

# *The Quest*<sup>®</sup>

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, RELIGION & THE ARTS

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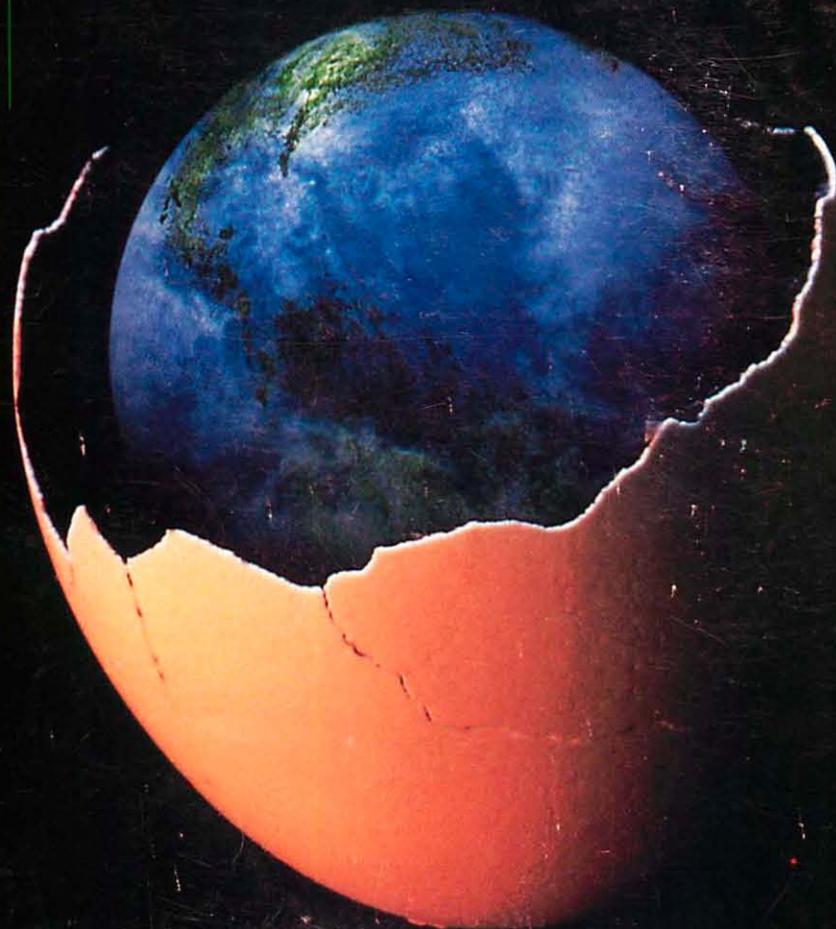
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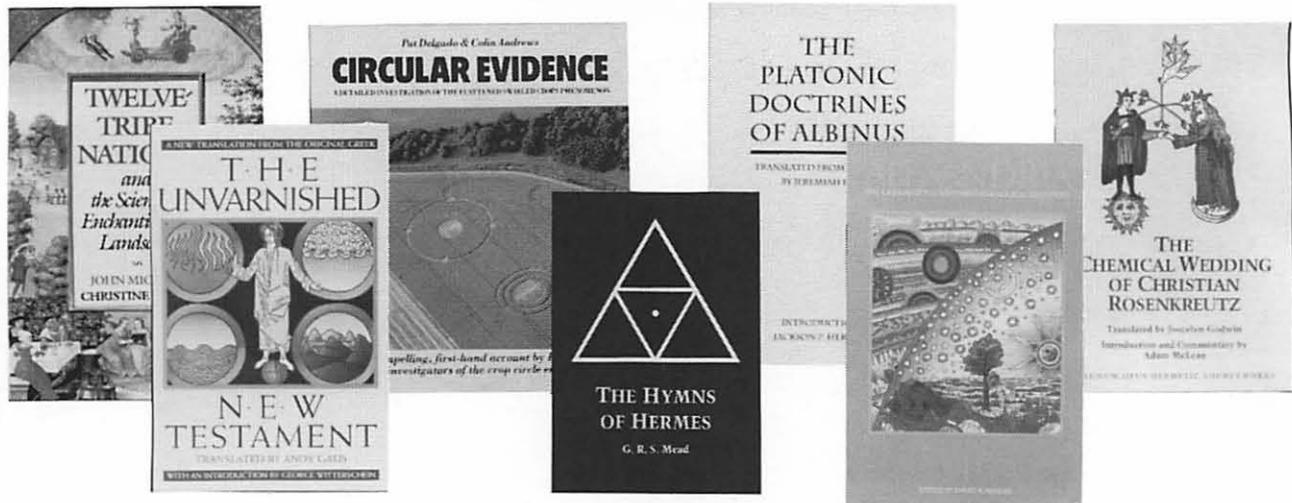
Chronicles of Plan-Net Geomancy  
by Richard Leviton

## Myth and the Arts

Star Wars and Mythic Quest  
Myths, Dreams, and Movies  
Birthing into Space!

The Alchemy of Freedom:  
Hermetic vs. Puritan America





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in response to the Hymns of Heathen Hermes even in this twentieth century of Christian grace; for perhaps, after all, Hermes and Christ are not in reality such strangers as traditional theological prejudice would have us believe." Paper, 85 pages, \$7.00.

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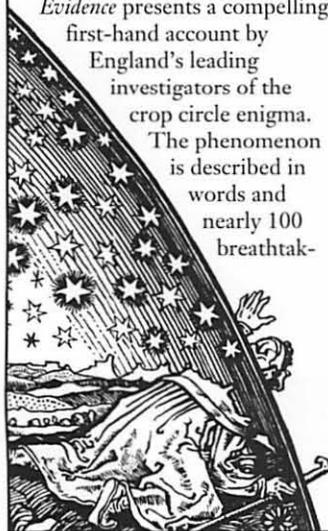
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The new year 1992 began in an atmosphere of change more momentous than any new year in our memory. The avalanche of change in Russia and the former Soviet Union, throughout eastern Europe, in South Africa and the Middle East, is quite simply unparalleled. After so many years of cold war, the rapid breakup of the Communist "evil empire" stunned analysts of all political stripes, left and right.

*Newsweek* noted that "at the nadir of World War II the world had only 13 democracies. Twenty years ago, according to Freedom House there were 44; now there are 89, with 32 more in transition."

And as **Stephan A. Hoeller** in this issue observes, "One is tempted to repeat the tragicomic jest that in a short time Communism and its allies will have totally disappeared from the face of the earth, except at certain American universities and in some circles of New York intellectuals."

Still, the rapid global change, with a host of old countries reemerging, is not without its conflict. Despite the spreading demand for freedom and democratic processes, "democracy is in the details," and the birthing/rebirthing process is reviving old ethnic rivalries.

Grasping the scope of the change that is taking place on a global scale is no small challenge. The tendency to think on a small scale is surely part of the problem in the ethnic warfare that is occurring in various parts of the world. This tendency toward the narrow view contributes to the widespread cynicism in our political life.

Yet we see all around us signs of peoples attempting to reshape their political institutions and thereby make their lives better. These are times such as the theologian Paul Tillich called "times of no-longer-form and not-yet-form," times in which old forms are breaking down before our eyes and we are not yet sure what the new forms will be.

Though such times are unsettling, we are encouraged to see the member nations of the United Nations more actively seeking to use the UN's structures for conflict management and problem solving. There is, indeed, a trend toward globalism despite the emergence of old ethnic rivalries.

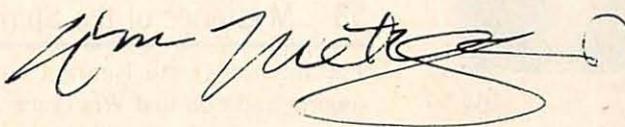
In *The Quest*, we are always trying to promote an appreciation for the "big picture"—the realization that we are all part of the One Life, and not myriad lives fighting other lives for our exclusive "place in the sun." Herein we seek ways of healing the whole.

In his essay "Hermetic vs. Puritan America," Hoeller considers the issue of freedom, so central in our time, by looking at the American tradition. He contends that the hermetic tradition was central to the founders' vision of this nation, and that throughout our history this tradition has been opposed by puritanism. He urges that we can heal our kingdom by recovery of its hermetic roots. The essay is a first look at Hoeller's new book, *Freedom: Alchemy for a Voluntary Society*, to be published in June by Quest Books.

Also in the issue, **Richard Leviton** begins a two-part account of a journey with Merlin into the mythopoeic reality of the Celtic landscape—a contemplation of the ancient mythic giant, Albion. Leviton says Merlin and Albion are integral to the redemption of our host planet Gaia.

The mythological theme, all tied in to the contemporary environment and technological change, is carried forth in three other essays. **John W. Tighe** draws on the *Star Wars* films in an analysis of the ways technology conquers nature. **Keith Cunningham** is back this time with an analysis of the movie theater as Plato's Cave. And **Austin A. Mardon** suggests some ways in which our movement out into space will change our cultural experience.

There's more in this issue, of course—on music and mysticism, on Mozart and Tibetan overtone chanting, and on establishing a relationship with God. And you will certainly want to check out our new cinema/video section, where you will find a host of suggestions for your next trip to the video store—in search of movies on spiritual themes.





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## 10 Walking in Albion: Chronicles of Plan-Net Geomancy

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The entire global skin of Gaia scintillates with an etheric geography made of the stars and their cosmomythic portent. Some people call Gaia's subtle spiritual anatomy the planetary grid and speak of energy lines, power centers, and sacred mountains. Gaia, as we world grid proponents like to postulate, is a self-conscious planetary being.

By Richard Leviton



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## 22 Star Wars, Archetypes, and the Mythic Quest

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Much of the present environment is being destroyed by people, motivated by greed and power, using technology as their means to conquer nature. *Star Wars* addresses many of these same issues. Thus, the interaction of human beings with technology needs to be studied in this myth.

By John W. Tigue



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## 30 Myths, Dreams, and Movies

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This is Plato's Cave, and it is also the movie theater. The naive, passive spectator in us wants to say cowboys and Indians are moving on the screen, but in fact there is nothing moving on the screen but patterns of light and shadow. The Zen monk would say: "Not cowboys moving, not film moving, but Mind is moving."

By Keith Cunningham

## 42 Birthing into Space!

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Our movement out into space will radically change the cultural experience of humans. The spaceship as a carrying vehicle of humans to other places will likely be seen as the symbol for rebirth or birth itself by the crew. The humans will be floating in an "amniotic" fluid called air in an artificial womb of steel.

By Austin A. Mardon



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## 48 Hermetic vs. Puritan America

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If, like Parsifal, we ask the right question, we too may become the healers of the kingdom. What ails our culture more than any other illness is the continuing, insidious, and perilous conflict between the original hermetic archetypal matrix of the republic on the one hand, and the puritan complex on the other.

By Stephan A. Hoeller

## 58 Mysteries of the Spiritual Voice

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A conversation with Khen Rimpoche

## 64 From Mozart to Mysticism

Mozart's creative experiences bring to mind the state documented by many mystics of a knowledge received in a timeless, spaceless form. He claimed to hear the whole piece of music, almost complete and finished, in his mind.

By Christine Cox

## 70 Becoming Intimate with God

To establish a relationship with God, you do not need to possess a particular theology or creed, or cling desperately to any doctrine or dogma. These are dry, brittle things; the letter, not the Spirit.

By Garry Stewart

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*The Quest* is published quarterly by the Theosophical Society in America, and is supported in part by a grant from the Kern Foundation. The journal is dedicated to an exploration of a worldview which embraces ideas of wholeness and compassion, and that seeks to draw on the divine wisdom found in all religious traditions. Often it is called "the perennial philosophy." The views expressed in the magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Theosophical Society.

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## WEST DOES A DISSERVICE

John Anthony West does a great disservice to both the interested public and scholarly community by condemning Egyptologists as “dangerous” (*The Quest*, Winter 1991). As an academically trained Egyptologist, but by no means “orthodox,” I feel it is necessary to clarify Egyptological methodology.

Contrary to what Mr. West believes, professional Egyptologists are not in the habit of “denying or suppressing the truth,” (p. 22) rather they seek to discover the “truth,” not by the “gut emotional experiences” which he advocates, but by referring to what the ancient Egyptians *themselves* have expressed in *writing* whenever possible, or by means of the archaeological record when inscriptions do not exist. The problem with the many alternative theories about the Egyptians which have been proposed over the decades is NOT that they are contrary to the opinions of Egyptologists, but that they very often contradict what the *Egyptians* themselves have revealed to us in their own words. In the great majority of cases, those individuals who have made spurious remarks about the Egyptians have never read a single hieroglyphic inscription. Would we let go unchallenged a biblical interpretation by someone who has never read the Greek or Hebrew text or an analysis of Hinduism by someone who never read the Vedas in Sanskrit?

The only way to truly understand any ancient people is to abandon a twentieth-century perspective, immerse oneself in that culture, and get “inside” the minds of those individuals, preferably by reading what they themselves have expressed. Certainly translating inscriptions is only the beginning of the process by which we come to know the ancient Egyptians. Much light can be shed by looking to other cultures and traditions. Much can be learned by comparing the enigmatic scriptures of Egypt with other esoteric writings such as the Tibetan “Book of the Dead” and the Vedas and Upanishads of India. Theories will continue to be theories until they can be corroborated by *some* evidence other than emotions. Surely Mr. West must realize that basing one’s opinions on emotions is dangerous indeed. Rather, an appeal to our spiritual selves would be more advantageous to all.

Although I am quite familiar with dry and uninspired (and yes, faulty) academic analyses of the ancient Egyptians, I cannot find fault with the discipline itself nor its methodology, but rather with the biases and subjective opinions of specific individuals

(Egyptologists are after all human). The dilemma as I see it is to ground oneself firmly in the academic tradition (how else can you know what factual evidence has come to light?), and combine scholarship with a sense of the spiritual, by recognizing that individuals are more than assemblages of flesh and bones, but comprise spirit as well. Together the spiritual and the scholarly may breathe life into the dead Egyptians. Relying exclusively on one or the other results in a very unbalanced view of the ancients.

As for Mr. West’s endorsement of Schwaller de Lubicz’s work, putting any one of Schwaller’s books in the hands of someone with no background in Egyptology is like giving *War and Peace* to a pre-schooler — it would make no sense whatsoever. Before anyone can begin to gauge the esoteric significance of ancient Egyptian texts, monuments, and artifacts, he/she must be acquainted with the basics of Egyptian civilization, the “exoteric” if you will.

Mr. West’s comments on the Sphinx also need addressing. Whereas it is clear that the limestone outcropping from which the Sphinx was fashioned geologically predates anything of human construction in the Nile Valley, it by no means follows that the carving of the sphinx predates the construction of the pyramids. Additionally, the location of inscriptions by workmen on stones used to construct the pyramids indicate that those inscriptions were put on the surfaces *before* the stones were set in place. This firmly places the monuments of Giza in a historical context.

Granted that Egyptology is a fairly conservative discipline (as are most academic fields), still the findings of archaeologists and philologists have allowed us to see that the ancient Egyptians comprised a highly structured society in which politics, science, philosophy, and the arts all were grounded in a pervasive spiritual tradition. Modern man would do best to rediscover the divine matrix of which he is part, and of which the ancient Egyptians seemed so well aware.

Michael D. Calabria  
Baruch College, New York, NY

## JOHN ANTHONY WEST RESPONDS:

A defense of academic orthodoxy by a professed *unorthodox* academic is difficult to counter in the few words allocated me by *The Quest*. The best I can do is to flatly maintain that academic Egyptologists

routinely do NOT do any of the things Mr. Calabria says they do. They do NOT take into account what the Egyptians say about themselves; nor do they know what the ancient Egyptians are actually saying (if they did, the translations of the religious literature would not be so wildly disparate). Even if they had the words more or less straight, the meaning would elude them completely, precisely because they approach the subject from that analytical standpoint extolled by Mr. Calabria (try writing intelligibly about Beethoven without first *feeling* his music in your gut!). A grounding in Egyptology is the last thing you need to read Schwaller de Lubicz.

And any Egyptologist indiscreet enough to confess that he or she "combined scholarship with a sense of the spiritual" would be denied tenure and would probably be fired. If *Quest* readers would like to put these generalizations to the test they should refer to any popular book on ancient Egypt by any modern English-speaking Egyptologist, or better yet, consult any professional Egyptological journal to get a sense of the stupefying pettiness of the discipline as a whole and the barrenness of its methodology.

Finally, the Sphinx is not fashioned from a natural "limestone outcropping"; it is in its entirety fashioned by human hands out of bedrock deliberately exposed to produce the Sphinx. In other words, ALL weathering to the Sphinx has taken place since it was carved, and it is the nature of that weathering that convinced hundreds of professional geologists attending our presentation at the Geological Society of America's convention in San Diego in October that the historical context invented for the Sphinx by Egyptologists is wrong. Mr. Calabria is not a geologist.

John Anthony West

#### DEFENDING MUKTANANDA

My enthusiasm for *Quest* magazine was considerably dampened after reading Georg Feuerstein's article on God's fools. . . . Mr. Feuerstein's inference that humiliation of self or others was a goal of the practice—according to Mr. Feuerstein—of the "art of self-degradation" is absurd. While misguided seekers have been known to harm themselves, humiliation—with its lasting psychological and emotional damage—is never a tactic or goal of great beings.

My main objection is with Mr. Feuerstein's one-sentence dismissal of Swami Muktananda. Along

with a core of several hundred devotees, I traveled with Swami Muktananda and lived in his ashrams in this country and in India for six years prior to his death. It was news to me to learn, through Mr. Feuerstein, that Swami Muktananda "alas, also demonstrated how sacred authority and spiritual power can become associated with moral corruption." Really? That's quite a statement, certainly a judgment that endeavors to deny my own experience.

For Mr. Feuerstein to take someone of Muktananda's stature, dismiss and condemn his life's work in one unqualified sentence is unconscionable.

. . . Occasionally, one of the functions of great beings is to serve as a mirror image of the one who stands before them, reflecting back in unmistakable clarity just where that person is. In an uncanny way, that is exactly what all these great ones Mr. Feuerstein mentions did for him, revealing for all to see his fascination with sex and sensationalism, his inexperience, and his rather pathetic attempt to force his intellect to penetrate the mysteries and marvels which can never be fathomed by the intellect alone. None does this reflecting of Mr. Feuerstein better than Nityananda. Of the dozens of great stories I've heard about Nityananda, I had never heard the one chosen by Mr. Feuerstein. It wouldn't surprise me if that story manifested just for Mr. Feuerstein, to let him see himself exactly where he's at. . . .

Medini Longwell  
Young, Arizona

#### GEORG FEUERSTEIN REPLIES:

In response to Ms. Longwell's letter, I would simply like to point out that some of her criticisms were in fact made by me in the article that she found so provocative. Also, the stories to which I referred in my article are all readily available in published form, and Swami Muktananda's moral flaws have also been public knowledge for some time. Witness the expose, "The Secret Life of Swami Muktananda," in *CoEvolution Quarterly* (Winter 1983) and the article, "Baba Beleaguered: Was Muktananda Misguided or Merely Maligned?" in *Yoga Journal* (July/August 1985).

Further references to crazy-wise behavior—some of which is quite irresponsible and morally unjustifiable—among Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi, and Christian adepts can be found in my recently released book *Holy Madness*, which is a first detailed study

of this unorthodox teaching style.

In this book I also argue that disciples of Eastern and Western gurus would do well to exercise their critical faculties, since adeptship apparently is not always accompanied by exemplary moral behavior. Cultic worship of one's guru, or idolizing gurus in general, is spiritually quite unproductive and certainly has nothing to do with genuine respect and obedience to the guru.

### APPRECIATING HPB

Appreciated seeing an article on one of the Theosophical Society's co-founders ("H. P. Blavatsky: Woman of Mystery and Hero of Consciousness," Autumn 1991) and hope others will appear on Theosophic pioneers and specific Theosophic teachings. They could help clarify differences between the profound depths of ancient philosophy and spirituality as re-presented by Blavatsky in Theosophy and the often shallow interpretation of the same ideas by much of New Age thought. Stephan Hoeller's article, however, is unclear or misleading in places.

Hoeller equates HPB's teachings with what he calls the alternative reality tradition (ART) but does not give examples of what she taught. Readers are not allowed to decide if Hoeller's equation of the two is correct. We have only his hypothesis.

For example, Hoeller states that in ART humans can "transcend earth, nature, and cosmos." He implies a fundamental, incompatible difference of matter and spirit. The dualism inherent in his ART point of view is at odds with HPB.

From the Proem of her *Secret Doctrine*: "An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutabile PRINCIPLE. . ."; "... One Absolute—BENESS. . ."; "Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter are, however, to be regarded, not as independent realities, but as the two facets or aspects of the Absolute. . ."

HPB *did* teach a hierarchical structure to the universe—of which humans are an integral part. She taught an *involution and evolution* of the spirit pervading all life, throughout all kingdoms of nature. Each kingdom springs from and builds on the others, all is interdependent. As modern science is now coming to realize, we are made of the stuff of the stars.

Hoeller commits a "category error" when he states HPB was "... not moral, but honorable and authentic. . . ." Hoeller confuses the conventional

mores of her time with true morality. In *The Key to Theosophy* she was asked the "object" of her system. She replied, "First of all to inculcate great moral truths . . ." and "to reconcile all religions, sects, and nations under a common set of ethics, based on eternal verities."

While it is good to see a Theosophic organization publishing a journal for the general public, I am disappointed that *The Quest* did not distinguish between HPB's Theosophic perspective on the Ancient Wisdom tradition and these same ideas filtered through the superficiality of much New Age thinking.

Missing from this article are references to back up Hoeller's claims, clear definitions of terms used, and a lack of clarity in the ideas expressed. This easily leads readers to misunderstand the person HPB was and what she taught.

Brett Forray  
Los Angeles, CA

### FOUNDATIONS OF NEW AGE THOUGHT

While I don't possess the academic background or resources of a scholar such as the author of the article in the 1991 winter edition of *The Quest* titled "Taproots of the New: New Thought and the New Age," I would like to express my views on the subject matter discussed.

In first reading this article I was totally mystified by the general absence of any discussion of the Asian influences upon the concept of a New Age. Granted the author briefly mentioned the influence of HPB and attributed the dissemination of New Age teachings to the writings of Alice Bailey, however, this cursory explanation hardly digs to the root of New Age Idealism. More importantly the author's explanation of the ideological foundation of New Age "religion" as being the confluence of apocalyptic Christianity and pagan divination is, from my perspective, off the mark.

My intention is not to discount the author's work but only to present a much different perspective; for our difference is mainly one of perspective. As a New Thought Christian scholar Mr. deChant's view is naturally influenced by his background and interest. As a New Age Idealist my view is naturally quite different.

As a point of reference I'd like to define one of my basic New Age beliefs. To my mind New Age

refers, spiritually, to living fully in the present; which is to say, one's religion is that which one experiences in the eternal moment of the here and now. This concept of awakening in the eternal moment is an ageless precept shared by Christian, Buddhist, Sufi, Taoist, and Yogic mystics alike.

The master yogi, Patanjali, states it well; in the first verse of the Yoga Sutras he says "Herein lies the explanation of yoga," *i.e.*, religion. The yogic master Paramahansa Yogananda explained this to mean: the eternal truth is known only by the personal mystical experience of the soul, here and now. From this perspective the roots of the New Age lie in the Ageless Wisdom of all mystics.

Based upon this foundation it is antithetical to try to define the historical beginning of this movement, in that its expression is ageless yet continually and cyclically manifests throughout time. The cyclic expression of mystical awareness can be traced beyond the Western adept Plato, as Mr. deChant suggests, to at least the time of authors of the Vedas, approx. 1500 B.C.

If one must, however, attempt to identify the beginning of the current expression of this ageless cycle, I would refer to the introduction of a work by Yogananda's guru, Sri Yukteswar, titled *The Holy Science*, in which he provides an in-depth explanation of a particular solar cycle which strongly influences mankind's spiritual awakening. According to this explanation we, indeed, fully entered a new age of awareness in 1899.

Previous to this date there was a 200-300 year cusp period of gradual awakening to the spiritual and scientific changes which have steadily occurred since then. Spiritually, the beginning of this period could be marked by the publication of the Rosicrucian Manifesto in 1614.

From my perspective, two important ingredients which identify any expression of New Age thinking and which must be present in that expression, are the integration of East and West, along with the integration of science and spirituality. Transcendental philosophy and wholism are essential hallmarks of New Age Idealism, not the materialistic worldview as stated by Mr. deChant. A brief examination of *A Course in Miracles*, which Mr. deChant identifies as New Age, will show this to be so.

By now it may be obvious that, from my perspective, it is the philosophy of a New Age which precedes and allows for the expression of a New

Thought movement.

The philosophy of a New Age is much broader and more inclusive than the Christian-based New Thought movement. Transcendentalism was made popular in New England by the likes of Emerson and Ripley as early as 1838. The Persian prophet Baha'u'llah declared 1844 to be the beginning of a New Age of modern universality. In 1861 the great householder yogi Lahiri Mahasaya met the deathless Mahavatar Babaji who declared the world, both East and West, ready for the reintroduction of the ancient teachings of self-realization. In 1875 HPB, along with Col. Olcott, founded the Theosophical Society in New York City after years of studies with Himalayan masters. In 1893 Swami Vivekananda spoke in Chicago at the World Conference of Religions. In 1925 Paramahansa Yogananda came to the U.S. to further fulfill the New Age decree of reconciling East and West, as well as science and religion.

In addition to the facts stated above, it is well known that many New Age religionists believe "The Ascended Masters" have been, throughout history, and continue to be, a guiding force behind the establishment of human rights and democracy in the world.

With regard to the universal acceptance of all beliefs categorized as New Age, clearly, categorizing countless diverse beliefs as New Age does not automatically prove these beliefs to be either right or wrong; nor should the indiscriminate grouping of these beliefs reflect negatively on truth or positively on falsehoods. The keys to constructive New Age thinking will be found in open-mindedness balanced with discrimination and humility.

For those who are interested in learning more about the Asian influences upon the West, I would recommend a book titled *How the Swans Came to the Lake*, by Rick Fields. While it may not be a complete presentation of these influences, in that it focuses solely upon Buddhist influences, it provides an excellent taste of the blending of East and West which has gone on throughout history and continues to be one of the major influences contributing to the advancement of all mankind.

Bruce N. Walck  
Fort Collins, CO

#### CORRECTION

Readers probably figured out that G. R. S. Mead's oration over H. P. Blavatsky's ashes was delivered in 1891, not 1981 as printed in Autumn 1991, page 76. Our apologies.

## OUR UNCONSCIOUS MIND AND GOD

Walter R. Townsend

In December, 1982, while I was attending a psychoanalytic meeting in San Diego, I met a psychiatrist from Lubbock, Texas. We had something in common because I had grown up in Texas and graduated from Baylor School of Medicine in Houston. I was telling him how psychoanalytically oriented therapy just didn't work for the majority of my patients in rural California. He had found that true for most of his unsophisticated patients in Lubbock so he had turned to Ericksonian strategic psychotherapy. He found it very effective, usually in a much shorter time. He told me of a couple of books that I obtained and read. How Dr. Erickson treated his patients didn't make much sense to me, but I was impressed by his results. So I began going to Ericksonian seminars and workshops, and read more books on his type of therapy.

Milton H. Erickson, M.D., became well known in hypnosis many years ago, and he used hypnosis in a new way. He would listen very carefully to what his patients would tell him for clues as to what was likely to relieve their symptoms. He might use what would ordinarily seem like a small detail about how they experienced their symptoms. He would take "what the patient gave him," and with or without the aid of hypnosis, elaborate it into a strategy that the patient could use to give himself/herself relief. Since these clues came from within the patient himself or herself, he concluded that there was a healing part of each person's unconscious mind that had a great deal of knowledge that could be used to solve their problems. He thought that this knowledge was stored there, out of awareness, as a result of all the person's accumulated experiences from the time they were born.

It took me a long time to be able to practice this kind of psychotherapy. For one thing, I had to learn to look beyond the genesis in childhood of my patients' problems. From my psychoanalytically oriented training I had learned to quickly discover how their problems had started early in their lives. Though I was often able to convey this to them so they understood why they were like they were, the majority got no relief from their symptoms. I gradually learned to help the patient look within himself/herself, not only for the causes, but for the solutions,

and, in short, I found that it worked.

Erickson, as far as I can tell, talked a great deal about helping patients use the healing power in their unconscious minds, but never mentioned any spiritual dimension to this healing. Yet the strategies that he helped patients develop seemed highly creative, and often had an uncanny quality to them. I noticed the same thing with my patients, so I began to wonder if there wasn't some connection to a higher power in addition to the knowledge stored in the brain that came from past experiences.

About that time I went to a seminar on the causes and treatment of alcoholism and other chemical dependencies. I found out that most of the treatment programs for this disease are based on the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. People who recover in AA come to believe their problem with alcohol is beyond their own ability to deal with it, and they believe they have to admit this, and turn it over to a higher power. This is the essence of the first three of the twelve steps.

So I came to believe that most of our problems that have been with us for years are beyond the ability of our conscious mind to solve. If that were not true we would have solved them long ago. What Erickson taught was to turn those problems over to our unconscious mind. That sounds much like what AA teaches, if you only substitute higher power for unconscious mind. So I began to think of my work with my patients that way, and my results seemed even better.

Now I believe that what Erickson called our unconscious mind is really that higher power, or at least that there is a very close connection between the two. So I think what we do in Ericksonian therapy is really a tapping in to God's wonderful loving power to heal.

We know from recent research that there are multiple mechanisms for healing within our bodies which I believe were placed there by the Creator. There are some 80 odd "messenger molecules" or "informational substances" that can carry "messages" from the brain, and other parts of the nervous system, to each system, organ, cell, and even many genes in the body where they can initiate changes. These same

substances carry information from those parts of the body back to the brain. All of this is admirably detailed in one of Dr. Ernest L. Rossi's recent books, *The Psychobiology of Mind-Body Healing* (W. W. Norton, New York, London, 1986) Rossi was one of Erickson's closest pupils.

Several years ago when I was attending one of Rossi's seminars in Phoenix, I asked him how we could help our patients use all the recently discovered mechanisms for healing. He said he had found that if people could go into a hypnotic trance of the kind Erickson advocated, and do so at the time of one of their ultradian rhythms, it seemed to facilitate healing. He indicated that it also could help in solving other problems. He went on to explain that we all have an ultradian rhythm which occurs during our waking hours. About every 90 to 120 minutes while we're awake we have a need to rest which is manifested by our yawning, feeling tired, irritable, or just feeling the need to take a break. If at those times we do take a break, get comfortable, close our eyes, and tune into comfort, then we can allow our unconscious to do its work in its own way. He thinks it best not to give ourselves any self-suggestion, but just let ourselves *wonder* how our unconscious will resolve our current problems.

When we returned from that seminar I told our daughter, who is a teacher with a bachelor's degree in psychology, all about this. After listening attentively her face lit up and she said, "Oh, you mean we all ought to rad out every 90 minutes!" So now I refer to it as "radding out," and I have taught a lot of my patients how to "rad out." Our daughter had evidently associated the middle part of ultradian with the word radical.

When we rad out it is not only healthful and helps us find solutions to our problems, but I believe we are closer to God. I think it helps us be less in touch with our conscious thinking, and more in touch with our unconscious, which is our connection with God. Perhaps this is the meaning of one of my mother's favorite phrases, "let go and let God." As I understand it, Eastern philosophers advocate letting go of our conscious thoughts during meditation in order to move closer to the oneness of God.

I believe Erickson's unconscious is the same as our higher self. I believe our higher self, or soul, or spirit, is a part of us now, survives "death," and is very powerful because it has a direct connection with that omnipotent spirit, God, who has unlimited

power to heal.

Perhaps what I mean by God stems from my Quaker background. I understand that Quakers, or Friends, speak more of the Spirit than of God. So to me God is a spirit. I believe one of the tenets of Quaker theology is that in order to do the will of God one should have quiet times during which one should wait for the Spirit to move one. So this fits with Dr. Rossi's concept that I have come to call radding out.

Also, I'm sure I'm influenced by my admiration for the spirituality of the original inhabitants of this hemisphere. So I think a better term for my concept of God might be the Great Spirit. To me, God and the Great Spirit mean the same thing. Also, thinking of other terms for God helps me get away from any lingering ideas that God is an old man with a long white beard sitting on a throne up in the sky—a man who is much more likely to be wrathful than loving. I believe God is the very essence of love, and is always loving toward us.

If all this is true, then those of us in the healing arts, indeed all of us as human beings, should let ourselves be closer to our own unconscious and the Great Holy Spirit.

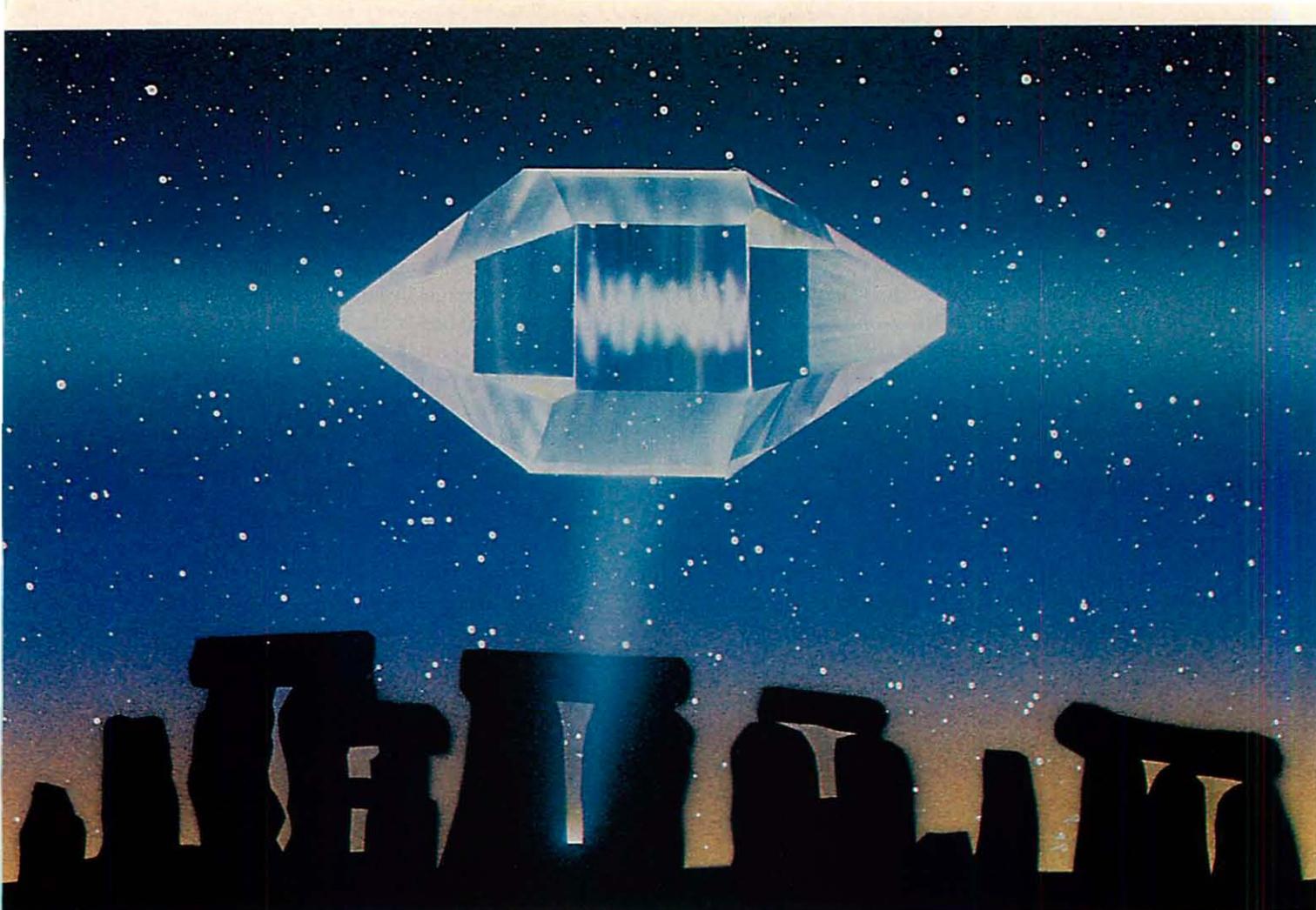
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# Walking in Albion: Chronicles of Plan-Net Geomancy

*Richard Leviton*

## PART I: CHILD OF THE ANCIENT GIANT

**M**erlin said to me, as I stood on the windswept cliffs of Tintagel in north-western Cornwall in the middle of an English winter, "It's time to do it again, to walk in Albion. Hatch his eggs. Unbind him. Talk to him from the emerald. Celebrate his awakening on America's Independence Day." It was blowing wind and rain so hard I felt if I lost my balance on this high promontory I'd

easily be blown across the sea to Wales. I was so thickly padded in wool and down that I'd have made a handsome dirigible in my wind-blown sea passage. So I envied Merlin. He didn't have "weather" where he was. I wished he were incarnate again so we could measure our footfalls together as we paced Tintagel headland this midday in January, contemplating the future of that ancient mythic giant, Albion. Mythic? I used to think Merlin and

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Albion were both old figures of Celtic myth, intriguing reliquaries of a fabulous legendary past—until I realized how integrally involved they are today in the well-being, the *redemption* of our host planet Gaia and all Her residents.

