thinking man to become concerned with Augenstein's anxieties. RICHARD KLANN

MY TRAVEL DIARY: 1936. By Paul Tillich. Translated by Maria Pelikan. Edited by Jerald C. Brauer. New York: Harper & Row, 1970. 192 pages. Cloth. \$5.95.

At first glance it may seem that this book will be appreciated only by former students or friends of Paul Tillich. It is a kind of unveiling of his thought and activities during the year 1936, when he had been in the United States for three years. The diary deals chiefly with his stay in Europe from April to September. Obviously, Hitler and his activities fill most of Tillich's horizon. We get the flavor of exiles plotting revolution and their return, endless rounds of meetings, conferences, as well as some reflection on art, which was so dear to his heart. Brauer's introduction reveals his own intimate acquaintance with Tillich and his world and should be helpful to the reader.

RICHARD KLANN



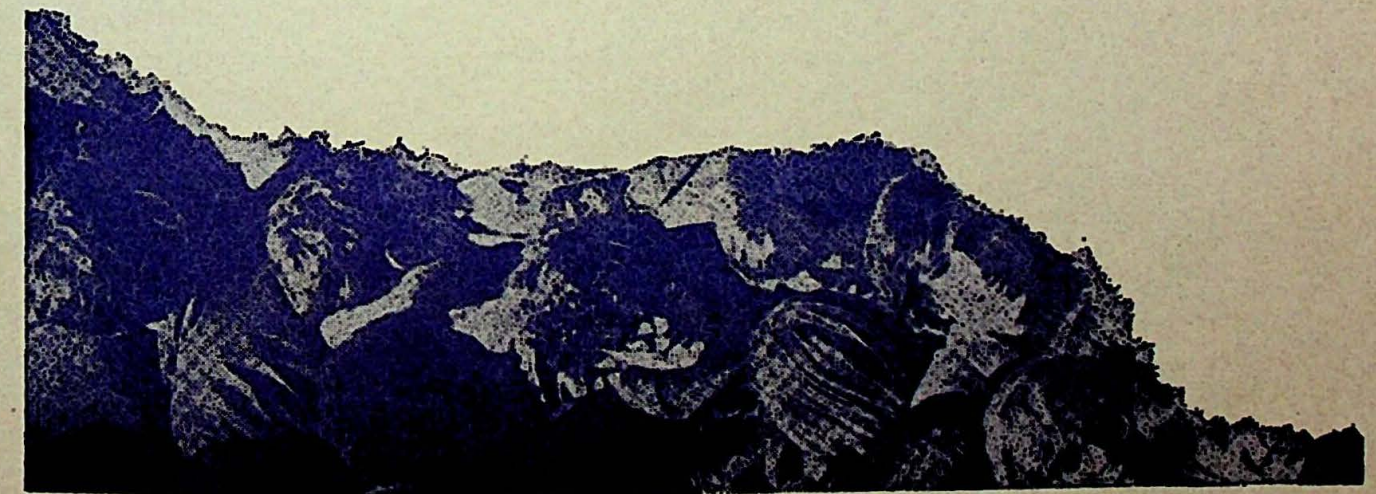
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