



The Book Reviewer

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Between Heaven and Hell by Peter Kreeft (Philosophy)

This small book in our philosophy section is a thoroughly enjoyable romp through the theology of Christianity. C.S. Lewis, John F. Kennedy and Aldous Huxley, who all died on the same day—November 22, 1963—meet up on their way to heaven, presumably in purgatory. C.S. Lewis takes the lead in educating the other two, the Christian humanist and the pantheist, respectively, on his “mere Christianity”. These two

are no match for Lewis, who is has been well-schooled in logic at Oxford. He gently but firmly explains how the two are guilty of fuzzy thinking, especially in their jointly held beliefs that Jesus was a great man or a prophet, rather than truly God. He explains at length, and in many different ways, that Jesus was either God, as he claimed, or else a madman and a cheat. This is the very old argument against the Arians, “aut Deus

aut homo malus”: either God, or a bad man. Modern critics bypass that argument by claiming that Jesus didn’t claim equality with God; they decide to throw out, as inauthentic, the parts of the Gospel in which Jesus does indeed make that claim. Lewis sticks to the old logic, and Professor Kreeft makes all of these ancient philosophical discussions extremely entertaining.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno

Till We Have Faces by C.S. Lewis (Fiction)

Like the work of his friend, J. R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis’ writings are often full of the deep down meanings of myth and fantasy. This, his only novel, is a reworking of the myth of Psyche and Cupid. It is told in the first person by Orual, queen of the pre-historic, semi-barbaric, miniscule country of Glome.

The truly barbaric king of Glome fathered three daughters: Orual, who is ugly, but very intelligent and righteous; Ringal, who is beautiful but stupid; and Istra, as lovely as she is good, gentle, gracious, and bright. Glome is perpetually at war with all of her neighbors, as it naturally would be with a king who is given to flying into irrational rages. The

girls are saved from barbarism by their slave tutor who instructs them in reading, writing, Greek, and philosophy. Orual never really knows how ugly her face is until she is fully grown and is the wise queen of Glome.

Before the king dies, Glome has suffered several years of drought, plague, and famine, and he is forced to sacrifice his beautiful youngest daughter to the awful God of the Mountain. The people, in a perverse state of illogic, have decided that she is the cause of their suffering. First she is perceived as the Healer, and then as the Accursed. Orual, with Bardia, the captain of the guards, decides to ride out and gather

Istra’s bones for proper burial. She finds a radiantly alive and happy Istra, not on the dread mountain, but in a lush and fruitful valley. Istra claims to be the bride of a god whom she has not been allowed to see.

Orual, even after a brief glimpse of the palace, and the glory, is unable to believe. Orual sends Istra off to a life of seeking and wandering the earth, and herself to a life of regret and activity. Her face is covered with a veil, and after long years she finally learns the real meaning of love, and how her own possessive love for Istra, Bardia, and the Fox (the old tutor) was sadly lacking.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno



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Man's Search for Meaning by Victor E. Frankl (Psychology)

Man's Search for Meaning, published in 1959, is considered to be among the most influential works of psychiatric literature since Freud. By the time of Frankl's death, the book had been translated into 24 languages, and more than 10 million copies had been sold. A reader survey, conducted in 1991 by the Library of Congress and Book-of-the-Month Club, rated the work as one of the ten most influential books in America.

Based on his personal experience, Frankl describes the struggle for survival during his years of confinement in

Auschwitz and three other Nazi concentration camps. Adding to the horror of these years of imprisonment, he also had to endure the death of his parents, brother, and pregnant wife.

As a result of living under these dreadful circumstances, Frankl developed a remarkable perspective on the psychology of survival, which he labeled "logotherapy". During the period he was experiencing life in the concentration camps, he began to wonder why some of his fellow prisoners were not only able to survive the horrifying conditions,

but in addition were able to grow in the process. He came to the conclusion that our primary drive or goal in life is to discover and pursue what we personally find meaningful. Frankl claims that while we cannot avoid suffering – we can choose how to cope with it.

The foreword of the book was written by Harold S. Kushner, who authored *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.

Reviewed by Pat Dalcher

Paul by Stanley B. Marrow (Saints)

This book is an excellent introduction to an understanding of St. Paul's epistles, throwing light upon Paul's sometimes difficult syntactical style. Professor Marrow grounds Paul's theology within his life and historical setting, plus the central event of his life—his conversion experience. The subtitle of *Paul* is *His Letters and His Theology*. Step by step his theology is revealed, specifically his Christology; because as Paul says over and over again, his "mission is to preach Christ, and Him crucified." He soon learned that his special mission was to the gentiles, leaving Jerusalem and other Jewish communities to Peter and the

other apostles. He calls himself an apostle, "though one born out of time," not having followed Jesus when He was alive, nor having been present at the resurrection. He was suddenly into faith by grace, while on his way to Damascus to persecute the new "sect." This initial meeting with the risen Lord was to be the impetus for the rest of his life: his deep faith and brilliant portrayal of Christ's life, death, and resurrection and its salvific meaning. "...to accept the fact that in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we do have God's final and definitive act of salvation." The central event of our faith is not the crucifixion, but the

resurrection:

"...knowing that He who raised Jesus will raise us also, and bring us with you into his presence."

Professor Marrow also explains Jesus' insistence that we love one another, which fulfills all of the Old Testament commandments, and the law.

Reviewed by Clare Dinno

