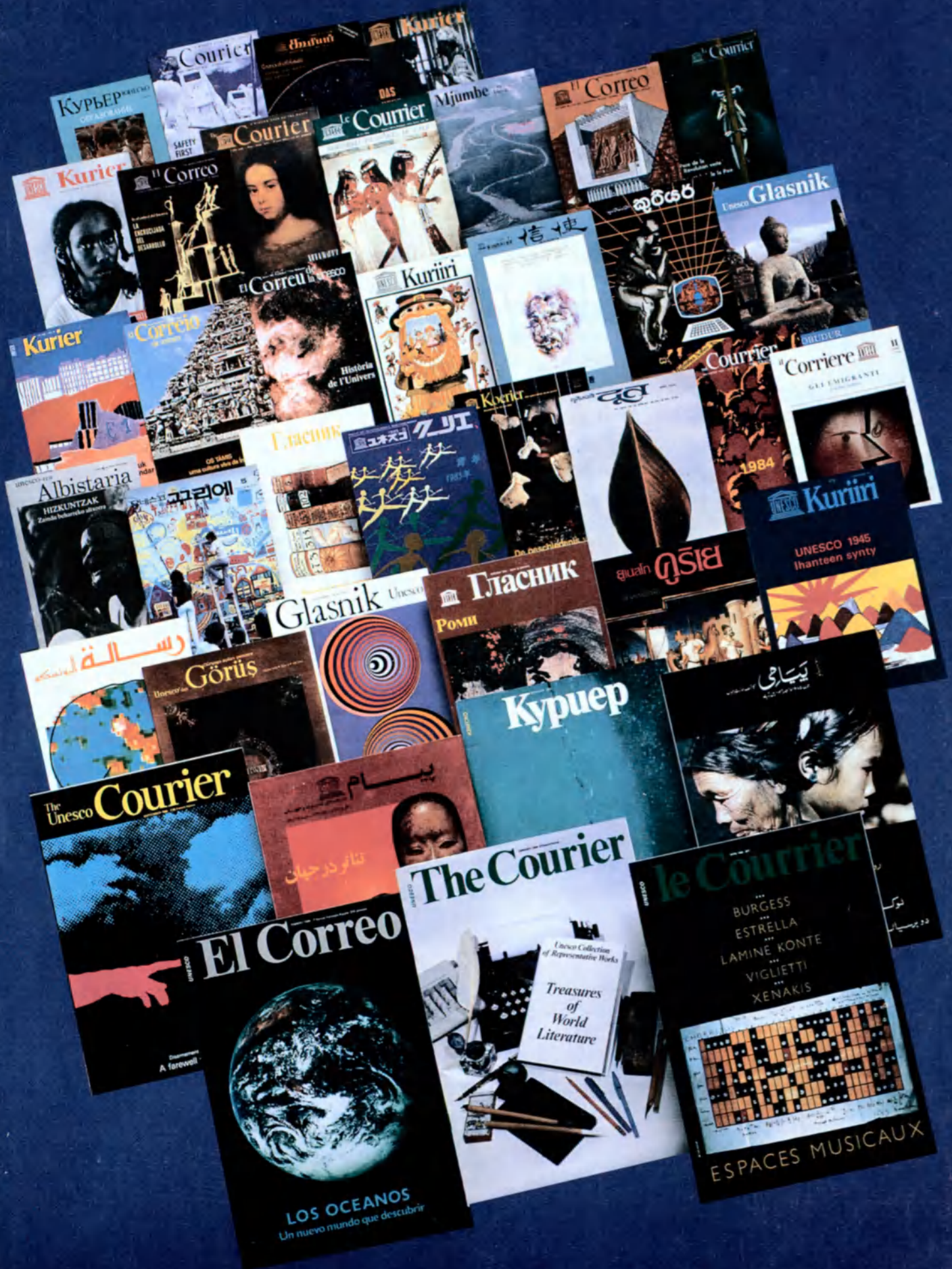


# A selection from the Courier

Unesco 40th anniversary issue

MAY - JUNE 1986 - 8 French francs





# A message to world youth

**Y**OUNG people form a considerable and ever-increasing proportion of the world population. Inevitably they are concerned by all the problems arising from the present and future of humanity. None of the major questions of our time can be answered without the active involvement of young people.

Young people constitute 45 per cent of the world's population today and their numbers are continuing to grow. There were 730 million fifteen- to twenty-four-year-olds in 1975, and this figure should rise to 1,180 million by the year 2000—an increase of 60 per cent in twenty-five years.

If the role and impact of youth in national life vary from country to country, young people in many cases share a number of common preoccupations, fears and aspirations.

In many countries young people are particularly exposed to such problems as unemployment, hunger, delinquency, drugs, violence and racism, all of which are rooted in the tensions and uncertainties of today. But young people are also endowed with imagination, enthusiasm, and courage; qualities which may contribute to the changes which prove necessary; they stand at the meeting-point of continuity and change, tradition and progress.

The different groups of young people must have the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of the economic, political, educational, cultural, and scientific life of the society in which they live, and to exercise freely in it the qualities which are theirs.

Unesco, which places action in favour of young people at the heart of its programmes, notably those concerned with education and training, is making its contribution to the achievement of this goal.

Unesco's efforts in this field are focused on three main objectives: stimulating research on young people in the different world regions; promoting the diffusion and exchange of information about and for young people; contributing to the formulation of policies and the application of programmes which will encourage the participation of young people in all aspects of the life of societies. ■

*January 1985*

*A. M. M' Bow*

Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow  
*Director-General of Unesco*



As a contribution to the celebrations marking Unesco's 40th anniversary, the Editors of the *Unesco Courier* have compiled for readers an anthology of articles and illustrations which have appeared in the magazine since it began publication almost 39 years ago. All the articles have been shortened. (Above, cover of the first number, published in February 1948.) Although any such selection is bound to be to some extent arbitrary, we have been guided by a number of criteria. Firstly, we have given coverage to major Unesco preoccupations and spheres of activity such as hunger and world peace, racism and human rights, the environment and the cultural heritage, science and technology, education and literacy, youth and the condition of women. Secondly, we have tried to reflect the magazine's aspiration to be a "window open on the world", through which peoples and countries can be viewed on equal terms, irrespective of geographical position or demographic, economic or political weight, with the main focus on their cultural riches and their human and ecological problems. Thirdly, we have included a selection of work by writers occupying a leading position in their own culture or internationally, and who by virtue of their contributions to the *Courier* have also signalled their attachment to the ideals of Unesco.

Cover: Marking the *Unesco Courier's* 39 years of publication, a display of 39 issues in many languages. Photo Princelle, Paris

Editor-in-chief: Edouard Glissant

A message to world youth <i>by Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow</i>	2
The roots of a growing world crisis	4
My latest work—a wall <i>by Joán Miró</i>	8
<b>WORLD HUNGER</b>	
Food for a hungry world <i>by Antoine Dakouré</i>	9
<b>PEACE</b>	
Nuclear weapons and world sanity <i>by Linus Pauling</i>	11
<b>RACISM</b>	
Apartheid: the shameful record <i>by Basil Davidson</i>	12
Racism today: 'Us' and 'Them' <i>by Albert Memmi</i>	14
The forbidden dialogue <i>by Lewis Nkosi</i>	15
Pictures in our heads <i>by Otto Klineberg</i>	16
<b>THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	
The menace of 'extinct' volcanoes <i>by Haroun Tazieff</i>	17
The shocking slaughter of Africa's wild life <i>by Sir Julian Huxley</i>	18
Will deserts drink icebergs? <i>by Paul-Emile Victor</i>	19
<b>LANDS AND CULTURES</b>	
Fifty years of literary life <i>by Ba Jin</i>	20
Night thoughts, November 1926 <i>by Lu Xun</i>	21
The angry young men of Oceania <i>by Albert Wendt</i>	22
The Afro-Brazilian experiment <i>by Gilberto Freyre</i>	24
Where gods and men have mingled <i>by Jorge Amado</i>	25
'I was born 1,000 years ago' <i>by Dan George</i>	26
Ishi—the last of the Yana Indians <i>by Alfred Métraux</i>	27
The blacks in Latin America <i>by Alejo Carpentier</i>	28
The land-locked island of Paraguay <i>by Augusto Roa Bastos</i>	30
The <i>Chronicle of Michoacán</i> , <i>by J.M.G. Le Clézio</i>	31
<b>EDUCATION</b>	
An illiterate in Paris <i>Interview by Marguerite Duras</i>	32
A 21-point programme for a global strategy in education	33
<b>SCIENCE</b>	
Science, technology and man Nobel Prize-Winners' Round Table	36
The truth behind the veil of facts <i>by José Ortega y Gasset</i>	38
The candle of learning <i>by Abdus Salam</i>	38

<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	
My first steps in space <i>by Aleksei Leonov</i>	39
<b>CHILDHOOD</b>	
African childhood <i>by Camara Leye</i>	40
The sting in the fairy tale <i>by Jorge Enrique Adoum</i>	42
Disabled characters in search of an author <i>by Tordis Orjasaeter</i>	43
All about Alice <i>by Anthony Burgess</i>	44
<b>HUMAN RIGHTS</b>	
A Third World view of human rights <i>by Radhika Coomaraswamy</i>	45
<b>WOMEN</b>	
Women of the Mediterranean: tradition and change <i>by Nilüfer Göle</i>	46
Self-portrait of a woman writer <i>by Ding Ling</i>	47
<b>THE SPOKEN AND THE WRITTEN WORD</b>	
The image and the word <i>by Alberto Moravia</i>	48
The yestermorrow of the book <i>by Marshall McLuhan</i>	50
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	
Man, the first walkie-talkie <i>by Victor Bunak</i>	51
Tongues that span the centuries <i>by Amadou Hampâté Bâ</i>	52
The non-aligned countries pool their news <i>by Pero Ivacic</i>	53
<b>THE BOOK</b>	
On translation <i>by Octavio Paz</i>	54
Painted manuscripts of pre-Columbian America <i>by Miguel Angel Asturias</i>	55
<b>CULTURAL IDENTITY</b>	
Today's crisis in anthropology <i>by Claude Lévi-Strauss</i>	56
The building blocks of culture <i>by Cheikh Anta Diop</i>	58
The writer between two worlds <i>by Tahar Ben Jelloun</i>	59
<b>THE CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>	
'The action of a man who snatches something from death' <i>by André Malraux</i>	60
<b>GREAT MEN</b>	
Miniature anthology of works by Al-Biruni	61
Lenin and the physical sciences <i>by Mstislav Keldysh</i>	62
Portrait of Rabindranath Tagore <i>by Satyajit Ray</i>	63
Leonardo da Vinci, or the glory of painting <i>by Carlo Pedretti</i>	64
Year of peace: 5 Letter from Nagasaki <i>by Takashi Nagai</i>	66

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# The roots of a

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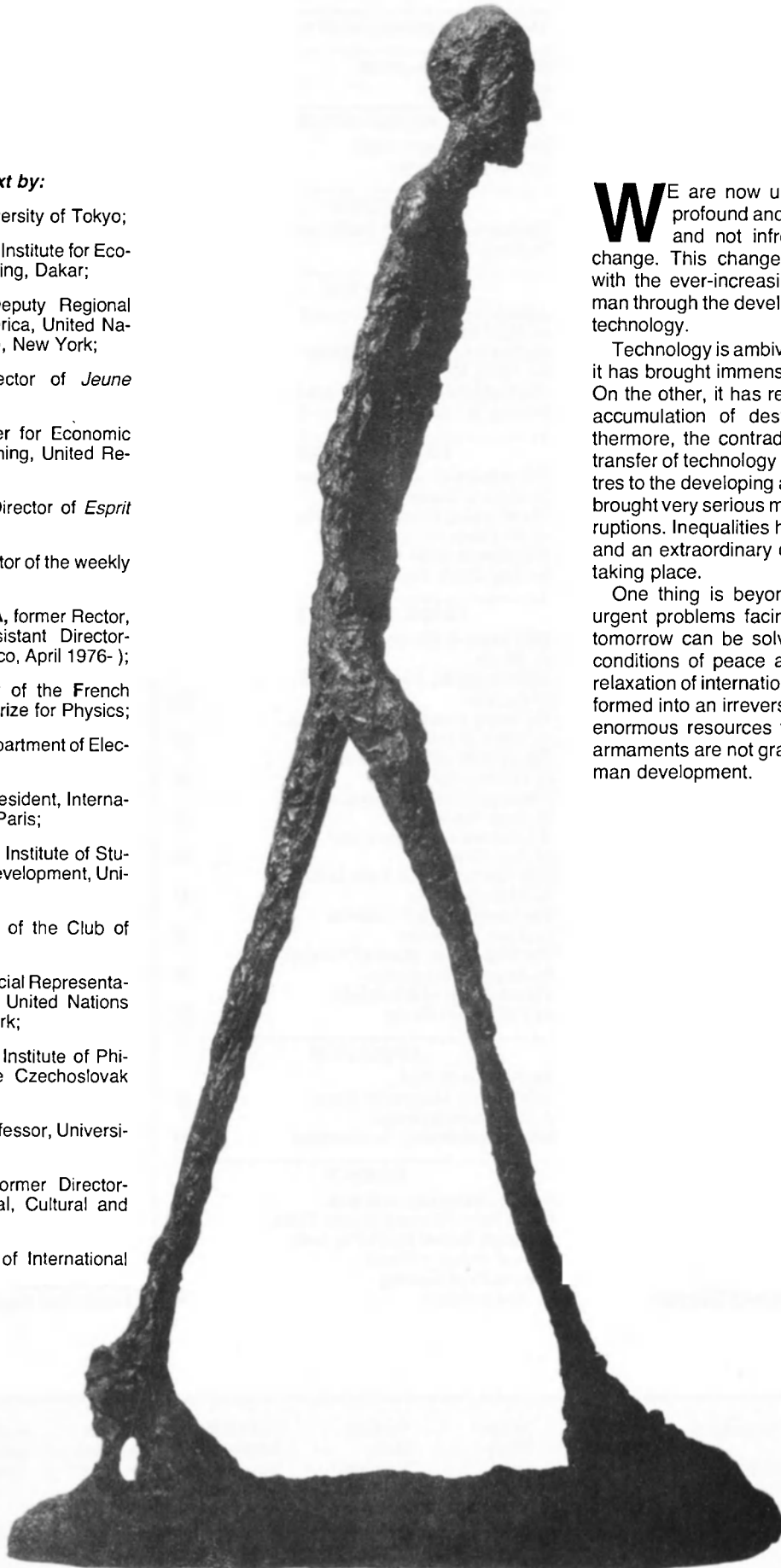
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**W**E are now undergoing a period of profound and rapid, though uneven, and not infrequently crisis-ridden, change. This change is largely connected with the ever-increasing power available to man through the development of science and technology.

Technology is ambivalent. On the one hand it has brought immense benefits to mankind. On the other, it has resulted in an incredible accumulation of destructive devices. Furthermore, the contradictions inherent in the transfer of technology from the industrial centres to the developing areas of the world have brought very serious maladjustments and disruptions. Inequalities have been accentuated and an extraordinary demographic growth is taking place.

One thing is beyond doubt: none of the urgent problems facing mankind today and tomorrow can be solved successfully if the conditions of peace are not ensured, if the relaxation of international tension is not transformed into an irreversible process and if the enormous resources today still tied up with armaments are not gradually released for human development.



# growing world crisis

Efforts for the consolidation of peace, which is to be understood as a just and democratic system of international relations based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and not simply as the absence of war, should be expanded in all spheres, from economics to science, from diplomacy to culture.

Annual expenditure on the arms race is probably around 200 to 250 billion dollars—a sum equal to the total national income of those countries in which the majority of mankind is living. At the same time 2,500 million men and women live a largely precarious existence at levels of nutrition below the acceptable minimum.

The present growth-rate of these populations is such that their number is expected to double in 25 years.

The currently accessible resources of the earth have their limits. Within the space of a few generations we are frittering away reserves of energy below the ground which nature has taken thousands of millions of years to accumulate. In the immediate future there is a danger that we shall destroy, without a thought for future generations, the plants ▶

*Illustrations to this article symbolize the evolution of the human outlook from that of the small community and the region to a truly global perspective. Photo far left is of a statue by the Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti which stands in a patio at Unesco's headquarters in Paris.*



► and trees produced over the ages. In the last fifty years, nine-tenths of the forests of some tropical islands have disappeared.

Under the pressure of either justified or artificial imperatives designed to maintain economic growth, increase consumption or satisfy it without heeding the consequences, today's generations are plundering and polluting nature.

Thus the very fact that our resources (whether renewable or not) are limited would indicate that the "Western model" of development cannot be applied everywhere or at all times.

In some societies where they are firmly established, industrialization and technology deprive individuals and groups of the possibility of influencing their living conditions, and hence their own destiny.

Human rights and freedoms are threatened by multiple intrusions into private life. As a result of the spread of computer science and communication techniques, life is being conditioned on the basis of surveys whose aims in some cases are to a certain extent inquisitorial. Thus some of the industrialized countries must undertake a new kind of struggle to defend human rights, the very notion of which is an empty promise for the masses of the developing countries who are deprived of the most elementary means of satisfying their needs.

These considerations emphasize the close interdependence of the problems facing the modern world. We are not faced with distinct problems, each of which we may try to solve separately and in isolation. A global view must therefore be a prerequisite to any attempt to solve the different problems of today. The United Nations declaration on a New International Economic Order can be regarded as an event of world-wide significance.

We must give up thinking of the centres of economic power as the sole repositories of truth, civilization and universality. It has been held in certain quarters that industrial growth, modelled on that of certain European or North American centres, would itself bring about a general improvement in human conditions, each nation being free to reproduce the proposed pattern for itself. We must face the fact that this is not so.

Once it is seen as global, development can no longer be the direct extension to the whole world of the knowledge, ways of thought, life styles or experiences specific to a single region of the world; each local development must be related to its own values and culture.

It is not enough to transfer the sum total of the knowledge available in developed countries to the developing countries; to do this excludes the possibility of any genuine implantation of science and technology in the countries at the receiving end. It favours the "brain drain" and even slows down the general advancement of knowledge.

The immediate problem facing the developing countries is that of establishing an infrastructure for science. As long as this does not exist, there can be no authentic scientific development, but only transplantation of imported science, which does not correspond to the true needs of the country.

The kind of scientific development which does correspond to the needs of a country can only be based on an awareness of its civilization, traditions and values.

Whilst science has been concerned with discovering knowledge and understanding nature, its applications have been largely governed by the profit motive to the benefit of

small sections of human society—groups or countries.

We should also like to draw attention to the huge sums spent on scientific research, half of which at least are spent on armaments. In actual fact, science is one of the great creative manifestations of human genius. What is needed is a new concept and long-range international strategy for the development of science and technology which reflects overall global social needs.

With the headlong progress of science and technology, there are new developments in the offing whose implications are of a global nature for human society as a whole—such as interference with the genetic code, deliberate efforts to modify climate, mass employment of information systems and storage devices with permanent memories, industrial utilization of micro-organisms, creation of closed man-

nature metabolism cycles, and so on. Concerning questions of so far-reaching a character, there is need for a widely based discussion leading to a global concept and in this Unesco should play an important role.

Culture is not a luxury reserved for those whose elementary needs are satisfied; it is linked with the organization of society, and to it society owes its dynamic force. It is made up of the wisdom of the illiterate or the experience handed down through generations of manual workers as well as of the highest scholarship. Traditions which have been forgotten or destroyed by inconsiderate modernization are irreparable losses to the understanding of our destiny.





To over-assert cultural particularities is just as dangerous as to underrate them. It is another way of running the same risks. We must maintain a constant equilibrium between sciences and cultures, although this is not enough. It must be matched by an equilibrium in mutual efforts at comprehension, and by incessant adjustments between what different cultures have to learn from one another.

It is not to be taken for granted that men will escape the course of events which has led them to the present dangers; the survival of

the planet is at stake. Is it not high time to display a certain modesty, a wisdom which at times our ancestors possessed and which could constitute the basis of a new morality? What is at stake, indeed, is not merely the survival of the human race, but the survival of all living things. If man really wants to live in harmony with the natural environment, as he

claims he does today, he must show respect not only for human rights but also for the rights of life in its widest sense. ■

*March 1976*

Photo © USIS, Paris



# My latest work— a wall

by *Joán Miró*

**I**N 1955 Unesco asked me to take part in the decoration of its new headquarters buildings, then under construction in the Place de Fontenoy, Paris. Two perpendicular walls—one fifteen metres long, the other seven and a half metres long—near the Conference building were put at my disposal. My idea was to decorate them with ceramics, in collaboration with José Llorens-Artigas.

The design and colouring for the walls I was to decorate were suggested by the shapes of the buildings themselves, their

spatial structure, and the play of light. As a reaction to the huge concrete surfaces around the larger wall came the idea of a large, vivid red disc. Its counterpart on the smaller wall would be a blue crescent to accord with the more confined area it was to occupy. ... I aimed at a crude and forceful expression in the large wall and at something more poetic in the smaller one. I also wanted to provide an element of contrast within each composition itself, and for this reason I conceived harsh, dynamic outlines side by side with restful coloured shapes, in flat-tinted or in check design.

The second stage in the task was to study with Artigas how my plan in ceramics was to be carried out. No ceramist had ever before been faced with an undertaking of this scope. Besides this, as both walls were to be in the open air and unprotected, we had to keep in mind the extent to which the materials used would resist differences in tem-

perature, humidity, and the sun's rays. There is no doubt that Artigas was the only person capable of solving these extremely difficult problems.

He sought, like an alchemist of old, the type of earth, the sandstone enamels and the colours that he would use. It was true creative work.

It was then that we suddenly decided to visit Santillana del Mar to have another look at the famous cave paintings of Altamira and gain inspiration from the world's earliest mural art. While we were in the "Collegiata", the old Romanesque church at Santillana, we were deeply moved by the extraordinary beauty of the material used on an old wall, rotten with damp. Artigas made notes about it for the purpose of his backgrounds.

Having made our journey to the fountain-head, we thought we should also go where we could feel the influence of the Catalan Romanesque artists and of Gaudí. The Barcelona Museum has wonderful Romanesque frescoes, which have inspired me since I first began to paint. Finally, we visited Gaudí's work in the Guell park; and here I was struck by the sight of an enormous disc set into the wall. It bore a strong resemblance to the disc which I had intended to carve and paint on the larger wall in Paris, and this coincidence I took both as confirmation and as encouragement of my purpose.

Artigas was not satisfied with the basic material we were using and he feared that the geometrical regularity of the tiles might harm the feeling and "life" of the work. Then he remembered the wall of the Collegiata, and succeeded in reproducing in his tests the wonderful depth of feeling we had found there. In much the same way, the sight of the walls of the old chapel at Gallifa was a revelation to us. We saw that, in deciding how to divide up the surface we were to cover, we should think of the "throbbing" irregularity of the stones at Gallifa. We had to begin again, using slabs of different sizes.

Now that we had discovered how to arrange the slabs and the base, the first firing gave no trouble whatever. No matter what precautions are taken, the firing is the decisive factor; its action is unpredictable, its decision final.

One more difficulty lay ahead—the large size of the surface I was to paint. If some of the shapes and lines were to retain their original form and spontaneity, they would have to be made with single brush strokes. For this purpose I used a long-handled brush made of palm fibres. Artigas held his breath when he saw me take the brush and paint in shapes of five or six metres. One mistake could have ruined the work of several months. ■

November 1958

Reproduced from *Derrière le Miroir*, numbers 107, 108 and 109. © Maeght, Paris, 1958.

**JOAN MIRO (1893-1983)**, Spanish painter, was one of the great artists of the 20th century. As a young man he took part in the Surrealist movement in Paris, where he lived for many years. He was commissioned to create for Unesco's Paris headquarters the two ceramics which he describes in his article and which he named *The Wall of the Sun* and *The Wall of the Moon*.

*Miró and Artigas set up full-sized paintings of the ceramics in a dell beneath an immense circle of rocks and trees near Gallifa. Towering background enabled them to visualize how works would look against the great walls of the Unesco buildings.*

Photo Catala Roca. Unesco





# Food for a hungry world

by Antoine Dakouré

**F**OR years, the vast problem of world hunger has been the focus of lengthy debate in various organizations at the governmental, non-governmental and international levels.

In a noteworthy study entitled *Agriculture: Toward 2000* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) warned all nations of the deteriorat-

*"Even the best rural development projects designed by experts and backed with all the material, technical and financial resources needed, are destined to fail if the farmers in whose interest they are purported to be carried out do not feel sufficiently concerned to offer their unreserved participation and if they lack the assurance that the projects are for their own benefit." Below, Egyptian farmers hard at work.*

ing situation and offered concrete suggestions for controlling hunger effectively. Today, however, it must be admitted that the plight of the world's underprivileged is steadily worsening. Nearly 500 million human beings, stagnating in poverty, are under daily threat of famine. The population of the most vulnerable countries increases by 2.5 per cent a year, whereas the annual increase in cereal production has levelled out at 1 per cent. If current trends continue, requirements for cereal aid, which totalled 7.6 million tonnes in 1979, will reach some 21 million tonnes by 1990.

Land resources are very seriously depleted in many regions. Demographic pressure, which is responsible for the increasing over-exploitation of arable land, the destruction of plant cover and the damaging effects of extensive grazing, is the ultimate cause of accelerated desertifica- ▶

Photo H.W. Silvester © Rapho, Paris



► tion, whose consequences in the medium term are just as harmful as a nuclear holocaust. Our planet is threatened by famine and yet, at the same time, we continue to exhaust almost 20 million hectares of land every year.

Why does the problem seem insoluble despite all indications that it has been carefully and perspicaciously analysed? There are undoubtedly many reasons, the most serious of which, it would seem, is that both the developing and the industrialized nations lack the political courage needed to implement the measures recommended.

It is important to seek methods of approach that involve farmers as much as possible rather than insisting on taking decisions for them and imposing solutions on them without taking the precaution of soliciting their opinion. This is an essential prerequisite to obtaining their collaboration. Without the farmers' wholehearted involvement no profound changes can take place. Their participation cannot be obtained by presidential decree or ministerial decision. Tangible, co-ordinated measures are required which will progressively create a favourable environment, working at a pace acceptable to the farmers and not racing ahead at the speed of technicians and politicians. The farmer must be assured that the land he needs, as well as seeds, equipment and other inputs, of adequate quality, will be made available to him at the right time and in sufficient quantity. Furthermore, he must have some guarantee that, when production begins, he will not be despoiled of the fruits of his labour.

As stressed in the study *Agriculture: Toward 2000*, it should be possible to solve the problem of hunger by the year 2000. Generally speaking, however, while considerable emphasis has been placed on all the sectoral areas that influence programme success, I feel that the vital question has yet to be answered: "What concrete measures can be taken to create the motivation essential to progress in the field of agricultural production?" Unesco and the FAO could undertake joint initiatives in order to make a detailed examination of this question with the appropriate organizations in the countries concerned.

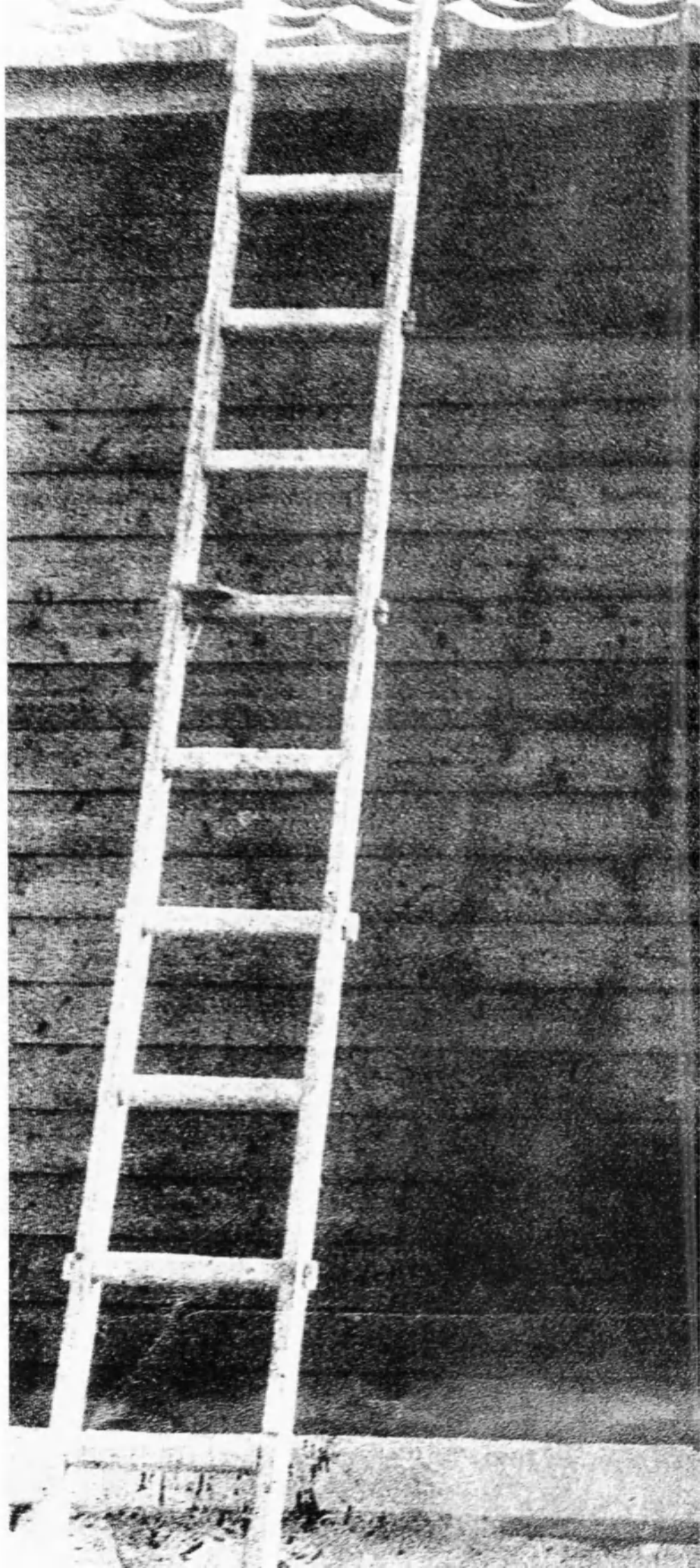
As a first step, food aid, which enables us to attend to the most urgent cases rapidly, is a highly positive factor. It can help stabilize food prices and encourage efforts to increase the quantity and improve the quality of agricultural production.

