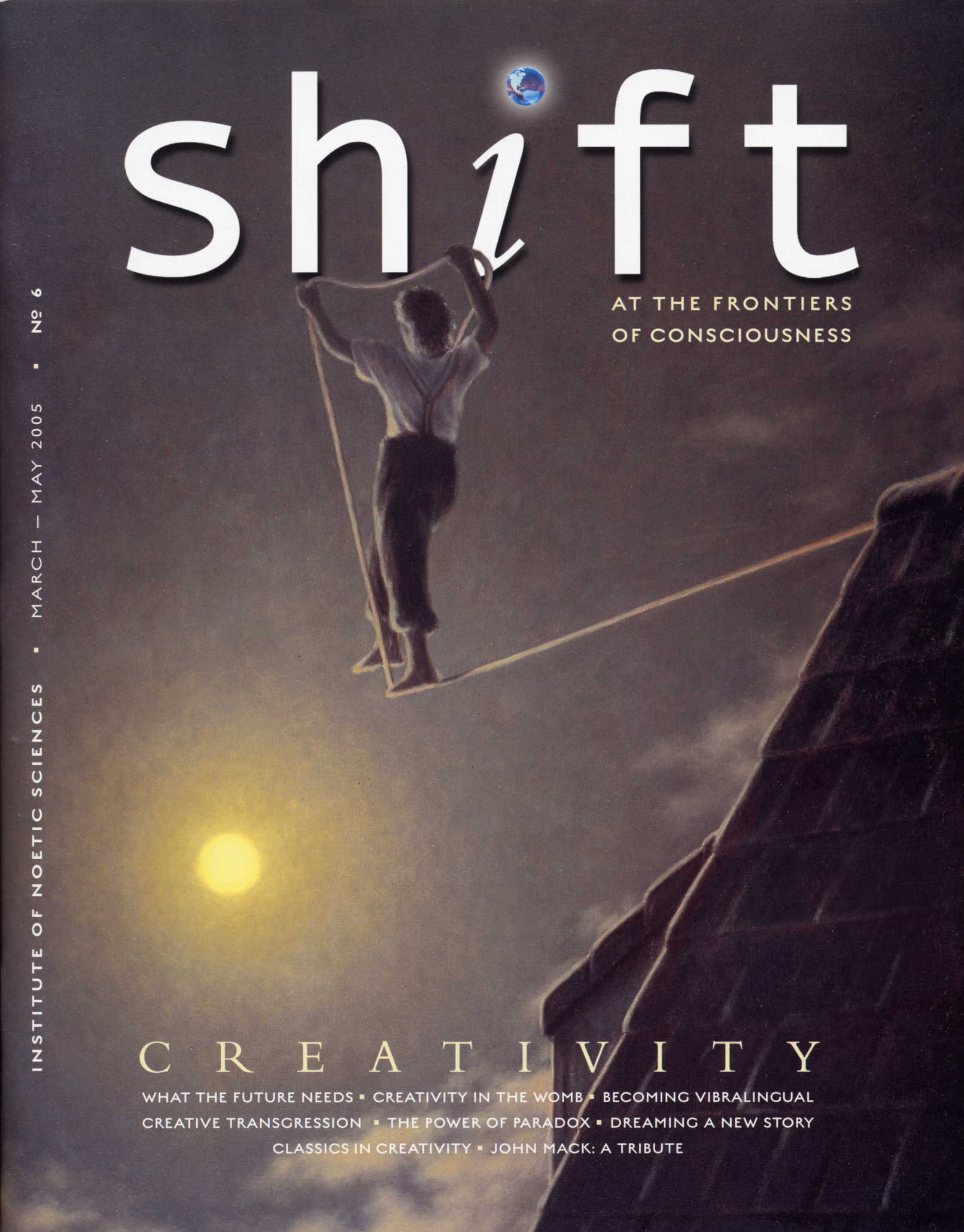
INSTITUTE OF NOETIC SCIENCES ▪ MARCH – MAY 2005 ▪ Nº 6

shift

AT THE FRONTIERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS



CREATIVITY

WHAT THE FUTURE NEEDS ▪ CREATIVITY IN THE WOMB ▪ BECOMING VIBRALINGUAL
CREATIVE TRANSGRESSION ▪ THE POWER OF PARADOX ▪ DREAMING A NEW STORY
CLASSICS IN CREATIVITY ▪ JOHN MACK: A TRIBUTE

