Arts in society: the humanist alternative. Volume 10, Issue 1 Spring-Summer, 1973

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Arts in Society

THE HUMANIST ALTERNATIVE

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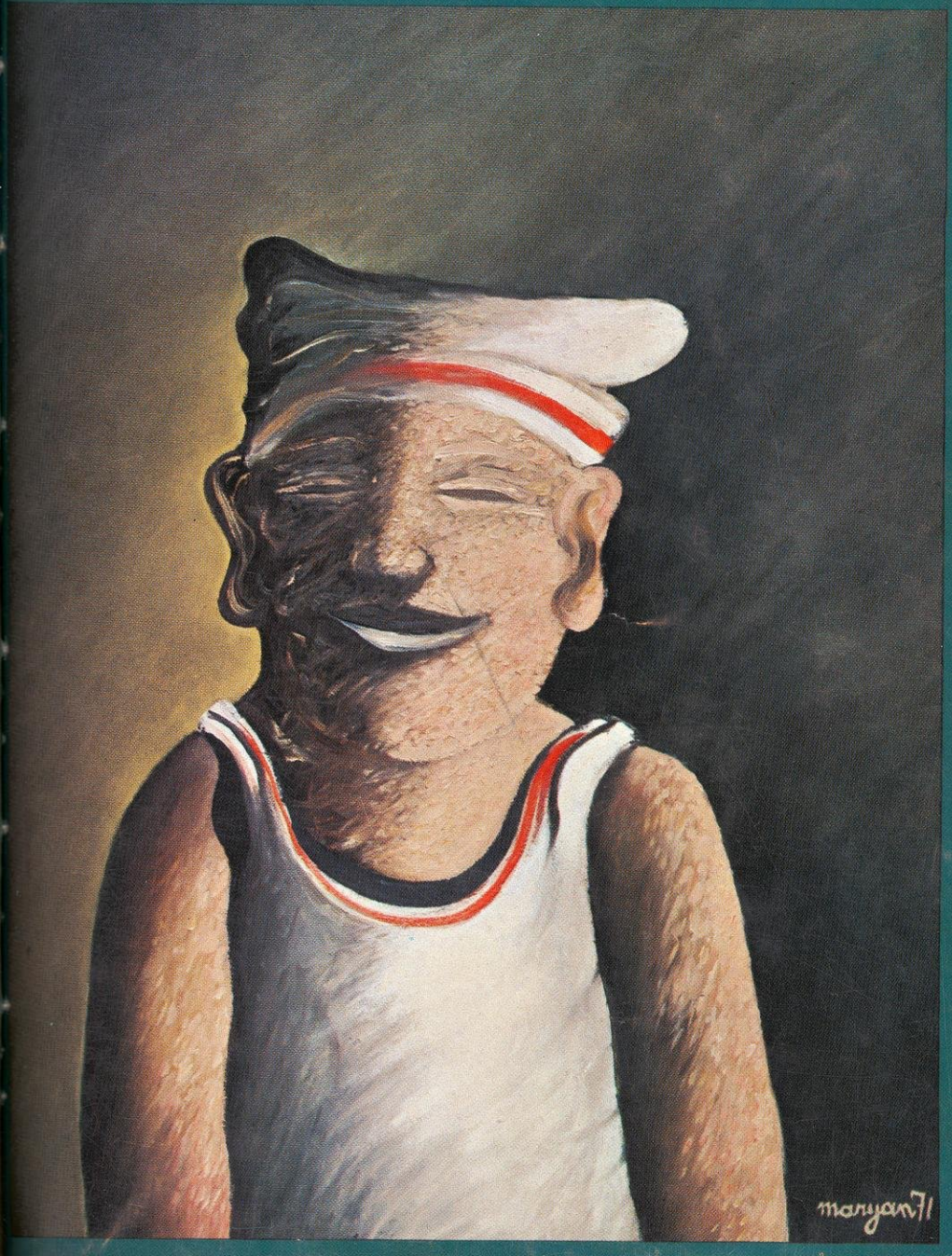

About twenty-five years ago Maryan began to piece his life together. From ages twelve to eighteen his youth mutated inside a concentration camp. He has seen the bottom of man's pit of inhumanity; whatever he will come to believe will not be quickly acquired.

Freed of the camp, this self taught painter begins a life-long battle. Pitting his sanity against the steeled vision of bloodsoaked images and tormented humanity forever etched in his mind, his art becomes an exorcism of authority, a psychological journey into and beyond the crisis of contemporary life. His art is not about freedom and despair; it is liberation itself.

He challenges the images of his keepers with paint-laden brush. First we see them as authorities; ordered, precise, intense. We see power ridiculed by gestures of infantilism, absurdity and pathological collapse. As time goes on, these images are transformed into guts and bowels, blood vessels and nerve endings. They choke on their own organs, suffocating on innards that come out of their mouths. Maryan is moving all the time to the destruction of those who had wished to destroy him.

Now, the new canvases are filled by images of rebirth: of children's bodies inhabited by old and aged faces. Each face identified by some first gesture of childhood. Through this serial painting process, through art, a human being has regained his sense of the possible. It is one of the most convincing demonstrations of transcendence to be found in modern art. Out of the holocaust Maryan has come to again believe in man. This is Humanism in art.

(Please note the three Maryan paintings on the opposite page, and front and back covers. Courtesy of the artist.)


Maryan 71

Arts in Society

Published by Research and Statewide Programs in the Arts
The University of Wisconsin-Extension

This issue was designed by Linda Heddle.

Arts in Society is dedicated to the augmenting of the arts in society and to the advancement of education in the arts. These publications are to be of interest, therefore, both to professionals and the lay public. **Arts in Society** exists to discuss, interpret, and illustrate the various functions of the arts in contemporary civilization. Its purpose is to present the insights of experience, research and theory in support of educational and organizational efforts to enhance the position of the arts in America. In general, four areas are dealt with: the teaching and learning of the arts; aesthetics and philosophy; social analysis; and significant examples of creative expression in a medium which may be served by the printing process.

The editors will welcome articles on any subjects which fall within the areas of interest of this journal. Readers both in the United States and abroad are invited to submit manuscripts for consideration for publication. Articles may be written in the contributor's native language. An honorarium will be paid for papers accepted for publication.

Manuscripts should be sent to: Edward Kamarck, Editor, ARTS IN SOCIETY, The University of Wisconsin-Extension, 610 Langdon Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706. Address review copies of books, recordings, tapes and films to the same address.

We regret that due to our large stock of poetry and limited staff time, we will not be reviewing or accepting unsolicited poetry.

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For **subscription information,** see page 151.

Table of Contents

THE HUMANIST ALTERNATIVE
Volume 10, No. 1 Spring-Summer 1973

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The Exquisite Debate

(Editorial)

At various times and in various countries there have arisen heated, angry, and exquisite debates as to whether art and the artist should be free to live for themselves, or whether they should be forever mindful of their duty toward society, albeit in an unprejudiced way. For me there is no dilemma . . .*

From the Nobel lecture by
the 1970 literature prize winner,
Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn.

In the core statement of the symposium which forms the bulk of this issue of *Arts in Society*, Barry Schwartz elucidates the urgent necessity to "develop a social art in a time of social crisis." His position, not unlike Solzhenitsyn's, springs out of an almost religious faith in the inherent importance and power of art, and more tellingly out of a compelling need to assert at this crucial juncture in man's history the dimension and substance of art's responsibility.

Art's responsibility, mind you, and not its prerogative. That is significant. We hear a great deal these days about the needed prerogatives of art: why it must be subsidized, protected from censorship, its institutions bolstered, etc. In truth, at times such urgings are strangely reminiscent of the kind of lobbying we are accustomed to hearing from those economic interest groups notorious for seeking prerogatives in a contextual argument strikingly devoid of responsibility to man. While it would be abhorrent to suggest that society directly challenge artists in the same way it is now finally beginning to challenge oil speculators, land developers, and automobile manufacturers in regard to this matter of responsibility, is it not true that in various indirect ways this challenge is in fact continually being made, and that unfailingly the art and artists of our time have been found wanting? Why else have the arts been so pushed to the margin today—and at the precise moment when the power of their eloquence is so sorely needed?

So our symposium appears at an opportune time. There have been, of course, many such symposiums in the past, especially during the thirties. But not then, nor ever in the recent or far distant past, have the pertinent issues been as sharp and clear.

**It is intriguing to note that the translator chose to use the word "exquisite" in this context. At first glance it seems overly-vivid. And yet, presuming that the connotation intended is the one listed by most dictionaries as "intense, acute, or keen" (as in* exquisite pain*), its stressed evocative power does finally seem most apt. For without doubt, the long-time debate over art's social role is now hitting the raw nerve ending of society.*

For one, we have now attained a kind of desperate wisdom about ideologies, politics, and institutions, which while will-paralyzing and at all points touching the profoundest depths of despair, nevertheless is beginning, gropingly, to articulate a working faith for our time. Call this faith what you will. Many are now calling it a new humanism. You can see its stirrings and the fresh energies it is unleashing in the ghettos, among the youth, in the professions, among the women, in the developing countries. Unlike any humanism of the past, it seems to be no respecter of boundaries and barriers of any kind, whether of class, nationality, or political creed. It seeks to speak universally, with directness and compassion, to the despairs and hopes of all of us—one might add, just as art at its best has always sought to speak.

Exactly. It does seem evident that this social stirring is so uniquely consonant with the aims, the matrix, and the very modes of artistic creativity, that there should be no reason for debate about art's role today. But the debate nevertheless persists in considerable force. It persists for many reasons, most of them effectively spelled out by Barry Schwartz in his symposium statement. But an important one he neglects to develop, and it lies in the traumatic betrayal of art by ideology during the earlier decades of this century. That bitter memory, exacerbated and scarred anew by the political reprisals of the McCarthy era, has given our whole culture a catatonic-like rigidity in regard to even intellectual explorations of the social dimensions of art. Scare words, which are often enormously imprecise, replace argument. A great deal that we need to and could have known about how art functions in society we have simply not learned, because the avenues of inquiry were never fully opened by critics and scholars.

Hence much necessary background of the debate is unilluminated, and in one respect particularly. We have a pitifully small comprehension of the degree to which the institutional frames projecting the arts can shape and often constrict creative expression. Though it may seem a truism to say so, we need to realize *fully* that unless the artist's so-called supportive institutions permit him to function as a free soul, he has but little latitude to do so on his own. Yet critics continue to write about artists as if they had all the opportunities in the world to exercise a creative choice. Our institutional apparatus for the arts, and it is a vastly elaborate one, happens to be built on value systems and committed to objectives, which are often horrendously corrupt and small-visioned. One must conclude that the power of their influence on the artist's aspiration and sense of his own role cannot but be enormous. Yet we continue to assume that it is the artist at whom the debate is directed and over whose soul we are wrestling. No, there is good reason to assert that it is the culture itself which must be expostulated, and depending upon which side you're on, possibly excoriated.

The value and significance of the Schwartz statement lie in the fact that backed by the evidence which he has patiently amassed he boldly challenges the American art experience, in its totality, to move to the humanist alternative. If he is in any way prescriptive, it is not in regard to the artist, but to the whole ambience and machinery of artistic processing and marketing (in which the maker too often finds himself an automaton). Schwartz asks—nay, demands!—that the artist be permitted to work out of his own best instincts as a creative spokesman of our time. He is clearly on the side of freedom for the artist, and not prescription.

[Art] is a desire to find and separate truth from the complex of lies and evasions in which [man] lives. To pretend to separate subject from artistic intention is to infringe upon the basic structure, to deny its autonomy.
—Robert Gwathmey

We are proud to present the Schwartz statement, not only for itself, but because in the context of this symposium it has served to highlight the new urgencies, dimensions, and opportunities now manifest in the long-time debate. You will note that Mr. Schwartz considers mainly, although by no means exclusively, the role of the visual arts in contemporary culture. While much of what he says has perhaps limited pertinence to the other arts, it is our strong feeling that his key position has wide and most cogent applicability, and that it can productively serve to inaugurate a long-needed, broad-based effort to formulate a positive orientation toward the fusion of human values, human need, and creative expression.

By way of background, Mr. Schwartz's statement has been drawn from the writing and research he has done for a book to be published by Praeger this summer, entitled *The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change.*

We are grateful to Praeger for giving us permission to reprint extracts and photographs.

In Mr. Schwartz's view, he is not presenting so much a personal as a collective insight, broadly responsive on one level to the social stirrings we have mentioned and on another intensely and directly reflective of the feelings of a large number of artists whom he has come to know intimately. These are artists who by and large are not heralded, who on their own with little or no institutional support, and at times under the sting of retributive attack, have forged individually a creative vision which Mr. Schwartz deems to be a significantly "humanist" one for our time. How did he reach and identify them? It was a labor of love over more than a three-year period. When he set out to write the book, he corresponded with the few artists whose work he most respected, requesting the names of other artists he should see. They responded, and in turn others, and by geometric progression he became familiar with a whole network scattered over the breadth of the country. The work of ninety such artists is presented in his book and that of one hundred and fifty is discussed. In short, he feels himself well armed with the evidence he needs to make his case.

From the more limited selection of photographs and other data presented in this issue as a subtext to the discussion, the reader is given an opportunity to sample the nature of the documentation. (It should be stated that with one or two exceptions the symposiasts did not have such an opportunity. It simply was not practical to try to provide it.) Acknowledgedly, it will not be easy to make judgements on a number of the artists, especially out of our usual expectation of what art should or should not be, of what art should or should not try to say. Schwartz tells us that unlike the artist, "who puts us at ease, who would have us appreciate his form, color field, experimental direction," the humanist artist announces in his work "that complacency is a more passive form of suicide"; he is distinguished by a sense of commitment to "the struggle to create new, credible values" for man. In effect, it is work predicated on what might be termed humanist assumptions, and we are asked to respond to it in that light. In the context of the symposium in this issue that should not be difficult.

As a final word, we hope it will be noted that we are presenting an original work, which was done for this issue. We trust that it will add its voice to *the exquisite debate.*

And the debate continues.

Edward L. Kamarck

The Humanist Alternative: Man in Modern Art

by Barry Schwartz
Barry Schwartz is a writer, poet, lecturer and activist. He is Director of the Cultural Alternatives Network. The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change *will be published by Praeger in the summer of 1973. Also in the Spring of 1973 Mr. Schwartz will publish his first volume of poetry,* The Voyeur of Our Time, *with Barlenmir House and another book,* Human Connection and the New Media, *with Prentice-Hall. He has a heart like pudding.*

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Western civilization experienced the peak intensity of an historical crisis of identity of over three centuries duration. The human problems originating with the dissolution of the Medieval belief system were now thought to be solvable by allegiance to the technological myths of progress, systems, States, collective optimism, organization, rationalism, function and order. Against a backdrop of social nihilism, social energies became firmly committed to technological development. A reevaluation of both the meaning and conventions of art took place as the crisis of modern life was felt throughout the cultural domain.

The Romantics, looking through a rear view mirror at a vision of the agrarian society, were unable to convince a world preoccupied with machines, pavements and products that an ecological reconciliation was a possibility.

Out of the confusion came two possibilities. Some artists chose to investigate the technological environment. In their exploration of the man-made world, they paralleled the scientific inquiry into materials, space, time, energy, architectonics and the nature of perception itself. Others chose to oppose technological myths by creating countercultural art. Generally the opposition to the technological direction has been pessimistic, critical, tragic and concerned with liberation, injustice, individualism and freedom in the face of its denial.

The contemporary opposition to social "progress" first took the form of Dada, an expression of contempt. Dada was artistic noncooperation; the artist would no longer participate in the creation of illusions which diverted attention from the crisis. Dada was a statement of unconditional dissatisfaction; the artist's rejection of his own time. But Dada, though

scandalous, was not an effective countercultural force. Duchamp complained "I threw the bottle-rack and the urinal into their faces as a challenge and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty."[1]

The last breath of Romanticism in art — Surrealism — tried to resurrect nature again as an inexplicable force. However, because Romanticism was driven into the human shell, nature had to be confined to the human psyche. Now nature was without a body; it consisted of spirit, of irrational forces, of the mysterious. Without an external reality beyond the mind of man, nature now needed man to be.

The artist who wished to deal with society was required to do so only insofar as he investigated himself. The retreat of the artist into freedom in isolation was irreversible by the time Dada was already incorporated into art history; today it is used to tell more about the artists involved than about the spiritual collapse of Western civilization. The technological track has continued, and the Romantic tradition has willed itself away in a dedicated but ineffectual protest against the modern world.

Impressionism was the first of a number of artistic movements to test the Romantic view of nature with a scientific one. It chose to explore light. Later Cubism explored space and time. With the invention of the camera, a metaphor for the entire technocratization process, many artists sought vitality by closing the distance between their art and the emerging technology. No longer believing in their "magical" powers, doubtful of their actual contribution, these artists participated in the general consolidation that was part of the larger technocratization movement. As was true in most other human pursuits, the artist began to think of himself as a specialist, a more imaginative form of technocrat with dominion over a small part of the fragmented whole.

The idea of "art for art's sake," which differs dramatically from the idea of art for the species' sake, or even art for culture's sake, coincided with the artist's decision to leave unto technology the human sphere of people, economics, and social and political relationships. Art would content itself with discovery within those areas of human perception over which it thought it had some control.

Art became divided against itself as a result of the breakup of the Medieval period; today art is divided against itself as society moves toward a technological medievalism. In the modern stage of this historical process, since Dada and Surrealism, artists have had several versions of essentially two options: the first offers artists a role that parallels or complements science and the forces of technology. Here the artist is encouraged to support the historical pattern and affirm the dominant direction of society. The second option takes the form of creative resistance to the blind technocratization of the human and natural environments. By no longer divorcing human life from modern life, this second option seeks a central role for art within the human situation. This critical perspective of the technological world is what Marcuse has called "The Great Refusal."

The first option leads to an avant-garde defined by its ability to innovate, discover and change at a rate comparable with technological development; the second option promotes an avant-garde based on the artist's ability to provide a countercultural force—opposing the acculturating forces of the technocratization process. The

first option has sometimes been called modernism, but whatever its name, it is a modern application of the theory of imitation. In this case, however, the imitation is that of the man-made environment. *Modernism is a technological portraiture.*

The art directions of the twentieth century reflect these two patterns.[2] The side of the coin seen in Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Futurism, Cubism, Geometric Abstraction, Neoplasticism, Constructivism, Op Art, Minimalism and the New Abstraction all work toward finding the proper artistic mode, sufficiently unique, while at the same time avoiding a tension between the dominant forces of technological change and the often brutal impact of these forces upon mankind. Modernism has remained aloof from subjective appraisals of modern life. The human resistance to the technological pattern takes the form of Surrealism, Expressionism, Social Realism and Humanism. This human resistance is characterized by the artist's willingness to risk, to oppose "the way things are," to provide cultural criticism, to help us see that optimism is a lie. If the modernist believes little is known and that he is about to discover, the artists who resist feel that much is known but that too few are paying attention.[3]

Throughout this century there has existed an art that has expressed outrage at the castration of human life. It has often been lost in the shuffle of art movements and its practitioners have usually been treated as eclectic creators. Although related to Surrealism, Expressionism and Social Realism, Humanism is a unique artistic intention. Unfortunately, "humanism" has been frequently misused or soiled in discussions of art. It has sometimes been associated with a drab academic representational art. Further, artists of other persuasions have taken offense at the suggestion that their art is not equally "Humanistic." However the word is embarrassing or clichéd, I would still prefer to use it when describing the ever growing body of work created by living artists who share a common aesthetic. If this art is the cultural expression of the struggle to achieve new, credible values, a struggle that can be characterized as Humanism, then it is appropriate to speak again of Humanism in art.

We are encouraged to believe that art is indifferent or independent of so-called non-visual values. The view that there should not be a social art in a time of social crisis is evidence of yet another way we are conditioned to police ourselves. Art historians and critics have usually refused to recognize and deal with the value orientation of Humanist art, perhaps believing with the rest of society, that what is not recognized, goes away. Humanist artists themselves have sometimes inculcated or pretended to have inculcated aesthetic theories which do little justice to their art. They have done this in the belief that it was required of them if they were to survive as working artists and receive adequate exhibition. Obviously, Humanism has been affected by the crisis it communicates.

The crisis of modern life is the contemporary bison. It is inexplicable, beyond our reach, incomprehensible and of enormous impact on human life. At a time of unparalleled potential for an environment that promotes the growth of healthy, fulfilled human beings, we live with distorted values, with war and nationalism, with the cruelties of empire builders. In the United States, the center of technological development, we live with social fragmentation, polarization, poverty, racism, sexism, violence and spiritual death. Values are built on lies, on illusions,

Why is it that form without significant/empathetic content is much less embarrassing than content with insignificant form?

—Sigmund Abeles

I deal in horror, but it is one of recognition, not violence, although sometimes that, too. . . . My people are transitional people. They must learn to breathe chemical air and eat processed dinners, and not merely accept them but defend them because it is the price to be paid. What I take perverse pleasure in they must take their only pleasure in.

—Michael Fauerbach

on a pathological consumerism, on the evasion of what each of us knows is secretly true. Although the environment has been created in the name of satisfying human needs, the mechanisms of society are dehumanized, insensitive and hopelessly beyond the reach of individual man.

Not simply a matter of political or social upheavals, today's crisis is the crisis of life itself. It is not alarms we hear; it is the roar of an apocalypse. At a time of greatest uncertainty, what scientists would call the point of maximum entropy generation, a time when men must choose between life and death, the Humanist believes "the apocalyptic contingency must be recognized as *conceivable* yet shown to be *avoidable*."[4]

Unable to account for the apocalypse by divine plan, modern man has no choice but to account for his actions as the realization of his identity. Rejection of present human action leads to the search for a new human identity, a new self-image of man in the world. The search for this new identity characterizes Humanism in life and in art. Unlike less critical tendencies, Humanist art tries to discredit technological myths with older and newer myths which prove human perceptions are as equally valid a guide for human behavior as are the systematized rules of conduct promulgated by the technological order. By opposing the direction of the society in which he creates, the Humanist artist is in a state of perpetual antagonism with reality. Out of this conflict comes the insight of what it is we need to know in order to be able to survive.

The Humanist will weigh and measure, evaluate and communicate those values which are seen to deny or encourage new ways of relating to the world and to each other. The Humanist insists on social change and participates in the creation of a system that offers greater sanity, humanity and justice. But the demand for positive social change implies no illusion of its certainty.

The Humanist expresses both the desperation of the human situation and his own assertion of freedom. His images express the unacceptable, but in his negation of past human choices, the Humanist affirms that men may live differently.

Unlike the ethical philosopher who creates discourse, the Humanist artist creates a visual experience which, if successful, will stimulate the viewer's sensitivity to the reality of his human environment and the needs of human beings within it. The Humanist artist is concerned with life as it is experienced; he does not subscribe to the current fashion of separating logic from feeling, cognition from perception, feeling from intuition and intuition from behavior. His art will generally be representational because his subject is explicit human experience and behavior, the forms of existence. However, the artist is not merely representing what is known, obvious and enduring. He explores values and behavior within a context of confusion, pain and crisis.

