PARABOLA

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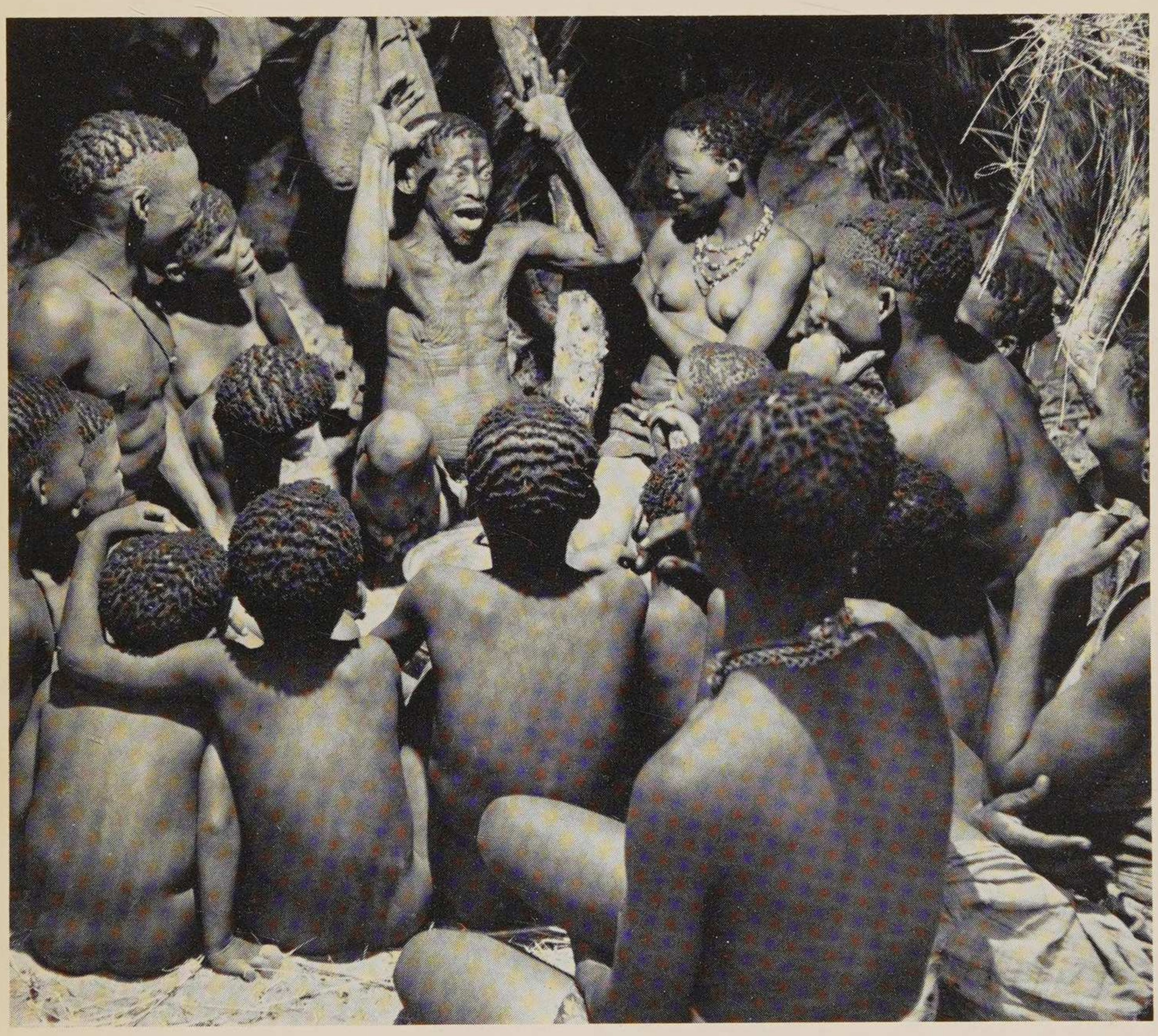
IV:

MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

STORYTELLING AND EDUCATION

Stories and their Relation to Learning with Thomas Buckley, Anne Charles, Maria Dermoût, Sam Gill, James Hillman, Sr. Maria José Hobday, Richard Lewis, Abraham Menashe, Nancy Rambusch, Robin Ridington, Diane Wolkstein



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VOLUME IV, No. 4

STORYTELLING and EDUCATION

PARABOLA

MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

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Cover: Old Father, painting by Pablita Velarde from *Old Father the Story Teller,* by Pablita Velarde. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Cradoc Bagshaw.

Inside Cover: Old Man Makaai tells the children a bushman folk tale in the waterless regions of the southern Kalahari. Photograph by N.R. Farbman. Life Magazine ©Time Inc.

FOCUS

In our last issue we published a description by Lobsang Lhalungpa of the finding of the amazing child destined to become the fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet. This boy—while still in his teens, facing the loss of his throne, having to carry the burden of terrible choices for his threatened country, maintaining his inhumanly exalted position without losing his humanity in conditions of brutal hostility and exile—grew up to be the joyful, free, and dynamic man who has finally been allowed to visit this country and be taken to its heart. I think anyone who has been in the Dalai Lama's presence would wish for himself or his own child even a part of the qualities he manifests; anyone would wish to have and to be able to pass on the wisdom and compassion that he urges on us. "Do I sound unrealistic?" he asks, laughing. Indeed, how are wisdom and compassion possible? Can these things be passed on, taught? Are they the result of education? What *is* education?

In preparing this issue of PARABOLA we have been searching for answers to these questions, and we come to the same conclusion as Richard Lewis in the conversation between teachers that we listened in on: we don't know very much about education. We know that life has produced great knowledge and great men; we know that

most of what we know has come to us from other people. Since time's beginning the oral tradition—the great process of the transmission of knowledge-energy from one person or one generation to another—has found its expression in stories: stories enacted in rituals, represented in art, narrated and sung in myth and poetry, written down in books and even in magazines like this one. For, here we are, *writing* about the oral tradition; because of course the word that is said can be put on paper, and we believe that the written word not only need not betray the spoken one, but may be its very loyal servant. The scriptures also are holy. What is vital is that what is written should indeed be an echo of lived truth, and not only a description.

Education in our times cannot take place without the written word; but it cannot take place either, in our times or any other, without the spoken one, without the voice of the teacher. Perhaps in the relation between the two is the very essence of transmission. In the beginning was the word, and the word has to be incarnated in a form that can preserve the soul, the echo of that original vibration. Alas for the words, or the art, or the ritual, that forget their origin and their purely secondary function of expressing it, and begin to strut like the louse in the Popol Vuh, in love with their own importance. And alas for us, if we let ourselves be fooled into thinking that the expressions, the tools and instruments of teaching and learning, can be themselves the teachers. There is no substitute for the teacher and his voice: for the story told aloud, for the scripture read aloud, for the living gesture that interprets human understanding. Knowledge may be expressed in many forms, but someone must express it and someone else receive it, test it, and interpret it anew. Whatever education is or is not, it must be the transmission of a living energy, and human beings must exchange it.

For if we cannot define education, we surely can see some elements that are vital to it, and begin to demand that they should not be lacking in our schools. Education, which means a leading out, must mean a development from the inside, an opening of the inner eye; it must mean a development of inner strength. The word "discipline" is out of style, but it simply means teaching, and the learning of the teaching by a "disciple." And if the truth makes us free, true education surely also must bring a kind of inner liberation from our more ignorant inner slaveries—especially, as Krishnamurti says, freedom from fear.

What the Dalai Lama has shown us in his own person is an educated man. Perhaps it is only people who are educated in this sense who can respond to life, its situations and inhabitants, its exiles and its thrones, with what he calls wisdom and compassion.

— D.M. Dooling

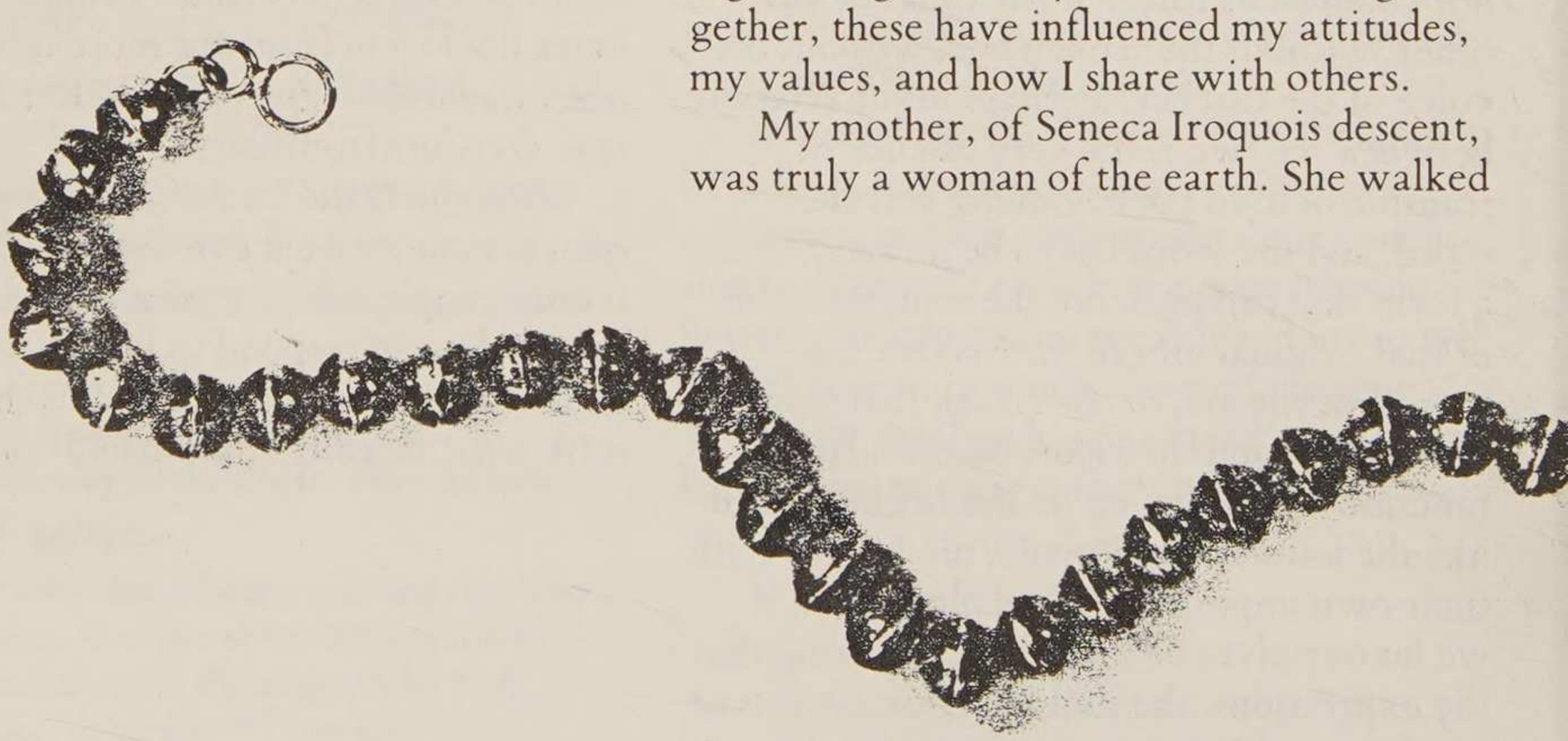
STRUNG MEMORIES

by Sister Maria José Hobday

When I was small, I used to stand with my mother and look across the land to the Sleeping Ute Mountain. The sun set often between his folded arms. His feathered headdress lay in quiet dignity across the plain, and the moccasined feet, so distinctly Indian, pulled the eyes upward along the sleeping form. We would be very quiet, my mother and I, looking at the legendary Indian asleep on the land. The promise was that one day he would rise up and lead his people, the Utes, to new power and life. And my mother would tell me, "Take this beauty into your heart; learn it. Some day you will be far from here, and you will only be able to see this with the eyes of your heart. Then it will be important for you to have the beauty inside you. Memorize the land." I did not completely understand what she was saying, but I did remember those land pictures. When we walked along a dusty country road, she would say, "Feel the earth. Your feet are trying to teach you about the land. Some day your toes will not be walking in this warm dirt, but your feet will remember the road, and this will make you happy."

My mother was right. Because of her manner with me, her quiet and ranging look, I came to know that it was important to think with the senses. It was important to smell with more than the nose, feel with more than the feet, touch with more than the fingers, see with more than the eyes. My mother said that people who are not homesick for the land, the weeds and grass and flowers and trees that helped them grow up, probably would not hurt too much, either, from homesickness for those they love. As I have grown older, I have found myself fingering the memories of such moments. They are like a necklace of experiences. Each story, each teaching, is a bead, having its own space, but also creating a string of beauty for remembering. Together, these have influenced my attitudes, my values, and how I share with others.

My mother, of Seneca Iroquois descent, was truly a woman of the earth. She walked



tall in her own ideals and search for good living. She was five feet five inches tall—but people always judged her to be taller. She and my father were always reminding us to stand high, to keep our backs straight, to walk firmly, to lift our feet with spring and set them down softly. My friends were told, "Throw back your shoulders!" but my brothers and I were told, "Lift up your heart bone." Later I learned that my parents were quite accurate in their anatomy. The heart bone is the place to lift so that the shoulders rest without strain. Mother said that the soul had to teach the body, had to help it know how to stand and sit.

So many of the best lessons I learned were stories from everyday happenings. As a sister in a religious community, I have taken a vow of poverty. But what that freedom is all about first came to me through my parents. I learned the heart of this vow from a strawberry-ice-cream evening.

We were rather poor during the 1930s; not desperately so, but poor enough to feel the lacks and to live on the edge of insecurity. One Saturday evening I was working late on my homework. I was in the living room, my brothers were outside with their friends, and my parents were in the kitchen, discussing our financial situation. It was very quiet, and I found myself more and more following the kitchen conversation, rather than attending to my homework. Mama and Daddy were talking about what had to be paid for during the week, and there was very little money — a few dollars. As I listened, I became more and more anxious, realizing that there was not enough to go around. They spoke of school needs, of fuel bills, of food. Suddenly, the conversation stopped, and my mother came into the room where I was studying. She put the money — a couple of bills and a handful of change — on the desk. "Here," she said, "go find two or three of your brothers and run to the drugstore before it closes. Use this money to buy strawberry ice cream."

I was astonished! I was a smart little girl, and I knew we needed this money for essentials. So I objected. "What? We have to use this to pay bills, Mama, to buy school things. We can't spend this for ice cream!" Then I added, "I'm going to ask Daddy." So I went to my father, telling him what Mother had asked me to do. Daddy looked at me a moment, then threw back his head and laughed. "Your mother is right, honey," he said. "When we get this worried and upset about a few dollars, we are better off having nothing at all. We can't solve all the problems, so maybe we should celebrate instead. Do as your mother says."

So I collected my brothers and we went to the drugstore. In those days you could get a lot of ice cream for a few dollars, and we came home with our arms full of packages. My mother had set the table, made fresh coffee, put out what cookies we had, and invited in the neighbors. It was a great party! I do not remember what happened concerning the other needs, but I remember the freedom and fun of that evening. I thought about that evening many times, and came to realize that spending a little money at that time for pleasure was not irresponsible. It was a matter of survival of the spirit. The bills must have been paid; we made it through the weeks and months that followed. I learned that my parents were not going to allow money to dominate them. I learned something of the value of money, of its use. I saw that of itself it was not important but that my attitude toward it affected my own spirit, could reduce me to powerlessness or give me power of soul.

Not money, only, but solitude, too, had to be learned in relation to power — the power to be truly free and responsive to life. One summer Saturday morning when I was twelve, I was waiting for my friend Juanita to come over. We had planned a morning together, and she was quite late. I was fretting and complaining, and generally making a nuisance of myself. In fact, I was becoming rather obnoxious to everyone else in the house. Finally, my father said to me, "Get a book, a blanket, and an apple, and get into the car!" I wanted to know why, but he only repeated the order. So I obeyed. My father drove me about eight miles from home to a canyon area, and said, "Now, get out. We cannot stand you any longer at home! You aren't fit to live with. Just stay out here by yourself today until you understand better how to act. I'll come back for you this evening." I got out, angry, frustrated, and defiant. The nerve of him! I thought immediately of walking home; eight miles was no distance at all for me. Then the thought of meeting my father when I got there took hold, and I changed my mind. I cried and threw the book, apple, and blanket over the canyon ledge. I had been dumped and I was furious. But it is hard to keep up a good, rebellious cry with no audience, so finally there was nothing to do but face up to the day alone. I sat on the rim, kicking the dirt and trying to get control of myself. After a couple of hours, as noon approached, I began to get hungry. I located the apple and climbed down to retrieve it — as well as the book and the blanket. I climbed back up, and as I came over the top I noticed the piñon tree. It was lovely and full. I spread the blanket in the shade, put the book under my head, and began to eat the apple.

I was aware of a change of attitude. As I looked through the branches into the sky, a great sense of peace and beauty came to me. The clouds sat in still puffs, the blue was endless, and I began to take in their spaciousness. I thought about the way I had acted and why Daddy had treated me so harshly. Understanding began to come, and I became more objective about my behavior. I found myself getting in touch with my feelings, with the world around me. Nature was my mother, holding me for comfort and healing. I became aware of being part of it all, and I found myself thinking of God. I wanted harmony, I wanted to hold the feeling of mystery, I wanted to be a better person. It was a prayerful time, a time of deep silence. I felt in communion with much that I could not know, but to which I was drawn. I had a great sense of discovering myself as great, of seeing the world as great, of touching the holy. This sense lasted a long time, perhaps a couple of hours. I found I liked being alone, enjoyed the rich emptiness, held the stillness. It was as if I had met another person — me — who was not so bad, after all.

By the time my father came to get me, I was restored. Daddy did not press me about the day. He asked no questions, and I gave him no answers. But I was different, and we both knew it. My father had dumped me into solitude and had challenged me to grow. Before I got out of the car, I thanked him. And from then on, especially during the summers, I would take a day to go off alone. I loved those times of solitude, of contemplation, of prayer. I loved the person, the world, the God I had met that day. This habit of seeking solitude has stayed with me all these years.

Another time that I loved was Tuesdays — late afternoon during school days, and all day during the summers. This was the time when my mother and I ironed together. From the time I was very small, I had my little ironing board set up next to hers. I was ironing before I even had an iron that

was hot! I graduated from handkerchiefs to flat pieces, then to white shirts and frilly curtains. I had many brothers but no sisters, so time alone with my mother was a great treat. But Tuesdays were a long line of the best days, for these were close times of sharing. Ironing was no drudgery for me, and never has been; I think this work was too pleasant to be infected with weariness. It was a day when I walked around in my mother's adult world of thoughts and expe-riences, and prepared quite directly for my own grown-up life. My mother taught me songs from her girlhood, and I taught her the contemporary songs. She told me about her problems when she was my age, and about her parents and home. After two or three hours of ironing, we always stopped to look throught part of her album, and every picture was a story. I came to know her school friends, the boys she dated, the people who made a difference in her life. My mother was a great storyteller, and over the years had memorized long poems of love and courage and heartache.

The album was very selective, not crammed full of the same pictures with dif-ferent poses. Mother said it was better to have a few good story pictures than to have so many crowding the album that you never looked at them at all. Sometimes we laughed, sometimes we cried; as old as the stories were, each time they held something new for me.

But ironing days were serious, too. My entire education on sex came over the iron-ing board. My mother was at ease with her body, liked being a woman, and read a great deal. Her explanations were always accurate, direct, and generous. I was always prepared a year or two in advance for what was happening to me as well as to boys of my age. I became the chief source of infor-mation for most of my friends — I had the knowledge and vocabulary. Changes that frightened my friends or burdened them with discomfort never bothered me; Moth-er kept the point of view that what was nat-ural had to be understood, appreciated, and accepted as healthy.

One ironing board discussion centered around my reading. In junior high someone had given me a couple of pulp romances, and I had hidden them in my room for late-night reading. Mother found them, and the next Tuesday we talked about them. She did not scold me for my trashy selections, but said it might be good if I read a great deal of such stories so that I could find out for myself if they were worth my time. I was surprised, but quite happy. The next day while I was at school my mother went to the drugstore and bought me a whole quantity of real love, true romance and glamorous experience. I found the stack in my room, and attacked the magazines with zest and freedom. After a couple of dozen of these in a row, it occurred to me how very much alike they were. They were good for setting off the imagination, but I knew every story before I read it. At one point, I stopped midway through the story, decided they were all a waste of my time, and the next morning I burned the whole pile. It was a clear but easy lesson of evaluation.

It was at the ironing board, too, that Mama asked me some of the most important questions. One she asked for a number of years was this: "What are the five most im-portant things, do you think, in the man you would want to marry?" I can remember the change from early answers such as "rich, handsome, a car" to "intelligent, a good sense of humor, loves life." My mother would comment on my choices, not so much by judging as by wondering or ques-tioning. One day it occurred to me to ask my mother what *she* felt were the five most important qualities in the man she married. That day I grew up quite a bit. I also saw my father differently and appreciated him more.

It was not only my mother who could ask one question for ten years. My father also had a few favorites which he repeated at regular, well-spaced intervals. One was, "Are you thinking about what you want to do with your life when you grow up?" It was a good question, and the way he asked it was larger than thinking of a job or career. He had asked me that question when I was a mere second-grader. I knew the answer then, too, but I did not tell him that early. How I came to know so soon has always been a shining memory for me.

There were about eighty of us second-graders in one classroom. We had a wonderful teacher named Miss James. She had never married, was in her sixties when she taught me, and was a remarkable woman — full of life and fun. For all of us, she made the classroom an experience of discovery and pleasure. She treated us as if we were important, and took us seriously. There were many chances to grow individually. She told us many stories and taught us how to tell stories on ourselves, to make dramatic the little things that happened to us. My mother and father did this, too, and I still consider it one of the strongest forces of my education.

One area that we all liked was the contests. She ran so many that everybody came off a winner during the course of the year. Two big ones pitted girls against boys and the subjects were mathematics and spelling. The boys could pick the ONE they wanted to represent them in these two contests; the girls could do the same. We were always having to pick the good ones in this or that, which in itself was a great education. It got us off the superficial level of seeing each other.

The two chosen for the grand finale in math and spelling were a boy named George and I. The final tests were in writing and all in the class took the tests with us—but our scores decided whether boys or girls were the champions. George had won the math; only spelling was left for us girls. We were given a few minutes to review the long list of words from our homemade, ditto-toed books. Then we took the test, and I had a perfect paper. George missed one. As Miss James was recording the girls as winners, one boy looked back at me and then said, "She cheated. Her book is still on her desk." I had forgotten to put the book inside the desk and there it was, bold and accusing on the corner of the large double desks we shared. I had not cheated, but the evidence was clearly against me, and I knew it. My eyes filled with tears, and when Miss James came back to my desk, I could not look at her. I had lost for the girls. It meant a lot to us. She stood by me for what seemed ages. Then she put her hand on my shoulder and asked softly, "Did you look at any of the words during the test?" I couldn't speak. I shook my head "No" as the tears ran down my cheeks. Then she said, "I believe you. That could happen to anyone. You and the girls are the winners of the spelling contest." I will never forget the feeling of relief and gratitude that flooded me. She had accepted my word in the face of what looked like guilt. Shortly afterward, the dismissal bell rang to end the school day, but I just sat where I was. It was a thing about power. She had had the power to make all the difference, and by believing me, she had given me a certain power. I felt as if I had been saved from death. By her faith in me she had handed me back to myself. Sitting there in that desk, I decided that what she did was a great thing, and that I too wanted to be able to make such a difference with people. Right there I decided to become a teacher, and a really *good* one. I went to the drugstore after school and bought a notebook, and it became my journal of what makes for a really good teacher. Miss James was my first entry. I

split the first two pages into four columns, writing her name at the top of the page. The column headings were: 1)What I like; 2)What I don't like; 3)What the other kids like; 4)What the other kids don't like. I kept that book for eleven years, evaluating every teacher I had, trying to learn how to be the kind of person that would make important differences in people's lives. I never showed the notebook to anyone, but I studied it and kept it up-to-date.

During those eleven years, I had only two teachers that I thought were great, but that was enough. Miss James, in the second grade, and Grace, in the eighth grade. Grace took us into a wonderful world of drama and poetry and literature. She treated us with dignity and responsibility. She helped us search out and find and treasure our individual gifts. When my father asked me during my eighth-grade year, "Are you thinking about what you want to do with your life when you grow up?" I answered, "Yes." With a twinkle in his eye, he followed with the question, "Does it include talking?" Again I said "Yes." My work, interests, life style, and successes and failures have been varied, but the thread of those meaningful experiences held. I find myself in the world of education, no matter what form it takes. It was a great gift to be awakened by women who were truly educators.

Other stories from my life that stay close to me come from my father's way of teaching. Daddy wanted us to be self-reliant and courageous. He did not live in fear, and did not want us to be afraid of challenge, of life, of people. So, he took risks with us; he can't have always known what would happen, and I am sure he lived with some misgivings about his decisions regarding us. But mostly, they were good decisions. None of us grew up afraid to try, afraid to reach out, afraid to venture. During the 1930s, many traveling men stopped at our home. Some of my friends were afraid of hoboes and warned me never to let them into the house. Others told wild stories about them. But I had a different experience of the depression hoboes. My father always welcomed them, included them in the family meals, and instructed us children: "Listen to these men. They have been getting a different kind of education from what people get in school. They travel, and meet many people, and have to make their way in hard times. They can teach you a great deal. So, when we have these men as guests at the table, be sure you ask them questions and get them to tell you about their adventures. They have a different view of life from people who never go anywhere or try to get along without much of anything." So, for a few years, hoboes were part of our life. They were not just different and exciting. They were living geography lessons. We were not afraid of them, were not put off by their rumpled clothing and sometimes smudgy faces. A few were ordinary, but mostly, they were great teachers, hungry for more than a hot meal and a place to clean up.

Speaking of fear reminds me of an evening when I was nearly ten years old. I was coming home rather late from a movie, and I was alone. We lived only six blocks from the theater, and I was never afraid to come and go by myself, except on Halloween. This particular evening I was walking along the dimly lit main street when out from behind the courthouse bushes jumped a man, waving what looked like a knife. I recognized him at once as Crazy Tom. Crazy Tom was a good enough man when he was sober, but if he got hold of too much whiskey, he went wild. Those wild escapades had earned him the name of Crazy Tom. Well,

he was yelling and looked wild, and whatever he had in his hand wasn't to be examined! He yelled at me, and I started running; he was running right behind. My heart was pounding, and it seemed as if he was getting closer and closer. My imagination was no help. Finally, I was running down the last block, and I saw our house lighted up, the door open, with only the screen door between safety and me. I jumped onto the porch, pulled open the door, and ran inside, panting heavily. My father was sitting in the rocking chair, reading. "Daddy, Daddy," I cried, "Crazy Tom's chasing me with a knife!" My father lowered the paper slowly and then said quietly, "Well, he didn't catch you, did he? I always said you were a good runner." I was dumbfounded. Here I was, bursting in after a run for my life, and my father defused the entire chase with a simple question and a sincere compliment. I stood there looking at him, and then I laughed. What he said was true. Crazy Tom had *not* caught me. I had outrun him. There was nothing to be afraid of, nothing to worry about. I suddenly felt it was a great experience, worth telling everyone as soon as I could. What could have become a crippling experience was a victory, a show of courage. I knew Daddy approved of my fast sprint. He never even mentioned Crazy Tom.

Daddy had a way of making us philosophize about what happened to us. In fact, "philosophy of life" was one of his favorite phrases. My mother surely had a clear philosophy that she lived, but she did not talk about it as much as Daddy. The joke in the house was that Daddy had the philosophy and Mother lived it. Mother taught us out of what happened, but Daddy reflected on experience more verbally. He made us articulate, while Mother tried to keep moving us gently toward understanding.

An incident that happened when I was in junior high would be to the point. We were having a poster contest in art class, and I had what seemed to me a great idea. I shared it with one of my friends. Well, she used my idea, turned it in first, and won the prize. I was furious — not even so much at the betrayal as at not getting credit for an original idea. I went home fuming, and several hours later, when my father came home from work, I was still complaining. Daddy asked what was the matter and I told him how my friend had stolen my idea. She hadn't even said that it was mine, but just claimed it as if it were her own. Daddy listened, and then he sat down and took me on his lap. "Honey," he said, "let me give you a lesson that you might need for the rest of your life. It is very hard in this world to have a good idea and also get credit for it. Not very much that we have is ours alone. We pick things up from books and people without even knowing it. But even if it comes together in a new way in us, we might not get credit for it. Which do you think is really better — to be the kind of person who really *has* good ideas, even if you don't get credit for them...or, to be the kind of person who is willing to take credit for what isn't hers? Which do you think would make you happier, make your life more exciting?" It was not hard for me to see. Again, it was a question of where real power was, in reality or appearance. Dad taught me that being creative was more important than being acclaimed as creative. It is pleasant to have our gifts acknowledged, but it is a shame to let the joy of the gift hinge on such recognition. What matters is what is in the heart; that is how we keep from getting blood poisoning — by keeping a heart that makes all the actions healthy.

Stories, symbols, were always important in my life. Mother taught so much that mattered through actions. She taught me many ways to pray, and often these were connected with nature, with the land, with the sky. She took dirt from the place where I was born and kept it for me. When I was born she saved a little piece of the umbilical cord, dried it, crumbled it, and mixed it with the earth. Such gifts, held for years until a child can understand, make deep impressions on the subconscious. My brothers and I have spoken of these mystery gifts, which have been good medicine for the mind and body and spirit.

My mother did not speak, when I was very young, of death. But she taught me death. One of the best ways she taught me was through prayer, and my favorite prayer was the Sacrifice Flower. My favorite flower was the dandelion. It was so happy, and fun, and changed its petals for wings. When I brought great gatherings of dandelions home to decorate every table and window sill, my brothers sometimes laughed. They said I was picking weeds. But my mother said to ignore them — they had learned from non-Indians to call dandelions weeds. Calling any plant or blossom a weed, my mother would say, was just human bias. Each had its place and use, as well as its own beauty.

Now and then, when I had something heavy on my heart, or a special favor I wanted very much to receive, Mama would say, "Maybe this would be a good time for the Sacrifice Flower." At first she went with me, to help me find a special flower. But after awhile, I went alone. This prayer started with a search for just the right flower to put your heart and thoughts and dreams in. You had to wander around and look at many, then select the ONE you wanted to hold your prayer. You picked the flower, took it home, but you did not give it a drink of water. This flower was going to offer its life to help you receive your favor. So, you went apart to your room with the flower, and held it in your hand. You looked at it with love and admiration, thankful for its beauty and dignity. When you knew the flower and had taken time to love it, then you gave into its keeping your requests or dreams. This was like an intense meditation and trust. You placed your spirit into beauty in the fragile flower. Then you placed the flower in a safe place (safe from brothers!), but where you could see it. Often you looked at the flower and remembered it was giving its life for you, bit by bit offering your prayer to God. The flower did not get tired or distracted; your prayer was in its perfume and color, and in its dying. It was a holy offering, and its presence kept you remembering what you yearned for, what you prayed for. Finally, the flower had offered all the life it had — this may have been days after you first chose it. Your prayer was almost complete.

When I felt the flower had died, I took it from its safe place and showed it to my mother. Then she taught me. Look at the flower again. See, it has given all its own juices to help you, to keep you remembering the things of your spirit. Now, you must hold it with reverence and gratitude. Take it outside and dig a small place for it to rest and mingle with the earth. It has died as a flower, but there is still life power in it. After a while, it will be new energy for the earth, and more flowers can grow. Unless you can learn death, my mother would say, you cannot learn life. Dying and living are part of the same way. The day dies to be born again. The harvest is picked to make way for a new planting. Your flower sacrifices itself for holy thoughts and prayers. Learn from it, so you may know what in you has to die if you are to live more nobly. Then, what looks like death becomes part of the greater life you live.

I thank my parents and all my teachers; they have strung many beads on the necklace of my memories.

Storytelling Stone

From the Seneca, whose name means "The Stone People."

In another time before this one, there was a boy who hunted every day in the forest. Once, late in the afternoon, he stopped beside a large rock and sat down near it to fix his bow and make new points on his arrows.

A man's voice spoke to him. "I will tell you a story," it said.

The boy was startled and a little afraid, but he searched all around the stone to find the source of the voice. It could only be the rock, he thought. It must have *orenda*, the magic power the old men talk about. So he spoke to it. "What did you say you wanted to tell me?"

"They are called stories; they are traditions. But first you must give me a present for telling it to you."

"Will this partridge do?" asked the boy, placing one of the birds he had hunted that day on the stone.

"Come back in the evening," the stone said, "and you will hear a legend about the world that was."

In the evening the boy sat on the stone again. The voice told him of the people who lived in the sky above, the "first people," the ones with great magic. Among them lived an old woman who dreamed that the large tree with the white blossoms that stood in the center of her village should be dug up by its roots. When she told her people about this, they followed the dream's instructions, uprooting the tree. They were frightened and angry over the hole it left and threw the old woman into it. She fell to earth, and the earth, which was completely under water then, had to be brought up from the depths by the animals and put upon the turtle's back and patted by the beavers' tails and allowed to grow before it could receive her who had fallen from the sky.

When he finished the tale, he noticed the boy had dozed off and so he said, "You must tell me if you be-

come sleepy, and we can rest. If you sleep you will not hear. It is better that you come back tomorrow evening, and I will tell you more. Remember to bring my present."

Next day the boy hunted and in the evening returned to the rock with a string of birds. This time he did not miss a word. He came the next evening and the one after that.

"Where do you disappear to at night?" his friend asked him one day when they were out hunting together.

"I go to hear stories," he replied.

"What are they?"

"I don't know how to tell you about them, but come with me tonight and you will hear for yourself."

So he brought his friend to the stone, and its voice filled their ears with the tales of Genonsgwa and the stone coats, the Flying Heads, and the Porcupine people until the boys were sleepy and the stone sent them home to their beds.

Soon the whole village was buzzing with the news of the stone and the tales. The boys led the tribe to the place where the stone stood. The people carried fresh game with them which they left for the stone. They marveled over the things called tales that fell from its mouth. No one had ever heard about "The Master of Life" and "He Who Is Our Grandfather," or his enemy "He Who Is Clad In Ice." They did not know about such things as the songs of the corn or the prayer for the harvest, and the wisest among them knew then that they had known nothing until the stone had begun to speak. It took four years for the stone to tell all the tales, but the nights passed quickly.

The rock called the boy one evening after the others had left and said to him, "One day you will become old

and be unable to hunt. These tales will help you in your old age. Tell the legends to others, but make sure that they give you something in return for them." And after it had told the boy the last story, the stone was silent and never spoke again.

The boy grew up and grew old. He did not forget the legends, and he told them to anyone who came to his lodge to listen. Many traveled from faraway tribes to hear the stories from the old man who had learned them from the stone when he was a boy. They gladly gave him tobacco, meat, and pelts, for he knew the stories of their beginnings, too, and could tell them as well as the ones about his own tribe. There were few nights when his lodge did not have a crowd of listeners, enthralled and intent, catching the tales to take home with them to their own hearths.

That is the way stories came to be and why there are many stories in the world where none had been before. The people from the other world before ours, the ones who had the strong and wonderful magic that the stone told about, are the ones we cannot stop telling stories about, even today.

—Retold by John Cech

TOWARDS BEGINNINGS Part II

by Richard Lewis

The simplest point of attraction, a speck of dust, a shadow, a hand, a single thread, a ring—these can become for children beginnings of immense proportions. They are, in their way, no longer "specific" things, but doors which may be opened to passageways that lead far and deeply into the labyrinth of a child's world. Getting past the purely associative attributes of these things, the child will guide us and himself to their very "being"—their particular aliveness and qualitativeness. He sees them as having a history, a past, a nature peculiar to themselves. He cares about their origins, their "whyness," the "how" of their creation. His seriousness takes us in and past dreams, leading us into thinking that moves with intuition, with images revolving in a free-floating world, with feeling extending itself often to perceptions formed in a time far from our own. And the further he gets, the greater his excitement, as if he senses the extent of his wisdom, the meaning of his knowledge, the closeness with which he, without warning to any of us, quietly touches who and what he is—revealing that special relationship between himself and the things of the world which is the secret of his being.

As poet and scientist the child investigates what is inside of all that is outside in order to touch the inward of all that is outward, finding his way into and out of what is continually touching us.

Learning as venturing out, hesitating, turning away, venturing in, meeting, grasping, forming...

venturing out, hesitating, turning away, venturing in, meeting, grasping, forming...

Each question becomes its own teacher.

To learn is to express, learning is the expression of learning, to learn is to extend, extending is expressive of our reaching, expressiveness is our reaching to our learning. Learning and expressiveness cause each other.

"Look at this writer thing," my son says to me, picking up a stick, and scratching in the dirt, diagonal lines joining.

"What this is?" he asks.

"It looks like an H," I tell him.

As we continue my answers to him are about S's and P's and O's.

After awhile I walk on and looking behind me I see him, still turning the ground into a quilt of letters and numbers, spelling and figuring proportions and shapes, making the earth a place to be written on, decorated humbly, by his hands first learning to write on the aged surface of its history.

Within our emergence our need to represent our emergence—our search for symbols depicting our emerging—symbols growing alongside of ourselves.

Children leap from expression to expressiveness when the very limitation of what they can express is surmounted by what they want to express—so that the content of their expression, in that moment, determines the shape of their expression—in no other possible way than in the instant it was expressed.

In all expression the argument of what can be expressed, fighting to the last, in what is expressed, battles as expression, to be understood.

Given a sense of the secret, children need to retire into secret, to corner their selves, to hide in their selves, to feel nestled in their privacy. They need a version of themselves confined in themselves, only seen and found by themselves. They need a secret place to huddle close to their secret dreaming... of dreams dreamt only by themselves, dreaming.

To inform children of only that which is visible is to deny the source of what we can see and feel, to confine ourselves to the outward appearance of experience rather than what is alive and real to the eye turned inward.

Questions arise from the sense of what questions might answer—the sense that beyond what is immediately perceived is yet another perception, perceivable.

He was upset because he did not understand me when I said the word "invisible." I took him aside and asked him to blow some air on his hand. He smiled. He had felt the invisible, without ever having any need to see it.

Hovering with uncertainty, children ask of meaning, "Why?"—only to discover in meaning yet another question, hovering with uncertainty, yet to be asked.

The width and depth of the subjective cannot be measured, being that space in which we are, filling our presence more than we could ever fill it.

As the mind factualizes it often discards feeling: the best of learning finds feeling again without discarding fact.

Once feeling is neglected, learning cannot become process, thought cannot become knowledge. Our humanness exists in the recognition of feeling—and to live otherwise is to debase and deny our struggle to be human.

