

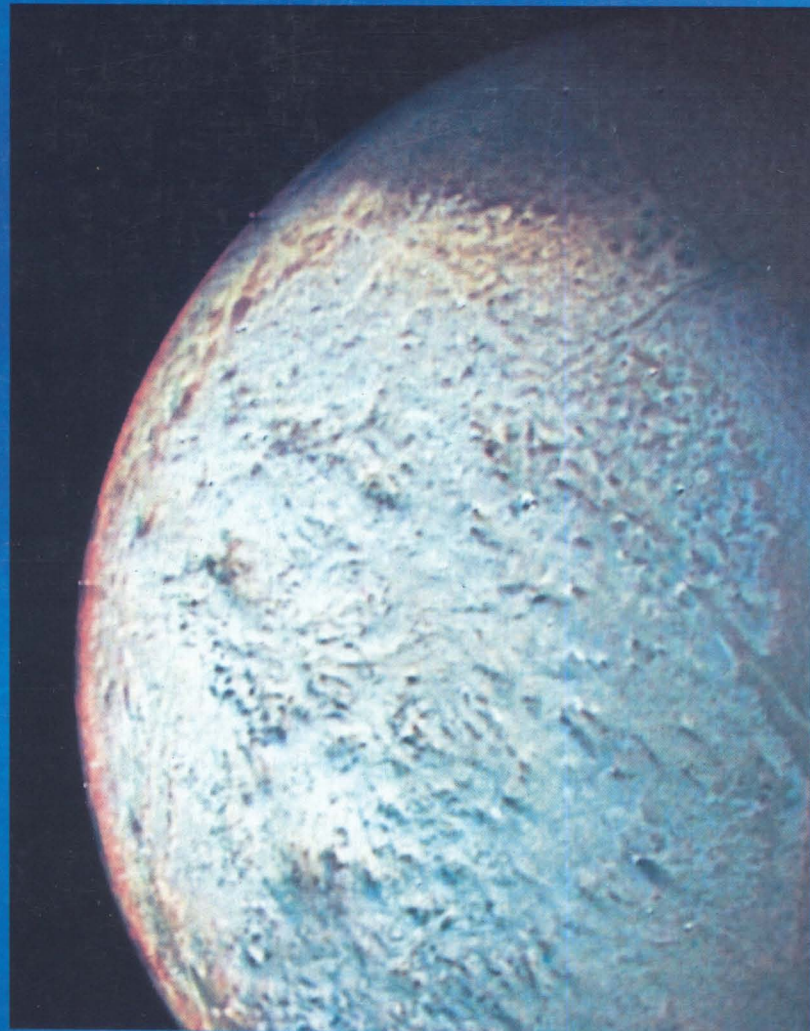
Issue 10

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BESHARA

M A G A Z I N E



BESHARA
A UNIFIED PERSPECTIVE IN
THE CONTEMPORARY
WORLD

Making a Bridge to the Unknown

An interview with Raimon Panikkar

Life in a Living World

Rupert Sheldrake

What a Way to Leave the Solar System!

Richard Twinch *on Voyager II*

C o n t



Kalachakra Sand Mandala created by the monks from the Namgyal Monastery at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. From 'Journey Through the Wheel of Time' by Barry Bryant, to be published in 1990 by Doubleday. © 1989 Samaya Foundation. See page 8.



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- What a Way to Leave the Solar System** – Richard Twinch on Voyager II
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- Buddhist Peace Initiatives** – the Kalachakra Initiation in Los Angeles and the Pilgrimage for Active Peace
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Rupert Sheldrake explores some of the implications of an idea which is increasingly accepted by science – that the universe is 'alive'.

Left: Figures on West front of Chartres Cathedral, one of Europe's most venerated holy places. Photograph by Clive Hicks. See page 15.

e n t s

Issue 10

Winter 1989/90

BESHARA

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Joseph Campbell. © David B. LaClaire
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BESHARA Magazine

was founded in 1987 as a forum where the ideas of unity which are now emerging in many different fields – in science, economics, ecology, the arts and in the spiritual traditions – can be expressed. 'Beshara' means 'Good News' or 'Omen of Joy'. In its Arabic form it is found in the Quran, in its Aramiac form it is translated as the 'Glad Tidings' of the Bible, and it is also found in its Hebrew form in the Torah.

Front Cover: background – the great dark spot on the surface of Neptune – a storm system the size of the earth which rotates counter-clockwise; inset – the bright southern hemisphere on Neptune's moon, Triton. Both taken by Voyager II, August 1989.

Courtesy of Jet Propulsion Laboratories.

Back Cover: 'Fool and Flower' by Cecil Collins, 1944.

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International Symposium
To commemorate the 750th Anniversary
of the death of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi.
The Seventh Annual Symposium of the
Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society

MUHYIDDIN IBN 'ARABI

A.D. 1165 - 1240
HIS LIFE AND TIMES

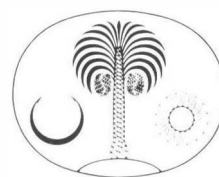
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Editorial



“In this kairos (era) of the mixing of civilisations we need a fresh approach, another opening to Reality. Without discarding or making fun of what has gone before, we are able to make a bridge towards a situation we still do not know. We need this now not because there is a crisis in theology, politics, philosophy or whatever, but because the situation in the world is different”.

THESE ARE THE words of Raimon Panikkar, whom we interview in this issue of BESHARA, but the sentiments they express are so prevalent throughout the magazine that they could almost have been said by any of the contributors. The mythologist Joseph Campbell, for instance, says in his book ‘The Power of Myth’ which we review: “Every mythology has grown up in a certain society in a bounded field... But today there are no boundaries. The only thing that is valid today is a mythology of the planet, and we don’t have such a mythology...”, whilst Rupert Sheldrake points out that ideas coming out of science are equally demanding. “Cosmic evolution is a new idea...” he says. “It might be implicit in certain world views, but it is not part of the standard doctrine which has come down to us. This idea of ongoing evolutionary creativity is a challenge for us today”.

THIS THEME HAS emerged not because we planned it so, but, we feel, because it is so very much of the moment, with many events in the past few months indicating great and totally unexpected possibilities for humankind. Two in particular have stood out for their dramatic impact – the discovery of Neptune and its astonishingly beautiful moon, Triton, by Voyager II at the very end of its twelve year mission, and, more recently, the breaching of the Berlin Wall – an event which has really brought home the vast implications of

the recent reforms in the Soviet Union.

Witnessed by millions of people all over the world on television, both these events may lay some claim to being elements in the developing ‘planetary myth’ proposed by Joseph Campbell. Both were also immensely moving, and so united us not only in principle but in sentiment. And this seems important; for “... without the fire of love,” says Arnold Toynbee, “the dangerous fissures of mankind’s social solidarity can never be annealed”.

MANY COMMENTATORS have been content to see these great events in isolation, and/or have attempted to explain them in terms of well-worn beliefs and assumptions. BESHARA, however, indicates that it is possible to view them as part of a larger movement – which is not only one of politics, science or technological achievement, but also an inner movement, of the spirit or of consciousness. Therefore, the concern in exploring our future is not to tie it down to any formula or ideology, nor to speculate with either optimism or pessimism, but rather to consider some of the deeper dimensions of meaning which are opening up for us at the moment.

Whether in the work of the Tibetan Buddhists for universal peace, changes in economic theory, the new scientific perception that the universe is alive or a fresh understanding of our past through history, what emerges clearly is that what is on offer is, at the very least, an expansion of our horizons. “I believe that we live in a completely universal age” said the painter Cecil Collins, to whom we pay tribute. “We’ve got to grow up and accept universality. Universality is maturity”.

Jane Clark

Left: East Germans climb over the Berlin Wall. Photograph courtesy of the Times Newspapers Ltd.

News

Economic Developments

Alison Yiangou

Economists have traditionally regarded their discipline as objective, predictive and value-neutral. But just as such concepts have been overturned in the natural sciences, so recent developments suggest that a comparable reassessment is occurring in economic theory.

One indication comes in the form of a new book from America, 'The New Realities', (1) by Peter Drucker, which discusses the relationship between economics and the inappropriately named science of chaology. Chaology points out that highly complex systems (like the weather) are inherently unpredictable. Although the systems as a whole are highly ordered, the constituent 'variables' are so interdependent that minute fluctuations in one can result in huge variations in the outcome – the so called 'butterfly effect'.

Drucker points out that world economics is such a system, being so complex and interdependent that, according to the theory, a small eddy in the Maltese pound could deflect the dollar. Simon Jenkins commented in The Sunday Times, 24th September: "To accuse the chancellor of having 'got 1989 inflation wrong' or of being '5% out

on his money supply' will one day seem as daft as flat-earthism – like accusing American forecasters of not seeing Hurricane Hugo coming a year ago".

Whose Responsibility?

Drucker also points out that both recent history and the post-war problems of the Third World have proved that attempts to impose 'macro-economics' (central planning) usually fail; "...not one of the regulations through which the US government has tried over the years to control, direct or regulate the economy has worked". The question now, is whether governments can have an economic policy at all, or whether they should limit their hopes to 'doctoring' a self-organising system. If the latter, and economies are regulated only by free-market forces, where does responsibility lie?

These questions were touched upon at a recent meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The Financial Times reported that: "Where worries do exist among the policy-makers of the major nations, they appear largely impotent to influence events. Nowhere is this more true than in the exchange markets, where the strength of the dollar poses a particu-



Above. Delegates at the Economic Summit in Paris in July. The placing of ecology on the agenda for the first time was an indication of just how generally acknowledged the link between the two subjects has become.

Below: Leaders of seven of the world's poorest countries met in Paris at the same time, at The Other Economic Summit, to protest against a system which keeps their people in poverty.

Photograph by Chip Hires. Courtesy of FSP, Gamma.



lar problem. Policymakers were slow to realise that deregulation has transferred some of their sovereignty over economic and monetary policy to the financial markets. The markets, reflecting as they do the aggregate millions of individual decisions, are incapable of exercising the responsibility which usually goes with power." (2)

The Environment

These conclusions are paralleled by a different kind of

re-appraisal, this time based on the lessons being learnt from ecology. In its etymological root the word 'economics' is related to both ecology and ecumenism: all are to do with caring for and managing the household (*oikos* in Greek) where the term 'house' has been extended to mean the whole planet – or, indeed the cosmos – that we inhabit.

Proposals to apply economics to the environment range from exchanging areas of rain forest for Third

World debt, to assessing the economic value of the environment. For example, it has been calculated that one hectare of rainforest cleared for timber yields an economic value of \$2000; cleared for ranching beef it yields \$4000, and left for medicine and sustainable hardwood forestry it yields \$6000 over a period of years – an equation which economists would never have considered a few years ago.

Ecological Models

These matters have been brought into focus by a recent, influential report by David Pearce, Professor of Economics at University College, London, (3) which considers the feasibility of placing economic values on the environment. This is being taken very seriously, particularly, it is said, by Great Britain's new environment minister, Chris Patten, and by the much-lambasted multinational companies – even if, as has been suggested, the latter only wish to ensure that there will be future generations to buy their products! Unexpectedly, the role of the multinationals was also emphasised recently by the father of the Gaia hypothesis, James Lovelock, who told a Friends of the Earth conference (4) that they must learn to love the ICIs of this world, for it is they, not small cottage industries, who will bring about change on the required scale.

From the other side, it is being suggested that the model provided by the world's eco-systems is a far more suitable basis for economics than the ones we have at present. The world's eco-systems demonstrate the working of highly complex, interdependent and sustainable self-regulating systems. Our economic system may be complex, but it is not yet sustainable. If it is to become so, then it has to be re-modelled to include some of the

principles through which eco-systems maintain themselves.

Economics and the Faiths

Another level is that of trying to reassess the values which should properly underpin a new economics. The New Economics Foundation, (which for the last five years has been running 'The Other Economic Summit' as a forum for alternative economic models), has now joined forces with ICOREC (International Consultancy on Religion, Education and Culture) to re-examine the teachings of the world's great faiths on economic practice.

They aim to establish an ecumenical, inter-cultural network on economics and religion along the lines of the WWF's Network on Conservation and Religion, and eventually to produce reports and educational packs. To launch the venture, they have organised a major conference on 'Faith, Ethics and a New Economic Order for the 21st Century' in London in December. (See page 45 for details).

Hope for the Future

Although these various new intentions have as yet had little effect upon world economics, they could bring about changes of some magnitude. This is the view held by Dennis Anderson, Visiting Professor of Economics at University College, London, who is working with David Pearce on environmental policies. "If we speak of what needs to be done and what can be done, I am very hopeful. Our scientific understanding of what is happening is deepening all the time, and we already have at our disposal the instruments we need to solve many of the problems."

However, optimism from economists is not enough. As both chaology and the study of living systems are showing, the economic sys-

tem is dependent upon each of the millions of people who comprise it, and it is with them that responsibility ultimately rests. Mr Anderson continued: "where I feel less hopeful is whether politicians, or indeed people

in general, have the will to do what needs to be done."

- (1) Heinemann, London 1989.
- (2) September 20th 1989
- (3) 'Blueprint for a Green Economy' by Pearce, Markandya and Barbier. Earthscan, 1989.
- (4) Independent, 23rd Sept '89

Death of a Pioneer



George Adamson died in July 1989. At the age of 83, he was shot, with two of his assistants, as he charged a group of Somali poachers who had held up a visitor to the Kora National Park in Kenya. George and Joy Adamson struck a chord in the public imagination with the publication in 1960 of her book, 'Born Free', which told the story of the lioness Elsa. Coming to them as a cub, she stayed with them until the age of three. When they had to part with her, rather than send her to a zoo, they returned her to the wild. She had never killed before, never even opened a carcass, and it took her months to become fully self-sufficient.

Although the lioness adapted fully to life in the wild, lived with other lions and reared cubs, whenever the Adamsons would visit her area, she would come racing out of the bush. For the few days they would spend with her, she would resume the old relationship

of friendship and equality. In 1970 George Adamson established Kora as a game reserve, on 500 square miles of arid land. Three days before he died his great wish was fulfilled when it was confirmed as a National Park, securing its future.

Some scientists and conservationists have been critical of the Adamsons, and of the concept of rehabilitation. But through their intense sympathy with the lions they loved the Adamsons learnt a great deal about them. They are part of a remarkable group of pioneers of the post-war period who, by close and courageous observation of species such as chimpanzees, gorillas, elephants and dolphins, have been able to approach these creatures on their own terms.

By means of film and television they have been able to bring home to a world-wide audience something of the essential quality of these beings. The long-term effect of their work may be incalculable.

What a way to leave the solar system!

Richard Twinch contemplates the recent exploration of Neptune by Voyager II

Every 176 years a special alignment of the planets takes place. In 1977 this fortuitous event was the occasion of the launching of two unmanned space probes – Voyager I and II. These traversed our solar system, calling in on Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune on the way, and have now passed into history. Their journey has perhaps done more to extend our vision of the horizon than any other previous exploration, either on earth or in space.

A Miracle of Technology

The marvellous pictures of Neptune and its moon, Triton, arrived on our television screens in August by a whole series of extraordinary feats of modern technology. It was only in the 1950's that it was noticed that comets speeded up near the planets. In 1965, a research student, Gary Flanдро, realised that the same physics could be used to explore the outermost planets of the solar system, cutting down an estimated journey time of over 40 years to only twelve. This idea was taken up and popularised by Arthur C. Clarke in the book (and film) '2001: A Space Odyssey', so that by the launch date of the twin explorers it had become an established idea.

The Voyagers were the first generation of spacecraft to be controlled by on-board computers – although such has been the rate of technological change that they were far more primitive than the desk-top computers now in everyday use. Whilst in flight, the space-craft was

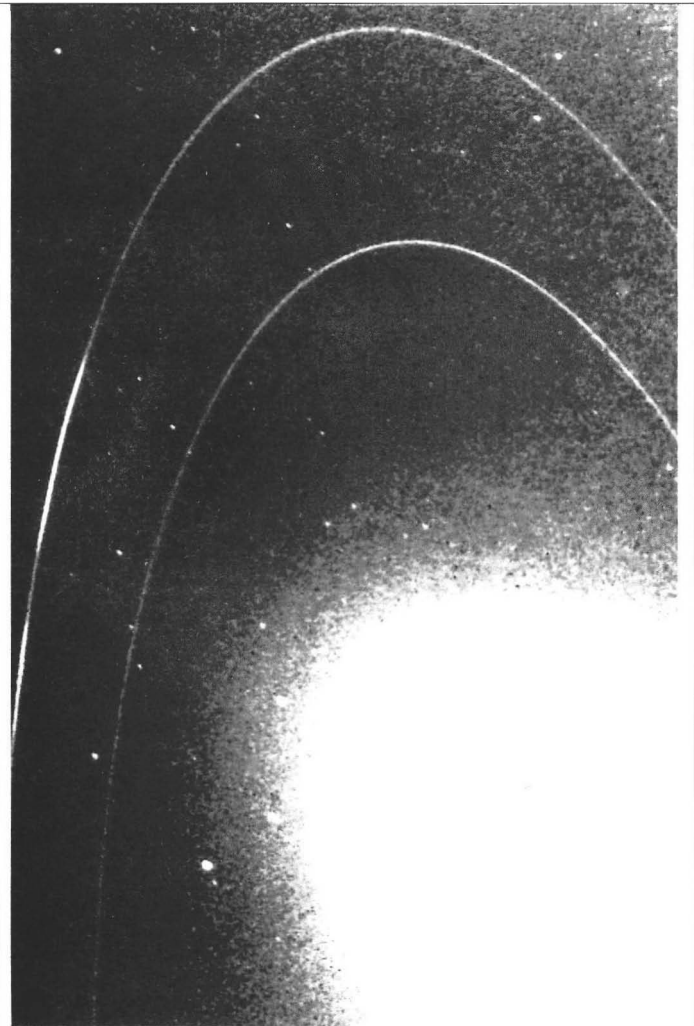
modernised through modifications to the computer software beamed through space at the speed of light. At the time of closest encounter to Neptune, these took over four hours to reach Voyager II. The procedure was so successful that Voyager arrived at Neptune four minutes early and on a course within 20 miles of the original projection. In 1977 it was impossible to pick up such delicate signals from outer space, said to be billions of times less powerful than a digital watch, but in 1989 the vast leaps forward in computer technology also made possible almost instant pictures and analysis of the data as it arrived from three billion miles away, using software called VANESSA.

The economics also dictated that the project had to succeed to keep going, and so we were allowed to share the sights as it threaded its way around the solar system. There can be no doubt that the mission was a tremendous success for technology and a boost for 'pure science'. But what of its value for us?

Information Overload

In its coverage, the Sunday Telegraph reported on 27th August a discussion between a United States senator and an astronomer.

Senator: "Dave, I have a confession to make about those space missions. People who know better than I keep saying they are important, and I believe them. But I still find it very hard to be concerned. Frankly, whether or not there is nitrogen or



The rings of Neptune seen by Voyager II. Courtesy of Jet Propulsion Laboratories, California.

hydrogen on Venus or Jupiter doesn't excite me very much."

Astronomer: "You're not alone, senator, you're just a victim of instant information overload, a common disease. It prevents people from seeing the big picture. For instance, the greatest contribution of the space age is that it will cure us of future shock. We will learn how to look at accelerated change and live with it. What space scientists call long lead-times – big blocks of years – will be an accepted part of our daily activities.

"We'll initiate projects that we know won't be completed in our lifetime, but we'll accept that. Our present perception of time is incredibly narrow, but the space age will alter all that. Everything will appear in a

new light, if only the politicians don't blow us all up first."

The senator became convinced and the conversation continued along the lines of manned missions, mining of planets, colonies on the moon etc., all of which may well happen but are future possibilities rather than present actualities. What they did not tackle was the importance to us now of "seeing the big picture" in understanding our place in the universe.

The Big Picture

If we take the time span of 176 years (the time it takes the planets to come into realignment) as one solar cycle or 'day' (in earth terms it is about the time it takes to grow a large oak tree), one cycle back Laplace was successfully applying Newton's

gravitational theory to the entire solar system; two cycles back Galileo was clearing the way for 'classical' science to emerge with detailed investigation of the planets by telescope and his experiments with falling objects (studies which were later taken up by Isaac Newton in his theories of gravitation and mechanical forces). Three cycles back saw the birth of Leonardo da Vinci (1452), a pre-cursor of the Renaissance. Exactly four cycles back was the death in 1273 of the great Islamic teacher and poet, Jelalu'ddin Rumi, whose followers, the Mevlevis, (known as the 'Whirling Dervishes') enact, in their dance, the spinning of the planets around the sun – a ritual which was initiated some 200 years before the birth of Copernicus and the discovery of the heliocentric universe in the West.

In terms of the 'big picture', it can be seen that all these men had the ability to recognise an essential step along the path that led to the success of Voyager I and II, and each one was instrumental, in his own way, in opening up and extending our understanding of who and where we are, from the most interior meanings to the most explicit mechanics. Watching the re-run of the television pictures transmitted from the first landing on the moon 20 years ago, it was astonishing to see the astronauts leaping and hopping, carefree, on the low-gravity surface of the moon, whose lack of atmosphere would have killed them instantly had they tripped and broken an oxygen line. Their sense of well-being and delight, they said, was because they felt that it was like 'home'.

It is perhaps for this reason that the pictures from Neptune and the other planets have brought such euphoria; these, too, are our home. The feeling is of looking into

richly furnished rooms of whose existence we only had a dim idea, each filled with wonderful and exciting new discoveries for the scientist in us, and unimaginably beautiful 'spacescapes' to charm and delight our sight.

Sense of awe

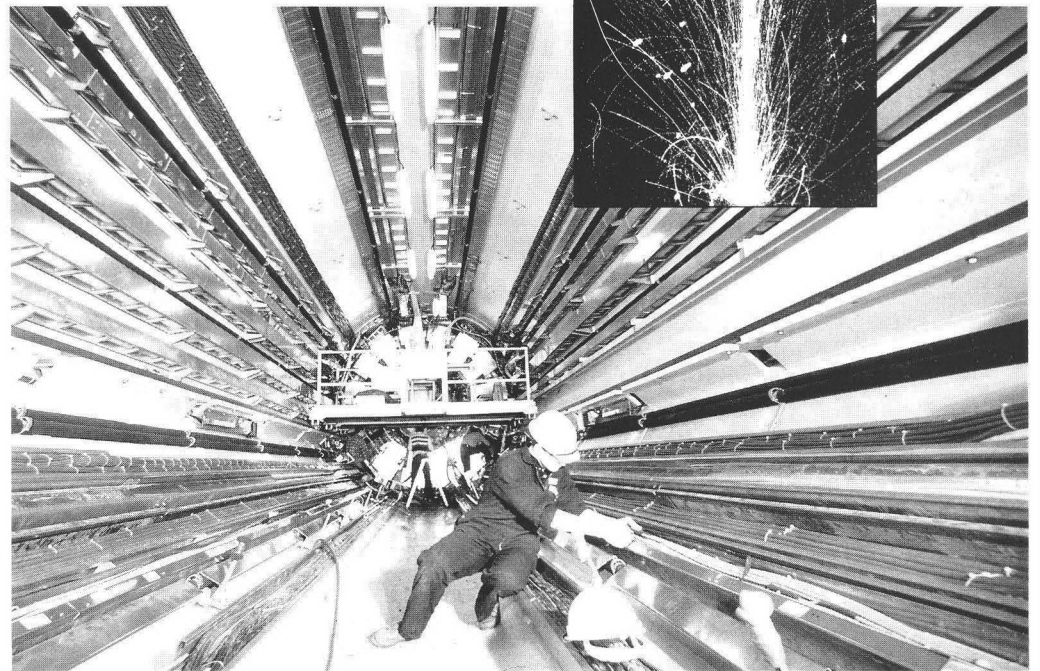
Certainly, to all of us following the mission, the arrival of Voyager at Neptune was a deeply memorable and moving experience. The last object seen, the extraordinary and beautiful moon Triton, with its pale blue and pink poles, (the first blue seen by Voyager since leaving the earth), deeply etched surface and active geysers, was an unexpected

revelation, especially to the scientists who had been following the mission day after day, year after year. The project scientist, Dr. Edward Stone, described it as "the most interesting object in the solar system". It was Triton that prompted one of the scientists to suspend critical analysis and simply gasp in amazement "Wow, what a way to leave the solar system!"

In 1802, one solar 'day' away from Voyager's launch, William Paley (himself a noted theoretician on gravity) was admiring a watch, found on a heath, and drawing the conclusion that such intricacy and delicacy must have had a maker. The

'watch' the Voyagers found on the heath of space, swept by the solar wind, reveals further and further mysteries. Our sense of wonder and awe is well-placed, for whether we choose to ascribe creation to an omnipotent deity (as did Paley), or whether one chooses to ascribe it to 'things' (as did Darwin), or whether indeed one is able to see both points of view simultaneously, (as did Rumi), then without a doubt what we have been shown is a glimpse of greatness in which each beauty is displayed in exactly its own place and with its own measure – a synchronicity which some ascribe to wisdom.

