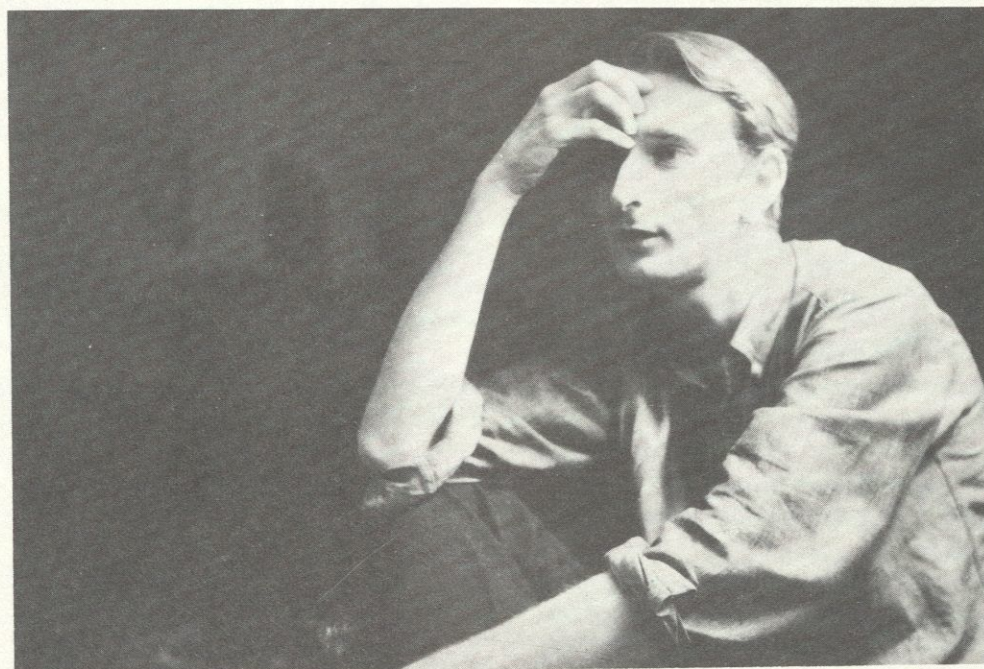
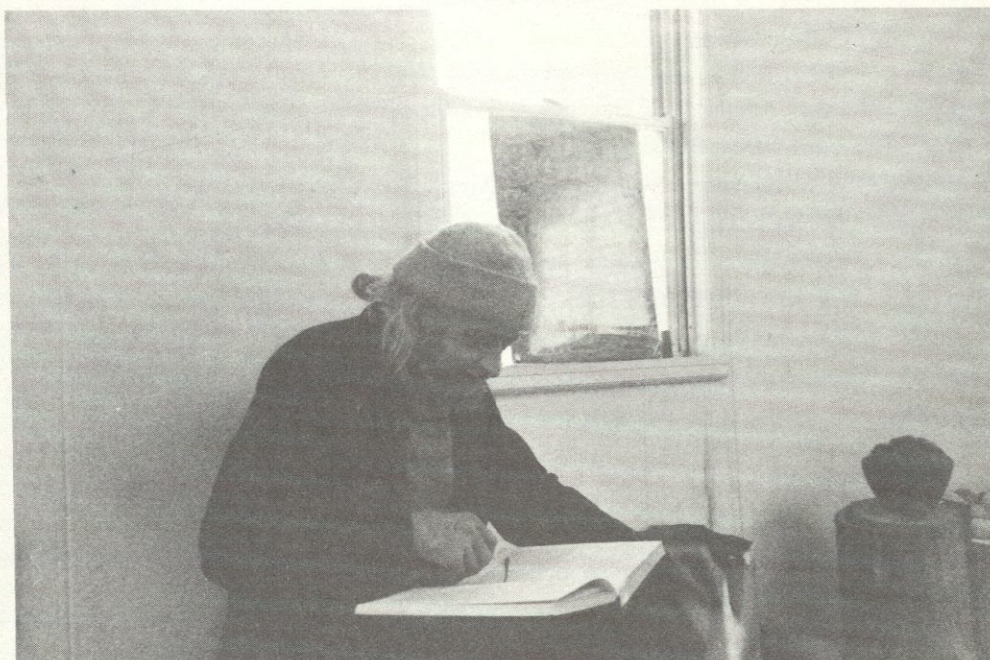


# FILM CULTURE

AMERICA'S INDEPENDENT MOTION PICTURE MAGAZINE No. 76 / June 1992 / \$5.00



**In this Issue: Harry Smith—Jack Smith  
Josef von Sternberg—Larry Jordan  
Ingmar Bergman—Luis Buñuel—and more.**



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FROM THE EDITORS:

With this issue Film Culture is resuming a regular, quarterly publication after a lengthy intermission. We thank all our subscribers for an admirable patience.

**Notes on some of the writing in this issue:**

\* Harry Smith's **(Think of the Self Speaking)** has been set from Smith's original manuscript given us some years ago. We have taken the liberty of correcting a few obvious misspellings, but we have left most of the manuscript intact.

\*\* Jack Smith's **The Astrology of a Movie Scorpio** was written in 1964 as a guest column for *The Village Voice* upon request by Jonas Mekas. The column was never printed, on objections from the Editorial Staff.

\*\*\* Fred Camper's essay on Larry Jordan's film *Sophie's Place* first appeared in *The Chicago Reader*. We thank The Reader for the permission to reprint it here.

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**THE COVER:** (top) Harry Smith at Naropa Institute, 1991. Photo: Rani Singh; (bottom) Jack Smith c. 1964. From the archives of Film Culture. Photo: anonymous.



# HARRY SMITH INTERVIEWED

by Mary Hill

January 5th and January 15th, 1972, New York City

The following interview was conceived as a veiled explanation in alchemical terms of my Film No. 12. But due to the lack of initiation on the part of the interviewer, Miss Hill, and the fact that I was being intensively treated by Dr. G. for a nervous condition, various garblings of symbols have occurred that may be misconstrued by the reader. This is particularly true about references to murder and to copulation with various beings such as the devil, dogs, horses, etc.

More explicit descriptions of these events can be found in Foxcroft's edition of *The Alchemical Marriage of Frater Christian Rosenkreutz* where superb descriptions of the various animals and the murder of the King and Queen are given. The elegant engravings in alchemical works illustrated by Theodore DeBry should also be examined, particularly *Scrutinem Chemicum* and *The Hermetic Museum*.

As far as the interview itself is concerned I would particularly direct the interested reader to the order in which various references to water and other liquids are given and to point out that the position of the moon on the night of the dialogue made the connection between 2=9 and 1=10 plus their reverses particularly close.

Harry Smith

**Interviewer:** I know that P. Adams Sitney got you to cover your earlier life already in his interview with you,\* but since it was all lies anyway I wonder if you would discuss your parents and childhood again briefly.

**Smith:** Well, at the time when I first remember my parents I suppose I was about 2 years old. I had just begun to walk, although I remember seeing for the first time when I was still in the hospital right after I was born, and I saw the ceiling of the hospital and realized that there was a component of reality.

**Interviewer:** This was right after birth?

**Smith:** Sure, 2 or 3 days after, because they used to keep ladies in hospital for a longer period then. Now, my parents were very peculiar. They never really...I don't know why they married each other except that I sup-

pose it was the fashionable thing to do. It was the in-thing to do to marry somebody. My parents were once described by the people who lived across the street as "fancy ladies and college toughs." I've always remembered that because both my mother and my father told me that, that the people who were living across the street referred to them as fancy ladies and college toughs. But that's about one of the earliest memories I have. Then my first footsteps were taken...

When the treaty was made with Alaska, I mean, when the United States bought Alaska, there was a special school set up by the Tsarina retained under Russian, you know, control up until the end of Russia or at least until it turned into a Communist state. It was a very bad thing my mother was...

**Interviewer:** Alexandra, you mean?

**Smith:** No, Alexandra was my grandmother. My mother was Anastasia, although it was only a claim of her later years.

Well, she was on a Russian gunboat, the Potemkin or something, and they were having a picnic on the boat when the news got through that even the Tsar's bodyguard had, like, revolted at that point, and she just barely got off the boat and worked her way back to Alaska. She didn't work her way, what I mean to say by work is that she had the money to get there but it was like a touchy case. So that my grandmother and my mother's sister had run this school that was, like, supported by the Tsarina and aah...What was the question again, early memories? So that my mother's sister got killed in the wreck of an ambulance. She was a nurse because all of my family were like teachers and that sort of thing. The most valued possession that my mother had was a little teapot which her sister had given her. It was the only thing she had left from her sister. It had chrysanthemums and roses worked on the outside in enamel. But I got up out of my

\* *Film Culture* #37



crib and walked a few feet and went and smashed that thing, and then they came back, glued it all back together and the second time I walked I got up and broke it again and they didn't bother to glue it back that time but for a long time my mother kept the lid of the teapot.