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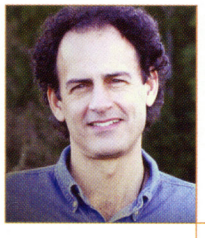
FROM THE EDITOR



shift
AT THE FRONTIERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

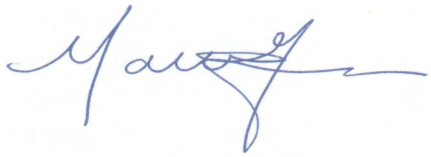
Greetings *Shift* Readers and IONS Members,

The theme of this issue, my first as editor, is "Creativity." And in the spirit of imagination that creativity inspires, we have followed the name-change to *Shift* with a change on the cover, going literally out-of-the box! We also continue to explore new ways to communicate the important issues of our day, balancing mind and heart, thought and action, research and healing, all within the larger field of our "noetic" mission.

Creativity is an integral—and integrating—force in any change process, whether at a personal or collective level. And yet it isn't always clear just what creativity is or how it fits or how we can even tap into it. On a personal level creativity may ask us to do nothing at all, to simply surrender to our senses, to the messages ever-present both inside and around us. In short, to get out of the way of our conditioned minds, a prescription that "vibralingual" weaver **Rachel Bagby** *(page 21)* and Zen *koan* teacher **John Tarrant** *(page 24)* would heartily endorse. At other times it demands that we take a risk and leap fully into the unknown, as the late Harvard psychiatrist/researcher **John Mack** *(page 31)* did despite fierce opposition from his conservative colleagues.

At a larger level our culture has been enormously creative in pursuit of technological advancement and material wealth, but far less innovative—or courageous—in solving the more difficult problems of poverty, conflict, injustice, eco-genocide, and a long list of others. As Einstein might have put it, we have a "perfection of means but a confusion of goals." Much is at stake, and we are all in the game—every one of us—either in perpetuating what is, or helping to birth what can be. As our global challenges persist, as new crises push us to the edge of the envelope, to the edge of our own abilities to cope and overcome, we must respond with new ideas and answers. As **Charles Johnston** writes in our lead feature, "A healthy future will require of us every bit of creativity we can muster."

Who do I want to be? What kind of world do I want to live in? What future awaits our children? Fortunately, we have much more control over the answers than we've been led to believe. What we've made we can largely unmake—or remake—given the will, the wisdom, and the vision. May the articles that follow stir you to consider the above questions in a new light, and help you move creatively, and meaningfully, in a direction of personal and global healing and renewal.



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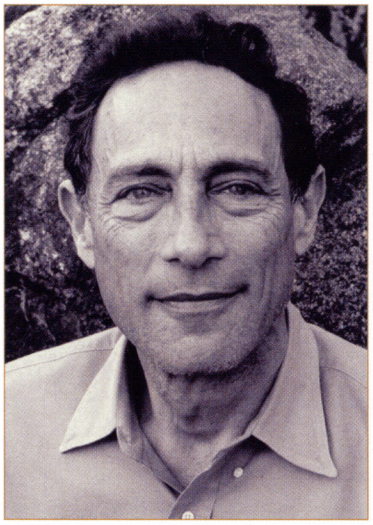
Dr John Mack – A TRIBUTE



(1929-2004)

JUDY DATER

EDITOR'S NOTE: *As described in Aftab Omer's "The Spacious Center," the job of a cultural leader is to creatively build a bridge between a culture's entrenched core and its churning, marginalized periphery, especially during times of transition. John Mack was such a leader, though he wouldn't necessarily have admitted it. With diligence and courage, through his research at Harvard and his books* Abduction *and* Passport to the Cosmos, *he helped to shift our collective perspective about the world we live in and our place in the universe. His life and work are beautifully honored here by Michael Cohen.*

