

# PARABOLA

THE JOURNAL OF THE ITALIAN AND AMERICAN TRADITION



EXILE

7

# PARABOLA

MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY

MAY 15 1985

## EXILE

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION  
& EDUCATION

- 6 **Living in the Rift** by Philip Zaleski.  
*The contemporary challenge.*
- 14 **Out of Chaos** by Vine Deloria, Jr.  
*The exilic mission of the Native American.*
- 23 **Now, Farewell and Hail** by P.L. Travers.  
*Lost and found.*
- 26 **We Are All Witnesses:** An interview with Elie Wiesel.
- 34 **The Strife of Interpretation: The Moral Burden of Imagination**  
by Richard R. Niebuhr.  
*The art of reading deeply.*
- 48 **The Way Back** by D.M. Dooling.  
*Mythic images of return.*
- 53 **Homing In** by Janwillem van de Wetering.  
*A place to begin.*
- 56 **Tibet: Mystic Nation in Exile** by Robert A.F. Thurman.  
*Fruits of the diaspora.*
- 70 **EPICYCLES**  
**Parting Gift/Chinese**  
**The Flight and Exile of Quetzalcoatl/Aztec**  
**The Hymn of the Pearl/Gnostic**  
**O My Country!/Maghreb**
- 3 **FOCUS**
- 4 **FULL CIRCLE/A Readers' Forum.**
- 80 **CURRENTS & COMMENTS**
- 84 **TANGENTS**  
**The End of Exile?** by Frederick Franck.  
*A review essay of Falasha: Exile of the Black Jews.*
- 90 **BOOK REVIEWS**
- 118 **CREDITS**
- 119 **PROFILES**

Founding Editor D.M. Dooling

Editor Lorraine Kisly

Executive Editor Jeff Zaleski

Epicycle Editor Anne Twitty

Publisher John P. Sheehy

Production/Circulation Director Daniel R. Miller

Administrative Assistant Suzanne Lavine

Mechanical Artist Patricia Kellis

Designer Gloria Ortiz

Contributing Editors Susan Bergholz, Jonathan Cott, Lee B. Ewing, Paul Jordan-Smith, Winifred Lambrecht, David Leeming, Richard Lewis, Roger Lipsey, Jean Sulzberger, Philip Zaleski

Consulting Editors Joseph Epes Brown, Thomas Buckley, Frederick Franck, Lobsang Lhalungpa, John Loudon, Barre Toelken, P.L. Travers

PARABOLA (ISSN: 0362-1596) is published quarterly by the Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition, Inc., a nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

Single issue: \$5.50. By subscription: \$18.00 yearly, \$32.00 for two years, \$46.00 for three years. Postage for outside territorial U.S.: add \$3.50 for surface rates, \$15.00 for air per year.

Address all correspondence regarding editorial and advertising to PARABOLA, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Tel.: 212-924-0004.

For subscriptions and change of address notices: PARABOLA, Subscription Dept., 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Postmaster: Send address changes to PARABOLA, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and additional offices.

Distributed in the United States and Canada by Eastern News, 250 W. 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

All material Copyright © 1985 by the Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition.

This issue is made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

VOLUME X, NUMBER 2, MAY, 1985.

Cover: Masaccio, *Expulsion from Paradise* (detail). Alinari/Art Resource, New York, N.Y.

---

Barbara G. Myerhoff

February 16, 1935–January 7, 1985

Barbara G. Myerhoff was a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA from our first year until her death. One of her articles, "The Huichol and the Quest for Paradise," appeared in our first issue, and was followed in the next by another on the Huichol shaman, Ramón Medina. Her book, *Peyote Hunt*, also comes from her work with the Huichol Indians in Mexico. From 1966 to 1985 she was with the Anthropology Department of the University of Southern California, where she became Professor and Chairperson of the Department. Her interests turned toward medical anthropology and the problems of old age, and her next book was *Life's Career: Aging and Cross-Cultural Studies in Growing Old*. Later she celebrated her work with the aging in her best-known book, the warm and wonderful *Number Our Days*, from which a film was made in 1977 which won the Academy Award as the year's Best Short Documentary.

The brief fifty years of her life were filled to overflowing with her zest for living and her care for people. PARABOLA is among the many who were enriched by her work and who feel her loss deeply.

---

## FOCUS

---

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,  
yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows  
in the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away captive  
required of us a song; and they that wasted us  
required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the  
songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand  
forget her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave  
to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem  
above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day  
of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the  
foundation thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy  
shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou has served us.  
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little  
ones against the stones.

—*Psalm 137*

## FULL CIRCLE

---

### A Readers' Forum

Please excuse these attempts to complexify Dr. Basarab Nicolescu's analysis of "Unity and Exchange" (Vol. IX, No. 4), but it would seem that some logical conclusions are relevant to the current revival of the analogy of Dr. Schroedinger's cat. In the classical sense, there is a cat, a box, and an observer. The observer opens the box and the cat is found to be either alive or dead. In the quantum analysis, the S-matrix "cloud of particles" exists in a state of "becoming"; adhering to time, inertia, and the other so-called laws of physics only when an observer is present and constantly maintaining that energy state conducive to objective observation. Thus, the cat-box-observer event reifies as a probability in which the cat is to be found either alive or dead dependent upon the time at which it is observed. Prior to that observation, the cat can be alive, or dead, or both simultaneously in that "many worlds" state which is peculiar to the idea of the quanta. In bootstrap theory, CATBOXOBSERVER are potentialities engaged in an indiscrete exchange of energies.

Bootstrap theory attempts to describe energy states between that of particle and that of wave in order to arrive at a more holistic understanding of the Universe. Therefore, when the "index of topological entropy" is at zero, we perceive the particulate universe, and when the index of topological entropy is at some integral level other than zero, we then arrive at the wave

state of perception. At some point in between we should be able to perceive both states simultaneously. That is, we should be able to drop the uncertainty from the uncertainty principle and perceive the notion of quanta: that quanta are a level of consciousness as well as an energy state in which particle and wave coexist in a mutually interdependent diffusion state which is approaching the limits of unity. If you are a Taoist, you are familiar with this level of consciousness as the Tao.

Stephen A. Graue  
Stillwell, Kansas

Martha Heyneman's article "The Unending Hunger" (PARABOLA Vol. IX, No. 4) offers a wide spectrum of how each, on its own, feeds on, and is food to, another. The dispassionate and objective manner in which she made her presentation helped buffer the shock I experienced when I saw myself as a unit in the food chain, as well as when I realized that all this time I have been endlessly vacillating between the inner and the outer worlds and missing the point.

Perhaps attention should indeed be turned inward, and without any sense of "doing" rest in that core of existence



found within. Perhaps we do need to let the "organized" evolutionary process take its course; to pay attention to what is before us *now*, and stop trying to seek the answers out there. Perhaps the search does not end in answers; rather, it *lives* in questions.

S.D. Smith  
Tujunga, California

Thanks to Martha Heyneman for the lovely shimmer of primary images—yellow lemons, green light, white fish—that assemble in quiet painterly fashion into a graceful illustration of one woman's life and its relationship to larger cosmic forces. But I was taken aback by her breathtaking ability to swallow whole the deformed elephant of orthodox Darwinian evolutionary theory. Ms. Heyneman is certainly free to think of herself as the product of multiple random mutations (enhanced, to be sure, by natural selection, a.k.a. survival of the survivors, a glorious tautology), but I wonder if her doughty great-grandmother, so wonderfully evoked by her, would agree. It all reminds me of the best of scientific jokes, when Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, in debate more than a century ago with "Darwin's Bulldog," Thomas Hux-

ley, demanded of him, "Pray tell me, sir, but is it through your father or your mother that you claim descent from an ape?" Pegging a series of spiritual insights—even if they are as deft and refreshing as Ms. Heyneman's—on possibly flawed scientific theory is a risky business. What happens if researchers discover that the crackpots are right, and a human being has in him as much cherubim as chimpanzee? That our ear bones issue not from the jaws of a fish (Ms. Heyneman's contention) but from the mouth of God?

Thankfully, a full bouquet of alternative views on evolution has blossomed in the last half-century; one appears in the same issue of *PARABOLA*, where Owen Barfield sketches out Rudolf Steiner's theory that "matter has emerged from mind, not mind from matter." This is unprovable, of course, as are all evolutionary theories: the time spans involved are too great, the human mind too small. But what might happen if the majority of human beings gravitated toward, say, Steiner's belief that evolution is spirit defining itself through matter, and not matter mindlessly meandering through time? What might this do to our attitudes toward ourselves? To our hopes for the future? To our sense of responsibility? To our efforts?

Philip Busuttill  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

# Living in the Rift

PHILIP ZALESKI

*If a man could pass through Paradise in a dream and have a flower presented to him as a pledge that his soul had really been there, and if he found that flower in his hand when he awoke—Ay!—and what then?*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Can it be? Is it possible that Paradise still exists—even for us moderns? We can picture the elation racing across the dreamer's face, the terror filling his heart: here, *in my hand*, proof of Paradise—the Paradise described by the myths as my native land. Behind Coleridge's imagery lies a truth: a link remains between myself and a higher world. I recognize that flower instantly: its colors penetrate like no other, as if my eyes were carved to see it. Surely in childhood I knew its impress, in that early time when the cosmos flared with meaning, in that true world tended by parents, school and church, by legend, myth, and fairy tale. But since I became an adult? I remember . . . certain times when a tide of feeling, propelled by some momentous event—

a death in my family, the birth of an idea—splashed over my breakwater of falsehood and fancy, and in the stinging cold baptism that followed I recalled for a moment whence I came, and who I might be, and where I might go. Mircea Eliade has a term for this sudden alertness to an inner call: *nostalgia for Paradise*, "the desire to recover the state of freedom and beatitude before 'the Fall,' the will to restore communication between Earth and Heaven." Eliade adds that "the 'nostalgia for Paradise' belongs . . . to those profound emotions that arise in man when, longing to participate in the sacred with *the whole of his being*, he discovers that this wholeness is only apparent, and that in reality the very constitution of his being is a consequence of its

dividedness.”

Why is this so? Why is modern man so miserable? Of our wretchedness little doubt remains: the dreamer's heartrending “Ay!”—a commingling of triumph and longing and pain and remorse—resounds for all of us. We are all dreamers, asleep to the reality of our lives. We are all exiles on a planet in exile (planet: wanderer, from Greek *planan*, to lead astray), a globe trapped halfway between heaven and hell. We see our “dividedness” wherever we look: one moment we prattle of love, unity, inner peace; the next moment we spit on our neighbor and vilify ourselves. Recalling the legend of Richard the Lionhearted and faithless Prince John, we realize that these royal figures strut across our interior stage: there, too, the true monarch is abroad and upstart subordinates—our lusts, our fears—control the throne.

We can, if we wish, heap the blame for our state on modernity, on the collapse of tradition, which causes our psyches to warp as we grow toward adulthood. We can indict modern science, which stripped God naked, or modern religion, which dandified Him with dogmatic finery. Whatever our culprit, it's clear that we are acceding, in a variety of contemporary and ancient languages, to the concept of a pan-human degeneration from a golden age, to Eliade's idea of “beatitude before the Fall.” Our misery springs from our felt privation.

Perhaps we then see that our longing for lost Paradise colors every moment of our lives. Consciously or not, each of our acts is an act of destruction, a revolt against our divorce from Eden, or an act of recon-

struction, an effort to repave the road, to reopen the gates. It is essential that we understand how widespread and deep-seated this longing is: the history of humanity is nothing less than the search for the lost Garden, for the hidden God: “Every creature searches for God. If there were no search for God, the heavens themselves would not be revolving,” wrote Meister Eckhart. And for many of us, in the strange final days of this strange millennium that witnessed the collapse of Christendom in the West, the demolition of traditional cultures worldwide, the story of our individual lives is nothing less than a



Photographs by Jerry N. Uelsmann

search for a new relationship with the heart of spiritual tradition: with the essence of those great religious institutions that taught us in our earliest years the secrets of the miraculous horticulture of Paradise, and the way, long since obscured, to its ever-blossoming Gardens.

**M**y story is no different from that of millions of others, and is perhaps useful in its very ordinariness. When I was a child, Paradise—or, more accurately, its earthly embassy—was the Roman Catholic Church of Notre Dame, a large, grim building on the potato fields of Long Island, New York. The church still stands today, three thousand miles from Rome, six thousand miles from Calvary. Its bland facade of dark red bricks, divided at regular intervals by sentimental stained-glass windows depicting the lives of saints, exhibits the workmanlike ecclesiastical architecture that flourished forty or fifty years ago in suburban communities across America. Not a bad place to learn of sacrifice, morality, original sin. Within its drab walls, an Irish priest whose jokes were much admired by the congregation lifted to my lips a communion wafer wonderfully white, alive, charged with the presence of God. Later, I revealed my boyish sins to this same priest, his face crisscrossed by a wickerwork screen, and felt his absolution wipe across my heart. Inside Notre Dame, I watched the universe grow transparent from top to bottom: I knew my place, my parents' place, my priest's place—and I knew where

I stood in relation to the nailed man above the altar.

A few years ago, on a trip to New York City, I travelled by subway and bus to visit Notre Dame. The church doors were locked. Now I spend my Sundays cleaning house, collecting shells on the beach, dreaming of flowers. Somehow, I too became the man in Coleridge's tale.

How did this happen? The initial disillusioning experience will be familiar to many: I sat in the pew of Notre Dame with my thirteen-year-old eyes locked on the heavy wooden crucifix in the apse—on Christ, exile par excellence, in whom, according to Catholic teaching, God exiled Himself from Himself, pouring Himself into human form to effect our salvation—and in applying to this sacred myth my newly acquired tool of analytical thought, I began my own exile from traditional faith. To challenge divinity is an easy game—sheer delight, really—for an adolescent skeptic. By setting up straw men to knock down—articles of faith understood on the most superficial level, that of the dog-eared catechism buried in my desk—I guaranteed myself a Pyrrhic victory.

Like so many others of my generation, I instantly converted to a second “religion”—to science, whose laboratory coats, microscopes, Nobel Prize winners, and Baconian methods became for me a second set of holy vestments, implements, high priests, and inviolable Commandments. As Jacob Needleman has pointed out, science burst upon the Western Renaissance—and, one might add, upon many teenage minds—as a Revelation, startling us to the

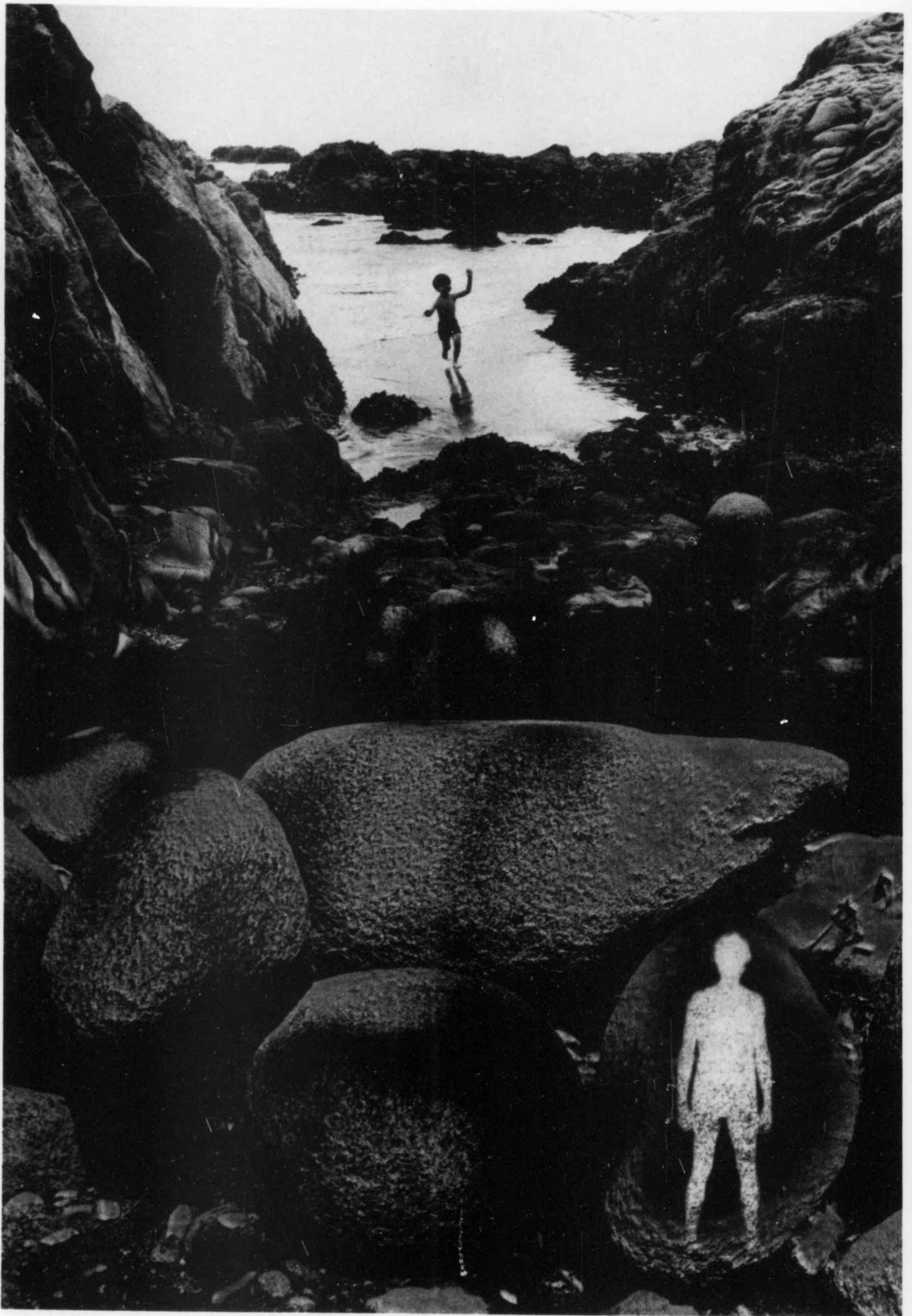


core with its ability to uncover the laws of material creation. I grew to love the sight of Saturn's lambent yellow ball, a tiny top spinning in my telescope's field of view; the feel of planaria squirming down a metal maze in my junior high school biology lab, brave little worms jolted with electricity (I flicked the transformer switch with a dispassion known only to psychotics and adolescents) and then chopped into pieces to see what memories the writhing chunks of still-sentient flesh retained; the smell of the rubber membrane stretched across the top of my homemade, basement atomic cloud chamber, powered by a radioactive needle supplied free of charge to readers of *Scientific American*. These altars supplanted the marble slab and terra-cotta statues of Notre Dame as the touchstones of my inner quickening. They fed me in a way that religion had ceased to do, for through them I made my own discoveries, enjoyed

the fruits of my own efforts to grasp the world.

Yet another side of me—that which longed for something immeasurably greater than myself, greater even than the infinite spaces I discovered in macroastronomy and microphysics—grew dissatisfied. Science, with its facts and artifacts, its great men of sometimes vicious morals, taught me much but failed to satisfy. It was objective but not absolute.

So I found another religion; for a while, art became my God. But I soon discovered that art in this hyperkinetic century is largely divorced from any purpose beyond "self-expression." And the artists I met—not all, but the bulk—seemed to swirl around in Brownian motion until, higgledy-piggledy, they clumped together into "movements"—dada, surrealism, abstract expressionism—which lost rapidly their initial exuberance, the joy of breaking



through barriers, and degenerated into self-mockery or self-indulgence. The quest of the modern artist—genuine in its longing, admirable in its courage—yet lacks a system of checks and balances, a measure greater than individual genius to guide the practitioner to the ultimate goal.

Myriad “religions” clamored for my attention: social action, “self-improvement” through diet, exercise, and sport; the deep-sea fishing of depth psychology; more outré activities such as drug-taking, the study of paranormal phenomena, or the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (into which scientific institutions pour millions of dollars, a perfect expression of our cosmic loneliness). But sooner or later it dawned on me, as it does on many of us, that all these passions are stop-gap measures, pseudo-miracles, fast food; that behind this furious activity gnaws the Hunger.

Where, then, can we obtain real food to feed our famished beings? Why not revert to our childhood faith? Isn't this the real meaning of the parable of the prodigal son? Many people do return at this juncture: the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* ran a feature recently on wayward intellectuals who have rejoined the fold. But for a number of us—the majority of Americans, judging from the vertiginous drop in church attendance over the past decades—this avenue is blocked. We visit a church and feel a vague regret; there lies our childhood. But we are adults; the gifts of youth, although we may pass them along to our children in turn, are no longer available to us. Rejoining an old tradition, like

slipping into a pair of old shoes, can too easily lead us down dead-end trails. We seek a teaching that will confound our habits, our ordinary way of life—the way that got us into this impasse. We need to see with new eyes. Perhaps this explains why the great revitalizers of religion, those men and women that gain most from and give most to a particular tradition, are so often converts—Thomas Merton being the most dramatic example in this century.

Of course, new traditions that promise new eyes call to us daily—clamor, at times, from the modern minarets of street corners and television talk shows. And more convincingly, every library and bookstore now proffers what used to be the hidden wisdom of the ancients; translated and with commentaries, every esoteric text is now open to us. It's easy to browse, much harder to buy. How to choose what teaching to follow? The abundant options available to us seem to cancel each other out. We are paralyzed by our very freedom. Certain that a path to Paradise exists, able to unfold a sacred map—the Bible, the Dhammapada, the Upanishads—and trace out the route, we are yet unable, in everyday life, to figure out where to plant our feet. Lost in the Neverland, we peer around for a signpost pointing us home.

**W**e yearn for tradition, yet we have moved irrevocably beyond the tradition given to us at birth. Having experienced the world as believer, scientist, artist, we bear all these beings within us. Now we



d  
n  
u  
n  
F  
fr  
o  
a  
u  
o  
fe  
te  
  
in  
li  
ri  
ti  
w  
w  
n  
w  
fl  
in  
to  
an  
no  
yo  
br  
se  
th  
th  
Lo  
  
ce  
bu  
ta  
be  
na  
m

demand a method that brings us into alignment with the higher forces that nourished us as children, yet which acknowledges the multiple perspectives we have attained. From our current vantage point of distance from home and early youth, we see that our adolescent rejection of religion, based as it was in the heady exuberance of the unfolding intellect, has little to do with our current needs. Now we possess a different criterion by which to measure a teaching: whether it aids us in our quest.

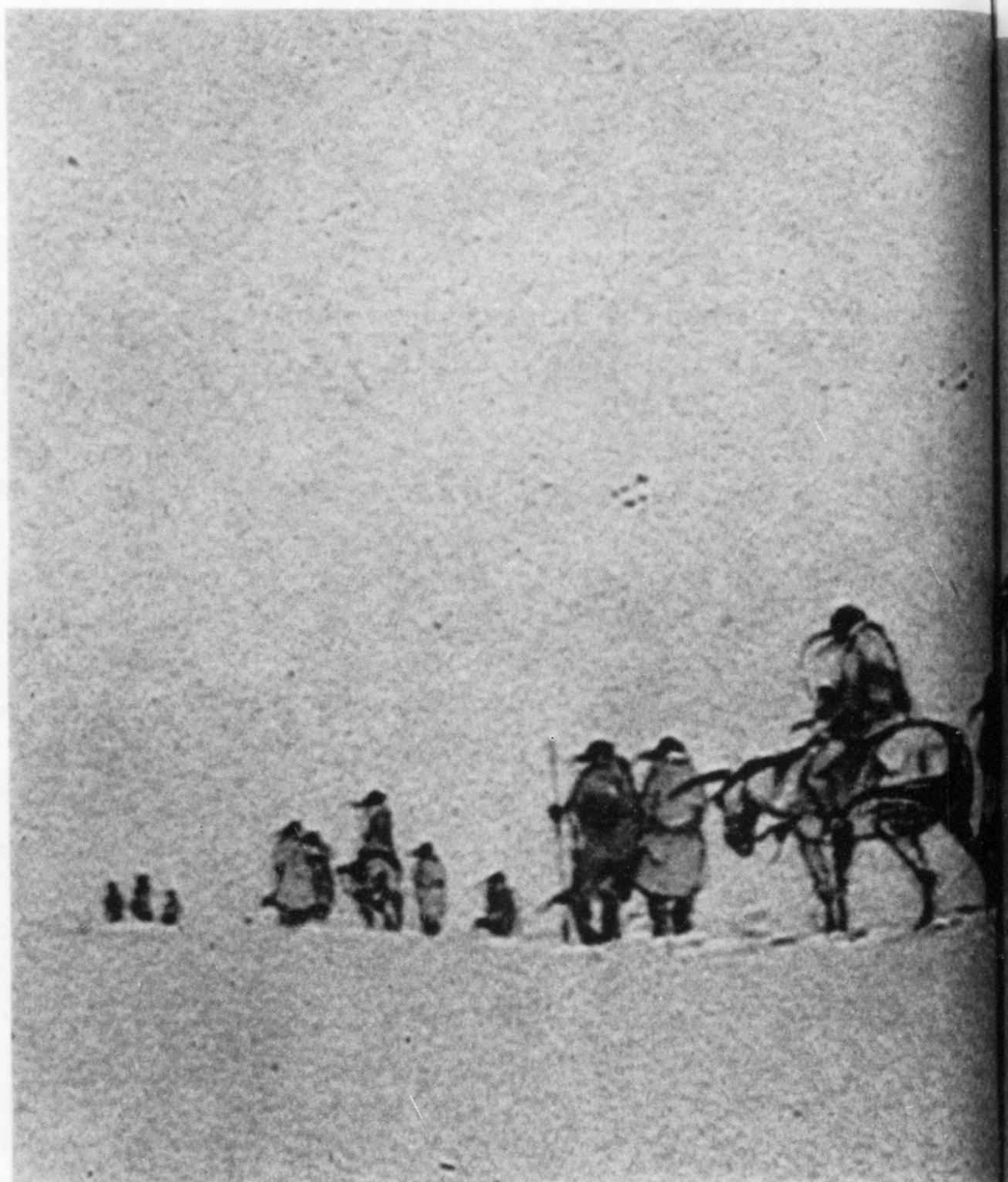
The hope, it seems to me, lies in learning to use the materials at hand. The inner life we seek can be stimulated by the experience of our inconsonance, by the contrition that arises in us if we measure our weakness against the great traditions from which we are exiled; if we pit our "dividedness," as Eliade defines it, against the unity we wish to attain; if we gaze without flinching at the gulf between our dazzling intellects and our empty hearts. We have to hold within ourselves scientist, artist, and priest, rejecting none, surrendering to none, struggling to discover who lies beyond them all, holding them in his embrace. In our oppositions there lies a great secret, a truth that applies even to Paradise; there is sense in Nicolas of Cusa's dictum that "The Wall of Paradise in which Thou, Lord, dwellest is built of contradictories."

Such challenges demand not complacency, but work. Since I possess nothing but myself—and rarely that—necessity dictates that I start my work there. I can begin by making hard choices, by discriminating between those influences that feed me and those that bleed me. William James

wrote that "there are dead feelings, dead ideas, and cold beliefs, and there are hot and live ones, and when one grows hot and alive within us, everything has to recrystallize around it." If I gravitate toward those ideas that nurture me, perhaps in time, as James described it, "a new perception, a sudden emotional shock . . . will make the whole fabric fall together, and then the center of gravity sinks into an attitude more stable."

Before I find the teaching appropriate to myself—or, more exactly, before it ferrets me out—I must construct an inner compass that will point me towards my true north, towards the Pole Star that shines within. I need to find a grain of truth in myself that will correspond to the right teaching when and if it appears. There is no guarantee that this teaching will find me. But I draw solace at this moment from a wise saying found in many traditions: "If you take one step, God will take a thousand." If I take this step, one day I may find myself before a teacher in whose presence artifice crumbles, excuses evaporate, lies die on my tongue. With the proper guidance, I may then find my way back to the groves of Paradise and match my flower to the resplendent garden from which it fell. ■

*Carol Zaleski suggested some of the ideas that appear in this article.*

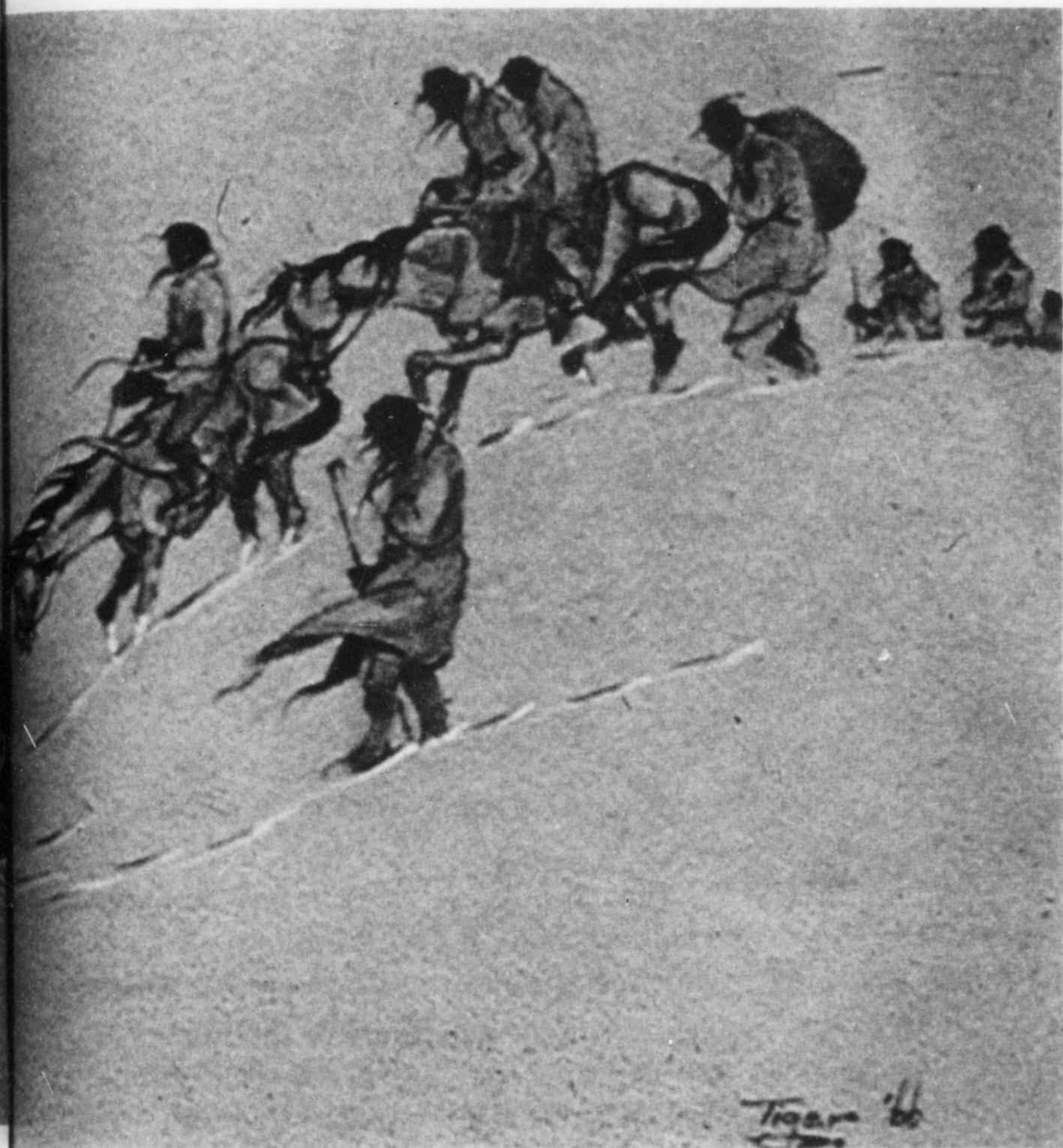


Endless Trail, *Jerome Tiger*, 1966

## Out of Chaos

VINE DELORIA, JR.

When we talk about exile today we are more than likely to have a political situation in mind; but the original use of the word is considerably more enlightening. The roots of the idea of exile are most prominently displayed in a religious or mythic context. Moses and Oedipus immediately come to mind—as well as a host of other historical and mythological figures—all experiencing exile or suffering the sense of alienation which such a status entails. The religious aspect of exile, in contrast to its political meaning, involves many intangible factors which help us change and enhance our knowledge of the world.



The mythic and traditional idea of exile entails the expulsion of the chosen one from his comfortable and often exalted position in society. He is then thrust into a barren place where he has to abandon his former knowledge of this world. He learns humility and faith, comprehends the transcendent nature of ultimate reality, and is initiated into the mysteries and secrets of the other, higher world. Then the exile returns to his society armed with his superior knowledge, and creates fundamental and lasting reforms, so that society marks its distinctive identity from the time he received his exilic commission.

Considering all the modern racial and ethnic groups to whom the idea of exile might be applied, none appears more deserving or representative of this status than North American Indians. In the half-millennium since the discovery of the western hemisphere, almost all Indian tribes have been forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands and subjected to cultural and religious indignities comparable in many ways to the manner in which the old culture heroes were stripped of their beliefs and presuppositions. At least this view is the popular explanation of the condition of Indians in modern American society. But



Trail of Tears, Jerome Tiger, 1966

there is considerably more to the story.

We immediately remember the removal of Indians from the Ohio valley and deep South as the most prominent historical instance of Indian exile. The bitter picture of thousands of Cherokees, Creeks, and Choctaws, their heads bowed in sorrow, walking west in the driving rain of a cold winter is deeply etched on our consciousness. Federal policy to clear the country east of the Mississippi of Indians was carried out with almost scientific precision, even gathering small bands of Winnebagos in Wisconsin and moving them a few hundred miles to Nebraska. Removal was understood as a sensible solution to the Indian problem until the 1890s; plans were even suggested to gather all the tribes in western Oklahoma, ring the area with forts, and maintain a massive concentration camp until such time as the Indians had either acculturated or vanished.

When we look at a map of the United States, however, we find that there were tribes that escaped this fate. Beyond the Mississippi-Missouri border, tribes were generally settled on reservations within their aboriginal homelands; and if we note that many groups are still living within their original occupancy areas, we might argue that exile is not an appropriate description of the condition of western Indians. But we would be mistaking the possession of the title to lands for the right to live on them freely, and substituting our own political concepts for the rich feeling toward lands that has always characterized Indian society.

Within the western context we are always inclined to see land as a commodity and think first of its ownership; in contrast, the traditional Indian understanding of land focuses on its use, and the duties people assume when they come to occupy it. When an Indian thinks about traditional lands he always talks about what the people did there, the animals who lived there and how the people related to them, the seasons of the year and how people responded to their changes, the manner in which the tribe acquired possession of the area, and the ceremonial functions it was required to perform to remain worthy of living there.

The idea of lands, therefore, tells us the difference between Indian and non-Indian views so we can determine whether or not an exile has occurred. Whites acquire land through purchase and sale, and land is a quantifiable, measurable entity; their primary responsibility as landowners is simply to prevent a loss of value; hence any responsibility the landowner may have is only to himself. Indian tribes acquire land as a gift from higher powers, and in turn they assume certain ceremonial duties which

must be performed as long as they live on and use the land. Removing an Indian tribe from its aboriginal territory, therefore, results in the destruction of ceremonial life and much of the cultural structure which has made ceremony and ritual significant. So the western tribes, although not completely removed from their lands in a geographical sense, experienced exile in much the same way as did their brothers from the east. Restrictions in the manner in which people use lands are as much a deprivation of land as actual loss of title.

Indian exile, because of its impact on ceremonial responsibilities, includes a religious dimension which modern political exile lacks. If we understand ceremony and ritual, performed as a condition of living in certain places, as the critical element which distinguishes each Indian group, then the cultural life of the people, its continuance or destruction, is the important fact in considering whether an exile has occurred. So while the Sioux, Apache, Blackfeet, and Crow, for example, all live within their original lands, persistent efforts to change their culture and exclusion from sacred places has produced a profound sense of exile.

A good example of this intangible, cultural/religious exile can be seen in the struggle of Taos Pueblo during this century to regain the Blue Lake area. Deprived of exclusive use of the lake, located near the Pueblo and central to its ceremonial life, when a national forest was established at the turn of the century, the Pueblo was given a "use permit" that only enabled it to visit the lake and conduct ceremonies but did not give it exclusive use. When the Pueblo filed its claims in the Indian Claims Commission, it carefully segregated the claim for the Blue Lake area and asked for restoration of the land to the Pueblo instead of a financial payment for its loss. After an

intensive struggle in Congress the Pueblo finally succeeded in getting a bill passed in which the United States recognized in the Pueblo the title to the lake area.

It might appear to the casual observer that title was the primary concern of the Pueblo during this argument and that the Pueblo was only acting in the same manner as any other land owner faced with similar circumstances. Such was not the case. Rather, from the Pueblo point of view, its religious responsibilities to the lake and surrounding lands were paramount and could only be carried out in their totality by the complete exclusion of all other activities from the area.

Obligations demanded by the lands upon which people lived were part of their understanding of the world; indeed, their view of life was grounded in the knowledge of these responsibilities. Tribal ritual life was intimately related to the seasons of the year. Other species shared the land and also responded to the annual rhythms of nature. Thus the people perceived that a social contract existed between men and the other animals. The human ceremonial life confirmed the existence of this equality and gave it sustenance. One could, perhaps, list the tribes according to the complexity of their ceremonial year and project their approximate longevity. We need not distinguish sedentary agricultural tribes from migratory hunting and fishing tribes. Indians had an intimate and precise knowledge of the habits and personality of both plant and animal life and therefore successful relationships with fish and game were no less indicative of the responsibility to land than were successful agricultural activities.

Migratory tribes suffered a considerably greater exile than did agricultural tribes when the Indians were restricted to the

reservations. Some of the most important ceremonies needed to be conducted at certain sacred places at specific times of the year. While tribes could hold ceremonies at the proper time, they could not always hold these rituals at the proper place. Sometimes the sacred materials essential to the ceremony could only be obtained at these sacred places and so different materials had to be substituted. These conditions changed ceremonial life considerably, introducing a process of erosion which has since eaten away the substance of rituals and responsibilities. One might even say that the ceremonial year of the migratory tribes was highly dependent upon sacred places whereas the sacred calendar of sedentary tribes had long since become dominant over special places for enactment. On this basis, perhaps, we can determine both the longevity of a tribe and the degree of trauma which confinement produced.

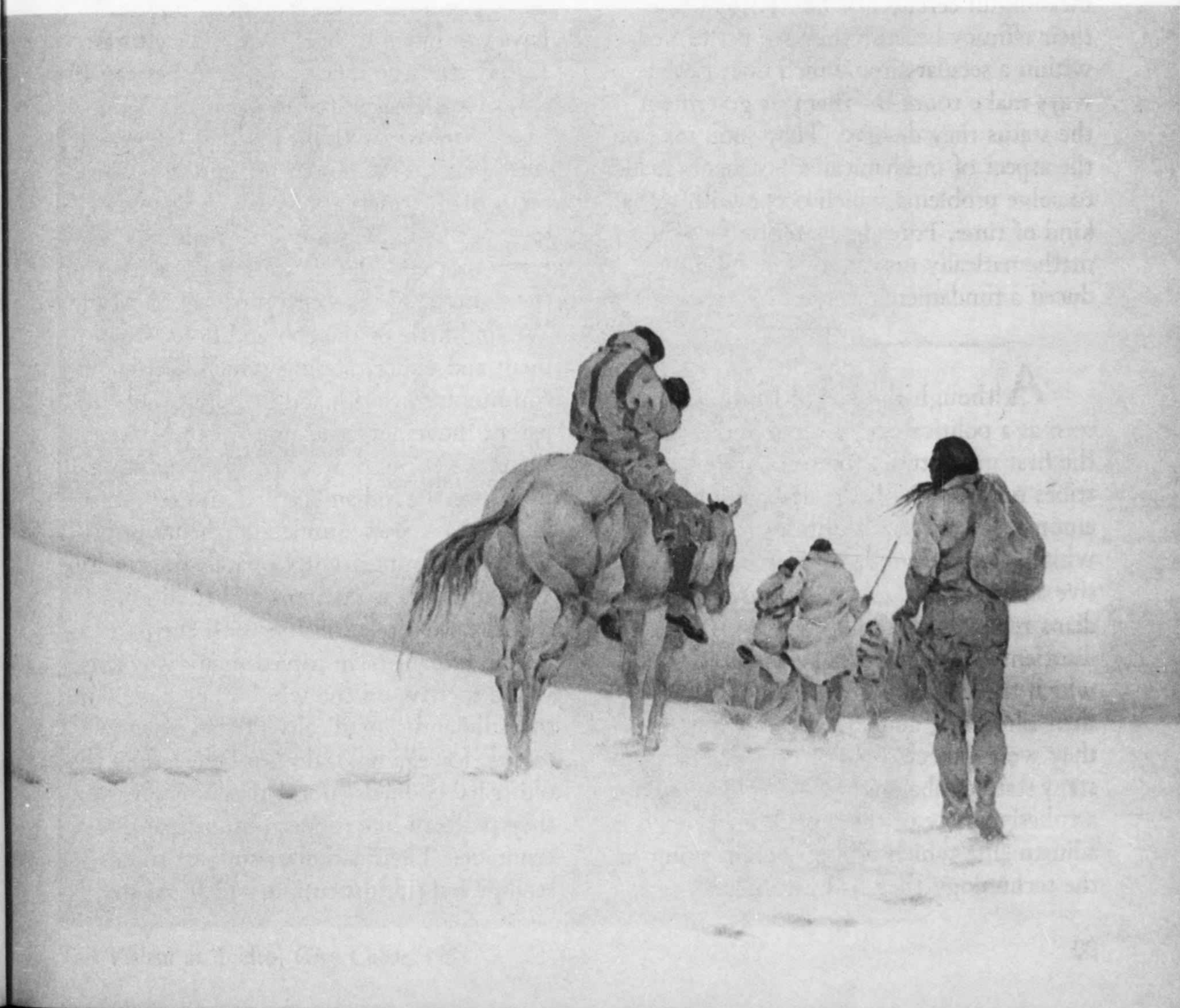
Not only did their geographic confinement work to destroy the sacred calendars of tribes, but the effort to perpetuate a traditional life within the confines of the reservation was vulnerable to overtures by the federal government, seeking to make the people abandon old ways and adopt new practices which were carefully orchestrated by a new sense of time—a measured time which had little to do with cosmic realities. It is debatable which factor was most important in the destruction of tribal ceremonial life: the prohibition of performances of traditional rituals by the government, or the introduction of the white man's system of keeping time. The answer to this question can be found in an analysis of the impact of each factor on individual tribes.

Many of the old people among the Sioux felt that the government prohibition of the ceremony of the "keeping of the soul," an important condolence ceremony

which linked generations of the tribe together in a more comprehensive cosmic reality, brought about the real destruction of ceremonial life in that tribe. On the other hand, in the Pacific Northwest the government tried to impose an agricultural system, and the farming calendar conflicted directly with fishing activities, producing the same erosion of ceremonial life. Prohibition of the potlatch was not nearly as important as the government's insistence that the Indians become farmers and the orientation of all programs to achieve that end.

Certainly the combination of these factors must be present in the immediate past

Untitled (Trail of Tears), Jerome Tiger, 1967



of every tribe. We can safely suggest that the new sense of time introduced into Indian life produced a sense of alienation which made Indians strangers in a land that was becoming increasingly strange—as whites changed it to suit themselves—and that the old ceremonies might have provided an emotional bulwark against this alienation, but their prohibition only increased the feeling of exile among the people of the tribe.

