

mm Fifth of Four Summer Reading Reports

Add one More Book

I know you can't have five out of four....but I'm writing this page anyway! I actually brought *five* books to read this summer. I have already commented on four of them...as promised.

On September 28, this year, 2020 I was packing my books for our return to Corvallis. There was a fifth unreported book. I had brought it to the cabin where we had talked about doing a time of remembrance for my cousin, Chuck.

Chuck died on September 28, 2019, exactly one year ago...that very day!

I immediately sat down and opened the fifth book, "*Shaw and Religion*". Charles A. Berst, is the author/editor. Our remembrance event didn't happen...pandemic and all. Maybe this will do.

A note is scribbled on the cover page: "*Art, with the motive that there might be something spiritual even in a Shaw.*" As he would agree, there's much more to Shaw than inspiration. My copy of this book has numerous tags from previous reading.

The very first quotation from Shaw qualifies the book to join the previous four on the theme of *mysticism*. You should immediately recall the last two of my four previous reports which deal with **mysticism**:

"*God is a Verb --- Kabbala and the practice of **Mystic Judaism***" by Rabbi David Cooper
Last week it was "*Meister Eckhart --- A **Mystic Warrior** for our Times*" by Matthew Fox.

One of the first quotes from Shaw in this book: "***I am, and always have been, a mystic.***" ((p. 6)

Shaw's plays and lectures often had religious themes. He got under the skin of the traditional clerics and believers of the late 1800's and early 1900's. Shaw met biblical literalism, questions of God, the nature of Jesus' humanity, the dominance of church authorities, and lack of courage by clergy in speaking truth...and so much more. He made people laugh but left many in his time gnashing their teeth. He was undaunted and prophetic. He would be astounded at the current religious and political conservatism today. A mystic for our times before our times.

Shaw's mysticism would be in step with what is now a growing consensus among modern mystics. The two chapters called:

"*In the Beginning: The Poetic Genesis of Shaw's God.*" --- and

"*Some Necessary Repairs to Religion: Resurrecting an Early Shaw 'Sermon',*" are two of the chapters written by Chuck.

I was finishing a post-seminary graduate degree at Claremont in the late '60's while Chuck was working on Shaw at UCLA on the opposite side of Los Angeles. I would love to have had a seminary class in theology that used Shaw's plays and philosophy as a starting point.

Chuck was a Professor Emeritus and Distinguished Teaching Award recipient in the English Department at UCLA. George Bernard Shaw informed and inspired him for more than 30 years as a popular lecturer.

I humbly mention that his wife Roelina reports he had a complete file of all these pages I've mailed over many years. They would read my page together at bedtime the day of its arrival.

A touch of sentiment here now...as I **add one more book** to my summer reading reports.

... for the Moment...

Art Morgan, September 29, 2020