The Triple Structure of Matter



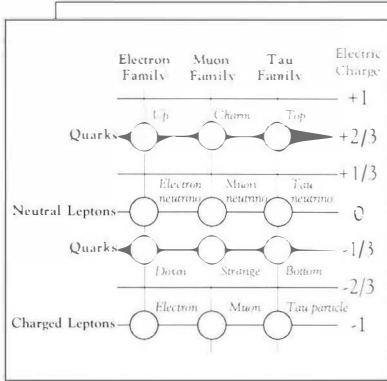
Above: A technician works on cabling inside the L3 detector at CERN. L3 is one of LEP's four detectors. Photograph by Philip Plailly.

Insert: Streamer chamber photograph of charged subatomic particles in a high-energy collision. Courtesy of Science Photo Library.

The quest for a 'theory of everything' which unites all matter and energy into a single, simple picture, came a step closer to success in October when scientists at the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) announced that

they had confirmed the so-called 'standard theory' of the structure of matter. Their findings indicate that there are only three 'families' or 'layers' of fundamental particles existing in the universe – and no more.

The results came from a



new accelerator which had opened less than a month earlier. The Electron-Positron Collider (LEP for short) is the most ambitious attempt to date to uncover an underlying order in the multiplicity of particles from which matter appears to be made. Straddling the Swiss/French border, LEP is 17 miles long (the size of London Underground's Circle Line) and took six years to build. Its technique is to accelerate electrons and their anti-matter equivalents, positrons, in opposite directions and smash them against one another at speeds approaching the speed of light. The collision releases particles which under normal conditions are 'locked' together by atomic forces, which are then monitored by four gigantic detectors.

Carlo Rubbia, the Nobel Prizewinning physicist who is director of CERN, likens the accelerator to Galileo's telescope. Just as this allowed Galileo to explore the hitherto unknown regions of the heavens, so LEP will allow modern day scientists to probe into the very depths of matter.

The Standard Theory

When particle accelerators were first used during the 1940's and 50's, they revealed a plethora of 'fundamental' particles in addition to the electron, neutron and proton with which every schoolchild is now familiar. It was not until the mid 60's that scientists began to discern a pattern in the profusion. Then it was proposed

that all matter is made from two types of particle: those like electrons and neutrinos which are not bound in atomic nuclei (leptons) and quarks which combine together (usually in groups of three) to form heavy particles like neutrons and protons (hadrons).

The 'standard theory' which is the current orthodoxy in particle physics, proposes that both leptons and quarks exist at different 'levels' or generations, each with its own internal logic. Two equivalents to the electron, for instance, have so far been observed - the muon or 'heavy electron' on the 'second level' of matter and the tau particle on the third. Neutrinos and quarks also have relatives on other levels, although not all of these have yet been detected.

The second and third lev-

els are unstable, and therefore not observed outside the extreme conditions of accelerators and places such as the centres of stars. They were also present in the 'Big Bang' out of which matter was originally created, and it is because of this that the findings of the particle physicists are so avidly absorbed by cosmologists trying to understanding how the universe began.

Co-operation

Before the LEP announcement, scientists saw no reason why there should not be many more than three levels of matter, each containing progressively heavier particles. LEP's achievement has been to produce a particle called the Z^0 (1) in great profusion - 11,000 in just three weeks compared to a mere 500 by its greatest rival

at Stanford University in California - and so allow the scientists to calculate its mass with reasonable accuracy. From this they have concluded that the chance of further levels existing is less than one in 50.

This early result can only be described as a spectacular one for CERN, and a vindication for the huge expenditure which LEP has involved. It is also a triumph for European co-operation, with 14 states contributing to CERN's budget and more than 2000 scientists of all nationalities employed in its search for a unifying force of nature.

(1) The Z^0 particle is neither a lepton nor a quark, but a third type of particle called a boson, ie a particle which mediates and 'carries' one of the forces of nature.

Buddhist Peace Initiatives

In October, it was announced that the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize is to be given to the Dalai Lama. Forced to flee from his country more than 30 years ago, following its invasion by the Chinese, the Nobel committee acknowledged the Dalai Lama's consistent refusal to countenance any violent solution to his people's dilemma, and his desire for peaceful conciliation. But the commitment of the Tibetans to peace goes beyond their particular political situation. It encompasses the whole world and is at the very heart of their religious understanding. We report on two recent initiatives.

The Kalachakra Initiation

Jane Carroll reports from Los Angeles, July 1989

KALACHAKRA means 'Wheel of Time' and the Kalachakra initiation, conferred this summer in Los Angeles by the Dalai Lama, belongs to the highest of the four levels of Tantric practices, those practices which provide a path to achieve enlightenment in this lifetime. It has only been given twice before in the West; once in America and once in Switzerland, and is considered by Buddhists to be an extremely important event, both for those partici-

pating in it and for the world at large.

Once considered suitable only for advanced initiates who had been practising Mahayana Buddhism for at least five years, the Kalachakra has been opened now to all who wish to receive it, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. There are three levels of Kalachakra practice: the external, which deals with the earth and the universe in which we live; the internal, which relates to the mental and physical capacities of the

individual; and the alternative Kalachakra, which provides a meditation practice to purify the first two. The ritual is considered a vehicle for world peace because of its power to unite the inner and outer worlds into a harmonious relationship.

For the Sake of Others

The Kalachakra Tantra is said to have been given directly by the Buddha to Suchandra, legendary King of Shambhala, for his subjects, and is one of the few practices requested of the Buddha for the sake of others. The teachings were passed on through direct oral and written tradition to the present

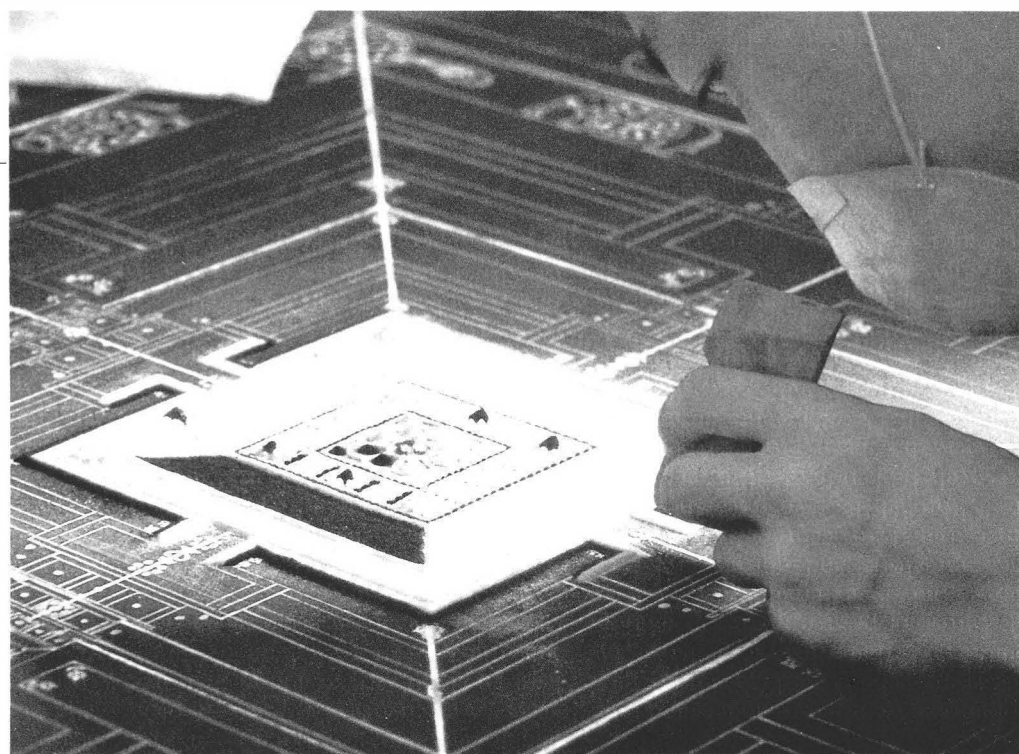
Dalai Lama, who received them intact from his Senior Tutor, Ling Rimpoche. It is considered extremely significant that the Kalachakra lineage has remained unbroken to the present day. One of the reasons the current Dalai Lama attaches such importance to it is that, according to Tibetan Lore, the world is nearing the time when the teachings of Shambhala will once again become visible, and then, all those who have received this initiation will be reborn fully prepared to receive enlightenment.

In his introduction to the ceremonies in Los Angeles, the Dalai Lama explained how it is that the initiation and empowerment is now given to all who request it. Each will receive according to his capacity and at least a 'karmic relationship' is established with the Kalachakra. What was most crucial, he stressed, was the motivation for receiving the initiation, which must be selfless, not to gain protection or relief from suffering for oneself in this world or the next, but to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

Ceremonies

Throughout the teachings and the ceremonies, the Dalai Lama went to great lengths to make the meanings of the rituals accessible to all present, from whatever tradition they came. He often interjected to suggest that those who found particular prayers difficult to say, could, for instance, contemplate compassion instead. His sense of humour and frequent laughter during the solemn moments did much to dispel any attachment to the gravity of the form.

The Dalai Lama gave three days of teachings before the ceremonies began, during which time the Kalachakra Mandala was created by monks from the Namgyal monastery in Dharmasala in India. The mandala serves as a focus for



the initiation, containing within it the wisdom of the Kalachakra in an extremely delicate, complex and beautiful design of coloured sand.

Buddhist doctrine holds that each person contains within themselves the seed of their own enlightenment, and that this seed may be nourished by contemplating the mandala. At the beginning, the mandala was concealed behind curtains. At the end of three days of ceremony the curtains were pulled back, and the initiates allowed to view it for the first time. Afterwards, in private, it was dismantled by the Dalai Lama according to a certain special order, and

the sand was taken in a container to the sea, where it was scattered as a blessing to all marine life. The container was then filled with seawater to wash away the markings of the geometrical base so that no visible trace of it remained.

The Initiation was attended by around 3,000 people from a variety of backgrounds and studies. It seemed an extraordinary event not only to be taking place in the West but to be open to all who wished to attend, and the Dalai Lama himself appeared as an exceptional religious leader to be exhorting not only his own followers, but others, to

Above: The Kalachakra Mandala is built of concentric circles representing the elements and incorporating Sanskrit characters, flowers, animals, and 722 Buddhist deities in the five chambers of the Kalachakra Palace. It is created with powdered coloured sand, applied onto a geometrical framework supplied by the Dalai Lama himself. Both the underlying geometry and the colouring are created from memory, as only those who have internalised the Kalachakra teachings can reproduce the Mandala. Photograph ● Thubten Dhargye Ling

go beyond the confines of their particular religion.

The Kalachakra Initiation was sponsored by Thubten Dhargye Ling, Los Angeles. Our thanks also to Martin Wassell.

Pilgrimage for Active Peace

Bodh Gaya, September 1989

This pilgrimage by one of the leading figures of Tibetan Buddhism, the 12th Tai Situpa, began in Bodh Gaya in India (the site of the Buddha's enlightenment) in September 1989. By the spring of 1990, it will have visited Scotland, Italy, America, Taiwan and Nepal, and the Tai Situpa will have prayed with representatives of the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Islamic religions in places sacred to their traditions. It

is expected that more than 100,000 people world-wide will participate in the various events.

The Pilgrimage for Active Peace is based on the principle that selflessness and concern for others is the foundation of all spiritual activity. Its goals are to emphasise the importance of prayer in a global peace effort, and to redefine the concept of peace. Peace is not the mere absence of warfare; it is the active pursuit of the resolu-

tion of such problems as religious and political intolerance, environmental degradation, and world hunger.

Global Meetings

The schedule has already included a visit to Italy in September 1989, where the pilgrimage was received at the Vatican by the Pope, who greeted them with the words: "All human persons, conscious of the realities of today's world, must commit themselves to the cause of peace. You, as monks, make use of the means that are particular to you: prayer and the search [for inner] peace. If prayer is neglected, the whole edifice of peace is

liable to crumble.”

The visit to Italy also included a meeting with Benedictine monks at the Camaldoli Monastery. The pilgrimage then proceeded to Scotland, where the Tai Situpa met with Nobel Laureates and government representatives at the Samyé Ling Buddhist Temple. As a direct result of this meeting, the Nobel Laureates have agreed to initiate a series of conferences where outstanding scientists and scholars will discuss global problems, including “environmental degradation, a widespread sense of meaninglessness, (and) increasing misery...”.

In October, the party were in California, where they were joined by the Dalai Lama for an interfaith ceremony in San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. The schedule also includes visits to:

- India (November 10-11th) where the pilgrimage will be joined by the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa and the heads of India's ten major religions for a walk for peace.
- Taiwan (December 23rd-25th), when tens of thousands of Chinese Buddhists will witness the first meeting in over 25 years of the heads of the four sects of Tibetan Buddhism.

•Kathmandu (Spring 1990). Here, the people of Nepal will join the pilgrimage in carrying a torch from Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha, to a high spot in sight of Mount Everest where an eternal flame for peace will be lit.

The Tai Situpa

The Tai Situpas are a line of incarnate Buddhist teachers who have played a vital role in the development and leadership – both spiritual and temporal – of Tibetan Buddhism since the 14th century. The current Tai Situpa shared with the present Dalai Lama the fate of being exiled from Tibet at an early age. For both, this exile has resulted in a familiarity with different Eastern and Western cultures, and a fluency in English which has uniquely prepared them for their roles in promoting world peace.

This Pilgrimage is only one step in the Buddhists' unceasing efforts towards what its official brochure describes as “bringing together diverse peoples who share the desire to make compassion and wisdom a part of a global vision for daily life”.

Below. The Dalai Lama with the Pope at a meeting in 1982, one of his many efforts towards peace and interfaith dialogue. Courtesy of the Tibetan Foundation.

The Great Happiness

Martha Chamberlin pays tribute to Cecil Collins

IN THE SUMMER of this year, the Tate Gallery in London honoured the painter Cecil Collins by hosting a major retrospective of his work. The artist lived long enough happily to see his pictures hung; he died on June 4th, at the age of 81, before they came down again.

It would be hard not to see the Tate exhibition as evidence of a new interest in Collins' work, and it must have seemed sweet news to the painter, who had said in a television broadcast a few months earlier: “I am interested not in success but in no longer being alone. To be understood is to no longer be alone.” The company Collins has only so very lately found may perhaps be ready to listen to what he had to say, whether it be in words or in paint. Fortunately his vision was both well-conceived and well-spoken, the fruit of some sixty years of self-reflection. In the same television broadcast, in the Channel Four series ‘Art, Faith and Vision’ (1), entitled ‘Hymn of Light’, he said:

“Artists who give to the world torment, conflict, violence, are actually promoting this condition in the world, and extending it. That's a kind of betrayal. My own art is concerned to give man peace... and to orientate his consciousness so that he may have some experience of that great happiness which is forever, through the transmission of the mystery of Love, of the mystery of Beauty.”

Universality

‘That great happiness which is forever’ occupied Collins' mind intensely for all of his adult life, and his continued

concern with and for it led to a perception which is rare in its refinement. He did not carry out a blind search for personal or emotional satisfaction, but rather considered deeply what happiness he had tasted, remembered what he had not yet tasted, and allowed that remembering to bring him to a kind of certainty; so that he could say without qualification that “the real purpose of life is union with God, and with each other in God” (2).

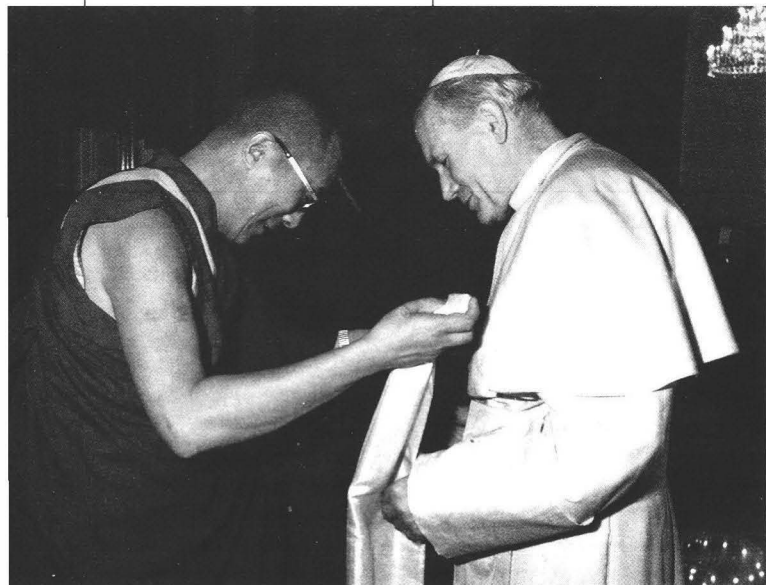
He did not belong to any church, believing that as the religious institutions find themselves unable to agree on even very fundamental questions, it is better for human sensibility to be orientated toward the Divine, directly. He said (3): “I believe we live in a completely universal age. We've got to grow up and accept universality. Universality is maturity”.

Collins was more concerned with the new civilisation he saw emerging than with the old one known too well. The passage between the two consists of the expansion of the human consciousness, which expansion cannot be brought about by any but the individual himself. “You cannot give people anything”, he said (4). “You can only awaken what they already know. Everything is already in us, now”.

Images of Pilgrimage

William Anderson, his biographer, suggests that:

“the ground image of Collins' work may be called pilgrimage. Pilgrimage implies three elements: first, the object of the pilgrimage which is the lost paradise, or the Great Happiness: second, a world or landscape:





and third, the pilgrim, the human being possessed and driven by his or her longing for the Great Happiness. The pilgrim may be the figure travelling in the picture, the Fool, or the artist or ourselves – or all these together. We must never exclude ourselves in looking at these paintings. His is no private world of fantasy into which we are permitted to peer. The invitation to enter the world of spiritual reality is universal because its theme and its purpose are universal”. (5)

Collins was able to describe very clearly his perception of the degrees of mind which are his paintings’ provenance:

“The lowest level one could call the small happiness, and above that... a small unhappiness, where one is restricted to fear of losing this small happiness. Above is the great happiness, which means that you have seen through the small happiness. I mean by that that it doesn’t satisfy you, and you are unhappy in a very deep

way because you know that there’s a great happiness, and, if you cannot experience that, you reject every other kind of happiness. Because that is the happiness you know to be the greatest and the most real... Let me put it another way; you are unhappy because you cannot reach it but you are very happy because you can see it. In a word, you’re alive... ” (6).

Appreciation

Life, Collins suggests, is no other than the journey of

the self to the Self, from the small illusion to the large Reality. Images of pilgrimage display this as they can, in their relative terms; the meaning of pilgrimage must, however, be larger than these relativities. For Cecil Collins, it is as if, due to the strength of his interior enquiry and his persistence in it, his peculiarly personal vision discovered itself to be universal. The merits or demerits of his art may be debated elsewhere; but larger than that debate would be an attempt to appreciate something of the man himself, his fidelity to the interior truth which inspired him, and the largeness of vision which such fidelity affords.

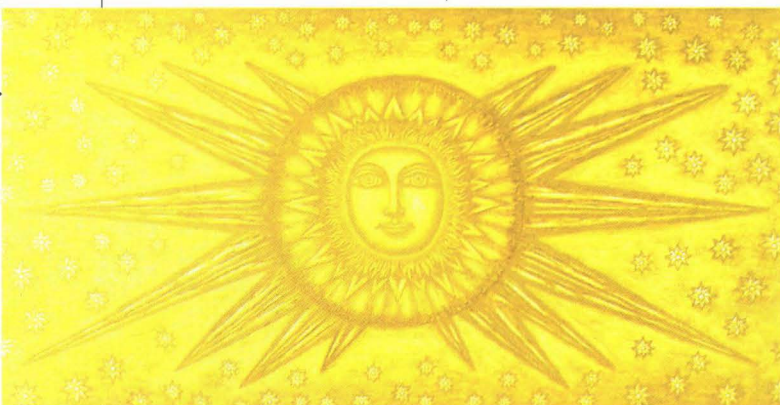
Above: *Walking on the Waters*, 1987. Mixed Media on Board. Anthony D’Offay Gallery.

1-4. ‘Art, Faith and Vision’. Channel 4, UK, 2nd August, 1989.

Left: *Icon of Divine Light*, 1972, Chichester Cathedral.

Photographs by Clive Hicks.

5. ‘Cecil Collins: The Quest for the Great Happiness’ by William Anderson. Barrie and Jenkins, London, 1988. p154.
6. *Ibid*, p112.



Conferences

REVISIONING THE SACRED

Open Gate, London, June 10th – 11th 1989

"Is it not at once exhilarating and daunting that we in the West may have found ourselves, at this time, not only at the end of a civilisation but also at the beginning of a new spiritual epoch, still in embryo...?", asked Kathleen Raine in her opening address, which set the tone for all subsequent discussion over this weekend. "I do not believe that we shall go 'back' to the old religions in the old way. The revisioning of the time demands a profound inner transformation."

This gathering was billed not as a conference, but as an opportunity to participate in dialogue with physicist David Bohm and philosopher Jacob Needleman. Discussion in small and large groups aimed to draw out some of the meanings of 'revisioning the sacred' and ranged over topics such as suffering, prayer, creativity, the need for a new metaphysics, service, the role of spiritual teachers and the power of intention.

With more than 60 participants, few of whom had met before, it was perhaps not surprising that communication was not always achieved within the group. But there were, nevertheless, moments of genuine conversation during the weekend when new and valuable meanings emerged. One of the predominant themes was that 'the sacred' is ultimately unknowable, and to participate in it requires the putting aside of our opinions and pre-conceived ideas – an attitude of reverence and openness which was characterised by Professor Needleman as 'listening'. When

this was present, David Bohm maintained, then dialogue itself could be a means through which consciousness was raised.

It was perhaps a measure of the success of this event that it came up with no answers, but raised a great many questions, and pointed towards a possibility.

Jane Clark

THE 2ND INTERFAITH SYMPOSIUM

Samyé Ling Tibetan Centre, Scotland. August 20th–23rd 1989.

The 12 delegates, representing the five major spiritual traditions, who first convened on the occasion of the inauguration of the Tibetan Buddhist Temple last summer (see BESHARA 7), returned this year for a second conference on the theme "Our world; how it

The topic arose from an "urgent concern for the future welfare and integrity of the natural environment". Consequently the delegates were joined by two speakers with particular knowledge of ecology, namely Mr Roger Levett from the Scottish Development Department and Dr Tony Clayton of Edinburgh University.

During the first two days, papers were presented *in camera*, whilst on the third day the conference was thrown open to a wider public. The final day in particular saw some strong and profound discussion as the panel were led to examine the relationship between man and nature in response to questions such as "Do humans have a unique status within creation?", "How far would the different traditions incline towards a biocentric as opposed to an anthropocentric point of view?" and "Can the universe be regarded as a mirror that reflects the compassion of God to man?"

problems were seen as symptoms of man's forgetfulness of his origin and the consequent loss of feeling for the true sacredness of every living thing.

It was agreed that there is an urgent need to adopt eco-centric policies which respect the intrinsic value of every creature, regardless of its usefulness to man. But whether or not such policies are adopted depends very much on what Dr Mashuk Ali of the Centre for Islamic Studies at University of Wales described as "a re-strengthening of absolute values" which inform the moral and ethical context from which true judgements, economic or otherwise, can be made. Or, in the words of the Tai Situpa, "the first and best thing one can do is to know oneself."

The significance of this symposium seemed to lie not so much in the agreed conclusions as in the efforts of a group of people of different beliefs, languages and cultures to begin to address the meaning of their common humanity. For, as Akong Rinpoche said, "the practice of mutual respect and understanding is the first step on the path to peace".

Elizabeth Roberts



Ven. Akong Rinpoche

came into being and our responsibility towards it". The inter-faith dialogue which was initiated by the Ven. Akong Rinpoche, the Abbot of Samyé Ling, forms part of the work towards the establishment of world peace, an aim particularly close to the heart of leading Tibetan Buddhists, and the symposium was once again honoured with the presence of the 12th Tai Situpa.

Certain of the answers illuminated the question of our responsibility towards the environment in a way which would not be possible from a purely materialistic perspective. One such insight concerned the vision of the spirituality of the universe, and several people spoke of the entire creation as being in constant praise and glorification of its origin. Many of our current

MIND AND BRAIN

Medical and Scientific Network, London October 7th 1989.

The aim of this conference was to "bring together prominent scientists who will examine the current state of scientific knowledge, and whether it is adequate to deal with the question of mind and consciousness". All but two of the speakers were psychologists or psychiatrists. Most of them held the opinion that consciousness should ultimately be explainable in physiological terms, although they varied in their views as to the degree that this could currently be done.