Unless time is understood as sacred, experienced in all its fullness, and so dominant a consideration in the life of a people that all other functions are subservient to it, it is impossible to have a complete and meaningful ceremonial life. Rituals lose their efficacy because they are performed within a secular time which does not always make room for them or give them the status they deserve. They soon take on the aspect of mechanical adjustments made to solve problems which occur within that kind of time. Forced adaptation to secular, mathematically measured time has produced a fundamental sense of alienation.

Although the loss of land must be seen as a political and economic disaster of the first magnitude, the real exile of the tribes occurred with the destruction of ceremonial life and the failure or inability of white society to offer a sensible and cohesive alternative to the traditions which Indians remembered. People became disoriented with respect to the world in which they lived. They could not practice their old ways, and the new ways which they were expected to learn were in a constant state of change because they were not a cohesive view of the world but simply adjustments which whites were making to the technology they had invented.

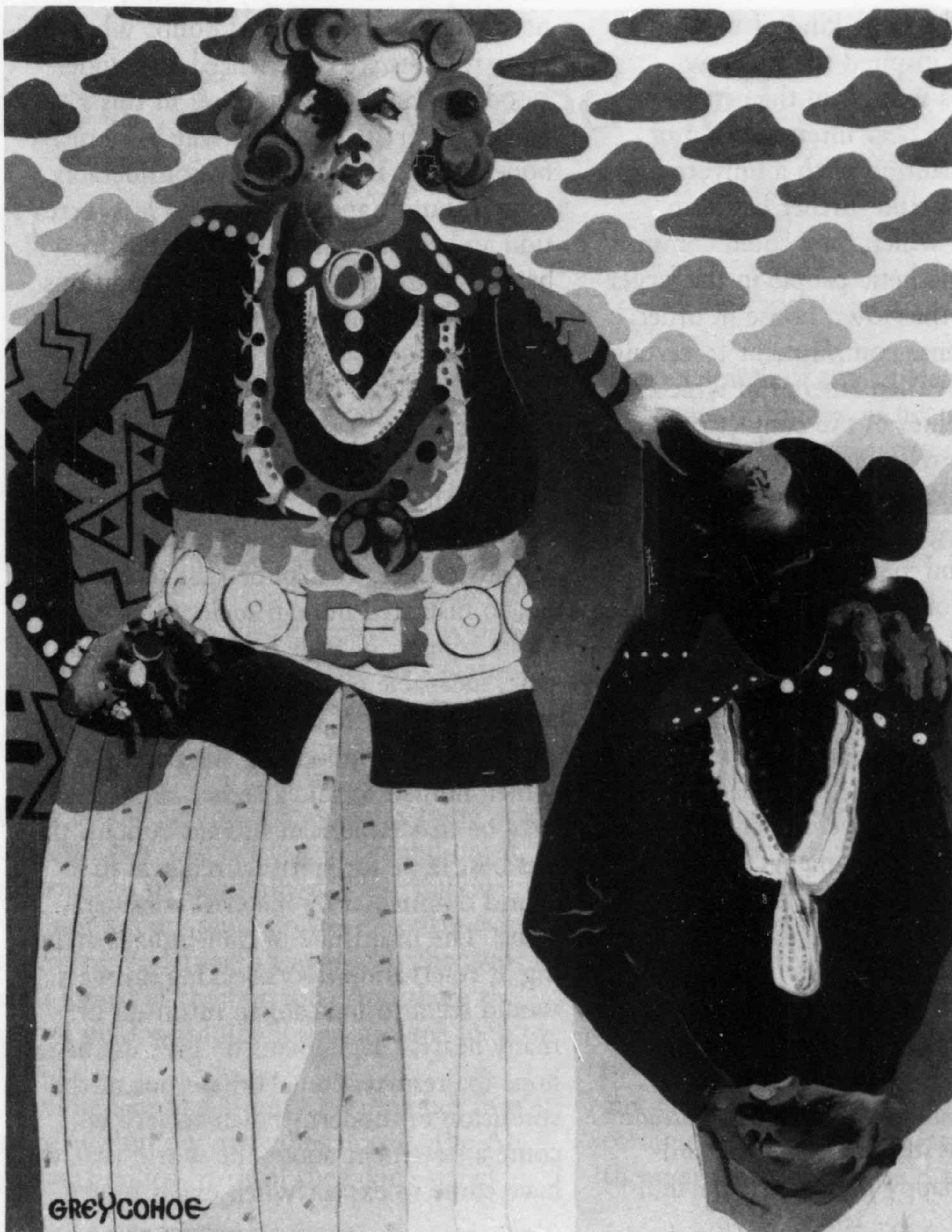
Had whites been able to maintain a sense of stability in their own society, which Indians had been admonished to imitate, the tribes might have been able to observe the integrity of the new way of life and make a successful transition to it. But the only alternative that white society had to offer was a chaotic and extreme individualism, prevented from irrational excesses only by occasional government intervention. The experiences of Indians since the 1880s have been uniform in the sense that they have been confined within the boundaries of white individualism and whenever and wherever they have attempted to recapture the old sense of community, technology and domestic American politics have combined to beat back their efforts.

There is no question that American Indians have been mired in a century-long exile. Almost anything that has happened to Indians in the decades since the establishment of the reservations can and must be seen in this light. Individual incidents are but minor episodes indicating the extent of the pattern that has encompassed tribal life. We find little of the ebb and flow of sentiment and understanding which keeps a community healthy and growing, only apparent movement back and forth between the poles of political independence and dependence. In Indian cultural and religious life we have seen a unilateral shedding of old forms coupled with a paralyzing inability to create new customs and traditions which have a relationship with the past. While Indians have copied many ways of white society, on the whole they have done so badly and sporadically. Tribal governments, for example, do not behave like the old tribal councils, nor, unfortunately, do they perform like modern municipal governments. Their activities suggest some strange hybrid institution which has no

knowledge of its constituents or responsibilities.

What, if anything, can Indians do to escape or overcome this condition? Originally, as we have seen, exile had a specific religious direction which suggested that exilic alienation was necessary to prepare an

individual for a significant mission. The Old Testament, if we can accept some of its prophetic ideas, saw the exile of the Jews as the means of preparing them to move forward from a parochial, tribal religion and become advocates of a more universal interpretation of the meaning of human social life. Their exile did not produce a new religious understanding so



Tall Visitor at Tocito, Grey Cohoe, 1981

much as it enabled the people to see themselves as representatives of a tradition which had within itself the potential to become an exemplary society, at peace with its neighbors and its environment. We may not be able to apply this model completely to the situation in which American Indians find themselves; but it is certainly important to our discussion of exile to try to do so.

We might, therefore, expect American Indians to discern, out of the chaos of their shattered lives, the same kind of message and mission that inspired the Hebrew prophets. Indians would, in this situation, begin to develop a new interpretation of their religious tradition with a universal application. They would further begin to seek out areas in which they could communicate with sympathetic people in the larger society, and put their own house in order. A process of intense commitment to certain social goals might then emerge in which the traditional values of pre-contact days would be seen as religious principles having a universal application. Most important, Indians would begin to probe deeper into their own past and view their remembered history as a primordial covenant.

It would be important and significant if we could report, in the activities of Indians today, the emergence of such behavior and beliefs. Unfortunately the nature of modern society precludes, or at least substantially inhibits, the development of new religious realities and statements. The vast majority of people, including Indians, believes that the world is primarily a physical thing, and the existence or importance of spiritual realities is given but token acknowledgement. Indians are the popular American minority group and the white majority deeply believes that Indians *already* have the secret mysteries which will produce a wise and happy life. Therefore Indi-

ans are plagued with a multitude of well-wishers and spectators hoping to discern, from within the Indian communities in which they visit, some indication of the substance of religious experience. This inundation of pilgrims makes it impossible for Indians to experience the solitude and abandonment which exile requires in order to teach its lessons.

Finally, modern American life is comparable to a large and bountiful Christmas tree. It promises only joy and fun, and never suggests a period of doubt when ultimate realities are experienced and understood. Indians are wandering in this plush fantasy desert in the same way as sensitive non-Indians. It will require considerably more thought and significantly less recreation and entertainment before Indians will be able to discern in their own traditions the substance and energy which lies dormant.

The exile of today is filled with frustration because it is being experienced in the midst of many other intensely competitive factors, all of which require energy and attention and none of which provide any lasting sustenance. It may be that technology has so insulated human society that the religious context of exile is now a thing of the past, incapable of realization in a wholly artificial world. If so, we have lost an important key to unlocking the potential which human social existence suggests. It may be that American Indians contain the last best hope for spiritual renewal in a world dominated by material considerations. The multitude of non-Indians arriving at reservation doors seeking answers would seem to indicate an intuition in many hearts that Indians do give us the last hope for resurrection. Perhaps out of the confusion of modern Indian society will come a statement about the world that we have come to expect when exiles return. ■

# Now, Farewell and Hail

P.L. TRAVERS

If anyone, in those early years, had asked me where I lived, I would not have been able to answer. For me, my homeland was Here and Now—not a place, not a time, a condition rather, or domain, enormous and yet intimate, close to the stars and the grasses. By night you went about cautiously lest the Pleiades catch in your hair; and by day lest you trod on a passing beetle that might well be a prince in disguise.

All was present and immediate, everything whole and complete, not a thing was missing. No road ever went on and on; it returned to its beginnings. The rainbow was not a mere semi-circle—it continued its course underneath the world, the two ends joined at the horizon. And there the pot of gold would be if you had the luck to find it.

The Sleeping Beauty awaited her moment within our crowding forest; the Argonauts sallied forth in their long-oared

ships in search of the Golden Fleece, and the waves of the sea, if not seen by the eye, resounded when you put a shell to your ear. Tilly Saville, carrying the daily pail of milk, scattered the farmyard cockerels that forever crowed three times for Peter who somewhere, behind a shed, would be weeping; angels squatted on the roof top, ready to take your soul if you died; if there was an oak tree anywhere Bonnie Prince Charlie would be sitting in it; the Three Grey Sisters, from whom Perseus had to steal an eye and a tooth, were in reality my two great-aunts and one of their aged friends; Lord Nelson, behind my bedroom door, nightly scraped the wall with a pencil in spite of the grown-up assurances that the sound was merely the creaking of wood as the house stretched itself luxuriously after the heat of the day; there were serpents, any one of whom slithering by would be coming direct from the Garden of Eden; the sound of a shot would tell us that

Nimrod was away hunting on the thither side of our mountain; tigers burned brightly in the nearby bush and God ubiquitously worked among us, forever unespied—playing the organ in church on Sundays, his feet bare on the pedals; unfolding the flower buds at the dead of night; peering through windows, listening at keyholes—how else could He know everything?—giving Halley's comet a push to speed it on its way to the stars; gossiping with the gossiping trees that no matter how hard you listened for it could never be caught in the act. Once He looked at me through the gap in a fence with the face of a golden sunflower, awesome, quizzical, resolute. I put up my hand and picked Him. This deed was reported to my parents who mildly—after all, it was only a flower!—expostulated with me. But when, in extenuation, I explained to them Who it was, they rose up on their high horses. No one, they said, could pick God and if they could, they would not. It was socially, if not ethically, unacceptable and not the kind of thing people did. I held my peace, knowing that this was not the case. Acceptable or not, *somebody* had done it. And, given the chance, would certainly do it again.



All things were possible in this world of Now. Near and far were alike to it. Huge, spherical and all-containing, it yet was so local and neighborly that it seemed as though I could put out my arms and take it to my breast.

But the sun and the rain were at work upon me, drawing me up like the seedlings. And as I grew, amidst all the abundance, I began to feel a wanting. Lacking nothing, I came to know lack—a longing, even a nostalgia, for something I had never known. In all the completeness, I was incomplete, a cup only half-filled.

This ache, this lonely weight of heart came upon me always at sunset, when the long rays lay across the earth like stripes on the back of a zebra. “There must be Something Else!” I would say. Achingly, I would say it. But all, I knew, was Here and Now, and if all, then within the all that Something Else awaited me, infolded, implicate. Was it an answer to an unheard question? If a question, how would I know the answer?

So, now grown to sapling height and pondering the riddle within me, I left my Now, my eternal homeland, or to put it more truly, I fell from it as ripe fruit falls from the tree, not of intent but inevitably, as if at the summons of an inner bell.

But who had fallen? Who had been summoned? I who had been a mere particle, a scantling of the whole I knew, had now become an entity, separate, a thing in itself, whose reflections threw themselves back at me from a glassy hall of mirrors.

Surprised at my new infinity, I turned among the images, delighting in each pose and posture, trying them on as though they were garments to see which was most becoming. Is this I? Or this? Or this? I could not choose. I was all of them, a multiple someone to whom life beckoned with auspicious finger, hinting at secrets to be revealed, promises fulfilled.

There were others, too, decked, like myself, in their own reflections, pressing towards a moving throng beyond the glassy walls. And, forgetting the weight I carried with me—for now it was no

weight at all, a mere lostling among my findings—I with my flying bannerets hurried to join the dance.

Hand after hand swung me round—O tinkers, O tailors, O candlestickmakers!—and I was led into the general motley dancing to the tune of the world.

We had become our own images and were all, it seemed, on the way to Tomorrow which would give us everything we needed—importance, relevance, power, pleasure, every ultimate satisfaction. “I want, I want!” was the general cry amid the fluttering oriflammes. Our friends were exultations, agonies, and the clamor always for “More, more!” Yes, even for the agonies “More!,” for the losing as well as the having—will the sailor come safely home from the sea, the hunter from the hill?—for thus we could reassure ourselves, “I suffer, therefore I am. I suffer, therefore I escape the Void, the Non-living, the Nothingness.”

Thus I danced the day of my life, seeking, learning, experiencing, always-living-and-always-dying, until the long setting of the sun. And again, facing the falling light, I felt the old familiar weight and paused in the gallimaufry.

“Where am I?” I asked myself and from somewhere came a voice not mine, a searching echo, “Where art thou?”

“On! On!” cried the dancers streaming by. But I stood still and let them pass, knowing that I had been hiding—hiding in the midst of the dance as in the rift of a dream, letting being take on the guise of becoming, homeless, looking for home.

“Where art thou?” That voice again!

And out, from under the leaves of Eden, I rose and was awake, awake and in my lost domain.

“I am here, Now, my eternal instant, that holds what was and will be.” I am here, Now, in the all that is here: Gilgamesh reaching for the scarlet flower and the serpent seizing it from him; Isis gathering back to herself the lost parts of Osiris;

the Buddha watching the golden bowl making its fateful way upstream; Galileo muttering into his beard his “Eppur si muove!”; Prometheus bringing down the fire that men, laboriously climbing, must carry back to Heaven; a son of Adam setting foot on the moon, another walking the sky; Demeter searching for her stolen daughter; Stabat Mater, heart-stopped, breath-stopped, waiting to take upon her knees her dead and living Son; Halley’s comet still sweeping past; Aratus singing to his lyre, “Full of Zeus are the cities, full of Zeus are the harbors, full of Zeus are all the ways of men”; the fox stealing into his hole, the crested wren swinging in her hanging mansion.

I am here, Now, a lost child found, with that Something Else, that painful riddle, again at work upon me. Perhaps it is not, indeed, a riddle but rather an intimation. There are things that may not be understood, except by standing under them, watching, waiting and empty, as a shell that the bird has flown. It could be that my lack is, on its obverse side, my treasure, that which calls and calls me back to the sole and living moment. I shall not be given to know its name nor even to ask to know it. Somewhere within me it is known, it has no need of words. And that which knows it also knows that I shall not stay long with you, my homeland. I shall fall away again and again, drawn by the magnet of Tomorrow and the treacherous hope that it exists, and carries gifts and surcease from care. Sages and seers, Now, dwell in your pavilions. To such as I it is given only to visit them from time to time and know that I have slept—slept and forgotten my meaning.

Death, be my friend! I came, waking, if weeping, into the world. Let me, waking, leave it.

And you, Sweet Lethe, run softly when I end my song that I may not drink deep of your tide. For there is a thing that I would remember.

Now is the day of everlasting. Now is the day of salvation. ■

# We Are All Witnesses

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELIE WIESEL



Photographs by Roger Lipsey

*The long exile of the Jews, from the Babylonian Exile recorded in the Bible to the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, has been both physical and spiritual fact. From Biblical Prophets to medieval Kabbalists, eighteenth-century Hasidim, and twentieth-century Zionists, exile has never been forgotten. No longer a physical reality, it remains one of the deepest and most fruitful insights of Judaism, which still awaits the Gathering of the Sparks and redemption from the spiritual exile to which all human beings and the cosmos itself are subject.*

*"I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner"—the ancient Hebrew poetry of exile is unforgettably powerful. But so too is the modern*

*poetry. PARABOLA asked Elie Wiesel, internationally recognized as one of the great Jewish writers of our time, to share his understanding of exile with us.*

*Elie Wiesel was born in 1928 in Sighet, a small Transylvanian town with a richly traditional Jewish life. From his grandfather, he heard Hasidic tales retold as if the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century holy men and seekers in the tales were still alive, their lives still a dialogue between the above and the below. From his father and mother, he received a liberal, broadly European point of view which complemented formal Jewish studies at schools in the town and region. And after school hours, he*

discovered an obscure synagogue caretaker who responded to his appeal by teaching him the elements of Kabbalah and the Jewish mystical view.

In 1944, the Nazis occupied the region and deported the Jews of Sighet to their deaths in concentration camps. At Auschwitz and Buchenwald until the liberation in 1945, Wiesel lost his grandparents, parents, and a sister but survived, deathly ill and in despair, vowing not to speak of his experience in the camps until ten years had passed. He found his way to Paris, where he resumed his studies and in time became a journalist. In these years, he worked not only with teachers but with a Teacher, the inscrutable Rav Mordecai Shushani, whom he has memorialized in one of his most joyful stories, "The Wandering Jew."

In 1958, the prominent French author, François Mauriac, convinced him that the time had come to speak. The result was *Night*, the brief and unforgettable account of his concentration camp experience which remains the most read and perhaps the most central work about The Holocaust. Thereafter, he continued to write—novels, stories, essays, plays, more than twenty books in all, ranging in theme from contemporary lives and issues to powerful recastings of Hasidic tales and the Hasidic world.

Elie Wiesel is a witness and a survivor; this alone gives his work moral authority. But beyond that, he has incarnated the true vocation of the writer with a rare seriousness and power.

He lives today in New York City with his wife and child and is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University and Chairman of the United States President's Commission on the Holocaust. These and many other honors are far from one's thoughts when one meets him. He erases any doubt we may have as to the essential dignity of man.

—Roger Lipsey

**Roger Lipsey** Exile and the return from exile can be seen from many different levels. When the feeling appears of not quite belonging here, of being a stranger, that can be the beginning of a movement of return. What do you see as the real exile?

**Elie Wiesel** I cannot see any other exile but the real exile, and that exile is total. It envelops all endeavors, all explorations, all illusions, all hopes, all triumphs, and this means that whatever we do is never complete. Our life is not complete, and lo and behold, our death is not complete: one does not die when one should, or the way one should. As you know, in our tradition we speak of exile in absolute categories. Exile envelops God Himself; God Himself is in exile. Language is in exile. The *Shekhinah*, of course, is supposed to be everywhere, and it is exile that carries it everywhere. So exile for us is something which is as absolute, as infinite, as life.

**R.L.** There is a feeling of being cut off, and yet there can be a thread, no more than a little thread to someone or something higher than oneself. When that is cut, that is the exile, don't you think?

**E.W.** Not necessarily. For example, exile has a link to solitude—why? Because we are away from home, we are away from our memories, we are away from security. But what is easier to bear—to be in exile alone, or with someone whom one loves? It may become worse to see the other person also suffering. So maybe the cutoff is a blessing and not a curse. One of the reasons why so many Hasidic rebbes sank into melancholy was precisely the *Galut ha-Shekhinah*, the Exile of the *Shekhinah*. They were ready to bear their own suffering, but not the suffering of God.

**R.L.** Is that your understanding today, or did they express that in their own way?

**E.W.** It's my understanding, which they didn't express. I discovered their melancholy, I was struck by it, and I couldn't understand why it was so. The greatest of the Hasidic masters, meaning the first generation, the companions and disciples of the Besht, all of them without any exception at one point in their lives had an encounter with melancholy, with deep depression. And I couldn't understand it, because all of them were speaking of joy and happiness and exhilaration. Why should they be in such danger of falling into depression? I studied it, I researched every case, always in their terms, with their books and stories. And the reason was a *transfer*, a transfer in the sense that they didn't encounter depression on their own account but because of the separation of the *Shekhinah*. And that's something, after all. If I suffer, maybe I've done something, but if God suffers, what right do I have to suffer for Him?

The real exile, the profound exile—where did it begin? It began with Adam, who fled God, and with Cain, who fled human beings. Or did it begin with Abraham, who fled his parents, or with Moses, who fled his enemies? There are categories in exile. God's exile also has many stages. In the Kabbalah, we read that God's exile—the Breaking of the Vessels—occurred very far back, at Creation. The Creation and exile were almost simultaneous. In the Midrash, we read that it happened during the destruction of the Temple, the first destruction.

**R.L.** God's exile from what?

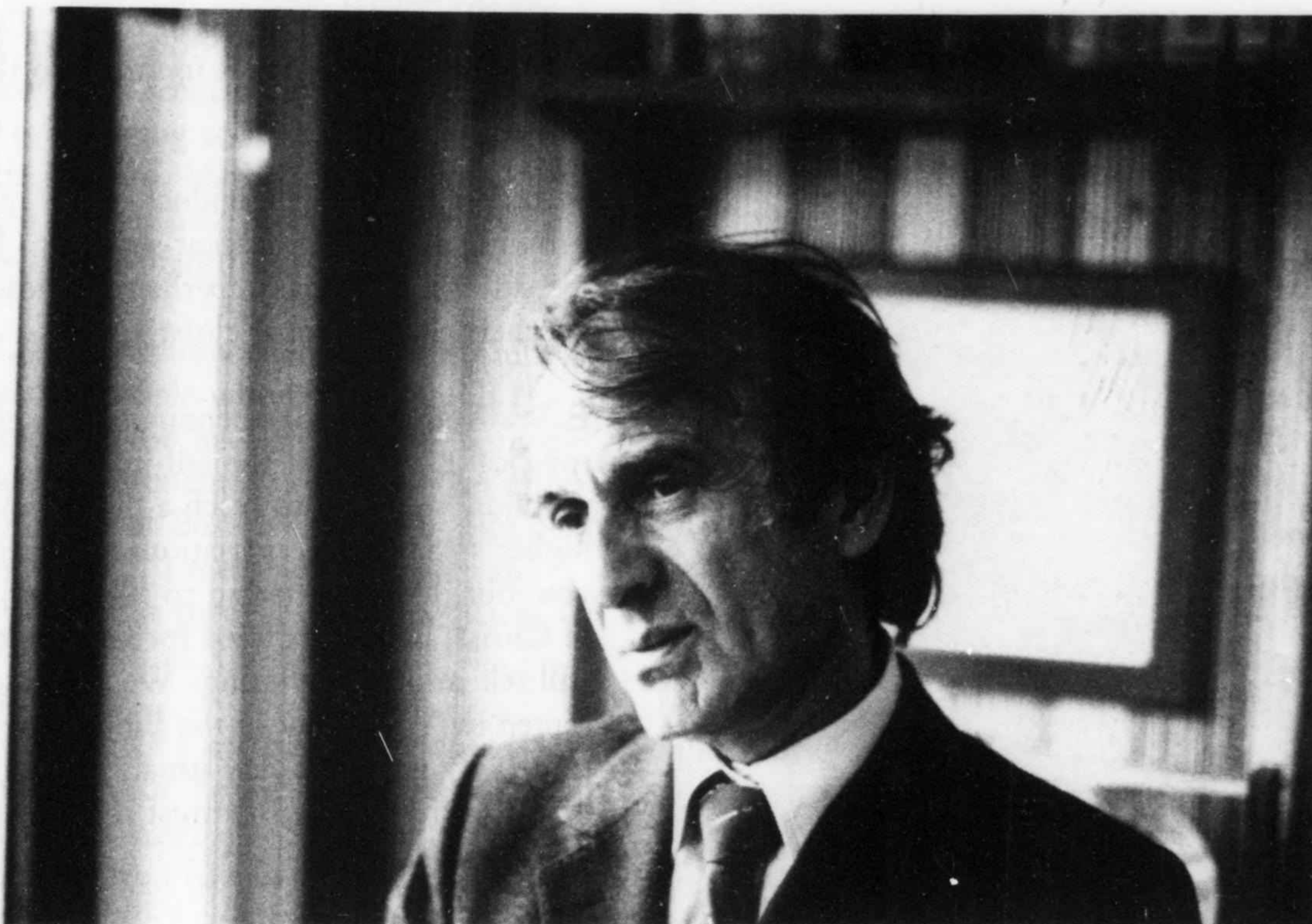
**E.W.** We don't know about that, we only know that *we are* in exile; that, we know.

And we ask ourselves, how did God our Father allow this to happen? There are many answers given. One answer was that God Himself is suffering.

**R.L.** Terrible trials and tests have been put in the way of the Jewish people, which are inseparably bound up with exile. After the concentration camps, someone said, "God saw that it was enough." After two thousand years, the Jews could return to their land. Does this mean the exile is over?

**E.W.** The entire period is a question. I envy those who think that God said it is enough. Maybe He said it's only a warning. I'm scared, I'm literally scared for the future of mankind. It seems to be the plan that whatever happens to the Jews later happens to the world. God gave the Law to all the peoples; we were the first to accept it, and then we shared it. Almost every phase in our civilization we later shared because we wanted to share; for after all, God said "I am your God," and we said, "Thank you, but don't be our God alone, be everyone's God." He gave the Torah, we are told in our tradition: He went from one people to another, from one nation to another, and nobody wanted it. And again, we accepted it—under duress, but we accepted. The moment we accepted, He said: everybody gets it!

There is a tendency in us: the more Jewish we want to be, the more universal we become. That is true in everything. There is a thesis to be elaborated about the connection, let's say, between the Inquisition in Spain and what happened to Spain, between the exodus of the Jews from Spain and the downfall of Spain. Somehow, when Jews left the country, it fell into bad shape. Very often, in Europe, they called them back.



**R.L.** What we've been talking about so far has more to do with all of us, with human beings in general. But when it comes to a man's own work on himself, then things have to be looked at in quite another way. A man learns enough about himself to see that something is lacking. He needs to live in the present, and not worry about past history or the future. Maybe the first thing he has to understand is that something in him is in exile from his true self.

**E.W.** Yes, but what you say about having no concern for past history or the future is impossible. How could human beings be human without the past?

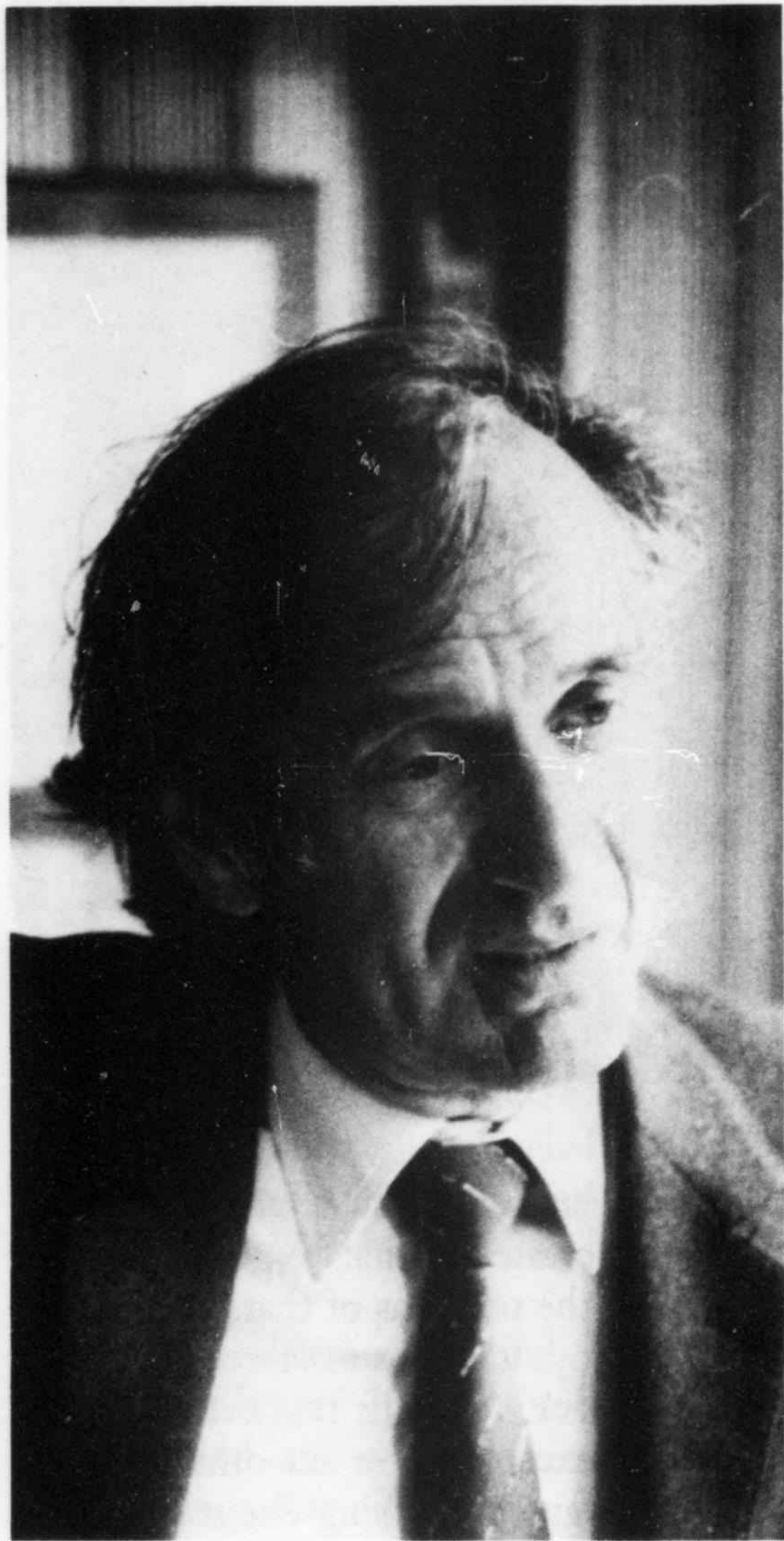
**R.L.** Yes, but what about the present moment when I can *be*?

**E.W.** What is exile? What is *galut*? Whenever I have a problem, I go to the

original Hebrew idioms. After all, the world was created in that language. Let's go back to the relations of that word: *gal*, move, *gil*, joy: it means *movement*, continuous movement. It means that everything is moving, except me; or the other way—I am moving and everything else stands still; or still a third way, we are not moving in the same direction. Then exile means to be displaced, I am here and I am not here. The content and form do not espouse one another. That means they are in exile. When a person is in exile, nothing fits.

**R.L.** Do you see a purpose in the exile?

**E.W.** We are told there is a purpose, the purpose is redemption. This is expressed in the Kabbalistic theory of the Gathering of the Sparks, after which the universe itself will be redeemed.



**R.L.** The Jewish people have had experiences which, had they stayed in one place, might never have occurred. And the rest of the world has had experiences because of the Jews which it might never have had. From the point of view of a return, could there have been something useful there?

**E.W.** Do you ask my opinion or the opinions of other people whom I could quote? In my personal opinion, I cannot bring myself to find a purpose to suffering, so much suffering. I am ready to accept my suffer-

ing, but not the suffering of others. Does it have a purpose, was it useful, two thousand years of suffering?

**R.L.** Yet there are individual stories of men growing as a result of their suffering. People suffer intentionally, perhaps, to reach another level, to come closer to God.

**E.W.** You find that phenomenon in every mystical movement: the self-inflicted wounds, suffering to reach a higher level, a higher sphere; then, variations occurred, you joined your suffering to the suffering of Christ, or you suffered for God, but it's still self-inflicted suffering. We never accepted it. You know in the Bible, when somebody renounces the usual, normal, everyday joys of life, he must make a sacrifice in atonement.

**R.L.** You said that the goal of exile is redemption. What does that mean?

**E.W.** I am told, I didn't invent it. My feeling is really that we did not choose exile, we never did. As long as we were in exile, we tried to rationalize it, and to see it in a larger context. We weren't satisfied to say that because Israel was in exile, the redemption would be only the redemption of Israel, a geographic redemption. We wanted to return to the Kingdom of David. In other words, we wanted the impossible. Only the impossible could explain or accept or justify so many sufferings. We speak of exile, and we speak of Messianic redemption, which is universal redemption—not only of the Jewish people but of Creation itself. And then all the imageries are possible: the wolf and the lamb at peace, there will be no slaves, justice will prevail.

**R.L.** Is there an exile within Judaism itself—not the exile of Jews in the diaspora versus

Jews in Israel, but an exile within the religion? The religion of the successful American Jew often seems very dilute, and yet there is a longing to return to a more authentic Judaism. Have authentic Jews reached out to these economically successful and religiously failed Jews?

**E.W.** I don't know them! I know quite a few young people whom I teach (and I love them), who have a profound, authentic quest for something truthful. Not only in my classes at Boston University, but wherever I go, I meet people who want something. But there is no support anymore. The future is frightening, it is frightening.

I had to give a lecture two years ago in a seminar on the Year 2000. My topic was the future of language. So I worked on it, and never have I had to work so hard on a lecture, because I couldn't imagine the Year 2000. Yet it's only fifteen years away! Is this the feeling of the millennium? I'm not sure. It's the feeling that we are racing too fast; technologically, scientifically, we're going too fast, and in ethics and in philosophy we remain behind. Technology is never really pure, it's always at the expense of something. Maybe that is what the young people are afraid of: they see themselves running, thrusting into the future at a tremendous pace, and they look for support in the past, which is there, and the past after all is synonymous with survival: we survived the past. But can we survive the future?

**R.L.** Until modern times, traditions and customs made it possible for people to have more or less tolerable lives; they supported people, the possibility of living closer to one's center was there. Now, there is such a collapse of many traditions. You and a few other authors have restored the Hasidic

tradition—

**E.W.** Well, I have not; I have tried to tell a few stories.

**R.L.** It seems as if, in the absence of traditions, the master is terribly important—the single individual who concentrates the knowledge and whose very presence in a room changes the way people think and feel.

**E.W.** Absolutely, absolutely, look at the Besht: when he came to a town, the simple fact that he was there influenced people. Moses—I would be afraid to meet Moses, but I would like to meet him. He was the one who was a watershed in everything, not only to his disciples but to all the people that he and his disciples had never met.

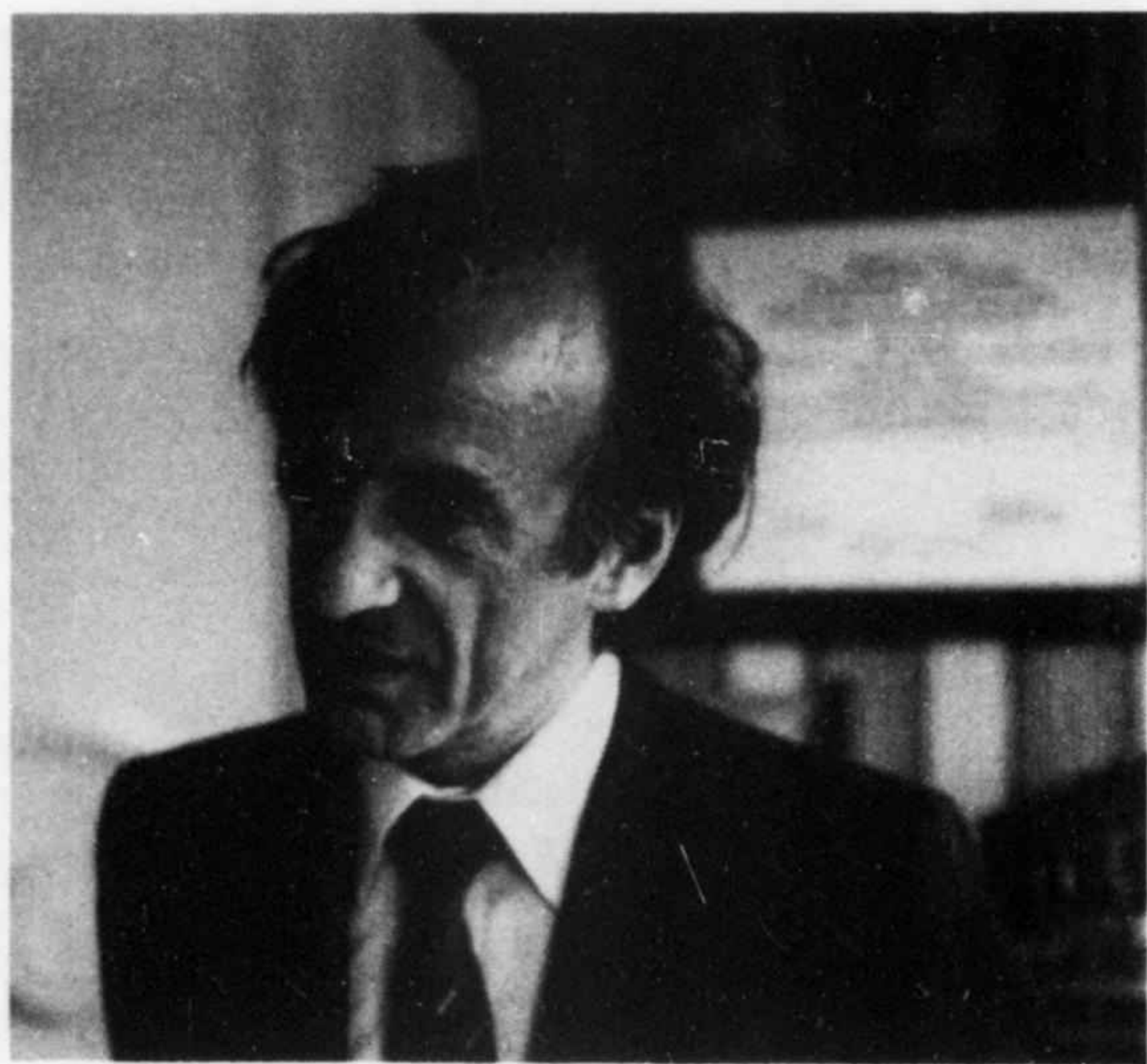
**R.L.** Is there a teacher to send people to now—a spiritual guide?

**E.W.** Ah, this is a disturbing question. I am looking for one. My own case is different, because I *had* teachers. The longing is not only for teachers but for what they represent, a whole world.

Hasidism is very beautiful, but to me it's amazing to see Hasidism in New York. It's so atypical here. Hasidism had to be in villages; it was born in villages, it was meant for villages. Hasidism is not only a structure of perceptions or of melodies or of stories, it is a geography. It had to be in the mountains of Carpathia, and in the villages there that were abandoned and forsaken. It was never a city movement, it was a village movement. You know, some streets in Brooklyn are structured like the villages in Eastern Europe. But the fact is that the Hasidic movement suffered most of the losses. I think three Masters survived among hundreds and hundreds.

**R.L.** There is a sense in which Hasidism was very healthy and alive even in 1930, but in your books you have also implied that there was a decline after the first three generations in the Hasidic movement.

**E.W.** I confess, I glorify them. I do it with love, because whenever I have to repeat something negative it hurts me so much. If I had written my books in the 1930s, like Martin Buber, I would have become an objective, neutral, critical historian of normative Hasidism; why not? But



today this wouldn't do them justice. Of course, I know the truth—the first and second generations, and the third, were great. The fourth was less great.

**R.L.** The third generation was trained by the Great Maggid?

**E.W.** Yes, and then began the dynasties, families, and everywhere you found children becoming heads of schools. It was no longer in the tradition of the Besht. The Besht's successor was not his son, but a disciple. Moses left his succession not to his children but to his disciple Joshua. That is

the tradition: it goes from master to disciple, not from master to son. But in later Hasidism, it went from father to son.

**R.L.** So that people wouldn't fight and envy each other?

**E.W.** They fought! Why? Because really the generations became less worthy.

**R.L.** Isn't there always the "chain of tradition"? Doesn't *someone* always appear to maintain the life behind Judaism or behind any tradition—the *melamed vav* in Jewish tradition?

**E.W.** The *melamed vav* is by definition unknown. But that doesn't matter. There are always masters, but they change. That is of the very essence of Judaism. How was the tradition handed down? Moses gave it to the Elders, the Elders to the Judges, the Judges to the Prophets, then to the Teachers, then to other Teachers. Every generation has had its paradigmatic personage. Somehow, Jewish history has always managed to find those who kept it alive.

**R.L.** There has been something Biblical about recent Jewish history, hasn't there?

**E.W.** I think we live in Biblical times. This is the conclusion I have reached. We live in extraordinary times.

**R.L.** To see through the inner exile, to find oneself deeply happy to be here and to be what one is, accepting whatever burdens and suffering there may be—this requires a great deal of intensity. Where is the intensity in Judaism today? Where is the real quest?

**E.W.** Our times are Biblical, but also paradoxical. On one hand, you may say we

have never been so poor because of what we have lost; on the other, when you see what is going on in Jewish life, it's amazing. Never has Talmud been taught in so many places as it is being taught now. Never has there been such growth. Never has Hasidism been so popular. People want to study, they want to come along to communities.

In France, all those young people in '68 who belonged to the Maoists, the Trotskyites, etc.—what are they doing now? They are studying Talmud! Jean-Paul Sartre's adopted daughter just published a translation of *Eyn Ya'akov*, a huge Midrashic work. You can't imagine what's happening there.

**R.L.** Abraham Heschel once said that the "school" in the sense of "school of the prophets" is missing in Judaism.

**E.W.** It's difficult to evaluate, for geographic reasons again. In a small city with 15,000 Jews, sixty or seventy *shuls*, houses of prayer and study, it was easy—easier than it can be in New York or Chicago or Los Angeles. Here we need other methods. But the new methods must never be against the orthodox; a new method must be an outgrowth of orthodoxy but never *against it*. If the Talmud had been against the Prophets, there would be no Talmud; the Talmud came to complement. If the Midrash later came against the Talmud, it would never have grown; if Rashi had been *against*—but never *against*; it's always an adjustment, but not in opposition to. A new method is possible, it is necessary. We have to remember that we need also strong roots.

**R.L.** May I ask: you have been a witness, and—

**E.W.** We are all witnesses, I have no privilege.

**R.L.** But you have witnessed such things as most people don't see. As a witness, you help us all to remember: what is it we should remember?

**E.W.** Everything! We have to remember that we can't remember. My fear really is that memory is in exile. The only possible salvation of the Jewish people is to remember our whole experience. But this memory is so powerful, so exalted, that we can't remember fully: it is bigger than us, bigger than all of us, than all the people. So how do you transform it into memory? Memory must not stop. If I were to stop in, let's say, 1944, it would lead to madness. And then I realize that, after all, there was a Jewish life before, and there I find my friends and my teachers, and I go back and find my grandparents, and go back and I find the Hasidim, and go back and find the Kabbalists, and I go back—memory must go back until it goes back to the source of memory. It is a creative channel.

