The UNESCO COURIER

INTERVIEW WITH MIKIS THEODORAKIS

DOUBLE ISSUE JULY/AUGUST 1992

UNIVERSALITY: A EUROPEAN VISION?

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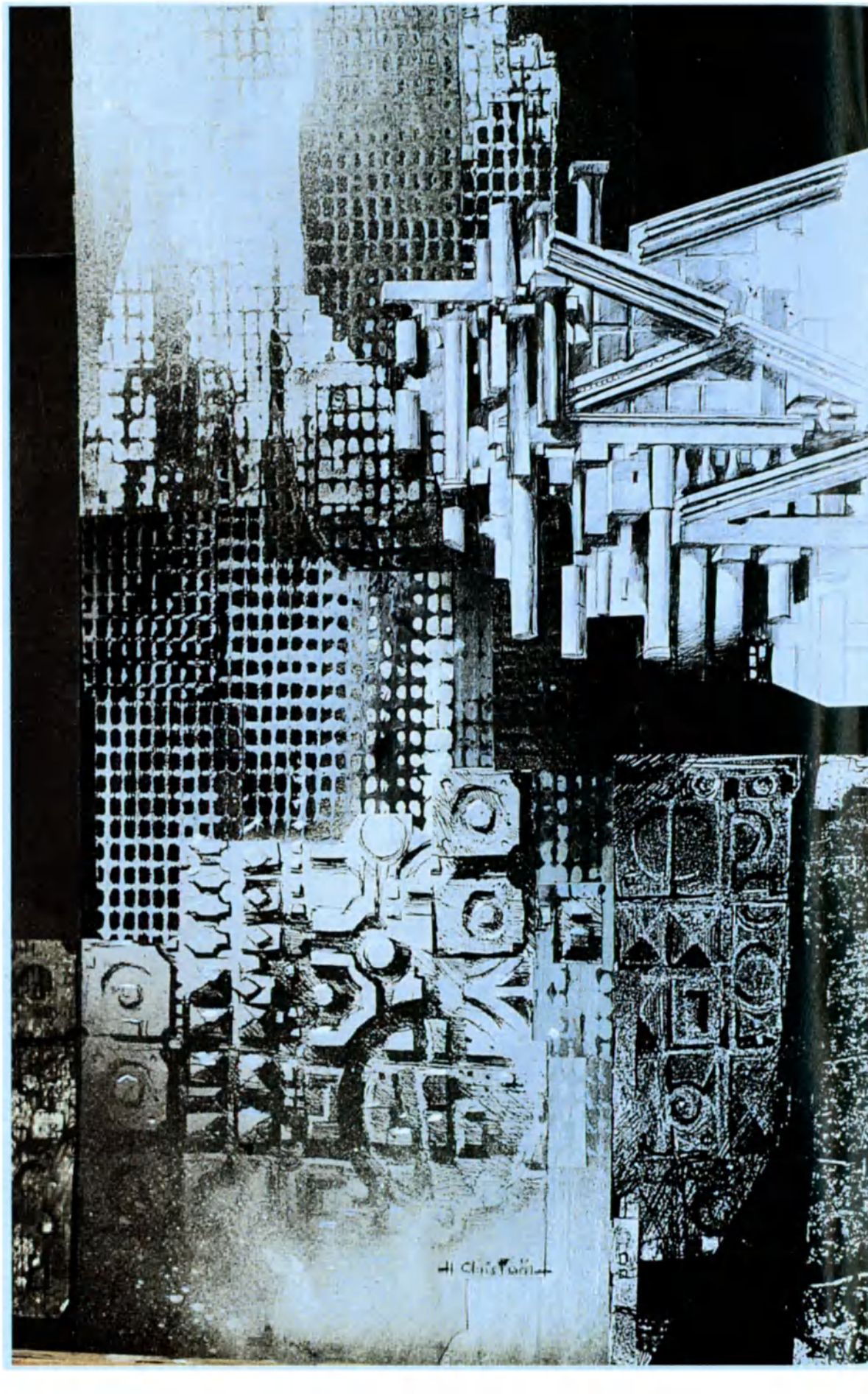
We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.



Timeless cities
1992, acrylic, ink, collage
(38 by 27 cm.)
by Henry Christiaën

"Where are these strange city walls? In what forgotten Acropolis? In what unlikely Manhattan? In what undreamed of Babylon, buried beneath the layers of the ages?" In this imaginary urban landscape, the French artist Henry Christiaën has juxtaposed a variety of architectural styles and elements, including some that evoke the electronic circuitry of modern technology. He thus reveals affinities of structure and rhythm between civilizations and cultures which transcend time and place.

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Complete (1989), mixed media, by the Turkish artist Akyavas Erol.
Back cover:
Volcano/Trees (1989), a photo-collage by the US artist Pat Horner.

The UNESCO COURIER

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"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed . . .
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties . . . are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives. . . ."

EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

MIKIS THEODORAKIS

describes A GREEK CHILDHOOD

No one who has heard the wonderful *bouzouki* melodies written by the Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis for *Zorba the Greek* or his theme music for two other noted films, *Z* and *État de Siège*, will ever forget them. Theodorakis has infused the soul and spirit of the Greek people into all his musical works. He is also a militant who today, as a member of his country's parliament, continues a struggle for freedom and justice which began when he joined the wartime resistance as a teenager and has taken him more than once to prison or into exile. Here he looks back on the circumstances that gave rise to his musical vocation and his political commitment.

■ *Tell us something about your early life.*

— I was born on 29 July 1925 on the island of Chios, opposite the native village of my mother on the mainland of Asia Minor, in what is now Turkey. My father was from Crete. He had volunteered to serve in the first Balkan War, in which he was wounded, and had then entered the civil service. When the Greek army occupied Smyrna, he was posted to the small town of Bourla, where he met my mother. She came from a very poor family. Her father was a farmer during the winter and went out fishing in the summer. Her brother, who had had an education, later became a Director in the Ministry of Economic Affairs. My family therefore came from the lower middle class of government officials who instilled a sense of discipline in their children.

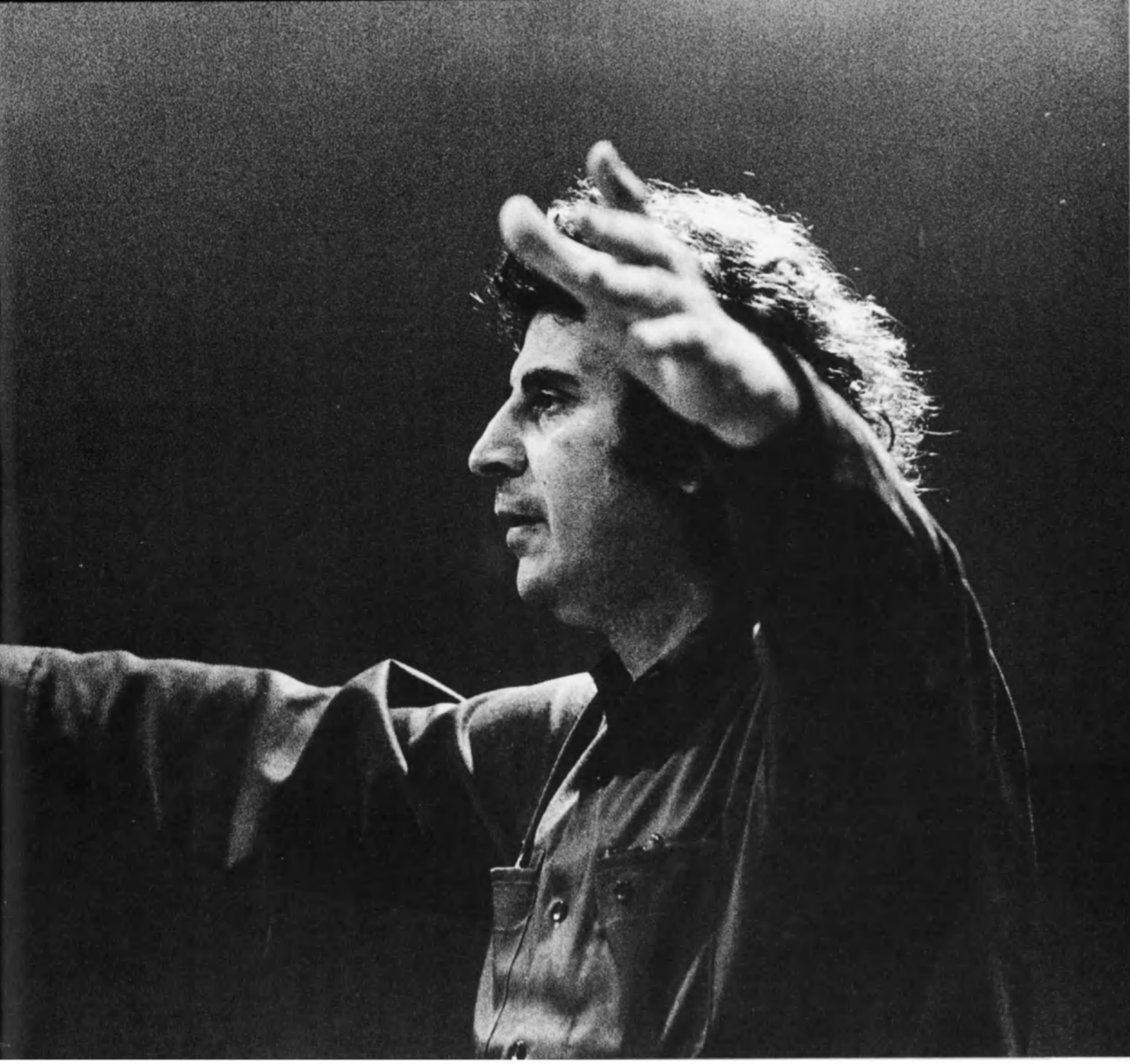
I was born after the military defeat which Greece suffered following the Turkish revolution of Kemal Ataturk. It was a real tragedy for the country. I think that Greece lost its soul when it lost Ionia. Greece and Turkey have been in conflict with one another over long periods of their history. The first Greek nationalist revolution was directed against the Ottomans, in 1821. And Crete remained under Turkish domination until 1912.

Many of our relatives, on both my father's and my mother's sides, were victims of these confrontations and made great sacrifices. My father used to say that our two families had shed a river of blood. I therefore grew up in an atmosphere of patriotic stories and the stirring revolutionary songs known as *Rizitika*, which had a very great influence on me.

■ *Even so, you have memories of a happy childhood.*

— Yes. We had a country house, where we were surrounded by aunts and uncles forming one big family. This house had also been the home and source of inspiration of a famous naive painter, Theophilos. It was a wonderful experience to live there in the middle of the olive groves, the orange trees and the flowers, overlooking the sea. I remember that there was a boat which used to sail past twice a week. The impression which that white boat on the blue sea has left on me is like a wound, like the mark of a scar left by a moment of exhilaration. I really believe that I have tried, in everything I have composed, to recreate that beauty and rediscover those images engraved in my memory like a childhood dream.

I also remember evenings we spent with my father, stretched out on the ground



gazing at the stars. He knew a lot about the stars and he explained them to me and made me follow them, telling me their names and their history.

Another of those childhood memories that leave an indelible mark on you came from my uncle. Just before he was posted to Alexandria as consul, he came back to the village to get married and brought me a gramophone as a present, together with records of Greek classical and popular music and of jazz, which was then at its height. I was only four years old and there I was discovering music! We used to hold social evenings at which young people danced the Charleston and the foxtrot and I was put in charge of the gramophone. Moments like those have meant a lot to me throughout my life!

My uncle also gave me a set of recordings of operatic arias, which for a long time made me afraid of opera. I think that this was probably because, for a child of my age, there was something frightening about the voices of those famous tenors and prima donnas. I was sixty before I made up my mind to tackle opera. The music I heard on that gramophone in my childhood certainly contributed to developing my tastes for a long time to come.

What sort of child were you?

— I had some crazy ideas. I wanted to fly like a bird. I climbed a tree and flung myself into the air and almost broke my neck. Then I did it again, because I was sure that I would be able to fly. One day, I wanted to take off from the top of a three-metre-high wall, because I thought that I would be able to fly down to the beach below. I was just about to jump when my grandfather suddenly came out of nowhere and tried to catch me and stop me from hurting myself. I fell on top of him and he lost his balance. I broke my wrist, but the old man broke his leg. There was utter panic all around me. Everybody was obsessed with my wrist, but nobody bothered about my grandfather. He was very embittered, and started to refuse his food. It

was this, coupled with the after-effects of his broken leg, that eventually ruined his health. He died not long afterwards. That was the first time I had seen a dead person and I didn't realize what it was all about.

■ *How did your musical vocation come to you?*

— The period from 1928 to 1930 was a very stormy one in Greece. There was one government after another, which meant that civil servants didn't have a very easy time of it. My father was from Crete and was therefore a liberal and a supporter of Venizelos. He was not only my father's idol, but was actually a relative. When he became prime minister, my father was appointed Vice-Governor of Epirus. It was a very poor and backward region, where the children were dirty and went barefoot. I was the only child to have a pair of shoes, but I was so ashamed that I used to take them off. Then Venizelos was deposed and my father was transferred to a less highly rated and above all less well paid post in Cephalonia, which was very hard for us.

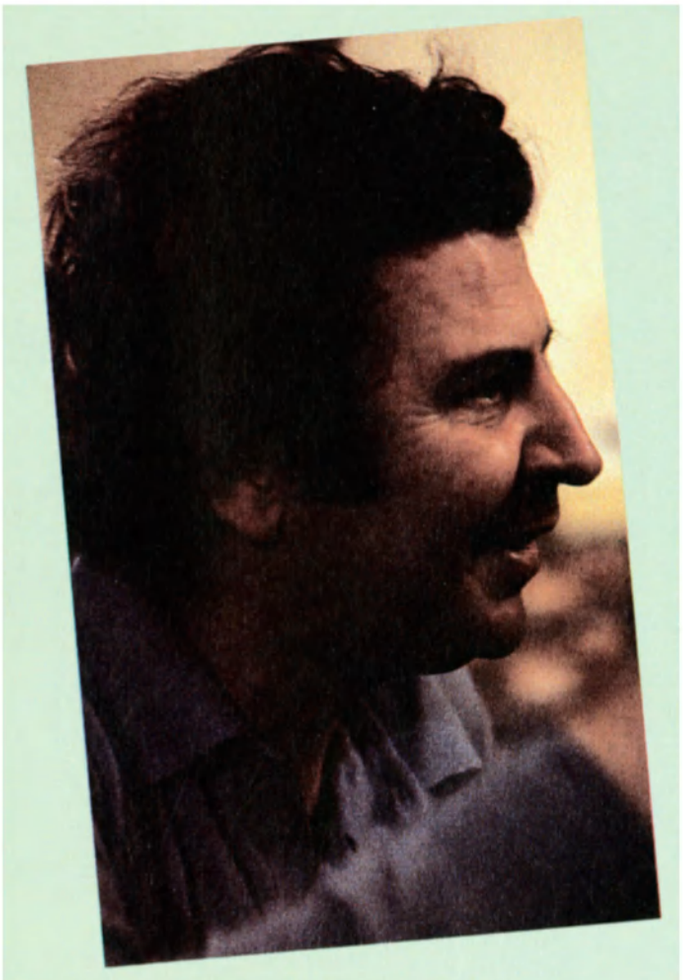
The cultural atmosphere in Cephalonia was completely different from that in Epirus. The island had never been occupied by the Ottomans and the influence of the Venetians, and later of the British, could still be perceived, even in the way people spoke. The music played on the island was more Western in style. It was there that I heard a philharmonic orchestra for the first time. It used to play on the main square and whenever I went by I was transfixed, spellbound with admiration. I was very impressed with the conductor. When I asked my mother what he was doing, her reply was: "That man is suffering". For me too that music meant suffering.

I was still at primary school when the Metropolitan of Cephalonia came to inspect my class and asked the other children and me to sing the national anthem, so that he could judge what our voices were like. After that, twenty of us were chosen to sing canticles in a small local church on Good Friday. The tunes were very old and beautiful—two of them were in modal form and one was tonal. I joined the church choir just to be able to keep on hearing them. About ten years ago, I used those three canticles in my third symphony, in memory of those times I shall never forget.

After Cephalonia, we were sent to Patras, which was a more affluent middle-class town, although it was not such a pretty place. It was there, when I was buying some books, that I found out what a musical score was. My father explained to me that that was how music was written, and gave me my first lesson. There was a very good choir at school, conducted by a teacher who was also a violinist. Every morning we used to sing a hymn by Haydn, with a solo part which I must have sung well, since the teacher regularly invited people to come and listen to it. One day, he offered me a violin, which I bought from him. I then went to the academy of music in Patras, but the violin teacher there used to hit me every time I played a false note. Eventually I left and went on studying by myself. As a result, when I was about twelve, I wrote my first songs to the words of classical poems I took from my schoolbooks. The melodies are beautiful, perhaps the most beautiful I have ever written. There are about seventy of them altogether and I plan to publish them. I shall dedicate them to schoolchildren, since they were written when I was a schoolchild myself.

We left Patras for a poorer town further south. It was summer and in the afternoons everybody strolled about on the main square. I was already very tall and thin and people tended to look at me, with my lanky frame, as if I was a bit of an oddity. In the end, I shut myself up in the house and, as a result, I made considerable progress with my music. In the house opposite, there was a beautiful girl with green eyes and I fell madly in love with her. All alone in my room, I watched the girl, who couldn't see me, and composed a large number of songs on my violin. I taught them to my mother, who had a beautiful voice and sang well. In the evenings, after supper, when my father asked us what we had been doing during the day, we used to sing our songs for him. He in turn started singing and later on my brother joined in, so that we formed a family quartet which I accompanied on the guitar or violin, while also singing myself. My father began to invite his friends, along with the prefects and sub-prefects and a whole small world of civil servants, to come and listen to us. It was like having a job, since I had to prepare a concert every evening for my father's guests.

The following year, we changed towns yet again. I was more and more on my own



Opposite page, Anthony Quinn dancing a *sirtaki* in a famous scene from the film *Zorba the Greek*, based on the novel by Nikos Kazantzakis, with music by Mikis Theodorakis (left).

and I spent a lot of time reading. My father had a library of more than 1,600 books, which followed us wherever we went.

Later on, in Tripolis, I started to learn the piano and harmony. We couldn't afford to buy a piano and there were only three in the entire town. I practised the scales on the piano of a rich American, who allowed me to study at his house on Sunday mornings when people were at mass. But I had to stop playing as soon as he got back. For the first time in my life, I felt a sense of hatred for rich people who could afford a piano but who didn't use it, whereas I really needed a piano but was deprived of the opportunity. If I became a Marxist, it was because of that piano, which to my eyes was the embodiment of social injustice. I eventually hired a harmonium, which I found very useful. But all these setbacks taught me to write music from memory, without any instruments, and I was therefore later able to go on composing in exile and prison

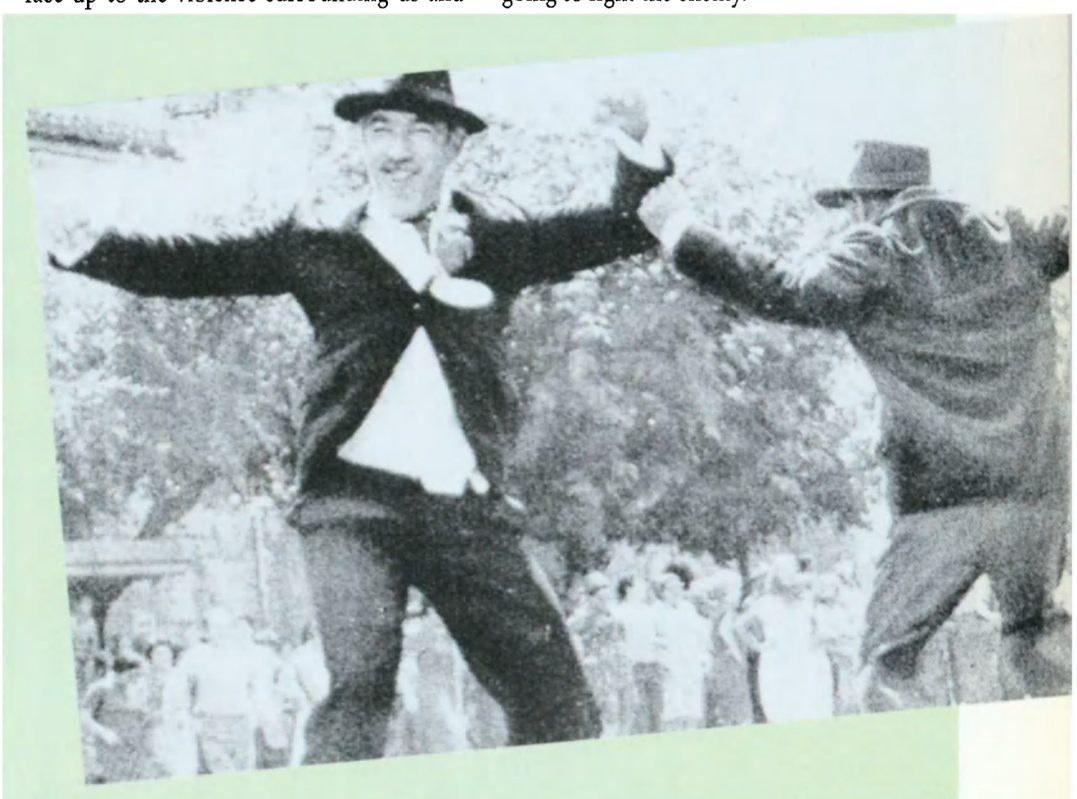
■ *Where and when did you decide to devote yourself to music?*

— At Tripolis, in the Peloponnese, which was a poor region where life was very hard. Many people emigrated to the United States or went to seek their fortunes in Athens. I decided to become a musician, although I was fairly good at mathematics and liked handling abstractions. My parents and my maths teacher hoped that I would go in for a glamorous profession, like architecture. However, I went on studying classical music and composing. I started writing piano pieces at a time when I knew a girl who had a piano and played Schumann and Beethoven. We used to give concerts to which we invited the town's leading citizens. This was during the occupation, when our only diversions were poetry and philosophy. We translated classical authors such as Aristotle, Plato and Homer into modern Greek. There was also the cinema, which only showed German films, although we sometimes got to see splendid musical films instead of military propaganda. For example, I saw German films which ended with the finale from Beethoven's ninth symphony, which had an absolutely stunning effect on me. I was so shaken that I actually fell ill and ran a high temperature. In the end, I told my father and the maths teacher that all I was interested in was music.

In 1942, my father went to see the director of the Athens conservatory with my music. The director asked to meet me and I went to his home, where we had a talk and he listened to me play the piano. The upshot was that he offered me a scholarship to the conservatory, which I was due to enter in 1943. But I am jumping the gun. Before that, there was another important stage in my life, when I joined the resistance and discovered Marxism.

It was wartime. We were deeply religious and fervent worshippers. The love of Christ, Christian charity and religious feeling catered for a real need when we had to face up to the violence surrounding us and the ugliness of the world at that time. Reading the Gospel was itself a form of resistance, but it was not enough. We had to do something. We had to react. On 25 March 1942, we organized a demonstration against the Italians in Tripolis. The National Liberation Front, which had been set up in Athens and was communist-inspired, sent representatives to help us. During the demonstration, we were surrounded by the Italians. I got into a fight and apparently struck an Italian officer. Along with other demonstrators, I was arrested and beaten and was taken to a barracks, where we were tortured in an attempt to force us to reveal the names of our leaders. I was then thrown into prison, where I met the first resistance fighters, who were communists. I was then a member of the nationalist youth movement formed by Metaxas and we abhorred communism. The very word conjured up the image of a hideous monster for me. But when I started talking to these people and learnt that they had been the first to rise against the occupying forces, it made me think. When I came out of prison, I joined the resistance.

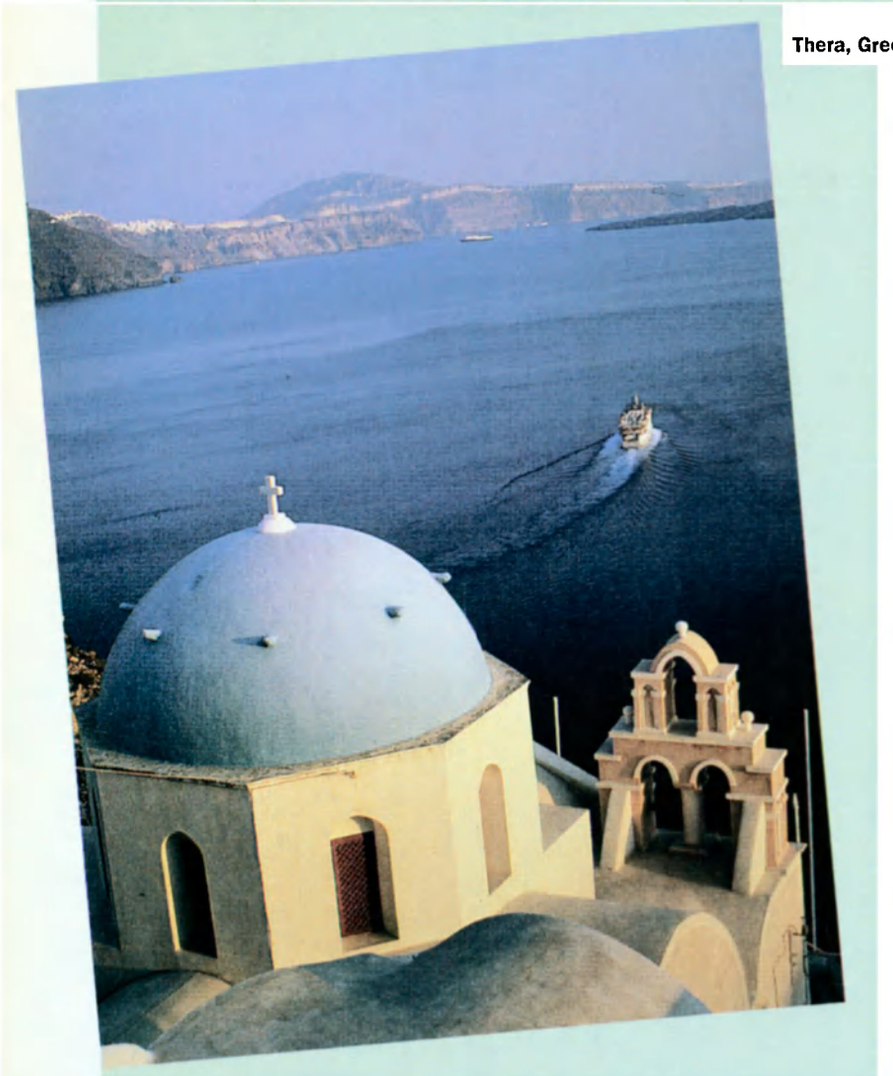
I was entrusted with the first resistance cell at school. I had to explain my ideas and justify the proposals I put forward. I therefore had to read about Marxism and brief myself on the ideology with which we were going to fight the enemy.



■ *Was this a sudden change of attitude of yours? By that time, your only interest was music, yet there you were becoming a member of the political resistance.*

— No, the change was not all that sudden. It is true that I was still interested in music, but we were spurred on by deeply held patriotic feelings. We suffered terribly during the occupation. The country was divided between the Germans, the Italians and the Bulgarians. There was talk of torture and the population was reduced to famine. The Germans surrounded Athens for four months and 300,000 people died of hunger. My family had always been very nationalistic and it was only natural, therefore, that I should join the resistance.

At that period, I gave a public concert, attended by Italian officers, who were surprised to find a young musician and composer in front of them. From then onwards,



Thera, Greece.

I became something of a celebrity among the occupation authorities, since Tripolis was a small town where everybody knew everybody else. The head of the Italian garrison was a terrifying colonel whose excesses put the fear of death in us. One evening, when people were taking their evening stroll on the main square, he suddenly came up to me, took me by the shoulder and started singing *La donna è mobile!* People looked at us in amazement. Then, all of a sudden, his mood changed and he pushed me all the way to the hospital that was requisitioned for Italian soldiers and had me searched. Since they found nothing on me, he ordered me to report to his office the next morning. When I entered, he got up, gave a military salute and said: "I hail the patriot and hate the communist!" He then told me that the Italians were due to withdraw from the town on the following day and hand it over to the Germans, who had demanded a list of twenty resistance fighters to be executed. So in order to save my life he had to arrest me and send me to Athens! That's how I came to leave for Athens. Only a few days later, the colonel was killed in battle.

In 1944, I was arrested by the Gestapo. Then the Germans pulled out and there was a breathing-space which the communist patriotic front used to its advantage. After that, the British arrived and were at one time in favour of the formation of a government of national unity under Papandreou, but soon urged confrontation with the communists.