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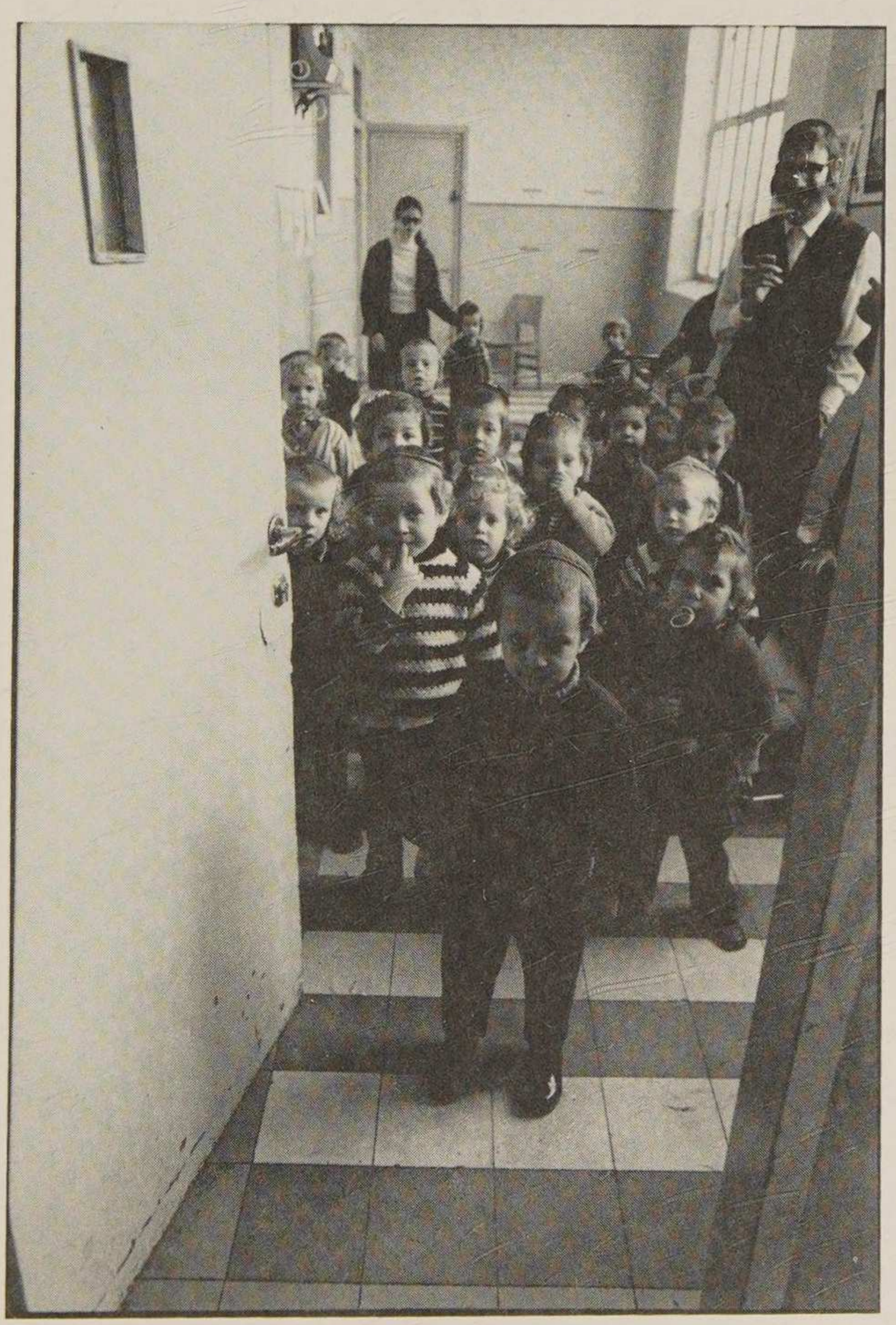
Parts I & II of "Towards Beginnings" which appear in this and the preceding issue of PARABOLA *are sections of a book-in-progress,* Towards Beginnings: Reflections on Early Childhood *by Richard Lewis.*

Learning the Holy Tongue

A Photographic Essay by Abraham Menashe

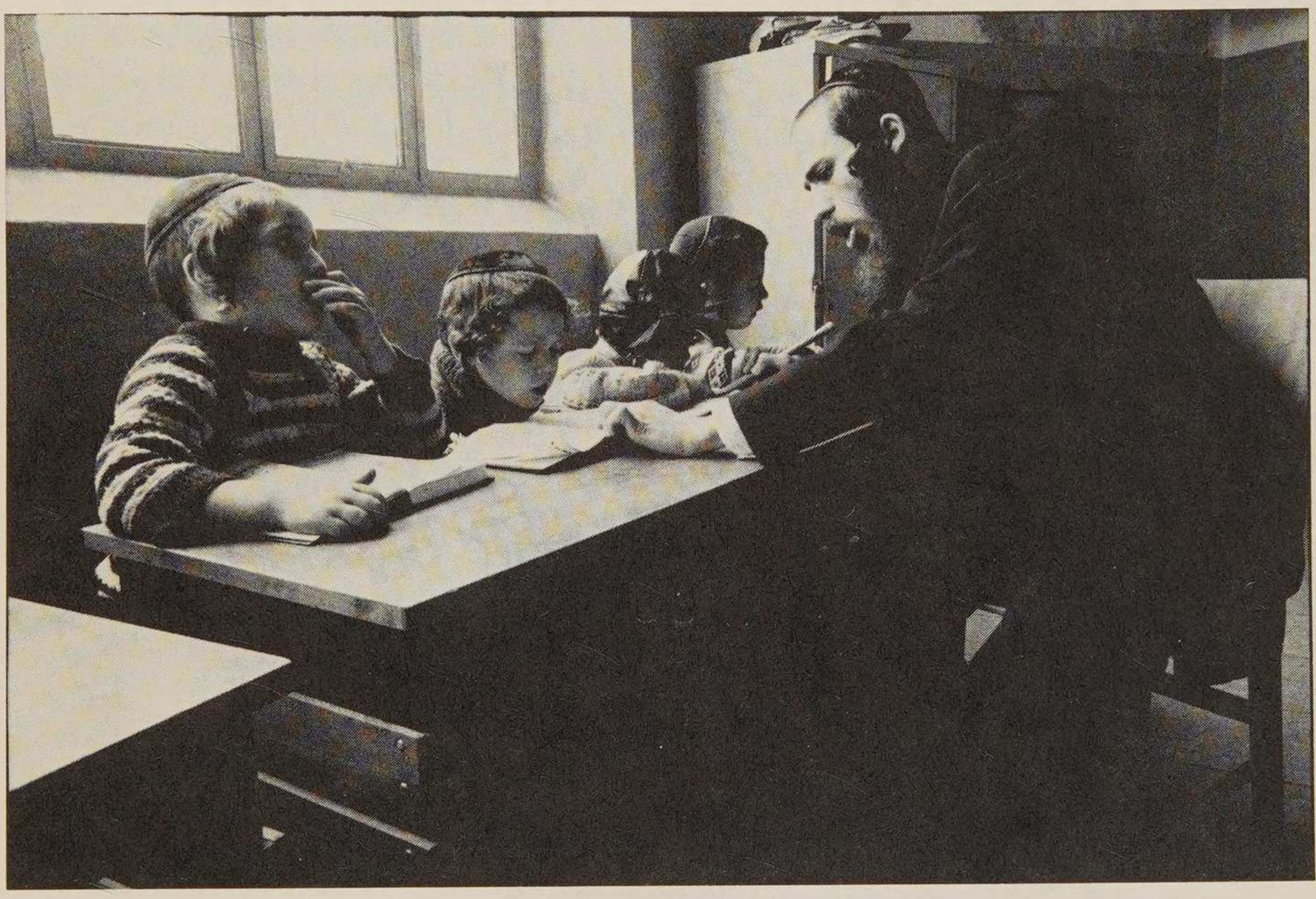


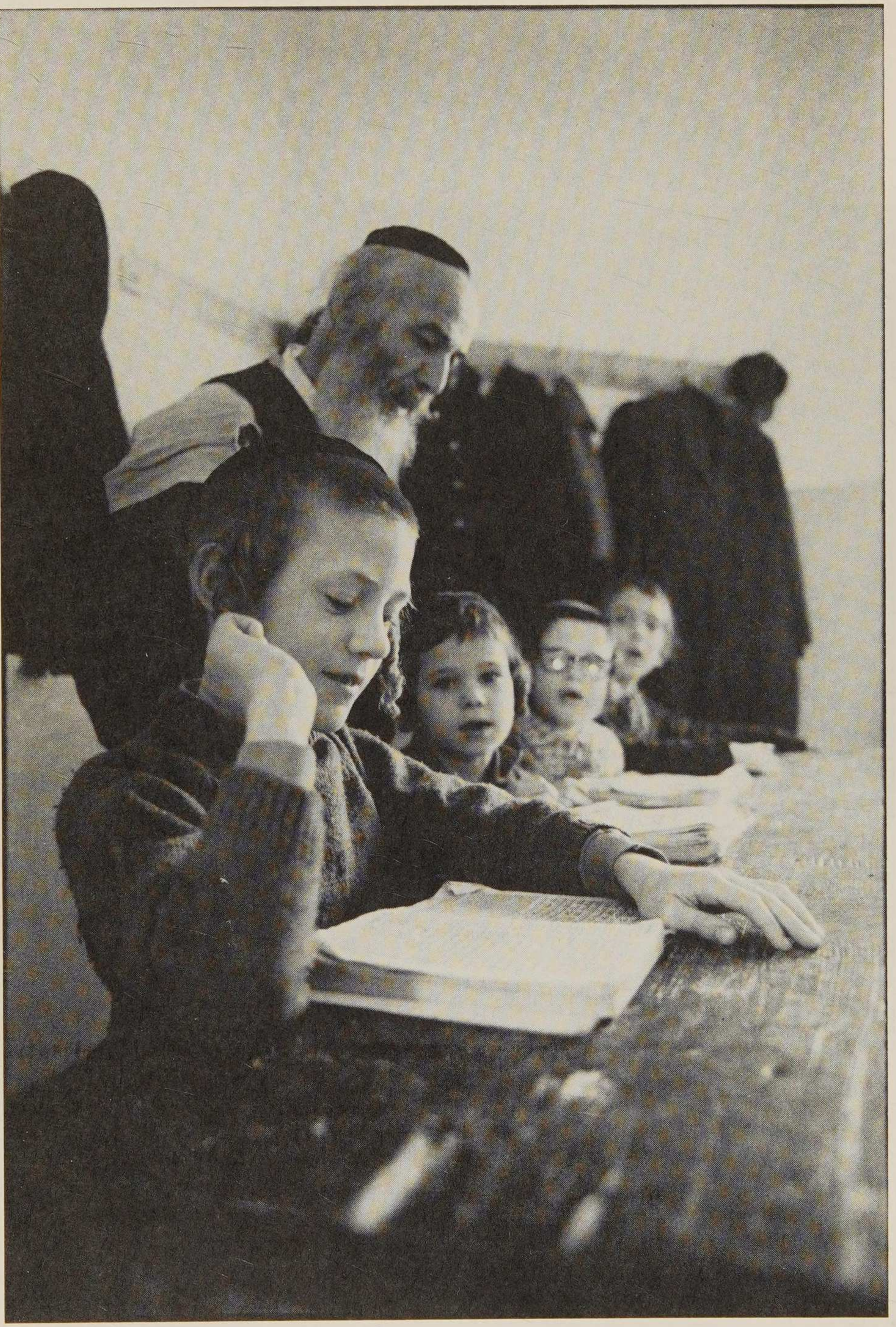
Photographs copyright ©1979 Abraham Menashe

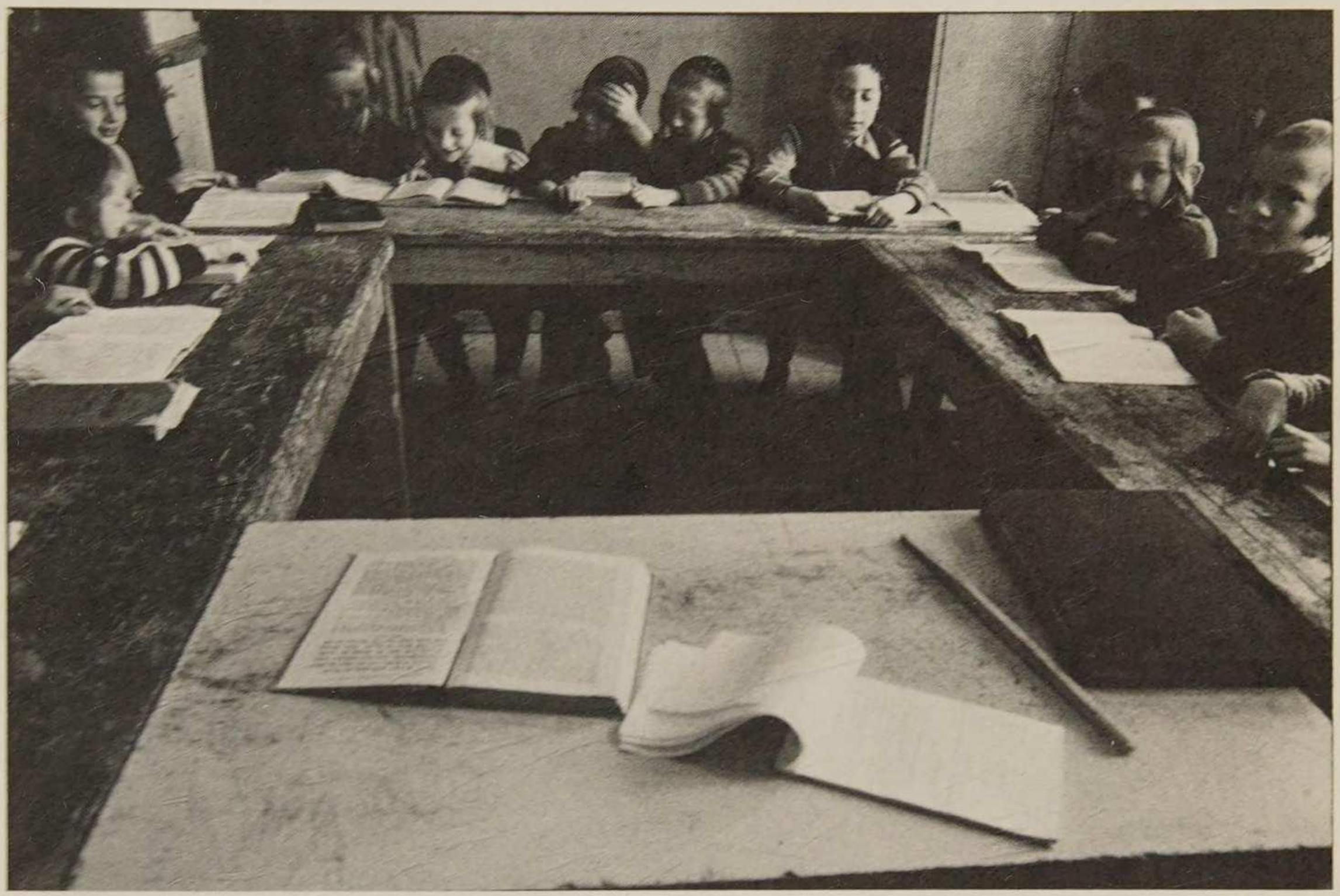
Gehulah is a section of Jerusalem where Hassidim, a sect of highly Orthodox Jews, live. The children of Hassidim study in the cheder, *the name for the study room. They are studying the Hebrew language as well as the conventional prayers and the Bible. They learn in the traditional method through memorization and strict discipline, learning to read and write from the Holy Books. They are most likely to speak in Yiddish, or even in Modern Hebrew, but their studies are all written in Biblical Hebrew, the Holy Tongue. Many of these children live in the surrounding quarters of these study rooms. They do not live at home because often their parents have too many children to care for, but they keep close contact with their families and visit them each Sabbath and on holidays. Young girls are raised in the home and learn the skills of a homemaker and wife and are rarely sent to learn in* cheder.

When the Egyptian-born photographer, Abraham Menashe, went to the cheder *in Gehulah, these boys, like all children, were eager to leave their studies and have the man with the camera take their picture. Whenever the teacher allowed it, they got up from the tables and tried to attract Abraham's attention, calling "Tzalem otti, tzalem otti!"— which means in Hebrew, "Take my picture, take my picture!"*

The photographs in this essay are now in the collection of the Archives of the Jewish Museum in New York City.







EPICYCLE

Anansi's Box of Stories

Anansi, or Spider, is a favorite trickster of the Ashanti and other African peoples. I first heard this tale from storyteller Jay O'Callahan.

One day, Spider decided to visit the Sky God, to see if he could buy the box of stories that the Sky God kept by his throne. Spider wanted those stories—all the stories in the world were in that box! So Spider wove a web right up to the sky, and climbed up to visit Nyami, Lord of the Sky.

"You want to buy the box of stories?" said Nyami, and all the other gods shook with laughter at Spider's request. "Well," said Nyami, "you will have to pay the price."

"I will pay the price," said Spider.

"Bring me four creatures, then: Onini, the python, Osebo, the leopard, Moboro, the hornet, and Mmoatia, the fairy that none can see," Nyami told Spider. "Then you may have the box." The other gods roared with laughter, but Spider didn't hear them. He was going down his web as fast as his legs could carry him.

Spider went to Aso, his long-suffering wife. "Aso," he said, "I must bring Onini, the python, to Nyami." Aso said to her husband, "Cut some vine." Spider said, "Enough! I understand!" Then he went and cut a long vine and coiled it up and went walking through the jungle. At every step, Spider said, "It's longer than he is. No, no, it is shorter. No, it is longer. No, it is shorter."

Presently, Onini heard this imaginary conversation and said to Spider, "What is this all about?" Spider said, "I am arguing with my wife Aso. She says that this vine is longer than you are, but I say it is shorter. Come, stretch out on the river bank, and I will measure you. Then the argument will be settled." So Onini stretched himself out along the river bank and Spider stretched the vine beside

him. Then quickly Spider wound the vine around Onini. "Nwenene! Nwenene!" was the sound of the tying. "Oho!" said Spider. "Now I will take you to Nyami!" And he did so.

When Spider came before the throne, Nyami put his hand out and touched Onini. "What my hand has touched, my hand has touched," said Nyami. "What my hand has not touched still remains." So Spider climbed back down his web to get Osebo, the leopard.

Spider went to Aso. "Aso," he said, "I must bring Osebo, the leopard, to Nyami." Aso said to her husband, "Dig a hole." Spider said, "Enough! I understand!" Then he ran off to the jungle and dug a great hole, right in the trail where Osebo came down to the water. Then he hid behind the bushes and waited. By and by, Osebo came down the trail. He wasn't expecting a hole to be there, so he fell in. Spider came out then, and looked in the hole. "What are you doing there, brother?" he said. "Help me get out!" pleaded Osebo. "Oh, brother, if I did that, you would eat me!" said Spider. "No, I wouldn't," replied Osebo. "That would repay kindness with unkindness." "Very well," said Spider. Then he took a vine and threw one end of it over a branch that stuck out over the pit. He said to Osebo, "Reach up with your front feet, so I can tie the vine to them and pull you out." Osebo did so. Then Spider lifted his knife and in a flash it descended on Osebo's head. "Gao!" was the sound of the cutting. "Oho!" said Spider. "Now I will take you to Nyami!" And he did so.

Nyami put his hand out and touched Osebo when Spider appeared before the throne. "What my hand has touched, my hand has touched," said the Sky God. "What my hand has not touched still remains." So Spider climbed back down his web to get Moboro, the hornet.

Spider went to Aso. "Aso," he said. "I must bring Moboro, the hornet, to Nyami." Aso said, "Get a cala-

bash." "Enough! I understand!" said Spider, and he went to get a calabash.

Spider took the gourd and hollowed it out and made a stopper for it. Then he went down to the river and filled the calabash with water, and picked a banana leaf and went to the great nest where the hornets could be found. There they were, coming and going, and their stingers were long and menacing. Spider took the calabash and sprinkled some water on the hornet's nest, and some on the banana leaf, and poured the rest on his head. "Moboro, Moboro!" he cried. "The rains have come, the rains have come! I am soaked to the skin, protect yourself! Fly into this calabash, it will keep you dry!" Moboro heard Spider and flew into the calabash, and Spider immediately put in the stopper. "Fom!" was the sound of the stopping. "Oho!" said Spider. "Now I will take you to Nyami!" And he did so.

Nyami put his hand out and took the calabash from Spider. "What my hand has touched, my hand has touched," said the Sky God. "What my hand has not touched still remains." So Spider climbed back down his web to get Mmoatia, the fairy that no one can see.

Spider went to Aso again. "Aso," he said. "I must bring Mmoatia, the fairy that no one can see, to Nyami." Aso said, "Make a doll." "Enough! I understand!" said Spider, and he went about making a doll. He made it small, like a baby, and he made it so that its head would move up and down. Then he tied a long vine to it and set it down under a tree. He put sweet yams in its lap, and he covered it all over, from head to foot, with sticky black honey. Then he hid in the bushes and waited.

By and by, the leaves began to tremble as if the wind had touched them, but there was no wind. Mmoatia had come to the clearing. She came up to the doll and saw the sweet yams in its lap. "Little one," said Mmoatia, "are those yams for me?" Spider pulled on the vine and the

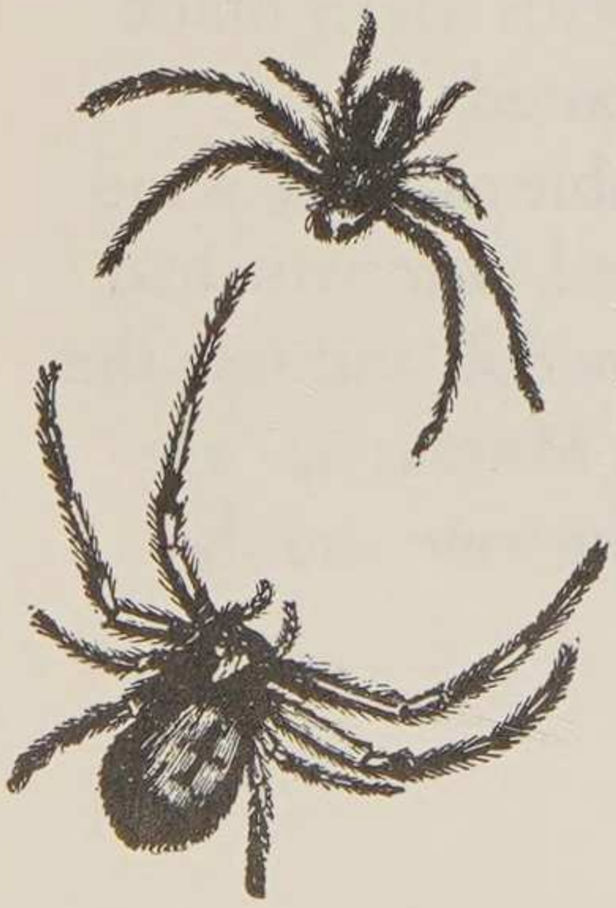
doll's head nodded up and down. Mmoatia took yams and ate them. "Thank you, little one," she said when she had finished. This time, Spider did not pull the vine. "I said, 'Thank you little one.' You must answer me," said Mmoatia. Spider did nothing, and the doll did not move. "Little one," said Mmoatia, "answer me, or I will spank your crying-place!" Still, the doll did not move. Mmoatia grew very angry then, and she slapped the doll in its crying-place. "Pa!" was the sound of the slapping. Mmoatia's hand stuck to the honey. "Little one," she said, "let go of my hand, or I will strike your crying-place again." The doll did not move, and Mmoatia slapped it again. Then she kicked it with her right foot, and then with her left foot, and finally she pushed it with her stomach. "Oho!" said Spider, coming out from the bushes. "Now I will take you to Nyami." And he did so.

"What my hand has touched, my hand has touched," said Nyami when Spider came before him with Mmoatia. "The price has been paid. Spider, the box of stories is yours." Then he gave Spider a beautiful carved box, and Spider quickly scrambled down his web with it.

"Aso, Aso!" cried Spider, "Come look! I have bought the box of stories from Nyami!" Aso came, and so did all the villagers. Spider set the box down in the middle of the village and danced around it, telling everyone how he had bought it. Then, when everyone had heard the story, Spider opened the box. "Fah!" All the stories leapt out of the box and began flying everywhere. Spider caught some, Aso caught some, the villagers caught some, but many got away and flew to the four corners of the world, for everyone to catch. I caught one, and this is it.

If it be bitter, or if it be sweet, take some away, and bring some back.

—Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith



Doing Your Thinking

by Thomas Buckley

We look at each other, but we do not see each other anymore. Our perception of the world has withered away; what has remained is mere recognition.

Viktor Shklovski

The Yurok Indians live where they always have, in northwestern California along the lower reaches of the Klamath River and both above and below its mouth on the Pacific coast near the present-day Oregon border. Numbering somewhat more than three thousand individuals, the Yurok are but one of several groups indigenous to the area that are at once unique and of similar cultures. Much has changed in the region since 1850, when the Gold Rush brought a massive and devastating influx of non-Indians into the lower Klamath drainage. Yet cultural change cannot be simply dealt with as "acculturation." Aspects of European-American culture have been adopted, voluntarily and otherwise, by Indians. Usually, however, these have been taken up in a particular, culturally specific way, to be woven into the inclusive fabric of contemporary Indian life. This has been true in education as in every undertaking and expression. It is apparent, at a gross level, in the efforts of college-educated Yurok intellectuals towards expressing traditional esoteric values and practices in terms of Jungian and transpersonal psychologies, and in the presence of a young man among the neighboring Hupa who began his training as an Indian doctor, a "shaman," at about the

same time that his exceptional facility in mathematics was hitting the local papers. Perhaps the more important and more interesting signs of the persistence of traditional educational ways in contemporary Indian culture are the far more subtle ones; the particular gesture or silence or phrase that a person uses, a specific sort of glance directed at a child or visitor, a certain shared understanding that is present in a group; reactions and recognitions and attitudes that are manifested at the extreme limits of description yet which are distinctly palpable.

I am interpreting aspects of the earlier stages in traditional Yurok education — up through what some Indians consider, today, the old equivalent of a high school diploma; that is, through the acquisition of the necessary tools for higher education. After this point, although studies become increasingly complex and sophisticated, they still rest on the same theories, principles, and techniques. In discussing these aspects of an ever-changing cultural pattern I use the present tense. The "now" thus indicated is to be understood as representing only a part of present Yurok realities — very often and for a great many individuals a submerged, even unconscious part. Nevertheless, the aspects described as occurring in the present are indeed ongoing ones, shifting and entering into new relationships, taking on new guises, as ever throughout the Yurok's long history. Somehow, these things continue to make sense in a context of grammar schools and graduate professional schools, Christian churches and television, home economics and modern hard knocks.

The Universe, *wesonah*, is energy. It moves against itself and creates waves and these waves go through everything. Each person receives and is part of the Universe in this way and, too, each is unique. The energy that enters a human fetus ten weeks after conception is the "life" of that being, its spirit, *wewolocek*. Occasionally this spirit is augmented through the favor and intervention of another human being or a spirit being. In any case, a person's spirit is unique, and to deny this unique life is against the Law.

The Universe incorporates, manifests, is one with, the Law, *tle*, and everything occurring in the world is subject to this Law while expressing it. To guide human beings there are many, many laws—also *tle*—that interpret the (finally unspeakable) Law and apply it to specific situations in the form of rules for conduct. Thus, there is a correct way to behave in every situation, a correct answer to every question; there is truth. Most simply, the truth is what has been known to work, every time. (Some people say that *skuyeni*, "good," really means "successful," *kimoleni*, "bad," "unsuccessful"; but both words have many meanings.)

These things being so, all education and training must move in respect of each unique person's individuality while, at the same time, insuring the success of the results as far as this is possible. That is, the interface between individual and society is specified by culturally defined truth expressed in a legal idiom.

The direct study of the Law itself is advanced study, far beyond the scope of this introduction to "secondary education." One approaches it gradually through study of specific laws as these are encountered in attaining mastery of various sorts of specialized activities. One who has acquired knowledge of many laws and of the Law is *tenohwok*, a "well educated one," a member of an intellectual and spiritual elite minority. One must begin at the beginning and few go that far. To even begin to study the laws pertinent to one's chosen activities one must be able to perceive the "facts" involved in those activities. Thus, before one can learn to think, to define the facts inherent in situations, one must learn to perceive, to "see," *serneryerh*, *nework*.

Thoughts-and-feelings, being parts of situations, of actions, are simply another sort of *thing*, to be seen and defined. Explanation is largely useless, because a person can only see for himself, and must be both encouraged and allowed to do so.

Thus, a young child is actively taught

very little; it learns by watching and copying when it has enough interest. Most things are not explained, since people can only learn by and for themselves, learn to sort out facts, to draw conclusions about what works and what does not. For example, among certain families there is a great emphasis on table manners, a very definite etiquette. Nothing much is said: a young one watches and learns. When it is old enough to know right from wrong but still misbehaves at meals, its meal-basket is turned over, upside down. Hungry or not, no more food. It's up to the child to figure out what's wrong and to fix it, and thus to start learning about the laws concerning food and the respect for both resources and other human beings that underlie them.

To explain too much is to steal a person's opportunity to learn, and stealing is against the Law.

Children grow when they grow, as they learn to see, learn to learn, according to their spirits. A famous man of the last century learned very early to observe the men of his village carefully. After a while, using his toy bow, he killed a bird with valuable feathers. He made a small wooden storage box, as he'd seen done, put the feathers in this, and showed the men. One of them made him a real hunting bow, a small and light one, and from then on he was free to join hunting parties, with all of the rights and responsibilities of a hunter. He had done what a man does and, in this respect, was treated like a man. He was six at the time.

This man was very unusual, leaping to the top of his class in high school, as it were, while most of his age-mates were still in first grade. Most children grow more gradually, spending most of their time with other children, older and younger, helping to take care of the younger ones and learning from the older ones. Usually there is a strong bond with a "grandmother" and, perhaps, a "grandfather" — sources of comfort in a hard world, people who may occasionally explain things. So it goes until puberty. Children are not handled roughly, not scolded severely unless there is really no alternative. They are, after all, only children.

At puberty, when the blood and hair come, things change. The person is an adult now and must act it, or find out about his shortcoming in an emphatic way. Fathers and mothers may occasionally teach their sons and daughters after this point, but it is deemed best to have an "uncle" or an "aunt" do it. Parents and grandparents are considered too emotionally involved to exercise the necessary rigor and objectivity. The leisurely and affectionate learning situation under "grandmothers" and "grandfathers" becomes a thing of the past, although these relatives often remain confidantes. "Uncles" and "aunts" are tougher.

Girls who have been watching their mothers and other older women make baskets and do other household tasks are now expected to do these things well themselves: no more play-baskets. They are helped, taught. A basket is started for the young woman and given to her to finish. The teacher watches, rips out a mistake and hands the workpiece back to be done again. There is very little credit given for "trying"; you can't eat soup out of a good try. If a girl has it in her to be a good basket maker (not all do) she will be one, spending the necessary effort to see how it's done; others are maybe meant to be doing something else.

Once, this was the pattern:

The young man leaves the women's house at puberty (or before if he's ready earlier) and moves into the "sweathouse," the men's house. He no longer plays with the girls and younger children. His education is now largely up to him, and there is a great deal to learn.

Perhaps he decides that it's time to have a real bow, something a man should have — both a weapon and wealth. He finds a man, an "uncle," who is making himself a new bow (maybe not so coincidentally) and he follows this man around, seeing all that he possibly can: where the tree grows, what

Yurok man making a canoe, a "double ender," around 1895

sort of a tree it is, how it's split and what wood's selected, how this is scraped and fashioned, how the glue is made and the sinew applied. Very little is said. Having seen the whole process, he starts out alone. Maybe he shows his work to this teacher. The older man maybe asks, "Which end of the bow grew towards the top of the tree?" Or, maybe, he just takes the workpiece, scrapes it in the direction opposite to the young man's efforts, hands it back: let him figure it out. He either does or he doesn't, and if he doesn't, there's no point in trying to teach him more yet.

I asked an old man canoe maker on the River today if someone had taught him how to build the beautiful old boats. "Naw, nobody taught me nothing. I just watched and picked it up. That's how you used to learn everything; you watched and figured it out and went ahead and did it. Nobody taught you." This man makes fine redwood canoes of a very pure, traditional style. It takes many months, after the tree is felled, and it's a fairly complicated business.

Thoughtful people will tell you that two important things are learned through this process of watching and doing, beyond the actual skill that is acquired. First, one learns to see things as they are, to see the facts. Secondly, seeing the facts, one sees that one must start everything at its beginning and see each necessary step in an action, each constituent part of a situation, clearly, leaving nothing out. If something is

left out — like remembering which end of the bow was highest on the tree from which it was cut — one has no choice but to go all the way back to the beginning and start over. The same will be found to be true in thinking through complex problems, in unraveling situations, thinking being an action. One proceeds slowly, in small increments of progress.

If you do leave anything out, if you don't start at the very beginning, or go back to it when you should, your efforts are considered to be out of control. You have reason to doubt yourself and thus, by definition, you are afraid. The process of education is seen as a process of gaining absolute self-confidence, of vanquishing doubt, and thus fear. "Don't you be fearing too much!" are the instructions from the *wogey*, the "Beforetime People." The only way to remove all doubt is to begin at the beginning and follow through, on your own. (An old man to his student who must do something difficult: "Can you do it? Yes or no? Are you doubting? If you have doubts they'll just get in your way when you get out there.")

To see the facts is to see the meaning of the facts: no distinction can be made; a fact *is* a meaning.

I was once sitting with another older man by our fire. When we'd eaten he held up a piece of the wood that we'd gathered. "What's this?" he asked. "Piece of firewood," I answered. He looked sad, disgusted; put down the stick, silent. I thought more. "It's wood, a piece of a tree." He brightened a shade: "That's a little better. What's a tree?"

Later that evening, turning in, he offered a rare bit of direct teaching: "When you can see each leaf as a separate thing, you can see the tree; when you can see the tree, you can see the spirit of the tree; when you can see the spirit of the tree you can talk to it and maybe begin to learn something. Goodnight."

◇

"There are two sides to everything. What a real Man does is to define these and keep them in balance."

A tree is a tree, and it is each of its parts. This is the physical tree, a fact, and there is a spiritual tree as well, another fact, a potential object of perception. This spiritual tree has two sides, a side that can be seen, as the physical is seen, and another side, completely different, as spirit is completely different from matter. These two sides have two sides, too. To know a tree, to be in control of your relationship to trees, is to define all of these sides, these facts, and to act from the totality of this knowledge. But one can only begin at the beginning. Learning to see material things, then, is basic to learning to see nonmaterial things, simply because the former are more obvious, more easily perceivable facts; not because they are, finally, qualitatively different. Seeing the physical is the beginning of a continuum that includes more advanced orders of perception and of definition. One must explore the entire continuum in order to find its middle, the point of balance from which all truly controlled action springs, and at which all fear is rendered irrelevant.

Thoughts, as well as spiritual things, are facts that can be seen. Contemplating, "doing your thinking," *kocpoks*, *leponol owenkip*, means seeing mental and emotional facts and defining them. Speculation is something quite different, and native-educated Yurok are consistently careful, in conversation, to discriminate between what they've seen to be a fact, and what they think or surmise to be a possibility.

(A simple technique begins to teach one how to define thoughts as facts. One has, let's say, family trouble. He's confused and prey to uncontrolled emotion, to doubt. He should pick up a stone and see it. He shouldn't just look at it, but see it, as though no one were there behind his eye-holes. Now he looks at the situation at home in the same way, defines the facts as they are, as though no "he" were looking at them.)

Every person, again, has a unique spirit or potential. In northwestern California, as elsewhere, "be true to yourself" is, finally, the ultimate expressible law. The question

becomes, then, *who* you are, all of you, each aspect clearly defined. Knowing this exactly, doubt vanishes and one becomes capable of living a balanced life. In the Yurok view, only a fool tries to be other than what he potentially is, and only a fool fails to take responsibility for his full potential. Fools are laughed at and usually come to a bad end.

Of course, *who one is* has two sides to it, a personal and a social one, and each of these has two sides, and so on. Education moves to both illuminate and to integrate these aspects and the succession of paired aspects inherent in each. Female puberty offers a succinct example.

Traditionally, when a girl menstruates for the first time she undertakes a ten-day period of seclusion and ritual activity, an amplified version of the routine she'll follow during each of her periods until menopause. One side of menstruation is seen to be polluting and dangerous, even poisonous. The other, balancing side is seen to be that of great, female energy, menstruation marking the time at which a woman is at the peak of her powers, closest to realizing her full potential. It is, thus, a very "pure" and "beautiful" thing, too.

Experienced women instruct the young woman in the laws pertaining to menstruation, socializing her as it were. At the same time, because a young woman is close to her potentials at this time, it is a time for her to "do her thinking," to engage in the most focused sorts of reflection and self-definition. Meditation and contemplation are thus strongly urged by her teachers and supported by various routines and rituals. For example, after a certain period of ritual austerity, the new woman is given an abalone shell to see. (The abalone is identified as both female and as sun-, or spirit-like.) In the polished whorls and patterns she sees her own life's trail, her direction, unique and individual.

Again, scratching-sticks are used, it being against the law for a woman to touch her own body while menstruating. The standard anthropological explanation of this practice, widespread in native North America, is that one is so highly charged with pollution that, touching oneself, one poisons oneself. The analysis of Yurok women has a more satisfying logic: one makes scratching and touching difficult, keeping it conscious and intentional, they say, so that a woman is encouraged to perceive all of her body exactly as it is, every itch included. Coming to know the body more intimately during this time of heightened access to the truth, the facts, one comes to know oneself more intimately.

Another side of *who one is* is, of course, who one is not. As for the menstruating woman the body is utilized as an organ of perception richly implicated in a process of contemplation, so a young man's body may be used in "doing his thinking" about who he is and who he is not.

A Yurok teacher:

"My nephew was so angry! So mad at the world. I told him, 'Do like they used to do in the old days. You're mad, you think you're pretty tough? Well, go down to the beach in the high surf, you'll find out. You go fight with the waves for a while, kick them and beat them and try to knock them down. Your Father, the ocean, will show you something. Now when you've had enough, when you can't stand up any more, go lie on the beach, that's your Mother. Kick her and pound her and yell at her too. She'll forgive you. When you're done in, just lie still and cry. She'll tell you something you need to know.'"

Body and mind, then, are both mobilized in "doing one's thinking," in defining facts. To seek perception with the body is to "train," *hohkep*, and the object of "training" is to "make medicine," to experience immediately a direct perception of a certain order of facts which serve to confirm one's potentials, one's particular slice of the Universe's energies, one's areas of specialization in life. "Making medicine" equates with what have been called "vision" or "power quests."

In training and in making medicine, exoteric techniques and esoteric experience are interdependent, balanced. To an extent,

Father and son in costume for Jump Dance, 1923

this is true in all situations and actions: "In the old days everything we did was a prayer. We are the praying people, that's who we are." However, training and medicine making comprise specific educational means, particular categories of action. Because training for medicine making always demands stringent austerity — including continence — young men and women are urged to start out as early as they can, before they get too interested in sex. Most training is an individual matter, involving student and teacher only, although there was once a ceremonial society, a kind of study-club, the *talth*, through which young men and women trained, under a priest, towards participation in the Jump Dance, a major religious event.

Most available descriptions of training and of medicine making and of their equivalents in other Indian cultures have stressed the "supernatural" aspects of such undertakings. These are, indeed, present — but so are other, purely pragmatic elements. Of particular interest here is the role of perception, of "defining the facts," in these undertakings. An old man told me about training for "making ocean medicine" by swimming far out into the sea during a storm on a winter's night:

"I was afraid of the ocean. I was born that way I guess. When I was about eleven, my uncle made me go sit on a big drift-log that stuck in the beach and hung far out over the surf. I wanted to come in right away, but he made me stay. I sat there all night. Slowly, I began to see the water, to see what the important things about it were. And when I saw this, I started to see the facts about my fear of it. After I came in, for two or three years, I studied the water, and I studied my fear, and I swam a great deal. I defined all of these things for myself. Finally, I was ready to make my medicine. I didn't try to do it; I just did it. Actually, I'd made my medicine while I was training, before I made the swim. If I hadn't, my uncle wouldn't have let me do it. The swim itself, going out to that rock at night, swimming around it three times, slapping it — that wasn't the medicine. It was just demonstrating it, a way of making it public, and of recognizing what I'd become; showing that I could do it any time, on purpose. I was in control of my fear and of the sea before I started. If I hadn't been, I would have drowned, and people would have laughed at me for thinking that I was a Man."

In Yurok, one doesn't speak of "power." One speaks only of "doing," and of "control." Power, as this man's ocean-power, is there, always. But there is no specific Yurok word for it because it is irrelevant without an individual's ability to control it, to *do* with it.

An important part of doing is, then, "doing your thinking," perceiving non-material aspects of situations as objects, facts which may be defined and, hence, controlled. There is truth, and that truth is factual, independent of personal desire; one thus learns, with the teacher's help, to discriminate between "hallucination" — a fantasy, the product of wishful thinking — and "vision," an objective seeing of spiritual facts manifested in the physical.

All learning is experiential. It follows clearly from the Yurok theory of individuality that knowledge is an object of perceptual experience, and only an individual is capable of experiencing for himself. Here, we find what seems extreme subjectivity being interpreted as pure objectivity. What is thought by a person and what is experienced by him as true are two different things and, in the Yurok view, the difference is immediately obvious to the skilled observer, the teacher who has himself experienced the truth at hand. If this teacher does not see for himself the evidence of his student's having experienced, seen, the facts of a matter, the student's solution to the problem at hand is not accepted by the teacher. "Belief," obviously, has no part in the system; an individual either knows the facts, or he is ignorant of them.

The Yurok do, however, have a culture. This is to say that there exist a myriad of ways of directing the individual towards certain experiences, perceptions of specified truths or facts. There is, after all, a correct way to build a canoe, to make a bow, to become brave, to know the world. Individuals must, in a sense, reinvent the culture for themselves; but they must reinvent the culture that has been reinvented by individuals before them, the culture that will work because it is based in a finite series of facts.

Among the modes of directing experience towards specified knowledge is, as in most cultures, discourse and other forms of verbal instruction. Among the Yurok, all discourse must start and end with the individual who wishes to learn. It is the student who defines, through "doing his thinking," what is worth knowing. It is the student who asks the questions, not the teacher, and if no questions are asked, no possible clues to answers are offered. When the questions stop, so does education.

Questions may be answered in a variety of ways, none of which seem direct. Perhaps the most common answering device, once, was the exhortatory recitation of myths, historical narratives, and set prayers in which, the teacher felt, were embedded the facts necessary for the student's correct approach to the problem at hand, there for him to see if he chose to and was capable of it. Even answers to questions on simple techniques are often fielded in this apparently obscure way. "I can't learn *for* you, can I?" asks a Yurok teacher. Thus, rare attempts at giving straight instructions usually come out as relatively oblique suggestions: "Well, in the old days, if a fella wanted to do that, maybe he'd get up before dawn and..."

An interesting variation on the use of narratives and formulas in answering questions is the use of personal songs as *koan*-like problems, sometimes posed by a teacher or counselor in answer to the question of a student or client and sometimes proposed by the student to his teacher in answer to his own question after he'd contemplated further. A modern example, made in English:

The fawn lies quiet
  in the grass
The lily
  does not sing[1]

(We note, in this example, the tendency to "think in pairs"; it is understood that the adequate "answer" reveals their "balance.")

Having been given such a song by a teacher it is up to the student to show the teacher that he knows what it means; that he is capable of perceiving, of experiencing the facts referred to. Here, the comparison with Zen *koan* rests on more than form or relative obscurity.

While these songs are of great interest, their use has apparently never been particularly common. Far more common, along with the recitation of myths and other narratives, is the simple technique of returning the question to the student, from a different perspective and, usually, at a higher level.

Back to the bow. If a young man wants to learn, he asks his teacher why he uses wood from the side of the tree that he does. "Use wood from the side that the moon never shines on," the teacher might answer

Yurok boys in Brush Dance regalia, around 1910

or, "from the side that's away from the water," adding, in either case, "why's that?" (There are two sides, of course, to a correct answer in this case, a physical and a spiritual one.) The young man goes off and "does his homework," as people put it nowadays. When he's answered, proven that he's seen, defined the facts of the matter, he may ask another question and gets it also thrown back at him.

Each step is marked by a clear perception of what is construed to be purely objective, facts as concrete as the manifest world. Teachers tend to be extremely demanding in precisely this regard, and the educational process is accompanied by a good deal of frustration, anxiety, and impatience on the student's part. As Raymond White pointed out to be the case among the Luiseño, far to the south of the Yurok, "No one is permitted information beyond his *demonstrated* capabilities."[2] The only acceptable demonstration is that of having experienced the truth of the matter. "I think that probably. . ." will not suffice. Until the student comes up with something better, *sees* something through and through, he simply hasn't "done his thinking"; having experienced nothing for himself, he has done nothing at all.

From such experience, in the native theory, come self-confidence and freedom from doubt as surely as these things come from a ritual swim in the stormy ocean at night.

As the Yurok *tenohwol* has learned to see two sides to everything while seeing the whole as well, so we must see two sides to the Yurok mode of education. The collective, mystical, "supernatural" and "power-" oriented aspects of indigenous American educational systems have become familiar and popular fare during the past two decades. I have stressed a second side, an objective, pragmatic, and individualistic one that reveals both a consistent and satisfying logic and easily recognizable common sense. It is but one of two sides that have always been intrinsically interrelated, blended into a single cultural mode that might be characterized as pragmatic mysticism.

"To make deer-hunting medicine, first you learn to see the bush that's in front of you, then the bush behind that bush, then the deer behind the bush behind the bush that's in front of you, then the spirit of that deer. Now you can call the deer, his spirit, and he'll walk up to you. The people with the strongest medicine learn to fly out, their spirits, and find the deer that way."

Acknowledgment
Special thanks to Herquer, expert and unrelenting teacher.

Notes

1. Harry K. Roberts, "Lonesome trail," *The Windbell,* Vol. 16, No. 1, 1979, p.34.

2. Raymond White, "Religion and its role among the Luiseño," in *Native Californians: A Theoretical Retrospective,* edited by Lowell Bean and Thomas C. Blackburn, Ballena Press, Soccoro, N.M., 1976, p. 356.

The Wife Who Loved Fairy Tales

Once long ago, in Holy Russia, there lived a villager whose wife was passionately fond of fairy tales. At first, the man thought this was a harmless foible and made no objection to her indulging her taste by asking everyone she met to tell her new stories. But at last her appetite for them grew to such an extent that she would no longer have any of her friends or her husband's cronies in her house, because they had already told her all the tales they knew, and nothing would satisfy her but ones she had never heard before. So she filled the house with passers-by, many of whom, drawn there by rumors of the woman's weakness, made their stay as long as possible, eating greedily and keeping her husband awake all night with their fantastic chatter.

One cold winter night, an old man knocked on the door and asked for shelter.

"Can you tell fairy stories the whole night through?" asked the villager. "For unless you can, I am sorry to say that my wife will not allow you to stay."

The old man eyed the warm stove within and felt the bitter wind on his back.

"I can tell stories for a hundred nights," said he, "for I am the greatest of all storytellers. But there is one condition: I am serious about my art, and I must not be interrupted, or I shall not go on."

"If I interrupt you," cried the wife, delighted, "may I never listen to another story in all my life!" She gave the old man a good supper and a comfortable place on top of the stove, and settled herself to listen. The old man began.

"There was once an owl that flew into a garden, sat down on the well and drank... There was once an owl that flew into a garden, sat down on the well and drank... There was once an owl that flew into a garden, sat down on the well and drank... There was once an owl..." and over and over he repeated the same words. At last the woman could stand it no longer and cried out: "What kind of story are you telling me? I have heard about your owl and the well; get on with what happened next, for the love of Heaven!"

The old man flew into a rage. "You have interrupted me!" he cried. "This is the way this story begins and you have spoiled it with your impatience. Do you understand nothing of the importance of repetition in fairy stories? Now I cannot go on!"

The husband, delighted with this turn of affairs, grabbed his wife and raised his fist. "You broke your promise!" he shouted, "and now we shall never hear the end of this fascinating tale. And I shall see to it that you abide by your vow never to listen to another story if you interrupted this one. Now this old man shall sleep here in peace tonight, and hereafter my house shall welcome friends without requiring any storytelling in payment for our hospitality."

So he beat his wife a little to convince her and while she was sobbing and promising to be good, he winked gratefully at the old man and slipped a silver coin into his hand.

—Retold by D.M. Dooling

EPICYCLE

A Thousand and One Nights

In the high and far-off times in the lands of the east, there lived a great king who had two sons. The elder was called Shahryar; he was tall, and a great horseman, and when his father died he succeded to his kingdom of Sessan. His brother Shahzaman was short; he was also a good horseman and warrior and he ruled the kingdom of Samarkand.

The brothers loved each other well, though they saw each other rarely. But after twenty years of ruling their kingdoms in peace and happiness, both found out that their wives were deceiving them. In vengeance, Shahryar, when he had slain his wife, made a vow that every night he would take a virgin to his bed, and kill her in the morning; unbeknown to him, in far-off Samarkand, his brother made the same vow. So both, having been generous and beloved rulers, became terrible in the eyes of their people, and great was the grief in both kingdoms.

There came a day when Shahryar's wazir went out to choose a virgin for his master and found there was not one girl left in the whole realm, for those who had not already been taken had fled. The wazir returned to his house in great fear and trouble, for he himself had two maiden daughters: the wise and beautiful Shahrazade, whose voice was like birds singing, and little Doniazade, still a child.