**R.L.** Everything in Judaism says, "Remember."

**E.W.** Absolutely. We have lived through such events.

**R.L.** In a certain way, my life is not only the events of my life. Isn't this something that has to be faced?

**E.W.** Events are outside, reverberations inside. To be awake means to listen to these events. Each event is a code, history is telling us something, God is telling us something, and if we don't try to decode the message, then what will make us understand it?

# The Strife of Interpreting: The Moral Burden of Imagination

RICHARD R. NIEBUHR

Our general life today is one of strife. We can distinguish various kinds of strife, but we can untangle them only with great difficulty. Strife placards itself in the slogans and symbolical facts that we daily encounter in our communications media: burning effigies of "Uncle Sam" in the streets of Teheran, cities of tents stretching along the borders of Cambodia and El Salvador, starving villages in the Sahel, ruined bodies and buildings in Lebanon. Here in the United States policy makers shape their actions in fearful response to the specter of a league of enemies encroaching upon "our" sphere of influence and gaining a more secure foothold in the countries of Latin America. But fear begets fear; and others, perceiving the policy makers' fear, act out of their own fear that those who define our nation's interests will once again, as they did in Vietnam, set in motion the great Wheel of Destruction that heedlessly crushes combatants and bystanders alike wherever it chooses to roll.

This readiness to read the approaching future as a menacing presence is the child of long experience; for strife has measured out grievous change in every decade imprinted on our social memory. There lives in that memory, for example, the devastation of the 1930s: the disasters that befell us in the collapse of our economy and the blossoming of the dust bowls in the Great Plains, the homelessness into which families were cast, and the breadlines in which the destitute waited. To be sure, the larger part of the nation's present population has been born since that depression. But our blighted economy a half century later and the escalating number of unemployed and uprooted make these realities vivid to us again. The World War of the 1940s, with all the horrors of the radical wickedness and incomprehensible destruction it brought forth, lowers over us ever more ominously in the lurid image of the war-created mushroom cloud. The Cold War of the '50s and its virus of universal distrust

and domestic suspicion are still our dreadful legacy. The assassinations, riots and burning cities, jungle warfare and political deceptions of the 1960s and 70s inhabit our imaginations and whisper to us how we ought to interpret what is happening now in Central America, in the Middle East, and in other regions of the globe. Our forebodings of the future in turn intensify these memories of the recent past.

Yet strife not only effects change for the worse; it can also create possibilities of change for the better. The failures and disasters of the 1930s made an opportunity for the development of a new kind of federal executive and legislative accountability to the people as a whole for restraining unbridled and destructive competition for wealth, for fostering conservation of farmland and water, for creating employment for the jobless. World War II opened the way for the independence of peoples who had been the colonial satellites of the warring empires. For a time, at least, the deep turmoil in our country in the 1950s and '60s helped to generate a new national dedication to the building of a "Great Society," involving more stringent laws to ensure the right of all to vote, a more realistic recognition of the ubiquity of racial and sexual discrimination, and the deployment of federal tax monies for the release of the poor from the social obstructions entrapping them. These new and life-enhancing possibilities born of strife serve us as much needed auguries of hope and endow us with courage to engage the future resolutely.

The pages of ancient philosophy record Heracleitus as having said: "All things come into being and pass away through strife." These words still commend themselves to us as empirically valid. But we cannot content ourselves with the mere passive recognition of the "law" of strife; our sense of moral responsibility commands us to take active part in shaping the determinations of this law.

### *Religion in Strife*

Strife is a fact not only of our social and political experience; it is a fact also of our collective religious life. To be sure, conventional social analysis all but conceals

---

*"... even we of the "modernized" west, as well as our contemporaries in other regions of the globe, still shape our conduct not only by prudent calculations of individual or national interests but by imagining ourselves as protagonists in great dramas of mythic proportions, in conflicts of order with chaos, good with evil."*

---

the action of religion, focusing as it does on the patterns of economic and political processes and—above all—on the military violence they breed. The recognition of religion as a primary potency in our collective experience is still woefully underdeveloped. As a society we are little attentive to the religious energies that affect us, particularly the religious loyalties of communities to which we do not belong, and we are therefore disadvantaged in our interpreting of the tumultuous world environing us. The still prevalent notion that religion is an evolutionary phase, a myth-making stage through which cultures pass, encourages us to believe that only tattered remnants of religion now remain, principally among isolated peoples. The notion is part of our inheritance from Enlightenment rationalism and nineteenth-century speculative philosophy of history. But as a guide to interpreting living experience, it veils the fact that even we of the "modernized" west, as well as our contemporaries in other regions of the globe, still shape our conduct not only by prudent calculations of individual or national interests but by

imagining ourselves as protagonists in great dramas of mythic proportions, in conflicts of order with chaos, good with evil. The disadvantage that falls to us from this self-incurred ignorance of our nature is particularly apparent in the dominant institutions which gather, report, and comment on news of events at home and abroad; for they are often inept in discerning and intelligently describing the action of religious symbols and loyalties in our common life. The perceptual and cognitive habits governing these institutions weaken their power of interpreting what is going on. This weakness showed itself dramatically in the media's struggle to interpret the recent rev-

---

*"We are compelled to heed these theologies—Black theologies, women's theologies, liberation theologies of various peoples in various parts of our world—because we know them to be the verbal and public signs of immeasurable pain."*

---

olution in Iran. Newspapers and television networks were able to do little more than represent those events as merely a puzzling outbreak of inexplicable fanaticism. Still today we tend to understand that ongoing series of events as having culminated in the seizure of American citizens as hostages; we still regard what was—and is—a violent religious storm as essentially an act of "international terrorism." But this is to misinterpret a complex cultural and religious process as simply a political calamity.

Presently we are all witnesses to another kind of strife that has deep religious significance, though that significance is not widely recognized. This is the strife between the individual and corporate persons who value economic development above all other values—as our highest good and the goal of history—on the one hand; and, on

the other, those who are committed to the ideal of conserving all life, to the conserving of the balance of nature. The epithets that each party hurls at the other do much to disguise the religious character of the conflict. Nevertheless, the perception and valuation of nature as a household of life, which is what the word "ecology" (*oikos* or household + *logos* or knowledge) symbolizes, is significantly religious in its ethos, drawing as it does on American Transcendentalist religious literature and philosophy and grounding its convictions in religious motifs, specifically in the ancient and ever recurring idea of a harmony or law of proportionality governing the cosmos. This valuation of nature as a house of life espouses a deeper and wider consent to being than does the more conventional or presently publicized way of thinking, which trusts in the profit motive as a mechanism adequate to the ordering of human life and the global concord on which all life depends. The conflict is profound and is growing ever more strident. Affecting the whole of our collective life, it is indeed of mythic proportions and verifies the fact that the world we look upon and try to see into is a complexly religious world, by whose processes and actions we are repeatedly taken unaware. What some, though still only a relatively few, among the ecologically minded have perceived is that an explicit religious symbol system, an eloquent theology, is needed to give voice to the woundedness of nature, to cry out in behalf of the liberation of all living things from mindless exploitation.

Indeed, the religious utterances, the theologies, of which we have become most keenly aware in recent times are just such cries expressing a deep woundedness, if not explicitly in behalf of all that is living still in behalf of peoples manifestly wounded and oppressed. We are compelled to heed these theologies—Black theologies, women's theologies, liberation theologies of various peoples in various parts of our world—because we know them to be the

verbal and public signs of immeasurable pain. These theologies are registrations—as on a seismograph of the spirit—of dislocations in the deepest recesses of our being. And they will not pass away until the body of our common life begins to change into a new heaven and a new earth. There was a time when the word “theology” signified intellectual hair-splitting, the making of distinctions that are so fine they are not real distinctions at all. This was the theo-

gy of the schools or scholasticism. But it is impossible now to live as fully sentient beings in our experiential world and employ the word theology in that fashion. For the manifest impetus of vital theology today is to symbolize the groaning creation, the spirit-flesh-and-blood that are in travail, waiting to be delivered from bondage “into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Moreover, this travail is of such magnitude that no one can deny its reality.



It is the mother of our religion, and the birthplace of creative imagination.

Theology of this root kind that symbolizes the groaning creation comes to public utterance as response to covenants and promises woven into the fabric of life itself. Such theology is the striving to read and interpret the texts of experience for the ultimate purpose of wringing from them the fulfillment of these promises. The texts we try to interpret are, of course, of many kinds, a fact that we need to explore further. But the one text that still threads all of the other texts of our experience is the Bible, if in no other sense than that biblical history and narrative remains the objective "other half" of our corporate social and moral imagination. Equal justice and equal dignity are not merely abstract values; they are real energies that have become laws of our conscience and imagination, the source of our sense of worth; and they have come to lodge in us through our perpetual quest of the covenant of life, of which the Bible is the objective or enduring social symbol. Whoever in our world endeavors to read experience religiously reads to lay hold on the promise of life.

This is the great fact to which conventional social analysis of the sort employed by our news gathering and interpreting institutions is oblivious. It recognizes convocations of bishops and the travels of prelates and evangelists as religious events—and also, of course, the often startling activities of "new" religions and cults; but it does not recognize the wider, deeper thirst for life that continues so powerfully to motivate human beings.

### *Reading as Religious Action*

The variety of ways in which we read and interpret books reflects the complexity of our experience and the multiplicity of the interests and the purposes we pursue. We read to be distracted and amused, to be instructed, to acquire skills, and to be made

wise. In all these kinds of reading we must discriminate, gather up, and interpret—at one and the same time—the signs and characters to which our minds attend.

We also read for religious purposes. Indeed, where we encounter religion we are apt to encounter a peculiarly intense engagement with texts. People dream of and treasure sacred texts: stories and histories, coded laws, hymnic poetry. Texts, however, need not be written: they may also be told or sung, gestured and danced, sculpted or built into temples. Different kinds of

---

*"Whoever in our world endeavors to read experience religiously reads to lay hold on the promise of life."*

---

systems of symbols serve the purpose of providing text matter, although they tend to flow into one another. The one thing necessary is a sincere desire to read them. Whether it is the reading and interpreting that create the text as sacred or the text that makes the reading and interpreting religious is a matter that now exceeds our understanding. In our experience, however, religious reading and religious text actualize each other.

The religious traditions we commonly identify as living in a relation of special intimacy with sacred books are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. (Of course, the number of religious traditions that give writings a central role is larger.) For purposes of very broad characterization scholars describe these religions as teaching that their scriptures are divine words, words that are realities in themselves, the sacred present in time and space in literal form. Certainly this conviction appears in Christianity and has become starkly evident at times. It is notable in the confessions of faith and dogmatic theses of the sixteenth-century European reformation and in the

systematizations of Protestant faith made by seventeenth-century scholastics. "Canonical scriptures," according to these divines, "are the actual true words of God," manifesting the quality of perspicuity or utter clarity. No recourse to unwritten words or other supplements to scripture is needed, not even to the traditions of the church. Amandus Polanus, a representative figure among these systematizers, writes:

All doctrines . . . the knowledge of which is necessary for eternal life, are presented with undoubted clarity in Holy Scripture for him who reads it with a believing mind, i.e., according to the *regula fidei et caritas* [the rule of faith and love]. It follows from this that the obscure passages of Scripture are to be explained by the unambiguously clear ones or the *analogia fidei* [analogy of faith] based on them.<sup>1</sup>

But we today know ourselves to be greatly distanced from Polanus's cast of mind. For one thing, we are not so confident that we can distinguish between the passages that are "unambiguously clear" and those that are "obscure." Moreover, we find ourselves to be different from the orthodox of earlier times, because we are not able to read Scripture—or any writing from which we desire counsel and wisdom—while abiding solely within its pages and bringing nothing to them from beyond their precincts.

### Deep Reading

Dedicated readers, lovers of the creative word, who brood rather than skim over the characters on the page, and counsel and read themselves as much as the lines over which they pore, seem to be drawn irresistibly to a less partitioned and more freely flowing region of language and experience. It is a region where established word patterns are vulnerable to disturbance by intuitions and surmises that rise from the depths of invention in ourselves in newly retrieved symbols phosphorescent

with the freshly apprehended qualities and processes they name. This is the region of deep reading and, for that matter, of deep telling, for we must become authors ourselves in order to decipher the messages coded upon the pages. This region includes not only the high art of inspired prophets, sages, and poets but also the more tentative and halting words of those who are still finding their way to knowledge and wisdom not yet achieved. We have prolific examples of the latter in diaries, notebooks, and letters, which are often as valuable to us as are finished works. They show us thinking, meditating, and imagining in the process of growing; they mirror to us the ways in which our own intelligence moves. Robert Alter has observed that the process of literary creation, as it is exhibited in biblical narrative, is an unending conflict between "the necessity to use established

---

*... we find ourselves to be different from the orthodox of earlier times, because we are not able to read Scripture—or any writing from which we desire counsel and wisdom—while abiding solely within its pages and bringing nothing to them from beyond their precincts."*

---

forms in order to communicate coherently and the necessity to break and remake those forms," because patterns repeated merely automatically no longer carry news that refreshes and augments us.<sup>2</sup> Art, Alter adds, is "the dance of significant innovation" upon the ground of the familiar and expected. We can supplement this remark with the further observation that the art of reading deeply is also an unending conflict between convention and innovation. It is the interpolation of the text or passage into the reader's experience and the reader's ex-

perience into the passage, not, to be sure, either haphazardly or according to rigid rules but tactfully and experimentally. Earlier generations of readers of Scripture—including contemporaries of Polanus—knew this art well; and art is what they understood it to be. These are the persons who, following a precept expressed by Sebastian Frank, found in the Bible a reflection and adumbration of their own experience. Sometimes they searched in themselves for experiences answering to the examples they encountered in biblical narratives or in the Psalms or in other Wisdom

---

*“... To read in the way described is to interpret, and interpretation is always a contest, at times a contest that is a game and at times a strife with personal and social powers.”*

---

Writings; sometimes they were overcome by an unexpected surfacing in their own awareness of an experience that deepened the example set before them on the printed page.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the texts we read we merely employ as perishable artifacts. We skip through or skim them, we dip into them. But in deep reading we do not so much have a text “before” us as a “presence” of voices, of living words and symbols, around us. We do not scan lines seeking what may please us, for we are not attending to a two-dimensional surface. Rather we are inside a voluminous space whose proportions we are attempting to gauge and whose twists and turns we are trying to discern. Reading of this kind is similar to living in a sprawling house, in which we climb up and down and explore adjoining rooms, halls, and yard. For the deep reading we do makes as intimate a part of our lives as the houses in which we grow up and grow older. The text annexes our

imagination to itself; conversely, our imaginations annex the text to us, and we wander in corridors and living spaces fabricated of both. In such reading we no longer *encounter* the text. We *dwell* in it, and the text *dwells* in us. But deep reading is still more lively and complex: for we are continuously stepping in and out of this voluminous space, now regarding its written symbols from the “outside” as though inscribed on a facade and now living and exploring in their midst.

This I believe to be a fair description of the reading we do, not of every kind of reading, but of reading for “great” purposes, reading for moral and religious enlargement. If it is not accurate in every detail, it is at least faithful to the process in general. To read in the way described is to interpret, and interpretation is always a contest, at times a contest that is a game and at times a strife with personal and social powers.

### *Interpretation*

We *interpret* not only when we read but also when we think or communicate with ourselves, when we speak with others, and often when we act. Philosophers have written at length on the art and rules of interpretation and all that it involves. In many respects the most insightful and helpful—if also demanding—of them are Friedrich Schleiermacher and Charles Sanders Peirce. They were pioneers in formulating the art of interpretation and the philosophy of signs. But for the task at hand, what we must be clear about is that interpreting is a *process*, one that issues in acts of valuation, and that the outcome of the action of interpreting can be momentous; indeed, it is momentous more often than we are apt to suppose.

When we read Miguel de Unamuno’s words alluding to his passage through skepticism, “I was a pilgrim in the fields of reason . . . ,” we must retrieve from our

own experience some appropriate feelings of mental wandering and lostness which make this fresh and surprising metaphor both immediately concrete and generally intelligible.<sup>4</sup> We re-value Unamuno's words for ourselves. That is to interpret. Again, when we read in the prologue of The Fourth Gospel (1:14) that the Logos that was with God in the beginning "became flesh" and "tabernacled" or "tented among us," we are better prepared to interpret, that is, to re-value what the words signify, if we ourselves have bivouacked in a wilderness. Otherwise, we are likely to choose the common and much paler rendering of the Greek: "became flesh and dwelt among us." But the latter is poorer in value, less resonant and provocative. The signs, images, and symbols we choose and use in interpreting are—again—momentous, in their present and future importance.

When we meet an author or speaker saying "Nature knows best," we must intuit or surmise the particular set of meaning-values the speaker has in mind, for "nature" is a word that carries an unusual multiplicity of meanings. We interpret the meaning of "nature" in this instance by looking to the context in which it appears. Perhaps a soil conservationist wishes to warn us against damming up a river, because the rich silt the river carries will then never reach the lands lying downstream that depend on the river-borne silt to replenish their nutrient capacity. If we consent to the argument, we adopt a new configuration of values, expressed in the belief that dams are potentially destructive—a belief symbolized and further confirmed by photographs of downstream fields, sterile and barren of crops. This value-laden belief is a product of the act of interpretation. And it may become a policy of restraint in dam construction. Such a policy, founded on belief, *conflicts* with the desirableness of building dams to create lakes for leisure recreation or to generate electricity. This conflict is a conflict of

values, brought about by acts of interpretation.

### *The Image*

One of the conventional comparisons we meet in mystical and older theological literature likens the eye and the soul to mirrors, so that whatever stands in front of them appears within them. But eye and soul are not passive mirrors; they are active powers that seize what appears before them and appropriate it into the whole fluxing pattern of life that is self. William James observed that images are "steeped and dyed" in the waters of the mind.<sup>5</sup> In turn, they give to these waters differing colorations by bleeding into them their own hues. The interaction is subtle and complex, and no impermeable boundaries divide images from the psychic energy that embraces them. As a psychologist James is now receiving renewed appreciation; as a phenomenologist of consciousness he is unsurpassed, and his remarkable characterization of consciousness as a stream lives on in our literature if not in recent technical psychology. Every image, James says, is sur-

---

*"But eye and soul are not passive mirrors; they are active powers that seize what appears before them and appropriate it into the whole fluxing pattern of life that is self."*

---

rounded by a "halo" or "penumbra," "the dying echo of whence it came to us [and] the dawning sense of whither it is to lead." But all configurations are susceptible to change, and this is nowhere more evident than in the relation between the image and the halo of significance that "surrounds and escorts" the image.

James goes on to propose that the

"image in the mind is the attention."<sup>6</sup> Part of the import of this judgment is that to attend is to imagine in a quite specific way; it is to imagine some feature or quality that is "there," which we hitherto had not noticed; it is to imagine—with patience and deference towards that which shows itself. And, conversely, to imagine with genuine respect for what shows itself is to attend. Such imaginative attending or attentive imagining constitutes a momentary confluence of the action of our minds and the flowing world of objects-in-relation. These confluences alter the direction of our experience itself. Perhaps we are apt to think of images as inevitabilities or even as fatalities that befall us; and there is a measure of truth in that way of taking our experience. We all know what it is to be surprised by an appearance we had not anticipated. But if we conceive attending as being in the main *deliberative* action, then our effortful (as well as our habitual) choosings of what to attend to play decisive roles in our living and interpreting. Consciousness, to quote James again, "is always *interested* more in one part of its object than in another, and welcomes and rejects or chooses, all the while it thinks."<sup>7</sup> There is much in this characterization on which we could reflect, but for the purposes at hand the importance of James's description lies in the prominence he assigns to interest and to choice. Here we meet with an issue that confounds much psychological, philosophical, and theological theorizing. Are our interests outside our capacity to determine and hence outside the domain of our responsibility, so that our choosings follow the dictates of our desires and fears? Or, can our choosings modify our interests, our ways of attending? The issue, as C.S. Peirce remarks, is really one of noticing what we experience. One of the facts our experience presents, when we take notice, is that we are immediately conscious of choosing. We are, to use Peirce's example, as much conscious of hitting as of being hit, as much conscious of acting as of being

acted on. "A consciousness of polarity would be a tolerably good phrase to describe what occurs," Peirce writes.<sup>8</sup> This is an issue we cannot settle with a sentence or two. We have each to examine our experience as best we can, but once we begin to read it, we can scarcely overlook so evident a feature; so it seems to me, at least. Desiring and being interested are intimately intermingled with our acts of volition, but we ought not to confuse this intimacy and contemporaneity with inexorable determination.

Our practical experience tells us that we are free, free to initiate action—and to know ourselves as initiators. The experience of attending helps us to see this. For as we attend we learn to discriminate, to dissolve qualities in that to which we attend, and to connect them again with other qualities in other objects, in ways we had hitherto not suspected as possible or fruitful. We suspend the automatisms of our perceptions and expectations and inspect, dissect, and reconnect. We thereby make room for new interests and purposes to arise, assisting the world to come to light for ourselves in new ways. The work of those who write or paint or sculpt or fabricate in the many other forms open to us, asking us to perceive and think with them as we had not before, is witness to this fact. To be endowed with the capacity to imagine is to be endowed with the freedom—and the need—to bring into being. We do not, of course, create out of nothing; we re-create, as authors do who innovate on the conventions earlier authors have established. Attending and imagining are our responses to the flowing world of objects. Insofar as our willing is active in these responses, they are moral actions.

### *Habit*

Habit, to be sure, plays a large part in our attending and imagining. Many images that modify the mind's action of appre-

hending and assimilating subside below the surface of volitional consciousness. That is the way much of the world's work gets done, James reminds us. At least half of what we perceive we "pre-perceive." Pre-perception, however, is also a powerful soporific, under the influence of which we become victims of morbid dreams. Our inveterate groping toward the outer and inner landscapes of the mind leads us through

regions where wrecked images lie corroding. Images that insensibly decompose in the subterranean passages of memory and that can be neither wholly forgotten nor fully recalled become shadowy presences that confuse and betray us. We may suppose this is one reason why Calvin so many times likens the human understanding and conscience to a labyrinth. He represents the fallen human being as vitiated, injured by



The Sleep of Reason  
Produces Monsters,  
*Francisco José de Goya*

being twisted on itself. The mind's memories of the signatures of God haunt and perplex it. On the one hand, the progeny of Adam and Eve cannot forget God; they fumble after God. But, on the other hand, in the darkness of occluded memory they cannot bring the dimmed signatures of divinity to light again, and so they cannot recognize that they live in a spacious theater of glory. It is this idea of the understanding as twisted that prompts Calvin to characterize the mind as "a factory of idols." Moved by the spell of these misshapen images, the people exiled from the face of God are constrained by their nature to interpret, but they interpret themselves astray.

Commenting on one of his *Caprichos*, "The Sleep of Reason," Francisco Goya wrote: "Imagination, deserted by reason, begets impossible monsters."<sup>9</sup> Usurping images are capable of tyrannizing the life of imagination, when our other spiritual energies drowse. Our science fiction tales of the possession of human beings by alien creatures are mythographic comments on that fact. Such usurping images transform the outer world into a trackless waste or enigmatic space also. Much of our literature has the labyrinth-wilderness for its theme. Detective stories—stories of interpretation—work and rework it. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a seventeenth-century prototype of such stories. John Bunyan's dream "in the wilderness of this world" opens with the scene of the would-be pilgrim's turmoil. Possessed by the sense that a wrathful "Fire from Heaven" will burn "this our city" and bring ruin upon his household, the poor pilgrim is paralyzed. "I saw also," Bunyan writes, "that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still because, as I perceived, he could not tell which way to go." So confused is the pilgrim's orientation by his sensible image of wrath that in order to move purposefully he always requires another as an interpreter, be it Evangelist, the character named Interpreter, or an angel or

some other personification of the Holy Spirit. It is this innate need for interpretation that makes the pilgrim a symbol of the Christian who desires to read experience with and through Scripture, desires to "lay book and heart together."

Sensible images—and patterns of images—gather demonic power into themselves and possess the imaginations of corporate as well as individual persons. In Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the sons of Christian and Christiana, as a company led by Mr. Great-heart, deliberately destroy Gyant-Dispair and Doubting Castle, the image-symbols that objectify and amplify the hopelessness ever ready to entrap pilgrims. On the other hand, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, which we can read on many different levels, tells the story of the seduction and corruption of a community afloat on the seas by the evil genius of Ahab. One commentator holds that the book is "about" the whaling industry, a corporate person in nineteenth-century American society.<sup>10</sup> Ahab, captain of the Pequod, is mentally maimed by the memory-image of the white whale, symbol to him of God-Satan or God the Adversary. Ahab interprets all features of the oceans of

---

*"Sensible images—and patterns of images—gather demonic power into themselves and possess the imaginations of corporate as well as individual persons."*

---

the world as potential signs of the whereabouts of the Adversary. On the quarter-deck he rebukes the protesting first mate, Starbuck:

All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forward the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask! How can the prisoner reach outside ex-

cept by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him.

Unlike Bunyan's pilgrim, Ahab is his own exegete and interpreter. Moreover, he imposes his interpretation on the whole crew, cowing all resistance. The motive that supplies the moral energy of his "interest" is hatred. The pre-perceived image that shapes and constitutes his attention is the image of the white whale.

[Ahab's] special lunacy [had] stormed his general sanity . . . and turned all its concentrated cannon upon its own made mark; so that . . . Ahab . . . did now possess a thousand fold more potency than ever . . . .

### Agon

Both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Moby-Dick* show themselves to be constructed for the kind of reading I have called deep reading. Narrative and meditations adjoin each other and interpret each other. Both books are biblical in their language and motifs—above all biblical in exhibiting the archetypal pattern of Exodus, the journey out of captivity, across the frontier, into wilderness, toward freedom, however it be conceived, and toward triumph. Both books repeat Calvin's symbolism of the labyrinth but with greater narrative detail and power. The pilgrims Christian and Christiana and their children and companions and Ahab are agonists, doing battle with principalities and powers, spiritual wickedness in high places. And the agon in which they are engaged is the struggle to interpret. Both narratives, moreover, evoke by explicit or indirect allusion the centuries of wrestling on the part of preachers and readers of the Bible to find a way, a method, in the

wilderness of experience. Bunyan and Melville each provide clear signals that finding one's way through the Book and struggling on through the thickets and storms of life are parallel, if not interdependent, undertakings.



Christian Reading in His Book, *William Blake*

Beyond all this, the arduous task of interpreting appears in these pages, as it appears elsewhere, in the form of an enterprise on the outcome of which *everything* is staked. The end or goal, the complete interpretation, does not lie at hand before the venture is begun. The magnitude of the affair does not dawn on the actors until they have already committed themselves. To venture into interpretation is to begin playing one's part not so much in a drama as in an epic. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in both its parts, shows this quality in the fact that in the course of the journey the band of wayfarers now dwindles and now increases: companions are martyred, new companions enlisted, enemies encountered; the wayside is strewn with evidences of earlier pilgrims who have gone before; children grow up and marry and have children in turn. The

story resembles in some respects the diaries of the overland emigrants to Oregon and California in nineteenth-century America. *Moby-Dick* makes the epic proportions of interpretation explicit at its outset, in Melville's description of the pulpit in the Whaleman's Chapel, from which Father Mapple delivers his sermon:

Its panelled front was in the likeness of a ship's bluff bows, and the Holy Bible rested on a projecting piece of scroll work, fashioned after a ship's fiddle-headed beak.

What could be more full of meaning?—for the pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world. From thence it is the storm of God's quick wrath is first descried, and the bow must bear the earliest brunt. From thence it is the God of Breezes fair or foul is first invoked for favorable winds. Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow.

As the narrative of the Pequod's voyage unfolds, it is Ahab who stands in the pulpit-prow of the world of the whaling ship and interprets its way to destruction. Ahab's *analogia fidei* draws upon the terrible vividness of Leviathan in his "outrageous strength" and "inscrutable malice."

### *The Discovering Image*

Interpretation is agonistic. It involves a striving that is, not least of all, a moral struggle, because it is a struggle of imagination against itself. Further than that, it is epic or open-ended. We begin our interpreting—often we are propelled into it—before we have more than a mere glimmering of the end toward which we strive.

Insofar as the aperture of our attention is occupied by a dominant image or configuration of images together with its halo of significance, and insofar as our interpreting proceeds from moment to moment according to the law of that image-shaped atten-

tion, we are obliged to draw the conclusion that images play a discovering part in the business of interpreting. It is the image—enlivening or atrophying attention—that escorts the world into us. There can be no disclosure of a richer reality, no widening of our sensible hearts, unless we welcome images into the eye of our attention that are fitting and expansive, capable of bringing the larger world to birth in us. Religion and imagination are joined as inseparably as earth and sky. Together they give us our horizons; and what our religious imagination always requires is a more generously resonant image that fosters a larger world within ourselves. These actions of generous imagining prompt in turn the actions by which we enlarge the world without.

This generative power of imagination helps us to understand why the prophets so often began their prophesying after *perceiving* the word of the Lord, an almond tree, a burning shrub; and why Jesus taught in parables. He dislocated the minds of his auditors, thrust them into new regions, by throwing down a new symbolic image. Often, to be sure, it was a very old image, one that had faded in the minds of his followers, such as the sight of a widow searching for a lost coin. He threw these down in a new context, the context of his own symbolic conduct, and in that moment discovering became possible. "Repent!" he said, that is, "Have a new mind!" and "Believe!", that is, "Hold dear!" or love or take into yourselves what you now behold. So he revived and recombined sleeping images, thereby arousing men and women from their torpor or mania and thereby earning the name, "Light of the world."

Image and imagining attention, then, are the windows of our souls. At times these iconic symbols are dredged from the bottom of our memory. At times they lay their hands on us from without, as it were, arresting our attention. They horizon our world afresh. When we interpret, we do

so through them. The interpretation of texts, even of Scripture, is not fundamentally different from interpretation in general. To be sure, we do not now usually refer to the "Book of Nature" or to the creature as a "book" that is "full of God" (Meister Eckhart), thereby explicitly likening what we perceive to a sacred page. But while that custom has lapsed, we still act on the tacit premise that the moral and intellectual processes involved in interpreting our environment, both social and natural, and those involved in interpreting the written word are kindred. With each enigma we encounter, with each challenge we meet to make our way, we are cast into spaces that are adjacent. These may be spaces on the page or in the book or in regions of memory or of experience we have not yet made wholly our own. Most likely we are cast into all of these regions of adjacency at once. As we make our way through this astonishing world, we remember the verbal environments of the books we formerly read and of the conversations with companions that nourished us. When we come to the banks of a broad river after a dusty, thirsty trek through serpentine canyons, we think of the rivers envisioned in the hymns sung in the congregations of our childhood. When we read, we read with and through the journeys we have made and the houses and families in which we have lived. Journeys and dwellings interpret each other. Our lives are marked by graphic memories and images. Our minds are like galleries or tunnels on whose walls graffitic symbols have been etched and varnished by time. We pass by these walls whenever we make our way as interpreters. For these reasons, interpretation can never be carried out within the precincts of the page alone, nor can interpretation ever come to completion. Each act of interpretation leads us into new passages and at the same time into the vicinity of old and unremembered symbols, where we have to begin afresh our moral and religious struggle.

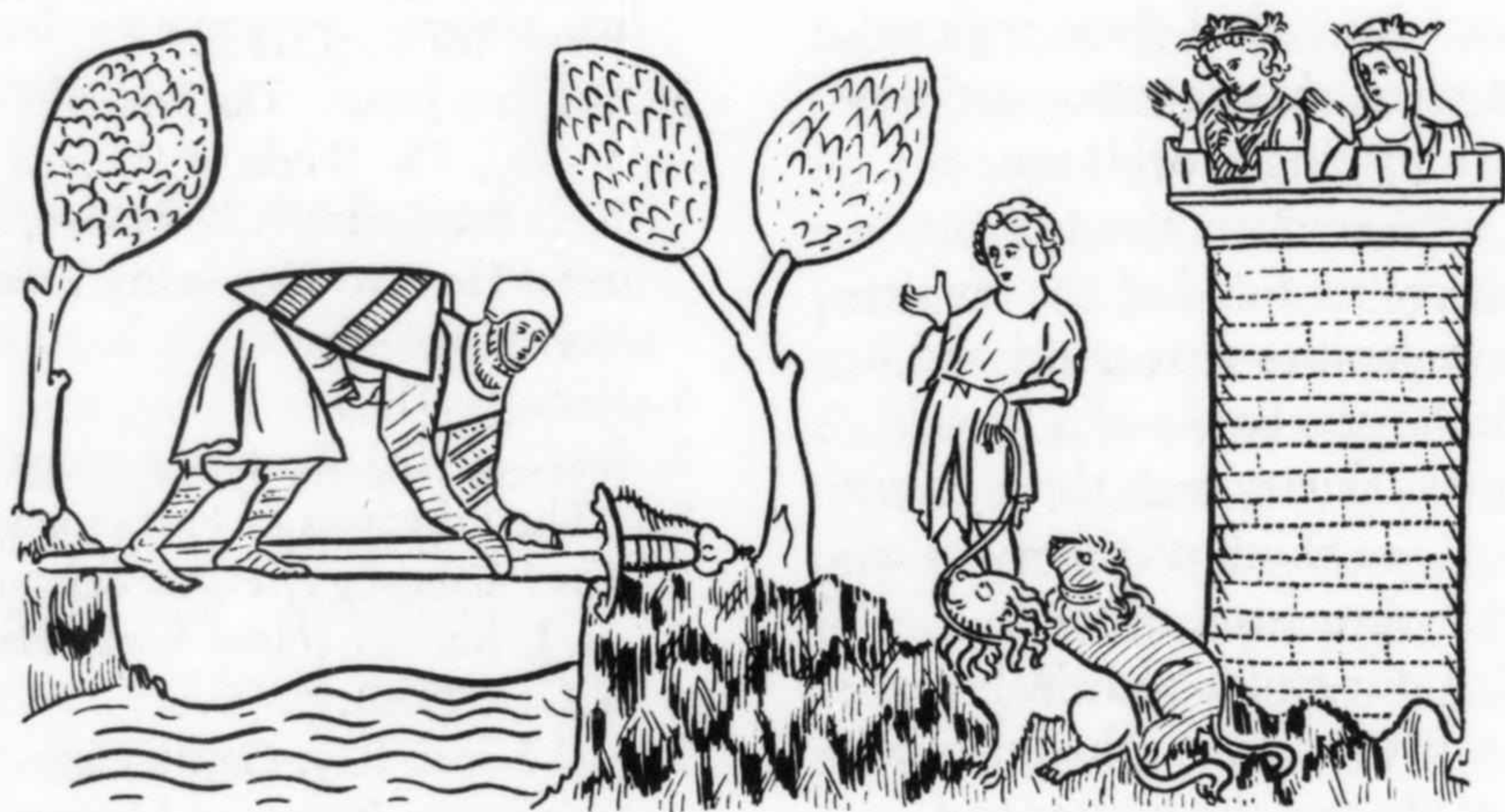
## NOTES

1. Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. E. Bizer, trans. G.T. Thomson (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950), p. 34. For statements identifying Scripture as the "true word of God" and affirming its utter clarity, see pp. 15-28.
2. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), p. 62.
3. Spiritual autobiography, from the seventeenth century onward, affords many examples. See Owen C. Watkins, *The Puritan Experience: Studies in Spiritual Autobiography*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1972). John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding To The Chief of Sinners* and Jonathan Edwards's "Personal Narrative" are especially instructive.
4. Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 185f.
5. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 3 vols.; *The Works of William James*, ed. F.H. Burkhardt (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), Vol. I, p. 246.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 419.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 273. Emphasis added.
8. "The Principles of Phenomenology," in *The Philosophy of Peirce: Selected Writings*, ed. J. Buchler (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950), p. 96.
9. José López-Rey, *Goya's Caprichos*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), Vol. I, p. 200.
10. Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael: A Study of Melville*, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1947), p. 23.

*Adapted from the manuscript version of the Atkinson Theological Lecture delivered in March, 1981 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Copyright Richard R. Niebuhr.*

# The Way Back

D.M. DOOLING



*Lancelot crossing the Sword Bridge*

What does it mean to search, to be a seeker? It is too big a word to be used lightly, for it has to do with seeing; not that kind of physical seeing which we share with the animals, but an inner perception which is peculiar to the human being and is his highest attribute. Or perhaps I should say his highest *possible* attribute, for not everyone can "see" in this fashion, and certainly not everyone can call himself a seeker. The seeker is humanity's chance to grow, for he is not satisfied, he is not sure of his answers, he has not "come to a

conclusion." He looks for more; he is a person with an active question, with a *quest*; in other words, he is a hero.

Perhaps we can only aspire to be seekers; go into training, as it were, in order to become worthy of the title. And to do this seriously, we have to find a question and begin to look, for it is by making a start that one begins to discover what the role of seeker really is and to become what it represents.

With what question shall we begin, then? What do we want to find out, or to

find? If we listen only a little, we are aware of some dissatisfaction; something is certainly lacking, something needs to be found—and it doesn't seem to be anything completely new or unknown, but something we have lost, something that belonged to us but that disappeared so long ago we have forgotten it was ever ours. It is a kind of "lost chord" that still resounds in us at moments, and at such moments affirms the wholeness of our own identity.

At the heart of all the traditions there is the recognition of this loss and its possible restoration, a recognition of the return to unity as the destiny of man. The Fall and the exile from Eden speak of it, and the homeward journey of the prodigal son; the marvelous circling dance of the Mevlevi dervishes; the words of the Upanishad: "When I go hence, I shall obtain him." To *return* is the basic human longing. Paradise is man's lost home, so far away in time and space, so diametrically opposite to his daily realities, that he may hope to go back to it only in another life, in another world.

On the one-level plane of existence where most of us live most of our lives, the vision of a transforming destiny, a reunion of myself with myself, has either to be abandoned or reduced to an infantile dream of some purified and ideal existence on the other shore of death. Any connection with an idea of another level must become imaginary, if it starts from a plane of thought dominated by the scientific dictum that everything must be measured by physical means, in terms of our most primitive functions. By this downward-heading trend of reasoning, the higher must come to the lower, the greater to the less. It is this kind of thinking that takes the symbolism of the religious traditions and of sacred art to be merely an illustration of our bodily experience, instead of what it is: a living representation of truth which our experience only partially reflects. We need to be careful not to confuse the reflection with the fact, like the dwellers in Plato's cave who take for granted that their limited view constitutes the whole possibility of human

life and being. If we suspect that there is more, and wish for it, we must find a way of access.

Creation myths from everywhere show how man was produced from the wholeness of God in an incomplete form: "Male and female created He them," and in the Mayan myth, the gods, seeing the original man too nearly perfect, blow mist into his eyes to cloud and limit his vision. Christians call this human incompleteness "sin," a word that comes from the same root as the word *to be* (Indo-European *es*, participial *sont*); but the wisest among them, with St. Augustine, also call it "blessed," for the incompleteness of man's being is his possibility of becoming. This incompleteness, or "imperfection," is what makes him "a little lower than the angels," and yet gives him a higher potential; he is capable of becoming God's son as well as his servant.\*

**B**ut how is the human potential to be achieved? What we are *in fact* is incompleteness, a fraction divided between self-admiration and self-pity. Sometimes this random collection is satisfied with itself as it is, deluded by its apparent accomplishments and confident of its future successes; then dashed by its equally accidental failures, blaming itself and others in an agony of pessimism; always either before or after its own events. Or perhaps at moments these fragments come closer to each other and to the present instant and there is a momentary view of undeveloped capacities, unexplored territory, vistas that are unknown yet reminiscent of something forgotten—and the nostalgia for Paradise arises anew. The chasm is there and the

\*The definition of sin implied by its etymology is borne out by the fact that "imperfect" literally means "unfinished" or "incomplete." Taking the original meaning of "sin" in this sense gives quite a different—and more comprehensible—reading of Paul, I Corinthians 15, 56: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."

need to bridge it; one is caught between the Clashing Rocks of one's own contradictions—one's own personal Symplegades. This is the human experience, and everywhere we find the symbols of our predicament in all its terror and all its hope. Then, if our desire for wholeness is the beginning of a real search and not simply another song of self-pity, we will look at the images of myth and symbol not as poetic descriptions but as coded messages that could help us to face our danger and perhaps, like the mythic heroes, overcome it.

These "forms of revelation that God in His mercy created," as symbols were described by a seventeenth-century artist, are various in appearance, but inevitably interconnected by their original dwelling together in the mind of God. The process of transformation of the fragment that man is into the whole of his origin, his possible return to the home of his father, is a dangerous passage: between "the rocks that clap together" (or the icebergs, or the falling portcullis, or the Cutting Reeds or whatever it may be, depending on the moment and the place where it was rephrased); up through the branches of the Sacred Tree, or on the rungs of the Ladder that reaches to Heaven; through the maze of Minos, or across the rainbow bridge of the Navaho or the Scandinavian legends. It is a constant retelling of the myth of man's becoming, a becoming that does not happen but must be attained. It is Everyman's quest, but possible only for one who is a seeker and a hero.

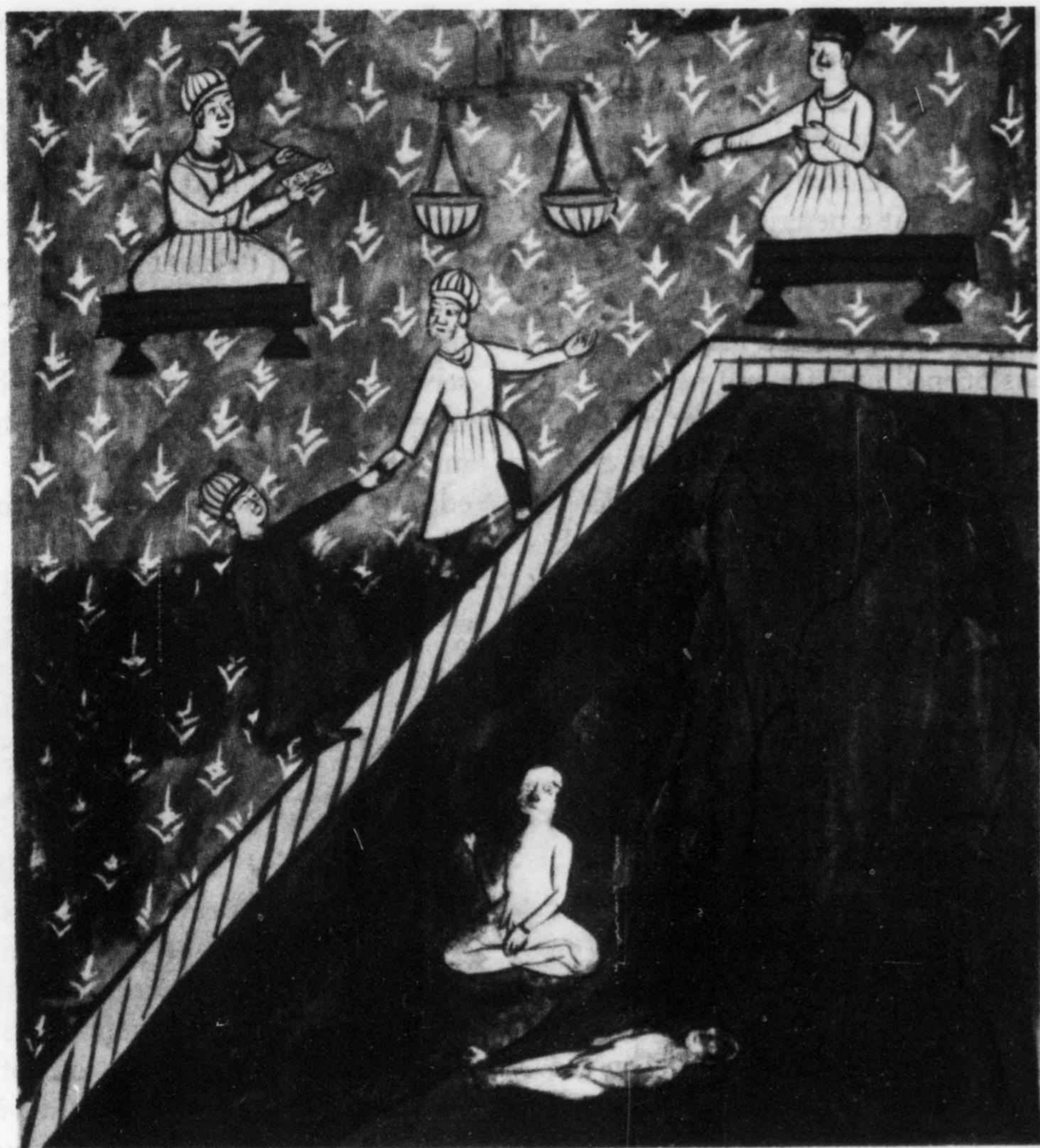
The mythic bridge and the perils of its crossing reappear again and again. The rainbow bridge Bifrost of *The Prose Edda* was "of three colors and great strength, made with more cunning and art of magic than any other work of craftsmanship; yet it must be broken, when the sons of Muspell shall go forth harrying and ride it." The rainbow traversed by the Navaho brothers, the Slayers of the Enemy Gods, on the contrary was so fragile that the gods had to harden it with their breath lest the heroes slip through. Lancelot walked on the edge of a sword-blade to reach the

country where his lady was held captive; Bodhidharma crossed the ocean of transmigration on a reed. Endless examples could be cited, but what are we really being told? More interesting than the varying forms of the bridge itself is the *how* of its crossing.

