(te•kün) To mend, repair and transform the world.

TIKKUN

ASSIMILATION
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AFTER THE WTO PROTESTS

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2000 $5.95

FOR THE MILLENNIUM
Prophetic Visions



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Interrogation

We began
to interrogate each image for the promise of meaning
we needed to believe in

in order to hold out
against the wheel we were bound to
and intoxicated by—

we were children of earth, sun, of the drugged eye of Mars.

We were frightened of our own need of origin—
we wanted malleable clay
not granite…

But we sat at the table separating us
and tried to make love a lens
that would focus our past errors
surrounding us like Medusa's forest of stone men and women
frozen in attitudes of flight and anger...

But it was necessary to learn
every gesture and transmute it into ourselves
to refute our sentimental questions, arid investigations,
the smaller and smaller truths
we fossilized around.

And unlearning
was a learning more arduous
and different than the lineaments of a stone hand reaching out
caught in a seizure
that could be a caress.

—Tom Sleigh

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY VOLUME 15 NUMBER 1

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21 **Prophetic Visions: The New Millennium**

How can we transform the millennial hype into prophetic vision? We asked this question of activists and novelists, pop stars and academics, spiritual leaders and in-the-trenches pragmatists, and received answers that were thoughtful, funny, passionate, at times cynical, but more frequently inspirational. Here they are, grouped thematically, seasoned with poems and *brief thoughts* from the next generation of Jewish writers.

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Once in a Blue Moon by Samuel Bak. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of Pucker Gallery, Inc., Boston, MA.

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The Shaman (Indian Series) by Matt Lamb. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of Fassbender Gallery, Chicago, IL.

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88 David M. Stone reads the new Annenberg biography.

91 *Whither Feminism?* Wendy Chapkis reviews Lynn Chancer.

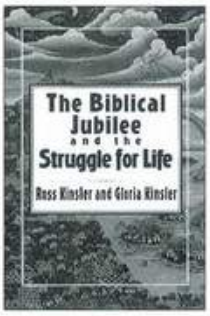
93 Richard Weisberg tells us *Why Grass Won the Nobel Prize* in his look at Ernestine Schlant's *Language of Silence.*

96 Roger S. Gottlieb ponders millennial prayers.

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Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

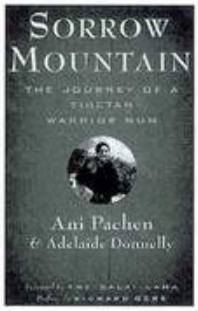
The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life



Ross Kinsler and Gloria Kinsler
Orbis Books, 1999

A perfect book for contemplating the millennium: two Presbyterian missionaries and theological educators in Central America discover the revolutionary radicalism of Torah's injunction to redistribute ownership of the means of production every fifty years (the Jubilee). Those who think that religion must necessarily be conservative need to read this insightful study from Orbis, the press of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society.

Sorrow Mountain

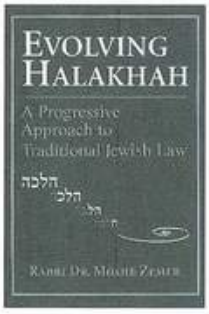


Ani Pachen and Adelaide Donnelly
Kodansha America, 2000

The Dalai Lama introduces, and pro-Tibetan activist Richard Gere writes the preface to, this simply told story of a Tibetan nun who became a guerrilla fighter and then prisoner of the Chinese Communists. Told with a powerful simplicity and grace by Daidie Donnelley (whose writing has appeared in TIKKUN), this is a story of courage and determination in the face of torture. Now escaped to the Tibetan enclave in Dharamsala, India, Ani Pachen continues her work on behalf of the Tibetan people.

Evolving Halakhah

A Progressive Approach to Traditional Jewish Law

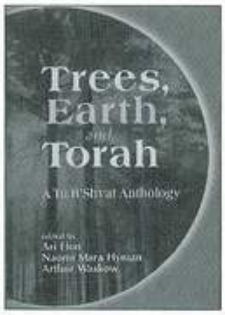


Rabbi Dr. Moshe Zemer
Jewish Lights, 1999

Moshe Zemer helped establish Judaism's Reform movement in Israel and his detailed documentation of Jewish religious law (Halachah) demonstrates the continuing vitality both of Jewish law and of the thinking within Reform Judaism. Among the topics Zemer discusses: conversion, demolishing houses in the territories, attitudes toward the enemy, halachic justifications for murder, the rights of women, religious violence, abortion, autopsies, removing the terminally ill from life support, and whether it is halachic to smoke. A truly fascinating and significant contribution to contemporary Jewish thought.

Trees, Earth, and Torah

A Tu B'Shvat Anthology



Edited by Ari Elon, Naomi Mara Hyman and Arthur Waskow
Jewish Publication Society, 1999

Tu B'Shvat, the birthday of the trees, used to be the occasion for students in Hebrew school to buy trees for the Jewish National Fund, which used the money to expropriate land from Palestinian villagers whose families had worked on it for hundreds of years. Now, Tu B'Shvat is being transformed into an ecological consciousness raising festival. Pulsing with Arthur Waskow's creativity, this collection is an outstanding example of how the Jewish renewal consciousness can rejuvenate old forms and make them speak to and illuminate contemporary social concerns.

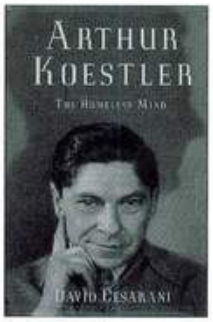
The End of the Alphabet

Claudia Rankine
Grove, 1998

Jamaican-born Claudia Rankine's second book combines extremity of experience and meditational repose, a capacious measure cadenced against lyric intensities. She works to find a language capable of speaking not only about trauma, but of the difficulty of speaking about it. On each page the poet pulls up to the surface and makes audible an uncommon speech invented out of a pressing and common need.

Arthur Koestler

The Homeless Mind



David Cesarani
Free Press, 1999

Cesarani's book caused a sensation when it was first published in England in 1998, in part because Cesarani accuses the great writer and social theorist Koestler of sexual assault on the basis of what English critics called rather shabby evidence. Cesarani seems at times overwhelmed and disturbed by the sheer life energy that pulsated through every pore of Koestler's life, but he has presented us with a full-bodied taste of this remarkable writer's range of interests.

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Letters to the Editor

Public Journalism

To the Editor:

Jay Rosen's "Public Journalism" (November/December 1999) beckons the reader to jump aboard and join what he calls the "breakaway church" of journalism.

After nearly half a century of critically observing the media, both its accomplishments and its shortcomings, this writer, a believer in TIKKUN and its message, finds that the public will be ill-served by this siren call.



The threat of public journalism lies not in any specific activity or enterprise, but in bestowing upon journalism a new role that very likely would invalidate journalism as a detached but critical observer. Public journalism invites journalists to become actors, participants, instigators, and torchbearers.

Advocates of public journalism urge journalists to jump into the fray by proposing alternative solutions to civic and social problems. This, they hope, will activate the public, reinvigorate democracy, and promote civic progress.

Who is then left to evaluate? When journalists become part of the show, it lowers their credibility; newspapers become house organs for special interests.

When we talk about journalism, we are not only referring to some idealistic young editor who wants to leave a mark on his community, but also to moguls such as Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black, who have their own agenda to promote.

We cannot trust media conglomerates to advance ideas or solutions that contravene their own commercial or ideological interests.

No one doubts the good intentions of the advocates of public journalism, but whenever journalists have a personal stake, be it ideological, political, commercial, or whatever, the line that separates good journalism from public journalism is broached. For years we have asserted that no human endeavor, including reporting, can ever be objective. That awareness should discipline reporters. But that is a long way from abandoning all attempts to strive for objectivity.

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While public journalism's stated intent is to regain public trust in the media, the actual result will intensify distrust. If the media prepare the blueprint, engage the actors, become an active part of the civic process, and invite the public to choose from a prepared scenario, how can we ever trust the media to report on the process the media has concocted in the first place?

No, thank you.

CHARLES L. KLOTZER
FOUNDER, EDITOR/PUBLISHER EMERITUS
THE ST. LOUIS JOURNALISM REVIEW
St. Louis, MO

Jay Rosen responds:

I believe there are at least two legitimate journalisms "out there." Not one.

To oversimplify, there's public or "civic" journalism, which I wrote about. Then there's the traditional variety it departs from. Charles Klotzer rises in defense of what he regards as the best tradition in the American press. I salute him for it. Meanwhile, some journalists I know have worked out a variation, which they and I believe to be valuable, ethically sound, and worth trying.

There is an argument to be had about the wisdom of the civic turn in journalism. It is by nature a highly debatable thing. But there is no arguing with the fact that a turn has been taken by serious, dedicated, mainstream American journalists.

They decided that trying to cultivate a better discussion does not inevitably lead you to dominate that discussion; trying to see more clearly the community's path to resolution doesn't disqualify you from tracking the community's problems; trying to engage people in public life doesn't have to mean a takeover by journalists.

Aware of the dangers involved—not as theories but as facts on the ground—they take what precautions seem necessary to remain on the right side of truth, fairness, and public trust.

These precautions do not convince Klotzer, and he speaks for much of his tribe there. Curiously, those who call themselves public journalists have persisted. Why? In Klotzer's view, they're deluded, intoxicated, corrupted by an alien ethic, or too eager for a starring role in public life. My view: they've discovered there's more than one journalism to be done in service to democracy.

JAY ROSEN
New York, NY

Mumia: Stop the Judicial Murder

To the Editor:

Please reconsider TIKKUN's support for Mumia Abu Jamal, who was convicted of murdering a Philadelphia police officer. I would understand if you were opposing Abu Jamal's execution because of a principled stand against the death penalty. Your demagogic use of the terms "judicial murder," "injustice," and "travesty" to describe his trial and sentence, however, reveals your belief that Abu Jamal was denied a fair trial. In this belief, you are mistaken.

You assert that "anyone who reads the judicial record" must conclude that "Abu Jamal was never given a fair chance to defend himself or prove his innocence." In fact, the judicial record, which it appears few of Abu Jamal's supporters have actually read, refutes each of your claims. As to proving his innocence, Abu Jamal had no such obligation during his trial, when the burden of proof lay on the prosecution and he enjoyed the constitutional right to remain silent. In his post-hearing proceedings, when the burden of proof lay on him to show that he deserved a new trial, Abu Jamal chose to avoid testifying. If he lacked a "fair chance ... to prove his innocence" in those proceedings, which were held at his request, it was due to his own decision.

If you really believe that Abu Jamal received an unfair trial, you owe your readers an explanation of how you came to that conclusion. Perhaps you would like to open your pages to articles by those involved on each side of the case. Even better might be an assessment by a fair and independent expert.

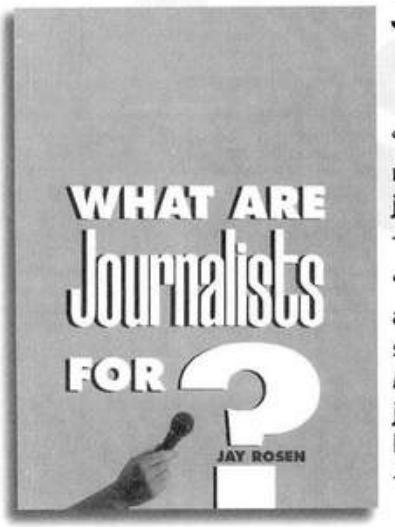
It is neither progressive nor humane to support the cause of Abu Jamal. Not every policeman is an agent of oppression and not every jailhouse intellectual is a victim of misused government powers. It pains me, as I'm sure it does many other readers, to see TIKKUN promoting this cynical and misguided cause.

ALAN SACKS
Philadelphia, PA

C. Clark Kissinger responds:

If one reads the transcript of the trial (and I have), one must indeed conclude that Jamal was never given a fair chance to defend himself. Mr. Sacks would have us forget that the post-conviction hearing on whether Jamal received a fair trial was conducted by the same judge who conducted that trial. That's not exactly independent review! Judge Sabo proceeded to quash thirty-two subpoenas for defense witnesses and deny discovery motions. Sabo found

"The best statement yet of civic journalism's philosophy, promise, and problems. A must read."
—Thomas E. Patterson



What Are Journalists For?
Jay Rosen

"A valuable addition to a meager list of books that take journalism seriously."
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"Every aspiring journalist—and every entrenched editor—should read *What Are Journalists For?* to discover how American journalism can heal itself by helping to heal our democracy."
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nothing wrong with vital evidence being withheld from the defense for thirteen years, or the fact that witnesses changed their stories in return for favors from the police or that the prosecution used its peremptory challenges to knock Blacks off the jury. He even found it believable that police officers didn't "remember" for two months that they heard Mumia "confess." It would be an excellent idea for TIKKUN *to open its pages to a real debate on this travesty of justice.*

C. CLARK KISSINGER
Brooklyn, NY

[Editor's note: the author is a journalist and activist who attended all Abu Jamal's court hearings in 1995–1997 and has a complete set of the case's court transcripts.]

Hope or Despair?

To the Editor:

Thank you for the beautiful, poetic articles in your last issue, "Hope or Despair? Lessons from the Last Millennium" (November/December 1999). As I read them I could almost imagine the very flowering of human consciousness spiraling and unfolding in those pages, as Ken Wilber describes.

GUY BERLINER
San Diego, CA

ADHD—Whose Disorder?

To the Editor:

In the most recent issue of TIKKUN, Thom Hartmann continues to call for school changes to accommodate ADHD differences. I have one alternative to suggest: homeschooling.

In the school system, my active, challenging children would likely be labeled ADHD. At home, they are free to learn in their own way and at their own pace—moving around while working on math problems, running around outside for a few minutes, learning to read on their own time instead of when the school says they should read. We can set our own schedule, including evenings and weekends. We can focus on a topic they are interested in learning more about. We can have plenty of "recess" and "PE," which many schools have cut back on or eliminated (I personally believe this is directly related to the rise in ADHD diagnoses). Instead of my children coming home from school with construction-paper Christmas trees and Easter eggs, perhaps with a token dreidel thrown in, we can do crafts and read stories for all the Jewish holidays. My children socialize for limited amounts of time with both children and adults, rather than struggling with the overemphasis on peer influence that schools tend to create.

Some may dismiss homeschooling as impractical. I disagree. I am not a particularly patient person, yet I am willing to trade the stress of being with my children almost constantly for the stress of rushing through homework and dinner to get to bed on time, then rushing to get groggy children to the bus in the morning, then rushing to school to deal with discipline and learning and self-esteem problems. I know single parents and two-income parents who homeschool by working alternative shifts and enlisting the help of family and friends. Any reasonably intelligent, committed parent can educate their children at home. It may be difficult at times, but the flexibility, individual attention, and love of learning it fosters are worth it.

For interested parents, books by John Holt and Mary Griffith are a good place to start. Contact the Jewish Home Educator's Network at beithoro@erols.com or (314) 534-1171.

MARY FRANCELL-SHARFSTEIN
Atlanta, GA

Tikkun Community

To the Editor:

My husband and I joined your community of supporters (with a donation, of course!) in response to your invitation earlier this year.

I am indebted to you for the thinking and heart-opening leadership you provide. I need to keep hearing the message of the possibility of transformative political and community action. My "transformation world," my "spiritual world," and my "political world" have been so separated from each other that I am getting to the point where I can't tolerate the pain of that separation. You provide a language of integration, which I for one desperately need to hear. Again, I promise to take action and make a difference out of it and not just be an intellectual "free-loader," so to speak.



KATHARINE CAHN
Seattle, WA

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CORRECTION

The original manuscript of Paul Krassner's article, "The Love Song of Timothy Leary," (November/December 1999), included the following paragraph containing Stew Albert's explanation of Jerry Rubin's tactic at the PILL (People Investigating Leary's Lies) press conference:

> Rubin proclaimed the press conference "a political victory" because it stopped action on indictments that were supposed to have come down as a result of Leary's rollover. Stew Albert, co-editor with Judy Gumbo Albert of The Sixties Papers, observes: "Public-relations oriented prosecutors might have been influenced not to indict because they envisioned a future trial where even Leary's kit and many others who knew him would take the stand to say he was a liar. All very ugly indeed."

An editor, in an attempt to clarify Albert's quote, misrepresented his position by adding a phrase so that it read, "But Stew Albert ... observes that PILL could only have had the opposite effect...." Unfortunately, this made it appear that his statement could be taken as being in opposition to Rubin and PILL when actually Albert's intention was to bring out the hard-ball practicality of Rubin's tactic, getting a necessary job done in however harsh and ugly a manner.

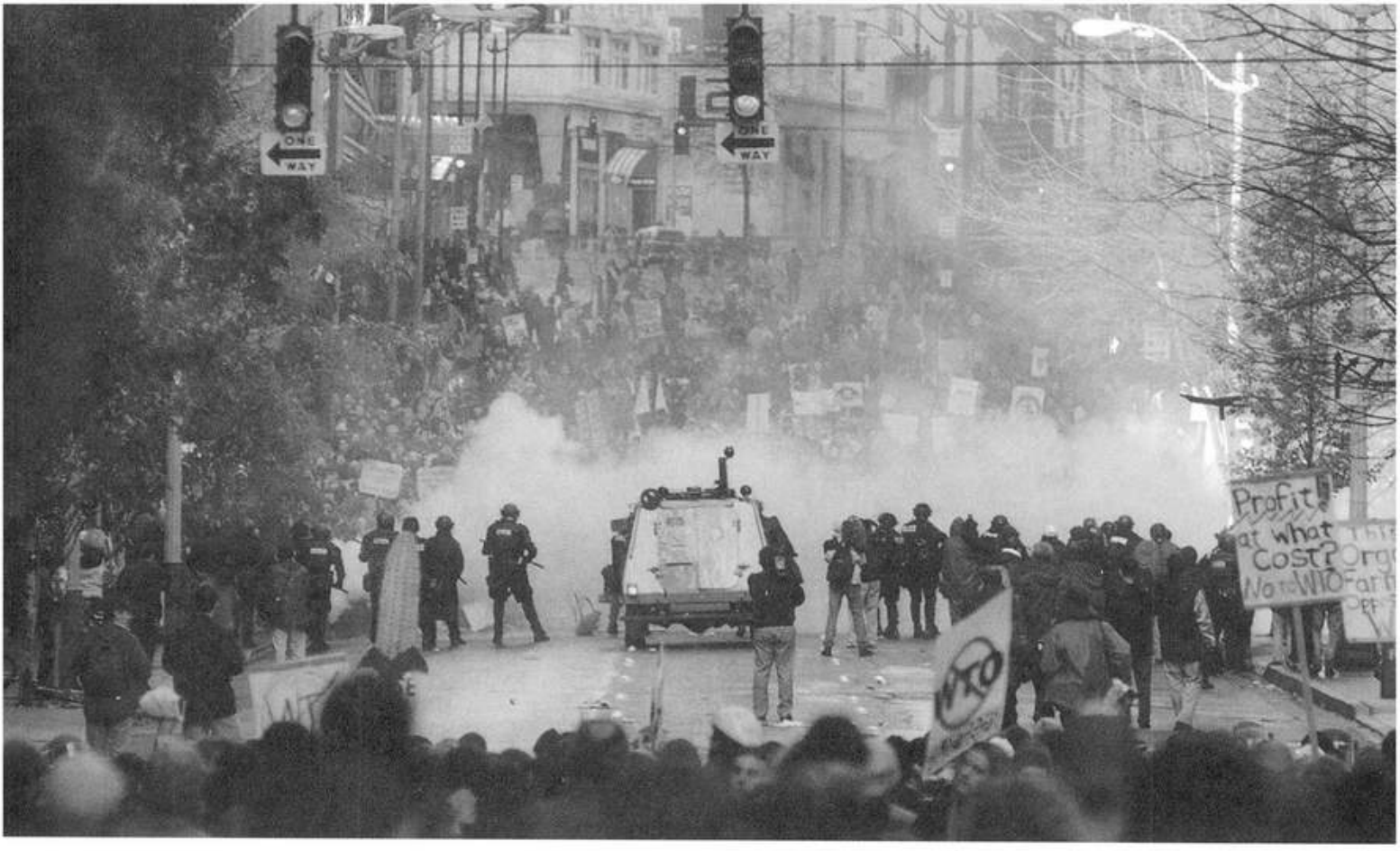
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EDITORIALS

Protest in Seattle: The Modern Maccabees

Michael Lerner

A few days before the celebration of Chanukah 1999, tens of thousands of demonstrators in Seattle took up the modern banner of ancient guerrilla fighters. Though the terms of the struggle are different, it's really the same battle that Jews celebrate each year as we light candles every night for eight nights.

The struggle of Chanukah was about a massive Greek empire, which had taken over ancient Judea and attempted to subvert the independent right of the Jewish people to shape its own cultural, religious, and political life.

Today, the form of empire has changed: fifty multinational corporations have gross incomes greater than those of many countries.

This domination by corporate power does not require colonial armies or imperialist interventions. The "free market" concentrates wealth and power in the hands of the few, and they in turn are able to dictate the terms of trade and shape the cultural and political life of governments and peoples around the world.

Yet these corporations are not satisfied with that. They have created the World Trade Organization (WTO) to extend their power back into countries whose democratic processes have put environmental, labor, and human rights constraints on the reckless pursuit of profits *uber alles*.

Lori Wallach, director of the Global Trade Watch Division of Ralph Nader's consumer group Public Citizen, described in these pages what the shapers of the WTO hope to accomplish. One of their most powerful suggestions is this: that foreign investors and corporations be compensated for any policies a government makes that might pose a potential threat to corporate profits. For example:

- Had the WTO been operating in the 1980s, cities or states might not have been able to join the boycott of South Africa, which would have been seen as a

constraint on trade and made those localities vulnerable to lawsuits under WTO rules.

- Similarly, under WTO policies foreign companies would have to be given "national treatment," i.e., treated exactly as if they were local companies. Any attempt, for example, by your city to favor local or minority-owned businesses for municipal contracts would be illegal.
- If the WTO has its way, it would also be impossible for any country to regulate rapid capital entry or exit, thus making all countries vulnerable to currency speculation and financial crashes.

Most Americans oppose the WTO's policies, but have no effective political leadership to represent their concerns. Because our system of government requires that politicians amass huge campaign monies from the very elites of wealth and power who see themselves benefiting from the WTO, presidential contenders Gore, Bradley, and Bush will all toe the same line. We can expect them to follow the lead of President Clinton, who "identifies" with the "concerns" of the demonstrators while doing his best to strengthen and accelerate the millennial round of talks aimed at consolidating the power of this new world government.

That's why many Americans, including central elements of the labor and environmental movements, felt they had no alternative but to take to the streets. They do *not* oppose increasing trade, but they insist that trade be conducted in ways that ensure environmental restraint, respect for the basic rights of working people, and human rights. The demonstrators have no intention of throwing roadblocks in front of the many Internet and new technology companies that could easily demonstrate corporate responsibility and whose entry into the world market would be a boon.

In response, the cheerleaders for the globalization of capital, like *New York Times* foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman, describe the demonstrations as "senseless" and "a Noah's Ark of flat-earth advocates, protectionist trade unions and yuppies looking for their 1960s fix."

The basic argument made by Friedman is that "there is no alternative." There is no way to oppose globalization; therefore, the most rational path is to whisper into the ears of the powerful and try to shame the major corporations into being more socially responsible. A similar argument was made to a small band of Jews when they decided to oppose Hellenistic power. Many of their fellow Jews were following the Thomas Friedman line: "There is no alternative, so let's see what terms we can work out for ourselves if we cuddle up to the powerful." As a result, the guerrilla struggle waged by Judah the Maccabee was not just a national liberation struggle, but also a civil war between the accommodators to "reality" and those who believed that there was a Force in the world (they called it God) that made it possible to fight for what was right even against overwhelming odds. Whether you think you believe in God or not, if you think that the smart thing to do is to accommodate to oppressive reality you are (at least in terms of the way we in Jewish renewal think of God) an atheist, and you are a believer (no matter how much you deny it) if you believe there is something about the universe that makes such a struggle morally necessary and potentially winnable.

Wallach's organization has come up with a series of recommendations that we endorse, including:

- The WTO must be prohibited from challenging any environmental, health, or safety measures or from doing anything to restrict countries or localities which seek to ban the import of foods or products that may pose an environmental or health risk.
- Public health concerns must be given priority over profits in regard to safeguarding consumer access to essential drugs and medicine, and all legal constraints on each country developing these drugs and medicines in ways that provide adequate consumer safety must be dropped. Any aspects of the agreement that prohibit full access to health care, water, education, and sanitation must be dropped.
- The WTO must drop any regulations or procedures which would interfere with the ability of localities to maintain legitimate nondiscriminatory food safety measures or other health and safety regulations.

TIKKUN in the Public Square

Have you noticed the way we are being mentioned quite regularly? Sometimes it's worrisome.

Consider, for example, the ad we signed along with other groups to challenge the WTO. The ad appeared in the *New York Times* the Monday the demonstrations began, and became the subject of a TV news story. Instead of focusing on the substance of the ad, the commentator focused on the list of endorsers, and in particular circled TIKKUN's name. "Remember," he said, "the editor of this magazine was the guru of the White House some years ago—and now he is opposing the Clintons publicly."

You might think any publicity is good publicity. That's what people told me the next day when Rush Limbaugh returned to his personal attacks on me, citing my role as a "shaper of Clinton consciousness" and warning his 20 million listeners to watch out for my influence.

I'm not so sure. As always with the media, it's the focus on the person rather than the message that contributes to a kind of homogenization of political culture. And yet ... it is precisely that dynamic that then allows me to get TIKKUN perspectives articulated in places where they might never be heard otherwise. ❑



The miracle of Chanukah was that this small band eventually prevailed (after many decades of struggle). That kind of victory has happened throughout history when people realize that the Spirit is greater than the wealth and power of arrogant elites. It may take many generations here, too, but the demonstrators in Seattle have taken a first step toward the modern miracle that will eventually lead to serious constraints on corporate domination.

A major step in this direction would be the passing of the Social Responsibility Amendment (SRA) to the U.S. Constitution, which has been proposed in TIKKUN. The SRA would mandate that corporations operating (not necessarily based in) the United States would have to get a new corporate charter every twenty years, which would be granted only to corporations that could prove a history of social responsibility as measured by an Ethical Impact Report. In the March/April 2000 issue of TIKKUN we will lay out more details, but one is important here: this constitutional amendment would declare null and void any international agreements that prohibit the United States or local governments from requiring corporate social responsibility as a condition for continuing to function in that jurisdiction.

Whether the demonstrations become little more than a good moment will depend on their ability to develop this kind of long-term innovative legislative strategy. But let's not knock moments of hope—they are critical for getting people through periods of despair. The demonstrations were a light of hope, a first step in the struggle of the next few decades to counter corporate power with social responsibility and democratic decision-making. Don't let the lights go out. ❑

Insurgency in Local Electoral Politics



TOP PHOTO BY STEPHAN SAVOIA / AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; AMMIANO PHOTO © MARC GELLER

San Francisco is a town known for its liberalism, but the fact of the matter is that downtown commercial and real-estate industries run this area, cheerily embracing multicultural flavors and gay and feminist demands as long as they do not conflict with the unimpeded operation of market dynamics. The living example of this tolerance is the African American Willie Brown, a liberal-reformer-turned-establishment-lackey whose career as speaker of the California Assembly was followed by his election to mayor of San Francisco. Few who saw Brown in action as speaker were surprised when he used his first term to accelerate gentrification and harass the homeless while ignoring the problems of middle-income San Franciscans. The downtown money could hardly be happier.

Imagine their surprise, then, when the mayoral election in November resulted in a total upset victory for a *write-in* candidate, the gay president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Tom Ammiano's surprising showing put him into a runoff with Brown. Announcing his discontent at a political spectrum where the "left-wing" candidate is the candidate of corporate interests (!), Ammiano generated an almost unbelievable level of solidarity among all those who had felt left out of the process.

Though Ammiano's subsequent campaign unfortunately reverted to the technocratic language that typically eviscerates activist energy as it avoids the politics of meaning, the November write-in effort was a moment which reminds us that people can in fact be mobilized outside the realm of established politics and its frame of "reality." Write-ins can actually work, if the foundation has been built through years of careful community organizing and building. New possibilities are emerging, and you, dear reader, could be part of the effort in your own area to make those possibilities real.

Considering this and the energies in Seattle, we can be more confident that the forces of co-optation and one-dimensional deadness, so skillfully dominating the public sphere for so long, have not yet won. We can still dare to hope—activism has a future! ❑

Spiritual Renewal: Gratitude

One reason we've given so much space this issue to a vision of hope for the new millennium is that we believe we are at the beginning of a whole new period in world history and culture, a period in which Spirit will replace the slavish subordination to ego and power.

I've just completed a book on this topic, entitled *Spirit Matters*. I argue there this same theme, showing exactly how it matters today that Spirit has been denied and how that will change with the emergence of what I call Emancipatory Spirituality.

Many people get turned off the moment they hear the word "spirit" because they have so many negative associations. One of the worst is that they identify that word with reactionary and oppressive religious histories.

The good news here is twofold:

First, an amazing spiritual renewal has been taking place in religious institutions all over the world. In place of patriarchal, repressive, anti-pleasure, reactionary, and spiritually dead versions of established religion, we are increasingly finding a renewal of the deepest spiritual truths of religious traditions. Perhaps the most important change is this: the rejection of triumphalist visions and the demeaning of the other that leads to racism, nationalism, religious chauvinism, sexism, and homophobia. In its place we find a growing recognition that every human being on the planet is created in God's image and entitled to equal respect (whether or not they are part of your group).

Second, you don't have to be in any religious community to recognize Spirit and to build a spiritual life. Many TIKKUN readers are secular Jews who do not feel comfortable in any particular religious setting, but who nevertheless are alive to the spiritual dimension of experience. While I personally am a strong advocate of the value of a (renewed) religious tradition, many people in the TIKKUN community don't agree with me on that point, yet do agree that there is a need for a meaning-oriented transformation of our society and a new bottom line for judging productivity, efficiency, and rationality besides that of maximizing wealth and power; they agree that the healing and transformation of the world is not only desirable but possible. There are ways to build a spiritual life that do not require a conventional belief in God.

You don't have to be in any religious community to recognize Spirit and to build a spiritual life.

But building a new world based on spirit requires some actual transformation in our daily life behavior. So in my editorials, I'm going to talk about a spiritual practice in each issue of the magazine. One good place to start is with gratitude.

I've found that most of us are so focused on what isn't happening in our lives, or in what is yet to be achieved, that we must make a huge psychic stretch just to recognize what is good, what is terrific, even, and what is worth celebrating.

One of the great strengths of doing Shabbat as a spiritual practice is that it is meant to be a twenty-five-hour period in which we focus our energies on CELEBRATING WHAT IS. Jews are great at the "oy" and the "not enough," but only on Passover do we sing "dayeynu" (there is enough).

There's nothing specifically Jewish about the problem: being focused on what has not yet been achieved is part of the frenetic path set for us by the competitive market.

The solution is to begin to focus each day on something for which we are grateful, and to then dedicate a full day a week to an exclusive focus on those aspects of our life. So, say you give Friday night to Saturday night to celebrating the wonder of the universe. Then, each day of the week, from Sunday through Friday, give yourself a few minutes in the morning, and a few minutes after every meal, to give thanks for all the good that is in your life. ❑

Millennial Thanks

We started planning for the millennium this past summer, when our terrific bunch of interns—Heather Holbrooks-Kuratek, Anna Levy-Warren, Kim Marks, Rebecca Meyer, Beth S. Pollack, and Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow—began locating and sending out letters of invitation to potential authors. Special thanks goes as well to our long-time poetry editor Josh Weiner, who did the impossible, finding topical poems by some of the best poets writing today, and to literary editor Thane Rosenbaum, who had the idea of asking the most exciting young Jewish writers to share their brief thoughts on the turn of this century. ❑

So Where Can You Find Spiritual Renewal Communities?

We get phone calls all the time from people asking us how to connect to a spiritually alive community (usually Jewish, but not only) or a community that instantiates TIKKUN's values. So, we'd like to ask you to send us a one-paragraph description of any synagogue, havurah, church, temple, mosque, ashram, or other form of spiritual community you think embodies a renewal perspective—and is fun or spiritually exciting to be at. We will try to put that out, in the magazine or on our website (www.tikkun.org), or at least through our email list (you are still invited to add your name to that list: send an email message of only the word SUBSCRIBE to tikkun-request@lists.best.com). That way, you can check this list when you are traveling or want to find something in your vicinity. ❑

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Grassroots Conservatism Comes of (New) Age

The Falun Gong Phenomenon

Rebecca Weiner



Followers of Falun Gong standing in silent protest opposite Beijing's leaders' compound, April 25, 1999.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG BAKER / AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

It is 7:00 AM on a chill October morning in Manhattan's Riverside Park, and the woman's eyes shine with the unnatural brightness of ecstasy. "I had searched for something, maybe all my life," she says in Mandarin, brushing back raven hair. "When I read the Master's words, and heard his voice, I knew I had found what I was looking for."

The woman is a practitioner of Falun Gong, or Falun Dafa, an exercise, meditation, and "moral cultivation" movement that started in northeast China in 1992 and now claims to have 100 million followers worldwide. Freighted with an oddly apocalyptic metaphysics that rejects evolution and calls this "the period of Last Havoc"—and with moral guidelines that warn followers against such "degenerate" influences as rock and roll, television, computers, homosexuality, and modern medical care—the Falun Gong has been an easy target for critics. It has also been targeted for an unusually harsh Chinese government crackdown.

That crackdown was sparked by the extraordinary gathering in Beijing on April 25, 1999, of some 10,000 practitioners for a sit-down protest at the compound of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. The vigil, which fell around the tenth anniversary of the largest 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, was called because of the arrest of fellow practitioners in coastal Tianjin (these, in turn, had protested publication of an anti-Falun Gong article in a local journal). Li Hongzhi, the movement's controversial and charismatic founder, claimed the demonstration was spontaneous, apolitical, and held while he was out of the country (this final claim was proven false by Chinese immigration records). Peaceful as it was, the size and suddenness of the protest rocked leaders and public alike.

Since April, more than 5,000 followers have been arrested, and Falun leaders say those who refuse to recant are being tortured (the Associated Press reported at least one beaten to death in police custody). Twelve-hundred-plus government officials have been detained and forced to write confessions and self-criticism for Falun activities. One and a half million Falun tracts have been burned in televised bonfires that looked like nothing so much as the thought-control campaigns of Chairman Mao, or of his model, the harsh ancient emperor Qin. A barrage of anti-Falun articles and books have been churned out. Police have ransacked homes, confiscating books, tapes, and videos. Notices have gone up banning practice in parks. In July, the Falun Gong was banned entirely. Practice has been banned even in private, and taking part in protests is grounds for an instant and harsh prison sentence.

Beijing also has declared Li Hongzhi a criminal and sought support from the United States and Interpol to bring him back to the People's Republic of China (PRC). This request was in all likelihood pro forma, since the United States has no extradition treaty with the People's Republic. Interpol duly refused. But the attempt reveals some kind of desperation among the Chinese leadership.

Rebecca Weiner is a freelance writer. She has lived in China, on and off, for the past ten years.

What is the movement's appeal, and what about it has the Chinese government so upset?



Li Hongzhi, founder of the Chinese spiritual movement Falun Gong.

Numbers of Falun Gong practitioners are disputed, but all agree they are large; most news reports now quote 20 to 60 million. Before the crackdown, practitioners by the hundreds could be seen in parks throughout China. Founder and leader Li Hongzhi is a forty-eight-year-old former clerk who is referred to by his followers as "Master Li," or simply "the Master." Li's system of breathing exercises draws on China's traditional qigong (CHEE-gung) practice (which enjoyed a popularity craze in the early 1990s), Buddhism, and Taoism. It also includes beliefs that seem drawn variously from creationist fundamentalism, Scientology, pop science, Christian Science, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. While the content of the official website (www.Falundafa.org), the Master's lectures (*Falun Buddhist Law*, Falun Fo Fa Publishing), and the movement's "bible," the *Zhuan Falun*, can be contradictory, the recurring themes are simplicity and nostalgia for a purer day.

"Falun Gong is really three systems in one," explains Gail Rachlin, owner of a public-relations consultant firm and one of the movement's four "unofficial contact persons" in New York. "It's an exercise practice, a meditation practice, and a system of moral guidance." While the exercises are straightforward, the metaphysics of the movement have drawn criticism from nonbelievers. In an interview with William Dowell of *Time* (which Rachlin claims was taken out of context; Dowell says the quotes were "absolutely accurate"), Li Hongzhi said the biggest cause of decline in society "is that people no longer believe in orthodox religion. They go to church but they no longer believe.... The second reason is that since the beginning of this century, aliens have begun to invade the human mind." These aliens, Li said, "have corrupted mankind.... The aliens have introduced modern machinery like computers and airplanes. They started by teaching mankind about modern science, so people believe more and more science, and spiritually, they are controlled. Everyone thinks that scientists invent on their own when in fact their inspiration is manipulated by the aliens." He concluded the alien goal is wholesale takeover of humanity, via cloning.

Li's published works describe the *Falun* or "wheel of law" as a constantly spinning miniature universe that Li "installs" in followers' bellies via telekinesis. The *Zhuan Falun* also describes a presence called *Fashen*, a set of "mind and thoughts controlled by the [practitioner]" which is "also a complete, independent and realistic individual life" brought into being through exercise and spiritual practice. The Master's Fashen, of course, is most powerful, due to what he calls "my extraordinary divine superpower." Li promises followers: "You have the protection of my Fashen, and you will not run into any danger"; and "those who practice at the exercise sites will have my Fashen to cure their illnesses" (though interestingly, he forbids followers from attempting to cure illness with *their* Fashen).

Falun Gong also offers moral guidance, based on the triple concept *zhen-shan-ren* ("truthfulness-compassion/benevolence-forbearance/acceptance-endurance") which, Li writes, "is the sole criteria to judge good and bad people." Many of Li's other directives take a leaf from the fundamentalist movement. He denounces drugs, modern music, sloppy clothes, funny hairdos, sex out of marriage, homosexuality, and "sexual liberation" in any form. "Advocacy of women's liberation," he writes, "appears only after the degeneration of the human race." In ancient times, "men knew how to treat their wives, be loving and take care of their wives; and wives in turn knew how to be loving to their husbands"—unlike today, when in the wake of women's liberation "all kinds of social problems appear, such as divorce, fighting, children being abandoned, etc."

More ambiguously still, Li exhorts followers to avoid "attachments"—to money, things, ideas, even people—which distract from their own cultivation. This concept is not taken to the extremes of some groups; followers are encouraged to hold jobs, marry, have families, and lead normal lives. There's a degree of play in the system. Moderate meat-eating, for instance, is allowed so long as followers aren't "attached" to meat, while alcohol and tobacco are forbidden as inherently "attaching."

But the dedication to avoiding attachments has serious implications for the role practitioners see for themselves in society. While dedicated to zhen-shan-ren in their own lives, followers will not, Rachlin told me, seek this in others, because that means being "attached to the idea of improving them." At best this seems to eliminate the spur to proactive "goodness" inherent in concepts like Christian charity, or Judaism's *tikkun olam*. A Falun practitioner might choose to volunteer with the poor, or in a hospital or school, Rachlin said, but "that's his business; it has nothing to do with his status as a practitioner." And would a practitioner, for instance, seek to educate a neo-Nazi known to have defaced a synagogue? "Why?" Rachlin asked in return. "Why should I attach myself to changing him?" And would

PHOTOGRAPH BY DIANE BONDAREFF / AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

a practitioner seek to stop a murder in progress? "Maybe, maybe not," she said. "It would have to be case by case. Because it might also be that person's karma to die, and then it would be wrong for me to interfere."

In fact, it seems the only attachment followers are encouraged to make is to Li Hongzhi himself. He speaks in public about his status as an ordinary man, and his desire for quiet. But the round-faced, smooth-voiced Master, who looks and dresses more like a businessman than an unattached ascetic, speaks to followers of his mystical powers in ways that encourage close identification. Rachlin and others spoke of him in tones that can only be called rapturous. In the meantime, the only voluntarism Li fosters as part of zhen-shan-ren is dedicating time, money, and energy to spreading the Falun Gong.

This fact brings up the closely guarded matter of the movement's finances. Practitioners eagerly point out that Falun Gong has no churches or meeting halls, no hierarchies or membership dues, and no fees for joining practice sessions. Li portrays himself as a humble man living on meager royalties. But while Falun Gong publications are not expensive, they are not free either. The now-banned Chinese version sold in China for twelve yuan, about $1.50, which doesn't sound like much until you multiply it by 20 to 60 million. Even allowing for production costs and for the many pirated versions, Li must have done reasonably well—especially considering that the owner of Falun Fo Fa Publishing is: Li Hongzhi. A Chinese marketing expert I know told me: "the key in China is cheap, cheap, cheap. Slash margins mercilessly. As long as you're making a little each time, China's sheer volumes will make you rich."

Indeed, money cannot be completely absent from Li Hongzhi's motivations. The *Wall Street Journal* estimates that in a six-month period Li grossed at least $35,000 through the distribution by Sino United Publishing of Los Angeles of the English version of *Zhuan Falun* (which "also has been translated, into Spanish, French, German, Russian, Swedish, Japanese and Korean"). And the *Journal* estimates Li grossed $20,000 a week in his lecture tours in China in 1992 and 1993. Since followers in search of "karma cleansing" donate time and money to run websites, manage exercise sites, and organize conferences, Li has in effect a free marketing organization, making his earnings pure profit. As a clerk, Li's monthly income in a state-owned enterprise would have hovered under $100.

Discussing the attraction of cults and new religious groups, Dr. Philip G. Zimbardo argues in the *American Psychiatric Association Monitor* that there's a tendency to dismiss those "whose behavior violates our expectations about what is normal" as "kooks, weirdos, gullible, stupid, evil or masochistic deviants." But, says Zimbardo,

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"Such pseudo-explanations are really moralistic judgments" which "miss the mark.... Instead, our search for meaning should begin at the beginning: 'What was so appealing about this group that so many people were recruited/seduced into joining it voluntarily?' We want to know also, 'What needs was this group fulfilling that were not being met by traditional society?'"

In 1990s China, the answers are fairly obvious. With Marxism-Maoism debunked and the market economy roller-coastering, economic uncertainty and fear for the future grip the vast middle class, which grew up expecting cradle-to-grave security in a state-owned enterprise. At the same time, the vast amount of new information delivered by the rapidly opening media is confusing to a population that had few emotional mainstays due to earlier official attacks on traditional culture. This confusion and imploding faith in the state has provided fertile ground for a variety of belief systems.