Beneficiaries and donors of food aid must ensure that it does not become self-perpetuating. A prolonged commitment would constitute a long-term hindrance to the development of local agricultural production.

This reservation aside, nobody can deny that well organized food aid is precious. It could, however, become a formidable weapon and a serious threat to peace if the donor countries were to succumb to the temptation to use it as a lever in international relations. ■

April 1984

**ANTOINE DAKOURE**, a former Minister of Planning and Rural Development of his country, Burkina Faso, was President of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1973. His country's ambassador to the European Economic Community from 1981 to 1983, he also served as a member of the independent Brandt Commission.



# Nuclear weapons and world sanity

by Linus Pauling

**D**URING the Second World War there were some massive bombing raids on German cities. In one such raid, on one night, one thousand aeroplanes each carrying four tremendous one-ton blockbusters destroyed much of the city of Hamburg and killed an estimated 75,000 people. If there were to be such a raid on, say, Paris today, and another such 1,000-plane raid tomorrow, and then another the next day and so on day after day for fourteen years, the explosives delivered would have the power of one 20-megaton bomb. (One megaton equals a million tons.)

Now, one 20-megaton bomb test in the atmosphere or at the surface of the earth liberates radioactive materials into the atmosphere which will, according to the best estimates that we can make, cause gross damage or death to 550,000 unborn children. This is the probable sacrifice of the testing of a single H-bomb by any one nation. Everyone must understand this.

The standard nuclear bomb today is the 20-megaton bomb. The Soviet Union has detonated a 60-megaton bomb, which was apparently only the first two stages of a 100-megaton bomb. A 100-megaton bomb involves only about three and a half tons of explosive material and probably can be carried in a single large rocket from one continent to another. But 100-megaton bombs don't make very much sense because a 20-megaton bomb can destroy any city on earth.

My estimate is that the stockpiles of the world comprise about 16,000 of these 20-megaton bombs or the equivalent of them. Now, there aren't 16,000 large cities in the world and one might well ask why this irra-

tionally great amount of explosive material has been produced.

If 10 per cent of the stockpiles were to be used in a nuclear war with the bombs exploded on the average within 150 kilometres of the targets (you don't have to hit the target in order to get the result) then 60 days after the day on which the war was fought—and we assume that it would cover Europe as a whole, all the Soviet Union and the United States—of the 800 million people living in these regions, 720 million would be dead, 60 million severely injured, and there would be 20 million survivors with only minor injuries.

But these survivors would have to cope with the problems of complete destruction of all cities, metropolitan districts, and means of communication and transportation, complete disruption of society, death of all livestock, and gross radioactive contamination of all growing foods. This would be the end of this part of the world, and how great the damage would be to the rest of the world no one has been able to estimate in a reliable way.

The partial test ban treaty signed at Moscow in 1963 was a great step forward. I regret very much that this treaty was not made three years earlier.

I should like to see some action taken in the meantime that would decrease the chance of outbreak of a devastating nuclear war, perhaps through some psychological or technological accident or through some combination of circumstances such that even the wisest of national leaders could not prevent catastrophe. ■

November 1964

*Of what was once a man, only a shadow on the wall is left. For a single instant, on 6 August 1945 at Hiroshima, the man's body absorbed the radiation and heat from the atomic blast and traced the outline on the building behind. The man vanished. The ladder remained.*

Photo © Asahi

**LINUS PAULING**, US chemist, achieved renown through his contributions to the understanding of molecular structures, particularly with regard to chemical bonding. In the late 1940s he discovered, with other scientists, a "molecular defect" associated with haemoglobin formation. His most influential work is *The Nature of the Chemical Bond*, and *The Structure of Molecules and Crystals* (1939). He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1954 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1962.



# Apartheid: the shameful record

by Basil Davidson

**T**HE history of apartheid is the record of a racism conceived and used by small white minorities in South Africa in order to dominate a large black majority, deprive this majority of its land, and maximize the exploitation of its labour for the benefit of the whites and their foreign partners. Apartheid is colonial racism carried to an extreme.

Up to 1899 the white politics of all the lands south of the Limpopo river—the lands that form modern South Africa—were largely those of military power used to defeat black resistance. Broadly, those politics were contained within two areas of competition. As soon as the British were established securely at the Cape of Good Hope, following victory over the French fleet at Trafalgar in 1805, they embarked on a long series of what were euphemistically called “frontier wars”. Against continuous black resistance, not always defeated, British forces pushed east and northeastward from their little colony at the Cape, invading and dispossessing one African community after another until their final conquest of the Zulu kingdom in 1879.

The descendants of the Dutch settlers (enlarged by immigration from Holland but still more by unadmitted unions with black women) had meanwhile gone some way towards forming themselves into a distinctive nation, the Afrikaner *volk*, and by this time spoke a variant of Dutch which was already beginning to be a distinctive language, Afrikaans. They were far too weak in numbers and technology to tackle strong African communities such as the Xhosa and the Zulu, whose destruction as independent entities was left to the British, but were strong enough to dispossess a wide range of small African communities. These lived to the west of the areas of British conquest, and were duly enclosed in the Afrikaner (or Boer, a term meaning simply “farmer”) republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

By the 1880s there were four white political units: the two British colonies of the Cape and of Natal, and the two Afrikaner republics in the north and west. Diamonds had been discovered in quantity at Kimberley as early as 1867, and in 1871 the British duly annexed these diamond fields which became, a little later, the scene of a veritable “diamond rush”, with a railway completed from the Cape to Kimberley in 1885. But even this new source of wealth could change little in the general picture. What changed everything, with violent drama, was the proving in 1884-1886 of the great

goldfields of the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal Republic.

For reasons imperialist and narrowly economic, major British interests now saw that they must secure political control of a Transvaal governed by farmers who had little or no interest in large-scale capitalist development. After many skirmishes there followed the Anglo-Afrikaner war of 1899, provoked by the British and won by the British, though at a sorry cost in lives, two years later.

Having won the war, the British were quick to reassure their Afrikaner opponents that systematic discrimination against the black majority would be written into the foundation of the Union of South Africa (that is, the union of Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal, and the Orange Free State) which followed in 1910. For thirty-eight years after that, the English-speaking minority generally dominated the all-white parliament of a now-independent Union, but invariably on apartheid lines.

This new parliament lost no time in guaranteeing a systematic racism. In 1911, a Native Labour Regulation Act provided for the legalization—much elaborated and tightened up in later years—of an all-embracing discrimination against black wage-earners. In 1913 the parliament went much further. It passed a Land Act which reserved some 90 per cent of the total land surface of the Union for white ownership, and reduced the area available for black ownership to the remaining 10 per cent (less at the beginning, today about 13 per cent). These small areas where Africans could own land were named Native Reserves, and rapidly became what they were intended to be: destitute reservoirs of black labour for the “white areas”.

In 1923 came the Natives (Urban Areas) Act which was to remain, with the Land Act of 1913, the foundation of all white policy towards blacks, and so remains to this day. Essentially, it was a weapon of physical segregation with the “white areas”; and the policy which was held to justify it was called “separate development”.

In 1948 the English-speaking minority lost control of parliament, and were never to regain it. That control passed to the Purified Afrikaner National Party; and “separate development” was followed by apartheid.

Meanwhile the Second World War had done much to exacerbate English-Afrikaner hostility. Nearly all the leaders of the Purified National Party had openly hoped and worked for a Nazi victory; and some of

## The face of hunger

*I counted ribs on his concertina chest  
bones protruding as if chiselled  
by a sculptor's hand of famine.*

*He looked with glazed pupils  
seeing only a bun on some sky-high shelf.*

*The skin was pale and taut  
like a glove on a doctor's hand.*

*His tongue darted in and out  
like a chameleon's  
snatching a confetti of flies.*

*O! child,  
your stomach is a den of lions  
roaring day and night.*

Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali

them had been gaoled for pro-Nazi sabotage. Their electoral triumph of 1948 was therefore accompanied by a determination to succeed where Hitler had failed: and put an end, once and for all, to English-speaking supremacy.

The system in no way changed in substance. Laws were passed to identify any black protest, however peaceful or otherwise legal in nature, with a “Communism” which was equated, however ludicrously, with some kind of foreign-promoted attempt to overturn the State.

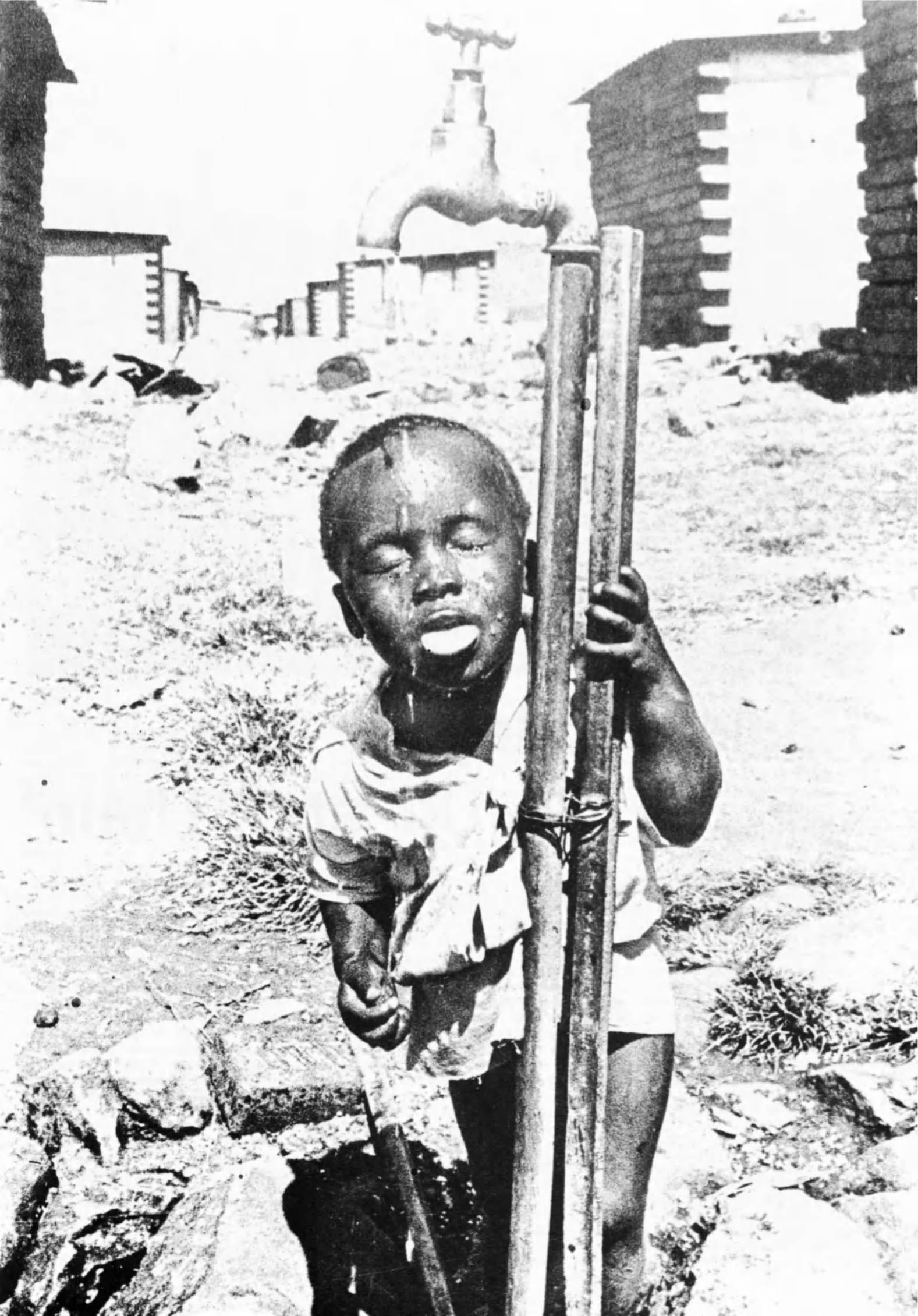
In this Republic of South Africa, all “safety valves” were now sealed off, so that explosion had become the only possible alternative to continued submission. And in 1980, through its action-wing, Umkonto wa Sizwe, the African National Congress of South Africa duly embarked on the beginnings of a war of resistance.

By 1981 the South African régime was virtually at war with Angola and Mozambique as well as in its colony of Namibia, and was threatening invasive action against the newly-independent Republic of Zimbabwe. But this régime was also at war, in everything save the name of war and its formal declaration, within its own frontiers.

Today that war continues. ■

November 1983

**BASIL DAVIDSON**, British writer and historian, is an authority on African history and current affairs. His many books on Africa include *Liberation of Guiné (1969)* and *In the Eye of the Storm: Angola's People (1972)*.





# Racism today: 'Us' and 'Them'

by Albert Memmi

**A**FTER twenty years of observation, reflection, research and studies "in the field", I am convinced that racism is a rotten plank. I am not speaking only of its moral aspect, but of its very logic.

Man's present biological nature developed, and is still developing, in the course of continuous cross-breeding processes. In this context, therefore, the concept of purity is no more than a metaphor, wishful thinking, fantasy. This is not to say that men do not differ from each other. They do, both culturally and even biologically. But, surprisingly, the most recent scientific research reveals on the contrary that the differences are so fragmented that it is impossible to make a given social group coincide with any one biological profile. Nor is the concept of superiority any more sustainable on a functional level. There is nothing to prove that biological superiority, assuming that it exists, leads to psychological or cultural superiority. Finally, it is difficult to see why any form of natural superiority should involve economic or social advantages.

In order to survive, man seeks to defend his integrity and his possessions and, on occasions, to appropriate those of his neighbour, whether they be movable or immovable property, food, raw materials, territory, women, real or imaginary religious, cultural or symbolic assets. Man is both aggressor and the object of aggression, both terrifying and terrified.

However, this aggressive rejection of another is not yet exactly racism. The racist way of thinking is based on this rejection, and on pre-existing cultural and social facts.

It is evident that racism or, in other words, alleged racial superiority based on alleged biological purity, is no more than an ideological apparatus, one among many alibis for domination and expropriation. For this reason, I think it is necessary to point out both this general character of a form of human behaviour which is unfortunately only too common, and the specific character of racism. Otherwise the false problems associated with racism will continue to obscure the permanent drama represented by the aggressive rejection of others. To

make the distinction more clear, I have proposed that this terrified, aggressive rejection be designated by a new word, *heterophobia*, and that the term racism be henceforth reserved for that variety of heterophobia which exploits the fear engendered by biological and racial difference in order to justify aggression and privilege. ... I therefore suggested the following formulation, which has been adopted by the *Encyclopaedia Universalis* and which Unesco has done me the honour of using as a basis for its own definition: *Racism is the generalized, permanent exploitation of real or imaginary biological differences, to the advantage of the accuser and to the detriment of his victim, for the purpose of justifying aggression.*

We can perceive what could constitute a single criterion for replying to those closely related questions which embarrass contemporary consciences—what connexion is there between anti-semitism and the slave trade? Can one speak of prejudice against women or young people as forms of racism? Is there also a form of racism affecting the



*Dr. Martin Luther King, winner of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, addresses participants in a "Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom" in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., in May 1957. King was assassinated on 4 April 1968, a victim of racism.*

poor and oppressed? etc. To establish the connexion between these forms of behaviour, one has only to ask oneself what advantage a particular aggressor could derive from them at the expense of a particular victim.

There is an obvious correlation between the black slave trade, which reached its climax in the seventeenth century, and the first arguments used in support of biological racism. True, the first element of such a demonstration can be found in certain ancient writers. But these are isolated cases, and where it was present at all, biological stigmatization played only a very secondary role. This latter system of argument, which obviously had mercantile advantages, came into its own with the growth of the slave trade.

Anti-semitism is of course very ancient, but it was originally a religious or national issue. It appeared as a racist doctrine only much later, simultaneously with the relative social emancipation of the Jews and their consequent emergence as economic competitors.

In short, then, it is only relatively recently that attempts have been made to provide a systematic explanation of racism based on an alleged science. At the end of the nineteenth century educated Europe was convinced that the human species was divided into superior and inferior races (see Ernest Renan and the anthropologist Paul Broca).

A comparison of these various doctrines—social and cultural as well as biological—clearly reveals a constant factor, irrespective of their specific characteristics or local circumstances: in the name of a biological or other form of superiority, one human group believes itself entitled to assert itself over another and to have recourse for that purpose even to violence and murder.

Thus we find at the same time the answer to the most recent questions with which people are concerned. Racism was a convenient ideology for rising colonialism, for the black slave trade and for anti-semitism. It can still be useful on a wide scale. The Algerian war, followed by the presence of millions of immigrant workers in France and throughout Europe, provided and still provides favourable ground for "arabophobia", renewed "negrophobia" and, more generally, the aggressive rejection of immigrants, which I also suggest be included in the general concept of heterophobia—the complex of fear of others and aggressiveness towards them. ■

November 1983

**ALBERT MEMMI**, Tunisian-born French writer, is well qualified to describe the different manifestations of racism. Notable among his works published in English are *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Souvenir Press, London, 1974) with a preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, and *The Pillar of Salt* (1955) with a preface by Albert Camus.

# The forbidden dialogue

by Lewis Nkosi

**E**VEN the proponents of apartheid cannot deny that the blacks suffer untold hardships as a price for the maintenance of the policy of apartheid.

What is not always noted is that, though economically exploitative as a ruling class, the whites are also subject to certain very real deprivations as a result of their determination to live by a policy which would seem to all reasonable men not only unrealistic but insane.

To say the very least, South African whites are the most culturally deprived community in Africa. Emotionally they are just as stunted.

They not only grow up denying their innermost dreams, they also learn to do without some of the best works of modern world culture (in literature, music, painting and intellectual discourse) either because such works are considered subversive, or because traffic in culture with the outside world is rendered almost impossible by the maintenance of the policy of apartheid.

We all know what happens to people who cannot face up to the reality of their lives, who must live by evasions and fantasies; a greater burden is placed on writers or any other kind of artist who belongs to such a community. Before they go on to create anything of value they must make an extraordinary effort to unlearn everything they have been taught.

In South Africa they must, for instance, unlearn what they are taught in schools: that the whites, from their forefathers to the present generation, are all heroes; that the whites have the monopoly on moral wisdom and intellectual enterprise; the pain and the anguish which attend the creative efforts of Afrikaans writers at the moment is not a matter for cynical amusement. It is the agony of creative artists who must break through a sealed cocoon in order to see the world in its variousness or even to say something remotely relevant to their country.

Black writers do not have to make any comparable moral choice; they do not have to choose to oppose a system which is patently contrary to all observable reality; their colour makes the choice for them; what they have to do is learn to survive the system.

There are times when an affirmation of certain traditional African values proves exasperatingly difficult for black writers since most of them are reacting to an ideolo-

gy which asserts again and again that black and white people are irreconcilably different; that the African mind cannot grasp certain nuances of European thought; and, concluding from the foregoing, that apartheid is justifiable, indeed the only realistic policy to follow.

The result has been that black intellectuals in South Africa have had to bend over backwards to prove that they can not only master the modes of European thought but that they can beat the South African whites at their own game.

Urban African music seems to me to have provided the only example of what South Africa can offer culturally if she were left to develop in a natural direction.

Music, because it is non-literal, is not subject to the same limitations as literature; it is hardly banned; also it is less self-conscious in the modes it adopts to express the agony of the South African situation. The result has been that popular urban African music has provided a glaring paradigm of what is happening to the underground life of the nation.

The music is predominantly African, which is as it should be, considering the dominant number of Africans in the country; but it is also eclectic; it provides a moving illustration of cultural diffusion in that part of the continent which offers us the best laboratory for the marriage of African and European techniques and for the coming together of European and African modes of expression.

While black literature from the Republic offers us glimpses into an appalling situation of rare brutality and anguish, the music not only shows us this but goes further to affirm what we should have known all along; that the oppressed in South Africa also display an amazing form of resilience, emotional certitude and optimism. On the other hand, apartheid deprives white South Africans of any real participation in such robust forms of cultural expression. ■

March 1967

**LEWIS NKOSI**, South African writer, was exiled from his country in 1960, and later lived in London. He is the author of a play about racial tensions in Johannesburg, *The Rhythm of Violence*, and of an essay on contemporary Black American and South African literature entitled *Home and Exile*.

# Pictures in our heads

by Otto Klineberg

**T**HERE are very few, if any, among us who have not succumbed to the temptation to stereotype nations. One might almost describe the tendency as inevitable, or at least very nearly so. But if we are asked how it originates, we would not easily find a suitable answer.

One of the earliest careful studies of this tendency was made by Katz and Braly, in 1932, in connexion with the stereotypes held by Princeton University students.

We may summarize the results by indicating the three or four characteristics most commonly ascribed to each nationality. These included, for the Germans: scientifically-minded, industrious, stolid; the Italians, impulsive, artistic, passionate; Negroes, superstitious, lazy, happy-go-lucky, ignorant; the Irish, pugnacious, quick-tempered, witty; the English, sportsmanlike, intelligent, conventional; the Jews, shrewd, mercenary, industrious; the Americans, industrious, intelligent, materialistic, ambitious; the Chinese, superstitious, sly, conservative; the Japanese, intelligent, industrious, progressive; the Turks, cruel, religious, treacherous.

A study conducted in nine countries under the auspices of Unesco in 1948 and 1949, showed that such stereotyped thinking could easily be elicited almost anywhere. In each country approximately 1,000 respondents, representing a cross-section of the population, were given a list of twelve traits, and asked to choose those which they thought were most applicable to themselves, to Americans, to Russians, and in some cases, to two or three other national groups as well.

The British, for example, thought of Americans as primarily progressive, conceited, generous, peace-loving, intelligent, practical. The Americans regarded the British as intelligent, hard-working, brave, peace-loving, conceited and self-controlled.

The "self-image" is also revealing. The British saw themselves as peace-loving, brave, hard-working, intelligent; the French saw themselves as intelligent, peace-loving, generous, and brave; the Americans saw themselves as peace-loving, generous, intelligent and progressive. All the groups agreed on one item: their own nation was the most peace-loving of them all.

There is a good deal of evidence that

stereotypes may develop without any kernel of truth whatsoever. We all know how widespread is the notion that intelligent people have high foreheads, yet scientific investigation in this field has failed to reveal any such relationship. The stereotype of the criminal as bearing in his features the mark of his criminality is widely accepted, but it is equally without foundation.

The American sociologist La Piere studied the attitudes of residents of California towards first and second generation Armenian immigrants in Fresno County in that State. There was almost complete agreement that these Armenians had more than their share of faults, and the general attitude toward them was relatively unfriendly.

La Piere proceeded to question non-Armenians as to the reasons for their antipathies, and he was able to classify the answers into three stereotypes. In the first place, it was stated that Armenians were treacherous, lying, deceitful. In actual fact, when measured by the criterion of business integrity, the Armenian merchants turned out to be equal and frequently superior to others.

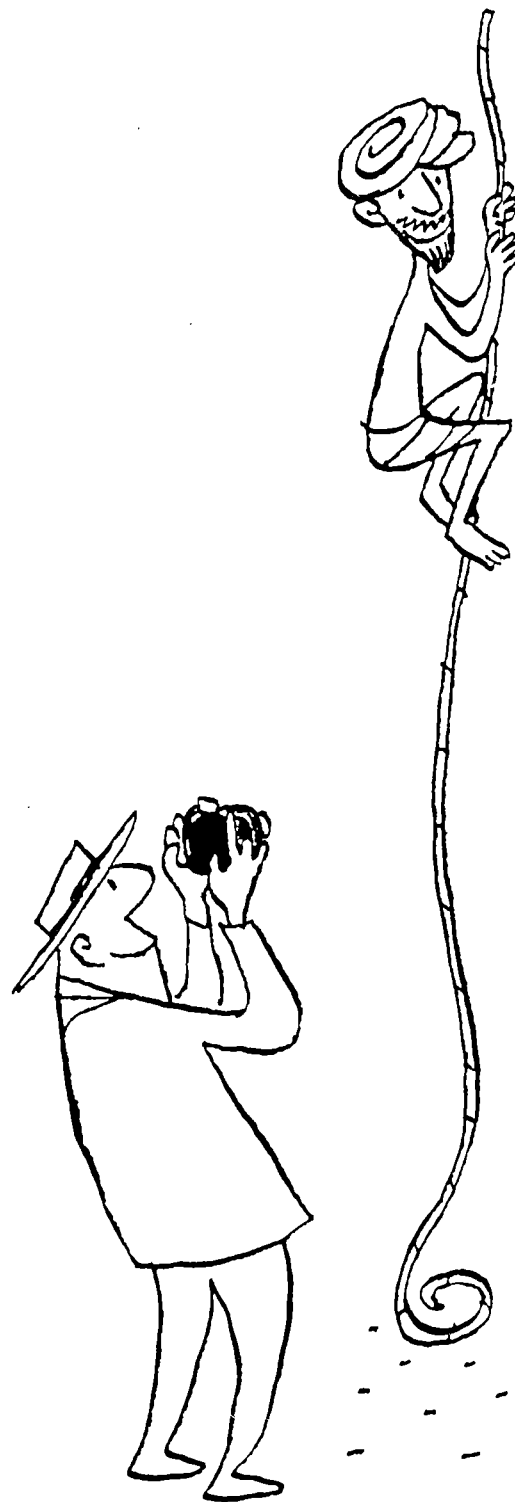
In the second place, they were alleged to be parasites, making excessive demands upon charitable organizations, free clinics, etc. Actually, such demands by them were less than half of what would be expected in terms of their proportion of the population.

Finally, it was said that they had an inferior code of morality, and they were always getting into trouble with the law. In fact, police records showed that they appeared in only 1.5 per cent of Police Court cases, although they were about 6 per cent of the population.

La Piere concludes that all of these stereotypes have one factor in common, namely, that they are definitely false. ■

June 1955

**OTTO KLINEBERG**, Canadian psychologist and anthropologist, is one of the world's leading authorities on questions of race and psychology and on race relations. Among his many published works are *Race Differences* and *The Human Dimension in International Relations*.



Cartoon specially drawn for the Unesco Courier in 1955 by an Indian artist, A.M. Abraham.



# *The menace of 'extinct' volcanoes*

*by Haroun Tazieff*

***One of history's most famous volcanoes, Vesuvius on the bay of Naples, is still active. Its eruption of AD 79 buried Pompeii, Herculaneum and Stabiae.***

I have gradually become convinced of something that laymen and even professional geologists and volcanologists usually ignore and it fills me with dread—the prospect, some day soon, of unheard-of volcanic catastrophes. Geological evidence has finally convinced me that humanity has so far been fantastically lucky, and the catastrophes of Pompeii and St. Pierre de la Martinique are nothing to what awaits us. These were small towns compared with the enormous modern cities threatened at closer or longer range by a volcanic outburst—Naples and Rome, Portland and Seattle, Mexico City, Bandung, Sapporo, Oakland, Catania, Clermont-Ferrand! ... Volcanoes regarded as

totally extinct near these cities are dead only to eyes that cannot or will not see. A volcano may be less than a century dormant and people almost forget that it exists. But volcanoes are geologically live; time for them is counted not in years or even in centuries, but in millennia and tens of millennia. Centuries might pass and Clermont-Ferrand, Rome or Seattle not be wiped out. But the interval might be much less. ■

*October 1967*

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**HAROUN TAZIEFF**, *French geologist and volcanologist, has combined scientific research with the authorship of many popular scientific books and documentary films.*



# The shocking slaughter of Africa's wild life

by Paul-Emile Victor

by Sir Julian Huxley

**T**HE wild life of eastern Africa is the wonder and envy of the rest of the world. Unique in abundance and variety, it has been gravely diminished in the past and is seriously threatened in the immediate future. Its natural habitats and wild lands cover more than half of its immense area, and are of tremendous potential importance if properly used. But they too have been reduced in extent, their value has been sadly reduced by improper use and they are threatened with drastic misdevelopment in the immediate future.

The future of African wild life is bound up with that of the conservation of natural resources. Both are now in the balance. The next five or at most ten years will be decisive in determining whether they are headed downhill towards a point of no return, or set on the upward path of beneficial development.

Let me state the African situation in ecological terms. The ecological problem is fundamentally one of balancing resources against human needs, both in the short and in the long term. It thus must be related to a proper evaluation of human needs, and it must be based on resource conservation and resource use, including optimum land use and conservation of the habitat.

Over the whole of south-eastern Africa, the wild life resource has been shockingly reduced from its astonishing past abundance. In spite of this, the wild life of this region is still a resource of unique value. It must be preserved both as an object of study and as a spectacle to be enjoyed. Its scientific study is a necessary basis for proper land use policies, and an increasing number of people from all over the world are finding unique satisfaction and interest in it as a spectacle.

