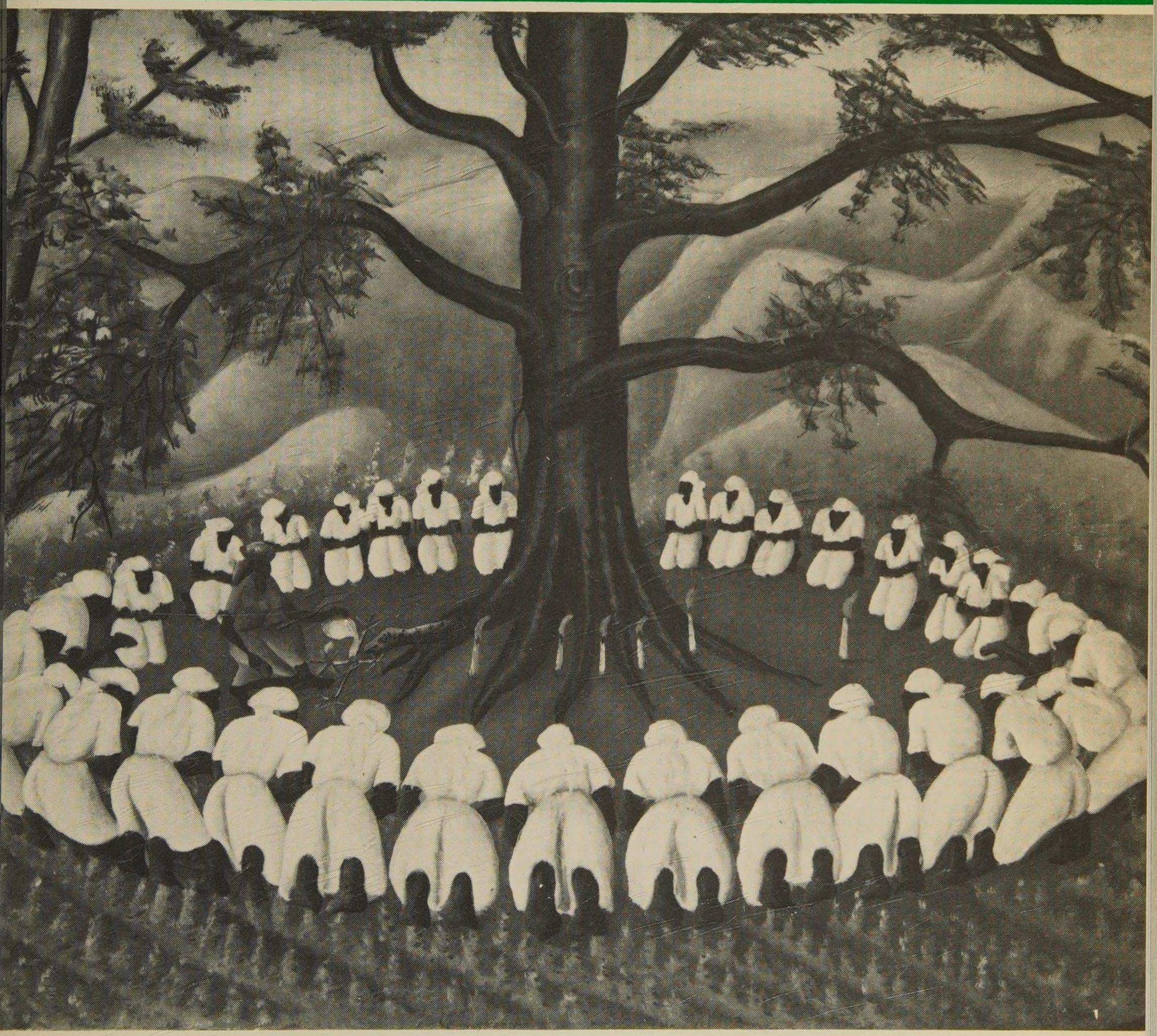
# PARABOLA

## MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

Summer
$5.00
VII:3

CARROLL LUTHERAN COLLEGE
LIBRARY



# CEREMONIES

Joseph Epes Brown  Robertson Davies
Frederick Franck  Brother David Steindl-Rast  P.L. Travers

LIBRARY

VOLUME VII, NO. 3

# PARABOLA

## CEREMONIES MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

AUG 17 1982


6 **Becoming Part of It** by Joseph Epes Brown. *Native American sacred values as models for our own.*

13 EPICYCLE: **White Buffalo Woman.** *Origination of the peace pipe.*

15 **Nobility and Style** by Robertson Davies. *Ceremonies as archetypes of order and degree.*

22 **Ceremony for a Dying Planet** by Doris Lessing. *From* The Making of the Representative for Planet 8.

26 **Tennessee Heritage** by Francelia Butler. *A firsthand account of the religious ways of mountain people.*

34 **Setsubun: Ceremony of Renewal** by Frederick Franck. *Ancient ritual in contemporary Japan.*

40 **A Pillar So Straight** translated by Barbara Nimri Aziz. *From the epic poem sung at a Tibetan wedding.*

42 **Name and No Name** by P.L. Travers. *The mystery and power of identity.*

47 EPICYCLE: **The Two Hunchbacks.** *A cautionary folktale.*

52 ARCS: **Ritual Action.** *The efficacy of sacred patterns.*

58 **Making Magic** by David Abram. *How is it done?*

65 EPICYCLE: **Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.** *A test of knightly vows.*

70 **The Uses of Ceremony: Two Views** from the works of Aldous Huxley and P.D. Ouspensky.

76 **Two Poems** by Joseph Bruchac.

78 **Holy Ground** by Brother David Steindl-Rast. *The sacramental life.*

81 EPICYCLE: **The Teasing of the Bride.** *From the* Kalevala.

2 FOCUS

4 FULL CIRCLE: A Readers' Forum

TANGENTS

86 **Ritual and Performance** by Rob Baker. *The question of sacrilege in modern theater and dance.*

90 **The Paradox of Conquest** by Thomas Buckley. *The influence of Native Americans.*

98 CURRENTS & COMMENTS

104 BOOK REVIEWS

130 CREDITS

131 PROFILES

*Publisher and Editor* D. M. Dooling
*Executive Editor* Rob Baker
*Managing Editor* Gus Kiley
*Circulation/Production* Cort Smith
*Editorial Assistant* Kate Wheeler
*Epicycle Editor* Paul Jordan-Smith
*Art Director* Elizabeth Avedon

*Contributing Editors* Jonathan Cott, Lee B. Ewing, Lorraine Kisly, Winifred Lambrecht, Richard Lewis, David Leeming, Jean Sulzberger
*Consulting Editors* Joseph Epes Brown, Thomas Buckley, Frederick Franck, Lobsang Lhalungpa, John Loudon, Barbara G. Myerhoff, Barre Toelken, P. L. Travers

PARABOLA (ISSN: 0362–1596) is published quarterly by the Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition (formerly Tamarack Press, Inc.).

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

Single Issue: $5.00. By subscription: $16.00 yearly, $29.50 for two years. Postage for outside territorial U.S.; add $3.50 for surface rates, $15.00 for air per year. Please specify when ordering.

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

Address all correspondence regarding editorial and advertising to PARABOLA, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. Tel.: 212-924-0004.

*For subscriptions and change of address notices:* PARABOLA, *Subscription Dept., 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. Subscription inquiry, Tel.: 212-924-0004.*

*Postmaster: Send forms 3579 to* PARABOLA, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011.

All material Copyright © 1982 by the Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition.

VOLUME VII, NUMBER 3, August 1982

*Cover:* Detail from "Voodoo Ceremony" by Gerard Valcin.
*Inside Cover:* "Hands of a Boddhisattva," Chinese, 7th century.

# FOCUS

The word ceremony comes from a Latin word which means "sacredness." Isn't it strange that in our irreligious times, possibly the furthest removed in history from a relation with the sacred, ceremonial forms should be so great a part of our profane lives? Look at the New York parades on any holiday; the ritual pomp of football games with their bands and drum majorettes; the panoply of Lodge initiations. Graduation ceremonies begin now in kindergarten, with our five-year-olds in caps and gowns.

We take our passion for rituals for granted; we may question their forms, but never the need for their existence. But why this apparently *growing* need? We no longer acknowledge the thirst for a relation with another level, the thirst to which our religions sought ritually to minister; nevertheless, however deeply buried, it continues to exist. Are we unconsciously trying to allay it with the empty cup of our mostly meaningless rites?

It seems that what is genuine in our need to solemnify, celebrate, ritualize the things that happen in our lives originates in something as basic as the incompleteness of our being. For we see that a person—or a community—usually seeks a ceremony at the moment of recognizing human inadequacy in the face of life events. At a moment of sudden danger, even a total unbeliever prays. When help is needed for a difficult transition, or a blessing on an achievement or a new possibility, one feels the insuffi-

ciency of one's own force, even to be a successful petitioner. A person is too small, and that which can help and bless is too great. Perhaps one could say that the real need for a ceremony arises in the moment when we recognize our place.

In that place we are humble; we need an intercessor, we look for someone closer to the throne than we are, a priest or a shaman, to plead for us; and we need others to plead with us. Even "private" ceremonies must be performed in a limited public of family and friends. Those gathered to celebrate the rite cannot be "audience" or mere spectators; they have an active part to play in calling down the gift from above. And the ancient forms of the rituals, handed down through centuries, are also carriers of force, in the same way that the walls of old churches are impregnated with the power of the prayers they have absorbed.

All this, of course, refers to real ceremonies and to the conditions in which they can be effective. Any of them can become a rite of passage: an intercessory movement opening a channel between the human level and the sacred, through which the help and the blessing may come. But the truly sacred must be truly invoked. The difficulty—one can say, even, the danger—of our attempts to approach the throne consists both in how we approach, and what is enthroned.

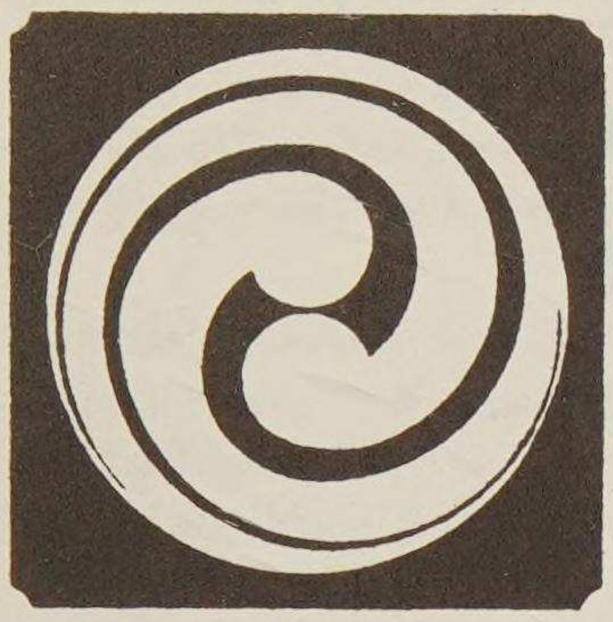
It has been said that the problem of prayer is not that it is not answered, but that it is; and there are hungry ghosts hovering over our altars as well as boddhisatvas. Real help, real blessing, can come only when what is real in the human reaches for the highest in himself and something higher than himself. If it is not this that is invoked, the form of the invocation is a "vain repetition," or a social occasion, or an ego trip, or perhaps even black magic.

The ceremony is a reminder of our possible relation with the sacred, and no ceremony can do more than help the celebrant to remember himself in all his possible dimensions. But this is quite enough; indeed, it is all the help and all the blessing that could be asked. For a relationship re-membered is revitalized, brought to life, like Osiris delivered from Seth the Divider. Then giving and receiving become one, as the words were once in the original Indo-European root (*ghabh*). We call a religious ceremony a "divine service" without thinking that perhaps the title means literally what it says. People closer to life sources than we are, the Native Americans for instance, understand this and know that their ceremonies are needed by nature and by the earth their mother, by the Creator as well as by themselves.

Perhaps it is this almost forgotten element of service, this sense of exchange with the holy Whole, that is the greatest lack in our attempts at ceremony today.

—D.M. Dooling

# FULL CIRCLE/A Readers' Forum



This note is just to congratulate you on your fine work. It is an extremely difficult task to present myths from various traditions without prejudging what they are saying and so allowing readers to explore the further implications of them, but this is precisely what you do very well—and in an interesting way.

The most recent issue of PARABOLA—on sleep—is an example of the excellence of your work. The articles are thought-provoking, the epicycles are well-chosen, and the production is of an unusually high quality. Bravo!

Two specific comments: the story by P.L. Travers was a delight! It dealt in a charming way with some very difficult issues, leading the reader to some real insights. Second, despite the letter in "Full Circle," which took Kathleen Raine to task for her conception of man as spiritual, Ms. Raine's article in that earlier issue was a fine one. Her presuppositions have been shared by some of the greatest thinkers of the past and present, and they will be trumpeted by many in the future. Far from being outdated, the notion of man as spiritual is just coming into its own in this scientific age, when thinkers are beginning to realize that principles unify any field of study and that spiritual principles will unify our understanding of man, so that spiritual monism will replace the fundamentally dualistic "composite" pictures of man that the letter-writer seems attached to. I applaud Kathleen Raine for her courage in risking the wrath of the materialists and the dualists!

Again, congratulations on your outstanding work, and best wishes for the future; I look forward to receiving my next issue of PARABOLA.

—Christopher L. Largent
Wilmington, Delaware

Joseph Campbell's remarks apropos Christianity in the interview with Douglas Auchincloss (VII:1) were disappointingly crude, and inexcusable in one who is an "internationally known" authority in matters mythological. Even after allowing for the possibility that the interview does not convey the true spirit of the man, what does one do with remarks as ludicrously simplistic as "the whole character of the Judeo-Christian tradition is opaque to the transcendent" or "everybody else [sic!] has got the hang of it except these people going around trying to convert the world to their concretization of the idea of God, who sits there as a kind of roadblock," or "they [the adherents of the Christian tradition] tend to think Jerusalem is the Central Mountain of the World," or "if you have concretized your image of the transcendent, get rid of your image"? One gets the impression that Mr. Campbell has trafficked so much in the wisdom of others that the most sacred concepts and most sublime symbols share the same "concretization" in his mind as do the dogmatisms he deplores—a sort of dogmatization of metaphysical truth by the hardening or crystallizing of "esoteric" or "gnostic" expressions

into the very opposite of what these expressions intend.

Mr. Campbell and those who share his views should remember that the Zen master who first said "if you see the Buddha coming down the road, kill him" remained a Buddhist all his life, and Meister Eckhart, who said "the ultimate leavetaking is the leaving of god for God" remained a faithful servant of the Christian Church till he died. In other words, genuine esoterism or gnosis transcends outward forms but does not abolish them. The true sage neither deplores devotion as a "lower level" of spiritual activity nor destroys the inevitable (because human and necessary) image of God that appears in the soul. Furthermore, Mr. Campbell appears to take that particular Zen formula as a piece of metaphysical information, which is a typical mistake of the discursive mind which tries to make "sense" out of what is primarily an attempt to shock the ordinary mind to a standstill. In the words of Frithjof Schuon, "in the formulas of Zen the element 'shock' has precedence over the element 'information' proper to language." Rinzai would be amused to see his verbal Zenthrust "elevated" to the status of a dogma by academic metaphysicians.

The Divine Personality appears anthropomorphic, but it is in fact Man who is an image of God and not the reverse; and it is because of mankind's theomorphism that God is capable of making Himself man in His ceaseless effort to make His superintelligibility known to man.

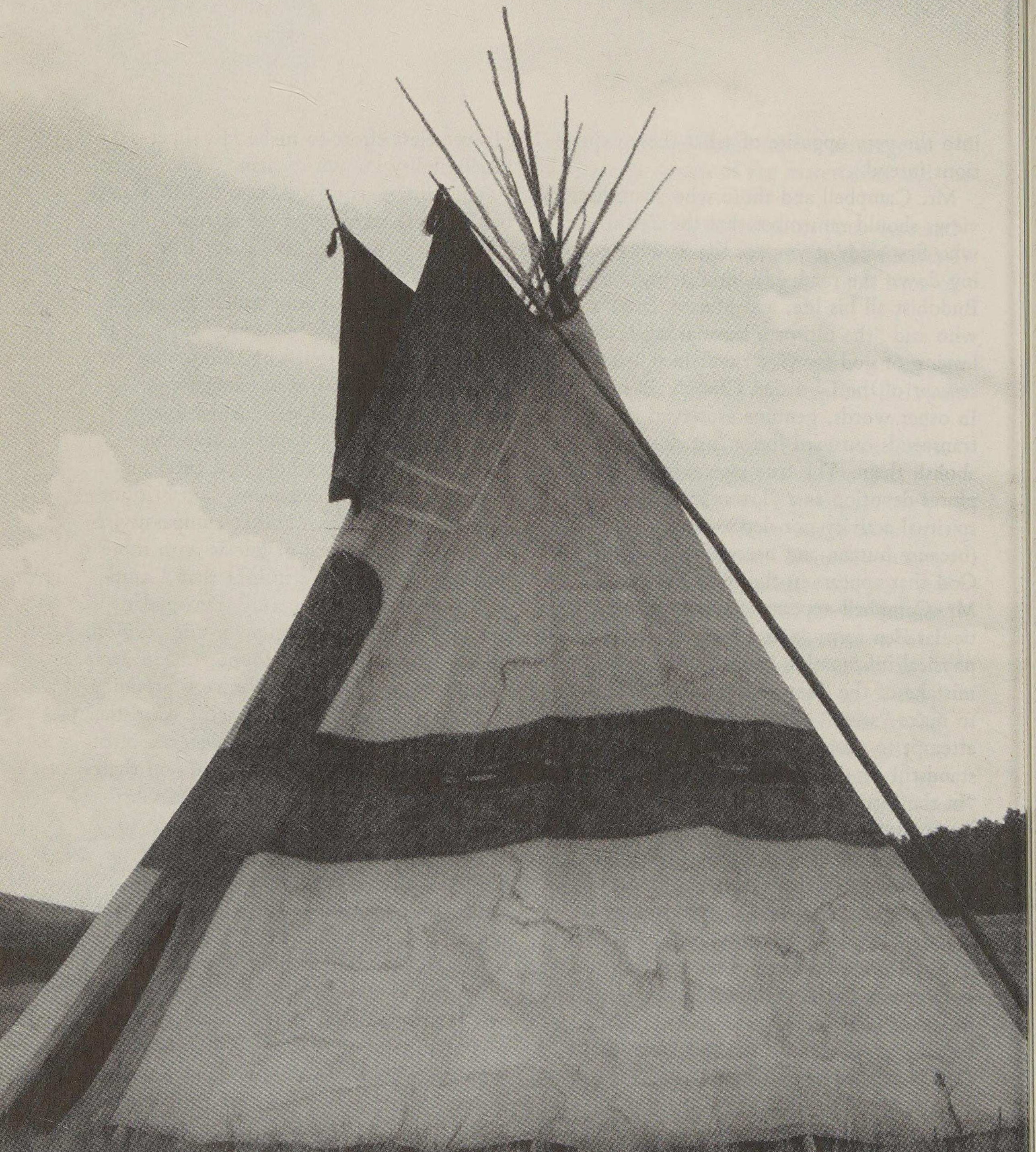
This brings us to the heart of Mr. Campbell's erroneous view of the meaning of Christianity: his "insight" that "Christ isn't Jesus." The attempt to separate Jesus from Christ is one of the commonest cliches of pseudo-metaphysical "wisdom," and one is surprised that Campbell has succumbed to it, considering his field of expertise is "comparative mythology," which is supposed to foster an attitude of objective detachment to all mythological expression. Both Ananda Coomaraswamy and Frithjof Schuon, to name two master comparativists who wield the sword of gnosis with more rigor, compassion and insight than Campbell, maintain that the truly transcendent metaphysics of Christianity (or any religion, for that matter) is to be found, not in some heterodox notion, but in the very presiding idea of the religion itself. In short, Christian gnosis is to be found in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption, and therefore precisely in the Person of Jesus Christ as such, as the God-Man. To attempt to separate Jesus from Christ is to miss completely the message of Christianity and to tamper in an unconscionable way with the universal Mythos as it gives expression to itself through the Christian form.

Much more could be said on this subject, and perhaps should, since I note that a certain ambiguity and tension always appears whenever PARABOLA's editors and writers are compelled to deal with Christianity. It hits a little too close to home, maybe? One is not quite as "objective" about the Chris-

*(Continued on page 128)*

# *Becoming Part of It*

*by Joseph Epes Brown*



*The following is a transcription (with some added material) of an address given at the American Museum of Natural History in January. It was part of a program entitled "I Become Part of It," which was presented by* PARABOLA*'s Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition.*

In talking about sacred dimensions in Native American life, I must proceed not just as a descriptive ethnographer but also as a historian of religion, and with what I hope is a basic humanistic concern; that is, I believe it important to ask about the relevance of these primal values to a dominant contemporary world with life-ways which are oriented towards very different directions and with contrasting priorities. One notices very clearly today our increasing malaise and sometimes even fear, which—at least in certain segments of our society—is leading to a growing mood for re-evaluation and reassessment, a wish even to take a backward look, so to say, at "progress," that concept which for so long has been an unquestioned quasi-religious dogma in our lives. Many of those early studies of Native American peoples and cultures suffered from the kinds of prejudices that came out of this prevailing concept of progress.

An expression of this new and growing mood is found in an increasing concern to seek out our ancient origins, with a view to rediscovering and perhaps even identifying with what is our own proper heritage. I put the question in this manner because very often when I speak about the relevance and the reality of American Indian values, I am misunderstood, especially by students who like to believe that what I am trying to say is that they should go out and live and be American Indians; this is not my point at all, because for those of us who are non-Indians it is an impossibility. One has to be brought up in these cultures and traditions, one has to live the languages, in order truly to identify with the ethos of an American Indian people. What I *am* trying to say is that these traditions could be taken as models which might provide us with answers to some of the dilemmas with which we are currently struggling in our own society.

In the '60s, in our restlessness with where we found ourselves, we began to turn to the religions and methods of the Orient, with all the attractions and mystique which distance provides. By the '70s, however, with our rapidly growing ecological concerns, there developed an increasing awareness that certain answers could be found in the spiritual traditions of the Native Americans; for here the sacred values which so many of us were seeking out were actually rooted in this land, where they have survived through some sixty to eighty thousand years. Out of this mood there has come a vast array of new literature, both genuine and spurious, relating to Native American life-ways and world view; and even if the approach has often been overly romantic, there is here a change from earlier attitudes and prejudices, which is a positive sign even if it is only a beginning.

Although greatly oversimplified and generalized, let me give at least a brief sampling of what I think are some of the core Native American values and perspectives, through which we can perhaps come to relearn a little bit about ourselves and about our own proper spiritual heritage, the hope being that what has been lost can still be rediscovered. Certainly the Native American people themselves, especially the younger ones today, are trying to regain and revitalize their own traditions which may have been lost, or taken from them through a variety of pressures and prejudices. We have, I suggest, in this struggle a model for our own proper quest. What are some of its contours?

Tribal cultures, it seems to me, present a model of what a religious tradition *is;* and this is a basic reality which we have lost sight of. That is, what really is a true religious tradition? What does it encompass, what are its dimensions? These cul-

tures demonstrate how all components of a culture can be interconnected: how the presence of the sacred can permeate all lifeways to such a degree that what we call religion is here integrated into the totality of life and into all of life's activities. Religion here is so pervasive in life that there is probably no Native American language in which there is a term which could be translated as "religion" in the way we understand it. As Peter Nabokov tells us in his book, *Indian Running,* when you track down a seemingly isolated or minimal feature of Indian life, such as running, the whole system opens before your eyes; and this is true because of the interrelatedness of all the components of a genuine tradition. Obviously in such a system life cannot be fragmented, due to that binding and interconnecting thread of the presence of the sacred.

In terms of interconnections, a dominant theme in all Native American cultures is that of relationship, or a series of relationships that are always reaching further and further out; relationships within the immediate family reaching out to the extended family, to the band, outward again to the clan, to the tribal group; and relationships do not stop there but extend out to embrace and relate to the environment: to the land, to the animals, to the plants, and to the clouds, the elements, the heavens, the stars; and ultimately those relationships that people express and live, extend to embrace the entire universe.

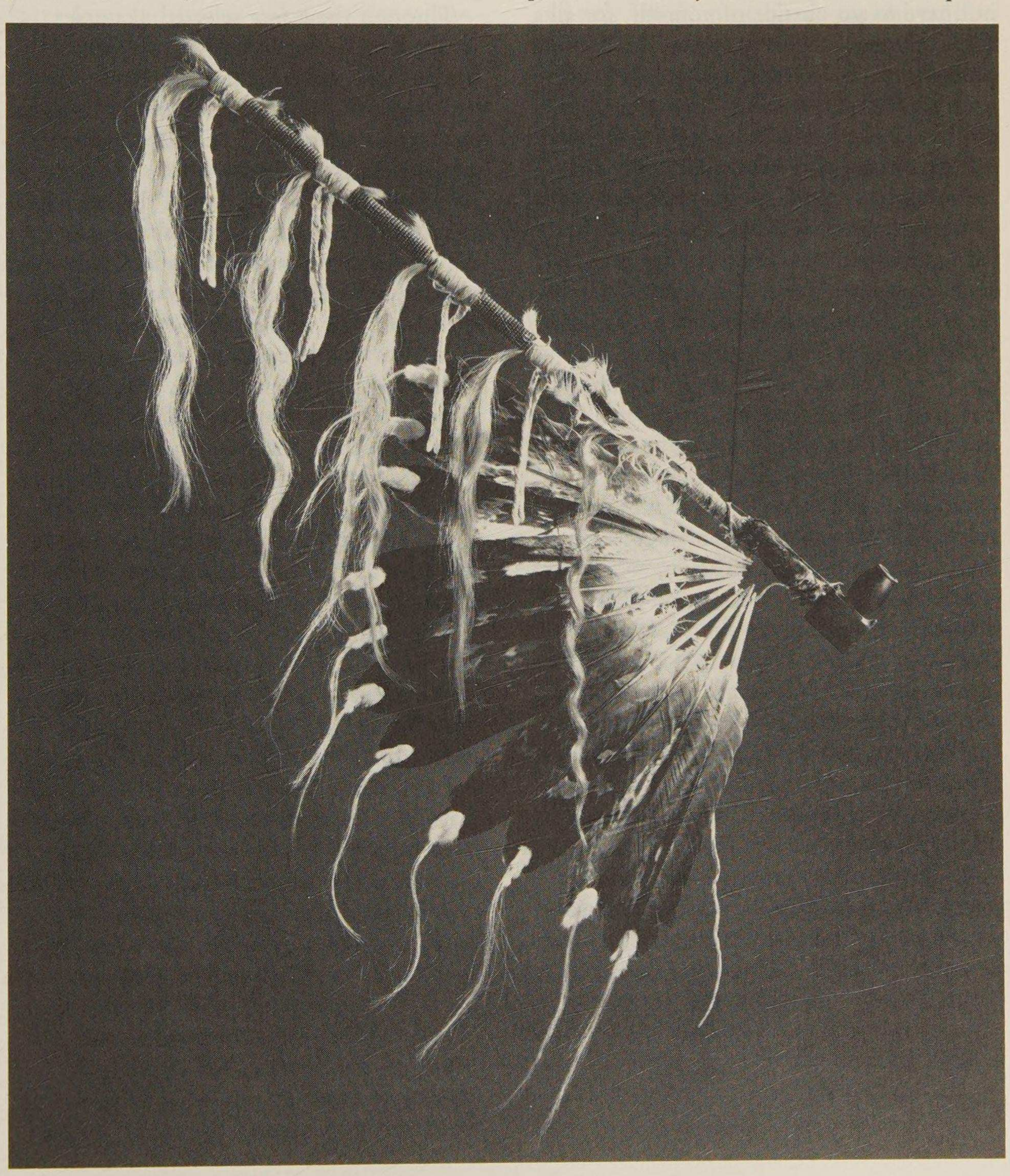
In the Plains area, to give an example, one of the most profound rites is that of the smoking of the pipe. In this ritual smoking of the pipe, all who participate are joined in a communal ritual act, and when it is finished, everybody who has shared in the smoking of the pipe recites the phrase, in Lakota in this case, *"mitakuye oyasin"*— "we are all relatives." We *are* all related, because in this rite we have all become one within a mystery that is greater than any of its parts. I shall talk more about the general importance of rituals and ceremonies later.

Associated with relationship there should be mentioned the theme of reciprocity which permeates so many aspects of North American cultures. Put very simply, reciprocity here refers again to that process wherein if you receive or take away you must also give back. This is a living statement of the importance of the cycle permeating all of life: the cycle of life and death, of life leading to old age and then coming back to life. Everything in their world of experience is conceived in terms of such cycles or of the circle; everything comes back upon itself. Black Elk so often said that all the forces of the world work in cycles or circles: the birds build their nests in circular form, the foxes have their dens in circles, the wind in its greatest power moves in a circle, and life is as a circle. I recall once how this reality was beautifully expressed in a living manner, when I noticed how this dignified old man would relate to little children. He would get down on his hands and knees and pretend he was a horse, and the children would squeal with joy on the old man's back. Here there obviously was no generation gap; he was one with the child. I once asked him how it was that he could so relate to the child, and he replied: "I who am an old man am about to return *to* the Great Mysterious" (*Wakan Tanka,* in Lakota) "and a young child is a being who has just come *from* the Great Mysterious; so it is that we are very close together." Because of such cyclical understanding, both are very nearly at the same point.

Such attitudes could be spelled out in terms of any number of cultural expressions, but the point I want to draw from this is that we have here an example which contrasts with our own dominant concept of process which is in terms of linearity— the straight line which moves from here to there and onward indefinitely. Indeed, this theme of linearity permeates all aspects of our life. The way we read, for instance, is in lines; we have sayings in our vocabulary that tell us to "Line up!" "Let's get this straight!" Or if we refer to somebody who is a little bit crazy, we make a circular

motion alongside our head, by which we indicate the reason is going in circles. There is something here from which we can learn, something about ourselves and our concept of progress, with all the loaded meanings which this term bears.

One must mention also the special nature of Native American languages, which contrasts with our understanding of language and our use of words. In Native languages the understanding is that the meaning *is* in the sound, it *is* in the word; the word is not a symbol for a meaning which has been abstracted out, word and meaning are together in one experience. Thus, to name a being, for example an animal, is actually to conjure up the powers latent in that animal. Added to this is the fact that when we create words we use our breath, and for these people and these traditions breath is associated with the principle of life; breath is life itself. And so if a word is born from this sacred principle of breath, this lends an added sacred dimension to the spoken word. It is because of this special feeling about words that people avoid using sacred personal names, because they contain the power of the beings named, and if you use them too much the power becomes dissipated. So usually one has to refer to a per-



son in a very circuitous manner, or use a term which expresses relationship.

In this context one must also emphasize the positive values that could be attached to non-literacy. I use that term rather than illiteracy, which connotes the *inability* to read and write, which is negative and derogatory. Too often we have branded people as being backward and uncivilized if they are *illiterate,* whereas one can make a strong case for the advantages of growing up and living in a society which is *non-literate.* For in such a society all the lore which is central and sacred to the culture is borne *within* the individual in a living manner; you do not have to go outside of yourself, for all that is essential to life is carried with you, is ever-present. It seems that where you have people who are non-literate in this positive sense, you tend to have a special quality of person, a quality of being that cannot be described—a very different quality from that of the literate person. It has been my experience when among primal peoples in many parts of the world that there is something here that is very special.

Paralleling this primal concept of language, and of the word not as "symbol" but as an immediate event, is the quality of experiencing the visual arts and crafts. I should stress first of all that for primal peoples generally there is no dichotomy between the arts and crafts, in the manner that our art historians insist on, where art is one kind of thing that can be placed on a mantelpiece or hung on the wall, and the craft item is inferior because it is made for utilitarian ends. This seems to me a most artificial distinction and I think it is time that we outgrew it; indeed there is today evidence that we *are* reevaluating such prejudiced dichotomies. For why cannot a utilitarian object also be beautiful? All necessary implements, utensils, and tools in Native American life-ways are of technical excellence and are also beautiful. They must be made in special sacred ways, and the materials of the tools and objects made have to be gathered with prayer and offerings. Beauty and truth are here one! When a Pomo basketmaker, for example, goes out to collect the grasses for her basket, she prays to the grasses, she enters into a relationship with them as she gathers, and makes offerings in return for having taken their life. When a woman weaves a basket she will pass the grass between her lips to moisten it, but also to breathe upon it, to give her life breath into the grass and thus give to the basket a special sacred quality that is always present in its use and tangible presence.

Through these few selected examples which have been given, I am suggesting that, where such traditions are still alive and spiritually viable, there tend to be present, within all of life's necessary activities, dimensions and expressions of the sacred. Actions of such quality could therefore be considered to manifest a ritual element in the sense that they tend to *order* life around and toward a Center. In this context, however, one must also speak of those special great rites and ceremonies, many often related to the seasonal cycles, which serve not just to support continuing orientations toward the sacred in everyday activities, but work for the *intensification* of such Presence and experience; such rites may also be the source and origin of new rites, ceremonies, and other sacred expressions through the visual arts, songs, or special dance forms.

One example of a ritual complex which is central to the lives of Plains people is the well known "vision" or "guardian spirit quest." This ritualized retreat is for the benefit of the individual man and woman, and yet means are present for the eventual sharing of received vision powers or messages with the larger community. After rigorous preparations, which always include the rites of the purifying sweat lodge and instructions by a qualified elder, the candidate goes to a high and remote place with the resolve to fast and pray continually and to suffer through acts of sacrifice and exposure to the elements for a specified number of days. The ordeal is highly ritualized and may involve the establishing of

an altar, or the setting out of poles at the center and to the four directions of space. The person may also be instructed to remain within this established space and not to move about casually but to walk only out from the center to each of the poles in turn, always returning to the center. Prayers may be addressed to the powers of the four directions, and one may also use repetitive prayers such as the one the Lakota Black Elk has given us: "Grandfather, Great Mysterious, have pity on me." One may also remain silent, for it has been said that "silence *is* the voice of *Wakan-Tanka,* the *Great Mysterious.*" If tired, one may sleep, for dreams of power may come to the candidate in this manner; yet it is understood that the true vision is of greater power than the dream. Often the sacred experience comes in the mysterious appearance of an animal or a winged being, or perhaps in one of the powers of nature. A special message is often communicated to the seeker, and this will serve as a guide and reminder throughout the person's life. After three or four days one returns to camp where a sweat lodge has again been prepared; within this lodge the candidate will explain the vision or dream which will be interpreted by the guiding elder, who will then give instructions as to what should now be accomplished in order to insure the continuity of the participation of the spiritual throughout the person's life. From such experiences have come the "medicine bundles" with rich and complex rites specific to each bundle and their ceremonial opening on special occasions. They have also been the origin of sacred types of art forms, such as the painted shields, or special songs of power, or even the great ritual dances, such as the horse dance, involving four groups of eight horses not representing, but *being* the powers of the four directions of space. It is in this manner that something of the sacred experience which had come to a particular individual is shared by all members of the larger community.

What is remarkable about the rites of the vision quest among the Plains peoples is that it is accomplished not just by special people as is the case in the Arctic, but that every man or woman after the age of puberty is expected to participate either once or even continually throughout his or her life.

What concerns us in this example is not just the detailed pattern of the ritual elements of the quest as such, which can encompass a multitude of very diverse possibilities, but that here we have one sample as a model of traditional ritual structures and acts which must involve initial purification, choice of appropriate site, the defining and delimiting of a special sacred place, and the fixing of a center. Further, ritualized *actions* are prescribed for the participant, which means that participation is not just with the mind, or a part of one's being, but with the totality of who one is. Also provided are means for continuity and development of the sacred experiences received, and the eventual responsibility for sharing something of them with the larger community.

As complement to the individually oriented "vision quest," one could mention the great communal "Sun Dance," referred to by different terms across the Plains groups. For this great complex of solemn rites, ceremonies, fasting, sacred song and dance fulfills not just the particular spiritual needs of the actively participating individuals, but also those of the entire tribal group gathered in circular camp for the occasion. The event is indeed for the welfare of the entire world. These are ceremonies, interspersed with special sacred rites, which celebrate world and life renewal at the time of spring. The ritualized dance forms again involve orientation around and towards a center which is either the sun itself or the cottonwood tree as axis of the world, standing at the center of a circular frame lodge carefully constructed in imitation of the cosmos. The ritual and ceremonial language of the total celebration speaks to and encompasses a plurality of spiritual possibilities at the levels of micro-

cosm, macrocosm, and metacosm. It is believed by many that should the sacrificial rites of this "thirst lodge" be neglected or forgotten, the energy of the world will run out and the cycle in which we are living will close. It is an example to the world that these rites and ceremonies are far from being neglected, for today in ever increasing numbers the people are participating and are finding renewed strength and spiritual resolve.

All spiritually effective rites must accomplish three cumulative possibilities which may be termed purification, expansion—wholeness or virtue—and identity. A ritual means which embodies these possibilities may be found in the sacred nature and use of the Plains Indian tobacco pipe, the smoking of which constitutes a communion. The shape of the pipe with its stem, bowl or "heart," and foot, is identified with the human person. In purifying the pipe before a ritual smoking there is an analogy to man's own purification; for in concentrating on the hollow of the straight stem leading to the bowl comes the understanding that one's mind should be this straight and pure. In filling the bowl of the pipe a prayer is said for each grain of tobacco in such a manner that everything in the world is mentioned. The filled bowl or the heart of man, in thus containing all possibilities, is then the universe. Finally the fire which is put to the tobacco is the Presence of the ultimate all-inclusive Principle, *Wakan Tanka,* the "Great Mysterious." In smoking the pipe through the aid of breath the totality of all creation is absorbed within this ultimate Principle. And since in the pipe there is a grain of tobacco identified with the one who smokes, there is here enacted a sacrificial communion of identity. With this understanding, the phrase "we are all related," recited by the individual or group after the smoking, takes on the deepest possible meaning.

I will sum up by simply saying that in all that I have tried to speak of in such brief fashion, we have expressions through different means of a special quality among traditional peoples that could be called oneness of experience: a lack of dichotomizing or fragmenting, a unity in the word and in visual image. In the painted image, for example, the understanding is that in that being that is represented, or even in a depicted part of that being—the paw of a bear, let us say—all the power of the animal is present. One can draw from all Native American cultures examples to reinforce such interpretation. One final example I will use is that of the Navajo dry painting or "sand painting" as it is sometimes called. These are made in a rich ceremonial context for the curing of individuals who have gotten out of balance with their world. They are long ceremonies which can go on for four or five or up to ten days, during which time sacred chants are used with all the meaning of the *word* as I have tried to explain it. At a certain moment during the ceremony the ill person is placed at the center of one of the dry paintings; the understanding is that the person thus becomes identified with the power that is in the image painted on the earth with colored sand and pollen. And the singer takes some of the painted image and presses it to the body of the ill person, again to emphasize this element of identity: the painting is not a symbol of some meaning or power, the power *is* there present in it, and as the person identifies with it the appropriate cure is accomplished.

I conclude with this portion of a Navajo chant:

> The mountains, I become part of it . . .
> The herbs, the fir tree, I become part of it.
> The morning mists, the clouds, the gathering waters,
> I become part of it.
> The wilderness, the dew drops, the pollen . . .
> I become part of it.

And in the context of other chants, there is always the conclusion that indeed, I *am* the universe. We are not separate, but are one.◇

EPICYCLE:

# White Buffalo Woman

There is a story about the way the pipe first came to us. A very long time ago, they say, two scouts were out looking for bison; and when they came to the top of a high hill and looked north, they saw something coming a long way off, and when it came closer they cried out, "It is a woman!," and it was. Then one of the scouts, being foolish, had bad thoughts and spoke them; but the other said: "That is a sacred woman; throw all bad thoughts away." When she came still closer, they saw that she wore a fine white buckskin dress, that her hair was very long and that she was very young and very beautiful. And she knew their thoughts and said in a voice that was like singing: "You do not know me, but if you want to do as you think, you may come." And the foolish one went; but just as he stood before her, there was a white cloud that came and covered them. And the beautiful young woman came out of the cloud, and when it blew away the foolish man was a skeleton covered with worms.

Then the woman spoke to the one who was not foolish: "You shall go home and tell your people that I am coming and that a big tepee shall be built for me in the center of the nation." And the man, who was very much afraid, went quickly and told the people, who did at once as they were told; and there around the big tepee they waited for the sacred woman. And after a while she came, very beautiful and singing, and as she went into the tepee this is what she sang:

"With visible breath I am walking.
A voice I am sending as I walk.
In a sacred manner I am walking.
With visible tracks I am walking.
In a sacred manner I walk."

And as she sang, there came from her mouth a white cloud that was good to smell. Then she gave something to the chief, and it was a pipe with a bison calf carved on one side to mean the earth that bears and

*Painting by Frithjof Schuon*

feeds us, and with twelve eagle feathers hanging from the stem to mean the sky and the twelve moons, and these were tied with a grass that never breaks, "Behold!" she said. "With this you shall multiply and be a good nation. Nothing but good shall come from it. Only the hands of the good shall take care of it and the bad shall not even see it." Then she sang again and went out of the tepee; and as the people watched her going, suddenly it was a white bison galloping away and snorting, and soon it was gone.

This they tell, and whether it happened so or not I do not know; but if you think about it, you can see that it is true. ◇

*From* Black Elk Speaks *by John G. Neihardt, copyright John G. Neihardt 1932, 1959, 1961, published by Simon and Schuster Pocket Books and the University of Nebraska Press.*

# *Nobility and Style*

## *by Robertson Davies*

Since first it appeared in 1932, Aldous Huxley's anthology, *Texts and Pretexts,* has been a book to which I recur, never less than once a year; although it abounds in the whimwhams and perversities of thought which made Huxley one of the most infuriating writers of his time, it is also full of the splendid things which made him dear. When I was asked to write something about Ceremony, I thought at once of the passage with which that book concludes:

> People will accept certain theological statements about life and the world, will elect to perform certain rites and to follow certain rules of conduct, not because they imagine the statements to be true or the rules and rites to be divinely dictated, but simply because they have discovered experimentally that to live in a certain ritual rhythm, under certain ethical restraints, and as if certain metaphysical doctrines were true, is to live nobly, with style. Every art has its conventions which every artist must accept. The greatest, the most important of the arts is living.

Ah, but who regards living as an art? We all know dreadful people who do not scruple to talk of what they call "gracious living," by which they mean some observances with which they have overlaid their natural vulgarity. They are the people who ask you if you would "care" to pass the "conserves" when they want the pickles; they are great users of sugar-tongs and gadgets for holding ears of corn. They always leave some of their food on the plate, to show that they have a delicate appetite; their stomachs never ache, they are "upset," and they never belch, but "repeat." Their school of manners is the TV set, when it is busy with commercials. They have no smell, except a costly one from a bottle.

Their ceremonials are equally dismal. When they eat at a public meeting, they are asked to "honor their head table," as the "chairperson" (such people have no discernible sex on public occasions) asks each head table guest to stand, strictly in order of precedence; applause must be "withheld" until all are standing, or at least crouched in a jack-knife posture above their chairs. When a patriotic air is played or sung, such people may be seen placing the right hand upon the left breast, markedly higher than the real position of the heart. Before they eat their meal in public it is very likely that a clergyman extemporizes a request to Someone (take care there, Rev., for not all present are Christians even in the nominal sense) to add some supernatural essence, rarely specified, to the food. But it is unkind to jeer at them, for they are reaching, however ineptly, toward ceremonial, without which public life cannot be carried on.

Their children, who are strong in their rejection of ceremony, are nevertheless apt to harden their own public pleasures into ceremonial forms. Are the ritual ecstasies that greet pop singers all spontaneous ebullitions? No; they are expected, and they are forthcoming, because without them the sense of a great occasion would be diminished.

What is wrong with these ceremonial dabblings is that they are shallowly rooted. But when a crowd gathers at the site of John Lennon's murder a year later, singing one of his songs and holding lighted candles, the roots are deeper, for this is reverence for a figure who attained, in the consciousness of many people, the stature of a saint. Nobody compels these people to be there; they have sought out a shrine, and perhaps they hope for a blessing. They have, however vague it may be, a faith, and their ceremonious observance takes strength and dignity from that faith. They are living, not "graciously" but deeply, and grace comes as a consequence.

One reason why modern man so often

fails to live deeply is that he knows too much, and too much of what he knows is trivial. He knows that he lives in a democracy, but he would be hard pressed to define what democracy means. He knows that religion is exploded and God is dead, but he thinks religion is primarily concerned with ethical conduct, which can be managed pretty well without it, and he has never given two minutes of serious consideration to what the word God might mean. He considers himself the equal of any man, but acknowledges that the famous and the rich are "different." What he considers to be fame is widely variable, but often seems more truly describable as notoriety. He is certain that he is free, and at the same time he is painfully aware of a network of taxes and regulations which, if he heard of them as existing in a country with a different ideology from his own, he would condemn as intolerable oppression.

