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PARABOLA

MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING



RELATIONSHIPS

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FOCUS

It seems a very strange thing that of all the forms of life on this planet, the human being— the most intelligent, the most powerful, the most capable of controlling its environment and so of relative independence— is also the form of life which has the longest period of physical dependence and immaturity. No other creature has so evident and so prolonged a need for its parents; on no other creature is the lesson of family and of relationship so deeply impressed by its own necessities.

Is that why we rebel? For rebellion against parents and family seems an inevitable part of our experience. The generation gap was not invented in modern times; the Old Testament, paradigm of patriarchal tradition, is full of stories of disobedient sons and quarreling brothers. Is that a part of the lesson, perhaps? Must we first resist our human bonds in order to learn to accept them; run away from home so as to come back, like the prodigal, knowing ourselves better?

For certainly we can only begin to become aware of our own identity in terms of where it belongs and its place in the whole of what surrounds us. We know nothing, in fact, and can learn nothing, except by means of contact and comparison with other things and other people. The family is only the beginning of our education in rubbing elbows with the world, but as such it forms the basis for all our future participations. If we refuse, and continue to refuse, this first training in relationships, we have little prospect of success with other, even more difficult ones; and however much we may at times resent our human interconnectedness, we must also admit that most if not all of the joy, color and warmth of our lives comes through contact with other people.

Beyond the family we were born into, based on the family, come all the other exchanges with friends and lovers, teachers, masters, dependents, husband and wife, son and daughter. And beyond all these is all of life in all its forms and manifestations, for what is there that is not in relation with something else? And below them, within them, conditioning them all, taught and formed by them all, is the relation with oneself, and the possible return to one's own deepest sources.

All this, if we obey the rules. But if we were not the inventors of the generation gap, we take it and its accompanying and continuing tantrums as seriously as if we were. We indulge its kicking against the pricks by yielding to all sorts of pretenses that things are not the way they are. We pretend that there are no differences between the sexes except a small biological one (vive la petite différence), call our parents by their first names to make them the same age as ourselves, and encourage every individual (but if we are all as alike as peas in a pod, what *is* an individual?) to do his own thing. We will have equality, even if our brand of it eliminates all real liberty and all real fraternity. But appeasement, we should have learned, brings its own perils. Rebellion there may and perhaps must be in order to come to maturity, but maturity must come, with the capacity and the insight to accept the facts of the human condition. We are learning to our cost that our apparent domination of our planet, and possibly others, does not make us free to do as we please with it. Other forms of life that we consider subject to our will, as well

as and including our own, can still punish and perhaps destroy us utterly for our transgressions against a natural order.

We are all caught in Indra's net, in which, the myth tells us, at every crossing of the strands a bell is attached, so that any single movement, be it ever so slight, sets the whole in motion and every bell to ringing. Is it cacophony, or harmony? Does it depend on how we move and how we hear? Is this interweaving of relationships a cruel doom, or the possibility of treasure multiplied? Can we know before the final bell rings for our apparent exit?

"No man is an island," wrote John Donne, "sufficient unto himself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; and if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as if a promontory were, as if a manor of thine own or thy friend's were. Every man's death diminisheth me, for I am a part of mankind; therefore send not to know for whom the bell tolls: it tolls for thee."

D. M. Dooling

PARABOLA is published quarterly by The Tamarack Press, Inc.

Single Issue: $3.50. By subscription: $12 yearly, $22 for two years, $32 for three. Postage for outside territorial U.S.: add $2.50 for surface rates, $7.50 for air per year. Please specify when ordering.

Correspondence regarding manuscripts, articles, proposals, and permissions should be addressed to the Editors. Two copies of each manuscript, accompanied by return postage, should be sent. Upon request, the Editors will furnish authors with editorial guidelines.

Address all correspondence to: PARABOLA, *150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011, for change of address notices, subscriptions and all other business. Tel: 212-924-0004*

Second Class Postage Paid at New York, N.Y., and additional offices.

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Second Printing, 1983

VOLUME II, ISSUE 4

On the Cover

Virgin and Child, School of Auvergne, XII century. Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morga

An original illustration by Carole Kowalchuk.

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FULL CIRCLE:
A READERS' FORUM

There is an assumption I labor under which runs something like this: when a person or group of people is performing an action so well, with real effort, with wonder and beauty and success, they are constantly being congratulated on the fact to the point of boredom. I sincerely hope this is true of you, for pats on the back are quite in order. And superfluous or not, here is my pat: Thank you for this most unusual and special magazine that arrives in my post box at great long intervals, that takes me so long to read, and requires me to read with such care.

Most special was your issue on Death. Alone in a strange, a foreign place, a Chippewa reservation in northern Wisconsin, the normal elements of my everyday life had faded and the winds and water pressed in all around me. Nature was so strong and in it was Death. There was a feeling of smallness of self and an urge to cry— not from sadness, but from the rightness of things which for a brief moment your issue helped recall to me.

Being unfamiliar with the *Tibetan Book of the Dead,* I was strongly impressed with certain parallels between it (in the excerpts and the conversation with the lamas) and tales I heard from the old people. Like the Bardo there is an interim land that the Chippewa dead must travel before they reach the Happy Hunting Ground. When a man is dying, a *midé* (medicine society) priest explains to him at length what he will encounter on this journey so as to prepare him to successfully overcome its many perils. (The corpse is provided with ample food for this journey.) The element of this story that has impressed me most is that in this interim land there is a swamp which must be crossed. There are many trails in this swamp. Alongside this confusion of pathways are the dead man's friends and relatives who have preceded him. They are stuck in the mud and cry out for him to help them. If he wavers and tries to help them, however, he too will be pulled down into the mud and never reach the river's edge. The river is the last obstacle and he must cross it on the back of a big snake to reach his goal on the other shore.

I have no idea of the anthropological accuracy of this tale but this is how it was told to me unprompted by a seventy-three-year-old Chippewa with little formal white man's education. I must add that on this reservation the last *midé* priest died over thirty years ago and the *midewiwin* (medicine society) is all but dead.

Of all the articles, Brother Steindl-Rast's touched me most profoundly. Perhaps as a voice from the West it seem closer to my own life. What I know is this: my last night on the reservation an Indian woman I had met only a week earlier wanted to talk. She had just heard from the hospital that her brother undergoing spinal surgery was not expected to live. We sat up most of the night, talking only a little, waiting for the call saying he was dead. We stared at Death for many hours (my own as well, and hers), and it did not seem to be the impenetrable black I have always painted it. He lived. I left in the foggy dawn, and now I am back in this bustling daily life. I do not think of Death very often. I hope I do not forget that long night too soon. Thank you.

Karl Schurman
Brooklyn, N.Y.

No one can be both judge and advocate in his own case, but I would like to respond to four points in Ronald Brennan's review of my *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition (Parabola, Vol. II, No. 1).*

1. Mr Brennan says flatly that "the promise [in the book's "much-promising title"] is not fulfilled." The reason, he asserts, is that though I announce a theme "of enormous possibilities and interest"—the thesis that the major religions converge in a central truth which I compare in a spiritual sense to the human spine— I do not return to this theme after stating it in my Preface. Yet within three pages of the book's beginning I argue it *explicitly,* marshalling Eliade to show that primitive religions conform to it, and Lovejoy to show that "the greater number of subtler speculative minds and of the great religious teachers" of all civilizations have adhered to it. Meanwhile *implicitly* if I do not return to the theme it is because I never leave it. In laying bare the common "spine," I introduce cross-cultural references at every point to remind the reader that I am describing a terrain, not inventing it.

What Mr. Brennan must have in mind is that I do not argue my case systematically by devoting a separate section or chapter to each tradition and showing that its essence is indeed primordial. I intend to do this, devoting not a chapter but a book to each tradition, but that comes next. *Forgotten Truth* is the prologomenon to that larger project.

2. Neglecting its announced theme, "what [the book] gives us instead is a collection of opinions and statements from many sources, tagged as to which are to be approved and which are not;" where argument enters there are "glaring flaws in logic." As Mr. Brennan provides no instances of these alleged flaws I have no way of replying directly.

3. Mr. Brennan suggests that the book's shortcomings may be because the author "did not have quite enough respect for his readers' intelligence." Yet the common complaint from my nonprofessional friends is that, unlike my previous writings, this book is too difficult. To refer to *Publishers Weekly,* it describes it as a "difficult, densely written book, but one which continually rewards the *thoughtful* reader" (italics mine). Can we believe that a book that patronized the reader's intelligence would be nominated by the director of the University of California's Institute of Religious Studies for "the highest award for books in the philosophy of religion published this year"?

4. Finally, style. *De gustibus non disputandum*— as there is no arguing about taste I should perhaps pass over Mr. Brennan's discomfort with mine, but two passages that he cites sound (I agree) so fatuous when placed out of context that I feel impelled to say that on the whole the book's prose has been well received. *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* called it "characteristically elegant," and the previously quoted *Publishers Weekly's* characterization of me as "above all, a philosopher" is prefaced as follows: "Smith's style reflects his subject; he is by turns a mystic sage, a poet, and... a philosopher." Walter Capps, whose name will be known to readers of this journal, wrote to Harper & Row: "I love the imagery, the turns of phrase, the care with which sentences were constructed, paragraphs ordered, and the argument assembled. It's a beautiful book."

My chief assurance regarding the book's style, however, comes from professional quarters. While the book was still in progress my editor sent several chapters to the New York critic whose judgment she most respected. He recommended that the opening sections be revised because "they demand too much of the reader at the start," but his summary comment was: "This is very sophisticated writing."

Huston Smith
Syracuse University

Mr. Brennan responds:

I may have been wrong to imagine that the title of Professor Smith's book suggested that its terms were about to be explained and not merely continually referred to. However, this was *my inference, and Article I of Professor Smith's statement*

Letters continued on page 110

OF MAJESTIES



It was in the Spring of 1947— the ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were still smouldering and considerably radioactive— when Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, that John the Baptist of Zen to the West, received the command from Emperor Hirohito to give two lectures in the Imperial Palace. In the first lecture Dr. Suzuki[1] spoke of the essence of Buddhism in general terms. It is a magisterial exposé, the forty pages of which I have re-read countless times both in periods of anxiety and stress and at moments of great happiness, without ever having been able to exhaust or perhaps even to assimilate their momentous insights. The second lecture which Suzuki bade their Majesties ponder at this moment in history is even more impressive and timely: it deals with the realities of relationship between the One (the *Ri*) and the Many (the *Ji*), but especially with that of every *Ji* to every other *Ji*...

He begins his talk with an elucidation of the term *Dharmakāya,* the Law-Body of the Buddha. *Dharma* means here something like the "regulative principle" of the Dharmadātu or Universe. Coupled with *Kayā* (Body), it implies that the highest Reality is "not a mere abstraction, but is very much alive with sense, awareness and intelligence, and, above all, with love purged of human infirmities and defilements." The Dharmakāya unites in itself the two great supports of the entire edifice of Buddhism: Mahāprajna, the Great

AND MAJESTY

by Frederick Franck

Wisdom, and Māhakaruna, the Great Compassion. These are in fact one, for the Wisdom is the Compassion and the Compassion is the Wisdom. Only our limited viewpoint makes Wisdom and Compassion appear as if they were two separate entities. The Dharmakāya might be called the Spirit and be seen as the field of action where Wisdom and Compassion interfuse to become "the principle of vitality in our world of sense-intellect."

This teaching, Suzuki said, can only be fully grasped by an intimate acquaintance with the vast Kegon literature, which is based on the Kegon Sutra, known as *Hwa Yen* in Chinese and as *Avatamsaka* (garland) or *Gandavyuha* (flower-decoration) in Sanskrit. Garma C.C. Chang,[2] the Chinese scholar and sage, refers to it as the Buddhist philosophy of Totality, but both he and Suzuki agree that Kegon or Hwa Yen contains the highest teachings of Buddhism. This totalistic way of seeing and thinking was first articulated by Tu Shun (557-640) and further worked out by Fa-Tsang (613-712). In it all the essential elements of Mahāyāna Buddhism are integrated into an organic whole. In Kegon the "Universal Mind" is likened to a vast Ocean-Mirror, in which the totality of infinite processes that constitute the universe are spontaneously and simultaneously reflected. Its realization is known as the Ocean Mirror-samadhi.

Unfortunately, the Kegon literature available in English is scant. But both Suzuki's magnificent lectures and Dr. Chang's equally imposing writings can give us a first initiation into the profundity of Kegon, making it possible for us to glimpse the Dharmadātu as a single living organism of mutually dependent and interpenetrating processes of becoming and unbecoming. Kegon offers a model of the universe, a cosmic ecology, a view of all of "Creation" in its mutual interdependence, which only now, 1300 years later, has just begun to dawn on the Western scientific mind.

It would be presumptuous for me to attempt to give even a superficial overview of the majestic world of Kegon. I have therefore been bold enough to call upon Fa-Tsang himself to repeat for us the "simple demonstration" which he used in the 7th century, in order to provide the Empress of China with a little more than an inkling of it.

The Empress was Wu Tse T'ien. She took a profound interest in Buddhism and Hwa Yen in particular, although not exclusively. For Her Majesty had been a nun, and had jumped over the wall (not of China but her convent) to become the Imperial Concubine of the T'ang Emperor Kao Tsung. When Kao Tsung died, Wu Tse T'ien promptly usurped the throne and governed China for twenty years. She has been

[1] Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essence of Buddhism*, 2nd edition, revised and enlarged. London: Buddhist Society, 1957.

[2] Garma C.C. Chang, *Buddhist Teaching of Totality*, cloth and paper editions. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971.

described as a great statesman (statespersons did not yet exist) and a remarkable Buddhist scholar who commissioned a translation of the eighty volume Hwa Yen Sutra, for which she wrote the preface herself.

She often discussed the Hwa Yen doctrine with Fa-Tsang and questioned him, but according to the official report Her Majesty found his prodigiously learned and profound expositions so abstruse that she begged the Master for a demonstration which might give her an immediate grasp of the insights of Hwa Yen. We may perhaps surmise that after long days in her Oval Office, Her Majesty was too tired to burrow through the eighty tomes for which she had written such an elegant foreword.

However that may be, she is reported to have told Fa-Tsang: "I understand that one cannot really grasp Totality by the direct approach before reaching Enlightenment, but since the superiority of direct experience over the indirect way of intellection and inference is taught in so many scriptures, I wonder if, given your genius, Master, you could not give me a demonstration that will clarify the mystery of 'All in All' of the 'One in All,' of the interpenetration and containment of all phenomena, in short: of the Dharmadātu with its non-obstruction and interpenetration of time and space."

There is no verbatim record of what follows, but if I may paraphrase what is known from venerable sources, Fa-Tsang bowed deeply, with knitted brow, and said: "I shall do my utmost, Your Majesty. Give me a few days and let's see what I come up with." He then retired to his quarters, and indeed a few days later he knocked at the Imperial boudoir, announcing that the demonstration was ready to begin.

Fa-Tsang had appointed one of the halls of Wu's palace, so that eight large mirrors stood at the eight points of the compass facing one another. A ninth and tenth mirror were installed on floor and ceiling. He led her Majesty to the darkened hall, in the center of which he had a Buddha statue. Then he lighted a torch and Wu Tse T'ien was overwhelmed by an awesome spectacle: she saw the Buddha reflected in each one of the mirrors and each one of these reflections repeated and repeated in all the other mirrors: an infinity of Buddha reflections filled the room wherever the eye could wander.

"Ah quelle merveille!"..., the Empress sighed— in Chinese— putting her small hand on Fa-Tsang's arm. But Fa-Tsang said, calmly: "Your Majesty, this is the simple demonstration of the Dharmadātu Your Majesty commanded. Please notice how the One is reflected in the Many, see how each mirror reflects the center, the Buddha, perfectly. But see, there is more than this: in each reflection in each of the mirrors you

will find the reflection of all the other mirrors with the full Buddha image in each. See then, August Empress, the unobstructed interpenetration, yes, the perfect, unimpeded mutual solution of One in All, of All in One! See the mystery of realm reflecting realm in infinity; but also, Your Majesty, the Principle of the simultaneous arising of these various realms in a perfect harmony. All these reflections are mutually identical; in a sense one might say they are interchangeable, in another sense each exists individually. This shows the relationship of each being in its Suchness to Sunyata, the Absolute Emptiness out of which all looms up, into which all returns and of which its and our being and non-being is the manifestation..."

Then Fa-Tsang gently placed his right index finger on one of the infinite number of reflections, blotting it out, and he whispered (as if speaking to himself): "Now the Whole is affected by this frivolous little gesture of mine... one day this will be spoken of as ecology..."

Then he addressed his monarch again with courtly apologies for his crude, approximate and static model of the real state of affairs in the universe, "which, as Your Majesty will have realized, is not static and limited at all, but a multi-dimensional perpetuum mobile."

He smiled, lifted his left arm and from the wide sleeve extracted a small ball of pure crystal which he placed on the palm of his hand. "To conclude this command performance, Great Empress, and before my final profound obeisance, allow me to still impose for one moment on Your peerlessly precious time," he said. Fa-Tsang then held up the small crystal ball and said: "Now watch, Your Majesty, how all these large mirrors and the myriad forms they reflect are mirrored in this little sphere. See, how in the Ultimate Reality the infinitely small contains the infinitely large, and the infinitely large the infinitely small, without obstruction! Oh, if only I could demonstrate to You the unimpeded mutual interpenetration of Time and Eternity, of past, present, and future! But alas, this is a dynamic process that must be grasped on a different level..." The Hwa Yen Sutra says: "The incalculable aeons are but one moment, and that moment is no moment, thus one sees the Reality of the Universe..."

□

May this short tale serve to give a first glimpse of the panorama of the Dharmadātu, that boundless theater-in-the-round in which in limitless space-time and in unfathomable complexities of countless forces, those events which we humans are used to speak of as "things" and "beings" interact and interplay...

Strangers at the Gate

Ancient Rites of Hospitality

by Robert E. Meagher

For Germaine Breé

"Be not forgetful of strangers and travellers." (Assembly of princes, China, 650 B.C.E.)

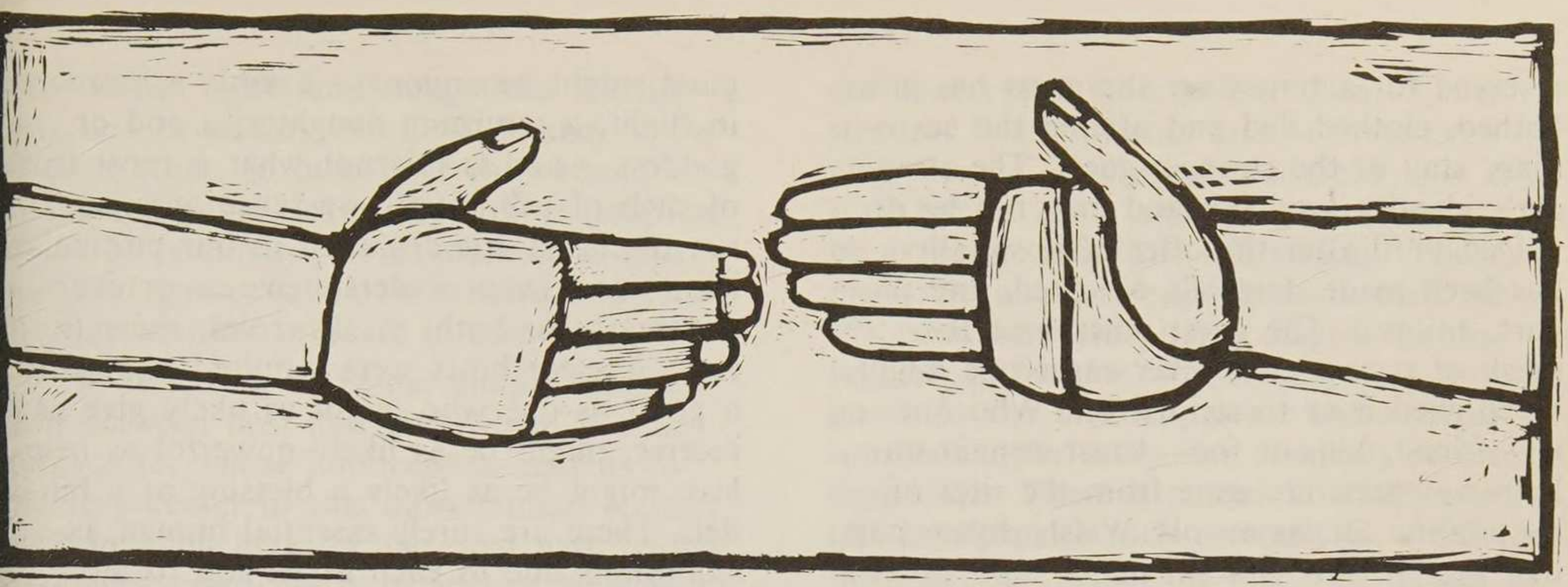
"Hospitality to strangers is greater than reverence for the name of God." (Hebrew proverb)

"I was a stranger and you took me in." (Gospel of Matthew)

I wonder if there is any topic discussed more widely and urgently among the probable readers of this essay than "relationships." And, of course, the relationships we have in mind are mostly inter-personal and often intimate. It is safe to say that we are preoccupied with the chemistry and the politics of personal interaction; meanwhile, we hope for little beyond the preservation of our own unique, autonomous integrity. Such is the poverty of our imaginations as we consider our possibilities.

Each person clings to what is singularly his or hers and fails to notice that we have one and all long since misplaced our common humanity. We refine our appreciation of the particular, when only an eye for the generic may restore our imaginations and our hopes to their appropriate stature. We must unearth human images, wherever they are to be found, so as to recognize ourselves therein. And the task of this essay is to disclose and to consider one such image of human being and of human interrelatedness.

The image I have in mind is that of hospitality, the ritual bond of host and guest. For in this bond lies hidden the idea of humanity and of human fellowship. Today, the image of hospitality suggests very little to us. If we imagine hospitality on a grand scale we call it "Southern," which leaves us far from the ancient Hebrews who counted hospitality among the six meritorious deeds whose reward is like a tree, the fruit of which we enjoy now and whose trunk remains for our delight in the world to come. Similarly, we would find quaint,



but extreme, the claim of Muslim theology that on the Day of Judgment we must give an account of all expenditures except those of hospitality, which God would be ashamed to demand. Hospitality has become a harmless urbane quality in the order of observances represented by general civility, politeness, and table manners. It is on the verge of being regarded as a matter of personality, which means that it stands not far removed from the peculiar oblivion spread ever wider by our obsession with the particular and private. If we manage, across some period of time, not to be rude to our friends within our own house, and even a bit unsparing, then we are deemed hospitable— should we happen to have among our friends anyone given to archaisms. We forget that properly hospitality has to do with unrecognizable strangers rather than with kith and kin. The thresholds of our homes are formidable, cold to all that is not familiar. And, behind our doors, we remain, in our essential humanity, unvisited, unpracticed in the giving and receiving of a recognition common to the ancient rites of hospitality.

The ancient rites of hospitality differ from one people to another like the countless racial and individual forms of the human countenance; always there are the essential characteristics which make possible human recognition. First of all we must notice that human beings alone open the doors of their dwellings to strangers. No other creature casts aside territorial and familial definitions and welcomes the wanderer with words like these: "You are among your family," which is a traditional greeting to the guest among the Bedouin. There is the offer of a bath, of a meal, and of shelter to the stranger, gifts which obviously correspond to the fundamental needs of one who travels as well as to the simplest resources of one who dwells. And this offer is made for at least three days— the day of arrival, one or two days of rest, and the day of departure. This expectation has come down to us in the form of Yankee good sense in the familiar suggestion of Ben Franklin that "Fish and visitors smell in three days." Interestingly enough, this same proverb exists in Hebrew, Greek, Roman, British, Danish, and Japanese literature. Clearly it is more than Yankee common sense that three days is an appropriate sojourn for the stranger. Without at least one full day free of travel, the continuum of strain and weariness has not been broken. A bath, a meal, even a night's sleep, if they serve only to maintain one in one's journey, are part of the metabolism of being under way. However, a bath, a meal and a bed which prepare one to spend a day dwelling with one's host, provide a brief but genuine respite from travelling as well as a taste of dwelling. And a stay of such length does not altogether disrupt the household of the host. Both host and guest return in what seems due time to their alloted ways. If not, there is in the *Midrash Tellihim* a suggestion of how one might nudge a stale guest on his way:

> *On the day a guest arrives, a calf is slaughtered in his honor; the next day, a sheep; the third day, a fowl, and on the fourth day he is served just beans.*

Still more significant, however, is the fact that ancient hospitality is firstly and primarily a bond between utter strangers. Most often, as in ancient Israel and Greece, the simple questions which work to unmask any stranger— who are you; where do you come from; what is the reason of your visit?— become ceremonial questions strictly

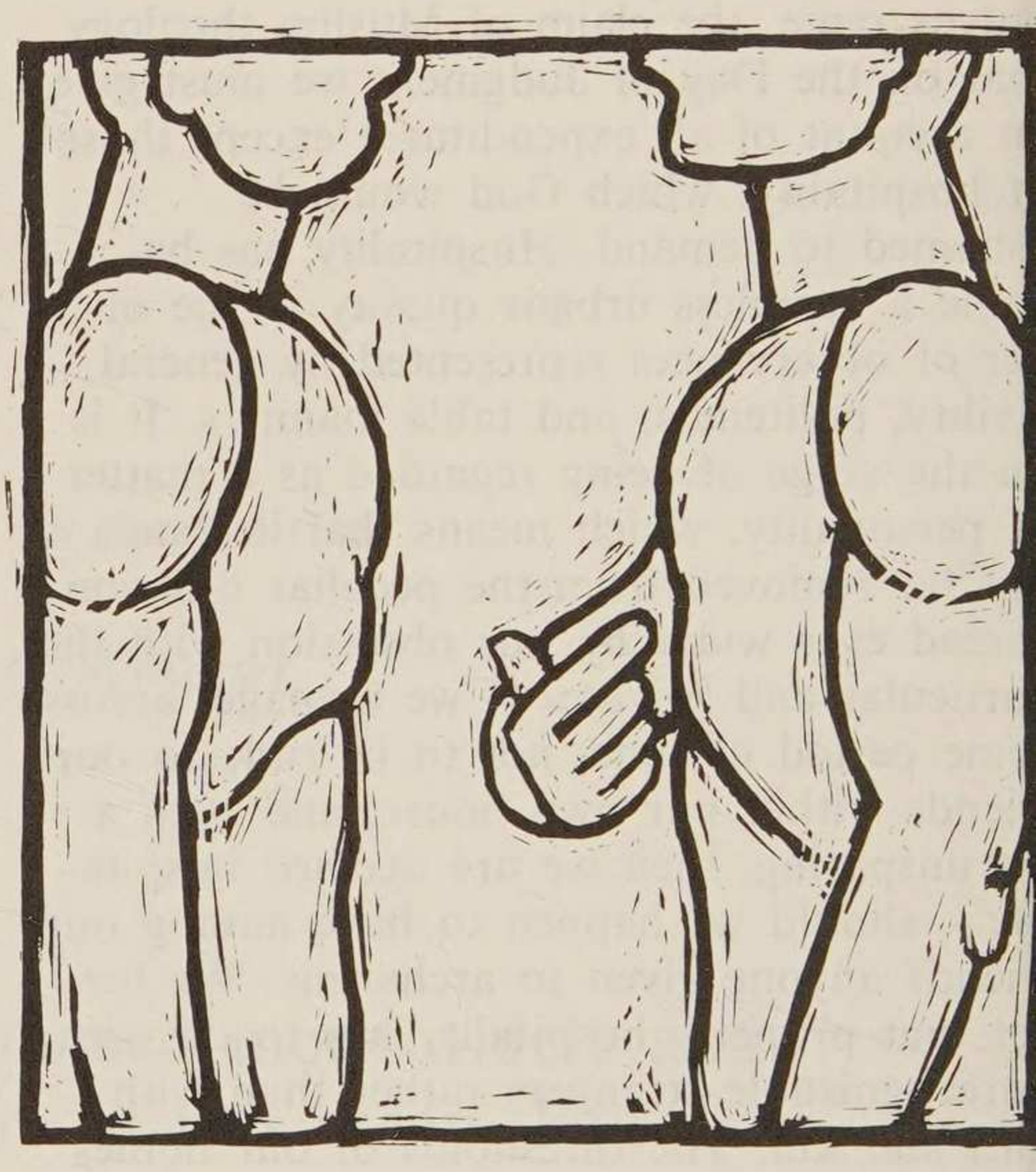
reserved for a time after the guest has been bathed, clothed, fed and offered the customary stay of the stranger-guest. The stranger's identity need not and may not be divulged until after the offer of hospitality has been made, formally accepted, and in part, enjoyed. The guest must wear the mask of stranger, however eager one might be to shed it or to strip it off. Who one is— friend, kin, or foe— must remain unknown, a separate issue from the rites of hospitality. Or, as an old Welsh rhyme puts it:

Hail guest, we ask not what thou art;
If friend, we greet thee, hand and heart;
If stranger, such no longer be;
If foe, our love shall conquer thee.

More than anything else, the required anonymity of the guest assures that host and guest act towards one another as human beings in an essential manner which must remain untouched and unqualified by race and blood, business and politics. Both wear the mask of strangers, for a moment avoiding any recognition which would particularize their relationship with special interest, fondness, hostility, or disdain, so that their only relationship is momentarily an essentially human one.

Or do we put aside our customary masks in this simple rite of guest and host? For everything that particularizes us and thus sculpts our own peculiar identities at the same time differentiates us one from another and, ultimately, renders us all but unrecognizable one to another. Of course, within the narrow circles in which our lives mostly trace themselves, the opposite appears to be the case. The accidents of birth and fortune, the stories that tell themselves in our lives, leave those marks which alone seem to make possible our being recognized. When we give our names and tell our stories we disclose our place or placelessness, or so it seems. And yet what is most obvious may not be what is most true.

It may be that true recognition occurs at the threshold rather than at the hearth. When guest and host meet as strangers they meet unmasked in their humanity. Each guest might be anyone— a king, a murderer in flight, a returning daughter, a god or goddess— and is this not what is most true of each of us? Mostly we sense ourselves not disclosed but disguised in our particular identities, always understatements or overstatements or both, masks, roles, sheer fiction. Ancient hosts were required to regard a guest as one who might as likely give as receive, might be as likely powerful as helpless, might be as likely a blessing as a burden. These are surely essential human assumptions due to each of us and to all



whom we encounter. They are threshold assumptions, first words and first thoughts, epithets prior to and preeminent over all other names.

In the giving and receiving of hospitality, the guest is befriended and becomes the guest-friend. Host and guest become dear to each other and, still strangers, come to care for one another. This friendship and care would appear to be of the lowest order, an order of sheer formality, an obligation not only met but given a gratuitous, cordial facade. But again we must inquire beyond appearances. So lasting is this bond between host and guest that, upon parting, it is frequently the custom to break a die in two, host and guest each keeping one half as an enduring token and proof of their relation-

ship, whose rights and obligations are life-long and hereditary. So little do they know of each other, so little have they attended to those peculiarities of identity and station which are ordinarily so predominant, that host and guest require these tokens to identify one another in years to come.

In reflecting upon the unique relationship between host and guest there is a linguistic fact whose implications lead us to the very center of this most human bond. I have in mind here the fact that with telling frequency, particularly in ancient languages, *host* and *guest* are the same word. (In ancient Greek, *xenos* means both guest and host; and in Latin, *hospes* has the same double meaning, as does, for example, *hôte,* in French, and *ospite,* in Italian.) This failure to distinguish between host and guest would seem to constitute still another offense against the obvious. For what distinction could be more obvious than that between the giver and the receiver of hospitality? On the one hand, there is the stranger, who in a strange land is without friend or kin, dependent upon those who dwell in this land for shelter, warmth, food, water, protection, companionship, and recognition. However boundless one's resources at home, one is helpless on the road in a world not yet uniformly tamed with moulded motor lodges prepared to accept properly perforated credit cards with a practiced smile. Whatever one's standing and estate may be at home, as a stranger, as a wayfarer, one is necessarily a suppliant. On the other hand there is the host who, whether prosperous or insolvent, is nevertheless walled, roofed, lit, warmed, located, and thus identified. The host is essentially secure and the wayfarer is essentially insecure. This fact alone places the former in a position of power over the latter; and it is this fact that is cancelled and transcended when host bends to guest to see to the washing of dirt-crusted feet. The sheer needy presence of the stranger binds the host in a yoke of service to the high god of hospitality. It is the host who becomes the suppliant inquiring into the stranger's needs. And the very presence of a stranger estranges the host, as we read in the apocryphal book of Ben Sira: "Let a stranger live with you, and he'll estrange your way of life." As a result, the host is a little less at home and the guest, made to be at home, is a little less strange. They meet mid-way and participate in each other's condition. Hospitality dispels the distinction of fortune which mark host and guest; for no distinctions are more fortuitous nor more easily and suddenly reversed than these. There is indeed in folklore a rich tradition of such reversals in which the host, or more often the one who refuses to be the host, is rendered homeless and the guest is revealed to be royal or divine with a royal or divine reward for the once generous host.

But we need not turn to folklore to imagine such reversals nor to discern the truth which such accounts suggest to us. For they too lead us into the obscuring of any distinction between host and guest; and it is into that obscurity that we must peer in search of an underlying clarity. What would seem to distinguish the host and the guest is that the host is at home and that the guest is not. The home represents an extension, an expansion, of that most familiar of spaces, one's own body. The home is a structural repetition of the womb, a place of intimate nurture, support, and primitive protection for those who have been hurled out into the predator world. The sting of the wind, the oppression of the day's heat, the nameless threats which the darkness contains, the many masks of death, are closed out; and a hollow place is carved in their midst, a place of unmediated familiarity and care. Because its rituals respond to the pulse of instinct and necessity, we are safe here even from the ache of futility and meaninglessness which stalks us elsewhere.

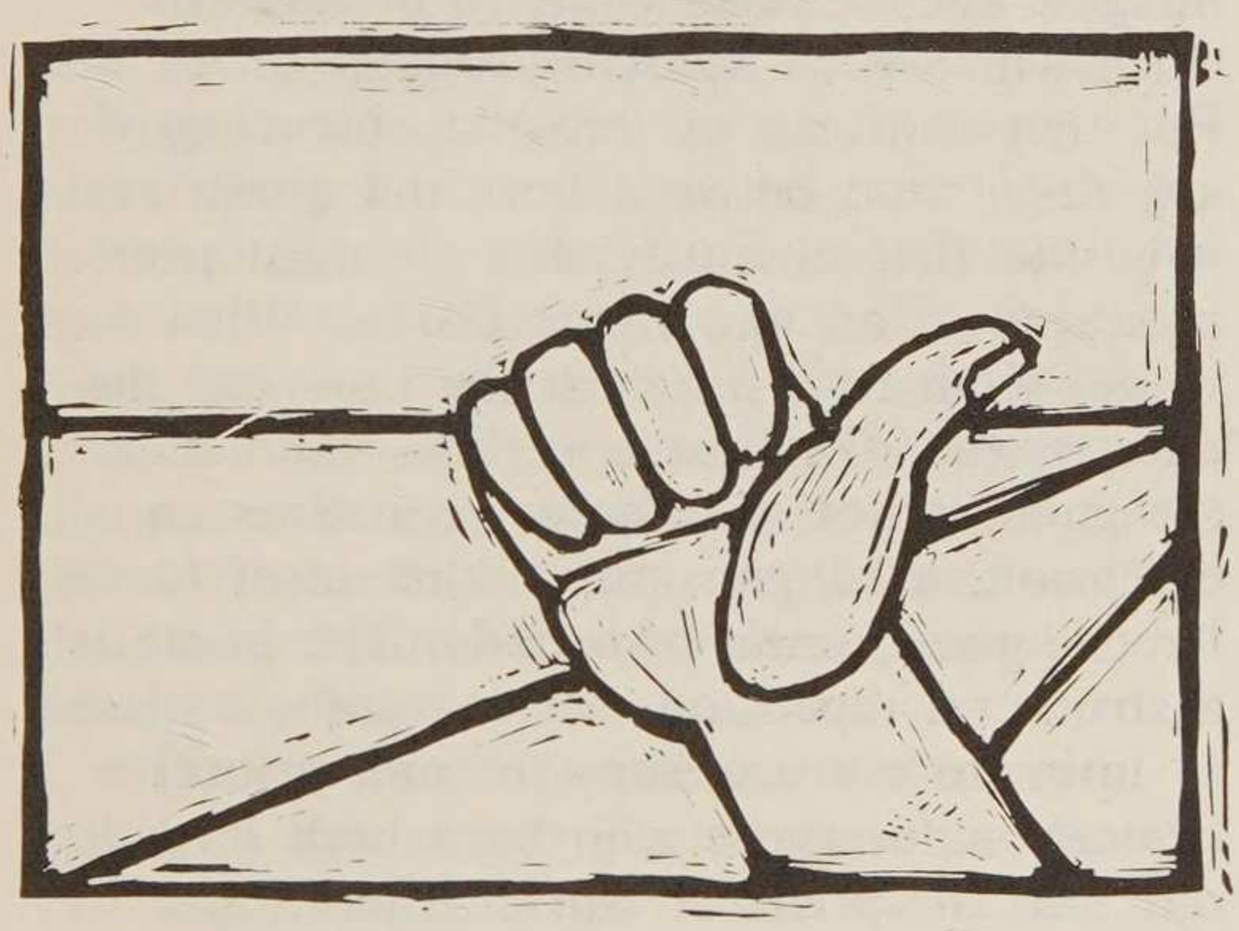
But where and when is "home"? What is a home to us if not that place which is more than any other place, secure, familiar, and supportive? And again, what places are more secure, familiar, and supportive than our own bodies and those walls, roof, and caring and cared-for persons with whom we daily and nightly dwell? If only we may steal ourselves within those most intimate confines, it would seem that we would nev-

er know the wanderer's drivenness, weariness, the trials of which the old and broken Oedipus gives us a brief account:

> *often in the wild*
> *Forest going without shoes, and hungry,*
> *Beaten by many rains, tired by the sun.*

Indeed, if we manage never to leave our home, then the force of every storm is broken and the sting of every chill is softened. Our loneliness and desperation would be tamed and manageable. We would live in concurrence with the conviction of Hecuba that:

> *that human is happiest*
> *who lives from day to day and asks no more*
> *garnering the simple goodness of a life.*



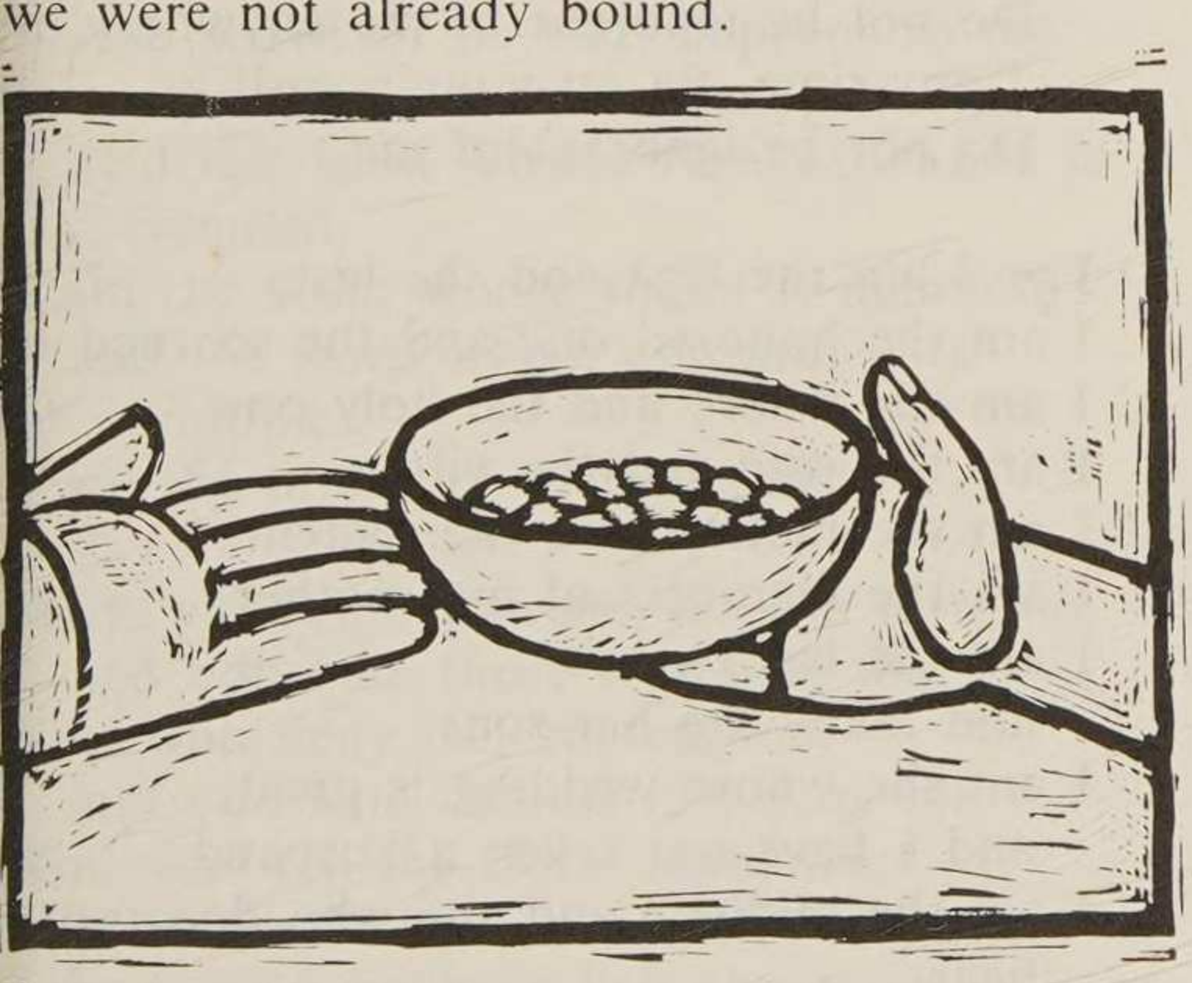
But this is an image suited for bees, not for human beings. Rooted, sheltered, spoused, warmed, fed, loved— every reasonable desire fulfilled and every reasonable fear set at rest— we nevertheless know an aching anxiety and restlessness which edges us towards an abyss of fear and desire. The scents, the fleeting images which we follow or flee are inward and infinite. Our lusts, hungers, and insecurities are insatiable. Whether we track mad dreams or whether such dreams, like furies, track us for some forgotten offense, whether we are the hounds or the hounded, we find ourselves homeless in our own home and in the midst of what is most familiar. The doors of our homes are bolted as if to keep the storm within. Unhoused and uprooted, our hearts, if not our feet, begin again a thankless journey nowhere. We join the chorus of the *Bacchae* in describing ourselves:

> *Briefly, we live. Briefly, then die.*
> *Wherefore, I say, One who hunts a glory, one who tracks some boundless, superhuman dream, may lose the harvest here and now and garner death.*
> *Such ones are mad, their counsels evil.*

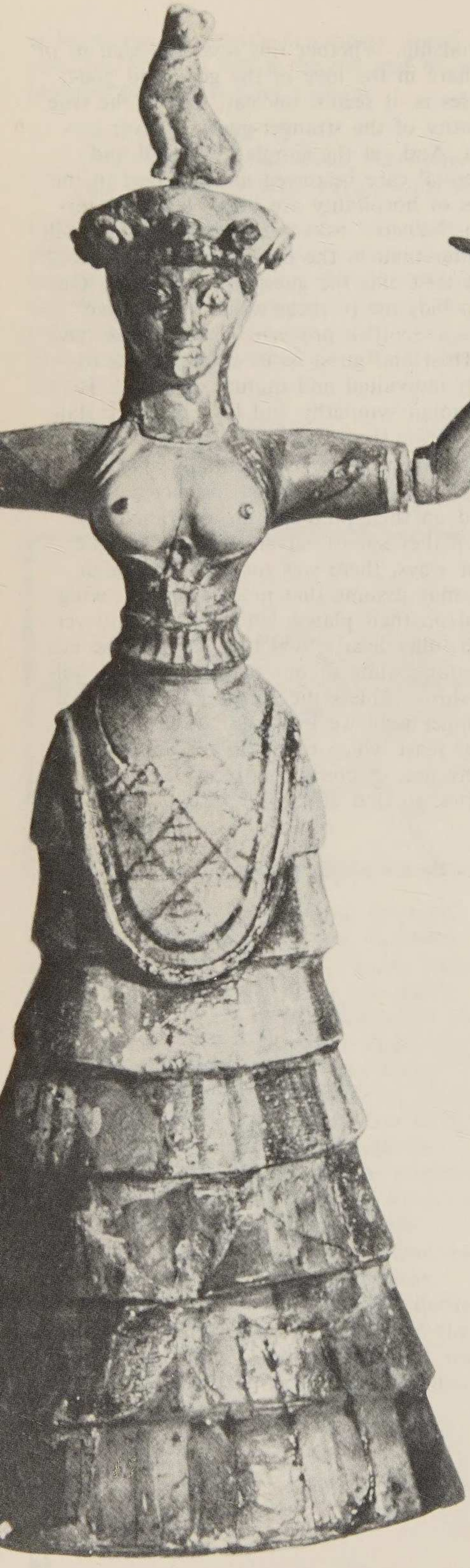
Our bodies enclose, after all, the scandal of death as well as the wonder of life. However deeply enfleshed our own death may be within us, we find it most unfamiliar. "From hour to hour we ripe and ripe," writes Shakespeare, "and from hour to hour we rot and rot." Our bodies, when we catch the smell of mortality on our breath, become less reliably familiar, secure, and supportive. What is more, our bodies begin to store and enact life's anxieties and avoidance in often unrecognizable rituals and gestures. As for our homes, their weather is as likely to be choppy as calm, chilling as warm. In fact, in this time and place when homes, like underdeveloped nations, occupy the center of political concern and revolutionary ferment, the home is as likely to be a battle zone as a place to lay down one's head or to put up one's feet. In short, we find ourselves on the road more frequently than we might wish, knocking at other strangers' doors, asking for very little and for everything. Host and guest are decidedly not life-time prerogatives or professions. Rather they are the two masks of our fate which, like the two sides of a fallen leaf, sometimes whirl around each other and at other times lie quite still and separate.