Proper management of wild lands can yield a large crop of meat as well as numerous ancillary animal and plant products. The meat-crop could in particular areas be commercially profitable, but of more general importance is the fact that it would go a long way to satisfying the Africans' meat-hunger, which springs from the region's marked protein deficiency.

This in turn would help in reducing the threat of poaching to African wild life. "Poaching" today is in reality a large-scale illegal trade in slaughtered wild animals. It is by no means confined to killing for meat; all too often it takes the horrible and wasteful form of merely taking the valuable trophies, such as rhino

horn, wildebeest tails, or elephant ivory, and leaving the slaughtered carcasses to rot.

The poacher's methods are not only wasteful, but extremely cruel. It is bad enough when gangs of bowmen with poisoned arrows wait near a waterhole or at a gap in a prepared barrier, and shoot large numbers of animals, which then die an agonizing death. However, pitfalls are worse; in the Serengeti, for instance, whole series of carefully-sited pitfalls have been laboriously dug, providing proof of the value of the proceeds.

What is needed is a comprehensive and conservationist land use policy for the region, based on a proper survey, to decide which land should be allocated primarily for agriculture and for commercial or industrial development; which allocated for game-cropping, watershed protection, forests, National Parks and Nature Reserves, or merely kept undeveloped in reserve until its best use can be determined; and which could be best developed by establishing a fruitful symbiosis between wild life and domestic stock.

Wild life in Africa as a resource may be summed up in the phrase Profit, Protein, Pride and Prestige, with enjoyment and scientific interest thrown in. It can yield Profit from tourist revenue, sales of meat and trophies, and Protein from game-cropping schemes; it can be a source of local Pride and international Prestige; while its importance as a source of scientific knowledge is very great.

To let the wild life die or be destroyed would be to allow a precious element in that rich variety to be submerged forever in the drab monotonous flood of uniformity that is threatening to engulf our mass-produced technological civilization. Unesco has roused world opinion to save the threatened monuments of Nubia: it should take on the responsibility of rousing world opinion for the equally worthy task of saving the threatened wild life of Africa. ■

September 1961

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**JULIAN HUXLEY (1887-1975)**, British zoologist and biologist who won a worldwide reputation for his work in embryology, was Unesco's first Director-General, from 1946 to 1948. The author of some 40 books on science, travel, religion, politics and natural history, he was awarded the Unesco Kalinga Prize for the popularization of science in 1953.



# Will deserts drink icebergs?

**E**VERY attempt has to be made to find further supplies of fresh water. There are two viable methods of doing this, and two only: the desalination of sea water, and the tapping of the only existing reserves of fresh water—the ice of the polar regions, formed by the accumulation and compression of snowfall over many thousands of years.

The desalination of sea water is expensive, whereas the production of fresh water by the transportation of icebergs is both economically competitive and feasible.

Icebergs are composed of fresh water so pure that it often approaches the characteristics of distilled water.

It has been estimated that the Antarctic icecap loses more than 10 million million cubic metres of ice every year in the form of icebergs, which eventually melt and disappear.

Why go to the South Pole to get icebergs? Why not the North Pole?

There are two reasons for this. First, most Arctic icebergs are irregularly shaped and dangerously unstable. Secondly, Arctic bergs come from mountain glaciers (from Greenland, for example) which precludes their ever being large enough. The "tabular" icebergs from Antarctica, on the other hand, are often big and regular in shape.

A "suitable" iceberg should be large enough (100 million tonnes) to provide the

required amount of water by the time it arrives at its destination. It should be tabular, as regularly shaped as possible, and, to make towing easier, much longer than it is wide.

Icebergs of this type, always supposing that no internal or invisible cracks and stresses are subsequently detected, are formed in the Pacific sector, in the Atlantic sector, and in the Indian sector.

The most important problem will be to protect the icebergs against all types of erosion, such as melting, evaporation, mechanical erosion by waves, and friction caused by movement through the sea.

It would, for instance, take eight to nine months to cover 6,000 nautical miles at optimum towing speed (about one knot or roughly two kilometres per hour).

Various solutions have been suggested. One of them involves the protection of the sides of the icebergs by strips (similar to those of a Venetian blind) made of a reflective material.

The submerged portion of the sides would be protected by a similar curtain (or skirt) made of insulating material, while the insulation itself would be provided by a pool of cold fresh water between the skirt and the sides of the iceberg. The underside of the berg would also be protected by a kind of wrap held against the bottom by inflatable floats.

The manufacture and assembling of such

units in Antarctic waters will involve various problems that are not yet solved.

The actual towing operation should, in theory, cause no problems at all, as the largest modern tugs have a tractive force of 125 tonnes. The tractive force needed to shift an iceberg of 100 million tonnes is in the region of 600 to 700 tonnes, so five or six large tugs could do the job.

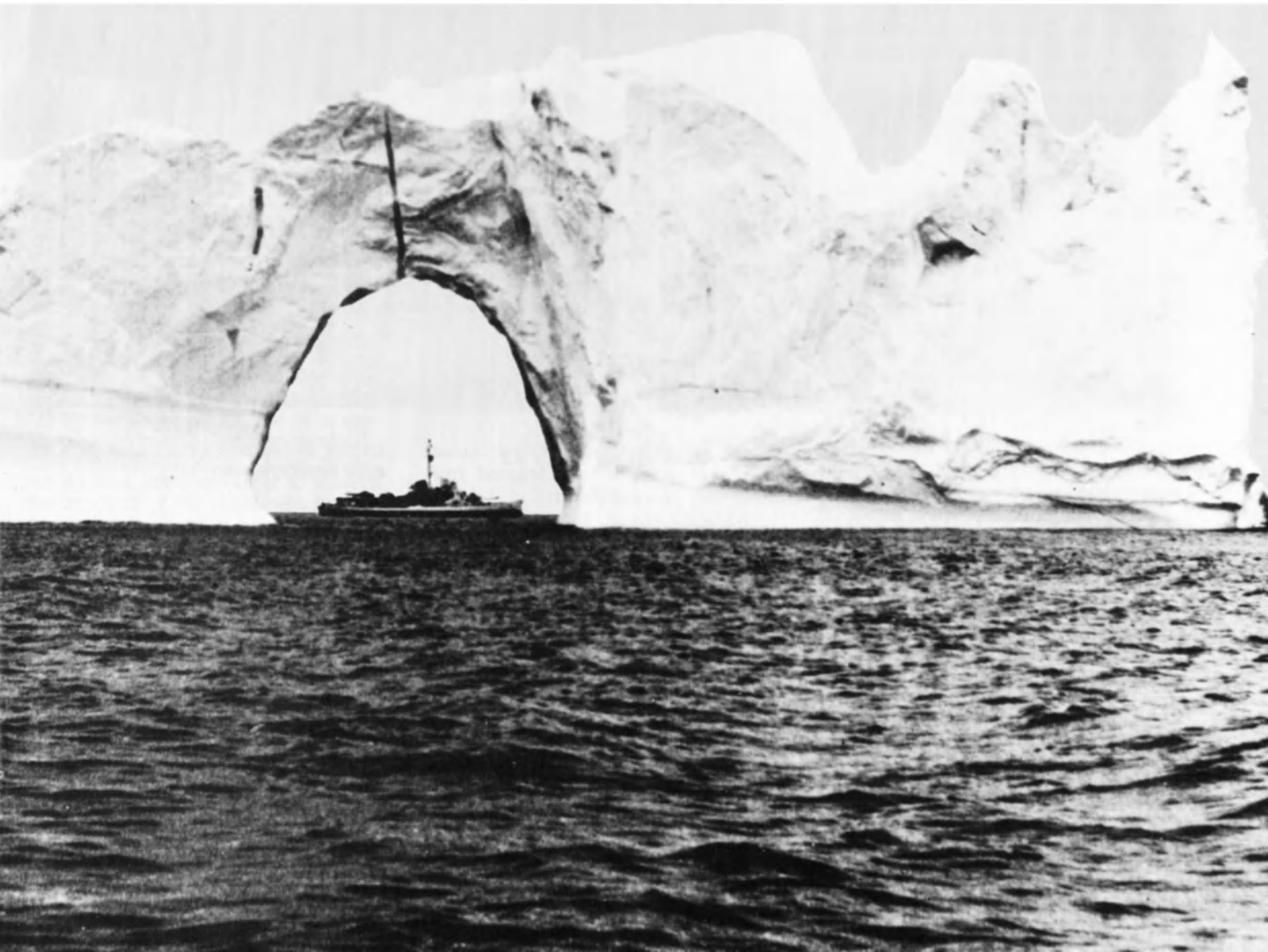
Once the iceberg arrived at its destination it might have to remain a certain distance offshore, depending on the shallowness of the continental shelf. Melting water would then have to be pumped by pipeline to the coast.

The production of fresh water by the transportation of icebergs is undoubtedly one of the most original and exciting ventures of our time. It is also one of the most useful: the most urgent problem soon to face mankind will be how to obtain fresh water. ■

February 1978

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**PAUL-EMILE VICTOR** is a noted French explorer who has organized and led many French expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic. He was head of the international glaciological expedition to Greenland from 1967 to 1970. His achievements as an explorer and scientist have brought him international recognition, including the award of the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society, London.



# Fifty years of literary life

by Ba Jin

**W**HEN the Chinese people were liberated and the People's Republic of China was founded, I wanted to use my pen, which had been used to writing about darkness and misery, to write about new people and new deeds, to celebrate the people's victory and joy. But I had not the time to familiarize myself with these subjects. I also took part in non-literary activities.

I wrote widely in praise of our new society and our new life. These writings were used as evidence of my "crime" and were condemned as "poisonous weeds" during the ten years of the "Great Cultural Revolution". I myself was illegally detained and suffered from all kinds of mental torture and humiliation. During these ten years I was deprived of all my civic rights and denied the freedom to publish.

These ten unforgettable years constitute an important episode in the history of humanity. Few writers in the world experienced such dreadful, ridiculous, strange, painful events. We were all involved, we all played a part, and today when we look back at what we did during those years we find our behaviour ridiculous—but it didn't seem like that at the time. I often say to myself that if I don't sum up those ten hard years and analyse myself sincerely, I may one day again regard cruelty, savagery and stupidity as part of the normal order of things.

I have never thought about writing technique or ways of expression when writing my stories. What I care about is how to help people lead a better life, a worthy life, and how to help my readers contribute to society and to the people. All my writings have this aim.

When I met a group of Sinologists in Paris in September 1981 someone asked how I had survived the "Cultural Revolution". Their sincere desire to understand something which seemed quite ordinary to us set my mind working. Those ten dreadful years had



taught me something. At last I came to realize what I have learned from those long years of disaster.

Gradually things became clearer in my mind. It must be love, fire, hope, something positive. Many people had survived because they had these qualities. But many had been destroyed and left to us their love, fire and hope to be transmitted to posterity. No, I shall never lay down my pen. ■

December 1982

**BA JIN**, born 1904, is a celebrated modern Chinese novelist. His major works include *Trilogy of Love* (*The Mist*, *The Rain*, *The Lightning*), *Trilogy of the Torrent* (*The Family*, *Spring*, *Autumn*), and *Reminiscences of my Writing Life*.

*Ba Jin at his Shanghai home in 1982, aged seventy-seven*

Photo © Chinese edition of the *Unesco Courier*, Beijing



**R**EADERS who claim me for their favourite writer often say that I express the truth. This is excessive praise induced, no doubt, by their very partiality. It is true that I do not seek to deceive, but neither do I try to recount all that is within me. What I express is merely a few odds and ends, just enough to hand in to the printer. It is true that I often try to dissect other people, but I apply the scalpel even more frequently to myself, and with far less pity. When I lift only a corner of the veil, sensitive spirits quail. What if I were to reveal myself entirely, exactly as I am?

It occurs to me from time to time to use this method to drive people away, so that those who even then did not abandon me, "snakes and odious monsters"<sup>(1)</sup> though they might be, would show themselves to be my friends, true friends after all. And if even they left me in the lurch, then too bad, I'd walk alone. But for the time being I refrain from putting this idea into practice, partly because I lack the courage to do so, and partly because I want to go on living in this society. But there is another reason, too, which I have mentioned several times: it gives me a certain satisfaction to create for as long as I can a feeling of unease among our "respectable and right-thinking" fellow-citizens. This is why I shall continue to gird myself with a few pieces of armour and stand before them, disturbing their orderly world with my presence, until I become tired of the whole business and take off this armour.

To serve as a guide to others is all the more difficult for me, since I myself do not know which path to follow. There is certainly no lack of "masters" and "guides" in China, but I am not among them and they do not inspire my confidence. There is only one outcome of which I myself am certain, and that is the tomb. But this is something everybody knows, without having to consult a guide. The problem is that more than one way leads to that ultimate destination, and up to now I have been unable to determine which of them to take. I am still trying to find out, and I am very much afraid that my still-green fruit should poison those who appreciate me, while those who detest me—the "respectable" and "right-thinking", for example—all live to a ripe old age. It is thus inevitable for me to clothe my words in ambiguity, since it often occurs to me that the best gift I can offer to readers who are fond of me might well be "inconsistency".

Some people imagine that I write spontaneously, that the words pour out in total freedom. Nothing could be further from the truth: I am inhibited by a host of scruples and uncertainties, I have known for a long time that I am not the stuff that warriors and pioneers are made of. Three or four years ago, I remember, a student arrived to buy one of my books. The money which he took out of his pocket and pressed into my hand was warm with the heat of his

(1) In the original: "Xiao, snakes and revenants". Xiao was an unpleasant mythical bird whose repellent attributes included devouring its own mother.

# Night thoughts, November 1926

by Lu Xun



Photo © China, Beijing

Lu Xun at the age of fifty

body. And that warmth penetrated me, so much so that ever since then, whenever I take up my pen, I am afraid of poisoning people like that student; I hesitate for a long time before putting a single word on paper. I fear that the time will never come again when I speak without such reserve, and although I sometimes think that in order to respond to the expectations of the young generation one should sweep every scruple aside, I have not, as yet, managed to bring myself to do so.

That is all I intended to say today, and it may be taken as relatively sincere. ■

This text, an extract from the afterword to "The Tomb", the first compilation of Lu Xun's collected works, was written in November 1926, shortly after the author had left Beijing, where he faced the threat of imprisonment, to teach at the University of Xiamen (Amoy). This English version is based on the French translation from the Chinese, carried out under the direction of Michelle Loi and the Lu Xun Research Centre of the People's Republic of China. This translation, *La Tombe*, was published by Editions Acropole in 1981, and forms part of the Unesco Collection of Representative Works. French translation © Unesco, 1981

**LU XUN** (pseudonym of Zhou Shuren, 1881-1936) is a major figure in Chinese literature. He exercised considerable influence on his times through his many essays, stories and poems. Among his works translated into English is "The True Story of Ah Q" (Chinese, 1921; Eng. trans. 1926).



# The angry young men of Oceania

*by Albert Wendt*

*These bird of paradise feathers form part of an intricate headdress worn by the people of the New Guinea highlands. The relationship between birds and men is strongly expressed in the oral literature and art of the Oceanian peoples.*



Photo © Camera Press, London

**I**N our various groping ways we are all in search of that haven, that Hawaiki (mythical homeland of the Maori people) where our hearts will find meaning.

Our dead are woven into our souls like the hypnotic music of bone flutes; we can never escape them. If we let them they can help illuminate us to ourselves and to one another. They can be the source of newfound pride, self-respect and wisdom. Conversely, they can be the *aitu* (evil spirit or ghost) that will continue to destroy us by blinding us to the beauty we are so capable of becoming as individuals, cultures, nations. We must try to exorcise these *aitu* both old and modern.

There is no state of cultural purity (or perfect state of cultural "goodness") from which there is decline; usage determines authenticity. There was no Fall, no sun-tanned Noble Savages existing in South Sea paradises, no Golden Age, except in Hollywood films, in the insanely romantic literature and art produced by outsiders about the Pacific, in the breathless sermons of our self-styled romantic revolutionaries.

Our quest should not be for a revival of our past cultures but for the creation of new cultures which are free of the taint of colonialism and based firmly on our own pasts. The quest should be for a new Oceania.

Many of us are guilty—whether we are

aware of it or not—of perpetuating the destructive colonial chill, and are doing so in the avowed interest of "preserving our racial and cultural purity" (whatever that means).

To advocate that in order to be a "true Samoan", for example, one must be a "full-blooded Samoan" and behave, think, dance, talk, dress and believe in a certain prescribed way (and that the prescribed way has not changed since time immemorial) is being racist, callously totalitarian, and stupid. This is a prescription for cultural stagnation, an invitation for a culture to choke in its own body odour, juices, and excreta.

There are no "true interpreters" or "sacred guardians" of any culture. We are all entitled to our truths, insights, and intuitions into an interpretation of our cultures.

To varying degrees, we as individuals all live in limbo within our cultures: there are many aspects of our ways of life that we cannot subscribe to or live comfortably with. We all conform to some extent, but the life-blood of any culture is the diverse contributions of its varied sub-cultures.

The population of our region is only just over five million but we possess a cultural diversity as varied as any other in the world. There is also a multiplicity of social, economic and political systems all undergoing different stages of decolonization, ranging from politically independent nations (Western Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Nauru) through self-governing ones (the Solomons, the Gilberts, Tuvalu) and colonies (mainly French and American) to our oppressed aboriginal brothers in Australia.

If as yet we may not be the most artistically creative region in our spaceship, we possess the potential to become so. There are more than 1,200 indigenous languages plus English, French, Hindi, Spanish, and various forms of pidgin to catch and interpret the void with, reinterpret our past with, create new sociological visions of Oceania with, compose songs and poems and plays and other oral and written literature with.

We also possess numerous other forms of artistic expression: hundreds of dance styles; wood and stone sculpture and carvings; artifacts as various as our cultures; pottery, painting and tattooing. We have a fabulous treasure house of traditional motifs, themes, styles, material which we can use in contemporary forms to express our uniqueness, identity, pain, joy and our own visions of Oceania and the earth. ■

February 1976

**ALBERT WENDT**, of Western Samoa, is a writer, poet, and specialist in Oceanian literature.



# The Afro-Brazilian experiment

by Gilberto Freyre

**B**RAZIL'S experience can be useful to new nations in Africa, Asia and elsewhere for, after four centuries of pre-national and national development and more than a century of independence, Brazil is now emerging as a civilization in search of forms of expression suited to a tropical environment. This civilization does not, however, repudiate the European values which are so basic to Brazil's national heritage.

Brazil now boasts its own types of architecture, music, painting, cooking, Christianity, social life, attitudes towards health and hygiene, and football—a more dionysiac Brazilian kind of football than the apollonian English one. All of these express a new type of civilization whose novelty derives as much from racial intermingling as from an intermixing of cultures.

The cult of the Virgin Mary is an example: elements have been assimilated from the Yemanjá cult (the female counterpart of Orixa, a secondary divinity in the African *jeje-nago* cult). Brazil has black Virgins like the Virgin of Rosario and mestizo Virgins like Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose devotees pledge themselves by offering *ex-votos*—wood and clay sculptures whose expression and colour symbolism are more African than European.

Brazilians do not consider themselves less Catholic because elements of African rites or beliefs have been incorporated into their religious worship. Though their Catholicism is more tropical and less European, believers do not feel it has been corrupted or de-Christianized. The same holds true for Brazilian cookery, music, sculpture and painting of European origin: African penetration represents not a corruption of values but an enrichment.

The process of "tropicalization" of the Portuguese language in Brazil stems primarily from African influence, and only secondarily from Amerindian influence. As a literary language, it is no longer considered as inferior to the academic language of Portuguese purists. Less and less academic, the Brazilian language is daily acquiring new rhythms and expressions whose musicality and forcefulness are deeply marked by their African origins.

More has been written about the African influence on Brazilian music than on any other Brazilian art form. It is apparent not only in popular music but also in some of the country's most serious music. The compos-

er Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) was influenced both by American and even more by Amerindian musical themes, which he considered basically Brazilian.

The cultural affinities between Brazil and Africa are, as we have seen, strong. But we

must not forget that another factor, besides the historical one, has contributed to these similarities: a common tropical environment undergoing the process of modernization. ■

August-September 1977



**GILBERTO FREYRE**, of Brazil, is an internationally known authority on sociology and on social and cultural anthropology. His works translated into English include: *The Masters and the Slaves*, *New World in the Tropics*, and *The Mansions and the Shanties*.

# Where gods and men have mingled

by Jorge Amado

**T**HE culture of Brazil was formed in the struggle against racism and was born of the mingling of whites, blacks and Amerindians. The black element in Brazilian society is inextricably mingled with the white, and Africa is a maternal presence in our midst.

Our outlook on life is fundamentally anti-racist, based as it is on intermingling. The vigorous "negro" art of the sculptor Agnal-

do da Silva, without equal in Brazil today, is not exclusively black. It bears traces of white and Iberian influences in both form and subject: Aginaldo's *Oxossi* is also St. George.

It is all the more unfortunate, then, that a distorted image of our way of life is sometimes presented abroad. The African contribution, which is of fundamental importance to Brazilian culture, is glossed over or pushed into the background.

This is a totally false approach. Through a curious reversal of the colonial mentality, there is a tendency to put the spotlight on painters, writers and singers with the blackest possible skins. This attempt to prove the absence of racial-prejudice in Brazil actually indicates a preoccupation which is totally alien to the Brazilian philosophy of life.

The blackest girls are chosen to sing, but no attention is paid to the fact that they sing songs more strongly marked by Iberian than black influence, although Brazilian music derives primarily from the *atabiques* of Africa.

The paintings shown tend to be typical examples of the Paris School—the important thing is that the artists' skins are black. Brazilian painters like Tarsila and Di Cavalcanti are neglected, although their work displays the black African influences which, along with white, Amerindian and Japanese elements, have produced an art which is uniquely Brazilian.

We must proclaim to the world at large the tremendous importance of the African presence in Brazil, in our life, culture and in the faces of our people.

The black African has contributed to all the great achievements of Brazil. The presence of Africa with its sunlight and shadow can be felt in the prophets, saints and angels which the mestizo sculptor Aleijadinho (1730-1814) carved in the mining region of Minas Gerais.

Africa is present in the music of Villa-Lobos and Dorival Caymi, in the *Orixas* and *Madonnas* of Aginaldo, in the poetry of Gregorio de Matos, Castro Alves and Vinicius de Moraes. It is present in the dancing, and the singing, the gentleness, the friendliness and the expansive imagination of everything great in Brazil.

For here in Brazil gods and men have, happily, become inextricably mingled. ■

August-September 1977

**JORGE AMADO**, of Brazil, is one of Latin America's most widely read novelists. Since the appearance of his novel *Mar Morto* (*Dead Sea*, 1936), which won him a reputation throughout Latin America, he has published many books that have been translated into over 30 languages. Among his works published in English are *Gabriela* (1963) and *Doña Flor and Her Two Husbands* (1970).

**For four centuries, black Africa has exercised a strong influence in Brazil, alongside the Amerindians and the European colonizers. Black African cultures and peoples played a major part in the development of a new type of civilization, which is neither European nor African, but distinctively Brazilian. Left, an Afro-Brazilian family out for a stroll in Salvador de Bahia. On the wall in background, scenes from the conquest and colonization of Brazil.**



Photo René Burri © Magnum, Paris

# Open letter from a Capilano Indian: 'I was born 1,000 years ago'

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*This letter from Dan George, chief of the Capilano Indians of British Columbia, Canada, was read at a symposium on the economic development of the Arctic and the future of Eskimo societies, by Father André-Pierre Steinmann, of Puvirnituk, New Quebec.*

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My very good dear friends,  
I was born a thousand years ago, born in a culture of bows and arrows. But within the span of half a lifetime I was flung across the ages to the culture of the atom bomb.

I was born when people loved nature and spoke to it as though it has a soul: I can remember going up Indian River with my father when I was very young. I can remember him watching the sunlight fires on Mount Pé-Né-Né. I can remember him singing his thanks to it as he often did, singing the Indian word "thanks" very very softly.

And the new people came, more and more people came, like a crushing rushing wave they came, hurling the years aside, and suddenly I found myself a young man in the midst of the twentieth century.

I found myself and my people adrift in this new age but not a part of it, engulfed by its rushing tide but only as a captive eddy going round and round. On little reserves and plots of land, we floated in a kind of grey unreality, ashamed of our culture which you ridiculed, unsure of who we were and where we were going, uncertain of our grip on the present, weak in our hope of the future.

We did not have time to adjust to the startling upheaval around us; we seem to have lost what we had without finding a replacement.

Do you know what it is like to be without moorings? Do you know what it is like to live in surroundings that are ugly? It depresses man, for man must be surrounded by the beautiful if his soul is to grow.

Do you know what it is like to have your race belittled, and have you been made aware of the fact that you are only a burden to the country? Maybe we did not have the skills to make a meaningful contribution, but no one would wait for us to catch up. We were shrugged aside because we were dumb and could never learn.

What is it like to be without pride in your race? Pride in your family? Pride and confidence in yourself?

And now, you hold out your hand and you beckon to me to come over: "Come and integrate," you say, but how can I come? I am naked and ashamed; how can I come in dignity? I have no presents, I have no gifts. What is there in my culture you value? My poor treasure you can only scorn. Am I then to come as a beggar and receive all from your omnipotent hand?

Somehow, I must wait. I must find myself. I must wait until you need something that is me.

Pity I can do without. My manhood, I cannot do without. Can we talk of integration until there is social integration? Until there is integration of hearts and minds you have only a physical presence and the walls are high as the mountain range.

Come with me to the playground of an integrated school. Look, it is recess time, the students pour through the doors. Soon, over there, is a group of white students, and over there, near the fence, a group of native students.

What do we want? We want first of all to be respected and to feel we are people of worth; we want an equal opportunity to succeed in life.

Let no one forget it: we are a people with special rights guaranteed to us by promises and treaties. We do not beg for these rights, nor do we thank you for them because, God help us, the price we paid was exorbitant. We paid for them with our culture, our dignity and our self-respect.

I know that in your heart you wish you could help. I wonder if there is much you can do, and yet there is a lot you can do. When you meet my children, respect each one for what he is: a child and your brother.

Dan George

January 1975



# Ishi— the last of the Yana Indians

by Alfred Métraux

ONE night in the summer of 1911, a butcher in a small town in California was woken up by the furious barking of his dogs. He went outside and found near his house a "wild man" leaning against a wall, quite clearly in the last stages of exhaustion. The sheriff was called, and after handcuffing the strange creature, he took him off to the county gaol where, as an extra precaution, he locked him up in the cell reserved for dangerous lunatics. Ishi, the Indian, had made a lonely and painful entry into civilization.

It is curious to note that Ishi did not retain any unpleasant memories of his first contact with white men. The prison had impressed him as a fine house and he was grateful for the food he had been given and the way in which he had been treated. Ishi had, in fact, been expecting to be killed. He could not imagine any other fate at the hands of the white men who had massacred his own people. Towards 1872, when Ishi must have been about ten years old, the small tribe of the Yahis, belonging to the Yana group of Indians, had been virtually wiped off the ethnic map of America. There was barely a handful of them left.

It is difficult to imagine the existence of a dozen Indians who have chosen to live like hunted animals rather than give themselves up to subjection. They were forever on the move, taking the utmost precautions to conceal every trace of their passage and living only on the animals they managed to kill or the fruit and herbs they gathered. Gradually, fatigue, age and illness took their toll of the fugitives.

By 1906, Ishi was alone. For five years he lived a solitary life in the forests of his territory. When he was discovered on the outskirts of one of the white men's villages, he had made up his mind to return to the community of men, even though they might be his worst enemies.

The American anthropologist Professor Alfred L. Kroeber had made a life study of the Californian Indians,<sup>(1)</sup> and his attention was attracted by the

newspaper reports of the capture of a "wild man". He telegraphed the sheriff, asking him to receive his colleague, Professor Waterman. The latter went to the prison equipped with vocabularies of the Indian languages of the Californian district, and read lists of these words to Ishi. He listened patiently, but his face did not betray the slightest sign of comprehension.

Waterman was beginning to be discouraged and was about to give up his attempt to communicate with the "savage" when he pronounced the word "siwini", at the same time touching the wood of the bed on which the Indian was sitting. Ishi's face suddenly lit up. He repeated the word. The two men, realizing the importance of the incident, went on striking the wood as hard as they could, shouting "Siwini! Siwini!" The mystery had, to some extent, been solved. Ishi could now communicate, after a fashion, with a white man. He was no longer alone, and his "hunted animal" look disappeared.

What was to be done with this "savage" who could no longer be kept in gaol? The sheriff consented to his prisoner's transfer to the University of California. ... Ishi had come out of the prehistoric past. He seemed to be just over fifty years old. Would he be able to adapt himself to the industrial civilization of the twentieth century?

He showed no emotion or fear when confronted with the novelties of San Francisco. The strict Indian etiquette which he invariably observed forbade him to do so. He quickly adapted himself to the white man's way of living.

Either out of natural kindness, or gratitude, or even perhaps because he realized that he was helping to perpetuate the memory of his people, Ishi tried, as far as he could, to pass on his knowledge to the ethnographers and linguists who questioned him.

His greatest exploit was the expedition on which he took his friends through the valleys in which he had

lived with the last of the Yahis and where he had eventually spent years of wandering on his own.

It was a unique experience for the ethnologists, and they learnt to see nature through the eyes of a Neolithic hunter. As Ishi went further and further into the woods which he knew so well, old memories came surging into his mind. ... But gradually, the pleasure of finding himself back in his familiar surroundings gave way to a strange impatience to be gone. It was with an eager step that he climbed up into the train which was to carry him away from the lands of his ancestors.