Humanism in art can be characterized by a commonality of interest and a shared intention realized in a diversity of styles and visual appearances. Yet, because critics have only been able to see connection between art that *looks alike* they have characterized groups and movements solely on the basis of the formally similar qualities of a body of work. They have failed to develop a reasonable critique of the development of content in our time, and have preferred instead, to pretend that art history is the progressive evolution of form. As a consequence much twentieth century art has been misrepresented. For our purposes, it is relevant to consider how the

Leonel Góngora. *Imaginary Portrait of Góngora,* 1964; gouache, acrylics, and pen. Courtesy of the artist. Photographer: Stephen C. Sumner.

A stranger once asked if I was in the entertainment world. I almost said yes, but I thought of my paintings and said, 'No, I make cudgels.' Such self-righteousness makes me squirm but it is a discomfort I live with. It is not easy to stay out of step.

—Joseph Hirsch

art historians and critics have handled Abstract Expressionism.

Today the Abstract Expressionists are used to affirm American art generally and American formalism specifically. Referring to the "formalist writers on art, whose point of view came to dominate art criticism during the 1960's," Irving Sandler explains that "These writers narrowed their interpretations to formal problems, avoiding any analysis of content. Their underlying premise was that advanced artists conceive new styles by rejecting recently established styles that have become outworn through overuse."[5]

It is a bitter irony that during the 1960's, an era that destroyed the lethargy of the previous decade by its energetic search for new values, art criticism was reduced to a preoccupation with style. Though Abstract Expressionism was motivated by Humanist concerns and struggled to communicate content with integrity, the formalist critics have preferred to judge Abstract Expressionism as the artistic analogy to the scientific endeavor. They have, as Harold Rosenberg expressed it, engaged "in the systematic nibbling away of the meanings of Abstract Expressionist works through translating them into purely aesthetic terms."[6]

The formalists refuse to acknowledge that Abstract Expressionism was a crucial holding action, a hesitation between the forces of technological development and the values promoted by human resistance to its most destructive impulses. Abstract Expressionism was a dedicated attempt to come to terms with the problems to be found at the boundary of two opposing sensibilities. Although the Abstract Expressionists could no longer perpetuate myths they felt to be untrue, they were unwilling or unable to lead the cultural opposition to the transformation of the environment.

Abstract Expressionism was, after all, a persona of lament; an expression of self and human presence through the experiences the artists believed were credible. Within the social milieu, at a time when brave men felt hopelessly confused and most men were no longer able to locate themselves, the Abstract Expressionists maintained human significance while avoiding direct confrontation with the dominant forces in the environment.

At the heart of Abstract Expressionism is the crisis of the person, the individual, the singular man. Abstract Expressionism kept a man alive, affirmed his human presence against the background of the machinery, but it did not fully anticipate the crisis of the species. The Humanist sensibilities in Abstract Expressionism took the form of an assertion of identity; Humanism today aspires to human connection, not identity, but relationship. Thus Abstract Expressionism embodies within the work the emotional life of the artist, while in Humanism we find the subjective experience of the species.

The dilemma of content inherited by Abstract Expressionism and Humanism alike can be traced to Social Realism which, unfortunately, served to diminish the credibility of a countercultural art. If the art which affirmed the dominant directions of society supported the ideology of progress, Social Realism, which was antagonistic to the existing political system, allowed itself to succumb to similar myths. By subscribing to a "truth" that was not a truth but an ideological proposition, Social Realism blemished later attempts to create outside the swift stream of technological imitation. Though the "content" of Social Realism advocated change in the name of man, the illusions, myths and faith of Social Realism were

too similar to the decadent art to which it thought it was an alternative.

Social Realism did not maintain the tension between freedom and security that is necessary for the integrity of a Humanist art. Instead, it differed with modernist values only in terms of which conception of the eventually secure society history would prove to be accurate; historical inevitability was fundamental to both. The Social Realists denied freedom to the future much in the same way the technological pattern affirms that, despite ecological disaster and civil strife, dissent and polarization, the over-all direction of society ("Progress is our most important product.") is assured. By offering its optimism as a counterbalance to technological optimism, Social Realism was as much influenced in its rejection of modernism as if it had followed the modernist tendency blindly.

The major objection that must be made to Social Realism is that, after a time, like the art it opposed, it became dishonest. It was not, of course, a form of realism at all. In its most vigorous expressions, it was actually a form of Surrealism. However, its dream was not the one that came with sleep, but that which came with history.

For the Social Realist, history was the insight of which one must be conscious. And here my remarks may be included as part of the standard rhetoric used to help ease Social Realism out of the history of American painting. But if Social Realism failed as a countercultural mode, it was, after all, only an art that did not succeed. The blanket condemnation in our time of the art of the thirties, and the fact that historical accounts of American art do not adequately deal with it, is in no way justified because Social Realism failed to provide a viable artistic alternative to the art that has remained in vogue. Dada, too, was a failure, but we surely have reacted to both in different ways — ways that support and follow the pattern of modernism.

If art is to be political today, it must be post-ideological. No ideology presently exists which does not have the potential for betraying the very mankind it says it wishes to serve. Thus today's Humanist upholds human value against both the ideological collective and the corporate state. Still, the absence of ideology in Humanist art does not imply any diminution of the demand for social change. However, the social change envisioned —divorced from imposed labels— is simply a demand that people be able to be free, live lives that are healthy, satisfying and free of manipulation.

Yet if Humanists are free of the illusion of historical determinism, the over-all assumption that historical developments are *a priori* positive has been incorporated within the discipline of art history. Although the technological society wishes to maintain an appearance of progress, it abhors fundamental change. Contemporary criticism collaborates, freezes the moment, turns art into events. By creating an art history that divorces art from its historical context, today's art historians and critics would have us believe that art has always been concerned primarily with its own conventions. Through a method of correlating styles and influences, these art professionals have pictured the history of art independent of the history of man. If art is to be truly a cultural phenomenon, the work of art must be seen related to its context. The critics and historians who speak about the universality of art, its ability to transcend circumstances and to speak to all men and all time, in reality reduce art to a carcass

which speaks to no man at any specific time.

Humanist art strives to be a cultural force. It wants to derive its authenticity by the degree to which it is of this world. It is a constant reminder that the assumption of progress and the illusion of advancement are only conditioned reflexes within the technological environment; that if man is suffering within the dehumanized environment, there will be an art that gives voice to his pain.

At times, the Humanist intention in art is ascribed to all artistic motivation. This is not correct, and describes only those artists who have refused to fit into and support technological optimism. Herbert Read, for example, demonstrates this confusion:

> *Art, on the other hand, is eternally disturbing, permanently revolutionary. It is so because the artist, in the degree of his greatness, always confronts the unknown, and what he brings back from the confrontation is a novelty, a new symbol, a new vision of life, the outer image of inward things. . . . The artist is what the Germans called* ein Ruttler, *an upsetter of the established order.*[7]

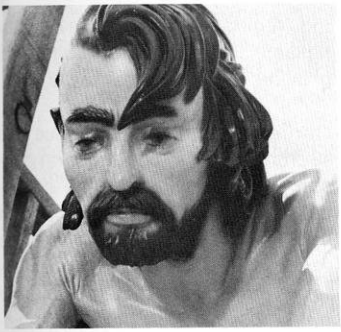
Unfortunately, Read's wish that the artist upset the established order is not satisfied by many of those artists who are today very deliberate and calm in their ongoing neutrality and "professional" concerns. If they are capable of upsetting some small part of society, it is only because they, for the moment, are "news"—not because of their work, but because it is *their work.*

At this moment, there are at least as many artistic energies expended in affirmation of the established order as there are those against it. And by upsetting the established order, I trust we mean specifically that art creates more than aesthetic controversy; we mean that it threatens existing structures insofar as it postulates their brutality or their fragility.

On the other hand, what makes the established order secure are cultural structures that take the same form as societal structures. The art that today affirms the established order defines itself as a new profession, a specialization whose discoveries can be known only through its own enlightened discipline. It prefers to leave most citizens to their so-called popular culture, the fully programmed arm of the technological system.

As society moves toward completion of its technological task, it creates appropriate institutions for the arts. This has to be so. The technological society is not comfortable with a strong creative, unpredictable and critical force within its midst which is not brought under influence or control.

As society has taken children out of the home to insure a more cohesive, uniform and effective acculturation by placing them in schools, so too society has created vehicles in the form of enormous cultural apparatus to "educate" the artist. The continuing affiliation of artists with the university, the often disastrous intrusion of media and prominence into the lives of younger artists, the manipulation and support of museums as a way of emphasizing specific artistic directions, the use of foundation monies to pump prime the arts, the creation of a governmental bureaucratic arts management class — these are some of the factors that have assured that certain very general, very persuasive assumptions would continue to be made about art

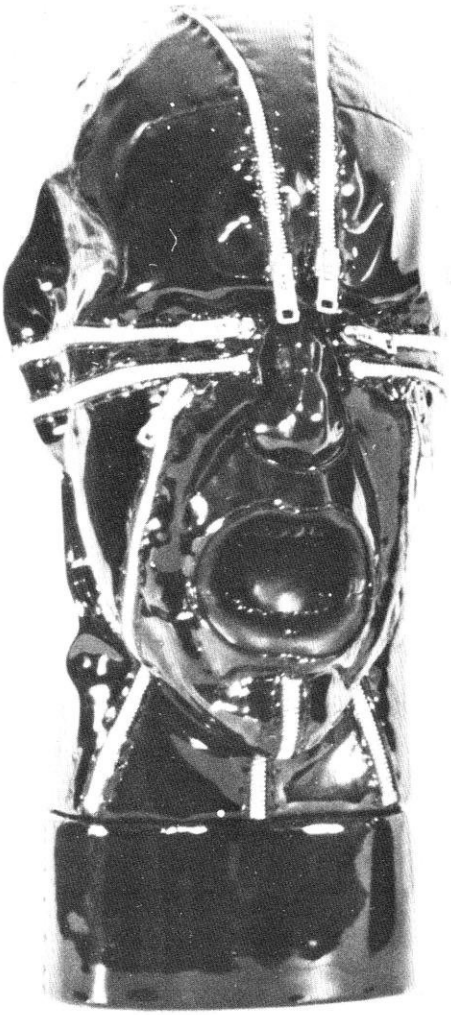


Ralph Massey. *Cage,* 1972, fiberglas and polyester resin with lacquered patina, 5′ x 5′ x 7′ h. Courtesy of the artist.

Look at the censored faces in the street. You can almost see people saying 'I'm not going to be caught feeling.' My figures feel right because they're all tied down. They might look frightening at first—after I had done a few I ran out of my studio. Then I began to see how defenseless they were.

—Nancy Grossman

and the role of the artist in society. In a way that is perfectly consistent with the technological pattern, the arts are controlled not by overt political influence, but are "managed" by the "proper" means, which are support, access and distribution. Those who express surprise at the fact that in our time the arts have become institutionalized and integrated within the mainstream of modern life are naive, for society will accept the artist as long as his art is not *effectively* critical. The technological system within which we now live, like other systems offering regulation and security, harnesses the forces of culture to provide affirmation of the system.



Our society does not value the search for the contemporary bison. It values instead the continual discovery of things that can be known only through specific processes. The questions it likes to explore are dictated by the ways it believes it can find answers. It encourages a pseudo-scientific method which increasingly emphasizes methodology rather than value. As art has become integrated within society, and with the creation of the art marketplace, planned obsolescence has been built into art. The artist, in turn, has been redefined in ways that are consistent with the role of the professional, the specialization and the marginal importance assigned to his endeavor.

We are living with what amounts to a *"science-centered curtailment* of human understanding."[8] As Edgar Wind has noted, many artists "seem to act in their studios as if they were in a laboratory, performing a series of controlled experiments in the hope of arriving at a valid scientific solution. And when these astringent exercises are exhibited, they reduce the spectator to an observer who watches the artist's latest excursion with interest, but without vital participation."[9] The old is continually rejected for the new, like the processes of science itself which affirm a method but never claim any particular discovery to be of lasting importance. The turnover of new data is seen as a sign of the health of the process itself. Artists speak of color theory, serial painting, field painting, and other categories, based on a pseudo-scientific exploration of visual experience.

Thus modernism in art, the cultural analog to the technological system, emulates science and technological innovation, and "proves" art to be a legitimate

activity within the environment. I am reminded of the museum catalog in which artist Richard Anuszkiewicz says of his art: "My work is of an experimental nature and has centered on an investigation into the effects of complementary colors of full intensity when juxtaposed and the optical changes that occur as a result."[10]

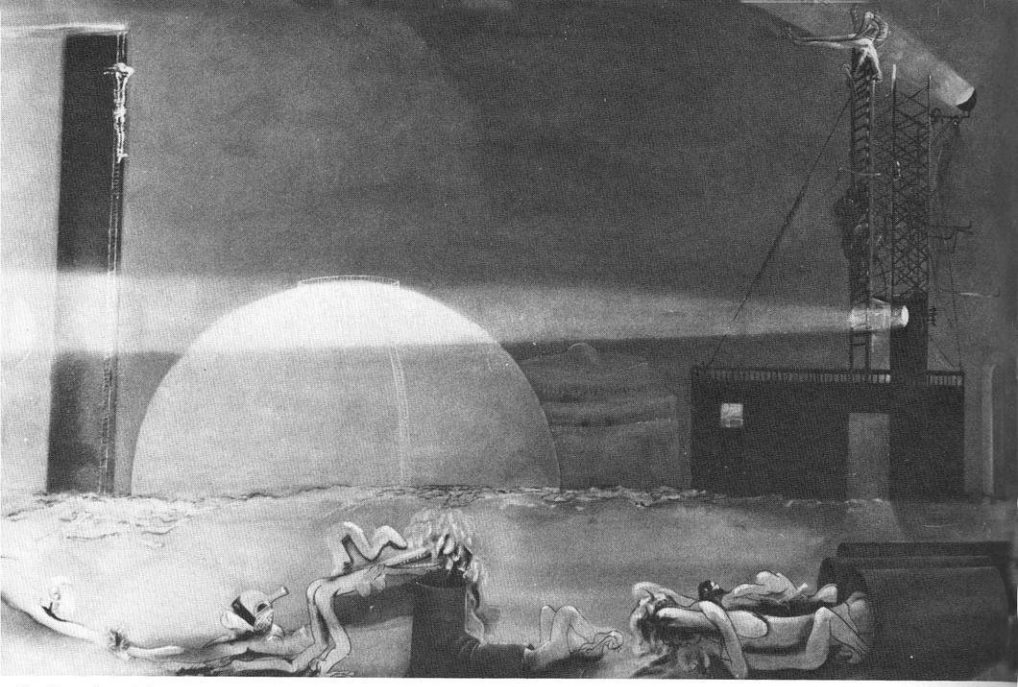
The formalism in aesthetics which is dominant in our time is a rationalization for the continuation of an art that is compatible to the technological society. It is predictable that an aesthetic emerges serving this "cleansing function." These aesthetic theories, which are only opinions with support, are what Marcuse has identified as "technological rationality." Not only do formalist aesthetics provide the context into which new art forms come and go, but it also provides a general rebuttal to Humanist arts.

Every artistic intention, and they are as varied as human choice itself, generates an aesthetic by which one is encouraged to understand the art and by which one can choose to evaluate it. An aesthetic is, as Kenneth Clark put it, "a helpful background to art."[11] But when the aesthetics of one intention is applied to another, as has been the case when the formalist aesthetic has been applied to Humanism, we have a form of critical totalitarianism, in which individual works are rejected not because they are unsuccessful, but because what they intend to do is thought to be undesirable.

Though individual Humanist artists have, on occasion, passed the inspection of the critics, they have rarely been presented within the context of their actual intention. Because formalist aesthetics reject any attempt to bring what are thought of as non-aesthetic considerations to the work of art, the Humanist intention has been relegated to an obscure status. "Why," asked Clive Bell, "should artists bother about the fate of humanity?"[12]

The concern for human and social experience found in Humanist art antagonizes the formalists. In their attempt to create the rationale for modernism and in their wish to neutralize counter-cultural forces in art, formalist critics have pretended that the judgments of art history are based on nearly scientific, objective criteria, and not on the cultural assumptions made by the critic himself. Although there is little hesitation among critics to use terms such

Nancy Grossman. *Heads*, 1971; patent leather, wood, polyester resin; each 16¾" h. Courtesy of Cordier & Ekstrom Gallery, N.Y. Photographer: Susan Weiley.



I plan to put on my work the . . . stigma of wars and their objectives; the horrible presence of aggressive weapons that serve to kill, to create smoke, fear, demolish countries only to make others, violate ideals to create sinister interest. All of this and the great multitude that flows through the streets wants to live on the bare canvas of each work I start . . . in the lonely spots I choose to confront my own conscience.

—Gaston Orellana

Gaston Orellana. *Estación de Radar Fuenterrabía (España)*, 1970, 4.20 x 3.80 (metros) h. Courtesy of the artist.

as "bourgeois sentimentality," and "aristocratic frivolity," words which identify qualities of art satisfying the special requirements of a social grouping or class, critics have been more than reluctant to identify what, if any, grouping they respond to. Is this the job of later historians, or can we say now that much of modern criticism is based on "institutional compatibility"?

To articulate their bias in less vulgar terms, the formalists have employed the catchall of all art discussion: the concept of purity. It is a very convenient term, for instead of having to say, "I don't like this," or "I find this offensive or disturbing," critics can now conveniently and authoritatively indicate that this or that work is "impure." It is only within the "rational" irrationality of our society that, in a time identified chiefly by war, ecological disaster, corruption, authoritarian ethics, credibility gaps and the like, our art historians favor the notion of purity in art.

The contemporary fascination with the concept of purity is another borrowing from science. Within the scientific endeavor, there are two directions: applied science and "pure" research. Applied science is concerned with what science has learned only insofar as this "knowledge" can have an impact on the environment. Thus, applied science is infused with utilitarian values. Pure science is concerned with the continual discovery of what has not previously been known. The ideal of purity in art is analogous. Art that has messages, meanings and utilitarian implications is impure, whereas art that leads along the path of formal inquiry and investigation of visual experience freed of all extra-aesthetic implications maintains its purity. Such formalist theories of art tend to regard Humanism with its concerns for human values and social experience as a misuse of art. Curiously, one sees overt hostility between pure science and applied science only when funding priorities emphasize one over the oth-

er. Perhaps if the arts were as fully supported as the sciences, many of the "important" controversies in the arts would quickly be reduced to amicable disagreements over the "best" of artistic intentions.

* * *

Unfortunately, the Humanist's wish to communicate has been all but ruled out of aesthetic discussion. The formalists have wanted only to perceive art through the tools of analysis or by the requirements of the marketplace. Critics and art historians alike have remained unwilling or unable to contact, feel and describe the communication of the art work. They have supported this neglect by asserting that the painter's experience with the work is solely important and that the viewer's experience with art is only of minor interest.

The refusal of formalists to deal with the experiences of those outside the closed world of art invention is typical of the contemporary elitism found among other technocrats in the technological environment. This refusal implies that art experience is not, in fact, intended to communicate to the average person but only to those already initiated into the profession's visual literacy. Like technocrats and bureaucrats, the artist and the critic are encouraged to achieve status by showing how many shares (training, education, apprenticeship, connections) they hold of the cultural knowledge bank. Fortunately, a work of art does poorly as an interoffice memorandum.

Edward Kienholz. *The Wait*, 1964-65, assemblage and mixed media, 80 x 148 x 78". Coll: Whitney Museum of American Art, NY. Photographer: Geoffrey Clements.

A work of art is created when an artist fashions something that comes to exist through the painter's being — sensory, intellectual, subconscious, emotional, perceptual. It is a thing of paint, of color, of form, of texture, of smell, of time and space, of a thousand sensory impacts occurring simultaneously. The work of art may or may not be conceived, but it is always a surprise. It is all of these things for the painter; the painter's experience with the object is really not with the object *qua* object at all but with the process through which the object is created. The painter or printmaker discovers, grows, creates, and finds things he or she didn't know were there. Out of the infinity of possibilities that exist on any blank canvas or unscored plate, a definite specific visual experience is created.

But there is more than the painter to be considered; it is here we part company with formalist aesthetics. There is an "other"—the non-maker. And though the artist may or may not create with this "other" in mind, once the work is completed it belongs as much to the "other" as it does to the artist. I think this is what Rothko meant when he said, "the instant one painting is completed, the intimacy between the creation and the creator is ended."[13]

The "other" is unable, though he may and should try, to implicate himself fully into the process by which the work was created. Consequently, the "other" must come to terms with the work itself, *qua* object. He must deal with the "ends" of the process. Not to respect the special problems and/or talents and/or contributions of the "other" to the painting is to say that paintings are for painters — which, I think, some of us do not want to say.

The "other" will engage in a new process in many ways opposite to the processes of the artist. Where the artist started with nothing (nothing fixed or definite) and created a new experience in the world, the "other" is presented with an experience that is everything to him. The sensuality, the emotion, the meaning, the impact he feels—all are to be found within the confrontation with the object. The "other" is given a thing which is "fixed," filled, done. At first, it is more than he can see, more than he can feel, more than he can understand. His problem is not to create something out of nothing; he must comprehend, absorb, and perceive something which at first seems monumentally alien to him. While the painter must bring to the canvas numerous emotions and perceptions in order to create the work, the "other" must contact his emotions, his feelings, his experiences, his sensitivities in order to maximize his experience with the work of art. If this were not the case, the painting would be merely another stimulus inducing an automatic response; the behaviorists would be correct in thinking that we can control human emotions by learning specifically which stimuli create which specific response.

The "other" is not a passive spectator, not a yea-sayer to the visual truth. Nor could he be. The work of art is not "clear," it is a mystery. One has to live with art a very long time before one perceives the dimensions of that mystery. Still, the "other" is compelled to seek a communication. First, this communication is purely visual: I see. Colors exist, textures appeal, lines suggest, etc. Forms are pleasing or disturbing. After a time, the "other" will become visually familiar with the work. He will go deeper, past, through. Though never outside the visual experience, the "other" contacts the artist, seeks to know his vision, his emotions. Summoning sensitivity and awareness,

the "other" will enter the essential nature of the thing that is before him.

The relationship between artist and viewer is one outstanding aspect of the holistic aspiration of Humanist art. The Humanist artist needs the viewer for completion. Since the work strives for human connection with the viewer, since the symbolic and mythic orientation of the work is useless without viewer engagement, the Humanist, perhaps more than others, has the viewer centrally in mind while he creates his work.