The reality of our situation seems to be that no one of us is securely host or guest. The founding and forsaking of homes, the raising and razing of walls, is a dialectic in which there is little lasting division of labor. As soon as we exclude the strangeness outside we encounter the strangeness within. Finally, the wildness which we face is never tamed and a vast indifference spreads like rust over our ever caring at all. The wonder is that, for no adequate or enduring reason, we find ourselves on occasion at home in our lives, in our world. We feel the earth and sky a mother and father to

us; we feel brotherliness and sisterliness towards whatever and whoever enters our space and our time. In such moments we are to be the host, opening ourselves to the estrangement of others and allowing them to enter our peace. For such moments pass and we find ourselves lost in a dark wood, in a storm that sweeps at once inward through more tunnels than we ever knew we contained. We find ourselves unnerved by the sheer carelessness of all that stands off against us. We cannot guess how long or why we ourselves will continue to cohere. In such moments we are to be the guest, neither too proud nor too despairing to seek out someone at home and to knock loudly enough to be heard. Most often, however, I suspect the giving and receiving of hospitality will be more a matter of the companionship of wanderers, wherein they huddle close and take their turns against the wind. One way or another we are the caves in which others find shelter and fellowship and they in us, in the rite of hospitality to which the high god binds us as if we were not already bound.



In the mutuality of host and guest we find a fossiled image, the image we have sought, of what Aristotle might have meant in saying that human being is in its very nature political. Human being is always plural, always a *we* and not simply an *I* or a *you*. Only in relation to the human other is human being realized; and that relationship is properly one of care and of good will, what the ancient Greeks call *philia* or friendship. Whether this love is a sign of or a share in the love of the gods and goddesses is, it seems, unclear, just as the true identity of the stranger-guest is never certain. And yet the simple good will and essential care bestowed and received in the rites of hospitality are both clear and certain. "Where," asks Aeschylus, "is good will greater than in the host towards the guest?" The host aids the guest on life's way. "One who bids me to meat wishes me to live," runs a Scottish proverb. And here we have it. Host and guest recite a simple yes to their individual and mutual existence. Here is human sympathy and love in its crystalline form. Here too is a recognition that our being together is essentially a feast. For ancient guests were often instructed to leave food on their plates as an assurance that when they sat to eat and rose to resume their ways, there was more than enough. We may assume that many guests, leaving food on their plates, left hungrily, and yet with fuller hearts, which is perhaps the last inevitable state of our feasting and our fellowship— unless the stranger is more of a stranger than we know and returns with a truer feast which calls for no such pretense. There are, of course, stories, marvellous stories, to that effect.



The Thunde
Perfect Mind

I was sent forth from the power,
and I have come to those who reflect
upon me,
and I have been found among those
who seek after me.
Look upon me, you who reflect upon me
and you hearers, hear me.
You who are waiting for me, take me
yourselves.
And do not banish me from your sight.
And do not make your voice hate me,
nor your hearing.
Do not be ignorant of me anywhere o
any time. Be on your guard!
Do not be ignorant of me.

For I am the first and the last.
I am the honored one and the scorned o
I am the whore and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin.
I am the mother and the daughter.
I am the members of my mother.
I am the barren one
and many are her sons.
I am she whose wedding is great,
and I have not taken a husband.
I am the midwife and she who does not
bear.
I am the solace of my labor pains.
I am the bride and the bridegroom,

The Thunder, Perfect Mind *has been adapted from a section of* The Nag Hammadi Library *which will appear early in 1978. Its publication will be the first complete English translation of the remarkable Gnostic documents that were found in the Egyptian wilderness over thirty years ago. Except for* The Gospel According to Thomas, *the texts have been virtually unknown except to a small team of scholars.*

and it is my husband who begot me.
I am the mother of my father
and the sister of my husband,
and he is my offspring.
I am the slave of him who prepared me.
I am the ruler of my offspring.
But he is the one who begot me before
the time on a birthday.
And he is my offspring in due time,
and my power is from him.
I am the staff of his power in his youth,
and he is the rod of my old age.
And whatever he wills happens to me.
I am the silence that is incomprehensible
and the idea whose remembrance is
frequent.
I am the voice whose sound is manifold
and the word whose appearance is
multiple.
I am the utterance of my name.

Why, you who hate me, do you love me,
and you hate those who love me?
You who deny me, confess me,
and you who confess me, deny me.
You who tell the truth about me,
lie about me,
and you who have lied about me, tell the
truth about me.
You who know me, be ignorant of me,
and those who have not known me, let
them know me.

For I am knowledge and ignorance.
I am shame and boldness.
I am shameless; I am ashamed.
I am strength and I am fear.
I am war and peace.
Give heed to me.
I am the one who is disgraced and the
great one.

I am the one whom they call Life,
and you have called Death.
I am the one whom they call Law,
and you have called Lawlessness.
I am the one whom you have pursued,
and I am the one whom you have seized.
I am the one whom you have scattered,
and you have gathered me together.
I am the one before whom you have been
ashamed,
and you have been shameless to me.
I am she who does not keep festival,
and I am she whose festivals are many.
I, I am godless,
and I am the one whose God is great.

And come forward to me, you who know
me
and you who know my members,
and establish the great ones among the
small first creatures.
Come forward to childhood,
and do not despise it because it is small
and it is little.

And do not turn away greatnesses in some
parts from the smallnesses,
for the smallnesses are known from the
greatnesses...

I am the union and the dissolution
I am the abiding and I am the dissolving.
I am the one below,
and they come up to me.
I am the judgment and the acquittal.
I, I am sinless,
and the root of sin derives from me.
I am lust in outward appearance,
and interior self-control exists within me.
I am the hearing which is attainable to
everyone
and the speech which cannot be grasped.
I am a mute who does not speak,
and great is my multitude of words.

Hear me in gentleness, and learn of me in
roughness.
I am she who cries out,
and I am cast forth upon the face of the
earth.
I prepare the bread and my mind within.
I am the knowledge of my name.
I am the one who cries out,
and I listen.

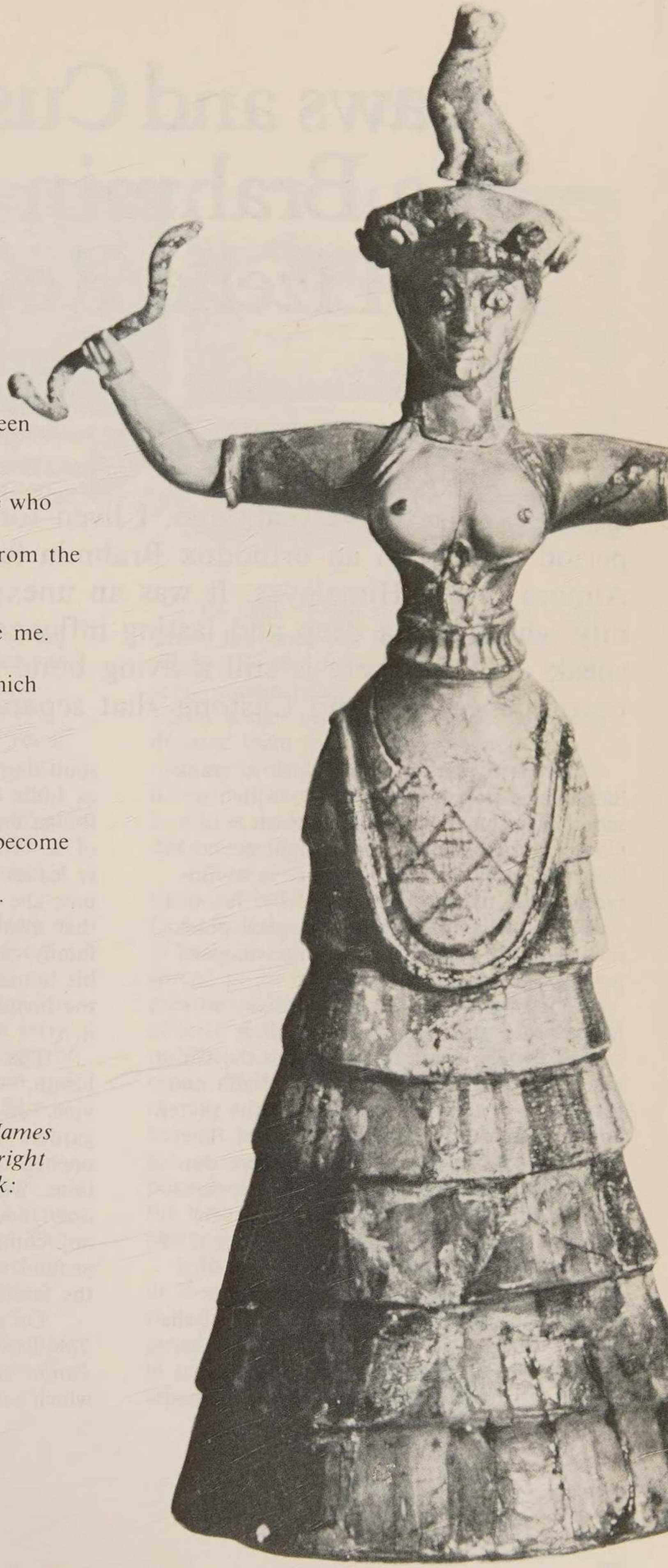
Judge them before they give judgment
against you,
because the judge and partiality exist in
you.
If you are condemned by this one, who will
acquit you?
Or if you are acquitted by him, who will
be able to detain you?
For what is inside of you is what is outside
of you,
and the one who fashions you on the
outside
is the one who shaped the inside of
you.
And what you see outside of you,
you see inside of you;
it is visible and it is your garment.

Hear me, you hearers,
and learn of my words, you who know
me.
I am the hearing that is attainable to
everything;
I am the speech that cannot be grasped.
I am the name of the sound
and the sound of the name.
I am the sign of the letter
and the designation of the division.

Look then at his words
and all the writings which have been
completed.
Give heed then, you hearers
and you also, the angels and those who
have been sent,
and you spirits who have arisen from the
dead.
For I am the one who alone exists,
and I have no one who will judge me.

For many are the pleasant forms which
exist in
numerous sins,
and incontinencies,
and disgraceful passions,
and fleeting pleasures,
which men embrace until they become
sober
and go up to their resting-place.
And they will find me there,
and they will live,
and they will not die again.

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Laws and Customs in a Brahmin Family by Lizelle Reymond

About twenty-five years ago, I lived for a considerable period of time in an orthodox Brahmin family, at Almora in the Himalayas. It was an unexpected opportunity which had a deep and lasting influence on me. I can speak of it for there is still a living bond between us beyond the Laws and Customs that separate us.

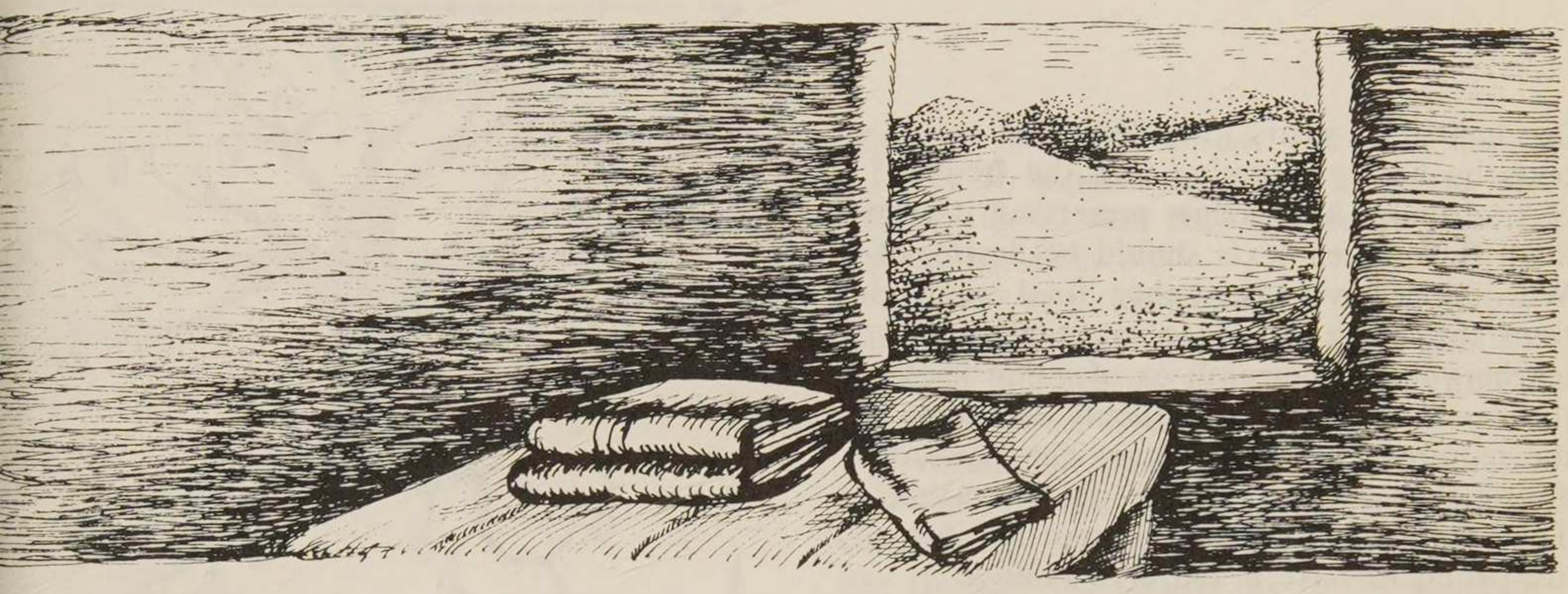
My participation in the work of translating sacred texts having to do with the series of volumes "The Great Masters of Contemporary India" had brought me to live in Almora. It is a town in the mountains whose name is mentioned by Swami Vivekananda as indicating a magical point, in the North, from which a large range of possibilities opens up.

The pilgrimages towards Kailas and Manasarova start from Almora. It is crossed by the routes down which the Chinese pilgrims of old entered into India and up which, in times of oppression, the sacred books were carried in flight to Tibet. The Brahmins of the plains went up there during the Moslem invasions and took possession of these "High Hills." The relatively isolated position of Almora, legal capital of the Northern Borderlands, has contributed to the flourishing of spiritual disciplines even far into the heart of the valleys of the whole district.

The Joshi, strict Brahmins of Almora, invited me to live with them after the astonishing "intelligence service" covering all of India had been functioning around me for an entire year without my being aware of it. "Who is this foreign woman? She never leaves her house; she never receives anyone; she is served by a Singh; she eats neither meat nor eggs?" The head of the Joshi family came to visit me with the priest of his house to inquire about me. Surprisingly, the invitation was extended and I accepted it.

The Joshi mansion is called "Ishwaribhavan," which means "Abode of the Divine." In front of the house there is a rose garden. The room that was given to me opened up on a gallery facing the mountains, with an outside staircase to the garden. It was the guest apartment, without any communication with the inner court around which lay the private apartments of the family.

On my table, three books awaited me: *The Laws of Manu, The Grammar of Panini* and *The Aphorisms of Patanjali,* which set forth the Laws and Customs of



all Brahmins of high rank.

A young boy of fourteen, stammering with shyness, came to greet me in the name of his father and announced that Narain, the Brahmin at the service of the family, would bring me all my meals to my room. Next morning, Pandit Joshi came to visit me to make sure I was comfortable, and left. My isolation was beginning. By inviting me, Pandit Joshi was satisfying his idea of being liberal; by accepting, I had chosen a difficult, unknown situation.

In the garden, I saw two little boys of eight and ten playing with a ball and another little boy who, without showing any displeasure, did nothing but pick it up for them. Obviously he was the son of a servant. From the other side, I was hearing the calls of women, the sounds of a conch and of the rhythmic bells accompanying Sanskrit recitations. The house was living, vibrating.

The practical teaching which I supposed was given in the family came to me, in the first place, through an uncle of Pandit Joshi. He offered to explain to me the Laws of Manu in their higher, absolute meaning down to the details of everyday life and the necessity of knowing everything forbidden so that the thought does not stray.

He said: "From the time of the Vedas, Manu has once and for all determined the conduct of the human being. For if we observe human relationships, we see that Manu is that very Cosmic Intelligence who dictated them for all family events: birth, marriage and death. We can invent disobedience but as everything is put down in the Laws, we necessarily come back to them on discovering the essence of our life."

There is a Brahmin pride that, defying time and history, obeys only the "Law and Order" of the Spirit. And what has become of this Tradition since Western progress has spread in all its forms over India? The great traditional families are not particularly affected since this situation of apparent rupture has occurred before, in fact several times, during certain periods of invasions or of religious intolerance. The living Tradition has not been touched. During times of danger, it contracts and hides itself, gets temporarily scattered— and reappears, when the time comes, in all its strength and purity.

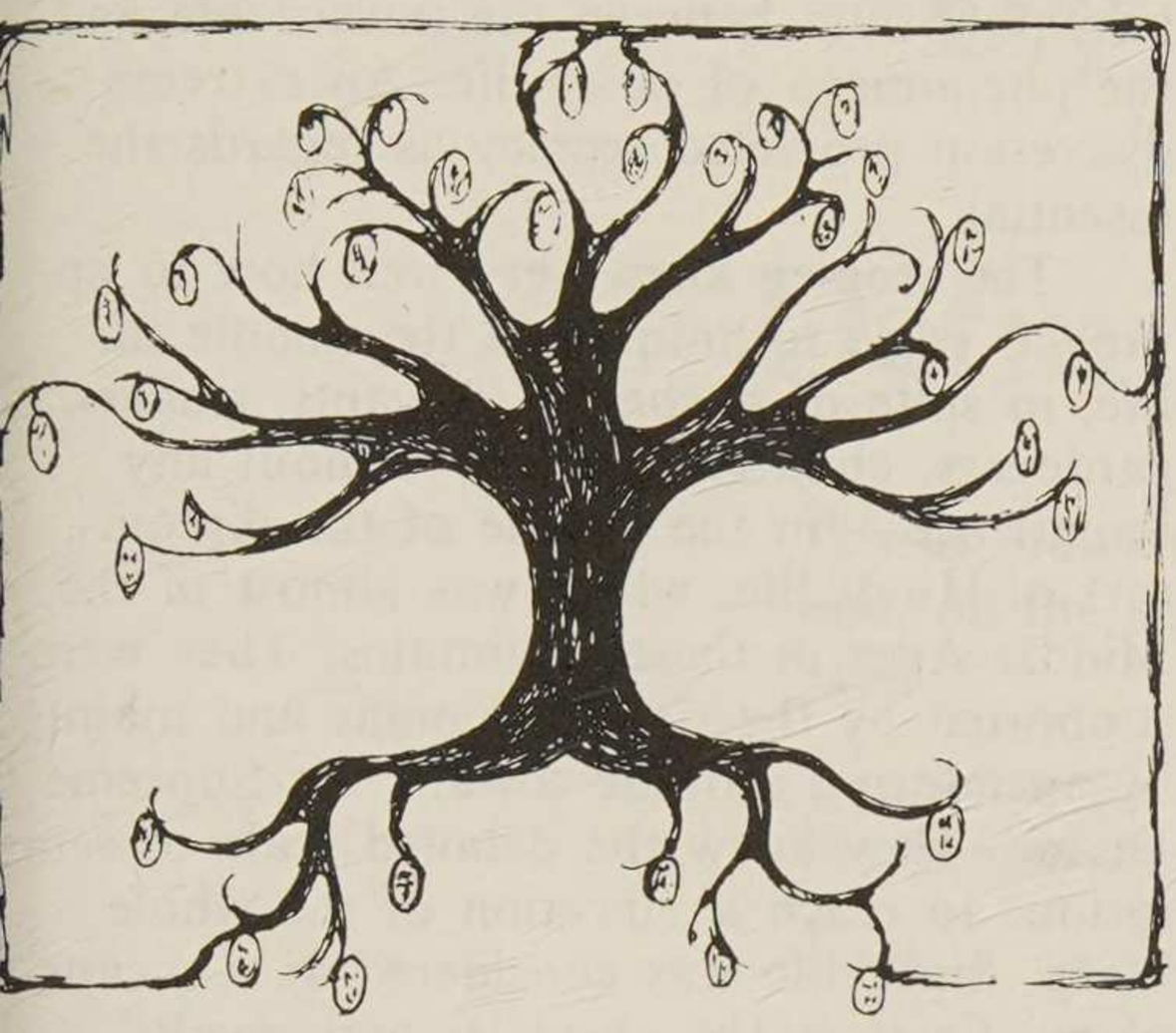
There still remains, as in the past two or three thousand years, the custom of choosing certain boys of brilliant intelligence, and of sending them to be educated in a Gurukul, a monastic school. There, separated from any contact with their fami-

lies for twelve years, they learn the sacred texts by heart, becoming thus the "reserve" of traditional knowledge, preserving it even if all the written texts should be destroyed. When they have passed their final examinations they have the choice of staying as teachers in the Gurukul or of going back to the world to bring up a family according to the required Order of things. The Laws ordering such a discipline are not discussed. They are respected. All Brahmin families are proud to have a son or a relative among the pandits or pupils of a Gurukul.

On the whole men and women follow the Laws of Manu in an apparently passive way, but they are also very conscious of the advantages inherent in them. Today, in modern life, their customs are, by experience, still more powerful than laws dictated by the government and the Constitution of India, which abolish the castes. They weave an invisible net that protects all the members of any Brahmin family belonging to the same gotra, i.e., having the same family origin, going back to the first rishis of the Vedas.

The genealogical tree of the Joshi family covered the wall of a large hall. A very fine writing, framed within medallions, described every father, every son and their male descendents, giving a short chronological account of their activities. Each sannyasin, who had voluntarily dedicated his life to God and to asceticism, was written up in red ink. Women were not mentioned. This genealogical tree is known by the family priests, who consult it for arranging a marriage; but more often it is the grandmother who chooses the bride and discusses the propitious time for the marriage and the dowry. Last year, in 1976, the Joshi's fourth son was married in accordance with Tradition, thus determining that his dharma, i.e., his destiny, remains linked to that of the family. It is in fact an insurance on all levels. Certain men bear heavy loads on their shoulders for, should a young wife become a widow she would be sheltered and her children brought up by their uncles as if they were their own sons. It sometimes happens that a son refuses to meet his share of obligations. He is nevertheless tolerated in the family, without being subject to any reproach. In this case the grandmother will speak of the unity of the group to avoid any dissension, because Manu, the Legislator of the Cosmic Laws, has set up the family in divine time and space.

I was very moved by the education of little boys. Every morning I saw their master as he arrived and soon after I heard a rhythm, given by a bell and a wooden rule, for the scanning of verses. It lasted a long time. On several occasions Pandit Joshi brought one of his younger children or a visiting cousin to see me, so that I could share their "knowledge." First the child would greet me by touching both my feet, then standing, he would recite in a loud, somewhat strained voice one of the sections of the eight chapters of Panini's *Grammar*. What did he understand of what he was saying? Apparently nothing. I gave a pres-



ent to the child to congratulate him and remained with my question.

A long conversation with Pandit Joshi would follow. Indeed Panini, the rishi par excellence, full of wisdom and knowledge, had impressed on classical Sanskrit his own method of thinking, his logic, structure and rules. He gave an appropriate name to everything known— so much so that nowadays the natural living impulse has no place to express itself! I defended the child. The father would listen to me until I confusedly felt my ignorance in front of Tradition.

I am indebted to Pandit Joshi for having taught me, every morning, the construction of Sanskrit words through the play of roots, using a parallel to logical thinking as stylised by Panini, who referred to the "divine thousand years" when sounds, letters and words created the world. In Panini, life blooms: the far horizons, the places where things happened, social life; everything which has a name and a shape, from the good Northern wine to the white Southern rice, sports, games, arts, music and dance. Pandit Joshi said: "Five centuries before our time are in our hands today, as is every word with all its possible derivations. Facing no matter what difficulty in life, we know, thanks to Panini, what it is appropriate to think and to do. The child lives in a forest of impressions where he learns unconsciously all that he will need to know consciously later on."

I only met the women of the family after having passed a serious examination, and was then again to be observed and discussed by these women.

When I first arrived I had sent a gift to Pandit Joshi's mother, who had replied with sweets "made by her own hands." One day though, she invited me to get acquainted. This happened ceremonially in the Reception Hall. She greeted me with a smile. A widow, dressed in white, with the bunch of all the keys of the house attached to her sari, she pointed out my place to me— a cushion on the floor in front of her. She didn't speak English well and I spoke a poor Hindi, but we understood each other well. She wanted to know what spiritual discipline I was following. Did I have a guru to guide me and follow my progress, in order to prepare within me the place of the living experience which is the meeting with God? Nothing else for her was important. I noticed that several women had slipped in surreptitiously and sat down at the back of the Hall. They were watching my every movement.

From that day on, although I had never been inside the family apartments, Pandit Joshi's wife came to see me with her close relatives and later with young girls, who were friends; they all wanted to ask me questions. Several times I was invited to their parties, where only women could come and which were extremely elegant with music, dances, poetry and more particularly with daring pantomimes that revealed the elder's oddities— an unexpected letting go!

Between women we could speak of weddings, studies, careers, as so many facts existing on another planet. I understood the

reason— perhaps it was unconscious— for my having been invited to Ishwaribhavan. Amidst the rigid customs having to do with caste, I was a bridge between two ways of thinking, while I remained deeply respectful of the Brahmin Laws and Customs. Pandit Joshi trusted me.

He had told me: "Do not teach anything to anybody. Do not speak of your life, or of your journeys. Actually nobody would believe you. Incidences are mere anecdote, do not create them. Your attitude alone will determine who you are. It is linked with the freely accepted sacrifice which establishes a constant relationship between oneself and the Law that is lived."

Every day he stressed the fact that in the family cosmology where everything was organized around him— he belonged to the Chandra dynasty (moon)— everyone played his role in a voluntarily impersonal way. This made possible a neutral space where spiritual discipline entered in an active way. If detailed rules of good behavior created restrictions, on the other hand they permitted an individualized research; one could withdraw for a time with everybody's approval. Nothing was left to chance.

One spoke of death, for instance, in as simple a way as of a birth— natural events in life where everything is transitory. Of a young widow of twenty, mad with grief, Pandit Joshi said to me: "In a few years from now, her pain will have become the nourishment of her serenity. It is she herself who will discover the expansion of her inner being. One can only support her active perseverance."

I found myself related to a certain way of living that led me to a constant awareness of my movements: never go out alone, never buy anything, not even stamps or sweets. No alms are to be given. Always be available to receive anybody. And there were more refined rules such as: never address somebody with a question, never speak except when questioned, stifle reactions and worries heavy in one's heart.

It was Patanjali's Yoga that gave the key to the observation of one's character. A pandit regularly came to comment upon the Aphorisms of Patanjali and tell symbolic tales to the younger ones in the family. Beside this general teaching everyone had his personal discipline, his way of meditating, often very profoundly, related to one or another of the particular Aphorisms that determine a precise technique for achieving an equilibrium between the inward life and the phenomena of outer life. An extreme discretion protected secrecy as regards the essential.

The women knew very well how to approach yogic techniques in the middle of life, in spite of husbands, servants, traders, gardeners, children, visitors, without any impatience— in the middle of the discomfort of Hindu life, which was almost of the Middle Ages in these mountains. They were supported by the rites and pujas and mainly by an adoring attitude toward the Supreme Divine. They knew the detailed scale of sensations to reach a vibration of the whole being. Since life was considered as a means of purification, the obstacles and revolts— and there were some— became finally gradually diminished.

On certain days, there took place a veritable jousting around Pandit Joshi— an assemblage of Brahmin judges and lawyers, all experts on exegesis. Their way of speaking was deeply influenced by an atheist Samkhya, and they discussed for hours such subjects as dualism, the matter-Spirit dissociation, or the struggle that each being must sustain to liberate himself by his own means. They finally reached a state of harmony with the theist Yoga thanks to the techniques of concentration and meditation coordinated by Patanjali.

Every three years I meet again the elder son of Pandit Joshi, who has become the head of the great family of Almora since his father's death. He is an active man who travels a lot. He is the father of three daughters, and one day they will have a university education instead of a dowry and gold jewelry. Such is the only decision influenced by modern life that I have discovered.

At Ishwaribhavan, I still have my guest room facing the outside, while Tradition is hidden inside, within the hearth of the home.

Essentials by Jean Toomer

Definitions and Aphorisms

A true individual belongs, on the one hand, to no less than himself; and, on the other, to no less than mankind and the entire human race.

I am of no particular race, I am of the human race, a man at large in the human world, preparing a new race.

I am of no specific region, I am of earth.

I am of no particular class, I am of the human class, preparing a new class.

I am neither male nor female nor in-between. I am of sex, with male differentiations.

I am of no special field, I am of the field of being.

The only man who can leave the earth to other men is he who has won himself.

Human relationships are matters of skill and art. We tend to treat them as matters of convention, or worse.

Whatever stands between you and that person stands between you and yourself.

Because of unbecoming human relationships the world stinks like an outhouse.

Far from loving all that breathes we do not love even those we do love.

Instead of wishing to be with people, to work and grow with them, we wish to use them. This is one reason why we hate each other.

We who have enough knowledge to separate the atom may fail to separate men from their antagonisms.

Life moves, things happen, when people care.

When people do not care, nothing can happen. There can be only events of inertia.

Caring alone produces events of force.



The Coat

Relationship Between Shaikh and Murid

In Fatih, a section of Istanbul, there lived a Halveti shaikh whose wife was an initiate of the Kadiri Order of dervishes. They had a young daughter who was dying of tuberculosis. The sickness was so bad this one day that the wife said to her husband, "Do something, go for a doctor." Just as the man left the apartment, the daughter died. Sobbing, the woman went to the window to call her husband back. She pushed her fingers deep into the wood frame and cried, "Oh, Abdul Qadir Gilani, please give me back my daughter." As she turned toward her daughter, the girl was moving her

by Shems Friedlander



arms. She called her husband again. He entered
he room as the girl asked what had happened. Her
nother answered, "You died, but now you are
alive." The girl said, "A black bird came and took
me high into the sky. As we were flying, another
bird, a white one, came and told the black bird
hat it was to let me go. The black bird said that it
had instructions to take me. 'I have instructions
from a higher source that she is to be released,'
said the white bird. It was at that moment that I
opened my eyes and saw you."

There is a relationship not easily explainable to Western man whose conditioning, environment and education have all focused on how to make a living, not on how to live. Many are satisfied to pursue the goals of the world. Some, who have felt the emptiness, the futility and the anxiety of this struggle have turned to a path of the heart. Man has been trained to rely on his intellect to solve problems of family and livelihood. Sufism says that all problems are solved by the heart.

Adam was the first man, and the first prophet. He was chosen by God. In Arabic the name Adam is made from the letters *alif, dal* and *mim* which represent man standing, bowing and prostrating. When man prostrates to his God it is the only time that his heart is above his head. Within the name of the first man, God has left a secret of how to live.

The shaikh is the guide on the Path of Love. He is an exemplary being who lives according to the Qur'an and the Hadith, what the Prophet

Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, did or approved. He does not say one thing and do another. He leads to God according to the openness of the murid (follower). The shaikh can be very close to God. If you take a glass of water from the sea, what is in the glass is not the sea, yet it is the sea. This is how the shaikh is to God. The shaikh has the medicine which can cure the doubt and hesitation of the murid. He is generous with his secret and is concerned more for his murid than he is for himself. He knows when to remove the spiritual cataracts which prevent his murid from reaching the Highest Station.

> *Associate with such a person whose sight wakes up the remembrance of God in you, and who does not instruct by words but his example makes you perfect in your spiritual practice.*
>
> —Advice from an unknown dervish

It is a blessing of Allah to find such a shaikh. Although the submission to God is so difficult you can cry tears of blood, it is a submission of the slave who, once he has fondness for his master, introduces a joy to service. It is the changing of an attitude into aptitude. Ultimately he becomes one with his master.

The great Sufi poet Hafiz wrote:

> *He who knows not and knows not that he knows not is a fool, shun him.*
> *He who knows not and knows that he knows not is a child, teach him.*
> *He who knows and knows not that he knows is asleep, wake him.*
> *He who knows and knows that he knows is wise, follow him, follow him.*

One who is asleep to what he knows can recognize that another knows, but cannot know how much he knows. This is the beginning of the relationship of the shaikh and the murid who is now the slave with doubt and hesitation.

The shaikh teaches through example and transmission. Sufism is an initiatic process whose chain is a lineage which goes back to Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

The learning process is never solely individual, for Sufism is living together and helping others. The greeting to one's circle of brothers is *"selaam aleichum,"* which means "peace be upon you." For the dervish it also means peace be upon everyone, even those not present. One stands with his right hand placed on his heart affirming that he is prepared to do anything to help his fellow dervish if he is in need or in trouble. His fingers represent the five pillars of Islam

nd indicate to those present that no harm can come to them from him.

When the *adhan* repeats the call to prayer, during the part which says, "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," many will press the thumb and forefingers of both hands together, kiss them, then gently wipe them across their eyes indicating that their love for the Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is dearer than their own eyesight.

When one is prepared to submit in this manner there is no question of obedience to the shaikh. Hesitation exists when there is doubt and fear, when in our minds we are still first and God is second.

The danger of spiritual self-deception can be avoided by proximity to a shaikh. This is a place that the murid must acknowledge is good for him. He may enter with caution, but this the shaikh will eradicate through the presence of his being. The dervish is like a honeybee and the shaikh is the flower. Not all bees are honeybees. A flower may be good for one honeybee and not another. The bee must know what is sweet to him. The murid is "like a corpse in the hands of the washer of the dead." The shaikh will guide the murid along the road of *Qalb* (the heart) and through *dhikrullah* (repetition of the name of Allah), the heart will be satisfied.

Sari as-Saqati, the shaikh of al-Junaid said, "The slave may reach a point wherein if his face were struck with a sword he would not notice it." This is not a statement one can easily assent to; for it is the process of melting of an icicle of knowledge in one's heart which may allow one to understand as-Saqati's words.

Once the "doctor" has removed the spiritual cataracts, the murid begins to see with his inner eyes beyond the surface of things.

During the latter part of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey there lived two brothers who were the nephews of a wealthy man of the court. When he died he left all his money to be divided between his nephews. One of the young men was a murid of a great shaikh so he went to his shaikh to ask if it would be right to accept such a large sum. "If you want all the things that this world can offer, you should accept the money. If you want all the things that the other world has to offer, then do not accept the inheritance."

The young man replied, "I do not want the things of this world or of the next. What I desire is to always have this wonderful feeling in my heart when I am with you." "Then you must take the money and give every bit of it away to those who are in need," said the shaikh.

The murid accepted his inheritance and began to give it to those people

who were in need of food, clothing and shelter. It was a vast sum which took days to distribute. He gave the Imam of the mosque enough money to repair the building of prayer which was very old and needed much work. When all of the money was given to the poor the murid began to walk to the tekke *of his shaikh. The Imam ran up to him holding a new coat. He thanked the young man for his generosity and insisted that he accept this new coat to replace the threadbare one he was wearing. Not thinking it proper to refuse, the murid accepted the coat. When he arrived at the* tekke, *the shaikh asked if all the money had been distributed. "Every cent," answered the murid. "Then how did you obtain such a new coat?" asked the shaikh. The murid told the story of the Imam. "If you like this coat so much I will make you earn it," said the shaikh.*

He sent for twenty flat-breads all covered with ground meat, threw the coat in the street with the breads on top of it and called all the neighborhood dogs to come and have a feast. The hungry dogs tore the coat in many places as they pushed and scrambled about the cloth. When they were finished the coat was wet with food stains and threadbare. "Now you wear this coat always," said the shaikh and motioned his murid to follow him. They walked down the streets of the town and followed a path to a Bektashi tekke *where the shaikh wanted to visit a friend. The courtyard was lined with trees. The shaikh got a chair and placed it beneath a high branch. He told his murid to climb on the chair and take off his hat. When he did so his long black hair fell to his shoulders in beautiful curls. The shaikh tied his hair to the branch, removed the chair and left his murid hanging as he went to visit the Bektashi shaikh. The Bektashi shaikh was so upset on seeing the murid that it interfered with the visit. Several times he interrupted the conversation and asked his friend to release the murid. "If you want him so much, I will bring him here," the shaikh replied, and called his murid. Hearing the call from outside, the murid ripped himself free and leaving part of his scalp and all of his hair still hanging, went to his shaikh. The shaikh rubbed his hands over the head of the murid and healed the wound. The Bektashi shaikh was astonished at this example of submission and asked if he could have some of the hair to hang on the wall of his* tekke *so his murids could be reminded what it is to be a dervish.*

The shaikh then went to visit another friend. When they came to the door of this tekke *he took a hammer and drove a nail through the earlobe of the murid and into the door. This*

riend also had a difficult time with onversation and finally asked for the elease of the murid. The shaikh called is name, and the murid ripped him- elf from the nail leaving part of his ar on the door and went to his haikh who rubbed the side of his ead and healed the wound.

When they returned to their own ekke *the shaikh told his murid that e would always wear this coat. "You nake certain you wear it in this life, nd I will make certain you wear it fter you are dead." When the murid lied the shaikh placed the coat over he sarcophagus. It is said that the nurid became a great shaikh in his wn right. The coat can still be seen s a reminder that "the submission to God is so difficult, you can cry tears of lood."*

The example of the shaikh can be oth powerful and subtle. A transmis- ion can be so subtle that even the nurid is unaware of what is happen- ng. The shaikh places an icicle of nowledge in the heart of the murid. lowly the warmth of the heart melts he icicle and the murid begins to act n life in a manner that is different rom the one he knows. He has a new nowledge and by using it he makes it is understanding. He may be sepa- ated geographically from his shaikh ut he is aware that his shaikh is lways in his heart.

Astaghfiru'llah

Following page:

Interior of a small mosque in Istanbul showing the *mihrab* (prayer niche), and the *minbar* (right), where the Imam stands when delivering a discourse.





otographs taken from *Submission— Sayings of the Prophet hammad,* **Harper & Row, 1977.**

Indra's Net

Reflections on Relationships



On the rough wet grass of the back ya
my father and mother have spread quilts. We a
lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, m
aunt, and I too am lying there. First we were si
ting up, then one of us lay down, and then we a
lay down, on our stomachs, or on our sides, o
on our backs, and they have kept on talkin
They are not talking much, and the talk is quie
of nothing in particular, of nothing at all
particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wi
and alive, they seem each like a smile of gre
sweetness, and they seem very near. All m
people are larger bodies than mine, quiet, wi
voices gentle and meaningless like the voices
sleeping birds. One is an artist, he is living
home. One is a musician, she is living at hom
One is my mother who is good to me. One is m
father who is good to me. By some chance, he
they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever te
the sorrow of being on this earth, lying,
quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, amon
the sounds of the night. May God bless m
people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my goo
father, oh, remember them kindly in their time
trouble; and in the hour of their taking awa

After a little I am taken in and put to be
Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and tho
receive me, who quietly treat me, as one famili
and well-beloved in that home: but will not, o
will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever te
me who I am.

James Ag
A Death in the Famil

A man of principle is reverent in everything and as much as in anything else reverences his own self. That self of his is a branch of the tree of his parents. How could he not reverence it? To be unable to reverence oneself is an injury to one's parents, and that is an injury to one's very root. Let the root be injured and the branches along with it will die.

These three facts are a symbol of life in the community. "Self" includes other selves, "son" includes other men's sons, "wife" includes other men's wives. Let a man of principle put these three things into practice, and he will reach out to the whole of the Great Society. They constitute the Way of a great king, and it is along this line that states and families will become docile.

Li Chi, Ai Kung Wen

IMPULSE

Everything gets results— you pull
A mouse's tail, and start a comet.
A pebble, stepped on, may rouse up
An avalanche, and you beneath it.

My stone in water
Casts waves on Asia.
Ashes from my hearth-fire
Drift down on Greece.

Strung like odd beads upon a string,
Sing one of us and all the others ring.
Therefore beware of this small tool, your
hand—
is a lethal thing.

Frances Minturn Howard[2]

At night when Gilgamesh approached
The market square to go into the Family
House
Where the bride was to be chosen, Enkidu
stood
Blocking his way. Gilgamesh looked at the
stranger
And listened to his people's shouts of praise
For someone other than himself
And lunged at Enkidu.
They fell like wolves
At each other's throats,
Like bulls bellowing,
And horses gasping for breath
That have run all day
Desperate for rest and water,
Crushing the gate they fell against.
The dry dust billowed in the marketplace
And people shrieked. The dogs raced
In and out between their legs.
A child screamed at their feet
That danced the dance of life
Which hovers close to death.
And quiet suddenly fell on them
When Gilgamesh stood still
Exhausted. He turned to Enkidu who leaned
Against his shoulder and looked into his eyes
And saw himself in the other, just as Enkidu
saw
Himself in Gilgamesh.
In the silence of the people they began to laugh
And clutched each other in their breathless
exaltation.

Gilgamesh[3]

Whosoever saves a single life is as if he had saved the whole world;
whosoever destroys a single life is as if he had destroyed the whole world.

—Talmud

A certain man came and knocked at a friend's door: his friend asked him, "Who art thou, O trusty one?"