Ishi had an iron constitution, but he had not been immunized against the white man's illnesses. In spite of the best medical care, it proved impossible to rid him of the devastating effects of tuberculosis, which he contracted during the fourth year of his stay among the white people. When his friends judged that his end was near, respecting the Indian tradition according to which a man should die in his own house, they had him taken to the Ethnological Museum, his "home".

Ishi died stoically, without a word of complaint, like the members of his race. His friends, the ethnologists, felt that it was their duty to deal with his body as his family would have done, and accordingly burnt it, together with his bow, his arrows and his shells. Inscribed on the urn which contains his ashes are the words: "Ishi, the last Yana Indian, 1916". ■

February 1963

ALFRED METRAUX (1902-1963), French anthropologist of Swiss origin, specialized in the study of South American Indians. As a member of the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., he contributed extensively to the Handbook of South American Indians (1946-1959). From 1946 to 1962, he held posts with the United Nations and Unesco. Notable among his works translated into English are, *Ethnology of Easter Island (1940)*, *Myths of the Toba and Pilagá Indians of the Gran Chaco (1946)*, and *Voodoo in Haiti (1959)*.

(1) *Ishi—in Two Worlds* was published by Theodora Kroeber, widow of Alfred L. Kroeber (University of California Press, 1961).

# The blacks in Latin America

by Alejo Carpentier

**T**HE apparent loss of feeling for their original plastic arts among displaced Africans transported to the Americas can be explained by the fact that sculpture, carving and decorative painting required free time, which the slave-holder was not prepared to grant.

He was not going to place workshops and tools at the disposal of men who were there to increase his wealth, simply so that they could have the pleasure of carving figures that he considered barbaric idols and repositories of ancestral beliefs.

On the contrary, any such recollections had to be wiped from the black man's memory with the help of the overseer's lash. "Civilized man" in the West did not yet have the slightest interest in what he would later come to value as "folk art".

While the black man's paintings or carvings were considered works of the Devil, music, on the other hand, did not cause much inconvenience. The plantation owners in Cuba, for example, allowed their slaves to beat their drums and dance every evening because this showed that they were in good health and that their "ebony flesh" was fit for hard labour.

Meanwhile, the slaves listened to what they heard around them. During the sixteenth century, when they were first taken to America, they assimilated Spanish ballads, songs from Portugal and even French square dancing. They discovered musical instruments unknown in their own lands and learned to play them.

If one of them succeeded in being freed by a master who was more benevolent than others, he might well turn to music as a way of earning his living, mingling with white people in an occupational freemasonry.

Far removed from his African roots, the black man in Latin America became a basic constituent, together with the Indian, of the creole class that was to affect the destiny of a whole continent with its aspirations, its struggles and its protest. As the centuries went by, the blacks were slowly incorporated into the society of

their new homelands and, little by little, they recovered their poetic sense and the feeling for the plastic arts which they seemed to have lost.

Observing ancestral traditions that no longer bore any relation to their surroundings was now out of the question. The black peoples had forgotten their African dialects by this time and spoke only the major languages of the New World. They felt no need to revive old Yoruba tales, to recall ancient legends or return to the sources of an oral culture they were alienated from, but rather to "make poetry" in the full sense of the term.

The same thing happened in painting. Black artists in the New World were completely out of touch with art forms that in Africa were related to religious cults now left far behind (even though some vestiges can still be found on altars ostensibly consecrated to Christian saints).

On the contrary, they had to solve the same technical problems that face artists everywhere in any period. It is obvious then that the work of the black and mestizo painters and sculptors active in Latin America in the nineteenth century bore no resemblance whatsoever to the forms and stylizations of African art.

This was also true of poetry at that time. And one may add that there were many "white" writers—the word "white" has always been quite relative in Latin America—who published novels with "negro" settings, denouncing the loathsome aspects of slavery in the Americas.

It is only in the last fifty years that a new generation of poets and painters has appeared, whose works are marked by the symbiosis of cultures fostered by the New World. There has been much talk, for example, of "black poetry", referring to a resonant, percussive, onomatopoeic type of poetry which, despite a prevalent assumption, has often been written by perfectly "white" poets.

In point of fact, this is an exotic view of "negritude". The truth is that if "black poetry" as such ever existed, it would

have had to be a protest on behalf of the black people oppressed by centuries of slavery and racial discrimination.

First and foremost, it would have had to be a revolutionary cry because, since the sixteenth century, the blacks have always been in revolt against their overlords in some part of the hemisphere, and even formed small independent States in Brazil, the Guyanas and Jamaica—States that sometimes survived for many years.

Never during their long history in the New World did the blacks give up their quest for freedom, a quest furthered by the creoles of all classes and stations who, after much struggling, finally threw off the yoke of Spanish, Portuguese, French and English colonialism.

In short, there exists in the Antilles, where Spanish, English and French are spoken, literature and painting with a markedly creole character, and it would be difficult to say just what can be attributed to their various ethnic components. ■

August-September 1977

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**ALEJO CARPENTIER** (1904-1980), of Cuba, was one of Latin America's leading novelists. His many books have been translated into 22 languages and include, in English editions: *The Kingdom of this World* (1957), *The Lost Steps* (1957) published by Knopf, New York, *Explosion in a Cathedral* (Gollancz, London, 1963) and *Reasons of State* (Partridge, London, 1976). A musicologist, Carpentier wrote *A History of Cuban Music* (1949).

*African slaves and the caravels that transported them to the New World dominate a huge mural in an office in Bahia (Brazil). Along with the Iberian conquistadors, the blacks were to create a new form of culture in the Caribbean, Brazil and other parts of Latin America. Black artists in the New World lost touch with purely African art forms, but family resemblances to the African tradition have survived.*





# The land-locked island of Paraguay

by Augusto Roa Bastos

ONE cannot hope to understand Paraguay without taking into account its linguistic problem. For four hundred years now, two languages have coexisted in the country: Spanish and Guarani—the language of the conquerors and the language of the conquered. These two languages are used as parallel, though not complementary, means of expression for a whole society. In this, Paraguay is unique in Latin America.

For the child with a European father and an Indian mother, the natural mother tongue was Guarani, and Spanish was a language imposed as a symbol of authority. It was the language which the mestizo would in turn use to impose his own authority on the Indians.

Mestizos and Indians felt that the language of their father or master, as the case happened to be, was a more integral part of his dominance than the arms, tools, food, houses and customs which were the trappings of his power.

**Paraguay has a large rural population, amounting to some 70 per cent of the total. Almost all are Indians, who communicate among themselves in Guarani, a language which is spoken in Paraguay's towns and cities as well as in rural areas.**

Photo © Almasay, Paris



In the missionary settlements of the Jesuits, however, sermons and prayers were in Guarani. There, the Indian was not forced to change his language. He did, however, have to change his rituals, his liturgy, his gods, and his conception of nature, of the world and of the universe—although the embers of all these still glow brightly today in Indian myths about the universe.

Governor Lázaro de Ribera was mistaken when he complained, at the end of the eighteenth century, that the language of the conquered peoples had become dominant. Guarani was not, and could not be, the dominant language. It retreated into the depths of the collective memory, settled there like a sediment, and came to dominate *from within* the self-expression of Paraguay, whether it be bilingual or not.

The use of Guarani or Spanish in Paraguay is governed by social and regional factors. Even people who think of themselves as bilingual will never discuss certain topics in the indigenous language: it would be simply impossible because social circumstances do not allow it. The Guarani speaker thus finds in fact that he is excluded from a whole range of fields because he cannot make himself heard in them. Worse still, he cannot even conceptualize them because he lacks adequate linguistic means of self-expression.

If, for example, someone speaking Guarani had access to the world of advanced technology, he would find that he would have to use so many neologisms that his language would be practically annihilated.

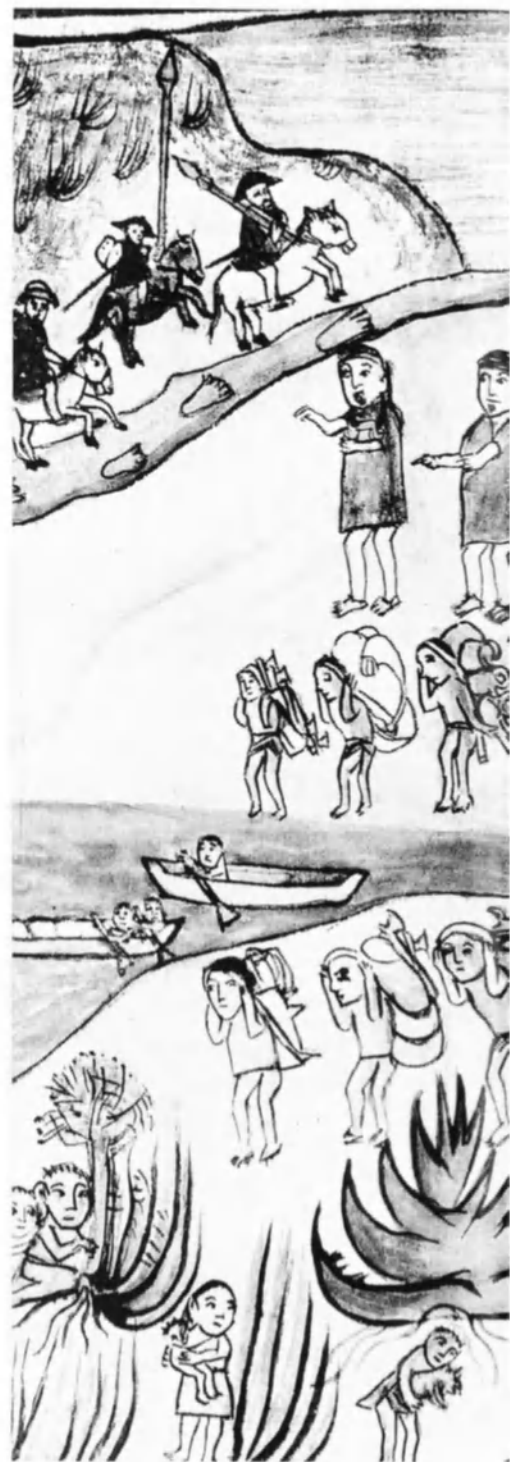
It is clear that the future of Guarani—like that of Spanish—is closely linked to the historical destiny of the country itself.

Although Guarani has been relegated to the status of a vehicle for communicating emotions, it will continue to modulate the expression of a whole people's deepest and most vital feelings. Herein lies its strength.

Linked to the mysteries of blood, instinct and collective memory, the survival of Guarani is guaranteed by the density of the linguistic sediment that forms the foundations of the bilingual island of Paraguay. ■

August-September 1977

**AUGUSTO ROA BASTOS**, of Paraguay, won an international reputation with his book *Hijo de hombre*, published in English as *Son of Man* by Victor Gollancz, London, 1965. His novel *Yo el supremo* is required reading for students of Latin American literature in a number of European universities.



# The Chronicle of Michoacán

by J.M.G. Le Clézio

*In the sixteenth century, Michoacán, which in the Nahuatl language means "the place of fish", was the name of the Indian town of Tzintzuntzán, the capital of the Porhepecha. We should know nothing about this vanished civilization of Central America were it not for the Chronicle of Michoacán, which can rightly be said to be its testament. The book was written in Spanish around 1540; it describes the history of the Porhepecha people, their beliefs and their faith, and gives the names of their gods and heroes. The French writer J.M.G. Le Clézio has published a French translation of the Chronicle of Michoacán (La Relation de Michoacán, Gallimard, Paris, 1984). In the following text he evokes this legendary tale of the one-time glory of the Indians.*

**T**HE great stories of history tell us about beginnings: the creation of the earth, its first inhabitants, and the coming of the gods and of the beings they created.

The *Chronicle of Michoacán* is one of the few texts—the books of the *Chilam Balam* of the Mayas of Yucután and the *Popol Vuh* of the Quiché Mayas are others—which tell us about these beginnings. Thanks to the Western system of writing, it catches the verbal magic of the fabled past of the people of Michoacán when, after centuries of wandering amid tribal warfare, there came the first signs of the destiny of a nation which played a vital part in the civilizations of Central America.

Stricken in its vitals, with its temples in ruins, its gods overthrown and, worst of all, the one incarnation of the god Curicaueri, the Cazonci Tangaxoan Tzintzicha, fallen and enslaved by the Conquistador Nuño de Guzmán, the Porhepecha Kingdom was unable to put up a fight. The men of this warlike people were struck motionless by a holy dread, and fighting was out of the question.

The Indians sent these new gods offerings by way of greeting. But they were soon to realize that these terrifying messengers from the other world had not come to bring the answer to their prayers and receive their offerings; they had come to fulfil the doom-laden sayings of the oracles.

The news of the destruction of the opposing empire of Tenochtitlán brought no solace to the Cazonci; it perturbed him even more. "Who are you?" he asked Montaña, the first Spaniard to set foot on his territory. "Where are you from? What are you seeking? For we have never heard tell of men such as you, nor seen such men. Why have you come from such distant lands? Is there neither food nor drink in your native land, that you have come to make the

acquaintance of peoples unknown to you? And what had the Mexicans done to you, that you annihilated them when you were in their city?"

The apprehensive questions of the Porhepecha people were soon to be answered. ... The newcomers wanted gold, the "excrement of the sun", the symbol of divine power. Their lust for gold was not sated by the spoils of war handed over to them by the Cazonci; they wanted more and more, so they sacked the temples and profaned the tombs of the most illustrious kings.

Everything vanished when these conquerors approached, everything grew silent, as the soothsayers had prophesied. On the banks of a river, at the ford of Nuestra Señora de la Purificación in the year 1530, the last Cazonci was tortured and slain by Nuño de Guzmán, after a parody of a trial. So ended the glorious line of the Uacusecha, the Eagles, who had built up the empire, and also the reign of the god Curicaueri, whose last incarnation on earth the Cazonci had been. Another form of speech, another conquest, were about to begin, covering over the silence of the Indians.

All that is left today as a legacy, thanks to the anonymous *Chronicle*, is the memory of that greatness, the legend, both touching and true, of a past era, when poetry and history were one, and when the kingdom of men was like the dwelling place of the gods. ■

August 1985

**JEAN MARIE G. LE CLEZIO** is an essayist and novelist of Franco-Mauritian origin. In addition to his translation from Spanish into French of the *Relación de Michoacán* (The *Chronicle of Michoacán*, 1984), his many published works include French translations of Mayan texts, such as *The Prophecies of Chilam Balam* (1976), and novels such as *Le chercheur d'or* (The *Gold-seeker*, 1985).



Photo: Jean-Loup Charmet © Real. Biblioteca de El Escorial and Ediciones Aguilar, Madrid

**Arrival of the first Spaniards in Michoacán. In his residence at Tzintzuntzán, the Cazonci (sovereign) orders gifts to be taken to the strangers who were thought to be gods.**

# An illiterate in Paris

An interview by  
Marguerite Duras  
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In countries where free and compulsory education has been applied for generations, illiteracy is no national problem. Yet in all countries, even the most advanced, a small residue remains of adults who, for one reason or another, have never learned to read or write. What is the position of the few who have somehow slipped through the network of compulsory education? What does it mean to be an adult illiterate in a society where life is organized on the assumption that everybody can read and write? The French writer Marguerite Duras decided to find out and managed to discover a middle-aged woman factory worker living at Romainville, a suburb of Paris, who could neither read nor write. The answers she gives in the interview published below reveal the poignant drama of an illiterate person living in a modern capital and the tragedy of being cut off from written communication.

*Are there any words which you can recognize even though you cannot read them?*

Yes, three words. The names of the two Underground stations on the line I take every day: 'Lilas' and 'Chatelet'—and my maiden name.

*Could you pick them out from a group of other words?*

I could recognize them from about a dozen others, I think.

*What do they look like to you ... like drawings?*

Yes, like pictures, if you want. 'Lilas' is a tall word—it's almost as tall as it is wide—and it's pretty. The word 'Chatelet' is too long, and it's not so pretty. When you see it, you know it's not the same as the word 'Lilas'.

*When you tried to learn to read, did it seem difficult to you?*

You can't imagine what it's like. It's terrible.

*Can you give me an idea of what you mean exactly?*

I don't really know. Maybe because everything is so ... so small. I'm sorry, I'm not very good at explaining things.

*It must be quite a difficult thing for you to live in a city like Paris and to get around from one place to another without being able to read.*

Oh, if you've got a tongue in your head you can get anywhere you want.

*How do you manage exactly?*

Well, I do a lot of asking. And then I use my head. It's funny how quick you pick up things and remember what you see. Much quicker than other people. It's like a blind person. There are places where you know where you are. Then, I ask people.

*Do you have to stop and ask your way often?*

Oh, about ten times when I come into Paris from Romainville on an errand or something. There are all those Underground station names. They mix you up. You have to take another train back, ask again ... and then there are the names of the streets, the shop names and the numbers.

*The numbers?*

I can't read them. When I get my pay or go shopping, I can count the figures in my head, but I can't read them.

*Don't you ever tell people that you can't read?*

No, never! I always say that I forgot my glasses.

*But there must be times when you can't avoid it?*

Yes, sometimes. When they ask me to sign my name at the factory or in the Town Hall. But I go red when I have to say it. If you were in my shoes you'd know what I mean.

*How do you manage in your job?*

When I'm being hired, I keep it to myself. And I always hope to get away with it. It works most of the time, except when there are time-slips to fill in. The rest of the time I make believe I can read.

*Everywhere?*

Yes, everywhere. In the factory, in the shops, I look at the labels and the scales and make believe that I'm reading them. I'm so afraid that people are cheating me, too. I'm always suspicious.

*Does it bother you in your work?*

No, I'm a good worker. I've got to be more careful than the others. I use my head and I'm careful. I don't have any trouble there.

*What about your shopping for food and things?*

I know all the colours of all the brands I use. When I want to change a brand I ask one of my friends to come with me. After that I remember the colours of the new brand. You've got to have a good memory if you're like me.

*What do you do for amusement? Do you like the cinema?*

No, I don't. It's too fast and I don't understand the way they talk. The pictures always start with a lot of writing. People read letters and you see it on the screen. Then they look sad or happy and I don't understand why. But I do go to the theatre.

*Why the theatre?*

You've got time to listen. They tell you everything they're doing. There's no writing. They talk slow. I understand better.

*Any other amusements?*

I like to go to the country and I like to watch sports. You know I'm no more stupid than anybody else, but when you can't read you're like a child.

*Do you ever forget that you can't read?*

No, I can't. As soon as I walk out of the house I think about it all the time. It tires you out and makes you waste time. You never want people to notice it ... that's what you think about all the time. You're always afraid. ■



# A 21-point programme for a global strategy in education

In 1971, Unesco set up an International Commission on the Development of Education to carry out an unparalleled world-wide inquiry. The Commission's purpose was to devise a global approach to educational problems; to rethink the objectives and methodology of education in the light of development needs and of individual aspirations; and to provide ideas for national educational strategies and for international co-operation. The members of the Commission were Messrs. Edgar Faure (Chairman), Felipe Herrera, Abdul-Razzak Kaddoura, Henri Lopes, Arthur Vladimirovitch Petrovsky, Majid Rahnema and Frederick Champion Ward. Summarized below in 21 points are the conclusions of the Commission's report.

1

Lifelong education should be the keystone of all educational policies in the years ahead, in industrially-developed as well as developing countries.

4

Artificial or outdated barriers between different branches and levels of education and between formal and non-formal education should be abolished.

2

Lifelong education presupposes a complete restructuring of education. Education must cease being confined within school walls. Education should become a true mass movement.

5

Education for pre-school-age children should be a major objective for educational strategies in the 1970s.

3

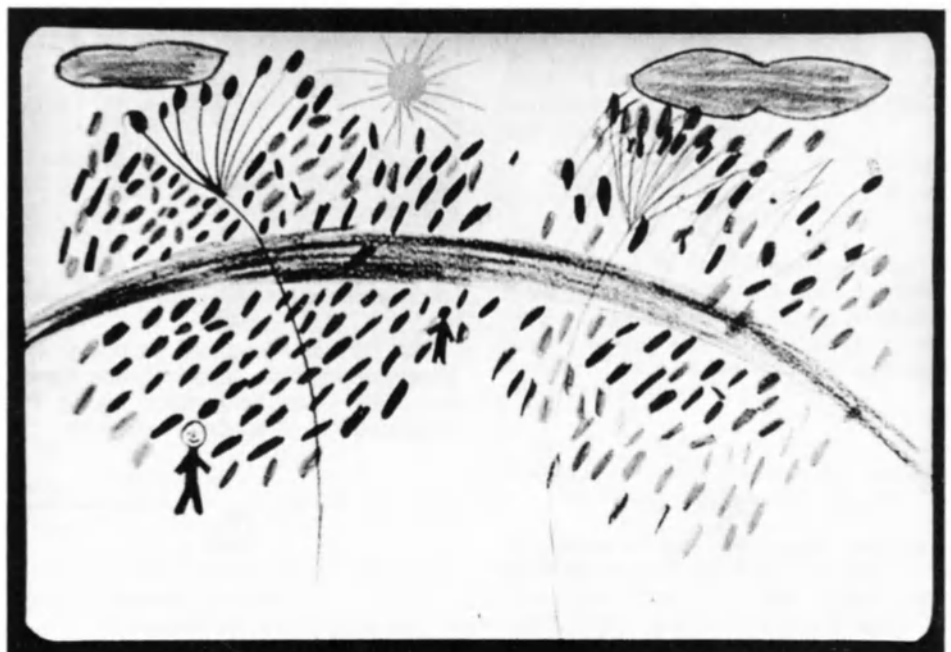
Education should be provided in many ways. What counts is not how a person has been educated, but what real knowledge he or she has gained.

6

Millions of children and young persons are still deprived of education. Universal basic education, geared to national needs and resources, should be a primary objective of educational policies for the 1970s.

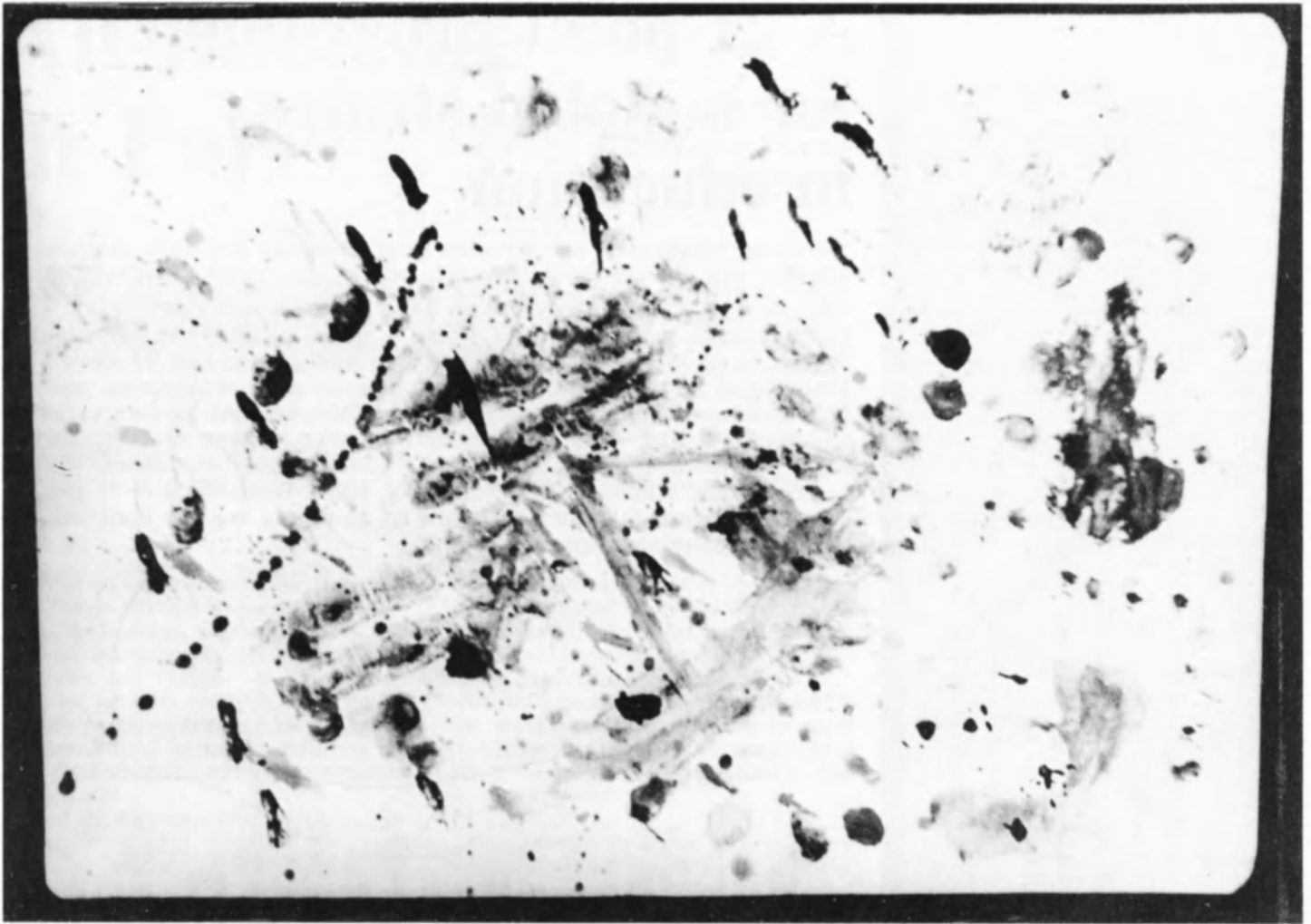


*"Education", says the report of the International Commission on the Development of Education, "has the power to cultivate or stifle creativity." This is what a young Spanish artist and teacher attempted to do in his art class at the High School of Lugones, near Oviedo (Asturias): his pupils listened to a piece of classical music after which, with no further guidance, they drew images and impressions evoked by the music. Their drawings often surprised by their quality, considering that they were the work of culturally underprivileged children of 10 to 12, whose first experience of art was acquired in these classes. Above, "The Rite of Spring" by Stravinsky as seen by 11-year-old Maria Paz Martinez. Right, the same composer's "Fireworks" as interpreted by Leonor Huerta Rodriguez, aged 10.*



Photos Sancho-Miñano, Oviedo, Spain





**7**

Rigid distinctions between different branches of education should be removed. Education, from primary and secondary levels, should have a combined theoretical, technological, practical and manual character.

**8**

Education should aim not only to train young people for specific jobs, but also equip them to adapt to a variety of occupations.

**9**

Responsibility for technical training should not fall exclusively on the school system. It should be shared by schools, business, industry and out-of-school education.

**10**

Higher education should be expanded and made varied enough to meet individual and community needs. Traditional attitudes towards the university must change.

**11**

Access to different types of education and employment should depend only on a person's knowledge, capacities and aptitudes.

**12**

Development of adult education, in and out of school, should be a priority objective of educational strategies during the next ten years.

**13**

All literacy teaching should be geared to a country's objectives in social and economic development.

**14**

Aids to self-education, including language laboratories, libraries, data banks and audio-visual equipment, should be integrated into all education systems.

**15**

Education systems should be conceived and planned in terms of possibilities offered by new educational techniques.