The Chinvat Bridge in the Mazdaean tradition was said to be projected from a mountain peak, the peak of judgment, as the center of the world, and on this bridge the soul's final destiny was decided, for it could be reached only after death. At its entrance the righteous soul meets the angel who is his true, fulfilled identity; but the unrighteous soul encounters a hideous creature and is possessed by it. Here some very interesting questions arise. What kind of "death" is really being spoken of? For it hardly seems that the bridge could be reached in any automatic or accidental way. It is "at the center" and "on a mountain peak," the mythic description of the goal of the hero's quest; and the hero, surely, is victorious and alive. So what meaning has *death* here?

Luisa Coomaraswamy, speaking of similar Hindu myths in her definitive essay on the Perilous Bridge, says: "It is not only in a future life that the end of the road can be reached; the shores are but an arrow-shot apart, if one knows what is the 'arrow' and how it must be 'released.'"<sup>\*</sup> She also refers to a West African story in which a man creates a magic bridge with a chain of arrows which he shoots alternately into the near and the far shores; and to the correspondence of this story with American Indian legends of similarly created ladders to heaven. What indeed is the nature of such an arrow? Is it like that of the Japanese master of archery who bade his greatest pupil shoot down a star, and then surpassed the feat by doing the same thing without using either arrow or bow? These "arrows" hint at another kind of speed, directness, and power, a "magical" activity that could not be the property of ordinary

<sup>\*</sup>"The Perilous Bridge of Welfare," by Luisa Coomaraswamy, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 8:2 (August 1944): 196-213.



*Weighing the Souls on the Chinvat Bridge*

functioning, but of that which can appear only when ordinary functioning and its governor, the human ego, are no longer in control. Then do these stories perhaps reveal, by implication, another kind of death—not that of the body, which comes to everyone, but that of the ego, which is earned by few?

**B**ut here we must be very careful, for what does it mean that the ego should die? Surely it is a misunderstanding and a diminishing of the symbol to think of the “crossing over” as the leaving behind of one kind of being in order to pass into a “better” one. What can be abandoned if what we are seeking is our own wholeness? I do not think that we can attain a transformed being by simply adding to our virtues and abolishing our vices; and if by “ego” we mean to characterize our selfish

human nature, we can never (fortunately) be rid of it. Only what has a merely illusory existence can be discarded without loss to the whole. But if we take “ego” to mean the imaginary importance which my person gives itself, the lie it tells by calling itself “I,” this indeed is an image whose “death” is necessary in order that I may become truly and wholly what I am. This *fantasy* must disappear. The selfish human nature, however, must not be “killed” but must remain to be taken into that other nature which has hitherto been overpowered by sleep; it must be transmuted into the strength and substance necessary to establish that Other’s rightful supremacy. Indeed, the ego in a certain sense is even the savior of this Other, who needs not only the ego’s strength and substance but his very difficulties, errors, and inadequacies in order to awaken and respond.

A version of the Chinvat Bridge passed from the Zoroastrian teaching into Islamic folklore as the steep and narrow bridge over Hell called Sirāt, on which the wicked could not keep their footing and plunged into the abyss; but a description quoted by Mrs. Coomaraswamy says that "if the deceased can make the right answers to the questions put to him in the grave, a gate of Paradise is opened for him and he is led onto the bridge and brought over it by an angel, and it will seem to him as soft and level as the palm of the hand." I would compare this to a much more recent work that is yet totally true to the myth, Howard Pyle's *The Garden Behind the Moon*. The boy David, the hero of the story, makes the journey from his home village, where he is neglected and derided as simpleminded, to the Otherworld of the moon and its delightful garden, and finally to another and even more terrible passage into manhood and a hero's adventures. His bridge over the sea to the moon, at the start of his journey, is the path of light that the newly risen moon at its full casts on the waves; at the exact moment he must step out on the wriggling bar of moonlight on the top of one wave and jump to the next, without yielding to fear. His first attempt does not succeed and he is nearly drowned; but on his second try, he manages to jump from wave to wave until he finds himself on a broad path like silver gravel on which he can run easily.

Both these stories seem to indicate something of how the bridge is to be crossed; a note here rings in harmony with our own experience. There is a choice to be made, and we seem to know the taste of that choice—a "right answer," a refusal of weakness that brings a moment of certain knowing, and the road becomes "level" and easy to travel. But one knows well that this must be paid for; we also, like David, have choked on salt water. Access to the bridge can never be easy. In the Zoroastrian myth, one must climb the mountain at the center of the world, and pass through death before, at the entrance of the Chinvat Bridge, the perfected soul can be joined with what Henry Corbin

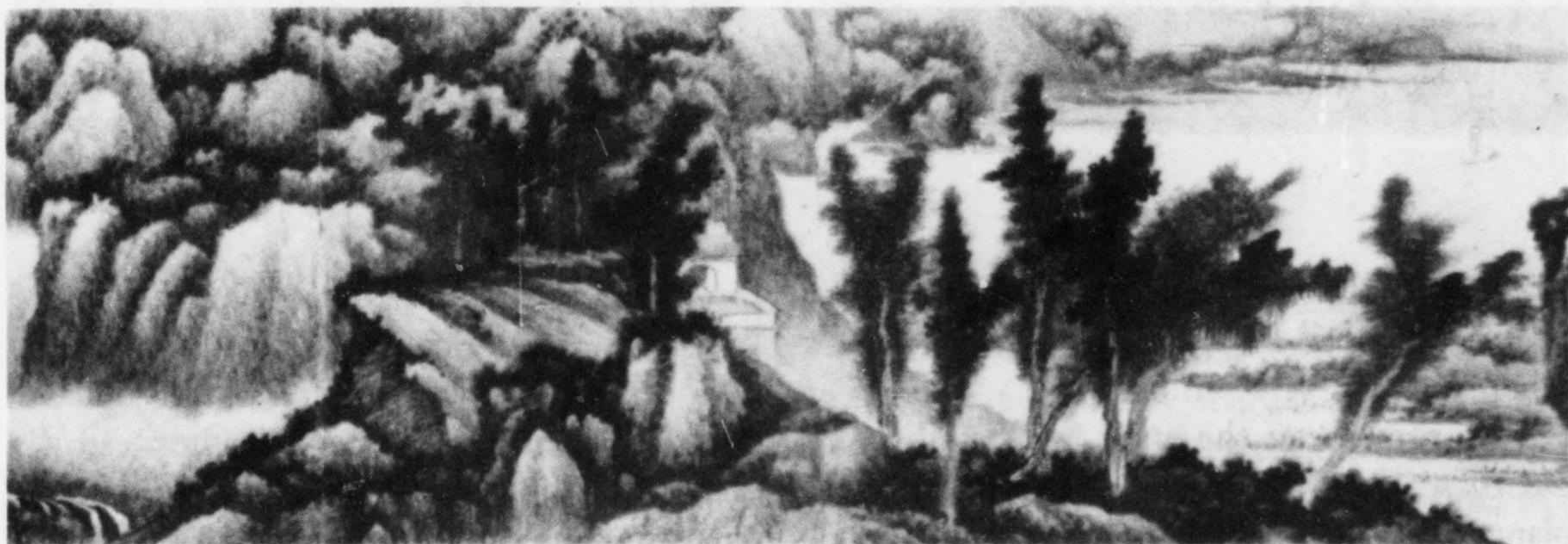
calls its "heavenly I." All the teachings of the bridge speak of difficulty and suffering, for the bridge, of course, is within; it is, in fact, myself, if I can make myself conform to the process and take the risk of situating myself "in between." "Who would be Chief, let him be the bridge," says the *Mabinogion*; and to be Chief, one needs no more followers than one's own unruly selves. It is only within that the battle can take place, the choice be made, the false images vanquished and the seeker incarnated; and until the seeker comes, the angel waits in vain upon the bridge. It is only when seeker and angel clasp hands that the crossing can take place.

Once crossed, we are told, the bridge must disappear for him who crosses it, as the Buddha bade the traveler forget his raft when the other shore was gained. That we need such a warning is evidence of how easily we confuse the inner and the outer. The crossing is within, it is in movement, and it is instantaneous, like the flight of the arrow, like David's leap from wave to wave at the instant of the moon's rising. It exists only in that moment out of time which is *now*, between *was* and *will be*; it is itself the bridge of a different, truer reality between our ordinary view of time past and time to come—the time-sense of our everyday life in which even today is nothing but partly past and partly future. The present is a moment, a flash that always escapes our slow-footed ego-awareness, that exists only for the arrow-swift intuition that belongs to the seeker himself. So of course the bridge must disappear when the crossing is made; it is no longer needed, for both shores are joined, and the separation also has disappeared. The hero has become whole. He has not left one world for another, but found how one is part of the other, and in that liberating relationship has freed himself from all limits and all divisions. ■

*This article originally appeared under the title "The Search for Transformation" in Search, Journey on the Inner Path, edited by Jean Sulzberger (Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1979). Reprinted by permission.*

# Homing In

JANWILLEM VAN DE WETERING



The possibility that we are exiled on Earth must have occurred to a good many. What did we do to deserve being expelled to this particularly painful planet? And for no less than life? Indeed, this is a life of suffering, as the first Buddhist truth has it. Is *this* our home? It can't be, so home must be somewhere else. Can we escape, go home again? Are we homesick, is that the pain? Home is the right place, and it can't be Earth. We may even think that we vaguely remember that Home, as a place of light, warmth, of love, where suffering could never be, where our soul is at ease.

When I first realized that I was born into the city of Rotterdam, a place I then visualized as a cluster of gray buildings splashed by cold rain, I fearfully wondered whether that was *it*. My father said it didn't have to be. He lived in Indian tropics for over twenty years. He showed me photographs, of himself on an elephant,

and my mother under a parasol. I saw attractive brown people in exotic clothes, in warm glorious light.

"I want to go there."

"Not just yet."

I was hampered by a small and helpless body and an untrained juvenile mind. I stared at palm trees in picture books and the southern sun shining out of a movie, all projections from my real home. I firmly believed that my birth in the dank Dutch swamp had yanked me from that better place and that I should get back. Now how? Bible class told me about little kids going crusading to the Holy Land but Arabs caught them and sold the lot as slaves. My father wouldn't help; how about asking someone else? A lady came to visit, about to return to her African home. I asked her to describe it; what she said fitted my bill. Could I go along? She laughed. Why not? I immediately packed a bag with a banana and a toothbrush and



dragged my teddy bear to the front door. The lady slipped away, leaving me exiled where I didn't want to be.

I forgot about the quest for a while but then things got worse. A German warplane flew low over our house and the city began to burn. The war added its atrocities. Then there was the boredom of school and Calvinism telling me to feel guilty for my sins. All my experiments proved punishable and what else was I doing to improve a life that got started under the wrong conditions? This wasn't my home anyway, my home was South. I wandered off and ran out of money in another dim city. The autochthones that lived there were having dinner behind protective glass. I couldn't even gnash my teeth for they chattered with the cold. I was still a kid. The cops caught me, cutting off escape.

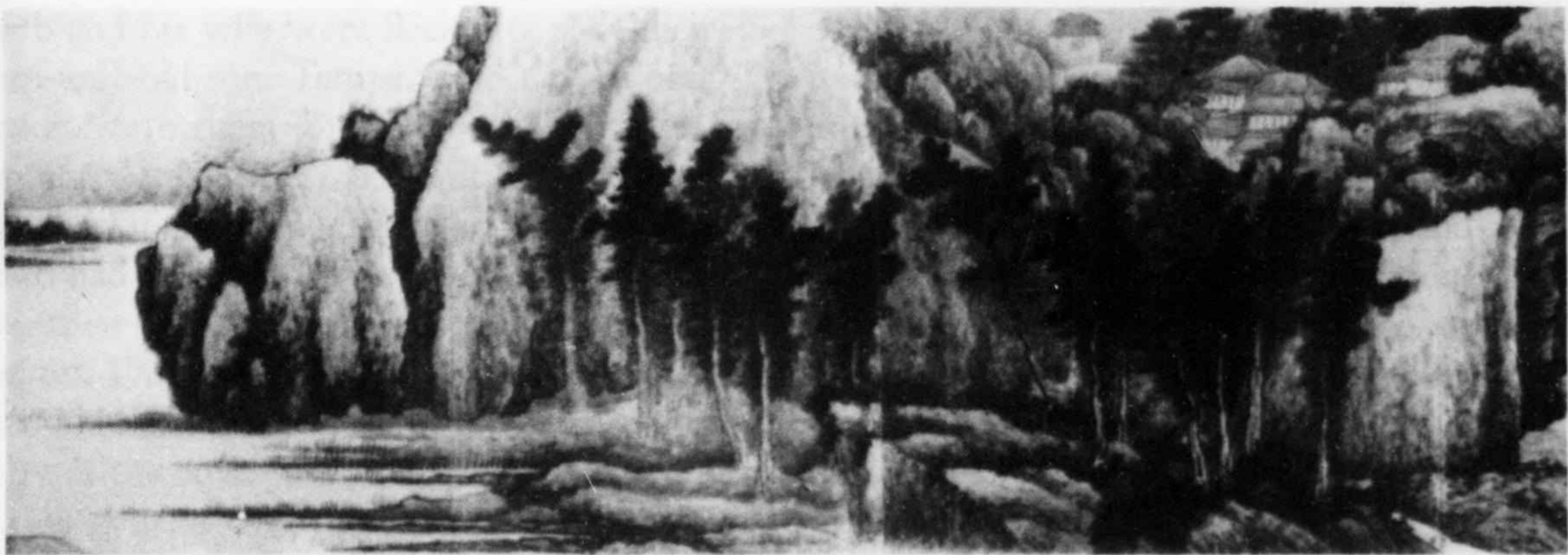
However, good luck comes to those who keep trying. In due course I reached the warm countries of my dreams, swam in glowing seas, doped and drunk my mind into blissful ecstasy on foreign fruit. Back home in paradise, the nightmare of my exile forgotten.

I had to stop kidding myself, successful escape doesn't work that way. In South Africa I felt the agony of the multitude

forced to exist below any livable level, in India I saw the homeless die in the street, in South America I stumbled over a skull in a shantytown alley. I wasn't home at all. If earthly life is suffering, perhaps my discontent was caused by not belonging on this planet. I thought I could believe that for a while. Constant traveling helped. A rolling stone does not register pain. I tried not to care while devising a pleasurable routine. I didn't have a home, and if I had it, it was nowhere on Earth for sure. The method worked somewhat, and in order to fill the gaps I inserted another thought.

Just suppose that earthly suffering cannot be avoided, even then the pain will be limited in time. We're only here for the duration. How long exactly? Not much more than eighty years. Too long? Life can always be cut short. Perhaps the ultimate refusal would be the ultimate going home.

So far for the particular, we can generalize too. Shall we theorize that we may all be exiles? That no one can accept what goes on in this place? Thoughtless devastation of nature, worldwide corruption, endless war, none of that can be excused. Neither can the smaller trouble, such as, after riding the New York subway, watching a streetperson sort through garbage. There's the joker in us who whispers "could be worse, could be *me*," but his



joke has to fall flat. The streetperson *is* me and while we observe we become the bum. Unacceptable. We can't belong to this. Somehow the exile must be stopped, and while we wait we can science-fiction to a painless resort in another galaxy, or dream ahead into pleasant astral spheres, described in mystic literature and medical papers, quoting interviews with the clinical dead who returned, with cheerful tales, about figures of light and other helpful angels. Home may be either after death or far out in space. Clench our teeth, hold on somehow, our mishap is not forever. That's another approach and it doesn't work well either.

We grew from the Earth that was formless gas once, then solidified and held fertile fluids. The light of our star started our first life. From bacteria we evolved into plants, became animal, walked upright. While we consumed ourselves we slowly humanized. All embryos, including ours, look identical in the early stage. We must be from here and this therefore is our home. But science isn't sure. Did we come from another globe perhaps, a long time ago, and somehow couldn't return? Then we've made Earth our home. Will we be able to leave in the future, colonize other parts of space? Then other planets will be home again, and it's unlikely that mere

transport will make our suffering stop.

Once we accept that home is here we can at least hopefully stagger ahead, using doubt as a stick, while we look for light. The shadow side of suffering exists but, as Carl Jung points out, there's no need to cling to darkness. Why not, instead, help to brighten local conditions? Castaneda's Don Juan mentions the choice between a smile and a sob. "Me? I prefer to laugh." Dizzy Gillespie sings about the sunny side of the street. We can cross over.

Too simple? Perhaps not. It's immature to waste energy to pinpoint the calamities, join them up in an endless lament, however artistic and musical it may turn out to be. To excuse our presence here as forced upon us by inevitable exile could be quite shortsighted, and blocking the way. By accepting suffering the way out could open up. By whose fault are we here? Our own? By whose merit? Our own again?

Acceptance—it certainly clarifies the private enquiry, a fascinating pursuit, requiring all the energy we can possibly provoke.

We *are* home, now let's look about a bit. ■

# Tibet: Mystic Nation in Exile

ROBERT A.F. THURMAN

*This center of heaven,  
This core of the earth,  
This heart of the world,  
Fenced round by snow,  
The headland of all rivers,  
Where the mountains are high and the land is pure.  
O country so good,  
Where men are born sages and heroes!<sup>1</sup>*

In 1959, His Holiness the Dalai Lama had to flee the invading Red Army of the People's Republic of China, to go into exile in India. He was followed eventually by over one hundred thousand Tibetans, with many more tens of thousands perishing in the attempt. Since then, those Tibetans who could not get away have suffered genocidal occupation by the Chinese Communists. And those in the diaspora in India, Europe, and America have had to be responsible for the preservation of the entire culture. They are having a real experience of exile. Yet they have adapted amazingly well to the homelessness of modernity, stepping effortlessly across what seems to be a chasm of five centuries into the world of industrial technology. They have preserved the life and culture of their nation without their land, which floats in the diamond sky over the Himalayas whence came their ancestral king.

The exile has not daunted, has even strengthened the Tibetan people as a whole. But so many individuals have died, are dying, have suffered, and are suffering horribly. Reflecting on national tragedies, we must always remember the individual dimension. In many cases, the little death of exile became real death. Often there were insurmountable physical hardships on the flight over the high Himalayas and dur-

ing the reacclimatization to the heat, low altitude, and germ-environment of India.

John F. Avedon, in his recent masterpiece, *In Exile from the Land of Snows*, poignantly recounts the trials and hardships of one little Tibetan family.<sup>2</sup> On a cool



H.H. the Dalai Lama, early 1960s

October night in 1959, Chopel Dhondub began a hastily planned flight from his village to the south, across the Himalayas. Unaware that the Dalai Lama had already gone the previous March, Chopel Dhondub and his wife were fleeing to save their ten-year-old son, Tempa, who was to be taken from them forcibly by the Chinese military authorities, and sent down to China for schooling. Mr. and Mrs. Dhondub had to carry their two infant daughters on their backs through the cold, deep snow. One of the little girls died of exposure in her mother's arms during the third day of the trek, just after they had succeeded in getting over the last pass at eighteen thousand feet. They had to bury her little body right there in the snow. With further great hardships, they had to beg their way through Bhutan to reach India. After some months in an over-crowded refugee camp in a hot, humid climate they had never experienced, the second daughter died. The family was eventually transferred to a road-working camp in the hills, but Mrs. Dhondub had become withdrawn and listless from the shock of the loss of her daughters. The better climate of the road-camp did not revive her spirits, and after two more weeks, she also died, simply of a broken heart. Chopel Dhondub himself became very ill, and the eleven-year-old Tempa had to be taken into the Tibetan government nursery that was being set up in Dharamsala. In spite of tragedy that might have crushed such a young boy, Tempa somehow survived. He grew to serve the Dalai Lama and the government very ably as secretary and translator.

The Tibetan story is hundreds of thousands of such individual cases of human tragedy and suffering. The policy of the Chinese occupation forces was described as "genocidal" by the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. Following Mao's ideological determination and his expansive geopolitical strategy, the mission of the Chinese generals in charge was to eradicate Tibetan culture and assimilate Tibetans into the Chinese race. They wanted to create *ex post facto* the appearance of legitimacy for

their claim to a land that had never been part of China during its several thousand years of recorded history. Tibet has suffered a total loss of the physical setting of its civilization, monasteries, temples, palaces, elegant houses; a loss of at least one fifth of its population to war, mass executions, both militarily organized and class-struggle incited, attrition in gulag-style prison camps, mass deportation to China; and a loss of their national land and individual properties due to the carving of the eastern parts of Tibet into a new state, Qinghai, and into new districts of old states such as Sechuan, and due to the mass colonization of their ancestral lands by Chinese workers and soldiers.

In an exact sense, Tibet only exists in the refugee community in India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, where His Holiness the Dalai Lama, his government-in-exile, and his by now roughly one hundred twenty thousand refugee subjects have preserved much of the old culture, while vigorously developing new forms of Tibetan living in the modern situation.<sup>3</sup> The capitol is in Dharamsala, a small town in the Himalayan foothills in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. The Dalai Lama has led the way in a monumental administrative job of reconstructing a government, with elected representative bodies, ministries of Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Religious and Cultural Affairs, and Education, and numerous smaller agencies. Hospitals, practicing Tibetan medicine and western medicine both, have been constructed, large nursery schools for the many orphans and virtual orphans, monasteries, cultural associations for dance and drama, fine arts, carpentry, silver and goldsmithing, archives and museums—the energy and thoroughness with which the culture is selectively preserved and developed are remarkable. Education has been a major priority, and His Holiness received great understanding and assistance from Pandit Nehru in this, allowing him to create a special Tibetan school system for the Tibetan children. The Dalai Lama real-

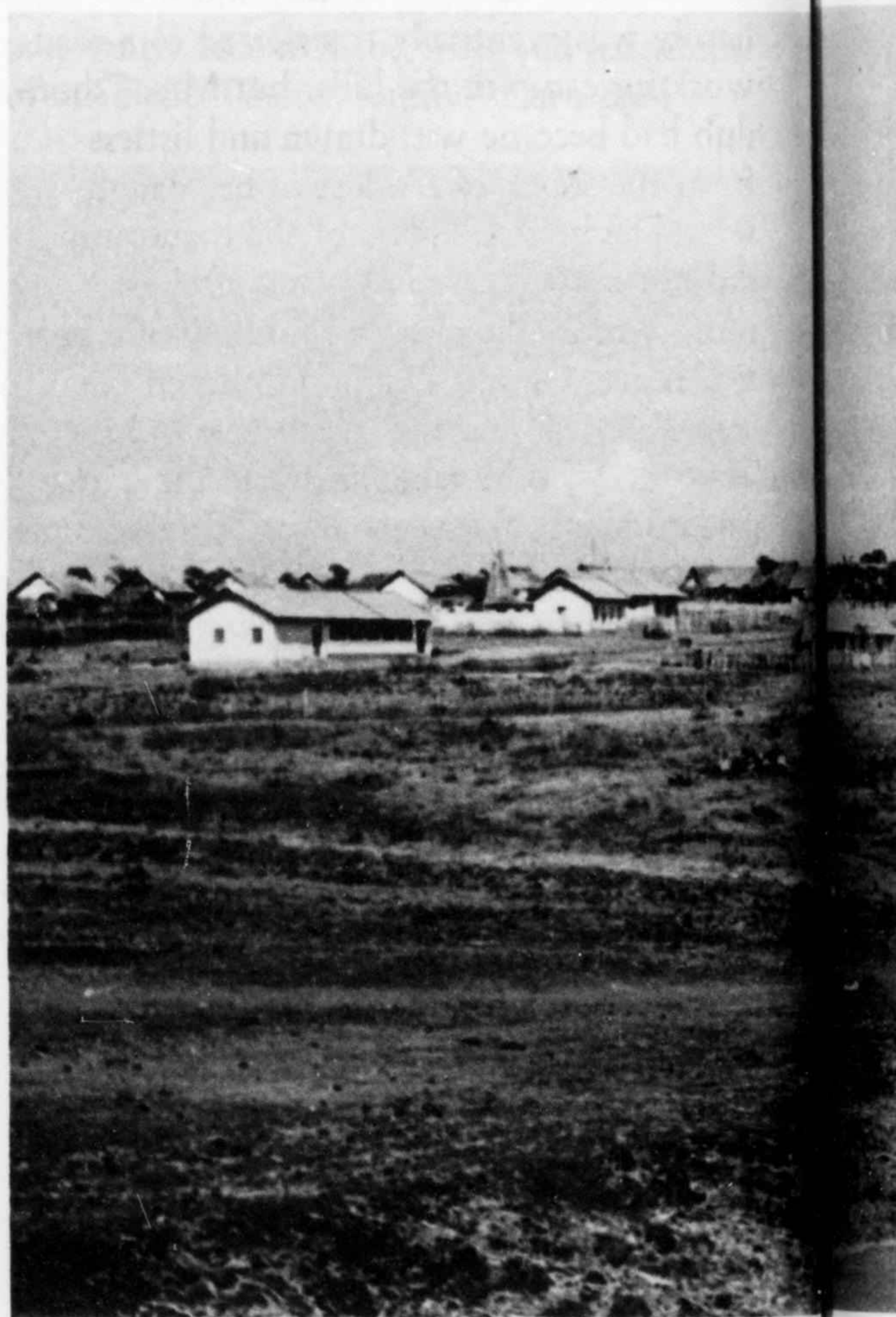
ized twenty-five years ago that the survival of his people depended on the education of the youth—they could lose their language and Tibetan culture in the Indian school system, or they could follow a curriculum that provided them with knowledge of their language and history and native culture as well as giving them the essentials of a modern education, including English and Hindi. The excellent implementation of the latter policy led to a whole generation of Tibetans with a well-balanced education, now able to enter and excel in institutions of higher learning anywhere in the world, restricted only by limited funding.

The Tibetans have also successfully developed industrial projects in various parts of India, as well as a thriving craft industry in rugs, metalwork, sweater manufacture, and other popular arts. They have done well in farming on the large tracts of undeveloped lands generously given by the Indian government in various parts of the country. In fact, the degree of success they have achieved in only two decades has been stunning, resulting in many cases in their achieving a standard of living substantially better than that of the surrounding population. This has sometimes been a source of friction arising from envy on a local level, as happened in Bhutan, for example. Finally, the major industry of Tibetans will always be knowledge, especially their "Inner Science" knowledge. The Tibetan lama teachers have already had quite an impact on spiritual seekers in India, causing a renaissance of Buddhism in its original holy land. They have created substantial movements in Europe, Australia, and North America.

The Tibetan holocaust is a culminating event in a sequence of calamities that bring us nearer to the bitter end of a certain flow of history. It is a warning for us all, a warning that confirms our clear sense of ultimate planetary danger. But most important is the opportunity for rebirth, the chance to understand the various levels of forces at work here, to see the reality of Tibet. We must find out how to benefit by its special knowledge, help it become reborn, by the power of truth against what-

ever odds, and let it help us become reborn again. As we stand on our own brink, we need whatever might be useful to turn it all around, to avert oblivion and realize a practical utopia.

Tibet, culturally including the previously scattered Mongolian peoples, represents a special civilization, which is not "traditional" in our usual sense of "pre-modern," but also is not "modern" in the *western* sense of modern. It is not a "medieval" or "feudal" civilization, as often even its most sympathetic students have assumed. It had its own "renaissance" and "reformation," developed its own form of "modernity," and its own form of "industrial revolution." But, where the western industrial modernity is "exterior," i.e. materialistic, secularistic, and aimed at ultimate transformation of the world as a physical, external environment, the Tibetan



*Tibetan settlement camp, southern India*



industrial modernity is spiritual, religious, and aimed at ultimate transformation of the world as an intersubjective, internal realm of mind.

Tibet/Mongolia was the only society on the planet in which Buddhism had become completely central, the only fully monasticized society in history. But have a care—this does not mean that it was a “pure land” or “Buddha-land,” a land where all Buddhist ideals, both individual and social, were fulfilled. No land could ever satisfy the messianic aspirations of the Mahayana Bodhisattvas without the entire planet going along with it, according to the Buddhist view of the interconnectedness of all beings. Tibet showed her implicit awareness of her own imperfection in this sense in two ways; by seeking in the end to shut out the rest of the violent world, and by adopting the dream of Shambhala as central to her view of history. But Tibet was still a relatively, temporarily purified land to her people, a land chosen as sacred to the angelic messiah/Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, a land where the millennium had already arrived and the God of Compassion was manifestly and institutionally incarnate in the five-century-long line of the Dalai Lamas.

To understand what this means, we need to run through the thousand-year process by which Tibet/Mongolia became such an even temporary Buddhist paradise. At the time of the song at the beginning of this essay, Tibetans were a powerful race of conquerors, feared by the T'ang emperors, Muslim caliphs, Bengali and Nepali kings, and Inner Asian princes. In the seventh century, Songzen Gampo brought in Buddhism against the strenuous objections of his fierce feudal vassals, and it took his dynasty almost two hundred years to build the first monastery. The Dharma of non-violence, renunciation, love, and wisdom did not sit well right away with blood-thirsty tribal warriors. And a nation's support of a monastery, a nonutilitarian sacred

space for the individual's spiritual development, is the threshold of its entry into the sphere of Buddhism as a way to enlightenment.

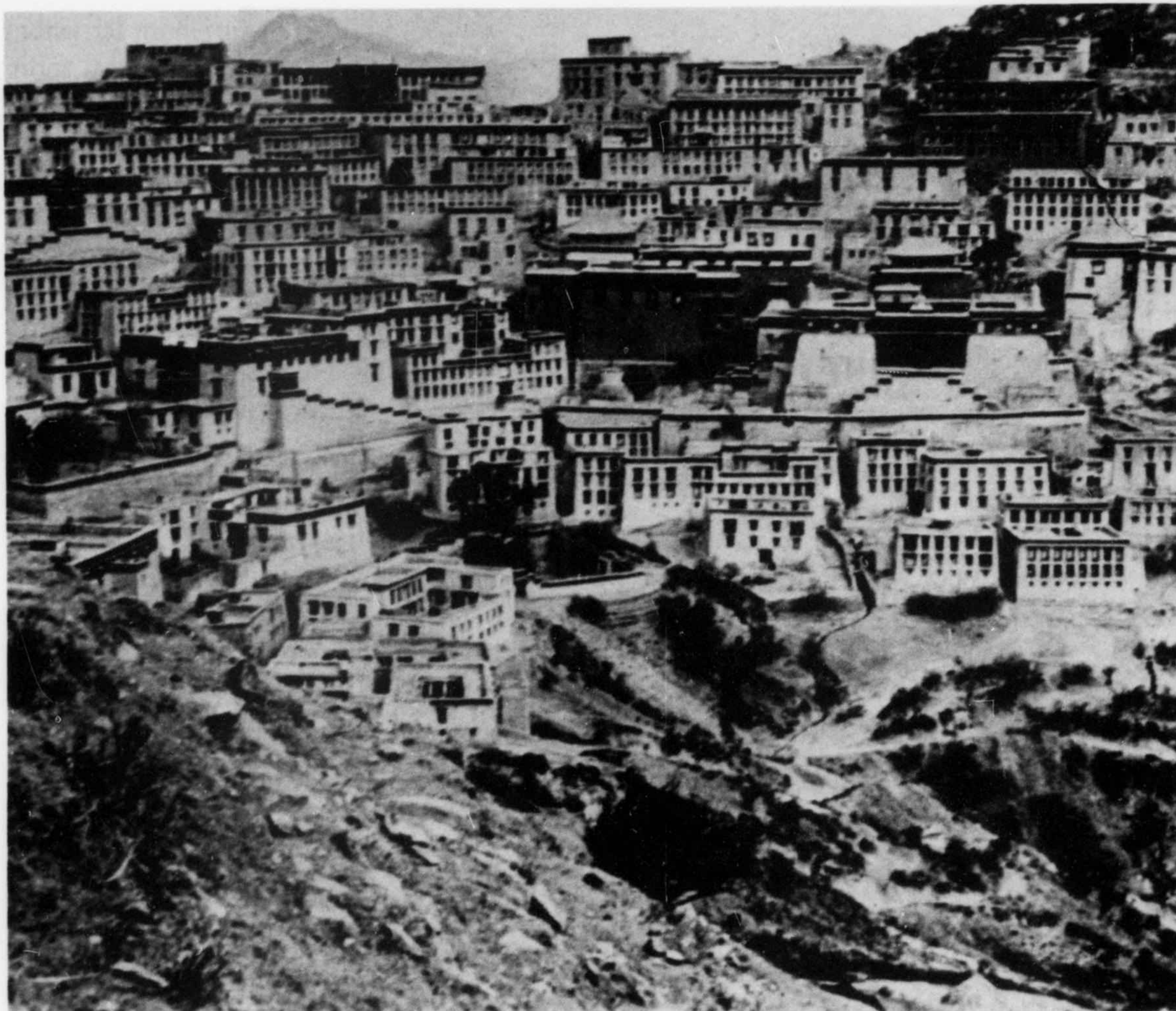
In the tenth through the fourteenth century, Tibet was slowly monasticized, as the nation's warrior energies turned more and more inward to the conquest of the inner enemies of ignorance, lust, and hate. The power of the feudal nobles still remained great, however, and the fortunes of the monastic Orders teetered in a precarious balance with the various dynasties, with foreign powers often involved, especially the as yet untamed Mongols. This was the period of the “feudal, medieval Tibetan society” so many think still existed until recently, due to the combination of Tibet's lack of “exterior modernity,” the propaganda of the Chinese, ignorance, and the lack of even a concept of a form of personality and society that existed nowhere else, a form we can suitably call “interior modernity.”

Then in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, something remarkable happened, something that did not happen anywhere else on the planet. The monastic, spiritually-centered institutions became the secular power, gradually assumed responsibility for government, took over management of resources, and developed a skillful bureaucracy. During these same centuries in northern Europe, the merchant classes backed secular kings to suppress the feudal nobles, the Protestant ideology destroyed the role of the monasteries by making “interior industry” irrelevant to a predetermined salvation by faith alone and hence irrational, and the unification of the sacred/secular duality was accomplished by the collapse of the sacred into the secular. Max Weber has analyzed this process of “exterior” modernization quite well.<sup>4</sup> In Tibet, the monastic Orders employed Messianic and Apocalyptic Buddhist ideas to produce a Sacred King to control the feudal nobles, depriving them of much of their land and all feudal claims over the serfs. The monasteries became the seats of the national industry, the inner perfection of minds and



*H.H. the Dalai Lama with students at the thanka painting school, Dharamsala, India*

souls through education and contemplation. And the Apocalyptic Buddhist ideology encouraged a sense of millennial immediacy of ultimate spiritual fruition that led to the sacred/secular nonduality being focused on the sacred (the exact reverse of the western secularistic "nonduality"). Although rough and tough individuals still roamed free, especially in the



*Ganden, the third largest monastery in Tibet . . .*

east of Tibet, the national policy was non-violence. There was no army and little police. There was total access to learning and wide social mobility through the universal monastic education system. The central government protected the lower classes from the greatly weakened nobility, whose landholdings had become dependent on their service of the government, and there was a new avenue of ennoblement through having the merit or good fortune to receive a reincarnate saint in the family by birth. Above all, the whole nation lived for the enlightenment of each individual, within a multilife time-frame, with a messianic and apocalyptic sense of the immanence of the divine benefactors of the world.

The magnificent edifice renowned as the Potala was completed during the seventeenth century, combining monastery, ancestral royal fortress-palace, apocalyptic

mystery temple, and bureaucratic administrative hall of government. It symbolizes dramatically the synthesis I have so quickly sketched. At the nexus of this synthesis was, of course, the person of the Dalai Lama, Buddhist monk, Messiah/Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara incarnate, Mystic Master of the Vajrayana, apocalyptic sacraments, and chief executive of the state. The reformation was conducted by the first four Dalai Lamas, and the Potala was begun by the Great Fifth (1617–1682), and finished by the Seventh (1708–1757). It symbolized the national center, the abode of the nationless, universal Bodhisattva of Great Compassion, incarnate to protect his people whose chosenness was their selflessness, whose identity was identitylessness, whose industry was enlightenment, and whose evolutionary destiny was imminently to be fulfilled in the unfolding of the mystic

Wheel of time.

This is Tibet's "modernity," her "conquest" of the realms of the individual mind through a refined technology of self-perfecting education and contemplation, and her "industrial revolution" of producing powerful and beautiful, benevolent, magical energies to create new spaces of the human imagination, within which invisible horizon the imaginations of all peoples could flourish. This is not an intellectual game, a play on the words "conquest" and "industry," a way of dressing up in fine new clothes a quaint traditionality we should value for humanitarian reasons. No, I mean this in great seriousness. Opening a path of insight toward this social possibility can bring us to the concept of something as important, useful, even essential to us as an alternative modernity; a way of becoming modern that is equal and yet opposite to

the one Europe chose; a way of modernity that may complement our own.

It is convenient that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has become more well-known, as his personality and the mythic sources of identity underlying it provide us with a good example of "interior modernity." Quite a bit has been written about him since Heinrich Harrer first knew him as a boy eager to dissect radios and assemble car engines,<sup>5</sup> and people are always surprised about how "contemporary" and "everyday" and "modern" he is. Tibetans in general have taken easily to technology and machinery, becoming skillful quite rapidly, learning very well. Tibetan refugee colonies in India have tended quickly to become islands of Swiss-like order and precision in a



... Ganden, after being razed by the Chinese Red Guards



*H.H. the Dalai Lama distributing fruits at a Tibetan refugee school in India*

sea of third-world shabbiness. His Holiness in his home in exile in Dharamsala relaxes doing scientific horticulture, repairing watches with a set of fine Swiss precision tools, soldering connections in home radio sets, as well as reading widely in the enormous Tibetan philosophical and mystical literature. He goes into his office and conducts businesslike and amiable conversations with people from all over the world. Or he holds a staff meeting with his Cabinet, or with officials from one of the Ministries or government institutions. Or he presides over an elaborate liturgy in his hierophantic regalia. Or he attends a philosophical debate or he lectures to graduate students. And occasionally he spends weeks or even months on retreats, practicing very disciplined contemplations. He travels widely, has quietly met most world leaders around the planet, and is well informed in

many fields. He holds incisive views on a variety of subjects, yet he always maintains an open curiosity. What are the sources of identity of such a person?

His Holiness is a Buddhist monk, a Mendicant in the Community of Shakyamuni the historic Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha was a famous exile, exile in the really cosmic sense of a "stranger in a strange land." In his mythic royal lives previous to his historic Buddhahood, he was often exiled, usually for being too good to be true. As Vessantara, the Prince of Generosity, he is exiled for giving away the national treasury and the key to the national defense. As Mahabodhi, the sage of ethics, he is exiled for giving counsel that was all too excellent. As Siddhartha in his final life, when his father seeks to imprison him in his royal role, he must escape into exile himself to gain his individual freedom, his enlightenment.

The Buddha undertook such an exile voluntarily, in keeping with his spiritual vision of ignorant life as an exile from enlightenment. After he had overcome such ignorance and the samsaric life cycle it controls, he formed a new Community, the precious Sangha. This was his historic invention of the monastic institution, which codified and made more widely available the "homeless" life. He expressed his fundamental insight into the nature of reality in the "lion's roar" of "selflessness." He saw through the illusion of fixed identity on every level, personal and biological as well as national and cultural. Thus, the Buddha provided the earliest preparation of people for modernity on record. He taught "homelessness" as a fundamental quality of the Buddhist experience from its beginnings. It is as if the Buddha were teaching a kind of selfless personality structure in anticipation of modernity.

It is because of the centrality of this teaching that the Tibetan nation achieved what we can only call a "national identity of identitylessness." And herein we see a foundational source of the "spiritual modernity" we are after. On this level of identity, His Holiness is an international, uni-

versal human figure, at home in homelessness, tolerant of wandering, forgiving of his enemies. It is from this monastic depth of his being that he is often heard to express sincere thanks to Mao Tse-tung as one who taught him the realities of impermanence and suffering. And he only possesses to a highly cultivated degree a trait shared by most Tibetans, coming from the same source.

**H**is Holiness is considered the reincarnation of the messianic Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the archangel of great compassion. There is a myth about Avalokiteshvara that is a key to understanding his central role as patron deity of Tibet. He vowed to tame the wild beings of the Land of Snows many eons ago, when he lived in the Sukhavati in the presence of Buddha Amitabha. To stress his determination, he insisted that, should he ever become discouraged with that difficult task, his body should be torn into a thousand pieces and his head shattered into ten. He descended to the Red Mountain overlooking Lhasa and meditated for many centuries. Finally,

he did become discouraged, for he found the Tibetans to be incorrigibly difficult. At that moment his vow came true, and he was torn up into shreds. He cried out in agony and despair to his father, Amitabha, who appeared and stated, "All things are created from conditions. You should always take care about what you wish for: sooner or later you will get it!" Then he blessed the dismembered Bodhisattva, and the thousand pieces became the thousand arms of the thousand wheel-turning kings, each having in its palm one of the thousand eyes of the thousand Buddhas of our present Good Eon. The ten pieces of his head became ten heads, each symbolizing the vision of one of the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood. On the top of the stack of heads rested a miniature emanation of Buddha Amitabha himself. The Bodhisattva thus became gloriously resurrected as the embodiment of both royal power and spiritual wisdom. His topmost head was the head of Death, Yama, Lord of the underworld, symbolizing that he now could understand and deal effectively with evil without compromising his constitutional goodness of messianic great compassion.