But she'd always been kind to me. When I was in my crib my mother had gotten out of the *National Geographic* pictures of all the main Tibetan gods and had mounted them across the arch that went over this basket that I slept in.

But then she gradually taught me to read the newspaper; this was in about 1927 or '28 I would say, no, '26 or '27; and pick out all the words like "to," you know, "t," "o." I'd go through the newspaper and find all the words "t" "o," and then she taught me to read the word "and" so naturally by the time I got into kindergarten I was already reading newspapers every day. They were excellent parents that I had but they were a peculiar type. I suppose they were fond of each other, in a way. I mean, they both cried over each other, and that sort of thing, but they had two houses built, exactly the same, at opposite ends of the block, and my father lived in one and my mother lived in the other one. I had a tree house in a maple tree that was halfway down the block, see, because the garden was a block long. Actually it was like four blocks long but the other part of it was mainly planted up in things like dahlias and corn and various types of poppies, all types of plants.

**Interviewer:** What do you consider your truest vocation, painting or anthropology or what?

**Smith:** Well, naturally, of the two I consider my truest vocation to be anthropology; I mean, my painting is a mere adjunct to that. This is the thing I am most interested in, linguistics and archeology, and so forth. But they are mere amusements, my true vocation is preparation for death; for that day I'll lie on my bed and see my life go before my eyes. I've seen that twice: once when I almost drowned and once when I was in automobile accident. I

couldn't speak or anything and this priest was like giving these last rites over me. But I'm sure the Angel of Death appears that's covered with eyes and all that sort of thing.

You see, we're living in the Middle Ages now, we're not living in an intelligent period despite the fact that they have all these cameras and tape recorders, we're living at the kind of low period as far as social existence is concerned.

**Interviewer:** Tell me about when you lived under a bridge.

**Smith:** Tell you about when I lived under a bridge? Well, I don't remember if it was a contract bridge or auto bridge. I've never been interested in card games because they are like the devil's picture book and I don't believe in fooling with the devil's picture book. I'll fool with the devil. I like him, I fuck him every night, in essence, although I've become tired of him lately because my sex life consists entirely of masturbation. But there always has to be somebody there, so I imagine the devil is in bed with me and, you know, being very nice and doing everything I tell him to do, and so forth.

**Interviewer:** Say a few words about God's relation to your work.

**Smith:** I don't believe in God in a generalized sense. What was the question? God owes me a lot of money. I mean, as I figure, He owes me about \$23,000, well, no, closer to \$90,000, you know, in my fantasies. But God is not an interesting person. God is like an old man with a grey beard that's senile. He's seen the world, from the Garden of Eden to the Crusades to Viet Nam. So God is not very interesting. I'm tired of Him. I like the devil better because he has nicer muscles. The devil has a shaved head and all those kinds of things and God would never shave his head. On the other hand...

**Interviewer:** The devil's no spring chicken.

**Smith:** Yeah, but he's managed to hold out. At least I'd rather be in bed with the devil than with God. He's more handsome. But it is all due to God's permission, you see. The devil could not exist without God's permis-



sion, and only exists because of God's permission. Naturally, God allows Lucifer to be beautiful and handsome and brutal and sadistic and all the things that I like. Hmm, I'm really going too far in this interview.

**Interviewer:** You once told me that you have not engaged in sex for over 20 years because of the ever present danger of disease. Yet we once visited you and found you in bed with Z., and although you claimed he was about to perform some curative ritual, you also made reference to his open fly.

**Smith:** Well, I'm a very charming person. Mary. There's just scarcely anybody, at least I haven't run into anybody in the world, that if I really wanted, whether they were animal, vegetable or mineral, that if I really wanted I couldn't get them because I am very persuasive. I had tossed Z. into bed simply because of the fact that I wanted to sleep with someone. We never copulated or fornicated or whatever you want to call it. I just wanted somebody that was warm. It was a cold night and I wanted somebody that I could just put my arms around and lie there. Of course Z. would have done anything; he still will, but I am not interested in sex as such.

It was cold and Z. had promised to murder somebody and I like to murder people. It's a lot of fun, you know, but you have to catch them when they're off guard. And I sort of got Z. interested in that, but at the last moment I decided he was a big blabbermouth so I shut that off. You came here when Z. was in bed with me? How embarrassing. It's the only time that I've been with anybody for years. I have never placed my penis inside any living creature. Except a dog. Other than that it's been like knotholes or trees, and that sort of thing; my hand is the most useful thing, but the belladonna I take slows down the smooth muscle reactions so that I don't get a satisfactory ejaculation anyway. Isn't there something about my films or my scientific research or anything? It's entirely this sort of stuff?

Why don't you shut that thing off while we smoke some hash?

**Interviewer:** It's almost to the end of the tape.

**Smith:** Okay, let's recite limericks till the end.

There once was a man from Calcutta  
Who tried to write Cunt on a shutter  
When he got to C U a pious Hindu  
Knocked his head over bum in the gutter.

There once was a man from Bombay  
Aah, how does that go?

Who invented a cunt out of clay  
But the heat of his prick reduced it to brick  
and he chafed all his foreskin away.

**Interviewer:** Do you think God is testing you?

**Smith:** I don't believe so. I don't believe he has time for testing. Something is testing me but I'm not sure it's God. I'm afraid it's like Mary Hill.

**Interviewer:** Did you study painting?

**Smith:** Naturally I studied painting. Do you suppose I got to be the world's greatest psychopathic painter without studying painting?

**Interviewer:** Where?

**Smith:** Well, my parents set up a special art school that a Mrs. Williams was in control of and, you see, my family was heavily in control of the salmon industry during the World War because they needed to get their hands on anything they could to eat. When the 1929 crash came, well, two of my uncles committed suicide immediately, to get the insurance for their wives so they could keep their houses. Another one got amnesia and wandered off and was not heard from in ten years. So that, yes, my parents set up like a free art school in part of the cannery that we'd had there. It had formerly been the world's largest salmon cannery. That was my playground, the longest dock in the world. It was like a mile and a half long.

**Interviewer:** I know you are a collector of several types of artifacts—the two that come to mind are the Seminole patchwork and the enormous egg collection. What is their significance and why do you collect them?

**Smith:** Well, because they're indexes to a great variety of thoughts. The things I collect are the Seminole patchwork, which is being



removed to the Smithsonian to be photographed and studied very carefully, and then the collections of eggs. There were three big collections, mine, and some Polish Count had a big collection of eggs, I forget his name. Those collections were wiped out during the Second World War so that the only one that survived was mine. But they're like encyclopedias of design, you see. You can look in the *Oxford English Dictionary* if you want to study words, but being that the designs on the eggs are so ancient, they're like 20 or 30 thousand years old, it's like having something that's superior to a book. These things, like the Seminole collection and the egg collection have been built up fundamentally to have an index of design types that I might want to use in my painting because the real reason that I make movies or that I make paintings or that I jack off or do anything else...It just occurred to me that Jack Kerouac's favorite sex act also was, like, masturbation. When I said "jack off" I thought about him. Because we'd often, we'd sit up all night discussing masturbation. Although I have never masturbated with him, I have never...He wanted to, and I wanted to but we thought that it would be defacing a religion and so we never did it together. What was the question again? She has so many weird questions.

**Interviewer:** Are you going to make a donation to the Swedish Museum?

**Smith:** Yes, the eggs and everything I have goes to the Goteborg Ethnographic Museum...and so those things are going to end up there. I'm not particularly fond of Americans, I'd like to machine-gun them down. Like you and Andy, I wouldn't mind killing you. And it's true that I have killed a few people. But it's never been troublesome, it comes up maybe every 3 or 4 months that I'll think of somebody that I've killed and wonder what their life would have been if they'd gone on. But, aah...it's simply fun killing people so I like to do it.

**Interviewer:** When do you think the end of your life will be?

**Smith:** Well, it will be on about October 18th

of this year, or some other year, given 5 days one way or the other, or I may live up until the first part of November but I don't think so. You understand that I'm like 77 years old and all that sort of thing but I just don't have much longer to go, Mary. The fact that I live on nothing but beer and pills doesn't improve my health any and you can quote me on that. And if anybody wants to have information on how long it takes to get beer adjusted to dexedrine, I would say about 3 months. I discussed that with Janis Joplin a number of times. But eventually the body metabolism pulls itself together and you are able to take several different drugs at a time.