Mythology always seems to lead us back into a forgotten initiatory domain, an experiential realm shimmering with heightened reality and expectancy. As J.R.R. Tolkien once said, ancient figures of household legend suddenly spring up from the grass as living heroes in a time of need. Take Tintagel, fabled birthplace of King Arthur, the once and future King, champion of the Knights of the Round Table, and royal sponsor of the Quest for the Holy Grail. As I penetrate deeper into the mythopoeic reality of the Celtic landscape, I realize that Arthur is much more than a charismatic king. Arthur is a cosmic energy, an ascended master from the constellation Great Bear, a perennial mentor both for human culture and Gaia—for isn't the Big Dipper often called Arthur's Wain?—and Tintagel is the numinous point on the skin of Gaia where the Arthur light is born in each individual who *wishes* it.

It isn't only the Celtic landscape that is mythopoeically alive. The entire global skin of Gaia scintillates with an etheric geography made of the stars and their cosmomythic portent. Some people today call Gaia's subtle spiritual anatomy the planetary grid and speak of energy lines, power centers, and sacred mountains. The world grid is like a planetary onion replete with dovetailing layers, like shells of consciousness in which great supersensible events are continually happening. In the late 1970s James Lovelock, the British atmospheric scientist, boldly formulated the Gaia Hypothesis, asserting that the planet is a single self-regulating homeostatic biological organism. The world grid hypothesis develops Lovelock's model further, bringing it into the realm of consciousness and intention.

Gaia, as we world grid proponents like to postulate, is a self-conscious planetary being whose energetic anatomy and physiology are as complex and as cosmically interwoven as that of the human being—as ourselves. The grid is an energy and consciousness matrix, a net with a plan. Through Her complex grid body—the *plan* of Her *net*—Gaia mirrors the essential higher spiritual nature of the human.

Both mirror images of planet and human derive from the original projection of the galaxy, which means when we describe Gaia's etheric geography we're really modeling the galaxy on Earth. Gaia is a multidimensional hologram of the cosmos.

The plan of the net, Merlin tells me, is conscious evolution, and geomancy is the way we help this plan-net along. Tintagel is a good place to make plans and formulate wishes because this is where all the power of *AL\** enters Earth from the Great Bear. Tintagel is one of about 1750 numinous grid points around the planet, englobed by a dome, an etheric energy canopy about five miles wide. Domes correspond to individual stars, and Tintagel's dome is the Earth home of the Great Bear's *delta Megrez*, "The Root of the Tail" in the Big Dipper. Domes are like huge bells of light ringing perpetually in the ethers to enhance human consciousness. Tintagel is aflame in the *tints of angels*, a magnificent rainbow kaleidoscope of cosmic and angelic energies. The tints of angels surround the Arthur light at domed Tintagel; through their focus the co-creative potency of *AL* becomes available. *AL* is what Albion is made of, the radiantly-hued love of the Great Mother Bear. *AL* is the power to make wishes reality. *AL* is how we re-vision the world along positive lines, how we reimagine Albion, the wished-for land. Arthur is Albion's spokesman, so as grid engineers we're all working for Arthur. "You make your sincerest wish for Albion at Tintagel," said Merlin. "That begins to loosen his bonds of Time."

Merlin ought to know. He's the one who bound Albion in the Pit in the first place at the beginning of Time. Merlin was involved with the Earth long before he gained his reputation as the magus of Arthur's Camelot. Wasn't the oldest name for Britain *Myrddin's Precinct* as the Welsh remembered Merlin? The other re-

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\**AL* is a God-Name or mantric word from Qabala indicating the Sephira Chesed on the Tree of Life. Chesed is about the expansiveness of Jupiter, the abundance of the higher mind, the Olympian realm of the Masters, and the primordial creative energy that recreates land, thought, life, and consciousness. As such *AL* is the celestial seed and core of Albion which is the collectivity of human consciousness over time expressed through the Land itself. *AL* is the once and future creative energy that makes Land and Human one.

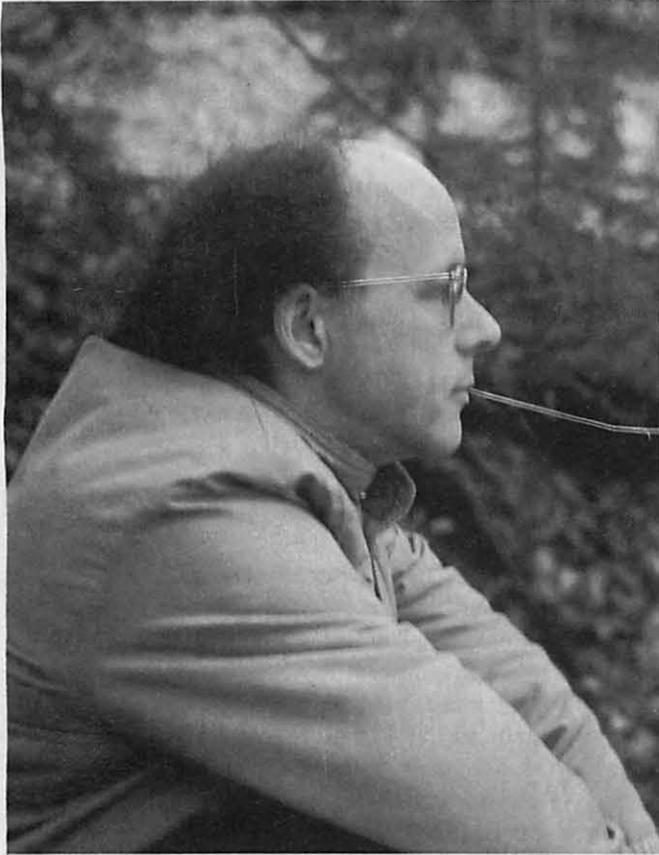


PHOTO: MARTY CAIN

markable thing about myth and the landscape I've discovered is that when you pull on the threads persistently enough you inevitably unravel the unwritten history of the planet—and that's a story with many surprises. The Earth, Merlin told me, is a designer planet made expressly for human higher conscious evolution within matter. Gaia's energetic anatomy, which recapitulates the spiritual structure of the galaxy, is the starwoven body of the Holy Ghost, that first primordial cosmic human appearing in a form of light—variously called Phanes, Adam Kadmon, the Rich Fisher King, Kronos, Saturn, Albion.

Earth history began with a sacrifice. The Holy Ghost living in eternity was bound in matter, crucified on the cross of time and space. When Merlin bound Kronos in the Pit, Time began on Earth. The Greek myths remember this in their account of Zeus dispatching his castrated father Kronos into permanent guarded exile in the golden halls of Ogygia far off in the West. William Blake also recounted this ancient sacrifice of the Holy Ghost caught in Time in his lamentations of the ancient

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giant, Albion. The holy image of Man caught in the Time of planet Earth—that's our Albion, **A Light Being In Our Neighborhood.**

Albion is the collectivity of human experience over time on Gaia. Albion is what we've made of this primordial endowment of the cosmic spirituality of the Holy Ghost in the material context of our planet. The plan of the net in which Albion is bound is that he should one day wed Gaia in a planetary marriage of spirit and matter. As geomancers, our work is to facilitate the arrangements and then serve as bridesmaid and best man, and the most astonishing news I can report is that the wedding is slated for approximately 1999. Albion is expected to wake up at last in an apocalyptic rush of planetary self-consciousness, joyously embracing Gaia, our bride clothed in the Sun. In a curious reversal of relationships, we as humanity give away the virginal bride, our planetary Mother.

It all starts here, at Tintagel, here in this numinous mythic British landscape, the vestigial remains of that very old land called Hyperborea that flourished long before even fabled Lemuria. Blake knew this: "All things begin & end in Albion's Ancient Druid Rocky Shore," he wrote in *Jerusalem*. Yet this kind of millennialist expectation isn't a matter of pro-British sentiment; it's an evolutionary necessity based on the inherent structure of the planet. If the Earth is the planetary embodiment of cosmic man, then Albion's belly button will always be found at the same place, no matter who's occupying the land.

As Plato commented in the *Timaeus*, the Earth when seen from afar resembles a ball stitched of twelve equal sections. Plato was describing the world grid. The planet woven of twelve sections is dodecahedral, twelve-faced, and each face of Gaia is a five-sided pentagon. Each pentagonal face is the net in which an image of Albion is reflected, and each is under a different astrological influence in the planetary zodiacal wheel. There are twelve reflected

Albions, each a face with a different expression, and all the faces are cast by the one Albion bound in the Pit at the energetic center of the planet, at the heart of Gaia's grid net. In the very old days of Hyperborea (Tolkien called this the First Age of the Elves, the First-Born) the planet was first energized through this particular pentagonal face, which occupies one-twelfth of the surface of Earth, including the North Pole, Greenland, Iceland, Great Britain, Ireland, France, Spain, and a lot of the Atlantic Ocean. This Hyperborean face of Albion was Gaia's original umbilical cord to the cosmos—as it still is today in the 1990s. That's why Merlin wants us to walk in Albion, to meditatively traverse the Hyperborean landscape body of that ancient giant bound in the Pit of Time, and to rouse him into wakefulness for his glorious future. Albion, I keep reminding myself, is ourselves writ large in the Earth.

Our first stop was the tiny Lincolnshire village of Tetford in the north of England. Tetford and the neighboring villages of Somersby, Bag-Enderby, and Maidenwell, is topped by a dome corresponding to *Sadalmelik* (meaning "the Fortunate Star of the King"), the brightest star in the constellation of Aquarius. Aquarius is the energy of the Water-Carrier now moving into planetary and human consciousness for the coming age, emphasizing collegiality, individuation, self-authority, freedom, expanded consciousness, world brotherhood, cosmically rational new ideas, and the communication of these values. Aquarius rules the human ankles, without which we couldn't walk in Albion. So unknown Tetford is one of Gaia's primary receptive points for this new Aquarian energy, but that's not the whole of Tetford's secret. Albion, like humans, has a progression of energy-consciousness centers in his landscape body—what we usually call chakras. Tetford is the root chakra, the source of creative kundalini for the once and future Albion of this Hyperborean pentagonal grid face. And nestled like a jewel in the landscape folds of his root center under the Tetford dome is an egg-born Golden Child.

That's why we positioned ourselves as geomantic midwives in the minuscule parish church at Somersby at midmorning a couple days before Christmas. We were breathing as the angels do, as Love from Above from the tiny blazing Star at the center of our being to

the massive diaphanously golden egg with its slumbering cosmic child within. The egg is a supersensible presence almost the size of the dome itself, which is eight miles across. The ancient Mystery tradition called this the Mundane Egg, and H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* concisely summarized the egg's esoteric attributions. The Egg was the consummate cosmogonic symbol, representing the origin and secret of being, both human and universal. Various solar heroes—Dionysus, Ra, Brahma, Osiris, Apollo, Phanes, Vishnu, Castor, Pollux—emerged from the Golden Egg. A staggering amount of mundane eggs were distributed around the etheric landscape of Earth at the beginning of Time, Merlin told me, and many of these still haven't been hatched. That's probably because when you hatch a golden egg you have to be able to deal with the dragon that comes out first.

But then dealing with dragons is what a Grail Knight is trained for. I took my sword, the insightful focus of mind wielded at the

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brow chakra, and gently penetrated the egg-shell. The blade's cutting edge flamed lilac with the transmutative energy of the Christ as it touched the sleeping form of a blue dragon. When the blade contacted the skin of this somnolent dragon, it suddenly woke up and flushed crimson. This is the tricky part. I held the sword very steady, breathing Love from Above to the waking passionate dragon of the lower elemental self, the zoomorphic expression of the animal part of each of us. My body twitched sympathetically with the dragon's own prodigious struggle and I felt like a skewered serpent. The dragon flushed golden, then crumbled like a shattered ceramic sculpture, revealing a resplendent golden apple amongst its glittering shards.

As that initiate hero Hercules discovered long ago, the dragon Ladon guards the golden

apples of the Hesperides, but the dragon fruits of wisdom are *inside* Ladon's heart. You only get the golden apples by transmuting the dragon. I cleaved the apple in half, revealing the golden child resting wakefully in the pentagrammic inner apple core as if in a celestial manger. This all happened very quickly and seemed to be as large as the entire Tetford domed landscape, but it's just another paradox of the grid which has its prime reality outside of time and space. We grid engineers tie down the guide wires connecting the two realms.

The child, awake and smiling, turned first into a crucified man, then a crowned king—but I was looking ahead in time. The golden child's destiny as the egg-born progeny of Albion is to recapitulate the five traditional Grail changes (dragon, apple, child, crucified man, crowned king) which are stages in the awakening of human consciousness. It turns out this sequence is identical to the five initiations of the Christ Alice Bailey described in *From Bethlehem to Calvary*, namely, birth, baptism, transfiguration, crucifixion, and ascension. The emergence of the solar hero proceeds

puzzle. For us, it's a continuing revelation. The next morning at dawn we meditated at Maidenwell, a lovely grassy prominence overlooking Tetford valley. Our experience was like placing the golden infant at the breast of the Mother, creating a geomantic tableau reminiscent of the Renaissance portraits of Madonna and Christ Child. As none of this landscape awakening work is in any way separate from our own attainments in consciousness, our experience cycled continually from being the infant to being the Mother. At Maidenwell, the unbounded, timeless clairvoyant awareness of the Mother welled as celestial nourishment into the crown of the golden child.

We spent the remainder of the week meditating each day in nearby Lincoln Cathedral, one of England's great Gothic churches, set prominently on a hill overlooking the old city. Each day we drove the twenty miles from Tetford to Lincoln knowing we were moving through a tunnel of light connecting two great centers of awareness in this ancient landscape giant. Lincoln is also an Aquarian consciousness point, topped with the star dome for the second brightest star in Aquarius, *Sadalsuud* ("Luckiest of the Lucky"). Lincoln, in the body of our giant, Albion, is the second chakra. Our Aquarian transiting and church sitting was in preparation for the Epiphany, that majestic annual event on January 6 in which the Christ focuses the creative force of the Logos upon one matrix point in the planetary grid net. This year the Epiphany would be focused in the British Midlands, through another unsuspected numinous point, and unassuming stretch of wood and water between Burley and Hambleton outside the town of Oakham in Rutland.

Burley Wood wasn't that unassuming a couple centuries ago when the polymorphous Rosicrucian master Saint Germaine inspired the local landed gentry to carve a stately Eight Riding Tree out of the thick woods. The aristocratic owners of Burley thought they were making an elegant eight-spoked equestrian circuit through the Burley woods, suitable for galloping fox hunts and Sunday canters on horseback. What they didn't know is that their forestry work made it possible for St. Germaine and Merlin to install an astral eight-spoked lilac wheel of transmutation in roughly the same spot. Saint Germaine slipped this massive wheel under another of those mundane solar

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according to the dictates of an archetypal etheric physiology, but the destiny of this golden child is somewhat special. This child will receive on Gaia's behalf the consciousness influx of the Solar Logos, which is the Christ consciousness working through the Sun as spoken communication. As Merlin explained, the focus of the Solar Logos at this time works through the alpha Aquarius star dome at Tetford into the being bodies of Tetford's golden child who is awake and creatively astir within the root chakra of the Hyperborean Albion.

Merlin grinned, of course, as he told me this. As a Grand Square Master from Sirius who helped design our planet in the first place, he enjoys this kind of complexity. For him, Albion's anatomy is as obvious as a crossword



"Awakening" ©1979 Philip Jacobson

eggs, knowing in advance that when the Epiphany of 1991 permeated this golden egg set like a hub in the lilac wheel, it would awaken Albion's solar plexus and umbilicus to the cosmos, and repercuss throughout the planet. They also intended to flush the Earth grid with intense lilac light through this wheel for the first time in 10,000 years, Merlin told me, trying not to boast.

This wasn't precisely our cover story when we applied at the security guard's office at Bur-

ley Mansion for permission to wander around the privately-owned Eight Riding Tree. The ownership of the wood was a little vague owing to legal complications of bankruptcy, fraud, and imprisonment, but we obtained quizzical permission to spend a couple hours each day in the mud, rain, and wind of Burley, dowsing, taking photographs, watching the wild boars root for tubers, enjoying the inimitable British scenery—or whatever it is American tourists come to England for. Merlin, Saint Germaine,

and the Archangel Michael didn't apply at the security office, advising us they already had the okay from a higher authority.

Our grid work fell into a manageable routine. At dawn, midday, and dusk we meditated at the heart of the lilac wheel, breathed Love from Above to the Golden Child like the three magi in adoration of the Christ infant. We pacified the irritable elemental spirits, dispatched negative thought forms that kept trying to bend our intentions, and made forays with Merlin into the wild supersensible yonder. In the evenings we drank Guinness, ate quiche, talked about Albion with our neighbors, and dried our sodden clothes by the open fire in a lovely cottage we rented for the week. Clarissa wrote postcards to friends back home in sunny Australia about why she came to England in the height of winter, while Marty joked about stuffing her parka pockets with bricks to keep from getting blown away.

As always, the Christ came like a thief in the night in a flush of magnificent scarlet warmth. Like the apostles of an earlier time, we fell asleep to the higher perception of this epiphanous appearance of the Logos. Of course, you can't see the Christ anyway, because that's a mistaken anthropomorphism. That's because the face of the Christ is your own, and these days the Christ incarnates individually in human consciousness, Merlin told us with a wink. We expanded our individual identities to include the Burley golden child and the lilac wheel at the belly of Albion, then took the full

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permeation of the Epiphany on Albion's behalf. The face of the Logos isn't necessarily some smiling, beaded, new age pacifist type, either. The transmutative effects of Epiphany are profound, disruptive, and sometimes rapid. Ten days later the United States went to war with Iraq in a pentagonal grid face under the astrological influence of Aquarius.

After Epiphany, we headed south for Avalon, one of Merlin's favorite spots on Earth. We called in at Avalon's epicenter at Glastonbury in Somerset, one of the leading new age mystical watering holes. We didn't find any mundane eggs in Avalon; instead we found a landscape zodiac. Glastonbury's esoteric community prides itself on its starwheel, which is an apparent imprint on the landscape topography of the standard features of the zodiacal constellations. Aerial photographs and close-detail topographical maps exhibit the outlines of Taurus and Sagittarius and the rest of the tumbling round table of zodiacal images etched in hills and streams and hedgerows, the Glastonbury savants explain. True enough, said Merlin, but that's only part of it. The star imprint is actually a complete experiential hologram of the galaxy made of twelve dozen constellations arrayed like the pith of a cleaved apple about 35 miles wide in the etheric domain around Glastonbury.

The Glastonbury zodiac is the heart center of our Hyperborean Albion, said Merlin; but his attention was focused on his old haunt, Park Wood, in nearby Butleigh. Park Wood is a modest copse of a few acres preserved in the midst of Somerset farmland a couple miles from Glastonbury's most prominent hilltop feature, the Tor. Park Wood marks Polaris the pole star, the axis mundi that connects planetary and cosmic worlds at the center of the Glastonbury zodiac. But the Wood is even more than that. It's the inner heart chakra, the *ananda-kanda*, for Albion, and as such, it's the seat of the emerald, the *mani* jewel in the *padme* lotus of the Holy Ghost—the green stone from the crown of Lucifer. The emerald signifies the Heart of Man, the swinging doorway into the worlds of matter and Edenic light. The Park of the Wood is a hologram of that primal Eden—that's the *esplumoir* he really disappeared into, that's the hollow hill into which his protege in magic, Nimue, seduced him, Merlin explained a little wistfully. Park Wood is also a shortcut to Shambhala if you know how to make your moves in light—and that's exactly the kind of move that Albion desperately requires now to wake up.

We only had one afternoon at Park Wood to make our Shambhalic connections because we were expected further south in Dorchester at the King's Arms Hotel for a *mitzvah* for



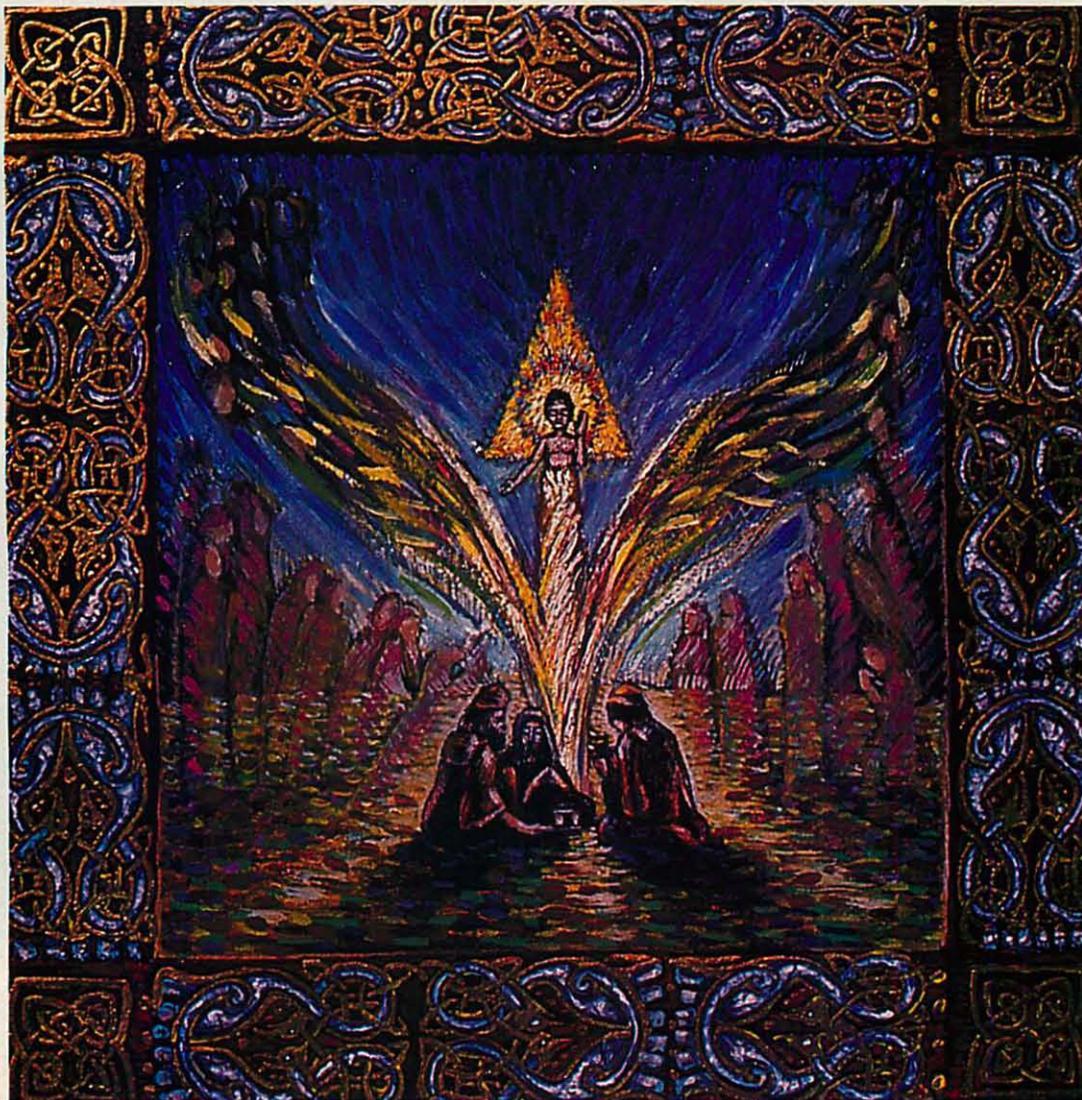
"Warm Wind," ©1980 Philip Jacobson

Albion. Close friends from Tetford were feting us all to a lavish weekend in celebration of our seven years of grid work on behalf of Albion. Merlin, Saint Germaine, Michael, and other angelic colleagues of long-standing acquaintance joined us in our jubilee at Dorchester. Our time was doubly productive of course, because Albion's throat chakra was centered just outside the city limits at Maiden Castle, an absolutely massive three-tiered earthwork, probably Europe's largest. Maiden Castle, said Merlin, was made that large because it marks the grounding of the Mothership on Earth, that beneficent panoply of the Feminine, the three archetypal aspects of the Mother of the World as the maidenly guardians of Gaia.

Maiden Castle was topped with a dome and its extensive elevated acreage was also the center of a modest five mile wide landscape zodiac. But what was most palpable about the earthwork was the overwhelming presence of the Mother. Images of the Mother no doubt vary with individuals. For me, She appeared as

Leda the Swan, mother of the egg-born solar hero Apollo, her breast aflame with the scarlet radiance of the Christ as She sailed the infinite cosmic sea in perfect equipoise. The Mother of the World speaks to Albion from his throat, speaking Logos syllables of life, and She speaks to the world from Maiden Castle, too, recreating human life and thought with maidenly words made of the power of *AL*.

Our moments with Leda got us in the mood for a sea voyage. The next day we took the Brittany ferry to Roscoff in northwestern France, then drove a couple hours south to the resort town of Karnac on the Gulf of Morbihan. It was winter, most of Karnac was boarded up, and we were practically the only non-French tourists in sight, but that didn't matter because we came for the stones. Karnac is famous among megalithic enthusiasts for its five miles of stone rows, something like 3000 standing stones, varying from two to fifteen feet high, arranged in ten to twelve parallel rows, striding enigmatically across the country-



"Sacred Night," ©1988 Philip Jacobson

side. We would spend a fortnight aligning our energies with the cranial stones of Albion's brow chakra at Karnac under the aegis of Sirius, Merlin told us with understandable pride, being one of the original Sirian engineers who installed Karnac's stones.

The grid engineering at Karnac is complex, Merlin warned us. First, Karnac and environs is the site for the Sirius dome for Earth, which is about 30 miles in diameter. Sirius is the brightest star in our galaxy and the heart of Canis Major, the Great Dog. The Dog is a mythological big shot. In myth, the Dog is the guardian of the zodiac, the conductor of souls through the Underworld, and the faithful companion of all solar heroes, including Arthur. Second, a large zodiac 44 miles in diameter is situated here, with Karnac occupying the

landscape position of Canis Major. Third, the entire stone row alignment and Karnac zodiac mark the brow center of the Hyperborean Albion. And the whole complex is directly connected by energy lines to Albion's crown chakra at the cathedral city of Rennes in eastern Brittany, which also has a small zodiac.

After Merlin bound Albion in the Pit—in cooperation with other Sirians and the angelic family called Elohim, who temporarily manifested as giants—he came to Karnac and set up 365 stones to create the cycle of Time for Earth and to mark the nodal points within the cranium of Albion. The intention was to ground the Mind of Sirius, which is to say, the Cosmic Logos, within Albion on behalf of future human conscious evolution. Later they added more stones because the mixture was too rich,

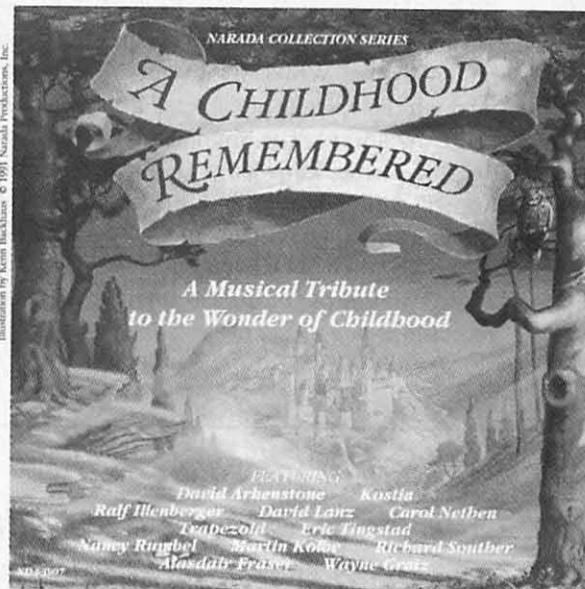
and still later, French farmers hauled a lot of the stones out of the fields because they got in the way of their potato crop. Today, even though some of the Sirian stone rows are curtailed by farmhouses, interrupted by criss-crossing roads, generally neglected, and sometimes abused; Karnac's cosmic cranial function is still intact, if a little sluggish. It required fully two weeks of walking around in Albion's brains for us to penetrate the thicker, more resistant French ethers and to come into cognition with the Sirian mind of our ancient giant. After this, our work got serious.

But I found I couldn't get dogs and hunting out of my mind. The whole of the Karnac stone alignment is like a living organism with progressive energy centers. We spent several hours at the heart center meditating in the shadow of an eighteen-foot-tall single standing stone called Le Geant Manio set in the woods a couple hundred yards away from the parallel stone rows. I spent some time poking around the dense ethers with my sword, and finally found an opening. I made my way towards a golden spherical temple set atop a plateau of conifers. Inside the temple I found a high-level meeting in progress. It's the round table of the cosmic logos, Merlin whispered, and that big golden fellow is Sanat Kumara, the King of Shambhala and the Cosmic Logos of Sirius. The other spiritual beings around the table are individual solar logoi, and one of them is King Arthur, Merlin added a little fondly. Each of them energizes a stone row at Karnac like a chromatic chord of sound, and the whole alignment is metaphorically comparable to a twelve-string cosmic guitar.

It was when I stepped out of Le Geant Manio and surveyed the stone phalanxes of Karnac again that I suddenly understood what the Welsh myths meant by the Wild Hunt, and why dogs had been on my mind all day. On Samhain, the moment of No-Time in the Celtic calendar (November 1), the abyssal cauldron of Cernwn, the awful "smoke barrel" of infinity, opens above our world, and through this aperture storms Gwyn map Nudd and his Hounds of Hell, the red-eared, white-skinned dogs of the apocalypse, chief among which is Gwyn's special hound, Dormach. They basically scare everyone silly and wreak lots of havoc. The Wild Hunt is all about the mind of Sirius. Gwyn is Sanat Kumara, the Cosmic Logos pre-

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siding over the domain of No-Time, the time before Time began on Earth. Dormach is his Karnac landscape dog, and the devilish hounds are the 3000 stones of knowledge, the group mind of the White Brotherhood expressed through the Karnac alignments as a megalithic frieze of canines. The hounds are the ferocious dogs of cosmic knowledge that tear the conditioned, time-bound mind of we humans to shreds. Of course that's the pessimistic side of it. We could see Gwyn and his Sirian dogs as psychopomps for an astounding, perpetual revelation.

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*Albion winked in his sleep at the Harmonic Convergence of 1987. He stirs in expectancy of a startling lucidity.*

This little insight prepared me for my descent into the Pit through the mind of Dormach. We walked to the far end of the Karnac alignments, to an almost completely neglected stretch of small stones in the woods called Le Petite Menec. The brow center of Karnac's Dormach, it felt still, soft, and very focused. I slipped easily into a meditative awareness of the subtle environment around me. The woods teemed with astral dogs, but one especially captured my attention: black with foxy ears, he was a very old canine breed with an attentive semi-human face—Dormach, presumably. A crystalline jewel was set prominently in his brow, and using my sword I penetrated this aperture and entered his domain. Inside, Dormach flushed golden and the 3000 stones of his landscape body hummed like a single crystal bowl. Not only the dogs of Karnac live in Dormach's expansive body; the dogs of all the landscape zodiacs on Earth (more than 500) reside in his Sirian being body, and these were all present with me inside the cosmic kennel of Dormach. Dormach is the Dog of Sirius multiply present on Earth through Karnac. Then we descended into the Pit.

A vortex cone of light like a slow-winding tornado appeared and I traveled through it like water funneling down a sink drain. This vortex

cone is actually a more dynamic expression of one face of the dodecahedral world grid which is made of twelve wide-mouthed spiraling cones that all taper down to meet at one common center. This is the Pit, or the golden halls of Ogygia, if you prefer. Lying before me, bound and strapped to a massive table, was the golden slumbering figure of Albion, that ancient colossus of consciousness caught in the planetary webs of Time. It's as if the Karnac Dog of Sirius sits at Albion's brow in the Pit because that's where I landed in a fractal collapsing of apparent spatial identities, spinning down vortices into larger frames of identity. Was I in the Pit of Gaia or was this Pit in the mind of Sirius?

The ropes binding Albion were stout and tightly knotted and his body was encased in a winding sheet like the Egyptians traditionally used for mummification. Merlin was there and he pointed to my sword. The blade easily sliced through the knots binding his neck, wrists, and ankles, then I delicately sliced through the winding sheet until Albion, still somnolent, lay free upon the table. O Albion, I exclaimed in a flush of exaltation. Now I know why Blake so rhapsodized about you. "Thou wast to me the loveliest Son of Heaven, the Angel of my Presence, the mildest Son of Eden," the Christ declared in Blake's *Jerusalem*. This loveliest Son of Heaven was attended by his Mother, too. The presence of the Feminine as aegis was unmistakable. She towered like a benign Madonna over Her sleeping effulgent son. That's part of Merlin's task, actually, making the connection between the cosmic Father at Sirius and the cosmic Mother, establishing the line to the Mer, the Mother, the *Mer-Line*.

So with Merlin's help the Mer-Line was open to Albion, the resplendent image of Man somnolent but unbound upon the table in the Pit of Gaia. With the turning of every planetary age, Albion shifted in his slumber, but he's never awakened on Earth. But now his sleep grows ever lighter as he struggles towards self-awareness, prying off the cobwebs of countless millennia of dreams. Albion winked in his sleep at the Harmonic Convergence of 1987. Albion stirs in the expectancy of a startling lucidity. We can reach him now, he can hear us in his lightening trance state. We all have a hotline to Albion. We all must speak the truth to him about his destiny, about what his life will be

like when he wakes up. What is Albion's destiny? Albion's destiny is precisely *what we wish* for through our spoken power of *AL*. *AL* is the life blood of Albion, his once and future beginning, and his colossal destiny is entirely contingent upon what we say.

I walked down the huge recumbent figure and stood upon Albion's emerald heart. The emerald is the key. This is the true, the efficacious ear trumpet into which we must broadcast our good wishes for Albion's future. The emerald is the planetary moderm of consciousness into which we're all patched. The emerald, or inner heart chakra, contains the jeweled altar and its wish-fulfilling tree, and we wish upon this tree with our highest, keenest, most sincere aspirations to communicate with the Absolute—on Albion's behalf. We've all been inside the emerald anyway. We know the pace, It's the New Jerusalem that Merlin foretold in his *Revelation* when he spoke as John the Revealer. After all, Merlin wasn't always a

"pagan." The Harmonic Convergence was a global meeting inside the one emerald of the Holy Ghost fractally multiplied around Gaia's net and present like a master key in the chest of every woman and man alive today.

I paced contemplatively upon Albion's heart, intoning an emerald benediction. I formulated my wishes with the breath of *AL*. Albion, I *wish* you will awaken. I *wish* you a world of *AL*. I *wish* for you a bright future. I *wish* for you the best there is—the limitless luxury of light. Merlin nodded approvingly. That's a good start, he said. "But you'll need to hatch another egg over in America. Get some more Grail Knights together. Celebrate Independence Day with a little panache. Albion wants this new golden child of the eagle born on the 4th of July." ■

[Part II of "Walking in Albion" by Richard Leviton will appear in the Summer 1992 issue of The Quest.]

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# Star Wars, Archetypes, and the Mythic Quest

John W. Tighe

Joseph Campbell rekindled an excitement about mythology, especially in his tales about heroes. Hero figures are outcasts; at least, they do not live by traditional social values. Campbell described three stages to the heroic journey—departure, initiation, and return.

Departure is the stage in which heroes leave behind their old way of life to follow an inner voice which beckons them into a new and enchanted world. Initiation takes place in the forest, swamp, or jungle, and consists of the tests and trials that heroes undergo to prove themselves worthy of a successful adventure. Return is the boon heroes bring back to the world they left. It may be in the form of an insight, a teaching, a gift, or best of all—their own transformation of consciousness.