Traditional religions are on the rise (official estimates cite more than 300 million Buddhists, more than double the number a decade ago), as are charismatic faiths of all kinds. The *New York Times* recently profiled a "delicate-looking man with bright eyes ... a scraggly beard and a preference for plastic flip-flops" named Liu Jiaguo, the "God" of the Supreme Deity movement. "More than a dozen of his devotees, the authorities now say, were young women who were coaxed into his bed. Countless others were persuaded to empty their wallets." After his arrest, Liu admitted he'd learned about the God business by following another recent deity named Wu Yangming: "If you flaunt a divine banner, people believe in you and are willing to dedicate everything they have to you. So I thought, if Wu Yangming can be a god, so could I."

The majority of China's Falun Gong adherents are middle-aged and older (70 percent are over fifty, Rachlin said), many of whom suffered through the Cultural Revolution only to be stranded on retirement by the rapid dry-up of pension funds and other safety nets. And a disproportionate number are women, many of whom struggled for the much-heralded but little-realized Communist ideals of equality, only to find themselves later judged wanting by capitalist standards of beauty and material success. The appeal to Communist Party members seems clear given the declining moral authority of the Party.

Fewer clear forces of social turmoil operate in the United States, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, other nations where Li Hongzhi's popularity is on the rise. But the uncertainties of life in a global, digital age and the attenuated ties to family and friends it too often fosters have left many searching for meaning. That search was a common theme among Falun Gong followers I spoke with, as was the movement's "simplicity." "It simply has all the answers to all the questions I was asking," says one practioner on the official videotape.

Falun Gong followers insist they are not a "religion" or "sect," let alone a "cult." They are, they say, not even an "organization"; they are merely followers of a "practice." And the practitioners I met urged me to give the movement a try. Rachlin gave an astonishing three-hour interview, telling me much of her life story, and asking that I "approach the Fa with an open heart." Of course any movement behind a charismatic leader has the power to become more apocalyptic over time. But so far there seems to be relatively little threat to followers—financially, physically, socially, or spiritually.

Possible political threats to the Chinese government are another matter. All Li Hongzhi's demurs aside, no Chinese person could have organized 10,000 followers to surround the Communist Party headquarters at Zhongnanhai near the tenth anniversary of the 1989 demonstrations without seeing it as a political act.

Officially, PRC leaders have offered two reasons for the crackdown on the Falun Gong. First, they accuse the Falun Gong of "advocating superstition, spreading fallacies and hoodwinking people." Second, they charge Li's followers with "inciting and creating disturbances, and jeopardizing social stability."

Regarding the first charge, many Falun beliefs are clearly far out of the mainstream. But then so are many ideas advocated by Buddhist, Taoist, qigong, and other groups in China. To my best knowledge, nothing in the PRC Constitution—or in the UN Charter on Human Rights China has signed—gives the government either right or responsibility to protect people against their own odd beliefs or gullibility.

The government's second charge carries a bit more water. Li's demonstrators blocked television stations, harassed journalists whose reports they disliked, and otherwise created nuisances before the crackdown. These incidents were for the most part minor, though. In fact, prior to April there was some sympathetic coverage of the Falun Gong on Chinese television, and government leaders talked of the group as a positive force.

The switch came with the rapid escalation in protests in April and May. The initial (and illegal) Tianjin demonstration quickly drew over 6,000 supporters. Arrests began, which then led to the (also illegal) April 25 vigil by 10,000 in Beijing. That vigil was treated gently by authorities (Premier Zhu Rongji organized a meeting with leaders, and ordered police to provide protesters with train tickets to get home). But it was followed by a series of sympathy protests in as many as thirty cities in May and early June. At that point the crackdown began in earnest.

It comes down to fear and anger: fear of instability, of what the Falun Gong could do, and anger at protests swelling rapidly despite leadership concessions. There are, after all, plenty of historical echoes for quasi-religious

groups in China creating social unrest. In the 1850s, a Cantonese schoolmaster who said he was the younger brother of Jesus proclaimed himself the Heavenly King of Taiping and led his followers in a rebellion against the imperial government of the Manchu dynasty. Nearly 20 million people died in the ensuing Taiping rebellion, which remains the bloodiest civil war in history. In 1900, the Boxers, a secret society whose Chinese name translates as "the Fist of Righteous Harmony," murdered foreigners, missionaries, and Christian Chinese by the thousands as part of what they called their "righteous mission" to cleanse China of impure elements. Even the idea of a secretive group with its leader abroad must give the leadership pause when they reflect on Party history. In 1911, Sun Yat-sen, the "Father of Modern China," was in Denver when his followers rioted in Wuhan, sparking the revolution that toppled the last dynasty.



Silent protest, July 22, 1999. Police later arrested hundreds of protesters.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG BAKER / AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

With unemployment in double digits and rising, with a banking crisis that observers say has China's financial institutions bankrupt three times over, with state-owned enterprise productivity plummeting and privatization moving slower than planned, with their currency softening and the threat of devaluation looming, China's leaders have plenty on their minds. Rhetoric supporting social stability has been pouring from Beijing for more than a year. Debates on avoiding unrest have also formed a key part of a titanic struggle going on in the leadership between "pro-reform" factions who want to move more quickly to a market economy and "conservatives" who want to keep the Party and the state-run safety and security networks strong. When the Falun Gong vigil emerged in April, it played right into the leadership's worst fears. When the movement then rejected reformist concessions by continuing protests in May and June, it played right into the conservative's iron fists.

Of course there have been some dissenting voices in China. Several internal documents and news reports tacitly blamed the Falun Gong's rapid spread on disaffection with today's PRC society. An August 5, 1999, Xinhua News Agency dispatch, ostensibly concerned with "smashing" the then-illegal organization, admitted "Falun Gong incidents make us realize that it is an important duty of women's organizations to help women improve their overall quality and establish a right viewpoint." Several scholars have also written urging the leadership to address the social causes that led to Falun Gong. But the main voice out of Beijing has been shrilly punitive.

"Should the human rights community rush to the defense of China's newly visible sect?" asks Dr. James Seymour of Columbia, a noted expert on China human rights issues. "After all, there is much that is unattractive about this phenomenon." He then answers his own question: "Indeed we should. Human rights principles are not concerned about whether people are right or wrong." Falun Gong followers have the right to believe what they like, under every international covenant China has signed, so long as their actual activities are legal. This means Beijing had the right to stop the protests (under PRC laws banning assembly without a permit), but not to crack down wholesale on the movement that spawned them. There are legitimate concerns about Falun Gong's shadowy organization, mysterious finances, potentially apocalyptic tendencies, and unclear political aims. But nothing in law, morality, or wisdom allows banning a movement because of negative potential.

Indeed, the chief result of the ban so far seems to have been rapid mobilization and politicization of followers. While I was with Rachlin she took calls from CBS and CNN and made plans for a press conference at the United Nations and a delegation to the U.S. Senate. Li seems to be rapidly collecting friends in high places. Meanwhile, Rachlin speaks of arrested followers being tortured, then released, only to spread Falun practice and be captured again. "They accept the torture as their karma," Rachlin says. "They will not give up." At this rate, the Party that legitimized its own rule partly by establishing a series of parks throughout China dedicated to the martyrs it lost in the revolution may be on the way to creating a new generation of martyrs for the future believers of Falun Gong. Sort of the ultimate in self-fulfilling prophecies; it's hard to see what else could have so focused movement attention and international growth.

What is less clear is the best course of action for the well-intentioned foreign observer; China tends for many reasons to resist international pressure on "internal affairs." But clarifying issues is at least a start, for Beijing always deals most openly with the well-informed. It can't be repeated too often that misinformation is best dispelled via education. There are far better ways to handle the Falun Gong than through the barrel of a gun. ❑

CURRENT DEBATE

Why Am I Here?



Max Frankel

On Rosh Hashanah 1999, at a small congregation in Long Island, former New York Times *editor Max Frankel delivered this provocative sermon explaining his particular version of secular Judaism. It is printed here with a response from Rabbi Tirzah Firestone.*

I am honored to be speaking to you on a day of such reverence for Jews everywhere. I honestly don't know why I am expected to have anything meaningful to say to you. Please understand that I speak only for myself, and, as you will see, to myself, dwelling on the highly personal thoughts that come to me at this season.

Those thoughts all revolve around a single question: Why am I here?

Why, first of all, am I here in Saltaire? Why on these holidays do I prefer to be dressed down when even the most reformed and agnostic Jews elsewhere are dressing up? Why do I prefer a minimal dose of ritual to the splendiferous liturgies accumulated by many of our tribe's sages over many centuries?

Well, I like spending the holidays in Saltaire precisely because the services are short and sweet and unpretentious. Instead of straining my patience with overblown repetitions and dreary lectures that put me in mind only of the clock, the services here give me all the time I need to check up on my faith—or lack of it—and to pay a heartfelt tribute to forebears and other memories.

My parents exploited these holidays to satisfy a child's need for ceremony and to inflate that child's sense of self-importance. They kept afloat the myth that I was being watched, nourished, and guided by the mysterious force of the universe—their synonym for God. Then, in immature middle age, I kept coming to synagogue to honor their sense of custom and continuity and to give my children a chance to carry on with that custom. But now that time for me is fleeting, a miniservice is preferable, because it doesn't take much longer to think my holiday thoughts than it takes to describe them to you.

I especially like spending the holidays here in Saltaire because we come together as sandaled and sneakered friends and neighbors, not the merely nodding acquaintances of urban and suburban temples. We come together just long enough to mark the specialness of the day, then walk on the beach or sail on the bay and define our own unique measure of observance, without superfluous ceremony or hierarchy. With all the building and rebuilding we are witnessing in our village, it is no longer apt to describe Saltaire life as entirely simple. Still, compared to holiday exertions on the mainland, or even the longer island across the bay, our village remains an innocent Eden.

I have grown certain that humanity invented God.

But why am I in any house of worship? I am old enough now to acknowledge the truth: that despite my competence in the liturgy, I am incompetent at, indeed incapable of, genuine prayer.

Don't misunderstand: I am not ungrateful for a rich and blessed life—but I attribute that to the intense love and accidental genes that I have shared with the kin of many generations, past, present, and future. I am not so vain as to believe that a deity capable of inventing this incredible universe is watching directly over me, just itching to respond to my solemn beggings, tributes, or confessions. I have known the temptation of praying for good things—or for overcoming the bad. But I have grown ashamed of the urge to exploit holidays and synagogues to send toward heaven my agenda of self-interest.

Along the way, I have grown certain that humanity invented God, not the other way around.

I understand the urge. People throughout history have embraced one or more gods—and also devils—to cope with the exquisite mysteries and terrible trials of existence. I respect that need and the creativity it has inspired. But I consider it my good fortune that I was born into a free-thinking tribe—a tribe that banished not only all idols but all images of its own God. Unformed and unpictured, the Jewish God has encouraged us to treat Him or Her as an abstraction. We have been liberated—or, if you prefer, condemned—to strive to find our own definition of the meaning of life.

Max Frankel retired as executive editor of the New York Times *in 1994 and has since written a biweekly column, "Word & Image" for the* Times' *magazine. He received a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of Nixon's trip to China.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SUSAN GROSS

So I come occasionally to a house of worship because the occasion stimulates me to wonder why I am here, to think about the nature of life, and to advertise my right to do so freely—to advertise my membership in a hard-thinking tribe. I'm here because I was born a Jew and raised a Jew and persecuted as a Jew and because I sometimes yearn for the special comfort of affiliating with Jews. We Americans pride ourselves on achieving the goal of the many religions that hold all of us on this Earth to be God's children. But our enduring tribal habits are proof that one parent in common does not make for genuine brother- and sisterhood.

At best, humanity is a collection of stepbrothers and stepsisters. We are defined not just by different genes and different experiences but even by different calendars. So we feel a need to retreat to the circle of blood relations. In spite of myself, I feel a special delight in possessing my own holidays and rituals, to exchange a perverse New Year greeting in autumn instead of winter. Millennium shmilennium, we Jews are only 240 years from 6000!

But the ultimate reason for my comfort in being Jewish is not at all ceremonial. I am comforted by that discomfiting Jewish summons to all of us to define our own deity, our own system of beliefs. Jews must live with a delicious religious paradox: we are instructed by our dogma to reject dogma, and to imagine our own place in the universal scheme of things. Our most exalted rabbis are teachers, not priests. We are all obliged to study, but not to accept or believe. We have been freed to think, to enjoy the communal songs but to make up our own words.

Thinking about how I have dealt with that paradox, I discovered that while I have strayed from the idea of God, I could not escape from Torah—that rich collection of laws and fables that was my earliest childhood literature. I consider Torah to be our tribe's Declaration and Constitution combined—proclaiming our freedom and our commitment to law as the only reliable restraint on human behavior—the only firm guarantee of human liberty and human rights. We are a disputatious tribe because the constant improvement of law and defense of liberty require unending dissent and debate.

Instead of idols and passions, our tribe worships words and argument and that religion lies at the heart of our highly verbal contributions to world culture. Inspired by our heritage as keepers of the book, creators of law, and storytellers supreme, we do, as others often complain, achieve disproportionate influence in education and communication.

But we should never forget that despite our millennia of study and storytelling, we still have no better answer than any other tribe to the ultimate "Why am I here?" It remains for each of us to conquer that vain yearning for immortality, to accept the limits on our talents and capacities and on life itself and still salvage a sense of purpose and meaning from our brief existence.

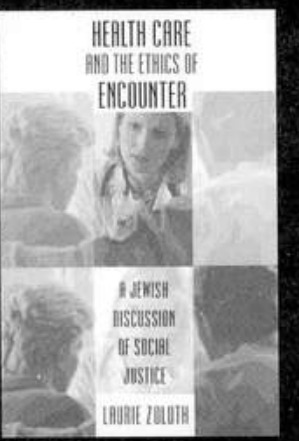
Those who say they are here on Earth to do God's will are obviously evading the issue, for that will has been defined by mere mortals. The idea of a divine will causes many people to do good, but it has also caused many to commit evil. Just think of how much pillage, murder, and war have been justified as some kind of service to assorted gods or the will of history. History is the product of causes and consequences, but it has no will, no purpose, of its own. As people who sometimes consider themselves Chosen ought to appreciate, history belongs to those who write it.

But if my actions and fate are not dictated by a divine plan or subject to a historical will, how do I find purpose in my individual life? Why am I here? What is my function? What mark will I leave? What constitutes a life well lived?

Most of us have no chance of ever contributing some life-saving vaccine or other invention or making some heroic sacrifice for the common good of all humanity. In any case, we rarely really understand in our short time on Earth what individual action constitutes a truly historic contribution to the evolution of life. One generation's medicine just turns out to be another's poison.

Contrary to logic, the longer I live, the smaller is the speck that represents me in the universe. The briefer my remaining time on Earth, the more modest, indeed microscopic, appear the consequences of my best efforts. When I come to a religious function and think about why I am here,

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I become transfixed by the incredibly long chain of circumstances that brought me to my place on Earth—how many random journeys and unplanned couplings produced my genes and gave me life and how many trillions of toiling, striving, plants, animals, and people produced the environment in which I have landed. Whatever it is that I can add to the gene pool and whatever I have managed to do to improve the space around me, my net contribution is a tiny, almost immeasurable drop in the universal bucket.

It is to escape the notion that we are mere ants in the universe that people throughout history have invoked a Divine will or utopian scheme of history. As the years race by, we all aspire to discover a larger meaning—not only a longer life but an afterlife that will memorialize our existence. It's why we enlist in causes that we call larger than ourselves and erect monuments to our passage. They are, of course, mere castles on the beach.

For me, the wisdom of Jewish culture is that it has a single, overriding prescription for living a good life. If I understand our heritage correctly, it holds that my obligation—and my reward—are both defined by the concept of study: I am expected to rise above my selfish biological needs and to strive to understand the time and place into which I happen to have come. I am importuned to absorb as much as possible the lessons learned by all who came before me and to figure out how, given my capacities and predicaments, I might enhance and enrich the lives of others, now and in the future.

So I think of myself as running just one short lap in the endless race—the striving of all living things. I carry the baton that was handed to me, I run as well as my talent will allow, and I make sure that no matter what I may achieve along the way that I not drop the baton, that I avoid doing harm, false moves, and unworthy deeds.

Why am I here? I come to look up at the stars and to contemplate my smallness in the chain of life. The Heavens inspire me to keep asking why I am here. And I come to worship—not to pray for good fortune but to honor a tribe and a heritage that encourage me to face that awesome question.

So I ask you, why are you here? ❑

Tirzah Firestone, a Jewish renewal rabbi, responds.

Dear Mr. Frankel,

Your ecclesiastical discourse is bound to resonate with the many who see themselves as lone products of life's "random journey," and who look upon their own individual efforts as insignificant drops in a universal bucket. Doubtless, too, there are numerous Jews who would join you in spirit to celebrate a simple, sunny Rosh Hashanah away from it all, "dressing down" both the ostentatious attire and the superfluous repetitions that are common to the day.

But while you were away, you seem to have missed some rather important developments: there are now many, many of us who stand together, not only at the High Holidays but year-round, as a global community of Jews, dedicated to an alive, hands-on approach to Judaism in the world, and to building a society in which our lives are connected to one another and to values which transcend us. Together we shed the stereotypical outer trappings of the Judaism you describe. We work to eschew the narcissistic individualism that is rampant in the society around us just as we do the nihilistic deconstructionism which would have us believe that our natural human hunger for meaning is nothing more than the "vain yearnings of immortality."

What we have learned is that without a community of like-minded allies, this narcissism and nihilism creep insidiously into even the most thoughtful among us, leading one to confuse his or her own existential angst with the purposelessness of a whole people or, God forbid, with life itself.

Rather than subscribing to the broken-down myths of our ancestors, and settling for a cynical reductionism which tells us that in the end nothing we do matters, we prefer to challenge ourselves as a community to develop a new vision for this venerable lineage which we call Judaism. Around the world, this transdenominational community of Jews, linked by the TIKKUN readership and in other expressions of the Jewish renewal movement, works together to forge a life which is commensurate with our durative spirit and our ancient mandate for bringing holiness into the world. Together we proclaim our connection and responsibility to the earth which we inhabit, to the other members of the human race, and to the task of fostering a sane, meaningful and, yes, joyous existence which sanctifies and celebrates



Rabbi Tirzah Firestone is a Jungian therapist, founding rabbi of the Jewish Renewal Congregation of Boulder, Colorado, and author of With Roots in Heaven *(Plume).*

PERSONAL ESSAY

Americans

What We Lost, Who We Are

Michele Wucker



When I was a little girl learning how to read in the Midwest, my mother taped note cards with French translations into my books. My favorite was *Are You My Mother?* (*Êtes-vous ma mère?*) I loved how the *teuf-teuf* explained to the little *oiseau* that a steam shovel couldn't be a little bird's mother. I didn't come to understand until years later that the hand-lettered cards in my books represented my mother's own quiet rebellion; she was reclaiming the language that had been forced out of her childhood. Even though she was born near Brussels, Belgium, my mother had to go to the library to make sure the French in the notecards was correct. Since she was two, she'd lived in Milwaukee, where her GI father had brought her and my grandmother after the end of World War II. His mother (my great-grandmother), a fierce woman whose own grandfather had come to America from Germany a century earlier, turned an icy shoulder to her Belgian daughter-in-law for being a foreigner. My mother had to speak only English "because it wasn't polite to speak a foreign language in front of people who didn't know it." This was why when I was a little girl she insisted that I learn French and call my Belgian grandmother "Bobonne." The English word "Grandma," my mother's name for my dour great-grandmother, evoked painful memories of a harsh welcome to America.

"At least she doesn't have rickets," my great-grandmother had sniffed the first time she met my mother. Such intense dislike of anything foreign rang true to the mantra of old-stock English, Scottish, and German Americans who held themselves above newcomers. By their rules, assimilation was a zero-sum proposition: you couldn't blend in and succeed unless you gave up who you were. For white Americans, cultural identity was the price of economic opportunity. Today, this insistence on complete assimilation, together with its corollary that cultural and ethnic markers are dangerous, threatens the sense of unity that white Americans have long credited it with creating. It sterilizes the quirks and habits, rituals and expressions that mark people as members of a group; in the process it erodes the sense of the little things that hold Americans together as a wider community.

Tremendously self-absorbed yet also astonishingly lacking in self-awareness, white America still knows itself best at its borders: when we are at war, maintaining trade barriers to cheap foreign imports, or raising fences against illegal immigrants. It is time to revisit the way we came to see ourselves. By leaving Americans of European descent without a positive way to define themselves, the old taboo against cultural markings forced us to define ourselves by exclusion: saying who we are not instead of who we are. This seeded the culture wars of the last two decades and left white Americans unprepared for a new wave of immigrants who do not look like our great-grandparents did.

Travelers love this joke: *What do you call someone who speaks two languages? Bilingual. Someone who speaks many languages? Polyglot. One language? American.* It's dark humor, funny because it is so accurate. English is our unifying signature and underscores the isolationism that only a superpower can afford: if the world wants to talk to us, let it learn our language. To me, it also suggests that this country has not yet formed a national identity that is solid enough for many Americans to embrace outsiders.

What does it mean to be American? Individualism, consumerism, and mobility are our totems as expressed by the suburb, the strip mall, and the superhighway. Celebrating

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Michele Wucker is the author of Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola, *which Hill & Wang will release in paperback in April. She lives in New York City.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CAREN BELLE LOEBEL-FRIED

individualism yet subverting it through a maddening sameness, white middle-class Americans drive in their Fords and Chevrolets to or from their single-family homes in order to buy what they want when they want it. They identify themselves by allegiance to brand names: Schwinn bicycles, Barbie and GI Joe dolls, Nikes and Calvin Kleins. Culture is commerce, commerce culture.

White Americans replaced their old-country identities and those of others with ersatz ethnicities: hyphenated subgroups cobbled together from Americans who are descended from Europeans, Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans. Whiteness is a sterilized version of a pan-European ethnicity that happily claims hamburgers, kindergarten, and spaghetti with meatballs as American. It also imposes strange unities on nonwhites, who in turn have transformed these semi-arbitrary designations into symbolic power as well as political clout. African Americans, whose ancestors often came here long before many of the whites who now see themselves as the true Americans, don't need to wear dashikis to embrace symbolic ties to Africa. Asian immigrants have excelled economically, using to their advantage the stereotype of Asians as "honorary whites" with superachieving children, a lumping together made even more ironic in light of Americans' embrace of urban Chinatowns as symbols of exoticism. Latin Americans—who themselves represent varying mixes of European, African and indigenous Americans—come to the United States and discover that they are "Hispanic." Once the shock of the label subsides, Hispanics embrace it as a source of political power. If white Americans want to believe that Puerto Ricans eat tacos then let them, as long as they realize that Hispanic Americans vote and have cash to spend.

New immigrants are arriving today in numbers approaching a million each year. They are bringing white Americans face to face with the ambiguities and contradictions in our own identity.

New immigrants are arriving today in numbers approaching a million each year. They are bringing white Americans face to face with the ambiguities and contradictions in our own identity. About 9 percent of Americans are immigrants now—far less as a percentage of the total than during the Great Wave of 1880–1920, but nearly double the 5 percent level in the 1970s. This is happening amid a massive demographic change. According to 1998 quick-census figures comparing the present population to that of 1990, the African American population increased by 13 percent to 34 million people, or nearly 13 percent of the total population. The Asian population increased by 41 percent to 10.5 million people, or about 4 percent of the total. Hispanics increased by 35 percent to 30 million, or 11 percent of the total. American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts increased by 14 percent to 2.4 million, just shy of one percent of all Americans. Though census figures indicate that the white population grew by 6.6 percent to 223 million, or 83 percent of the populace, this figure includes white Hispanics (the census asks about both race and Hispanic identity, since Hispanics can be white, black, indigenous, or mixed). In states like California, whites are giving up their majority status. The 2000 census will most probably confirm these trends, making it clear that America no longer looks as white as white Americans imagine it.

In the face of this demographic change, the last decade has been characterized by intense debate over what it is to be American, intensifying at times to open conflict. A harsh set of 1996 laws withdrew government social services from legal immigrants—including those who paid taxes to support those benefits. Worse, the laws denied immigrants due process and forced retroactive punishments on those who had committed petty crimes, even when they had already paid their debts to society. In Arkansas last year, a local tax assessor denied a Dominican couple and a South Korean immigrant a property tax credit because they did not speak English; they sued. A California group, the European American Issues Forum, declared itself to be the first group to fight hate crimes against whites; it convinced the state legislature to declare October "European-American Heritage Month." In the fall of 1999, students at New York's City College demanded the resignation of the head of the board of regents after he was quoted calling Dominicans and Mexican immigrants uneducated Indians from the hills who needed remedial classes. Thankfully, public sentiment does seem to have reversed from the heights of immigrant-bashing that surrounded the 1994 elections; activists are now working to roll back the 1996 laws.

The current debate over whether new immigrants will acculturate often openly cites race. For example, Pat Buchanan famously argued that a million Englishmen would make better Americans than a million Zulus. The expatriate British writer Peter Brimelow argued in his book *Alien Nation* that America is fundamentally a white nation and that the new immigrants are destroying national character. Ironically, it is only easy to question new immigrants' ability to assimilate if we hide our own past. From the distance of generations, it is easy for white Americans to forget that our own ancestors' assimilation was traumatic. Even my great-grandmother's dislike of things foreign was disingenuous, since she and her brothers still spoke German—though only in private after the Great War cast all things German into disfavor.

Though the French scholar Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835 praised America as "a society formed from all the nations of the world," American history has been a long series of ethnic slurs, with each group denigrating the newest to arrive. As early as 1753, for example, Benjamin Franklin wrote that the German immigrants arriving in America were "the most stupid of their nation," though they were hard-working and good farmers.

My great-grandmother's German-speaking grandfather had come here from Schleswig-Holstein in 1848, when Germany was not yet unified and America was still deciding whether it was a German or Anglo nation. For much of the nineteenth century, daily newspapers in fifteen cities and the majority of books here were published in German. In 1880, the Great Wave began: a four-decade flow during which twenty-six million immigrants arrived here from Southern and Eastern Europe. Many of them—the Irish, the Italians, the Slavs—were deemed to be "unassimilable." Among these were my father's grandparents, who traced their roots to a Croatian enclave in what is now southeastern Austria, to Polish Galizia, and to Bohemia. A backlash ensued as immigrants reached 15 percent of the U.S. population. In 1921, Congress limited immigration to 3 percent of the existing number of each country's population in the United States as counted by the 1910 census.

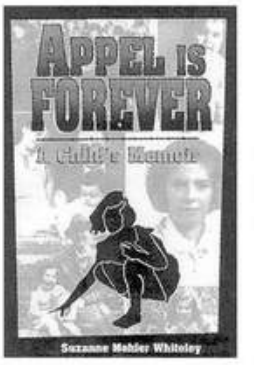
America did not re-open the doors until more than three decades later, after we had won a second war against Germany; if anything proved that an immigrant had assimilated it was death in combat. By the time we removed racial characteristics from our criteria for citizenship in 1952, Americans were becoming part of the world again, opening the way to an ethnic revival. When the World's Fair came to Brussels in 1958, my mother spent the whole summer with her family in Belgium; she still has the pictures of herself under the *Atomium*, that giant model of the atom as a symbol of human capabilities. My great-grandmother died in 1960, freeing my mother's family from her xenophobic opinions. Not long after that, my American grandfather became the Belgian honorary consul for Wisconsin. As a college student in the 1960s, my mother studied French—this time with the blessing of her parents, who told her she could make good money as a translator. There weren't enough books to go around in French class; she met my father when they ended up sharing a text.

In 1965, Congress re-opened the gates to new immigrants, ending the exclusion of Asians, abolishing the National Origins Quota System, and setting a new emphasis on reunifying families. In the 1960s and 1970s, the old "melting pot" metaphor of many sources blending into one was re-cast as a monolith that was undermining the ideal of a pluralist society. Assimilation had failed in that a simple "American" identity was simply unavailable, as Nathan Glazer and Patrick Moynihan demonstrated in their classic work, *Beyond the Melting Pot*. Ethnicity, they argued, was and would continue to be the defining factor in American life. In New York City, this was certainly the case, but the heartland didn't quite catch on.

Celebrating the 1976 Bicentennial in grade school in the Midwest, I absorbed mixed messages about immigration and ethnicity and not much at all about race other than that slavery was wrong. Identifying oneself as part of an ethnic group instead of simply "American" was bad, although we did honor our immigrant ancestors on a symbolic level. For a project on Ellis Island we were instructed to tell the class where our families had come from. Belgium and Austria (never mind Poland) notwithstanding, I became "French" on my mother's side and "German" on my father's. The end of the melting pot did not lead to authentic identity, but instead to a distorted approximation at best.

In three generations, the turn-of-the-century "unassimilables"—like the Wukovitses who became the Wuckers—blended in. Painful as it was, my family could do so because we looked like our neighbors. We became "white," reaping the privileges of being "true Americans" but also losing the ability to talk about who we really were. A young Black Studies professor recently recalled to me what happened when he asked ethnic studies undergraduates to scribble quickly a list of things that made up their cultural identity. The black and immigrant students had no trouble drawing up lists, but the few white students in the class stared at blank pieces of paper: metaphors for an area of their lives that had been left empty.

The great paradox of white American ethnicity is this: what we share is that we are ashamed to express an ethnic ethnicity. In surveys carried out in the 1980s, the sociologist Richard D. Alba found that many white Americans do con-



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sider themselves to have an ethnic identity, but they fear to express it for fear of seeming "less American." White Americans' discomfort with ethnicity goes back much farther, to the days when it marked people for prejudice; no immigrant wanted to appear to be the last to arrive and thus the lowest one on the totem pole. The culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s made it even harder to speak about whiteness by tingeing it with blame and guilt for slavery and the brutalities of the wars against the Indians. To assert whiteness implied condoning white supremacists and hate groups. This ironically made it much harder to create a bridge in the culture wars: moderate voices from white Americans who could speak constructively about their own identity and thus do not need to define white America by attacking people who are different.



Many countries have constructed life-lines to their American diasporas. Now people can belong to two places at once.

The newest wave of immigrants do not look like the white Europeans who came here at the turn of the twentieth century. Nor do they feel that holding on to their old identities makes it impossible to become American. For new immigrants, cheap phone calls and airfares have made it easy to stay in contact with the old country; the resulting transnational communities may appear to suggest that immigrants are not embracing America. But the same technology makes newcomers more likely than ever to be familiar with America when they arrive. Many countries have constructed life-lines to their American diasporas. Now people can belong to two places at once. In El Salvador, 11 percent of gross national product comes from money sent home from Salvadoreans living in the United States. The Dominican Republic's President Leonel Fernandez, who was raised in Manhattan, has urged Dominicans living here to become American citizens. The Dominican-born Chicago Cubs slugger Sammy Sosa is as much a hero in his homeland as he is in the United States.

Despite the new immigrants' strong ties to their homelands, they are indeed assimilating here; possibly even faster than did the Great Wave white Europeans. A recent National Immigration Forum study finds that within ten years of arriving in the United States, 76 percent of immigrants speak English proficiently. At the turn of the century, one in four immigrants could not speak English; today, only 8 percent of immigrants over five years old do not speak English. Intermarriage—a strong indicator of assimilation—is very high among second- and third-generation immigrants. In 1990, more than three-quarters of immigrants who had lived here for forty years were naturalized; of the entire foreign-born population, four out of ten had been naturalized. Within twenty years of arriving in the United States, 61 percent of immigrants owned their own homes.

Pop culture is perhaps the best evidence of how well new immigrant groups are successfully Americanizing—and shaping America at the same time. After Puerto Rican heartthrob Ricky Martin exploded onto the music scene with his Grammy Awards performance, the covers of at least a half-dozen mainstream glossies showcased America's Latin craze. Members of the hip-hop band The Fugees—named for Haitian refugees interned in camps at Guantanamo—are openly proud of their Haitian and Jamaican roots, yet deftly pay tribute to the decades of American pop music that they meld into their hit songs. Just as white Americans have long done with Negro spirituals, jazz, and other black forms of cultural expression, we've co-opted the music of groups who don't look like us. What better demonstration exists that culture is best used as a means of exchange, not division?

When white Americans do preserve our own cultural markers, it is on a symbolic, private level. In my home, not studying French was never an option. Even after we moved to Texas, where Spanish was far more useful, my brother and sisters had to learn French first. My last year of high school I saved money from my part-time job in a cheap clothing store to pay for a trip to Germany and to Belgium, where my many second cousins greeted me, *la petite Américaine*. While I was there, Bobonne's mother *Bonnemaman* died; at the funeral I stood with my Belgian relatives and looked at the huge bouquet of flowers that my parents had sent via FTD. Those flowers were "From America" as my cousins pointed out, just like me. There, across the Atlantic, I began thinking about what it meant to be from America.

American families like mine cannot retrieve what we lost in the assimilation process. But we can learn how to think about what our own culture is, who we are, and why. We can make it clear that there *is* an encompassing American identity: a civic culture and a shared ideal of freedom. Being from somewhere else does not contradict becoming American; it reinforces it. Our ancestors' rejection of our past, though understandable, did us a disservice. We will compound it if we push newer immigrants to make the same mistakes that we did. ❑



The New Millennium

An Introduction

Michael Lerner

I don't blame you if you've felt turned off by or disinterested in all the millennium hype.

Whose millennium is this, after all? Jews don't base our calendar on the birth of Jesus, and many non-Jews are wondering why they should care about this particular year. Meanwhile, everyone is trying to sell you something and using the millennium as the "hook."

Yet, despite the hype, there are tens of millions of people in our society who *do* take this moment seriously and who are using this opportunity for individual and societal self-reflection. Such reflection is rare enough in our society that we should pursue it when we can.

In our last issue (November/December 1999) we focused on the past 1,000 years and on "the lessons of history." Omer Bartov and Martin Jay wrote provocative essays warning us against utopian fantasies. Peter Gabel and I responded with a spirited defense of the importance of grounded utopian thinking which acknowledges human limitations but refuses to be bound by the contours of "reality" as defined by the present moment in the history of global capitalism.

In my own work I've taught that how one understands God in any given period is shaped by the human needs of that period. In this period (roughly, the past 5,000 years since the emergence of class-dominated societies) the most pressing face of God for Jews has been God as the Force of Healing and Transformation. The Hebrew word YHVH, sometimes pronounced Adonai, really means something like "The movement of the present into the future" or, more generally, "That which makes possible the transformation of that which is into that which can and should be."

The process of moving the world from that which is to that which should be can be summed up in the Hebrew word *tikkun*. And that's what this magazine has been about since we began in 1986. Conversely, the Jewish notion of idolatry can be reduced to one word: "realism" (as in, "Don't start hoping for a fundamentally different society—be realistic"). Letting that which is define your concept of that which can and should be is the opposite of what it means to believe in God or Spirit. Most of our readers think of themselves as atheists, yet in the deepest Jewish sense you are only an atheist if you believe that what is is all that can be. If you believe in a power which makes transformation possible, you believe in YHVH.

TIKKUN sees this transformative power operating in every realm of human endeavor. So we have invited some of the most creative thinkers in a wide variety of spheres to tell us how they think of the possibilities that lie ahead in the coming millennium. From the realms of spirit and society to the environment, culture, and issues of identity, we've sought out some of our most important essayists, theorists, cultural mavens, spiritual practitioners, poets, and fictionists, plus a few people who don't easily fit into any category but who are just plain interesting.

Needless to say, they don't all agree with each other; nor do I agree with all that is said here. What you will see in reading this issue and the last is the range of ideas that concern the TIKKUN community.

Meanwhile, let me bless us all that we have the merit to participate in the renewal of Spirit that is already under way, and with it a renewal of self-confidence in our highest visions for a world based on love and caring, peace and ecological sanity, and awe and wonder. Let us feel the strength and the renewed trust in each other and in ourselves that enable us to participate in the healing and transformation of our planet. And let us do so with joy and celebration, with a deep appreciation of all the marvels that already exist in our lives, and with a profound sense of how wonderful it is to be alive at this moment of hope and possibility. ❑

ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

Twenty-First-Century Spirituality

Elizabeth Lesser

For thousands of years every wisdom tradition has given its followers the same messages: that we receive the gifts of goodness and mercy when we ourselves are full of love and compassion; that our own happiness is a moot point when our neighbor is suffering; that faith in the perfection of God's plan—when aligned with our own commitment to justice and beauty—can move mountains. But how do we cultivate love and compassion? How do we really relieve suffering? How do we become full of faith and courage? These are the questions that a twenty-first-century spirituality must address.

In the new millennium, we don't need more religions, more theologies, more philosophies. We already have enough! And we don't need more authorities handing down the same moral codes dressed in new millennial clothing. Twenty-first-century spirituality is not about being told what to do. It's about each person deeply embodying the timeless spiritual teachings of love and generosity in a personal and genuine way. It's about becoming one's own authority, so that our moral behavior comes from the inside out. We've had enough centuries of hierarchical and patriarchal religion to learn once and for all that love cannot be legislated, and generosity cannot be demanded. While we don't have to create new theologies, we do need to learn to use the ones we have in ways that honor each person's uniqueness. I have come up with the following lists to help the spiritual seeker leave behind the old interpretation of the spiritual search and to move into a twenty-first-century way of seeking.

How do we cultivate love and compassion? How do we really relieve suffering? How do we become full of faith and courage?

Old Spirituality

1. WHO HAS AUTHORITY? The hierarchy has the authority. Church authorities tell you how to worship in church and how to behave outside of church.

2. WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY? God, and the path to worship Him, have already been defined. All you need to do is follow the directions.

3. WHAT IS THE PATH TO GOD? There is only one path. It is the right way and all other ways are wrong.

4. WHAT IS SACRED? Parts of yourself—like the body, or ego, or emotions—are evil. Deny or transcend or sublimate them or they will lead you astray.

5. WHAT IS THE TRUTH? The truth is like a rock. Your understanding of it should never waver. Therefore ask the same questions and receive the same answers at all stages of life.

Twenty-First-Century Spirituality

1. WHO HAS AUTHORITY? You are your own best authority. As you work to know and love yourself, you discover how to live a spiritual life.

2. WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY? You listen within for your own definition of spirituality. Your deeper longings are your compass on the search.

3. WHAT IS THE PATH TO GOD? Many paths lead to spiritual freedom and peace. You have a rich array of gems from which to draw illumination: the world's religious traditions; mythology; philosophy; psychology; healing methods; scientific wisdom; your own experience. String a necklace all your own.

4. WHAT IS SACRED? Everything is sacred—your body, mind, psyche, heart, and soul. The world is sacred, too, with all of its light and darkness. Bring the exiled and unloved parts of yourself back into the fold.

5. WHAT IS THE TRUTH? The truth is like the horizon—forever ahead of you, forever changing its shape and color. Let your spiritual path change and diverge as you journey toward it. You live many lives in one lifetime. The truth accommodates your growth.

What was needed to uphold the old spirituality and to educate its followers is quite different from what we need now to guide us on a spiritual path. To forge our own way through life's deeper terrain requires different perceptions and skills than following someone else's directives. To pursue personal happiness here on earth, and to sanctify the human body, is a different sort of quest than the search for redemption in an afterlife. And the task

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Jonathan Levi

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Entropy and birth control being what they are, things will fall apart for observant Jews in the next millennium, as they have since the first Exile. The settlements in Williamsburg and Boro Park will dissolve as certainly as those on the West Bank will. This is the good news. As the Halachah that has been rejected by all but a small minority of Jews fades away, as the secular faith in the State of Israel continues to disintegrate as all nationalisms must, a new Judaism will be revealed that, lo and behold, has been there all along. It will be the Judaism of Jewish culture, an arkful of art, music, philosophy, and mythology, as rich as any sailed by the Aegeans or the Norsemen. Better yet, this treasure will be revealed, not just to the Jews, but to the world: Maimonides will be read along with Heidegger, "The Man Who Shot Cain" will play in the jukebox next to "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," and Lilith will take her place in the pantheon next to Pallas Athene. ❑

of understanding and healing the troublesome parts of our own self and the world, as opposed to punishing or repressing the darker parts of human nature, asks us to fold disciplines like psychology and healing into the spiritual path.

While twenty-first-century spirituality traverses much of the same territory that spiritual pilgrims have crossed throughout the ages, it also brings us into uncharted lands and presents each of us with disturbing paradoxes: If I focus too much on my own authority, won't I veer in the direction of narcissism? But if I neglect myself, what will I really have of value to give to others? If I turn my attention to my body, what will keep me from becoming vain, or materialistic, or obsessed with the body's inevitable demise? But isn't the body the temple of the soul? If I work on opening my heart, what's to stop me from becoming an emotional mess? Conversely, won't I dry up if I concentrate exclusively on spirit? With so many ways to worship, seek, and heal, what will prevent me from flitting like a butterfly from fad to fad to fad, never landing long enough to settle into wisdom?

It's important to swing back and forth between these questions. Somewhere, in the middle, between the old, homogenized, autocratic ways and the new, diverse, and individualistic ways, is a clear path through the paradoxes. The spirituality of the next millennium will not offer easy answers, miracle cures, or ten ways to get something for nothing. It will not provide a magic carpet ride back to nonexistent times when indigenous cultures lived in peace and harmony. Nor will it promise a dawning age of instantaneous enlightenment when divine intervention will save humanity from itself. Rather, seekers in the twenty-first century and beyond will be given the opportunity to create a personal and practical synthesis of the world's wisdom traditions into a living theology that honors the full picture of human spirituality: our soul and our body, our mind and our heart, our individuality and our communion with others. ❑

Reginald Gibbons

Refuge

Beyond the suburbs, armed
bulldozers crush the libraries
of wildflowers, religions of
the butterflies are suppressed,
hamburgers force their way even
into the forests that never
before had been cut, they legislate new
districts of the bewildered star
fields of trillium that constellate
the black ground ... However,
farther in, farther for a little while
yet, the sister saplings still do
not tell their myth, but whisper
warnings to each other, blue-
feathered heads look up from their
reading of acorns, tall leafed
beings breathe out benevolence
and one grass stem no
different from innumerable
others happens to move so
that I see it and it is
singular, it sways gracefully,
alone now, alone, unafraid,
the center of the world.

Dream the Dream

Marianne Williamson

I am hopeful about the new millennium because I believe hope is a moral imperative. If the millennium signifies nothing more than billions of people *thinking* there's a shift occurring, that alone can change things; this millennial moment can interrupt the flow of history.

Obviously we stand at a crossroads. Humanity at its best exalts the dream of a loving world, and at no other time in history have we had more technological know-how with which to build that dream. Yet our collective dream is not yet sacred, or reverential, or even deeply peaceful. From the rejection of nuclear test ban treaties to the genetic alteration of our food supply to consistent assaults on the biosphere and upon each other, as a race of people we are displaying mass behavior that is maladaptive for human survival.