Papandreou was caught between two fires and eventually resigned, whereupon we organized a demonstration against the British in Athens, in the course of which the police killed seventy demontrators in Constitution Square. The partisans then rose up in mass against the British, who had come with heavy weapons and warships. The communist party was reluctant to put its most seasoned fighters in the front line and withdrew them from Athens. Instead, we reservists, who were students in the daytime and soldiers after lectures had ended, were sent into action. Even so, we managed to resist for thirty-three days, after which the British occupied the country.

The party, which was still quite strong, continued to organize demonstrations for two more years. Then the communists fell into the trap of reacting to provocation and civil war broke out. A fresh army composed of 70,000 militants, including 15,000 women, was mobilized. This was a well-trained army set up with the help of the countries of Eastern Europe. Its strength surprised the nationalists and it managed to take control of almost the whole of Greece! Then the Americans landed with a full-scale battle-fleet, rebuilt the national army and supplied it with an exceptional array of equipment and facilities. They hunted down the partisans, made massive arrests and deported whole villages to unpopulated islands, whereupon Yugoslavia closed its borders to the fleeing partisans, who took refuge in Albania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and even the Soviet Union.

I was arrested for the first time in 1947. Then there was a change of government and I was granted an amnesty. I returned to Athens, but had immediately to go into hiding. I was arrested again and sent into exile on the island of Ikaria, interned on Macronisos with other political prisoners, taken to a military unit and tortured for several days before being sent to hospital, and then brought back to Macronisos. At the end of the war, I was just like a ghost, walking on crutches.

■ *Even so, you continued to compose during this turbulent period?*

— I think that it was during these difficult years that I wrote my most important works. I also recopied the scores of the great classical composers and studied them from beginning to end. This was how I analysed Beethoven's nine symphonies. I don't think that anybody has ever composed anything quite so all-encompassing. My own compositions were confiscated at Macronisos, but I had committed them to memory and was able to reconstitute them afterwards.

In 1949, I was able to return to my father's village in Crete. It was a horrifying experience: all my cousins who had been in the national army were there and they, like me, had been wounded. Some of them had had arms or legs amputated. We belonged to the same family, yet we had torn each other apart and had all lost out in the end. It was a lesson I would never forget. In a sense, it marked the end of my childhood. ❐

THE quest for universality is a response to a long-standing human aspiration. It may have begun long ago with the sages, prophets and mystics who sought a single divine principle which would release the sacred from confinement within purely local, tribal or national boundaries and make it accessible to people everywhere. In so doing, they created a potential link between each individual conscience and humanity as a whole.

The philosophers of the Enlightenment gave another meaning to the quest when they removed its sacred dimension. They regarded the principle of universality as inherent in human nature and applicable to all people, whatever their religion or community, by virtue of their status as members of the species. This attitude, which seems unexceptionable today, was actually a radical new departure at that time.

How far has Europe served or—notably through the slave trade and colonialism—betrayed this vision of universality in the last few centuries? Now that all other societies have been confronted with it through European influence, how and at what cost can they incorporate it into their mental and cultural landscape?

These are some of the questions raised in this issue, which has been inspired by an international meeting that was organized by the European Parliament at Strasbourg on 21 and 22 November 1991 on the theme of "Universal culture and Europe—a dialogue of civilizations". The authors of the articles published on the following pages all took part in the meeting. In our choice of contributions we have tried to give an idea of the wide range of responses aroused by this important question. We only regret that for reasons of space we have been unable to publish texts by the other participants at the Strasbourg meeting, who all contributed to a debate of high intellectual calibre.

BAHGAT ELNADI AND ADEL RIFAAT ■

AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

The double-faced head of the Roman god Janus on a terracotta votive stele (Rome, 1st century BC).

The two faces of Europe

by Enrique Barón Crespo

WHY should we be concerned with the universal? For one thing surely because the future of humanity on our planet is the day-to-day responsibility of all of us, everywhere. For another because the upheavals of the past few years have often triggered reactions that oblige us to ask where we stand in relation to the universal. What do we see around us? A retreat into self-absorption, a resurgence of aggressive sectarianism, a rising tide of nationalism, communities turning to fundamentalism. We are witnessing a collective identity crisis accompanied in some cases by a crumbling of the forces that hold societies together.

In spite of this—perhaps even because of it—the context in which these shifts in identity are taking place is one of an irresistible march towards globalization. Societies everywhere are involved in the same processes of wealth-creation and exchange. All societies, at least those that are free, have access to much the same information and, for better or for worse, the same television mythology, the same games, the same tragedies and the same hopes. But this globalizing trend is egalitarian only in appearance, since it reproduces inequalities, imbalances and tensions across the planet. To see that this is so, one need only consider the current state of North-South relations.

European imperialism has led many peoples to look askance at the universal values proclaimed by Europe. But it is on this heritage that the future must be built

Yet out of this contradictory situation, with its convergences and divergences, a completely new historical configuration is emerging. We may be entering an era of global immediacy. Universality is ceasing to be an abstraction, as part of a natural process shaped by the qualities of each and every one of us. We cannot join in this chorus of many voices unless we accept its diversity. People today are no longer only asking themselves about their place in their families, their towns and cities, their regions and their countries, but also about the role they should play in the future of our planet, and what they must do to remedy the harm caused by pollution, technology and progress.

Both for societies and for individuals the word universality has many different meanings, coloured by a host of historical, cultural and religious connotations. It would be wrong to attach priority to one of these meanings and try to impose it on everybody. Modern anthropology and ethnology have taught us that no civilization is superior to any other, that there is no such thing as "advanced" or "primitive" intelligence, only collective mental images that must be judged on their own terms. Yet we must beware of falling into the trap of all-comprehensive relativism. When widely differing cultures come into contact, some values remain inviolate, and we must try to preserve them and ensure that they are respected, not so much because they serve our own particular interests as because, through each and every one of us, they reach out to embrace the whole of humanity.

Have we not entered a historico-cultural period in which it will be possible to win universal support for certain fundamental values? A twofold demand for freedom and human dignity is evident in social relations everywhere. This fundamental imperative is at the heart of all questions relating to human rights. Having contributed to the downfall of more than one monolithic empire, it now requires those of us who rightly defend equality of opportunity and living conditions to reflect on the best way to equate living well with living freely. This equation is becoming a fundamental and, when it is solved, a universal value.

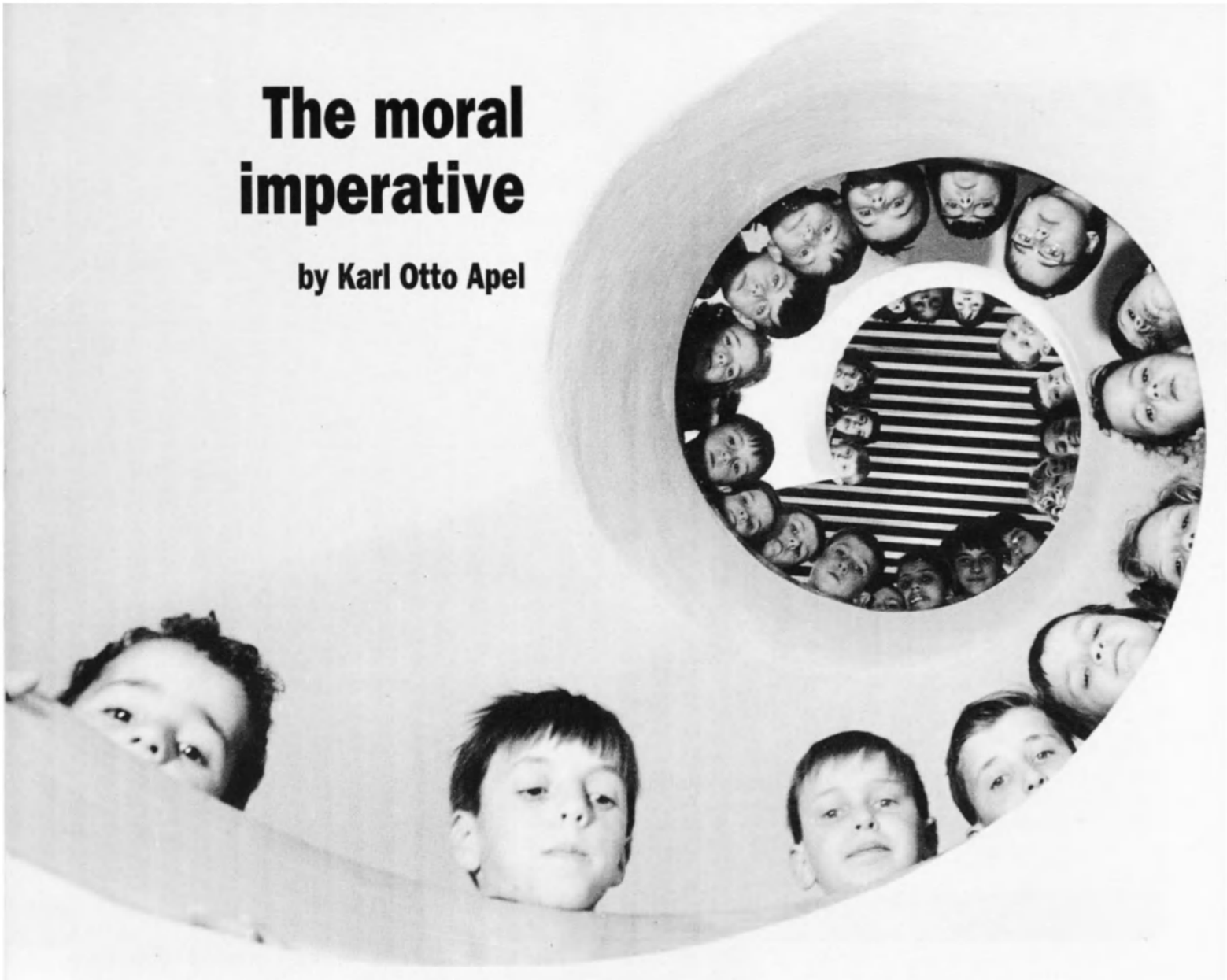
Like Janus, Europe has two faces, a dual identity oscillating between good and evil. As the French historian Fernand Braudel once put it, Europe is both hell and paradise. The past two centuries have seen modernization and progress but also war, revolution, colonization and totalitarianism. Paradoxically, it is through this duality that Europe has, since the sixteenth century, made its mark on the world. Its greatest sin, perhaps, has been to fashion that world in its own image. For the most part the rest of the globe has paid it back by assimilating its humanitarian ideals while rejecting its urge to dominate. This is a lesson we must never forget. ❐

***Totem* (1991), mixed media on batik by the Slovenian artist Anièce J. Novak. In the words of its creator, this work inspired by the sand-paintings of the Navajo Indians of North America is an attempt to express a "vision of one world in which each element has its place in a harmonious whole, thus linking us to the universal."**

Enrique Barón Crespo, former Spanish government minister, was president of the European Parliament at the time when the seminar on "Universal culture and Europe" was held. He is the author of *El rapto de Europa* (1990).

The moral imperative

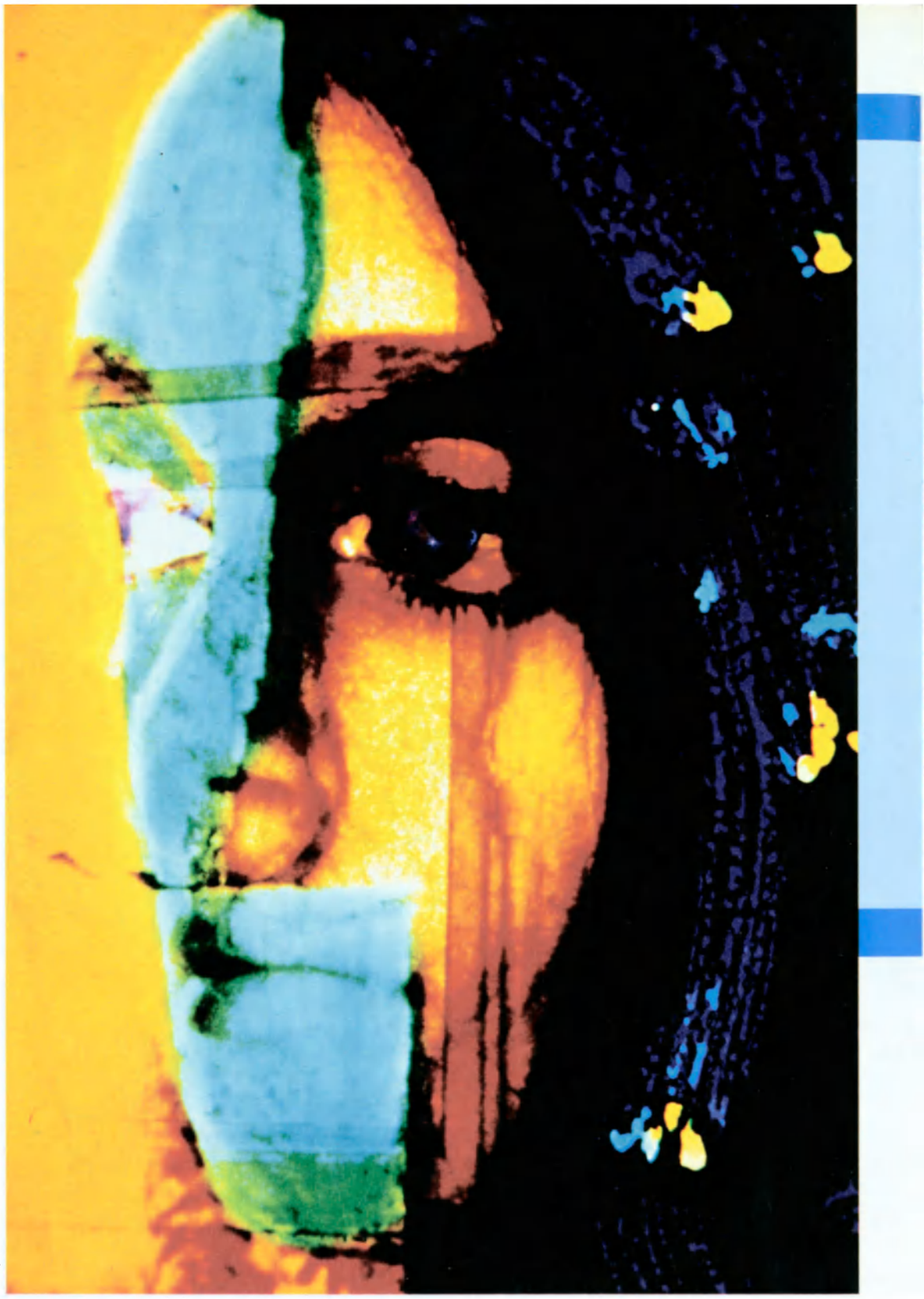
by Karl Otto Apel



Contrary to the view of some modern thinkers, a universal ethic complements and even guarantees the right to be different

EUROPEAN universalist philosophy—and I am thinking particularly of moral philosophy and the philosophy of law—has always shown itself ultimately to be, in its political and economic implications, the ideological expression of Eurocentric power. That, at any rate, is how it appears even now to the peoples of the Third World, who find the framework it provides inappropriate for the expression of their aspirations. Excluded from the debate about themselves, strangers to European ideas about universality, which to them smack of colonialism, they are not permitted, for example, to participate in the deliberations of the World Bank or to attend the great international summits so as to adequately defend their interests.

Even when their élites are accorded a worldwide audience, they remain prisoners, at least in economic terms, of the perspective imposed by the interests of the wealthy countries. This view tends to accord *a priori* universal validity to the decisions of the great arbiters of international economic life, including



Multi-image **(1991), by the Indian artist Naresh Singh, who wished to evoke in this portrait of a woman with a fathomless gaze "the age-old serenity of ancient civilizations".**

those relating to the reduction or cancellation of Third World debt.

Even if one believes that the inequalities of a market economy based on capitalism represent an irreversible achievement of the cultural history of humankind—and I personally do not—it in no way follows that the socio-political factors that underlie the economic power structure linking rich and poor countries are naturally pre-ordained.

On the other hand, no one would dispute that it is the rich countries of Europe and North America, and one must also add Japan, that are primarily responsible for the current world ecological crisis, both directly through their uncontrolled waste of energy and toxic emissions and indirectly where the destruction of tropical forests by Third World agriculturalists is concerned. At a time when the threat of nuclear conflict seems to have been largely lifted, the world ecological crisis constitutes the best argument for a strict, universally applicable moral code.

That said, I would like to put forward an argument which seems to me to confirm the link between the European intellectual tradition and

The components of culture

Egyptian culture may be clearly analysed into the ancient Egyptian artistic component, the Arab-Islamic legacy, and the borrowings from the best of modern European life. These elements are strongly antipathetic to each other. As they clash, the un-Egyptian qualities are rejected and a purified blend emerges which is then transmitted from father to son and from teacher to pupil.

I realize that many prominent European thinkers are opposed to national cultures because they want mankind to have but a single culture. I feel that this, however, is contrary to nature. While certain things, of course, are the common property of all men, for example, many branches of science, others are individual and limited to a given nation, as in fact are many kinds of art. Human life is so constituted that people are afforded the opportunity of particularizing the general and stamping their own imprint upon it. Science has no homeland of its own, but when it settles in a country it becomes influenced by the prevailing atmosphere, physical and social, and is thus able to reach the souls of its inhabitants. Art, on the other hand, is personal, portraying as it does the soul and temperament of its producer. It scarcely appears when by the very fact of existence it acquires an indefinable quality that brings the artist closer to his fellow men everywhere. An Egyptian statue is purely national in that it embodies the Egyptian nature and taste; yet as soon as cultivated people glimpse it, they are moved by admiration. Similarly, a piece of typically German or French music, say by Wagner or Berlioz, will touch the hearts of all sensitive listeners.

Culture is neither exclusively national nor international; it is both, often individual as well. Who can separate Beethoven from the music of Beethoven or Racine from the poetry of Racine?

Taha Hussein
Egyptian writer (1889-1973)
***Mustaqbal al-thaqâfah fî Misr* (1938; *The Future of Culture in Egypt*, translated from Arabic by Sidney Glazer, Octagon Books, New York, 1975)**

its claims to universality. It is a historical fact that ever since the start of the conquest of the world by Europe, the repeated and constant condemnations of such tragic manifestations of this imperialism as the extermination of the Indians or the African slave trade have themselves proceeded from the universalist thinking of European philosophers. This is as true of Latin-American "liberation" theology and philosophy as it is of "dependence theory". It holds true to the point that in the fields of morality or legal theory it is hard to imagine any philosophy with universalist pretensions that could attract consensus support around the world starting from premises other than those of the tradition of European thought. This seems to confirm the universalist vocation of Europe, even if at present it amounts to no more than pious intentions.

For and against a universal morality

It is a remarkable and irritating fact that all the names that count in the world of thought today are critical of the idea of a universal morality, which they consider to be useless, superfluous or even impossible. So-called "post-modern" philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard or the late Michel Foucault also consider it undesirable, on the grounds that universalism could stifle the variety of individual forms of life. American neo-pragmatists such as Richard Rorty and British neo-Aristotelians such as Alasdair MacIntyre go further, rejecting the very possibility of a universal morality on the grounds that all moral values, in Rorty's view, rest on a consensual basis contingent on a specific cultural tradition. In Germany too, the view of the conservative, neo-Aristotelian current represented by such writers as H. Lübbe and Otto Marquard is that a universal morality transcending local differences is not only impossible but undesirable. They hold that the desire to assess the values attached to the conventions and institutions of each cultural tradition would do more harm than good.

It is worth noting that accepting the accuracy

of all these critiques would implicitly confirm the view of Third World intellectuals that universalism is merely Eurocentric imperialism in another guise. So Europe's universalist mission arouses hostility both inside and outside the continent. Basically its critics tend to deny the very possibility of achieving a macroethic of universal law recognized by all—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example—or of a concerted approach to resolving the great problems confronting humanity such as the world ecological crisis.

Commenting on his great unfinished *History of Sexuality*, the French thinker Michel Foucault deplored the fact that classical Greek morality based on "care for oneself", whose goal was for each individual to find self-fulfilment through a personal lifestyle, was supplanted by the Christian Stoicism of Kant and "a universal law imposed in the same way on every reasonable being". He went on to reject the very idea of a universal morality in the following terms: "The quest for a moral formula that would be acceptable to everyone in the sense that everyone would have to submit to it seems to me to be catastrophic". It is true that shortly afterwards, when he was asked whether human rights have a universal value, he felt obliged, as the progressive militant he also was, to reply in the affirmative. This internal contradiction seems to me to result from the incompatibility between Foucault's critique of power and his post-Nietzschean conviction that all discourse, including his own, is nothing other than an act of power, the expression of a will to power.

Currently critics of Eurocentrism look to post-modern attacks on rationality, universalism and the theory of consensus, and São Paulo and Mexico City affirm as ardently as Paris and the International College of Philosophy the right to plurality and to variety in face of the ubiquitous tyranny of universal reason. But what theoretical interest is there in such a polarization?

If it were only a matter of demonstrating the limits of certain types of rationality—technico-instrumental, strategic or systemic-functional—or establishing a distinction between forms of reasoning centred on theory, morality and aesthetic expression, this critique of the homogeneity of rational expressions would be doing no more than pushing at an open door.

But when the critique of rationality calls into question the fundamental identity and unity of reason in the name of difference and plurality, it overshoots the mark and threatens the very diversity that it aims to protect from the reductionist tendencies of European thought. For if this prodigious diversity really exists and the ultimate goal of human communication is to develop an awareness of it, does the stress put exclusively on basic "difference" and "otherness" not risk encouraging behaviour similar to that of the first colonists who, when confronted with beings very different from themselves, considered them as not human and so saw nothing wrong in massacring them or transforming them into beasts of burden?

Minerve écrivant les droits de l'homme
(1790, "Minerva Inscribing the Rights of Man"), an allegorical work by the French historical painter Jean-Baptiste Baron.

THE CONSENSUS ETHIC

It will be objected that that is not what the postmodern critiques of the unity of reason seek to demonstrate. What they try to do, rather, is to win acceptance for the idea that the essential differences with regard to the fundamentals of morality and value judgements are

irreducible and irrational. Max Weber used to say that humanity practised moral "polytheism", and one simply had to accept the fact.

I believe that the task now facing us is not to set the particularism and self-concern of individual existences against universal value-structures, but rather to seek an accommodation between an exacting universal morality and the values of neo-Aristotelian individualism. As Kant realized, this would imply that the ethics of great universal principles should take precedence over a value-system founded on self-fulfilment. In fact such an approach would benefit individual aspirations, for ever since the promulgation of Roman law inspired by Stoicism, moral and legal progress in the field of human rights has always brought advances with respect to individual particularism. It is in their inability to understand this that the postmodern philosophers who set particularisms against the unity of normative reason have failed.

The consensus ethic, on the other hand, allows for two-way communication, and conciliation between the universal norms of an exacting morality and the burgeoning demands of self-fulfilment in all its multiple manifestations. This exercise in conciliation must involve the search for a rational consensus rather than intimidation or manipulation, which rely for their effect on force.

To end on a personal note, I would conclude that even in the domain of morality, Europe's universal vocation is both an impossibility and a goal to strive for. As for knowing whether it will be achieved and whether Europe will succeed in dissociating itself sufficiently from a manifestly Eurocentric ideology of power, only time will tell. ❐

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How far is Europe meeting the standards it sets itself?

Louder than words

by Sami Naïr

At a crossroads of cultures.

THE universal can no longer be regarded as an abstraction. The process of unification resulting from membership of a single trading nexus, the worldwide domination of media and information networks, and the sharing of mythologies at the planetary level all imply that any discussion of the universal is meaningless if it does not take account of the individual cultures of which it consists. We shall not be awarded a diploma for proficiency in universality merely because we affirm our belief in the fundamental values of humanism, freedom, equality, tolerance, progress and human rights. Societies are now judged by the world at large, and the events that take place in them are matched against the account they give of themselves and the values they claim to epitomize.

For example, what the West says about universality seems to be extremely constructive when looked at in abstract terms, but much of the shine rubs off when it is set against the facts. In the past, colonization went forward in the name of progress and civilization. Today, although democracy may ensure that freedoms are protected, in Western Europe it also finds expression in the return of racism and xenophobia and the resurgence of exclusive local allegiances.

The fact is that we are living in a zone of turbulence created by the revolution in world economic structures which took place in the 1970s and 1980s. That revolution turned everything upside down, including the chessboard of world politics, relations between North and South and between East and West, and even the forces of social cohesion within the democratic societies of Europe and America. The nature of the traditional social classes is changing—this is particularly true of the traditional middle and working classes—and new classes, with different values and attitudes to life, are emerging. The rise of new middle classes all over the world makes it very difficult to define universal values rooted in solidarity and progress, because these middle classes are confronted with influxes of new migrants—in Europe from the developing countries of the South and from Eastern Europe, and in North America from Spanish-speaking America. This encounter prompts people in the host societies to reassert their own identities and in many cases leads to attitudes of

refusal and rejection. It will not be easy to give tangible form to a universal vision of the world.

Thought must also be given to the scope and limitations of the European social and political model. Although democracy and the economic system subtending it seem to be here to stay, they are far from perfect. It would be worthwhile investigating the relationships between different forms of power—cultural, political and economic. The media can in some cases be of decisive importance in encouraging emancipation and freedom, but they can also be extremely dangerous by leading to new forms of alienation (especially television) and by manipulating individuals. Democratic access to the media is now becoming a key issue, and the modern concept of freedom of opinion clearly hinges on it. The concept of democracy should also be refined, since in these closing years of the twentieth century democracy cannot be considered simply as an institutional form. It must be given a content that will make it possible for social communication to flourish and, in its wake, for society itself to take responsibility for its problems.

Europe is, in the words of Enrique Barón Crespo, former President of the European Parliament, "easy to describe but difficult to build". It cannot be defined in terms of an ethnic, denominational or even narrowly cultural identity. In reality, Europe is both an idea—the idea of a dialogue and a universal humanist outlook—and a combat against tendencies which within Europe itself wish to pervert this idea. Seen from the outside, Europe must be both of these things simultaneously. This is now the only way it can exert its power of attraction.

European universality no longer depends on the force of arms or even on the power of words to convince. It faces a much more difficult test in which success or failure will be measured by the account which European society will be seen to give of itself, day in day out. Europe is no longer a source of fascination, and that is all for the good. It will be judged on its acts. It no longer holds the monopoly on universality, but the Universal will be recognized as the foundation stone of its identity if—and only if—it provides itself with appropriate democratic facilities; if it extends democracy to all the people of whom it is constituted; and if it supports the emergence and strengthening of democracy the world over. ❐

Opéra cosmique **(1991, "Cosmic Opera"). Composition by the French artist Hélène Mugot.**

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If North and South are to meet, both must make an effort—the North to stop thinking it has a monopoly on universal values, the South to incorporate the principle of universality within its own value systems

The common ground of humanity

by Mahmoud Hussein

THE European Enlightenment ushered in a new conception of humanity, based on the idea that certain fundamental characteristics—the need for individual autonomy and freedom, the ability to think for oneself by exercising the power of reason, the aspiration to progress—are common to all human beings. Over and above all differences of race, nationality, region or class, the individual was acknowledged as belonging first and foremost to universal humanity.

This truly modern view of the individual seen independently of all his or her religious and social affiliations was developed in the West from the time of the Renaissance onwards and assumed its final form in the eighteenth century. Since then, however, the West has betrayed it.

No sooner had the bastions of feudalism and absolutism in Europe been rocked to their foundations or toppled than the principles of humanism, which had hitherto been articulated with crystal clarity, gradually came to be swamped by the demands of financial and industrial capitalism, for which the French Revolution had opened up great prospects. A scheme for exercising world domination began to take shape, boosted by the astonishing achievements of industrialization. From then on, Europe would export to other societies not the unabridged message of a universal humanity but rather a piecemeal collection of universal characteristics, chosen to cater for the requirements of colonization in those societies. Generations of eminent European thinkers did their utmost to resist this betrayal of the principles of 1789. By doing so, they saved their honour, but they did not change the course of history.

The clash between universalist ideas and the urge to dominate continues to this day. The prime concern of the ruling political and economic classes is to hang on to their positions of strength and sources of wealth in what used to be called the Third World. The profits they reap from a trading system based on inequality, the exceptional sums they make from the sale of arms, the pressures they can bring to bear as a result of the indebtedness of the poorest nations—all these are arguments strong enough, in the eyes of many governments and private companies, to ensure that their interests

An allegorical, revolutionary representation of Equality and Liberty. 18th-century French engraving.