*Giving free rein to their imagination, pupils of the High School at Lugones (see caption previous page) express on paper the impressions evoked for them by (above) Johann Sebastian Bach's "Air on the G String" (Miguel Cortina Garcia, aged 11); "Spring" (above right) from Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" (Maria Pilar Sanjosé Calderon, aged 11); and, (right) "The New World Symphony" by Dvorak (Emilio Prado Sanchez, aged 12).*

**16**

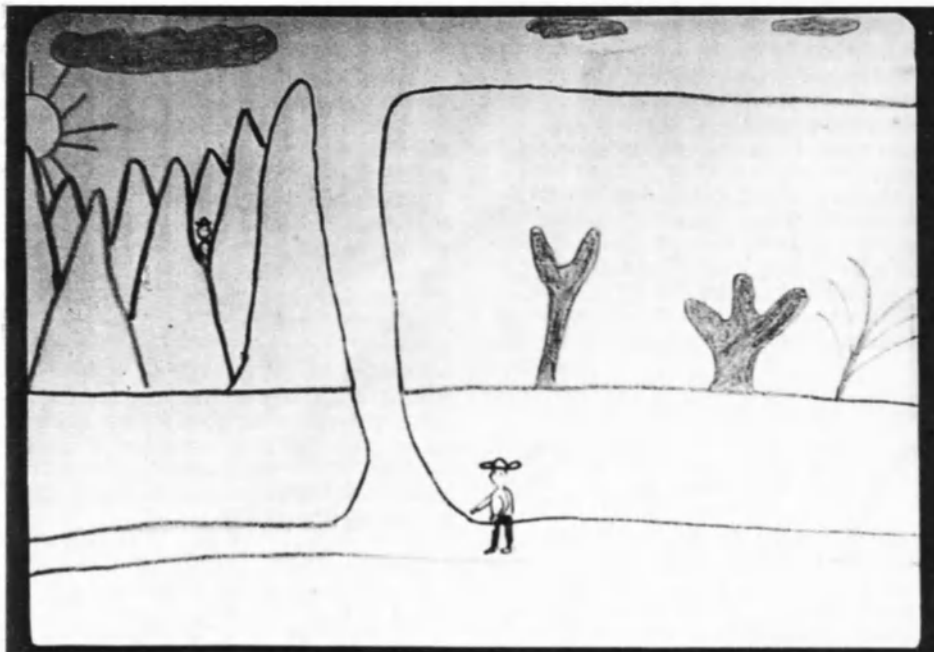
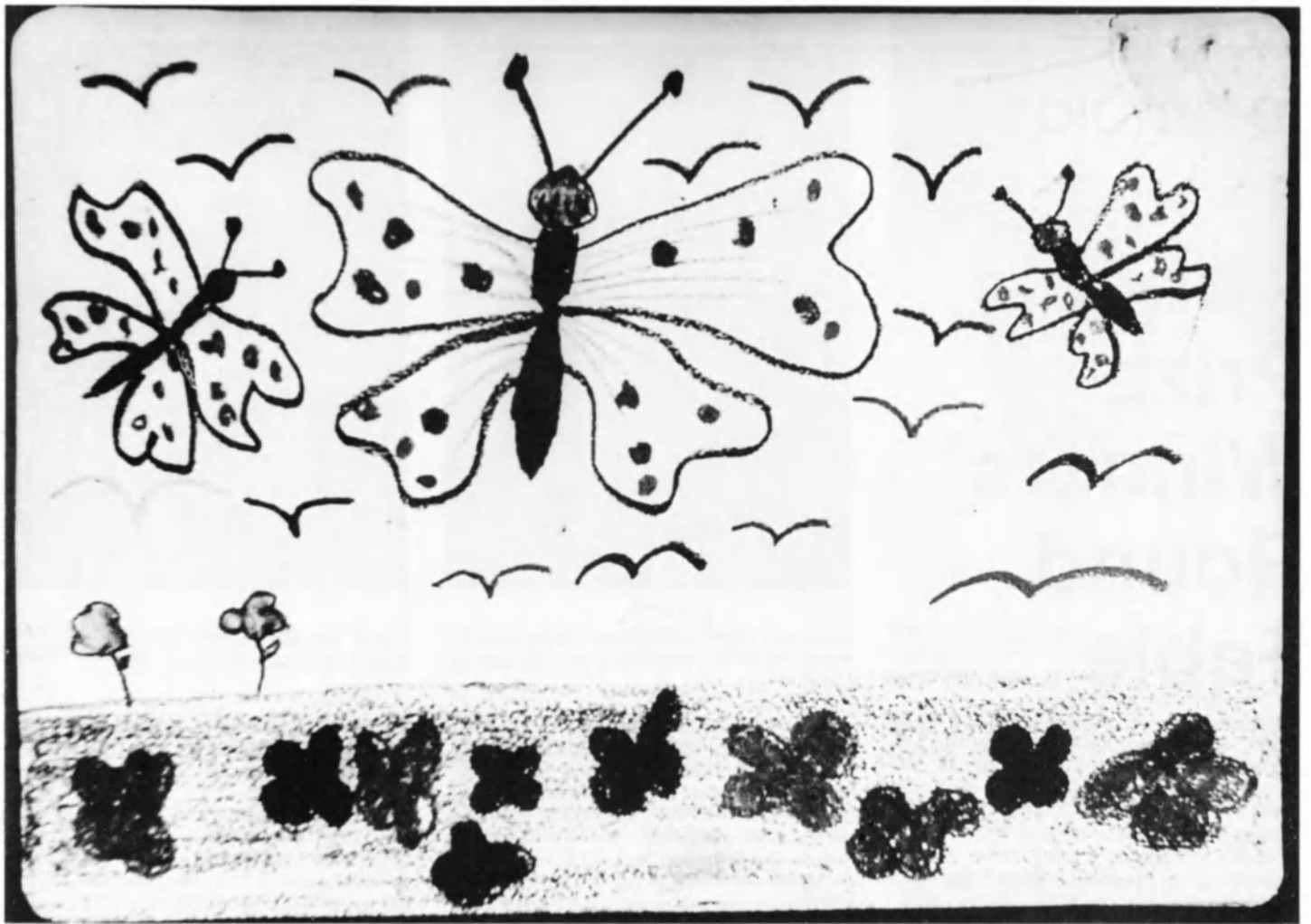
Teacher training programmes should make full use of the latest teaching aids and methods.

**17**

All hierarchical differences between teachers in primary schools, technical colleges, secondary schools and universities should be abolished.

**18**

Teachers should be trained to be educators rather than specialists in the transmission of knowledge.




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**19**

Skilled auxiliaries from the trades and professions (workers, technicians and executives) should be brought in to teach in schools. Students should also participate, educating themselves while teaching others.

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**20**

Contrary to traditional practice, teaching should adapt itself to the learner. The student should have greater freedom to decide for himself what he wants to learn and how and where to learn it.

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**21**

Students and the public as a whole should be given a greater say in decisions affecting education. ■

November 1972

# Science, technology and man

## Nobel Prize- Winners' Round Table

Seated at a "Round Table" set up under the immense shell of reinforced concrete housing Unesco's Conference Hall, eight world-famous scientists, five of them Nobel Prize winners, took part in a succession of scientific and cultural events organized in November 1958 on the occasion of the inauguration of Unesco's new Headquarters and its Tenth General Conference. Vital questions arising from the impact of science and technology on human life were discussed by members of the Round Table. We present here significant passages from these debates.



**Bernardo Alberto Houssay (Argentina)**  
Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine,  
1947

**I**t is a mistake to talk of pure and applied science. There are not two kinds of science but only one, and there are the applications of that science. The public in general and governments, too, think that only applied science is useful. They are very much mistaken. People should realize that all the knowledge on which applied science is based comes from theoretical or pure science. If theoretical or pure science is brought to a halt or loses its impetus, then application, too, becomes sluggish or stops. So we should make no distinction between these two aspects of science.

Pasteur said: "It is not the long and involved political discussions we may read about in the newspapers that help mankind to progress, but only the great discoveries of science, of human thought, and the uses to which they are put."

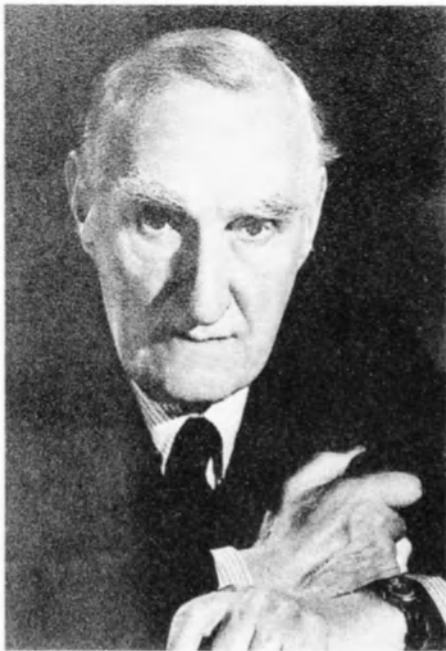


**P.M.S. Blackett (United Kingdom)**  
Nobel Prize for Physics, 1948

**I**t is very important to realize that science, although it has achieved marvellous things, is not a magic wand to wave over a poor country and make it into a rich one. Science textbooks are cheap; it is reasonably cheap to train scientists; but it is extremely expensive to embody the science in the factories, the steel works, the transport systems, the power stations, the mines and the chemical plants. They all cost an enormous amount of capital, and the poor countries are very hard put to find capital. And that simple economic reason is why science is so very unevenly applied over the world today.

I agree that the most important thing for mankind is not to blow itself up. But I am, curiously, an optimist about this matter. ... And assuming that we won't blow ourselves up, what is the next main problem?

I think the next main problem is to do something about the widening gap between the rich and the poor parts of the world, the rich countries which have successfully used science and obtained all the benefits, and the poor ones which have not. Now, if we don't do something about this widening gap, in a few decades, if the standard of life in the West goes up at the present rate, we may end up with a large part of the world poverty-stricken, as for centuries past, while the advanced countries of the West are enjoying (if "enjoying" is the right term) what has been called a "five-day weekend".



**John Boyd Orr (United Kingdom)**  
Nobel Peace Prize, 1949

**I**T is the advance of science, leading to technology and to the birth of new ideas, which has guided the full evolution of our civilization.

The problem of the present day, however, is that in our generation science has advanced at an accelerating rate. In the last fifty years science has advanced more than in the 2,000 previous years and in this advance has given man enormous new powers.

In the past, hunger and disease limited the growth of population. Today hunger can be abolished, disease is rapidly being defeated and we are undergoing an explosive rise in population. This is one of the problems we shall need to deal with. Thus, you see, the advance of science has driven us into an entirely new age—an age where war is impossible. That is the biggest revolution which has ever taken place since the beginning of civilization.

Can we adjust human society to these great changes? Some people think we cannot. I believe we can. But it depends upon whether the people of the world realize what it is we have to face up to, and make it possible for our governments to lead us to a new golden age.

*Boyd Orr / Brecht*



**Nikolai Semenov (USSR)**  
Nobel Prize for Chemistry, 1956

**W**HAT is the situation facing us today? Science has the means to bring happiness and contentment to the world. But should a new war break out (it would inevitably be an atomic one) then mankind would experience the most dreadful fate it has ever known.

Which road will humanity take? The decision rests with us, on our goodwill, our efforts and our determination. What we can and must do is to put an end, once and for all, to the testing of nuclear weapons. Though this is perhaps not the main problem it is of primary importance, for the first effect of prohibiting nuclear tests would be to prevent any further development of devastating nuclear weapons, and would help to re-establish international confidence.

This would do much to dispel the present worldwide fears and depression caused by the "cold war". It would hasten the next and most decisive action—a banning of the production and use of nuclear weapons, the destruction of all existing stocks of such weapons, general disarmament, and the renunciation of war as a means of settling international disputes.

*N Semenov*



**Daniel Bovet (Italy)**  
Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine, 1957

**W**E must see to it that university teaching is not impoverished; that humanistic teaching is not impoverished. We must see to it that, where science is concerned, authority is not transferred from the university to politics. We must do everything to avoid the militarization of our endeavours and our culture.

The question of the degree of responsibility of the scientist, and particularly the physicist, for all our weapons, all our wars, has sometimes been raised. Let me take up his defence—a task which is easier for me as I am not a physicist.

Science is innocent of the crimes of which it is accused. The only guilty party is society—a society insufficiently permeated with the scientific spirit.

*Daniel Bovet*

Photos Nobel Foundation



# The truth behind the veil of facts

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by José Ortega y Gasset

**F**OR centuries the sidereal facts of this world were set clear before the eyes of humans; yet what those facts meant, what they presented to man, what they made evident to him, was by no means a reality, but quite the opposite—an enigma, a profound secret, a problem before which man trembled in terror.

Facts, then, come to be like the figures in hieroglyphic writing. Have you ever noted the paradoxical character of such figures? There they are, holding up their clean profiles to us so ostentatiously; but that very appearance of clarity is there for the purpose of presenting us with an enigma, of producing in us not clarity, but confusion. The hieroglyphic figure says to us: "You see me clearly? Good—now what you see of me is not my true being. I am here to warn you that I am not my own essential reality. My reality, my meaning, lies behind me and is hidden by me. In order to arrive at it, you must not fix your attention on me, nor take me for reality; on the contrary, you will have to interpret me, and this means that in order to arrive at the true and inward meaning of this hieroglyph, you must search for something very different from the aspect which its figures offer."

Science is the interpretation of facts. By themselves, facts do not give us reality; on the contrary, they hide it, which is to say that they present us with the problem of reality. If there were no facts, there would be no problem, there would be no enigma, there would be nothing hidden which it is necessary to de-hide, to dis-cover. The word which the Greeks used for truth is *aletheia*, which means discovery, taking away the veil that covers and hides a thing. Facts cover up reality; while we are in the midst of their innumerable swarmings we are in chaos and confusion. In order to discover reality we must for a moment lay aside the facts that surge about us, and remain alone with our minds. Then, on our own risk and account, we imagine a reality, or to put it another way, we construct an imaginary reality, a pure invention of our own; then, following in solitude the guidance of our own personal imagining, we find what aspect, what visible shapes, in short, what facts would be produced by that imaginary reality. It is then that we come out of our imaginative solitude, out from our pure and isolated mental state, and compare those facts which the imagined reality would produce with the actual facts that surround us. If they mate happily one with

another, this means that we have deciphered the hieroglyph, that we have discovered the reality which the facts covered and kept secret.

That labour is what science is. As you see, it consists of two different operations: one purely imaginative and creative, which man produces out of his own most free substance; the other a confronting of that which is not man, of that which surrounds him, the facts, the data. Reality is not a datum, not something given or bestowed, but a construction which man makes out of the given material. ■

May 1964

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**JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET (1883-1953)**, internationally known Spanish philosopher and essayist, exercised a strong intellectual influence throughout Europe and the Spanish-speaking world. Among his many works translated into English are *La Rebelión de las masas* (The Revolt of the Masses) and *España invertebrada* (Invertebrate Spain). The text on this page is taken from *Man and Crisis* (published by W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, 1958).

# The candle of learning

by Abdus Salam

*Pakistani physicist Abdus Salam, founder and director of the Unesco-sponsored International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, and professor of theoretical physics at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, was awarded the 1979 Nobel Prize for Physics. The prize, which he shared with two American physicists, Sheldon Glashow and Steven Weinberg of Harvard University, was awarded for work in electromagnetic interaction between elementary particles. Shortly after the announcement of the award, Professor Salam, who has had a long and fruitful association with Unesco, was invited to the Organization's headquarters in Paris to receive the congratulations of the Unesco Executive Board. The article below consists of extracts from his address.*

concourse can take place, where one can light a candle from a candle; secondly, there has to be an interest in developing societies to give the topmost priority to the acquisition of knowledge, just as, for example, the Japanese did after the Meiji revolution by enshrining the acquiring of knowledge in their constitution.

Regretfully, if I may speak the truth and if I look at the world of developing countries as it is today, I see that neither of these requirements is being met. The opportunities for international concourse are fast shrinking, with greater and greater restrictions on acceptance of overseas scholars from developing countries. It is becoming increasingly clear that soon the developing world will need internationally-run, United Nations-run, Unesco-run, institutions, universities of science, not just for research as at the United Nations University in Tokyo, but for high-level teaching of traditional technology and science, both pure and applied. The second prerequisite which I mentioned, a passionate desire on the part of the developing countries for scientific knowledge and the removal of all barriers to its acquisition, is unfortunately non-existent.

I would like to appeal, first, to the delegates from the developing countries, of which I am one. I wish to make a personal

appeal. Science and technology are your responsibility. Your men of science are precious assets. Prize them; give them opportunities to participate in the scientific and technological development of your countries. Do not leave them out. The goal of increasing the 2 billion dollars which the poorer countries currently spend on non-military science and research, to the 20 billion they should be spending on the basis of the norm established by the richer countries, is ultimately your responsibility.

But having said this, I would also wish to appeal to the international community, both to governments and to scientists. A world so divided where science and technology are concerned cannot endure. What is one to think when one sees that an international centre for theoretical physics has a budget of 1.5 million dollars to spend on 100 developing countries, while the great organization CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research), at Geneva, which is a joint organization of European nations, has a budget of one-third of a billion dollars? That is the scale on which scientific research has to be conducted in order to be effective. ■

**T**HE question which I wish to lead up to is, are we in the developing world today firmly on the road to a renaissance in the sciences, just as the West was in the twelfth century at the time of Michael the Scot?

For this renaissance to happen, there are two prerequisites: one, the availability of places like Toledo where international

November 1979



# My first steps in space

by *Aleksei Leonov*

Photo © APN, Moscow

**On 18 March 1965, Aleksei Leonov became the first man to leave a space vehicle and walk about in outer space. He described his extraordinary adventure in this article specially written for the *Unesco Courier*.**

ONLY the unforgettable moments at the take-off and the recollection of the long months of flight training forced me to believe in the reality of the scene that unfolded before my eyes as I viewed the spaceship while I floated through the vacuum of space. Voskhod II sailed with an awesome majesty.

Before me, blackness—an inky-black sky studded with stars that glowed but did not twinkle; they seemed immobilized. Nor did the sun look the same as when seen from Earth. It had no aureole or corona; it resembled a huge incandescent disc that seemed embedded in the velvet black of the sky of outer space. Space itself appeared as a bottomless pit. It will never be possible to see the cosmos the same way on Earth.

Below me our blue planet drifted by. It did not look round but completely flat, like a giant physical map. Only the curvature of the horizon showed that it was round.

Two minutes after the ship had been placed in orbit, Pavel Belyayev, Commander of Voskhod II, and I began making preparations for my exit into space.

When we were over Kamchatka, Com-

mander Belyayev helped me to put on the cylinder containing my air supply. I checked the connexions linking my breathing mixture to the spacesuit. Belyayev opened the inner door of the air lock. Together we fastened to my spacesuit the tether cable that would keep me attached to the ship. Built into the tether was the telephone cable that would be my link with the ship and Earth. I unstrapped myself from the seat and floated into the chamber of the air lock.

I gave a hand signal to the Commander. The inner door closed behind me. Belyayev at once began to empty the chamber of air in order to equalize the pressure with that outside the ship. I could feel this happening from the way my spacesuit became inflated. Suddenly the outer door of the air lock opened into space. A blinding burst of sunlight poured into the chamber. I made my way forward in the lock towards the exit and poked my head out. We were over the Mediterranean.

I found myself spinning and was powerless to control it. I had had the same experience when Belyayev and I were practising in the aeroplane-laboratory the tech-

nique of exit and re-entry under conditions of weightlessness. So I did nothing about it. I merely waited for the twisting of the tether to slow down the rotations. I could have checked this by grabbing hold of the tether, but I preferred to keep on rolling because this enabled me to see better.

While I was drifting in space, I was always in telephone contact with Pavel Belyayev and with Earth. I spoke to Yuri Gagarin who was on duty in the control room of the spaceport. I heard Radio Moscow announce the launching of our craft. While over the Yenisei, Commander Belyayev gave me the signal to re-enter the ship. I was feeling wonderful, in excellent spirits, and was in no hurry to leave open space.

I tried to enter the air lock directly, but this proved anything but easy. The inflated spacesuit constricted my movements. I had to use all my strength to re-enter, but before long I was back in the cabin alongside Pavel Belyayev.

So ended the experiment in which a man climbed out of a capsule into space. I had spent twenty minutes outside the cabin. During this time, Voskhod II had gone far from the Mediterranean, over which we had been travelling when I first went into the air lock—we were now approaching the Pacific. ■

June 1965

# African childhood

by Camara Laye

**K**OUROUSSA in Guinea, West Africa, my birthplace and the traditional home of my forebears, is a typical Malinke village; the Djeliba River which flows past it dominates the life of its mainly agricultural population. Kouroussa is situated some 700 kilometres from the coast and is reached by train or automobile.

In my childhood, Kouroussa was a cluster of round *banco* (clay-walled) huts topped by conical thatched roofs. The village housed various *kapila*, or extended families, bound together by a love that welded them into united, close-knit groups.

From my studies of the oral tradition of West Africa, undertaken over the past twenty years, I know today that Tabon Wana Fran Camara was an ancestor of mine. He was a contemporary of the great kings and leaders of the Mandingo, a people formed of a confederation of tribes which constituted the basis of the Malian empire.

According to our elders, the snake spirit of our race belonged first to Fran Camara and made him a skilled and respected craftsman. As a child I was taken by my father to see the snake spirit whom I got to know very well. The source of my father's skill in the shaping of wood and the working of metal, the snake spirit was also his trusted adviser in the art of controlling his colleagues.

In those days men protected themselves with all manner of *greegrees* (charms); it was a time of revealers of things hidden, and of healers, some of whom could really heal.

A child in Kouroussa did not belong to his parents but to his lineage group which was responsible for him and took care of his education. The individual remained linked to the group which was held to have given him life, and it was within the group that he continued to live.

This solidarity, or rather this source of life, made itself felt on important occasions.

Should a villager fall ill, the men and women would visit the sufferer on the way to work in the fields in the morning and again on their return in the evening.

But it was above all at the time of a death that the solidarity of Kouroussa was seen at its best. Work was abandoned so that everyone could lavish attention on the one who was dying and on his or her family.

Today, many of the ancient customs are unsuited to the modern age and have had to be abandoned. But the solidarity arising from these exchanges created a current of sympathy and was a positive aspect of traditional society. Solidarity was a vital force that existed in all African villages.

In the past, the face, the figure or the animal that took shape from the wood in our sculptor's hands and the varied output of our sculptor-ironsmiths were imbued with mystery and were designed for use in worship and magic. It was a time when the sculptor-ironsmith was not merely a craftsman, but a sorcerer, a priest in constant contact with fire, which he used first to melt the ore and then to breathe shape into the metal. It was a time when the hoe was not merely a tool for turning the soil, but an instrument which controlled the earth and the harvest.

And though these skills have never been completely lost, they have, inevitably, become rarer in a society whose ancient animism has been confronted with new ideas. ■

March 1979

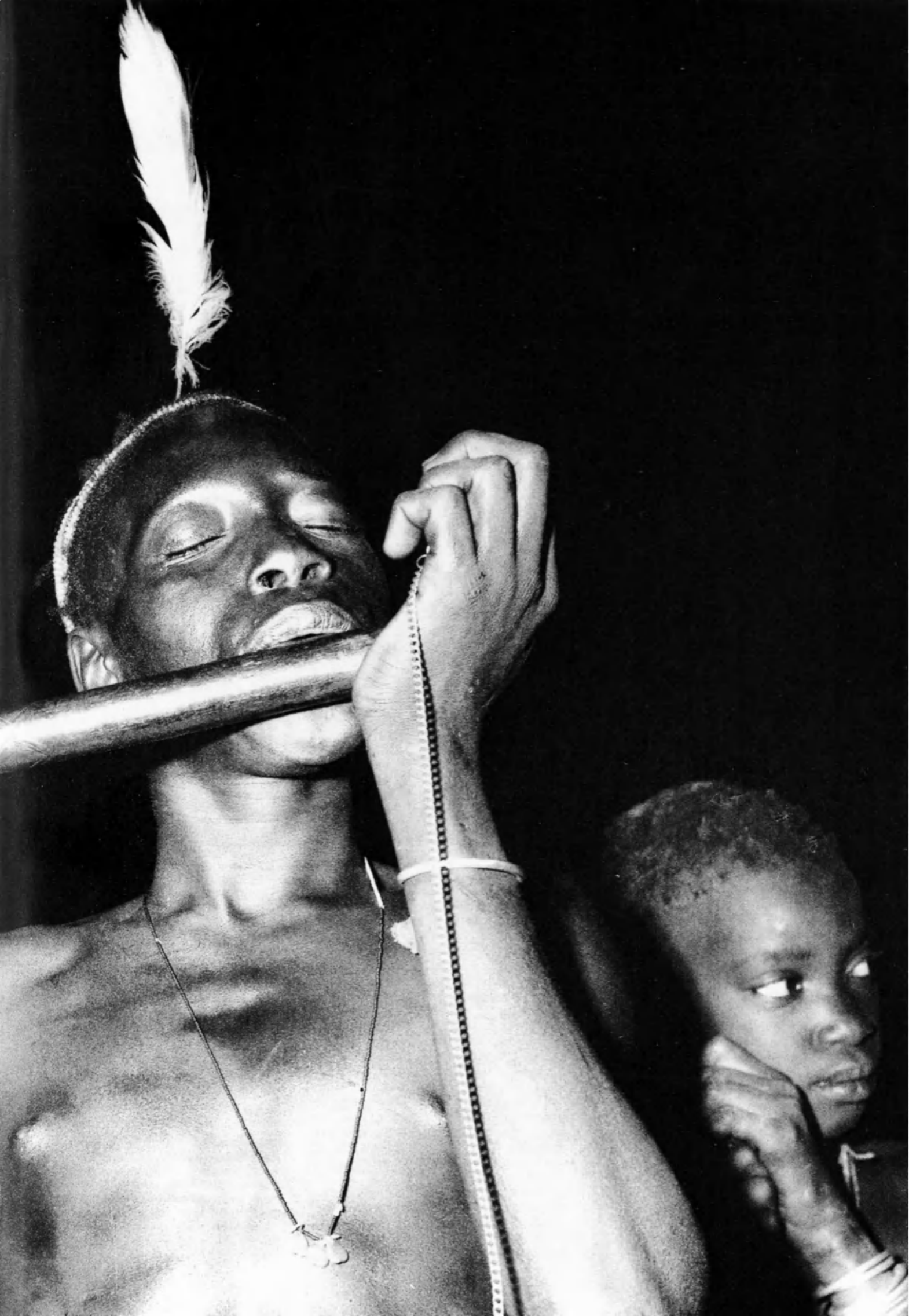
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**CAMARA LAYE** (1928-1980), Guinean writer, attended the Qur'anic school and the French primary school at Kouroussa in northern Guinea, and later continued his studies in Paris. He told the story of his childhood in *Africa* in *L'Enfant Noir* (*The Black Child*).

*Evoking the harmony of traditional ways of life in Africa, the Togolese sociologist F. N'Sougan Agblemagnon wrote that "All form part of a single whole which is Nature. ... People must live in the world of Nature, co-ordinating their rhythms with those of Nature. This is a form of happiness which African children learn in their earliest years." Right, musician of the Basari people (Republic of Guinea).*

Photo © Dominique Darbois, Paris







# The sting in the fairy tale

by Jorge Enrique Adoum

‘A T one time or another,’ says Bruno Bettelheim, “every child dreams of being a prince or a princess.” Yet what child of the tropical plains or plateaux of Latin America would ever have dreamed of such a thing if these (fairy tale) images had not been imposed upon him, images made much more concrete by Gustave Doré’s at times gruesome engravings and Walt Disney’s cloying cartoons, and made superficially more real by the stage versions of these tales in which schoolchildren are obliged to take part?

Given the authors and the immediate audience for whom they were writing, the kings and queens, princes and princesses who figure in these tales were inevitably generous and charitable, beloved of their subjects and respected by their peers. They had neither armies nor police forces (at most a few kind-hearted gamekeepers) and they never declared war. Only rarely were their subjects sent to prison or to the executioner’s block, and then only through the spiteful machinations of a wicked stepmother. The queens and princesses, moreover, were all remarkable for their beauty. The young Latin American was not slow in recognizing that, in comparison with the realities of his life, all this was nothing more than a huge adult lie.

In European fairy tales, which draw on Scandinavian, German and Slav traditions, the characters are naturally white-skinned, blue-eyed and fair-haired (with the sole exception of Snow White whose hair was “as black as ebony”). Yet in Latin American society, where economic discrimination almost always goes hand in hand with discrimination of a racial nature, the tacit identification of this type of beauty with goodness may have undesirable repercussions. Young indigenous and mixed-race Latin Americans who, quite naturally, reject this discrimination may tend to develop a sense of inferiority, especially since at school and in daily life they are already set apart by the more or less white children whose servants they often are.

In the Grimm brothers’ version of Cinderella this identification is quite deliberate: “This woman (the stepmother) had brought with her two daughters who, though beautiful and fair of complexion, were nevertheless evil and black-hearted.” In establishing the exceptional nature of this case, the “nevertheless” betrays the ideological content of the sentence. If we were to turn the sentence round and say that



Photo © Roger Canessa, Toulon, France

“the daughters, though ugly and black-skinned, were nevertheless good and pure in heart”, the racist implication, however involuntary it may be, would become brutally apparent. It is easy to see why, for Latin American children, the most comforting, or at any rate the least cruel, of these stories is Hans Andersen’s *Ugly Duckling*.

A vital element in this literature, this ideology, is the solution of problems not by human endeavour but by providential means which constitute, moreover, the reward for submission. A king’s son transforms Cinderella’s life, other princes do the same for Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, and a dragon and a soldier arrive in the nick of time to save Bluebeard’s third wife. Two centuries later the situation is brought up to date. At closing time, a humble washer-up in a bar sings at her work and a film director seated in a corner “discovers” her and makes her a film star. Unfortunately there are very few Marilyn Monroes; millions of young Latin American match-sellers, goose-girls and Cinderellas are destined only to become adult Cinderellas. They

have no fairy godmother with a magic wand to free them from their toil and change their rags into silken robes and their sandals into glass slippers. They have no prince to come to their rescue, not even a more prosaic modern equivalent—the son of a president, of an industrial magnate or of a banker. For most women the dream of Cinderella becomes the harsh reality of Snow White; if she wants a roof over her head she can stay and be provided for so long as she is prepared to “make the beds, cook, wash, sew, spin and keep everything clean and tidy” for the dwarfs. ■

January 1979

**JORGE ENRIQUE ADOUM**, Ecuadorian writer, has published several volumes of poetry, including an anthology, *No son todos los que están - Poemas* (1949-1979), a novel, *Entre Marx y una mujer desnuda*, and two plays, *La subida a los infiernos* and *El sol bajo las patas de los caballos*, the latter of which has been published in English as *The Sun Trampled Beneath the Horses’ Hooves*.



## *Disabled characters in search of an author*

by Tordis Orjasaeter

**I**T is important for handicapped children to meet themselves in children's books, to see pictures and read about children like themselves, their lives, problems, feelings, circumstances. And it is important for other children to get acquainted with handicapped children.

Mentally retarded, physically handicapped or other disabled children almost never see children like themselves on television or in films, unless the programme specifically concerns handicapped children. They almost never belong to their environments in the mass media as naturally as other children do.

During the last decade quite a few books have appeared about handicapped children, but many of them are not good enough. They often activate our mechanisms of rejection and make integration even more difficult. Because literature influences us for better or for worse, especially when we are children, it is important to evaluate it critically.

There is the hidden rejection found in many well-intentioned books where healthy young people who meet handicapped persons are filled with gratitude for their

own good health. The underlying attitude is that the normal thing is to be healthy, beautiful and charming—and the handicap somehow is a kind of punishment for our sins.

The blind characters in children's books are mostly girls—it seems so suitable that girls should be sweet and gentle and play the piano. The characters in wheelchairs are mostly boys, extraordinarily clever boys, the best companions anyone can think of and such excellent referees in a football or baseball game. The handicap is compensated far beyond reasonable limits.