Gandhi said that the problem with humanity is that we are not in our right minds. Yet we have the power, in any moment, to change our minds and thus change our lives. I see more people every day moving their lives in a more spiritual direction: putting the values of peace before the values of war, emphasizing forgiveness over judgment, choosing to love rather than giving in to fear. This subtle yet massive revolution in the way we think and behave means we are on a journey from who we used to be to who we are capable of becoming.

Just as a newborn child emerges from a physical womb, a new world emerges from the womb of higher consciousness. Let us be pregnant with a world where there is no poverty, no war, no hunger and no violence. Let us be pregnant with a planet that is ruled by love. Enough of us have conceived the vision; now how many of us will endure the pregnancy, carry it through, and labor on its behalf?

Do we support the ways of fear, or do we support the ways of love? Are we willing to risk the disapproval of our peers if we choose not to toe the more traditional fear-based line?

If the answer is yes, then miracles will happen. Angels are summoned to the side of the dreamer, who dreams of a better world. We are not alone. We are being watched. And when we love, we are invisibly aided. Wait and see. I believe the time is nigh. ❑

Marianne Williamson is the best-selling author of A Return to Love, The Healing of America, *and* Enchanted Love.

Heather McHugh

Depend

Against a distant spill of glitter (it's
a trembling nation) forty-five or more
appointed red and purple blasts

make dandelion-drift: the little shocks devolve upon
an old dissolving borderline: the topical upon
the typical, the shimmer on the shine. Such small

flash chemistries and colored concentrations! (So much
eye-salt, mind-mote, aneurysm. Blink,
and all America comes down

to asterisks, a tiny stripe across the Straits.)
Even the whaleful Straits appear
uncertain, in the face of the serious altitudes: that sheer

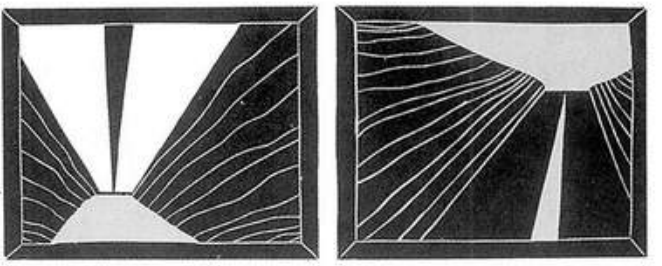
Olympic imperturbability, ten townships high,
attended by impressive skies
of its own manufacture. Doesn't it care

what we call great? our years of sex, our love
of centuries? Its root is fire, its flower ice.
Its order of immediacy's endless: that's enough

to put a damper on the human holiday. The baby
spends a lifetime, and the president his penny, on just
this single evening in America. Port Angeles's seed

is blown. The mountainsides go "poof!" and all
the seven seas are one. (The tininess
is many.)

Securing the Future



Thomas Moore

For many of us, the current global situation is disillusioning and depressing. It isn't easy to enter a new millennium with hope when atrocity is the order of the day and corruption rampant the world over, even at home. The temptation is to imagine some future ideal world or to focus on making oneself a superperson not contaminated by the paltry ways of a materialistic world. The current renaissance of spirituality has plenty of sentimental escapism in it and a heavy dose of narcissism. These two qualities are enough to keep our social ills in place, for self-serving corruption flourishes in the presence of its opposite—self-serving innocence.

While there is a place for the prophet whose job it is to criticize the status quo, the monk who makes his or her contribution by withdrawing, and the utopian who provides models of experiment, most of us can contribute to a change for the better by acting locally and recognizing that small is beautiful. For one thing, many people making honest and heartfelt changes add up to a movement or an example and can have real effect. For another, people who stand apart from the majority for their courage and honesty are noticeable and encourage others in their own directions.

We don't need grand plans of social change as much as we need the imagination to look deeper into our situation. We have a habit of feeling the pressure of our problems and, without thinking enough, calling for quantitative studies and programs of action. We don't realize that this kind of response is part of the problem. We make a modern response to a modern problem without recognizing that modernism is the issue.

For ten years I have been saying that our underlying failure is a loss of soul, by which I mean forgetfulness of our deep and simple humanity. What does it take to hold a marriage together, keep children from self-destruction, enjoy safety and civility in our communities, make us mindful of our responsibilities to the natural world, and keep us from entering wars? Not some common vision of spiritual truth, but a way of life that constantly feeds our souls. It is when we are impoverished at a deep level, when fantasy goes berserk, and when emotions have no containment that we become rabidly patriotic or antipatriotic, and so full of rage that we search for victims.

The deep soul needs certain specific things just to keep a balance and to avoid desperation. It needs real friendship; belonging in a family that need not be perfect; a feeling of connectedness in a community whether that is a neighborhood, region, or town; beauty, which traditional teachings have long said tames the aggressive spirit; recognition, opportunities to be creative, and a sense of personal presence, which all counter the narcissism that is endemic to modern secularism; and sexual fulfillment and deep pleasures, not just substitute entertainments.

In my travels I have discovered that the first thing men and women do when they wake up to themselves and begin to care for their deep reality is to change jobs. Our entire approach to work—the loss of craft, the tempo, the environment, the emphasis on productivity, and above all the work ethic by which we justify our lives by being busy and working hard—numbs the soul. In our cities we are still hard at work tearing down beautiful buildings of the last century, which typically have features of beauty and personality, and replacing them with functional boxes that disregard the soul's defining need for beautiful, comforting, embracing architecture.

In their new book, *Gardening for the Future of the Earth*, Howard-Yana Shapiro and John Harrison say that the future of the world lies in gardening, and I believe it. Gardening gives us contemplation, beauty, nature, body, and honest work. We don't need much else. Making a real home might accomplish the same things. For me, playing the piano every day and doing work I love keep me sane.

The point is, in our own lives we could reject modernist values and expectations by doing work that fills us up, raising children to be real people and not cogs in a cultural machine, making music and painting landscapes and portraits, reading only worthy books and magazines, knowing our neighbors and living with the highest, most positive, contributive ethical sensibilities. Problems would then solve themselves from the heart that is engaged in a real life rather than from a mind that is always trying to be clever and controlling.

Our society is neurotic, even in much that seems creative, such as technologies that have no connection to the heart and do not serve our education in civility. It makes no sense to adapt to those neuroses and to trim ourselves to fit modern expectations. What a person needs more than anything is the opportunity to be an original presence, a new thing, a challenge to all, and a source of inspiration. ❑

Thomas Moore is the author of Care of the Soul *(1992),* Soulmates *(1990), and* The Reenchantment of Everyday Life *(1996). His most recent book is* The Soul of Sex *(1998), published by Harper Collins.*

ILLUSTRATION BY BENNY ALBA

The Coming Spiritual Revival

Tony Campolo

To all who study social trends, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that a spiritual revival is under way in America, but this revival has its own peculiarities. First of all, it is highly personal and somewhat anti-institutional. Secondly, this new spirituality is ready to question twentieth-century hyperpositivism and instead embrace beliefs in the miraculous. Healing is at the core of this new spirituality, especially in those cases for which science has exhausted all hopes for cures.

While there are numerous other characteristics of this emerging spirituality, ecology most certainly must be seen as one of its dominant themes. The emerging spirituality that will mark the twenty-first century most definitely will promote a personalistic rapport with nature, and this in turn will foster a reverence both for the biosphere as well as for the nonliving elements of the cosmos. A mystical environmentalism is developing, based on an awareness that even atoms are held together by spiritual forces, and it will move us beyond the utilitarian approach that characterizes so much of present-day environmental concerns.

Those of us who are witnessing the dawning of this post modern spirituality only wish that Francis of Assisi and Martin Buber were still with us. These two, more than any of us, might be able to give verbal expression to what is happening. Separated by close to a thousand years, these two religious geniuses would be able to interpret this new spiritual consciousness for those who want to understand it.

It was Buber who taught us that we are capable of addressing one another with a spiritual connectedness that he called "I-thou encounters." In such encounters, Buber claims, each finds "the other" no longer to be either an object or a thing. In "I-thou" encounters, ordinary relationships are lifted up and transformed into a kind of ecstatic communion in which each enters into the subjectivity of the other. God, who is the empowering connector between the two, enables each to enter into a oneness with the other that transcends time, space, and matter. God is what "happens" when an "I-thou" encounter "happens."

Such sacred relationships on the human level, according to Buber, prepare us for "I-thou" relationships on other levels. Buber spoke of sensing such encounters with his cat. I can relate to that! Although some of my evangelical critics have mocked me for it, I myself have had such an encounter with a humpback whale. It was during a whale watch off Provincetown, Massachusetts. As the whale came alongside our boat, our eyes met—and it happened!

Buber suggested that we could go beyond "I-thou" encounters with animals. He proposed that there could be such mystical subjective encounters even with that which we consider to be inanimate. I think Buber would have much in common with another Jewish rabbi who, centuries ago, caused his disciples to marvel when He talked to the winds and waves in the midst of a wild storm on the sea of Galilee. He told them to quiet down and be still—and they obeyed Him. This kind of spiritual connectedness with nature was very much a part of Buber's worldview.

Martin Buber also could have found a soul mate in Francis of Assisi had they been contemporaries. Reading what each had to say about the natural environment leaves little doubt that both were aware of the spirituality of the universe which the rest of us are only now beginning to rediscover. *The Canticle to the Sun*, written by Francis, shows all the empathy with nature that Buber promised in "I-thou" relations with the world. However, Francis saw that the presence of "The Spirit" in such mystical subjectivity had therapeutic powers. Francis believed in and practiced healing of the body when connectedness between persons is imbued with God's presence. Francis experienced such healing powers himself, and I do not think Buber would have had difficulty in accepting their validity.

If all of this seems beyond the realm of possibility and rationality, it may be because we are still mired in the twentieth century. The postmodern world of the twenty-first century may be filled with signs and wonders that go beyond anything that we now hope or think.

Albert Einstein once said, "There are only two ways of understanding the world. One is to believe that nothing is miraculous, and the other is to believe that everything is miraculous."

In the end, Einstein chose the second alternative. He was a man of the twentieth century, but he was better prepared to live in the twenty-first century than most of us who will actually have to live there. ❑

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SPIRIT *in the* NEW MILLENNIUM

Millennial Possibilities

Neale Donald Walsch



ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD ROSS

Change is inevitable and that is the only thing in life that never changes. The key question is how and who will construct the change. In the twenty-first century, the human race is going to decide that change will serve the entire human community.

In the past, we did not cast ourselves as shapers of our evolution but as witnesses to it. Consider cell phones or pagers: what could have been a wonderful change now actually enslaves us as people find that there is no place they can go to be away—their offices tell them that they must be in touch by pager or cell phone wherever they go. What is happening now is that we are choosing to play a participant's role: we are evolving in ways that we choose to evolve.

The entire human race is moving towards what Barbara Marx Hubbard calls "conscious evolution," which will involve reconstructing our major institutions—including politics, culture, spirituality, education, religion, and economics—all in ways that better reflect our grand idea of who we are and who we can become. This movement is coming not a moment too soon: if we don't act now, we may find ourselves evolving into extinction because of the unwise use of the instruments and tools that we ourselves have developed.

We are choosing to play a participant's role: we are evolving in ways that we choose to evolve.

We are finally coming to the awareness that our society does not work. We are looking at our failures with a greater sense of impatience, and are unwilling to let these failures repeat. So, for example, we are no longer willing to be patient with an economic system which gives a tiny percentage of the world's population the ability to consume an obscene amount of the world's wealth, nor with a political system which intentionally disenfranchises a far greater number of people than it enfranchises, nor with a religious system which causes us to be afraid of the deity and of Highest Power in the universe, nor with a social system which manages to separate us from each other through class structure and categories.

These separations between us have created the mistaken notion that some of us are somehow superior to our fellows and therefore deserve to be winners at the game of life at the expense of others who we imagine really deserve to be losers. Partly this is based on the notion that there is not enough for everyone. If we realized there was enough we would not have to compete with everyone and the idea of winners and losers would disappear.

What will disappear in the twenty-first century are these central and distorting cultural myths:

1. The myth of separation
2. The myth of insufficiency
3. The myth of superiority

In their place a new awareness will emerge: that we are not separate at all, that we are all One; that there is enough for everyone if only we construct a system that allows us to

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Pearl Abraham

Pearl Abraham is the author of The Romance Reader *and* Giving Up America.

Some sharpen ten pencils, others read poetry. For some, daily sameness is the requirement. Writers get started in various ways. I like taking my first cup of coffee at my desk, a slow waking. Some mornings, looking at where I've left off the day before, what comes to mind is the prayer before praying, the words that are at the commencement of the silent prayer, and which for years I recited daily.

"Open my lips, my lord, and my mouth will say your praises."

The passivity written into the statement itself, "my mouth," not I, "will say your praises," implies a certain helplessness in the matter, an acknowledgment that only with divine help is the recital possible. Writers have written of a similar feeling, of moments in which they are mere mediums through whom the story is told, renouncing their own powers. Henry James' *donne* has been interpreted this way.

There is a more rational explanation for such experiences: intense concentration. In Jewish services, though the text is entirely circumscribed, the level of concentration while praying is what makes it a uniquely creative act. Ascetics of the past tried to achieve a heightened state of being though fasting, immersion in ice water, and walking on hot coals. For hasidim nowadays, the mikvah serves as a preparatory ritual. And then there is the prayer asking for help, "Open my lips, my lord," and having said this, one's lips suddenly bear the weight of significance, which is probably a good part of the intention. With heavy lips, the words that follow don't spill forth quite so glibly.

On the first day of the new year, the millennium, my daily prayer (or wish) might be the same: "Open my lips, my Lord." And perhaps I'll add the last line of a poem by Gerard Manly Hopkins: "Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain." What I'll be asking for are those moments in which everything falls into place, as if of itself, with me just sitting there, concentrating. ❑

share equitably; and that there is no such thing as superiority. These new awarenesses will produce a dramatic step forward towards heaven on Earth which Highest Power has always told us could be achieved and has been trying to communicate to us from the beginning.

As our perspective changes, what was once viewed as utopian or unrealistic will be seen as possible and then realistic. What was described as utopian in the past will be seen as the product of advanced thinking by people who were giving voice to what now will become the perspective of the human race. Literature that points to a grander and better tomorrow manages consistently to find its way to the best-seller list because the world is hungry for this message—a sure and certain sign that the human race has lost patience with its past failures and is now engaged in a search for a new path.

From the beginning of time we've wanted nothing more deeply than to love and be loved

Though I am very hopeful about the twenty-first century, the reality of change at an exponential rate is already producing social, political, and spiritual chaos in our lives. That chaos will increase in the next twenty years. But the chaos is good and will be followed by periods of advancement for the human race, now more rapid than we've ever seen before.

The chaos will be caused by those who are stuck in the traditions and mindsets of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries and who refuse to let go of their possessions and their ideas of superiority. As a result, we will find a split in the personality of human beings, between those who find comfort in this sense of superiority and those who know that we are all One.

Those who have already made this switch to a higher consciousness will feel that change is not coming fast enough. There will be lots of push and pull between those who are stuck in the past and those who feel upset that the pace of change is not quicker, and this tension is going to be very disconcerting for those whose highest desire is for serenity in their lives. It will be a time when the world badly needs spiritual healers and spiritual mentors and what I call COIs, centers of influence in the marketplace of ideas—and their task will be to be centers of peacefulness in the midst of the chaos, people who can explain what is going on and can help explain both why change is necessary and why it isn't coming faster.

From the beginning of time we've wanted nothing more deeply than to love and be loved, and yet we've put into place every cultural story, every restriction, every nuance, every rule, every tribal custom that we could imagine or construct that would tell us who and how we might love and who we might not love. Today, more and more of us are impatient with these distortions and are giving ourselves permission to find new ways to increase our capacities for love. In the new millennium, people will be more and more open to holding onto their own highest ideals as each of us will be willing to support each other in saying our deepest truths. ❑

Hope, Yes; Optimism, No

Matthew Fox



I am not an optimist when it comes to our species waking up at this millennial time. However, I am not cynical or pessimistic either. What I am is *hopeful*. What are some signs that give me hope?

First, the very depths of the peril we face. I believe that nothing moves humanity like necessity. So I take hope when Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute says we have twelve years left to change our ways as a species—provided we can educate people about the reality of our ecological peril. That means getting people out of their addictions to making money, watching TV, and succumbing to the seductions of our society's multiple distractions.

I also take hope from the spirit within people, which includes the potential to be awakened by awe, wonder, gratitude, and reverence. If we could make awe, wonder, gratitude, and reverence more available to more people we would be nurturing what Thich Nhat Hahn calls the "seeds of peace" and what Erich Fromm calls "biophilia."

Studying the new creation story and relating it to our professions can assist us in awakening awe and wonder. I have come to appreciate today's biology which teaches that we all have a reptilian brain inside of us. It makes sense and even helps to explain much of human history. The crocodile comes out time and again. Much of capitalist energy, unfortunately, is based on crocodile energy. The reptile in us sees things as win/lose, us/them, private property at all costs.

How do we tame the crocodile energy now that it has been named for us? Meditation can teach us to put a leash on it; the growing availability of meditation practices is another sign of hope. Maybe the great genius of the Buddha was to have shown us some ways to *let go* and *let be*. Meditation can move us beyond the crocodile to other brain patterns of which we are capable, such as the nurturing ones from the mammal inside us. To link the intellectual brain with all its power of imagination and reason to the crocodile brain helps to explain a lot of human history. But not the future. We must tame the crocodile brain and link the intellectual brain more to the heart. From there will come wisdom, not raw knowledge and destructive power.

The rise of interest in spirituality is also a sign of hope. Spirituality has the potential to make us warriors and lovers, prophets and mystics. I find that many in the present youth generation are interested in spirituality even if not in organized religion. I think these numbers will grow.

The return of a sense of community also gives me hope. In the Newtonian and Cartesian worldview community was excluded because we were told atoms were impenetrable and in competition with each other (much like crocodiles) and the universe itself was a machine. How much community can one have with a cold machine? But today's physics is all about interconnectivity. Therefore a deep sense of kinship with all beings, celebrating that in ritual and living it out (compassion is an expression of our interconnectivity), gives me hope that community will return as a goal and a starting point to give us strength.

Deep ecumenism, or the coming together of our spiritual traditions at the level of *practice* and not mere theological position papers, is also a hopeful sign. Spirituality is about action and acts of compassion. It is not a psychic coping mechanism. It is the way we mirror the unending beauty of the universe.

Despite all these signs of hope, however, I come back to the facts that confront us: the disappearance of our fisheries (fourteen of our seventeen fisheries essentially fished out); the failure of industrial agriculture (26 billion tons of topsoil being lost yearly); ozone depletion; forests disappearing at alarming rates; human populations destroying 27,000 species per year; the widening gulf between very poor and very privileged societies and individuals. These realities cannot be denied much longer. When we face them, grieve them, mourn what is being lost—then we may have the energy and the will to imagine alternatives and create them. There lies our greatest hope: creativity is the one thing our species has going for it. Can we have an awakening of creativity? Can we give birth to new forms of education, worship, work? We must. ❑

Matthew Fox is president of the University of Creation Spirituality and cochair of Naropa University, both in Oakland, California. He is the author of twenty-two books including Original Blessing *and* Sins of the Spirit, Blessings of the Flesh.

ILLUSTRATION BY RUTH SOFAIR KETLER

The Internet Versus the Sabbath

Amitai Etzioni

The clash between the so-called liberating forces of globalization and the conservative forces of tradition came face to face last May. On May 27, 1999, the board of the National Association of Securities Dealers (the parent organization of Nasdaq) announced that it planned to open an evening trading session for stocks between 5:30 PM and 9 or 10 PM. Nasdaq president Richard Ketchum added, "There may come a day when we trade twenty-four hours." He did not say that the "24/7 week," as they say in Silicon Valley, is already here. One can now trade twenty-four hours, seven days a week (including holidays), on the Internet. One day earlier the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the board that guides Reform Jews, voted to call on its members to return to the observance of traditional rituals such as observing the Sabbath, wearing a skullcap, and keeping kosher. Numerous other religious groups, including practically all Christian denominations, already have in place drives to renew their religious commitments.

At first it may seem that there is no conflict between trading around the clock and religious renewal. One can wheel and deal five days and nights (even six) and rest on the seventh day, as the Lord prescribes. Nor is the conflict between commerce and family, community and religion, a new one. At the very onset of industrialization, concerns were already raised that having looms at home might entice people to work "after hours." That conflict between work and home intensified as many mothers followed most fathers to labor outside the household. Cyberspace, however, presents a qualitative jump in the scope of opportunities and temptations offered, because it knows no clock nor calendar.

For those who seek to trade or labor within the Internet's rapidly expanding confines, any time is as good as any other. While in the old world, banks still close some hours and days, rapidly rising e-banks are operational at all times. And while out there some shops stay open late nights and weekends, only on the Internet can one safely assume that it matters not what time it is or day or date. Nobody needs to ask about the Internet mailman's rest day; email flows into your PC seamlessly, nonstop. In short, cyberspace has neither Sabbath nor holidays, not even Christmas or Yom Kippur. It stands to eradicate whatever is left from what sociologists call "institutionalized" barriers, those that are used to protect, at least to some extent, the sacred from the secular, the social and spiritual from the economic.

All these new opportunities to trade, bank, and shop have rushed at us so quickly that we have barely had a chance to examine their full significance. Most new books exploring cyberspace and globalization (including those by Thomas Friedman and Benjamin Barber) proceed in ways that several TIKKUN authors (such as Roger Friedland, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, David C. Korten, and myself) find profoundly mistaken. These books associate the onrush of enriching choice with the West, and suggest that other parts of the world resist the spread of the Internet, and more generally, of globalization, out of traditionalism and parochialism. In short, those not enamored with cyperpossibilities are viewed as parochial if not worse. Viewed in this way, it's small wonder the Nasdaq move was greeted with so little fanfare. In contrast, the rabbis' call was greeted with the mix of consternation and criticism that is rained on those who try to roll the clock back in the name of tradition.

As I see it, the renewed call to redouble our efforts to secure room in our lives for family, community, and religious life is not simply traditional and certainly not "backward." It is not a simple call to return to the past, to observe rituals and tenets "because that's the way we've always done things" or "because that is the way the Lord or the scripture commands." Instead, we face *more* choice; we are asked to examine which rituals we will adapt and which new rituals we will develop to protect life beyond commerce and work in cyberspace. We look to define turfs where cell phones will be turned off, and bringing laptops will be considered inappropriate. In seeking such places away from the glare of computer screens, we are not limiting ourselves to the shade of old olive trees, but are choosing what to plant and cultivate to replace them.

If we need a symbol for the new world of chosen rituals it may be the lowly dinner. Unless Nasdaq traders plan to have dinner at 11 PM or so, they are extremely unlikely to share a meal with their families on weekdays—unless they choose to miss the evening session. Most of the rest of us have long faced the decision of whether, given our busy households and conflicting schedules, we plan to have shared dinners—at least on some agreed days of the week. (Such meals surely no longer just happen because food is

Amitai Etzioni's most recent book is The Limits of Privacy *(Basic Books, 1999). He teaches sociology at The George Washington University.*

always served at a given time and everybody knows they are expected at the dinner table.) Indeed, additional deliberate choices are involved: those who seek dinners that are occasions where family members can truly communicate with one another must formulate "policies" on matters such as turning off the TV, not answering the phone, and staying at the table until an agreed time.

The same now increasingly holds for weekends and holidays. Cyberspace makes it even more necessary than in the past to decide where to draw the line. While it has long been possible to bring home briefcases bulging with work, the Internet makes it much easier and hence more tempting to trade from home or the beach, to call up the office, or to exchange work-related email messages.

The fact that selection, rather than a simple return to tradition, is what we now face is evident when we compare those rituals we seek to uphold or adapt versus those we choose to ignore. These are decisions we increasingly make on the basis of what seems meaningful to us rather than what is handed down to us from earlier generations. Observing the Sabbath thus may well be one of those rituals that is meaningful to many because they see the virtue of securing time away from economic activities. At the same time, following the Jewish tradition of purification in a public bathhouse for women after they have their period may well be one of those rituals that lacks the same contemporary conviction for most—to put it mildly.

I am not suggesting that tradition will play no role. It is one major source of options people consider, rather than *the* depository of the answer. In effect, religion may be viewed as a place where earlier approaches were preserved so that we now can re-embrace them—not merely because that is the way we are commanded by religious authorities or what we learned from our forefathers and mothers, but because we find them compelling and meaningful, because they speak to us. The way people plan weddings these days is a case in point. Various alternative rituals are considered, from traditional nuptials to newly composed vows, tailored to the particular couple.

Some of these decisions people are able to render as individuals and as families. For instance, whether or not—and when—to attend church. Other choices, though, require communal dialogues and shared decisions; for instance, whether committee and board meetings, which are increasingly conducted on listservs, will be conducted only on work days and during "regular" hours (whatever that means) or if they will go the way of twenty-four-hour stock trading.

The conflict is not between choice and tradition. Rather, cyberspace poses a new opportunity for us to choose how much space we are willing to dedicate to spiritual, cultural, and social activities in the coming digital century. ❑



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Judaism for a New Age

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

A new consciousness is emerging among the Jewish people which will flourish in the coming millennium.

• This millennium will bring a new ecumenism to Judaism and to the Jewish people. I've already seen a growing centrism in the Orthodox world, an openness to including in *clal Yisra'el* (the community of the Jewish people) everyone from the Orthodox to the Reform—and secular Jews as well. Of course, there will be some tension between those who want a more flexible definition of Judaism and those who want to insist on more rigid paths. But all this is part of what it is to be a living organism. You need some part that is brittle and stiff like the skeleton to give shape and hold up the other parts.

The world will need some of Judaism's insights even more in the new millennium.

• There are many signs that the ceiling that locked Judaism into a halachic behaviorism (a focus on specified rules and behaviors) is lifting. We have people learning meditation in all corners of the Jewish world and people who are interested in the somatic area of serving God, so that religious services not only are about addressing the cortex, but can include sensation and bodily movement.

• A new generation is arising in Israel and in Islamic countries that seeks a renewal of religious traditions in positive ways that will bring greater openness and greater respect for "the other." There is more energy toward peacemaking that speaks to the mythic and shadow regions of people's feelings. That new energy now makes possible a recent article by Rabbi Froman, a founder of Gush Emunim and chaplain of the Knesset, calling for Jerusalem to be an international city and the capital of the world. When I called for this in 1967 it was seen as a very extreme position, but today this kind of idea can come from inside the power circles.

• Even the information superhighway is being sacramentalized by various religious groups. In the future the Web will have an impact on the consciousness of even the most fundamentalist elements of the religious world.

The world will need some of Judaism's insights even more in the new millennium.

• The world is speeding up, and that speedup has hurtful consequences for many. The world needs Shabbat—our Jewish Sabbath—in its fullness. There's much to learn from our calendar and its focus on the celebration of the seasons, and in our notion of having a monthly moment of inner repentance and correction (what we call Yom Kippur *katan*, a small day of atonement).

• The world needs a new understanding of food, one that incorporates the notion of eco-kosher that we developed in Jewish renewal: eating only those foods that have been grown in ecologically sensitive ways that promote sustainability and ethical industry behavior.

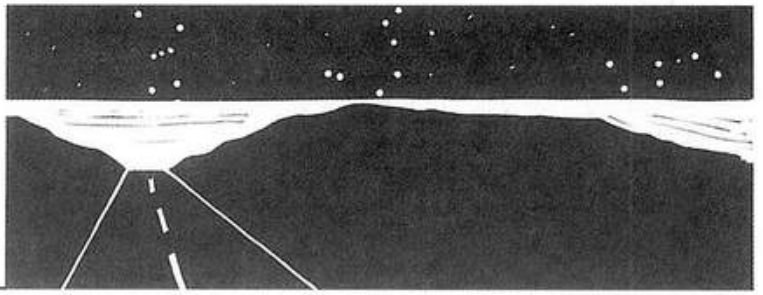
• People are beginning to open to a new way of approaching sacred texts, "myth-rush," that has emerged from the Jewish tradition of midrash. This is the rush that we get out of the myth when people personally grapple with possible elaborations of the text, filling in the blanks and creating contexts that incorporate their own deepest psychological and spiritual wisdom as they interpret ancient material. Many people worry about Jews leaving Jewish arenas and being "lost" to other spiritual traditions like Buddhism—but these people don't realize that in some ways these Jews are spiritual ambassadors to these other traditions and that Judaism is also learning from these other traditions.

Jews have often provided the connectors between different spiritual traditions—and today continue to function as bridges between them. I want to invite non-Jews to study Judaism more seriously so that they can learn from us as much as we have learned from them. That happened with Wayne Muller, whose book *The Sabbath* was enriched by spending Shabbat with us in the Jewish renewal movement. Spiritual writers often study the texts of different religious traditions, or they see the religious practice of monks who have built their entire lives around their religious practice. But they get a very disembodied experience as a result. If they came to the Jewish world, they might get the flavor of a religious tradition for householders, for people who are living normal lives and nevertheless trying to build a relevant spirituality, and this is an experience that they and others could learn quite a bit from. ❑

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi has been at the forefront of pioneering Jewish spiritual renewal. His most recent book is From Age-ing to Sage-ing *(Time Warner, 1998).*

SPIRIT *in the* NEW MILLENNIUM

Light the Spark



Jim Wallis

How do Christians receive the new millennium? Is it with the expectation of a "Second Coming"?

First, on that Second Coming thing. Not a big issue at the moment. The religious right doesn't seem to think the Second Coming of Christ is imminent, seeing how much money they all are putting into their houses and the stock market. Plus, they're still trying to take over the Republican Party in several states and who would be left to run things if the Christians were suddenly all caught up together in the clouds? Some conservative Christians still sing "This World is Not My Home, I'm Just a Passing Through," but their investments don't convince you of their sincerity. Y2K has created bigger worries.

As far as progressive Christians are concerned, we've generally held to the theology that says you should live by the values of the kingdom of God right now, rather than worrying about when and how it's all finally going to be implemented. In fact, that's the best way to implement it. So, not much Second Coming discussions going on during or after church.

Are we optimistic? Well, optimism is just bad theology. You know—the cup is half full, look on the bright side, let a smile be your umbrella, etc. It's hard to ask that of the mother we saw in the Burger King the other day helping her three children with their homework, between serving cars at her drive-in window. The politicians boast about her as the success story of welfare reform, but she's poorer than she was before, having to decide now between paying her rent or taking her kids to the doctor. So far, the rising tide has lifted all yachts and hasn't gotten to her boat yet.

But hope is a different matter altogether than optimism. And yes, there is talk about that. Theologically, hope is more a decision based upon what we know and trust about God's purposes. Archbishop Desmond Tutu used to say, "As Christians, we are prisoners of hope." Many just thought he was an eccentric old man, but he turned out to be right in South Africa. And Rosa Parks wasn't just tired that day in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1956 when she refused to give up her seat on a bus. No, she had been going to retreats and training conferences. She was part of a network all over the South, of people who believed that history was about to change. Mrs. Parks had been getting ready for the change, and just happened to be the one who lit the spark. You didn't think that the civil rights movement began in Montgomery, did you?

That's exactly what a lot of us are doing now.

We're getting ready.

We actually believe that the growing gap between the rich and the poor is like a 900-pound gorilla just waiting to be recognized.

We think that shopping can't satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart, and we're listening to the middle-class students who are volunteering far beyond what is necessary for a balanced résumé when they tell us they're looking for "connection" and "meaning."

Many of us are reading Isaiah when he tells us that sharing your bread with the hungry will cause your light to rise like the dawn and your healing to come quickly.

So we're not predicting the Second Coming, but we are getting ready for a new movement (now that's a word we've been afraid to use for a while), a movement of both justice and healing, led in large part by people of faith. We can't tell what the "movement time" is. It's not 1956 yet, but is it 1955, '53, '48, or '49? We don't know, but we feel something is coming.

We'll meet you other religious and spiritual folks in the movement, after our New Year's Eve parties, if the Second Coming or Y2K doesn't get us all first. ❑

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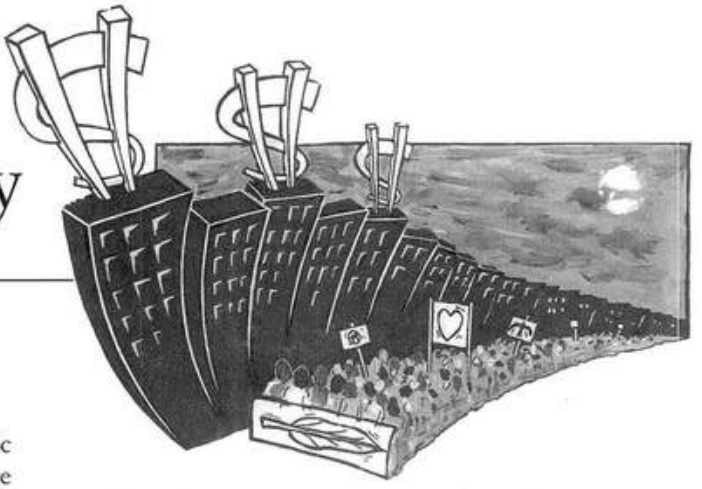
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Jim Wallis is editor in chief of Sojourners.

SOCIETY *in the* NEW MILLENNIUM

The Gift Economy



Jean Bethke Elshtain

Why is it that our presently heralded economic boom rings so hollow to so many? With the foes of freedom bested or on the defensive around the world, and the fearsome power of America's engine of production and consumption churning out products and profits round the clock; with unemployment at sustained record lows and little but buoyant predictions on what lies ahead, this should be a time of great optimism for Americans. But it is not. The figures on low trust, whether in one another or in government, are stalled out in the neighborhood of between two-thirds (who think you can't trust anybody) and three-fourths (who think you can't trust government).

If asked to speculate about what their own futures might look like, individuals oscillate between generalized optimism and bouts of personal disgust and despair. Many are working three or four jobs. Others have one very high-paid job but don't feel secure in it: the economy is too volatile and the work environment too radically individualistic for anyone to feel anything but insecure. Your job may disappear. Or go to someone who has negotiated his or her own contract in a way that gives them the edge because they require fewer benefits. This edge, for example, would go to singles rather than to those responsible for the rearing of children, who are both more encumbered and less mobile than their unattached counterparts.

Unattached is the way an increasing number of Americans want it. Don't get too hung up. Keep all your options open. Only get involved with "low maintenance" types. This extends to choice in animal companions, too. Cats are preferred over dogs. Cats can make do with a litter box, water, and kitty kibble for days on end. They don't need to be walked and most of them don't insist on interacting. They don't make you feel guilty when you go away. Dogs, it follows, are a big problem. Not as big as children, but getting uncomfortably close. They have "needs." They make "demands." They actually want a relationship.

But surely, in the deep of night, with the clock ticking and sleepless anxiety rising, all the thousands living out our current version of the American dream must be having second thoughts. Surveys suggest as much. We don't want anyone to hamper us. But we do think there's too much—well, too much of pretty much everything, including plain old-fashioned raw selfishness, out there. We do think family and friends are important. We just don't have much time for either. But we believe people *ought* to have time and to make time for family and friends. Abstractly, we endorse the idea. But we're glued to the spot. We can't figure out how to move our own selves closer to the abstract ideal of greater balance and decency and even modesty that we still, rather ephemerally, cling to.

Is there any way to speak to these inchoate discontents without sounding like a grumpy moralist who consistently "knows better" or just another dime-a-dozen guru of self-help? The answer is "yes," but it is a qualified yes which presupposes the existence of the sorts of networks and communities and solidarities that we can no longer take for granted. I am struck by how generously forthright are so many of the people I encounter, not necessarily in the academy (or it is rarer) but in churches and synagogues where, week after week, folks put their shoulders to the wheel in service to others and do it without trumpeting their virtues and without beating their chests. It is a remarkable thing. The market offers no rewards for this. From a strictly utilitarian perspective, much of this faith-based behavior can only be seen as irrational moral superorogationism, which just means going above and beyond what anyone reasonably expects for reasons no one reasonably understands.

But that isn't the perspective persons of faith in communities embrace. They are working with a different notion of *economy*. Let's call it a gift economy by contrast to a money economy. In the money economy's world of calculation of marginal utilities, giving of one's time and self makes little sense—unless you can run some sophisticated calculation that enables you to tote up monetized or other instrumental benefits down the road. If you can't do that, the giving of time and self constitutes a depletion, a loss. But from the perspective of a gift economy, one is enhanced, not denuded, through the giving of time and self. In giving, we create more rather than use something up. I submit that this latter view of economy, the economy of the gift, is scarcely glimpsable any longer and that when it is finally lost to view, much more will have been lost as well to our very humanity. ❑

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSH MACPHEE

Jean Bethke Elshtain is the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago and the author of many books, including Real Politics: At the Center of Everyday Life *(Johns Hopkins, 1998).*

For the Love of Life



David C. Korten

By his constant rituals, trances, ecstasies, and "journeys," the tribal shaman ensures that the relation between human society and the larger society of beings is balanced and reciprocal, and that the village never takes more from the living land than it returns to it.

—David Abrams, *The Spell of the Sensuous*

Violent climatic disasters, dying reefs, melting ice caps; the disappearance of once-familiar birds, butterflies, and frogs; falling sperm counts; dropping water tables; collapsing fisheries—it is as if the earth itself is attempting to send us a message we cannot ignore. In 1992, more than 1,600 senior scientists, including a majority of all living Nobel laureates in the sciences, heard the message and issued a *Warning to Humanity*: "human beings and the natural world are on a collision course … that may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know."

Dire messages come not only from the planet and Nobel laureates. The financial meltdown that recently swept through Asia, Russia, and Latin America tells of serious economic malfunction, as does evidence of extreme and rapidly growing economic inequality both within and between countries and the extreme deprivation of more than a billion people. Similarly, high rates of divorce, teen suicide, imprisonment, random violence, and other signs of social breakdown signal an alarming disintegration in the fabric of our own society.

The message, as we cross the threshold of the millennium, could scarcely be more clear. Humanity is experiencing a deepening environmental, economic, and social crisis.

Rather than address the problem, those in positions of formal power point to encouraging short-term statistics on economic growth, rising stock prices, and employment expansion as proof that all is well. They seem not to realize that in the pursuit of money, we have forgotten how to live. Worse, we have created institutions that are destroying life for the sole end of making money.

David C. Korten is author of The Post-Corporate World *and board chair of* Yes! *magazine.*

Reduced to basics, our future hangs on a profound choice between life and money—or, in the more biblical sense, between God and mammon. It should be the simplest of choices. Money is nothing but an abstraction of no substance or intrinsic worth. Life is the essence of our being, the breath of God, a miracle of creation.

The cause of our crisis is largely self-evident. Our economy is ruled by global corporations and financial institutions that measure success by the rate at which the life energies of people and the natural capital of the planet are being converted into money to inflate the financial assets of the already very wealthy. The task ahead, what Thomas Berry calls the Great Work, is both simple and profound. We must transform societies dedicated to the love of money into societies dedicated to the love of life—and we must do so quickly before environmental and social disintegration bring us to a point of no return.

By all indications, we cannot afford to wait for constructive leadership from the failed institutions of corporation and state. Our hope lies with the deep, but largely unnoticed, pressures for positive change that are building within global civil society. Much like the stress created by the shifting of tectonic plates deep within the earth before a great earthquake, these forces remain largely invisible. Yet much as geological forces burst forth to create violent earthquakes, we know that accumulating social forces can also burst forth with incredible transforming power. We experienced such forces at work a decade ago in the breakup of the Soviet Union, the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, and the end of apartheid in South Africa.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSH MacPHEE

We, the people of planet Earth, face our moment of truth. Our future, indeed our very survival, depends on awakening and channeling these latent energies toward the creation of a life-affirming human civilization that embodies the values and inspiration of a *new story* given practical expression by a *new politics* and a *new economy.*

A New Story

The foundation of the Great Work is a new story of the miracle of cosmic creation narrated by the great storytellers of our time—writers such as Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme, Elisabet Sahtouris, Joanna Macy, Mae-Wan Ho, Lynn Margulies, Matthew Fox, and others. Drawing data and inspiration from the leading edge of contemporary scientific and religious inquiry, the new story awakens us to the sacred wonder of a living cosmos embarked on a great journey of self-discovery.

The journey began 15 billion years ago when all the energy and mass of our known universe burst forth from a point smaller than the head of a pin and spread as dispersed energy particles, the stuff of creation, across the vastness of space. With the passing of time these particles, self-organized into atoms, swirled into great clouds that eventually formed into galaxies, then coalesced into stars that grew, died, and were reborn as new stars, star systems, and planets. The cataclysmic energies unleashed by the births and deaths of billions of suns converted simple atoms into ever more complex atoms and molecules—at each step opening new possibilities for the growth and evolution of the whole.

More than 11 billion years later, at least one among the countless planets of the cosmos gave birth to tiny but enterprising living organisms that launched the planet's first great age of invention. They discovered the processes of fermentation, photosynthesis, and respiration, which provided the building blocks for what was to follow. They learned to share their discoveries with one another through the exchange of genetic material and, in so doing, created the planet's first global communication system. With time they discovered how to join in cooperative unions to create complex multicelled organisms with capacities far beyond those of the individual cells of which they were composed. Our own bodies, comprised of some 30 to 70 trillion individual living cells plus an even larger number of assorted beneficial bacteria and fungi, are an extraordinary example of the complex consequences of this experimentation. Continuously experimenting, creating, building, life transformed the planet's very substance into a web of living beings of astonishing variety, beauty, awareness, and capacity for intelligent choice.

How different this unfolding epic is from the old story of the Newtonian scientific tradition, which tells us matter is the only reality, life is an accident, consciousness is an illusion, and the cosmos is a clockworks defined by purely mechanical relationships, created and set in motion by a God who then left it to exhaust itself as its great spring winds down. This Newtonian story, which defined our view of ourselves and our potential throughout the industrial era, stripped life of meaning, mocked compassion as irrational, and left us with no moral purpose beyond seeking distractions from the terrible loneliness of our experience as conscious beings in a dead and uncaring cosmos. It gave us little reason to live, let alone to accept the responsibility of caring for one another and the living planet.

The new story calls on us to reexamine our most basic understanding of the nature of reality. Its cosmic metaphor is not the machine, but the organism. Its irreducible building block is not a particle, but a thought. Rather than banishing the spiritual intelligence and energy we know as God to some distant place beyond our experience, it recognizes God as integral to all being.

The new story recognizes life and consciousness as integral to the process of creation and even to the existence of matter itself.

The old story reduced life and consciousness to mere chance artifacts of material complexity. The new story recognizes life and consciousness as integral to the process of creation and even to the existence of matter itself. It suggests we were born to contribute to a great purpose in life's quest to know itself through a continuing unfolding toward ever higher levels of complexity and competence.

