

# Reality *An Open Possibility*

By BRYANT ARRINGTON

Fire burns. Without this as a fact there could not be the kind of reality we have. But fire does not have to burn a person in a particular case at a particular time.

Fire walking is a reality on the island of Ceylon for the Hindus who worship Kataragama. The event has been covered by such reputable publications as the New York Times, National Geographic, Travel Magazine, and Scientific American. The English Society of Physical Research ran a series of tests on two Indian fakirs who walked on red hot coals under control conditions. No chemicals were used, no preparation made and they repeated the performance on coals measured at 500 to 1400 degrees centigrade. The results: verified stories published on fire walking.

The secret of the Hindus was stated in National Geographic by Hindu Mohotty, a successful fire walker, as "Faith, total faith in my gods."

"As with all the firewalkers, the long togas they wear are not even scorched unless the walkers' faith snaps, whereupon the toga bursts into flames," one account said. Admission to the priesthood hinges on a successful walking over the stones, and attendants stood by with long wooden hooks to try to rake failures off before they were cooked.

ONE OF THE tenets of science is of a basic uniform causality operating as a unifying force throughout the universe. Dr. Warren Weaver speaks (Science and Imagination, Selected Papers) of this as a kind of statistical necessity, but points out that this can never be proven to apply in a specific case.

"There is a relationship between what we think is out there in the world the energy of thought and the energy of matter modify each other and interrelate. A kind of rough mirroring takes place between our mind and our reality." So says Joseph Pearce (The Crack in the Cosmic Egg).

Jerome Bruner of Harvard's Center for Cognitive Studies has also concluded that our minds direct our sensory approaches with a selective program as much as our sensory apparatus informs the mind. However, to consider our viewpoint as arbitrary places our reality in the same questionable position. This could explain the hostility of an individual towards something outside his reality.

HOSTILITY AGAINST another's reality and support of one's own reality with religious fever is part of reinforcing the circle of one's own logic. Have you ever witnessed a discussion of beliefs? Each person has a circular logic which often necessitates denial of the others' arguments as rubbish, or a reexplaining within their own realities' terms of the same viewpoint.

We often look on the beliefs held by primitive tribes as archaic survival mechanisms. Levi-Strauss, the French anthropologist, challenges our smug chauvinisms (The Savage Mind). He claims that archaic thought patterns were "highly disciplined, intellectual structures, designed to give the world coherence, shape and meaning." This, of course, is what all world views (viewpoints) accomplish.

Our realities and the realities of primitive people produce results unobtainable to each other. Each reality is bought at the price of possibilities sacrificed to keep a limited structure intact. And there are times when a reality "no longer protects, but suffocates and destroys," as Pearce says.

ERICH NEWMANN contended that fire is experienced "with the aid of images" which derive from the interior of one's psychic world and are "projected upon the external world." The subjective reaction, he claims, always takes precedence historically. Fire walking seems to accomplish this. Fire walking is made possible by replacing historical precedents with another reality created out of faith.

Price, in his preface to Whatley Carrington's book (Matter Mind, and Meaning), discusses the physiological phenomenon of "ideomotor action." It is found that an idea tends to fulfill itself

through the muscular apparatus of the body. Price suggests that this is indicative of a wider operation in life, namely that all ideas have a tendency to realize themselves in the material world in any way they can, unless inhabited by other ideas.

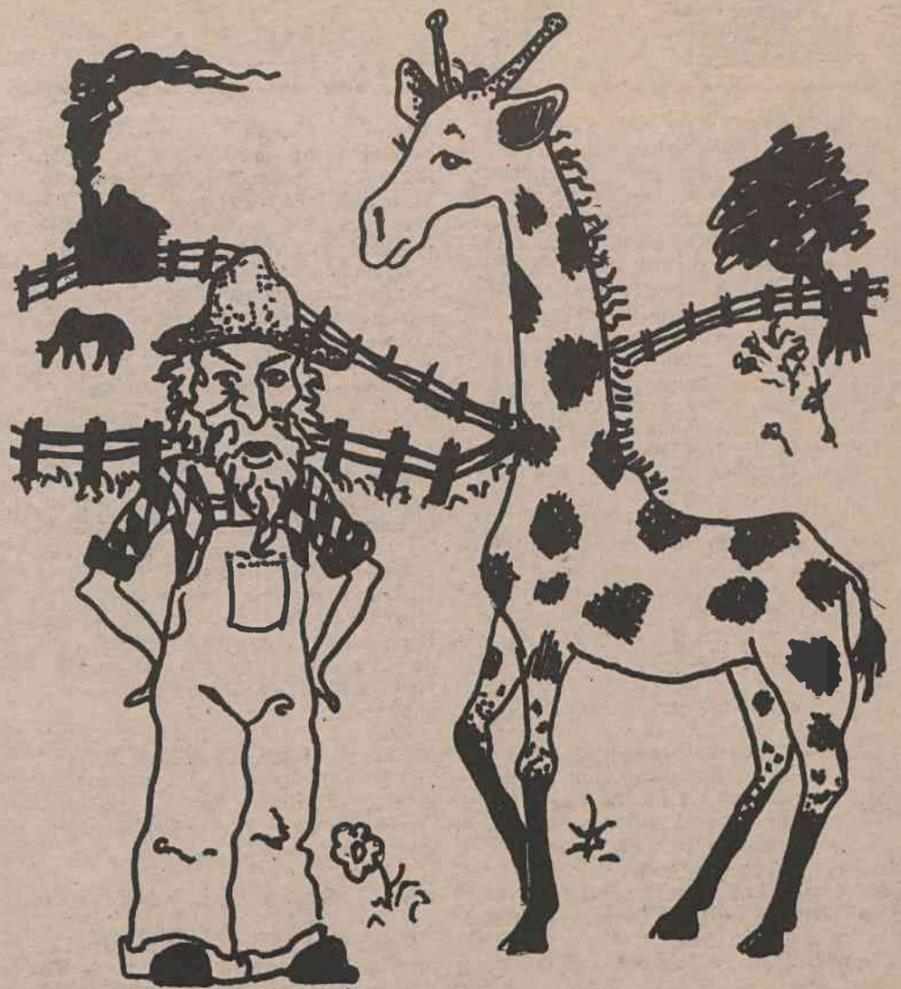
Carrington considered consciousness an intensified point on a spectrum of unconsciousness. He rejected the metaphors of a "layered consciousness" as formed in depth psychology. He favored a "field of consciousness," the mind belonging to this field rather than the field belonging to the mind. Even material objects are only "logical constructions" from different possibilities for sensory data.

