

All together, all this material will prove to be of value for future interpreters, maybe not so much of Merton's "art" but of his spirit. That too is the conclusion, it seems to me, of the final piece of work included here, the "reconstruction" of Merton's experimental technique, not in print-making but in the making of images which are (of course) not really images (pp. 167-173).

This book is highly speculative, and perhaps one might argue exactly what is needed at this juncture to begin to appreciate the mystery of Merton's ever-developing monastic journey—that journey is clearly reflected in his love of art, abstract drawings, calligraphies and as he put it once "blobs of ink" (p. 14).

Anthony Feuerstein

CARRERE, E. Daniel, *Creating a Human World: A New Psychology and Religious Anthropology in Dialogue with Freud, Heidegger, and Kierkegaard* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2006), pp. x – 273. ISBN: 1-58966-116-8 (hardcover); 1-58966-122-2 (paperback). \$30.00.

Guided by Freud, Heidegger and Kierkegaard, Daniel Carrere delivers a rigorous exploration of the human psyche and its inherent tendency to beset itself against that which is life-giving. Carrere proposes a 'new anthropology' that hopes in the human potential to coexist in an open, molten state, thereby freeing oneself (and humanity) from that which is illusory, defensive and, ultimately, fatal. *Creating a Human World's* interdisciplinary character will likely appeal to a broad audience, both lay and professional. Due to some technical language, however, those at least familiar with Freud (in particular), Heidegger and Kierkegaard will be at an advantage. Carrere's focus on modes of being and living on both individual and collective levels, grounds his study amid theoretical and clinical investigations of Freud's monolithic *Eros* and *Thanatos* drives, Heidegger's *Dasein*, and Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works and journals.

In his Prologue, Carrerre states, "This essay addresses the conundrum of how a person or group moves from a closed, defensive existence to a life that is open and sharing, not only tolerating otherness but celebrating others ... it explores the crisis of being human." Carrere proceeds to ask whether one's very presence jeopardizes the presence of another and how nevertheless a shared, human world might be possible. As Freud, Heidegger and

Kierkegaard form the psychological, philosophical and religious basis (respectively) of Carrere's anthropological foundation, (Christian) scriptural themes of Exodus, kenosis and incarnation provide the means by which Carrere's vision of a shared, human world materializes. Part of what makes *Creating a Human World* appealing is its potential to stimulate needed discussion in philosophical, psychological and religious domains concerned with both theoretical and practical problems of self-knowledge and self-preservation as well as faith and reason.

Carrere's religious anthropology also lends itself to dialogue with cultural theories and theology such as that proposed by Kathryn Tanner, Professor of Theology at the University of Chicago's Divinity School. In her *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*,¹ Tanner explores both the term "culture" and its varied theoretical and practical implications for the sake of better identifying a culture that enjoys freedom. The underlying challenge of Tanner's cultural exploration involves knowing what freedom is and what freedom looks like. Tanner operates under the assumption that theology is a form of cultural activity, or simply a human activity. Following epistemological assumptions of postmodern anthropology, Tanner's basic argument denies an *a priori* set of practices and standard of correctness in relation to "doing theology" in any sense. This means that no individual, institution or theory can characterize, prescribe, or even (perhaps) predict the immediate and distant future of "doing theology" because the (true) meaning of Christian practice unfolds as it occurs. So one constructs or understands meaning and purpose in the moment, so to speak. Tanner addresses the potential value of Christian identity and practice that holds diversity and disagreement as its defining characteristic as a religious community. Seeking to clarify and articulate the true nature of discipleship, Tanner says the freedom to follow God's dynamic Word is at stake. Tanner emphasizes her thematic point that being Christian hinges on discomfort with diversity in theological judgments. She argues this point because, ultimately, she sees it as inherent to being Christian. Engaging Tanner with Carrere's later chapters, which focus on interacting with the world in a new and shared fashion, will prove fruitful.

The following points are significant for both theoretical and practical purposes, for they bring to the fore certain philosophical assumptions, religious beliefs, and notions of the self that argu-

ably result from the human mind's tendency to perpetuate an illusory, defense-filled existence rather than an open, vulnerable one that truly 'rests in God's presence.' To become clear about this point of Carrere's study is to say that the stakes are high if one takes seriously his proposed psychological and religious anthropology. In fact, in order to create the human world that Carrere proposes, one, I believe, must be willing to seriously challenge, if not let go of, several traditionally and preciously held beliefs about God, self and our world.