Opposite page, *Metaphorical Salute to Europe 1992*, by the French artist Marc Pio Maximilien Salvelli.

prevail over vague and half-hearted talk of worldwide solidarity.

These interests are being defended all the more fiercely today because their future seems less assured than it once did, because of the general instability of the world economy and because of the growing frustration and unrest which they arouse. In some extreme cases, their defenders justify their actions by aggressive ideologies based on claims of national, cultural or even racial superiority.

In the countries of the South, where the choice between fundamentalism and democracy is starting to be posed, such attitudes are grist to the mill of fundamentalism. Confronted with a West whose power is so manifestly geared to safeguarding its own privileges, those who subscribe to the universal principles of freedom and equality—which came from the West in the first place—find themselves on the defensive against opponents who are intent on dismissing all such universalist pretensions as mere camouflage to cover up injustice and inequality on a global scale. Fundamentalism

North-South

uses the selfishness of the rich as a pretext for giving an aura of respectability to the selfishness of the poor and insisting that communities should keep themselves to themselves.

Some leading intellectuals and a handful of statesmen in the West are trying to grasp these home truths from the developing world and to develop a strategy which is receptive to the universal hopes of freedom heralded by the widespread emergence of people as individuals in their own right. But the stakes involved in such a change are too high for the burden to be shouldered by a handful of thinkers alone. It demands a drastic shake-up in people's attitudes generally, and a radical transformation of the very nature of the ties binding the North and the South.

An immense moral privilege

Apart from the self-interest of the major powers and the calculations of international financiers,

Science and the world community

Some have claimed that European culture has a universal mission. This, essentially, is supposed to distinguish it from all the others. Its essence is at the same time defined as a creative activity of superior dynamism. Its expansion is considered as the natural consequence of this superiority. European culture still seems to spread throughout the world, whereas the other cultures remain purely local and hold their ground with difficulty.

Universality and superiority—these are comforting conclusions for Europeans. But there is a fallacy here. That European civilization created the entity of a modern world unified by the streamlined wing of the aircraft and by the radio wave is a historical fact. This, however, was not the work of jurists, theologians, politicians or writers, but of engineers and scientists. So what we should ask is which parts of "European" world civilization are truly universal and which are of purely local importance. As soon as the question is clearly put, the reply is clear. *The true universal factors are modern science and modern technology*, with the philosophies that have made them possible. . . .

Furthermore, it is wrong to assert that science, whether pure or applied, was entirely shaped by the European Renaissance. There were long centuries of preparation during which we see Europe assimilating Arab learning, Indian thought and Chinese technology. It is hard to represent the physico-mathematical hypotheses of Galileo without the aid of Indian numerical notation. The Arsenal, in which Galileo set the scene of one of his Dialogues which changed the world, could hardly have functioned without mastery of a typically Chinese technique, that of casting. Likewise, the first phases of science in Europe were neither so laborious nor so fraught with difficulty as has been claimed. On the contrary, there were periods when great discoveries could be made just by lifting a scalpel, once the basic technology of the discovery had come to light. It is thus impossible and even absurd for Europeans to think that science is their private property. It is not something they can protect by an everlasting patent. Science has always belonged to the world community.

Joseph Needham
British historian of science
***The Dialogue of Europe and Asia*, 1955**

so far-reaching a change comes up against a fundamental feature of Western consciousness. It would entail making a sacrifice whose psychological consequences would be incalculable. It would mean that the West would have to face the loss of the immense moral privilege it has enjoyed for the past five hundred years—that of being the motive force of universal history.

Throughout the period marked successively by the Renaissance, the age of the great inventions, the intercontinental voyages, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and finally colonialism, European society gradually forced everyone else to dance to its tune. Other parts of the world had to adjust their ways of thinking, acting and producing in order to fit in with European demands; they even had to take lessons from Europe when they came to resist European domination. The West felt it was justified in considering itself to be the heartbeat of the world and in assuming that its own new ideas and discoveries, not to mention its own spiritual, moral and aesthetic experiences, had an immediate and universal validity.

Now it faces the threat of losing the power to speak for others and to create in the name of all. The graft of individualism that it has implanted all over the world is beginning to take in the most varied soils. It is giving rise to modern democratic movements which are rooted in desires, fears and dreams that are different from its own, and through which a host of rapidly changing societies are trying to assert themselves, forge their own identities and set their own stamp on the future.

The West is thus called upon to adapt to a contemporary world that will move in increasingly unpredictable directions, and whose inner resources and secret workings will often tend to slip from its control, for they will draw on memories and loyalties that are not its own. As the West is forced to take on board intellectual landmarks and constructs which it has had no part in making and which will be transmitted and given universal relevance by citizens from other shores, it will have to think in terms of a future which it is no longer alone in desiring or shaping. It will have to learn how to become once more one element in human society among others.

The West already realizes that although its historical reign still continues, it is no longer absolute; that although it may have invented

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the concept of the modern individual, it no longer holds exclusive rights to its invention; and that other possible models for man are emerging. But the West has not yet come to terms with this change nor agreed to pay the price for it. To do so would mean abandoning the benefits it has reaped from a historical situation in which it has for so long been able to identify the promotion of its own cultural landmarks with the forward march of civilization and the furtherance of its own interests with the welfare of humanity.

From the specific to the universal

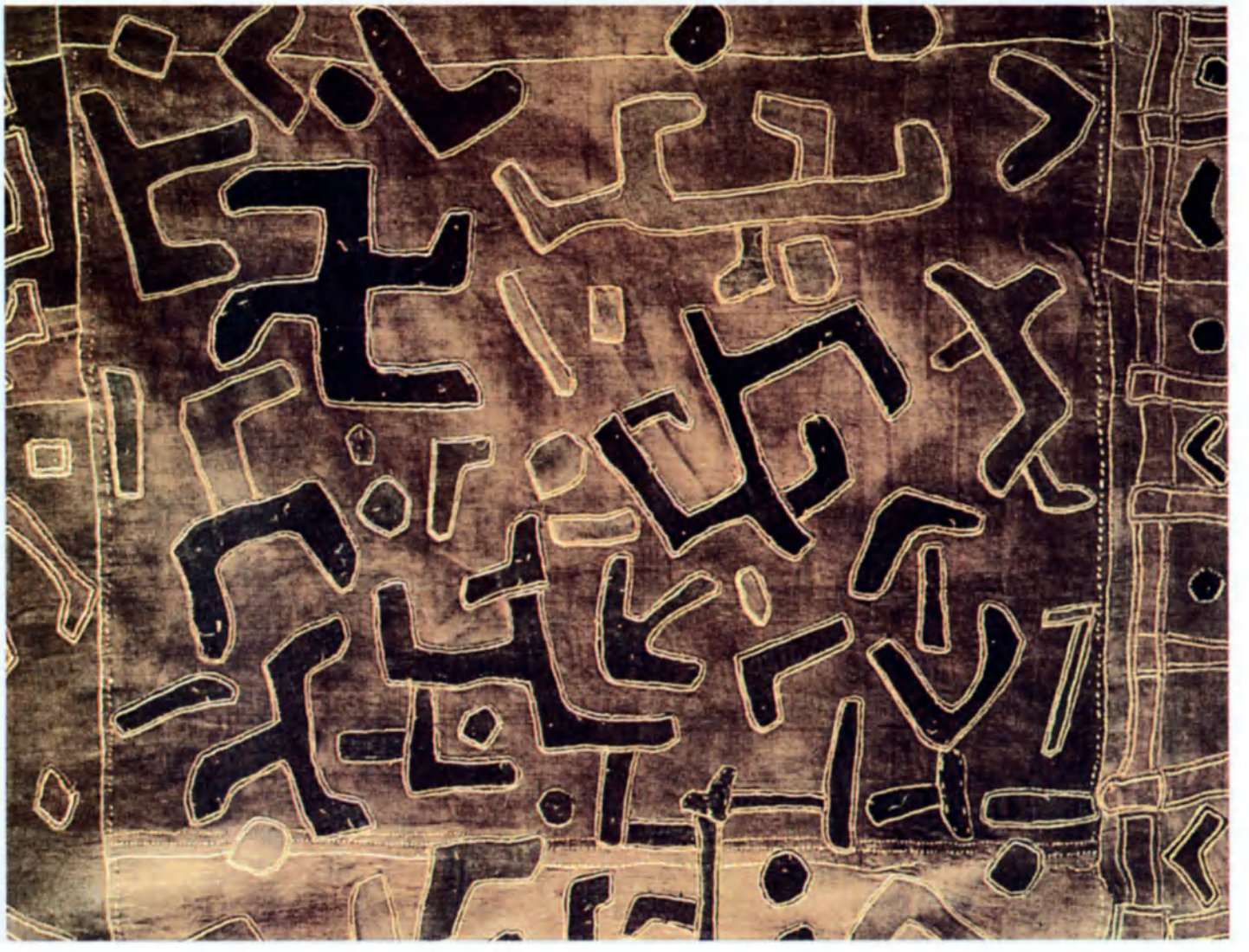
In these closing years of a millennium that has seen the peoples of the world emerge one after the other from tribal, national or regional isolation, become caught up in the maelstrom of a common history and feel that they share a single destiny, it is becoming clear that this destiny will be democratic only if two conditions are met. The peoples of the West and the peoples of the South will have to find a new way of relating their own specific values to the values they have in common. Let the former stop thinking that what is good for the West is good for the world, and let the latter start to incorporate a modern, universal dimension into their own particular value systems.

In taking it for granted that it held the key to universality because it had invented the concept of the modern individual, the West not only overestimated its own genius but also depreciated its own achievement. It forgot that other cultures and civilizations have, especially in art and religion, reached out to values transcending space and time in a bid to encompass the human condition in all its mystery; that they have produced accomplished expressions of universal preoccupations in metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics and rational thought; and that the West drew on all these sources before creating in its turn a new vision of modern Man.

This new vision is destined to unite the whole of humanity, for several reasons. It is the culmination of so much that has gone before; it draws inspiration from so many sources; it marks the completion of so many initiatives and experiments cut short by the vagaries of history. It responds to the potential which is latent within all people but was previously confined within the straitjacket of their many local allegiances. Now, without denying any of these allegiances, it can illuminate them all.

The idea that modern Man is a creation of the West that people elsewhere in the world can only emulate by adopting Western ways and surrendering their own identity is a misrepresentation of the West's essential contribution to humanity. That is the mentality that underpinned colonialism, corrupting the minds of the colonialists and tormenting those of the

***Project* (1938). Painting on newsprint by Paul Klee.**



***Ntshak*, raffia cloth decorated with divinatory symbols by an artist of the Kuba people (Zaire).**

peoples they colonized. This double misunderstanding can now be avoided.

THE FRAGILE FLOWERS OF FREEDOM

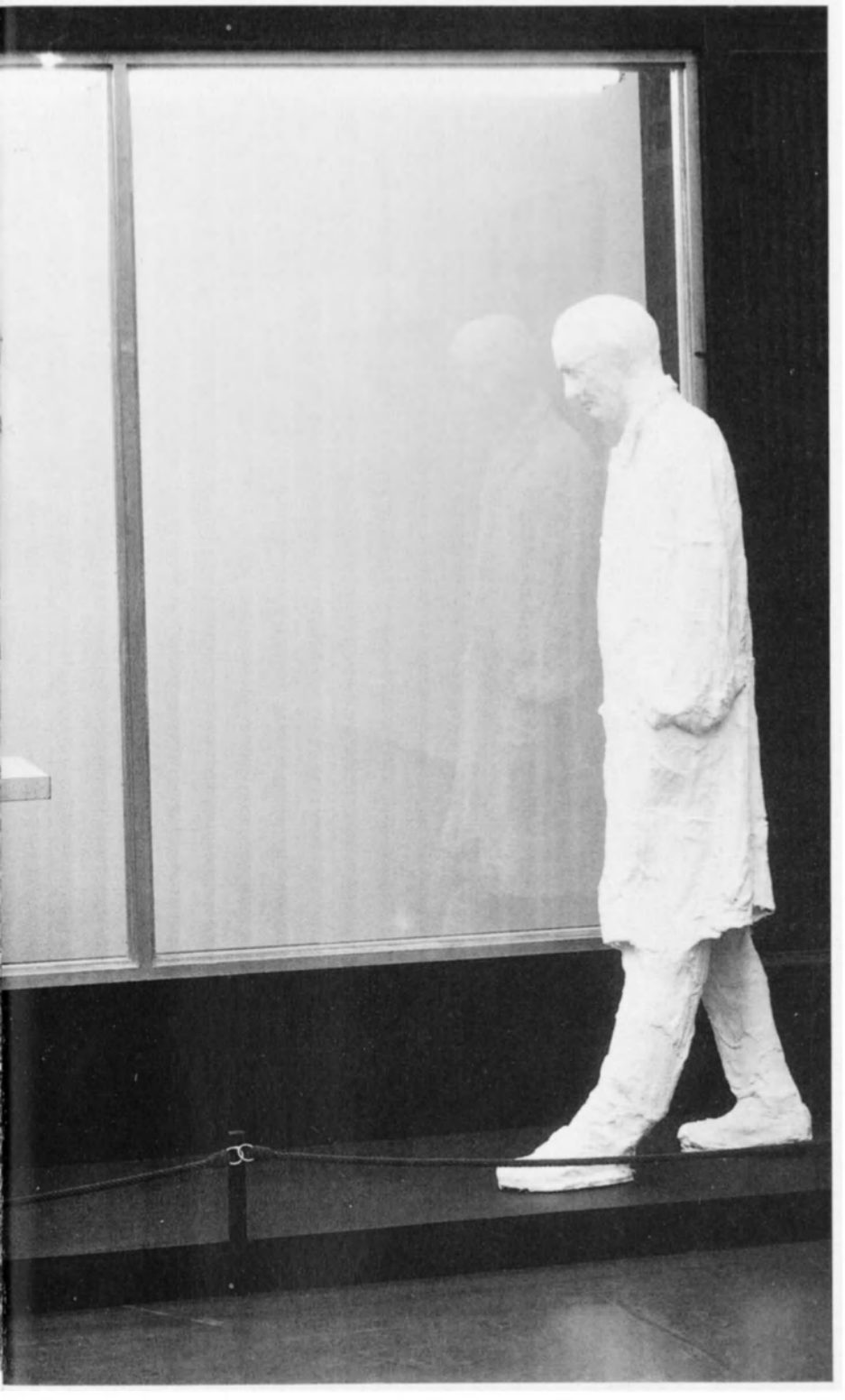
It is not for the West to export to others a value which belongs naturally to it but would be alien to them. Instead, the West should help others to adopt, of their own free will and in their own way, a value that is needed by all. That value was first formulated by the West and long monopolized by the West for its own ends. Now the West must serve the value it created. Let the West protect the first, timid shoots of freedom that need the universal nourishment provided by human rights if they are to take root in very different political and cultural soils.

Until now, the only way in which the peoples of the South could try to protect their personality was through confronting their identity with that of others and rejecting out of hand everything they regarded as specifically Western. It is true that they have come to acknowledge modern science and technology as necessary aspects of the universal, but they have remained convinced that these could easily be superimposed on their own, unchanged identity. Now they are starting to realize that the concept of the individual human being is the driving principle behind modern universalism. They will have to come to terms with this realization by voluntarily doing violence to a part of their innermost selves, by reappraising the core of values in which the tyranny of the community, the habit of despotism and the temptations of fatalism and superstition are all closely intertwined. The democratic imperative requires, in short, that they must accept a mutation and regeneration of their very identity.

For intellectuals in the South who support democracy, the time has come to accept this challenge. They must do so if they are to follow the same path as their counterparts in the West and the East and are to embark on the road to membership of a global community experienced as an intrinsic part of their own individuality. And they must do so in order that all those societies which, in five hundred years of disorder and violence, have moved from the stage at which their identity was defined by community and religion to the stage at which it is defined by the nation can together, in a spirit of solidarity, embark on the era of planetary identity. ❐

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

The Restaurant Window I (1967), by US artist George Segal. Life-size plaster mouldings reflect the distance between people and the barriers to communication.



Between two worlds

by Tahar Ben Jelloun

The uncomfortably acute perceptions of the intellectual who is an intermediary between two cultures

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IN 1967, the Moroccan historian Abdallah Laraoui published in Paris a book called *L'Idéologie arabe contemporaine* ("Arab Ideology Today"). In it he formulated the problem of the Arab quest for identity in these terms: "For three-quarters of a century, one question has absorbed the Arabs: 'Who are the others and who am I?'. . . Who are the non-Arabs? They long went by the names of Christianity and Europe. Their new title is at once vague and precise: the West".

Twenty-five years on, the question is still as topical as ever. It was brutally restated by the

Gulf crisis and the subsequent war. Some have answered it by rejecting everything associated with the non-Arab world, and have gone so far as to blame all the ills of the Arab world on the West. Others have known the attraction and fascination of the West but also its capacity to repress, and to cultivate indifference and even ignorance.

Those who are considered as links or intermediaries between the Arab world and the West are in an unenviable position. They do not stand between the two camps but rather have one foot in each, casting a critical eye in both directions.

The uneasy world of the Arab intellectual

The days when Arab intellectuals were fascinated by Europe are over. Now the relationship is more complex. They are preoccupied with Europe's future, with its weaknesses. As for the Arab world, they feel a responsibility towards it, but live in uncomfortable isolation from it.

Arab intellectuals living in Europe today feel uneasy. Perhaps this is a necessary stage in developing a clearer sense of their own identity. For many of the values born of the French Revolution have become universal, as part of a process that is making ever greater headway. Now people around the world take to the streets to fight for freedom and democracy as well as for bread. Europe no longer has a monopoly of values to which much of the world now stakes a claim.

These intellectuals must constantly rectify their vision of the world if they are not to be abandoned by their own folk while at the same time feeling alienated from a Europe that they find disturbing. It is not a comfortable situation to be in. But the tension it creates is interesting insofar as it obliges thinkers constantly to take stock, like photographers recording their surroundings.

In Europe Arab intellectuals have an opportunity to express their individuality, to test their subjectivity and affirm their uniqueness, for the individual, both as a unique entity and as a value, enjoys an unchallenged status there that is linked to the rule of law. Until the countries of the southern Mediterranean arrive at the same situation, the individual will not achieve recognition there.

Yet at the very time when the emergence of the individual is a rallying cry in the Third World, the individual is being increasingly demeaned as a value in the West. A selfish individualism is gaining ground. A chill wind is blowing as people become more and more self-absorbed and unresponsive. This tendency can be seen in the way in which the industrially developed countries of Europe have reacted

***Basta Game Over* (1991).**
A print made by Mélik Ouzani to promote peace and understanding between peoples.

recently to the phenomenon of immigration. Europe on those terms has not just lost its fascination, it provokes anger. Arab intellectuals won over to Western values have good reason to be concerned by the ways things are going in such a Europe, which apparently seeks to rekindle the spirit of colonialism and revive ethnocentric attitudes.

The paradox is that these intellectuals sometimes accept the achievements of liberal developed societies without adopting certain aspects of the cultures of those societies that are not compatible with their own backgrounds. On the other side of the Mediterranean there is a similar paradox: Europe has such a splendid image there that the picture sometimes verges on caricature, since everything that comes from the West is regarded as being good.

Everything? Well, not quite. In some non-democratic countries, for example, the import of large quantities of material goods is permitted, but the frontier is firmly closed to certain ideas and principles. We have all heard politicians claim that democracy, multi-party elections and universal suffrage are "foreign products" whose "consumption" would be harmful for a traditional society. Even so, these principles are now accepted as valid for all countries and all peoples.

Prejudices and suspicions

Is Europe equally fascinated by the Arab world? Various clichés distort the picture, resisting rational analysis as firmly as prejudices always do. To begin with, the Arab world is often confused with the Muslim world; people hardly bother to distinguish between Arabs and, say, Berbers. There is a passion for the desert, but it is often viewed as a kind of country retreat. Harems still haunt the popular imagination, even though they have long since ceased to exist. Polygamy is generally considered to be widespread, despite the fact that it is forbidden in many Arab and Muslim countries. People think that the wearing of veils by women is prescribed by Qur'anic law, when in fact it is merely a matter of tradition (though women do have to wear a veil when praying).

How can the picture be set right?

This is one of the duties of those intellectuals who wish to serve as intermediaries between the two cultures. It is no easy task, for politically the Arab world in general is held in low esteem, its image tarnished by régimes that can claim no democratic legitimacy. But there is more to the Arab world than these unpopular systems. How can one set about adjusting the image?

The Israelo-Palestinian conflict has only reinforced European prejudices, while also constituting an obstacle to the progress of

democracy in the Arab lands. Sometimes it serves as a litmus test for attitudes towards the Arabs and their role in history. Arabs do not understand why Europe defends some causes more than others. All this clouds relations between the Arab world and Europe with mutual suspicion. When a misunderstanding arises, it is allowed to fester. Frank dialogue and healthy curiosity free of all hypocrisy are in short supply.

TIME FOR CO-OPERATION

If the era of fascination with the West is over, let us hope that a new age of co-operation on equal terms will not be slow in replacing it, when specific projects can be tackled together. It is time, for example, for the West to reconsider the status of immigrants and to stop brandishing them as a threat at election time.

Consideration must be given to those North African countries that want closer relations with the European Economic Community. At the very least their demand to be treated as fully-fledged partners and interlocutors should be taken seriously.

It is time, too, to highlight the originality of the Mediterranean countries, whether they lie north or south of the sea. In order to bring them closer together—for want of being able to unite them, which is another matter—what is needed is a great moral force capable of overcoming suspicion, fear and unhealthy stereotyped opinions.

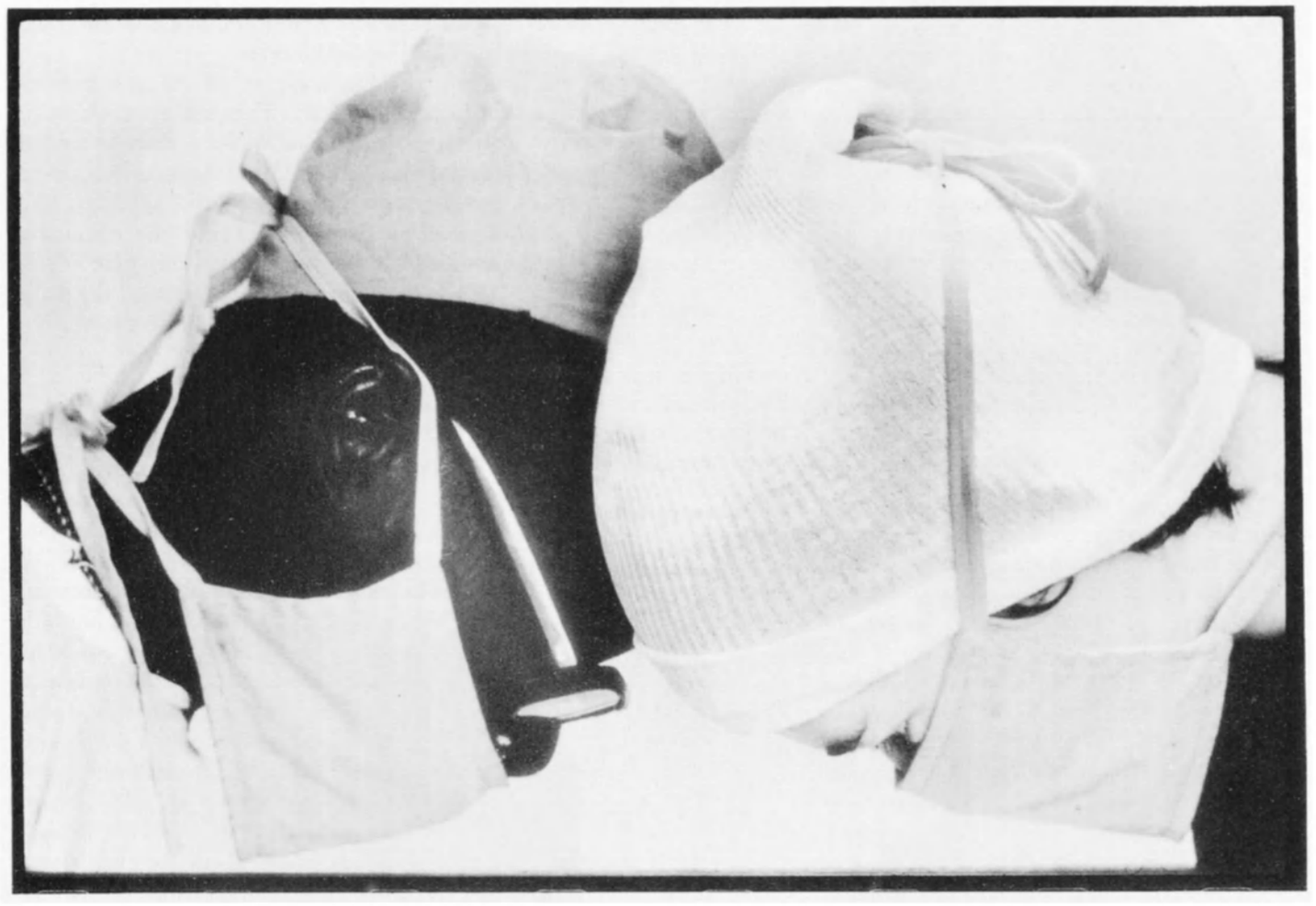
Jean Monnet said that "people only accept change out of necessity; and it takes a crisis to make them recognize the necessity". Imagination is needed as well as a sense of urgency, for as Monnet also said, without imagination peoples die.

Misunderstandings poison relations between peoples, in defiance of all logic. That is why it is so important to nip them in the bud. Even when they have flowered, should we not have the courage to try to clear the ground so as to allow new co-operation to grow, free of malice and suspicion?

In a time of exceptional historical upheaval will an Arab voice be heard, so that its unique, authentic tones, its own special contribution to the universal heritage, can again join in the chorus of history? ❐

TAHAR BEN JELLOUN is a Moroccan-born novelist and poet whose *La Nuit sacrée (The Sacred Night)* won the Prix Goncourt, France's most prestigious literary prize, in 1987. Among his other works published in English are *The Sand Child* (1987) and *Silent Day in Tangier* (1991). He is also the author of a number of essays, including *Hospitalité française: racisme et immigration maghrébine* ("French Hospitality: Racism and Immigration from the Maghrib", 1984).

Les Princes du désert **("Princes of the Desert"). Wash-drawing by the French artist Claude Quiesse.**



There is much for the West to learn from the original art, religion and society of black Africa. But first of all Africa must learn to believe in itself

Africa's long march

by Ahmadou Kourouma

"When your friends do not tell you the truth, ask your enemy and pay him to tell you"

MALINKE PROVERB

FOR an African, taking a view of European civilization poses two problems at the outset. The first stems from the extent to which he or she is imbued with European culture. For myself, I went to a European school and I write in a European language. Each day I live, function, and (thanks to the European media) think like a European. How can I stand back far enough to take a genuinely African view of this civilization? Europe's economic, political, military, technological and intellectual strength nowadays allows it to make its culture universal. Nothing totally escapes its influence or the ideas behind it. As they say in my village, I shall have to dance and watch myself dancing at the same time. And that is no easy matter.

The second problem is how to define

Marble head of Athene (460 BC) from Aegina, Greece.

African culture. That vast continent contains several Africas and hundreds of cultures: hence a myriad possible views of European civilization. For the sake of simplicity I shall divide Africa into two, a Muslim Arab area and black Africa, and confine myself to presenting the black African view of European civilization. For this purpose we need to examine the main features of European cosmogony and religion, and compare them with their traditional African counterparts.

Starting with Gods, the European God and the black African God have one feature in common: each of them is a single God who created the world. It was only after they had completed this tremendous fundamental task that their functions became differentiated. The European God is a God revealed to humankind by prophets, and those who have heard the Gospel have a duty to spread it to the world. This God ascended into heaven, but before doing so He left humankind in sole charge here on Earth. He granted human beings a soul, and put the whole universe at their disposal. He can use them as he wishes, even if it means destroying them. Humankind is free and at the same time a prisoner, since it is God who governs everything here below: it is God who marks out the path everyone must tread. When a person dies that person disappears for good, is recalled by God forever.

So much, in brief, for the essential features of European culture. They still exist, although after the Renaissance Western thought tended to become secularized and decided to separate itself from religion. But the axiology, the system of moral values and the ontology, remained linked to Judaeo-Christian ideas. This Judaeo-Christian conception of the deity is common both to Europe and to the Muslim world.

In the beginning was power. . . .