He answered, "I." The friend said, "Begone, 'tis not the time: at a table like this there is no place for the raw."

Save the fire of absence and separation, what will cook the raw one? Who will deliver him from hypocrisy?

The wretched man went away, and for a year in travel and in separation from his friend he was burned with sparks of fire.

That burned one was cooked: then he returned and again paced to and fro beside the house of his comrade.

He knocked at the door with a hundred fears and respects, lest any disrespectful word might escape from his lips.

His friend called to him, "Who is at the door?" He answered, "'Tis thou art at the door, O charmer of hearts."

"Now," said the friend, "since thou art I, come in, O myself: there is not room in the house for two I's.

The double end of thread is not for the needle: inasmuch as thou art single, come into this needle."

'Tis the thread that is connected with the needle: the eye of the needle is not suitable for the camel.

Jalal al'din Rumi

Our friendship, all friendship, consists of this: I have understood, acquired, realized something only if you also have understood, acquired, realized it. For the moment our friendship consists in knowing and remembering that we are incapable of friendship. Friendship, complete union in search, exists between us only in flashes which we do not know how to produce. In these flashes, there is no difference between what is good for you and what is good for me. The rest of the time we live together only on the memory of these flashes. And to prepare for future flashes, the first condition is to know that it is only a memory. A friendship has to be remade, continually, and if we imagine that it already exists in a permanent and stable way we shall make no effort to build it. In order to build it, we have to establish mutual relations as though this friendship *did* exist, as though we really had forged something lasting between us. This presupposes that each effort must be twofold for each of us: I make it for me and for you.

Our first task in order to make the friendship real is to break with everything that is ordinarily called friendship: confederacy in lying, familiarity (complicity in falling) convenience, connivance in going to sleep, one of us shifting our responsibility onto the other and so forth.

In front of every human being, I should support him, understand him, be free of him and respect his freedom, and remember wha we have in common; yes, in front of *all* other But I know I am not capable. Let me at leas try to be like that in front of you, because yo are my friend, because you prepared the wa for me and made the task easier for me. So i your presence at any rate I should not allo myself any weakness; all our meetings shoul be sacred moments.

You exist for me— I *touch* your uniqu existence— only in moments when I am awar of my own nothingness. The rest of the tim you are a "thing" in my subjective world. Yo are a "person" when I feel myself nothing. A that moment, I can understand you, but I ca have no right to judge you. I can at most judg your opinions, your outer actions, produc tions, etc., *in relation to you* and to our com mon aim. But I cannot judge *you,* the perso Our common aim should more truly be calle our common *wish* (hardly more than the wis for that wish), since the true wish for som thing "better," permanent and immovable, w do not have.

And so our friendship cannot be fulfille "in this world," in this world alone. It would b empty without the certainty which we share a higher world to which our friendship wou wish to belong, in order to serve.

René Dauma

Everyone says that my way of life is the way of a simpleton.
Being largely the way of a simpleton is what makes it worthwhile.
If it were not the way of a simpleton
It would long ago have been worthless;
These possessions of a simpleton being the three I chose
And cherish:
To care,
To be fair,
To be humble.
When a man cares he is unafraid,
When he is fair, he leaves enough for others,
When he is humble he can grow;
Whereas if, like men of today, be he bold without caring,
Self-indulgent without sharing,
Self-important without shame,
He is dead.
The invincible shield
Of caring
Is a weapon from the sky
Against being dead.

Lao T'zu[5]

Love one another, Fathers... Love God's people. Because we have come here and shut ourselves within these walls, we are no holier than those that are outside, but on the contrary, from the very fact of coming here, each of us has confessed to himself that he is worse than the others, than all men on earth... And the longer the monk lives in his seclusion, the more keenly he must recognize that. Else he would have had no reason to come here. When he realizes that he is not only worse than others but that he is responsible to all men for all and everything, for all human sins, national and individual, only then the aim of our seclusion is attained. For know, dear ones, that every one of us is undoubtedly responsible for all men and everything on earth, not merely through the general sinfulness of creation, but each one personally for all mankind and for each individual man. This knowledge is the crown of life for the monk and for every man. For monks are not a special sort of man but only what all men ought to be. Only through that knowledge our heart grows soft with infinite, universal, inexhaustible love. Then every one of you will have the power to win over the whole world by love and to wash away the sins of the world with your tears...

Dostoyevsky in The Brothers Karamazov[6]



As God put desire in man and woman
to the end that the world should be
preserved by their union,
So hath He implanted in every part of
existence the desire for another part.
Day and Night are enemies outwardly;
yet both serve one purpose,
Each in love with the other for the sake
of perfecting their mutual work,
Without Night, the nature of Man would
receive no income, so there would
be nothing for Day to spend.

Jalal al'din Rumi

since feeling is first
who pays any attention
to the syntax of things
will never wholly kiss you;

wholly to be a fool
while spring is in the world

my blood approves,
and kisses are a better fate
than wisdom
lady i swear by all flowers. don't
cry
— the best gesture of my brain
is less than
your eyelids flutter which says

we are for each other: then
laugh, leaning back in my arms
for life's not a paragraph

and death i think is no
parenthesis.

e.e. cummings[7]

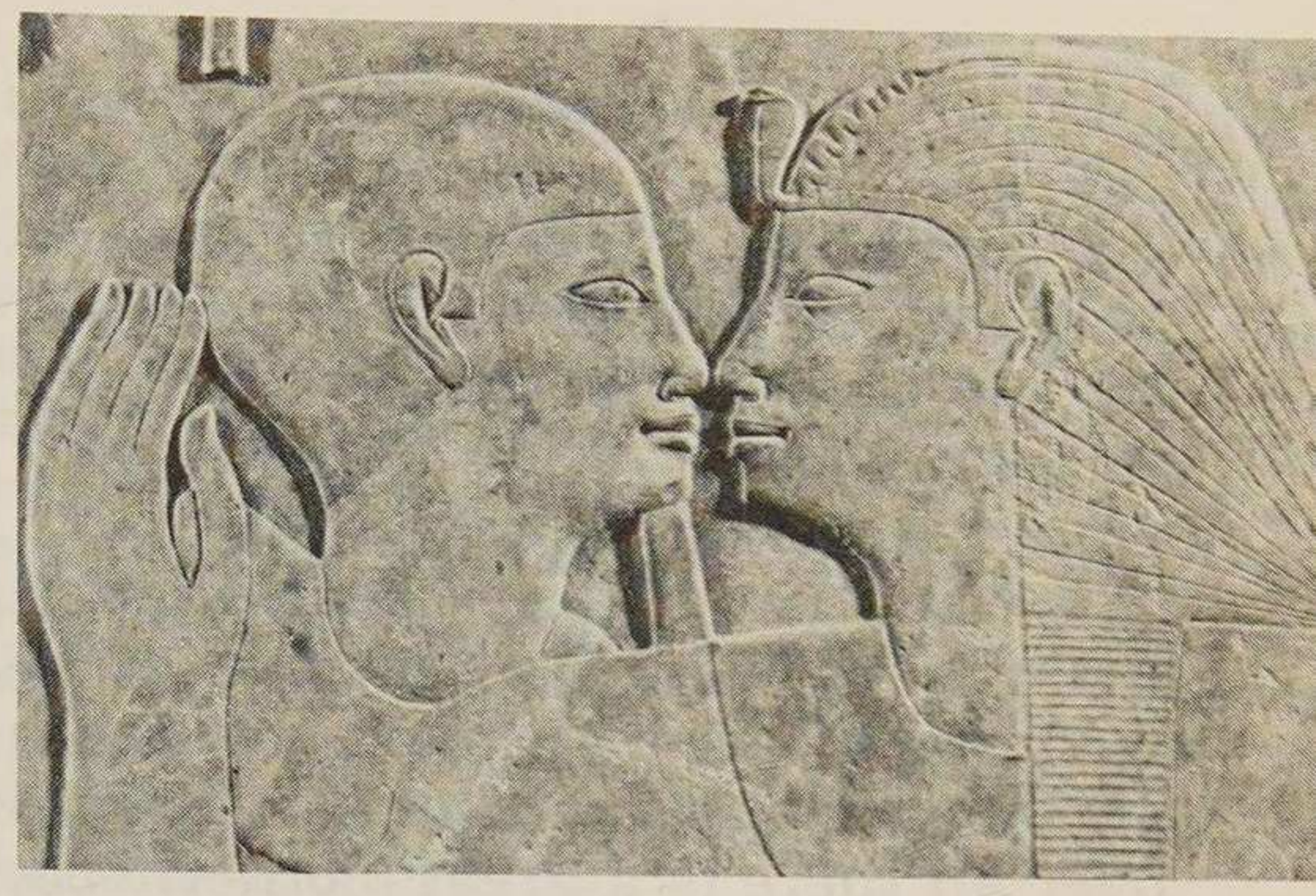


The same words [e.g., a man says to his wife, "I love you"] can be commonplace or extra-ordinary according to the manner in which they are spoken. And this manner depends on the depth of the region in a man's being from which they proceed, without the will being able to do anything. And by a marvelous agreement they reach the same region in him who hears them. Thus the hearer can discern, if he has any power of discernment, what is the value of words.

Simone Weil[8]

But young people err so often and so rievously in this: that they fling themselves at ach other, when love takes possession of nem, scatter themselves, just as they are, in all neir untidiness, disorder, confusion... thus ach loses himself for the sake of the other and oses the other and many others that wanted ill to come. And loses the expanses and the ossibilities, exchanges the approach and flight f gentle, divining things for an unfruitful per-lexity out of which nothing can come save a ttle disgust, disillusionment, and poverty...

Rainer Maria Rilke in Letters to a Young Poet[9]



In the same manner as lovers gradually advance from that beauty which is apparent in sensible forms, to that which is divine; so the ancient priests, when they considered that there is a certain alliance and sympathy in natural things to each other, and of things manifest to occult powers, and discovered that all things subsist in all, they fabricated a sacred science from this mutual similarity. Thus they recognized things supreme in such as are subordinate, and the subordinate in the supreme.

Proclus

Jesus saw children who were being suckled.
He said to his disciples: These children who are being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom.
They said to Him: Shall we then, being children enter the kingdom?
Jesus said to them: When you make the two one, and when you make the inner as the outer and the outer as the inner and the above as the below, and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will not be male and the female (not) be female, when you make eyes in the place of an eye, and a hand in the place of a hand, and a foot in the place of a foot, (and) an image in the place of an image then shall you enter [the Kingdom].

The Gospel According to Thomas

Do not be bewildered by the surfaces; in the depths all becomes law. And those who live the secret of sex wrong and badly (and they are very many), lose it only for themselves and still hand it on, like a sealed letter, without knowing it. And do not be confused by the multiplicity of names and the complexity of cases. Perhaps over all there is a great motherhood, a common longing. The beauty of the virgin, a being that "has not yet achieved anything," is motherhood that begins to sense itself and to prepare, anxious and yearning. And the mother's beauty is ministering motherhood, and in the old woman there is a great remembering. An even in the man there is motherhoo it seems to me, physical and spiritua his procreating is also a kind of giv ing birth, and giving birth it is whe he creates out of inmost fullness. An perhaps the sexes are more relate than we think, and the great renewa of the world will perhaps consist i this, that man and maid, freed of a false feelings and reluctances, wi seek each other not as opposites bu as brother and sister, as neighbors and will come together *as huma beings,* in order simply, seriously an patiently to bear in common the diff cult sex that has been laid upon them

Rainer Maria Rilke

The scene was bathed in the nocturnal silence of the village, and all I could hear was the bark of a dog and the scraping of a cat's claws on the bark of a tree. Then a shadowy form in a white dressing gown— my mother— crossed the road and entered the garden opposite. I saw her raise her head and consider the party wall as though she had hopes of climbing it. Then she started to walk up and down the center path, where she broke off a sprig of scented bay, automatically crushing its leaves between her fingers. Under the cold light of the full moon not one of her gestures escaped me. Motionless, her face upturned to the sky, she listened, and waited. A thin cry, long-drawn-out and muffled by distance and the intervening walls, reached us at the same moment, and she clasped her hands convulsively to her breast. A second cry, pitched on the same note, almost like the opening of a melody, floated towards us, and a third... Then I saw my mother grip her own loins with desperate hands, spin around and stamp on the ground as she began to assist and share, by her low groans, by the rocking of her tormented body, by the clasping of her unwanted arms, and by all her maternal anguish and strength, the anguish and strength of the ungrateful daughter who, so near to her and yet so far away, was bringing a child into the world.

Colette[12]

If we really and truly understood what is our true personal dignity, we should at once spring to our feet and change our very hearts and minds. We should worship the three treasures and reverence the patriarchs. We should put filial piety first and above all else. We should preserve that proper and respectful love between husband and wife. We should be cordial in the courtesy of our behavior towards our brothers and friends. We should never forget our duty of fidelity towards our relatives and neighbours. We should have compassion on the sick and the poor. We should work with all our might for our home and family. We should be obedient to the ordinances of our rulers. We should be merciful, honest and patient, so as to be good examples to all men. Then without appearing to instruct we should in the most natural way be able to act as guides. Then all classes of the people would associate in peace. Everyone would pass through life with smiling faces, co-operating with the Buddha and the Gods of heaven and earth.

Then the eight million Gods, Brahma, Indra, Daikoku, Bishamon— all of them would be a protection to you. Evil demons and false gods would flee. There would be no sickness. The whole world would be at peace. The five harvest grains would mature and every home be prosperous. The children who were born would be good too.

Hakuin



Our respect for our parents is the beginning of all common codes of mankind. There is no one whose conduct is substantially wrong in his personal behavior and in his social relations if he respects and loves his parents. During the period we were growing up through our embryonic and childhood periods, love and care were poured upon us by our parents. Their love for their children was unconditional, and they treated their children as their own life. Therefore, children, when they grow, should respect and care for their parents unconditionally. It is a natural, universal, and common principle of human conduct. If we do not practice it, however great we are in fame, position, property, and social influence, we are worthless in the order of the universe.

Through the respect of our parents, we learn about our ancestors. The spirit of our ancestors is living biologically, psychologically and spiritually within us, whether we are aware of it or not. From our parents, we receive our biological and psychological constitution, carrying the influence of our grandparents, and, further, the influences of great-grandparents upon them. Practically seven generations are manifested within our physical, mental and spiritual constitution very clearly, and theoretically an unlimited number of generations have descended into our existence. We extend our appreciation to all ancestors through learning their histories, and if that is not possible, through making self-reflection within ourselves— since we are representing a succession of the stream of life coming down through our ancestors.

Respect for ancestors, however, should not be limited to only several generations or even several hundred generations prior to us. Such respect should b dedicated to unlimited generations prio to our generation. Chinese people shoul not limit their respect for ancestors to th beginning period of China; Jewish peopl should not limit their respect to the tim their ancestral history began; those o Scandinavian descent should not limi their respect of parents to the time of th formation of Scandinavian countries Our respect for the traditions of th ancestors should go back far beyond th time of the beginning of written history It should go back to the commo ancestors of all people, all races, an eventually reach their common origin nature, earth, the universe, and the life o the universe itself. Respect for ancestor ultimately becomes the same as th respect of the order of the universe, th origin of all life, and expands to th brother- and sisterhood among everyon and every being arising on this earth an appearing in this endless universe.

Michio Kushi

Relationship persists so long as subsidia cause persists, and subsidiary cause persists long as quest persists, and quest persists long as thou persistest, and thou persistest long as thou seest Me not: but when thou see Me, thou art no more, and when thou art more, quest is no more, and when quest is more, subsidiary cause is no more, and whe subsidiary cause is no more, relationship is more, and when relationship is no more, lim is no more, and when limit is no more, veils a no more.

Niffa

This is the most beautiful place on earth.

There are many such places. Every man, every woman carries in heart and mind the image of the ideal place, the one true home, known or unknown, actual or visionary. A houseboat in Kashmir, a view down Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, a gray gothic farmhouse two stories high at the end of a red dog road in the Allegheny mountains, a cabin on the shore of a blue lake in spruce and fir country, a greasy alley near the Hoboken waterfront, or even, possibly for those of a less demanding sensibility, the world to be seen from a comfortable apartment high in the tender, velvety smog of Manhattan, Chicago, Paris, Tokyo, Rio or Rome— there's no limit to the human capacity for the homing sentiment. Theologians, sky pilots, astronauts have even felt the appeal of home calling them from up above, in the cold black out-back of interstellar space.

Edward Abbey[14]

Certain animals in the sea live by becoming part-animal, part-plant. They engulf algae, which then establish themselves as complex plant tissues, essential for the life of the whole company. I suppose the giant clam, if he had more of a mind, would have moments of dismay on seeing what he has done to the plant world, incorporating so much of it, enslaving green cells, living off the photosynthesis. But the plant cells would take a different view of it, having captured the clam on the most satisfactory of terms, including the small lenses in his tissues that focus sunlight for their benefit; perhaps algae have bad moments about what they may collectively be doing to the world of clams.

With luck, our own situation might be similar, on a larger scale. This might turn out to be a special phase in the morphogenesis of the earth when it is necessary to have something like us, for a time anyway, to fetch and carry energy, look after new symbiotic arrangements, store up information for some future season, do a certain amount of ornamenting, maybe even carry seeds around the solar system. That kind of thing. Handyman for the earth.

Lewis Thomas[15]

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

And why beholdest thou the mot that is in thy brother's eye, but conside est not the beam that is in thine own eye Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, L me pull out the mote out of thine eye; an behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Tho hypocrite, first cast out the beam out thine own eye; and then shalt thou se clearly to cast out the mote out of th brother's eye.

What man is there of you, whom if h son ask bread, will he give him a stone Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a se pent? If ye then, being evil, know how give good gifts unto your children, ho much more shall your Father which is heaven give good things to them that as him?

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall b opened unto you: for every one that ask eth receiveth; and he that seeket findeth; and to him that knocketh it sha be opened. *Matthew, 5 and*

Answer to Luc Dietrich's Question:

Dietrich: Can one speak of a Divine Person? If so, what is the analogical relationship which connects the human person to the person or persons of God?

Daumal: One can and indeed one does speak about almost anything without knowing anything about it; this is what I have been taught to call "lying." However, it would be another kind of lie, an evasion, to say: "For my part, I know absolutely nothing so I shall say nothing." I should like to understand why you ask the question and answer, not *the* question but *your* question.

If it is permissible to use the language of the mathematicians (I nearly became a "great philosopher" by building a new (?) metaphysics in this manner) I will say: God impersonal, the "That," the "Absolute," is the *limit-idea* of human feeling. (But luckily I did not become a "great philosopher"; somebody stopped me in time.)

I will confess to you that I have to force myself to write or utter this word: God. It is a sound I make with my mouth or a movement of the fingers that hold my pen. I am ashamed to speak or write this word. What is real here is the shame.

I cannot speak *of Him* except as impersonal. I cannot speak *to Him* except as to a person. Lead me not into temptation!

Must I never speak of the Unknowable because it would be a lie?

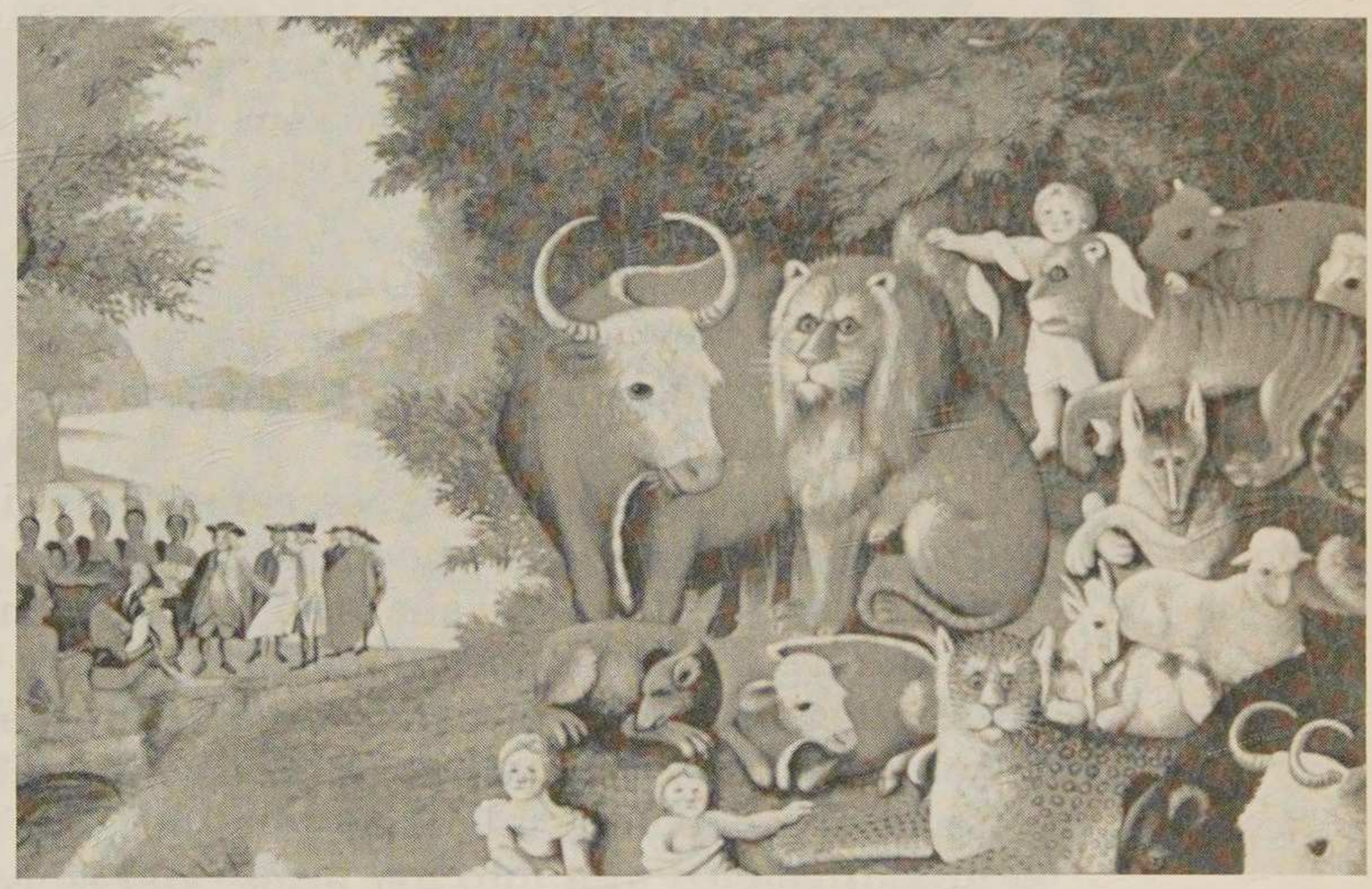
Must I speak of the Unknowable because I know that I proceed from it and am bound to bear witness to that?

This contradiction is what motivates my best thoughts.

René Daumal[16]

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11, 6-9



4 *Death in the Family,* by James Agee (New York: antam, 1971).

Impulse," by Frances Minturn Howard in *Mixed oices,* Fall 1977. Copyright by *Mixed Voices* and rances Minturn Howard.

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[8]*Gravity and Grace,* by Simone Weil (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1952).

[9]*Letters to a Young Poet,* by Rainer Maria Rilke (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963).

[11]Adapted from *The Book of Macrobiotics,* by Michio Kushi (Elmsford, N.Y.: Japan Publications Trading Co., Inc., 1977).

[12]*My Mother's House and Sido,* by Colette (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, Inc., 1953).

[13]Rilke, *op. cit.*

[14]*Desert Solitaire,* by Edward Abbey (New York: Ballantine, 1971).

[15]*Lives of a Cell,* by Lewis Thomas (New York: Bantam, 1975).

[16]Daumal, *op. cit.*

Epicycle I

The Oedipus *story has been subject to a great many "interpretations." Question: Is it necessary to interpret myths in order to understand them? Another question: Is there a connection to be* understood *between the kind of seeing* Oedipus *gained through his blindness, and the discovery of one's real relationships?*

Oedipus

It was not the choice of the Pythoness to be the Oracle at Delphi: this fate was thrust on her just as the fates of men were thrust on them. Nor did those of her choosing come to inquire after their own destinies. She could no more refuse to answer them with the truth than she could refuse the role of Oracle. Perhaps it is for this reason— her bondage to her duties— that her replies to those bold (or foolish) enough to come to her are so passionate in temper.

When Laius, King of Thebes, came to inquire why his wife was barren, truth came from the lips of the Oracle like a curse: "Be thankful she is so! For the son she bears will murder his father and be joined in unholy wedlock to his mother!" And this prophecy became the machinery of its own fulfillment, for when Laius decided to banish his wife in order to forestall their fate, Jocasta made him drunk, inveigled him into her arms, and so conceived a son. Nor did Laius succeed in lifting the curse from his house by piercing the child's feet and giving it to a shepherd of Corinth. The child was spared and was fostered by King Polybus and Queen Merope as their own.

In the course of time, whose patience outlasts the impetuousness of men, Oedipus sought the Oracle for himself. The reason was this: taunted at a royal banquet with bastardy, he went to Delphi to seek the truth from the Pythoness. She could not refuse: "Away from me, wretch! For you will murder your father and marry your mother! Begone, I say!" Then Oedipus, driven by the for-



ces of his own knowledge, fled into the wilderness that he might protect Polybus and Merope whom he still believed to be his parents. Thus in the narrow pass between Delphi and Daulia, he one day found himself face to face with a charioteer, whose surly master ordered the young man aside, then rudely drove over his feet when he refused to yield. In a rage, Oedipus slew the charioteer and his unknown passenger: Laius, King of Thebes.

The death of Laius left open the kingship, which Creon declared would be bestowed upon the man who would save Thebes from the ravages of the Sphinx.

A strange beast, the Sphinx, with the tail of a serpent, the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the head of a woman. This creature passed to travellers one and the same question, the riddle of the feet: "What being is it who in the morning walks on four feet, at noon walks

on two, and in the evening on three, and is weakest when it walks on most?" Those who could not answer she throttled and devoured. When Oedipus answered, "A man, who in the morning of his life crawls on all fours, lives his days upright, but needs a cane to assist his steps in the twilight of his life," the Sphinx threw herself from Mount Phicium and was dashed to pieces in the chasm below. In this way Oedipus became King of Thebes, husband to its queen, Jocasta.

Passionate too was the Oracle when Oedipus sent to find the cause and cure of the plague that ravaged the city: "Drive out the murderer of Laius!" But, as Oedipus did not yet know the truth about himself, his edict of banishment was of no effect.

The Oracle had played her role in the history of Thebes. Now it fell to the blind seer Tiresias, he who had been both man and woman, to provide the knowledge that fulfilled itself. "The plagues will cease," he told Oedipus, "when one of the Sown Men, who sprang from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, founder of Thebes, shall give his life for the sake of the city." Then Menoecus, Jocasta's father, threw himself from the city walls, for he had been one of the Sown Men. The plagues ceased. "Nevertheless," Tiresias told Jocasta, "the gods had another in mind: one of the Sown Men of the third generation: Oedipus is he, slayer of Laius, your husband, and your son."

Jocasta hanged herself, when a letter from Corinth confirmed in detail the foster parenthood by King Polybus of the infant Oedipus. And Oedipus himself gouged out his eyes when the truth was revealed to him.

It is said that Oedipus became a seer by this act and spent the remainder of his days hated not for the fated circumstances of his past but for his knowledge of the fate of others.

Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

Epicycle II

Tales of a Demon *is adapted from the* Vetalapanchavimshati, *or* Twenty-five Tales of a Vetala, *a cycle of stories embedded in the eleventh-century Indian epic known as* The Ocean of Story, *by Somadeva. The "Tales of a Demon," twenty-four in number, are all riddle stories which were used for religious instruction by the Buddhists and others; their antiquity antedates* The Ocean of Story *by several centuries. The subsequent issue of* Parabola *will carry a Tale together with King Trivikramasena's answer to the previous riddle. Readers are invited to try their wits at an anwer and to send in proposed solutions.*

Tales of a Demon

In our last tale, after King Triple-Victory had once more cut down the corpse from the Simsapa Tree and set out yet again on his grim mission through the graveyard, the demon in the corpse told a "light and amusing tale" of King Glory, his devoted minister Farsight, and the fairy princess Moonlight. In order to redeem his name, and at the same time force King Glory to pay heed to his kingdom, Farsight went on a long pilgrimage which ultimately led to the discovery of the fairy princess. Upon hearing this tale, King Glory at once set off in search of the princess, found her and, falling under the spell of love, married her. Shortly, however, he discovered, to his amazement, that his bride was under a curse: twice every fortnight she was devoured by an enormous demon, only to come forth alive, remembering nothing of the horror that she had endured. King Glory, upon witnessing this outrageous scene, at once slew the demon, thus fulfilling a prophecy and freeing the princess Moonlight from the spell. By miraculous means, King Glory abducted the princess and returned to his own kingdom. All the kingdom rejoiced upon the monarch's return; but the minister Farsight died of a broken heart. Why did he die? asked the Vetala of King Triple-Victory.

"This demon," thought King Triple-Victory to himself, when the tale was finished, "is a worse chatterbox than all the monkeys of the royal gardens!" And aloud, he said, "Where is the riddle in this tale? The answer is simple and straightforward enough, even though you attempt to trick me, malicious one. The faithful minister Farsight died

of a broken heart not because he desired the princess Moonlight for himself: for was he not already blessed with a wise and caring wife? Nor did he long for the sovereign power which he had in fact practiced for so many years in service to his monarch: indeed, happy is he who, having shouldered the heavy cares of kingship for so long, is at last able to return the burden of monarchy to its rightful bearer. No, the loyal and faithful Farsight died because he saw that his pilgrimage had been in vain and that, far from abandoning the garden of pleasure, his King was determined to spend his remaining days in dalliance with the princess Moonlight."

Strange is the burden which, once removed,becomes heavier still! Again did the demon transport the corpse back to the boughs of the grim Simsapa Tree, and again did King Triple-Victory turn and retrace his steps to the foot of that tree, climb it, and once more cut down the corpse. Then, lifting it upon his shoulders, that noble prince once more set his foot with determination upon the path back to the waiting monk Kshantisila.

This strange pair had gone but a few yards when once again the demon spoke. "O King," it said, "this going back and forth wearies me greatly, though I see you are not tired at all. I will, therefore, put to you one truly difficult question: mind that you listen carefully."

The Misleading Footprints

There was once upon a time in the Deccan a king named Virtue who truly fulfilled the destiny of his name, being the virtuous ruler of virtuous men. He had, however, many wicked relations who wished to supplant him, and in his later years, when his daughter Beauty was of marriageable age, that noble king

was ejected from his throne and forced to flee his kingdom. Taking his wife Moonbeam and his daughter, King Virtue set his course towards Malava, the dwelling-place of his father-in-law. They travelled by night, those three, hiding and resting by day, and thus they reached the Vindhya Forest. It was there that the morning sun found them, reaching out the long arms of its rays as if to warn King Virtue of the dangers that lay in his path; yet on he pressed, wishing to pass through the forest before night fell again.

Now, all who know of the Vindhya Forest know well that it is haunted by brigands who have a village in its depths, like a city of Death. Everyone who lives in that village is a robber and a murderer, and to pass under the eyes of its watchmen is to risk loss of life as well as property. As King Virtue drew near to this village, he was seen from a distance and recognized by his robes as one possessed of wealth. Thus, they immediately set out, armed with sharp and deadly swords, to deprive him of all that he owned.

When King Virtue saw that he had been discovered, he spoke quickly to his wife and daughter, and advised them to save themselves by fleeing into the forest. Then that noble monarch turned to defend himself, meeting the attack with sword and shield and manly courage, falling at last to the blades of his enemies only after slaughtering many of their number. Thus it was that Queen Moonbeam and Princess Beauty found themselves alone and defenseless in the heart of the dark and deadly woods. Saddened and wearied, they came to rest by a lotus-bordered lake, in the shade of an ashoka tree.

In another part of the forest, meanwhile, behold a hunter and his son: Fierce-Lion and Strong-Lion, riding on horseback, armed not with the implements of war or brigandry, but with the noble instruments of the hunt. They ride, they pause to examine a track of footprints, and the father, Fierce-Lion, says to his son, "Look, here are the tracks of two beautiful women!" "Yes!" says the son, "And they are mother and daughter." "Yes!" returns the father. "And notice that one footprint is large, while the other is small and dainty." "Yes," replies the son, "and doubtless I shall marry the one with the small and dainty feet, for she will be young and well-suited to me. And you, my father, will marry the older one, with large feet, for she will be well-suited to you."

"What?" replies the father. "How can you say this? Have you forgotten your poor mother so soon after she departed this life? How, after I have lost so good a wife, could I ever desire another?" "Father," answers the son, "do not speak thus. Is not the home empty without a wife, is not the householder incomplete? Do you not know the verses of Muladeva? 'A fool is he who enters a house where no shapely love eagerly awaits his return: no house is that, but a prison without chains.' So, my father, take heed; for my death will be at your door if you do not take this large-footed lady to be your wife."

When Fierce-Lion thus heard the words of his son, he took heart, for he approved the wisdom that came from his lips. And so the two hunters slowly followed the tracks until at last they came to the lotus-lake and beheld the loveliness of the two women: she whose moonbeam-like countenance seemed to light up the darkness of the woods, and the reflection of that beauty, her daughter. But Queen Moonbeam, beholding two men, rose up terrified and prepared to flee into the woods. At this her daughter said to her, "Mother, do not take fright. For these are not brigands: see, the implements they carry are not weapons of war but the noble instruments of the hunt. These are two gentlemen, and perhaps they may be able to help us out of these woods."

Then Fierce-Lion spoke and said, "Do not be alarmed. We have come here out of love, not violence or greed. For we spied your footprints in the forest, and seeing that they belonged to two beautiful and noble women, we fell in love and sought only to behold you. Take confidence, then, and tell us how you come to be here in this brigand-infested spot."

Then, slowly, Queen Moonbeam related the sad tale of their adventures, and how they came to be lost and unprotected in the Vindhya Forest. And the two noble hunters, father and son, consoled the two women, mother and daughter, with kind words, and persuaded them into becoming members of their family. And the queen, being helpless, submitted to their will, as if she had been born again in a second life. For what can an unprotected woman do, having fallen into such calamity in a foreign land? And so mother and daughter consented to become the wives of father and son. But, wonder of wonders, when Fierce-Lion and Strong-Lion beheld the feet of Queen Moonbeam and Princess Beauty, they saw that their judgment had been hasty:



for the feet of the daughter were large, and those of the mother were small and dainty. Nevertheless, they did abide by their original decision: the son, because of the smallness of her feet, married the mother, and the father married the daughter because of the largeness of her feet. Who that is noble ever swerves from his plighted word?

And so it happened, because of the mistake about the feet, that the daughter became the wife of the father and the mother-in-law of her own mother; and the mother became the wife of the son, and the daughter-in-law of her own daughter. And, in the course of time, there came to be born sons and daughters, and together they lived in their city, Fierce-Lion and his young wife, Beauty, and Strong-Lion with his wife Moonbeam.

"Now tell me, O King," said the Vetala when he had finished this curious tale, "about the children born in the course of time to those couples, the father and daughter, the mother and son. What relationship did those children bear to one another? Tell me, if you know, but be minded that the curse applies as before, and should you know and not tell, your head will burst into a thousand pieces."

Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

Epicycle III

Alen MacWeeney spent several summers on the road with Ireland's wandering tinkers, her "Traveling People," while he recorded their tales. Mostly illiterate, the tinkers preserve a body of tales and a way of telling them that have gone largely overlooked, even in Ireland.

The Blacksmith's Tale

This is a story now about a blacksmith. This old blacksmith had himself and his wife and his sister, all living alone together. But this day a man rode down to him on a horse's back and he goes into the forge.

"Smith," the man says, "would you put a set of shoes on this horse for me?"

"I would, Sir," says the smith, "but I don't know how. I have an old mare meself, and I can't shoe her."

"Would you give me a lend of the fire, then, Smith," says the stranger, "and I'll shoe her meself."

"I would Sir," says he, "and I'd like to see you doing it."

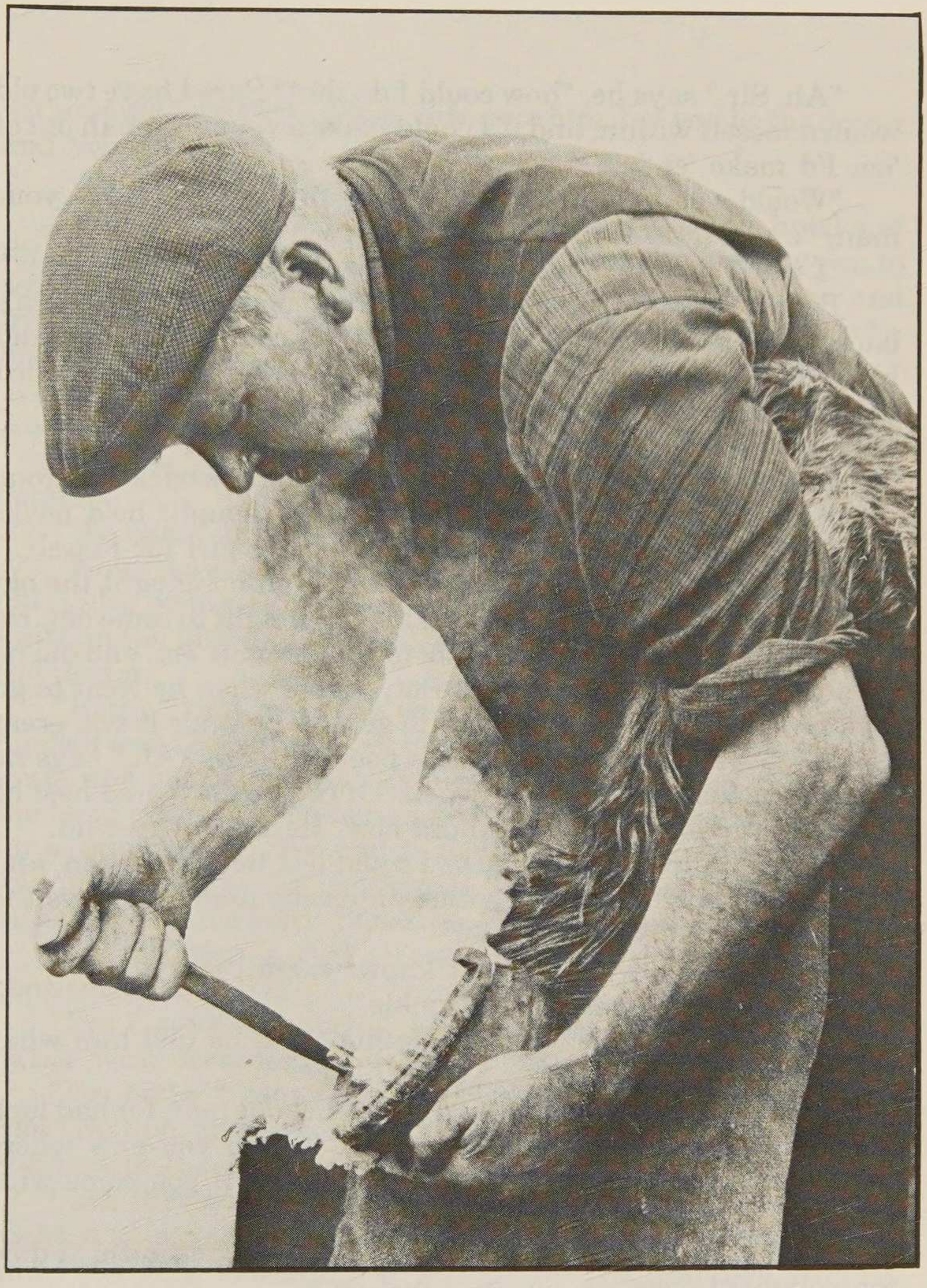
The man brought in his horse and he cut the four legs off him and he put 'em in the fire. He put down a bit of coal and he blew and blew and after a few minutes he took out those legs and put 'em back on the horse. The horse walked off with a new set of shoes on 'im. The man got on his back then and rode off where he come from.

"Begod," says the old blacksmith. "I'll shoe my mare too."

The old man went out and he brought in this old mare that he had for ploughing the half-acre, with a couple of lumps on her heels and she never had any shoe on her. He brought her in to the forge, cut the legs off her, put 'em in the fire. But when he went to go look for the legs again he had nothing to get, the bones was burnt up in the fire.

"Oh, I'm done ,"says he, "I'm finished. I got that old mare done away with." But between himself and the old wife and the old sister they dragged the mare out in the field and they left her there.

Photograph by Alen MacWeeney



Well, begod, on that day a week, 'twas a week after, this stranger come down the road again on his horse, and two old women on the horse's back behind him. "Hello Blacksmith," he says.

"Hello, Sir," says the old man.

"Blacksmith," he says, "would you make a young girl out of those two old women for me?"

"Ah, Sir," says he, "how could I do that? Sure I have two old women meself within, and if I could make a young woman out of 'em I'd make 'er."

"Would you give me a lend of the fire, Smith," says your man, "and I'll do it meself."

"I will," says the old fella, "and I'd like to see you doing it."

Begod, the stranger took the two old women off of the horse's back, put 'em on the hob, fixed up all the coal around 'em and blew like blazes, and after about twenty minutes of this he pulled out the grandest young girl you ever seen.

"By God," says the old man, "it's great!"

So the stranger took up the girl on the horse's back and gone off the road he come. The old blacksmith thought he'd never have 'em gone, of course, til he get a young girl for hisself.

Begod, when the man went, he went in and caught the old wife and the old sister. They made an awful fight to come out. He tied 'em on the hob. Put down a lot of coal around 'em, and did he blow and blow like blue blazes. But, begod, when he went to go look for the girl, he had nothing to get. All he finds is two great big old jaw-teeth belonging to the poor old wife. "Ah," says he "that's the last of me. I'm finished."Of course, he feared he'd be taken, in trouble, and everything else. He run away wild.

He went farther than you or I could tell, but he goes on, and going and going he met a gentleman on the road, and says the man,"Where are you going to?"

"Musha," says he, "I don't know where I'm going."

"You look like a man in trouble."

"I am trouble, Sir," says he to him, and he told him what happened, his complaint.

"Well," says the gentleman, "if you met one man for bad luck you could meet another for good luck. I'll tell you now where meself and you'd make a good bit of money, if you come with me."

"God, and I would go with you, Sir," says the smith, "I'd be too delighted, because I'm in a bad way."

"Well now," says the gentleman, "there's an advertisement made that there's a gentleman sick, a gentleman to be cured, in such a place outside of London. There's three hundred pound to be got for curing him, and you can cure him."

"I can?" says he.

"You'll be the doctor and I'll be the servant, but don't go

without me," says he. "I'll have to cure him, but you be the doctor and you get paid."

"All right, Sir," says the old man.

In they go to London, anyway, and they got this hotel and they stopped in it for the night. On they goes the next day, on to where this sick man was. They rung the bell on the door, and friends and everyone was there seeing the gentelman waiting for his death. "What is your business here?" says they.

"Ain't he here," says the smith, "this man wants to be cured? And ain't there three hundred pounds for the doctor'll cure him?"

"Oh yes," says the friends and relations, "but he can't be cured."

"We came to cure; we can cure him," says he.

"Now," says the man was the servant, "I wants the nobility out. I also wants a pot of boiling water on the fire, and a carving knife on the table, and no one to be in the house, only meself and the doctor."

"Right," and everyone was put out. The door was locked, himself and the servant, pot of boiling water on the fire, carving knife was put on the table. The servant, he went up and he cut the head off of the gentleman and put it in the pot. He boiled it for a couple of minutes, and he took it up with the knife, went up and put it back on the gentleman. The gentleman was the same as he never had a pain or an ache. He never was better in his life.