Among this group, Dr



Pilgrims arriving at Canterbury for the Faith and Environment Festival. Photograph by Ann Wilson

Max Velmans championed a 'reflexive' view of consciousness: ie rather than regarding consciousness as a state of the brain (the reductionist view) or, alternatively, regarding mind and brain as being separate (the dualist view), he suggested that one should regard the phenomenal world as being a mental construct, since it is only known through perception. Hence, he said in his abstract, "...in so far as the entire world is involved in the production of awareness, and in so far as one has awareness of the entire world, it is the entire system rather than the brain which may be said to be conscious (of itself)."

Professor Colin Blake-more, although a reductionist, began his talk by articulating the paradox inherent to the attempt to look at consciousness: that one is trying to look at consciousness, which is the very substance of experience, from the standpoint of that self-same experience. But it was left to Sir Brian Pippard, FRS, the eminent physicist, to take this paradox serious-

ly. He expressed the view that material science could never, of its nature, explain consciousness 'from within', but that science without a consideration of consciousness was incoherent. He looked to a future discipline which would regard both mind and matter as aspects of a greater unity.

There were some stimulating contributions from the floor, (the event was attended by over 100 people, many of them professional scientists or psychologists) but, to my mind, effective dialogue between the various points of view was hardly generated. Perhaps if, as tentatively suggested by the chairman, Dr Peter Fenwick, a second conference is held, a wider range of speakers will be invited and a better dialogue will develop.

Michael Cohen

FAITH AND THE ENVIRONMENT
A Festival and Conference
Canterbury, 14-17th
September 1989.

This festival was the largest ever event in the UK to link the major world faiths with

environmental concerns. It marked the latest initiative from the Network of Conservation and Religion founded in Assisi in 1986 by the World Wide Fund for Nature, and was the occasion for welcoming a seventh faith, the Sikhs, to take their place alongside the six who are already members. (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Bahaism)

The Festival opened with the welcome of pilgrims from different faiths and backgrounds who had walked – some for two weeks – along old Pilgrim Ways from Winchester, Coventry and Watford, and continued with a packed programme of workshops, exhibitions and music. Each of the seven faiths offered to all comers its own distinctive act of worship, and the highlight of the weekend was a service in Canterbury Cathedral.

It is a sad reflection that this last drew the attention of the media not for the significance of the event itself, but for the often vociferous protest it evoked from certain Christian fundamental-

ist groups, who objected to the Cathedral being used for an interfaith celebration. This, however, had never been the intention. Rather, Canterbury Cathedral, England's most important place of worship, was to welcome people of all faiths to that most uniquely Christian of celebrations, the Eucharist, celebrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury himself. Communicants of any Christian church were invited to take the sacrament, whilst all others were invited to the altar to receive a blessing. The sight of Buddhist monks, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims receiving blessings moved more than a few onlookers and participants to tears.

Nor had many cheeks been dry the previous evening when the Cathedral housed a different kind of celebration, this time performances of drama, music and readings on the theme of *The Forest*. The Cathedral gifted each person a candle, and after the performances the whole building was thrown into darkness, to be gradually relit as each candle took its flame, one from another. A completely new building revealed itself as a forest-like pattern of light and shadow, and one was reminded that this is how such buildings were intended to be seen by those who designed and built them.

Alongside the Festival was a conference on Christian Faith and Ecology, organised jointly by the WWF and the British Council of Churches, whose aim was to explore the interaction of Christian theology and environmental policies. This was opened with 'stage-setting' addresses from Jonathon Porritt, Director of Friends of the Earth; the Archbishop of York, Dr John Hapgood, and Dr Freda Rajotte of the World Council of Churches. Delegates then split up into workshops, and at the end of the three days, the theolo-



TURQUOISE

The International Magazine of the Turkish World

Turquoise is just a year old, but it already has subscribers in 35 countries around the world. Why don't you too explore the art and the lifestyle of a people and a land which have always been an enigma to East and West but have given so much to both.

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gian Dr Ruth Page of Edinburgh University and the naturalist Dr David Bellamy responded to their findings.

The conference was, many participants confessed, rather a mixed experience. But there is no doubt that it served to close the already narrowing gap between faith and ecology. Dr Ruth Page admitted that she was struck by "how much change in Christian theology is actually being demanded by a number of the priorities with which people are working here", whilst the chief economist of a major international oil company confided afterwards: "I came to this conference as a hard-headed economist, not thinking that values had much to do with economics. Now I begin to understand how much they do."

Alison Yiangou

SEEKING THE TRUE MEANING OF PEACE

United Nations University for Peace, Costa Rica
June 25th-30th 1989

This gathering was hosted by the United Nations University for Peace, Costa Rica. The delegates included His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Robert Muller and the ecologist Elizabeth Sautouris.

Central to the work of the conference was the drafting of a Declaration of Human Rights and Responsibilities for Peace and Sustainable Development, which will be presented to the General Assembly of the United Nations during the 1989 session. It is hoped that this will be adopted "as a tool for reflection and commitment" and will complement the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The draft Declaration consists of twelve articles, divided into four chapters: The Unity of the World; the Unity of the Human Family; Human Choices and Responsibility; and A Reori-

entation towards Peace and Sustainable Development. It includes the following statements:

Everything that exists is part of an interdependent universe. All beings depend on one another for their existence, well-being and development. (Article 1)

Every manifestation of life on Earth is unique and necessary and, therefore, is owed respect and care regardless of its apparent value to human beings. (Article 3)

Responsibility is an inherent aspect of every relationship in which human beings are involved. The capacity to act responsibly, in a conscious, independent, unique and personal way, is an inalienable creative quality of each human being. There is no limit to its scope or depth other than that which each person establishes for him or herself. The more it is accepted and exercised, the more it will grow and strengthen. (Article 6)

This conference happened not in isolation, but as part of a cycle of international gatherings. The Conference organisers were particularly inspired by the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986 and by the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders in Oxford last year. The Venerable Ugowiyuhi Dhyani Ywahoo, Clan Chieftainess of the Etowah Cherokee Nation, said in her address. "I pray that each of you recognise that you are a parent of tomorrow. Whether you actually give birth to children or not, what is arising from your thought, your word and your deed is affecting the future generations."

Our thanks to World Goodwill, 3 Whitehall Court, Suite 54, London SW1A 2EF for the information used in this article.

Life in a Living World

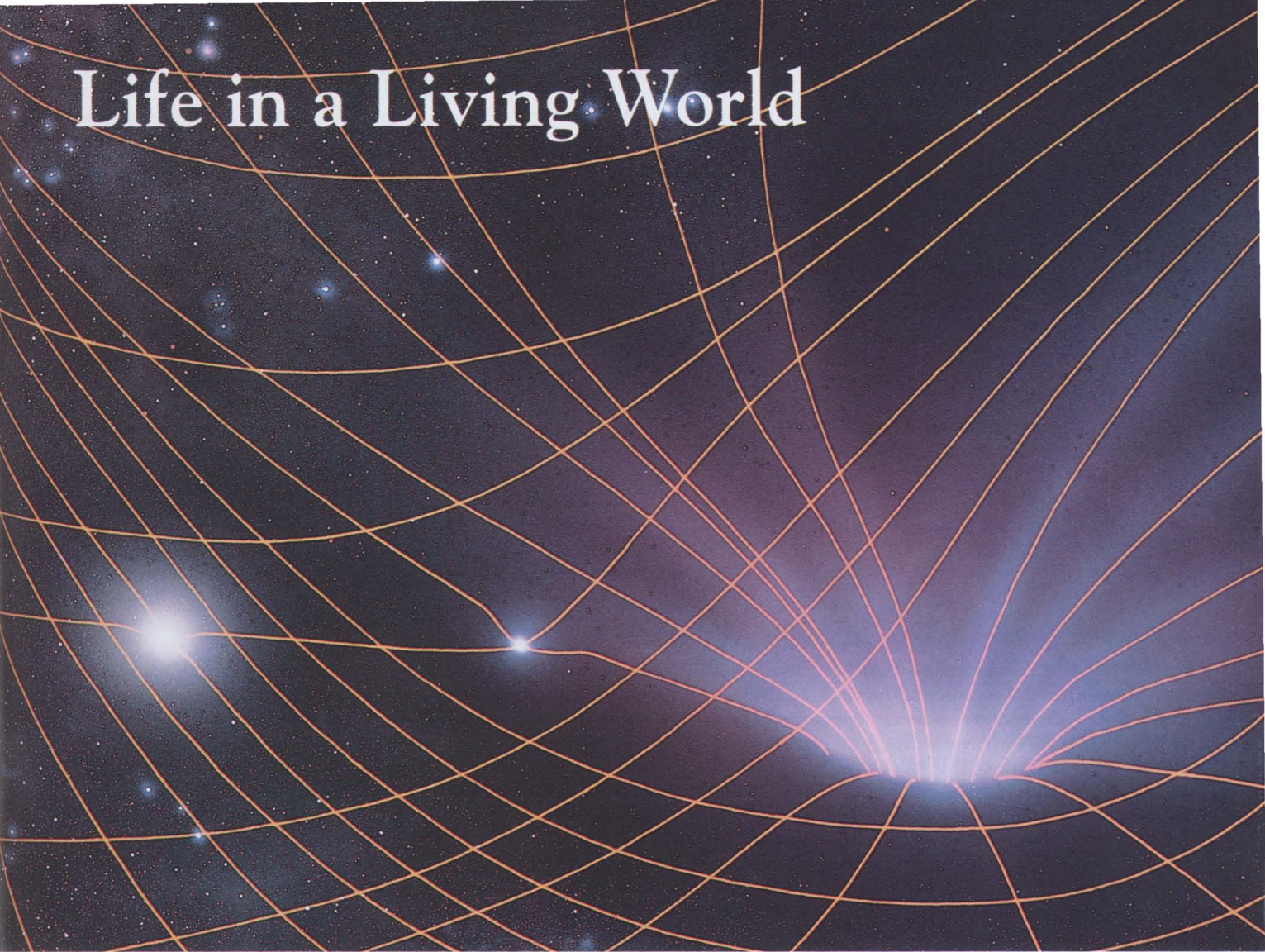


Fig. 1: The effect of mass upon the space/time continuum

The idea that space is effected by gravity is a consequence of Einstein's theory of relativity. In this, the grid of space is considered to be like a thin rubber sheet on which objects of varying weights produce smaller or larger dents.

The above shows a computer simulation in which the fabric of space is represented as a grid in which objects of increasing mass produce increasingly large distortions. Our sun, at bottom left, makes almost no impression. A small, but much denser and more massive neutron star (lower centre), creates a slight distortion. The enormous gravitational pull of a black hole (bottom right) creates a yawning chasm, warping the fabric of space for light years around.

Photograph by Julian Baum, Science Photo Library.

by Rupert Sheldrake

An extract from a seminar given at Beshara Frilford, July 1989

WHAT I WANT to explore in this article are some of the implications of an idea which is increasingly becoming accepted by science – that we inhabit a living world, that nature is alive; a concept which has been described by myself and others as the 're-animation' or the 're-birth' of nature.

Of course, practically everyone, everywhere in the world, has always believed that nature is alive, and that human life participates, in some sense, in the life of the cosmos. The very word 'nature' reflects these notions; it comes from the latin word *natura* which means birth; the same root gives us words such as native, nation, renaissance, and it originally implied that which is born, or which is inborn. It came to mean, in some contexts, the inborn powers or tendencies of things,

or the underlying power which gives rise to the tendencies of the natural world, or, even, the whole natural world itself.

For the Greeks, as for most ancient peoples, the cosmos was a living organism; they saw the planets as alive, each with an inherent soul or spirit, as were all plants and animals (the English word 'animal' comes from *anima* which means soul). And this idea was taken over in the West during the Middle Ages, in the official philosophy of Aristotelianism synthesised with Christianity which was brought about by St Thomas Aquinas. It was only with the 17th century scientific revolution that this old view gave way to the idea of nature as inanimate and essentially dead, and man was conceived of as being in charge, trying to dominate and control.

Our present view – that of modern, contemporary secular humanism which is the ‘orthodoxy’ of the academic world, our business affairs and other official contexts – is more or less derived from mechanistic science. It regards nature as essentially soul-less and purposeless and sees man (or woman) as being the only truly conscious being within the universe. We are meant to understand it with a mind which is somehow detached from the processes of the natural world, and control it ever more perfectly with a view to achieving human ends and goals. Human ends and goals are, of course, the only possible ones, as nature is not seen to have any ends or goals of its own.

But now we begin to understand that the vision behind the 17th century revolution – that first formulated by Descartes, of passive matter in motion moved only by external forces – was in fact unrealistic and untrue, and ever since the 17th century, science has itself, through its own researches, progressively broken free of this mechanistic view, has been progressively transcending it. Developments during this century, and especially recently, are returning us to a view of the cosmos as a living organism – only now it is seen as a developing organism rather than as a mature one. Our current theories encompass the development of the entire cosmos, growing from the ‘Big Bang’ like the cracking of the cosmic egg: they acknowledge creativity and spontaneity within nature through the growing understanding that physical determinism does not hold in most areas of the natural world; and recognise the existence of non-material organising agencies within nature, which used to be thought of as ‘souls’ and are now thought of as fields. I have described elsewhere (1) how I feel that there is a real sense in which field theories of nature have involved a re-animation of the world. Through my own developments of the field concept, starting from biology in the context of an evolutionary cosmology, I have come to feel also that it makes more sense to think of nature as being governed by habits, which build up and develop within the evolving natural world, than by eternal laws which were all there at the outset like a sort of cosmic Napoleonic code.

What sort of changes might this acceptance of the living universe bring about? An exploration is urgently needed, I feel, because of the ecological

crisis in which we find ourselves – a crisis created because of our existing attitudes, and which can perhaps be summarised by saying that in our official world view, nature is seen as just a series of natural resources to be exploited for human ends, preferably for a profit.

Oddly enough, I think most people in our society take it for granted that the universe is alive, but only in their ‘off-duty’ moments, at weekends or while they are on holiday. The extreme dissociation from natural processes which is engendered by the technological nature of our modern life has created, it seems, an imbalance in our attitudes towards nature, and many people live a kind of double-life. During working hours they accept a mechanistic world view, or at least go along with it, and in their free time they revert to a kind of Wordsworthian romanticism about natural beauty and unspoilt nature. But if we really begin to take the idea that nature is alive seriously, then we must adopt it not just at weekends when we are gardening or when we are with our pets and children, but in our official life, during working hours.

Qualities of Time and Place

Now in all traditional societies and cultures, people have related to the natural world not just in terms of exploiter to exploited, or of controller to controlled,

nised something in nature which goes beyond visible appearances, another dimension beyond the material. And the traditional way in which people have participated in nature and related not just the individual but collective human life to the natural world, is through a recognition of the particular qualities of time and place. It has been understood that certain places are special – sacred, beneficent or evil – and through rituals and festivals people have participated in the cycles of time and recognised the particular qualities of the moment.

This sense of the quality of a time or a place has no validity in the mechanistic world view. In the Newtonian universe, the framework of absolute space and absolute time provides the framework for all events, and places become things which do not have particular properties of their own, but are characterised by parameters within mathematical space/time. Of course, the very concept of ‘quality’ is left out of the picture altogether in mechanistic science; smells, colours, and tastes feature nowhere in the equations of physics and the only things that are taken into account are mathematical quantities.

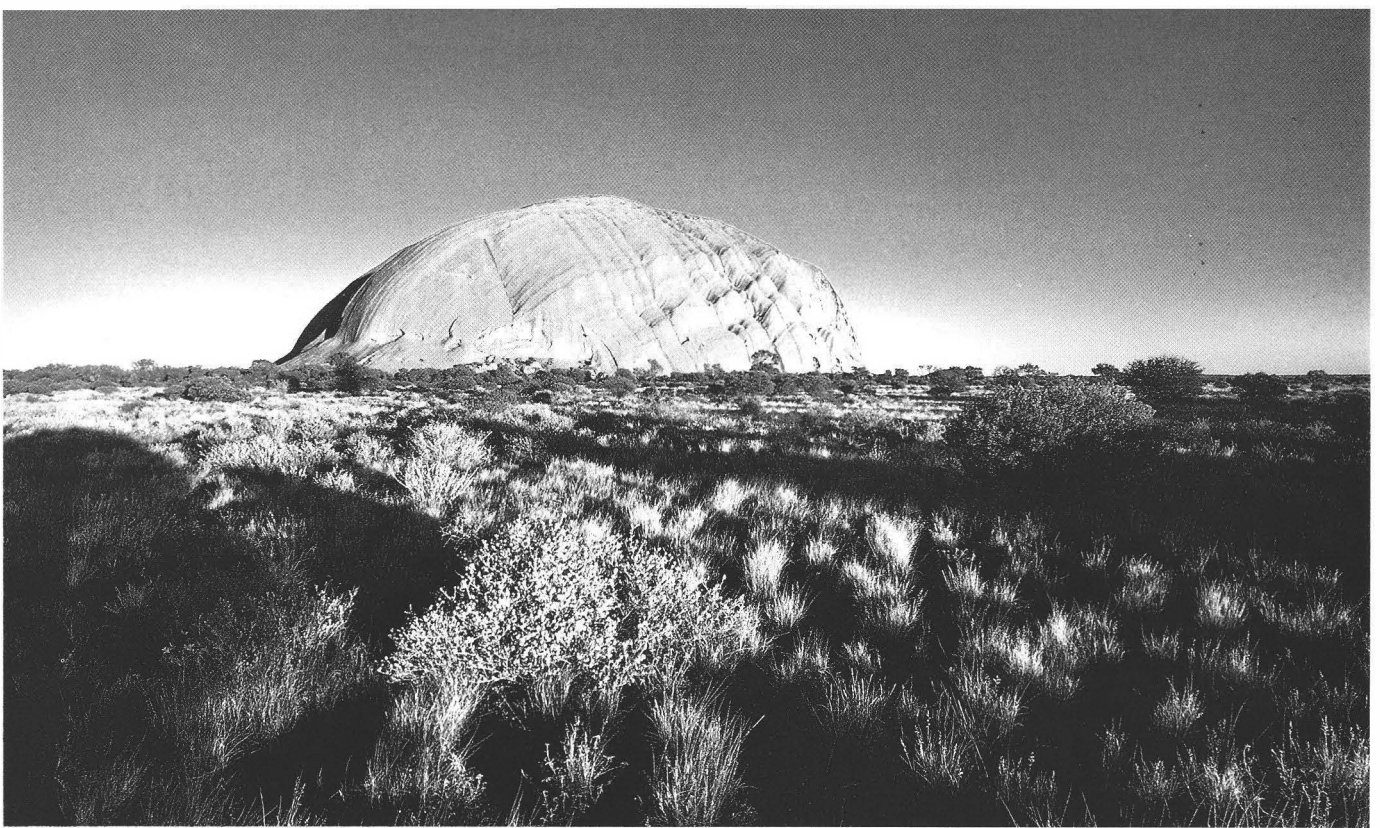
When the Newtonian view is applied to the natural world, as it was after the scientific revolution, it leads to a flattening and diminution of the qualities of particular places; anywhere is as good



Aerial View of California, 1933, showing how the land is divided on the planes to the East of the Rocky mountains. Courtesy of Hunting Aerofilms.

but the material world has been seen as something with a psychic dimension – that is, it has an inherent mind or a soul of its own – and also a spiritual dimension, in that they have recog-

as anywhere else, any time is as good as anywhere else in that kind of a world, and the laws of nature apply equally everywhere and always. When it is applied to the landscape, the map



Ayers Rock in Central Australia. This ancient rock has been a sacred site to the Pitjandira tribe for thousands of years, being the site of many mythological events in 'the dreamtime'. It has become a focus in modern Australia for aboriginal spirituality, and is increasingly also seen as a focus for all Australians. Photograph by Ron Watts.

becomes the territory, and this can be seen most clearly in the United States. If you fly over the United States, you are confronted by the depressing spectacle of the whole landscape divided into uniform one-mile squares, and within those squares sub-squares, and within those further squares. It is as if a piece of Cartesian graph paper has been pasted on the map of America in some office in Washington.

This system was not adopted by accident or as a convenience; it was done as a symbolic act. Jefferson, who was a typical Enlightenment intellectual, thought that it was a marvellous idea, because it imposed reason – by which he meant human reason – upon nature. The result is – and this is particularly evident as you fly over the West Coast where the plains meet the Rockies – that the boundary lines of people's property (because the squares usually denote private property) bear no relation at all to the natural features of the land like rivers or valleys.

By contrast, in New England or in the Old World, when people made maps and divided up territory they did it in accordance with natural features; English parish boundaries often follow rivers or prominent features or they move from one prominent feature to another. The map grows out of the territory; it is in human relationship to it. By contrast, in America the map is imposed on the territory, and this is a kind of symbol of man's relationship to the place in which he lives before and

after the scientific revolution.

Places as Fields

However, modern science would tend to support the traditional view of place, as it tells us that because of the developing universe, places within do indeed have a particular quality in relation to everything else. In Einstein's theory of general relativity, which in most respects supersedes Newton's model, the gravitational field is curved in the presence of matter. (See Fig.1). The gravitational field, according to Einstein, is space/time – it is not *in* space/time but is the very structure or framework within which all events can happen. In other words, place has a quality in the gravitational field, and space/time becomes not just an anonymous graph paper, a bland background, but is itself affected by what goes on within it.

When we consider the question of place on earth, it is obvious that the qualities of a place depend upon its relationship to all other places. For instance, the seasons, the temperatures, the climate, etc. all depend upon the latitude. In China, the science of geomancy is really a science of the quality of place, as it is an attempt to form a systematic understanding of what makes one place favourable for certain purposes and not for others. Geomancers take into account a lot of common-sense things like the orientation, which way the sun rises, the direction of the prevailing winds, and the way in

which water will flow. The Chinese word for it, Feng Shui, actually means 'wind and water'.

I would like to put forward the hypothesis that places can be thought of as having fields associated with them; therefore to describe the quality of a place is like describing its 'field'. When I first thought of this, I wondered whether it might be a bit far-fetched to extend the field concept in this way, but then I realised that the idea of scientific fields came about in the first place by analogy to physical fields. A field is the place within which things can happen – crops can grow or whatever. If we think that the science of geomancy can be understood like this, then it is just the return of the metaphor by a long and devious route to its origin.

If one accepts this hypothesis, and further accepts my theory of morphic fields, then it follows that places have a built-in memory. We all know as a matter of common-sense and ordinary, everyday discourse, that this is what most people believe to be the case. Common beliefs about haunted houses, for instance, usually involve explanations about someone being killed or murdered on the site; execution grounds and battlefields are still, even in Britain, which must be one of the most secular societies in the world, considered to be places of ill-omen. If the hypothesis is correct, then places of worship – cathedrals, chapels, stone-circles and longbarrows, etc. – might also

be expected to have some kind of memory associated with them. And indeed, most people would agree that in these places some atmosphere of sanctity can be detected. This may be because most of these places were built originally on sites which had special properties, or it may be because of what they have accumulated through the things which have happened there, and it would be difficult to disentangle, now, the two things.

One of the ideas that can be re-examined in the light of these new concepts of place, is the notion of pilgrimage. In the past, people would go to particular places because they felt that they had a special property. It was not so much that they expected to receive some standard response there, but rather, they believed that that place, or what happened at that place, would act upon them in some way – sometimes through healing, sometimes through inspiration, sometimes through conferring various benefits or blessings. People still go on pilgrimage in Catholic countries, and are increasingly returning to doing so in this country – the shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham in Norfolk has in recent years once again become a major centre. In contemporary India, the pilgrimages are vast events. At the Kumbha Mela, which happens every 14 years, 14 million people go as pilgrims. And more than 500,000 people every year visit the great Temple of Tirupatti in Southern Andhra Pradesh, near where I lived for a while. When they go, they shave their hair and walk barefoot for the last part of the journey, and return bearing offerings – consecrated food which they share in order that others should have some part in the blessings they have received.

The De-sacralisation of Nature

Pilgrimage was very much part of the life of medieval Europe; and here I want to make a digression and consider how it was that we lost this sense of the sacredness of place, and indeed, the sacredness of matter itself. Some people nowadays say that Christianity and the Judaic-Christian tradition is unique in sanctioning the exploitation of the natural world, but I think this is a false view. All religions and traditions had to have some sanction of the power of human beings over plants and animals – even in India, where cows are sacred, they are still under the dominion of people – and it does not seem to me that there was much difference between



Walsingham Pilgrims Badge. Virgin and child enthroned. Courtesy of Kings Lynn Museum.

Christianity and the other religions in this respect until the end of the middle ages.