The black African God is a natural God. He has revealed himself to no one. He sent no one to preach the good word, did not become flesh, and asks no one to make him known. He will not sit in judgement after death. He ascended into heaven, like the European God, but will stay there for good. He no longer concerns himself with the world or takes an interest in what happens here below. Less unjust, he gave all his creatures (things, plants, animals and men) souls, or "Powers" as black Africans say. Life is essentially a constant struggle between these powers. As an animist priest from Casamance explained to us: "In the beginning was Power. God, the supreme power, created all power by infinitely diversifying his own. God created all energies at one stroke, and life on Earth is now no more than an interchange of powers, willed and planned by God. Man intervenes in the structure of the world by words and sacrifices, since in this way he can ask God to move powers about. This is why the world is at the same time both completed and inchoate."

For black Africans language is not merely an instrument of communication: it is the expression *par excellence* of the power of Being, the release of life forces. The words of the ancients are sacred, and the dead are not dead: they never went away, but exist in things, beings and plants. Above all, it must not be thought that traditional African religion is a thing of the past: that is not true. Even when converted to one of the great world religions, Africans retain part of their religious heritage. When we analyse the value systems and ontologies of black Africans, we find that they are still rooted in the concepts of traditional religion. Thus their views about Western civilization are mainly derived from what are called animism, naturism, vitalism and even fetishism.

For Europeans, nature and the environment are there to be dominated. The environment was created by God for humankind. For black Africans, however, people live not merely off nature but with nature. They are not its exploiters but its allies, and they survive and reproduce only

by knowing how to come to terms with the other powers that animate it. There is no supernatural world separated from nature. Religion is not independent of a given setting or a given Earth or heaven, any more than it is of a given society: it is closely linked to them. Proselytization and conversion are meaningless: a religion is not something people belong to. Thus there is no place for intolerance.

Art as the mystification of the senses

In the field of art, artists drawing inspiration from a civilization born of Christianity and Graeco-Roman culture seek to define the outlines of their subject in order to take it and possess it, use it and subjugate it. They do so in order to demystify the subject, to ensure that it is dissociated from themselves and is no more than what they see. Black African artists take the opposite approach. They take the subject from within and make it implode, in order to express its complexity. They strive to erase or blur its outlines in order to heighten its mystery. Whilst European artists aim to please, African artists aim to frighten, to make you doubt the evidence of your senses, to make you believe that what you are seeing has other dimensions, meanings and languages which are beyond you.

Kaolin-painted wooden mask of the Fang people, Gabon.

In the field of law, a European is an individual. Europeans are solely responsible for what they do: they act and the consequences of their actions do not jeopardize or bring shame on their community. They can do what they like: create, innovate and change, or alternatively blaspheme, lie, contradict themselves, be unjust and destructive, without any aftermath or punishment here below. The victims of their actions and turpitudes carry within themselves no immanent powers to constrain their ways of thinking and behaving. Black Africans, wherever they are and whatever they do, never forget that they belong to a community which is held to account for their every action. Responsibility is collective. There is an immanent power which can avenge the victims of injustice and untruths. Things destroyed needlessly and for no reason react. Black Africans grow up in a world marked out with signs to be interpreted and powers to come to terms with.

The basic cultural features of European civilization have turned out to be much more efficient and much more favourable to man's social, technological and economic development than those of black African culture. They made Europe the hub of the universe and master of the world, and enabled it to dominate the black African peoples, directly or indirectly, for 600 years. This domination has taken various forms. At every stage European culture has managed to secrete an ideology, a utopia, a doctrine or a mirage sufficiently uplifting and motivating to persuade Europeans to launch out on the adventure of conquest without second thoughts. The efficacy of a culture may also be gauged by this ability to turn out new myths and doctrines.

The colonial utopia, or the quest for Paradise Lost

Let us consider the stages in the history of Europe's domination of Africa and the Africans. European civilization has produced various ideologies, utopias and doctrines to motivate the adventurers who set out in search of the point "where the Sun falls into the sea". The Judaeo-Christian religion describes this

Allegory of Peace (1929-1930), a fresco by the French artist Ducos de la Haille. It is now in the Museum of African and Oceanian Arts in Paris.

lost Paradise, which only the chosen will attain after the Last Judgement. Europeans have always dreamed of such a Paradise, and when in the Middle Ages they found themselves tormented by hunger they hoped to find it elsewhere, in distant lands. This was the colonial utopia: "Somewhere where life is deliciously warm, easy and sparkling, where all Nature's generous juices set out to produce good things, so easily come by" (Maurice Lencellé).

The quest for this idyllic land took European seafarers to the coasts of Africa in the mid-fifteenth century, and the Africans welcomed them as spirits from the sea. The Europeans traded with the black Africans on terms greatly to their advantage: gold and silver in exchange for shoddy baubles. They continued for a century and a half, with ever-renewed enthusiasm and obstinacy, to explore the coasts of Africa. Their religion turned trade into a spiritual mission: they were the soldiers of Christ, spreading the good word among the savages.

Europe next discovered America, and massacred the Indians there. Then shortage of manpower for the planting of sugar-cane and coffee led them to institutionalize the slave trade. The Renaissance, one of the most brilliant periods in human history, coexisted with slavery. Here again, European religion found the myths needed to salve people's consciences: negroes had no souls, and were descended from Cain. Hence they could be tortured or killed with a clear conscience.

We must of course pay tribute to the abolitionists who, Bible in hand, fought courageously against slavery and denounced the imposture of its advocates. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century they were joined in their struggle by the churches and by intellectuals and governments. On every sea and in every port slavers were pursued and slaves set free. This struggle was carried through in the name of humanism as well as of Christian morality, but the moment slave labour turned out to be less profitable than hired labour, things changed. Immediately after the abolition of slavery, European civilization launched out into colonization.

A DIALOGUE OPEN TO ALL

People tend to mention only the drawbacks of colonialism, but it must be said that it also had its advantages, and not only for the colonists. It contributed to the advent of the Industrial Revolution; it opened up many lands to social and economic progress, and made possible the creation of the frontierless world that is at last taking shape. The questions we need to ask ourselves are the following: did Africa not pay too high a price to be thus opened up? Without the colonial powers, would Africa, left to itself, not have found the way to economic and social development and receptiveness to the world by itself?

The universal civilization that is taking shape will be a civilization that has incorporated all cultures, with none barred. The West, which is the master of the world by virtue of its weapons, its economic power, its means of communication and its spirit of enterprise, has the duty to enter into genuine dialogue with other civilizations in order to understand others and accept them along with their differences.

Africa for its part must realize that a man at the bottom of a well cannot be pulled up unless he makes the effort to grasp the rope that is lowered to him. The failure of Africa is perhaps due to cultural reasons. Africa and only Africa must recognize this and reform itself. Europe can go along too, but Africa must make the journey by itself. ❐

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GREENWATCH

THE UNESCO COURIER - JULY/AUGUST 1992

EDITORIAL

The road from Rio

by Alcino Da Costa

ATTENDED by more than a hundred heads of State and government, with over 170 countries represented and with a total of 40,000 participants, including 14,000 representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), under the eyes of some 10,000 accredited journalists, Rio 92 has been acclaimed as the biggest world conference ever held.

But looking beyond these impressive figures, what did this mega-summit achieve? The list includes adoption of the Rio Declaration, of Agenda 21 and of a resolution on the conservation of forests and the signing by a majority of the participating countries of international conventions on climate and on biodiversity.

In some quarters, however, it was felt that all these laudable declarations of principle might well remain mere words. Disappointment was expressed about the lack of precise, enforceable measures for the control of carbon dioxide emissions and the absence of any binding financial provisions for the implementation of Agenda 21, the action plan for ▶

protection of the environment coupled with sustainable development. Many were alarmed by the absence of any reference to that important source of pollution, the armaments industry.

Nevertheless, Rio 92 succeeded in obtaining unequivocal, worldwide recognition of one incontrovertible fact—there is only one Earth, it belongs to both the rich and the poor and its protection is the responsibility of all. The Conference had the additional merit of reinforcing awareness that all nations are interdependent and that no individual country could hope to escape the ecological catastrophe towards which progressive degradation of the environment, due both to consistent over-consumption in the North and growing poverty in the South, is leading.

There was general agreement that the disequilibrium caused by the unequal distribution of the riches of the world had to be corrected by a decisive act of solidarity. The fight against poverty has become an ecological imperative. This is what underlies the concept of sustainable development, the multiple aspects of which lay at the heart of the debates initiated by the NGOs within the framework of their "Global Forum".

The extraordinary vitality of the Non-Governmental Organizations was one of the revelations of Rio 92. Present in force, dynamic, even aggressive at times, and with the confidence that comes from their wide geographical representativity, they demonstrated their ability to analyse, to look ahead, to mobilize, to animate and to take action. The NGOs made a vital contribution to the discussion on development and the environment. Strong in the support they enjoy in society at large, the NGOs wield real power and their voice will be increasingly heard in the field of international negotiations.

Rio 92 has triggered a new dynamic. In the words of the United Nations Secretary-General, the time has come for "a new moral and political contract with nature". Collectively and individually we must undertake to change our way of life, to better our mangement of the Earth's resources and to seek a form of development that incorporates the cultural dimension. Only thus will we be able to bequeath to future generations a world in which it will be good to be alive. ■

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A GUARDIAN FOR THE REEF

The great barrier reef of Belize, the world's second largest after that off the coast of Australia, has found a guardian angel. A jury meeting at UNESCO Headquarters in March awarded the first International Marine Environment Prize set up by the World Confederation of Underwater Activities to Coral Cay Conservation (CCC), a UK civic group that has been working since 1986 with the Belize Government on managing the country's coastal areas and largest marine reserve. In 1991, more than 300 volunteers engaged in diving expeditions and helped in computerizing all kinds of data of value to the programme. CCC has also provided Belize nationals with 24 fellowships a year, in a bid to encourage the population to look after its natural heritage. ■

A WAY WITH WASTE

Véronique Gnanih is undoubtedly the prettiest refuse collector in West Africa. She lives in Tohoue, not far from Porto Novo, the historical capital of Benin, where, draped in a green dress with an embroidered neckline, she takes pride in showing people round the domestic refuse sorting and reprocessing plant which she set up in February 1989 with the assistance of Emmaus International and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). With diplomas in rural development and community organization, Véronique had the idea of doing something about a waste tip the height of a two-storey building, which had been an eyesore in the town ever since colonial times. She recruited a number of jobless young people, who are paid a good wage and are given a meal and free medical care. She has also bought a tractor and trailer. Organic waste is dumped in a heap and is watered until it has completely decomposed. The resulting compost is then sold or spread in Véronique's organic vegetable garden. Glass bottles and metal scrap are also sold. Plastic objects are stockpiled until a use can be found for them, as are the shells of *acatines*, a type of large snail which Véronique rears. This is a prime example of a small-scale project that is working perfectly, thanks to a renewable energy source in the person of Véronique herself! ■

CITES UNDER THREAT

At a meeting of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, held in Kyoto (Japan) in March, Mostafa Kamal Tolba, the Egyptian-born biologist who has been head of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the past sixteen years, said that CITES was itself endangered by North-South divergences. Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and Malawi are demanding the resumption of trade in ivory, which has been banned since the Lausanne Conference in 1989. At that time the international community had voiced concern about the threatened disappearance of the African elephant. By cutting off the supply at source, it thought it could, by the same stroke, do away with demand. Yet poaching did not stop, and the profit that states could have derived from the sale of elephant tusks disappeared. "Powerful groups, chiefly in the rich, industrialized countries, consider that the outlawing of trade in elephant products is the answer," Mr. Tolba stated, before adding that "There are also thousands of millions of people whose voices will not be heard, who use a minute part of the planet's resources and who receive a pathetic part of its revenues. . . . These people cannot be refused the right to use their natural heritage." ■

AUSTRALIA CLEANS UP

Prompted by an idea that came to a solitary yachtsman appalled by the sorry state of the high seas, Australia has instituted a clean-up day for beaches, rivers and parks. On the 1991 Cleaning Up Australia Day, more than 350,000 volunteers collected some 30,000 tons of waste from 4,452 locations, twice the amount of the previous year. In all, a quarter of a million garbage bags were distributed to military personnel, local authorities and associations of volunteers. All kinds of rubbish were collected, including bottles, cartons, syringes, wrecked cars, rubble, industrial waste, animal carcasses and household refuse. Plastic, glass, paper and aluminium were recycled. Although Australia is the only country to have officially designated a special clean-up Day, volunteers on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, where Honolulu is located, gather every Saturday morning to clean up villages and remove wrecked vehicles from the roadsides. ■

TRUCK TRAIN PIGGYBACKS

Since 1 December 1989, trucks have been prohibited from travelling by night on some of Austria's highways, including the main route across the Alps through the Brenner Pass and the valley of the River Inn. This highway accounts for 75% of the road traffic transiting through the country.People living along the road had to put up with noise pollution of more than 67 decibels, two decibels above the officially acceptable limit. Consequently, trucks weighing more than 7.5 tons have been banned from using the road between 10 o'clock at night and 5 in the morning, except for vehicles carrying perishable produce and livestock. Since the prohibition went into effect, traffic on the road has dropped by two-thirds, while unaccompanied rail-road transport has risen by 115% and accompanied transport by 250%. The "piggyback" system is an excellent substitute for road traffic, in that it is better suited to rapid trade flows and is less expensive over distances of more than 500 kilometres. ■

COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES—— THE ENERGY CRUNCH

Of all the republics to emerge from the former Soviet Union, only Russia and Turkmenistan are energy exporters. Russia has abundant resources and is widely acknowledged to have 20% of the world's oil and 40% of its natural gas reserves. However, the current crisis in the country is affecting the production and transportation of this wealth, especially since the oil and gas fields are in isolated regions to which access is difficult. Drilling equipment is old and poorly serviced, and the wells have been poorly managed. Vladimir Kozlov, the head of the International Fuels and Energy Association, a specialized non-governmental organization, said at a meeting in Paris last February that he was pinning his hopes on the development of natural gas, which could be easily transported by pipeline. ■

ANTARCTICA, CONTINENT OF SCIENCE AND PEACE?

by France Bequette

A continent in its own right, covering an area larger than Europe, Antarctica has long been shrouded in mystery. From the early years of the last century, national flags gradually came to be planted all over it, although it has never been the scene of armed conflict. Since then, eighteen States have laid claim to varying portions of the continent, which in 1940 was divided into cake-like slices extending outwards from the South Pole to the surrounding ocean. However it was not until 1958, thanks to the combined efforts of explorers, aircraft and satellites, that Antarctica was completely mapped.

This enormous landmass is covered by an ice cap which is estimated to be 2,500 metres thick and accounts for roughly one-third of the planet's freshwater reserves. In 1983, at the Soviet Vostok base in the interior, a temperature of -89.6°C was recorded, setting an all-time low in an environment where cold is constant, with temperatures ranging from -36°C in January to -72°C in July. The most extreme conditions are associated with blizzards, fierce biting winds accompanied by snowfalls, which reduce visibility to zero and make the cold unbearable.

'A few months from now we shall know whether the international community has the good sense to respect a continent where the dawn is more beautiful than anywhere else in the world—but one which already has a hole in its ozone layer'.

Yet Antarctica has exerted great fascination over people ever since the American navigator John Davis first set foot on the continent in 1821. Scientists and explorers of extreme conditions followed in each other's footsteps. International Geophysical Year in 1957-1958 provided the occasion for setting up the first permanent scientific stations. Some 2,000 people now occupy all the year round forty-two bases located on the continent or on the offshore islands, while twenty-six other bases are only occupied during the southern summer. Research being carried out covers such broad subject areas as glaciology, meteorology, the Earth's magnetic field and the upper atmosphere, but even so the continent has by no means yielded all its secrets.

About 140 million years ago, the east of Antarctica was still at the heart of an enormous continent, known as Gondwanaland, formed of what are now Africa, South America, India, Australia and New Zealand. Gondwanaland had a temperate climate and was covered with forests and inhabited by reptiles and amphibians, vestiges of which dating back 200 million years have been found. In 1982, American scientists unearthed the fossil remains of a small, 40-million-year-old marsupial that was an ancestor of those now found in Australia, thus showing that these territories once formed a single landmass. However, through the action of what is known as plate tectonics, rift faults started to appear and these were gradually widened by movements of the Earth's crust. Antarctica came to be isolated from the rest in the ice-bound ocean of the South Pole, where its temperature fell and its forests gave way to everlasting snow. It is still not known exactly when the different parts of Gondwanaland started to break away or what the shape of the continents was at that time.

Heat under the ice

In the south of Antarctica, Mt. Erebus, on Ross Island, is the continent's only still active volcano. Not far from Erebus, there are "oases", or dry valleys, which have been given that name because there has not been a single drop of precipitation for at least two million years. The ice has retreated and the snow is melted by the the heat of the Sun's rays. These rock-strewn deserts have been used by the US National Aeronatics and Space Administration (NASA) to test equipment for the exploration of Mars, whose surface features are similar. Lake Vanda, which is situated in the middle of one of these desert areas and which, in the everlasting cold, is

almost always covered by a thick layer of ice, displays one peculiar feature, in that the temperature of the water at its lower levels may rise to as high as 25°C. This is because the ice crystals act like optical fibres and transmit the sunlight to the bottom of the lake, heating up the motionless water.

What we know about Antarctica is based on information gathered by some fifty expeditions that have explored the continent in the last 150 years or so. The actual name Antarctica was coined by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who held the view that, in order to offset the known mass of the northern hemisphere under the constellation of the Great Bear (*Arktos*), there was bound to be an equivalent mass in the south, whence *Antarktikos*. When one of Magellan's ships was returning from its circumnavigation of the world, demonstrating that the Earth was round, its crew thought that they had caught sight of an unknown land, which was thereafter shown on maps as *terra*

australis incognita, although its contours were a matter of conjecture. Explorers like Kerguelen, Cook, Weddell, Dumont d'Urville, Ross, Charcot, Amundsen, Scott, Shackleton and Byrd endured untold suffering, and sometimes even went to their deaths, in order to find out more about the continent.

Left, a huge tabular iceberg off the Coast of Adélie Land, Antarctica.
Below, acting like optical fibres, surface ice crystals transmit sunlight to the bottom of Lake Vanda.

A PRECIOUS NATURAL RESERVE

Plant life on the continent consists only of lichens, mosses and a few flowering species, and terrestrial animal life of tiny invertebrates, but there is an intensive marine life. Plankton and krill provide food for 120 fish species, which are particularly abundant during the summer months, and also for seals and whales. Nineteen seabird species live in harmony with seven species of flightless swimming birds belonging to the large penguin family. However, the source of wealth posing the greatest threat to the ecology of Antarctica lies beneath the surface of land and sea. Although less than 1 per cent of the continent has been prospected, deposits of coal, iron, copper, gold, titanium, uranium and cobalt have been identified. Offshore drilling has also revealed the existence of hydrocarbons. However, it is impossible to state with certainty that these minerals are present in sufficient quantity for their exploitation to be a profitable proposition.

Ever since the beginning of the century, the extreme fragility of the Antarctic environment has given rise to a series of Commissions, Treaties and Conventions, such as the Washington Treaty, the Wellington Convention and the Madrid Protocol. Their purpose is to protect plant life, as well as whales, which are threatened with extinction, and seals, which are hunted for their fur. But they are also designed to prevent overfishing. From the environmental standpoint, the scientific bases are not entirely free from blame. All kinds of waste, of varying toxicity, are beginning to pile up. The first American nuclear power station installed on the continent developed faults and had to be transported back to the United States, along with tons of contaminated earth. Aircraft landing strips disturb the habitat of the Antarctic fauna. Tourism, the "smokeless industry", is increasing and is attracting 9,000 visitors a year.

In 1991, the Madrid Protocol, which has already been signed by thirty-nine States, was left open for signature for a period of one year. The Protocol forms an additional instrument to the Washington Treaty. Its originality lies in the fact that it includes a moratorium providing for Antarctica to be a natural reserve of science and peace, for the development of mineral resources to be prohibited and for a Conference to be held in fifty years' time, with a view to making, if necessary, changes to the status of the continent or even abolishing that special status. A few months from now, we shall know whether the international community has the good sense to respect a continent where the dawn is more beautiful than anywhere else in the world—but one which already has a hole in its ozone layer. ■

FRANCE BEQUETTE is a Franco-American journalist specializing in environmental questions. Since 1985 she has been associated with the WANAD-UNESCO training programme for African news agency journalists. She has played a leading part in the preparation of this Greenwatch *section.*

FRANCESCO DI CASTRI

The second instalment of an interview with the co-ordinator of UNESCO's environment programmes

Villagers gather round a solar powered television receiver in the Tuareg village of Aïr (Niger), in a part of the Sahara that is one of the largest protected areas in Africa.

The world's forests have been called "the lungs of the planet". Is this an accurate metaphor?

— The metaphor arises from the continuous exchange of carbon dioxide and oxygen that takes place between living organisms and the environment. Living plants take up carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. When they are dead, the reverse occurs and they take up oxygen and give off carbon dioxide. If all the forests were wiped off the face of the Earth, the amount of oxygen in the atmosphere would diminish and the amount of carbon dioxide would increase. However, the change in the amount of oxygen in the atmosphere that this would entail would be only temporary; furthermore, the concentration of oxygen in the atmosphere is such that, as far as humans are concerned, the change would be imperceptible.

In fact, the prime role played by forests, in particular the tropical forests, in the atmospheric balance and the Earth's climate relates to the part they play in the water cycle. Deforestation has serious repercussions on the process of evaporation and the rainfall régime. When forests are destroyed, the water balance of the atmosphere is upset and this has a direct influence on the climate. Massive deforestation would also entail a serious reduction in biodiversity, a subject that I shall not go into more deeply here.

How can the poorest countries achieve a level of growth and welfare compatible with the protection of the environment?

— That problem is more than just circumstantial, which is to say it cannot simply be solved, in a rather paternalistic way, by the rich countries providing money. The roots of the problem are structural. The developing countries need—and UNESCO plays a central role here—to acquire know-how: without education, awareness, management training, they will not be able to resolve their difficulties. Meanwhile, as a result of the prevailing monetary system and the market economy, the terms of trade are against them and give them no room for manoeuvre.

To escape from this impasse, it will be necessary to change the rules of the international marketplace. Otherwise developing countries will be forced to destroy forests, impoverish the soil, and only cultivate cocoa, coffee or other export crops, thereby aggravating the degradation of their environment. The relationship between the North and the South should be modified structurally. Instead of talking about aid for the Third World, we should be talking about justice and equity for it.

Energy consumption per head of population is often used as an index of development. Yet the production of energy under present conditions is a major cause of pollution. Isn't there a contradiction between economic growth and the protection of the environment?

— Yes, there is a conflict between development as it is presently understood and the environment. The objective of the Rio conference was to prove that environment and development are two sides of the same problem. As long as we refuse to admit that the two issues are complementary, we will continue to experience setbacks in both domains. Despite growing awareness among governments and peoples, in spite of the efforts made and programmes set up here and there, environmental policy over the past twenty years has been an almost total failure. As a result, we have also lost out where development is concerned.

There is undeniably a link between development and energy consumption, but it is less direct than it is often thought to be. Let's take an example: the United States consumes much more energy than the European countries, but should one conclude from that that it is more developed than Germany? No. The United States could maintain

the same level of development while using maybe 20 to 30 per cent less energy. To sum up, considerable energy savings can be made without slowing down development. But a minimum of energy is of course necessary....

Will the so-called "clean", renewable energy sources—solar energy, tidal power and so on—one day produce sufficiently satisfactory results to be widely used? What are their real prospects?

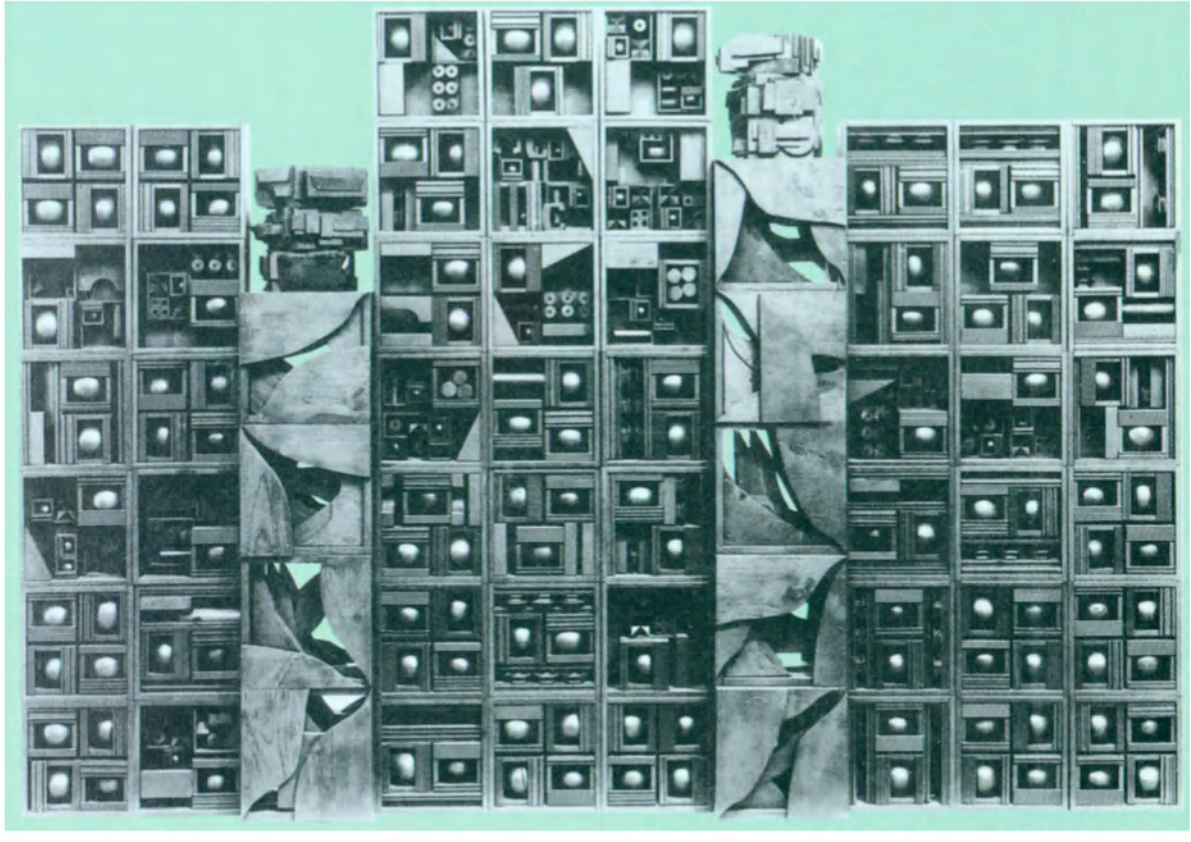
—The priority for the time being is to conserve and economize on existing energy sources rather than to produce new ones, however necessary they may seem to be. Both in the developed countries and elsewhere, there is an urgent need to reduce energy consumption without slowing down development—two perfectly compatible objectives. The new energy sources are already producing results, but on a limited scale—providing heating in villages, or working wells in the desert—but the main thing is that they are not yet sufficiently productive. It is a fantasy to think they could replace existing energy sources in ten or even fifteen years. It will certainly take much longer than that. They still cost too much. And a lot more progress will have to be made on the scientific and technical fronts before these new energy sources replace the older ones everywhere.

Protecting the environment is everyone's business. Don't you think that Ministries of Education in every country of the globe should be made aware of this point, so that every child can learn from a very early age how to respond to the situation? What is being done about this?

—This is a very important point. The role of education at both the primary and the secondary level is crucial. But there's more to it than that. The people responsible for development should also be trained in ecology; they must be fully aware of the repercussions of the economic model they choose. We must make ecology seem a force for action, a broadly-based movement. People who have become aware of the problems of the environment can put pressure on their governments—which tend to act in the short term, within the narrow timeframe of their mandates—to take a longer-term view of things. Well-informed people could bring about policy changes by using their power as voters. Direct action of this kind must rest on a solid scientific foundation if it is to be effective, not just on emotional reactions as is still too often the case.

I repeat, whether in the Third World or in the developed countries, the problem of the environment will remain unsolved as long as the norms of development remain unchanged. The two crises cannot be separated, which is why the Rio conference has marked a turning-point: to think one can resolve them independently is utopian. The only chance for a solution rests in a joint approach. The problem of the environment is in reality just a consequence, an aspect of the type of development we know today. No country is unaffected, for the world economy is completely interdependent and the environment ignores frontiers. No country is so great or powerful that it can afford to say, "No, I don't want to change, and what happens elsewhere doesn't matter to me...", for the scale of these problems is global, and none of them can be resolved without a sense of global solidarity.

To be continued ■



Rain Forest Wall **(1967), sculpture in black wood and mirrors by US sculptor Louise Nevelson.**

A WORLDWIDE SYNERGY

by René Lefort

"We're not doing any research ourselves, but we help with research at an international level. We don't have any laboratories of our own, yet we work with the best labs in the world. We don't teach, but thanks to us knowledge gets around."