The encounter with Humanist art will not be realized if the viewer filters out, or refuses to become involved with, experiences that are not pleasurable. You cannot ask Humanist art to make you feel good, to provide a playful and idyllic escape from depressing realities, or to assist you in finding relief from the painful experiences of life. Humanism incorporates Brecht's theatrical ideas of alienation. The "estrangement-effect" is designed to produce an experience in which the world can be recognized for what it is. "The experiences of everyday life are lifted out of the real to the self-evident. . . ."[14] As Marx wrote, "petrified conditions must be forced to dance by singing to them their own melody."[15]

Humanism is the insistence that from actuality something better must emerge. Through a rejection of what men have come to regard as normal, the Humanist creates the avenue for acceptance of new values. As he identifies the realities of our time, its illusions, its slogans, its programmed human relationships, and its lies, the Humanist creates his own mythical base which recognizes both the limitations of the human condition and the need for a more acceptable social condition. In this sense, the Humanist adds to the existentialist: if God is dead everything is allowable—yes, but not everything is preferable. What gives man his spiritual dimension is precisely this ability to make choices.

The fact that the formalist critics' assumptions about art are different from those of the Humanists' may be taken only as a difference of opinion and not as a rationale for the denigration of a particular artistic intention. Certain critics and art historians believe that viewers must be trained to see, that seeing is a learned discipline. But one could equally argue that critics have to be trained to feel, that most art history and art criticism, in their pseudo-scientific guises, have long ceased to engage the work of art. Critics and art historians categorize, debate the worth of manifestoes, place the work in chronological perspective, and characterize its influences. While they speedily place the newest art form within the purview of twentieth century art, they often do not feel, or react, or let us know what it is like to have an experience with a work of art.

The realities of contemporary existence are not implied by or to be deduced from Humanist art, but remain embedded in the work's visual reality. What can one say after seeing Kienholz's "The Illegal Operation"? How easy is it to enter into academic discussions on environmental sculpture? How much guesswork is necessary for one to conclude that the artist did not create this work in order to initiate a discussion about *art?*

Unfortunately formalist writers never developed the visual and mythical vocabulary of Humanist art. Their decision to avoid the artist's communication is based on a conception, an idea, a value, about the role of art. Within the technological system, we are supposed to blindly accept the belief

My art is a confrontation. . . . It is of course a social art, based on my 'gut' perceptions of our worldly conditions; but it draws upon each viewer to confront himself in consideration of his role in affecting these conditions.

—Cliff Joseph

that art is only something to be looked at, a retinal experience exclusively.

The Humanist sees the crisis of our times not as personal *angst* but as human and social conditions about which he is compelled to communicate. His work is filled with the signs and strains of our time. What Humanists see as essential awarenesses, without which the quality of life will be greatly diminished, formalist critics persist in seeing as corruptions of the work of art. What Humanists create as sometimes archetypal, sometimes concrete, images of our time, critics dismiss as images which are too ugly to be acceptable within a proper, tasteful modern art.

Unless the critic or art historian accepts Humanist assumptions, at least for as long as he looks at Humanistic work, he will be unable to deal with this work. If he is attuned only to the artist who puts us at ease, who would have us appreciate his form, color field, and experimental direction, the critic or historian will fail to understand those artists who tell us that complacency is a more passive form of suicide.

In future years, the formalist aesthetic will undergo revision. When this particular aesthetic is revised, modified or rejected, we will then see how many works of art were misunderstood or not understood because the prevailing aesthetic was not able to deal with them. Though the Humanists vary a great deal in terms of how well they achieve their shared intention, I will leave it to others to demonstrate vigorously which are the better. My wish is to develop an understanding of the Humanist intention and to present works which incarnate the vitality of Humanist creation in our time.

To this end it is helpful, though not always accurate, to categorize Humanist art by the artist's stance toward the crisis of modern life. The emotional stance of the artist is what finally gives the work its characteristic form. Some Humanists see the present as one point on the continuum of tragic human existence. These artists lament our particular condition. They are metaphysical in their concerns and mythical in their mode. Other Humanists are angered by the destruction and spiritual bankruptcy and create images of diminished man as existential statements of human identity. Other Humanists are angered by the social conditions. Their art will be explicitly political, the expression of the imperative of change. Still other Humanists investigate human lives and create a contemporary portraiture. And finally there are Humanists who wish to smash the belief that what we usually regard as normal is healthy and sane. These absurdists reveal the fundamental irrationality of programmed human behavior.

The stance of the artist determines the way he chooses to explore content. The metaphysical Humanist creates work that is active symbolically; he engages the viewer in the interpretation of the work. The existential Humanist creates images which confront the viewer by provoking a response. The absurdists employ a repulsion-curiosity mechanism; the viewer is repelled by these parodies, but, as it is human nature to do so, comes back for many more curious looks. In the end he is led into a reexamination of his value system, or, if he is among the initiated, he is led into a form of humor that takes delight in the exposure of modern madness. The political Humanist wants to contact the viewer's feelings of oppression and struggle.

All Humanism embodies a tension between life as it is lived and life as it could be lived. The dual vision of the artists is comprised

My images take place . . . at that moment we stand balanced between our 'internal' (what we believe to be real) and 'external' (what is real) realities.

—Michael Peters

Yehuda Ben-Yehuda. *Mass of Figures* (detail), 1967, life-size, latex and foam. Courtesy of the artist. (opposite page)

of a view of man as the victim of contemporary experience. The Humanist aesthetic is best demonstrated when the totality of human experience is maximized through a tension between human potential and human actuality. If the work expresses only human potential it becomes an ineffective form of romantic protest, a fantasy unconnected with life as it is lived. If the work contains only actuality, it reverts to a crass realism which goes no further than the human eye.

However the Humanists vary in the ways they achieve their art, they hold in common and validate a Humanist aesthetic motivated by the priority of human life, the necessity of change and their willingness to contribute to the possibility. □

[1] Marcel Duchamp, as quoted by Edward Lucie-Smith, *Late Modern: The Visual Arts Since 1945.* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), P. 11.

[2] The modernist exploration of the technological environment and the Humanist's concern with its impact on human life are not to be construed as exclusive categories. In fact, the greater body of artists' work reflect both concerns in varying degrees. I have used these classifications as convenient tools for describing artists who clearly emphasize one of the concerns as the central feature of their work. There are, of course, numerous examples of overlap; Humanists who reveal prominent formalistic concerns, and formalists whose art is motivated by Humanist intentions. Space does not permit discussion of the work of Picasso, the Dadaists, and the early Surrealists who excelled in both formal innovation and major Humanist statements. Yet these classifications, if understood as generalities, are worthwhile, particularly since World War II, when the separations became apparent.

[3] For an extended discussion of the relationship between these cultural patterns and their relationship to the new media, see "The Communications Revolution: Lower Rates for Long Distance Telephone Calls or The Transformation of Society," Barry Schwartz, *Arts in Society,* Vol. 9:2 (Summer-Fall, 1972).

[4] Ernst Fischer, *The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1963), 216.

[5] Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 1.

[6] Harold Rosenberg, *The Anxious Object: Art Today and Its Audience* (New York: Mentor Books, The New American Library, Inc., 1967), 24.

[7] Herbert Read, *Art and Alienation* (New York: Horizon Press, 1967), 24.

[8] George W. Morgan, *The Human Predicament: Dissolution and Wholeness* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1970), 10.

[9] Edgar Wind, *Art and Anarchy* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, Inc., 1969), 20.

[10] Richard Anuszkiewicz, as quoted by Rosenberg, *The Anxious Object,* p. 47.

[11] Kenneth Clark, "The Blot and the Diagram," *Encounter,* XX, 1 (January, 1963), 32.

[12] Clive Bell, *Art* (New York: Capricorn Books, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), 160.

[13] Mark Rothko, "The Romantics Were Prompted," *Possibilities 1,* No. 1 (Winter, 1947-48).

[14] Bertolt Brecht, as quoted by Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1968), 65.

[15] Karl Marx, as quoted by Herbert Marcuse, "Art as a Form of Reality," *On the Future of Art,* Sponsored by The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (New York: Viking Press, 1970), 132.

Humanism for Our Time

by George W. Morgan
Born in Vienna 1924; formerly in applied mathematics, now Professor and Chairman of the Committee on Human Studies at Brown University.

I.

The theme of this symposium is Humanism in culture, especially art. Immediately we face the question, "What do we mean by humanism?" There are many kinds of humanism, for example, Renaissance and Enlightenment, religious and secular, Marxist and non-Marxist scientific. Perhaps *humanism* has been used for too many and varied attitudes to serve us well. Yet by the same token, its meanings and associations are so rich that one cannot readily find a better word. If we use it, then, we must be prepared to see that our conceptions differ, while hoping that they will share enough of what is essential so that our ideas about humanism in culture will exhibit significant resonance.

I cannot be certain at just what points and how far the direction in which I shall try to point may diverge from Barry Schwartz. But there seems to be much in common. "Humanism," he writes, "embodies a tension between life as it is lived and as it could be lived." "It is the insistence that from actuality something better must emerge." In a time of crisis, as ours undoubtedly is, "the humanist insists on social change and participates in the creation of a system that offers greater sanity, humanity, and justice." (I am uncomfortable with "system," but this may be a matter of terminology only.) Though he works for such change, the humanist has no certainty that it will come about. The change cannot take place within the values that dominate the modern age, and humanism therefore means "the struggle to achieve new, credible values." It also means the search for "a new self-image of man in the world." And the man in the world to whom humanism today aspires cannot be "singular man," but man in "human connection."

I will add two matters that I deem fundamental. The first is an unwavering concern for man. Note well the word concern. I don't say confidence or faith. That might be too simple: we can affirm man's capacity for goodness and improvement, but we cannot ignore—especially we of this century cannot ignore — the distortions and evils into which he can sink. Unwavering concern for man means that no interest is allowed to displace the interest in man. No work, no achievement, no institution of man may overshadow man himself. Material productiveness, for example, is valued, but only in so far as it enhances the quality of human life. Knowledge is esteemed essential, but humans, who are the knowers, more so. No matter how necessary or sublime the arts, it is they that belong to human life, not human life to them.

The second matter of basic importance is that our concern is

I rather like the word "Humanist" with all its faults and virtues. It has a sweaty sound and is warm, moist, nostalgic, sentimental, paradoxical, passionate, humorous, fully, hard, trite, visionary, vulnerable, repellant, unfathomable, inexhaustible, awesome, in short, Human . . . .

—James Kearns

for the wholeness of human existence. Indeed, it is only when we are attentive to human wholeness that we can be unwaveringly concerned for man. Preoccupation with one need of man at the expense of others distorts him. Pursuit of a single goal, no matter how worthy it might appear in itself, subordinates the human being for whom rhythm of numerous activities and balance of many goals are always essential. To enthrone dynamism and change, for example, is to ignore the importance of stability and rest. To enthrone stability and rest is to court a security provided only by the grave. Without intellect we are not human, but no humanity without affection, and if we cleave the two, we cleave ourself. When we consider the products of industry, it is not only quantity and cost that matter, but the needs to which products answer, how well they do it, how accessible they are, and what side effects they have. Even that isn't enough, for not only the product but the act of working is essential. Making a complete object, being responsible for a significant task, engaging with others in relations of fellowship — these and many other aspects of work endow it with meaning and joy.

The dominant institutions and attitudes of our age are oblivious to concern with whole human life.[1] Gross National Product is a gross national obsession. More, bigger, and faster hold us in trance. Universities are referred to, and behave like, knowledge producing industries, and like other industries exhibit—even boast—disregard of the human context. In most areas of life, technical and organizational rationality preclude sensitivities and feelings. Other areas complement this repression by seizing the opposite pole: advertising and the mass media whip the emotions or exude sentimentality. The arts have not been immune to this fragmentation of man. They have often proclaimed sublime independence from life: art has only to do with art. Here and wherever specialization is idolized, experts displace whole human beings. The cults of the original, newest, and latest can be found in painting and sculpture, in music and film, just as in technology, business, and scholarship.

There are the voices of those, however, who have never ceased to speak to us of humanity. They insist on the primacy of the person, alert us to the dissolution of human wholeness, and seek possibilities of its realization. Artists, thinkers, and social leaders who have accepted this task have generally stood alone, not knowing who could hear them in the headlong rush. The rush continues, but their numbers have increased of late. More and more people around them are beginning to listen, and an awakening at many levels is occurring that gives glimmers of hope.

II.

In the wholeness of human life every activity is involved in the moral realm. Everything we do engages us somehow with particular persons or society. Every act implies a stance toward others, whether concern, indifference, or hostility. The words we speak, the images we form, the deeds we do, have consequences for which we carry a share of responsibility, however small. All pursuits move within possibilities, and we are answerable for the choices we make. Whatever we decide to do is simultaneously a decision not to do other things, and such decisions have to be taken in the context of claims people have upon us. In our work we rely directly or indirectly on others, and it is no matter of indifference whether our work warrants their support.

Exclusion or enfeeblement of the moral dimension is a pervasive modern phenomenon. Clearly

Richard Karwoski. *Two Figures*, 1971, oil on canvas, 60 x 40". Courtesy of the artist. (opposite page)

economic life allows moral considerations only a very subsidiary role. Interest in producing what can be sold at a profit dwarfs interest in meeting real needs. The major purpose of our advertising apparatus is to incite excessive and trivial desires. Nor is the moral dimension enfeebled only among those who seek profit; it would be illusory to suppose that the wage earning worker is widely concerned with the quality of his work or the steadiness of his working; the nature of our industrial enterprise encourages neither. This situation has a counterpart in "value-neutral" economic theory.[2] Modern economics is proud of its avoidance of ethical judgments because such avoidance is one of the hallmarks of scientific procedure. Other "behavioral sciences" — psychology, sociology, political science, etc.— with varying insistence take the same stance. Much modern philisophy, despite its rejection of positivism, is akin, using one or another argument to refrain from offering notions of good and evil or right and wrong.

It is neither necessary nor feasible here to go over the numerous claims that the moral dimension has no place in art. Unfortunately the fact that the most influential oppositions to these claims are equally false obscures the fundamental issue. For example, censorship by self-righteous guardians of so-called morality discloses more about the inhibited nature of much contemporary life than about the moral dimension of the works in question. (The nearly exclusive worry about sex together with unquestioned acceptance of brutality and murder are sufficient to expose this morality.) Or, when art is harnessed to disseminate a doctrine, then genuine moral concern for man is subordinated to a system of ideas, that is, to a product of man. But properly to understand the exclusion of morality from art, we must see it not only in a perspective of opposition to moralizing and indoctrination. We must see it in the perspective of enfeeblement of the moral dimension throughout modern culture. Every interest has sought to become a kingdom unto itself and strip away larger concerns. This "purification" brings relief from a difficult burden, avoids uncertainty and risk, and escapes from the terrible confusion of values in our age. It eliminates the possibility of having to sacrifice things we cherish because of greater claims.

The manner in which each human activity is involved in the moral realm varies. The natural sciences, for example, are value-neutral in that they do not perceive the phenomena they study as good or just or desirable. Their pursuit, however, involves assent to certain modes of human conduct and opposition to others that might interfere. The social studies involve the same kind of assent and opposition, of course. But they paralyze or delude themselves when they emulate the value neutrality of the natural sciences.[3] Their subject matter, which is human existence and therefore permeated by values, affects their inquiry. The economist's notions of growth and profit, for example, are laden with moral attitudes toward what the concepts refer to. The sociologist's study of suicide, poverty, or prejudice involves his own moral inclinations, not only in the choice of his subject matter, but throughout his work. By neutralizing his approach, he can sometimes provide useful ancillary data, but if he stops there, his study is uninteresting to those who care about poverty and prejudice. The interaction between subject matter and mode of inquiry, moreover, works also the other way. Economic theorizing, sociological surveys, political analyses work back to affect human conduct. This is a chief reason indeed why many people engage in such studies. They want to influence the way

things are. Those who wish to renounce such influence invoke the "purity" of their pursuit. But it is impossible and therefore deceptive to renounce influence. The real issue is whether we acknowledge our inclinations to ourselves and others and what the directions of these inclinations are.

The arts are steeped in the moral realm. They arise from, and affect, dispositions, they present the admirable and objectionable. They are filled with laughter and tears, joy and depression, praise and rebellion, clash and conciliation. How *could* art avoid the moral realm without ceasing to arise from the artist's human experience and to touch the beholder? The moral quality of art has nothing to do, of course, with explicit or simplistic ethical judgment. It has to do with the fact that loneliness and relation, gaiety and despair, effort and repose, discord and peace are the stuff of great art, whether drama, painting, or music. Where the arts eschew the moral realm, therefore, they cannot really succeed. But they can maim themselves and make themselves effete. And they, just like other endeavors in which the moral is essential, can become immoral. For amorality is ultimately immorality. A bystander is not an executioner, but he too may fail to meet the moral demand of a human situation.[4]

III.

Fabrication of things requires appropriate *methods.* Conversation, philosophy, the writing of a history or novel involve search for right *means* of expression. Effective use of the properties of a *medium* is essential to the painter, sculptor, and dramatist. In every activity there is interaction and tension between what the activity is for, its end, purpose, significance, or meaning, and the method, means, medium, or materials through which the end is attained or the meaning realized. For example, when I speak, what I wish to convey directs the search for words. Some words lend themselves to my meaning, others offer resistance. At the same time, the words affect what I have in mind. My initial feelings and thoughts may undergo development and transformation in becoming embodied. The relative stress on method or meaning varies from province to province of human life. In relating a personal experience, for example, the experience has priority over the means found to relate it. In scientific research, by contrast, method has priority over what becomes known, for scientific cognition is in the first place a certain means of knowing.

Even where method and means do not have priority, they exact attention. The poet is constantly working with words and the painter with colors and lines, exploring their potentials, looking for means to use them, molding them into new forms. The medium, moreover, has its own appeal — interplay of colors, magic of words, beauty of sounds. For these reasons, the *possibility* is ever present that method and means run away with us, that we become absorbed in them and forget meaning and end. There are people, for example, who are so enamored with words and their own flowing speech that they engage in brilliant monologues in place of conversation.

Ours is an age in which method and means hold sway. We give far more attention to the fact of producing than to the what and why. Ours is a time of extreme specialization, and this implies expertise in methods and techniques. Almost everywhere, therefore, concern with techniques subordinates concern with the value of what is being done.

The same problem has long beset the arts. Lines, colors, and form in themselves have been hailed as the summit of painting. Tech-

Art . . . is not something to beautify or decorate our lives, or to amuse or entertain us. Rather it must become an activity in which each person, to the degree of his capacity and sensitivity, can fulfill and direct his life while allowing him to accept that there might not be any special meaning or purpose or grand design in it.

—Brian Nissen

niques for producing works of plastic art have been pursued with frenzy and to the point of absurdity. In music, electronically produced sounds, electronic amplification to burst one's ears, and composition by means of computers have become the rage. Architecture seems often so infatuated with materials and their latest engineering properties that physical and social function, not to speak of symbolic power and the environmental enhancement of life, receive scant attention. And mixed media arts exhibit a strong tendency to become completely submerged in technology. Marshall McLuhan is right in stressing the impact of the medium. But he only exacerbates the medium mania when he dissolves the tension between medium and meaning by declaring that "the medium *is* the message."[5]

Humanist culture implies liberation from the sway of formalism, method, and technique. Their centrality in science, technology, and industry has especially given them the power to dominate every province of life. Process, organization, and pattern have banished purpose of process, meaning of organization, and content of pattern. Jacques Ellul's pessimistic analysis of the dehumanization by technique is justified.[6] Even he refuses to conclude, however, that there is no hope. But this hope rests on giving primacy to the human, and recognizing that every method, means, or medium is no more than a part of life, to be used, assessed, and assigned its proper place in the totality of the human scene.

IV.

A principal effect of every activity is the conception or image of man it implicitly or expressly advances.[7] Currently two kinds of conception prevail, resulting largely from science and technology. They are mutually opposed and equally fatal. First, there is the notion of human beings as infinitely powerful, bound by no limits, moving onward and upward from conquest to conquest. Second, there are the pictures of diminution and impotence. In the face of huge and inscrutable machinery, impersonal and immovable organization, and a ubiquitous and all powerful state, man has become an object and cipher. And the interpretations provided by the sciences of man, being chiefly reductionistic, mechanistic, "ratomorphic," and "robotomorphic,"[8] have complemented this degradation.

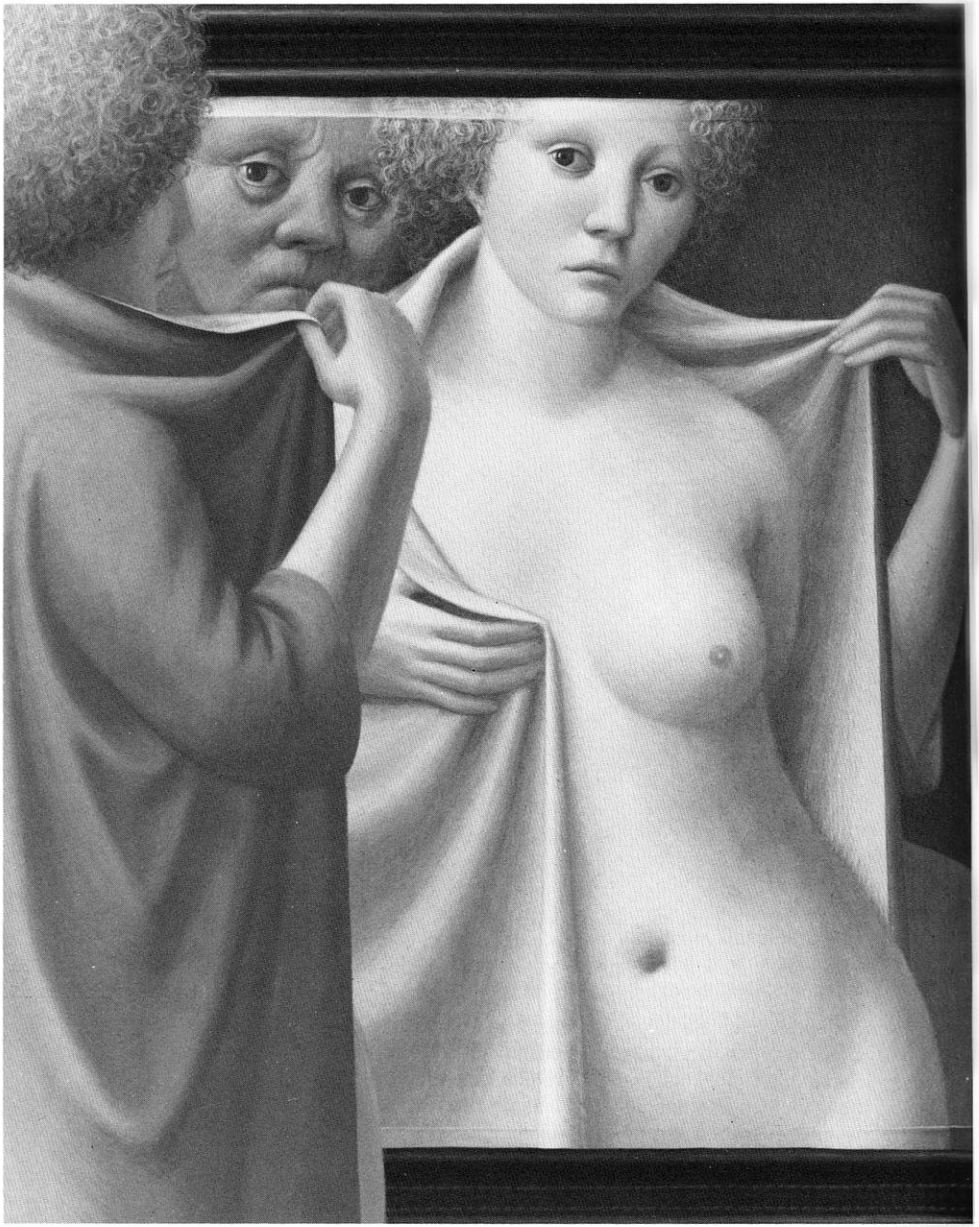
Corresponding images have come through the arts. On the one hand, imagination and creativity have been extolled as powers nearly divine. On the other, the images the arts have given us have often denied all worth to man. Such images, of course, can bear honest witness to what has happened in our age, to the impotence, lostness, and dismemberment human beings have experienced. But everything depends on the spirit which informs this denial. There is a world of difference between art that cries out in anguish and protest and art that in quasi scientific detachment says that boredom and brutality are all there is. Humanist art may show man disfigured, but it does not toy with him to achieve new aesthetic effects or prove that it is modern. The mutilation of the human practiced in this century in the form of gay colors aesthetically balanced on canvas springs out of, and reinforces, the same cultural context as the fragmentation of man found all too often in the elegant theories and experiments of cybernetics and behavioristic psychology. And this context includes also the bodily destruction of modern warfare, where sophisticated planning and precision-technique avoid awareness of the far off result.