Carl Jung wrote extensively on archetypes, particularly the shadow, animus, anima, and self. All archetypes have both a destructive and a constructive side. The shadow is the dark side in every person. It is a powerful force which individuals may identify with and make into a demon or a savior. The animus is the masculine principle operating in a woman. The anima is the feminine principle at work within a man. The self is the integrating archetype. It is personified by the wise old man, the prophetess, or the mandala.

The popular movie trilogy *Star Wars* exists as a twentieth-century myth, in which the hero, Luke Skywalker, emulates the heroic three-stage journey. In addition, Jung's archetypes

can be applied to the characters in the *Star Wars* myth.

*Star Wars*, because it was written in the late twentieth century, reveals, in its dramatization of an advanced race of peoples living in a highly technological world, the ideas, passions, conflicts, and hopes of people living today. Much of the present environment is being destroyed by people, motivated by greed and power, using technology as their means to conquer nature. *Star Wars* addresses many of these same issues. Thus, the interaction of human beings with technology needs to be studied in this myth, as well as the psychic interplay of forces at work within Luke Skywalker, the protagonist.

Myths are metaphors symbolic of inner spiritual powers (Campbell, *Open Life*, 21), embodying universal ideas on natural or cultural phenomena which are derived from experiences common to all human beings. They are not to be interpreted as literal or factual tales, but as tales that point "beyond facts to something that informs the fact" (Campbell, 21). Myths depend upon individuals' receptivity to them and constitute an attempt to express insights into human nature. They reveal psychological patterns and themes through archetypal and symbolic transformation of people's everyday experiences.

These archetypes are composed of objects from nature forming "a vision of the goals of human work" (Frye, 113). *Star Wars* is such a myth—a vision quest, a story about the hero battling the forces of light and dark, person-



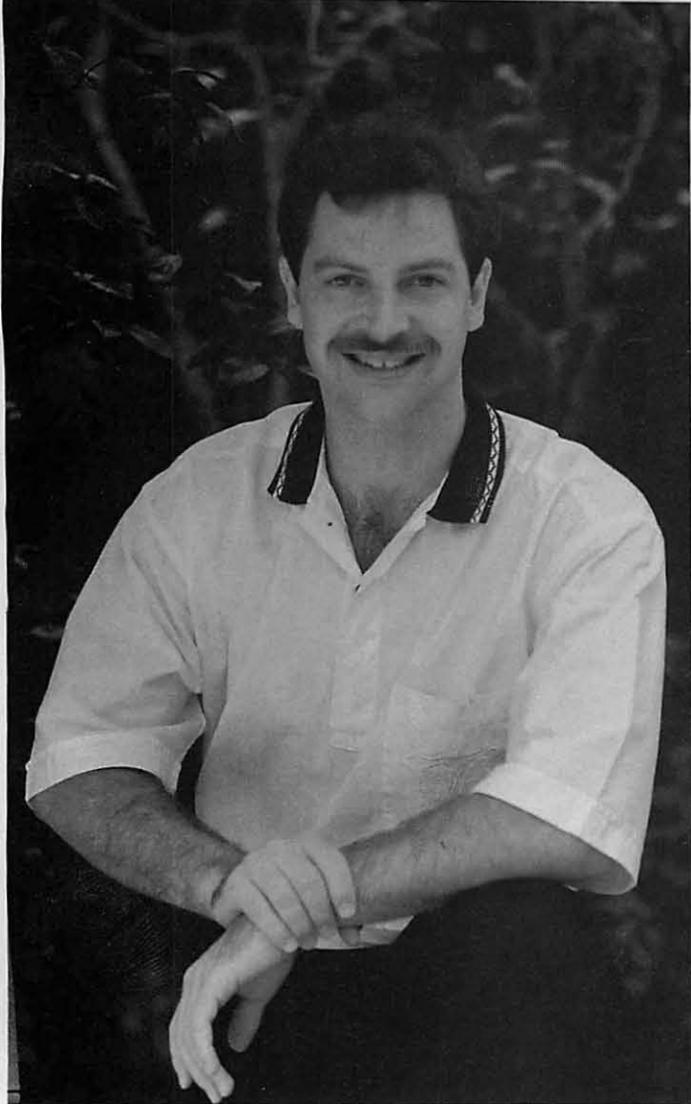
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ified through individual and collective characters, as well as the locales where the story unfolds. *Star Wars* is a metaphorical attempt "to understand and explain the perceived realities of human beings" and it "contains valuable clues to the conscious and unconscious shared values, that is, to the shared wishes, conflicts, and fears of society" (Vilella-Minnerly, 387, 389).

The symbols in *Star Wars* personify humans as potentially unlimited horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, they are technologically very advanced, traveling faster than light around the galaxy in small spacecraft, and they have weapons powerful enough to destroy an entire planet with the push of a single button. Vertically, those select few who are in communion with their inner world and "the Force," are semi-divine in power but not necessarily in moral judgment. Luke Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobe, and Yoda act as benevolent beings, whereas Darth Vader and the Emperor act as demons. Those who ascend vertically, that is, develop control of the Force, must act morally on the horizontal dimension, where their ideas

are acted out. They are the ones who ultimately affect the mass consciousness, and must themselves be moral beings in order for the world to remain stable while growing progressively.

Northrop Frye explained that the quest is an aspect of myths, involving a hazardous journey, an imminent struggle, and recognition of the greatness of the hero by others (Frye, 186-87). There is a cyclical development to this quest because it is a reflection of nature: the seed that must enter the darkness, struggle, and finally be reborn in its exalted form. An element of the quest is polar opposition between the hero and the enemy of the world. The hero is associated with "order, fertility, vigor, and youth" (188), the enemy with "darkness, confusion, sterility, and old age" (187-88). Vader and the Emperor use technology for evil and are partially crippled. Obi-Wan says Vader is "more machine now than man—twisted and evil" (*Return of the Jedi*). Frye wrote that the victory of this struggle is that of "fertility over the waste land" (193). This victory will come when Luke faces Vader, that is, overcomes the



machine.

Luke Skywalker and his Freedom Fighters hazard a journey against Darth Vader and the Empire. Luke first appears as a vital youth with untidy blond hair and white garments signifying his purity and innocence. He spends his time on his uncle's farm getting ready for the annual harvest. Luke is restless and eager for adventure, gifted, yet having much to learn. Upon acquiring the droids R2-D2 and C-3PO, and witnessing the holographic image which

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**John W. Tigue**, Ph.D., teaches in the department of philosophy and religion at Daemen College, Amherst, New York. He recently returned from an Asian excursion, which included practice in zazen in Japan and a lengthy stay in a Theravada Buddhist monastic community in Thailand. Afterwards, he traveled to northern Thailand to research the Hill tribes' multi-religious (animist, Buddhist, Christian) lifestyle. Since returning to Amherst he has involved himself in the "Year of Tibet," seeking to raise public awareness to facilitate return of Tibet to its indigenous people.

R2-D2 shows of princess Leia, Luke's fascination with this image and the name "Obi-Wan Kenobe" signify the awakening of his latent potential. Luke's loyalty to his friends, and his desire to free his people, though his own life lies in constant peril, are part of his humanity.

When Vader first makes an appearance, he tramples his way in amongst a mass of corpses that his sterile-clad soldiers have destroyed with their laser weapons. Vader is hard in appearance, dressed in black armor, emotionally detached from the death at his feet. His soldiers respond to him without reflection upon his commands, as do mindless machines. This image speaks about a "real fragmentation of the individual even as it is moralized and presented as mythic evil instead" (Rieder, 36).

Luke's worlds are covered with water, trees, and marshes signifying the processes of life. Even the deserts he wanders are full of developing life. He often encounters ominous forces and creatures, for nature can be a difficult power to reckon with if individuals are not prepared or experienced. Nature, however, is the manifestation of the creative principle in life. When nature's forces are in opposition, the victor ultimately brings forth life. Civilization operates in the same manner, as it "is not merely an imitation of nature, but the process of making a total human form out of nature, and it is impelled by desire" (Frye, 105).

When Luke undergoes some of his most arduous training under Yoda's guidance, his every encounter with natural forces develops his own self-knowledge and maturity. He also utilizes technology to increase his intuitive skills, as he demonstrates during a practice with his lightsaber. He keeps his eyes covered while deflecting the tiny laser shots that are fired at him by a hovering electronic ball. He learns to focus and direct his desires and his skills through means which will allow others to live life more fully.

Vader spends most of his time on one world, a planet-machine, a spaceship of destruction aptly named the "Death Star." This Death Star is an artificial world where life is dead, that is, life exists in or as a machine. I believe the words of Frye apply to Vader's worldview because the images it consists of are "engines of torture, weapons of war, armor, and images of a dead mechanism which, because it does not humanize nature, is unnatural as well as in-

human" (150). Vader's every thought and desire focus on how to disrupt the very fabric of civilization, to create a world of anonymous human machines responsive only to him. Vader lacks empathy for human beings and views them as things to be manipulated, thus their wills and thoughts are inconsequential to him. Vader's life is death through cruelty and mercilessness.

Technology is at an incredibly advanced stage of development, in some ways matching the subjective leaps of Skywalker and of Vader. They both use technology, but in diametrically opposed ways—Luke for the release of life, and Vader for its bondage and ultimate extinction. Vader has identified with technology to the point of becoming a partial machine himself, hooked to a life-support system. Vader needs technology for his own survival, yet uses it to destroy the lives of others. Luke is not enslaved to the machine, and demonstrates that technology is the servant and the human being its director. When Luke's hand is cut off and replaced with a mechanical hand to make his body function well again, technology does not determine how he will choose to use his new hand.

A most dramatic moment of the relationship between intuition and technology is when Luke is flying his fightership into a small canal on the Death Star in hopes of firing a blast down a narrow shaft to destroy it. A fighter pilot asks Luke regarding this target, "Are you sure the computer can hit it?" A moment later Luke responds to the ethereal voice of Obi-Wan Kenobe telling him to use the Force. Luke disengages his computer and fires a blast, a direct hit! Luke uses a machine to fire the blast, and relies on his intuition to direct the shot. Hence the human and the machine become intuitively united. Interestingly, neither the Force nor computers think; they both operate deductively, that is, they respond to an originative factor, namely, human beings.

The success of Luke Skywalker over himself and the mechanical aspirations of Darth Vader significantly suggest that life consists of a harmonious interchange of naturally and technologically created systems. The abuse of the human intellect and failure to reason on the impressions from life can destroy both life and the people who fail to unite with it. This is why Yoda fears for Luke when he prematurely leaves his training, before his intuitive skills are

fully developed, that he might be swayed to the dark side of the Force. The dark side disrupts people's responses to technology as a malignant tumor disrupts a healthy organism.

Incredibly, the droids express more compassion than Vader, because that is the way they were programmed to respond. Vader and the Emperor actually sink below the pre-programmed value systems of these machines. They have so deliberately identified with a mechanized world that is manipulated, programmed, and systematized, that they have lost their own identity. They have become the manipulators, programming other human beings to respond to them as do the unquestioning machines. They disintegrate an entire planet, murdering countless people. This selfish conquest over

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*Star Wars suggests that life consists of a harmonious interchange of natural and technologically created systems.*

nature is exemplified by their cold, unfeeling, guiltless nature. What once qualified them as humans is nearly gone.

The Star Wars myth has the elements of a mother-goddess, father-god system. In fact, it "recapitulates the archetypal pattern of classical myth" (Gordon, *Return*, 46). Yoda is a chthonic creature who symbolizes the earth and all that is natural. Vader is a sky figure who expresses paternal authority. His name means "Darkfather" and he is the antithesis of Obi-Wan. Vader wants to run the universe with a Death Star which gives not illuminating, but destructive, light (Waller, 64). The Death Star, Vader's home, unleashes lightning like rays of death down upon one world. The emperor even shoots electricity from his hands, symbolic of thunder and lightning. Thus the conflict between matriarchal and patriarchal systems. Vader is unable to balance these two forces and therefore leads himself to doom.

Waller wrote: "Lucas has designed a non-anthropocentric universe that has a way of catching offguard those who trust too completely their own, egocentric perspective" (65).

And Campbell states, "It's what Goethe said on Faust but which Lucas has dressed in modern idiom—the message that technology is not going to save people. Their computers, their tools, their machines are not enough. They have to rely on their intuition, their being true" (*Power of Myth*, xiv). The real heroes of humanity and technology are not the ones who make discoveries about the world, but about themselves (xiv), and live in such a way that their actions are of redeeming value for society (xv).

Lucas hints that even the most mechanized world cannot escape nature, as when the Skywalker group falls into a garbage pit and encounters an organic life form which feeds on the refuse of machines. Regardless of how advanced technology becomes, there is no elimination of the life which makes technology possible. As Campbell so aptly put it: "The monster masks that are put on people in *Star Wars* represent the real monster-force in the modern world. When the mask of Darth Vader is removed, you see an unformed man, one who

has not developed as a human individual. He's a bureaucrat, living not in terms of himself, but in terms of an imposed system, (*Power of Myth*, 145).

An essential question raised by this myth is whether humanity will become subservient to and therefore diminished by the system, or whether the system will be used to serve a higher human potential.

In addition to the interaction of human beings with machines, *Star Wars* is a mythological tale about the conflict between good and evil, similar to the Zoroastrian worldview, with Arhura Mazda versus Angra Mainyu. It is also like the *Bhagavad Gita*, where a war is fought between families, when in fact the real battle for Arjuna takes place within his soul. This is true for Luke as well. Throughout the movie the evil Empire tries to crush the rebel forces who wish only peace and cooperation. The evil Empire is the shadow which wants to crush that part of itself (the rebels) which denies it unlimited expression. These two opposing

"Return of the Jedi," ©1983 Lucasfilm LTD., All Rights Reserved.



armies each have their individual leaders: Luke and Vader.

The myth takes opposing archetypes, creates an entire world for them to be played out in, and then reduces them once again to being worn by an individual. *Star Wars* is really the journey of Luke as hero. He is the living archetype who learns to integrate the diversities of his psyche until he is complete.

Luke's departure or call to adventure occurs in his young adult years after the death of his uncle, symbolic of Luke's old way of life, leaving him free to follow his destiny. Luke cannot even contain himself to one planet, but must extend himself to all the possibilities the galaxy offers. Luke soon finds his guide and helper, Obi-Wan Kenobe, one who has been through what he is about to face. Thus he eagerly leaps at the chance to learn about the Force and how to direct it. He lacks some patience and is a bit over-zealous at times, but he is quite willing to endure whatever trials come along. The name "Obi-Wan Kenobe" is itself rather fascinating: O-be-one/Can-no-be; the idea of being and nonbeing, that is, of one who has integrated the opposites in his psyche. Luke too will do this.

Luke encounters all sorts of strange creatures during the initiation stage of his journey. These creatures represent the many parts of himself that he must recognize and integrate. He actually goes to a world full of mysterious creatures to train as a Jedi knight with Yoda, the master of masters. He learns to control and direct the Force by quieting his mind. All of his training is in preparation for the intuitive skills he will need at his disposal when he confronts his own dark side.

Some of his greatest leaps in consciousness are his struggles which take place within the "forest," a place to confront monsters. The children in fairy tales, likewise, must travel through the forest and overcome its dark powers, like Hansel and Gretel doing battle with the witch. Luke is dragged under the muck and mire of refuse by a snake-like creature and nearly crushed by the enclosing walls of this container for waste, but survives by his quick thinking; he destroys Imperial fighters and fires the shot that destroys the Death Star. With each encounter of Luke's skills versus the monsters of the evil Empire he grows stronger. He will need this added strength, for the final

battle will be with the devil himself: Vader.

The return part of Luke's first cycle as a developing hero is that he has helped to save the Rebel Alliance from defeat. And mostly he has gained some mastery over the Force. It is this development which allows Luke to be successful and such a welcomed asset to his people.

The second cycle and second departure to adventure begins when Luke travels to Yoda's world to undergo arduous training to develop his skills as a Jedi knight to their fullest. He is put through all sorts of tests: physically, he must develop strong, flexible muscles and endurance. He learns to direct the Force with more accuracy and greater effect by concentration and mental discipline. When Yoda levitates and moves Luke's sinking ship to dry land, Luke learns that the limits to life are within his own mind. Luke's impatience and ambition often interfere with smooth transitions from one stage of his journey to the next, although this is quite common among hero figures.

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*Luke Skywalker is the living archetype who integrates his psyche, and extends himself to a galaxy of possibilities.*

Luke's second initiation begins when his friends are captured by Darth Vader and their lives threatened. When Luke learns that his friends are in trouble, he decides, against the better judgment of Yoda, to come to their rescue. Yoda fears that Luke is too impatient and that his skills are not developed sufficiently to confront an ominous presence such as Vader. Luke believes that he can manage himself well and departs to help his friends. Leia and Chewbacca manage to escape, but Han Solo is put into carbon freeze. Luke is not able to help him because he has been put to the test with Vader and lost a hand. However, he does not succumb to the dark side, and refuses to join Vader.

Luke's second return is different from the first cycle in that Luke is returning not only with victories over the Empire and Vader, but is bringing back to the world that which is most important, himself. Luke has developed self-

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knowledge through his ordeals as a Jedi and will need these skills of intuition and insight to train the next Jedi, his sister.

The archetypes abound in this myth and have many roles to play to complete the story about the life of this hero. But his journey is not complete until he slays the biggest monster. This is Vader, who happens to be his father, a former Jedi turned evil. Gordon writes that Vader is a "source of demonic energy," and represents the possibility for evil in Luke (*Empire*, 314-15). It is at this meeting that Luke well might be persuaded to identify with the dark side of the Force and go his father's way.

Luke has learned from his encounters with Vader that "the Dark Side of the Force can 'consume' him if he is not careful" (Gordon, 202). His father is really the shadow part of himself. Luke fights him but refuses to kill him, because he knows there is good still in him. However, the confrontation between father and son, and the loss of Luke's father's hand, nearly causes his own death (Wyatt, 607). The shadow is too powerful to confront casually. Luke cannot destroy his own dark side, but must integrate it.

Vader's white "pit" of a head reminds the audience of the tender, quiet person with whom Vader had refused to identify (Wyatt, 607). Luke actually turns his father back to identifying with the good side of the Force just before his father relinquishes his spirit and dies. The visual image accompanying this moment is rather poignant, because Luke is shown carrying his father "on his shoulders out of the wreckage of the past" (Wyatt, 606). The next time Vader appears, he is in an ethereal realm with the other Jedi masters. Vader's real name "Anakin Skywalker" suggests that he will be reunited to the good side of the Force. Anakin means "and again" I can be one who walks in the sky—above the shadow of darkness. Vader does not die, but is transformed into an ally.

The anima is personified in the character of Princess Leia. She is introduced to the audience as an arrogant, self-centered woman who expects everyone to bow to her every wish. As Leia observes the unselfish acts of those around her—including the brash Han Solo, who like Leia is out for himself but changes into a courageous, unselfish hero in his own right—she too begins to change. She moves from an antagonist to Han to being his girlfriend. Her love

for Han is evident when she risks her life to save him after he has been given to Jabba the Hut. Her feelings for Luke change from one who is in competition with him (sibling rivalry) to one who intuitively knows Luke is in trouble and demands that the escaping spacecraft return to rescue him.

Telepathy in this film is common among people who have close emotional and biological ties, and later it is revealed that Leia is indeed Luke's sister. Yet Luke's anima seems to project less onto any woman and more onto his chthonic environments in which he lives and develops. He is the savior of the Mother archetype much as people today are learning to appreciate their Mother Earth. The strong anima-animus interplay occurs between Leia and Han. They are the princess and knight who are drawn to each other.

The animus archetype is worn by Han and Luke. Han is the spacejock, the flamboyant vagabond who thinks himself to be a lady's man, thus his self-assuredness that Leia is very fond of him—which at first Leia denies, because she is too involved with herself and her own projection of meeting the perfect "macho" man. When Han and Leia's projections begin to lack intensity and the two of them incorporate psychological material into their psyches, they see each other for who each is and just happen to like what they see. Luke too is a macho figure, who is even referred to as a knight. What more could any princess want? Except, in this case, the true knight is her brother, thus a projection onto him could not work. Han is the next likely and suitable candidate for Leia's unconscious to seek out.

The self archetype is the most powerful force in Luke's life. And the self is personified in the characters of Obi-Wan and Yoda, the two most integrated personalities in the tale. They are Luke's guiding light, his conscience, source of inspiration and example of what can be done. In fact, they act as the *daimon* or "inner guru" who show Luke the way (von Franz, 150). It is not a coincidence that Yoda lives on a swamp planet that is primitive in appearance. Yoda is an integrated mother-father archetype and a transpersonal entity who speaks the collective voice that changes worlds (Neumann, *Origins*, 174). His home is the archaic realm from which the archetypes emerge and the place of Luke's most necessary

training. It is the center out of which Luke emerges a more integrated personality. ■

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# Myths, Dreams and Movies

## Exploring the Archetypal Roots of Cinema

*Keith Cunningham*

There is a festival time in the soul. We dress ourselves up and jump from profane time, time as linear continuation, 9 to 5, week in week out, into sacred time. In sacred time, as Mircea Eliade has called it, we enter the flight of mythic fantasy. We enter again the old tales, we live again the high adventure of the soul. Everything becomes fluid in a shifting landscape: we are Hercules as much—or as little—as our existential selves. We are here and we are there. They are both part of the same illusion. They are both masks of what Schopenhauer called the Will and Freud called the id: the “it” that animates us.

During festival time, even in the profane setting of the movie theater, the soul is prepared to be taken back to its grounding. People who make movies understand that there is a Dionysian impulse there. To lose ourselves. To enter the primal world of the primal scene and thus to become immortal. To melt for a time into the original void. The festival is always a time of eros and license where we permit ourselves, if only in play, experiences and feelings which in the daily grind of profane time are safely locked away.

But even in festival time our attitudes determine the quality of the experience. Our consciousness of our participation in the game—in the illusion, in the complex ability to be simultaneously passionately involved and reflectively detached that is the true play state—determines whether we learn the lesson of the myth or whether we remain “as children” in relation to the primal powers. Certainly a part of us wishes to remain innocent, naive. A part of us is eternally the rube at the carnival side show. But even the cinema as entertainment needs to not be taken naively. What we think we comprehend while sitting in the movie theater is but the shadow of the full experience. Our feelings about peeking behind the sideshow wizard’s magic curtain are quite ambivalent: resistance and fascination. The image of the “Magic Theater” from Hesse’s *Steppenwolf* naturally comes to mind.

### 1. THE MOVIE HOUSE AND PLATO'S CAVE

The scene opens on a movie theater. You’re waiting in line to get in. The act of going to the theater is itself a kind of ritual: a profane ritual. It is profane in that its symbolic dimension is

implicit or unconscious. But all the aspects of ritual are present. Waiting in line already begins to put the ego on hold. There's nothing to do while waiting in line. Individual will goes into the background, and your mind becomes more open to random impressions. Step by step you approach the threshold to the interior, both of movie house and of the self. You pass the narrow opening where a threshold guardian requires you to make a sacrifice: seven or eight

dollars or whatever it is nowadays.

Inside the lobby, the antechamber, is where ritual foods are served. These foods are the nectar of special occasions, full of the milk and honey our tribal ancestors found in the desert. The buttered popcorn, Milk Duds, and Jordan almonds are not part of our daily diet (or were not until our society adopted the "every day's a holiday" attitude toward sugar and we started watching our movies at home). "Letting our-



PhotoCollage by Ray Grasse



selves go" here at the threshold to the theater is part of the general loosening of consciousness and lowering of the mental threshold that opens the floodgates of fantasy.

Finally you come into the theater itself. There is a melee, which means a mixup or state of confusion. You seldom get exactly the seats you want. You become part of a crowd, surrounded by strangers, each of them likewise alone in the crowd. All facing the same direc-

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tion. And now the lights go down, the room darkens; the ego disappears. You're in the primordial cavern, and it's dark.

From somewhere above and behind, a light shines. Images appear on the screen and you are carried away. For two hours you live the life of Scarlet O'Hara, Travis Bickle, or a Mutant Ninja Turtle. Vicariously, you lead a higher life full of drama and significance, life distilled and compressed to its essential conflict, its essential gestures.

But there's nothing there! No thing at all. The world that seems so real to us during the liminal period we're in the movie theater is, in fact, simply made up of shadows cast by light passing through the chemical emulsion of the film, which travels through the projector in a mechanical sequence of 24 still images per second. The sound is provided by amplified variations in electromagnetic flux. And so this is a primal world made up of light and dark, of electromagnetic reality. We are in Plato's Cave.

We are thrown into the archetype. Odysseus was also in a cave when crossing into the unknown, the cave of the cyclops (or "sun-eye"). The story tells us that when Polyphemus asked his name, he replied "I am No Man." The prisoners in Plato's Cave cannot turn their heads and see the source of the shadow-play. They cannot know themselves. The source is behind them, on their blind side, which is to say in the unconscious. What is played out on the movie screen is an icon, an "eidolon," a representation. But a representation of what? The naive spectator is the prisoner.

There is a Zen koan which seems to have been especially created for the filmmaker. It poses the problem of Plato's Cave in another way. Two monks, one older and one a novice, are walking in the garden of the temple. It is a breezy day, and the prayer flags are flying. The novice monk cries out enthusiastically, "The flags are moving!" The older monk, wanting to show his expertise in the Dharma, moves quickly to correct him: "No, not flags are moving, wind is moving."

Now, in these stories the old gardener always seems to appear, and this one has been listening to the two monks from behind the hedge. He emerges suddenly before them with the laugh of a titan and says, "Not flag is moving, not wind is moving. Mind is moving!"

This is Plato's Cave, and it is also the

movie theater. The naive, passive spectator in us wants to say cowboys and Indians are moving on the screen, but in fact there is nothing moving on the screen but patterns of light and shadow. So we could say, "Not cowboys, but film emulsion is moving through the movie projector." And the old gardener would have to jump out and confront us once again: "Not cowboys moving, not film moving, but Mind is moving."

The movement of Mind is behind the play of shadows. Jung once commented in a seminar that the Shadow is just the entire unconscious. And the unconscious is the ground of all experience. It is the labyrinth we wander in; it is Plato's Cave. The gods create the illusions, that play of shadows on the cavern wall. Yet even they, in the Greek mythology, are subject to higher laws: *moira*, fate. Psychologically we prefer to call the gods archetypes, dominants of the unconscious. As though by the trick of a name we could contain the influences they exert upon our lives. A rose is a rose. . . . Yet the archetypes derive their energy from a source which cannot even be symbolized. Joseph Campbell has said that myth is the penultimate language: the ultimate is silence.

In the drama on the screen which is an analogy and compression of the audience's own situation, the hero is also wandering. He is also in a labyrinth, expressed as movement through space or as movement into dramatic complication, into the knot of the drama. In the Greek drama, it is the gods who are tying the knot. Or they are drawing the net, and man is the catch. Always at issue is man's relation to Being. Is he going to remain a dreamer in the cavern, repeating the round of illusions and pleasure-principle fantasies forever, or is he going to recognize the dynamic patterns behind the scenes which govern his own life—and perhaps recognize in the end his unity with the source of light behind those puppet-figures of the gods?

It is always a question of the right relationship to Being. The drama is itself a symbol, unfolding in time, of the way to right relationship. The dramatic hero, like the dream ego, acts as our magic double, inhabiting the compressed underworld of the drama, subjected to trials and experiencing incredible delights for our sake. For the sake of our waking up. We can't just be the rubes gawking at the sideshow.

To wake up we have to peek behind the magic curtain and see the structure of magic: the internal structure of which drama as symbol is made.

## 2. THE ARCHETYPES AND DRAMATIC FORM

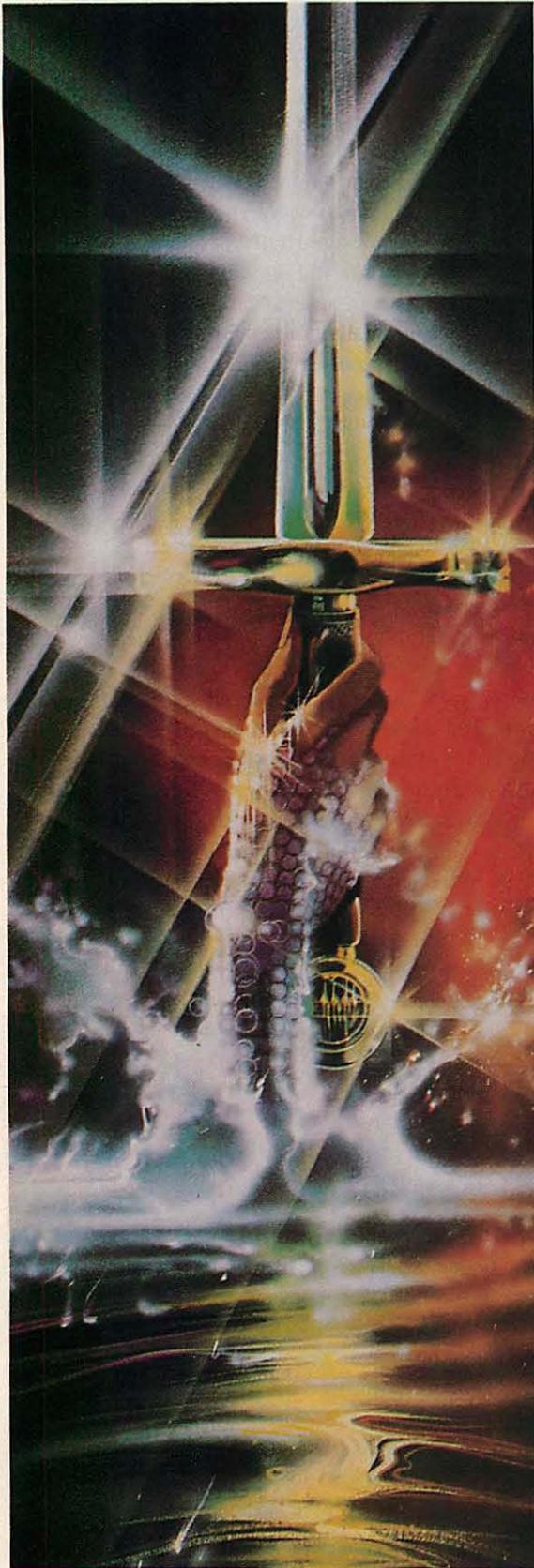
Dramatic form is itself a symbol. Its elegant form speaks to us nonverbally through the meaning of its internal rhythm. There are two faces to this rhythm. In fact, a movie or theater play is made up of several layers of harmonically, holonomically connected rhythms. But for us the two faces or aspects most directly connected with the story we're developing here are the Hero's Journey, identified and enunciated by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, and what we call Aristotle's Plot Curve. Dramatic form is a dialogue of these two, the eternal and the temporal.

Campbell expresses the Hero's Journey through the image of the circle, the cycle, a mandala unfolding in time. The hero's journey revolves around "the still point": his own essence as Will. It is the umbilicus where he is connected back to the light outside the cave. The image of the eternity of prenatal life, before duality, before the Fall. Heroes' journeys are stories of new birth, second birth. They are initiation stories that take as their pattern the image of the human life cycle. The hero myth is a symbolic image of the successful human life.

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*In the movies, "Not cowboys moving, not film moving, but Mind is moving." Mind moves behind the play of shadows.*

The major phases of the hero's journey outline an initiation process. The first phase Campbell calls the Separation. We are to be separated from who we have been, from our outmoded or infantile state. We are stuck; the life in us is stuck. Normally at times of change we experience anxiety and resistance, the fear of the unknown. The urge for change is the stirring of the id, the "it," the Self inside us. Usually it is announced from within, either as a Call to Adventure, or as a blunder or coinci-



Poster Art from "Excalibur," ©1981 Orion Pictures

dence (or synchronicity). Alternatively, the call may come from outside, as an assignment.

In movies, the "calling" of the hero normally appears within the first ten minutes, and it creates a compelling identification between the one who receives it and ourselves in the audience. The opening of *Midnight Cowboy* is the classic example of the self-announced call: Joe Buck tells us directly the new life he intends for himself. *Tootsie* shows us a calling which grows in force as it meets opposition; while *The Wizard of Oz* gives us a combination of self-announced calls and blunders. Whether the call comes from within or without, its larger function is to catalyze the energies of the individual in preparation for deep change, to throw us into the unknown.

We have crossed a threshold. In the archetype of the Hero's Journey, growth is not a question of adding a new skill or degree. It is not a question of accumulation but of revolution, revolution in the deep structure of the psyche. Death is demanded for rebirth. And so the second stage in Campbell's model is Descent. In the Hero's Journey, as in the initiation process, we *descend* to the meeting with the god. The fairy-tale hero—Hansel and Gretel, or the Pretty Wassilissa—must be lost in the woods, must come to the hut of the witch, must carry the cowshit, separate the bad grain, and so on. The ego is tested, humiliated, and crucified. This means that the "I" we thought we were is shown to be illusory, transitory. The magic curtain is pulled aside. The experience of death replaces neurotic anxiety. And here is where the initiation takes place.

One of the most significant points of Joseph Campbell's outline of the Hero's Journey is that initiation is not seen as the end goal in itself. It is, in fact, only the midpoint of the journey. Campbell makes the observation that very frequently, as in the case of Dante, people receive their decisive calling or vision in the middle of life. So what are they to do with the remaining forty years? In the myths, this is the stage of the Return. There is another threshold to cross: coming back into the "world" with the new insight, invention or social structure. The revolutionary spirit of the Initiated meets the "jury of sober eyes" of those who have not seen. It is the problem of Tannhauser, and also of Rip Van Winkle who played at bowls with the spirits of the mountain. There is a new set of trials dur-

ing the Return which mirrors the trials of the Descent, and another initiation, pictured as the new king or new kingdom. Ultimately the new king will grow old, the world will become ossified again, and a new hero will have to set out once more to find the springs of life. It is a cycle.

The message of the Hero's Journey as a symbolic form, as an archetype, is that we change continually. Change is the law of life in the field of time and space. By changing we dispel our ignorance of life, of the life which carries us. One of Joseph Campbell's favorite teaching analogies was the light bulb. When the bulb burns out, the janitor throws it away and screws in a new one. Now, do we say this is a new light, or the same light shining from a new source? We die and are reborn out of ourselves: the image of the snake biting his tail. The snake of the Garden, who sheds his skin and throws off death. Simultaneously, the symbol indicates the path of change and imparts to us a kind of courage to change and desire for change. The hero story seeks out all of the stuck places, agitating and encouraging. It carries the force of instinct, seeking to realign us again within our own instinctual life, our grounding.

Aristotle's Plot Curve is not a cycle. It is not the eternal round. It looks at the same process of growth from the point of *how it feels* to those in crisis and transformation. The myth keeps our sensibilities engaged on the level of a contemplation: the mind is raised above its personal condition to view "the grave and constant in human suffering" in terms of its divine meaning. Drama, or the dramatic aspect of the double-faced symbol, immerses us in the emotional experience of growth through crisis. We live the life of the movie or stage hero much closer to our ego than we do that of the mythic or epic hero. The more we approach the level of myth, the more the characters take on general outlines, expressing what is generally true in the human condition. Yet the universal law is embedded in each particular as well. We all live the life of Oedipus or Sleeping Beauty. And so Aristotle's analysis of dramatic structure reveals features that are exactly analogous to the stages of the Hero's Journey.

Aristotle appears to have been the first to analyze the structure of drama. The general observations he made in the fourth century B.C. are still valid when looking at today's films. He noted that drama follows a curve of rising

dramatic intensity leading to a dramatic climax, the duration of the total drama being about two hours. To him we owe the principles of dramatic unity: unity of place, unity of time, and unity of action. The drama must drive toward a single goal.

For our current discussion, what is important is to look at the features of the dramatic structure, the underlying morphology that is as necessary and as typical as the inner morphology of the human body. Aristotle's opening, the Establishing Scene in film-story terms, corresponds to the Separation phase of the Hero's Journey, and serves the same functions.

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*Change is the law of life in the field of time and space. By changing we dispel our ignorance of the life which carries us.*

It focuses us on a status quo that is going to be broken during the course of the drama. This dramatic status quo symbolizes the illusory ego, which thinks itself fixed and permanent. The protagonist will be the person in the system who is ready to change. Conrad in *Ordinary People* is having nightmares; his old ego is already broken down and he is inwardly ready for change. His mother and father may have constructed a tremendous defense machinery, but Conrad is going to send it all tumbling down.

