

Br. Paul's reminiscence about the wilderness of his "vacation" includes a chapter about the role of liturgy and music in his own monastic journey and a chapter on the "Schola Natura," the way that immersion in the rhythms of nature has shaped his spiritual life. There is also a chapter about his battle of wits with a mockingbird that insisted on singing through the night where he slept on a porch. These three chapters might be useful as supplemental reading for a course in spirituality, but I think students might need some guidance in unpacking them.

The rest of the book, however, does not really offer much in the way of reflection on the "uselessness" of monastic life. The book includes recollections about Thomas Merton, who was Br. Paul's novice master, and stories about the various hermitages the monks built during the 1960s and 1970s. There are descriptions of Br. Paul's own forays into poetry and photography, and descriptions of famous, influential people who have visited Gethsemani over the years. The book as a whole leaves one wondering just how successful Br. Paul has been at living his "vacation," at vacating the world and leaving behind the clutter of his own mind and heart.

Br. Paul ends his book by reflecting on a question that Thomas Merton asked his novices: "Did you get what you wanted when you came to the monastery?" His answer:

"I have the moment. ... I sit as if this is all I could ever know or care to know. There is nothing else to want. I listen to the cicadas and forget about wanting and not wanting. Such moments are themselves something worth wanting, but they do not come by wanting. They are a windfall."
(133)

This book is like that—like a windfall of apples. Much of what falls is not particularly appetizing or useful, but in among all the odd bits, there are some apples that are quite tasty and juicy.

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On Ethics, Politics, and Psychology in the Twenty-First Century. By John M. Rist. New York: Bloomsbury, 2018. 160 pages. \$22.45 (paper).

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This volume is a part of the Reading Augustine series (Miles Hollingworth, series editor). The series' goal is to connect Augustine to contemporary thought and show his relevance to current life and thought.

After an introduction, the book attempts to do this in the following eight chapters, each positing that an Augustine *redivivus* has appeared to present

his alternative to modern viewpoints. The first two chapters are more about Augustine making a case for his own worldview or philosophy on moral empiricism (chapter 1) and confession (as opposed to chapter 2's "'Scientific' Philosophy"). The following chapters are more of an attack by Augustine on modernity, under six headings: autonomy (chapter 3), the state (chapter 4), political panaceas (chapter 5), utilitarians and Kantians (chapter 6), rights (chapter 7), and modern theology (chapter 8). Two final sections wrap up the argument in a more conversational way, with a "Brag" in which Augustine attacks relativism (chapter 9), and a humorous radio interview with the fifth-century bishop who has been displaced into the twenty-first century (Anna Rist is credited as "orchestrating" this section). The volume concludes with a short list of books for further reading and an index.

That the book splits into one-fourth of its chapters defending Augustine's worldview and three-fourths savaging modernity as incoherent and evil already anticipates my criticism of the work. This is not even a work of apologetics (which many would consider suspect already, but for which this reviewer would have some sympathy) but of polemics (which this reviewer finds less helpful). It could without any distortion be subtitled, "The Closing of the Augustinian Mind," as its tone and constant use of modernity as a whipping-boy for every personal, societal, psychological, and moral ill (imagined or real) is vividly reminiscent of Allan Bloom's classic, polemical work; paragraphs could be swapped between the two volumes without the transposition even being noticed.

This reviewer was already ambivalent in the first two chapters. On the one hand, anything that seeks to appreciate and understand an ancient thinker is welcomed by me as salutary, challenging, ennobling. But insofar as we sift or ferret out of the ancient thinker, everything we personally find congenial and supportive of our already-held beliefs, the exercise seems solipsistic and pointless. But in the early chapters here, there was at least some attempt to ally Augustine with someone (other than the author himself) from modernity (e.g., Dostoevsky, 48), so that the contemporary world is presented at least as a complex phenomenon, and Augustine (and other ancients) can help us understand it, make distinctions, and see (and prefer certain) differences therein. The later chapters seem to me to drop any such pretense, and simply present, over and over, the evaluation that Augustine is right and good, and modernity is wrong and bad. Augustine need never change his mind on any issue, and there is no issue on which modernity even has a semblance or shadow of truth or virtue (e.g., "Many Western élites have no moral principles" [112]; the "Western liberal mind" will soon treat its enemies, such as Augustine, with "racking, hanging, castration and disemboweling" [143]). It

is especially problematic that such bitter pillorying of modernity frequently singles out Islam as particularly violent (86, 135) and barbaric (“hopefully benevolent dictatorship” being the best option for the “contemporary Middle East” [82]), the LGBTQ community as “wicked” and “nihilistic” (135), women as especially heartless (Hillary Rodham Clinton is labeled “Miss Abortion USA” [79]) or dull (Virginia Woolf is singled out as “incoherent” [107], and when an example of an easy-to-understand author is needed, Jane Austen is the choice [134]), and environmentalism as mere “tree hugging” (136, 140).

A healthy skepticism about modernity—and indeed, about one’s own, personal beliefs—is highly desirable and helpful. So is a fond admiration and honest consideration of Augustine (and many other ancients and medievales). Those two attitudes together could lead to open and productive dialogue between ancient and modern thought and between various, competing schools of thought in the modern world. This book provides none of those things.

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Realizing the Distinctive University: Vision and Values, Strategy and Culture.

By Mark William Roche. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017. viii + 275 pages. \$25.00 (paper).

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Early in *Realizing the Distinctive University: Vision and Values, Strategy and Culture*, scholar and former university dean Mark William Roche notes the reticence many professors feel about the prospect of entering academic administration. Although some of this is clearly attributable to the desire to focus on research or classroom teaching, there is also a degree of trepidation around the responsibility for leading an institution and shaping its mission. In this highly readable and useful text, Roche offers a guide to present and future administrators by analyzing the core issues institutions face and illustrating them with personal narratives from his seventeen years of academic administration. The combination of anecdotes and scholarship provides an engaging and approachable outline for how best to define, pursue, and sustain an institution’s mission.

The central concerns that Roche lays out for the university administrator are vision, resources, and organizational culture. While he is adamant that an administrator have a clear vision, he is especially effective at noting the numerous obstacles that hinder making that vision a reality. Some of