At the top of this list rests variegated Christian notions of "eternal life" and Otherness, revealing a checkered history that on occasion shows a sober approach and interpretation of such enigmatic themes. The New Testament's perceived attention to eternal life made possible through Christ (Otherness) is not without justification, however. But the challenge is identifying the nature of such justification. Whereas Kant's Copernican revolution severed the "ontological" link between humanity and the divine, the Kantian claim that we are neither suspended from heaven nor anchored on earth underwent fundamental revisions by Freud, Barth and Wittgenstein and their collective yet disparate criticisms of modern rationality. In his "Third Introduction" to the *Römerbrief*, Barth states:

It seems to me impossible to set the Spirit of Christ—the veritable subject matter of the Epistle—over against other spirits ... Rather it is for us to perceive and to make clear that the whole is placed under the KRISIS of the Spirit of Christ. ... The Spirit of Christ is not a vantage point from which a ceaseless correction of Paul—or of anyone else—may be exercised schoolmaster wise. No human word, no word of Paul, is absolute truth... But what does the relativity of all human speech mean? Does relativity mean ambiguity? Assuredly it does. But how can I demonstrate it better than by employing the whole of my energy to disclose the nature of this ambiguity? ... It is precisely the hidden things, inaccessible to sense perception, that are displayed by the Spirit of God.²

From a Freudian perspective, one cannot underestimate the mind's cunning denial of Barth's point that God eludes human apprehension. For biblical examples, Genesis, Job and Ecclesiastes also emphasize the human tendency to 'become gods' by identifying

oneself with God, but history shows that we have a terribly difficult time with exegesis and its appropriation. Freud reminds us of this problem of navigation by prescribing the culprit as a diseased conscience. Wittgenstein urges us to at least look at the difficulty (of being human) by realizing the groundlessness of our beliefs. Yet the religious tendency to cling to certainty in its countless shapes and forms persists. The paradox is that this particular (human) tendency undercuts one's ability to understand the point of Barth's "Spirit of Christ."

Chapter 10 of Carrere's study—"Beginning Anew: Envoi & Cross-Cultural Entrée"—discusses the process of becoming an authentic individual who is concerned both in the world and with others. Heidegger's *Being and Time* and the work of Ananda Coomaraswamy infuse Carrere's anthropology with four key elements: 1) self-emptying; 2) death (or Kierkegaard's "dying away from") issuing in a deeper, 3) more integrated self that concurrently 4) opens to the broader world of others and otherness (p. 180). With its focus on sexuality and its traumas, Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* offers bare sobriety to this process of becoming authentic, which is difficult, serious and full of risks, yet it also potentially yields unparalleled freedom and joy. Carrere's Exodus drive emphasizes Freud's point of risking the unknown and the new, which "...elicits periods of inscrutable pain as one inhabits emotional and mental states that are difficult to endure. Intense sorrow is sustained for all that must be left behind: a former world and a former self, or parts of a self, that are irretrievably lost" (p. 171).

Carrere challenges our affinity for certainty—or, better, our comfort in exchanging the harshness of reality for an illusory one that believes in particular certainties—by emphasizing the need to embrace our humanity as well as our literal world, or earth. Such an embrace, if actualized, would be a radical process with life-changing effects. Yet the question of how one might create a particular human world broods throughout Carrere's study, which connects the thought of Freud, Kierkegaard and Heidegger (as presented by Carrere) to the complex reality of our entangled world. This particular tangled connection shows the collective and individual potential of humanity, but it also reveals a chasm between Carrere's world and our actual world.

Carrere's focus on the human dilemma of self-deception and self-preservation shows a tacit connection to a rich lineage of mod-

ern philosophical and religious thought that casts a wide net, often perceived in part as the "Modernity Problem."³ The complexity and magnitude of our human situation shows itself throughout this alleged problem.

Carrere offers a way to better understand our human situation that emphasizes our spiritual predicament brought on by inherent tendencies to construct illusions of safety, power, and achievement. True freedom and joy are at stake in recognizing and understanding how we tend to entrap ourselves in countless ways.

Notes

1. Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

2. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans., Edwyn C. Hoskins (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 17-20.

3. See Robert Pippin's *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, 2nd edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

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WISEMAN, James A., *Spirituality and Mysticism: A Global View* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), pp. xiv + 242. ISBN 1-57075-656-2. \$20.00 (paperback).

As the subtitle indicates, this volume seeks to provide a broader perspective on its subject than many other surveys of Christian spirituality and mysticism (which, despite the more generic main title, is its exclusive focus). Part of the new "Theology in Global Perspective Series" from Orbis, it includes discussions of East Asian, African and Latin American spiritual traditions along with the more familiar chronological path from the Holy Land through the Egyptian deserts and Asia Minor into Europe and North America; it also is particularly careful to include the insights of women writers and practitioners throughout Christian history. Its author, James Wiseman, Benedictine monk, Catholic University professor and co-editor of the widely used anthology of Christian mystical texts *Light from Light*, is a wise and trustworthy guide to both the familiar and the less familiar ways in which the Gospel has been proclaimed and lived out across vast expanses of both space and time.

After a very helpful introductory chapter providing a concise history and clear contemporary definitions of both "spirituality"