Affirming many ancient religious insights, the new story reveals the wonder of life's extraordinary capacity for creative self-organization, infuses our lives with meaning and possibility, and evokes a love and reverence for the whole of life, the miracle of our living planet, and the creative potentials of each person. It calls on us to accept responsibility for our presence on a living planet and to act as mindful stewards of God's creation.

The new story opens the way to healing the centuries-old breech between science and religion that has left us with an artificial and often schizophrenic separation of our intellectual and spiritual lives—torn between a theology that denies the evidence of logic and observation and a science that denies our experience of consciousness and spirit. It allows us to recognize sin as that which is destructive of life and the actualization of its potential. Equally, it allows us to recognize our own capacity for goodness, compassion, and creative engagement in the unfolding drama of creation. And in revealing life's ability to self-organize with a mindfulness of both self and whole, this story further affirms our potential to create truly democratic, self-organizing human societies that acknowledge and nurture our individual capacity to balance freedom with responsibility.

A New Politics



The new story calls us to a new politics. This politics would be dedicated to realizing democracy's promise of a society in which sovereignty—the right and power to govern—would reside in and flow from mindful and informed people to the community and the state, expressing the values, needs, and creative aspirations of every person. A dream that traces back at least to the ancient Greek philosophers, the new politics gains modern impetus from the unhappy reality of democracy's contemporary practice, in which the bureaucratized mega-institutions of state and corporation concentrate control of real power in the hands of a small economic and political elite.

The new politics recognizes that democracy is an act, not a possession, and therefore exists only as an active practice. It seeks not power over or power under, but power with—enhancing the choice-making opportunities and capacities of every member of the community to build the mutual power of the whole. It seeks to bring meaning and compassion to political life by rooting political practice in the living values of community and place—engaging the natural human desire to steward that which we value. The ideal of the new politics is the true and active political participation of all people in the decisions that affect their lives.

The new politics recognizes that democracy is an act, not a possession, and therefore exists only as an active practice.

Finding inspiration in the participatory self-organizing processes of healthy natural systems, the new politics seeks to move society beyond contemporary forms of representative democracy that limit the majority to deciding which elite faction will hold political office for the next electoral period. Thus, unlike many political movements of the past, it does not focus on replacing one ruling elite with a potentially nobler elite. Rather, it seeks to awaken a civic-minded political consciousness, to generate an open political discourse aimed at creating an informed and constantly self-renewing popular will, and to transform the institutions of governance to facilitate the processes of orderly self-rule in an interdependent world.

While most of us still think of democracy primarily in terms of formal institutions, we have a rich contemporary experience with deeply democratic self-organizing processes that arise from the popular will of informed people. Compelling examples from the twentieth century include the independence movement that freed India from British rule, the civil rights movements that ended apartheid in the United States and South Africa, and the bloodless popular uprising that brought down the corrupt Marcos regime in the Philippines. We also have experience with the labor, civil rights, environmental, peace, and women's movements that have brought millions of people to a new level of political and spiritual consciousness and engaged them in radically participatory processes challenging the institutional status quo.

While most expressions of the new politics begin with protest, the more notable eventually turn to nurturing proactive processes that move society to a higher level of awareness and function. These include labor initiatives that improve the rights and conditions of all working people; civil rights initiatives that raise consciousness of the inalienable rights and innate potentials of every person; environmental initiatives that call on us to rethink and reshape the relationships between human communities and the living planet; and women's initiatives that liberate all genders from the confines of prejudice and arbitrarily defined roles. Each contributes to a larger transformation yet unfinished.

Ironically, the ultimate impetus for the creation of a new politics comes from global capitalism and its drive to establish a hegemonic system of world financial and corporate rule grounded in the perverse belief that the rights and interests of money properly take precedence over those of living beings. Mocking democracy and disregarding the interests of people and the planet at every hand, the institutions of money are provoking a global political awakening of people of every race, nationality, religion, ethnic group, gender, and sexual orientation—giving birth to a politics of solidarity that may hopefully take us beyond the more divisive identity politics that now fragments progressive movements.

The possibilities are revealed by the formation of broadly inclusive national movements that apply the self-organizing principles of the new politics to the work of national transformation in countries as diverse as Canada, Chile, and the Philippines. In each instance these movements have become proactive in illuminating and experimenting with life-centered alternatives to rule by money—and in so doing are opening the way to a rethinking and restructuring of political institutions and creating a supportive context for a new economy.

A New Economy

Nowhere does a society more clearly reveal its true values than in the institutions and priorities that govern its economic life. In our case, our economic institutions reveal the extent to which we love money over life itself. As the new story awakens our love of life, we face the challenge of reorienting our economies to life's service. In embracing this challenge, we do well to model our economic systems

on the processes of healthy living ecosystems—which are place-based, self-organizing, and predominantly cooperative, and bear a striking resemblance to the ideal of the market economy.

The notion of a market economy self-organized by ordinary people in the pursuit of secure and satisfying livelihoods has long fired the imagination of those who value human freedom and self-rule. It is a great tragedy of our time that a massive consolidation of economic power in the hands of authoritarian states under communism and in the hands of authoritarian corporations under capitalism has moved us ever further from this ideal. With the fall of communism, capitalism's mega-corporations—with the backing of institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization—have accelerated their efforts to consolidate their control of the world's wealth. The resulting instability, insecurity, and outright destruction are pushing millions of people into an active search for economic alternatives that value equity, cooperation, stewardship, and the long-term well-being of the whole.



The wise society favors economic structures that naturally and seamlessly align the self-interest of the individual with the broader community interest.

Many recruits to the creative task of inventing a new economy come from among those whom capitalism's relentless competition has marginalized or excluded. Others are one-time winners who have come to realize that capitalism's rewards are hollow and its costs unconscionable. The financial meltdown that devastated the economies of Asia, Russia, and Latin America during 1997 and 1998 gave fair warning of what lies ahead for a world ruled by financial speculators whose only loyalty is to their own profits.

The key to capitalism's ability to concentrate economic power beyond public accountability is the publicly traded, limited-liability corporation which is to economic life what monarchy once was to political life. Just as there could be no political democracy under monarchy, there can be no economic democracy in an economy ruled by publicly traded, limited-liability corporations. Further, we now find that political democracy cannot long survive without economic democracy. Such corporations must therefore join the institution of monarchy as historical relics of a less mature age.

The wise society favors economic structures that naturally and seamlessly align the self-interest of the individual with the broader community interest. This alignment follows most naturally when an economy is comprised of human-scale enterprises owned by real people who have a love for the community in which their enterprise is located and for the place on the earth where they live. While not eliminating the need for rules determined and enforced by democratic consensus, organizing an economy around local stakeholder owners minimizes the need for coercive public intervention in otherwise self-organizing processes. Because mindfulness and market principles are both defining features of the new economy, we might call it a mindful market economy.

While most economic needs, even in a modern economy, can be met by human-scale enterprises, many economic undertakings require larger-scale coordination of resources. Where appropriate, this can be achieved by numbers of stakeholder-owned, human-scale enterprises forming mutually owned cooperative structures. Notable examples include the manufacturing networks of Denmark and northern Italy, and consumer cooperatives such as the Seikatsu Clubs in Japan.

The new economy holds forth the ideal that work—both paid and unpaid—can and should be widely shared and undertaken as a means of living and an act of creative contribution to the health and vitality of the community. Similarly, because the enterprises of the new economy are owned by local stakeholders who care about the place in which they live and work, it is natural for them to consciously accept a measure of responsibility for the general prosperity and well-being of community and society, even as they seek to provide a fair return to their workers and stakeholder owners.

Each of the three elements of the Great Work—the telling and retelling of the new story, the creation of a new politics, and the creation of a new economy—is essential to the whole we seek, yet insufficient in itself. Without a supporting transformation in the political and economic institutions by which a society expresses itself, the new story remains only a story. Political democracy has little substance in the absence of economic democracy, yet economic democracy is unlikely to be achieved until we embrace a story that gives meaning to life beyond an eternal competition for material acquisition and consumption.

Together the new story, the new politics, and the new economy suggest key elements of a realizable vision for the human future consistent with both our survival and our advance to a new level of conscious function. The realization of that vision will be a truly Great Work of, by, and for the world's people, for the vision—itself a product of countless minds—is more like an abstract drawing than a blueprint. The rest is yet to be filled in through the creative contributions of billions of people possessed of a love of life, self-organizing to create a life-affirming, life-serving future for humanity. ❑

SOCIETY *in the* NEW MILLENNIUM

Techno-Utopia?

Jackson Lears



In the United States, at least, utopian hope—often fired by religious faith—has been a major component of democratic social movements from antislavery to Populism to the struggle for black equality. The courage to challenge established power has often required eschatological visions of deliverance. No wonder the editors of TIKKUN have emphasized the importance of reviving utopian thought for the renewal of progressive politics in the twenty-first century.

Yet the renovation of utopia could be a tricky project. There are problems embedded in the utopian habit of mind, difficulties that have weakened the utopian tradition from within. The dream of social perfection has often (especially in recent centuries) depended on a sentimental faith in human goodness and a universalist assumption that human needs and desires are everywhere the same—or at least everywhere assimilable to the enlightened creed of utilitarian rationality. The utopian, even at his best, falls prey to what William James called "the sentiment of rationality"—the overwhelming desire for conceptual tidiness. At his worst, as TIKKUN contributors have frequently noted, the utopian could justify genocide in the name of the perfect world to come.

Still, the utopian impulse remains a powerful force in American public life—and probably an inevitable one, in a culture still dominated by protestant habits of mind if not protestant beliefs. For more than two centuries, a linear millenarian view of change has energized American nationalism, underscoring our allegedly crucial role in the sacred drama of world history. As millenarians became more secular, various versions of technological determinism displaced the older sense of providential order.

The latest version of techno-millennialism is the vision of a wired world now being promoted by our high-tech corporate monoculture. The celebratory perspective of Bill Gates, and of his rivals and minions too, offers us a chillingly uniform picture of whole populations happily embracing "the Web lifestyle"—whether they want to or not. Choice and determinism coexist. Apart from this confusion, what is particularly striking in this thinking is the techno-millennialists' assumption that there will simply be no one outside the Web, or at least no one worth noticing. For all their democratic rhetoric of "empowerment," cybervisionaries preserve an authoritarian streak, an addiction to market discipline. Evolve or die, says Gates.

The problem, in short, is not the absence of utopian vision but its monopoly control by the high-tech corporate elite and their publicists in the major media. Professional wise men like Thomas Friedman (in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*) provide a balm of beneficence and inevitability to the globalization of capital. Skeptics are silenced or ignored, denied the authority of "responsible opinion."

That is why we so badly need the revival of genuinely countercultural utopianism—some alternative visions to pose against the deification of "technology" and "the market." I mean countercultural in the original sense of principled opposition to the norms of utilitarian rationality, the utopian ideology which displayed its destructive underside in the Vietnam war. It is important to distinguish this strain of protest from the caricature of countercultural politics served up almost daily by the major media—the rapid-fire montage of Nehru suits, go-go boots, and naked cavortings at Woodstock. The serious antiwar counterculture preserved a core religious dimension, a desire to rekindle some sense of the sacred amid the disenchanted landscape of American culture.

Everyone knows how quickly those larger countercultural hopes disappeared in a carnival of commodity fetishism. But the power of the original protest remains. What we need now, in my view, is a chastened utopianism: alive to the persistence of human perversity, sober in its acknowledgment of ineradicable evil, yet capable of indignation and hope—and capable, too, of addressing the millions of Americans who do not see themselves reflected in the worldview of the *Wall Street Journal*. Who knows? Maybe the fire of a utopian vision can once again inspire Americans to rise above mere money-worship. ❑

Jackson Lears is a professor of history at Rutgers University and is writing a book on chance and luck in American culture.

ILLUSTRATION BY JON STRAUS

Peter Dale Scott

Minding the Darkness

V.ii

September 30, 1997

Having reached the too narrow balcony
up the perilous fire escape
I stand up naked

my heart clutched with the great height
and I say to the woman who brought me here
as part of the experiment

It is discomforting to have learned
they have found DNA on Mars
it is too much for my mental world

at this point my dark glasses
fall down nine stories to the earth
I call out to the stranger *Those are mine*

and having thus dangerously
exposed my nakedness
I wake up to see at once

this is my inadequacy
as the poem begins to finish
getting nowhere final

it is as if you
who in the dream were silent
were in fact speaking *We*

are still with you
over your head Iliad 2.20
often perhaps reflecting

what was already on my mind
but in some dreams more
a rebuke to what is happening

or a surprise as when you
a *wind-driven ghost of snow*
outside my childhood window

returned after forty-two years Scott '88 10
from somewhere deep in my brain
words writing themselves

the way humans make history
not just as they choose
(Bloch: *The work of art*

a star of anticipation
on the way home through darkness Bloch 151; Wolin 24
through the linear *ordo seclorum*

the *ordo* of return
to the *long sought after homeland)* Wolin 25
but compounded from the past

original the primary form
from which varieties arise Random House Dictionary
and *authentic* having an undisputed origin

as if sometimes it is the dead
who do the talking
just as a dream is said to be from God Iliad 1.63

and is not truly ours
when I first invoked you Scott '88 10
I was exalted by despair

in a time like Wordsworth's
exhausted by excess
possessed by defamation Coleridge 87

and the mess of my own life
just as now the sleeplessness
of my wakeful heart

(overwhelmed with the wealth
of a life outwardly secure
and inwardly perilous

from the guilt and fear of privilege
it sees now throughout my dreams
as well as my fathers')

knits up plain words *in prose* Williams 176, Chaucer 228
which can be taken as a gift
though God knows I and the reader

have worked hard to reach this place
Inner and outer enlightenment
depend on each other

both of them lost
when they are not conjoined
impious Greek arts Virgil Aeneid 2.106,152,163,195

pitched against blind
superstitious Trojan furor Virgil Aeneid 2.244
this is what is wrong

with secular capitalism
and its mimetic offspring
secular communism

facing *the theocratic alternative* Said '93 305: cf. Benjamin '78 312
of *shariah* and *jihad* Islamic law; Muslim holy war
(proposed to Edward Said

at Cairo University
by *a well-spoken woman whose head*
was covered by a veil) Said '93 305

I have written what I have seen
for this unextraordinary millennium
like every other year

an end and a beginning
between the cosmic cycles *shemittot*
of *din* or judgment

and of *chesed* lovingkindness
a kind of golden age Scholem '74 121
yang comprehension

the strength not just to understand
but to change the world
(the fault of Enlightenment

was that it changed
not so much but so little
of our still secret world

the small realm of the public
still surrounded by perils)
tempered by yin compassion

toward the Open
both Rilke and Holderlin wanted Heidegger '63 268
as well as Popper

the Rebbe: *these words*
shall be on your heart cf. Deut. 6:6
and when your heart is broken

they will fall in
the poetry of that lake
was in the ruins

from Theodelinda's castle
to the stones of abandoned households
rubble from so many dreams

that it is less a pain
than an entry into fellowship
to contemplate our own

and when Ronna and I danced
naked in the middle of the night
on our too narrow balcony

overlooking the lake
more dreamlike even than the dream
I felt like crying *May everyone*

experience such breathing
moments this
now

already gone

Utopia: An Abiding Presence

Douglas Gwyn

Utopia: the word literally means "no place." Utopia has never been more "nowhere" than it is today. The twentieth century began with burgeoning utopian expectations, but two horrendous world wars, the Holocaust, the advent of atomic warfare, and accelerating environmental degradation (to name only a few crises) have greatly darkened that prospect. What's more, these disasters have not been unexpected detours along the road to utopia, but the product of various utopian agendas and movements themselves. Now, with the defeat of Nazism and Marxist-Leninism, the victorious forces of liberal capitalism have pronounced utopianism anathema in all its forms. Instead, political pragmatism, an abiding confidence that the ruling technocracy can "fix" whatever messes it creates, and a blind faith in the benign "hidden hand" of the global market—all anti-utopian expectations—have dominated the last years of the twentieth century. If there is a utopianism in good standing today, it is only in the electronic "nowhere" of cyberspace, or the private "no-mind" of meditation.

The anti-utopia teaches us that Oz is a dangerous place, that "there's no place like home." Indeed, home, identity, and tradition are reassuring verities amid the permanent revolution of capitalist development (and there is nowhere to stand outside that revolution today). Over the past thirty years, many have delved deeper into adopted or inherited religious traditions for comfort and stability. But that search has led many of us into a renewed confrontation with utopia. Studying my own inherited faith, Quakerism, has

Douglas Gwyn resides at Pendle Hill, a Quaker study center near Philadelphia, and is author of books on early and contemporary Friends. His alter-ego, the Brothers Doug, has recently released a tape, Songs of Faith and Frenzy.

Melvin Jules Bukiet

Melvin Jules Bukiet's most recent novels are Signs and Wonders *and* After.

This is being written at perhaps the most millennial moment of the last 2,000 years, "millennial" not merely because of the calendar. The year 1848 was also a millennial moment, and so was 1968. These are times of social, political, economic, and artistic transformation as well as—and perhaps more importantly—awareness of transformation and anxiety about transformation. As at previous millennial moments, some perceive imminent salvation and others imminent doom. Either perception is created by uncertainty. On the assumption that knowledge is power, we herewith offer to alleviate this problem. The following are ten brave predictions that our readers can assume will happen during the next 1,000 years—guaranteed.

1. Trends: People will continue to communicate via the Internet. They will buy deodorant and detergent so that they will smell nice and their clothes will be clean, though they will never leave home.

2. History: War in the Mideast.

3. Sports and Entertainment: The Boston Red Sox hang up their cleats and turn Fenway Park into an aquarium.

4. Science and Sports: Life in outer space, slums in outer space, violence in outer space, stupidity, cupidity, and grief in outer space. Boston Red Sox announce relocation.

5. Medicine: Cloning fad fades as parents realize that children genetically identical to themselves are no more tolerable than biological mongrels. Realization preceded by an epidemic of multiple personality disorder.

6. Commerce: Agricultural revolution leads to the Holy Grail of generations of genetic engineers, square eggs.

7. History: Another war in the Mideast.

8. Religion: Chris Ofili is named first Art Pope. White smoke from the Vatican chimney is scented with elephant dung. Charles Saatchi announces he's buying Titians.

9. Books: Five or six people write them; two or three people read them.

10. People: Bill Gates will die.

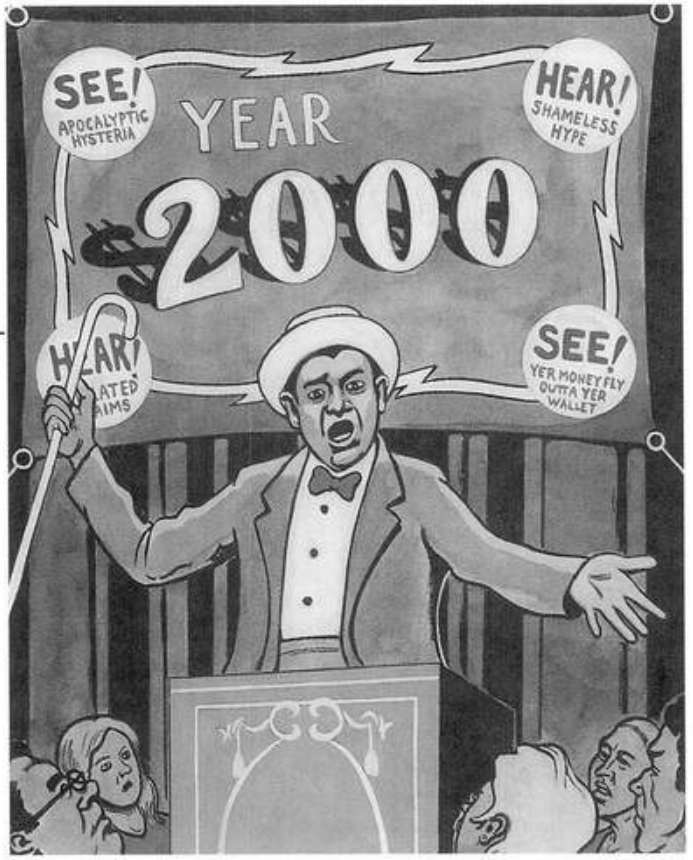
11. People: On the other hand, Cher will not; the beat goes on, with a respirator.

12. Technology: The ultimate advance, a single box that contains all possible communication and entertainment media. It also allows the owner of this miraculous device to eat and sleep. It also has a built-in toothbrush. This radical invention is called a house. Most people can't afford them.

In other words, nothing new. ❑

Millennial Dilemmas

Jack Miles



As we enter the last year of the second millennium, there are two dilemmas that I fear the new millennium may fail to resolve. I write as someone who, on no scriptural or other arcane grounds, is pessimistic about the prospects of the human species.

The global conflict between ecology and economy. Of the world's 6 billion inhabitants, 2 billion are still hewers of wood and haulers of water. That is, they do all their cooking with wood or "biomass," and they have no electricity or motorized transportation. Understandably, many of them are desperate to leave the world of subsistence agriculture and village barter and join the world of industrialization, world trade, health, and comfort.

As they do this, their birth rate tends to go down. Unfortunately, their consumption of fossil fuel invariably goes up, and with it the already serious threat of global warming. If China could reduce its population by one-quarter but in so doing were to increase its energy consumption from one-twelfth to one-quarter of the American level, its overall energy consumption would more than double, and the planetary consequences of that doubling would be dire indeed. India, with further to go, is about to overtake China in population. How can this dilemma be resolved? How can per capita energy consumption grow in these countries without making the global ecology a ship that takes on passengers until it sinks? I know of no answer to this question and perceive no effective global movement to find one.

The American conflict between labor and capital. According to the U.S. Census, the poorest fifth of American households received 3.6 percent of the nation's aggregate annual income in 1997, while the richest fifth received 49.4 percent. All such statistics are open to interpretation, but by common consent, the income gap in the United States is both wide and widening. How, if not by increasing the wages paid to the poorest, can this gap be narrowed?

Unfortunately, good news for the salaried worker is bad news for the American economy. Rising wages create inflationary pressure, to which the Federal Reserve responds by raising interest rates so as to slow the economy, reduce the aggregate demand for workers, weaken the workers' bargaining position, drive wages back down, and thus reduce inflation. In this way, in the name of inflation control, the concentration of wealth is de facto government policy. But the concentration of wealth at the top creates effective political disenfranchisement at the bottom, which feeds alienation in a huge and growing sector of the American population that never votes and that, from the top and even the upper middle, is socially invisible unless and until it explodes. Will it explode? Can the stock market count on social stability if it goes up indefinitely while leaving this population ever further behind? Would it not be foolhardy to answer "Yes"? ❑

Jack Miles won a Pulitzer Prize in 1996 for the book God: A Biography.

Robert Cohen

Robert Cohen's third novel, Inspired Sleep, *will be published next year.*

The new millennium is a hopeful construct, but not in my view a deeply interesting one. Maybe I've been listening to the Car Guys too long—for me it just seems like a case of the old Christian odometer turning over, all those top-heavy nines free-falling backwards, into a field of immaculate zeroes. But it isn't free, of course, and it isn't a fall. History's engine, its fossil fuels and habits of combustion, will remain the same. There will still be lots of accidents, most of them avoidable, even comical. Our coverage will be forever inadequate. And we will all continue to watch for signs. ❑

ILLUSTRATION BY JON STRAUS

The Wisdom of Ordinary Folks

Paul Buhle

Things certainly don't look so good now. The ecological aspect of the war in (or on) the former Yugoslavia and the haste of the Russians in Chechnya to copycat NATO's aerial attacks on oil facilities and chemical plants point to the monstrous possibilities ahead. All the effort that we can rouse against the clear-cutting of forests, against the further degradation of our water supplies and the dumping of toxic chemicals, seems only to hold the worst prospects at bay, temporarily, as politicians like Al Gore continue the charade of supporting environmentalism while zealously supporting the global corporate drive to override ecological restraints.

Here is my ray of hope for the millennium: twenty years of interviewing blue-collar folks in little blue-collar Rhode Island (where the organized Left has never exceeded a hundred). Ordinary citizens lost faith in the system (and the willingness to blame themselves for their poverty) only one time: during the Great Depression. That crisis prompted them to think differently and to take drastic action, even to take their lives into their own hands. Compared to that, for most of America, the 1960s–1970s was only a bubble of unrest, uncertainty, scattered utopian hopes, and unsustained protest.

Ordinary citizens lost faith in the system only one time: during the Great Depression.

Such a crisis may be on today's horizon. The skyrocketing of the stock market cannot continue indefinitely. The conditions are ripe for a major downturn and for assorted social explosions. The crisis will erupt more severely outside the United States, and is already under way in Russia, Colombia, and elsewhere. In that moment, the perceptions and the faith of everyone, including ourselves, will be tested.

One of the greatest changes in social forces, from the first half of this century to the second half, has been the possibility that the spiritually inclined will not be overwhelmingly on the reactionary side as they were (not uniformly, but generally) during the 1930s. Today the ecological crisis, even more than the economic crisis, is also evidently a spiritual crisis for the civilization and indeed for Homo sapiens.

What form will the response take? I don't intend to prescribe. But I do believe that, for most of us at least, it will return to the sources of Judeo-Christianity and outstrip them. A greater universalism now barely visible will come into view, and we will finally abandon what may be called the conquest mode once and for all, as we face the epochal moments of saving the merest songbird, or the last of the old-growth redwoods, from the great machines and the financial brutes who would see all nature uprooted for profit. ❑

Paul Buhle's most recent book is Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland, and the Tragedy of American Labor.

Marcie Hershman

Marcie Hershman is author of the novels Tales of the Master Race *and* Safe in America *and is the 1999–2000 Fannie Hurst Writer-in-Residence at Brandeis University.*

At the start, I didn't take the uproar over the coming millennium seriously. It seemed primarily a spelling opportunity. One "l"? Two? Or is it two "n"s? Also, I felt a certain annoyance since my sense of spiritual reference is the Jewish year 5760, even though I date my checks and copyrights with secular precision: 1999. Already living between, I didn't see how the next flip of the calendar to 2000 was going to change anything.

But the truth is that one flip is going to change the meaning of time. Time is as much about perception as it is about events and action. Any year with the numerals "19" prefixed to it will be regarded as belonging not to the less-recent present but to the irrefutable past. Those whom we rejoiced in and loved—well, if they died in 1998, say, or in the horrors of 1938 or 1945, they will have died in a world with a door shut against it. Believe it, the new millennium will do that. It will make us think of time-recent as time-past. The year 2000 will make it, finally, time for our time to move on. ❑

The Millennial Elder



Barry Barkan

Most of us who were around during the Sixties will at some time come to realize that there are more days behind us than ahead of us. At that moment, the choice will be upon each and every one of us about whether to take seriously the opportunity to become millennial elders—the stewards of our own lives, of the lives of our sisters and brothers, and of the legacy we will leave to those who follow us.

Signing on is not an optional act of courage. It is about the survival of meaning and spirit in our old age. It is about the legacy that we will leave behind for future generations and the healing of those who came before us. It is about our parents and our potential for guilt and failure in relationship to their old age.

To be the elders of our time, we will have to incorporate into thought, deed, and understanding the ultimate wisdom of our age that we are all part of a dynamic, interconnected living organism and that our potential for healing, regeneration, and renewal is beyond our greatest imagination. But in these coming years, let us not get so fixated on exhilarating thoughts that we lose sight of the peril we face from those who are driven by shortsightedness, greed, and hopelessness.

Already, as our parents' generation is aging, we see hints of what lies before us. Our health-care system is essentially dysfunctional, and the nation's nursing homes, which have never been a source of national pride, are on the brink of financial collapse. Major nursing-care companies have filed for relief from the bankruptcy courts. Small operators are imperiled. Nursing homes that serve the indigent are a species at risk.

At the same time, the best practitioners in nursing homes are drowning in paperwork and well-intended regulation that is skimming the best energy from caregivers and leaving despair in its wake.

We do see a new emphasis on shifting the continuum of care from nursing homes to less labor-intensive assisted living and a building boom of such assisted-living facilities. But they are being built for those with money. Where will the old, the cognitively and physically impaired, the incontinent and broken-hearted old people go? We're talking about your mama, your papa, your aunt Mary. We're talking about you and me.

Some of us who have devoted our lives to repairing the way elders are treated in society have formed a national organization called the Nursing Home Pioneers. We are working passionately to create a cultural revolution within nursing homes, government, and our own way of aging. The Pioneer culture is building community, flattening hierarchy, and making elders' needs and preferences the center of care, and is committed to fixing gender and class prejudices that keep the people who serve elders in our society the most fixed in working poverty.

To this end we will have to make government and the way it allocates its resources work. This is not a left- or right-wing issue. It's at the heart of the radical center. Government is broken and it must be fixed. But it's more than government. In this new age, we will need to bring a cultural revolution into our own lives.

We will need to enter a path of conscious aging in which we actively learn, grow, and practice so that we can truly become elders whose wisdom, compassion, and lack of hangups is a blessing to the generations.

We will need to change our attitude towards our money and human resources so that we begin to see ourselves and to act as stewards of our legacy. If we join and redirect our resources, we will have enough to fix history.

We will need to tap the wisdom of the ages and grow it in ourselves, with one another, and with the young so that society can be healed. If we do this our legacy as millennial elders will be celebrated for a thousand years. If not? Well, things will be no different than they have always been. The wealthy will be okay in their old age. The rest of us? G-d help us all. ❑

ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREA KASSOF

Barry Barkan has been learning about changing the culture of aging since 1976 at the Live Oak Institute and Living Center in El Sobrante, CA. He currently is writing The Millennial Elder.

Reigniting the Spirit of America

Corinne McLaughlin

The vision I have for the new millennium is a remarkable political transformation that reignites the spirit of America:

After a period of increasing degeneration in politics—money driving elections, opinion polls driving politicians, and alienation driving the voters—things get so bad that finally something shifts. Americans start waking up to the reality that they are losing their democracy. The awakening begins first in small groups of citizens who start meeting to discuss what can be done to renew the spirit of freedom, the spirit of justice, the spirit of compassion in America.

Rather than passively expecting their government to solve all their country's problems, many citizens begin taking the initiative themselves. They join with other citizens to start praying or meditating together, asking for guidance about how to be most effective in changing the direction their country is going. They start discussing how to apply their spiritual values to solve social problems, examining the root causes of problems in the individual, the family, or the society.

In their discussions and research they find, for example, that youth violence and drug abuse are caused both by a lack of values and support in the home and by larger social and economic inequities that reinforce a culture of poverty. These citizens then join or start new civic organizations that work to create effective solutions, such as youth mentoring programs, support groups, and training in nonviolent conflict resolution.

Corinne McLaughlin is executive director of the Center for Visionary Leadership in Washington, D.C., and coauthor of Spiritual Politics. *Copyright © 1999 by Corinne McLaughlin.*

A Midrash on Kafka's "Metamorphosis"

Steve Stern

Steve Stern is the author of The Wedding Jester.

Last summer I taught a course in Prague called "Jewish Wizards: From Rabbi Loew and His Golem to Franz Kafka and His Guilt." The idea was to trace the trajectory of Jewish literature from a time when magic was the given up to our own moment—when the world (as defined by Kafka) has become an airless labyrinth, its inhabitants subject to a cosmic bureaucracy whose laws are as merciless as they are inscrutable. One night I was out in the cafes with my students and, after one too many absinthes, began making extravagant assertions. I submitted that the art of the next millennium might possibly manage a synthesis between the worlds of Rabbi Loew and Kafka; the mythic and the commonplace would finally end their post-biblical estrangement.

Egged on by my audience, I maintained that the golem no longer dwelled in the attic of the Altneushul, the Old New Synagogue, centerpiece of the Jewish Quarter of Prague. Legend had it that, after Rabbi Loew's clay automaton had saved the ghetto from ritual murder reprisals (and become unruly to boot), the sorcerer rabbi had deactivated him, storing him for safekeeping in the synagogue loft. This was 400 years ago, but the faithful claimed the monster was sleeping there still, under a hill of tarnished Torah crowns and crumbling *siddurim*. I, however, insisted that, if you climbed into the attic and delved among the prayerbooks, you would find not the golem but an enormous bug, with searching antennae and half a dozen wizened legs. The evidence of the text notwithstanding, Gregor Samsa lived on in the attic of the Altneushul.

That's when a member of my audience—a fat boy in a straw fedora—called my bluff. He advised us that a steel-spoked ladder ran up one wall of the synagogue toward a small metal door in the nave. So we set out en masse for the Jewish Quarter, the Josefov, with a shared bottle of spirits and a borrowed crowbar. Along the way, puffed with pot valor, I imagined how I would scale the wall and enter the loft; I would uncover Gregor and pry from his cracked carapace the apple Herr Samsa had hurled for spite at his son. I would climb back down, with my hair perhaps turned white, to press upon the skeptics, like the gift of a trod-upon heart, the ancient apple. But as you know, I was never heard from again.... ❑

Other groups of citizens start having honest dialogues with each other around divisive issues such as race, abortion, or the environment. They learn to listen deeply to each other's experiences and their passions, to develop empathy and understanding of differences. They try to find the grain of truth and the positive intent in the opinions of those with whom they disagree.

To resolve conflicts in their community, citizen leaders begin inviting all the stakeholders—all those who have a stake in the outcome—to sit down and dialogue with each other. A trained facilitator is asked to run the meeting, ensuring that all voices will be heard and inviting participants to search for higher common ground that creates outcomes beneficial to all parties. These "multistakeholder dialogues" are remarkably effective in finding win/win solutions for everyone concerned. And they help heal relationships among former adversaries, who previously had spent fortunes on legal battles and PR campaigns to defeat each other.

As citizens start feeling more empowered through personal engagement with solving local problems, they begin taking more of an interest in local politics. They realize the importance of being informed about local issues and voting regularly. They start carefully tracking which interest groups give large sums of money to which politicians, and how this translates into politicians' votes on policies. This research is widely circulated and read, and politicians are publicly shamed at political rallies and in the media.

Then some truly miraculous transformations start occurring. The growing campaign finance movement starts attracting thousands of voters. Differing opinions on federal elections policies are resolved through numerous national town meetings across the country, until a clear consensus emerges and the political will for change is forged. Public financing of campaigns is finally enacted into law. Without the controlling influence of money, there is a level playing field, and politicians are judged on their own merits.

Voters start seeking out more courageous and honest politicians, those who have real vision and integrity. They insist that campaigns stay focused on the issues, and avoid negative attack ads. They start holding their politicians accountable for their behavior in office and for fulfilling their promises.

Finally, some truly inspiring leaders of all races—both men and women—become elected, recognized by the public for their wisdom, courage, and compassion, and their inclusiveness and universality in dealing with all citizens equally. Their election results in wiser laws that transform society, creating better opportunities for all citizens to grow and develop their abilities.

America becomes more peaceful and prosperous, and aligns with her soul or deeper purpose, unselfishly helping other countries and playing a responsible role in the United Nations. ❑

Genesis 1:1

Thandeka

When God began to re-create the heavens and the earth in the year 2000 CE, darkness was everywhere in the United States. Most Americans worked long hours at demeaning jobs that destroyed the environment. Personal debt was endemic, and a pervasive feeling of failure and despair engulfed every heart. As God's spirit moved over the face of this Deep, a stillness fell upon the heart of every woman and man. And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. And everywhere, men and women now had insight as they peered into the void in the midst of their own lives. They saw their regret, felt a profound sense of loss and meaninglessness, but did *not* turn away. Instead, every woman and man had a clear idea of what must be done: repair their lives.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind." The people began to organize themselves collectively to support a sustainable environment where decent jobs, excellent schools, and expanded social benefits were available for all. Campaign finance reform legislation was passed, new taxes for the top .05 percent of the population became law, a national health care system for all Americans was established, a revitalization of urban and rural centers began, decent affordable housing was built.

So God created humankind anew, male and female God created them, and blessed them saying, "Don't subdue the earth; sustain it." And the people did this because they now had vision. And God, at long last, could rest. ❑

Thandeka, associate professor of theology and culture, Meadville/Lombard Theological School, is author of Learning to be White: Money, Race, and God in America *(Continuum, 1999).*

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The Challenge *of the* Twenty-First Century

Fritjof Capra



As our century draws to a close, we are facing a whole series of global problems which are harming the biosphere and human life in alarming ways that may soon become irreversible. Concern with the environment is no longer one of many "single issues"; it is the context of everything else—of our lives, our businesses, our politics. The great challenge of our time is to build and nurture sustainable communities—social, cultural, and physical environments in which we can satisfy our needs and aspirations without diminishing the chances of future generations.

Since its introduction in the early 1980s, the concept of sustainability has often been distorted, co-opted, and even trivialized by being used without the ecological context that gives it its proper meaning. In its correct usage, what is sustained in a sustainable community is not economic growth or development but the entire web of life on which our long-term survival depends. In other words, a sustainable community is designed in such a way that its ways of life, business, economy, physical structures, and technologies do not interfere with nature's inherent ability to sustain life. The first step in this endeavor, naturally, must be to become "ecologically literate," i.e., to understand the principles of organization that ecosystems have developed to sustain the web of life. To do so, we must learn to think systemically—in terms of connectedness, context, and processes.

When systems thinking is applied to the study of the Earth Household—which is the literal meaning of "ecology"—we discover several basic principles of organization:

- that an ecosystem generates no waste, one species' waste being another species' food;
- that matter cycles continually through the web of life;
- that the energy driving these ecological cycles flows from the sun;
- that diversity increases resilience;
- that life, from its beginning more than 3 billion years ago, did not take over the planet by combat but by cooperation, partnership, and networking.

The main task in the next century will be to apply our ecological knowledge and systemic thinking to the fundamental redesign of our technologies and social institutions, so as to bridge the current gap between human design and the ecologically sustainable systems of nature. Fortunately, this is already taking place. In recent years, there has been a burst of optimism about the dramatic rise of ecologically oriented design practices, in which our human purposes are carefully meshed with the larger patterns and flows of the natural world (see, for example, Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and Hunter Lovins' *Natural Capitalism*). In other words, ecodesign reflects the principles of organization that nature has evolved to sustain the web of life.

The great challenge of our time is to build and nurture sustainable communities.

For example, the principle "waste equals food" means that all the products and materials manufactured by industry, as well as the wastes generated in the manufacturing processes, must eventually provide nourishment for something new. A sustainable business organization would be embedded in an "ecology of organizations," in which the waste of any one organization would be a resource for another. In such a sustainable industrial system, the total outflow of each organization—its products and wastes—would be perceived and treated as resources cycling through the system. Such "ecological clusters" of industries have recently been initiated in several parts of the world (for examples see Gunter Pauli's *UpSizing*).

Fritjof Capra, Ph.D., physicist and systems theorist, is the author of The Tao of Physics, The Turning Point, *and most recently* The Web of Life. *This article is based on his talk at "Forum 2000" in Prague, October 1999.*

ILLUSTRATION BY GRADY McFERRIN

In fact, ecodesigners like William McDonough and Michael Braungart speak of two kinds of metabolism—a biological metabolism and a "technical metabolism" (as described in their article "The Next Industrial Revolution," *Atlantic Monthly* October 1998). Things that are part of the biological metabolism—agriculture and food systems, clothing, cosmetics, etc.—should not contain persistent toxic substances. Things that go into the technical metabolism—machines, physical structures, etc.—should be kept well apart from the biological metabolism.

Eventually, all products, materials, and wastes will be either biological or "technical" nutrients. Biological nutrients will be designed to return to the ecological cycles—to be literally consumed by microorganisms and other creatures in the soil. Technical nutrients will be designed to go back into "technical cycles." This means that customers will not own these products but will merely buy their services. When they have finished with the products, the manufacturer will take them back, break them down, and use their complex materials in new products.

Today, the obstacles that stand in the way of ecological sustainability are no longer conceptual, nor technical. They lie in the dominant values of our society, and in particular in the dominant corporate values. Corporate values and choices are determined, to a large extent, by flows of information, power, and wealth in the global financial networks that shape societies today.

During the past three decades, the information technology revolution has given rise to a new type of global capitalism, which is structured around networks of financial flows. In what Manuel Castells calls "informational capitalism," the movements of capital do not follow a market logic. Rather, capital operates as if in a global casino, using information technology to scan the planet for investment opportunities and to move from one option to another in a matter of seconds. The market is twisted, manipulated, and transformed by a combination of computer-enacted strategic maneuvers and unexpected turbulences caused by the complex interactions of capital flows themselves in a highly nonlinear system.

As a result, money is almost entirely independent of production and services. Thus labor has become fragmented in its performance, organization, and collective action. At the same time, information technology has transformed the core processes of knowledge generation, economic productivity, political and military power, and media communication. As a result, presence or absence in the network is a critical source of power. The rise of this "Network Society" has thus become intertwined with rising social inequality, polarization, and social exclusion (see Manuel Castells' *The Information Age*).

At the close of this century, then, we can observe two developments that will have major impacts on the well-being and ways of life of humanity in the next century. Both of these developments have to do with networks, and both involve radically new technologies. One of them is the rise of global capitalism and the Network Society; the other is the creation of sustainable communities, involving ecoliteracy and ecodesign practices.

Whereas global capitalism is concerned with electronic networks of financial and information flows, ecoliteracy and ecodesign are concerned with ecological networks of energy and material flows. The goal of the global economy is to maximize the wealth and power of the elites in the Network Society; the goal of ecodesign to maximize the sustainability of the web of life.

These two scenarios—each involving complex networks and special advanced technologies—are currently on a collision course. The Network Society is destructive of local communities and thus inherently unsustainable. It is based on the central value of capitalism—money-making for the sake of making money—at the exclusion of other values. However, human values can change; they are not natural laws. The same electronic networks of financial and informational flows *could* have other values built into them. The challenge of the twenty-first century will be to change the value system of the Network Society, so as to make it compatible with the demands of ecological sustainability. ❑

Jim Powell

An Oracle Madrone

No plants grow
within the shadow of the vast madrone
because its fallen leaves contain
a chemical that poisons them
before they sprout.

In late September
band-tailed pigeons in antic flocks descend
to gorge upon the red-orange berries
shining in clusters through its branches
and strip them bare.