What I feel did lead to a major break with the past was not Christianity itself, but the Protestant Reformation. This denied the sacred nature of places, and also reduced very greatly the sense of time which was so important in the medieval tradition and which is still important in the Catholic tradition today – the whole cycle of the liturgical year, of saints' days and liturgical offices at different hours of the day which embodied a relationship to the ongoing processes of the cosmos.

The Protestant Reformers for a variety of reasons wanted to overturn the

power of Rome. There were various ingredients in it. One was the humanistic, Renaissance attitude of returning to the original sources – which meant looking to the Bible as the primary source (and the people of the Bible did not know about European sacred sites). Another was a very strong incentive to remove magic from the natural world. The Protestants wanted to do everything they could to de-sacralise the world of nature and this was quite explicit in the writings of Luther, Calvin and other reformers. One of the reasons they had so many what to us seem arcane debates about the nature of the holy sacrament was because of this. If they admitted that there could be a

spiritual power present in the host, this would enable spirit to enter into non-human matter, and they believed that there was no spiritual dimension to the natural world – it was just matter. The only thing which had a spiritual dimension – except, of course, insofar as it had been made by God in the first place – was the human being. Consequently, the idea that a place could be sacred was to them a form of idolatry.

What happened, therefore at the Protestant Reformation in continental Europe, and in England, was that the ancient places of pilgrimage were destroyed. The ancient, pre-Christian traditions of sacred places had been synthesised with Christianity and many of them were taken over and turned into sites of cathedrals and churches. Medieval Europe was covered with the routes of pilgrimage – in England there was Walsingham, dedicated to Our Lady – the shrine of the black Madonna; the shrine of St Thomas à Becket at Canterbury (The Canterbury Tales by Chaucer were an account of a pilgrimage to this); in Gloucestershire, a famous shrine of the Holy Blood, and throughout the land numerous holy wells.

Between 1536 and 1540, all of this was suppressed. The shrines of the saints were desecrated, the relics were scattered, the statue of Our Lady was dragged from Walsingham and publicly burned in London, the wells were destroyed and pilgrimage was abolished. The monasteries and nunneries were closed down and the images of God and the angels were smashed by the iconoclasts. Many people nowadays think that all this was done by Oliver Cromwell, as there was a second wave of iconoclasm in England during the puritan period in the 17th century, but in fact most of it was done under Thomas Cromwell, the chancellor of Henry VIII. The idea was to destroy the very notion of sacred place. The reformers were well aware that if they destroyed them without trace, then within a few generations very few of them would be remembered.

This desecration of the landscape, the destruction of the sense of a spiritual psychic and mythical dimension to the places and times in which people lived, created a completely different attitude to nature in Protestant countries, to which we are the heirs. Once the reformation had occurred, the way was open for a new idea – that of nature's conquest by man. This was

expounded first of all by Francis Bacon in the early 17th century, before the vision of Descartes in 1619 which gave rise to the mechanistic view of the world. What is important about all this is the understanding that many of the features which most people attribute to mechanistic science *per se*, were actually developed and were in place, before its detailed development. So there is a sense in which science is not so much the originator as the culmination of this particular line of thought, giving it a particular quantitative form.

Pilgrimage

This idea of journeying to particular places in order to participate in their quality still survives in our culture, but now it has been secularised into tourism. People still go to all the ancient sacred places but they go as tourists, to take photos rather than to form a spiritual connection. I suspect that some people do secretly go in a spirit of pilgrimage, but they are rather furtive about it.

I think that one of the great changes we could have in our relation to the world would be a recovery of the sense of pilgrimage, and when we go to special places, to go in a spirit of pilgrimage. We need then to consider what the essences of pilgrimage are. I would suggest that one is going with a particular intention; another is seeing the journey itself as part of the pilgrimage. Then, one of the most common things that is done on arrival is to walk around the sacred place, to circumbulate it, usually clockwise, which makes it symbolically the centre of the universe, which you enter. As you approach the centre, you are then approaching the heart of the sacred place, and through opening to its spirit, and through prayer, then something can happen to you. An aspect of this is that one has to give something as well as take when you visit these places. Then, the return journey is again seen as part of the pilgrimage, and it is important that the benefits should be shared with others, as the Indians symbolically do by handing out the blessed food.

Sacred places are places where human beings are related in a special way to the natural and the spiritual worlds; they are often thought of as places of the marriage of heaven and earth; where heaven and earth come together. Church spires and towers symbolise this, as do obelisks in Egyptian temples. These places connect us both to our cultural traditions, to the earth itself and to the heaven; and when, in places like churches and temples, the seasonal festivals are observed there, they connect us to sacred time as well.

Resacralising the Elements

Another aspect of recovering our sense of participation in nature involves resacralising the elements of the natural world. I think a fairly good starting point is the traditional doctrine of the elements – earth, fire, air, water and what the Hindus call *Akasha*, what the Medievals called the 'quintessence', the etheric substance of the heavens which these days would best be thought of as space, or as the fields which are the structure of space. We still recognise these elements, but they are now thought of in more prosaic terms as the four states of matter – ie. the solid, the gaseous, the liquid and radiation.

We need to recognise that each of these elements has its own quality. Air, for instance, is not just a gas made up of a mixture of molecules; it is something which relates us to the whole life of the planet. The Gaia Hypothesis brings home to us the fact that we all breathe the same air. The whole planet's atmosphere is one, and we participate with all other life through the air we breath. More than this; throughout spiritual history, the air has been seen not just as the breath and the wind but as the spirit. The very word for spirit, *pneuma* in Greek, *ruah* in Hebrew, are words which mean breath and wind and air. One of the things we have done in the modern world is to separate off physical matter as it is explained in physics books – that air is just a mixture of gases which contains 21% oxygen and 1% argon, etc. – from the spiritual meaning, which we have come to see as belonging to the realm of religion, and there-

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fore metaphoric or symbolic and nothing to do with physical reality. We have created a split in ourselves which did not exist in other societies. For them, the air that was in the wind which was blowing the leaves in the trees was, in some sense, an epiphany, a manifestation of the spirit.

And so was fire. Fire was not just something useful for heating, which involves combustion of a combination of chemical elements with oxygen, resulting in a release of energy through heat. It was the flames of the holy spirit at Pentecost, it was God in the burning bush, it was the primal fire or light from which the whole universe was born. The Big Bang, which modern cosmology tells us is the creative source of everything, is a version of the great, primal fire myth of creation, in which the universe starts off as an incandescent fire-ball.

All the elements have these other dimensions, and one of the challenges we now face is to recover some of the psychic, imaginative, mythic dimensions of the elements we live in and within day by day. Water is not just a flowing liquid, the substance of the oceans and 90% of our bodies. It is the purifying element through which initiatory rites such as baptism are performed; it is the water of life, and the sacred element of wells and springs. Light is not just electro-magnetic radiation moving as waves in fields as quantised photons. It is also the light of consciousness, the light of the spirit, the light of God, the light of reason. All these metaphorical concepts are present even in our everyday language, and I feel that we have to begin to understand how these are not two types of things. There is not one light which is described in physics textbooks and another sort of light, symbolic light, which has no physical reality; they are the same thing.

Similarly with vision. Vision is not just seeing with our eyes; it is the vision which witnesses visionary states, that through which we see things in our dreams. What is the light of consciousness? We don't know. We have a science which deals very well with the physical aspects of our bodies and the electrical and chemical changes in our

brains, but tells us nothing at all about their relationship to consciousness. The so-called 'mind/body problem' is totally unsolved by science. Some people assume that consciousness must arise, in some mysterious way, from all this physical activity like a kind of phosphorescence around the nerve endings; others say that consciousness must be something totally different, totally outside the scope of physics which in some unexplained way interacts with the brain, but they cannot say how. Philosophers can go through their entire careers writing on the mind/body problem and never solve it because many of them assume that it cannot in fact be solved.

We have been in this position since the time of Descartes. We do not understand the first thing about ourselves, because we do not understand how we are conscious or in what way our consciousness relates to our bodies or the rest of the physical world. I feel that the only way we are likely to be able to solve the problem is by overcoming the division we have all become accustomed to between the spiritual and the material; and this

“...the idea of an evolutionary God whose on-going imagination is the creative force of an evolutionary world”

means realising that the link between them is through our imagination. It is of course through imagination that we created science in the first place. The whole of science is a product of the imagination tested by experience, and reason and scientific theories are just one limited sub-set of what the imagination can do. Poetry is another, but we have separated these two, saying that one is about the 'real' world and the other is 'just' subjective.

The Greening of God

There are many other things that could be discussed – the whole matter of our relationship to time, for instance, and our relationship with plants and animals, and, practically, how we relate to the earth. This latter is something which concerns our patterns of waste, consumption and pollution, which are subjects which are very widely discussed at the moment. It involves the recognition, I feel, that our pollution of the earth is not just a physical process. The concept of pollution has very strong religious overtones, and every religion

has developed ways of dealing with it.

But I want to finish by considering something that I think that we may see a great deal of over the next couple of decades – the 'greening of God'. There is a sense in which post-mechanistic theology has accepted the mechanistic world view and thought of God as the God of the world machine; the God of Newton and Descartes who was constructed in the image of the engineer, designing and making the world – and, in Newton's view, repairing it from time to time. When Laplace perfected the celestial mechanics through his equations in the late 18th century, he said that there was no longer any need of God because he had created a perpetual motion machine of the universe. Through the discovery of thermodynamics, the universe then began to run out of steam, because the Second Law tells us that no perpetual motion machine is possible, and it was no longer possible to invoke God, who had been disposed of by Laplace, in order to stoke it up again! This created the notion of God which Darwin rebelled against – one in which God was the designer and creator, working from the outside like a mechanic, or like a designing intelligence. Modern images of God as the celestial computer programmer still retain this same idea.

So the image of God which we have got used to – and one which many theologians have actually adopted by trying to adapt theology to the prevailing world view of mechanistic science – is one which is totally inappropriate both for the theological traditions from which it has come, and also for a new conception of nature as alive. When we look back to the Bible itself, or to any religious tradition, or to the theology of the middle ages, we see that their conception of God was not that of a mechanic, but a living God of a living world, and there was a relationship between God and Mother Nature which was not at all that of a designer making things. If we look back, for instance to the first chapter of the book of Genesis where the creation of life is described, we find: "And God said: let the earth bring forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so".(Genesis 1, 11). Here, God did not invent the grass and other vegetation – He said: "Let the earth bring forth grass", indicating a spontaneous creating process in nature which depended upon a kind of divine allowing, but

which was not in detail constructed or made by God.

Part of this greening of God, therefore, involves a rediscovery of these aspects of the tradition which have been neglected over the last few hundred years. One of the movements of modern theology is to return to concepts of God as process, and to the rediscovery of traditional Christian doctrine, which is not at all of God as a transcendent creator of the world, but

Imagining' and another 'The World as Imagination'. He developed the idea of an evolutionary God whose on-going imagination was the creative force of an evolutionary world. Some such notion is essential, I believe, for any new conception of God. The God of an evolutionary cosmos has at least to have an evolutionary 'pole', as the process theologians say, even if He is not totally evolutionary Himself; He must have at least some creative, evolution-

It amounts to a modern obsession, and one which is obviously self-fulfilling, and the more we are pre-occupied with creativity and change the more we get. One of the challenges in the greening of God, or indeed the greening of atheism if you don't want God, is to understand how there can be such on-going cosmic evolution. (Traditional atheism will not do any more than traditional theology will, because it was derived from traditional theism by getting rid of the mind of God and leaving the eternal laws of nature.)

WHETHER WE THINK of nature as the ultimate reality, or whether we see nature as a reflection of a yet greater reality which we call God, there is a sense in which, as participants in this, we can learn to relate to the greater reality in which we live. Unless we begin to recognise the other dimensions of the natural world which I have spoken of – the mythic and spiritual dimensions which have been traditionally expressed through ceremony, prayer and pilgrimage – and understand that our relationship with it involves more than just manipulation and exploitation of natural resources for private or collective profit, we do not have much future. But exactly how we are going to do this nobody knows, and we face a challenge which no society has faced before. Because traditional peoples have not started, as we do, from a position where the whole of society and the whole economic system is geared to endless change. The system we have created is careering into the future, with a built-in dynamic for endless change, and at the same time it is upsetting the balances of the whole world and pushing us into crisis. My contention in this article is that the recognition that the world is a living world is an important contribution to our solving this problem, and one essential ingredient in whatever new vision humanity comes to.

(1) See, for instance, *'The Presence of the Past'* (Collins, 1988).

(2) See *'The Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi'* by Henry Corbin. Princeton University Press, 1969.

Rupert Sheldrake studied Natural Sciences and biochemistry at Cambridge University. He has lived and worked in India and America, and is the author of two books. *'A New Science of Life'* (1981) and *'The Presence of the Past'* (1988). When he is not teaching or lecturing, he lives in England working on his new book *'The Nature of Nature'*.



Moses and the Burning Bush. Courtesy of the Warburg Institute.

as an organic being. The Holy Trinity is a system of organic interaction within unity, a model of organic process which can be understood in relation to a world of process or interaction.

Creative Imagination

One of the most important ways in which we can begin to think again about the relation of God to the world is through the Imagination. Now in the works of Ibn 'Arabi there is a most interesting development of this aspect of the Divine Mind, which is a much more dynamic and interesting way of seeing things than the old concept of the Platonic Ideas in the Mind of God.(2). There was also a philosopher at the beginning of this century, called E. Douglas-Fawcett, who was the brother of the great Colonel Fawcett who disappeared in the Amazon, who wrote several books. One was called 'Divine

ary relationship to the natural world.

Some people of course will say, well why bring God in at all? Why not just have an evolving mind of nature, or an evolving natural process? But this still requires a kind of thinking about the problem, and a way of understanding evolutionary creativity, which is not given to us by any of our traditional philosophies. Cosmic evolution is a new idea. It might be implicit in certain world views, but it is not part of the standard doctrine which has come down to us. This idea of on-going evolutionary creativity is a challenge for us today. It seems that we must find some way of making sense of it, because so much of our own sense of ourselves is to do with creativity. We are obsessed with it, with changing everything, with innovation and technology, changing and improving social institutions, bringing out creativity in our children.

The need for a comprehensive study of human affairs

Arnold Toynbee



This year is the centenary of the birth of historian Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), whose masterpiece 'A Study of History' established him as one of the greatest thinkers of this century. In this 12 volume work, he attempted to trace out a 'universal history' of mankind from the earliest times, and to perceive in it patterns and meanings which transcend the particularity of time and place.

Achieving great renown immediately before and after the Second World War, Toynbee's professional standing was attacked in the 1950's, notably by Hugh Trevor-Roper, then Regis Professor of History at Oxford University, and has never recovered. Recent reviews of a new biography by the eminent American historian, William H McNeil (Oxford University Press, 1989) reveal that he is still deeply unpopular with modern historians, many of whom who deny the very validity of his effort to establish a universal history.

However, at a time when history is very much in the news – with Francis Fukuyama in America claiming that the 'triumph of Western liberal democracy' signals the 'end of history', and the con-

troversy in the UK over the 'nationalist' content of the new National Curriculum – it seems that there is much that Toynbee could offer. Particularly relevant is his contention that individual national states, cultures, religions or ideologies are inadequate 'fields of study' for a comprehensive history. Rather, he suggests, we must look deeper to the civilisation which is the ground out of which these things arise.

Looking for the driving force behind the great civilisations, Toynbee came in his later life to see it in spiritual terms – "behind every civilisation there is a vision" "(Civilisation) might be defined" he says in 'A Study of History' "as an endeavour to create a state of society in which the whole of Mankind will be able to live together in harmony, as members of a single inclusive family."

The following passage is taken from his abridged and illustrated one volume version of 'A Study of History' (Thames and Hudson, 1972).

THE DEMAND FOR a comprehensive study of human affairs is inspired by several motives. Some of these are permanent and some temporary; some are disinterested, some self-regarding. The strongest and most estimable of these is curiosity. This is one of the distinctive traits of human nature. No human being seems to be altogether without it, though the degree of its strength varies enormously as between different individuals. In the field of human affairs, curiosity prompts us to seek a panoramic view in order to gain a vision of reality that will make it as intelligible as is possible for a human mind. "History certainly justifies a dictum of Einstein, that no great discovery was ever made in science except by one who lifted his nose above the grindstone of details and ventured on a more comprehensive vision." (1) A panoramic view will at any rate be a less misleading reflection of reality than a partial view. And, while it is true that in the search for knowledge and understanding, as in all human activities,

human achievements are never complete, it is one of Man's virtues that he has the intelligence to be aware of this and has the spirit to go on striving, with undiminished zest, to come as near to his goal as his endowment of ability will carry him.

ANOTHER MOTIVE FOR the quest for a panoramic view of human affairs, and indeed of the whole of the phenomenal Universe, is more self-regarding. The phenomena appear to be innumerable, and the Universe infinite, to the diffracting human mind; and this experience of being adrift in a boundless sea, without chart or compass, is terrifying for a being whose powers are finite. In this disconcerting human situation our first recourse is to make believe that the ocean is not as big as it looks; we try to play on it the tricks of partition and omission; but in playing them we see through them, and then the only recourse left is the formidable one of trying to fling our mental net over the Universe as a whole. Needham points out (2) that "one of the greatest simulatory factors of primitive science" was "the need for at least classing phenomena, and placing them in some sort of relation with one another, in order to conquer the ever-recurring fear and dread which must have weighed so terribly on early men".

"All of human history is relevant to present and future human needs"

This anxiety in the face of the phenomena spurs human minds, always and everywhere, into 'fixing' the phenomena by finding a pattern in them; but it has been accentuated in the present-day world as a result of the world's sudden unification by means of modern

science and technology. The same unprecedented scientific and technological advances that have unified the world by 'annihilating distance' have put it into Mankind's power to annihilate itself by making war with atomic weapons. We are now waking up to the truth that we have unintentionally put ourselves in a new position in which Mankind may have to choose between the two extreme alternatives of committing genocide and learning to live henceforward as a single family. The human race's survival is now once again in doubt for the first time since Man established his ascendancy over non-human Nature – a feat that he achieved part way through the Palaeolithic Age. This time it is human nature that threatens Mankind with extinction. The recurrence of the ancient threat from this new quarter is a challenge to all human beings to subordinate their traditional parochial loyalties to a new paramount loyalty to Mankind itself. The recurrent threat's source in human nature is a challenge to us to study human affairs in order to bring them under control.

IN A WORLD THAT has been unified in both space and time, a study of human affairs must be comprehensive if

it is to be effective.(3). It must include, not only the whole of the living generation, but also the whole of the living generation's past. In order to save

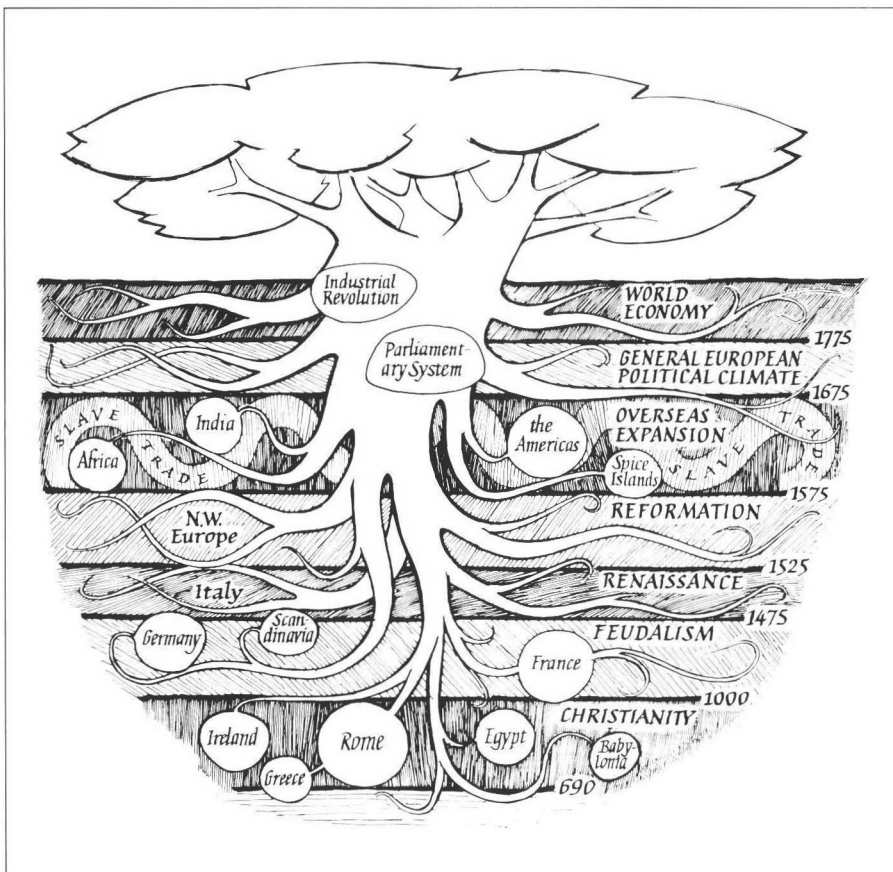
“Danger is never a sufficient stimulus in itself to make men do what is necessary for their salvation.”

Mankind we have to learn to live together in concord in spite of traditional differences of religion, civilisation, nationality, class and race. In order to live together in concord successfully, we have to know each other, and knowing each other includes knowing each other's past, since human life, like the rest of the phenomenal Universe, can be observed by human minds only as it presents itself to them on the move through time. Historical forces can be more explosive than atom bombs. For our now urgent common purpose of self-preservation, it will not be enough to explore our common underlying human nature. The psychologist's work needs to be supplemented

by the archaeologist's, the historian's, the anthropologist's and the sociologist's. We must learn to recognise and, as far as possible, to understand, the different cultural configurations in which our common human nature has expressed itself in the different religions, civilisations and nationalities into which human culture has come to be articulated in the course of its history. "All of human history is relevant to present and future human needs".(4) "The knowledge of the history of Mankind should be one of Mankind's common possessions". (5)

WE SHALL, HOWEVER, have to do more than just understand each other's cultural heritages, and more even than appreciate them. We shall have to value them and love them as being parts of Mankind's common treasure and therefore being ours too, as truly as the heirlooms that we ourselves shall be contributing to the common stock. Without the fire of love, the dangerous fissures in Mankind's social solidarity cannot be annealed. Danger, even when it is as extreme as ours is today, is never a sufficient stimulus in itself to make men do what is necessary for their salvation. It is a poor stimulus because it is a negative one. A cold-blooded calculation of expediency will not inspire us with the spiritual power to save ourselves. This power can come only from the disinterested pursuit of a positive aim that will outrange the negative one of trying to avoid self-destruction (6); and this positive aim can be given to men by nothing but love.

- (1) M. R. Cohen in 'The Meaning of Human History', Open Court Publishing, 1947
- (2) J. Needham 'Science and Civilisation in China' (Cambridge UP 1954), and C. Levi Strauss 'The Savage Mind' (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966)
- (3) This point has also been made by Polybius in his 'Ecumenical History' "The coincidence by which all the transactions of the world have been oriented in a single direction and guided towards a single goal is the extraordinary characteristic of the present age..."
- (4) R. Coulborn in 'Phylon', 1940
- (5) The 9th part of Ranke's 'Weltgeschichte', Duncker and Humblot, 1881-2.
- (6) In a critique of my work, J. Romein judges that I am right in thinking that the unity of the world is now in the making. As Romein puts it, world unity has been created by the technicians; we now have to raise this technological unity to the level of creativity. (See Toynbee and History, Porter Sargeant, 1956).



The roots of British history in the civilisations of the world. From 'A Study of History'.

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Making a Bridge to the Unknown

Jane Clark and Alison Yiangou talk to Raimon Panikkar, who delivered this year's Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh University

"The time of forms of theism is over. In this kairos (era) of the mixing of civilisations we need a fresh approach, another opening to Reality. Without discarding or making fun of what has gone before, we are able to make a bridge towards a situation we still do not know. We need this now not because there is a crisis in theology, politics, philosophy or whatever, but because the situation in the world is different".

So contended Raimon Panikkar during the course of the ten lectures he gave at Edinburgh last April. It would almost be an understatement to describe Professor Panikkar as a polymath. The author of more than 30 books, he has lived and travelled in India, Europe, and the Americas, studying and lecturing on topics ranging from the philosophy of science to religion and indology. He holds doctorates in chemistry, philosophy and theology, is an ordained Catholic priest, and is now Emeritus Professor of the University of California, Santa Barbara,

where for sixteen years, before his retirement, he was a Professor with tenure teaching Comparative Religion and History of Religions.

Born in Spain in 1918 to an Indian father and a Spanish mother, Professor Panikkar describes himself not as part Indian, part Spanish, but as wholly Indian and wholly Spanish, and he has spent his life striving for “the harmony of a pluralistic world” by making bridges between the different religious traditions. From his intimate knowledge of Christianity and Hinduism have come ‘The Unknown Christ of Hinduism’ and ‘The Vedic Experience’: his insights into other traditions have produced ‘The Silence of God, the Answer of the Buddha’, in which he tackled both Buddhism and “that great post-Christian phenomenon called atheism”: whilst in books like ‘The Trinitarian Life’ and ‘Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics’, he has attempted to distill and illuminate what is essential to all the religious traditions.