There are so many misleading books about mentally handicapped children. Some typical examples: many authors use the description *ill* when they write about mentally retarded children. They are not ill, no more than other children, unless they have measles or colds or something like that. They are not ill, they are retarded in their mental development.

We need books containing good psychological descriptions of the handicapped person as one of the main characters, and books where handicapped

children belong to their environment as naturally as do other people. Happily, books exist in which the author shows both insight and poetic power.

Most children's books about the handicapped tell us about children with physical or sensory handicaps, and the authors' intention is quite obviously to make the readers identify themselves with these children. Books about mentally handicapped children are fewer in number and mostly written from the point of view of a sister or brother.

During the last decade we have seen a number of photographic picture books about handicapped children. Children who read them are usually as fascinated by this documentary material as by fiction. It acquaints them with handicapped children in their daily life. Such books are often excellent for handicapped children as well; they can look at pictures of and read about children who look like themselves and have to struggle with some of the same frustrations.

Especially interesting are picture books made by authors or artists who are themselves parents or siblings of handicapped children, using their personal experience and love, trying to tell other children how it can be for a family to have a handicapped son or daughter, sister or brother. ■

June 1981

**TORDIS ORJASAETER**, of Norway, associate professor at the Norwegian Advanced College for Special Education, is the author of several books on children's literature. This article has been extracted from a background paper prepared for a Seminar on Books and Disabled Children, organized by Unesco in co-operation with the Bologna Children's Book Fair in April 1981.

# All about Alice

by Anthony Burgess

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**L**EWIS Carroll, who wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), was, in private life, a professor of mathematics at the University of Oxford named Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.

He produced other books as well—mostly on difficult mathematical subjects.

Lewis Carroll was also the first of the great photographers, and his studies of children—especially of little Alice Liddell, who was both the heroine and the first reader of the two great books—have a charm and a mastery of technique envied by the snappers of today.

His love of girls, which he was too innocent to interpret sexually, had perhaps something to do with his desire to remain a child himself.

He never married, he was deeply and innocently religious, he liked to be cut off from the dangerous outside world. But the publication of the two Alice books brought him fame.

Both the Alice books are fantasies, aspects of the love of nonsense which was prevalent in England in the Victorian age. There was no nonsense in the rest of the world.

Alice's adventures take the form of dreams in which bizarre things happen, but these things are based on a more serious approach to language than we can permit ourselves in waking life. By language I mean, of course, the English language in which Carroll wrote; many of his dream-jokes are impossible to render into other tongues.

There is a strange poem which one of the characters, Humpty Dumpty, kindly explains to Alice, that sums up the possibilities of the dreaming world. It is called "Jabberwocky" and it begins:

*Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.  
All mimsy were the borogroves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.*

"Slithy" is both slimy and lithe, to "gyre" is to girate, to "gimble" is both to gambol like a lamb and to turn like a gimlet or corkscrew. Humpty Dumpty calls these "portmanteau words", because, like portmanteaux, several things can be crammed into them. James Joyce saw the possibilities of this Jabberwocky language and, in his great novel *Finnegans Wake*, which presents an adult, not a child's, dream, he used the technique. What, with Carroll, began as a joke ends, in Joyce, as the most serious attempt ever made to show how the dreaming mind operates.

To be honest, Alice is not a very nice little girl. She is far too sharp and bossy and proud. She lacks humility, but—and this is an aspect of the British imperialist spirit—she also lacks fear. It requires great



Drawing by Sir John Tenniel

courage, at the trial of the Knave of Hearts, with the Queen shouting "Off with her head!", for her to cry: "You're nothing but a pack of cards!" and to see the chaos of the mass of pasteboard that, a minute ago, was an imperialist society whirling about her head. She is transported to mad colonial territories and retains something of her sanity. She is very British and very Victorian, but she is also admirably and universally human. ■

June 1982

**"Off with her head!" the Queen shouted at the top of her voice. Nobody moved. "Who cares for you?" said Alice (she had grown to her full size by this time). "You're nothing but a pack of cards!" At this the whole pack rose up into the air and came flying down upon her. ...**

**ANTHONY BURGESS**, prolific British novelist, critic and man of letters, has published most recently *Flame into Being*, a study of D.H. Lawrence (1985) and *Homage to Qwertyuiop* (1986), a collection of essays.

# A Third World view of human rights

by Radhika Coomaraswamy

**T**O a great extent, the Third World has not played a creative part in the formulation and implementation of human rights. Though human rights embody many tenets found in all the world's cultures, the theoretical origins of the human rights movement are distinctively Western. The pillar concepts of the movement—liberty, equality, material welfare and self-determination—are formulated in the manner envisioned by the modern movements of nationalism, liberalism and socialism. These movements originated in the West but have influenced political values throughout the world.

These historical origins alone have made many cultural nationalists advocate the rejection of the human rights movement as a universal norm. Violations of human rights are justified in terms of the illegitimacy of certain human rights values in the Third World context. This remains a major crisis for the human rights movement in the latter half of the twentieth century.

What approach should be adopted to reconcile the tension between the inherited tradition of human rights and major developments in the non-Western world? It is inevitable that any such reappraisal must begin with a view of history as a collective experience, a synthetic process of human rights learning and growth. At present there is a need for Third World insights into human rights protection, but the process must be a creative one and not a denial of the very concept of human rights; a process of supplementation and not of derogation.

The problem posed by this polemic between North and South has two aspects. The first is the reconciliation of non-Western cultural values with the basic concepts of human rights. The second is the integration of the "development" experience into the norms and structures of human rights protection. One method of moving towards resolution of these problems would be to regard human rights not as ends in themselves but as a process which implies a certain approach to law, politics and economics. It should be seen as an approach which accentuates the human dilemma above other considerations.

The human rights movement cannot immediately be removed from the context of its own history and structures. To do so would be to deny it content and increase ambiguity.

The success of the human rights movement in the future of developing societies is greatly dependent on its ability to convince the youth of these nations that human rights must be an important, if not primary, concern of any political ideology. It is therefore imperative that teaching human rights be considered a fundamental aspect of the school curriculum.

Though women's rights have received much attention in the Western world, the dilemma is more fundamental and complex in developing societies. On the one hand, the problem is political, legal and economic, especially in relation to the so-called "modern" sector. The human rights approach to women's rights has most relevance to this sector where the structure and style of the industrial establishment are based on those either in Western Europe or the Communist countries of Eastern Europe.

The "techno-rational" principles of management and policy-making are especially relevant to the structures of protection formulated and implemented by the human rights

movement. As the organizations in the modern sector are prototypes of their European counterparts, the human rights issues greatly resemble those which are present in the developed societies. The issues are, nevertheless, accentuated because of a limited sharing of resources.

On another level, the problem of women's rights in developing societies has enormous social and psychological dimensions. In many ways, the issues of women's rights have accentuated the constant tension between tradition and modernity. There is an important and fundamental need to extricate women's rights from the constraint of traditional ideas and institutions, while acknowledging the creative role that such concepts may play in other areas of social and political life. ■

*Resting in the shade, India.*

*August-September 1982*

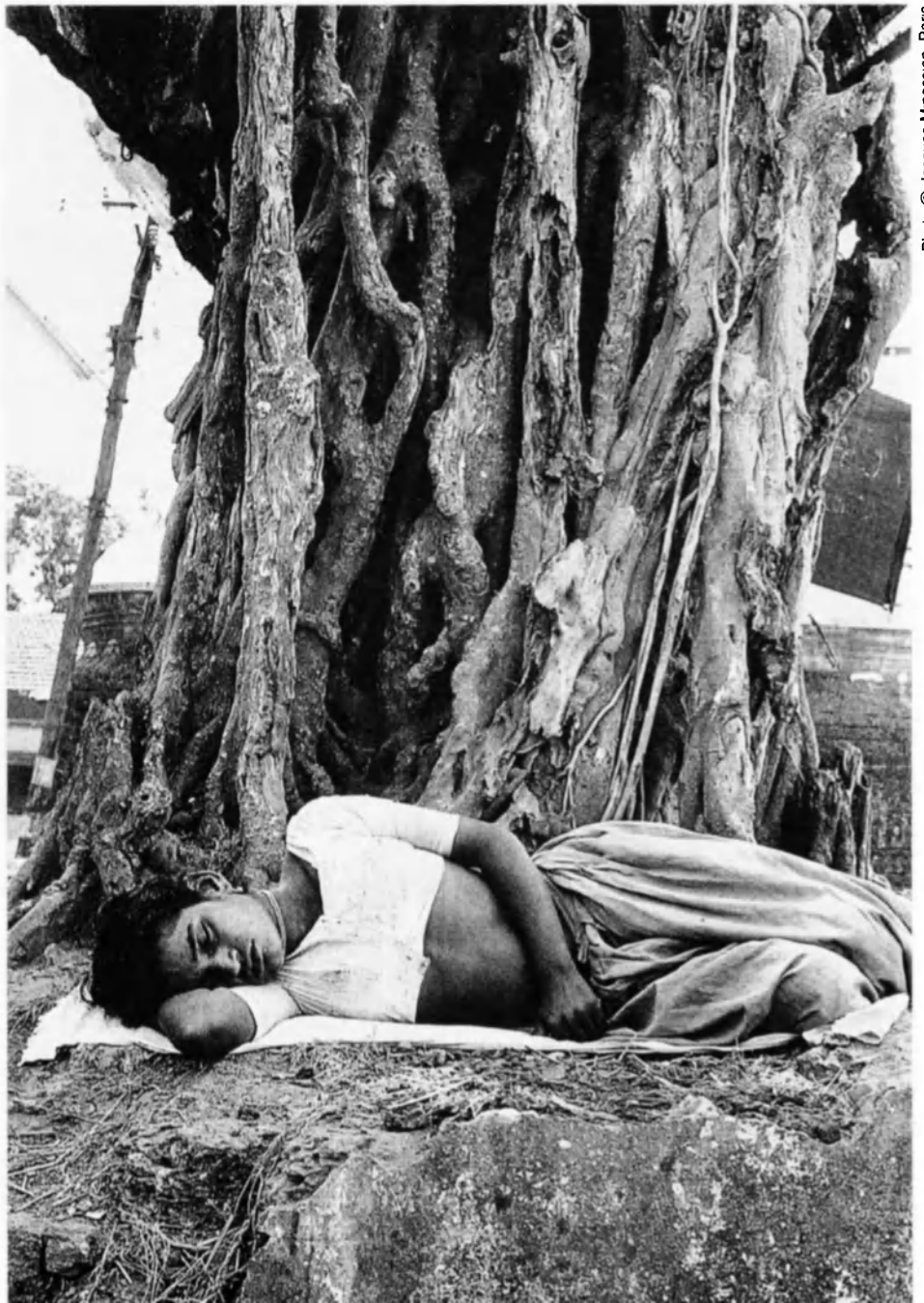


Photo © Jacques Minassian, Paris

**RADHIKA COOMARASWAMY** is a Sri Lankan lawyer who has specialized in human rights research and education.





# Women of the Mediterranean: tradition and change

by Nilüfer Göle

*"It is up to us to dismantle the mechanisms of invisibility, all those processes which impoverish our relationship with the world, impose silence on the majority of women, and bring to the fore a few of us, under certain conditions, to legitimize the exclusion process as a whole."*

*Fatma Oussedik (Algeria)*

**R**UNNING in filigree through studies on the situation of women in various Mediterranean countries is a common thread: a desire to seek out the feminine presence wherever it lies hidden, in the political and cultural as well as the religious and urban context.

The two dominant aspirations of feminist movements in the industrialized countries—the equality of the sexes and the search for a specifically feminine identity—

find an echo in the perceptions of women of the Mediterranean countries.

In the industrialized countries these two themes made headway only with difficulty. ... Does not the demand for both equality and recognition of a specific identity leave women in a "Catch 22" situation?

This thorny problem also faces the women of the Mediterranean. The societies in which they live are exposed to the onslaught of the hegemonic cultural model

of the industrialized countries, a homogenizing model conceived in terms of the Universal, of History, of Progress, as opposed to regional, national and cultural specificities.

Mediterranean societies are not, by nature, modern societies in the individualistic, egalitarian, liberal sense. Liberal ideology situates and defines Western society both in the "public" area (social relationships) and in the "private area" (the relationship between the sexes); when it intrudes on Mediterranean societies, it not only meets strong resistance with regard to matters concerning the "private" area but also creates a duality in the social sphere. Italy is an example of a Mediterranean country in which these two influences cohabit and even create a geographical dichotomy between the North and the South, with the northern influence more and more gaining the upper hand.

The complexity of the situation in which Mediterranean women find themselves results from the specificity of their cultural heritage, the impact of a hegemonic cultural model and the claims of the feminist movement. The conflict between the sexes thus takes on a particular coloration in each country as a result of the interaction and the opposition between these elements in the religious, political and cultural fields.

In the political and religious context of the Arab Mediterranean the question arises as to whether or not the Islamic cultural heritage constitutes an obstacle to equality of the sexes. Must the Arab-Islamic past be "mutilated" in order to enable equality of the sexes to be established, or should this past be sifted and analysed, in which case might not a measure of hidden political power of women stand revealed?

In Morocco, women who have exercised direct power have been given a dehumanized image, being represented either as something "monstrous" or as pertaining to the "sacred". However, the exercise of indirect power via a husband or a son seems to have been more acceptable to the extent that it conjured up the image of the devoted wife or mother.

Examination of the specific form domination of women takes in Algeria comes down to an examination of the various aspects of Algerian women's "invisibility", that is to say, the various forms of social rejection to which they are subject as being "Other". It also involves study of the struggle of those women who have attempted to escape from this cloak of "invisibility" by acquiring a certain autonomy in their private lives or by outright militancy.

One aspect at least of the condition of Mediterranean women can be defined. From the situation of Algerian women to that of Italian women there is a progression from "silent" action towards conscious, collective action by women. The "silent" way is perhaps peculiar to Muslim societies; nevertheless, outspoken, independent expression by women is possible only within the context of a lay society. ■

April 1985

**NILUFER GOLE** is a Turkish sociologist and the author of many articles and studies on women's participation in public affairs, the discrimination from which they suffer and the solutions proposed by feminist movements.

# Self-portrait of a woman writer

by Ding Ling

I am a Chinese writer, and for the first sixty years of my life I lived, worked and wrote in the wake of the Chinese people, by whose difficulties I have been guided and inspired. In this way I came to know the world and its contradictions, but at the cost of many trials and tribulations. Today, at the age of seventy-seven, one hope remains—to be able to serve my fellow countrymen until I die.

I was born in 1904, at a time when the Manchu Empire was in its death throes, into a family of notables, a breeding-ground of mandarins such as described in those great classic Chinese novels *Dream of the Red Chamber*, by Cao Xueqin, and *The Scholars*, by Wu Jingzi.

My family was a replica in miniature of feudal society in decline and its history was a chequered one. The branch of the family to which my father belonged was impoverished and going rapidly downhill, and when I was four years old my father died completely ruined. My lonely childhood gave me an insight into the miserable lot of the people in Chinese society at the beginning of the twentieth century and opened my eyes to the selfish attitudes which governed relationships between one man and another. I found comfort in, and learned much from, reading the great Chinese classic novels. European Renaissance literature and foreign literature of the nineteenth century was also grist to my mill. And it was this reading that sowed in me the seed of my vocation as a writer.

Ding Ling during a visit to a farm cooperative in 1955



I became a writer, not out of personal vanity or out of a love of art for art's sake, but to defend my fellow countrymen and help them to achieve liberty. The same objectives motivated other writers, both my contemporaries and those of the following generation, to engage in a literature of combat.

I wanted to give myself up totally to the cause of the people, to share their destiny, their cares and their sufferings, to live and die with them. During the 1920s my female characters had been petty bourgeois intellectuals in revolt; from the 1930s onwards they were based on working women and peasants.

I took part in the agrarian reform which abolished the feudal land system and redistributed the land. In the new China that had just been established I was given the task of helping in the reorganization of literary life. So absorbed was I in this task that I almost forgot that I too was a writer. It was only when this practical work was completed that I began once again to be haunted by the characters buried deep within my soul. I became eager to reveal their existence by writing them into my novels, stories and essays.

When I write, my pen follows the thread of my imagination and I stick to my first impulses, not trying to refashion the characters I have known and loved in my life and who become the heroes and heroines of my books. ■

December 1982

**DING LING (1904-1986)** is one of the most popular figures in modern Chinese literature. Among her novels translated into English is *The Sun Shines over the Sangkan River*.



The following two articles, in which the Italian writer Alberto Moravia and the Canadian thinker Marshall McLuhan set forth their reflections on the future of the book in the modern world, were specially written for the January 1972 issue of the *Unesco Courier*, devoted to International Book Year.

# The image and the word

by Alberto Moravia

**F**EW persons appear to have given much thought to the fact that the image owes its success to the entry into history's arena of large masses of humanity, including their new literates and total illiterates.

The illiterate person undeniably has a distinctive visual awareness. For him the whole world is a vast system of visual signs and symbols waiting to be interpreted and translated.

So in the first place, what we are dealing with is not so much a decline of the book as a triumph of the image, a triumph due in far smaller measure to those who have always been readers than to those who only yesterday did not know how to read.

If this is so, as I myself believe, we can expect at any time to see a steady decline in the influence of the image and a corresponding resurgence of the book. In other words, as millions upon millions of illiterate men and women learn to read and write, they are likely to abandon the primitive, direct language of the image in favour of the more elaborate, more indirect language of the printed word.

That this hypothesis is plausible is borne out by the huge circulation of paperbacks. The paperback scatters the seeds of the culture of all ages and all regions wholesale upon completely virgin soil. In the space of a few years, the entire population of our planet, only now barely emerging from illiteracy, has been inundated, without any preparation, with the culture of thirty centuries.

The danger is that this culture will not be assimilated, but thrown together, condensed and reduced to mere formulas and synthetic aggregation in a vast grinding operation of destruction. After which the

masses would apparently be free to revert to the image, thenceforward the sole medium of communication.

Besides, the image itself has recently appeared to be reaching its limits. The fact that the spectator takes in the picture passively, without any attempt at interpretation, ultimately results in the picture itself losing its full force and becoming a victim of this passivity.

The decline of the book is by no manner of means, then, a certainty. Even if we ignore the fundamental fact that the book springs from nature, that is from the faculty natural to all human beings to utter words and shape them into organized speech, we should not overlook the fact that the book is made up of words which are "also", under certain conditions of poetic creativity, images. Thus there is no substantial difference between the image suggested by the book and the image that appears on the screen. In fact there is only one difference, though an important one: the image on the screen allows for no play of imagination; it is what it is.

Nevertheless, we must distinguish between one type of reading and another type of reading, between one book and another book. Reading some books is no more than a simple physical exercise. For a book to be properly "read" it must first be really "written".

A book, then, must be thought out and created or it is not a book. Indeed, the future of the book is bound up with the poetry, creativeness, descriptive power and imagery of the writing. The future of the book will be assured if we succeed in "writing" books; it will perish if we content ourselves with merely printing them. ■

January 1972

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**ALBERTO MORAVIA**, Italian writer, is one of the great names of contemporary world literature. He has published some 15 novels, from *Gli Indifferenti* (1929, *The Time of Indifference*) to *1934* (1982) as well as volumes of short stories, five plays and many articles on social and political subjects.

*It will take until the year 2000 for the precious book collections of the libraries of Florence, ravaged by the floods of 1966, to be fully restored. Right, a cleaning and drying centre set up in a former tobacco-curing shop.*



Photo © Gérard Dufresne-Idea Focus, Paris







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# The yestermorrow of the book

by Marshall McLuhan

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**W**HEN Gutenberg transformed the European manuscript into a new uniform and repeatable package, he ended the regime of oral scholastic philosophy and provided the means of retrieving the world of pagan authors.

At the same time that the new intensity of words as visual objects came into play against the old oral ground, words became visual counters in a new "objective" sense. The world of resonance and multi-levelled

depth of verbal structures which had been the basis of the exegesis both of the sacred page and the Book of Nature, was suddenly muted by high visual stress.

New kinds of rational authority were substituted for the old resonance with its affinity for magic and metamorphosis.

Clearly, scholastic philosophy was a form of discourse that would not do in the new era. It was doomed, not because of its content or meaning, but because it was chatty,

"The new electronic interdependence," wrote Marshall McLuhan, "recreates the world in the image of a global village," an aphorism aptly portrayed by the optical trickery of this Salvador Dali painting, *Visage paranoïaque (vertically a face, horizontally a group of villagers)*.

conversational discussion that took all manner of things into account at any given moment.

With the coming of print, specialism developed because the individual reader, by solitary effort, could speed over the super-highways of assembly-line printing without the company or comment of a group of fellow learners and disputants.

With the advent of telegraph and telephone and radio and TV as service environments, totally new figure-ground relationships have come into play. In science and in fiction, in art and in politics, the fact of audience involvement in all aspects of the social process has become an irresistible datum.

So far as the book is concerned, the mode and means of involvement of reader as co-author and of audiences as actors has been the symbolic or discontinuous form in poetry and painting, and music, in press and novel, and in drama.

Print made handwriting "obsolete", but there is more handwriting in the present day than there ever was before printing.

Obsolescence is not extinction but the necessary matrix of innovation. Therefore handwriting has blossomed out in many new forms, including that of the typescript.

In the same way as the information offered by the printed book is outstripped by photo and film and TV, the book has steadily hybridized with other forms of visual image giving us many new art forms.

There is a sense in which it is possible to speak of the book as "hardware" technology.

The paradox is, oral culture is stable and conservative, whereas the written word is fashionable and fluctuating. There is a good deal on this subject in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. For example, "correct" grammar begins with the written word. Nobody ever committed a grammatical error in an oral culture.

Alexander Pope felt that an inky smog had settled over all human consciousness in the age of Newton. What lay ahead now seems, in retrospect, to have been a considerable advance over the world that Pope saw in dissolution. In the age of video cassettes, when it will be possible to dial a book as easily as an acquaintance, totally new forms of literary experience are at hand. It is our literate job to be ready to cope with these innovations. ■

January 1972

**HERBERT MARSHALL McLUHAN** (1911-1980), Canadian sociologist, was founder-director of the Centre for Culture and Technology of the University of Toronto (1963-1980). In addition to his celebrated work *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), he was also the author of *Understanding Media* (1964) and *The Medium is the Massage* (with Quentin Fiore, 1967).

# Man, the first walkie-talkie

by Victor Bunak

**S**CIENTISTS have long speculated about the origins of speech, and a great many theories have been advanced.

One of the earliest, already current in Ancient Greece, held that the first words were onomatopoeias—imitations of the sounds prehistoric man associated with various activities. Another maintained that words developed from inarticulate cries of fear, alarm, delight and so on.

But none of these theories explains how shouts or onomatopoeias could turn into articulate syllables and words, or what factors determined the development of mental activity along with the faculty of speech so closely connected with it. For it is man's ability to speak that above all distinguishes him from the animal.

Man finally left the animal world when he was at last able to reproduce in his mind coherent images of different objects and actions, to distinguish between them and to combine some with others. The mental images of these linked percepts are what we call concepts, and the capacity to form concepts was the first main feature distinguishing *Homo sapiens* from the earlier hominids.

The next stage in man's evolution was the ability to combine and diversify these concepts, a process representing a considerable development of the intellectual faculty.

The combination of percepts in a single mental operation or concept becomes possible because of its association with vocal stimulations. The sound of the voice and the corresponding movements in the mouth and throat become, as it were, symbols of concepts, a different set of vocal movements being associated with each one.

The vocal organs can produce a great many sounds, but in each language only some thirty, known as phonemes, are used. There are, however, hundreds of phoneme-combinations or syllables, and many thousands of syllable combinations.

Modern man can produce hundreds of syllables a minute, each of which requires a different use of the vocal chords, a different direction of air expelled from the lungs and

a different positioning of the tongue and the mouth cavity. The whole system of articulation can switch from one position to the next in a fraction of a second.

This mobility of the speech organs and the extremely flexible link-up of concepts are the result of a long evolution.

The first words, still few and mainly monosyllabic, related to material objects and basic facts in the lives of primitive peoples, particularly their food-gathering, and perhaps some percepts with a magical meaning. New words were formed by doubling or inverting syllables or by changes in the pitch of some sounds. First mastered by one or several members of a group, they were adopted by the group as a whole if they supplied a need, and then modified by practical use.

A major change took place at the end of the Stone Age, at the time of the fourth and final glacial period, when the direct ancestors of modern man, (*Homo sapiens*) appeared, some 50,000 to 30,000 years ago.

So far as their technology, economy and arts were concerned, the Neolithic people of the last glacial period in Europe had a standard of living and way of life that were by no means inferior to those of certain hunting and food-gathering tribes still existing today. There is no doubt that they were able to form paired combinations of concepts and words. In other words, they had fully mastered articulate speech.

The periods that followed saw the elaboration of different speech systems or languages with their own phonetic, lexical and grammatical structures.

According to historical, archaeological and linguistic research, the great basic language systems emerged in the early Age of Metals some 6,000 to 9,000 years ago, while the formation of many contemporary languages dates from historical times. ■

August-September 1972

**VICTOR BUNAK** of the USSR is one of the world's leading authorities on the early development of speech.



"He said his first word today, 'pterodactyl!'"

Cartoon Al Rose © Saturday Review, New York



*It would be virtually impossible to over-emphasize the importance of the oral tradition in Africa where, it has been said, whenever an old man dies a whole library disappears with him. In societies that have oral rather than written records, it is by word of mouth that the guardians of the collective memory hand down from one generation to the next stories, legends and poetry, society's moral values and religion, the mastery of occult forces, the secrets of initiation into different crafts, as well as detailed accounts of actual events of yesterday or today. Left, an African griot, or musician-entertainer. Griots are leading transmitters of the African oral tradition.*

So he created Fan,  
A wondrous Egg with nine divisions,  
And into it he introduced the nine  
fundamental  
States of existence.

"When this primordial Egg came to hatch, it gave birth to twenty marvellous beings that made up the whole of the universe, the sum total of existing forces and possible knowledge.

"But alas! None of those first twenty creatures proved fit to become the interlocutor (*Kuma-nyon*) that *Maa Ngala* had craved.

"So he took a bit of each of these twenty existing creatures and mixed them; and then, blowing a spark of his own fiery breath into the mixture, he created a new Being, Man, to whom he gave a part of his own name: *Maa*. And so this new being, through his name and through the divine spark introduced into him, contained something of *Maa Ngala* himself."

Synthesis of all that exists, pre-eminent receptacle of the supreme Force and confluence of all existing forces, *Maa*, Man, received as his legacy a part of the divine creative power, the gift of Mind and the Word.

*Maa Ngala* taught *Maa*, his interlocutor, the laws according to which all the elements of the cosmos were formed and continue to exist. He installed him as guardian of his universe and charged him with watching over the maintenance of universal Harmony. That is why it weighs heavy, being *Maa*.

Initiated by his creator, *Maa* later passed all that he had learned on to his descendants; and that was the beginning of the great chain of initiatory oral transmission of which the order of Komo (unlike the orders of Nama, Kore, and so on in Mali) claims to be a continuator. ■

August-September 1979

**AMADOU HAMPATE BA**, Malian writer, is a specialist in African history, cosmogony and literature. He is the author of many articles and books, including *L'Empire peul du Macina* (*The Peul Empire of Macina*), *Les Religions africaines traditionnelles* (*Traditional African Religions*) and *L'Etrange destin de Wangrin* (*Wangrin's Strange Destiny*), a work which won the Grand Prix of Black African Literature in 1974.

# The non-aligned countries pool their news

by Pero Ivacic

**N**EWs exchange, the basis of relations among news agencies, is more important today than ever before.

In recent years, news exchange has become accepted practice for most news agencies in the non-aligned world. January 1977 marked the second anniversary of the creation of the system known as the "Pool"—a multichannel flow of news reports and information between these agencies.

Current efforts to build a new international economic order inevitably stimulated initiatives for change in the structure of information, which for decades had been based on a one-way flow of news from the developed to the developing countries under the influence of a small number of news agency giants in the developed world.

On the basis of recommendations adopted at the Fourth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held in Algiers in 1973, bilateral exchanges of views took place between the news agencies of some ten non-aligned countries concerning possibilities of joint action to change the existing situation.

The Pool was officially constituted at the meeting of information ministers and news agency directors of sixty-two non-aligned countries held in New Delhi in July 1976. All the resolutions of the meeting were endorsed a month later at the Non-Aligned Summit in Colombo (Sri Lanka).

The first meeting of the Pool co-ordination committee, held in Cairo in January 1977, noted that more than forty news agencies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe were already contributing actively to the news flow of the Pool. Five news agencies were already functioning as regional or multilateral collec-

tors and redistributors of news reports and information from other agencies participating in the Pool.

The Pool is a tangible example of co-operation among equals on a voluntary and democratic basis. The manner in which it functions is the best proof of this. A news agency is considered as a participant if it transmits its selection of news reports to one or more of the Pool's collector-redistributor news agencies.

The process involved is simple. Each participant agency transmits by the means at its disposal—teleprinter, telex, airmail—one or more of its news reports daily to a Pool redistribution centre.

Each agency selects which reports it will send to the Pool. A redistributing news agency translates the reports it receives into the languages it usually transmits abroad, scrupulously respecting the substance of the news received.

This concrete form of co-operation among the non-aligned countries is in no way viewed as a challenge to or competition with existing news reporting systems. The Pool's function is to fill the previously existing vacuum in the international information system.

Interest in the Pool has been shown by several news agencies outside the non-aligned world, where the Pool is increasingly making its presence felt in the mass media.

It is obvious that a new dialogue has begun in international communication, and that the process of building a new international information system is under way. Difficulties clearly lie ahead and change will not be rapid, but the process which has been initiated cannot be arrested or reversed.