If humanist art plunges into the depths of man's despair, it is to wrestle with this despair and to

Alan Bermowitz. *Fun and Games*, 1965, pen and ink. 16 x 14". Courtesy of the artist. Photographer: Susan Weiley.

try to discover what can be affirmed and what may be hoped. It neither inflates man nor tears him down. It seeks to distinguish the distortions and evils of a historical period from the ineluctable condition of all human existence. Concern with fundamental change in our way of life in the direction of fuller humanness takes the place of incessant disruptive innovation inside the dominant mentality. After the terrors of this century, in the midst of ongoing ones, in the face of others rushing toward us, we hardly know what, if anything, is praiseworthy and what promise exists. Cultural creation must be able to say both Yes and No. No to conditions that are neither acceptable nor inevitable; yes to what grounds and fulfills our humanity. With respect to what is ineluctable in the human condition, we may rebel or seek a new trust in existence. If we are far from the kind of great trust that has been possible for other generations, we nevertheless still know that life holds possibilities for sustenance and joy—passing moments of gladness at the least, commitments and meanings that last a lifetime, and perhaps glimpses of larger destiny.

Humanist culture seeks a renewed relation toward nature. This is what on a biological level ecology is about. Interdependence and



George Tooker. *The Mirror,* 1971, oil on canvas. Courtesy Frank Rehn Gallery, N.Y. Photographer: Geoffrey Clements.

care instead of conquest and exploitation. Yet still other dimensions are needed. Subjugation of nature was accompanied by subjugation of the human body. Rectification of this does not come by release of the id. Such outburst is but the complement of the long-standing neglect and suppression. Instead, we need to be in touch with what is of nature in ourselves and roundabout, to be in accord with the rhythms of our bodies and the world. Awareness, wonder, and awe must be regained: brown earth freshly turned by the plow, leaves glowing and falling in autumn light, waves thundering on rock, the grace and awkwardness of the living, the unfathomability of dying. This is no sentimental kind of romanticism, but

true realism, recognition of the human being on earth, of the creature which, in ancient language, is indeed made of spirit and clay. Not the hybrid so scorned by Nietzsche, but a mysterious whole which is readily violated and in need of being sought and resought.

Nothing is more urgent than to testify to the possibilities of genuine life of person with person and peoples with peoples. We cannot ignore the abysses between us, the loneliness rooted in human individuation, the endless monologues in place of relation, the cruelty humans inflict on humans. These have to be acknowledged when present and recalled when past. Without that, realization of the true interhuman is quickly perverted. It doesn't reside in being bundled together under a banner, or linked in a smoothly functioning network of instant communication and efficient production. "World games,"[9] and "global villages"[10] will not bring us closer to the interhuman, but subvert it by simulation. We cannot approach it within the mentality of individual rights, freedom to do as one pleases, and smugness about tolerance and pluralism. Nor can we approach it by levelling differences, uniformizing and standardizing, and reducing the richness of human complexity and variety for the sake of external order. Only acknowledgment of the other as other, patient search for understanding, true presence, genuine selfhood and faithful caring constitute the true realm of "between,"[11] meeting between persons, respect between groups, peace between nations.

These beliefs and commitments can be the common ground of humanist action, learning, and art. They call for many kinds of activity, private and public, and allow for many forms and styles. The task is often excruciatingly difficult, because those who undertake it are themselves children of our crisis. Despite everything, without guarantee, calling to unknown others, reaching to join hands, rejoicing when they can and suffering when they must, they seek a human way. □

[1] For an inquiry into wholeness and its destruction in our time, see George W. Morgan, *The Human Predicament: Dissolution and Wholeness* (Providence, R.I., 1968, New York, 1970).

[2] Walter Weisskopf, *Alienation and Economics* (New York, 1971).

[3] See *The Human Predicament,* especially chs. 8, 10, and 11.

[4] The inhumanity of the spectator unmoved by suffering is a principal theme of Elie Wiesel's novel, *The Town Beyond the Wall* (New York, 1964).

[5] See, for example, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York, 1964), p. 13; italics mine.

[6] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York, 1965).

[7] For the central importance of "images of man" see Maurice Friedman, *To Deny Our Nothingness: Contemporary Images of Man* (New York, 1967).

[8] I seem to remember having met these apt terms in one of Ludwig von Bertalanffy's books.

[9] R. Buckminster Fuller's technocratic computer program for "How to Make the World Work" and how to make "every man able to become a world citizen." See *Utopia or Oblivion* (New York, 1969), pp. 157 ff.

[10] Electricity, according to Marshall McLuhan, allows us to resume globally person to person relations as if on the smallest scale. *Understanding Media,* p. 255.

[11] One of Martin Buber's central and seminal concepts. See his works *passim,* specifically "What is Man?" in *Between Man and Man* (Boston, 1955), p. 203.

My work takes shape around images and ideas that are centered within the vortex of a black life experience. A nitty-gritty ghetto experience resulting in contradictory emotions: anguish-hope-love-despair-happiness-faith-lack of faith-dreams. Stubbornly holding on to an elusive romantic belief that the people of this land cannot always be insensible to the dictates of justice or deaf to the voice of humanity.

—Charles White

New Heaven and Earth*

by Joyce Carol Oates
Prize-winning author. She has published five novels, four collections of short stories, a collection of literary essays, and two volumes of poetry. She was such a consistent winner in the O. Henry Prize Awards that in 1970 a Special Award for Continuing Achievement was created for her.

In spite of current free-roaming terrors in this country, it is really not the case that we are approaching some apocalyptic close. Both those who seem to be awaiting it with excitement and dread and those who are trying heroically to comprehend it in terms of recent American history are mistaking a crisis of transition for a violent end. Even Charles Reich's much maligned and much misinterpreted *The Greening of America,* which was the first systematic attempt to indicate the direction we are surely moving in, focuses much too narrowly upon a single decade in a single nation and, in spite of its occasional stunning accuracy, is a curiously American product — that is, it imagines all of history as running up into and somehow culminating in the United States. Consider Reich's last two sentences:

> *. . . For one almost convinced that it was necessary to accept ugliness and evil, that it was necessary to be a miser of dreams, it is an invitation to cry or laugh. For one who thought the world was irretrievably encased in metal and plastic and sterile stone, it seems a veritable greening of America.*

Compare that with the following passage from Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man,* a less historical-nationalistic vision:

> *In every domain, when anything exceeds a certain measurement, it suddenly changes its aspect, condition or nature. The curve doubles back, the surface contracts to a point, the solid disintegrates, the liquid boils, the germ cell divides, intuition suddenly bursts on the piled up facts. . . . Critical points have been reached, rungs on the ladder, involving a change of state — jumps of*

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all sorts in the course *of development.*

Or consider these lines from D. H. Lawrence's poem "Nullus," in which he is speaking of the private "self" that is Lawrence but also of the epoch in which this self exists:

There are said to be creative pauses, pauses that are as good as death, empty and dead as death itself.
And in these awful pauses the evolutionary change takes place.

What appears to be a breaking-down of civilization may well be simply the breaking-up of old forms by life itself (not an eruption of madness or self-destruction), a process that is entirely natural and inevitable. Perhaps we are in the tumultuous but exciting close of a centuries-old kind of consciousness — a few of us like theologians of the medieval church encountering the unstoppable energy of the Renaissance. What we must avoid is the paranoia of history's "true believers," who have always misinterpreted a natural, evolutionary transformation of consciousness as being the violent conclusion of all of history.

The God-centered, God-directed world of the Middle Ages was transformed into the complex era we call the Renaissance, but the transition was as terrifying as it was inevitable, if the innumerable prophecies of doom that were made at the time are any accurate indication. Shakespeare's most disturbing tragedies — *King Lear* and *Troilus and Cressida*—reflect that communal anxiety, as do the various expressions of anxiety over the "New Science" later in the sevententh century. When we look back into history, we are amazed, not at the distance that separates one century from another, but at their closeness, the almost poetic intimacy.

As I see it, the United States is the first nation — though so complex and unclassifiable an entity almost resists definition as a single unit—to suffer/enjoy the death throes of the Renaissance. How could it be otherwise, since our nation is sensitive, energetic, swarming with life, and, beyond any other developed nation in the world, the most obsessed with its own history and its own destiny? Approaching a kind of manic stage, in which suppressed voices are at last being heard, in which *no extreme viewpoint is any longer "extreme,"* the United States is preparing itself for a transformation of "being" similar to that experienced by individuals as they approach the end of one segment of their lives and must rapidly, and perhaps desperately, sum up everything that has gone before.

It is easy to misread the immediate crises, to be frightened by the spontaneous eruptions into consciousness of disparate groups (blacks, women, youth, "the backlash of the middle class"); it is possible to overlook how the collective voices of many of our best poets and writers serve to dramatize and exorcize current American nightmares. Though some of our most brilliant creative artists are obsessed with disintegration and with the isolated ego, it is clear by now that they are all, with varying degrees of terror, saying the same thing — that we are helpless, unconnected with any social or cultural unit, unable to direct the flow of history, that we cannot effectively communicate. The effect is almost that of a single voice, as if a communal psychoanalytic process were taking place. But there does come a time in an individual writer's experience when he realizes, perhaps against his will, that his voice

It makes little difference to me whether I underline struggle or parenthesize happiness. I cannot capsulize my painting to fit the mood of an art-minded audience. I am more interested in discovering the underlying root of the things in my world and transferring them into a painting language.
—Peter Passuntino

Peter Passuntino. *Laocoon Man*, 1971, oil on canvas, 70 x 52¼". Courtesy the Bienville Gallery, New Orleans. Photographer: Bevan Davies. (opposite page)

is one of many, his fiction one of many fictions, and that all serious fictions are half-conscious dramatizations of what is going on in the world.

Here is a simple test to indicate whether you are ready for the new vision of man or whether you will fear and resist it: Imagine you are high in the air looking down on a crowded street scene from a height so great that you cannot make out individual faces but can see only shapes, scurrying figures rather like insects. Your imagination projects you suddenly down into that mass. You respond with what emotion—dread or joy?

In many of us the Renaissance ideal is still powerful, its voice tyrannical. It declares: *I will, I want, I demand, I think, I am.* This voice tells us that we are not quite omnipotent but must act as if we were, pushing out into a world of other people or of nature that will necessarily resist us, that will try to destroy us, and that we must conquer. *I will exist* has meant only *I will impose my will on others.* To that end man has developed his intellect and has extended his physical strength by any means possible because, indeed, at one time the world did have to be conquered. The Renaissance leapt ahead into its own necessary future, into the development and near perfection of machines. Machines are not evil, or even "unnatural," but simply extensions of the human brain. The designs for our machines are no less the product of our creative imaginations than are works of art, though it might be difficult for most people — especially artists—to acknowledge this. But a great deal that is difficult, even outrageous, will have to be acknowledged.

If technology appears to have dehumanized civilization, this is a temporary failing or error—for the purpose of technology is the furthering of the "human," the bringing to perfection of all the staggering potentialities in each individual, which are nearly always lost, layered over with biological or social or cultural crusts. Anyone who imagines that a glorious pastoral world has been lost, through machines, identifies himself as a child of the city, perhaps a second- or third-generation child of the city. An individual who has lived close to nature, on a farm, for instance, knows that "natural" man was never *in* nature; he had to fight nature, at the cost of his own spontaneity and, indeed, his humanity. It is only through the conscious control of the "machine" (i.e., through man's brain) that man can transcend the miserable struggle with nature, whether in the form of sudden devastating hailstorms that annihilate an entire crop, or minute deadly bacteria in the bloodstream, or simply the commonplace (but potentially tragic) condition of poor eyesight. It is only through the machine that man can become more human, more spiritual. Understandably, only a handful of Americans have realized this obvious fact, since technology seems at present to be villainous. Had our earliest ancestors been gifted with a box of matches, their first actions would probably have been destructive—or self-destructive. But we know how beneficial fire has been to civilization.

The Renaissance man invented and brought to near perfection the civilization of the machine. In doing this, he was simply acting out the conscious and unconscious demand of his time — the demand that man (whether man-in-the-world or man supposedly superior to worldly interests) master everything about him, including his own private nature, his own "ego," redefining himself in terms of a conqueror whose territory should be as vast as his own desire to conquer. The man

who "masters" every aspect of his own being, subduing or obliterating his own natural instincts, leaving nothing to be unknown, uninvestigated, is the ideal of our culture, whether he is an industrialist or a "disinterested" scientist or a literary man. In other words, I see no difference between the maniacal acquisitiveness of traditional American capitalists and the meticulous, joyless, ironic manner of many scholars and writers.

It is certainly time to stop accusing "industry" or "science" or the "Corporate State" or "Amerika" of being inhuman or antihuman. The exaggerated and suprahuman potency attributed to machines, investing them with the power of the long-vanquished Devil himself, is amazing. It is also rather disheartening, if we observe the example of one of our most brilliant writers, Norman Mailer, who argues—with all the doomed, manic intensity of a late-medieval churchman resisting the future even when it is upon him—that the universe can still sensibly be divided into God and Devil, that there can be an "inorganic" product of the obviously organic mind of man. Mailer (and many others) exemplifies the old, losing, pitiful Last Stand of the Ego, the Self-Against-All-Others, the Conquerer, the Highest of all Prothoplasms, Namer and Begetter of all Fictions.

What will the next phase of human experience be? A simple evolution into a higher humanism, perhaps a kind of intelligent pantheism, in which all substance in the universe (including the substance fortunate enough to perceive it) is there by equal right.

We have come to the end of, we are satiated with, the "objective," valueless philosophies that have always worked to preserve a status quo, however archaic. We are tired of the old dichotomies: Sane/Insane, Normal/Sick, Black/White, Man/Nature, Victor/Vanquished, and—above all this Cartesian dualism—I/It. Although once absolutely necessary to get us through the exploratory, analytical phase of our development as human beings, they are no longer useful or pragmatic. They are no longer *true.* Far from being locked inside our own skins, inside the "dungeons" of ourselves, we are now able to recognize that our minds belong, quite naturally, to a collective "mind," a mind in which we share everything that is mental, most obviously language itself, and that the old boundary of the skin is no boundary at all but a membrane connecting the inner and outer experiences of existence. Our intelligence, our wit, our cleverness, our unique personalities — all are simultaneously "our own" possessions and the world's. This has always been a mystical vision, but more and more in our time it is becoming a rational truth. It is no longer the private possession of a Blake, a Whitman, or a Lawrence, but the public, articulate offering of a Claude Lévi-Strauss, to whom anthology is "part of a cosmology" and whose humanism is one that sees everything in the universe, including man, in its own place. It is the lifelong accumulative statement of Abraham Maslow, the humanist psychologist who extended the study of psychology from the realm of the disordered into that of the normal and the "more-than-normal," including people who would once have been termed mystics and been dismissed as irrational. It is the unique, fascinating voice of Buckminster Fuller, who believes that "human minds and brains may be essential in the total design" of the universe. And it is the abrasive argument of R. D. Laing, the Freudian/post-Freudian mystic, who has denied the medical and legal distinctions between "normal" and "abnormal" and has set out not only to experience but to articulate a metaphysical "illumination"

whereby self and other become joined. All these are men of genius, whose training has been rigorously scientific. That they are expressing views once considered the exclusive property of mystics proves that the old dichotomy of Reason/Intuition has vanished or is vanishing.

As with all dichotomies, it will be transcended — not argued away, not battered into silence. The energies wasted on the old debates —Are we rational? Are we ninety per cent Unconscious Impulses?— will be utilized for higher and more worthy pursuits. Instead of hiding our most amazing, mysterious, and inexplicable experiences, we will learn to articulate and share them; instead of insisting upon rigid academic or intellectual categories (for instance, that "science fiction" is different from other fiction, or less traditional than the very recent "realistic novel"), we will see how naturally they flow into one another, supporting and explaining each other. Yesterday's wildly ornate, obscure, poetic prophecies evolve into today's calm statements of fact.

The vision of a new, higher humanism or pantheism is not irrational but is a logical extension of what we now know. It may frighten some of us because it challenges the unquestioned assumptions that we have always held. But these assumptions were never *ours.* We never figured them out, never discovered them for ourselves; we inherited them from the body of knowledge created by our men of genius. Now men of genius, such as British physicist/philosopher Sir James Jeans, are saying newer, deeper things:

> *Today there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading toward a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter. . . .*

Everywhere, suddenly, we hear the prophetic voice of Nietzsche once again, saying that man must overcome himself, that he must interpret and create the universe. (Nietzsche was never understood until now, until the world caught up with him, or approached him.) In such a world, which belongs to consciousness, there can be no distracting of energies from the need to push forward, to synthesize, to converge, to make a unity out of ostensible diversity. But too facile optimism is as ultimately distracting as the repetitive nihilism and despair we have inherited from the early part of this century. An absolutely honest literature, whether fiction or nonfiction, must dramatize for us the complexities of this epoch, showing us how deeply related we are to one another, how deeply we act out, even in our apparently secret dreams, the communal crises of our world. If demons are reawakened and allowed to run loose across the landscape of suburban shopping malls and parks, it is only so that their symbolic values—wasteful terror, despair, entropy—can be recognized. If all other dichotomies are ultimately transcended, there must still be the tension between a healthy acceptance of change and a frightened, morbid resistance to change.

The death throes of the old values are everywhere around us, but they are not at all the same thing as the death throes of particular human beings. We can transform ourselves, overleap ourselves beyond even our most

I make prints and drawings and collages of the Unborn growing, pushing into form and shape and of the Old melting reluctantly and with sadness into the ultimate resolution.
—Gabrielle Brill

flamboyant estimations. A conversion is always imminent; one cannot revert back to a lower level of consciousness. The "conversion" of the I-centered personality into a higher, or transcendental, personality cannot be an artificially, externally enforced event; it must be a natural event. It is surely as natural as the upward growth of a plant — if the plant's growth is not impeded. It has nothing to do with drugs, with the occult, with a fashionable cultivation of Eastern mysticism (not at all suitable for us in the West —far too passive, too life-denying, too ascetic); it has nothing to do with political beliefs. It is not Marxist, not Communist, not Socialist, not willing to align itself with any particular ideology. If anything, it is a flowering of the democratic ideal, a community of equals, but not a community mobilized against the rest of the world, not a unity arising out of primitive paranoia.

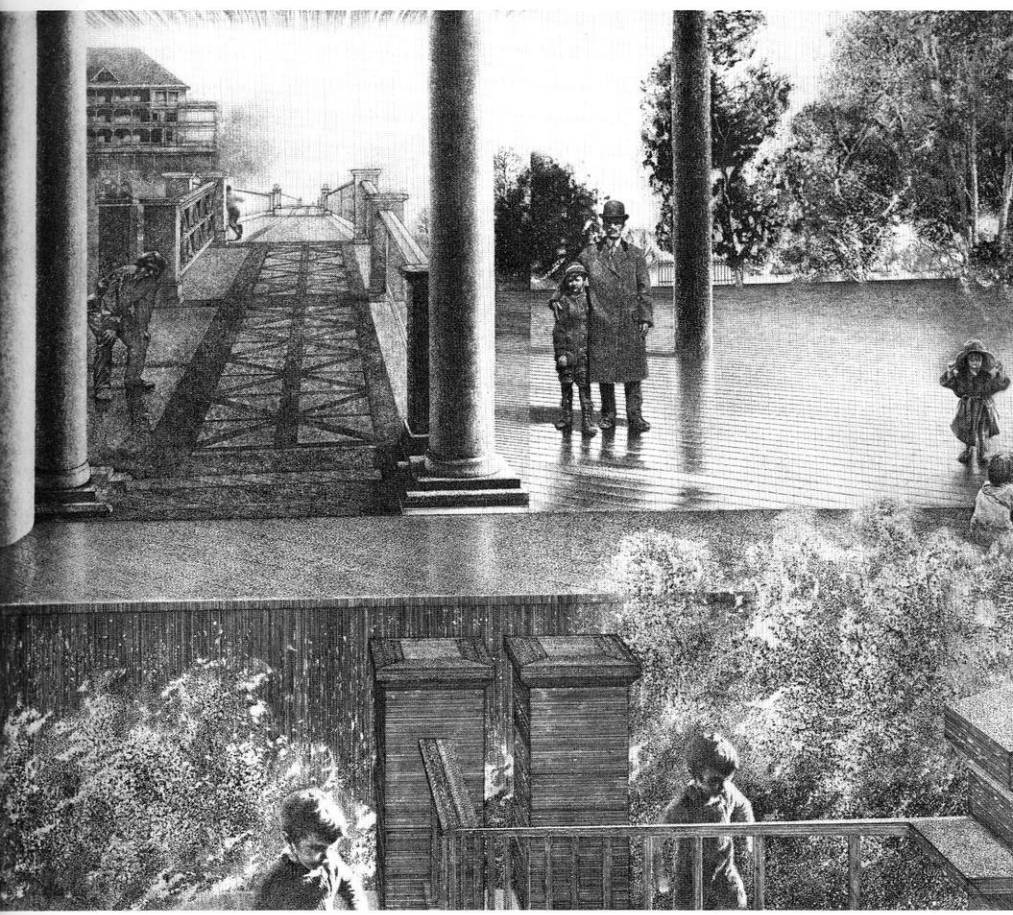
In the Sixties and at present we hear a very discordant music. We have got to stop screaming at one another. We have got to bring into harmony the various discordant demands, voices, stages of personality. Those more advanced must work to transform the rest, by being, themselves, models of sanity and integrity. The angriest of the ecologists must stop blaming industry for having brought to near perfection the implicit demands of society, as if anyone in our society—especially at the top —has ever behaved autonomously, unshaped by that society and its history. The optimism of *The Greening of America* seems to me a bit excessive or at least premature. There is no doubt that the future — the new consciousness—is imminent, but it may take generations to achieve it. The rapidly condensed vision, the demand for immediate gratification, is, once again, typically (and sadly) American. But, though the achievement of Reich's vision is much farther off than he seems to think, it is an inevitable one, and those of us who will probably not share personally in a transformed world can, in a way, anticipate it now, almost as if experiencing it now. If we are reasonably certain of the conclusion of a novel (especially one we have ourselves imagined), we can endure and even enjoy the intermediary chapters that move us toward that conclusion.