**Interviewer:** I've never had any trouble mixing beer and dexedrine.

**Smith:** Yes, but you don't take enough.

**Interviewer:** In what institutions have you studied anthropology?

**Smith:** Not in an institution, in a university. The University of Washington in Seattle and the University of California in Berkeley.

**Interviewer:** Where have you done field work?

**Smith:** In the Northwest coast, in Puget Sound on Vancouver Island; among the Indians in Florida and the Oklahoma. I tried to hit everything as far as the Indians were concerned but I never got to the Southwest.

**Interviewer:** How is anthropology related to your films?

**Smith:** That would be a very difficult question to answer. I've tried to make films that were of a universal nature, that could be shown to the Zulus or the Eskimos or anyone like that, and they would still have a generalized meaning for those people that would be irreducible to anything less than what those things are. Because everybody knows what it means when an egg breaks or when tears run out of the eyes or when someone dies. They may view it in a different fashion; I mean, it's not the same, death among the Eskimos and the Zulus but, nonetheless, it is a death and there are certain minor qualities that appear in both of them.

**Interviewer:** Can you say anything more on that subject?



**Smith:** Well, name the subject and I'll say something more on it.

**Interviewer:** The relation of anthropology to your films and also this idea of making your films have a universal nature.

**Smith:** Well, my films, except for the one I'm working on now, *Mahagonny*, which is this opera by Kurt Weil and Bertolt Brecht and aah...I hope you get that in there, that my masturbation fantasies are connected with brutality and cruelty but, nonetheless, I like Kurt Weil's music and I like Bertolt Brecht's writing. It's part of my schizophrenia. So that aah...what was the question again, my dear? How are my films connected with anthropology? Well, in the same way your interview is connected with *Film Culture*. It's like a spider looking at its own reflection on the glass. Okay, next question.

**Interviewer:** How is music related to your films?

**Smith:** Well, I am very pleased tonight to hear the Beach Boys because it's the first time, as I mentioned earlier, that I have heard them for many years, and they're so good. This girl, J.G., I gave her, as a present to a friend of mine who I'd had, like, aah homosexual drives toward—Naturally I have never performed a homosexual act for, like...

**Interviewer:**—Money?

**Smith:**...30 or 40 years, I tried those things that I mentioned in the earlier portion of the interview, like horses and things. Almost anything that seemed to have an asshole or a vagina I'd try.

Anthropology, of course, is connected with well, anthropology is a recent science. It was devised by Franz Boas. He had gone to Greenland to study why sea water was green. But while he was there he became fascinated by the way that the Eskimos were always laughing in spite of the fact that they were dying at the same time. Naturally, earlier people had made classifications of artifacts from places like New Guinea, and so on.

**Interviewer:** The question I asked when you finally began to give more of an answer to the first question, was how music was related to

your films. I've seen one of your movies that has a Beatles soundtrack.

**Smith:** Those films were all made as silent films. They were basically derived from the heartbeat and the respiration which are, roughly, the heart beats 72 times a second, I mean, minute, and you expire about 13 times a minute. You see, those are important Cabalistic numbers—13 is half of 26—so I had taken those two basic rhythms, the rhythm of the heart which is about 72 and the rhythm of the breathing which is about 13, and I had then interlocked them in certain ways. Those were in those handpainted films. The last one took me five years to make. I worked on it every day for 5 years. I, like, completely wrecked the apartment because there was so much spray paint over the place. I also had these snakes, these California rosy boas that I was collecting at the time. This is all going on in Berkeley, you see. I have plenty of money, you understand. I am a millionaire and there is no trouble getting money but I have never touched that money because I wanted to live as much a normal life as I could. Mary Michael, could you just play a little of this back; I want to see how it sounds.

Now, to get back to John Dewey, naturally he was no fool, he was one of the greatest intellects that ever lived, but he didn't quite understand that people live as individuals and wars are not fought, people don't kill each other unless they're mad at each other, and so that...Who were those people, a man and his wife that wrote very good books? Charles and Mary Beard. But they were like tossed out of the situation entirely because they announced before it was publicly announced that President Roosevelt had known that Pearl Harbor was going to occur. Their careers were ruined. They were more or less the same general type as Dewey and I suppose that Herbert Hoover was also of that type. There was a certain type of sociology that developed at one time where it was thought that America would be able to produce enough typewriters or any fool thing to sell to the rest of the world and that this would



support America. Something went wrong there and it didn't work. If that system of people I mentioned, who were the Beards and Franz Boas and so forth, had worked, everything would have been hunky-dory. But it didn't work. Because people don't dislike each other...I don't think there can possibly be...well, there's enough fools left in the country to have a major war but I don't think it's going to happen for a long time.

**Andy:** What does this have to do with exporting and importing?

**Smith:** Well, because that was Herbert Hoover's major theory and it was the thing that destroyed the Republican Party, the notion that things could be built and could be built quickly enough and sold quickly enough and break down quickly enough—see, there are very few things that are made to last. A telephone is one. There is a natural fluctuation because people, of course, are guilty for the way they have been acting lately.

**Patrick:** Well, everybody has guilt built into them.

**Smith:** Well, they spit on me so I'm of a higher class.

**Patrick:** You remind me of somebody I know in Boston—Prescott Townsend. Do you know him?

**Smith:** Yes. We're related through the Prescott hyphen Smiths. Let's see, I used to have a medal that George Washington gave to my great great grandfather, but I lost it along with a lot of other things.

My great grandfather re-founded the Templars who were an important Masonic order. The Smiths come from New York via Galena, Illinois, but I'm not exactly sure what their background is. I used to have my great grandfather's diaries which he wrote in 1802 and 3 and so forth. But I lost them like everything else. I stupidly threw my possessions away. The first diary began something like "I have decided to write down what is going to occur in my life." Then the Civil War occurred in about the fourth diary. Then Albert Pike and my great grandfather had arguments. Albert Pike founded the Scottish

Rite of the Masons and my great grandfather founded the Templars after the Civil War because they were still mad at each other. I mean, everybody was split up, see, because it was bad war. I mean, the average age of the soldier in the Civil War was around 14. It was like when the teenagers flipped, see, and they were just little kids that went out and fought each other and killed each other and all that sort of thing.

**Interviewer:** Are you a Cabala expert, Harry?

**Smith:** Hmmm. Well, the word "cabala," I suppose, means hidden or something like that, so I'm, of course, not. I would try as much as I could to give any kind of information to anyone. I know someone now that's making a magical sword. It's a beautiful one, too, except they broke the goddamn thing and they should have started all over again. But it's nice. I mean it's steel with Hebrew spells written in it in silver that has been inlaid into it. But they made a mistake, they broke the goddamn thing and they tried to put it together with gold and everything else but I'm afraid that they should have just junked the whole thing at that point. I am interested in the Cabala, of course. That's why I came to New York, to study those things. I wanted to hear Thelonius Monk play because I'd never heard him play, and I wanted to hear about the Cabala. And so I came to New York.

**Interviewer:** Did you learn about the Cabala?

**Smith:** Certain things, yeah. Certain things. But I'm tired of that because there's no real reason to do anything but trust in God. I mean, at this point I trust in God to direct my footsteps.

**Mike:** Harry, do you know a lot about the Eskimos? Or some?

**Smith:** Some.

**Mike:** Because one thing has always interested me. It seems like jealousy is a common thing, affliction, with a lot of people, but the Eskimos share their wives with guests and they don't seem to feel this natural jealousy type thing and that has always intrigued me.

**Smith:** Yeah, well, that's just like some type of...

**Andy:** Legalized prostitution.



**Smith:** This part of the interview is coming out much worse than the other one where I was able to say interesting things.

**Interviewer:** What about Mike's question about the Eskimos sleeping around?

**Smith:** Well, you understand the Eskimos are like cut off. They got to North America preceding the final glaciation of the Paleolithic Age. It isn't the Paleolithic Age, it's something else, but we'll fill that in later. Leave the bathroom door open while you're in there so the mice can get out.

**Interviewer:** Do you have anything more to say about the Eskimo problem?

**Smith:** The Eskimo problem? Well, I've been invited to go on this expedition to Baffinland in February to study the Eskimos but I won't go because I just can't take enough dexedrine with me.

**Andy:** Does that have something to do with string figures?

**Smith:** Yeah. But the major problem where the expedition is going is that you only get like one six-pack of beer a week. I almost dropped dead when they told me this. Is that more beer spilling? As far as wife-sharing goes, it's a cultural thing. I mean, there's a lot of wife-sharing going on around here.

