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ism to open one's eyes to the complexity and philosophy of political capitalism and its thematic kin: imperialism, religious intolerance, and exploitation. Cannon has honed these essays well, and the reader eagerly awaits more of her music. This thought-provoking work can be used at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The more life experience and the greater the skill of the student, the more engaged they can become with her text. This work comes full circle and gives us a greater sense of Katie Cannon—her honesty, her willingness to engage, and her profundity. *Katie's Canon* is a welcome addition to the canon of theological ethics, literature, social and cultural critique in general, and Womanist theory in particular.

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*Nature's Self: Our Journey from Origin to Spirit.* By Robert S. Corrington. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996. 192 pages. \$21.95.

*Nature's Self* is Robert Corrington's fourth book in development of a major description of the most pervasive features of the world, this time with particular focus on the self-in-process and the unconscious. It follows upon *The Community of Interpreters* (1987), *Nature and Spirit: An Essay in Ecstatic Naturalism* (1992), and *Ecstatic Naturalism: Signs of the World* (1994), all of which integrate a metaphysics of naturalism, semiotics in the tradition of C. S. Peirce, ordinal complexes as delineated in the work of Justus Buchler, and the author's own highly nuanced use of phenomenological and hermeneutical methods. The influence of Julia Kristeva's notion of the "material maternal" is strongly apparent here, although Corrington rejects her binary model of signifier/signified in order to tie more closely the drama of signification to the interpretant's embeddedness in nature. All of this gives to *Nature's Self* a lyrically difficult and dense prose that demands much of readers, even those acquainted with Schleiermacher, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Peirce, Royce, Tillich, Heidegger, Jaspers, Jung, and Kristeva. As is the case with any deeply original vision, evocation stands substitute for argument in much of this text. Corrington's signature metaphors are all in evidence—spawning, spewing, birthing, fissuring, and ejecting—suffused now by "melancholy" and "love."

Depicted meditatively in terms of feeling-tones, the world is fundamentally a sad place; naturalism of the ecstatic variety embraces the truth of nature's utter indifference to its human ejects; and the possibility of transcendence occurs primarily through the power of the unconscious. Potencies swell, and fissures abound, both within nature (between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*) and within the self (between its conscious and unconscious processes). Selves are "ejects" of nature naturing, the product of a "thrownness" analogous to separation from the maternal. As finite semiotic orders of nature we long for the lost object, the "material maternal," that is forever beyond our reach. Caught between melancholy and eros, each thing of the world is a foundling, looking for love in all the wrong places and hoping for erotic transfiguration in the future. Out of this dialectic of melancholy and love, in both its erotic and agapastic forms, the

drama of the spirit-driven self unfolds. Transcendence proves possible not of inescapable nature but of its semiotic opacity as our journey from origin to spirit finds fragmentary fulfillment.

How is this accomplished? Why does dissatisfaction with all finite orders of meaning not have the last word? What enables the self to move through the crucible of melancholy to love, past the material maternal lost object and into the liberating power of the not-yet? The answer to this question is anything but clear, contained in the inner cunning of the unconscious and the work of transference. Fascinating affinities between speculative philosophy and depth psychology show up in every chapter of this book. In perhaps the most interesting move, Corrington posits a direct parallel between the repositioning of social signs through the domain of nature naturing and the depositioning of the conscious self in and through the unconscious. Like the cosmic dark matter said to make up 90–99% of the physical universe, there is a “dream field,” Corrington says, which links the unconscious structures of analyst and analysand in the transference/counter-transference relation. Both fields exert strong gravitational effect. The therapeutic effect of Corrington’s own writing on his readers is to explode any utopian expectations about willful changes in the structures of subjectivity by stressing the primacy and all-pervasiveness of the unconscious and by resisting any romanticization or reification of nature. Carl Jung has been updated with Julia Kristeva, Schopenhauerian pessimism has been tempered by Tillichian authenticity and Heideggerian hope, and even biblical exegesis receives a boost from basic ontological structures. “The most ontologically precise way of describing the transfiguration is to say that it is something that happens to origin (Moses and Elijah), the children of time (the disciples), and the power of the whither (Jesus). In this triadic structure, all three dimensions are brought into a new correlation that has its ultimate foundation in the eternal fissure between *nature naturing* and *nature natured*” (155).

