boarding school experience), deconstructed by Gerald McMaster; lantern slides, possibly by Robert Chaat, produced by missionaries for fund-raising purposes, commented on by Paul Chaat Smith; a 1992 photomontage by Jolene Rickard, which incorporates a photo of some of her female relatives from the 1940s and a closeup of beadwork by her great-grandmother; a 1990 photocollage by Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie commented on by Gail Tremblay, which consists of "images that speak both aesthetically and politically to a postcolonial reality"; and David Seals's essay on a 1989 photograph by Sarah Penman from Wounded Knee.

One could not wish for a richer, more varied look at photography both by and about Native Americans. Rarely do you find a book that makes the subject so alive and relevant. I do not agree with everything that is said, but I enjoyed immensely this compilation of ideas and images.

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The Spiritual Quest: Transcendence in Myth, Religion, and Science. By Robert M. Torrance. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. 367 pages. $35.00 cloth.

Robert M. Torrance's *The Spiritual Quest* is at once a grand, interdisciplinary exercise in a human-centered theory of reality (and at this level operates innovatively, provocatively, abductively) and a less successful overview of the form the quest takes in several human cultures. Torrance essays to overcome the objectivist/subjectivist cast of so-called modern thought and, in so doing, reveals the limitations of positivist, functional, structural, and deconstructionist modes of physics, biology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and linguistics. Arguing the need to mediate between the binary poles of the objectivist/subjectivist paradigm, Torrance aligns himself with semiotic philosophy (Charles Sanders Peirce, among others) and ritual anthropology (Victor Turner, among others). Torrance thus locates human persons as the inevitable arbitrators between an apparently fixed reality, seemingly objective cultural representations of that reality, and the human need to make sense for themselves in particular, local, and contingent settings. While others have thought productively about these issues, Torrance gives them new ana-

lytical focus: For Torrance, the quest constitutes both nature and culture, stasis and change.

Divided into six parts and sixteen chapters, *The Spiritual Quest* demonstrates the ways in which the study of religion must engage major interpretive problems. In Torrance's closely argued view, biology, psychology, language, and religion are all related as ritual phenomena. In order to make the point, Torrance's theoretical chapters necessarily adjust many ethnographic interpretations and methodological claims. Balancing these competing explanations, Torrance concludes that ritual and myth are conjoined. On the one hand, he understands ritual as responsive and responsible action; on the other, he holds that myth is revised constantly in the face of the unknown. Both are processual, dynamic, open to discovery and constructive change. To hammer home the creative point of ritual and myth, Torrance explores detailed examples in addition to cases of spirit possession, mediums, shamans, medicine people, priests, prophets, and professors. Torrance concludes that *homo religiosus* has a gutsy and unflinching stance in facing an uncertain but emerging reality in need of her response.

The Spiritual Quest excels in establishing an argument the complexity of which only detailed and concerted research will be able to plumb. There is such a congruence of logics here—physical, biological, psychological, social, philosophical, and especially spiritual—and such confidence in laying out their congruence that narrow specialists might quibble with detail but leave the main argument untouched. Others will question Torrance's disciplinary expertise, but few will be able to speak about the accuracy of the whole. It will not do, therefore, to consign this text to specialists. The issues addressed in this study—the nature of self, society, and cosmos, and the fit between myth, rite, creativity, and grace—pervade all forms of cultural life. Torrance shows that these issues challenge both commonsense and academic ways of knowing, because we must come to study and to understand the ways in which all people live: We grasp something of an unknown lying just beyond our sense of the safe, the normal, and the familiar which all cultures demark.

Torrance's finely tuned argument reveals the complex ways in which scholars have felt disinclined to plumb the religious foundations of culture. Eschewing the sacred and bracketing the supernatural, always leery of the merely subjective as poetic flights of fancy, linking emotion and irrationality, and viewing

religions as bizarre epiphenomena of either nature or society, the social sciences, Torrance shows, have missed motivation. In effect, much of what passes as making sense of the human situation reduces motivated human action to the empirical, the objective, the structural, the rational, the grammars, and the putative facts of the matter. Torrance argues for a new human science. Such an interdisciplinary endeavor would examine the myriad of ways in which historically situated persons have deliberately stepped beyond both the constraints of nature and the domestic security of culture to struggle in the midst of the threatening unknown. Because Torrance links such human standing-forth with well-understood processual stages of ritual life and cultural process—separation, liminality, and return—he achieves a postmodern humanism worthy of close consideration and emulation. We need to examine, Torrance argues, the cross-cultural truth of a human action that wrests meaning from chaos.