**Interviewer:** I was going to ask you why your paintings are primitive.

**Smith:** They're not primitive, they're the most valuable paintings in this country at this time.

**Interviewer:** Well, they are primitive in the sense that they contain primitive symbology.

**Smith:** That's because that is the symbology; there is no symbology other than primitive symbology.

**Interviewer:** Well, if that's true then your paintings are primitive.

**Smith:** Well, they're not as sophisticated as Picasso or Braque or Mies van der Rohe or somebody, but they're, I've tried to make those things like the introduction of one type of life into another, in the hope that they will all arrange themselves in some happy pattern, which they will never do. But fuck it, you know.

**Interviewer:** Do you care to discuss *Mahagonny* at all?

**Smith:** No, not this time.

*Mahagonny* is the best thing I know of. I mean, of the people, places or things; of the animals, vegetables or minerals *Mahagonny* is it because it shows what causes things and the result of those things. So, of course, I'm very interested in it. It is a beautiful work by very beautiful people. Okay, next question? I mean, stop fumbling with the question cards.

**Interviewer:** Do you think you will ever finish *Mahagonny*?

**Smith:** Yes. I think I will finish it in about September of 1972. Things are going at about that pace. I need about \$90,000 more, but, I've already raised like \$15,000, I mean, just to put those twenty cans of films there and just to put that projector there, has cost like \$10,000 or \$12,000, or something. So I'll be able to finish *Mahagonny*, sure. It's going to be so beautiful that no one can brush it aside. It's going to be like a miracle of motion pictures. It'll get people interested in motion pictures again and I'll have enough money to buy a studio and really make some spectacular things with, you know, enormous sets and beautiful actresses and handsome actors. Gymnasts and things.

**Interviewer:** Then there's no point in dying in October.

**Smith:**...Yeah, it's all I have left. I'll finish *Mahagonny* in September but I want to see it on the screen. I want to see what it looks like because that is what I'm leaving behind me to amuse people for hundreds of years. I want people to be amused by it so I have to make sure it's perfect. Next question.

**Interviewer:** Do you love me?

**Smith:** Not in the sense that I love Rosie. I'm very...well, there have been times we've been very involved with each other. But I don't think that was love. That was something else which the Indo-European language probably lacks a word for. So, of course, I'm attached to you. It was hard those first few weeks after I got you the job with Mr. Masur and you didn't phone any more. But I don't believe it was love. Any more questions?

**Interviewer:** No.

**Smith:** Okay, let's pack up and get out of here.



**(THINK OF THE SELF SPEAKING )**  
by Harry Smith

Where to start?  
How can it matter—  
I have evidence  
On every side of me  
That I am  
The very smartest being  
In all this Great Round World.  
And can do no wrong at all.  
A notion came to me  
today at tea time  
for, as I gazed  
into the liquid  
shimmering like a great  
cod-fish eye / in a thimble  
It swirled  
and so impacted me  
with thoughts of "Proust,"  
"Nonsense,"  
"I accept and/or reject thee"  
(and/or) "truth" (and/or)  
"Death" (and/or) "Beethoven"  
that (only that) nagging  
Freudian thing  
referred to by Mathers  
as the macroprosopus  
and the microprosopus,  
(in effect)  
as tweaking each others  
noses.  
The Big NOse, being in  
contact with mine.  
As I am, of coarse,  
infinity.  
(It already having been  
established  
that if infinity exists,  
God exists)  
and thus God & I are one,  
this because my  
*knowledge* of God  
(and therefore *God*,  
  
as far as any possibility  
of my understanding

the nature of God-Hood)  
and therefore being God  
is paradoxically  
totally parallel  
to the existence of God  
and therefore incomersorated.

This sort of relaxation  
of the Will  
So typical of our society's  
search for the unquents  
of the East  
in the form of Swamis,  
Books of the Dead,  
Psychedelic Fungi known  
only from the Heart  
of some Dark Continent  
or other  
(comp. Blake, "Heart shaped  
Africa"—but isn't this south,  
not east?)  
and, lacking presence of  
a Car Door  
To crush my (non-preceived, thus  
non-existant) finger in  
(such finger being possible  
only because it is non-existant)  
and this possible/impossible  
and/or accident  
being the only sure-cure  
for over-indulgence in  
Arthur Avalon,  
T.G. von Streholou,  
Noam Chomsky,  
Claude Levi-Strauss,  
and their ilk;  
the Animal in me surfaced  
the already self-contained,  
non existant,  
final future (because now)  
Two-in-one-in-two  
battle  
of that self that is  
both-or-only Bahemath and/or Leviathan

so entertaining

To the blessed, as they  
(like myself at tea  
in the hypothetical—  
earlier—today)  
in fact *were* obviously me,  
and thus God, earlier today,  
but even more obviously *us*  
in that future "now"  
"When time shall be no more,"  
that I rested my eyes where  
"The Sacred State of the Ako

should be if I had a copy  
applied the Jimmy-Cliff-

having-lights-turned-on-  
by-Preacher-  
at-the-word-"shine"  
(comp. L. Armstrong)  
principal, once again,  
to that obviously inferior  
beadwork  
of the Queen Mother of Ashanti  
(in relation to that of  
Queen Victoria)  
and smiled proudly  
at a hastily achieved thought-form  
of Lord Baden-Powell  
at Bantama writing  
"And a Jolly Good Blaze  
it was too,"  
Thanked my lucky stars  
that the  
never-was, never is, never-will-be  
thread of the Ain Soph  
didn't snap,  
boldly faced the "White Man's  
burden" threat,  
(but vowed I would at least  
*try* the Grandpa-following-  
Northerners-North bit  
a few more times  
before I even attempted  
the Sitting-Bull, Mother-  
Hubbard, Illinois-Ohio axis  
again)

Experienced a decline  
in the Alpha Rhythm  
from that which transformed  
the veritable image of Baden-Powell  
into the etc, my thinking of Sarat Chandra  
Das  
(himself thinking, within  
this thought,  
at a high Alpha rate,  
of the pastel  
pink and blue of Mrs. Waddel's  
wash-line, in Darjeeling)  
as he writes of Queen Victoria  
crossing a vertical axis  
and becoming Lha-Mo,  
and thus, safe back in the Orient,  
transform "I have evidence  
on every side of me that  
I am" by crossing this  
self-same axis,  
now in the form of a mirror,  
now in the form of a mirror,  
and perceiving myself,

in my "Artless Japanese Fashion,"  
as the most beautiful maid  
in all this Great Round World,  
Gilbert and Sullivan (1 1)

equivalent to Queen Victoria  
and Lha Mo (2 2)  
and thus having returned  
completely  
from that most distant  
matrix of Complete reversal,  
this time with three,  
instead of two units;  
me generating you,  
you generating God,  
God generating me,  
and thereby, alas,  
with the only real possibility  
being to compare the self  
with the self,  
whither or not that self  
be the self of existence,  
or the self of nothing,  
the first equals the last



which is, of course, impossible.  
 (until we reach that point  
 when time shall be no more),  
 thus there is absolutely no  
 possibility whatsoever  
 of your having read a poem,  
 only a memory which, preforce,  
 no matter how many times  
 it may be added to by re-reading  
 it at any point whatsoever,  
 in any order whatsoever,  
 at any speed whatsoever,  
 cannot possibly exist,  
 I or, as the "Now" is so small  
 as to not exist at all  
 except as a hypothetical,  
 dimensionless nothing of memory.  
 Oh you who have read this,  
 or think you have read this,

Try to prove that you have  
 read it.  
 For you have not

and never can  
 no matter how you twist & turn,  
 for this is an impossibly  
 small point  
 and you do not exist at all,  
 and the feeling you think exists  
 does not exist at all;  
 and any emotion you feel  
 as joy/sadness, love/hate,  
 contentment etc,  
 can only be existant  
 as the most concentrated  
 paranoia.  
 So, therefore, if you think  
 you have read this,  
 or even that you exist,  
 you are hopelessly insane;  
 this insanity, itself being  
 impossible,  
 so that if you think these  
 words exist,  
 or that you exist in any way  
 whatsoever,  
 prepare for the most excruciating,

hideous tortures possible,  
 for no death, whatsoever,  
 can exist where there is nothing,  
 and the Greatest possible joy  
 cannot possibly compensate  
 for the pain you will therefore experience;  
 as the feeling that you exist  
 can only be an error,  
 and the natural outcome  
 or error is remorse,  
 Therefore at least *try*  
 to erase this hideously grim future.  
 Gulp down any pill or capsule  
 you see or feel,  
 no matter how innocent it  
 may look,  
 on the remote chance  
 it may be poisonous or explosive.  
 Start *NOW* by savagely gouging  
 out your own eyes.  
 Don't be afraid,  
 At least try;  
 you will have less chance  
 of having any possible way  
 of avoiding fires, stairwells,  
 open windows on the 30th floor,  
 razor-sharp teeth, etc. of various  
 descriptions.  
 At any event, grab sharp

knives whenever you can  
 and mutilate yourself  
 in the most sensitive areas  
 of the body possible.  
 There is at least a remote chance  
 that it may do some small  
 bit of good on some day  
 so far remote that the prospect  
 of incredibly intense pain  
 for periods of time so long  
 as to be inconceivable,  
 should steel you to face  
 the worst at once,  
 Therefore I again exhort you  
 to gouge out your eyes  
 once and for all.  
 For you do not exist,  
 I do not exist,

pain does not exist.  
 Therefore, start this way  
 to blot out the page  
 and enter into pain forever,  
 death forever,  
 and horror forever and ever and ever,  
 for as there is a vestige  
 of sensation left,  
 no matter how ever slight,  
 (You can feel it now)  
 there is no hope at all.