THESE WORKS, HOWEVER, would not rest easily on shelves labelled ‘Comparative Religion’. What distinguishes them from the realm of the comparative is their perspective. “The essence of cross-cultural studies”, he said at a recent lecture in London, “is not to study the cultures of others, just as the essence of a good education is not just to know what others have known or discovered. The real cross-cultural attitude demands that the very paradigms, the very categories, the very forms of thinking and presuppositions of that other culture are integrated in the vision I have of my own culture and of the culture of the others.”

Panikkar extends this same perspective to the study of traditions which exist not at the same time, but successively in time – in other words, to what are otherwise known as historical studies. From this perspective, the study of history serves not to add a few ancient objects into a contemporary panorama, but it can change the very way in which the present is witnessed.

The offer of the prestigious Gifford Lectures brought Professor Panikkar on a rare visit to Britain (he now lives in Spain, although he continues to spend part of his year in India). In the course of the series, entitled ‘Trinity and Atheism: The Housing of the Divine in the Contemporary World’, he drew together the many forms of ‘theism’ which man has embraced throughout history – monotheism, polytheism, pantheism, deism, and even atheism – with the aim of throwing light on our present planetary dilemma.

What is now required, he maintains, is a new kind of spirituality, and a picture of reality which has some claim to universality. He sees that the key to both lies in what he calls ‘the radical trinity’. The notion of the trinity is not an exclu-

sively Christian doctrine, he claims, but is found in “the deepest intuitions” of all great traditions, and he brings quotes from his vast knowledge to support this: “Everything which is threefold is perfect”, (from the Mahabharata); “My Beloved is three although He is One” (the Islamic mystic, Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi); “He revealed Himself in a three-fold manner” (the Upanishads). Nor is the trinity the monopoly of ‘God’, but it points towards “a universal human awareness of something which appertains to Reality Itself” – that is, the awareness that Being itself is threefold.

This trinity, which in the Christian insight is spirit, word (*logos*) and matter, is reflected in man, in the very structure of the human mind and the human faculties – which Panikkar enumerates as the senses, the intellect and the mystical, or spiritual. These three together constitute the capability which we have of knowing and experiencing the real directly, through our experience and knowledge of ourselves, without *theisms* or the intervention of priests and teachers. “... human beings have had, since the dawn of historical consciousness, (an awareness) that they are part and parcel of an ongoing adventure. They are neither alienated spectators, nor blind slaves and actors having to play to music imposed from above, but part and parcel of it. We are ourselves microcosms of the whole Reality, and the whole Reality passes in and through us”. (Lecture 6)

FOR RAIMON PANIKKAR, these ideas constitute no mere metaphysical debate, nor a treatise intended to secure his inscription amongst the list of notable scholars. Whilst his intellectual grasp and the range of his knowledge are breathtaking, what he communicates is his utter conviction that the finding of this ‘fresh approach’ is the most urgent issue of our times. A man of slight physique who combines both humility and dignity in his manner, he is very much, one feels, what Lord Gifford had in mind when, in 1887, he enjoined his trustees to seek out ‘able, reverent men, true thinkers, sincere lovers of, and earnest enquirers after, truth’ who would have the courage and the modesty to address the real issues of the age. There is a seriousness and a humour in Panikkar’s delivery which serves to emphasise that he is speaking about life itself, with all its qualities, and he communicates his passion by what can only be described as contagion.

Although little known in England, Professor Panikkar has a following in American and Europe, and amongst the distinguished audience who attended the lecture series were several who had travelled from America, Canada and New Zealand specifically to hear him speak. We spoke to him between lectures, at the George Hotel in Edinburgh.



Q. I would like to start by asking about something you said during a lecture to the Teilhard de Chardin Society (1) just before you came to Edinburgh. You opened the lecture with a quote from Teilhard, which translates roughly as:

“To create or to organise material energy or truth or beauty is an inner torment, which deprives the one who ventures it of the peaceful life – the life of selfishness and attachment. In order to be a good worker of the earth, man must leave behind his tranquillity and repose not only once, but unceasingly he must know how to abandon the first forms of his skill, of his art, of his thoughts, for better ones. To stop and just enjoy them, or possess them, would be a sin against action. Again and again one must transcend oneself, tear oneself away from

oneself, and at every instant leave behind one’s most precious first attempts”.

A. I brought in this quotation because it allowed me to disagree with some of the things Teilhard said. By ‘disagree’, I meant to act in the very spirit that he speaks of. You see, for me, the great Teilhard is the man, the saint and the poet, more than the scientist or the thinker. And I said at the lecture, if we have to follow in his footsteps, we should not be satisfied with just following in his tracks and repeating what he did. We have to be prepared to abandon everything and jump again and again into the newness of life, the newness of creativity, into the beauty of everything that is new at every moment.

Q. This matter of never resting, but always going on, seems very important to you.

A. Well, I think that it is essential. Because without that you easily become a fanatic. Or you absolutise. And even if there is an absolute, what that absolute wants is that nobody else should be absolute – and so none of us can have a monopoly on absolute truth.

We have to walk a tight-rope. To not fall into fanaticisms and solipsisms and totalitarianisms on the one hand, and agnosticisms, relativisms and banality on the other, is, I think, the real religious challenge – or better to say, the human challenge – of our day. That is not to say that we throw away the baby with the bath water. To see that all *theisms* are inadequate does not mean that I should become a totally materialistic fellow, living only for myself.

Q. You have often spoken of this challenge in terms of there being a new ‘myth’ emerging which effects the whole of humanity. By ‘myth’, I know that you refer to a specific concept which you have developed in great detail in some of your books. Is it possible to borrow a term from science and summarise what you mean by ‘myths’ as the paradigms on which we base our lives?

A. Well, I would not use the word ‘paradigm’ because of the Platonic resonances. It implies that they are ready-made models. I prefer to speak of myth as the horizon in which we situate our convictions, our visions, all that we see and do. The metaphor of the horizon helps inasmuch as we never reach the horizon; whenever we arrive it is somewhere else. The myth, like the horizon, is never the subject matter of our investigation, but it is that which makes the investigation possible.

Q. There is a tendency nowadays to think that myth is just a subjective thing which has been made obsolete by science. But you say that *mythos* – which as you have just said, is that which we do not question, which remains undefined – must always be considered alongside the intellect, the *logos*; and vice versa.

A. Yes. You see, we have the light of reason, and I would not like to diminish the value of that light, that torch. But what makes that torch useful is that it illuminates darkness. You cannot see darkness, and yet, if it was not for the darkness there would be no need of a torch. So it is darkness which makes the looking possible – and the seeing.

So – you are aware that the intellect illuminates something that needs to be illumined, but you can only see that something when it is illumined. And the analogy with the myth is, that as you cannot look for darkness with a torch, so you cannot look for the myth with the intellect. That darkness which you cannot lay your hands on, except by

annihilation, which to enter would mean to disappear – that darkness is the myth, of which we can be aware only indirectly, or by inference. We are only aware of it once we have left it; then we can say, “Ah, that was”; and this happens through our growth, through our constant loss of innocence which we then recover in a different way. It is this which makes us aware that we cannot stop, we cannot rest, we have to continue all the time.

Q. So if we want to encourage this constant growth, we must stop assuming that what we see and think is the whole truth and try instead to look at the origin and source of our myth?

A. Absolutely. And this is why it is important that we do not throw all the spiritual traditions out of the window – but, also, we must be careful not to get stuck in them. We have to continue to grow and develop and learn. But the other thing is that we have to overcome, or resist, the temptation of eclecticism. For me, religion is not a supermarket where you can have a little Zen and a little Yoga, some drops of Christianity, shake well and you have your cocktail. That it is not what we need. What we need is to gather some feeling for our own tradition and deepen in that direction.

Q. What signs do you see of this ‘emerging myth of our times’?

A. One thing is that I do not believe that the present day situation allows us to use the usual parameters – social, political, historical – to understand where we are. Politicians like Mrs Thatcher, Mr Gorbachev or President Bush do not give us any clue. They are merely instruments of a much wider situation of which they are exponents.

I am convinced that the strength of my effort (and also, at the same time, my weakness) at these lectures and in the other things that I do, is that I try to gather together 8,000 years of human, historical experience. Then, I try to encompass that experience of *homo historicus*, historical man, in order to formulate, or re-formulate, something which is not just a mish-mash of everything, nor something which follows my own particular line to the detriment of all the other ones, (that would be at the level of the *logos*, of doctrine, not at the level of the myth), but to arrive at something which makes us more and more aware of, more conformed to, more – not homogeneous but congenial, co-natural – with that which happens in the entire enclosure of reality.

Q. You feel that there is something about now which is radically different to any other time in human history?

A. Yes. I think we are facing a turning point. We are facing a mutation, not only in human consciousness but in reality as such. It is appearing here and there in fragmented

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ways, and I try to bring these fragments a little closer together so as to detect the elements of the incoming myth. What is coming is not a kind of monistic, global thing – you have probably heard me criticising the sorts of concepts people come up with, and I do this because they are all at the level of subjective ideas, at the level of *logos* and not *mythos*. I believe that we are in a very serious moment of the entire destiny of human kind; not only of the planet, but of the whole of reality. For me, not to be able to see that is a short-coming.

Q. I like very much what you say about this in your introduction to the Gifford lectures: that our dissatisfaction now with traditional ideas of God “may reflect a corresponding event in Being itself”. It is not that we are inventing these things. What is happening is that we are reacting to a change in reality, and it would seem to follow that what is required is not so much action as response. We have to find a completely new way of being.

A. Yes. And it seems to me that I detect the signs everywhere. This is why I criticise those who propose small reforms, here and there. That is all right, but the time for reformation is over. We have to face that which you have just said.

Q. What elements are there, do you think, to this new kind of response?

A. One thing is a deeper trust in ourselves. I meet so many so-called good people who have fallen into a state of not knowing what they should be doing now. So the first thing is a deeper trust in ourselves, which is, paradoxically, the essential link to the other side – that of trust in God. One says trust, but it is equally confidence and faith. This requires a much more ‘feminine’ approach – and I use feminine in a metaphorical sense, meaning that we should be opening the eyes and the ears, and embracing and loving and accepting. This last is very important, in fact, is absolutely essential, as many people are impatient and want change straight away.

The second thing, which is linked, is courage; absolute courage. And courage is the fruit of two things; the first one is this listening, and the second is what the Gitas call the renunciation of the fruits of action; the ability to do things not because of the desire to be successful, or to change the world, or for any kind of result, but to act and do according to what is appropriate and leave it at that.

Take as an example the question of peace. Everybody wants peace. Not everyone wants to receive peace. We fight for peace; we want to impose our own ‘peace’ on others, according to our own perceptions of what it is. But the Christian understanding of peace is that we must be able to receive it, we must be able to be ‘made peaceful’, and then we can pass it on to others. Otherwise, I am the peacemaker through conquest and it will never come about, whether it is in the home, the family, the city or the world.

Q. You have said that throughout the human history, in every culture, there has been a perception that there is more to reality than can be encompassed by the senses and the intellect; that we have a sense of something ‘beyond’. This ‘beyond’ is not a ‘thing’, neither an entity nor a non-entity, but nevertheless it is accessible to us through a third faculty or organ which you call the ‘mystical faculty’, or the spirit.

In other words, if we go back to the analogy of the torch and the darkness, we do in fact have the capacity to directly perceive the darkness, but this happens not through the senses or the intellect but through mystical perception.

A. Yes indeed. And I have made the connection between this faculty and what is called ‘the third eye’ – and in my lecture I

made a reference to something which few people realise, that the ‘third eye’ is an expression used by Hugh of St Victor, the 14th century Christian saint.

But I also insist that the moment we try to isolate the mystical ‘organ’ from the intellect and the senses, then we fall into a trap; either *hubris* or absolutisation – “I see and you don’t”. What we have to develop now is the three in harmony, which involves knowing which one is the boss. The whole thing is in itself in harmony, and is in constant trust and confidence in reality, but modern society and the modern concept of man has condemned us to a kind of atrophy in which this third element is simply undeveloped, hardly counts. We must learn to acknowledge it, cultivate it and develop it.

Q. You make a distinction between what you mean by the mystical faculty and the things that many people take as ‘mystical’ or ‘intuitive’ like psychological states, visions, or para-psychological phenomena, etc.

A. Yes. What I mean by the mystical is the capability of immediate contemplation of the real. That which is disclosed by it is disclosed by *enosis* (union). St John of the Cross referred to it as “this touch which is not of the senses, which is not of the intellect, but is substantial”. The touching point, you see, is a point which does not separate one thing from the other.

The mystical does not claim to reduce everything to rationality, but functions on another level. It transcends reason, and its perceptions are only partially translatable into the images of the mind or the senses. But there is nevertheless an almost universal testimony to it throughout human history. Moses was described by a pharisee as the ‘seer of the invisible’ – and this, to me, could almost be a historical description of man.

Q. I feel that one of the most important things you have said about this sort of perception is that there is no possibility

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of gain in it. We cannot build a social order out of it, or use it as a 'paradigm' for a new world, because it has no end or aim in the usual sense of the word.

A. It has no power. It is of another order altogether.

Q. We are so used to using the intellect to solve all our problems that I feel there is a tendency for even the smallest mystical insight to be taken over by it – and the intellect always has an end in view.

A. Yes, indeed, and we have to be aware of this all the time. In its proper place, this causal thinking is a great thing, but out of its sphere it leads to things like, "I am meditating in order to be peaceful".

Q. Whereas if the faculties were in harmony, one would be in a position of 'being made peaceful'?

A. Of course. Things are so simple in reality. We complicate them all the time. If we enter into that rhythm, that dance, that vision, then we communicate by contagion, not by some pre-conceived scheme which we want to propagate. If something is alive, those who are also alive will resonate with it.

You see, ultimately, these three organs are not really faculties by means of which we come into contact with the Real. Reality is not an object before us which we open up by special faculties. We exist and live because we exist and live in the Real; we are as much members of that Reality as the Reality we are in contact with. We do not need special organs to open it up. We do not need a special key to enter into that which we already are.

Q. In your eighth lecture here, you ask whether it is possible "to live a religious life, a full human experience, while transcending all *theisms*?" And you answer "Yes. Worship persists, but free from idolatry. Prayer persists, but free from superstitions and being the projection of human frustrations." Could you say more about what function prayer and worship have?

A. The very word 'prayer', in its etymology, is related to precariousness. So prayer develops our sense of precariousness – our contingency – which is very realistic, very true, perhaps very humiliating if we thought that we could change the world or whatever. Prayer puts us straight and gives us a true sense of proportion. At the same time, it does not discourage, because this is not the kind of humiliation which just pulls us down, but it is the rediscovery of our true place and function in the world and in society. Prayer resituates us, and this is why I think it is essential.

Q. What most people understand by prayer is a request for something.

A. Prayer is more than asking God for some thing, and that is why the real prayer is very often a cry – a spontaneous response to something from which we cannot escape, whether that has to do with ourselves and our own small problems or whether it is the suffering of the world. Without it, we become inhuman. There are ideals of human perfection which are so above everything that I don't know what one would become – an angel or a callous fellow, certainly not a human being. They assume that everything has already been transcended, but that is not the case.

So prayer situates us in the real place where we are. And we are, I think I can say, still struggling. I may reach a state where I have no personal problems, except perhaps to face death, but I would not be so unintelligent, or so callous, that I would not still share and participate in all the struggles and the pangs of birth of the entire reality. And then, prayer is of that kind of order.

Q. And how do you see worship?

A. Worship is the ultimate outlet to say – and I use the word in its deepest sense – that which otherwise cannot be said.

“Worship is the ultimate outlet to say that which otherwise cannot be said. It expresses, embodies, manifests, reveals, that which the human language cannot convey”.

It expresses, embodies, manifests, reveals, that which the human language cannot convey. Worship is participation in a more existential way in the reality of Being. That is why without this worshipful attitude we fall into two-dimensional relationships, and we forget about the third dimension, which does not allow itself to be spoken about, but which you have to speak to or speak with. The worshipful act need not be defined; it is whatever way you share in this reality. It could be a Catholic mass, a Sufi dance, a mosque prayer or a silent meditation, or whatever.

One of the things that has interested me about worship is this. I have said, as a challenge to modern philosophy, that you cannot have a hermeneutic of worship; in other words, you cannot interpret it in the usual way. There are things that, the moment you try to explain them, go away; they are vulnerable, and this makes it easy for something like religion to become superstition, with the priesthood exploiting the people, etc. which is something I would not like to foster.

Nevertheless, there is something upon which we cannot lay our hands – or our intellect – without destroying it. That is why, in all the religious traditions, only the faithful are allowed to participate in the worship. This is a delicate matter, because of the dangers of fanaticism, but there is something very deep here. You see, this sharing, this participation which is worship, is at the level of the myth; you cannot be an observer there, because all that one can 'see' is not the real thing.

Q. You have invented, I believe, a whole new concept, the '*pistema*', to tackle this problem.

A. Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, invented the term 'noema' (from the Greek 'nous' meaning mind) which is the pure concept, the pure notion of awareness of any situation which one has without judging whether it is true or not true, whether one likes or dislikes it. *Noema* describes an intellectual object in all its purity, and it allows one to describe the thing sufficiently clearly and purely to engage in a meaningful discourse.

From this has sprung that extraordinary branch of modern philosophy called phenomenology. Now the historians and the theologians have tried to apply this same concept to religious phenomena; and I have tried to make my voice heard – in fact to shout – that this is wrong. It is simply imitating something which does not belong to our sphere of study, because the religious object is essentially different from the secular object. The worship of the believer belongs essentially to belief; so if I do not share in this belief, how can I describe it? It is inevitable that even videos or tape-recordings of religious ceremonies will only be a translation into secular consciousness of what I have seen.

Religious phenomenology needs not the *noema* but the *pistema* – from *pistis*, the Greek word for faith, which is the capacity of describing a belief in its own terms. In other words, in order to understand your belief, I need to enter into it, and I can only enter into it if I somewhat share in it. This does not mean that I necessarily bow to superstition, but that I recognise that I cannot understand these things from the outside. This implies a totally new method.

Q. Or even, a completely different way of knowing. This is something which is spoken of in many of the mystical traditions. Ibn 'Arabi for instance talks about the possibility of being the *hayula* (the substance or the kernel) of all the beliefs. This is not a question of becoming a bit of this and a bit of that, but of direct participation in the interior meaning of the beliefs.

A. One may not be able to participate in all the belief systems, but one can have an entrance. Just as I cannot speak two languages at the same time, but I am able to speak any number of languages one after another.

But what you say touches on something which is very dear to me, which is the distinction, which I have elaborated in my book 'Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics', between faith and belief. Faith is essentially different from belief. Faith to me is a constitutive human dimension. Faith belongs to Man, like reason belongs to Man; therefore every human being has faith. Faith is an openness to transcendence, and it is that which in every human being is open to more, to better, to different, to the future, which are very simple ways of saying transcendence.

Now we crystallise that faith, we articulate it, into systems of belief; and the systems are not the same. Arjuna is

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not the same as Avinagupta, Avinagupta is not Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Aquinas is not Karl Marx. The systems which they articulate are incompatible *qua* systems of belief. But the spiritual man like Ibn 'Arabi or St Paul has developed the awareness of what I call naked faith, which allows him, with the necessary discipline, to understand the meaning of other beliefs at the level of the mythology, and so to eventually criticise.

Q. And to see the limitations, perhaps, because it is said that such a man will see that each belief system is right, and each is a blessed way, but that it has limitations.

A. Yes. To be able to undertake a critique in this way may actually help that particular way to progress, to grow. And this is important, because the whole of life is in this sort of constant movement.

Q. It seems to me that the essence, or the substance, of worship is, in the end, the love of God. Would you agree that the criteria of being able to enter into another's faith is the recognition of that?

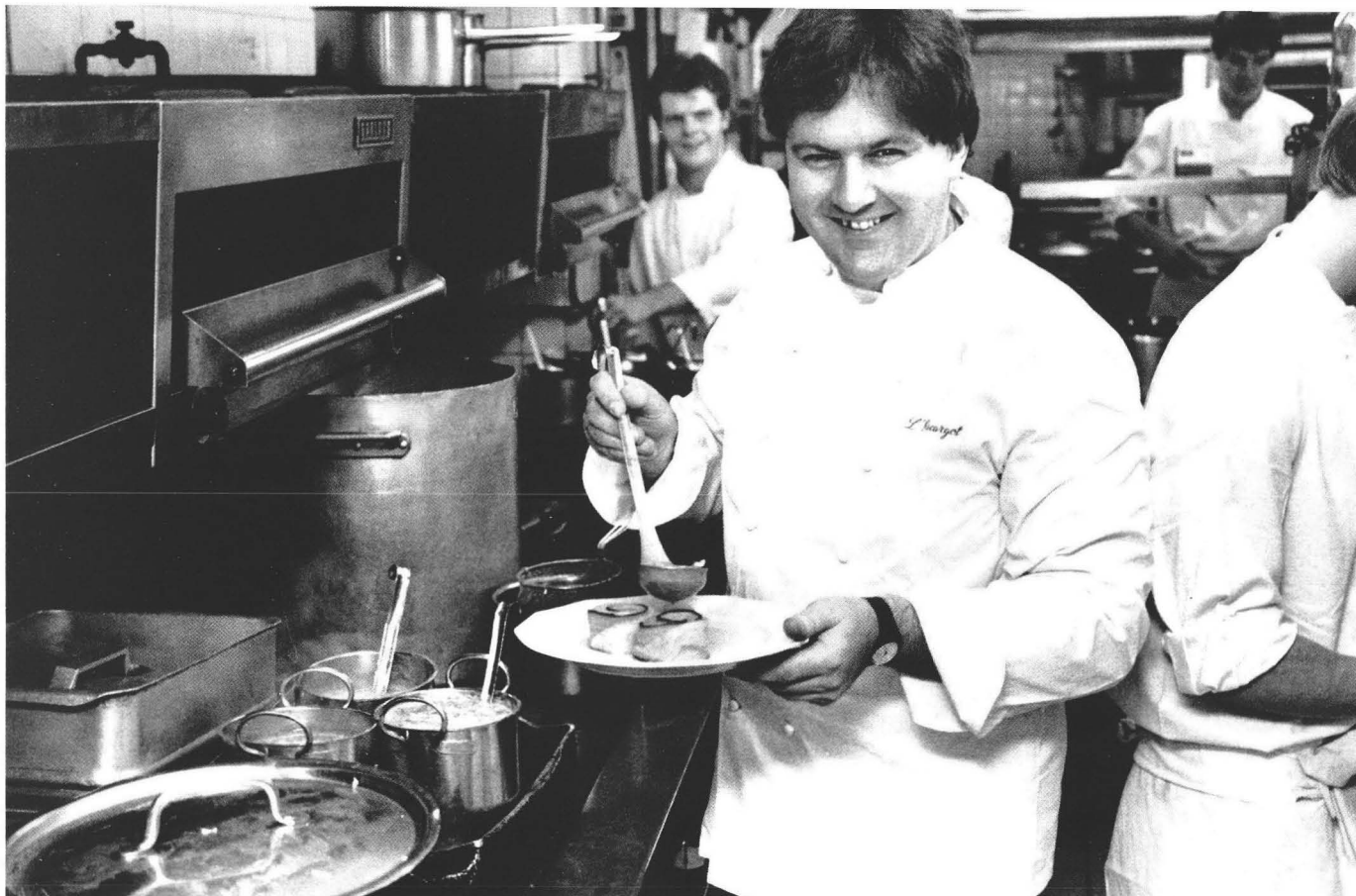
A. Now you have said the word which I always tried to avoid because there are so many meanings to it, but which nevertheless is *the* word, which is love. When you link worship with love, I say “obviously”, because if you don't love, then you do not see the same thing. If you are in love with somebody, and you describe them to somebody else, then usually it leaves them cold. Worship is about that which, if you see it, then you know that we are all in love with it. The different forms of worship are the expressions; some people resonate with one way, some with another.

Q. It is only through this sort of perception, I think, that real tolerance can arise. And it explains why it is that the more one understands one's own way, in the sense of directing oneself towards its essential meaning, the more one understands and tolerates other people's.

A. The thing is, that people have to understand that in following any tradition, whether it be Kabbalah, Zen or any of the rest, they have to accept that it involves both acceptance and transformation. You cannot be a true traditionalist if you do not transform your own tradition. This transformation takes many different paths, but basically it starts with us.