One of the unfortunate aspects of American intellectual life has been the nearly total divorce of academic philosophy from the issues of a fluid, psychic social reality. There are obvious reasons for this phenomenon, too complex to consider at the moment. But the book that needs to be written about the transformation of America cannot really be written by anyone lacking a thorough knowledge of where we have been and where we are right now, in terms of an intellectual development that begins and ends with the faculties of the mind. We require the meticulous genius of a Kant, a man of humility who is awakened from some epoch-induced "slumber" to synthesize vast exploratory fields of knowledge, to write the book that is the way into the future for us.

This essay, totally nonacademic in its lyric disorganization, in its bringing together of voices that, for all their differences, seem to be saying one thing, is intended only to suggest — no, really, to make a plea for — the awakening of that someone's slumber, the rejection of the positivist-linguist-"naming" asceticism that has made American philosophy so disappointing. We need a tradition similar to that in France, where the role of "philosopher" is taken naturally by men of genius who can address themselves to varied groups of people—scientists, writers, artists, and the public itself. Our highly educated and highly

cultivated reading public is starved for books like *The Greening of America*. We have an amazingly fertile but somehow separate nation of writers and poets, living dreamily inside a culture but no more than symbiotically related to it. Yet these writers and poets are attempting to define that culture, to "act it out," to somehow make sense of it. The novel is the most human of all art forms—there are truths we can get nowhere else but in the novel—but now our crucial need is for something else. We need a large, generous, meticulous work that will synthesize our separate but deeply similar voices, one that will climb up out of the categories of "rational" and "irrational" to show why the consciousness of the future will feel joy, not dread, at the total rejection of the Renaissance ideal, the absorption into the psychic stream of the universe.

Lawrence asks in his strange poem "New Heaven and Earth" a question that seems to me parallel with Yeats's famous question in the sonnet "Leda and the Swan." In the Yeats poem mortal woman is raped by an immortal force, and, yes, this will and must happen; this cannot be escaped. But the point is: Did she put on his knowledge *with* his power, before the terrifying contact was broken? Lawrence speaks of mysterious "green streams" that flow from the new world (our everyday world — seen with new eyes) and asks, ". . . what are they?" What are the conversions that await us? □



Peter Milton. *Mornings with Judd* from The Jolly Corner Suite, 1970, etching, 18 x 24". Courtesy of the artist.

A Bodiless Combat

by Michael Gibson
Paris editor for Art in America *and critic for the* International Herald Tribune *in Paris.*

It is a bodiless combat for which you must prepare yourself, such that you may face in all events, an abstract combat which, unlike the others, is learned through reverie.
Henri Michaux, Poteaux d'Angles

There's a war on.

The nature of this war, both planetary and intimate, its destructive presence in all public areas and within all individuals is becoming increasingly obvious.

Barry Schwartz calls it the crisis of modern life—"the crisis of modern life is the contemporary bison" — alluding to the bison in the prehistoric cave paintings, its vital mystery and the artist's role, then and now, as mediator "between his powers of understanding and that which cannot be understood." The crisis today, as a reality of *individual* experience, appears incomprehensible.

"Not simply a matter of political or social upheavals, today's crisis is the crisis of life itself. It is not alarms we hear; it is the roar of an apocalypse." The nature of this crisis can be grasped in a number of ways, and the terrible urgency of the threat cannot be exaggerated: never in history to this day had one come to a spiritual situation comparable to the one we are now experiencing. Why? Because never in history had man been persuaded to doubt his vision and experience, to renounce his reality and individuality as much as we have today. Never in history? The assertion is a sweeping one, but never in history did man encounter the opportunity afforded him today to become as passive and submissive before the assertions of science and the world view propagated by the mass media. It is the reasons for this renunciation of personal vision and experience that I would like to go into.

* * *

Take any statement and one may argue about the precise level at which the actual meaning is attached: is it in the phoneme, the

John Dobbs. *Motel Room,* 1971, oil, 52 x 52″. Coll: Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Mass. Photographer: Eric Pollitzer, N.Y.

word, the phrase, the paragraph or the total speech? Take the global statement of world history, of civilization, and it poses the same problem to the individual living in its context: am I, on my own, a meaningful increment—or is my meaning only in that I am part of a larger unit? And if so, how large?

But — to borrow a concept from cybernetics, a concept which is now also being used to express certain problems of communication in psychology — any human discourse communicates on two levels: the analogical and the digital. My understanding of these terms is that the analogical expresses itself by variations of intensity (volume, intonation, rhythm, speed, attitude, gesture) whereas the digital makes use of signs (words, ciphers, etc.) that are arbitrarily related to the content they signify. Language, that conventional mode of communication using words and constructions fixed and codified by the whole course of civiilzation, is a digital system. The individual in today's society who protests that he is "nothing but a number" is in fact stating that the forces that rule him see him only as a digital entity, something inherently meaningless.

But when we use language we do not restrict ourselves to the digital, as is obvious to anyone who has ever heard a member of his family saying: "Give my love to Aunt Emily" in a tone of voice that clearly conveys the real message of the sentence: "Aunt Emily should drop dead."

In the digital the meaning which is apparent in a word tends to dissolve as we turn to the phrase, and the phrase itself dissolves as we turn to the thought communicated by a cluster of sentences. The analogical, on the other hand, because it uses variations of intensity, can inject meaning into the merest phoneme and at the same time embrace the broadest discourse.

The whole of history reflects a struggle between these two modes and reveals the irrepressible imperialism of the digital mode, and the endless guerilla warfare conducted by the analogical.

Martin Buber refers to the same process when he points out the continuous growth of the "World of It" (*Eswelt*) both in individual and in human history.

"Those (civilizations)," he writes, "which have been subjected to the influence of others, have adopted the World of It that was presented them, but at an intermediary level between their primitive state and their full flowering." The Greeks took what Egypt had to offer, Medieval Europe had the traumatic experience of discovering Greek thought, and the African nations today (one might as well say the nations of the Third World) are in a state of shock after having slammed into the scientific civilization of the West.

What Buber calls the World of It, in contrast to the World of Thou, is paralleled in practice by one pole of a number of contrasting verbal couples that reveal the nature of the alliances in the current battle: it is also the Object devouring the Subject, Process absorbing Praxis, the white dominating the black, Society ruling Nature, and the male subjecting the female.

Process and Praxis are, I believe, words borrowed from the existentialist vocabulary although I have run into them in readings on antipsychiatry. In this domain they refer to two forms of interaction in human groups, and in particular in the family. Process refers to the sort of interaction that unfolds independently of the will of any of the participants. Praxis, or Action, on the other hand is willed by one person. Process is not sy-

nonymous with passivity, although it means that passivity pervades relationships between members of a group. This can also cover relationships between citizens and government.

As for the white/black, society/nature, male/female couples, a recent book by Serge Moscovici, *Société Contre Nature* (Society against Nature, 10/18 ed., Paris, 1972) points out the implications of a system of thought that sees society as a negation of nature, an organization created by man to compensate the deficiencies of nature, and views it as one cut above nature. The corollary to that is that any group it seems desirable to exploit in the interest of society is looked down upon as closer to nature. The dominant group, which always considers itself as essentially "social" can consequently say that blacks are more "natural" than whites, women than men, children than adults. The refutation of such attitudes, according to Moscovici, appears in the discovery that most living species possess a social organization, and that there is consequently no valid opposition between society and nature. Society is one of the manifestations of nature.

The imperialism of the digital is apparent in the growing importance of patterns instead of relationships, of form instead of content. This is inevitable over the course of time since what is given, the *data,* constitutes an ever growing mass that can easily crowd out the acquisition of experience. What is unknown to our experience can be codified into the algebra of language, depicted in the geometry of patterns, and thereafter indifferently controlled and exploited without our ever getting personally involved. What makes the situation today so tragic is not the inevitable expansion of the digital as it is the disarray and surrender of the forces of the analogical.

I think this is apparent in the way people communicate today, in the ritual neutrality of tone governing much of our speech which is symptomatic of a malaise reaching into the core of our being.

The individual's problem is that he must find a way of remaining always on the battle line between the two forces. He himself is involved on both sides, always, and in varying degrees. If he falls behind the lines on either side he betrays part of himself. On the analogical side he gains in wisdom, but, as the Hassid said, wisdom is thought which cannot be made manifest. On the digital side he gains in articulateness but loses hold of his meaning.

Another form of resistance, and one which in the present situation is perhaps the most telling, is in verbal sabotage and linguistic guerilla warfare. This is what much of the underground is about, its use of taboo words like "fuck" or of faulty spelling and grammar which is a real shocker here in France, a country which has made a fetish of language. Anything which breaks down the coherence of the digital outside of the technical areas where it has a purpose can only be a service to humanity.

At this point in history the digital processes are behaving increasingly like a runaway motor. This is because the isolated logic of the digital poses insoluble problems of power, meaning and reality. The individual, confronted with the "objective," the World of It, the digital patterns, hypnotized by them into forsaking the analogical root of his existence, finds himself becoming increasingly meaningless in his own eyes. He may then assume that his meaning can be won back by rising in the hierarchy so that he is no longer just a word or part of a word, but a full sentence, a full

I still feel my own place is to dramatize the nightmares of my time, and (hopefully) to show how some individuals find a way out, awaken, come alive, move into the future.
—Joyce Carol Oates

The art of our time, for our time requires that the artist project the conscience of man. This unfortunately is not a pleasant image to hang on the wall. Man does not ordinarily want to confront his innermost self.

—Menahem Lewin

paragraph, a full speech to himself.

Hence all that talk in America about every child having a chance of being President. Hence, too, the temptation, if that chance appears remote, of shooting a President. This also turns a man into a larger semantic unit.

Jean Cocteau once remarked: "Victor Hugo was a nut who thought he was Victor Hugo."

Today an entire society is possessed with the obsessional desire — communicated by the digital hallucination — to control ever broader areas in the hope of reaching a higher level which may after all turn out to be meaningful. But precisely because this venture is collective it has the reverse effect. The broader the areas a civilization controls, the more each person's role is atomized so that each participant's actions become increasingly meaningless.

Consequently he finds himself involved in a process without any inherent meaning other than its own progression and the fiction of a millenial goal, infinitely mirrored off two facing glasses: the *illusion* of reality and the *illusion* of power.

The stampede is in the wrong direction. Meaning wells up through the analogical mode and is given its coherence through the digital. The digital is primarily an available pattern waiting for an impulse to stir an image in it. Rushing ever deeper into the digital we find more and more patterns, but no new meaning.

* * *

I realize that by talking about the imperialism of the digital I run the risk of making concepts into good guys and bad guys. The "bad guy" is of course the imbalance, the imperialism itself. The digital grows out of the analogical just as society grows out of nature. What makes it dangerous is our own attitudes towards it, the ascendency we grant one over the other and the submission of our minds to the pretensions we project into the golem we have created.

All this is relevant to humanist art because art expresses itself totally in the analogical mode. Now there have been an enormous number of painters and sculptors who were overawed by the focus of power of their age—by the fictions and structures that supported this power at a time when power and faith became dissociated—and who used their talent with cheerful insouciance or meticulous application to serve it.

The obvious power of our age is the deity with which we commune from the top of the technological ziggurat. Not really science, but the bureaucratic mentality that governs its uses. As Barry Schwartz points out (and as I wrote in *l'Oeil* in December 71) the avant-garde today is out to pastiche its methods. The experimental, the esoteric, the investigation of the apparently insignificant detail, all this seems magically right to the avant-garde because it is in conformity with the sacred model of technical research. In fact a significant portion of the art world apparatus is operating today somewhat like the cargo-cultists of New Guinea.

This art flirts unsuccessfully with the digital mode—or serves as an entertainment (and why not?). It fiddles around with patterns in ways that are sometimes impressive but which never convey anything artistically indispensable. Neo-Dadaism, which behaves as if it were an effective form of sabotage behind the lines is in fact an impotent abdication by people who have nothing to offer beyond a reflex of refusal. (This is not a criticism of the artists who have their own problems, but

of the over-evaluation of their work). This is no big deal in a world of people starving for an occasion of enthusiasm, and so afraid of seeming naive should they happen to show it. There are of course acceptable channels for enthusiasm—like sporting events —where the ritual absolves the fan for behaving in a way which, in any other context, would be considered unsophisticated. But who is he really cheering?

The artists who have expressed human realities in a way that touches one humanly today are chiefly those who had no awe of power, although they were well aware of the nature and force of this power. Brueghel, Rembrandt, Goya, Daumier are the sort of names that automatically come to mind. Their art has a sort of permanent relevance not because it is "art" but because it expresses something essential to being human: love and solitude, suffering and joy. These existential and emotional realities are the substance of life and any "art" that does without them falls short of its potential—is something other than art.

In the days of Van Eyck painters in Burgundy belonged to the same guild as the harness decorators. Today the situation is reversed—it is the harness decorators who are crowding into the artists' guild. They are sometimes brilliant in their way, they have a lot of talent—and the confusion of talent with art has brought their works into museums where they have no reason to be, if museums actually are devoted to showing art, which is not so sure.

The problem of defining what is really art is about as awkward—and psychologically very close to —defining the nature of a specific sex act between a particular man and woman. Is it an act of love, a simulation, or a masturbation? (The list is not limitative.) The man or the woman may hotly defend that it really is an act of love. The artist or his admirers will just as hotly defend the "truly" artistic nature of his work. Critics, thereupon, may tear into one another without proving a thing. The reason is that you can analyze an object to pieces, but you can't analyze a relationship objectively. The truth of the matter lives contagiously but incommunicably between the people concerned. What can be analyzed are certain facets of the artist's talent and technique, things that are necessary but which are not used for their own sake.

The formalistic approach to art which attempts to analyze it *in vitro* rests on untenable intellectual premises. It assumes that the significant aspect of art is in the formal connections that can be detected within the object, rather than in the relationships it signifies and those it provokes; that art can be looked upon as a closed system with its own dynamics and laws; or again that it follows the same road of progress (or research) as science, moving ever onward to new conquests.

Something here looks suspiciously like a distrust of life, movement, balance and freedom, a compulsive need to treat such manifestations like an embalmer. "One reflects," writers David Cooper in *The Death of the Family* (Vintage Books, 1971), "on the difference in historical effect of the written and the oral Torah. The former became a humanly restricting but socially cohering teaching; the latter, transmitted by face-to-face confrontation situations in which every small gesture and intonation became part of the message, became a dangerous source of joy and liberation that all the time had to be drawn back into the verbal capsule." (p. 30, n.).

The great power of art is that it can always confound those who

Robert Crumb. *Drawing Cartoons is Fun* from the Despair comic, 1969, ink on paper, 9¾ x 6½". Courtesy of the artist. Photographer: Susan Weiley, N.Y.

try to trap it in the nets of technical and formal analysis, just as the oral Torah is always slipping through the bars of writing.

I heartily agree with Barry Schwartz that a work should stand on its own and I believe that information about what the artist intended is irrelevant if the work itself draws a blank. This sort of belief—that one must be in on what the artists are thinking—is one way of preserving the specialized status of the critics. (I remember one of the first shows I went to as a critic in Paris—most of the critics there were walking around talking to one another without looking at the exhibition.) The critic *as a critic* can't be a specialist. His business is to use his eyes and his psyche and his mind and heart and spirit, establish contact with what is put before him and write about it as straightforwardly as he can. Now this (exclusive of the writing) is the common human response in presence of a work of art. Unfortunately a lot of people in various parts of the world have been brainwashed to some degree and tend to be intimidated by art because they really believe some sort of special grace and expert knowledge are required—a humble faith in which they are happily kept by the dumb arrogance of the critics. Every summer, for instance, they rush to the Louvre like lemmings to Delphi (if you'll excuse the metaphor) and stand in front of the Mona Lisa who whispers at them: "Thou hast been weighed in the balance and found wanting." By whom? And by what standards? By their own fear of saying that Mona Lisa strikes them as rather dull. Yet why should they not say so? Would it banish them from humanity?

This alienation from art parallels an alienation from one's selfhood and an absence of any conscious link between the two.

Art, in some social classes and some areas of the world, belongs to the World of It dumped upon them by alien classes and people. But the barrier is accidental. Any person who can trust himself and open himself is sensitive to analogical modes of communication. But to open himself he must revolt against the forces that cast him in a role, reduce him to a conveniently normalized digital entity.

His capacity to revolt attests his reality on another level and the artificiality of the world in which process tends to confine him.

All our century has witnessed the awful achievements of objectivity and digital precision. The horrors and benefits thus accrued don't need repeating. We have stood overwhelmed, terrified and grateful trying to look equal to the occasion. But the occasion is like a party without end and it is time somebody said: thanks and good night. Time we remembered ourselves, found ourselves—life, love and death, solitude, joy, anguish, creation, hatred, dreams, fantasy, play, male and female—compare all those and many more of the treasures before us with the dubious passive comfort we are encouraged to covet.

It is time to fight or fly the vicious circle. Not to destroy the technical acquisitions of our age, but to swing the dialectical pendulum in another direction. Many are fighting, many have divorced, showing by their work or by their absence that something else is necessary.

It will also become increasingly apparent that the individual stand and subjectivity and relationship hold a truth and reality and power that the objective approach can not even suspect. This is what any humanist art will persistently proclaim. □

If art is to die it will be no small part the work of the museum curators, the critics and the gallery dealers of today. It is they who have absorbed the lessons and mentality of Madison Avenue of *creating* a need for the *new*, the novel, the spectacular.

—Jonah Kinigstein

What Price Humanism?

by Parker Tyler
Has pioneered American film criticism since 1944 when The Hollywood Hallucination *was published as the first of his nine volumes on film subjects. As an art critic, he is the author of a monumental biography,* The Divine Comedy of Pavel Tchelitchew. *His newest book is* The Shadow of an Airplane Climbs the Empire State Building: A World Theory of Film.

As of here and now, one might say that the mere word Humanism, however evoked, can in itself produce only vague, as it were nostalgic, resonances if one responds to it emotionally, mere academic resonances if one responds to it intellectually. Therefore Barry Schwartz's revival of Humanist art as something of a program and a creed, something tangible and viable today, adds to the murmurs we have had lately that there might be, actually, a new Humanism and that people may be asked to consider its possibilities. Can one close the door on such a prospect out of hand, just skeptically—or just ideologically? If one reacts with simple bewilderment . . . well, that is not quite safe. It might be that one has missed the latest bulletins from certain intellectual fronts that don't command headlines in the daily news. The just focus might be that, after all, there are no very aggressive "isms" nowadays unless drawn formalistically from the teeming world of technology, and these are courageously rejected by Mr. Schwartz in advance.

There could be (as satiric) a term such as computerism, and surely robotism might be educed as a pretty convincing formulation of a new monsterdom: the anti-man as we have come to speak of the anti-hero. Consider, for instance, the statutory lack of emotion characterizing the responses of the two cosmonauts in the Kubrick-Clarke movie, *2001: A Space Odyssey,* and the alienated fate befalling one of them. The value of a revival of Humanism might appear, then, as an inevitable reaction against sheer dehumanization in the classic sense: the sense that makes Frankenstein's monster what he still is (because he still roams filmland) or any near-shape or near-substance of man out of whose being something essential has been left, something leaving him crucially incomplete or marred. Speaking in the strict traditional

sense, this might be the "soul," the touch of life that only God or Nature can supply, the touch that made Adam "human" because it vivified his inert clay. Clay, of course, is a metaphor for earth, mere physical being. Remember that sculpture itself used to be criticized as inferior because it lacked the "spark of life," the vivifying thing that imitated the function of God's own touch—a memorable image of which Michelangelo gives us on the Sistine ceiling.

Thus man's own attempts to perform the divine function of creation and impart life to inorganic or dead matter can be looked upon as the ancient human presumption. There are pagan myths to this effect, like that of Marsyas who wished to rival Apollo's music, and Arachne who challenged Athene to a contest of weaving; besides, of course, the archetypal case of Prometheus, eternally punished for presuming to make man as wise as the gods. When studying the document Mr. Schwartz has supplied as a code for Humanism in modern art, we swiftly become aware that he is rejecting, in a certain obscure but firm sense, the classic function of art as an "imitation" of divine creation: its proportion, its symmetry, its order no less than its spark of life. Mr. Schwartz accomplishes this by maintaining that the great styles—including all the modern isms: impressionism, expressionism, cubism and so on —have ceased to serve because they have, while technically successful, ceased to serve man's basic humanist interests. For this purpose, he quotes Herbert Read's overall definition of the artist as the permanent revolutionary (*ein Ruttler*), rejecting it, however, as an evasion of Humanist responsibility, contending that artists can fulfill a "revolutionary" function simply by having created one more art technology: by having brought into subjection, through style, a specific area over which an individual artist "thought he had some control." Thereafter, mere fashion—time and the fluctuation of the art market — would determine the power and validity of such style-control. Human, and implicitly social, interests would remain outside the special goal of "success."

In an age dominated by technocratic ideas (a fact to which Mr. Schwartz refers), it is hard to oppose his general contention that one cannot "ascribe humanist intention to all [genuine] artistic motivation." Even though he also asserts that Social Realism was just another "art that did not succeed," it seems inevitable that he aims, on the positive side, at some amalgam of social and political consciousness. "If art is to be political today," he therefore writes, "it must be post-ideological" because, he continues, no ideology "presently exists which does not have the potential for betraying the very mankind it wishes to serve." This seems pretty conclusive — and if we reflect a few moments, we can draw definite inferences from it.