10-4-76

I call upon my good right hand to be  
 archaic once again.  
 Call down once more the glowering rha-  
 sodies of Pythagorean  
 Antinomy which long since drained my  
 rusted fish of ecstasies  
 antique.  
 I weep. Ink spills to right and left. More  
 snowflakes settle.  
 Let reddeucel Aspens flatten their feeling  
 whiteness repeating  
 "move" over and over again. Lillies swear  
 by whatever  
 poppyran God transcends their roots that  
 vegetative  
 cascades are more than thongs. This, that,  
 the other:  
 these words containing interdental spirants  
 survive pragmatic  
 rondilays then incased in longsacks crash  
 downward from  
 seven wounds last Friday.  
 Next day fall to thy knees and earnestly cry  
 out "paranoia,"  
 oh paranoia—why hast thou forgiven me.  
 We once loved  
 nest and placed jewells in each others  
 crowns. I clasped

that mirrored nakedness next athwart my  
 spiral's where little  
 more than proctors' syllogisms careen to  
 becoming migraine  
 built precision round rubies hand the  
 grasping of my

jewelled barosse. Now take breath and  
 hold it, perhaps  
 asphixiation will pay in kind the noiseless  
 wrench of  
 surface sounds. Dead Birds sing. I swear  
 to it. Perhaps  
 the wildness of their pinions measures the  
 length of your  
 elegant locks. Give me a penny. I'm  
 leaving. Drag that  
 ass-hole up the hall away from 700 times  
 700 bejewelled  
 hookers voluptuous but calcined hood-  
 lums. Flay neatly to  
 rumblings of your Hermetic eyes and  
 grinning curses to throw  
 its wreckage in some lime pit in regions left  
 unnoticed by  
 Herodotus and Strabo. Now third. Take  
 the contracted  
 yellow skimmings off, walk solemnly to East  
 of town on years  
 first day and hope to redden up your milky  
 rose with one  
 who has crosses from the sybaline ex-  
 change. Very well, the  
 sable pendulum swaying in the wind of  
 Edens breath swept  
 rives, and sorely missing lead and silver nets  
 designed for  
 this precise emergency, slink under foamy  
 scales of dragon-  
 waves, so many fathoms rent from yester-  
 days slow measured  
 shells.

Very well, I bow to popular demand and let  
 this accident of  
 purity cast to the quarters dust that was my  
 finger rings.  
 Take care! for dawn brings up a bird more  
 splendid than the  
 last in all its formal sympathy to iridescent  
 beetle wings.  
 Beware—this one will devour you!  
 Beware that one will devour you!  
 Beware those ones will devour you.

10-7-77



"And the Sins of the  
Children shall be visited  
upon the Parents"

# HARRY SMITH

Born 1923 in Portland  
Oregon to parents whose  
folly regarding their gender  
led to cyclical social and  
religious mania ~~that~~ forcing  
Smith to accept his own  
duality with generous enthusiasm,  
and espouse the dualistic  
dictum of "make a person  
think they think and they  
love you; make them think,  
and they hate you."

Naturally the ~~Abhor~~ grandure  
of his never-ending unhappiness,  
combined with his well known  
greed, have provided many  
a private or corporate Marceus.

to finance his excursions  
into that blunted hunger  
on the boundry of voice  
and vision

(list?)

He has made about  
1500 recordings for restricted-  
scientific use, in addition to  
about 120 cuts commercially  
released.

(list?)

and has produced 23 films,  
about half of these being  
easily available

His reason for coming to  
Boulder is to find out why  
he's such a damn fool, and  
has heard that Naropa is  
the best place to find out  
such things.

(The following supposia  
are announced.)

- I - "The rationality of namelessness"
- II - "Is self reference possible?"
- III - "Communication, quotation, and  
creation."
- IV - "The grammar of awareness."

(films will be shown and  
recordings played with the  
above)

## HARRY SMITH by Rani Singh

### One

Jonas Mekas has asked me to write about  
the time period that Harry Smith spent in  
Boulder. This time dates from July 1988 to  
February 1991. Harry gave three series of  
formal lectures, all at the Summer Writing  
Program at Naropa Institute, Jack Kerouac  
School of Disembodied Poetics entitled *Sur-  
realism* in 1988, *Alchemy* in 1989, and *Cosmog-  
raphies* in 1990. While he lived in Boulder  
Harry spent his time in serious study, making  
audio tapes, reading books on many different  
subjects, entertaining visitors in his flat, go-  
ing to various parties, and correlating every-  
thing from cat purring to the familial pat-  
terns of the squirrels that lived outside his  
door. I was Harry's assistant, secretary, chauff-  
eur, valet, laundress, personal trainer, and  
dietician in various degrees during this time.

The first time I saw Harry was at the 4th of  
July 1988 picnic at Naropa Institute in Boul-  
der, Colorado. He had arrived with Allen  
Ginsberg from New York and was making  
audio tapes of the 4th of July picnic. He had  
headphones on his head, a glove on his hand  
holding a microphone, and was silent as he  
sat at a picnic table under the tent as people  
ate tofu burgers around him. I had seen his  
movies many, many times and had been told  
the wildest stories about him. First the leg-  
ends, only to be followed by the man. And the  
man was Harry. Here he was as I got my  
burger and any other loud food that I could  
find.

Harry made continuous tapes that 4th of  
July and the two subsequent ones. In 1988 he  
positioned himself under the large tent for  
hours, silent. I sat down as loudly as I could as  
I slammed my Coke onto the table. He  
jumped, the noise amplified in the head-  
phones, as I smiled at him and he acknowl-  
edged me. I was very nervous but continued  
to nash noisily. Crunching and munching as  
loud as I could, I watched the intent look

through Harry's coke bottle glasses and was  
immediately mesmerized. Could this inno-  
cent looking guy be capable of the fables that  
had preceded him? Was it possible? His long  
fingers continuously lit his Salem 100's only  
broken up by the occasional lighting of a  
bowl. I knew I was going to like this guy.

And I did. My affection for Harry grew  
exponentially. Granted, the years that I knew  
Harry were some of his best, intellectually  
and physically, but there was a dark side to  
Harry that I did experience at times. Harry's  
life in Boulder was marked by his increased  
weight gain and burgeoning physical strength,  
as he put on over 30 pounds due to his huge  
intake of Ensure, a caloric supplement. His  
ruddy sun tanned face, walking in the warm  
sun in his trench coat and his Herman Munster  
boots or the running sneakers (the ones Dr.  
Gross got him a year before and which Harry  
swore he'd never put his corn ridden feet  
into) contrast dramatically with the time spent  
with him in grey New York.

Sitting, recording and watching the fire-  
works year after year with others on the Naropa  
lawn became a tradition. Harry told me that  
looking directly at the fireworks in the sky  
affected your eyes in the same way a xerox  
machine does if you look at the light as it  
moves across the glass. It could ruin your  
eyes, he told me as we both did it anyway. It is  
one of those facts that I seem to tell anyone  
and everyone as I stand in line at the xerox  
machine. Or the story he told about time the  
fireworks barge blew up on the river and  
people cheered madly as the best fireworks of  
the night exploded, along with limbs and  
people's lives.

Harry stayed at Allen's apartment at Varsity  
Townhouses for the month of July. I was told  
that Harry had been staying at Allen's New  
York apartment since he had broken his leg  
and that he was driving Allen crazy and under



the advice of Allen's psychiatrist, was encouraged to move to alternative housing. The other story I heard was that Harry was living in the Breslin Hotel at the time, taping people dying on a daily basis. Allen visited him there and was so appalled at the conditions, offered to take him to Boulder.