A free man, untroubled by superstition, as good as anybody else, what need has he of ceremonial? To return to Huxley, he feels no desire to live nobly, because the concept of nobility never occurs to him, and he would laugh if it were suggested that his life might be regarded as a work of art. Yet this man clings to certain ceremonials, and invents new ones. Can it be that ceremonial has some archetypal source and thus cannot be banished by mere will? Can it be that society arranges itself in psychological patterns of which ceremonials are the outward signs?

One of the things that most sharply differentiates this free man from his ancestors is that he can read and write. In the pride of this new accomplishment modern man has forgotten in some important respects how to see—to see the world about him and his fellow men. Of late, sociologists have written a good deal about what they call "body language," meaning the signs and signals by which people show what they are and what they intend without speech, and sometimes without being conscious of what they are doing. But some of us have never forgotten body language; we grew up with a strong awareness of it, and a great many other social signals which are not included in it.

This consciousness, which I had long possessed, became sharply focused in my mind on May 12, 1937, when I attended, as a member of the press, the Coronation of King George VI. Revelations of this kind do not really come in a flash; there is long preparation of which we are not strongly aware, and in this instance that preparation included the death of the old king, George V (I was at Oxford at the time and the vice-chancellor sent out an order that the university should go into mourning for a week, and black ties must be worn on all occasions), which was followed by the proclamation, and subsequent abdication, of Edward VIII. What, I remember asking myself, was all this kingly business? I had been brought up to it—I am a Canadian—but I had never thought much about it. But when I was briefed as part of the Canadian press corps that was to attend the Coronation, I thought about it a good deal.

At Oxford my chief study was Shakespeare, and of course I knew that—

> 'Tis not the balm, the sceptre and the ball,
> The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
> The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
> The farced title running 'fore the king,
> The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
> That beats upon the high shore of this
> world,
> No, not all these, thrice gorgeous ceremony,
> Not all these, laid in bed majestical
> Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,
> Who with a body fill'd and vacant mind
> Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful
> bread;
> Never sees horrid night, the child of hell,
> But, like a lackey, from the rise to set
> Sweats in the eye of Phoebus, and all night
> Sleeps in Elysium.

But, thought I, it is a king who speaks, and he knows how hard his father wrought, killing King Richard II, in order

that the balm, the scepter and the ball should belong to him and his descendants. Are these outward shows of kingliness of any significance?

So off I went to the great ceremonial, and when I had climbed up into the press area in the triforium of Westminster Abbey, very smart as I thought in my hired morning dress, I discovered what the press of the world thought about the Coronation of a king.

They were gorgeous. Pressmen and women of every European country, in full dress (for the white tie and tails, contrary to a widespread belief on this continent, is ceremonial and court dress, and is not worn solely in the evening) over which they wore the robes, often splendid, of their academic degrees. Only the Americans were dressed like myself, and we felt somewhat rebuked by all this grandeur. This was before the days of television, so the scruffy gnomes who operate the cameras, and intrude them between the auditors and whatever is going on at so many modern ceremonies, were not to be seen. As the press, we were very high up in the great church, and at some distance from the scene of the actual crowning, though it was visible to us. This was also before the days when the news people, aggressive in their assertion that they represent millions who cannot be bodily present, take over on so many public occasions. That is a new thing in society, accepted humbly by those who have actually taken the trouble to be on hand when something important is being done. It is not of long standing, despite the words of St. Luke, that on a famous occasion "he sought to see Jesus who he was, and could not for the press."

Perched high up as I was, I saw what was happening. Although the ceremony went at a good pace, it took hours as the balm, the scepter and the ball, the sword, the mace, the crown imperial were all deployed before the slight man who received them with dignity and an obvious humility. It was the humility that I had not foreseen, nor the dominating part played in this ceremonial by the priests. The making of a king was not a show, but a sacrament. Simple young man that I was, I suddenly understood that all the principal participants

in this affair were taking it with the uttermost seriousness, not as a pageant for the world, but as a great act of dedication, and the assumption of a symbolic significance.

Much time was taken by the Homage paid by all the peers of the realm, in order of precedence, as they approached the king's chair, climbed the few steps to it, knelt and swore their fealty. One, too old, was singularized when the king went down the steps to him, an act of courtesy toward years and infirmity which was knightly, for the king must be, before all else, a gentleman, and loses nothing in dignity when he behaves like one. But my Shakespearean studies nudged me as the Homage was in progress, and I realized that I was seeing in reality what I had known only as theory: that at no time must anyone's head be higher than the king's when that person is in immediate proximity to the king and has the king's attention. Many things began to fall into place for me.

Conduct in church, for instance. When we enter a church of a sacramental faith—Roman Catholic, Anglican, Episcopalian—we make a brief obeisance, bending the knee, before we take our seats. Why? Because the form of those churches is essentially that of the great hall in a medieval noble house. At one end, usually the east end, is the table of the ruler of that house, and we, as his liegemen and vassals, acknowledge his presence, humbly kneeling before him just as we might have done a thousand years ago. When we make our supplications we also kneel: short of lying face to the ground, it is the posture of reverent submission. The church is the hall of the greatest of all kings, and lights burning in the sanctuary assure us that He is there, though invisible except, sometimes, in the form of the sacramental wafer which is exhibited in a special vessel. Nobody passes in front of the altar without acknowledging it with a low bow, or a genuflection. And when we formally declare our allegiance and belief in this king, we turn toward the East, if we are not already facing in that direction, because it is there that this very special king is supposed, for ceremonial purposes, to reside. One's face must always be toward the king: in court etiquette it is usual to retreat backward three paces before turning away.

Similar ceremonial courtesy is extended to representatives of the earthly monarch, in the courtrooms of the country where I live. Everybody stands when the judge makes his appearance, and whenever he stands subsequently, everyone is expected to rise. Courts in Canada retain a great deal of ceremonial, sometimes to the astonishment of visitors from the United States. The judge, who represents the Crown, sits higher—sometimes very much higher—than anyone else, for nobody's head may be higher than the king's. He wears handsome robes that make him the most remarkable and easily recognizable figure in court. Lawyers may not appear without their robes—special robes for Queen's Counsel—and the judge will not hear a lawyer who is not properly robed. The judge is addressed as My Lord, and woe betide the barrister who is so careless as to forget it. He is not formally rebuked, but a steely glance is usually enough to jog his memory. He may be an old school or university friend of the man who sits on the bench, but when the king's business is to be done that cuts no ice at all.

A quaint and perhaps tedious persistence from the past? Young lawyers of radical tendency sometimes inveigh against it, but they make no impact, for everybody of experience knows that this sort of ceremonial conduct helps the work of the court by setting it in a framework wholly different from that of common life, where ancient and possibly archetypal forms of behavior expedite what may be very modern legislation. Every man is equal before the law, but let no man think that he is equal to the law.

The university is another world in which ceremonial gives weight to a rite of passage. The bestowing of degrees is ac-

complished with ceremonial that differs from one university to another, but the essential form is fixed. At least, it is so in Canada, of which country alone I am qualified to speak in this context. As the name of each recipient of a degree is called by a presenter, the candidate approaches the chancellor, kneels on a stool before him, and places his hands between the chancellor's, who whispers the words of admission in his ear. I have watched this happen hundreds of times, and the effect on the newly created bachelor, or master, or doctor, varies greatly. Some are overcome with blushes, some smile radiantly, some are eager to remain cool, but very few are obviously unmoved. When I took my degree at Oxford it was literally impossible to be unmoved, for the vice-chancellor hit each candidate a thumping blow on the side of the head with a Bible, a gesture of admonition worthy of a Zen master.

Convocation is a ceremonial against which some young people rebel, and it is of interest that they are usually women and usually achievers of degrees in sociology. They approach the chancellor with a minatory glare, and thrust out a hand, which he shakes. Why sociologists, who study the nature and development of society, are particularly resistant to an ancient custom, I do not know, but I suspect that it is a refusal to bow the knee to any other human creature, especially a man. That they are, in truth, recognizing in the person of the chancellor, so dehumanized by his gold-embroidered robe, the bounty and goodwill and eminence of the institution which has nourished them will, I suppose, break in upon them later.

It is often hard for young people to see another human being as a symbol, rather than an individual. But the chancellor knows what he is, and his acceptance of his ceremonial office is usually tinged with humor. I recall one young woman who approached the chancellor of a great university with fire in her eye, but plainly with terror in her heart, for she said in a tremulous whisper, "I refuse to accept my degree from a man whom I know to be a Tool of the Big Interests." "Oh, that's all right, dear," said the chancellor with a grin, as he seized her hand and wrung it warmly. Tool as he might be in his private capacity, he knew who he was at that moment, and he knew how to make the party go.

There are people who deeply and sincerely mistrust and reject all ceremonial, and society makes allowance for them. They are the people who will not swear that they will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth when they appear in court (usually as witnesses, for they are in most cases people of unimpeachable ethical rigor), but they will make a solemn asseveration, which comes to the same thing. They are the people who will not take off their hats when a national anthem is played, protesting that their loyalty is not a matter of formal observance. They are the students who will not consent to appear at Convocation, for the essence of their degree lies in what they have achieved, and no ceremony can confirm it. They are often valuable people, though their aggressive high principle sometimes makes them uncomfortable company.

Their dislike of ceremonial springs from the same root that impelled so many of the Church fathers to condemn the theater. Vain shows and pretenses are certain to be corrupting. The assumption of roles—as the representative of the monarch in court, the intermediary for God in church, the learning and benevolence of a university at a Convocation—is bad for the man who takes on such dignities, and delusive to those who conspire with him in such an assumption. They are the people who, in an earlier time, espoused the rigors of Puritanism, and who in an even earlier time protested against the development of the Mass because it seemed to them to be theatrical. They are ridden by the hobgoblin of sincerity, which seems always in their view to mean a severely reductive attitude toward

all the things of this world.

They are good people, so long as they do not go too far, but their zeal may push them to extremes. If they are John Miltons we value them; but Miltons are rare. Too often their model seems to be Praise-God Barebones, and they are the image-smashers, the picture-slashers, the theater-closers, and the haters of all art. They are no friends of women, and the ages in which they have held most influence have been bad times for what they do not scruple to call the weaker sex, born to obey.

The ceremonialists, on the other hand, though they may often be silly, and morally lax, and slip imperceptibly into government corruption, are the friends of art, the friends of women, and promoters of *la douceur de vivre,* insofar as they understand it. Balance and reason in all things is the answer, as the Greeks so tediously, and rightly, insisted.

There is one place in which I wish that there were less of this puritanism in our own day, less of this aggressive leveling, and that is the theater. As a playgoer of fifty years' experience, I have grown weary of productions of Shakespeare and other classical drama, in which ceremonial is not given its due. The fall of a tragic figure is not especially terrible if he has been represented for four of the five acts as simply one of the boys. If Hamlet is not a prince, why is his predicament especially impressive? If Macbeth is not a regicide, and therefore a blasphemer, he is simply a Scottish tough driven onward by a woman of inordinate ambition. A distressed young man and a greedy power-grabber are interesting enough, but if they are not shown in the context Shakespeare understood and gave words to over and over again, they are not the people the playwright intended them to be. I long once again to see a Shakespearean production in which nobody's head rises higher than that of the monarch until he is plainly being pushed from his place of power. Hamlet may clap Rosencrantz and Guildenstern on the shoulder, but they must not beat him and thump him about like modern undergraduates. Hamlet may long to kill the King, but he must be aware that too much killing of kings has created the situation in which he suffers. In *Troilus and Cressida* the wise Ulysses says it loud and clear:

> O, when degree is shaked,
> Which is the ladder of all high designs,
> The enterprise is sick! How could
> communities,
> Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in
> cities,
> Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
> The primogenitive and due of birth,
> Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurel,
> But by degree, stand in authentic place?
> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And hark what discord follows! each thing
> meets
> In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
> Should lift their bosoms higher than the
> shores,
> And make a sop of all this solid globe;
> Strength should be lord of imbecility,
> And the rude son should strike the father
> dead;
> Force should be right; or rather, right and
> wrong,
> Between whose endless jar justice resides,
> Should lose their names, and so should
> justice too.
> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite;
> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power
> Must make perforce an universal prey,
> And last eat up himself.

And so on. Everybody knows it, except perhaps the gentlemen who seek to make Shakespeare real to us by making him unreal to himself.

Unreal also, of course, to us and to our world. The archetype of order and degree, expressing itself in ceremonies, is not dead, and when it stirs again from its sleep we should be careful that it is not in its negative form it manifests itself anew. For if that were to happen what hope have we of living nobly, and with style? ◇

# *Ceremony for a Dying Planet*

*by Doris Lessing*

*Their planet was dying, slowly freezing to death, and there was nothing that anyone on Planet 8, or their Representatives, or even their guardians on Canopus, could do about it, except keep trying, desperately but without desperation, until the end, which was completely inevitable, but in no way final, or without hope.*

It was this pressure on us that made our more tender-minded Representatives agree to think again about our lake. Our ocean. A ceremony was made of it. All the populations of the valleys round about, and delegations from every part of our planet, stood along the edges of our ocean. It was a sombre, grey morning, and the crowds were silent and grey. From where we stood on the low hills on one side of the stretch of water, we could see a greyish brown huddling of people around the far shores. We Representatives were on the shore nearest the wall, and we could see, far over the mountains on the other side of the water, a light greyish blue sky that seemed still to smile. Populations under threat know silences that they understand nothing of in lighthearted times. The people around me could be observed turning their faces about, to look into other faces; all were silent, or speaking only in very low voices, and it came into my mind that the reason for this deep attentiveness was because they

were, we all were, *listening*. Everything we had to do was difficult and hateful to us, we were not at ease with even the smallest and most ordinary and often-repeated things in our daily lives, from the putting on of the heavy coats to the preparing of the fatty meat which was our staple food; not at ease in our sleep that was always threatened by cold creeping in from somewhere, a heavy weight of cold that seemed to subside into us, like water soaking clay; not at ease even in the stretching out of a hand or a smile, for our bodies and faces seemed always too light and friable for what they had to do and had to express. There seemed to be nothing left to us that was instinctive and therefore joyful, or ordinarily pleasurable. We were foreign to ourselves as much as to our surroundings. And therefore groups, and crowds, sank easily and often into silences. As if this sense, hearing, was being pressed into service in default of other senses which we needed and lacked. We *listened*—the eyes of every one of us had in them always a look of waiting to hear or receive some news, or message or information.

There had been some of us Representatives who had said that we ought to make of this occasion, the dedicating of our lake to usefulness and productivity, a ceremony of songs and chants, contrasting the bleakness of our present time with the past. The so recent past . . . it was only the young children there who did not remember our lake set blue and bright among the greens and yellows of foliage. What need of a formal ritual of memory? Our stretch of shining waters had been blue, and had been green, and there had been little white wavelets on it. Brown rocks had made diving places all around the amazingly and improbably coloured shores . . . living always in dun and grey and dirt colour, the hues of a warmed and fruitful land come to seem extraordinary, almost impossible. Had we stood here, we people of our stricken planet—stood here and looked at lively brown bodies diving and swimming in sky-reflecting waters? We had danced and sung around these shores on warm nights when these soft dark waters had seemed crammed with stars? We *had?* Well, we knew we had, and we told our younger children about it all . . . and their eyes, puzzling at our faces, said they believed it all as they believed the legends we had been given by Canopus to repeat to them. For Canopus had told us Representatives a thousand tales that would prepare the minds of our people for understanding our role as a planet among planets, and how we were cherished and fed and watched over by Canopus. I myself remember how, as a small child, I was taken out on to a hillside by the Representatives of that time, with other children, on a soft warm night, and shown how a certain brilliant star, low on the horizon, was Canopus, our fostering and nurturing star. I remember how I fought with my own mind to take it all in, how I matched the rustling of the grasses around me, the familiar warmth of my parents' hands, and the pleasant smell of their flesh, with the thought: that shining thing up there, that little shine, is a world, like ours, like our planet here, and I must remember

when I look at that star that it is a world, and my Maker.

I remember how I part-understood, partially accepted. And how the legends and tales sank into my mind and fed it, and made in me a place that I could enter at will, to refresh myself, and to feed myself with largeness and wholeness. But it had not been easy, that slow change, monitored always (as I knew, though with difficulty) by Canopus.

What our task was that cold day looking out across the grey water was to hear from each other, and to understand, that this sacredness, this untouched wonder of a place, which we had swum in and played in but never never desecrated—was now to be farmed as we had once farmed nearly all the planet. As we still did farm the small area around the pole that was thrust forward—slightly, only very slightly—into our sun's fruitful light. Yes, we were making use of our slight, almost imperceptible "summer." We would harvest from our "ocean" the creatures in it, but carefully, for there were many of us, and not so many of them that we could take as much as we liked.

The Representatives for the Keeping of the Lake, its Guardians, named Rivalin, stood forth from the silent crowds, and got into a boat that was decorated and made as cheerful as we could contrive with our now so limited resources of vegetation—some garlands made of lichens, and stalks of grain—and sailed out a little way from our chilly shores, and stood there on the deck, holding up the new instruments, for all to see. They were nets, and all kinds of lines with hooks, and spears and harpoons. These last were because there were tales that deep in the centre of our lake were monsters. Sometimes people had drowned, though not often, and it was said they had been taken down into the deeps of the lake by these great creatures no one had ever seen. And which never had existed—or at least, we never saw them.

Something happened when the Representatives lifted up the new weapons, high above their heads, and turned them around to show us. A groan or cry came out from the crowds, and this sound, which had been pressed out of us, frightened us all. There were moments of wild lament. For what? Because our necessity made us violate what had previously been sacred to us? It was not only on our shore that this wild groaning cry rose up from the people. All around the edges of the lake, people had gone out in boats with the implements of catching the creatures of the water, and from every shore had come this keening dirge.

And when the brief moment of the lament was over, there was silence again, the deep listening silence. ◇

*From* The Making of the Representative for Planet 8 *by Doris Lessing. Copyright © 1982 by Doris Lessing, reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.*

# *Tennessee Heritage*

*by Francelia Butler*

Tennessee is a peculiar state. It is not really Southern, and though its eastern section fought on the Yankee side in the Civil War, it is not really Northern, as most of its residents would be quick to say. It is not what one generally thinks of as Eastern, nor is it Western—though if one watched the wild rodeos in Knoxville, one might think it more Western than the West.

For nearly two centuries it has attracted idealists to a surprising degree—people seeking not so much group independence, as the Pilgrim Fathers did in Massachusetts, but individual perfection within the group. Even before the American Revolution, there was Priber's Kingdom of Paradise, a democratic society founded by a German for the Cherokee Indians. It worked blissfully until Priber was shot for perverting British rule. Then, in the early nineteenth century, there was Nashoba, a colony where slaves could work to buy their freedom. The Marquis de Lafayette, who helped win the American Revolution, was sympathetically interested in it as was Fanny Trollope, writer and mother of the novelist, Anthony. Gossip helped to destroy Nashoba—the possibility that the white leaders were sexually interested in the black workers.

Nothing is left of Priber's Kingdom, nor of Nashoba, either, except for a grove of trees near the Memphis Airport.

Much later in the nineteenth century, Thomas Y. Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's School Days,* developed a pretty village, Rugby, in northeastern Tennessee for the younger sons of British noblemen. The village failed for various reasons. Some said that the young men preferred riding to the hounds to planting crops. The charming English-style village remains, including a library frozen in time—no books have been added or subtracted since the 1880s. Also founded in Tennessee was the first American commune strongly influenced by Karl Marx. This commune, some thirty miles south of Nashville, lasted for nearly eight years at the turn of the century, but failed, too, and is now a ghost town. My mother-in-law, one of the members, said it failed because everyone wanted to be boss, but Upton Sinclair, in his novel, *Oil,* attributed the failure to sexual promiscuity. (When I asked my mother-in-law about this, she slapped my face, which makes me wonder if it isn't true.)

Besides these individualistic experimenters, there were many escapees, whole groups of people breaking into freedom for socio-economic rather than religious reasons. On mountain plateaus or in charming coves in the green valleys are the descendants of indentured workers brought over to the East coast from England in the eighteenth century. Rather than serve endless years of drudgery as bonded servants to wealthy planters, these people ran westward. Traces of their earlier cultural heritage are everywhere—in the dulcimers, for instance, of varying sizes, often made of poplar wood because of its tone. A maker "listens to a log," then cuts and seasons the wood. Strings are either gut or "store bought," sold by mountain peddlers. "Do any of you men play the dulcimer?" I asked a group of men near the Alabama border. "There are divers of us who plays," was the quaint reply.

But to me, the most interesting vestige of their earlier culture is to be found in the church services. To these services, mountaineers sometimes bring their dulcimers of various shapes—like long rectangular boxes, or tear-shaped, or hourglass-shaped. They sit and play with the instrument across their legs, and a wild turkey feather to pluck the strings, which are held down with a hickory chip. Either they play by ear or from the ancient hymn books with "shapenotes" that are triangular or square for modal music. The tunes have the raucous, monotonal sound of old ballads, as some of them originally were. Men in overalls sit on rude backless benches on one side of the room, women in plain dresses on the other, while up in front are a few people in the "Amen" corner, their function being to comment emotionally on the words of the preacher, observations which are then echoed by the congregation.

So far as I am aware, no one has ever noticed the metaphysical nature of these services, which sometimes consist of a series of meditations entered into dramatically by the congregation: a ritual that strongly suggests the format of the Jesuit meditation. Since each religion inherits from the one which precedes it, it is curious but should not be surprising to hear and see a service with Jesuit undertones in a primitive Baptist church. In England in the seventeenth century, the Jesuits encouraged a kind of meditation that brought together the senses, the emotions, and the intellectual faculties, sometimes with highly unconventional imagery. This method of meditation was so striking that it not only influenced metaphysical poets such as John Donne, but also cultivated the basic, the lower levels of the spirit, so that it became part of the duties of every man in daily life. It combined very well, as Louis Martz writes in *The Poetry of Meditation,* "with the older traditions of primer and private prayer, and with the inward surge of Puritanism, to produce in the seventeenth century an era of religious fervor unmatched in English history."

Whether the mountain services have been influenced by the meditational practices of their forebears or not, they have brought into American spiritual heritage a strikingly similar meditational form. Sometimes a service consists of five meditational units, dramatizations of the stories of the Tower of Babel, the Sacrifice of Isaac, the Judgment of Solomon, the Prodigal Son, and the Rolling Away of the Stone from the Sepulcher (the mountain preachers pronounced it the seventeenth-century way, with the accent on the second syllable). Characteristically, in one such service, after the first two meditations, the congregation took their benches out into the yard to sit on while they "partook of a feast"—a cold meal of corncake cooked in the ashes, blackberry jam, chitlins, stack cake with sauce made from sun-dried apples between the seven thin layers, chess pie of honey and eggs, and spring water (kept in fruit jars stored under the seats).

Meditations often begin with a question asked by the preacher: "Why were the people scattered who built the Tower of Babel?" The answer comes in reading a selection about the episode from the Bible (contemplation), then having the congregation get into the experience by acting out the story (illumination), and finally, having them come out of the experience (purgation) with deeper understanding of its meaning in their own lives.

Specifically, in a primitive Baptist church in the mountains of Belvidere, Tennessee, Preacher Winn asked if there was anyone in the room "what can read." Sister Della stepped proudly forward: "I kin, Preacher." Clearly, Preacher Winn knew the selection by heart. He told her to read from Genesis, Chapter 11. She read slowly, verse by verse, and as she read, he cupped his hand to one ear and leaned toward her to savor every word. After each verse he would make an enthusiastic comment echoed by the Amen corner and the congregation:

"And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech."

"You hear that, folks? The whole earth!"

"Amen!"

"And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there."

"That's were they dwelt. The good book says that and hit don't lie."

"No indeed! Hit don't lie."

"And they said to one another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

"That's what they used. Slime for mortar. Jes' like we use this here red clay."

"Yes indeed!"

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven! and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

"They warn't satisfied with what the Lord give them. Oh no!"

"Oh no!"

"They was a-goin' to build a tower with a top reachin' right up to God's heaven!"

"Amen!"

"And they wanted folks to look up to them. They didn't want to be scattered over the face of the earth. 'Deed they didn't!"

"No indeed! Amen!"

"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded."

"The Lord come down and took a look at what they done. They didn't reckon on that."

"No indeed!"

"They didn't care a snuffbox full what the Lord wanted."

"No indeed!"

"And he seen what they was up to."

"Yes indeed. Amen."

"And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do."

"The Lord seen they is up to all the

devilment they're a mind to. That's what the Lord seen. And He didn't like hit no way."

"No way! Amen!"

"Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

"He seen they was a-gettin' too feisty and it was time he stepped in!"

"That He did! Amen!"

"So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city."

"Amen! Praise the Lord!"

Preacher Winn and the congregation had now contemplated and commented on the story of the tower. It was time for the congregation to experience illumination through building a tower of their own:

"Brother Orval, will you fetch me a brick?"

Brother Orval ran up and placed an imaginary brick at the feet of Preacher Winn.

"Brother Henry, I need some mortar."

Brother Henry ran forward and carefully spread some imaginary mortar on the imaginary brick.

"Sister Sally Ann, another brick."

Sister Sally handed the brick to the preacher, who bent and put it on top of the mortar.

Now Lily Mae on her own accord ran forward with mortar, and Brother Orval brought another brick.

"Lay it straight, Brother Orval," said the preacher.

Taken up by the ritual, members of the congregation were running back and forth, coming from both sides of the church. The imaginary tower was rapidly rising, so rapidly that soon Preacher Winn was obliged to stand on a chair to get the bricks set right on the upper layers. Unbidden, the people were working feverishly, and the rising of the imaginary tower could be measured by the position of Preacher

*Bertha Bell and her grandson*

Winn's hand. Meanwhile, his voice rose with the tower as he stimulated the excitement of the builders:

"See our fine tower! See how the people in the valley is lookin' up to us! My! Don't they wisht they had a tower like ourn! Let's think about what our neighbors is thinkin'."

By the time the tower was built, both preacher and congregation were breathless. Both paused for a moment to survey their handiwork. Then, with a mighty push, Preacher Winn knocked over the heavy wooden pulpit and flung the old shape-note hymnbook clear across the room.

"Now," said the preacher, "that proud tower is knocked down. And mind you, don't you build no tower of pride. You go out next week and think about what the Lord is thinkin' of you and not what your neighbors is thinkin'."

The question that opened one of the meditations—why, at Christ's tomb, the angel rolled away the stone and then sat on it, was directed to me:

"Sister Butler, why did the angel set on the stone?"

Everyone looked at me. I was nonplussed. "With all her book larnin' "—I could see they were thinking—"she don't know."

I hazarded a guess: "He'd had a long trip?"

"No," said Preacher Winn simply. "He done it because God told him to."

But times are changing. Influences of the outside culture are entering to destroy the old ways, and much else besides. There were a few mountaineers who did not join in the meditation . . . notably, a sandy-haired young fellow named Jesse. He sat, arms crossed, on the back bench, his head propped against the wall.

"Now Jesse," said the preacher. "Ain't you got somethin' to 'fess? We're enterin' into public confession now."

Jesse did not reply. The congregation turned round and stared at him.

"Preacher, I think Jesse drunk too much white lightnin' Sattiday night," one woman suggested out loud.

"Now, Sister," Preacher Winn admonished her, "We all human bein's. Hit ain't what goes into a man what counts. Hit's what comes out'n him."

The service continued, but the mysterious Jesse neither left nor participated.

Perhaps he had seen too much television. In Knoxville, a psychiatrist who works with the mountaineers told me that the older ones, who have stuck to their religious practice, have notably fewer neurotic problems than those exposed to the civilization beyond the mountains. It would seem that the services release inhibitions, give a feeling of purpose to life, make it easier to go on another week; and without the guidelines of their beliefs, more and more of the young people are lost in the confusion of modern life.

The Melungeons, those mysterious people in East Tennessee, have for the most part lost their own heritage, whatever it was. For protective coloration, they have taken on the religious practices of those about them, religions that are close to the soil, free, and slightly wild. No one is quite sure where the Melungeons came from originally and how they got where they are now. Scholars have tried to track them and have come up with a number of theories: that they are descendants of Phoenician sailors who settled in Carthage, and after that city fell, crossed over from Africa to Portugal and Spain, where they lived until the Inquisition. At that time, some of them left as workers on ships bound for the New World, where, left behind or lost on some expedition, they stayed in the Tennessee mountains. In 1540, De Soto passed through the northeastern section of Tennessee and lost a contingent of Portuguese sailors in the mountains. The word "Melungeon" is close to the Portugese word, *melungo,* meaning "shipmate," and a doctor in Melungeon country says that their blood type is one common in Portugal. Not at variance with the theory of an origin in the Middle East is the possibility suggested by Cyrus H. Gordon, an authority on Mediterranean lore from Brandeis University, author of *Before Columbus,* who deciphered a stone found in Melungeon country as reading, "For (the land of) Judah." Could they be the lost tribe of Israel? Dr. Charles Boer of the University of Connecticut has noted that two leading Melungeon families have the names "Meluns" and "Goins." The name "Melungeon" could be an amalgam.

When the first white settlers came to Tennessee, the Melungeons were already there. They were living as rich farmers in the valleys, it is said, until 1834, when the Tennessee Constitution declared them "free persons of color" and disenfranchised them. They were disenfranchised because they do not look like the typical white settler: characteristically, they have olive skins, grey eyes, straight black hair, and they tend to be slender. After they were driven from their farms in the valleys, they fled to the mountains, where they became counterfeiters and bootleggers.

Though their culture is forgotten, their burial customs make one think of Mediterranean peoples. They decorate the tops of graves with objects for use by the deceased in the after-world. Sometimes they put a little house on top of the grave, and around it they place toiletries, kitchen utensils, and so on. In Snake Holler, seventeen miles or so from Sneadville, I walked up the slope of a mountain with Bertha Bell, a Melungeon who showed me the graves of two of her sons and a nephew. On the graves she had put quart jars of rocks painted silver (money for the after-world, she explained), a cereal bowl, a cracked cup, a rusted coffee pot, a painted paper bird, a yellow glass tumbler, some plastic peaches, and a salt shaker. Directly in front of the stone, she had placed a small wooden house, covered with silver paper.

She told me the painful story of the deaths of these young men. One of her sons was found dead down by the "crick." The nephew, unused to cars, tried to drive one under the influence of "white lightnin' " and was killed. Another son—her favorite—had married a woman in Maryland and had become a truckdriver. They quarreled one holiday—he wanted to go back to the Holler for Christmas and his wife did not want to go. The mother-in-law called the police, and the son came to the door with a gun—the only way he knew to confront police. He did not shoot it, but the police killed him. Now the wife comes back to the Holler with their little boy.

Another son is still alive. On one of my early visits to Melungeon country, this one—a handsome boy of perhaps eighteen, with smooth olive skin, a drooping moustache, and soft brown eyes, begged us to take him out of the valley and back to Knoxville with us. We in turn begged him not to go. His dark skin would be a disadvantage. His simplicity would be taken advantage of. But he insisted, even jumped into the car. In Knoxville, at a street corner, he jumped out, and we never saw him again. When I asked Bertha about him, she told me that he got in with some thieves in Knoxville. When they robbed someone, they ran, but he stood his ground and the police arrested him. He ended up in the penitentiary in Nashville, where, she said, "he learned somethin'. When he come home, he would light a little lamp and heat some white powder and pick himself. Then he would lie back and sleep for hours." He was arrested again for stealing and was back in jail in Nashville.

While I was staying with Bertha I went with one of her nephews to gather ginseng in the mountains. (I chewed some of the raw root, but it only made me slightly dizzy.) The Melungeons sell it to a local pharmacist, who in turn sells it to drug companies in Bristol, Tennessee. The pharmacist told me the drug companies then sell it to China, as the wild ginseng the Melungeons gather is better than the cultivated variety. I went also with Bertha to gather "yarbs" for commercial tonics and also for her own use: bloodroot for the heart, gravel root for kidney disease, horsemint for colds and fevers, golden clover for burns. On various trips, we gathered wildfish, a kind of porous fungus to fry for food, young poke in the spring, plantain for "sallet," and, on one occasion, rampion or wild onion, all of these rich in vitamins and minerals. A dietician from the University of Tennessee said that the Melungeons tend to be healthier than the mountaineers, for they depend more on wild plants and berries, less on pork and cream gravy for

their sustenance. I remember my surprise the first morning with Bertha, when I woke, assuming that I would get milk and cold cereal. Instead, she handed me a basket and a gourd and told me to go pick all the wild blueberries I wanted and to fetch water from a spring "down that thar path. And if you hear a rattlesnake singin' so sweet, just let him sing. He won't bother you less'n you bother him."

Often when I returned from walks, I would find her sitting in an old rocker on the porch, which dipped badly at one end. The house, half fallen in, had been a Presbyterian mission house, but the Presbyterians had long grown discouraged and left the place. (Perhaps it was the Saturday night shoot-ups when she and I would have to bar the door.) Just above Bertha's head, a phoebe would be flying back and forth, in and out of a small gourd. Bertha would be talking to her:

"You've already had three young 'uns in thar. And now I think you're fixin' to have three more."

And when I returned ten years after my earlier jaunts, I found Bertha sitting on the porch, talking to the phoebe, just as if there had been no lapse in time.

On one of my trips I drove out to the Sneadville area with Professor Jan Bakker, then teaching at Tennessee, as I was. Beyond the town, we saw a group of fifty or more mountaineers and Melungeons walking along a dirt road. Hoping to join them, we parked alongside the road behind the group and took our lunch basket. I was a little nervous and left the leadership to Jan, who knew the art of ingratiating himself with large numbers of people.

The group appeared to be headed for a nearby cemetery, high on the slope of a mountain. Jan went up to a tall man with a hawk nose and sandy hair, who seemed to be the leader, and asked if we could walk along. Jan offered his hand, and introduced himself, and the tall man, somewhat diffidently, identified himself as Preacher Sweeney, a Holiness preacher. He turned out to be a farmer, who preached and planted. He told us that the group was walking past Sulfur Spring, up the mountain to a graveyard for an open-air service.

High up the mountainside, in a clearing, there were a hundred or more graves. Some had slate markers with the name, often misspelled, scratched on, along with "De. this life——" and the date. The newer markers were slabs of concrete with the name traced into the wet cement with a stick. The older men climbed up to an old, roughly made fence at the back of the clearing and sat along it, using it as a rest. The matrons, some of them carrying infants, gathered below them. The teenagers sat or stood together under a hickory tree, and the toddlers stumbled hand in hand, in and out among the graves. Jan and I sat down together on the sloping ground, below the matrons. Preacher Sweeney stood in the center of the small plot.

Like other mountain preachers we had heard, he began the service with a fervent prayer of gratitude for all God's blessings. But the congregation did not listen passively, interrupting occasionally with an "Amen," as they had done with Preacher Winn, the primitive Baptist preacher at Belvidere. Instead, they all began to say prayers of thanks out loud on their own, with no regard to the prayers of those about them, so that the sounds were in various keys, rising and falling, but no more discordant than the various simultaneous sounds of the birds around them. (I have heard the same kind of simultaneous praying aloud among the Cree Indians at an Anglican service above the tree line in La Baleine, in the Canadian Arctic.)

After the prayer, Brother Gibson, a Melungeon, and his two girls played the guitar and sang simple religious songs, such as "I traded my soul for salvation. I sure rooked the Lord on that deal." Then the Preacher Sweeney began his sermon. He talked about us strangers in their midst and reminded his people that God said we should all love one another. He told them to shake hands with us at the end of the

service when they shook hands with one another. "They may be laughin' at us," he said. "Some city folks does, I heered. But we don't pay that no mind."

I looked back to see what effect this had on the matrons behind me, but they were placidly sitting, pleasant expressions on their faces, two of them nursing their babies. I thought I detected a slight laugh from the young people under the tree across the lot-sized cemetery, but I may have been mistaken. Certainly, their elders would not have stood for it.

"This here's a beautiful garden," said Preacher Sweeney. "But there's an even more beautiful garden waitin' for us right up thar." He pointed upward and there was a chorus of "amens" and "praise-the-Lords."

"As for me, I wisht I was thar this very minute. When the Lord calls me, I know I'm no longer needed here and I will go with joy—yes, with joy! And God help me to live right so as I will always feel that way—full of joy of livin' and joy of dyin'. The other day I was so full of joy that I took my plough and ran zigzag through the field, not noticin' nor carin' where I was led. But the Lord didn't let me plough up too much corn. And we all want to be up yonder, do we not, where we can be near those we love that you, God, have already called to your garden."

"Yes indeed! Hallelujah!" everyone chorused.

"And our fathers and mothers who have gone up there and little children—they're all with us right now and list'nin' to what we are thinkin'. Old Granny's thar in her new dug grave. She's a list'nin'. She had a good life, goin' on like that to 102, helpin' with the housework and the dishes and all and bein' with her kinfolk. But she's havin' a better life now, and she wants y'all to know that you should keep your faith strong and love God, because truly, He loves you."

"Amen!"

"No transfusions in heaven!"

"No indeed!"

"You don't need to go to none of them cold city hospitals to get a transfusion. God will give you a transfusion from the blood of Christ, and that transfusion lasts through eternity."

"O God, forgive my sins!" called a young man.

And the preacher answered, "'Deed He will! You have only to ask and to love Him!"

Then a young girl stood up. Her whole body swayed slightly like the young trees near the graves. Preacher Sweeney paid no attention but went on with his sermon:

"Little Tommy that was born afflicted, he's a list'nin', and old Mother Jones, that reached a hundred and recently left us. Workin' in the fields 'till she dropped down over her weedin', she's a list'nin' over thar. They may be still to our ears but that's because they're shoutin' so loud. Their voice is loud as the trumpets at Jericho. Don't you hear them? I say, do you hear them?"

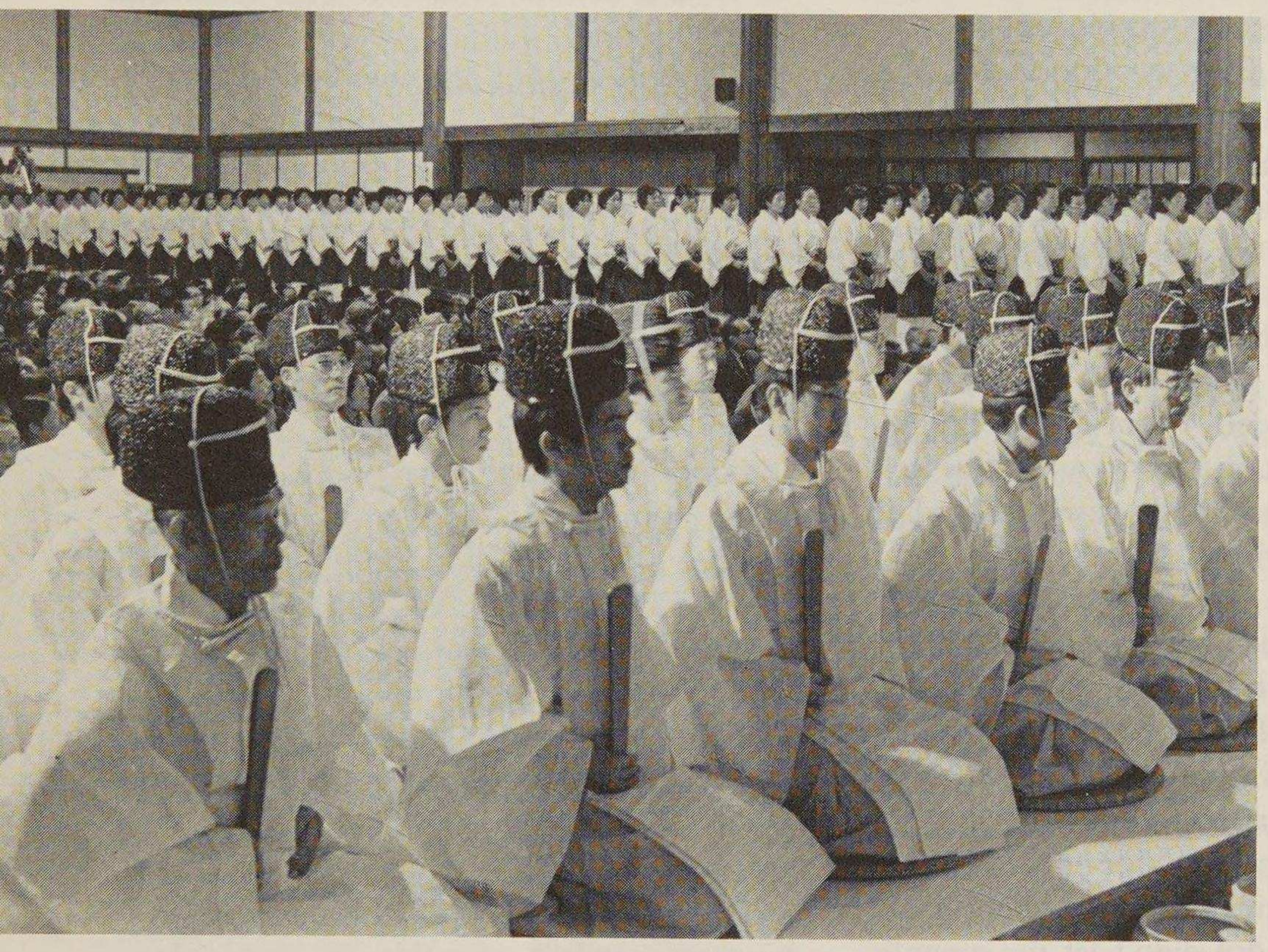
The young girl who had been swaying began to speak in a jumble of soft words that sounded like a mixture of foreign languages. You could almost catch one now and then, but not quite. "She's talking in tongues," Jan whispered. I looked at his sophisticated face which suggested his exposure to foreign and Virginia cultures. I had seen him in school in Virginia and in Tennessee, for six years, but I had never seen tears rolling down his cheeks before.

There was more praying and more preaching and then everyone shook hands. Farmers unused to strangers came forward as the preacher had bidden them and unsmiling, thrust out their hands. But we knew that even if the handclasp was unwilling, such a gesture was sacred in the mountains. Henceforth, these men would be our friends.