Andras Szollosi-Nagy, head of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP), wants to avoid any misunderstanding: even though he is trained as a scientist and his work deals with science, he is first and foremost a "scientific manager". A term that applies as well to his colleagues working for the other three international scientific programmes at UNESCO: the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and the International Geological Correlation Programme (IGCP).

"We achieve a worldwide synergy of local research," says MAB Director Berndt Von Droste. Synergy is the key word in the role played by UNESCO with these programmes. They offer (but do not impose) procedures on which scientists in distant labs can rely to work effectively as a global team. These procedures thus help researchers in prioritizing their activities on a worldwide scale, in dividing up tasks according to each team's strengths, and in coordinating the projects, making information and results available to all. In diplomatic jargon, this is "international intellectual co-operation." For Szollosi-Nagy, it is more simply a way to "put together all the pieces of the puzzle and get a global picture."

GOING GLOBAL

With the worldwide impact of environmental problems such as pollution, the greenhouse effect, climatic changes, and urbanization, the concept of working together on a global scale seems obvious today. At the time when UNESCO's international programmes got under way, however, this idea had little weight. In particular, the South was then kept out of major developments, most of the research capacity being concentrated in the North. One of the great merits of UNESCO's programmes lies in links built between North and South—and, little by little, between South and South—by adding Third World scientists to their endeavours, by helping in the development of science in the South, and especially by making significant efforts in local training.

Innovating in new fields went along with this extended geographical reach: MAB, the IOC, the IHP and the IGCP have been pioneers in the study of tropical ecosystems, which were previously little known even though three-quarters of the world's population live in the tropics. Similar groundbreaking studies are carried out in desert areas, and on the relationships between the environment and cities swollen by rural migration. Indeed, UNESCO's four major scientific programmes do not conduct research for its own sake, be it on the biosphere (MAB), the ocean (IOC), fresh waters (IHP), or the Earth's crust (IGCP), but rather with the aim of improving humanity's condition. Their interdisciplinary character is emphasized further by UNESCO's mandate, integrating science, education and culture. Thus UNESCO has played a leading role in putting the concept of sustainable development forward in international forums.

The programmes have proved successful. For example, more than four out of five laboratories throughout the world dealing with issues concerning water co-operate with IHP, and the ratio is one out of two in cases involving MAB or IOC. But should this success be taken for granted? Revolutionary as such programmes may have been twenty or thirty years ago, might they not become outdated, even superfluous?

Their budgets are extremely modest compared to what is at stake: UNESCO provides them with about $5 million a year, to which is added about $25 million in voluntary contributions from other organizations and Member States. Yet their worldwide scope is an asset that no other network holds.

For the programme Directors, as with the International Council of Scientific Unions—the largest non-governmental body in this field—their intergovernmental character is their "main strength", an irreplaceable feature that "connects the scientific engine with the political machine." But intergovernmental means heavy bureaucracy, making it at the same time an obvious weakness.

The fact that many others have now followed the lead set by UNESCO's programmes is a welcome development. Faced with today's environmental crisis, should international networks not forge new ecological alliances, each focussing on what they can do best, and thereby ensuring greater efficiency? Are interdisciplinary methods sufficiently established and validated within and among these programmes, or adequately tied to social sciences, culture, and education? Now that the Earth Summit is over, the question is how these programmes should evolve to embrace the "revolution" needed in all our institutions to confront the degradation of our environment. ■

Monitoring pollution in the Baltic Sea, offshore from Kiel, Germany.

RENÉ LEFORT is Editor-in-chief of the monthly magazine UNESCO Sources.

OF COCKROACHES AND ROSES

ALL living species—whales and cockroaches, roses and the AIDS virus, pandas and people—make up the biological diversity of the Earth. All biological entities and systems are interconnected and interdependent, from a DNA molecule to an ecosystem to the biosphere. Biodiversity is important because it provides basic services: it protects and maintains soils, regulates the climate and ensures photosynthesis, thus furnishing the oxygen we breathe. It provides the basic material for our food, clothing, medicines and housing.

It is time to think about the consequences of the current changes in biodiversity. Although there have always been extinctions (such as the disappearance of dinosaurs), never have there been so many losses of species and alteration of natural areas as today. In order to feed, lodge and transport the world's millions, ecosystems are being cut up, fragmented and completely modified. Additions of fertilizers, domestic and industrial wastes, or simply salty water are degrading and poisoning natural systems with a resulting die-off of the animals, plants and fishes that depend on them.

The resulting destruction affects not only the area directly concerned: wind and river and sea currents can transmit pollutants far from the source of contamination. Thus penguins in the Antarctic have DDT residues in their tissues. There are cases of malaria in people living near airports far away from infected countries.

Intensive agriculture has brought about a deliberate loss of biodiversity, which is a mixed blessing. Farmers traditionally used many varieties of crops and domesticated animals to accommodate the local differences in soil and climate. Today, of 145 local sorts of beast in the Mediterranean basin, all but thirty are in serious danger of extinction. In order to achieve maximum yields, farmers are using only a limited number of varieties of cattle and crops, the latter vety often needing heavy inputs of fertilizers and pesticides.

OUR DWINDLING BIOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Only now are we beginning to assess the threat that the loss of biodiversity can have on environmental development. But such an assessment is difficult because we know very little about biodiversity. While some 1.4 million species have been identified and described by scientists, there is a great deal of disagreement on the total number of species on Earth. Estimates vary from 5 to some 80 million, taking account of all the insects, microbes and marine life-forms to be discovered. With so few data, the losses in terms of genes, species and ecosystems are not easy to calculate. Some biologists have hazarded a guess that perhaps one-quarter of the world's total biodiversity is at serious risk of extinction over the next twenty to thirty years. This figure may be contested, but it does call attention to the urgency of the matter.

Scientists are only now questioning why there is so much biodiversity and how it is generated and lost. They are also asking whether biodiversity has a role in the functioning of ecosystems. It has been shown that there is some redundancy in ecosystems, for example, different species performing the same ecological tasks such as eating the same fruits and occupying the same space. This implies that we may be able to do without some species. But which ones? And is this morally acceptable to society?

In the face of so many unknowns, different countries have different ideas and priorities. In order to conserve a maximum of biodiversity, efforts need to be made to protect natural areas as reserves, to set up repositories in zoos, botanical gardens and gene banks. Care should be given to preserve biodiversity in all types of natural systems, from deserts and grasslands to estuaries and coral reefs. However, the most effective and difficult measure of all is to use natural resources sustainably, at least above the threshold at which the processes of evolution, of speciation and adaptation can continue.

A mountain gorilla. The small surviving groups of this endangered species are mainly found in Rwanda.

Third World countries, usually rich in biodiversity, will and must exploit their natural resources for their development. The industrialized countries feel that more should be done to protect biodiversity and save the last wild natural areas of the planet. Some countries thus decided to negotiate an international convention on biodiversity.

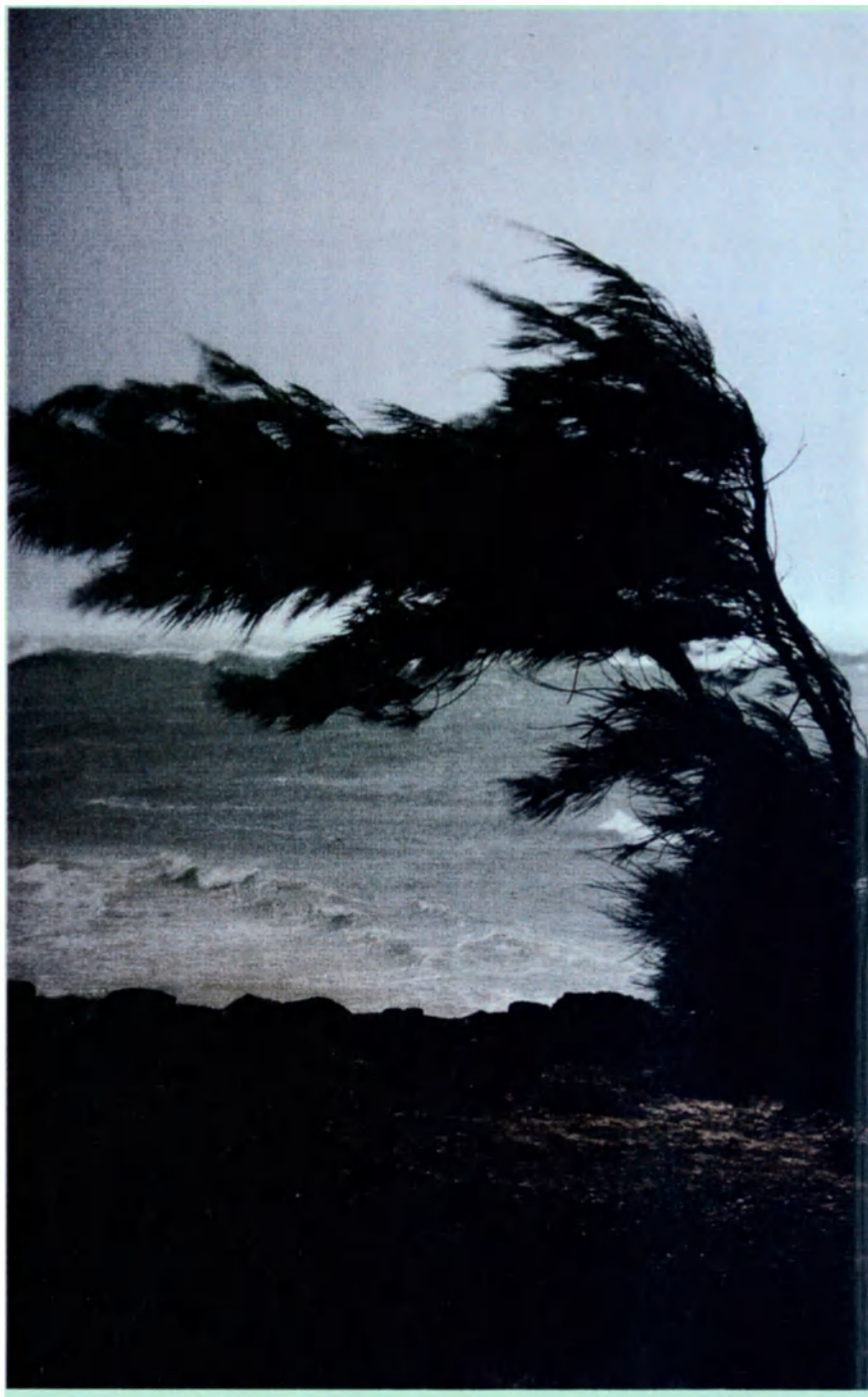
UNESCO has an important role to play in this effort. First, as the United Nations scientific organization, it will promote research and inventories to improve our understanding of the world's flora and fauna and the role of biodiversity in the functioning of ecosystems.

THE 'DIVERSITAS' PROJECT

Together with the non-governmental scientific community, through the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) and the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE), a new initiative called "Diversitas" has been launched to mobilize a major global co-ordinated effort in this field. UNESCO will also tackle the educational aspects, sensitizing the public and policy-makers to the implications of losses of biodiversity, based on the results of Diversitas. Training activities, for example of much-needed taxonomists (specialists in the classification of plants and animals) in developing countries, will also be conducted.

One of UNESCO's unique contributions is the international biosphere reserve network under which representative ecosystems are protected in 300 sites in 75 countries around the world. The biosphere reserve system makes it possible to find solutions to land management problems and to share the information through a co-operative network. They are field laboratories for finding out more about biodiversity and how it can be both protected and sustainably used for the benefit of humankind in all parts of the world. ■

Extracted from an article by Jane Robertson, a UNESCO specialist, and Nancy Mathews, a journalist specializing in environmental questions. UNESCO–Office of Public Information.



THE RETURN OF EL NIÑO

DROUGHTS and floods in 1987 in India, Africa, Australia, Indonesia, North and South America and the Philippines were caused by the El Niño effect. El Niño is the name given to the recurring tropical phenomenon that brings a warm current to the west coast of South America every three to five years. It begins to appear around Christmas-time, as befits its name (El Niño means the Christ-child in Spanish).

During El Niño periods the warm ocean surface temperatures, normally found only in the western Pacific, move east toward the central Pacific and the western coast of South America. The results are unusual weather and short-term climatic changes. There have been crop losses and famines as well as major changes in fisheries such as severe reductions in the Peruvian anchovy catches, and tropical crustaceans have moved far north of their normal habitats.

Oceans cover 70 per cent of the Earth's surface, and contain 97 per cent of the world's water. They have long been understood to influence weather patterns, including hurricanes, typhoons and tropical storms. Only recently, however, has their very large influence on climatic variability and climatic change become accepted. The interaction between oceans, atmospheric activity, weather and climate are becoming better understood.

Oceans absorb and retain heat, as well as carbon dioxide (which could theoretically help to mitigate the effects of global warming). The top two metres of ocean contain as much heat as the atmosphere, but the average ocean temperature ranges from 2°C (its freezing temperature) to 30°C, in contrast to mid-continent variations of up to 100 degrees of difference.

Changes in ocean temperatures and currents and in salinity levels can affect weather and climate,

Climate

which in turn determine which crops will (or will not) grow in a given season and which fish will be found (or not found) in a given marine, coastal or estuarine environment.

Raised sea water temperatures already have affected coastal zones in many regions. Changes in nutrient levels and water temperature have caused mass mortality of corals; decreases in sediment inputs lead to the retreat of mangroves. While these incidents occur as a result of locally or regionally imposed burdens, they suggest what might occur with global influences.

Although oceans might reduce the effects of global climatic change, they also could make matters worse; increases in ocean surface water temperature can cause a release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Moreover, as oceans absorb carbon dioxide their acidity increases, which in turn lowers their ability to take up further carbon dioxide.

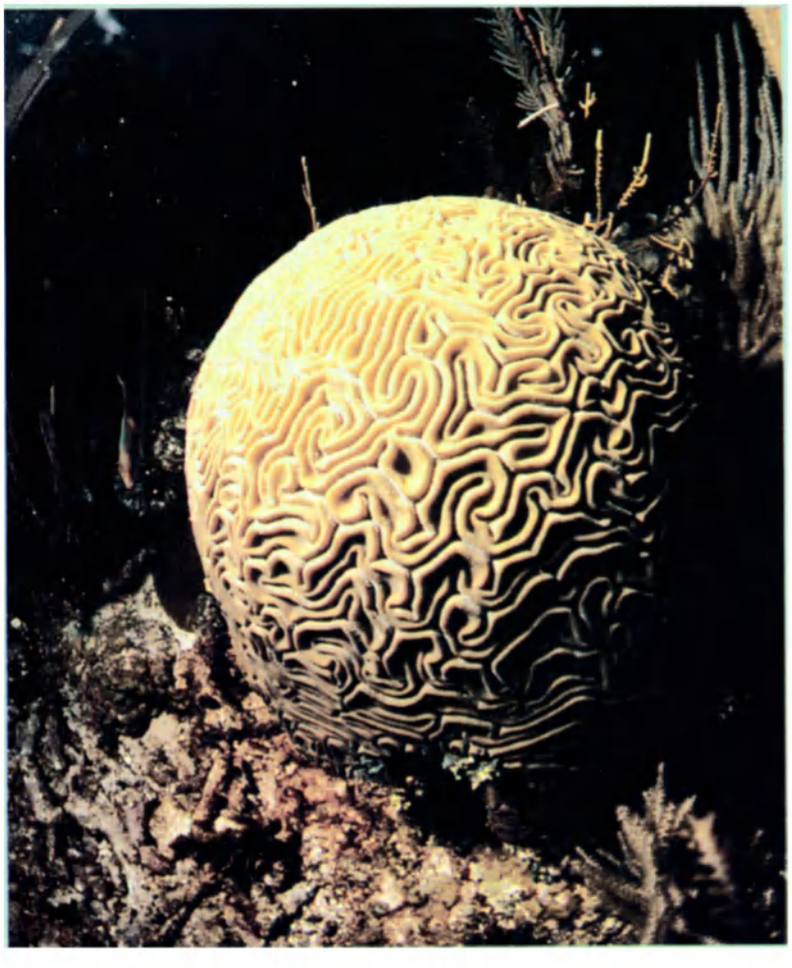
If climatic change or other phenomena were to cause a rise in sea-level of between 20 centimetres and a metre, a number of problems might result. There are thousands of populated islands at low altitude in the world's oceans, and many major cities are located in low-lying areas of continental coastlines; they could suffer flooding or inundation. Global sea levels have already risen in some areas, by approximately 15 centimetres, over the past century. Among the reasons given are land movements and tectonic plate activity, local oceanographic and meteorological conditions and numerous human activities on land. In some cases, however, land has actually risen.

To improve human understanding of the oceans requires the application of many disciplines and many technologies. Satellite imaging is identifying currents and temperature gradients. The International Mussel Watch being conducted throughout the world by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is gathering extremely useful data. Mussels are, in effect, an "indicator" species capable of revealing everything from the level of pesticides applied on upland agricultural lands to the presence of other toxins.

A new international effort has begun to monitor, describe and understand the physical and biogeochemical properties that determine ocean circulation and the seasonal-to-decadal climatic changes in the ocean and to provide the extensive observations which will be needed for any climatic predictions. Known as the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), it is jointly sponsored by IOC, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), UNEP and the states concerned.

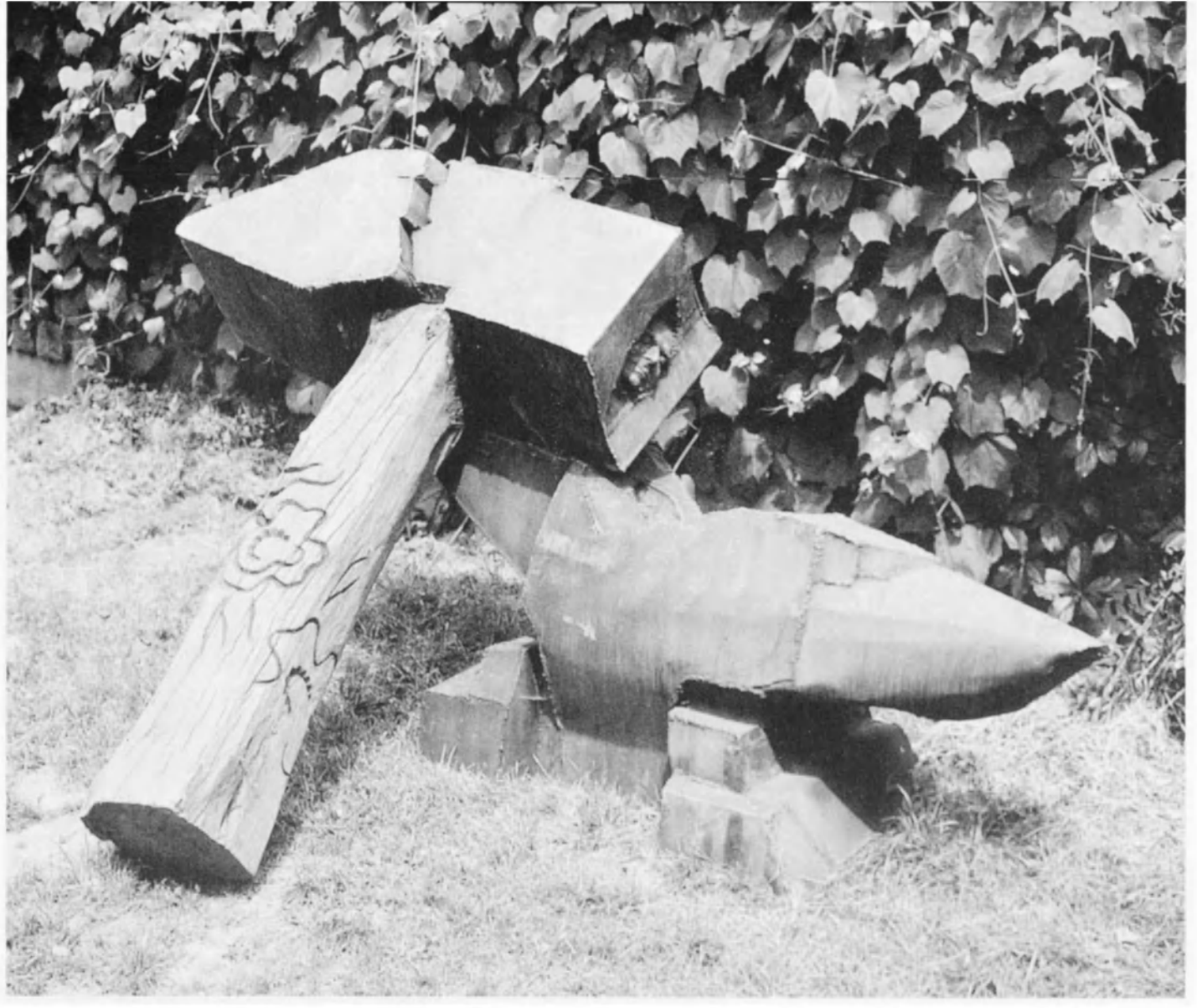
In the past dozen years, intensive scientific research jointly sponsored by IOC, WMO, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) has greatly increased the understanding of El Niño. Known as the Study of Tropical Oceans and Global Atmosphere (TOGA), its observers have begun to piece together enough information to begin anticipating El Niño's arrival and its expected effects.

El Niño is, of course, only one phenomenon among many in the highly complex and poorly understood system of oceans, atmosphere, weather and climate. To comprehend potential global climatic change, much more information than now exists will be needed. ■



A coral formation (Belize).

Extracted from an article by Nancy Mathews, a journalist specializing in environmental questions. UNESCO–Office of Public Information.



Dialogue (1989), wood and oxidized iron sculpture by the Slovak artist Juraj Melis.

Eastern Europe: an uphill road to freedom

by Antonin Liehm

Post-communist societies face many pitfalls as they seek to modernize themselves

LESS than three years have gone by since the collapse of communism in central Europe, and we are only beginning to realize the extent of the fall-out and to come to terms with the problems its heirs—and by extension all Europe—will have to resolve.

Central Europe had been subjected to totalitarian régimes—first nazi, then communist—for more than fifty years, leaving two generations with no experience of any other system, least of all democracy or a market economy, which were not even a distant memory. Such systems survived only as dreams, fleeting images whose shape changed according to whatever scraps of rhetoric or other information people had gleaned at random, mainly from hearsay.

Like all dictatorships, the communist régimes were profoundly conservative in their

***Athletes* (1928-1930), oil on canvas by the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich.**

structures and manner of operation. Despite the resolutely forward-looking beginnings of communism, its ethics and even its aesthetics remained firmly rooted in the nineteenth century. In its turn, it provoked anti-communist trends that also took their cue from the past, whether in the form of rampant economic liberalism, a certain form of nationalism or an aesthetic of rejection. So when exponents of these trends came to power two years ago, they gradually transformed the anti-communist revolution into a restoration of the *ancien régime*. Only in Germany was there any kind of corrective counterweight.

A DISMAL LEGACY

We knew that the fall of communism would reveal the depths of the ideological and political pit the communist movement had dug, in flagrant contradiction with its own doctrines. Nevertheless, many of us thought that the vacuum would soon be filled, first by a return to religion and then by a restoration of democracy, tolerance and political ecumenism, at least in those countries that had a democratic tradition. It was clear, of course, that communism had done nothing to solve the problems of nationalities, which it had merely glossed over or concealed. Even so, few of us foresaw that the nationality issue would erupt as suddenly as it did. In some countries, nationalism—with the backing of the churches—filled almost the entire ideological vacuum left by the collapse of communism.

Half a century of totalitarianism had also left other dismal legacies, among them the myth of social equality, which was for the most part achieved by a levelling downwards, and the

illusion of full employment. The very idea of a society made up of the rich, the poor and the unemployed is a difficult one for most people to accept. A sense of responsibility (except for one's own destiny) and the spirit of individual initiative have also both disappeared. The middle class hardly exists except in a form inherited from communism, namely a mass of state employees and functionaries on the one hand and a class of small or big-time speculators, crooks and parasites on the other. The latter group is best placed to benefit from the new situation. One interesting development is the growing esteem in which the old titled nobility is held, echoing the respect once enjoyed by the party élite, the *nomenklatura*. One last factor we have to bear in mind is the complete absence of structures governing labour relations, as well as the lack of trade unions and employers' and business organizations.

A PRECARIOUS BALANCE

In politics, the organized successors of the communist party, which, surprisingly, remain relatively strong, have been boycotted by all the other formations, thus upsetting the normal democratic process of alternation in power. Confronting them is a liberal right intent on putting the clock back, flanked by a chauvinistic and often racist extreme right wing. In between lies a fragile centre-left and various timid social democratic groupings that hardly dare mention the words "social" or "left" for fear of being tarred with the communist brush. This virtual deadlock will continue until the market economy and all that goes with it have been restored, for these are indispensable to the proper functioning of democratic politics. In the meantime, there may be—and in some cases already have been—political explosions and recklessness that could have dangerous consequences.

Economic reforms aimed at restoring earlier market structures were of course already under way well before the collapse of the old régimes. In its death throes, the communist state sought with a kind of desperate energy to find a way out of the impasse in which it found itself by creating a mixed system, inspired on the one hand by the parallel economy (which was particularly developed in Hungary) and on the other by Polish experiments in associating the unions with the running of the economy and attracting massive foreign aid. In Czechoslovakia, because of the panic fear of liberalization shown by the communist régime installed after

***Repairmen* (1960), by the Azerbaijani artist Tahir Salakhov.**

***About Love* (1990), oil on canvas by Alex Belyakov, a young Moscow artist. The work is inspired by the Yin and the Yang, the two opposing but complementary principles of Chinese philosophy on whose interplay the universal order is based.**

the 1968 invasion, the reform programme was prepared almost surreptitiously. Its proponents were a handful of reformist communists running the Institute of Economic Planning and a group centred on the Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus. The former were basically Keynesian in their approach, seeking a "third way", a gradual transformation of the economy based on large-scale state participation. The second group, drawing its inspiration uncompromisingly from F.A. Hayek and Milton Friedman, aimed at a restoration of the situation before communism. They sought the dismantling of the existing system, then a return to classic liberalism via a more or less uncontrolled privatization, as well as by opening up the economy almost unconditionally to foreign capital. By and large this latter view prevailed in the three main countries of central Europe, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

In view of the fact that the European Community is not in a position to open its doors to the central European nations in the immediate future, or to finance their transformation in the meantime, decision-makers in these countries are looking increasingly to the United States as a last hope. The Americans are fully aware of this situation, and they view central Europe as a not unimportant area for their long-term influence and a significant factor in their policy towards the European Community. This seems natural to the extent that current economic doctrine in the United States closely matches that of central Europe—another factor promoting the belief that central Europe will long remain one of the cornerstones of European conservatism.

It remains to be seen whether such conservatism will speed up or slow down the process known as the "return to the European fold". Will the urge to return to an earlier status quo move central Europe closer to or away from Western Europe as it is today?

The American model

The same questions arise in the field of culture, taken in its widest sense. In cultural terms, the situation in central Europe is coming to resemble American practice more than the Western European norm, with the arts becoming an object of speculation, a speedy route to riches. Yet this is the field in which the American model is in fact least applicable. In Czechoslovakia, for example, there are about 3,000 publishing houses but no law protecting them or defining their financial position. Attempts are being made to propagate the idea that privately-owned television is synonymous with independent television. Meanwhile, local film production is coming to a halt as its products lose access to distribution networks saturated with American B-movies. Cuts in subsidies to public libraries, museums and similar institutions are being contemplated.

Such, in brief, are some of the pitfalls and dangers confronting post-communist societies in the throes of change. The much-touted risk of a return to communism seems to me personally to be one of the least of them.

Every communist nation had an opposition of sorts, whose strength and visibility varied from country to country. The "dissidents", as they were known in the West, only enjoyed solid popular support in Poland. Elsewhere they represented protest movements of nationalists or intellectuals, drawing their strength only from the contrast between the moral sense of individual citizens and the immorality of the ruling class. In this way the very concept of morality was identified with the anti-communist cause.

