

A NIGHT OF SERIOUS DRINKING BY RENE DAUMAL



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Review

"Presents a clear, truthful language in which intense human warmth establishes and commingles two elements too often apart--poetic fervor and philosophical insolence."

Language Notes

Text: English, French (translation)

About the Author

Rene Daumal (1908-1944) was one of the most original thinkers of the twentieth century; a poet, philosopher, and scholar of religion and Sanskrit. In his late-teens his avant-garde poetry was published in leading journals, and barely in his twenties, as a counter to Surrealism and Dadaism, he founded a literary journal, *Le Grand Jeu*. He wrote many essays on religion and philosophy, trained himself in Oriental languages, and engaged in drug experiments. He died of tuberculosis in 1944, at the age of thirty-six.

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A NIGHT OF SERIOUS DRINKING BY RENE DAUMAL PDF

A Night of Serious Drinking is among Rene Daumal's most important literary works. Like Daumal's Mount Analogue it is a classic work of symbolic fiction. An unnamed narrator spends an evening getting drunk with a group of friends.; as the party becomes intoxicated and exuberant, the narrator embarks on a journey that ranges from seeming paradises to the depths of pure hell. The fantastic world depicted in A Night of Serious Drinking is actually the ordinary world turned upside down. The characters are called the Anthographers, Fabricators of useless objects, Scienters, Nibblists, Clarificators, and other absurd titles. Yet the inhabitants of these strange realms are only too familiar: scientists dissecting an animal in their laboratory, a wise man surrounded by his devotees, politicians, poets expounding their rhetoric. These characters perform hilarious antics and intellectual games, which they see as serious attempts to find meaning and freedom.

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Most helpful customer reviews

15 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Astonishingly Timeless

By Grady Harp

A NIGHT OF SERIOUS DRINKING is an amazing, short novel written by Rene Daumal in French in 1938 and translated into English in 1978. It has now been reissued thanks to the vision of TUSK IVORIES, a publishing house committed to restoring classic books from Europe, Asia, and Latin America, books that are profoundly important but happen to disappear off the shelves of bookstores.

Rene Daumal was a poet, writer and philosopher who preceeded the Beat Generation by twenty some years, writing about the absurdity of life as we are leading it. His title "Night.." refers metaphorically to the thirst we have to make sense of a world of endless intoxication. He introduces characters/types who drown themselves in alcohol in order to expound on fantasy ideas of the meaning of life. He then takes us on a "utopian tour" of life as a fantastical house dismembered and reassembled in a bizarre series of levels of sci-fi porportions - an artificial Paradise which peels away to a Kafkaesque, rotten core. He finally addresses the pie-in-the-sky concept of mythology and religion as a means of purification/evolution only to call forth his fellow drinking partners to wake up to the possibility of change. For all the surreal maelstrom of his intoxicated revelation of society as we are living it, Daumal makes his narrator introduce hope 'seeing the myriad atoms of possibility'.

This is a profound little book that is richly written, understands the use of metaphor, and calls us to step out of the dark hole of depression to view the 'available light' in the future. Not a one-read book, this little treasure asks to be re-visited frequently. And now, thanks to Tusk Ivories, we can.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

... in the shaope that I expect it and I enjoy having it

By S.G. Atayde

It took a long time for this item to get to me but otherwise it was in the shaope that I expect it and I enjoy having it.

27 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

"There are only three exits: death and madness"

By Luca Graziuso and Marina Ross

A Night of Serious Drinking is among Rene Daumal's most important literary works. Like his more widely read Mount Analogue, it is a work of symbolic fiction that can be enjoyed purely as an entertaining and imaginative story, but also for its much deeper meaning embedded in its deceptively simple plot: an unnamed narrator spends an evening getting drunk with a group of friends. As the party becomes intoxicated and more and more exuberant, the narrator embarks on a journey ranging from seeming paradises to the depths of pure hell.

The fantastic world depicted in A Night of Serious Drinking is actually the ordinary world turned upside down. The characters are called the Anthographers, Fabricators of Useless Objects, Scienters, Nibblists, Clarificators, and other absurd titles. Yet the inhabitants of these strange realms are only too familiar: scientists dissecting an animal in a laboratory, a wise man surrounded by his devotees, politicians and poets expounding their rhetoric. These characters perform hilarious antics and intellectual games, which they see as serious attempts to find freedom and meaning.

Daumal's keen perceptions about the human condition infuse this fable with a critique of culture and consciousness that is both disquieting and enlivening. The author presents a clear, truthful language in which intense human warmth establishes and commingles two elements too often apart - poetic fervor and philosophical insolence.

To note that Daumal was a philosopher, anovelist and a scholar of religion and Sanskrit. He was mostly renowed for his avant-garde poetry which appeared in the widely read Le Grand Jeu, a literary journal he founded as a correlate movement to Surrealism.

The novelist wrote to "lead people out of the black hole of depression which our age gravitates towards, because there is light in the heart of love that steers clear of it."

A line of indelible strength struk me as hilarious and frightening as did the fictive deliberatons in their

entirety. The narrator finds himself overstepping the the demarcation of intoxication and announces as he stands at the threshold: "There are only three exits here: madness and death."

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