Several families invited us to eat with them. We spread out our city food, adding it to the chicken and berries and cornbread of the worshippers. They ate our food and we ate theirs. I knew we dined the best. ◇

# *Setsubun: Ceremony of Renewal*

*by Frederick Franck*



*About a year ago I attended once again the* Setsubun, *one of the principal rituals of the Oomoto sect, and found it as impressive as ever.* Setsubun *celebrates the exorcism of winter, the start of a new season of seeding and planting, as well as the beginning of Oomoto's liturgical year. Its rituals are purest Shinto, although Oomoto—like all the "New Religions" of Japan—is essentially syncretistic, and incorporates elements of Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity, as well as Japan's most archaic folk religion.*

*It was a cold and snowy February day that I drove from Kyoto to the small country town of Ayabe, to be struck once more by the poignant authenticity of Oomoto's almost neolithic ritual which survives with such undiminished vitality in technotronic modern Japan. Thousands of Oomoto followers from all over the country had gathered in Ayabe to participate in the solemn rite that started with the booming of a gigantic drum at the entrance of the Miroko-den, the Great Hall.*

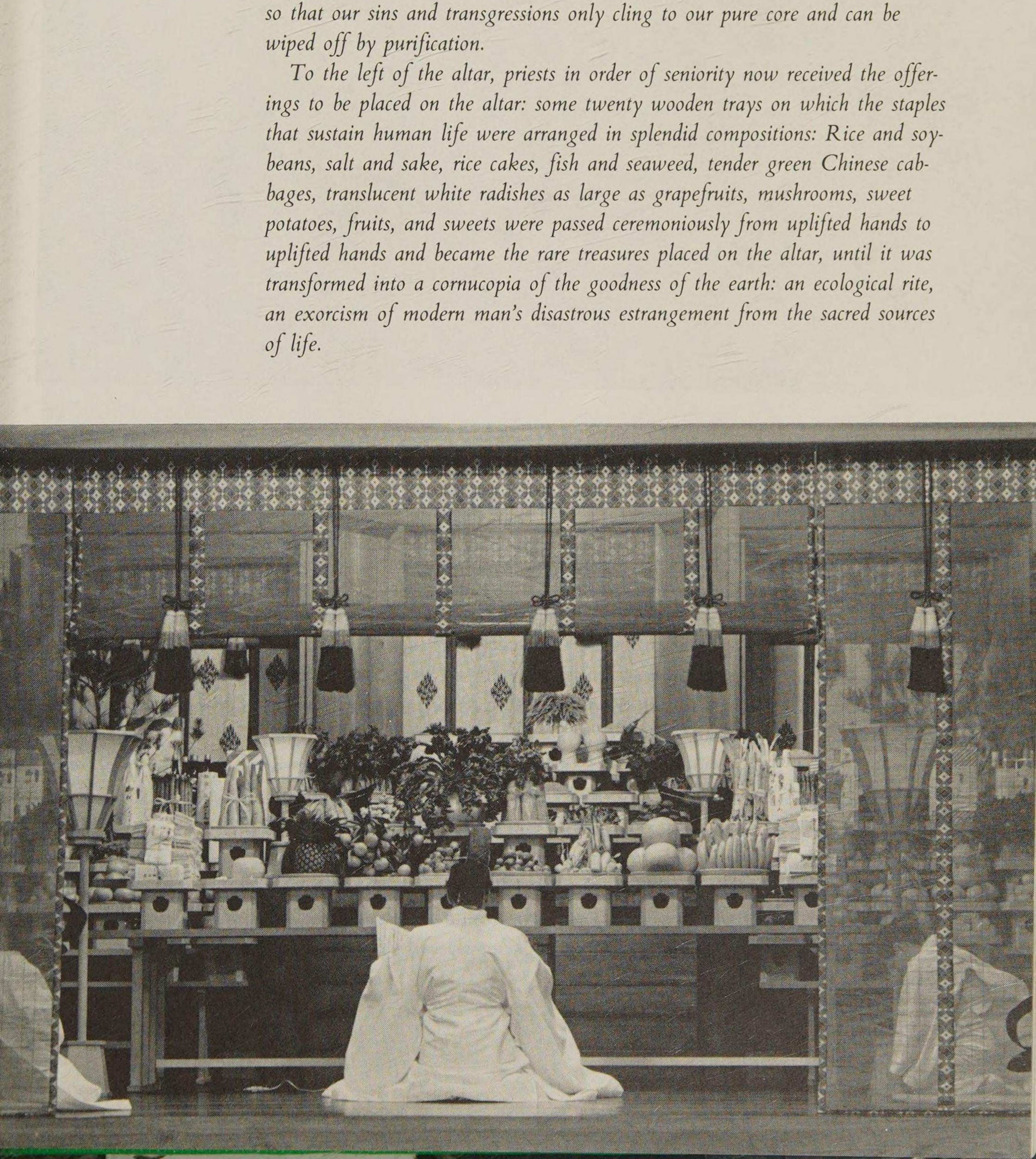
*Before entering the huge hall I had to shed overcoat and shoes. A priest swung the purification wand over my bowed head. Through a congregation of six thousand devotees kneeling on the tatami, I was led to a spot in the first row at the foot of the altar steps.*

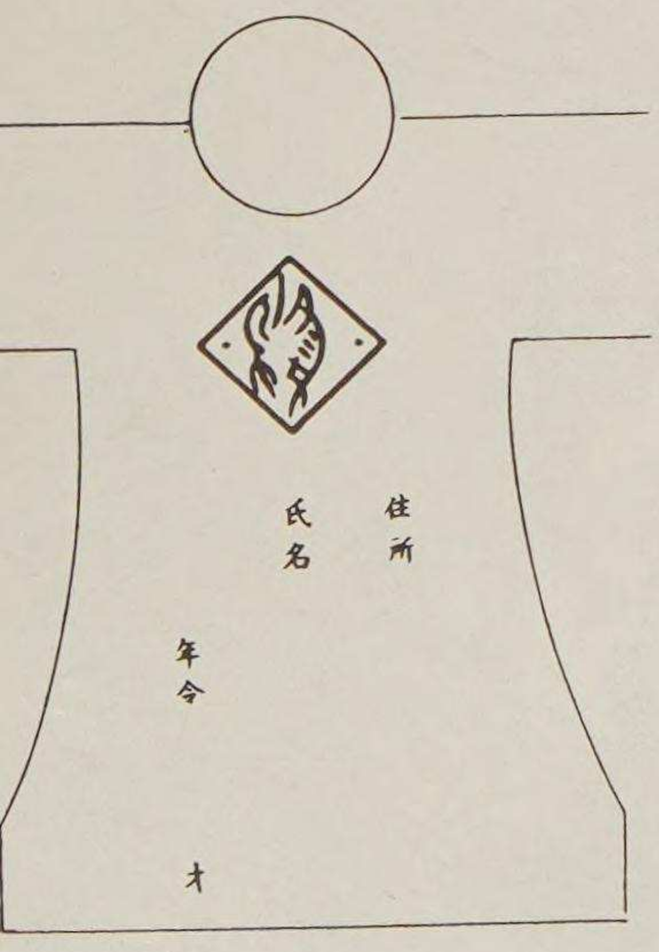
*Six priests in their eighth-century white silken robes, black lacquered clogs and Heian headgear now entered in single file to place the sacred flame—it had been kindled in an archaic ritual on a mountain sacred to Oomoto—on the altar. From it a sea of candles was lit as a group of female musicians took their places and let the gentle waterfalls of sound of their archaic two-stringed kotos float over the congregation.*

*Meanwhile a stately processional of well over a hundred priests, all in Heian garb, entered, followed by as large a procession of matrons in the characteristic white Oomoto kimonos with deep purple aprons.*

*When all were seated, a priest once more swung the purification whisk of white paper ribbons over us all, with a great flourish. This repeated purification ritual is characteristic of a faith from which all concepts analogous to Original Sin are absent. For Oomoto, as for Shinto, humans are born pure, so that our sins and transgressions only cling to our pure core and can be wiped off by purification.*

*To the left of the altar, priests in order of seniority now received the offerings to be placed on the altar: some twenty wooden trays on which the staples that sustain human life were arranged in splendid compositions: Rice and soybeans, salt and sake, rice cakes, fish and seaweed, tender green Chinese cabbages, translucent white radishes as large as grapefruits, mushrooms, sweet potatoes, fruits, and sweets were passed ceremoniously from uplifted hands to uplifted hands and became the rare treasures placed on the altar, until it was transformed into a cornucopia of the goodness of the earth: an ecological rite, an exorcism of modern man's disastrous estrangement from the sacred sources of life.*






*The head priest then started the long declamation of the* Norito *prayer, as ancient as Japanese history: ". . . Everything is ruled by the Divine Power and enjoys its invisible protection eternally . . . May the great manifestation of the Spirit . . take away all offenses, sins and pollutions . . . May according to the Divine Will all beings be blessed . . ."*

*The great incantation surged through the hall, echoed by six thousand voices, and culminated in the four handclaps that symbolize the three realities of Heaven, Man and Earth, while the fourth clap signifies the harmony that makes these three into one.*

*Over the loudspeakers members of the gathering were then summoned to offer the* tamagushi, *the sacred pine branch with the liturgical white paper fringe attached that is so characteristic of Shinto.*

*When the* tamagushi *offerings were over, two young* miko *girls in splendid Heian robes performed the sacred dance in which the four corners of the cosmos are purified with purification whisk and clusters of golden bells, so that life may renew itself utterly and the earth bring forth abundantly.*

*At this point the all-night vigil started. Relays of priests had to recite every name written on hundreds of thousands of slips of rice paper on which the outline of a doll was printed. Stacks of wooden boxes filled with these slips of paper stood ready. On each one someone had written the name which had to be read aloud before these votive offerings were placed in rows of unglazed earthenware jars that stood waiting to be filled. Meanwhile the congregation chanted prayers in a crescendo of fervor, accompanied by the booming of the huge drum.*

*The slips of paper are called* hitogata, *and this* hitogata *rite is based on an ancient Chinese purification ceremony which consisted in a ritual bath in a stream in early spring. The Japanese imported the ceremony but found a convenient substitute for such chilly ablutions: one merely rubbed oneself with a paper doll, assuming that sins and impurities would cling to it. These paper dolls were then thrown into rivers which would carry one's blemishes and transgressions to the ocean, to disappear forever. A further simplification led to the present-day* hitogata *that have become simple slips of paper on which one writes name, address, and age, one's own and those of relatives, friends, or other living human beings in need of divine succor.*

*Each time a number of jars were filled, they were handed to groups of women waiting to carry them in torchlight procession to the bridge across the Yori River.*

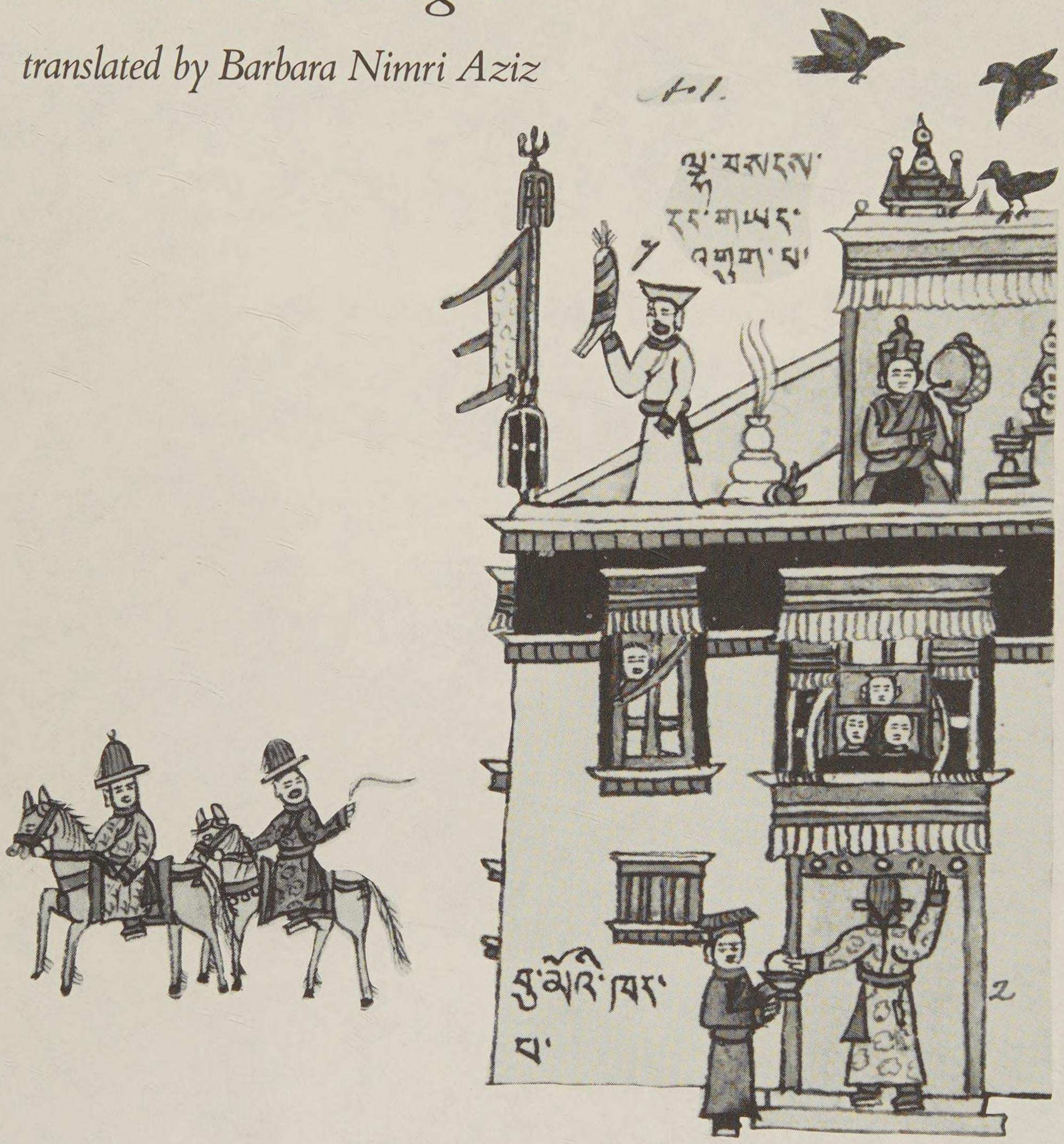
*In the snow-covered courtyard of the Miroku-den worshippers stood trampling around huge bonfires, drinking hot rice gruel spiced with ginger. The snow by now had become a blizzard, but still, the narrow streets of Ayabe were lined with Oomoto believers, chanting hymns as constant processions of white-clad figures passed by, carrying their terracotta jars.*

*At the bridge I stood in the dense crowd of worshippers watching the priests who ceremoniously took possession of the jars, passed them on to one another, shattered them with deft blows of wooden mallets. Avalanches of white paper* hitogata *fluttered down into the black water, formed icefloes of prayers that slowly drifted downstream towards the ocean.* ◇

大本節分人型大祓

# *A Pillar So Straight*

*translated by Barbara Nimri Aziz*



*Known as the* Mo-pon, *the traditional director of a Tibetan wedding is in every way a Master of Ceremonies. He supervises all stages of the 3-5 day wedding and he is himself the main performer and entertainer through the singing of an epic poem during the wedding. Known as the* mo-la *or* Ka-she *(song of the pillar), the dramatized poem unfolds to lay out to the nuptial couple and their guests all the values of Tibetan family and social life in a song of praise to the house. It is laden with wisdom, law and humor, commenting on the meaning of "union" at many levels. These excerpts are from the version sung by the Dingri Mo-pon, Pema Tayye.*

Praise to this pillar, a pedestal with flowers.
On top, for the capital, we have three parts:
The shortest is white; second is red, and blue is longest.
See! Each firmly set, steadies the pillar.

The base of this post is a slab of stone,
Immovable, it roots the column firmly here.
This place and this household will be so steady.

The column is made of sandalwood, firm and true.
It has to be straight, so build it this way.
Its shaft is smooth, with texture fine as silk.
There must be no flaws, so shape it this way.

Praise to the capital, embellished with jewels;
It's like a round bowl overflowing with riches.
There should be such opulence, so decorate it like this.

The topmost beam is studded with pearls;
It must shine in the light, so encase it this way.

Where cross-beam and post join, they meet exactly in line.
We must have such balance, so lock them like this.

Those upper beams are lashed to the capital,
As subjects are tied to their king.
(This) union is essential, so bind them like that.

There, overhead, ceiling boards are clinched,
Like a prosperous family.
We want such fitting, so make it that way.

That skylight brings air in through the roof;
It must have opportunity, so open it that way.

The windows are alike, each the same size.
We seek equality, so divide them that way.

Hanging above, a fine silk canopy covers all guests;
Excellence is for everyone, so spread it that way.

Outside, prayer flags billow like the southern clouds;
We need protection, so flood the whole sky like that.

—Transcribed by Karma Thinley Lama
Translated by Barbara Nimri Aziz

# *Name and No Name*

*by P. L. Travers*

"What is your name?" That is the first question of the Catechism. And naturally, also, the first question that any stranger asks.

Reading it as a child, I trembled. It was like a mighty trumpet call, a summons to leave the safe place where one was merely an appellation, an infinitesimal particle of one all-containing whole—grass, child, linnet, hare.

"Stand forth and declare youself!" it demanded.

And the answer it required was equally portentous.

"N. or M.," it said.

But I was neither N. nor M. And until I became of riper years, I was haunted by the thought that my father, when the time came for my confirmation, would palm me off as one or other of those letters, in order to jockey me into Heaven, much as the Miller in "Rumpelstiltskin," in order to catch the eye of the King, boasted that his daughter could spin straw into gold—two well-meaning, if specious, parents with, for issue, clearly, a pair of whited sepulchers. For how would I be able to renounce the Devil when, as far as I knew, I had never met him; or she transform the bedding of beasts or the thatch of the roof into that ineffable substance?

And yet, after all, the thing was done. Everyone knows the story. The King put her into a barn that was full of bales of straw. "Spin that into gold and I'll marry you!"

And there she sat and there she sat, weeping and doing nothing, because there was nothing to do.

And the doing nothing did it. Out of nowhere—or everywhere—leapt a little ugly dwarfish man. "What will you give me if I spin for you?" The thing was of little account to him for in the land he came from straw and gold are the same thing, not a pin to choose between them.

"The beads round my neck," she told him. And so he spun and took them.

Then came another barnful of straw, the creature, quick as you'd spit, turned it into gold and this time she gave him her ring.

But on the third day she could give him nothing for nothing was all she had.

"Well, your first child when you're Queen!" he demanded. And she promised him that. What else could she do? So at once there were three barns full of gold and she with the King at the altar. And at the ninth month, more or less, there was the child and there was the little man in her room, agog for his reward.

But now she hadn't the heart for it. "Anything but the child," she said. But nothing tempted him. What he wanted, he said, was a living thing. "Something alive is dearer to me than anything in the world." So he made a bargain with her.

"If within three days you discover my name, then you shall keep the child."

So she thought, and sent messengers through the land to find out outlandish names. And when the manikin arrived she rattled off a list of them—"Caspar. Melchior. Balthasar." But to each he said "That is not my name. And there's the first day gone."

Then she made enquiries of the neighbors, thinking to find a more humble name. "Is it Shortribs? Or Sheepshanks? Or Shake-a-leg?" "No, it is not, and there's two days gone."

But on the third day, the messenger returned, saying, "Not another name have I found. But in the forest behind the mountains, in the country where the fox and the hare say goodnight to each other, I heard a little old man singing:

"Today I brew,
Tomorrow I bake,
The next, the Queen's young child I take.
For little she knows,
That royal dame,
That Rumpelstiltskin is my name."

And as soon as she heard that—she knew! And, womanlike, she pretended.

"Is it Tom?" she asked the old man the next day. "Is it William? Is it Harry?"

"No!"

"Then is it Rumpelstiltskin?"

"The Devil has told you!" the creature cried. And he stamped his foot into the earth, so deep, so deep, that the earth took him and hid him away in itself.

So goes the story. And the Miller's daughter thought, "What luck!"

But luck was nowhere in it. The old man himself was the one who told her, for Necessity required that the name be known. The tale is told everywhere and always the name is known at last. In England it is Tom Tit Tot, in Russia the creature is Vargaluska, in Spain El Enarno Saltarin, and in Africa he is, of all things, a hippopotamus, who goes by the name of Isantim.

Only in the Grimm's version is the name discovered in "the country where fox and hare say goodnight to each other." Very possibly they invented this, but they were steeped enough in lore to realize that the name belongs to another level, a level that can only be activated when the impossible is confronted. Rumpelstiltskin here is its embodiment. In another story it will take the shape of a frog, a witch, a little old woodsman, for in fairy tales it is always at work, giving or confiscating gifts. So, the name discovered, the named one is lost . . . or at least deprived of his power.

But in the Scottish tale of the Brownie who went haunting among the burns, the opposite is true. Splash and paddle he would, in the leaping water, and then go with wet feet into the farmhouse. And what was tidy he threw about and what was untidy, he tidied. You wouldn't know where you were with him and no one would follow the road at night lest they meet him face to face. But at last, says the tale, they had him laid. And by what? By a name! A man, merry from the market, greatly daring, took to the road, and heard the splashing and slopping. "Is it yourself, Old Puddlefoot?" he cried, spying the creature. And the Brownie broke in two with despair. "Oh, I've gotten myself a name!" he cried. And never more was he seen or heard. For a thing such as he, the name was too much. He could not bear the burden.

As to myself, sitting still like the Miller's daughter—doing nothing, for what could one do?—I answered the catechism's call and, expecting dissolution, survived. No one said, "What? Neither N. nor M!" My father, like the Miller, was absolved and I given an identity, made object to some subject that might or might not be someday known. No longer one with the grass and the hare, I felt the mystery of the name,

the obligation, the danger.

For the name, if it binds, also separates. If one asks the question—"When was it that the lion lay down with the lamb?"—the answer inevitably has to be "Before they were named by Adam." Once the lion knew who he was, he had to devour—it was his role—the fleecy thing beside him. Once she knew she was a lamb, she understood that her part was to put the world between them.

"A power superior to man," says Plato, "gave the primordial names to things in such a way that the names are necessarily right and the rightness of the names makes the nature of things visible."

And the Koran says much the same thing—"And He taught Adam all the names" (Sura 2.31).

Thus it was that the children of Adam, having got wind of the Law of the Name, set themselves—as is done with all laws—to discover means to subvert, or evade it. So they invented the euphemism, a placatory process by means of which the lesser word is made to stand in for the greater, the sweet for the bitter, scabbard for sword. To this day, you will find farmers who will not speak the name of the fox, for fear he should hear himself called and come forthwith for the chickens. "Him," they will say, or "Prick-Ears" or "Reynard." In the lands that the bear inhabits he is scrupulously referred to as Grandfather, Honey Paw, Little Old Man. Among the Algerian Arabs, the lion is spoken of, astonishingly, as "Mr. Johnson," and it is well known that in Africa and Asia a snake is not a snake at all but a coil of rope or a piece of string.

In the same way, to keep away the evil spirits, leprosy is known as the Blessed Disease, just as the Erynnes, the avenging deities of Greek mythology, were apostrophized as the Eumenides, the Kindly Ones. As for the Devil, he has a thousand nicknames designed, if he has to appear at all, to make him feel part of the family and not the Opposing Power—Clootie, Old Hornie, Meister Pieter, Old Nick.

Thus, on all levels, we minimize reality in order to be able to face it. By giving the Name a sobriquet we think to rob it of its power. But it will not be demythologized. A spade is always a spade, no matter what it is called.

The Name, Ceremony, and Tradition have at all times belonged to each other and this relationship necessarily involves Taboo. In myth, as in folklore, Rumpelstiltskin and the Brownie are humble witnesses to this quaternity, its potencies, and its menace.

One thinks of the names that arise out of the high deeds of men or of their physical characteristics. For instance, Setanta, who destroyed the hound (Gaelic: *Cu*) of the smith, Culain, undertook himself to be the hound of the smith and became thereafter Cuculain, one of the great heroes of Ireland; Lugh Ildanach (Gaelic: *the All-Craftsman*) was another; and also Dermot O'Dyna (Gaelic: *of the Love Spot* or *white blaze on the brow*), whom any woman, and she betrothed to another man, would slip her jesses and follow. On the other hand, among the Grail knights, it was forbidden to divulge either their names or their origins. The Grail had to be served by the Nameless Ones. For what name would be worthy of such a task?

In Imperial China, where every ordinary man received throughout his life a succession of names—the birth name, the school name, the marrying name, the fathering name—it was considered a serious crime to mention, even to one's pillow, presumably, the sacred name of the Emperor. And I was told recently by a traveller to Nepal that when a certain woman was asked her name she gave it, but stoutly refused that of her husband. It was not her part, as a woman, to give away—who knows to what devil!—the name of the head of the house. "Well, tell me the name of the father of your son!" This put her into a quandary. Torn between two taboos, she uneasily whispered her husband's name and presumably heaved a sigh of relief when no dragon materialized to swallow her up.

In all places where life still retains something of ritual, this secrecy of the name is

to be found. I myself, living on the Navaho reservation for a long summer, during the war, was ceremoniously given an Indian name and warned not to disclose it to anyone, lest ill-luck follow me and the tribe. I have never told it. Unknown, I felt, it would work within me.

But the next day, having been driven far from the place where I had received it, I rode at twilight up the Canyon de Chelly. Cantering in the silky dust that aeons ago had been river, I came unexpectedly on a group of the People, making their evening meal. Shy to disturb them, I wheeled about, but a man came and held my stirrup and motioned me to the fire. We sat in silence, taking food from the pot, and I sensed, somehow, that my new name was known. Borne on the wind, or the back of a crow, it lay between us, a tangible thing, the name I could neither assume nor possess but which bound me to the mothering land.

Later, I heard that a woman from that place had recently had a nightmare—someone had called her by the wrong name, an ill-famed name—and she and all the other women had danced the dream to the mouth of the canyon, thus sending it out of their world. The simplicity, the wisdom of it—which could be ours if we had the courage—to ritualize the fearsome thing and dismiss it as a dance!

The inner name, the secret name—its equivalent, in our world, is the personal or baptismal name—has immemorially been held to be the vesture or outward form—*nama rupa*—of the soul. In ancient Egypt it was thought of as a knot tied in the continuous cord of a destiny and determining one of its incarnations—or episodes.

And in all teachings, the initiate, having reached a certain stage, is given a name appropriate to that stage, a name that he does not possess but serves. Corbin, in *Ismaili Initiation or the Esotericism of the Word*, speaks of "the Mystery of the Divine Names—almost Divine Hypostases—which from all eternity aspire to be known, that is to say, to be invested in beings who will receive these names and in whom these names will be embodied. Any proper name, therefore, is a theophoric name, a God-bearing name, and he who bears it is not its owner but rather, belongs to this Name.

Think of the Bible, the stark absoluteness of the Old Testament where the name of God may neither be known nor spoken. "Say unto them I AM hath sent me to you" is the nearest the Deity will allow Himself to approach humanity; and the New with its Christos, whom any man, or, indeed, child, may salute as Jesus.

Has God, then, had a change of heart? Or is it that one of the aspiring Names is, because of the needs of man, allowed to be known and embodied? But—known, perhaps, only insofar as it is also, in an ultimate sense, unknowable, a mystery. *Revelations* (2.17) hints palpably at this.

> To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna and will give him a white stone and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving him that received it.

Anyone grounded in myth cannot but ask himself whether that "hidden manna" is not the hypostasis of every secret name, from that of the Absolute right down the vertiginous slope to Rumpelstiltskin and his kind. And the beautiful Negro spiritual "Hush! Someone is callin' my name" suggests a similar scale of identity. We know, without needing to be told, who is calling and who is called.

Ah, but that hush is seldom heard. It needs a contained and communal world where, as Yeats puts it in "Prayer for my Daughter,"

> Ceremony is the name for the rich horn
> And Custom for the spreading laurel tree.

For in our profane and secular life, where everything is reduced to the least common denominator, we are essentially separate—and lonely. By dispensing with ceremony, with superscription, patronymic, honorific—"Hi, Steve, meet Joe"—we hopefully imagine that we know one another, and moreover, have the right to know. We're

all equal, aren't we?

But, familiarly to wrench from another his personal name before he has had the chance—or, indeed, the wish—to offer it, is in a sense to degrade him, to snatch away his dignity. If there is alive in him some of his old ancestral stuff, it will quiver with apprehension—and withdraw. As a woodland creature, part of the speckle of sun and shadow, noted, becomes a fawn and flees, so he will inwardly turn away. Come too near and you have lost him. Only the far can be near. The door has to be knocked at gently if we want to know who is within.

And who is within? Who are *you*, stranger, who reads this page and who am I that write it? There is no name that would answer the question, if we put it inwardly to ourselves. Blood may know, but blood has no words. In Unknowing wisdom lies. A drop enters the ocean and the ocean pours itself into the drop. It is all one—Name and No Name.

You, child, who were neither N. nor M., my end lies in your beginning. It is a mystery. Let it be so. The snake takes its tail in its mouth and you and I, linnet and hare, named and at the same time Nameless, are rolled round in our eternal course with rocks and stones and trees. ◇

EPICYCLE:

# The Two Hunchbacks

*Of the many variations of the following tale—including Turkish and Italian versions—this Irish retelling I like the best, perhaps because it came to me by word of mouth, rather than through a literary collection, or perhaps because the unfortunate Michael becomes something of a culture hero at the end.*

Now if you're wondering how it is that the plough, source of our very livelihood, was invented, I have it on good authority—namely, my grandmother, God rest her bones, who heard it from the son of the inventor's brother himself, and this is the way it was.

There were, once upon a time (as the saying goes) two brothers, one Patrick and one Michael, but if their names were different they were certainly alike in one respect, which is that the both of them were afflicted with a hump on their backs, which bowed them low and earned them much pity. Patrick had the hump on his right shoulder, or maybe it was his left, while Michael had the hump on his left shoulder, or maybe it was his right, but in any case they each had one and it caused them to go about the world seeing things, as you might say, from a slightly different perspective than you and me.

Well, one day, as the story has it, Patrick set out into the woods to gather kindling for the hearthfire, and perhaps also mushrooms or whatever else he could find on the ground—inasmuch as his eyes were more or less cast in that direction already—and after spending a good part of the day so occupied, he found himself weary and sat down for a moment or two to rest his bones. Now the place where he sat down was next to a rock, and next to that there was a fairy ring, so he should have known better, but perhaps his weariness had got the better of him and he didn't see it. Anyhow, as he was resting, he laid his head up against the rock and shut his eyes. Now he swears he had not fallen asleep, but only just shut his eyes, so what happened next must indeed have happened, and was not a dream. And what did happen? Ah, well you might ask, for it was a curious thing indeed that Patrick heard and then beheld. At first, it was no more than a whisper, a tickle of sound coming from the rock—from *inside* the rock, mind you—and he couldn't make out

what it was, but it sounded very like speech. Then, as he listened closer, his eyes still shut, he heard the words, very clearly, of a song, coming from the rock:

Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday . . .

That was how the song went, or at least so it seemed. It was rather a monotonous song, you see, and as he listened, Patrick was quite sure of the words, repeated over and over again by a chorus of very small voices from inside the rock.

Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday. . . .

And for some reason or other—he could never afterwards say why—Patrick put his mouth to the crack of the rock and said—very quietly, mind, so as not to frighten the folk that were singing inside—

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday!

No sooner had he whispered these words then a silence fell, sudden and immediate, within the rock. Patrick kept his ear pressed hard against the crack, and he heard a bit of a rustling, then a bit of murmured conversation, then a voice as clear as clear,

Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday!

and straight away the crack in the rock opened up, and a whole troop of wee folk—you'll be knowing who they might be—came out and took Patrick inside. He was frightened by all this, as you well can guess, but they sat him down and comforted him, and when his eyes had grown used to the dimness of the light, he saw that he was inside the palace of that folk, and that the whole company of them were dancing in a ring around him, singing their song—with his addition:

Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday!

Then, all of a sudden, they stopped dancing and singing, and one among them, who was plainly their king, stepped forward and stood

*Illustration by Deborah Koff*

before Patrick and said,

"Honorable sir! For centuries now, we have been singing our song, and trying desperately to remember the next line of it. That line you have given us this day, to our great joy, and in return you may have whatever your heart desires—as well as any gold you might wish to carry away. For we are not an ungrateful folk, and we reward well those who freely give us what we need."

Now, this speech is much shortened, as you might guess, for that folk are fond of words, and especially of courtly and flowery speech, so you must forgive its terseness here. Our Patrick was amazed at first, and quite without words himself, but in a moment (or perhaps less) he came to himself and asked the king, "Noble sir, would you, could you, please remove my hump?" Well, no sooner asked than granted, and in a trice, Patrick was standing as straight as ever you or I have stood, and perhaps straighter, and the hump was hanging on the wall of the palace inside that rock. Then a great feast was held, and all that folk—and Patrick too—ate and drank a very great deal, and sang the song over and over again, to everyone's great delight. Then, when the celebration was at an end, they opened the rock again, and set Patrick on his way, straight upright and laden with gold.

Well, when Patrick got home again, his own brother did not recognize him, as you might imagine, for in fact Patrick stood almost twice as tall as Michael now, and Michael could only just make out his brother's face among the trees, or so it seemed. The story of the rock was soon told, and of the song and the folk that sang it, and of the king and his boon. "And they gave me as much gold as I could carry, brother!" exclaimed Patrick. "Indeed, I forsook all the kindling and left it in the woods, the better to carry the four full sacks of gold they gave me!"

When brother Michael heard all this, you might have thought he would have been overjoyed at his brother's good fortune—and his own, for surely he would share in the gold—but that was not so. As green as the fields turned Michael, with envy and greed, and there was nothing that he would have sooner done at that moment than kill his own brother, had he not wished even more to find the rock for himself. So he hid his hatred, and bit by bit extracted from Patrick the locality of that rock, and the place where the crack was.

Up leapt Michael, as soon as he heard how he could find the rock, and rushed off into the woods to find it. And sure enough, there by the fairy ring it was, and the crack his brother had told him about, and eagerly Michael pressed his ear to the crack, and closed his eyes

and listened. And as he listened, there inside the rock he heard the song his brother had spoken of:

Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday,
Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday!

No sooner had he heard this, Michael put his lips to the crack and shouted:

Thursday, Friday,
Saturday, Sunday!

and straightaway a silence fell. The silence seemed to go on for a long time, while Michael waited, impatient and fidgeting, beside the crack. Finally, he could bear the suspense no more, and putting his lips again to the crack, he shouted:

Open the crack!
Take this hump off my back!

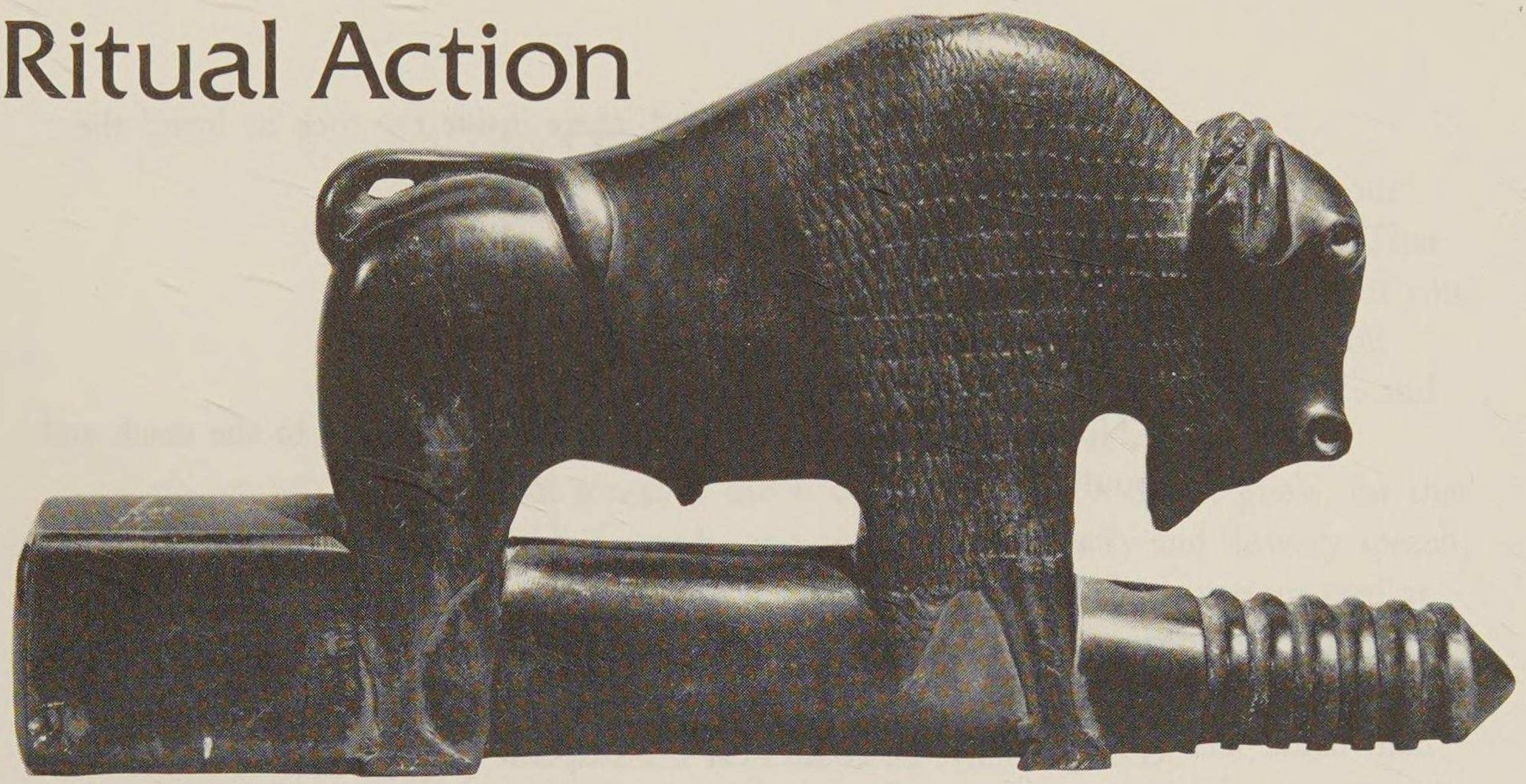
Then a rustling was heard, and a whispering of voices, and a groaning of rock, and sure enough the crack opened, and a troop of very solemn folk came out. They took Michael inside the rock and sat him down, same as Patrick, but they did not dance around him, no, and they did not sing. In silence they stood, and absolutely still, and for all his greed and impatience, Michael became very afraid. Then the king of that folk went up before Michael, and said not a word, but looked at him, very solemn-faced. And Michael began to feel that his head was getting lower and lower to the ground, almost on a level with the king's own, and perhaps even lower. For the hump that was on the wall—Patrick's hump—was now on Michael's back, beside his own. Then the crack in the rock was opened, and, still in deathly silence, Michael was led out of the rock. The folk trooped back in, and the crack closed and the rock itself vanished before his eyes, and he was left alone.

Now that is the story of those two brothers, and you'll be wondering what on earth that has to do with how the plough came to be invented. Well, Michael's back was now bowed down so low to the ground that his nose was right against the earth itself, and there was nothing he could do but walk backwards. And as he did so, his nose dug a great long furrow in the ground, and when the farmers saw that, as he passed by, well, one thing led to another and after much conversation and pondering, the plough was invented.

—Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

ARCS:

# Ritual Action



*Rites* (li) *rest on three bases: Heaven and earth, which are the source of all life; the ancestors, who are the source of the human race; sovereigns and teachers, who are the source of government. If there were no Heaven and earth, where would life come from? If there were no ancestors and teachers, where would government come from? Should any of the three be missing, either there would be no men or men would be without peace. Hence rites are to serve Heaven on high and earth below, and to honour the ancestors and elevate the sovereigns and teachers. Herein lies the threefold basis of rites. . . .*

*It is through rites that Heaven and earth are harmonious and sun and moon are bright, that the four seasons are ordered and the stars are on their courses, that rivers flow and that things prosper, that love and hatred are tempered and joy and anger are in keeping. They cause the lowly to be obedient and those on high to be illustrious. He who holds to the rites is never confused in the midst of multifarious change; he who deviates therefrom is lost. Rites—are they not the culmination of culture? . . .*

*Rites require us to treat both life and death with attentiveness. Life is the beginning of man, death is his end. When a man is well off both at the end and the beginning, the way of man is fulfilled.*

*—Hsün Tzu*[1]

*Then said Huracán, Tepeu, and Gucumatz when they spoke to the soothsayer, to the Maker, who are the diviners: "You must work together and find the means so that man, whom we shall make, man, whom we are going to make, will nourish and sustain us, invoke and remember us.*

*"Enter, then, into council, grandmother, grandfather, our grandmother, our grandfather, Xpiyacoc, Xmucané, make light, make dawn, have us invoked, have us adored, have us remembered by created man, by made man, by mortal man. Thus be it done . . ."*

*And instantly the figures were made of wood. They looked like men, talked like men, and populated the surface of the earth.*

*They existed and multiplied; they had daughters, they had sons, these wooden figures; but they did not have souls, nor minds, they did not remember their Creator, their Maker . . .*

*These were the first men who existed in great numbers on the face of the earth.*

*Immediately the wooden figures were annihilated, destroyed, broken up, and killed.*

*A flood was brought about by the Heart of Heaven; a great flood was formed which fell on the heads of the wooden creatures . . .*

*The desperate ones ran as quickly as they could; they wanted to climb to the tops of the houses, and the houses fell down and threw them to the ground; they wanted to climb to the treetops, and the trees cast them far away; they wanted to enter the caverns, and the caverns repelled them.*

*So was the ruin of the men who had been created and formed, the men made to be destroyed and annihilated; the mouths and faces of all of them were mangled.*

*And it is said that their descendants are the monkeys which now live in the forests; these are all that remain of them because their flesh was made only of wood by the Creator and the Maker.*

*And therefore the monkey looks like man, and is an example of a generation of men which were created and made but were only wooden figures.*

—*Popol Vuh*[2]

*And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,*

*This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.*

*Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:*

*And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.*

*Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:*

*And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

*And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.*

*And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.*

*Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.*

*And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until morning ye shall burn with fire.*

*And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.*

*For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man, and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.*

*And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

*And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.*

*Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.*

*And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.*

*And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.*

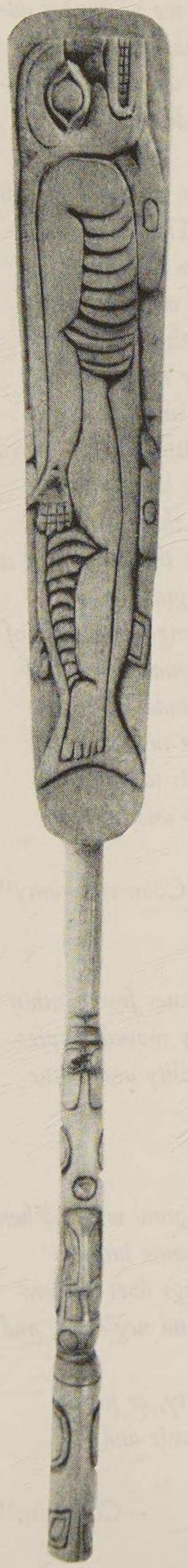
—*Exodus*[3]

*The time of action does not differ at all from that of prayer; I possess God as tranquilly in the bustle of my kitchen—where sometimes several people are asking me different things at one time—as if I were on my knees before the Blessed Sacrament . . . It is not necessary to have great things to do. I turn my little omelet in the pan for the love of God; when it is finished, if I have nothing to do, I prostrate myself on the ground and adore my God, who gave me the grace to make it, after which I arise, more content than a king. When I cannot do anything else, it is enough for me have lifted a straw from the earth for the love of God.*

—*Brother Lawrence*[4]

*The world is imprisoned in its own activity, except when actions are performed as worship of God. Therefore you must perform every action sacramentally (as if it were* yajna, *the sacrifice that, in its divine Logos-essence, is identical with the Godhead to whom it is offered), and be free from all attachment to results.*

—*Bhagavad-Gita*[5]



*No man should worship a deity so long as he himself has not become a deity. If the repetition of sacred utterances is performed without previous dedication of the parts of the body to the different deities, this repetition of* mantras *is demoniacal and without useful effect. To worship a deity, a man must become the Self of that deity through dedication, breath control, and concentration until his body becomes the deity's abode.*

*—Gàndharva Tantra*[6]

*In essence, every rite symbolizes and reproduces creation. Hence, rites are connected with the symbolism of ornaments. The slow-moving ritual, characteristic of all ceremonies, is closely bound up with the rhythm of the astral movements. At the same time, every rite is a meeting, that is, a confluence of forces and patterns; the significance of rites stems from the accumulated power of these forces when blended harmoniously one with the other.*

*—J.E. Cirlot*[7]

*Religion, like art,* lives *in so far as it is performed, i.e., in so far as its rituals are "going concerns." If you wish to spay or geld religion, first remove its rituals, its generative and regenerative processes. For religion is not a cognitive system, a set of dogmas, alone, it is meaningful experience and experienced meaning. In ritual one* lives through *events, or through the alchemy of its framings and symbolings,* relives *semiogenetic events, the deeds and words of prophets and saints, or if these are absent, myths and sacred epics.*

*—Victor Turner*[8]

*If it is difficult for us to understand the primitive belief in the efficacy of symbolic rites, it is largely because of our limited knowledge of the prolongations of the personality, which forces us to think in terms of a purely physical causality. We overlook that while we may believe that the anticipatory rite has no physical effect in the desired direction, the rite itself is the formal expression of a will directed to this end, and that this will, released by the performance of the rite, is also an effective force, by which the environment in its totality must be to some extent affected.*

*—A.K. Coomaraswamy*[9]

*Our primary error when we consider the Eucharist is to suppose that the notion of a transubstantiation represents any but a normally human point of view. To say that this is not merely bread but also and more eminently the body of God is the same as to say that a word is not merely a sound but also and more eminently a meaning: it is with perfect consistence that a sentimental and materialistic generation not only ridicules the Eucharistic tran-*

*substantiation, but also insists that the whole of any work of art subsists in its aesthetic surfaces, poetry consisting, for example, in a conjunction of pleasurable or interesting sounds rather than in a logically ordered sequence of sounds with meanings. It is from the same point of view that man is interpreted only as a psychophysical being, and not as a divine image, and for the same reason that we laugh at the "divinity of kings." That we no longer admit an argument by analogy does not represent an intellectual progress; we have merely lost the art of analogical procedure or, in other words, ritual procedure. Symbolism is a calculus in the same sense that an adequate analogy is proof.*

*In the Eucharistic sacrament, whether Christian, Mexican, or Hindu, bread and wine are "charged with meaning": God is a meaning. The Vedic incantation* (brahman) *is physically a sound but superaudibly* the *Brahman. To the "primitive" man, first and foremost a metaphysician and only later on a philosopher and psychologist, to this man who, like the angels, had fewer ideas and used less means than we, it had been inconceivable that anything, whether natural or artificial, could have a use or value only and not also a meaning; this man literally could not have understood our distinction of sacred from profane or of spiritual from material values; he did not live by bread alone. It had not occurred to him that there could be such a thing as an industry without art, or the practice of any art that was not at the same time a rite, a going on with what had been done by God in the beginning.* Per contra, *the modern man is a disintegrated personality, no longer the child of heaven and earth, but altogether of the earth. It is this that makes it so difficult for us to enter into the spirit of Christian, Hindu or Buddhist art in which the values taken for granted are spiritual and only the means are physical and psychological. The whole purpose of the ritual is to effect a translation, not only of the object, but of the man himself to another no longer peripheral but central level of reference.*

—*A.K. Coomaraswamy*[10]

*Sacrifice is not a thing coming to a man from without; it issues from within him, and has its birth in his heart. When the heart is deeply moved, expression is given to it by ceremonies; and hence, only men of ability and virtue can give complete exhibition to the idea of sacrifice.*

* * *

*When the soil is worn out, the grass and trees on it do not grow well. When water is often troubled, the fish and tortoises in it do not become large. When the energy of nature is decayed, its production of things does not proceed freely. In an age of disorder, ceremonies are forgotten and neglected, and music becomes licentious.*

*In such a case the notes are melancholy but without gravity, or joyous without repose. The superior man despises such a style of music and ceremonies.*

—*Confucius*[11]

*"There are some things I have to tell you," Betonie began softly. "The people nowadays have an idea about the ceremonies. They think the ceremonies must be performed exactly as they have always been done, maybe because one slip-up or mistake and the whole ceremony must be stopped and the sand painting destroyed. That much is true. They think that if a singer tampers with any part of the ritual, great harm can be done, great power unleashed." He was quiet for a while, looking up at the sky through the smoke hole. "That much can be true also. But long ago when the people were given these ceremonies, the changing began, if only in the aging of the yellow gourd rattle or the shrinking of the skin around the eagle's claw, if only in the different voices from generation to generation, singing the chants. You see, in many ways, the ceremonies have always been changing . . . .*

*"At one time, the ceremonies as they had been performed were enough for the way the world was then. But after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies. I have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the ceremonies strong.*

*"She taught me this above all else: things which don't shift and grow are dead things. They are things the witchery people want. Witchery works to scare people, to make them fear growth. But it has always been necessary, and more than ever now, it is. Otherwise we won't make it. We won't survive. That's what the witchery is counting on: that we will cling to the ceremonies the way they were, and then their power will triumph, and the people will be no more."*

*—Leslie Marmon Silko*[12]

*NOTES*

[1]*Translation by Y.P. Mei, in Wm. Theodore de Bary (ed.),* Sources of Chinese Tradition *(New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).*

[2]*From* Popul Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya, *English version by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley, from the translation of Adrián Recinos. Copyright 1950 by the University of Oklahoma Press.*

[3]*Exodus 12:1–14*

[4]*From* The Practice of the Presence of God *by Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, translated by Sister Mary David. Reprinted by permission of Paulist Press.*

[5]*From the* Bhagavad Gita *translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (New American Library, Mentor Books edition). Copyright by The Vedanta Society of Southern California. Reprinted by permission.*

[6]*From the* Gāndharva Tantra *translated by Alain Daniélou in his* Hindu Polytheism, *Bollingen Series LXXIII. Copyright © 1964 by Princeton University Press.*

[7]*From* A Dictionary of Symbols *by J.E. Cirlot and translated by Jack Sage. Reprinted by permission of the Philosophical Library, 1962.*

[8]*From* From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play *by Victor Turner, Performing Arts Journal Publications: New York, 1982. Reprinted by permission.*

[9]*From* Coomaraswamy, Selected Papers, *edited by Roger Lipsey, Bollingen Series 89. Volume 1: Traditional Art and Symbolism, Copyright © 1977 by Princeton University Press.*

[10]Ibid.