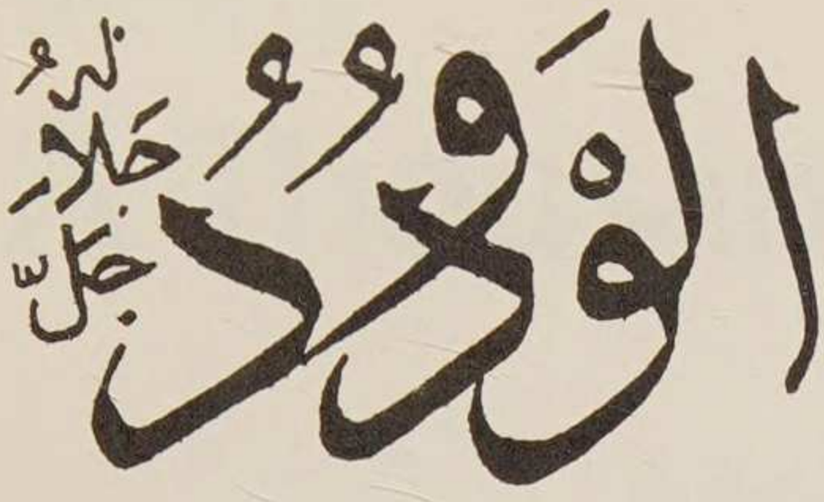
When Shahrazade knew the reason for her father's grief, she demanded to be married to the king. "I can deliver the land from this trouble," she told her father. He scolded and begged, but she would not be dissuaded, and at last he had to take her to the palace in her wedding robes. Shahryar was very pleased with her beauty and took her as his bride; but after he had had his will with her she began to weep and beg for her little sister, in order to take leave of her. Doniazade was brought to the king's chamber, and as her sister had previously instruct-

ed her, she said to Shahrazade, "Tell us some of your wonderful tales, O my sister, that the night may pass pleasantly."

"Gladly," answered Shahrazade, "if the great king will allow it."

Shahryar gave his consent, and Shahrazade began a story of magic and adventure in her beautiful voice. Before she had finished, the morning came and she stopped; but the king, wishing to hear the end of the tale, decided not to kill her yet but to let her continue the next night. On the second night the same thing happened, and on the third, and the fourth; for always the tale led, with great eloquence and charm, into another, and when dawn broke, the story always stopped in the middle. So night followed night, filled with lovemaking and storytelling. Each morning the wazir appeared carrying his daughter's winding sheet, but the king, saying nothing, would go to his judgment hall, returning at night to Shahrazade and her unfinished tale.

So passed a thousand nights. Little Doniazade, still accompanying her sister and listening nightly to her stories, was no longer a child but a ripe and beautiful young girl. And on the thousand-and-first night, Shahrazade finished a story she had begun four nights before, a par-



ticularly tender tale of the love between Prince Jasmin and Princess Almond. When she had finished, it was morning.

Shahryar said to her, "For a thousand and one nights you have instructed and delighted me. You are lovely and you are clever." Doniazade embraced her and slipped out, returning in a moment with three small children, twin babies and a two-year-old. Shahrazade kissed them and put them in front of Shahryar.

"O great king," she said, "here are the three sons whom Allah has granted to us during the years of my storytelling."

Then Shahryar wept and kissed his children; and he took his wife in his arms and said to her, "O my beautiful and wise one, even before seeing my sons, I knew that I wished to live with you all the days of my life, for you have taught me wisdom with your tales."

Then the king sent for his wazir, the father of Shahrazade and Doniazade, who fainted for joy; and he sent for his brother Shahzaman to attend the feasts of joyful celebration that there was a Queen in the land and that the terror was over. Shahzaman was astonished, but he said, "I rejoice at your good fortune, and since it is so with you, I too will take a wife, and it shall be Doniazade, the sister of Shahrazade, your wazir's second daughter."

The marriage was celebrated with splendor and gaiety. Afterward, Shahzaman gave up the kingdom of Samarkand, and Shahrazade's father, the wazir, was appointed to be king in his stead. But Shahzaman and Doniazade stayed and shared the kingdom with Shahryar and Shahrazade, and they lived together in great contentment.

—Retold by D.M. Dooling

A Note on Story

by James Hillman

From my perspective as depth psychologist, I see that those who have a connection with story are in better shape and have a better prognosis than those to whom story must be introduced. This is a large statement and I would like to take it apart in several ways. But I do not want to diminish its apodictic claim: to have "story-awareness" is *per se* psychologically therapeutic. It is good for soul.

To have had stories of any sort in childhood—and here I mean oral stories, those told or read (for reading has an oral aspect even if one reads to oneself) rather than watching them on a screen—puts a person into a basic recognition of and familiarity with the legitimate reality of story *per se*. It is something given with life, with speech and communication, and not something later that comes with learning and literature. Coming early with life it is already a perspective on life. One integrates life as story because one has stories in the back of the mind (unconscious) as containers for organizing events into meaningful experiences. The stories are means of finding oneself in events that might not otherwise make psychological sense at all. (Economic, scientific, and historical explanations are sorts of "stories" that often fail to give the soul the kind of imaginative meaning it seeks for understanding its psychological life.)

Having had story built in with childhood, a person is usually in a better relation with the pathologized material of obscene, grotesque, or cruel images which appear spontaneously in dream and fantasy. Those who hold to the rationalist and associationist theory of mind, who put reason against and superior to imagination, argue that if we did not introduce such grim tales in early impressionable years, we would have less pathology and more rationality in later years. My practice shows me rather that the more attuned and experienced is the imaginative side of personality the less threatening the irrational, the less necessity for repression, and therefore the less actual pathology acted out in literal, daily events. In other words, through story the symbolic quality of pathological images and themes finds a place, so that these images and themes are less likely to be viewed naturalistically, with clinical literalism, as signs of sickness. These images find legitimate places in story. They *belong* to myths, legends, and fairy tales where, just as in dreams, all sorts of peculiar figures and twisted behaviors appear. After all, "The Greatest Story Ever Told," as some are fond of calling Easter, is replete with gruesome imagery in great pathologized detail.

Story-awareness provides a better way than clinical-awareness for coming to terms with one's own case history. Case history too is a fictional form written up by thousands of hands in thousands of clinics and consulting rooms, stored away in archives and rarely published. This fictional form called "case history" follows the genre of social realism; it believes in facts and events, and takes with excessive literalism all the tales it tells. In deep analysis, the analyst and the patient together re-write the case history into a new story, creating the "fiction" in the collaborative work of

the analysis. Some of the healing that goes on, maybe even the essence of it, is this collaborative fiction, this putting all the chaotic and traumatic events of a life into a new story. Jung said that patients need "healing fictions," but we have trouble coming to this perspective unless there is already a predilection for story-awareness.

Jungian therapy, at least as I practice it, brings about an awareness that fantasy is the dominant force in a life. One learns in therapy that fantasy is a creative activity which is continually telling a person into now this story, now that one. When we examine these fantasies we discover that they reflect the great impersonal themes of man-

kind as represented in tragedy, epic, folk tale, legend, and myth. Fantasy in our view is the attempt of the psyche itself to re-mythologize consciousness; we try to further this activity by encouraging familiarity with myth and folk tale. Soul-making goes hand in hand with deliteralizing consciousness and restoring its connection to mythic and metaphorical thought patterns. Rather than interpret the stories into concepts and rational explanations, we prefer to see conceptual explanations as secondary elaborations upon basic stories which are containers and givers of vitality. As Owen Barfield and Norman Brown have written: "Literalism is the enemy." I would add: "Literalism is sickness." Whenever we are caught in a literal view, a literal belief, a literal statement, we have lost the imaginative metaphorical perspective to ourselves and our world. Story is prophylactic in that it presents itself always as "once upon a time," as an "as if," "make-believe" reality. It is the only mode of accounting or telling about that does not posit itself as real, true, factual, revealed, i.e., literal.

This brings us to the question of content. Which stories need to be told? Here I am orthodox, holding for the old, the traditional, the ones of our own culture: Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Nordic myths; the Bible; legends and folk tales. And these with the least modern marketing (updating, cleaning up, editing, etc.), i.e., with the least interference by contemporary rationalism which is subject to the very narrowing of consciousness which the stories themselves would expand. Even if we be not Celtic or Nordic or Greek in ancestry, these collections are the fundamentals of our Western culture and they work in our psyches whether we like it or not. We may consider them distorted in their pro-Aryan or pro-male or pro-warrior slant, but unless we understand that these tales depict the basic motifs of the Western psyche, we remain unaware of the basic motives in our psychological dynamics. Our ego psychology still resounds with the motif and motivation of the hero, just as much of the psychology of what we call "the feminine" today reflects the patterns of the goddesses and nymphs in Greek myth. These thematic tales channel fantasy. Platonists long ago and Jung more recently pointed out the therapeutic value of the great myths for bringing order to the chaotic, fragmented aspect of fantasy. The main body of biblical and classical tales directs fantasy into organized, deeply life-giving psychological patterns; these stories present the archetypal modes of experiencing.

I think children need less convincing of the importance of story than do adults. To be adult has come to mean to be adulterated with rationalist explanations, and to shun such childishness as we find in fairy stories. I have tried to show in my work how adult and child have come to be set against each other: childhood tends to mean wonder, imagination, creative spontaneity, while adulthood, the loss of these perspectives.[1] So the first task, as I see it, is restorying the adult—the teacher and the parent and the grandparent—in order to restore the imagination to a primary place in consciousness in each of us, regardless of age.

I have come at this from a psychological viewpoint, partly because I wish to remove story from its too close association with both education and literature—something taught and something studied. My interest in story is as something lived in and lived through, a way in which the soul finds itself in life.

Notes

1. In the essay "Abandoning the Child," in my book *Loose Ends: Primary Papers in Archetypal Psychology* (Dallas: Spring Publications & The University of Dallas, 1975).

Originally published in Children's Literature: The Great Excluded, Vol. III *(ed. Francelia Butler and Bennett Brockman), Journal of the Modern Language Association Seminar on Children's Literature, Storrs, Connecticut, 1974. Reprinted by permission of Temple University Press, Philadelphia. The first seven volumes of* Children's Literature *are available from Children's Literature Foundation, Box 370, Windham, Conn.,06280. Vol. VIII and subsequent volumes obtainable from Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 05111.*

THE MASTER OF THE SHADOW PLAY

by Diane Wolkstein

Most—perhaps ninety-five percent—of those who attend a Balinese shadow play (wayang) *sit in front of the screen. At a certain moment the* gender *accompanying the shadow play begins the sunrise melody, and then the reflection of the tree of life puppet* (kayon) *flutters across the screen. After that the principal puppets who will appear in the story are stuck into the banana trunk at either side of the screen. The screen glows brighter,* kayon *reappears, followed by the servant puppets who sing in noble Javanese the first phrases of the story.*

But five percent of the audience stand behind *the screen and watch the shadow play puppeteer* (dalang). *They watch him during his preparations as he recites the mantras, eats the proper foods, embraces the light of the fire, and calls to the gods. They watch as he takes out the first puppet,* kayon, *and holds it a long time pressed against his forehead, praying, before he twirls it in the air and lets it dance before the screen. Then, as he takes each puppet from the box, he examines it carefully to be certain it is well and in good working order. Sometimes an assistant will have to repair the puppet, and sometimes as he is holding one of the puppets in his hand, the* dalang *will suddenly announce to his musicians which story he will tell that evening.*

Those watching in front of the screen are soon lost in the world of the puppets. They dance, they sing, they fight, they prophesy. They live. And those watching behind the screen are caught up by the dalang, *who is moving like a whirlwind, sweating, throwing his heroes and villains in the air, grabbing new ones, urging his assistants to adjust the fire—to hand him the puppets faster, drinking tea from the spout of the teapot (there is no time for a glass), spitting, singing, directing the music of the* gender, *holding everything and everyone both before and behind in his grasp. He—the* dalang*—is the lord of the* wayang.

I Wayan Wija, at the age of twenty-seven, is one of the most popular dalangs *in Bali, celebrated for his humorous dialogue and the expertise of his puppets' movements. Though he is widely respected, he is also somewhat feared for he speaks very little and no one knows what he is thinking. He refuses small talk, rarely asks advice, and is often alone. He spends much of his time studying the mystic texts, composing for his* wayangs, *and directing dance dramas.*

His intensity, moodiness, and tautness of body made me begin with the most direct of questions. In return, he always answered me directly. But I did not always understand.

At first it was the terseness of his replies that intrigued me, then his humor, and then the vastness and power and complexity of the world of wayang *so that the interview went on for nearly ten days and nights, always with the aid of our translator, Kristina Melcher, who often plays the* gender *for Wija's* wayangs. *In*

the end we understood each other well enough to begin to argue about the meaning of stories, as we rode over bumpy, muddy roads in the evening on our way to Wija's wayangs.

The evening I left, he offered me his highest compliment:

"If you return to Bali, I will teach you to be a dalang.*"*

Of what benefit is it to you to be a dalang*?*

A *dalang* is helped in understanding the meaning in life. But it is also dangerous to be a *dalang*.

Dangerous?

Yes. If they do not have sufficient grounding, *dalangs* can go crazy.

We try to find the key in a story—the key to the philosophy—if we can not find it, it can be very confusing.

Once in a story from the Mahabharata, I had Twalen say, "Some people give ceremonies out of jealousy and display of wealth instead of love of the gods." A man in the audience was so disturbed, he could not sleep after he had heard this. Three nights later I was performing in the same district. He came to me and asked me to explain. He had heard only the negative part. He was comforted when he understood.

The *wayang* is a ritual, and if it is not done correctly there can be spiritual repercussions against the *dalang*. If we make mistakes, if the mantras are not properly recited, if we eat the wrong food (we are not permitted to eat beef or internal organs) or face the wrong direction when we are eating we can become ill.

Has this happened to you?

Only that I have felt disturbances during a performance—my voice loses its strength, as if taken away from me. Before we take the puppets from the box, we ask the gods for protection for us, for influence on the audience, and for forgiveness for any mistakes. At the end of the play, we again ask for forgiveness for any mistakes. When there have been disturbances, they go away with the prayer for forgiveness.

Do you know what the disturbances came from?

No...There can be many possibilities...

A *dalang* is known to have certain powers because of his training. Other people may create spells to test a *dalang's* powers. Or they may be jealous of the person sponsoring the *wayang*.

A *dalang* who is very evolved will know who the person is. I do not have those powers. Often someone will come to me a few days after a performance and tell me which person has caused the disturbance.

What will you do?

There is nothing to be done—but to add to our strength, so that it will not happen again.

How do you add to your strength?

More study. Use of magic words and spells. Fasting. Raising the level of our concentration. Yoga.

Are there some places you are afraid to perform because the village is known for its black magic?

No. I have enough inner protection. But I prepare.

If everything goes well, and your performance is a great success, how do you celebrate?

If the performance was successful, then the service to the gods was properly fulfilled.

Are there certain stories you tell that people say have changed their lives?

Anyone who likes *wayang* already feels fulfilled when they hear it. If a community likes *wayang*, the community feels it receives its guidelines from *wayang*.

A *wayang* is almost always asked for in relation to a religious ceremony. There are five different kinds of ceremonies: for the gods, the priest, humans, cremations, and exorcisms. A *dalang* chooses the story that is appropriate for the ritual.

The people do not always understand the ritual they are carrying out so it is the task of the *dalang* to make the ritual understood through the story.

Which stories would be told at the different ceremonies?

For the gods—on the occasion of the birthday of a temple—I might tell a story about one of the Pandawas (you know the Pandawas? from the Mahabharata? Our stories come almost always from either the Mahabharata or the Ramayana.) Well, I might tell a story where one of the Pandawa brothers is building a shrine in order to get strength from God. The point of the story would be directed toward the gods—toward a higher consciousness.

For the priests—at the time of the consecration of a priest—I might tell the story of Arjuna's meditation in the forest.

For humans—the stories are told at times of rites of passage—the six month birthday, the tooth filing ceremony, marriage. For marriage there is often a love story. For the six month birthday the struggle between Kala and his brother.

For cremations—the story of Bima Svarga is often told—Bima's journey to hell to rescue his parents.

For exorcisms—a story of witches or of a country which has suffered a disaster and offerings need to be given.

Most stories are for such rituals, but there are some stories which are created by individual *dalangs* to deepen their powers.

How do you choose which story you will tell?

It is always different.

Before the performance begins we are served coffee and tea by the community or the people who have asked for the *wayang*. I talk with the people. Very often those who have sponsored the *wayang* will ask for certain things to be stressed. When Bali was occupied by the Japanese, the Japanese watched the *wayang* carefully (the influence of the *wayang* on the thinking of the people is very great), and they asked many *dalangs* to encourage the people to cooperate with

the Japanese. Some *dalangs* agreed; others went their own way.

I do not always do what the sponsors ask, but I listen to what the people say and try to understand.

If you go to a village where there are troubles do you try to solve them?

Of course! That is my job.

How do you help to solve village difficulties?

If there are quarrels in a village, I might tell a story about Bima. Bima likes to get angry. Then I would have Yudhistira, his older brother, come and advise him to control his anger.

Wayang means shadow—reflection. *Wayang* is used to reflect the community. People will listen seriously when Kresna or Siwa speak to them.

Do you invent some of the stories you tell?

Invent? There is no inventing. Composing. Yes.

Most of the stories I tell now I have composed. They are trunk and branch stories. The trunk is either the Mahabharata or the Ramayana and the branch is my own composing.

In Bali we have the four servant puppets, Twalen and his son, Merdah; they serve the gods and heros. Delem and Sanut serve the monsters, demons and enemies. These servants do not exist in Hindu literature. They are our creation; they speak in high and low Balinese and explain and interpret for the people what the high characters are saying. When the servant puppets speak, and they are in almost every *wayang*, there is no written dialogue; then the *dalang* is speaking.

How many stories do most dalangs *know?*

To prepare a story takes a long time. A story can be from two to four hours long. The students who graduate from Kokar [a conservatory for music and dance in Denpasar which also trains *dalangs*] know one story after four years and even this they do not know well. The songs the high puppets sing are in *kawi*, which is ancient Javanese. The language must be learned and then the musical parts. The songs are sung with the *gender*. A *dalang* must be able to play the parts on the *gender* also. Some *dalangs* know less than five.

And you?

Maybe thirty.

Do you write down your stories?

[Great laughter] Oh no!

Then you have no regret they will be lost when you die?

No... no.

Anyhow, they have already been stolen. The other *dalangs* come and listen and tell my stories.

Does this make you angry?

No. *They* need the stories. They cannot compose. I can always create new ones.

How often do you perform?

About fifteen times a month. But it is too much. Ten times would be better. It would give me more time to study and to compose.

Where do you get your inspiration?

From performances of dance dramas. Listening to people talk. Daydreaming. I daydream. I wait. Sometimes I have dry periods...

I read the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

I talk to those who know the literature and stories, not necessarily *dalangs*, but those who study and read.

Do you always perform when you are asked?

Of course. It is against the rules of our religion not to offer a performance when it is requested.

And how do you decide on the fee?

If a *banyar* [a community organization] asks I will charge my full fee: 20-30,000 rupees—thirty or forty dollars a night. I receive half of this, the other half I give to the assistants, the driver, and the musicians. [There are four musicians who play for the Mahabharata *wayang* and eleven for the Ramayana.] But if a single person asks, whatever he can pay is acceptable. I cannot refuse him, because he has his needs. If the person cannot pay, I pay the musicians myself.

A *dalang* must not think of money even if he needs it. His performance is an offering.

It is true many *dalangs* think of money. But they suffer for it. A *dalang* cannot think of money in relation to the *wayang*.

Do you often go to watch other dalangs*?*

Rarely.

Is there any living dalang *whom you admire?*

No.

Then whom did you learn from?

From Geranyan.

I started before I was ten, when I was still in school. I would go at night to his *wayang*. I would walk with him wherever he was performing. (This was before we had cars or trucks.) After three times I could hand him the puppets.

I have heard many dalangs *speak about the great Geranyan. What made him so special?*

His dialogue and the movement of the puppets were far advanced from the other *dalangs*, but what was most important: he gave the *wayang* life.

He had great *sakti*—great charm. He was known for his *sakti*.

How did you begin?

I followed Geranyan. Then when I was eleven, my father and I went to Sumatra. There was a transmigration policy. My father was always eager to go new places. He was also a *dalang*.

In Sumatra we lived in a very isolated place. There was nothing to do. My father had brought the puppet box. I began to play with the puppets. I asked my father many questions about *wayang*. I was serious, but he only teased me. He thought he would live a long time.

When we came home, after a year, my father needed money so he sold the puppets. Then we made another set together.

I studied dancing. Every *dalang* must study dance so he knows how to make the puppets dance. I studied singing. I had a good voice. My voice teacher encouraged me to be a *dalang*. When I was fourteen there was a ceremony and I was initiated and became a *dalang*-priest. I had not performed more than ten times when my father died.

When he died I didn't feel anything at first. Then after a few days I realized I was suddenly responsible. I had thirteen brothers and sisters, and I was the oldest boy. I had to provide for them. But I still had my teacher, my voice teacher. I still had the opportunity to question him. It was not the way then for the teacher to say more than was needed. Still, when I would ask something he would answer.

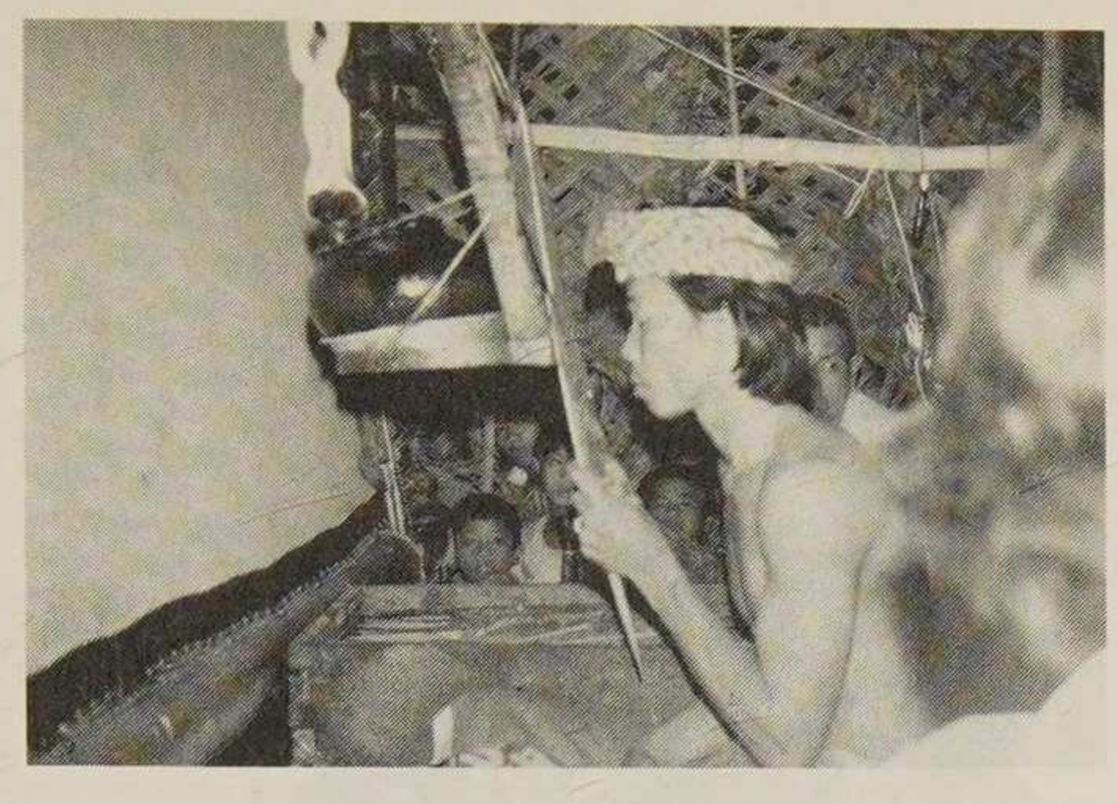
Then, not more than a year after my father died, my teacher died. I was sad—uncontrollably sad. I was just moving ahead in my studies and beginning to understand, and he was dead. At that time I used to cry every night.

After a while I stopped. It was useless to continue to cry. I began to study more actively and realized how stern and oppressive my teacher had been. I felt freer.

I studied philosophy and another aspect of the *wayang*—that which had to do with mystical training. I would borrow *lontar* books [books made from *lontar* leaves] and speak with one of the men in the village when I had questions.

Who was this?

Sadia, the goldsmith—the one whose hair stands so straight on his head a lizard would be impaled if he fell on it—Sadia's father had great *sakti*, great magical powers.



What did Sadia teach you?

There are ways of calling upon certain gods or powers so the audience will be drawn to us. It is making ourselves into magnets. He helped me understand how to do this.

If something is put together with something else, it can become alive. There are ways to kill people by using words. There is negative power. A *dalang* needs to know both ways. If you know only good things then there is no power. You need to know all the magic and yourself and then trust yourself.

I know there is a mantra you recite before the wayang *in which you praise Isvara, the god of the* dalang, *and then say, "Evil and good are in my thoughts." I wanted to ask you about another mantra. After you take out the first puppet, the* kayon, *the tree of life puppet from the puppet box, you hold it near the fire, then you press it against your forehead and say, "I concentrate my mind on the knowledge that Sambu (NE) moves to Vishnu (N); Sankara (NW) to Mahadeva (W); Rudra (SW) to Brahma (S); Mahisvara (SE) to Isvara (E); Isvara (E) to* kayon *(Center)." What is the meaning of this?*

There can be no world without direction. The gods have names and places in the compass. By calling their names, they go to their places—the beginning. At this moment, too, the *gender* is playing the sunrise melody. In the *wayang* the *dalang* is God, and he is asking to be located in his proper place —his center—so that the act of creativity can take place.

There are many meanings.

When you first recited this mantra thirteen years ago, did you understand it?

No. No one tells you. You do not even know the question. It's an understanding. It comes with time.

How would you train a dalang*?*

Before we teach someone to be a *dalang* we need to decide if he can be cleansed. If a person's character is rotten, the ceremony can be as big as the world, the person would still be covered with mud and the money wasted. It is not the ceremony that takes us to heaven but our character.

If I have someone I'm going to create I teach everything he needs to know. If I have trust and faith in the self of the student, I correct his nature—that is part of the training.

It seems to me that a person's ability to take in contradictions as well as to be cleansed is important in a dalang.

In *wayang* when we are teaching we look to the story, whatever story from the Mahabharata or Ramayana that we are using. The story the teacher chooses for the student is very important. The story is what changes the *dalang*.

Can you describe how you teach?

I taught my older sister, Treyata. When she began there was one woman *dalang* in Bali. Now there are four. Her husband was my friend and a well-known *dalang* but he was killed in a motorcycle accident.

The first thing I did was to tell her to practice with a *chapala*, a foot hammer. Then I taught her the songs in *kawi*. After she had memorized the songs and could sing them with the *gender* I taught her the dance of the *kayon*. Then she learned how to make the other puppets walk and move and fight and dance.

She had to learn the speech of the puppets. There are three languages. The gods and demons and high caste puppets

speak in *kawi*, the servants speak in both high and low Balinese. She learned to make jokes—joking and punning is what the people like the most. During all this time I taught her the story at night.

Three thousand people came to her initiation ceremony. That was not good. They came because of her husband and his reputation and because of the uniqueness of her being a woman *dalang*.

Now she performs often, but it is not good for she does not study enough. She knows only two stories. A *dalang* needs to know many stories. The more stories a *dalang* knows the better he can compose and then, of course, the *dalang* is a teacher.

A teacher for the community?

For everyone. A teacher gives information. What kind of information can a *dalang* give if he knows only two stories?

The stories are spiritual information for many different levels of awareness.

The story of Bawang, Red Onion and White Onion,* is for children. It teaches the child who is lazy to change his ways.

I wonder about that. I think that each child who hears the story thinks he or she is the good one. The story helps them to feel that they are not alone in being unappreciated. There are others who are also misunderstood.

That is true also, but the story is like a picture. Once we've seen the drawing the mother can say to the child, now you are acting like that. We can use the story to describe the child to himself. Since the child is not yet formed it is our responsibility to make children good people.

Adults are already more formed. For them there are stories on another level, stories that assist them to be more aware.

There is the story of Sorga Rahana Parwa:

The five Pandawas are on their way to heaven. Their wife, Draupadi, falls down and dies. Yudhistira says, "Draupadi, this has happened because you did not love all your husbands equally." Right there we understand that if we do not love the members

of a family equally there will be a price to pay. One by one the four younger brothers fall and die. Only Yudhistira keeps climbing. A small dog follows him. When Yudhistira arrives at the peak of Mt. Meru, Indra greets him and says, "Because of your deeds—you never made a difference between two people, you were never angry nor deceived anyone—it is now fitting that you enter heaven."

Yudhistira is lifted up and placed in a golden chariot, but he says, "What about my dog?"

"Your dog!" Indra answers. "Dogs do not enter heaven."

"If you do not take him, I will not go either. He has been faithful to me and only he has been able to come all the way."

Indra refuses.

Yudhistira refuses to enter heaven.

Then Yudhistira's dog changes into the

** The story of Bawang is similar to Cinderella.*

father of Yudhistira. He had been testing Yudhistira to see if he had the quality of faithfulness.

So Yudhistira enters heaven but when he sees his enemies, the Kaurawas, are there and not his brothers, he insists on finding his brothers.

Indra takes him to hell. Yudhistira sees each of his brothers and his wife enduring different tortures. They call out to him:

"Yudhistira, help us! Help us!"

"My brothers have always been faithful to me. I will not leave them."

Yudhistira jumps into the fire. As he does so hell turns into heaven and heaven hell. The Kaurawas end up in hell and the Pandawas in heaven.

The story reflects the different natures of good and evil. The Mahabharata reflects man to himself.

When I watch your puppets move and talk, on the reflected side of the screen, after a few moments I forget they are puppets. They seem completely real. Each one has his own character and gestures. I love Twalen. Every time he appears I laugh with pleasure. I suppose part of the delight is self-recognition. Do you have a favorite?

How can we? If we would prefer one to the other, they would not perform for us.

In every wayang *I have ever seen, there is always a great fight scene. I know both the Ramayana and Mahabharata culminate in battles, but isn't is possible to have a* wayang *without a fight scene?*

Impossible. In life there is always collision. If we are alive we are at war with ourselves. The *wayang* reflects our life. Just as the Pandawas are always being tempted by their enemies, the Kaurawas, we, too, are always tempted by evil. By taking the shadows of the *wayang* into ourselves, we are strengthened by the struggle and the victory of the Pandawas. The clashing of the swords and heaving of the divine weapons is only the outer image of the internal battle.

How do you evaluate your own performance?

Part depends on the audience. I have to find the door to their understanding. Then I ask my musicians and assistants, but if their understanding is low, I ask them about the theater, rather than the philosophy. Sometimes I can perform for two thousand people and there's not more than two or three that can evaluate what has happened.

Recently a man came to see me who studies the *lontars*. He had never heard such a thing discussed in *wayang* and he wanted to talk more.

What had you spoken about?

The difference between God's laws and man's laws. In man's laws if we've done wrong and others find out, we are punished. But if we do wrong and no one knows, who makes the judgment?

If we're born as men, there is God in us and there is no way we can deceive that part in ourselves. No matter how we try to hide what we've done, we still know. A part of us always knows what we are hiding.

Of all the mantras you recite before the wayang, *is there one that gives you particular strength?*

There is one that is a request for strength since during the *wayang* we are speaking for God. We invite God. We ask him to come. We ask him to come so we can absorb his light. The light purifies us. We need to be pure to begin the *wayang*.

The reputation of a dalang *is based on his* sakti. *How do you guard your* sakti*?*

We lead ourselves. *Sakti* is control of self. We are magnets. If we stray from ourselves, the gods will avoid us. If we are clean, if we make the place clean and ourselves clean, the gods will be attracted. Brahma, Visnu, Siwa—they will visit us.

If we act with the nature of Visnu, he will come... so we say:

May it be so.

May it be so.

May it be so.

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The Good Serpent / *De Goede Slang*

by Maria Dermoût

translated from the Dutch by Frederick Franck

Maria Dermoût was born in 1888 in a small town in the middle of Java. Her father's family had lived in Indonesia for some generations and was firmly rooted there. After her education in Holland, she lived for many years in the Molucca Islands—"the islands I have loved so dearly." Her first full-length novel, *The Ten Thousand Things*, was begun when she was sixty-eight years old and was published to much critical acclaim in Europe and the United States in 1958. Ms. Dermoût died in 1962.

Dermoût's work issues from a unique literary tradition, that of story-telling, a tradition which is characteristic in both Indonesia and Holland. Above all else she was a confirmed storyteller—with the finesse, sensitivity and a profound empathy for human beings that is reminiscent of Isak Dinesen. In the following story, adapted from *And Thus Goes the Story (Zo luidt het verhaal)*, she displays her purposely idiosyncratic style: the reader must distinguish where the narration ends and the listener begins to ponder...

It is late already. We still walk to the little beach to watch the sunset. The sharks must be asleep. The island of Ceram is across from us, indigo blue, very close by. In the hollow, empty room with the big black iron bed, where the little one is already lying on her ear, the two big ones and Jacomina sit around Louisa. The oil lamp on the wall hardly spreads any light between the white, naked walls. In her dark clothes Louisa sits straight on a little wooden box. She is wearing a black blouse and black kebaya *with long sleeves, which close around her wrists with a row of small buttons. Her hands are slim and supple with long fingers and pointed nails, fine hands, very deep brown. She holds her dark face with the frizzy black hair upward. Sometimes she closes her eyes quickly, as if*

she wanted to keep her full attention, all the suspense, locked up inside; then she opens her eyes again, looks tensely in front of her at something she seems to see there and describes it in short words, constantly broken off; they hardly form sentences, but never shall we hear anyone tell a story as Louisa told it that night on the island of Hila, about the serpent, the Serpent with the Carbuncle Stone, the good serpent.

She begins:

"In the jungle," she says, "in the forest, the sun has gone down, the moon didn't come, nor the stars; it is dark, much too dark," and she shivers around her shoulders and falls silent. For a long time she doesn't speak.

Then she lifts her hands, sometimes the left, sometimes the right hand, or both at once; and slowly she begins to move the four fingers—not the thumb—of each hand, as somebody who plays the piano, up and down, the muscles taut, slowly, finger after finger, that's all.

Little feet are put down...

How she does it, I don't know. Each time it is different, or do we just imagine that? Little strange claws, wider paws that approach more heavily, or stiff straight little hooves, or shuffling little feet that sneak closer... stealthily... whose little feet?... carefully... warily...

First we only see it, then we hear it too, rustling in the undergrowth of the mute forest, leaves that move ever so little, a small twig that crackles. Ssst!... look out!... careful!...

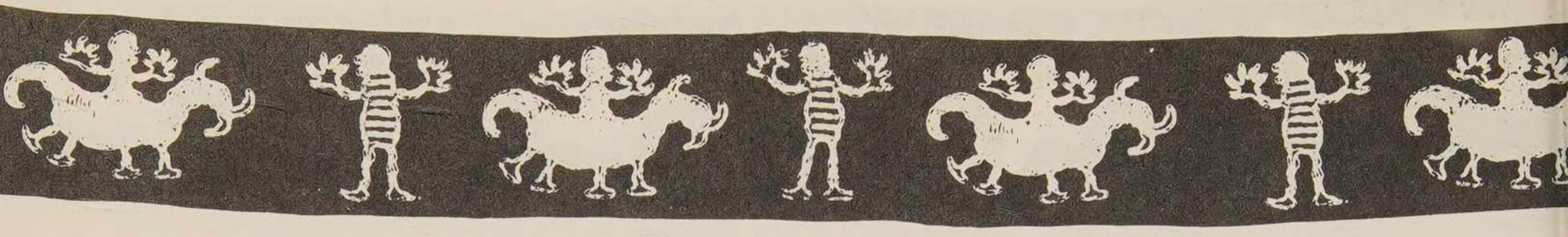
Then her voice, dark and soft, begins to rise, and she enumerates them one after the other who go there. First the birds: "The bird Mourning Dove, ruku, ruku-ku, always one extra coo to end with.

The bird Kakatoua...

The bird Betet...

The bird Lurie..."

Sometimes she describes one: "That little black Lurie, shining



like black satin, a yellow little beak and tiny yellow feet, he is so sweet…

The bird Papoua (that is the bird of paradise), his tail is so marvelous, like a little fountain of water made of gold…

The bird Crowndove has blue feathers and white stars on its head and is oh, so proud…

The Yearbird is tired, his thick yellow beak is too big," and Louisa drags her fingers. And more, and more…

And then come the other animals:

"The little Dwarfdeer, clever!" and her fingers step even more stiffly, even more cautiously.

"The Civetcat, the Mungo, with its long plume of a tail, his little bright red eyes," she says and sniffles through her nose; and we too smell the strange penetrating musk that pervades the room and just as quickly evaporates.

She continues, one by one, slowly, and talks about the animals of the jungle.

"The Iguana, like a tiny green dragon…

The Honeybear, softly snarling…

The Bobcat, mean, those yellow eyes he's got!

The Sloth, much too lazy to run fast…"

When she says "Bottol-muntji"—those are the dwarfs—the boy breaks the trance, the too-great tension.

"What do they look like, Louisa?"

What a pity. Louisa too is disturbed and looks around.

"Oh," she says impatiently after a while, "you should know that*! Red hair, teeth sticking out, like a squirrel, but without a tail and they walk on their hind legs!" The boy and the girl look at each other. Of course!*

"You must keep quiet," I whisper. "Listen, just listen."

Louisa closes her eyes, says nothing for a long time and then, slowly she lifts one hand again, then the other, moves the fingers up and down, tensely, claws, paws, little feet and takes us back once more into the wilderness, into the silent, dark forest, with the

birds, the animals, all those who come walking, tripping, jumping, shuffling, slinking, sneaking. There is also a little forest spirit with green eyes; its feet stand the wrong way round and so it has to walk with slanting oblique little leaps. They are so careful, oh, so wary, because they are afraid of one another, afraid of the darkness, afraid of hunger and pain and death, and of the things one cannot name.

We hold our breath.

Louisa no longer works her fingers up and down; her one hand lies on the other, and she is silent. It is still now, nothing moves.

"The Serpent is coming," she whispers, "the Serpent with the Carbuncle Stone on its forehead, red, like a little red lamp, like a single little lamp in the darkness... It comes nearer, sits down, on a stone, in the forest. Straight up, it sits, stately, with great pomp; the others are allowed to sit down too, around it...

"It is no longer dark," she says, "they are not afraid..."

Louisa is silent for quite a while.

She has turned both hands; now they lie palms up, one over the other in her lap, and slowly something rises in our hearts, that unnamable something, a stillness, a goodness, a freedom from all fear.

"The birds begin to sing and whistle softly in the night," Louisa whispers.

"The butterflies come, those big blue ones that can dance." Now she lifts both hands, moves the long supple fingers as in a languid, fragile wingbeat.

Still, be still. All is good...

The story is finished, and we go to sleep on the island of Hila.

Adapted from Maria Dermoût's *Verzameld werk* (Amsterdam, Em. Querido's Uitgeverij B.V., 1970).
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ARCS

Hear/Say

There are two basic modes of learning: "direct experience" and "hearsay." Nowadays most that we know comes through hearsay—through books, teachers, and television—keyed to only a minimal ground of direct contact with the world. (The "world" is perceived as a rolling outdoor space with weather above, obstructions underfoot, and plants, people, animals, buildings, and machines occupying various niches.)

Hearsay is the great organizer of the apparent chaos via myth, science, or philosophy. Not too long ago there were no writing systems and the world-view/myth/frameworks came to young listeners as long stories chanted in the evening. These old stories are the foundation stones of what the Occident calls classics, and indeed all literature.

In a completely pre-literate society the oral tradition is not memorized, but remembered. *Thus, every telling is fresh and new, as the teller's mind's eye re-views the imagery of origins or journeys or loves or hunts. Themes and formulae are repeated as part of an ever-changing tapestry composed of both the familiar and the novel. Direct experience, generation by generation, feeds back into the tale told. Part of that direct experience is the group context itself, a circle of listeners who murmur the burden back or voice approval, or snore. Meaning flashes from mind to mind, and young eyes sparkle....*

The many motifs of oral literature found world-wide, which at least prove that humanity enjoys the same themes over and over, are not heard as part of some comparative study demonstrating the brotherhood of man, but as out of the minds, hills, and rivers of the place—maybe through the mouth of a bear or salmon. A people and a place become one.

—*Gary Snyder*[1]

[In discussing the oral tradition] it seems that the term of greater significance is traditional. *Oral tells us "how," but traditional tells us "what," and even more, "of what kind" and "of what force."... The traditional oral epic singer is not an artist; he is a seer. The patterns of thought that he has inherited came into being to serve not* art *but religion in its most basic sense....And the picture that emerges is not really one of conflict between preserver of tradition and creative artist; it is rather one of the preservation of tradition by constant re-creation of it. The ideal is a true story well and truly retold.*

"If I were to live for twenty years, I would sing the song which I sang for you here today just the same twenty years from now, word for word."

—*Albert B. Lord*[2]

My father went on talking to me in a low voice. This is how our people always talk to their children, so low and quiet, the child thinks he is dreaming. But he never forgets.

—*Maria Chona, Papago*[3]

I wonder if we have ever asked ourselves what education means. ... This is really a very important question, not only for the students, but also for the parents, for the teachers, and for everyone who loves this earth. Why do we go through the struggle to be educated? Is it merely in order to pass some examinations and get a job? Or is it the function of education to prepare us while we are young to understand the whole process of life?... Surely, education has no meaning unless it helps you to understand the vast expanse of life with all its subtleties, with its extraordinary beauty, its sorrows and joys.... To live is to find out for yourself what is true, and you can do this only when there is freedom, when there is continuous revolution inwardly, within yourself....It is only when you are constantly inquiring, constantly observing, constantly learning, that you find truth, God or love; and you cannot inquire, observe, learn, you cannot be deeply aware, if you are afraid. So the function of education, surely, is to eradicate, inwardly as well as outwardly, this fear that destroys human thought, human relationship and love.

—*J. Krishnamurti*[4]

I also very well remember that on another occasion the father dean said:

"In order that at responsible age a man may be a real man and not a parasite, his education must without fail be based on the following ten principles.

"From early childhood there should be instilled in the child:

Belief in receiving punishment for disobedience.
Hope of receiving reward only for merit.
Love of God—but indifference to the saints.
Remorse of conscience for the ill-treatment of animals.
Fear of grieving parents and teachers.
Fearlessness towards devils, snakes and mice.
Joy in being content merely with what one has.
Sorrow at the loss of the goodwill of others.
Patient endurance of pain and hunger.
The striving early to earn one's bread."

—*G.I. Gurdjieff*[5]

A woman punished
her children unjustly.
The Creator is sad
because of such things
and bids us tell you
they must cease.

Talk slowly and kindly
to children.
Never punish them unjustly.

If a child does not obey,
let the mother say,
"Come to the water
and I will dunk you."

And if the child
still does not obey
let her say this again.
If at the third time
obedience still has not come
then the child should be dunked
in the water.

But if the child cries for mercy
it must have it.

So they said and he said.
It was that way.

—*Handsome Lake,*
Seneca[6]

Too much thought only leads to trouble. We Eskimos do not concern ourselves with solving all riddles. We repeat the old stories in the way they were told to us, and with the words we ourselves remember. And if there should then seem to be a lack of reason in the story as a whole, there is yet enough remaining in the way of in-

comprehensible happenings, which our thought cannot grasp. If it were but everyday ordinary things there would be nothing to believe in.

—*Caribou Eskimo*[7]

Tanaka was such a wonderful storyteller that hearts were stirred when he told tales of love, and when he told of war, the listeners felt themselves to be on the field of battle.

One day Tanaka met Kanayama, a layman who was close to becoming a Zen master. "When I slept beside my mother as a child," Kanayama said, "she often related the legend of the Peach Boy. In the midst of the tale, I would fall asleep. It was my favorite story. You are the greatest storyteller in this land. I have heard that you make people laugh or cry with every tale. Tell me the story of the Peach Boy exactly as my mother did."