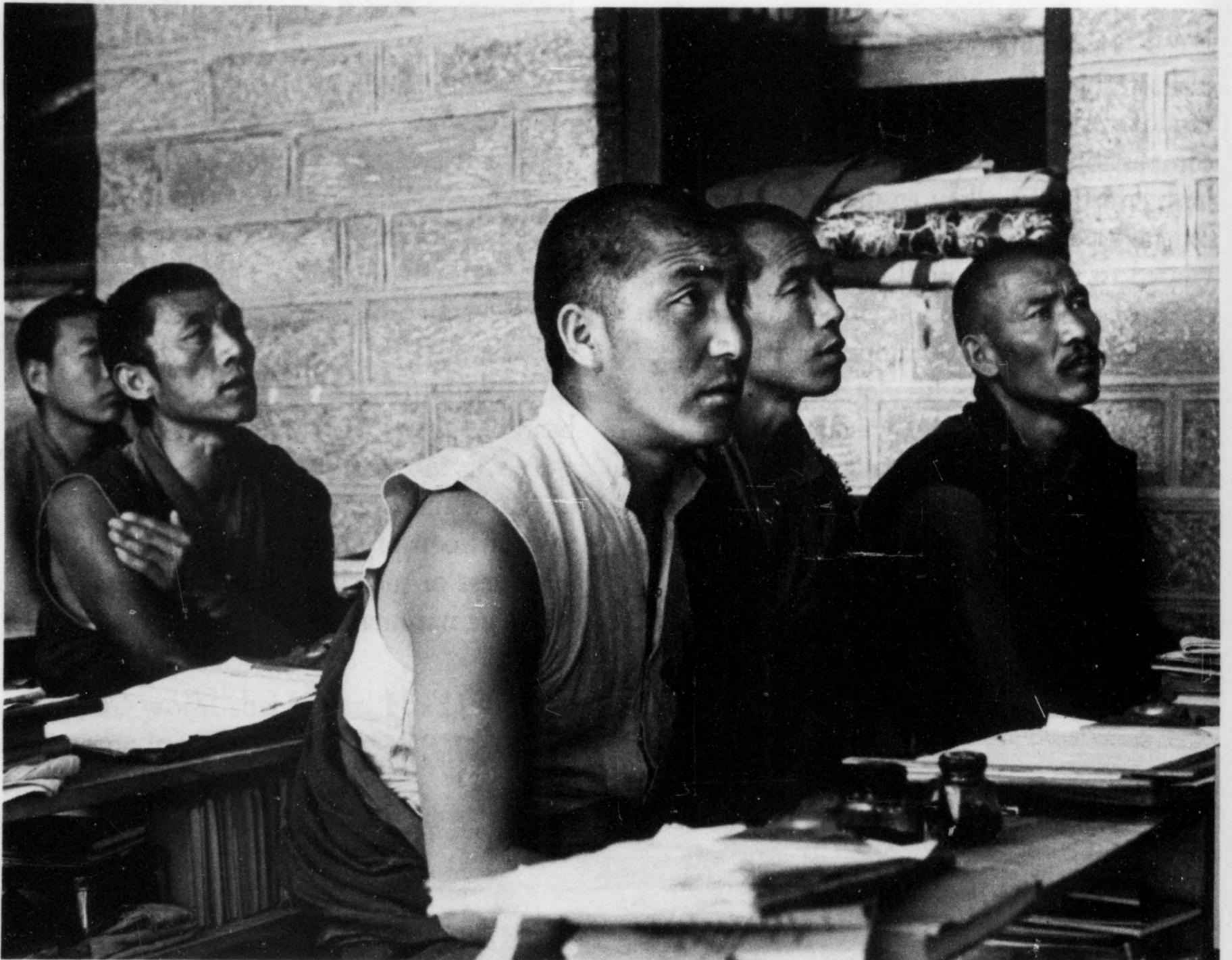
The national myth understands that he



*Traditional Tibet*

emanates in innumerable forms to help the Tibetans: as the great King Songzen Gampo, who imported Buddhism in the seventh century; as the Great Adept, mystic anthropologist, Padma Sambhava, who tamed the shamanistic deities of the Tibetan tribes; as the lay disciple of Atisha, Drom, who established the seed of a viable form of monasticism in the eleventh century; and afterwards as kings and queens, lamas and nuns and ministers and lay men

ness unique on the planet during the last three centuries. Tibet was a nation enjoying its own millennium, with its own resurrected savior alive among its people, guiding them in day to day matters as well as blessing them in matters of spirit. On this level the present Dalai Lama is of course agonized by the holocaust that has overtaken his people, and he is committed never to abandon his effort to see them through to freedom and happiness again.



*Young Tibetan lamas struggling to learn Hindi in the early 1960s*

and women. He “manifests whatsoever is needed to tame whomsoever,” in the words of the famous salutation. Finally, in the seventeenth century, after one thousand years of taming the wild Tibetans, he unifies church and state in a millennial fusion, emanating himself as the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and building the magnificent Potala on the ruins of Songzen’s favorite palace.

At Lhasa beneath its imposing beauty, the Tibetan people have enjoyed a happi-

He is also committed to the happy solution of planetary tensions and conflicts, and tries in an unassuming way to mediate any conflicts that come close to him. All Tibetans, whether accomplished or not, place great value on love and compassion, and seek to emulate the deeds of Avalokiteshvara. This gives them boundless industry and perseverance in struggling to make the world a better place, in trying to better themselves and help their fellow beings. It gives them

a kind of modern universalism of world improvement, a messianic commitment to a better future.

Finally, His Holiness is a Great Adept, both ritually and on the strength of his contemplative virtuosity, a Vajra Master of Apocalyptic Buddhism, especially renowned for his expertise in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the "Spiritual Technology of the Wheel of Time." In this role he can be identified in certain ritual and contemplative contexts with the Buddha in his most cosmic manifestation, as the *Time Machine* itself, a godlike presence that is fully aware of all time and all destinies, and is fully competent in benevolent strategies to assure the positive evolution of all forms of life toward freedom and happiness. The Tibetan sense of history is tied to the teachings of the *Kalachakra*. They believe in the existence of a mythic country at the North Pole named "Shambhala," where there are thousands of enlightened Bodhisattvas with a highly developed spirituality and an effective technology. This country remains invisible to all the nations until a time in the near future when things seem all but lost to the forces of darkness, ignorance, and despotism. Then Shambhala becomes visible, there is a final battle between darkness and light, light prevails, and a golden age ensues all over the earth. It is rather like the apocalyptic teachings of most religions. On this level of His Holiness' identity, he practices a contemplation that uses the artistic creative imagination to conceive a Mandalic universe of pure beauty, harmony, kindness, and wisdom, never losing faith in the essential spiritual fact that good is more powerful than evil. Again, although the Dalai Lama is the standard-setter for the nation, all Tibetans possess this identification with the positive evolutionary process symbolized by the *Kalachakra Time Machine*. It provides them with a resilient optimism in the midst of the worst difficulties and sufferings. It is a great asset in modern times.

These three strands of mythic identity combine in the complex Tibetan personality to constitute its "interior modernity."

There is the basic, monastic "homeless mind" of the free individual, grounded well enough in the ultimate groundlessness to be tolerant and resigned and detached from many of the props of ordinary life. There is the messianic commitment to universal compassion that underlies a general friendliness, a sense of the "familiarity" of all beings that enables the Tibetan to get along so well in pluralistic situations. And finally there is the historical utopianism, or "Shambhalism," that enables him or her to keep up hope in the face of overwhelming odds, that preserves a sustaining faith and sense of grace even in the darkest moments of holocaust, torment, and death. In these three traits we have a concrete illustration of a "modernity" of personality that does not depend on external technology, modern industrial urban living arrangements and so on: the character constellation of "interior modernity."

Well, so what? What difference does it make if we call the form of society of Tibet "an interior modernity" rather than "medieval," or "feudal," or even "traditional"? Perhaps modernity itself is not so wonderful; there are those among us who have no great pride of progress, and esteem the values of good old traditionality. What is the point of this exercise?

There are several levels of answers to this. On the minimal level, "feudal" and "medieval" have been used by the Chinese Communists to justify their genocidal policy, trying to pretend that their theft and absorption of Tibet is a form of "progress," righting "feudal class injustice" and "medieval barbarities." It has been used by westerners seeking an excuse for their turning a blind eye on these atrocities, pragmatically resigning themselves to the inevitability of the disappearance of traditionality. Both these excuses disappear when we recognize the integrity of Tibetan civilization and the importance of allowing its development to continue on its own innovative line of progress.

On the next level, it is true that there

are many drawbacks to our form of modernity: the homeless mind is a painful alienation and a sorry way to live, and we are on the brink of destroying the earth itself in the process of breaking away from fettering traditionality. We have a great deal to learn from so-called "traditional" peoples, and every single one of them, each in its own way, presents an alternative form of modernity, in that it still exists somehow today. Granting these points, is it practical to try to take the world back into any existing form of traditional social reality? Is it desirable? Every form of romantic atavism I know of, including all forms of religious fundamentalism, tacitly admits the impossibility of turning back the momentum of "modern progress" by basing the plausibility of its worldview on an evident anticipation of the destruction of modernity in some form of planetary apocalypse. Not one of them considers that its social vision could be implemented by systematic design

without the catalyst of doomsday. Secondly, although we moderns sometimes feel lonely, alienated, rootless, and restless, we also feel free, full of potential, and optimistic about the infinite horizon of positive evolution that lies before us. We want a refined postmodernity, not a regression to any premodern romantic fantasy.

On the other hand, the "interior modernity" of Tibet presents another way of having the freedom and pleasures of modernity without the dangerous alienation and destructive excesses of "exterior modernity." If our technologies of self-exploration, self-conquest, and self-transformation were just as systematic and effective as our exterior technologies, then it would be extremely likely that self-restrained, enlightened, sensitive, and compassionate individuals could utilize such great power over the environment for human benefit instead of detriment. Such individuals would clearly adopt nonviolence in conflict resolution,



*Demonstrators at the United Nations*

and war, with its exorbitant expense, could be abandoned. War industries could become peace industries, the ghettos could become elegant ethnic paradises, the Sahara could become a garden, the oceans farms, outer space resorts, schools and universities centers of enlightenment training, and monasteries could replace mental hospitals and prisons. Use your own imagination on how the one trillion plus yearly planetary war dollars could be spent to long-term human benefit.

The key is the Inner Sciences kept alive for us in Tibetan monastic universities and rooted in her unique cultureless culture. In brief, from Tibet's alternative, interior modernity, we can learn the Inner Science and Technology we need to balance knowledge with cultivated positive emotion, to complement our power over nature with power over self, to become interior conquistadors and discover our inner El Dorados, fountains of youth, and the vast Pacific vistas of the mind. This means we have much to learn, especially in the line of ethics, psychology, and philosophy included in Inner Science. And we can learn much from books, but more from people.

As people learn best by example, we have to observe the Tibetans themselves, to see how they combine our outer modernity with their own inner modernity. We are not the only active agents. It is not just a matter of how we use their knowledge. At least as important is how they will pick and choose among our knowledges and techniques. We may learn most of all about evolving a balanced modernity from how the Tibetans learn from us. There are two experiments going on: nations with exterior modernity trying to balance it with newly learned interior modernity, and the nation with interior modernity trying to balance it with newly learned exterior modernity. If, as the Indian and Tibetan sages have said all along, the Inner Science is the more important, difficult, and valuable, then they should have the easier time and develop an integrated modernity before us. Thus, it is they who would lead us by example into Shambhala, and not the other

way around. And we cannot know how they will do that until they are free to evolve in their own space, their own freedom, their own time. So it is part of the complex project of continuously saving the world not to cease the struggle to return the Tibetan people to their own environment, to enable them to rebuild their institutions. And then how we will enjoy their happiness, watching them evolve in open international communication!

It is not only a moral imperative to stop the human rights abuse in Tibet and to base our policy there on the principle of freedom and self-determination. It is in our own interest and in the interests of the Chinese to see Tibetans free. We should not just enjoy the spiritual gift of the Tibetans, ignoring their relative, political plight. We should see that they regain their freedom, as a planetary priority, more important than any nation's face-saving or short-term interests, even a huge nation such as China. A free Tibet can do even more for the world than the Tibetans free in exile are now already doing.

A viable world order, what the Chinese called T'ian Ming, the "Will of Heaven," stands not on power or strategy, but on truth. The truth is that Tibet is free, its shattered pieces gloriously resurrected into a thousand loving arms and knowing eyes, even floating in exile. Let the Bodhisattva have his feet back on the ground. Give back the Land of Snows. ■

#### NOTES

1. Ancient Tibetan Song, from *Cultural History of Tibet*, by H. Richardson (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), pp. 24-25.
2. John F. Avedon, *In Exile from the Land of Snows* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), pp. 73ff.
3. From *Tibetans in Exile, 1959-1980* (Dharamsala: Information Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama).
4. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1905.
5. Heinrich Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1953).

## EPICYCLES

---



### Parting Gift/chinese

Lao Tse was a scholar. He lived a quiet and retiring life, cultivating the Way. Spontaneous and serene, he lived with natural ease and natural purity. Lao Tse lived for many years, some say more than two hundred, for he knew the art of nourishing and sustaining life.

For many, many years he was Keeper of the Imperial Archives for the House of Chou. But at length he saw that the kingdom grew daily more corrupt. All around him, he saw that there was no respect for natural goodness and the Way. Saddened by what he saw, Lao Tse resolved to leave the kingdom. He mounted a water buffalo and rode away toward the West. When he reached the western gate in the great wall that separated the kingdom of Chou from the desert, he found a gatekeeper there. Now, this gatekeeper, Yin Hsi (some say he was no ordinary gatekeeper, but one of the Eight Immortals), had dreamed of the coming of a master of wisdom. Seeing Lao Tse arrive on his water buffalo, he recognized the man of his dream. He asked where Lao Tse was going, and Lao Tse replied that he intended to ride into the desert and never return.

“Since you are retiring from the world,” said Yin Hsi, “before you leave, will you be so kind as to write a book for my enlightenment?”

Lao Tse was reluctant, but at last he yielded and sat down to write. He wrote for seven days and seven nights. When he had finished, he gave Yin Hsi the book, the eighty-one sayings of the Tao teh Ching. Then, mounting his water buffalo, he rode away into the desert and was never seen again.

—Retold by Anne Twitty



## The Flight and Exile of Quetzalcoatl/Aztec

*The twelfth "chapter": which tells of the flight—of the flight and exile—of Quetzalcoatl, how he went to Tlapallan [the land of the sun] and of all that he did on the way.*

[The three sorcerers came against the Toltecs, deceived and destroyed many of them.]

And many another evil was done to the Toltecs that Tollan might be destroyed. And because it was so, Quetzalcoatl suffered. He grieved. Then he remembered that he was to go, that he was to leave his city of Tollan. Then he made his preparations.

It is said that he completely burned his house of gold, his house of redshell. And the other Toltec treasures, the splendid things, the precious things: all were buried, all were concealed in inaccessible places, in the interior of a mountain or in chasms.

And he also changed the cacao trees to mesquites. And all the precious birds, the quetzal, the cotinga, the roseate spoonbill—he sent them on ahead. They led him onward, they proceeded to Anahuac. So it was. And so he started out, and so he followed on.

And soon he reached the site of Cuauhtitlan—Beneath the Tree. The tree rose very broad and very tall. He stopped beside it. Then he asked to have his mirror, then he saw himself: he looked at his reflection, saying, "Truly I am old." And there he dubbed it Old-Age Cuauhtitlan—Beneath the Old-Age Tree.

Thereupon he stoned the tree. He pelted it. And as he pelted it, the stones grew all encrusted and fixed themselves upon the old-age



tree. This is how it always looked—it appeared just so—beginning at the root, extending to the crown.

And as Quetzalcoatl followed on, they preceded, blowing flutes for him.

Again he rested—at a place where he sat himself upon a rock, leaning forward on his hands. Suddenly then in the distance he saw Tollan, and then he wept. Sighing, he wept. His tears rained down as hail, and his tears slid down his face. As they dropped, they pierced the very rock.

*The thirteenth "chapter": where it is told of the mark Quetzalcoatl made in the rock with his hands where he rested, where he sat.*

And as he leaned on the rock with his hands, he pressed them down, just as one would make impressions with one's palms in clay. His buttocks likewise were upon the rock and so were impressed and bemired. Indeed the indentations can be seen. So he gave this place the name Temacpalco—Where the Handprints Are.

And then he arose and went on to a place called Tepanohuayan—At the Stone Bridge—where a river lies, a river flowing, spread out wide. He laid stones to make a bridge, and then and there crossed over. And thereupon he called it Tepanohuayan.

And again he set forth, and arrived at a place called Coahapan—At the Water of the Serpent. There were sorcerers there who wished to turn him back, reverse him, and they blocked his way and asked him, "Where are you going? Where are you bound? Why are you leaving the city? To whom have you left it? Who shall do penance?"

Then Quetzalcoatl answered the sorcerers, "This cannot be permitted. I must go on."

Then the sorcerers asked Quetzalcoatl, "Where do you go?" And Quetzalcoatl answered, "Tlapallan is where I go and what I seek."

And they asked him, "What business have you there?" Then Quetzalcoatl said, "I have been summoned there—the sun has called me."

Then they answered, "Very well. You must relinquish all the Toltec arts."



And there he did relinquish all the Toltec arts: the art of casting gold, the art of cutting jewels, the art of carving wood, the art of working stone, the art of painting books, the art of feather-working.

They made him yield it all, they took it all by force—they seized it all.

So it was. Then Quetzalcoatl threw his jewels upon the water and they were swallowed up. And so he gave the place a name: Cozcahapan, At the Water of the Jewels, now called Coahapan, At the Water of the Serpent.

And then he traveled on, reaching the place called Cochtocan—Where He Lay Sleeping. And there a sorcerer came to meet him and said to him, “Where are you going?” Then he answered, “Tlapal-lan is where I go and what I seek.”

Then the sorcerer said, “Very well. Drink this wine that I have brought here.” Quetzalcoatl answered, “No, I must not drink, nor even taste but a little.”

Then the sorcerer spoke to him again: “It cannot be allowed that you fail to drink, that you even fail to taste it. For I give leave to no one, I let no one pass, unless I serve him wine and have him drink—and make him drunk. Now do it! Come! And drink this!”

Then Quetzalcoatl drank the wine through a reed. And when he had drunk, he fell fast asleep in the road. He thundered as he slept: his snoring could be heard from afar. And when he woke, then he glanced from side to side. He looked at himself and arranged his hair; then he gave the place a name: Cochtocan, Where He Lay Sleeping.

*The fourteenth “chapter”: which tells how Quetzalcoatl’s subjects were chilled and frozen to death as they passed between Iztactepetl and Popocatepetl—and of the other things that he did.*

Then again he set forth, climbing up between Iztactepetl and Popocatepetl. And all the dwarfs and the hunchbacks who were his servants went with him. It snowed on them all, they were chilled there, they died of the cold. And Quetzalcoatl was shaken by it. He wept. He sang. Weeping greatly, he sighed.

Then he saw in the distance another white mountain, called Poyauhtecatl. And again he set forth and went everywhere, touching

at towns and villages everywhere. And they say that he left a great number of traces behind him—his signs—by which he was signified:

At a certain spot on a mountain, they say, he would frolic and tumble and fall to the bottom, and for his recovery he left in place a towline of maguey.

At another site he laid out a ball court all of stone. And through the middle, where the center line lay, it was entrenched. And the entrenchment ran deep.

And in another place he shot a ceiba [tree], shooting it so that he himself passed through the heart of the ceiba.

And in another place he built a house underground. And the site is called Mictlan.

And in yet another place he erected a stone, a great stone phallus. They say that anyone, even a child, might once have pushed it with his finger.

It had indeed been set in motion, rocking back and forth. Yet, they say, when many pushed it, then it absolutely would not move. Though many together might make the effort, desiring to push it, it could not be moved.

And still many other things did he do in towns and villages everywhere. And they say that he named all the mountains. Here and throughout he bestowed all the names.

And at last he arrived at the seashore. Then he constructed a litter of serpents. And when it was finished, he sat himself on it: it served as his boat. And so he set off and was carried away by the sea.

No longer does anyone know how he reached Tlapallan.

From "Quetzalcoatl," translated from the Nahuatl by John Bierhorst, in *Four Masterworks of American Indian Literature*, edited by John Bierhorst (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1984).



## The Hymn of the Pearl/Gnostic

A small child, I was dwelling in my Father's palace, delighting in wealth and luxuries. My parents sent me from our home, the East, putting together a load of treasures. It was large, yet so light I could carry it alone. Gold from the land of Gilan, silver from Gazzak the Great, chalcedonies from India, iris-hued opals from Kushan, and the hard adamant that cuts iron, they sent with me. They took my robe from me, my robe spangled with gold, and my mantle. And they made a covenant with me, and the covenant was written in my heart. It said:

If you go down into Egypt  
and bring back the one Pearl  
the Pearl of the Sea  
that lies close to the loud-breathing Serpent  
then you shall wear once again  
your robe and your mantle  
and, with your brother, shall be  
heir to the kingdom.



I came out of the East, and with two guides, I traveled the hard and dangerous road. I passed by the borders of Maishan, the market of Eastern merchants, and I reached the Land of Babel, and entered the walls of Sarbug. Further I went, into Egypt, and there my guides left me. At once I went to the Serpent, and settled close to the hole where he lay, waiting to take the Pearl, while he slept. Alone I was there, and lonely, a stranger.

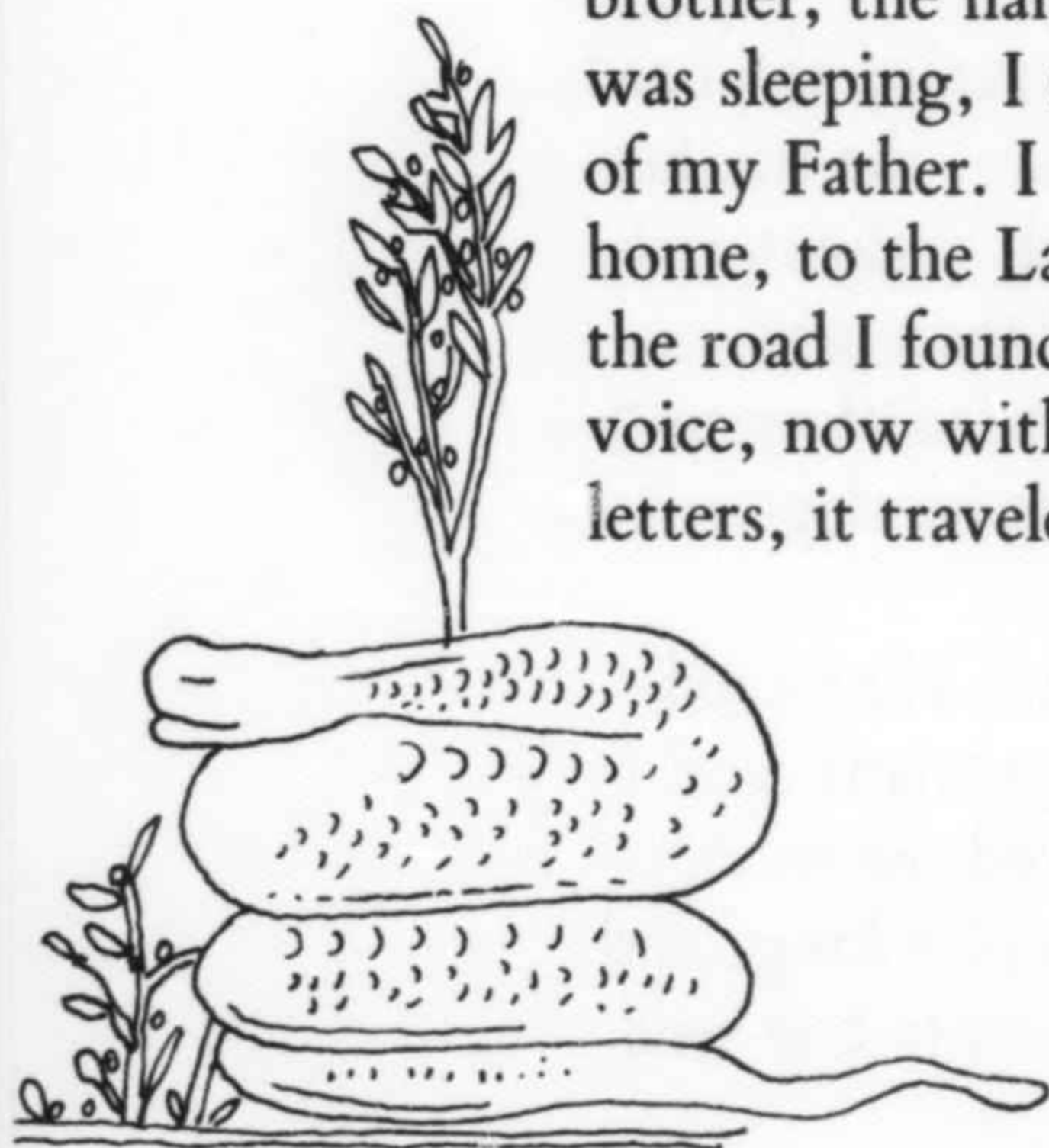
But now a kinsman came to me, a fair young man. He joined me, became my companion. We were wary of the Egyptians, and I wore their clothing to seem like them. But they offered me food, and by friendship deceived me. I forgot I was the son of a king, and became a slave to their king. I forgot the Pearl my parents had sent me to search for. And I fell into a deep sleep.

But my parents perceived this, and hurried to take counsel. The kings and great ones of the East came to their doors and decided I must not be left down in Egypt. They wrote out a letter for me:

From the King of Kings, your Father  
and your Mother, Queen of the Dawn-land,  
and from our second son, your brother,  
peace. Rise, rise and wake out of sleep  
and hear the words of our letter.  
Remember you are a king's son.  
Whom have you served as a slave?  
Remember the Pearl.  
Remember your robe of glory  
and your mantle of splendor.  
Your name is named in the Book of Life  
and with your brother, you shall be  
heir to our kingdom.

The letter flew, in the form of an eagle. It flew, and it settled beside me, and it became speech. Its voice and the sound of its wingbeats woke me from sleep. I took the letter and kissed it. I loosened its seal and I read it. And I remembered that I was a king's son. I remembered the Pearl.

I began to charm the terrible Serpent. I lulled him to sleep with my chanting, chanting the name of my Father, the name of my brother, the name of my Mother, the Queen of the East. When he was sleeping, I snatched up the Pearl and returned toward the house of my Father. I returned by the way I had taken, to the light of my home, to the Land of the East. I stripped off my filthy garment. On the road I found the letter before me. As it had wakened me with its voice, now with its light it led me. On shining silk, with red letters, it traveled before me. I went through Sarbug, through the



Land of Babel, and I reached Maishan, the great meeting place of the merchants.

There my parents sent to me my glorious robe, and my mantle. And at once, when I saw it, I knew and saw myself through it. We seemed two, yet we were one likeness. The glorious robe, a splendor of colors, gold and beryls, chalcedonies, iris-hued opals, sapphires, was spangled and covered with the image of the King of Kings. All through it, I saw the motions of Gnosis.

Its music spoke to me:

I belong to one more valiant than all men  
and my stature grows according to his works.

And the robe poured itself toward me, and I, too, ran toward it, stretched myself to receive it. I clothed myself in its beauty, and wrapped myself in my sparkling mantle. I clothed myself, and ascended to the gate of greeting and homage. I bowed my head and worshipped the brightness of Him who had sent it.

There, at the gate, I mingled with princes. And they received me with gladness and promised me I would be sent to the gates of the King, and taking with me my pearl, I would be received by the King.

—Retold by Anne Twitty

## O My Country!/Maghreb

**K**ing Salomon knew the language of all living creatures, and all obeyed him, especially the birds.

One day this great king, a master of wisdom, was sitting on his throne. He was deep in thought. He was thinking that all paths of knowledge are useless if they do not lead to the origins of the world and to its end.

Salomon had read in The Book of how God had created Adam in Paradise, had sent him out of it, and had set the Angel Ridhwan, armed with his sword of fire, to guard the gate. Among all the descendants of Adam, no one on earth knew where Paradise lay.

From time to time Salomon lifted his head and gazed out of the window at the palace gardens, at the rare and most beautiful plants that grew in them.

His gaze was drawn to an enormous tree whose branches spread out endlessly into a thousand smaller branches. On all these branches, a maze of branches, perched myriads of his faithful friends, the birds.

And then from out of the tree came a great eagle. It flew toward the palace, flew in through the window, and settled at the foot of the throne.



Salomon asked how old the eagle was. The eagle answered, "Your Majesty, I do not know how old I am, but I do know that have spent one hundred years on each branch of that great tree."

In a flash of clarity, Salomon saw an answer to his meditations on the origin of the world. He realized that to spend one hundred years on each branch of a tree with thousands of branches was a way of rising back up the steps of time and reaching Paradise.

"Then you knew Paradise?"

"Yes indeed, Your Majesty."

Salomon rose. He took a little pebble. Placing it in the eagle's beak, he said, "Go, search the horizons, cross seas and deserts! I command you to discover its foundations once again, and to drop this pebble into the center of the place that once was Paradise."

So it was. The eagle flew for a long, long time. At last, he saw below him the foundations. He soared in great circles around the ruins of the ancient Paradise, and let the pebble drop in the desert, in the very heart of Eden.

When the eagle returned to the palace, King Salomon gave orders that this venerable witness of Paradise should be treated with the greatest respect. A nest of soft white cotton was prepared for him, and he was given nothing but the hearts and livers of young lambs to eat.

And, in spite of all this, the bird, his head hanging low, was plunged in sorrow. In his heart he held a craving for the lost Paradise whose traces he had found. There he longed to return.

Over and over, he murmured his lament:

*Ouatana, ouatani!*  
*Oua la ouasiat al koursi*  
*Oua la raqdi fil quotni!*

O my country! O my country!  
Away with grand thrones  
and beds of soft cotton!

—Retold by Anne Twitty

## CURRENTS & COMMENTS

---



### TOUR

For over five hundred years the Tibetan monks of the Gyüto Tantric College have performed sacred rituals utilizing the sounds of harmonic chanting and native instruments to create specific changes in listeners. East Coast residents now have a unique opportunity to experience the Gyüto monks' mastery of sound and its effects as the monks wind up their first visit to the United States. Sponsored by American Landmark Festivals in association with the Office of Tibet and under the patronage of H.H. the Dalai Lama, the monks of the Gyüto Tantric College will appear at Nassau County College in Garden City, Long Island, on May 2nd; at the

Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City on May 3rd; at the Alternative Museum in New York City on May 11th; and at the Open Center in New York City on May 12th. Further dates will be scheduled; for more information, telephone American Landmark Festivals at (212) 866-2036.

Those unable to attend the performances may partake of the monks' ceremonies by viewing *Tantra of Gyüto: Sacred Rituals of Tibet*, a fifty-two-minute filmed account of the Gyüto monks' 1973 European tour. Filmed by authorization of H.H. the Dalai Lama, who introduces the ceremonies, and incorporating rare historical

footage, *Tantra of Gyüto* is one of three films now available in home video format from Mystic Fire Video. The second is *Tibetan Medicine: A Buddhist Approach to Healing*, a thirty-minute exposition of Tibetan medicine filmed at the Tibetan Medical Center in India and featuring demonstrations by Ama Lopsang Dolma, Tibet's first woman doctor. The third, *Nepal, Land of the Gods*, runs sixty-two minutes and examines Nepal's unique blend of Buddhism and Hinduism. These videos may be ordered in either VHS or Beta format from Mystic Fire Video, 70 Greenwich Avenue, #410, New York, N.Y. 10012.

#### MUSIC

A definitive four-record album of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann music is announced for May release and may be ordered from Triangle Records, P.O. Box 452, N.Y.,

N.Y. 10021. The album has been re-recorded from tapes made in the 1950s of Thomas de Hartmann playing the music he composed according to Gurdjieff's indications. The album includes music from Gurdjieff's ballet, "The Struggle of the Magicians," as well as Near Eastern melodies, Sufi and Christian hymns, and the music of sacred dances witnessed by Gurdjieff in remote parts of Asia.

Thomas de Hartmann will be especially remembered by New Yorkers for his music for Kandinsky's experimental scenario, "The Yellow Sound," performed in 1982 at the Guggenheim Museum, and reviewed in *PARABOLA*, Vol. VII, No. 2.

#### FESTIVAL

June 17th marks the official opening of the year-long **Festival of India**, a celebration of Indian culture throughout the





United States. Museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and several others will hold major exhibitions devoted to Indian painting, sculpture, architecture, and design, while performances of classical Indian dance and music, film festivals, and craft shows will tour from coast to coast.

**Aditi: A Celebration of Life** at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., for example, will from June 4th to July 28th present an exhibition of 1,500 Indian artifacts and forty traditional performers, artisans, and craftspeople, including magicians, jugglers, musicians, and painters, and the Museum's Special Exhibits Gallery will be transformed into a simulation of a rural Indian setting. The Museum, located at Tenth Street and Constitution Avenue, is open every day from 10:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Admission is free. For further information, telephone (202) 357-1300; for more information on the entire Festival of India, telephone the

Indo-U.S. Subcommittee on Education and Culture at (212) 725-2666.

## MUSEUMS

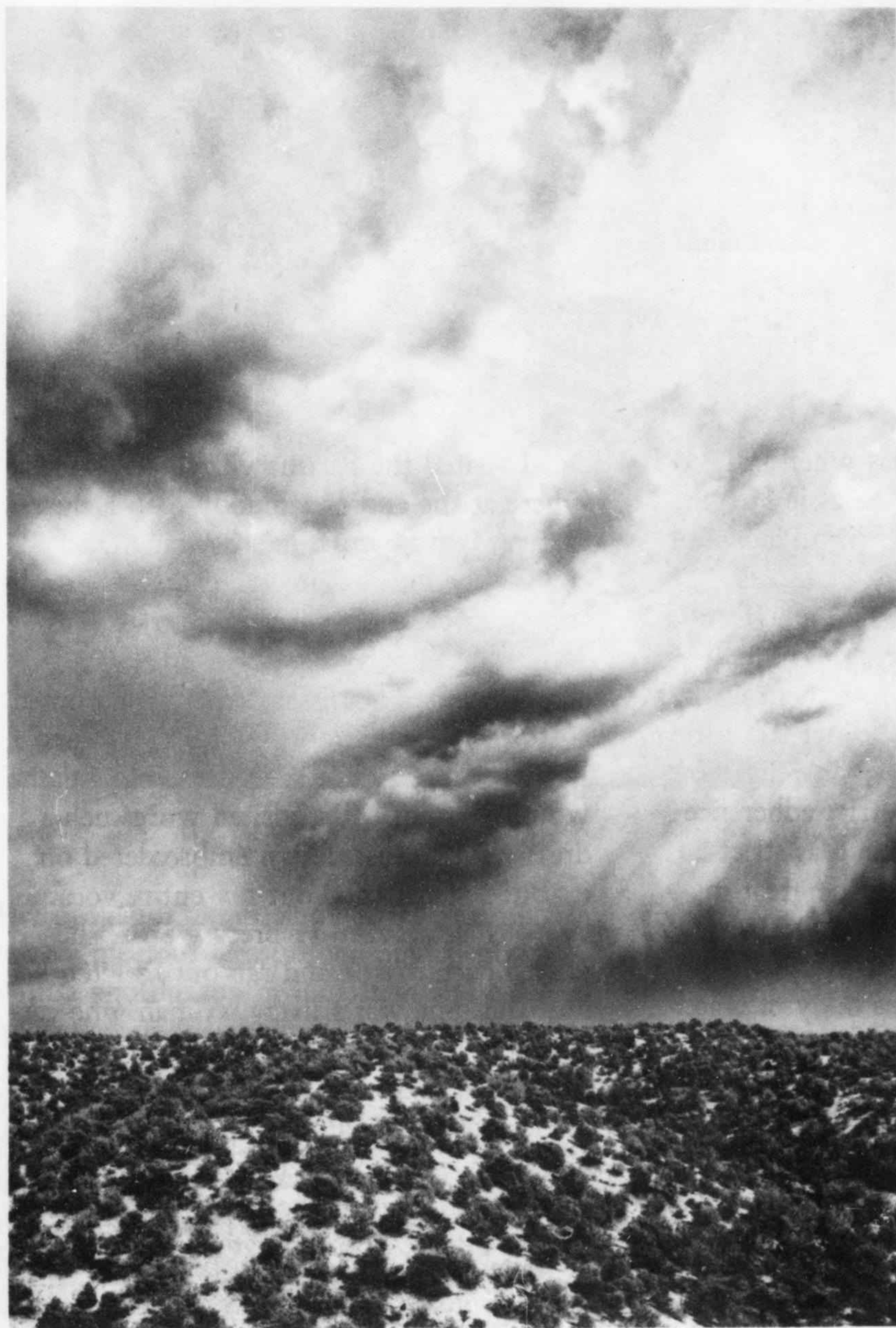
A seven-foot-long Yangere drum in the form of a running antelope, a life-size wood figure of King Behanzin of Benin portrayed as a shark-man, a Baule divination vessel, and a Dogon figure of a hermaphrodite are a few of the one hundred objects available for viewing until June 9th in **African Masterpieces from the Musée de L'Homme** at the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C. The exhibition spans eight centuries, ranging from thirteenth-century terra cotta figures of the Sao culture of Chad to twentieth-century wood sculptures from Zaire. Ninety per cent of the objects on display have never before been shown outside of France. The Museum, located at 318 A Street, N.E., is open from 10:00 A.M. to



5:00 P.M., weekdays, and from noon to 5:00 P.M. on weekends; for further information telephone (202) 287-3490.

"Earth and Spirit" (PARABOLA Vol. VI, No. 1) featured a photograph by Paul Caponigro on its cover and a selection of Caponigro images within its pages. Now visitors to the Cincinnati Art Museum in Eden Park can view over two hundred photographs from Caponigro's distinguished quarter-century career in **The Wise Silence: Photographs by Paul Caponi-**

**gro**, running through June 1st. This exhibit, presented by the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, includes images of Stonehenge, the sacred gardens of Japan, the Connecticut woods, sunflowers, and the Southwest landscape. The Museum is open from Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Sundays from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Admission is free on Saturdays, \$2.00 on other days. For further information, telephone (513) 721-5204.



## TANGENTS

---

# The End of Exile?

FREDERICK FRANCK

### **Falasha—Exile of the Black Jews**

A film by Simcha Jacobovici. A Matara Film Production, 1984.

I met my first Falashas when in Igbo I gave a course at the Haile Selassie Health College in Gondar on the High Plateau of Ethiopia. Falasha is actually a term of abuse, for the word means "alien, stranger." The Black Jews refer to themselves as Beit Ysrael. When I first met them in Africa in 1960, they seemed to differ from the Coptic Ethiopians only by their religious tradition, which includes strict adherence to the Jewish dietary laws and as strict an observance of the Sabbath. The great majority of the Black Jews lived in villages located in Gondar Province, in the vicinity of Lake Tana, an enormous body of water on whose shores stood ancient Coptic monasteries fiercely protected against the intrusion of women and even female goats and donkeys. Lake Tana is the origin of the blue Nile, a river of vital importance to both the Sudan and Egypt, for it supplies the only irrigation to their otherwise desertlike plains.

I visited the Falasha village of Wolleka where at the end of a muddy path a cluster of round straw huts, *tukuls*, was spread against the hillside. It was as undistinguishable from other Ethiopian settlements as were the villagers themselves in their stained white togas, *shama*, of handloomed cotton, from their non-Jewish neighbors. I was surprised to notice that the old Falasha woman whom I first visited wore such a dress with a cross design embroidered on it. But when I tried out my entire vocabulary of half a dozen Hebrew words, she waxed enthusiastic and ran out to fetch her husband. She was a lively woman who carried herself with a ladylike dignity that contrasted oddly with the utterly primitive interior of her *tukul*. She had short white hair, keen eyes with a humorous twinkle, and chatted gaily as she sat grinding coffee for her guests with mortar and pestle. She served it graciously in the black earthenware mugs she had baked in her own kiln.



Her husband, Gollo, showed me, as if it were a precious treasure, an old calendar with a photograph of Jerusalem and a Hebrew text neither he nor I could read.

Primeval and poverty stricken as Wolveka was, I found it neither wretched nor destitute; like the surrounding Coptic hamlets, it simply witnessed to a way of life that had remained essentially unchanged from time immemorial. I was tempted to find it almost idyllic; it was so basically

civilized, so serenely and movingly human. But their future seemed bleak: they could not own land, and their skills were doomed to disappear, for they could not possibly compete with the cheap Japanese crockery, the German aluminum pots and pans, the machine-made ploughshares, tools, and fabrics that were flooding the market. I also heard the prophecy that in a generation or two, with improved education, they would become literate, seek baptism, and be grad-

ually absorbed in the general population.

The prophecy was only partly fulfilled and in an unexpected way, as Jacobovici's film makes abundantly clear. The archaic idyll, if it ever existed, was finished forever. The improved education would turn into Marxist indoctrination—there is a scene of little children trained in goose-stepping—the baptism would be into Marxist orthodoxy and would force the Falashas to deny their few-thousand-year-old religious traditions. Their vague dreams of Jerusalem, kept alive by their liturgy, would change into an urgent and conscious desire to seek integration into a Jewish homeland of which the radio had brought news, a land in which they would be “strangers” no longer. When drought and hunger struck, the Falashas started to trek en masse in the direction of the Jerusalem of their age-old dreams.

The land-reform initiated by the revolution of 1974–75, which put an end to the reign of the “Lion of Judah,” was apparently sabotaged by hostile, local Peasant Associations, and left the Falashas as landless as ever, and thereby perhaps even more cruelly affected by the present drought and famine. It is also certain that their hallowed religious traditions were abhorrent to the Mengistu regime and that the teaching of Hebrew was prohibited. In the film the official guide who accompanied Jacobovici's crew goes to considerable lengths to stress that the Falashas are considered as Ethiopi-

ans. Nazi-type anti-semitism therefore does not seem to prevail. Nevertheless, whatever the biological antecedents of the Falashas, they consider themselves to be Jews; for centuries they even believed that they were the only Jews surviving on earth. The Israeli Government, however, did not consider them to be ethnically Jewish until 1975. In the early sixties a President of the Knesset, Ysrael Yeshayahu, went so far as to advise the Beit Ysrael to solve their problems by conversion to Christianity. Then, in 1975, the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, Ovadia Yossef, declared them to be remote descendants of one of the Lost Tribes of Israel, the Tribe of Dan, and therefore entitled under the “Law of Return” to settle in Israel and become automatically naturalized Israelis. In 1977 first attempts at their rescue were initiated by Menachem Begin.

Maybe even the Falashas themselves were surprised by the news that they were the descendants of Dan, for the accepted legend has it that the Queen of Sheba (she was probably the Queen of Axum), hungry for Solomonic wisdom, visited King Solomon at his Court in Jerusalem. Solomon, presumably a little bored by his six hundred wives, felt irresistibly attracted to his beautifully dark-skinned guest. He vowed nevertheless to respect her person, to refrain from touching her, on condition that she would not touch any of his property. Slyly the royal but libidinous sage served the queen a spicy farewell supper, so that when in the dark of the night she reached for the royal water-pitcher, Solo-

mon claimed and received his compensation *in natura*. The Queen of Sheba returned home to give birth to Solomon's son, Menelik I, who according to imperial dogma became the first ruler of the dynasty of the "Lions of Judah," of which Haile Selassie would be the last.