[11]*From* Texts of Confucianism, *Part IV, Liki, XI-XLVI, translated by James Legge, being Volume XXVIII of* The Sacred Books of the East *edited by F. Max Müller, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1885.*

[12]*From* Ceremony *by Leslie Silko. A Richard Seaver Book, published by The Viking Press, Inc. Copyright © 1977 by Leslie Silko. Reprinted by permission of Viking Penguin Inc.*

# *Making Magic*

## *by David Abram*

They told me I had powers.

Powers? I had been a magician for seven years, performing steadily back in the States, entertaining in clubs and restaurants throughout the country, yet I had never heard anyone mention powers. To be sure, once or twice a season I was rebuked by some spectator fresh out of Bible school for "doing the work of Satan," but the more customary refrain was: "How did you do that?" Every evening in the clubs: "How? How did that happen?" "C'mon tell us—how does that work?"

"I don't know," I took to saying, mostly out of boredom, yet also because I felt there was some grain of truth in that statement, because there was some aspect of my sleight-of-hand tricks that mystified even myself. It was not something I could experience when rehearsing alone, at home, or when practicing my sleights before a mirror. But when, in the evening, I would stand before my audience, letting my fingers run through one of their routines with some borrowed coins, and I'd see the spectators' eyes slowly widening with astonishment, well, there was something astonishing about that for me as well, although I was unable to say just what it was.

When I received a fellowship to support a year's research on the intertwining of magic and medicine in Asia, I thought I might have a chance to explore the secrets that lay hidden within my own magic, or at least to discern what mysteries my magic had in common with the magic used in traditional cultures not merely for entertainment but for healing, fortification, and transformation. I was intending to use my skills as a Western sleight-of-hand magician to gain access to the native practitioners and their rituals—I would approach them not as an academic researcher, not as an anthropologist or sociologist, but as a magician in my own right, and in this manner would explore the relation between ritual and transformation from the inside.

As it turned out, this method worked well—at first almost too well, for the potency which my magic tricks took on in rural Asia brought some alarming difficulties. In the interior of Sri Lanka, where I began my quest, I was rather too open with my skills; anxious as I was to get some sense of the local attitude towards magic, I began performing on village street-corners much as I had three years earlier while journeying as a street magician through Europe. But these were different streets now, so much more earth-worn and dusty than those concrete thoroughfares, reeking with smells of incense and elephants, frequented as much by gods and demons as by the human inhabitants of the island. Within a week after I began plucking handkerchiefs from the air, "the young magician from the West" was known throughout the country. Huge crowds followed me wherever I went, and I was approached, constantly, by persons in the grip of disease, by persons blind and crippled, all asking me to cure them with my powers. What a frightful, saddening position to be in! When, like a fool, I attempted to show that my magic feats were but illusions accomplished by dexterous manipulations, I only insulted these people—clearly, to them, I was using such clumsy explanations to disguise and hide my real powers. I fled Sri Lanka after only three weeks, suffering from a severe case of ethical paradox, determined to begin my work afresh in Indonesia, where I would above all keep my magic more to myself.

It was five months later, after carefully immersing myself in the Indonesian island universe, observing and recording the patterns of culture while slowly, inadvertently, slipping into those patterns myself—my body and voice startling me with their natural appropriation of gestures and rhythms that I had thought so alien—it was only at this point that I first allowed myself a chance to explore the more un-

usual possibilities of my position. For five months I had been true to my resolve, keeping my magic much more "up my sleeve" than I had in Sri Lanka, letting it out only rarely—waiting for just the right moments to make something impossible happen, and for only a few people at a time, perhaps in a tea stall or while sauntering past the rice paddies, yet never calling attention to it, and in this manner slowly and much more surely weaving my way into the animist fabric of the society. I had the sense that I was becoming known in the region, but in a more subtle and curious manner than before—here and there I had begun to hear stories about a Westerner, glimpsed on the far side of the island, who actually had access to the invisible world, to the spirits. Gradually I had been contacted by a number of *dukuns,* or sorcerers, often in some clandestine manner, through a child or a friend, and asked to visit them in their homes. The initial meetings had been strained, sometimes frightening, for these practitioners felt their status threatened by a stranger who could so easily produce shells from the air or make knives vanish between his hands. And I, in return, felt threatened by the resultant antagonism—I did not want these magicians to view me as their competitor, for I knew the incredible power of the imagination and had no wish to be the victim of any dark spells (when I came down with a nightmarish case of malaria I was sure, in my delirium, that I had brought it upon myself by offending a particular sorcerer). As the months unfolded, I had learned not to shy away from, but to work with these tensions, and had become adept at transforming the initial antagonism into some sort of mutual respect, at times into a real sense of camaraderie. I had lived with a sorcerer-healer in Java and traded magic with a *balian tapakan,* or spirit medium, in Bali, both of whom were convinced that my presence in their household enhanced their own access to the gods and accentuated their power as healers. But that is another story.

On a certain early monsoon day I sat in a rice stall in a small fishing village on the coast of Bali, shielding myself from the

afternoon rain. Munching my rice, I stared out at a steamy, emerald landscape—with the rainy season finally breaking overhead, all the Balinese greens were beginning to leak into the air. Inside, the old woman was serving rice across the wooden slab of a counter to two solemn fishermen; in the corner of the hut three others were laughing and conversing in low Balinese. The downpour outside stopped abruptly; now other sounds—dogs fighting in the distance, someone singing. I stood up to pay the woman, counting out the correct number of coins and reaching across to drop them into her hand. I opened my fingers—the coins were not there! The woman and I looked at each other, astonished. I turned my empty hands over several times, looked on the dirt floor behind me, then struck by an idea I reached under my rice-bowl and . . . found the coins. Feigning relief, I took them up and reached across to hand them to the bewildered woman—except that the coins were missing, once again, when I opened my fist. By now the men in the corner had stopped talking and the two at the counter had paused in the middle of their meal, watching as I became more and more annoyed, searching the floor and the bench without finding my money. One of the fishermen suggested that I look under my bowl again. Of course! I lifted up my bowl . . . but the coins were not there. Upset, I stared at the others. One of them backed slowly into the street. I shrugged my shoulders sadly at the woman, then caught sight of the two half-filled rice bowls resting in front of the other men at the counter. I motioned, hesitantly, for one of the fishermen, his eyebrows arched in puzzlement, to lift up his bowl. He looked 'round at the others, then gingerly raised one edge of the bowl . . . there they were! The coins glittered on the palmwood as the fishermen began shouting at each other, incredulous. The old woman was doubled over with laughter.

The man who had uncovered the coins stared at me long and hard. As the others drifted out onto the street, still shouting, this man shoved his rice aside, leaned over to me and asked, in Indonesian, if I would be so kind as to accompany him to meet his family. Something urgent in his voice intrigued me; I nodded. He paid the old woman, who clapped me on the shoulder as we left, and led me down the street toward the beach. He turned off to the right before reaching the sand, and I followed him through the rice paddies, balancing like a tight-rope walker on one of the dikes that separate the flooded squares. To our left the village spread itself out along the shore; a young woman nursed an infant, smoke rose from cooking fires, three pigs rummaged through a pile of rags and wood. The man turned to the left between two paddies and led me through a makeshift gate into his family compound. Children were playing. He motioned me inside one of the two buildings—his brother lives in the other, he explained—where a young woman sat with a child on her lap. Before I could make a formal greeting, the fisherman pushed his wife and child out the door, slinging a blanket over the doorway and another over the window. He sat me down in the dark, offered a Javanese cigarette, lit one for himself, then sat down next to me, crosslegged on the floor. He gripped my ankle as he began to explain his situation. He spoke quickly, but in broken Indonesian, which was good, since I could never have followed his story had he spoken so quickly in Balinese. Essentially, what he had to say was this: That he was a poor and ignorant fisherman blessed with a loving wife and many children, and that despite his steady and enthusiastic propitiation of the local gods and ancestors he had been unable to catch any fish for the last six months. This was especially upsetting since before that time he had been one of the most successful fishermen in the village, and besides—he said—it was evident to everyone in the village that his present difficulties were the result of some left-handed magic; clearly a demon had been induced

by some sorcery to take up residence in the hull of his fishing-boat, and was now frightening the fish away from his nets. Furthermore, he knew that another fisherman in the village had secretly obtained a certain talisman from a priest, a magic shell which made this other man's boat fill up with fish whenever he took it out on the water. And so perhaps I, who obviously knew about such things and had some powers of my own, would be willing to work some special magic on *his* boat so that he could once again catch enough fish to feed his family.

Now, it was clear that this man was both honest and in earnest (his grip on my poor ankle had increased considerably), but I had been in this position before, and though less disconcerted by it than I had been five months earlier, I was still reluctant to play very deeply within the dream-space of a culture that was not my own. And so I explained to Gedé (the one of his many names with which I could most properly address him) that my magic was only good for things like making coins vanish or causing fruit to appear (I plucked a banana, ripe, out of the darkness and handed it to him, making him laugh), that my magic was useless when it came to really practical matters, and that in any case I had never worked with fish but was sure, since they could breathe underwater and all, that their own powers were even more potent than mine—if a demon was frightening them away, he or she was certainly beyond my influence. Gedé nodded in agreement, released my ankle, and changed the subject. After a few minutes he led me to the doorway and thanked me for coming.

I felt sure that I had convinced him with my excuses. But perhaps I had failed to take into account the Balinese habit of self-effacement before accepting praise (*"Saya bodoh"*—"I am stupid," any Balinese healer will reply to the assertion that he or she is skillful), including, apparently, the praise and respect implied in being offered a difficult task. Unaware, I walked along the beach toward the little bamboo hut I had procured for the night. As the sun sank into the land, the moon rose from the ocean, pale white, nearly full. In the distance, between the rising and the lowering, sat the great volcano, silently looming on the horizon . . . That night I had difficulty falling asleep. A weird symphony of chirping crickets accompanied the chorus of frogs gurgling in unison outside my hut. Sometimes this loud music stopped all at once—then just the faint lapping of waves and the afternoon rain dripping off the night leaves.

Toward midnight I was awakened by a persistent tapping at the window. I stumbled to my feet and lifted the thin slab of wood—there was Gedé, grinning nervously. He hissed that we must attempt the magic now, while the others were asleep. In an instant I understood the situation—that Gedé was not taking "no" for an answer, or rather that he had taken my refusal as an acceptance—and I found myself, oddly enough, giving in to the challenge this time without hesitation. Wrapping a sarong around myself, I recalled the dream from which Gedé's tapping had awakened me: I had been back in the States, performing strange, hypnotic magic for seamonsters in a nightclub that was actually an aquarium. Just before waking, I had heard one monster applauding; his clapping had become the tapping at my window. Now, looking around, hastily, for something to use, I grabbed an empty Coke bottle I had tossed in the corner, then on an inspiration

dug in my backpack for some flashpaper I'd brought from the States. (Flashpaper is a common tool of the stage-magician; thin paper that has been soaked in a magnesium solution, when crumpled and ignited it goes up in a sudden, bright flash of flame, leaving no ashes behind—wonderful stuff.) I shoved the flashpaper into a fold in my sarong and, gripping the Coke bottle, hurried outside where Gedé was fidgeting anxiously. When he saw me, he turned and led the way down to the beach.

We walked quickly along the water's edge to where the boats were resting on the sand, their long, painted hulls gleaming in the moon-glow. As we walked, Gedé whispered to me that the fishermen don't go out fishing on nights when the moon is full or nearly full, since the fish can then see the nets. Only on such a night as this could we accomplish the magic in secret, while the other fishermen slept . . . He stopped before a sleek blue and white boat, somewhat longer than most of the others, and motioned me to help him. We lifted the bamboo outriggers—he on one side, myself on the other—and slid the craft into the dark water. I hopped back onto the beach and scooped my Coke bottle full of the black, volcanic sand, then waded back out and climbed into the boat with Gedé. Really a long dugout canoe with limbs—the two bamboo outriggers and a short, rough-hewn mast near the bow—it rested on the swells while Gedé unrolled a white triangle of sail and hoisted it from a beam on the mast. The breeze rose up and the boat glided effortless and silent into the night. Overhead, the moon drifted behind a cloud and set the whole cloud glowing. The volcano, luminous, watched and waited.

In the Balinese universe the volcano provides a sort of gateway to and from the upper world, the world of the ancestors, of the gods. The sea, meanwhile, provides the passage to the lower world of demons; these destructive forces are known to reside in the black depths of the waters which surround the island. Consequently, those islanders who live near the shore, and especially the fishermen who make their living on the water, are a highly nervous and wary bunch, and they partake even more than the average Balinese of the animistic rites and ceremonies of protection for which the island is famous. At this point in my journey I was only beginning to sense what I would later see clearly; namely, that while the magicians of all traditional cultures are working fundamentally toward the same mystery, still the magic of each culture takes its structure from the particular clues of the region, that is, from the particular powers of earth to be found there—whether volcanoes, or wind, or ocean, or desert—for magic evolves from the land.

The wind shifted, became cooler. I moved close to where Gedé sat in the stern guiding the rudder, and asked him why it was so necessary for us to work in secret. "So other fishermen not jealous," he explained softly. He lit himself a cigarette. After some time I turned away from him and slipped a piece of flashpaper, crumpled, into the mouth of the Coke bottle. The beach was a thin silver line in the distance. I told Gedé that I thought we were out far enough for the magic to take effect, and he agreed. As I took down the sail, I wedged the rest of the flashpaper under a splinter near the top of the mast. Gedé heaved an anchor over the side, then settled back into the stern, watching me carefully.

How to improvise an exorcism? I leaned with my back against the mast, emptying my mind of thoughts, feeling the rock and sway of this tiny boat on the night waters. Small waves slapped against the hull, angrily at first, then softer, more playful, curious. Gradually something regular established itself—the swaying took on a rhythm, a steady rock and roll that grew in intensity as my body gave in to the dance. Phosphorescent algae glimmered like stars around me. The boat became a planet, and I leaned with my back against the axis of the world, a tree with roots in the ocean and branches in the sky, tilting, turning.

Without losing the rhythm, I began to move toward the rear of the boat, keeping it rocking, swinging the bottle of black sand around myself in circles, from one hand to the other. When I reached Gedé I took the cigarette from his hand, puffed on it deeply once or twice, then touched the lit end to the mouth of the bottle. A white flash of fire exploded from the bottle with a "Whooshh," propelled by the pressure inside, a wild spirit lunging for air! Gedé sat bolt upright, with his arms quivering, grasping the sides of the hull. I motioned for him to cup his hands—he did so, and I tipped the bottle down, pouring a small mound of spirit-sand onto his fingers. There were little platforms affixed symmetrically around the hull, platforms upon which Gedé, when fishing, would place his lanterns to coax the fish up from the depths. I moved around to each of them, nine in all, the cardinal points of this drifting planet, and carefully anointed each one with a mound of sand. I then sat myself down in the bottom of the carved-out hull and planted my hands against the wood, against the inside of that hollowed-out tree, waiting to make contact with whatever malevolent presence slumbered beneath the chiseled surface. I felt the need for a sound, for some chant to keep the rhythm, but I could think of nothing appropriate, until a bit of Jewish liturgy sprang to my lips from somewhere, perhaps from my own initiation at age thirteen. I sang softly. The planet heaved and creaked, the hollow tree rolled from side to side, the upright tree with roots in the sea swung like a pendulum against moon-edged clouds. At some point the moon itself rolled out from a cloud pocket and the whole mood shifted—sharp shadows slid back and forth across the wood. Somewhere inside me another planet turned; I began to feel slightly sick. I stood up and began weaving from one side of the boat to the other, sweeping the mounds of sand off the platforms. When I came to the fisherman, I reached into the sky above him and produced another cigarette, already lit, from the dark. I felt a fever flushing my forehead and cheeks. I held the cigarette first to his mouth, then to my own, as we each took a puff on it; I held mine in, walked back rather dizzily, and blew a long line of smoke from the bottom to the top of the mast. Then I touched the cigarette to the paper wedged in up among the invisible branches. A rush of flame shot into the sky. Instantly I felt better—the fever was gone, the turning stopped, the little boat rocked on the waves. I turned to Gedé and nodded. A wide grin broke across his face; he tossed the sand, still cupped in his hands, over his head into the water. We drew anchor, hoisted the sail, and tacked back to the village with Gedé singing gaily at the rudder.

I had to leave the coast the next day to begin work with a healer in the interior, but I promised Gedé that I would return in a month or so to check on the results of my impromptu exorcism.

It was five weeks later that I returned, with gathering trepidation, to the fishing village. I found Gedé waiting for me with open arms. I was introduced to his family, presented with gifts, and stuffed with food. The magic had been successful. The fishing business was thriving, as was apparent from the new gate and the new building Gedé had had built to house the family kitchen. After the meal, Gedé took me aside to tell me of his new ideas, projects which he could accomplish if only he had a little magic help. I backed off gracefully, paid my respects, and left the village, feeling elated and strange.

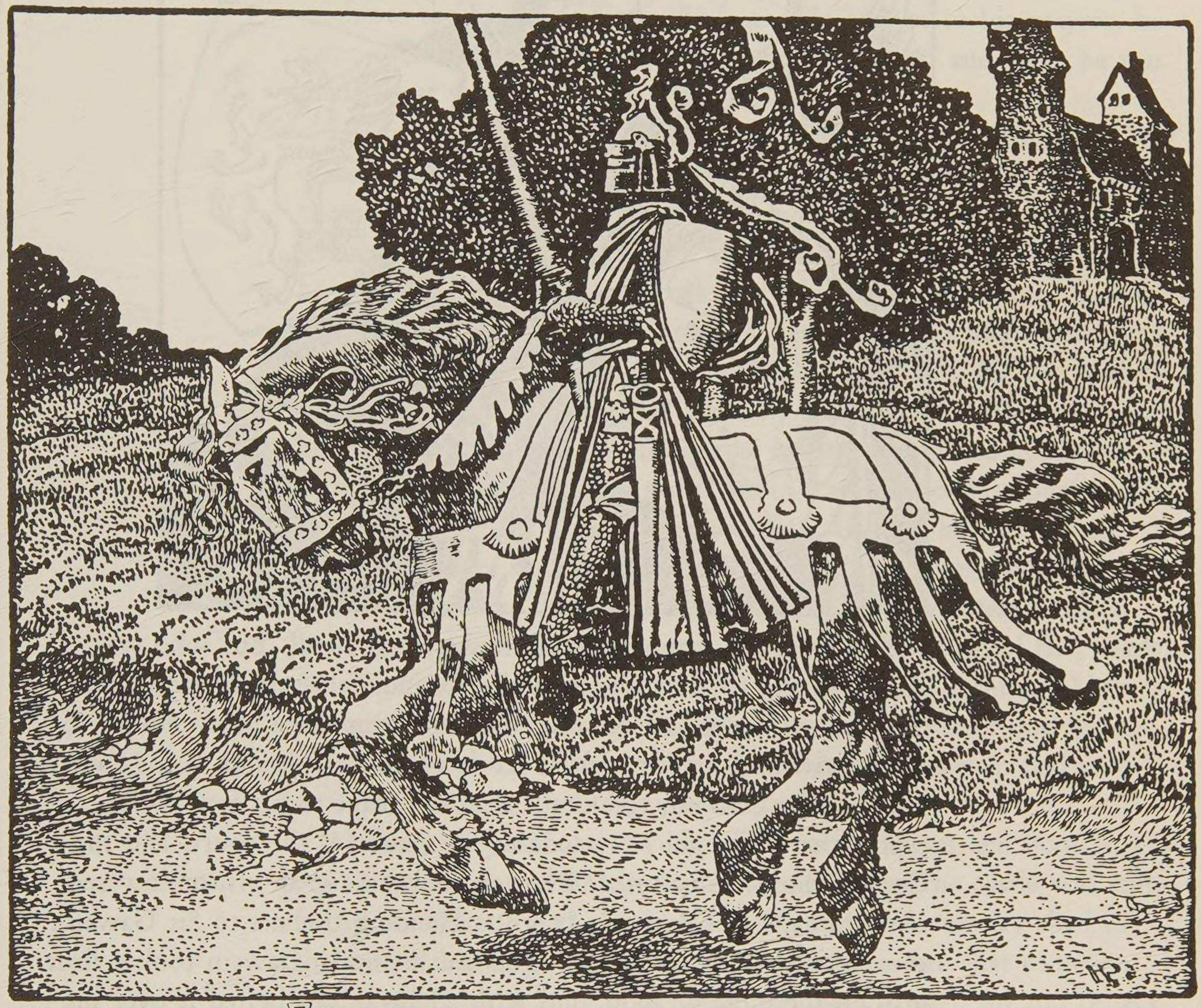
I am scribbling the last words of this story at a table in the small Vermont nightclub where I have been performing magic this winter. Tonight I was doing mostly card magic, with some handkerchiefs and coin stuff thrown in for good measure. Some hours ago, a woman grabbed my arm. "How? " she gasped. "How did you do that?"

"I really don't know," I told her.

I think there's something honest in that. ◇

EPICYCLE:

# Sir Gawain and the Green Knight



It was on the last day of the old and dying year that the Green Knight came to the court of King Arthur. He made his appearance unheralded, riding his horse into the hall and stopping before the assemblage at the Round Table. Huge he was in stature, but it was not his hugeness alone that struck terror into the hearts of the knights. For the Green Knight was indeed green: not his armor only, but his flesh as well, and the green weapon he carried was a battle axe of ancient form. And if that were not terrifying enough—and perhaps for some it was not—then his challenge to that assembly alarmed them all. For it was this: that the knight bold enough to champion the reputation of the court was to take hold of the green axe and with a single stroke decapitate its owner. Then, on the following New Year's Day, that same champion was to present himself at the Green Chapel, and there endure a stroke in kind.

The challenge was given, and it was clear to all. But who was there to meet it? The whole of the Round Table sat amazed, and they looked not at one another, for none was there bold enough to accept. At last, Arthur himself arose, to save the honor of his court, but then Sir Gawain, the king's nephew, leapt to his feet and accepted the challenge. He strode to the center of the court, and the Green Knight dismounted. Even on foot, this grim visitor towered over the tallest of Arthur's knights. Handing the axe to Sir Gawain, the apparition bent over and presented his neck. Gawain took a firm grip on the huge weapon, and with all his might hefted it over his head. In a single, prodigious stroke, he brought it down upon the green neck that awaited it, and the head dropped and rolled to the side and was still. Then, as if nothing had happened, the Green Knight straightened himself, while the court looked on in horror, walked to where his head lay and picked it up. Then he took from Gawain's unresisting hands the gigantic battle axe, mounted his horse and rode away.

Thus was the challenge given, and thus taken. And when the year had nearly passed and was drawing to its close, Sir Gawain set forth to find the Green Chapel and fulfill his pact. Though the court lamented, he himself was cheerful. "For what else can befall a man except that he should go to meet his destiny?" he said to that noble assembly.

Long was the journey, and a lonely one. Gawain traveled northward, into the jaws of winter, and his way was unknown, for none

there was to tell him the whereabouts of the Green Chapel. Never had it been heard of, never seen, and by and by Gawain found himself wandering hopelessly astray.

At length, on Christmas Eve, he turned aside for a moment, and prayed to Christ and the Virgin in that dark forest where he now was lost. He asked only that he might find shelter where he might celebrate the Saviour's birth. And, as if in answer to his prayers, he came thereafter to a great castle in the wilderness, and there he was made most welcome.

His host was a man of sinister appearance, but his wife was a lady of beguiling charm; they, together with an older woman who resided there also, sought to make Gawain as comfortable as possible, and seemed delighted to welcome a knight of such renown. Gawain himself was concerned only to know the way to the Green Chapel, for the appointed hour was drawing near when he should meet that dolorous stroke that he had sworn himself to suffer. He was greatly relieved to learn that his host not only knew of the Green Chapel, but that it was nearby; if he left the castle even so late as New Year's morning, he would arrive well in advance of his appointment. And so it was that Gawain consented to stay and be entertained.

One evening, some days before the end of the year, while Gawain and his host were drinking at the hearth, the two entered into a curious bargain. Upon the morrow, proposed the lord of that castle, Gawain should remain behind while his host went hunting. Upon his return, whatsoever should have fallen to the hunter during the day should belong to the guest, while whatever Gawain had won during the day he should pay to his host.

At dawn the next day, amid the clamor of horses and hounds, Gawain's host departed on the hunt, and thereafter the castle was still, for all the retinue had accompanied the hunt. Gawain lay abed in that silent morning, but presently he became aware that someone was sitting on the edge of his bed. He raised himself up and beheld his host's beautiful wife, who had stolen into the room as soon as the hunt had quitted the courtyard. The dazzling woman spoke to Gawain in a rich and beguiling voice, and Gawain was moved with longing; but he was bound by the honor of Arthur's court, and he resisted his desire. The struggle was the more difficult, for the lady was more than willing to bed the knight whose reputation as a lover was widely known, but the duty to his host and the honor of his knighthood held firm, and the magnificent woman had to content herself with no more than a kiss.

His host returned at dusk, greatly laden with all manner of game, all of which was presented to Gawain in accordance with the strange agreement of the previous night. Gawain accepted, and to the amusement of both men, repaid his host with the kiss that he had received from the lady. What a small price to pay for such bounty! So the evening passed into night, and the two feasted and drank their fill.

The following day, when his host departed, Gawain again found himself alone with the lady, and once more was entreated and urged, even more strongly than before. But Gawain stood fast and though the temptation was stronger still, all that passed between them were two kisses. And when evening came, and his host returned from the hunt with a mighty boar killed that day, Gawain gave him in return the two kisses. Evening passed into night, and once more they drank and feasted.

On the final day before the New Year, when the castle had become still once more, the lady came again to Gawain's bed. This time her entreaties were more than urgent; there was indeed a desperation in her insistence and the assault on Gawain's honor was the more acute, for the lady seemed in sore distress at his refusal. At length she said to him, "If you will not vouchsafe me your embrace, accept from me at least some token, before you leave these walls." And she pressed him to accept a green scarf, a small piece of lace which she had about her waist. "Please take it," the lady pleaded, "it is so small a token, a mere nothing, but it possesses a miraculous power. Whoever shall wear this bit of lace cannot be harmed, no matter the peril he is in." Gawain hesitated a moment, loath to accept a token of any sort, but then he thought himself of the morrow, and his meeting at the Green Chapel. His hand closed upon the lace, and the lady, in the joy of gratitude, roundly kissed him thrice.

When evening came, and the hunt returned, all that was brought in was one bedraggled fox, which Gawain's host presented apologetically. Gawain himself gave in exchange the three kisses he had received—but the bit of green lace he withheld. Then evening passed into night, but the feast was meagre and subdued, and Gawain's thoughts were turned towards the morrow and his final journey.

When morning came, a young squire guided Gawain to the dismal valley wherein lay the Green Chapel. Earnestly the boy pleaded with Gawain to turn back, "for none who has gone there has ever returned." But Gawain held to his oath, and remembering the power of the green scarf rode forward alone. And when he had gone down into that valley, the silence closed around him but for one eerie sound that came from the woods, as if an axe were being ground and sharpened.

Gawain boldly called out his name, and the sound ceased. A voice replied that he should wait but a moment, and so he did, while the grinding resumed. Then it stopped and from a gloomy, moss-covered cave stepped the Green Knight. His ghastly head was back upon his shoulders, and in his hand he held the mighty battle-axe, the edge of its blade gleaming in the murky light. At once Gawain leapt from his horse and stood still, his head bowed, his neck ready, just as his adversary had done the year before, and bid the giant strike at once. The axe was raised, but as it rushed down, Gawain shrank a little with his shoulders, and the Green Knight checked his blow.

"A noble knight such as yourself," he said in rebuke, "should not show such cowardice. Thou hast agreed to this exchange: meet it steadfastly." Gawain retorted that, unlike his opponent, he was not in the fortunate position of being able to retrieve his head once it had fallen. But he readied himself again, and the axe was once more lifted. This time, Gawain stood firm, and the Green Knight, seeing his resolution, once more checked the blow even as the axe descended.

"Thus I like you, and now will I deliver the blow. But remove, if you will, the cap that King Arthur gave you, so that I may catch your neck full bare." Gawain replied in exasperation, "Strike well and quickly, lest I hold you afraid to deal the blow!"

So the axe was raised a third time, and was brought down. This time the blow was not checked, but only the corner of it touched Sir Gawain's neck, just nicking it and leaving but a tiny streak of blood. Immediately Gawain sprang aside, before the axe could be raised again, and seized his own weapons. "Stand back," he declared, "for I have withstood you! One blow was all that was pledged and that blow ye have given!" But the Green Knight stood calmly leaning on his axe, and made no motion to fight.

"Do not excite yourself, good Sir Gawain. You have received the blow you deserved, and our pact is at an end. Twice did I check my blow because you repaid the kisses you received, at my behest, from my wife. But the third time, though you gave me the kisses, you withheld the green scarf I bade her give you, and which now you wear: and so I have marked you with my axe. But know that in your weakest moment, you were stronger than any man alive or dead; a pearl among white peas is Sir Gawain, the most honorable of all King Arthur's court."

Sir Gawain was red with shame. "A curse on the two of you, Fear and Desire!" he shouted. "You are the destroyers of all in man that seeks valor and honor. Take this scrap back to your wife!" And he made to remove the green scarf. But the Green Knight refused to accept it, and comforted Sir Gawain, bidding him return to the castle and bide there for a time.

This Gawain refused; but he consented to keep the scarf, to remind him forever of his failure.

—Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

# *The Uses of Ceremony: Two Views*

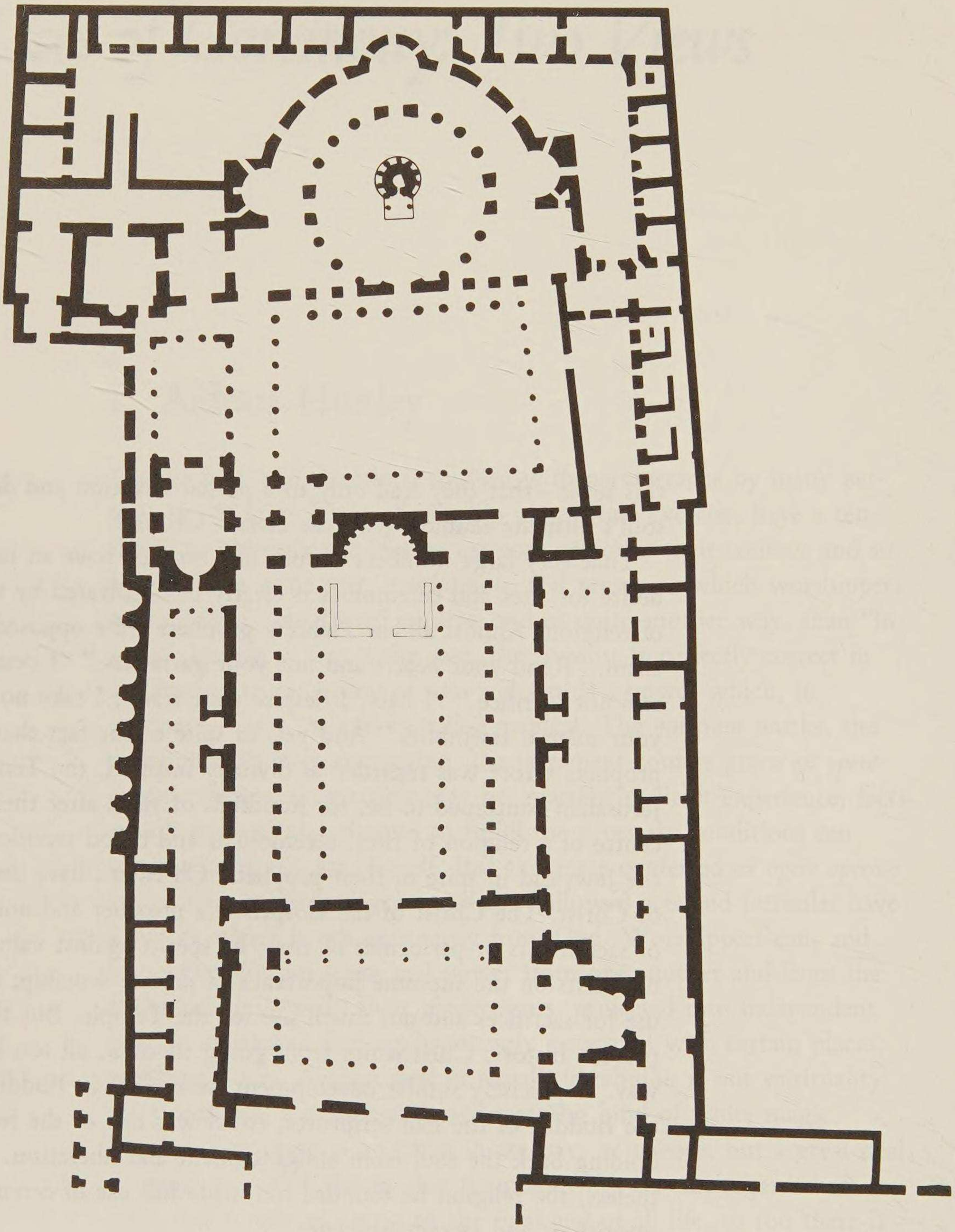
## I. Aldous Huxley

Intense faith and devotion, coupled with perseverance by many persons in the same forms of worship or spiritual exercise, have a tendency to objectify the idea or memory which is their content and so to create, in some sort, a numinous real presence, which worshippers actually find "out there" no less, and in quite another way, than "in here." Insofar as this is the case, the ritualist is perfectly correct in attributing to his hallowed acts and words a power which, in another context, would be called magical. The *mantram* works, the sacrifice really does something, the sacrament confers grace *ex opere operato:* these are, or rather may be, matters of direct experience, facts which anyone who chooses to fulfill the necessary conditions can verify empirically for himself. But the grace conferred *ex opere operato* is not always spiritual grace and the hallowed acts and formulas have a power which is not necessarily from God. Worshippers can, and very often do, get grace and power from one another and from the faith and devotion of their predecessors, projected into independent psychic existences that are hauntingly associated with certain places, words and acts. A great deal of ritualistic religion is not spirituality, but occultism, a refined and well-meaning kind of white magic. Now, just as there is no harm in art, say, or science, but a great deal of good, provided always that these activities are not regarded as ends, but simply as means to the final end of all life, so too there is no harm in white magic, but the possibilities of much good, so long as it is treated, not as true religion, but as one of the roads to true religion—an effective way of reminding people with a certain kind of psycho-physical make-up that there is a God, "in knowledge of whom standeth their eternal life." If ritualistic white magic is regarded as being in itself true religion; if the real presences it evokes are taken to be God in Himself and not the projections of human thoughts and feelings about God or even about something less than God; and if the sacramental rites are performed and attended for the sake of the "spiritual sweetness" experienced and the powers and advantages conferred—then there is idolatry. This idolatry is, at its best, a very lofty and, in many ways, beneficent kind of religion. But the consequences of worshipping God as anything but Spirit and in any way except in spirit and in truth are necessarily undesirable in

this sense—that they lead only to a partial salvation and delay the soul's ultimate reunion with the eternal Ground.

That very large numbers of men and women have an ineradicable desire for rites and ceremonies is clearly demonstrated by the history of religion. Almost all the Hebrew prophets were opposed to ritualism. "Rend your hearts and not your garments." "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." "I hate, I despise your feasts; I take no delight in your solemn assemblies." And yet, in spite of the fact that what the prophets wrote was regarded as divinely inspired, the Temple at Jerusalem continued to be, for hundreds of years after their time, the centre of a religion of rites, ceremonials and blood sacrifice. What the Jews did in spite of their prophets, Christians have done in spite of Christ. The Christ of the Gospels is a preacher and not a dispenser of sacraments or performer of rites; he speaks against vain repetitions; he insists on the supreme importance of private worship; he has no use for sacrifices and not much use for the Temple. But this did not prevent historic Christianity from going its own, all too human, way. A precisely similar development took place in Buddhism. For the Buddha of the Pali scriptures, ritual was one of the fetters holding back the soul from enlightenment and liberation. Nevertheless, the religion he founded has made full use of ceremonies, vain repetitions and sacramental rites.

There would seem to be two main reasons for the observed developments of the historical religions. First, most people do not want spirituality or deliverance, but rather a religion that gives them emotional satisfactions, answers to prayer, supernormal powers and partial salvation in some sort of posthumous heaven. Second, some of those few who do desire spirituality and deliverance find that, for them, the most effective means to those ends are ceremonies, "vain repetitions" and sacramental rites. It is by participating in these acts and uttering these formulas that they are most powerfully reminded of the eternal Ground of all being; it is by immersing themselves in the symbols that they can most easily come through to that which is symbolized. Every thing, event or thought is a point of intersection between creature and Creator, between a more or less distant manifestation of God and a ray, so to speak, of the unmanifest Godhead;



every thing, event or thought can therefore be made the doorway through which a soul may pass out of time into eternity. That is why ritualistic and sacramental religion can lead to deliverance. But at the same time every human being loves power and self-enhancement, and every hallowed ceremony, form of words or sacramental rite is a channel through which power can flow out of the fascinating psychic universe into the universe of embodied selves. That is why ritualistic and sacramental religion can also lead away from deliverance.

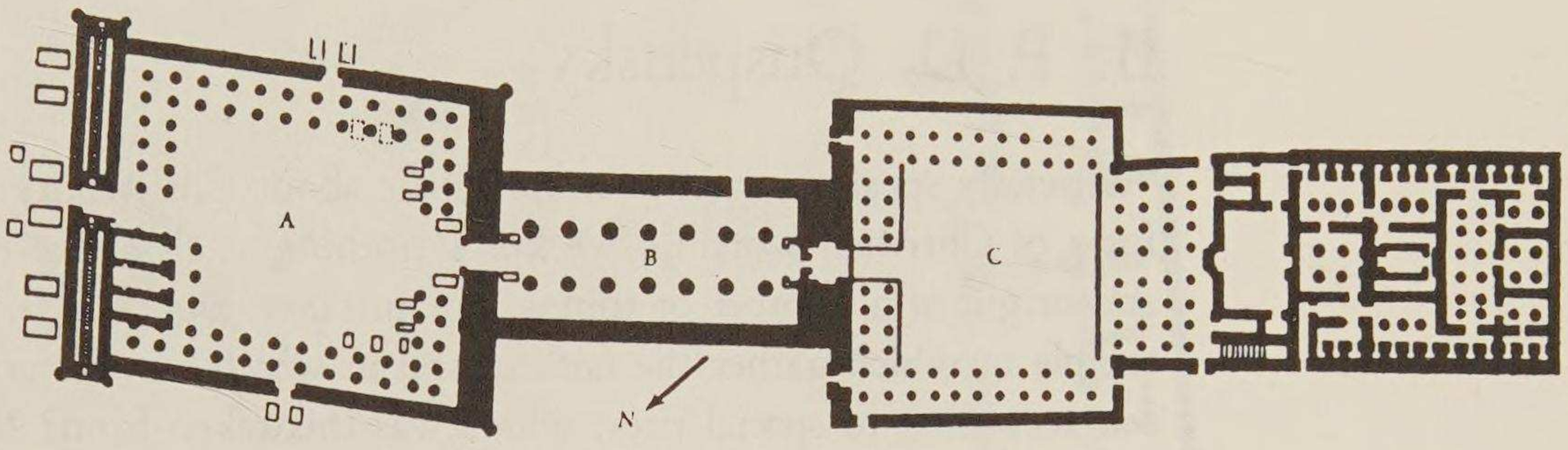
*From* The Perennial Philosophy *by Aldous Huxley (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).*

# II. P. D. Ouspensky

"Generally speaking we know very little about Christianity and the form of Christian worship; we know nothing at all of the history and origin of a number of things. For instance, the church, the temple in which gather the faithful and in which services are carried out according to special rites; where was this taken from? Many people do not think about this at all. Many people think that the outward form of worship, the rites, the singing of canticles, and so on, were invented by the fathers of the church. Others think that this outward form has been taken partly from pagan religions and partly from the Hebrews. But all of it is untrue. The question of the origin of the Christian church, that is, of the Christian temple, is much more interesting than we think. To begin with, the church and worship in the form which they took in the first centuries of Christianity could not have been borrowed from paganism because there was nothing like it either in the Greek or Roman cults or in Judaism. The Jewish synagogue, the Jewish temple, Greek and Roman temples of various gods, were something quite different from the Christian church which made its appearance in the first and second centuries. The Christian church is—a school concerning which people have forgotten that it is a school. Imagine a school where the teachers give lectures and perform explanatory demonstrations without knowing that these are lectures and demonstrations; and where the pupils or simply the people who come to the school take these lectures and demonstrations for ceremonies, or rites, or 'sacraments,' i.e., magic. This would approximate to the Christian church of our times.

"The Christian church, the Christian form of worship, was not invented by the fathers of the church. It was all taken in a ready-made form from Egypt, only not from the Egypt that we know but from one which we do not know. This Egypt was in the same place as the other but it existed much earlier. Only small bits of it survived in historical times, and these bits have been preserved in secret and so well that we do not even know where they have been preserved.

"It will seem strange to many people when I say that this prehistoric Egypt was Christian many thousands of years before the birth of Christ, that is to say, that its religion was composed of the same principles and ideas that constitute true Christianity. Special schools existed in this prehistoric Egypt which were called 'schools of repetition.' In these schools a public repetition was given on definite days, and in some schools perhaps even every day, of the entire course in a condensed form of the sciences that could be learned at these schools. Sometimes this repetition lasted a week or a month. Thanks to these repetitions people who had passed through this




course did not lose their connection with the school and retained in their memory all they had learned. Sometimes they came from very far away simply in order to listen to the repetition and went away feeling their connection with the school. There were special days of the year when the repetitions were particularly complete, when they were carried out with particular solemnity—and these days themselves possessed a symbolical meaning.

"These 'schools of repetition' were taken as a model for Christian churches—the form of worship in Christian churches almost entirely represents the course of repetition of the science dealing with the universe and man. Individual prayers, hymns, responses, all had their own meaning in this repetition as well as holidays and all religious symbols, though their meaning has been forgotten long ago."

Continuing, G.* quoted some very interesting examples of the explanations of various parts of orthodox liturgy.

The idea was that, beginning with the first words, the liturgy so to speak goes through the process of creation, recording all its stages and transitions. His explanations differed very greatly from the usual theological and even from mystical interpretations. And the principal difference was that he did away with a great many allegories. I mean to say that it became obvious from his explanations that we take many things for allegories in which there is no allegory whatever and which ought to be understood much more simply and psychologically.

"Every ceremony or rite has a value if it is performed without alteration," he said. "A ceremony is a book in which a great deal is written. Anyone who understands can read it. One rite often contains more than a hundred books . . .

"A grain of truth in an unaltered form is sometimes found in pseudo-esoteric movements, in church religions, in occult and theosophical schools. It may be preserved in their writings, their rituals, their traditions, their conceptions of the hierarchy, their dogmas, and their rules.