This association was largely illusory, as the first years of the post-communist era have demonstrated. In a recent essay entitled *Summer Meditations*, Vaclav Havel writes: "The return of freedom to a world in moral decomposition inevitably involved a phenomenon that was

Antonin Liehm, a Prague journalist, left Czechoslovakia in 1969 and took up university teaching. In 1984 he founded *Lettre Internationale*, a periodical published in nine European countries. His publications include *Trois générations: Entretiens sur le phénomène culturel tchécoslovaque* (1970), *Socialisme à visage humain* (1974), *Le passé présent* (1979) and *Le cinéma de l'Est* (1979).

wholly predictable in the nature of things but that nonetheless turned out to be much graver than might have been expected. This was the extraordinary and almost blindingly blatant explosion of every imaginable base human instinct. It was as if a whole range of shady—or at the very least ambiguous—inclinations, which had insidiously festered within society for years (while also being requisitioned into daily use by the totalitarian system), were suddenly released from their straitjacket and granted complete freedom to express themselves and spread their wings. A certain discipline, if one may use the term, that had been imposed by the authoritarian régime (which, in doing so, had also 'legalized' these base instincts), had been shattered, while a new one based on freely-accepted collective responsibilities, which would have smothered them rather than giving them rein, had not yet grown up. Nor could it have, for it takes many years for such a development to mature.

"So we find ourselves confronted with a bizarre situation in which societies that have indubitably become freer in many ways behave worse than in the days when they lacked freedom. Criminality of every kind has increased rapidly, and the sensational press has unleashed the nauseating flood that always seems to spurt out of some dark corner of the collective memory in times of great historical change. Worse still, even more disturbing phenomena are beginning to become apparent: suspicion and rancour between nationalities, racism, even manifestations of fascism, brazen demagogy, intrigues and deliberate lies, political chicanery, shameless and unrestrained promotion of vested interests, naked ambition and the thirst for power, fanaticism of every variety, new kinds of confidence trickery, Mafia-style venality and a general absence of tolerance, mutual comprehension, good taste, reflection or a sense of proportion. . . ."

The communist countries have gained their freedom, but they are far from achieving a healthy democracy or economy. They will only attain these objectives if political leaders do not confuse ends and means and choose suitable paths to reach the desired goals. ❐

In Our Fathers' Footsteps **(1988), polyester and concrete sculpture, painted in acrylic, by the Slovak artist Josef Jankovic.**

Latin America: a different way forward?

by Ernesto Sábato

Robotized industrial nations can learn a salutary lesson from the supposedly "less advanced" societies

THE problem of the relationship between cultures is subtly linked to that of national or regional identity. For proof one need only look to Latin America, where the movement of opposition to the Spanish conquest, five centuries after the fact, has made the "return to tradition" a rallying cry without specifying to which tradition we are supposed to return. Am I, as an Argentinian of Italian parentage, expected to write in Quechua or in Araucanian? Or to reject the influence of Greek and Latin culture and then that of the European nations?

World history is a story of invasions, conquests and the intermingling of peoples. Consider, for instance, a nation like Spain. What is

its "real" identity? If we go far enough back into the past, we reach the mysterious Iberians about whom almost nothing is known. In their footsteps came Phoenicians, Celts, Romans, Germanic peoples, Greeks and Arabs. What could the "real" language of such a nation be? Castilian Spanish with all its Teutonic, Arab, Greek, Latin, Italian, English and now American derivations expunged? Purity is a concept that only has meaning in the world of Platonic ideals. Nothing in the human world is pure—nor on Mount Olympus either, contaminated as its denizens were by Egyptian and Babylonian divinities.

In 1978 I was told that we were celebrating the millennium of the Spanish language. Surprised by such precision, I requested further information. What I learned was that in the year 978 a monk of the monastery of San Millán jotted notes in a grotesque Roman dialect in the margins of a Latin manuscript. He can hardly have imagined that he was inventing Castilian Spanish. This is no joke on my part. I am simply paraphrasing the arguments put forward to justify the anniversary.

Since Spanish is a living language, not an invented one, we must refuse the good monk the honour of having invented it. All he did was to put into writing some words of a dialect that had developed over the centuries in the clumsy and poorly articulated utterances of illiterate peasants who had no need to read Cicero in order to raise their pigs, shout for food, scold their wives or berate their children. It is impossible to know how long it took to "corrupt Latin", as one purist has put it—but then Latin had already been corrupted by the Roman soldiery, and would continue to be so through the development of other tongues. The same point could be made about the languages of other nations once invaded by so-called "barbarians" and now celebrated for their culture.

I am perfectly well aware of the atrocities committed by the Spaniards in the course of the conquest, and I am in no way condoning them. The Spanish conquest of the Americas was, like all such events, abominable. But if the descriptions of the "black legend" and all its attendant horrors were the whole story, it is hard to see why the defenders of the indigenous peoples' cause do not make their case in Mayan or the Aztec language. Come to that, it is also difficult to see why Rubén Dario and César Vallejo, two of the greatest poets of the Spanish language and both of mixed race, not only felt no rancour towards Spain but even hymned it in memorable poems. Nor is it easy to explain how, in those circumstances, the culture of Hispanic America, having undergone the influence of the great European intellectual currents, could not merely have produced one of the great literatures of the contemporary world but also have influenced European writers in its turn. Finally one could adduce the subversive and paradoxical argument that the colonies owed their liberation to the doctrines of the Enlightenment and of Romanticism, both of which originated in Europe.

I am not for a moment denying the element of snobbery that has characterized Hispanic America's passing imitations of the great European intellectual movements. But snobbery is not limited to new nations: it was not us, to the best of my knowledge, who invented the word "snob". True, a great Argentinian intellectual of the last century discovered the beauty of one of our own trees by reading a European Romantic. But just as illustrious, and even more ridiculous, examples of similar behaviour can be found in Europe itself. Although Frederick the Great spoke German as his native tongue, he only read Wolff's metaphysical works after they had been translated into French. The story is frightening as well as comical, rather as if nineteenth-century Greeks had had to read Goethe to appreciate the beauty of the Parthenon.

But that is how culture works, in strange and roundabout ways. We should not be so hard on our feeling of awe in face of European culture, for thanks to it we have in turn been able to dazzle the Europeans themselves—those same Europeans who once turned to

Opposite page, a Mayan stucco sculpture of a man's head (classic period, 600-900), Chiapas, Mexico. Below, *Mask* (pastel and coconut fibre, on wood), by the Hungarian artist Blaise Simon (1990).

Left and opposite page, wood sculptures from a Sakalava royal tomb at Tsianihy, Madagascar (c. 1897).
The influence of Indonesian art has been turned to original effect in these imposing figures (height 159.1 and 180.5 cm).

ERNESTO SÁBATO, Argentinian writer, philosopher and essayist, is the author of a number of novels that have had a great influence on Latin-American literature. Among the best-known are *El túnel* (1948; *The Outsider*, 1950) *Alejandra* (1967) and *Abaddón el exterminador* (1974; "Abaddon the Exterminator").

Spanish-American novels only for picturesque effects and local colour, as though solitude, suffering and death, the ultimate attributes of the human condition, were not common to all peoples. I mention this because one American critic has written, with reference to Borges, that the Argentinians have no "national" art, doubtless because our culture lacks that quality of local colour that tourists so admire. What would this critic make of Moby Dick? Would he consider Melville stateless on the grounds that in American territorial waters metaphysical whales are in short supply?

A THREATENED WORLDVIEW

Great artists seek the absolute, for art comes, mysteriously, not just from the conscious mind but also, and perhaps to a greater extent, from the submerged layers of the unconscious, the domain of the life urge and the death wish. Yet although this visionary form of art is essentially subjective, its subject-matter does not exist in isolation, but has a specific society and a given culture as its context. And every artist, however magisterial, reflects the influence of others, just as Beethoven came out of Mozart. In the same way, our art has European antecedents, but the link in no way diminishes its (relative) originality, for those forms of artistic expression that are not collective endeavours, like the building of the cathedrals, are individual and unique.

The basic difference between science and art lies in the fact that scientists strip away the self from their view of the world, while artists do not aspire to such abstraction. The originality of art lies precisely in this apparent incapacity, which explains why art has style while science does not: it would be meaningless to look for the "style" of Pythagoras in his celebrated theorem. The language of science is ultimately no more than a sequence of abstract and impersonal symbols, while a work of art is a unique and original mark left on the world, the concrete expression, enigmatic and uncertain, of a creature of flesh and blood.

Although this difference between science and artistic creation has always existed, it has now attained critical importance. By overvaluing science and technology, the thinking of the philosophers of the European Enlightenment and their positivist successors has involved the human race in an accelerating process of abstraction and rationalization. The resulting crisis is not just that of capitalism or of socialist dictatorships, but also that of a certain view of the world that has ended by forcing both opposing camps into the same mould and establishing the reign of mass man. Under both systems—for scientific knowledge knows no politics—the sciences are all the more powerful because they are abstract. Humanity

has been led off towards a mathematical Olympus, leaving flesh-and-blood humans increasingly alone and confused. Steel and the triangle, logarithms and nuclear energy have all come together with the most abstract forms of economic power to create a diabolical machine in which human beings have become anonymous and powerless cogs.

It is already possible to measure the terrible price we have had to pay for having banished the archaic powers of the unconscious mind. The hidden gods have had their revenge in the form of collective hysteria, widespread anxiety, the devastation of whole peoples by technology, sadistic violence and drug abuse, which is not, as is often wrongly claimed, a problem of delinquency.

The true realists

So what does the dialectic of cultures amount to? What role is there for the poor nations—that huge majority of peoples oppressed by the myopia and mad avarice of the world banking system and the rich countries—in a world in which social injustice prevails and where millions of children are dying of hunger?

Some countries, including my own, have already advanced halfway along the path separating us from the great industrial powers and it is important that we should not make the same mistakes as they have. Progress must be welcomed, but only if it is illuminated by the light of the great philosophies of life and by the wisdom and foresight of those thinkers who in the nineteenth century were already looking for ways of restoring a sacred dimension to nature and to humankind. Let us avoid at all costs the alienation of the individual by excessive state power, the world of mass man, the spread of megalopolises built for robots, the destruction of ancient cultures, centralization, and contempt for small nations, however small they may be—above all if they are very small.

All of this may sound utopian and may draw smiles from so-called realists. But if "realists" are those who are destroying all forms of reality, from nature in all its nobility to the souls of children and adolescents, it seems wise to turn instead for inspiration to those who believe it is impossible to live without these ideals. We are all aware of the crisis of ideologies, but that does not mean that we must give up the great ideals of freedom, justice and a belief in the sacred nature of the human being. In this respect, the so-called "backward" countries, in which people have not been transformed into robots, have a salutary lesson to teach us all. As Schopenhauer put it in a phrase later quoted by Nietzsche, "There are periods of history in which progress is reactionary and reaction is progressive". ❐

THE WHOLE AND THE PARTS

Above,
Endless Ribbon, a sculpture
in granite by the Swiss artist
Max Bill.

A golden age of dialogue

by Vassilis Vassilikos

Mixing reason and intuition, the pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece reached some surprisingly modern conclusions and developed a spirit of intellectual tolerance that still has much to teach us

At the wellspring of universalist thought, the pleiad of philosophers known as the pre-Socratics belong not just to their homelands—the Greek and Sicilian coasts of ancient Ionia—but to the world. They deserve to be known as philosophers of the Universe, or philosophers of the four corners of the Earth, or philosophers of the infinite.

To start alphabetically, Alcmaeon was the first philosopher to discuss the importance of the human brain, that most perfect of computers, which he described as a primordial element. A little later, another pre-Socratic, Democritus, put forward ideas prefiguring the first electronic brain and atomic fission. But Alcmaeon, a pupil of Pythagoras in his later years, has the honour of having introduced to Western thought the Chinese concepts of yin and yang when he spoke of humankind's essential duality and claimed that the unitary state, with no counter-balance, is a cause of sickness. Duality was, of course, subsequently to prove fundamental to the development of computers, through the concepts of "input" and "output".

Democritus, with Leucippus (often described as his twin), developed the original atomic theory. He was the first thinker to affirm that nothing exists other than atoms and the void. His dialectical materialism, which presented nature as a single entity whose parts were all linked, has been borne out by the scientific discoveries of our

Mercury (Roman equivalent of the Greek god Hermes) with his caduceus, or staff, adorns the façade of a house at Melk, Austria.

century, the century of the atom, of the theory of relativity and of quantum mechanics. In the 1920s and 1930s in Copenhagen, Born, Schrödinger, Kramers and Dirac conducted experiments on quantum mechanics and on the uncertainty principle, the law of physics that most directly rebuts Plato's social ideas and the logic of Aristotle.

Heraclitus introduced the concept of psychosomatic influences on health, which has been considerably developed in our time. One of his fundamental beliefs was that antithesis and antagonism are the causes of progress and development. "War is the mother of all things," he claimed. Everything decays and is changed, except for the law of change itself. Another of his ideas, which appeared paradoxical at the time but which anticipated many modern scientific discoveries, was that the universe dies and comes to life in alternating epochs, having neither a Creator, a beginning nor an end in time. Is the physicist's law of the conservation of energy not the clearest possible confirmation that the Universe is infinite and immortal?

Some years later, Empedocles foretokened the eternal nature of matter. "Foolish men," he wrote, "how could it be possible that anything should come from nothing? Movement and immobility, life and death are merely two faces of the same reality." Yet it was not until 2,500 years later, in the eighteenth century, that Leibniz and Lavoisier discovered the law of the indestructibility of matter. And contemporary atomic science has calculated that, while the lifespan of certain atomic particles is extremely short, every electron, proton or neutron has always been in existence. The universe is made up of these basic building-blocks, and it is certain that nothing is born of nothing. "Nothing is born of nothing and whatever is has always been and always will be. There is neither beginning nor end. Nothing departs, for nothing has ever arrived." So claimed Melissos, one of the least known of the pre-Socratics, but none the less important for that. Others of his fellows would add precision to the concept of continual creation: Pherecydes of Syros said that "Water is born of time".

The beginnings of pluralism

At the beginning of the sixth century BC, Thales travelled by boat from Miletus to Egypt with the intention of studying in the temples of Thoth or Hermes, god of learning. On his return, he amazed his compatriots by declaring: "The Sun and stars are only spheres of fire of colossal dimensions." His disciple Anaximander thought that the world originated as an undifferentiated mass of primitive and arid matter. He explained that this mass had gradually condensed from a gas to a liquid before solidifying, and he stressed the role that temperature played in the birth of the world. Other thinkers sought a comprehensive explanation in mathematics. Philolaos, for example, considered that "everything is numbers. Without numbers there is neither knowledge nor thought." And the essential power of numbers for him lay in a decimal system.

Modern physicists have similar concerns. Werner Heisenberg wrote that "It is perhaps interesting to note that the problem of determining whether the original matter is one known to us, or something different placed above it, re-emerges in a different form in contemporary physics. Physicists today are trying to establish a fundamental law of the movement of matter, just as the pre-Socratics did in their day, a law that would explain all the elementary particles and their singularities." "Consequently," Heisenberg noted, "in the last analysis mathematical forms replace regular bodies according to a process that is virtually identical to that of the Pythagoreans, whereby harmonic vibrations can be obtained by differently arranging the tension of strings." For Pythagoras, numbers were "the principal elements of nature".

Thales, "the first astronomer to predict

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Left, bronze statuette (7th-6th century BC) of the ancient Egyptian Moon-god Thoth, whom the Greeks identified with Hermes.

eclipses of the Sun and explain the solstices", was the founder of a new tradition of freedom of thought, according to the British philosopher Karl Popper. The critical attitude displayed by disciples towards the teaching of their masters was a feature of the philosophy of the Ionian school. Thales could tolerate criticism, and even encouraged it. That was something new. It marked a break with the previous tradition whereby each school had a single doctrine. Acceptance of a plurality of doctrines led inevitably to an awareness that our attempts to understand and explain the truth are not final but open to improvement, and that knowledge and ideology are influenced by circumstances. Popper believes that one of the most important lessons to be learned from the pre-Socratic philosophers is that all of them, with the exception of the Pythagoreans, accepted a critical attitude and even open disagreement without ostracizing dissenters.

THE PATH OF DIALOGUE

Parmenides was not only the physicist who said "Everything comes from Necessity; Earth and Sun and Moon and air that is common to all and the Milky Way and the glowing stars". He was also a poet who wrote that "Everywhere Eros encourages base procreation and parturition, driving the female to the male to join in union." Anaxagoras showed the same concern for unity: "The visible is the aspect of

The Greek philosopher and sage Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 576-480 BC). Engraving by an unknown artist (17th-18th century).

the invisible", he wrote; "the spirit rules everything" and "what had to be, what was and is no longer, what is now and what will be—all this the spirit has known and has disposed in good order by its rotation." So did Xenophanes, who wrote that "The vast sea engendered the waters, the winds and the rivers," and Anaximander, who claimed that "Heat separated from cold at the creation of the world and formed a burning sphere around the atmosphere of the planet like bark around a tree-trunk. And the sphere split in two to form two spheres, that of cold and that of heat, born of the matrix at the birth of the world."

The Greek philosopher Empedocles (c. 490-c. 435 BC). 17th-century engraving.

The ideas of the pre-Socratics can therefore be seen as astonishing intuitions of modern experimental science. After the pre-Socratics, according to Popper, humanity sank into the wintry torpor of the Middle Ages until our own time, when Einstein, with his discoveries with regard to movement, mass, energy and time, offered a new image of the old universe. Popper's views may be summarized as follows: pre-Socratic philosophy shows us the way of debate, from which truth can emerge, whereas dogmatic religions and rigid ideologies are monologues delivered by a single speaker who thinks he has a monopoly of the truth. No such monopoly can exist. The notion of complementarity that characterizes atomic structure and the quanta presupposes an awareness that two different descriptions of an experience can be equally valuable, and are both indispensable even though they remain irreconcilable. I would add, myself, that the law of indeterminacy reinforces this message.

The pre-Socratic philosophers investigated not just the Earth but the universe. Today they would be involved in star-wars research. As one American researcher has put it, "The psychology of the common man in the twentieth century is hardly different in its outlines from that of a sixteenth-century merchant or a fourteenth-century peasant, even if modern man has a car and a television set. Future historians will be astonished by the gap between the scientific discoveries of our time and the anachronistic attitudes we have inherited from the Middle Ages. This chasm is one of the causes of our present material and psychological crisis. For a good example of right thinking and judgement, we could turn to the golden century of the Greek pre-Socratics, at a time when philosophy was synonymous with scientific thought."

And, I would add, at a time when technology was not limited to the capacities of the computer. Humankind cannot live without intuition. All the great thinkers, like all the astronauts, have turned to poetry to describe the miracle they saw. And poetry, along with scientific knowledge, is what we find in pre-Socratic philosophy. ❐

Two great traditions

by Wang Bin

Attempting to understand the European Christian tradition of thought is a complex and challenging experience for the Chinese mind

Above, Confucius (c. 551-479 BC). 18th-century Chinese water-colour. Above right, the birth of Eve, as depicted in *The Book of Birds*, a 12th-century illuminated manuscript.

THIS article endeavours to answer a difficult question: How does Christianity differ (beyond purely religious differences) from the Chinese tradition? Focusing on collective thought patterns, I shall attempt to explore a number of non-religious phenomena that are deeply rooted in Christian doctrines but are notably absent from Chinese intellectual life. It is these phenomena, the article will argue, that not only differentiate Western culture from Chinese culture, but also illuminate the contributions Christianity has made historically to the general development of the human mind.

A transcendent deity emerges when the potential believer separates himself or herself

mentally from the external world and attempts to establish a system of interpretation capable of affording a final answer to all the mysteries represented by nature. What impresses a Chinese reader of the Bible is not so much the image of God as His relationship to humankind. The notion of "covenant" is particularly difficult for the Chinese mind to grasp. According to Genesis, man, created by God, separates himself from God through the Fall and devotes life-long strivings to an attempt to be reunited with God in another world. The covenant between God and man not only holds out the hope of achieving that ambition but presupposes a separation of man mentally from the Truth, the Good and Beauty, the whole external world pertaining to or created by God. As for visible cosmic nature, God encourages man to subjugate it by exercising "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the Earth" (Genesis 1:28).

St. Francis, detail of a fresco by Cimabue (1240) in the church of St. Francis at Assisi, Italy

Stripped of its doctrinal content, the covenant reveals a deep-rooted thought pattern whose archetype can be traced back to ancient Greece and serves as a unique link between the pagan tradition and contemporary intellectual life. The characteristic features of this pattern are, on the one hand, the detachment of man (the observer) from the external world (the observed), and on the other a constant effort to achieve the final yet impossible recombination. Ultimately, man is separated from himself as an object of study. No revolution in the West has ever altered this basic thought pattern.

The Chinese counterpart to this thought pattern is its precise opposite. In defining man's relationship to the universe, Confucius, Lao Tzu and his modern critics share a single framework: that of man in the universe. The term "universe" refers mainly to cosmic nature in Taoism and to society in Confucianism. (The former finds its fullest expression in artistic creation while the latter has its roots in Chinese political-moral doctrines.) The man-in-the-universe thought pattern has survived many generations of revolutionary change. The overlapping shadows of Confucius and Lao Tzu still guide the thought processes of the Chinese intelligentsia and circumscribe their imagination.

TRANSCENDENCY VERSUS IMMANENCY

When the Chinese and the Western traditions meet, the Chinese mind tends to appreciate the Greeks and to reject Christianity, disregarding the intellectual process which made the transition from paganism to Christianity possible. To the modern Chinese, passages in the Bible that encourage the conquest of nature might be acceptable. But the results of the separation described above go much further than the exploitation of cosmic nature and do not form part of the Chinese mental landscape. They include: a persistent quest for the ontological meaning of human existence; a way of verifying the truth, divine or scientific, which in the historical continuum encompasses not merely modern individualism but a deep Christian sense of the individual's soul identified only with God; man's challenge to the Almighty (as in the story of Job); the formula "I think, therefore I am"; the progress from equality before God to equality before the law; a contractual tradition that binds two separate parts: God and man, a King and his subjects, a state and its citizens; and so on. To understand these ideas, the Chinese mind has to adapt to a new perspective.

In addition to a mental state preoccupied with the separation of man from God, a sense of transcendency is indispensable to Christian faith. Without it, it would be impossible to conceive of reunion in the other world.

As a concept imported from the West, transcendency is frequently used by Chinese scholars as well as Western sinologists to describe Taoism. This conceptual misplacement, a common phenomenon in contemporary Chinese intellectual

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"An Ascetic in Meditation". Painting on silk of the Yuan period (13th century).

life, neglects the basic fact that Chinese "transcendency", restricted as it is to the "man-in-the-universe" framework, is totally different from what is meant by transcendency in its strict Western sense.

Christian transcendency takes the individual (his soul) as the point of departure as well as the final goal of fulfilment. It rises above objects which reveal themselves to experience and moves towards God or the absolute truth in the other world. It focuses on the fulfilment of the individual and points to the infinite. Chinese "transcendency", on the other hand, requires the individual to transcend himself so as to merge into nature or society. When there is perfect harmony between man and the universe, the absolute truth can be grasped through sense-perception and intuitive reason. To the Chinese mind, the truth is here and to the Christian mind, the truth is there. The two truths are incommensurable, though they may agree on some specific points.

The most obvious manifestation of this difference is to be found in theoretical reflection on artistic creation. From Plato on, classical theories of art and literature attribute the source of inspiration to the divine or the supernatural. In modern times some theorists have seen inspiration as originating in the irrational self (the emotions or the subconscious) as opposed to the rational self, thus postulating a microcosm within human nature of the separation of man from God. Both these ideas involve a transcendent movement from one opposite towards the other. Modernism seeks pure truth in life, a truth which, it maintains, has been polluted and distorted by civilized society. But it remains a truth which is always there, not here.

All this contrasts sharply with the way in which the Chinese understand inspiration. In ancient Chinese, there is no such term as inspiration because such an idea is totally absent from Chinese spiritual and intellectual life. However, classical Chinese theories of art and literature do describe a mental state in which the artist suddenly finds himself confronted with a spiritual spark triggered off as a result of the inexplicable harmonization between the artist and his object to be expressed.

Scholars of comparative literature who lack philosophical insight have simplified this situation and wrongly described it by attaching to it another Western label, "expressionism" or "empathy". Chinese expressionism, if we must adopt this term, emphasizes a constant reciprocal movement and recognition between subject and object within a shared space, the universe. It is two in one. As for the source of inspiration, the difference might be summarized as inspiration out of ontological transcendency versus inspiration out of cosmological immanence.

To illustrate this difference, let us imagine two classical pictures: a Western figure painting and a Chinese wash painting. In the latter, the landscape often occupies almost the whole space with one or several figures relegated into obscurity. A Western connoisseur might misunderstand the overall arrangement as a suppression of individuality. On the other hand, the nimbus around the head of a beautiful medieval or Renaissance figure often puzzles the Chinese mind. The setting is beautiful, so is the figure. But what is the point of that small halo, a visual cliché? A readily found explanation is Western superstition. If only both sides would understand that appreciation of different mysteries demands different perspectives as well as different imaginations! However, from the Chinese point of view, the challenge of Christian transcendency is more than an image of unfamiliar beauty.

The relevance of Christian transcendency to the general orientation of Western philosophy and modern intellectual life cannot be overestimated. Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he is concerned with modern epistemology or scientific knowledge, denies transcendent knowledge, that is, knowledge which goes beyond the limit of experience. Such knowledge belongs to the noumenon, the thing-in-itself, or, to use the Christian expression, God. But in his *Critique of Practical Reason,* Kant tells us that moral thought and in particular considerations about human freedom demand reference to a noumenal self. Hence a famous Kantian principle of man as the end, never only as the means. It is on this transcendent speculation that modern liberal thinkers have built various arguments about the freedom of the individual which constitute the starting point of Western political philosophy. Can we understand this Kantian "categorical imperative" without a sense of transcendency? Is it not true that Christian transcendency has in the past two thousand years cultivated an intellectual atmosphere whose impact upon modern society transcends religion itself?

The relevance of transcendency to the natural sciences is equally important. Always pointing to the infinite, it acts as a force which constantly drives human imagination and creativity forward. It is said that the Chinese mind is capable of creating or absorbing new technology but is not so efficient in creating or internalizing new science. I would not go as far as that, but history has proved that the remark is not without foundation. It takes transcendency as well as abstraction to make a scientific mind. Unfortunately, in everyday Chinese conversation and in the mass media, science and technology are not differentiated. This matches another confusion: the equation of religion and superstition.

What is versus what-ought-to-be

When we discuss the Western tradition, we Chinese are often confronted with a seemingly inexplicable dichotomy between the moral man and the intellectual man, a distinction first made by Matthew Arnold who referred to the two elements involved as, respectively, "the forces of Hebraism and Hellenism". This gives the misleading impression that the Greek mind is concerned with "What-Is" while the Christian mind, like that of Confucius, is oriented towards "What-Ought-To-Be". I would argue that What-Is is characteristic of both the Greek and the Christian traditions.

Like Aristotle's "substance", God as a category is characterized by three priorities: knowledge priority—God is the Absolute truth or the subject and purpose of understanding;

Zen
(8 cm x 66 cm, 1991). Mixed media on canvas by the French artist Jean-Pierre Bourquin.

definition priority—God is the definition or the subject in terms of logic while all the others are predicates; and time priority—God is the Being independent of and determinant of all other beings. Without this combination of epistemology, logic and ontology as a prerequisite, Christian love and good works are meaningless.

Modern Chinese intellectuals feel sympathy for Christian charity and works but many of them reject god as a term imagined through superstition. In the past ten years or so many of them have talked loudly about the importance of "transforming the traditional thought pattern", but what they mean by "thought pattern" has turned out to be economic, political or moral ideas. While they have been busy introducing Western ideas to replace Chinese ones, they have actually paid little attention to the thought pattern which supports those ideas. Thus we have a coin with two sides: Cathayan centricity on one side and wholesale Westernization on the other. This is the inevitable result of a three-thousand-year long tradition in which epistemology has yet to come to maturity.

Doubtless, Christianity also experienced domination by What-Ought-To-Be. For more than a thousand years, the spirit of the Church ruled the Western mind. It monopolized the interpretation of the Bible and institutionalized the Christian world into a hierarchy of terror. The Reformation was of profound significance in that it removed the Church as the mediator between God and man. When man confronts directly what he believes, he is free to pursue What-Is. Without this spiritual and intellectual liberation, the capitalist spirit and Protestant ethics could not have made a new world. Max Weber should have added two significant points to his analysis of the rise of Protestantism. Firstly, that the re-establishment of What-Is is predetermined by the separation of man from God, which not only gives rise to a religious revolution but nurtures modern epistemology which, in turn, challenges that religion. Secondly, that any faith or ideal, no matter how perfect it is, will inevitably decline in popularity if it is institutionalized into an interpretational hierarchy in order to control freedom of thought. The second point is more than a matter of thought pattern. Its far-reaching significance is a powerful challenge to any type of authoritarian institution.