Menelik was sent to Jerusalem, identified by the ring Solomon had given to his royal mother, and educated at court. When he was eighteen years old, he returned to Ethiopia, accompanied by a retinue of Hebrew nobles. The Falashas believe themselves to be direct descendants of these nobles, although others assume that they were Amharic people, converted to Judaism some 1500 years ago by Jewish missionaries from Egypt and Yemen. They are a profoundly religious people who observe the commandments of the Torah scrupulously. Their prerabbinic Judaism does not know either Talmud or Mishna. Their Bible is in Geez, the ancient semitic language which is also that of the Coptic scriptures; the commentaries, however, are in Amharic.

For centuries they had a king of their own and were mighty warriors. In 1616, however, their kingdom was utterly defeated and the Beit Ysrael withdrew to the Gondar region, a conquered, despised, and exploited minority. However this may be, thanks to Ovadia Yossef they may now find a refuge in Israel as descendants of a Lost Tribe. Ten years ago there were at most two hundred Falashas to be found in Israel. Now there may be twelve thousand or more—maybe half of their total number,

estimated at twenty-five thousand—thanks to the efforts by American, Canadian, and Israeli attempts at rescue, of which the recent airlift from Khartoum succeeded in ferrying some seven thousand refugees to Israel. This "Operation Moses" was interrupted when it was publicized in early January, 1985; complicated diplomacy had attempted to keep the rescue operation secret, or at any rate sufficiently discreet not to arouse Arab tempers and Ethiopian obstruction.

The film, consisting to a great extent of an assemblage of adapted documentary material, is arranged around a single visit to a single Falasha village and is an anguished outcry without any pretensions at being a work of art. It attempts perhaps too much in trying to capsule the explosion of change from the almost neolithic Ethiopia of Haile Selassie through the ruthless revolution of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, which has brought death to countless victims of repression and fratricidal palace revolutions. It is a regime that can hardly be expected to be anything but harsh and vindictive wherever the slightest resistance or attachment to hallowed traditions is encountered. The film presents the goose-stepping elite corps parading for Soviet dignitaries, as in a perverse symbolization of the attempt to implement the instant transition from an anachronistically feudal and primitive country with ninety percent illiteracy into a contemporary Marxist society. A great deal of film foot-



age is spent on controversial statements and mutual accusations on the part of various rescue organizations and government agencies, blaming one another for the failure to act more promptly and efficiently in rescuing the Falashas before it is too late, and on interviews with Ethiopian and Sudanese ambassadors in their New York and Washington offices, telling diplomatic half-truths and repeating soothing clichés.

The little, however, that is shown of Falasha village life is extremely moving. It brought back into focus the impressive dignity of these simple people. But I found

the shots of the Falasha immigrant in Canada whose name I could not catch even more moving. He is photographed in the little luncheonette he started there and speaks of the suffering of his people with precisely that gentle, deeply civilized, and transparent humanity I remembered from Wolleka.

The assault on their religious heritage by the new regime added to the superstitious animosity of their neighbors and, surely, the drought, the failure of their crops, the sheer hunger, gave the impetus in the spring and summer of 1984 to the

sudden mass exodus of which the story of the weaver-farmer Abeba, reported in the *New York Times*, is no doubt symbolic. In his despair he gathered the little that was left from his 1983 crop and with seventy of his fellow villagers started the arduous trek across inhospitable mountain passes and wildernesses, exploited by native guides, attacked by bandits, plagued by hunger and thirst, to reach the Eastern Sudan, where they were to join some half a million desperate human beings who too had fled from the semipermanent disaster areas, from the drought and famine that is now ravishing large parts of Africa. Interned in camps like Umma Rekuba, some two thousand Falashas were to die. Abeba finally was evacuated to Israel, but like so many others, he was separated from his family. Those who succeeded in reaching Israel show, apart from symptoms of dehydration, tuberculosis, typhoid, jaundice, and malaria, severe psychological afflictions similar to those of the survivors of Nazi concentration camps at the end of World War II. Several thousand of the Falashas are still the "guests" of Sudan's President Gaafar al Nimeiry, not exactly a humanist host. Nimeiry has recently reinstated the Islamic law which punishes theft with amputation, adultery or what is considered an attempt at it, with public and usually lethal flogging, and heresy with execution. Quite recently the seventy-six-year-old leader of a more liberal movement, Mohammed Taha, was hanged as a heretic. Nimeiry has declared that the Falashas may leave at any time, but not directly to Israel, which he considers an enemy.

The film ends with some touching scenes, photographed in Israel, of the reception and integration of these descendants of Dan returning after a considerable absence to their homeland. It seems to be proceeding with surprising kindness and admirable efficiency. The difficulties of acculturation to contemporary ways of life would seem to be formidable. It includes the learning of Hebrew, of various trades, the adaptation to strange foods, beds with sheets, the use of electricity, and even the watching of television. In absorption centers like Ashkalon, where they stay for a year, the Falashas, often to their irritation, have to submit to a ceremonial religious updating after their age-long separation from general Jewish custom. They tend to defend their right to retain their cultural identity in this new/old homeland.

Whether the Falashas are Amharic or Jewish in origin, they have found their haven, and this film, one hopes, will speed further concerted efforts to reunite them with those still in camps, still on the road, still in the almost depopulated villages of Gondar's High Plateau. One shudders to think of the hundreds of thousands of human beings, of Ethiopians, Sudanese, Mauritians, who have no Israel to receive them. Who was it who said, overlooking the killing fields of our earth near the end of the twentieth century, "Now, we are all Jews. . . ."? ■

Frederick Franck is a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA. His latest book, *Echoes from a Bottomless Well*, has just been published by Vintage Books.

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

### **The Mind of Clover: Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics**

By Robert Aitken. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984. Pp. *xiv* + 199. Paper. \$11.50.

### **The Unborn: The Life and Teaching of Zen Master Bankei**

Translated and with an Introduction by Norman Waddell. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984. Pp. *xi* + 155. Paper. \$11.25.

*Reviewed by Thomas Buckley*

Bankei Yōtaku (1622–1693), a Zen master of Tokugawa Japan, was immensely popular during his own lifetime. He taught before huge audiences of Buddhist professionals and lay people gathered at various temples to train with him. Although he has been little known outside of Japan, Suzuki Daisetz characterized him, in the 1940s, as “one of the greatest masters that Japan has ever produced.” Now Norman Waddell has translated two series of Bankei’s “sermons” and a large collection of his dialogues with individual students into

English for the first time. Waddell accompanies his lively translations with a serviceable biographical introduction and an abundance of historical and doctrinal footnotes.

Bankei’s great originality lies in his summation of Mahayana Buddhist doctrine in a single metaphor, “the Unborn,” and in his unique teaching method. The essence of his teaching is simply put: “*All things are resolved in the Unborn*”—the Buddha-mind, neither born nor extinguished: essential reality.

Bankei taught in an immediate, friendly way, using colloquial Japanese (unusual in Buddhist discourse at that time), eschewing received scripture and the classic Chinese Zen records alike. “I don’t make people waste their time on worthless old documents like that,” he says of a classic *koan* case study. “You don’t yet know about your unborn Buddha-mind and its illuminative wisdom, so I’ll tell you about it. That will take care of everything.” Again: “All the true unborn Dharma needs to do the job is direct personal comment on you and your lives.”

To allow the Dharma to shine forth, to do the job, Bankei uses what is right at hand in the experience of his audience: belief in rebirth and fear of the hells, awe of

# Bollingen Paperbacks

---

## from Princeton

---



### The Art of Poetry ✂

Paul Valéry

Translated by Denise Folliot

With an Introduction by T. S. Eliot

"These essays should come into the hands of everyone interested not only in the now almost mythical figure of Valéry but in the evolving situation of poetry and poetic theory in our time."

— *The New Yorker* \$10.50

*The Collected Works of Paul Valéry, Volume 7*

Jackson Mathews, Editor

Bollingen Series XLV:7

### Mudrā ✂

A Study of Symbolic Gestures in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture

E. Dale Saunders

"A good reference volume for the study of Buddhist art, symbolism and theory of symbols. Despite the fact that the subject is rooted in Indian art, the reference to Japanese sources opens the field to little known works which are hidden behind a language barrier."

— *Alfred Bloom, Harvard Divinity School Bulletin* \$10.50

Bollingen Series LVIII

*The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 4*

### Freud and Psychoanalysis ✂

C. G. Jung

Translated by R. F. C. Hull

"This volume is an excellent introduction into Jungian theories and demonstrates their fundamental differences from psychoanalysis. It makes it understandable that Jung was often called a mystic even at the early stage of the development of his theories."

— *Times Literary Supplement* \$9.95

Bollingen Series XX:4

### The Archetypal World of Henry Moore ✂

Erich Neumann

Translated from the German by R. F. C. Hull

Erich Neumann approaches the sculpture of Henry Moore from the viewpoint of analytical psychology, clarifying and enriching the reader's understanding of Moore's themes of mother and child and the reclining figure, both supreme expressions of the archetypal feminine. \$9.95

Bollingen Series LXVIII

### Spiritual Disciplines ✂

Papers from the Eranos

Yearbooks, Volume 4

Edited by Joseph Campbell

Translated by Ralph Manheim

Paper by C. G. Jung translated by R. F. C. Hull

With a list of contributors that includes Heinrich Zimmer, Erwin Rousselle, C. G. Jung, and Martin Buber, this volume provides the reader with a sense of the range of the cross-cultural Eranos Conferences and their investigations of "the world's wealth of poetic and religious visions, modes and dreams of life, and readings of the mystery of death." (Editor's Foreword). \$9.95

Bollingen Series XXX:4

At your bookstore or

41 William Street **Princeton University Press** Princeton, NJ 08540

the Chinese, suspicion of other sects, the dogs barking and bells ringing outside the hall. His is that earthy, populist Zen of which we hear so much, yet seldom encounter in English. Through familiarity, Bankei instills confidence, offering unswerving affirmation of his listeners' and interlocutors' Buddhahood. His style has something of the pitchman's patter to it.

Bankei went beyond the illusion of self to claim to enjoy his own, distinct individuality. "I am the first to teach people by giving them proof of the Unborn." What proof? "While you're facing me listening to me speak like this, if a crow cawed, or a sparrow chirped . . . you would have no difficulty knowing if it was a crow or a sparrow, or whatever, even without giving a thought to listening to it, because you were listening by means of the Unborn." Bankei pitches, offers proofs, trial periods ("To start with, try to stay in the Unborn for thirty days.")—even his equivalent of a money-back guarantee. He promotes the salvation of all beings on terms that anyone can afford: ". . . since you're always a Buddha, there's no other Buddha in addition to that for you to become. Instead of trying to *become* a Buddha, then, a much easier and shorter way is just to *be* a Buddha."

"Don't you think that teaching is too lightweight?" asks a laywoman. Bankei: "Lightweight? . . . it's just because it has such weight that you are unable to do it."

We are well-cautioned by this exchange. Bankei, through his profound wish

to affirm and support, makes it look easy. Robert Aitken, a contemporary American Zen master, reminds us that, while it may be ultimately simple, it isn't *just* easy. Zen, finally, demands both hard practice and principled living.

Bankei's teaching, coming to us thanks to Waddell, is for "beginners" of every degree of experience. Aitken intends his new book, *The Mind of Clover*, for the "second day," after students have taken up *zazen* meditation, so well instructed in his fine first book, *Taking the Path of Zen* (1982).

In many ways, Aitken's approach in these twenty-one essays is the opposite of Bankei's. This is in part because of real differences in the cultural and historical contexts of their teaching, but also because of differences in the teachers as realized individuals. Aitken's teaching strengths to an extent lie in his intellectuality, his appreciation of received texts, and his moralism—all in contrast to Bankei's self-avowed "dull-wittedness," disdain for written sources, and seeming *laissez-faire* decency. Yet the two illuminate a single truth. Bankei concentrates on the unborn and undying Buddha-mind, illustrating it, often, in terms of ethical problems—the treatment of women by men, for example, or the matter of theft. Aitken concentrates on ethics, using them to reveal the nature of Buddha-mind.

Ethical living, for Aitken, rests in "responsibility, the ability to respond." *Clover*, its roots adding nutrients to the soil in

## HABITS OF THE HEART

Individualism and Commitment in American Life

by Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan,  
Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton

"A landmark in the quest for self-understanding on the part of middle-class Americans."  
—Robert McAfee Brown "Bellah and his talented colleagues have written a book that is unique and extraordinarily valuable. By examining the state of our morality, public and private, and by doing so in a way that has tried to probe the depths of people's thinking and ways of looking at the world, they have helped all of us to better understand our present moral situation."—Daniel Callahan \$16.95

---

## EXEMPLARS

by Rodney Needham

To what extent are humans the originators of their own thoughts? Needham tackles this question through essays on a sequence of remarkable persons ranging from the seventh century B.C. to the present. "Brilliant, idiosyncratic. . . . nearly every figure included here is marginal to the present field of cross-cultural studies, yet Needham weaves them provocatively together in a way that contributes to a cogent reformulation of comparatist anthropology."—James Clifford \$19.95

---

## THE END OF CULTURE

Toward a Generative Anthropology

by Eric Gans

A ground-breaking attempt to found a rigorous anthropology. Rejecting the popular agnosticism concerning the origin of man, Gans demonstrates that human representation—language, ritual, art—could only have originated as an event taking place on a *scene* present to the consciousness of its participants. \$29.95

---

## PUCK OF THE DROMS

The Lives and Literature of the Irish Tinkers

by Artelia Court

Perhaps the most absorbing and comprehensive work yet written about Ireland's nomadic outcastes, the Tinkers. Court begins with a review of the social history of Irish nomadism. The rest of the book displays the riches of Tinker personality and literary tradition in the memoirs of three Tinkers of the 1960s. It includes what is probably the largest and most representative selection of fully annotated Tinker tales and songs ever published. \$24.95

---

## ART OF NEPAL

A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection

by Pratapaditya Pal

The millennia-long commingling of Buddhism and Hinduism in Nepal finds its most exquisite expression in that country's art. The unknown artists of Nepal have had an influence on the art of a large area of Asia far beyond what the tiny size of their country would suggest. In his catalogue raisonné of perhaps the finest Nepalese collection outside Nepal, Pal documents this remarkable tradition. Large format, cloth \$49.95, paperback \$22.50

---

At bookstores or order from

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS**

BERKELEY 94720

which it grows, provides a key metaphor of ethical practice and of Buddha-mind as well. "Clover does not think about responsibility, and neither did Shakyamuni [the historical Buddha]. He simply arose from his seat and went looking for his friends. The clover simply puts down its roots . . . ."

Such naturally ethical practice does not come easily. For this reason, Mahayana Buddhism offers its Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts, including ten "grave," prohibitive ones. "Without the precepts as guidelines," writes Aitken, "Zen Buddhism tends to become a hobby, made to fit the needs of the ego." His essays are about the precepts, and the ten grave ones are the subjects of ten essays at the center of the book.

Aitken lends himself to the task of explanation with considerable insight and energy. Still, the ten grave precepts often seem to jump out of the way, wiggling their ears. You have a choice, Aitken writes: you can defend your ego or you can dance. He is not defending here, yet occasionally his dance is stilted. But what stiff partners he's chosen! How, for instance, *can* you rationally reconcile the literal precept against killing with the complex modern politics of abortion? Aitken's contemporary liberalism is at once cumbersome in its embrace of these ancient precepts, and fully responsible.

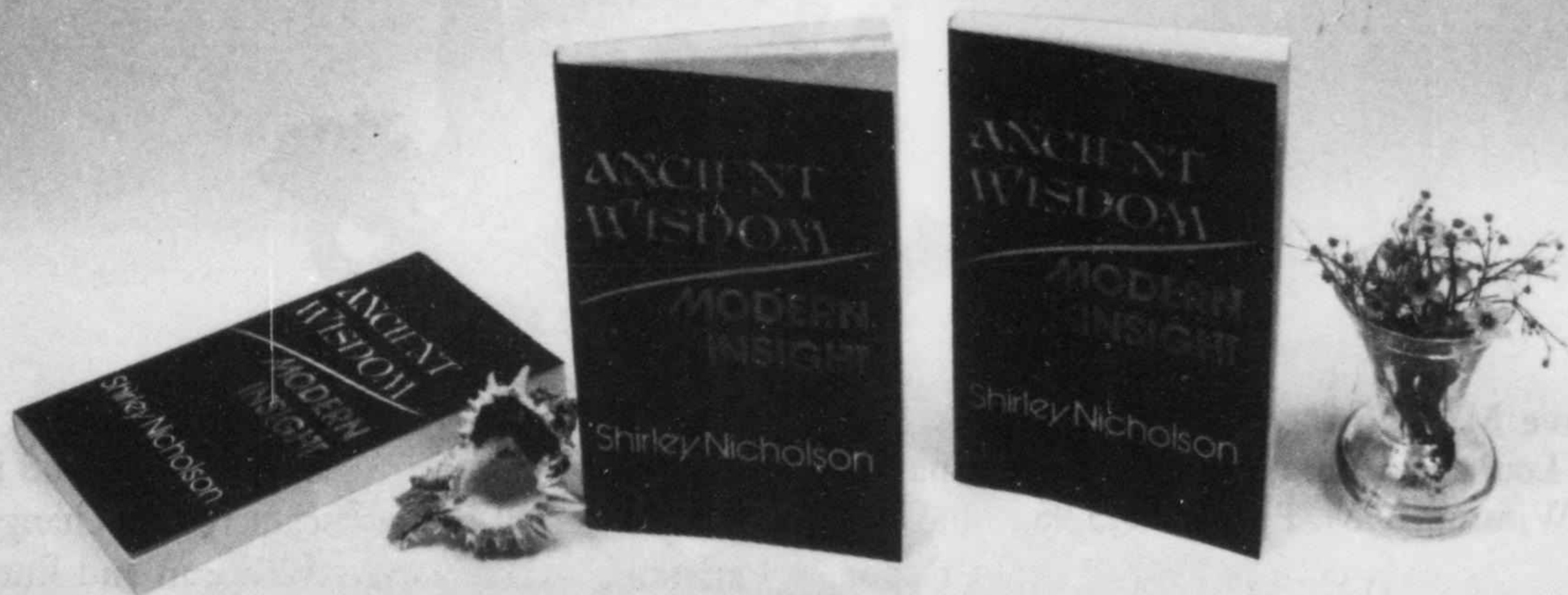
Finally, he says, the grave precepts are no more and no less than "the law we know in our hearts." So, "Let's get on

with it!" In the essays about the other six precepts and about ethics more generally speaking, getting on with it, Aitken dances beautifully, writing with uncommon clarity, grace, and authority. "Your task as Zen students is to demythologize the lofty claims for the Buddha's wisdom, and present it as it is, with all its truly miraculous power, as your own body." Here, the qualities that inform his efforts in the matter of the grave precepts come to full expression: loving-kindness, acceptance of interdependency, commitment to community. The intellectually problematic aspects of the ten prohibitive precepts simply evaporate and all of the precepts emerge as both a means toward and a natural outcome of mature Zen practice.

The later essays in the book could not, I think, be so glowing and true, so "light and brisk" (Aitken's characterization of the more mature Zen student), were it not for the hard spadework of the ten on the grave precepts. The book is whole, then, and in a way provides a literary analogy of the relationship between hard practice and the ease of realization. It is fine teaching, in a style as distinctly Aitken's as Bankei's is Bankei's. We leave it fully involved, grateful, and wanting to hear more from this good friend.

*Thomas Buckley is a cultural anthropologist and a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA. He is presently Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.*

1875 --- Theosophy --- 1985



# Ancient Wisdom / Modern Insight

By Shirley Nicholson

This is the engrossing and surprising story of theosophy (the wisdom of the gods) and what it has done to our contemporary way of life. So many of these timeless concepts—called “outlandish rubbish” in the last century—have now been authenticated. So many—derided in 1875—are now an integral part of our mystical, religious, and scientific culture.

This then is the story of the perennial philosophy and how we're living it in 1985—day by spiritual day. How this cosmic wisdom of the ages has impregnated the very being of many thousands of seekers, resulting in the powerful, world-wide “new-age consciousness” movement. Here is a 1985 evaluation of H. P. Blavatsky's monumental work *The Secret Doctrine* and how it has changed the way we view the world. In 1875 they said it was heretical nonsense. Hocus pocus magic. How wrong they were!

196 pages

With diagrams

\$6.75

**Plus—THIS BOOK BONUS:** With your order for *Ancient Wisdom* you may request a copy of *An Abridgement of the Secret Doctrine*. This 259 page Quest book contains all the major concepts of the complete work (3 volumes: \$45.00). It has been edited by Christmas Humphreys and Elizabeth Preston. The regular price is \$5.50. With *Ancient Wisdom* your price is just \$3.85

Order directly from: QUEST BOOKS, Dept. P., 306 West Geneva Road, Wheaton, IL 60189. VISA, MASTERCARD, check or money order acceptable. Please include \$1.00 for shipping. (Also available in book stores)

### **Love Medicine**

By Louise Erdrich. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984. Pp. 275. \$13.95.

*Reviewed by Elaine Jahner*

The restlessness so endemic to American society today proceeds in part from a vague intuition of impending change. This sense of change seems to drive people to whatever they perceive as sources of security at the same time as they grope towards the individual and collective transformations that must occur if we are to emerge from crises threatening planetary life. Novels have a place in helping people move into the momentary security of invented worlds to learn the feeling of alternative ways of living. Obviously, novels complex enough to affect consciousness in any significant way and compelling enough to attract a wide readership are far too infrequent. Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* is one such novel.

Erdrich's novel derives much of its complexity from its truth to the culture of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe in North Dakota, but its compulsive fascination comes from the fact that she knows how to tell grand stories about characters whose intensity shatters banality and leaves us rethinking the whole matter of being human.

Some basic knowledge about the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa can be useful to readers of *Love Medicine* although it is not essential for responding to the nov-

el's immediacy. Erdrich depicts a culture that found the sources of its energy and its unique identity amidst cataclysmic changes affecting other Native American and European cultures, changes that forced individuals into new territory to shape a way of life that is perhaps most usefully capsulized through a description of the language these people evolved. It is one in which most verbs are derived from Chippewa, and most nouns from French, with other Native American and European languages leaving less easily identifiable traces. The rest of the cultural fabric is similarly woven of diverse national and cultural strands, yet all these people are direct descendants of individuals who refused to give up just because their security was yanked out from under them. The importance of this cultural dimension of the novel is best assessed after encountering the range among Erdrich's characters.

In the first pages, readers meet June just before she confidently walks straight into one of those winter storms that people on the Plains so justly fear. June walks ecstatically, having sensed her moment, that time when "the pure and naked part of her" can go right on "home." June is a member of a community, and this basic fact reverberates throughout the book as we come to know the many people whose lives are intertwined with hers. That network (sensitive as the nervous system of a separate living being) reacts; and thus we learn how the past and the future of a people can be entered through an event like June's moving out of the lives of characters who,

# The Body



The next issue of

## PARABOLA

The Magazine of Myth and Tradition

in turn, move into the lives of *Love Medicine*'s readers.

We meet Marie, utterly practical yet possessing a sure instinct for matters mystical. Her no-nonsense determination can prevent husband, children, a mad nun, and finally even a ghost from escaping their fates. And there are people like Lulu, who discovers death near her secret playhouse one day, and in that realm where fact consorts with fantasy senses the power of sexuality that is so often defeated by romantic trappings. Lulu goes on to live true to herself, bringing strong children into the world and bringing men to themselves, while remaining always the essentially innocent observer who knows only one real cause for weeping.

The men are as intensely real as the women and each character has his or her own chapter in this novel, which is organized as a series of first person narratives so that we grasp the particular tenor of each character. Every chapter has its own plot yet the events of all come together in a mosaic, richer and more revealing than any chapter could be on its own.

The incident that refers directly to the novel's title features Lipsha Morrissey, Marie's grandson. Even in old age, Marie requires undivided loyalty from her husband; and when his attentions seem to stray, she decides to try one last desperate remedy, traditional Chippewa love medicine. No one of her trusted acquaintances knows how to make love medicine anymore; but, she feels Lipsha must have special powers of some kind and she persuades

him to try to prepare it. The results are totally unpredictable, hilarious, and genuinely touching. Finally, in spite of the consequences, we realize that the effort was absolutely necessary and that the novel redefines love medicine somewhat, or, more appropriately, it expands the traditional sense so that the term applies to the healing powers of all forms of love.

Love has many modalities, but the one that gives the book its particular force is delight. For anyone tempted to see delight as one of love's weaker forms, Erdrich's novel should prove otherwise. Delight is never a turning away from the pain that stalks the days and nights. It isn't even a shield to be held against pain. Rather, it springs from the act of staring down pain, holding one's ground in spite of pain, with the full and certain knowledge that suffering has an inevitable role in shaping the universe, but that is all. Life still has much that is good; indeed, delightfully good.

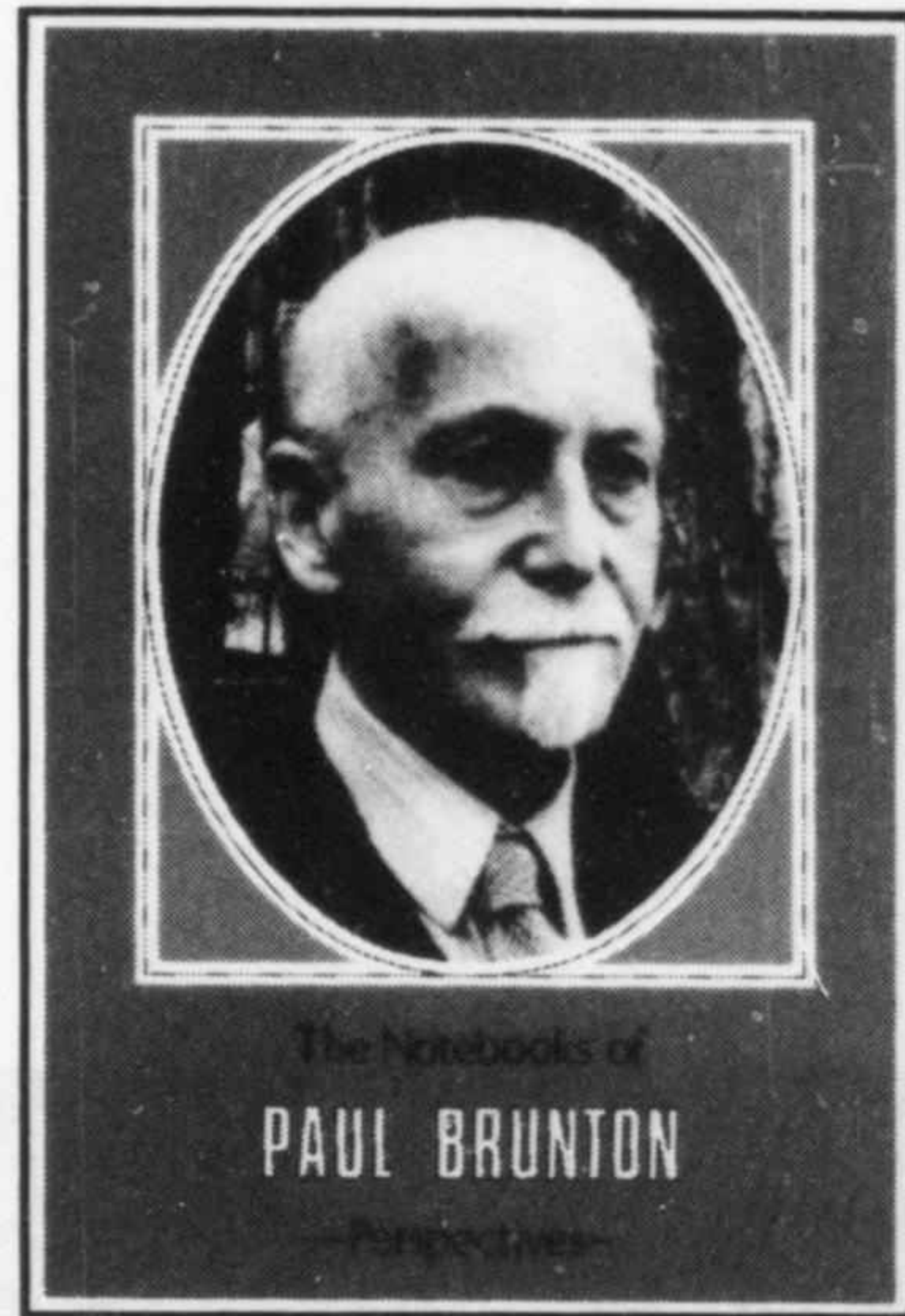
Undoubtedly, as *Love Medicine* finds its many publics there will be discussion of its specifically tribal aspects; scholars will find traces of tribal ritual in style and plot, proving the continuity of mythic traditions. Such scholarship will have its value but hopefully it will not overshadow the book's basic insights which apply to any culture. Whatever may have happened in the past, people like Erdrich's characters are stubbornly alive and magnificently self-possessed because they are not self-obsessed. Erdrich's novel needs to be placed in the large context of contemporary writers who are helping us rethink the concept of self

**“... vigorous, clear-minded, and independent ...”**

— *Library Journal*

“... his espousal of an ethically based spirituality... is **sensible and compelling**. His work can stand beside that of such East-West ‘bridges’ as Merton, Huxley, Suzuki, Watts, and Radhakrishnan. It should appeal to anyone concerned personally or academically with issues of spirituality...” — *Choice*

“... vigorous, clear-minded, and independent... a **synthesis of Eastern mysticism and Western rationality**.... A rich volume...” — *Library Journal*



*The Notebooks* of Paul Brunton represent **the acme of wisdom** on the nature of human spirituality. Every serious student of this subject will profit enormously by becoming acquainted with Brunton's seminal work.” —Dr. Kenneth Ring, author of *Life at Death, Heading Toward Omega*

“Paul Brunton's notebooks are a **genuine spiritual-philosophic encyclopedia** where everything from abstruse metaphysical insights to practical spiritual guidance is presented with **unprecedented clarity, originality, and depth**. Nowhere else will you find such a profound synthesis of East-West philosophic mysticism stripped of all the usual obscurity and extravagances. Both the modern intellect and the weary heart will find unlimited inspiration, wisdom, and guidance for action in these notebooks.”

—Dr. Victor Mansfield, Chairman, Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, Colgate University

“... significant commentaries on nearly every conceivable aspect of the spiritual quest... meditation, the body, emotions and ethics, the intellect, the ego, world crisis, the arts in culture, psychic experience, philosophy, the Overself, cosmology, and much, much, more. *The Notebooks* can be **unreservedly recommended** as the final, eloquent statement and summing up by one of the West's most perceptive thinkers and deepest students of the Ancient Wisdom.” —*The American Theosophist*

“... **astounding scope and inexhaustible depth**... truly a Bible for our time. ... Those who knew Brunton in his later years can breathe here the same air of absolute peace and adamant certainty that they felt in his presence.”

—Dr. Joscelyn Godwin  
Prof. Music, Colgate Univ.

## **The Notebooks of Paul Brunton: Perspectives**

xvi + 392 pages, cloth, Smyth-sewn, acid-free

*Trade edition*: \$25 in bookstores or \$19.95 postpaid direct from publisher with reference to this advertisement.

*Limited (500) numbered deluxe edition*: gilded edges, ribbon marker, special design stamping, available from publisher only, \$50.

**Larson Publications, 4936 Rte. 414, Burdett, NY 14818**

(Distributed to bookstores by Kampmann & Company)

## SCHOOL OF SACRED ARTS



Classes in Tibetan Thangka Painting, Byzantine Icon Painting, Gold leafing Techniques, Nepalese Bronze Casting, Islamic Calligraphy, Chinese Landscape Painting and Medieval Manuscript Illumination are being given by noted teachers. For information please contact.

School of Sacred Arts  
135 West 4th Street  
New York, NY 10012  
(212) 475-8048

that has dominated so much of this century. She shows us how the crucible of Plains history is part of the redefining process, and that geographical locale points to a sort of marvelous accidental symbolism. The Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation is near the International Peace Garden; it is also near the line of Intercontinental Ballistic Missile silos strung across North Dakota. This contextual dimension of the novel helps us realize why the tenacity, caring,

and humor Erdrich depicts constitute the love medicine we all need to help us face the stunning contrasts between missiles and a peace garden.

*Elaine Jahner teaches in the English and Native American studies Department at Dartmouth College. She is the editor of Lakota Myths, by James R. Walker, and is currently at work on a book examining cross-cultural literary criticism.*

### **The Voice Within: Love and Virtue in the Age of the Spirit**

By Helen M. Luke. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1984. Pp. 118. Paper. \$8.95.

*Reviewed by Leonie Caldecott*

The magical world of myth and archetype, the innermost adventure of the human spirit, is exciting territory to explore. It has been charted with great subtlety and perception by Jung and his followers, of whom Helen Luke is a particularly original and accessible example. The blend of homey wisdom and sophisticated insight which her writing embodies is, sadly, all too rare in a world chock-full of superficial solutions to problems that are far from superficial.

*The Voice Within* is the third collection of her essays to be published in the last four years (published for a wide audience, that is—several of her essays have appeared in journals such as PARABOLA, or in the pub-

**15 years in preparation, the  
most complete, authoritative  
1-volume reference available!**

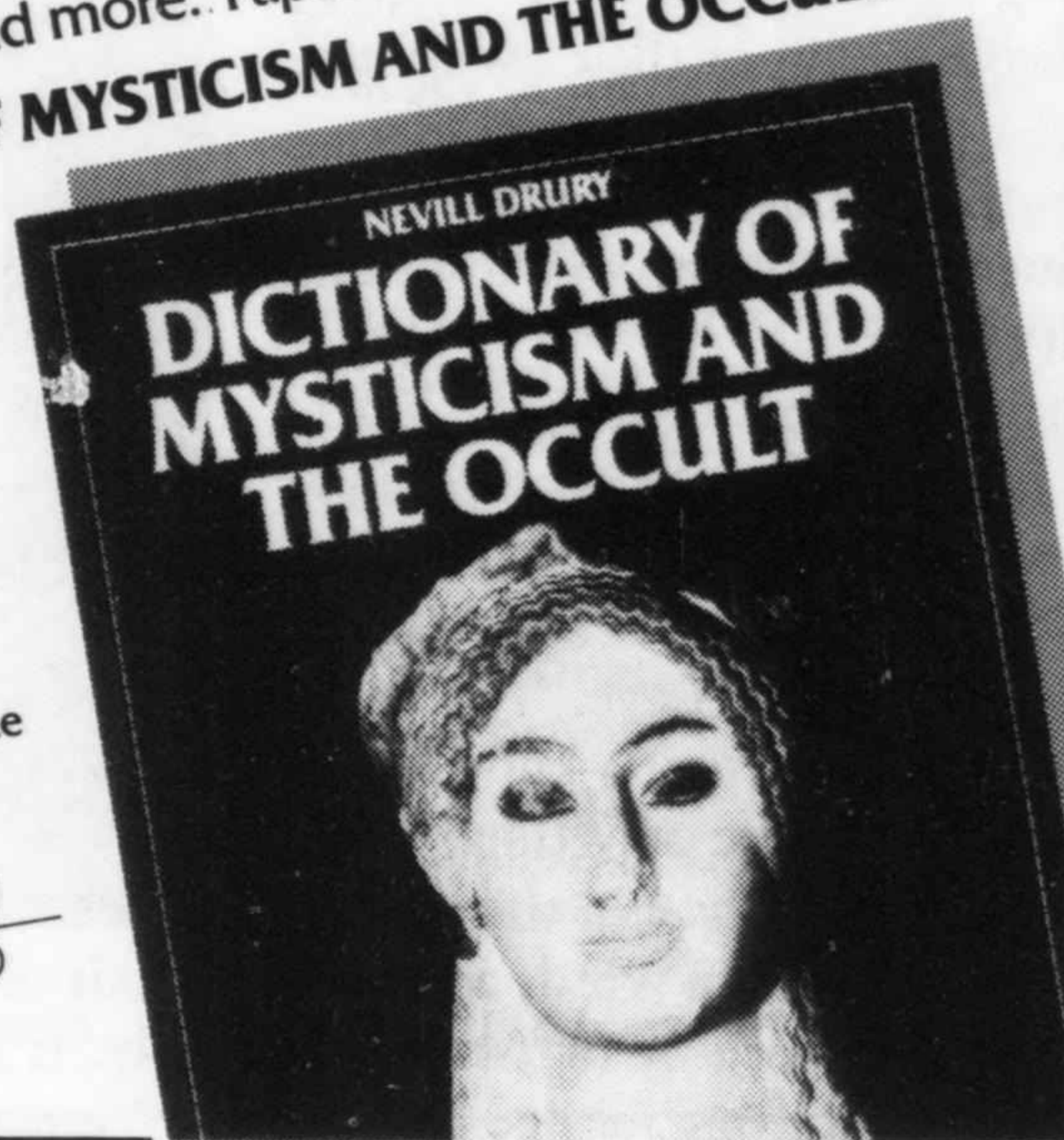
Nearly 3,000 cross-referenced entries on magic, spiritualism, parapsychology, Eastern and Western mysticism, mind and consciousness, divination, astrology, Tarot, and more. Paper \$12.95\* Cloth \$24.95\*

**DICTIONARY OF MYSTICISM AND THE OCCULT**  
Nevill Drury

At Bookstores  
or call TOLL FREE  
(800) 638-3030

\*Suggested consumer price

 HARPER & ROW  
SAN FRANCISCO



lications of the Apple Farm Community where she lives). *Woman, Earth and Spirit: the Feminine in Symbol and Myth* came out at a time when the women's movement (in some of its manifestations, at least) seemed to be casting around for a deeper, wiser understanding of its *raison d'être*, and made a valuable contribution to that process. *The Inner Story: Myth and Symbol in the Bible and Literature* demonstrated Helen Luke's gift for taking material that has lost

its savor for many of us brought up in the faltering traditions of the West, and infusing it with new life and vigor.

Indeed, Helen Luke's approach to her native tradition (and her ability to connect it in an appropriate manner with other cultural traditions) gives her readers what formal "education" often fails to give. She is a pied-piper, capable of taking a story and drawing out its inner meanings, making them dance along the road of human expe-

rience for the individual to see and record afresh. In doing this, she also draws something out of her readers, making her an "educator" in the true sense of the term.

She is also a moralist, in the old-fashioned sense of the term which has nothing to do with the finger-wagging travesty represented by moral majorities and the like. At her best, Helen Luke can make those dancing figures along the road give rise spontaneously, out of their own internal logic, to a *feeling* for the moral life. Only out of this feeling (not to be confused with simple emotion) is the will to genuine responsibility born.

This theme is very much at the heart of her new book. Hence the subtitle, *Love and Virtue in the Age of the Spirit*. The juxtaposition of these two terms has a pleasingly provocative ring. "Love," wrote Dorothy Day, "is a science, a knowledge, and we lack it." It is the only thing which ultimately guarantees virtue in the heart of man—although virtue is a word, according to Helen Luke, "debased by its association with a narrow and unconscious conformity to what is 'respectable.'"

The book is divided into three parts. The first, *Vow and Doctrine in the New Age*, contains four essays exploring the difficult relationship between inner truth and outward manifestation in a religious context. The focus of this exploration is the Church, which during the 1960s (when these essays were originally written) was going through major doctrinal and institutional upheavals. In examining the meaning of religious and marriage vows, liturgy,

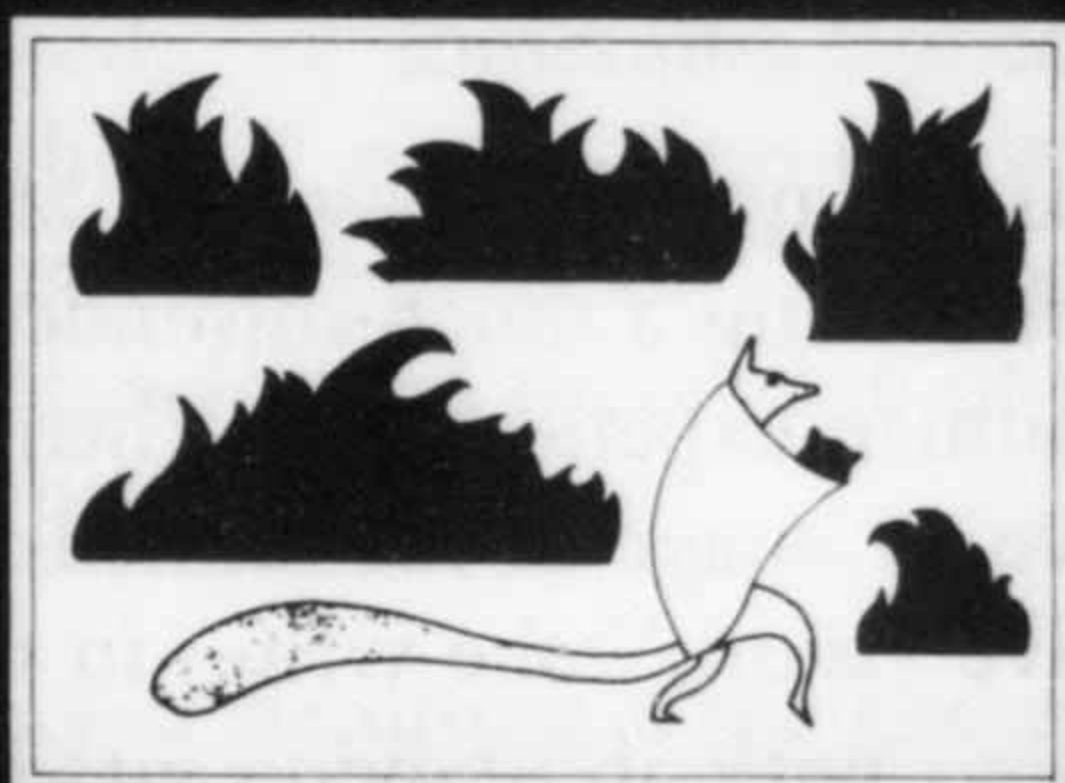
sexual strictures, and so forth, Helen Luke appeals both to the faithful and to the Church authorities to pay attention to a level of reality beyond the fashionably liberal on the one hand, or the mundanely authoritarian on the other.

Helen Luke pushes for a deeper insight which would make sense of the Church's rules and regulations to a generation that has largely lost touch with the living metaphysical patterns underlying them, and while she is straining in this direction, I am with her all the way. But it seems to me that there comes a point, as for example in her discussion of contraception, where she doesn't go the extra distance needed to make sense of that mysteriously uncompromising doctrine. To criticize the Church for not conveying clearly enough the spirit that informs the law is one thing; but to go on from this to describe as "mere quibbling" what is in fact a valid distinction between "artificial" and "natural" methods of birth control is another thing entirely. It is, perhaps, to focus so entirely on the "inner" dimension of the issue that one loses sight of the complex interdependence, the ecology of body and soul, law and spirit, obedience and creativity, that binds the inner world up with the outer world.