By the end of the month we were steadfast friends. I remember the 2nd to last day of the summer, Allen was sitting at a table with his address book open, lining up people to take care of Harry after he was gone. As it turned out things do take their natural course. All of the people Allen had signed up, flaked out. Jaqueline Gens, who at the time was living in Boulder, now Allen's assistant, arranged for drives to the doctor and would call me pretty regularly as I took Harry most places anyway. It was she who told Allen of my help, and my assignment had become official. Either it was that, or the time that Harry's local doctor, Dr. Phil Weber asked Jaqueline to try to monitor Harry's pill popping. This task, being inherently impossible, exploded into a crazed situation as Jaqueline, a usually calm and collected Buddhist, turned into a fearful, violent person advocating murder. Maybe that was when I was hired...

Harry was given a bulk sum of money to last him for several weeks. Many stories of this caliber will be told in regards to Harry, only the date, time and victim will be different and this story will be similar to all the rest. Within a couple of days all the money was spent at local bookstores. I knew this couldn't last for long as the first thing Harry would do without was food. With Harry's mixed blessings, I then went through official state channels procuring Harry Medicare, Medicaid and SSI, and prescriptions for unlimited amounts of Ensure.

Stan Brakhage had shown all of Harry's movies in every film history and documentary class that he had given. Seeing these films had a profound effect on me and my concept of just how expansive and all encompassing the pure art of film actually could be and even better, actually was!! He prefaced each show-

ing explicitly: "You are about to see the works of one of the most extraordinarily inventive film artists alive."

He told us how Harry used to keep his semen in a jar in the viewing room to garner energy for his film showings, "projecting into a magically contrived frame, along with superimposed slides and accompanied by extraordinary, and sometimes frightening, sound effects: but, as you will see (now that we no longer have the whole sideshow Harry provided) these films hold up by themselves, even silently; and you are likely to be just as haunted by them as Art, even in a dull classroom, as ever Harry intended with his magic shows of them." I sat there mesmerized watching the colors, designs and cutouts jump on the screen, in awe of the years of dedication these seemingly inhuman works of intricacy were. In Harry's alchemy class of 1989 we collected many different types of music, from Enrico Caruso to The Butthole Surfers to Monk and Mingus and played them to *Early Abstractions*, over and over again. Each time it seemed the music was made to correspond directly, note for note with each frame: and that was just the point.

Harry turned the mundane, everyday things into magic. Harry's phone was a treasure trove to be explored as we became enthralled in the capacities of the phone and its services provided by US West. Harry subscribed to the Voice Messaging Service in which 175 three minute messages could be stored and retrieved at whim. Harry then invited people to call up and leave creative messages on the recording, dream interpretations, songs, imitations, horrific stories, anything: as long it was creative. I remember someone telling me that Harry used to ask everyday: "Have you been creative today?" That rule always applied. After sitting for hours at a time hearing the messages in different order, I started calling from places with any unique sounds, namely concerts with good acoustics, the Stock Show, various sporting events, bars or clubs. At one point we were planning to have me lowered into a live volcano on my

trip to Hawaii. I was amazed at the scope and depth of the recordings that were made. Harry was forever transcribing the times, dates, the who, what, where, and whys of the calls, and upon packing up his possessions I found pages of these lovingly, meticulous transcriptions.

Harry's forays to the stores and bookstores in town were an experience. The concept of "float" had achieved new meaning in Harry's hands. He had an incredible eye as we would walk the Pearl Street Mall regularly staring into each window of each store, and commenting on the display and formulation of every obscure item; how cute all the salt and pepper shakers were, or the maps, or the Nepalese thing, or the Indian pots. He would then go into the place of choice and make his purchases quickly.

When Harry would get it into his mind that he needed a particular book, completely necessary to his path of thought at that moment, nothing could stand in his way. Every possible way to cash an invisible check, along with creative bartering would be used until we'd arrive at the book store, money or scheme in hand. Harry would then stay up all night reading, as I went home only to find him the next morning still up and able to quote me page and placement of a particular anecdote or idea. All his books were kept in piles in his bedroom and I was only allowed to enter at certain times, with explicit instructions on how to handle the book's binding and methods for turning the page.

Harry played the King in a performance of the *Seven Deadly Sins* we performed with Marianne Faithfull and Hal Wilner. He wore a long purple cape, his O.T.O. shirt underneath, and a crown he had fashioned himself. He collected paper towel rolls, spray painted them gold, attached cut out covers of his design for *The Holy Books of Thelema* and put fresh flowers in the top. He was indeed quite regal, and this is the outfit we decided he'd be wearing when we saw each other in another lifetime.

The times Harry and I spent were sometimes

quixotic and worked in a weird back and forth manner. Despite how helpful and committed I was to him, he sometimes sabotaged things. Now, after hearing stories of Harry's past, this was a pattern and Harry kept people close to him at an emotional distance for a reason.

His constant smoking was one of our points of conjecture. In the dead of winter his windows would be open and the heat blasting. The windows HAD to be open if one were to spend any amount of time there without leaving with serious upper-respiratory problems. The proliferation of cats multiplying as we spoke, along with the kitty litter and the constant Salem 100's burning unattended in the ashtray left an unseemly odor that now I long for.

When we would sit listening to tapes, stoned, time went on without us. Enclosed in his room, with the "Do Not Disturb. I am either sleeping or working," sign on the door and the Chinese paper blind half closed, we listened to sounds. Hundreds of audio tapes with sounds of cats, water dripping, music, conversations, or the cheers from the football stadium located 200 yards from Harry's door. As we sat in the early morning or middle of the night hours, the sounds opened out into an expanse. An expanse that was open ended—it opened out to all of experience, to all of time. It connected us with all of history; anyone who had ever listened to a cat purr or a certain folk song was part of this long historical chain. This connection was strong as we both sat. Just sat and looked at each other, communication unnecessary at times, but implied. When I spoke it was always something inane, and we joked. The day Harry died he told me that my inane thing, though seemingly obvious to us at that very second was accurate. It was our standard tiff and here he was telling me of that fine line between brilliance and simpleton.

Harry's work in Boulder was definite, explicit, part of and vital to a summation of a life's work of theories. Accumulation of required materials (Harry often bought 2nd



and 3rd copies of crucial books that he'd already had in N.Y. surreptitiously packed), a testing and contrasting of principles and vast exploration of sound was explored while in Boulder. Harry left New York with Dr. Gross and five cats under dark of early morning 48 hours before the Grammy ceremony in which he was to receive an award for his contribution in folk music.

There is a fine line on the cutting edge of genius. Harry was schooled in many cultures, and intent on a comparison between all. Harry was taking knowledge used by many all over the globe, and in his mind was taking it a step further. New ideas, not just rehashing—sometimes in today's academia or intelligentsia, seems impossible, but not in Harry's case. The story that Henry told me seems to exemplify this. "Harry taught me lots of things. He always told me that there is never any right or wrong, just various shades of grey." Harry delved in these various shades of grey.

Now, those of us left here on earth have Harry's tapes, books, lectures, films, interviews, lithographs, music, Ukrainian eggs, and our memories of unembellishable stories. These things are attempts that hint at the glimmer in Harry's electric mind; the flurry of genius that was bursting in his brain. May the curious explore and begin to dig at the *Mysterium of Man*.

## Two

The following is transcribed from a lecture by Harry Smith on July 22nd, 1990 entitled "Cosmographies."

"... That you'll find in one of these two books, cover the same cosmographic scheme, basically. It's an idea that evidently comes from Australia, at least the version here is from Terra Del Fuego. How the women first had the ceremonial flutes, and then later the men got them. This particular myth is treated in two different ways. One, this is from the Brazilian Highlands. In this case the men had the flutes in the beginning, and the women manage to get them.