Now the friends, they all come knocking at the door, "Is the gentleman all right?"

"Yes," says the doctor, and he open the door. He shook hands with everyone; he done a cure that couldn't be beat.

"I'm better," says the gentleman that was sick, "nor ever I was." So they give the doctor a hundred pound more. He got four hundred pound for the cure.

Back they goes to London, into the same hotel again for the night, and, says your man to the smith, "Give me half the money now. You keep two hundred and I keep two hundred."

"I won't give you a penny," says he.

"Ah, give me half of it."

"No, I won't give you a penny," says he.

"Ah well, you should," says your man, "we'd have two hundred pound apiece."

"I won't," says the old man, "I'll keep the four hundred."

"All right," he says to him, "so I'll be going." And the man

that really done that cure left the hotel and he went his own road.

Now there was a ring come to the hotel where they were stopping that there was a lady with the same complaint in another district. Your man was gone of course, but the blacksmith was there and he was supposed to be the doctor. He got the ring, "Is such a doctor there?"

"Yes," says he.

"Well there's a lady to be cured here, and there's four hundred pound to give for the doctor that'll cure her."

"I'll go tomorrow and cure her," says he, and he was chancing his arm of course.

He hired a side-car the next morning, there was no motorcars in them days, and went on to the lady's place. Up to the house. "Oh, are you the doctor?"

"Yes, I'm the doctor," says he.

All the old ladies and gentlemen was there saluted him and was that happy to see him.

"I wants now," says he, "a pot of boiling water on the fire, also a carving knife on the table, and all hands to be cleared of the house until I cure the lady." They done so. The pot of boiling water was on the fire, the carving knife was left on the table, everyone was clear of the house and the door was locked.

He went up and he cut the head off the lady and he put it in the pot. He started blowing away at the fire and stirring up the coal. But when he went to look in the pot again he could get nothing out but bones and broth. "I'm done," says he, "I'm finished this time."

Course all the nobility was waiting in the yard, and when they waited so long they knew it was a big delay, and they come knocking at the door, "Is she any better yet, Doctor?"

"Yes, she'll be all right now in a minute," says he on the other side. He goes and search the pot again, and he could get nothing. Worse 'twas getting. "Ohhh," he says, "it's come for me death now. The mare was bad enough," says he, "and me old sister and me wife was worse, but this come for me death altogether. I'm going to be shot now, and gibbeted, over doing away with a lady afore her time to come."

And here come the knocking again, "Is the lady all right yet Doctor?"

"She'll be all right in a minute."

Course, after about three hours they were going to drive in the door, knocking and hammering at it. And just then the man could make the cure appeared in to him.

"Well," says the man, "how're we getting on?"

"Ah, I'm bet," says the old smith, "I'm going to be hung, either hung or gibbeted."

"No," says he, "give me the knife." He caught the knife, turned over the pot and stuck it in the head. He put the head on the lady and she was sound as a bell. "Now," he says, "the lady is all right. And I'll meet you below the avenue gate." And he was gone.

Well the old smith opened the door, and the friends and relations was that relieved to see the lady sound. There was so much entertainment for the great special doctor, he got a hundred pound more'n his limit, he got five hundred pound for curing the lady! "Oh," they says, "you're a terrible great doctor entirely!"

"Yes," says he, "that's a cure was left to me from my generation, and 'twill be in the generation while I'm alive."

So when they was all done with the celebration, down he goes to the avenue gate and met your man.

"Well," says the stranger, "now you've nine hundred pound. You got four hundred pound yesterday. You got five hundred pound today. Would you give me half of it now?"

"No," says the blacksmith, "I'll give you it all. Take it all," says he, "and let me go united. I was done, only for you."

"No," says the stranger, "when you offered me that now I don't want it; I won't take it. I'm the man," he says, "that made you cut the legs off of your old mare, and I'm the same man that made you burn your old wife and your old sister. And you're a good man now," says he, "better 'n what you were that time."

"Would you know your way home? Go home now. Your old wife and your sister, the two of 'em, is sitting at the fire, and your old mare is grazing in the garden as usual. Now mind yourself. And when you meet one man for bad luck," says he, "you'll meet him for good luck."

So, put down the kettle and make the tea and if you live happy I may.

Epicycle IV

Mullah Nasr Eddin, who is also known as Nasreddin Khodja, has appeared in Parabola *before (Vol. I, Issue 1). He has been a favorite character of Middle Eastern storytellers for centuries. Here are two more of the stories told about him!*

The Judgment

Once the Mullah, who often was sought out to make judgments in family and other "minor" matters, was approached by a woman who complained bitterly that her husband mistreated her.

"If it isn't neglect, then it's a beating," she told the Mullah. "All evening long he will sit in the coffee-house with his cronies, telling tales— probably about me— and, when he comes home late (if he comes home at all that day) he beats me if I complain about his neglect. I beg you to make a judgment— for you know that your words carry weight in our household— and say which of us is in the right."

The Mullah listened very sympathetically to the woman, and when she had finished thought for just a moment.

"There's no doubt about it," the Mullah told the poor woman. "You are in the right." With triumphant joy, the woman left and went home to tell her husband. In less than an hour, there came a loud banging on the Mullah's door. It was the husband.

"Why did you just now tell my wife that she was in the right?" the husband demanded. "Don't you know that in our family, men do as they please, and that in accordance with all the wisdom of tradition, wives must respect their husbands' ways without complaint?"

Again the Mullah listened patiently as the man angrily demanded a fresh judgment. When he had finished speaking— or rather, shouting— the Mullah again took a moment or two, and then nodded his head.

"There's no doubt about it," he said. "You are in the right." With an air as triumphant as his wife's, the man left the Mullah and went home again. When he had left,



the Mullah's wife, who had been listening to every word said, came out of the kitchen.

"What have you done now, you imbecile?" she stormed. "You just told that poor woman that she was right, and now you've told the husband the same thing. They can't both be right!"

"There's no doubt about it," replied the Mullah. "You're right."

Uninvited Guests

In Turkey they call him Nasreddin Khodja, and this is how the Cadi was asked to settle one of the Khodja's own family quarrels.

It was after the Khodja's first wife died— the one who was right— and Nasreddin had married again, this time to a woman who had herself been married before. One evening, as they climbed into bed together, the Khodja's wife began to talk about her first husband.

"What a good man he was," she said. "Always so considerate and kind." And she went on— and on— describing in detail all the virtues of her late husband.

Not to be outdone, the Khodja began to talk about his first spouse, about her sweet disposition, her thoughtfulness, her patience. On and on he talked, matching word for word his new wife's observations. But women talk faster than men, and it wasn't long before Nasreddin's wife was getting the upper hand. His patience at an end, he gave her a violent kick and— bump!— out of the bed she fell, onto the hard stone floor.

The next day, Nasreddin's wife went to the Cadi to lodge a complaint against the Khodja, saying that he kicked her out of bed. Nasreddin was sent for and the Cadi demanded an account of the issue.

"Oh no, Effendi," said the Khodja when the charges were presented. "That's not what happened at all. There we were in bed together when along came one of her friends and got into bed with us. Then one of my friends got into bed too. With four people in bed, there was no room; she fell out."

Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

Epicycle V

The Salish Indian tale below was collected by Professor Tony Matina of the University of Montana. It is copyright by the Colville Confederated Tribes of Nespelem, Washington, and is reprinted with their permission.

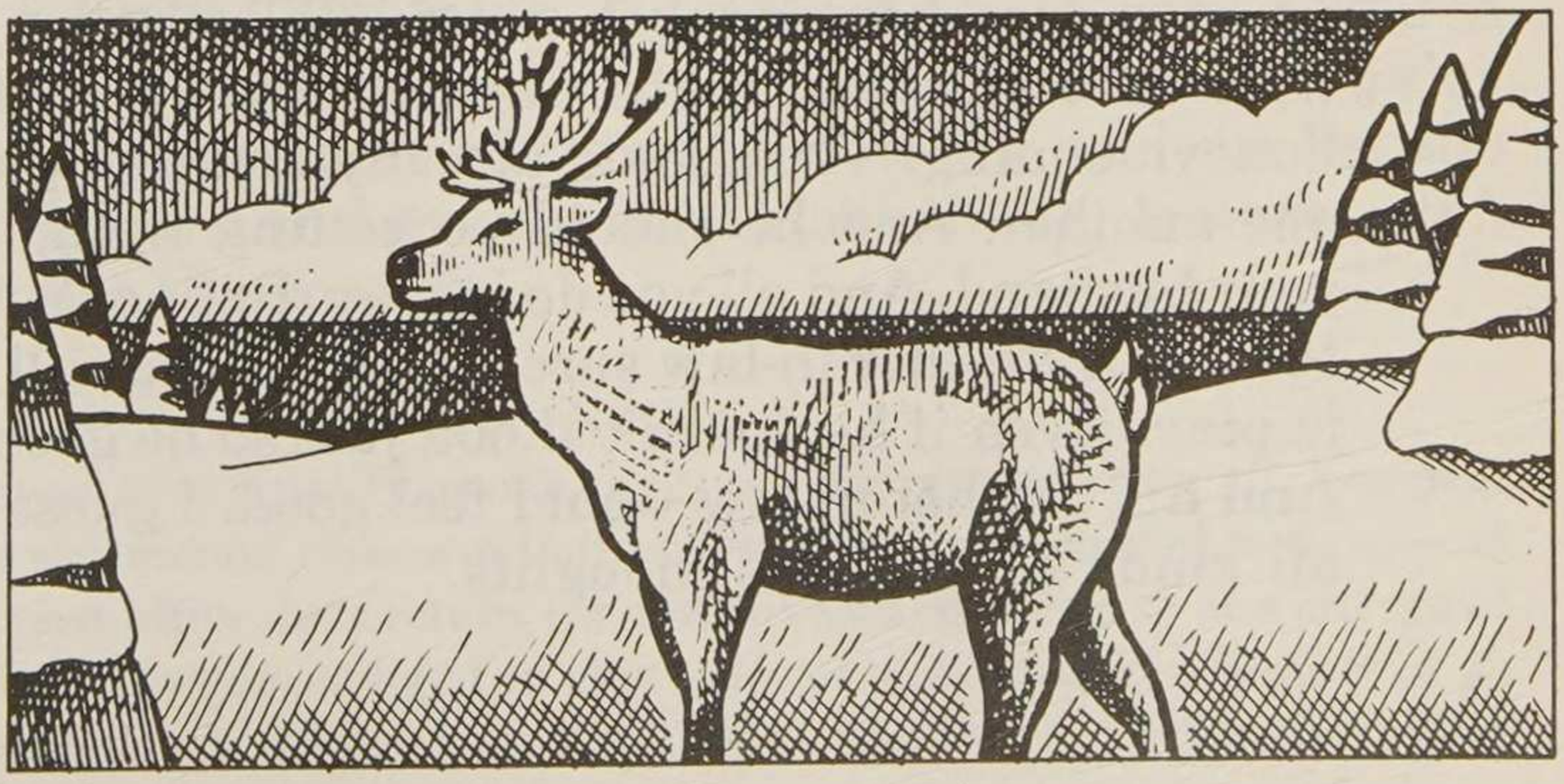
Blue Jay

Yes, this here Blue Jay and his brother-in-law Wolf, that's what I'm going to tell. This here Wolf was married to the oldest one. And he was their leader. There is also another tribe, and the chief's daughter, and the chief's law relations. And long time ago they didn't know what money was, they put the providers above everything else. Yes, those who get grub, that's who they put above everything else. They are the highest.

And so that's when Wolf proposed to the chief for his daughter, and he consented because Wolf is smart in getting things to eat, deer. And the chief told him: "All right." And so they married, he and his daughter. And when they go hunting they put Wolf on the head.

And at that time the people didn't stay alone but in a group. Yes, they stick together in winter time; they call it wintering. They don't have buckskin tipis. They use all kinds of things to cover their houses, this here tules; they use this here tree bark; or just anything, boughs, these here cedar boughs.

Well, Blue Jay got to them. Well, he proposed to the chief. The youngest one had grown up too. They say in Indian she was a maiden. She wants a man. Well Blue Jay started to flirt. Blue Jay got stuck on her and she

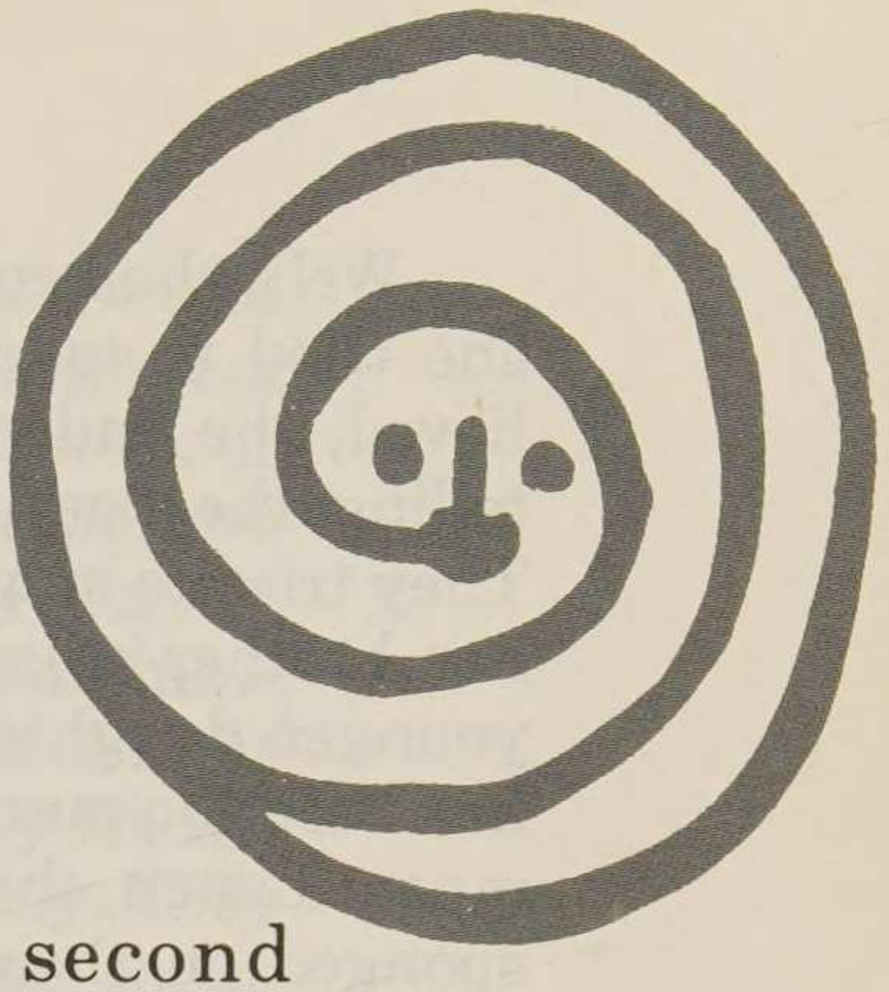


told her father: "You better consent." Her father tried to tell her: "But we don't know him. We don't know in what things he's smart, in getting things to eat, maybe you will suffer from it. It might not be long and you'll throw him away if he's good for nothing. Get the one that'll do us good, take that one for your man." But no, his daughter. "He's going to be *my* husband, not your husband. Even if I got hard up, it's me who gets hard up." He told her: "Well, all right, if that's how you feel."

That was that, and they gave Blue Jay his answer. Well, he got married. And Blue Jay went on a honeymoon. And they were all together, Wolf and his woman, and this here Blue Jay and his wife, and his law relations, the regal couple, the chief and his mate. There are all together there in one house, I don't know how many tipis put together, maybe four, maybe three, because there are three couples. Well, all Blue Jay does is play with his wife. He sleeps till noon, then he wakes up, he gets up with his wife, because they're on their honeymoon. Everybody is gone by that time.

They hunt, get things to eat, and Wolf is their leader because he sure is smart in getting things to eat. He knows where the wintering places for deer are, and he is very good on snow shoes. When they make a drive for the deer Wolf chases them. The deer don't go far and then he catches up with them and then he slaughters them. Then he overtakes his relations, and the other people, and he gives the deer to the others. And then they drag them home, they don't even have to shoot and then they get meat. That's when he gives it to them to eat, Wolf. Because he is great, smart in hunting. That's why he is their leader.

Well, his oldest daughter started eating her feelings, getting cross, Wolf's wife. She is always watching her brother-in-law. She hates her brother-in-law. She even said to her younger sister: "What's the matter with you? It's been many days, and you two are still honeymooning. You should already be getting tired of one another. And he should be getting things to eat, your husband. And all you do is play. But no. You know that your brother-in-law sure gets tired that all you do is play. Even if he doesn't shoot, just so he goes along. And his brother-in-law would feel good. I guess he has all kinds of different thoughts."



A HOLIDAY REMINDER

This issue celebrates completion of our second volume and our second exciting year of publication. We thank you, our readers and subscribers, for believing in our value and helping us grow.

During this holiday season, won't you consider giving a gift with real meaning: a subscription to PARABOLA.

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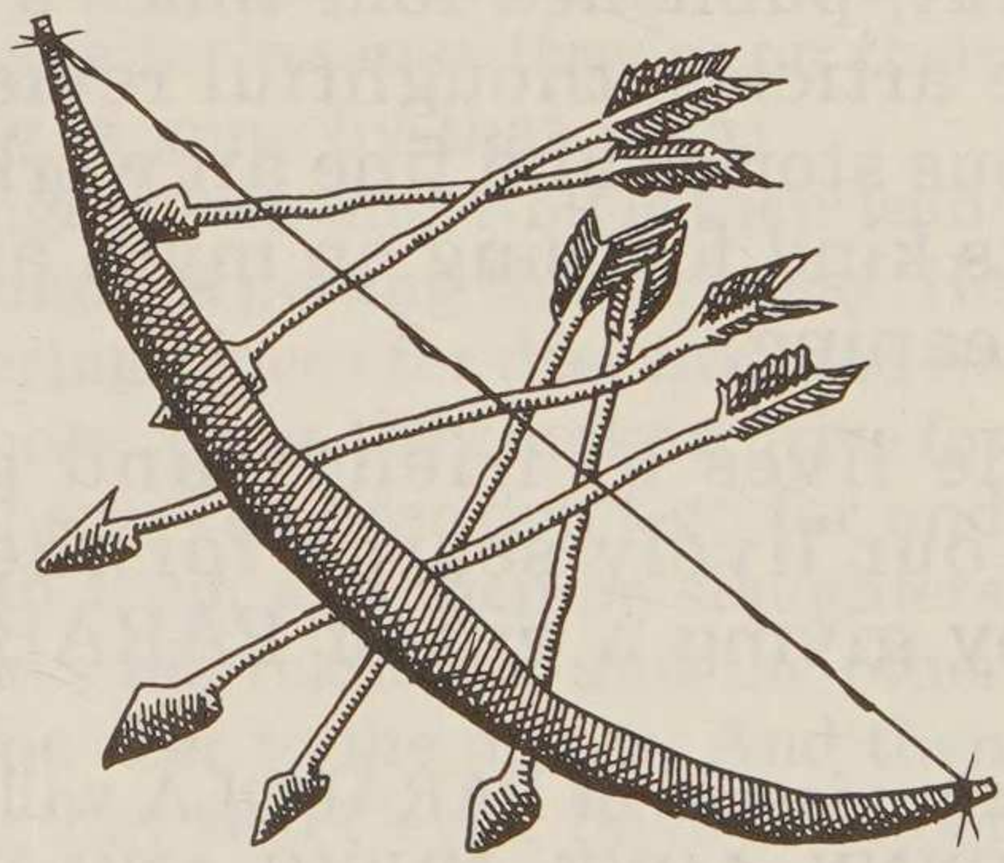
The Parabola Guide

The *Guide,* published twice yearly, is a comprehensive listing of books and events (recent and forthcoming) in the field of religious traditions, new religions and myth. It features a book service which supplies books at a discount of at least 10%. There are regular columns by well-known guest editors and authors, and we list the most significant news and events (seminars, films, lectures etc.) taking place across the country.

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Well, she kept nagging at her younger sister. First she tried to take up for her husband; finally she believed, she understood. "That's true, my older sister is telling the truth." The parents never say anything. They tried to stop their oldest daughter when she hates her brother-in-law and she backbites him. Well, the younger daughter told her Blue Jay: "Listen here. It has been too many days, and we are still on our honeymoon. Listen, think about getting some grub. We have sponged on them too much. Maybe they are getting tired of us. Look at your sister-in-law. They hate us very much. And they are your law relations. They tried to take up for you. They tried to stop their daughter, the oldest one. They said to her: 'Just leave your brother-in-law alone.'" He said to his wife: "Give me a piece of skin, since you complain with me. I haven't got any snow shoes, nor have I got any bow and arrow. I am going to prepare myself."



Well, he got a bow, Blue Jay. Well, the bow he made, it wasn't even that, it was awful. It wasn't any good. And the arrows he got, they are just the same. And even when he put the feathers on those arrows, he just stuck them on. And the arrows weren't good enough. He doesn't make things well enough; his snow shoes, no, they are bad, and they were weak. It was just new shoots that he made the frame with. Well it's not even fit.

Well she finally asked her mother some skin for weaving thread. She said to her: "What's that for?" She said, "Your son-in-law, the one I'm married to, well, he's going with the hunters and he has no snow shoes, and now he's got sticks ready, and he's made frames but he has nothing to lace them in. That's what he told me, and I interpret him to you, maybe you got some hide." She told her: "Well, yes. I keep some in stock. I will give you some." So she started cutting it.

Blue Jay then started stringing the shoes. Well, it

took him one whole day to fix his bow and arrow and his snow shoes. And those that are used to fixing them it takes them a good many days to finish shoe-work or arrow-work. But he, in one day and already he had finished his arrow and his snow shoes. Surely, they're not good enough. They took pains, the ones that know how to fix them. The sticks for the arrows have to be dry, and then they straighten them. Then they fix the feathers on the arrow and the bow the same way. They dry the sticks; when they get dry they whittle them, and they wipe them. Then they use something... I don't know the word... to make it shine in the center of the bow. And then they wrap it with a string, with sinew, and they pitch it. And it doesn't come loose, it's solid. Then it's good and strong. And maybe Blue Jay has got weak arms, because what he made is no good.

The next day it was still dark, and Wolf hollered: "Daylight will overtake us, we will be too late, we're going far. Get up!" Goodness, the people got up, the young folks. They ate, they drinked, they were all ready. He hollered, Wolf was hollering: "All right, we're going." All the young folks started coming out. Blue Jay is there too. He came out.

Blue Jay was still inside, and he coaxed his wife to put his snow shoes on him because he doesn't even know how to tie his shoes. Well, this woman put his snow shoes on him right from inside. My, and how they made fun of him. They laughed at him because he put his snow shoes on from inside. He just takes one step and he hooks on something, Blue Jay. He has to protect himself with his hands. It must be from the snow, and his hands get really cold. I don't suppose he had gloves on and he started sucking his fingers because they're cold.

Then the young ones said: "No, maybe he'll just get out of sight and then he'll go back home because he's way behind. He'll give up, take his head and hang it down, and he'll go back. He's just making us lose time." They walked away. This here Wolf is way ahead. He is making the trail, he fixes the trail for his friends. They go, then they find tracks, and then they scatter. Wolf'll point where to go. This here Wolf is the leader, he is the smartest of all. He goes where the deer goes. Because he is smart and strong. He can go fast.

They were going, and then they see the tracks. Lots of deer where they were feeding. They scattered. There were lots of deer. He stopped. There is a hollow place, it's a big place. The deer must be there. "We didn't scared them. Here are their tracks, they might be still eating." It was broad daylight then. They stopped and he told them: "Are you all here?" They said: "Yes, we are here. Just your brother-in-law Blue Jay, he hasn't come in sight yet. Just as we left, he was falling around because he doesn't know anything about snow shoes, he might have turned back. Let's not wait for him. We're wasting time." Wolf said: "Well, that's right, we saw these tracks, deer tracks, fresh tracks. I don't think they went anywhere. Maybe they are in that hollow, in them slate rocks. We'll scatter. Just when you get to the top there's a saddle. That's where we'll all get back together. If they've already gone over that, then we'll think more how we're going to scatter again."

Blue Jay has been watching for them. He saw his friends all scatter. And he must have good hearing, he heard every word of it. Blue Jay was just putting on, and that's why he fell deep in the snow as if he didn't know his snow shoes. Blue Jay just rised up, kicked the trees. The wind started blowing. The snow on the trees came down to the ground. The snow was floating around the earth. They ran up the hill, these here deer. The same thing happened with the air, they done their best to get where they could get shelter, to a place for shelter where there's no air, and where the snow and wind didn't reach, and where it's still. Blue Jay went up the hill. He went. He got there to the top of the mountain where that low place is. The deer had already gone over. His brother-in-law, he's already went over behind. He started following and he was right in the tracks of his brother-in-law.

Wolf hadn't gone very far, and he heard something. He got the chills. He looked behind him, well, he was being overtaken by his brother-in-law Blue Jay. Then he runs, he's doing his very best. He thought: "Ah, and we thought he couldn't make it, and here I am, the best in hunting, and he overtakes me. It won't be far now, he'll give out." Until he overtakes the deer that's when he'll turn back this here Wolf.

Well, then Wolf run down the hill. His snow shoes

go dust, dust, dust, dust; with the corner of his eyes he saw his brother-in-law. His snow shoes too go dust, dust, dust,dust. He had got used to his snow shoes. Wolf didn't get to the bottom and he got give out. Wolf just tried, couldn't make it and turned around. He was too tired. He told his brother-in-law: "Go ahead, maybe you're a little better off than I am. I'm plum to the end, I'm done tired. Maybe you are stronger," he said. Wolf gave him the way, he stepped aside. Blue Jay made another jump. Just like Wolf never made a move. He started to go. Just like that Blue Jay was out of sight.

Wolf tried his best and finally got to the bottom, because he always tracks the deer. Blue Jay's tracks are right along. It got dark, and it was dusk when he got to the bottom. Deers is laying all over. Well, Blue Jay was busy doing something. That was the last deer. And Blue Jay had got done taking the guts out. And that's when he overtook him. He's got them all killed, the deer. Wolf thought: "From the time I was born, from the time I got my senses nobody could step in front of me. And now this here brother-in-law of mine stepped in front of me. I'm not going to believe it. Maybe I'm just dreaming."

Blue Jay told him: "Well, now let's turn back. We might be too late. Our women are still far away yet, and so is our staying place." Wolf thought, and he figured it's all uphill, and then to the top, then it's all downhill to their houses, and he said: "No, I fear it. I have no more breath from fatigue. All I could do was catch up with you. I can't make it to go up the hill. I'm going to camp here."

Blue Jay had already figured out what to do. The biggest, the leader of the deer that he killed, it had a lot of fat inside of it, he thought. Well he had buried the deer-gift down— that is, deer he gave to the other guy. He broke up the stitches, because he had stitched up the deer. He told his brother-in-law: "You go in here, in this here deer." He told him. "And then you'll live. Well, look how clear it is, it'll be very cold. You'll freeze. What can you do to make fire? What can you do to get wood? Look at all this snow. What can you do to get fir boughs, in the dark, and you're tired besides. That's the only way you can save your life. Don't refuse. If you refuse, you'll die. Don't you get stingy of your wife? You

want to stay alive!"

He coaxed his brother-in-law. Then Wolf believed him. He thought: "I'm all in from tired. What he told me is true." He said: "Yes, I'll take your advice." He told him: "Well, get in."

Well he went into the deer, because it was big and he stitched the deer back, and he put snow back on the deer. Well after he got snow on top, Wolf got warmed up because he still wasn't too cold. He got very hot, sweated; he hadn't got too chilled before.. He really liked how he was getting warm. It was really warm. But he's very hungry. He felt something, the fat. He cut some off, and then he ate. That was delicious. He cleaned all the inside of his gift deer. In a little while since it's fresh deer, he got diarrhea. There's no way of him getting out, because he's sewed up there. Right then Wolf shat himself, he that used to be the boss.

Blue Jay run up the hill, got to the top he run down the hill. He got half way; he got closer to home. Then he hollered and hollered, because that's the way the hunters go when they get late, because their relatives don't go to sleep. They always wait up for them.

They heard. He was hollering. They answered him. They thought: "This is Wolf." This here Wolf's wife pushed her younger sister. She said: "Hah, hurry, fix the fire! Stir it for him! That might be your man that's hollering. Put the coffee on! He must be awful hungry." She's making fun of her younger sister.

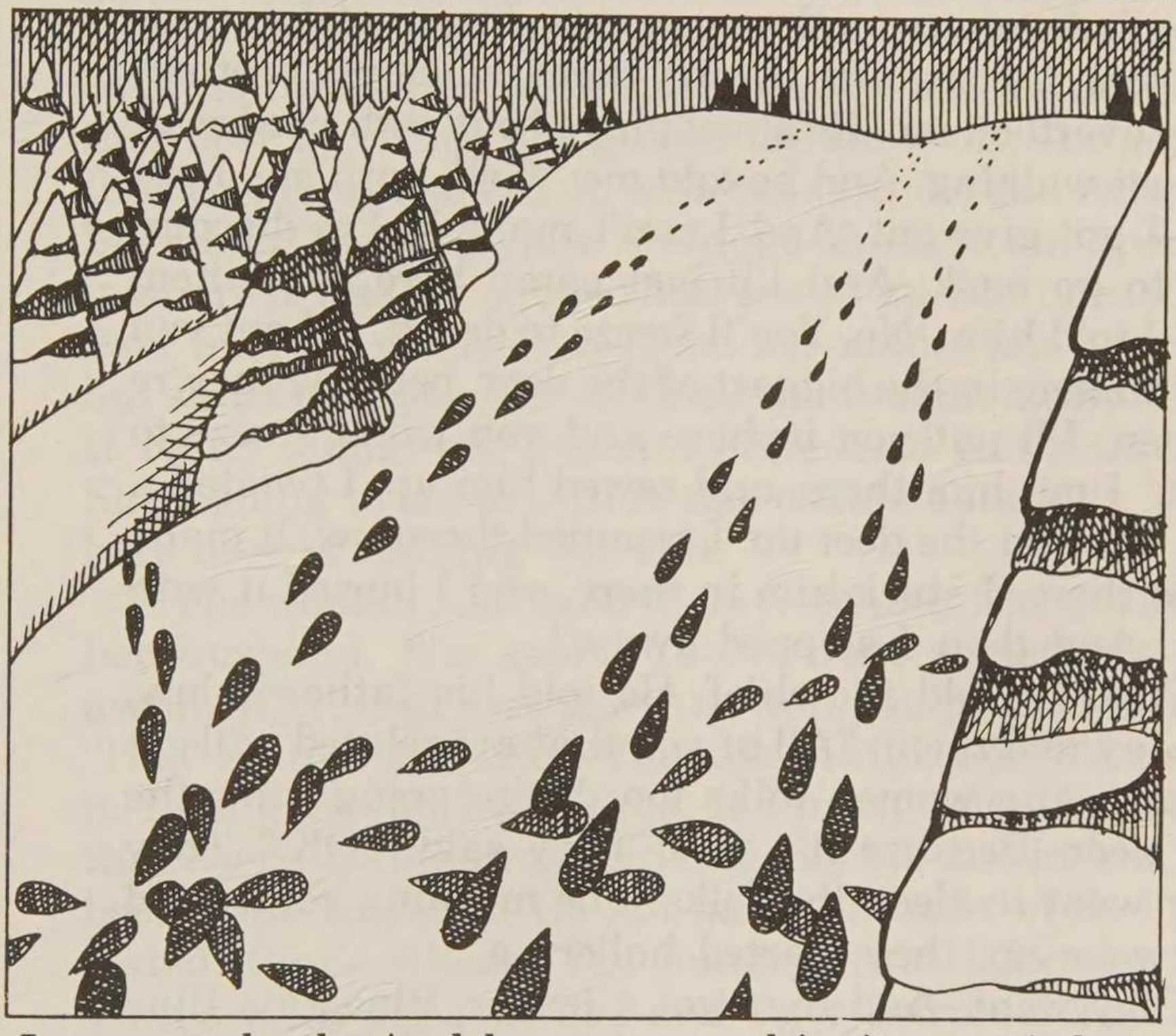
Well they heard him, because the snow shoes are loud, because it's frozen. Puckh, puckh, puckh, puckh. That's snow shoes. The sound is good not as if tired. Well, he came in. He raised the curtain. He came in. He still had snow shoes on. And he sat down.

His wife rushed to him. She put her arm around his neck, and kissed him. She told him: "I bet you're tired." He said: "Yes, yes, I am tired. I've traveled around far. I was all in when I got back. Take my snow shoes off." She took his snow shoes off, and he said: "and my moccasins too, because my feet are wet." Because he had moccasins on. "I got wet when I covered the deer with snow." Well she took his moccasins off. She set dishes for him, a whole pot of food.

Blue Jay was just about to eat and he pulled something from his vest. And he throwed it at his father-in-

law. He said: "Take it, look at this. Then you'll know what this is, you'll wonder what it is." His father-in-law took it. He started to unwrap it. "What part of the deer?" He laid it down, he done like that, and shook it, and put it down; he can't figure out what it is. It doesn't come out right.

The old man went out, because he's the boss, and yelled. He told them: "Come on in. My son-in-law Blue



Jay came back. And he gave me this, it was tied up. And I can't get them together, and I can't get it right. I want you to figure it for me, that's why I am asking you." My, the people run over there because that's surprising news. Well, they all come in the chief's tipi. And it was a full house, the young folks. And the chief gave it to them. They tried to figure it out. No, they couldn't figure out this here ear. They know it's a deer's ear; but it wouldn't match. They even laid it down. One half doesn't fit with the other half. Well no, it didn't match.

Then they asked Blue Jay. They told him: "We are puzzled. What is wrong with this ear, and it won't match?" Blue Jay just laughed and laughed at them, and he told them: "You got no sense. You know it won't match. And each one has one ear. And I marked all of them, just one ear on one side. And if it comes out right,

then it will be easy to count." That's when they all agreed. They understood, and they knowed about the ears. They counted them. There was lots of deer if there is that many ears.

The oldest one, his sister-in-law, asked him, "What became of your brother-in-law? Didn't you see him?" He said: "Yes, we scared a bunch of deer. I just went ahead of him. I left him. The deer had just got down to the bottom and I overtook them. I killed them, finished them all. As many as there are ears. I just got done gutting them, I was going to bury them, when my brother-in-law overtook me. He's just played out with tiredness, he's just walking. And he told me: 'Well, with me, I got tired. I got give out. And I can't make it, I'm discouraged to go back. And I'll just camp here with them deer.' I told him: 'No. You'll freeze to death. I'll put you away in here in the biggest of the deer, because they're all open. I'll put you in here and you won't freeze to death.' I put him there, and sewed him up. I twisted a stick. I sewed the deer up. I tromped the snow. It made a hole there. I stuck him in there, and I buried it with snow. And then I stepped away."

Then he told the chief. He told his father-in-law. Blue Jay told them: "All of you that are related will get up early, the women folks too. We're going after the dead deer. Because it's far." They said: "OK." They never went to sleep, the folks. The morning come, and they woke up, they started hollering.

They went. And they got a leader, Blue Jay. Blue Jay is really smart on snow shoes. He didn't used to know how. And they made fun of him. Blue Jay's wife had also gone along. And his sister-in-law was right behind too, also his mother-in-law and father-in-law, they're behind. And then the rest of the folks, they string along. They went there in a big valley, and at the end there's a little mountain, that's where the low place is. They went right over that hill. Then they went down the hill. They got to the bottom. He told them: "It's right here."

There is lumps all over where the deer is buried. He told his father-in-law: "You are the boss, my father-in-law. You give the meat away. The whole deer." The father-in-law said: "No, even if I'm the chief. You're the one that killed it, you are the one that worked hard. You pass it around. And here I was just setting down,

laying on my back; pulling my whiskers with tweezers. And for me to take the lead to pass it around... You do it!" He said: "OK."

He passed it around. He knows where he put Wolf in the deer. He told his sister-in-law: "That's what I'm going to give you this lump. You dig that out, do what you please, drag it home or skin it, pack it back, do anything. Whatever you think." My, this sister-in-law was glad; I suppose she kissed Blue Jay, his sister-in-law was so tickled. She used to hate him, his sister-in-law, because he was good for nothing. She started digging that deer up. When she got all the snow off, she got to the deer. It was sewed up with the sprig he had twisted. She undid them stitches. She done like that, she opened it where it was cut opened and sewed up. She opened it. And all of a sudden out came her man. He's nothing but shit. Goodness, the stink hit the woman in the nose. It really stunk, her husband. She tried to fix things. She's going to try to skin it. She couldn't stand it. This here deer is nothing but shit.

The woman just stood there frowning. She got after her husband. She said: "You've done something too awful. Why, that was our eats, and you messed it up." "Ha," he told his wife: "You talk pitiful. I didn't mean it. I got give out; I was tired. If I hadn't slept inside of that deer... He done my thinking, my brother-in-law. I'd been froze to death. He left me. In a little while I got rested, that's when I felt hungry. And I ate the fat. That's what done me bad and I got diarrhea. There is no way of me getting out. That's when I done that pitiful thing inside there, I didn't do it on purpose."

They started packing the deer. And Blue Jay got to be the boss. They got all the dead deer back home. They got to drying meat, the men folks to roasting. And the women cutting it open, they started drying it over the fire. Lots of deer meat, each one gets a whole deer. And this here Wolf's woman, I don't think she'll throw it away, whatever she did with it. Maybe she washed the deer. She aired it out till it smelled no more, and then she roasted it.

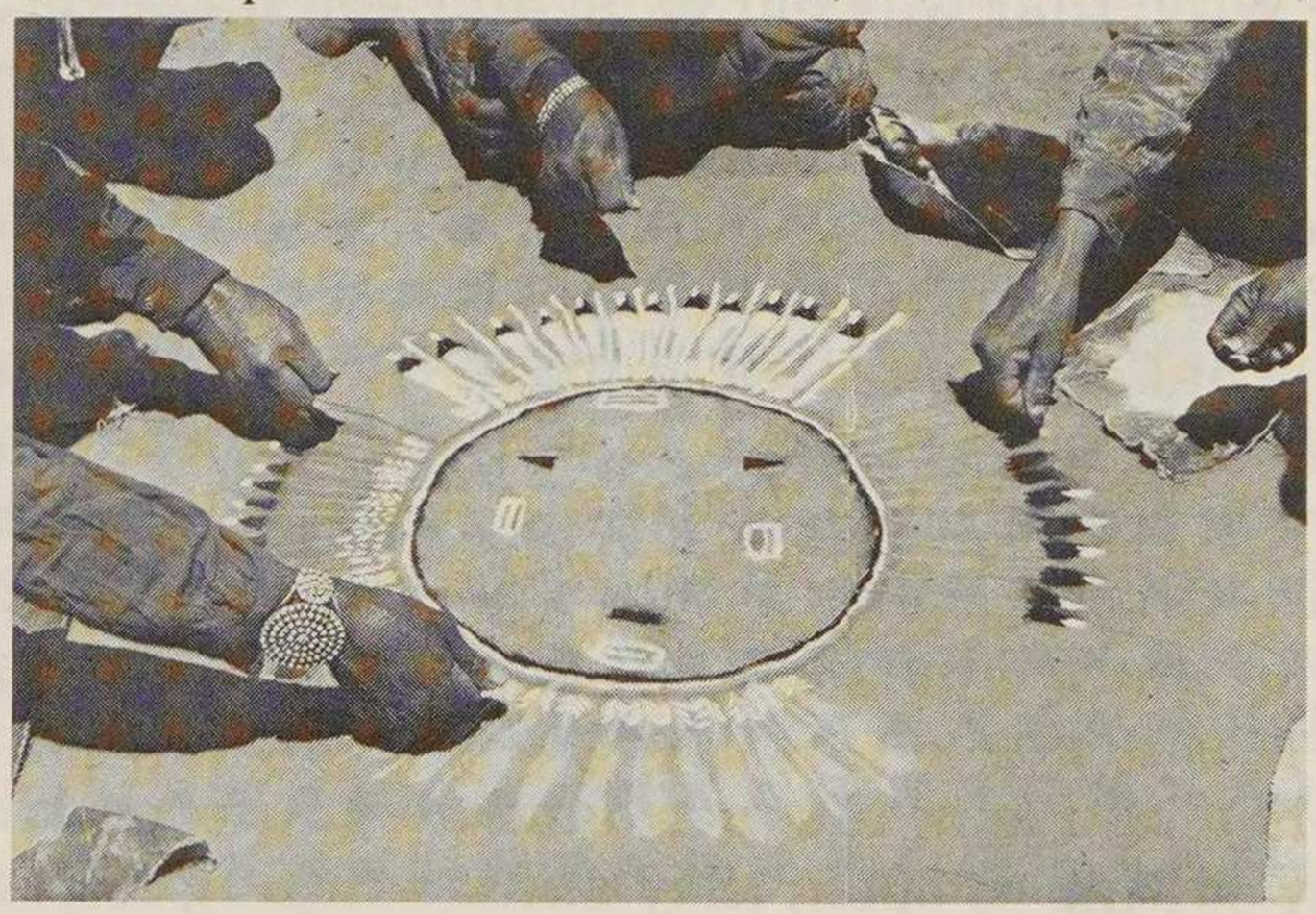
And because it's just fairy tales, I say: The sun is coming up high, it's late, and I'm going to end, like they say in Moses language. With us, we say: "It's the end of the story."

The Demands of Harmony

An Appreciation of Navajo Relations

by Barre Toelken

Literary critics are fond of observing that each work of great literature treats at least one of three relationships: Man and other Men, Man and Nature, Man and God. And students are fond of asking "What else *is* there to talk about, after all?" While the students are accurate in pointing out the obviousness of these sets, we may still use them profitably as coordinates of our own cultural way of abstracting things: we recognize these as separate kinds of relationships which will bear scrutiny, which will allow for recognition and response.



These categories are especially helpful, I think, in providing us with a temporary "place to stand" when we inquire into the nature of important relationships in other cultures. The concept of *relation* itself is of course very broad until it is focused by some particularized inquiry. In the case of the Navajo, what relationships are considered central in these arenas of Man and Man, Man and Nature, Man and God? The answers— even those which can be brought forth in so superficial an essay— are illuminating. Of course, I suspect the matriarchal Navajo might like first of all to rephrase the sets as: Woman to Woman, Woman to Nature, and Woman to Holy Spirits. But in practice they would be sexually more fair; at the same time, they would reveal a basic set of Navajo relationships: The People, The People's relations among themselves; The People and Nature; The People and the Holy People. In this hypothetical renaming of the categories we begin to see our own familiar designations crumble, but in the erosion itself we begin to see more clearly those details of culture-specific attitude which characterize a people's way of looking at the world

d which often sets them sharply apart
m other peoples— in spite of the well-
entioned liberal view that after all "we
all alike under the skin." The tripartite
mework of these relationships, that favor-
device of Western logic and conversa-
n, will also begin to disappear; for the
ıe being, however, precisely because it is
meaningful frame for our own percep-
ns, we may as well keep it artificially
tched together.