I fully appreciate the contribution that depth psychology has made in seeking to counterbalance an overemphasis on the outer world of appearances, the world of physical and social "facts"; but it may not be an appropriate discipline for every task. The task of relating to the transcendent dimension, to the reality which cannot be

# Diné bahane'

The Navajo  
Creation Story



Paul G. Zolbrod

## Diné Bahane' The Navajo Creation Story Paul G. Zolbrod

Twelve years in the making, this is the most complete version of the Navajo creation story to appear in English since Washington Matthews's *Navaho Legends* of 1847, Zolbrod's new translation renders the power and delicacy of the oral storytelling performance on the page through a poetic idiom appropriate to the Navajo oral tradition. A story whose origins reach as deeply into the past as the Old Testament, and whose protagonists are as complex as those in the Greek myths, *Diné Bahane'* is a vivid introduction to Navajo folkways and history. It is also an excellent example of native art.

*Just published* Cloth: \$22.50

Order directly from us. VISA, MasterCard, check, or money order accepted. Please add \$1.00 for postage and address to Dept. P.

University of New Mexico Press

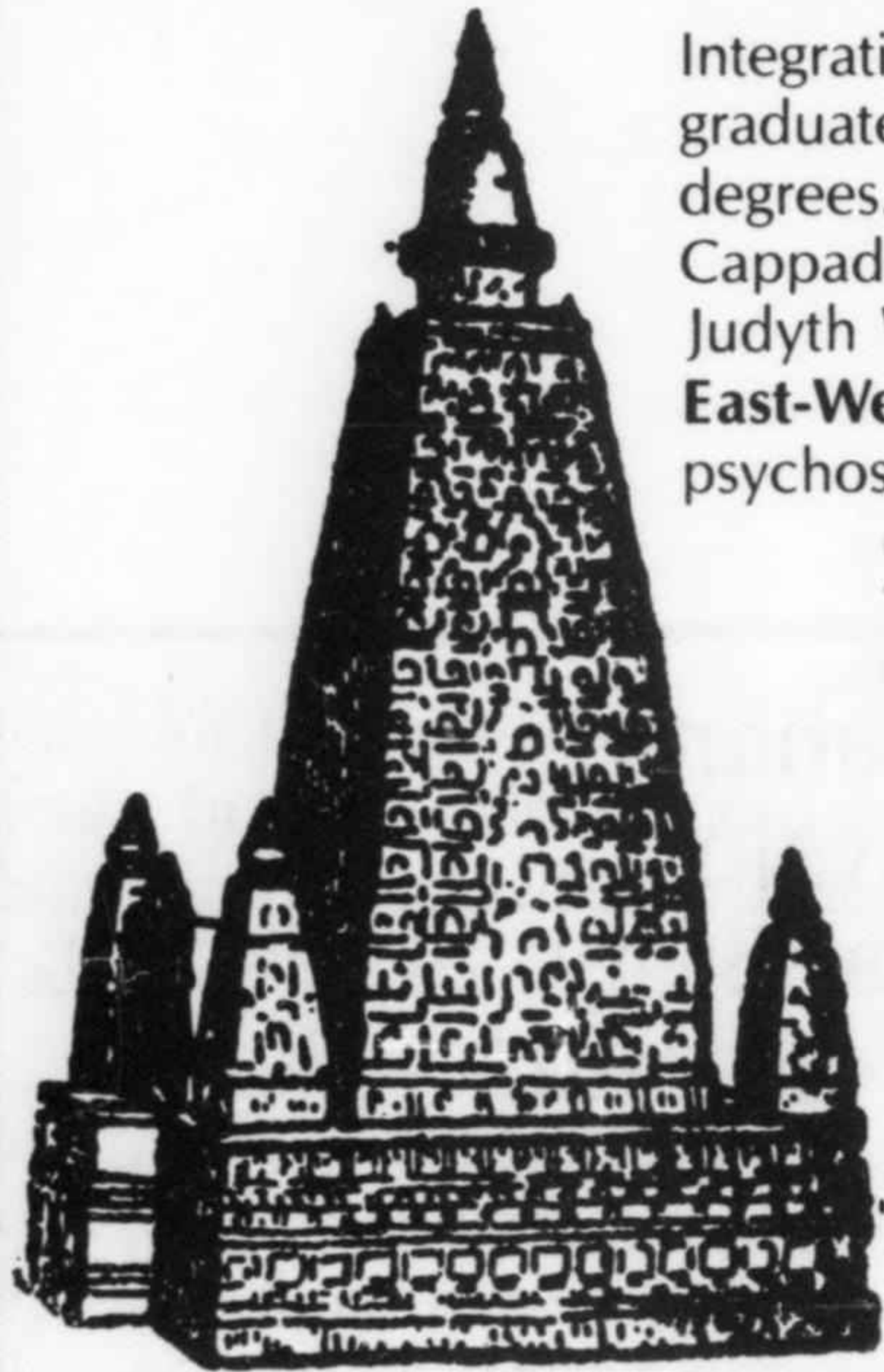
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131

encompassed within the bounds of even the collective unconscious, may be a case in point. To put this another way: I am not sure that listening for the "inner voice" (even if, like Helen Luke, we grasp the import of St Paul's exhortation to "test the spirits") is the only thing we need to do in, say, dilemmas over sexual morality. Attempting to practice the virtue of obedience, in my experience, can have a surprising, paradoxical result. Inner truth can

arise from changes in our outer lives—changes made in response to the dictates of a trusted authority. It isn't always the other way around. The difficulty, of course, lies in making sure we are obeying a genuine authority, not simply projecting our partial desires or values onto an authority figure. *This* is where the art of a discriminating listening to the inner voice becomes essential.

And discrimination is what Helen

# California Institute of Integral Studies



## Graduate programs in East-West Psychology Philosophy and Religion Social and Cultural Anthropology

Integrating Eastern and Western knowledge, the Institute is an **accredited** graduate school with innovative programs leading to the **M.A.** and **Ph.D.** degrees. The faculty includes Angeles Arrien, John Broomfield, Dominic Cappadonna, Ralph Metzner, Paul Schwartz, Rina Sircar, Mark Tatz, Judyth Weaver, and John Welwood.

**East-West Psychology:** the study of consciousness, perception, psychospiritual practices, and personality, based on the spiritual philosophies of the East and the scientific psychologies of the West. Track available in organizational consulting and development.

**Philosophy and Religion:** the study of the wisdom traditions. Majors offered are Buddhism, Hinduism, and East Asian Philosophy and Religion. Language study in Chinese, Japanese, Pali, Sanskrit, and Tibetan.

**Social and Cultural Anthropology (M.A. only):** the culture of the world's peoples, with emphasis on Asian area studies and transpersonal/spiritual perspectives, including shamanism.

V.A. approved. Federal loans, work study and scholarships available to qualified students. Auditors welcome.

For information, write California Institute of Integral Studies,  
Box PB, 3494 21st Street, San Francisco, CA 94110 (415) 648-1489.

Luke teaches whenever she speaks on a psychological level, as, for the most part, she is doing. I remember being literally sprung out of a futile cycle of grief and anger by her essay on suffering, published in *PARABOLA* a year or two ago, and now included in the second part of *The Voice Within*. This section of the book, in fact, contains some of her best writing to date. Her knack for unpretentiously decoding ideas that have become encrusted with distorting associations is particularly noticeable in essays such as "Pride," "Courtesy," or "The King and the Principles of the Heart." Another essay, entitled "Inner Relationship and Community in the I Ching," is a masterpiece of economical but illuminating writing.

Helen Luke has done a great deal to disseminate and develop the insights of that fascinating Christian esotericist, Charles Williams. She refers to him several times in this collection and uses his novel *The Greater Trumps* to provide the opening image in "The Joy of the Fool," which also draws

on Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Dickens, celebrating a much-misunderstood facet of human experience. "When we perceive an image in the immediacy of imaginative vision," she writes in this essay, "it glows with an undying vitality and changes our lives, but as soon as we insist on a rational understanding of it, the symbol is dead."

The proof of the pudding, as they say, is in the eating. The two stories at the end of *The Voice Within*, "Salmon Fisher Boy" and "The Hunter and the Hunted," are both the result of the author's own imaginative vision. No commentary of any kind is added; and none, of course, is needed. For one thing, Helen Luke is a fine and canny storyteller in her own right. For another thing, she trusts us.

*Leonie Caldecott is a writer with a particular interest in religion, psychology, and women's issues. She is the author of Women of Our Century and editor of We Claim the Earth. Her book on Teresa of Avila will be published next year.*

**Perceiving Ordinary Magic: Science and Intuitive Wisdom**

By Jeremy W. Hayward. Boulder and London: New Science Library (an imprint of Shambhala Publications), 1984. Pp. xi + 323. Paper. \$9.95.

*Reviewed by Martha Heyneman*

What we are in exile from is in front of our noses, is closer to us than our neck-vein. It is what Jeremy Hayward calls "the unconditioned," or sometimes "unconditioned goodness," or our own unconditioned nature. Perception of "ordinary magic" is transformed perception of this ordinary world.

Perhaps you are sitting at the kitchen table . . . . You sit there looking out of the window at the street. It is a warm day with high clouds . . . . Suddenly your eye catches a flag flapping in the breeze on the roof across the street. For a moment your mind rests with the flag. A sudden flash of freshness, almost of joy, enters your state of being . . . . It is very simple.

How shall we find our way home to what is here and now? It is very simple, but we, alas, are complicated, swathed in layer after layer of self-protection, self-deception, preconception—our cocoon. Hayward speaks of three natures: the unconditioned, the conditioned, and beliefs. If the conditioned is seen without preconception, it is seen to be not other than the unconditioned: samsara is nirvana. But we are wrapped in the cobwebs of our unexamined beliefs.

**Greek Religion**

Walter Burkert

Translated by John Raffan

Walter Burkert, the world's leading authority on Greek religion, has produced the standard work for our time on that subject. A clearly structured and readable survey for students and scholars, it will be welcomed as the best modern account of any polytheistic religious system.

\$30.00



**The Kalevala**

*Or Poems of the Kaleva District*

Compiled by Elias Lönnrot

Translated by Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr.

The national folk epic of Finland is here presented in an English translation that is both scholarly and eminently readable.

"For English students of the *Kalevala*, unless they have a good working knowledge of both Swedish and Finnish, this is an indispensable book." — *Folklore*

\$9.95 paper

**The Return of Martin Guerre**

Natalie Zemon Davis

"One can only admire Natalie Davis for the major work of historical reconstruction she has performed without any kind of ideological basis."

— *New York Review of Books*

\$5.95 paper

**Harvard University Press**

79 Garden Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

## VIDEO JOURNEYS



### TIBET

*Sacred  
Rituals &  
Healing Arts*

**TANTRA OF GYÜTO** The Dalai Lama introduces ancient Tantric rituals that use mantric power to transform consciousness, featuring the harmonic chord-chanting of the Gyüto Lamas. Prefaced by rare footage of Tibet narrated by Francis Huxley. 52 min., color, \$69.95 postpaid.

**TIBETAN MEDICINE** Ama Lobsang Dolma, Tibet's first woman doctor, heals both the physical and psychic being by treating the patient rather than the disease. Filmed at the Tibetan Medical Center in the Himalayas. 29 min., color, \$59.95 postpaid.

**NEPAL: LAND OF THE GODS** Journey to the mountain kingdom of Nepal and explore the Bodhisattva ideals of life, death, karma and rebirth in a land where Tantra is an integral part of daily life. 62 min., color, \$69.95 postpaid.

All three videos are available for \$175 postpaid. Please send check or money order (NY residents add 8 1/4% sales tax) and specify VHS or Beta. Exclusively from:

**mystic fire video**

70 GREENWICH AVE. #410-P, NY NY 10011

The unconditioned itself is not a concept but an immediate experience, a sudden realization (coming suddenly, that is, after years of search, struggle, and preparation!). One can only point to it, as Hayward tries to do in a few brief passages like the above, where simple sensory descriptions of the immediate flash out, with their bright

colors and freshness, through occasional gaps in the predominantly abstract prose. Or one can inform the reader of the existence of disciplines which will lead him, if he actually undertakes them, to the experience; and this Hayward conscientiously does, sorting out the spurious from the reliable and offering criteria for distinguishing between the two. Or one can approach the unconditioned by becoming aware of our conditioning, our unexamined beliefs, and this is the main topic of Hayward's book, "especially our conditioning as it is revealed, reestablished, and confirmed by the scientific tradition."

Hayward paints a devastating picture of "what Johnnie learnt at school," what we ask him to believe, what we have come to believe ourselves without knowing how this came about. The whole unconscious credo gives rise to a world view of such monstrous desolation that it's a wonder we've been able to endure it for as long as we have. Moreover, we go on feeling obliged to endure it as "the facts."

Hayward, who is a nuclear physicist and molecular biologist as well as a senior student of Chögyam Trungpa, is able to show how every part of this world view has been called into question by science itself during the twentieth century, not only by relativity and quantum theory, but by neurophysiological and psychological scrutiny of the nature of perception, by anthropological and semantic scrutiny of the nature of language, and most importantly, by the ongoing scrutiny of the nature of science itself carried out by such theorists as Popper,

Toulmin, Hanson, Kuhn, and Feyerabend. Hayward proposes that in this interval, when the old belief system is overthrown and the new not yet crystallized, it may be possible to open to true freshness, to the unconditioned.

The direct path to this opening is "the setting up of mindfulness" or "bare attention." Hayward makes an important distinction between two quite different practices which have been confused in the West because both are called "meditation." He calls these "trance-type" and "openness or access-type" meditation. Trance type presupposes a higher realm and turns away from awareness of what is taking place here and now in order to seek that other realm. Access type, on the other hand, says it does not matter whether other realms exist or not when we are unable to see what is in front of our noses. It "simply is a way to become attentive to our thoughts, emotions, perceptions, bodily sensations, and environment, so that who and what we are begin to be clearly and precisely seen." It is, as Hayward says, as precise an instrument for its purpose as is a microscope for the examination of tissues. "Sit mindfully, and put this mindfulness into action in daily life. It is so simple, yet it is the most powerful discipline for turning us directly toward our basic, unconditioned nature." It is this "access type," or mindfulness-awareness training, that Hayward has experienced in his work with Trungpa and with the Fourth Way teaching of G.I. Gurdjieff.

"Thus we begin to be able to be atten-

# NEW!!

## ZEN AND WESTERN THOUGHT

*Masao Abe*

*Edited by William R. LaFleur*

In this collection of essays Masao Abe, the leading exponent of Zen and Japanese Buddhism for the West, compares the standpoint of Zen with the Western intellectual tradition — Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Whitehead, and the Christian tradition.

**\$24.95, cloth**

## SHAMANS, HOUSEWIVES, AND OTHER RESTLESS SPIRITS



WOMEN IN KOREAN RITUAL LIFE

*Laurel Kendall*

A fascinating study of the ritual realm dominated by Korean women—the rites that demarcate it, the supernatural beings who inhabit it, and the shamans who heal its ills.

**\$20.00, cloth**

## THE HAWAIIAN POETRY OF RELIGION AND POLITICS

*John Charlot*

The author of *Chanting the Universe: Hawaiian Religious Culture* explores the unique value of chants and songs as sources of information for the study of post-contact Hawaiian history. **\$12.00, paper**

**TO ORDER:** Send check or money order, plus \$1.00 per book for shipping. VISA and MasterCard also accepted (include acct. no., exp. date, and signature.)



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PRESS**  
2840 Kolowalu Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

### Spirit & Culture Program

*A residential learning experience at Chinook on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound.*



The SPIRIT AND CULTURE program provides a comprehensive framework through which to examine the critical changes taking place in our world today. It offers a perspective on life which affirms the primacy of spiritual values. It offers a hopeful vision of the future and the skills to help bring it about.

#### FALL

The Living Earth  
Sept. 30 - Dec. 13

#### WINTER

The Radical Journey  
Jan. 6 - Mar. 14

#### SPRING

Vision Into Action:  
Breaking the Mold  
Mar. 31 - June 6

Faculty will include Thomas Berry, Connie Martin, Sam Keen, Elizabeth Cogburn, Mother Tessa Bielecki.

For full brochure write to: CHINOOK LEARNING CENTER P. O. BOX 57, CLINTON, WA. 98236

tive to the smaller details of experience. . . a natural and self-correcting process of joining mind and body," or awareness and perception, the unconditioned and the conditioned, nirvana and samsara, heaven and earth—for which purpose, all the great teachings agree, human beings were created. In our century, despite all its terror and confusion, it has again become possible, thanks to the labors of many meditation masters and of such world teachers as Ravana Maharshi, G.I. Gurdjieff, and Krishnamurti, to realize, in a practical way, what this means. And so the point of life, eclipsed for 700 years, begins once more, like the Star of the Nativity, quietly to shine.

*Martha Heyneman is a poet and essayist and an editor of A Journal of Our Time.*

### **Biblical Images: Men and Women of the Book**

By Adin Steinsaltz. New York: Basic Books, 1984. Pp. 256. \$16.95.

*Reviewed by Arthur Kurzweil*

On the surface, *Biblical Images* is a collection of twenty-five portraits, closely divided between men and women, of mostly familiar characters from the Bible. But a careful examination of the book reveals that, like Adin Steinsaltz's other works, it is filled with spiritual insights, enlightening observations, and succinct definitions. It was the late Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan who wrote in his translation of and commentary on the *Bahir* that the proper way to study a Kabbalistic text is to follow the threads that run through the work. When one studies a text by Adin Steinsaltz, one sees that the fabric of his religious vision is woven with exquisite artfulness.

One "thread" to be found in *Biblical*

**Human Relations Institute**

**MA Degree Program in Counseling Psychology**

**Degree Specialization in**

# **Depth Psychology**

The Depth Psychology Program builds upon the conviction that what is at work in the individual is also at work in the world and is experienced in culture. In a unique approach to the study of psychotherapy, the program is designed around an interdisciplinary curriculum which includes depth psychological traditions, literature, history and mythology.

## **Monthly Weekend Courses**

**Students Eligible for California State MFCC License**

In addition to core and adjunct faculty, distinguished lecturers and therapists from the field of Depth Psychology contribute to the program. These include: James Hillman, Joseph Campbell and Jean Houston.

**NOW ENROLLING FOR FALL 1985**

*For a catalog:* Human Relations Institute, 5200 Hollister Avenue,  
Santa Barbara, CA 93111 (805) 967-4557

*Images* is an exploration of the nature of prophecy. For example, in his portrait of Samson, Rabbi Steinsaltz notes, "A prophet, in the biblical sense, is someone who, by virtue of his personal characteristics and of his having been chosen by God . . . becomes a vessel for what the medieval sages called the Divine Plenty." Elsewhere, in the chapter on Deborah, he clarifies: "In Judaism, prophecy is not perceived as the experience of the unusual individual, gifted

with parapsychological powers or possessing extraordinary spiritual characteristics that can be developed only at the expense of other manifestations of personality. Rather, the prophet is seen as a perfect, whole person. Far from being an eccentric, outside the normal mode of understanding, he or she is an individual who has achieved a state of perfection in the overall experience of life."

This book, then, is far more than a



---

---

**JUKES PRODUCTIONS, INC.**

PRESENTS

The first in a series of video films on Dharma and related historical and cultural subjects.

**HIS HOLINESS  
THE DALAI LAMA  
IN BRITAIN 1984**

A unique set of video programs made in conjunction with Tibet Foundation Films, London, England.

These video cassettes not only form a remarkable record of His Holiness The Dalai Lama's views on peace, humanity and spiritual values but also constitute a masterful survey of the philosophy of Buddhism. They are invaluable to anyone interested in Buddhism or comparative religion. All video tapes are available on VHS, BETA, V2000 and European PAL cassettes. For our brochure write to:

**JUKES PRODUCTIONS, INC.**  
61 Grove Street, Suite 4A  
New York, N.Y. 10014; (212) 242-2802

---

---

---

collection of brief sketches of Biblical personalities; in *Biblical Images* Adin Steinsaltz offers his readers an example of how a devoted student of Biblical text uses the text as a point of departure for a search for truth.

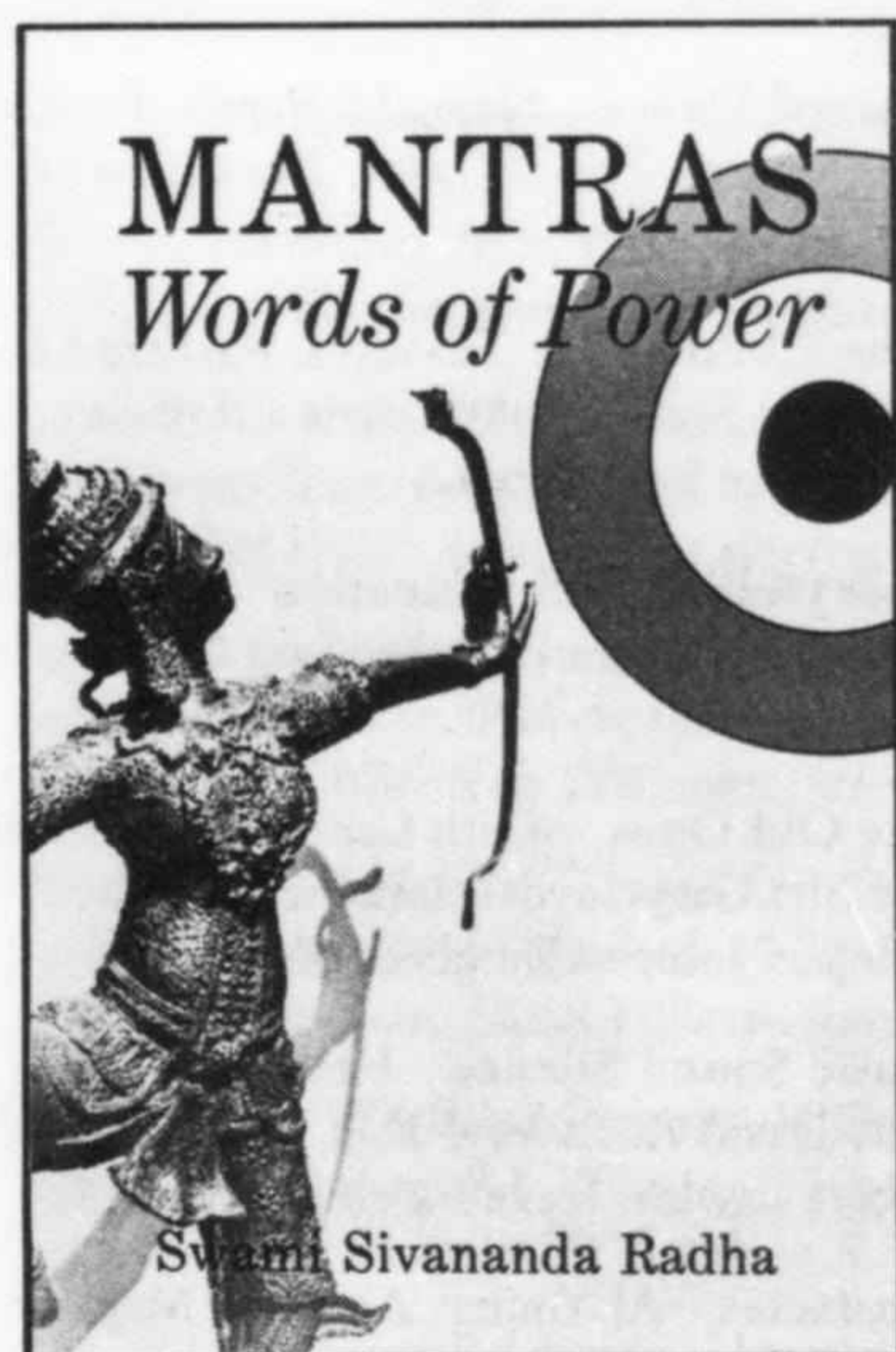
Like much of Steinsaltz's work, *Biblical Images* deals with archetypes and essences. Steinsaltz identifies Eve as "an archetype, the mother and precursor of women in general." In this way he provides his stu-

dents with a role model, an example of how to approach the Biblical text and its subjects. Throughout the book one finds brief, valuable definitions. In his portrait of Joshua, for example, Steinsaltz clarifies the nature of *midrash*: "...the midrash relates to the spirit of the biblical account rather than to the explicit narrative. . . ." In his portrait of Miriam, we find a clear exposition of the nature of redemption: "Redemption has no significance for one who is unprepared for it. . . Herein, too, lies the essence of Miriam's role: she is the 'big sister' who watches and worries and prepares for the future—an essential and fundamental part of the process of redemption."

A theme that appears in much of the translated work of Rabbi Steinsaltz is the problem of communicating the Tradition to an "outsider." The issue appears in the Bible itself: when the children of Israel accept the Torah, they say "We will do and we will understand." One might expect them to say the reverse: first we will understand and then we will do. But in the Biblical text, as Steinsaltz points out, "every sentence, every action counts." By first saying "we will do" and only then saying "we will understand," the text reflects the view that only the student who experiences the Tradition for himself can truly *know* it.

In an earlier work, *The Thirteen Petalled Rose*, Rabbi Steinsaltz points out the difficulty of using words to communicate the wisdom of the Tradition. There he writes, "For it is not given to transmit

# WORDS OF POWER MANTRAS



## Mantras: Words of Power

Swami Sivananda Radha

Discover the power of this ancient practice. The complete handbook on Mantra • What is Mantra? • Mantra for healing • How to use Mantra in daily life.

\$7.95 paper, 140 pages



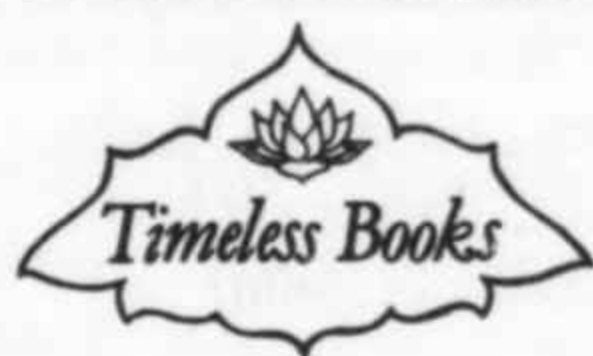
## Mantras: Songs of Yoga

Swami Sivananda Radha

A selection of Mantras sung by Swami Radha. The ideal companion to *Mantras: Words of Power*.

\$7.50 cassette tape

★★Save: book & tape set — \$13.95★★



## T I M E L E S S   B O O K S

Box 160A, Porthill, ID 83853

To order, send payment with \$1.00 shipping for the first (50¢ for each additional) book, tape, or set.

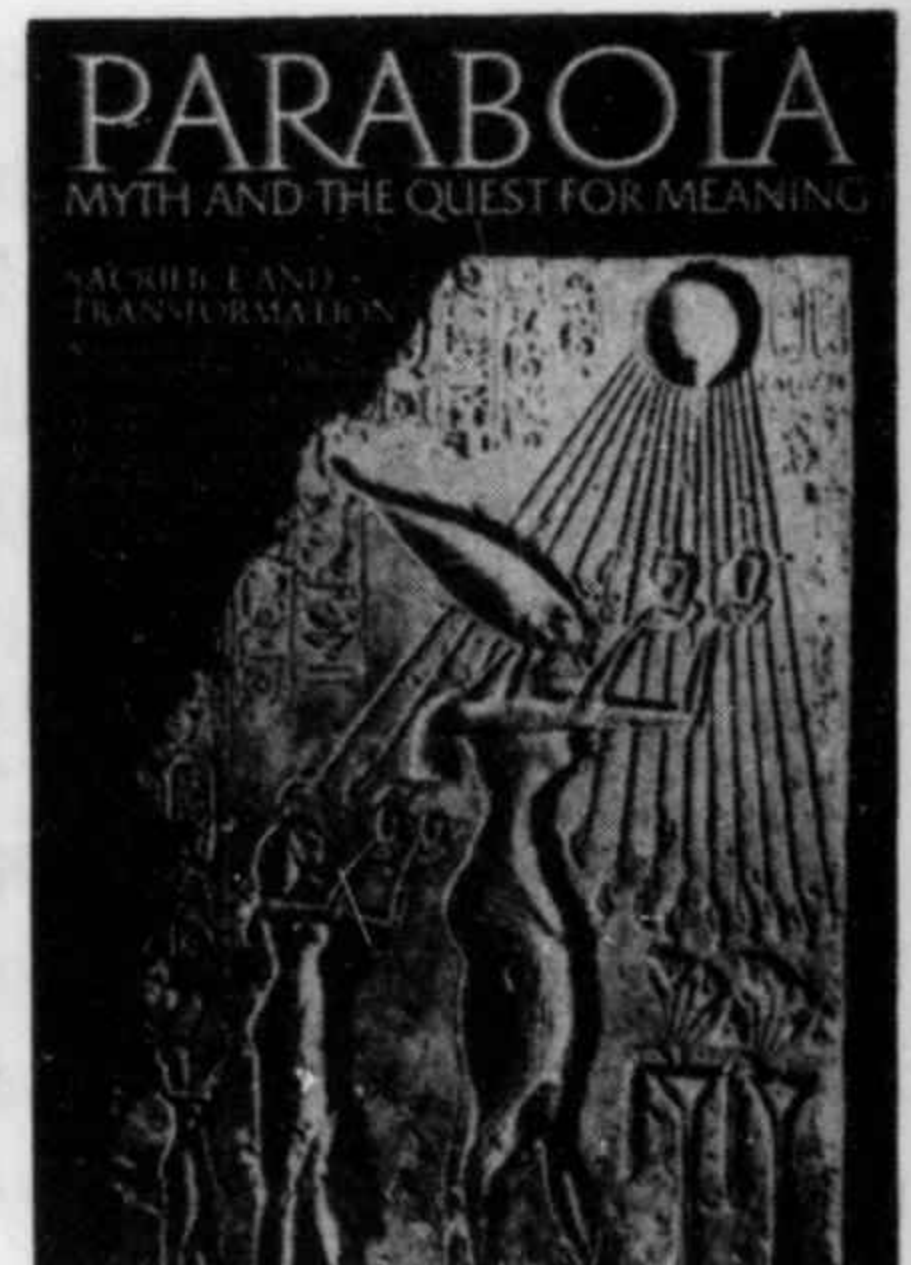
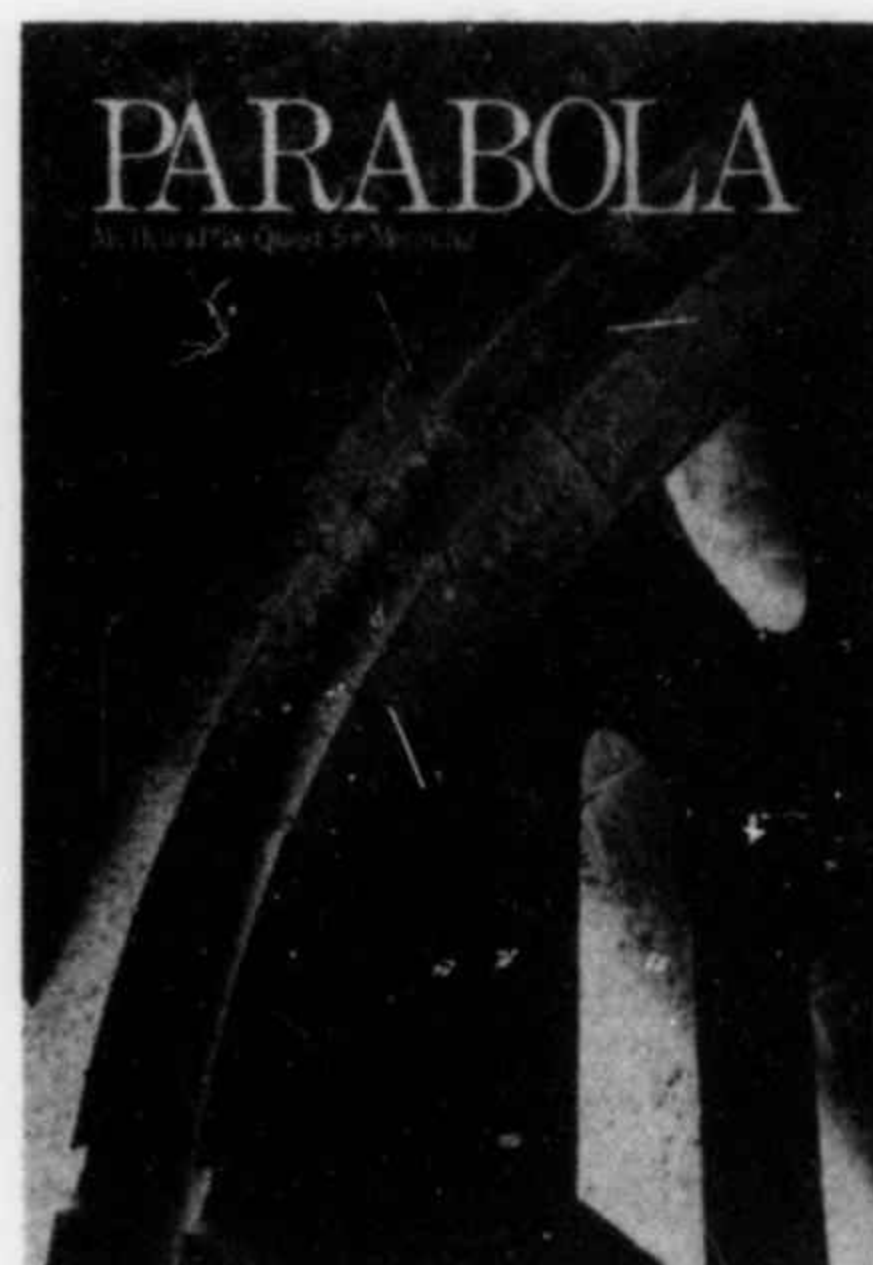
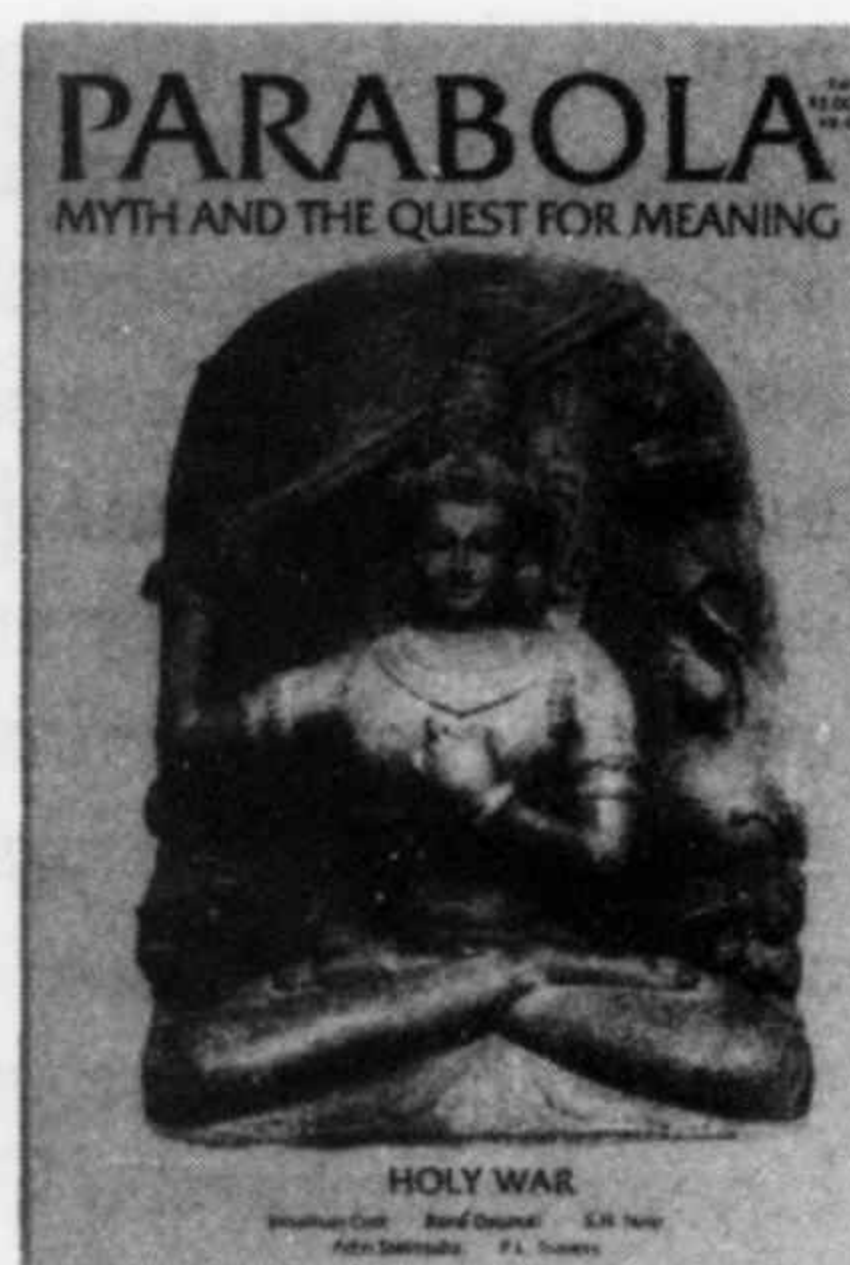
something that does not lend itself to material description, and the imagery used is invariably inadequate." In *Biblical Images*, Steinsaltz explores a different side of the same question. The difficulty in teaching anything about the characters of the Bible is due to their "fame." As he puts it, "This lack of knowledge and understanding is not necessarily a function of ignorance but stems rather from the fact that the Biblical personae are so familiar, so 'fa-

mous,' that they have become almost stereotyped. They have fallen victim to accepted patterns of thinking, been fitted into conventional molds and subjected to unquestioning assumptions which have prevented any attempt at deeper understanding. It is not uncommon for the very thing that 'everyone knows' not to receive the attention it deserves." Steinsaltz connects this problem to the primal sin of humankind, the sin of the Tree of Knowledge,

# Read not the Times,

For a decade PARABOLA has addressed the important concerns of the day with a depth that only the timeless traditions can provide. Through PARABOLA Back Issues, you can now share in this storehouse of knowledge and insight harvested from the world's myths, folklore, and spiritual heritage. All back issues are available at \$7.00 per copy. Orders of twelve or more are offered at a special price of \$6.00 per copy. Please use the convenient order card bound between these pages. Only prepaid orders are accepted.

- VOL. I:1 **The Hero** Mircea Eliade, Barbara G. Myerhoff, Barre Toelken, P.L. Travers, Jacob Needleman, Minor White, Huston Smith interview. (Reprint)
- VOL. I:2 **Magic** Barbara G. Myerhoff, Robert Ellwood, Jacob Needleman, Victor Turner, Thomas Moore, Christmas Humphreys, Joseph Campbell interview. (Reprint)
- VOL. I:3 **Initiation** Sam Gill, Janwillem van de Wetering, Arthur Amiotte, Evelyn Eaton, Frederick Franck, Fernando Llosa Porras, Mircea Eliade interview. (Reprint)
- VOL. I:4 **Rites of Passage** Frederick Franck, James Wolfe, Ursula K. Le Guin, D.M. Dooling, Robert Meagher, William Irwin Thompson interview. (Reprint)
- VOL. II:1 **Death** P.L. Travers, Conrad Hyers, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Brother David Steindl-Rast, William Doty, William Burke Jr., interview with Tibetan Lamas. (Reprint)
- VOL. II:2 **Creation** Sam Gill, P.L. Travers, David Rosenberg, David Johnson, Jane Yolen, John Fentress Gardner, Daniel Whitman, Zalman Schachter interview. (Reprint)
- VOL. II:3 **Cosmology** Brother David Steindl-Rast, Ursula K. Le Guin, Lorel Desjardins, Elaine Jahner, Anne Bevan, Harry Remde, Lloyd Motz interview. (Reprint)
- VOL. II:4 **Relationships** Frederick Franck, Robert E. Meagher, Shems Friedlander, Lizelle Reymond, Jean Toomer, Barre Toelken, Diane Wolkstein interview. (Reprint)
- VOL. III:1 **Sacred Space** A.K. Coomaraswamy, Barbara Stoler Miller, Robert Lawlor, Irving Friedman, Hélène Fleury, P.L. Travers and Michael Dames interview.
- VOL. III:2 **Sacrifice and Transformation** Annemarie Schimmel, Joseph Epes Brown, Robert A.F. Thurman, Minor White, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz interview.
- VOL. III:3 **Inner Alchemy** Mircea Eliade, D.M. Dooling, Harry Remde, Jacob Needleman, Elémire Zolla, Bart Jordan, Faye Ginsburg.
- VOL. III:4 **Androgyny** Elaine H. Pagels, Titus Burckhardt, Keith Critchlow, P.L. Travers, Barbara G. Myerhoff, Lobsang Lhalungpa interview. (Reprint)
- VOL. IV:1 **The Trickster** Emory Sekaquaptewa, Michel Waldberg, Lynda Sexson, P.L. Travers, David Leeming, Joseph Epes Brown interview.
- VOL. IV:2 **Sacred Dance** Elaine H. Pagels, Rosemary Jeanes, David P. McAllester, Fritjof Capra, Annemarie Schimmel, Peter Brook interview.
- VOL. IV:3 **The Child** Don Talayesva, Richard Lewis, Frederick Franck, Lynda Sexson, John Loudon, Lobsang Lhalungpa, art and stories by children.
- VOL. IV:4 **Storytelling and Education** Maria José Hobday, Thomas Buckley, James Hillman, Sam Gill, Diane Wolkstein, interviews.
- VOL. V:1 **The Old Ones** Keith Critchlow, Lobsang Lhalungpa, Robert Bly, Gary Snyder, interviews with Deshung, Rinpoche and Joseph Campbell. (Reprint)
- VOL. V:2 **Music Sound Silence** Herbert Whone, Tomas Tranströmer, David A. Lavery, Tom Moore, David P. McAllester, Robert Lawlor, Steve Reich interview.
- VOL. V:3 **Obstacles** Al Young, Abraham Menashe, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Jonathan Omer-Man, interviews with Mohawk Chiefs and H.H. the Dalai Lama. (Reprint)
- VOL. V:4 **Woman** P.L. Travers, Helen M. Luke, Seonaid Robertson, Ursula K. Le Guin, Barbara Rhode, Joseph Campbell, Judy Swamp interview. (Reprint)



Yes, I want to  
complete my  
**PARABOLA**  
collection.

# THE PARABOLA LIBRARY Form

Please use this form to order PARABOLA BACK ISSUES and PARABOLA BOOKS. All back issues available for \$7.00 or, for orders of twelve or more, \$6.00 per copy. *The Sons of the Wind* is available for Prepaid orders only.

|           |       |       |       |       |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Vol. I    | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol II    | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol. III  | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol. IV   | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol. V    | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol. VI   | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol. VII  | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol. VIII | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol. IX   | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 |
| Vol. X    | No. 1 |       |       |       |

I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ back issues.

I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ copies of  
THE SONS OF THE WIND.

Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Dollars only.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip

Send to PARABOLA  
150 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011

# read the Eternities

—Henry David Thoreau

- VOL. VI:1 **Earth and Spirit** Peter Matthiessen, Peter Nabokov, Robert Bly, Paul Caponigro, P.L. Travers, John Kastan, Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal interview. (*Reprint*)
- VOL. VI:2 **The Dream of Progress** Kathleen Raine, David Malouf, Dino Buzzati, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, interviews with Chinua Achebe, Jacob Needleman.
- VOL. VI:3 **Mask and Metaphor** Terry Tafoya, Ray Zone, Demorest Davenport, Adin Steinsaltz, Henrich von Kleist, interview with Peter Brook. (*Reprint*)
- VOL. VI:4 **Demons** J. Stephen Lansing, Maria Dermoût, Chinua Achebe, Susan Stern, Edwin Bernbaum, Dino Buzzati, interview with Isaac Bashevis Singer.
- VOL. VII:1 **Sleep** Henri Tracol, Mircea Eliade, A.K. Ramanujan, Jonathan Omer-Man, P.L. Travers, interviews with Dr. Yeshi Dhonden and Joseph Campbell. (*Reprint*)
- VOL. VII:2 **Dreams and Seeing** Ursula K. Le Guin, Arthur Amiotte, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Elémire Zolla, conversation between Laurens van der Post and P.L. Travers.
- VOL. VII:3 **Ceremonies** Joseph Epes Brown, Robertson Davies, Doris Lessing, Francelia Butler, Frederick Franck, Barbara Nimri Aziz, P.L. Travers, David Abram, Joseph Bruchac, Brother David Steindl-Rast.
- VOL. VII:4 **Holy War** Jonathan Cott, René Daumal, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Adin Steinsaltz, James and Myfanwy Moran, Brother David Steindl-Rast interview.
- VOL. VIII:1 **Guilt** Vincent Rossi, P.L. Travers, Adin Steinsaltz, John Updike, Robert Granat, Helen Luke, Thomas Dooling, Michel de Salzman interview.
- VOL. VIII:2 **Animals** Joseph Epes Brown, Barry Lopez, Dino Buzzati, Paul Shepard, Philip Kapleau, Robert Bly, Ursula K. Le Guin, James Hillman interview.
- VOL. VIII:3 **Words of Power** William Chittick, L. Charbonneau-Lassay, P.L. Travers, Lawrence Russ, Richard Lewis, interview with Kathleen Raine.
- VOL. VIII:4 **Sun and Moon** Martha Heyneman, Martin Lev, Carol Ring, Jonathan Omer-Man, Paul Jordan-Smith, interview with Seyyed Hossein Nasr.
- VOL. IX:1 **Hierarchy** Henri Tracol, Janwillem van de Wetering, Roger Lipsey, Martin Lings, D.M. Dooling, James B. Robinson, interview with Adin Steinsaltz.

## THE SONS OF THE WIND THE SACRED STORIES OF THE LAKOTA

Edited by D.M. Dooling

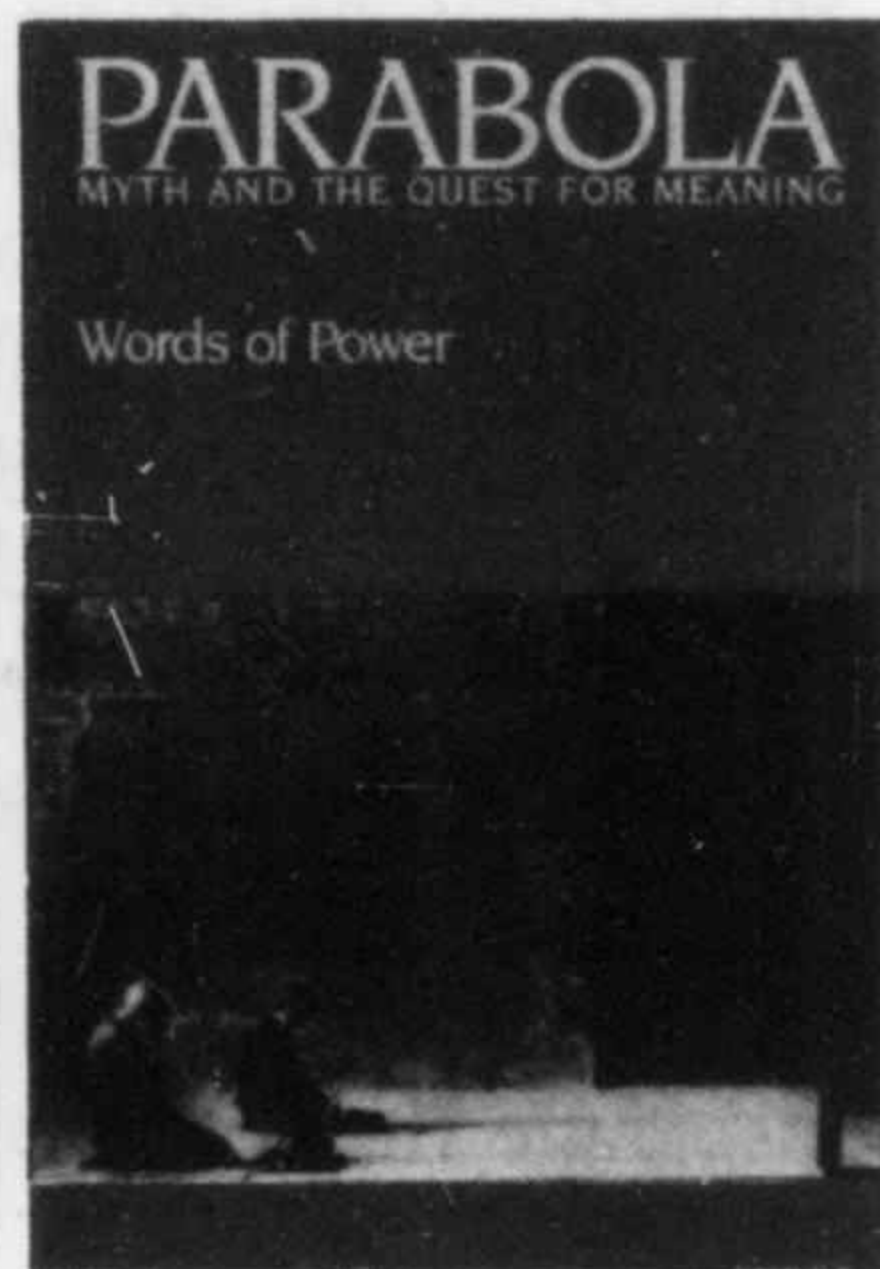
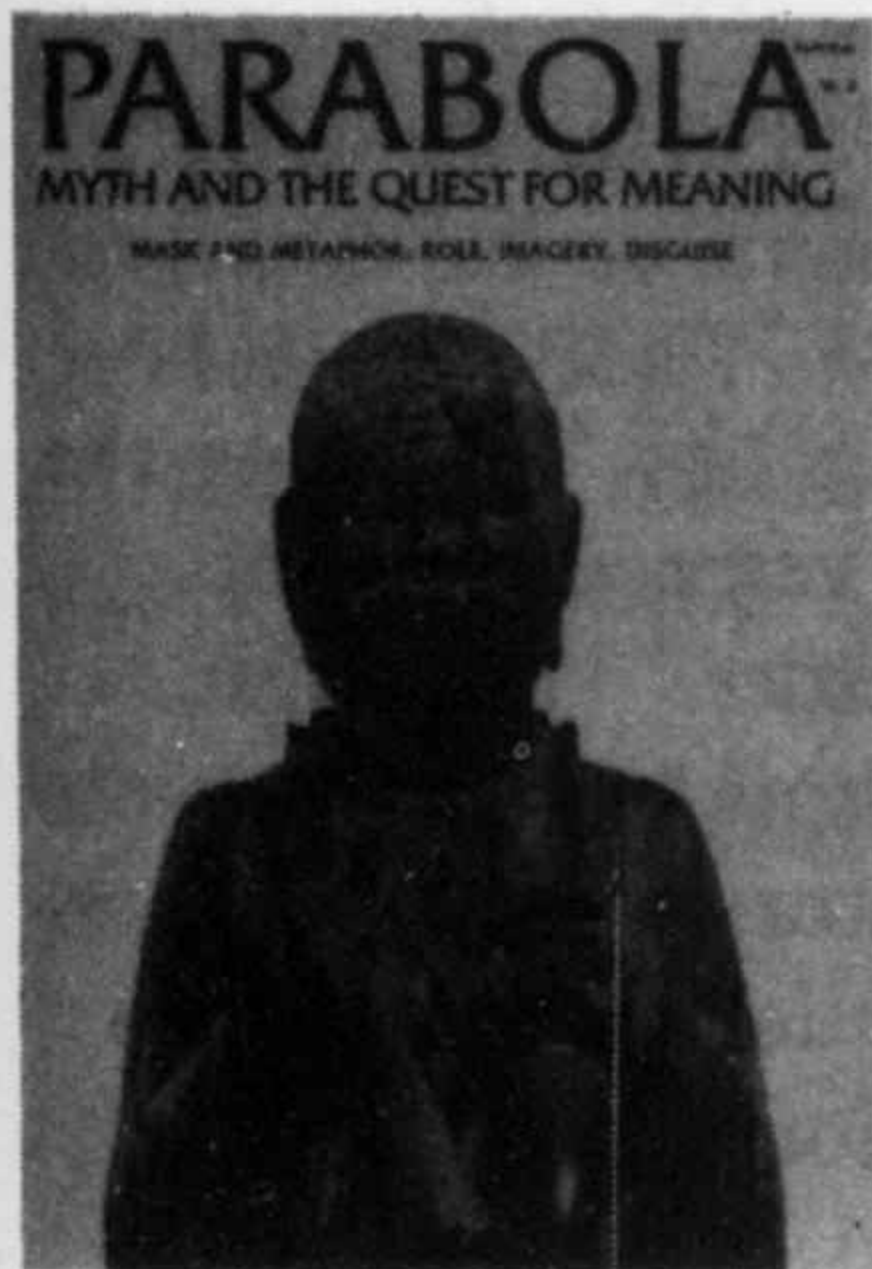


*"An eloquent and accessible rendering . . ."*

—Peter Matthiessen

**PARABOLA BOOKS \$8.95 Paper**

- VOL. IX:2 **Theft** Joseph Bruchac, Robert Venables, John Stratton Hawley, Robert Thurman, Jonathan Omer-Man, interview with David Maybury-Lewis.
- VOL. IX:3 **Pilgrimage** Arthur Amiotte, Padma Perera, Gai Eaton, Richard R. Niebuhr, Paul Brunton, Thomas Buckley, interview with Tara Tulku, Rinpoche.
- VOL. IX:4 **Food** Martha Heyneman, Ursula K. Le Guin, Basarab Nicolescu, Christopher Bamford, Lobsang Lhalungpa, Donald Harper, interview with Henri Tracol.
- VOL. X:1 **Wholeness** Interviews with H.H. the Dalai Lama, Helen Luke, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Geoffrey Chew and Jacob Needleman, Pauline de Dampierre, Bishop Kallistos Ware, Kobori Nanrei Roshi, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz; 10th Anniversary Issue.



## The Multiple States of Being

by René Guénon

Translated from French by Joscelyn Godwin  
140 pages / both editions Smyth-sewn, acid free  
cloth \$13.95 ppd. / paper \$9.95 ppd.

See "Tangent" essay "Effective Knowledge" in *Parabola Spring '85 issue*.

"... a profound and valuable work of esoteric philosophy."

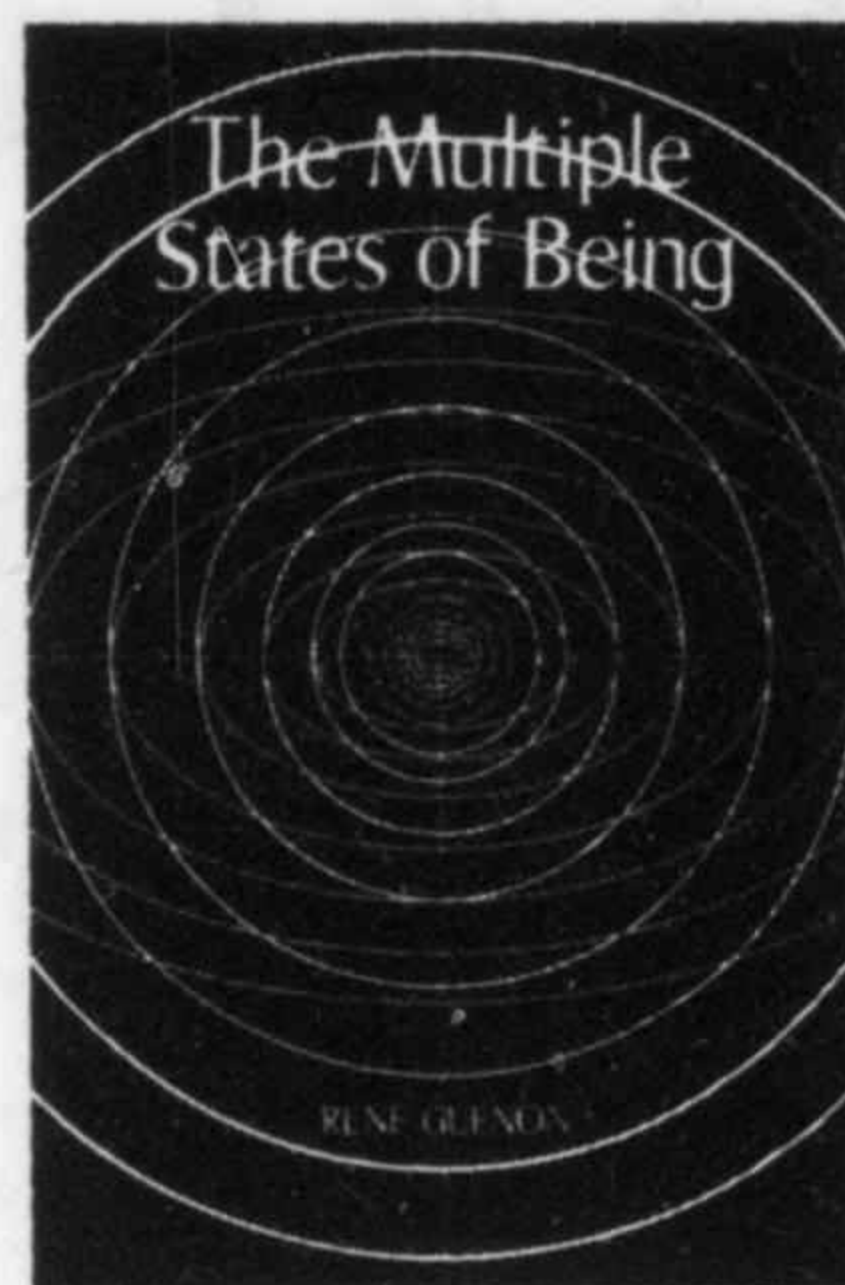
—Dierdre Green, *Hermetic Journal*

"I do not know when I have been so happy to learn that a book, so long honored in its original language, is to be made available to the English-speaking world."

—Huston Smith

**Larson Publications, 4936 Rte. 414, Burdett, NY 14818**

(Distributed nationally to bookstores by Kampmann & Company)  
NYS residents, please add sales tax.



"when man knows more than he needs to know, when what he learns are no more than fragments of information, heaps of unrelated facts which, whether they are correct or incorrect, become a barrier to experience itself."

Rabbi Steinsaltz states the issue bluntly in the Introduction to *Biblical Images* by saying, "In order to try to present a complete picture and not merely to be content with historical hindsight, this material is drawn from traditional Jewish sources. In most cases, these sources are not listed, since the material is culled from many levels and types of the rich treasury of Jewish literature; and, in the nature of things much more is alluded to than is explicitly written. Readers who are familiar with these sources will be able to recognize the allusions to a greater or lesser degree, while those who are outside the world of Jewish scholarship would merely be confused by detailed references."

Like the Biblical text itself, this new work by Rabbi Steinsaltz (which is based on a series of lectures he delivered on the army channel of Israeli radio) must not only be read, but studied. It forms one more part of his teaching available to English readers, and should be "turned again and again" to learn from its brilliance.

*Arthur Kurzweil is editor-in-chief of the B'nai B'rith Jewish Book Club and Judaica editor of Jason Aronson Publishers. His own articles, books, and lectures explore various Jewish subjects.*

## Afro-American Folktales: Stories from Black Traditions in the New World

Edited by Roger D. Abrahams. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985. Pp. 352. \$22.95. Paper \$11.95.

*Reviewed by Winifred Lambrecht*

In *Afro-American Folktales*, a companion to his *African Folktales*, Roger D. Abrahams has gathered from travel and plantation journals, as well as from his own recordings, a portion of the legacy of thousands of forcibly displaced people. In his preface, Abrahams notes that he is fully aware of the limitations accompanying the translation of one form of communication into another, and particularly acute are the problems arising in the writing down of orally transmitted stories. Where an animate, vibrant source—in this case, a storyteller—is fixed in one of its moments, shared knowledge and non-verbal communication, through which so much is exchanged between teller and listener, disappear for the reader; new historical, economic, and political dimensions force subsequent audiences to reinterpret stories, and nothing withers as quickly as humor and satire.

Abrahams attempts "to maintain the spirit of the storytelling" by "recasting the stories in the standard vernacular of the American 'common reader.'" Though what he achieves may approach in spirit the intent of the original storytellers, the inherent problems of translation remain; yet to disparage the compilation in written form

of oral literature serves no purpose. Collections such as this one are repositories of memories and creative impulses which, though elusive and transitory, contain valuable information. True, the subtleties of the interactions between teller and audience cannot be rendered, but readers of these Afro-American folktales will perceive general themes which emanate from the experiences of the black diaspora.

With the renaissance of storytelling as an art/performance genre, many artists, uprooted from traditional contexts, are searching for sources to reconnect them with an almost obliterated past. In the case of the African diaspora, the past is both the dramatic crossing from a distant land and the tragic burden of slavery. For those who tried to preserve traditions in a degenerating cultural climate, stories were bridges to what was left behind and catalysts for the formation of strong communal bonds:

“. . . so when you eat, you must eat with others.” Not all the stories “survived the transatlantic passage to the New World with their vigor and range intact”; as “Brother Baboon” became “better known as Big Jim,” defiance to masters often replaced obedience to ancestors and elders, and adaptation undoubtedly was valued above the preservation of non-pragmatic values.

Transplanted from their native lands, Afro-Americans created new story forms, remodeling the old repertoire to fit new priorities. As the past grew dimmer with each generation, new metaphors emerged: the Afro-American story, never discarding its African character, became polymorphic—blending memories from different native sources, borrowing from other cultures, reflecting (while sometimes mockingly defying) the slave condition—in order to maintain self-awareness and strength and to prevent the death of their culture. These stories can be read as testimonies to a resistance movement.

*Winifred Lambrecht is a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA.*

# NAROPA

## I N S T I T U T E

### M.A., B.A. & CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS:

- Buddhist & Western Psychology
- Buddhist Studies
- Dance Therapy

### B.A. & CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS:

- Movement Studies/Dance
- Movement Studies/Dance Therapy
- Music
- Writing & Poetics
- Book Arts

### DEPARTMENTAL MINORS:

- Theater • Martial Arts • Visual Arts
- Horticulture • Anthropology

Financial Aid Program for qualified students. Naropa Institute holds candidacy for accreditation (NCA 1978). For catalog contact: Naropa Institute, Dept. PBS, 2130 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302 • 303/444-0202.

### Artistic Form and Yoga in the Sacred Images of India

By Heinrich Zimmer. Translated by Gerald Chapple and James B. Lawson in collaboration with J. Michael McKnight. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. Pp. xxx + 289. \$25.00.

*Reviewed by Janice Leoshko*

The preface to the English translation of Heinrich Zimmer's *Artistic Form and Yoga in the Sacred Images of India*, first published as *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild* in 1926, includes an excerpt from Ananda Coomaraswamy's review of this first German edition. In it, Coomaraswamy hailed the book as the most valuable yet published for understanding Indian art. In Coomaraswamy's words, the basic question is "why is it what it is?" and Zimmer's main concern was with that

question. Now, almost sixty years later, on the eve of a major year-long Festival of India in the United States, the question is still necessary for approaching the art of India, and the first English translation of Zimmer's book, by Gerald Chapple and James B. Lawson, with J. Michael McKnight, is a welcome publication.

As briefly noted in the preface and more fully described in Zimmer's autobiographical notes appended at the end of this translation, the book is important not only as a basic work on clarifying Zimmer's approach, but also because it touched other thinkers working at the time, including C.G. Jung. Zimmer's autobiographical notes could serve well as an introduction to the text. There he traces the development of his vision of India and explains the genesis of *Kunstform und Yoga*, which began as a brief paper meant to correct the narrow and purely esthetic approach to Indian art. A year later, the book was finished, written for non-professionals as well as professionals and not as a specialized study.

Zimmer begins by stating that much data has been accumulated about ancient sites and ancient arts of India which helps to understand the images. While monuments helped to spark his search for the texture of Indian traditions, it was the texts which he used most profitably, discovering there ways for entering and experiencing the Indian world. The complexities of Indian texts become facets for vision as Zimmer uncovers the unity which underlies their seeming diversity. His central focus rests on understanding the functional identity of sacred images. Although different in form, figurative and non-figurative Indian images are similar in function; each serves to organize inner vision and define divine essence. Zimmer stresses that the unique characteristics of

Indian images cannot be seen without the realization of the "fundamental congruity of all constructs." The sacred image is a *yantra*; *yantra* is the broad designation for a representational (figurative or non-figurative) sacred device used for religious practices. Zimmer notes that such constructs include figurative images (*pratimā*), "circle-shaped" designs (*cakras*), "ring-shaped" designs (*mandalas*), and the exclusively geometric and linear designs that have no other name but *yantra*.

Notable at the time of its original publication, Zimmer's examination of the linear and geometric *yantras* remains a valuable analysis. He explains the interdependence of their form and meaning in relation to religious practice and discusses their connections to Buddhist *mandala* forms, which he defines as linear *yantras* containing figures. The *yantras* and *mandalas* reflect the unfolding and enfolding of inner vision; their shivered (broken) perimeters, symmetry of plan, and concentric division of surface contain and simultaneously expand the symbolic essence of the center. From the examination of two-dimensional images, Zimmer moves on to discuss Borobudur, a splendid Buddhist monument in Java dating from the ninth century. The analysis of Borobudur as "an architectural mandala of the pilgrim's path" highlights Zimmer's emphasis on the fundamental unity of *yantras* and *mandalas* and figurative images. His perception that one can understand Borobudur's form and decoration in terms of its function gave a major impetus for subsequent studies of the monument.

A specific path is presented in the organization of *Artistic Form and Yoga*. By first contrasting Western classical images with Indian images, Zimmer carefully constructs a door to lead the reader through to the world of India. The following chapters in-

terweave the theme of the similar nature of sacred images as explicated in various Indian texts. The central chapter of the book, titled "Yoga and the Linear Sacred Image," examines the *yantras* and *mandalas* and discusses Borobudur. The next two chapters, "Proportions and the Language of Signs in the Canon of Indian Art" and "The Place of the Sacred Image in the World of the Believer," further define the meaning of Indian images. Zimmer draws on both Buddhist and Hindu texts to delineate the functional nature of the artistic traditions. But one of the few weak points of the book is Zimmer's view that Buddhism simply absorbed its more complicated aspects and tantric tendencies from Hinduism. More recent scholarship demonstrates that the developments of these religions are more complex and intertwined than Zimmer realized.

Having begun by departing from Western traditions, Zimmer ends by returning the reader to considerations of the contrast between the West and India. The Western classical tradition of art is more tied to form, for its images tend to celebrate the visible world. Indian images, however, are meant to lead us from the visible to the reality which is beyond form. They are the initial phase of true sight. By understanding their purpose, Zimmer believes, we can begin to lift the veil of *māyā* (illusion) and see the essence of the divine. This is the necessary place of departure for understanding the specific developments of art in India.

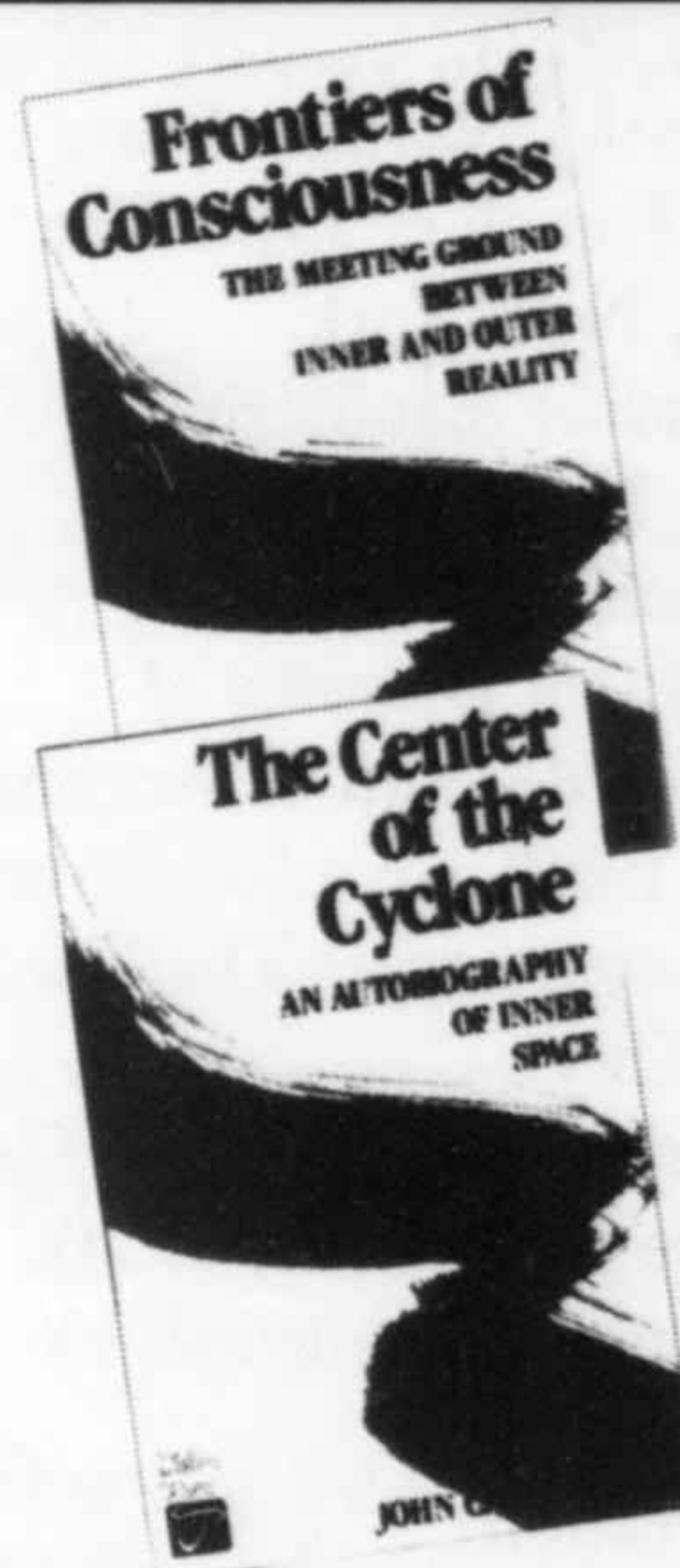
Zimmer's autobiographical notes illuminate his view on the purpose of understanding Indian traditions and provide an appropriate end to his thoughtful book. He states:

It was, I felt, not the right solution, simply to

swallow Eastern wisdom hook and sinker, as did the Theosophists, NeoBuddhists, etc. The task was to transmute it so as to make it fit into the context of our own experiences and traditions: a process of mutual transmutation, assimilation. The spiritual food, when assimilated, assimilates him who has swallowed it. It forms and transmutes his substance.

*Janice Leoshko teaches Asian art history at Wheaton College. Her particular area of research is the meaning of the Buddhist and Hindu traditions of the art of Eastern India.*

## BACK IN PRINT!



22 thought-provoking articles on such diverse subjects as meditation, psychic research, biofeedback, space travel, and extraterrestrial life. "Guaranteed: a deeper, subtler understanding of the relationship between mind and body, between consciousness and the universe." — *East West Journal*. Paper \$8.95; cloth \$14.95

A fascinating study of the interaction of brain and mind, using experiments with LSD, mysticism, isolation, and other catalysts. "Contains the enormous riches of greater understanding of ourselves and our relationship to the natural universe." — *The New York Times*, Paper \$7.95; cloth \$14.95

Julian Press

A division of Crown Publishers Inc.

CROWN PUBLISHERS, Inc., Dept. 577  
34 Engelhard Ave., Avenel, NJ 07001

Please send me the books indicated below. I enclose my check or money order for \_\_\_\_\_ plus \$1.40 postage and handling charge for the first book, plus 60¢ for each additional. If I wish, I may return book(s) within ten days.

FRONTIERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS Paper \$8.95 \_\_\_\_\_ Cloth \$14.95 \_\_\_\_\_  
THE CENTER OF THE CYCLONE Paper \$7.95 \_\_\_\_\_ Cloth \$14.95 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

N.Y. and N.J. residents, add sales tax

## CREDITS

---

Pages 7–12 Photographs by Jerry N. Uelsmann. From *Silver Meditations* by Jerry N. Uelsmann (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Morgan & Morgan, Inc., 1975).

Pages 14–19 Artwork by Jerome Tiger. From *The Life and Art of Jerome Tiger*, by Peggy Tiger and Molly Babcock (University of Oklahoma Press, 1980). Reprinted by permission of Peggy Tiger.

Page 21 Private collection. Photograph courtesy of Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Page 24 Illustration by Charles Green.

Pages 26–32 Photographs by Roger Lipsey.

Page 37 Illustration by Gloria Ortiz.

Page 43 From the first issue of *Los Caprichos*, Madrid, 1797. Courtesy of The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Page 45 From *Blake Books*, by G.E. Bentley, Jr. (Oxford University Press, 1977).

Page 49 Drawing by Dorothy Norman from manuscript illumination. French c. 1310. The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

Page 51 *viraf-nameh*, on Indian manuscript (MS Indien 721), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Pages 53–55 From “Summer in the Water Country,” Kung Hsien. *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting* (Cleveland Museum of Art and Indiana University Press, 1980).

Pages 56–68 Photographs courtesy of The Office of Tibet, New York City.

Page 78 Drawing by Kate Adamson. From *The Conference of the Birds* (The Janus Press, 1954).

Page 80 Gyüto tantric monks; photograph by Ernst Haas.

Page 81 Smithsonian Institution.

Page 82 From “Rosalind Solomon: India, Festivals, and Life,” exhibit at the Smithsonian.

Photograph © Rosalind Solomon (detail).

Page 82 “King Benhanzin as a Shark,” Musée de l’Homme.

Page 83 “Near Dixon, New Mexico,” 1977. Photograph by Paul Caponigro.

Pages 85–88 Photographs courtesy of Matari Film Productions, Inc.

Page 97 A Bodhisattva, 13th century. Private collection. From *Nepal, Where the Gods Are Young*, by Pretapanditya Pal. An Asian House Gallery Publication, 1976. Photograph by Otto E. Nelson.

## ERRATUM

On the Credits page in “Pilgrimage” (Vol. IX, No. 3), an incorrect credit was given for the photographs illustrating Padma Perera’s “Guruji” (pages 26–29). The proper credit is, “Photographs by Eric Lindbloom.” Our apologies to Mr. Lindbloom.

On the Credits page in “Wholeness” (Vol. X, No. 1), no credit was given for the photographs illustrating “Gentle Events,” the dialogue between Geoffrey Chew and Jacob Needleman (pages 42–49). The proper credit is, “Photographs by Eric Neyerlin.” Our apologies to Mr. Neyerlin.

Also on the Credits page in “Wholeness,” an inaccurate credit was given for the painting appearing on page 70 and illustrating “Image and Likeness,” the interview with Bishop Kallistos Ware. The proper credit is, “*Old Testament Trinity*. Courtesy, Temple Gallery, London.” Our apologies to the Temple Gallery.

## PROFILES

---

**Vine Deloria, Jr.**, is Professor of Political Science at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Among his many books are *Custer Died for Your Sins; American Indians, American Justice*, co-authored with Clifford Lytle; and, most recently, *The Nations Within: The Path and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*, co-authored with Clifford Lytle (Pantheon Books, 1984).

**D.M. Dooling** is Founding Editor of PARABOLA.

**Richard R. Niebuhr** is the Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard University. His most recent books include *Experiential Religion* (Harper & Row, 1972) and *Streams of Grace* (Doshisha University, 1983).

**Robert A.F. Thurman** is a Professor of Religion at Amherst College and a founder of the American Institute of Buddhist Studies. His latest book is *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence* (Princeton University Press, 1984).

**P.L. Travers**, a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA since the magazine began, is the author of the Mary Poppins books, as well as of *Friend Monkey, The Fox in the Manger, About the Sleeping Beauty, and Two Pairs of Shoes*.

**Janwillem van de Wetering** is the author of two books on Zen Buddhism, *The Empty Mirror*, now being filmed with Donald Sutherland, and *A Glimpse of Nothingness*. He has also written many well-known mystery novels, the most recent of which is *Inspector Saito's Small Satori* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1985).

**Philip Zaleski** is a freelance writer and a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA. He is currently writing a one-volume critical encyclopedia of modern alternate thought.

# Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition

Publisher of PARABOLA Magazine

The Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition is a non-profit organization devoted to the dissemination and exploration of materials relating to the myth, symbol, ritual, and art of the world's religious and cultural traditions.

In addition to publishing PARABOLA Magazine and PARABOLA Books, the Society sponsors PARABOLA Events, a series of lectures, programs, and symposia.

The Society gratefully acknowledges the following contributors whose support has helped make its activities possible:

Consolidated Edison of New York  
New York State Council on the Arts  
The Marsden Foundation  
The Museum of Natural History  
The New York Community Trust

All contributions to the Society are tax deductible. Inquiries about making individual contributions should be directed to: Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

## *Board of Advisors*

Joseph Epes Brown  
*Professor of Religious Studies*  
*University of Montana*

Joseph Campbell

Clayton E. Carlson  
*Publisher: Religious/General Books*  
*Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.*

Mircea Eliade  
*Sewell L. Avery Distinguished Service*  
*Professor of History of Religions,*  
*University of Chicago*

John Fowles

Frederick Franck  
*Artist and Writer*

Marie-Louise von Franz, Ph.D.

Dr. Stella Kramrisch  
*Curator of Indian Art,*  
*Philadelphia Museum of Art*

Ursula K. Le Guin

Lobsang Lhalungpa  
*Writer, translator of Tibetan texts*

The Very Rev. James Parks Morton  
*Dean of The Cathedral of St. John*  
*the Divine*

Joseph Needham, F.R.S., F.B.A.  
*Director of Science and Civilization in*  
*China Project, Cambridge*

Dorothy Norman

Isaac Bashevis Singer

Huston Smith  
*Thomas J. Watson Professor of*  
*Religion and Adjunct Professor of*  
*Philosophy, Syracuse University*

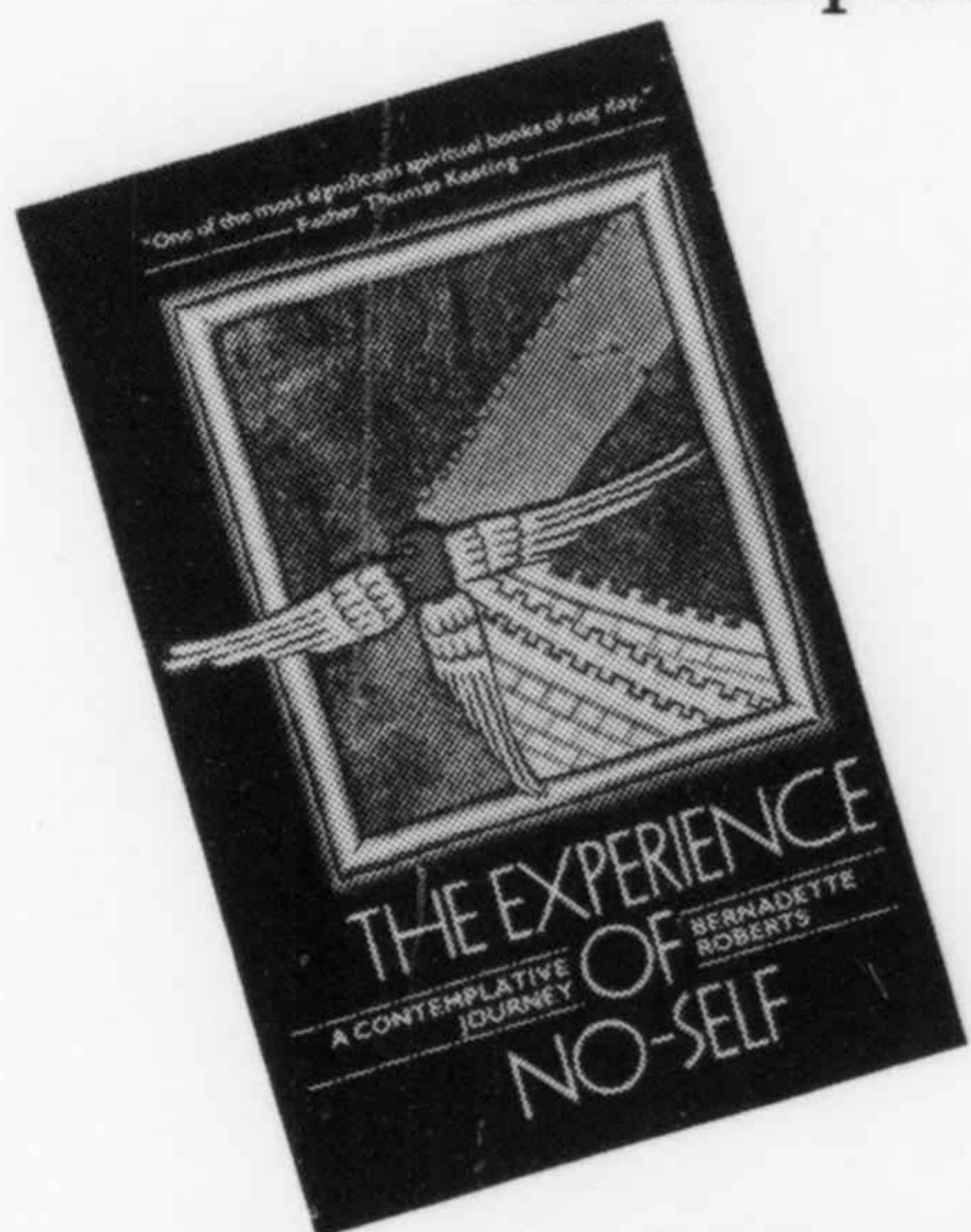
Barre Toelken  
*Folklorist*

Dr. P.L. Travers, O.B.E.

David Wilk  
*President, Inland Book Company*

# from SHAMBHALA

Two books that "form a major contribution to the world's treasury of mystical theology and contemplative wisdom"\*



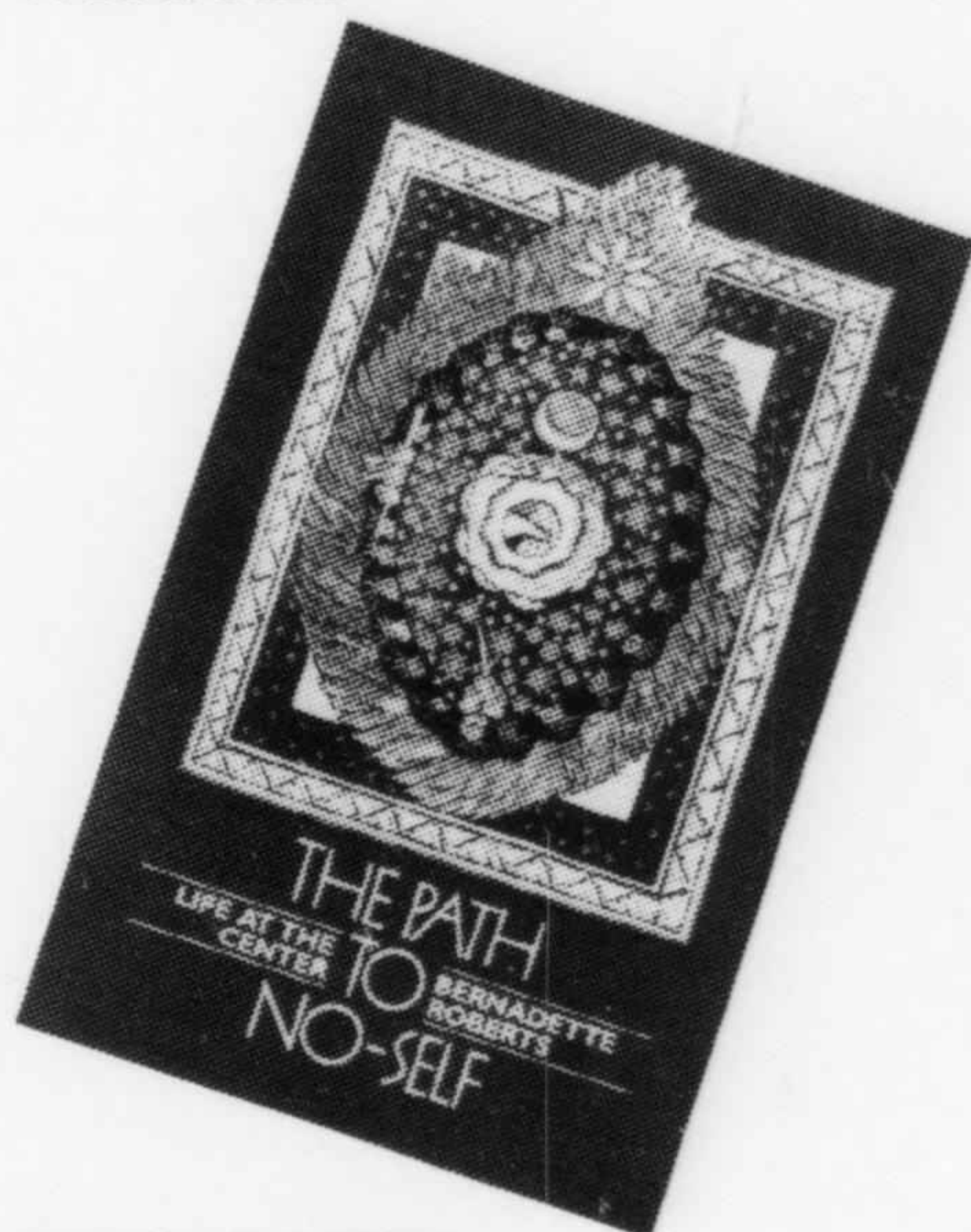
## THE EXPERIENCE OF NO-SELF

*A Contemplative Journey*

Bernadette Roberts

Bernadette Roberts' first book is fast becoming a classic in its field. A moving personal account of an American woman's spiritual odyssey, it describes an awakening rarely encountered in contemplative literature, related in terms that are recognizable to anyone who has made some small effort toward spiritual practice.

Paper \$9.95



## THE PATH TO NO-SELF

*Life at the Center*

Bernadette Roberts

Roberts' newly published second book situates *The Experience of No-Self* in the broader context of the spiritual journey in the Christian tradition. It is exclusively concerned with the "unitive" stage of contemplative life, viewing it as a *transitional*, rather than the final, step on the contemplative path.

Paper \$9.95

\* Father Thomas Keating, former abbot of St. Joseph's Abbey, now in residence at St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado.

At quality bookstores, or order directly from (add \$1.75 for handling)  
SHAMBHALA PUBLICATIONS, INC.

P.O. Box 308, Back Bay Annex

Boston, MA 02117

Shambhala Publications books are distributed by Random House