If neither triumphant art styles nor triumphant political ideologies are serving true human (or Humanist) interests, then it is "ism" itself, a system of ideas, whether political or aesthetic, that has failed. Hence it is "systemism" that has failed. In consequence humanity, having put its faith in those two vast systems, art and politics, is being challenged at a very radical level; indeed, is asked to believe that it is actually in grave peril. Doubtless Mr. Schwartz is counting on the fact that certain philosophers and intellectuals have "existentially" felt the presence of this peril and spoken out, though without notable conclusiveness, without offering satisfying alternatives. Rightly, Mr. Schwartz believes a mere refusal to collaborate with established technocracy (one might cite Kafka's attitude) is not enough. *He* has in mind a

My art has always been solely human oriented. At age six or seven, I believed that if I could only draw people "well" enough, then they could come to life. I guess this unattained magic—of representation—has never left me and glimmers in my better works.

—Sigmund Abeles

I equate Humanism with specific subjects. I don't visualize Humanist stripes, drips, squares, discs, columns, earthworks, etc. To me, a Humanist picture points out things about people and the way they behave. If a picture has been incorporated into the aesthetic system of art appreciation, it is not Humanist, it is an aesthetic object.

—Peter Saul

constructive program and, with a certain rashness, he declares himself in favor of "archetypal, sometimes concrete, images of our time" dismissed by critics, he admits, as "too ugly to be acceptable within a proper, tasteful modern art."

We might have been in doubt about Mr. Schwartz's Humanism before that particular sentence. We cannot be so following it, especially as we are faced with the pictorial evidence he has taken the pains to accumulate: examples of which are to be found in these pages. What he has done is to dislocate completely all human complacence with our race's artistic and political — one might summarily say "civilized" — achievements, and for the basic reason that these cannot prevent human self-destruction, mainly in the form of wars. Who can deny the evidence when it is thus tagged? No matter how our civilized achievements, in their variegated forms and classifications, be morally or emotionally evaluated, they patently have not served to end racial and national hatreds and aggressions or internecine human strife, which at this particular moment are more threatening than ever. Mr. Schwartz would have us focus on an alternative. What is this alternative as particularized by his evidence?

I think it can be read in only one way. In the most radical sense, it is a plea that, in whatever realm of idea or plastic medium, unself-sufficient amateurism be accepted at the expense of self-sufficient professionalism. Assuredly, this might be taken as desperation psychology. Self-sufficient professionalism (in that domain where art is welded with all other technologies) has failed, and we must look elsewhere for a true solution to the problem of human survival—survival, one presumes, with honor. Among the paintings, sculptures and collages reproduced here, the more or less modish mixed media, one detects what stylistically is a strong derivation from art styles — chiefly Picasso, van Gogh and Expressionism—that, when they first appeared, were attacked as not only ugly, but also monstrous, perverted and even diseased. Their ultimate aesthetic victory — and we cannot for a moment question that — meant a new concept of non-representationalism and non-idealism in art. Moreover, the visible *entente* here with Pop Art puts this art's dubious current ascendancy in a new light.

Picasso's cubist human figures and Soutine's expressionist human figures (related as both were to van Gogh's violence of image) destroyed altogether the vestiges of the idea of the human as progressing toward "divine" perfection, of which classical sculpture had come down as the original model. Even great formalizations, such as those of Egyptian and Buddhist art, were destroyed by the modern "art idea" if only because those were arts of basic composure, basic serenity: symmetries of peace. Equivalent figures of serene composure, when they occur in contemporary art, are invariably images of severe alienation. When struggles had been portrayed by classic Western art—the Parthenon frieze remains archetypal—they were disorders on which order had been stylistically imposed, a-symmetries out of which meticulous symmetries were worked. Futurism, in parallel, imposed order and symmetry on battle scenes. Ultimately, to the considerable surprise of some, it turned out that Picasso's art and Soutine's, however paradoxically, imposed order on disorder, wrought "beauty" from "ugliness."

So what of Mr. Schwartz's Humanism in modern art? To put it as tersely as possible, it revives the totally rejected idea that there can be a legitimately ugly art

specifically because it is a morally disordered and humanly monstrous or estranged art. Personally I believe that the true consequences of the form in which Mr. Schwartz puts his plea lie in an absolute turnabout of the modern art code of significant form as efficiently replacing classic formal symmetry and human idealism. It is an affirmation of whatever was truly destructive of traditional art in late movements such as dadaism and surrealism, in that it rejects the assimilation of those same two isms to the ideology of aesthetics by the route of a new "significant form," a new distortive or anti-syntactic "style." In short, I do not see what else Mr. Schwartz can really mean when he asserts categorically that "the Humanist sees the crisis of our times not as personal *angst* but as human and social conditions about which he is compelled to communicate." Personal *angst* can be settled by an individual's exertion of stylistic control. Social *angst* cannot be settled this way.

What is the difference between Picasso's *Guernica* and certain scenes of similar violence portrayed in these pages by Mr. Schwartz's Humanists? Some of the latter have not been received into the modern canon, apparently, because they do not supply the same degree of stylistic control, of total artistic order, as *Guernica* does. What, then, is the *moral?* It is, I think, that human crimes such as the actual Hiroshima, the actual Guernica (this is to be neither pro-fascist nor anti-fascist but simply Humanist), *should not become features of art control or moral-ideological control.* Slaughter of human by human is tacitly tolerated if it enters the domain of formal control, major or minor, so that Mr. Schwartz's Humanism, I take it, is basically the Picassan "Guernica" turned inside out, a "Guernica" unlegitimized either by art or by that

James Grashow. *Murder Mache* figures, 1967-71; fiberglas, cloth, and polyester resin, 8' h. approximately. Courtesy Allan Stone Gallery, N.Y.

William King. *The Limit,* 1970, bronze unique, 33". Coll: Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Sass, North Caldwell, N.Y. Courtesy Terry Dintenfass, Inc, N.Y. Photographer: Walter Rosenblum, N.Y.

concept of human fate that regards the killing or spoliation of human by human as somehow inevitable. Art is a seal of approval on what exists simply because it exists. Existence, as we well know, includes the immoral and the a-moral. So Schwartzian Humanism is simply a cry of pain pure and simple, an eloquently naked protest, no matter what its artistic shortcomings, what its aesthetic "illegitimacy."

We say of the emotionally disturbed van Gogh that he had plastic genius and of the sexually obsessed Sade that he had great intellectual distinction. Art might then be classified as the "bribe" which induces us to accept otherwise socially misfit, undesirable and extremist personalities as artistic and intellectual geniuses and thus "tolerable." The moral force of Schwartzian Humanism is to assert that, in substance, what is socially and humanly and morally undesirable is ultimately intolerable and no bribe can make it tolerable. How, then, are we to classify a Humanist "art"? My only suggestion is that we regard it altogether as *not* a formal quantity, *not* an exhibition of technical skill, and as basically inharmonious where art is harmonious, as amateurism where art is professionalism. I do not assent to Mr. Schwartz's program for a Humanist art by agreeing that it can be at all an "art" if skill, harmony and formal control are to be sacrificed as canons. The power of some of the most passionate and pyrotechnic obsessions made visible here is the power of disaster *as disaster,* emotional disturbance *as emotional disturbance,* extremism *as extremism:* none of these things, primarily, *as art.* I wonder —and to me this is the true pathos of the Humanist crisis—if we have to sacrifice the image of human perfection (which is what art *as such* means) in order to shock humanity into its own true existence! □

Humanism in Modern Art

by John Berger
Novelist and art critic. He has written articles for many periodicals and in recent years has appeared often on BBC television. His published books include A Painter of Our Time, The Success and Failure of Picasso, Art and Revolution *and* The Moment of Cubism. *His most recent novel is* G. *(Viking Press)*

I find Barry Schwartz's paper interesting and provocative. It raises problems that need to be raised and in so far as it does this, it is an excellent starting point for further discussion and thought. These questions await answers and the answers will not be found easily. This is why I am disinclined to adumbrate once more the partial solutions about which I have written in other places at other times. I would rather contribute a few specific points to what I take to be the beginning of an on-going discussion. If we all merely repeat what we have already thought, the discussion will be still-born. And so here are a few reactions to Barry Schwartz's argument.

1. He suggests that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, technology appeared to offer an easy solution to various problems whose origins lay in the breakup of the medieval world. He then divides artists, roughly, into those who were able to believe in this technological solution (utopia) and those who rejected it in the name of the human condition at large. It may be that this distinction is a fruitful one. But there is a danger that in accepting it we ignore all those specific mediations which are finally the very substance of history. For example, the technological promise meant something very different to the Constructivists in Russia from what it meant to, say, the Futurists in Italy, or the De Stijl group in Holland. And this is not an art-historical quibble. It is something manifest, at anything beyond a superficial viewing, in the works themselves. The works of the Dutch De Stijl group are impregnated with an almost manic form of individual idealism. All the references are towards a mathematical order which can metaphysically transcend actual experience. The work of the Italian Futurists is full of references to the political frustrations which Italy had experienced after the hopes of the Risorgimento had been more or less betrayed by the new Italian bourgeoisie—frustrations which showed themselves in a cult of violence and of military heroism. And, by contrast, the work of the Russian Constructivists reflected a real and positive social and economic aspiration. That is to say that, for a few years either side of 1917, a number of Russian artists believed that modern technology, combined with social revolution, could take

Romare Bearden. *The Prevalence of Ritual—The Conjur Woman,* 1964, collage, 35⅞ x 28". Courtesy of the artist.

their country from a backward feudal state to a form of industrial society which, in its human rationality, would far surpass any of the existing capitalist ones. These hopes were doomed to disappointment. But the disappointments may not have been inevitable, and, in any case, we are concerned not with hypotheses about Russian history but with works of art that embodied — and still embody — those hopes. Perhaps I can put this more simply. For the De Stijl group the promise of technology, translated into the terms of their art, was a metaphysical solution to an abstract moral problem closely connected with the history of Calvinism in Holland. It represented a form of abstraction which already had in their country a long cultural history. (I am not here attempting any critical assessment of the value of their art.) For the Italian Futurists modern technology promised, in a sense, a return to the primitive, to the cult of the individual hero or warrior, and this return was the result of a half-century of political history in which, time and again, more complicated hopes had been disappointed. For the Italian Futurists technology was an end solution. For the Russian Constructivists modern technology was neither abstract nor a bitter solution to an intractable problem; it was the beginning of something new. And these differences in these three different art movements correspond very precisely to differences in the historical and economic development of the three countries concerned. If we ignore such differences or simplify them out of existence, we run the risk of referring to a humanism that is shamefully empty. The consequences of those three different levels of development in the three countries filled and affected the lives of nine-tenths of their inhabitants.

2. Barry Schwartz suggests that Impressionism was a "scientific" movement and that its purpose was to explore the nature of light, as later the purpose of Cubism was to explore the nature of space and time. Again, this is true but only up to a point. And what it leaves out of account seems to me to be crucial to either the experience of Impressionist works of art or to any serious study of their example. Ever since art became problematic, ever since an individual artist could believe that, in terms of form and content, he faced a significantly individual choice — and this is more or less since the Renaissance — artists have tended to seize upon any convenient philosophic or scientific argument in order to justify, with a show of objectivity, their confused but often far more prophetic intuitions. Here are several statements which one might make about the art of the Impressionists. They were concerned with exploring the nature of light. Thanks to the railways and the new means of transport, they were concerned, for the first time in the history of art, with painting neither pure landscape nor ideal cities: they were the painters of suburbs and small towns, seen from the point of view of one-day visitors. They were concerned with popular pleasure envisaged as normal, i.e., not as the subject of either moral judgement or social comment. They were concerned with destroying the substantiality of the object, implicit in the whole tradition of the oil painting; they set out to question the value given during four centuries to the tangibility of all painted objects and scenes; in doing this they were challenging the principles, if not of science, anyway of pragmatic science. They were concerned with the transience of the moment; their heightened awareness of this transience was the result of their more or less conscious awareness of two different rates of time: that of the individual life and that of history, and this in turn was due to the extraordinary acceleration of historic

I am trying to explore, in terms I know best, those things common to all cultures.

—Romare Bearden

Robert E. Marx. *Claws of God*, 1968, oil on canvas, 60 x 46". Coll: University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Binghamton, Binghamton, N.Y. Photographer: DeClerco Studio, N.Y.

change which was then beginning. All these assertions about the Impressionists can make equally good sense, or nonsense. Any one of them isolated from the others will tend to be nonsense. Thus it is necessary in front of the example of a work of art to do our utmost to reconstruct the totality which gave rise to it. It is only through our grasp of this totality (a grasp which must be imaginative as well as cerebral) that its human testimony can be adequately received. By this I do not want to say that works of art should reduce us to merely inarticulate "sympathy." What I do want to say is that our social theories must begin to be commensurate, in their complexity and sophistication, with the works which we use as examples in those same theories.

3. Barry Schwartz makes a distinction between art for art's sake (a relatively modern development) and what he terms art for the species' sake. There is here the same generalized over-extension of terms used. It is not possible to speak of art for the species' sake before man has achieved action and consciousness as a species. The notion of man acting as a species was an important one in Marx's thinking, but he saw such action as an attainment to be achieved on the far side of class exploitation, when the social relations existing between men would allow them to see each other as equals and therefore all of them as a species. Given the present contradictions and conflicts existing in the world it is premature to talk of man as a species. It might be argued that the role of art is nevertheless a prophetic one. And indeed it can be. But we must be clear about the manner in which art can be prophetic. Its prophecy does not either start, or continue, from the program of a changed world. This is why programmed political art scarcely ever succeeds as art. The subject of art is not political change. At least not directly. What a work of art does in relation to any specific subject is to reveal the distance between what *is* and what *could be.* When this happens it does so, not because the artist is working according to a conscious historical or political program, but because within the form of the work he may be able to create a wholeness which is lacking in that part of reality to which the work refers. What finally makes art prophetic is its ability to create a formal totality. The problem of formalism—that is to say, the tendency to formal sterility in art — is never a question of the artist searching for a formal wholeness, but a question of his using second or third-hand, unoriginal references to the world beyond the specific work. Formalism is not a quality within a work: it is a quality of the relation between a work and the world. Thus it is mistaken to think of formal art on one hand, and prophetic art on the other.

4. Schwartz writes that modernism (which for him is the anti-humanist trend in modern art) is a form of technological portraiture. This definition when applied to Minimalism or the New Abstraction might well lead to very useful insights. And I suggest it is a thought which should be followed up. But once more he himself overextends it; he applies it to Impressionism, Cubism, Constructivism, Op Art. Some of these movements have already been mentioned in some of my counter-arguments.

5. "Throughout this century there has existed an art that has expressed outrage at the castration of human life." I don't wish to be pedantic and I would be the last to deny any writer the right to use images. But the image of the castration of human life may hide more than it discloses. What castrates whom? The process by being universalized is made fatal

My hero stands stoopingly up-right, pot-bellied and tight-assed, top heavy on his thin legs. He is spent and bewildered, frail and human. . . . And yet, I hold man as collectively redemptible.

—Leonard Baskin

and even fatalistic. A little further on Schwartz writes: "The crisis of modern life is the contemporary bison." The bison, I take it, refers back to one of the subjects which occurred in very early paleolithic art. The bison, Schwartz says, "is inexplicable, beyond our reach, incomprehensible and of enormous impact on human life." Thus the 'castrating' is mystified. It can be made simpler and much clearer. The potentiality of man—his potency in the widest sense—is today frustrated and deformed by the results of exploitation and by the means taken by the exploiters to defend their right to exploit. The process is world wide. It is not certain that it can be stopped or defeated. But if we wish to attempt to do so, we must at least see it clearly for what it is. It is not a question of bison, it is a question of one class or one milieu or sometimes a whole nation living ruthlessly off the lives of others. The most powerful exploiting nation in the world is the U.S. Its form of exploitation can only be explained in terms of modern capitalism and imperialism. The exploitation sustained and practiced by the ruling bureaucratic class in the Soviet Union has to be explained in other terms. But in many areas its results are as disastrous. Schwartz appears to recognize this in so far as he says that "the humanist upholds human values against both the ideological collective and the corporate State." But this is prefaced by a remark which is very confusing. He says that if there is to be political art today it must be post-ideological. This is impossible however you interpret the notion of ideology. If ideology means the world-outlook of a social or national group, then those who are exploited and who struggle against exploitation need an ideology and will go on needing it until exploitation has ceased. If ideology means false consciousness, then it is clear that what has created such false consciousness still exists, applying its pressures, and therefore that the only hope of breaking through the falseness lies in action against those pressures. According to either of these interpretations, to speak of art being post-ideological is as premature as speaking of art for the species' sake.

6. The last point I want to make is a simple and positive one. The function and purpose of art has to be re-examined. Even many of the ideas implicit in so-called modern art need to be reexamined. This reexamination cannot be academic; it must start from lived experience. The reexamination needs to include all of the following points and many others besides. Perception is a creative, not an automatic process. The antinomy between art and science is a false one. The substitution of quantity for quality in all the categories of bourgeois thought (or the thought of bureaucrats) is profoundly hostile to imaginative creativity — in art, but also in other, more common forms of human activity. The way that art and its history is usually presented in our societies is undemocratic and is meant to be so. The relation between any artistic achievement and the social sacrifices made blindly and involuntarily for the sake of that achievement needs to be rigorously reconsidered. The concentration, according to our cultural norms, on cerebral calculation, and the underestimation of intuition and sensuous knowledge may well have become a pathological deformation. None of the reasons found in the past for being an artist exist any more; new reasons have to be found, or art should be abandoned. All these questions, however, have to be approached and decided upon in a world where, for the majority, the primary physical and imaginative condition is one of exploitation, and where the claim of Humanism is no more than a benign and hypocritical mask held up to hide the faces of their exploiters. □

Understanding the Concrete Needs of the Historical Moment

by Louis Kampf
Author of On Modernism: the Prospects for Literature and Freedom, *and Professor of Literature at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

Let me begin by asking why I feel so dispirited about doing this. I've been asked to write about the values art might create, and about the "necessity to develop a social art in a time of crisis." I feel at a loss. I could forget about doing this. But then I feel I should try to face the issues. I am, after all, a teacher of literature: I have a job and make my living because some people have created works of art in the past, and, for various reasons, will probably continue to do so. Yet I feel at a loss to justify the claims some people make for art. More and more I find its powers illusory, or at best something very private. Of course, I enjoy looking at some paintings, reading some poems, listening to music, and so forth. But my enjoyment becomes more and more removed from my public life. I feel no sense of relation to the modern art scene. Museums, exhibits, openings, hassles amongst critics and schools repulse me.

I think there are good reasons for my discomfort. The loss of confidence in the public role of art is not simply a matter of my own consciousness, nor is it a matter of the quality of the art being produced at present and in the recent past. Rather the particular functions of art in advanced capitalist societies are at issue. Social relations determine consciousness: My feeling ill at ease derives from the role of art as part of the market economy; art's value lies in its capacity to generate surplus value, not in the images it consciously attempts to create.

There seems to be no end to the arrogance of artists. And to the

worldly ambitions some critics have for art. Art is universal. A thing of beauty is a joy forever. The artist forges the consciousness of his race. He or she unveils the human essence, strikes through the mask. Here is Thomas Mann's humanist, Zeitblom, on the hero of *Doctor Faustus,* the composer Leverkühn:

> *What he had said did not fit with him, his pride, his arrogance if you like, which I loved, and to which art has a right. Art is mind, and mind does not at all need to feel itself obligated to the community, to society — it may not, in my view, for the sake of its freedom, its nobility.*

Zeitblom is not trying to articulate a version of art for art's sake. Rather he sees art as the vanguard; art has foresight, the rest of the world follows. The fate of a "free" art (free in mind, free in spirit, unattached) defines the fate of society: Germany did not accept Leverkühn's music; Germany had the Nazis and was destroyed. So goes Zeitblom's version of humanism.

Why, I wonder, should a society be valued by the high art it produces? Most people who are not publicists for art have similar doubts, or don't even give the subject a thought. But that hardly deters art critics, museum directors, foundations, publishers, and professors.

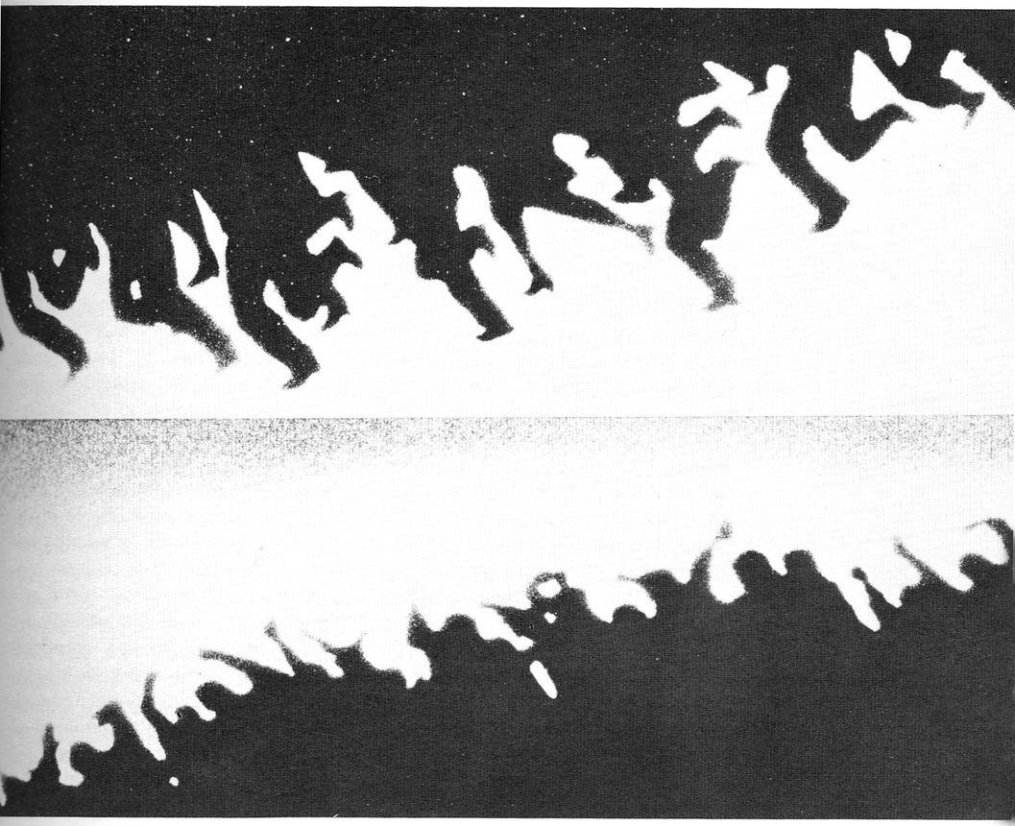
And why should anyone follow the lead of artists? Contributors to this symposium are asked to consider how artists might give birth to new, more humane values. I am reminded of the English Augustan poets wanting to create a Virgilian epic which would imbue the new Age of Augustus with nobility of purpose and the spirit of heroism. The creation of an epic, a public poem, would elevate the institutional life of the new empire. Such ideas gained prominence just as industrial capitalism was getting into gear. While England in the eighteenth century begins to enter the era of free trade, free labor, urban industrialism, and massive speculation in capital, the humanist art of Joshua Reynolds portrays the eternal values of the country estate. Adam Smith may realistically describe the rationality and social impact of the division of labor, but literary critics prattle about the need for epics. Whose needs are they concerned with? Why are they trying to cover the grime of industrial capitalism with the heroic values of the Virgilian epic?