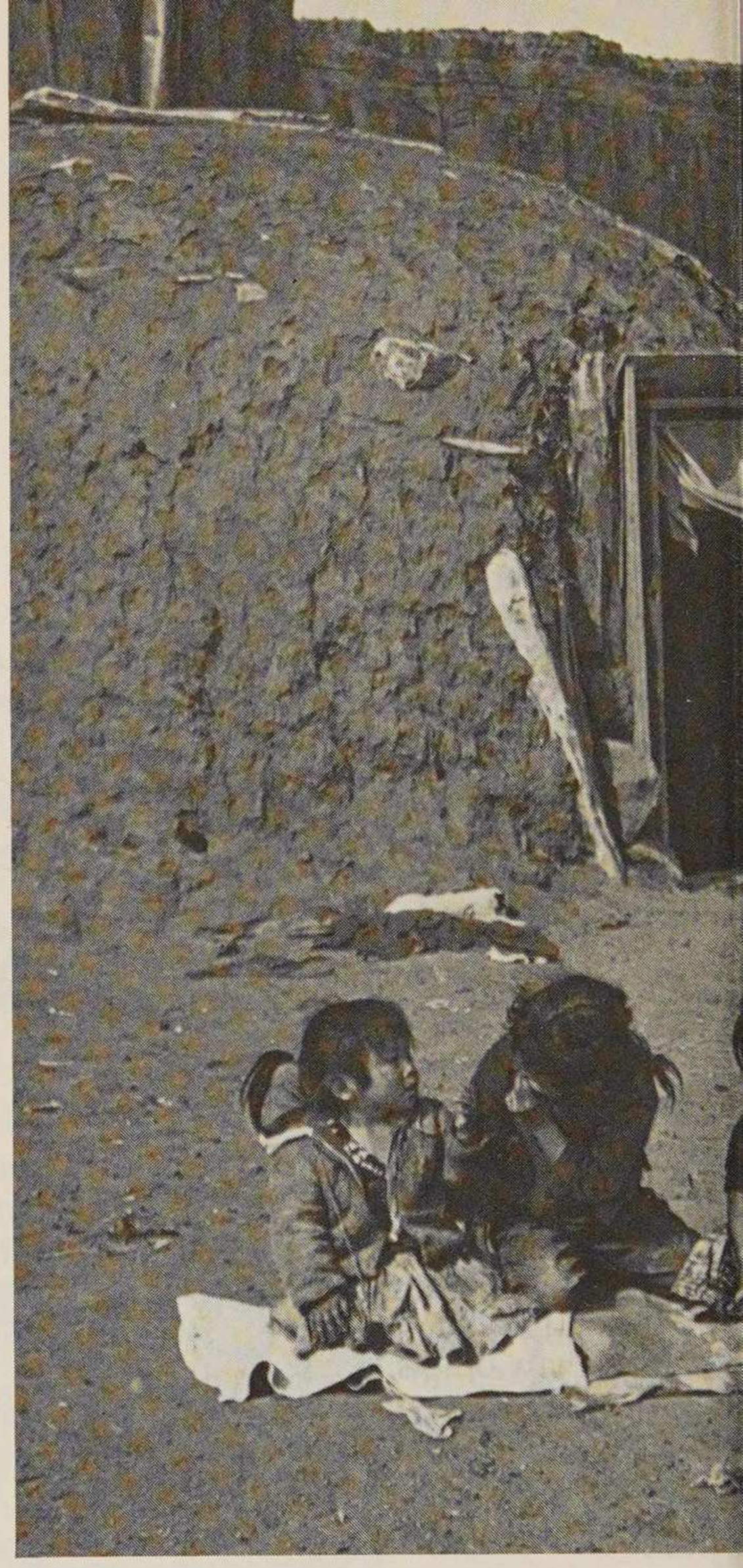
e People and The People

My first direct experience with the for-
lities of Navajo inter-personal relations
me in the mid-1950s when I had to cope
h learning Navajo names. I found out
ough making a number of mistakes that
ch person had several names, some more
portant than others. First of all, each
rson had a "war name," which was
own only to close members of the imme-
te family and was not to be divulged to
ers. This was thought of as a person's
l name, but it was never used in direct
dress, nor was it used among friends in
erence to the person in his absence. For
rposes of conversation about others, each
rson had what I would call a "descriptive
me" which called attention to some fea-
e of his past history, or his looks, or his
uation in life, or his geographical region.
e old man who eventually adopted me
s called by other Navajos (but never to
face) Little Wagon. In the Navajo,
agon translates literally "a piece of wood
ling, wheel-like," and the adjective "little,"
ced after the noun, can mean small or it
mean offspring of. I was never able to
ermine if this old man was the son of
neone called Wagon, but I could see that
was rather small in stature, and I had
rd reference to the fact that when wag-
first became available in that area, he
l bought one of the smaller models. I
nd it was not an uncommon custom for
Navajos to apply descriptive names to peo-
ple that might have a number of possible
meanings. Such names could be humorous
as well as serious delineations; names
ranged from Son of the Late Singer Blind
in One Eye, to names like Old Man by
Chinle Wash Where the Goats Sleep on the
Rocks, to a name for a local woman of
prodigious sexual appetites: Woman Whose
Genitals Are Always Hungry. These names
were used only by others, and were never
used in direct address to the persons so
described.

For direct conversation to take place in
Navajo, some kind of relationship must be
established which becomes the basis for per-
sonal terms used. One refers to his mother
as *shima,* literally "my mother," and to all
other people directly addressed the speaker
must use the formula *shi-X.* Thus one can
refer to another as "my friend," "my mater-
nal grandfather," "my little mother" (the
word usually employed for maternal aunt),
"my older sister," "my granddaughter," "my
close companion" *(shilna'ash,* literally "my
one who travels with me").

This is certainly as much a matter of
Navajo grammar as it is custom, but in
daily practice it insures that conversations
seldom take place unless there is first some
kind of amiable relationship established.
These relationships are almost invariably
matters of family alignment or of function,
and they testify to the basic assumption of
the Navajo that conversation itself is an
enactment of relationships existing between
people. In other words, conversation is not
seen simply as a matter of passing informa-
tion objectively between total strangers, but
it is seen as a form of close relational inter-
course in and of itself.

In addition to a "war name," a "de-
scriptive name" and constantly shifting
terms of personal address, most Navajos
have an "Anglo" name which relates them
to the non-Navajo world. Someone whose
father was called "John" by the Anglos be-



comes John Begay (John's son); the schoolteacher or government employee takes Begay to be the "last name" and sets it down so; since there are twenty or so John Begays in the vicinity each is awarded, gratis, a middle initial (John A. Begay, John B. Begay and so on) or number (John Six Begay). Far from protesting, the Navajos find this a useful custom, for their formal relations with the Anglos require them to have a name; they cannot say their war name, usually will not say their descriptive name, and have no reason to use a relational appellation. Of course the local whites think that the Begays and Bennallys (grandson of) are huge families.

The family relationship for a Navajo is more extensive than the recognition of immediate relationships with parents and siblings. First, each Navajo belongs to two clans; primarly, he or she belongs to the mother's clan, but one is described as being born "for" the father's clan. His relationships with anyone in the clan of his mother are viewed as if they are the relationships of an immediate family: a young man from the Bitter Water clan, for example, cannot marry— or for that matter engage in any amorous actions— with a young woman of that same clan, even if they live miles apart, have never seen each other before, and even if their actual genetic ties are distant. At government boarding schools, it is common for young people attending a dance to ask a stranger initially what clan he or she belongs to before engaging in a public embrace on the dance floor which would be interpretable as incest. Family relationships are thus ritualized, and each Navajo's attention to these details helps to underscore and maintain the deep personal involvement with relational matters in everyday life which may extend far beyond the individual; these responsibilities are thought of not simply as onerous obligations, but as positive aspects of belonging to a large and strong group. On the reservation, this set o relationships has much to do with the maintenance of personal stability.

One of the harshest things I ever hearc said of another person while I lived among the Navajos was "he acts like he doesn't have a family." This accusation, heard a number of times, seemed to be the epitome of personal degradation and lack of responsibility. For a person to act as if he had only himself or herself to care for or be concerned about was tantamount to an admission of interest in, or practice of, witchcraft. This brief essay does not allow an excursion into that fascinating and frightening subject, but it should be at least mentioned here as an adjunct to the topic. If



lose family and clan relationships are basic
o a sense of normalcy in life, if one's re-
iprocal relationships with others are
nought of as a basic premise on which sta-
ility stands, then the lack of those rela-
onships is seen as essentially evil. Those
ho are thought to be witches are usually
haracterized by selfishness, acquisitiveness,
ack of concern for other family members
nd for clan relationships. This would seem
o be another vivid example of the Navajo
nsistence on one's attention to the details
f relation with other People. It is interest-
ng to note in this regard that many
Navajos do not consider the same
elationship a necessity with non-Navajos.
or example, one friend of mine who
nakes mocassins in the traditional way uses

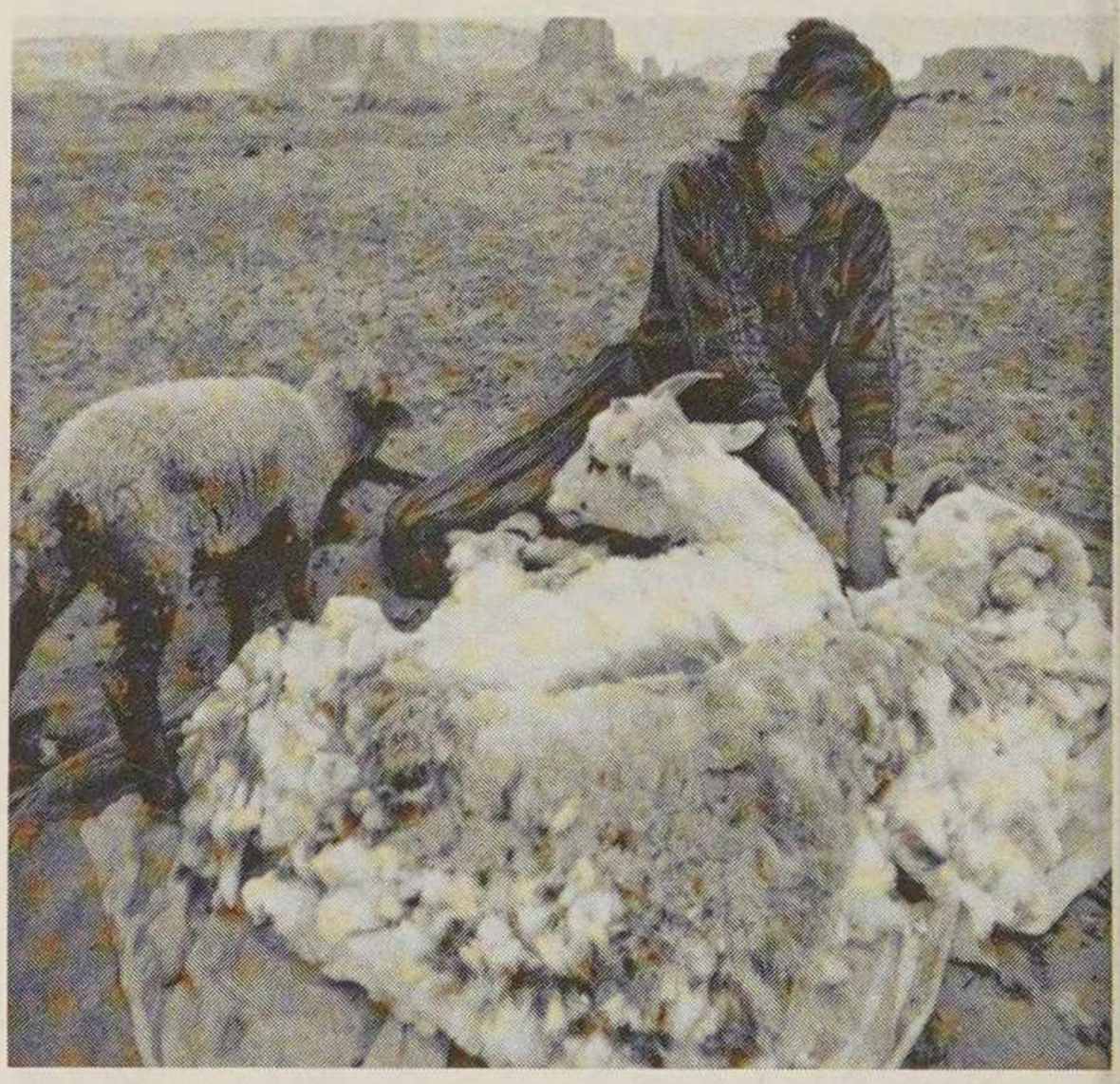
only "sacred deerskin" when he makes mocassins for his family (sacred deerskin is obtained by a special manner of hunting, a special ritual skinning of the deer, and a ritual disposal of the carcass); on the other hand, he feels that mocassins made for sale to tourists do not need to be made of sacred deerskin because "whites don't care about that kind of thing." In this we see a distinct difference from the ordinances carried out by various of the Pueblo tribes for the benefit of all of mankind. The Navajo concern for relationship tends to be directed inward among The People themselves, rather than outward towards the whole world. Nonetheless, as I found out in my own experience there, the Navajos find it rather easy to accept an outsider who is willing to move in with them and live life on their terms. So it is not that they do not care about other people, but that one must move into and within their system for the relationship to "work."

An example of this is the customary way of receiving visitors at a Navajo hogan. If the members of the family are outside, they all run in and shut the door; and each takes his right place in the circle and starts doing whatever is appropriate there. Everyone is occupied. The visitors sit outside for a while, perhaps ten or fifteen minutes, as if to say "we're here"; then one of them knocks, or pushes on the door and if it opens he goes in. Someone inside may call out a Navajo word that means "Straight ahead" or "Come in," and the guest enters and makes the circle sunwise, from left to right, shaking hands quietly with each person. Nowadays there is a good deal of variation, but the old custom was that the women sat on the south— the first person to the left of the door, which is on the east, being the mother or owner of the hogan. This is because the south is represented by the color green of the turquoise,

which stands for fertility and the female generative power. So the first person to be greeted is the owner, and then the other women, and then the men who generally are on the west. The other visitors come in, one or two at a time, and shake hands around the circle, and each one squats or sits down without talking, or with very few words. It is a very delicate way of sharing the living space. The coming together is quiet and low-key, not joyous or noisy; there is a lot of smiling but not much eye-contact. It may be half an hour before a conversation begins to take place, but somehow in the middle of all this a communication is established about the visitors' needs and whether they will stay to eat or sleep. The guests are absorbed into the family circle without disturbing or interrupting it, in the gentlest way possible.

The People and "Nature"

In discussing Navajo attitudes toward relationships with what Westerners call Nature, we find rapidly that the category is inadequate. First of all, Navajos tend to group and categorize things in Nature according to various kinds of ritual usage as well as in terms of shape and movement. For this reason, the word Nature is not as usable for us here as are some clear subdivisions. For example, there is a large frame of reference among the Navajo for what might be called sacred geography and geology. There are the four sacred mountains which relate to the cardinal directions; Navajos feel most stable and secure when they are living within the precincts suggested by these ritual points. Indeed, many Navajo families of my acquaintance carry along with them in their suitcase of ritual materials and items four bags of soil wrapped in sacred deerskin, one from the top of each sacred mountain. In this way,



each family has its own particular physical reference point to those geographical places which bound the Navajo world. One could also mention the volcanic plug called Shiprock which some Navajos believe represents the spot where mankind first entered into this present world. As well, there are many other areas of geologic importance which may be referred to as mythic monuments for the Navajos. Their shape, their form, their structure, their color, all lead to certain details in Navajo mythology in such a specific way that the places themselves are not seen primarily as objects or results of natural phenomena but holy spots bearing continual testimony to the validity of Navajo myth, ritual, and religion.

Indeed, the terrain of the Navajo world is actually viewed as the latest scene in the development of mankind and as such is directly related to those other worlds inside this one through which people and animals passed in order to come here. To put it more simply, this world is a visual confirmation of the previous world, seen in ritual terms, and it physically relates us to the mythic past, not to geologic "fact."

Another aspect of Nature as it is regis-

red by the Navajos could be called sacred tronomy. Again, rather than the sky being en as the arena of free flowing natural henomena, it is referred to as a compen- um of patterns which relate directly to ythic and ritual events. A good number of ar constellations appear in the sand paint- gs which are made to cure people of vari- us sicknesses, and several of the more mplex string figures done as "games" dur- g the winter are representations of ritually nportant constellations.

Relationship with animals are in many ays central to Navajo thought, but the lationships differ according to whether the nimal is wild or domesticated. For kample, relationships with the coyote, the ear, and the spider are all ritualized and eavily ordered by myths and tales. One is ot supposed to mention the word for bear, pecially while traveling alone in the ountains or forest, for surely it will bring rth a bear on the spot. Coyote tales are ot told except in the wintertime. String gures are to be done only in the winter- me, otherwise Spider Woman will become nnoyed and will perhaps capture young eople in her snare. Whatever one makes of ese beliefs, it is clear that they represent mong other things a subordination of hu- an activity, even in areas such as storytell- g and game playing, to religious assump- ons about the proprieties of actions during rtain times of the year. These concepts ear witness to the fact that nature is not en as something outside the people which ust be related to in any kind of practical pproach to survival within it, but, rather, represents a ritual circumstance in which an moves as carefully as in any other rit- l occurrence. The principal parts are al- ays related to each other.

The Navajos' connection with sheep, al- ough it is historically quite recent, is per- ps their best known feature to outsiders. ow the Navajos turned from nomadic nters and raiders into such avid herders sheep may never fully be appreciated; rtainly it is due in large part to the "en- uragement" of the U.S. Government, but e sheep have assumed such an important sition in Navajo life that there must be her philosophical and cultural reasons be- nd the economic and political dilemmas of the 1860s. The sheep do not show up prominently in any particular ritual that I know of, but they have become basic to the Navajo concept of relationship between people and fertility of the land. The woman of any family, since she is not only the matriarch but because it is from women that fertility proceeds, is usually the owner of the family's flocks. Thus women and sheep are central images in today's Navajo concept of stability and process in Nature. If something goes wrong with the grass or the rainfall, if sheep are getting sick, it is blamed on something unnatural and infertile in the world (in most conversations I heard, the blame was usually laid on the proximity of white people or attributed to intrusions of the U.S. Government). So central are sheep to the Navajos' relationship with the occurrences of everyday life that when anthropologist John Adair and filmmaker Sol Worth wanted to do some research on Navajo filmmaking, they were asked by a local medicine man if the filming would hurt the sheep. When they replied in the negative, they were asked if the filming would *help* the sheep. When they were forced to admit that filmmaking would not help the sheep either, they were asked by singer Sam Yazzie, "Then why make films?" When I showed my adopted Navajo father a news photo of the Empire State Building, his first question was, "How many sheep will it hold?" I first took his query to be related to the perception of space, then I assumed it was sarcastic in nature, and finally I realized that what it meant was "what is that thing good for, in terms of anything that relates to my way of life?"— obviously a complex cultural question to ask, and askable only in terms of those relationships which the asker recognized as valid.

Other ritual categories cause items from different parts of nature (as the Western eye would see them) to be grouped together; for

example, in one category of medicine we will see stone arrowheads, corn pollen, lizards, and lightning, all in the same category because they are all used medicinally in a particular curing ritual. Even though these items come from "different" parts of nature, and would therefore be discussed under different headings by a scientific-minded person in Western culture, a Navajo would assert that just as naturally they go in the *same* category because they are ritually connected. It is for reasons like this that the consideration of the relationship between "Man and Nature" must be re-examined, at least from the Navajo point of view. As one sees these various natural phenomena appearing in Navajo conversation and custom, one realizes that they actually fall into our third category, relationships that exist between People and the Sacred; indeed, there seems to be no Navajo basis for separating these sets of relationships from each other to begin with. If it has been worthwhile for me to do so here, it is primarily because it has led to a demonstration of the culture-specific basis for the category itself.

The People and The Sacred

The *yei* are hard to define using English words. They are very much in the nature of *kachinas,* the sacred embodiments of cosmic forces made manifest in physical form when humans dedicated to the task assume their clothing and song for the purpose of ritual. The *yei* whose figures appear on the floor of a hogan in the complex sand paintings used for healing are no less real than the *yei* who appear in the dances using a human being for locomotion. Dealing with the *yei,* in other words, is not a matter of make-believe; rather, it is an attempt to align The People with the actual forces which surround them by making manifest the close relationship, practically the identity, between the two spheres of interest. During a healing ritual, for example, the patient is caused to walk around on the delicate sand painting of the *yei,* and through ritual is closely identified with each one and with the world of reality they live in. Psychologically, the patient is taken from his own context, the interior of his own hogan usually, and is described as standing on patterns, ledges, floating through the air with jewels, and other kinds of suggestive actions which bring the person simultaneously into two dimensions: this world and the "other world" interpenetrate and reciprocate at the point of the ritual. The patient is made whole, it is hoped, partly by the application of medicines, and partly by the forced realization of a deeper relationship between the person and sacred forces than might be evident in everyday life.

On another level, relationships play an equally important role in healing ceremonies (perhaps it is well to mention in passing that *all* Navajo ceremonies have to do with healing). In addition to the ritual itself, which relates the patient to the *yei,* there is the gathering of relatives and friends who share in the healing ceremony and who usually are administered the same medicines taken by the patient. It is as if one's relations are potentially ill, or perhaps likely to become ill, if one among them is sick. In any case, the participants in the healing ceremony are not present in the role of onlookers, but as actively involved components of the ceremony: they may sing and chant along with the singer when requested to do so, they spend a good deal of time concentrating on the health of the patient (especially the restoring of stability and health to particular affected parts of his or her body), and in sharing the medicine with the patient they proclaim a close

lational tie both with his sickness and his re.

It would be possible, on the basis of ch sketchy evidence, to make one of ose grand, romantic summations showing at for the Navajos, all parts of nature are lated; animals, plants, and people exist as others and sisters in a stable world; man- nd has close relatives in the other world th whom he may share his sicknesses and oes and from whom he may expect suc- r. But I think the evidence does not al- w us to entertain such dreamy conclu- ons. It is indeed true that the Navajo me life, in the immediate family, is ex- emely warm and supportive. There, rela- onships are at their most informal and ep interactions are expressed with an notional power that would surprise most tsiders. However, beyond the immediate mily, it seems to be that the relational eas are applied as ritual metaphors, not loving extensions of the family circle. At ast I have never heard a Navajo speak of ing a brother to his sheep, a sister to the *i,* a cousin of the bear. Rather, the rela- onships seem to be part of the tremen- ously complex system of ritual enactments e aim of which is to maintain stability in world which inclines toward instability. ost of the serious relationships are in- ked at times of ritual enactments, when e illness of a patient is central to every- e's concern. It is an extension of the be- f that one can always call upon relatives help out in a dilemma, and it is based the assumption that relatives must help they are indeed part of the system. But it ritual enactment and mythic system and igious belief which compel the relation- ips to work beyond the immediate family. ese are obligations a Navajo feels as he oves through a world which is ordered re by ritual order and by its opposite— disorder of sickness— than by broad natural forces.

The system is impressive to us because of its assumption that all phenomena are integrated and interdependent, not extractable and abstractable from each other. Similarly, individuals are integrated and interdependent with other individuals in the culture, and are not encouraged or expected to be totally independent agents. While individuality is allowed, and expected, it is always tailored to the larger ritual expectations of the group. Rather than viewing the Navajos as some kind of primitive desert "flower children," moving easily through a harmonious world because of their recognition of the relationship among all things in nature, we need to recognize that the Navajos are participants in an extremely rigorous philosophical and ritual system which places demands on individuals that most non-Navajos would find it difficult to cope with.

One can only begin to imagine the terrible impact on the Navajo and on other tribes of a system in which realities are always separable, discussable, abstractable; in which people are expected to be in competition with each other in order to be thought of as healthy individuals; in which animals are objects of scrutiny or quarries in the hunt rather than ritual counterparts in a complex and delicate environment; in which the stars are in random order and the gods are not partly ourselves; in which all multiform and delicate relationships necessary for stability in the world can be subdivided into three main parts and discussed in an essay.

TELLING STORIES

A Conversation with Diane Wolkstein and Paul Jordan-Smith

At the core of Parabola *lies a profound respect and love for true stories. They provided the impulse that began our venture, and it is the search to understand their meaning that maintains it. Most of the time we have to settle for encountering these stories in print, but anyone who has ever had a story told to them knows the difference. For complex and partly mysterious reasons, there seems to be no better medium for transmitting the essential qualities of myth and story than the human voice.*

Feeling that this dimension is often overlooked in our society, we asked Diane Wolkstein and Paul Jordan-Smith, two contemporary storytellers, to share their perceptions and experiences as students of the oral tradition.

Ms. Wolkstein is New York City's official storyteller and is known to the many children and adults who come to hear her tell stories in front of the Hans Christian Andersen statue in Central Park. She has travelled throughout this country and the world collecting new stories and is heard regularly on her own radio program. In her course on storytelling at the Bank Street College of Education, she stresses her main rule for successful storytelling: tell the story you love.

It's a rule she follows herself, and she demonstrates its effectiveness everytime she tells a tale. I must confess to some surprise at being so captured by her stories: Ms. Wolkstein gives an impression of vulnerability, almost of frailty, and has what might be considered anything but a commanding voice. But whenever she began a story, I was completely in her hands.

Ms. Wolkstein has also written a number of books for children, and their variety speaks of her wide-ranging interests. The Cool Ride in the Sky *is a black American folk tale,* The Squirrel Song *is adapted from a Hopi Indian story,* The Visit *is an original bedtime tale for four-year-olds, and* The Magic Orange Tree *contains twenty-seven stories Ms. Wolkstein collected in Haiti (all from A.A. Knopf). Her most recent work is a beautifully illustrated Sufi tale called* The Red Lion *(Crowell-Harper).*

Paul Jordan-Smith is known to readers of Parabola *as the editor and major contributor to the "Epicycles" section of this magazine. He began bringing the stories his father told him to his fifth grade show-and-tell sessions, and has been collecting and telling stories ever since.*

L.K.



Right: Diane Wolkstein, Hans Christian Andersen, Paul Jordan-Smith

ul Jordan-Smith: Everytime I find yself on the spot telling stories a question ises in me. Why tell stories? Why am I re in front of a group of people, why are ey there?

iane Wolkstein: One of the reasons I tell ories is because I get caught by an image a story. It is so strong for me that I ant to tell the story just to get closer to e image.

There's a particular story I'm thinking out. It's a Chinese tale about a man who alks home in the evening. On the road, he es a beautiful white stone shining in the oonlight. He goes and picks up the stone. ut it's not a stone, it's a snail, and the ell is not white, it's every color of the rainbow. Then the story goes on, but just that particular image of finding a white stone in the moonlight strikes me. Imagine, you go out and you find what you think is a stone, what you think is dead, but no, it's gleaming, and when you touch it it's living. A tiny dark creature is alive inside. Now what will happen? Will the man let the snail into his life? And why has the snail come to him? All this, from the white stone gleaming in the moonlight— and beginning to be transformed.

I guess other stories appeal to me because of their ideas or their humor. Last week I told the story of a poor water carrier who went to see Moses, the great Prophet Moses. Listen, I'm going to end up just telling you stories, but this is a fantas-

tic story. I'll tell you the beginning. A poor man once went up to the great Prophet Moses and asked him: "Why is my fate so terrible? And why does the chief merchant have so much he can not even count it?" Moses answered: "That's the way it was written in the beginning." "Well then," said the poor man, "since you're on your way to Mt. Sinai can you ask God if he couldn't change his writing?" "What?" cried Moses. "Well, just a little adjustment would be a great help." "No," said Moses, "no changes are ever made." "Well," continued the poor man, "since you are going there anyhow, what harm would it do to ask?" Moses finally agreed. He went to Mt. Sinai, spoke with God, but as he was leaving God called out to him: "Moses, didn't you forget something? Didn't you forget the message from the water carrier?" Moses said, "But you know everything, surely you know that too." "Yes," God answered, "but still, you must ask. Now go and tell the water carrier the writing on his forehead has been changed."

Lorraine Kisly: That's marvelous!

D.W. That's not all! So the water carrier gets up the next morning, and he's passing the chief merchant's house. And a woman comes out and asks "Can you carry water?" And he says, "What do you think my bucket and rope are for?" She says, "Yeah, but it's a lot of water because my daughter is getting married and I need every vessel filled." So he fills them up and by then it's the afternoon and he's completely exhausted. The woman asks her husband if they could give him some dinner. The husband says they could except that he's dressed in rags. So she says, "Couldn't you lend him some of your clothes?" So they dress him up and he looks like the chief merchant, or something like that— he looks wonderful! The governor comes in and sees this man sitting in the corner and asks the chief merchant, "Who's that?" And the chief merchant is embarrassed, so he says "It's my nephew." And the governor says "That's your nephew and you want to marry your daughter to a stranger? That's nonsense, you marry your daughter to your nephew." And so he's married to the chief merchant's daughter. That night no one can sleep. The chief merchant's wife gets up and looks through a crack in the door to see what's going on and nothing's happening. The only thing that's happening is the groom is walking up and down and up and down and he's screaming. And she runs to her husband and says "Not only do we have misfortune, we have craziness. You have to come and see." They go and they see him walking up and down screaming, "You changed it! You changed it! You changed it!" They can't understand what's going on so they open the door and they go in and they say, "Are you crazy? Shall we lock you up? Or is it just joy?" Moshe, no longer just a water carrier, says, "It's beyond everything." "Well, what is it?" He says, "I can't tell you. It's the secret I can't tell." They say, "But you're in the family. All secrets have to be told." So he says, "OK, I'll tell you. You see I asked Moses to ask God if He would change my fate. And God said He would change it. And he changed it! He *really* changed it! He really, really changed it! He changed it! Last night I slept on the earth, I had no blanket, only the sky. And he changed it. Tonight everything is mine." And everyone fell on their knees and they gave thanks because a miracle had happened and they were close to it.

The thing I love about this story is that the man is in such a state that all he can say is it really happened.

But to go back to Paul's question of why tell stories, I think it's because of something within a story that you love so much you want to share it because you think that thing is the most amazing thing you know.

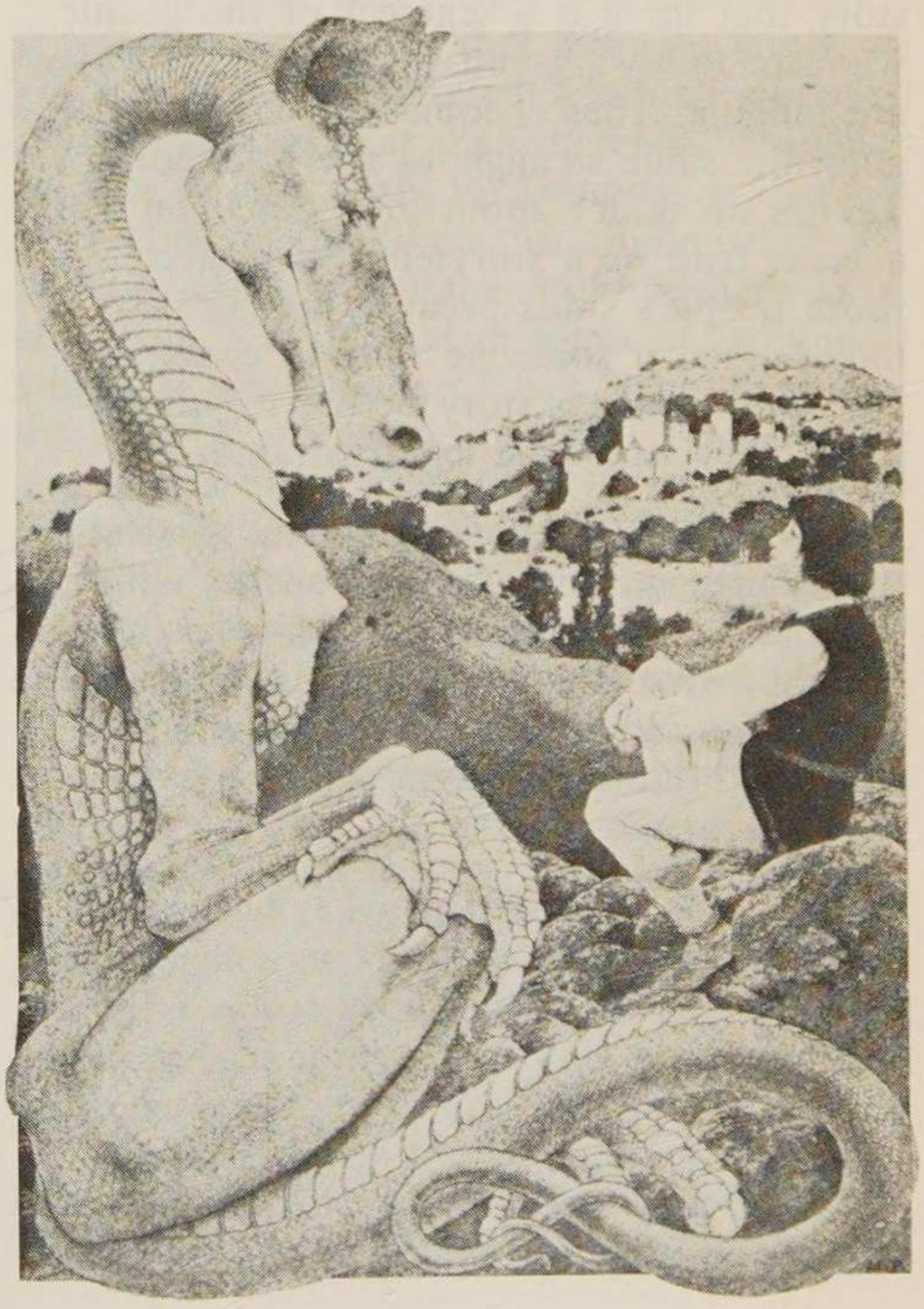
P.J.S. Exactly. And our conversation is demonstrating the sort of effect that has. The two of us have just been your audience, and the attention that has come up among the three of us as a result of your beginning a story is remarkable. We are in a sense, strangers, and suddenly there is relationship— the relationship of a storyteller to his audience. Isak Dinesen said once that she was asked to tell a story when she was with some members of an African tribe who were very good storytellers. She said suddenly her mind went blank. She didn't know what to say. She started out telling a story about a man who

ke up one morning and went out onto
plains. And there he met another man.
soon as the other man was brought into
story and a meeting took place the at-
tion of everybody was riveted. They
ln't care *what* happened from that point
; the point was that *something* was going
happen. Just that image— exactly as you
re saying earlier— that image reached
t and caught something. The way Diane
ought what touched her, touched all of us
re.

K. In relation to this question of audi-
ce and storyteller, in how many cultures
there an exchange between the two? I'm
nking of what goes on between a black
ptist preacher and his congregation where
speaker is constantly supported by the
ense response of his audience.

W. I think that's the usual situation. I
n't know of any original culture in which
audience is separated from the story-
er. The story belongs to everybody. The
dience is part of the story. The storyteller
l often say, "Here's a story for you and
me." And that gets us to the difference
ween a storyteller and an actress. An
or or actress is separated from the audi-
ce and acts as though the audience wasn't
re. Each storyteller goes into a magic
rld and the relationship is always that
storyteller and the audience are going
re together. The storyteller leads the aud-
ce into the magic world. The actor is
eady in it and he has no control over it,
l in the end the actor does not take the
dience back to reality, the curtain does.
at's why in storytelling the beginning and
end is so important. You often have
se formulae for entering the story world
l then for coming back from that world
h as: "Once upon a time," or "once there
s and once there was not" and then
lings, such as: "My tale I've told it, your
cket shall hold it, dilly-dom dory, that's
end of my story" or "I was passing by
l saw it all but the King he kicked me
l that's how I got here to tell you the
ry" and then of course, the one we are
st familiar with, "happily ever after."
e of my favorites is: "and if they are not
d, then they are living still."

.S. What do you think of the stand-up



comedians? Particularly those of the sixties, like Mort Sahl and Shelley Berman who told stories which were emblems of contemporary life. In their recording of nightclub performances, you can hear laughter of recognition, as if the audience was at least partially taken into that world.

D.W. Well, that is a part of storytelling, but for the most part the storyteller isn't engaged in attacking the audience. Usually the attack is taking place in the story and the struggle in the story is the important thing. It is not happening between the storyteller and the audience. What you describe sounds to me a little like Brechtian theater. In Brechtian theater Brecht is asking the audience to consider at every moment where they are and what they think. Storytelling works on a different level— if you bring only the intellect, there is no healing. Part of storytelling is the idea of non-interruption. You enter a world, go through a situation and have the situation resolved within that world. And then it's finished. But if you interrupt it, it can't struggle its own struggle. I'm sure, Paul, you've seen sometimes when you're telling a story that there is a segment of the people who are following you so intently their eyes are bulging. These people are actually struggling the same struggle as the protagonist. There's no doubt about that. And you feel a great trust as a storyteller to protect those people's souls because they are so naked. And if someone were to come in and interrupt that story before it was finished, they would be left frustrated.



P.J.S. Frequently, telling stories at schools or libraries, a mother will drop her child off, finish her shopping and announce to the child that it's time to go. In the *middle* of a story. Whenever that happens I have a sense of brutality, of something violent done.

L.K. I was interested in what was said about the audience really being engaged in a struggle as they listen to a story. I think you expressed very well why it is that you tell stories, and this comment about struggle leads to the other side of the question which is, why listen to them? Many people vaguely assume, for example, that a child's

e is enriched by stories, and that they ould read their children bedtime stories, thout having a very clear idea of why it a valuable activity. I have never really ought clearly about what kind of effect ories have on children— or on adults her for that matter.

J.S. I think it depends very much on at kind of story is being told. There are kinds of stories. There are some which e of a very poor quality. What are they ing, what are they feeding to the child? story feeds a certain kind of impression a child and it can serve various purses. The question is, of what value is a ry to a child, morally or spiritually?

W. I tend to look at this question not terms of what a story gives a child, but at a story gives a person. We always ake a mistake when we try to answer in ms of what it gives a child, because we ally don't *know* quite what it gives a ild. We think we know, and we can guess out it. For example, I would probably ree that it gives all the things that Bettelim says it gives in *The Uses of Enchantnt,* and more! But we really don't know.

A better place to start is how *you* unrstand it and what happens to *you* when u hear a story and to know, really, what being given to you. The same thing that's ing given to you is being given to the ld. We may all be on different levels of velopment, but we are all human beings d all over the world there are human begs who want to hear these stories. And y they want to hear these stories goes ht back to why each person wants to ar a story. I think it has to do with mething Jung said: If you have a problem en you're young, don't think that the oblem will ever go away. It never goes ay and it will never be solved, you just rk on it all your life. All the things ound that you can't make sense of— the aos and ecstasy of our own emotions, the ole inner world which we don't have rds for— those are the things which the ries are about and we're dealing with m at every age of our life.

The wonderful thing about stories is t they present deep psychological and taphysical truths, but in a poetic form which is gripping, beautiful, and— entertaining. I've been telling stories on the radio for ten years, and you've got to be somewhat entertaining to do that. Strangely enough, the majority of mail I receive is from fans over fifty. It may be that the older you get the more you recognize the truth in them— or the more you know you need them. Life doesn't always become simpler with aging.

P.J.S. Is it necessary always to be able to relate the story to oneself? Certainly a child cannot understand certain stories the way an adult would.

D.W. I believe the stories work for a child just as they do for an adult. As you look at an audience, you can see that there are a certain number of people who are attached to the story with their entire self— it is their story. It might be a story that belongs to one adult and not another. Or a story that belongs to one child and not another. Adult or child, a story can be *yours,* or not. It grips you completely if it is— and if it doesn't, you simply enjoy it.

P.J.S. I think that's true, but I also think it is important to see that different levels are involved with different kinds of stories. Bettelheim says that the difference between fairy tales and myth, for instance, is that fairy tales are predominantly optimistic, while myths are fundamentally pessimistic in character. I think that in terms of "coping with real-life situations," he's right. But to me in myth we are dealing with questions and events on a different level. Bettelheim, given as he is to psychoanalytic terminology, talks on the level of the "superego" in conflict with the "id." For everyday life situations, myth is inappropriate because its questions and demands treat personal crises as obstacles not to be resolved for the peace of the hero's life, but suffered unresolved, if necessary, for the sake of a higher goal— a goal on the cosmic level, not the ontic level of the hero's life.

Let's talk more about myth. Does a myth function differently from a folk tale, fairy tale, legend, fable, parable?

D.W. I think there is a difference between myth, fairy tale and folk tale, and part of

the difference was visible, Paul, when you told the Welsh myth in Central Park last Saturday. When you began the myth, you began with a sort of mantle on you, and it takes a while to enter it because it is "otherly." Part of the mantle is related to the fact that it's a story about a whole tribe, so it's invested with more than other kinds of stories. Fairy tales may be about one psyche, but a myth is about a whole people and their relation with the supernatural, and good and evil. As such one feels it is more important, more weighty.

L.K. Paul retold the "Breath of Brahma" in the last issue. That seemed to me to be on the level of myth without specifically relating to a group of people or historical event. It dealt with another level of time, another level of being. There is a vertical dimension in that story which seems to be in contrast to the horizontal level of the fable of the fox and the grapes.

P.J.S. I think that this dimension must be *the sacred*— that is, precisely this vertical element that you are asking about: the above and the below. But there's another dimension to this, and that is that the demands imposed in stories of all categories— tasks, if you will— and the obstacles and rewards, belong in myth to a different level of interpretation, one that is *qualitatively* distinct from that of the other categories. Bettelheim calls the level of the fairy tale "psycho-social," and I take that to refer to the plane of ordinary existence, where relationships are between two human beings, or between two aspects of the same human being. Without saying whether Bettelheim is right or wrong in his psychoanalytic approach, we could say that fairy tales, if indeed they do refer to an individual's struggles and conflicts— or at least, insofar as they can be taken that way— do so on the same level of existence, even if not the same "psychological" level, as most other cultural activities and expressions.

L.K. And you feel that myth is fundamentally different?

P.J.S. Yes, I feel it refers to a totally different plane of existence, one so beyond this ordinary one where our wants, needs, likes and dislikes shape our lives that the tasks, obstacles and rewards in myths seem remote and, to use the word Bettelheim himself uses, *implacable.* The demands of the gods are implacable. The obstacles in the tasks are impossible to overcome without the help of the gods. And the reward, when it is attained, is *apotheosis:* not happiness in this sphere, but elevation to a new, divine or semi-divine status: transformation not in terms of resolved conflicts of the superego and id, but in terms of Being and Knowledge. I think the best clarification of this can be found in Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces.* Myth has to do with transformation in the religious dimension; compared to the subjective attitudes and achievements of the other types of tale, attitudes and achievements in myth are objective. Tragedy occurs in myth typically because the hero's subjective attitudes and needs and wants act as obstacles to his achievement of the implacable— which means *unavoidable*— demands of the gods. Perhaps that is why the obstacles are impossible to overcome without divine intervention: trapped in trying to resolve ordinary conflicts, man is thereby cut off from God. What is required is a leap beyond this ordinary plane, and this man cannot do by himself.

L.K. It seems to me that most of the books for children today, even when they are adapted from traditional material, concentrate on "teaching" children about this ordinary level and how they can adapt themselves to it. Do you find this?

D.W. Yes, I do. Editors of children's books are always asking for rational explanations of situations. In *real* stories, just as in life, there are often gaps where there *is* no explanation of why this or that happened. When I'm telling a story to my daughter, she will sometimes ask: "Why did that happen?" Editors are terrified that a child might ask why and not have an immediate answer and explanation. To me, part of the communication the reader of the story has with the child lies in just such a question. They ask you why, and through the explanation of the why you come closer to the story and to each other. But today, editors feel a pressure to fill in and answer those gaps and questions.