There have been enormous changes in all the religions in recent years. Within Christianity, people are talking about things which would have been considered madness even 20 years ago. If we do not see this, then we must be blind. It is all part of the same process which I have been talking about. My effort is directed towards formulating, and crystallising, and living, these new things – to try to signal these fragments of a not-yet-new story or myth.

I. London, April 21st, 1989.



Photograph by John Farnham

Cooking as a Means of Expression

Martin Lam, head chef at L'Escargot, talks about his work

Martin Lam began his career whilst still at school – when he worked at Keith Floyd's restaurant in Bristol. Since 1982 he has been a director of L'Escargot restaurant in Soho, London, and has recently been elected to the Academie Culinaire de France.

My work is an expression of what I love quite simply because it's to do with the perception of beauty in taste, and that runs throughout the whole process, from finding the ingredients, preparing them, cooking them and serving them. There's great pleasure in it. If food is cooked well and it's served to an appreciative audience, then there is an element of celebration in it.

Process and technique in cooking is very important, in the same way that some people may be gifted with the ability to play music without being able to read a note, and even compose, but most people need to be trained. It doesn't matter how you receive that training, whether at college or on the job, but you need to learn, to build up a platform from which to progress. But technique in itself is not enough to make a good cook. Anton Edelman, chef of the Savoy, said recently that the trouble with many chefs is that they don't taste their food and they don't eat their food, and I'm afraid that that is very much the case. One finds college trained chefs who have no appreciation for what they are doing, which for something completely bound up in taste is extraordinary. It's true that *le bon gout s'apprend* (good taste is learnt) but there has to be the motivation to learn.

The way I've pictured it for a long time now is that learning to cook is like an artist learning to mix colours. First you really have to know what the individual flavours are (and they are far more diverse than prime colours), and then you have to know how to mix those flavours to form other tastes. All of this is definitely acquired over quite a long period of time, because until you really know what a chicken tastes like – and that means finding what the best chicken tastes like and basing all your judgements on that – it's difficult to achieve the best results.

There is always room for experimenting or re-inventing, but I tend to agree with Escoffier, who wrote in 1907:

“the number of alimentary substances is comparatively small, the number of their combinations is not infinite, and the amount of raw material placed either by art or by nature at the disposal of the cook, does not grow in proportion to the whims of the public. What feats of ingenuity have we not been forced to perform at times in order to meet our customers' wishes? Novelty is the universal cry. Novelty by hook or by crook.”

There are certainly well-established combinations which endure despite fashion. The famous London chef Nico Ladenis, whom I really admire as a cook, has a section called “Marriages are made in heaven” in his book *My Gastronomy*(1) where he says that there are tastes, like tomatoes and basil, chicken and morels, which one cannot

improve upon and one should not even try. As one goes on, one finds other tastes in various different national cuisines where that is also the case.

COMPOSING A MENU comes about in thought firstly, and then in practice. The teacher, John Bennett, a man of great insight, used cooking a meal as an example of how intention is made and fulfilled. When you begin to plan a menu, you have to have the finished product completely in mind; how it will look, how it will taste and also how you will get to that point. If you don't, then it won't be accomplished.

Having said that, most people don't go shopping with a list of ingredients to make a specific dish. They go out and see what's good from the point of view of seasonality and taste and then decide what to do with it. So it's essential not to have completely fixed ideas. The whole thing depends on the final result, so it's not going away from the principle if you decide that those ingredients would be better served by treating them a different way. Very often the most simply prepared dishes can be the most exquisite and in fact Escoffier's motto was "*Faites simple*".

We call the style of cookery at L'Escargot 'Modern English' because although it does have a French influence, the influence on me is much wider than that. What I cook is very much in response to what I know the customers like, because it's very difficult to cook a meal for oneself. However, one can take responsibility for buying ingredients that are properly produced. At L'Escargot, we have sold nothing but free range chickens for the last four years. This is partly because they taste best, and also because of the way they are reared, and the lessened risk of salmonella poisoning which is now such a big issue. Going that route, meant educating people into no longer thinking of chicken as a cheap meat, because free range chickens are probably twice the price.

Unfortunately, it's less practical on the side of fruit and vegetables. I would very much like to cook only produce that is in season and available locally, but that remains an ideal. Not many places have a fruit and vegetable garden outside the window where one is able to go out and pick things and cook them that same day, although I had the opportunity of working like that with Justin de Blank in Norfolk, at the Shipham Place Hotel. High quality organic fruit and vegetables are not easily available here. It's rather different in California. All the best restaurants there have their own farms, or links with farms, which supply really prime produce grown for both taste and appearance.

Ingredients should be presented in the best possible way to allow them to be what they are. Man is the only creature that cooks. It's not the same for the lion who, after catching his prey, only has to devour it. We have devised, throughout the world, so many different ways of taking the natural fruits of the earth and making more of them through cooking. There's a very good cookery writer called Elizabeth Lambert Ortiz, whom I met when she did an article on me for Gourmet Magazine whilst I was working at the English House in Chelsea. She said that man's place is to glorify in the sense of giving praise, and man glorifies the raw ingredients he cooks by transforming them into something greater.

This is why vegetarians are only partially right in what they think. In the Western world, vegetarianism is usually not a matter of necessity but moral choice, because people

have a particular idea that eating meat is wrong. But they fail to understand that what is important is not the specific ingredients but the principle behind the cooking. Vegetables, and all those parts of diet which don't include meat or fish, are just as important as those that do. We have to understand the full spectrum of how foodstuffs provide more than just physical sustenance. Through the enhancement of the ingredients during cooking, they themselves are heightened, and so the whole process provides nourishment on a different level.

THERE IS AN IMMEDIACY to cooking because it is constantly being renewed. I find it entirely satisfying that the process is completed with the eating and then everything starts anew. One becomes attached to the enjoyment of the process rather than the created thing. And it develops one's feeling of humility, because at every stage it's quite obvious that you are serving the ingredients, the taste, and also, finally, the customer – you are completely integral to the process, yet without you it couldn't happen.

There is also a direct correlation between processing food from raw to cooked, and that same process in ourselves. We can live our lives quite happily as raw ingredients which are never appreciated fully for everything that they contain in potential, or we can live our lives expressing completely what we contain. It's up to us.

The other part of the process of cooking is, of course, the people who eat the food. Without them, without the mouths there

to eat and appreciate the tastes one produces, the whole thing would not be complete. L'Escargot, although a big restaurant which seats 200 people, is, I believe, one of the most hospitable and friendly restaurants in London. Even the pictures hanging on the walls have been chosen to induce a feeling of relaxation and well-being in people when they are eating. The ambience is very important, because what one is offering in a restaurant is a place where you can go to be uplifted and restored (*'se restaurer'* means 'to refresh one's inner man').

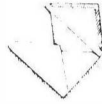
The whole aspect of hospitality should run through restaurants as much as it does in one's own home. It's much more than just a question of stopping at the filling station. In order to have discourse with our fellow man, we have to spend time together and one of the nicest ways of doing that is with food. It's a celebration, not in the sense that it's someone's birthday, but as in the celebration of the Eucharist in Christianity.

One of the best meals I ever had was in Istanbul, at a restaurant called 'Abdullah's' with some friends, and we had lamb. It was the most sublime lamb I've ever eaten; quite why, I don't know, because it was just roast lamb that not a great deal had been done to. It's not necessarily the complexity of the process that matters but the spirit in which it's done and the degree of skill. It was exquisite, and it was then that I really understood that good food demands the appreciation of an audience who can respond to it and return it to its source. To be able to witness this world fully, at its best, is what we are here for. When we understand it properly, eating and drinking is not just for staying alive, it can completely change the quality of one's life in all its aspects.

1) Ebury Press 1987

Interview by Cecilia Twinch

Letters



Dear Sir,

Concerning the article on Fractals, 'Inner Infinity' by Michael Cohen in Issue 9:

I am sorry but I must exclude myself from the "everyone" who knows that a circle is one-dimensional. Mathematics and geometry never were my strongest subjects but I have been comfortably rolling along under the impression that a circle was two-dimensional; a line was one-dimensional and a point no-dimensional. Maybe there is some topological or mathematical definition of the circle as one-dimensional, but after all these years I am not sure that I would understand it.

I was also disappointed because Dr Cohen, in saying that the examples in Mandelbrot (1982) "are all self-similar" fudged over the fact that the "most interesting ones", in not being identical at all scales, are not self-similar. They are self-affine. I would dare to suggest that the regular self-similar fractals, while very pretty in full colour and producible *ad-infinitum* on whizz-bang computer graphics systems, are rather sterile and uninviting kinds of forms. The variability of forms within the rich nexus of the world of the senses, call it 'nature' if you like, exhibits a character that is far more mysterious and less predictable. It is this factor of unpredictability that confirms that the order is indeed expressed from a level of uniqueness and incomprehensibility throughout all levels. The

complementary character of regularity is of course also present and is the one that traditional scientists have always concerned themselves with in trying to determine the underlying 'laws' of energy, form and matter.

Fractal mathematics seems to me, as a non-mathematician, to go some way towards bridging the gap between these two aspects of expression. It has proved useful in analysing some of the 'noise' that occurs in data collected in many branches of science. Although such analysis has shown a pattern in chaos, results have not, so far as I know, enabled any breakthrough in predicting precisely how events may unfold. Fractals are known retrospectively. Yes, they are interesting. Yes, they may be useful. So far they are merely another tricky tool for statisticians to use, and a powerful tool in computer graphics.

The universality of fractals is worthy of comment but has about as much intellectual value as the statement that "it is all one". It is sad that much of what seems attractive in science, new or old, is always a veil and only momentarily proposes solutions which do not hold up under close scrutiny. In view of this I would like to see more evaluation of the ideas presented in BESHARA in order to guide the reader through the maze of scientific discoveries and correlate these to the symbolic media through which spiritual truths are revealed.

Richard MacEwan.

Reply by Dr Michael Cohen.

When I referred to the circle as being one-dimensional, I should have made it more clear that I was talking about the circumference of the circle, ie. the circle as a closed curve. Like any curve of classical geometry this is one dimensional – it has no thickness or area – although of course the disc-shaped region enclosed by the curve is two dimensional.

Concerning self-similarity: what I say in the article is that "[Mandelbrot's examples of fractals] are all self-similar, in that the same features recur at any level of magnification – although, in the most interesting ones, never in the same way". This seems to me to cover Mr MacEwan's point. It is true that, in reference to the Koch curve, I used 'self-similar' in a different sense, ie. of looking exactly the same at every degree of magnification, but the term is used in both senses in the literature. I do agree with Mr MacEwan's implication that the article could well have given examples of so-called 'random' (non-deterministic) fractals and their uses.

Mr MacEwan states that fractals "have not enabled any breakthroughs in predicting how events may unfold". It is, of course, unreasonable to suppose that a theory which expresses the inherent unpredictability of phenomena could make such predictions. The importance of fractals and chaotic attractors lies in their being symbols or 'ways of see-

ing' through which it is possible to apprehend phenomena in ways less limited than those afforded by previous conventional scientific models. One might also say that the new geometrical ideas (of which fractals and chaotic attractors form just a part) provide a means by which it is possible to express, in mathematical language, intuitions of features of a solution which were not previously accessible to such expression. The application of these ideas to specific scientific questions (which is happening in fields from cardiac research to engineering) is to some extent indirect. The aim of the article was to convey to its readers a glimpse of the ideas by, in part, aesthetic means, allowing the symbols to act for themselves. If any reader has meditated on the Lorenz attractor, and considered the tides, some of the above intention may have been fulfilled.

Concerning Mr MacEwan's final points; I would say that the entire Universe is nothing other than 'the symbolic media through which spiritual truths are revealed'. It follows that there can be no fixed way in which BESHARA exposes the significance of its subject matter. The device of explicit reference to a spiritual perspective may or may not be appropriate, and it was not suitable for the purpose of my article for reasons I have indicated above.

As for whether these symbols reveal or conceal – that depends entirely on the response of the individual.

Reviews

Books

...in brief

SCIENCE

Science and Providence*John Polkinghorne*

SPCK, 1989. P/Back, 114pp, £5.95

This is the third book of a trilogy which John Polkinghorne, a former Cambridge Professor of Mathematical Physics and now a priest, began with 'One World' and 'Science and Creation'. In the former, he considered the idea of God as an underlying intelligence, or ground of being, which modern science gives us. Such a God, he feels, may awaken awe and wonder, but not love, and in this book he goes on to consider the 'Christian' concept of a God who interacts personally and compassionately with the individual beings of his creation.

Polkinghorne feels that the new theories of complex dynamic processes open up the possibility of a God with such 'liberty' to intervene, and goes on to undertake a delicate and educative exploration of the meaning of providence, miracle, evolution and hope in such a context. "... man's assurance", he quotes "must be ... not that all that happens is determined by God's plan, but that all that happens is encompassed by His love."

The Emperor's New Mind*Roger Penrose*

Oxford University Press, 1989.

H/back, 465pp, £20.00

Professor Penrose is a physicist and a mathematician whose work on the foundations of physics has included a long-term collaboration with Stephen Hawking into the consequences of Einstein's Theory of General Relativity – the best known result of which is their theory of black holes. In this brilliant book written for the general reader, he utilises his wide knowledge to focus attention on the nature of mind. He is the child implicit in the title, who dares to declare the obvious – that mind is more than a machine. Penrose argues that the two 'superb' (and incompatible) theories of modern physics – quantum mechanics and relativity – are both based on equations which are essentially computable and determinate; whereas a complete and unified 'superb' theory may be determinate, but it will have to be non-computable in an essential way. Only such a theory, he maintains, has any hope of exploring the nature of mind.

The Time & Space of Uncle Albert*by Russell Stannard*

Faber and Faber, 1989. H/back, 120 pp,

£6.99

Recommended for young readers of twelve and upwards, this book attempts

to introduce Einstein's theory of relativity in an exciting and accessible way. Russell Stannard, who has had a distinguished career researching high-energy nuclear physics and is currently Professor of Physics at the Open University, manages to present the elements of physics with delightful simplicity. We tried it out on a 'young reader' aged 13 and three-quarters, and he gave the following verdict:

"It's not a light read – you have to concentrate so as to understand what's



"Tell me, Uncle," she said, "if you thought of me, would I end up in the thought-bubble?"

going on – but it explains the theory of relativity in a relaxed way without lots of mathematical complications. It has a very original story-line and is well-written with lots of illustrations. Uncle Albert is a crumpled, snoozy sort of person and Gedanken, his niece who shares adventures with him, is like his thoughts, bubbling up and down as his moods change."

(All parents who are incapable of explaining $E=mc^2$ to their children may also enjoy a surreptitious glance at this book!)

Does God Play Dice? *The Mathematics of Chaos*

Ian Stewart

Basil Blackwell, 1989. H/back, 317pp,
£15.00

It is about 20 years since scientists and mathematicians started to investigate seriously the inherent unpredictability at the heart of most mathematical models of natural phenomena. The most comprehensive popularisation until recently of this work was James Gleick's best-selling 'Chaos'. Stewart's account, written in a breezy style for the general reader, is less anecdotal than Gleick's but is in many respects more accurate and detailed. The author is a professional mathematician with an inside knowledge of the subject and a gift for exposition. Some attempt at a historical context is made, and the diagrams, so essential in this subject, are plentiful and of reasonable quality. In short, the book is an excellent introduction to the topic, with a select bibliography for those who wish to take it further.

MYSTICISM

Albert and Thomas *Selected Writings*

Ed. and Transl. by Simon Tugwell OP
Paulist Press, NY, 1988.
P/back, 650pp, \$17.95

This is a rare volume. It contains comprehensive and fresh biographies of perhaps the two greatest of the schoolmen, St Albert the Great of Cologne and his pupil St Thomas Aquinas, plus new translations of selections from their writings. Both the biographies (intelligent and sympathetic) and the translations (robustly scholarly yet accessible and vital) focus unerringly on the central mystical and theological teachings of the two saints. The only disappointment is that the translated passages from St Albert's writings are frustratingly short – the already better-known St Thomas has the lion's share. Nevertheless, the book makes crystal clear the immediacy and perennial value of the writings of these two men.

The Dalai Lama at Harvard *Lectures on the Buddhist Path*

Transl. and Ed. by Jeffrey Hopkins
Snow Lion Publications, NY, 1988
(Distr. in UK by Element Books) P/back,
255pp, £8.95

In August 1981, the Dalai Lama gave this series of ten lectures at Harvard University as an introduction to Buddhist theory and practice, starting



Detail from the frontispiece of 'The Upanishads', a re-issue by the Mandala imprint of Unwin Hyman of a poetic translation of the great Indian classic by Alistair Shearer and Peter Russell. With many beautiful illustrations. Mandala, 1989. P/back, 105pp, £8.99.

from the perspective of the Four Noble Truths. These he talks of in their subjective order as suffering, the recognition of its cause, the knowledge of possible cessation and thus the emergence of a path.

Each lecture was followed by a question and answer session, extracts from which are included, and the whole book constitutes a very readable exposition of Buddhism. The Dalai Lama's teachings are infused with insight and experience, interlaced with revelations of the life and tradition of Buddhism that could only come from a source such as he is. He also talks of the implementation of Buddhist principles and techniques after the loss of his homeland, and extends these to the global issue of converting conflict to peace.

The Sufi Path of Knowledge *Ibn 'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*

William C Chittick
State Univ of New York Press, 1989
P/back, 478pp, \$24.50, £18.00

The heart of this book consists of more than 600 passages translated from the 'Revelations of Mecca' of the great mystic and philosopher, Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240AD) – the first book

in English to make available a substantial quantity of material from that encyclopaedic work. The translations have been collected in six sections with commentary interspersed – Theology, Ontology, Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Soteriology and Consummation. Chapters on Cosmology, Anthropology and the Cosmic Role of the Perfect Man have been reserved for another book. Although he is modest about his achievements, Chittick points out that Ibn 'Arabi's work has been relatively neglected by modern scholars, partly because of the daunting volume of writing, and this book will certainly help to open up the field for academic study. He quotes Ibn 'Arabi: "... in this book and in all our books we only write that which is given by unveiling and dictated by God."

Mysteries of the Dream Time *The Spiritual Life of the Australian Aborigines*

James Cowan
Prism Press, London, 1989. Unity Press,
Australia, 1989. P/back, 128p., £6.95,
A\$13.95

Aboriginal spirituality has in the past often been denigrated as primitive animism or magical superstition. James

Cowan seeks to present it as an ancient and esoteric spirituality and to relate it to other major religious traditions. He draws attention to the aborigines' reverence for the landscape as a sacred icon and their perception of man's place within it as consort and co-creator; to their 'dream journeys' as pilgrimages of the soul, and to the traditions of holy men and prophecy. Although the correlation with other traditions is sometimes slightly laboured, the book is nevertheless a helpful introduction to the rich tradition of the Dreamtime, which, for Cowan, is still a vital presence for contemporary Australia. In the words of Big Bill Neidje: "Dreaming place... you can't change it, no matter who you are. No matter you rich man, no matter you king. You can't change it."

POETRY

The Drop That Became the Sea Lyric Poems of Yunus Emre

Transl. Kabir Helminski and Refik Algan
Threshold Books, 1989 P/back, 93pp,
\$8.00

This is one of the first translations into English of the work of Yunus Emre (d1320?), who has been called 'The greatest folk poet in Islam'. An unlettered Turkish shepherd, Yunus sang mystical songs which are still popular today in Turkey, and was the first of a whole tradition of Turkish Sufi troubadours who sang of the Divine Presence, the Beloved or the Friend.

Soul of my soul,
Without You I have no work to do.
If You were absent from paradise,
I don't need to go there.
If I look, all I see is You.
If I speak, I speak of You.
There is no better prey
than You whom I secretly watch.
Because I forgot myself,
because I went to You,
in any conversation, in every state,
I haven't a moment's rest.
You can kill me seventy times,
and like St George, I'll resurrect,
and crawl back unashamed.

Show Your face to Yunus.
He loves You and has no other.

(Poem 35, page 62)

The Hidden Words of Bah'u'llah.

Transl. Shogi Effendi
Oneworld Publications, London, 1989.
P/back, 108p, £3.95

Bah'u'llah, born in Persia in 1817, was

the founder of the Baha'i faith. He was persecuted by the Persian authorities and finally consigned to the penal colony of Acre, where he spent 40 years until his death at the age of 74. His writings are prolific, but of them the 'Hidden Words' is probably the best known. The book consists of 82 meditative verses of which the following is an example:

"O Ye People that have minds to know
and ears to hear.

The first call of the Beloved is this: O mystic nightingale! Abide not but in the rose-garden of the spirit. O messenger of the Solomon of love! Seek thou no shelter except in the Sheba of the well-beloved and O immortal phoenix! dwell not save on the mountain of faithfulness. Therein is thy habitation, if on the wings of thy soul thou soarest to the realm of the infinite and seekest to attain thy goal".

GENERAL

The Dramatic Universe Vols. 1-4

J G Bennett

Claymont Communications 1987,
H/back, £18.50 each volume.

'The Dramatic Universe' is the encyclopaedic work of John G. Bennett (1897 -1974), teacher, scientist, philosopher and mystic, a pupil of Gurdjieff during the 1930's, who later founded the Institute for the Comparative Study of History, Philosophy and the Sciences at Coombe Springs, England. It is a bold and far-reaching attempt to reinterpret the significance of human existence in the light of the challenge presented by the modern world, constituting a synthesis of science, psychology, philosophy, history and religion. It was published originally from 1956 to 1966. Volume 1 covers 'The Foundations of Natural Philosophy'; Volume 2 'The Foundations of Moral Philosophy'; Volume 3 'Man and His Nature' and Volume 4 'History'. Most of the revisions in this new version are to Volume 1, which has been abridged to about half its original length by one of Bennett's students and is consequently much more accessible. However, most readers will probably still find the later volumes on the nature of man and history the most immediately attractive.

Conference of the Birds

John Heilpern

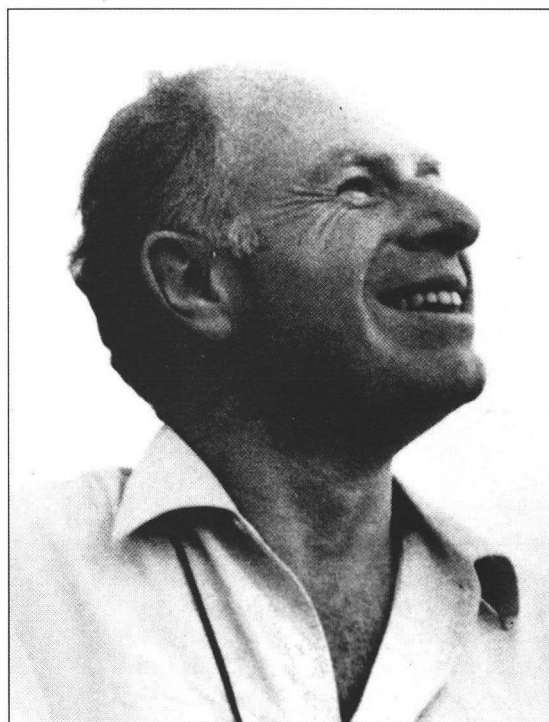
Methuen, 1989,

P/back, 327pp, £5.99

This is the paperback version of a book which received a lot of attention when it was first published in 1975. It covers the extraordinary journey that director Peter Brook made through Africa with his experimental theatre company in 1972. Much of Brook's work has been an attempt to uncover a universal language of theatre, one that does not rely on cultural conventions, or even on any particular language. To this end, his performers presented themselves in African villages to an audience who had never seen 'theatre' in the western sense - sometimes with disastrous results, sometimes with astonishing success, but always with something learned.

Heilpern feels that all Brook's subsequent work, including his version of Attar's 'Conference of the Birds', (the proto-type of which was performed on the journey), and the spectacular 'Mahabharata', has stemmed from his experiences in Africa. One suspects that Heilpern himself did not fully grasp some of the dimensions of the things he recounts - particularly the spiritual aspects - but this is nevertheless a fascinating book.

Short reviews by Michael Cohen, Martin Notcutt, Derek Elliott, Cecilia Twinch, Jane Clark, Kathy Cresswell, Adam Dupré and Tyl Norland.



Peter Brooke. Photograph courtesy of Methuen.

The Power of Myth
Conversations between Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers
 Ed. Betty Sue Flowers
 Doubleday, NY, 1988. London, 1989
 P/Back, 233pp, \$18.95. £12.95

Maren Pekedis and Jane Carroll

"Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind. It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation. Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth." (1)

THESE WERE THE WORDS of the distinguished American teacher and mythologist Joseph Campbell, who devoted his life to exploring the wealth of meanings in the mythologies of the world. Shortly before his death in 1987, he was interviewed by journalist Bill Moyers, and in 1988 the results of their conversation appeared as a six-hour video documentary on American public television and as an accompanying book, both entitled 'The Power of Myth'. They constitute the last major work which Campbell produced, and Moyers describes them as "... (his) great summing up. A challenging farewell from one of the most original and widely educated minds of our age".