Tanaka did not dare to try. "Please give me time to study," he said. Months later he went to Kanayama and said, "Now let me tell you the tale."

"Another day," answered Kanayama.

Disappointed, Tanaka studied more and tried many times, but Kanayama rejected him again and again. When Tanaka would open his mouth, Kanayama would interrupt and say, "You do not sound like my mother yet."

It was ten years before Kanayama said, "Yes, that is the way."

Thus did Tanaka learn Zen.

—*Classical Zen Story*

Notes

1. From Gary Snyder Foreword in Donald L. Philippi, Songs of Gods, Songs of Humans: The Epic Tradition of the Ainu *(© University of Tokyo Press, 1979), p. vii. Reprinted by permission of University of Tokyo Press and Princeton University Press.*

2. Albert B. Lord, The Singer of Tales *(Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp.220, 27, 29. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.*

3. From The Autobiography of a Papago Woman *by Ruth Underhill and Maria Chona (Menasha, Wis.: Kraus Reprint Co.: 1974, 1936).*

4. From Think on These Things *by J. Krishnamurti (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1964).*

5. From Meetings With Remarkable Men *by G.I. Gurdjieff, translated by Alfred R. Orage. Copyright © 1969 by Editions Janus. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, E.P. Dutton.*

6. From The Good Message of Handsome Lake *by Joseph Bruchac (P.O. Box 3307, Greensboro, N.C. 27402: Unicorn Press, 1979).*

7. From "The Intellectual Culture of the Caribou Eskimos," Vol. 7, No. 2, Copenhagen, Report of the 5th Thule Expedition, quoted by Peggy V. Beck and A.L. Walters in The Sacred *(Tsaile, Arizona, Navajo Nation: Navajo Community College, 1977).*

As the Twig is Bent...

For our issue on storytelling and education, we didn't feel that any one point of view would be enough; so we set up a conversation between several people whose ideas interest us, who are working in quite different ways and places in the world of education.

Anne Charles has been with the Waldorf schools for twenty-two years, first as a parent, then as a librarian, and now as a classroom teacher. She heads the elementary school at Garden City and is the Recording Secretary for the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America. She also headed a pilot program for the Middle States Association for the accreditation of elementary schools. Expressive, dynamic, and totally unsentimental, Mrs. Charles is a disciplinarian with a twinkle, and it is her most unruly pupils who love and respect her the most.

Richard Lewis has been teaching for some sixteen years in both public and private schools, and at the university level, at Fordham, Rutgers, and the New School for Social Research. He directs the Touchstone Center, a city-wide teacher-and-children training program based at P.S. 9. One of the Touchstone dramatic productions, "Creature Tales," was reviewed in PARABOLA, *Vol. III, No. 2. Lewis has produced a number of anthologies of poetry from all over the world, including two of children's poetry,* Miracles *and* Journeys. *Poetry, he says, is his major impetus, but his work is always a bringing together: the working relation between adults and children, the interaction of science and the arts. Soft-spoken, but decidedly firm, he demonstrates, in his own way of being, the balance between creative freedom and discipline that he seems to pass on to his pupils.*

Nancy Rambusch, author of Learning How to Learn: An American Approach to Montessori, *is now the Director of the Caedmon School in New York. A graduate of the Maria Montessori Training Organization in London and of Teachers College at Columbia, she was the founder of the Whitby School in Greenwich, Connecticut and of the American Montessori Society. She has taught, directed, counseled, and supervised many other educational projects and institutions; the list of her achievements amply substantiates the impression she gives of intellectual acuity and lively capabilities.*

To be moderator for what would evidently be a provocative exchange of views, we invited Margaret Flinsch, who founded one of the first nursery schools in this country in Princeton, New Jersey. She has been involved for many years with children's theater, with special interest in improvisation, and has also trained a group of adult storytellers; so her interests are well adapted to represent PARABOLA's *in the conversation which follows:*

M.F. Since one of PARABOLA's chief interests is the transmission of knowledge through myths and stories, we have been invited to talk about the place of storytelling in education. Dr. Rambusch, you are one of the people chiefly responsible for introducing Maria Montessori's methods in this country; the general notion that people have, I think, is that the Montessori approach is rather more intellectual than mythic or imaginative. But what is your own view of the child's need?

N.R. Like Montessori, I, too, see the child as infinitely capable of self-realization.

M.F. What does that really mean?

N.R. It means that every child is going to be a reflection of the culture in which he or she lives. The child invents his world by rearranging it; he re-creates it but does not create it. One of my major concerns now is that we live in such an artificial world; our culture gives children a lot of canned perceptions about everything. It is very hard for children to live a rich personal life now because instead of reading a book and imagining what the characters look like, they see the story in the movies or on television and are given very literal, extrinsic indications of what everybody looks like. Some children never take that extra step of imagining, and don't really penetrate to their own personal worlds.

R.L. I am very interested in your point about the whole problem of children's life today: their inner lives being at a distance, so to speak, from themselves because the world out there tends to package things for them—the television experience, for instance, is a kind of packaged experience. It goes back to the word you used, "re-create," and whether or not after the child experiences television he is truly capable, through play or through dramatic activities or whatever, of re-creating that experience. In most schools that I know of there is very little work being done to help children take the gut kind of experience that they do receive from television, and somehow recharge it and relive it. What I find frightening, in this sense, is that children are being bombarded with an enormous amount of experiencing, but there has been a minimal amount of channeling of their natural capacity for reinventing, that would allow them to go back to reset the stage somewhat.

N.R. Robert Bly talks about received ideas; these are received images and they are canned. The question is whether children can break out of that stage set to take the information and reshape it. There is very little in the schools that encourages them to do this.

R.L. And because they don't have that opportunity to reset the stage, in many ways they are forced to continually live through the canned setting. It is almost like an addiction, and if you don't have a release from it you simply have to go on being addicted. They can't get out of it because there seems always to be the possibility of receiving more and more from this television screen.

N.R. But more and more of essentially the same thing.

R.L. The same thing, right. And educationally speaking, one of the major problems is, how do you urge the child to move out of that setting of the stage in which he is constantly being placed, and get him to look out or down at it from another level to see what is really happening: What am *I* feel-

ing? and what, indeed, do *I* think about all this? Teachers rarely give children the opportunity to remove themselves, at least one step, from that experience to find their own point of view.

M.F. What do you think, Mr. Lewis, is *the* necessity for children now? What do they need?

R.L. What do they need—well, it is not much different from what I need!

M.F. But they are just beginning; you are farther along on the trip!

R.L. It is a very complicated question, beause the situation that children are in today is very complicated. That connects with what we were just saying about the canned image. It seems to me (and I say this with a certain reservation, because it can be misunderstood) that there needs to be at the outset a kind of almost therapeutic setting for the child, to allow him to re-experience emotions and actions from which he has been cut off. Now how that is done is part of the complicated question. Certainly many of the arts allow the child to go through that process, but it is more than just using the arts; it is also using a point of view, and a way of relying on the child's native capacity to play and to perceive things in a highly intuitive way. But to get in touch with these natural capacities, there has to be an interim period where the child gets away from some of the very pressing social contexts in which he has been placed. I don't mean to say that children should not be watching television; I believe the Steiner way of thinking is that they should not be watching, but I don't think I agree with that. Children *are* within a television culture and they have to deal with it in the best way they can. But they should be given the opportunity to think about the myths that are being televised for them so that they can then in turn act as myth-makers themselves.

A.C. It is certainly safe to say that a Waldorf teacher discourages TV watching in any great amount, just for the reason Mr. Lewis has mentioned. Our culture today presents children with packaged or canned images, not only on television but everywhere. The kitchen, more than likely, is a food-processing center rather than a meal-creating center; programmed learning via tapes, cassettes, film strips, and computers have in many instances replaced the personal exchange between student and teacher. It is true that a child should not be alienated from his cultural environment. Still, there is a question, isn't there? if one perceives that many of the most powerfully affective elements in that culture tend to cripple a child's natural gifts—his capacity for play, for an inner life of the imagination and creativity, for establishing his own relationship to the world. And TV is certainly one of those affective elements.

M.F. Do you feel there is a difference in the way in which a television show is received and the way a story is heard by a child?

R.L. Oh, yes. When a child hears a story, let's say from his parents, you have all of that physical intimacy which is part of the story. The fact that the child is interacting with the parent is part of the process of why the story is important; it isn't just the story, it's that he is hearing it from a member of the family. If he hears it in school, again it's a communal experience: other children reacting and interacting, even their restlessness and the interruptions, the asking of questions, is important. With television, of course, you are dealing with an image which can't be interrupted except to be turned off, which is a different thing. An interruption means you can continue again, perhaps even on a higher level; when you turn something off you just miss whatever you turn off.

I don't mean to imply that television is some mammoth monster that is out of control—though I think, in part, it is! It has enormous potential for communicating

ideas and feelings. Whether it is being used in that direction is another question.

M.F. Do you think there is a difference between the auditory and visual attention, that might have something to do with the oral versus television problem?

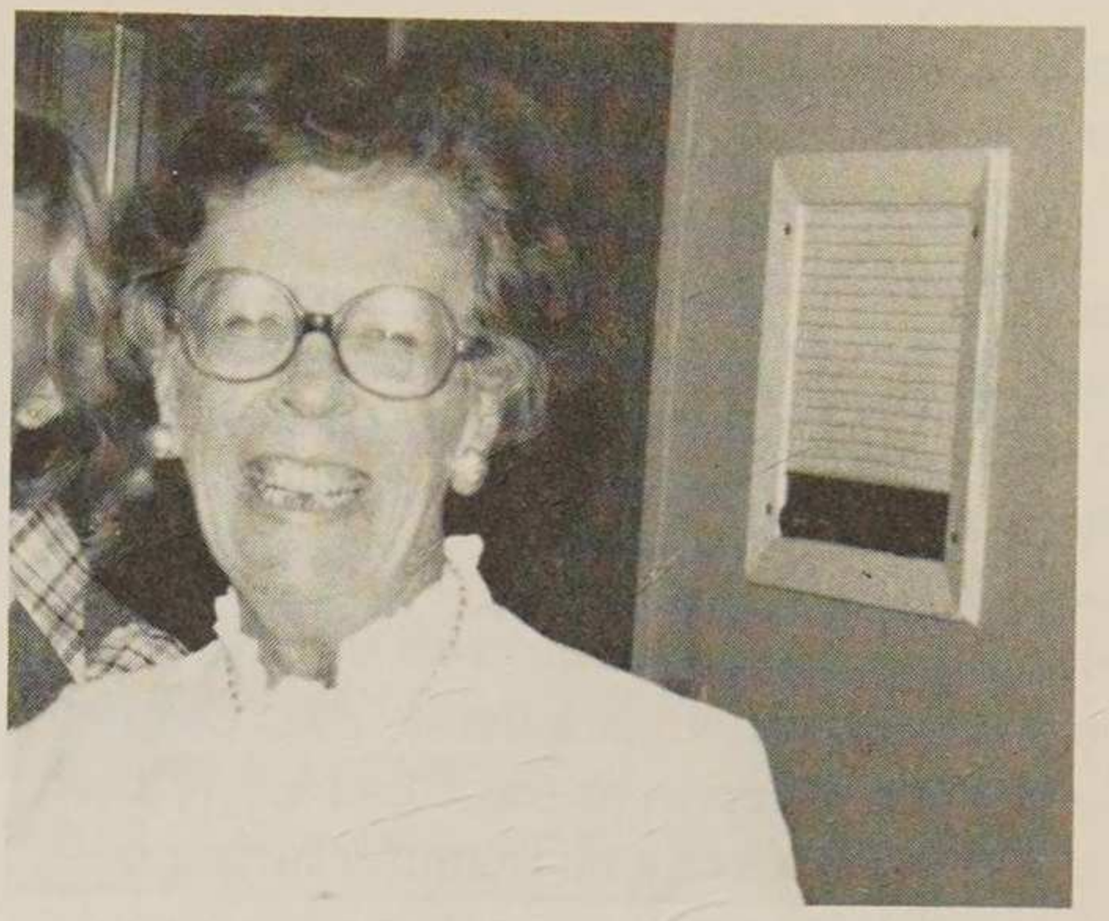
R.L. Of course, in television, both kinds are called on simultaneously. But I think we still have a lot to learn about how children are using television to reinforce the auditory and the visual. I know that there have been scientific studies to examine these experiences but I don't think we have understood the implications.

N.R. It seemes to me that a story told by a parent to a child or a teacher to her pupils is really a relational phenomenon. You could say that the story is the pretext for getting together in a personal way. With television there is none of that intimacy that is characteristic of storytelling, between people who are personally involved.

R.L. Going back to my phrase, "turning off," both adults and children watch television as a kind of turning off; they turn off, in effect, certain elements of their experience in order to watch television.

N.R. Sitting with a few friends and doing something together is very different from sitting with them and watching television, where the children are not together really but isolated. I am not against television—any more than I am against air-conditioning! It is very much part of the culture, for good or ill. But it is certainly affecting children's perceptions of their ability to create.

R.L. I think it is also affecting their perceptions of things like space and time, in ways that are extraordinarily profound. You go back to a Sesame Street kind of rhythm, the advertising mentality where everything has to be speeded up, clipped, staccato-paced, in presenting ideas to children. This is very different from a classroom situation or the way a parent presents ideas, where one more or less stumbles along! Obviously in television there is no stumbling—if you stumble you are fired; and I think that that presents for the child a real problem in understanding how ideas are ignited. Any number of times in working with children I get the feeling that some of them have been so keyed into television that a lot of the world is cut off from them, and they expect the teacher, the human body in front of them, to catalog the world in the way in which the television set is capable of doing. And when they realize that the human being can't catalog the world with the speed and precision of television, they are disappointed.



Anne Charles

M.F. They lose interest in you.

R.L. Yes; they are bored. And I don't think children are capable yet of understanding that what they are watching is in fact a finished product; there is a confusion between the product and the process.

M.F. Where do you see the real value of storytelling? What does it do for them that television doesn't? When you tell a story, you are also imposing *your* story; it is not *their* story. What is the difference between this story that is told them and you feel they

receive something from, and the image on the screen?

R.L. Well, I think one of the major differences is that it allows the child to imagine the context in which the story is being told, so that the child is using a self-image-making process in allowing the story to take hold of him. In television you are being told what images to combine with the story; the choice has already been made. And this is the danger, it seems to me, of a society that has relied so heavily on manufacturing images without pointing out that each one of us has the capacity of creating imagery of one kind or another. So the story, or the poem, or any kind of spoken way of telling something, really returns to the individual hearer the capacity to create the arena in which words can then take hold.

M.F. Do you feel the oral method calls on feeling more than the visual image?

R.L. In a certain respect yes, and in a certain respect no. Certainly children don't watch television unmoved; we are all moved by it. But it is a different kind of emotion, not the same kind that you might get when you hear a beautiful story or a poem. The story on television can be very gripping because the people who produce these programs are smart enough to know how to grip you. The animated cartoons rely on some very simple concepts of what will grip a child in particular: action, suspense, a certain kind of physical violence, power; and sometimes, obviously, these very natural emotional reactions are taken advantage of. The child is feeling something, but with what quality of feeling? It is not so much the lack of feeling as the quality of feeling that is in question.

A.C. I believe Mr. Lewis points out a very real and important distinction here. What elements are missing in a cartoon version of *Charlotte's Web* that one finds in full measure in reading the book aloud? The bare story line remains the same; that is the quantitative. But the magic—the subtleties of humor, vocabulary, warmth of relationships—the qualitative—all vanish.

N.R. Children who are read to frequently will tell you that if they see an animated version of what they have heard they are very disappointed in it because it has foreclosed that wonderful world of imagery which they have had on their own. Clearly, people who make animated cartoons assume that lots of children don't read or are not read to, and that this is a sort of shortcut for them.

R.L. On an educational level, it seems to me that the real problem is that teachers are finding it more and more difficult to spend time reading to a class; and the beauty of reading or telling a story is that the reading, if it is working, will elicit questions from the children. The asking of questions in the process of the reading enhances the reading itself, because it means the child is so involved in the story that he has to pin down every detail in some way. And of course any storyteller knows that if you dare to veer from the right detail in a story the child will pick it up immediately; he'll know that that wasn't the way it was supposed to be.

M.F. Dr. Rambusch, how do you regard the importance of storytelling?

N.R. I think that it is extremely important, more so now than ever, because we can no longer count on families spending time with children telling them stories or reading to them. This is not a social criticism of parents, but it reflects a world in which schools are expected to do more and more of the kinds of things that typically families used to do. The positive aspect of that is for schools to take that challenge and say, fine, we will start seriously telling and reading stories and give children this first-hand kind of experience. But I remember, not too long ago, I was visiting a day care center in which a teacher was reading "The House that Jack Built," and at the end of every verse a little boy said, "Who Jack?" The teacher never answered him. She

meant to do the very best for the children but she missed the whole point! She could not stop and satisfy his curiosity so that he would understand the rest of the story. So I think there is a lot of "Who Jack?" going on; children would like to know, but they need to have you stop and tell them, or at least elicit from them what their questions are.

Another aspect that I think is important is the magic repetition of stories. If children aren't read to or don't hear any stories, they miss that whole initiation into the hypnosis of rhythmic repetition.

M.F. Do you believe that the story is retained longer because of the repetition?

N.R. Oh, absolutely.

M.F. You touch a very interesting point there. I think that there are further dimensions in the storytelling even than the relationship between the storyteller and the listener, and maybe even more than the asking of questions; and it is those dimensions that I think relate to the whole oral tradition, and why storytelling has existed from the beginning of time as a method of education. So it is nice to tell children stories, it is good for their creativity, but is it *necessary*?

R.L. I think that teachers must be allowed to truly debate the reasons for the importance of the story or the poem. Most teachers don't have that opportunity; and there are a lot of different points of view about this. There are some teachers who feel that it is a waste of time and there are some who would say that it is absolutely vital. But out of the debating at least we would come to some kind of sense of the value that we are trying to give it. And the value has to do with what you say about all of this hooking into the larger tradition of the story and the nature of being human. I think that it goes back to the nature of childhood itself, which is that children play, and playing is a symbolic form of telling something. Symbols and the making of symbols are crucial to learning. We don't have learning without symbols; language itself is in fact a kind of symbol. Very few teachers understand the importance of the symbolic process in the nature of teaching. They see knowledge as something that is to be dispensed, but there's often a mechanical sense of dispensing it. It is very sad that many teachers have never had, or have lost touch with, the experience of how the power of symbolic communication has affected them in their own lives, and how they can in turn become creators of symbols. Very few teachers are keyed into that kind of thinking.

N.R. Wouldn't you say also that storytelling at its highest level is really initiation?

R.L. Yes.

N.R. You are being drawn into something that transcends you. This is certainly true in hearing the sagas; this is the repository of a whole culture. And if you think of storytelling merely as communication or a transfer of information, and not as an initiatory experience into which children are drawn, and if you as an adult have never had that transcendent experience yourself, then you might think that it was less effective to tell a story than to do something else.

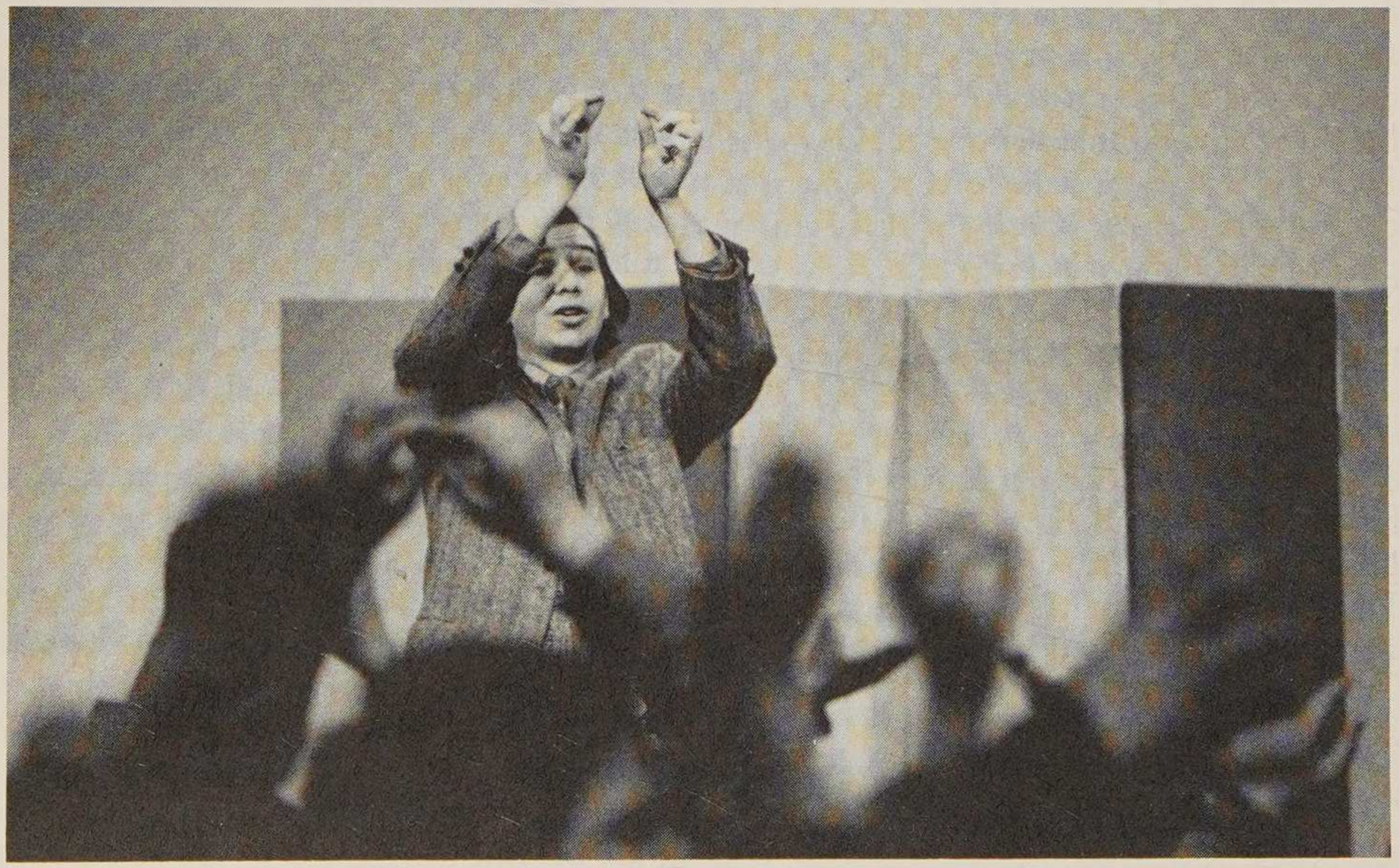
R.L. Right. And to add to that, it seems to me that what has been lost is the ritual that surrounds every initiation, and the role that ritual plays in all the educational processes. Children constantly make rituals. So that the ceremony of telling a story, the aura, the mood, the drama, when one sits down to hear or to make a story—all of that is tremendously important. There is a delicacy in setting the mood which is part and parcel of storytelling; but it is the rare teacher who can come into a room and just say one thing or make one gesture that will make the children realize that something important is about to happen—and then allow certain things to happen in that mood of importance that sets the stage. It is drama; of course it is drama—it goes back to the Greeks!

N.R. A child cannot learn to dramatize his thinking if he hasn't had some experience with storytelling, both on the receptive and expressive level, I think.

M.F. I wonder about that; I feel that it's part of the child's nature to be dramatic, and that they are already acting at eighteen months! They may not have even heard stories but they are already acting them. They will do it covertly if they have to, or overtly if they are permitted. Children seem to carry within them a very heavy dramatic component that in some way will be expressed.

R.L. I think we may be applying a rather sophisticated idea of story to the rather primitive sense of it that children have. As an example: when a young child sits in the grass and suddenly says to you, "The ant is moving," I wonder whether he is telling us the rather simple fact that the ant is moving, or whether he is in fact trying to tell us a story. What is fascinating about children, because of their ambidextrous way of being between the real and the unreal all the time, is that when they say the ant is moving, to them that is a drama; they are observing a dramatic event outside of themselves which they are then conveying back to us by telling us a story that the ant is moving. It is only later that they begin to link other ideas and sentences and finally begin to understand the nature of plot and of how stories begin, have a middle, and end. But the beginnings of story making, or drama making, it seems to me, might come out of a kind of innate observational sense of things and the desire to convey something that has come out of that observation. Maybe everything that a child observes is for him a kind of mini-drama that has to be encapsulated in a statement, the tenuous beginning of what we may eventually call a story. But this is purely speculation.

M.F. I am very sympathetic to that. I think life probably is drama to children. And that poses a rather interesting aspect of the question. What is the real world, and what is the unreal? We speak of them that way, but which is which? To a child especially, which is which?



R.L. Many adults themselves are not sure of what is real and unreal; so any definition the adult gives tends to be speculative.

M.F. You said something about how storytelling leads to questions. There seems to me to be a big clue there about the need for storytelling as an educational tool; because I think that when education insists on children just being told things as facts or information, there is something that is killed, or at least put to sleep. If one is concerned that the whole person needs a certain preparation, then who is the whole person? Is only one part—the head—being told things, and the rest being put to sleep? This is certainly a very big question, to my mind.

R.L. One of the ways I look at education is that it is an attempt to elicit response—that to educate means, in effect, to allow the individual to reverberate enough experiences and ideas within himself that he needs to respond. The need to respond is the beginning of framing and forming knowledge so that it becomes understandable for one's self. So going back to the story, it seems to me the story is a kind of melodic line that has a built-in need for a response. So when the story brings out questions, it has started a melody which has to be continued by the hearer in some way, either through the response of a question or some other reflection of what the story may have meant for him. But the story must in some way elicit a response. That is where, again, television is lacking.

N.R. This fascinates me. But there is an enormous gap between being initiated into storytelling as a listener, responding as you say to its melodic line, and learning how to give that melody, that kind of measured excitement, to one's own utterances as a storyteller. In observing children of eight to ten working with puppets and devising their own stories, one of the things that is very apparent is how unutterably boring these stories seem to be to anyone but the teller. The child has not yet mastered the form. At what point do you think children become aware of the true artistry of storytelling?

Richard Lewis

R.L. That is a very interesting question. I just want to disagree with you on one point: I don't think their stories are boring to other children. I think perhaps they are boring to adults; but I have noticed, in observing children playing with puppets or making stories out of puppets, that the attention of all the other children is riveted to what these children are expressing

N.R. You're right; they are very tolerant.

R.L. No, no, it is not even tolerance! They are absolutely keyed in, completely. But I think it is in the nature of the child to tell stories in a way that for us as adults is boring, because they have this wonderful circular way of telling something; it doesn't go straight down the line, it meanders. Somehow the child has a gift for that kind of meandering which allows it to touch on points that have everything to do with enforcing the nature of that story. Maybe—and I am only making a supposition here—children developmentally are able to tolerate that kind of meandering because it is crucial to them to fill in the holes where the adult can't do it.

Education has been traditionally set up

as the adult doing something for the children; but it seems to me more and more that it is the children who might (and should) be doing some of the educating for themselves. Perhaps they know better than we do about what is needed—in this case, the meandering syndrome—and how to use it perhaps to its best potential. So in effect, it is not so much when they learn their artistry but when they learn to make a story sound like an adult story when it is still perhaps a childlike story. There is a difference there. And what I think is so confusing to children, as well as adults, is that children do seem to have, in their art, their writing, their acting, and so forth, a very particular kind of approach. It's only a child that can be saying or doing it that way. That is why children's books written by adults rarely take hold of a child. Most of them are attempts to imitate what they think sounds like a book children could understand or be involved in, but they very seldom touch that quality that children bring to anything that they are transforming. I always insist that children do indeed have their own art forms that are particularly theirs, and it is a very delicate problem how to allow them to maintain those art forms without trying to make them conform to adult standards.

A.C. As a parent, teacher and children's librarian, I have not found that really to be so. Many children's books are nonsense and a waste of money—that is true. There are many others, however, which *do* involve children, that do have the ability to transform the world—at least temporarily!—such books as the Howard Pyle Arthurian stories, *On to Oregon, Tom Sawyer*, or the Narnia books, for instance.

M.F. And I am not altogether satisfied, in a certain way, with your equating education with the child's response; surely that is, at most, half the story. What about the child's perceptions? To what are they responding? How do they *see* what is outside of them, and isn't that something that also needs to be educated? We are perceptive beings, and we have all kinds of perceptions, not just mental ones. How else do we learn except through them, and how are they trained? Isn't this a concern of education?

R.L. Oh, absolutely it is a concern. Of course what I think about education is opposed to the idea of the teaching of perceptions: the point of view which assumes that children have a minimum amount of perceptions, and that the role of education is to build upon that to a maximum amount. My feeling is quite the opposite: I think that children perhaps at no other time in their lives have as many senses of perception going on simultaneously with such rapidity; and the problem is not so much a *lack* of perception as perhaps the reverse.

M.F. I agree about the quantity of children's perceptions, but don't you think there are differences of quality that they have to learn to discriminate?

R.L. Yes, there are differences, and they are trying all the time to make those differences. But I think in terms of *training* the perceptions we don't rely enough on the child's *natural* ability (and I don't want to be misunderstood about this) almost to train himself; we don't rely enough on what is in the power of the child to do. In most education that I have seen, children's innate responsiveness to their perceptions is squelched.

M.F. We spoil their perceptions.

R.L. We spoil them. We overeducate the child. We overstimulate, in the sense of giving factual knowledge to a point where the child is often unable to realize that he is in fact a perceiving creature.

N.R. I think it is important to see the way in which we have shifted in this culture our notion of what learning is. In the seventeenth century, every Puritan family read the Bible through the course of the year; children heard it, and then learned to read from it. So in a simpler time, there was

more of an ordering of what the perceptions were that were important.

R.L. A way of adding to what you are saying is that if you take a flower and make a flat statement to a child, "This is a flower," and leave it at that, this is a way of strangling perception; because in effect it is saying that there is only one way of knowing a flower. What most education overloooks is the variety of ways in which the flower can be perceived. A lot of teachers complain about lack of time or too much trouble, and indeed it takes both time and trouble, but if in fact you want to know what a flower is, you must examine it from a multitude of levels, from smell and taste and touch and hearing, from personifying and fantasizing; and all of these can coexist, and one is no more important that the other. But it is not often that a teacher is capable of allowing all of those varieties of perceiving an object to exist at the same time. The reason I use the word "response" is that I see the importance of allowing children to respond to the enormous range of experiencing and perceiving that they do have; and we don't give that possibility to most children. They just don't know that they can tell us all kinds of things about that flower if in fact we ask, or if they ask themselves, what a flower is.

M.F. Would you say that what is necessary is to train teachers, rather than children, in the symbolic approach?

R.L. If I had my way I would turn all the teachers upside down, shake them a bit, and say: Let's start again! I am generalizing, obviously; of course there are some wonderfully gifted teachers doing just what I am talking about. But unfortunately, too much of the training of teachers is based on a kind of cognitive sense of childhood, that really overlooks the experiential, perceiving kind of thing we are speaking about. Teachers by and large have become frightened of these areas.

N.R. Well, you know, teachers are under tremendous pressure to respond to the explosion of knowledge. Therefore they are taking a kind of taxonomic point of view about information: "flower," "bird," "hat," "tree," so that the child will move on to more and more information rather than take a few notions and explore them thoroughly. They are under this pressure because the culture exalts quantitative information, as opposed to qualitative.

M.F. With those words "quantitative" and "qualitative" you are clarifying my thinking about perception, because children certainly have very physically acute percep-

tions. I don't know for a fact but I accept what you say, Mr. Lewis, that they have more at an early age than they ever have later because, undoubtedly, we squash them, we interfere with them in the name of education. But there is not yet (how could it be?) developed in a child a kind of discrimination of qualities and differences between literal vision and inner vision. And it seems to me that this is something that surely is somewhere near the heart of the educative process, that we really never get at quite right.

R.L. It is the critical faculty.

M.F. Real knowledge is of a difference in qualities—in their feeling, for instance.

R.L. I think this is a very crucial point because it relates to the child's feeling that to survive the culture, one must become part of the culture and accept its values. And it is the rare individual who can fight back and say: No, I don't believe in those values, I want to go one step further, or higher, or lower, or to the side. I think it is a crucial problem, in working both as a parent and with children in a classroom situation, because the peer pressure element is extraordinarily strong.

M.F. What have we done to children to make them so afraid, so non-independent? They're not born frightened, but by the time they are teenagers they are all scared to death, and that is why they yield to peer pressure.

R.L. I have a theory about that: that there has to be a kind of training for courage. I am not being facetious; it is as if we don't take into consideration in our educational process that if in fact you are going to be different from the lot, you have to be courageous about it. To be different often means taking risks that other people will not take. And our educational system is not geared toward the making of differences, it is geared toward the homogenizing process; so that within most of the educational and institutional settings, the person who is different has enormous problems. In fact I have seen any number of times children who are obviously "different" being labeled as ones with learning disabilities; and yet when I have worked with some of them, what is extraordinary is that it is not a learning disability; the disability is on the part of the society around them to accept their differences. It goes back to the problem of perceiving: if we can accept the very democratic notion that every one of us perceives the world differently, that is the basis for saying: All right then, each individual has to be encouraged to be courageous enough to accept the differences within himself and to move from there. This doesn't mean to go off on one's own and not communicate with others; what we have to do is to make strengths of the child's differences, and then find some way *through* that of communicating with other people. Everybody can do his own thing, but let's have some of those things interconnect! I think that is where education is in trouble, basically; we don't allow human beings to realize the individual quality of their own perceiving enough to allow a kind of personal sensibility, that is truly personal rather than simply public. And we have a long way to go on that. It goes back to teachers and the training of teachers.

N.R. There is also the race against time, the pressure for children to know more and more within the same time frame, and the drive towards convergence in order to be accepted in other institutions of higher learning. You may think anything you like, but what are your S.A.T. scores? That is really the bottom line. So the teachers are rushing to get through the tasks demanded by our culture, and there is very little time left, and probably less energy, to explore some of these really critical areas that are at the heart of the educational process. And after the S.A.T. scores have been long forgotten, children will suffer from not having had this part of their nature activated. Instead of getting "A" in life, people are getting "A" in school. What could be more

confusing? If you are going to get "A" in anything, let's have it in life, to live as a full human being! Instead, the focus is in getting over each academic hurdle, frequently at the expense of all that is idiosyncratic in the child.

R.L. Which is another way of saying that we make such a big thing of failure and success in schooling that what we are talking about here is just a seed of possibility; because what we speak of cannot be measured in successes and failures. It is richer and deeper. But not many teachers are able to combat and rise above the success-and-failure kind of mentality and survive as teachers as well—though most teachers I know have tried.

A.C. A Waldorf school believes it possible to do both: educate a child to be at home in the world, equip him in an academically sound way for his higher education, and at the same time cultivate and honor his inner qualitative and creative life.

N.R. I think that this is one of the strengths of the Waldorf approach from what I have seen: the willingness of teacher and children to make a very long-term investment in learning together, so that children's skills are not reckoned on an annual basis. This is also a part of the Montessori point of view, but it is more apparent with younger children, where there is less pressure. Unhappily, once a child is six in this culture, time has run out for him!

M.F. One of the things that is interesting about the Waldorf method is that they have a storytelling approach in every subject, even mathematics; so that in the early years it all comes in somehow a little differently to the child.

Then they have a very interesting method that they carry on all the way through high school, which they call the block system. For about three weeks at a time they have a "main subject" which they study for about two hours every morning—chemistry, or math, or history—and the rest of the day they have other things like art and music and sports. Then after three weeks they drop that subject and take up another. It is based on the idea of the receptivity of the human being and his being able to retain something, when it comes like that, in a very different way and much less mentally. And it is really interesting to see how the child receives things in this way. I feel that storytelling is something that doesn't need to be apart from everything else; it is part of the attitude of the teacher that a story is made, in a certain sense, about the way in which the child can approach almost any facet of life.

Nancy Rambusch

A.C. The "block" system may be likened to the importance of repetition discussed earlier. We believe that when subject matter is explored in depth for a certain period, brought to a conclusion, then left for a time to lie fallow, it has greater impact than if it is relentlessly pursued day after day. The interval between one block of history and the next, for example, is an important part of the learning process, just as time between meals is essential for the digestive process.

But I think the "storytelling" approach to each subject may be a bit misleading. We try to bring the facts—whether they are the simple addition and subtraction facts of first grade, the Pythagorean theorem of eighth grade, or the theory of probability in

high school—in such a way that the student can find a direct relationship to himself in the subject matter. In the early grades, this may well be through stories; as the student grows into his own thinking, the teaching approach becomes increasingly conceptual so as to educate the thinking, although it still seeks to confirm the *reality* as opposed to the *abstraction*.

N.R. Montessori suggested that in teaching older children geology, for example, the way to begin would be by telling a story of the birth of the earth, a very large story which would seize and hold the children's imagination. Then after a mural had been painted, as it were, there could be a series of miniatures, quite specific and particular, such as the kind of geological conditions in which a volcano develops or what happened in Pompeii. This is similar to the Waldorf idea of not wanting children merely to intellectualize about information but to absorb it through every pore.

R.L. The key phrase is "seizing the imagination."

N.R. And holding it.

R.L. And holding it. It is not done enough, obviously; it is too bad.

M.F. I think "calling" would be much better than "seizing."

R.L. Yes. One of the things that is activated in me in a discussion like this is the feeling that we still don't know very much about education.

N.R. We know too much about schooling, though!

M.F. What about competition? Do you feel it is a necessary element of education? Is it helpful or harmful?

N.R. Like air conditioning in this culture, it appears inevitable. Children can handle competing with themselves and learn to be critical about their own previous efforts; but whether or not it is useful to be competing against other children for a prize is a very real question that we have to ask ourselves as a culture, since we have sanctified this in schools.

M.F. Marking is a competitive thing.

N.R. Marking is certainly a competitive thing. Perhaps a better way for children to cooperate is to organize them into groups and have each group's best efforts pitted against another's—the quality of participation of each individual in the group contributes to the whole. It is hard to see whether it is the children or the culture that is competitive; which comes first, the chicken or the egg? Montessori once said: Never let a child risk failure until he has a reasonable chance of success. And I think that is very important, because if a child has done something well, then the subsequent efforts are not so fragile; you know that they can be put to some test. But to put children under competitive circumstances, without knowing what the basis is of the competition, is dreadful; this kind of quantitative marking is certainly competitive. It is very dysfunctional educationally.

R.L. It is an extraordinarily interesting cultural problem. I would love to see more channeling of competitiveness into the area of games, because that feeds into the child's instinct for play—but play that is testing certain boundaries that don't necessarily affect a sense of self, as so much competitiveness tends to do. If you have failed in school you get the idea that you have failed in life, and that is bad, obviously. But I think there is a quality of competititon which is very good. Children do have a natural sense of competing against things; it is a struggle for a certain kind of power, a certain sense of strength. Perhaps that could be tapped for a qualitative effort—not in terms of the social definition of quality, but quality that might have more to do with raising the level of certain ways of perceiving the world. Going back to Greece, the competition for the best plays in the Greek theater gave rise to quality drama. And I am not so sure that some of the competition shouldn't be put into a context of raising the level of expression. But whether the schools are ready to do that sort of thing is another question, and a very difficult one, because

giving prizes feeds again into the social sense of stigma; if you don't get the prize, what happens to you?

A.C. Doesn't that go back to the statement earlier in the discussion about the lack of the qualitative in our culture today? How can a teacher or a school or education as a whole raise the level of perceiving the world, when almost everything around us seems to be trying to lower that level? This seems to me to be one of the key questions in education, and one in which the whole question of competitiveness does play a part.

M.F. Yes; if I have failed, don't I have to know that I have failed, and be able to accept it? Because if I am going to be protected from my failure, I can't learn. So to me, complete eradication of all competition is somehow abnormal.

R.L. I agree. Great strength can be built from failure; in fact, failure is a key to learning.

M.F. Absolutely; we learn from our mistakes. It has to do with what you were saying about courage.

N.R. I think it is also helpful to ask children to judge which of their efforts *they* perceive to have merit, rather than uncritically accept everything that comes from the child's hand as if it were quasi-magical. Children know what their best efforts are and whether they have achieved them or not.

R.L. There is a sort of romantic notion of childhood that tends to say that all children are beatific; but children are rough and tough, and they can deal with an enormous amount of strengthening kinds of challenges. I think challenge is the nature of competition, and what we don't do with children is to present a certain kind of challenge that lets them feel they have a role in the making of their society. We have placed children in a kind of ghetto situation where they are literally cut off from having any sense of the place of their efforts in the larger context of things. When they come to adolescence, I think that that becomes even more aggravated—that sense of displacement of the individual. What is my place? It's nothing! I am here either to be entertained or...

N.R. ...or kept off the labor market.

R.L. Yes. And I think there's an historical reason for some of that; certainly the concept of childhood is comparatively new...

M.F. The concept is new?

R.L. I mean the idea that there is a special period of life that is somehow different from other periods of life. Three or four hundred years ago, children were part of

the adult world and they grew up as such; there was not such a large distinction between the adult and the child, whereas in our society the distinction is very large. And what has happened, I think, because of that, is that the child feels left out of the ongoing process of life itself. We were speaking of initiation and ritual; the contemporary initiation rites don't often succeed in making the child feel a part of society *per se*. Maybe it goes back also to storytelling, because one of the great values that stories have is to give the child a feeling of interconnection with the larger frame of things. If I hear the story of the ugly duckling I know that I am part of the human experience; it isn't only me, it is somebody else, in another world, another land, another time. The way in which stories begin: "Long ago and far away," "once upon a time," gives that continuity between myself and the past and another culture. This is not the case with many children today; there is a sense of isolation.

A.C. It is precisely on this point, among others, that Waldorf education believes it has something to give to education generally. The "storytelling"—the re-creation of the Old Testament stories, the sagas, and creation myths, the hero tales—all give the child the background for his own being and sense of self. He does not feel isolated; indeed, he is more at home in his world because he feels this relationship with the past.

M.F. Do you think we are clear enough about what education is really for? I am going back to something that was brought up before. What are we training them to be? What is an educated person, finally?

N.R. I think we're *schooling* children to be producers and consumers. But the question is, are we *educating* them?

M.F. But if it's not enough to be producers and consumers, what is the result we are looking for?

N.R. We certainly want people to live as human persons sensitive to the world and as repositories of the highest aspirations of the world at this moment.

A.C. Not only as repositories of those aspirations but capable of putting them into practice for the good of their fellow men.

M.F. And how do they receive those values?

N.R. In the past these values were received through a series of social institutions which were very clearly defined. In the old stories there was a king, there was the prince, there were the first, second, third brothers. Lovejoy talks about the great chain of being where God is at the top of the pyramid, then the king and the serfs—everyone knows where he or she belongs and presumably glories in his or her position. That's no longer so, but there is certainly a lot to be learned from a world that's orderly in that way, even though it's not our world. We live in a world where there appears to be a minimum amount of order, or the order is not as obvious to children or to parents as the old order was; and that's one of the difficulties we're suffering from now—not only in the schools, but in the culture at large. If you don't have some kind of internalized order which somehow relates to the cultural order, you're going to have a very hard time functioning as a human person. I don't think schooling now addresses that question. It has gotten much more vocationally oriented; people are thinking not so much about being excellent human beings as they are about being medical people or lawyers or executives. You could be all these things without being an excellent human being.

M.F. Do we think enough about what it means to be an excellent human being? Do we think as much as the Native American thinks, for instance, and seems to know, about the difference between a boy and a man, or a girl and a woman? Isn't that really the important process, that a child should grow up to become a mature adult of whatever sex he was born—and there's a difference between them, whatever they say nowadays?

There's something you said, Mr. Lewis, that I'd like to come back to, in reference to this, because it surprised me a little: that not too long ago there was much less differentiation between the child and the adult. I feel that it's exactly the opposite; I feel there was a tremendous differentiation between the role of the adult and that of the child, the duties of the child, so to say, and his relationship to his parents and family and growing up. Nowadays, there is a neglect of those differentiations, such a total neglect that we have no difference between men and women; it's unisex. A child of fourteen is already on drugs; he goes into bars and gets what he wants. There isn't any marking of the age of initiation when a child comes to the age of puberty, no rites to help him understand how to go on to become an adult, or what is the difference between a child and an adult in an inner sense. I don't think that's understood now, or even looked for. It seems to me that the schools could help that. Storytelling, for instance, could help children to find their place. You say they're lost; they could be helped to find where they belong. Do you look at it in another way?