Of course, any attempt to speak to the truth of all cultures rests inevitably on the success of seeing, hearing, and reading the truth of any. Torrance has studied widely, draws examples from all over the world, and certainly is skilled in synthesis. Two other considerations affect his reading and writing of cultures. First, Torrance remains too closely indebted to a technical language about religious culture that remains freighted with Western scientific, philosophical, and theological baggage; to compound the problem, specialist and general readers will carry this baggage with them to Torrance's text. Among others, these terms include ethnocentric and therefore slippery notions of cosmic dimensionality *(sacred, profane, the supernatural, the natural, the cultural,* and *the wild);* of ontology *(gods, spirits, animals, humans, the primitive);* of states of consciousness *(possession, trance, rapture as demonic, frenzied,* and *catalytic);* of causality *(magic, taboo, self-mastery, disease theory, luck, mechanism, function, psychological, social,* and *ethical motivation);* of epistemology *(spiritual* as opposed to other kinds of *knowledge, belief, superhuman knowledge);* of typologizing religious specialists *(shaman, medium, diviner, priest,* and *prophet).* In effect, these terms constitute problematic assumptions about what is known about the nature of religion. If Torrance's argument is to be taken seriously, however, these notions invite deconstruction as our own cultural terms. They also urge reconstruction in the perceptual, cognitive, behavioral, and ethical terms of other cultures. Thus, if Torrance has shown the processual terms in which a new analysis might emerge, he has not himself

engaged the self-reflexive aims of postmodern ethnography. In part, the problem lies slightly beyond Torrance's grasp. While a number of scholarly convergences allow him to craft a new methodological synthesis, the ethnographic sources on which he necessarily relies for his survey of questing culture are uniformly mired in, and rehearse, attitudes that consider religious concepts and practices as at least unrealistic and certainly not mundane.

Second, a related problem emerges in Torrance's definition of *spirit* as "the dynamic potentiality latent but unrealized in the given. . . (p. xvi)." Understanding such latency as emerging into ontogenetic being in cosmic process and biological evolution may help one appreciate the inner directedness of nonhuman reality, and even a directedness shared with human purpose. Potency, however, does not grasp the interpersonal facedness of the human quest. Humans face each other and spirits as intentionally powerful beings and personalities, not as natural forces. Simply put, one does not address, in either social or religious life, that which cannot respond. There is here, for humans and spirits alike, a question of desire that Torrance does not examine. Moreover, contradictions seem to occur when Torrance calls such beings natural forces, gods, ancestors, supernatural and superhuman beings without attempting to understand their differences. Whatever their nature (and they differ from culture to culture), these beings stand in need of human acts of embodiment (in song, dance, generative utterance, and persuasive gesture) in which all engaged beings find existence, indeed coexistence. Not only do these performative terms seem to modify the emphasis Torrance places on transcendence (because embodiment takes place in local and particular persons, places, and events); they would also suggest that a theory of religious culture must also account for processes and philosophies of immanence, a possibility that Torrance seems to glimpse only at the margins of his theory.

These two considerations aside, Torrance drives new questions for Native American studies. His emphasis on human engagement with the unknown implies that it is time to assess the decisive intentionality that informs Native American kinship, social, political, and economic forms of culture. As Torrance would put it, we need to study the ways in which these forms express a gracious encounter with a spiritual unknown. He suggests that it would be well to reexamine and compare the audacious cosmological revelations upon which those cultures have been, and continue to be, constructed. Most forcibly, Torrance requires a reconsideration of

ritual as located in the humble, deliberate, and defiant acts of human responsibility that have constituted Native American history. As such, Native American history can be retold, not as a narrative of victims twitching ineffectually in reaction to global processes of urbanization, nation-building, and colonial will-to-power, but as the real stories of destined survivors responding creatively to nothing less than cosmic chaos.

All told, then, *The Spiritual Quest* assesses where we have been in making sense of the human situation as religious. It identifies both unproductive and path-breaking modes of inquiry. It also reveals the very edge of the current known—the nature of spiritual being that humans share with everyone else. As such, *The Spiritual Quest* pushes the limits in the human sciences, because Torrance's tenacious focus remains on the unknown standing in the midst of the contingent truths of the moment, this moment, any moment. *The Spiritual Quest* is recommended, in short, for its disturbing analysis, its confident humility, its intellectual method and grasp, and its insistence on a new set of questions.

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Stories That Make the World: Oral Literature of the Indian Peoples of the Inland Northwest. As Told by Lawrence Aripa, Tom Yellowtail, and Other Elders. Edited by Rodney Frey. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. 264 pages. $24.95 cloth.

Early in Rodney Frey's *Stories That Make the World,* the astute reader may notice a discrepancy of the type that Native American scholars and critics have been leveling against the field of anthropology for decades: the inability of ethnographers to organize materials from anything other than an anthropological worldview. In the first pages of this book's introduction, Frey makes the statement, "Our journey through *Stories That Make the World* into an oral literature will follow the path suggested by Alan Old Horn." According to Frey, Old Horn explained to him that this path was not an exterior description of culture but an interior living or being in culture. Readers of this book, however, will have to wait 150 pages for the next mention of Alan Old Horn. Instead, immediately following this quote Frey launches into a discussion