**G.I. Gurdjeff*

"Esoteric schools, that is, *not pseudo-esoteric schools,* which perhaps exist in some countries of the East, are difficult to find because they exist there in the guise of ordinary monasteries and temples. Tibetan monasteries are usually built in the form of four concentric circles or four concentric courts divided by high walls. Indian temples, especially those in Southern India, are built on the same plan but in the form of squares, one contained within the other. Worshipers usually have access to the first outer court, and sometimes, as an exception, persons of another religion and Europeans; access to the second court is for people of a certain caste only or for those having special permission; access to the third court is only for persons belonging to the temple; and access to the fourth is only for Brahmins and priests. Organizations of this kind which, with minor variations, are everywhere in existence, enable esoteric schools to exist without being recognized. Out of dozens of monasteries one is a school. But how is it to be recognized? If you get inside it you will only be inside the first court; to the second court only pupils have access. But this you do not know, you are told they belong to a special caste. As regards the third and fourth courts you cannot even know anything about them. And you can, in fact, observe the same order in all temples and until you are told you cannot distinguish an esoteric temple or monastery from an ordinary one.

"The idea of initiation, which reaches us through pseudo-esoteric systems, is also transmitted to us in a completely wrong form. The legends concerning the outward rites of initiation have been created out of the scraps of information we possess in regard to the ancient Mysteries. The Mysteries represented a special kind of way in which, side by side with a difficult and prolonged period of study, theatrical representations of a special kind were given which depicted in allegorical forms the whole path of the evolution of man and the world.

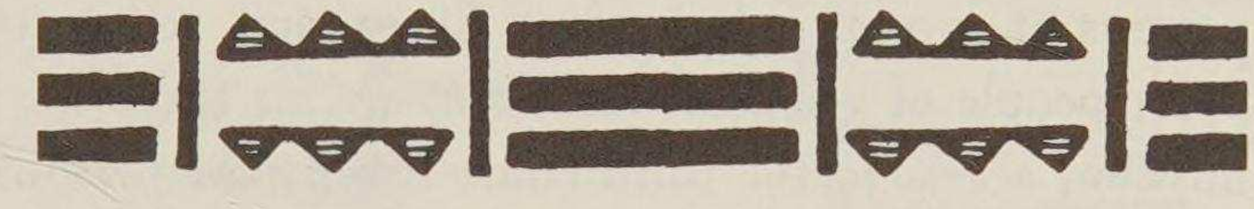
"Transitions from one level of being to another were marked by ceremonies of presentation of a special kind, that is, initiation. But a change of being cannot be brought about by any rites. Rites can only mark an accomplished transition. And it is only in pseudo-esoteric systems in which there is nothing else except these rites, that they begin to attribute to the rites an independent meaning. It is supposed that a rite, in being transformed into a sacrament, transmits or communicates certain forces to the initiate. This again relates to the psychology of an imitation way. There is not, nor can there be, any outward initiation. In reality only self-initiation, self-presentation exist. Systems and schools can indicate methods and ways, but no system or school whatever can do for a man the work that he must do himself. Inner growth, a change of being, depend entirely upon the work which a man must do on himself." ◇

*From* In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching *by P. D. Ouspensky, copyright 1949 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.; renewed 1977 by Tatiana Nagro. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.*

# *Two Poems*

*by Joseph Bruchac*

## First Day After the Sun Dance



*for Lance Henson and Jon West*

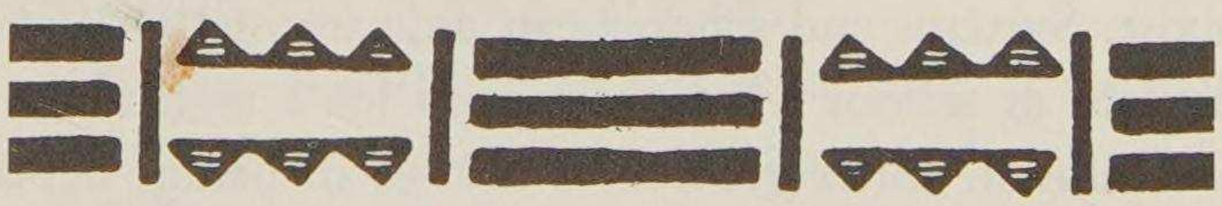
Walking on our Grandfathers' breaths
we come to the cave, see their faces
held at the edge of the trembling web.

Today the branches of all the trees
hold up that pattern on which our lives
shimmer with theirs, drops of dew.

To the East there are shadows still,
but they fade. The shapes of our painted dreams
are already walking, strong among the houses
of our grandchildren's children.

The old ways dead?
Old Man laughed at that.
Maybe, he said, it's just that those
who get too used to using maps
can't see the real roads
under their feet.

## First Sweat



*for the Sundancers*

Rain which falls
through thin leaves of late summer
cold on our skins

stones from a wall
my great-grandfather piled
have turned white with heat
from the fire of logs
stacked chest-high

within the sweat lodge
Crow Dog's voice
speaks to the grandfathers
hiss of water
whispering against the red of stones
glowing inside the fire pit
is the voice of earth
at the time when Creation
first turned to life

my sons on each side,
bent sapling against my back
we go into the darkness together
six stones added to the sixteen
cedar needles fall and rise again
in smoke which burns eyes into vision

then we sing, together we sing
words we did not know we knew
heat driving foreheads down
to touch the mats of woven grass

breaths go shallow in moist heat
which burns our backs, the touch of a flaming wing
until the blanket lifts
and we realize we have been seeing
each other with only our ears and our skins,
that the prayers we heard each other offer
were not spoken by our lips

and when Sitting Bull's pipe
circles the lodge, glowing like the rising sun,
given me by my son's hand, passed on to my other son
I realize in many ways what it means to sing
We shall live again
We shall live again

# *Holy Ground*

## *by Brother David Steindl-Rast*

Some insights of the human heart are so deep that only a story can help us bring them home to ourselves and share them with others. The basic intuition of what we call in abstract terms sacramental life is one of those deep insights, and I would like to begin with a story out of Bible tradition.

> Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.
>
> And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.
>
> And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.
>
> And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.
>
> And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.
>
> Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.
>
> Exodus 3:1-6

Can we recover the power of this sight?

A bush ablaze, yet unharmed! It is one of the images that left a lasting impression on the religious mind throughout the ages, lasting because re-inforced by daily fresh experience. In its immediate context, the blazing flame amidst the desert bramble stands for the divine Presence among God's people; it stands for "the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 1:4). But in a more general sense, the thorn bush burning, yet unburnt, is a daily sight—daily, yet ever amazing—for the heart that has learned to see all things aflame with divine fire.

How staggering a paradox it is that shines from the Burning Bush becomes clear only when later prophets translate that image into a formula "the Holy One in the midst of you" (Isaiah 12:6; Hosea 11:9). Holiness here does not mean moral perfection so much as God's unimaginable otherness. And the paradox bursts in upon us when we encounter that unimaginably other One in the midst of what is most familiar to us. Two attitudes are apt to blind us to that encounter: worldliness and otherworldliness. Worldiness sees merely the bramble; otherworldliness sees merely the fire. But to see, with the eyes of the heart, one in the midst of the other, that is the secret of sacramentality.

We shall never understand that secret as long as we look for it in somebody else's report, no matter how exalted the experience reported. Psychology calls moments of a private vision in which reality appears transfigured "peak experiences." We have all had these experiences, though some people are more alert to them than others, or more ready to admit them. Some are almost ashamed of them, remembering them as flashes of momentary insanity, though these may have been the only really sane moments in their lives. What matters is that a peak experience is always a gift, a surprise, and that in a flash the things at hand are seen in a new light that slakes the thirst of our heart for ultimate meaning.

Although you will have to remember a peak experience of your own in order to understand sacramentality, let me prime the pump by quoting a fine account by my friend Don Johnson.

I walked out onto a dock in the Gulf of Mexico. I ceased to exist. I experienced being a part of the sea breeze, the movement of the water and the fish, the light rays cast by the sun, the colors of the palms and tropical flowers. I had no sense of past or future. It was not a particularly blissful experience: it was terrifying. It was the kind of ecstatic experience I'd invested a lot of energy in avoiding.

I did not experience myself as the *same* as the water, the wind, and the light, but as participating with them in the *same system* of movement. We were all dancing together.[1]

Together—that is the key word here. All those rifts and cracks of separation, polarity, alienation, which we ordinarily experience, are healed in one glance. "Like a saint's vision of beatitude. Like the veil of things as they seem drawn back by an unseen hand. For a second you see . . . For a second there is meaning."[2] This is the secret of which you catch sight: everything has meaning. And one glimpse of that secret makes everything whole. "Then the hand lets the veil fall and you are alone, lost in the fog again, and you stumble on toward nowhere, for no good reason!"[3] But the secret you saw is the secret of sacramentality, the mystery that God's life is communicated through all things, just as meaning is communicated through words. Those two belong together—without confusion, yet inseparably—meaning and word, God and the world.

"He dwells (all of Him dwells) within the seed of the smallest flower and is not cramped: Deep Heaven is inside Him who is inside the seed and does not distend Him. Blessed be He!"[4] "For a second you see—and seeing the secret, are the secret!"[5] You are the secret, because you are seeing it with the eyes of your heart. No other eyes can see it. But being centered in the heart means being together—together with ourselves; together with God, who is always closer to me than I am to myself; together in community with all.

For this reason, sacramental life always unfolds in community, together. It is never a private affair, though it is deeply personal. Sacramentality is the secret that in the great household of the Earth, all communicate to all in a myriad different ways the life of the Holy One in the midst of us. All the many communities, churches, communes, are merely more or less clear pointers towards that one great family of God, more or less successful models and partial realizations of it. Their celebrations of life are somehow sacraments whether or not they are aware of this, because life itself is sacramental.

In my own community, the Roman Catholic Church, life is celebrated at its crucial points by sacraments in the most specific sense. When the eyes of faith look at those symbolic actions, they see God faithfully fulfilling what the gestures signify. Through baptism a person is born into the Christian community; confirmation

completes that rite of passage, often at the age of puberty; the sacrament of matrimony marks the founding of a new family within the community; sacramental reconciliation brings alienated members back home together; and the anointing gives strength to the sick in their struggle to get well or to meet death bravely. The sacrament of priestly ordination establishes a historic link between the Apostles who founded this community, and their successors today; and in the Eucharist, Christ's death and resurrection are celebrated again and again as the community's source of life, food and drink for all. Only as rooted in the soil of the community do these seven signs of life make sense, because they are merely the flowering of that one great sacrament which the Church itself is: God's holy earth household, the reality of which the Burning Bush is the image.

Rightly understood, the sacraments are not self-contained boxes conveying divine grace. They are focal points of that divine fire which makes all of life sacramental. It is hard to imagine that someone would truly understand, for instance, the Lord's Supper, without having learned to look with the eyes of the heart at a robin gulping down an earthworm to feed her young in the nest. The universal law that life must give its life to feed new life simply mirrors that surpassing mystery that through God's love we have life—God's life—by the very death of God. This mystery of the Eucharist pervades the whole universe. It comes to a focus wherever a community shares a meal mindfully, that is to say, gratefully.

Bible tradition—Jewish, Christian, Islamic—sees with particular clarity that for us humans sacramental life is realized in time, in history. This is how the rabbis put it: unless Moses had been taking care of the sheep, he never would have come upon the Burning Bush. Unless we serve life, in that give-and-take which this involves on all its levels, we shall never discover its sacramental power. That togetherness in which sacramental life has its roots includes the dimension of time, of history, of struggle, of suffering, of service. Not only did Moses come upon the Burning Bush in the midst of his daily work as a shepherd; this vision sent him, protest as he may, into a lifelong struggle for the liberation of his people. Not even politics is excluded from the all-embracing unity of sacramental life.

There is one condition for seeing this: "Take off your shoes!" The soles, made of dead animal skin, stand for the deadness that comes from taking things for granted. The moment we take off those shoes is thanksgiving. It is through the eyes of the heart that we see the ground as holy—everywhere. And gratefulness makes us wholehearted. It is always the whole heart that gives thanks and through thanksgiving enters into sacramental life.

Going barefoot actually helps. There is no more immediate way of getting in touch with reality than touching. To feel the difference between walking on sand, on grass, on smooth granite warmed by the sun, on the forest floor; to let the pebbles hurt us for a while; to squeeze the mud between our toes; these are so many ways of gratefully touching God's healing power through the earth. But there are more subtle, more difficult ways. Wherever we take off the dullness of being-used-to-it, life in all its freshness touches us, and all life is sacramental. If one can measure aliveness, it is surely the degree to which we are in touch with the Holy One, as the inexhaustible fire in the midst of all things. ◇

NOTES

1. Don Johnson, *The Protean Body, A Rolfer's View of Human Flexibility.* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).
2. Eugene O'Neill, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956).
3. *Ibid.*
4. C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra.* (New York: Macmillan, 1968).
5. O'Neill, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night.*

*This article was previously published in* Warm Wind, *Vol. II, No. 1, the journal of the Chinook Learning Community. Reprinted by permission.*

*Illustration by Rodrigo Shopis*

EPICYCLE:

# The Teasing of the Bride

*Each of the three heroes of the* Kalevala *set out to win the heart of the maiden of North Farm. Each is given, by the maiden's exacting mother, three tasks to perform in order to merit her daughter's hand. Vainamoinen's tasks were described in* PARABOLA, *Vol. I, No. 2, and those of Lemminkainen, "the man with a far-roving mind," in Vol. VI, No. 1. But the maiden herself had already decided upon Ilmarinen, the master smith who forged the miraculous mill called the Sampo. Nevertheless, Louhi, the Mistress of North Farm, demands the fulfillment of three tasks: to plough a field of vipers, to catch Death's bear and bridle the wolf of Death's Domain, and finally to catch the monstrous pike in the river of Death's Domain without the aid of a net. These Ilmarinen accomplishes, with the aid of his sweetheart and through his own skill as a smith, and finally the wedding-day is set.*

Louhi, the Mistress of North Farm, went outdoors, went about her household tasks. From the fen she heard a whip cracking, the rattling of a sled from the water's edge. She sang,

"I thought the wind was blowing, a pile of stacked wood toppling over,
the shore of the sea resounding, gravel rippling down.
I trudged off to look at that, to examine it from near at hand;
the wind was not blowing, no pile of stacked wood toppling over,
the shore of the sea not resounding, gravel not rippling down.
My son-in-law's people are coming, winding along with two hundred men.
How will I recognize my son-in-law, my son-in-law among the people?
My son-in-law will be recognized among the people as a chokecherry is recognized among other trees,
an oak among slender shoots, the moon among the stars of heaven,
The son-in-law is on a black stallion as if on a ravenous wolf,
a powerful raven, a flying griffin;
six golden oriole bells singing on his shaft-bow,
seven bluish cuckoo bells calling on the traces."

The rumbling and the clatter of Ilmarinen's sled grows louder, now he has reached the farmyard. The Mistress of North Farm sends her people to minister to his needs, to stable his horse, send it to pasture, feed it on oats and chaff, groom it with a walrus-bone brush. "Escort my son-in-law into the house, you fellows! See whether he fits into the house without taking away the door, without raising the lintel or lowering the doorjamb!" But the doorway is too small, the door must be taken down, the lintel raised so that he need not stoop down, the doorjambs removed so that he will not stumble.

"Is the house made ready?" she worries, the Mistress of Pohjola, the Lady of Sedgy Farm. "Are the tables washed, the wall benches flushed down with water, the floorboards swept?" She runs to see if all has been made ready. "I do not recognize this room, I have not been here at all! Of what wood are the walls made, with what are the floors laid? The side wall is of hedgehog bones, the back wall of reindeer bones, the wall near the door are of wolverine bones, the doorjamb of lamb's bones. The beams are apple, the posts of curly birch. The table is decorated with gold, the floor covered with silk. The room is ready indeed to receive my son-in-law."

The feast was prepared, the guests settled in to eat and drink. The Mistress of North Farm filled their mouths with butter, their hands

with cream cakes, and above all, the son-in-law's. Salmon and pork were on every plate, bowls brimmed full, dishes spilled over, and above all the son-in-law's. Then beer was brought in five-banded mugs, and passed around to whiten with froth the beards of those guests, and above all the son-in-law's. But the beer had made a bargain, struck an agreement with the Mistress of North Farm, for how can beer be drunk from a five-banded mug without a singer of songs, a teller of tales, a competent warbler? Then did steadfast old Vainamoinen set aside his downcast heart and raise up his joyous heart, he threw himself into the task of singing, nor did he shorten this song or that, but sang all the lays and charms, told all the old tales without leaving out so much as a word, a marvel to all present, transfixing the guests.

Now when the guests had drunk plenty, and the feast was over, the Mistress of North Farm said to Ilmarinen, her son-in-law:

"What are you sitting around for, man of a great clan?
What are you waiting for, pride of the countryside?
You are sitting around for your virgin's favor, the young girl's love,
for the radiance of the one you longed for, for the beauty of your girl
with luxuriant hair.
Bridegroom, my very dear friend, you waited a long time; wait some more.
The one you longed for is not ready, your eternal comrade not prepared.
Half her hair is braided, half unbraided.
Bridegroom, my very dear friend, you waited a long time; wait some more.
The one you longed for is not ready, your source of eternal harmony not prepared.
One hand has been gloved, the other still to be gloved.
Bridegroom, my very dear friend, you waited a long time; you are not tired.
Now the one you longed for is ready, your mallard prepared."

Turning from Ilmarinen, the Mistress of Sedgy Farm spoke to her daughter. "Go along now, bartered maiden. Your abductor is at the door, his stallion is champing at the bit, his sled is waiting." Louhi, her mother, reminded her of her young days:

"Not much indeed, young maiden, have you looked at your two courses,
really understood whether you were making a regrettable bargain,
something forever to bewail, for years to bemoan
after you set out from your father's home, moved away from your birthplace

from your dear mother's, from the farmstead of the one who bore you.
How fine it was for you to live on your father's farm!
You grew up as a flower in the lanes, as a strawberry on clearings.
Now you are setting out from this farm, going to another farm,
to another mother's region, to a strange family.
You have not set out for the night, not for one night, not for two;
you have gone for a longer time, have disappeared for ever and ever,
forever from your father's cottage, forever from your mother's.
The farmyard will be a step longer, the threshold a log higher
when next you come, when you do it again."

Tears come to the daughter's eyes now, hearing the words of her mother. Sorrow comes over her, her heart grows heavy. Her state of mind becomes like the flat shore of a pond, like the dark edge of a cloud, like a gloomy autumn night, a dark winter's day. Then, seeing tears appear, an old woman, a housekeeper who had tended the daughter, speaks up, reminding the child of her counsel. "You did not obey me, you did not listen to my words. Defiantly you walked into the fire, knowingly into a batch of tar." Now tears begin to flow more freely, as the bride remembers her youth. Mercilessly, the women tease the poor child, the young wretch setting out for a new home, putting her foot into another's sleigh.

"Weep, weep, young girl! When you weep, weep hard indeed;
weep your tears by the handful, your bitter water by the double handful,
teardrops on your father's farmyard, ponds on your father's floor.
Weep a flood in the house, billows on the floorboards.
If you do not weep when weeping is in order, you will weep when next
you come,
when you come to your father's home, when you find your old father
in a smoked-up sauna with a dry bath whisk under his arm."

Then, indeed, the poor girl wept, shed tears by the handful, bitter water by the double handful, teardrops on her father's clean yard, ponds on her father's floor. "O sister, my finches, former lifelong companions!" she weeps. "Listen to what I am saying. Always I thought I knew otherwise, always I promised that things would be different. I vowed to go about like a cuckoo, to call out on knolls when this day arrived. But now I am like an old squaw on the surge of the sea, a teal on a broad bay swimming in chilly waters. Mother, my bearer, beloved giver of milk, you might rather have swaddled a tree stump and washed little pebbles than to have washed this daughter, swaddled this miserable child."

Then up spoke a child, an infant near the inglenook: "What a weeping of girls, what a great grieving! What is there to be grieving about? You are not being thrown in a ditch, or lost in the fens! From a tussock of grain, you will be led to a place with even more grain, from a house where beer is drunk to one where even more beer is drunk. Look to your flank, look to your side: a bridegroom is in your house, a ruddy-cheeked lover at your side. You won the finest husband, the most daring, the least idle. This man of yours is a breeder of herds, a grower of grain, of barley and wheat. Windrows lie on every clearing, grain sheds by every brook. Good is this husband, good his horse, and good the whole character of his farm. Listen! The grouse are preening their feathers, they sing on the shaft-bow. Listen! The thrushes rejoice, giving voice on the traces. Listen! Six golden oriole bells, seven bluish cuckoo bells call at the front of the sled."

The toddler on the floor finishes speaking, and the bride's eyes are drier now. No more is she sighing and sniffling, her heart is lighter. Almost she is ready to set forth on her journey, to sit by the side of her ruddy-cheeked husband. It is time now for the girl to be counseled, the bride instructed by a woman of Osmo, the groom instructed by a Kaleva descendant. How else will they know how to live with each other? From when else will come wisdom for their life together? Long into the night the words of instruction are given by the woman of Osmo, the Kaleva descendant. When the hour of departure arrives, Ilmarinen snatches the young girl into his sleigh, speeds along the shore of North Farm, along the shoulders of sandy ridges. The shingle rings out, the sand sings under the clatter of birchwood runners. A day he drives, then a second and even a third, one hand guiding the stallion, the other holding the girl in his arm. On the third day, as the sun is going down, the dwellings of Ilma Farm loom up, the craftman's home appears. Soot is going up straight as a string, smoke arises from the fireplace into the clouds.

—Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

*Excerpts from the* Kalevala, *translated by Francis P. Magoun. Reprinted by permission of Harvard University Press, copyright © 1963 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.*

# Ritual and Performance

## by Rob Baker

> The theatre, when it was still part of religion, was already theatre: it liberated the spiritual energy of the congregation or tribe by incorporating myth and profaning or rather transcending it. The spectator thus had a renewed awareness of his personal truth in the truth of the myth, and through fright and a sense of the sacred he came to catharsis.[1]

This statement from Polish director Jerzy Grotowski's radical artistic manifesto, "Towards a Poor Theatre," crystallizes a number of the problems inherent in presenting (or witnessing) religious ceremony as a theatrical performance: Has something that is essentially a private act of worship, either to an individual or a specific group of individuals, been compromised and changed by being made public? Should such ceremonies be so readily available, often out of context and to persons unaware of their symbolic import? Does public performance, particularly in a commercial arena, profane ceremony—or does ceremony, by its very nature, actually do the opposite to theater, giving it a kind of transcendence? Can the spectator really experience the feeling of renewal, of catharsis, that Grotowski describes, or does his very presence so cheapen the experience that it no longer moves on the levels and in the ways originally intended?

None of these questions is easy to resolve. One wonders how clear they really are to Grotowski himself. How, for example, can he, in the same breath talk about profaning and transcending myth? Isn't that a completely mixed metaphor to begin with?

Grotowski seems to believe that such a "profaning" of myth and tradition—of ceremony itself—is necessary in order to "tear away the masks behind which we hide daily," and to "transcend our stereotyped vision, our conventional feelings and customs, our standards of judgment—not just for the sake of doing so, but so that we may experience what is real and, having already given up daily escapes and pretenses, in a state of complete defenselessness, unveil, give, discover ourselves."[2] This act of profanation, or "defiance of taboo," as he also calls it, is therefore not any sort of conscious attempt to destroy, degrade, or ignore myth or tradition, but rather a purposeful, positive confrontation to point up the shallowness of contemporary attitudes towards such essential roots.

In Grotowski's own work in theater, moreover, he has moved further and further away from the notion of theater as a large public event, limiting the number of spectators allowed to view each performance to smaller and smaller groups—and eventually, in the past few years, creating theater not for audiences at all, but for the individual "actors" involved. His recent experiments have indeed merged theater with its ceremonial roots, so that André Gregory, in *My Dinner with André*, speaks of the experience as a kind of life-rite, for an "audience of one":

> ". . . look at something like that christening that my group arranged for me in the forest in Poland. Well, there was an example of people creating something that really had all the elements of theater. It was worked on carefully, it was thought about carefully, it was done with exquisite taste and magic, and they in fact created something that had ritual, love, surprise, denouement, beginning, middle, and end—and it had a real moon instead of a painted moon and a real castle instead of a painted castle, but it was an incredibly beautiful piece of theater. And the impact it had on its audience, on me,

*Laura Dean Dance Company*

was somehow a totally positive one. It didn't deaden me, it brought me to life."[3]

Unfortunately, for all of us, most attempts at ritual theater and theatricalizing ceremonies over the past decade have had nowhere near the same impact. It is easy to understand, with Grotowski and Gregory, why contemporary culture (which includes dance, music, film, and the visual arts as well as theater), being so bereft of any sort of meaningful sense of tradition (or any other purposeful buoy in a sea of chaos), has turned with increasing interest to ceremony and ritual for a spark of inspiration. But the very nature of this answer-hungry leap-to-faith endangers such a search, and more often than not these new ceremonialists have not taken the care that the actors did in the Polish forest with Gregory; in some cases, they have had only the foggiest of notions about what they are trying to do, and their results have trivialized, made ludicrous, and in a very real sense profaned the very ceremonies and sense of the sacred they have sought to imitate or capture.

By short-circuiting the process by which men get in touch with the sacred, these new ceremonialists have done serious disservice to both ceremony and theater. Yet other artists in these various media (Peter Brook and Andrei Serban, in theater, for example; Laura Dean and Martha Graham in dance; Maya Deren in her film about Haiti) have incorporated a sense of ceremony, and of the sacred itself, into their work in a very different way, without com-

promising it, so that transcendence is achieved. But just how they have succeeded where others have failed so embarrassingly needs very careful examination.

First of all, there is the point that Gregory raised: constructing an act of ceremonial theater requires great care. Attention must be paid to all the details, no matter how small or seemingly inconsequential. The act must be thought out in great detail, preferably with what Andrei Serban has called "the intelligence of the emotion," so that the new, or representative, ceremony is intuitively complete and correct.

"New" ceremony is perhaps a key concept here, for the attempt to reproduce, or imitate, real and existing ceremonies is almost always doomed. Taking ceremonies out of the culture and context in which they exist cannot help but reduce their efficacy; such a move is, in fact, usually a profanation in and of itself.

Even when members of a culture choose, for whatever reason, to export their danced, sung, or acted-out ceremonial traditions (say to Carnegie Hall, or La Mama Theatre in New York), one can't help but feel a real squeamishness, particularly if an admission (and often a very stiff one) is charged for the privilege of watching someone else's religion unfold on a stage. The long-held presumption of Europeans and Americans that they have some sort of inherent right to witness and experience whatever their money can arrange for them—including the spiritual traditions of cultures which they know virtually nothing about and therefore cannot even begin to comprehend with any sort of meaningful awareness—is one of the most appalling conceits of the modern age.

When tourists, or other observers, such as filmmakers, travel to a foreign country and witness ritual ceremonies there, they at least have the advantage of seeing them on their home turf, performed by people who are actually (presumably, at least) believers and participants. But even then, there is the danger of "tourist voodoo"—ceremony performed for money, to titillate Western eyes. And in most cases the filmmakers, for all their technical expertise and presumption of documentary objectivity, are seldom able to capture anything more than the outer shell of the ceremonies being performed; in their editing, camera angles, and voice-over narrations, more often than not, the whole impact is lost. Even those who try to be as honest and direct as possible are severely limited by a gross ignorance of a life style and belief system that is taken for granted in the participants themselves as the result of a culture that is often over thousands of years old.

Yet, like new ceremonialist theater and the museum packaging of sacred artifacts, such documentary journalism is growing by leaps and bounds. And the potential scenario, of a future when sophomoric renditions of sacred rites and dramas from around the world are spliced into a cable television schedule right in there with football and *Flamingo Road*, is a sad and sobering thought.

Another problem with "adapting" ritual for the public stage is that it becomes merely imitative. Due to any combination of the above-mentioned factors, staged ceremonies become sacrilegious not only by being performed at the wrong time and in the wrong place, but by being mis-performed, mis-represented, mis-taken by participants and onlookers alike.

Artists like Brook or Laura Dean have tried to avoid this pitfall by not attempting to ape or imitate cultures which interest them, but by immersing themselves as much as possible in studying the life and beliefs of such a culture, going for the essence, the core of that culture's ceremonial concerns—not specific rites or movements (which it is unlikely they would be able to reproduce exactly and efficaciously anyhow). As a result their work strives for the "feel" of a particular ethnic or religious group, instead of their actual look or sound or specific gestures.

Perhaps the great pioneering works here

are the myth-based works of Martha Graham, particularly the 1931 dance, "Primitive Mysteries," which powerfully tunes in on the general or universal aspect of ceremony, not on a particular ritual of a specific culture. As such, Graham's work differs radically from the imitative "ethnic" studies being done contemporaneously by other early modern dancers, such as Ruth St. Denis with her Egyptian nautch dances and pseudo-Hindu and pseudo-Japanese extravaganzas.

Related to this search for the essence of a ceremony is the problem of finding the proper tone—surprisingly one of the most difficult things for directors or choreographers involved in such work to grasp. Again the secret has to do with intuition, plus the care and delicacy and respect with which the outsider approaches the original ritual.

The most difficult question of all involves whether the secret, esoteric nature of any ceremony should be made public. Perhaps even worse than a theater of the outer shells of ceremonies would be a theater in which specific ceremonial secrets were revealed—whether or not the audience were bright enough to pick up on the depth of the sacrilege being committed. There's a similar problem when actual ceremonial relics are used in a theatrical performance, so that they become curiosity pieces, *objets d'art*.

Perhaps the real solution to all this is not to turn to the rest of the world at all for our ceremony or our theater, but to return a sense of ceremony to our own lives, based on our own traditions, our own feelings, our own needs. Most of us may find that we have far more to build on in our own ceremonial memory banks than we ever realized. For me, it has taken years to realize the serious relevance—both personally, and to the society in which I was raised—of such "country" celebrations as family reunions (with fiddle contests, white gospel singing, and fourteen different kinds of pumpkin pie), or such neighborly gatherings as when my grandfather and the men from the nearby farms got together to butcher a hog or when my Aunt Addie had "the girls" over for a "quilting bee." Or Thanksgiving, Christmas, Sunday dinner, firework displays on the Fourth of July.

Some three decades later, after a good deal of semi-profane globe-hopping and ceremony-shopping myself, I'm beginning to realize that all the right connections, above and below, within and without, were there all along, at those Murphy Reunions, or in Aunt Addie's quilts (or, better yet, her homemade rolls).

All of us have such memories, such roots, which, however simple, are truly our own, ours alone. It is there our ceremonies should begin. Without this, that second step—of connection, of correlation with Ceremony on a higher level—cannot possibly be taken. But once the personal connection becomes clear, the links and connections—to higher powers, as well as within the community and to other, similar or different communities—become more and more apparent. And with such preparation and understanding, the sense of the ceremonial could even, just possibly, be transformed into some sort of performance which might even have a kind of efficacy for others besides ourselves.

Otherwise, without having understood those basic, essential correspondences, we have little, if any, right to watch the dance of God around our neighbor's campfire, or on anybody's stage. ◇

*Rob Baker has reviewed widely in the arts for* Dance Magazine, The Chicago Tribune, Soho Weekly News *and the New York* Daily News. *He is Executive Editor of* PARABOLA.

NOTES:

[1] *Jerzy Grotowski,* Towards a Poor Theatre *(New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), pp. 22-23.*

[2] Ibid., *p. 257.*

[3] *Wallace Shawn and André Gregory, screenplay for* My Dinner with André *(New York: Grove Press, 1981), p.88.*

# The Paradox of Conquest

## by Thomas Buckley

**The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America**
By James Axtell. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981. Pp. xii + 402. $19.95.

**Witnesses to a Vanishing America: The Nineteenth Century Response**
By Lee Clark Mitchell. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981. Pp. xvii + 320. $18.50.

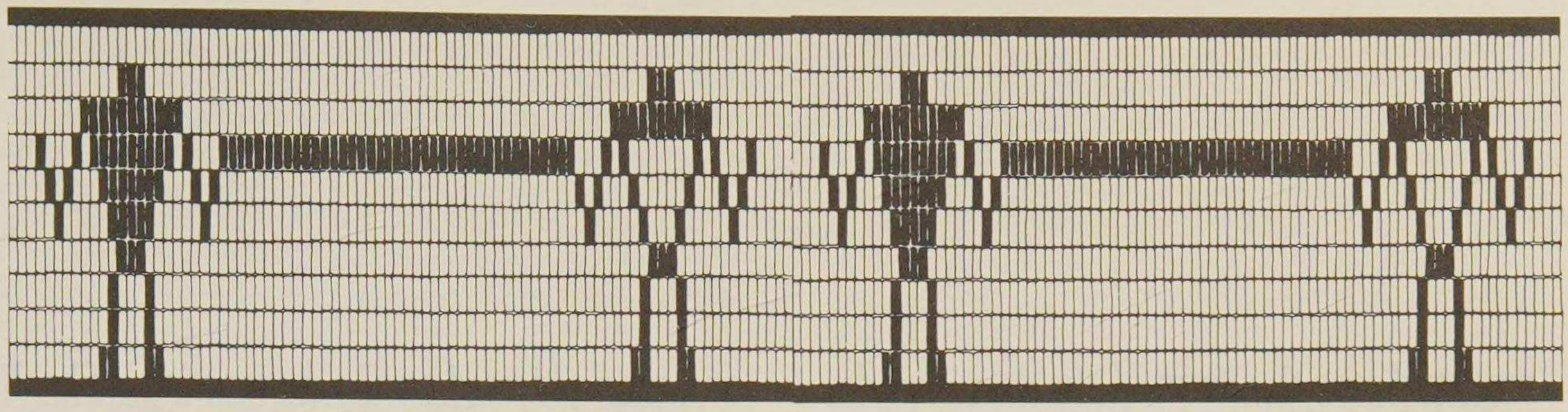
**The Primal Mind: Vision and Reality in Indian America**
By Jamake Highwater. New York: Harper & Row and Company, 1981. Pp. xix + 234. $12.95.

Generation after generation, non-Indian Americans have rediscovered American Indians and the vestigial American "wilderness" with which these indigenous peoples are inextricably linked in non-Indian sentiment. Such rediscoveries have been characterized by a sense of uniqueness—as though each generation to make them were the first—and by as-yet-unresolved recognitions of sameness and otherness, of unity and alienation. The growing coalition between Indian activists and non-Indian anti-nuclear environmentalists today suggests that, while differences remain, a unity of consciousness is perhaps ascendant. Three recent books account for this "new" development, historically and culturally.

Although anthropologists, entrusted during the first half of the twentieth century with explaining such things, were slow to acknowledge that acculturation works both ways, such an exchange is a certainty. White Americans have been affected by their history of contact with Indians as well as *vice versa*—and the wilderness has run its own axes, plows and placers through Euro-American consciousness. All non-Indian Americans have been touched deeply by the dispossessed. At the same time, despite an occasional but persistent yearning to claim fully this aspect of national identity, whites seldom have taken full responsibility for the intuitions of a different world order that Indians have afforded them. Axtell's, Mitchell's, and Highwater's books each explore facets of this American complex and conundrum; together they comprise a history of some of the most generative instances spanning the seventeenth through twentieth centuries.

In *The European and the Indian*, an interlinking collection of accessibly written essays in ethnohistory, James Axtell addresses the impacts of European and indigenous cultures on each other in seventeenth and eighteenth century colonial Northeastern America. In these richly documented studies, ranging in subject from education to funerals to scalping, Axtell's concern is, finally, with the ways in which cross-cultural contacts affected such things as the world views, modes of thought, values and identities of invader and invaded. For, while "surprise was the last thing the invaders wanted in the new world," events of the first two centuries of massive colonization had cultural consequences for the Europeans at least equal to and perhaps, Axtell argues, greater than those they entailed for Indians.

Northeastern American Indians, Axtell suggests, were little changed inwardly by the Europeans during the colonial era; despite enormous outward change in adapting to the new, alluring, and dangerous presence in their lands. Even in the face of deci-



mation, through an ability to adopt newly introduced culture traits, they retained their unique and autonomous identities, their sense of cultural superiority, their frames of meaning—to a far greater extent than did the colonists. The Europeans, on the other hand, while scarcely becoming Indians through contact with the "Tawneys" and the "wilderness," ceased being Europeans and became, culturally, something else. In particular, the English, whose goal it was to "reduce the savages to civility," were themselves "reduced" by their experiences in the new world to what they had formerly, at least, defined as "savagery."

This is not to say that Europeans were "Indianized." "To suggest, even indirectly, that 'what is distinctive about America is Indian, through and through' (Felix S. Cohen) or that Americans are simply Europeans with 'Indian souls' (C.G. Jung) is to blithely ignore the 'wholly other' nature of English colonial society." The "reduction" of Europeans to "savagery," as they themselves defined it, resulted not in their being "Indianized" but, rather, "Americanized."

This transformation was expressed in many apparently insignificant, largely material ways—in changes in clothes, tools, and in common nouns. In more complex fashion, the colonists' exposure to some of the more pleasing norms of Indian societies reflexively revealed the savagery long inherent in English society, in modes of education reliant upon the physical and spiritual abuse of children, in the many hypocrisies of Protestant Christianity. The colonists "soon discovered that in many ways the Indians were morally superior to the English, more Christian than the Christians."

Accompanying the slight revisions in self-image that occurred through these changes in material culture and language, and through inadvertent glimpses of English society in cross-cultural perspective, other, more profoundly decisive acculturative developments were taking shape. To cope militarily with Indian resistance to invasion and dispossession, the Europeans adopted Indian military equipment (*e.g.*, snowshoes), along with guerrilla modes of warfare and some of their attendant rituals—most significantly, for Axtell, scalping. "It was the successful adoption of the Indians' own tactics and technologies that gave the English . . . the domination of New England." Yet far more than military victory ensued.

The shift, from regimented open field combat under strict, centralized command to the individualistic and, to an English way of thinking, "skulking," deceptive, and opportunistic tactics of woodlands guerrilla warfare, loosened the grip of European moralities on the colonists' spirits. The adoption of such practices as that of scalping fallen enemies and of using scalps as tokens of victory (in the colonists' practice, redeemable not for ritual power but for the hard cash of bounties) left the colonists both deeply shocked and illicitly thrilled; and, finally, morally alienated from the Europe that had spawned them. The cumulative effect of this harsh moral independence from Europe was, Axtell argues, to prepare the colonists for political independence as well.

Accompanying such colonial moral alienation through acculturation came a grudging but profound respect for the Indian virtues of egalitarian self-reliance, personal liberty, and political autonomy. From the beginning the colonists had their hands full keeping their own people in check, so

powerful was the draw of the deep woods and of the Indian alternative to the life-denying and laborious disciplines of centralized Puritan authority and rigid class structure. Ironically, as ruthless as were the colonial efforts to utterly obliterate the Indians, it was finally the Natives who provided the very image of free and self-determinative manhood which, once assimilated, filled the moral vacuum left by the horrors of two centuries of guerrilla warfare, provided the colonists with their own identity and, in doing so, fueled the revolution of 1776.

The book, though thrown somewhat off balance by Axtell's inflated ethnohistorical programmatics and by his obviously high estimation of his own significance in the development of this discipline, survives handily on the strength of its arguments, its documentation, and the unity of the separate essays in comprising a convincing, sustained, and varied single work.

Lee Clark Mitchell takes up, both chronologically and culturally, where Axtell leaves off, tracing the career of a minority sensibility in post-revolutionary America. While Axtell at times gives the impression that his own self-avowedly brilliant grasp of events and the methodology through which he has achieved it are of greater significance than the events themselves, Mitchell cannot be faulted along these lines. He stays committedly behind the scenes throughout his gracefully written *Witnesses to a Vanishing America*.

In the voracious sweep of white invaders westwards after the Revolution, the author demonstrates, there were those who early on doubted the tenets of Manifest Destiny and who objected to the destruction of both the lands and the peoples who had so much to do with the formation of emergent national identity and character. The impacts and costs of the move west were immediately apparent in the palpable terms of decimated forests, sullied streams, and obliterated or debased people—Indians. Individuals objected, each in his own way, to the overhasty and wasteful transformation of a new world rife with unimagined potentialities into a blasted parody of the old by the new Americans who "traveled west to escape their [European] past, moving spatially, as it were, to escape time." Mitchell draws together the work of a variety of travelers, painters, novelists, photographers, and, eventually, conservationists and ethnographers, active between the beginning and end of the nineteenth century, to demonstrate the consistency of white self-doubt and the emergence of resistance, as well as the linked histories of these.

What emerges is a striking and coherent developmental history of a peculiarly American sensibility. In the work of novelists like James Fenimore Cooper and of essayists like Crèvecoeur, we first catch sight of a deep ambivalence towards the westward expansion of the new settlers. Such observers were generally convinced of the inevitability and justifiability of the displacement of the Indians and the "taming" of the "wilderness," viewing both, romantically and in an ultimately prejudicial ethnocentric way, as the necessary costs of (ultimately positive) expansion and agricultural development. Nevertheless, they lamented these things. While the pioneers rushed west to escape a European past, these hesitant observers wished to stop time itself, "to freeze all aspects of the wilderness experience" that was itself becoming, year by year, less attainable. Such people were nostalgic preservationists,

recording a remembered scene that had, in their own lifetimes, already vanished.

The effort was taken up quite early in systematic fashion. Painters almost literally "elbowed one another aside" to record the endangered natural beauties of the frontier, and "widespread concern for recording a threatened wilderness landscape created a context for anxious ethnographic effort." Here, the painter George Catlin is the typal figure. Through untiring, compulsive effort Catlin created an enormous painted record of Indian life in the (then) Far West, exquisite in its detailed accuracy if not in painterly craft. Yet, it is clear that men like Catlin were not so much concerned with an *understanding* of Indian life (any more than the landscape romantics had, finally, been concerned with the natural rights of "wild" life), as with the descriptive "freezing" of its physical properties. They were neither students nor conservators, but collectors and taxonomists, working in fully conscious haste before the flood of expansion that, to them as to their predecessors, seemed inevitable and desirable.

Catlin, Audubon, and others were unusual in their commitments to recording what was passing, not in any profound questioning of that passage. ("Catlin differed from his fellow Americans less in the substance of his beliefs than in the quality of his devotion.") However, in their devoted pausing to see what was to be lost they *were* unusual, and prefigured others who, in part through their efforts, seeing what was afoot, protested—though ambivalently. Figures like Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, historian and Federal Indian Agent, emerged, "laboring anxiously against the loss of materials that were threatened by [his] own official actions." Others, however, soon went west, came to know Indians in perhaps more meaningful ways and, out of this knowledge, to protest their degradation. By the 1870s, "admirers of native cultures had come to see that white depredations were less exceptions to than expressions of their culture's basic tenets. So to those who . . . treasured the landscape—not more than they desired the good of society, but precisely for society's good—realized that the enemy was themselves." The tree stump had become, by mid-century, a double-edged metaphor in paintings and in writing, marking at once the stolid taming of the wild by farmers, and its rapacious devastation.

Writers like Melville, less certain than Cooper, Catlin, and Schoolcraft of the goodness of Christian entrepreneurial incursion into the tribal world, came truly to see the victims, both human and geographical, of progress. From this vision was drawn a truth that had evaded Axtell's acculturated colonists who, though they had glimpsed it, shrugged it off in the fervor of revolution: "many individuals by the last third of the [nineteenth] century perceived . . . directly and factually . . . that western European civilization, particularly its American variant, might have little to redeem it from a charge of fundamental inhumanity."

For the first time (although still in minor and isolated numbers) Americans came to be concerned with the felt experience, with the minds and hearts, of Native Americans; came, like Frank Hamilton Cushing among the Zuni and others among other indigenous groups, to realize fully the implications of the cross-cultural perspective that the early colonists had gained but momentarily. Out of this realization, objective salvage ethnography, as initiated by men like Catlin and Schoolcraft, came to be accompanied by

the theory of cultural relativism, and cultural anthropology as we think of it today emerged, most decisively in the work of Franz Boas, a German expatriate.

This movement towards cultural relativism and a modern cultural anthropological perspective was linked throughout, Mitchell demonstrates, to a movement from nostalgic, descriptive preservation of wilderness-as-artifact in words and pictures, to concrete efforts to save the most exotic portions of the American wilderness from destruction, to the birth of the conservation movement in the second half of the century. At first such actions as the preservation of Yellowstone as the first National Park in 1872 were, like the efforts of Cooper and Catlin, the results of sentimental antiquarianism and exoticism rather than of any deeply felt desire to preserve the land for its own, intrinsic worth. "Only afterwards did people realize that they had saved unspoiled forests and waterways along with historical curiosities, threatened species of wild game along with natural wonders."