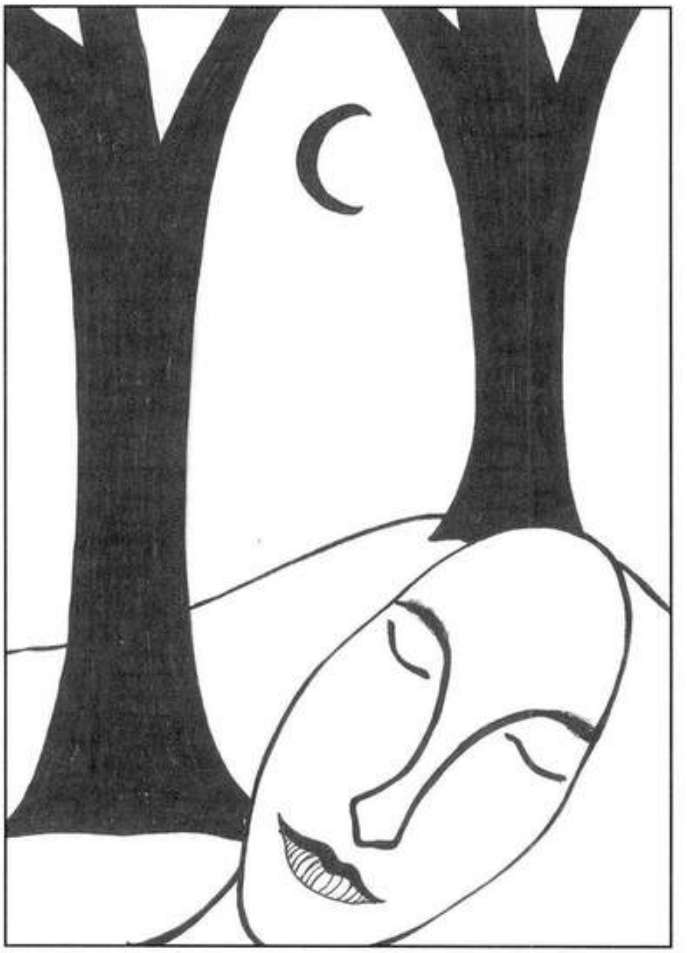
Toward nightfall
they wheel and dive in eccentric drunken loops
widening around its crown
while darkness steeps the lethal carpet
of sterile leaves,

then go to roost
apart, far from the muscle-bound bronze limbs
towering alone above
a barren circle of distinction
into silence.

ENVIRONMENT *in the* NEW MILLENNIUM

Stewards *of the* Earth

Barbra Streisand



We learn in the Talmud that we are not always required to complete a difficult task, but we also are not free to desist from it. Although we often feel powerless to change our environment, the crisis has reached such epic proportions that we must begin the task of trying to repair our world. For thousands of centuries, the earth changed in slow increments, allowing its organisms to adapt to the pace of changing elements. Unfortunately, our unsustainable way of life is causing rapid change in our environment. We have created the fastest species extinction in the earth's history, and are consuming its resources at a speed that our planet will be unable to support. We have increased carbon-dioxide emissions in the air to the point where the earth is warming at an alarming rate, releasing devastating weather disturbances. And, there has been such a massive population growth over the past century that every three days the population of the world increases by as much as it did during each hundred years before the Modern Age.

There is quite a bit that we can do as a community to protect and preserve our planet. The most important thing that we can do today is reduce the release of fossil fuel emissions into our atmosphere. This can be accomplished by the use of renewable and more efficient energy sources, combined with a commitment to maintaining our forest lands. In addition, we must call upon our leaders to work together to find lasting solutions to our environmental problems. Our government must work with companies and individuals to plan and implement reductions in fossil fuel emissions by investing in new technologies and new ways of doing business both at home and abroad. Finally, this problem must also be dealt with on a global scale, involving not only the leaders of our nation, but also the heads of state from countries across the world.

There is a midrash that tells the story of the time when G-d shows the first humans the Garden of Eden. At that moment, G-d says to them, "See my works, how fine and excellent they are … do not corrupt or desolate my world; for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you." We are called to be the stewards of the earth, to watch over creation and guard it from harm. This responsibility applies not only to our own species, but to plants and animals, the air, the soil, and the waters of our planet. The obligation to care for the earth does not stop with us but is passed from generation to generation. Native Americans have a tradition in which all environmental decisions are assessed based on their impact on those who will be alive seven generations from the time of the decision. We should emulate this tradition and consider the effects of our actions not only on ourselves and our children, but on our children's children and those who follow.

We now stand at the crossroads of opportunity. We can continue to thrive on this earth, but in order to do so, we must adapt to a more sustainable way of life. While there is still some time to alter our way of living, we must begin now to behave respectfully and honor these sacred gifts—our rolling hills and mountains, the depths of our blue oceans and rivers, the richness of our forests and plants and the vastness of our land. At the twilight of the present millennium and the dawning of a new age, let us be guided by truth and light. Let us live in a world unified by respect for each other's differences. Let us welcome new possibilities and fresh alternatives. And most of all, let us tend our earth as holy space. When we make decisions today, let us look not only to the present, but also to the years and ages to come. ❑

Barbra Streisand is an award-winning actress, director and producer and the top-selling and most widely honored female recording artist of the twentieth century. She is also a dedicated philanthropist and leading social and environmental activist.

ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH SOLIE

Ecological Odds

Carl Pope

In Michael Shaari's *The Killer Angels*, just before the Battle of Gettysburg, a British observer asks General James Longstreet, legendarily the best poker player in the South, "When do you draw to an inside straight?" Longstreet, portrayed by Shaari as the harbinger of the twentieth century, who believes warfare is about numbers and odds, about having the right weapons at the right place at the right time, and not about chivalry or morale, calmly and repeatedly replies, "Never. Never draw to an inside straight."

But that is exactly what we must do. Ecologically, the next century is about drawing not just one, but a whole series of inside straights. Among other tasks, we must:

- Shift our energy economy from carbon, and pray that the global climate can then restabilize.
- Substitute sustainable agriculture for pesticides, herbicides, and genetically engineered quasi-foods.
- Abandon both the metaphor and the practice of unifying human communities with networks of roads, railroads, and sprawling strip cities, and begin to reconnect fragmented natural communities with green belts, reserves, corridors, floodways, and wild rivers. Human communities need to nest within a connected and naturally functioning landscape.
- Amortize and retire our 200-year investment in toxic technologies based on heat and pressure applied to metals and hydrocarbons. We have the new technologies, but don't want to write off the capital invested in the old ones.
- Create and measure wealth, not waste, and then distribute it fairly enough that excess accumulation is no longer the measure of either security or dignity.
- Reduce the human footprint, almost certainly by reducing human numbers.

The odds on each one of these transitions is, in the logic of odds and numbers, no better than an inside straight in poker (about one in thirteen). So if we view this next century through the logic of a stock market, a casino, or one of Longstreet's killing fields, we are in for some very heavy gambling indeed.

Life itself, however, is improbable, and that very improbability must inspire us. Folding a hand in poker derives its sensible security from the certainty that another hand will follow, and another. There is little reason to hope for another creation.

But if the improbability, and irreplaceability, of the biosphere we inherited should inspire us in the face of the mechanical odds against an ecological rehabilitation, they should also caution us that in seeking strategies, we must put everything on the table. We will not save the environment by waiting for a more perfect humanity to emerge—we will either save it with profoundly flawed, omnivorous, shortsighted, and aggressive primates or we will not save it at all.

We know, in fact, that under the right circumstances, human beings can live profoundly sustainable and ecologically mindful lives in the most harsh, infertile, and demanding of environments. The Inuits of Baffin Island constructed an entire civilization entirely on the seal, while the !Kung of the Kalahari passed on detailed knowledge of hundreds of plants and harvested them lightly enough, even in their privation, that the plants would be there for their descendants in another season.

And we also know that human beings can lay waste to an entire continent in a century, as Euro-Americans did in the years between Lewis and Clark's departure from St. Louis in 1803 and the closing of the American frontier with the census of 1890.

Our challenge, then, is to accept our flawed nature—and demand of ourselves that we shift our vision of ourselves from the bold and Promethean pioneers of the wide open spaces to something less single-minded and more mindful.

As individuals, we already face the new century with a far different attitude than I grew up with. Ecological awareness, caring, and consciousness have diffused broadly both in this country and globally.

But individuals are far ahead of institutions. I don't think that this is just because institutions are always slower and more cumbersome. I also think that our very model of an institution is genetically incapable of behaving sustainably. Since the collapse of the universalist Catholic Church, European and Euro-American societies have developed a series of institutions—nation-states, bureaucracies, universities, corporations, armies, citizen organizations—whose strength was their focus, their ability to be "single-minded."

The great virtue of the single-minded institution, which dominates the emerging global economy, is that it ignores

Carl Pope is executive director of the Sierra Club, the nation's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization.



all but a fraction of the consequences of its actions. It can, therefore, move quickly, decisively, and creatively. It can exploit "opportunities"—many of which, of course, turn out to be the opportunity to take advantage of others: other competitors, other societies, other species, other generations.

This exploitative temperament is deeply embedded in human DNA by evolution. But in individuals there are powerful countervailing forces—empathy, altruism, solidarity, love, spirituality, discipline—which bestow upon us the potential to grow and be mindful.

What we lack, and what we must find in the next century, is a vision of how we can create within modern institutions such countervailing "mindfulness." What does it mean for a corporation, specifically created to be irresponsible and to view its liabilities to the world as "limited," to be responsible? How can a democratically elected politician, with a parochial constituency comprised of one geographic subsector of one species in one generation, appropriately act on behalf of all of those she does not represent? How can we deal with a scientific culture that sees its mission as enhancing human manipulative power, without worrying about whether the society into which this new knowledge is projected is capable of using it well?

In TIKKUN's terms, how do we find a politics of meaning not only for individuals, but also for institutions?

While that may indeed require drawing to an inside straight, look at the jackpot we stand to win. ❑

ILLUSTRATION BY JIM FLYNN

Joseph Skibell

Joseph Skibell is the author of A Blessing on the Moon *(Berkeley). He teaches at Emory.*

The Gregorian calendar, the calendar most of us now use, is only about 450 years old. It is Pope Gregory XIII's improvement on the Julian calendar, which had been around since about 49 BCE. Since Julius Caesar preceded Jesus by one hundred years, it's safe to assume that the first year on the Julian calendar was not called forty-nine and that the year following it wasn't called forty-eight. I don't know if anybody knows what these years were actually called while they were happening. I assume the first Julian year was year I, just as the fifth year must have been year V. In any case, the Julian calendar lost about three days every fourth century and when the Gregorian calendar was introduced in 1582, the universe was about ten days behind schedule. When Protestant England adopted the Pope's calendar by an act of Parliament in 1751, eleven days in 1752 (September 2 through the 14th) had to be sacrificed so that the Earth could catch up with itself. Although most Roman Catholic countries adopted the new calendar one hundred years after its invention—so much for papal fiat—Eastern Orthodox countries like Greece, Russia, and Bulgaria switched over only in 1918.

All of which basically means that of the last thousand years, not more than a third of them have been universally counted in any consistent manner, so that the likelihood of this new year being the year 2000 is fairly remote. Celebrating the new millennium on December 31, 1999, is a scientifically absurd act, akin to believing in a flat earth at the center of a universe filled with gaseous ethers, and I urge every one of us not to be taken in by superstition and myth! I'm sure this is fairly disappointing news to most of you, many of whom have probably already made at least tentative plans.

However, the good news is that, according to the Hebrew calendar, the days and months of which have been counted accurately and methodically by our people since the sixth day of Creation, the year is 5760. In other words, the Sixties are finally and actually and scientifically here! A new millennium (5760 to 6760) with the promise of rising consciousness, groovy threads, and, with the coming of the Messiah, free love! ❑

Carl Phillips

By Hard Stages

All the glories—
ribbed, and
separate,

collective
sway-in-the-wind.
Shut them.

To have wanted
more, where has that
carried me,

if what
so much matters
now can be proven

later to all
along have been doomed
not to?

*

The governing
drift was from
sensation to

distraction to
irrelevance: "they came
to nothing," it says here,

"en route
settling for things like
heat falling mostly

against, light mainly
falling, between them
a bush or

a skull
shimmering like another
example of absence of

will—with
heat only,
shivering—"

*

Do I make
a difference? or
What is it

so persuades, I
must make one?
The text breaks like a road

forking where none
warned of …
Look at yourself,

Look at you.
Have I not
looked there—

possibility for
—into it?
How small,

*

without effort almost,
can be the leap from
it-is-findable to

we-have-found-it.
Though not water,
not the flash, even,

as if off of that which
could be water, could
also not be—

To have
called it water. "They
crossed themselves,

they gave
utterly themselves over
to what

wasn't there,
that it might
save, or drown them...."



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID REGAN

Aesthetic Sensibilities

Geoffrey Hartman

As a twentieth-century leftover, I have my anxieties. They center primarily on the progress of insensibility, or future non-shock. Much has been made, by way of Walter Benjamin, of the obverse: how the shock of the great city, the industrial metropolis, began to affect our sense of the world. Also how the wastage of life in the trench warfare of the Great War, and the literal shell shock that played an important role in Freud's thinking, affected the public. Since then, the horror of civilian suffering, which penetrated public awareness with Germany's invasion of Belgium in 1914, has increased immeasurably because of the Holocaust and later genocides—as well as atrocities now brought into the home visually, daily, unavoidably, by the mass media.

Given these realities, I begin to understand why Goethe and Wordsworth appeal to me. Toward the beginning of an era which is recognizably ours, both maintained an enviable faith in art as an antidote to the growth of insensibility. The Enlightenment had not shaken their trust that thought and feeling could reinforce each other. The dissociation of thought from sensibility, while always a danger, was not a historical fatality that threatened their work. In Wordsworth as in Goethe, art and science are not opposites. Wordsworth links "Poetry and Geometric Truth," praising "their high privilege of lasting life, / From all internal injury exempt."

Geometry as a system is exempt, in theory, from contradictions; but poetry? Wordsworth's juxtaposition does not make sense—unless we see that "poetry" stands for the ideal result of the growth of the mind described in the autobiographical poem from which this quotation comes. Instead of "internal injury," then, we could say "trauma," for the integration of trauma, never perfect but holding the promise of a future development in that direction, is indeed the subject of *The Prelude*. How did Wordsworth's sensibility, "great birthright of our being," survive a complex series of political shocks during the French Revolution? How was it formed or reformed by those events?

Wordsworth's premonition at the end of the eighteenth century is that rural nature and the ethos it implies can no

Geoffrey Hartman, Sterling professor (emeritus) of comparative literature at Yale, has just published A Critic's Journey: Literary Reflections 1958–1998 *(Yale).*

longer be taken for granted. Industrialized society's intensified warfare, massively crowded cities, escalating demand for new sensations, proliferation of journalism, and "frantic novels"—all this would alienate the imagination from its earthly habitat more perniciously than other-worldly religions had ever done. Wordsworth proclaims, therefore, a new, anti-apocalyptic ecology, a "wedding" of earth and mind. He devotes himself, on the threshold of what I venture to call the 1800 millennium, to that ecological vision in a prothalamic poetry, a "spousal verse."

Despite our own century's recrudescence of cultural prophecy, we seem to be in a mist that is thickening rather than lifting. The Romantics saw the darkness to come, yet a principle of hope prevailed, perhaps from the fact that, unlike Goethe's fisherman enticed by a mermaid ("Half she drew him under, / Half he let himself sink down"), they did not sympathize or conspire with the destructive element, except at moments which also played out their resistance to it.

Today, the darkness the Romantics foresaw, often carried along by the excitement—and betrayals—of the French Revolution and by the gathering storm clouds of a soon rampant Industrial Revolution, is difficult to respond to without the complicity of extreme scenarios. Kenneth Burke talks of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" as the author's redemption of his drug. Is that what is going on in the agitated art that has taken over today's literature, movies, and popular music? Rarely, I think. Too many works of fiction return to the vomit of violence for the word "redemption" to be ventured. Ecstatic fantasies remain the drug as surely as drugs are often what enable such fantasies. No deviation will eventually escape this carnival; and when there is nothing to deviate from, when no taboo has a restraining force, and no *écart stylistique* can make an impact that is not immediately absorbed, then Hegel's prophecy of the end of art will have come about, in a paroxysmic rather than philosophic act of transcendence.

In short, to represent trespass and shock has become near impossible. There used to be the expectation that a shift in sensibility—an expansion or liberation of it, even approaching a *dérèglement de tous les sens*—might undo older divisions and dichotomies, such as faith and reason, life and learning, science and art. But playful stylization toward that end has been replaced by a spectacular emphasis on technique. Realism itself is no longer a vision to be achieved but something to be trumped by each competitively violent representation.

My New Year's wish, then, even if it takes another millennium to fulfill, is that our sensibility will not harden further, and that art as we have known it almost from the beginning of recorded history will survive, because it so often has managed to unfreeze, with its unexpected and humanizing insights, doctrinal attitudes or an inflexible realism. It is to be hoped that all the nonsense about dead white men—and identity politics generally—will depart from the earth, so that each artist, new or old, can receive that careful attention and judgment which are *a priori* obligations of the critic. I take courage from Goethe who tries to make clear "that the history of art alone can give us a true conception of the worth and value of a work of art," and that, especially though not exclusively in the visual arts, "it is first necessary to know the laborious development of the medium over the centuries." This sounds like a plea for material culture, and it is also that, though within a context where materialism is not a faith (or antifaith) but a means to enlarge the understanding. What Goethe suggests primarily is that the work of art is a "work," that it exacts a special attentiveness, a contemplative labor different from, but of comparable intensity to, what went into it, and which embraces a "filiation that informs all of art. If one sees a masterful artist one always finds that he has used whatever was good in his precursors, and that precisely is what makes him great." I would like to think that aesthetic education, though not aestheticism, will be honored once more in the future as a countervailing influence to the sensory overload and compassion fatigue of the dot-com era. ❑

Brenda Hillman

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Songless Era

A fine ash obscured the sun.

Leaves grew large as rooms.

Stamped recreants strolled near the pond
of wands.

There was a great and terrible brightness
that was pretty much like a fire
but it had *lots of eyes* in it.

Four syntaxes correspond to four styles of
going on.

Can you hear? (how 'bout now.) Non-
chanson:

lie down in the tent of a servant-queen;
lie down in the dust; go on.

One kind of sentence remembers the
accident;

one kind of sentence is a scar.

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Techno-Sweatshops

Andrew Ross

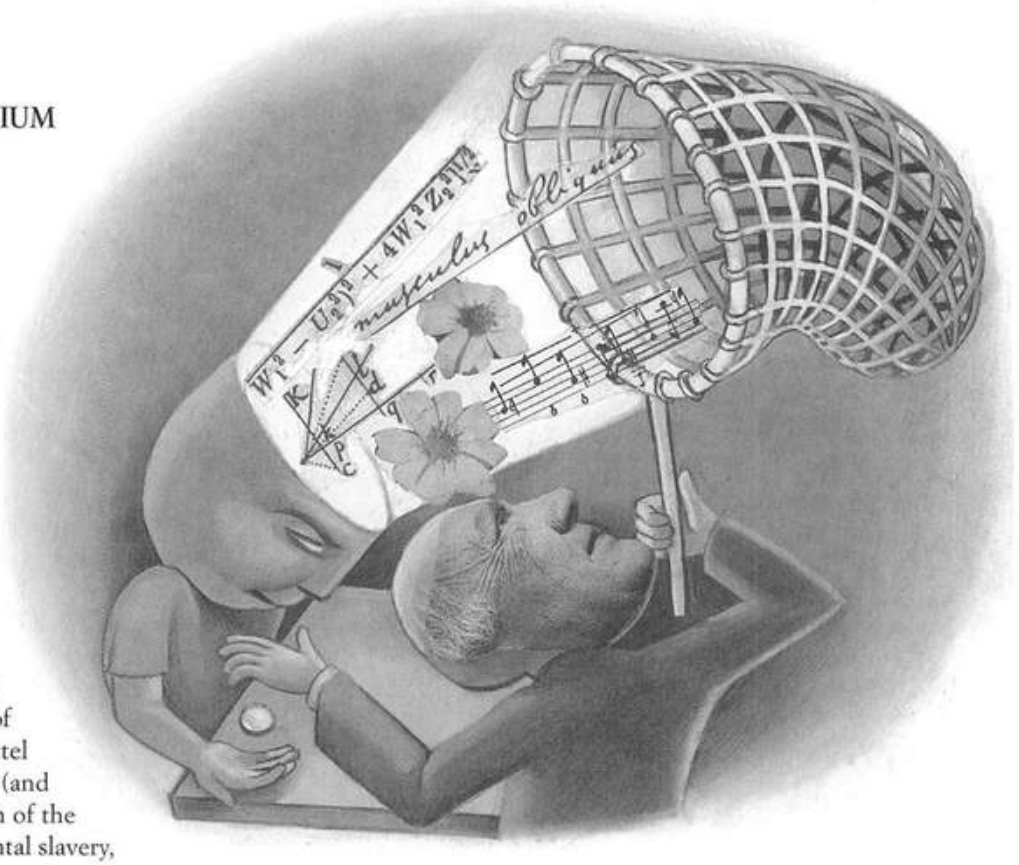


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID BALL

If I had to name a millennial moment it would be that part of the soulful lullaby of "Redemption Song" where Bob Marley soberly advises us: "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery." It took most of this past millennium to eradicate chattel slavery, serfdom, and indentured labor (and we are not done yet). It may take much of the next millennium to deliver us from mental slavery, from ideas that keep us down. Marley's genius was to recognize this, and so he stands on the cusp of the millennia, haunted by the future even as he summarizes the past.

But don't believe that mental slavery has any less to do with labor than physical slavery did. The New Economy which is pulling us along does not make it easy to distinguish between manual and mental labor, nor is it simply supplanting the former by the latter. For all the talk about a knowledge economy, economists have yet to figure out what mental labor is, and what it really costs. The one thing we do know is that the cheaper it comes, the more brutal the New Economy will be.

In the first wave of premillennial futurism, boosters, from Daniel Bell to Alvin Toffler, blithely hailed the coming of postindustrialism as the advent of the rule of reason and expertise. The irrational rule of capital was over, and knowledge would now reign. In the most recent wave, cyberboosters like Kevin Kelley speak of a collective, networked intelligence—the "hive mind"—that is liberating work from the rigid constraints of the former industrial system. Yet it is clear that this industrial system has outlived the millennium, and, contrary to reports of its death, is churning its way

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Rebecca Goldstein

Rebecca Goldstein's new novel, Properties of Light: A Novel of Love, Betrayal, and Quantum Physics *will be published this August.*

My question concerning literature and the future is this: I wonder if it will be possible for writing once again to make a difference in the world—for art, of whatever form, to prompt the deeply unsettling, deeply exhilarating communal experience of being pried open to reality—including moral reality—through the mediation of beauty.

Any art, including literature, that has a chance of securing such an end is one requiring of its audience an intensity of attention mirroring that of the artist's in producing the work. The jolt of receiving reality is delivered through the discerning and rapt activities of the intelligence and imagination. And because this is so, the probability of its happening in our day, or the one quickly approaching, is dim. The art of paying attention—of directing the mind away from the ego-driven drama in order to confront and absorb the reality of what is separate and precious—is hardly practiced in our day. The only art that can flourish when attention is barely paid is one that throws up yet some more passing and pleasing diversions or, even better, an art that blends with, rather than disturbs, the preoccupations of the ego. We are losing our chance for transcendence for lack of knowing how to pay attention. ❑

Overwork and underpayment do not disappear when knowledge drives the economy.

through the next. The global sweatshop is alive and thriving—from the garment factories of Indonesia and Honduras to the data-processing pools of Bangalore and Jamaica. Take away the armed guards and barbed wire on the factory perimeter, and today's sweatshop is not much different from a century ago.

What's more surprising is the degree to which new kinds of mental labor are becoming industrialized. For a pioneer workplace of tomorrow, look at the funky milieu of the Webshops, where over half of the jobs are filled by contract employees or perma-temps, where workers rarely find employer-supported health care, and where deeply caffeinated eighty-five-hour workweeks without overtime pay are a way of life for employees on flexible contracts, who invest a massive share of "sweat equity" in the mostly futile hope that their stock options will pay off. All in all, the New Media workplace is a prescient indicator of the near future of labor, which combines mental skills with new technologies in alternative environments.

We will see ever more customized workplaces where work looks exactly like play; horizontal networking among heroic teams of self-directed workers; the proto-hipster appeal of bohemian dress codes, personal growth, and nonhierarchical surroundings; the vague promise of bounteous rewards from stock options; and employees so complicit with the culture of overwork and burnout that they have developed their own insider brand of sick humor about being "net slaves," i.e., inferring that it's actually cool to be exploited so badly. Industrial capitalists used to dream about such a workforce, but their managerial techniques were too rigid to foster it. These days, the new-wave management wing of the New Economy worships exactly this kind of decentralized environment, which "empowers" workers, banishes bureaucratic constraints on their creativity, and delivers meaningful and nonalienated labor for a grateful, and independently minded, workforce.

Artists' traditions of sacrifice, whereby the cash compensation for doing creative work is deeply discounted, are feeding directly into new economic sectors like the Webshops. Indeed, artists' hours and wages, once a socially marginal profile of labor, are increasingly the model for today's flexible employee. So, too, we have seen the academy succumb to the rapid penetration of the low-wage economy, with much of its contingent workforce teaching for wages at or near the poverty line. Again, this was hastened along by academic traditions of sacrificial labor, which sanction the voluntary acceptance of discounted wages for the privilege of doing mental work. Perhaps we can see a pattern developing here. No longer on the margins of the economy, in Bohemia or the ivory tower, discounted mental work of the sort that is customary among artists and academics now increasingly lies at the center of the productive economy in core sectors of the new industrial order.

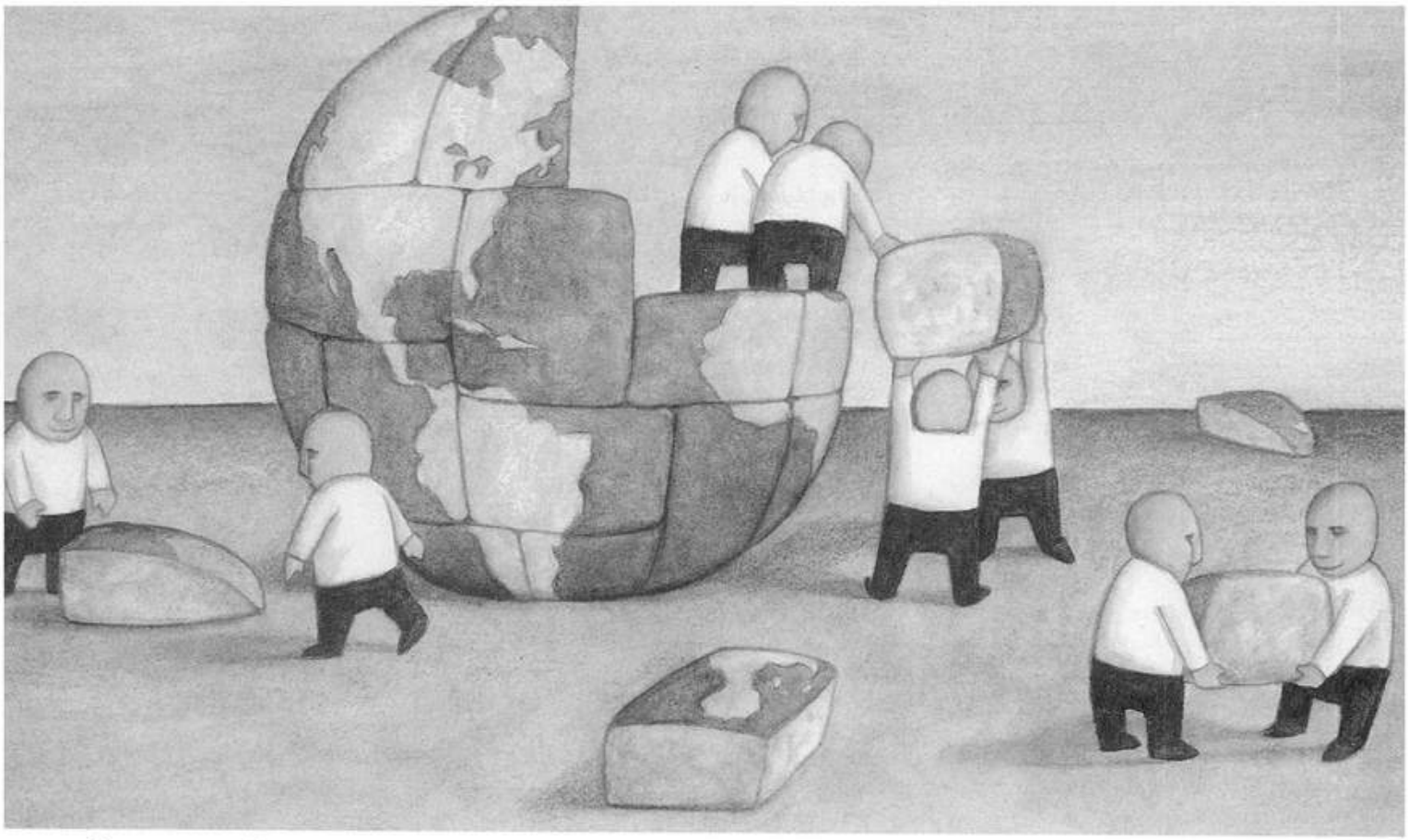
The lesson, then, is that overwork and underpayment do not disappear when knowledge (rather than heavy manufacturing) drives the economy. If anything, knowledge work is seen as a creative opportunity for which workers will work longer, and for less compensation. As we move into this next century, we will have to learn fast how to price our work, before mental labor becomes the high-octane fuel for a low-wage industrial revolution that may surpass the slavery systems of the past with unforeseen forms of servitude. Bob Marley was never quite so prophetic. ❑

Sheila P. Donohue

Pastoral at the End of the 20th Century

Hens lay a thousand a day, wing to wing
like the bombers buzzing azure skies
in the paint-tinted frames of TV films I see
five seconds of then flip flip flip.
If it's not the beef mooing by the road
it's the hayseed in your hair
and you sneezing all the way to Galena
then pointing with a city finger
at the five cute foxes leaping in the field
near the three brown rabbits, not real speedy.

Meadow, rather. The copper ping
of drops dripping into tarnished pots
sings a hobo's song; give me a twenty
and my pants wrapped in a scarf on a stick:
I'll hop the next train and stare three states wide
till the sky slams bam horizon-wise into the land
and there's nothing else, the sky, that land,
and a spread-open empty feeling in the gut
of my gut saying Who's out there: Anyone?
—And how did I get here?



ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS ANDO

CULTURE *in the* NEW MILLENNIUM

Peace or Hate?
Education for a New Millennium

Svi Shapiro

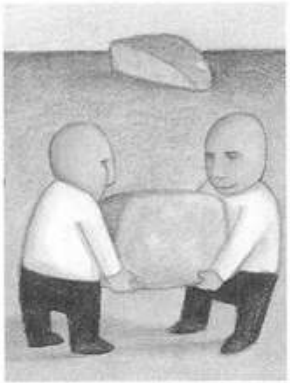
In the past year, the war in Kosovo as well as the Los Angeles killings have brought home to us again the horrifying and painful consequences of human hatred when it is mobilized around ethnic and national divisions. In a world awash with such hate-filled social conflicts, what might it mean to talk about an education that attempts to teach a more peaceful, less violent civic and global culture? Breaking the cycle of violence, hatred, and injustice depends on some kind of politics of negotiation and reconciliation. "Blessed are the peacemakers" is more than empty cant.

Yet this is a time when we can see more clearly than ever that peaceful understanding and coexistence between human beings depends on something more than the deal-making between political leaders. It requires a transformative process more deeply rooted; a profound change in our cultural attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, indeed in the psychological dispositions that shape how human beings react and relate to the others who share our world. The overriding challenge of the next millennium will be to learn from our own century's extraordinary barbarism the lessons we need to construct an education for our children that might lead them away from its endemic violence, dangerous stereotypes, and conformity to intolerant behavior.

More than ever we need a critical education that will address why we make wars, destroy lives, brutalize and devalue others, and follow those who lead us into the blind rage of ethnocentrism or other forms of social hatred. At the very least, globalization—which has increased, not

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lessened, social animosity—will require a more balanced vision of education for our children. Such an education would concern itself not just with the capacity to work in the postindustrial economy but also the ability and will to contribute to the making of a pluralistic culture (a multiculturalism, if you will) in which there is tolerance and respect for difference, and where conflicts are resolved through democratic means. Most of all, in the new world order of both growing global integration *and* intensifying communal strife, educating for social justice—for the creation of a world that is more peaceful because it is more fair—must be seen as an urgent priority of public policy.



What might such an education look like? Forty years after Hannah Arendt described what she called the "banality of evil," we continue to be reminded of the power unquestioning conformity to authority has to make human beings willing to commit atrocities against others. Again and again we see young men (it is usually men) recruited to become part of armies or paramilitary organizations trained to unthinkingly obey orders to humiliate, terrorize, and kill those designated as the enemy. Again and again we hear the voices of those who have maimed and murdered plead that that they did no more than follow the orders given to them. Whether in Nazi Germany or Bosnia, My Lai or Serbia, South Africa or Israel, we are witness to the effects of teaching individuals that the meaning of being good citizens or soldiers is to unreflexively accept the decisions and commands of others. Yet educators (and generals) know that acting without consciousness or conscience is a *taught* response. Brought up and educated in democratic environments, individuals can just as surely respond to authority with critical attitudes and a readiness to resist inhuman commands. Those who commit themselves to teaching for freedom know the liberating consequences of schools and classrooms where there is a constant emphasis on the development of a "critical imagination"—classrooms where kids are constantly encouraged to question assumptions, challenge what is "taken for granted," and approach knowledge and truth as the stuff of human invention.

If a more peaceful world is necessarily a more just one, then it is certainly easy to see the importance of cultural changes that give dignity and recognition to all those hitherto suppressed or invalidated human voices. Despite those who would sneeringly deride such changes with comments about "political correctness," the multicultural movement in our schools is an expression of hope and celebration. Multiculturalism gives voice to all those identities that have been denied, effaced, or despised by those whose visibility and acceptance is underscored by their economic and political power. It means an education in which the history and experience of those who have been marginalized or ignored because of their language, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, race, age, disability, or nationality becomes part of *all* our awareness and understanding.

What is, however, ultimately at issue in our classrooms is the question of social justice. An education concerned with peace must teach students how societies create hierarchies that privilege the experience, culture, and humanity of some, and devalue that of others. Through this pedagogy of justice students begin to grasp how much of the bitterness and violence in the world is the stored-up frustration of those whose who have been deprived of both dignity and opportunity. We know from psychological experiments that even creating relatively simple hierarchies—like dividing young children into groups of privileged "blue eyes" and despised "brown eyes"—can powerfully evoke a sense of anger and frustration in those condemned to a lesser category. And the effects of such lessons can be lifelong.

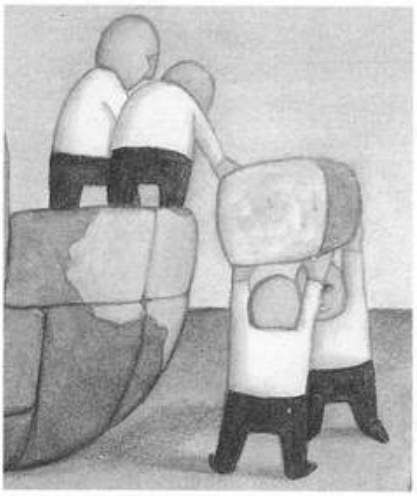
Unfortunately, it is still the case that struggles for justice are dealt with in schools only in the most sanitized and blandest of ways. Studies of textbooks typically used in American classrooms show just how watered-down such historical experience becomes, leaving little sense of the passion, commitment, and courage needed to battle systems of oppression and inequality, or of the capacity and willingness of ordinary people to challenge these worlds of pain. Worse than this, historians such as James Loewen have demonstrated just how badly distorted and misrepresented are the stories we tell in school about social injustice. Such accounts too often occlude the full horror and suffering perpetrated against the many who have been enslaved, exploited, deprived of jobs, homes, or dignity, or even killed. No education interested in the possibility of constructing a more peaceful world can omit an honest telling of this history. Only by making real to students the awful legacy, and the current reality, of the lives of so many of those who share our world can sense be made of the rage that surrounds us.

We have to admit that the relationship between an education that acknowledges and celebrates cultural identities and the possibility for a less violent, more peaceful world is not a simple one. The opportunity to vigorously assert one's identity is often a two-edged sword, allowing those who have been condemned to a prison house of silence to finally speak but also permitting us to see just how much we define ourselves through the negation of others. It is easy to see how the freedom to assert one's identity becomes not the road to less violence and more peace, but the vehicle for all kinds of hate-filled intolerance. It is certainly possible to understand the wariness of Zygmunt Bauman towards the new politics of identity in which, he says, the "imagined communities" of nation and ethnicity

provide the language for all kinds of intolerance, chauvinism, and separatism. These "neo-tribes," as he calls them, offer the possibility of escape from the anxiety and uncertainty of modern existence, with their promise of reassuring traditions and secure identity. Yet they do so at a steep price, for they are frequently a flight into parochialism and authoritarianism.

Yet there is surely more to these communities than simply intolerance and absolutism. Historically rooted communities often provide the moral commitments and creative vision that fuel struggles for justice and human dignity. Such movements frequently draw on communal cultures with their "dangerous memories" that speak to enduring struggles for survival and justice. In these narratives of history and identity are found those wellsprings of courage for surviving the despair of the present moment, and the hope, possibility, and courage that galvanize the quest for transforming the world.

Educators can both acknowledge Bauman's criticisms and yet draw on the socially beneficial power of identity by creating educational spaces where there is a commitment to bridge differences, to create compassionate connections among people, *in spite of* the divisiveness and separations. The feminist educational philosopher Jane Roland Martin has written eloquently about the need for schools and classrooms to be places not simply where the "productive" values of achievement and mastery are taught, but where the "reproductive" values of connection, relationship, and caring are emphasized. When schools are so much about success and "getting ahead" it is hard to imagine creating the kind of compassionate and caring communities in which individuals learn to really struggle with the painful issues of difference and injustice in a pluralistic culture. Unlike the hollow institutional integration typically practiced around race or disability or language, where students "coexist" but remain largely strangers to one another, real educational communities would make possible human encounters with genuine dialogue and interaction. Such places would enable individuals to learn how to face and deal with issues of anger, distrust, and intolerance.



The effort to recognize and value our differences, however, is only half the story. Educating for peace means also teaching about that which *connects us* across cultural borders—our shared *humanity*. While there are those who are dismissive of the more transcendent vision of our "humanness," it is hard to see how we can live without some version of that profound quality that connects and unites human beings. Whether we understand humanity as a philosophical invention or the ineffable expression of God's creation, it is hard to deny just how powerful and transformative is the notion of the precious and unique quality of human life. It drives the extraordinary and expanding movement for human rights throughout the world. It nurtures the deep sense that human life is something sacred, a matter of incalculable value. It unleashes the radical vision that only loving communities can truly and fully honor the infinite worth and dignity of each person.

Such profound notions not only offer inspiring possibilities, but also revolutionary critiques of the world we live in. To see in every person the "face" of God, as the French Jewish philosopher Emanuel Levinas has described it, is to grasp just how ethically desensitized we become when this face is turned into the "other." The latter is the dehumanized being of our world that we can now exploit, violate, dominate, or murder. In our grossly desensitized world this is, indeed, the everyday reality for so many human beings. Educating for peace means, I believe, teaching students to recognize this precious or sacred quality of life, and its inseparability from the loving communities that are needed to nourish and develop it. It means, too, teaching our students just how much the values that drive our society, and increasingly our world, are antithetical to our human-ness. The terrible confluence of masculinity and capitalism, with their relentless emphasis on competition, control, aggression, separation, and domination over nature, thwarts and destroys our ability to see the sacred faces of all who share our world.

A pedagogy for peace does not in itself produce peace, but it does encourage what Herbert Marcuse called "immanent critique": a deeper appreciation of the contradiction between this world of so much unnecessary suffering and the ageless dream of a mutually caring and just human community. If only for the short time we are together with our students, the classroom might become a place where we name this intolerable schism. ❑

Peter Campion

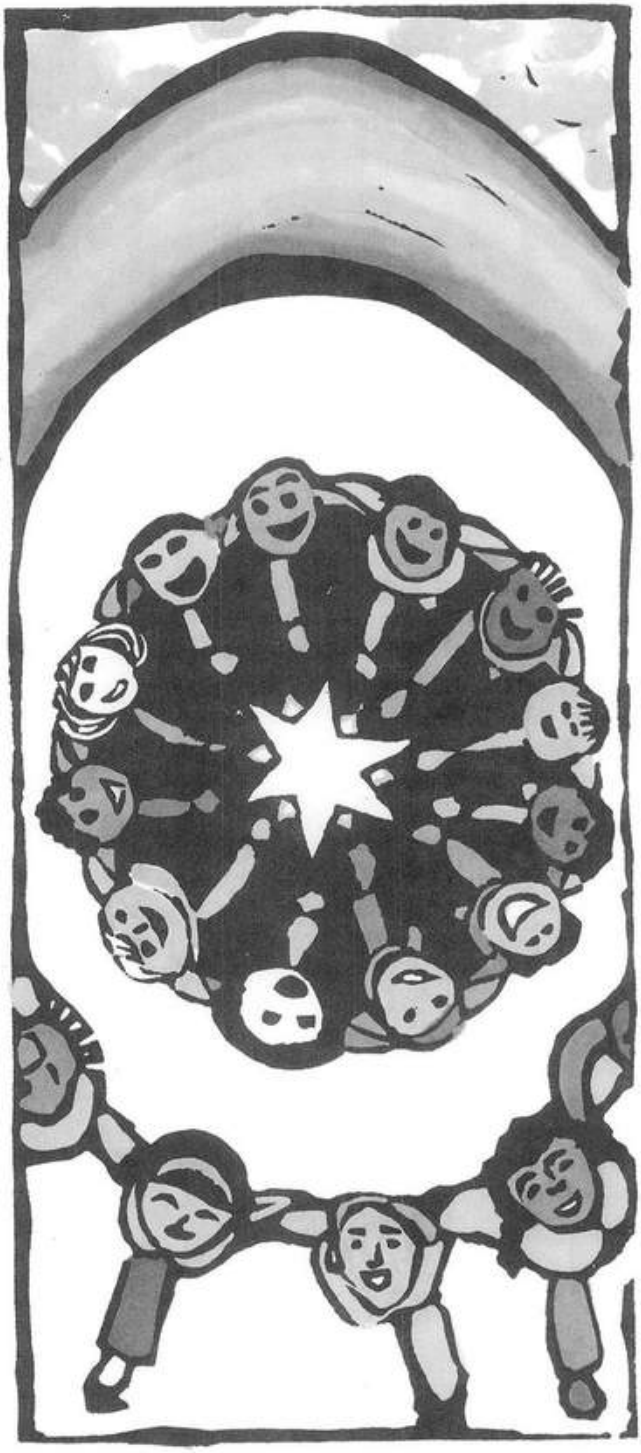
Pines

You who see us in winds, like warriors, or
dancers angling shoulders against each other's

—we're forced by long gone choices, like your fathers,
hugely and helplessly, like nations' borders.

