



Thou Art That: Transforming Religious Metaphor

By Joseph Campbell

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Thou Art That is a compilation of previously uncollected essays and lectures by Joseph Campbell that focus on the Judeo-Christian tradition. Here Campbell explores common religious symbols, reexamining and reinterpreting them in the context of his remarkable knowledge of world mythology. According to Campbell, society often confuses the literal and metaphorical interpretations of religious stories and symbols. In this collection, he eloquently reestablishes these metaphors as a means to enhance spiritual understanding and mystical revelation. With characteristic verve, he ranges from rich storytelling to insightful comparative scholarship. Included is editor Eugene Kennedy's classic interview with Campbell in The New York Times Magazine, which brought the scholar to the public's attention for the first time.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This collection of essays, lectures and discussions will delight both avid Campbell disciples eager for more of his thoughts and newcomers to his work on comparative mythology and religion. It is also a quick refresher course on some of Campbell's ideas about the Judeo-Christian tradition for those who have encountered him in his well-known *Hero with a Thousand Faces* or in his popular television series on the power of myth with Bill Moyers. This is not the polished writing of a scholar systematically presenting an argument. Rather, editor Kennedy urges the reader to approach this collection "as one would the classroom, or the study" in order to better enjoy the more energetic and spontaneous "master teacher" side of Campbell. The effect is to take the reader on a romp through the Judeo-Christian tradition a lightning-paced tour with an extremely knowledgeable and provocative guide to illuminate some intriguing, untrammeled paths. The most abiding theme of this collection is that Western religious traditions have suffered from taking their stories and symbols literally instead of metaphorically. Some chapters are dense with ideas and call for careful reading, while other sections are breathtakingly clear in describing mind-opening concepts. In either case, this is a book that will stretch readers to reconsider their interpretation of the stories and symbols of faith and the relationship between personal spirituality and institutional religion. (Oct. 15) Forecast: Although Campbell died in 1987, there is still tremendous interest in his work, which bodes well for this title, the first in New World Library's Collected Works of Joseph Campbell series. The book will have a 25,000-copy first printing and will be advertised in *Utne Reader*, *New Age*, *Tricycle*, *Shambhala Sun* and elsewhere.

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From Library Journal

Any book by Campbell must attract the attention of a broad public, given not only the continued success of his *Hero with a Thousand Faces* but also his series of televised interviews with Bill Moyers. This volume has been rather carefully assembled from his notes and concludes with a brief interview with Eugene Kennedy. While there are no revelations here, Campbell continues his forays into archetypal and Jungian readings of the motifs of world religions. For most collections.

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From Booklist

To launch an edition of the collected works of the comparative mythologist who gained celebrity in a series of televised conversations with Bill Moyers, Catholic journalist Kennedy has collated versions of six of Campbell's public lectures that sound his customary main themes while being more oriented to Judaism and Christianity than to other religions. The understanding of myth as religious metaphor, the experiencing of religious mystery through symbols, how myth elucidates the understanding of God, the role of the imagination in religious thought, how the myths and symbols of Judaism and Christianity define their conceptions of God and the sacred, and the cultural and psychological meanings of Christian symbols--these are the particular concerns of the lectures. Overarching them is the personal yet universal message of immanence implicit in the Sanskrit saying translated by the book's title, which is a statement locating the essential mystery of religion within the person--every person. Excerpts from postlecture question-and-answer periods and Kennedy's 1979 *New York Times Magazine* interview of Campbell round out a great way to start a series. *Ray Olson*

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Users Review

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Phillip Martin:

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