Of course, hardly anyone paid much attention. History may occasionally repeat itself, but it rarely moves backwards. Alexander Pope glorified the values of the country estate, but the middle classes entertained themselves by watching their own values being affirmed and vindicated in the plays of Steele and Lillo. As for the masses of working men and women, secular artists were not very interested in passing on new values to them. Had they attempted to do so, I doubt that anyone except art critics and connoisseurs would have paid them much heed. The consciousness of the masses was left to preachers and those popular instruments of expression rarely taken seriously by critics and historians of art.

"A social art in a time of crisis." There seems to be an assumption that the human race is in the midst of *the* crisis: it is the crisis of the species, of our very being. There are crises and there is *the* crisis. The latter is the property of Western intellectuals and artists; they worry about it because what they perceive to be the crisis of the species has expressed itself in the hangups of their professions or arts and in the disasters of their lives; and so they

write articles and books about *the* essential human anxiety and *the* crisis of the arts. A Vietnamese peasant, I suspect, has a different sense of crisis. Meeting that crisis has little, if anything, to do with the development of a social art for the galleries on Madison Avenue; it might have something to do with destroying American power and the government of President Thieu.

To middle-class intellectuals the ecological crisis may be an existential one, but for most city dwellers with low or average incomes it is a matter of not being able to breathe, of not being able to keep one's windows clean. Soot in one's hair, seeing it spread from the smokestacks of the local Con. Edison plant, has a great deal more to do with a city dweller coming to understand the ecological crisis than the artist's portrayal of it as *the* crisis of the species. Here the humanist artist is ostensibly trying to make people (that is, those few who have the opportunity or desire to look at his/her work) understand something about the nature of humanity's values, and that these might be exchanged for different ones. But to meet the crisis in ecology seriously, means to stop the actions of that sector of humanity which is responsible for it; it means a social grouping developing the power to stop those responsible for the soot and smog. Artists and art might play a role in this struggle. I would hope so. But the terms of their participation will be set by the struggle's nature, not by the artists' sense of anxiety about the state of the species and the state of their art. If humanist painters, for example, fail to understand the concrete needs of the historical moment,



Juan Genovés. *Afterwards, With the Ones Before* from Silencio, Silencio suite, 1970, etching, 19¾ x 26". Courtesy Marlborough Gallery, N.Y. Photographer: Anthony J. Bruder.

I claim no achievement save my recognition that the situation of mankind is so perilous that the future of art, as a separate and unrelated activity, is unimportant.

—Balcomb Greene

their fate will be to paint representations of the struggle which will then be hung in galleries and admired — or damned — for their aesthetic qualities. Aestheticizing the misery of others, however, is one way of making it bearable for oneself and for others. And that is hardly the kind of "humanist" art which is likely to create new values.

Part of my discomfort in writing this derives from the notion of humanism itself. It has been burdened with many definitions, and used for a variety of political purposes, some evil, some merely naive. At its core, however, has always been the assumption that there is some kind of human essence which transcends the historical moment and the divisions of social class: all people at all times are really the same; they're human. Well, they are. But the condition of being human at any moment in history also includes being part of what Marx called the "ensemble of social relations." Social relations place people in social classes, and that becomes the locus of their humanity. The humanist thesis leads artists to generalize from their *personal* concerns to those of all people. If the artist feels tragic, the sense of tragedy becomes *the* human condition. The humanist artist — or any artist working within the Western tradition or within capitalist social relations — will strive to give expression to the ecological crisis in terms of his/her personal vision. That's what an artist is supposed to do; only thus can he/she be honest to his/her artistic creed. But that means that the very different ways in which ecological crisis is experienced by people in different social classes will be falsified or simply left out. Moreover, such generalization of personal vision implies the negation of the possibility for any positive action by the masses of people. If the source of ecological crisis is the human condition, how then can a humanist art rouse people in one social class to struggle against another class, another sector of humanity, which it holds to be responsible for the ecological crisis?

What, I wonder, is a humanist art supposed to do or be? One modest proposal is that it might create an "avenue of acceptance for new values." But what new values? And do we really need new ones? If we insist on floating around in an idealistic medium where values get magically created by artists, we might as well grab at a few of the good ones around: for example, socialism, love, cooperation. The problem is hardly the availability of articulated values.

Another proposal is that humanist art lead the "search for a new human identity." But that brings us back to the humanist fallacy: that there is a human identity which transcends the concrete struggles which divide social classes in our society. The search for one's identity may, in fact, be the collective attempt by a social grouping — nineteenth-century English factory laborers, for example—to discover that they have a common class consciousness. But such a discovery will serve to further separate that grouping from other human groups. Besides, the discovery will not be made by initiating a conscious "search for a new human identity." It all sounds uncomfortably like president Eisenhower's commission on the National Purpose.

Yet another proposal is that artists create a counter-cultural force to technology. I don't know why we should assume that a counter-cultural force is likely to have any effect on the uses of technology. Capitalism has so far managed quite well to use the counter-culture to expand consumer demand. Beyond this, seeing technology as an enemy derives from one's location in a particular social class or national group. That location

defines the range of available ideologies. Western intellectuals and bourgeois artists have been inclined to look at technology as an independent phenomenon, a disembodied ideology, rather than as part of a social process. Those who benefit from capitalism's use of industrial technology tend to avoid looking at the real enemy, and point an accusing finger at the symptoms instead. Members of the National Liberation Front of Vietnam, victims of the murderous use of American technology, generally do not point to technology as the enemy; they see the destruction as one expression of an economic system. The concrete expressions of that system have to be struggled with; but so does the system itself. As for the technology, the NLF would like to have some of it. Only those living comfortably in a society so productive that it creates the material possibility for the elimination of labor itself can afford to reject technology. Others still laboring might not be so anxious to toss out the baby with the bathwater.

Finally, it has been proposed that a humanist art might threaten existing social structures. Just how art might act as a threat is not made clear, though it is suggested that it do so not through an implicit political stance, but in a "post ideological" way. I know of no way any art can threaten those in power unless it is part of a political movement with an articulated ideology and a political program. Political theater in Turin is a threat to the authorities because its performances are part of the political motion generated by the extra-parliamentary left; Jane Fonda and the FTA show give the brass fits because there is a G.I. movement. Art can not shake the foundations of authority simply by throwing more light on the way things are.

What then might a humanist art be or do? I want once more to quote from Mann's *Doctor Faustus*. Here is the composer Leverkühn on the art of the future:

> *The whole temper of art, believe me, will change, and withal into the blither and more modest; it is inevitable, and it is a good thing. Much melancholy ambition will fall away from her, and a new innocence, yes, harmlessness will be hers. The future will see in her, she herself will once more see in herself, the servant of a community which will comprise far more than 'education' and will not have culture but will perhaps be a culture. We can only with difficulty imagine such a thing; and yet it will be, and be the natural thing: an art without anguish, psychologically healthy, not solemn, unsadly confiding, an art* per du *with humanity.*

These words elicited the reflection by Zeitblom quoted earlier. Surely the repose of an organic culture is not a possibility for the present. Were we in a revolutionary situation, I might guess that Leverkühn's program might become a reality after a socialist revolution. It will take such a political upheaval to make a classless humanist art, one which is not an instrument of struggle, possible.

Meanwhile, what does one produce a political art for? To further the struggle for a socialist society: a society in which art will not be an alienated product produced for surplus value. How the struggle for socialism is to be waged is another story, though perhaps it should not be so.

But then I don't really feel like telling artists what to do. Why should they listen to me, anyway? So here's my message to artists, critics and art historians; it is not as serious as Leverkühn's, but serious enough:

From life, among other things, you could damn near die laughing.

—Ed Schlinski

—Have a good time.

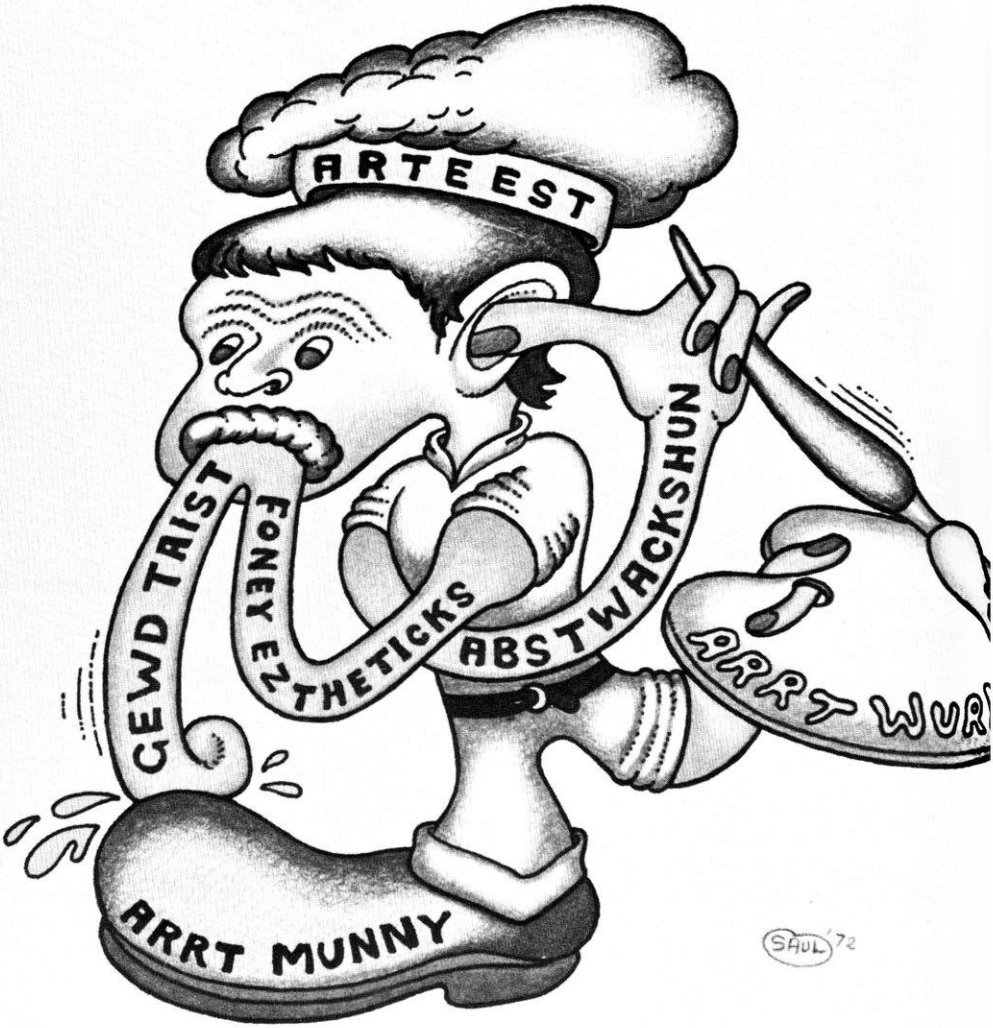
—Hustle the government, foundations, schools, corporations for all the money you can.

—Don't worry too much about what your art says; it doesn't matter; only the institutional way in which your work gets used does.

And the way your work gets used will not be determined by you or me, but by the great mass movements of our time.

Those capable of allying themselves with such movements will discover means "to develop a social art in a time of crisis." □

Peter Saul. *Arteest*, 1972, colored pencil and ink on paper, 11½ x 10". The editors heartily thank Mr. Saul for this drawing done especially for this issue.



Man:

Still Between Earth and Sky?

Or Myth, Art, and Technology

by Ihab Hassan
Vilas Research Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His works include Radical Innocence, The Literature of Silence, *and* The Dismemberment of Orpheus.

My wife asked a Japanese friend the secret of flower arrangements. He said, it's very simple. And with quick strokes on a paper, he sketched three harmonious zones in space: Earth, Man, and Sky.

1. WORDS

This symposium is conducted in words. It concerns the plastic arts but it is expressed in verbal language. I have only read the text of Mr. Barry Schwartz; I have not seen the pictures or paintings he has in mind.

What of it?
Only this:
words, perhaps more than colors, shapes, or musical sounds,
tend to humanize;
they socialize, moralize,
philosophize.
Humanism and Language are harder to separate than Humanism and Shape or Sound. Because Mr. Schwartz states and argues in English, his *particular* argument is more than half won.
And I am glad of it!
Still,
let us admit it: a painting is probably more ambiguous in its pro-, anti-, or a-humanism than our discursive selves
may be willing to allow. We
are not saying it with flowers.

Rico Lebrun *Mask*, 1962-63, bronze, 13½ x 11½". Courtesy Lee Nordness Galleries, N.Y. Photographer: Richard Fish.

2. HUMANISM RENEWED

No one can wish for a diminishment of humanism on earth; and some would argue that, with rare exceptions, all art is humanist. But the question is really what kind of humanism is commensurate with our age? Is it the Classical humanism of Sophocles and Phidias? Is it the Renaissance humanism of Leonardo and Erasmus? Is it humanism of the Enlightenment or Romantic humanitarianism? Is it the "New" humanism of Irving Babbit and Paul Elmer More? Or is it, as I am inclined to believe, still something else, something truly new, something that carries a fundamental concern for human BEING into the future, a kind of Posthumanism? Let us leave some room for doubt and surprise.

3. FROM VALUE TO VISION AND BACK

I think that the concerns expressed by Mr. Barry Schwartz are concerns that I share. And his plaudits are well placed. I, too, cheer the "creative resistance" of Humanist artists to totalitarian and technocratic tendencies in the world; I, too, cheer their anti-formalism and their resolve to provide a fierce critique of our time. Indeed, I feel myself drawn to a common purpose when, for instance, Mr. Schwartz writes or quotes:

- "The apocalyptic contingency must be recognized as *conceivable* yet shown to be *avoidable*."
- "If art is to be political today, it must be post-ideological."
- "The relationship between artist and viewer is one outstanding aspect of the holistic aspiration of Humanist art."
- "The Humanist aesthetic is best demonstrated when the totality of human experience is maximized through a tension between human potential and human actuality."

Yet I remain somewhat uneasy; for I sense a retrograde spirit in this new Humanism, a readiness to welcome:

Luddites, uncritically hostile toward science and technology

Arcadians, pursuing the myth of lost innocence in nature

Tragic Humanists, who emphasize the inherent limitations of man

Neo-Marxists, who define change too narrowly in terms of the

Elias Friedensohn.
Liebestraum, 1972, oil on canvas, 72 x 60". Courtesy Terry Dintenfass, Inc., N.Y.

already given, without imagination ever glimpsing power.

For me, there is something atavistic in these embodiments of present perplexities. Sharing some of their values, I find their outlook lacking in vision.

Vision creates values before they come to be valued.

But this is perhaps all too vague. My resistance to the argument of Mr. Schwartz, as distinct from his artistic evidence, centers on more specific points:

- He does not suggest — beyond the relation of artist to viewer — the elements of a Humanist *aesthetic.*
- He exaggerates formalist influence, which *has steadily declined* in the last two decades, in art, in music, in literature, in criticism, in the culture at large.
- He dulls the novelty of the new Humanists by encouraging us to apprehend their contribution in terms of outworn dialectics: Form *versus* Content, System *versus* Counterculture, Machine *versus* Man.
- Thus he does not entirely convince me that "Humanism is a unique artistic intention;" for I see it in the work of all the ages, and like Herbert Read, I believe the artist remains *ein Ruttler.* So far, it is the "technological optimist" who seems the exception rather than the rule among artists.

But these objurgations may finally dissolve in matters of rhetoric, of emphasis and nuance. The significant point is there in the statement of Mr. Schwartz:

> "Humanism is the insistence that from actuality something better must emerge. Through a rejection of what men have come to regard as normal, the Humanist creates the avenue for acceptance of new values."

If this is true, we may be on our way from value to vision and back again. Yet the question remains whether Man still stands, as in Japanese flower arrangements, between Earth and Sky.

4. A LITERARY EXCURSUS

Between the art and literature of this century there are some parellels and contrasts.

a. *Avant-garde* movements in art and music tend to precede those in literature (innate conservatism of the Word).

b. Literature does not organize itself easily in such concepts or categories as Futurism, Cubism, Constructivism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop, Op, Minimalism. The three art movements that may have had a special influence on literature are Dada, Surrealism, and Expressionism.

c. There are essentially two main movements in twentieth century literature. The first I call Modernism and the second Postmodernism. The

Man, it seems to me, employs Art for many reasons, but centrally to discover who and what he is as the 'who and what' evolves and plays hide-and-seek with assorted mundane to ruthless realities. When the Art is narrow and restricted to itself as it often has been and is today, and will, in major ways, be so tomorrow, when it refuses to go beyond surface . . . to the tragedies of existence itself, then it is a social plaything. And while I won't deny playthings as such, I do recognize that they belong to a different order of things.

—James Kearns

differences between these movements are chronological but also typological.

d. Modernism, which has its early and late stages, includes works by Valéry, Proust, Gide; Yeats, Joyce, Lawrence; Rilke, Kafka, Mann; Pound, Eliot, Stein, Hemingway, Faulkner, etc.

e. Postmodernism includes works by Borges; Beckett; Butor, Genet, Sartre; Brecht, Böll, Grass; Barth, Burroughs, Mailer, etc.

f. There are certain links between Modernism and Postmodernism: Dada, Surrealism, Kafka, Stein, the Joyce of *Finnegans Wake.*

The essential differences between Modernist and Postmodernist authors should not be glibly defined; for both continuities and discontinuities operate in our sense of time; and the century is not yet over. Still, we can already note that Modernists tend to have more confidence in the powers of literature than Postmodernists; the ironies of the former give way to the destructive self-parodies of the latter. Modernists also show a greater interest in literary structure, the made artifact; they favor formalism while Postmodernists favor its opposite. Furthermore, Modernists often strike an aristocratic or authoritarian stance in their art, whereas Postmodernists prefer anarchic or antinomian postures.

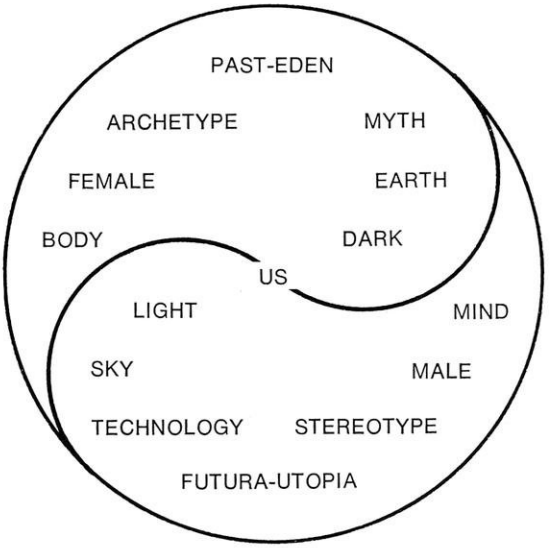
Hierarchic, ceremonious, complex, allusive, detached, Modernist authors are, nevertheless, neither social conformists nor technological optimists. Is their "humanism," then, more deficient than that of their heirs? The answer is not simple. In discussing Modernism, Ortega y Gasset struck on the phrase, "the dehumanization of art," to characterize the elitism and abstraction of that movement, its formal distance in art as in life. Most of us would concur with his perception. Yet who would deny that the great Modernists also provided a radical — going to the roots!—critique of civilization and of consciousness, and that their works acted as a deep countercultural force in the earlier decades of this century?

True, the development of literature has led to more open, discontinuous, or parodic forms; to a sharper sense of cultural crisis, an intuition of apocalypse; to a more direct involvement with the actualities of contemporary life; to an awareness that literature itself may no longer suffice. Yet, with few exceptions, Postmodern literature has been no more explicit than the Modern in recognizing the technological myths; and has been no more "humanistic."

The exceptions—dealing with various dreams and nightmares of the machine — are significant. These usually occur in Science Fiction, a field that at last has come to majority. But the same impulse to understand, criticize, shape, and even reinvent the technological world also occurs in works of another kind, such as William Burroughs' *Nova Express,* Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle,* and Norman Mailer's *Of a Fire on the Moon,* to mention only three. Too often, however, the technological threat either goes unnoticed in literature or else it is countered by the vanishing pieties of nineteenth century humanism.

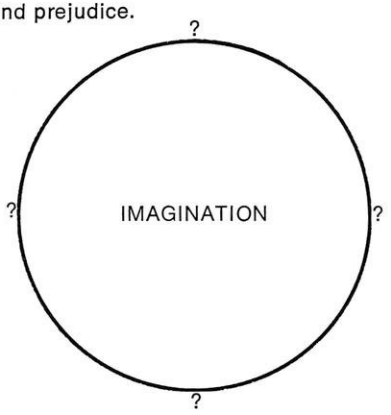
A truly new humanism — Posthumanism—is rarely to be found in current "serious" literature. Its invisible elements are rather discovered, scattered, *both* in the Rand Corporation and the Esalen Institute, the *Pentagon Papers* and the *Whole Earth Catalogue,* the mechanists and the mystics of America, as William Irvin Thompson puts it in *The Edge of History.*

5. A SCHEMA



We must move beyond
dialectics
toward trialectics . . .
multilectics.

In creating oppositions,
two cults or cultures
—M. Arnold vz. T. Huxley
D. H. Lawrence vz. H. G. Wells
F. R. Leavis vz. C. P. Snow—
we become twice
captive,
of logic and prejudice.



There are Blakean marriages
of Heaven and Hell,
of Technology and Mythology.
What is their issue,
their offspring in
Reality?

The juxtaposition, though not the marriage, is before us every day. Thus *Time,* October 2, 1972, reports on two artists on the same page.

A kinetic artist called Tsai, an ex-engineer from Shanghai. Rods and vibrators. "The result is that when one approaches a Tsai or makes a noise in the vicinity, the thing responds. The rods appear to move; there is a shimmering, a flashing, an eerie ballet of metal, whose apparent movements range from stillness to jittering, and back to a slow, indescribably sensuous undulation."

A Jungian mystic called Floyd Johnson, from Topeka, Kansas. Acrylic on raw canvas. Memories of a spiritual crisis that brought visions and hallucinations, primordial emblems. The style of contemplation, brilliant and cloudy, impersonal. Johnson: "I believe I was watching the whole evolution of life, from its fundamental shapes — the building blocks of consciousness."

Is there contradiction between these two or either with Man?

6. FRAGMENT OF AN INTERVIEW*

Frederick Brussat: A lot of people, however, would classify the occult movement as a retreat from reality, another escape mechanism to avoid the pressures of the present.