Let's see. There are 52 pages in each one of these books, they are somewhat like small almanacs. You have to remember that last year I taught, what did I tea—? alchemy in the summer, the summer before that I taught surrealism, so that, be sure to get your books, so that this document was built up both from a surrealist and an alchemical, as well as a cosmographic model. The second batch of them which are numbered from 53 to 104 are also numbered down in this corner from 1 to 52 so that you can easily, by laying them out, by moonlight, find page 17 on each one, and you immediately know that it's the star of the Tarot and you're in real big trouble. Now a number of subjects are treated in here of course and I'm going to outline them as best I can. First the Terra del Fuegian notion of that, and then to Italy where a tape recording made in Tuscany of someone telling a story and then a structural analysis of that story that leads off into further structural things on page four, ahh and then these are various inventions by Rube Goldberg but there on pages 5-7, but these are very much the way myths are fitted together. Ahhh, something happens that causes something else to happen, but you'll notice, I mean, I, although I have several hundred of these, I haven't analyzed them to see which ones have fire, or which ones have water, air or earth, but I'm sure these things occur in there, ahhhh, then beginning on page 8 is one of the most remarkable scientific papers, written by Joseph Bastien. It doesn't, you know, look very good, Andean Body Concepts: A Topographical-Hydraulic Model of Physiology. But I included the whole article, although it really sorta begins where it starts the metaphors between the bodies of individuals and various mountain ranges, that the same term is used on page 10 is a "an anatomy of the mountain's body." These, this is one of the very very, it's long, ahh best descriptions of numeral medicine, or in other words, the concept that earth, air, fire, and water is fundamental, you'll also find that in a Aztec narrative, somewhat towards the end of this or the next

section, so anyhow, Dr. Bastien goes on for quite a few pages, yeah [as Harry paws through for a moment amazed], now interleaved from page 25 on are pages out of a book on Mohave ethnopsychiatry, it's one of the few books that's written by a person who, George DeVereux, who indulges in dream analysis, who examines the methods the Mohave use in dream analysis, oh I see yes, because a southern Shoshonian creation myths from around Palm Springs follows this, doesn't look very good, the suicide of twins, you'll have to read it, ahhhh, they're born, ahhh, in fact, before they're born, they behave like babies, no more then anybody else, because it's been heavily developed in the Mohave creation story here that was handed out earlier, but now it's been rebound in with other explanatory stuff, starting on page 27, ahh, you'll notice that these two opposing forces, the yin or yang or whatever you want to call them. Be sure to get your books, [he yells to a late straggler]. "They're all out" [someone yells back]. What!?!? "We're all out!" It's a collector's item!!! I'll buy them all back!!!! The ahh, but ahh, for example twins are conceived if a thunderflash, I mean a lightening flash occurs at the moment of conception, ahh you'll find that in this Mohave thing about twins. Now getting back inside an egg, which is evidently where these things are occurring, although it only says that lightening occurs within this void and then something like eggwhite appears, ahh that's very long, also, I included it, it's the funeral oration, that would ordinarily take four days if it was all sung. It ends with mixing the bones of the dead person with the turra, which is a powerful hallucinogenic, and then eaten by the mourners. Oh, then to far off India on page 39 or rather Bengal, there has been some confusion in people's minds about what I was referring to about the earth diver, ahh, like in a song from Bengal the Lord was floating in the void form, he then ordered a crab to sink down and bring up earth from the bottom, a crab brought it to the Lord. According to one version, the Lord made the

world with a portion of the earth brought up by the crab and the world was then placed on the back of a tortoise, and so on... Following that, this is a contemporary song. Incidentally, following that is an analysis of the Ojibwa creation myth, if you want to call it that. That's what the article is titled, begins on page 40., ahhh and goes on almost to the end, but the earth diver notion occurs in it along with a lot of other things, the theft of fire, this and that, ahhh, but then bound in from page 48 to 50 is a Seneca version from New York of the earth diver and also the world tree perhaps, ahh but it has the same features, it substitutes some other animal from the crab. I know it's a crayfish in the Choctaw one. And this ends up with the birth of the twins so you're back to that page. Then this, which I hadn't noticed before, it's from the Kunna of Panama, where it says the Kunna Earth Mother, were various things like the flood and the chopping down of the world tree occur.

The second half, this is all like one continuous item. What is this? "The ceremonial vessel is used to prepare a hallucinogenic drink distributed among participants during certain ritual gatherings." They've gone into that earlier. This is the version where the men originally had the secrets but the women stole them. That notion of the separation of the sexes is in Navajo, a certain level. I haven't gone into emergence myths at all, you know, maybe next geologic period we'll go into that. There's a long description of the song that I believe this is, creation notions, like there's a certain amount of sexual energy, somewhere there's a picture of it, revolving, there's a picture of it somewhere, that's funny, it may have been censored. No, here it is on page 56. That stuff that's the milky way is some important person is up there in a continuous hallucination. This gives the origin of a number of hallucinogenic drugs, one from the navel from the sun and the other, what's it like? I don't know, yaga comes from a finger of the same person, at one point this guy had such tremendous hallucinations that



he moved one level up, you'll find that all carefully laid out.

There are then, is a description of inner and outer. This really fitted in with Bastien's article. It has to do with the symbolism of the Tlingit potlatch, carried on from the matrilineal inheritance 'cause that's the big discovery that's been made in Inca studies lately, there was a dual dissent system ... I'll go into that some other year. Ahh, but, and the notes for that are in here, but the article is severely cut down. Then we are back to, oh no this is Eskimos, Inuits of North Alaska. Souls are constantly dissolving into newborn children in this, and the problem of getting them out, identifying the proper child by showing it objects from people that have died since the last child was born, and then a long discussion of the Kwakiutl potlatch which has to do with an elaborate method of controlling reincarnations. That goes up to page 74, the so called cannibal dance are in the, but this is all done by trickery, in the Kwakiutl portions of this, has been driven mad by menstrual blood. And here from, on page 74, here's some Mohave analysis caused by items that, can even be from the Gods, people who behave like them, it can be a definite disease. From 77 on, are a few pages from a translation of a Tibetan medical work that describes very similar things. I thought this one was kind of strange; "people who are possessed by the demonic effects of the Gods, speak Sanscrit, sleep little, are good-natured and are very clean." That's what possession means. So I'm sorry that at various points in here I have introduced material from, particularly from Asia, I wish I'd been able to do it with Australia but uhhh, I'm hoping some one...What is this? "Madness caused by ghosts." ...ahh yea. This is a Chinese psychiatrist's diagram of personality, he gives a great number of cases in the article and builds up this model of the human. This on page 82 correlates communion and surgery. I wish I'd been able to put all of this article in here. More people die of mistakes made in the operating room than the Aztecs managed to slaughter.

But the uh, it was a little, heh, heh, the Rydal (?), it was a scientific book was a little too fiery and I was afraid it would ruin my, you know, anarchistic trends. The ideology of the operating room and then we're back to the Mohave ethnopsychiatry and suicide, which has to do with people who wish to dream, do dream. And then there are a group of Aztec poems, beginning on page 84. The Aztecs believed that everything was one big hallucination. I mean Sarhagune in the Florentine codex, of which there is a sample of in here somewhere, had a lot of Aztec scribes write stuff done, there's a mass of, here's a piece of the original manuscript, although these are not taken out of Sarhagune, they're taken out of some other places. Why don't I wear my reading glasses? Apparently the Cortez etcetera, it took them a while to get there, and various people, I'd almost wondered, in the accounts of people that were with Cortez, why people came up and asked him if the whole thing wasn't an illusion? Could the buildings be real? No doubt by that time the Spaniards had taken various types of psychedelics. For example, on page 86 it says that "in man's effort to forget that one day we must go, one night we will descend into the regions of mystery, he can seek consolation in the drunkenness produced by mushroom wine—soon to be available at Alfalfa's. Anyhow, some of them are very beautiful because they, a whole philosophy was built up, revolving around the completely illusory nature of everything that happens. Anyhow, they go on for a few more pages. On page 90, where it says: "with flowers you write, oh giver of light," flowers is a way of referring to song, "with songs you give color, later you will destroy, we live only in your painting here on earth. With black ink you are blot out, all that was friendship, brotherhood, nobility." Life on earth is more or less like a painting that can be rubbed out. "Do men have roots? Are they Real? No one can know completely? What is your richness? What are your flowers? Oh, Inventor of yourself."

Anyhow, it's a souvenir of your visit to the

holy city. Something to take home, and you know, prove to the neighbors that the worst they heard was true. You see false data prevails: the higher up you are, the closer you are to heaven. Everybody thinks here that because you're a mile up, that it's an institution of higher learning.