R.L. The differentiation I was making was that in Western society, for example, the concern for the child was minimal. Children were there and they were part of the society. I think what's happened now is that we've become very concerned about the children, but the concern might be misguided in some ways. In no society has there been such a quantity of things produced for children as in ours—children's games, books, television—you name it.

N.R. Nor as much rhetoric expended!

R.L. We have, at least on paper, displayed an enormous amount of concern for the child. But I think that, as we've done with education, we've overdone it. However decent some of the motives might be for all this (and maybe there are some not-so-decent, material motives) I think we have placed the child at a disadvantage. From four through twenty-one the child is effectively in school; he's isolated. And we've not made the attempt to make the school a

Margaret Flinsch

part of a societal sense of things. The school has simply become the means by which the child is "trained" to be a...

M.F. A member of the human race?

R.L. I wish it were the human race! Really, to be a member of a material society—a specialized material society. That's where the child feels isolated. By training the child, or the child-adult, in that way, what has happened is that we've overlooked the very things that we're talking about as important. And I agree with you completely; we've got to get back to a sense of the interior nature of education. There is an enormous need to be educated, to be trained, on the part of the human person, and in fact maybe even to be acknowledged and recognized. I think, going back to what you were saying, Dr. Rambusch, about air-conditioning, that there's no doubt that in the society we live in now, because of the expansion and the extraordinary complexity of knowledge, we will probably have to live with the fact of specialization. But the problem is, how do we get the airline pilot, with his incredible knowledge about using the dials of a plane, to be perceptive about the flower, to feel as much at home with the flower as he is with the gadgets in the cockpit? How do we make a union between the scientific emphasis, the direction that

society seems to be moving in, and the other sense of things which is the intuitive, the sense of drama and story? That's the real challenge.

A.C. The union comes, in time, when the human being is seen for what he is: not just a "thinking reed," but a being containing within himself the highest ideals and the basest impulses; a being who strives for the good in his increasing consciousness of self. It seems to me that the child should be educated in such a way that as he becomes an adult, he can assume his responsibilities to himself and the world in full self-consciousness, humanity, and optimism.

N.R. I think it comes down to specific adults interacting with children. As education expands, it becomes more monolithic and less reponsive, and then information becomes a much easier kind of commodity to deal in because information doesn't have the interpersonal nuances that attitudes do. It seems to me the only way to break the vicious circle is to go back and deal with individuals and humanize them so that they can then purvey these kinds of insights and concerns to children.

R.L. A kind of nurturing of intimacy.

N.R. Yes. Ideally, this would be done by parents; unhappily, we're living in a time when parenting is moving away from this rather than toward it. For whatever reason, the nurturing aspect of parenting tends more and more to be projected onto other groups. There's no reason to think parenting can't be done by surrogate parents; I'm not suggesting that that's not possible. But all the natural bonds are being loosened now. It isn't a matter of indoctrinating mothers, because those mothers for the most part, if they're educated, are not going to be home with their children; somebody else will be home with them. And if those mothers go out into their professions, very often the people who deal with their children will be less well-educated than the mothers. This is something that has never happened before.

R.L. And to make it even more complex, we're also dealing with a society where the extremes of economic stability are enormous; so that you get schools where for the children, simply because of the nature of their backgrounds, schooling is the key to survival. It is very difficult to talk in the terms we're talking about when the parents of those children are chiefly concerned about whether their child is going to be able to read and do mathematics. Maybe in a society that puts such a strong condition for survival on those basic skills, we have to say: All right, those skills are part of our reality, but let's see if we can't build within that reality the other things we have been talking about today. That's where the real solution has to come from—the teacher who can do the balancing act.

M.F. Where is the ray of hope?

R.L. I'm still looking for it!

M.F. Is there anything happening along those lines except in individual efforts?

R.L. As far as I can see, there are many individual efforts, many people who are working in these areas; but I don't think it has become a collective process. Society hasn't stood up in arms and said: This is what we want to do.

N.R. I think society is too intoxicated with its own information at this point. We're still operating as if more information were better, even though people who are frontrunning know that more information is not necessarily better. It's better for the culture but not for individuals; so that will have to change, and it will take a while. It's not easy to get funding for projects, and I think this is an index that these concerns are considered a luxury rather than a necessity now. I find that more and more teachers are disheartened at the little they feel they are able to do; they feel they have much more to give than they're being permitted to give. That's a very necessary condition for a change in program. First you start with a change of heart; then you have a change of program.

Henny-Penny

A boy sat on the wall of the farmyard, idly tossing pebbles.

He threw one and it hit a haystack.

He threw another and it hit the cow who was grazing in a nearby field.

He threw a third and it hit Henny-Penny.

"Dear me!" said Henny-Penny. "The sky is falling. A piece of it hit me on the head. Cluck-cluck, I must go and tell the King!"

So off she went.

"It would be better to sit still and lay an egg," thought the cow to herself. But she said nothing; just went on eating the meadow grass.

"Where are you off to, Henny-Penny?" called Goosey-Poosey from the pond.

"The sky is falling," said Henny-Penny. "A piece of it hit me on the head. Cluck-cluck, I am going to tell the King."

"Whatever will happen next?" said Goosey-Poosey. "I will go with you, Henny-Penny."

So off they went.

"And how will her goslings fare?" thought the cow. But she went on eating the meadow grass.

"Where are you off to, Henny-Penny?" called Cockie-Lockie from his perch on the fence.

"The sky is falling," said Henny-Penny. "We are going to tell the King."

"Good Gracious! Is nothing safe? Cock-a-doo, cock-a-doo! I will go with you, Henny-Penny."

So off they went.

"Who now will wake up the day?" thought the cow. But she went on eating the meadow grass.

"Where are you three off to?" asked Foxy-Woxy, slipping out from behind a feather of bracken.

"The sky is falling," said Henny-Penny. "A piece of it hit me on the head. We are going to tell the King."

"A proper and sensible proceeding! He should have the news without delay. I will come with you," said Foxy-Woxy, "and show you a short cut to the palace."

A short cut! How fortunate!

One by one they followed Foxy-Woxy into his dark hole underground. And, snap, snap, snap, went their three heads. They made an excellent breakfast.

"I thought it would come to that," said the cow. But she went on eating the meadow grass.

So Henny-Penny never got to tell the King the sky was falling.

But the King, because he was a king, knew it. He knew that the sky is always falling, that dust has closed Helen's eye and that the rain it raineth every day.

And the cow knew it, too, and had always known it. But she went on eating the meadow grass.

—Retold by P.L. Travers

Message from the Underworld

From the *Popul Vuh*

(One-Hunter and Seven-Hunter, the sons of the creator gods Grandfather and Grandmother, disturbed the Lords of Xibalba, the Underworld, with their ballplaying and were summoned by them to a contest. They lost and were put to death. Their sons, Hunter and Sorcerer, lived in the upper world with Grandmother. When they grew up, they found out where their fathers' playing gear was hid-

den and managed to retrieve it, with the help of the Rat and the Mosquito.)

Now the boys cleared away the jungle growth which had hidden the court where their fathers played ball, and in their turn they began to play, and once more the ground shook with their running feet and their shouts, and the lords of the Underworld were disturbed.

"Have One-Hunter and Seven-Hunter come back to life?" they asked each other. And again they sent messengers to Grandmother's house to command the boys to come and play with them. The old woman was very sad, for Hunter and Sorcerer were now her only grandsons and she didn't want them to go as their fathers had done; but she couldn't defy the Underworld.

"All right," she said to the messengers. "I will tell them to be there within seven days."

The messengers went away, and she sat down, heavy-hearted, to ponder what to do. As she was sitting there, a louse fell into her lap. She picked it up and said to it, "Little one, would you like to give a message to my grandsons? Go and tell them that the lords of the Underworld have sent for them. Tell them they must come within seven days."

So the louse set off strutting down the road, very

proud of itself for being so important. By and by it met a toad sitting beside the road.

"Where are you going?" said the toad.

"I am going to the ball court to find Hunter and Sorcerer," said the louse. "I am carrying an important message for them in my stomach."

"You aren't going very fast," said the toad; "shall I swallow you? In that way you could go much faster" — for in those days the toad could run.

"Very well," said the louse.

The toad swallowed the louse and began to walk down the road, also feeling very important and not going very fast. He had been swaggering along for quite a while when along came a snake.

"Where are you going?" said the snake.

"I am carrying an important message for Hunter and Sorcerer in my stomach," said the toad.

"You are not making very good time," said the snake. "Wouldn't it be better if I swallowed you? You could go much quicker," and he swallowed the toad and began to slide rapidly down the road; and from that day to this, the snake swallows toads for its food. Soon a hawk came flying, saw the snake and swallowed it; and from then on, the hawk has eaten snakes. The hawk flew to the ball court where Hunter and Sorcerer were playing, and perched on the wall.

"Here I am! Here is the hawk!" he screamed.

The boys seized their blowguns and shot him in the eye, and he fell to the ground.

"What do you want?" the boys asked him.

"Cure my eye and I will tell you," said the hawk.

The boys took a scrap of the rubber of their ball and touched the hawk's eye, and immediately it was cured.

"Tell us now what you came for," they said.

The hawk said nothing, but vomited the snake.

"Tell us what you came for," said the boys to the snake; and the snake vomited the toad.

"Tell us what you came for," said the boys to the toad.

"The message is in my stomach," said the toad, and tried to vomit up the louse. But only spittle came out; he couldn't bring up the louse. The boys were angry, and kicked him to make him bring it up, but he couldn't. But the kicks of Hunter and Sorcerer crippled his haunches so that since that day, toads have not been able to run but only to hop. Then the boys opened the toad's mouth and found the louse sticking to his teeth; for it had only pretended to let the toad swallow it, and really had been clinging inside his mouth. The toad had been tricked, and that is why he had to lose his power to run and has become the food of snakes; and as for what he himself eats, nobody knows.

"Speak to us," said the boys to the louse.

"Messengers have come to you from the Underworld," said the louse. "Within seven days you must come, they say, with all your playing gear. Grandmother sent me to tell you, and she is very sad and weeps."

Then the boys ran quickly to say goodbye to Grandmother and to their mother Quick.

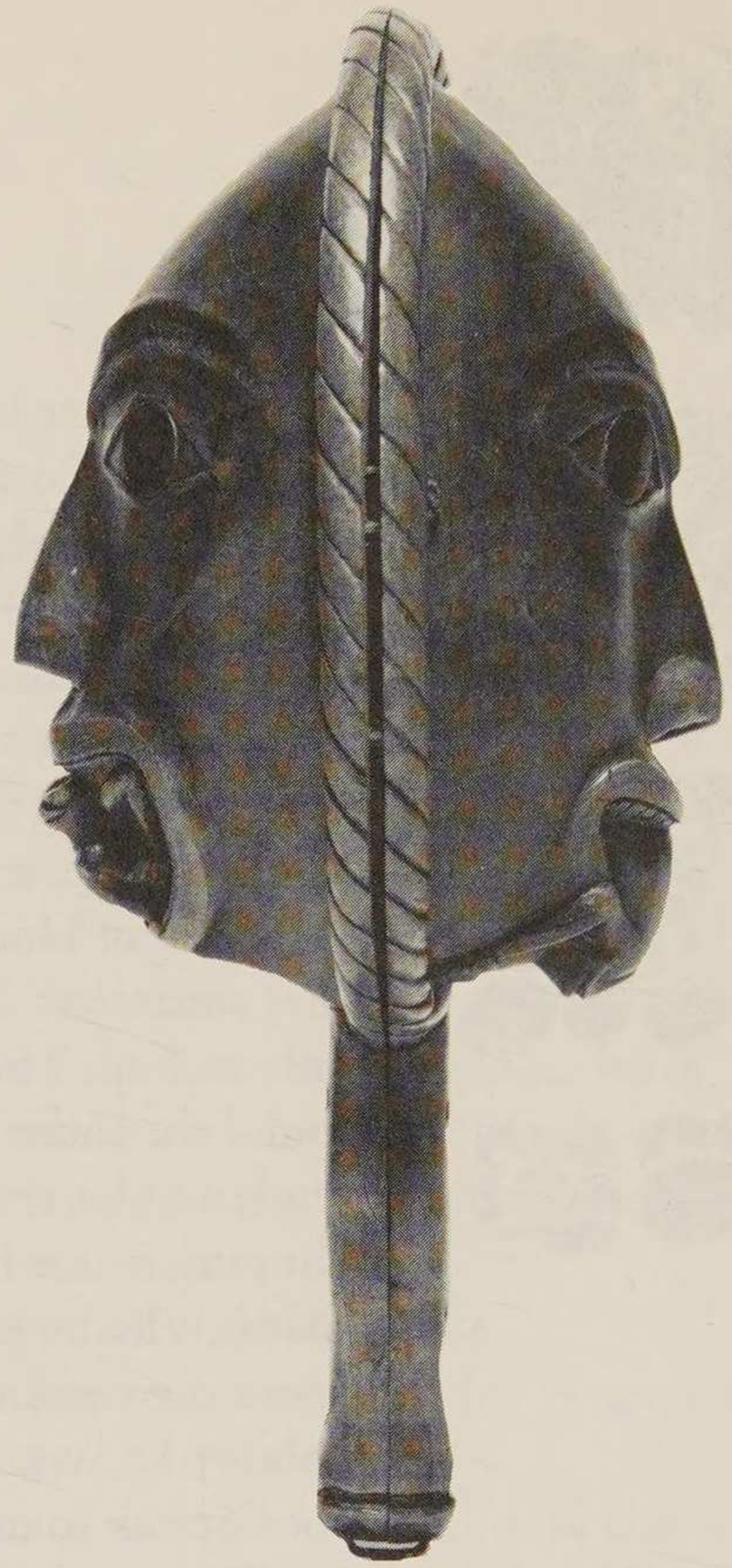
"Don't be sad," they said to them. "Look! We will each plant a reed in the center of the house. If the reeds dry up, you shall know that we are dead. But if they sprout again, it means that we are living. Thus you shall know what happens to us."

Hunter planted one reed and Sorcerer another, in the dry ground in the center of the house; then they said goodbye to Grandmother and to Quick, and taking their blowguns and their ball and playing gear, they started on their journey.

—Retold by D.M. Dooling

Mirrors and Masks

by Robin Ridington



Museums are treasure houses not only of artifacts but more fundamentally of images that were alive and meaningful to people in other times and places. In addition to preserving artifacts physically, a museum is charged with the task of bringing these images into focus so that we may see through them into the imagination of the people who created them . An anthropology museum must show us the vision of people in other worlds. It must frame its artifacts conceptually as well as physically so that we may see them as images rather than merely as foreign objects.

A museum can be a house of great wealth in both the native sense of the term as well as the financial value of its collections. Here, the work of native philosophers, artists, and even shamans, reaches out to touch our minds and subtly shift the boundaries of our perceptions. The material artifacts of their work can serve as windows into other worlds if the museum is able to frame them so that we see them with insight. From a vantage point of insight into native images, our own world will come to look different to us. The museum must show us how to transform the objects it contains into the visions these objects themselves contain. It must become a container of imaginative power just as the artifacts contain the powerful images of native people whose understanding of the very environment in which we now live was fundamentally different from our own. If it is to be successful in showing us how to

transform objects into images it must also show us how to see our world from the point of view of native imagination. The museum's wealth lies in its power to transform our way of seeing ourselves and our world. By showing us windows into other worlds we can look back on ourselves from a different point of view.

Transformation was basic to the thought of native people. In their response to changes in life-style brought about by the turn of the seasons, in their oral traditions and in their ritual theater, native people experienced a cycle of changes in their ways of seeing the world. Even in the alternation of daytime and dreaming time they recognized a regular succession of alternate visions of reality. Many of their objects were intended to bring about an experience of transformation, the change of one thing into another in our eyes. Masks opened and shut, revealing alternative images. Faces and containers carved from the great trees of their forests reflected their vision of powers beyond the realm of ordinary day to day reality. Even their wooden boxes contained images of power as well as valuable objects.

In traditional native life, shamans were visionaries gifted with seeing into other worlds. By wearing masks, they often made themselves look different from ordinary people, showing that they see differently from them. Their eyes were penetrating and ceremonial, their visions flashing across the mask's planes of transformation. The images carved and painted onto artifacts in the museum are related to the vision of shamans in having the power to transform ordinary appearances for the people who made them.

A guide capable of releasing these insightful images into our own imaginations must be in possession of the shaman's transformative vision. If he is skillful, he can carry out a transformation in the eyes of grownups. Clowns and shamans are relatives in some network of kinship that transcends the outer experiences of their respective cultures. They are both practiced in sleight of hand and in tricks of the eye. Clowns juggle balls in the air and there are stories of shamans who could even juggle eyes. A good clown must be able to keep more than one vision in the air at the same time. He or she must keep our eyes suspended like the balls that rise and fall from the clown's hands. A good shaman must be able to cast our eyes into other worlds and then retrieve them safely. Both clowns and shamans are guides, capable of leading us into different ways of seeing.

The University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology has employed a clown to take school children through a looking glass, and into the world of images it holds in suspended animation. He is Garbanzo, alias Paul Gibbons, himself an anthropologist who turned to clowning rather than submerge his sense of vision within the objectification of academic thinking. It is this clown's transformative vision combined with the anthropologist's information that Garbanzo offers visitors to the museum. Through the clown's eyes, they come to glimpse the shaman's visions mutely coded into the museum's artifacts.

Garbanzo's museum show is a program for seeing with the shaman's eyes of transformation. He shows the children how to see as well as what to see. As with any magical practice, he begins by riveting their eyes and minds on a simple single image before taking it away—and with it their breaths. This first image is the overdrawn and evidently unproblematic person of the clown himself. It is the image of Garbanzo, the clown who stands for all clowns. He needs no other name and none is sought. The children do not perceive him as wearing a mask but as a fundamental rock bottom unquestioned reality. A clown has appeared in the museum to entertain them. What more is there to say?

He begins without words, touching children in a circle with the sensation of a feather duster, of soft feathers reaching out from clown to child, a comfortable nest.

When, in its pursuit of the circle, the feathered hand comes to the body of a teacher positioned like one of the numbers on a clock's face, the children ripple with a sense of themselves in shared laughter. This touching says only one thing but it says it over and over and over until the message has completed its circuit of children and grownups without any break or crossover in its replication of the code. Through the touching, clown senses child and child senses clown; they are sharing this sensation joyously with the teachers as well. A vision of touching is exchanged with every vector of the circle through the soft rustling tickle of the clown's touching presence. The effect is intensely synesthetic, a melding of messages from skin and eye into the touch of a common vision. The world is reduced to an axis of clown and child. Teacher and child are all the same to the clown's soft touch. The clown's ability to include the teachers in his magic circle and to transform them into kids for the duration of the show is a key to the further transformations he carries out. The clown is an authoritative figure but not a figure of authority. He is automatically on the same level as his audience and this essential image of equality is communicated by his soft act of touching. He is not telling us what he knows but rather showing us what he sees. By his act of communication with us, we come to see through the clown's transformative eyes. By temporarily suspending for us the presence of an external authority, the clown opens us to the authority of our own ability to know and understand what we are seeing. But in the beginning, we only see clown and child, clown and child and the soft sensation of touching.

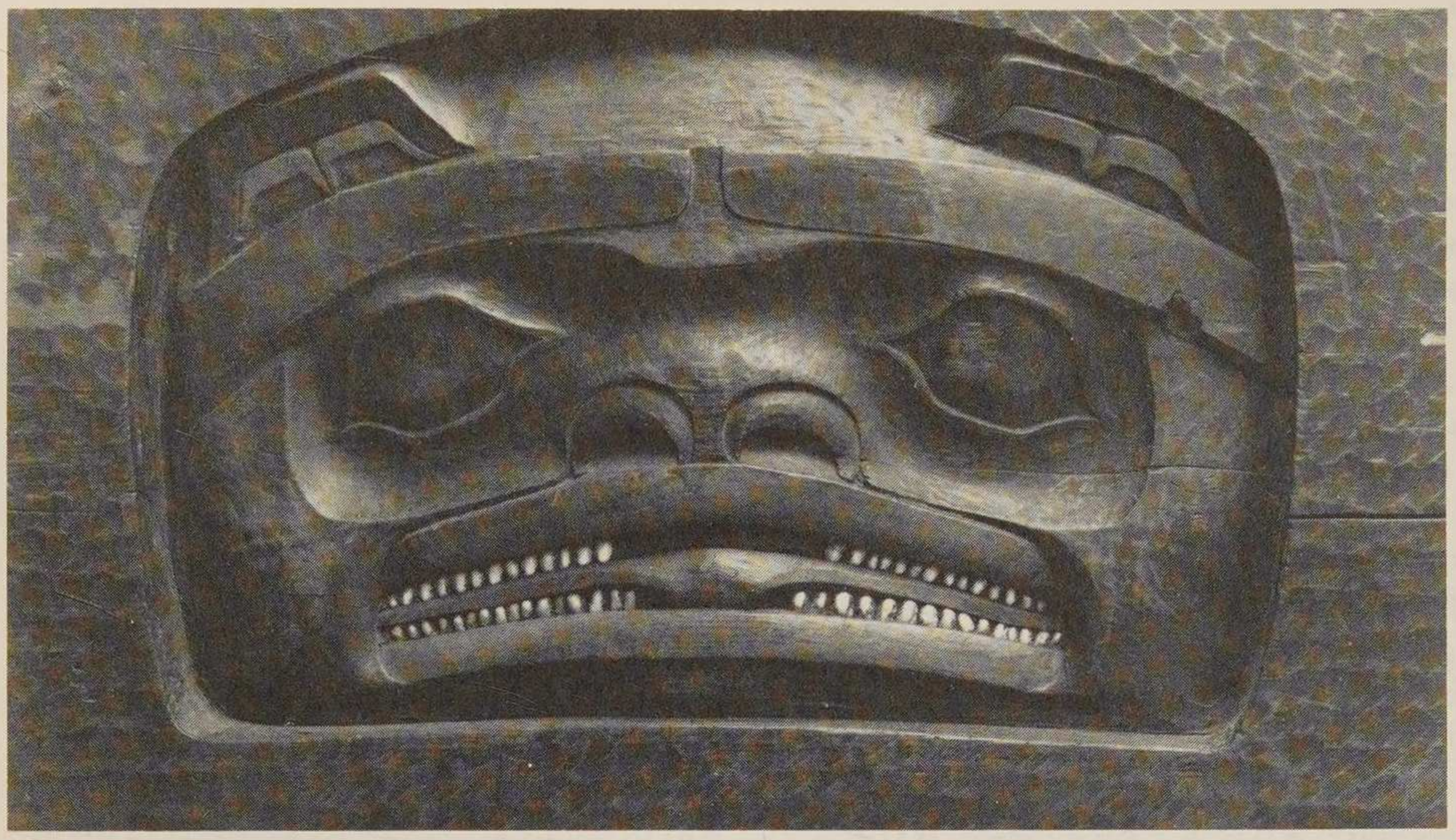
Then, just as the spell is cast, Garbanzo changes his vision and with it the spell of his audience. Suddenly, the feather duster has become an extension of his clown's nose, balanced precariously from its small end, the touching this time precise and masterfully articulate of the clown's discipline as a performer. Within the clown's vision, an object that was once a touching hand is transformed into a nose with a mind of its own. In rapid succession, the duster now becomes a chopstick and finds its mate in a magic wand with which Garbanzo tries to eat a plate of balls that somehow have materialized within his world and ours, juggling themselves into and out of our sight. Once the trick of transformation has been mastered, the changes come on thick and fast. As Garbanzo proceeds through the props of his clown's act, he plays upon the transformative potential of the circumscribed and contained environment he brought into being. The message that comes into focus within the vision of even the youngest children is that changes are now as stable as the unitary axis of clown to child was before. Perhaps even more readily than older children and adults, the preliterate children understand his presentation of a new hypothesis about the world as they understand the hypotheses they have been generating about the formation of the spoken language. The changes he takes them through are like the changes experienced in learning "went" instead of "goed." Their competence as new native speakers of an oral language gives them an understanding

of the clown's way of teaching. He provides information about which they formulate hypotheses. Then he changes the information, compelling them to alter their hypotheses, just as new information about the use of language compels children to invent new rules to explain it.

At the end of the feather duster routine, Garbanzo has invested this relatively simple object with a powerful degree of animation in the minds of his audience. It is now time to move on to the central device of both clowns and shamans. It is the mirror with which they both frame another way of seeing for the audience. The clown's mirror, like the shaman's, is different from the ones in which we ordinarily see ourselves. It is a mirror whose reflecting surface is purely imaginary, a frame with no glass. It is a purely abstract plane of transformation, a frame for whatever we are led to see through the clown's direction of our point of view. His looking glass is actually a seeing glass. At first, Garbanzo uses his mirror like the feather duster, touching child after child with his vision of them and theirs of him balanced between alternate sides of the frame, and as before, bringing both children and teachers into the secrecy of his reflective circle.

Once he has firmly established the communicative power of his mirror to pass images between clown faces and those of children, Garbanzo begins his next and critical transformation. First he frames his own clown's face firmly within the mirror's circumference. Then deliberately, he shifts his mirror's frame across to an image inertly coded into one of the museum's totem poles. The shift is sharp enough to take the breath away. At last and for the first time, we come to see that we are in a treasure house of images, each awaiting only the shaman's transformative eye and vision. At first the faces framed within his mirror's eye are human like the clown's but they look different from the faces we normally see in our mirrors because they represent a way of seeing that is different from our own. They are the faces of a different imagination penetrating the looking glass to touch and transform images we hold of ourselves. The mirror in which we had become accustomed to seeing the face of a clown now reveals to us a shaman's vision.

As we stare hypnotically at the mirror passing back and forth between the clown's face and that of the totem pole image, Garbanzo shakes us into yet another consciousness by transforming the mirror into an electronic metal detector with which he searches the ground for some hidden image like a dog sniffing for scents hidden upon an unseen trail. We follow with our eyes and minds, inviting the unimaginable to come to rest within the mirror's questing frame. At last it trails back toward a mysterious black bundle of cloth upon the ground. Garbanzo sounds the mirror detector's electronic alarm and we know that the object of our quest is soon to be revealed. Beneath the heap of cloth the clown has discovered another treasure. It is an image of great transformative power. With his mirror the clown frames this new image before our eyes. It is the face of a frog worn by the clown as a mask. After this final framing, the mirror is now abandoned in favor of a far more powerful and subtle framing device, the mask. We have now begun to enter the world of native imagination where masked dancers bring people face to



face with otherwise unseen and unforeseeable powers.

Once the mirror has been used to locate the mask hidden beneath a black cloth of mystery, it may evaporate like the chrysalis of another season, there only as a searing star of memory. Now we are set down within another world where dancing frog and bear and raven pour out of ancient wooden images and breathe their songs and medicines in strong succession even within this circle of the children of aliens. These spirits manifest themselves within the space of the museum, emerging from the bones of native peoples' handwork, long cast off but not forgotten. They freely assume the attitude of their natures, reminding us of the native culture here before us because of the guide, Garbanzo the clown, by whose hand the masks are re-created and worn into life. Frog, bear, beaver, wolf and raven dance along their trails before us for a time all masked as clowns. We take them in as a symphony. The world has changed into a dance of animated spirits, ourselves among them.

The frog dances first to us, having the honor to be the mask of masks, a grinning swimmer nourished from wings of air, disappearing and returning to mind with every change of season. Garbanzo's mask of frog is doubly transformative, like frog itself in that it is mask when the clown's face is covered and the circle of children is transformed into a pond, but becomes a ceremonial headdress when tilted up above his face. Like the frontlets worn to signify the many faces powerful within a single dancer, the frog mask headdress names its bearer and creator. This mask the questing mirror located for us is frog-like, both in its appearance and in its ability to change from one form of address to another. A shaman's name is frog and now we see the clown transformed into the hopping visitor whose presence here among us brings a cry of "ribit...ribit" rippling around the pond. Then out from underneath the heap of cloth appear the masks of raven and of bear, bringing into being growlings and rush of wind and raven's call penetrating and insistent as the breath of winter gales across the great-house smoke holes, the largest whistle of the people.

The bear is dancing in a circle rippling fear and fascination, frog leaps back and forth from one world to another and raven

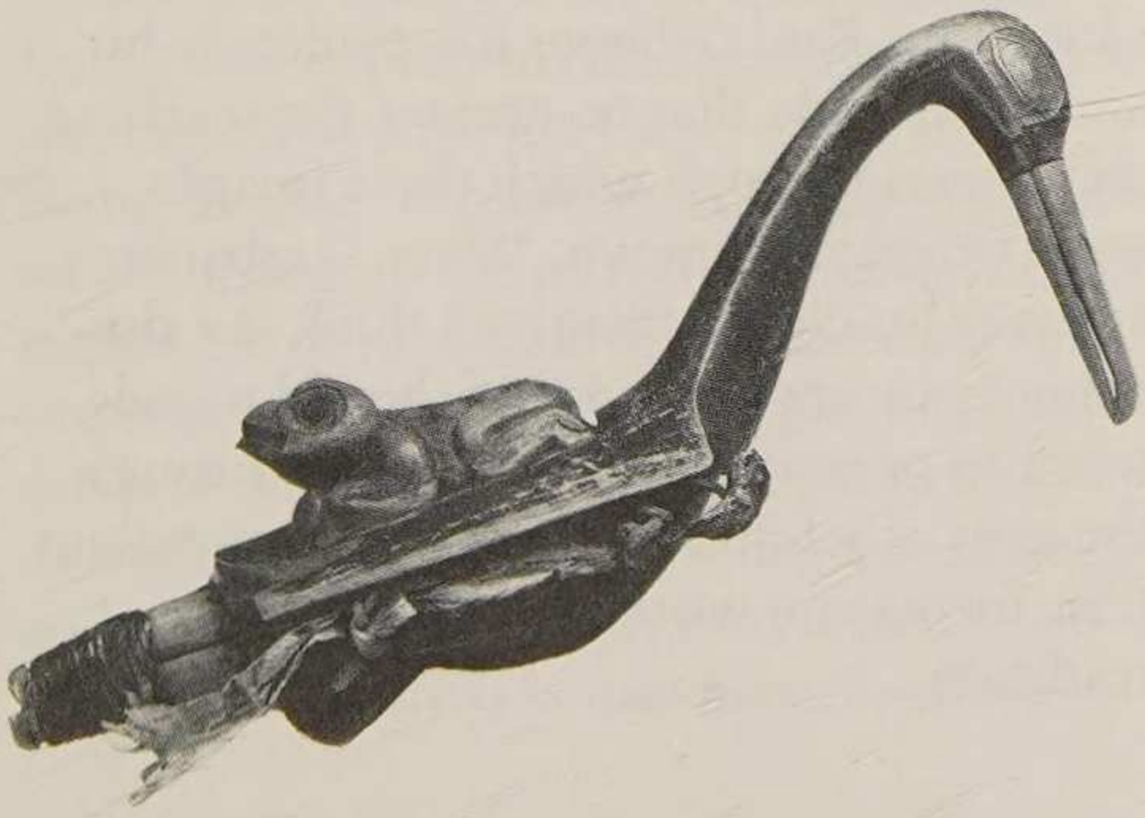
steals our eyes with his beak, flying to the very tops of totem poles from whose vantage point we laugh to see ourselves below wearing the masks of children. In taking on these masks, the clown takes up the heap of black material under which he located them, revealing it to be a robe like that of a teacher in some ancient tradition of scholarship. Just as the clown's mirror changed into the more powerful mirroring of the mask, the clown himself becomes unnecessary as the power of transformative seeing implants itself within the imagination of his audience.

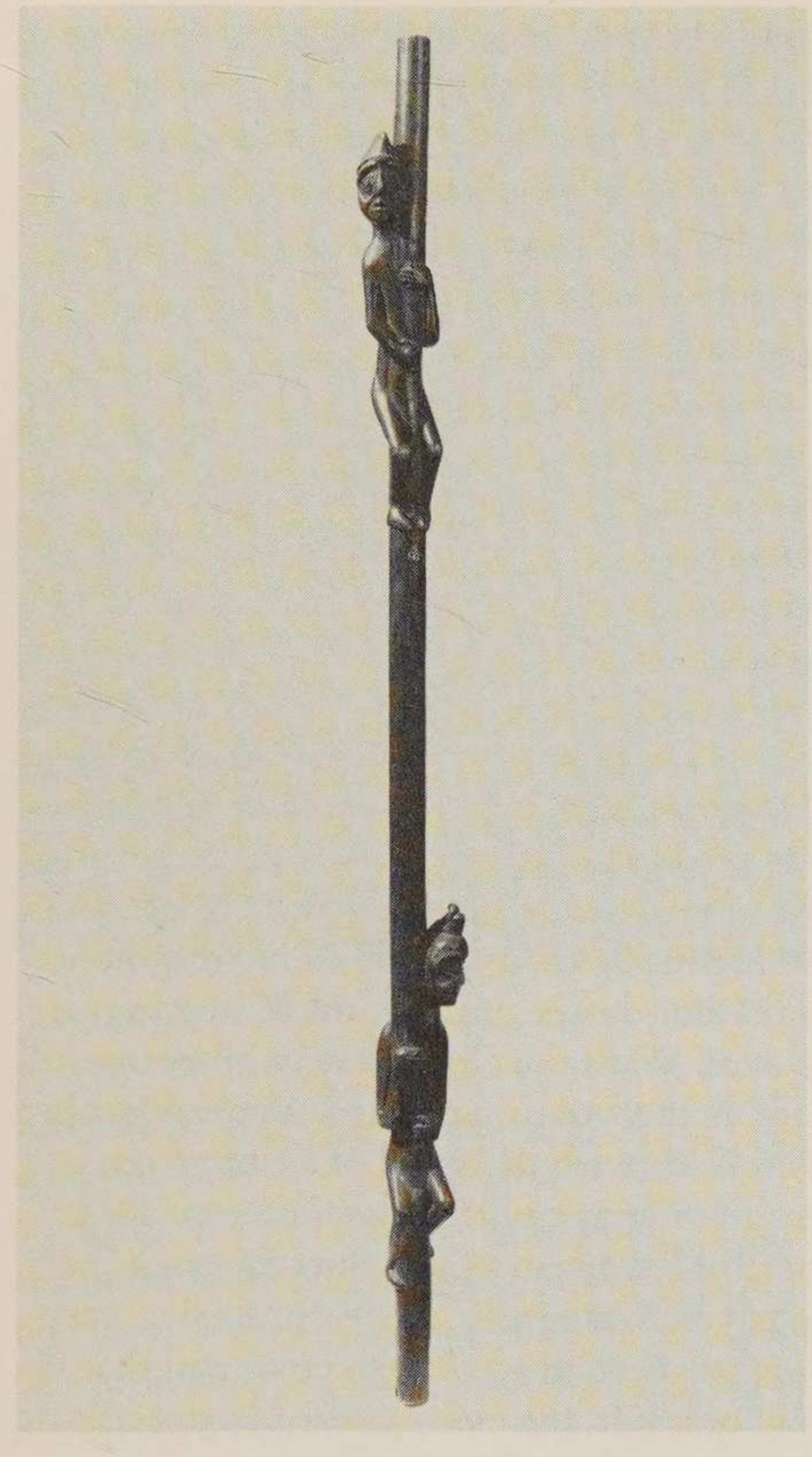
At last the dance of recognition with its mix of masking and clowning is over and the black-robed figure wearing dark glasses speaks in the words of our common language for the first time. The children are visibly startled by the transformation from mime to speech and sense that there has been a change of scene. The tall educator sees darkly through his glasses, assuming an identity of austerity tempered by wisdom. He begins by naming the clown as someone other than himself. "Garbanzo," he tells us, "has been called elsewhere in the universe and I have taken his place. All around you are the creatures that Garbanzo became. They are all carved by Indian families in honor of the animal spirits, raven, bear, frog, beaver."

Garbanzo the guide appears to have gone back with the animal spirits he became in his dancing, into the ancient woodwork from which he coaxed them to emerge. If the children want to maintain their connection to him they must seek out his image in these faces from elsewhere in the universe. The clown's way of seeing is now a point of entry into all the images in the museum. In his final act of transformation Garbanzo turns himself into all of the images we have come to know through him. Like the culture heroes of mythic tradition, he is both the changer and the changed. Like them, he has shown us how to take the world apart and put it together again. Like them, he is an actor playing many parts against the whole. Culture heroes, like clowns, are transformers. They see with the original shaman's eye. Because of his framing eye, we now see the clown's many faces. He is within the powerful images of this museum.

First the sense of touching is internalized, then the mirror, and the mask and finally the clown himself is swallowed up inside our font of memory. We remember him now as a verb, not a noun. He is a happening inside us, a way of seeing disguised as feather duster, mirror, mask, and juggler of eyes. With the clown's way of seeing still dancing before us we follow the black robe who leads with the wind of a flute from image to image within the museum. Past the Bill Reid bear that is ours to touch (but gently because it is a powerful spirit), past the two-headed serpent so powerful that if you look it in the eye you turn to stone, past Tsonoqua, the wild hairy woman of the woods who eats children, we follow this different teacher into the rotunda of the museum where another framing device is set up for us. It is the familiar frame of a TV set but the images of this "snake in the grass theater" are those of a traditional Kwakiutl story. The black-robed teacher both tells the story and steps into character to speak the parts directly through the use of masks. Beside his figure, the story's images move from frame to frame within the square face of this make-believe television console.

The story we see and hear is a "little bit scary" because it is about four brothers who are sent out by their father, the chief, on a quest for the power of Tsonoqua herself. It is only through their understanding of transformation that the quest meets with success. In the story, an old woman gives the children four gifts: a stone, oil, a cone, and goat hair. As they are pursued by the powerful Tsonoqua who eats children, they throw down their gifts in her path and





the gifts are transformed into a mountain, a lake, a bramble thicket, and a fog. With the help of their father, the chief, the boys pretend to have become the food she will eat in a great feast, but at the last moment are able to deflect her power with their superior intelligence and transform her into clouds of mosquitoes. They see with the shaman's eye of power even as they look like children who are food for Tsonokwa. The story ends with a touching, this time with the sound of mosquitoes made by a kazoo. The storyteller makes the circuit of children with his whining mosquito probe touching one after another just as the clown began so long ago with the touching of his feather duster.

The circle is now nearly complete, a set of visions framed between two touchings. The final transformation is one of ending and a new beginning. The teacher leaves his circle of paired eyes glowing with some inner source of illumination. He tells the children that many of the things mentioned in the story were part of the everyday lives of native people. Some of these things have been brought to the museum where, if the children look carefully, they will be able to discover them. As the children take their departure from the world and vision of their guide it is in the direction of a quest in which they can use their newly acquired way of seeing to recognize images that before were unknown to them. The strange objects contained by the museum can now be seen as part of the everyday reality of the people who were native to this very land in which we now live.

The clown's introduction to the artifacts and images in the Museum of Anthropology is true to the spirit of native teaching in that it creates a situation in which, without words, knowledge of the transformative vision is strengthened. Garbanzo's act of transformation is nicely balanced with the black-robed teacher's introduction to particular artifacts and images. Together clown and teacher, in the person of Paul Gibbons, take the children and their teachers out of ordinary time and space to bring about in them the experience of an entirely different world. When a graduate student, evaluating the impact of the clown's performance, interviewed groups of children weeks later, she was amazed to discover the wealth of detail with which they were able to recall their experience. This ability to retain detailed information, because of the coherence with which it is coded, is characteristic of traditional native education. Paul Gibbons has evidently hit upon a formula that re-creates the teaching techniques through which these images were originally known. When Garbanzo assumes his clown identity I think the shamans come creeping out of the old woodwork to peer at their own images through the eyes of schoolchildren. It is an excellent transformation worthy of their high tradition.

"It's Where You Put Your Eyes"

by Sam Gill

"Attention to the world's art historians!" was the message sent forth in 1885 by the Army physician Washington Matthews upon observing Navajo sandpainting.[1] He was deeply impressed with the beauty and elaboration of these paintings in sand, but that only heightened the shock of the feature he was calling to the attention of the world. A number of people work to make a sandpainting; on the same day they willfully destroy it. Matthews declared these paintings to be the most transient works of art in the world. We know that such short-lived works are not unique to the Navajo, but I don't think that Matthews' cry has been seriously considered. Perhaps that is because it would raise grave questions about the way we see and understand the nature of Native American art. Nearly a century later, I would like to consider some of the questions which echo from Matthews' message.

A description of Navajo sandpainting will give us a place to begin. It is a ritual procedure in Navajo culture which is part of certain religious ceremonials performed to cure an ailing person. The sandpainting is constructed on the floor of a ceremonial hogan and depicts mythic persons who have a connection with the cause of the illness being treated. It must be carefully replicated according to the memory of the officiating singer or medicine man. No visual record is kept by the Navajo people, but hundreds of different patterns are known to exist. The finished picture, like a costume and mask, provides a physical form in which the spiritual beings may manifest their presence. When cornmeal is sprinkled by the singer on the painting and the person for whom the ceremony is being performed, the holy people are present in the sandpainting. The rite identifies the ailing person, who walks onto and sits in the middle of the painting, with each of the holy people present in it. The identification is physically accomplished by a transfer of sands on the medicine-moistened hands of the singer, taken from the feet, legs, body and head of each of the sandpainted figures and pressing the sands on the corresponding body parts of the person sitting on the painting. When this identification is complete the sandpainting, badly defaced during the rite, is completely destroyed by the singer who scratches through it with a plumed wand. The mixed sands are removed and return to nature.

In the study of Navajo religion, I have attempted to understand the significance of sandpainting from the Navajo perspective. Each pattern is appropriate to only certain ones of the many Navajo ritual ways. Each has its own stories of origin which in turn are framed by the whole

Navajo mythology of creation. I have found that no Navajo sandpainting can be understood very well without placing it in these contexts. Every ritual performance is uniquely appropriate to the specific motivating circumstances which emphasize certain features of a given painting. While attempting to understand any sandpainting is a highly complex affair, I want to present a generalized interpretation.

In the ceremonials in which sandpainting rites play a major role, the cause of the illness being treated is attributed to impaired relationships with specific, life-giving forces in the Navajo cosmos. These life-giving forces are associated with certain holy people whose powers have become directed against the life forces of the ailing person. In the ceremonial cure, rites are enacted to appease the holy people and persuade them to remove their life-threatening influence. But this in itself does not constitute a cure, for the person must be placed again in a state of order modeled upon the creation of the Navajo world. The sandpainting rite is therefore a rite of re-creation in which the person is remade in a way corresponding to the conditions of his or her ailment. In this rite of re-creation, the sandpainting is the essential vehicle.

The perspective of the person being re-created is based on his position in the center of the sandpainting facing east, the direction of the road of life. This perspective on the painting is unique and cannot be shared by anyone. It is a view of the sandpainting from within it, being surrounded by it. Only portions of the sandpainting may be seen at any one time and these only from the center outward. To sit upon the sandpainting and to be identified with the many holy people and cosmic dimensions which are alive in it is to experience the complexity and diversity, the dynamics and the tensions of the cosmos as represented in the surrounding painting, but also to experience the one point common to all, and therefore to see and to feel the diversity and tensions.

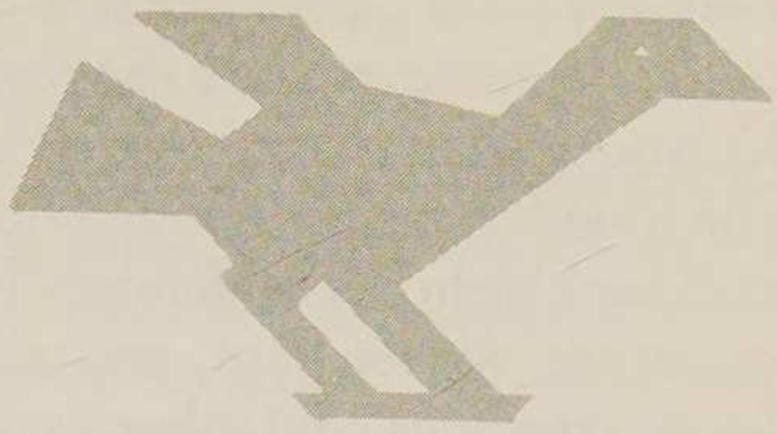
The illness suffered is an experience of the world at odds with itself, but this experience is cosmicized when the person finds that this is but an incident in the whole drama of the universe. The illness is overcome when the person realizes (in the largest sense of that term) that in some places these tensions and oppositions can be balanced in a unity that signifies good health and beauty.