The best contribution to the quest for the most widely acceptable solutions will be to continue the dialogue among all those who have an interest in the world of information—a dialogue which must take place between equals. ■

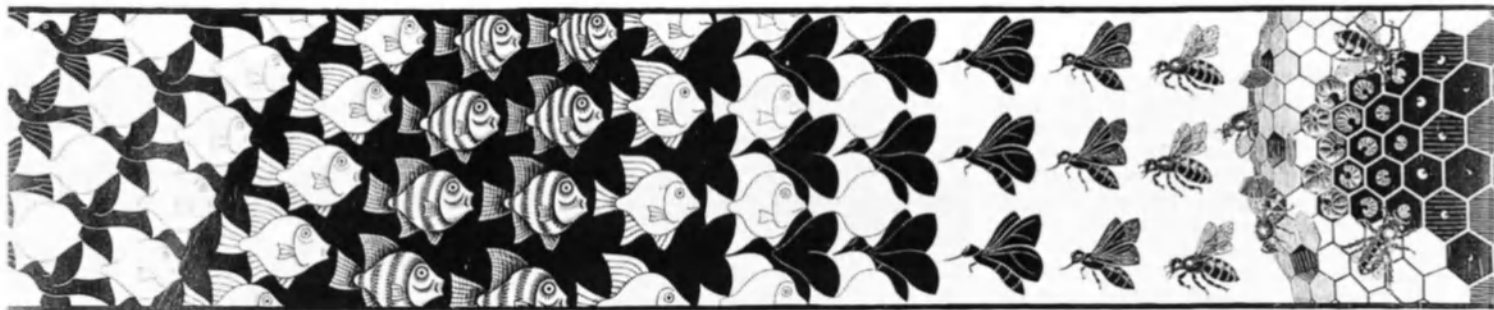
April 1977

**PERO IVACIC**, Yugoslav journalist, was, when he wrote this article, Director-General of the Yugoslav national news agency Tanjug, which played an active role in the setting up of the non-aligned countries' news pool.



Photo J.-P. Bonnotte © Gamma, Paris





# On translation

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by Octavio Paz

**E**ACH text is unique, yet at the same time it is the translation of another text. No text is entirely original, because language itself is essentially a translation. In the first place, it translates from the non-verbal world. Then, too, each sign, each sentence, is the translation of another sign, another sentence. This reasoning may even be reversed without losing any of its force and we may assert that all texts are original because every translation is different. To a certain extent every translation is an original invention and thus constitutes a unique text.

The original text never reappears in the other language: this would be impossible. Nevertheless, it is always present because, although the translation does not explicitly state as much, it refers to the original text constantly, or else converts it into a verbal object that differs from it, yet reproduces it by metonymy or metaphor. Both of these, as distinct from explanatory or free translations, are strict forms that are not incompatible with exactness. Metonymy is an indirect description; metaphor is a verbal equation.

Poetry has always been considered the form of writing that lends itself least to translation. This prejudice is surprising when we stop to think that many of the best poems in every Western language are translations, and that many of these translations have been made by outstanding poets.

The reason why many poets are unable to translate poetry is not purely psychological in nature—though the cult of self does enter into it—but functional. Poetic translation is an operation similar to poetic creation, except that it is executed in reverse.

Meaning tends to be univocal in prose, whereas one of the characteristics of poetry, as has often been noted, and possibly its chief quality, is that it retains the several meanings of a word. In reality, this is a property of language in general. Poetry accentuates it, but it is also to be found in everyday speech and even in prose.

The poet, caught up in the whirl of language—which is a constant verbal coming and going—selects a few words, or is selected by them. He fashions his poem by combining them and it then becomes a verbal object made up of irreplaceable and irremovable signs. The translator's starting point is not language in motion, which is the poet's raw material, but the fixed language of the poem. It is a frozen language, and yet it is quite alive. His operation is the opposite of the poet's. He is not called upon to forge an unchangeable text with changing signs, but to take that text apart, set the signs in motion again and return them to the language. Up to this point the translator's work is similar to that of a reader or critic, since every reading is a translation, and every criticism is, or begins by being, an interpretation.

Reading, however, is a translation within the same language and criticism is a free version, or more exactly a transposition, of the poem. For the critic a poem is the jumping-off place towards another text, his own, whereas the translator, using another language and different signs, must compose a poem similar to the original.

Thus at the second stage the translator's activity is comparable to that of the poet, but with this important difference: when the poet writes, he does not know what his poem is going to be like; when the translator translates, he knows that his poem must reproduce the poem he has before him.

Translation and creation are twin operations. As the cases of Baudelaire and Pound show, it is often impossible to distinguish translation from creation.

Moreover, there is a constant give and take between them, a continual and mutual creative influence. The great ages of poetry in the West have been preceded or accompanied by the interweaving of various poetic traditions. These cross-currents have sometimes taken the form of imitation and at other times that of translation.

Critics study "influences", but this term is equivocal. All styles have been trans-linguistic.

Styles are collective and pass from one language to another; written works, rooted in their verbal soil, are unique. They are unique but not isolated, for each of them is born and lives in relation to other works in different languages.

In every period European poets—and now those of the two Americas as well—write the same poem in their several languages, and each of these versions is likewise an original and different poem.

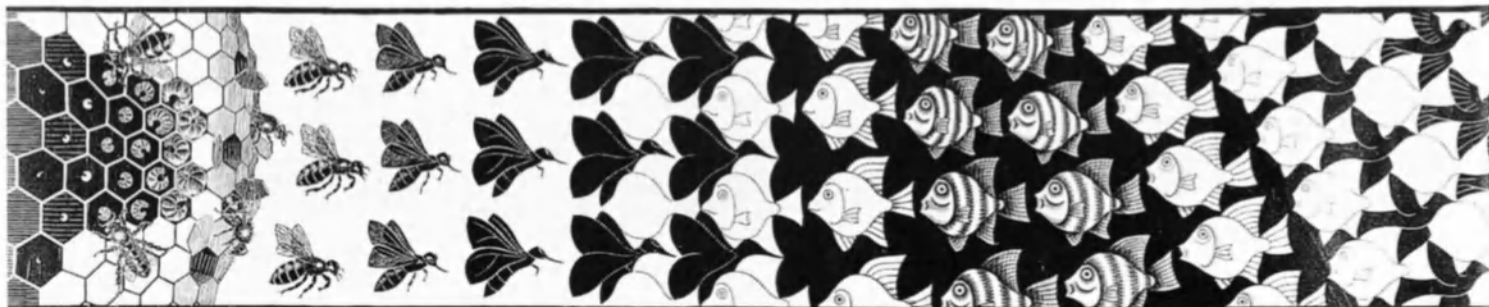
The synchronization may not be perfect, but if we withdraw a certain distance, we find that we are listening to a concert in which the musicians, playing different instruments and without following any orchestra leader or score, are composing a collective work in which improvisation is inseparable from translation, and invention is closely bound up with imitation. Occasionally one of the musicians launches into an inspired solo. The others soon take their cue from him and then go on to introduce variations, while the original motif becomes lost in the new creation. ■

February 1975

**Below, detail of Metamorphosis II. 1940, a work by the well-known Netherlands artist M.C. Escher. In this masterly feat of graphic transformation, the artist imperceptibly changes bees into birds by way of fish. Above, the same engraving reversed.**

**OCTAVIO PAZ**, Mexican poet, essayist and translator, is one of the outstanding writers in the Spanish language. He has published several volumes of poetry such as *Libertad bajo palabra* (*Liberty on Parole*). English translations of his essays include *Labyrinth of Solitude* (1961), *Claude Lévi-Strauss: An Introduction* (1972), and *Alternating Current* (1973).

Photo © Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague



# Painted manuscripts of pre-Columbian America

by Miguel Angel Asturias

**T**HE Mexican, Maya and Peruvian Indians discovered and cultivated different "modes" of transmitting their culture and ethics. Some of them still amaze us with their plastic beauty and their esoteric ingenuity, and in them all we discern a fundamental and even obsessive urge to preserve and transmit through original forms of writing the profound meaning of man and the universe.

For this reason writing became something sacred and esoteric for the pre-Hispanic peoples. Written signs, writing materials and those who could handle them were

considered by the people as being connected with the divine. The writings themselves, in their creation and their appearance, had a magical character, closely linked to cosmogonic conceptions.

*A page from the Codex Borbonicus (named from the Palais Bourbon, seat of the French National Assembly in Paris, where it is preserved). It depicts children dancing around a "maypole" decorated with paper clothes on the occasion of an Aztec festival.*

That is why the various systems of writing that evolved among people with such a high level of technical expertise bore no relation to practical needs; they were symbols for the sacred message concealed within.

We know that writing, its preservation and interpretation, were the responsibility of a special class of dignitaries with priest-like functions—sometimes they even were priests—who used language, materials, colours and contents indissolubly related to the archetypal situations of the Indian deities.

The pre-Columbian peoples possessed several systems of writing (ideographic, ►



Photo © Dominique Darr, Paris

► calendric, pictographic, numeral, phonetic) with which they wrote on deerskins, stones and strips of amatl paper. In their eyes, however, the very fact of recording and of keeping these records was of such vital importance that their loss or preservation was identified with the destruction or continuity of the universe.

In fact, in order to make sure that the world will continue to exist and that the loss of the instruments of transmission does not bring about the end of their lives and the destruction of the universe, the ancient Nahuas meet to reinvent or rediscover the old knowledge and the old form of preserving the past, the life and essence of their people.

They are not concerned with the form and various ways of recording the past—hence their infinite variety—but with the act of recording it so that its remembrance may illuminate and give coherence to a world filled with gods, conflicts and doubts.

*Then they invented the count of the fates,  
The annals and the count of the years,  
The book of dreams;  
They recorded the sequence and course of  
events,*

*The time that passed  
Under the lordship of the Toltecas,  
The lordship of the Tepanecas,  
The lordship of the Mexicas,  
And all the lordships of the Chichimecas.*

This is one reason—not the most improbable—for the dearth of Maya texts and the abundance of Nahuatl writings. The Spanish conquest and the destruction that ensued... put an end to the various systems of transmitting Indian culture.

In the final phase of the Mexican tragedy, the missionaries attack the Indian religion and way of thought and at this point one of the Chiefs rises to express “with courtesy and urbanity” his displeasure at this attack on the customs and beliefs so dear to his ancestors. It is not for him to defend them since there are still some survivors of

*Those who turn the rustling leaves of the  
codices,  
Those who have in their power the black  
and red inks and the painting.  
They lead us, guide us, show us the way.  
They order how a year passes,  
How it follows its course,  
The account of the days  
And each of the twenty-day months,  
That is their business,  
It is for them to speak of the gods.*

There could be no more concise description of the old Indian conception nor any better expression of the loneliness, sadness and helplessness of a bewildered, leaderless people. ■

December 1972

**MIGUEL ANGEL ASTURIAS (1899-1974)**, of Guatemala, was one of the greatest modern novelists in the Spanish language. In 1967, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Three of his most important novels have been translated into English: *The President (1963)*, *The Mulatta and Mister Fly (1970)* and *The Green Pope (1971)*.

# Today's crisis in

**T**HE important place social anthropology holds in contemporary thinking may seem paradoxical to many people. It is a science very much in vogue: witness not only the fashion for films and books about travel, but also the interest of the educated public in books on anthropology.

Today there is no fraction of the human race, no matter how remote and retarded it may still appear, which is not directly or indirectly in contact with others, and whose feelings, ambitions, desires and fears do not affect the security and prosperity and the very existence of those to whom material progress may once have given a feeling of ascendancy.

Even if we wanted to, we could no longer ignore or shrug off with indifference, say, the last head-hunters of New Guinea, for the simple reason that they are interested in us. And surprising though it may be, the result of our contacts with them means that both they and we are now part of the same world, and it will not be long before we are all part of the same civilization.

As they spread throughout the world, the civilizations which (rightly or wrongly) felt that they had reached the height of development, such as Christianity, Islamism, Buddhism, and on a different level the technological civilization which is now bringing them together, are all tinged with “primitive” ways of life, “primitive” thinking and “primitive” behaviour which have always been the subject of anthropological research. Without our realizing it the “primitive” ways are transforming these civilizations from within.

For the so-called primitive or archaic peoples do not simply vanish into a vacuum. They dissolve and are incorporated with greater or lesser speed into the civilization surrounding them. At the same time the latter acquires a universal character.

Thus, far from diminishing in importance, primitive peoples concern us more with each passing day. To take only one example, the great civilization the West is justly proud of and which has spread its roots across the inhabited globe, is everywhere emerging as a “hybrid”. Many foreign elements, both spiritual and material, are being absorbed into its stream.

As a result, the problems of anthropology have ceased to be a matter for specialists, limited to scholars and explorers, they have become the direct and immediate concern of every one of us.

Where, then, lies the paradox? In reality there are two—insofar as anthropology is chiefly concerned with the study of “primitive” peoples. At the moment when the public has come to recognize its true value, we may well ask whether it has not reached the point where it has nothing more left to study.

For the very transformations which are spurring a growing theoretical interest in “primitives” are in fact bringing about their extinction. This is not really a new phenomenon.

Let me cite a few examples. Protected by its exceptionally hostile environment, New Guinea, with its several million tribesmen, may well be the last great sanctuary of primi-

tive society on earth. But civilization is making such rapid inroads that the 600,000 inhabitants of the central mountains, who were totally unknown a mere twenty years ago, are now providing labour contingents for the building of roads. And it is no rarity today to see road signs and milestones parachuted into the unexplored jungle!

As Western civilization becomes more complex with each passing day and spreads across the whole of the earth, it is already beginning to show signs of the sharp differ-

**In a shrinking world, from the tributaries of the Amazon to the mountain fastnesses of New Guinea, traditional ways of life are being transformed.**



Photo Unesco - Dominique Darbois

# anthropology

by Claude Lévi-Strauss

ences which anthropology has made it its business to study but which it could formerly do only by comparing dissimilar and widely separated cultures.

Here, no doubt, lies the permanent function of anthropology. For if there exists, as anthropologists have always affirmed, a certain "optimum diversity" which they see as a permanent condition of human development then we may be sure that divergencies between societies and groups within societies will disappear only to spring up again in other forms.

Who knows if the conflict between the old and new generations, which so many countries are now experiencing, may not be the ransom that must be paid for the growing homogenization of our social and material culture? Such phenomena seem to me pathological but anthropology has always been

characterized by its ability to explain and justify forms of human behaviour which men found strange and could not understand.

In this way anthropology at every phase has helped to enlarge the currently held and always too constricting view of humanity. To picture the disappearance of anthropology, one would have to conjure up a civilization where all men—no matter what corner of the globe they inhabited, and whatever their way of life, their education, their professional activities, their age, beliefs, sympathies and aversions—were, to the very roots of their consciousness, totally intelligible to all other men.

Whether one deploras it, approves it, or merely states it as a fact, technical progress and the development of communications hardly seem to be leading us to this end. And as long as the ways of thinking or of acting of

some men perplex other men, there will be scope for meditation on these differences; and this, in a constantly renewing form, will be the abiding province of anthropology. ■

November 1961

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**CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS**, one of the world's greatest living anthropologists, has been professor of social anthropology at the famed College de France, Paris, since 1959. Between 1935 and 1939, he was professor of sociology at the University of Sao Paulo, and led many scientific expeditions in central Brazil. He has written many authoritative works including *A World on the Wane* (Hutchinson, London) also published by USA Criterion Books, New York, under its French title, *Tristes Tropiques*.





# The building blocks of culture



by Cheikh Anta Diop

**A** people's cultural identity is related to three major factors—historical, linguistic and psychological (the last of which may include the people's specific forms of religious observance). These factors vary in importance in different historical and social situations; when they are not fully present in a people or an individual, the cultural identity is flawed.

Can these factors be classed in a hierarchy of importance, or does each one play an equal part in the constitution of the cultural personality?

Awareness of a common history is the most solid rampart a people can build against cultural or any other form of aggression from outside. Thus in contacts between civilizations—during the colonization process, for example—the colonizer tries to weaken if not destroy the historical consciousness of the colonized people.

The exercise of national sovereignty is by far the best school for a people's mind and soul, and the only way to keep alive its greatest virtues.

It is hard to say whether or not the historical factor is more important than language. For the French philosopher Montesquieu language was the only common denominator, the supreme mark of cultural identity. "As long as a vanquished people has not lost its language," he wrote, "it still has hope."

But nowhere in the world does the phenomenon of linguistic unity exist on a continental scale. Fragmentation and diversity prevail until an official effort is made or a

## Anthropomorphic Head Sections, a work by the British sculptor Roy Adzak

Photo © Gérard Dufresne, Paris. Xavier Jeupitre Collection

political decision is taken to extend the use of one language, if necessary by force.

This process, nevertheless, at first only affects the vocabulary of a language, not its grammar, i.e. its morphology and syntax.

The civilization with the most advanced technology usually exercises a one-way influence on the civilizations or societies with which it comes into contact.

Creolization is a linguistic process which began in a specific historical situation. Isolated individuals, deprived of their freedom, were taken from their original environment and cast brutally into another environment to which they adapted as best they could. The illiterate Africans thus deported to the West Indies deformed the European languages spoken there, creating new forms of speech in which specialists have found distant echoes of the syntactical and morphological structures of African languages.

Finally, the psychological factor presupposes a certain permanence within a diversity of structures. A thorough analysis of this factor would call for study of what might be called cultural invariables.

The cultural environment may be regarded as an assimilating structure which absorbs material from outside and evolves while remaining aware of its own identity. Assimilation

enriches it without affecting its destiny. Only destruction by some external agency, disintegration (whatever the reason), or hardening of the arteries because of excessive autarky can be fatal to it.

Each civilization has two ways or levels of handling concepts. The first is concerned with all that is specific, with an area that is, so to speak, protected by the people's unique psychological barrier, an area which can only be understood from within. This is also the level of poetic expression; it is the core of all living culture, of all civilization. The second way or level is concerned with the universal, with general ideas that everyone can grasp, with the area in which one civilization can influence another.

When the core perishes, the life of societies and civilizations comes to an end. Hence the widespread efforts today to safeguard this productive uniqueness which is not isolation nor withdrawal but the fundamental condition of universality. ■

August-September 1982

**CHEIKH ANTA DIOP (1923-1986)** was a Senegalese anthropologist and physicist who played a leading role in inspiring the revival of interest in African history. Professor of Egyptology at the University of Dakar and director of the Radiocarbon Laboratory at the University's Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN), he was also one of the most active members of the International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa, an 8-volume work sponsored by Unesco and now in course of publication.



Photo © Marino Benzi

Two young pupils in a Mexican school

# The writer between two worlds

by Tahar Ben Jelloun

**T**HE Third World intellectual must live with a terrible fact: over 80 per cent of people in the Third World can neither read nor write. No magic wand can be waved to change their plight; it will be a long, hard struggle which will call on men and women with a real determination for change.

Is it not a paradox to write in a continent of illiterates? "No," says the Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes, "it is not as paradoxical as it may seem. Perhaps the writer knows that he is working to keep alive a relationship with a past which has rarely found its political equivalent."

A literature in which many poor and dominated peoples find a recognizable picture of themselves has come from a single fissure etched in the warm and human earth of Latin America. The waifs and strays of Bogotá are part of the same wound as the urchins of Cairo and the *shayatin* ("little devils") of Casablanca. A peasant dispossessed of his land has the same dreams whether he lives in north Africa or northeast Brazil; the same imagination broken by injustice, forbidden to express itself, thwarted by a tragic fate.

Once he has resisted blandishments and pressures, the writer born of this reality cannot accept that a dispossessed peasant should be left to live what political and military authorities call a reasonable life.

"A continent of illiterates" has a greater need of writers than a continent sated with knowledge. Writing here is a refusal to accept defeat.

And so we have this gamble on liberty and on the future, for this continent will not always

be afflicted by the inevitability of illiteracy. Those who come later, perhaps the children of this period, will be entitled to call us to account. The writer will have to declare his books or his silence.

The commitment of the artist implies solving his country's problems at the same time as creating a work of art. This still has a meaning in countries which are confronted with life-and-death problems, not intellectual fads. In this respect the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa has noted something which is valid not only for Latin America but for the Third World as a whole. "Elsewhere, to be a writer means, primarily and often exclusively, assuming a personal responsibility for a body of work which, if artistically valid, will enrich the culture of the country in which it is created. In Peru and in other Latin American countries, to be a writer means primarily, and often exclusively, assuming a social responsibility." There is virtually no escape from assuming that responsibility.

If this conception of literary activity relates to reality by making the writer a repository of information with his eyes fixed on the outside world, then it causes a major misunderstanding. For the main thing is forgotten, namely how to write, how to create.

Should we then go far in the other direction and regard literature as a pure stylistic exercise or a lifeless *tour de force*?

There is a widespread misunderstanding about where the writer's commitment lies. To militate in a political party or organization is one thing; to write while taking part in politics as well is another. The one does not exclude

the other. But it is rare that the two combine in such a way as not to be mutually harmful and do not create confusion and misunderstandings.

As for the writer who deliberately chooses to live in exile, he leaves far behind him the prevailing stagnation, the temptation to bitterness and inactivity. Whatever he does is bound to be wrong! If exile leads to nothing, he is wrong. If exile brings him success, he is wrong. The child who leaves his family connexions by the wayside is not forgiven.

But to be far away does not necessarily mean to be absent. To go away is another way of establishing links with one's land and people. Wherever it is produced, the work of a writer or an artist returns in one way or another to the land of its origin.

But when exile becomes a way of thinking and of becoming ensnared in the toils of an unhappy conscience, when it severs a man from his deepest roots, when it becomes an end in itself and submerges the individual in a set of problems which ought not really to concern him, then exile becomes alienation. It returns to the mother country another person, often a stranger who has lost the capacity for wonder: a wreck apparently in good health. ■

July 1982

**TAHAR BEN JELLOUN**, Moroccan writer and journalist, has divided his time between France and Morocco since 1971. Among his recent works is *L'écrivain public*, published in 1983.

# 'The action of a man who snatches something from death'

by André Malraux

**André Malraux, French Minister of State for Cultural Affairs, was one of the speakers at a ceremony held at Unesco's Paris Headquarters on 8 March 1960 to launch the International Campaign for the Preservation of the Monuments of Nubia. Below, extracts from André Malraux's address.**

**O**N 8 March 1960, for the first time, all nations, though many of them even now are engaged in covert or open conflict, have been summoned to save by a united effort the fruits of a civilization on which none has a pre-emptive claim.

Such an appeal, in the last century, would have seemed fanciful. With our own century, however, has come one of the greatest developments in man's spiritual history. These temples which had been looked on only as records have again become living witnesses; these statues have acquired a soul.

The only ancient Egypt which can come alive for us is the one conveyed by its art—and this is an Egypt that never existed at all, any more than the kind of Christianity which would be inferred from Romanesque art if that were our only witness to it. Yet Egypt has survived in her art, not through famous names or lists of victories. ... Despite Kadesh, one of history's decisive battles, despite the cartouches carved and recarved at the behest of the bold pharaoh seeking to force his lineage upon the gods, Sesostris has less meaning for us than the unfortunate Akhenaton. The face of Queen Nefertiti haunts our painters as Cleopatra has inspired our poets; but whereas Cleopatra is a queen without a face, Nefertiti, for us, is a face without a kingdom.

At their highest expression, Egyptian conventions were designed to mediate between ephemeral men and the controlling stars. It is an art that consecrates night. ... In such a way, during three thousand years, Egyptian art translated the temporal into the eternal.

Let there be no misapprehension about this today: it is not as a witness to the past that it moves us, nor as what used to be called beauty. "Beauty" has become one of our age's most potent mysteries, the inexplicable quality which brings the Egyptian masterpieces into communion with the statues of our own cathedrals, or the Aztec temples, or the Indian and Chinese grottos; with the paintings of Cézanne and Van Gogh, with the greatest dead and the greatest living artists; with, in short, the whole treasury of the first world civilization. For the first time, men have discovered a universal language of art.

The emotion we share with the creators of these granite statues is not even one of love, nor a common feeling for death—nor even, perhaps, a similar way of looking at their work; yet before their work, the accents of anonymous sculptors forgotten during two thousand years seem to us as much untouched by the succession of empires as the accents of mother love.

If Unesco is trying to rescue the monuments of Nubia, it is because these are in

imminent danger. Yours is the first attempt to deploy, in a rescue operation, on behalf of statues, the immense resources usually

harnessed for the service of men. And this is perhaps because for us the survival of statues has become an expression of life.

At the moment when our civilization divines a mysterious transcendence in art and one of the still obscure sources of its unity, at the moment when we are bringing into a single, family relationship the masterpieces of so many civilizations which knew nothing of or even hated each other, you are proposing an action which brings all men together to defy the forces of dissolution. Your appeal is historic, not because it proposes to save the temples of Nubia, but because through it the first world civilization publicly proclaims the world's art as its indivisible heritage.

The slow flood of the Nile has reflected the melancholy caravans of the Bible, the armies of Cambyses and Alexander, the knights of Byzantium and Islam, the soldiers of Napoleon. No doubt when the sandstorm blows across it, its ancient memory no longer distinguishes the brilliant notes of Rameses' triumph from the pathetic dust that settles again in the wake of defeated armies. And when the sand is scattered again, the Nile is once more alone with its sculpted mountains, its colossal effigies whose motionless reflection has for so long been part of its echo of eternity.

But see, old river, whose floods allowed astrologers to fix the most ancient date in history, men are coming now, from all parts of the world, who will carry these giants far away from your life-giving, destructive waters. Let the night fall, and you will reflect again the stars under which Isis accomplished her funeral rites, the star of Rameses. But the humblest worker come to rescue the statues of Isis and Rameses will tell you something you have always known but never heard from men before: that there is only one action over which indifferent stars and unchanging, murmurous rivers have no sway—it is the action of a man who snatches something from death.

May 1960

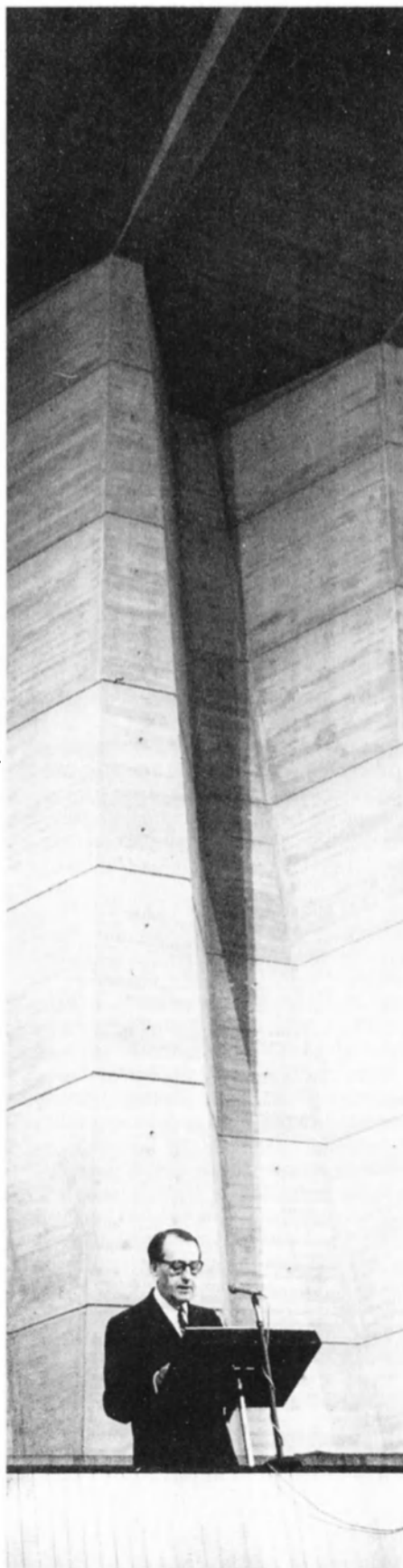


Photo Unesco - Berretty

**ANDRÉ MALRAUX (1901-1976)**, French writer and politician, was the author of a wealth of literature covering the fields of art, civilization, war and autobiography. Among his best-known works translated into English are *La condition humaine* (*Man's Fate*, 1934), *L'espoir* (*Man's Hope*, 1938), *Le musée imaginaire* (*Museum without Walls*, 1967), and his autobiography, *Antimémoires* (*Antimemoirs*, 1967). He fought with the French Resistance during the Second World War, and was Minister of State for Cultural Affairs from 1958 to 1969.

# Miniature anthology of works by Al-Biruni

Selections from works written a thousand years ago

## Intelligence and reasoning

Some believe that science is of recent origin, others that it is as old as the world. The former affirm that its techniques were taught by "initiation" and go so far as to maintain that every technique was revealed and implanted by a particular prophet. But there are others who think that man discovers techniques with the help of intelligence and that it is reasoning which enables the mind to acquire understanding.

When one discovers, by reasoning, a law or principle, one must proceed from the general to the particular. At the same time, experiment and reflection allow us to compare one thing with another and so obtain knowledge in detail.

Time is limitless and successive generations traverse only stages. Each passes on its heritage to the next, which develops and enriches it.

*Bibliography of the Works of al-Razi*

## Smart scholars

Once a sage was asked why scholars always flock to the doors of the rich, whilst the rich are not inclined to call at the doors of scholars. "The scholars," he answered, "are well aware of the use of money, but the rich are ignorant of the nobility of science."

*India*

## Why the Earth is round

As concerns the curvature of the Earth in the directions between longitude and latitude, it may be ascertained by means of the longest days in the towns we have mentioned. Let us consider, for instance, the town of Bulgar, in the far north, and the town of Aden, lying far to the south of it. In and around Aden, the length of the longest day is little more than twelve hours, whilst in Bulgar it is little less than seventeen hours. There is a difference of two hours between the hours of sunrise and sunset in those two towns. Consequently, at the time of sunrise over Aden, the Sun has already risen to a height of two hours' travel in the sky over Bulgar.