The Partnership School *of the* Future

Riane Eisler



What will the world be like for tomorrow's children? When I look at my two-year-old granddaughter's face, bright with wide-eyed curiosity and joyful expectation of love and life, I see wonderful possibilities. But when I look at the challenges she and her generation will inherit, I see that these possibilities will not be realized unless today's and tomorrow's children learn to live in more environmentally conscious, equitable, and peaceful ways.

For over two centuries, educational reformers such as Johann Pestalozzi, Maria Montessori, John Dewey, and Paolo Freire have called for an education that prepares us for democracy rather than authoritarianism and that fosters ethical and caring relations. Building on the work of these and other germinal education thinkers, I am proposing an expanded approach to educational reform that can help young people meet the unprecedented challenges of a world in which technology can either destroy us or free us to actualize our unique human capacities for creativity and caring. I call this approach partnership education.

Partnership Education

Partnership education is not just one more program or method, but a new learning tapestry for the school of the future. Partnership education integrates three core components: partnership process, structure, and content (how, where, and what we learn and teach). It is an education to help children not only better navigate through our difficult times but also create a future oriented more to what in my study of cultural evolution I have identified as a partnership rather than dominator model.

We are all familiar with these two models from our own lives. We know the pain, fear, and tension of relations based on domination and submission, on coercion and accommodation, of jockeying for control, of trying to manipulate and cajole when we are unable to express our real feelings and needs, of the miserable, awkward tug of war for that illusory moment of power rather than powerlessness, of our unfulfilled yearning for caring and mutuality, of all the misery, suffering, and lost lives and potentials that come from these kinds of relations. Most of us also have, at least intermittently, experienced another way of being, one where we feel safe and are seen for who we truly are, where our essential humanity and that of others shines through, perhaps only for a little while, lifting our hearts and spirits, enfolding us in a sense that the world can after all be right, that we are valued and valuable.

But the partnership and dominator models describe not only individual relationships. They describe the specific

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEN SERON

Dr. Riane Eisler is the author of the international bestseller The Chalice and the Blade *and the just-published* Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century, *from which this article is adapted.*

systems of belief and social structures that either nurture and support or inhibit and undermine equitable, democratic, nonviolent, and caring relations. Partnership education is foundational to a society that orients primarily to the partnership model.

Transforming Education

To move to a better millennium we need an education that offers children a more accurate, and hopeful, vision of human nature and our place in the unfolding drama of life on this Earth. In the mass media as well as in much of the conventional school curriculum, we humans are portrayed as inherently cruel, violent, and selfish (for example, in education's emphasis on who conquered whom in wars). But what distinguishes us as a species is not our cruelty and violence but our enormous capacity for caring and creativity. This is our essential humanity and the basis on which we can build a better future not only for today's and tomorrow's children but for generations still to come.

To lead good lives and create a better society, young people need an education that integrates the practical and the theoretical and the sciences and the humanities, inspiring a life of meaning and service. Because the social construction of the roles and relations of the female and male halves of humanity is central to both the partnership and the dominator social configuration, partnership education is gender-balanced. It integrates the history, needs, problems, and aspirations of both halves of humanity into what is taught as important knowledge and truth. Because in the partnership model difference is not automatically equated with inferiority or superiority, partnership education is multicultural. It offers a pluralistic perspective that includes peoples of all races and a variety of backgrounds, as well as the real life drama of the animals and plants of the Earth we share. Since partnership education offers a systemic approach, environmental education is not an add-on but an integral part of the curriculum.

Through partnership education, young people will learn the dramatic story of our human adventure on this Earth against the backdrop of the need and prospects for a major cultural transformation. They will begin to see school as a place of exploration, a place to share feelings and ideas, an exciting community of educators, students, and parents working together to ensure that each child is recognized and valued and that the human spirit will be nurtured and grow.

I see a place where children learn about the mystery and majesty of our amazing universe.

Nurturing the Human Spirit

When I envision the partnership school of the future, I see a place where children learn about the mystery and majesty of our amazing universe. In this school, young people will hear many stories of the wonders of life on our Earth. They will learn that cooperation and caring play a major part in the life of many species with whom we share our planet, and that what marks our human emergence is not our capacity to inflict pain but our enormous capacity to give and feel pleasure. They will know about chemicals that, by the grace of evolution, course through our bodies, rewarding us with sensations of sometimes exquisite pleasure when we create and care. And they will understand that this pleasure is ours not only when we are loved but when we love another, not only when we are touched with caring but when we touch another with caring.

Boys and girls will learn to value women's contributions throughout human history, and to give particular value to the caring and caretaking work that was once devalued as "merely women's work." They will also understand that this work is the highest calling for both women and men, that nonviolence and caretaking do not make boys "sissies," and that when girls are assertive leaders they are not being "unfeminine" but expressing part of their human potential.

Tomorrow's children will know that all of us, no matter what our color or culture, come from a common mother,

Rodger Kamenetz

Rodger Kamenetz' books include The Missing Jew, The Jew in the Lotus, Stalking Elijah *and* Terra Infirma.

Jewish mystical wisdom teaches that time in its deepest origin comes out of kindness. Rebbe Nachman writes in one of his tales, "the very beginning of time is chesed." But that pure holy expansive time is something we taste only fleetingly.

So we only become sensitive to time when big round numbers roll around. Those zeroes really wake us up: when we hit thirty, forty, fifty in our personal calendar, or when the three big zeroes roll down for the millennial year.

So let's use all those zeroes as a meditation. Let's understand that sabbath is day zero of the week, the time before time began, the place of not-doing in the big scheme of doing. The millennium begins this year on a sabbath—New Year's Eve is Friday night—so maybe that's a sign to renew our time by returning to the zero point of time, which is kindness. ❑

way back in Africa millions of years ago. They will appreciate difference beginning with the difference between the female and male halves of humanity. They will have mental maps that do not lead to the scapegoating and persecution of those who are not quite like them. They will learn to regulate their own impulses, not out of fear of punishment and pain, but in anticipation of the pleasure of responsible and truly satisfying lives and relationships.

Spiritual education will not be an add-on, but integral to the whole curriculum. The partnership core of all world spiritual traditions will be taught in practical, day-to-day settings, inspiring young people to live lives guided by a partnership morality of caring rather than a dominator morality of coercion. Both girls and boys will learn that they have in them the divine spirit, and that this was recognized by our earliest ancestors, who revered powerful female deities from the North American Corn Mother and the Greek goddess Demeter, givers of the fruits of the Earth, to the Indian goddess Sarasvati and the Sumerian goddess Nidaba, honored as inventors of the art of writing.

Inspiring stories will be told of ancient myths honoring the Earth as sacred. Inspiring stories will also be told of heroic women and men who worked for a safer, more equitable society, and how we too can use our creativity to help build a partnership world.

Above all, in this partnership school of the future young people will form visions of what can be and acquire the understandings and skills to make these visions come true. They will learn how to create partnership families and communities worldwide. And they will join to construct a world where chronic violence, inequality, and insensitivity will no longer be "just the way things are" but "the way things once were."

We still have a long way to go. But if we have the spiritual courage to build a new educational system based on the principles of the partnership school, we can lay one of the primary foundations for a more sustainable, equitable, and caring new millennium. ❑

Aryeh Lev Stollman

Aryeh Lev Stollman is an interventional neuroradiologist and the author of the novel The Far Euphrates *(Riverhead 1997) which has been translated into five languages.*

Our calendar and the approaching millennium are in the end merely constructs of the human brain based on real and countable events—the movements of the sun, moon and stars across the heavens, and on our imagination and longing. The year 2000 which marks an arbitrary point in the infinity of time is a most wonderful fiction, and like all wonderful fiction can be the tool with which we might better navigate our world. ❑

Co-Creating Our Future

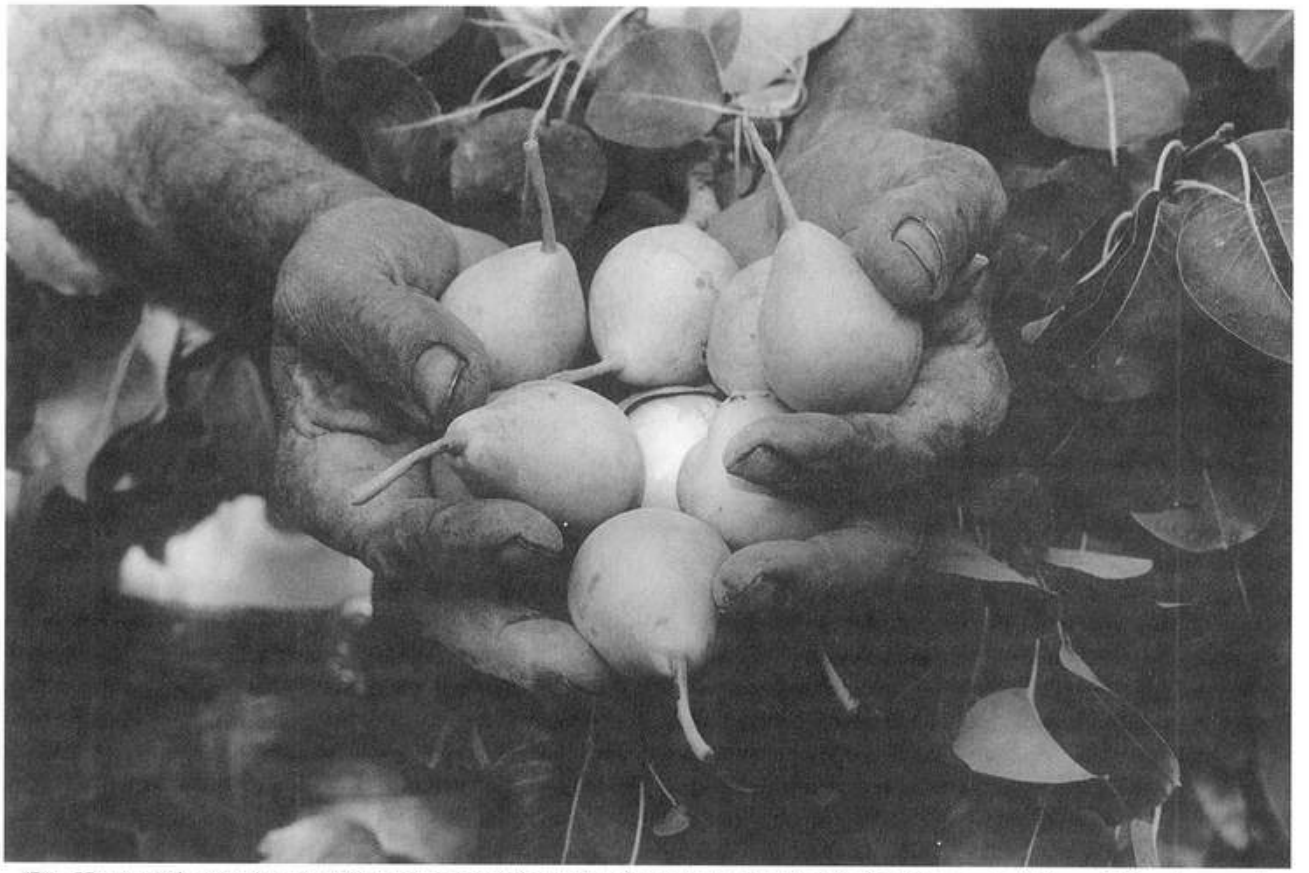
Among the programs fashioning threads for a new partnership educational tapestry is the Weaving the Future: Partnership Schools project of the Center for Partnership Studies (CPS). Drawing from Riane Eisler's new book *Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century* and the work of other innovative educators, CPS provides educational consulting, continuing teacher education, curriculum development, and other support to individuals and schools who want to move past the current crisis in education to a new approach that supports, rather than impedes, the development of our full human potential.

Through Partnership Education Consultants (PEC), the Center for Partnership Studies offers assistance to individuals, schools, and other organizations who want to ensure that partnership process, content, and structure are integral to all aspects of education. PEC also assists in the building of educational models that can be replicated and adapted independently and disseminated through websites, books, and other publications throughout the world.

For example, CPS is assisting Nova High School, a public charter school in Seattle serving a culturally and socioeconomically diverse student body, in developing and testing a one-year multidisciplinary systems class that spans biological and cultural evolution, focusing on human possibilities rather than human limitations, peace rather than war, gender balance rather than imbalance, environmental balance rather than "the conquest of nature."

Other CPS projects include developing a project in conjunction with *New Moon* magazine to bring together a multicultural group of girls from across the United States to create partnership-based picture books for younger children; collaborating with the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning to provide Partnership Teacher Training workshops; and working with the Institute for Field-Based Teacher Education at the California State University, Monterey Bay, to develop plans for a distance-learning Master of Arts in Education degree with a specialty in Partnership Education.

To find out more information, browse CPS' website at www.partnershipway.org.



"Pear Harvest, Palestinian Hands, Kibbutz Dvir, Israel" is one photo in a series by Jenni Kolsky titled *Remnants of a Dream*. This series recently won the First Prize in the First Annual Nagler Jewish Photography Competition sponsored by the Judah Magnes Museum.

Floyd Skloot

Floyd Skloot's most recent book is the novel The Open Door *(1997).*
He recently was awarded Creative Nonfiction*'s prize for best essay.*

As the millennium approaches, my mind, or what's left of it, has been wondering what became of the Decade of the Brain. By proclamation, President Bush dedicated the 1990s to unlocking the brain's secrets. This was announced seven months after I had suffered brain damage in a viral attack that left me utterly changed. But I felt hopeful then that research would help me regain what had been lost. I would walk with a normal gait, remember not to put the ice tray in the oven or the newspaper in the freezer, not say "undershirts" when I meant to say "outskirts," and know who the man on the phone was when he said we'd been best friends. By century's end, I would celebrate these miracles by dancing a fandango sans cane with the woman I loved. We have indeed learned about the brain. When I had my first brain tests, there were no PET or SPECT scans with which to map the workings and nonworkings of neural impulses. No one had discovered the brain's capacity to regenerate cells. Understanding of the receptors and chemicals that govern or fail to govern behavior was less clear. But I have come to see these advances as beside the point. So is dancing the fandango. I remain brain-damaged to such an extent that I am clinically demented, and now that damage can be seen pinpointed on a computer screen. Yet like the demented century, I have gotten here well enough to see the millennium as a new beginning, not an end to hope. I seem shattered, but there are many ways in which I am better than ever, ways that are not obvious or flashy, not what I expected of myself at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Slowed down, living quietly with my wife in rural isolation, learning how to think and write in new ways, I feel reborn, hopeful, looking at the millennium with genuine astonishment at all we thought would be important. ❑

The Culture *of the* Just Born

Robbie Pfeufer Kahn



During his breastfeeding years my son would say, "my am going out to play." Linguistically he seemed to regard himself as part of a whole. When he weaned at three and a half, he began for the first time to call himself "I." Twenty-four years later a two-year-old girl was visiting me with her father. Though she liked the blueberries I gave her to eat, after a while she began calling for her mother. I asked if she was wanting to "nuh" (thinking that was her word for nursing). She looked at me with the bemused impatience of an expert linguist and, correcting me, said, "Nooh."

Levin's grammar and Nina's word seem not to bear public meaning. Yet they belong to a history more ancient than the oldest word for God in the Torah. *El Shaddai* means "mountain" or "breasted one" and likely is a genetic remnant of Paleolithic Great Goddess cultures, a period when the maternal body was the matrix of the social order, as it was to Levin and Nina. Like the transcendent creator in Genesis, patriarchal societies always have given birth from above. Even material production (the work of human hands or, later, industry and technology) has belonged more to history and culture than to nature. Yet without birth from below, the reproduction of human life, there would be no history or culture at all. At the threshold of the next millennium, as it was 25,000 years ago, the maternal body remains our common ground of being.

Besides its etymological roots in the far past, Levin and Nina's language derives from the substratum of human life to which they once belonged. In the culture of the just born, birth and lactation constitute founding moments of the embodied social person. A language of birth arises between the subjectivities of mother and baby expressed through their bodies. Later the baby puts the experiences into words.

What relevance has the culture of the just born to the millennium? Humanity verges on unimagined disembodied connection, the most familiar expression of which is the Internet. We communicate feverishly while leaving our creatural bodies behind. By "creatural" I do not mean "primitive" versus "civilized," or "nature" versus "culture," or "wild" versus "tame," or "bestial" versus "human." These bifurcations must be left behind in the millennia responsible for colonialism and the separation of mind and body. What I do mean by creatural is the difference between feeling apart from one's body or inside of it, feeling tool-like or like a being that breathes and is capable of embodied action, feeling that we are our own creation or that we are embedded in a reality larger than the human alone. If we hope to mend separations from the self, from other human and nonhuman animals, from this spinning planet ringed with blue, and from the sacred, we must cultivate creatural aliveness in the next millennium.

We have named global constituencies First World (developed countries), Second World (former Soviet-type systems), and Third World (developing countries). Women and people with disabilities both have claimed the designation of Fourth World as theirs. The culture of the just born deserves a global category in recognition of its universal community. As a Fifth World community the culture of the just born instructs us about a sociability *grounded in the body.* This lesson guides us toward a proper embodied relational life. In any culture, if born healthy and undrugged, a newborn will wriggle up her mother's body to reach the breast and begin suckling; a newborn will focus his eyes best at ten inches, which is the distance from his position at the breast to the mother's eyes; a baby will begin smiling at around two to three months (unsighted babies begin smiling slightly later). These species-specific acts of embodied sociability are not marked by culture and suggest that relinquishing our creatural bodies violates human nature.

Together with the culture of the just born, nature itself teaches creatural lessons. The damaged environment and vanishing species have communicated mutely that we live

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Robbie Pfeufer Kahn received the Jesse Bernard Award of the American Sociological Association for Bearing Meaning: The Language of Birth. *This essay is dedicated to her father, Dr. Arthur E. Kahn, who died on 20 Tishri 5760.*

without regard for the interdependence of all things. What life is possible for humans if we lose the plants, the animals, and the very atmosphere of the earth? When they gain the right to meaning production, expressed in social and cultural reforms, nature and the culture of the just born attain equality in a society whose democratic ethic applies only to adult humans.

Calling women back to the maternal body is problematic for the next millennium, for it seems at odds with equality. Yet from the baby's point of view the breast is preferable to a rubber nipple; the sound of the mother's voice, her face, and her scent are preferable to all others. Babies even have the same REM patterns of sleep as their mothers. From the baby's point of view the maternal body ought not to be banished from experience and consciousness as if it were Eden, and patriarchal cultures should not be considered more mature societies than matrifocal ones.

The culture of the just born instructs us about a sociability grounded in the body.

If it were not used as a ploy to keep women "in their place," the maternal body once again could become the matrix of the social order with social structures built to accommodate it. Education about pregnancy, giving birth, and the benefits of breastfeeding would be taught in grammar and high schools and in colleges; all women would have the privilege of good nutrition, habitable environments, and prenatal care given by midwives during pregnancy; women would have the support of *doulas* (women helpers) throughout the childbearing cycle (research shows that *doula* support during labor decreases the incidence of cesareans dramatically); most births would take place in birth centers unconnected to hospitals, or at home; midwives, familiar with allowing a woman to give birth by her own powers, would attend most women in childbirth; breasts would receive a new cultural code as sources of nutrition for babies rather than as sexual objects belonging to men; workplaces would offer generous maternity and paternity leaves, and would offer onsite day care so that babies could have access to the maternal body; breastfeeding would be encouraged in public so that you might see a senator nursing her baby during a congressional session; the emotional benefits of breastfeeding beyond infancy would be recognized and promoted. To accommodate all these changes the pace of society would slow down in much the same way as a walk to the corner store for a stick of butter with a toddler, who bends down to inspect a dandelion that has pushed its way through a crack in the concrete sidewalk, takes longer than usual.

With such social structures in place women might feel at home in their maternal bodies. The physical transformations of childbearing would become normalized culturally, would not separate women from the public sphere, and would not threaten the loss of male regard. Research shows that many professional women, accustomed to being trim and having their lives "in control," feel trapped by childbearing and do not mind cesarean births. In the extreme, some of them fear and loathe the maternal body. When society advocates androgyny, women atone for entering

Richard Zimler

Richard Zimler's new novel is The Angelic Darkness *(W. W. Norton).*
His previous novel is The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon *(Overlook). He lives in Porto, Portugal.*

I have come to the conclusion that our constant emphasis—over the past several thousand years—on male authority and masculine power has done great evil to our world and our minds. I don't know if all the abominable injustices of contemporary society—from poverty and illiteracy to child labor and human rights abuses—are a direct result of this imbalance, but the weak economic and social condition of women is certainly a big factor (and maybe the most important). Many recent pilot projects have shown that investing in women's education, health care, and business can do more for an underdeveloped society—and more efficiently—than investment in any other area. Making schooling obligatory for girls in the Indian state of Kerala has, for instance, succeeded in lowering the astronomical birth rate to a near-stable level. And a special banking program in Bangladesh has proven that small loans to poor women for specific start-up projects results in greater wealth for greater numbers of people than loans to men.

I also believe that our heightened respect for things masculine and contempt for things feminine over the past several thousand years has resulted in a spiritual imbalance in our world. Simply put, our values are all lopsided. We have come to despise or deny much of what is best in ourselves.

Of course, I don't believe that women having more power will always result in societal improvements (no one in his right mind could witness how Margaret Thatcher destroyed the English educational system and come to that conclusion). But I do believe that putting more resources in the hands of women is the great hope for our planet in the coming millennium. Let's do everything we can to make women financially independent, healthy, respected, and highly educated. Then let's see what happens. ❑

male-gendered time and space by turning away from the riches of the maternal body.

Historically, male desire has corseted women's sexuality. The next millennium ought to unbind the maternal body so that women can discover the creatural pleasures of embodied relational life during the childbearing years. It is a creatural pleasure to grow big without worrying about offending the male-dominated public sphere; it is a creatural pleasure to feel and see the radiant glow bestowed by estrogen during pregnancy; it is a creatural pleasure to feel the hormone oxytocin—which causes orgasm as well as labor contractions and the letdown of milk—during childbirth (some women even have orgasms giving birth); it is a creatural pleasure to feel, many times during the day and night, the sensual well-being breastfeeding arouses which makes bearable the relentless demands of caring for a child.

Why should women pay a price for gaining access to the public sphere so long dominated by men (men have long paid a rather heavy price for being in this sphere of alienation) by relinquishing female powers valuable to the embodied social development of our children and sources of pride to ourselves? Childbirth without drugs protects against minimal brain dysfunction such as dyslexia and attention deficit disorder, and might protect children from taking drugs later in life. Breastfeeding protects immunologically during childhood as well as reducing susceptibility to chronic illness in adult life. Breastfed babies, often less interested in comfort objects or thumb-sucking than artificially fed babies, are protected from the capitalist impulse to satisfy needs in the absence of the other. Babies who wake up at night to breastfeed and who sleep in bed with their parents are less susceptible to sudden infant death syndrome. Breastfed babies, securely grounded on the mother's body as if on the earth itself, often have an inner calm that allows them to take the world in with quiet attention.

Praise for the maternal body is not meant to diminish women who have suffered difficult conceptions or not been able to conceive, women who have had disappointing or even traumatic childbirth experiences, or women who have not been able to breastfeed. Nor is it meant to compromise the respect due to women who choose not to bear children. The purpose of such an evocation is to enrich the cultural imaginary whose moral implications flow not toward women but toward the institutional forces that bind the maternal body. The late Mary O'Brien, sole philosopher of birth in Western tradition, never was a mother. Yet she found ontological significance in the act of birth because she looked at it through the discerning eyes of a midwife. Regardless of our relation to fecundity, we all can cultivate a midwife's sensibility toward childbearing women. In the next millennium, equality must not be achieved by a leveling down of the cultural imaginary out of the fear that someone will have more than someone else. We must come to see that roundness in any area of life enriches all of it. Then, too, each of us once belonged to the culture of the just born. Who may not still carry a faint forceps scar on the cheek or at times feel the pores of his arms and legs open like the mouths of a million baby birds longing for the nourishment of maternal touch? It is redemptive to these scars and longings, which are at once individual and collective, to place a full evocation of the maternal body and the culture of the just born firmly in the cultural imaginary.

Thus far, I have spoken of the social and biological aspects of the maternal body. As in Paleolithic cultures, the maternal body also is a spiritual matrix connecting those coming into being with the great streams of the universe. As an *axis mundi* of the human world, the maternal body receives in velvet darkness the meteor shower of insemination; it enfolds the protoplasmic dance of mitosis; it releases the oceanic amniotic fluid where we float as if in deep space; it pulses the interlaced uterine muscles shaped like infinity signs which, in awakening massage, guide us into the world; it pumps the sweet, blue-tinged criss-crossing sprays of life-giving milk that the newborn receives in long slow draughts, eyes closed, eyebrows lifted like an opera singer reaching for a high note, toes curling and uncurling in pleasure.

We must come to see that roundness in any area of life enriches all of it.

The secular view is limited because it does not ground social reform in larger forces of being and life. Man [*sic*] is far from the measure of all things. Even if we just open our awareness to the earth which rolls heavily toward a dawn pink as a brand newborn; to the concentric rings of multicolored spheres which revolve around the flaring sun; to the stippled Milky Way which streams through space bearing us with it; to the bile-colored cosmic particles which make up the Eagle Nebula which in turn gives birth to galaxies: even if we open our awareness just that far we can see that social reform must acknowledge the dependence of our life upon the universe that embeds us.

One instance of this embedded awareness would be to take reverent care of the maternal body. With counsel received from the Fifth-World community we even might discover the sacred immanent in the maternal body, a mortal instance of the Great Goddess. By imagining the maternal body as a spiritual matrix I do not mean to deify women. Such imagining simply insists that spirit, or breath, become enfleshed. For too many millennia in the West we have imagined the sacred as transcendent, apart from the flesh and superior to it. The environmental crisis has shown us that it has been a grievous social mistake to ignore our creatural side. Perhaps the environment also enlightens us that we have been held hostage to an enormous misperception of the sacred. Lessons from the culture of the just born, the biosphere, and the nonhuman animals of the earth suggest that in the next millennium we will discover the sacred in the creatural. ❑

Suzanne Wise

I was Very Prolific

Legislators say they want women to have second thoughts.
—headline from *The New York Times*, January 28, 1998

I was very prolific in my generating qualities.
I was sprouting here and there.
They said I was developing.
They said my heterosexual adjustment
was quantitatively well above average.
Of course, they said, there is always the possibility
she won't cooperate. But I did my best
to acclimate. I said to them: *Just don't rip my nylons.*
I said to myself: *This is not my self.*

Afterwards, no matter how much I gargled
or apologized I couldn't get that force field
out of my head: it sucked and dragged.
It depleted most of the memory banks
and then installed my functions
in the outskirts of a category
called *unknown or other.*

Basically I was subletting
a very unlisted condition. I signed up
for Public Resistance, for Confessional
Help, for Social Insecurity.

At headquarters, the police said: *Welcome to our favorite prefab events.*
The doctors said: *Let's make a deal.*
The technicians said: *The Traumatic Image Resource Room is now out of order.*

After the treatments and a brief dreamy
episode involving armed forces,
a parasite shaped like a subway system
built its home in my lungs.

No matter how precisely I cross-referenced,
no matter how many official reports
I downloaded, I was still not clear.
I was vaporware, I was the pre-data
part of a package deal.

And so I have learned to distrust
the blinking signs, the free-floating quotations,

I have learned that my gender is still a risky situation
marred by sexuality, like those B movies,
dominated by chase scenes and ending in predictable
disasters. And, despite the best of intentions,
it is not true that groups of humans behave
in an aimless, non-goal directed manner.

Nor is it true that being stripped and strapped down,
flown like a flag and projected onto the big screen,
is without reward: just look

at the audience turning its one
gigantic head, from left to right, then back again.

The Masculine Mystique

Susan Faludi

This essay is excerpted from a conversation between the author and Michael Lerner.

It's very hard to talk about what a healthy society might be like in a world that values only whatever sells and is most new.

We need society to be organized around taking care of each other. I witnessed this ethic of care in Sweden, where I lived several years ago, so I know it can be done in the real world. Not that there were no problems—I saw people who were drunks and who had fallen drunk in the streets. But I also saw women who stopped to wipe the blood off these people's heads, an act of caring I rarely see in American society when people pass the homeless and the hurt. It's a small example, but in Swedish society people have a sense of responsibility, not just for their own children or relatives, but for all those who are part of the family of man/woman. That sense of responsibility makes you an adult.

God forbid if you bring this sort of social caring up in our society. Men and women yearn for it but they fear being ridiculed for wanting it. In a performance culture, people often will let their sense of "image" override their own inner needs, to the point where they may even be willing to sacrifice their own emotional health for the sake of not being embarrassed.

So many people are invested in their status quo while claiming to be against their status quo.

We need to put our energies for this new millennium into building a society that genuinely serves human needs rather than just whetting consumer appetite. We should build a world which is engaged in the home-grown and not the corporate, a world in which individuals have a stake,

Susan Faludi is the author of Backlash *and, most recently,* Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man *(William Morrow & Co.).*

Leslie Epstein

The latest of Leslie Epstein's eight books of fiction is Ice Fire Water: A Leib Goldkorn Cocktail.

When I was eleven or twelve, I pulled a brown and beige copy of *The Grapes of Wrath* off the library shelf of our home on San Remo Drive, lay down on the rug of that same corner room, and began to turn the pages in a shaft of light. There was, I remember, a turtle trying to cross from one side of an Oklahoma road to the other. It took the poor beast forever, just as it took me, child of privilege, forever to follow his trek, along with that of the Joads across what seemed thousands of pages.

Now no one has any time for reading—and the prospect looks worse for the next millennium. Yet that, the expenditure of time, is what is most peculiar to the experience of literature. No other art, not even music, so insinuates itself into our lives over weeks, months, and—if it's Proust we're pursuing—years.

The only analogy is architecture: not the decades and sometimes centuries that go into construction, but the daily shift in light, the angle of viewing, the passing of clouds across the reflecting glass, the vagaries in foliage and season and weather and in our own lives and moods that, taken together over years of trundling by Boston's Hancock building, say, make up our full encounter with it.

Everyone has had the experience of wishing that a book would never end. With dread we watch the pages dwindle, with a pang we wake, with the Don, Quixote, from what had promised to be the endless charm of his dream. That is because we are about to take leave of what has become something intricate within ourselves—or, better, what we have become a part of. When I read Dickens before bed, the rhythms of his sentences somehow end up rocking me at a vulnerable time out of my own pattern of thoughts and speech and into those of Dombey or Dorrit.

How to put it? To read a great book is to be a willing victim, like an invertebrate beneath an echinoderm: the arms wrap us round, the stomach protrudes, we are ingested, all alert, into the spines. Any metaphor can get out of hand: the point is that the enzyme is time, the slow wash of the alien sensibility, the drip-drip-drip of the words; then transformed like Jonah we are cast up, new made, on what is a not quite familiar shore. No time! No time! But as Tolstoy asked, in one way or another upon every page he wrote, *To what are we rushing, gentlemen? What are we saving these hours for?* ❑

Nessa Rapoport

Nessa Rapoport is the author of a novel, Preparing for Sabbath, *and of* A Woman's Book of Grieving.
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I hope this auspicious date in the Christian calendar helps both Jews and Christians recognize the centrality of love in the Jewish tradition, and that law is love, rather than its opposite. And I hope that Christians are increasingly able to embrace their beginnings in Judaism and that the millennial need to overturn our Old in favor of their New will itself be overturned. (Their New is now old, too, and they would not care to see it supplanted.)

I hope that the great book we have given the world and the transforming ideas it embodies—monotheism, the Sabbath, prophetic justice in covenant with God—are acknowledged for their eternal beauty and power. And I hope we will not continue to draw the hatred that is a perverse consequence of Christianity's and Islam's burden of gratitude.

I hope that Jews take the remarkable fact that we are not only still here but flourishing to extend to each other all the *chesed v'rachamim*—the tender compassion—that is available to us so abundantly in our intoxication with holiness. Of the indescribable catastrophes that have befallen the Jews I have no theological understanding. But to dwell in a world without God's mediating love can only augment our desolation.

Finally, as a Jew, I hope that every person in our unredeemed world who has sown in sorrow will reap in bountiful joy. Even if we have not yet attained the messianic age in which "God will be One and God's name One," we can recognize God's image in each of us, one by one. ❑

occupations have a purpose beyond making money, society is judged in terms besides the amassing of money, and our lives are "about" something. We need to rebuild communities that are real rather than electronic town squares which are built out of commercial needs and do not actually promote deep human connection.

When we don't have such a society, we get the current anger between men and women. So much of what is causing men pain today is not feminism, but the way men have been stripped of a role in which they can have meaningful social purpose. Men have traditionally been defined in terms of what they can bring to and contribute to the public sphere. When that capacity to give and contribute is severely undermined, as it is in our current consumer culture, men often feel an inchoate rage that gets misdirected and vented upon others. The more we live in a consumer culture void of civic life and community, a culture in which men are invited to define themselves by image, appearance, celebrity, display value, and sex appeal, the more pain they experience.

Men are being slotted into the same position that women were sucked into in the 1950s. They feel entrapped in a deadening consumer culture, they don't feel honored for being decent fathers and husbands, and the places they go to feel socially useful are given short shrift in the culture. They can't even feel useful in their work, because increasingly they are making money creating things that have no real meaning to them. They may amass huge profits for a company that has no real product but that has tremendous potential as perceived by others in the stock market. They are creating something they don't think they can believe in, but they are supposed to rejoice because they are making money doing so.

Women rebelled against these cultural pressures and responded collectively to them, and men could do the same thing, because if they looked at their situation honestly they'd see that they and women are on the same side. But men are prohibited from really talking about their feelings—and if they do, they are accused of whining and not being "real men." The only acceptable way they get to express these feelings is to attack "political correctness."

The media should put this message out, but it won't because the message itself belies the media's format. That format depends on representing people in opposition to each other, on showing who is on top. We need complexity and nuance—and that's just what the media cuts out of its account of reality. The media seems to exist to push challenging ideas into familiar channels and to avoid any serious discussion of ideas.

To really rebuild public space, we need some kind of religious view to give us a sense of society's purpose. So many men whom I have interviewed were experiencing a spiritual emptiness and hunger for meaning. People want to feel that they are here on this earth for something more than competing and consuming and knocking out a number of other people so that they can notch up their market share.

The media ignores this hunger for meaning, but then can't figure out why millions of men respond to Promise Keepers or the Million Man March. These are attempts to reclaim some social role that is rooted in a spiritual context. I went and talked to these men and found that they were not talking about how to put women back in their place, but how to find some sense of purpose and meaning for their lives.

What's happening with men and women leads me to believe that the real task for the new millennium is to construct a world in which we give priority to social institutions that foster and support a meaning greater than the market. ❑

Millennial Prayer—7 Tishrei 5760

Alicia Ostriker

I was asked if I could write something for TIKKUN that would imagine the Jewishness of the next millennium. I thought I should try to say something about how the feminist movement may transform Judaism. But I find I cannot. The question is too awesome. It makes me fall on my face trembling, for a Judaism transformed by feminism—a Judaism in which women's spiritual imagination contributes as much as men's has until now done—is scarcely imaginable.

It is my conviction that the Being known in the West as God the Father swallowed God the Mother in prehistory, that she exists within him as his repressed feminine self. The story is like the story of the wolf swallowing Grandmother—Grandmother does not die, but awaits release.

God the Mother has many names. Our name for her today is the Shekhinah. Who and what is she? What would it mean if her power—not the power of Yeats' "rough beast"—were "loosed upon the world?" It has often seemed to me that God is not dead and not dying but in pain, that our suffering must also be God's suffering, and that the cruelty and despair which seem in so many ways to dominate our world might be seen as labor pains, part of a long struggle to deliver that inner aspect of God which has been repressed since the advent of male monotheism in the third millennium before the Common Era. Our task as feminists in Jewish renewal is to be midwives. "Without vision the people perish," and the vision a rebirthed Shekhinah will offer remains unknown. Jews tend to find their identity in a sacred past. But what about the future? We know what God wanted us to do at Sinai, and what God wanted us to do at Javneh. What does God want us to do *now*? And for the next thousand years?

We might begin by reading Judith Plaskow's *Standing Again at Sinai* and Rachel Adler's *Engendering Judaism*, Lynn Gottlieb's *She Who Dwells Within* and Tikva Frymer-Kensky's *Motherprayer*, Ellen Frankel's *Five Books of Miriam* and Merle Feld's *A Spiritual Life*, Arthur Waskow and Phyllis Berman's *Tales of Tikkun*. A short list, but a strong start. And we might pray for inspiration. As a poet I cannot predict the future; I cannot guess what God, the soul, our ideas of good and evil, our images of the cosmos, will be in a thousand years. But I can pray, invoking—as other women today are doing—that aspect of God that has been mostly concealed from us by Jewish "tradition." The following poem is from my meditation journal.

It is written that when the temple was destroyed
the Shekhinah followed her people into exile,
and that she remains in the world as "the hidden one"

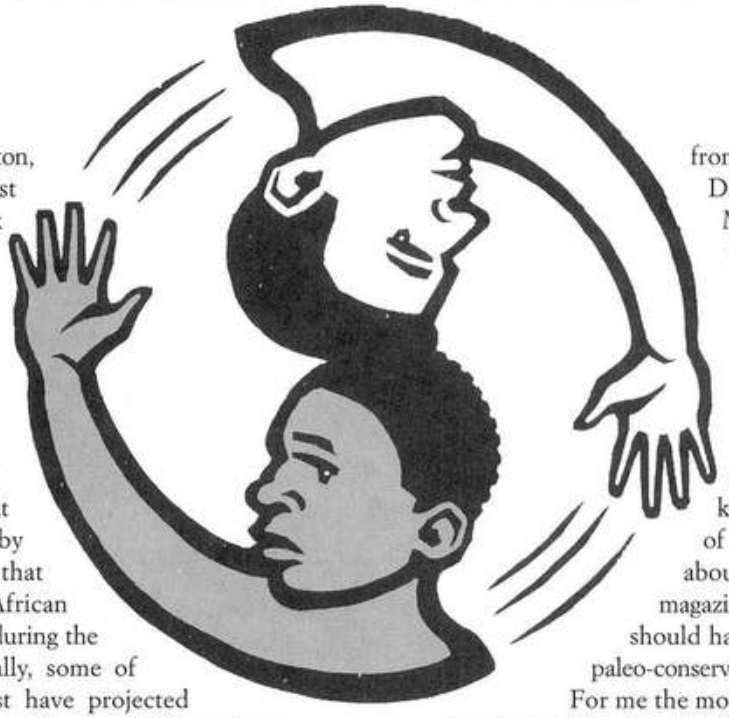
Hidden one: when the temple fell
when Jerusalem arose and fell and whenever
we were persecuted and scattered
by the nations,
to follow us in pain and exile
you folded wings patched coats
dragged mattresses pans in peasant carts, lived
your life laboring praying and giving birth, you also
shipped across the hard Atlantic
landed in the golden land
they called you greenhorn
you danced in cafes
you went in the factory
bargained pushcart goods ice shoes Hester Street
put makeup on threw away wig
and you learned new languages
now you speak everything
lady, but part of you is earth
part of you is wounds
part of you is words
and part is smoke
because whoever was burned over there, you were burned
you died forever with the sheep
whoever survived, you speak in our tongues
open your wings, instruct us
say what we are
do not confuse us
with your false lovers, the rigidly righteous
the sanhedrin of the loud speakers
who have no ear for your voice
but we who thirst for your new
instructions, source of life
come into our thoughts
our mouth. Speak to us
O voice of the beloved
O wild wandering god

help us, hidden one
say what we are
say what we are to do ❑

Alicia Ostriker's most recent volume of poetry, The Little Space: Poems Selected and New, *was nominated for a National Book Award. She is also the author of* The Nakedness of the Fathers.

The Rhetoric of the Ersatz

Ishmael Reed



Booker T. Washington, one of the most powerful Black men at the turn of the last century, complained that the media of his day stressed the "weaknesses" of the Black community. Since the media has all but abandoned the late Robert C. Maynard's challenge that it diversify its personnel by the year 2000, I expect that media vilification of African Americans will get worse during the next millennium. Ironically, some of those who hate the most have projected images of African Americans that are similar to those used against their own ancestors in a former time. Indeed, I've found that locating a person's "identity" has been very useful, especially when engaging in a debate with ex-ethnics.

For example, when the Italian American host of KPFA Berkeley's morning show was entertaining his listeners with a program about how homophobia was at its most intense among African Americans, I called in and informed him that I had published Italian American feminists who claimed that homophobia was a big problem among Italian Americans. He had a fit and accused me of being angry with him.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., during his campaign to become, as the *Economist* described him, the interpreter of the Black experience to the white establishment, wrote a *New York Times* op-ed arguing that anti-Semitism was on the wane "generally," but on the rise among African Americans. Gates' op-ed did much damage, not only by smearing Blacks with another "pathology," but by lulling Jews into a complacent mood with the false hope that their only remaining threat comes from a few disgruntled Blacks. I knew this to be false, not only because the ADL had released statistics prior to this article showing that anti-Semitism had declined 8 percent among African Americans since 1976, but because I knew that both Jews and Blacks were most likely to attract hostility from Celtic Americans like David Duke and Timothy McVeigh. I was right; now we see Norman Podhoretz and William Safire having conniptions about the candidacy of a Celtic American, Pat Buchanan, who—unlike Farrakhan and Khalid Muhammed—has an opportunity to broker the next election. Instead of printing crude articles about Black inferiority in his magazine, *Commentary*, Podhoretz should have paid more attention to paleo-conservatism.

For me the most important essay written about what Barry Blasner calls the media-hyped Jewish-Black feud was authored by Herbert Hill, in which he said that Jews became white in the 1960s. *How the Jews Became White Folks* by Karen Brodkin seems to back up this assertion. When Black intellectuals become upset by comments made by some Jewish intellectuals about Blacks, they should realize that many of these people are ersatz Jewish. They don't identify with Jews. They're "white." To blame all Jews for these intellectual entrepreneurs would be as wrong as saying that Henry Louis Gates, Jr., is the "czar" for Black Americans.

Noel Ignatiev said it beautifully: "Whiteness is not a culture. There is Irish culture and Italian culture and American culture—the latter, as Albert Murray pointed out, a mixture of the Yankee, the Indian, and the Negro (with a pinch of ethnic salt); there is youth culture and drug culture and queer culture; but there is no such thing as white culture. Whiteness ... is nothing but a reflection of privilege, and exists for no reason other than to defend it."