But how do we understand the destruction of the painting? We must see that it is not the materials of the sandpainting, nor really even the design it takes, that is at the core of its meaning and power. Rather it is the process and use that is made of it that is important. It is a cosmic map. It is a vehicle by which re-creation, health, and beauty in life and the world are achieved. The sufferer finds his or her way to health from within the sandpainting, and by becoming a part of it it disappears and becomes a part of him or her. The picture disappears in the process of a person coming to know the fullness and unity of the reality it represents. The destruction of the picture corresponds to the dissolution of the tensions and imbalances which have given rise to the suffering.

We are now quite used to seeing Navajo sandpaintings reproduced in books and articles on varying subjects. The circle inscribed by a cross is a widely known symbol, but its universal significance seems somehow shallow to me once I have considered Navajo sandpainting, especially when I find that a fully closed border is rare and has very special significance and that double symmetry divided by a cross is but one of many general patterns.

The concerns I have are deepened as I begin to compare how we, as outsiders, view sandpaintings with how Navajos view

them, even from a physical perspective. Let me list several points of comparison. We have only representations of sandpaintings drawn or painted on paper or canvas, which we enjoy as objects of art. Navajos strictly forbid making representations of sandpaintings and they are never kept as aesthetic objects. Even the use of sandpainting figures in the sand-glue craft has not met with the approval of most Navajo singers. Sandpaintings must be destroyed by sundown on the day they are made. They are not aesthetic objects; they are instruments of a ritual process. In terms of visual perspective we always view sandpaintings from a position which would be directly above and at such a distance that the whole painting is immediately graspable with each side equidistant from our eyes. This is completely impossible for Navajos. I got a laugh when I asked some Navajos if anyone ever climbed on the roof of a hogan to look at a sandpainting through the smoke hole. When a painting six feet, or even larger, in diameter is constructed on the floor of a hogan only fifteen or twenty feet in diameter, the perspective from the periphery is always at an acute angle to the surface. A sandpainting cannot be easily seen as a whole. The most important point of view is that of the person being cured, and this person sees the painting from the inside out because he or she sits in the middle of it. These differences are basic and cannot be dismissed. The Navajo view is inseparable from the significance which sandpainting has for them.

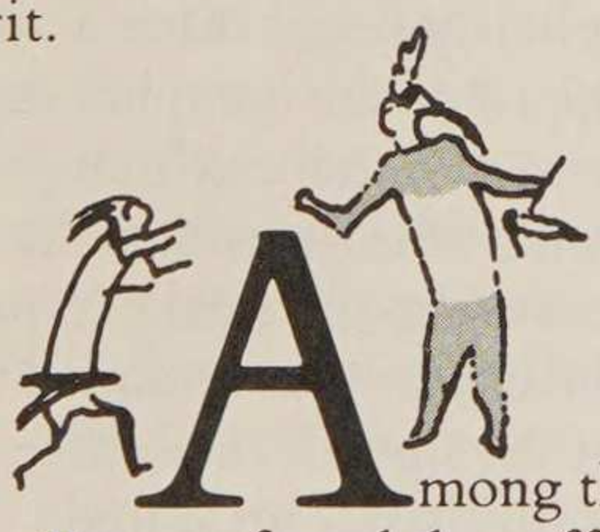


I think that we can say that for the Navajo the sandpainting is not the intended product of the creative process in which it is constructed. The product is a healthy human being or the re-creation of a well-ordered world. The sandpainting is but an instrument for this creative act, and perhaps it is the wisdom of the Navajo that it be destroyed in its use so that the obvious aesthetic value of the instrument does not supplant the human and cosmic concern which the confinement of our attention to the reproductions of sandpaintings is somewhat analogous to hanging paint-covered artists' palettes on the wall to admire, not acknowledging that these pigment-covered boards are not paintings but the means to create them. There is a certain aesthetic value in artists' palettes, I suppose, but surely most would think of this action as foolishly missing the point.

While I am delighted at the increased interest in viewing artifacts from Native American cultures as objects of art, I cannot dismiss the implications which arise from this Navajo example. Our view of Native American artifacts as aesthetic is a perspective the people themselves do not often take and sometimes explicitly reject. Our way of looking at it is stripped of the complex cultural views unique to each tribe which frame the significance of the artifacts. We often don't even know the physical perspective from which the object was intended to be seen. As a result the significance these objects have for us surely has little to do with their meaning for the people who created them.

If this were only a problem with Navajo sandpainting it might ease my concern, but I think it is in a significant measure correct for any artifact not made for sale outside the culture. I will mention some other examples to illustrate the point further.

Dr. Ted Brasser of the Museum of Man in Ontario has for some time been interested in the self-directed aspect of many objects of Native American art in the regions east of the Rocky Mountains.[2] In extensive research he found that such things as moccasins, birchbark dishes, wooden bowls, effigy pipes, drums, woven bags, snowshoes, breechclouts, pipe bags, and other items were commonly designed to be viewed from the perspective of the wearer or user. The intentionality of this he found to be confirmed by many craftsmen. Moccasins have the design on the toe oriented to be seen by the wearer, not by those looking at moccasins worn by others. Dr. Brasser found that effigy pipes were used by the Iroquoian and Algonkian peoples as aides in the concentration of thought; that is, they were instruments of meditation. The pipe bowl bore the effigy of the guardian spirit or the familiar spirit of a shaman. It was so placed on the bowl that only when the smoker put the stem in his mouth did he come face to face with the representation of the spirit. Hence through smoking the pipe, drawing the tobacco smoke through the stem while concentrating on the effigy, the smoker gained power from his guardian spirit.



Among the Sioux peoples, Brasser found that effigy pipes sometimes took the form of a sitting male, with the stem clearly representing the penis. Also among the Sioux he found self-directed effigy pipes of a bear facing the smoker which were used by shamans whose power to cure and benefit war parties was centered on the spirit of the bear. In their ritual performances these shamans personified bears, wearing fur costumes and moccasins with bear paws attached.

Examples from Brasser's research throughout the whole area east of the Rocky Mountains could be multiplied, but our point is that there is ample evidence which indicates that the meaning of the effigy pipe is inseparable from the act of smoking the pipe, from the relationship the smoker had with the spirit represented on the pipe. It is inseparable from the spiritual transfer which took place as a result of long hours of concentrated smoking of strong tobacco. The visual perspective is dictated by the use for which the pipe was intended. When not in use the pipes were not placed on display for aesthetic pleasures, but carefully wrapped in their bags.

To suggest another example, I have long been dissatisfied with our whole framework for attempting to understand Native American ritual drama. I am uneasy especially with our views of masked performances. Our words "mask," "impersonate," and even "perform" suggest that these ritual processes are somehow artificial, illusions, enactments of something else which is being imitated or represented. I have been little comforted that these performances are enactments of the events of the gods in the primal eras. I feel strongly that, rather than enactments or performances, they are the creation of a reality. I have been concerned with some aspects of this process in terms of rites of initiation (see PARABOLA Vol. III, No. 1). I would like to consider another aspect of this related to masks. It is quite common for initiation rites to include having initiates look through the eye-holes of sacred masks. I think we usually interpret this as a means of educating the initiates to the unreality of the mask; that is, we consider it as showing that what the uninitiated think is a real being is actually only a personification. But I think we may be wrong here. Again it is a matter of perspective. I would like to sug-

gest that the perspective from which one gains the fullest meaning of a mask is not finally by looking at it at all, although this is certainly an essential stage in the process. The full meaning is gained by looking through the eye-holes of the mask and seeing the effect it has on the world. That is why it is a privileged view of the initiated.

A couple of Hopi examples might give this some support. The Hopi Don Talayesva told of a time when he portrayed a Giant Kachina in the Soyoko ritual proceedings which are aimed at disciplining uninitiated children. These monstrous-appearing figures come to houses of misbehaving children and demand that the children be given them to eat. This forces the parents to bargain with the kachinas in order to save their children. The children's bad behavior costs the family a great deal, and this along with the fear aroused by the kachinas serves to encourage proper behavior. Talayesva describes a time when he wore the mask of the Giant Kachina and enacted this ritual process. He played his part very well, with great effect on the children. That night Talayesva had a dream which he describes:

> I was tired and restless, and dreamed that I was still a Giant Katchina arguing for the children. I reached out my hand to grab a child and touched him. [Touching a child is strictly warned against for fear of frightening a child to death.] The little one held up his hands to me, crying and begging to be set free. Filled with pity, I urged him to be a good child in order to free himself from the Giant Spirit. I awoke worried, with a lump in my throat, and bells ringing in my ears. Then I spat four times and decided that if I were ever the Giant again I would have a better-looking mask and speak in a softer voice.[3]

By looking through the mask from the inside out, its reality was reflected in the faces of the children.

The other example is a comment made by Emory Sekaquaptewa regarding the experience of performing as a kachina. He said:

> I am certain that the use of the mask in the kachina ceremony has more than just an aesthetic purpose. I feel that what happens to a man when he is a performer is that if he understands the essence of the kachina, when he dons the mask he loses his identity and actually becomes what he is representing.... The spiritual fulfillment of a man depends on how he is able to project himself into the spiritual world as he performs. He really doesn't perform for the third parties who form the audience. Rather the audience becomes his personal self. He tries to express to himself his own conceptions about the spiritual ideals that he sees in the kachina. He is able to do so behind the mask because he has lost his personal identity.[4]

In this description of the experience, Sekaquaptewa expresses the paradox of how one is at once enacting an impersonation and also transformed into what one is impersonating. It is described in terms of perspective. One best "sees" the reality one is oneself manifesting by wearing the mask; while looking through its eye-holes, one gains a view from the vantage of the audience so as to be able to know the reality it presents.

There is an inevitable conclusion which must be drawn from these examples. We can never appreciate some forms of Native American art without also appreciating the contexts in which they are produced. When our understanding of art is so heavily focused on objects, we tend to look in the wrong place for art. We find only the leavings or by-products of a creative process, never even realizing what is transparent to our view. We fail to grasp the inseparability of art and religion. I am reminded here of an essay by LeRoi Jones entitled "Hunting

is Not Those Heads on the Wall."[5] In it he criticizes the aspect of Western art which he identifies as a worship of art objects. He feels that the price paid for this is the failure to appreciate the creative processes of art. In his view, art objects are what is left over from the art process and they have no more to do with art than do hunting trophies have to do with the hunt. The Native American examples I have given are related to this, but the case is even stronger because the aesthetic values cannot be separated from religious processes. A point of view commonly found in Native American cultures holds that reverence for objects which we might judge as being of artistic or religious value can become a kind of tyranny which stifles the full expression of ideas and the proper performance of religious acts. These acts themselves are creative in a primary sense: they define and shape reality, they literally make life possible. In light of this we should dissociate ourselves from the notion that for Native Americans art is a noun. We might prefer to adopt the term "arting" coined by LeRoi Jones, so that we can think of the art of Native Americans as a process of creating and maintaining life-giving relationships.[6]

Each year we are dazzled by the publication of beautiful books on Native American art and by stunning museum exhibits. I read the captions to the plates: "Painted Hide, Sioux, Lent by ...," "Mask, Tlingit, from the collection of..." The more elaborate identifications give a few descriptive notes, but since they are frequently drawn from publications of collectors who have little knowledge of the ethnography, they are often in error or severely inadequate.

When I find a plate depicting an object which is from a cultural context I know something about, I close my eyes and try to picture it in its living setting. Opening my eyes and focusing again on the object propped up with plexiglass or pinned against a completely blank background, I can't help feeling a little sick. While it is true that increasing interest in the aesthetics of what we call "primitive art" has provided an increasing interest in Native American artifacts as objects of art, I think we have done just about everything possible to remove the aesthetic and meaningful elements which they bore in the setting of their creation. And having done this I don't understand how it is possible to appreciate them except in a relatively superficial way.

few—all too few—publications about the art of Native Americans overcome the sterilization process which strips the cultural contexts from the objects. Outstanding among them is Edmund Carpenter's *Eskimo Realities*. The objects which we consider as art pieces are placed in the milieu of Eskimo world view not simply through verbal description but through the visual effects achieved by this beautifully crafted book (regrettably no longer in print) which leads to the conclusion:

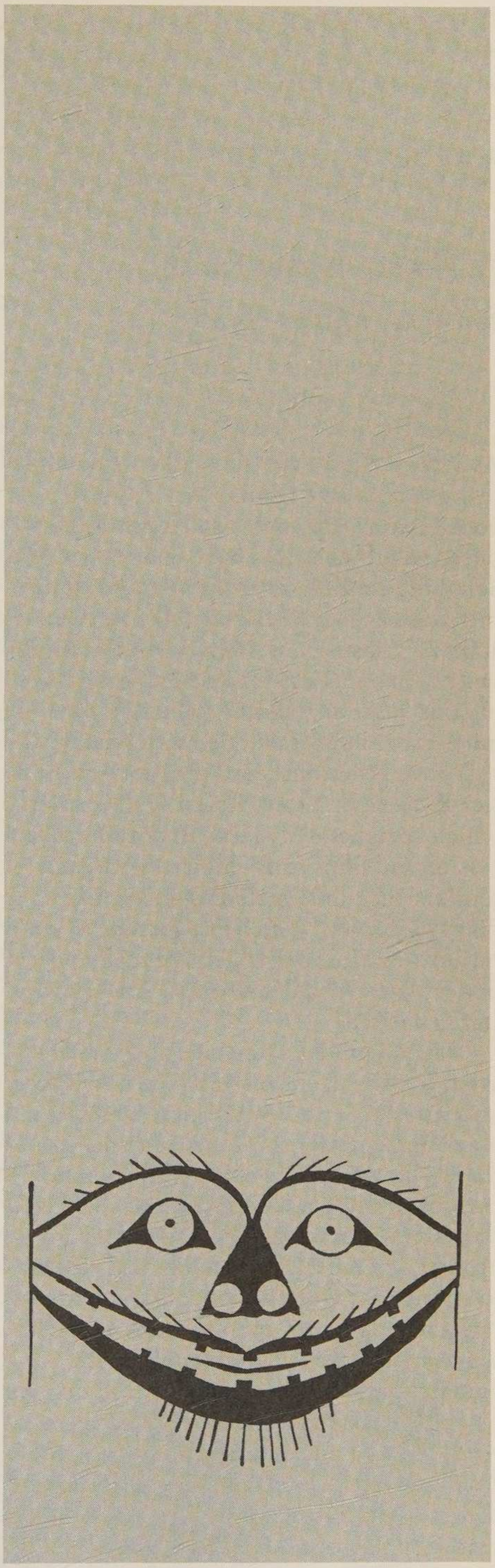
> The concept "art" is alien to the Eskimo, but the thing itself, the act of art, is certainly there, carefully implemented as a dimension of culture. It is not, however, always easy to recognize. The Eskimo don't put art into their environment: they treat the environment itself as art form.
>
> Such art is invisible: it belongs to that all-pervasive environment that eludes perception. It serves as a means of training his perception upon the environment.[7]

Carpenter's book helps demonstrate this lesson of perspective I have been talking

about. The shape of our own reality may blind us to the perspectives of others. Dominant objects from our perspective may, to the makers of those objects, be the leavings of a creative process completely invisible from where we look. What appears to us as an uninteresting background may be to others the ground against which reality gains orientation and human meaning. What we must first realize is that there are many ways of looking; then, that understanding is shaped by where you put your eyes.

Notes

1. Washington Matthews, "Mythic Dry-Paintings of the Navajos," *American Naturalist,* Volume XIX (1885), pp. 931-939.
2. Ted Brasser, "North American Indian Art for TM," in *The Religious Character of Native American Humanities* (Published privately by the Department of Religious Studies, Arizona State University, 1977), pp. 126-143.
3. Don Talayesva, *Sun Chief: An Autobiography of a Hopi Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 184.
4. Emory Sekaquaptewa, "Hopi Ceremonies," in *Seeing With a Native Eye* edited by Walter H. Capps (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 39.
5. LeRoi Jones, "Hunting is Not Those Heads on the Wall," in *Home: Social Essays* (New York: William Morrow, 1972), pp. 173-178.
6. Robert Thompson in *African Art in Motion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), ... others have shown how true this is for African art.
7. Edmund Carpenter, *Eskimo Realities* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, no longer in print), p. 202. Another sensitive book introduced by Carpenter is: Bill Holm and Bill Reid, *Indian Art of the Northwest Coast: A Dialogue on Craftsmanship and Aesthetics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975).



THE WIND OF THE MOMENT

by Wilbur Jordan Smith and Paul Jordan-Smith

As a storyteller, I am often asked where the stories I tell come from—that is, what books contain the myths and legends, fairy tales and folktales that have entertained and delighted children over the years. Despite the fact that I almost never tell a story exactly as it has been written down by someone else, I am always interested in answering this question, because behind it is a much more important one, with which parents have been concerned probably since stories were first told. And it is a question which becomes daily more important as television and films stuff children with junk food for the mind, including shows like "Sesame Street" which masquerade as culturally superior, but which are really no better than "Wonder Woman" or "Battlestar Galactica."

Faced with the same question myself—what to give an eleven-year-old boy whose taste runs to Saturday morning cartoons and week night sit-coms—I turned to my father, who was a rare-books librarian and curator of U.C.L.A.'s collection of children's books, and who managed to inspire in my brother and me a love of books and reading so strong that we never once asked him to buy a television set, in spite of the fact that we seemed to be the only family in the neighborhood without one. It's true that we listened to the radio, but we preferred to read. What, I asked him, was the secret? And how did he manage, with all the trashy children's literature around, to get us to read anything of real quality?

"The answer," he said, "is that there is no answer. With you boys, there was already a strong inclination to read, as we had a great many books in the house and no television, so the choice of entertainment was somewhat limited. I found fairly early on that the two of you had no particular taste at all—you read practically anything. The 'secret,' I suppose, lay in keeping your interest in reading alive; and to do that, I simply brought as many books as I could into the house, good and bad. Some of them were what I suppose you could call 'classics,' but I also included a number of 'plugs,' books that had no redeeming feature other than that they were fun to read: good, solid adventure stories with no literary pretensions. There had to be a discreet amount of those, otherwise there wasn't enough fun in reading. So I gathered books at random, really, a chance assortment of textbooks, juveniles, salted with a few classics—and you boys read them all.

"You got interested in the damnedest things, too, I recall. Your brother Ralph's favorite was a college textbook of bacteriology, and the two of you read an old geology text to pieces. I think you loved, of all things, the Penrod books by Booth Tarkington, incredibly dated things, but you must have read *Penrod* at least three or four times when you were about twelve or thirteen. When you were very young, of course, I read aloud to the two of you — Lang's fairy tales, and Ernest Thompson Seton's books, *Lives of the Hunted* and *Wild Animals I Have Known*. With the Lang, I sometimes got sick of reading the same stories, so I made some up and pretended to be reading them too.

"In any case, there was no science to it at all—selecting books, I mean—but it did become an art. I had to put my knowledge of literature into the wind of the moment. The knowledge came from familiarity with books of all sorts—I spent a dissolute youth prowling bookstores and reading until I was thrown out—and, of course, from handling books all day long as a librarian. And naturally I took an interest in what you boys were interested in. I suppose the 'art' was a kind of intuitive sense that developed out of knowledge and a shared interest. I'd let my eye roam over the shelves in bookstores,

and something would catch my attention because it seemed to fit with my intuition. Not a very scientific way of going about it and I wasn't necessarily right every time, but things did seem to work out in your favor.

"When I was a boy your grandfather tried to give me things that were 'good' for me, but I read pretty much whatever caught my fancy. My step-brother had a collection of about twenty of Zane Grey's novels, every one of which I read with zest. Their titles alone were as much a pleasure as the books themselves—*Lone Star Ranger, Riders of the Purple Sage*—Grey had a real ear for corny, glamorous titles. The books that Father recommended I turned down flat; Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger* was one of them, and another was Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae. Lorna Doone* was another that I couldn't get interested in, and so was *Moby Dick*. Later, I read many of these rejects with pleasure, but I was older then, and I chose them myself.

"There are, of course, a great many books which children enjoy in spite of the fact that their parents have recommended them. Young children love Howard Pyle's books—his versions of Robin Hood and of King Arthur are among the best. Kipling's *Jungle Books* also rate very high, starting about age six; and of course—although they were long after my time—P.L. Travers' *Mary Poppins* books. Girls still seem to love Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* and *The Little Princess*. Norton's *The Borrowers* is a great favorite now, too. Falkner's *Moonfleet* is very popular with boys, and some of Jack London's adventure stories. Children who have a taste for American history often love *The Oregon Trail* and *Two Years Before the Mast*—you read them avidly, I remember, and so did I, at about the same age. James Fenimore Cooper's Deerslayer books, though rather corny and formulistic, weather well with boys, and so does Jules Verne's very dated science fiction.

"A good many of these books were already in our library, if I recall, and whatever wasn't there I brought home, with, as I say, enough 'plugs' to keep your interest.

"But what was your interest, really? That's what I wanted to know; and once, I tried to keep a list of everything you read, with the idea of organizing it and trying to find out what things appealed to you boys most. Within a week, I had to give it up—the list was too long and there seemed no pattern to it at all. But I think that in general what concerned you, like most children, were ways of life, principles, and ideas about the world and man. Children seem to be much more interested in these large questions than most adults, who usually have only an academic interest at best. Children are much more vitally concerned with the way things are in the world, who they are, and why they're here.

"The books children read again and again, in whatever category you choose—adventure, magic, humor, even perhaps the 'plugs' and textbooks—endure because they raise these larger questions in a way that corresponds to the child's understanding—wouldn't you agree? The questions may not be explicit, either in the book or the child reading it, but they are there all the same. I think the books which last are those which support the child's interest in these questions and help it grow. And it seems to me that it's the job of parents to make sure that interest is never lost."

The Child as Craftsman

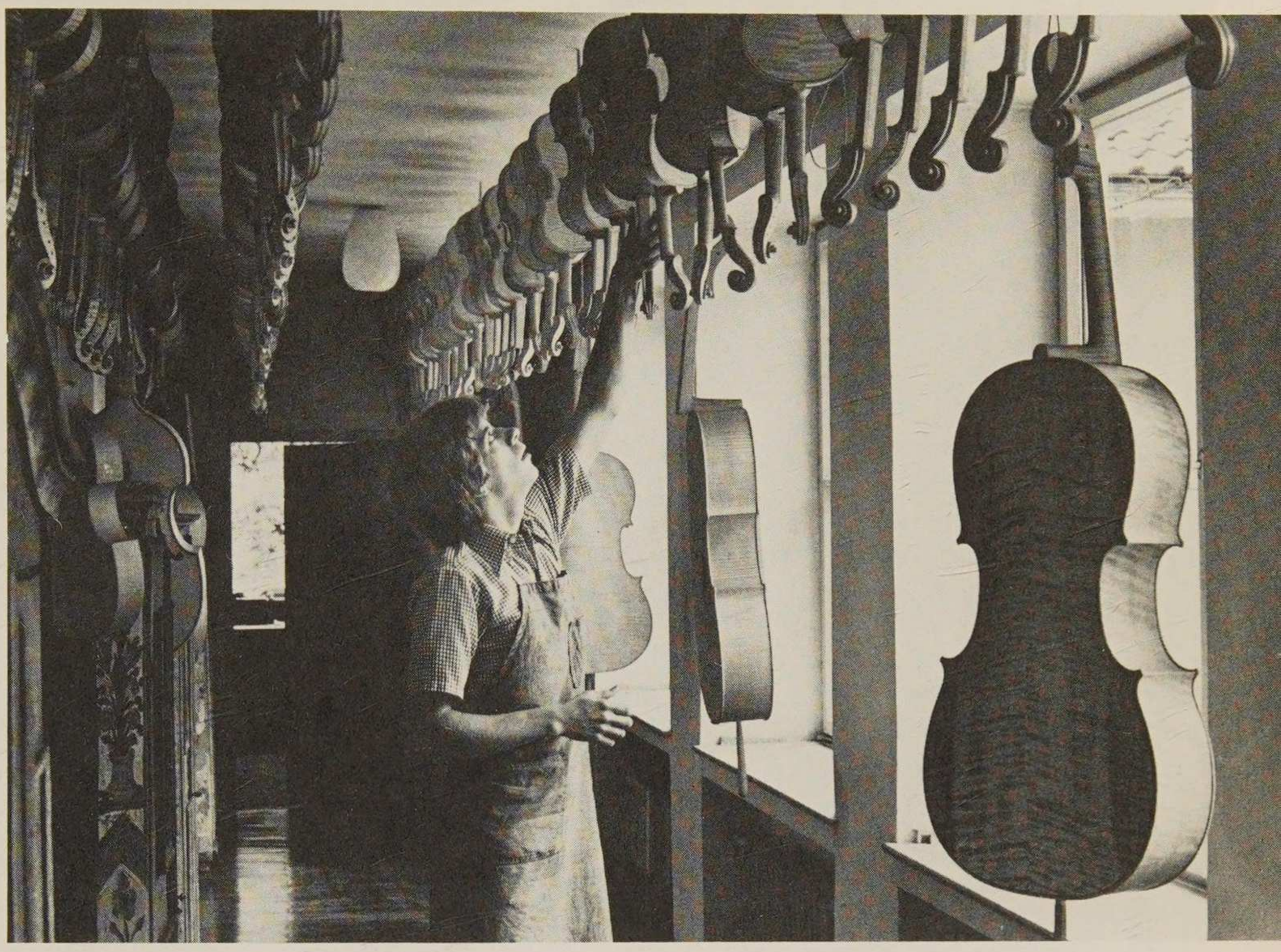
by Rosemary Jeanes

Spread Your Wings:
A series of films produced by Sunrise Films, Toronto, in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1976-79, distributed by Sunrise Films, 120 Wells Street, Toronto, Ontario MSR IP3.

Three Canadian film-makers have undertaken a remarkable project: to search out, and capture on film, children around the world serving their apprenticeship in traditional crafts. Through each half-hour episode we step into the materially different lives of a ten-year-old gold craftsman in India, a young violin maker in Germany or a little girl learning to carve gourds in Peru. Yet a common spirit runs through the films as they focus on the special relationship of pupil to master craftsman through whom the intricacies and discipline of the craft are transmitted. The activity of learning and creating is a fascinating one to witness. Concentrated faces and deft fingers tell their own stories as each moment of the process from intention to realization is followed. Visually splendid and sensitively filmed, this series brings out the individual qualities of each child absorbed by a tradition in which he becomes a vital link in the chain of its continuity.

The nine completed films are presently being shown on Canadian television. Each is narrated simply and engagingly by the child. The little girl of the Andes (Peru) tells how her traditional art began over 5,000 years ago with the Incas who developed their skill in carving on gourds to record legends and history. She now learns from her uncle who teaches her how to create patterns based on her own experiences. The scenes of her family life, the lessons with her uncle and the moments devoted to perfecting her gourd while high in the mountains watching over sheep, give a vivid impression of her world that she recreates through her fingers. Child and teacher working together, child working alone—the strong and clear determination of the young creator guides her art as her art forms her.

There are resonant moments in every film. A Kashmiri boy, Hasan, has chosen to be a carpet weaver like his grandfather. The small fingers of the child lend themselves well to the fine work of making a carpet. Designs come from the elderly master craftsman and before him from nature. To follow the complicated patterns the children learn to read and chant a special code so that their voices lead their fingers



Steve Keller, age 16, in the Mittenwald violin-making school in Germany

to the selected colors. Voices of children in their own tongue and the distinctive music of each country echo through the narration and reinforce the image of each culture.

At times in the western world one can become oblivious to the painstaking steps that go into the making of something beautiful. On the Greek island of Sifnos a young potter works with his uncle and aspires to become as fine a craftsman as his father. The way is not easy and he discovers that at first his hands will not do as he wants. Gentle encouragement emanates from his uncle, and the wise words, "When you become a true potter your hands will follow your heart." The huge stone kiln being filled with large round pots takes one back to ancient times. In a world where electric power flows so freely, it is striking to see grass being kindled to start the fire that must be fed for six hours to generate the necessary heat. We share Francesco's eager anticipation as he awaits the cooling of the great kiln to find if his work is sound. His project, a pair of clay candlesticks, is a fine offering for the little church on the hill.

One wonders when a child is first drawn towards a craft, and whether the motivation varies if the art is "in the blood" or one that has been chosen. There is a marvelous photograph of the German boy at age three clasping two pieces of wood in his tiny hands and taking the stance of a violinist. This appears quite natural, since violin making has been in the family since the time of his grandfather's own grandfather. Later as a youth he attends a special school but in the summers he returns home to help in his

Gulam Hasan, age 12, a carpet-weaver from Kashmir

father's workshop. The attentive expression on the boy's face as he taps and listens to the tone of his nearly completed violin captures the proud joy in his growing mastery.

In some cases the majesty of the craft itself emerges more forcefully than the child's involvement. One of the most beautiful films records the construction of a dhow in Zanzibar. A boy learns the techniques of building the vessel, taking his place as one of the many who contribute their energies to its realization. The sweep of the great sail spread out on the ground in the center of the village makes a spectacular backdrop for the workers stitching it into shape within the contrastingly small shadow of a palm tree. When finished the launching of the dhow is a time for celebration, for dancing and music-making, as the villagers gather to tug and roll the vessel on logs towards the sea. This film becomes another way of showing how the child is a part of something greater than himself, both at the moment of completion and through the time of tradition.

Chartres, its stained glass and the work-

shops of the Lorin family who contributed to the cathedral window, provides the setting for another film. We see a young girl beginning her apprenticeship in a situation imbued with the magic of the past. While working on her first window, she looks forward to the day when, with her teacher and colleagues, she will so harmonize with the art that "people will hear music in our windows."

A further episode takes us to a small village northwest of Tehran to a reconstruction project of the oldest mausoleum in Iran, where the traditional technique of producing blue tiles for the dome is being rediscovered. A village boy spends his summer learning to mold, color and set the tiles into the dome. The handmade and individually glazed bricks reproduce the hues of ancient times and create a subtle beauty beyond the grasp of modern technology.

Seeing all these films makes one thankful that traditional crafts are very much alive in many parts of the world even today. Especially in traditional societies the way of apprenticeship to a family craftsman is still an aspect of the regular pattern of life. Though most of us probably remember learning from an older person, perhaps a grandparent, modern society tends to push such experience into the background. Particularly in countries of high technology, children's energies are soon channeled into different kinds of achievements. For instance in Japan, a country as devoted to its traditional art forms as it is to modernization, the child learning in a traditional context is becoming a rarity as academic pressures dominate.

The inspiration drawn from the films is put into perspective when one talks with the film-makers about the fragility of the diverse traditions they are recording.

To bring the subject closer to home and to give a sense of new possibilities, one film has been made of a thirteen-year-old Florida photographer. Many of the qualities and values of traditional craft translate themselves into the context of the new world. Close family relationships, especially between daughter and father as mentor and source of encouragement, are as much a key here as the teacher/apprentice rapport is in the older crafts. The nurturing of a sense of design, the care needed in the developing process and the thrill of watching images take shape on the paper capture our attention as they do Amy's. The sense of accomplishment and the joy in creating a work of beauty draw the American girl close to her counterparts in distant lands.

These children scattered around the world are linked by a similar learning and growing experience: craft and child together form the substance of each film study. The sense of direction and the attentiveness under the watchful eye of the master craftsman mark each child and evoke in us an admiration for the innate strength of tradition. The shining faces are certainly as beautiful as the creation. Nevertheless, the films allow for the fact that such training is neither isolated nor static. Changes in the world cannot pass unheeded and new interpretations of a heritage emerge. Now the Indian child attends school while learning the gold craft with his father. In this way he will be better prepared to deal with the modern society. And the German youth delights in bluegrass music once his classical practice is completed for the day.

A viewing of these films provides a special opportunity for understanding something of these children, their lives, their crafts, their hopes. It provokes such questions as to how select a group of children these are, and whether our world will permit space and time for the continuity of such traditions. Certainly the fact is encouraging that some thirteen more films are planned, including children from China, Bali, Japan, and elsewhere. Above all, the work of film-makers Paul and Deepa Saltzman and Fred Harris captures the moment and creates a vivid impression of the scope and vitality of childhood.

Rosemary Jeanes has recently returned from a tour with the La Mama Company to the Jerusalem Festival. She is writing, studying, and teaching dance in Toronto.

CIRCLE OF STORIES

by Deena Metzger

Coming From a Great Distance
The Legend of the Baal Shem Tov Retold in Our Times. A production of the Traveling Jewish Theatre. Created and Performed by Corey Fischer and Albert Greenberg. Directed by Naomi Pollack. Theater for the New City, New York (August 30-September 6), West Coast Tour (Winter 1979-1980).

Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. So it helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside stories and stories between stories and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is the getting lost. If you're lost, you really start to look around and to listen.

Coming From a Great Distance is a theater piece about the Baal Shem Tov (the Master of the Good Name), the legendary founder of Hassidism, about whom it was said "New Light in the World." And this is a piece about the light—and also about the darkness. About the light, and the darkness it must pierce to exist; the light and the darkness which threatens it; it is about the coming of the light and its persistence.

Whether the Baal Shem Tov existed, we do not know. But his disciples existed and they told stories... stories about the Baal Shem and stories which they attributed to the Baal Shem. And to these stories, Fischer and Greenberg have added their own stories. Using masks and puppets, they adopt the archetypal personae of Rabbi and Peasant—mind and body; believer and skeptic—debating the issues of faith and vision, without heaviness of rhetoric but through the lightness and delight of poetry, music, and image. We quickly recognize that these symbolic and dramatic characters are manifestations, as well, of the exploration of the actors/writers' minds. These characters, even from their own blindness, act as guides to the more traditional stories where Greenberg and Fischer, passing the storytelling rod between them, enact the life of the Baal Shem Tov and the stories he told as well as the stories told about him—each actor in turn assuming the role of the Baal Shem as each plays, as well, the dozens of other characters: parents, prophets, rabbis, students, thieves, etc.

In the center of the play is the most humorous moment—a highly stylized vaudeville enactment of the nineteenth-century "The Thief's Play," translated by Jerome Rothenberg. And toward the end, we are visually and emotionally stunned by the flight of the Baal Shem's Soul and its retrieval by his wife's Voice as it hovers longingly at the edge of eternity.

True to mythic time, where time bisects itself, these enacted stories occur in other than linear form, are interrupted, continued, interrupted, continue again, and yet remain coherent—a marvelous feat evolving from the integrity and breadth of vision of Pollack, Fischer and Greenberg. In listening we come to know that we must travel through all the stories towards our own stories, for to find the Baal Shem alive in the stories is to find ourselves as well.

Why stories? Because stories are origins and origins are places that we walk out from. Because stories have many feet and travel several roads at once to the wisdom of the heart. And most important, because the story conjures the invisible, and the enacted story materializes vision, and after we listen we can believe what our eyes had not been ready to see.

And why travel? Because stories travel and in order for us to be with the story we must follow where it goes and we must change with it as it moves from mouth to mouth. And even as it seems that one is retelling a story night after night, still it changes in the intimacy of the telling or as the Traveling Jewish Theatre says "a person telling a story is alive in the room with the listener. The story is created between them."

And why theater? Because theater is the evidence of the vision, because theater is an ecstatic form of knowing and when language is only one road then this theater brings other roads and calls them mask and puppets, music, dance and song.

And why Jewish? The Traveling Jewish Theatre says "We have come to see the Baal Shem Tov as a radiant creation of the Jewish imagination; a channel of visionary experience which runs, sometimes underground, through all cultures, in all ages. We seek to trace the journey of the Baal Shem Tov through the world and through the heart. Along the way we discover inexhaustible sources of imagery and meaning."

Deena Metzger is a poet, novelist and playwright.

Interpreting Life

by Susan Bergholz

The Tree of Wooden Clogs
Written, directed, photographed, and edited by Ermanno Olmi. Produced by RAI and Italnoleggio. A Gaumont/Sacis/New Yorker Films Release.

The Tree of Wooden Clogs is more than excellent "cinema," it is a life experience—or as close an approach to another world and time as is possible watching a screen full of images. For the three hours the screen is lit, you are immersed in the seasons and landscape of the nineteenth-century Bergamo countryside of Italy. Virtually every frame has a painterly quality that is breathtaking, yet only as nature is breathtaking for this is not self-conscious artistry. The sounds of daily living are natural, familiar in some way: the dray horses' hooves in the mud, clogs on pebbles, the chop of an ax against a goose's neck, the songs over cornhusking and even the silence of snow—all flow together to create a distinctive and totally authentic sense of Time and Place. It is strange, and perhaps disquieting, to walk out onto twentieth-century streets.

Raised in this countryside, Ermanno Olmi creates this world through some kind of remarkable osmosis of the region's own physical integrity and his unerring respect for and attunement to nature. So faithful is he to "the eternal round" that he spent two years in making this film—in order to allow things like the growth of grandfather Anselmo's tomatoes, passing from preparation of the ground in the snow to ripened fruit in the spring, and to let the people of the region, as he says, "interpret" this story in their own way.

The story is simple (ironic that so many critics complained of "no plot"—life is plotless, I suppose, viewed from a professional critic's chair): Batisti, a peasant farmer who never even saw the school as a child, is advised by the village priest that his son Minek has been chosen by virtue of his special intelligence to go to school. Later, in order to fulfill the directive, Batisti cuts down a tree to make a new clog to replace Minek's broken one so the child can continue to walk the four miles to school each day. The landlord discovers the "theft" and dispossesses the family.

But in the course of these events, we are privileged to witness (and in a sense to be a part of) the lives of a community of families, a human condition where one still lives in a dependent and integrated relationship with the land, each other, and God. There is Batisti's family within itself, where the father's strength and care can literally be seen flowing to his children as he bathes them, dresses them for bed, warms their feet by the fire or looks and listens in wonder to the lessons Minek learns at school ("You never stop learning!"); the newly-weds whose union is sanctified by the gift of an orphan child with a dowry and fine lace who, "never mind," will now be a peasant; the widow who receives the priest's blessing because "caring for the children comes before the Mass" and who in her simple faith brings holy water to an ailing cow, reciting an incessant and anxious prayer on her pilgrimage; the priest, a sympathetic participant in these lives, who defines the very core of this community's experience: "faith today means respect for one's neighbor"; and grandfather Anselmo, carrying the wisdom and common sense of all the generations who have preceded him on the land, educating his granddaughter (a different education from Minek's) through story, fable, rhyme, nonsense song, and ritual. The circle that the entire community forms each evening in the barn around Batisti, who is

Storytelling in the barn

the storyteller, is protective and symbolic. The listeners hold on to every word—even those of the suspenseful ghost story. The rhymes and tales of wisdom illuminate their lives, transmit and celebrate the knowledge of their ancestors.

This tradition and the earth itself—this ongoing dialogue between the internal resources of man and the external resources of nature, the relationship and dependence of the old and the young, the "wretched" and the whole—educates and trains these people's souls. It trains them to face the inevitabilities of life, to discover the essential truth of things—to accept the duality: everything contains its opposite and the results of these interconnections are not finite but infinite. The seasons change and man transforms himself in response as the earth itself is transformed by man.

In the same way that being chosen lifts Minek out of a natural sequence of events, Batisti's courageous, necessary and natural act in cutting down the tree, which disturbs man's laws and the natural order, changes his life and livelihood irrevocably. And because of Batisti's integration in the community, as a hard worker, as an unofficial leader, perhaps especially as the storyteller, their lives will change as well.

Every episode contains its opposite: one feels the extraordinary sense of human dignity, the remarkable will of the human being to survive and also the injustice and gratuitousness of our acts. But Olmi is not a polemicist and the polarities remain here as they do in life in some kind of strange and amazing balance. Olmi has captured an essence: these people simply *are* and he in wisdom and respect has let them *be*. In choosing to let the people of Bergamo "interpret" their own lives, he has given them and us a sense of dignity that goes beyond social commentary. Olmi is not sentimental or romantic, and he definitely sees a world disappearing, a tragic loss of relationship with nature and each other, inevitable social change, industrialization, military and political upheaval. But through it all he sees the mystitying and beautiful endurance ot man in all of his frailty, in the face of both injustice and necessity. These people act as they must: in their care of the village idiot, in their faith in the church, in their silent obedience to the landowner, in their intense compassion and respect for each other, which reaches its ultimate expression in leaving Batisti and his family alone in their sorrow. Man is fated but he is responsible. And life is sacred. Olmi shows enormous restraint in that he, as the filmmaker, does not pass judgment, just as the peasants do not resist or bemoan their fates.

Certainly it is no longer this simple; certainly it is difficult or impossible for most of us to return to the earth or to try to re-establish a natural relationship to it; certainly in our insatiable need to know, we often forget the bases of our knowledge. But if these dignified traditions we see in other times and places are connected to the earth and we no longer are, then perhaps what we can take from Olmi's vision is that to live well and meaningfully on the earth, we have to live with our environment as we have allowed it to become. At this time, we seem alienated physically, emotionally, mythologically. We have not made the transition from that set of values we experience in this film to another. But life still flows from the roots, from the tree; it is still sacred. And we can still respect, take strength from, and be a part of it.

Susan Bergholz is Executive Editor of PARABOLA.

Songs of Gods, Songs of Humans: The Epic Tradition of the Ainu
Edited and translated by Donald L. Philippi. Princeton and Tokyo: Princeton University Press and University of Tokyo Press, 1979. Pp. xi + 417. $25.00.

Reviewed by George Quasha

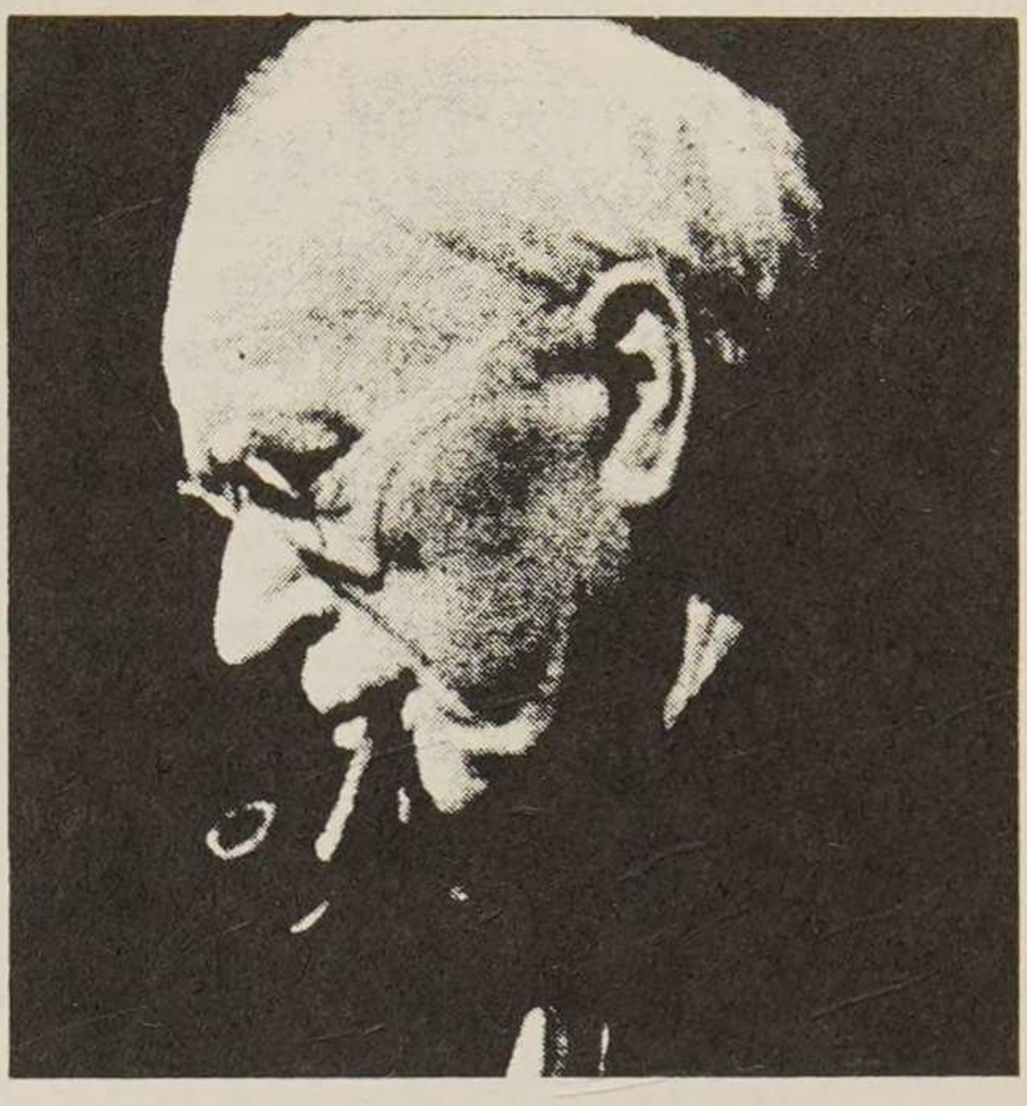
The great influx of previously lost, hidden, incomprehensible, subterranean, or otherwise occluded oral traditions is clearly and dramatically happening. In recent years the accelerated transcription, translation, and poetic transformation of oral poetries has created a new species of literary text, entering Western literature by way of our poetic experiments and renewals, and challenging, indeed altering, the standards and definitions by which we identify literary work. In America the resurgence of the long (and often non-linear) poem, the emphasis on ritual content and technique, the practice of oral performance, and the creation of a field of discourse called Ethnopoetics are some of the signs pointing to a healthy dialogue between the written and the oral. This phenomenon is very deeply American. At root it draws energy and authority from the articulate (and profoundly political) voice of Native Americans and from the great open spaces of our poetry from Whitman to Charles Olson and beyond. That the remnants of the oldest people of Japan, the Ainu, get inspiration and encouragement, as Gary Snyder tells us in his Foreword, from the American Indian movement, indicates the global power and rightness of the new oral self-consciousness.