It is in such oblique ways, Axtel and Mitchell suggest, that American Indian cultures have had their greatest impacts on what has come to be the dominant culture in North America: on the one hand, contributing to the formation of a national morality and a revolutionary spirit that were, ultimately, to insure the Indians' loss of the West as well as of the East; and, on the other, to what were to become, in the twentieth century, national ideological movements—environmentalism, "the new ethnicity," anti-war and anti-nuclear movements. Despite their channeling of such influences, however, neither Axtell's colonists nor Mitchell's witnesses, for all that they were deeply affected by Indians, ever fully grasped, in significant numbers, the implications of the conceptual worlds to which Indians introduced them. With a few individual exceptions, the culturally constituted realities of diverse indigenous peoples remained "wholly other" (if at all remarked upon) to the whites. Rather than developing "Indian souls," *à la* Jung, white Americans developed, under the acculturative stimulation of contact, uniquely non-Indian American moral, political, and academic frames of meaning. While cultural anthropology may have in part sprung from this contact, it is, after all, a distinctly "Western" way of making sense of human experience—as much as the Sierra Club, for example, seeks to preserve the remaining American back-country for distinctly non-indigenous reasons. The perceptions and conceptions of those who have so deeply affected the development of dominant North American culture, for better and for worse, have remained foreign to it.

These are not two orders of trait inventories, of culture elements, but two radically different modes of experiencing life itself—a difference that cuts both ways. As Mitchell writes, "It is one irony among many that Indians never quite comprehended those who, precisely because they conceived of God, nature, and man as independent, could acquire the power to destroy them."

It is this European fragmentation of nature and culture, of Being itself, and the resultant disjunction between European and indigenous modes of conceptualization, that Jamake Highwater confronts in his latest book. While the disjunction may be irresolvable, Highwater seeks, at least, "to make profound sense of our differences" for reasons congruent with the historical and acculturative theses of Axtell's and Mitchell's books. For Highwater, "primal mentality has become the conscious and unconscious focus of the twentieth century. That is the ultimate irony of our era: those who have been most utterly defeated have become most influential."

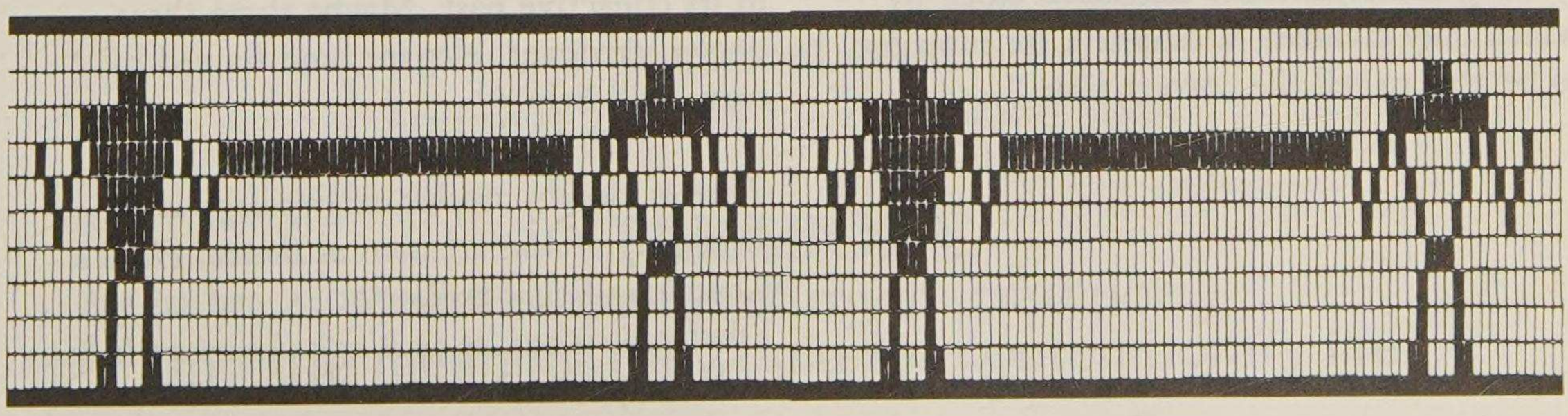
Highwater insists on the word "primal" as more appropriate to the description of indigenous peoples than "primitive," with its connotations of savagery and lack of sophistication. At the simplest level, *The Primal Mind* comprises an extended argument for expunging the latter term from our cross-cultural comparative vocabulary, and for replacing it with the former. But the book is far more ambitious than this.

Highwater, Blackfoot-Cherokee-French by birth and upbringing, an intellectual and an artist by choice and proclivity, is an edgeman: peripheral in his way as much to indigenous as to Euro-American cultures. He acknowledges himself as between both, "cherishes" such alienation as both privilege and creative discipline, and offers *The Primal Mind* as a public effort towards personal synthesis, as well as one towards communicating the understanding that the "primal mind" is not necessarily "better than linear, western mentality" but, rather, simply and profoundly different. His intention is not to "depreciate those who do not possess it, but to elevate those who do possess it." His work serves as an adequate introduction to some of the workings of "the" primal mind, and is most successful as such. But, again, it is more ambitious.

The author seeks to introduce readers not only to "the" mentality of American Indians ("the Indian"?), but to those aspects of "linear western mentality" affected, particularly during the twentieth century, by the conceptualizations of these "primal" peoples. For one of the author's several major arguments is that the scientists, philosophers, intellectuals and, especially, artists of the twentieth century "western" world have been deeply affected by their cultures' contacts with the primal world, although they have, by and large, understood neither the content nor the impact of this acculturative experience. It is, however, in fully comprehending and appreciating conceptual acculturation in the twentieth century that, Highwater argues, westerners may come at last, not to think primally, but to value each mode of conceptualization for its unique virtues; come in from the cross-cultural cold and enter into productive dialogue, as Highwater seeks to do within himself in this complex and doggedly liberal book.

Such complexity of intent is matched, if not exceeded by, a complexity of structure within the book itself. Highwater's initial paradigm, the *primal:western* opposition formed by the "ruptured mentality of the west as it contrasts with the holistic world view of primal peoples," immediately generates a long and familiar set of opposed terms—holistic:linear; dynamic:static; atemporal:temporal; communal:individualistic; experiential:"formal, emotional, or decorative"; "spirititual":profane. These oppositions are voiced through examinations of a number of topics in American Indian and western world views (image, time, place, motion, sound, identity), each exemplified by a single art or process (painting, literature, architecture, dance, music, individuation). Beside such scope and complexity of structure, Axtell's and Mitchell's historical accounts are simple (ah—linear), and Highwater clearly deserves recognition for the audacious breadth of his endeavor to "make profound sense" and for his willingness to attempt the transformation of a definitively linear and temporal mode of expression—the analytic scholarly book—into an example of the very integrative holism to which he seeks to introduce readers.

Yet, though his work deserves such recognition from the careful reader (for whom, clearly, he wrote it), that same reader must find it deeply flawed. While the subject of conceptual/perceptual "holism" cannot but present multiple paradoxes, Highwater's presentation of some of these is rife with simple argumentative contradiction. Again, such holism, a general pattern in experience and expression, can only be elucidated through the particular. Unfortunately, Highwater's consideration of particulars often veers towards unsupported generali-



zation, occasions of a romanticism that detracts from the sense of intellectual rigor and careful research he has worked assiduously, and through a wealth of often unfamiliar and fascinating quotations, to produce.

The complexity of Highwater's project ultimately defeats his own communicative intent. We gain, for example, more of an understanding of how western scientists and artists have understood and misunderstood and have been, finally, influenced by the primal mind than of how primal peoples understand themselves. In the end the reader must ask whether he has increased his own understanding of this mind, or has merely augmented a secondhand understanding (or misunderstanding) with more secondhand ratiocination. By the time Highwater has, in his final chapter, aligned the primal mind—something now not simply pre-acculturation American Indian but "ageless and raceless"—not only with "the innate art impulse in humanity" but with feminism, ethnicity, and other currently fashionable liberal causes, these doubts reach critical mass. The reader asks whether he has come to any, even secondhand, understanding of primal mentality, or has simply been party to the reduction of many "wholly others" to one, and that one to a comfortable and comforting fit with the liberal/artistic version of "the western mentality."

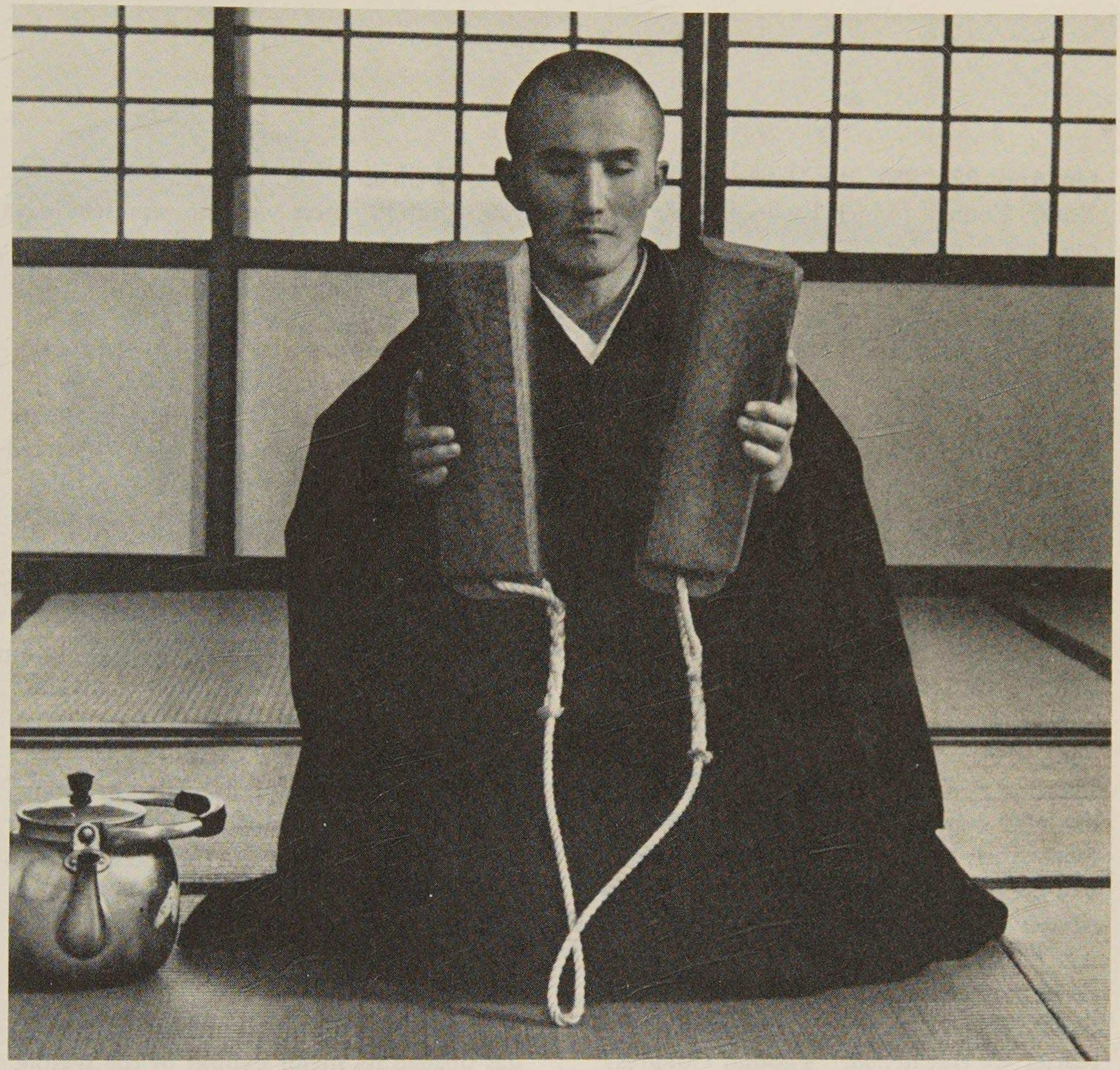
*The Primal Mind*, whose goals and structure are so complex, succeeds primarily in offering a simple, secondary, and relatively familiar image. It is good as an introduction to the immensely important fact that there are utterly different possible ways of successfully constituting reality than that institutionalized by European cultures. At least some of these ways, Highwater does convincingly demonstrate, are "holistic and formative . . . not imprisoned in a linear *universe* with its unthinkable Copernican gears moving some pathetic, calculated clock by which only civilized Westerners are supposed to be able to tell the correct time."

Today, the rationalized savagery of that clock's gears seems to march all, Natives and colonizers alike, towards final "escape" not only from a shared past but from the commonly abused earth herself. Axtell, in his cautious scholarship that nonetheless is, implicitly, as much a comment on the Southeast Asian wars of this century as a study of the colonial wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth; Mitchell, in his references to the civil rights, anti-war, environmental, and anti-nuclear movements of our own era; and Highwater, with his pan-liberalism—are all deeply concerned. These are, all three, very contemporary books; and they are, as Axtell himself has it, moral ones.

Yesterday, a Lakota medicine man, Leonard Crow Dog, spoke to an audience of college students, faculty, and Wampanoag Indians. Crow Dog spoke in widening, spiraling circuits, moving from Plains creation myth outward to enclose Adam and Eve, Three Mile Island, Marion Federal Penitentiary, swirling back to touch again on hoops and eagles and lightning, Sun and Moon. Crow Dog's circuit widened until the entirety of indigenous and post-colonial worlds alike were firmly enclosed in the folds of myth-time; time of the "generations" of the cosmos, "seven million aeons back" and right now. He moved his feet, his hands, feathers, dancing in the fires of Apocalypse. Few seemed to follow or, indeed, even to relax enough to admire the dance. Most were troubled. Still, not a few felt clearly the deep bonds of grief, rage, and too long denied wisdom that exist between themselves and the Sioux activist. To take full responsibility for those bonds, for that hidden, shared vision, historically reiterated but for so long resisted and denied—in that, perhaps, lies the best hope for "the West" to creatively escape the most dooming aspects of its collective past. Maybe these three books, arrogant, elegant, and flawed by turn, will help. ◇

*Thomas Buckley teaches anthropology at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. He is a Consulting Editor to* PARABOLA, *and has published various articles on North American Indians and on myth.*

# SWEEP AWAY THE "DUST OF THE MIND"



## PARABOLA CAN BE THE CATALYST FOR EXPLORATION, INQUIRY, AND TRANSFORMATION

**Past issues have included:** The Hero, Sacred Dance, Relationships, Earth & Spirit.

**Future issues will explore:** Holy War, Grace, Pilgrimage, Words of Power.

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

And save 20% off the newsstand price.

## PARABOLA

The magazine of myth, tradition,
and the meaning they hold for contemporary life.

# CURRENTS & COMMENTS

On April 22, 1982, the National Indian Youth Council (which has its base in Albuquerque, New Mexico) held a press conference in New York City to announce the beginning of its Campaign for American Indian Religious Freedom. In essence, the campaign seeks to boost public awareness of infringement of the religious rights of Native Americans, particularly the sacrileges committed against their sacred relics and ceremonial sites. A coalition between churches and civil libertarian groups is proposed, and lawsuits will continue to be filed against the various government agencies and tourist or "land-development" projects which threaten sacred spaces.

A statement by Senator Edward Kennedy was circulated at the press conference; it summed up the growing concern that Indians are constantly expected to "surrender basic rights so that others can ski, swim, or buy beer. We would be outraged if a church or synagogue was razed or a cemetery disturbed for these purposes. We should understand the equal outrage felt by Native Americans when their natural sanctuaries are threatened." Though Congress passed an American Indian Religious Freedom Act in August of 1978, Kennedy says, "Three years later, the situation is sadly unchanged."

Speakers at the press conference included five Indian representatives (Gerald Wilkinson, Cherokee; Bernard Second, Mescalero Apache; José Rey Toledo, Jemez Pueblo; Oren Lyons, Onandaga; and Leon Shenandoah); Norman Dorsen of the American Civil Liberties Union; and two liberal Protestant clergymen, the Rev. Howard Moody of Judson Memorial Church and the Rev. William Sloane Coffin of the Riverside Church. There were no representatives of the Catholic or Jewish faiths present, and no other minority spokespersons.

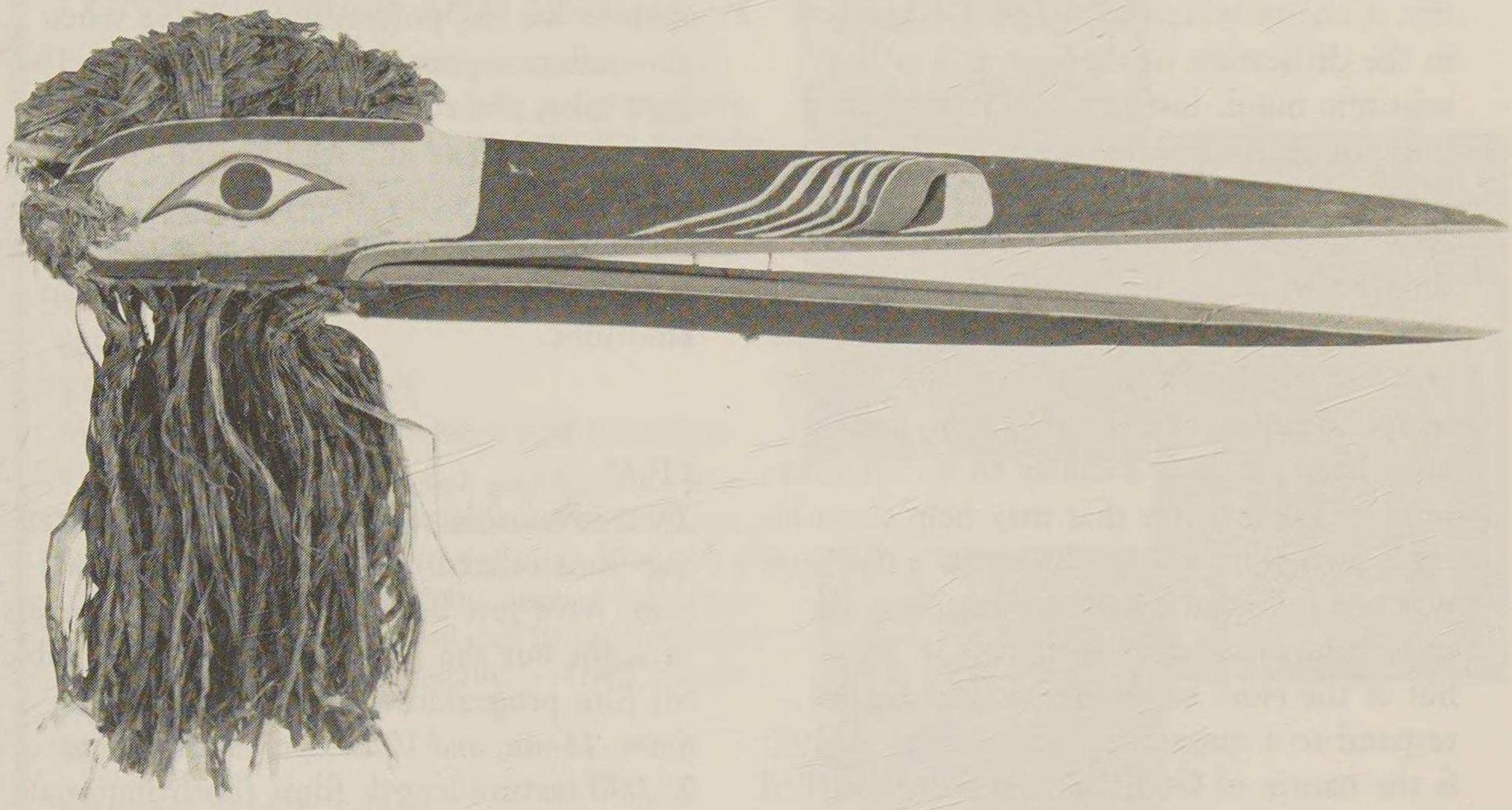
The conference was sparsely attended, with little coverage resulting in the local daily or weekly press. Thus, there was sadly little publicity for the very legitimate complaints raised: denial of access to sacred sites, disturbances of burial grounds, the placement of sacred relics and ceremonial objects in museums, laws against Indians' using eagle feathers or peyote in their traditional ceremonies. Several of the speakers also stressed the related dangers of pollution by developers and private landowners and overall governmental disregard for the sacredness of the earth itself.

Those wishing more information about the campaign can contact the National Indian Youth Council, 201 Hermosa, N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108.

## EXHIBITS

The American Museum of Natural History has opened its major exhibit of the season, consisting of Aztec ceremonial objects from the Templo Mayor excavation in Mexico City, widely regarded as one of the major archeological discoveries of modern times (see PARABOLA, Vol. VI, No. 2). The exhibit, which features "100 objects ranging from human skulls to jewelry, dating from about 1000 B.C. to the sixteenth century," will run through October 6.

A major new exhibit has also opened at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Curated by anthropologist Victor Turner, *Celebration: A World of Art and Ritual* is "comprised of 600 objects which were used in or depict celebrations in sixty-two societies around the world." The exhibition is in two parts: Part I, which was on view from March 17 through June 26, included sections devoted to "Celebratory



Objects" (a number of which were sacred relics), "Elements of Celebration" (subdivided into masks; costumes; sound and music; dancing; feasting and drinking; retelling myth and history; and games and sports), and "Rites of Passage." The second part opens August 26 and runs through February 21, 1983. Included will be the following groupings: "Shrines and Altars," "Religious Celebrations," "Celebrations of Increase," and "Celebrations of Polity." Two things stand out about the exhibit as a whole: the care that Turner and his associates have taken to balance the exhibit between the ceremonies and celebrations of exotic, Third World cultures with those of Europe and the United States—and his attempt, through use of film, video, photography, and live performance to present not just ceremonial objects, but a fuller sense of the complete flow of various ceremonies and celebrations.

## LECTURES & GATHERINGS

An announcement was made this March of the formation of the Center for Celebration in New York City "for the advancement of festivity and ceremony, pageantry and ritual." The brainchild of Karin Bacon, who was festival director for the city's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Administration under Major John Lindsay, and later held a similar position with the National Endowment for the Arts, the new organization hopes to become "an international network of artists from various disciplines who create their work within the context of celebratory occasions." Among the events held thus far: photographer Caterine Milinaire (whose book, *Celebrations*, is mentioned below), held a symposium on "Family Celebrations"; filmmaker Deedee Halleck showed her movie *Bronx Baptism*; artist Antoni Miralda gave a slide presentation on "Food in Celebration and Ritual"; and poet/anthologist Jerome Rothenberg spoke on "Words and Songs in Ceremonial Performance."

Krishnamurti spoke to a full Carnegie Hall house on March 27 and 28. A rather noisy audience complained of difficulty

hearing as he began, with them, to observe the state of human life. Unspectacularly but firmly, he presented a view of the confusion in which human beings live, and strove to bring a clarity to the observation of this life, a clarity which he suggested was lost in the deification of thought and of the scientific mind, lost in fears, lost in imagined things. His words were familiar to those who had read his books or heard him speak before. Perhaps this familiarity was simply part of his undisguised discouragement of a following: "I am not a guru" he says lest anyone forget—for he does not attempt to teach, but rather, in the hour or so at hand, to lend a clarity to the observations of his listeners that may help them in their own searches. Krishnamurti's dialogue was not followed by the question period (which had been customary in the past), but at the close of the second day he did respond to a questioner who asked, "What is the nature of God?" Krishnamurti replied that man had created God, and then said that he was surprised that the audience had listened to all this.

The Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, will hold its "Conference on Christian and Buddhist Meditation" August 6-10. Among the featured speakers and workshop leaders are Naropa's president, Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, and Benedictine Brother David Steindl-Rast (who has contributed an article to this issue of PARABOLA).

## THEATER

Both Washington and New York were treated to recent runs of director Robert Whitehead's new production of *Medea* (in the adaptation by Robinson Jeffers from the Euripides original), featuring actress Zoe Caldwell in the title role. Her Medea is a combination of wile, seductiveness, and ferocity: a pagan princess who is led by jealousy and betrayal to mock the Greeks' gods as well as their government, and who in the end literally sets the classical patriarchal world afire. Dame Judith Anderson, famous for her portrayal of Medea when this Jeffers version had its premiere in 1947, here takes the role of the devoted nurse, setting the scene and leading the chorus. Jeffers' stark poetry always remains true to myth and high tragedy, but also realistically captures the destructive power of human emotions.

## FILM

Two invaluable reference sources for locating films related to various spiritual traditions have just been issued. Bowker has just brought out the seventh edition of its bible for film programmers, *Feature Films on 8mm, 16mm, and Videotape,* listing some 23,000 feature-length films (both fictional narrative and documentaries) available for sale or rental in the United States and Canada. Once the director or title of a film is known, one can immediately locate such basic information as the distributor, the format, the availability, and the running length of any film. The only problem is that no descriptions or evaluations of the films are given. It's sort of like using the card catalog at the public library—it tells you where to find the item, but not what's inside.

The second source, *Native Americans on Film and Video* (published by the Museum of the American Indian, Broadway at 155th St., New York, New York 10032) does give full and accurate descriptions of the 400 films and videotapes it lists, and unlike the Bowker book, it also lists films that are shorter than "feature-length." Again, information about running times and where to locate the distributors is also included.

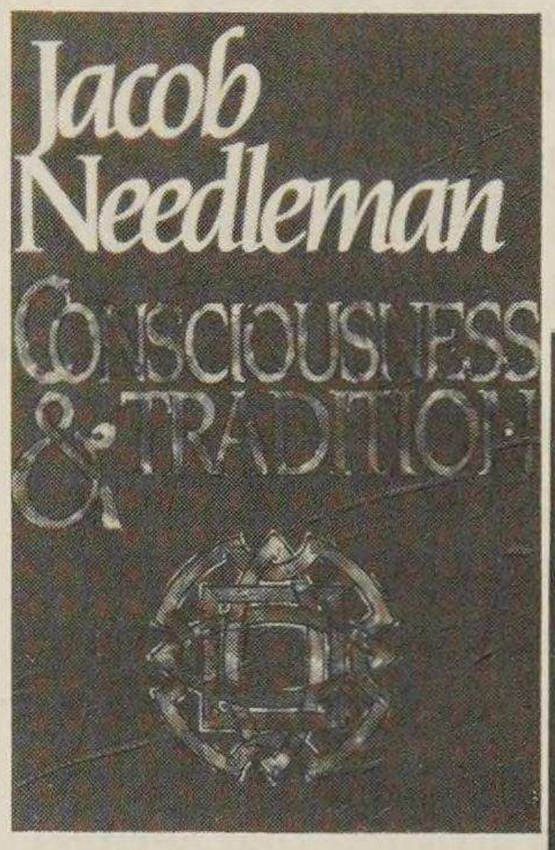
## BOOK BRIEFS

A consideration of the ritual or ceremonial aspects of American sports has been the focus of a number of books from North

# Religion—East and West

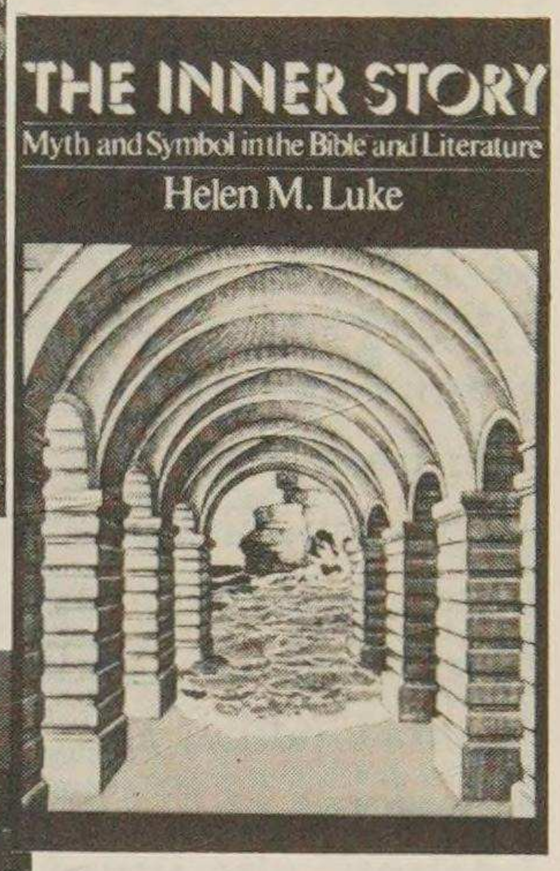
**Jacob Needleman**
## CONSCIOUSNESS AND TRADITION

Jacob Needleman addresses such themes as Eastern and Western spirituality, existentialism, spiritual traditions in our contemporary materialistic culture, disease and meaning, the loss of wholeness, and being as mystery in "ten searching philosophical essays." —*Publishers Weekly*
$14.95



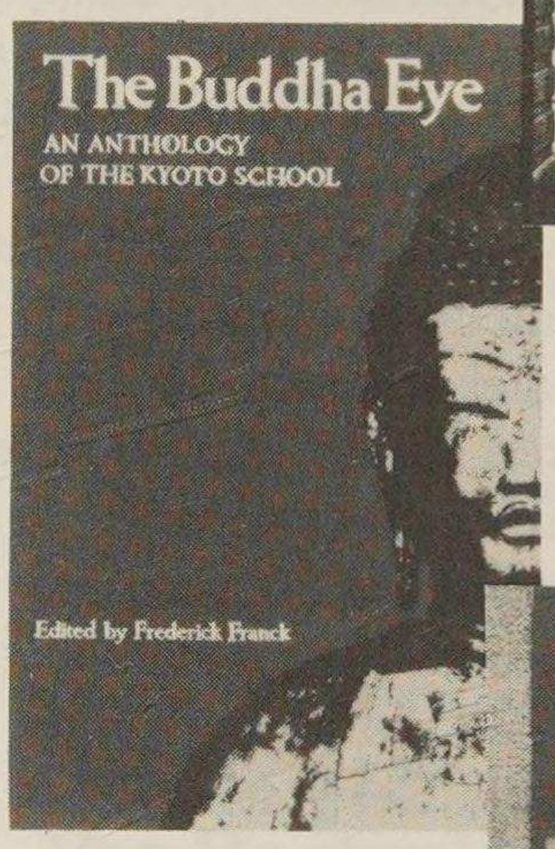

**Helen Luke**
## THE INNER STORY
**Myth and Symbol in the Bible and Literature**

The author of *Woman: Earth and Spirit* here retells ten stories from the Bible and from classical literature and legend to reveal their symbolic and mythic aspects. "Her insights demonstrate how something new or different can be learned each time a story is read over again." —*The Catholic Transcript*
$8.95



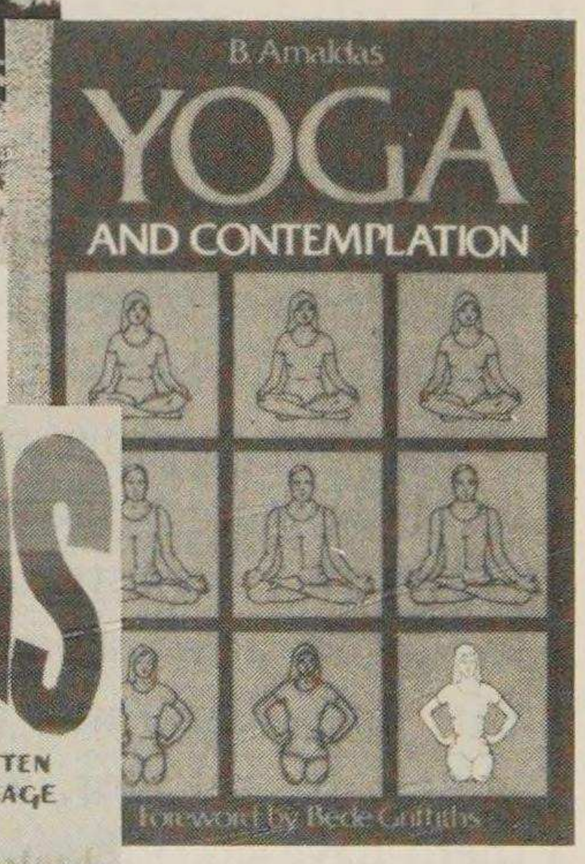

**Frederick Franck, Editor**
## THE BUDDHA EYE
**An Anthology of the Kyoto School**

A collection of seventeen significant and previously unobtainable writings of the major figures of the Kyoto School, *The Buddha Eye* covers the essential categories of contemporary Buddhist thought. Included are Abe Masao, Nishitani Keiji, Ueda Shizuteru, and Kiyozawa Manshi.
$14.95



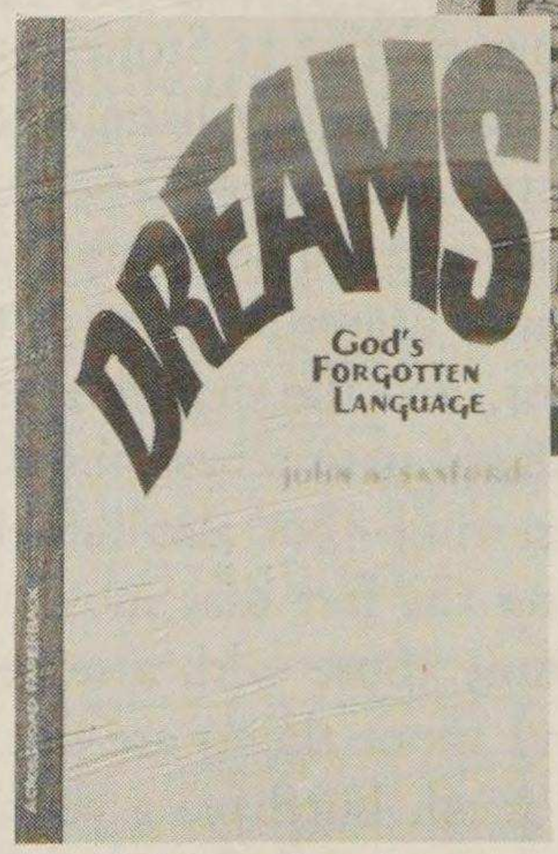

**Brahmachari Amaldas**
## YOGA AND CONTEMPLATION
**Foreword by Bede Griffiths**

Amaldas, an Indian Christian, explains how the physical and psychological discipline of Hatha yoga can be used as a basis for Christian prayer and contemplation. Exercises are described and illustrated to show the different positions that draw us ever more deeply into the presence of God.
$7.95 pbk




**John A. Sanford**
## DREAMS
**God's Forgotten Language**

"This clear, helpful and original book . . . illustrates the healing relevance of dream material . . . . The most valuable contribution is Mr. Sanford's treatment of dreams and visions in the Bible. No one has previously given this material such attention nor demonstrated its contemporary psychological and spiritual significance." —*Library Journal*
$6.95 pbk




*Available at bookstores or*
*send your check or money order directly to*

**CROSSROAD**
**CROSSROAD**
**CROSSROAD**
**CROSSROAD**

**The Crossroad Publishing Company**
**575 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10022**

Atlantic Books of Richmond, California, including their forthcoming *Waiting Game,* an examination of the "rhythms, rites, symbols, gestures, and performance" of the Oakland A's baseball team, through photos by Debra Heimerdinger and text by John Krich. Editor and publisher Richard Grossinger has long been interested in the ceremonial overtones of our national pastime (he co-edited *Baseball, I Gave You All the Best Years of My Life* with Kevin Kerrane for North Atlantic in 1976), and Heimerdinger's photos in the new volume bring home the truth of these concerns with patterning, costuming, gesturing, audience-devotion, and overall attitude that writers such as Roger Angell (of *The New Yorker*), Jack Kerouac, Willie Morris, Philip Roth, John Updike, and Tom Wicker bring out in words in the earlier anthology. North Atlantic also issued a similar examination of the basketball phenomenon, *Take It to the Hoop,* edited by Daniel Rudman, in 1980.

Caterine Milinaire's 1981 photo book for Harmony Books, *Celebrations,* depicts celebrations and ceremonies from around the world, focusing equally on sacred and secular events. She divides the book into three sections: "Family Celebrations" (such as weddings, births, bar mitzvahs, and funerals), "Seasonal Celebrations" (everything from summer solstice at Stonehenge to Halloween in Greenwich Village), and "Elements, Objects, and Devices" (including some rather arbitrary shots celebrating Air, Fire, Earth and Water). Most of the photos are in color, and the majority of them have an offhand naturalness about them that is interesting—but also rather curious considering the fact that most celebrations (or certainly those with a sense of ritual or ceremony about them) are not casual and offhand at all, but have a very distinctive sense of order and definition. But maybe those are the very ceremonies which should not be photographed to begin with.

Among other recent volumes published relating to Ceremonies are the following: Victor Turner's *From Ritual to Theatre,* the first of a series of books bridging anthropology and the performing arts, edited by Brooks McNamara and Richard Schechner for Performing Arts Journal Publications in New York; Ronald L. Grimes' *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, a similar analysis of the correspondences between religion, anthropology, and aesthetics, drawing upon the differing theories of Turner and Theodor Gaster, and published by University Press of America; and Gail Kligman's *Calus*, a study of an age-old fertility and healing rite from agrarian Romania, published by the University of Chicago Press and with a foreword by Mircea Eliade.

Knopf has brought out a beautiful volume entitled *Yoruba: Sculpture of West Africa*, available in both cloth and paper editions. One of the first studies of the art of the Yoruba tribes of Nigeria to take seriously into account the religious cosmology of the Yoruba, the text strongly challenges the traditional academic view of "Negro art" as "existentialist" and stylized by (in critic Herbert Read's terms) a kind of "cosmic anguish" or terror of the unknown. William Fagg suggests that, instead, a study of the art itself reveals that the artists are guided by religious and aesthetic considerations totally different from those held by most Westerners, including very importantly the fact that most African people have never become obsessed with orderliness and "straight lines" the way Europeans have. "All European thinking," he concludes, "is rationalistic by comparison with the mysticism of Africa."

Fagg goes on to delineate the distinctive differences in style among the twenty separate Yoruba tribes, and then the volume presents some seventy plates of nineteenth and twentieth century Yoruba sculptures, each of which is carefully described and related to the complex religious and philosophical system out of which they were created. Also included are an extensive bibliography of Yoruba art and religion, plus concise and accurate descriptions of the major religious deities (*orishas*) and the concept of sacred kingship.

# New from Princeton

## At Play with Krishna

**Pilgrimage Dramas from Brindavan**
**JOHN STRATTON HAWLEY**
"Hawley has accomplished rather an extraordinary thing: he has told practically the complete mythology of Krishna in an entirely painless and delightful way." — Edward C. Dimock, Jr., The University of Chicago
$27.50

## The Presence of Śiva

**STELLA KRAMRISCH**
"This book is a landmark in the study of Hinduism . . . sound and careful in its scholarship, but very lively in its presentation." — Wendy O'Flaherty, The University of Chicago
Cloth, $37.50. Limited Paperback Edition, $16.50

New in Paperback

## Platonic Studies

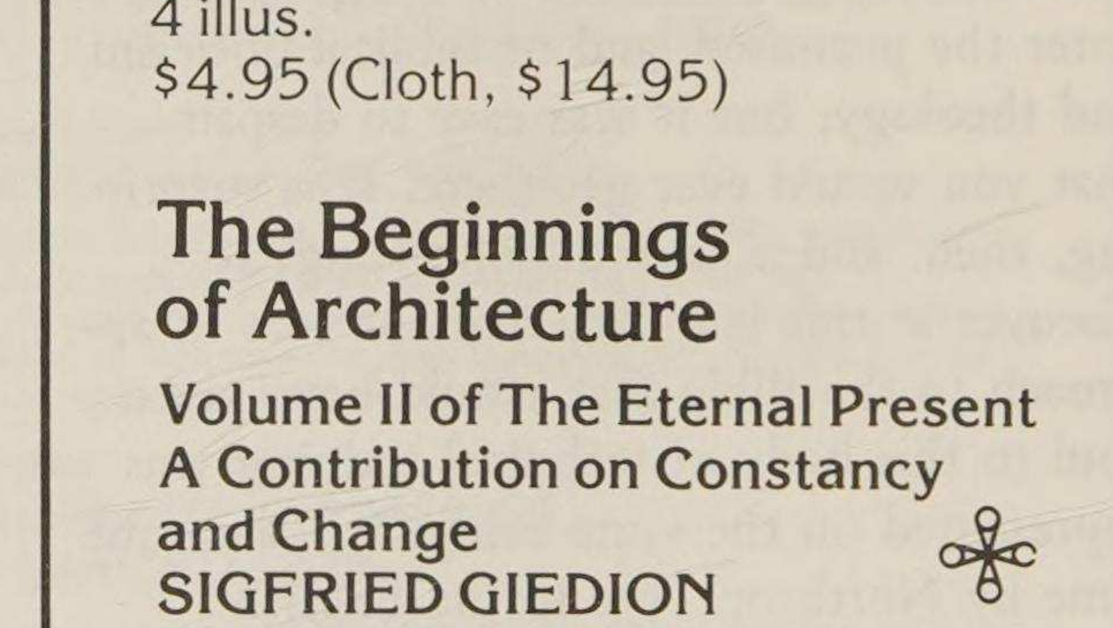
**Second Edition**
**GREGORY VLASTOS**
$12.50 (Cloth, $35.00)

## The Tao of Architecture

**AMOS IH TIAO CHANG**
4 illus.
$4.95 (Cloth, $14.95)

## The Beginnings of Architecture

**Volume II of The Eternal Present**
**A Contribution on Constancy and Change**
**SIGFRIED GIEDION**
The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1957
Bollingen Series, XXXV: 6, 11
345 illus 7½ x 10".
$15.00 ($42.50)



# Princeton University Press

**41 William Street • Princeton, New Jersey 08540**

# BOOK REVIEWS

**The Great Code: The Bible and Literature**
By Northrop Frye. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982. Pp. xxiii + 261. $14.95.

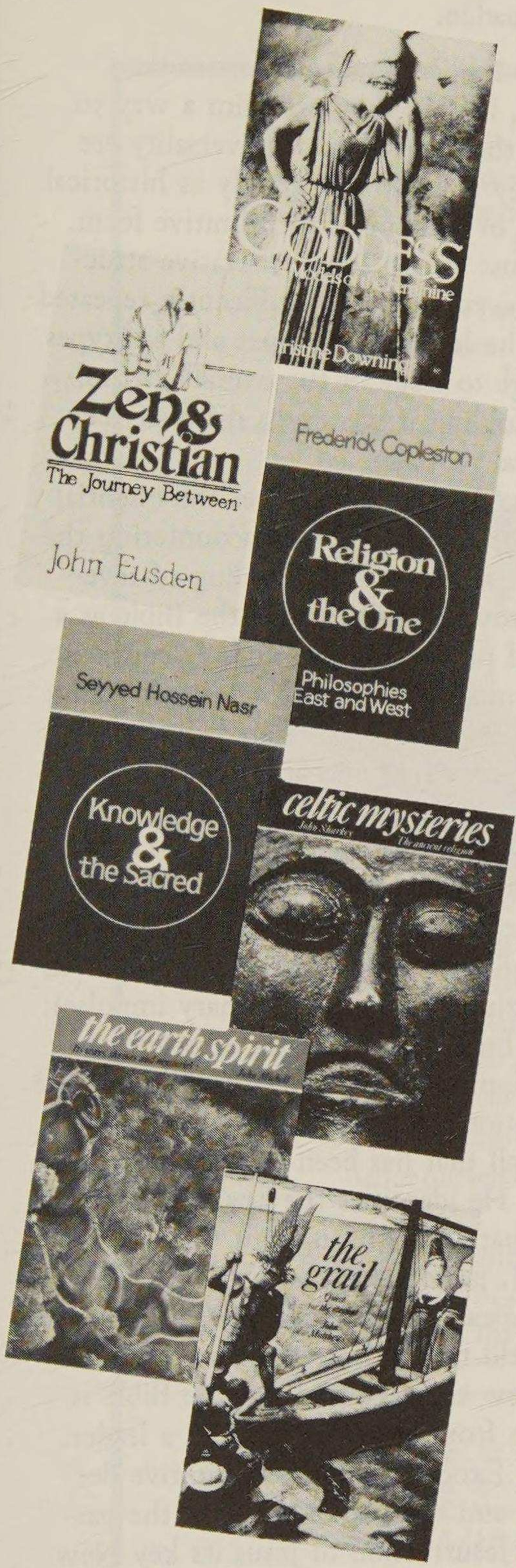
*Reviewed by John Loudon*

As a graduate student in Near Eastern Studies at the University of Toronto, I used to kid, only half in jest, that the professors taught everything related to the Bible except what really mattered. You could learn any number of languages, complexities of textual criticism and Hebrew pointing systems, history, archaeology, and so on, but nothing about what the Bible might actually mean. Admittedly, the idea was to learn the tools of the exegetical trade so that one day you would be well prepared to enter the promised land of Biblical criticism and theology; but it was easy to despair that you would ever get there. It is surprising, then, and a little disconcerting, to discover at this late date that the sort of approach to the Bible that would have given soul to this body of technical training was represented on the same campus at the same time by Northrop Frye in the English department, where he has taught a course on the English Bible since the late 1950s (because "a student of English literature who does not know the Bible does not know a good deal of what is going on in what he reads"). Well, in this book I have been able at long last to take Professor Frye's course, and a wonderfully rich course it is, one that I can heartily recommend to anyone wishing a fresh encounter with the Bible.

Frye says that his book is "a study of the Bible from the point of view of a literary critic" that "expresses his own personal encounter with the Bible." But just as his trailblazing study of William Blake, *Fearful Symmetry,* and his immensely influential *Anatomy of Criticism* represented much more than personal views, *The Great Code* provides much more than an idiosyncratic and narrowly literary reading of the Bible. His enterprise is not to be confused with "the Bible as literature" approach popular in humanities programs, in which the Bible is treated merely as an anthology of great stories, poetry, rhetoric, etc. Rather, as a resourceful and conscientious critic, Frye's aim is to discover, dispassionately, what distinctive sort of literature the Bible now embodies and to let its structure, language, motifs, imagery teach him how it might be most appropriately and fruitfully read.