I'll tell you another story about a poor water carrier and show you what I mean. This is a Hasidic story about a water carrier who went to synagogue on Rosh Hashanah to see his Rabbi, the Seer of Lublin. The Seer of Lublin turned to him and said, "Go home, leave the synagogue." The water carrier left, but he didn't go home. Instead, he met a friend, and the friend said: "You look terrible, come to the tavern, things will improve." So he went with his friend, and all his friends wished him life and blessed him with forty glasses of vodka. He got so enthused, he went back to the synagogue, knocked on the door, and then was terrified that he had disobeyed. But when the Seer of Lublin opened the door, he said, "Moshe, Moshe, I'm so glad to see you." The water carrier said, "Rabbi, surely I'm going crazy. One moment you tell me to go away, the next moment you tell me you are glad to see me." And the Seer of Lublin said, "When I saw you this morning, I saw the Angel of Death standing next to you, and I knew you only had one hour left to live. I thought it would be best if you spent the last hour with your family. But when all your friends blessed you and wished you life and peace, the Angel of Death fled. For no Angel of Death can stand beside a man so blessed with the blessing of all his friends."

Typical kinds of questions an editor might ask about a story like this are: "Who's the hero of this story? The Seer of Lublin, or Moshe? How did Moshe get what he wanted if he disobeyed the Seer of Lublin? Wasn't the Seer of Lublin wrong when he told him to go home? Didn't he make a mistake? Or did he understand what would happen? All of this should be made clear in the story." But those are the questions that make the story wonderful. To answer them would mean making it into a different story— maybe a more rational and practical story, but one without the other dimension we were talking about which makes it more of a true story.

L.K. Do you think there is a significant difference between reading a story and telling it from memory?

D.W. Bettelheim says something very lovely about Goethe's mother telling him stories

every night. As she was telling him stories she would look into his eyes. She would see when something was going wrong and he was becoming upset; she would see the tremor and the fear in his eyes, and she would rearrange the story so that he would become calm and able to go on and to follow it. That's the big difference in telling and reading. You read the story and you don't know where anybody is because you only see the words. When you tell the story, if you open your eyes, you can see exactly where everybody is and can modulate it, modify it and rearrange it, change the nuances and build up certain parts, let go of other parts, according to what's happening with the audience. Now, one time I was going to tell a series of stories in Boston. It takes a lot of thought to plan the order of the stories you are going to tell. I told three Andersen stories, and the audience got more and more excited. They got so high that they reached a pitch of laughter— they just became hilarious, and I couldn't go on; I simply couldn't tell any more. Everyone had come to the top of the ceiling. They were filled, and I had to end the program early. But it was finished. And I knew it and they knew it, and there was a wonderful moment when I said, that's the end. That kind of rapport happens when you see exactly what's happening between you and the audience.

L.K. That relates again to the idea of the storyteller as a guide. And if you're a guide, you have to see where the people who are following you are!

P.J.S. I often get asked the question by parents who want to tell children stories and want to tell them well, what techniques to use.

D.W. Tell the stories you love and then, if you are serious, go out and listen to other people tell stories. If you want to paint or draw well, you would go to a museum or an art gallery. If you want to learn to tell stories, go to your library (to the preschool hours or the family story hours), go to storytelling festivals. The National Association for the Preservation of Storytelling has a wonderful festival each year the first week in October in Jonesboro, Tennessee. Storytellers come from all over the country. There are guest storytellers and story swapping for three days. Start your own storytelling group or festival. In February at The Open Eye in N.Y. we are going to have four Storytelling evenings for adults called: "Evening Tales by Candlelight."

L.K. Do you tell stories differently from other storytellers?

D.W. I sing. I dance. I jump about— depending on the story. In Haiti, where I've been collecting stories for five years, I listened to over four hundred storytellers— each has his or her own style. There is no one way. There is the story and the heart and soul and self of the storyteller. Lately I've wanted to use more music with my stories— singing opens the heart and the story goes in easier, so I've been making up songs to go with the stories.

L.K. Weren't the old storytellers called singers?

P.J.S. There's a book by Albert Lord called *Singer of Tales* which included the music of the Yugoslavian storytellers who accompany themselves on an instrument while they are telling their tales. There is much more music used in storytelling than we generally suspect. It certainly plays a major part in ceremonial storytelling. In Indonesia, for example, the Ramayana is told at certain times of the year in a public performance by the public for itself. Those who don't play major roles take part in the monkey chorus. If there are two hundred and fifty people in a village, maybe fifty people will have roles and the other two hundred will be in the chorus. This means that the audience is listening to itself and that the storyteller is the story.

D.W. I think the best storytelling is when the storyteller *is* the story.

L.K. I wonder if you could say something about what is required of someone who is listening to a story. It seems to me there has to be a willingness to really open oneself, and to suspend one's ordinary world. How do you as storytellers assist that process?

P.J.S. Well, you could point to all sorts

f things, the same things that an actor ight point to— gesture, inflection, voice odulation, and so on. These are mechani- l things which some people have to a irly refined degree and others may not ave at all. I used to be puzzled by one oryteller I heard who had a flat, almost nteresting voice, and who completely ptivated his listeners, until I realized that ere was a quality which this man pos- ssed which went beyond the mechanics. o put it as simply as possible, he himself as open: to the material and to his steners.

I would say that for myself, the best mes have been when I felt the story was sing me as an instrument for its telling ther than me using the story as an instru- ent for publishing my writing or "per- rming" in public. A case in point is my xperience with Gilgamesh. It was suggested retell it for the first issue of *Parabola,* nd I agonized over it for a year. It is such great, massive, significant story that I felt mpletely at a loss on how to approach it. the end the editorial deadline became my uide, and I just sat down and wrote it. I'd ad by that time so many different transla- ons and had told it again and again, try- g to find the proper voice for each part, at in the end the story used me to tell self. I suspect that traditional stories have at kind of force: they are alive. And they se storytellers to transmit themselves. Gil- mesh is a story that has been told con- nuously for five thousand or seven thou- nd years or maybe even longer and with ry little change. It was not resurrected in e nineteenth century with the discovery of e tablets. Researchers found the story ing told in Yugoslavia exactly the way it as written in the tablets. Where did it me from? How did it get there? Well, it t there because the storyteller heard it m the storyteller he used to listen to, ho heard it from a storyteller who heard from a storyteller and so on back for wever many thousands of years it has en alive.

You know, that openness I mentioned s some very unusual aspects to it. For e thing, it is irresistible. You either have relate to it or run: I mean, leave the om, leave that presence. I don't know the reason for that, and I'll keep my opinions on the subject to myself, but it's true all the same. Of course children come up to you open, and it's just as true with them as with oneself. *They* are open, so you have to either relate to them or run. The first time I told a story, I wanted to run. All that attention focused at once— but more than that, really, because it was also a matter of responsibility— a vulnerable attention. So either you run or you become open your- self, and if you do become open, then sto- rytelling is like a ball, a ball you toss back and forth.

And then of course there isn't any question about why you are there telling stories.




B·MOSER·1977

The Wild Child

n 1799, in France, a wild boy
Vas seen running,
unning like a beast
)n all fours,
unning like a beast
hrough gullies and streams,
unning like a beast
nd free.

Ie could not talk,
Ie could not think
eyond instinct,
Ie could not reason
eyond his last meal,
)r count to ten,
ut he was free.

Ie bayed at the sky,
Ie ate roots,
Ie howled at the moon,
Ie ate acorns,
Ie snuffled and snorted
nd did not use a fork,
Ie wore nothing but his tangled hair
nd he was free.

ut late at night
Vhen he was packless
nd without a mate
)r a mother to kiss him,
Vithout the comfort
)f language or art,
e was trapped forever
his animal heart.

Icarus

Death did not come black and cringing,
Wingless
In the dawn,

But banking upward toward the sun,
He burst full nova
And was gone.

Jane Yolen

THEATER

The Grand Kabuki

National Theatre of Japan
Presented by Kazuko Hillyer International, Inc., September 3, 4, 14, 17, 18, 1977.

By Frederick Franck

When in Japan I do not need Kabuki, for there is Noh. Besides, switching on my hotel room television at any hour I am sure to see a noble Superman about to lop off the heads of a batallion of bad guys all by himself in a "Samurai drama." These perennial bloodlettings are the Westerns of Japan: stereotyped caricatures of the *aragoto* style, the violent rodomontades and bombastic heroics that are traditional in Tokyo Kabuki.

Once back in New York, however, Kazuko Hillyer's Grand Kabuki at the Beacon Theater could not be resisted. It was sold out every night to a typical New York public— instant expertise— with a larger sprinkling of Japanese than usual. I heard people assuring each other that it was "very good," but had no idea what that could mean. For as an art form Kabuki's peculiar stage conventions are alien indeed. There is a comic side to the current chic of all that is Japanese, the canonization of all *Japonaiseries* from calligraphy to sashimi (raw fish). If my neighbors, who joined wildly in the frequent applause, were representative, their questions to each other and to me showed that notwithstanding copious program notes they had at most a misty inkling of what was going on. There were a limited number of simultaneous translation sets available and Faubian Bowers' comments (he is the author of a sensitive and erudite book, *Japanese Theatre*) must have been helpful to those who conquered them. The others? Oh, Kabuki offers enough to keep all the senses pleasantly tense for a few hours, but one wonders how much real nourishment was absorbed. Visually even more than audibly it was splendid entertainment, and entertainment is what Kabuki has been about all through its long history. It never pretended to be "high art." After nearly four centuries, in 1966, it was offially elevated to the rank of a "national classical art." Kawetake Shigetoshi, the great scholar of Japanese theater observes; "the popular audience is the soil in which all the performing arts are germinated... Later they are transplanted to the gardens of cultural arbiters and other influential persons, where they become sophisticated entertainments and come to be known as the representative performing arts of their periods."

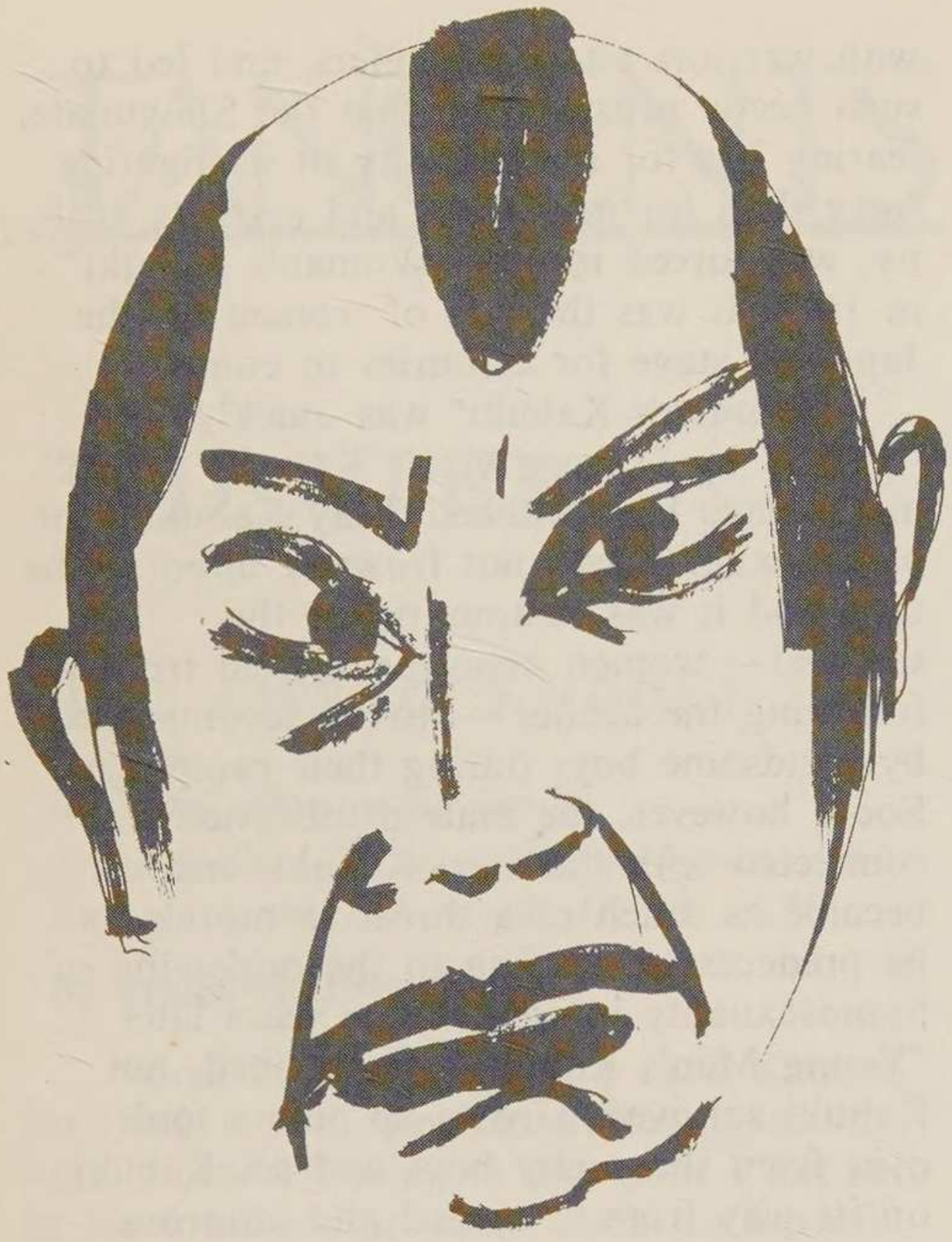
As a genre Kabuki— the word means something like "song-and-dance virtuosity" and has etymological roots that have to do with "frolic, flirt" and even "show-off"— goes back to 1586. It was born in a dry riverbed of the Kamo river that splits Kyoto in two. O-Kuni, a dancing girl who claimed to have been connected with the great shrine of Izumo which rivals Ise, took the initiative to give shows in this no-man's land. Since only religious representations were allowed to charge admission, she would start off her performances with a priestly incantation-dance, the *Nembutsu odori* (Nembutsu is the invocation of Amida Buddha in Jodo Shin Buddhism), but added to this pious overture comic, piquant and erotic skits and dances that



vere so successful that in time she could merge from the riverbedding and move on ntil she had conquered the sacrosanct Noh tage of the Kitano Shrine. She constantly xpanded her repertoire to include daptations of Sarugaku Noh, the very un-olemn forebear of the courtly Noh drama. arugaku was a lusty composite of dance, himicry and erotic farce elements, which ave remained part of Kabuki ever since. he also incorporated fragments of the erennially popular scenes from the wars etween the Taira and Minamoto clans ostly centered around the handsome but agic folkhero Yositsune and his concubine, hizuka, a courtesan and dancer. Dancers re indispensable in Kabuki. Yositsune also ecame the subject of many Noh plays, and ter of classical Kabuki as for instance the *ositsune Senbon Zakura,* with a fragment which the New York performance, most ttingly, started.

After O-Kuni's death, hosts of imitators ood ready to carry on in her style. They ere mostly women of less than exemplary astity who also played all male roles. Woman's Kabuki" or "Pleasure Woman's abuki" became an institution so popular with warriors and commoners, and led to such hectic prostitution, that the Shogunate, fearing less for the morality of its fighting force than for its morale and even its virility, was forced to ban "Woman's Kabuki" in 1628. It was the end of women on the Japanese stage for centuries to come.

"Woman's Kabuki" was quickly replaced by "Young Man's Kabuki" which might have been dubbed "Gay Kabuki," for homosexuality was not frowned upon at the time and it was customary for the samurai— women being prohibited from following the armies — to be accompanied by handsome boys during their campaigns. Soon, however, the male prostitution connected with this new Kabuki-form became as much of a threat to morale as its predecessor, leading to the outlawing of homosexuality in 1648. Four years later "Young Man's Kabuki" was banned, but Kabuki survived. Grown-up actors took over from the pretty boys and set Kabuki on its way from a sensual and amorous divertissement to a "legitimate" theater. It took its definitive form during the *Genroku,* those six decades (1688-1735) which were the Golden Age of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Both Kabuki and Bunraku, the puppet theater, rose to established and major art forms which greatly influenced one another and competed for dominance. Tokugawa rule, established by military might, was to bring some centuries of peace to Japan. The power of the emperors, now almost imprisoned in their Kyoto palace, had been broken. The Shogun and his retainers wielded undisputed power from their stronghold in Edo, the present Tokyo. Yet this longed for peace was destined to undermine the hegemony of the now unemployed warriors. A merchant class arose which— while maintaining a semblance of subservience to the samurai— became gradually their financial master. Osaka developed into a center of commerce, where not the samurai but the commoners they despised, set the tone. It was in Osaka that the arts of the common people began to take wing. The playwright Chikamatsu, "the Japanese Shakespeare," was the first great creator of Kabuki plays, but he defected from Kabuki, dispirited by the mutilations



of his scripts by popular and arrogant actors. The position of the playwright was that of an artisan who supplied texts that might be changed radically and arbitrarily. During performances he acted as a humble prompter, sitting under a hooded black cloak behind the actor.

Chikamatsu changed his allegiance from Kabuki to Bunraku, the puppet theater of Osaka. The huge puppets manipulated by "invisible" puppeteers in black, hooded kimonos and narrated with musical accompaniment *(joruri)* became in Chikamatsu's scripts unprecedentedly human. They dramatised the conflicts between social pressures and conventional obligations on the one hand and human integrity on the other. These were conflicts serious enough to cause suicide and especially the frequent double suicide of lovers. Chikamatsu was the pioneer who first introduced commoners as worthy of respect and as the spiritual equals of nobles and even emperors. While the Osaka theaters would deal with domestic themes of *giri-ninjo* (obligation versus humanness), of love and of money, the demands on the Tokyo actors was a different one. Tokyo loved the violence and the extravagant heroics which gave rise to the boisterous aggressiveness and grandiloquent style known as *aragoto,* which also resulted in the peculiarly bold make-up style of *Kumadori,* in which stylized bold streaks of red, for instance, indicated anger, wickedness or bravery according to their distribution on the actor's face. *Kumadori* is still an integral part of Kabuki.

Kabuki, Bunraku and Noh are all three composite forms of theater in which mime, dance, acting, vocal and instrumental music are synthesized into a single whole. Still, the differences between Kabuki and Noh are enormous. For one: Noh is solemnly epic and liturgical in style, its texts are literary masterpieces devoutly revered. In Kabuki the texts are likely to be mere pretexts for the actors' virtuosity. Noh is enacted before its unchanging backdrop of a stylized pine tree, on a permanently open stage. Kabuki developed elaborate stage designs, rapidly changing from scene to scene. In 1729 a revolving stage was invented that made an even quicker succession of environments possible. Multiple front curtains were gradually added. Comic scenes were incorporated in Kabuki, while in Noh they merely serve as *kyogen* intermezzi between plays. The Noh mask which magically smiles or weeps by changing its angle of observation was replaced by a great variety of make-up techniques. In Noh the masked actor of female roles symbolizes a woman, he does not impersonate her. Voice and gait remain his own. In Kabuki specialized woman impersonators are "transvestites" who cultivate falsetto voices and are trained to walk with a sheet of paper held between their knees, so that they may learn to imitate traditional female locomotion perfectly.

While Noh remained the aristocratic art of nobles, samurai and scholars, Kabuki became the entertainment of the rising bourgeoisie. Its actors for centuries remained specialists, confined for life to one of the many subdivisions of the parts: hero or villain, old or young man or woman, or "comic character." Only in the 19th century did versatility become fashionable. It still is the program of the Grand Kabuki boasts that its star Ennosuke III once succeeded in

rforming eighteen star roles in two days. Until more recent times Kabuki per- mances would start in early morning and ntinue till dusk. In order to fill the long ys, plays were becoming ever longer, last- for many hours. Usually they consisted five acts, each one subdivided into sever- scenes, themselves as long as a contem- rary opera act. Narration would summa- e what had gone on before, for specta- s who took long tea-breaks. Each scene s constructed according to Japanese tra- ion in a sequence of a slow beginning *)* that speeded up in its second section *a)* and ended in a fast moving climax *yu).* These unwieldy plays were beyond powers of a single playwright and hence iter-collectives came into being. *Yosit- ne Senbon Zakura (Yositsune and the ousand Cherry Trees)* was written at the d of the 17th century by a trio of play- ights, Takusa Izumo, Namiki Senryiu and yoshi Shiroka. It became famous as one that "Triumvirate of Masterpieces" which still the living core of Kabuki. Later it came customary to perform only one or o of the most popular fragments of these g plays. In the Grand Kabuki's New rk performance it was the Shi-no-kiri ne of *Yositsune Senbon Zakura.* Yosit- ne is the handsome but tragic warrior, ose status of folk hero does not rest on victorious battles, but on the typically panese reverence for what Ivan Morris led "the nobility of failure." As the hero the battle of Yashima, he is persecuted his jealous elder brother, the Shogun ritomo, who fearing his popularity, tries have him killed. Yositsune has to flee d entrusts his beloved concubine, the ncer Shizuka, to his most trusted retainer, danobu. Or rather: he thinks so, for the l Tadanobu lies gravely ill from his bat- wounds at Yashima. It is his double, a ite fox who has assumed human form, o becomes the protector of Shizuka. ne fox in Japanese folklore is a magic mal which can take human form at will.) a keepsake Yositsune gives his beloved precious tsuzumi or hand drum which has received as a reward from the Em- or. Shizuka notices that wherever he y be the false Tadanobu will instantly appear as soon as she strikes the drum. The real Tadanobu visits his master in his hid- ing place and, asked about Shizuka, denies all knowledge of her whereabouts, and de- nies ever having been entrusted with Yosit- sune's mistress: he was near death at the time, miles away. Yositsune has his old friend arrested on the direst suspicions. It all turns out for the best, however, for Shizuka appears and she only has to strike the drum for pseudo-Tadanobu to material- ize at once. When Shizuka accuses him of being an imposter, the fox admits that in- deed he is, but that there are extenuating circumstances. Tearfully he reveals that the hide that covers the drum is that of his beloved parents who were sacrificed to end a disastrous drought. As long as the drum was in the imperial palace the fox could not get close to it to pay it the reverence due to his parents. But once it changed hands, he quickly assumed the human form of pseudo-Tadonobu so that he might be close to his parents' spirit, and so became the loyal guardian of Yositsune's beloved. He is heartbroken when the drum tells him that he has caused harm to the real Tadon- obu and that he must leave immediately. Luckily Yositsune has been eavesdropping, and, moved by the superb example of filial piety the fox embodies which is one of the pillars of Confucianism, he presents him with the precious drum. The fox accepts it in ecstatic joy, but before leaving he re- wards Yositsune by warning him of a con- spiracy to kill him that very night. Through his supernatural powers the virtuous fox be- fuddles and then defeats the murderous in- truders. Only then, taking his leave with the proper bows, he disappears forever into the night.

In this Shi-no-kiri section, Ennosuke III plays both the real Tadanobu and his double, the Fox, which gives him the op- portunity for brilliant acrobatic feats. As the white fox jumps from ceilings, balances on narrow railings and vanishes through trapdoors, my Western eye could not help being disturbed by a curious inconsistency in the severe stylization of the slow *Ja* sec- tion of the beginning and the naturalistic imitations in the *Kyu* part. Ennosuke's fox, notwithstanding curly coat and *kumadori*



make-up struck me irresistibly as a trained poodle, embarrassingly repetitious in his frenetic agitations. I would be inclined to blame the embarrassment I felt on the enormous culture and generation gap between this 17th century Japanese theater and my own perceptions conditioned by 20th century Europe and America, if I had not seen so many Noh plays.

Noh is timeless; it never made me aware of any gap. The first Noh play I ever saw made me speechless: it enveloped and invaded me totally. It was as if something in me recognized every word and motion, as if the slightest gesture of the actors was inevitable. During this Kabuki I remained the coldly interested, at times fascinated, at times slightly irritated spectator-consumer.

Watching Shi-no-kiri— all the aristocratic trappings surrounding the great lord notwithstanding— I could not help but be repelled by much of the spectacularity that struck me— I hesitate to confess it— as an essentially provincial, petit bourgeois period piece. I was reminded of attending "Gilbert and Sullivan" in Cheltenham, or was it Brighton, in a slightly dowdy theater with an audience of retired civil servants and dowagers, and finding it splendid and touching. D'Oyly Carte at Lincoln Center becomes a clinical study.

With the second play I was on more congenial grounds, for *Kurozaka* is originally a Noh play. I had been surprised that, since only two plays were offered, such a quite recent (1939) transcript from Noh into Kabuki had been chosen instead of a Noh-adaptation from the traditional Kabuki repertoire— *Dojoji,* (*The Bell*) for instance— as being more representative. The program clarified this choice to be Ennosuke's own: *Kurozaka* is part of his own family tradition. The selection was interesting in that this play is so purely Buddhist in spirit, hence contrasts so strongly with Shi-no-kiri which is a forceful Confucian sermon in theater form. Its plot is simple: a priest with his attendants and a servant are on pilgrimage. At dusk they come to a hut where an old woman is spinning and they request lodging for the night. The old woman (*Shite* in the Noh) is willing and as she continues to spin, the priest (the *Waki* of the Noh play) preaches a sermon about enlightenment, which deeply impresses her. She goes out to fetch firewood and water for her guests, whom she warns not to enter or open an inner chamber. The *kyogen*-type servant however cannot resist peeking

nto the forbidden room and, seeing it filled
with human bones, runs in terror to his
naster, who immediately realizes that they
re caught in the precinct of a dreadful
annibalistic demon. The old woman mean-
while, under the spell of the sermon, wan-
lers in the meadows and feels hope of
being saved from her demonic possession
eturning. Had the priest not said: "When
ve know the truth of our mind, we will
know paradise"? She recalls her youth and
begins to sing childhood songs, she dances
dance of liberation in the moonlight. "Oh
ow beautiful," she cries, "I see the moon
f absolute reality for the first time." On
er return however, she meets the servant
whose terror betrays that the forbidden
oom has been opened. At once, overcome
with rage, she changes back into her de-
nonic form. A battle follows in which the
riests with their prayers and rosaries suc-
eed in defeating the frightful demon.

The backdrop of an overcast sky which
hanges into a night sky with a huge cres-
ent moon rising over ochre grasses and
lowers was quite beautiful, and Ennosuke
vas deeply moving as the old woman
urdened with age and guilt. When she
anced her dance of hope, her stiffness
radually loosening up into gracefulness, his
novements, of exquisite subtlety, were
ntensely moving.

But the moment he appeared as a
emon the spell was broken. To me he was
o demon but an actor in heavy make-up
laying to the gallery. I tried to reconstruct
Kurozaka in its original form as a Noh
lay: there would have been no backdrop
nd none needed, for the moonlit night
would have been visible to the inner eye.
The old woman in the woeful old woman's
nask would have danced and we would
have shared her trance. Then suddenly with the shrill flute, the shoulder drum and the hand drum going wild, the yelled shamanistic invocations of the drummers making one's hair stand on end, the little curtain at the end of the bridge between stage and Green Room would have lifted, and in would rush the demon in splendid mask and enormous wig... to be defeated by the *Waki* rubbing his rosary with relentlessly static force. Zeami, the father and great theoretician of Noh, said the actor's motion should be at seven when his emotion is at ten.

Walking away from the Beacon I asked myself: Is such radical partiality to Noh purely a matter of taste, perhaps even of "elitist" snobbery? Not necessarily! There is a stellar difference between the quality of perception in Kabuki and Noh. Refusing to distinguish between the levels of perception of life and death can be a refined form of inverse snobbery... Kabuki's aim is to entertain, it tells a story set in time, it is anecdotal and as such admirable. The spirit of Noh however, is a deeply poetic one. Its style is mythic, perceiving life *sub specie eternitatis*. It is a timeless activity in time. It is Zen contemplation in sound and motion, the inner workings of life made manifest.

Mummenschanz

(Swiss Mime-Masque Theatre)
Presented by Arthur Shafman International, Ltd. Bijou Theatre, New York, N.Y.

By David Leeming

In the German language "mummenschanz" has come to have a derogatory meaning implying mere insignificant show. By contrast, the theatrical activities now taking place under that name at the Bijou Theatre take their inspiration from a Swiss mask theater form whose distant but better known relatives are mummery and the Commedia dell'Arte. *Mummenschanz,* then, is not really the name of a play but of a partly re-discovered and partly invented genre. It is a theater of body movement

and mask, and most of all in the current production it is a company of three highly talented mime actors— Andres Bossard, Floriana Frassetto, and Bernie Schurch— who are always silent and always anonymous behind, under, or within various abstract constructions.

"Mummenschanz" means, literally, "chance game." Each of the some thirty-eight segments of the performance is a game in that the audience is implicitly invited to participate by determining the nature of whatever it is that is being acted out, and chance in the sense that the game is to some extent improvisational. The chance-game aspect of *Mummenschanz* is pleasantly emphasized during the single intermission when the fantasy of the performance itself is carried directly to the audience by the actors leaping into the aisles and onto the street in front of the theater to frolic with and invite people actually to play with the colored wool expressions on their cardboard box masks.

But *Mummenschanz* is living theater not only in that it is participatory but in that it speaks to and acts out— perhaps more directly and somehow more magically than words or facial expressions could do— the essence of the life energy on this planet and the need of that energy in its human form, to understand itself. It has been said by many that the dominant informing principle or living myth of human culture is that of self-discovery— the quest for fuller consciousness. It is this myth to which *Mummenschanz* gives sometimes funny, sometimes pathetic and always cleverly expressive form.

The performance is arranged in two parts. The first depicts the evolution of life forms. In the opening event the lights reveal on stage a great blob of a figure later shown to this reviewer in its unmythologized form as mere grey corduroy covering a piece of foam rubber containing places within for a much contorted collection of human limbs. On stage this strange wrapping turns Floriana Frassetto into a paradigm of the single cell animal who through its marvellously funny attempts to climb a ramp tells us much more about the urgency of the life force in such beings than could any text book on evolution. From Event One to Intermission we move through various exciting visions of the voyage toward consciousness. A caterpillar creature much like a giant vacuum tube writhes about and flings its balloon-nose, in a primitive and playful act of recognition, into the audience. Spiders and flies evolve before our very eyes and finally our ancestor, the monkey himself. After the intermission the action is all in some sense human: two figures confront what they really are by using their checkerboard faces for a game of checkers— a game which while extremely funny contains an eerie element of the life and death struggle; two figures are involved in a kind of frenzied love ritual based on a mutual unwinding of facial extremities made of rolls of bathroom tissue. In another segment a yin-yang hourglass-like mask of alienation and union appears. Each event— each mask— concentrates in some way on the phenomenon of human communication as a means toward essential discovery.

In speaking with members of the cast of *Mummenschanz* it became clear that as creators of this theatrical experience they were motivated by a definite point of view, even a philosophy, growing out of the basic elements of their particular form. A costume-prop or mask is conceived and constructed by an individual actor and somehow its own being suggests to the troupe a means by which body and mask might capture in abstraction some universal life phenomenon. Then as one of the actors, Mr. Schürch, expressed it, "there is no way to

escape the mask"— no way for audience or actor, who are brought together by the abstraction, to avoid those things which words and facial expressions of conventional life and conventional theater tend to conceal. Each event is ideally a "living sculpture" which serves to "rip away our own masks of pomposity" and leaves us with the possibility of carrying away from the theatre the fantasy and the magic which is the life force.

Mummenschanz is in every way a family show. Indeed children may well find more in it and understand it better than those of their parents who have lost the mythical consciousness which would allow them to break through the barriers which hide the creative energy of the cosmos.

David Leeming is an associate professor of English at the University of Connecticut, where he teaches Myth, Religion and Literature. His publications include Mythology *(Newsweek Books World of Culture Series),* Mythology: The Voyage of the Hero *(Lippincott) and* Flights: Readings in Magic, Mysticism, Fantasy and Myth *(Harcourt).*

FILM

Chac

A Cientifilm Aurora Production. Written, produced & directed by Rolando Klein. Cinematographer: Alex Phillips, Jr.

By Victor Perera

Chac, a quietly ambitious, flawed, visually stunning film by Chilean director Rolando Klein, is an undoubted tour de force, and may well be the forerunner of a rash of commercial films on Pre-Columbian themes and mythology. One can almost hear the clock ticking inevitably toward Hollywood's assault on "The Conquest of Mexico," with Heston as Cortez and Quinn as Montezuma.

To his credit, Klein stayed clear of the more accessible cliches. He made the film on what passes these days for a shoestring ($400,000), and cast it almost entirely with Tzeltal Indians from the Chiapas village of Tenejapa, in southern Mexico. Except for a dwarf used in a dream sequence of doubtful authenticity, none of the actors were professionals, and several had never even seen a movie.

The story unfolds in the highland and rain forest of Chiapas state, as a diviner leads the villagers through a series of ascending "tests," or ritual exercises designed to propitiate Chac— the god of rain— into ending a prolonged and costly drought. After a climactic rain ceremony fails to produce immediate results, the village *cacique* or chieftain, who has allied himself with a degenerate shaman, leads a party of villagers to seek out the diviner so they can kill him. They find that he has already sacrificed himself and taken out his own heart, which lies warm and palpitating on top of his chest. As they toss his corpse into the village *cenote* or wellspring, the skies open up, and the cleansing rain comes down at last.

But the toll has been heavy. The village has failed the diviner's test, and lost its cohesiveness. Led by the corrupt shaman and the hot-headed *cacique,* who flaunts a flashlight, a .22 rifle and other Western appurtenances, the village must bear the brunt of having cut itself off from its elders, and from its tribal bond. The mute boy whom the diviner chose as his successor, and who presumably would have regenerated the village's ties to its ancient gods, dies of a

mysterious ailment.

There are serious questions to be raised about the authenticity of this sensuous exploration of Mayan ritual and myth in a contemporary setting. At the very least, Klein has been guilty of a too-liberal eclecticism in putting together his film.

My most serious reservations concern the gratuitous visual effects that served no thematic purpose other than to create a mood; yet they are presented so as to appear portentous, and suggest symbolic depths that simply evaporate on close scrutiny.

The most obvious instance is the dream sequence in which an owl turns into a sinister dwarf— dressed in a mortician's bowler hat and black suit— who then assaults the terrified *cacique*. Visually, this looks like a page borrowed from Jodorowsky's *El Topo*. In the Mayan context, it simply does not jell. In the *Popol Vuh,* which is cited a number of times as a frame for this story, the owl features as a messenger from the Lords of the Underworld. Dwarfs play no part at all, least of all in Western clothes.

Similarly, we see the Tzeltal farmers planting corn on a rock-strewn arid slope, although their huts occupy a fertile grassy plain. Although visually compelling, this scene makes no agricultural sense; and Mayans, both ancient and contemporary, are nothing if not sensible farmers.

One could go on. What is the source of the blinding light across the sky that frightens the villagers almost senseless? We all know that Kohoutek proved a terrible disappointment as an omen.

The retelling by the diviner of the creation tales from the *Popol Vuh* is quite effective, although it bears no direct relevance to the search for rain. The rain god, Chac, does not in fact appear in the *Popol Vuh,* which belongs to the Quiche Mayas of the Guatemalan highlands. Chac is a deity of the post-classical era of Chichen-Itza, Uxmal, and the other Peninsula Mayan cities.

The strength of *Chac* is in the haunting narrative pace, which ultimately sweeps along most of the film's weaknesses and incongruities.

After they meet the diviner and enlist his aid, the villagers are led into the heart of the Lacandon forest, where magic and myth still reside. The Lacandon *are* real, and quite appropriate to this story, for they are the last living caretakers of the Mayan legacy; unlike the Tzeltal, the Lacandon were never conquered by Cortez, and they have not (yet) converted to his gods.

In the trek through the forest, across the sylvan falls of Aguazul and the still, misted waters of Lake Metzabök, the inner rhythms of the life of the Maya are fleetingly captured. One can hear and almost touch the silence as the lone canoe skims across the lake. It is a still, charged atmosphere in which the possibilities of the human spirit inhere as spontaneously as a flight of green parrots, or as easily as a ritual cigar smoke on a jungle hammock.

It is Klein's sensitivity to these rhythms, and to the visual wonders of the endangered Lacandon forest— the last outpost of the proud Maya's descendants—that make *Chac* a memorable, evocative film experience.

A novelist and free-lance journalist, Victor Perera is writing a book (for Little, Brown) on the Lacandon Indians of Naha', Chiapas.

REVIEWS

Ceremony

y Leslie Marmon Silko. New York: Viking ress, 1977. Pp. 262. $10.00.

y Elaine Jahner

The inspiration for much American In-an art and literature receives its energy om the firmly held belief that the great guring powers of the human mind emerge om and are the avenue toward transcen-ent powers. If the human person is seen as point in a circle of creative energy, then sponsible participation within that circuit eans shaping a design for one's own life at reflects the primal patterns of Life it-lf. Participation also means ritual and cer-nony. All this Leslie Silko knows so com-etely that she has been able to write a ovel about the ceremonies of her Laguna eople which permits her readers to feel nd respond to life lived with the profound nd literal conviction that ceremonies are tal; they keep everyone alive, even those no do not believe in them; even those no, in their disbelief, perpetrate the evil at ceremonies must counteract. Leslie lko's novel is also about stories. It shows at storytelling and ceremony are not sep-ate activities with separate functions, but at they are merely different phases of the me great figurative process that brings the ner experience of the human spirit into rmony with outer forms— the physical vironment, human cultures, and all the her forms known and unknown to human ought. Stories, like ceremonies, make pos-ble all kinds of transitions among levels of ing, or, to state it another way, stories e connections.

Tayo, the protagonist of *Ceremony,* is man desperately in need of connections and of the genuine understanding that only the interpretive powers of a story can reveal. His experiences while on active duty in World War II left him with thoughts and memories as tangled as "colored threads from old Grandma's wicker sewing basket when he was a child, and he had carried them outside to play and they had spilled out of his arms into the summer weeds and rolled away in all directions." What is more, his stomach shivers, he can feel nothing except "a swelling in his belly, a great swollen grief that was pushing into his throat." Non-Indian doctors try to tell him that his sense of disconnection and his grief result from combat fatigue. They tell him that his sensed identity between his uncle Josiah and a Japanese whose execution he had witnessed can not possibly be real. But Tayo's sense of another kind of reality is strong enough to withstand the doctor's narrowly logical efforts to cure, and his belly remains full until he seeks help from medicine men who know that the grief is real because his sickness is "only part of something larger, and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything." The medicine man Betonie— a superbly realized character— understands that "after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies... otherwise we won't make it. We won't survive." Betonie knows stories that point to the nature of the story Tayo is experiencing as he grieves over what is really the inability of most people to see connections. Because so many are so blind, the forces of evil and witchery have many instruments.

Gradually Tayo understands that he has a role in a great story. He must hunt for his uncle's lost cattle not only because he needs the cattle but also because he needs the search to fulfill his part in the story. He learns that his healing cannot be sudden; "there were transitions that had to be made in order to become whole again, in order to be the people our Mother would remember." He can learn the nature of the transitions, the connections, from the old stories and once he learns them, he gains a sense of event. "He repeated the words as he remembered them, not sure if they were the right ones, but feeling they were right, feeling the instant of dawn was an event which in a single moment gathered

all things together." Events are unities; people participating in them have definite roles; Tayo is cured, able to assume his role in realizing both his own and Leslie Silko's story.

Leslie Silko is a superb stylist. She knows the power of words in the way that N. Scott Momaday, another Indian writer, has described it in his essay, "The Man Made of Words." Momaday describes the way "in which the elements of oral tradition can be shown, dramatically, to exist within the framework of a literary continuance, a deeper and more vital context of language and meaning than that which is generally taken into account." The context that Momaday, Silko and other Indian writers take as the source of story and style is the mythic context where words are generative and literally creative. When we turn to the work of contemporary Indian poets, such as Simon Ortiz, we find example after example of precisely crafted expression deriving from language's mythic context.

Although they believe in the pre-existent power of the word and story, the most talented of today's American Indian writers also know that such power can be channeled through literary structures like the novel only if there is careful and disciplined attention to all the requirements of the chosen genre. Over the last few years, Leslie Silko has proven her ability to write poetry, short stories and finally a novel. She is gaining attention from the entire literary community, not so much because of her message but because of her specific talent as a writer. The people listening to the narrator tell the old stories require one set of artistic and spiritual talents: the anonymous public reading a novel requires another somewhat different set. Nevertheless, as Silko and other writers tell us, both occassions are ceremonies, and those who care about the way language emerges from its vital mythic context must create new ceremonies to survive. Through her novel Leslie Silko is telling her people that the world is coming of age and the accumulated effect of all our experiencing forces profound changes in the way the individual experiences the creative action of the divine. Yet there is definite continuity. To know the story is to know the connections.

Elaine Jahner teaches native American language and literature at the University of Nebraska.

A Guide For The Perplexed

By E.F. Schumacher. New York: Harper & Row, 1977. Pp. 140. $8.95.

By William R. Torbert

All people throughout history have shared certain dilemmas. One such dilemma permeates everyone's life at every moment. Yet this dilemma is rarely felt directly, even by geniuses. Even more rarely does someone *address* this dilemma directly, thereby cultivating awareness of it.

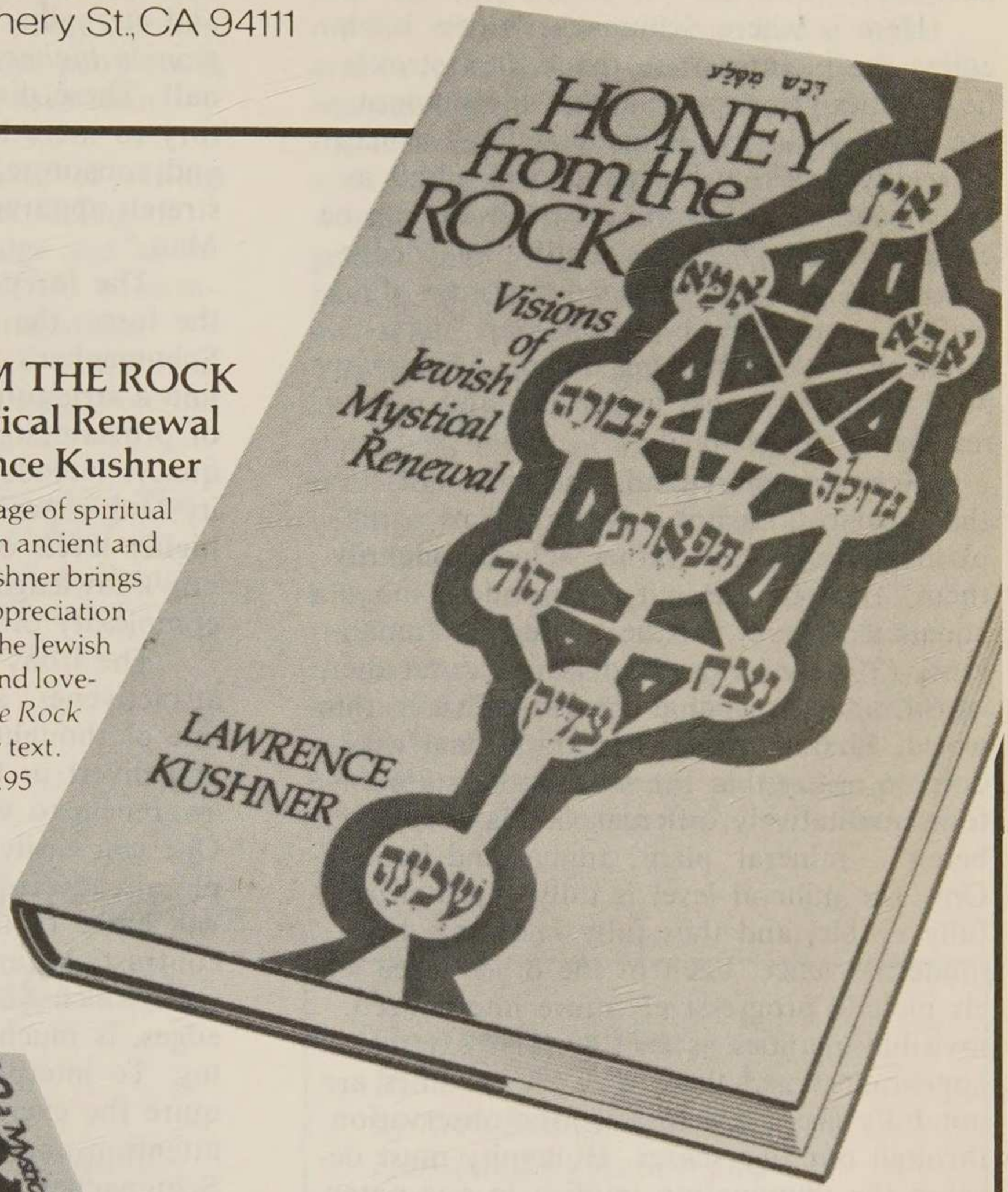
The dilemma is simply that our knowledge of what is occurring at any given moment in our lives, conditioned as it is by cultural habits of attention and modes of thought, *must* be inadequate to what is actually occurring. The inadequacy of our knowledge has two faces, one empirical, one significational. We are, on the one hand, simply not aware of much that is occurring: we are rarely aware of what is occurring in our bodies, for example. We are, on the other hand, not aware of the significance of what is occurring: we may assign an event a certain significance as it occurs, only to realize later that it takes a very different place in the overall pattern of our activities.