THE UNIVERSAL

The above argument presents Christianity as a challenge to the Chinese mind. It does not imply that Christianity or the West are universal. If they were it would be impossible to explain Chinese prosperity in the past and its predictable possibility in the future. What, then, is the universal? It seems to be a misleading and even dangerous question, similar to "What is God?" or "What is the absolute truth?" A more acceptable formulation is that of unity in diversity. Unity does not mean conformity, nor does diversity mean the coexistence of independent but discrete elements. How can unity in diversity be achieved? I see it as a kind of challenge. It is a mutual exposure to new dimensions and perspectives, a constant discovery of complementary factors in otherness and, finally, a rediscovery of oneself. It is a dialectical movement towards reciprocal recognition of different traditions and thought patterns. Even if there is no contact for the time being, the challenge remains. Our task is to turn potentiality into actuality. The process is endless. It is in this sense that I take Christianity as a challenge to the Chinese mind. ❐

The face of a stranger

by Emmanuel Lévinas

A distinguished French philosopher reflects on the process of ethical awakening triggered by scrutiny of the face of another human being

THE process of reflection stirred by the face of another individual is not a thought *about*—a representation—but at once a thought *for*, a non-indifference towards the other which upsets the equilibrium of the calm and impassive soul of pure knowledge. It is an awakening to a uniqueness in the other person which cannot be grasped by knowledge, a step towards the newcomer as someone who is both unique and a fellow being. I am speaking of the face itself, over and above any particular expression it may bear, the face that exists beneath every expression that crosses its countenance and cloaks its nudity. To look at it in this way is not so much an unveiling as a stripping bare of something exposed and undefended, revealed as it is, naked as mortality itself. The extreme precariousness of something unique, the precariousness of the stranger. The totality of the exposure lies in the fact that it is not merely a new awareness of the familiar revealed in its true light; it is a form of expression, a primal language, a summons, an appeal.

The face is not the only vehicle of such an exposure. In Vassili Grossman's *Life and Fate* (part three, chapter 23) the author describes a visit to the Lubianka prison in Moscow by the families, wives and relatives of political detainees, come for news. There is a queue at the window, and those in it can only see the backs of the people in front. A woman is waiting her turn. "She had never thought that the human back could be so expressive and could so vividly communicate a state of mind. As people approached the window, they had a special way of stretching their backs and necks, with their lifted shoulder-blades taut as if on springs, as though the shoulders themselves were shouting, crying and sobbing." What is conveyed is the extreme precariousness of those people, and a sense that peace lies in an awareness of this.

For the absolute directness of this face and its expression make demands on my deepest self. Implicit in them is a right over me. What concerns my selfhood is the specific circumstance in which that right has meaning. It is as if the shadow of death the other face confronts were my business, as if that death were my concern. In this reminder of my responsibilities by means of a face that has a claim on my selfhood, the stranger is my neighbour.

Of the directness of the stranger's gaze I once wrote that its precariousness and defencelessness represent both the temptation to kill and a cry for peace, a "Thou shalt not kill". That face is already an accusation; there is suspicion in it, but also a mute appeal. A human right is there, in the frankness of that exposure, invocation and command, a right more ancient than any bestowal of honours or any question of merit. In my closeness to my fellow beings, and the promise of peace it brings, lies my responsibility for someone else, the impossibility of leaving that person to face the mystery of death alone. In practical terms, this entails a willingness to die for him. Living in peace with others can demand that much. That is the momentous implication of loving one's neighbour with a selfless love.

The peace attained by loving one's neighbour is not that of pure rest, which strengthens us in our selfhood. Rather it represents a continual challenge to selfhood, its limitless freedom and its power. ❐

***Self-portrait* (c. 1655), oil on wood, by Rembrandt**

EMMANUEL LÉVINAS, of France, is a distinguished modern philosopher, whose work, which combines elements of German phenomenology and the Jewish tradition, has had an important influence on contemporary thought. He is the author of more than twenty books, including *Ethique et infini* (1982), *Humanisme de l'autre homme* (1975) and *Entre-nous—Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (1991). Among his works published in English is *Totality and Infinity* (1980).

NEWSBRIEFS

BICYCLES AROUND THE WORLD

Montreal will host the first world conference on bicycling from 13 to 17 September this year. At the Conférence Vélo Mondiale, which is supported by UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme, 700 participants from 30 countries, among them planners, decision-makers and ordinary cyclists, will spend 80 hours discussing the current situation of cycling around the world. The bicycle is the world's most popular personal vehicle, with more than 800 million machines in use. Non-polluting, economical and faster than cars, buses or even the underground in urban conditions, it might have been designed with cities in mind, though unfortunately cities are rarely designed for it. At the conference, the problems of integrating bicycles into the world's urban transport systems will be considered in workshops, discussion groups and round-tables. Given the stress, pollution and difficulties of life in cities today, the organizers may be steering in the right direction.

IN THE STEPS OF GENGHIS KHAN

This July and August, UNESCO's fourth scientific expedition along the Silk Roads of Asia will cross one of the remotest parts of Mongolia. Some 60 experts from Mongolia and elsewhere, including linguists, ethnographers, anthropologists, archaeologists and ethno-musicologists, will cover 4,000 kilometres of dirt road by car or bus or on horse or camel-back, and will spend eight or nine nights in yurts, the traditional round felt tents of the nomads of central Asia.

The expedition will set out from Khobdo, in the heart of the Altai mountain range in western Mongolia, and will travel eastwards along the former trade route which once linked the West to the Korean peninsula and Japan. After crossing the Gobi Desert and visiting the former capital, Khara-Khorin, it will come to an end at Ulan Bator, where a seminar on "The nomads of Central Asia and the Silk Roads" will be held from 3 to 5 August.

The Altai range, which is the starting-point for the expedition, is the heartland of the Mongolian people and of the Altaic family of languages, of which there are more than forty, including Turkish, Mongol and Manchu-Tungus, spoken altogether by over 90 million people. The region has a traditional music of great purity, played on instruments of a kind found nowhere else in the world.

FIRST NORTH-SOUTH CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN GENOME

The developing countries must be involved in the Human Genome Project in order to provide the majority of mankind with a chance to share in its benefits. To help to achieve this goal, the first North-South Human Genome Conference was held at Caxambu (Brazil) from 12 to 15 May this year. Some 300 specialists from all over the world attended the Conference, which was organized by UNESCO and the Brazilian Biochemical Society. The Project, one of the most ambitious in the annals of international scientific co-operation, aims to identify all the DNA components of human genes, and is likely to have far-reaching effects, particularly in the treatment of genetic diseases. So far, all the work has been done in industrialized countries because of the expense and complex technology involved. UNESCO plans to organize similar conferences in Asia and Africa.

SHIP WANTED

Does anybody have a spare research vessel ready to set sail for Antarctica? Oceanographers and climatologists the world over would be grateful for the assistance which such a vessel could provide for measuring the Antarctic Circumpolar Current.

The lack of measurements for the heat transfer patterns of this current linking the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans represents one of the remaining gaps in the research programme for the World Ocean Circulation Experiment (WOCE), the largest scientific study ever undertaken on the ocean and its influence on climate. The study is being carried out in connection with the World Climate Research Programme, which was launched in 1979 by the World Meteorological Organization and the International Council of Scientific Unions. More than 40 countries are taking part in the work by providing research vessels, drifting buoys, satellites and other data-collection aids. Merchant vessels are also co-operating in the measurement operations. Unfortunately, scientific data have not yet been gathered from some of the ocean areas well off regular shipping lanes.

WOCE will be of benefit to a large number of maritime activities, such as navigation, fisheries and offshore oil prospection and drilling. It will also make it possible to obtain a more accurate picture of the impact which human activities have on the climate and the greenhouse effect caused by the accumulation of gases in the atmosphere. Its findings will be used to set up the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), the studies for which are being co-ordinated by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

UNESCO REVIVES DISAPPEARING CRAFTS

To prevent production-line techniques from eliminating traditional craftsmanship, UNESCO is preparing a project to improve the image of craft professions in the eyes of pupils, teachers and parents. In six countries in Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Arab states, Africa and Asia, classes of children aged between 10 and 12 will be taught one of several crafts such as glass-working, basket-making, lace-making or ceramics, chosen for their cultural and historical interest and their universal value. For four months the children will take part in weekly sessions of practical work and visit craft centres. They will keep a notebook in which to describe the history, techniques and aesthetics of the craft they are studying, and discuss its place in modern life. The notebooks, illustrated with drawings and photographs and possibly supplemented by short videos, will be exchanged among the participating countries, and then with UNESCO's assistance made available around the world. ❐

Commentary *by Federico Mayor*

This article is one of a series in which the Director-General of UNESCO sets out his thinking on matters of current concern.

AFTER RIO

A global partnership

'COURAGE is when you have choices," declared the American journalist Terry Anderson emerging from four years of terrible captivity. We have a choice. But do we have the courage? This was the great underlying question at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development that took place at Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) from 3 to 14 June. Are we capable or not of establishing new priorities, of making arms reductions in favour of human development and aid to the most deprived countries, of pursuing—in the face of all obstacles and set patterns—the path from a civilization of war to a civilization of peace?

Five hundred years after the first encounter between Two Worlds, we are finally discovering that the world and humanity are one. We are realizing that the precious resources of this Earth do not exist to be appropriated and exploited without regard to the balance of nature or the interests of others. Everywhere the understanding is dawning that our common future depends on the establishment of a new worldwide approach to development, on a new relationship with the environment and our fellow human beings. Our task is to translate this growing awareness into a solemn compact of nations and into a personal commitment by all the inhabitants of the planet. No one can remain a mere spectator; we must all become actors. Our task is no longer to record history, but to write it. For it is through our actual behaviour that history is written, notably that of a more equitable future for humanity.

A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We must lay the foundations for a culture of sustainable development rooted in a new ecological economics and for a global partnership dedicated to ensuring the well-being of all the world's inhabitants and safeguarding the future habitability of our planet. Our generation bears a unique ethical responsibility since its choices will determine the fate of all future generations. As the main contractors of the environmental debt, the industrialized countries should be the chief contributors to making good the damage to the environment and should take measures to help the less well-endowed countries achieve sustainable human development. In the face of potentially irreversible damage to global life-support systems, we must act now in order not to compromise the rights of generations to come. This is the challenge that confronts us.

Such a challenge calls for an alliance between governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations of all kinds, scientific and professional communities and individual citizens. The United Nations will have a vital role to play as co-ordinator and co-implementer of the measures adopted at Rio. Within the overall United Nations effort, UNESCO has a broad and substantial contribution to make as the specialized agency responsible for education, science, culture and communication.

Education at all levels, formal and non-formal, will be essential in moving, through increased knowledge and improved capacity-building, towards sustainable development. Reducing population growth, improving urban and rural living conditions and increasing economic growth all depend on access to knowledge and on the transfer and sharing of knowledge. Educational, informational and awareness-building activities—particularly at the grassroots level—will encompass such areas as environment and development, global issues, women's role in development, family planning and child care.

Science, of course, will be of the essence. It is more vital than ever that political leaders have access to hard scientific data for decision-making and that scientists and politicians should work closely together. The measures adopted at Rio will have to go hand in hand with continuous scientific assessment of problems, likely future developments and possible solutions. Systematic long-term monitoring of the state of the environment and the state of human development will be essential. UNESCO, with its constitutional responsibility for mobilizing the scientific community and for providing scientific and technical assistance to governments, has a major role to play here.

Culture must not be neglected in this programme. Sustainable development means human development—one expressive of the rich diversity of cultures and individuals. The activities of the World Decade for Cultural Development and the independent World Commission on Culture and Development will have an important contribution to make to the implementation of the conclusions of the Rio Conference.

The complex, interrelated problems of environment and development call for solutions based on interdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches. UNESCO's wide mandate makes it particularly well placed to test and promote integrated approaches in this sphere. It is likewise called upon to lend its voice to those that have no voice: the most deprived, the most ignorant, the most isolated and—above all—the unborn.

A MORAL CONTRACT

The Conference could not resolve the problems confronting us at one stroke. It has, however, marked the start of a "global change" in attitudes to environment and development and to the related issues of poverty, illiteracy, disease and overpopulation. It has fashioned a moral contract strong enough to prevail against powerful economic interests of many kinds, so as to enable present generations to repair the harm that has been done and to ensure that future generations enjoy the right of all human beings to be born "free and equal". From now on we shall all be accountable for our action or our failure to act; and this accountability will rest on a new system of accountancy, transcending economism.

Will we have the courage to open up a new path for the future of the human species? Will we have the wisdom to agree to pay the price of peace as we have been willing—at what cost!—to pay the price of war? Yes, if the most developed countries set about curbing their consumption, particularly of the superfluous kind. Yes, if sharing takes place—particularly the sharing of knowledge. Yes, if the developing countries fix their national priorities according to their own criteria but in keeping with the principles of human development. Yes, above all, if it is understood on all sides that external aid can do no more than initiate a process and that all of us, rich and poor, will only become what we ourselves have been capable of creating. ❐

UNESCO IN ACTION
WORLD HERITAGE

A DREAM CITY BUILT ON SALT

BY ROY MALKIN

Right, an engraving from Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's book *L'Architecture* (1804) showing an overall view of Chaux, the ideal city Ledoux dreamed of building around the nucleus of the royal saltworks at Arc-et-Senans.
Above, the saltworks as they are today.

DEEP in rural France, on a wide plain beneath the foothills of a mountain range, stands a group of massive stone buildings arranged in a semi-circle and surrounded by a high wall. They have vast tiled roofs, neo-classical pillars, porticoes and pediments which dwarf the modern village houses around their precinct. There is something strange and otherworldly about them, perhaps because of their lack of context. Who built them? What for? And why here in the midst of fields? When one learns that they harbour a centre for reflection on the future, the mystery deepens, before being resolved when one discovers that they are actually a piece of futurology themselves: an eighteenth-century French architect's vision, partly realized in the twilight of the *ancien régime*, of how a modern industrial society should look and be organized.

The buildings in question are those of the Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans, a village not far from Besançon in the region of Franche-Comté. They have a theatrical setting between the forest of Chaux to the west and, to the east, the ramparts of the Jura massif, which make a spectacular backcloth as they rise in a series of plateaux towards the Swiss border.

Salt is a universal necessity, and in the days before refrigeration it was even more necessary, to preserve perishable food, than it is today. "Man can live without gold but not without salt," wrote Julius Caesar, and in ancient times this precious commodity was actually known as "white gold". During the *ancien régime* in France salt was particularly indispensable as a source of revenue to the crown, which held a monopoly on its distribution. A tax known as the *gabelle* was levied on salt and collected by intermediaries, the Farmers-General, who each year paid a lump sum to the king for the privilege. The *gabelle* was a highly unpopular tax, and salt became in the popular mind a hateful symbol of royal absolutism.

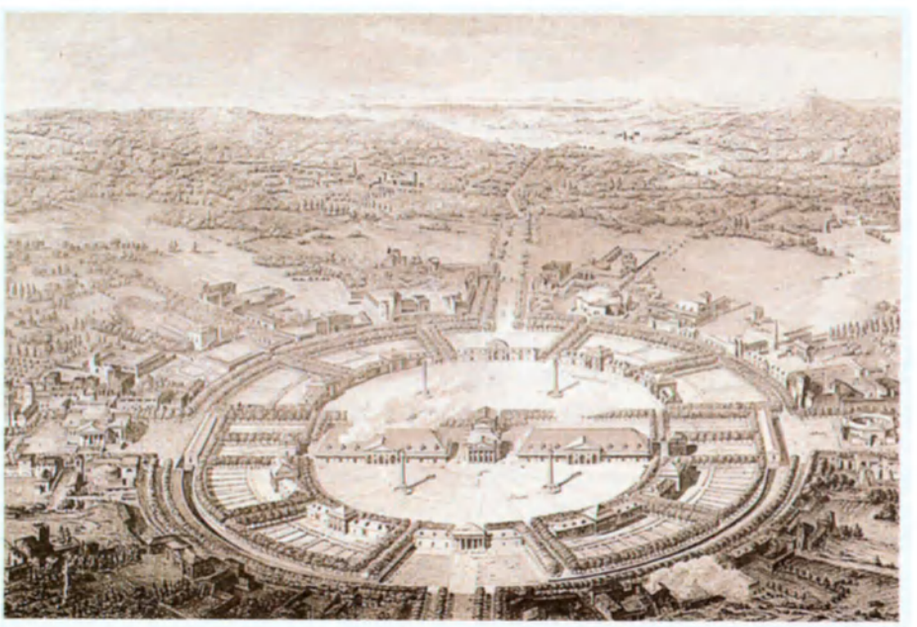
Salt has been produced in the Jura ever since the Iron Age. The town of Salins, some twenty kilometres away from Arc-et-Senans in a valley of the Jura foothills, had become rich and powerful in medieval times because of the brine that lay deep beneath its streets. For many centuries Salins brine was evaporated into salt in vast cauldrons heated by firewood from the surrounding hills (the word Jura is a synonym for a wood or forest). By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the saltworks of Salins were in crisis. With the passing of the ages the brine had become increasingly diluted, so that more and more fuel—already scarce—was needed to supply the furnaces. In 1771 it was decided that a new royal saltworks was needed in the region. To design and build it Louis XV called on a thirty-eight-year-old architect and decorative designer, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux.

Ledoux had won a reputation as a designer of houses for members of fashionable society, a profession he would follow until the Revolution. He had written the article on Architecture for the Encyclopaedia of Diderot and D'Alembert. He built the Pavillon de Louveciennes for Madame du Barry, the king's favourite, and it was at her instigation that in 1771 he was appointed by the king *Inspecteur Général des Salines de Franche Comté*. Now he had a commission that any ambitious architect might dream of: building an entire new industrial facility from nothing.

Ledoux familiarized himself with the terrain of Franche-Comté, and by 1773 he had found what seemed to be an ideal location: a clearing in the middle of the royal forest of Chaux between the two small villages (today united into one) of Arc and Senans. The forest offered a seemingly inexhaustible supply of wood. Brine would be brought from Salins at the rate of 135,000 litres a day by means of a twenty-kilometre-long underground pipeline which would be made from hollowed-out tree trunks and be guarded by the military. Some idea of the size of the operation can be gauged from the fact that 15,000 fir trees would be felled for the pipeline alone. Ledoux enthused over the site he had chosen: "lying between two rivers, near a forest 40,000 acres in extent, in the centre of the continent; linked to the Mediterranean by the Dole canal, and to the North Sea and the port of Antwerp by the Rhine."

The plans that were drawn by Ledoux and eventually accepted by the king made provision for the buildings disposed in a closed semi-circle that can still be seen today. At the centre of the main axis was a Director's Villa, flanked by other buildings in which the brine would be evaporated. In the interests of aesthetic uniformity the latter would not have chimneys: the smoke would be evacuated through dormer windows in the roof. In the curve of the semi-circle were the dwellings in which artisans—carpenters, smiths, coopers and so on—and their families would live, some 240 people in all. There would also be a prison, for the director of an eighteenth-century royal saltworks in France wielded absolute power; at Arc-et-Senans no workman could leave his dwelling or workplace without being seen from the Director's Villa. The semi-circular space enclosed by the buildings would be used for stocking the vast quantities of wood needed to evaporate some 100,000 tons of brine each year.

Building work began in 1775 and four



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The villa of the Director of the saltworks flanked by the salt-making workshops.

UNESCO IN ACTION
WORLD HERITAGE

years later salt was being produced at Arc-et-Senans. However, it soon became clear that output would not live up to expectations. It had been hoped to produce 60,000 quintals of salt annually, but production hardly reached 35,000-45,000. There were several reasons for this disappointing performance. The brine from Salins was less and less salty, and in any case much of it seeped out of the pipeline from leaks caused by fissuring of the wood and badly made joints. Ledoux had built an immense 500-metre-long wooden shed known as a *bâtiment de graduation*, in which the brine was supposed to evaporate naturally by exposure to wind and Sun, thus becoming more concentrated and requiring less fuelwood in the final cooking process. The Jura climate proved inimical to this system.

In 1806 the saltworks were sold to a private company which exploited them throughout the nineteenth century. The hollow trunks were replaced by steel piping and coal took the place of wood. But still the saltworks were barely viable, and production finally ceased in 1895. In the 1930s the buildings were bought by the local authorities, restored and later classified as a historic monument by the French Government. Since 1972 they have been the Headquarters of the Fondation Claude-Nicolas Ledoux as a "*Centre International de Réflexion sur le Futur*". In 1982 the monument was included on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Ledoux did not forget the Royal Saltworks. In fact they seem to have obsessed him until the end of his life. During the Revolution, when he was imprisoned for a time and narrowly escaped the guillotine, he dreamed of an Ideal City and drew plans for it. The nucleus of the city, which he named Chaux, was the saltworks he had built in Franche-Comté years before.

Using the cubes, cylinders, pyramids, spheres and other geometric shapes for which he had a predilection, he set out to develop a style of architecture to meet the needs of a new classless society. The principles and ideas on which the city of Chaux would be based he set forth in a remarkable book, *L'architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des mœurs, et de la législation*, which he wrote during the Revolution. "People!" he wrote in the preface, "Unity so worthy of respect for the importance of each individual of which you are composed, you shall not be forgotten in the constructions of art; at appropriate distances from the cities, monuments rivalling those of the palaces of the governors of the globe will rise in your name."

Ledoux wished each building in Chaux to be "an edifice marked by the function accorded to it." The houses of craftsmen would symbolize in their architecture the trades of those who would live in them. The cooper's house would have a hoop-like shape; that of the woodcutter would resemble a pile of logs. In Ledoux's drawings, the gunsmith's house looks like a group of smoking pyramids. This would be what Ledoux called "*une architecture parlante*" whose overall effect would be that of "a kind of visual encyclopaedia of the members of society and of their respective duties." Some buildings and their designs would also be identified with moral values and contribute to the education of the people who would belong to the new society. There would be a Temple of Reconciliation, an Asylum of Happiness, a Temple of Memory.

None of Ledoux's Utopian plans for an Ideal City ever came to fruition. Long forgotten, they have fascinated many modern architects and city planners. Perhaps for want of a better label, the style of the nucleus of buildings the visitor to Arc-et-Senans can still see today has been described as "Revolutionary Architecture"—although of course it was built in the reign of Louis XVI.

And so these stone buildings, today marooned incongruously in the middle of a plain in Franche Comté, are both a beginning and an end, a memorial to a lost cause, a signpost along a road that industrial society might have taken but did not. ❐

ANNIVERSARY

1881-1942

Stefan Zweig

by Gertraud Steiner

He was a man of letters, a cosmopolitan European in that period between the World Wars when the old world had been shaken but not destroyed by the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. It was Hitler who finally delivered the death-blow. In his London exile, in 1940-41, Stefan Zweig erected a lasting monument to that period and to turn-of-the-century Vienna in his memoir *Die Welt von Gestern (The World of Yesterday)*. He was himself an embodiment of the bygone age that he so matchlessly described.

Zweig, the son of a Jewish-Bohemian textile manufacturer, was born in Vienna but wrote most of his numerous biographies, novellas and essays at his Salzburg villa. He was attracted to Salzburg in part by its baroque setting, but even more by its ideal location as a jumping-off place for his extensive European travels. Here, in his "little palace", he lived the story-book life of an internationally famous author, receiving visits from other leading European writers such as Thomas Mann, Arthur Schnitzler, H.G. Wells and James Joyce. Unlike most of his fellow authors, he did not have to live by his pen. Yet his writing made him a wealthy man. By the 1920s and 1930s his works had been translated into almost forty languages.

A pacifist, Zweig was one of the most prolific letter-writers of his age and spun across Europe a web of correspondence that included such figures as Romain Rolland, Maxim Gorky and Rainer Maria Rilke. "I felt I was living completely as a European," he wrote. "Borders were insignificant lines." Looking back on his life, he admitted, "I studied philosophy. But my real studies began only when I started travelling extensively throughout Europe, America and India. My inner education began through friendships with some of the leading personalities of my generation—Verhaeren, Romain Rolland, Freud and Rilke." His underlying pacifism was based not least on this transcending of international boundaries.

His rich and abundant output, which includes biographies of Marie Antoinette, Mary Stuart, Fouché, Erasmus and Magellan, offers a *tour d'horizon* of European culture. His most famous work is *Sternstunden der Menschheit (The Tide of Fortune)*. In it he discussed certain "momentous occasions when a decision with lasting consequences can be pinpointed to a single date, a single hour." His profound knowledge of the human soul and his ability to recognize and portray the subtlest emotional nuances—clearly illustrated in his *Schachnovelle (The Royal Game)*—led him to be among the first to honour the founder of psychoanalysis. In his essay "Sigmund Freud" he exposed the nineteenth century as an epoch of prudery.

A refugee from fascism, Zweig moved to London in the 1930s and took British citizenship in 1940. In 1942 he moved to Brazil. In exile he found new companionship with his secretary, Lotte Altmann, who became his second wife. Believing that his world was lost forever and that Europe would be plunged into eternal barbarism, he was seized by despair. In a crisis of depression and resignation, he committed suicide together with his wife in Petropolis, a suburb of Rio de Janeiro. He was sixty-one. In a farewell letter he wrote: "Greetings to all my friends. May they live to see the red sky of morning, dawning after a long night. I am too impatient and go before them." ❐

Gertraud Steiner, Austrian journalist, is responsible for cultural information in her country's Federal Chancellery. She has published many articles and two books: *Die Heimat-macher* (1987), a history of Austrian cinema, and a study on the history of the Marshall Plan in Austria, *25 Jahre ERP-Fonds* (1987).

Ziryab, master of Andalusian music

by Mahmoud Guettat

"There never was a man of his profession, either before or since, who was so unanimously loved and admired. Even in the twilight years of the kingdom of Granada, which fell in 1492, poets were still finding in his glory a subject for their songs."

THE man the historian al-Maqqari so described in the *Nafh al-tib* ("The Perfumed Breath"), a celebrated literary-historical compilation on the subject of Muslim Spain, was Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nafi', known as Ziryab ("blackbird") because of his dark skin, sweet tones, fluent speech and pleasant character. Although we have no record of the dates of either his birth or death, the circumstances of his biography, and in particular his passage from the Orient to the Islamic West, suggest that he was born about 787 and died in approximately 857.

Apprenticeship in Baghdad

Ziryab was a fervent disciple of the celebrated Ishaq al-Mawsili (767-850), the uncontested master of the 'Udist' school of music in Baghdad. He learned all he could from the master without drawing attention to himself, until the day came when Ishaq, perceiving his talent, introduced him at the court of Harun al-Rashid (786-809). The young singer made a great impression, showing off an *'ud* he had designed himself. "Like many others I know how to sing," he told the caliph, "but I also understand things that other people don't. My art can only be appreciated by a connoisseur such as yourself. If you will permit me, I shall sing you something that no-one has ever heard before." Then he disdainfully pushed aside his master's lute, claiming that his own was about a third lighter, even though it was made of the same wood and was the same size as a normal instrument. "The first two strings are made of silk spun in cold water," he explained. "They are stretched tight, are supple without being slack, and are stronger than normal strings made from silk dampened in hot water before it is spun. The third and fourth strings are made from the gut of a lion's cub, which makes them melodious and gives them a clear, dense sonority. They are harder-wearing and resist changes in temperature better than strings made from the intestines of other animals."

Then, with the caliph's permission, Ziryab sang, to the accompaniment of his special *'ud*, an ode he had written glorifying the Prince of the Faithful, who was duly charmed, convinced that such a talent could not fail to enhance the splendour of his court. Ishaq, who had not suspected that the haughty and insolent young musician harboured such virtuosity, was less pleased. "You have tricked me with your filthy dissembling," he shouted when they were alone together again. "You were only out to do me down in the eyes of the caliph! Now you must choose: either you disappear, first

Moor and Christian sing together to their lutes. Illustration from *Las Cantigas de Santa Maria*, a book of poems written by Alfonso X, the Wise, king of Castile and León (13th century).

swearing that I shall never hear of you again, in which case I shall give you the money you need to go away; otherwise I won't answer either for your possessions or your life."

From Kairouan to Cordoba

Realizing that the odds against him were too great, Ziryab decided to go into exile and travelled first to Africa, where he entered the service of the emir of Kairouan, Ziyadat Allah I (816-837), the most illustrious ruler of the Aghlabid dynasty, where he found himself in the company of several other renowned musicians. His reputation soon grew, and his name was given to a bustling district of the capital—Al-hay-al-Ziryab—renowned for its artistic activity. The stay in Kairouan, often underestimated in accounts of Ziryab's life, brought him wealth and honour, until the day, sometime around the year 821, when he was condemned to be whipped and banished, after offending the ruler with one of his songs.