BRUNER, IN HIS study of thinking discusses experiments in sensory deprivation. After a period of womb-like condition, the subject begins to hallucinate. Deprived of ordinary sensory data from which to select, his mind structures a reality, drawing on past data. He is not necessarily aware he is hallucinating. He feels himself very much a part of the event. His sensory system is sending appropriate sights, smells, tastes, and touches as needed by the mind for its reality.

Fire walking is found in "primitive" societies probably because these people have fewer investments in strict causal modes. We are so heavily committed to our constructs that any suggestion of their arbitrary nature fills us with anxiety. One does not abandon a circular logic easily.

To give up one's belief concerning some structure of reality, there must be an image that stands for the new goal or reality. The statistical world is a broad and powerful way. But we are the determinate that shapes the meaningful pattern that is our reality. William Blake claimed that "everything capable of being imagined is an image of truth."

SUSANNE LANGER thinks that speech as a function was part of the development of a system of logical choice through which new possibilities for reality could be consciously directed. Langer quotes Flugler in saying the cause



**There Ain't no such animal!**

of the need is the cause of the fulfillment of the need.

People do walk on fire. We need not succumb to the statistical world. Nietzsche said we hear only the question to which we are capable of finding an answer.

Our universe can be what we have need of it to be. I don't think we must live as

Northrop Frye said, as armed crustaceans, damned to a perpetual alarm and crisis, where life itself is a threat to life.

We are an open possibility.

Bryant Arrington is a first year Design and Production major.

They should have named me butch.  
I never got clear of trouble.  
And my face  
I always looked like I had a stocking  
pulled over it.  
And much of the time I did.  
My sister was a whore,  
My father was a gambler,  
and my mother tried to support us all.  
Which was a stupid thing to do.  
She should have left  
like I did.

Joe Brown  
Design and Production

At my grandfather's funeral,  
a man I have never known,  
though I had been named for him,  
feeling uncomfortable, shaking hands  
with relatives I'd never met before,  
and probably never meet again,  
wondering what I felt—  
I was not too grieved, though a  
sufficiently guilty conscience made me  
feel sincerely depressed. I unconsciously  
wandered, not really caring where I  
went, so bored  
was I at his — affair.  
I saw my grandfather lying in state,  
heard the normal comments, saw all the  
bouquets  
arranged in the chapel (there were two  
other bodies lying in state there at the  
Cabarrus  
County Funeral Home that day)  
the music registered in  
my mind, and I had to step outside  
before I broke out in hysterical laughter,  
for they were playing  
"Somewhere Over the Rainbow"

Ken Ballard  
Design and Production

## Poetry By Students

Now about that Christmas  
Gee,  
I'm sorry you were  
waked up so rudely  
But  
this really took a lot  
of time  
and planning  
on my part  
And  
I thought you'd think it funny  
And  
maybe even a bit cute  
But  
you don't  
But  
I still do.  
Excuse me  
I don't understand.

Craig Weindling  
Design and production

I used to love to be me,  
But now I am an experience,  
A function that produces, similar to  
A line of production at some factory.

I used to make friends, more numerous  
Than the ports of the seas.  
But now the never ending, nameless  
nobodies  
Dominate, since you have gone from me.

I am he as you are he, and  
We must part and I will be.

Paul Hennessy  
Music

With each small step the other side of the  
street  
grew a little bit closer.  
The old man's feet grappled with the  
ground  
while two canes steadied his approach.  
To me the horror of the marvelous  
machine's  
decaying parts.  
To him just another lonely day before  
death.

As the light changed a motorist blasted  
his  
horn with insensitive rage  
at the slow moving obstacle.  
The old man regained for a split moment  
the vitality and spontaneity of youth

And with two mighty blows smashed  
the headlights with a cane and slowly  
clawed along his path.

John Scalzi  
Drama