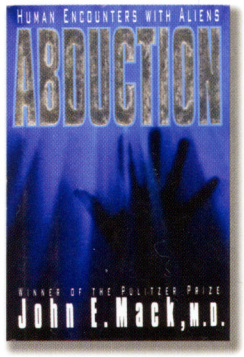
WHEN SOMEONE YOU LOVE suddenly passes, a series of shocks ripple through the system: waves of grief, tenderness, memories, combined with a sense of your own finitude; and at the same time, a paradoxical analytical process of combing through the associations and trying to understand the significance of what this person meant in your life.

When I learned from a friend that John Mack had suddenly died, I found these waves of emotions rising and subsiding. I felt deeply connected to John, though I knew him professionally only in passing, and personally hardly at all. I realized that we had connected beyond time and space, through a shared bond, a passion for truth. I admired John, and felt that I was able to travel further simply knowing he was there.

The details of John Mack's legacy are now coming to light in tributes from around the world, both from academics and institutions of great learning—including his own, which once put him through what must have seemed an inquisition—and the many individuals whose lives he touched. John was a pioneer, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author (in 1977 for *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T. E. Lawrence*), a dedicated psychiatrist, and a humanitarian. John was deeply committed to his local community in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the community of mental healthcare, and the larger community of all beings every-

"As I come to the end of this story, I cannot help wondering what it might take to bring about the shift in consciousness, the change of paradigm that is implicit in what the abductees have undergone. It would appear that what is required is a kind of cultural ego death, more profoundly shattering than the Copernican revolution which demonstrated that the earth, and therefore humankind, did not reside at the center of the cosmos."

—*excerpted from John Mack's* Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens *(Scribner, 1994)*



where. He seemed to embody the ideal of aspiring to help uplift the entire creation. John held the space for many to open up to their felt experiences, not judging them but allowing; and in our time together I experienced his wisdom, his compassion, and his humanness. Both in his intellectual triumphs and in the stillness we shared—the contact between the words—I felt his essence as a marvel.

John was a freedom fighter, working toward the liberation of human consciousness. That meant a lot to many people—particularly those who had experienced extraordinary planes of consciousness, tried to express their inner (and sometimes tormenting) adventures, and found only scorn and further abuse on most other doorsteps within the scientific and mental health "care" communities. Many of these individuals finally found a measure of acceptance—and self-acceptance—through John's work, as well as a way to reflect on and integrate their intense experiences.

John's spacious mind allowed a broader conceptualization of our place in the omniverse, a place in which we humans might coexist with other species and, indeed, intelligently converse with them. But to do so, if one followed the line of John's work, required more than radio signals and scientific intelligence. It demanded emotional and spiritual intelligence, including a capacity—if not the courage—to deepen our opening to inner experience.

John had been working on a new manuscript about "interdimensional" communication. He was exploring how a field of love can literally create a bridge between worlds, reiterating the perennial wisdom in the psychologically rich, biographical vein that had won him the Pulitzer. This exploration, while controversial to some, has resonances in epistemology and other branches of philosophy, and may inspire colleagues in other fields, including a new scientific discipline known as astrobiology. I believe this work will stand the test of time and be recognized as a great contribution to human knowledge. It was in such ways that John moved us past the marriage to our own intellectual constructs and into an awareness of our soul bond with something more unrestricted, and therefore less known.

A few months ago, I ran into John on a train ride to New York. It was wonderful to be in contact with his keen mind, wry humor, and generous heart. John could be intellectually critical and skeptical—as he was when the notion of "karma" was raised—yet as a person he was simultaneously embracing, tolerant, and full of wisdom.

John Mack offered a gift to all those with extraordinary experiences who might otherwise have felt shamed by the judgment of many segments within contemporary society. John's gift was unconditional acceptance of the possibility for transcendence; and thus, his legacy to us is a world without end.

MICHAEL H. COHEN *is an attorney and faculty member at Harvard Medical School. For more on John Mack's work, or to make a contribution to the institute he founded, go to* www.johnemackinstitute.org/gift.