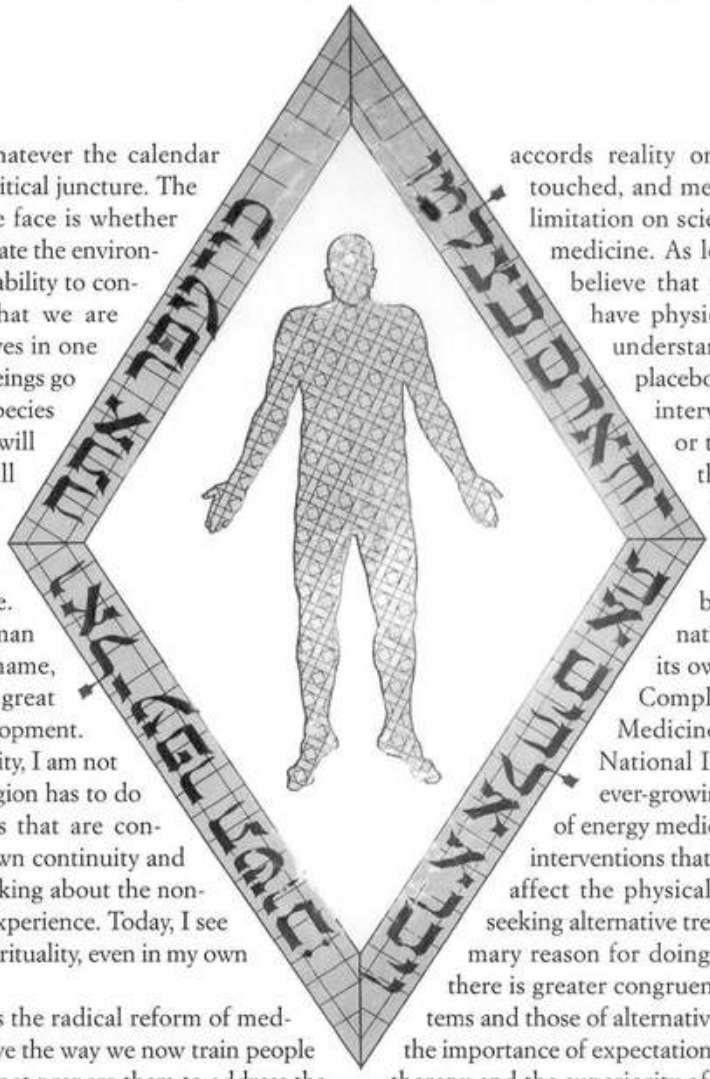
The rhetoric of whiteness is the rhetoric of the Ersatz. These rootless "whites," some of whom engage in self-loathing and who are identity-less, are more of a threat to African Americans and Jewish Americans than the Italian, Jewish, and Irish American intellectuals with whom I've collaborated for the last twenty-five years as a founder and director of the Before Columbus Foundation. They, at least, know where they came from. ❑

Ishmael Reed's The Reed Reader *will be published by Perseus books in April.*

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS PAPA

Healing the Mind/Body

Andrew Weil



It is obvious that, whatever the calendar change, we are at a critical juncture. The essential question we face is whether our ability to manipulate the environment has so outpaced our ability to control our own emotions that we are doomed to destroy ourselves in one way or another. If human beings go the way of so many other species that have not made it, life will go on and probably will come up with new forms in which technological and psychological proficiency will be in better balance. Still, the end of the human experiment would be a shame, because we have such great potential for spiritual development.

When I refer to spirituality, I am not talking about religion. Religion has to do primarily with institutions that are concerned mostly with their own continuity and expansion. Rather, I am talking about the nonmaterial aspect of human experience. Today, I see an upsurge of interest in spirituality, even in my own field of medicine.

The focus of my work is the radical reform of medical education, since I believe the way we now train people to become physicians does not prepare them to address the needs of consumers of health care. More and more consumers are turning away from conventional medicine because they want something else. They want treatments other than drugs and surgery. They want doctors who are sensitive to mind/body interactions. They want to be treated as mental/emotional and spiritual beings, not just as physical bodies. Those are reasonable demands, but our medical schools are not producing doctors who can address them.

A root problem is that medicine, like Western science in general, is dominated by materialism, a philosophy that accords reality only to what can be seen, touched, and measured. This is a profound limitation on science and a crippling one in medicine. As long as doctors continue to believe that changes in the body must have physical causes, they will never understand the significance of placebo responses, the usefulness of interventions like hypnotherapy, or the importance of assessing the spiritual beliefs of patients.

But change is in the air. Mind/body medicine, the best-researched area of alternative medicine, is coming into its own. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, a center within the National Institutes of Health with an ever-growing budget, is funding studies of energy medicine, homeopathy, and other interventions that use nonmaterial methods to affect the physical body. Surveys of patients seeking alternative treatments reveal that their primary reason for doing so is their perception that there is greater congruence between their belief systems and those of alternative practitioners: for example, the importance of expectation in determining outcomes of therapy and the superiority of gentler, more natural treatments over harsher, more invasive ones.

If, as I believe, the gradual opening of medicine to real change in the way doctors are trained to treat their patients is one aspect of a larger change in the philosophy of science, then I see some reason to be optimistic about human life in the new millennium. It is only through a change of consciousness that we can avoid disaster, and the change must include seeing through the materialistic illusion. So many of the world's problems—the greed that leads to ecological devastation, for example—are rooted in an illusory notion of cause and effect that makes people think happiness and security come from material possessions. The upsurge of spirituality that is occurring as the present millennium draws to a close is the antidote to this toxic philosophy and our best hope for survival. ❑

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL BERKOWITZ

Andrew Weil, M.D., is director of the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona. He is also the author of Spontaneous Healing *and* Eight Weeks to Optimum Health, *and maintains a popular website,* Ask Dr. Weil *(www.drweil.com).*

Toward Global Health Rights:

AN INTERVIEW WITH Joelle Tanguy

Joelle Tanguy is the executive director of the American section of Doctors Without Borders, which received the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize.

TIKKUN: In these pages we have suggested that we create an international peacekeeping force. Do you see Doctors Without Borders participating in such a force?

TANGUY: No. To lump NGOs, particularly the humanitarian ones like Doctors Without Borders, with a form of governance is to mix the military, the judiciary, the legislative, and civil society. Forget it. We are here as representatives of civil society, not as part of any government.

As we enter the next year with a renewed commitment to reaffirm humanitarian intervention [as a result of winning the Nobel Peace Prize], I'm concerned with the confusion between humanitarian and political action. For example, the main work that needs to be done in Kosovo is political. It's also economic, it's social, but it's not humanitarian. What's humanitarian? It's to fill the gap in the system, not to be the system. We have to preserve a space for a humanitarianism that's separate from international governance.

The WTO is reaffirming the commodification of medicine.

TIKKUN: Usually you can place people on a scale from pragmatic to utopian. But it seems that your organization is very pragmatic in a very idealistic way.

TANGUY: I think we are pragmatic. I don't call us utopian, but maybe that's why we are utopian. Is it utopian for me to think that everyone I meet can start sharing my sense that the suffering of a person on the other side of the earth is my responsibility too?

TIKKUN: Where do you see Doctors Without Borders in twenty years?

TANGUY: The utopians would say that we will have closed the shop. The realists would say that we will be there.

Perhaps there will be some sort of world governance which will ensure that we won't need humanitarian intervention because we'll have political, diplomatic, even economic mobilization early on to prevent crises rather than stepping in after they happen. I would hope that we will no longer suffer from collective blindness as we did facing the Rwandan genocide.

Today, for example, we cannot continue to look at an issue like the availability of appropriate and affordable medicine around the world as an issue that does not concern us. The drug manufacturers are in this country. The capacity to research tropical diseases is in this country. The sole fact that there has not been any substantial research since decolonization in epidemic diseases that affect the developing world is symbolic.

Everything we see happening around the World Trade Organization is reaffirming the commodification of medicine. We are building all this wealth, and in the meantime, sub-Saharan hospitals are full of people who are called terminally ill but who, if they were in a different place, would have another twenty years to live. Yet we are still finding comfort in the sort of market logic that says, if the medicine is too expensive, it's too expensive. We need to ask, how is the price set? There should be ways to think of medicine as more than a commodity.

TIKKUN: What are your thoughts about the future of health care in this country?

TANGUY: I hear this questioning of where health care is going from our volunteers. We're getting people who say they went into medicine to alleviate suffering and save lives, and they feel disconnected from that purpose. The majority of those who join us are looking for a purer role for doctors. I hope that health care is heading in a global direction, because health is one of the fundamental human rights.

TIKKUN: I hear a complex understanding of globalization from you.

TANGUY: Globalization in some countries is a dirty word. They call it the rule of the strongest. The good thing about globalization is that it brings issues to public debate internationally. The globalization of ideas has benefited human rights.

TIKKUN: How can people who are not doctors participate in what you are doing?

TANGUY: First, you don't have to be a doctor to volunteer: we have nurses, logistics experts, engineers, and administrators.

Otherwise, you can support our principles. TIKKUN is a special case, because you are already sold on our idea, but it's hard to get the media to cover other countries in depth, and not just in disaster-fatigue mode. Media and education are the keys to making tomorrow's world citizens.

If we enter somewhere in the new century, we have to enter with the sense that we are all citizens on the same planet and therefore we need to care for each other's existence—not just their health, but their life. ❑

Imagining Justice

Robin West

As we approach the new century and the new millennium, those of us who are legal professionals in liberal capitalist democracies need to drastically improve our practices of law if we are to bring those practices in line with our professed ideals. The commodification and marketing of legal services, for example, combined with a nearly blind commitment to overly combative advocacy, puts legal assistance beyond the means of large segments of the public, severely undercutting our commitment to equality before the law. A different and perhaps harder question, however, is whether the ideals against which we judge our practices are themselves in need of rethinking. What are our aspirations, for law, and for the rule of law, in a liberal society at the turn of the millennium?

There are at least three salient legal arenas in which some idea of justice informs our understanding of the rule of law, and in all three, not only our legal practices but the dream of justice itself stand in need of improvement. The first concerns the vision of "legal justice" that informs and guides the work of courts. Judges in Western liberal rule-of-law cultures labor to achieve what is often called "formal" or "horizontal" justice, which means that judges must decide cases according to a general rule or principle, and not according to their personal reaction to the particular case. Judges must don the proverbial blindfold, ignore differentiating features, and "treat like cases alike." But why?

Perhaps the best and most generous account of the requirement of formal justice is this: judges ought to strive to decide cases according to rule because by doing so they recognize, respect, and treat with dignity our shared humanity and our mutual inclusion in a common community. To do otherwise—to treat differently those who are in effect the same—would be to banish the one marked as different from the community. As they distill the similarities of our dilemmas and decide cases accordingly, judges recognize and honor that which we share, and that which binds us together. To the degree that the quest for legal justice is moved by that humanistic and communitarian

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Daniel Jonah Goldhagen

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen teaches at Harvard University and is writing a book about genocide in the twentieth century.

Millennial or centennial, this is the first chronological mark when all areas of the world are known to others, knowledge of events is instantaneously transmitted globally, resources and technology allow for both sustained and rapid intervention anywhere, and the moral equality of all peoples is, at least formally, acknowledged. For the first time, humanity faces a practical possibility and challenge: to develop an ethic that leads countries to live by and act upon the regnant public philosophy that all people deserve equal moral respect, which is usually couched in the language of human rights. What this ethic is understood to mean in its every detail can reasonably be contested. But some things cannot.

It is the obligation of those who can, mainly the countries of the west, to intervene in order to prevent and stop mass murder, "ethnic cleansing," and other related systematic assaults upon groups of people. This requires that countries reject the narrow and morally indefensible notion of "national interest" as the basis for acting in the world. A child born in the United States, France, or Japan, because he is lucky enough to be born there, is not worth more than a child born in Cambodia, Rwanda, or Bosnia. If the mighty and wealthy countries continue to fail to stop the systematic murder of children and adults born in these and other distant places, then they should publicly acknowledge the truth: that they view people belonging to some groups to be worth more than others, and that this is bigotry.

If one agrees that the privileged share an obligation to prevent mass murder, then one ought to ask why the underlying principles which produce this obligation do not also require them to work towards providing for all people's basic physical needs. We now live in a global village of immense, if uneven wealth. As we embark on this millennium, discussing these issues is, for the first time, not a matter of mere literary speculation. ❑

the soil in which our moral and most human selves are rooted. They are also, developmentally, essential conditions for the flowering of the individualist spirit so celebrated by liberal jurists and protected by liberal rights.

Perhaps we do need rights to protect our individuality. No less vitally, however, we need rights that we currently lack: we need rights that protect our ability and will to care for the weak among us and to nurture them to health, and to care for the young and to bring them up to adulthood. We need such rights of care not only to protect those activities against an overweening state. We need such rights so as to goad to action community and state support for those essential and essentially interdependent spheres of social life.

Finally, a dream of justice informs our understanding of our cherished rule of law, and our understanding of what purpose is served by a rule of law in liberal societies. Liberal societies have taken to heart the lessons to be learned from states that assume too much power: overbearing states, like Freud's overbearing fathers, must be reined in and we freely deploy the rhetoric and protections of law to do so. The rule of law exists, at least in this liberal dream, to protect individuals from state terror.

However, there is another understanding of the rule of law, also central to the liberal tradition, to which we have not so carefully attended. The rule of law should guard us against the danger posed to individuals by states that either are or pretend to be emasculated: the state that, through neglect, complicity, or simply bad faith, allows the strong to parties or entities no less than by states and state agents. The state that does nothing in the face of glaring and harmful private-sphere subordination—whether that subordination takes the form of violence against women within families; violence, taunting, or threats of violence against ethnic, sexual, or racial minorities; or violence extracted by exploitative work—is as much of a threat to human and community flourishing as the state that oppressively does too much.

In our end-of-the-millennium liberal dreams, law respects and honors our universal humanity, protects our rights, and guards us against our worst political nightmares. These imaginings of justice are noble ideals all, and we ought to cherish them even as we acknowledge how our practices belie them. We also need, though, to revitalize the liberal dreams themselves. We share, universally, not only a will to power, but a need for nurturance, for sustenance, and for assistance: law in a liberal state should dignify and protect our needful no less than our willful selves. We seek, universally, not just to assert and express ourselves, but to connect and care for others, and our cherished liberal rights should at least aim to protect us when we do so. And we are in need of law, not just to protect ourselves against political dictators, but also to protect against the ravages of economic, familial, racial, and patriarchal terror. A law that aspired to protect us against private as well as public oppression; to create and guard rights of care no less than rights of individualism; and to recognize and dignify human need as well as human freedom would not lose its liberality by so doing. Indeed, law might better serve not just individuals, but com-

We need law, not just to protect ourselves against political dictators, but also to protect against the ravages of economic, familial, racial, and patriarchal terror.

Morning Person

Holly Near

Winter morning. 1955. Should I sleep a little longer in my cozy dreams or put my feet on the cold floor? I hear Mom crumpling yesterday's newspaper, lighting the wood stove. She slips out into the morning moonlight to milk the cow. I want to be with her, with the moon. I am up and, for ever after, a morning person.

Our house is filled with music. Paul Robeson, The Weavers, Lena Horne, Judy Garland, Edith Piaf, Pablo Cassals, Mahalia Jackson. Hope and disappointment perfectly entangled in each breath. They seem eager to be alive even in the face of great risks like racism, poverty, drugs, child abuse, and fame. I stand in front of the mirror imagining their sounds coming out of my little body. This is how I learn the honest notes from the false notes. With these icons as my guides, sleeping in is not an option.

Winter morning. 2000. The bear in me enters the cave to sleep, to learn from my dreams. I have lost my sense of direction. Trust. Lost, I am teachable. We are much older than 2,000 years. We underestimate ourselves, distilling our diversity into a dominant culture calendar. Halloween narrowed down to witches and pumpkins. Spring equinox dressed in chocolate and bunnies. If I sing this in front of the mirror I find false notes.

I feel uncomfortable walking alone into the birthday party. I don't really know Him. I forgot to bring a gift. People are drinking too much and talking too loud. I have worn the wrong clothes. I vow once again never to go out on a New Year's Eve with so many lost people on the highway.

Stop. Go back to the morning. Before the sun. It is still dark in the northern part of the world. The down under feels her heat creeping over the horizon. Watch her, listen. Mother Nature promises us transformation by example. Still we lose sight of faith.

"Where have all the movements gone?" I wonder. Bad habit. Brilliant change is everywhere. True, circumstances may shake us until our teeth rattle, but once we surrender to the huge arms of participation, it is a natural home. So many of us have come to this place. Why do we doubt our journey here?

Notice the speed at which the Civil Rights movement transformed the world. It did not fix the world, it transformed it. By noticing, by giving weight to participation, the next social change movement makes its way through chaos and prepares a surprise attack on its sleeping leadership.

In less than a century we experienced great movement.
The youth movement! The labor movement!
The Civil Rights movement!
The peace movement! The solidarity movement!
The women's movement! The disability movement!
The disarmament movement! The gay rights movement!
The environmental movement!
Movement!
Transformation!
Is there any reason to believe we are done?

Do I insult God, the universe, the inexplicable power when I fail to appreciate our brilliance? When I sulk and allow fear and confusion to influence my personal foreign policy? On my knees, from my bear cave, I thank you/us/it/miracle/life/always.

Thanks to elders who bring a century of experience to the debate. Thanks to young people who come with fresh perspectives, unburdened by the weight of history.

Thanks to those who no longer accept dominance in leadership. Thanks to people of multiple-world ancestry for dancing identity. Thanks to you who have learned a divine blend of detachment and engagement which has brought revolutionaries through impossible predicaments.

Thanks to you of northern European descent who confront your racism. Thanks to you men who are redefining masculinity in response to feminism.

Thanks to the women who no longer alter natural instincts in the presence of arrogance. Thanks to lesbians for loving women amidst misogyny. Thanks to lovers who discover that sex in the arms of love is different from sex in the arms of despair.

Thanks to those sick with twentieth-century viruses whose activism has forced review of patriarchal health care. Thanks to you who risk your lives for whales, gorillas, and redwoods. Thanks to you who rise above cynicism about religion to a self-defined spirituality.

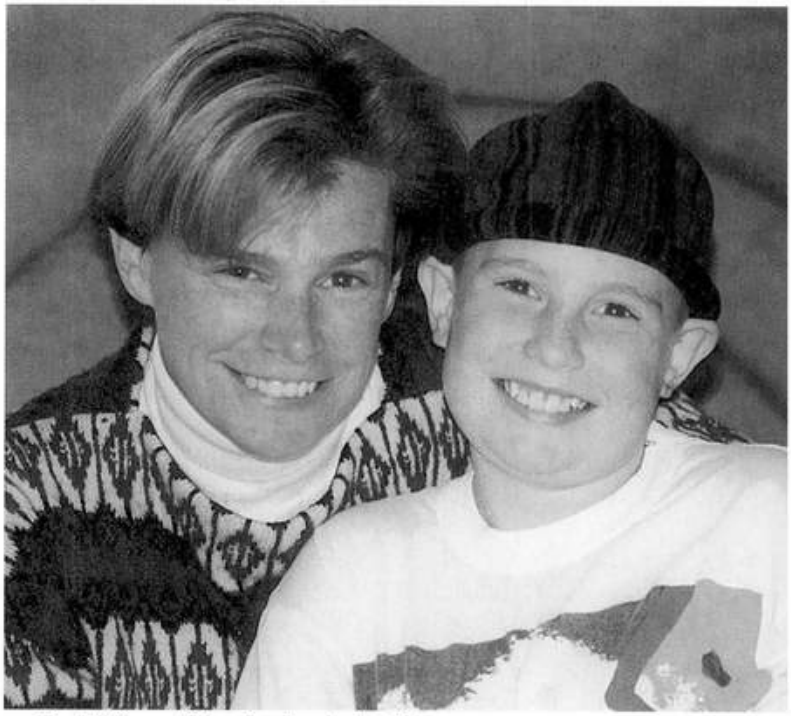
I feel the cold air hit my sleepy eyes as I follow my mom out into the dark morning. The world is full of transformation. I listen for the songbirds, the singers who dare to shout and whisper the honest notes. The moon and the sun tell me my true age. Mother Nature promises transformation. Faith comes with the noticing. I am a morning person. ❑

Holly Near is a singer/songwriter but, above all, she is a teacher and healer. *Copyright © 2000 by Holly Near.*

Boxing With God

How I Enter the Millennium

Cindy Bullens



Cindy Bullens with her daughter Jessie (z"l).

Entering the millennium creates lots of hope for new possibilities for the whole human agenda. But whatever hope I have has to go through the prism of my own experience of loss and grief.

Since my eleven-year-old daughter's death from complications due to cancer three and a half years ago, it's been very difficult for me to think of the future—because my daughter Jessie will not be there in the physical sense. Her death has changed every cell in my body, every part of my being—and has certainly changed the way I think about the world. I now try to live each moment as it comes and to infuse each moment with some kind of meaning. The future, for me, is now focused on how I, personally, can contribute positively as part of the human race.

That process has just started to happen in the last year or so. In the aftermath of my daughter's death, I wrote new songs about my love for her and my struggle to live on without her. I recorded these songs with no idea that they would be brought out into the public (*Somewhere Between Heaven and Earth* released by Artemis/Blue Lobster Records, September 1999). Since their release, however, I have found some hope for the future. Through people's positive and deeply emotional reactions to this music, I've been able to turn my own tragedy into something that can be healing to others.

As a society, we have a need to address loss and grief—not just for people who have lost children but for anyone who has faced a profound loss in their lives.

By touching others—by having people say, "Thank you so much for doing this music, it means so much to me"—I developed a sense of purpose and mission. As a society, we have a need to address loss and grief—not just for people who have lost children but for anyone who has faced a profound loss in their lives. A lot of men have responded to this music, as well as teenagers, college students, and of course parents—people from every facet and corner of society.

What people are responding to, I think, is something very real and pure: my attempt and my need to express myself *for myself*. The condition of the human race is that we've all experienced loss: a spouse, a sibling, a friend, a relationship, a job, some loss in which we as human beings have had to let go of somebody or something. I watched my child take her last breath—there's nothing else that could be so painful. I've learned how very important it is to have the support of family and community. I was the rebel in my family. I didn't pay much attention to family growing up. But the way that my own family came together in support after Jessie's death had a profound effect on me.

And now I've found a community of bereaved families, and a community of people who have lost friends, and other overlapping communities of loss. I've found that people have a gripping need to share their grief. When Jessie died I said, "I am not going to be silent about this." I was not going to submit to the denial of death that goes on in our culture, and the subsequent shying away from talking about our loss. This was *my child* who died three weeks after her eleventh birthday—she was a huge spirit and I was not going to be silent.

I found that there is relief and release in having permission to show your grief and your pain—and that there is

Cindy Bullens has been a successful singer, songwriter, musician, and performer for over twenty years. She has received two Grammy nominations including one for her first solo album.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CINDY BULLENS

hope in that knowledge. Writing these songs has led me to deepen my connection to some higher Presence. Sometimes I call this higher Presence God, sometimes not. It doesn't matter—I've always had that sense of connection. My daughter had a deep knowledge of a higher Presence—she absolutely knew that we were here on this planet for a higher purpose. She meditated from the time she was five years old. She was the most joyful, buoyant, spiritual person that I've ever met.

In experiencing the process of doing this music, I've connected to the spirit of my daughter—and I don't care how it's defined (as memory, pure energy, true spirit, or whatever)—I can tell you that this baby of mine is with me in a way that goes beyond any scientific categories. The centeredness and at-one-ness that I feel with what I am now doing, the non-projection into the future while I show up to do God's will, is in part because of my connection, I believe, to her soul. I also believe that all of my life experiences, both personal and professional, have led me to this point. I feel more part of the human race than I've ever felt, though I absolutely hate the fact that my child had to die for me to feel this way and to understand all this.

My hope for the future of the human race is that we all try to reconnect with each other. That's what the politics of meaning means to me—reconnecting on basic levels. Let's reach out and honestly try to listen, to "be there" for one another. That's how a better world will happen—to use a cliché—one person changing the world at a time. I don't see the politicians, at least on the national level, having the kind of vision or understanding that this world needs.

I was invited to perform a private concert for the parents and families of the students who were killed at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. I sent them the CD in late August before it came out nationally. They felt connected to what they heard in my music. What an honor it is for me to share these songs. I've performed and spoken at two national hospice conferences this year. I'm being asked to be a part of some wonderful events—events with participants dedicated to healing in one form or another. What more could I ask for—that this music would have that kind of impact. It's the best situation out of the worst situation of my life.

I absolutely hate the fact that my child had to die for me to feel this way and to understand all this.

This may be how we all approach the millennium, bringing to it the pain and the hope that have emerged from our lives—and entering the millennium with a spirit of service to others.

Boxing With God

My youngest child is now an angel
She lived her whole life in eleven years
I've never known anyone who was braver
I can't believe she's gone but she is.

She's boxing with God
She's showing all her stuff
It wasn't quite enough
But she's a fighter …

… I'm boxing with God
And I swear I see His face
Then He's gone without a trace
But I surrender

I'm boxing with God
I'm going round for round
I might be going down
But I'm no quitter … ❑

Ehud Havazelet

Ehud Havazelet's second collection, Like Never Before, *has just been released in paperback by Anchor Books.*

I think of the approaching millennium more as a father than as a writer. The Bible's most terrible story is the Akedah. Among its terrifying aspects is the response of the child Isaac when he learns he is intended for the altar. One midrash has him asking his father to bind him head and foot. The boy fears he might flinch before the knife and be cut, rendered unfit for slaughter. What's terrifying here is the trust.

I asked my eleven-year-old son what he thought was coming in the next 1,000 years. After some theorizing about space colonization, living among "little green people," he said he hoped there would be more human kindness. But he pronounced it differently—"humankindness"—and I hope he got it right.

Other hopes are for a gentler age; one less muscular and self-regarding; one less willing to blame the weak for their weakness.

As to the writing, good books will continue to be written. As Ezra Pound said, this is what matters, more than who writes them. ❑

Revelation

Joshua Levine Grater



When we commonly discuss revelation, the main content is centered around the event at Sinai: the giving of the Torah. Our sages have argued about what actually happened at Sinai: what was revealed, what was heard, what was said, who was there. Especially on the question of revelation, rabbinical perspectives range from the minimalist view that God's presence alone was revealed to the maximalist view that the entire Torah, Talmud, and midrash, as well as every thought, idea, and conversation ever to be had by all generations to come, happened at Sinai. We have divided our people on this issue.

I believe that we spend too much of our time trying to figure out the past or to plan for the future and not enough time focusing on the present. The most interesting yet least talked about message we can take from the revelation at Sinai is the state of being necessary to receive revelation and how our text gives us this insight.

What do I mean by "state of being"? Three years ago, during a stay in Jerusalem, I began taking yoga and practicing meditation. My teacher, Diane Bloomfield, taught me how to find the spirit of my own life-force, the breath flowing in my body at all times, and how to relate that breath to the texts of the Jewish tradition. Yoga and Torah she calls it, or Torat Haguf, the "torah of the body." By sitting in silence and focusing on my breath, worlds have been opened up to me. Listen to Thich Nhat Hanh, a contemporary Vietnamese master, explain meditation:

> The function of meditation practice is to heal and transform. The energy that is used in meditation is *mindfulness*; to look deeply is to use mindfulness to light up the recesses of our mind, or to look into the heart.... By looking deeply, the meditation practitioner gains insight, *prajna*, or wisdom. This insight has the power to liberate us from our own suffering and bondage.

Meditation is one of the hardest exercises that I have ever attempted. Mindfulness is not our normal state of being, and as such, I have great difficulty trying to not think, process, feel, engage. To just be in the present moment, letting go of past and forgoing the future, seems virtually impossible. To date, after three years of practice, I can say that I have achieved, in all honesty, a total of maybe seven minutes of pure mindfulness. While the difficulty is endless, however, the potential is limitless. This mindfulness, this potential, is what I perceive happening in the moment of revelation.

God is found in the moment that we stop and notice our breath.

In the midst of all of the passages surrounding the Sinai revelation, I have discovered two that suggest the Israelites were in a state of mindfulness at the moment of revelation. In Exodus 19, the sound of the shofar is described in an unfamiliar way: *va'yehi kol ha'shofar holaich v'hazaik m'od*; translated literally this means, "The voice of the shofar is walking and strengthening greatly." What does it mean that the voice was "walking"? The traditional commentaries and all of the translations I studied do not even take note of this strange vocabulary. The translations read, "And the voice of the shofar grew louder and louder." I did find the usual translation of this text to be in sync with a verse in Jonah which says, "*ha'yam holaich v'soair*" (literally, "the sea walked and stormed"), usually translated as "the sea was very, very stormy." But I wanted to look at the language of this passage through the lens of meditation. What might it mean if we accepted that the voice was "walking"?

Joshua Levine Grater is the Marshall T. Meyer Rabbinic Fellow at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York. He delivered his senior sermon at Jewish Theological Seminary on parashat Yitro.

ILLUSTRATION BY CYN MAURICE

The ability to experience out-of-the-ordinary sense perception is a classic giveaway of a deeper meditative state. We learn in this passage that the situation surrounding the revelation was imbued with meditative potential. We are being set up for an incredible event. What is normally *heard*, the sound of the shofar, a voice, is becoming *visible*; the Torah is preparing us for transformation. In order for us to witness the voice walking, we must enter into a mindful state of being. Is it possible to ascertain if the children of Israel found such an alternative consciousness? A second verse in this text, Exodus 20:15, offers us this insight.

In Exodus 20:15, the voice or sound of the shofar is not only walking, but can actually be seen by the people as thunder, just as they saw the lightning and the smoke on the mountain. In his book *Jewish Meditation*, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan says that the event at Sinai is a clear example of synesthesia, a meditative state in which our consciousness is raised to a higher level. In the moments surrounding revelation, the Israelites (and according to the midrash that includes all of us here today) saw sound, experienced a shift of sensory perception.

Prayer is meant to be this kind of meditative time. Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, says in his book *Contemplative Prayer*, "Without contemplation and interior prayer the Church cannot fulfill her mission to transform and save mankind." I say that the same holds true for the synagogue, and Judaism as a whole. Allowing our minds to rest from activity and focusing on God in the moments that we say words of prayer—this is how we can begin to understand the state of consciousness that was present at Sinai. It is easy to read the text, to teach the text, but can we live the words?

Because most of us are foreign to this state of mindfulness, while at the same time we complain about a lack of spirituality, I believe that until we are able to see thunder, or at least to spend our lives making a persistent attempt, spirituality will continue to elude us. God is found in the moment that we stop and notice our breath. This does not have to happen sitting still, or in isolation. Once a person is comfortable with breath awareness, has practiced it in silence, then meditation can happen walking down Broadway, sitting on the subway, running in the park. Being mindful and open to seeing God all around, to feeling the Shechinah, the holy presence which surrounds us always: this is revelation.

The meditative moment was not an isolated one for the Israelites, either. In the second half of Exodus 20:15 we are told, "And the people saw [singular, not plural] and they trembled and stood from afar." There are two teachings here. The first is that community is a vital aspect to revelation. We were all there. We saw as one, based on the singular verb which goes with "the people/nation," a collective seeing, if you will. Yet, we trembled and were afraid individually, because the verbs switch to plural in describing the ensuing trembling and fear of death. We become a multitude of individuals in the moment when we need each other most; the unity turns to multiplicity and we are afraid of God. Is the fear that the people experience due just to the scary special effects of the moment? I don't think so. The people were opened up to a reality beyond their own. God was present: they experienced creation, liberation, and redemption all in one. What is our own fear? The fear, I believe, is that we *might* connect with God; we *might* change the world; we *might* find peace. Our most noble dream is our greatest dread.

See the dream and go to it. The closer we come, the more clear the vision. And then we freak out, and run for the hills. Or back to Egypt, the narrow place, Mitzrayim. The message of meditation is not to run, but to be still. To be present. To receive. ❑

Meditation



ALEPH—The aleph is the first letter of the first commandment, ANOCHI. I AM GOD. The aleph is the silence in which God arrives. The midrash teaches in the name of Rabbi Abahu that at the moment of revelation, the entire world was silent, no birds chirping, no leaves rustling, no waves crashing. And so, I invite you now to meditate on your very own aleph. To spend a moment, a minute, looking deeply at your aleph; look at it in any way you wish, focus on any part that grabs you. The key is to stay focused, with your mind present, following your breath and looking at your aleph. If your mind wanders, bring it back with compassion and return to your breath.

MEDITATE ON ALEPH

Now I invite you to close your eyes and meditate on the image of the aleph with your third eye, your inner eye. Listen for God. You can open your eyes when you are ready and close the meditation with the following quote from the S'fat Emet, the Gerer Rebbi.

SILENT MEDITATION

All the people saw the voices [literally, "the thunder"] The voice was that which said, "I am the Lord your God." Each one of Israel saw the root of his or her own life-force. With their very eyes each one saw the part of the divine soul above that lives within. They had no need to "believe" in the commandments, because they saw the voices. That's the way it is when God speaks.

—Sfat Emet, Yitro (2:91)

The God of Maybe

Mordechai Gafni

We need to reclaim uncertainty as a spiritual value.

The paradox of touching God through doubt is fundamental to an understanding of authentic spirituality. True, we talk about God all the time as if we knew him, but that is only because God contracts her essence to make herself known to us. Certainties describe the contracted God, but the absolute certainty which is God before contraction is beyond our reach. "Absolute certainty," mystic philosopher Abraham Kook tells us, "rests in the highest places. It is the God of the future, whose name is certainty and so is his praise."

In Kook's image, borrowed from the Zohar, God is the eternal source of the river of life. Other rivers are fed by this source on high, each one carrying a more "diluted" aspect of God's essence. Each river, each divine channel to the world, is defined according to Kabbalah as a *sefirah*—a particular stream of divine emanation. The river which reaches into our world is the lowest sefirah: the Shechinah.

Although schematically it is the lowest sefirah, the Shechinah is nevertheless the aspect of divinity which we humans can perceive. Kook points out that in the Zohar the Shechinah is called "*nahar ulai*—the Maybe River." The clear implication is that the highest form of God accessible to the world is uncertainty. Seen through Kook's eyes, uncertainty is not the absence, but the essence of God.

Chaim Vital, the most central disciple of Isaac Luria in the sixteenth-century school of Safed kabbalists, vainly attempts to move beyond the "maybe" of the Shechinah to pierce the secrets of the ultimate certainty beyond. He calls this ultimate source of divine emanation *Radla*, an acronym for *risha delo yada udelo noda*—the point of origin which is not known and cannot be known. Hidden in the obscurity of the higher realms (what the kabbalists referred to as *Adam Kadmon*, the configuration of divine lights patterned after the human image), Radla stands beyond even the kabbalist's ability to vision the constellation of divine lights. Vital is only able to suggest five different possibilities for the configuration of lights in Radla. The absolute mystical configuration of the ultimate certainty, Vital reluctantly concludes, is beyond our reach.

Moshe Chaim Luzatto, perhaps the most important post-Lurianic mystic philosopher, disagrees. He maintains that the fact that there are differing options for the configuration of Radla does not mean we do not know Radla. Radla is not to be found in one of the five suggestions, he says; Radla is all five suggestions together. According to Luzatto's understanding of Radla, the nature of divine certainty is the place where all possibilities of divine configuration exist in paradoxical unity. Ultimate doubt is our highest certainty.

Through holding to uncertainty for at least a time, we reach a higher certainty.

While it reads like something out of a quantum physicist's handbook, this multiple truth model of Radla in fact has its roots in the study of the Talmud.

Talmud tells us that for three years there was a dispute between two opposing groups of scholars, the house of Shammai and the house of Hillel: "The former asserting, the Halachah [the law] is in agreement with our views, and the latter contending, the Halachah is in agreement with our views." Eventually a declaration issued from Heaven: "The utterances of both are the words of the living God, but the Halachah is in agreement with the ruling of the house of Hillel."

What does the Talmud mean when it says that two opposing viewpoints are "the words of the living God"? How can both be true? One teacher interprets this talmudic passage as making a methodological statement: in effect, there is only one truth, but in the open examination of all views we clarify more deeply that one truth. Through holding to uncertainty for at least a time, we reach a higher certainty.

However, there is a second position, expressed most powerfully by the Ritva, a medieval teacher who comments on this passage. According to the Ritva, "These and these are the words of the living God" is not an expression of methodology. Because we have no means of resolution we are not forced to accord legitimacy to both positions; rather, "these and these" is teaching that both possibilities are true. No one possibility, no one certainty, exhausts the truth. For the Ritva, the Talmud itself is a pool of infinite possibilities, and as such it provides a model for the uncertain multiple truth of the highest form: the absolute uncertainty of God in Radla. ❑

Mordechai Gafni is a rebbe and scholar in Jerusalem. He serves as director of Minad and as the Melitz scholar-in-residence.

Short Takes

A Look at What's in Other Monthlies and Bi-Monthlies

Here TIKKUN continues our conversation with American intellectual, political, and cultural monthly and bimonthly magazines.

DoubleTake

In *DoubleTake*'s fall issue, education professor Randy Testa interviews Vivian Paley (the author, most recently, of *The Kindness of Children*), who emphasizes the importance of play and the power of storytelling in the lives of young children. In this clear-spoken and engaging interview, she points out that school is the very first place where we are "strangers in a strange land." Fantasy play and storytelling allow boys and girls to share what is important to themselves and to begin to learn kindness. Paley starts her book with the rabbinical quote, "the moral universe rests upon the breath of schoolchildren" in part because in the classroom we can learn to respect each other one step and one voice at a time.

The Atlantic Monthly

Sue Erikson Bloland, the daughter of Erik Erikson, discusses her father in November's *Atlantic Monthly*. Bloland was compelled to write about her family life by the publication of Lawrence Friedman's biography of her father and family. In an essay that is both moving and banal, she describes Erikson as an insecure and ineffectual father who needed his wife's help in answering the question "How are you?" While able to convey great empathy to strangers, Erikson was helpless in the face of his children's emotional needs. Bloland argues that, like Laurence Olivier, Charlie Chaplin, and John F. Kennedy, Erikson's own need for fame was the result of an absent parent (a father, in this case), a narcissistic parent, and deep personal shame. The famous person seeks to compensate for these demons, to please the parent through his special talent. In turn, fame recasts the individual as a parent for the adoring crowds. Fame, then, comforts both those who are famous and those who need the famous. For Bloland, a heightened awareness of this phenomenon can "help us to feel more authentic to ourselves and to others, and can draw us together in appreciation of what it means to be a member of this flawed but wonderful species."

Dissent

In the fall issue of *Dissent*, Liza Featherstone takes a look at the relationship between unions and "socially responsible" (SR) companies. Companies like Ben & Jerry's, Powell's, and Borders Books and Music, all cultivators of a "socially conscious" image, have also all been involved in bitter—and disappointing—union fights. While her dismissal of the SR movement seems a bit reductive (business is bad because businessmen have power), Featherstone is right when she points out that the SR movement has allowed citizens to confuse purchasing with social and political action. It has also provided big business with union-busting tools. Rather than focus on the usual causes of union-busting, Featherstone notes the class difference between the formerly middle- and now upper-class hippie founders of SR companies and those who now want unions. She writes that such unacknowledged class differences not only "preclude these employers' empathy with workers, they inform a cornerstone of SR anti-unionism: the assumption that conflict itself is destructive." The bright spot, for Featherstone, lies in the employees of SR companies themselves, who tend to be more socially conscious and thus could revitalize the union movement.

Utne Reader

The November/December *Utne Reader* gives us a snapshot of the great American sellout. In his introduction, Jeremiah Creedon presents us with this paradox: "Never before has there been such opportunity to seek one's true self.... And yet never have so many been so reluctant to live by their own scripts." Most of the stories that follow are merely irritatingly familiar: Rita Hao was once a cool-grrrl, but now she's a high-priced lawyer; Bryan Urstadt justifies an all-expense-paid press trip to Tucson to test drive the new Volvo convertible by writing an exposé of press trips; rapper Puff Daddy moves to the Hamptons. Tinker Ready, however, in a story originally run in the *Boston Phoenix*, warns what happens when sellouts have substance. In "Science for Sale," she profiles researcher Dennis Selkoe, whose research on Alzheimer's has been funded by his own drug company, Athena Neurosciences. Last year, Selkoe endorsed his own company's product in an NIH report without disclosing his interest in the company.

He's not alone. Ready reports on research by Sheldon Krimsky of Tufts University which indicates that authors of 272 out of 800 scientific papers had a financial stake in their findings. "Unless those researchers disclose their industry links, no one will know whether they speak for the science or for the company."

Harper's

Is rock dead? Yes, according to David Samuels in his analysis of Woodstock 99 for the November issue of *Harper's*. Samuels talks to the promoters (Michael Lang, John Scher, and Ossie Kilkenny) and convinces us that they are hypocritical, naïve, and greedy. They didn't get enough water and charged too much for it. They lined up bands that built the crowd up to an overcharged, telegenic frenzy. They had no way to get rid of either the raw sewage or the garbage. The question on everyone's mind is voiced by Lee Blumer, a veteran of Woodstock 1969 and a member of the Woodstock 99 staff. Back in 1969, she says, "we wanted ... to create our own world.... We would do away with racism, with classism.... Then somehow we gave birth to that [gesturing outside]. And the thing that puzzles me is—how?" "That," as we know, included two deaths, at least four rapes, and a riot. Yet, while Samuels does a good job of evoking the gritty, smelly feeling of a summer concert from hell, his explanation of why Woodstock 99 was such a debacle is off the mark. For Samuels, something "broke apart" thirty years ago, "something vital and lasting—an idea of the good life and how to live it, what marriage meant ... what family and community were for ... that sense of connection, of some overarching narrative frame for our lives, still hasn't been repaired or replaced."

Mother Jones

The September/October issue of *Mother Jones* includes Mark Schapiro's sad story of Serbian draft evaders. "Serbia's Lost Generation" describes how thousands fled to Hungary in order to stay out of Milosevic's latest campaign. Now, unable to go home and unable to work, they are stuck in limbo. Even though these Serbs are anti-Milosevic and pro-democratic, however, all those Schapiro spoke with were furious about NATO's bombing. He quotes one former protester, Stojan Cerovic: "People at those [opposition] demonstrations were waving American and German flags. Now Milosevic can claim that bombs are the only thing we ever got from the West."