We come into the drama seeing an old way that is no longer working. It may simply have been outgrown: Dorothy is too big in her spirit for her little Kansas home. Drama tells us that growth requires crisis: death and rebirth again, this time on the level of emotional experience. Dramatic form is an image of growth through crisis. The Establishing Scene ends with a Crisis which will send the protagonist over a threshold. From this point there can be no going back, much though the character may wish to.

The Crisis raises dramatic and moral questions which will hang in our liminal consciousness during the film. At the heart of these questions is the tension in what my partner Thomas

Schlesinger describes as "the Need versus the Mode." This is an idea that comes from the screenwriter Waldo Salt. The character's mode, how he or she goes about trying to get things done, is at odds with his universal need. The universal need is the character's destiny, what he needs to become fully human. It may be need for love, for individuation, to express oneself, to see things as they really are. The inadequate mode is the prison of Plato's Cave. The prisoners are deluded; they cannot turn their heads. The universal need is the long-desired light. It is locked in the unconscious, and only those specific actions of the drama can bring it out and set it into operation. Drama is the Prince's kiss that will wake Sleeping Beauty. It is initiation, initiation for the character, and through our identification, initiation for us in the audience.

John Book, the tough, even brutal, cop in *Witness*, gets himself into a situation where his mode, his "modus operandi" no longer works: he can't go through the system, to the chief of police, because the chief is trying to kill him. He can no longer even be a good cop and protect his witnesses. Wounded, he has to run away from the whole thing. And there in the Amish

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*In the language of film, intrigues and pursuits, car chases and double crosses, all say that "everything is at stake."*

community, like the mythic hero who crosses the threshold to another world, he begins to discover his universal need. Charley, in *Something Wild*, blunders into his adventure with the anima-woman. In the opening scene, we can see that he is pale and flat as a character, an embodiment of a status quo whose life has turned mechanical. His need is to meet that dark brother in the soul which Carl Jung called the Shadow.

Because the hero's mode or self-understanding is inadequate to the present life task, to the antagonistic forces that drive the plot forward, there is dramatic complication. The hero is forced to make greater commitments,

take greater risks, reach deeper into the pool of life-energies. And that response is the source of transformation. The level of dramatic tension rises. Following Aristotle, we term this phase the Rising Action, and it corresponds exactly to the Road of Trials which marks the Descent stage of the Hero's Journey. In the mythic form as symbol it is seen as descent, while in the dramatic form as symbol the energy is rising. It is a necessary paradox. The ego is being prepared for death. The drama-face of the symbol shows us how the movement feels. We feel everything is at stake. In American films, the language for expressing this feeling is a hieroglyphic or picture language of intrigues and pursuits, car chases, stabbings, blackmails, love scenes, and double crosses. They are all ways of saying "everything is at stake."

In the myth, the descent is leading toward the "meeting with the god," the invisible mover of our lives. In the drama, this role is played out principally by the antagonist. The antagonist carries the energies the hero must integrate within him or herself. Put another way, the antagonist shows those energies gone bad, and represents who the hero could become if he or she does not change. Basil Rathbone's Sheriff of Nottingham is the dark mirror image of Errol Flynn's Robin Hood. We can see it as they stare each other down in the climactic duel. John Book could become Paul, the police chief; Captain Willard, in Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, could become Col. Kurtz. Dorothy could even become Miss Gulch if she doesn't realize that fiery libido inside herself, represented in Oz by the ruby slippers.

So the drama moves toward Aristotle's Climax. The dramatic events must bring the issue to a head. The foreplay of tension-building cannot go on forever, but must come to the point where a decisive confrontation between the antagonistic forces will take place, and the dramatic and moral questions posed at the opening will be answered. We have a gut feeling as we approach the climax of a drama. This was especially true of the classical tragedies. We can feel it during that moment in *Macbeth* when the forest appears before the castle in fulfillment of the witches' prophesy. We may feel it as a sinking sensation in the abdomen, or we may feel the hairs stand up on the back of the neck. It is the primitive thing that seizes us in a bullfight at the moment the matador raises the

sword behind the cape. We see reality; we see it coming. We are finally confronted with the "it" living inside us. Aristotle called this moment, just before the climax, the Catastrophe, literally meaning "the downward stroke." The feelings generated are instinctual: "aesthetic instincts," as Joseph Campbell quotes the poet A. E. Housman.

At the Climax we see reality as it is. The mask is pulled off the killer: we discover Norman Bates's mother in the cellar. Of course, this "seeing reality" is vicarious and symbolic. It is an Initiation. It is a dispelling of life-ignorance about ourselves and about the world. It is the moment in the primitive coming-of-age rites when the uncles take off their monster-masks and reveal that it "all was in play." We see behind the magic curtain. Now we can be adults.

But in a movie the climax is also the moment of greatest dramatic tension, of greatest kinetic action, and of closest identification with the character. We are caught in the spectacle of it, entranced, and in no position to reflect. We don't have our personal boundary back yet. We are still in the underworld. Thus, the dramatic structure has a final act, which is analogous to the Return stage of the Hero's Journey. It is variously called the Resolution, the denouement or "untying of the knot," the falling action. It's function is not to tie up all the plot ends, but to "decompress" us and cause us to take the dramatic and moral issues upon ourselves and reflect on them consciously. The magic curtain has been pulled back. We see the Oedipus, the Macbeth, the Colonel Kurtz, the Darth Vader in ourselves. And in the Resolution we have a moment for the wound to heal. A drama is a crisis, and a crisis is a wound. Drama wounds us with knowledge. We cross the return threshold of the movie theater carrying our wound. But the Resolution signals that healing and growth are possible. It offers us a way out of the theater and back to ourselves.

The dramatic form is a dynamic symbolic image of growth through crisis. It is more than a mere representation of conflict. A symbol is not something abstract, though our understanding of it may be. It is energy evoking and transforming, to use a phrase of Joseph Campbell's. The symbolic image stands between the instinctual life of the body and the mind's capacity for abstract thought independent from the body.

To quote Campbell again, "the mind can want things that the body does not want." How are the two to be reconciled? Dramatic form as a symbol orchestrates a feeling experience, orchestrates in fact a sequence of instinctive responses belonging to the fight-flight context of crisis. They are orchestrated into a sublimely reflexive form. The form of the sequence makes reflection on the instinct possible at the same time the instinctive wish is fulfilled.

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we carry our wound, but the  
Resolution signals that healing  
and growth are possible.*

It was my colleague at Columbia College, Chap Freeman, who first pointed out to me that both the shape of the Aristotle Plot Curve and the names of its constituent parts are identical to the shape of the curve of sexual response identified by Masters and Johnson, and to the stages of the sex act. We can look at any romantic encounter in these terms and easily identify the establishing scene, perhaps a seaside, nightclub, or museum; the crisis moment when contact is made and there is no turning back; rising action, the verbal foreplay and deepening involvement; the climax; and of course the falling action. That the drama takes the same form indicates how directly it speaks to the instincts.

But drama was not derived from sex. I think rather that there is a complex of related internal rhythms that have to do with how we structure emotional experience in the nervous system. We are on the boundary between the instinctual and the cognitive. All arts which organize themselves in time: cinema, music, dance, opera, owe their manifest dynamics to this internal metastructure. At the same time we are close to the internal template, now thought to be inherited rather than learned, that makes the recognition of grammatical structures possible. In philosophy, Hegel's sequence of Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis, New Thesis is an expression of this rhythm. And recently the Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz, following the traditions of numerology and the

recent discoveries of physics, identified a similar sequence as among the fundamental properties of the first four integers. This takes us into the rarified zone between mind and matter: number and rhythm as *a priori* structuring principles, Platonic "Ideas." (Mind is moving, but whose mind?)

Thus, behind the dramatic hero on the movie screen there is a mythic hero on the journey of initiation and self-discovery. The image of growth through crisis is conjoined with the image of the perfect human life cycle. Every drama has a mythic dimension. And behind the mythic hero stand the gods and the knot, the nexus, the Gordian Knot of our being in the world, the structure of reality. Drama helps us recognize and come to terms with one of the biggest and most fascinating of all the shadows cast on the wall of Plato's Cave. It is our own image, the shadow of our own humanity.

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*During the movie we've been halfway out of the body. We have to come back to the body and harvest our feelings.*

### 3. AFTER THE LATE SHOW

Closing scene. A better indication of how a film is working on us is how we feel twenty minutes after leaving the theater as opposed to how we feel during the big shootout at the climax. We carry the trance of the film in our bodies for some time, and our eyes are still seeing that other world. After *Star Wars* the parking lot is full of people curling through space in four dimensions. The sense of perception is actually altered by the kinetic impact of that ending. After seeing *Looking for Mister Goodbar* in a mall theater in Dallas, I watched the perplexed and agitated crowd move toward their cars. There was an atmosphere of paranoia as couples stepped gingerly through the parking lot, glancing over shoulders, suddenly uncomfortable in a familiar, banal, everyday space. Or the eyes of people emerging from a horror movie. Or the women who break into sobs after a film like Bergman's *Cries and*

*Whispers*, and who can't say what seized them. Or the body feeling of mystery, of the mystical, that accompanies a film by Tarkovsky or Kieslowski.

During the movie we've been halfway out of the body. We have to come back to the body and harvest the feelings and sensations that have grown in the body. In the Hero's Journey cycle the Initiation is halfway around the circle; in the typical movie the action climax is ten minutes before the end credits roll. We ourselves are carrying the Return stage of the journey. We take on our shoulders the questions and issues that were being carried by the characters we identified with. It does make a difference whether we take the kinetic momentum of the film into ourselves unconsciously or whether we can reflect it back consciously. It is the difference between catharsis and mimesis.

Catharsis was the goal in the ritual theater of the classic tragedy. Catharsis means purging, emptying out. Through the recognition of the Oedipus in ourselves, and *experiencing* this on the level of the emotions and the instinctual sequence, we are released. We are as though freed from the need to act out the tragedy of Oedipus in our own lives. It is an ancient pattern of tension and release. The sex act is sublimated into drama, and the drama is not just a substitute; it is its own reality. The aim of classical drama was to elevate the mind above fear and desire, the fear of death and the desire/compulsion to act out the infantile wish. To be purged of the contamination of death: the idea is to free ourselves from identification with the shadows on the cavern wall, and to be free of that illusion gives access to the light. It is itself a kind of immortality.

The other possibility is mimesis, repetition, acting out. We must recognize that the movies present, through the dramatic compression of reality, a kind of force field which is immensely attractive in itself. The experience is psychologically complex. There is indeed a sequence of instinctual responses constellated. Fight or flight: "early-warning signals of confrontation and desire." Just recently, at the openings of *New Jack City* in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, the audience came ready-primed for mimesis. Within ten minutes of the title sequence pistols opened fire in the theaters themselves. *Taxi Driver*, among other films, has been implicated in the mimetic,



Art by Mike Stopka

“copycat” stimulation of subsequent crimes. The combination of the kinetically active dramatic form and the archetypal image may be overwhelming to some egos already under internal stress.

At the same time, dramatic mimesis has its positive and life-giving aspect. The dramatic hero becomes role model and guide. When Norman O. Brown, in *Love's Body* (p. 50), says, “Wandering heroes are phallic heroes, in a permanent state of erection,” he is indicating how the figure of the hero carries libido. The symbol is energy-evoking and channeling. The hero (male or female) as a kind of dream-double of ourselves opens up potentials for action which for the ego are still unconscious. It can be a breath of life and a song of freedom. Dionysus, not Apollo, was the patron god of the ancient theater festival. Drama has an inherently Dionysian aspect: it wants to break down all the walls, the limits, of who we think we are.

For a society like our own, mechanized, rationalized, and living far from its base in the instincts, the cinema can indeed be both a potent medicine and an intoxicating drug. The technical mastery of the American film industry has taken us beyond dramatic mimesis to exact duplication, the imitation of life: the precise experience of a bullet passing through a body, of a car out of control hurtling through a crowd of pedestrians, of a village destroyed by napalm. I have picked these examples because the simulacrum includes an actual kinaesthetic mimesis. We are out of the body and flying. Television adds the complication of out-of-body flight to simultaneous *realities* around the world, and the need to distinguish those from their identical dramatic counterfeits.

These are thoughts for the long walk home after the late show. For the sake of things let's say walking: walking too has its symbolic function. Imagine a midwestern farm town with one old cinema on main street, something out

of *Last Picture Show*. You go out. The streets are dusty. Nighthawks are chasing insects above the treetops. Gradually you come back to the body. Catharsis means to come back down to yourself, to regain a proper balance and proper relationship. In the ancient and primitive initiation rituals, there was an organic integrity of things which held the magic flight of the soul on course. It was understood that too much psychic inflation leads to the sin of Phaeton,

---

*A movie is such a compressed  
experience that it needs reflection.  
What images is the psyche stringing  
like dark beads?*

who thought he could control the chariot of the Sun, or to the fall of Icarus. By integrity of things I mean that the ritual tools and monster masks were constructed from the materials of the immediate environment. They were shaped by the hands that were to hold them, using tools made by those same hands. Initiation was into a community of individuals living bodily together: those were the uncles behind those masks! In the Lakota tradition, it was the paternal grandmother who would make, from dried pieces of her own skin, the rattle which the young boy took on his vision quest. Traditional ritual is always grounded in a heightened sense of kinship.

After the movie we come back to the body. The movie presents itself to us kinetically: kinoscope, kino, cine-, the movies. Our conscious minds are so busy during the film reacting to what is happening on the screen that we don't have much energy left to be in touch with our own thoughts or feelings. Ten or twenty minutes after leaving the theater we can feel the body again. Or we stay in flight and rush off to the next stimulus. A movie is such a compressed experience that it needs reflection. Even a bad movie. What do we do with the physical excitement we are carrying, or our fear, or our erotic feelings, our urge to cry, to go alone into the night, to cling to someone? What images is the psyche already stringing like dark beads onto the thread of the drama?

Dreams also present themselves in a dra-

matic form: the dream ego is busy chasing or being chased. Yet in the end the dream remains with us as a static symbol, a picture of a total situation in the psyche. It stands there as an objective fact of the psyche. And it is we who have to approach it from different points of view. A great religious symbol, such as the Crucifixion or the Tree of Life, is capable of being freshly interpreted over and over again. Mind is moving. The symbolizing function of the psyche draws a line to and through the archetype, a line that disappears into the light beyond. All experience in the psyche, which is all there is, has a symbolizing dimension. When we can process consciously the kinetic impact of the movie and ground it back to our own internal feeling and image life, what we are left with is the drama as symbol, as doorway to the mystery of ourselves. We are connected back through the symbol and are no longer the rubes just staring at the shadows on the wall.

On the walk home the night is starry. Tonight's movie was only so-so. A little long-winded. I don't know what he saw in her, she was too "pretty." Now that I think of it, she reminds me of. . . . But that ended badly. We never understood why it didn't work out. But the way he got up there on that bridge and fought sword to sword with a hundred guys at once. . . . It makes me feel like maybe taking up a martial art, just to be able to move like that. And the way they finally discovered each other after all those years really got to me. I mean with night falling and him dying like that. But what's the connection between that old love of mine, this image of romantic death, and my sudden impulse to be a warrior? You know, I think I'm gonna take a walk. I'll walk to the edge of town and listen to the wind in the corn stalks. I'm gonna listen to the corn grow. And maybe I'll just keep on going. ■

*[This article is excerpted from a book-in-progress of the same title.]*



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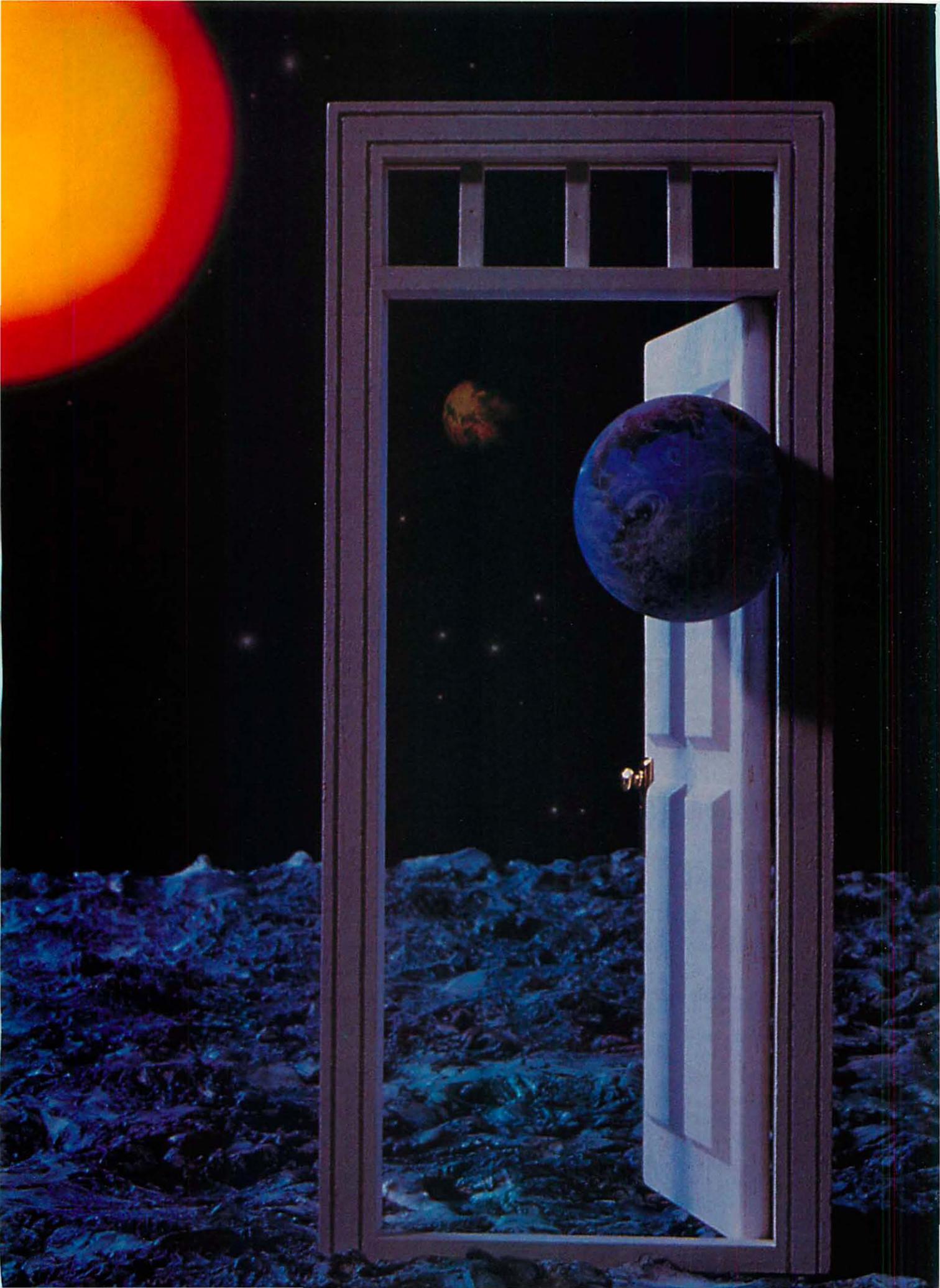
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# BIRTHING INTO SPACE!

*Austin A. Mardon*

**M**y personal philosophy of space is idiosyncratic and participatory, and includes a cursory description of the aspects of homo sapiens' evolutionary purpose in going into space. I consider the womb symbol as a central component of the exploration of space within exploratory ships. Moving from the individual experience to an understanding of how humanity fits into the cosmos, it examines the city in space,<sup>1</sup> the most common collective social entity that humans have created, as space creates a collective form of existence where the actions of one affect all. The dialogues that have always led to inquiry will still exist, except they will be applied to a rarely-experienced environment: space.

In my understanding, the exploration of space is the process of dispersal of populations of human beings across the face of the globe over the last one million years. Human beings originally radiated from one of the tropical rain forests in the equatorial regions into every ecosystem and locale on the globe over a one million year period of geological and evolutionary change. Even in later prehistoric times, we have had experiences of humans exploring and settling new lands as the Polynesians did in the Pacific.<sup>2</sup>

The movement toward the stars is merely an extension of this dispersal and movement into new environments that our species, the human race, has been conducting throughout the Pleistocene epoch. This movement within our time has changed from a dispersal, or Dias-

pora, contained and defined on a two-dimensional matrix, to a potential living matrix that is a three-dimensional reality of existence. Space is merely an increase in the tableau size to include areas that are not on our globe within our habitated ecumene. The movement out into space becomes the movement of our species to a new environment through the assistance of technology. The same ability, a unique ability at that, to assemble increasingly complex tools is the mental and dexterous trait that allowed us to move into increasingly hostile environments and compound our density of human occupancy on the face of the globe.

No utopian elements exist in our movement off the planet's surface into a new unknown locale. This movement has no special meaning to it beyond the biological drive that brought us down out of the trees at the beginning of our species' evolution. This point in time is like when the Olduvai bi-facial hand axe was first used; it is the ultimate point at which we diverged as a distinct species from the rest of the animal kingdom on the earth. The use of technology in the building of space habitats and rockets is the same use of a human-created

---

**Austin A. Mardon**, M.Sc., A.S.M., has participated in several scientific expeditions, and has published some 50 research articles and several books. He said he "has been kicked out of several Ph.D. programs," but "has received a 'Ph.D.' in reality while at his Antarctic fieldcamp." He lives in Alberta, Canada.

technology as the use of stone and bone tools by our early ancestors on the Serrengetti plain of Africa. The same emotions, dreams, and symbol-making existed a million years ago. The earliest burial site that has been found is a Neanderthal site that dates to approximately 150,000 years ago. It would be the height of hubris and folly to think that what we have done with our machines was any harder than what the generations of humans did before our modern mega-machine times.

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*Human fertility will not exist in the environment of outer space, at least under current biological paradigms.*

As we explore space, we will have to look at how space changes our culture within the human experience. One interesting feature of the outer space environment is that females of our species can not reproduce there, as gravity is needed to differentiate growing human fetuses at several important stages. Human fertility will not exist in outer space, at least under current biological scientific paradigms.<sup>3</sup> This might mean that outer space in a non-gravity environment is and will become the ultimate symbol of the barren wasteland of our near-term space-faring culture. Males will be able to function in a non-gravity environment, but reproducing couples, especially pregnant women, will have to move to a gravity environment. Pilots exposed to high acceleration forces before insemination statistically produce more female children than otherwise would occur. This is an example of how environment can affect gender in human societies. Astronauts as a group already have been differentiated by sex.<sup>4</sup> The fact that higher order animals can not differentiate space could affect and split gender roles within our species even more than they have been up to this point in our history.

While our movement outward as a species has been fraught with challenges, the individual experiences of space will influence and radically change the cultural experiences of humans. For example, the spaceship, as a carry-

ing vehicle of humans to other places, can and likely will be seen as the symbol of rebirth or birth itself by the crew. The humans will be floating in an "amniotic" fluid called air in an artificial womb of steel and modern technology, connected by various umbilical cords to the life-giving force of the womb/craft. The humans inside this womb are completely dependent for their ongoing existence on the womb. Several years later, they will eventually emerge from the craft in a new environment and life experience, just as babies emerge bewildered by their new environment but observant of all that they can survey. Many societies perceive a transition from one period of life to another through rites of passage. In space, the environment will not become a symbol of the female persona, Mother Earth, or a set of transcultural symbols. Rather, those human-created technological enclaves—or oases of potential habitation—will become even larger wombs of human existence outside the barren wasteland of the void, the airlessness of outer space.

The contrast of the void—the desolate environment outside the airlock—and the gas-filled areas of human habitation will become distinct. The "areas of life and death" will become more distinct to those who exist in space than the distinction of hearth from barren heath on earth. Paradise will exist inside the airlock and hell will exist a few inches away on the exterior, a duality of existence that does not happen on our planet. This duality of the human-supported existence will feed those aspects of pre-space global culture that have developed elaborate dual explanations of human nature. This sharp contrast of the life or death environment will affect how we see human nature.

The only equivalent cultural experience on earth that distinguishes the oasis and the desert are the polyglot of cultures that arose out of the semitic cultures and races of the Middle East. The Garden of Eden was the proverbial garden oasis in the desert, and the hell on earth was the desert.<sup>5</sup> This created extreme tendencies in the cultures that were spawned on the rim of the desert to see two sides of life as they saw two aspects to the world around them. This duality of oasis of the floating habitat and the nothingness of the outland might create a change in cultures that will be formed in space. This symbol of the womb will lead those occupiers of space-enclosed environments to look at gender

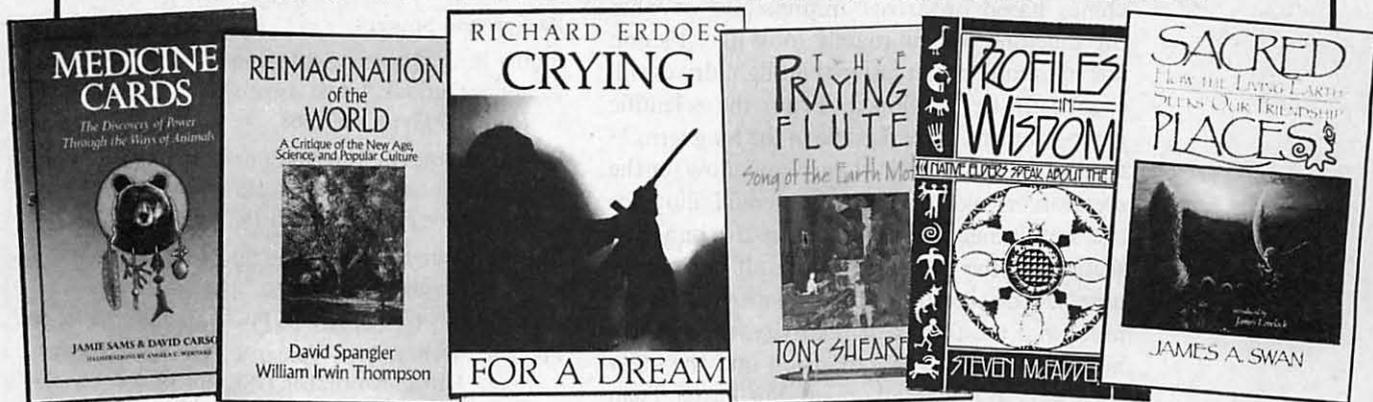
dimorphisms and distinctions, and to extrapolate these distinctions onto the environment as symbols. The symbol of the womb as analogy to the space habitat leads to the most unique productive collective experiment of humanity, that being the city, the *polis*.

When we as a species move out into space, we will move as collective groups, just as the early Greeks moved out into the Western Mediterranean Sea in the Early Golden Age of the Hellenes. Individuality likely will not exist as it exists on earth, as the life-support environment will become much more fragile than it is on earth. Pollution will become an instantaneous threat to life of all space polis occupants within the city. The womb, not as the symbol of the voyage vessel but as the city-nurturing vessel, will become dominant. This will mean that group dynamics will have to be understood and this might lead our species to a saner means of resolving our various problems. This, if any, is the "good" gift that space might give humanity on earth. It would be very ironic if we were to leave the planet merely to return to the place from which we started and have our social struggles begin all over again.

It is to be hoped that human beings would move out as collective representatives of our species, not as representatives of assorted tribes defined by the dirt we were born on. This is how I personally felt when I found my first 2.1 kilogram lunar meteorite; I was representing the human race by collecting a "fallen star." Those who voyage to discover those fragments of the stars should, as the saying goes, "go for all of humankind," not just for themselves. We represent others when we explore, and are merely a vessel for the society on the edge of our understanding of the world, whether it is in a spatial or wisdom-based analog.

The womb as an image will become the image of the structure that humans live within in space. While this is not necessarily synonymous with current female gender roles, it will lead to a symbolic relationship of human to environment that has not previously been encountered individually or collectively. Societies must nurture and cooperate internally rather than compete within their own structures. When this comes about, it will be tied to the reality of an existence within a womb, however large, of steel and technology, floating in the middle of a

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frozen void which may be the embodiment of various ancient visions of hell in the afterlife. Our heaven and our hell will both be within our grasp in habitations in space, as they were when we became sentient.

The vision that exists for humankind in the short term is substantially different from the far-term future. This far-term future will depend entirely on what we are able to deduce from the theory of relativity and the environment of the universe. Science will be our light to obtain the stars and even the vision that we hold in our hearts.

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*Star Trek's fictional images are not far from science's postulations; indeed, fiction may drive stellar development.*

The visions that we see in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and other fictional images of our stellar future are not far from what has been postulated. Indeed, the fiction may even be driving our path of stellar development. Many space engineers create their designs and machines based on artists' impressions<sup>6</sup> of what the machine will ultimately look like. Fiction has maintained that faster-than-light drives will eventually be developed. From the scientific perspective, they are feasible in the long term.<sup>7 8</sup> General relativity field theory can allow for the creation of "wormholes"<sup>9</sup> that would allow for the simultaneous connection of disconnected sections of the space continuum. If our species unlocks the secrets of the formation of wormholes and the theory of relativity, the sky will not be the limit. The expansion into the inner solar system is a small dream, but Faster Than Light Drive (FTLD) is the hope to truly see the stars. Otherwise, we will move away from the solar system at speeds lower than the speed of light, and our evolution as a spacefaring species will be retarded. ■

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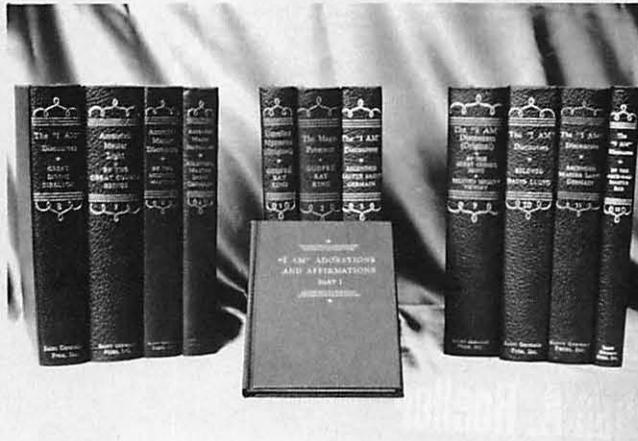
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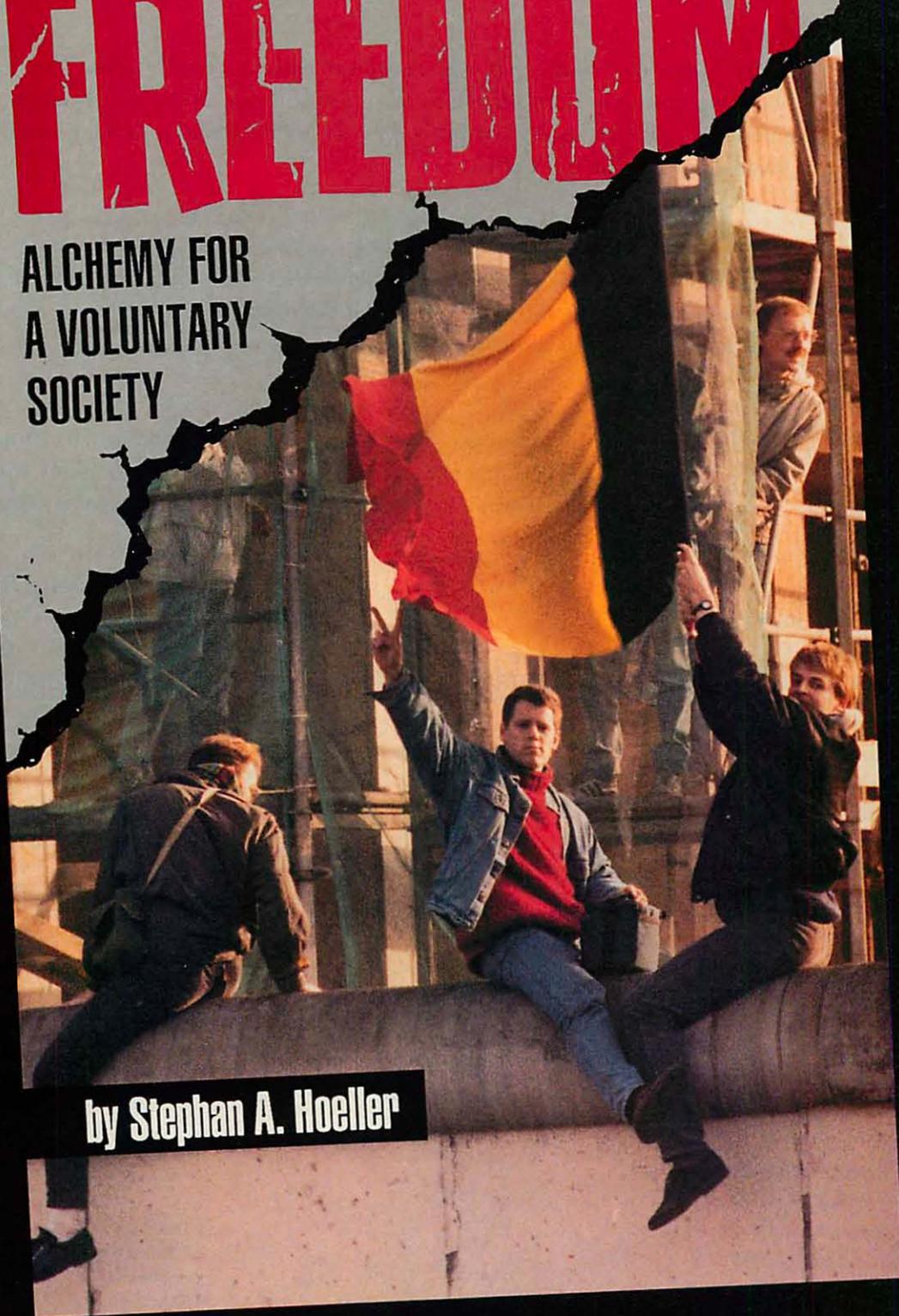
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# Hermetic vs. Puritan America

## Perennial Opposites in Our Society

*Stephan A. Hoeller*

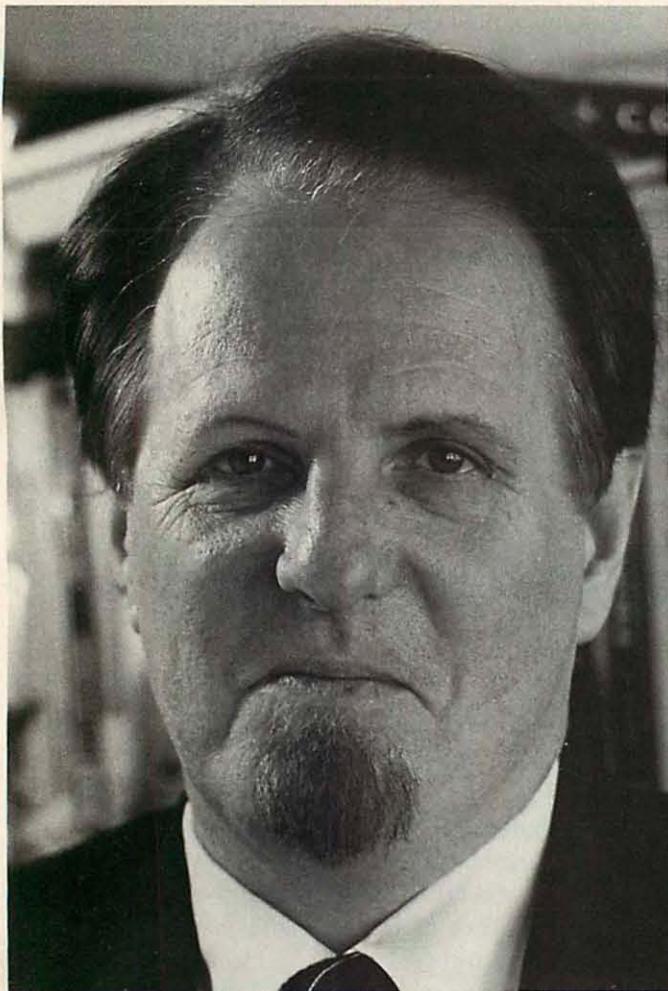
The contemporary social arena of the United States is characterized by a cacophony of competing voices, all claiming to be the authentic, the true voice of this country. On the left of the socio-political spectrum, we hear many voices heavily colored by late nineteenth and early twentieth century European thought. I am referring here primarily to the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels in its several variants, some amplified by Lenin. Born of the conditions of nineteenth century western Europe and championed by impoverished, restive intellectual immigrants to the United States from various European Marxist thought has become well-nigh normative for the American Left. Although the American Communist movement never attained to a status of even minor importance, and the various professedly socialist groups remained on the fringe of society, Marxism and crypto-Marxism have been very much with us and are in no serious danger of disappearing. One is tempted to repeat the tragi-comic jest that in a short time Communism and its allies will have totally disappeared from the face of the earth, except at certain American universities and in some circles of New York intellectuals.