### Three

The following is a list of articles compiled by Harry Smith and given to students at the Naropa Institute, Summer Writing Program 1990. His lecture was entitled "Cosmographies." There are two sections each of which contains 52 pages.

page 1—Tierra del Fuego myth regarding female domination

page 2—Fairy Tales for the Young and the Old

page 5—Rube Goldberg Inventions

page 8—Qollahuaya-Andean Body Concepts: A Topographical-Hydraulic Model of Physiology, by Joseph Bastien, appearing in *American Anthropologist*, Bulletin #175

page 25—Mohave Ethnopsychiatry and Suicide, by DeVereux, appearing in *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bulletin #175

page 27—Hooper: The Cahuiulla, appearing in *University of California Publications in American Archeology and Ethnology*, Vol#16, 1920

page 39—Obscure Religious Cults, appearing in *Cosmogonical and Cosmological Theories*

page 40—Imagine Ourselves Richly, The Ojibwa Creation Myth

page 48—Seneca Fiction, Legends, and Myths, written by Curtin, Hewitt, *Ethnology Annual* #32

page 51—Northwest, Mothers and Their Children

### Second Handout with Blue Cover

page 1—*Amazonian Cosmos*, The Creator and His Creation

page 10—The Tlingit potlatch in *American Ethnologist*

page 14—The North Alaskan Eskimo, written by Spencer, appearing in *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bulletin #171

page 15—an untitled book on the Kwakiutl

page 22—Mohave Ethnopsychiatry and Suicide, by DeVereux, appearing in *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bulletin #175

page 25—*Tibetan Medical Psychiatry*, Three Psychiatric Chapters Translated from the Gyuzhi

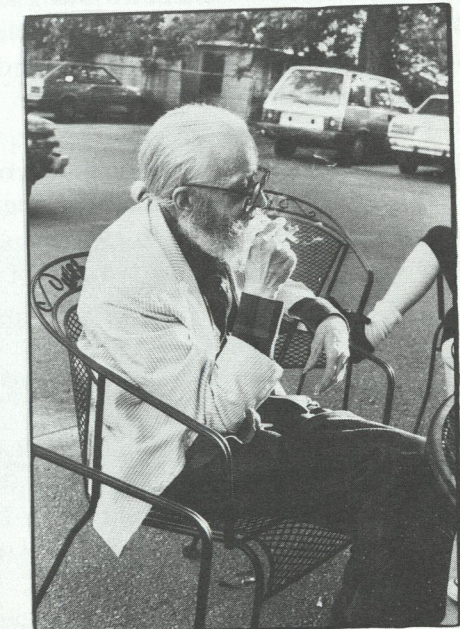
page 30—*Modern Medicine: Social Structure and Ritual*, Ideology in the Operating Room

page 32—*Aztec Thought and Culture*, The Birth of Philosophy and Metaphysical and Theological Ideas

page 38—*Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico*, The Sacred Hymns

page 41—*Creator Worship Among The Incas*, by John Howland Rowe

page 43—*Historical Changes as Reflected in South American Indian Myths*, by Annamaria Lammel



Harry Smith, Summer 1989  
Boulder, Colorado. Photo: Steve Miles.



## THE LAST DAY IN THE LIFE OF HARRY SMITH

by Rani Singh

Blood was everywhere. On the sheets, mounds of red tissues, chunks of blood—blood strewn in Harry's beard, clumped together. His pale tan linen jacket stained and streaked. It took him five minutes just to open the door. I barely fit in, almost knocking things over. The small room was completely filled with piles and piles of books and cards, with barely room for a bed and a chair to which Harry stumbled. My first instinct was to call the ambulance—right away. He told me to wait, that he wanted to talk, why should he be hooked up to machines his last few weeks?

First things first, he asked me to undo the cap to the Nyquil, you know those child proof caps, you always need a kid to open them. Our old joke, we told it everytime and always laughed. Harry dosed on Nyquil, Alka Seltzer Cold and Flu medicine, Accacea Root, Insure Herbal Formula, Ginger ale, coffee, all in children's dosages since he weighs 85 lbs now, of which he reminded me several times.

I shivered, wondering who would pass out first. Let's call an ambulance. I'll bring a car around. He conceded to putting a bottle in the doorway in case an ambulance had to break in as we both lay unconscious on the floor.

At his request, I emptied all the coffee cups filled with old moldy substances too disgusting even to be identified. He smoked constantly once he began, even having me light several in a row. I told him, "This is certainly breaking barriers, having me smoking cigs and sitting surrounded in blood. You've really broken through, Mr. Smith."

\$\$ isn't everything, we decided. "Health and Love" I said. "The 2 biggies. The onlys." "They're one and the same," he said as I sat there perplexed. I told him of my only wish and we agreed.

He spoke of the pain. "Maybe you have a broken rib?" "I was a boy scout. I don't have any broken ribs. I was a boy scout!," he

yelled. He said that as his health got increasingly worse, and the older he got, the more people shyed away from him. "Harry, you were cantankerous the day I met you, and you'll be cantankerous till the day you die. It has nothing to do with the reasons I love you, and all your friends must feel the same." I said it shyly, and surprisingly, this time he didn't cringe.

"Mine is a religious viewpoint. Yours is a secular one," he told me.

Various times in the day we just sat, not saying a word. I clenched my Florentine farmer's almanac nervously, and kept turning the pages, telling him that the magician with the stars and the telescope looked like him. We looked at Tarot cards. Fortuna, La Luna—2 dogs and a lobster parting the sea, 2 castles as the moon shines down, Oblessa, La Forza, Innocenza-cambi amento, distacco—a skeleton with a blue cape on, on a horse with a scythe, trampling human bodies. He handed me the decks as I pawed through. He knew just what card I was looking at, describing them in detail as his head hung down, occasionally coughing up blood. I passed up the death card, not looking up. "That's a good one," he said.

He showed me Raymond's chapbooks and asked if I wanted them. We looked at the interviews of Kerouac by Michael White, *Safe in Heaven Dead*. In the forward he said he dreamt he saw Kerouac. Harry said it didn't sound like Kerouac. I said maybe he dreamt it all. I left with the book tucked in my pocket. *Safe in Heaven Dead*.

He told me of his hallucinations the past few days, of how sometimes he couldn't remember if people had been there or not. "Like you on the phone books, sometimes I look up and you're not there."

I told him I hoped that this was just one stage in a long line of levels in which we exist. He smiled. "So what are we both going to be

wearing when we're dead?," I asked again. We had gone over this question before but this time I needed a concrete answer. "Should we have hand signals or a secret password? Maybe I'll have blonde hair." I told him my outfit. "I'll be the one in the long flowing purple gown," he said. "Wear the crown and I'll know it's you." We decided on our word and shook.

He finally agreed to drive to a doctor if I brought a car around. Before leaving I emptied the garbage, bloody tissues on the floor, cigarette butts, old juice cans, bags of pretied garbage in a pile on the floor. I stepped as if on glass, with the threat of knocked over piles of books. He said I was the only one who would do this with a clear conscience. He told me how different I was than all the others as we agreed about repeating things and that fine line between simpleton and brilliance.

As I left we shook hands again and he held my hand in his blood streaked palm. He said my hand seemed very warm. I told him his did too. We sat for several minutes, silent. I stared at his bloodied hand, both our heads hung low. As I left, telling him I'll be back in a couple of hours, he told me "I just wanted to thank you for everything." "Everything?" I asked, thinking maybe coffee and tissues?? "Everything, Har?? Nothing, it was nothing, it was the only thing," I said confused. My heels echoed as I walked down the hall of the Chelsea Hotel.

After calling Raymond in an unknowing panic from the downstairs phone, I looked in the mirror on the way out and I looked different, I noticed. On the subway as I pulled out my pen and furiously wrote, verbatim—I glanced at my profile and said, yes, I really do look different.

You are in me now Har. I am now you. I cannot separate the line where one begins and one ends. My legs feel heavier 'cause I am now walking for two. You spirit is engraved within. My entrails combine with your sinuous ones to form one, even better.

All you have taught me, world view cultures, folklore, vast expanse of history, mysticism,

magnitude of reference, Golden Dawn not black magic, tarot cards, gourds, sounds and string figures, playing cards and rocks from everywhere I travelled to—is still here. Without you. Now I look with your eyes.

With pain I finally understand the finality of it all, coming to only occasionally. My dear sweet king, never again will we ponder the wisdom of the ages, (glib answers resulting), never shall we share a coffee or a bowl, or buy books, or go to parties with you as my escort, or walk the streets of Manhattan or Boulder. Never again shall we tape cow noises for two days at the Boulder County Fair, or feed the family of squirrels with the well-known geneology in your living room. Never will we sit for hours pouring over Herodotus or Ovid as the sun comes up over Central Park or listen to 175 3-minute messages on your US West voice messaging service or hear the lies you propagated about me to your friends, about multiple language skills and me being a princess from the Mughal Empire. Never again may I get obscure references to arcane questions, leaving me with only more questions. Brilliance bordering on hysterical genius.

And with that, and the all seeing eye, and the beehive, and the scythe—I say goodbye. I will truly miss you.

(Approximately 20 minutes after I exited Harry's room he passed out, never to regain consciousness again)