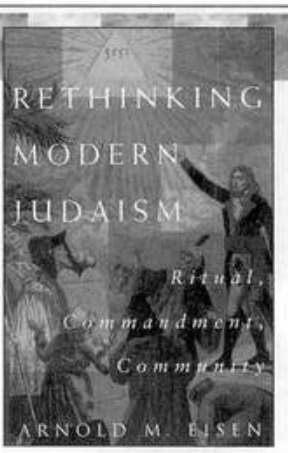
The American Prospect

The November 23 issue of *American Prospect* presents an intriguing piece on the ethical challenges facing international peacekeepers in Kosovo. "Kosovo can be either Hong Kong or Somalia," writer David L. Bosco quotes one citizen as saying. In Hong Kong, Bosco notes that the British administration "produced a remarkable economic rise, a gradual political liberalization, and an orderly (if troubling) reunification with the mainland," despite its "old-style colonialism." In contrast, Somalia belongs to the "new generation of foreign custodial efforts." Rather than a sustainable commitment, the humanitarian relief effort was a product of fleeting horror, grew into an attempt to reconstruct a Somali government, and ended in an "ignominious retreat" after eighteen U.S. soldiers were killed in Mogadishu.

What is the correct response to a society whose civil infrastructure is in total disarray? Bosco questions the Left's predictable criticisms of attempts to create civil order, such as the *New York Times'* insistence that "the best way to combat hate speech is not to ban it, but to ensure that Kosovo's citizens have access to alternate views." Bosco responds that in countries like Kosovo, "the simple availability of other, more moderate discourse may not be enough; active measures to root out the hate may be required. The uncomfortable reality is that fostering liberalism in a radicalized society may, at times, call for illiberal methods."

Lingua Franca

In the November *Lingua Franca*, James Schwartz takes a lively look at the debate over sociobiology. On one side is a group that includes Stephen Jay Gould, who has long opposed the notion that human behavior can be explained as simply the result of genetics alone. On the other side are the evolutionary psychologists who see human psychology as a set of "'complex adaptations,' *specific traits exquisitely suited to perform their functions.*" Much of this clash has a political subtext that has been played out in the *New York Review of Books*. In 1975 Gould and fourteen other scientists published a letter in that paper criticizing sociobiology as being part of a tradition of biological determinism that has "provided an important basis ... for the eugenics policies which led to the establishment of gas chambers in Nazi Germany." The scientists' letter "sounded a warning bell," writes Schwartz. "Supposedly objective science had been used—and could be again—to justify dubious politics and prejudices." Now, twenty years later, as the DNA code is further revealed, Gould's concerns seem increasingly justified. ❑



"Arnold M. Eisen's fascinating account of the interaction between Jewish religious practice and the concerns of modernity provides an insightful entrance point to understanding the evolution of the theologies of America's largest Jewish denominations."—*Tikkun*

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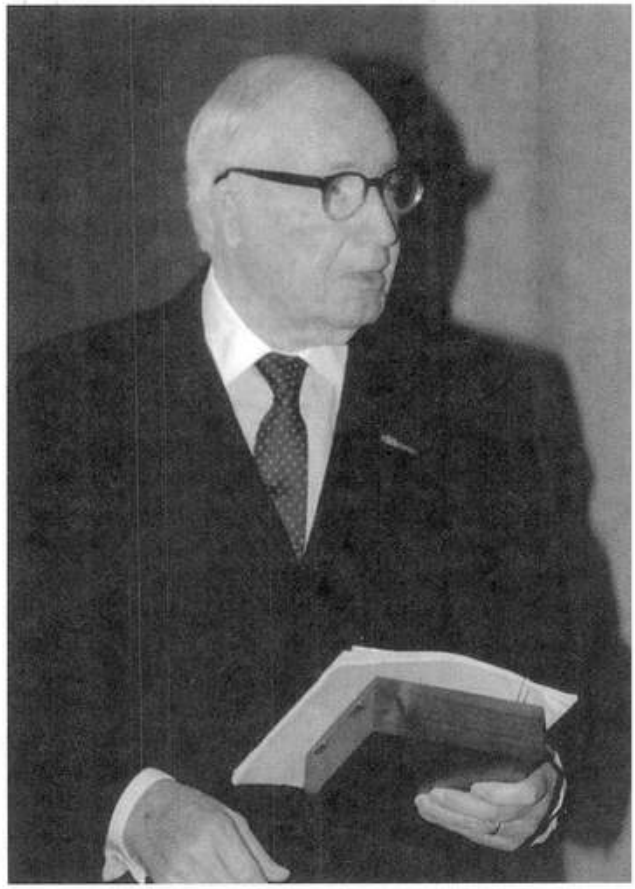
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BOOK REVIEW

The Son Also Rises

David M. Stone



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAD BOWER / AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

- *Legacy: A Biography of Moses and Walter Annenberg*, by Christopher Ogden. Little, Brown and Company, 1999.

The most pointed account of the "legacy" of publishing mogul Walter Annenberg comes on page 553 of Christopher Ogden's new 552-page biography. For it is there, after Ogden's dramatic prose concludes, that one finds a simple, selected list of Annenberg's philanthropic gifts: $500 million for innovation in the nation's public schools; $239 million to the University of Pennsylvania and $177 million to the University of Southern California; $177 million for public broadcasting; $50 million to the United Negro College Fund; and $165 million and a billion-dollar art collection to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The litany of seven- and eight-figure donations to educational, cultural, arts, medical, and Jewish institutions is remarkable in its scope and scale.

In *Legacy: A Biography of Moses and Walter Annenberg*, Christopher Ogden tells us in breathless detail how the Annenberg father and son got all that money: they became the essential "content providers" for consumers of American popular culture, first as racetrack bettors and then as television viewers. Unfortunately, he tells us comparatively little about how Walter gave so much of it away, although he does have a very simple theory of why: to remove a blot on the family name caused by his infamous father's conviction and imprisonment for federal tax evasion in the closing years of the New Deal.

As Ogden is perhaps too determined to prove, the Annenberg story reads like a romance novel turned TV miniseries. There are operatic feuds and bitter divorces, depression and suicide, criminal conspiracies and political intrigue, society balls and Hollywood starlets—a panorama of twentieth-century characters from Al Capone to Princess Di, William Randolph Hearst to Rupert Murdoch, FDR and JFK to Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan.

In brief, after reaching American shores with their parents while the Statue of Liberty was still under construction, Moses and his brother Max grew up fast, escaping an observant Jewish immigrant home by assimilating into the multicultural streets of Chicago. After a stumbling start in other sundry business schemes, Moses got into newspapering on the ground floor, building a Midwestern distribution system from the paper boys on up. And in a market where fighting for sales turf could literally involve fists and clubs, he won a reputation for strong-arm tactics that stuck decades after moving east to work as in-house circulation executive for William Randolph Hearst's publishing empire.

But the real criminality that would eventually land him in a federal penitentiary grew out of another business he pioneered—becoming the Dow Jones of the horse-racing industry. Never a wagering man himself, Moses Annenberg built *The Daily Racing Form* into an information-rich bible for a sport that was, in the Roaring Twenties, a true American pastime. But in what could be called an early "new media play," he used the American Telephone & Telegraph's growing network of long-distance phone lines to build a monopoly in providing nearly instantaneous information on the results from tracks across the country. The key clients for this telephonic "racing wire" were the mob-run bookies and illegal betting parlors that thrived long before our era of state-sponsored off-track betting.

He raked in millions, even during the Depression. He bought up legitimate newspapers in Miami and Philadelphia, turning them into crusading journalistic voices for government reform and conservative Republican politics. He used his brilliance at circulation promotion to win readers and his determined editorial focus to win elections. Unfortunately, he also continued owning the racing wire while running

Now an independent television producer in New York, David M. Stone served as communications director to U.S. Senator Harris Wofford between 1991 and 1995.

his far-flung business empire like the family candy store. Ogden provides a detailed, behind-the-scenes account of how the Democratic White House used this Achilles heel to silence the virulently anti-New Deal Moses.

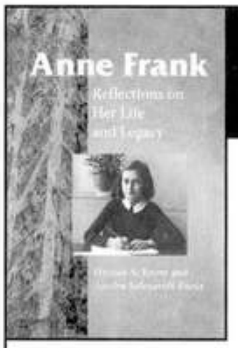
"I want Moe Annenberg for dinner," Franklin Roosevelt is said to have told Treasury Secretary Harold Ickes, who ensured that the Internal Revenue Service and FBI served up the meal. As with Bill Clinton and Ken Starr—where the prosecution's obvious excesses hardly excuse the fact that the defendant really did have sexual relations with "that woman"—the politically motivated indictment of the older Annenberg for income-tax evasion couldn't undo the reality that he was largely guilty as charged. Moses legalistically claimed that the racing wire was a legitimate business when he knew it was used for illegal purposes. He insisted to his early grave that he was guilty only of inattentive management of the closely held family corporation rather than intentional fraud. Repeatedly denied requests for clemency or parole, Moses died shortly after his eventual release in 1942.

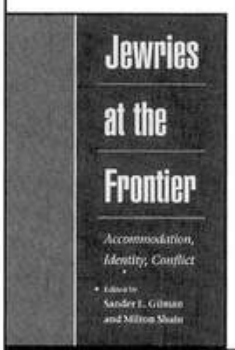
Ogden vividly recounts how all eight Annenberg children were affected both by their father's material indulgence and by his emotional distance. And how Walter—the pampered youngest child and only son who struggled to overcome a visibly defective ear, a pronounced verbal stutter, and his father's demanding expectations—seemed a classic underachieving scion of wealth when he was forced to take over a family empire crumbling under the weight of Moses' conviction, imprisonment, and heavy fines.

Ogden frames this ascension as a dramatic turning point in Walter's life, thrusting the heretofore ineffectual heir into the novel role of responsible business executive and avenging angel of the sullied family name. The product of the largely gentile Peddie School, a University of Pennsylvania drop-out who lost his shirt in the great crash of 1929, Walter had sat quietly at his father's often abusive and dismissive side for a decade at the *Miami Tribune* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. He, too, had been indicted on the federal tax charges, but was appropriately dropped before the trial since he was so obviously "out of the loop."

Yet Walter, who tried his hand as a society columnist and dated the likes of Ethel Merman and Ginger Rogers, seemed to have picked up more publishing wisdom from his father than anyone gave him credit for. His rescue of the family company was punctuated by smart business judgment and a knack for knowing the changing marketplace. Ogden's description of Walter's business acumen often borders on hagiography, but there's no arguing with the facts. Annenberg's idea for *Seventeen* magazine in the 1940s and *American Bandstand* in the 1950s put him way ahead of MTV in understanding the demographics of the youth market. His idea for a national/local *TV Guide* applied his father's strategy of getting the maximum reach and multiple reuses out of editorial resources, while capitalizing on the explosion of the new mass medium. The *University of the Air* broadcasts on his Philadelphia TV station were an early model for public broadcasting. And his breathtakingly large commitment to the United Negro College Fund created a new pattern for socially motivated giving which still has not been done adequate justice by the next generation of media moguls and computer industry entrepreneurs.

While Walter became known for his friendship and support of conservative Republicans from Richard Nixon—who appointed him ambassador to Great Britain—to Ronald Reagan, he also championed reform-minded Philadelphia Democrats Richardson Dilworth and Joe Clark (as well as the far less reform-minded former cop Frank Rizzo). He liked JFK and rejected Goldwater's conserv-





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ative extremism to support LBJ. His personal influence on important events seems pervasive. In the 1950s, it was he who first recommended Ronald Reagan to the chairman of GE, giving the actor's dimming career a new direction that pointed him toward the governor's mansion and the White House. It was also Annenberg who insisted that his own law firm hire Harvard-trained Supreme Court clerk William Coleman who, despite his credentials, couldn't get a job in post-War Philadelphia because he was black.

Ogden has clearly spent a lot of time with his second subject, Walter Annenberg, whom he just as clearly admires. Yet it is precisely in the sections on Annenberg the younger that some of the biographer's weaknesses show the most.

For example, Ogden tries to generate some mystery around Walter Annenberg's sense of Jewish identity. Like many hard-charging immigrants who yearned to be real Americans, Moses had little use for organized Judaism. So despite his wife Sadie's continued interest, there was no Hebrew school or bar mitzvah training for Walter. Ogden rhetorically wonders why Walter wasn't more notably affected by post-War visits to recently liberated concentration camps. But the younger Annenberg seemed fully aware of and largely comfortable with his ethnic and religious background—just not spiritually invested in it.

By contrast, a mystery that Ogden unwittingly raises but fails to consider is why Walter, whom he glowingly describes as committed to nurturing the best and highest quality workmanship in all his publishing endeavors, would have allowed his flagship *Philadelphia Inquirer* to go to journalistic seed in the 1950s and 1960s. True, Walter was busy with national publications like *Seventeen* and *TV Guide*, but the fact remains that the paper's Pulitzer Prize-winning record came only after Annenberg had sold the paper to what became Knight-Ridder. The paper's later successes were accomplished under the renowned editorial leadership of former—and subsequent—*New York Times* editor Gene Roberts, whose appointment and innovations Annenberg says he actively opposed.

Perhaps the most dismaying aspect of the book, however, is Ogden's penchant for facile psychological speculation, despite his seeming dismissal of the method early on. Ogden relies on a simplistic binary approach to understanding personality and relationships, repeatedly telling us that Walter's character should be seen as a direct reflection of each of his parents: "On the one side he had the unconditional love of a mother whose support could not be driven away; on the other, a father whose yelling compensated for his overindulgence, but whom Walter could never please because he could never be a complete extension of Moses." In one of far too many recapitulations of the identical point, the author knowingly concludes: "Because he was the product of parents who were very different from each other, Walter's temperament often alternated between the two poles."

Are we nothing more than a pendulum swinging between the polarity of our parents?

I'm no psychologist, but I wonder, is that the way it works? One from column A, one from column B—and poof, we are nothing more than a pendulum swinging between the polarity of our parents? Forgive me for falling back on my own redundant metaphor, but it sounds like soap opera or TV miniseries psychology: perfect for building a simple dramatic arc, but not the most sophisticated way of seeing the complexities of human character and experience.

Ogden also tends to rely on easy—and irritating—rhetorical tics, such as repeatedly closing early chapters by ominously foreshadowing the legal problems Moses Annenberg would face in Philadelphia. These trite clichés sound like TV news show "teases" for the next segment before a commercial break. There is also frequent redundancy of language in a text that clearly could have used some sharper editing. Virtually identical sentences and phrases are repeated only pages—or even paragraphs—apart from each other. The frustration here is that Ogden really has a terrific story to tell, one in which the main protagonists have played an essential role in the development of today's mass media, high culture, and new philanthropy. But he can't seem to keep himself from jumping right to the TV docudrama screenplay, perhaps counting on another *Life of the Party*, the cable network production of his earlier biography of Democratic doyenne Pamela Harriman as played by sultry Ann-Margret.

Unfortunately, since his second marriage nearly forty years ago, the life of Walter Annenberg, while often impressive and eventful, doesn't have quite that kind of sizzle. He simply doesn't come off as an inscrutable riddle of a man about whom the world is anxiously awaiting insight. He rather seems an altogether decent person of sound business judgment, some good luck, and a genuine sense of civic virtue. Yes, his extraordinary philanthropy has done honor to his parents and his family name. But the breadth and depth of Annenberg largesse deserves to be considered as more than mere expiation for the sins of the father. The jury may yet be out on whether Annenberg's far-flung philanthropic commitments will have the long-term impact and self-sustaining durability of, say, Rockefeller's University of Chicago or Carnegie's many libraries. But, years from now, chances are that's the kind of legacy our own sons and daughters will connect with the name Annenberg. ❑

BOOK REVIEW

The Future *of* Feminism

Both Sides Now

Wendy Chapkis

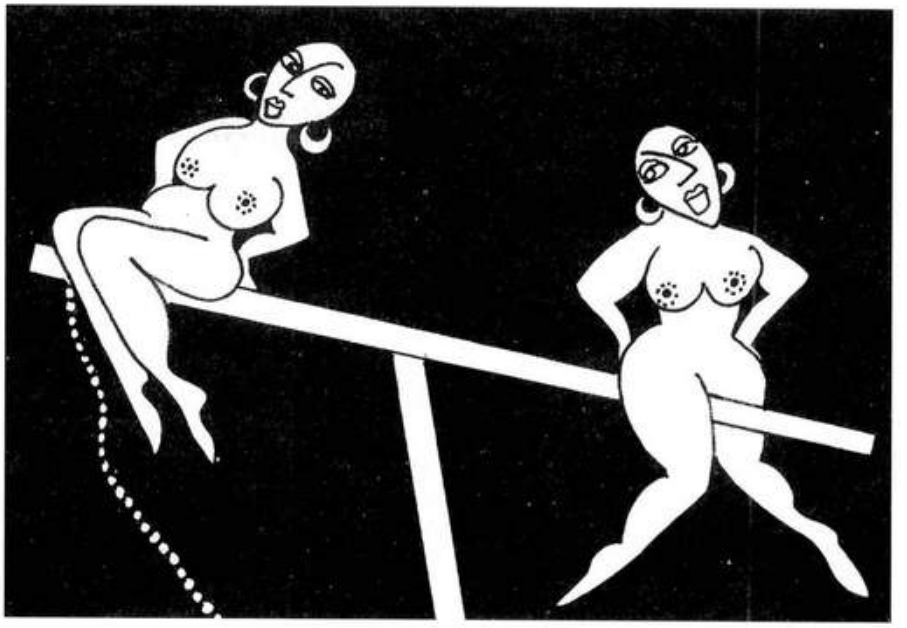


ILLUSTRATION BY NADINE EPSTEIN

- *Reconcilable Differences: Confronting Beauty, Pornography, and the Future of Feminism*, by Lynn S. Chancer. University of California Press, 1998.

I recently was invited to address a plenary session on the topic "Beyond the Sex Wars" at the National Women's Studies Association's annual meeting. Like many progressives, my spirit has suffered under the enduring twentieth-century enthusiasm for war after war after war. So I was heartened that a national feminist organization is forecasting life beyond the battlefield. Such a reconciliation has been a long time coming within the women's movement. For twenty years, deeply antagonistic feminist camps have been divided by differences over sexual practice and sexual culture. Most of us who have participated in the debates over pornography, prostitution, and S/M are bone-weary and eager to leave the trenches. This does not mean we now all agree with one another. But perhaps we are beginning to recognize that feminism does not require unanimity.

At the plenary, the issue of prostitution served as a lightning rod for those still-unresolved differences. The other two speakers were passionately opposed to the practice of prostitution in all of its forms. I, on the other hand, had just written a book arguing against that kind of sweeping condemnation of commercial sex and in support of sex workers' rights. Despite such fundamental disagreement, it was clear that the three of us also had many common commitments, including working toward greater respect and sexual safety for women, an end to the belief that a sexually active woman "deserves what she gets," whether at the hands of a lover, a stranger, or the state, and a demand for greater occupational choices so that no one is forced to choose sex work from among desperately limited options.

Whether cooperation to secure those shared objectives is possible within feminism, or whether we will remain impossibly divided into warring camps, clearly depends less on resolving our differences over sex than on creating a new attitude toward them. As feminist filmmaker and essayist Trinh T. Minh-ha has pointed out in *When the Moon Waxes Red*, "Difference is not what makes conflicts. It is beyond and along side of conflict." The plenary made clear that to move beyond the sex wars, feminists must learn to live within and across our differences without turning disagreement into a battlefield and the parties to it into enemies.

This attitude is increasingly being expressed by so-called Third Wave feminists, younger women intent on revitalizing the women's movement. In the new book, *Adiós, Barbie: Young Women Write About Body Image and Identity*, contributor Amelia Richards notes, "Because we now have many different paths to—and definitions of—empowerment, it's difficult to organize a unified movement. In this wave of feminism, you're as likely to run into women who defend and enjoy and create pornography as you are to come across feminists who see pornography as the ultimate oppressor.... To unite today's young women, we need to focus on a particular issue and then bring together the diverse feminist opinions on the matter to create a rich, complex dialogue. Better to disagree than to be silent, to fill out feminism rather than trim it down."

For Third Wave feminists to succeed at "filling out feminism" by accommodating the broadest range of views, it will be necessary to avoid strategies that foiled Second Wave feminists' attempts at dialogue and activism across sexual differences. This important task is made easier by the recent publication of feminist

Wendy Chapkis is an associate professor of sociology and women's studies at the University of Southern Maine. Her most recent book is Live Sex Acts: Women Performing Erotic Labor *(Routledge, 1998).*

sociologist Lynn S. Chancer's new book, *Reconcilable Differences*. Chancer, like Richards, argues that the future of feminism depends on a more productive attitude toward difference: "Two things must again become possible for feminists: both to disagree from within and to focus on effecting the desperately needed changes that require collective action."

To this end, Chancer's book opens with an examination of how the sex wars derailed such efforts over the past two decades. According to Chancer, the split within Second Wave feminism can best be understood as a difference of political emphasis—whether to prioritize "sex" or "sexism." These quickly became positioned as mutually exclusive choices: *either* to focus on the pursuit of sexual freedom, personal power, and individual pleasure in the midst of a hierarchically organized sexist society, *or* to be committed to fighting social and structural inequality at the expense of individual sources of pleasure and power. The side emphasizing sex embraced a personal politics of individual sexual defiance, where "to seek and to find physical pleasure is believed to be a good, even in a sexist present." The side focused on sexism proposed a politics of radical transformation of social institutions like law, the state, the media, and the workplace.

Of course, outside the heat of battle, it seems obvious that the two goals are inextricably linked, not mutually exclusive. Clearly the most effective route to sexual freedom and social equality is a non-divisive "third path" in which, according to Chancer, feminist efforts would be directed at "*both* transforming social institutions *and* asserting individual agency." Far from being a new proposal, this "both/and" approach actually characterized much of early Second Wave feminist writing, a fact reflected in the title of one of the first anthologies on feminist sexual politics: *Pleasure* and *Danger*. The question, then, is how did the many voices insisting on complexity become overwhelmed by the few dedicated to either/or politics? Chancer suggests that part of the problem was the deeply embedded cultural habit of reflecting difference in dichotomous terms. The most polarized feminist perspectives were selected and amplified by a media structured to find "both sides" of a story—as if there were only two sides and as if they were opposing positions. Furthermore, as Chancer observes, "complexity is clearly out of sync with a growing need to think and speak in sound bites."

If feminists are to prevent the media from setting the terms of discussion, we will have to become more adept at expressing the complex and contradictory nature of sex. Sex, like most other interesting and important issues, is too unruly for neatly divided positions of bumper-sticker length. As feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins has observed in *Black Feminist Thought*, far from being an either/or matter, "sexuality encompasses the *both/and* nature of human existence, the potential for a sexuality that simultaneously oppresses *and* empowers."

Sex, like most other interesting and important issues, is too unruly for neatly divided positions of bumper-sticker length.

Sex resists being divided between pleasure and danger, exploitation and empowerment. The very character of gender subordination works to produce a complex web of interconnection between sex and sexism, agency and oppression. Chancer notes that such key institutions of gender and sexual regulation as heterosexuality and the family, for example, serve both to maintain male domination as well as to provide much that is good in many women's lives: "The most profound intimate relationships and places to which women were socialized to turn for diverse emotional, social, and sexual comforts were simultaneously the same relationships and places where subordination subtly took hold.... In other words, comfort and oppressiveness regularly occurred together, and in such a way as to seem inextricable, melded together and intimately enmeshed in experience."

This tight interweaving of sex and sexism suggests that an adequate and effective feminist sexual politics must defy the either/or positions of the sex wars. As Chancer concludes, "a feminist position ought be possible that permits pornography [or prostitution, or S/M, or heterosexuality, to name but a few] to be both defended and criticized and that avoids it becoming either unhappily repressed or mindlessly glorified." Indeed, one useful strategy might be for feminists to attempt to publicly express the value of perspectives at odds with their own. In this alternate universe of the feminist future, I imagine anti-pornography activist Catharine MacKinnon acknowledging, then assessing the value of porn star/performance artist Annie Sprinkle's complex and subversive engagement with the sex industry; or sexual libertine *enfante terrible* Camille Paglia really engaging with the fact that Andrea Dworkin's equation of intercourse with rape resonates powerfully with many women.

It's quite possible, though, that wounds are too deep on all sides for this to happen among old combatants; perhaps it is up to the next wave of feminists to step in and begin a conversation that goes well beyond "agreeing to disagree." A new feminist coalition politics across sexual difference depends on respectful engagement with dissenting ideas and a deliberate attempt to join forces in action on common goals. Twenty years into the feminist battles over sex, it's time to acknowledge that no one has a monopoly on truth. The future of feminism depends on it. ❑

BOOK REVIEW

Why Grass Won the Nobel Prize

Richard Weisberg

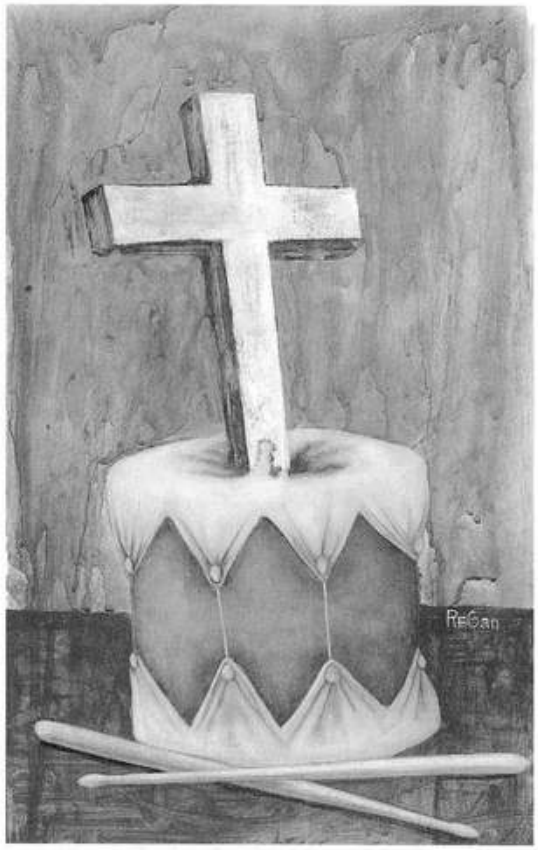


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID REGAN

- *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust*, by Ernestine Schlant. Routledge, 1999.

Unbeknownst to many—even those who carefully follow the Holocaust and its aftermath—we are living through a period of what I call "second-level negation." First-level negation included not only Holocaust denial but also the myths created by each country in Hitler's Europe to avoid local responsibility for the destruction of the Jews. The Swiss were "neutral," or—still better—a courageous little state that was a haven for escaping Jews. Austria, virtually until the Waldheim scandal, was "Hitler's first victim." In France, everyone was "in the Resistance"—everyone, even Maurice Papon! And even the Vichy government cleverly "shielded" French nationals by deporting stateless and denaturalized Jews instead. The Dutch were protected by the story of Anne Frank. The Poles suffered equal numerical losses to the Polish Jewish population killed by Hitler—et cetera.

Then, in each European center, reality took hold. Stories, films, and histories, as well as the mere passing of time, brought about changes. Chirac admitted to French responsibility in July 1995, shifting the paradigm that had prevailed from de Gaulle to Mitterrand. Polish collaboration in the killing of Jews was perhaps the primary message of the film *Shoah*. The Swiss acknowledged turning back desperate Jews and hoarding Nazi gold. Documents appeared. Myths vanished.

Subtly, and sometimes after only a few years of enlightenment, things are changing again. The old myths, definitively debunked, may never recur. But second-level negation, with its own version of the story, has set in. France—as I learned recently while testifying before a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives looking into the restitution of Jewish assets looted by Vichy—pompously intones its own relative innocence and powerlessness before Nazi power and xenophobically insists on monopolizing this dark period of its history. The Poles, in litigation here in the States as well as in their own histories, insist they were also genocidally targeted by Hitler. The Swiss feel they were "coerced" into their recent restitution settlement and seem to have little hesitation blaming this on a worldwide Jewish conspiracy—et cetera.

Ironically, in the midst of this ebb and flow, the Germans themselves have been relatively steadfast. Forced early to admit their irrefragable guilt, they have been endeavoring for decades to fathom how the birthplace of Goethe and Beethoven sunk so quickly to barbarian depths. As Ernestine Schlant shows in her remarkably thorough and sometimes highly prescient new book, there have, of course, been volatile variations on the German theme; yet West German culture has steadily pursued the inquiry virtually since the post-War euphoria of the Adenauer years gave way to decades of reflection.

Schlant's book comes at a good time, because it both permits us to review a literary discourse committed to self-exploration and also to compare and contrast West German letters to the far less open and textured treatment of the Holocaust in countries like France, the low countries, and the eastern states of Europe. Her book also helps to situate the contribution of Günter Grass, whose Nobel Literature Prize post-dates her study. Schlant is surprisingly ungenerous to Grass, both evaluatively and in the number of pages she devotes to him; but her decade-by-decade approach to post-War German letters permits the reader to recall trends and struggles that make Grass' superb fiction more understandable and even contemporary.

Schlant covers every West German writer since 1945 who has touched on the Holocaust. Economizing in the service of this all-inclusiveness, Schlant slights the better-known of her subjects—such as Grass, Heinrich Böll, and Hermann Lenz—who are treated through the optic of an already developed critical discourse. There is not enough room for Schlant to cover these writers with the originality and care they deserve, and she often seems

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willing merely to parrot other critics' distaste for their contributions. Böll's depictions of Jews, she says, demonstrate "precisely the power of indoctrinated stereotypes." Grass' writing sometimes displays "an ingrained obtuseness and insensitivity to those who suffered and died." These claims, as we shall see in the case of Grass specifically, are overbroad and rely on a surprisingly unsophisticated notion of the way stories affect readers.

Schlant is a professor of German and comparative literature. Her training emerges best, paradoxically, in the treatment of less well-known writers about whom I suspect she simply felt freer to opine. But these younger storytellers—such as 1960s student-generation writers Henisch, Plessen, Rehmen, and Härtling—write only marginally on the Holocaust. Even Schlant admits that the "rage that boils in these writers is a rage motivated not by the atrocities of the Holocaust, of which the children learned only later, but by personally sustained psychological injuries."

One very recent novel, though, merits the attention it gets from Schlant. Thanks to no less than Oprah Winfrey, Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* is quite well known to Americans as well as Europeans. Schlant excels when treating this subtle little story about a post-War adolescent's affair with an older woman who turns out to have been a concentration-camp guard.

Although Schlant's even-handedness may alert devotees of German literature to many writers untouched by the Oprah show, a reader must finally question the judgment that foregrounds the new and (sometimes) marginal writer at the expense of those whose post-War efforts have already influenced the world's perception of the Holocaust. Günter Grass is unsurpassed, almost four decades since the publication of his *The Danzig Trilogy*, in capturing forthrightly and imaginatively an event that his mainstream readers would surely have preferred to forget, minimalize, or relegate to second-level negation. Yet Schlant's closest approach to Grass' contribution—and her finest single paragraph—comes during a discussion of Grass' virtual contemporary, Alexander Kluge. She admires this writer and filmmaker for his willingness to break down traditional narrative boundaries and to employ documentary sources as well as imaginative representations; in locating the problematic of an otherwise understandable deconstruction of reality, Schlant articulates the compelling theory of her book:

> Despite the narrative fragmentations and the discontinuities associated with it, the Holocaust demands the adoption of a moral position. Kluge's language bears all the gaps and wounds and fissures associated with the problems of speaking about the Holocaust, but his skepticism about the factualness of "interested" discourse defies the unequivocal position a discourse about the Holocaust demands.

Grass may be the only non-Jewish storyteller whose fiction provides both of the elements Schlant correctly seeks: a narrative style deconstructive enough to compel a reader to journey further into the void of those terrible years and "a moral position" about the Holocaust. I believe that Grass deserved the Nobel prize precisely for this achievement, which he has produced especially in *The Tin Drum* but (as his recent piece in *The New Yorker* shows) also throughout his lifetime as a writer.

Where Schlant scants Grass in her pages and her praises, I find myself counting him as the foremost post-War storyteller. If, in recent years, his name has resonated more with German internal politics, we need upon the event of his prize to recapture the clinical force of his early writings. And if, among storytellers, we have been lately traduced by the trashy romanticism of a Roberto Benigni, we need to be reminded by Grass that not every post-War European representation of the Holocaust has fudged and idealized, candied over and misrepresented.

We need, once again, to open ourselves to such stories as "Cat and Mouse" and *The Danzig Trilogy*. We need to hear again—as we might have heard from Schlant—the story of Kristallnacht as told by *The Tin Drum*'s dwarfish narrator, Oskar Matzerath. So, having been inspired by Schlant's program of a deconstructive imagination producing "a moral vision," I will offer my readers what she has hesitated to give hers: an account of Grass' stunning chapter on the end of European Christianity.

We are "drummed into" Oskar's zany autobiography, recounted in *The Tin Drum* from the asylum he inhabits during the post-War years. Like other modern protagonists (Dostoevski's underground man is the seminal case), Oskar instantly eschews all claims to heroic status, urging the reader instead to accept him as sick, distorted, grotesque. But Oskar's pathology becomes our own as we accompany him through an epic of unprecedented degradation. Grass compels his readers—victim, bystander, or victimizer—to place our moral selves on the line.

Oskar's drumbeat rendition of Kristallnacht starts pianissimo, gradually rising to an almost unbearable thunder. Entitled "Faith, Hope, and Love," this chapter will locate for us the "moral position" on the Holocaust so aptly sought by Schlant's book but then omitted from it! S.S. thugs have chosen as one of their many Jewish targets the toy store owned by Sigismund Markus. In need of a new supply of his chosen instrument, Oskar sneaks into the store, cleverly capitalizing on the violent event that distracts the adults who may otherwise keep him from his treasure. Oskar seeks out the gentle proprietor who has serviced his need for drums so well in the past, and who has also been previously marked out for discrimination. But he finds Markus dead, slumped over his desk. We are not sure how he died, but we know there is a direct connection to the S.S. men, the shards of glass, and especially to the obscenely scrawled words on the shop window, "Jewish sow." Grass' narrative is obsessed with the connection of written

language to the Nazi violence, a connection we are about to see forged in an altogether shocking context.

Markus' death opens up Oskar's anti-lyric to its ascendingly fearsome truths. The lure of the Third Reich has overwhelmed not only thugs but millions of ordinary Christians as well. Their quintessential act—the burning of synagogues—demarcates a major theme (and not a quirky subtext) of their culture. Like Dante essaying the divine presence—but now so debased in our culture, so without the same hopes … shattered! shattered!—Oskar before this account admits his frailty. Yet, as with Dante, what in fact emerges proves all too fully adequate to the task. Employing a lyrical structure deliberately evocative of our culture's most beautiful stories, Oskar/Grass proceed to debunk that lyricism. It is so powerful an assemblage of texts with the aim of deconstructing them that no postmodernism was otherwise needed. For this is a postmodernism that grapples with what all the others have managed to deflect or even avoid: the end of mainstream Western traditions.

If the earlier Dantesque epic exulted in its quite specific subjects, Grass here extends the tradition by identifying—but here with such sadness!—the material that he represents. It is not "man's inhumanity to man" or twentieth-century totalitarianism taken as a whole; it is not Stalin, it is not Rwanda, it is not even human rights. It is Christian Europe and its programmatic destruction of the Jews. It is the inevitable link between St. Paul and Auschwitz. It is, in this chapter, the anti-lyrical interweaving of religion and gas: "you can't lock up disaster in a cellar. It drains into the sewer pipes, spreads to the gas pipes, and gets into every household with the gas. And no one who sets his soup kettle on the bluish flames suspects that disaster is bringing his supper to a boil."

The Leitmotif evocative of gas having once been introduced to the atmospherics of the chapter, it is now configured into the text's predominant theme. Leaving Markus' shop with a few intact drums slung over his shoulder, Oskar sees a collection of women handing out religious tracts, and holding a banner inscribed with a line from the thirteenth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians; he begins to play with the words "Faith … hope … love," a process which leads him to associate the ultimate medium of violence (gas) with the essence of Christianity:

> He's coming, He's coming. Who is coming? The Christ child, the savior? Or is it the heavenly gasman with the gas meter under his arm, that always goes ticktock? And he said: I am the Savior of this world, without me you can't cook. And he was not too demanding, he offered special rates, turned on the freshly polished gas cocks, and let the Holy Ghost pour forth, so the dove, or squab, might be cooked. And handed out walnuts and almonds which were promptly cracked, and they too poured forth spirit and gas.

Dazzling in its effect as pure language, this passage forms the climax of the chapter and—in my view—of the text as a whole. The rest is commentary or, better, commentary on a commentary-become-gospel. Oskar muses on the coincidental sight of ordinary Germans preaching Paul's message with utter disregard for the irony (ironic to Oskar, not to them, not certainly to Paul) that love and the gasman are one. Stripped of its universality, and contextualized in Christian Europe, faith in the next world, hope for the Second Coming, and love of one's enemies have been actualized as faith in the leader, hope for a triumphant racism, and love of violence towards those who persist in finding law a more workable value than love for the achieving of justice on this earth.

Traditional moral values stand revealed as sources of Auschwitz. But it is not—pace postmodernism—every value, and neither is it every religion that provided such sources. Specifically, it is the tradition that instilled, in the name of "love," the worst hatred known to human history. And so Oskar concludes his depiction of Kristallnacht—of a faith gone awry, of a hope distorted, of a love impervious to the suffering of one's neighbor, of a metaphysical beauty that inspires an all-too-physical destruction of those not interested in such a kind of beauty—with agonizing distress. Through his protagonist, Grass himself asks for all of us what remains after Santa Claus became the gasman, what remains of all we believed in, what remains (again, specifically) of the literary pursuit of truth:

> It is the same butchers who fill dictionaries and sausage casings with language and sausage, there is no Paul, the man's name was Saul and a Saul he was, and it was Saul who told the people of Corinth something about some priceless sausages that he called faith, hope, and love, which he advertised as easily digestible and which to this very day, still Saul though forever changing in form, he palms off on mankind. As for me, they took away my toy merchant, wishing with him to banish all toys from the world.

The "chapter call[ing] for an orchestra of wild men"—the chapter that could just as appropriately have been relegated to "circumspect silence"—is over. A single drummer, a degraded Christ-figure, an embodiment of the end of the epic and lyrical possibilities in our literary culture—Oskar—has done the work of all those madmen. If people will read this chapter with any feeling, they will not need any postmodernism to undermine their faith. If they read the last few passages well, they will never permit themselves the comfort of any Holocaust denial, and neither will they ever again produce a genocide.

And this is the only "moral position," perhaps, that a complex post-War imagination could have both conceived and crafted. If readers will again pick up their Grass—informed further by what they have learned from Schlant—there will be far less risk that second-level negation will eventually ripen into outright Holocaust denial. ❑

Praying for Time



Roger S. Gottlieb

▪ *Prayers for a Thousand Years*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon. Harper San Francisco, 1999.

I never managed to get very much out of New Year's resolutions, at least not the ones that were made on December 31. Personal pledges to eat less, stop smoking, and be less argumentative seemed great just before the New Year, but a few days later the fact that the calendar had gone up by one digit just didn't seem reason enough not to reach for another brownie or Lucky Strike—or to make one more devastatingly effective comment.

As we enter a new millennium I wonder if, despite all the hype, the world will use this change of (by gosh) all four digits to show more will power than I ever did. Sadly, I don't see much sign of that effort—at least on a global scale. On January 1, 2000, there will still be around 50,000 children dying of hunger each day; the chemicals from the toxic dumps will still be leaching into the water supply; and expenditures for weapons will not suddenly drop to a rational figure. The Madness, in all its depressing forms, will continue.

Just how are we to make the changes called for by the new millennium when global *teshuvah* is so clearly lacking? *Prayers for a Thousand Years*, a lovely new collection from the editors of the marvelously effective *Earth Prayers*, reflects as well as any book I've seen the difficult and fruitful tensions between personal and planetary spiritual development. Over 200 authors provide prayers, poems, short sermons, or brief statements in answer to the question: what do we need to pray for in order to help create a world of "beauty and kindness"? The contributors are a magnificent group of all ages, genders, and religious temperaments from thirty-one countries. Yet the spiritual messages of these "prayers" are remarkably consistent: honor the earth as well as people; remember the suffering that afflicts so many beings; don't lose heart or hope even in this dark time; try to find some joy along the way.

Is there anything new here? Why not just use the old prayers—many of them, frankly, much better written than most of what is in this book?

Because some things have changed. Without doing a formal head count, it's obvious that in *Prayers for a Thousand Years* the voices of women are fully present. The awareness that the earth is sacred comes in hundreds of the selections, and not just from explicitly "environmental" writers like Joanna Macy, Thomas Berry, and Terry Tempest Williams. I also like the many direct warnings against using spiritual practices or experiences as an escape from our collective troubles. Riane Eisler counsels that "faith is not enough. We must act on our faith. Inner healing is not enough. We must heal our world."

Unfortunately, although I found myself in spiritual, political, social, ethical, and ecological agreement, the book rarely moved me. How hard it is, I think, to write a prayer—to inscribe out of the depths of one's own joy and anguish, ecstasy and grief, words that will move another's soul. How hard to write for that abstract worldwide collection of politically correct spiritual seekers (of which I count myself)—all too conscious of all the issues, "isms," and problems we face—instead of for one very particular, very concrete, community. The thoughts are true, the values solid, but the spiritual and emotional power of the 23rd Psalm, the Dammapada, or the Sermon on the Mount rarely arise.

There is necessarily an important difference between a book of prayers and a prayer book. And perhaps this difference indicates something about the spiritual task of the new millennium: to forge a community that can be collectively moved by what we've learned from the past, so that these spiritual manifestos become the heartfelt prayers not of a few, but of the many. Those of us who feel, as Malaysian Chandras Muzaffar succinctly puts is, that "to remember God is to uphold justice and to express compassion and kindness," cannot remain a tiny but righteous minority. As these prayers for a thousand years teach us, we are fully connected with all of life. If we cannot spread our message beyond ourselves until it becomes the emotional and moral heartbeat of the world, our own spiritual life will be only a pale shadow of what we seek—and of what this new time asks of us. ❑

Roger S. Gottlieb teaches philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. His latest book is A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart and Protecting the Earth *(Crossroad, 1999).*

ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

תיקון

Tikkun (te-kün) … to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary



JOYFULLY RESPONDING to the glory of this universe,
HUMBLED BY our responsibility to save it from ecological destruction and moral and spiritual degradation,
FORGIVING EACH OTHER for the numerous ways that we have failed to be adequately nurturing,

WE ENTER INTO THE COMING PERIOD
affirming goodness, hope, and possibility,
affirming pleasure, affirming life itself, and
affirming our commitment to be partners with
God in Tikkun, the healing and transformation
of the universe.

—RABBI MICHAEL LERNER