On the opposite end of the spectrum we find a frequently confused melange of nineteenth century Protestant fundamentalist Christianity, liberally mixed with the economic out-

look of the Industrial Revolution. As the Left hides behind shibboleths of concern for the disadvantaged and other *human* values, so the Right spouts clichés of tradition and *family* values, by which it means anything from the work ethic of the last century to sexual repression and the bashing of almost anyone who disagrees with these positions.

Between these two poles there are many shades of opinion and allegiance, leaning toward one or the other extreme. This heterogeneous mix of positions is in turn encompassed, ameliorated, and to some extent held in check by a system of government, older and wiser than any of the shadings of the socio-political spectrum. However, this governmental structure, composed of a threefold division of power, parceled out between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, functions on the basis of a constitution formulated in the eighteenth century, an era in which the ideologies, allegiances, and foibles of the present society did not exist in any shape or form.

Who or what, then, is the true America? Who speaks for America? Does the land of the free and home of the brave, the land of opportunity, the nation of the Statue of Liberty, have an authentic voice? Or, is the cacophony of voices we hear the only voice of this land and this culture?



**Stephan A. Hoeller, Ph.D.**, is a Gnostic and Jungian scholar whose fourth book, *Freedom: The Alchemy of a Voluntary Society*, will be published by Quest Books in June. This essay, in slightly modified form, will be a chapter in the forthcoming book. Hoeller is associate professor of comparative religions at the University of Oriental Studies in Los Angeles and is director of studies for the Gnostic Society in Los Angeles, a member of the lecturing faculty of the Philosophical Research Society, and a bishop of Ecclesia Gnostica, a church of gnostic descent. Born in Hungary, he has lived in California since 1953.

of the human soul.

The influence of the hermetic mysteries asserted and reasserted itself several times in the history of Western culture. After deeply influencing much of early Christian mystical thought in the first four centuries of the Christian era, it returned again in the fourteenth century and, according to historians such as the late Dame Frances Yates, was responsible for the spiritual aspect of the remarkable cultural phenomenon known as the renaissance. The libraries of hermetic writings, brought to Italy from Byzantium at this time, were translated under the patronage of the Medici princes and their content publicized to the intelligentsia of Europe by such men as Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and Giordano Bruno. Thus the Middle Ages came to an end amidst the clamor of a newly begun hermetic renaissance. (There was another, far less spiritual renaissance also, known as the humanistic renaissance, concerned mainly with the revival of classical learning.)

In my view there are three Americas. The first is ancient, or "Shamanic America," (discussed in another chapter in the book). The second is "Hermetic America," and the third is "Puritan America," which in most respects has acted as the opposing force to Hermetic America, and which we will discuss in this essay.

To gain an understanding of Hermetic America, we need to go back a considerable distance in history, to the Alexandrian period of late antiquity. At this time, the Greek god Hermes, son of Zeus, messenger of the gods and patron of communications and commerce, became fused archetypally with the god-form of the Egyptian god Thoth, lord of mind, scribe of the gods and patron of transformation. The result was the splendid mystery system of gnosis, closely related in spirit to the schools of Christian gnosticism. A large and deeply inspiring body of mystical literature came into existence, all attributed poetically to Hermes-Thoth and designed to facilitate the spiritual insight, transformation, and ultimate liberation

The hermetic renaissance was in full swing when Columbus came to America. It flourished in England at the time of Elizabeth I, and thus the immediate ethnic and cultural parent-country of North America became thoroughly "hermeticized" at the very time when England was beginning her colonial expansion in the world. Thus hermetic and neo-hermetic currents were rapidly transplanted from England to America and were frequently reinforced by the emigration to the New World of European esotericists of a hermetic orientation, such as German Rosicrucians from Central Europe. From Lord Francis Bacon, the Elizabethan scholar and hermetic wise man, to Johannes Kepler, the German astronomer and wizard,

and beyond, esoteric influences, largely of hermetic origin, were brought to bear on the newly founded colonies of North America.

By the time of the American Revolution, the hermetic renaissance was fused to a considerable extent with the originally French movement of the enlightenment. Thus the normative leadership of the American Revolution, particularly its intellectual wing led and exemplified by Benjamin Franklin, was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the hermetic enlightenment.

The founders of the American republic proceeded to create a model government, hitherto unheard of in history, a republic founded on the philosophy of the hermetic enlightenment and expressing, with certain modifications made necessary by the different historical era, the wisdom of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and other hermetic books. This is how Hermes came to America, and this is how we can state today, perhaps to the discomfort of some, that the chief inspirer of the American republic was not Moses or Jesus, and even less Saint Augustine or Saint Thomas Aquinas, but rather Hermes Trismegistus of old. Hermes, who survived among the alchemists, magicians, Rosicrucians, esoteric Freemasons and the French enlightenment philosophers, crossed the Atlantic on his winged sandals and stood with his caduceus in the first assemblies of the Continental Congress.

There is no doubt that mystical, hermetized freemasonry played a great role in the eighteenth century establishment of a hermetic republic on the far side of the Atlantic. The emissary of the revolutionary colonists to France, Benjamin Franklin, was an ardent Freemason who established close links with leading members of that fraternity at the Lodge of the Nine Sisters in France. There he met the aged Voltaire, whose elaborate masonic memorial services Franklin attended later. The Lodge of the Nine Sisters counted among its membership Voltaire, Lafayette, Prince Charles de Rohan, and the philosopher Helvetius. The lodge was noted for its occult and hermetic associations, having been guided at one time by Court de Gebelin, one of the earliest expositors of the esoteric meaning of the Tarot cards. While diplomatic and discreet in openly voicing his deeper convictions, Franklin wrote freely of his hermetic allegiances and connections in his letters.

Of less direct historical relevance, but of even greater symbolic and archetypal interest are two mysterious occurrences connected with the founding of the republic. One concerns the design of the flag of the new colonial armies and state. A mysterious individual, never mentioned by name, but often referred to as "the Professor," is said to have appeared suddenly at a meeting of the committee considering the design of the flag in 1775. He was treated with great respect by Washington and other highly placed personages of the committee, and exchanged certain signs of recognition with Franklin. He lodged for a while with Franklin and reportedly made predictions concerning the forthcoming recognition of the new American nation by the various governments of the world. Even better known are reports of a mysterious stranger who appeared at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, gave a rousing speech, motivated many to sign, but who could not be identified or located afterward. The closing words of his address are said to have been: "God has given America to be free!" It is easy to put down such accounts to romanticism and mystery-mongering. Still, archetypal images often appear in inexplicable and synchronistic situations, and their effect is usually impressive and lasting.

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*The founders of the American republic  
created a model government,  
founded on the philosophy of the  
hermetic enlightenment.*

An unsigned editorial in *The Theosophist* (Madras, India, 1883) attributed to H. P. Blavatsky, states: "Yet it is certain, though this conviction is merely a personal one, that several Brothers of the Rosy Cross . . . did take a prominent part in the American struggle for independence. We have documents to that effect, and the proofs of it are in our possession." Such words, coming from one of the seminal figures of the esoteric revival of the late nineteenth century, who was herself involved in the work and conversant with the traditions of numerous secret societies of a hermetic provenance, should not be dismissed lightly.

## HERMETIC AMERICA

The question now arises: What was the content of this hermetic teaching that was transmitted to the early leadership of the American republic by various circles of the hermetic-Rosicrucian-Masonic enlightenment? To answer this question, I begin with a shorthand account, or abbreviated summary, of those points of the hermetic transmission that have a direct bearing on the founding of the American republic.

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*The hermetic enlightenment felt there was something profoundly wrong with the theologies of all existing denominations.*

The first of the important principles brought into the fabric of the new commonwealth from the hermetic enlightenment was *the separation of church and state*. This principle was unheard of in any part of the world or in any government at the time of the founding of the United States. Under the Constitution, no longer was there an established faith. By law the government completely disengaged itself from the business of religion. The most that religious minorities could expect from other governments up to this time was "tolerance." This meant that, while maintaining an officially established state religion, the authorities would nevertheless patiently endure (*tolerare* means "to endure" in Latin) the exercise of a different religion on the part of some. The prototype of tolerant monarchs was no doubt Frederick the Great, who uttered the famous words, "Let everyone be saved after his own fashion," but who still maintained the established Lutheran Church of Prussia. The founders of the American republic clearly went beyond that.

The popularly advanced theory accounting for the separation of church and state in America is that, since there were several religions present and flourishing in the colonies, it was best to make religion a private matter and thus diffuse potential sectarian dissension. However, in view of the hermetic influences that were brought to bear on the founders, it

might be assumed that this was not the only reason for their attitude. The hermetic enlightenment as a whole was not interested merely in the absence of religious strife; rather, it felt that there was something profoundly *wrong* with the theologies of all existing religious denominations in the culture, and that for this reason, none of them ought to be supported. The issue was not so much that one did not know which of the religions was right, but rather that one knew, or at least suspected, that all of them were wrong.

One of the major disagreements between the hermetic enlightenment on the one hand and the various denominations of Christianity and Judaism on the other concerned the God concept. All denominations of Christendom at that time, as well as followers of Judaism, were adherents of *theism*, a belief in a personal God, creator, maintainer, and judge of the world, who is personally involved in the management of creation at every moment of time. In the eyes of the hermetic thinkers of the enlightenment, this concept had shown itself to have not only theoretical flaws, but also to be responsible for certain practical ills, such as the divine right of rulers, the presence of religious law within the fabric of society, and many more. If God was actively involved in all the affairs of the world and of humans, it was easy to envision that this same God instituted the existing governmental and social structure and that the state ought to enforce God's ordinances in order to please Him. By their separation of church and state, we can infer that the founders of the United States were not in favor of such a God.

The men and women of the enlightenment were usually not theists, but deists. Deists accepted a Supreme Being as the ultimate origin and the final destiny of all beings and of the universe, but they were convinced that this Godhead did not actively manage the universe or interfere in the affairs of humankind. Theirs was the "Alien God" of the hermeticists and Gnostics, also known at times as *Deus Absconditus*, "the God who has gone away." (Esotericists of various schools and historical periods shared in this conviction. The aforementioned late nineteenth century figure of the esoteric revival, H. P. Blavatsky, was extremely emphatic in her denial of a theistic concept of God. The heterodox religious views of many of

the founding fathers were not only a matter of privately held conviction: Benjamin Franklin even wrote a liturgy for a new religion based on deistic, hermetic principles, and sent a copy of it to Jean Jacques Rousseau, who accepted it with pleasure and presumably with approval.

The second distinctively hermetic feature of the American republic was the three branch theory of government. Although it is not very well known, the United States became and remained in effect a constitutional, elective monarchy, wherein the monarch (named, or misnamed, "president") has far broader powers than the present constitutional monarchs of Europe. At the time the Constitution was framed there was even serious debate that the president ought to have the title "Serene Highness," indicating the monarchical character of the office. (Elected monarchs ruling over republics were not unknown in history, the doge of the Republic of Venice being an eminent example.) The hermetic teachings were never predominantly republican, although they were certainly opposed to absolute monarchies from a certain time onward. In fact, absolute monarchies were a relatively late phenomenon in Europe; the Roman emperor, whose office dated back to Charlemagne, was anything but an absolute monarch, but rather the incumbent of a mystical and mythical office. Monarchs in the hermetic scheme were regarded as carriers of a remote, ultimate authority, in emulation of the ultimate power of the deistic God. It is likely that persons worshipping the traditional image of God as Jehovah would be unlikely to fashion this kind of hermetic rulership. However, adherents of hermeticism knew that humans are prone to arrogate to themselves powers and privileges which properly belong only to the true, ultimate God. Such behavior makes people archons, which means "intermediate, or secondary, rulers," with overtones of usurpation. The absolute monarchs against whom the hermetic enlightenment struggled at the time of the American Revolution were regarded as such archons, rather than as authentic representatives of spiritual royalty.

The three branch theory of government separated the executive, legislative, and judicial aspects of government, thus preventing the concentration of unlimited power in the hands of any individual or group of individuals. Such a government resembles perhaps nothing more

than the structure of the leadership of a Masonic Lodge, with its three principal officers, where the master of the lodge holds office by way of election.

Another important consideration is the source of the legitimacy of government. In the prevailing arrangement in Europe at the time, it was understood that the source of legitimacy was the will, or grace of God. However, the founders of American government decided that the will of the people, or "the just consent of the governed," made a government legitimate. Here we find the hermetic principles powerfully at work again. Ever since Alexandrian Egypt, hermetic teachings have always given prominence to the god-like power and dignity of the human soul. The human soul is not a mere creation of God, but rather is divine in origin and in its essential nature, and as such cannot be forever subjected to external authority. The human was constituted as someone who causes events to occur and not as someone who is the passive recipient of the effects of an external divine will. As free agents, citizens may contract with each other to form associations such



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as state and nation and are not destined to remain subjects of rulers who are foisted on them. The social contract theory of Montesquieu also served as one of the inspirations for this feature of American government.

Finally, one must consider the hermetic principle of the alchemical interaction and eventual conjunction of opposing forces. This principle, more than any other, came to permeate not only American government but the entire history of the United States. The hermetic vision of existence declares that life is a process, not a fixed condition. Because of this, life cannot be managed, but rather must be permitted to function. In this vision, government is like a master of the alchemical art, who guards and oversees the process, but does not interfere with it. The less governmental interference with the life process of the body politic, the better. If citizens are free to move about, to keep their earnings, to take up trades and professions and engage in business as they choose, the process works. Thus, politically, religiously, socially, and economically, the existing forces, rather like the alchemical salt, sulphur, and mercury, freely interact with each other. The result is growth, transformation, and the unfolding of countless, latent potentials of a beneficent nature. The guiding principle of this process is not the petty, obsessive, and tyrannical Old Testament God, but rather Hermes, shepherd of the forces of being, the facilitator and wise alchemical transformer of all things.

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*Puritanism became an entire lifestyle, a powerful force, influencing public life throughout American history.*

#### PURITAN AMERICA

In contrast to the hermetic spirit, however, is another element in American life, which from the very beginning was different from and indeed antagonistic toward the hermetic enlightenment. This opposing idea was puritanism, or the Calvinist Protestant form of Christianity. In many ways puritanism became an entire life-

style, a powerful force, influencing public life throughout American history.

The puritans were transplanted from England, following in the footsteps of John Calvin, the theocratic tyrant of Geneva, who was known to put people into prison for such "crimes" as dancing. Inspired by Calvin's disciple, John Knox, the ranting scourge of Scotland, English puritans had become the cause of much anguish in their home country. Oliver Cromwell, whose associates cruelly executed King Charles I, instituted a pious dictatorship in which Christmas was outlawed and merry old England was stripped of virtually all color and beauty. This cruel and boring regime was eventually replaced by the restored monarchy of the House of Stuart, and Cromwell's puritan friends were increasingly subjected to the ire of just about everybody. Many of them decided to sail over the Atlantic, where they became known as the pilgrims and entered folk legend by way of the first Thanksgiving and other stories.

The puritans are remembered in sentimentalized literature and art as a harmless sort of immigrant folk who sought religious freedom denied to them in their homeland. However, the truth is that they had denied similar freedom to so many for so long that they were driven out of their homeland as a punishment for very real misdeeds. They soon distinguished themselves in the New World by burning not a few alleged witches, and this at a time when that curious practice was already nonexistent elsewhere. Looking to more recent times, we note that the Dutch puritans who settled South Africa became the inventors and perpetuators of apartheid. An altogether unpleasant record, one might say.

Unfortunately, matters did not rest there. Puritan ideology exercised an uncanny influence on practically all of American Protestantism (and, one must admit, on much of Irish-dominated American Catholicism also). Not only the direct extensions of the Calvinist tradition, such as the Presbyterian and Reformed churches, but innumerable other ecclesiastical bodies have become saturated with Calvinist ideas and with puritan values and life-style. In innumerable ways, the United States became a very Calvinist country, more so than Switzerland, Scotland, and Holland, the original strongholds of this faith. Deism and the hermetic

worldview appealed to the cultural elite, while puritanism, originally ensconced in New England, spread its principles (modified at times) to the broad masses and to every state. Whether Jacksonian Democrat or Lincolnian Republican, the "common man" of American history always had at least a partially Calvinist element in his character.

Four features of Calvinism (or puritanism) need to be emphasized here. The first is that the God-image of Calvinism is Old Testament in the extreme. Luther was the reformer representing Christ, Calvin the one representing Yehovah. It has been wisely noted by C. G. Jung and others that the God people worship places his signature on their psyches. The God-image of the Calvinists is radically at odds with the deism of the founders of the republic, and its influence has been characterized by harshness, vengefulness, and cold-hearted cruelty. (It must be remembered that Calvin and his associates did not avail themselves of the refined and softened theology of later rabbinical Judaism, in which this God image underwent salutary modifications. Calvin's God came straight out of the Old Testament and out of his *projections* placed upon the same).

The second point is that Calvinism is by nature and history theocratic in orientation. Pious dictatorship had been very much a part of the history of this religion. The petty, intolerant, and obsessive image of its God was mirrored in the public conduct and policy of its members. Early American history bears abundant testimony to the Calvinist desire to control public as well as private life. Witches were burned, and sinners were placed in the pillory or branded with a scarlet letter as part of this syndrome. A fairly direct line runs from Cotton Mather and his clerical judges to such modern movements as the Moral Majority. Clearly, the hermetic principle of the separation of church and state was never seriously endorsed by the Calvinist mentality.

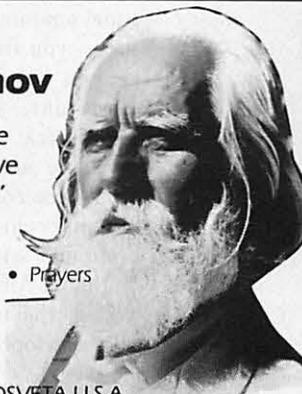
A prominent feature of Calvinist belief is the doctrine of predestination. While originating in abstract theology, this doctrine came to be universally interpreted to mean that those following the Calvinist ethic were the new "chosen people." Material wealth and success were regarded as the signal hallmarks of divine favor accorded to those predestined for salvation. From this it followed that Calvinists, and

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those influenced by them, became ambitious, success oriented, and not infrequently ruthless. Euphemistically, this attitude was subsumed under the innocuous term "the work ethic," ostensibly a wholesome, decent, and virile creed, which at the same time carried an enormous shadow. This feature of Calvinism soon joined in an unholy alliance with the capitalism born of the industrial revolution. The robber baron, the unscrupulous business person of our culture, is not a hermetic but a Calvinistic figure. Thus, from early times onward, the Calvinist or puritan spirit countermanded and minimized many of the great advantages the hermetic spirit had bestowed on America. This tendency has not ceased even today.

Finally, puritanism is in fact what we colloquially mean by the term. It is characterized by extreme moralizing in respect to personal life and conduct, conjoined with considerable laxity when moral principles are applied to politics or business. It implies a joyless, dour attitude toward the pleasurable side of human life on the surface, compensated by fierce greed and a lust for power underneath. (A poignant jest has it that a Calvinist preacher declared that ice cream must have been invented by the devil because it tastes so good.) Depth psychology reveals that this kind of obsessive, repressed life-style holds great dangers for the psyche of those who adopt it. At the time of his first visit to the United States, Jung spoke of this matter in an interview printed in *The New York Times* of September 29, 1912:

When I see so much refinement and so much sentiment as I see in America, I look for an

equal amount of brutality. The pair of opposites—you find them everywhere. I find the greatest self-control in the world among the Americans—and I search for its cause. . . . I find a great deal of prudery. I ask, what is the cause and I discover brutality. Prudery is always the cover for brutality. It is necessary—it makes life possible until you discover the brute and take real control of it. When you do that in America, then you will be the most feeling, the most temperamental, the most fully developed people in the world.

The natural result of a lack of self-knowledge is the exercise of a repressive and judgmental will. Those who do not know themselves must ever try to control themselves, without knowing whom or what they are attempting to control. The Calvinistic moral attitude is the direct antithesis of the gnosis represented by Jung. Prudery, repression, and artificial rules for moral behavior serve only to hide (at times to fortify) dangerous instinctual forces and psychological complexes in the unconscious. Thus Jung foresaw many of the future dilemmas of American culture.

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*What ails our culture is the conflict between the original hermetic matrix of the republic and the puritan complex.*

**DEFENDING OUR HERMETIC HERITAGE**

From this vantage point it is clear that the principal features of hermetic America and puritan America have differences which are portentous and still very much with us. A profound, and seemingly irreconcilable conflict rends the soul of America in two. While in some subtle way, this conflict may also be envisioned as an alchemical process, it is still incumbent upon those who perceive the hermetic heritage of this country to try to defend it and save it from being engulfed by its opposite. Only by recalling and supporting the hermetic qualities of the American vision will the beneficent alchemical operation envisioned by the founders be permitted to do its work.

What then should be the course of action

of those of us who have acquired some information about the hermetic component of early America and can perceive its value? The answer to this question can be given under three headings.

First, let us recognize the existence of the conflict and consciously understand and articulate its nature and significance. In the legend of the grail-hero Parsifal, the hero encounters the wounded fisher king Amfortas, and asks a simple question: "What ails thee, uncle?" If, like Parsifal, we ask the right question, we too may become the healers of the kingdom. What ails our culture more than any other illness is the continuing, insidious, and perilous conflict between the original hermetic archetypal matrix of the republic on the one hand, and the puritan complex on the other. Crime, economic woes, blunders in foreign policy, the human failings of statesmen: all of these are symptoms of the greater, underlying conflict. Will the hermetic vision prevail? Or will the encroachments of an archaic, unconscious religiosity, and of a gravely flawed worldview and life-style based on them, drive the American people and culture farther and farther away from the goals envisioned by the founders of this nation. Inspired by a splendid vision as old as time and as promising as eternity, they established a hermetic republic in the land of the uttermost West.

Second, we also need to inform ourselves about the philosophical-mystical roots of hermetic America and to study our institutions in their light. This task should be easier today than it may have been some years ago. Documents dating back to the early gnostic and hermetic flowering of wisdom have become available in recent decades. A significant subculture, often identified as the new age, is among us, and while it is generally ignorant of its own deeper roots and possibilities, it contains much that is in harmony with the hermetic spirit of old and may contribute to its revival.

Finally, we need to take our stand and begin vigilantly to sift the hermetic wheat from the puritan chaff in contemporary public life. Conservatives ought not to allow themselves to be taken in by slogans and ideas that are not truly conservative at all. Slogans like "the right to life" are designed to impose upon the body politic the values and the life-style of a Calvinistic religious orientation, which has little in com-

mon with the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the institutions based on these. What we need to conserve in this land is not the baleful heritage of John Calvin, but the spirit bequeathed to us by Washington, Franklin, and their fellows. What sane individual could envision Dr. Franklin storming clinics where abortions might be performed? Could Thomas Jefferson sanction the government interfering with the most private activities of citizens in their homes? These men, like other sensible persons everywhere, knew freedom to be one and undivided; they knew that people are either free privately as well as in public, or they are not free at all.

Conversely, liberals ought to cease seeking remedy for all ills in more government, manipulation, and interference. The passing of large numbers of laws, as Lao Tse recognized, leads to greater lawlessness; the increase of regulations increases confusion and unruliness. Governments do not exist to manage and regulate the lives of citizens but to insure a setting in which the inherent powers and talents of persons can develop and flourish. Every good government in history has been small in size, restrained in the exercise of power, and kept at a distance when it concerned the personal, economic, and political freedoms and privacy of people. The advancement of commendable causes ought not to be used as an excuse to increase government and to dwarf the freedom and initiative of individuals.

Hermetic America contains the remedy or the ills that have befallen us in this age. The remedy is freedom. With freedom, the alchemy of the spirit corrects the flaws of culture and rectifies the excesses of civilization.

For about a century now, people in the United States have looked to inferior doctrines imported from unlikely places as the panacea that would solve the difficulties that arise in this land. Fascism, Marxism, anarchism, and other schemes too numerous to name have drifted over the seas to be embraced by persons who did not seem to know or care about hermetic America. Perhaps now, when so many of the unwholesome schemes born of the fevers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have failed, more attention may be paid to the treasure before our eyes. With insight and consciousness, we may rediscover hermetic America and help it become a reality. ■

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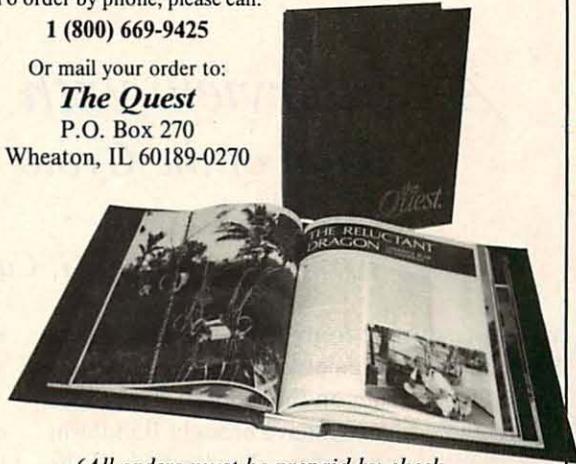
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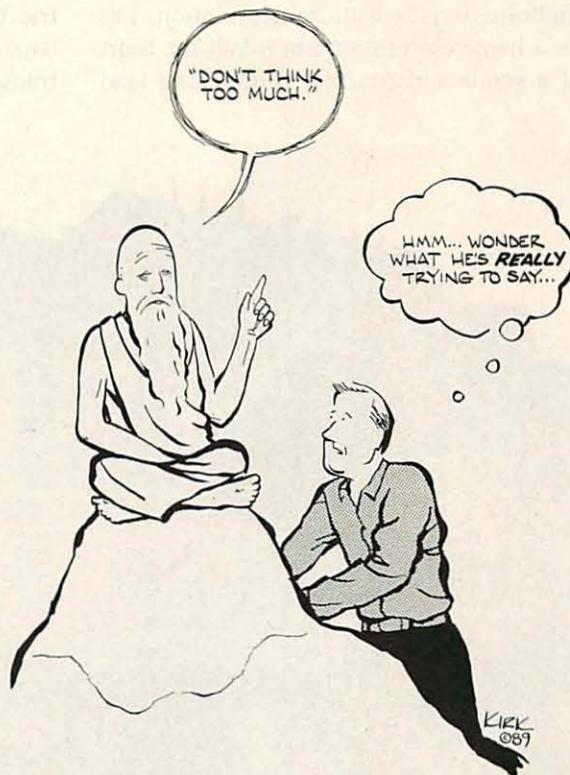
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# Mysteries of the Spiritual Voice

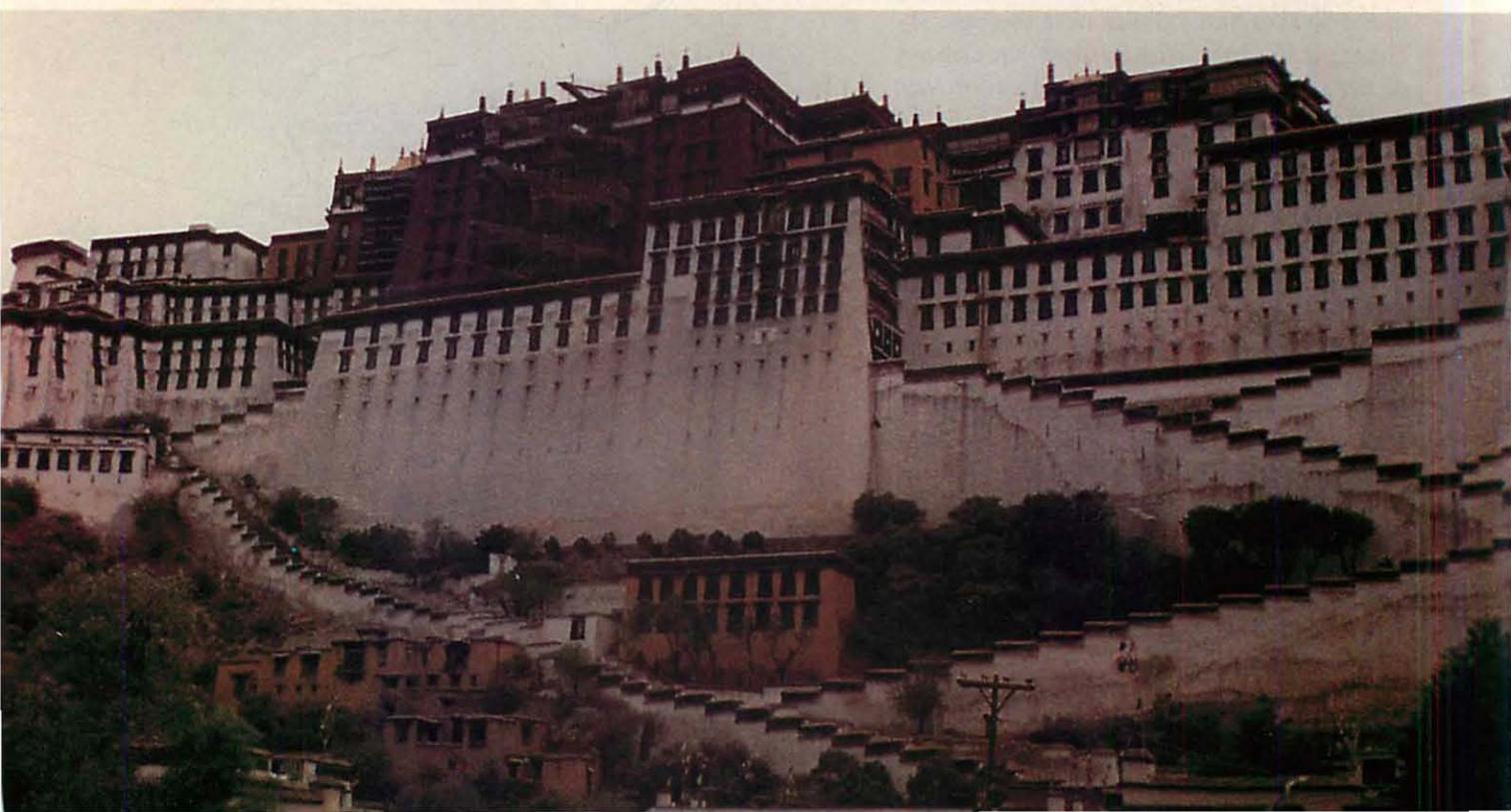
*An Interview with Khen Rinpoche,  
Abbot of the Gyoto Tantric University*

*Don G. Campbell*

I have just returned from Tibet, the land where Nicholas Roerich painted scenery that reflects the soul's spectrum on the Roof of the World. The land where Padmasambhava brought Buddhism to flourish in the eighth century. The land where the lineage of fourteen Dalai Lamas have ruled the Galupa tradition of Buddhism. The land where over 5,000 temples and monasteries were destroyed by the lack of mindfulness in the Cultural Revolution. The land where a living esoteric system is still the heart and life of a gentle and peaceful people. The land

where one prayerful, religious voice may produce the mysterious sound of four or five pitches at once.

From my first exposure to this distant world of Shambhala, it was the sound that called me. Over twenty years ago, through Alan Watts' lectures and Huston Smith's film "Requiem for a Faith," the single-voice chording caught my attention. The experience of first hearing the monks of the Upper Tantric College (Gyoto) led me into a timeless place where both the sense and concept of music were transcended.



In this style of chanting, each of the eight to fourteen singers produces a chord. The lowest note is usually about two octaves below middle B, C, or D flat, plus another note which is the middle B, C, or D flat, plus a third higher. Actually, the second, fifth, sometimes sixth and tenth harmonics are very prominent. Many other overtones can be observed on a voice spectrograph up to the sixteenth partial.

Explanations of the overtone series and learning how to begin to make harmonic sounds can be found in chapter 6 of my book *The Roar of Silence* (Quest, 1990).

A couple of hundred monks outside of Tibet are able to make these sounds in either the Gyoto or Gyume traditions. While in Lhasa, I was able to visit each of those original tantric colleges where the singing tradition is thought to have originated over 450 years ago. New recordings of the choirs of their sister colleges outside Tibet were given to the monks during the summer solstice full moon *puja* in Lhasa.

While curiosity is a natural reaction to hearing these sounds, it is when intent, practice, and the contemplative listening are integrated that the fullness of the religious and artistic meaning can come into focus for the Western ear.

The great difference between the Tibetan practice of Buddhism and other Buddhist forms in Asia is the concept of *tantra*. Tantra is a devoted study of the continuity and link between phenomena and mind in terms of energy. Through direct practices, observation of the inner and outer world relationships, and contemplation of the "true nature" that exists outside of duality (good and bad, life and death, I and the other), these energies are understood. Thus, complex tantric traditions evolved for centuries.

The complexity of disciplines and doctrines in the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism is enough for numerous lives of study. The intricate and fascinating rituals, the hierarchy of manifestations of deities, art, and architecture are awesomely abundant, even as seen in Tibet today.

It was a privilege to meet with the Venerable Lungri Namgyal, referred to as Khen Rimpoché, during the visit of the Gyoto Tantric Choir to the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas, and the Museum of Natural History

in New York City. Sincere gratitude is extended to the many people who made this interview possible: the staff of the Rothko Chapel, Frances Thargay at the Tibet House in New York City, Dr. Robert Thurman, director of Buddhist Studies at Amherst College, and the Tibetan teachers at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

*Don Campbell:* What is the Tibetan word for "overtone?"

*Khen Rimpoché:* We do not have a name for it. This is something new that Westerners, in listening to and analyzing our sound, have come up with. We do not have a discussion of this ourselves, this sort of synthetic, synergetic resonance within the vocal cords and so forth. This kind of overtone thing occurs in other musical instruments, like drums—if you hit a drum it has a deep resonance, and also there would be a high-pitched resonance. So it is not that amazing. All voices have certain overtones; however, the human voice does not usually have that degree of multiplicity of overtones. It is very rare, and this is one of the reasons why this chanting, when Huston Smith first discovered it from the Western point of view, was so amazing to people. Those deities who revealed this special technique to the ancient lamas must have wanted to amaze Western scientists!

*DC:* Are all of the young monks who come to study chanting in the Gyoto tradition able to learn this overtone style with extended practice?

*Khen Rimpoché:* Some cannot learn it at all.

*DC:* Are there any techniques to help enlarge the larynx or any non-musical techniques?

*Khen Rimpoché:* There are no particular mechanical things as a kind of test to show how well someone might be able to develop this—we may do something like have someone practice gargling with water to see how resonant the sound can become. Other than a test like that to get a sense of how someone is going to come along after they have practiced, we do not have any special exercises or anything.

*DC:* In the West we have certain scales and modes that have a tonal center and at times modulate to other tonal centers. In this style I hear different beginning pitches and consistent modulations. Is there a sense of knowing which tone to start with or does it find itself in rela-



Khen Rimpoche, Abbot of Gyoto  
PHOTO: DON CAMPBELL

tionship to each one of the rituals?

*Khen Rimpoche:* Usually they start on the same note and they are composed to begin on the same note; the tradition is handed down so that they would be. Sometimes the individual leaders of the chant, depending on the characteristics of their voice, their ability to conform exactly or in an exact way—sometimes start with a smaller voice and build up, coming into the traditional spot of sound; some start right away, very powerfully in that spot. Therefore, it sounds like they may be starting at different tones but it is not really, it just has to do with the particular voice.

*DC:* Have any women ever learned Tibetan chanting?

*Khen Rimpoche:* Yes, there are other traditions, not so much in the Tantric Colleges, but in the tantric choirs of some of the other monasteries. There are some traditions of chanting in a higher voice. The Tibetan nuns' choirs have usually cultivated that kind of chanting, even though they do not have this deep resonating kind of chanting. They do have very specific styles and with musical scores and so on as we have. They do have chanting methods, but at a higher register.

*DC:* Where are those to be found today?

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**Don Campbell** is an author and composer, and teaches "Music and Healing" at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

*Khen Rimpoche:* Any nunnery has this knowledge. They have certain melodies that they know, there are some very important universal ones that everybody practices such as at the Guru Puja, the worship of the lama rituals. These are very widespread. Then there are these special melodies of offering mandala which all of the monks and nuns do.