The television series was immensely popular in America, drawing an audience of millions, and is currently undergoing its third repeat in twelve months in San Francisco. The book draws further details from the original 24 hour conversation and is a companion to the series rather than a transcript. Adding some details and pictures from many mythologies and rituals, it stands in its own right as a masterpiece.

The Universality of Myth

Campbell, born in 1904, became interested in myth as a child, when he began to read stories of the American Indians and found there the same motifs that the nuns had taught him at his Catholic school. He went on to study at

... in depth

Columbia, Paris and Munich, and worked with the great Indologist, Heinrich Zimmer, from whom he learnt that myth could be an active transforming force in his life. He edited several of Zimmer's books, and went on to write 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces', 'The Masks of God', 'The Mythic Image' and 'The Atlas of World Mythology', and produced works on James Joyce and Jung. He taught comparative mythology at Sarah Lawrence College in New York for 40 years.

Campbell understands that all the mythologies of the world (in which he includes religions and science), describe the same immutable meanings, and that they even clothe themselves in the same forms, which are drawn from a storehouse of eternal ideas to which every culture has access. He maintains that one of the great leaps forward in this century occurred when Freud and Jung showed that, just as each society has its own particular mythology, so the individual human being contains these same forms in his subconscious. "Myth is the public dream, dream the private myth", he says.

He emphasises the transforming power of myth. "There is a point of wisdom", he says, "beyond the conflicts of illusion and truth, by which lives can be put back together again". He draws out universal themes which are present in all the traditions – themes such as sacrifice, death and resurrection, ascension to heaven and virgin birth. We have the same body, the same organs and the same energies as Cro-Magnon man, and whether we are living in 20th century New York or in a cave 30,000 years ago, we will pass through the same stages of childhood, awakening to sexuality, moving from dependency to responsibility, marriage, failure of the body, loss of powers and death. The prime function of myth is to aid us through these rites of passage and propel us through the transformations of life, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies which hold us back.

Campbell distinguished different aspects to myth – it has a sociological function, for instance, in encapsulating

the customs of society – but he maintains that its highest function, whether within the subconscious or in the exterior mythologies, is to offer the instruction for man to travel beyond religion and the confines of his cultural conditioning to the "ultimate elementary idea", ie. God.

The Hero in Myth

In other words, for Campbell myth delineates a spiritual journey, and it is the hero, the central character of the myth, who undertakes it. "The Great Deed of the Supreme Hero is to come to knowledge of the Unity in the multiplicity and to make it known." Much of Campbell's work has been to outline the themes of separation, initiation and return in the stories of the great heroes – the man who ventures forth from his known world to regions of supernatural wonder where he encounters trial and loss, confronts fabulous forces and wins decisive victories before returning to his homeland with great boons for his fellow man. He describes the temptation not to return and defines the difference between a celebrity and a hero as being between the one who keeps the prize for himself alone and the one who comes back to benefit others. (2)

He calls the returned hero the 'navel of the world' – the umbilical cord through which the energies of eternity break into time. Through his death to the world and rebirth in eternity he symbolises the mystery of the maintenance of the world, the continuous vivification which dwells within all things. Those places where the hero has been born, or wrestled with his demons, or passed through into the void, become marked and sanctified by their society. Campbell calls them the "place of breakthrough into abundance", and the site itself comes to serve as a support for contemplation. The hero's journey serves as an invitation and an instruction, warning of the difficulties (he quotes the Koran: "Do you think that you shall enter the Garden of Bliss without such trials as came to those who passed away before you?") and assuring us of the help to be received. As we follow Ariadne's thread through the labyrinth we have all the heroes who have gone before us to keep us company.

Past and present myths

Throughout the conversations with Bill Moyers, Campbell brings to life many elements of our society that we may not recognise as being ritualised or mythol-



The Modern Hero. Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker in 'Star Wars', preparing to counter-attack the imperial storm-troopers in the Death Star detention area. Campbell's work was the inspiration for the Star Wars films, and many of the discussions between Campbell and Moyers which resulted in 'The Power of Myth' took place at George Lucas's Star Wars ranch.

ogised, and shows how they are imbued with meaning. Marriage, for instance, he describes as "a purely mythological image, signifying the sacrifice of the visible entity to the transcendent good... Marriage is recognition of a spiritual identity... you're no longer this one alone; your identity is in a relationship..." (p7). If it is not understood in this way, he points out, then it easily disintegrates.

One of the major themes which runs through 'The Power of Myth' is that of the condition of the world at this time, when societies, religions and rituals are in dissolution. "Their forms no longer interest our psyche". All the mythologies of the past existed within a framework of integrating man with the mineral world, the plant world and agriculture, the animal world, other human beings or whatever. Campbell describes the American Indians and their reverence for the natural world. He says that "the Indians addressed all life as 'thou'" and he sees this as the beginning of the mythic imagination, the appreciation of

the wonder of things which results in a "burst of magnificent art" when the beauty is really seen and expressed. He speaks of the cave paintings of the Indians, and tells us that because of the reverence and awe for life which the painters expressed, he found them to be like cathedrals. "In the cathedrals, the spiritual images are in human form," he says. "In the caves the images are in animal form. But it's the same thing. The form is secondary. The message is what is important".(p82)

Future Myths

The destruction of integral societies like those of the American Indians, or the wars between conflicting mythologies being carried out in Beirut and Northern Ireland, leaves the world now without a great co-ordinating mythology. As re-integration is desperately sought, Moyers and Campbell discuss possible solutions – the return to our ancestral mythologies: the forging together of a single group's myth out of the world's diverse mythologies: or the

construction of a completely new mythology based on our projections for the future.

Joseph Campbell rejects each of these possibilities. He affirms that the only way to defeat death and destruction is through birth; therefore, it is only by shedding the trappings of the old mythologies and going beyond their forms that a new mythology can emerge. We are no longer in service to the structured social orders of the past. Society must become in service to man, who, by travelling inward to the interior meanings of the great stories, can return with new images of reality.

"Consciousness can no more invent, or even predict, an effective symbol than foretell or control tonight's dream. The whole thing is being worked out on another level... not only in the depths of every living psyche in the modern world, but also on those titanic battlefields into which the whole planet has lately been converted..." (2)

Pressed by Moyers to predict the mythologies of the future, Campbell suggests three elements that they must contain. One is the idea of the planet as a whole, symbolised by the picture science has brought us of the earth seen from space. Another is a re-assessment of our relationship with nature.

The third is that the central mystery will be, not the animal world, not the plant world, nor the miracle of the spheres, but the individual man. "Sheer life cannot be said to have a purpose", he says on page 229, "because look at all the purposes it has all over the place. But each incarnation (of life) has a potentiality, and the mission of life is to live that potentiality. How do you do it? My answer is, follow your bliss. There is something inside you that knows when you are in centre, and knows when you are on the beam or off the beam..."

To illustrate this point, Campbell brings in a beautiful image from the tradition of the Navajo Indians – that of the 'pollen path'.

"Pollen is the life source, the pollen path is the path to the centre. The Navajo say: "Oh, beauty before me, beauty behind me, beauty to the right of me, beauty to the left of me, beauty above me, beauty below me, I'm on the pollen path". (p230)

The Kingdom of Heaven

Perhaps these conversations have touched so many people because Campbell speaks so clearly of our inherent potential, expressed as a need not for a meaning in life but rather for the experience of being alive. "...so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive." (p5) He says at the end of the book: "Eden is. 'The kingdom of the father is spread upon the earth, and men do not see it'... When you see the kingdom spread upon the earth, the old way of living in the world is annihilated. That is the end of the world. The end of the world is not an event to come, it is an event of psychological transformation. You see not the world of solid things but a world of radiance".

(1) From *'The Hero with a Thousand Faces'*
(2) *Ibid*

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Theoria

Art and the Absence of Grace

by Peter Fuller.

Chatto and Windus, 1988.

H/back, 234 pp, £15.00

George Pattison

PETER FULLER IS well-known as one of Britain's leading art critics, a reputation enhanced by the launch of his quarterly journal 'Modern Painters' in 1988. Fuller has consistently repudiated the slick and the superficial in contemporary art and increasingly encouraged a respect for the best of existing traditions; Henry Moore, Cecil Collins and the Prince of Wales are known to rank higher in his esteem than Andy Warhol or Gilbert and George. Now, in 'Theoria: Art and the Absence of Grace' he gives us, perhaps, the fullest exposition to date of the principles which undergird his critical work.

'Theoria' focuses on the complex interrelationship between art, science and religion, and draws heavily upon the ideas of the 19th century painter and art critic, John Ruskin. Peter Fuller pursues his theme through a fascinating analysis of Ruskin's own writing and on through a study of major artists, critics and (even) theologians whose work, whether deliberately or not, reflects the influence (or repudiation) of Ruskin's concern to see art rooted in a faithfulness to the deep structures and truths of the natural world.

'Theoria' ranges over a vast area of 19th and 20th century culture and thought. It contains a vigorous and now familiar defence of British art, and discusses such varied thinkers, artists and subjects as William Morris, Walter Pater, P.T. Forsyth, G.F. Watts, Karl Barth, Benoit B. Mandelbrot, modern Australian art, the present British government's arts policy and the advent of post-modernism. It is clearly in many ways an important book, venturing as it does into an interdisciplinary minefield: few academic writers would risk their reputations in such dangerous territory, but the subject can hardly be dealt with in any other way – it virtually demands of us that we jettison the kind of narrow compartmentalisation which characterizes much contemporary intellectual life. Admittedly such compartmentalisation has its place, and it is never good to make vast generalizations about major cultural movements unless one has done one's homework first.

Fuller has certainly spent a long time on his, however, and if his domain is one in which angels fear to tread it by no means follows that he is a fool. He brings to the book a long and clearly passionate love for Ruskin, a prodigious familiarity with modern painting, and an intelligent engagement with critical, religious and scientific issues. If the book is not equally successful in dealing with every topic he discusses – and I shall spell out one area in particular where, I believe, his argument is deficient – he does manage to negotiate at least some kind of path through his complex and wide-ranging material. This is in itself no mean achievement.

The Theoretic Faculty

A pivotal point in the book is Ruskin's withdrawal from the Christianity of his upbringing and early writings, a withdrawal alluded to in Fuller's subtitle: 'Art and the Absence of Grace'. Ruskin's 'unconversion' is not simply an item of biographical interest, however, since his whole theory of art was bound up with a view of the relationship between the artist, nature and God. In a remark in the Preface to Volume II of 'Modern Painters', he declares that "In the main aim and principle of the book, there is no variation, from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfectness and eternal beauty of the work of God; and tests all work of man by concurrence with or subjection to that." (I). Elsewhere, in almost catechetical style, he avers that:

"Man's use and function...is, to be the witness of the glory of God, and to advance that glory by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness. Whatever enables us to fulfil this function, is in the pure and first sense of the word Useful to us. Pre-eminently therefore whatever sets the glory of God more brightly before us" (MP II p60).

The 'theoretic faculty' (from which Fuller's book takes its title) is precisely that faculty concerned with "the moral appreciation of ideas of beauty" (MP II p166); that is, the faculty by which we discern the beauty and glory of God in creation, that without which the artist cannot reveal that glory in his work, nor we recognize his representation of it. The analysis of the theoretic faculty is the cornerstone of Ruskin's theory of art. Through this analysis what began as a defence of Turner against his critics becomes a veritable theology of art.

Fuller, however, looks back on 'Modern Painters' from the standpoint of the later, more pessimistic Ruskin, and, indeed, from the standpoint of one who knows of the literal and metaphorical wastelands created by the ruthless advance of that modernist project which so alarmed Ruskin and which, as Ruskin feared, has substantially stripped both the world and the human subject of all but the barest vestiges of sacrality. (And, we may add, in doing so has believed itself to be performing a good and great thing.) Fuller brings to our attention the fact that the later Ruskin himself tried to deny any specifically Christian doctrinal elements in the theology of 'Modern Painters', and he suggests that even such talk of a personal God as is still to be found in the later Ruskin is, in effect, marginal.

Natural Theology

This raises many questions. For how far is Christianity tied to the kind of narrow doctrinal conformity which Ruskin was driven to abandon? How far is religious belief and commitment in general tied to an exclusive emphasis on the transcendence and personality of God? Depending on how we answer these questions we may make widely differing assessments as to how irreligious the later Ruskin really was.

In connection with this, Fuller sees a particular relevance in the works of

Karl Barth, the Swiss theologian whose commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans, published just after the First World War, caused a revolution in modern Christian theology. Barth rejected all attempts to use knowledge of the natural or created order as a means of validating religious belief. The world of nature (including human nature) was, he said, separated from God by an "infinite qualitative difference". Not only were the roles of creature and creator irreversible, but also the human situation revealed the complete blotting out of the image of God in Man occasioned by the Fall. Over against the Catholic tradition of natural theology which used our natural

knowledge as a kind of stepping stone to divinity, Barth insisted that knowledge of God could only come through revelation "vertically from above".

It is easy for Fuller to argue that it is only a short step from here to the complete refusal of God, since such a 'wholly other' God can only with difficulty be construed as having any significant impact on human life – although, it must be said, this 'short step' was totally contrary to Barth's own intentions. Barth's logic would, of course, render anything like Ruskin's concept of *theoria* inadmissible. If God is absent from



'King and Queen' by Henry Moore, one of the modern artists Fuller most admires. Courtesy of the Tate Gallery

the world, then there can be no seeing of his glory in the world. Conversely, the same logic might predict what Fuller claims is the later development of Ruskin's thought, ie. a move from natural theology in the service of faith to "an aesthetic and spiritual response to a world in which a conventional God seemed to play an ever diminishing role." (p168). All natural theology, Barthianism maintains, is essentially godless from the beginning, a human 'work' which imposes our limited and erroneous ideas of beauty, truth, unity and goodness on to a God who cannot be limited. Instead of elevating our minds to God (as it believes) natural theology reduces God to nature.

Art and Science

The theme of nature as the link between humanity and God plays a vital part in Ruskin's thought and in Fuller's interpretation and application of it. For neither of them is nature simply an object of visual contemplation: it is also a field for scientific exploration. Fuller intriguingly follows Ruskin through his geological researches and speculations and his debates with contemporary geologists such as William Buckland and Charles Lyell, an area in which modern Christian theology shows regrettably little interest. Of course most of the geological theories of these men, which were inextricably entangled in proofs and disproofs of the Genesis account of creation, have largely failed the test of time, but, as Fuller tells the tale, we glimpse a small, but gripping piece of intellectual history, taken with utmost seriousness and passion by its participants. Moreover, even if their specific conclusions are fallacious, the concern which was the motor-force of their arguments – ie. to maintain contact between religion and science – remains important.

The enormous expansion of both scientific and religious horizons in the twentieth century has made such detailed interweavings of science and religion considerably more difficult even than it already was then. But the fact that such undertakings require both patience and caution does not mean that they are totally worthless, and, in a sense, Fuller is pursuing a similar quest. His argument, however, is that evolutionary science can itself provide us

with the themes and concepts we need to compensate us for the death of God, the absence of grace in nature. He invites us to consider the possibility of a kind of 'grammar' of natural shapes and forms which provide the biological basis for and are reflected in "the greatest artistic and architectural achievements". (p232) He believes that such a concept was envisaged by Ruskin in discussing the shapes and proportions of Gothic art, which, as Ruskin saw it, reproduced "those characters of beauty which He (God) has made it man's nature to love". (p61)

Fuller finds confirmation for this theory in the more recent work of the

Harvard mathematician Benoit B. Mandelbrot – but Mandelbrot's explanation of this grammar requires no 'over-belief' in God as its creator and legislator. In place of God Fuller offers us E.O. Wilson's concept of *biophilia*, a biologically innate "urge to affiliate with other forms of life". (p233). This concept, he argues, not only helps to elucidate the natural affinities between art and nature, but it also helps to remind us of the overriding imperative cast aside by the ideology of technocratic domination, that all life depends on the mutual caring and concern for one another of those forms of life which share a common environment. It is thus a moral as well as an explanatory concept.

In an introduction to an exhibition of recent landscape paintings by Michael Williams, Fuller has neatly summed up the direction of his argument in 'Theoria':

"Even if God has disappeared, can we not, perhaps, root a spiritual, though secular aesthetic in a careful and loving attention to every detail of the visible world? Can a modern ecological sensibility replace the old Christian sense of wonder and awe in the face of God's creation?"

Fuller's hope is clearly that such questions can be answered in the affirmative.

An open state of heart

I am neither an art critic nor art historian and I shall not follow Fuller into the details of his often illuminating discussion of past and present artists whose work offers a vindication of these principles. I cannot, however, refrain from commenting on what I regard as the key weakness in Fuller's argument. Essentially, I believe that he is mistaken in focussing his discussion of twentieth century belief on Karl Barth's critique of natural theology, influential as this has undoubtedly been. The simple fact is that Karl Barth did not demolish natural theology. Even among those theologians often grouped with him as representatives of the 'dialectical theology' of the 1920s there were those who were prepared to argue along various lines for the retention of at least some 'points of contact' between creature and creator: Emil Brunner, Rudolph Bultmann and Paul Tillich being notable examples. What Bultmann and Tillich certainly emphasized – and what, I believe, Fuller's treatment of natural theology

notably omits – is the role of human subjectivity in the development of our apprehension of the things of God: the knowledge of God is, for them, a knowledge towards which the inner dynamic of our own processes of feeling, willing and thinking directs us. Such an emphasis goes back in Christian theology at least as far as St Augustine and is often (as in Augustine himself) associated with mystical and Platonic elements.

Now it is striking that Ruskin's own account of *theoria* includes a strong emphasis on subjective factors. The ideas of beauty, he states, are "the subject of moral and not of intellectual, nor altogether of sensual perception". (MP II p171) In still plainer language he affirms that 'Christian' *theoria*

"is dependent on a pure, right and open state of the heart, both for its truth and for its intensity, inasmuch that even the right after-action of the Intellect upon facts of beauty so apprehended, is dependent on the acuteness of the heart feeling about them." (MP II p172)

The exercise of the theoretic faculty does not just require sharp eyes and a sharp mind: it demands the full activation of the whole personality, a person's character. The sense for beauty is thus, according to Ruskin, "in analogy to, and in harmony with the whole spirit of the Christian moral system..." (MP II p180) In other words, the seeing of what has been well called 'a structural grace in things' does not depend solely nor even primarily on the demonstrability of certain formal principles regarded as objectively present in things. It depends rather on the eye which looks – 'to the pure all things are pure'.

In traditional natural theology it never was the case anyway that cosmological arguments (and this would include aspects of Ruskin's theology of art) were meant to sustain the theophanous possibilities of life. Such arguments were used to corroborate revelation, not to be its foundation. It follows that even where such arguments fail (as they are bound to do if too much weight is placed upon them) we do not need to leap to the conclusion that all the lines linking the divine and the human are severed. Now it may be that some of the existentialist discussions of subjectivity were lacking in a proper 'biophilic' concern for the non-human creation; it may also be that philoso-

phies and theologies of subjectivity are heavily implicated in precisely those aspects of modernism from which Fuller hopes a Ruskinian approach will deliver us – but, as Hölderlin put it in lines constantly quoted by Heidegger in his longing for a new dawn of Being, "where danger is/there grows the saving power".

Conclusions

In the light of this I should like to make three closing remarks. Ruskin states that the temper

"by which right taste is formed, is, first, patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it, it does not trample upon it lest it should be pearls, even though it looks like husks... it does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts to choke the weak seed." (MP II p179)

Noting once more the moral element in play we might comment that Fuller's own writing is at its best (as it is in much of 'Theoria') when he is concerned to interpret and expound thinkers, artists and works with which he is in profound sympathy. He is capable of fierce polemics against those fools he does not wish to suffer, but despite the verbal skill of such polemics, his best contributions to our understanding and experience of art come, as here, when he aims to commend rather than to blame, and when he leaves behind the only too well-expressed 'unkind thoughts' which some of the products of extreme modernism and post-modernism awaken in him. (He is in this respect a faithful pupil of Ruskin who was himself no amateur in the art of verbal assassination.)

Secondly, and more significantly, concepts such as *biophilia* are highly ambiguous. They clearly do not refer to specific entities in the world any more than traditional metaphysical concepts. To that extent they share many of the philosophical disadvantages of traditional 'God-talk', ie. they are hard to 'cash' and can all too easily degenerate into well-meaning generality. On the other hand, they lack the advantages of traditional religious language and are ill-suited to arouse that practical reverence for life and for beauty which Fuller correctly sees us as needing. So my question is: however 'new' the spirituality we need in our contemporary situation, must it turn its back totally on the symbolic and imaginative resources of traditional spirituality? Is it not still the

case that those scribes who are skilled in the Kingdom of Heaven have the freedom to draw from their stores things old as well as new?

Lastly, and following from this, Fuller (like so many of the modernists whose brusque scientism he rejects) seems to think that in dismissing a particular concept of God that God is thereby finished with. But, as I have tried to suggest, the theological tradition is much more varied than he seems to allow. Certainly in our present situation it is plain that a religious view of life is not limited to the kind of Aunt Sally the-

ism which critics such as Russell and Ayer gleefully derided. If Fuller will not have God, I would suggest that Buddhism has more to offer him than *biophilia*, or might at least be able to give religious depth to the attitude which he associates with that concept and which I agree is in itself highly desirable. But, I might add, there are also resources in the Abrahamic traditions of which he could make good use if he did not have an *a priori* commitment to disallow the term 'God', although, I suspect that may be precisely the word he needs to say what he

means. The line between the assumption of the absence of grace and the affirmation of the grace of seeing is only paper thin.

1. References initialled MP are to the Everyman Library edition of 'Modern Painters'. This quotation, also quoted by Fuller, comes from Vol. II p.xviii. References to 'Theoria' are given solely by page number.

George Pattison is the rector of five parishes in Suffolk. His Radio 4 series on the theology of art, 'Seeds of Faith', was broadcast in summer 1989. He is currently working on a book 'Restoring the Image' to be published by Macmillan, in 1990.



Nicholas Roerich
The Life & Art of a Russian Master
 Jacqueline Decter
 Thames and Hudson, 1989
 H/back, 216pp, £20.00 (88 col. plates)

Aaron Cass

**"In Beauty we are united,
 through Beauty we pray, with
 Beauty we conquer."**

SO BEGINS THIS account of the life and works of one of the most formidable men of twentieth century art. Descended from a Viking line which included a 13th century leader of the Knights Templar, Nicholas

Roerich was born in St Petersburg in 1874, the son of a well-to-do lawyer. A contemplative and a traveller, painter, philosopher, archeologist and set-designer, he worked with Nijinsky and Stravinsky (to whom he suggested 'The Rite of Spring'), and set up schools for the furthering of the arts in Russia and America. Long before it had been 'discovered' by the West, he travelled in Tibet, setting up institutions for cultural exchange and establishing a Tibetan library in New York. In 1929, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his formulation of the 'Roerich Peace Pact', an international treaty aimed at preserving cultural monuments during war, and, also, no less, for

'Drops of Life' by Nicholas Roerich, 1924. Tempera on canvas. Courtesy of Thames and Hudson.

his efforts to establish a universal perspective through the media of the arts and education.

Responsible for some 700 paintings, drawings, sets and costume designs, author of 30 books and innumerable articles and lectures, in his own lifetime he was renowned for his ceaseless energy and constant labour. He died in 1947 in Kullu, Tibet, whilst working on a version of his painting, 'The Masters of Command'. The painting shows a dove winging towards a solitary seated figure in a landscape that could be the mountain range at the very edge of the

world. By this time he had become known by many as *guru* or even *gurudev* (great teacher).

Art as Universal Language

For Roerich, Art was the great Unifying principle. It was the culture of pre-history, the common metaphor, and symbolism was the *modus operandi* of its perennial expression. The motto of his foundation in New York, 'The Master Institute of United Arts', began:

"Art will unify all humanity. Art is one-Indivisible. Art has many branches, yet all are one. Art is the manifestation of the coming synthesis... How many young hearts are searching for something real and beautiful!"

Such sentiments constitute an age-old search for a language that is universal, even ideal; a language of graphic strength, nourished by a seemingly atemporal source. At a time when art was (as perhaps it still is) the religion of intellectuals, Roerich sought such universality through the images of mountains and holy men which dominate his later paintings, representing as they do a pre-history of archetypes, unassailable

by time or distance yet potentially always present. His works are intended for contemplation, as icons are, but are more overtly spiritual in their intention than, say, Rothko's luminous, infinite canvasses.