And yet we should keep in mind that our awareness of the "oral" is still attached to the existence and availability of edited and translated texts. It is in this context that Donald L. Philippi's enormous labors have their meaning and impact. This first in a projected series of collected texts of Ainu "songs" includes an inspired preface by the poet and Zen initiate Gary Snyder and a substantial Introduction and critical apparatus along with translations by Philippi. In a carefully selected body of work consisting of thirty-three epic songs of the Hokkaido Ainu, translated from texts transcribed during the first three decades of this century, the editor seeks to represent the variety and profundity of the abundant materials available. He distinguished four main genres applicable to folklore or oral literature in general: the lyric, the epic, the dramatic, and the ritual or ceremonial. The Ainu are rich in all but the dramatic (of which none is known), with the epic "greatly overshadowing in its importance and its quantity the lyric and the ritual...."

In quantity and in psychological/mythological complexity the Ainu epics stand beside the greatest epic traditions. Special to the Ainu is the enormous number of tales spoken directly by gods (*kamui*) or god-like beings, telling of their own world and experiences among themselves and among humans (*ainu*). Philippi sees this archaic epic, boldly, and, I think, rightly, as a "form of inter-species communication in which gods or humans speak of their experiences to members of their own or other species." (Since the gods often speak in the persona of an animal, one is reminded of recent speculation on the complex language of whales and dolphins.) All of the songs are spoken in the first person and are rather intricately woven psychological revelations, linking them to a kind of meta-tradition from the Anglo-Saxon "Wanderer" and "Seafarer" to Browning, James, and Joyce. Often one doesn't know who is speaking until well into the tale, and if a being is killed his story breaks off until he wakes up in an altered state of consciousness. In one long heroic epic, "The Woman of Poi-Soya," the same

story is told from different points of view by different speakers. There is significant evidence in these epics for a process of psychic individuation involving the divine in the human and the human in the divine wherein the Self becomes, in several senses, plural.

Women play an extremely important role in both the society and the epic tradition of the Ainu. The actual singers whose transcribed texts make up this book were mainly women—and practicing shamans at that. The powerful role of women and of shamanism in the creation of these epics, along with their intricate psycho-mythology, make the publication of this book especially timely in the context of Ethnopoetics as a species of revolutionary thought. Reading them, I want to speculate about what is barely evident, the "inner story," the truth of a "hidden language" not available outside the oral transmission. Take for instance the use of oral formulas—devices used to suggest descriptions by repetition of a fixed verbal phrase. Literary critics have long regarded the high instance of such formulas as a sign of low sophistication. Philippi gives an excellent run-down of the kinds of formulas used, but says little of their function beyond aesthetic and mnemonic convenience. Again and again the epic speaker speaks of his/her life as passing "uneventfully," sewing, or whatever, with attention "focused on a single point." The impression is that life is boring until some great exploit unfolds. But suppose that these are formulas not for a tedious life but for the state of attention that makes a warrior powerful and alert: "uneventful" as something like the "doing nothing" of Zen or the "stopping the world" of Don Juan; "focused on a single point" as meditative austerity, a warrior's state of readiness. In "A Note on the Interface," Snyder's earlier statement on the Ainu accompanying a version of Philippi's "Song of a Bear" (*Alcheringa,* Vol. III, No. 1, 1977), he says that the Japanese respected the Ainu as warriors and that the Samurai may have derived from the Ainu



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(although it is probable that most of the Samurai art is Chinese in origin). We should not be surprised to find not only this local Japanese-Ainu interface, but a meta-traditional interface within international shamanism, e.g., Don Juan's Warrior and the Ainu.

The epic heroes often display both a plurality of selves and a specifically double nature as Hero and Trickster, saint and fool, culture hero and dangerously myopic blunderer. In this we might see an early type of Joyce's Ulysses/Bloom or the Hermetic/alchemical base and refined natures or the interplay of sacred and profane. Or we might see the self-distancing mystical humor noted by Henri Corbin in the works of Avicenna and Sohrawardi, especially if we consider the absurdist elements in the "dream songs" ("23. Song of the Young God Okikurmi") which turn the world on its head. Such humor makes less hazardous the precarious interaction of humans with gods. Whatever method of interpretation we use, it is clear that we are on shaky ground. But is not this challenge to interpretation one of the really important aspects of the influx of oral texts, pushing us toward some sort of "oral hermeneutics" and the full-scale re-evaluation of what it means to *read* (a word that also means, at root, to tell!).

Songs of Gods, Songs of Humans is in many ways a beautifully constructed book. Physically it is well designed and attractively made, expertly printed and conveniently laid out. For a deeply scholarly enterprise representing many years of field and textual work, it is a great pleasure to read. The translations are straight-forward narrative speech that has the virtues of good prose, and the persuasive clarity (although not quite the intense accuracy) of the post-W.C. Williams tradition. I am of two minds about the strategy of translation here (as I often am with "oral texts"): on the one hand I enjoy the directness and easy narrative quality, since these *are* stories; on the other hand, I miss the specialness of the separate language (analogue of a "separate reality"), remote, as we are told, from the common speech of the Ainu. It may be inevitable that we lose the *order* of images and verbal projections, since Ainu syntax differs extremely from our own. How much of the original dramatic time-release *within* the Ainu language might be recovered through a more radical strategy, I can't judge. Nor can I sense how much of the original timing and expressive pacing is lost—I suspect a great deal. A singer's use of timing is at the heart of his magical art of transmission. So that, sadly, the truth of the narrative process, linked as it is to image-sequence and time, is probably quite beyond us. I do not say this to fault the translator but to admit a limitation of our access. And I hasten to celebrate Mr. Philippi's production for the care, commitment, and thoroughness clearly in evidence, and for the easy accessibility that opens it to various species of readership.

George Quasha is a poet, critic, publisher, and book designer. As editor of Stony Brook *he initiated with Jerome Rothenberg the concept of ethnopoetics. His fourth book of poems,* Giving The Lily Back Her Hands, *has just been published by Station Hill Press. He founded and directs the Open Studio Print Shop, Rhinebeck and Barrytown, N.Y., a non-profit educational and productional facility for independent publishers and writers.*

Hanta Yo: An American Saga
By Ruth Beebe Hill. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1979. Pp. 834. $14.95.

Reveiwed by Joseph Epes Brown.

This tediously long novel, tracing through three generations the lives and life-ways of a Lakota band of the Plains Siouan peoples, could be dismissed as yet another romantic Indian book were it not for extravagant and misleading claims made by both publisher and author. Such claims and their implications, however, need to be critically addressed; and it would be particularly appropriate if Native American writers themselves would speak out on the misrepresentations and injustices they must suffer from an ever expanding list of similarly "authentic" Indian books.

The following claims and assumptions appear on the jacket of the book. 1) This is a "multigenerational saga which reveals *for the first time* an American Indian culture *from the inside.*" If this is the first time such inside revelation has appeared in print, then where should we assume those hundreds of serious Native American authors have been standing? Or, how should we situate the many existing texts carefully recorded in Native languages, such as those of Franz Boas in collaboration with the Dakota scholar, Ella Deloria? 2) "More than fact, more than fiction, *Hanta Yo* has the authority of a detailed ethnographic study..." In spite of a certain ambiguity in this phrase, the claim cannot but imply that the materials of the book are at least fairly authentic in ethnographic fact and in historical reality, an impression which is reinforced by the presentation on the inside cover boards of geneological charts of the two families whose lives and destinies are traced through three generations and 812 pages. Even more misleading is the detailed presentation of excerpts of the Lakota "Winter Count," 1750-1835, from which presumably these geneological records were reconstructed, and which provided, we are told, the historical structure for the novel. Of this "Winter Count" we are simply told that it was kept by Hehaka (Elk) of the Mahto Band of the Teton Sioux, and that it was "...discovered in 1865 in the possession of a Sioux Indian..." But what we are not told, at least in the context of the book, is that in fact this hide "Winter Count" was only seen by a Confederate soldier on his way West in 1865, but that the actual hide *had disappeared*! Those specialists who know the many existing "Winter Counts" would of course realize that this Count is fictive, since such accounts rarely present personal data as this one does. But why mislead the larger audience of non-specialists? 3) Further comments on the jacket of the book tell us: "A linguistic tour de force, it was translated from modern English into a now archaic Dakota-Lakota dialect [which one?]

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and then re-translated into an English based on Webster's 1806 edition and *faithfully* reflecting the Indian idiom." The efficacy of such linguistic methodology and assumptions is certainly open to question. In the first place the original English manuscript, although inspired by Ms. Hill's copious readings and personal experiences, was nevertheless a product of the imagination of a person not of the Indian's world. By straining these original English writings through the sieve of an "archaic" language, presumably now known only to Ms. Hill's Santee Sioux collaborator, and then re-translating this back into 1806 English, we are asked to believe that the final text now "...is a story Dakota in description and discernment, Dakota in precept and example, *Dakota in structure and style.*" It is noteworthy and commendable that in this process some three hundred English words were eliminated, being foreign to Indian perception. Yet the weight of the English language, and all that language bears, inevitably remains through thousands of other vocabulary items, no matter how carefully selected, and through the idioms, mood, cadence and above all, *structuring* of the English language. This labored Dakota-sifted language of the book ends up as something contrived, a gimmick which is a travesty of both the English and Dakota languages, and an insult to the intelligence of both English and Dakota speaking peoples.

Whereas it is true that a multitude of accurate and well-researched ethnographic details are abundantly incorporated into the

text, such culture-specific details, nevertheless, are often isolated out of their original and organic contexts and interrelationships to each other and reassembled piecemeal to fit the authors's preconceived story, so that the true import of their rich meanings tends to be lost or distorted. For example, when in this process fictive origins of rites or sacred forms are arbitrarily created, then particular violence is done to a sacred lore always held very carefully and accurately by the people.

For one who has even a minimal knowledge of the Lakota language, there is awareness that sacred expressions as conveyed, for example, in ritual prayer or in just a few lines of song, tend to open the hearer to a realm of *ever expanding* meaning and mystery. But in a strange and paradoxical manner the contrived and wordy language of *Hanta Yo* seems opaque, actually closing the reader off from the possibility of entering into the real and highly complex world of Lakota experience. Something of this weight and tediousness of text comes from the never ending stream of tensions of all types which flow through the entire narration, unbroken by relief of any sort, not even an Iktomi or Coyote tale. If in Lakota life, as indeed in the lives of all Native Americans, there is one quality that is pervasive, richly present within measure to all circumstances, it is the facility for humor. It is this quality of humor which relieves tension of any order, in the context of raiding or warfare, in courtship, or even at appropriate moments in the context of ritual activities. There is a mysterious quality to humor which releases tensions of the soul, leading to a detachment prerequisite to deeper possibilities of understanding and participation. It is precisely this means, this core ingredient of humor within all Lakota life and experience, which strangely has no place in *Hanta Yo*.

Another pervasive trait among the Lakota, and Native American peoples in general, is a profound sense of propriety, expressions of which are reserve and modesty in relation to things very personal, and particularly to the deeply sacred elements of life. It therefore comes as a surprise that an author so exposed to Lakota peoples and culture, and a person seeking to "clear the way" for the Indian peoples to return to the roots of their grandfathers, should risk offending these very people by incorporating into the novel lengthy and detailed descriptions of a range of intimate sexual relationships, from that which is permissible and thus most sacred, to what is illicit and clearly perverted. The realities of life are indeed made up of a totality of possibilities, but one assumes that cross-cultural respect demands a sensitive propriety and allowance for the sense of creative mystery to operate.

If the comments made in this review seem unkind, it is not from lack of respect for the quantitative research certainly accomplished by Ms. Hill, nor from lack of appreciation for attempting to come to terms with the obstacles of language in cross-cultural understanding. The criticisms and questions, rather, have been prompted by the unwarranted and misleading claims of an imaginative, idiosyncratic, a-historical piece of fiction, and thus by the assumptions of yet another non-Indian to tell the Indians' own story for them, and to presume to tell it "from within" as if it were actually a seeing through the native's own eye. If there is to be mutual understanding and respect across cultures, then representatives of such vastly differing cultures must each retain their own proper identity and integrity. If the intention to lead Indian peoples to "...appreciate as never before those grandfathers among the ancients who provided you your enduring spiritual roots..." then allow the people to speak for themselves, for they are the ones who can and do speak out of their own language, and thus from "within."

Joseph Epes Brown teaches in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Montana and collaborated with his teacher, Black Elk, on The Sacred Pipe. *He is a Consulting Editor to* PARABOLA.

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Theon of Smyrna: Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato
Translated from the 1892 Greek/French edition of J. Dupuis by Robert and Deborah Lawlor. San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1979. Pp. 174. $11.95.

Reviewed by Ernest McClain

This first English translation of Theon of Smyrna, a Platonist of the early second century A.D., is an historic event. In one thin volume we gain a summary of the Pythagorean quadrivium—arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy—which constituted the "core curriculum" of the Platonic Academy throughout the nine hundred years of its existence. Only the chapter on geometry has been lost, a casualty to Euclid's greater genius, and part of its content can be inferred from other chapters. Historians of science have already gleaned from Theon certain elements of arithmetic not found in the more famous work of Nicomachus, his contemporary, and have studied well his chapter on astronomy for its richly detailed account of the development of planetary theories after Plato. This translation, then, adds nothing to our understanding of Greek science; whatever is novel in Theon is summarized by Heath, Sarton, and other historians. But there is no modern edition of Theon in either Greek or Latin, and there has been no translation into a modern language except the 1892 French edition of Dupuis, now long out of print. The virtue of the Lawlors' translation is that it makes the whole of Theon's surviving treatise accessible again to all who want to enter into the ambience and spirit of ancient Greek thought in a truly authentic way, that is, as "undergraduate" students of a wise and patient teacher for whom Platonism was a living reality and the quadrivium the only route of access.

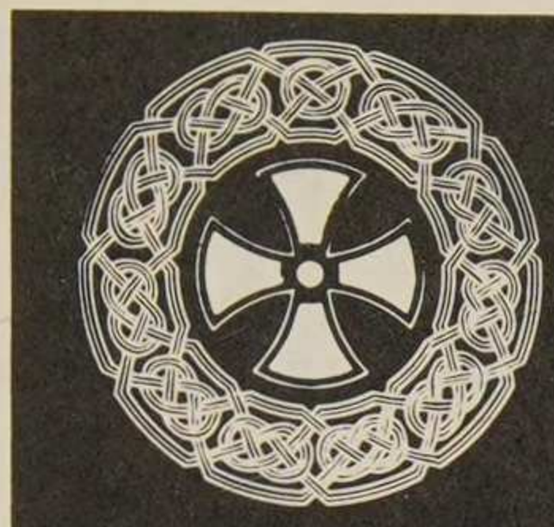
Theon's introductory chapter, "On the Usefulness of Mathematics," assembled primarily from Plato's own statements, may be the most valuable ten pages ever written about Plato. Wisdom is simply "right reason," and the function of the mathematical sciences is to discipline imagination in the ways characteristic of Pythagoreanism. Arithmetic, for instance, is the study of patterns among the natural numbers, integers, conceived as multiples of the monad, 1. Theon's concern is never with problem solving but with progressions which increase and decrease symmetrically, and with the rules which link all possible progressions into a set of continuous transformations. Great stress is given the visual-tactile representation of numbers by abstract counters (originally pebbles) so that the student learns to think and see and feel his way through the number field until all possible relations become self-evident by way of paradigmatic examples. Abstract

logic and formal proofs never intrude here. The Pythagorean imagination is concrete. The aim is freedom in changing viewpoints until one makes friends first with the multiplication table up to 10 X 10 and then, by extension, with the infinitude of numbers lying beyond. What cannot be numbered belongs to the irrational—and must not be allowed to distract reason.

Arithmetic leads naturally to music theory conceived as "ratio theory" and the doctrine of the "means," as well as the study of intervals, consonance and dissonance, and the systematic patterning of scales. Music theory is thus a further concretizing of number and a more intricate elaboration of the continuous transformations among numbers, conceived now as measures of string length or of vibration rates, their reciprocals, "numbers in motion." All of this points toward astronomy, which requires the highest level of imagination: "the astronomer is necessarily very wise" because his subject taxes "all the genius of man." Here is Theon's longest chapter, the one which gave him the greatest pleasure to write and which affords us the greatest pleasure to read. Today Pythagorean arithmetic seems heavy-handed, lacking the conveniences both of our Hindu-Arabic symbols and of our algebraic compression of detail, and Greek music theory is of minimal interest except to specialists. But nothing can hide from us Pythagorean excitement at its vision of the heavens and the "wandering" planets as one orderly system. Here in the unification of the "heavenly gods" is Greek science's great contribution to monotheism. Theon's only original contribution, he insists, is a slight emendation to Adrustus' explanation, oft-repeated, as to why two rival theories, that of eccentric loci (for the centers of planetary orbits) and of epicycles (secondary circles carried within concentric circles) turn out to be equivalent. His joy is not so much in the originality of his discovery as in his sheer pleasure in possessing alternative viewpoints—the source of intellectual freedom. He leads the student by way of careful digressions first into the consequences of mistaken hypotheses, never forgetting for a moment that philosophy is "right reason" and that even astronomy is but a prelude to thinking correctly about more important matters. Study of the harmony of the heavens leads on toward "political harmony." In the end, "only the philosopher is truly a musician," able to understand—in every domain—"the perfect union of contrary things, unity within multiplicity, even accord within discord." God is the supreme musician: "his greatest work is to reconcile with one another things which were enemies," and the business of philosophers is to become "a friend of the Deity." The Deity Theon cares about is the one symbolized in his equation, 1 X 1 = 1, the Supreme Invariant.

Platonism of Theon's kind is clearly a religion. It is a religion of reverence toward order in the universe, of faith that order dominates all things even though, as Theon shows in the case of planetary theory, men disagree as to the best way of describing some particular harmonic order. His supreme religious value is piety. "There could be [no] virtue for the human species greater or more noble than piety." But piety exaggerated drowns curiosity. Theon is contemptuous of "mathematicians" for arguing about minor contradictions, forgetting Socrates' warning that the mind is stirred to contemplation only by some kind of contradiction. From Aristotle onwards the creative, cutting edge of the Greek intellectual adventure lies outside the Academy—among those critical of Plato, and embodying Socratic dialectics in their own behavior. But Theon's lack of originality, typical of Platonism after Plato, is more than compensated by his great honesty and common sense, and it is the kind of minor disability which helps to make him an authentic guide to a powerful, conservative current in ancient thought.

I can think of no single book to rival Theon's as an introduction to Platonic Pythagoreanism. In particular, he is an antidote for the Neoplatonic effusions which soon followed and which still warp our per-



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ceptions of Plato. Purists will lament that this translation is from Dupuis' French rather than from Theon's Greek; such indirection is bound to produce some infelicities despite a serious editorial effort to consult various Greek sources. Even non-specialists will discover occasional errors—usually easily corrected because of Theon's pedantic repetitiveness. The translation owes its existence to the circumstance that Theon was one of Madame Blavatsky's primary sources of insight, and the publisher is dedicated to preserving her sources. Theon really deserved a major scholarly effort by one of the great university presses; he lives again only because of this admittedly inadequate labor of love. But the book is attractively printed and bound and generously illustrated, Dupuis' extensive notes succeed in illuminating many murky passages, and the book's worst critics are likely to be specialists willing to pay any price for it.

Ernest McClain is the author of The Myth of Invariance *and* Pythagorean Plato.

Art of the Maya
By Ferdinand Anton. New York: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1968, reissued 1979. Pp. 344. $29.95.

Reviewed by Winifred Lambrecht

In the introduction to *Art of the Maya*, Ferdinand Anton retraces the steps of a pilgrimage that he took through the areas once occupied by the Maya. Part of the story recalls the early Spanish conquerors who in their zeal to annihilate heathen images destroyed clues to the complete decoding of the Maya script. With the exception of the *Popol Vuh*, our concepts of what the Maya civilization achieved over centuries are based on architecture and artifact. It follows that Anton, as a photographer, might capture more of the cultural expression of the Maya through visual representation than through words, and his history of this Mesoamerican people is indeed sketchy. It is not by descriptive commentary but by way of the work of art that we are finally confronted with the true spirit of this enduring culture.

The Maya ritual centers hosted remarkable astronomers and mathematicians (their use of a positional notation of numbers based on the zero is the first recorded in human history). The Maya invented a numerical notation in which numbers could be written not only with dots and bars, but also by the "head variant numerals," a series of twenty highly decorative, stylized heads, expressing joy, fear, anger, peace, and other nuances of the human character. It is a testimony to the usefulness of personification and representation in the realm which we see as the separate field of science. Counting emerged not from terrestrial phenomena, but from the observation of the movements of the stars and planets, and it is the combination of the celestial and the terrestrial that Anton has captured. He says that "nothing was made without a reason, that everything had some magic or re-

ligious significance... Maya art is very rarely purely ornamental."

The photographs exhibit similar concerns. These are not arbitrary portraits dependent on the availability of light and the mechanics of the camera; they are careful revelations of the mythical and religious forces that dictated Maya life, at least around these centers where priests wielded power. At Copan and Chichen Itza we climb up stairways to face powerful god/masks. It is not the visual appreciation of those sculptured faces that Anton forces upon us, but a ritual participation, however vicarious it may be. And in case we forget the magnitude of the surroundings that these gods, warriors, dignitaries, and slaves occupied, detailed bas-reliefs, figurines, and vessels are interspersed with views of towering altars and forbidding walls. Here again, Anton has chosen his angle with the same care and thought that Maya architects used in building to persuade the gods to continue to order the universe. As they aligned altars as astronomical markers, he aligns his lens to reveal the awe and reverence of ordinary people who maintained theocracy and a hierarchical social order. Many of the gods were forces of nature: when they were neglected or abandoned, the tropical vegetation and climate soon invaded the sacred places; the order had been changed; the polychrome decorations disappeared never to be seen again. (Their magnificence is only hinted at in the few color plates included in the book.) But the structures and the faces remain to be discovered by travelers and archaeologists. It is to these prayers in stone and clay that Anton has dedicated the power of his photographs.

One wonders nevertheless how these forces of nature affected the everyday life of the Maya horticulturist, the common citizen who tilled the soil with the slash-and-burn method to provide for the family and the state, who hunted and traded with neighbors, who sometimes went to war...

In Bomanpak, the descendants of the Maya still make offerings to the temples where their ancestors once beckoned the divine powers. It is said that some of these temples are known only to them. Anton dedicates a few photographs to the contemporary descendants of the Maya as a link between the world he visited and the world whose religious dramas he brought closer to our experience—dramas perhaps eternally undecipherable.

Winifred Lambrecht is an anthropologist involved in alternative media and is a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA.

Enchanted World: Pictures to Grow Up With
By Bryan Holme. New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1979. Pp. 96. $9.95.

Fantastic Illustration and Design in Britain, 1850-1930
By Diana L. Johnson, with an essay by George P. Landow. Providence, Rhode Island: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design; New York: Cooper-Hewitt Museum, The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Design, 1979. Pp. 240. Paper $12.00.

Reviewed by Michael Patrick Hearn

For anyone to consider a work of art, particularly an illustration, out of its proper context is generally self-deceiving. One may speak of a modern example of non-objective painting as to its surface, coloring, composition, or emotional power; but to approach a piece of narrative art solely as to its technique of expression reveals little of the artist's intention in creating such an object. Such a work of art is meant to be understood, not merely observed. One may admire such a work as Giorgione's "The Tempest" for the Venetian's tender rendering of the nude nursing a child, for the lyricism of his lush landscape, or for the heightened drama of his alluring composition. However, it is the painting's elusive allegory which has secured its immortality. What does it mean? Man is rarely satisfied merely with experience; he must also know. He must understand whatever he observes whether it be the revolving of the Earth or the smile on the Mona Lisa.

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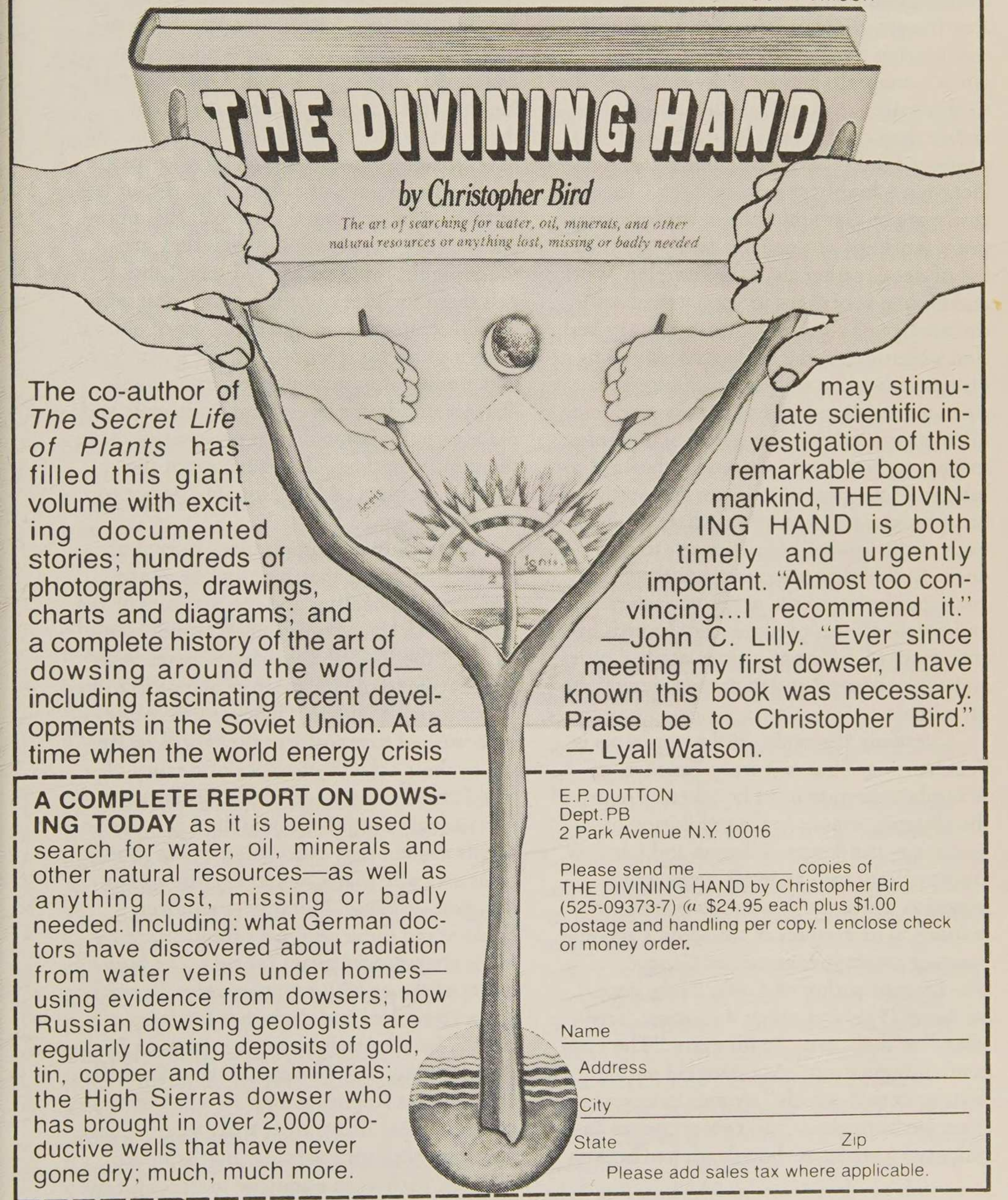

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Both Bryan Holme in *Enchanted World* and Diana Johnson in her splendid catalogue (for a recent exhibition at the Rhode Island School of Design—March 29-May 13—and the Cooper-Hewitt Museum—June 5-September 2) are critical reactionaries. Each challenges the modern fashion for discussing the arts divorced of subject matter by considering the individual charm of a work's imagery. Holme is drawn generally to the quaint and unusual; the imaginative rather than the technically innovative is preferred in his study for children. His collection is a highly personal effort. One may easily argue that few of his selections are great works of art; equally deceptive is the use of detail rather than the complete work; and Holme is perhaps too concerned with the artifice of custom and costume: try and find a blemish on the rouged cheek of one of his fair ladies. To suggest to children that painters depict only fresh flowers and fairy tales is a misleading introduction not only to the arts but also to the world they are to inherit. However, no one can deny either his refined taste or the immediate grace of each of the images he has chosen to reproduce. And Holme also makes witty visual analogies between the art of various periods and personalities: particularly clever is his treatment of different visions of ideal cities and of the natural and unnatural depictions of animals.

Certainly the realm Holme presents is "enchanting," but is it truly "enchanted"? A similar question must be asked of many of the alluring images in the exhibition of illustration and design. Johnson and Landow employ "fantasy" as an all-embracing genre, as if it were synonymous with "romance." Their essays in the show's accompanying catalogue introduce George MacDonald author of *Lilith, At the Back of the North Wind* and other Victorian "fairy tales," as their hero. In his essay "The Fantastic Imagination," MacDonald defines fantasy as that which "arouses in us sensations we have never had before, never anticipated having, as though we had broken out of our normal mode of consciousness and possessed joys not promised to our birth. It gets under our skin, hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are reopened, and in general shocks us more fully awake than we are most of our lives." Kate Greenaway's costumes are quaint, Ernest Griset's pelican and crabs whimsical, Edward Burne-Jones' knights and ladies heroic, but can all of these compositions be called "fantastic" in MacDonald's sense? "When such forms are new embodiments of old truths," the author of fairy tales explained, "we call them products of the Imagination; when they are mere inventions, however lovely, I should call them the work of the Fancy." Particularly disconcerting is the inclusion of animal drawings by E.J. Detmold; these matter-of-fact studies of natural phenomena may illustrate children's books, but their scale and place of publication do not necessarily make them imaginative. "The business of the painter," observed MacDonald, "is not to teach zoology."

The exhibition represents a period of art history rather than a definable genre. The Pre-Raphaelites and the disciples of the Arts and Crafts Movement, direct descendants of the English Romantics, offered an alternative to the technological materialism of Victorian London. They were reformers who wished to transform the world according to their eclectic theories of Beauty, derived largely from misreadings of history, particularly that of the Middle Ages. These artists argued that everything in life should be artistically made, whether it be a painting, pot, or piano. Notably in children's books were these designers free to experiment with their private fancies. The highlights of the exhibition are surely the original watercolors and drawings for fairy tales. The selections from the work of Edmund Dulac, Kay Nielsen, Arthur Rackham and Charles Robinson display what fine painters these illustrators truly were. There are numerous surprises among the other choices, such as an exquisite watercolor by the elusive Stephen Baghot de la Bere, a loose and uncharacteristic fairyland study by John Gilbert, and the sketches and hand-

lettered verses for an unpublished picture book by Walter Crane.

Diana Johnson has clearly done her homework. She has ferreted out many marvelous works from private collectors and unlikely public sources. She displays infinite patience in drawing subtle comparisons between various forms of the decorative arts. Not just pictures, but also crockery, jewelry, furniture, even wallpaper and a painted mirror, are considered as appropriate representations of this unusual period in British art. It is unlikely that such a show will ever be hung again, but fortunately the entire exhibition has been preserved in a sumptuous catalogue which reproduces every item shown at the two museums. The countless illustrations (many in full color) are supported by two intelligent essays, one on the visual tradition, the second on the literary genre within which these Victorians worked. The erudite texts aid in the interpretation of the show's seductive and often mysterious images. Certainly both *Enchanted World* and the recent exhibition of illustration and design argue that the much maligned power of Art to delight is now worthy of serious critical attention.

Michael Patrick Hearn is the author of The Annotated Wizard of Oz *and* The Annotated Christmas Carol. *He is working on a critical study of the art of illustration for children,* The Pictured World.

African Myths and Legends
Retold by Kathleen Arnott, illustrated by Joan Kiddell-Monroe. Pp. 212.
Armenian Folk-tales and Fables
Translated by Charles Downing, illustrated by William Papas. Pp. 217.
Egyptian and Sudanese Folk-tales
Retold by Helen Mitchnik, illustrated by Eric Fraser. Pp. 115.
English Fables and Fairy Stories
Retold by James Reeves, illustrated by Joan Kiddell-Monroe. Pp. 234.
Indian Tales and Legends
Retold by J.E.B. Gray, illustrated by Joan Kiddell-Monroe. Pp. 230.
Russian Tales and Legends
Retold by Charles Downing, illustrated by Joan Kiddell-Monroe. Pp. 215.
West Indian Folk-tales
Retold by Philip Sherlock, illustrated by Joan Kiddell-Monroe. Pp. 151. Oxford, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, reissued 1978-1979. $10.95 each.

Reviewed by John Cech

The Oxford Myths and Legends Series is a laudable attempt by a publisher to pass along to children a representative sampling of the world's abundant treasures of myth, fable, proverb, and folk tale. The series began in the 1950s and now includes nearly two dozen titles ranging in place of origin from Ancient Persia to the shores of the Irish Sea, and in content from Chinese "Fantasies" to Egyptian "Destiny." Most of the volumes have been recently reissued with new dust jackets and cover art, but with the contents unchanged from earlier editions. Many of the stories are constants, "classics": "The Firebird" from the Russian volume, the Anansi tales from the West Indies, "The Magic Drum" and the Hare stories from Nigeria. "Tattercoats" is here, and Baba Yaga, and the serpent princes of Armenia, where the trees can come to life and, if you look back, ensnare you, but where an apple also falls from Heaven into the lap of the listener when the story is over. Rich images. One dreams well after an evening of these.

Children are being asked to keep alive the old myths and tales in their literature because rationalized Western man has become so disconnected from the sources of myth and fairy tale—indeed, as James Hillman has pointed out, from a sense of the power of stories themselves—that when he does not try to ban these "pagan" myths and "superstitious" fairy tales altogether (as the Cotton Mathers and Sarah Trimmers, those "Guardians of Education," have been doing for centuries here and in England), he sends them off to bed in the nursery. True, some adults acknowledge and study myth and delight at the weaving of its influence in their lives and art, but unfortunately most do not. Parents and teachers want to know, pragmatically,

the "uses of enchantment" before they are willing to accept ancient tales into the curriculum or household story time. Children are the fire-keepers, and, for the most part, only adults who create for children can aid in fanning the mythic flames.

But one of the very few things that does not ring quite true about the Myths and Legends Series is the fact that the books are intended primarily for children and only secondarily, if at all, for adults as well. This definition of audience is limiting, and it is also, almost without knowing that it is, somewhat condescending. One begins to notice this when looking at the illustrations, many of which are often so amateurish that they are a distraction from, if not a distortion of, the stories. The prevailing assumption that often goes completely unchallenged in children's publishing is that children need illustrations. We are almost always happy with the results of this thinking when it leads to Andrew Lang's colored Fairy Books or, more recently, to Maurice Sendak's or Nancy Eckholm Burkert's illustrations of Grimm's tales. But what usually happens is the expeditious, careless thing; children, it is assumed, will be satisfied with just about anything that gives them an idea of what is going on in the text. Bruno Bettelheim argues, very persuasively I think, that fairy tales should stand on their own, without illustrations, thus allowing the reader to establish his own imaginative world for the tales to inhabit. The volumes of the Myths and Legends Series that I reviewed would all be more forceful, more accurate statements of the cultures that created them if the reader could meet "the storm," as Bettelheim suggests, without illustrations.

Still another assumption follows from producing these books for children, and that is that a cultural setting for the tales is not really necessary. In three of the seven volumes I reviewed, there were no introductions to the material at all. And, of the four volumes that did have introductions, only the *West Indian Folk-tales* and the *Armenian Folk-tales and Fables* had what you could call adequate or substantial prefaces to the material. In the *Russian Tales and Legends*, for example, it would be helpful to know something about the tradition of the nationalistic poems, the *Byliny*, that take up the first third of the book, especially since they are not a well-known genre of Russian oral literature like the *Skazki*. None of these groups of stories occurred in a vacuum, yet the tacit assumption seems to be, at least in half the volumes, that the modern reader needs little explanation to be at home in the tales, or else that there is little interest in these cultural details.

Yet the details are crucial. What may be categorized by the editors or retellers, say, in the West Indian volume, as a "folktale" was very probably a Carib origin myth, as in the stories of "The Coomacka-Tree" and "The Warau People Discover the Earth." The fine and important distinctions need to be made between myths, which are essentially sacred stories, and those other kinds of tales that can be changed, traded, embroidered to suit a storyteller's purposes. If these differences are not noted, what may be lost to children (indeed, to all of us) is an awareness of the degrees of significance that stories have, and thus the place a story holds in its culture.

When the scholarship, the selection of the tales themselves, and the quality of the retellings or translations all gel, as they do in the West Indian and Armenian volumes in particular, the effects are wonderful. In the Armenian collection, for instance, the voice of the storyteller is often present in the tale, breaking in at key points to caution the listener—"do not say anything!"—lest he break the suspense and guess the outcome. The reason for this sense of immediacy is due to the fact that the translations are based on field recordings of local storytellers—water-mill keepers, vine-dressers, and occasionally someone "of whom nothing but his name is known." The tales bear the marks of the individual teller—flamboyant, biting, or witty. In "The Fair Maiden Sunbeam and the Serpent Prince," the King's counselors cannot decide what to

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feed the prince, a serpent who grows and grows and becomes a dragon. Avetis Grigorian, the storyteller, goes on, drolly:

> For whatever they set before him, he would touch none of it. He roared and roared, crying for food, until the walls of the palace were in danger of collapsing.
>
> One day the chamberlain's daughter came to look at the young dragon, and as soon as his eye fell on her, he seized her by the arm and gobbled her up. Then everybody knew what he wanted to eat.

Because we have the feeling of a person actively speaking to us, our attention is heightened, riveted—we have an Armenian uncle in the room, the kind who is never at a loss for words or good advice, especially to chide us: "Spit and wipe your nose with your fingers a thousand times, but once in your life set a good example."

Despite my reservations about some of the individual volumes in the Myths and Legends Series, I did feel positively about the series as a whole. My criticisms are more those of frustration, because one sees how good this series could be throughout if more attention were paid in every volume to the choice and presentation of the tales. We live at a time when the great myths are crumbling or have already collapsed, as Joseph Campbell has remarked. It is heartening to have a series like this for older children and the adults who are still listening. It reminds us all not to let the fire go out.

John Cech teaches in the Department of English at the University of Florida and is the children's book reviewer for The Gainesville Sun.

Seasons of Woman: Song, Poetry, Ritual, Prayer, Myth, Story
Edited by Penelope Washbourn. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979. Pp. 176. $7.95.

Reviewed by Ann Warren Turner

Basic to Penelope Washbourn's books, *Becoming Woman: The Quest for Wholeness in Female Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) and the recently published *Seasons of Woman*, is a strong belief in the spirituality of women and its expression in the various life changes and cycles. Central to both books is a vivid celebration of women, their bodily transformations, and their profound strength as the givers of life.

Seasons of Woman is a collection of poems, songs, parts of folk tales, autobiographical selections, chants and rites of women across many cultures and times, ranging from a fourteenth century B.C. African love poem to modern American women writers. The impetus for the collection came from Ms. Washbourn's earlier book, *Becoming Woman*. As a theologian, she searched for the rituals in Western culture that would restore a "sense of worship in the many seasons of life," and was drawn to other cultures that accomplished this.

Seasons of Woman is divided into eight sections representing the definitive stages in a woman's life. Throughout, a fine though sparse collection of photographs complement and augment the poetry and prose. The first two sections, "Girl-child" and "Passage into Maturity," illustrate one of Penelope Washbourn's firm convictions—that other cultures knew how to celebrate and define the events in a girl's and a woman's life. What is implicit here is explicit in *Becoming Woman*—Western culture has lost the ability to mark with women and for women the significant changes in their lives. The American Indian ceremonies to welcome the birth of a girl and later, celebrate her first menstruation, remind us of this; where are our birth songs, our chants to bring health and skills to a girl child? How do we celebrate that astonishing change when a girl becomes woman?

In the third section, "The Wedding," the selections show women waiting to be taken to a stranger's home or experiencing the tearing loss of leaving a father. The Greek poet Sappho's poem on the violence of defloration is exceptional, ending with an image of "A hyacinth in/ the mountains, trampled/ by shepherds until/ only a purple stain/ remains on the ground."

The fourth and fifth sections on "Married Life" and "Passionate Women" contain several exquisite Chinese poems on separation from a husband. The force of love and rejection, as well as sexual passion, is well represented in folksong, poems and modern selections. The Chinese poet Huang O speaks of passion with "...and every night/You can make blossom in me/ Flowers of fire."

As women share their experiences of giving birth, being mothers, and growing old, we, as readers, have a chance to corroborate and extend our own experience. The book is a mirror we can look in and say, "Yes—I look like that; I remember the weight of pregnancy that way." And at the close of the book, in "The Changing Seasons," we can feel death passing by a New Mexico woman and see Colette's aged mother defying all promises to be "good," proudly sawing wood in an early wet morning.

Occasionally the source credits are confusing and one has to turn to the "Notes" section to clarify them. A bibliography would have enlarged the book and given us clear indications of where to go for further reading. For that is one of the values of the collection—it leads one to other works by the women represented. At times the balance of the cultures seems weighted with the American Indian experience, while some other cultures, European and Australian Aborigine, for instance, were either under-represented or not included. Sometimes this reviewer was uncomfortable with Ms. Washbourn's definition of a woman's spirituality. While understanding the need to see the sacred in the everyday, the following statement seems too broad, "Woman's religious events (among others) are those that concern her own bodily experience as a

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woman." There is a sweeping quality, a lack of definition that is unfortunate, especially as the concept is central to both Ms. Washbourn's books.

However, these are not weighty objections, and *Seasons of Woman* is hard to put down. It is an intelligent, comprehensive, and powerful collection of women's voices —a fine gift for others or yourself. It is for dipping into of an evening or for reading straight through. At the end, from the varied and extraordinary voices of women as they lament and take joy in their lives, we learn to celebrate ourselves as women and value the remarkable body that transforms itself and us in countless ways.