*DC:* What is the average amount of time used in chanting in your tradition? In the Gregorian tradition there are offices sung nine times a day. What are the similarities?

*Khen Rimpoche:* We do not do chanting all of the time. Within a month we, as a whole, chant three to six times, depending on the season and on different circumstances. In those times it is more or less depending on the occasion. During times of extensive ceremonies we chant all day long. Sometimes this will go on for two, three, or four days almost without interruption. Then sometimes there will be occasions where we will chant for two or three hours a day for two or three days in a row. This is because in our rites there are extensive or concise versions which we will use on different occasions, in different contexts. When we have very extensive rites we will sometimes get up at two in the morning and go on until eight or nine at night. There are exceptions to this when a young monk is in training; they will ask questions and learn certain methods and meditations and then they will practice alone. They may practice every day for several years. There is a particular exercise of going to the side of a loud waterfall and practicing until a state is reached where they can clearly hear their own voice amidst the roar of the water. This is done in the process of training, which takes place individually, until they reach a certain level of proficiency. Once we have learned this special chanting sound, it must be often used. If we do not chant this way for a couple years, go to another monastery, or do our daily recitations in a thin or conversational voice, then the powerful voice is lost.

*DC:* In the different sects of Tibetan Buddhism is chanting taught in different ways?

*Khen Rimpoche:* I do not really know all the systems of the other orders. I think they have their own methods of chanting and their own way of teaching and practicing it. I am quite sure that no one, even in the other mon-

asteries in our own order, are like the Gyoto Tantric monks with this deep, special kind of resonating voice. Even our sister college, the lower Tantric College of the Gyume tradition, uses a much lighter voice than we do. This style of chanting is sort of unique in Tibet and is of the Gelug order founded or renewed by Je Tzong Khapa. This deep voice chant does not originate in India, though there are many chanting methods to be found there. Various lamas who were heading this order and its monasteries had revelations. They had visions of deities like Yamantaka or Mahakala. These visions of deities were like gifts to them and taught them certain ways of making sound. They said that if we chant using this method it will benefit all human beings. It was through this kind of revelatory composition and not just their own sort of investigations or their own creations or inventions that they would adopt a new kind of chant. By the various heads of the order actually meeting with the deity in a mystical experience these sounds emerged. These were people in the lineage of followers of Je Tzong Khapa in the history of the Gyoto Monastery or the Galupa Order from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century.

*DC:* How important is the chanting in relationship to enlightenment? Is it for personal self-growth or is it for the ability to help simultaneously all sentient beings?

*Khen Rimpoche:* It is not directly con-

nected to the path of enlightenment in the sense that we do not consider it directly a vehicle to enlightenment, nor a direct vehicle of spreading enlightenment. It is directed to the sound as a thing in itself. Indirectly we do it this way (demonstration) for the process of living beings trying to attain enlightenment, either for ourselves or another.

There are various favorable circumstances and there are unfavorable obstacles. We believe that there are certain deities, that we call dharma protectors or guardians of the faith, who are powerful beings who can assist in keeping away or clearing away obstacles in our practice to realize or achieve enlightenment—for ourselves and others. For example, if there were not protective beings, we would have terrible wars. This would interfere with the path and practice of enlightenment, since we would not have time to meditate or think of higher things. Therefore, in order to propitiate these deities [we] request them to protect living beings from misfortunes and to put favorable circumstances in their way for understanding, studying, and the achievement of enlightenment: "Please protect them against obstacles that would prevent them from loosing their human minds and allow them to practice the teachings of enlightenment."

In requesting this, we are, in fact, indirectly affecting how other people are able to practice for enlightenment. When we request in a way which pleases the deities, and which is



Don Campbell and Monks

beautiful, this has a certain energy and becomes an ornament for them and something that they would rejoice about. Then, these deities exert themselves more energetically and it has a stronger effect. It is in that context that our chanting relates to the progress of the enlightenment of all.

This applies to the kind of chants, such as the Mahakala chants, which are offered to these protectors. There are other chants of the bodhisattvas which are concerned with the Buddhist deities whose sole concern is enlightenment by reciting or visualizing the content of the higher treatises. Using chant is a way of showing reverence for the teaching; of showing the greatness of the teaching. Chant makes a powerful impression upon one's mind and in the minds of others of the incredible value and preciousness of the teachings.

The other point is that there is a variety of approaches to this: the discipline, the yoga of chanting, and the yoga of using these rites in the monasteries. It is different for different people who are doing them. In Tibet, for example, there are two midtracks in the Tantra

are able to lead the group through the ritual. There has to be both those who are practicing the visualization and those who have achieved certain realizations. Then the chants can become very powerful vehicles for people. Each one enriches the other's particular type and stage of realization and ability. They also become powerful vehicles of expanding an enlightened vibration to others. There is a certain kind of complex mix within the tantric colleges in practice.

A final point is that Westerners may not realize that there are advanced practices of tantra. It is almost a prerequisite to have achieved an initial stage of realization of selflessness. A definition of enlightenment is the wisdom that realizes selflessness. It may not be total or all the way through the unconsciousness, but at least in the conscious mind and in some of the unconscious mind there must be some insight of the selfless life. Due to this insight, there will be a dedication of the will to the enlightenment of body and mind that is a wish to liberate all other beings from suffering. This is kindness, love, and compassion. This special new energy is based on the insight of selflessness. These two things must be there in some form before one can begin to practice tantra. Tantra is not an alternative in the sense that, "Oh, I am going to do tantric chanting instead of studying selflessness or compassion." It does not work like that. Those other studies are prerequisites which directly relate to the proper practice of the original and ancient ways in our tantric tradition. There are many around today, in our orders and even other religious systems, who say they are practicing tantra, who we would consider not to be properly practicing.

*DC:* How can the Western ear be opened to experience Tibetan chanting?

*Khen Rimpoche:* In general, in regard to sound, there is what is called agreeable sound and disagreeable sound. It may come out to the same thing, but the way that I would understand the impact of sound on the nervous system in the body is as follows. When an agreeable sound goes into the ear, then it is appropriated by what we call the aural consciousness and the mind gets involved and takes it over through the hearing faculty. Once the aural faculty has appropriated the hearing faculty, it generates a pleasant mental faculty, mental consciousness. Mental consciousness is what we

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*Various lamas' revelations said that  
if we chant using this method,  
it will benefit all human beings.*

College of the unexcelled practice of yoga tantra. One track is known as the creational stage and the other is the perfectionist stage. The creational stage is for the cultivation of the imagination and visualization. Those who are in this track have a prerequisite understanding, but are mainly concerned with the issues of selflessness, enlightenment, compassion, and so forth, directly through the tantra visualization practices. Others come from the studies of exoteric meditations of transcendent wisdom. As they enter the tantric monastery they are considered to already have achieved some level of enlightenment, though not perfect, at least a general understanding and an accomplishment of initial stages. It is considered that at least some members participating in those rituals have attained levels of enlightenment so they

call mental delight or mental happiness. When this mental happiness rises in the consciousness, which is a system of six-fold consciousness, the coordination of the five-sense consciousness feels a delight and this creates a secondary relation to reverberation in the physical consciousness, or what we call the body consciousness. When it does that, the body consciousness feels a kind of ecstasy or bliss, a different kind of energy, and it produces a transformation which, if you are reading them as chemical transformations or electrical transformations, would be an intensifying of the immune system or some other kind of positive effect.

The way we would explain how this works is that it happens in the mind first through the aural consciousness and secondarily through the mental consciousness. There is a feeling of a certain kind of delight that stimulates these physical changes. Rather than it being the sound going into the brain or the skull, which is a more mechanical model of explanation, I would explain it through the system of the six-fold consciousness. We understand the body as a secondary effect which corresponds with the state of the mental consciousness. It is something different than the five-sense consciousness, it is this sixth element of consciousness which determines the state of the body. So we say that the body corresponds or follows after the state of the mind. In this model we understand sound as a material phenomenon of waves which are propagated in a medium of some sort and result in molecular reactions taking place as energy reactions in the subatomic level of the neurons from the ear to the brain. In this theory of sound, certain kinds of unpleasant sounds, through the energy reactions in the brain, could cause somebody to get angry, to kill someone, or to be frightened. This accounts for people reacting in a negative way.

*DC:* I am amazed at how similar what you are saying is to the research of the Parisian, Dr. Alfred A. Tomatis, about charged sound and discharged sound. He is testing and measuring sounds that empower the mind and body with strength and clarity.

*Khen Rimpoche:* That is very good, to admire the subtlety of sound on mind and body. This type of observation in theoretical language in Western science is subtle—looking at these things and especially the level of sub-

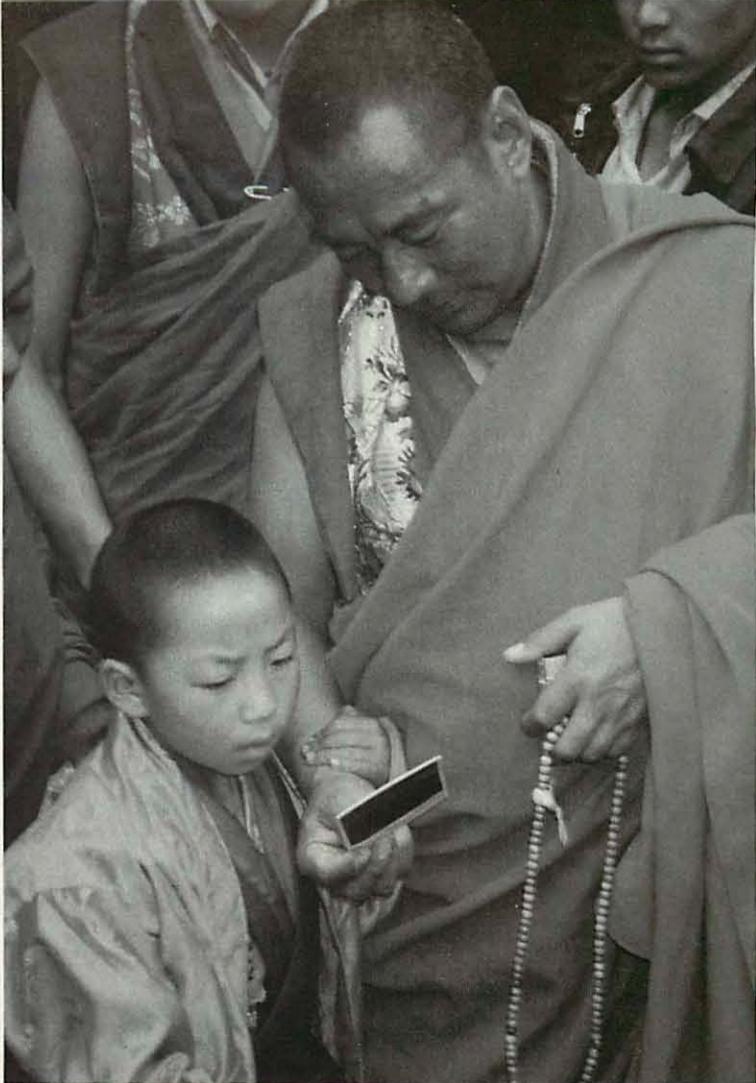


PHOTO: DON CAMPBELL

tlety in the atomic kinds of things and the neurological kinds of things. Western science has felt limited by its inability to talk about non-material phenomena or mental phenomena. To combine these auditory perceptions would be very excellent, very excellent. I am glad to speak to you. ■

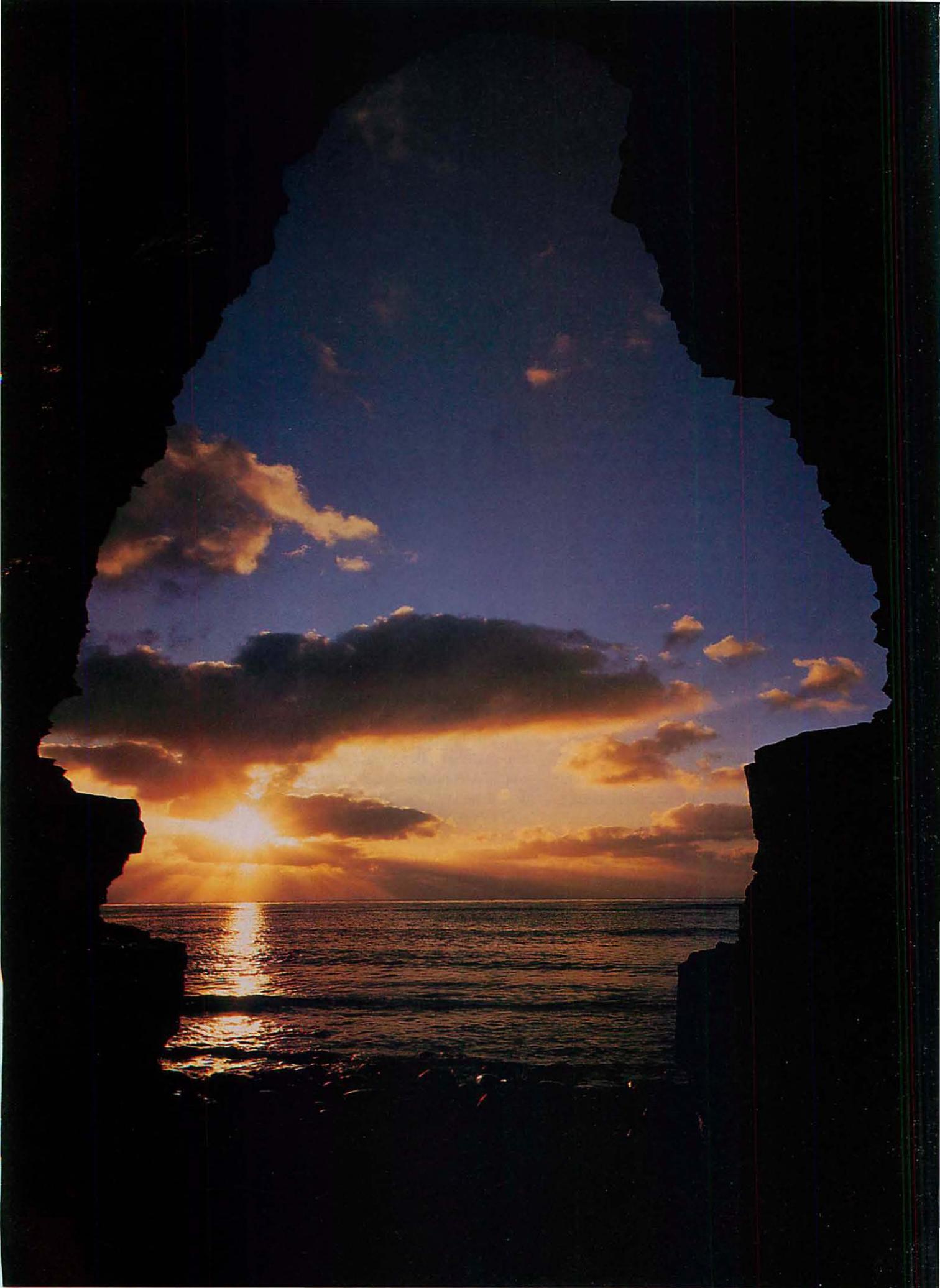
The following recordings are available of Tibetan Overtone Chanting:

*The Gyoto Monks: Tibetan Tantric Choir*  
Windham Hill Cassette 2001  
Box 9388  
Stanford, CA 94305

*Tantric Harmonics: The Gyume Monks*  
Spirit Music  
Box 2240  
Boulder, CO 80306

Donations for the development and availability of tantric chanting may be made to:

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# From Mozart to Mysticism

## Art as a Spiritual Path

*Christine Cox*

**J**oy. Silence. Ecstasy. At some time in their lives, most people have experienced extraordinary moments—altered states, if you will—while listening to music, reading a poem, or looking at a painting. Although these moments may be brief, they carry what appears to be a disproportionate power to draw us back again and again to art, to its appreciation or its creation. Many artists and philosophers have claimed that these moments are in fact mystical states, that the creation or appreciation of good art can act as a conduit to the divine.

Can art truly deliver genuine mystical experience and thus be an effective tool on the spiritual path? And, if so, what are the techniques for using art as a spiritual practice?



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**Christine Cox** is an editor for Snow Lion Publications, and has edited several books for H. H. the Dalai Lama. She has also been a free-lance editor for writers including Andrew Harvey, author of *A Journey in Ladakh* and *Hidden Journey*. Christine and her husband Jeff Cox have also published spiritual books. Earlier she was a painting major at Cornell.

"In all true works of art wilt thou discern eternity looking through time, the god-like rendered visible," said Carlyle. Shelley spoke of his inspired moments as "visitations of the divinity in man." The great sage-philosopher Paul Brunton stated that "beauty is as much an aspect of Reality as truth. He who is insensitive to the one has not found the other." More enigmatically, Hsuan Ho Hua P'u wrote, "When one approaches the wonderful one knows not whether art is Tao or Tao is art." Philosophers, artists, the enlightened of all times and places—from Plato to Ching Hao, Tagore to Beethoven—have made similar claims: that true art is inspired by the divine, and the source of that inspiration may be discerned by the attentive and sensitive reader or viewer.

Plato and his followers considered beauty as one of the chief aspects of the Supreme Principle. All beauty of earthly form—of a sculpture or a body—was understood to be a pallid outflow from that principial beauty. They reasoned that humans judge those things beautiful that most closely approach the symmetry of their own internal nature: thus the quest for the beautiful was regarded as identical to the quest for the Soul. The Asians, too, viewed the practice of the arts as a spiritual discipline and a sustained and intricate dance with the divine.

Naturally, not all that is called art today will embody some aspect of the divine. Much of it has no higher source than the psychology of the artist; some gives form to more nefarious and dark forces. Since what you pay attention to cannot help but affect you, concentration on

such work can be counterproductive for the spiritual seeker. For this reason, and for the sake of simplification, my use of the word *art* shall refer only to works that, being the result of an inbreathing of the divine on the part of the artist, have the capacity to inspire the viewer.

How, then, can art be used on the spiritual journey? What are the techniques of the path of beauty?

On its lowest level, genuine aesthetic experience is in the highest sense erotic, and has the power of true eroticism to expand us beyond the confines of the daily personality, make us intimate with the ecstatic. The importance of this should not be underestimated. Several years ago, Andrew Harvey, author of *A Journey in Ladakh* and *Hidden Journey*, scolded me on just this issue. "Don't you see," he said, "divine experience requires a very deep surrender, a talent for its ecstasy. Steep yourself in beauty, in music, painting, poetry—they will open you." Mystical development involves the cultivation of attitude or stance, of looking in the right direction, of softening toward the influx of the divine. In this way, a willingness to open to beauty can be helpful in any mystical path.

But a warning must be given. In this path—as in all paths, but particularly those that follow bliss—a conscious discipline is needed. Without it, we are not doing a spiritual practice; we are merely having a good, if ecstatic, time. We are all familiar with the too-too aesthete, in caricature if not in life, who reels from one beautiful object to the next, much like a gourmet from restaurant to five-star restaurant. He or she may be getting pleasure, but is missing out on the far greater joy of ever-deepening mystical experience. By putting the aesthetic hunger into spiritual context, we will not lose ourselves in the endless slaking of it, but can follow that hunger and its fulfillment to their source—the divine.

The form of discipline or technique used on the path of art naturally will depend on whether you are the creator or the audience of artistic works, although some methods are similar.

Fortunately, many artists have left accounts of their methods of opening to inspiration. Interestingly, these methods often echo those advocated in the ancient manuals of meditation, from the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali to the works of the early Christian anchorites.

In traditional forms of practice, the meditator stills the body, taking some formal or informal posture. For many people, the quieting of the body, a major source of stimuli, helps the mind to draw inwards. An astonishing number of artists, too, have individually discovered the value of this technique. Picasso would stand in front of a canvas for hours. "While I work," he said, "I leave my body outside the door, the way Moslems take off their shoes before entering a mosque." The dancer Isadora Duncan spent days in her studio, standing "quite still, my two hands folded between my breasts . . . seeking . . . the unity from which all diversities of movements are born." Many Zen painters would not pick up their brushes until they had achieved a state of focused stillness.

In their manuals for painters, the Asians spoke of the importance of this silence. They knew that with the body stilled, the thoughts can more easily be stilled. And that with the thoughts stilled, their substrate reveals itself to awareness. Although there are deeper levels in this substrate, what usually comes forward is a more subtle aspect or underlay of whatever one has been concentrating on. Thus the person meditating on Jesus may experience a strong feeling of Christ's presence, while the creative artist may receive the solution to his or her creative problem.

In the lapsing of thought, brief though it may be, our awareness of our personal ego also lapses. It is this momentary loss of the noise of the ego that is the true cause of the bliss that accompanies the creative state. And this silencing of the ego allows us to hear not only the symphony of bliss but also the many-stranded music of reality and the voice of inspiration arising from it.

The sense of being a receptacle for inspiration, for being a "translator" rather than a creator, has been mentioned by many artists. Paul

Klee felt that the artist "is merely a channel." Wagner recorded entering a somnolent state in which the overture to *Das Rheingold* came to him: it "has at last been revealed to me," he said. What comes through again and again in the writings of the great artists is their sense of not being the creator, but rather of being the recipient of a gift—from a source that must be cajoled, wooed, and approached with reverence. In fact, the ego is incapable of truly inspired creativity. The artist is great to the degree that his or her developed skill works together with a capacity to still the ego so that inspiration may flow through.

Mozart's creative experiences bring to mind the state documented by many mystics of a knowledge received in a timeless, spaceless form. He claimed that a whole piece of music "though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind. . . . Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them, as it were, all at once." In such states vast amounts of information are given in their wholeness, not strung out sequentially.

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*Mystical development involves  
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What is difficult, for mystics and artists alike, is not to lose the knowledge in the process of finding an adequate linear form for it. Mozart found it easy to translate his vision into space and time; others, such as Chopin, struggled terribly over the transition. George Sand writes of Chopin: "His creation was spontaneous, miraculous. . . . It came to his piano, sudden, complete, sublime. . . . But then began the most nerve-racking labor that I have ever witnessed. . . . He analyzed too much that which he had first grasped as a whole."

Perhaps for the artist, as well as the mystic, refining and clarifying the vehicle that will express the vision is all he or she can do to help the process—in other words, technique, the oiling and sanding of his or her mode so that it stands ready. The less attention the artist needs to give his craft, the more smooth may be the

slipping of the inspiration into its form. Chang Yen-yuan claimed that only when meditation and execution are fused into one single reality can the artist succeed in creating something valid.

And what of those of us who don't paint, or compose, or write, but are moved by beauty?

"The secret of art's highest mission is that it enables those who share in the experiences it evokes to be brought into the absolute stillness for a moment, however unconsciously and unintentionally," said Paul Brunton. To make this experience conscious is to make the appreciation of art into a spiritual practice, a practice that has much in common with the better-known methods of traditional paths.

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*Whatever your reaction to art — whether aesthetic shock or quiet pleasure — hold to the experience as a thread to source.*

Mantra, holy image, breath. These are some of the objects used as foci of attention in the meditation techniques of all traditions, Eastern and Western. To these we may add the beautiful, art. Whatever the object of attention, the aim of these various techniques is the same — to focus the mind on the chosen object, eliminating stray thoughts. Miraculously, concentration, however induced, permits the ever-present deeper ground of reality to reveal itself to us.

Although the ultimate reality is the same no matter how we have arrived at it, the journey can be long and the mystical stages on the way many. And since we are riding the energy aroused by our object of concentration, our experiences on the road and the swiftness of our travel will depend greatly on the character of the mount. It is for this reason that all the mystical traditions recommend concentration on objects, man-made or natural, that are considered to be imbued with sacred power.

How seriously the ancients took the power of the inner nature of the object is shown by Patanjali's assertion that deep concentration, *samadhi*, on a specific star would yield a knowl-

edge of the cosmos, or that concentration on an animal's strength would actually result in one's attaining the strength of an elephant. By extension, we can see that the higher the source of inspiration of the artist, the higher the inspiration we may reach through our contemplation.

Whether or not art depicts a religious theme or a cosmological schema is no indication of its power to evoke the spirit. Overt religious content does not indicate sacred power, although it may help by arousing associated religious feelings.

This being said, the esoteric ancient traditions held that certain forms, particularly musical and geometric ones, more perfectly embody certain aspects of the divine. As a result you can more easily achieve specific results through concentrating on them.

Certain Indian ragas and Western chords and scales were considered conducive to divine ecstasy, particularly in medieval times. The subtle effect of proportion and form was known by the Masons, who built their extraordinary cathedrals and stained glass windows according to the hidden knowledge. The artists who made the mandalas and yantras of Tibet and India were constrained to follow exactly the guidelines handed down from teacher to student. It was understood that any deviation would result in a form that could not be a proper vehicle for the divine energy being invoked. The principles at work here are the same as those that account for the effectiveness of ritual and magic — that the Beyond Form can be induced in some limited way to occupy the material form that most closely echoes or corresponds to its subtle nature.

How are we to go about trying to reach such a *samadhi*? Let's say you are wandering in a museum, looking at paintings from your favorite era. One particularly attracts your attention. As you move in front of it, you may experience what I call aesthetic shock; others have described it as a feeling of electric contact with the art piece, or an implosion on the heart. Or perhaps the reaction is quieter — a deep pleasure at the juxtaposition of color, or aliveness of line, or rhythm of form. Whatever your experience, hold to it — it is a thread that can be followed back to its source.

The wild and wise American philosopher Anthony Damiani used to play a passage of music over and over again — at high volume!

—in order to intensify the feelings evoked. Routinely, he would play these pieces for his students just before they were to meditate. Whether it is music, or painting, or poetry, the technique is the same—do not move on hungrily to the next beautiful object, but stay with the one that has taken your attention. Try to deepen the feeling that has arisen.

When you are thoroughly steeped in this feeling, withdraw your attention from the object that evoked it. But hold to the exaltation you feel, sink inward into it. In disengaging the feeling from the symphony, poem, painting, you will see that it has never been dependent on them—they have embodied some aspect of a much greater ecstasy or peace that is beyond them.

It is true that liberation may as well be reached when you are gazing into a latrine—so entertainingly described in the Zen literature—as when you are contemplating the Mona Lisa, and that at a certain advanced level of mystical development you see all things as shining equally with the divine. This does not mean, however, that the toilet bowl is as efficient an object as the Mona Lisa for reaching that state, at least for those people with aesthetic sensitivity. After all, this path is designed to be helpful for those who are attracted to beauty, and who use that attraction to harness their attention to an exaltation that can draw them rapidly inwards. An ugly or indifferent object won't catch the attention as easily, and is, simply, an unnecessarily hard way to go.

The recent interest in the feminine expressions of the divine, and the ways connected to them—the ways of affirmation and joy rather than deprivation and suffering—are a revelation for many of us. Our culture has deeply branded us with the belief that if something is pleasurable it can't be spiritual, and that ultimately it is suffering that takes us to liberation. Yes, suffering is a way, but not the only way, the scriptures of the Divine Mother tell us. Joy is also a path. Think of Ramakrishna passing into samadhi singing hymns to the Divine Mother, of Rumi's ecstatic twirling dances! The appreciation and creation of art is part of this joyful tradition.

From one point of view, the way of beauty can be considered a tantric path. Since tantra is such a loaded word, a circuitous explanation follows. Simplifying things greatly, there seem

to be two main routes to the divine. The first I like to call the transcend-the-hell-out-of-everything,-it's-all-maya-anyway route; the second is the follow-the-immanence-of-the-divine-back-to-its-source route.

The first is exemplified by the view of the great sage Ramana Maharshi that everything except the divine self is utter illusion, a trap that holds us from God. It is the stance of much of Christianity, and is the descendent of the ancient, male-centered worship of the sky god.

The second considers that the world, as a creation of the divine, instantiates in some sense that divinity. By following back to their source the threads of the divine that are the innermost essence of all objects, we can use our natural attraction to the things of this world to propel us toward the godhood. The trick is not to become ensnared by the outer, material shell of the pleasures of this world. This is the tantric path, and the descendent of the ancient feminine conception of the universe as a revelation of the divine.

Clearly, the most notorious tantras, those involving sexual practices, are very difficult to negotiate; the consequences of being caught by the outer forms can be quite severe. Obsession and madness can result.

But the tantra of art and beauty is a benign one. There really is no down-side—no crazed sexuality, no wild delusions of being a multi-armed deity. The worst that can happen through an immersion in art, if you fail to disengage the bliss from its object, is that you use up a lot of time further refining your aesthetic sensitivity.

In ancient times, art was not conceived of as a secular activity, but as a divine intercourse with the gods. As such, the arts were practiced only by priestesses, priests, and spiritual initiates. Things have changed. Today we need not turn to others to act as intermediaries to the divine; as individuals we can take the responsibility to fulfill our unique way to our higher selves. To bring us quickly toward it, the divine offers us a variety and richness of paths and methods to suit the variety and richness of the human temperament. For many of us, the path of beauty and art can play a useful—and sumptuous—part in our progress toward the divine, a path through joy instead of suffering, through ecstasy rather than asceticism. ■

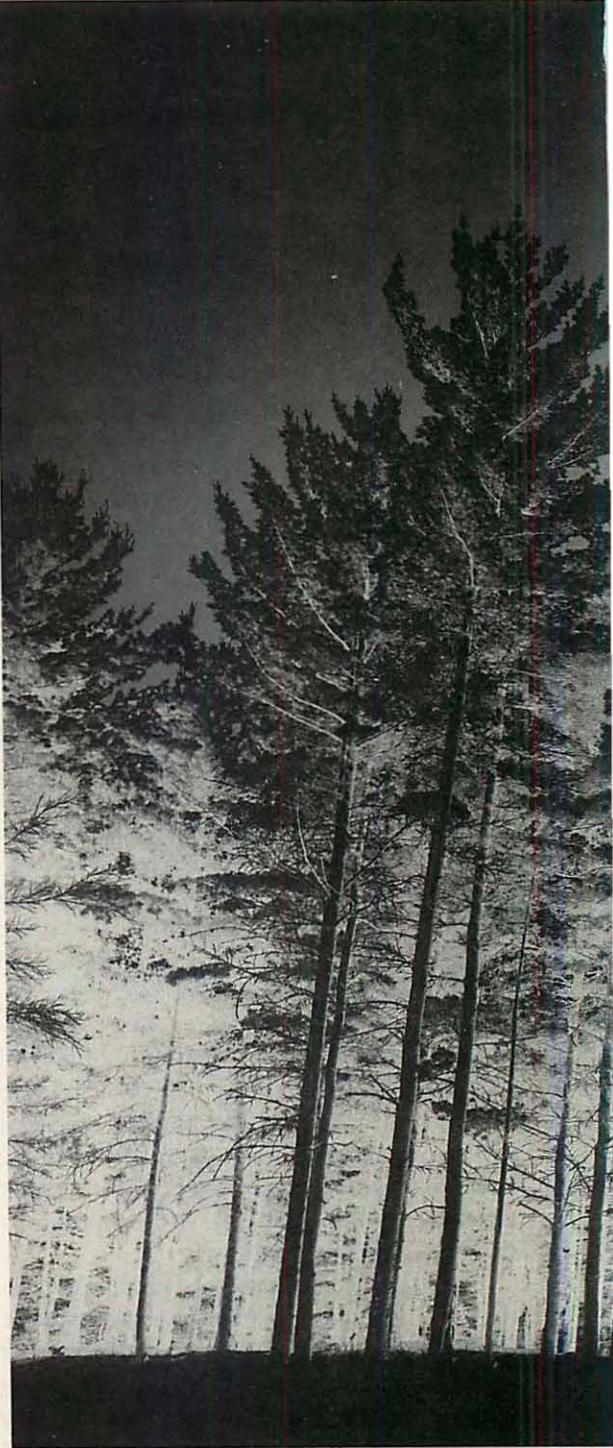
# Becoming Intimate with God

*Garry Stewart*

**T**he light was just beginning to spread faintly over the Vermont landscape of farms and small villages below us in the Connecticut River valley. With each mile we drove north on Interstate 91, more light flooded into the rich, green country. It was beautiful. I looked over at Doug Mattox, at the wheel of his new Volvo. He looked alert. I relaxed a little. Doug had been driving since early the day before, and I had been worried that he might fall asleep at the wheel. Doug never let anyone else drive his new car. I had done my best to keep him talking, but now I was desperately tired myself.

We were only a few miles from home. Home, in those days, was Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Doug and I were returning from a date with two women from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. We had all gone in to Boston, seen the sights, had dinner, and returned to Smith late in the night. Now we were making the two-hour trek back. Dartmouth was still an all-male college then, and this was the kind of brutal punishment one went through for a simple date. We were used to driving far, fast, and desperately.

The sun was well up now, though it hadn't cleared the tops of the surrounding Vermont



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hills. I looked over again at Doug. He was doing well. We were only a few miles from the Hanover exit. I said to myself, "Thank God; he's made it," and fell asleep.

In my sleep a voice behind me started shouting: "Wake up! Wake up now!" And I did wake up. The right wheels of the car were just about to go over the edge of a sixty-foot embankment down into the river. My left hand automatically shot over to the steering wheel and yanked the car away from the edge. Doug



jumped awake and shouted, "My God! I fell asleep!"

Afterwards I wondered whether perhaps my subconscious had reacted when it felt the car's wheels leave the main road onto the shoulder. But that was not it. It was a real voice, and it came from the back seat of the car, just behind my right ear. It was a youth's voice, and I couldn't tell whether it was male or female.

Twenty years later I ran into Doug with his wife at a Dartmouth alumni seminar. I was a

lawyer in Washington, D.C., and he was a doctor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He said that, strangely, he had just thought of me a few days before, though we hadn't seen each other since we graduated. He said he clearly remembered waking up when the steering wheel turned suddenly in his hands. I asked him if I had told him at the time about the voice. No, he said; I had never mentioned it.

For a long time I thought my experience was a strange and uncommon event in the life

of the world. Now I don't. Since then I have talked to dozens, perhaps hundreds of men and women who have had similarly startling extranatural experiences.

Usually in these recountings, as in my own, we have only the word of the teller and no independent way to confirm the truth of the experience. In forming a judgment, we are thrown upon the credibility of the witness, both as to the "fact" of the experience and, to a degree, the interpretation and significance that should be given to it.

Occasionally, history gives us somewhat more weighty evidence.

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### *In April 1865, Lincoln woke from a dream in which he wandered through the White House, and saw his own catafalque.*

In the second week of April, 1865, all should have been well with Abraham Lincoln. His handpicked generals Grant and Sherman had broken the rebel armies. The Confederate commander, Robert E. Lee, had surrendered. The great task of his life, the American Civil War, was over. He had won the victory.

But all was not well. He had been having disturbing dreams that left him sleepless, exhausted. One in particular disturbed him so much that he told a small group of his friends, including his wife Mary, Ward Hill Lamon, United States marshal for Washington, D.C., and a few others on his White House staff. His voice was sad and serious as he told them the following: "About ten days ago I retired very

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late. I had been up waiting for important dispatches from the front. I could not have been long in bed when I fell into a slumber, for I was weary. I soon began to dream. There seemed to be a death-like stillness about me. Then I heard subdued sobs, as if a number of people were weeping. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs. There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing, but the mourners were invisible. I went from room to room; no living person was in sight, but the same mournful sounds of distress met me as I passed along. It was light in all the rooms; every object was familiar to me; but where were all the people who were grieving as if their hearts would break? I was puzzled and alarmed. What could be the meaning of all this? Determined to find the cause of a state of things so mysterious and so shocking, I kept on until I arrived at the East Room, which I entered. There I met with a sickening surprise. Before me was a catafalque, on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were people, some gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully. 'Who is dead in the White House?' I demanded of one of the soldiers. 'The President,' was his answer; 'he was killed by an assassin!' Then came a loud burst of grief from the crowd."

When he woke from his dream, Lincoln opened his Bible, and everywhere he turned in it his eye fell on passages about dreams, visions, and supernatural visitations. Mary Lincoln, Lamon, and the others were horrified. Forget it, Lincoln told them; it was just a dream.

On the morning of April 14, Lincoln woke refreshed, cheerful. It was Good Friday, the day each year that Christians commemorate the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Lincoln had dreamed again, but this time it was the recurrent good dream, the one he had on the eve of all the great Union victories—Antietam, Gettysburg, Vicksburg. In this dream he was on the deck of a phantom ship. The strange ship was moving swiftly toward a dark and indefinite shore. A good omen, he thought.

