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   The Spiritual Quest: Transcendence in Myth, Religion, and Science by Robert M. Torrance
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the story of this segment of modern religious history—one which is so central to
the field of religious studies itself.

Most psychologists and psychoanalysts will say that getting to know an
analysand's deeper, unconscious motives and conflicts requires a great deal of
time spent with that person. When such an endeavor is done from "secondary
sources" the concern is that only a partial image can be constructed, hence a sig-
nificant amount of speculation is entailed to fill out that image. In the play of this
speculation all manner of self-serving ideas may creep in. This is the inherent
weakness of post hoc, biographical psychology. Nothing in Santaniello's psycho-
logical speculations dispels these concerns. They attribute far too much to cer-
tain experiences as causes of certain ideas or writings, and they are aimed at
showing how Nietzsche's misogyny contributed to his thought. The latter notion
has been widely dismissed as a superficial reading of Nietzsche. Santaniello's
speculations do not offer any viable challenge to this consensus. As a psycholo-
gist of Nietzsche, Santaniello has nothing new to offer.

Among theologians there has developed a trend, which Santaniello follows,
of describing Nietzsche as a "religious thinker" or as having "theological ideas." If
one says something about religion, one is not therefore "religious." By itself,
this would be nothing more than bad logic. However, it is closely connected to
an attempt to render Nietzsche's criticisms of Christianity innocuous and even to
appropriate them on behalf of that tradition. Certainly theologians are free to use
whatever ideas they wish. When they begin to attribute their own ideas to their
sources, however, this becomes disingenuous and bad scholarship. Santaniello is
not nearly as guilty of this as are many contemporary theological appropriators
of Nietzsche, but by constantly referring to his "religious" and "theological" ideas
she comes dangerously close.

Fortunately Santaniello is a far better scholar than she is a psychologist. The
greatest success of this work is the wealth of historical information she presents.
Her connections between Nietzsche's texts and his contemporary opponents
make a real contribution to the exegesis and scholarly understanding of Nietz-
sche in general. The book is clearly written and very thorough in its documen-
tation. One could quibble endlessly with her specific interpretations of Nietzschean texts, but her overall strategy of reading them in relation to Nietz-
sche's contemporaries is quite successful. Consequently this work makes a very
real and welcome contribution to both philosophy and—perhaps more impor-
tantly and far less typically in studies of Nietzsche—to the history of religious
thought in the late nineteenth century.

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The Spiritual Quest: Transcendence in Myth, Religion, and Science. By Robert M.

In a compelling and wide-ranging analysis of the multiple forms of transcen-
dence found in human cultures Torrance makes a strong case for the ubiquity of
a kind of triadic movement beyond static and antecedent structures toward a transfiguring vision that transcends the opposites that hold the self in check. He concludes his detailed historical studies of earlier cultures by using Peirce's semiotic theory to show how meanings are generated or undergone in time and how all signs and symbols point beyond their media of expression, e.g., language or iconic images, toward an elusive object. He makes masterful criticisms of the binary system of Saussure and its perhaps bizarre reincarnation in poststructuralism and deconstruction. In a deft series of strokes he exhibits the power of Peirce's triadic semiotic of sign, object, and interpretant, and the unveiling triad of icon, index, and symbol. The latter triad is tied to Peirce's three primal categories of firstness (possibility and pure quality), secondness (brute dyadicity and binary interaction), and thirdness (intelligible mediating structures that exhibit concrete reasonableness).

For Torrance, one primary aspect of Peirce's perspective, in addition to its triadic and open-ended semiotics, is its commitment to the growth of meaning in the future, in the "would be" or infinite long run. In a clear sense Peirce is the philosopher of transcendence under the conditions of biology and evolution. Torrance rethinks the current neo-Darwinian synthesis, which stresses random variation and natural selection within a given environmental niche, to show how some form of novelty and creativity emerging at the edges of disequilibrium can also be a motor force for evolutionary growth. The organism is "an open autoregulatory system" (22) that is capable of "self-transcendence" (22). Random variation thus has some help in the intrinsic striving of the organism for a more encompassing exploration of the natural sign systems that form the immediate umwelt. There are strong anti-entropic energies in biological systems, although they must, of course, steal their energy and order from outside the system, making them open to an enhanced field of semiosis (a field that is now being explored under the rubric of zoösemiosis).

Torrance extrapolates from this modified neo-Darwinian model the fact that consciousness expresses forms of transcendence that are nascent or potentiated in preconscious structures. Within the human order (the domain of anthroposemiosis) language functions as the most powerful form of semiotic transcendence. In a very subtle analysis of Chomsky's transformational depth structures, Torrance affirms some, but not all, aspects of Chomsky's perspectives on creativity and the infinite possibilities that can emerge out of finite rules and their internal constraints. Yet we are urged to go beyond the implicit Cartesianism (a kind of internal essentialism) of Chomsky toward a pragmatic understanding of dialogue that opens out genuine otherness and reveals the "openness, adaptability, and freedom" (43) inherent in the use of language. On the deepest level, language goes beyond the reiteration of origins and makes something like an open future possible.