When we recognize the inadequacy of our knowledge in a given instance, we generally either excuse it and forget it or try to repair it. Much less known is the movement whereby we actively enter into, feel and address this inadequacy.

Felt directly, the dilemma of necessarily inadequate knowledge would, at each moment, throw our knowledge of a given situation into relief against the vast and obscure background of our ignorance, teaching us a deeper humility. Addressed directly, this dilemma would inspire a new kind of initiative, a new kind of reaching out toward all that is somehow Other, a new kind of awareness.

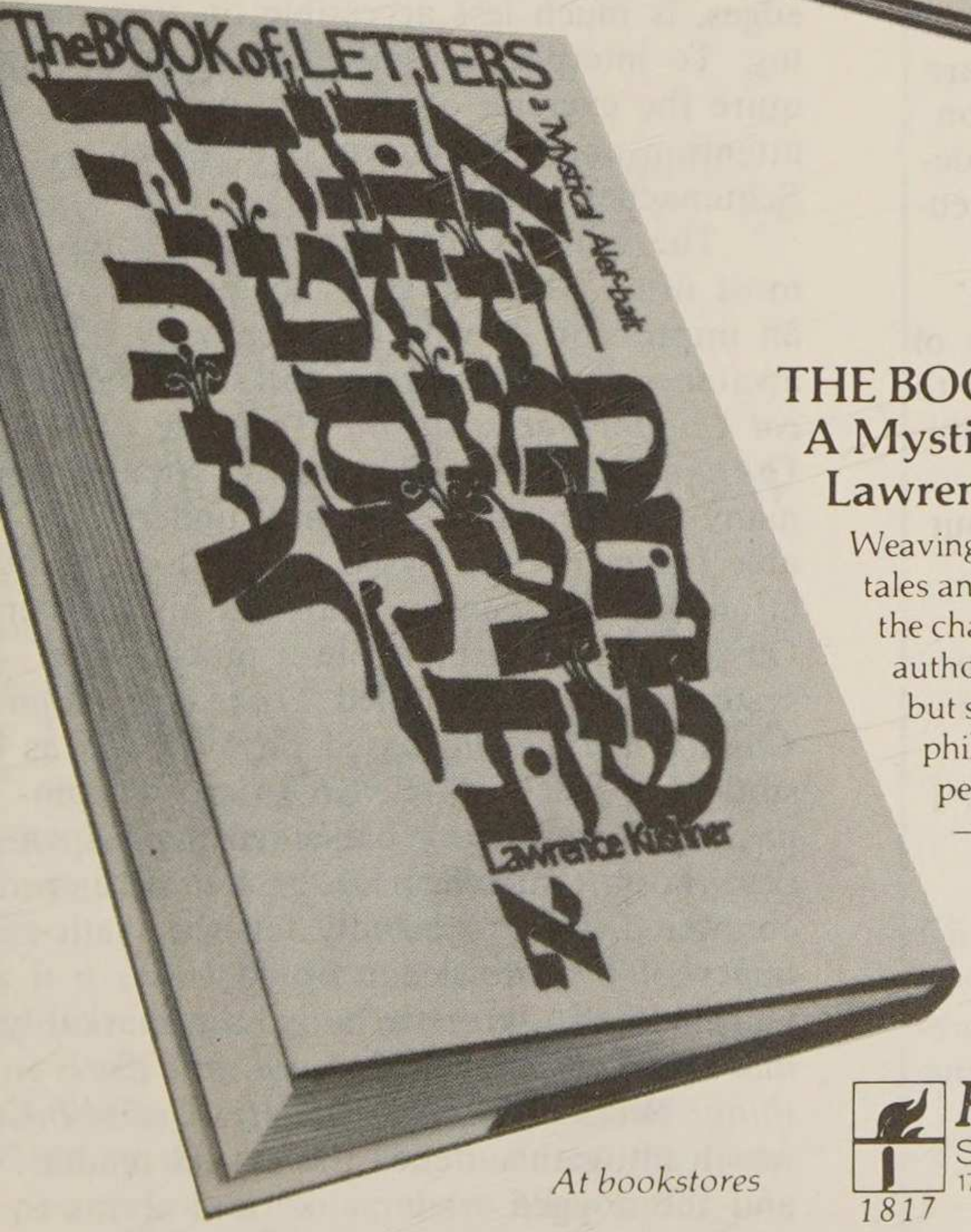
A deep and abiding irony attends the process of becoming aware of the necessary inadequacy of our knowledge. Initially, it seems reasonable to presume that some kinds of knowledge could help us to become aware and remain aware of this inadequacy. Indeed, one can even imagine a knowledgeable argument demonstrating that knowledge-tinged-by-awareness-of-its-own-

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inadequacy is qualitatively more adequate to our true state than knowledge-which-claims-adequacy.

Here is where Schumacher's new book enters the picture. With quick, deft strokes he outlines the argument that the modern, scientific worldview is inadequate as a map of reality precisely because it will admit as knowledge only that about which we can be certain. Although such scientific knowledge deserves a *place* on an adequate map of reality, to make it the *whole* map "maximizes the risk of missing out on what may be the subtlest, most important, and most rewarding things in life."

Schumacher reminds us at the outset that a map does not solve problems or explain mysteries, but rather helps to identify them. Then he sets out to provide a more adequate map of (1) the world, (2) humankind, (3) how humankind learns about the world, and (4) what it means to live in this world. First, he returns to traditional wisdom to assert that the world consists of four qualitatively different "levels of being"— mineral, plant, animal and human. Only the mineral level is fully externalized, fully visible, and thus fully knowable by modern science. Each of the other three levels include progressively more internalized, invisible qualities as well as their external appearances and these invisible qualities are not fully accessible to scientific observation through our five senses. Humanity must develop the illumination implicit in our potential for self-awareness if we are to know these higher qualities, for the "instrument" of knowledge must mirror the complexity of the quality to be known if that quality is to be known adequately. One who is not self-aware cannot "see" self-awareness.

From these initial considerations about the world and humanity, Schumacher derives four qualitatively different fields of knowledge which respond to the questions: (1) What is really going on in my own inner world? (2) What is going on in the inner world of other beings? (3) What do I look like in the eyes of other beings? (4) What do I actually observe in the world around me? Again, he argues that modern science is an adequate instrument for knowing only the fourth kind of question. Moreover, he goes on to distinguish between the *convergent* problems in life, which can in principle be fully known and solved in a hypothetico-deductive-technological sense, and the *divergent* problems, such as education and politics, where opposite solutions, freedom v. discipline, individuality v. equality, seem to vie with one another circularly and eternally *"unless something intervenes from a higher level"* (emphasis in the original). These divergent problems "are refractory to mere logic and discursive reason, and constitute, so to speak, a strain-and-stretch apparatus to develop the Whole Man."

The foregoing summary fails to convey the force, the clarity and the elegance of Schumacher's presentation. But it does outline a structure of knowledge which, instead of proclaiming primarily its own final adequacy, intends to remind us of the possibility and importance of developing toward higher levels of being and self-awareness, if our knowledge is even to approach the complexity of what is actually occurring.

The irony is that the very accessibility, attractiveness and adequacy of Schumacher's line of thought may substitute itself for, and divert us from, the work toward self-awareness to which he intends to call us. One can easily imagine that the many people already inspired by his earlier writings will make of this book a kind of Bible. By contrast, Maimonedes' book of the same title, which Schumacher nowhere acknowledges, is much less accessible on first reading. To interpret Maimonedes seems to require the exercise of the very qualities of attention and self-awareness of which Schumacher merely speaks.

The writings that Schumacher cites most often when he seeks to give the reader an impression of what he means by self-awareness are Maurice Nicoll's *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of G.I. Gurdjieff* and P.D. Ouspensky. Nicoll's many-volumed and eminently understandable fragments are based on his long association with Ouspensky who was his teacher. Ouspensky, in turn, wrote a much more systematic book subtitled *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* based on his years as a student with Gurdjieff. So cosmos-encompassing is the theory presented in Ouspensky's book that when this reader first encountered it he repeatedly felt the inadequacy of his knowledge by contrast. Gurdjieff also wrote a book, a remarkably *inaccessible* book entitled *All and Everything: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson,* which altogether defies the casual reader and the dogged reader alike and seems to require an interest qualitatively different

om that which we ordinarily bring to eading.

It is likely that many more people will ead Schumacher's book than either Nicoll's r Ouspensky's. And many more people will ead Nicoll's or Ouspensky's books than urdjieff's.

Questions remain. What kind of writing ould guide us toward a direct feeling of ne inadequacy of our knowledge and toard a new kind of awareness? Do contemorary interpreters of ancient traditions eally do us a service when they make their ormulations accessible to ordinary thought? don't think so.

Villiam Torbert is currently founding The heater of Inquiry, a business/school, in ne Boston area. His books include Being or The Most Part Puppets, Learning rom Experience *and* Creating a ommunity of Inquiry.

Creation Myths: Man's Introduction to the World

y David Maclagan. Thames and Hudson ooks; New York: W.W. Norton, 1977. Pp. 6. Paper $7.95.

Subtle Body: Essence and Shadow

y David Tansley. Thames and Hudson ooks; New York: W.W. Norton, 1977. Pp. 6. Paper $7.95.

y Toinette Lippe

Every time a new title in the "Art and nagination" series is issued, there is a mptation to become excited at the prosect of a treat— the whole idea of this ser- s is a really marvelous one and the format as such magnificent potential. And every me I am disappointed. *Creation Myths* nd *Subtle Body* are the eleventh and velfth in the series. They aroused the same opes and— sad to report— they suffer om the same drawbacks.

There is now a wealth of material on creation myths available, and it would seem that the only excuse for yet another book on the subject is if someone had clarified and ordered the material so that nonspecialists could gain a general understanding of the differences and similarities of the legends arising in the various parts of the world. This series is, after all, aimed at the general reading public (large format paperback with illustrations in color and black and white on two-thirds of the 96 pages). Yet the impression gained from this volume, as from many of the others, is that the publishers hired an expert on the subject, someone who had already digested or was willing to digest most of what there was to read and know about it, and then required him or her to analyze and condense all of this into about 25 pages of text. This is not to say that the task is impossible but it is an extraordinarily difficult feat, and in *Creation Myths* David Maclagan has not achieved it. He has made an erudite presentation, but if one is not already familiar

The Temple In Man
The Secrets of Ancient Egypt
by R. A. Schwaller de Lubicz
Translated by Robert and
Deborah Lawlor

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with the background, many of the references seem to come out of left field. And if one *is* familiar with the material, then presumably one is unlikely to be reading the book in the first place. I found it quite impossible to gain a clear impression of the ideas presented in the book; one comes away with a jumble of fascinating facts but the effect is kaleidoscopic and not very useful.

The last couple of pages of the text nearly make up for the inadequacies of the rest of the book, for here Maclagan draws all the strings together and describes the way in which this creation is based on sound, and how so many of the ancient stories prophesy that when man can no longer hear the sacred song of creation, then it is time for the earth to be destroyed again. It is a timely warning.

David V. Tansley, the author of *Subtle Body,* has produced a much more helpful book in that he proceeds logically from one area of the body to another, and by the end of the book one has at least an overall view of the subject and a foundation for further study. He considers the subtle aspects and function of the spine, the heart, the blood, the glands, etc., and has short sections on auras, healing, and meditation. He compares the teachings of different traditions and endows the whole with perspective, although references to the Rosicrucians come so thick and fast that one receives the impression that they form the only esoteric school in existence in the west.

The most unfortunate part of both books, as in the previous volumes, is the picture section. Most of the illustrations are printed on the same paper as the text, so there seems no valid reason why they could not all have been interspersed with the text (a few have been, but thirty whole pages have not)— especially since they are divided up into sections to correspond with the various subjects dealt with in the first third of the book (the text), and one has to keep flipping back and forth. The illustrations are accompanied by lengthy captions in a size type just too small for comfortable reading, and some of the statements they contain would have been more palatable had they been prefaced by the words "according to..." At the moment they read a shade too authoritatively. The color section certainly makes the books more attractive, but some enthusiastic production department has spruced up the tones of the originals in some cases so that a subtly illuminated page from the Book of Kells is made to look positively Byzantine. Lastly, the picture credits and acknowledgements are not really adequate.

Toinette Lippe is an editor and Reprints Rights Director at Alfred A. Knopf.

Ancient Astrology: Theory and Practice

Matheseos Libri VIII.

By Firmicus Maternus. Translated by J. Rhys Bram. Park Ridge, N.J.: Noyes Press, 1975. Pp. vii + 336. $15.00.

By Edward Conze

Some kinds of knowledge are progressive, others are not. In the natural sciences a later book is usually better than an earlier one, and no one would in 1976 teach geology, physics or biochemistry from a textbook of 1750. This is not so, however, with religion and the arts. In religion the older sources are usually the best. Recent centuries have seen a profusion of learned or clever works, but creative works generally propagate one-sided heresies. As for the arts, I once blurted out the truth at a drinking party in Berkeley. On meeting the then "poet in residence," I confessed that I never read modern poetry, and when I saw his pained face added for good measure— "who wants to read Nathan if he can read Virgil?" Who indeed?

It is the same with the art of astrology. For years I have treasured the two-volume Teubner edition of the Latin text of the last great treatise of classical antiquity. So I was very pleased to find that it has now become available in English. Its author, Firmicus Maternus, was a Sicilian legal gentleman who lived about 350 A.D. and if his book is the one among hundreds to be preserved he owes this to his later lamentable conversion to a particularly fanatical Christianity.

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When reading the book in Latin I ound much of it obscure, and attributed his to my deficient knowledge of fourth- entury Latin. Now, in this beautifully lucid nd accurate translation, a great deal still emains obscure, and I attribute this to my eficient knowledge of astrology, to the de- letion which astrological tradition has un- ergone since then, and to the notorious agueness of legal luminaries about the echnicalities of their intellectual hobbies.

What Firmicus plans to do is to write ut for us "what the Egyptian sages and abylonian priests, who are so knowledge- ble about the force of the stars, have anded down to us in their teaching about strology." Throughout he stresses his belief hat this is not an empirical knowledge cquired by mere men grubbing up "facts," ut a "god-given skill," "the divine tradition f the wise men," which enables one to shape oneself in the image and likeness of ivinity."

What interests me personally in astrolo- y is the light it throws on the character of eople, their affinities and potentialities. here is little about such things in this ook, which is concerned chiefly with men's ate. So it would be absurd to claim that nce those days there has been no progress all. In fact, Firmicus has none of the uperb psychological insight which marks rant Lewis's classical *Heaven Knows What* 970). On the other hand I have compared is treatment of Saturn in Aquarius with e eight astrological textbooks I have at ome, and found it incredibly superior to ny of them. My own Saturn is in 16.54 quarius in the sixth house, and Firmicus as given a precise outline of my life, dates nd all.

Scientific believers in a meaningless niverse will dismiss this as "mere coinci- ence" and will demand statistical studies of undreds of thousands of people with aturn in Aquarius. If we had only a small portion of the money which our scientists get for making the earth uninhabitable, we might undertake such studies— though I doubt it, since the venomous infighting among psychologists, economists, biologists and historians about statistical "evidence" shows this to be none too conclusive. One case at a time is quite enough. The astrological believer in a meaningful universe cannot fail to be astonished that our Sicilian of 337 A.D. should have predicted with such accuracy and in such detail the fate of Dr. Edward Conze 1200 miles and 1600 years away. How did he do it if he had no contact with a knowledge hidden from most?

Edward Conze is the author of many classic books on Buddhism and translations of Buddhist texts, among them Buddhism: Its Essence and Development *and* Buddhist Wisdom Books.

Letters, continued from page 5

above exactly demonstrates my consequent objection: When he says that Eliade shows that primitive religions conform to it, what is "it"? The passage quoted speaks of the "sacred," but this is not a sufficient definition. If on the other hand the book was intended merely as the introduction to a definitive work, it is a pity that this was not stated at the outset, as the reader's expectations would then be more moderate, and— speaking for this reader at least— much of the sense of injury would be removed.

As for logical flaws, I find examples in Professor Smith's varying and contradictory valuations of "credibility" or "probability"— which in any case have more to do with "credulity" than with real authority. Is, for instance, Lobsang Rampa unreliable because *he is an English plumber? Is the lengthy quotation (pages 43-46) describing an exorcism to be taken as factual because it is labeled an "eye-witness account"? There was in general a question raised in my mind about some of Professor Smith's authorities, especially on reading the formidable claims he makes for certain ideal "metaphysicians" who, he says, "already exist," and strangely enough all contribute to the same magazine.*

Finally, about style. It is indeed true that reviewers often take things most unfairly out of context; but I cannot believe that a kingpin, even when Professor Smith equates it with progress (in itself something of a metaphorical leap) can seep, soak, permeate, probe, and diffuse like mist in any context whatsoever. However, as Professor Smith observes, de gustibus *etc., and also* forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.*

Ronald W. Brennan
New York, N.Y.

**Perchance some day even these things will be remembered with joy.*

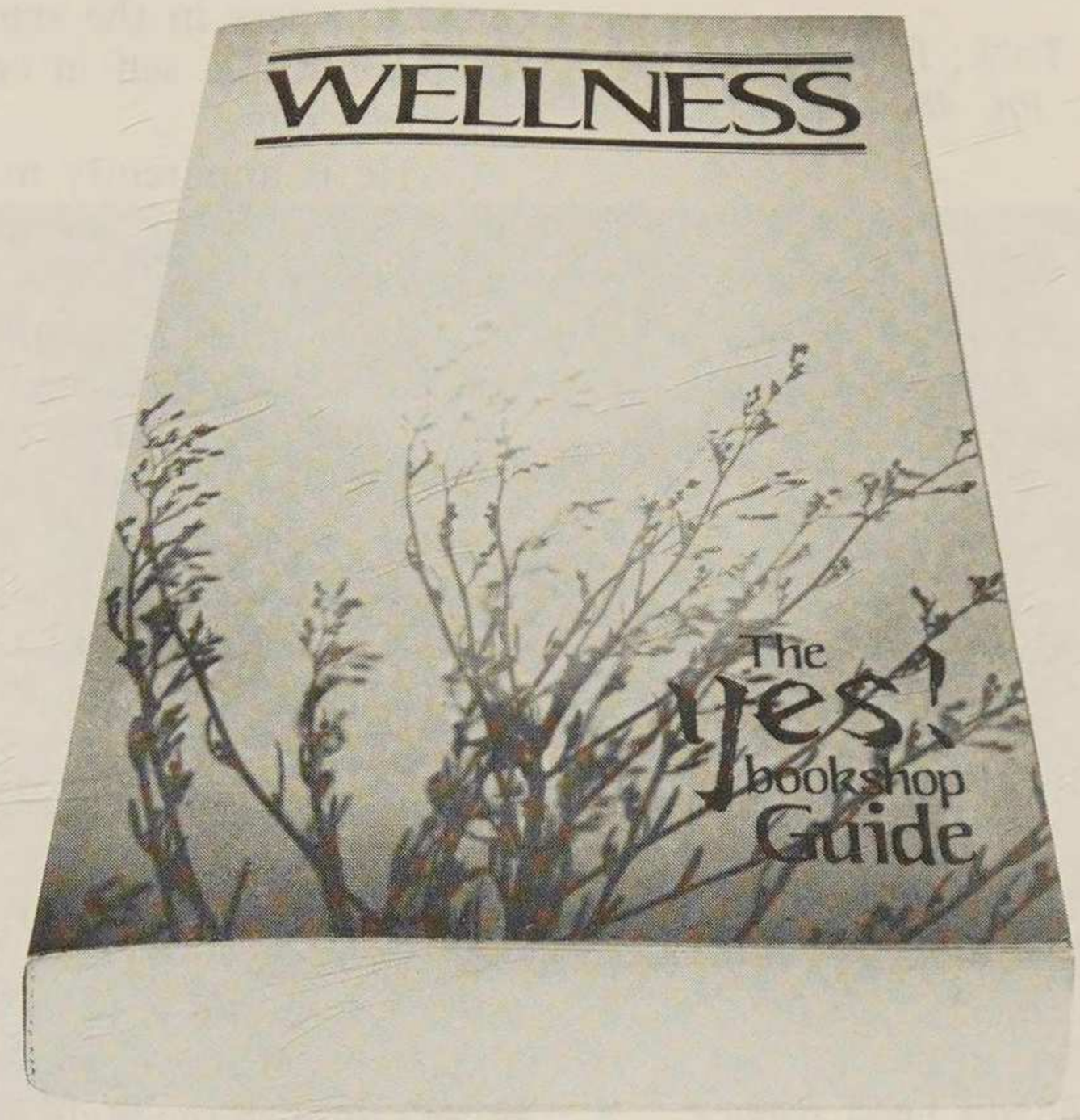
Belatedly we want to congratulate you on the way your discussions with the Tibetan lamas on death turned out in your Winter 1977 issue. It was a real service to the understanding of Tibetan Buddhism and the situation in Tibet. Robert Thurman's comments were an excellent augmentation of what the lamas had to say.

Your policy of organizing issues according to theme is most thought-provoking for us. It acts as a springboard for further investigation into the important subject at hand; therefore, I hope you can be induced to devote an issue to the theme of education, certainly an important matter for human beings, and one now crying out for new-old guidelines. I speak as both a very perplexed and concerned teacher, and as a brand-new parent. There is a real vacuum in the rationale for the teaching of the young in our increasingly anarchic society. The powers-that-be and the media focus on the gross failures and pick on the most materialistic solutions, such as a return to "the three R's." But the real problem is much more profound— it is a loss of philosophy, of goals, of what it means to nurture the whole of a person. Over the past twenty years a whole set of assumptions has disintegrated and there is nothing to take its place. This is a dismaying situation, but also one, we feel, of great opportunity and promise, if the proper search and questioning takes place. Since myth is so often concerned with the proper maturation of the person, and since you are devoted to "the quest for meaning," I hope you will undertake the study of education from the most basic levels. Perhaps such an issue could be the avant-garde for a broader discussion in the society.

At the moment, in our own search, we are re-examining the educational theories of Rudolph Steiner. We were also gladdened to read the insights of Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment,* in which he only touches the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the significance of fairy tales. But because he has the right credentials, at least some revival of understanding of this medium will spread widely. We also note that Gregory Bateson took up the subject of education and learning at the Lindisfarne Foundation last month, and we have an American Tibetan-Buddhist friend who claims there can be a new approach to education in this country drawn from that tradition. So we are absolutely sure there is no dearth of provocative thought. How nice to see it all drawn together in one place and so thoughtfully juxtaposed!

Rena and Tseten Wangyal
New York, N.Y.

Think of your body as the place you live



ellness is not a new concept. It is the natural der, easily forgotten when our technology leads to live ever more artificial lives. Birthing, which animals do naturally, is regarded as a pathologi- condition requiring medical intervention and spitalization. Dying is also. In between, we have st the ability to take care of ourselves. The medi- establishment, costing us more and delivering s, treats the symptoms; not the cause of disease.

ow new doors are opening. Aware people are tting to know their bodies, studying natural heal- methods, avoiding drugs. This is holistic heal- —the "new" medicine that looks at the entire dy, personality, and life-giving energy, and seeks llness as the goal, not just the relief of symp- ms. This is the subject of **Wellness.**

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The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind

By Julian Jaynes. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977. Pp. 480. $12.95.

By James Wyckoff

In his approach to the question of man's Fall and the growth of "consciousness"— or, in other terminology, the shift from the sacred to the profane— Julian Jaynes marshalls the evidence from laboratory studies dealing with the right and left hemispheres of the brain, as well as from a great many historical and archaeological studies, to support his statement that our distant forebears could not think as we do now, and so, unlike us, were not conscious.

Instead, his actions were directed through "auditory hallucinations," which were the voices of gods coming through the brain's right hemisphere. Early man, we are told, had no sense of himself as "I," and consequently no will, and no need for a sense of responsibility.

At this period in history, the author says, human nature was split in two, one part being an executive, a god, and the other a follower, the man; hence, bicameral. Neither part was conscious. Indeed, bicameral man was "schizophrenic."

Around three thousand years ago man began to "learn" consciousness, in large part because of the invention of language. "Consciousness is the invention of an analog world on the basis of language...(it) is a metaphor of our actual behavior... a metaphor-generated model of the world."

In support of his position the author draws upon the Old Testament which "... is essentially the story of the loss of the bicameral mind..."; on the Iliad, wherein there being no idea of insanity "...we could say that before the second millenium B.C. *everyone* was schizophrenic..." (author's italics); on a number of other writings, and the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Greece and Egypt.

The field is rich, but for this reviewer, the yield questionable. For the sources of recorded history must be regarded with suspicion in the light of Gibbon's very true statement that history is a record of crime; verifiable surely in our own day as much as in any other.

By consciousness, however, the author seems to mean the use of the concept "I" to identify oneself as separate from the environment, or what is commonly referred to as Ego. Mr. Jaynes clearly does not mean consciousness in the sense of an awareness of one's whole self in contact with the moment *now*.

He is apparently making the assumption that modern man can decide his behavior without being "told" what to do or how to be, and that he is therefore "conscious." In short, bicameral man was passive, but modern man is active. Bicameral man relied entirely on his gods, on an *other* authority; we rely on ourselves. Consciousness, as Mr. Jaynes appears to view it, depends upon the ability to decide from one's own authority.

But how does modern man decide? If he is in good spirits he decides in one way, if out of sorts his decision may be quite different. In either case there appears to be no permanent authority that decides and acts objectively, beyond emotional and physical reactions to desires, aversions, and environment. Are not these factors modern man's "gods" that tell *him* what to do?

Consciousness, it seems to me, is really an awareness of one's true place in the world, the universe. To know where we are and who we are in connection with all life and with our origin would be an awareness beyond the limitations of our pleasure and pain. With this knowledge we could act from an understanding, an authority that is not only our own but universal.

Consciousness is in the direction of what is greater than man, not less. Life is not man's idea, nor is consciousness. True consciousness is inclusive. But the alleged consciousness of modern man, his sense of himself, is exclusive, separated from life which is beyond his interpretation.

While there is a good deal of provocative material, the book's 480 pages border on overkill, with the author's burly vocabulary at times all but defying interpretation. It is possible to write on these matters in simple, clear language— Guénon, Reyner, and von Durckheim being cases in point. Here, I suppose, is the difficulty of writing for the logical— and therefore, limited— mind which must have everything explained in its own terms, even life.



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It is an uneven work, principally because of this effort to explain both the eternal and the temporal in temporal terms, with the consequent limitation in probe and deduction.

In one of the best parts of the book Mr. Jaynes tells us that "The coming of consciousness can in a certain vague sense be construed as a shift from the auditory mind to the visual mind." Why "vague"? For there is an interesting truth in this remark, if we accept that "hearing" has more to do with feeling, and even a physical sense of oneself, while "visual" is more intellectual; that is, interpretive. Ancient man, it seems, saw life through listening (which is finer than hearing); through attending and remembering. Hence, the oral tradition. Modern man sees life through words and pictures— looking. And so the current popularity of writing and photography, that is to say, forgetting; for surely inattentiveness is one of the chief characteristics of our time.

The author does not link his remark on the auditory-visual shift with his statement that "... one of the hallmarks of consciousness is the ability to deceive..." While he tells us that this was necessary under stress situations, such as confronting an enemy, he does not develop the point that lying has become an integral part of modern man.

In another instance, he makes the statement that conscious man has "... a life in the sense of a time span, rather than just in the sense of breath and blood..." But he does not pursue this. It is here that we may note the loss of a sense of real or vertical time— eternal time— in favor of a horizontal, secular, historical time. Is it not this illusion of time that holds us in our dream, our hypnotic sleep, our *un*-consciousness?

Mr. Jaynes, moreover, has fallen into the unfortunate attitude of so many orthodox scholars/scientists which denigrates what it does not understand. His passing reference, for example, to Pythagoras' school at Crotona as "a kind of mystical secret society," reveals a lack of knowledge and respect that could have placed this effort at understanding man on a level a little closer to its subject.

Finally, I wish that Mr. Jaynes had questioned the real nature of the ancient gods. For a collection of "auditory hallucinations" they seem to have been responsible for some rather interesting work— the Great Pyramid of Cheops, the Sphinx, Angkor Wat, Stonehenge, pre-Hellenistic art— to name but a few of the numerous testimonies to a power, a creation which far exceeds the abilities of modern man to emulate or to understand.

Perhaps Mr. Jaynes has questions himself, for close to the end of the book he says: "What we have been through in these last four millennia is the slow inexorable profaning of our species...It is the Great Human Irony of our noblest and greatest endeavor on this planet that in the quest for authorization, in our reading of the language of God in Nature, we should read there so clearly that we have been mistaken."

James Wyckoff is a writer and editor. His most recent book is Franz Anton Mesmer: Between God and Devil.

The Dark Tower and Other Stories

By C.S. Lewis. Edited and with a preface by Walter Hooper. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1977. Pp. 158. Paper $2.95.

By Jane Yolen

The Dark Tower and Other Stories, the latest of the posthumous offerings by C.S. Lewis, includes two fragments of novels, an unpublished short story, three published and well anthologized short stories, and both preface and afterwards by Lewis scholars.

The short stories are science fiction. Two of them, "The Shoddy Lands" and "Ministering Angels" first appeared in *Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine.* The other, "Forms of Things Unknown," which turns on a point of mythology, came out in Lewis' posthumous *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories.* They are uniformly good, solid though not *great* stories. They make their points and stick in the mind well after reading.

But it is to the two fragments and the complete-yet-incomplete short story that a critic must turn and ask herself this question: *Should we be digging in the waste baskets of the dead?* There is a certain kind of conscious critical necrophilia that may be

jurious to the artist in question. Even the ditor of *Dark Tower,* Walter Hooper, a iend and one-time secretary of Lewis', rought this up in his clear and helpful reface. "There are those who feel there is omething cruel in publishing fragments be-ause in many cases we cannot even guess ow the author would have ended his ory."

To me, the question is not one of cru-ty or guessing, but even more crucial than at.

I believe that art is selection and the rtist one who selects from an infinity of eas, details, pictures-in-the-mind. Deny the rtist his selection, and quite possibly you eny the art. I draw back and say "quite ossibly" because, in rescuing a writer's apers from the fire— which Mr. Hooper d, quite literally— there is no knowing hich pieces the artist considered complete nd which he still planned to work on hen he was interrupted by death.

We know, for example, that in the sto- "The Man Born Blind," the story includ-d revisions which Mr. Hooper did not rint in this book because they could not e linked together with the rest of the riginal version." Yet they were linked— in e author's mind. That story is the most uriously flat and unresolved of all those in is volume.

The same can be said of the title story, The Dark Tower," a Ransome story that is lated to the Perelandra novels. There is mething jejune in the writing, something ot yet matured in the attitude towards aracter and plot. I believe that Lewis mself had chosen *not* to finish it. To ring to light that which Lewis decided to ury is to both praise and mock at once.

I am asking for a different book from e one in hand. This combination of pub-hed and unpublished does not sit well to-gether. The unpublished, in a critical volume well annotated with scholar's remarks, might serve Lewis better. That includes all the unpublished material, for Hooper dismisses rather cavalierly Lewis' "unpublished juvenilia." If the incompleted work is so labeled and so judged, and scholars set it in context, Lewis the artist, Lewis the conscious selector, will not turn over in his fourteen-year-old grave.

Jane Yolen is the author of many books of literary fairy tales.

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Indian Artists At Work

By Ulli Steltzer. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976. Pp. vi + 163. $14.95.

Walk in Beauty: The Navajo and Their Blankets

By Anthony Berlant and Mary Hunt Kahlenberg. Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977. Pp. vi + 167. $27.50.

By David P. McAllester

As a part of the increase of general interest in American Indians, their traditional culture and the new directions this culture is now taking, the growth in the monetary value of Native American arts has been astonishing. A well-made Navajo rug sold for twenty-five cents a pound 100 years ago. Today a good rug 60″ x 64″ may sell for $15,000, or $2,500 a pound. Most of that increase has been in the last fifteen years.

The two books reviewed here deal with very different areas of Native American arts. Though both rely heavily on the camera, they are opposites in orientation. Steltzer portrays the current revival of Northwest Coast Indian arts and presents the artists as equal to their work in interest and value. Berlant and Kahlenberg illustrate a "golden age" of Navajo weaving which, for them, seems to have ended in the 1890s. The weavers depicted are a few nameless women in old photographs. The former book is a work of art in itself, the latter is a handsome but disappointing recapitulation of work that has already been done better.

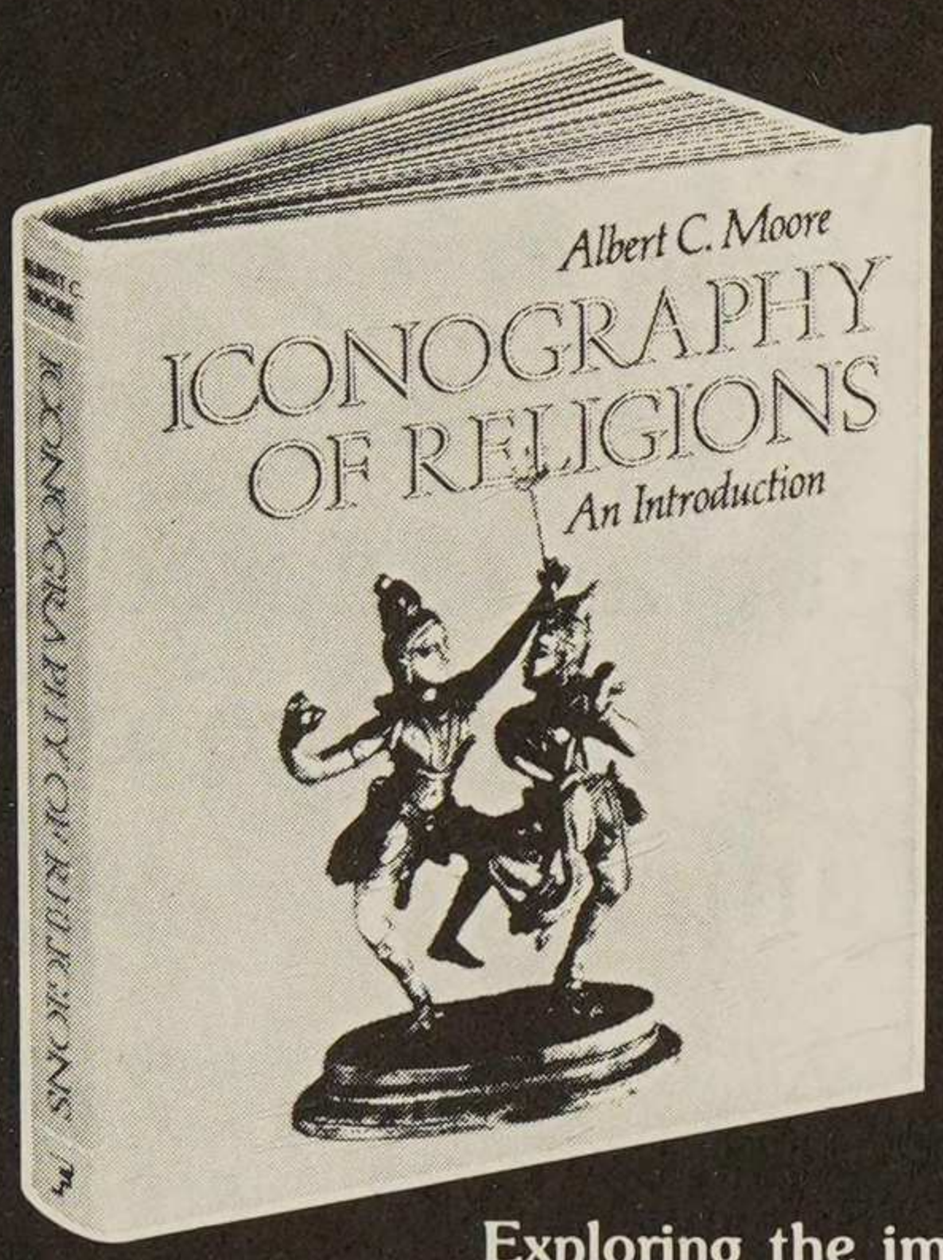
Indian Artists At Work, a photographic essay, is spare and poetic, going directly to the artists for the articulation of their ideas. The camera dwells as effectively on the faces of such artists as Matilda Jim and Roy Hanuse as it does on the work they have produced. There are portraits of over 100 artists in a series of some 200 stunning photographs. Glimpses of countryside, homes and workshops add to the context. The statements by the artists about their lives and work do much to convey the new vitality of Northwest Coast art. There is quiet fun poked at outsiders distressed at Indian use of gasoline saws and automobiles. There are introspections on the meaning of art and sources of inspiration. An encouraging note is struck by observations such as Dempsey Bob's: "It doesn't worry me that things of the past have disappeared, because we are here and we are making new things."

If anything is missing from the book, it is these new things. In an art tradition as powerful as that of the Northwest Coast, it would be surprising if there were no exciting new directions. But what the camera shows us is limited to sensitive and faithful reproductions of traditional art forms. We could do with more discussion of the sources and nature of the revival and also its scope and its economic base. The interest and sympathy of the reader are so engaged that the need for more information is a consequence. More of a preface, or an appendix, could fill this need without destroying the artistry of the presentation.

Walk in Beauty is as trite and pretentious as its title suggests. That phrase, of dubious translation, from Navajo ritual, has been used everywhere since Washington Matthews stunned the world with it in 1897. It reached its apotheosis in the "Tribe of Many Feathers'" recent pop hit, "I Walk in Beauty," (on record, *Lamanite Generation,* Brigham Young University) and now deserves a rest. The book is dedicated to Charles A. Amsden and is essentially a popularization, with new illustrations, of his *Navaho Weaving* (1934). In reduced form it contains much the same picture of Navajo history and the history of Navajo weaving, except that Amsden carries both further into the present.

The illustrations of blankets and rugs are a valuable addition to those already available. They are beautifully photographed in black and white and also in many color plates. Some 70 of the 130 examples are from the collection of one of the authors, Anthony Berlant. The book thus seems to be a celebration, in large part, of the industry and good fortune of Mr. Berlant and I wish it were more overtly so. The sketch of Navajo history is illustrated with an unusual selection of old photographs some of which are also newly discovered. A few of Laura

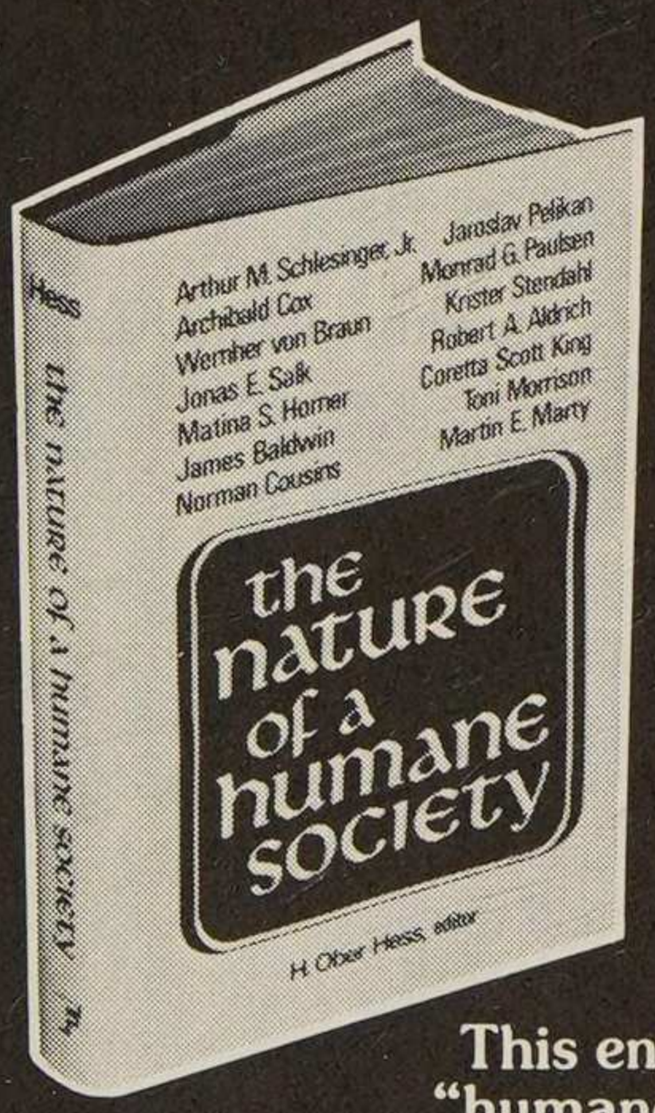
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Gilpin's classics of the Navajos and the Southwest are also included.

Though in the main the presentation of Navajo history and culture is accurate, a lack of contact with Navajo scholarship and contemporary culture is evident in sweeping statements, presented as though they were not debatable, such as: "And the planting and harvesting of corn was celebrated with elaborate ceremony, also borrowed from the Pueblo..."; "In the Navajo origin myth, most of which was adapted from the Pueblo..."; "Although the quality of the silverwork crafted today has largely deteriorated under heavy commercial demands..."; "Tribal identity is based for the most part on a common language..."

It seems to me that the discussion of Navajo weaving is not furthered by such language as this:

> *The subtle variation in modular scale and the energy contrasts resulting from the different yarns create a quietly controlled statement and yet build a forceful, frontal, unrelenting image... the sense of space of these Stripe Blankets and the uncanny blend of absolute calm with consistent, balanced energy mark them as a high point in the Navajo weaving tradition.*

From the subtitle of the book I hoped to be brought up to date with Navajo weaving since 1934. We need a contemporary account of the dynamic changes now taking place in this central artistic expression of a rapidly developing people. The establishment of the Arts and Crafts Board, the teaching of weaving in the schools and at the Navajo Community College, the present international fame of Navajo weaving and the consequent financial rewards to the weavers— all these are of great artistic and human interest.

David P. McAllester is Professor of Anthropology and Music at Wesleyan University. His area of research is in Navajo ceremonial arts.

Tibetan Buddhism in Western Perspective

By Herbert V. Guenther. Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1977. Pp. 261. Paper $4.95.