That day Lincoln held a successful Cabinet meeting, then went for a carriage ride with Mary. They talked cheerfully about traveling in Europe after he completed his second term. He was happy. He said to her: "I consider this day the war has come to a close." In the evening, he



took her to Ford's Theater. There, in the middle of the comedy play, the rebel sympathizer John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln in the back of the head. He died several hours later without regaining consciousness. On April 19 Lincoln lay in the East Room of the White House on a flower-covered catafalque. A faint smile was frozen on his lips. He was the first American president to be assassinated.

Do these stories suggest that there is a force operating in the world, in our life, that

can be invisible, yet speak with a child's voice, that can present dreams of the future to the mind of a sleeping man, that can in fact defy and dismiss all the "laws" that we associate with "the real world"?

Throughout the history of mankind, most people who have had such experiences have attributed them to such a force. Today, however, many people would say that they are mere coincidences, or that simple, natural explanations can account for them, such as the one I

considered after my own "saving" event—that it was my subconscious mind responding to physical stimuli, namely the tires leaving the road. Lincoln's dream, for example, may simply have been the reaction of his unconscious to the growing concern of his bodyguards for his safety. As for the victory dream—the phantom ship—well, perhaps a coincidence.

For those who hold fast to such explanations, it is not my purpose to try to persuade them otherwise. But for those who may believe in a force superior to all natural phenomena, or who are not sure—perhaps a little uncomfortable about it—what should they do?

#### THE NAME OF THE FORCE

Sgt. Steven Price was a tough, burly, heavily tattooed Marine. At the age of 23 he was critically wounded in Vietnam and evacuated

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### *The Marine tried to tell nurses of his experience of the light, but they said he was hallucinating. He shut up.*

uated to a hospital in the Philippines. As he lay on a stretcher waiting to be wheeled into the operating room, he claims he became "totally detached" from his body. He floated up near the ceiling and looked down at his body on the stretcher. He thought: "You damned fool, what are you doing lying down there, because it's time to go."

In this detached state, he turned and faced the brick wall. The wall suddenly became a light: "The light was there and it had come to get me.

"The light is the brightest thing you have ever seen, yet it's not penetrating in any way. I can't describe the light. . . . It is a mother cradling her young baby with love, only a million times more than that and that is all of the love there is."

Price says he was taken "to a place where there was a stream and I met my grandfather there who had been dead since 1954. . . . He was on one side and I was on the other and I

wanted desperately to cross the stream and he was there to tell me it wasn't my time. I tried to cross the stream and when I did I woke up. I had the surgery and I was back in my room."

He tried to tell the nurses of his experience, but they said he was hallucinating. "I didn't want to go to the funny farm or any of that kind of stuff so I just shut up."

When he got home in the United States, he told his wife. "Yeah, but you were under a lot of stress," she said. Nobody believed his experience was "reality." He shut up.

Price found his career in the Marines was complicated by his experience, even if he didn't talk to anyone about it. For one thing, he could no longer kill another human being in combat. He retired from the Marines in 1984 and went to work as a technician in Connecticut. His company sent him to college. There, due to a scheduling quirk, he signed up for a course in death and dying. When he told his story to his class, he was shocked to find that people didn't dismiss it. By that time, the phenomenon was very well known and studied. A 1981 Gallup poll found that about eight million Americans have had an experience like that of Steven Price. Research has revealed that the experience is common all over the world, in many cultures, and is recorded from ancient times to the present.

According to researcher Bruce Greyson, a University of Connecticut psychiatrist, for anyone who has experienced an encounter with the "light" mentioned by Price, the memory of the event is seared forever into the person's brain. Many people, though not Price, report going through a tunnel. They may meet a dead friend or relative with whom they converse telepathically. A feeling of bodily detachment is common. Often the experience is so blissful, the person doesn't want to go back into the world, but is told it is not yet time for them to die.

Generally, people who have had the experience become more spiritual and more compassionate. They also lose their fear of death. "You don't know what it is to live until you're not afraid to die," says Price.

But they also return to a culture that is hostile or dismissive of spiritual experience. Many scientists tell them that their experience is simply the stress of dying which triggers a natural physicochemical reaction resulting in

psychological delusion.

They, however, have no doubt. A physico-chemical reaction would not have given them the profound, life-changing joy they continue to feel. No drug or chemical can do that. Price is typical. When he talks about the light, his eyes fill with tears. "It took me 20 years to be able to call the light God."

God. That is the word that an English-speaking person uses to describe this force that transcends our ordinary "reality." Other peoples have found different words to use for it. Around 800 B.C., the people of northern India began using the words "Brahman" and "Atman" for it. In their stunningly beautiful scriptures, the Upanishads, they say of it:

He moves, and he moves not. He is far, and he is near. He is within all, and he is outside all.

The Spirit filled all with his radiance. He is incorporeal and invulnerable, pure and untouched by evil. He is the supreme seer and thinker, immanent and transcendent. He placed all things in the path of Eternity.

*(from the Isa Upanishad)*

There is a Spirit who is awake in our sleep and creates the wonder of dreams. He is Brahman, the Spirit of Light, who in truth is called the Immortal. All the worlds rest on that Spirit and beyond him no one can go.

The whole universe comes from him and his life burns through the whole universe.

*(from the Katha Upanishad)*

He is self-luminous and more subtle than the smallest; but in him rest all the worlds and their beings. He is the everlasting Brahman, and he is life and word and mind. He is truth and life immortal. He is the goal to be aimed at: attain that goal, O my son!

*(from the Mundaka Upanishad)*

He rules over the sources of creation. From him comes the universe and unto him it returns. He is the Lord, the giver of blessings, the one God of our adoration, in whom there is perfect peace.

There is a Spirit who is hidden in all things, as cream is hidden in milk and who is the source of self-knowledge and self-sacrifice. This is Brahman, the Spirit Supreme. This is Brahman, the Spirit Supreme.

*(from the Svetasvatara Upanishad)*

Other peoples have given the force names such as Yahweh (Hebrews), Allah (Moslems), and Wakan Tanka (American Sioux Indians).

### WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT

Two thousand years ago, a man lived who called the force "Abba." Abba is an Aramaic word. Aramaic was the language of the common people of Palestine in the first century A.D. Abba was a word one used with tenderness for one's father. It was a child's word, bearing intense love.

Abba is the word Jesus of Nazareth used for God. He used it to convey the kind of personal relationship he had with God. It was a relationship of the deepest love and tenderness. He said that everyone could have this kind of intimacy with God. Indeed, the whole message of his ministry can be summed up in these words: You, whoever you are, can become intimate with the living God, and if you do, you will have the deepest, the most lasting, the most profound joy.

Jesus taught that this experience is the single most important fact of life. Everything else is subordinate, even insignificant compared to it. In fact, it is what life is all about. He said

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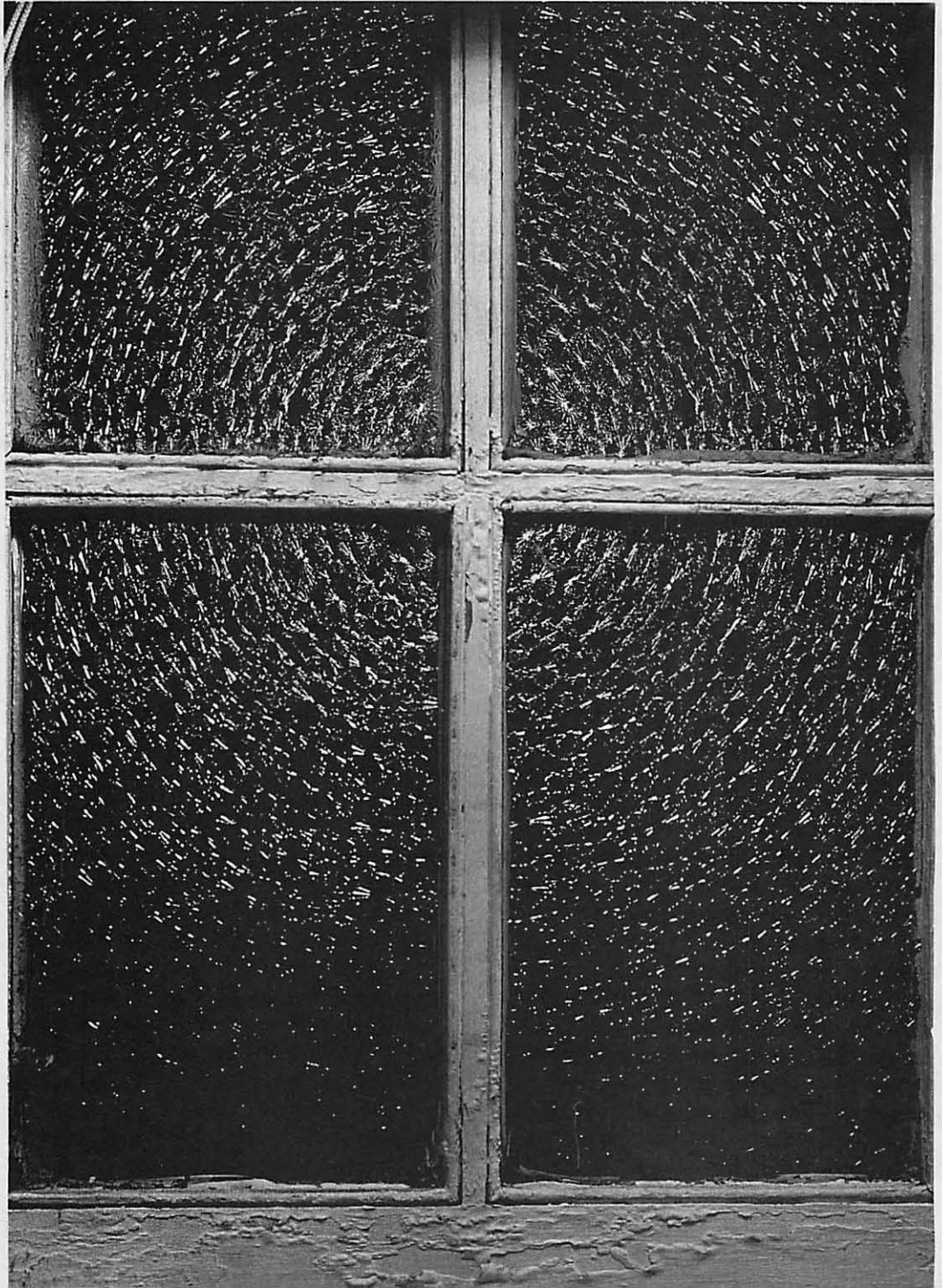
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that a life flowing out of this intimacy with God was "abundant" life. It was rich, full, whole, clean, beautiful.

Hundreds of years before Jesus of Nazareth preached these things in Galilee, another Jew of Palestine had pondered why it was that the arrogant and wicked men, who despised God, had bodies "sound and sleek" and had "no pangs." He was bitter about it. In fact, he was so bitter about the unfairness of things in the world that he almost lost his faith. In that state, he went to the "sanctuary of God." There

he suddenly realized something that had never occurred to him before:

When my soul was embittered,  
when I was pricked in heart,  
I was stupid and ignorant,  
I was like a beast toward you.  
Nevertheless I am continually with you;  
you hold my right hand.  
You guide me with your  
counsel,  
and afterward you will receive  
me to glory.



Whom have I in-heaven but you?  
And there is nothing upon earth  
that I desire besides you.  
My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my  
heart and my portion for ever.

*(Psalm 73, 21-26)*

This man had learned what Jesus later tried to teach those who listened to him, namely, that no matter what a person might possess—fame, intellect, competence, wealth, ease, power, physical beauty, religion, or anything else that the world says is valuable—it is nothing, absolutely nothing compared to the joy of God's company.

At about the same time this Jewish man received his revelation, a man in India wrote:

In this vast Wheel of creation wherein all things live and die, wanders round the human soul like a swan in restless flying, and she thinks that God is afar. But when the love of God comes down upon her, then she finds her own immortal life.

God upholds the oneness of this universe: the seen and the unseen, the transient and the eternal. The soul of man is bound by pleasure and pain; but when she sees God she is free from all fetters.

Matter in time passes away, but God is for ever in Eternity, and he rules both matter and soul. By meditation on him, by contemplation of him, and by communion with him, there comes in the end the destruction of earthly delusion.

Know that Brahman is for ever in thee, and nothing higher is there to be known.

God is found in the soul when sought with truth and self-sacrifice, as fire is found in wood, water in hidden springs, cream in milk, and oil in the oil-fruit.

Words cannot describe the joy of the soul whose impurities are cleansed in deep contemplation—who is one with his Atman, his own Spirit. Only those who feel this joy know what it is.

May we know the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the God of gods: God, the God of love, the Lord of all.

*(from the Svetasvatara Upanishad)*

For the saints of Islam, it is the same. Intimacy with God, Allah, is the only true source of life, purpose, and joy. All the strength and courage and will of one's life is to be concentrated on loving God everywhere, in everyone, and on remembering God's truth.

I die, and yet not dies in me  
The ardour of my love for Thee,  
Nor hath Thy Love, my only goal,  
Assuaged the fever of my soul.

*(Dhu'l-Nun, Sufi poet)*

Once He raised me up and stationed me before Him, and said to me, 'O Abu Yazid, truly My creation desire to see thee.' I said, 'Adorn me in Thy Unity, and clothe me in Thy Selfhood, and raise me up to Thy Oneness, so that when Thy creation see me they will say, We have seen Thee: and Thou wilt be That, and I shall not be there at all.'

*(Abu Yazid)*

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*“God upholds the oneness of this universe: the seen and the unseen, the transient and the eternal.”*

#### BECOMING INTIMATE WITH GOD

Intimacy with the living God, and the life that follows after. How do we attain it? Who may enter into it?

You may, whoever you are.

Your intelligence or education do not matter. Joan of Arc was a simple, illiterate French peasant girl. David and Muhammad were herd-ers. It is not your intelligence or education that counts, but your desire to know God and your commitment to truth.

You do not even have to be a good person to begin this relationship, for God to adopt you as his own. Jesus told a powerful, beautiful story to make this precise point. In the story a young man leaves his home and goes to a far country where he falls into a life of reckless, debauched living. In the end, broken and desperate, he returns to his home. His father, knowing the kind of life his son has led, rushes out to meet him, embraces him with overflowing love, and orders a feast and celebration. He tells his other son: “It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.”

You do not need to possess a particular theology or creed or cling desperately to any

doctrine or dogma. These are dry, brittle things; the letter, not the Spirit. This may surprise, even shock, some. But consider how it is in the life of a person. Consider Peter, for example, the chief of the Jewish disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. This man changed his "theology" dramatically at different moments in his life, but he enjoyed a strong relationship with God throughout, even when he had a "wrong" theology. His relationship with God, God's love for him, had nothing to do with the theology he happened to believe in at any particular time.

So it is with anyone who is growing in relationship with God. There comes a time when you are so sure of that relationship—even in the face of tragedy and pain in your own life—that such things as theological arguments and formulas, dogmas and doctrines and creeds become little things not even worth worrying about. It is not that you then consider these things wrong; it's just that they don't really matter.

Similarly, consider the development of religious denominations. In the course of history,

Christian tradition who know God intimately and lead the life of saints. There are Mother Teresas among the Jews, Hindus, Muslims, and other faiths. As Peter himself said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts of the Apostles, 11: 34-35).

This is not to suggest that any superstition that calls itself a religion is right. The test of any faith is whether it helps or hinders in bringing you into deeper intimacy with God.

If, as Jesus of Nazareth preached, this intimate relationship with God is the single most important thing about life, and if God completely disregards theologies and creeds and dogmatic distinctions when forming such bonds with human beings, then how significant are these many formulas and rituals and rules that differentiate the Protestant from the Roman Catholic from the Orthodox, the Christian from the Jew from the Muslim from the Hindu? They obviously aren't important to God.

It was exactly on this point that Jesus himself lost his life. He was a Jew who tried to explain to his own people that the rituals and rules and theologies that bound them up were ultimately insignificant. They weren't wrong, but merely insignificant and distracting from the real task of forming an intimate relationship with God. For preaching this, the religious establishment of his day had him crucified. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

If intelligence and education and goodness and right religion are not necessary, what then is needed to win through to the love of God? How do we attain relationship, even intimacy with God himself. By desire. If you truly desire to have it, there is nothing about you and no power in this world that can separate you from it.

It can stun like lightning, or be as soft as drifting fog. It can roar like the sea in storm, or be as hushed as a pine forest in deep snow. It can come suddenly. A tiger's pounce! Or slowly, calmly like the sun burning away mist from a lake. It can be as strange as a bush burning without being consumed, or as commonplace as a handshake, a word, a kiss. The encounter with the living God.

Who can explain it? I cannot. But I invite you to see it. Do what you then want, and be blessed. ■

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*How do we attain relationship,  
even intimacy, with God? By desire.  
If you desire, nothing can separate you.*

over hundreds of years, most have changed their official "theologies," dogmas, or doctrines to some degree. Yet there were saints who were intimate with God even though they believed in now-abandoned official doctrines. The Roman Catholic Christian after Vatican II, for example, might be puzzled and even startled at what a saint of, say, 500 A.D. actually believed.

It is also clear to anyone but the most ferocious denominational zealot that there are persons in other denominations who enjoy a close, profound relationship with God. Within Christianity, most believers today, whether Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant, would be willing to acknowledge saintly persons in the other major Christian divisions.

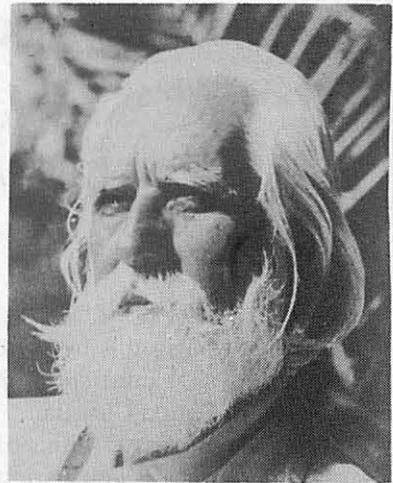
In the same way, as the selection of sacred writings above indicate, there are people of many faiths and cultures outside of the West-

# A TEACHING OF LIGHT

Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov was born in a small Bulgarian village in 1900. At the age of seventeen he became a disciple of the renowned Bulgarian spiritual teacher Peter Deunov. For many years he quietly absorbed everything his teacher had to offer.

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## WHEN LOVE MEETS WISDOM: THE PARADOX OF RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

Marjorie Schock Derrick

I cannot begin this by saying "Although I am a Christian. . . ." I must speak more truthfully and say "Because I am a Christian. . . ." Because I am a Christian, the Bhagavad Gita, a Hindu scripture, has spoken to my heart with its lofty theme of action undertaken, not for gain, but purely for the love of God. Because I am a Christian, a psalm describing the Buddha as a bull pulling the chariot of the world's empire said something to me about what it means for the meek to inherit the earth. Because I am a Christian whose native faith claims absolute pre-eminence over all others, the problem of religious differences looms very large and I cannot in conscience dismiss it.

While there are universal themes in the great religions which suggest a fundamental unity, it is surely a great mistake to see that as a solution to the problem, implying as it does that there is a transcendent "essence" of religion which is somehow closer to the Divine than any one individual religion can be. On the contrary, it is just as reasonable to hold that differences are what is really fundamental and resemblances are only superficial. The reality of the situation is that there are teachings in various religions which categorically oppose each other and they are fundamental to the substance of their respective faiths. Christianity would not be the religion it is without its emphasis on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer of the world, who said of himself, "No man comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Hinduism would not be Hinduism without the declaration of the Bhagavad Gita that ". . . many are the paths of men, but they all in the end come to me" (Book 4:11). These differing views are essential to their religions; they are not products of cultural or theological development.

The point is that if people of any persuasion are to seek a substantial solution to the problem, they will have to take a more comprehensive approach, one which does not rely on resemblances but which embraces both resemblances and differences as the paradox they truly are. For the approach to be feasible, it would have to find expression as a religious or spiritual approach and not as a philosophical or

political one. To do otherwise would infer that religion does not contain within itself the capacity to solve its own problems, that it is really rather impractical, and to resolve the terrible conflicts which religious convictions have caused, one would have to look elsewhere.

There is also this: religious experience by its own nature can never be fully verbalized. Any description is at best approximate. Therefore, the kind of understanding needed to approach the problem of religious differences would likewise have to have the capacity to transcend language. That is, it would have to be an understanding that could grasp meaning without reliance on either categories or even, possibly, logical coherence.

Actually, if we are willing to seek it, such understanding is already possible, made attainable through the intuitive instruction which comes from the world of archetypes, among those symbols and images such as cross and circle which occur throughout the world's religions expressing a variety of meanings.

Archetypal images are particularly helpful in addressing the issue of religious differences for the very reason that they do not come from external sources as do religious traditions. Instead, they arise, according to Jung, from the depths of our own unconscious processes, charged with universal meaning. As such they are not products of the imagination or metaphors of experience but a means of connecting our conscious minds to those tremendous integrating energies that shape the invisible psychic world in which we are imbedded.

How could contemplation of these archetypes provide a means of addressing the problem of religious differences? To answer that, one first needs to find a universal image of paradox among them. This is because the problem itself is a paradox and needs to be accepted as such if it is ever to be reasonably resolved. Given this premise, the image of paradox would have to form a harmonious pattern as a whole, yet would require identifiable opposites for its construction. Such an image does exist and is already very familiar: the Star of David, also known as the Seal of Solomon, the Sun, The Anahata Chakra. Its

configuration consists of two opposed triangles intersecting each other. At first glance, it would seem evident that where they intersect, a large common space is created, forming a single identity surrounded by individual triangles.

Seen like this, the figure provides an adequate image for those who think of the great religions as being identical in their essence and differing only in peripheral matters. However, such a view depends on seeing the image as a two-dimensional figure. In that perspective it becomes representative of two-dimensional thinking which is limited to either/or terms. It is this quality of thought that is reflected in the perception of world religions as either fundamentally unified by common themes or different with irreconcilable differences.



Let us consider a three-dimensional view of the same image. We can get the feel of that by cutting out two identical triangles and laying them on top of each other in the Star configuration. Now, each triangle has thickness and because that is so, they cannot share identical space. They can only exist alongside each other, each still a separate self-contained figure, the two together forming a larger whole. The unity they now express is not a simple unity of identity, but a relative unity which depends on two factors: independent parts which form a larger whole and the perspective of the viewer who can see the entire pattern.

Seen like that, the figure now offers not just a description of where we presently are, but a vision of potential, a both/and dimension of thought larger than anything we now know, that is capable of harmonizing the logical impossibility of opposites into a higher unity which does not compromise their opposition.

How is this possible, especially when a religion may have a teaching of exclusiveness? Again the image instructs us. Its meaning as the Anhata Chakra — Wheel of the Heart — points us to a spiritual condition which is characterized by transformation. This

transformation is brought about by God as Love. In that encounter, the soul awakens to conscious recognition of its true home. At that level, the will to prevail becomes the will to love impartially and to surrender everything to God.

Translating this into more familiar terms, we are “made new,” capable of a universal love which we were not capable of before, regardless of our religion. It is that love alone which cements the paradox and allows its existence, transforming antagonistic opposites into complementary ones. It is also that love which teaches us a larger view, whatever that view may actually turn out to be.

Because this is true, the image tells us more. This unity, being relative and paradoxical at its root, is temporary. By its own nature, it points beyond itself to higher planes of integration for which archetypes already exist but which defy comment without the understanding that is only accessible through an enlightened heart. At the same time it also points down to the potential of dissolution and destruction because the Wheel of the Heart, in turning, moves simultaneously in two directions. The archetype of paradox, therefore, both invites and warns: if Divine Love is the cement, it must also be the mover.

Finally, the image suggests that despite whatever we may believe to the contrary, we really have little idea at present of the spirituality that could teach us the truth concerning religious differences. Universal religious themes are simply insufficient to account for the uniqueness of the various religions when that uniqueness is the foundation of their identity. On the other hand, an inappropriate separateness can lead to the impoverishment of faith. This is not to suggest that separateness has no place, however. On the contrary, its prominence as an ongoing theme in Western monotheism underscores the importance of dealing with it adequately on a world stage. That is why a sufficient understanding must be capable of including both views without syncretism. Contemplation of archetypes encourages me to think that such understanding, as a product of more perfected spiritual being, is attainable through the transforming grace of Divine Love.

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## OVERTONES FROM THE YEAR OF TIBET

Don G. Campbell

For ten years I prepared for 1991, "The Year of Tibet." I knew nothing of this special year when my general interest turned into a fully devoted study. The effect of overtone chanting on my overly trained classical ears was initially curious, then I developed an intrigue with world vocal sounds. I then created a daily routine to open my voice and ears to these subtle sounds. The voice's ability to create harmonic partials of a fundamental tone with exactness and clarity seemed mysterious and impossible. Thus I began to integrate my understanding of the physical creation of these sounds with the spiritually created intention of the monks.

The present popularity of the Gyoto and Gyume monks can give us the impression that overtone singing is uniquely Tibetan. But there are ample examples of the split tone (two, three, and four pitched sounds) in many cultures. I've heard some very interesting overtone talking and toning in the Philippines, Taiwan, Swaziland and Uzbekstan in the Soviet Union. Live vocal recordings from Mongolia and China as well as Tibet are beginning to emerge on folk and ethnic labels.

In more modern times, David Hykes (France), Danny Becker (The Netherlands), and Michael Vetter (Germany) have released recordings of remarkable vocal "split tone" techniques. The elegance and refinement of Hykes' harmonic choir is well placed among some of the finest choral sounds on the planet. The Starscape Singers of Toronto blend a variety of styles of overtone singing in their extraordinary vocal arrangements. The well-known German composer, Karlheinz Stockhausen has written "overtone" compositions for singers for nearly twenty years.

Overtone sounds can be rough, elegant, simple, whistle-like, growly, or mysterious. Much like other forms of singing, the techniques can be learned with rigorous training or just naturally experienced through many hours of relaxed toning. (My book, *The Roar of Silence* is devoted to this work with tone and overtones.) When a spiritual intention is added to this powerful, relaxed attentiveness, the producer of the sound and the listener are both affected physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Upon visiting the sacred monasteries in Tibet last June, I had the wonderful privilege to visit the original Tantric Colleges during the full moon pujas. For hours I was able to experience both the Gyoto and the Gyume (Upper and Lower Colleges) in Lhasa where the unique and powerful overtone style developed. Most of the monks in the colleges left Tibet over twenty years ago, but many stayed in Lhasa in seclusion while their monasteries were closed. In the last year, they have reopened. Somewhat shy and cautious, the monks received me cordially. Spirit Records donated tapes of their counterpart choirs in India and Sikkim for our pilgrimage. We were truly blessed to be close to the lineage source of these sacred sounds. In October, the Gyoto Monks from India were with the Dalai Lama in New York during the Kalachakra initiation week.

The power of these sounds is startling and extraordinary. Listen, listen. They are part of the future of sacred music and healing sounds in the Western world.

### Sound Suggestions:

*Tuva, Voices from the Center of Asia*

Miraculous Singing from Siberia  
Smithsonian Folkways, 40017

*Gyoto Monks, Tibetan Freedom Chants*  
Rykodisc, 01132

*The Harmonic Choir, Current Circulation*  
David Hykes, Co Cel-010

*The Power of Overtones*  
Variety of Styles  
D. Campbell/Sophia, IMHE 027

*Tantric Harmonics*  
Gyume Tibetan Monks  
Spirit Music, 13007

(Catalog of materials and cassettes on overtone chant may be requested from P.O. Box 1244, Boulder, CO 80306.)

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**Don Campbell** is author of *Music: Physician for Times to Come* and teaches music and healing at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

**HOLY MADNESS: The Shock Tactics & Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools, & Rascal Gurus, by Georg Feuerstein; Paragon House, New York, 1991; hardcover, \$24.95.**

This superb book came just in time to offset the simultaneous arrival of one of those New Age "transformational holistic" publications replete with ads from neither crazy nor wise, but noisily self-proclaimed gurus offering their fast shortcuts to Beatitude at a discount.

Feuerstein's book is invaluable as a guide for the guru-bedeveled. It is remarkably erudite, rich in wisdom, or rather: delightfully sane. It traces the succession of holy fools and nutty adepts through India, Tibet, the Far East, medieval Europe, all the way to contemporary California. Masterly capsulated, finely balanced descriptions of gurus of various plumage make for fascinating reading. They include contemporary—not to be underestimated—"rascal-gurus" like Gurdjieff and Rajneesh, the gifted alcoholic and womanizer adept Chogyam Trungpa, and the multi-faced Da Love Ananda, formerly known as Da Free John.

The latter, at first sight, seemed to have been allotted a bit too much space, but on second thought he seems worth it. Feuerstein's own experiences as his one-time disciple throws light on the contradictory alloys of profound insight, bizarre game playing, irresponsible Tantra-styled genitality, and a taste for, or at least an extraordinary tolerance of, idolization by a gurucentric community.

My only experience with a rascal guru, a country cousin of Gurdjieff, who was the *dernier cri* of the London counterculture of the thirties, came to an early end when his experimentation with his faithful, his unpredictable alternation of flattery with assaults on the human dignity of his devotees and the sexual shenanigans that were part of the cult, inspired me to find the exit. Ever since, I have been destined to continue my loner's quest for Meaning without entrusting myself to the often all too eclectic, all too flawed wholesalers and retailers in the enlightenment trade.

Feuerstein's evocations of Da Love Ananda's holy circus almost made me kneel down to thank heaven for having put my trust in a very small number of exceptional books, instead of risking to be forced, as a vegetarian, to eat kidney stew for my own good, or to watch my beloved being initiated to the spirit in the Master's bed. Of course, I have had

to listen to choruses of true believers intoning "Ah, but you can't get IT from books!" They may be right, but I decided to gamble on it, and—unless I deceive myself—found that by reading D. T. Suzuki's *Essence of Buddhism*, the *Platform Sutra*, Bankei's *Sermons* and the prologue of St. John's Gospel a few hundred times and reflecting on these for a few decades—what is the hurry?—one may catch a glimpse of the Guru Within without being befuddled by the trickeries of the empirical ego.

Could it be that this Guru Within is none other than that Specifically Human of which the Buddha spoke as that "Unborn," that "unconditioned Something (or No-thing) without which all that is born and conditioned in us could not be overcome"?

Ramakrishna and Aurobindo, as Feuerstein points out at the end of this extremely readable book, acknowledged and stimulated a sense of communication between themselves and their disciples, never hesitating to admit their own human shortcomings, conscientiously avoiding to violate anyone's integrity, talent, and dignity. Masters of their authenticity seem to be fully aware of the relatedness of the Self—the divine Principle—with our finite nature in its process of becoming integrated, liberated from all the auto-deceptions the empirical ego is prone to.

Ramana Maharshi, like Bankei, was such a teacher despite himself; the spiritually starved flocked to him by the thousands for nurture, and found their own core of supreme sanity.

There is no doubt that those who have attained the ultimate realization can be of help to us confused mortals. That in their compassion they would refuse bestowing their blessings on those still suffering, still imprisoned in delusion, is as inconceivable as that they would seek to surround themselves with neurotic devotees.

A new approach to transcending the delusions of the individual and of the even more dangerous in-group ego, is obviously urgently needed. Beyond all doubt the first stirrings of a spirituality that is a radical thrust to the really Real, are becoming perceptible. The all too long ignored reality of the relatedness and interdependence of all beings is rising into our awareness, clarifying our actual place in the fabric of the cosmic Whole. There is nothing to realize but the Real. . . .

In the immense political, ecological, demographic, and economic upheavals of our world the eccentricities of holy fools cavorting among us mortals

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## **Books**

appear curiously anachronistic. Feuerstein agrees that they are indeed "relics of an archaic spirituality" and that sooner or later they will be replaced by a more integrated approach to self-transcendence, "sustained by teachers who place their personal growth and integrity above the compulsion to teach others and who value compassion and humor above all histrionics." *Holy Madness* is one of those books "one cannot put down," but it is more than that: it belongs in a prominent spot on one's shelves for future reference.

—FREDERICK FRANCK

*Frederick Franck, M.D., is an internationally-known artist and writer. His books include To Be Human Against All Odds (1991), The Zen of Seeing (1973), and Days with Albert Schweitzer (1959).*

**BIOSPHERE POLITICS: A New Consciousness for a New Century**, by *Jeremy Rifkin*; Crown Publishers, New York, 1991; paperback, \$20.

Lobbyist and lecturer Jeremy Rifkin, an articulate and aggressive advocate of environmental protection, described technology as a destroyer endangering the local, regional, and global ecosystems during decades when humanity has become severed from life-sustaining nature.

Forging a new environmental ethic upon the anvil of ecological necessity, Rifkin resounds with a righteous indignation when he complains quite correctly that senseless and unreasoned rapine has brought Planet Earth perilously close to irreparable disaster. His complaint emanates from his perceptive observation that has now become commonplace, an awareness that the industrialized West has severed itself from unsullied nature.

The author locates several specific causes for this impending catastrophe. Rifkin contends convincingly that the Roman Catholic Church's concept of purgatory legitimized and ultimately encouraged the development of usury. Without the threat of eternal damnation, moneylending became a thriving enterprise. Capitalism, he contends, ensued. Modernizing tendencies followed a characteristic *modus operandi* during the enclosure movement that commenced in England during the fifteenth century and persisted on the continent into the eighteenth century. Under this system, commons land became fenced in an attempt to provide pasture for grazing sheep; newly dispossessed peasants were forced onto the roads to congre-

gate among the homeless. Rifkin argues that under such systems, land, sea, and air are relegated as marketable commodities. The author indicts John Locke, Rene Descartes, and Francis Bacon who "promised future generations that greater consumption—material progress—would mean greater personal security. Instead we find ourselves more isolated and less secure—at war with the environment, at odds with our fellow human beings, and without an alternative approach to securing ourselves in the world."

Although Rifkin's causal reasoning becomes fuzzy and his causes might be simply symptoms for an even greater social dislocation, he paints a vivid and alarming picture describing ecological disaster. More than acting as a prophet pronouncing gloom and doom, he envisions a possible future in which humans attain a new developmental stage of consciousness and "reparticipate with nature out of an act of love and free will, rather than out of fear and despondency." Rifkin imagines a time when nature becomes "resacralized" and humans discover themselves "secure in the fulness of their grounding inside the biosphere."

*Biosphere Politics* describes a new consciousness capable of bringing a beleaguered humanity into balance with nature and advances a much needed understanding of how *homo sapiens* can halt the mindless race toward disaster. Rifkin sketches a hope-imparting and inspiring scenario in which the human community secures sufficient food, shelter, and comfort while simultaneously restoring a broken balance with the natural environment.

—DANIEL ROSS CHANDLER

*Daniel Ross Chandler has taught speech, rhetoric, and communication theory, and has published widely in journals on religious and communications issues.*

**ON A SPACESHIP WITH BEELZEBUB** By a Grandson of Gurdjieff, by David Kherdian; *Globe Press, New York, 1991; paper, \$12.95.*

Groups promoting psychological and spiritual development outside of conventional organizations have been the subject of media scrutiny for years. In groups often referred to as cults, the sometimes abusive methods and megalomaniacal behavior of the leaders of such groups make sensational news even up to the present day. *Let the seeker beware* is sound advice indeed to anyone looking for guidance on the spiritual path. A person embarking upon psycholog-

ical development, however, should be prepared to work without a safety net. For almost everyone's inner world holds surprising, even shocking, revelations for one who studies himself in earnest.

Those who are gullible and psychologically shaky can be hurt because they tend to become victims of their own tendencies to be led and to seek security and reassurance from those robed in authority. When the Gurdjieff teaching is properly applied, blind faith is understood to be a liability; inner growth depends upon taking responsibility for oneself.

The Gurdjieff work, called *The Fourth Way*, can be briefly described as a system of psychology used to study the mechanisms behind one's attitudes and behavior and the methods used to work free of automatic reactions to stimuli, events, and fantasies by efforts to increase one's capacity for self-awareness and the exercise of will.

This system was introduced in the West in the early twentieth century by G. I. Gurdjieff. Fourth Way theory has been explained in Gurdjieff's writings as well as those of his student, P. D. Ouspensky, and others. Ouspensky was an eminent journalist, mathematician, and cosmologist whose *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* remains the most concise and systematic exposition of the subject. Many Fourth Way groups are still to be found throughout the Americas and Europe. Whatever their differences, their adherents all claim to be grounded in the teachings of Gurdjieff.