His procedure, a move so obvious as to be revolutionary, is to take the Christian Bible as a self-contained literary unity and to explore on its own terms the mythological universe that the Biblical imagery and narrative constitute. And today as much as centuries ago, "Man lives, not directly or nakedly in nature like the animals, but within a mythological universe, a body of assumptions and beliefs developed from his existential concerns. Most of this is held unconsciously, which means that our imaginations may recognize elements of it, when presented in art or literature, without consciously understanding what it is that we recognize." Frye sees his critical task as making us aware of the Biblical mythological framework that, consciously or not, and authentically or distortedly, still greatly affects the meaning and quality of our lives by shaping the stories we are living, the images that guide us.

The book is structured in two parts that, like the Old and New Testaments themselves, function as a "double mirror": essentially, Part One analyzes how the Bible, taken as a here-and-now literary whole, is to be read, and Part Two applies the critical principles developed to the actual contents of the Bible. Taking his cue from Vico, Frye distinguishes between the poetic or hieroglyphic language of the age of the gods (in which words are concrete and function as dynamic forces), the heroic or hieratic language of the age of aristocracy (in which words function as the outer expression of inner thoughts), and the "vul-




# CROSSROAD
# CROSSROAD
# CROSSROAD

**The Crossroad Publishing Company**
575 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10022

# *World Religion & Culture*

**R. C. Zaehner**
## THE CITY WITHIN THE HEART

The last book of a challenging contemporary religious thinker. Zaehner writes for everyone who is striving to gain a measure of clarity on problems central to a living religious faith. pbk $7.95

**Frederick Franck**
## ART AS A WAY
**A Return to the Spiritual Roots**

Art As a Way, as a "spiritual discipline," will take the serious seeker beyond mere self-expression and absorption with ego identity to a new—yet age-old—Way of Seeing, leading to a sense of one's place in the fabric of the whole.

Hand written by the author and illuminated by one hundred of his exquisite pen-and-wash drawings, this inspired book expresses a radical faith in the meaning of life and art, a faith that celebrates the arts as a spiritual force not mere ornamentation.
pbk $9.95

**Christine Downing**
## THE GODDESS
**Mythological Images Of The Feminine**

At once a scholarly and intensely personal journey that demonstrates how the great female figures of classical Greece can serve to illuminate the experience of women everywhere. "Profound, provocative and moving. . .shows us how story theology should be done."—CAROL P. CHRIST $12.95

**John Eusden**
## ZEN AND CHRISTIAN
**The Journey Between**

A sensitive introduction to Zen which explores the relationship between two great and ancient traditions, and reveals the author's own spiritual journey between Zen and Christianity. $10.95

**Seyyed Hossein Nasr**
## KNOWLEDGE AND THE SACRED

This major work, based on the Gifford Lectures for 1981, establishes the intimate connection between religious experience and speculative thought in the great religious traditions and shows how the break down of "creative theology" resulted from the divorce of reason from authentic spiritual experience. $17.50

**Jill Purce, Editor**
## THE ILLUSTRATED LIBRARY OF SACRED IMAGINATION

In this series the images and symbols of the spiritual journey are explored in word and picture, color and form. Ancient knowledge, eternal myth and lost traditions become a new resource for the human venture. Some of today's most important religious authors undertake vision quests and discover authentic sources of enlightenment and wholeness in oft forgotten ways. This series constantly and directly points the spiritually thirsty seeker to the sacred well of the soul. For there in the heart dwells the creative imagination. These volumes are profusely illustrated in full color throughout. Each volume $19.95; pbk $9.95

**John Sharkey**
### CELTIC MYSTERIES
**The Ancient Religion**

**John Matthews**
### THE GRAIL
**Quest for the Eternal**

**Lucie Lamy**
### EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES
**New Light on Ancient Spiritual Knowledge**

**John Michel**
### THE EARTH SPIRIT
**Its Ways, Shrines and Mysteries**

**Peter Payne**
### MARTIAL ARTS
**The Spiritual Dimension**

gar" or demotic language of the age of the people (in which language is regarded as descriptive of an outside natural order and truth is the conformity of what is expressed to the objective way things are). He then argues that while it is vital to realize that much of the Bible's language functions poetically and some of it is hieratic, and hence cannot be read from the univocal demotic perspective we moderns instinctively bring to it, the truly distinctive language in the Bible is a fourth form of expression: *kerygma* or proclamation, a mode of rhetoric (mixing the metaphorical and the existential) that is the vehicle of revelation. So the Bible is "a gigantic myth, a narrative extending over the whole of time from creation to apocalypse," that proclaims a revelation of liberation. Myths are "stories that tell a society what it is important to know" and they operate within a mythology, an interconnected group of myths; as sacred stories they have a power and significance unlike profane stories that are told for entertainment or other less crucial purposes and are detachable and nomadic. And it is the Bible's mythology and imagery—*not* primarily the historicity of the events it recounts, the doctrines that can be deduced from it, or even its spiritual teaching—that constitute its perennial and literal meaning. For the mythology is the inexhaustible reservoir of stories and images from which everything else flows, and is more basic, primary, and rich than passing concerns and criteria of verifiability, correct beliefs, spiritual trends. What Frye teaches us to do is to read the Bible poetically, to read it as his mentor Blake (or Milton, or Dante) knew how to do. And from the poetic standpoint, historicity (or doctrinal consistency, etc.) is irrelevant:

> The general principle . . . is that if anything historically true is in the Bible, it is there not because it is historically true, but for different reasons. . . . Poetry expresses the universal in the event, the aspect of the event that makes it an example of the kind of thing that is always happening . . . [The] universal in history is what is conveyed by the *mythos,* the shape of the historical narrative. A myth is designed not to describe a specific situation but to contain it in a way that does not restrict its significance to that one situation.

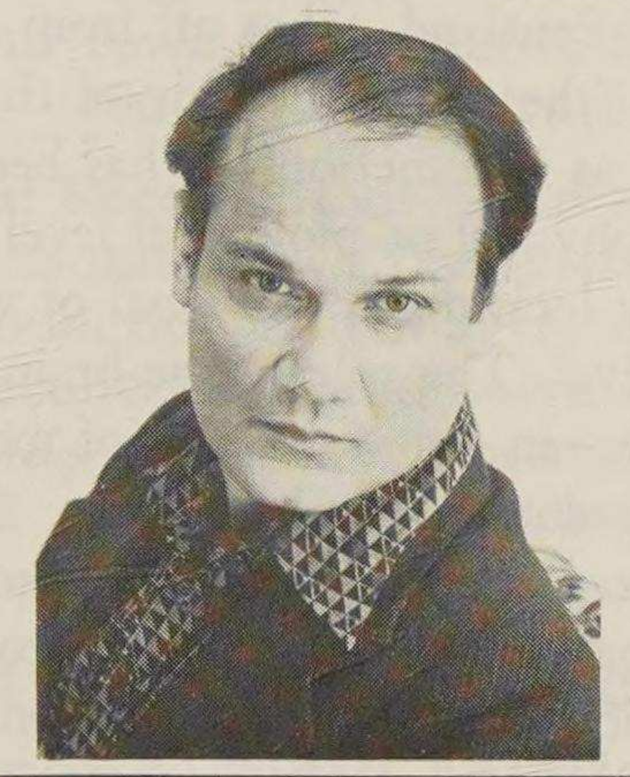
Certainly Biblical myths are more than literature, in that they proclaim a way to live, but their power and universality are lost if they are read reductively as historical evidence, or as dogmas in primitive form. So we must attend to the narrative structure of the myths, the significantly repeated images, the interplay of types and antitypes from stage to stage of the overall mythology's unfolding if we are to discover the Bible's real message.

In Part Two, Frye explores the essential ingredients of this way of encountering the Bible. He analyzes the unfolding of revelation through the course of the Bible as a dialectical progression through a sequence of seven main phases, each phase providing a wider perspective on its predecessor, and interrelated as type and antitype: *creation; revolution* (the paradigmatic Exodus story in which Israel is made the people of God); *law* (in which the community created by revolution is institutionalized); *wisdom* (the individualizing of the law); *prophecy* (the individualizing of the revolutionary impulse); *gospel* (a further intensifying of prophecy and wisdom); and *apocalypse* (a vision of the new creation, an unveiling of the inner form of all that has been happening in history). He identifies the key clusters of images that recur throughout the Bible (paradisal, pastoral, agricultural, urban, anthropological) and embody the vision of the ideal world that it is proclaiming. And he shows how the core myth of the Bible is liberation from bondage through a leader, with the Exodus being the definitive deliverance and type of all the rest, the passion and resurrection of Jesus its key New Testament antitype; and the pattern is carried on in the individual Christian's struggle for liberation from the world of sin into a way of life that is the spiritual kingdom.

The foregoing distillation of Frye's own distillation of his teaching, research, and reflections cannot, of course, convey the book's architectonic ingenuity, the almost offhand gems of interpretive insight, and the panoply of principles and information.

"Truly a powerful poem, with an empowering answer, vividly wrought from the rock and sand, transmuted, of our own desert today."
from the introduction by Joseph Campbell

"A beautiful epic of future, an epic of Man's consciousness and redemption of his sensibilities."
Harry Slochower, Editor, *American Imago*



# MANHUNT IN THE DESERT

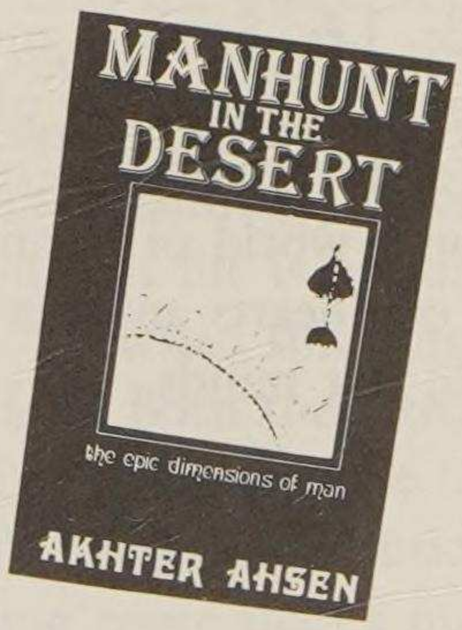
*an epic poem by*

## AKHTER AHSEN

A brilliant epic poem of the modern hero — the new Odysseus watching the sand particles fall in the hourglass of time — *Manhunt in the Desert* is a self-revealing journey in the quest for light and power. It carries us on the wave of vibrant images across illusions, mirages and new waters, to experience ourselves and our times in a totally new way.

A contemporary classic in the great tradition of *The Waste Land* and the Grail quest, a momentous return of the epic which involves and transforms.

Paper, $9.95; 426 pages
*For individual orders, add $1.00 postage and handling per book; New York state residents, add 8.25% sales tax*




Distributed by
*ProHelios Inc.*
*397 North Broadway, Suite 1-0, Dept. P*
*Yonkers, New York 10701*

Published by
*Brandon House, inc.*

But I do need to indicate as well possible shortcomings in his approach. Frye's favorite parts of the Bible seem to be its wisdom literature (his most insightful and eloquent analysis is that of the Book of Ecclesiastes, and he suggests that the Book of Job is "the epitome of the narrative of the Bible"). A clear bias through the whole book is to "move from the closed fortresses of believer and skeptic to the community of vision," eschewing all questions of doctrine and historicity and attaining to a spiritual interpretation that transcends ego and time. But I remain convinced that there is a "scandal of particularity," a rootedness in actual historical events, that is so much an ingredient of the Old and New Testaments that a faithful interpreter can't ignore it. Relatedly, the Bible as proclamation that aims at turning the hearer's life around (*metanoia*) seems to resist, at least as an ultimate interpretation, the cool dispassion of Frye's approach. It is literature that calls for commitment, conviction, surrender; and real hearing demands passionate subjectivity—Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, and others have captured something essential. And, finally, I think that Frye's single-minded devotion to the King James Authorized Version, rather than the more accurate Revised Standard Version, causes more problems than it solves.

Still, even these serious questions in no way gainsay the book's achievement, and one can only hope that it, and its promised sequel, may lead a whole variety of readers to discover afresh the power and richness of the Bible. For I'd venture to say that he may be doing for the Bible what seminal thinkers like Eliade, Lévi-Strauss, and Campbell have done for the study of comparative religions and mythology—recovering from alienation a world of meaning that we know in our hearts and our dreams but hardly at all in our minds.

*John Loudon is the Editorial Manager of Harper & Row, San Francisco, and a Consulting Editor to* PARABOLA.

**Transitional Man: The Anatomy of a Miracle**
By Franklin Earnest III, M.D., Ph.D. San Francisco: Far West Editions, 1981. Pp. 76. $5.95.

**Windows on the Mind: Reflections on the Physical Basis of Consciousness**
By Dr. Erich Harth. New York: William Morrow, 1982. Pp. 285. $15.50.

*Reviewed by William J. Welch*

Dr. Earnest's book, which has been reissued with revisions by his friend and mentor, John Pentland, takes off from the position that "the scientific study of the brain, as well as its functioning, has been confined to the physical or biological level and increasingly locked into the goal of well-being and survival. The role of the brain at higher levels—in the vast realm of metaphysics—has been neglected."

Dr. Earnest, a neuro-surgeon, includes in his background, in addition to his degree in medicine, an M.S. degree earned for his study of brain tumors at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, and a doctorate in Human Behavioral Sciences at United States International University in San Diego, California. In 1956 he studied the teaching of G. I. Gurdjieff at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation in Wisconsin, under the late architect's widow, Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, herself an early student of Gurdjieff's.

With this impressive array of qualifications, Dr. Earnest might have been expected to pay more than passing attention to the ambiguities, not to say blank spaces, in our understanding of the baffling tumult between our ears, but he has other fish to fry. *Transitional Man* turns out to be a lucid, often charming, sometimes evangelical recapitulation of the world view of G. I. Gurdjieff, and the dilemma of sleeping man. P. D. Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous* is the model for recurring efforts to rephrase this teaching in an idiom apparently presumed to be more congenial than that of Gurdjieff himself. Kenneth Walker, the English urologist; C. S. Nott, translator and sometime publisher; J. G. Bennett, linguist, mathematician and tireless pursuer of spiritual masters, are among the best known who have tried it.

**Southwestern Indian Ritual Drama**
*Edited by Charlotte J. Frisbie*
"A rich sampler of Southwest ritual drama clearly showing the vitality and creativity of Southwest peoples and fostering an appreciation for ritual drama as essential to Native ways of life."—*Parabola*
A School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series book, with essays by Barbara Tedlock, Claire Farrer, David McAllester, Joann Kealiinohomoku, and others. 372 pages, illustrated Cloth: $30.00

**Big Falling Snow: A Tewa-Hopi Indian's Life and Times and the History and Traditions of His People**
*Albert Yava* *Edited and Annotated by Harold Courlander*
"A rich collection of authentic traditions on ceremonies, organizations of clans, initiation rituals, and customs relating to birth and death. . . . Much more important are the insights into ordinary manners, customs, and attitudes of the Hopi and Tewa."—Lawrence S. Thompson, *Richmond News-Leader*
July 1982 190 pages, illustrated Paper: $9.95

**Hopi Voices: Recollections, Traditions, & Narratives of the Hopi Indians**
*Recorded, Annotated, and Transcribed by Harold Courlander*
"[The] introduction is a marvel of interpretation and engaging scholarship; while the recollections and narratives . . . assembled speak brilliantly out of a whole people's own unique mentality."—Jamake Highwater
August 1982 224 pages Cloth: $15.95

*at bookstores or order directly from us, Department PMF*

**University of New Mexico Press**
**Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131**

Dr. Earnest's neurologically based exposition holds up as well as most, if you can go along with his premises. His special vision of the transformation of man, overriding the conventional and more tentative view of the brain and nervous system, enables him to assert that higher consciousness is an electrical transaction, "every bit as discernible and definable as the more self-evident example of withdrawing the hand from a hot stove. The translation of the idea 'to love' to its highest form of enactment, through the complex circuitry of the human brain," he submits, "is the anatomy of a miracle."

After a quick overview of man's place in Darwinian and/or creationist beginnings, we are summoned to consider our common ordeal of pounding down the birth canal out into the cold world with a cry. Shortly thereafter, we proceed to envelop our "essence" (genetic structure and its vulnerable innate behavioral pattern) in a protective "personality." By trial and error, we fashion this desperate exterior (he calls it a costume) into as street-wise a masquerade as our assets allow and, with its skills and ruses, wrench from a hostile world the means of survival and the good things of life. The latter enterprise is subsumed by Dr. Earnest under the general heading of "toy business," his happy image for getting and spending and copulating.

Until the moment Gurdjieff referred to as the arrival at "responsible age" and Dr. Earnest calls the awakening of the question, "Who am I?," man's pursuit of toy matters often seems to have gone on tolerably well. But a haunting sense of lack, the suspicion that life is passing us by unlived, and the wretched suffering that informs the inner life of both the sated and the impoverished, should cause us, in Dr. Earnest's view, to reconsider the brain as something more than a manipulator of the environment. Here again, his peers might argue, Dr. Earnest forsakes the neurologists' data base as he takes up the velvet cudgel of revelation:

"The nervous system," he writes, "devel-

oped [and] . . . virtually burst into full bloom with the arrival of man. The cerebral hemispheres suddenly [*sic*] expanded and became the heralds of a new potential consciousness; . . . man was equipped to change dark to light, cold to warm . . . move through the sea, the air and over the land. . . . Still, the most exciting capacity of his brain he has barely noticed; yet it is the high point of creation. Man can change himself. Through the proper use of his brain man is capable of overriding instinct and altering essence. . . . The human brain has become the command post of a totally new human experience."

"Although science," he goes on to say, "has given us a peek at the brain and placed us in awe of its complexity we must come to see that the only laboratory capable of the intact brain's possibilities is the individual himself. Each of us has the validity of his own experience. We are the proof. Man becomes the living testimony of what he discovers."

Having coolly extrapolated the function of our brain into the realm of metaphysics, Dr. Earnest says that man can, if he will, hear an increasingly audible inner voice calling him to change.

The concluding chapters develop the idea of the need to change, but first to *know*. Equipped with the necessary circuitry, man in transition, who seeks transformation to his rightful level of consciousness, "needs to begin with self observation . . . to see not only his essence but also his personality . . . examine the motive behind each of his actions . . . sense the reality in every experience . . . seek help through a teacher . . . remember himself . . . move with a sense of thanksgiving for the opportunity life affords him to see himself and . . . help others to see also. Finally, he must walk in the harmony he discovers with compassion, the highest note in the octave of love, for this is the glorification of God."

If this essay succeeds in turning its readers to the writings and talks of Gurdjieff himself, it will have justified its publication.

On the other hand, imagine, if you can, a treatise on the brain that reads like a cliffhanger. Dr. Erich Harth, physicist and student of the brain, has managed just such a tour de force. In a brilliant inquiry into the vast machinery within our skulls, Dr. Harth ranges over the maze of neural circuitry, weighs the elusive duality of mind and body, explores the mysterious phenomenon of sensations, "the source of all real knowledge," the mechanism of thought, the dividing line between knowledge and superstition.

"We will search," he says, "for the qualities of the human mind in the uniqueness of man's physical nature and the search must begin at the crossroads of mind and body, the human brain."

Dr. Harth opens his discourse with a backward look at the way our knowledge of ourselves has evolved from the bewildered and spirit-ridden mode of the ancients to the no less bewildered but now science-ridden mode of the declining years of the 20th century.

There follows a series of travelers' maps of the gross organization of the brain and its flow of information to and from the higher centers. Graphic records of critical experimental data are carefully related to the appropriate nervous pathways and cortical connections—a field he ruefully labels the "mess" of neural circuitry. He goes on to consider such questions as where thoughts are made (this is not settled, but there is evidence that their genesis involves a good deal more than the cerebral cortex); how brains are made (they appear to be, in large part, genetically coded, but there is convincing evidence that a good deal of developmental "chance" and the brain's own experience seriously influence its structure and its function); how we see (no simple camera, by any means; many of the most seemingly obvious mechanisms of sight remain very much in question, and some of what we see is not out there at all). And so it goes; hardly anything "up there" is simple or self-evident.

In the sweep of his discourse, we learn that even the simple automatic reflex, *e.g.*, the hot stove and the withdrawn finger, turns out to have connections with our awareness that are far from self-evident. In considering the troubling duality of mind and brain, Dr. Harth leads us patiently

**Manual of Mythology in Relation to Greek Art**

*Maxime Collignon*
*Translated and enlarged by*
*J.E. Harrison*

One of the basic works on the relationship between Greek art and mythology now available once again. Essential to those interested in art history, archaeology, comparative religion, and related fields.
*$47.50 cloth*

**Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World**

*H.P. L'Orange*

An essential work on the iconography of ancient kingship, now available in our reprint.
*$47.50 cloth*

**The Gardens of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius**

*Wilhelmina F. Jashemski*

Jashemski's imaginative and original work adds new dimensions to our knowledge of Pompeii and its surroundings: through its careful study of gardens, garden art, and physical remains it illuminates many aspects of the ancient life and environment. Spectacular color and black-and-white photographs, drawings, diagrams, and plans enhance this volume.
*$65.00 cloth*

*Order from*
**Caratzas Brothers, Publishers**
Box 210 (481 Main Street)
New Rochelle, New York 10802

through the implications of the "dualistic trick" of overriding a mechanism (the brain) by another more elusive one (the mind), and invites us to confront the dismaying but logically necessary prospect of a hierarchy of increasingly subtle mechanisms ascending to the infinite in order to control things from above downward. Happily he concludes that the interconnections of neural circuits within the upper brain are quite sufficient to account for the phenomenon of volition without the imposition of dualism, much less its implied hierarchy of monitors.

Put another way he says, "The power of determining one's own behavior is not the power of one entity (the mind) over another (the body), but the influence the brain has on itself, the power of self-reference."

Jason Brown, the New York University neurologist, in a report entitled "Mind, Brain and Consciousness," on the same subject says: "Volition is an act of reflection that has an action as its object. Will is a way of describing the self in this reflective state."

In exploring the physical basis of consciousness, Dr. Harth links that state of being to the inner cerebral experience of sensation, which is to say that to have a sensation is to be conscious. This inner experience is supported and amplified by a verbal system and by visual imagery, which provides the means to a further and critical cerebral capacity—that of being able to simulate the occurrence of events in the mind, not prophetic of what is to come, but a prior rehearsal of the possible course of events in advance of their occurrence. The way we "see," for example, that walking counterclockwise would quickly release a dog caught up by a leash twisted around a stake, a prevision not granted to a dog's inner view.

This capacity, which Harth places among man's great intellectual achievements, can also, to be sure, just wool-gather, daydream, and woo anxiety with imagined intimations of doom. Here the question of

quality or level arises, but Dr. Harth is not on that subject, and stays with the run-of-the-mill, garden-variety miracle of consciousness.

Even so, in his role as physicist he is pressed by the metaphysical implications of the principle that the act of observation does not just record reality; it changes it. The observer and the observed are one, not only according to Krishnamurti, but to quantum mechanics as well. If consciousness is an inner cerebral sensation, it is also an observation. This leads in turn to the stubborn reality that "any attempt to describe or even to scrutinize the contents of the mind becomes itself a new mental state and hence alters irreversibly the very thing one is trying to grasp."

Thus, although exclusively hospitable to the scientific mode, Dr. Harth is not unfamiliar with what James Clerk Maxwell, the nineteenth century physicist, called "the den of the metaphysician strewn with the bones of former explorers and abhorred by every man of science," . . . whose walls, adds Dr. Harth, "are hung with the skins of many a scientist who should have known better."

In an epilogue, he describes an experience on the island of Garapocaia off the coast of Brazil, where for several months, as a young man of twenty, his susceptibility to the occult was put to the test. He did not succumb, but acknowledges that he continues to feel "between exasperation and desperation . . . profound compassion and love for the strange group of people whose lives briefly crossed mine in the early days of World War II."

*Windows on the Mind* is an elegant, widely ranging account of much more than can be touched on in a brief review. In it is much material for thought, especially for those drawn to the interface between reason and revelation, and concern with the prospect of the spiritual transformation of man.

*William J. Welch is a New York physician and former president of the New York Heart Association. He is the author of* What Happened In Between *(New York: George Braziller, 1972).*

**The Wishing Bone Cycle: Translations of Swampy Cree Narratives**
Gathered and translated by Howard Norman. Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson, 1982. Pp. 275. Paper $8.95.

**Where the Chill Came From: Cree Windigo Tales and Journeys**
Gathered and translated by Howard Norman. Berkeley: North Point Press, 1982. Pp. 129. Paper $7.50.

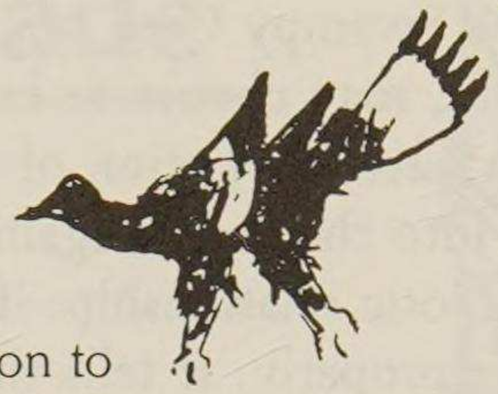
*Reviewed by David Sokolov*

Howard Norman has been working in the Canadian north, collecting and translating Cree Indian narratives for some fifteen years. To date two books have resulted from his work: *The Wishing Bone Cycle* and *Where the Chill Came From.* In the next few years we can look forward to a collection of Cree Trickster stories and at least the first part of a long, detailed, and quite remarkable autobiographical narrative of an elder Cree woman, Sarah Greys.

When I was first studying the ethnology of North America, I was struck by the commitment of Paul Radin, whose work with the Winnebago tribe was a life-long enterprise. The inventiveness of his approaches to ethnology set invaluable precedents. In many works, by letting people speak for themselves, he made their historical, linguistic, and ecological circumstances available to readers in a unique way. In view of the disappearance of the "old ways" among the Winnebago, Radin also felt an urgency about his work. There is a similarity between the work of Radin and that of Norman despite their different approaches and eras, and Norman's work likewise seems the beginning of a life-long commitment.

In *The Wishing Bone Cycle,* we are offered a range of narratives: a Trickster cycle, naming stories, and short poems. I am continually taken by the resonance of the Cree language, even in English; however, Norman's translations are not just echoes of the original, but also literary works of intuition and craft. As in the following section of Sarah Greys' narrative, paradox is inherent in the Cree language and also present in day-to-day life:

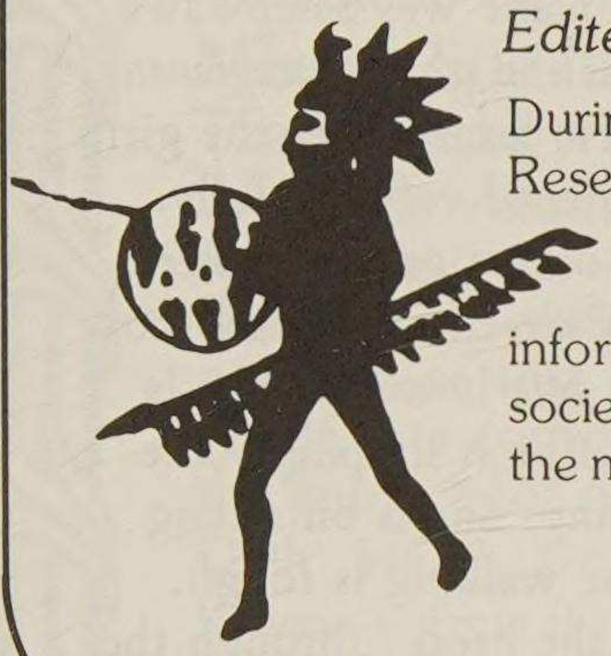
"the Indian Way"



**Yuwipi**
**Vision and Experience in Oglala Ritual**
*By William K. Powers*

William K. Powers draws upon thirty years of research and participation to offer the first complete translation of a Yuwipi ceremony, a present-day curing ritual performed by the Oglala and other Sioux Indians of South Dakota. The author weaves his information into a narrative of one performance of Yuwipi, told from the viewpoint of those taking part. The description and texts of the ritual, which was not described in the anthropological literature until 1946, are set in the context of the daily lives of the participants. xiv. 114 pages. **$13.95**

**Lakota Society**
*By James R. Walker*
*Edited by Raymond J. DeMallie*



During 18 years as agency physician on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation between 1896 and 1914, Dr. James R. Walker recorded a wealth of information on the traditional life ways of the Oglala Sioux. This book offers the first collection of the primary accounts of Walker's informants and Walker's syntheses dealing with the organization of Lakota society, including such important documents as an eyewitness account of the massacre of Lakotas at Wounded Knee Creek in 1890. ca. 206 pages. **$18.95** tent.

**University of Nebraska Press**

901 N. 17th Lincoln 68588

My first husband went blind. But I did not
feel sorry for him in that he still saw birds.
He could describe. . . . His descriptions of
birds went on, to me, and others as well. He
talked about them clearly, as if he had been
out walking among them that morning. So,
you see, it was not as if he saw nothing in
his eyes. He often had summer birds in them
. . . even during winter. They stayed all year
in his eyes . . . and on days of much snow
and cold he could talk easily about summer
birds.

In the generous selection of naming stories, other logics are at work:

LARGER EARS
She had large ears, and this seemed
to please her. Even the time a man joked at
her ears
and said they were BATS,
she chose to believe it! She said to him,
"Yes,
you are right. They are bats!
I'm glad you came to tell me.
And I will send them into your house
THIS VERY NIGHT to hover
and listen over your face!"
This quickly stopped
his joking.

Also, she liked to listen to *large* sounds
with those large ears.
Maybe the two things
went together.
Before storms, she would sit along the edge
of a lake, EVEN AFTER IT BEGAN
RAINING,
and listen to thunder.
Sometimes she shouted back
to it, "Louder, I can hardly hear you!"
Even though the rest of us
had our hands over our ears, as we sat
inside our houses.

Listening with our smaller ears.

*The Wishing Bone Cycle* has just been reissued in an expanded edition which includes etiological tales such as "Why owls die with their wings outspread," and a selection of longer naming stories; I think it suffers only from too limited introductions to each kind of narrative.

Of Cree stories at large, Norman writes: "The Swampy Cree say stories live in the world, may choose to inhabit people, who then have the option of telling them back out into the world again. This can form a symbiotic relationship: if people nourish a story properly, it tells things about life. The same with dreams. And names." The word *inhabit* is quite appropriate for the stories in the collection *Where the Chill Came From*. From the same geographical-linguistic region of the Swampy Cree, these stories invite us, cautiously, into an eerie realm within that region: that of harsh, isolating winters and the omnipresent threat of Windigo. Norman, in the introduction, writes: "It is the extremes of the Swampy Cree's daily life that are so deftly chronicled in their stories about Windigo, a complex, voracious spirit-being who, they say, has wandered the subarctic forests and icy swamplands west of Hudson Bay throughout time. Windigo is a conspirator with starvation. Since starvation (especially in winter) in Cree regions is always a possibility, so is an encounter with Windigo." Norman goes on to explain the most common forms of the cannibal Windigo, first as a tormented human form and secondly as a

> wandering giant with a heart made of ice who preys on Indian people. A Windigo may be of such frightening proportions that not only does your heart stop in its presence, but "you forget where your heart is." Sometimes Windigo appears as an "ice skeleton." Sometimes it has "rubbed tree pitch all over itself," and has bark, pine needles, and other scraps of forest stuck on. Some accounts say Windigos have huge, gaping mouths totally devoid of lips, are capable of exploding trees with hysterical exhalations, and can swim across glacial lakes in seconds. The vast inventory of its abhorrent characteristics constitutes a haunting natural history of Windigo.

I must note before discussing briefly these thirty-one tales of "confrontations with Windigos," that Norman's introduction may be termed anecdotal. Norman chooses—and I think rightly so—to be a participant without being an explainer. I found the "Three Conversations" with Cree elders concerning their experiences with Windigo, to be Windigo narratives in themselves, and excellent examples of Norman's approach to a world in which "the mysterious is made intimate without it being analyzed out of its diversity and contradictions, its own natural history."

The reciprocity possible in translation between the Cree's linguistic world and English is uniquely at work in Norman's translations. This inventive litany, from the "Curing Fox Windigo," is a useful example:

> An old curer, whose name was Sesepwawe (Duck Egg) arrived at the girl's *mataghwan* ("home dwelling"). He leaned over the girl's chest to listen. He listened very carefully. Then he said, to the others gathered there, "I hear a fox walking over crusty hard snow in there. She is tired. She is weary. She is raspy breathing hard. She is limping some too. This fox is panting. She is on a long journey, this fox. The walking is tough. And every few steps she breaks through the snow crust . . . that's the sound I hear in her chest."

In this story the sounds of the sick girl's breathing, transformed into the sound of the fox walking over snow, is then extended into an actual chase of a real fox who is ultimately used to cure the girl.

All these tales are natural histories in themselves. They are in part the ways the Cree relate their own history with this Windigo antagonist. And they are wonderful, frightening stories. The physical and psychological tensions set in each tale make us think of the endless variety of beings which haunt us and hover at the edges of our societies (such as Dybbuks, Bigfoot and the Abominable Snowman). One of these beings, in some form, is always roaming from its own landscape and time, in and out of our mind's eye.

*David Sokolov is a Russian writer and anthropologist presently living in Toronto. He has written about the linguistics and mythologies of Northern peoples, from Siberia to Alaska. He left Russia in 1978.*

# By and About Mircea Eliade

## ORDEAL BY LABYRINTH

*Conversations with Claude-Henri Rocquet*

**Mircea Eliade**

Translated by **Derek Coltman**

Mircea Eliade—scholar, philosopher, and writer—has led a life as rich and fascinating as any of his influential ideas. Claude-Henri Rocquet has elicited from Eliade brief versions of some of his most important theories, and a great many reflections on his life. The result is an intimate and charming profile of an extraordinary man and his work.

Cloth $17.50 240 pages Illus.

## A HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS

**Volume 2:** *From Gautama Buddha to the Triumph of Christianity*

**Mircea Eliade**

Translated by **Willard Trask**

With this volume, Eliade continues his progress through *A History of Religious Ideas*—a projected three-volume work envisioned as the culminating statement of his career. Volume 1 has received wide critical acclaim, setting a standard of scholarship and insight that promises to result in a completed work that will stand as the definitive treatment of the subject for at least a generation.

Cloth $25.00 576 pages

**Volume 1:** *From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*

Cloth $20.00 Paper $8.95 507 pages

---

*From *Chicago Originals*

## BETWEEN BELIEF AND TRANSGRESSION

*Structuralist Essays in Religion, History, and Myth*

Edited by **Michel Izard** and **Pierre Smith**

Translated by **John Leavitt**

Introduction by **James A. Boon**

The work of former students and colleagues of Lévi-Strauss, these essays offer constructive applications and extensions of his approaches as they examine religious belief, ritual practice, narrative performance, comparative institutions, and problems in the history of ideas. The volume ranges from intensive case studies to surveys, all rich in ethnographic detail.

$20.00 288 pages

**First edition paperbacks in a durable format—sewn bindings, wrap-around covers, acid-free paper—that permits lower prices for specialized works of original research and scholarship.*

---

*Now in Paper—*

## THE MEANING OF APHRODITE

**Paul Friedrich**

"The book is. . .a valuable irritant in the bloodstream of scholarship, and extremely rich in hypothesis and insight. . . . it must be hoped the brilliant ideas in [it] will not simply become received notions but undergo the more detailed scrutiny they call for."—Simon Pembroke, *The Times Literary Supplement*

$5.95 256 pages

---

## THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

*5801 South Ellis Avenue Chicago, IL 60637*

**Foxfire 7**
Edited with an introduction by Paul F. Gillespie. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982. Pp. 510. Paper, $9.95.

*Reviewed by Al Carmines*

*Foxfire 7,* the latest volume to appear from this Georgia-based organization dedicated to the examination and preservation of the mountain-country lifestyle of the American South, is the first Foxfire book to focus on religion, and it is a fascinating study for those of us whose interest in religion and sociology is experiential rather than theoretical. All the Foxfire books share this virtue, but here it seems particularly mature. Working from the inside out has its own peculiar dangers, but *Foxfire 7* manages to skirt these as if they hardly existed. Hearing the older people who are interviewed here talk about their faith inspires a feeling which is almost a foreboding. For these men and women are very old; and they hold something precious. Who will keep this when they're gone? The answer is, sadly enough, probably no one. Which is all the more reason why *Foxfire 7* is a precious book.

As the subtitle indicates, the book deals with "ministers, church members, revivals, baptisms, shaped-note and gospel singing, faith healing, camp meetings, footwashing, snake handling, and other traditions of mountain religious heritage." It is divided into sections on the various denominations—a division which is questionable, for there is more difference between an urban Methodist and an Appalachian one that between a Footwashing Baptist and a mountain Methodist. The book makes too much of these denominational divisions: it seems, on the surface, to be a way to structure the material, but ultimately it's a shallow way to do so.

Too much is also made of the religious opinions of the people, to the exclusion of other aspects of their life and beliefs; religion, even in the most saintly, is finally only one aspect of life. How a man or woman sees the moral questions of life, raises children, deals with sickness, handles a job—all of these are as interesting and important as their statements about religion.

The section on shaped-note singing, with its blend of religion and aestheticism with native custom, is perhaps the most powerful part of the book. Most of us—even those of us who consider ourselves musicians of one sort or another—are ignorant of shaped-note singing. Yet historically, it was the way in which our ancestors (at least those lacking a formal musical education) originally made music, and it continues to be a robust tradition in Appalachia. In the book, person after person testifies about learning shaped notes as a child, and therefore being "given" the inimitable gift of song.

I myself have attended several "singings" in Appalachia, where the people sang naturally and quite "ignorantly" in four- or even eight-part harmony. It was glorious. A singing—with its concomitant praying, preaching, dinner on the campgrounds, courting, and joking—was a magnificent experience. How sad that this gerund with a noun's importance has passed out of our vocabulary in urban areas. For a singing was a thing, a happening. Avant-garde

artists could learn much about the interweaving of art and life from studying and reading about these singings.

The section on snake-handlers has the eeriness of a good mystery novel and the realism of a documentary. Basing their activity on a passage from Mark (a disputed one, by the way), which says that followers of Jesus "shall take up serpents . . . and it shall not hurt them," the snake-handlers do pick up snakes and caress them. Sometimes they're bitten; some recover, and some die. This must be one of the oldest traditions of religion itself: the serpent—eternal symbol of mystery and evil—and the determination to tame him, which faith and fanaticism brings. This ritual is passing more and more into oblivion, and it is reported here with sympathy, depth, and accuracy. And the photographs, unobtrusive and deadly accurate, are themselves almost works of art.

The section on Footwashing Baptists (although some other denominations practice this rite also) is the most moving, most solid, and in a way the most understandable for urban-dwelling readers of the book. There is something in all of us that longs for once to experience the Holy—whatever our background, whatever our religion or lack of religion. While the quaintness of shaped-note music and the marked thrills of snake-handling are real, here is something more akin to American democratic spirit—something for which we long. For most liturgies on Sunday or Saturday touch us only occasionally. The beauty, the simplicity of the foot-washing among these Appalachian people seems to me the perfect therapy for us.

My main problem with the book lies in the introduction by Paul Gillespie and the historical overview by Professor Bill Leonard, as well as some of the editorial comments along the way, in the various sections. Perhaps the editors felt they needed these to give the book an overall authenticity. They didn't. Such comments are paradoxically probably true, but not helpful to the book. While they exhibit scrupulous respect for the religious traditions of Appalachia, they also betray enormous distance. Leonard speaks of southern religion and its various byways and modulations as an expert talking about a phenom-


*New from*

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL

9 Park Street, Boston, MA 02108

**WHOLLY HUMAN**

**Western and Eastern Visions of the Self and its Perfection**

*Guy Claxton*
*(Swami Anand Ageha)*

The author combines the practical and psychological wisdom of the East with Western theories of the self to examine the relationship between an individual's sense of self and real self or "original face". He guides the reader on a voyage of self-discovery informed by first-hand experience of therapeutic and meditative techniques.

**1982, 240 pp, $9.95 original paper**
**0-7100-0874-0**

**THE SHAMAN AND THE MAGICIAN**

**Journeys Between the Worlds**

*Nevill Drury*

Drawing on his practical experience of Western magic and anthropological knowledge of shamanism, the author explores in depth the parallels between modern Western magic and traditional shamanism via the "spirit journey of the soul" and the "vision quest".

**1982, 156 pp, $8.95 original paper**
**0-7100-0910-0**

*New in Paper*

**WHOLENESS AND THE IMPLICATE ORDER**

*David Bohm*

'Whether or not Bohm turns out to have all the answers, I find his concept of wholeness extraordinarily appealing, as an explanation of the riddles of modern physics and as a prescription for living.' —John P. Wiley, Jr., *Smithsonian*

'A serious and provocative effort to integrate recent developments in physics with a kind of pragmatic process philosophy, and thereby to explain the nature of consciousness.' —Stephen E. Braude, *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*

**1982, 240 pp, $8.50 paper**
**0-7100-0971-2**

fusion

an interdisciplinary journal of dreams and culture

**DREAM PSYCHOLOGY NORTHWEST**

An Educational Center for Dreams and Depth Psychology announces

**FUSION—An Interdisciplinary Journal of Dreams and Culture.**

This quarterly publication provides a forum for sharing ideas and images emerging from the human imagination in relation to dream psychology and archetypal thought, education, the arts and the consciousness community. Contributions and backing welcome. Published by Dream Psychology Northwest—Douglas A. Cohen, Director. Managing editor: Christopher Matthews. Consulting editor: Richard Jones. First issue: Summer 1982. Subscriptions — $8/year. *Fusion* is associated with The Dream Network Bulletin.

**Fusion 1602 E. Garfield, Suite B. Seattle, Washington 98112**
**(206) 325-6148**

enon of religion and culture. But no such experts are needed here. One photograph of a man in ecstasy holding a snake to his bosom turns all such theories into dust. *Foxfire* 7 should have had the courage to realize this, for it is otherwise a truly thrilling book.

*Al Carmines was for twenty years the Associate Pastor of Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village in New York. He has long been deeply involved in the arts, as a performer, director, playwright, and composer. His own musicals include* In Circles, Promenade, The Making of Americans *and two works based on rural Protestant religious groups,* Camp Meeting *and* The Evangelist.

**Simone Weil: Interpretations of a Life**
Edited by George Abbott White. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts, 1981. Pp. 207. $18.00; paper $7.50.

*Reviewed by Carol Ascher*

In the nearly 40 years since Simone Weil's death in England at the age of 34, this iconoclastic Catholic mystic and defender of the downtrodden has evoked two major biographies and a number of scattered critical commentaries. If younger American readers have missed many of the earlier works about her, most will at least know of the extremely detailed, though not analytical, biography, *Simone Weil: A Life* (English edition, Pantheon, 1976) by her classmate, Simone Petrement.

Weil herself wrote largely for small political newspapers and magazines. Her forms were political, literary, philosophical and religious essays, personal notebooks, letters, and poetry. While in France most of her work has been ordered into chronological volumes, in the United States knowledge of Weil began with a late essay (*Waiting for God,* Putnam, 1951), which provoked enthusiasms about sainthood; since then, the other books have appeared piecemeal and out of order.

What makes *Simone Weil: Interpretations of a Life* such a valuable contribution is both the high analytical and human quality of the individual essays—they are by people of social and political conviction, such as Michele Murray, Robert Coles, Michael Feber, and Conor Cruise O'Brien—and the thoughtful bibliographic essay at the end by the editor, George Abbott White, which provides an overview of the Weil literature useful to anyone wanting either simple direction for further reading or a comprehensive grounding for serious research.

Simone Weil was born in Paris in 1909 to a middle-class, nominally Jewish family. Both her parents were intellectually curious, and her older brother, André, was a mathematical prodigy. As Michele Murray reminds us in her very interesting biographical essay, Simone evinced a precocious streak of asceticism and social consciousness even as a child during World War I, refusing to wear socks because poor children did not have them or to eat sugar because the soldiers had none at the front. Although at an early age she became critical of an intellectual and cultural life that depended on money and excluded most of humanity, she always performed extremely well in school. At 19, she claimed first place in the national examinations for the Ecole Normale Supérieure, with Simone de Beauvoir coming in second and all the young men of

France following the two. While at the Ecole Normale, she was known as the "Red Virgin" for her strange reclusive behavior and her support for left-wing and pacifist causes.