Mansur al-Mughanni, an envoy of the Umayyad emir al-Hakam I (796-822), witnessed the incident and invited Ziryab to Córdoba. So the musician set off westward again, crossing the Mediterranean and disembarking at al-Jazira (Algeciras), only to learn the unwelcome news that al-Hakam I had died. He was preparing to set off on his travels again when word reached him that the dead ruler's successor, 'Abd al-Rahman II (822-852), was as fond of music as his father had been. The new emir received Ziryab with the respect his great reputation merited, and treated him with the greatest consideration. Even before he had been given a chance to demonstrate his talents, Ziryab was granted a pension of 5,640 dinars, 300 measures of cereals and an estate valued at 40,000 dinars. Ziryab wasted no time in showing the sovereign that his largesse had not been distributed in vain. His incontestable musical abilities, along with his fine manners, elegance and artistic tastes, soon established him as one of the emir's three favourites, along with sultan Tarub and the poet Yahya al-Ghazal.

The emir's generosity towards Ziryab attracted a great deal of attention in the Muslim world, and a celebrated musician of the Abbasid caliph of Baghdad, al-Mahdi, complained to his master that he would end up dying of hunger "while Ziryab, at the court of the Umayyads of al-Andalus, had 30,000 dinars and a thousand slaves or more". It was even rumoured that when the treasury of al-Andalus jibbed at paying the considerable sums allotted to Ziryab, "the sultan made them up from his own privy purse", thereby confirming his personal intimacy with the singer.

Arbiter of taste and fashion

Ziryab, whose reputation as a man of the world spread throughout Muslim Spain, quickly became the accepted arbiter of fashion, taste and manners. He was responsible for various innovations, which are described in detail by al-Maqqari. Under his influence, the people of al-Andalus altered their domestic habits, the furnishing of their homes and their cooking as well as their way of dressing. The people of Córdoba, who had been used to let their hair grow long and separate it with a parting, now took to wearing it in a crown around their heads, following the style set by Ziryab. They learned to dress seasonally, wearing light materials and bright colours in spring, loose white garments in summer, and cloaks and fur hats in winter. Girls wore saffron-coloured dresses and headscarfs with verses embroidered on them. Ziryab even invented a kind of deodorant (*al-martak*) to replace the powdered rose, basil and myrtle used until that time, which had the disadvantage of leaving stains on clothing—though he also found a way of removing these.

He invented new carpet designs, blankets that were softer than linen, and leather tablecloths that efficiently protected wooden surfaces and were also easy to wipe clean. He took an interest in the way banquets were organized and in table settings. He advocated the use of fine glassware in place of metal cups, and recommended that flowers be arranged in gold and silver vases. He radically changed culinary habits, introducing many new and delicate foodstuffs,

including asparagus (*al-isfiraj*) and the pastries known as *naqaya'*, made of almond and pistachio paste sprinkled with sugar and coriander-flavoured water. The delicious *zlabiya*, honeyed fritters that are popular in North Africa to this day, even owe their name to him: the word is a contraction of *ziryabiya*.

A peerless musician

First and foremost, however, Ziryab was a peerless musician who was universally appreciated and admired. He had a prodigious memory, and knew more than ten thousand songs (*aghani*) and their melodies (*alhan*) by heart; furthermore, he knew how to expound them as a teacher. As the founder of the Andalusian musical tradition, he carried on the work of the great classical composers while also being an innovator whose genius enabled him to combine the art of an Ishaq and the science of an al-Kindi (796-874).

In his teaching and through his pupils he introduced reforms that profoundly affected the art of his time. He continued to improve the *'ud*, adding a fifth string to the instrument and replacing the wooden plectrum with an eagle's quill to obtain a richer sound and a lighter touch.

As a singing instructor, he developed a rational and progressive teaching method. He worked step by step, always starting off by testing a new pupil's voice. The candidate was asked to sit up straight on a stool and either to shout at the top of his voice *Ya hajjam* ("Hey! Barber!") or else to sustain a prolonged "aah" up and down the musical scale. This test enabled him to judge the power of the voice, to confirm that there was nothing nasal about the tone and that the singer had no breathing problems. If the voice was perfect, he started teaching without further ado. If it was not, he would order the pupil to wrap a turban around his stomach to compress the middle of his body and facilitate correct voice projection. He advised pupils who had difficulty opening their mouths to the fullest extent to clench a piece of wood three fingers wide between their jaws for several nights running.

The lessons he gave ranged from the very simple to the extremely complex. Poems were recited to a tambourine accompaniment, in an attempt to encourage appreciation of different rhythms and especially the place of accents. Pupils were introduced to the rudiments of melody, before moving on to the study of ornamentation, nuance and the possibilities for improvisation that constitute the charm of a work and the skill of an interpretation.

Another of Ziryab's innovations was the development of the *nawba*, the performance of a suite of pieces composed in one mode. "It is customary in Andalusia," al-Maqqari wrote, "to start with a *nashid* (recitative), then to continue with a *basit* (full-throated song) and finish with *muharrakat* and *ahzaj* (light, lively numbers), following the rules laid down by Ziryab." One characteristic of these songs is the primacy of musical rhythm over poetic metre, giving birth to new styles: an elaborate form of the type of poem called the *muwashshah* and of its popular version, the lyrical *zajal*, subdivided into stanzas (*aqfal*) that are themselves composed of a variable number of short lines (*aghsan*). Ziryab was thus the architect of a veritable musical revolution that shattered the rigid framework of the old *qasida* poetry and opened the way for new metrical combinations.

From Spanish lyrics to the troubadours' songs

The musical tradition of the Islamic Orient accorded to music mysterious properties that were both magical and mystical, as well as expressive and therapeutic powers linked to its powerful effects on the human psyche. Under Ziryab's influence, these conceptions, which in the East were enmeshed in fruitless speculation, acquired new vigour in the Muslim West and came to constitute the very foundation of the musical edifice. Twenty-four imaginary *nawba* formed a symbolic "tree of temperaments" (*shajarat al-tubu*), each in its own *tab'* (mode). In addition, close links were forged between music's magical-religious origins and cosmology, medicine, mathematics and ethics. The strings of the *'ud* were associated with cosmic influences and the elements of human physiology. In the direct line of mystical aspiration of the traditional Arab school, the fifth string added by Ziryab to the instrument's sonorous and living body was described as "red, like blood" and because of its central position was considered to symbolize life and the soul.

The music Ziryab bequeathed to Andalusia profoundly influenced the music of medieval Europe, both in theory—for most of the Arab musical treatises, of which some 250 were produced between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, were studied if not plagiarized in the great monasteries—and in practice, in the evolution of plainsong and early Roman chant. It shaped important aspects of the Spanish lyrical tradition, as well as of the poetic and musical repertoire of the Provençal troubadours. Under the influence of Ziryab, several Arab instruments, including the *'ud* and the *rabab*, came to be widely used under their Arab names. Ziryab's music had no need of a translator to be understood, and it contributed more than literature or philosophy to the extraordinary influence of Andalusian civilization. ❐

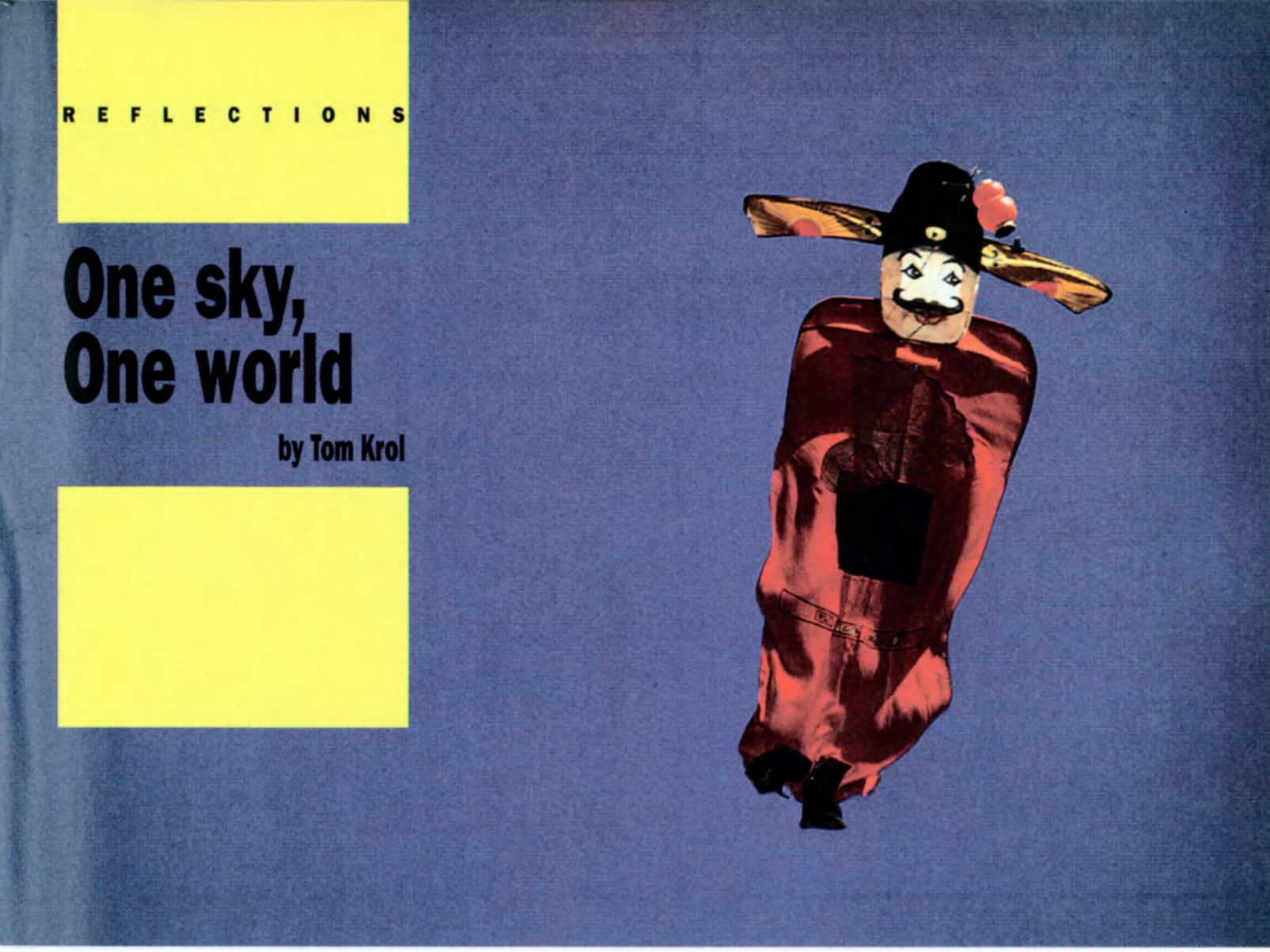
This craftsman of Fez, Morocco, descends from a long line of famous lutemakers from Andalusia.

1 The traditional school of Arab music, so called because of the importance attached to its principal instrument, the *'ud*, or short-necked lute.

Mahmoud Guettat, Tunisian musician and musicologist, founded the Institut Supérieur de Musique in Tunis and introduced musicology to the syllabus of the Tunisian university system. He has published many books and articles in Arabic and in French, including *La musique classique du Maghreb* (1980) and *La tradition musicale arabe* (1986).

One sky, One world

by Tom Krol



Above, a Chinese kite. The hobby of kite flying, which probably originated in China, spread rapidly throughout the world.

A flash of colour rises swiftly into the wind, dances softly, then comes to rest as a meditation against a bright blue sky. A tradition more than 2,000 years old, the serene act of kite flying continues to lift our spirits beyond the insistent gravity of earth.

A universal symbol in art, literature and folklore, the kite is an efficient and peaceful aircraft. The earliest historic references date to the fourth century BC, when Kungshu Phan, a Chinese engineer, reportedly sent aloft a "wooden bird". Accounts of kites are also found in the annals of ancient Egypt and Greece.

From Benjamin Franklin's experiments with electricity to the Wright Brothers' first flight, kites have played key roles in scientific discovery and the study of weather. But even for scientists, kite flying can represent a way to relax and have fun. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, designed a massive six-sided kite that could carry a person into the air.

In the modern world, the venerable kite is experiencing a renaissance that may carry with it a new role as a symbol of global co-operation. The historic 1985 summit meeting of Presidents Ronald Reagan of the United States and Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR marked a significant step towards peace between the super-powers. The spirit of that meeting inspired American kite designer Jane Parker-Ambrose to create a kite commemorating this new promise of global harmony. The flags of the US and the USSR are joined on the face of the kite. Halley's comet, which revisited the Earth in 1986 for the first time in seventy-six years, is shown as a portent of peace.

On a "people to people" visit to Moscow in that year, Jane presented her kite, along with a letter of friendship signed by some 300 kite flyers from the US, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom, to the Soviet Women's Peace Committee. This gesture of international goodwill gave birth to the idea for *One Sky, One World*, an annual global kite-fly held each year on the second Sunday in October. A non-profit organization based

in Denver, Colorado, its mission is to focus the entire planet's attention on the need to maintain peace and protect the environment.

'Painting the sky' for peace

The first *One Sky, One World* kite-fly took place in 1986, with more than 10,000 kites and 40,000 participants at ninety locations in fourteen countries. In just six years, the event has grown to include more than 250,000 people in twenty-four countries. In October 1991, *One Sky, One World* events were held in Moscow, Washington DC, Bombay, Berlin, Sydney, Beijing and many other major cities. Kite-flyers from Japan, France, Colombia, Guam, Chile, England, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, Hawaii, Alaska and many other US locations joined in.

Jane Parker-Ambrose has travelled around the world to promote her message. In April 1991, Jane and a *One Sky, One World* delegation visited the Weifang kite festival in China, an annual event that draws up to 30,000 people, and then went to Beijing's Tienanmen Square, where they flew kites along with Chinese citizens.

The custom of "painting the sky" is common to people around the globe. Like their kites, flyers come in all shapes, sizes and colours. The kites themselves display an incredible diversity of design, flying methods, colours and sizes. There are tiny "bird" kites a few inches long, and "stunters" with as many as 250 kites in train. They appear as airborne dragons, centipedes, hawks, bats and geometric shapes. Some are rooted in centuries-old tradition, while many incorporate high-tech design and materials such as nylon, mylar, fibreglass and carbon fibre. Kites have inspired colourful, spinning wind socks and giant streamers in the shapes of fish, cows, pigs and even chile peppers.

Most likely originating in China, the kite spread quickly throughout Asia, becoming a sacred ceremonial object in some cultures. Marco Polo wrote of man-carrying kites that bore a passenger whose spirits were often lifted beforehand by alcohol. A successful flight indicated a prosperous outcome for a proposed sea voyage.

Japanese legend tells of an exiled samurai who built a kite to carry his son Minamoto-to-Tametomo from the island of Hachijo to the Japanese mainland. Today, the kites of Hachijo traditionally carry the likeness of Tametomo. Many Japanese have become so involved in kiting that they have been labelled "*tako kishi*" or kite crazy.

In Guatemala, elaborate and colourful patchwork kites are flown at cemeteries each year to mark the "day of the dead". At day's end, the Guatemalans burn their kites to ashes in honour of their ancestors.

The highly manoeuvrable "fighter" kite, developed in India, is now popular world-

Right, kites and banners by the American artist George Peters are displayed at the *One Sky, One World* meeting in Denver, Colorado, on 13 October 1991.
Below, a giant kite in Guatemala.

Tom Krol, of the United States, is a media consultant and video producer with wide experience in broadcast journalism. He prepared the present article in collaboration with Larry Ambrose.

A *One Sky, One World* meeting held at Foligno, Italy, in October 1989.

wide. In the "civilized" pursuit of kite fighting, the object is to sever the line or force down an opponent's kite.

The Malay kite, used in Malaysia, Indonesia and Java for centuries, was adapted in the 1890s by the American photographer William Eddy, who used it to carry his cameras into the sky.

Kite technology began to accelerate in the nineteenth century. In the 1870s, the German engineer Otto Lilienthal studied the shape of birds' wings in order to create a manned glider. A few years later, the Australian Lawrence Hargrave designed the highly efficient three-dimensional box kite, which soon led to the bi-wing aircraft of the Wright brothers.

Francis Rogallo, an American aerospace engineer, invented the first truly modern kite, the delta-wing, in 1948. The delta is the precursor of the hang-glider as well as the most popular kite in use today, the stunt kite. With two kite lines, and sometimes as many as four, "stunters" are capable of precise aerobatics. "Stacked" one behind the other, they create a spectacular stream of colour and speed.

Kiting's latest development is the parafoil, invented by the late Domina C. Jalbert. A wing-shaped aerofoil, it is now used widely to make steerable parachutes that allow for remarkable pin-point landings.

Kiting can be both simple and complex, meditative or competitive. Spectators at competitive events witness graceful and elaborate air shows featuring synchronized movements, aerobatics and music.

Attracted by the mixture of technology and tradition, more and more people are attending kite events and joining kite clubs. New clubs and speciality stores are springing up. Annual kite sales world-wide have boomed to more than $216,000,000.

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One Sky, One World

takes place each year on the second Sunday in October.

For information about how to take part, write to:

One Sky, One World,

Box 11149, Denver,

CO 80211, USA.

RECENT RECORDS

JAZZ

Toots Thielemans with the Shirley Horn Trio. *For My Lady*
Thielemans (harmonica, guitar, whistle), Horn (piano, vocals), Charles Ables (bass), Steve Williams (drums).
CD Emarcy 510 133-2 Gitanes Jazz

This is the second record that Thielemans—the Belgian master of the jazz harmonica—has made with Shirley Horn, having accompanied her on her last disc. This time Horn repays the compliment, limiting herself to the unaccustomed role of background pianist except on "Someone to Watch Over Me", the only vocal track, in which her velvety voice blends perfectly with Thielemans' plaintive instrumental. Thielemans whistles to good effect on "I'm Beginning to See the Light", in which he also overdubs himself on guitar. Horn, who has long shown a feeling for Brazilian rhythms, solos economically and inventively on "Corcovado". On drums, Steve Williams is effective and precise, picking up all the nuances of the music and the changes of rhythm. This beautiful, sometimes poignant music loses something in the transfer from the concert hall to compact disc.

Donald "Duck" Harrison. *Full Circle*
Harrison (alto sax, vocals), Cyrus Chestnut (piano), Carl Allen (drums), Dwayne Burno (bass), Mark Whitfield (guitar).
CD Sweet Basil ALCR-64

Originally from New Orleans, Harrison was discovered a few years ago by Roy Haynes during a New York jam session, and after a spell in Haynes's band worked with Art Blakey. In *Full Circle* he turns his hand to a mixed bunch of original compositions and standards in a warm, classical style, with a Coltrane-like version of "Nature Boy" standing out. The musicians accompanying him are young, reliable and enthusiastic, though they have yet to find their own sounds. This is a good record that brings the mainstream tradition up to date.

Bill Evans Live at Blue Note Tokyo 2. *The Gambler*
Evans (tenor and soprano sax), Victor Bailey (bass), Mitchel Forman (keyboards and piano), Richie Morales (drums).
CD Bellaphon 660.53-025

The Gambler offers pleasant fusion jazz in the spirit of Weather Report or the Brecker Brothers, complete with echoplex effects and synthesizers. Evans—not to be confused with the pianist of the same name, who died some years ago—is technically a master of his instrument. Forman, who has worked with various groups including Latin combos, shows his capabilities as a soloist on his own composition, "Gorgeous", in a style close to Keith Jarrett. There are no big surprises here, just music to relax to at home, preferably late at night.

BLUES

Bessie Smith. *The Complete Recordings Vol. 2*
2 CDs Columbia 468767 2

This splendid re-issue of tracks by the Empress of the Blues features material remastered from the original 78 r.p.m. recordings and cleaned of all background noise. If the first blues singers to be recorded were men from Mississippi, Texas and Alabama such as Blind Lemon Jefferson and Leadbelly, Bessie Smith was one of the earliest female stars, opening the way for Mamie Smith and later Alberta Hunter and Billie Holliday. Bessie, who toured with her musicians in her own railway carriage to escape racial discrimination, has lost none of her majesty, her powerful voice providing a kind of female counterpart to Louis Armstrong. These two compact discs cover the greater part of her career. Fletcher Henderson plays on such tracks as "Work House Blues" and "House Rent Blues", while the young Coleman Hawkins can be heard on "Cake Walkin' Babies" and "The Yellow Dog Blues".

POPULAR MUSIC

Louise Feron
CD Virgin 30839

Feron, a pretty young rock singer who hails from Le Havre in France, sings about love in all its forms in a very French voice, less aggressive in its tones than those of English and American girl rockers. The poetically-inclined texts contrast with the tight accompaniment typical of rock.

Saliha. *Unique*
CD Virgin 30847

Saliha, who was born at Bagneux in the Paris suburbs, is one of the rare French solo rap artists. Unlike most of her European counterparts, whose mechanically predictable phrasing can be soporific, she has an interesting sense of rhythm, even if she lacks the edge of American equivalents like Salt 'n' Peppa or Queen Latifah. She works in English

as well as French, a language whose less vigorous tones do not easily lend themselves to rap. Still, Saliha holds her own with the help of the "fiery temperament" referred to in the title of one of the tracks. As her opening song proclaims, she knows how to lay down "The Law"—her law, the law of rap.

Julian Lennon. *Help Yourself*
CD Virgin CDV 2668.

Julian Lennon's fourth album, *Help Yourself* is acid rock with an English accent, despite the fact that it was produced in Los Angeles. The lyrics are sophisticated and intellectual: in "Keep the People Working", he sings: "From the mines of Anatolia to the isle of Mandalay/Along the coast of sullen Africa, they're queuing up to pay". Julian still has his father's voice, and a "feeling" similar to the Beatles. Breeding will out.

■ **Isabelle Leymarie**

CLASSICAL

Anssi Karttunen
Karttunen (cello) plays Hindemith, Merikanto, Lindberg and Zimmermann with the London Sinfonietta conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen
CD Finlandia FACD 400.

Apart from the *Kammermusik no. 3*, which dates from 1925 and takes us back to a bygone musical context, the great Finnish cellist Anssi Karttunen here demonstrates his skills in works from the second half of the twentieth century. The *Konzertstuck* by Aarre Merikanto, Sibelius's unfortunate rival who died in 1958, is particularly impressive. Also featured is *Zona*, a work by the young Finnish composer Magnus Lindberg, born in the year of Merikanto's death. And there is Zimmermann's extraordinary *Canto di Speranza*, an astonishingly concentrated piece dating from 1957, when the influence of Webern was at its peak.

Clérambault. *Cantates*
Noémie Rime, Jean-Paul Fouchécourt, Nicolas Rivenq, and Les Arts Florissants, conducted by William Christie
CD Harmonia Mundi HMC 301329

Straddling the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the work of Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749), a contemporary of Rameau, prolonged the musical traditions of France's golden age while subtly steering them in the direction of baroque refinement. Clérambault was a famous organist, and the change is most perceptible in his cantatas, a form of which he was a master. *La Muse de l'Opéra* (1716) explores the complex relationship between the cantata and opera, whilst *Orphée*, performed at the *Concert Spirituel* in Paris in 1728, is quietly moving. Its vocal flourishes and the dialogue between voice and flute almost seem to prefigure Glück. Although it is now rarely performed, Clérambault's work is worth listening to, especially when it is rendered, as here, by artists familiar with his style.

Philidor. *Carmen Sæculare*
Ghylaine Raphanel, Sophie Fournier, Donald Litaker, Jean-François Gardeil, the Sagittarius vocal ensemble, La Grande Ecurie and the Chambre du Roy, conducted by Jean-Claude Malgoire
CD Erato 2292-45609-2

Philidor was first and foremost a famous chess-player, like the philosopher Diderot, though music also ran in the family. The *Carmen Sæculare*, a secular oratorio drawn from works of the Latin poet Horace, was presented at Paris's annual *Concert Spirituel* in 1780, two years after Mozart had been invited to perform, with not entirely happy results. Philidor's music in fact bears some resemblance to the early works of the Salzburg master. But its majestic, even operatic pretensions also prefigure the vast pretensions of the music of the French Revolution, whose heroics declared an affiliation to pagan Rome. Berlioz reflects his influence, as he does those of the Revolutionary composers Méhul and Gossec.

Berlioz. Mélodies
Montague, Robbin, Fournier, Crook, Cachemaille, orchestre de l'Opéra de Lyon conducted by John Eliot Gardiner
CD ERATO 2292-45517-2

This disc is something of a rarity, for it features some little known material, including the splendid *Mort d'Orphée*, presented here in a synthesis of the versions of 1842 and 1848. For the most part the pieces are in the romantic mode, touched here and there by the Spanish influence that was very much in fashion at that time. The disc also contains a version of the incomparable *Nuits d'Eté*, inspired by poems by Théophile Gautier, that is notable for the breadth of its tessitura. Unfortunately, the articulation of the singers is sometimes stretched to the limit, and this recording cannot compare with the sublime version by Régine Crespin under Ernest Ansermet's direction, recorded by Decca in 1964 and now available on compact disc with works by Ravel, Debussy and Poulenc.

■ **Claude Glayman**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ANGKOR MUST BE SAVED

As a former temporary representative of the World Health Organization in Cambodia, where I was posted for four years, I should like to congratulate the Director-General of UNESCO on his speech of 30 November last year launching an international appeal to save Angkor, as reported in your Newsbriefs column (April 1992).

Angkor is the apotheosis of Khmer culture. The complex includes not merely Angkor Wat itself—the most celebrated temple in Asia and the symbol of Cambodia—but also the charming Banteay Srei, a jewel of classical South-east Asian architecture, Angkor Thom and its enigmatically smiling stone heads, the imposing Giant's Pathway and the splendid Ta Prohm, lost in luxuriant jungle.

Angkor must be saved as quickly as possible. . . . France should be in the forefront of the struggle. Let us hope that thanks to UNESCO, the restoration of Angkor will be taken in hand and brought to a successful conclusion, as at Borobudur.

Dr. Jacques Verdrager
Lyon (France)

BACK NUMBERS OF THE *COURIER* WANTED

In a developing country like my own, the *UNESCO Courier* provides access to information that is otherwise unobtainable. The magazine is especially useful to those of us working in education, because it allows us to expand our pupils' horizons and provide them with knowledge untainted by the stereotypes that have long reinforced intolerance and lack of respect between cultures.

We should be pleased to receive copies of the *Courier* dating from before 1991, especially (though not exclusively) the Spanish-language edition. We can promise to make good use of them, to the benefit of many readers.

Claudio A. Vargas Arias
School of History and Geography
University of Costa Rica
San José (Costa Rica)

A MIRROR FOR UNESCO

As Founder and President Emeritus of the UNESCO Association of Colorado, I am writing to commend you on your issue entitled "Women Speak Out on the Environment" (March 1992). It is so timely and exciting to have such exceptional coverage. I have already used information from it for several talks I have given recently.

The February issue, "Apartheid—The Beginning of the End", is a fitting response to those who continue abusing human rights all over the world. We are experiencing some of it here. I plan to write a letter to one of our daily papers shortly and will use some quotes from the editorial by Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO. The chronology, "UNESCO's First 45 Years", will be put in our archives as well as those of the Auraria library. It is something we have needed for a long time.

Finally, the article on Hampâté Bâ (January 1991) impressed me deeply. Copies will be shared with the Ford-Ross Library and the Black American West Museum. And I love the colourful covers and the photos which tell so much!

Genevieve N. Fiore,
Denver (U.S.A.)

SPEAKING UP FOR TLEMCEN

I should like to draw your attention to an unfortunate error which appeared in the box on page 30 of your issue on al-Andalus (December 1991), and raised my hackles as a citizen of Tlemcen. You referred to al-Maqqari, the author of the *Nafh al-Tib*, as a "Tunisian historian", when you should, of course, have called him a "Tlemcenian historian". It is a pardonable mistake, and it gives me the opportunity, in the name of the Tlemcen Ahbab Cheikh Larbi Ben Sari Musical Association, to congratulate you on the quality of your articles and to let you know how much pleasure I have had in reading them and getting others to do likewise.

A. Ben Mansour
Tlemcen (Algeria)

WHAT ABOUT ASIA?

Asia is almost entirely missing from the *Courier*, except for a few words here and there about "saving Angkor". Are stones so important? An awful lot of them must have been lost that humanity will never see again. It's people that I'm interested in. Is this vast continent so impenetrable behind its ideological, political and religious barriers? Could you not try to establish closer contact? It seems to me that there must be many ways for you to penetrate the human maze. Do you use them all? I accept the sincerity of your efforts, which I follow with great interest and sympathy.

Marie-Louise Lacoustille
Monpezat (France)

As a regular reader, you will have noticed that we make a point of opening our columns to authors from all over the world. In almost every issue you will find an article or illustrations that refer to Asia or one of its many civilizations. Even so, it is always possible to do better. Please believe that we try our utmost to do so. Editor

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(September 1992):

The knowledge bearers

Teachers, guides and mentors down the ages

Also featuring
an interview with the Argentine musician and poet
ATAHUALPA YUPANQUI

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