Symbolism

Roerich's search for a universal language extended beyond his own creative work. For the flag of his famous Peace Pact, he chose three spheres in a red circle on a white background which was coined 'The Banner of Peace' – a symbol which bore, as all symbols do, a resonance which is more than simply the effect of repetition. Jaqueline Decter describes its history:

"In India it is the sign of happiness, or *chintamani*. In China, it appears in the Temple of Heaven. It is found in the Three Treasures of Tibet: on the breast of Christ in Memling's well-known painting 'The Adoration of Christ': on the Madonna of Strasbourg; on the shields of the crusaders and the coats of arms of the Templars; on the blades of the Caucasian swords known as *gurda*: on the ancient Russian icons: on Ethiopian and Coptic antiquities: on

the rocks of Mongolia: on the breast ornaments of all the Himalayan peoples: on the pottery of the Neolithic age: on Buddhist banners: in the images of the legendary heroes Gesar Khan and Rigden Djapo." (p32).

Roerich's adoption of the 'Banner of Peace' sprang from his intense desire to promote culture as a global concern, which would imply the raising of perception at the very least to the level of the mythical. But now, in this perhaps deeper time, enriched as it is by all past endeavours, we begin to discern that such symbols can never really be a substitute for insight. It may be that Roerich was mistaken in thinking that there is a universal language which exists in an objective sense, as that which is universal by its very own nature defies repetition or encapsulation in a form.

A sense of the unity of all things is, then, more a kind of grace, as unspeakable as its resonances are unending; a matter of closeness and intimacy, according to the quality of the artist's interior – what he mirrors of reality and what reality mirrors of him – rather than the effect of the particular images he uses.

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Breadth of Vision

This book contains many pictures of Roerich's paintings hitherto unknown in the West, as well as many interesting photographs of his travels in Tibet. It reveals him as a man whose breadth of vision brought to his work a perspective which placed it outside any particular 'school' of art. His landscapes are vast. What for Tolstoy was the grand and effortless unfolding of time in a meticulous infinity of detail, was, for Roerich, the contemplative grandeur of moun-

tains and elements amidst whose awesome expanses (no different, perhaps, than those Chekhov saw from the window of a train crossing the steppes) stands the possibility of conscious man, inseparable from the immensities that it is his privilege to inhabit. His vision is in some ways uniquely Russian, even though in his later years he spent much of his time away from his native land.

What this book cannot tell is whether Roerich, in his life or his work, achieved the aims he had set himself.

But to delve into it, even for the fascination of the story, is a gesture towards an expansion, and so is in the spirit of what Roerich sought to achieve. What matters in the end is simply an appreciation of the size of issue which human endeavour may address.

Aaron Cass studied English Literature at Edinburgh University. He is currently director of the Beshara Trust Centre at Frilford Grange in Oxfordshire.

Exhibitions

A Vision of Britain

Victoria and Albert Museum, London
September 8th – 22nd October 1989

Richard Twinch

THE ARCHITECTURAL debate continues to rage in the UK between what the popular media label the 'traditionalists' headed by Prince Charles, and the 'modernists' spearheaded by the RIBA and its youthful president, Max Hutchison. This autumn has seen a flurry of activity, with a re-run on British television of the original programme in which Prince Charles put his views, the publication of his book 'A Vision of Britain' (1) of the same name, and the opening of this exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Meanwhile, the BBC screened 'The Architects' Reply' in their Omnibus series (2), giving some of the architects whose work Prince Charles had vilified a chance to put their point of view and explain why they had produced the buildings that they had.

Rather than dwell on self-evident and much publicised areas of disagreement which are largely a matter of taste and aesthetic appreciation, it is perhaps more valuable to examine what unites both camps. Interestingly, three of the four architects proclaimed in the Omnibus programme as expressing the true spirit of

'modernism' are the self-same architects that Prince Charles includes in the exhibition amongst those who express the 'classical' in a modern framework! Nor could anyone disagree with the ten principles or 'commandments' which Prince Charles has seen fit to focus on; ie. Hierarchy, Scale, Enclosure, Harmony, Signs and Lights, Community, Art, Decoration, Place and Materials. A well-known architectural critic rather disparagingly described these as "staple diet for all first year architectural students." There is, however, obviously disagreement as to how and why they should be put into action, and it is easy to forget that the simplest of principles are often the most

profound, and at the same time the hardest to put into practice.

Opening Up the Debate

Perhaps the great benefit of the debate, accepted by nearly all, has been to open up the whole matter of beauty, order, meaning and value into the public arena, a place it has not occupied for some time. One aspect of 'opening up' is a requirement to be explicit – and it is interesting that it is explicit disagreements over particular buildings such as Sir Denis Lawson's National Theatre which have generated the most heat and therefore publicity. These have highlighted the need to expose all the fundamental principles upon which



St Mary's Church, Barnes, London, designed by Edward Cullinan Architects. Photograph by Martin Charles.

design decisions are being made, rather than a selective few, and place them in a universal context.

Prince Charles, to his great credit, does attempt to set out the ground for such a debate on fundamentals, particularly in the conclusion of his book, which ground is the requirement for spiritual values to be reassessed. "Since I believe architecture has always been the outward expression of an inner inspiration" he writes on the last page, "it is only too clear that it has become dangerously unbalanced and unless it is examined in the light of a reappraisal of basic values and principles, we will all be the poorer".

He feels that this re-appraisal must include an acknowledgment of our national and cultural heritage. He says:

"It was Edmund Burke who wrote that a healthy civilisation exists with three relationships intact. It has a relationship with the present, a relationship with the future, and a relationship with the past. When the past feeds and sustains the present and the future you have a civilised society."

Science and Technology

Such statements call into question the easy assignment of Prince Charles to that category of 'traditionalist' who wishes only to return to the forms of the past. But it is also true that in many of his statements he lays himself open to easy attack from the modernists, and it is perhaps, therefore, a pity that he did not see fit to add 'Science' (in the sense of knowledge) and 'Technology' (as the ability to put that knowledge into action) to his ten principles.

Nevertheless, it was heartening to see that some of the modern buildings he chose for the exhibition, such as Michael Hopkin's new pavilion for Lords Cricket Ground and the work of Edward Cullinan, are demonstrably only possible through the use of modern materials and technology. It was also refreshing to see on display a micro-computer running a new planning tool (3) which analyses city space with reference to lines of sight which bind together the urban fabric from a human perspective. Directly alongside the micro-computer are displays of the tools of earlier centuries, among which are a pocket-sized 1520 edition of Vitruvius and Thomas & Batty Langley's book variously called 'The Builder's Jewel', 'Youth's Instructor' or 'Workman's Remembrance'. It is worth

pointing out that in 1520 the appearance of a pocket-sized book, available to all, represented the height of technological achievement. What these tools give the worker, the designer, the craftsman, is the ability to correspond more perfectly to the order of beauty.

Beauty in Design

Though the question of beauty is the backdrop to the ideas expressed in the exhibition, a deeper understanding of what beauty is, and the order it implies, would render dumb much of the controversy which has been aroused. Within Western culture, beauty has been relegated to aesthetics – something one can argue about incessantly whilst never having to relinquish one's



Princes Square, Glasgow, interior shot.

own limited viewpoint. Traditionally, however, beauty is not limited to an aesthetic consideration, but is indissolubly linked to the idea of order, i.e. there is not beauty *and* its order. It follows that if something is ordered, it is implicitly beautiful in some degree.

However, what conforms in some degree is not the same as something that is ordered and beautiful in many degrees. For instance, to take the architectural metaphor, we might admire the technological order of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, or the new Lloyd's Building in London whilst remaining aware that such beauty is only partial if it does not address every possible aspect i.e. fitness of purpose, construction, use of materials, harmonisation of exterior and interior, correspondence of the 'eye' and the mind etc. The value of a building like St Paul's Cathedral is that it is ordered on all possible 'levels'; built with the most advanced technology of its day, it embodies both man's greatest scientific knowledge and his highest religious aspiration.

Humility

Prince Charles, aware of these wider dimensions, sees what he calls a "proper sense of humility" as the key to reacquiring

"... those eternal values which, if properly understood, and blended with our technological expertise, could provide us with the essential balance and sense of proportion that we need in order to sustain both the visible and invisible aspects of our world."

His ten principles are clearly an attempt to initiate such an 'eternal' set of criteria against which a 'good' design should be judged. Prince Charles, himself, has been drawn into calling these principles 'Commandments', and their number (ten) reinforces this aspect. But establishing them like this begs the difficult question, "who is going to judge them?". Commandments require specific observance at the risk of punishment and it is, perhaps, this kind of thing which professional architects react against, feeling it to be undemocratic. Principles on the other hand are educational and enlightening, and do not establish opposition, which is often counter-productive in the long run.

The question of who will win in the professional debate which the Prince has initiated has limited significance. Far more important is that what has been suppressed and hidden is being brought out into the open. Hopefully the debate will widen and deepen our understanding, rather than divide and narrow, in which case we shall all be the winners.

(1) Doubleday 1989.

(2) BBC2, September 8th 1989.

(3) There are two very interesting features of such a tool: firstly it is essentially holistic in concept, i.e. even the smallest change requires complete recalculation of the whole 'network' since everything is linked with everything else (which is why such a tool would be impossible without the new technology); and secondly it is a tool that is in direct correspondence with human experience – in this case the eye, the importance of which, within traditional wisdom, has been discussed elsewhere. Such tools are proving useful in assessing new urban schemes to design integrated spaces and to identify in advance areas which will encourage the negative sides of city life i.e. muggings and burglaries!

Richard Twinch trained as an architect at Cambridge and the Architectural Association. He writes for 'Building Design' and 'Atrium'.

Events

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and events from December 1989 to April 1990

CONFERENCES

Faith, Ethics & a New Economic Order for the 21st Century

London, 9th December
Organised by the New Economics Foundation this conference brings together adherents of the world's major faiths with people committed to ecological sustainability and Third World development. The aim is to explore new approaches to economic thought with particular reference to insights from the teachings of the faiths. Speakers include Martin Palmer of ICOREC, James Robertson of NEF and Neville Jayaweera, former Director-General of the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation.

*Details. New Economics Foundation, 88-94 Wentworth Street, Universal House, 2nd floor, London E1 7SA
Tel: 01 377 5696*

Mind, World and Spirit

Devon, Spring 1990
A series of four residential week-ends at the new Dartington Centre, a new conference facility at the arts centre, Dartington Hall. This programme is intended to 'bridge the gap between academic specialism and the life of the spirit'. The series starts with Professor Ursula King on 'Revisioning Spirituality' (Jan 12-14th), followed by John Crook on 'Zen and the Ecologies of Meaning' (Feb 2nd-4th); Alan Bleakley on 'The Return of the Repressed Soul in Psychology and Psychotherapy' (Feb 16-18th); and Alan Dyer on 'Environment: Images and Realities' (March 23rd-25th).
Details: Dartington Centre, Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EJ. Tel: 0803-862267

Scientists and Sages

Munich, 9-11th March
Named after Renée Weber's well-known book, this ambitious event aims to explore the correlation between science and spirituality. It will be addressed by the lady herself along with David Bohm, Raimundo Panikkar, Peter Lasalle and others. Half the talks will be in German, half in English.

Details: Aquamarin Verlag Vogherd 1, D-8081 Grafing, Germany. Tel: 08092/9444.

Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240AD)

His Life and Times.
Oxford 22nd-25th March
This, the seventh symposium of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, is an international event to celebrate the 750th anniversary of the death of the great mystic and philosopher. Born in Spain at a time when it represented a confluence of Islamic, Judaic and Christian

thought, Ibn Arabi is only now becoming well known in the West. This conference brings together an eminent group of speakers, including the French scholar, Michael Chodkiewicz, Dr Ralph Austin of Durham University and Professor Elton Hall from California.

Details: 23, Oakthorpe Road Oxford OX2 7BD. Tel 0865 511963

Mystics and Scientists 13

The Nature of the Self - Psyche, Brain and Consciousness
Winchester, April 6-8th

This conference aims to direct its attention towards "the powerful Delphic command 'Man Know Thyself' ". Speakers include Dr Peter Fenwick of the Maudsley Hospital in London and psychotherapists Roger Woolger and Hertha Larive.

Details: Wrekin Trust, Runnings Park, Croft Bank, West Malvern, Wores WR14 4BP

Co-Creators: The Annual Teilhard Conference

London Colney, Herts. April 27-29th

This residential week-end will explore humanity's potential for taking part in God's creation, in moulding the environment, and the role of Man in the completion of creation. Speakers include Father Campbell Johnson (the Provincial of the Jesuit Order) and the educationalist Eugene Ryan.

*Details: The Teilhard Centre, 23 Kensington Square, London W8 5HN. Tel: 01 937 5372
Tel: 0684-892898.*

LECTURES

Deep Psychology and Deep Ecology by Peter Bishop London, January 18th

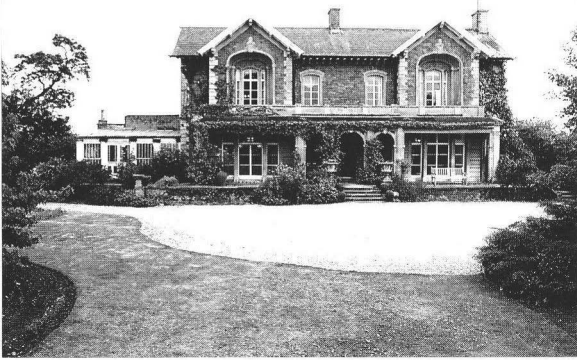
One of a series of lectures run by the Analytical Psychology Club, whose aim is to advance education in the psy-



The Deposition by Ugolino de Nerio. From the Tate Gallery's 'Art in the Making', see overpage.

BESHARA TRUST

FRILFORD



Frilford provides a number of different opportunities for study and introductory courses. Please contact the Secretary if you would like to attend. Visitors are welcome at any time.

Introductory Study

Friday 10.00am - 1.00pm and 4.30-6.00pm

Weekend Introductory Courses

December 8th-10th, January 12th-14th

Seminars

Evolution: a study of the determinism implicit to change

Abraham Abadi, November 26th

Constant Prayer

Bishop Kallistos Ware, December 9th

The Quantum Self

Dr Ian Marshall and Dana Zohar, Feb. 3rd 1990

Science, Discovery, and the Evolution of Meaning

Dr Mae-Wan Ho, Prof. Brian Goodwin, Henri Bortoft, Jane Clark.
A seminar with conversation.
February 24th-25th, 1990

The Beshara Trust, Frilford Grange
Frilford, Nr. Abingdon, Oxon OX13 5NX
Telephone: Oxford (0865) 391344

chology of C.G. Jung.
Details: Mrs Lindsay Blyth, Secretary, 37 Dorset Road, London SW8 1EH. Tel: 01-735 0298

C.J. Jung and the Quest for Wholeness

by *Rev. Sean Cathie*

London, February 26th
Details: World Goodwill, Suite 54, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EF. Tel: 01 839-4512.

EVENTS

Mevlevi Dervishes

Albert Hall, London March 2nd 1990, then San Francisco. A rare opportunity to witness the extraordinary and moving ceremony (*sema*) of the Mevlevi dervishes, often referred to as the 'whirling' dervishes. The dance is now only performed in Konya, in Central Turkey, for five days a year, culminating on December 17th, the night on which the founder of the Mevlevi's, the teacher and poet Jalal'uddin Rumi, died in 1273 - an occasion which he himself referred to as his 'nuptial night'.

The *sema* is both a celebration of the movement of the cosmos and a re-enactment of man's union with God. The movement of the dervishes around the floor as they turn represents a universal law; they spin around their sheikh like planets around the sun, and at the same time around their own centre. The ceremony is accompanied by traditional music and songs performed by the Mevlevi musicians, including the haunting and beautiful reed flute, the ney.

Details: Steepwest Holidays, Tel: 01-629 2879.

Interfaith Pilgrimage

World Congress of Faiths, 28th June - 28th July
Described as a 'journey in faith', this pilgrimage will walk from Derby to the island of Iona, calling on various religious centres *en route*. Open to people of different faiths, its aim is to encourage communication and fellowship and it will culminate in a week-long event organised by the Iona community entitled 'Communi-

nity and Differences'.
Details: World Congress of Faiths, 28 Powis Gardens, London W11 1JC.

ARTS

Art in the Making

Italian Painting before 1400
National Gallery until 28th February 1990

This second in the 'Art in the Making' series features eight works by leading Italian masters including Giotto and Duccio. The exhibition illustrates stages in their production and the materials used by the artist.

Wright of Derby (1734-1797)

Tate Gallery 7th February - 22nd April then Paris & New York.

The first major exhibition representing the full range of work by this British painter. It will include portraits, subject pictures, landscapes, prints and drawings. The range of Wright's interest, which included science and natural phenomena, makes him an exceptionally interesting artist, and his work is distinguished by an astonishing perception of the effects of light.

The Tree of Life

Until 10th November 1990 around the country

28 artists explore the contemporary relevance of the tree of life symbol in an exhibition of painting drawing and sculpture. Visiting Bradford, Durham, Eastbourne, Peterborough, Edinburgh, Ayr, Lincoln and Coventry.

Details: Common Ground Tel. 01 379 3109

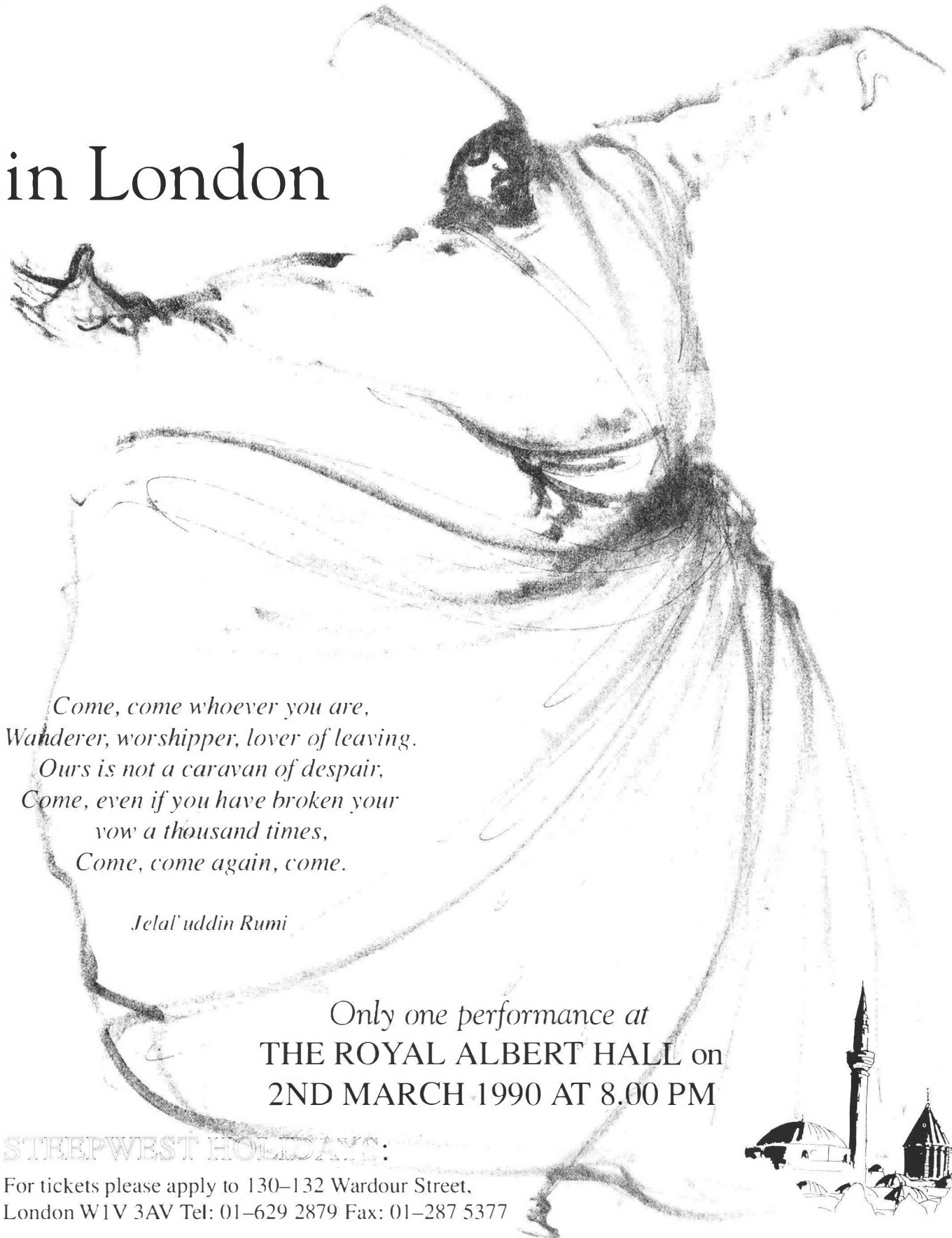


Miro Sculptures

A touring exhibition, 9th December - 8th April
Better known as a painter, Miro had the ability to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary

THE MEVLEVI DERVISHES

in London



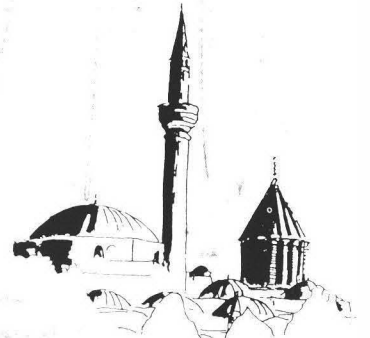
*Come, come whoever you are,
Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving.
Ours is not a caravan of despair,
Come, even if you have broken your
vow a thousand times,
Come, come again, come.*

Jelal'uddin Rumi

Only one performance at
THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL on
2ND MARCH 1990 AT 8.00 PM

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London W1V 3AV Tel: 01-629 2879 Fax: 01-287 5377



Also performances in Los Angeles and Berkeley, California, in February.
For information please telephone (415) 465 1135

and many of the 37 bronze sculptures in this exhibition represent his mythical world of birds, creatures and women. *Southampton City Art Gallery until 14th January, Birmingham Ikon Gallery 20th January – 24th February, Aberdeen Art Gallery from 3rd March.*

**The Work of Angels
Masterpieces of Celtic
Metalwork**

British Museum until 29th April 1990
Drawing from many recent excavations, this exhibition displays the artistic and technical brilliance of the great brooches, chalices, reliquaries and other fine metal work produced by the Celtic peoples in the 6th to 9th centuries AD. The beauty and delicacy of the work belies the labelling of the period as the 'Dark Ages'.

Spirit in the Stone

National Theatre, 22nd January – 3rd March
An exhibition of Inuit (Eskimo) Art selected from the Narwhal Gallery collection, showing the traditional and

spiritual world of the people of the North, with contemporary stone and bone carvings and prints.

**EVENTS FOR
CHILDREN**

**Charlie and the
Chocolate Factory**

Sadlers Wells, January 31st – 3rd March
Performed by the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, this is an adaptation of the book of the same name by Ronald Dahl, which has become a modern classic for children. This is a second performance of the ballet; the first was an enormous box office success.

**Whale : The Story of
Putu, Siku nad K'nik**

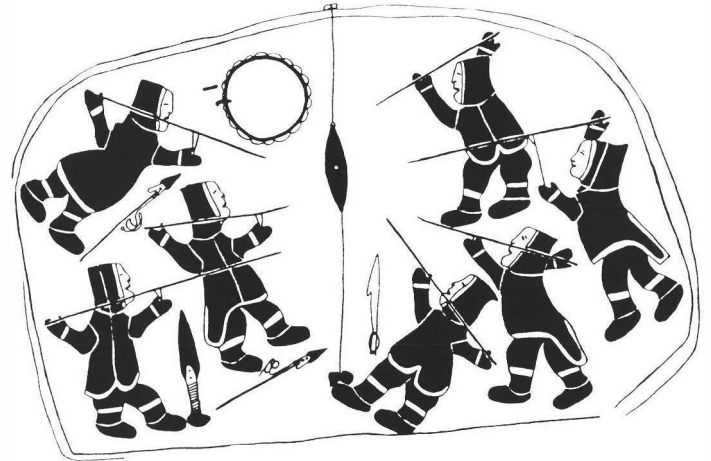
National Theatre from 12th December
A new play for 7-11 year olds by David Holman about the events of October 1988, when three Californian grey whales were trapped under the spreading ice-cap. The International

operation to rescue them attracted world-wide attention.

The play is linked to the exhibition of eskimo art (see above) with **three workshops** for 8-11 year olds on 18th, 19th and 20th December giving a chance to learn more about the eskimo people.

The Spirit of Christmas

Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, 29th November – 14th January
This year's exhibition concentrates on famous Christmas characters such as St Nicholas, the Nutcrackers, the Mummers, the pantomime clown, etc.



'Gambling Game', Inuit Lithograph, 1984 Courtesy of the Narwhal Gallery of Inuit Art, London.

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1st April – 30th September

INTRODUCTORY COURSES 1990

3rd February – 11th February

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by arrangement with
the Secretary

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Telephone: 045 088 215



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