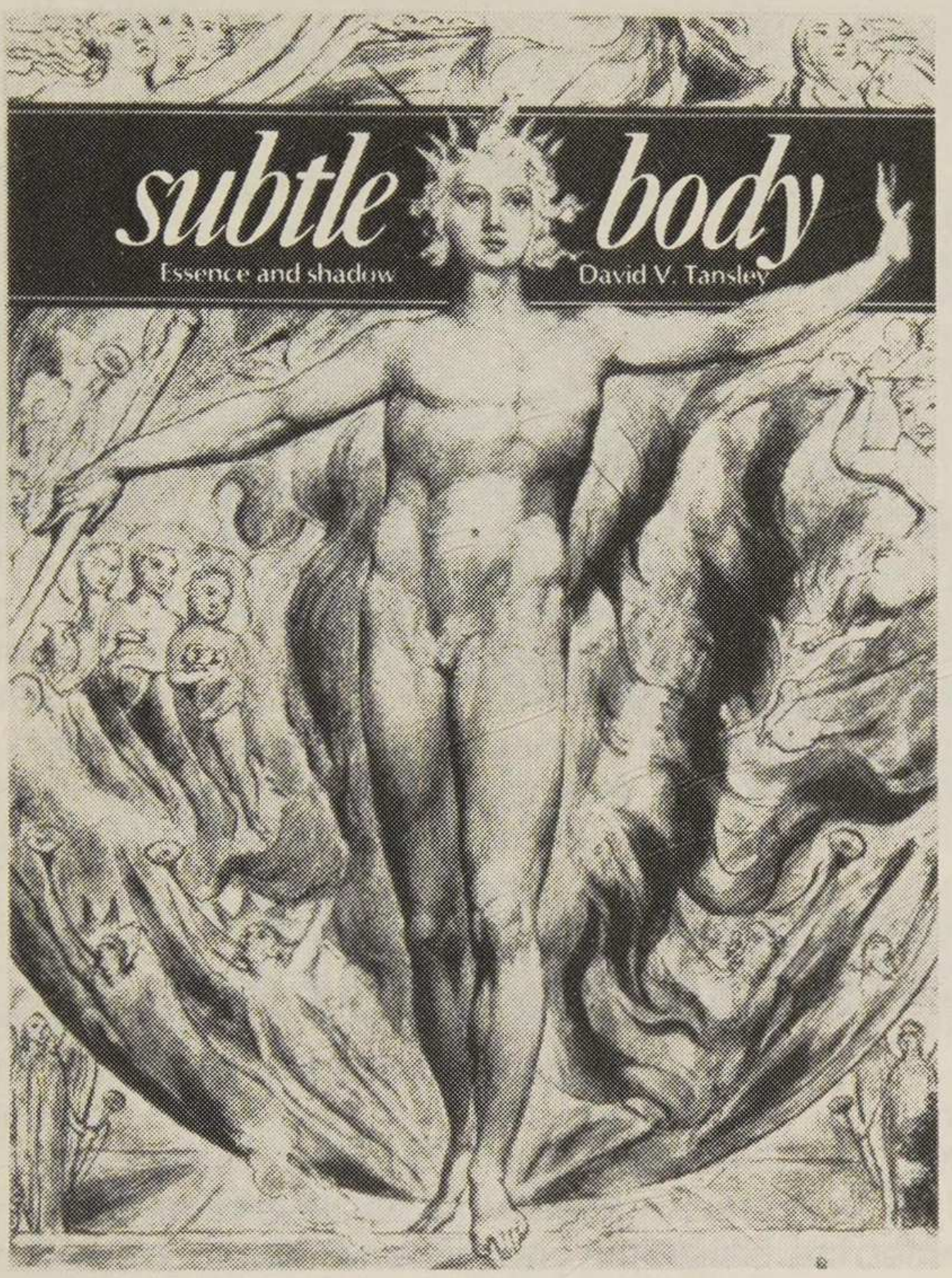
Tibetan Sacred Art, The Heritage of Tantra

By Detlef Ingo Lauf. Translated from the German by Ewald Osers. Berkeley: Shambhala, 1976. Pp. 228. $37.50.

By Matthew Kapstein

The teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which seek to direct us to the goal of perfect and omniscient Buddhahood, reached their culmination in the esoteric meditative systems which comprise the Vajrayāna, the "Adamantine Vehicle," or Tantric Buddhism. This, in turn, has produced an extensive iconography, which is striking for its bizarre imagery and pronounced use of sexual motifs; a seemingly endless body of ritual; and a diffuse literature, which mixes philosophy, magic, song, incantation, story and doctrine in a manner that may confuse, attract, beguile or enlighten. Transmitted widely, the Vajrayana became the spiritual staple of Tibet, where, for approximately a millennium, the most sensitive and refined minds dedicated themselves to unravelling its mysteries. During the half-century or so that Westerners have had in-depth contact with Tibetan Buddhism, various minds have applied themselves to unravelling the Tantras or getting entangled in them in such a way as to make their study appear a veritable cat's cradle.

Generally speaking the areas of study which have shown the most progress here are those which are by-and-large formal in character: description and classification of iconography, textual matter and ritual. The attempt to comprehend the philosophical and psychological implications of the Vajrayanā has been predominantly the undertaking of one scholar, Dr. Herbert V.

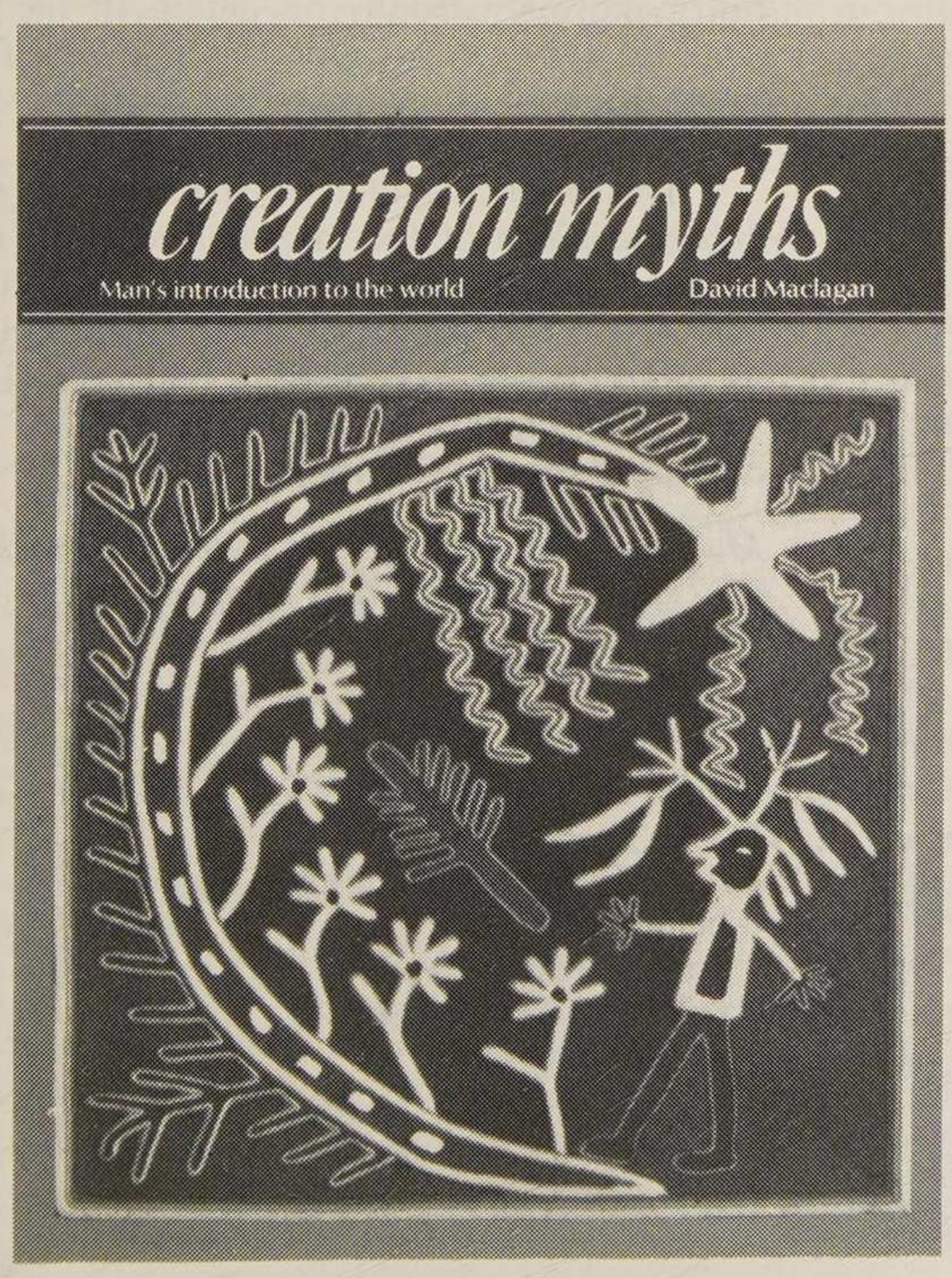


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Guenther. This fact alone lends vast importance to his work.

Dr. Guenther's work confronts the student with a number of problems. His extensive translations as well as his own writings demand a strong background in Buddhism and a familiarity with the many peculiarities of his own unique approach to translation, as well as a massive knowledge of recent Western philosophy. A key of some sort is most certainly called for. *Tibetan Buddhism in Western Perspective* is not quite that, but, by giving us an ample selection of Dr. Guenther's shorter works, it very nearly serves that function.

Tibetan Buddhism in Western Perspective is a collection of eleven essays, some of which include fairly extensive selections of translation. The first piece, "Excerpts from the Gandavyuha Sutra" represents the early interest of Dr. Guenther in the Indian Buddhist heritage. The following three essays are grounded in the study of the Mahāmūdrā teachings of the Kagyupa schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The seven works which remain are all concerned with the teachings of the Nyingma school, whose exceedingly difficult philosophy has been Dr. Guenther's dominant interest for somewhat more than a decade. His researches here constitute the beginning of a vastly significant new phase of that brilliant and inspired tradition.

Dr. Guenther's original work in this volume represents an on-going exploration of Buddhist philosophy utilizing distinctly Western modes of expression. The result is sometimes quite good; nonetheless, the writing is flawed by a persistent tendency to complicate matters unnecessarily. There is another fault which is occasionally seen in the author's work; namely, that interpretation is presented as fact without sufficient support. These comments are not intended to belittle the very real value of Dr. Guenther's work. He clearly intends to inspire us to think profoundly about the meaning of Buddhism, and not a few students must be grateful for the many new perspectives he reveals.

*

The first problem encountered by the reviewer of *Tibetan Sacred Art,* the coffee-table volume devoted to Tibet, is to decide just what it is that it seeks to accomplish. The author's stated intention is to examine the nature of Tibetan Buddhism and to convey an understanding of Lamaist art on the basis of that examination. While this seems perfectly sound as a departure-point it soon leads to far more issues than any one volume can be expected to deal with adequately— Buddhist doctrine and philosophy, Tibetan ecclesiastical history and art history, Tantric symbolism and meditation, iconography and iconometry, etc. The result, unfortunately, is that none of these issues is satisfactorily dealt with.

It is perfectly true, of course, that the English language has yet to see texts representing final authority in any of these areas, but there are works which do go perceptibly beyond this one, including some written for the layman. It is difficult, therefore, to decide in what manner *Tibetan Sacred Art* might constitute a real contribution to the literature.

This would be of little account if the text were accurate and insightful, if the plates were exceptional, or if the price tag were reasonable. But, regrettably, the text has numerous minor inaccuracies and shows little insight into the real depth of the teaching whose nature it presumes to illustrate. The plates are good, but almost all of the paintings are so reduced that one can make out virtually no detail. In the absence of enlarged sections this is a real fault in an art book which explores a tradition that treasures miniaturization.

This book would have made a fine addition to some of the inexpensive series of popular texts dealing with the art and culture of various peoples. Under such circumstances it might have been a real marvel of value, but right now it resembles chuck bearing the cost of sirloin.

Matthew Kapstein is a student and translator of Tibetan language and literature.

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The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa

Translated from the Tibetan by Garma C.C. Chang. Two volumes. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 1977. Pp. xvii + 730. Paper $13.00.

By Raoul Oyang Birnbaum

To translate a spiritual classic in a manner faithful to the original, scholarly tools must be united with a devoted attitude. In a text of this sort, it is the living spirit of the teachings which above all else must be transmitted. It is to Garma C.C. Chang's credit that, despite the great labor required to translate and annotate *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* his English version has a lively pulse and resonates with meaning.

This translation is the result of the felicitous encounter in 1950 of Chang (then a young man, a Chinese who had studied Buddhism in Eastern Tibet for a number of years) with the classic twelfth-century tale of the ardors and exaltations of spiritual experience. The Tibetan text (the *Mila Grubum*) was presented to Chang in Kalimpong, India by a Tibetan noblewoman who sensed that it would be a real aid to the young refugee. Chang has admirably fulfilled Lady Yutog's wish, which was that he eventually convey these teachings to the English-speaking world.

Feeling that some readers might be overwhelmed by the length of the text, Chang offers a condensed version within the full translation by marking those key chapters which in his opinion provide an overview of the book. His extensive footnotes are often helpful, though sometimes so concise that they may lack meaningful explanatory value. Chang modestly includes at the end of the second volume what ordinarily would be considered an introductory study; in this way the reader is able to consider the meanings of the text first, and later give some thought to Chang's interpretation.

The teachings of Milarepa (1052-1135) conveyed in this work are profound yet accessible. They deal with fundamental human problems, with fear and anger, pride and greed, and the conquering of these negatives through insight, devotion, love, and strenuous inner work.

Milarepa was born into a well-to-do family. However, when his father died, greedy relatives stole away his inheritance, forcing the young boy (together with his sister and mother) into bitter poverty. Fired by righteous anger and his mother's despair, Milarepa studied under a black magician and learned methods of destruction so that he might take his revenge, which he did by causing a storm of hailstones which killed those who had usurped his place and stolen his property.

Remorse followed his rejoicing, for Milarepa realized the grave implications of his actions. Understanding the Law of Karma, he feared that his unbridled anger would lead to eventual rebirth in a hell realm. He began a search for a spiritual teacher who could guide him to enlightenment, and aid him to purify his mind and soul so that he could help others rather than harm them.

The famous translator and tantric initiate Marpa finally accepted the youth as a disciple after putting him through rigorous physical, emotional, and spiritual tests. With great energy, Milarepa applied himself to his meditations, studies, and ascetic practices, gradually conquering his lower nature.

It is in the later phase of his life— when Milarepa had become a master in his own right— that the episodes of the *Mila Grubum* occur. These sixty-one chapters are divided into three sections: Milarepa's subjugation and conversion of the demons, Milarepa and his disciples, and miscellaneous stories. In the songs which Milarepa spontaneously chants in order to impart instruction, he emphasizes the importance of constantly applying principles of wisdom to daily life. Neither rituals nor philosophic debate consume his attention; instead he stresses meditation and devotion leading to direct perception of the Divine.

Milarepa's profound reliance on his guru is especially striking. In the song entitled "Nectar of Instruction," he begins:

> *"Oh, my Guru, he who shows*
> *the unmistakable path to liberation,*
> *The Perfect Savior, the Great Compassionate One,*
> *Pray, never leave me, ever remain*
> *Above my head as my crest-jewel!"*

In this song and in all the others, Milarepa's guru is invoked. In Tibetan art (as seen, for example, on the attractive cover of Shambhala's edition) Milarepa is frequently

hown with one hand cupped to his ear as e listens to the sound of inspiring words rom his guru in the spirit realms. This lose relationship of spirit guru and earthly naster is a fundamental feature of Tibetan piritual practices.

The classic nature of this text rests on nany factors: the elegant expression of spir-tual teachings in episodes and songs, rather han philosophic discourse; the sense of im-nediacy and relevance in Milarepa's teach-ngs; the example of the teacher himself, vho rose by effort and devotion from the owest depths of degradation to the summits of spiritual achievement. His spiritual un-lerstanding is shared through these out-pourings of song which, though given voice n twelfth-century Tibet, are timeless in sig-nificance and applicability.

Raoul Oyang Birnbaum is presently J. Clawson Mills Research Fellow in Far East-ern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; he also teaches in the Religion Depart-ment at Barnard College (Columbia Univer-sity). Dr. Birnbaum is author of The Heal-ng Buddha, *forthcoming from Shambhala Publications in Spring, 1978.*

The Book of Secrets-I

By Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Compilation: Ma Yoga Astha. Editors: Ma Ananda Prem and Swami Ananda Teerth. New York: Harper & Row, 1974. Pp. 402. $10.00; paper $3.95.

Meditation: The Art of Ecstasy

By Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Edited by Ma Satya Bharti. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1976. Pp. xxi + 250. $3.95 paper.

By Dennis Lewis

More than four thousand years ago, so the story goes, the Indian god Shiva, in a language of love unknown to us, chanted the tantric teachings to his consort Devi. Today many believe that these teachings, rooted as they are in a total acceptance of all the energies of life, can help transform our minds and put us into touch with the deepest parts of our being.

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In *The Book of Secrets* Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh gives us eighty discourses in five volumes on one such teaching, the remarkable yet little known *Vigyana Bhairava Tantra.* According to Rajneesh, this tantric text (first transcribed into English by Paul Reps and included in his book *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*) constitutes "the whole science of transforming mind," of "going beyond consciousness" to the ultimate truth.

Rajneesh, one of India's most widely known spiritual teachers, follows no one tradition in his discourses on the 112 methods of meditation that make up this text. Against a backdrop of the powerful forces in our lives— sex, love, fear and death— and using psychological observations from tantra, Zen, Sufism, Hinduism, Krishnamurti, Gurdjieff, and others, he tries to make these ancient methods accessible to the modern mind.

Rajneesh is at his best when he speaks from what is obviously his own experience. For instance: "Whatsoever is beautiful, whatsoever is eternal, is so delicate that if you try to grab it directly it is destroyed." He is at his worst when he recreates events and ideas from the lives of the great Masters, freely shaping them to suit his own purpose. For the most part, however, Rajneesh succeeds in this first volume in bringing the methods to life in a unified and consistent way, showing their relevance, at least intellectually, for an age lost in dreams and psychological fragmentation.

The methods themselves carry no speculation, no commentary. Rajneesh likens them to "the atomic formula," which can be expressed in just a few words but which can have "explosive" results. Though he has organized the methods he discusses into specific categories (Breath— a Bridge to the Universe, Five Techniques of Attentiveness, Techniques to Put you at Ease, Techniques for Centering, and so on) he believes that any one of them can go the whole distance, can free us from our unconscious identification with our thoughts, desires, fears, and tensions and lead us toward awakening. He makes it clear, however, that this is only possible if a Master initiates us into the method. For it is in the process of initiation itself, a process which involves right timing and the particular needs of our own individuality, that the method can reach beneath the surface of the mind and touch the unconscious life at the core of our being.

If the emphasis in *The Book of Secrets* is on traditional tantric methods, the emphasis in *Meditation: The Art of Ecstasy,* also made up of discourses and responses to questions, is on methods devised by Rajneesh himself, particularly on what he calls "dynamic (chaotic) meditation." Whereas most traditional methods are based on a direct effort of meditation, of "passive awareness," of the movement of our attention from the past or future to the present (for instance, the effort to be aware of the process of breathing), Rajneesh's methods are based on the idea of nondoing through doing, on the dialectical movement of energy inherent in all phenomena.

> *Life exists as a dialectic; it is not a simple movement. It is not flowing like a river...With each move life creates its own opposite and through the struggle with the opposite, it moves forward. With each new movement the thesis creates the antithesis. And this goes on continuously: thesis creating antithesis, being merged with antithesis, and becoming a synthesis that then becomes the new thesis. Then, again, there is the antithesis...And the same thing applies in meditation, because it is the deepest thing in life.*

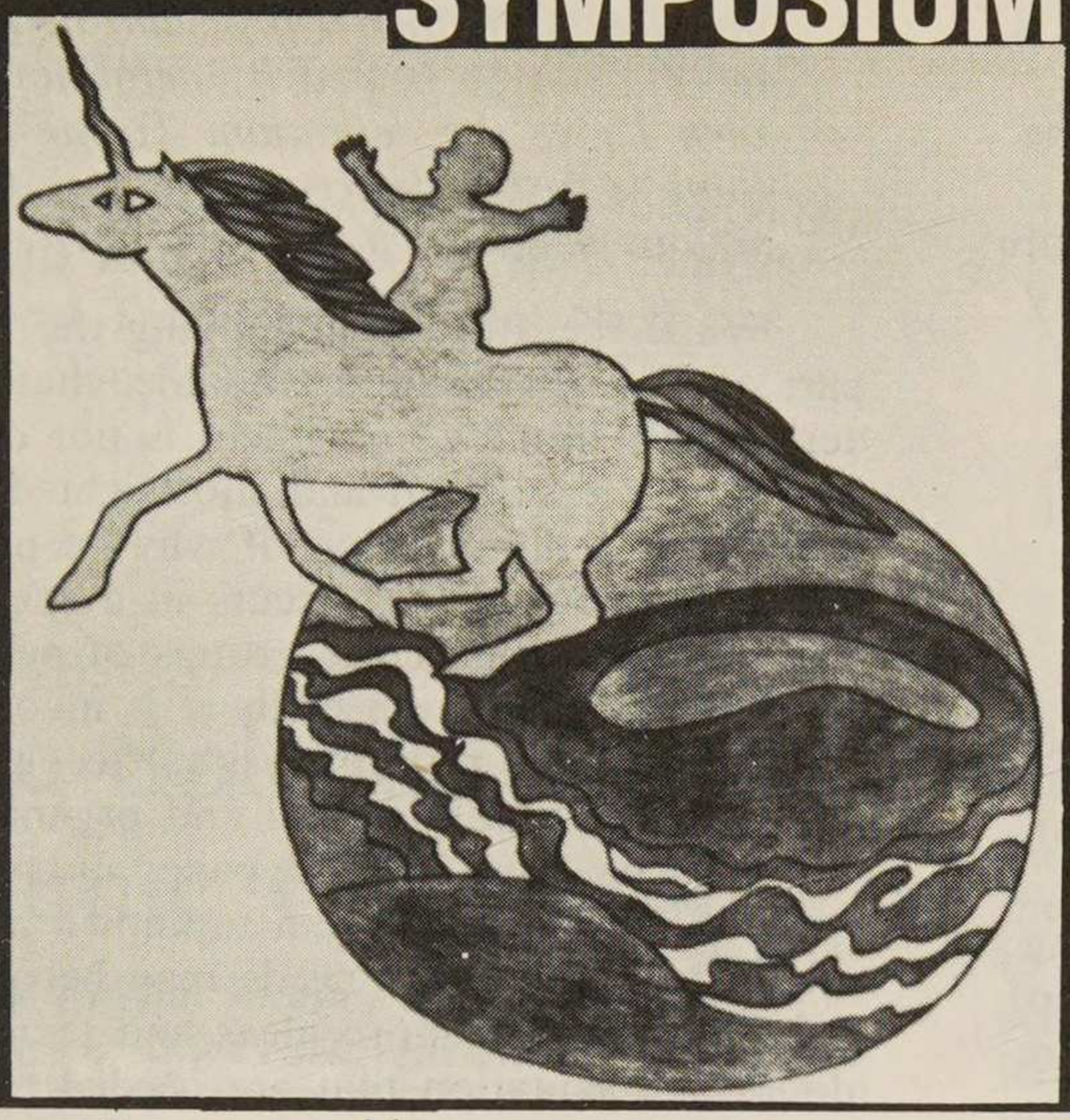
A practical illustration of this approach to meditation is given in Rajneesh's discussion of relaxation:

> *If you come to me, I will never tell you to just relax. First be tense, as utterly tense as possible. Be tense totally!... And then suddenly you will feel a relaxation setting in. You have done whatever you could do: now your life energy will create the opposite... Now be a witness to it.*

Rajneesh discusses, sometimes brilliantly, many other provocative ideas, some of which turn upside down current shibboleths of the spiritual life. For instance, in discussing Kundalini he writes: "You feel it when there is something there that resists the flow. If the energy flows upward and you have blocks in the passage, only then do you feel it. So the person who feels more kundalini is really blocked..."

But alongside his flashes of insight, there is a great deal of confusion and inconsistency. In one chapter, echoing Krishnamurti, Rajneesh tells us that we must

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"not long for the unknown" but must "go deep into the known...because the known is really the door to the unknown." In another chapter, challenging Krishnamurti, he tells us that "to be aware in ordinary situations will not do. And you *cannot* be aware in ordinary situations. The mind's stupidity has such a long history...You can only be aware in emergencies, in sudden emergencies...if you are familiar with the situation, you will not be aware of it." In his use of language, Rajneesh shows little precision. He uses words like witnessing, consciousness, and awareness in so many different ways, sometimes as the goal, sometimes as the obstacle that must be transcended, that it is difficult to understand what he is really saying— an approach to "communication" that is fast becoming common among spiritual teachers today. In his discussion of the three kinds of "mystics"— those who remain silent, those who try to define, and those who deny everything— Rajneesh defends at least part of his inconsistency:

> *As for me, I do not fall into any of these three groups. That is why I cannot be consistent... I am always concerned with the questioner, the one who has asked. How can he be helped? If I think he can be helped through positive faith, then I proclaim it; if I feel he can be helped by definition, then I give the definition. To me everything is just a device. There is nothing serious about it: it is just a device.*

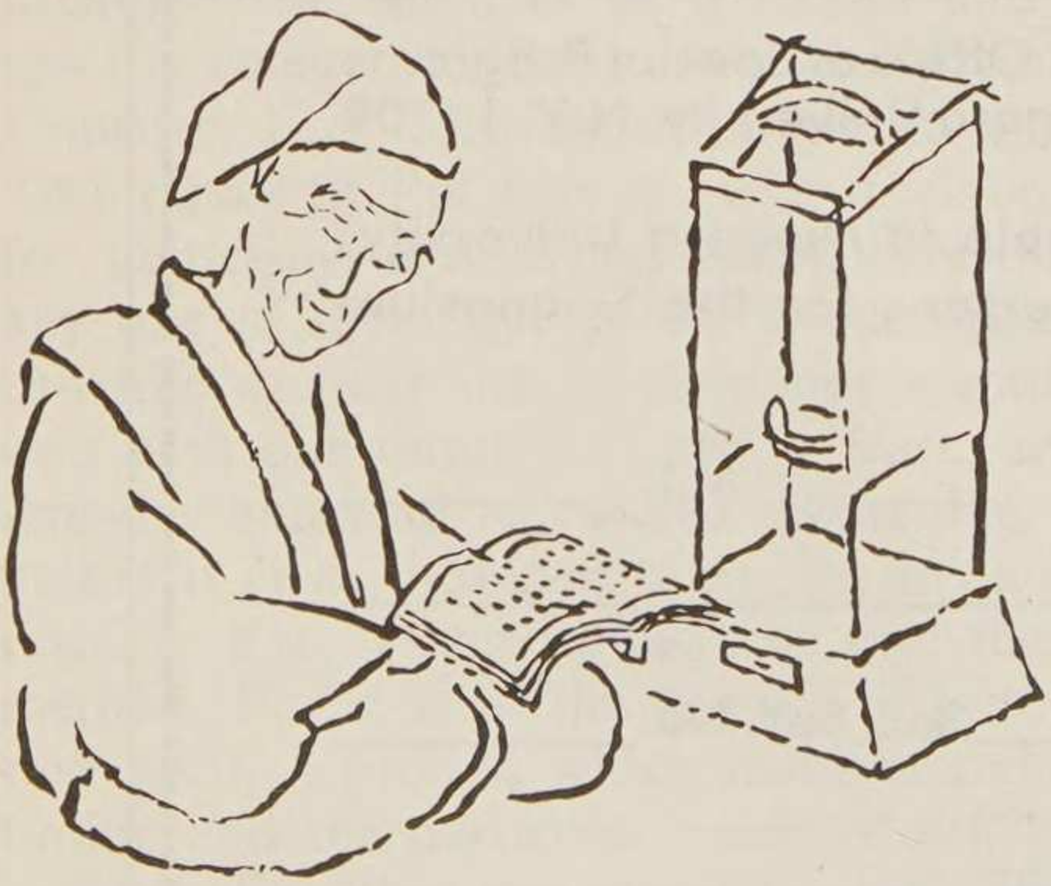
While the attitude underlying the first part of this quotation is laudable, that underlying the last two sentences is not only enormously egotistical and shortsighted, but it also raises the question of why he published this book. What occurs in a spoken context among particular groups of people at particular times, especially if it involves specific powerful psycho-spiritual techniques, needs to be carefully edited and organized if it is to be transferred to paper in a way that will be "helpful" to an unknown audience, whose individual needs may be quite different. It is not more ideas and techniques of meditation that are needed today— these are easy to come by. What is needed is an atmosphere in which such ideas and techniques can contribute to a total process of self-inquiry, an honest search for what is true. Tradition tells us that when Shiva chanted the tantric teachings to his consort Devi, he did so in an atmosphere of concern and mutual aim.

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Rajneesh evokes something of this atmosphere in *The Book of Secrets*, but it is totally lacking in *Meditation: The Art of Ecstasy*.

Dennis Lewis is a freelance writer and editor living in San Francisco. He is coeditor of Sacred Tradition & Present Need *and* On the Way to Self Knowledge.

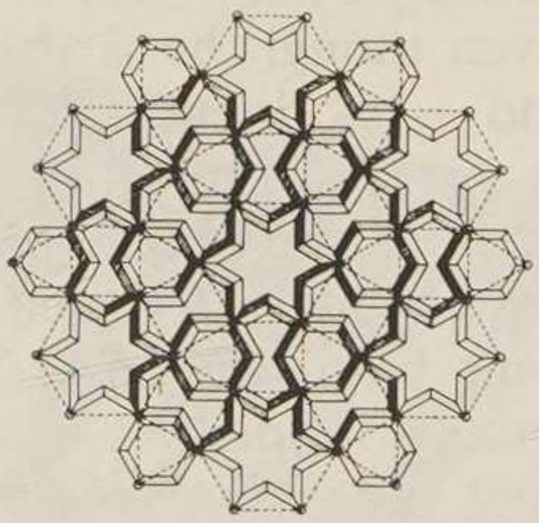
The Splendour of Islamic Calligraphy

By Abdelkebir Khatibi and Mohammed Sijelmassi. New York: Rizzoli, 1976. Pp. 254. $45.00.

By Richard Ettinghausen

This book by two Moroccan authors, one a professor at the University of Rabat and the other a doctor of medicine, is splendidly produced, and whether one is familiar with the Arabic script or not, it presents a constant feast for the eye. It is richly and technically well illustrated with examples from the various areas of the Middle East, Turkey, Iran, India and the countries of the Maghrib, the Western part of the Muslim world. Even a specialist in Arabic calligraphy will take endless pleasure in this publication because it offers a great deal of totally unknown material of great interest and beauty. There are some especially strong specimens from North Africa and from more recent scribes from Turkey and Iran. There is a wide selection of complex calligraphic configurations delineating birds, lions, ships and even human beings as well as the stylized signatures of the Turkish sultans *(tughra)* and, more significantly, mystic monograms of *Huwwa* (Him) from Sufi incantations. While there are richly illuminated manuscripts, the stress is on unadorned texts on parchment or paper.

It will come as a surprise to many readers that the small number of twenty-eight Arabic consonants could be rendered in so many different fashions: from the stately monumental early lettering to the ornate forms of medieval times and on to the rapid, passionately rendered modern versions in various arrangements and combinations. They vividly demonstrate how the individual impulses within the totality of the civilization could change from country to country, period to period and scribe to scribe. Proportions, manners of joining letters, elaborations, interplay of lines, diacritical signs to distinguish letters, marks for the short vowels, not to mention background designs, all contribute to make this a fascinating display of ever-changing configurations which offer a great esthetic delight page after page. In view of the often rhythmically organized compositions, the



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authors' parallels to the arts of music and choreography are not surprising.

The two writers point out correctly that calligraphy is not a universal art. Some civilizations have not developed it in detail while others (like that of Japan) have developed it into a supreme art. Indeed when one looks at the four illustrated pre-Islamic specimens of Arabic writing (dating from before the early 6th century A.D.), one would not regard them as a propitious beginning. Further, one would have hardly prophesied that extraordinary development which even modern times have not completely stifled and for which profound enthusiasm is still widely found in the Muslim world. The reason for this evolution lies in the fact that, for the Muslim, writing does not merely have the prosaic function of being the visual image of the spoken word. For him it is of divine origin and recognized as the vehicle of the Koran (Qur'an) and thus reproduces the content of the heavenly book brought by Muhammad to the Arabs and the world. The very sanctity of writing becomes clear from Koranic passages which are introduced by oaths invoking the kalam, the reed pen of the scribe. Also while the Prophet insisted on being an ordinary man— not a performer of miracles even though he is the chosen messenger of God— his divine message was brought in Arabic. The language is thus the center of the religion and of the civilization based on it. As such the writing had to become both rigorously precise according to certain formulas founded on geometric and decorative rules; yet it could also be emotionally charged. Calligraphy became also a mirror of the spiritual quality of a person and was eventually regarded as a reflection of the pure geometry of the soul. It also developed into an instrument of mystical knowledge. For the Muslim the fine art of writing thus represents a long and demanding path to a higher stage of cognition and to a deeper spiritual experience.

An earlier publication of this type was *The Sense of Unity: the Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* by Nader Ardalan and Ialeh Bakhtiar (University of Chicago Press, 1973). It has a forward by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the Director of the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy who is the leader in this field. He himself presented four lectures on "The Principles of Islamic Art" at New York University in October 1976 which will eventually be published by New York University Press.

In its outlook and approach this new book on calligraphy joins a small group of publications by Muslim scholars which try to go beyond the mere esthetic enjoyment of Muslim art.

Richard Ettinghausen is Consultative Chairman of the Islamic Art Department at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran

By Henry Corbin. Translated from the French by Nancy Pearson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977. Bollingen Series XCI:2. Pp. 350. $18.50.

By Annemarie Schimmel

On a splendid spring morning, one of my Persian students at Harvard remarked: "Here, the light is so material; in Iran, everything becomes spiritualized under the rays of the morning sun!" While reading Corbin's book (published in French in 1960) I often thought of this remark. The French scholar, long known as the best authority on the spiritual aspects of Iranian thought, attempts to give an account of the pre-Islamic, Mazdean *imago terrae,* the "visionary geography" that prevailed in the Zoroastrians' mythical world. *Eran* constituted the center of seven *keshwar,* regions, just as the Good God, Ahura Mazda, was surrounded

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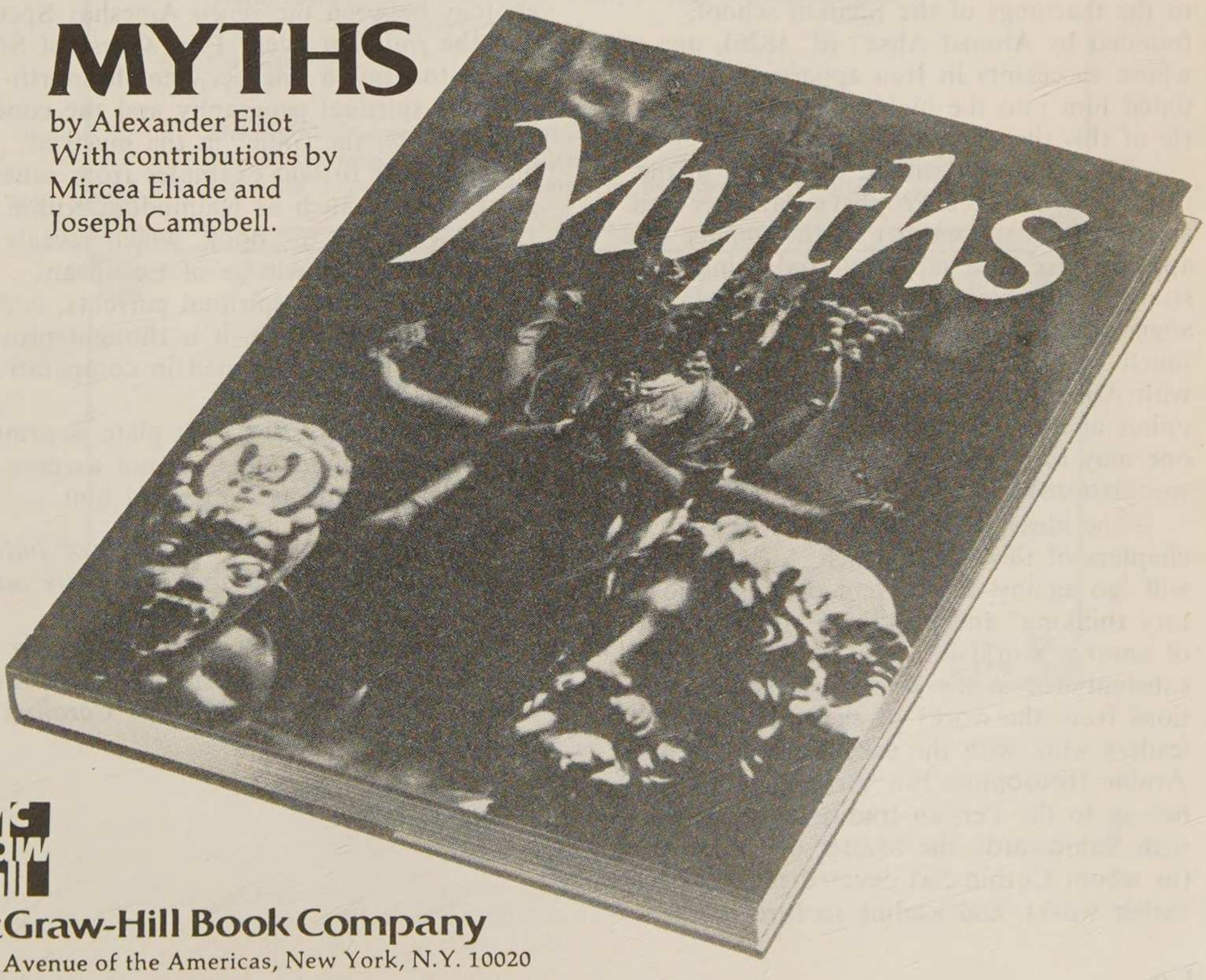
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by Alexander Eliot
With contributions by
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by and mysteriously united with the seven deities called the Ameshas Spenta; for "the hierophanic space is always at the center."

Corbin investigates what he calls "geosophy," the "visionary Earth" which is connected with a female angel. He then traces these same ideas in the Persian Islamic tradition, where the visionaries have postulated the existence of a spiritual world, called Earth of Hūrqalyā, with its two cities of emerald, Jablasa and Jabarsa. This is the Earth of Vision, and likewise the Earth of Resurrection, where man encounters his spiritual Ego, who is his real "I." In his interpretation Corbin is particularly indebted to the teachings of the Shaikhi school, founded by Ahmad Ahsa'i (d. 1826), one of whose successors in Iran apparently initiated him into the highly complicated fabric of this theosophical system.

The Islamicist will be interested in the role of Fātima, the Prophet's daughter and, as Ali's wife, the mother of the *imams*. She appears here as a supra-celestial being, strangely combining aspects of the "Mazdaic angel of the Earth," and of Sophia— so much so, that Corbin sees in her union with Ali, the Prophet's cousin, the ages-old union of *logos* and *sophia*. (In this context, one may also think of some mariological speculations).

The ideas put forth in the first two chapters of this book, which, to be sure, will "go against the current of contemporary thinking" and postulate "the irruption of another world into our knowledge," are substantiated in the second part by translations from the works of eleven spiritual leaders who, with the exception of the great Arabic theosophist Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240), all belong to the Persian tradition, beginning with Suhrawardi, the Master of Illumination (to whom Corbin has devoted much of his earlier work), and leading to three representatives of the Shaikhi school. We fully agree with the author that most of these thinkers are completely unknown in the West (even among orientalists). Hence, the excerpts offered in translation are most welcome to every serious scholar of Iranian spirituality, and to everyone who is interested in the reality of the spiritual world. The philologist and the "historian" will probably disagree with some of Corbin's daring hypotheses; but the lover of Persian poetry will be able to give a deeper meaning to some metaphors used by the poets of Iran. One would even be tempted to continue Corbin's musings by creating an analogy between the *seven* Ameshas Spenta and the *fourteen* "Very Pure Ones" of Shi'ah Islam; to draw a line between the north-oriented spiritual geography and the concept of the *Qutb*, the "pole" in the mystical hierarchy; or to add examples from other great mystics, such as Najmuddin Kubrā (d. 1220). Although the book, which reveals the author's deep knowledge of European, especially German, spiritual currents, is at times difficult to read, it is thought-provoking for everyone interested in comparative mysticism.

Unfortunately, the only plate is printed in the wrong direction. I do not assume that this is meant as a mystical hint.

Annemarie Schimmel is professor of Indo-Muslim culture at Harvard University and is also associated with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard. Her most recent book is Mystical Dimensions of Islam *(The University of North Carolina Press).*

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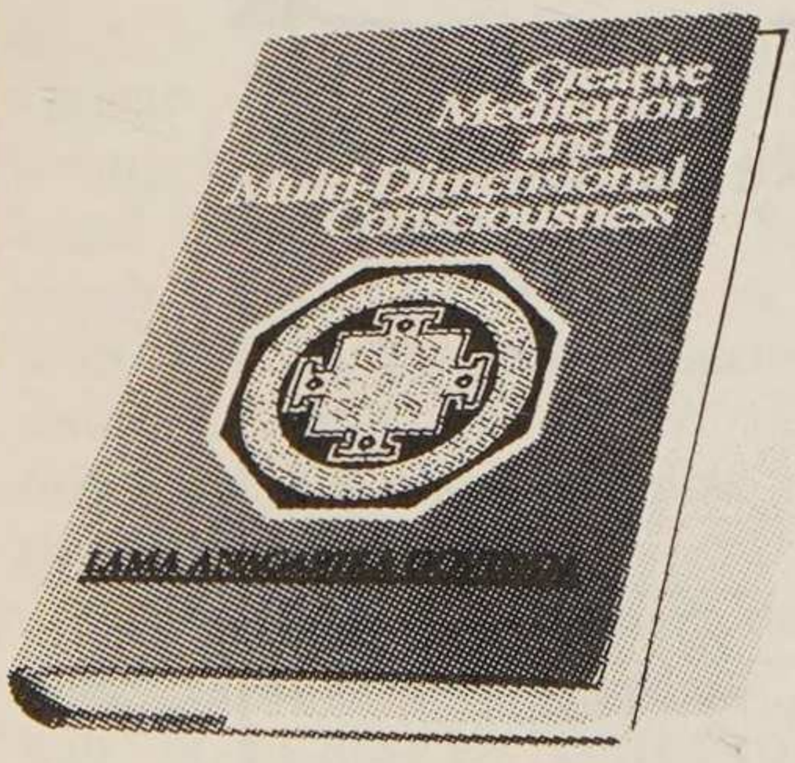
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Frederick Franck, one of *Parabola's* consulting editors, maintains a cultural program at "Pacem in Terris" in Warwick, New York, a spiritual center which he designed and built. He has written and illustrated *The Zen of Seeing, Pilgrimage to Now/Here* and is at work on a new book, *Everyman.* His drawings and paintings are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum and the Tokyo National Museum among others.

Shems Friedlander is the author of *Wisdom Stories for the Planet Earth, The Whirling Dervishes* and *Submission, Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad* and has written for *Aperture* and *New Age Journal.* His photographs of the dervishes are in the Baltimore Museum and private collections.

Robert Meagher, a teacher of humanities and religion at Hampshire College, is the author of *Beckonings, Personalities and Powers, Cave Notes* and a new volume, *An Introduction to Augustine.* His article, "Reflections on Ancient Friendship," appeared in *Parabola* last year.

Lizelle Reymond has spent many years living and studying in India. The article in this issue reflects a period which is more fully described in *My Life with a Brahmin Family.* Ms. Reymond's other books include *Shakti* and *To Live Within,* an account of her five-year experience in a Himalayan hermitage studying under the spiritual master, Shri Anirvan.

Barre Toelken is an expert on Native American traditions and folklore. He is a member of the English Department of the University of Oregon, editor of the *Journal of American Folklore* and a contributor to a new book on Native American religion, *Seeing with a Native Eye.*

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