

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

**The Riddle of Konnersreuth and Psychology:
A Psychological and Religious Study of Theresa Neumann**
by Paul Siwek, S.J., Ph.D., S.T.D.

Psychology: The Unity of Human Behavior
by Timothy J. Gannon

Review Author: Francesco Parisi

Philippine Studies vol. 2, no. 2 (1954): 185–187

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library of anyone who wants to be able to discover quickly and conveniently just what the Church holds on some aspect of the social problem.

WALTER B. HOGAN

THE RIDDLE OF KONNERSREUTH. A Psychological and Religious Study of Theresa Neumann. By Paul Siwek, S.J., Ph.D., S.T.D. Translated by Ignatius McCormick, O.F.M. Cap. Bruce, Milwaukee. 1953. Pp. xvi-228. \$3.50.

PSYCHOLOGY. THE UNITY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR. An Introduction to General Psychology. By Timothy J. Gannon, Ph.D., Foreword by Thomas Verner Moore. Ginn & Company, Boston. 1954. Pp. xii-482.

Near Waldassen, a little Bavarian town, in the tiny village of Konnersreuth, lives Theresa Neumann, aged 56, the daughter of simple countryfolk, who, since the beginning of Lent 1926, has been one of the most fascinating *mystical cases* of our day. For more than 28 years, large crowds of devotees, the curious and many scientists have gone to Konnersreuth to glimpse the remarkable phenomena of which Theresa is said to be the subject: healings, stigmata, ecstasies, visions, the gift of tongues, prophecy, clairvoyance and the marvelous fast which, it is claimed, she has kept since 1926.

As always happens in such cases, many readily accepted the *miracles* of Theresa and sided with her "worshippers" (p. 45). Others, with the same enthusiasm, opposed her, and occasionally went even to the extent of ridicule and calumny. Men of science, generally unsatisfied because of the obstacles to accurate observation put in their way, often shrugged their shoulders with skepticism. The Church remained and remains silent, prudently avoiding any official statement about the *problem of Konnersreuth*.

Father Siwek, with the authority of a specialist in psychology and theology, and with a broad experience in psychopathology and parapsychology, approaches the data available on the case. His purpose is not to decide whether Theresa is a *saint* or not; neither is it to explain the phenomena; he only wishes to analyze with strict scientific method the events of Konnersreuth, and decide whether or not the preternatural intervention can be proved. His conclusion is: *non constat*. "It is not clear."

Reading this book, though our attention is captivated by the interest of the topics, we are conquered by the power

of its calm, honest objectivity, devoid of all prejudice, the breadth of an all embracing scientific mentality, and the irresistible conclusions of strictly logical reasoning.

After a brief exposition of the facts, Father Siwek divides and classifies them. He analyzes and discusses the personality of Theresa with its weaknesses, the unwise direction given her by her Spiritual Father, the people around her and their attitude toward her, and, at length, the "mystical" facts one by one. I could not find a single argument that, for its purpose, was unsatisfactory.

This book will be read with interest by everyone. It will throw much light on the often criticized but little understood procedure of the Church in the delicate matter of preternatural phenomena, and in so doing, it will result in a convincing apology for the value of miracles as signs of true Revelation. It will be of help to those who have to deal with *cases* (which often occur) in which simple pastoral theology is insufficient. It will also be of no little interest to those who deal professionally with abnormal psychology and psychiatry.

The letter addressed to the author by Archbishop Alfonso Carinci, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, gives to this work an authority that no Catholic can disregard.

Together with Father Siwek's excellent study on a *case* whose problems cover the most profound fields of psychology, we should like to present and recommend Doctor Gannon's new introductory text to psychology.

Many conscientious teachers of psychology, who understand their responsibility of offering to college students a modern, scientific and sound introduction to the study of man, will find this book competent and satisfactory.

In the first chapter: *The Problem of Definition*, the author gives a brief but quite complete account of the philosophical prejudices that have been misleading the greater part of those who, in the past few decades, have been advocating the absolute divorce of scientific psychology from all philosophy. For Dr. Gannon our knowledge of reality is not restricted to the narrow walls of measured observation and laboratory experiments. He presents man, as man is in reality, a unitary and total being composed of a material body vivified by a spiritual soul.

His book, however, presents *the human behavior*; it is therefore a *scientific* rather than a *philosophical* book.

The physiological psychology of sensation, the more complex problems of perception, reflexes and drives are analytically exposed in such a way that any student with average knowledge of general biology can easily acquire a solid notion of man's sensory life.

With a wealth of well chosen experimental evidence, the author deals with the problems of imagery, learning and memory. He introduces the problem and the tools of the measurement of mental abilities, and finally discusses the nature of intelligence, and the often omitted problem of voluntary control. The unity of human behavior finds its crowning synthesis in the last chapter which deals with personality.

The pedagogical value of the book is undeniable. It combines easy reading with solid scientific doctrine. The illustrations in the book are good, some of the photographs excellent. The division of the matter is very logical and occasionally quite original.

There are, however, two weak points to be noted in this book. The treatment of instinct is completely inadequate, referring solely to the instincts in animals, and even this in a very perfunctory manner. The second weakness is the treatment of the psychological and conscious aspect of emotion, though its physiological aspect takes into account the more serious theories about the role of the autonomic and endocrine system in emotional reactions.

FRANCESCO PARISI

CONVERSATION WITH THE EARTH. By Hans Cloos. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. Pp. 413. \$5.75.

Geology is a branch of nature study that interests and fascinates almost everyone. The work that the geologist does, however, is to the layman almost as mysterious as the science itself. All of us are interested in earthquakes, volcanoes, and glaciers. The secrets of the world's history locked up in rocks have long lured on the mind of man. But it is difficult to find a book that explains these secrets in an interesting way so that the geologically uninitiated may understand and enjoy the beauty and wonder of Nature.

Conversation with the Earth is the exception that proves the rule. Here is a magnificent translation from the German of the autobiography of Hans Cloos, one of this century's greatest geologists, and professor of Geology at the University of Bonn. In this geological travelogue Cloos has described the rocks and mountains of the world around us in much the same spirit in which Rachel Carson portrayed *The Sea Around Us*.

Cloos does not merely explain the geology of those many parts of the world which were his outdoor laboratory, but