This version of the ontological difference distinguishes between nature in its naturing (Being) and nature as natural (being). “Ecstatic naturalism,” as a term, is Tillich’s, but the systematic development is singularly Corrington’s own. In previous writings Corrington has presented ecstatic naturalism as representing a new option that stands in contrast to, and in some continuity with, this century’s three other naturalisms: 1) the descriptive naturalism found in Santayana, Dewey, and Buchler, in which the cosmic whole is conceived as often indifferent to the human process; 2) the more honorific naturalism of Emerson and Heidegger, in which spirit/Being is responsible for creating nature, which has but one trajectory; and 3) the naturalism of process metaphysics which envisions plural centers of power in an evolutionary cosmos (Whitehead) but which in some representatives privileges history over nature (William Dean). In *Nature’s Self* Corrington shows what these other naturalisms miss insofar as they fail to incorporate the category of unconscious processes or to develop an adequate vocabulary for the elusive spirit at the heart of nature. (In the choice of vocabulary, ecstatic naturalism tends to favor “attunement,” “realignment,” “adjustment,” and “plumbing” primordial depths.)

By these means Corrington gestures to that which is deep in the heart of nature naturing, something primal that cannot be confined to human history.

Neither sign nor body of interpretations, it is an encompassing potency, the lure for divine evolution. But god is not restricted to the god of history and Corrington is concerned to show the supremacy of nature over history in addition to presuming the likeness between, on the one hand, selves who are language users and, on the other hand, processes in the rest of nature. Therefore, god's finite and historical dimension yet belongs to a more pervasive order of what Corrington calls "sheer providingness" or the enabling ground for any complex. Nature naturing is an unlimited dimension within nature of potencies, of preformal and preconscious energies. This is the presemiotic birthing ground that ejects the signs which make up the innumerable orders of the world as a settled organized system of signs (nature natured). Nature naturing is the unsettled generator of signs; as the Encompassing, it is the ultimate mystery, giving birth to god and to all complexes, as well as sustaining and eternally renewing all things.

What could be called the pre-Oedipal texture of Corrington's hymn to nature naturing carries some disturbing symbolic freight that critics may read as not entirely pre-Symbolic. It is a tableau that comes into play only as an after-the-fact construction that permits the subject who has already entered into language and desire to dream of maternal unity and primordial plenitude. This may strike some readers as a regressive fantasy, through which the male subject pursues both the Oedipal mother and the wholeness lost to him through symbolic castration.

What Lionel Trilling sensed in Santayana—"a dreadful knowledge of the abyss"—describes Corrington's writing also. In his psychoanalytically charged drama of the unfolding of the spirit on a vast canvas of cosmic nature, it is still possible to see the agonized conscience of the white Protestant American male, no longer afflicted by Calvinism, but still miserable, still a divided self, not exactly a sinner or in the hands of an angry God, yet wounded and marked with a cleft, still tortured and struggling to be hopeful. One can commend Corrington for not remaking the abyss into the Great Companion of some process theologians or reducing it to the great flatness of some analytic philosophers, even as one wonders in the end whether his anthropomorphisms detract from rather than advance the excellent anti-anthropocentric thrust of his metaphysics. In either case, *Nature's Self* is elegant proof that the sweep of the metaphysical mind can only move from the inside out.

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*Uncivil Rites: American Fiction, Religion, and the Public Sphere.* By Robert Detweiler. University of Illinois Press, 1996. 250 pages. N.P.

A year ago I visited the Pine Ridge Reservation with a group of students and my Native American colleague George Tinker. We visited the site of the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee and later met a woman whose grandmother had been a survivor of the massacre. It was, for me, a revelatory experience. I came to see that the massacre, which had long seemed the sad but distant culmination of