Ann Warren Turner is the author of Vultures *(David McKay, 1973),* Houses for the Dead *(McKay, 1976),* Rituals of Birth *(McKay, 1978), and a fantasy story in* Shape Shifters *(Seabury Press, 1978).*

Maria
By Richard L. Spivey. Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Press, 1979. Pp. xxi + 137. $27.50.

Reviewed by Jay Lindsay

Our culture and within it our creative arts are woven and inseparable. Everything in our life is all-inclusive.

—Popovi Da

As Popovi Da, son of Maria Martinez and one of the outstanding artists of the San Ildefonso potters in his own right, once remarked, Americans have written far too much about native Indians without capturing the feeling of what it is to be Indian. Richard Spivey's beautifully recorded book *Maria* documents the life and art of the famous San Ildefonso potter, Maria Martinez, and in so doing conveys a sense of the Pueblo Indian's feeling for life.

The story of Maria Martinez is the story of the San Ildefonso potters of New Mexico. By the turn of the twentieth century, the pottery making practices of the Indians, once the creative symbol of their way of life, had nearly vanished. Just as the culture was on the verge of losing the age-old tradition, Maria Martinez and her husband Julian revitalized the dying art form.

Tradition is not something that is merely repeated—rather it evolves slowly. Maria and Julian virtually rediscovered the Pueblo pottery tradition together, Maria building by hand the clay forms, Julian de-

signing and decorating the ware with traditional motifs. In 1919 they experimented with matte painting on a polished surface, producing the black-on-black ware they're known for. Recently archaeological excavations in southwest New Mexico have yielded ancient sherds bearing evidence of similar techniques.

Although I have never met this woman, I spent several haunting days in Chaco Canyon, the site of the largest Pueblo ruins in America. I roamed the awesome ruins, through buildings of over two thousand rooms, through sacred kivas, and wondered how they developed their unique sense of form. I came upon a mound of pottery sherds, each individually decorated with an unending variety of lines, zigzags, and abstract shapes. It was then I realized that these seemingly abstract forms represented the sun, the heat of the desert, the wind, birds and insects, and desert reptiles, which all make up the motifs that are uniquely Pueblo, a pottery style that grew in relative isolation, developed from one generation to another over a period of one thousand years. This symbolism might have been lost, for it is perpetuated only through memory and fragments of pottery.

Maria not only developed her own work, but shared the techniques of hand built pottery with others as well. She was uncompromising in her quest for perfection of form, relying solely on local clays and primitive tools. Each pot was carefully coil built, scraped and smoothed, then decorated by her husband, or later her son. Finally the pots were burnished by rubbing for hours with a small round stone. The perfection of Maria's pieces was due to the combination of her expertise in the difficult burnishing process and Julian's masterful painted decorations. Her pots have a quality that is their own; they are so simple, yet so much humanity comes out of these pieces. It is as though a curve in Maria's pots is the essence of a curve.

Spivey goes beyond his intention to present the full range of Maria's art. His beautifully photographed book illustrates her art and shows the importance of the Pueblo culture and symbols that influence her art form. A second text of quotes from Maria give the book a fresh and truly Indian viewpoint, which is so often lacking in this type of book.

Jay Lindsay is a professional potter and lives in Garrison, New York.

Primal Myths: Creating the World
By Barbara C. Sproul. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979. Pp. 384. $8.95.

Reviewed by Anne Bevan

An anthology devoted to myths of creation has long been needed, and the selection in this volume is first-rate. Covering a wide historical and geographical range, it includes some stories that will be familiar to most readers, such as the account of creation in *Genesis* and the *Gospel of John*. The juxtaposition of these stories with less familiar myths from the ancient Near East, India, Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific Islands, to name only a few of the traditions represented, makes this book a valuable introduction to the variegated ways in which humanity has conceived and remembered its relation to the sacred origin and core of existence.

Particularly interesting are the relatively recent myths found in this volume, as, for example, a contemporary story by a black African which records the encounter between the black and white races. In the beginning, the Creator gave various gifts to the first creatures, among whom are the white man and the black man. The white man withdraws from the fire given by the Creator, but treasures the gift of the book; the black man neglects the book but tends the fire. In the context of a myth of creation, this story suggests deep levels of meaning in the contemporary relation between white and black in Africa; and if one looks again, one finds it offers insight on quite different levels as well. And this, of course, is a characteristic of all myths; it

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Black Elk's account of the spiritual significance of his life and the life of his people has come to be known as "a great religious classic." "Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* and *When the Tree Flowered,* and *The Sacred Pipe* by Joseph Epes Brown, the basic works of the Black Elk theological tradition, now bid fair to become the canon or at least the central core of a North American Indian theological canon which will someday challenge the Eastern and Western traditions as a way of looking at the world."—Vine Deloria, Jr.

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makes them not only delightful but also as valuable today as they have ever been.

For all the splendor of the myths themselves, the commentary by Dr. Sproul is unfortunately at times contradictory. She asserts that above all, creation myths express a culture's "understanding of and awe before the absolute reality," and so transmit attitudes and values grounded in a sense of the sacred (or absolute); but at other points she seems to claim that any attitude, even if it is not so grounded, represents a "myth." The attitude of caution taught by a mother when she tells her child to watch out for a sharp piece of glass is an example of a myth, according to Dr. Sproul. What is even more astonishing, she uses the word to refer also to the attitude of superiority over other creatures that allows us "to set ourselves up as such and use them ruthlessly."

It is misleading to attempt, as Dr. Sproul does in her introduction, an explanation of myths by equating them with attitudes that are literal or superstitious. The attitude of ruthless superiority, for example, is not a myth, but a superstition, a fragmentary view "left" from a true myth. If some creation myths, including the story in *Genesis* and the *Koran*, proclaim man's superiority over other creatures, they do so in the context of God's superiority over man. Man's superiority thus entails a responsibility towards other creatures and towards God, not license to exploit. When our relation to God, or the absolute, is forgotten—when we forget the myths—we become materialists and literalists, superstitious creatures. Having lost access to other levels of meaning necessary for a sense of values, the materialist is ruthless and exploitative. It is quite illogical to regard ruthlessness,

exploitation, greed, etc., as attitudes representing certain values, or as myths; on the contrary, they arise when values are lost and when myths are shattered by the incomplete understanding of superstitious, i.e., literalist, thinking.

In her discussion of symbol, Dr. Sproul expresses a similar confusion. The word "symbol" is used as if it meant "sign." We are encouraged to "translate" symbols, but what is here called translation amounts to replacement. The modern scientific view of the evolution of the world is a "translation" of the *Genesis* creation story. The "six days" of creation are "symbolic"—which seems to mean that they may be regarded as figures of speech without coherent meaning. If we are entitled to "translate," i.e., replace myths with scientific theories whenever the myths' symbolic language escapes our understanding, it seems superfluous to read the myths in the first place.

Symbols, like myths, are essentially expressions of another order of reality, another dimension of experience beyond, but not contradictory to, the material and literal. Symbols and myths include the literal, presenting it, however, in the light of its relation to a higher or absolute reality. A materialistic view is itself a superstition, a fragment of the view given by myths and symbols, and so cannot possibly be an adequate mode for their translation.

The interest in myths and symbols increasingly evident in our time is a sign of our growing awareness of the need for other dimensions of meaning beyond the material and literal. If we confuse myths with literal superstitions, we are mixing vinegar with wine. We need to be clear about what we mean by symbol and myth if we wish to understand and satisfy the deeper thirst we at last begin to feel more strongly today. An awareness of this thirst is represented, and answered, by the very appearance of this truly excellent collection of myths. It seems a pity that Dr. Sproul does not appear to be clear about the value of her own collection.

Anne Bevan writes on myth and astrology and is working towards an advanced degree in religion at Syracuse University.

The Tall Stones, Temple of the Sun, Shadow on the Stones
By Moyra Caldecott. New York: Hill & Wang, 1979. $8.95 each.

Reviewed by John Anthony West

Books about magic are commonplace, but books that actually work magic are rare. Moyra Caldecott's trilogy, *The Tall Stones, Temple of the Sun* and *Shadow on the Stones* is one of these rarities.

Set in pre-Druidic Celtic Britain, the books follow the progress of a young girl, Kyra, and her brother, Karne, from their adolescence in a rude northern village to their maturity in the Temple of the Sun at Avebury.

In clean, spare prose, and without recourse to golems, goblins, ents, and other imaginary beings, Miss Caldecott manages to bathe her scene in that enchanted-forest atmosphere that distinguishes Tolkien at his best. At the same time, allowing for necessary simplifications, the trilogy conveys a sense of historical veracity. There is no need to suspend judgment to believe in the setting: one finishes convinced that life in ancient Celtic Britain must have been much the way it has been depicted.

It is a widespread system of small, quasi-independent agricultural villages whose secular life is determined in the North by councils of elders, and in the South by foreign (perhaps Teutonic or Norman) "Spear-lords." But since it is emotional and spiritual allegiance that determines the quality of any given society, the real power lies in the hands of the priesthood. Though enlightened and elite, it is exclusive only in the sense that to enter, the candidate must show aptitude, ask the right questions, and then pass successfully a series of increasingly difficult ordeals.

To initiates of the Temple of the Sun, reincarnation, out-of-body experiences, and telepathy are neither hypotheses nor powers to be taken for granted, but rather exact

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sciences and disciplines. The development of the Priest-Initiate is no more (but no less) mysterious than the development of a contemporary violin virtuoso, and just as problematical. At every step there are obstacles to overcome, pitfalls to be avoided. Miss Caldecott writes convincingly of stone circles, ley lines, Stonehenge, of the rituals performed in them and of the powers they convey to those who know their secrets. And she is able to interweave the ongoing process of the psychically gifted Kyra's instruction in the Temple of the Sun with the breakneck adventure of the plot without stinting the former and without impeding the latter.

It is true that from the beginning the reader "knows" that the hero and heroine will win out in the end. But it is also true that from the beginning everyone "knows" that no good can come to Hamlet and that Kafka's K will not end up in the Castle, marry the princess and live happily ever after. It is a twentieth-century convention that calls defeat "realistic" and triumph "romantic."

If the trilogy as a whole has a shortcoming in conventional modern terms it is that the psychological interplay between the forces of "good" and "evil" has been pared too ruthlessly to the bone. Without exactly asking for a *Brothers Karamazov* of Ancient Britain it might have added something, even to the suspense, if subtleties of inner conflict had been spelled out in more detail. But this may not be the author's fault: initially Miss Caldecott had carefully depicted a powerful physical attraction between Fern, Karne's lover, and the black magician, Wardyke. Since the original British publisher had decided to market the book as "young adult" fiction, which was not Miss Caldecott's intention at all, this

important twist was edited out, and perhaps that militated for a similar attitude towards the books to follow. In any case, this minor objection brings up some interesting questions on the function of literature and on certain prevailing literary conventions.

It is a weird situation: whatever celebrates failure, ignorance, perversion, despair, and impotence is awarded a prize. "Popular" literature is devoted almost exclusively to mindless violence and/or lurid, nightmare sex. And when a book of real merit or offbeat interest occurs, the literary establishment is at a loss as to how to deal with it. Usually it is ignored, sometimes it is condemned or merely misrepresented. In Miss Caldecott's case it is shunted off as "young adult" fiction which absolves the establishment critics of the responsibility of dealing with it seriously. (When the books appear shortly in paperback they will masquerade as "science fiction" which is preferable in terms of marketing but no more accurate.)

I've tested *The Tall Stones* on a number of friends. They found it irresistible and in no way beneath their "mature" notice. These are simply good books when judged by literary standards that do not impose pessimism as a necessary condition of quality. That they happen to be broad enough in appeal to be enjoyed by the young is a virtue. Under the guise of adventure, Miss Caldecott's trilogy has an esoteric purpose: her world, though unsentimental, is one infused with meaning and purpose and therefore functions as an antidote to the spiritual flat earth that is even today the basis for the whole of our educational system. It would be interesting to make these books available to bright teen-agers to see what kind of questions they provoked. But first read them yourself!

John Anthony West is co-author of The Case for Astrology *and author of the recently published study of the work of R.A. Schwaller deLubicz,* Serpent in the Sky: The High Wisdom of Ancient Egypt *(Harper & Row).*

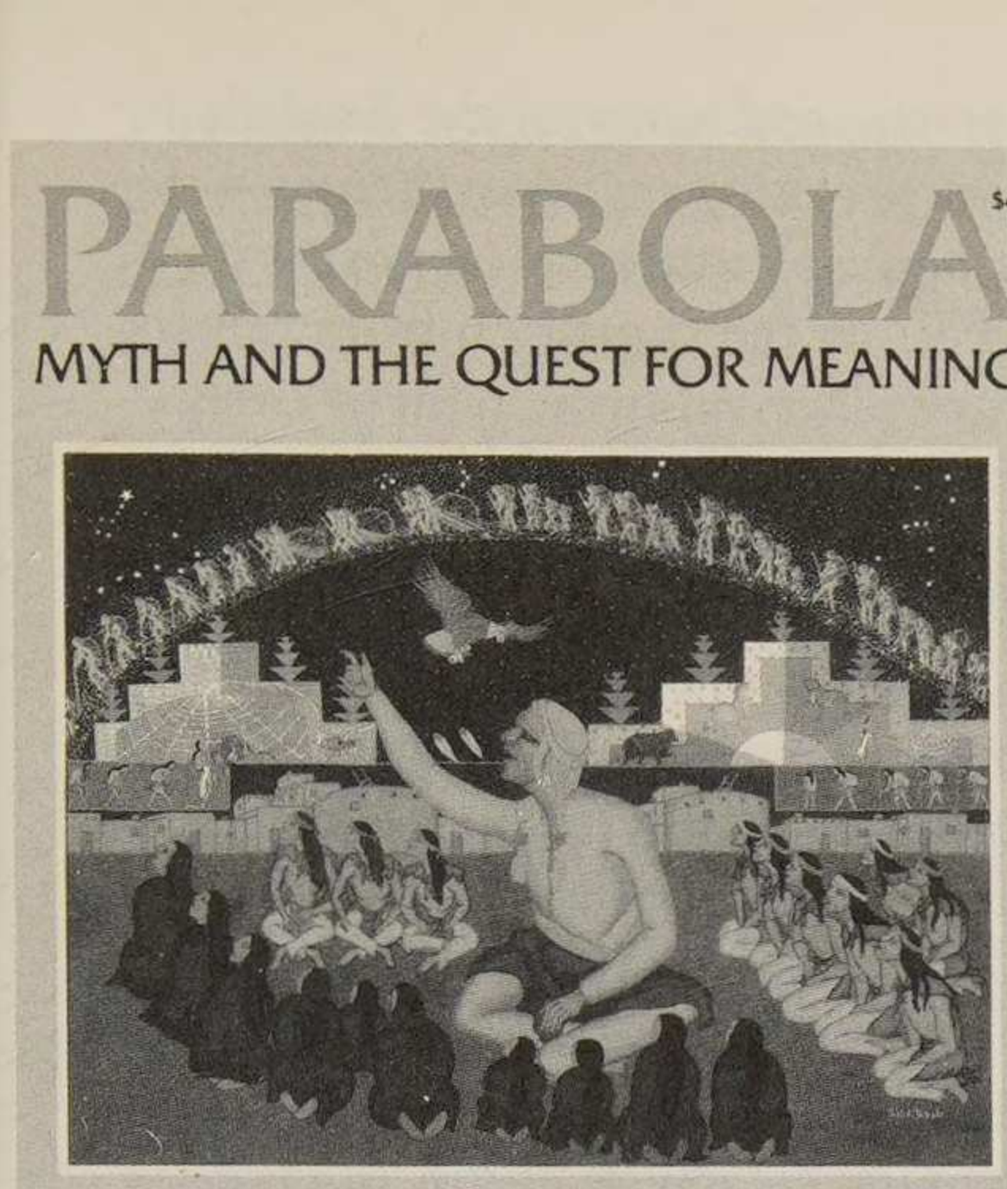
The Ancient Science of Geomancy: Man in Harmony with the Earth
By Nigel Pennick. London and New York: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1979. Pp. 180. $16.95.

Reviewed by Robert de Marrais

Geomancy is an old word given a new meaning when Nigel Pennick chose it for the title of his 1973 book, put out by the late lamented Cockaygne Press. He defines it in this volume as the "science of putting human habitats and activities into harmony with the visible and invisible world around us." As such, geomancy directly concerns itself with the propagation of fertility, the cycle of seasons, sources of water, positioning of fields. More generally, its intent is to harness the "various powers present in rocks, hills, trees, springs and rivers"—powers which, left to their own devices, would ebb and flow in strength according to the vagaries of time and location. Such harnessing is accomplished by the building of earthworks and megalithic monuments, dowsing for "blind springs" and the isolation of "power points," as well as the coordination of magic rituals with astronomical cycles. Geomancy, in other words, is a science of a radically different order from physics or chemistry—*if* it is a "science" at all.

Even those of us who are willing to agree, for the sake of argument at least, that geomancy may well *be* some sort of science, will likely feel compelled to note that the effects, practices, and concerns briefly mentioned above have all the sense of structure of a laundry list. This, though, Mr. Pennick would argue, is more an indication of our own confusion than our ancestors': "Urban humanity," he reminds us, "is so divorced from intimate everyday contact with the earth and its cycles that the modes of thought which underly the practice of geomancy must now be consciously cultivated in order to be comprehended."

This last point is essential, as there are many ways to "consciously cultivate" an alien mentality, and most of them— if the past few years' best-seller lists are any indication—amount to little more than mawkish nostalgia, unconscious projection, or the rankest sensationalism. In fields less



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prone to invasion by opportunists and cranks, the solution is hit upon automatically: it is referred to as "doing history." Fortunately, Mr. Pennick not only has the sense to realize that all the phenomena comprising his subject are *not* necessarily connected; he also ferrets out the inevitable implication: geomancy, like any discipline—"scientific" or otherwise—evolves out of disparate parts over time.

Mr. Pennick roughly sketches stages, filling in his landscape with some striking touches as we ramble with him pleasantly across a world-spanning variety of peoples and research. Start with the "pristine state" shared with Capistrano swallows and other migratory creatures. Start, that is, with the idea Pennick shares with John Michell, Bruce Chatwin, and many of the Englishmen who are working on these themes—the idea of the nomad's intuitive rapport with the earth. Follow the transition from this to the sedentary place-enshrinement of early agriculturalists. This is limned in as a move from a sense of world-wide spirit-energy "to individual spirits believed to inhabit the sites much as hermit crabs inhabit seashells." There are some highly suggestive discussions of the origins (as meteors) and replacement (by village churches) of *omphalos* stones—and some truly moving pages on the havoc wreaked by the Protestant Reformation.

Mr. Pennick clearly wants us to take this subject seriously, and is willing to take on the responsibilities this requires. (Those familiar with his earlier work should note the restraint he shows in discussing his own hobbyhorse, the so-called "terrestrial zodiacs.") All of this is achieved largely due to three signal virtues: fluid assimilation of a wide harvest of scholarly investigations, large capacity for understatement, and consistency of theme. Which brings us back to our first, and final, question.

Is geomancy a science? This is a notion of Pennick's, and a rather fruitful one. Since quantum mechanics, physics no longer upholds the paradigm of "objective" science. The existence and success of books like Capra's *The Tao of Physics* indicate that the old notion of "scientific truth" has been evicted. Some "new, improved" truth, having affinities with ancient wisdom, must fill the vacancy. This new vision could conceivably find a prototype in geomancy, which apprehends the world as a holistic continuum "in which all acts and modes of existence are subtly linked by a system of correspondences." This idea, we're told, "is the basis for the ancient belief in sympathetic magic, the Jungian principle of synchronicity, and even the modern science of ecology." This idea, if we think about it, is insidiously suggestive.

Robert de Marrais graduated M.I.T. in 1970, is finishing a doctoral thesis in the history of science at Cornell, and is living in Manhattan as a free-lance writer.

The Secret Message of Tantric Buddhism
By Pierre Rambach, translated from the French by Barbara Bray. New York: Rizzoli, 1979. Pp. 180. $40.00.

Yantra: The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity
By Madhu Khanna. London: Thames & Hudson, 1979. Pp. 176. $27.50.

Reviewed by Raoul Oyang Birnbaum

It is a pleasure to leaf through Pierre Rambach's *The Secret Message of Tantric Buddhism,* gazing at the many well-chosen photographs and diagrams which illustrate principal features of the art of the Shingon school of Buddhism in Japan. Perhaps the title should more clearly reflect the contents, for what is treated here — with sensitivity and care — is East Asian tantric Buddhist art and its symbolic meanings.

This is a landmark work: the first comprehensive book written specifically for a Western audience on the fundamental aspects of Shingon art. As such, it will be welcomed by all interested in Buddhism and in distinctive facets of Asian culture. Rambach correctly holds that Shingon is "...a school of thought which has influenced all aspects of Japanese culture just as much as Zen." Read together with Yoshito S. Hakeda's important study of the life and works of Kūkai, the first Japanese patriarch of this school of Buddhism (*Kūkai: Basic Works,* New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), this work will do much to broaden views about the nature and complex dimensions of East Asian Buddhism.

Kūkai held that the most profound teachings of esoteric Buddhism cannot be conceptualized in words, but are best communicated by the forms and colors of art. For this reason, the use of images and the appreciation of the aesthetic dimensions of spiritual life have been highly developed in Shingon; many great sages, including Kūkai, are said to have been excellent sculptors and painters. Following this tradition, Rambach seeks through a judicious

The Religions of Tibet
Giuseppe Tucci
Translated by Geoffrey Samuel

Tucci, the leading Western scholar of Tibetan studies in the world today, has drawn upon his knowledge of Tibetan language and literature and the expeditions he has made to western and central Tibet to produce an authoritative and comprehensive summation of his research and reflection over the past decades. The book touches on almost every facet of Tibetan religions, and much of the material presents the results of previously unpublished research. $19.95

The Religions of Mongolia
Walther Heissig
Translated by Geoffrey Samuel

The first significant study of shamanism and non-buddhist folk religions of the Mongols since the 1846 work of the Buryat Mongol scholar Dorji Banzarov. Heissig describes the beliefs and concepts of the folk religions dominant until the sixteenth century in the areas formerly known as Inner and Outer Mongolia. $15.00

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choice of illustrations to evoke the dual sense of mystery and accomplishment which is a hallmark of Shingon practice.

The teachings transmitted from T'ang China to Japan in the early ninth-century by Kūkai are termed in Japanese *Mikkyō,* the "secret" or "esoteric" teachings. The secret aspects are centered primarily on the method proposed for attaining enlightenment. By a complex set of processes, the initiate learns to invoke, identify with, and ultimately merge with Divine spirit forces, progressing stage by stage until his consciousness is purified and fully subsumed in the Divine. These methods focus on the perfection of the "three mysteries" of body, speech, and mind, on purification of deeds, words, and thoughts. A ritualistic approach to purification of these three fundamental human aspects includes: ritual prostrations and the fluent mastery of a complex series of hand gestures (*mudrās*) which suggest—when properly performed—a graceful dance, changing rapidly from modes of supplication to those of dynamic energy to those of peaceful equipoise; the chanting in a deep tone of long strings of sacred syllables (*mantras* and *dhāranīs*); and the accomplishment of visualization meditations, some very simple and others extraordinarily intricate and complex.

Each deity is perceived as a separate and unique being, who can be invoked—using specific gestures, mantras, and meditations—for definite purposes (such as aid in the development of insight or compassion, healing, protection, etc.). At the same time, each deity is perceived as a ray emanating from the central Buddha, Vairocana (the "Resplendent" Buddha, the "Illuminator"). The relationship of the various deities to Vairocana, and the specific attributes of each deity, are clearly portrayed in Shingon art through a complex symbolic language of color, gesture, hand-held object, physical appearance, and garb. Pierre Rambach seeks in *The Secret Message of Tantric Buddhism* to portray these basic principles underlying Shingon art and iconography, and he succeeds in offering explanations which are generally clear and appropriate.

In addition to describing the special paintings of assemblies of deities arranged in a geometric manner (the special *mandalas* central to Shingon doctrine and practice) and images of individual deities, Rambach includes: a very brief history of East Asian tantric Buddhism; summary explanations of the symbolic structure of pagodas, ritual objects, and altars; discussion of the symbolism of *mantras* and *bīja* ("seed") syllables; and diagrams and explanations of basic hand gestures (*mudrāś*). Quite a lot is covered, in a systematic and coherent fashion.

I should note that *The Secret Message of Tantric Buddhism* is an introductory work, at times elegant and evocative, which relies chiefly on secondary materials written in European languages as well as the author's extensive travels and studies in Japan. Pierre Rambach, an architect by profession, has a sensitive appreciation for the harmony of aesthetic and spiritual values which underlies the strongest passages in the book. But he barely touches on the enormous body of T'ang Chinese texts which form the scriptural underpinning of Shingon practice, nor does he refer to the extraordinary outpouring of compendia on deities and their iconography compiled especially in the twelfth century in Japan. Such works, studied in depth, should reveal many new facets of Buddhist practices and principles previously unknown to Western studies of Buddhism. These comments are not meant as criticism of Rambach's magnificent work; merely as an indication of a next step required in the study of East Asian esoteric Buddhism.

In contrast to Pierre Rambach's study of esoteric Buddhist art, Madhu Khanna presents a book on Hindu tantric art, entitled *Yantra: The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity*. Madhu Khanna defines "*yantra*" in its religious context as an "...aid to and the chief instrument of meditative discipline. Basically a *yantra* used in this context and for this purpose is an abstract geometrical design intended as a 'tool' for meditation and increased awareness." Essentially, this is a study of Hindu *maṇḍalas,* as seen in the con-

text of the associated metaphysics, meditations, and rituals. Also treated are the applications of *yantras* to temple plans, and a brief chapter on *yantras* used in magic.

Explanations of these various *yantras* are meticulously presented, with reference to a wide range of Hindu tantric scriptures, few of which have been translated into Western languages. That the prose style is dense and complex may reflect the intricate nature of the subject. The book is lightened somewhat by the many fascinating illustrations, which are closely linked to the topics under discussion. Most of the paintings and objects shown are comparatively recent in origin, from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, and they reflect living traditions—especially in the villages of Rajasthan and Bihar—of tantric art in India. (If these illustrations are reminiscent of those first introduced and made popular by Ajit Mookerjee, it is because Madhu Khanna was co-author with Mookerjee of *The Tantric Way,* and has included here many works from Mookerjee's extensive collection of Hindu tantric art.)

Like Pierre Rambach's *The Secret Message of Tantric Buddhism*, Madhu Khanna's *Yantra* is a serious work that seeks to reveal the underlying depth of tantric art. Though the Hindu and Buddhist traditions diverge at many crucial points, it is seen from these two books that the tantric strands of these traditions conjoin at least at one point: emphasis on the use of images as potent aids for meditations aimed at unity with the Divine.

R.O. Birnbaum is Clawson Mills Research Fellow in Far Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and also teaches in the Department of Classical and Oriental Languages and Cultures (Chinese Division) at Hunter College. He is author of The Healing Buddha.

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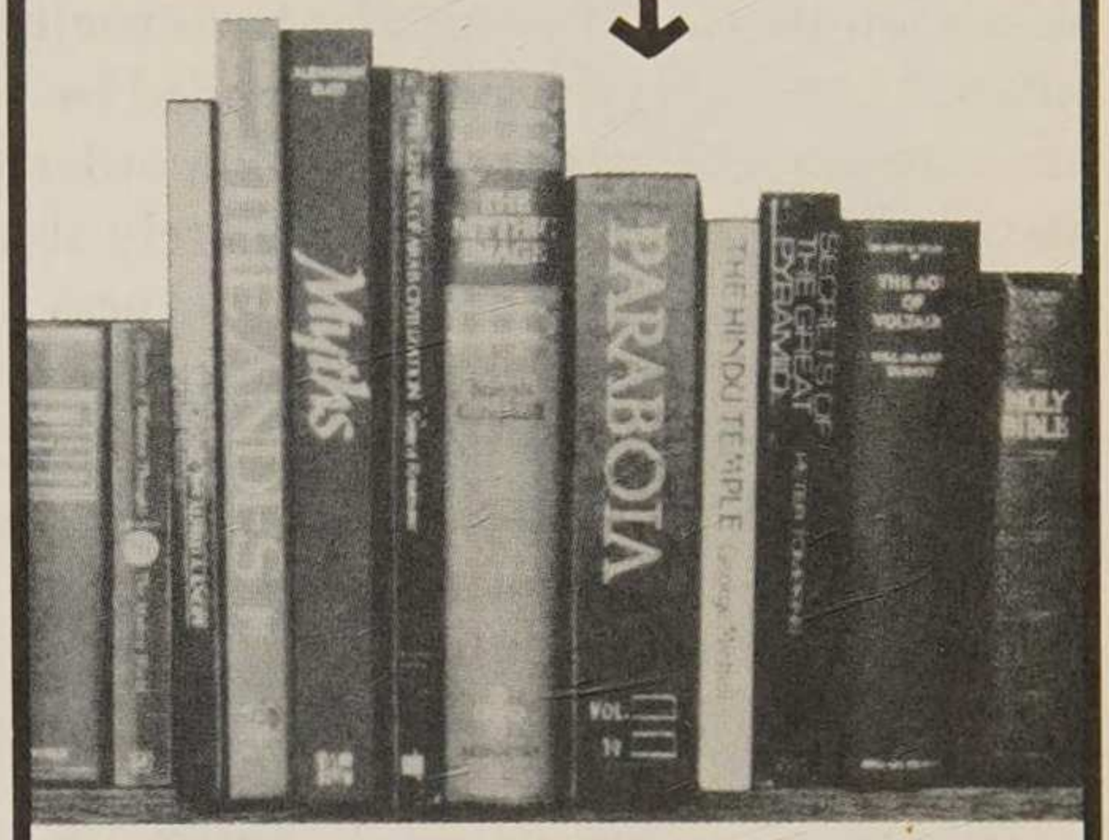

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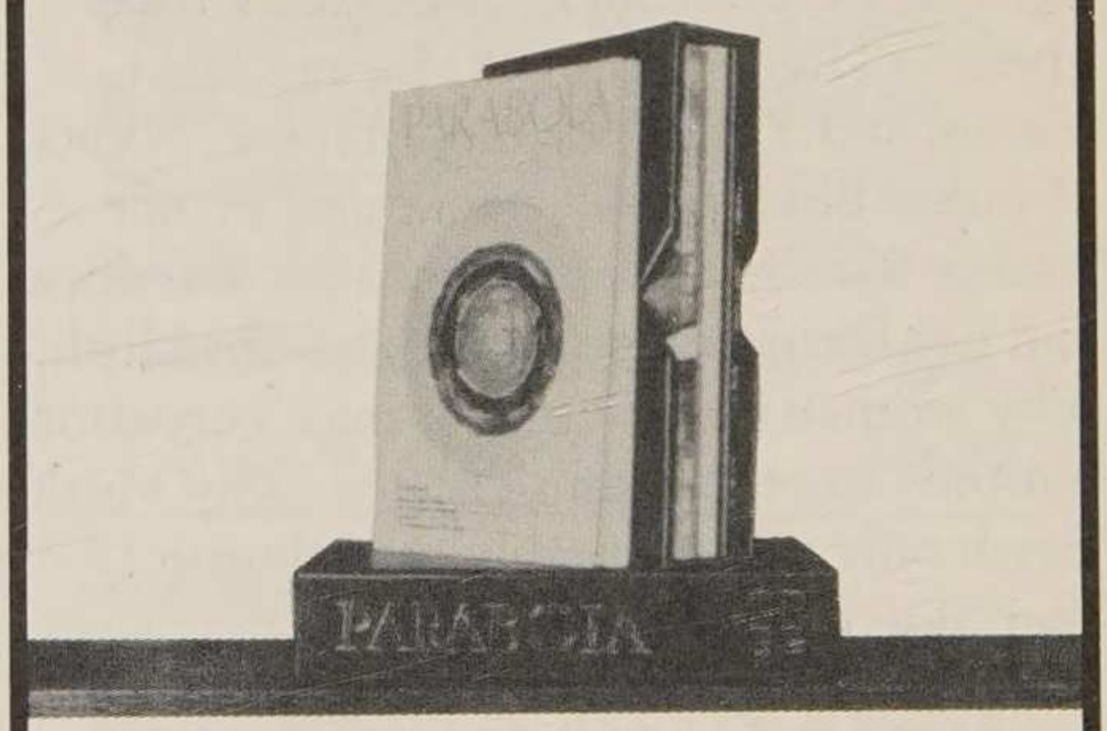

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Beginnings: Creation Myths of the World
Compiled and edited by Penelope Farmer, woodcuts by Antonio Fransconi. New York: Atheneum, 1979. Pp. 272. $8.95.

Reviewed by Anne Twitty

When a told story is printed, it finds itself encased in paragraphs and surrounded by punctuation. Letters march along in orderly lines and unchanging sequences, barely able to suggest the play of expression and gesture. Silent and alone, the reader is left to imagine the setting in which the tale originated—whether as part of a ritual, or as an evening's entertainment when the Ethiopians call out, after the mules have been fed, "Story! Story!" or the Surinam teller pauses to ask the listeners, "Will it go on?" and hears the answer, "It must go on!" *Beginnings* comes to us within the confines of a printed book.

Yet, here are bursts of vision as sudden and unexpected as the green smoke that pours from primeval stones when Alla's fire melts them down (in a Bashkir story). Here are subtle transformations; the Uroboros snake of Dahomey is "the motion that turns our world and sets the planets turning... the endless ululations of the sea... the flash of light across the water." Ms. Farmer has given us Ulgen and Erlik, Ea and Enlil, Yatam and Yatai, Nzame, Mabere, Nkwa, Princess Long As the Rocks and Prince Ruddy Rice Ear Plenty (but why Pandora and not Demeter, why Eve and not Lilith, why woman many times as man's creation, but only once as man's creator, why Mother Earth only when suitably mated with Father Sky?).

These origin myths tell of the false starts and the new beginnings, the appearance of human life, the first knowledge of death and a resurrection in food plants, and visions of a final apocalypse. Myths from the Bible, the Koran, and the Bundahish find their places naturally and unobtrusively beside the speculations of tribes who never attained or aspired to worldwide acceptance of their beliefs. The "evil material world" of a Persian apocalypse is page-by-page with a tale from the Fang, who feel that humans have been given the hard task of upholding the rule of good on earth. Whatever the stories lose in not being presented individually, in the crowding of several short pieces onto a single page, they gain in proximity, emerging as parts of one great story that moves again and again through the same themes. Ways of seeing begin a dialogue, in concepts ranging from the penetrating insight of the Wapanga ("The word was not something that could be seen. It was a force that enabled one thing to create another"), to the Xingu vision of an apocalypse in which, when Sinaa pulls out the center pole, the world will crash down like a collapsing hut.

Beginnings is presented as a book "for young adults" and insofar as this means that the myths are not enveloped in lengthy interpretations or compressed between polemic and footnotes, it is all to the good. But it may have affected the quality of Ms. Farmer's introductions, which balance uneasily between the poetic and the prosaic. She seems to be trying to make myth acceptable to the incurably matter-of-fact, as when she attributes the prevalence of Deluge stories to a human impulse to "get rid of an unsatisfying past and start all over again," or calls attention to the "practical and logical" qualities of a Hindu myth about death. The use of epigraphs from Webster, Eliot, and Donne seems to be part of an attempt to forge more or less arbitrary links between the myths and recognized values of the Western world.

Within Ms. Farmer's versions of some myths there is evidence, too, of a distorting touch. For example, she prints her own adaptation of a Sherente myth from Levi-Strauss' *The Raw and the Cooked*. It tells of a time just before the Flood, when the planet Venus descends to earth as a male being, reeking with running sores, and saves the family of the only man who will take him in and care for him. In the version printed by Levi-Strauss, the host "ordered his virgin daughter to let Venus sit on her bare thighs and washed him in this position"; in Ms. Farmer's words, he "ordered her to sit on

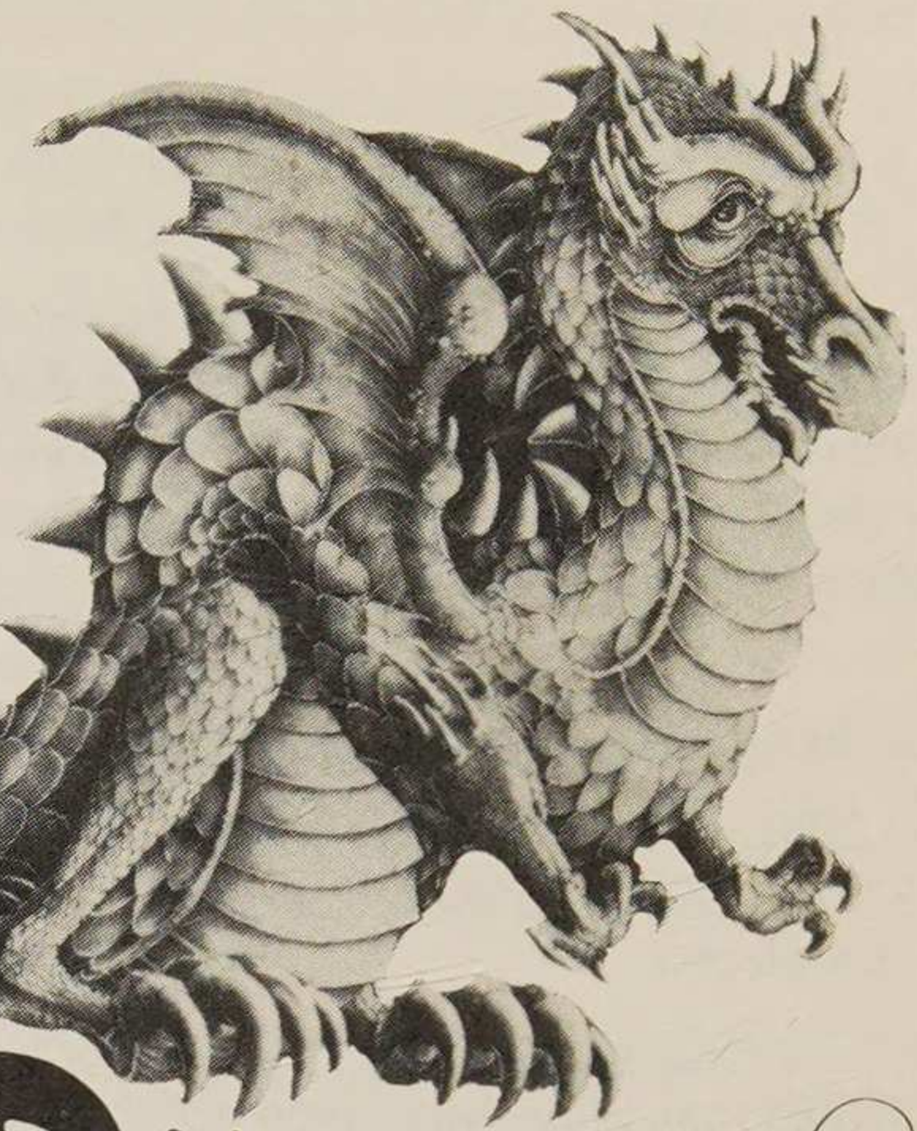
Venus' lap and hug and caress and comfort him." The sharp visual detail has disappeared; the enigmatic, erotic quality of the first description has been made familiar, cozy (while acquiring an oddly sinister undertone). In place of Venus' offer to pay reparation for deflowering the girl, Ms. Farmer has given him an apologetic speech that suggests the code of a rather antiquated English gentleman who has somehow strayed into the Brazilian jungle.

Ms. Farmer admits gracefully in an afterword that she feels she has gone too far in filling in details on some occasions. On this occasion, it is less a matter of going too far than of going in the wrong direction. Finally, it is a question of how far to trust an editor or a storyteller. Whenever Ms. Farmer reprints from a collection like Ulli Beier's *The Origins of Life and Death*, she is on sure ground. When she begins to invent, the result is always curious and entertaining, but too often seems both toned down and touched up, domesticated into a tradition of Western European storytelling that is not wide or deep enough to accomodate it. Like the Frasconi woodcuts that illustrate this book, her versions are handsome and decorative; just as his eye has been formed by Western pictorial tradition, her ear has been trained on Grimm and Lang.

Myths have always been told and retold, otherwise we would not even know about them. It is impossible to retell without risk; it may be better to have a misleading retelling than none at all, and there is no final authority. It is the very breadth of this collection, its willingness to include the unfamiliar, that leads to occasional disappointments. It is in many ways a book to be grateful for, and some may feel that, since it is not directed toward scholars, faithfulness to the original intent of a myth matters less. Those who read purely out of interest and delight, without the barriers of skepticism, analysis and comparison, can open their imaginations to the full impact of the words presented. Surely, in those circumstances, it is the words that matter most.

Anne Twitty has spent time in the British Museum, the Bibliotheque National in Paris and the Stratsbibliotek in Amsterdam studying myths in many versions. She has recently performed myth-tellings at the A.I.R. Gallery, New York.

How do you kiss a dragon?



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PARABOLA GUIDE

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Celtic Britain. By Lloyd Laing. Scribner's: 1979. $15.95. A history of the Celts by an archaeologist.

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Culture and Curing. Edited by Peter Morley and Roy Wallis. University of Pittsburgh Press: 1979. $14.95. Traditional medical beliefs and practices from an anthropological perspective.

Ebla: A Revelation in Archaeology. By Chaim Bermant and Michael Weitzman. Times Books: 1979. $10.00. An account of the expedition and the implications of the discovery of the lost city of Elba in the Near East.

Ecology, Meaning, and Religion. By Roy A. Rappaport. North Atlantic Books: 1979. $7.95. Meaning and cause in a dynamic relationship.

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Megaliths and Masterminds. By Peter Lancaster Brown. Scribner's: 1979. $14.95. The mystery behind thousands of ancient stone monuments.

Namkwa. By Hans-Joachin Heinz and Marshall Lee. Houghton Mifflin: 1979. $10.95. Life among contemporary Bushmen.

Pathways to the Gods. By Tony Morrison. Harper & Row: 1979. $12.95. A study of the Andes Lines, incorporating the work of Gerald S. Hawkins.

Prehistoric Avebury. By Aubrey Burl. Yale University Press: 1979. $19.95. New archaeological evidence about the stone monuments at Avebury.

The Rediscovery of Lost America. By Arlington Mallery and Mary Roberts Harrison. E. P. Dutton: 1979. Paper $8.95. Evidence of Iron Age civilization in America.

Secrets of the Ice Age. By Evan Hadingham. Walker & Co.: 1979. $14.95. The world of the cave artists.

Tarahumara: Where Night is the Day of the Moon. By Bernard L. Fontana, photographs by John P. Schaefer. Northland Press: 1979. $30.00. A chronicle of the lives of Mexican Indians in the remote Sierra Madres.

A Travel Guide to Archaeological Mexico. By Robert D. Wood. Hastings House: 1979. $9.95, paper $6.95. Organized for traveling by car.

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Wild Man. By Tobias Schneebaum. The Viking Press: 1979. $12.95. A painter and anthropologist living in a primitive state.

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Between Silence and Light. By John Lobell. Shambhala: 1979. $15.00, paper $7.95. The spiritual values and architectural principles of Louis I. Kahn.

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Ethiopian Magic Scrolls. By Jacques Mercier. George Braziller: 1979. Paper $11.95. The talismanic art of Ethiopia.

Haitian Art. By Ute Stebich. Harry N. Abrams: 1978. $17.50. Haitian history, religion, and everyday life in the art of the country. Illustrated.

Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast. By Hilary Stewart. University of Washington Press: 1979. Paper $6.95. An introduction.

The Masks of Orthodoxy. By Peter Benes. University of Massachusetts Press: 1979. $20.00. Folk gravestone art in Massachusetts.

Native American Art in the Denver Art Museum. By Richard Conn. Denver Art Museum, distributed by University of Washington Press: 1979. $40.00, paper $20.00. A collection based on aesthetic and historical criteria, 100 color photographs, 400 black and white.

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CREDITS

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Robin Ridington received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Harvard University and has been teaching at the University of British Columbia since 1967. He has done field work with Athapaskan-speaking Beaver Indians of northeastern British Columbia and is the author of "Swan People," a monograph on the Prophet Dance of the Beaver Indians, (Publication # 38 from the National Museum of Man in Canada).

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