In the first part of the book, David Kherdian describes the development of his poetic talent and his marriage to Nonny Hogrogian, his second wife, who immediately began to fill a large emotional void in his life. In spite of their fortunate lives, the couple felt an acute spiritual hunger. Their discovery of the Gurdjieff system initiated years of work, first in connection with the Gurdjieff Foundation in New York directed by Lord Pentland. After disenchantment with that group, they went to study under Annie Lou Staveley, who had set up a school on a farm in Oregon. Most of the book is devoted to their inner journey, emotional trials, and rewards over several years in the seventies with Ms. Staveley's group. The author demonstrates how his literary skills and insights unfolded together with increased self-awareness.

Kherdian refers to himself as "a grandson of Gurdjieff" in the sense that he is a generation removed from Gurdjieff's direct teaching. In addition to describing the inner workings of a Fourth Way group,

the book traces the footsteps of spiritual seekers into experimental group living situations in the seventies.

Kherdian's contribution to the literature of contemporary spiritual endeavors is a courageously candid account of his own efforts to chart his weaknesses and build upon the potentials manifested in his being. He is as forthright about both the strengths and shortcomings of the teachers and fellow pupils as he is about his own. The reader is given a balanced account of Fourth Way methods because the writer maintained his own balance throughout his experiences.

The author describes how he benefited from his group because he took it as a school that prepared him to take an active part in life again and not as a safe haven for the world-weary. Persons who leave various esoteric and religious groups are often condemned in the eyes of their former brethren to wander the world like Cain. Ouspensky advised his pupils to take the meaning of a school simply: a place to learn something. To overcome not only anxiety about how to act in a group but also fear of leaving its shelter once one knows in one's heart that it has served its purpose—these together constitute for many one of the major lessons to be learned from a group situation. *Courage, my heart, take leave and heal yourself* (Hermann Hesse).

The Gurdjieff work has much to do with realigning one's ideas about suffering. Our attachments and negative attitudes bring us much unnecessary suffering, which we are strangely loathe to give up. A certain kind of suffering is required for conscious development, but most of us come to the work to escape at least one form of it, that is, we want to be free from whatever we find hard to accept about ourselves and thus to reach internal rest. We can find our way to the quiet place within in moments whenever we can detach our sense of identity from whatever may be stimulating us or weighing us down at the moment. As Kherdian realized, however, the self-knowledge that we achieve brings more suffering than we expected. By accepting our flaws without an undue sense of tragedy, we can come to recognize them as shoals, around which we must learn to pilot. Then we can get on with living with purpose and a better sense of who and where we are without the unnecessary burden of overweening self-preoccupation.

According to Kherdian, he and Nonny were among the few to realize that the farm in Oregon provided a means to practice the work and not to

found a permanent community. Some members of the group saw the farm as a place to make their stand against the social and cultural values of their parents' generation. Means and ends are so often confused in group work. *Here we have no lasting city* (Hebrews 13:14) needs to be a constant reminder.

Kherdian builds dramatic tension as he tells his story with both substance and narrative skill. His book deserves to take its place among the most informative and even-handed accounts published by those who have journeyed on any of numerous branches of the path to inner growth and self-understanding.

—WALTER SCHEER

*Walter Scheer is a student of the Fourth Way who contributed an article on Fourth Way cosmology to a recent issue of Gnosis.*

## Briefly, Briefly

### BOOKS ON BUDDHISM

Two new collections of essays by the late Lama Govinda—*Insights of a Himalayan Pilgrim* (Dharma Press, paper, \$11.95) and *Buddhist Reflections* (Samuel Weiser, paper, \$14.95)—provide a superior introduction to Tibetan Buddhist ideas. Lama Govinda was born in Germany, and came to Tibetan Buddhism later on. At home in both East and West, he wrote with great clarity and built bridges between Eastern mysticism and Western rationalism.

A translation of an oral teaching by the Dalai Lama given in 1988 in Dharamsala, India, *Path to Bliss: A Practical Guide to Stages of Meditation* (Snow Lion, paper, \$12.95) is a systematic approach to visualization, reason, and contemplation. It presumes no prior experience with meditation, and begins at the beginning with instructions on "creating a conducive environment" and "preparing the mind" for meditation.

The Kalachakra initiation has been given increasingly in recent years by the Dalai Lama; unlike other Tibetan Buddhist initiations, the Kalachakra typically is given in large groups. Two new books provide an overview of this Buddhist tantric system, which weaves together astrology, eschatology, physiology, and yoga into a meditational path system. *The Practice of Kalachakra* (Snow Lion, paper, \$14.95) by Glenn H. Mullin includes Mullin's own study of the Kalachakra tradition and his translations of seven Tibetan texts on the practice. The other, *The*

*Wheel of Time: The Kalachakra in Context* by Geshe Lhundub Sopa, Roger Jackson, and John Newman (Snow Lion, paper, \$12.95), is a collection of five essays on the tradition.

*Old Path, White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha* by Thich Nhat Hanh (Parallax Press, paper, \$25) is a lovely collection of stories about the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha.

*The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School* by Frederick Franck (Crossroad, paper, \$14.95); *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind* by D. T. Suzuki (Samuel Weiser, paper, \$10.95), and *The Heart of Buddhism* by Takeuchi Yoshinori (Crossroads, paper, \$12.95) are all considerations of the Kyoto School of Zen Buddhism. The first is a collection of essays, almost all of which first appeared in the esteemed yet little-known journal, *The Eastern Buddhist*, founded by D. T. Suzuki in 1921 in Japan. The second is a reprint of a Suzuki book first published in the U.S. in 1972. Takeuchi Yoshinori's book, which includes a foreword by German theologian Hans Kung, sheds light on the interaction of Buddhist metaphysics and German existentialism. Yoshinori was a leading figure in the Kyoto School who also studied Heidegger and Bultmann in Germany.

#### BOOKS ON SHAMANISM

There has been a continuing outpouring of books on shamanism and Native American traditions. A listing follows, including a book on Celtic shamanism and another on Amazon Indian shamans.

*The Aquarian Guide to Native American Mythology* by Page Bryant, with a foreword by Sun Bear (Aquarian Press, HarperCollins, paper, \$12.95) is a reference guide to aspects of American Indian lore in the form of alphabetical listings.

*Dancing with the Wheel: The Medicine Wheel Workbook* by Sun Bear, Wabun Wind, and Crysalis Mulligan (Prentice Hall, paper, \$15) teaches how to use the medicine wheel as "a springboard of power that will allow you to link up with all the energies of the universe," in the words of Sun Bear.

Two Western psychiatrists have recently published studies of shamanism. *The Spirit of Shamanism* by Roger N. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D. (Jeremy Tarcher, paper, \$10.95) is a highly praised overview of shamanism, its history and techniques, which also considers the future of shamanism in view of the paradox that it is endangered in many of its home-

lands while becoming popular, even faddish, in Western culture. Psychiatrist Donald Sandner, M.D., offers a Jungian exploration of Navaho methods of healing in *Navaho Symbols of Healing* (Healing Arts Press, paper, \$12.95).

Yet another book combining anthropology, psychology, and shamanistic experience is *The Four Winds: A Shaman's Odyssey into the Amazon* by Alberto Villoldo and Erik Jendresen (HarperSan Francisco, paper, \$9.95). Villoldo, the principal author, is an American psychologist, and Jendresen is a playwright and screenwriter. The book is a narrative account of Villoldo's journeys to Peru, and his participation in Indian shamanistic experiences with drugs and visions.

*Native American Wisdom*, edited by Kent Nerburn and Louise Minglekoch, is an attractive addition to the Classic Wisdom collection (New World Library, hardcover, \$9.95), offering brief selections from Native Americans of many tribes.

In *Rainbow Nation Without Borders: Toward an Ecotopian Millennium* (Bear & Co., paper, \$16.95) Alberto Ruz Buenfil considers the ways nature has been venerated in all cultures and times, and finds that the rainbow is a natural archetypal symbol little explored in modern times. A sixties radical whose father was a famed Mexican anthropologist, Buenfil ranges over many traditions and the countercultural movements of the sixties and seventies. The book is illustrated with 21 four-color pages.

*Return to Creation* by Manitonquat (Medicine Story), an elder and storyteller in the Wampanoag nation (Bear Tribe Publishing, paper, \$9.95) presents the case for the path of sustaining relationships in the modern world. The book's subtitle is "A Survival Manual for Native and Natural People."

Two other books are in the form of story: Jamie Sams and Twylah Nitsch retell a classic Native American creation story in *Other Council Fires Were Here Before Ours* (HarperCollins, paper, \$15). Tony Shearer, who is part Lakota, tells the story of *The Praying Flute* (Bear & Co., paper, \$8.95), offering a hopeful view for restoration of environmental balance.

*Profiles in Wisdom*, edited by Steven McFadden (Bear & Co., paper, \$12.95) is comprised of a collection of interviews with Native American elders speaking about the earth. Among those included are Sun Bear, Medicine Story, Grandmother Twylah Nitsch, and Dhyani Ywahoo.

Those who enjoyed Carlos Castaneda and Lynn Andrews will probably take to *Queen of Dreams: The Story of a Yaqui Dreaming Woman* by Heather Valencia and Rolly Kent (Simon and Schuster, hardcover, \$19.95). The book is Valencia's story of her experiences as the wife of the spiritual chief of the Yaqui Indians (Valencia is part Cherokee). Her story has been described by Sun Bear as "factual and very alive."

In the same vein is Florinda Donner's *Being-in-Dreaming: An Initiation Into the Sorcerer's World* (HarperCollins, hardcover, \$18.95). Donner is described as "the longtime colleague and fellow dream-traveler of Castaneda). Like Castaneda, Donner studied anthropology at UCLA and, while traveling in northern Mexico, happened upon "another world that coexists with ours."

Those burned out by a surfeit of Native American shamanism books may find themselves drawn to John Matthews' *Taliesin: Shamanism and the Bardic Mysteries in Britain and Ireland* (Aquarian Press, HarperCollins, paper, \$14.95). Matthews is an authority on Arthurian and Grail legends, who here offers his research into the native shamanic tradition at the heart of the Bardic works.

## New from Quest Books

**PUTTING THE GIANTS TO SLEEP**, by David Sheinkin, M.D.; *Quest, 1991; paper, \$11.95.*

Ken Wilber and Jean Houston have praised this collection of "stories, advice, and exercises for finding balance in an unbalanced world." The author, a psychiatrist, was engaged in a program leading to ordination as a rabbi when he was killed in a plane crash in 1982.

**CINDERELLA'S GOLD SLIPPER**, by Samuel Denis Fohr; *Quest, 1991; paper, \$11.95.*

The spiritual symbolism in Grimm's fairy tales holds as much value for adults as for children. The author, a philosophy professor, shows, for example, how "Snow White" is a story of creation and spiritual growth paralleling Hindu and Judaic creation myths, and how "Hansel and Gretel" and "Cinderella" portray a journeying back to God. Huston Smith called this "a courageous and cogent book."

**LOOKING IN, SEEING OUT: Consciousness and Cosmos**, by Menas Kafatos and Thalia Kafatou; *Quest, 1991; paper, \$13.95.*

This book by husband and wife physicists explores the scientific quest and the mystic quest as parallel processes, one outer, the other inner. Our outward search is for objective reality in the world; the inward search is for that level of consciousness underlying all subjective experience and spoken of by mystics.

**THE OPENING OF THE WISDOM EYE**, by H. H. the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso; *Quest, 1991; paper, \$12.95.*

First written in Tibetan in 1963, this book is a new edition of a classic overview of the essentials of Buddhism by the Dalai Lama.

**THE PERSONAL AURA**, by Dora Kunz; *Quest, 1991; paper, \$19.95; cloth, \$29.95.*

Clairvoyant Dora Kunz describes characteristics of the aura, the emotional energy field that surrounds all human beings. This book includes paintings by artist Juanita Donahoo, showing auras in full color as Kunz described them to Donahoo.

## Georg Feuerstein on Books

**THE JOURNEY OF A MASTER: Swami Chinmayananda—The Man, the Path, the Teaching**, by Nancy Patchen; *Asian Humanities Press; paper, \$15.*

Swami Chinmayananda was born Balakrishnan (Balan) Menon in 1916 in Kerala, India. After acquiring a master's degree in English literature, Menon became a journalist and newspaper editor. Like so many educated Hindus of his generation, he started out as a self-proclaimed agnostic who was interested in politics, economics, and social reform, with few good words for religion. He steadily worked his way up the social ladder and was finally accepted into Delhi's social elite.

But this moment of worldly triumph coincided with his spiritual awakening, "ruining" his professional career. The stark contrast between the luxuri-

ous life of his new peers and the abject poverty of the masses, of which he had firsthand experience, set his mind reeling. It had been clear from his many articles that he felt tremendous compassion for the underprivileged. But now something deeper within him was stirring and demanding recognition.

For three years he secretly dedicated himself to spiritual practices, while continuing his busy outward life as an editor. The seed for his awakening had been planted long ago, especially by his meeting with Sri Ramana of Tiruvannamalai in 1936. At that time, desperate to rationalize his chosen lifestyle, Menon dismissed the gentle sage as a mere "hypnotist." However, in spite of this, Ramana's spiritual presence had communicated itself to him regardless, bearing fruit many years later.

In 1947 Menon went to Rishikesh, the Mecca of Hindu sages and saints, in order "to find out how those holy men are keeping up the bluff." He went straight to the ashram of Swami Shivananda, a former physician and well-respected spiritual figure, whose writings he had read. He had come to stay a day or two, but several weeks passed during which Menon was inwardly recast.

What impressed him about Swami Shivananda was that the swami, like himself, was not a contemplative hiding out in a mountain cave but was a man of action. On that first visit, Menon stayed for an entire month, and then frequently returned to the ashram.

By spring 1948 Menon had become a permanent resident of Shivananda's ashram. In the following year he was formally initiated into the Sarasvati order, and was given the name Chinmayananda, meaning "he whose bliss is in the form of pure Awareness." Since he expressed a keen desire to study Vedanta metaphysics, his guru sent him to the renowned Swami Tapovan, a Self-realized soul who lived and breathed Vedanta.

Swami Chinmayananda stayed with Swami Tapovan for many years, which amply demonstrated his devotion to spiritual life, because Tapovan Maharaj was a strict disciplinarian. Every day, Swami Tapovan expounded to him the truths embedded in the sacred scriptures of Vedanta. Tapovan also advised him to sit at the Ganges river and listen to the water's eternal sound. He said that the river was the best instructor in the hidden meaning of the Vedanta scriptures.

In 1951 the swami felt the urge to leave the quietude of the Himalayas and communicate the wisdom of Vedanta to the people. He dedicated his life to the spiritual renaissance of India. At first Swami Tapovan was against his disciple preaching Vedanta to the masses, but he gave his blessings anyway. Later, when he saw his pupil's great success and beneficial influence, the sage expressed his delight.

Swami Shivananda's reaction was quite different; he told Swami Chinmayananda: "Go, roar like Vivekananda." And the swami has been roaring ever since.

The book conveys not only Swami Chinmayananda's integrity and wisdom, but also his marvelous sense of humor. When asked by a group of overly curious Americans what his spiritual practice was, he replied: "Standing on my nose meditating."

One of his mottos is "Keep on smiling, always, at all times, under all conditions." This is another way of saying, have faith in divine providence; trust life. When some of his followers complained to him of absenteeism in their study groups, he sent them a circular stating that the only acceptable excuse was personal death. He added that in that case he would still like to have a week's notice to check whether all dues had been paid. The students saw the ridiculousness of their worries.

When asked whether he experiences the divine state all the time, Swami Chinmayananda responded: "Experience is of the body, mind, and intellect. I am being; I am not experience. I allow experience to exist around me. I am subtle like space, untouched by anything. It can't be said that I am in it or out of it, but I am never away from it."

This book is an eloquent, well-researched biography that gives us a unique glimpse into the life and work of one of modern India's great sages and tireless spiritual activists. The book also provides Western readers with an intelligent commentary on Indian society and culture, both during the British raj and today.

THE BOOK OF REVELATIONS: A Commentary, by Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov; Prosveta U.S.A., paper, \$8.95.

Much has been said and written about the *Apocalypse*, as the *Book of Revelations* is also called. Presumably, as the year 2000 draws nearer, we will see a growing number of books about this time-honored

biblical text. It is doubtful, however, that they will be grounded in the profound wisdom and visionary knowledge that marks the present work by Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov (1900–1986).

This volume, consisting of carefully edited talks by that great Bulgarian spiritual teacher, offers an incisive commentary that does not succumb to fantasy and sensationalism. Rather, Aivanhov's explanations penetrate deep into the esoteric mysteries of this much-misunderstood prophetic and symbolic work of the the New Testament.

Aivanhov, for whom theology is a matter of spiritual wisdom and practice, succeeds in surprising us at every turn. In his experienced hands, the prophetic *Book of Revelation* becomes a powerful tool for spiritual transformation. True to his gnostic heritage, Aivanhov believed that Jesus transmitted to Saint John a teaching that he did not divulge to his other disciples. Certainly, the *Book of Revelation* contains advanced metaphysical knowledge, which only someone well versed in the arcane sciences can hope to understand.

Who is the mysterious being who appeared to John, revealing to him the visions reported in the *Book of Revelation*? Who are the Twenty-Four Elders, the Four Holy Living Creatures, the 144,000 Servants of God, and the Beast? What is the New Jerusalem? Mikhael Aivanhov is a trustworthy guide in exploring these questions and finding credible answers to them. His interpretations are not merely based on book knowledge but derive from his personal experience of the spiritual dimension.

The discourses in this volume are a wonderful testimony to Aivanhov's spiritual genius and his profound knowledge of esotericism.

**TOWARD A SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS: Meditational Theory and Practice, by Hiroshi Motoyama; Asian Humanities Press, paper, \$9.95.**

Dr. Motoyama is one of the pioneers of research on higher states of consciousness and the inventor of the AMI apparatus, which measures the body's vital energy (*ch'i* in Chinese or *prana* in Sanskrit). He also happens to be an accomplished yogin, psychic, and

the head priest of a Shinto temple. This book purports to be a guide to the theory and practice of yogic meditation. The author defines yoga as "a practical method whose aim is the unification of the individual with sacred objects, and ultimately with God" (p. 1). This unitive state transcends all distinction between subject and object. The first chapter outlines the eight limbs of classical yoga and contains valuable insights into the physiological aspects of the yogic process.

The eighth limb or stage on the yogic path is *samadhi*, which Dr. Motoyama understands as superconsciousness. When this superconsciousness is awakened, he proposes, it can freely control the activities of the individual body-mind.

In a fascinating experiment involving people in whom the superconsciousness had been awakened, he asked his subjects to focus on the third eye. The experiment was conducted in a totally dark room that was, moreover, completely shielded from electric fields. Yet, astonishingly enough, his equipment registered the emission of light from the location of the third eye. Dr. Motoyama argues that this indicates the creation of a new type of energy in superconscious individuals.

The second chapter examines diverse aspects of the process of concentration and meditation. Here the author makes the interesting observation that meditation is possible only "when the lower part of the body is filled with vital energy and the upper part is empty" (p. 43). Practically speaking, this means that meditators should concentrate on the lower abdomen rather than the third eye. This will accumulate vital energy, which is essential for the deepening of the meditative process.

In the third chapter, the author explores a variety of psychic phenomena known in yoga. Success in meditation opens up what Dr. Motoyama calls the astral world. He devotes considerable space to discussing astral phenomena, especially in regard to the "serpent power" or *kundalini-shakti*. However, he makes the all-important point that the condition of full *samadhi* transcends all astral phenomena and even the causal plane of existence. In other words, more advanced meditators may be psychic but still unenlightened. Enlightenment depends on one's identification with God, or Being itself.

The principal value of this work lies not so much in the scientific explanations or metaphysical

framework it puts forward — which are certainly subject to revision — but in the author's practical suggestions for meditators.

GAIA 2: Emergence, The New Science of Becoming, ed. by William Irwin Thompson; Lindisfarne Press, paper, \$14.95.

The first Gaia conference was held ten years ago. Some of the papers then presented by philosophers and scientists were published in 1987 as *Gaia, A Way of Knowing*. The present volume contains papers delivered at the second Gaia conference, convened in Italy in 1988.

Apart from Thompson, the director of the Lindisfarne Association, the conference also attracted such well-known thinkers as James Lovelock, Lynn Margulis, and Francisco Varela, as well as John and Nancy Todd (New Alchemy Institute).

Thompson's own contributions to the volume are, as usual, brilliant and challenging. They provide an overarching framework that helps us grasp the concerns of the other contributors, who all address themselves to the question of how we should conceptualize nature. They explore the interface between biology and cognition.

Thompson argues that in the last century it was "transformation" that captivated the imagination of creative minds like Darwin, Spencer, Carnot, Dickens, and Turner. Today, at the edge of perception, avant-garde thinkers and artists are discovering a new theme, new cognitive forms. This book explores some of the aspects of the emergent notion of *Gaia*, which is introduced here as no longer a mere hypothesis but as a grand *theory* of evolution, a new way of looking at and experiencing the world, especially our planet.

It is evident from the book that the conference participants by no means all hold the same view, and their differences are often expressed with great wit. There are the scientific Gaiologists on the one side, and on the other what one participant labeled the "Goopy Gaia Group." The difference, at bottom, appears to be one of conceptual sophistication. The scientists want to be precise, avoiding the impression that Gaia is an organism, while the concept entertained by the soft-definition group comes very close to nineteenth-century vitalism. More than anything, the disagreements bear witness to the fact that Gaia

is truly an emergent idea — an idea waiting to be shaped by our imagination in order to usher in what Thompson calls a new planetary renaissance.

THE EAGLE'S QUEST: A Physicist's Search for Truth in the Heart of the Shamanic World, by Fred Alan Wolf; Summit Books, 1991, cloth, \$22.

Fred Alan Wolf, author of *Parallel Universes*, *Star\*Wave*, and other books, is well-known for his daringly creative interpretations of quantum theory. This book is another educational and entertaining Wolfian tour-de-force. As the subtitle indicates, it represents Wolf's personal search for meaning. This time he boldly enters into the magical world of shamanism. He does so, of course, with a physicist's gear strapped to his back and with a scorching desire to "know the secrets of the universe."

The result is a rather unique book that applies Wolf's quantum-physical insights to the spiritual dimension, bringing a new twist to our understanding of what it is that shamans do and experience. Not everything that Wolf conjectures and postulates need be taken as gospel truth, but his ideas are certainly thought-provoking. His notion that hallucination is an altered state of awareness in which we are conscious in a parallel universe is intriguing. However, in accepting this idea one must first accept Wolf's cosmology, as expounded in some of his other works.

Be that as it may, the present book is not another exposition of the farther reaches of physics. Rather, it is his most autobiographical account to date, and it brims with stories about his encounters with shamans, shamanic researchers, and other fascinating people in the United States, Peru, and Europe.

Whether you end up agreeing or disagreeing with Wolf's vision of the world, and of shamanism, you are bound to find him an enthralling writer who knows how to spin a good yarn.

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Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D., is the author of numerous books and articles. Among his most recent publications are *Sacred Sexuality* (Tarcher 1992) and *Sacred Paths* (Larson 1991). His forthcoming works include *Wholeness or Transcendence? Ancient Lessons for the Emerging Global Civilization* and *The Mystery of Light: The Life and Teaching of Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov*.

## SPIRITUAL THEMES ON FILM AND VIDEO: A CONSUMER'S GUIDE

Ray Grasse

Those of us who own video tape decks have probably all had the experience of wandering through our local video store trying to decide what films to select from the aisles upon aisles of tapes offered. For cinema fans who have tired of the conventional Hollywood offerings, the following list provides a brief selection of film titles that focus on one or another aspect of the spiritual quest. These range from films that offer inspiring views of perennial spiritual themes, to those that shed light on darker aspects of spiritual development. For, as Carl Jung (among others) noted, the path to self-realization involves a confrontation with our "shadow" facets no less than with our more luminous potentials.

Needless to say, no list of this sort could hope to be comprehensive; I will not even touch upon, for instance, the countless independent films of artistic and spiritual importance which could easily be included in such a discussion. Rather, I limit myself to those releases which are relatively accessible through local video outlets.

Readers are invited to share their own suggestions of films that illuminate the spiritual path, along with one- or two-sentence descriptions of each title. Those which are accepted will be run in a future issue of *The Quest*.

*Brother Sun, Sister Moon* – Franco Zeffirelli's lyrical biography of St. Francis of Assisi, with music by Donovan.

*Moby Dick* – John Huston's ambitious film adaptation (with script by Ray Bradbury) of Melville's symbolist masterpiece. The white whale as symbol for: the ego-shattering immensity of enlightenment? Melville's father complex? A sociological portent of the impending civil war? Or something else entirely?

*The Razor's Edge* (two versions, starring Tyrone Power or Bill Murray) – Somerset Maugham's tale of one man's search for enlightenment in the schools of the East and his subsequent return to Western society.

*Wings of Desire* (German/English) – Slow-moving but brilliant film by Wim Wenders on angels,

humans, and the richness of embodied existence. (By way of mythic analogy, compare to Woody Allen's *Purple Rose of Cairo*, or the South American feature, *Man Facing Southeast*.)

*Babette's Feast* (Swedish) – Academy award winning testament to the healing powers of art, food, and human kindness. Based on a story by Isak Dinesen.

*Dark Crystal* – Jim Henson's fairy tale for grown-ups, this film features impressive visuals and an imaginative reworking of perennial mythic themes.

*My Dinner With Andre* – New-age cult classic by Louis Malle centering around a dinner discussion between two men (Andre Gregory and Wallace Shawn) on the great questions of life.

*Total Recall* – While excessively violent, this Schwarzenegger vehicle (based on the ideas of science fiction genius Philip K. Dick) nevertheless raises important questions about the nature of identity, memory, and morality. Not for the squeamish.

*The Dead* – John Huston's final directorial effort, this film provides a subtle and sobering meditation on what James Joyce called the "grave and constant" in human suffering.

*Kagemusha* (Japanese) – This late masterpiece by Akira Kurosawa interweaves the multiple themes of illusion versus reality, blind adherence to symbols of authority, and the transformative power — for better and worse — of the social mask.

*Flatliners* – Among the more stylized and entertaining of Hollywood's current forays into life after death.

*Jacob's Ladder* – Released during the same period as *Flatliners* and *Ghost*, this film features a somewhat darker and more complex look at the death theme, focusing even more intensely upon the perennial Dantean truth that the ascent into the light must be preceded by a descent into the depths.

*Resurrection* – Though the special effects have grown a little dated since its release a decade ago, this little gem still remains one of Hollywood's first and most interesting looks at both healing and the near-death experience. Starring Ellen Burstyn and Sam Shepard.

*Excalibur* – This lavishly-produced film attempts the impossible—portraying the Arthurian saga and its myriad symbols in one installment—and succeeds surprisingly well.

*Defending Your Life* – Life after death in a decidedly more comedic vein, this film by Albert Brooks (co-starring Meryl Streep) scores useful points on the subjects of fear, courage, and love.

Finally, we might make passing mention of several film titles that, while not explicitly “spiritual” in theme, seem to strike many viewers in an inspir-

ing or thought-provoking fashion: *Days of Heaven*, *Never Cry Wolf*, *The Emerald Forest*, Jean Cocteau’s *Beauty and the Beast*, *Equus*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, *The Mission*, Stanley Kubrick’s *2001* and *Spartacus*, and, of course, the rarely seen *It’s A Wonderful Life* by Frank Capra.

Happy viewing!

**Ray Grasse** obtained a degree in filmmaking from the Art Institute of Chicago. He is assistant editor of *The Quest*.

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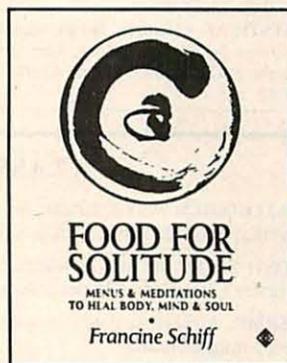


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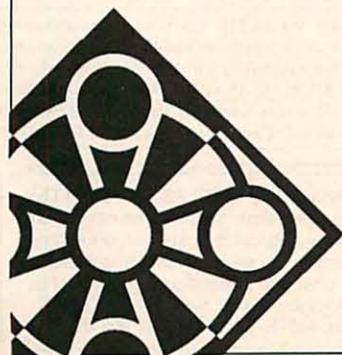
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## This Talking Earth

(Continued from page 96)

ship not only with ourselves but with everything else. Therefore are we involved in a perpetual awakening.

The springtime of the soul, or the rebirth of the spirit, does not involve some singular, mystical moment. Neither does the resurrection of the spirit take place at the moment of physical death. Rather we are reborn in every moment, along with every change. There is no final arrival into the full flowering of the new consciousness, unless it be in this and every moment. We are awakening now; we shall always be in the process of awakening. Spring will always be with us.

We rejoice in spring, therefore, because it strikes the spiritual chord of becoming. We thrill to nature's new life and new beginning because it is a sure sign that we stand forever on the threshold of new life and new beginnings. We live for the new: new knowledge and new understanding are the life of the mind; new experiences are the life of the Self. Our deepest purpose involves us in the perpetual unfolding within ourselves of the new, involves us in the eternal resurrection. Life pales when there is stasis, when there is no growth and no learning. Spiritual malaise befalls the individual and the nation without the influx of

new life and without the increasing elevation of consciousness. Our purpose, our destiny, and our joy are recalled to us by the earth's spring; healing, expansion, and growth are brought to us in the spring of the spirit.

When we consider the infinitude which stretches out on all sides, when we consider how much there is to know in comparison to the little which we already know, then perhaps we can say that we, too, are in the first blush of spring. Perhaps we are just beginning to stir from our long winter of dormancy. It may be that the fullest springtime of the spirit and of the mind is yet a long way off. Nevertheless, the first colors and the first life of spring will always stand for what is best in us—the certainty that tomorrow and the next day we will awaken into a new life and a new consciousness.

**Bruce A. Vance** is an author and poet who pursues a self-reliant lifestyle on a small farm in rural Indiana near the Ohio River. His most recent books, *Dreamscape: Voyage in an Alternate Reality* and *Mindscape: Exploring the Reality of Thought Forms*, were both published by Quest Books. He has also published poetry in various magazines.

## ETERNAL SPRING

Bruce Vance

There is a blush on the face of the forest; all winter long the woods have remained a uniform gray, but now there is a change. Yet but faintly perceptible, a reddish tinge has awakened in the branch tips. The forest has been long asleep; the sap of life has remained slumbering deep in the ground. But this innocent blush betokens the return of life: the sap is up; the buds are alive, bringing the first of spring's colors to the land. It is as if the eye has caught nature, the awakening maiden, unawares, and she has flushed pink—not in embarrassment, but in her innocent joy in the return of life.

Soon she will be fully awake, and she will put on her morning dress. It will be brightly colored: The background will contain countless shades of shimmering green; and as a further delight to the eye there will be sprinkled upon the fields of green innumerable wildflowers of pink and blue and white and yellow. The threads of her dress shall be of a liquid silver-blue which flashes in the sun. And above her head the sun itself will beam, returned from the south to glorify her. Nature has awakened and dons her spring vesture, and all our lives are made richer for it.

We thrill to the advent of spring not only for the joy it brings to the senses, but also for what it represents to the spirit and soul of us. We, too, are experiencing a spring tide; we, also, know the beginnings of new life, and the wonder of a fresh awakening. Unlike the seasons of nature, the seasons of the soul run simultaneously. Something within us is always reaching maturity, something is reaching fruition, something lays dormant, and something is awakening into new life. But we are prone to reflect upon these facets of the inner life which are made somehow more apparent through the passing promenade of nature and the outer world; thus does spring bring with it a contemplation of the spirit's eternal spring, of the soul's ongoing resurrection.

The experiences we faced last year, and the years before, contained more than we knew. As they were undergone we thought only of what was before us, just as now we concentrate upon what is transpiring in the moment. But in those past experiences there was a sowing of seeds; more was dropped into our depths than was suspected. Now and tomorrow

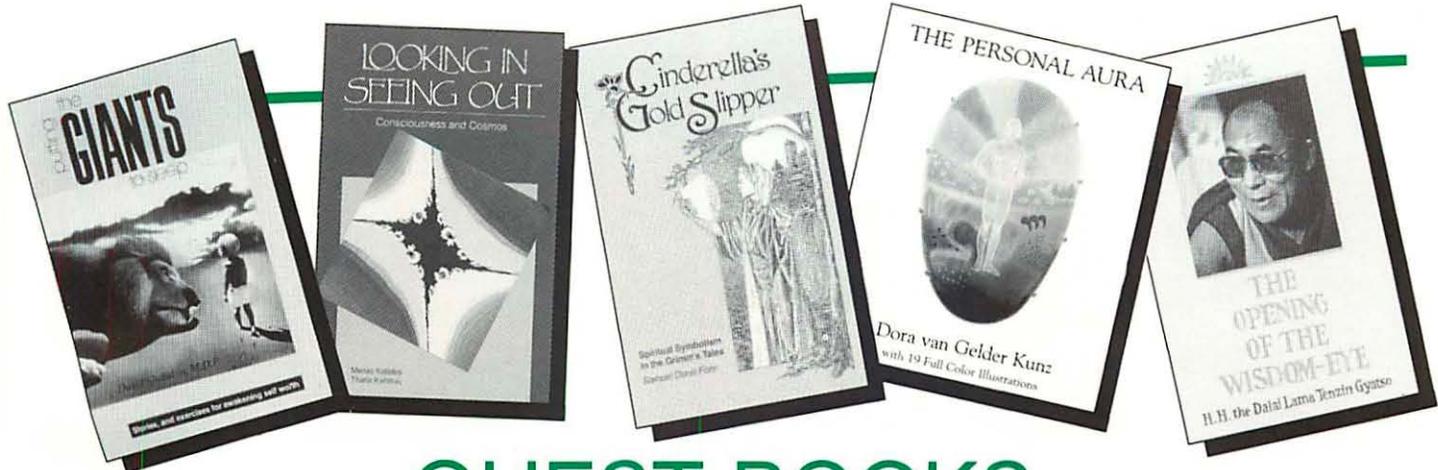
those seeds from the past are germinating, are coming to life and yielding new thoughts and feelings and knowings which were not anticipated. The lessons of life must often lay awhile dormant within the depths of our being before we may awaken to their full meaning.

Also, it is spring within us because this very morning, this very moment, we awaken to find ourselves born anew. We are not who we were as children; we are not the same as we were a year ago, nor are we the exact same person who went to sleep last night. There is a continuity which transcends the changes of identity, of personality; but our mortal lessons involve us in perpetual change, and therefore every moment is a new beginning and a new birth. Many of the thoughts we have today may be the same as those we had yesterday; but if we look closely, we find that here and there new ideas and new thoughts are emerging, new feelings are stirring, and new identifications are forming; especially do we see each day this new growth and this new beginning when we have reached that stage in life wherein we consciously take upon ourselves what has been called the "Great Work," or when we become students of the perennial wisdom.

The new idea of the moment, the fresh emergence of the moral sentiment, and the daily newness in self-identity—each of these is a bit of spring taking place within us, is evidence that there is new life for us in each day and in each moment. Furthermore, these spring-like growth impulses are evidence of that greater rebirth, of that ever-happening spiritual resurrection. They are lesser manifestations of a more encompassing process; they are signs that we are indeed participating in the alchemical operation of the transmutation of lead into gold.

The deepest and most pertinent spring is the awakening into a new order of consciousness. All inner growth, expansion, or increased understanding is an element or facet of this more encompassing rebirth. Our destiny guides us into ever greater communion with the All; and with each increase in depth or breadth of communion, there is a corresponding new growth. Each bit of true growth changes who and what we are, changes our identity and our relation-

*(Concluded on page 95)*



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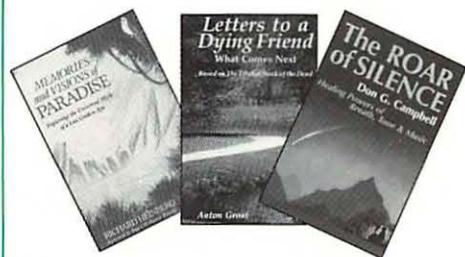
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back into a forgotten initiatory domain,  
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*As J. R. R. Tolkien once said,  
ancient figures of household legend  
suddenly spring up from the grass as  
living heroes in a time of need.*

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