This being the case, we may assert that a line traced on the Earth in the direction of latitude, that is to say a meridian, must of necessity be either straight, or a concave or convex curve.

*The Mas'udic Canon on Astronomy*



**Astronomer, mathematician, physicist, geographer, historian, linguist, ethnologist, pharmacologist as well as poet, novelist, philosopher, and humanist, Abu al-Rayhan Mohammed ibn Ahmad al-Biruni was born just over a thousand years ago near Kath in what is today Soviet Uzbekistan. He was one of the most outstanding scholars of the Islamic world and many specialists rank him even higher than Avicenna (Ibn Sina). An early proponent of fruitful cultural and scientific exchange between the East and the West, al-Biruni had a spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness rare for his time. Above, portrait of al-Biruni executed by Iranian artist Azarguin to mark the thousandth anniversary of the great thinker's birth.**

## 'Speak the truth'

That man only is praiseworthy who shrinks from a lie and always adheres to the truth, enjoying credit even among liars, not to mention others.

It has been said in the Qur'an, "Speak the truth, even if it were against yourselves" (Sura 4, 134); and the Messiah expresses himself in the Gospel to this effect: "Do not mind the fury of kings in speaking the truth before them. They only possess your body, but they have no power over your soul." In these words the Messiah orders us to exercise moral courage.

*India*

## On Hindu religions

I have written this book on the doctrines of the Hindus, never making any unfounded imputations against those, our religious antagonists, and at the same time not considering it inconsistent with my duties as a Muslim to quote their own words at full length when I thought they would contribute to elucidate a subject. If the contents of these quotations happen to be utterly heathenish, and the followers of the truth, i.e. the Muslims, find them objectionable, we can only say that such is the belief of the Hindus, and that they themselves are best qualified to defend it.

*India*

## Witchcraft and science

We understand by witchcraft, making by some kind of delusion a thing appear to the senses as something different from what it is in reality. Taken in this sense, it is far spread among people. Understood, however, as common people understand it, as the producing of something which is impossible, it is a thing which does not lie within the limits of reality. For as that which is impossible cannot be produced, the whole affair is nothing but a gross deception. Therefore witchcraft in this sense has nothing whatever to do with science.

One of the species of witchcraft is alchemy, though it is generally not called by this name. But if a man takes a bit of cotton and makes it appear as a piece of gold, what would you call this but a piece of witchcraft?

*India*

*June 1974*



# Lenin and the physical sciences

by Mstislav Keldysh

**A**LL of Lenin's work—as a politician, statesman and public figure—is inseparable from science.

The turn of the century, as we know, was marked by a series of discoveries which were to lead to a complete revolution in physics, and eventually to the development of the physics of today. Thus, the advances in electrodynamics opened the way to the theory of relativity and the discovery of new and more precise space-time relationships. Research into the theory of opaque bodies and the photo-electric effect made possible the formation of the quantum theory.

These new ideas and theories, to which were soon to be added the discovery of radioactivity and radium, could no longer be fitted into the nineteenth-

search scientists spoke heatedly of “the big crisis in physics”.

In 1909, Lenin entered the scene with his work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. This was his reply to the philosophical problems raised by the latest scientific discoveries. Lenin pointed out that the crisis in physics perceptible at the beginning of the century was just the first step challenging “the old laws and basic principles”, and that the change affected the postulates of physics that had been thought unalterable. The crisis, Lenin said, marked the beginning of a complete revolution in physics.

“To say that matter has disappeared,” Lenin wrote, “is merely to state that the limits of our knowledge of matter have disappeared and that our understanding has deepened. The properties of matter that formerly appeared absolute, unalterable and immutable ... have disappeared and are now recognized as being relative and inherent only in certain states of matter.”

He stressed that “the one and only property of matter that philosophical materialism recognized is that it is an objective reality, existing apart from our consciousness”. Here he pronounced his famous philosophical dictum: “the electron is as inexhaustible as the atom; nature is infinite ...”

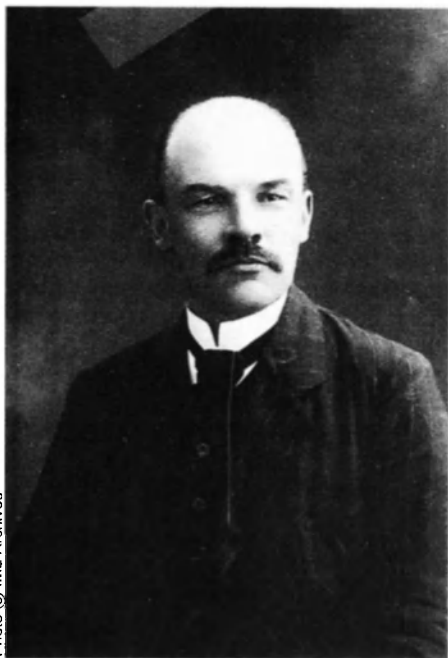
The discovery that electrons were capable of behaving as waves opened up a fantastic new world to physicists. In the 1930s the positron was identified. The electron revealed a new property: united with a positron, it was transformed into a photon. There followed the discovery that the electron is an active protagonist in the phenomenon known as weak interactions and so is also a bearer of a specific charge of these interactions.

Thus Lenin's thesis has shown itself to be a great deal more than a mere prophecy. It has become a philosophical postulate of the investigation of the infinitely small. All the later developments of physics have corroborated the validity of this principle, confirming the “inexhaustibility” of the electron, and, more generally, the inexhaustible physical properties of matter itself. ■

June 1970



## Portrait



Lenin, photographed in Paris in 1910.

century concept of physics or into the electromagnetic concept of the universe that had succeeded the mechanical concept.

Serious difficulties arose. In particular, the conclusion of the classic electron theory, according to which electrons had mass and electromagnetic characteristics, was interpreted by many mechanistic and positivist physicists of the time as a veritable “disappearance of matter”. Re-

**MSTISLAV KELDYSH** was President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1970.

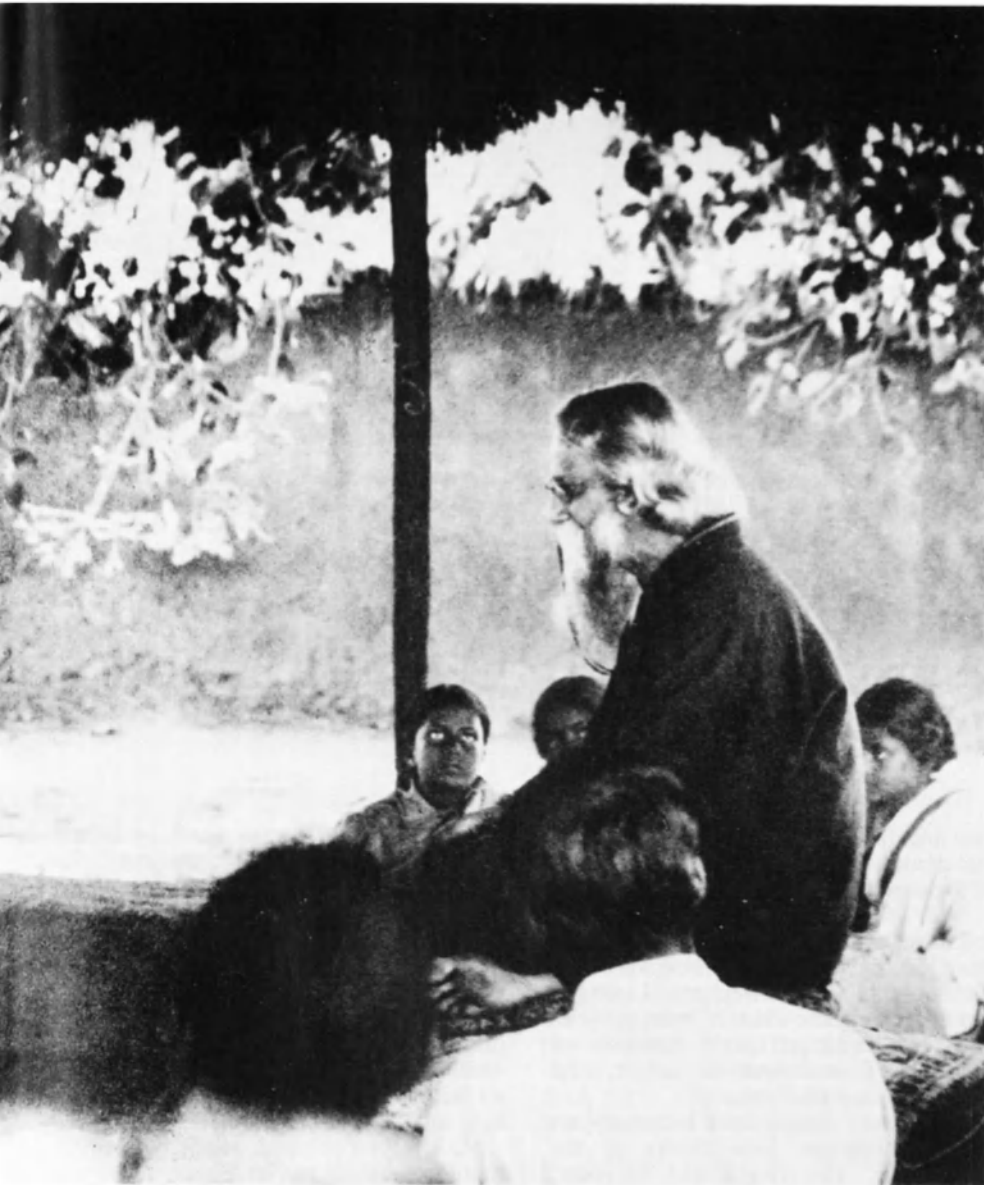


Photo © Rabindra-Sadana, Visva Bharati

*Rabindranath Tagore with a group of students in the school he founded at Santiniketan in 1901.*

# of a man

by Satyajit Ray

WITH a worldly wisdom unusual in a poet but characteristic of the Tagores, Rabindranath set out in a practical way to improve the lot of the poor peasants of his estates. But his own gain from this intimate contact with the fundamental aspects of life and nature, and the influence of this contact on his own life and work, are beyond measure.

Living mostly in his boat and watching life through the window, a whole new world of sights and sounds and feelings opened up before him. It was a world in which the moods of people and the moods of nature were inextricably interwoven. The people found room in a succession of great short stories, and nature, in an outpouring of exquisite songs and poems. Dominant was the mood of the rains, exultant and terrible.

Rabindranath Tagore received the Nobel Prize in 1913, and a knighthood in 1915,

while war was raging in Europe. Touring the United States and Japan in 1916, the poet made eloquent appeals for peace. He felt that world peace could be achieved only through intellectual co-operation between nations. He said, "The call has come to every individual in the present age to prepare himself for the dawn of a new era, when man shall discover his soul in the spiritual unity of all human beings."

While peace had been restored in Europe, in India there was unrest. The occasion was the Rowlatt Bill, designed to suppress all political movements. It dashed India's hopes of gaining the self-government that the British rulers had kept promising through the war years.

Dominating the Indian political scene at this time was Gandhi. As a protest against the Rowlatt Bill, Gandhi launched a movement of passive resistance. But the masses

misinterpreted the movement and, following a rumour of Gandhi's arrest, violence broke out in many parts of the country.

In the Punjab, martial law was declared. In charge of the troops at Amritsar was Brigadier General Dyer. On the first day of the month of Vaisakh, a crowd gathered in Jallianwallabagh, as it had done every other year. It was a peaceful crowd. But Dyer was taking no chances. Machine guns rattled.

Rabindranath wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and the letter was published in the newspapers. Condemning the Government for the killing at Jallianwallabagh, he concluded: "And I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of my countrymen who for their so-called insignificance are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings. And these are the reasons which have painfully compelled me to ask your Excellency to relieve me of my title of knighthood."

The next ten years of Rabindranath's life were filled with ceaseless activity. The necessity to collect funds for his university took him to all parts of the world, and the West as much as the East welcomed him with open arms.

Wherever he went, he spread the message of peace and stressed the importance of intellectual co-operation between nations. He said: "We ought to know that isolation of life and culture is not a thing of which any nation can be proud. In the human world, giving is exchanging, it is not one-sided."

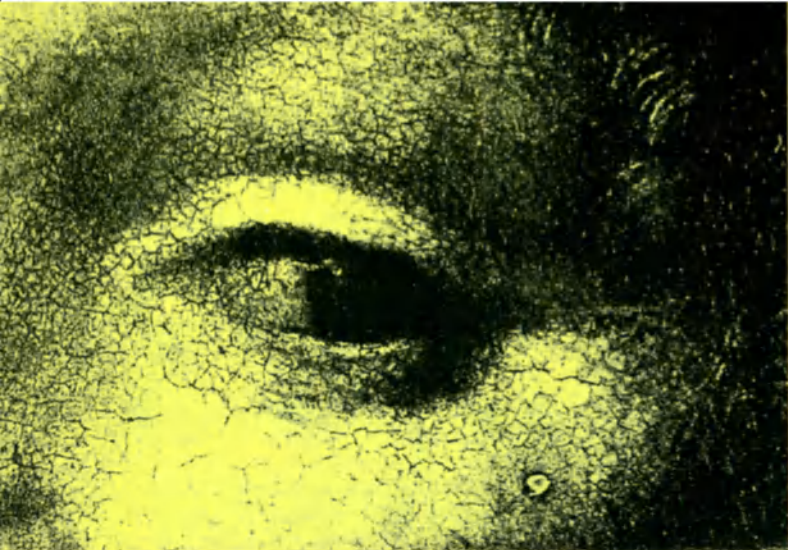
On 7 May 1941, Rabindranath was eighty years old. For the occasion, he had composed a message—his last message to the world—which concerned itself with the state of so-called modern civilization, a civilization that was being shaken to its very roots by barbaric wars of aggression:

"I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization could issue out of the heart of Europe. But today, when I am about to leave the world, that faith has deserted me. I look around and see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet, I shall not commit the previous sin of losing faith in man. I shall await for the day when the holocaust will end and the air will be rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East, where the sun rises. On that day will unvanquished man retrench his path of conquest, surmounting all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage." ■

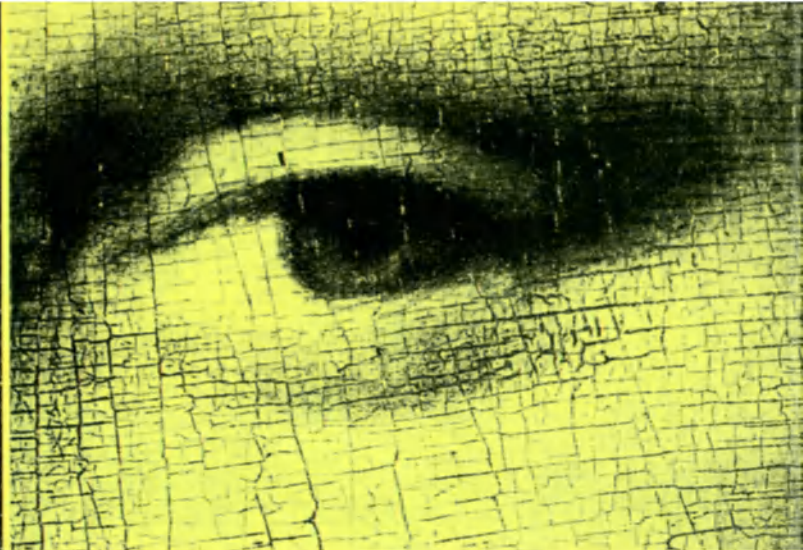
December 1961

To commemorate the centenary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian Government asked one of the country's leading film directors, Satyajit Ray, to produce a documentary film on the poet. In December 1961 the *Unesco Courier* reproduced the text of Ray's commentary, from which these extracts are taken.





An eye of the angel in *The Virgin of the Rocks*, executed by Leonardo in Milan about 1483 (Louvre Museum, Paris)



An eye of *Mona Lisa*. Leonardo began work on the painting about 1501 and finished it more than four years later (Louvre Museum, Paris)

# Leonardo da Vinci, or

by Carlo Pedretti

**L**IMBS which are not in exercise must be drawn without showing the play of muscles. And if you do otherwise, you will have imitated a sack of nuts rather than a human figure."

This is one of the notes on painting found in the second of the recently discovered Madrid Manuscripts of Leonardo da Vinci, dating from the first years of the sixteenth century.

All the elements of Leonardo's painting are present in the theories expressed in this manuscript. Another series of notes, in addition to those on form and colour, deals with light and shadow and the smooth transition from light to shadow, which is the true essence of the famous Leonardo *sfumato*.

When in the first period of his activity Leonardo was dealing with the problem of light and shadow he conceived of objects in terms of geometrical entities and

was mainly concerned with the study of the gradations and degrees of intensity of the shadows.

After 1500 his main concern becomes the study of light and shadow on objects placed in the open air, thus taking into account colour and reflections. Light becomes the vehicle that blends the elements of landscape into a harmony of transitions from colour to colour, and this Leonardo calls "grace".

The human figure, too, becomes part of the landscape (one thinks of the *Mona Lisa*, *The Virgin and St. Anne*, *Leda*) and thus participates in the phenomena of reflection, refraction and interplay of coloured shadows, as is the case with every other object placed under the light of the sky. What can be seen under the projection of a roof is also to be seen under the chin of a human face.

One of Leonardo's most beautiful

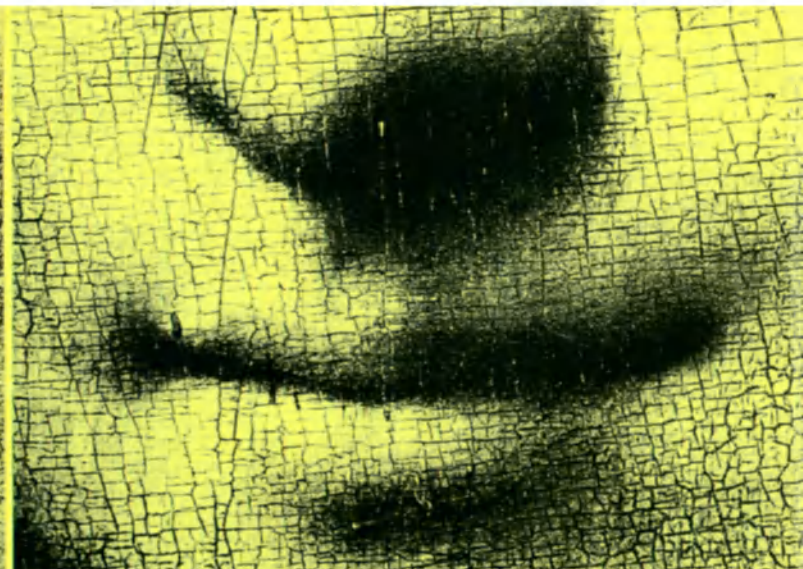
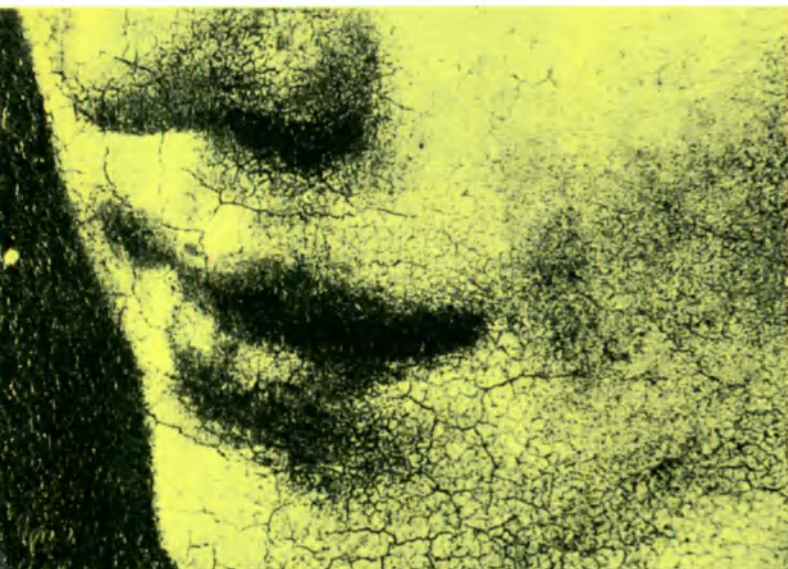
observations pertains to the way a human face should be represented. He advises the painter to arrange the setting so as to achieve the most delicate *sfumato* effects in the shadows, what he calls "the gracefulness of shadows, smoothly deprived of every sharp contour".

The setting is provided by the walls of the houses flanking the street, through which the light penetrates—light made of air without brightness, a golden, diffuse light such as that of Giorgione.

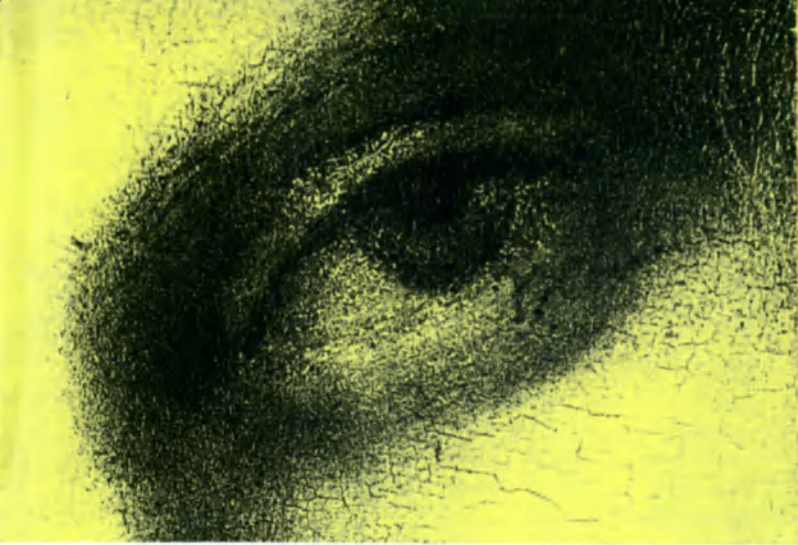
Now, says Leonardo, "light ends upon the pavement of the street and rebounds with reflected motion at the shadowy parts of the faces, brightening them considerably. And the length of the aforementioned light of the sky created by the boundaries of the roofs hanging over the street illuminates almost as far as the beginning of the shadows which are underneath the projections of the face, and so it is gradually changed into

*The smile of the angel in The Virgin of the Rocks*

*The smile of Mona Lisa*







An eye of St. John the Baptist, painted by Leonardo about 1509 (Louvre Museum, Paris)



An eye of the lady in the portrait known as the Belle Ferronnière (Louvre Museum, Paris)

# the glory of painting

brightness, until it ends under the chin with imperceptible shadows all over.”

Most interesting is the “unpredictable Leonardo”, the Leonardo who cannot be anticipated, because the notes he writes are nothing but the record of the movements of his mind, so that his precepts to the painter do not have the stiffness of academic teaching but the freshness of a revelation, evocative of the space that opens up in the background of his paintings:

“What I would remind you of, concerning faces, is that you should consider how, at varying distances, different qualities of the shadows are lost and that only the main spots are left, that is, the pits of the eye and the like: and finally the face remains dark, because the lights, which are small compared with the medium shadows, are absorbed by darkness. For this reason, at a distance, the qualities and quantities of the main

lights and shadows are consumed, and everything blends into a medium shadow. And this is why trees and all objects appear darker at a distance than if the same objects were near the eye. From this obscurity on, the air which is between the eye and the object causes the object to become brighter and to turn towards blue. But it turns bluish rather in the shadows than in the luminous parts, where one can see better the true quality of the colours.” ■

October 1974

**CARLO PEDRETTI** is the author of many books on Leonardo. This article is inspired by a chapter on the “Notes on Painting in the Madrid Manuscripts”, published in his book *Leonardo da Vinci Inedito (Leonardo da Vinci's unpublished works)*, published in Italian by Barbera Editore, Florence, 1968.

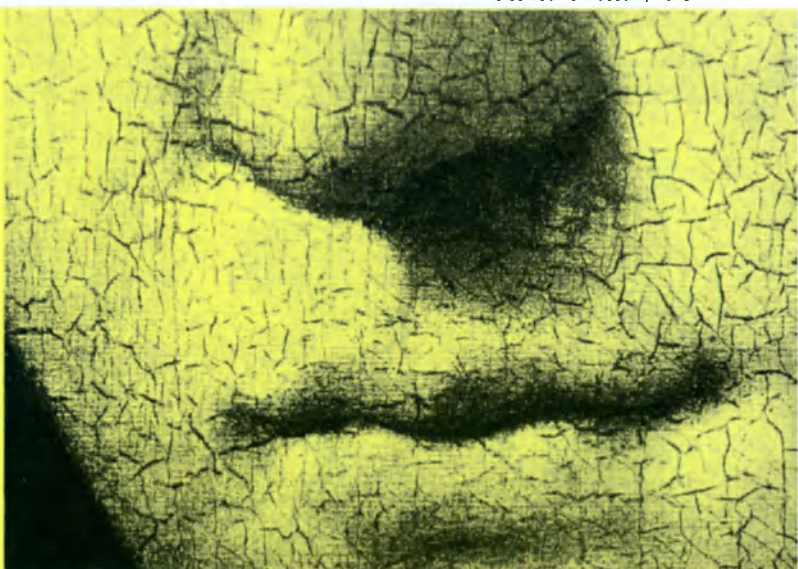
*In the manuscript known as Codex Madrid II, Leonardo states that the human face and body are defined by the light surrounding them. He notes that reflected and refracted light as well as coloured shadows are all what he calls “the truth of colours”. This may explain the affinity between the many faces he painted which the photographic enlargements on this double page clearly reveal, especially Leonardo's rendering of the eyes and the smile. The enlargements show how skilfully Leonardo played with light and shadow in order to achieve his enigmatic smile and beautifully expressive eyes (thousands of pages have been written about Mona Lisa's smile). In Codex Madrid II, Leonardo advises the painter to strive for a subtle blend of shadows which he describes as “the gracefulness of shadows, smoothly deprived of every sharp contour”. By so doing he has given us his secret of how he achieved such delicately nuanced forms in his models.*

The smile of St. John the Baptist



The smile of the Belle Ferronnière

Photos Louvre Museum, Paris







# Year of peace: 5

Takashi Nagai, professor at the Nagasaki Faculty of Medicine, died in 1951 at the age of 43 from the effects of the atom bomb explosion which destroyed his town in 1945. His eyewitness account is extracted from a book published in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1961. Entitled *Die*

*Stimme des Menschen* (The Voice of Mankind) by Hans Walter Bähr (R. Piper and Co. publishers, Munich), it is an anthology of letters from all parts of the world written between 1939 and 1945 by men and women who lost their lives as a result of the Second World War.

## Letter from Nagasaki

by Takashi Nagai

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**D**IRECTLY after the bomb exploded, the reaction of those who could still move was either to remain where they had been at the time of the explosion or to flee immediately. Those who stayed where they were—either to help injured friends or to try to save their apartment, office or factory—were quickly hemmed in by the flames and perished along with those they had wanted to save. When the fire came closer, we took refuge on the hill near our hospital. In this way my neighbours and I escaped death by a hair's-breadth.

Here and there we came across medical students and nurses lying on the ground. We picked them up and carried them a little further up the hill, out of reach of the fire. All the time I was urging those around me to move faster.

I had a gash on the right temple and was losing a lot of blood. Eventually I collapsed. When I came to, I found that I was lying in the grass beneath the billowing eddies of the atomic cloud. I was suffering terribly from my wound and had to grit my teeth to overcome the pain. Then I began to think about my wife. If she were still alive, I told myself, she would have already joined me.

Next day, looking down from the hill behind the clinic, I could see the ruins of my house.

Nothing remained of Urakami but a great pile of white ashes. Nothing moved, wherever one looked, in the clear morning light.

I had seen my beloved faculty and all the students to whom I was so attached engulfed in a flash by the flames. My wife was now nothing but a little heap of charred bones which I collected one by one in the ruins of our house. Her remains weighed no heavier than a parcel you might send through the post. She had died in the kitchen.

As for me, "atomic sickness" in its most acute form now added its effects to those of the long-standing illness caused by my research into X-rays. This, along with the injury to my right side, completely disabled me. By an extraordinary piece of luck, three days earlier our two children had been sent to their grandmother in the mountains and were thus safe and sound.

Never before had I found my work as a scientist such a painful burden. Leaning on a stick, my body covered with wounds which hampered my movements, I began with great effort to climb mountains and cross rivers in order to visit my patients. I kept this up for two months. Then I was struck down by a violent attack of atomic sickness and had to give up my medical work altogether.

Those of us who suffered the bombing had no idea at all of what an atomic bomb could be. I myself never thought for a moment that the bomb meant anything so cataclysmic, even though I was right underneath the mushroom cloud. I thought it was just a superbomb, or something similar. It was only when the cloud began to spread out and disperse and the sunlight (which it had completely blotted out) began to filter through again until it was bright enough for me to see something, that I looked around and said to myself: "It's the end of the world."

The rest of the world cried out in horror: "The atomic bomb must never be used again."

And yet I hear that some people do not think the bomb is as terrible as all that, or that it must never be used in any circumstances: "A city is never entirely destroyed...", they say. "There are always some survivors. ... Radioactivity disappears in time. ... It's only a new weapon, more effective than any used before. ..." More effective! ... What do they know about it, the people who talk like this? ■

November 1975

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