Making the bridge between this conceptual material at the beginning and end of the book and the historical analyses that form the heart of the text, we see how any human culture that can be named works out of the generic semiotic structures that appear in biology and language. When we enter more fully into human history, the issue of the unconscious comes to the fore. One of the best
descriptions in the book is Torrance's unfolding of Freud's model of the tensions between the ego and the id and how this model might be used to shed light on the more static or even regressive forms that ritual can take in the public sphere (24-31). There is a relation between the return of the repressed in the transaction between consciousness and the unconsciousness, and the need for an invariant and closed system of ritualistic behavior that ties community members to static conditions of origin.

Unfortunately Torrance fails to use the most compelling alternative model that can illuminate ritual return, as well as the vision quest that comes out of the more individualistic paradigm of the shaman. Here I am thinking of Jung's archetypal psychology (far more empirical and phenomenological than Freud's), which only gets a superficial and rather inadequate analysis in the book. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious is written off as if it posited a pseudo-reality that "is everywhere and nowhere if it exists at all" (283, n.2). The irony is that Peirce's semiotic theory works beautifully with Jung's archetypal theory, and their intertwining promises to generate one of the most powerful paradigms in the fields of cultural studies and anthroposemiotics. This is especially the case where Peirce's concept of the dynamic object correlates in certain distinctive cases with Jung's notion of developmental archetypal images. Peirce's simile of the psyche as a "bottomless lake" has strong family resemblances to Jung's concept of the collective unconscious. This new paradigm will make it much easier to understand the evolutionary progression from ritual to myth to the vision quest of the shaman.

For Torrance, ritual, especially as expressed in the more static agricultural societies, has fewer openings onto transcendence than do the various vision quests that appear in the hunter-gatherer societies that must, by definition, remain open to changing environments. While rituals can allow for conflict and change, the focus is on the eternal conditions of origin. For the more migratory hunting groups the shifting realities of weather and mobile food sources call for a mythological framework that honors the kind of mobility found in the animal kingdom. Torrance provides many vivid and even terrifying descriptions of the forms that the vision quest can take. He contrasts the more static role of the priest in an agricultural society (shades of Freud) with the role of the shaman in the hunter-gatherer society. Of course, the latter society can have priests as well, and there is often a tension, related to social class, between these two paradigms and what they each want for themselves and for their group (129). Yet there is almost something like an evolutionary progression from the ritual-bound priest to the roaming shaman who can go to the land of the dead, often with the help of an animal spirit, and return again to help the living. A linking reality is that of myth which can transcend ritual because it is open to an oral, and hence linguistic and future oriented, expansion into uncharted terrain.

What are the antecedent conditions for shamanhood? It is clear that it is not an inherited position, unlike membership in a priestly cast. There must be a unique event that singles out the potential shaman. This often takes the form of a severe illness that requires a strenuous regimen, perhaps of fasting or even self-mutilation (such as the cutting off of digits). Powerful dreams are often sought as
well (something that, of course, fascinated Jung who probed into the inner
dynamism of the shamanic dream). The shaman-to-be is elected by a force that
is non-human and is called upon to enter into the deepest secrets of the uni-
verse. This vision quest is not a mere initiation ritual or a rite of passage but
something that takes on personal form and refuses to promise some kind of pre-
dictable outcome. By responding to the invading spirit the potential shaman is
also agreeing to walk a road that no one else has ever walked before. This is not
to say that there aren't striking parallels between these quests, both tribally and
geographically. But it is to say that the quest, whatever its mythological clothing
(series of interpretants), will involve something like a triadic structure of separa-
tion, transition, and incorporation. This triad is also found in the more open-
ended rites of passage that allow for the prospect of an individual quest, even if
the return of the repressed often keeps such a quest well reigned in.

The vision quest, which has its ultimate roots in our genetic coding, comes to
fullest flower when it reaches into a narrative structure that participates in third-
ness (again, Peirce's concept of concrete reasonableness). This link between the
quest and thirdness allows for an indeterminate goal in an open future. Insofar
as developmental thirds punctuate the quest for transcendence, meaning that
enters into the objective orders of the world can unfold and become available to
the community. In this sense, the shaman is the questor who brings the mediat-
ing power of thirdness to a community that usually longs to return to the mater-
nal power of firstness or that remains caught in the stasis of oscillating seconds.

In the end, Torrance is to be commended for welding together an astonish-
ing amount of cultural material. His theoretical elaborations, with the exception
of his misunderstanding of the importance of Jung in this field, are wise and
masterful. The pulsations of the quest, what makes us animal quaerens, are traced
semiotically from their barely noticeable origins in genetic coding to the flower
of narrative in modern and even postmodern culture. This is a book that is emi-
ently worth reading and will certainly advance inquiry into the innate poten-
cies that open out meaning in time and place.

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Philosophic Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy. By Carl Page.

Page undertakes a defense of "First Philosophy" against the "betrayal"
perpetuated against it by "philosophical historicism," the first being always
capitalized and the second only when grammatically required. "Betrayal" is sen-
sationalist and imprecise, but the other terms in the title are carefully exegeted in
the course of the book. Although Page addresses only philosophers in this pene-
trating study, his concern being the subjugation of philosophy to history, his
insights are also applicable to the study of religion where, per impossible, philo-
sophical historicism may be as rampant as in philosophy.