Simone Weil's short adult life falls into two periods, which are reflected in the different foci of the present essays. In the earlier period, while working first as a teacher in provincial lycées, her intellectual and activist energy was drawn to the plight of poor workers and the unemployed and to the possibilities of radical social change. It is during this period that she gave up the comforts of mental labor to work briefly in several factories (in an era of economic depression, she was quickly fired for not being sufficiently fast or skillful), as well as in agricultural labor. Through experiencing the reality of the machine as it dominates the worker's pace and movement, she was able to write about how the nature of work itself would have to change before workers could be truly free. Watching the Soviet experiment in this period, she was also one of the first to criticize from the left the savage destruction of human life in the name of revolution. She participated briefly in the Spanish Civil War on the Anarchist side. Staughton Lynd devotes his essay to this early period and sees Weil, in both her analysis of alienated labor and her radical criticism of all forms of hierarchy and power, as a forerunner of the New Left. But the work/politics era, as George Abbott White points out, also had a religious component. White compares Weil to Dorothy Day, and quotes from Gustav Thibbon, the French farmer and Catholic writer with whom Weil spent time in agricultural work:

> She wanted first to become empty of self by giving herself entirely to work—to find out from experience what soul and thought become in a being whose time and strength are ceaselessly used up by hard obligatory labor.

The second, and perhaps even more interesting, period in Weil's short adulthood encompasses her intensifying involvement in religious faith and her enormous desire—which she would not allow herself to fulfill—to receive the Catholic sacrament. It is in this period that one sees grown to a distorted fruition the great strengths as well

**Megalithomania**

***Artists, Antiquarians and Archaeologists at the Old Stone Monuments***

**By JOHN MICHELL.** "Few marks left by ancient man have crazed so many as the vast stones surviving from the Stone Age.... They have inspired fantastic theoretical wars among archaeologists, astronomers and historians.... *Megalithomania* is a merry and fascinating account of the excavators, scientists, theorists and artists who have fallen under the spell of these stones for centuries. It is illustrated by hundreds of enchanting pictures."—*The N.Y. Times Book Review.* **8 color plates, 220 b&w photos.** $16.95

**The Reenchantment of the World**

**By MORRIS BERMAN.** "We have moved from an enchanted world in which everything was alive, and into which humans fit, to a world in which everything is an object, alien, 'not me' and in which 'I' becomes an alienated thing in a world of alienated things. Berman traces how science from the 16th century to the present took over Western consciousness....He argues from philosophy, history, psychology, and anthropology (using the thought of Newton, Jung, Reich, Bateson, and others) that we need to replace the disenchanted world view we now have with one that is holistic, one that describes a world in which humans live in an intimate relation with each other and with all things in the universe.... An excellent book."—*Choice.*
**20 b&w photos, 18 drawings.** $34.50 cloth; $8.95 paper

**CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS**
P.O. Box 250, Ithaca, New York 14850

as terrible failures of Weil's search for purity in this life. Always critical of Judaism, her dislike of it became so strong that, as J.M. Cameron argues in his essay, her refusal to become a Christian was partly the result of her resistance to accepting the Old and New Testament as organically one. She had never been comfortable in her body, and as her asceticism became stricter, it verged on a kind of self hate. Exiled from France during the Nazi Occupation, her death in a hospital at Kent where she had been sent for treatment for tuberculosis was brought on by her refusal to eat more than the rations the French were allowed. Yet, as Michele Murray notes, her death reflected an intense pride. "She identified so strongly with Jesus that she was impelled to do, as far as it resided in her power, the very same thing. Her death would be a sacrificial offering for her countrymen . . ."

Whatever her deeply complicated motives and strivings, there are still insights from this latter period that even today draw the searcher. Her notions of emptiness attracting plenitude and the illusory quality of all existence ring with a familiarity of the mystic. In an essay on "Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God," she wrote movingly on attention—whose purpose, she said, was not to increase one's intellectual powers, but rather to prepare one for genuine prayer. "Attention consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object." Prayer is merely pure attentiveness directed toward God. "Above all," she adds, "our thought should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything."

Whether one reads Simone Weil's life and work as an inspiration or a warning, or some combination of the two, there is much to think about in her peculiar and extreme solutions. While a final synthesis of her life and work probably will not be made for quite some time, this latest collection offers a significant and satisfying step along the way.

*Carol Ascher is a free-lance writer and anthropologist who lives in New York City. Her recent biography,* Simone de Beauvoir: A Life of Freedom, *is published by Beacon Press.*

**The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area**
By Malcolm Margolin, illustrated by Michael Harney. Berkeley, Calif.: Heyday Books, 1978. Pp. 182. Paper $5.95.

**The Way We Lived: California Indian Reminiscences, Stories and Songs**
Malcolm Margolin, editor and commentator. With photographs. Berkeley, Calif.: Heyday Books, 1981. Pp. 209. $12.95, paper $6.95.

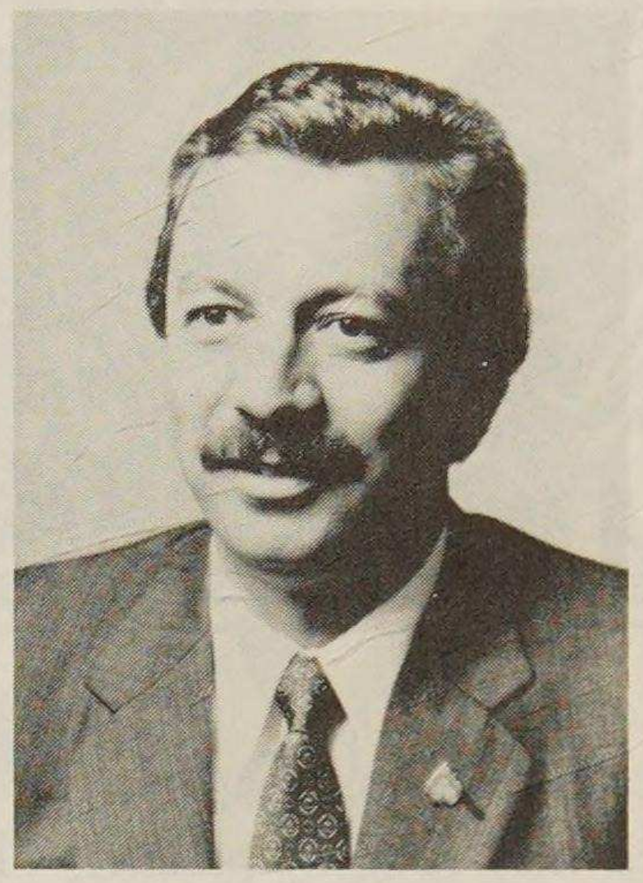
*Reviewed by Thomas Buckley*

Many people among those genuinely concerned with American Indian cultures are unfamiliar with the native peoples of California. This is so in part because of the speed with which the European and American invasions of (present–day) California decimated native populations and their cultures. Another reason is that these cultures offer little that is readily identifiable within customary, modern frames of meaning or that easily accommodates non-Indian expectations of Indians. Malcolm Margolin has done a real service in offering two books on these peoples that are, while written in an accessible and pleasing way, both ethnographically responsible and deeply felt. These two books taken together, as I think they should be, make an excellent introduction to the subject.

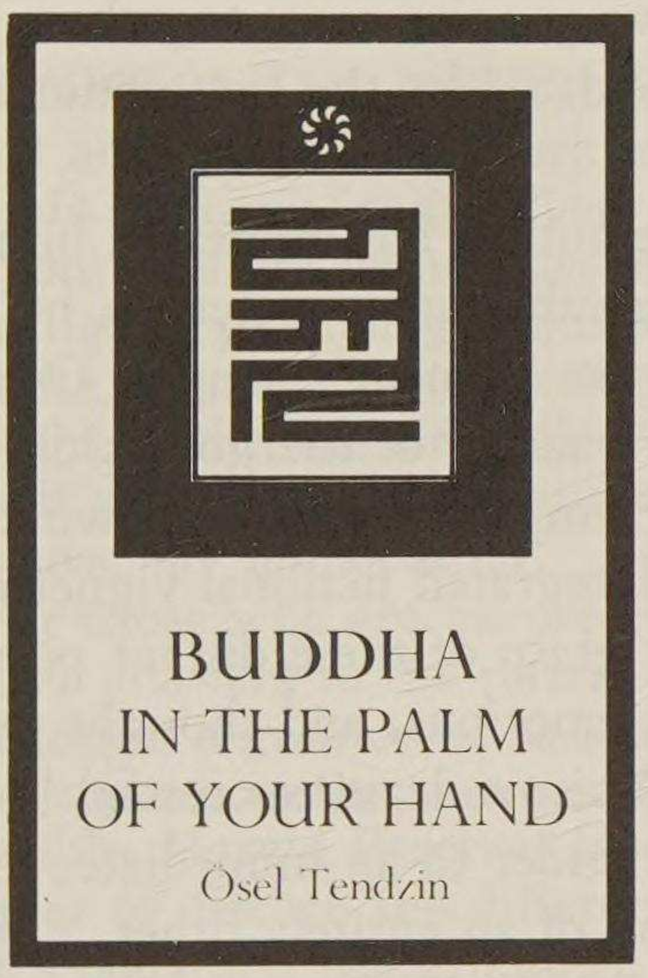
*Ohlone Way* gives a compact and lively portrait of daily village life in central, coastal California before the coming of the Whites. The book provides a well-researched account of striking clarity. The author alternates descriptive passages with novelistic vignettes and with a liberal scattering of evocative, detailed drawings by Michael Harney. Through this approach, Margolin succeeds in depicting, as accurately as possible on the basis of an incomplete observational record, the factual detail of Ohlone (or "Costanoan") life, and in conveying something of its probable feeling-tone as well.

*The Way We Lived* presents a selection of Indian texts collected from all over the present state by a variety of ethnographers and linguists, or offered in English by native people themselves. The texts are arranged

# BUDDHA IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND
## Ösel Tendzin



Ösel Tendzin is the foremost student and dharma heir of Buddhist meditation master Chögyam Trungpa. In this provocative volume based on the author's lectures throughout the United States, Ösel Tendzin presents the authentic teachings of the Buddha and the path of Buddhist meditation according to the Kagyü lineage of Tibet.




*Buddha's mind was not an Indian mind; my guru's mind is not a Tibetan mind; my mind is not an American mind. As someone born and raised in the West, I can say without a doubt that the Buddha's transmission of how to attain enlightenment is applicable to all human beings. . . . We can actually dissolve the myths about ourselves, conquer our fear, and attain enlightenment. This kind of conquering does not involve force; it relies on gentleness. Only gentle beings can produce a gentle world.*

$4.95

# NEW FROM SHAMBHALA

Shambhala titles are available at quality bookstores throughout the world or direct from the Publishers (add $1.00 for postage). If you wish to receive a copy of the latest Shambhala Publications catalogue of books and to be placed on our mailing list please write:

**Shambhala Publications, Inc. • 1920 13th Street • Boulder, Colorado 80302**

**RARE, SCARCE, AND OUT-OF-PRINT BOOKS**

Alchemy, Oriental Religions, Shamanism,
Tibetan Art, Travel in Tibet,
Mythology, Hand Colored Prints

Large Selection, Catalogue No. 5, $3.50

Santarasa Rare Books
937 Broadway
Boulder, Colorado 80302
303-447-0387

topically, like the chapters of *Ohlone Way* which they roughly parallel. They are accompanied by brief commentaries by Margolin notable for the appropriateness of the contexts that they provide and for their incisive economy. A portfolio of old photographs, as discerningly chosen as the texts themselves, concludes the volume.

The two books make ideal companion pieces, each nicely augmenting and expanding our understanding of the other, the voices of the twentieth century student and those of the people whom he has studied so assiduously counterpointing and illuminating each other. The old saw holds here about the whole being greater than its parts.

In general, Margolin's grasp of the issues and perspectives of academic ethnography is a fine one, and with striking ease he conveys the insights of what is now more than a hundred years of anthropological effort in California, without in the least belaboring the reader. For example, while much anthropological discussion among Californianists today revolves around the complex topics of cultural integration and social organization, Margolin illustrates these topics fully and instructively, only occasionally and rather quietly suggesting that he has done so. He points out, towards the end of *The Way We Lived*, that after contact with the Spanish, "overnight, elaborate systems of belief, technology, and social organization were rendered invalid." Reflexively, the simple statement orders and makes clear the sense of all that has gone before in both books, while suggesting the dimension of that tragedy which occurred when the two peoples came together, and which is elucidated by the last sections of both books.

While the author has immersed himself deeply in his substantive materials, he also feels the human element strongly. One may question the validity of Margolin's claim in *Ohlone Way* (implicit in the somewhat awkwardly integrated fictional vignettes) to an authentic grasp of these distant people's motivations, emotions, and thought processes. But he is, at least, successful in opening the reader to an immediate, felt understanding of an entirely other, fully human way of life. While Margolin risks more than an academic ethnographer might be comfortable with, he does so circumspectly and responsibly and, by doing so, provides a human link through which his readers, in turning to more conservative texts, is better prepared to make good sense of them.

In a related vein, however, the stress Margolin places on conformity and on family solidarity in both books seems somewhat overstated, if not overdetermined, and less circumspect than it might be. His aim is, it seems, to counter the assumption that contemporary individualism has been universal, through time and among all peoples. He deals subtly with the paradox that those among us most drawn, intellectually and romantically, to aboriginal Indian cultures would possibly have been the least comfortable in them. But in doing so he obscures the important place of individuality, as con-

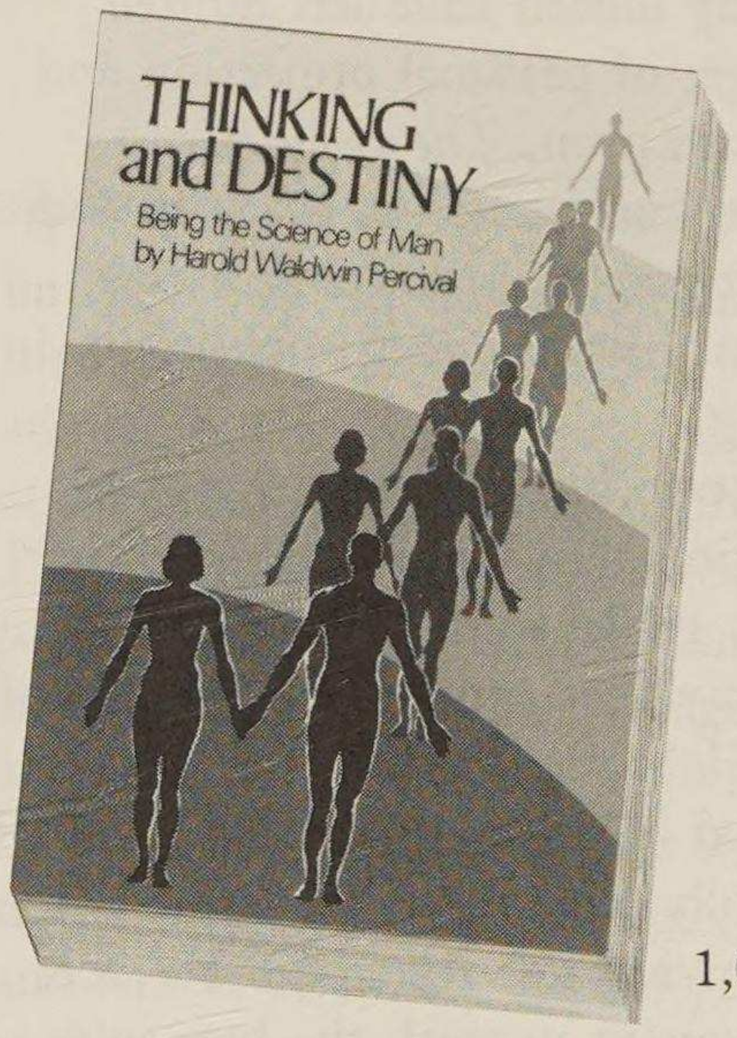
# It's time for Immortality to come out of the Closet!

**THINKING AND DESTINY** is a most lucid and challenging work on the cosmic science of man. Every probing person, whether or not already a student of religion, psychology, philosophy, science or metaphysics, will gain new insight in the age-old mysteries of birth, death, sex, procreation, and the promise of conscious immortality.

For those who are earnestly seeking better answers to the puzzle of human existence, a greater understanding of man's place in the universe is now possible. Harold Percival teaches the reader to discern the difference between one's body and the immortal conscious self within. In learning how to use the powers of his immortal self, the seeker will guide his own thinking and behavior so that eventually he may transform his mortal body into one of perfection and permanence in service to the progressive order of the Universe.

Through inner perception and by becoming conscious in higher degrees, the reader will be able to grasp the truths masked by fables and parables in all the known great scriptures. Human acts and events, feelings and desires, thoughts and forms, sorrows and triumphs — all will fall into a new and enriching perspective showing why we are here, where we have come from, and what we must do to return to our original state of perfection in an immortal body.

For the one who has recognized the limitations of life and is ready to prepare for the next step in human evolution, **THINKING AND DESTINY** is the most complete and intelligent guide available. In an age where old limitations to both thinking and achievement are losing their hold, **THINKING AND DESTINY** will prove to be an invaluable sign post along the road to Conscious Immortality for those who are making it their destiny to find the Way. A course for a lifetime of study for a modest, one-time investment!




1,021 pages

THINKING AND DESTINY by Harold W. Percival is available in quality softbound at $12.95, or in Deluxe hardcover at $22.95.
Order from

**The Word Foundation, Inc.**
**P.O. Box 18424-P**
**Dallas, Texas 75218**

Or order from your local bookstore.
Please enclose $1.50 per copy for shipping and handling with your order. Texas residents add 5% sales tax.

trasted with individualism, in these and in all cultures. In this he falls, though only partially, into a trap that has caught many before him.

Again, while Margolin stresses the importance of "family" in both books, in neither does he fully inform the reader of the nature of these "families." In fact, there was a wide variety of ways through which personal kindreds came to be constituted in native California, none of them particularly well described by the English "family" which the author so frequently invokes. In the absence of fully circumstantial definitions the reader is free to project onto the California Indians of the past whatever notion of "family" suits him or answers to his own longings.

In the full scheme of things, these are small flaws and the result of a just effort to make important and entirely valid points about core values in native California, and about real differences between our lives and those of some very different peoples. While the author may indeed have left himself open to charges of personal projection and of over-generalization, *The Way We Lived*, in giving native voices full play and, through photographs, in keeping native faces before us, balances such subjectivity in an honest way.

Margolin's two books together make a fine contribution. His writing is clear and good to read, available and interesting to readers of many ages and of every degree of preparation. He's got his facts right, as far as I know, and he's presented them in a way that is fully sensitive while being neither patronizing nor romantic. He does his best to acquaint us with the humanity, pragmatism, dignity and, occasionally, profundity of some little known people from whom we might all learn things of value. And his best is very good indeed.

*Thomas Buckley is an anthropologist specializing in the ethnography of northwestern California. He teaches at the University of Massachusetts at Boston and is a Consulting Editor to* PARABOLA.

**Totems**
By Stanley Diamond. Barrytown, N.Y.: Open Book Station Hill Publications, 1982. Pp. vii + 96. Paper, $6.50

*Reviewed by Dale K. Fitzgerald*

It might be said that, in the gathering gloom of contemporary America, the writing of serious poetry is itself an heroic act. So much more the case when such poetry issues from a man of sixty who moreover remains immersed in a rich and productive life as an internationally respected anthropologist: teacher, theoretician, editor, essayist, and administrator. In this collection of eighty-two poems, Stanley Diamond has actualized the central metaphor of his professional career, speaking *from* rather than *of* the primitive. True to the particular qualities of the individual, the heroism of these poems is in the spirit of the Trickster: the rascal who defies fixed definition, who is beyond the simplicities of good and evil, who wills nothing consciously and whose every act is permeated with irony. These qualities are alive within the poetry itself and, as well, characterize the startling twist which their publication gives to an assessment of the author's life work.

To begin here by tracing something of the topography of Diamond's life is not to suppose that, by doing so, the emergence of his poetry is explained, for one does not explain poetry. These poems would stand by themselves anywhere; they do, however, achieve an added significance when something is known of their biographical origin. As in primitive rituals of psychic renewal, what one is comes out of what one was, albeit in often paradoxical ways.

Diamond is a native New Yorker, whose life began and has been largely lived in Greenwich Village. Born of parents who were themselves American born, his ancestry is traced to Eastern European Jews. Educated in New York public schools, he showed an early inclination toward poetry and literature and had his work published in a number of high school and college literary journals. He received a B.A. from

# ICONS
# A SEARCH FOR INNER MEANING

by Richard Temple

144 pages, soft bound, fully illustrated text with 32 full page colour plates. The text traces the history of the icon from its pre-Christian, philosophical origins, through the Early Christian and Byzantine periods, up to Russia in the 16th century. It includes sections on Tradition, Symbolism, Cosmic and Spiritual Levels, Hesychasm and a passage on the spirituality of Rublev.

Price $22.00 (postage & packing: $5.00, surface, $15.00 Air Mail)

Temple Gallery
4a Yeomans Row, Brompton Road, London SW3 England


New York University and, after seeing active duty in the Second World War as an ambulance driver, completed a Ph.D. in anthropology at Columbia University. His dissertation, *Dahomey: A Proto-state in West Africa,* traced the struggle between the imperatives of an emerging state system and the substratum of a traditional, kin-based social order.

From this point there followed a professional career which for more than thirty years has dwelt on the social and psychic consequences of state formation, class division, and global imperialism. The breadth and diversity of his work during these years in truly remarkable. In a number of books (chief among them being *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*) and in more than sixty articles and reviews, he has covered topics which focus variously on politics, education, mental illness, art, literature, intellectual history, linguistics, law, and mythology, often making use of but never simply describing material from his fieldwork in West Africa, in Israel, among Native Americans, Irish-Americans, and institutionalized schizophrenics. In 1975 Diamond founded *Dialectical Anthropology* (published in Amsterdam) with himself as editor. Through its pages, with the assistance of an international editorial board, he has worked to regenerate the tradition, traced primarily to Montaigne, Rousseau, and Marx, of a truly critical perspective in anthropology.

For all its diversity his work, as a whole, is clearly propelled by a single unifying vision of human possibility. His most central concern is with the various dimensions of alienation and with those human energies—seen as matters of ethnogenesis—which gather to overcome it. Fundamental to his vision is a deep historical understanding of the contrast between "primitive" and "civilized" ways of life, wherein the processes of the latter are seen to result

in the reduction of human potential and wherein the symbolic dimension of the human experience is diminished and perverted.

The preface states:

> Although I worked harder on some of these poems than at any other task I've ever attempted, I seem to have had very little to do with their genesis. They exhausted me, traveling through me. Some of them were written very rapidly—as one recollects, before forgetting, a dream—others finished themselves after being suspended for a month or two. . . . I don't know why.

This is, of course, not unlike the report of a shaman—or, more precisely, a medium—caught in the moment of deliverance. It is a heavy claim to make, and entails risk.

The collection's first piece, "In My Grandfather's House," was of such power that, on first perusal, subsequent pages seemed almost anticlimactic. Later and more careful attention, however, evened the balance and, in time, others appeared as equally stirring.

Regarded as a whole, the collection displays a wonderful diversity of form and theme. And, though the author has chosen neither to subdivide the collection nor to date the individual pieces, some loose sorting is apparent and a sense of transition in mood emerges.

The opening array of poems is deeply familial, probing the pain as well as the warmth that attend kin ties; their caresses but, more repeatedly, their death. The permeating sadness here is poignantly captured for instance in the poem "Stillbirth":

> A woman under a bower
> in gardens of stone eagles
> among lions of leaves
> hears a hidden owl
> chant a pregnant hour
> and grieves.

and in the closing lines of "Death Watch II":

> Father that you tried to be
> son myself has made of me
> Son-father, father-son
> this death has only now begun.

As the collection progresses some of this weight lifts and the celebration of nature—which is in any case continual—becomes a full-scale devotion. Especially prominent are images of birds, making of the pages a virtual aviary of swans, gulls, teals, eagles, parrots, ravens, toucans, condors, sparrows, humming-birds, and crows. In these haiku-like verses, flight is everywhere and all manner of creature vibrantly alive:

> roots clench like fists
> around a suspicion of moisture
> worms eat earth
> and eyeless bugs
> hurtle through each other
> with awful accuracy
> in the hysteria
> of ecology.

Further along the collection is peppered with a number of poems activated by a sardonic humor, aimed at topics as disparate as English tourists in Italy ("Methodist Masquerade") and the enduring Russian penchant for icons ("At the Tomb of Lenin" which ends with the biting "Why don't/ they let him/Die?"). The last pages are more joyful—though with lingering images of death—until the collection is closed with the pregnant lines of "Visitation," in honor—it would seem—of the poetic muse herself.

The collection as a whole shows Diamond to be a poet of real magnitude and even those pieces most imbedded in a world of personal significances achieve a broader meaning while maintaining their aesthetic appeal. He possesses the searing glance of a *brujo* which penetrates (as in "The Nun") the wrapped civilities of those subject to his stare; he turns startling similes with the facility of a potter at the wheel. Everywhere the lines are alive with a tumble of rabbis and rabbits, angels and parrots. These are poems to be read aloud—to be publicly celebrated.

*Dale K. Fitzgerald has a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. He did field research in Ghana studying language and religion.*

Mythical Literature from Princeton

## Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral
### Essays on Theocritus and Virgil
*Charles Segal*

Collected in this volume are 15 essays, previously published in a wide variety of journals, on the pastoral poetry of Theocritus and Virgil. Both poets, the author suggests, invite the reader into a symbolic world that balances poetry and experience, artifice and nature, desire and illusion.

*Princeton Series of Collected Essays.*

Clothbound, $25.00. Paperback, $8.95

## Hymns for the Drowning
### Poems for Visnu by Nammāḻvār
*Translated by A. K. Ramanujan*

Presented here in translation from the Tamil are 83 poems by Nammāḻvār, celebrated saint-poet of the ninth century. The poems have been faithfully translated to convey the striking rhythms, images, and patterns of the Tamil verses.

*Princeton Library of Asian Translations.*

Clothbound, $18.50. Paperback, $6.95

## The Wisdom of the Throne
### An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra
*Translated by James Winston Morris*

To illustrate Sadra's thought, James Morris provides an annotated translation — the first in English — of one of Sadra's most concise and accessible books, *al-Hikmat al-'Arshiya.*

*UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, Arabic Series.*
*Princeton Library of Asian Translations.*

$25.00

## Mythical Intentions in Modern Literature
*Eric Gould*

Eric Gould assesses the theory of literary myth criticism, revising Jungian notions of the archetype that have dominated literary studies for so long. Working from contemporary theories of language, anthropology, interpretation, and psychoanalysis, he defines myth as part of the symbolic order of language.

$22.00

Please write for our Literature catalog.

**Princeton University Press**

41 William St. • Princeton, NJ 08540

## FULL CIRCLE/ *(Continued from page 5)*

tian mythos as one is when dealing with, say, the American Indian perhaps? As a magazine PARABOLA is a wonderful feast, but the feast, admirable as it is, is being served without the wine, which is a metaphysically sound, spiritually satisfying presentation of the living flame of the Christian tradition through its myths, symbols and meaning.

—Rev. Vincent Rossi
Holy Order of MANS
San Francisco

*Joseph Campbell replies: It is a real pleasure for me to respond to the Rev. Mr. Vincent Rossi's condemnation of my dialogue with Douglas Auchincloss on the mystical (in contrast to historical) way of interpreting mythic forms. Eight to four hundred years ago, this would have been no pleasure at all; for at that time such a condemnation from the pen of a cleric with an Italian name would have warned me of inevitable imprisonment, a possible torture chamber, and a probable heretic's pyre. It is amusing that he should have invoked to his side as witness the name of Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-c. 1329), whose views were condemned by the Vatican on 28 points, including the very point that I am making, which is, namely, that we are all in essence one with what in the West is called God (or Christ) and in the East the Buddha (Buddha consciousness). Eckhart seems to have died, by the way, either just before or just after reaching Avignon, where the Popes at that time were residing in service to the King of France (See Dante's comment on this historical situation in the* Purgatorio, *Canto XXXII, verse 160, where a giant represents the King of France and the giant's harlot, the Pope).*

*Now since I was myself born, baptized, and educated a Roman Catholic and remained in the Church for 25 years (devoted to its imagery through unconvinced by its dogmas), I know exactly what I and my fellow Catholics were at that time being taught. And what we were then being given as the only authorized interpretation of the mythological symbols of Holy Mother Church was exactly what her faithful son, Father Rossi, now proclaims as the essential message of Roman Christianity: which was and is, namely, that the historical Jesus (who was True Man) and the eternal Christ (who is True God, Second Person of the Blessed Trinity) are uniquely and inseparably one and the same. This is a question that was hotly debated in a series of church councils until in 431, at Ephesus (the ancient site of the principal temple in the Near East of the Great Mother Goddess of Many Names), the historical mother of the historical Jesus was conclusively mythologized as* Theotokos, *the Mother of God. And even through the centuries since that date, there have been many more Christianities than this one, of which I learned in my youth and to which Father Rossi adheres.*

*The most interesting centuries were the first five A.D., before the emperor Theodosius brought down the axe, not only on all the great pagan religions and philosophies of Europe, but also on every form of Christianity that was not that of the Byzantine throne. For example, there is the recently rediscovered and published, second century* Gospel According to Thomas, *where it is distinctly stated that, not only the historical Jesus, but also historical you and I, may be or become exactly one with Christ. For there we read of Jesus' words: "Whoever drinks from my mouth shall become as I am and I myself will become he, and the hidden things shall be revealed to him" (Logion 108). Also: "Cleave a piece of wood, I am there; lift up the stone, you will find me there" (Logion 77). Moreover, what are we to suppose St. Paul had in mind when he wrote: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)? According to report, the historical Jesus had already ascended historically to heaven. Did Paul, who had never laid eyes on the historical Jesus, imagine that he had historically re-descended to take up residence in himself? The whole problem is not quite as simple as the Rev. Mr. Rossi would like to have us all believe, and as he himself appears not to have realized.*

*Moreover, in jumping on me, the good cleric (who has obviously not read a single page of any of my publications—which is standard for the ecclesiastical course) strongly censures me for rejecting not only Holy Mother Church's* interpretation, *but also the mythological* image itself, *of the Savior. Let me inform him (for I need not*

*inform my readers) that it is not at all the* image *that I reject, but his and his church's way of* interpreting *it as referring* finally *to a historical personage, namely Jesus, instead of* through *the revelation of that mythologized historical personality to a* trans-*historical,* eternal ground *that is the substance of our own being, and which we are to realize in our historical lives: as recognized in the words of the charming seventeenth-century (perfectly good Christian) mystic, Angelus Silesius:*

> *Of what use, Gabriel, your message to Marie,*
> *Unless you can now give the same message to me?*
>
> *—Joseph Campbell*

*(Editor's note: Father Rossi clarified by telephone that the Holy Order of MANS, of which he is the director, is "an ecumenical Christian monastic community, somewhat like Taize in France and not directly affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church." He himself, however, was born, raised and trained as a Roman Catholic.)*

I feel compelled to answer Donald Brophy's letter in the Spring issue (Vol. VII, No. 2) in which he demonstrates a profound ignorance of the significance of shrines in religions other than Christian. Apparently, he views shrines as expendable, as unnecessary to the life of a religion. That is not always true. He cites the destruction of the abbey at Monte Cassino during World War II, and states, "Monte Cassino . . . has been rebuilt and the Benedictine life goes on there, as it has for centuries."

A Christian church or abbey can be rebuilt, and worship can continue in a place hallowed by centuries of devotion. But to the Amerindians, and to non-Indian followers of the Old Religion, it is the land itself which is sacred, which *is* the shrine, the place of power where the worshipper can feel the flow of the Earth's mana. It is not the worship which hallows the place, rather, it is the place which gives potency to the ritual of worship. When the land is desecrated by being concreted over, or strip-mined, the place and the power are lost for all time. We cannot, as Christians can, simply choose another spot for our rituals. Another location would not possess the qualities which made the original "shrine" so sacred.

We, both Indian and non-Indian Pagans, are facing the destruction of all our sacred places—the pollution of holy springs and rivers, the desecration of holy mountains, the destruction of sacred groves and forests. When the last of our holy places is gone, we will be a people cut off from the living roots of our spiritual life, barred forever from the experience of the numinous. We will die then, a very real physical death, for without access to the Gates Between the Worlds we cannot live. First, however, we will fight—using the written word, using the law, using weapons if it comes to that—to preserve our shrines.

—Carolyn Clark,
St. Louis, Missouri

I read William Segal's interview with Dr. Yeshi Dhonden in PARABOLA with much interest. I admire his skill in asking questions that brought out not only specific answers, but insights into Tibetan thinking in general about life and death—congratulations on an excellent job.

It's interesting to see how different traditions meet in their essential ideas. When Gurdjieff said that our true consciousness is the subconscious, he was certainly expressing the same thought as the Tibetans when they say that our real consciousness is the subtle mind which we don't know we have.

I've heard sleep compared many times to death, but I think I never understood the full meaning of the comparison until I read Dr. Dhonden's statement that in sleep the distorted consciousness dissolves into the subtle consciousness, which, he adds later, is the Clear Light Reality. If this is true, as it may well be, it throws light on the enigma of death.

Lawrence Morris
Shady, New York

# CREDITS

*Cover:* "Voodoo Ceremonies" by Gerard Valcin, 1963. From the collection of Halvor and Astrid Jaegar, West Germany.

*Inside Cover:* "Hands of a Boddhisattva" Chinese, 7th century. Reprinted by permission of Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., from *Chinese Art* by Daisy Lion-Goldschmidt and Jean-Claude Moreau-Gobard, Rizzoli, New York, 1980.

*Page 6:* Blackfeet lodge cover, 1930s. Reprinted by permission of the Denver Art Museum, Denver.

*Page 9:* Crow sacred pipe, c. 1850. Courtesy of the Denver Art Museum, Denver.

*Page 14:* Painting by Frithjof Schuon. Courtesy of the artist.

*Page 17:* "The Coronation of Arthur" from the 15th century *Chronicle of St. Albans*, Lambeth Palace Library, London. MS 6, f.54$^{v}$, 66$^{v}$.

*Page 18:* "January" by the Limbourg brothers, from the 15th century manuscript *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry.* Reprinted by permission of George Braziller, Inc., New York, and the Musée Condé, Chantilly.

*Pages 22 & 23:* Photograph by Bradford Washburn. Courtesy of the Museum of Science, Boston.

*Page 26:* Melungeons in a cave. Photograph courtesy Francelia Butler.

*Page 29:* Photograph courtesy Francelia Butler.

*Page 30:* Country church, Tennessee. Photograph courtesy Francelia Butler.

*Pages 34–39:* Photographs courtesy of Oomoto Foundation, Kameoka, Japan.

*Pages 40 & 41:* Scenes from a Tibetan Wedding, from a Tibetan manuscript. Courtesy of the India Office Library, London.

*Page 42:* From *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*, illustrated by Josef Scharl. Copyright 1944 by Pantheon Books, Inc. and renewed 1972 by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Pantheon Books.

*Page 46:* Zodiac from an early medieval Italian manuscript. Reprinted by permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome.

*Page 49:* Touch drawing by Deborah Koff. Copyright © 1982.

*Page 52:* Cheyenne pipe bowl, mid-19th century. Courtesy the Denver Art Museum, Denver.

*Page 55:* Tlingit Indian berry spoon c. 1780. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

*Pages 59, 61 & 62:* Photographs by David Abram. Copyright © 1982.

*Pages 65, 66 & 69:* Illustrations by Howard Pyle.

*Page 72:* Plan of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem.

*Page 74:* Plan of the Temple of Amen-Mut-Khonsu at Luxor.

*Page 79:* "Moses and the burning bush," American, 1827. From the collection of Dorothy Norman, New York.

*Page 81:* Illustration by Rodrigo Shopis. Copyright © 1982.

*Page 87:* Laura Dean dancers and musicians. Photograph by Larry Craven.

*Pages 91 & 95:* Design from the jacket of *The European and the Indian* by James Axtell, Oxford University Press, New York.

*Page 97:* The commencement of the tea ceremony, from *The Zen Life,* text by Koji Sato, photographs by Sosei Kuzunishi, New York, 1972. Weatherhill/Tankosha. Reproduced by permission of John Weatherhill, Inc.

# PROFILES

**David Abram** worked as a professional magician in Europe and the United States for ten years, including three years as the "house magician" of Alice's Restaurant in Massachusetts, before being awarded a Watson Foundation research fellowship to study the relationship between sleight-of-hand magic and shamanism in Nepal and Indonesia. Since returning to the United States last year, Abram has devoted his time to writing and lecturing about that experience.

**Joseph Epes Brown,** a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA, teaches Native American religions at the University of Montana. A well-known authority on the Plains Indians, he is the recorder and editor of Black Elk's *The Sacred Pipe*, and he is the consultant and distributor for the film *Walking in a Sacred Manner*, which he introduced in a program presented by PARABOLA's Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition at the American Museum of Natural History in January.

**Joseph Bruchac** is a poet, storyteller, and translator, as well as the founder and co-editor of *The Greenfield Review* in Upstate New York. He has received grants from the New York State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts for his writing and his publishing venture, and his third collection of Iroquois folk tales will be published by The Crossing Press this fall. Of Abenaki lineage himself, Bruchac is currently working on a new collection of Abenaki Indian tales.

**Francelia Butler** teaches in the English Department of the University of Connecticut, Storrs, and is the founder and editor-in-chief of the annual, *Children's Literature*, published by Yale University Press. Her specialty areas are the English Renaissance and children's literature, and her article, "The Children of Vietnam," appeared in the "Demons" issue of PARABOLA (Vol. VI, No. 4).

**Frederick Franck**, a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA, is the author of a number of books, including, most recently, *Art As a Way* (Crossroad) and *The Awakened Eye* (Knopf). He is an artist and calligrapher as well as a writer, and he holds degrees in medicine, dentistry, and the fine arts. He spent three years on the staff of Dr. Albert Schweitzer in Africa and was the only artist to sketch all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council. He and his wife, Claske, live in Warwick, New York, where they have converted a watermill and country inn into a small arts center and "trans-religious oasis of inwardness," named after Pope John XXIII's "Pacem in Terris" encyclical.

**Brother David Steindl-Rast** is currently on sabbatical from the Benedictine Grange in West Redding, Connecticut, helping found a new Grange for the order in California. He has spent much time studying the relationship between Christian and Zen meditation, and a collection of his writings will be published next year by Harper & Row.

**P. L. Travers,** a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA since the magazine began, is the author of the Mary Poppins books, as well as *Friend Monkey, The Fox in the Manger, About the Sleeping Beauty*, and *Two Pairs of Shoes.* Her next book, *Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane*, will be released by Delacorte this October.

# Back Issues Available from PARABOLA

*There are a limited number of back issues available at $7.00 per copy. For those who wish to complete their set, orders of twelve issues or more are offered at a special price of $6.00 per copy. Please use the convenient form between pages 96 and 97 when ordering. Only prepaid orders will be accepted.*

☐VOL. I:1 **The Hero** Mircea Eliade, Barbara G. Myerhoff, Barre Toelken, P.L. Travers, Jacob Needleman, Edward Edinger, Minor White, Huston Smith interview. *(Reprint)*

☐VOL. I:2 **Magic** Barbara G. Myerhoff, Daniel Noel, Robert Ellwood, Jacob Needleman, Victor Turner, Thomas Moore, Christmas Humphreys, Joseph Campbell interview.

☐VOL. I:3 **Initiation** Sam Gill, Janwillem van de Wetering, Arthur Amiotte, Evelyn Eaton, Fernando Llosa Porras, Mircea Eliade interview.

☐VOL. I:4 **Rites of Passage** Frederick Franck, James Wolfe, Ursula K. Le Guin, D.M. Dooling, Robert E. Meagher, William Irwin Thompson interview. *(Reprint)*

☐VOL. II:1 **Death** P.L. Travers, Conrad Hyers, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Brother David Steindl-Rast, William Doty, William Burke Jr., interview with Tibetan Lamas. *(Reprint)*

☐VOL. II:2 **Creation** Sam Gill, P.L. Travers, David Rosenberg, David Johnson, Jane Yolen, John Fentress Gardner, Daniel Whitman, Kenneth Phillips, Zalman Schachter interview. *(Reprint)*

☐VOL. II:3 **Cosmology** Brother David Steindl-Rast, Ursula K. Le Guin, Schwaller de Lubicz, Lorel Desjardins, Elaine Jahner, Jean Toomer, Anne Bevan, Harry Remde, Lloyd Motz interview. *(Reprint)*

☐VOL. II:4 **Relationships** Frederick Franck, Robert E. Meagher, Shems Friedlander, Lizelle Reymond, Jean Toomer, Barre Toelken, Jane Yolen, Diane Wolkstein interview.

☐VOL. III:1 **Sacred Space** Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Barbara Stoler Miller, Robert Lawlor, Irving Friedman, Richard Smithies, Andrew L. March, Thomas Bridges, Pablo Neruda, Hélène Fleury, P.L. Travers and Michael Dames interview.

☐VOL. III:2 **Sacrifice and Transformation** Annemarie Schimmel, Joseph Epes Brown, Ivan Morris, Father Alexander Schmemann, Christopher Fremantle, Robert A.F. Thurman, photographic sequence with Minor White and others, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz interview.

☐VOL. III:3 **Inner Alchemy** Mircea Eliade, D.M. Dooling, Harry Remde, Jacob Needleman, Elémire Zolla.

☐VOL. III:4 **Androgyny** Elaine H. Pagels, Titus Burckhardt, Keith Critchlow, P.L. Travers, Barbara G. Myerhoff, Lobsang Lhalungpa interview.

☐VOL. IV:1 **The Trickster** Emory Sekaquaptewa, Michel Waldberg, Lynda Sexson, Barbara Tedlock, P.L. Travers, David Leeming, Joseph Epes Brown interview.

☐VOL. IV:2 **Sacred Dance** Elaine H. Pagels, Rosemary Jeanes, David P. McAllester, Anita Daniel, Fritjof Capra, William L. Prensky, Annemarie Schimmel, Peter Brook interview.

☐VOL. IV:3 **The Child** Don Talayesva, Richard Lewis, Frederick Franck, Lynda Sexon, Lobsang Lhalungpa, art and stories by children.

☐VOL. IV:4 **Storytelling and Education** Maria José Hobday, Richard Lewis, Abraham Menashe, Thomas Buckley, James Hillman, Maria Dermoût, Robin Ridington, Sam Gill, Wilbur and Paul Jordan-Smith, interviews with Anne Charles, Richard Lewis, Nancy Rambusch; I Wayan Wija and Diane Wolkstein.

☐VOL. V:1 **The Old Ones** Keith Critchlow, Agnes Vanderburg, Frederick Franck, J. Stephen Lansing, Joy Elvey Bannerman, Megan Biesele, Lobsang Lhalungpa, Jonathan Chaves, Barbara G. Myerhoff, Robert Bly, Rolf Jacobsen, Gary Snyder; interviews with Deshung Rinpoche and Joseph Campbell.

☐VOL. V:2 **Music Sound Silence** Herbert Whone, Tomas Tranströmer, David A. Lavery, Peyton Houston, Tom Moore, David P. McAllester, Howard Schwartz, Robert Lawlor, Steve Reich interview.

☐VOL. V:3 **Obstacles** Al Young, David Malouf, Jacques Lusseyran, Abraham Menashe, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Jonathan Omer-Man, Italo Calvino; interviews with Mohawk Chiefs at Akwesasne and H.H. the Dalai Lama.

☐VOL. V:4 **Woman** P.L. Travers, Helen M. Luke, Seonaid Robertson, Heinrich Zimmer, Ursula K. Le Guin, Barbara Rohde, Joseph Campbell, Diane Wolkstein, Samuel Noah Kramer, Judy Swamp interview.

☐VOL. VI:1 **Earth and Spirit** Peter Matthiessen, David Guss, Victor Perera, Peter Nabokov, Robert Bly, Paul Caponigro, P.L. Travers, John Kastan, D.M. Dooling, Peter Heinegg, Thomas Buckley, Oren Lyons, Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal interview.

☐VOL. VI:2 **The Dream of Progress** Kathleen Raine, David Price, David Malouf, Dino Buzzati, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, David Leeming, Paolo Soleri, Scott Eastham; interviews with Chinua Achebe and Jonathan Cott, Jacob Needleman and John Loudon.

☐VOL. VI:3 **Mask and Metaphor** Terry Tafoya, Ron Jenkins, Ray Zone, Peyton Houston, Demorest Davenport, Adin Steinsaltz, Stephen and Robin Larsen, Henrich von Kleist, interview with Peter Brook.

☐VOL. VI:4 **Demons** J. Stephen Lansing, Maria Dermoût, Chinua Achebe, Robert Carter, Francelia Butler, Marie-Louise von Franz, Susan Stern, Edwin Bernbaum, Dino Buzzati, interview with Isaac Bashevis Singer.

☐VOL. VII:1 **Sleep** Henri Tracol, Mircea Eliade, A.K. Ramanujan, Jonathan Omer-Man, Paul Jordan-Smith, Heinrich Zimmer, P.D. Ouspensky, P.L. Travers; interviews with Dr. Yeshi Dhonden and Joseph Campbell.

☐VOL. VII:2 **Dreams and Seeing** Paul Jordan-Smith, Ursula Le Guin, Arthur Amiotte, Richard Lewis, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Elémire Zolla, P.L. Travers, Marguerite Yourcenar, conversation between Laurens van der Post and P.L. Travers.

*Plus Epicycles and Reviews in every issue.*