Ihab Hassan: That interpretation is also true. But this raises another point: in 1972 we can not afford to think "either/or;" we must think "both/and." *For instance, we have to be political, we have to stand with our feet on the ground and engage the world around us.*

But we must never really make ourselves believe that by taking this political action, getting this kind of legislation, toppling this type of regime, we are going to change things in the long run. We are simply going to stop one particular bully from beating another particular weakling. My son and your son will go on fighting the same fight if we simply restrict ourselves to specific political situations. *We also have to seek a transformation of consciousness.*

Frederick Brussat: The poet Auden said we can't go back to the Garden of Eden again—even though that is a dominant motif in youth culture today. On the other hand, we can't create a utopian world. Both tactics essentially retreat from the present and evade responsibility. The only viable alternative must be to wrestle with the "both/and" in the here and now.

Mary Brussat: Even though this may involve coping with extremes. Again, if we look at one of the simplest media forms—television—we can see reflections of two distinctly

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**The full text of this interview appeared in* Cultural Information Service *(October, 1972). Copyright Ihab Hassan.*

different tendencies in our culture. On the one hand, we have occult-mysticism programming reflecting an interest in the non-verbal, the spiritual or gnostic impulse. At the same time we have *Search,* a new series about a spy who is in essence a walking computer bank. This is the other extreme, reflecting an effort to come to terms with materiality, with machines, with things. It verges upon the near idolatry of technology which was dominant in the 1960's with the moon shots and other technological break-throughs. On television, then we see both sides.

Ihab Hassan: Yes, and this is exactly what I am interested in. Next semester I am going to try a seminar on the *wedding of mythology and technology,* a Blakian wedding similar to the marriage of heaven and hell. I believe that if the human race is going to make a breakthrough, it will be in that direction. Do you see the pertinence of this development to the things we've been talking about? I think that forms of clairvoyance and certain forms of technological achievement are already *converging.*

The problem comes up when we contrast body with machine. We look at the machine, the technological womb, and everything that issues from it, and say, "this is inorganic." How can the inorganic ever be reconciled to something that is organic—that is fleshly and even bloody?

But the reconciliation between the two forms is coming. In *pure consciousness.* When the body moves toward pure consciousness and the machine leaves all its equipment behind and becomes pure process, they will converge.

Let me give you an example. Somebody once asked Buckminster Fuller about a house, and he replied that the perfect house would be the invisible house. He means *invisible.* The house will be a *process* of protection and conditioning; there will be heat, water, envelopment, but without any walls or other visible medium at all. *The most perfect technology is that which is totally invisible.* The perfect technology will be an imitation of nature in her inherent laws; it will therefore be as invisible as the action of the inherent laws of nature.

This is where I see the convergence of the organic and the inorganic. Right now, of course, we can only see the contrast. I only know that when I go out to take a walk and want to breathe, the automobile is insistently there; I have to breathe its exhaust and I'm outraged. I know that my organic lungs are breathing the exhalations of someone else's iron lung!

Mary Brussat: In a book called *Guerrilla Television,* Michael Shamberg—a young New Yorker working in video tape television — makes an interesting statement about computers and the future. This is a direct quote: "Right now, the human brain in symbiosis with computers is the best thing going. But if some fabulous computer can process intelligence better than man all by itself, then at that point the computer may be man." I think such statements raise people's fears that some day the computers will rule the world! I'd like to know your personal feelings about this type of thinking. If man's consciousness and computers will not in essence be superior and eventually be making decisions on their own initiative!

Ihab Hassan: I find myself caught between two kinds of forces here.

My work is essentially autobiographical. As such, these pieces are reflections of things seen, emotions felt, a delight in a visually exciting world, an ache for the frustrations of human life. The purpose of my work is to find forceful images, freshly seen, that will reach out and touch another sensibiilty.

—Elbert Weinberg

To explain these forces, let me tell you again about some of my students. Some of them revolt with incredible ferocity when they read science fiction and futurology—because they feel that their sense of self is profoundly threatened by such projections of the future. And they are right. Their sense of self, as they feel themselves to be now, *is* threatened by these technological visions. Behind this reaction is a measure of self-love shared by all human beings. We are all threatened, as Susan Sontag said, by the void, the sense of non-being that science fiction exploits. *Zap!* Someone pulls a ray gun, and a human being is *annihilated!* The possibility of de-materialization lurks in our subconscious, lurks there *both as a threat and an appeal.*

O. K., that's one reaction from some students — fighting back against the threat of the void. Another group of students reacts differently. They recognize that *man is no longer the center of the universe.* The pre-Copernican view of the Earth as the center of the solar system has already been shattered. Now, we are beginning to realize that just as the solar system is not the center of the universe, human consciousness itself may not be the only kind of consciousness in the universe. Therefore, the veneration of life need not be limited to a veneration of human life. And, to make it even more troublesome from a Christian point of view, we begin to see that the nature of divinity in the universe may be evolving; it may not be directly related to the definitions of Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, or any of the other revealed religions of the world.

Consequently, man—once he realizes that he is no longer the center of the universe—may be able, may be even *willing,* to sacrifice his form, to give up his self, *to transcend himself.* This would happen, of course, only if man were convinced that his transcendence is "upwards," towards a larger and more energetic reality, and not "downwards," towards a piece of hardware like the computer.

Thus, I think, we stand between two perspectives. One is an affirmation of self faced with the threat of annihilation. The other is the urge toward self-transcendence in a cosmos that does not necessarily limit life and intelligence to their human forms. The computer may prove an instrument of human transcendence. Or it may prove just the opposite, a form of self-brutalization, self-mechanization. It may also prove to be both.

Frederick Brussat: Do you think it is possible to influence the direction of the computer? If so, who is going to have the moral obligation to control future technology? Isn't this one of the moral concerns of everyone today?

Ihab Hassan: Certainly. And the only answer is: *it has to be you and me.* There is nobody else. Literally, it has to be the three of us, sitting here, doing that job in some way or another.

Your question is especially troublesome because there are developments right now in the biological sciences, in genetic engineering for example, in the things you read about in Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* and Gordon Rattray Taylor's *The Biological Time Bomb.* These developments demand decisions — moral, political, spiritual, scientific, economic — somebody will make them for us or else they will be made by default by the process itself.

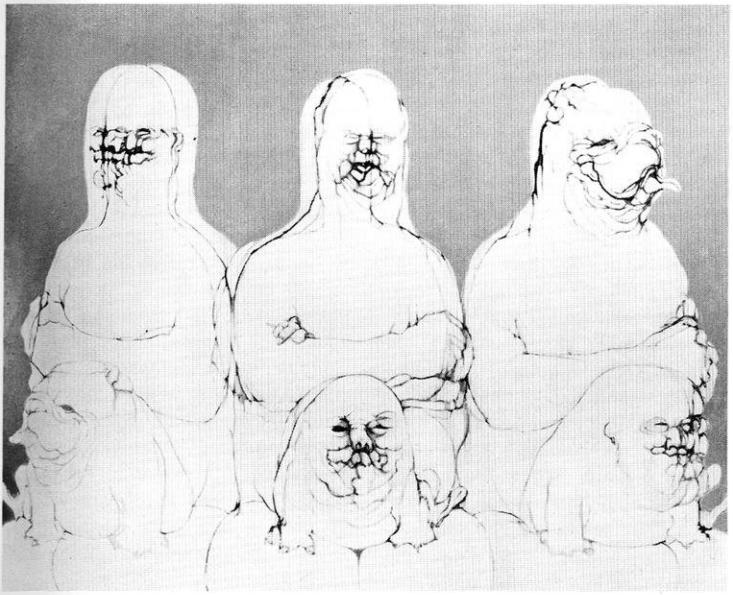
7. MAN, ART, EARTH, SKY

We need an integration of art into nature into culture.

We need a Posthumanism.

This means an end to victimization. Let us not say: "Man is a victim of contemporary experience." There are Augustinians and Augustinians in reverse. The ones believe in the Inherent Fault — Original Sin, Human Depravity, the Fall — and the others believe in the External Fault—Nature, the System, Them. Is there a difference? Perhaps man is a victim only of what he creates and chooses; the rest is process. By objectifying, by projecting our failings, into Them, we can *deny* these failings without ever *transforming* them. That way lies the endless cycle of victim and victimizer. There are other possibilities for man. Pogo: "We have met the enemy and he is us." Or Stewart Brand: "We are as gods and might as well get good at it." In popular culture, in the collective dream, Posthumanist art may find responsibility. The imagination is teleological.

We need the redemption of Prometheus, that Titanic trickster, fiery friend of men and unwitting foe, spiked on Tartarus, liver torn, harupsicating an end to his and our own woe. In the snow, white with pain, mythology and technology fuse as fire melts within the sun. Who is there to say that Man, Art, Earth, Sky may not become one? □



May Stevens. *Metamorphosis,* 1972, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 90". Courtesy of the artist. Photographer: O. E. Nelson, N.Y.

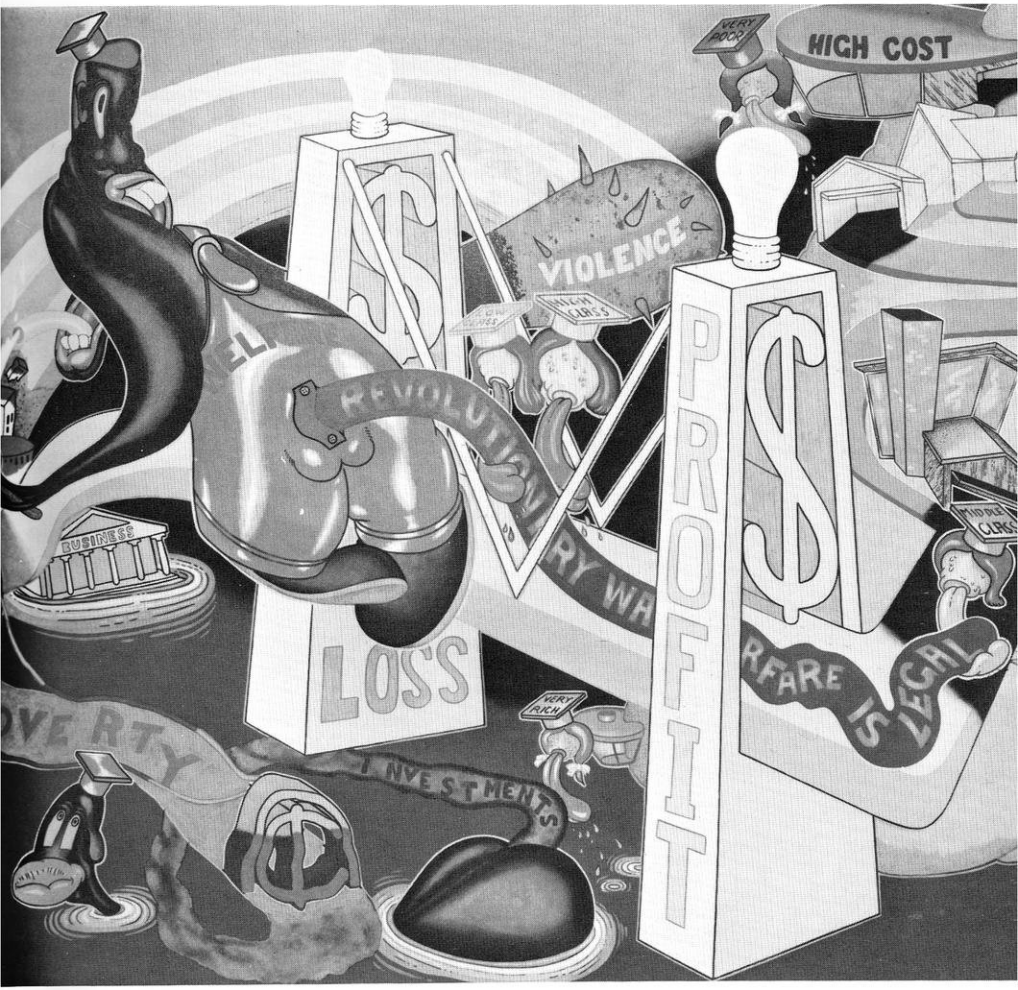
Humanism and People

by Vernon O. Leviege
He is a therapist, and community organization specialist.
He has authored a book soon to be released entitled,
Group Relations: Group Therapy With Mentally Ill Offenders.

Barry Schwartz's statement is a brilliant, sane and pioneering exposure of an area in which it is difficult to be rigorous, specific and illuminating. The piece's first virtue is that it does not look at Humanist art as a monolithic mass but, in pointing out its "intentions," Schwartz takes full account of the variety of values, attitudes, ideas and beliefs found within it.

Schwartz throws much light on the dynamics of social struggle, and speaks well of the deeper motives and aspirations of the Humanist Community. Many prevailing myths fall by the wayside. Those that are apt to be critical of art forms because they seem not well grounded substantively, theoretically, philosophically and technically might well be expressing only the fact that they view Humanist art with misplaced values. Perhaps they have become captivated by the eloquence and charm of modernist art and are prevented from responding to Humanist art because they see the absurdities, sickness and twisted ill-humor as distasteful and unacceptable.

The Humanist Artist's work is certainly different, yet I believe he is crying out for something that too many cannot understand. As Schwartz points out, the Humanist Artist is making an attempt to establish contact with the viewer, to tell of the pain, the hurt, the despair, the hopelessness and the discontent. His work is not a purposeful creation of sickness; rather it portrays sickness that already exists. Humanist Art thereby carries with it relevancy; it is related to and useful in the struggle for human understanding and justice.



I will show people that what they want to look at is not the kind of thing they will enjoy seeing.
—Peter Saul

Peter Saul. *Mr. Welfare*, 1969, oil on canvas, 93 x 120". Courtesy of Galerie Darathea Speyer, Paris.

As an Afro-American, too many times my cries for justice have gone unheard because they weren't delivered to the institutions of man with the "proper" rhetoric, procedure or style. Likewise, because of his different style, the Humanist Artist faces rejection by the status quo. Yet what is positive and meaningful is to stay out of the traps set by "proper" style and form and deal with bigger problems — lack of brotherhood, the rape of the earth, prejudice, and so forth. Within Schwartz's exposé formal, institutionalized art is not being attacked, rather it is the right to shape your own destiny and to express your own uniqueness that is being held most precious.

Because Humanist Art is a form of media that depicts the needs and anguish of mankind, it is often considered threatening to our technologically advanced society. Schwartz expounds on this point. If taken seriously, Humanist Art calls for a reevaluation of the system's effectiveness in serving its own. This threat tendency is combatted, as it always has been, by a four step acculturation process that sets out to control and manage humans. The first step of acculturation that occurs is our "socialization process" which attempts to teach us that many of our desires, feelings, thoughts, aspirations and individual differences are not just inappropriate, but wrong. The main source of this socialization process is our family of orientation. "Group pressures" is the second step, which may be exerted from a number of sources such as peers, business associates, jail house lawyers, relatives and other primary and secondary relationships. The third step is "language" itself which is a direct outcome of education, skills, training and culture. Education is a systemized process which often thwarts a person's desire to express individual differences and uniqueness. Too often a person's efforts to communicate are received with disfavor because the raiment of his expression is not conducive to the "proper" style. Finally, if a person is still unable to fit the mold, "force" is employed resulting in physical, psychological, economic or social extinction. Strangely enough, the acculturation process used by our society to manage and lessen discontent is often the very phenomenon that the Humanist Artist depicts as the source of discontent.

Re-education is vital. The artist's achievement depends not so much upon his knowledge of "academic art" as upon his reacquaintance with human nature and his experience of life. If today's artists rely too much on tradition they frustrate their own experiments and fail to produce the extraordinary results we see in Humanist Art.

In a new art movement it is important that we re-vitalize the high idealism and moral commitment as was reborn in the United States with the black, red and brown third world cultural movements. But in this case, we do not build around the effort to get a migrant farm worker minimum wages, a small black child a place in an integrated public school, or an "indigent" housing program. To receive more than token payment of the overdue democratic promise of our time—in regard to art movements—we need to legitimatize art with social images that reflect, as Schwartz says ". . . the realities of our time, its illusions, its slogans, its programmed human relationships, and its lies . . ."

In a discussion of the artist's attempt to communicate "the realities of our time" we can not ignore the importance of imagery. Imagery plays a very important part of our whole (Bio/Psycho/Socio) development. Life is full of it; we can not escape its influence. We are constantly receiving images (as viewers of art and commerce) or projecting images

to others (as the artist or ad-man), though we are not always conscious of the power we are exercising. The artist who creates images depicting life experiences becomes a threat to "most people," simply because his work of art has the potential to raise the social-consciousness of the people who view it. The artist who chooses a form of Humanism as his artistic expression becomes another participant in a new surge of individualism, which this author finds refreshing. Of the many and varied art forms I have come in contact with I have found the Humanist's approach the most real—I am able to identify with it. I must agree with Schwartz when he states in his work that "the Humanist aesthetic is best demonstrated when the totality of human experience is maximized through a tension between human potential and human actuality."

On cursory inspection, the Humanist Artist seems to project an overly sensational image of social problems. To be sure, there is deep anger and frustration, as well as varying degrees of suspicion and resentment toward these social problems. Yet there is still optimism about the possibility of change within the system. The Humanist Artist is the cultural analog to the Ombudsman, Social Worker, Psychologist, Psychiatrist or Welfare Worker, projecting psycho-socially in "one visual form."

But should the Humanist Artist's hopes for true equality be thwarted and the road to economic autonomy, political liberation, creativity and justice remain closed to them, there will certainly be a bitter harvest.

The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change delineates the problems, now we must get on with the solutions. Despite the opposition, the Humanist Artist is quickly moving ahead to shape his own destiny — already there are many signs of this. Just like *people of color* in America, Humanist Artists are being subjected to "doses of oppression," but at the same time they are more loudly demanding justice. It is important to bear in mind that the response of the oppressed is as varied as life itself. Sometimes oppression produces compliance; at other times it is vehemently opposed. The Humanist Artist likewise has various responses to oppression. He is compelled to communicate, through ill-fated images, oppressive social conditions and the limitations of mankind to cope with these conditions. Again, I agree with Schwartz that the "emotional stance" of the artist directs the manner that he chooses to express his discontent. Images are created with intent that ranges from repulsing the viewer to engaging him in similar feelings of life circumstance.

As a result of variations within peoples subjugated to oppression, ours is clearly a time of widespread but diverse protest. The struggle against differential opportunity, "benign neglect," sexism, and racism is probably more in evidence now than at any time in history. In the words of the author, the Humanist Artist portrays "tension between life as it is lived and life as it could be lived." Humanist Art then is an image that is the in-between, or the tension (anguish and despair) that results as the Humanist Artist is subjected to the real; seeing all too clearly the often forgotten "potential" that life has in store for us all.

In short, Barry Schwartz provides the reader with interesting information and thoughtful conclusions about *The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change* and the whole problem of developing an understanding of "the Humanist intention."

The lights are perfectly natural and harmless, and the seers are only sensitive persons.
—Bernard Hollander, M.D. □

Whom Are We Talking To?

Certainly Not to Artists

by Nat Hentoff
Staff writer, The New Yorker; *columnist,* The Village Voice.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's undelivered Nobel lecture parallels much of what Barry Schwartz says —though more passionately, Solzhenitsyn having discovered the risks of Humanist art in a most non-abstract way. But even he, while pleading that artists be humanists, recognizes an essential caution in any attempt to lecture artists:

"Who is there so bold as to proclaim that he has defined art? . . . Let us grant that the artist owes nobody anything."

Yet Solzhenitsyn, like Schwartz, does go on to moralize at artists. The full context of the last half of the preceding quotation is:

"Let us grant that the artist owes nobody anything; it is still painful to see how he can, by retreating into a world of his own creation, or into the open spaces of subjective caprice, deliver the real world into the hands of mercenary people who are often insignificant or even out of their minds."

But if he so chooses, an artist obviously has the right to do that. And who can predict with certainty that such an artist, whatever his intentions, may nonetheless have a humanistic effect — by Schwartz's criteria — through his work?

Schwartz, for example, is scornful of a statement by Richard Anuskiewicz in a museum catalog: "My work is of an experimental nature and has centered on an investigation into the effects of complementary colors of full intensity when juxtaposed and the optical changes that occur as a result."

But what if his work works with some viewers? We are not going to be able to significantly help create the kind of society that Schwartz — and I — desire until many more of us are less anesthetized. The normative brutalization that is done in the name of America, here and elsewhere in the world, could not continue without the non-resistance of most Americans. And the capacity to

be passive, to viscerally ignore the spiritual mutilation of children in our schools and the literal mutilation of Asian children wherever the bombs for so many years hit —I use two of myriad illustrations of brutalization — comes from a deadened sensibility. A deadened sense of what it fully is, or can be, to be alive! And if Anuskiewicz can stir a viewer to a shock, or even a glimmer, of recognition of how much more he can see (and thereby how much more he can feel), then this "experimental" artist has had a humanizing effect.

This is all quite speculative and certainly tenuous, to be sure. Remember the German concentration camp commanders who were de-

Joyce Treiman. *Anomie*, 1971-72, oil on canvas, 70 x 70". Coll: Whitney Museum of American Art, N.Y. Photographer: Frank J. Thomas.

voted to Beethoven. There *is* no predicting what effect any art, including avowedly "Humanist" art, will have on any particular viewer, listener, reader. But that works both ways, which is why I find Schwartz's summary dismissal of Anuskiewicz more than somewhat simplistic.

I gather from his essay that Schwartz and I have similar societal goals, and probably share much the same politics; but I am more "permissive" than he concerning art and the artist. I don't think artists can or ought to be guided. And I think it's foolish to try.

Consider this Schwartz dictum: "By opposing the direction of the society in which he creates, the Humanist artist is in a state of perpetual antagonism with reality. Out of this conflict comes the insight of what it is we need to know in order to be able to survive."

Wow!

Perpetual antagonism with reality? I write more polemics than fiction (though I much prefer to write the latter) because of the way we live and kill now. But in neither area of work, am I antagonistic, let alone perpetually, to all of reality. And more to the point, certainly more to the artist's point, how easy is it to know what "reality" is? Battling, often quite joyfully, with that conundrum is what art — almost all kinds of art — is about.

What his essay, and what this symposium, comes down to is how much effect art can have on enabling "something better" to emerge from present "actuality." Schwartz is right in his contention that "although the technological society wishes to maintain an appearance of progress, it abhors fundamental change." Humanist art, he believes, can, by "creative resistance," provide an effective "countercultural force" that may, in alliance with other forces, actually lead to fundamental change.

Leaving aside my conviction that even what Schwartz would regard as non-Humanist art has unpredictable effects, some of which might well confound both him and its non-Humanist creators, how much change "within the human situation" can Humanist art, as defined by Schwartz, stimulate?

The answer is much more difficult to come by, if there is an answer, than Schwartz apparently can conceive. During his term as Secretary of Defense, for instance, Robert McNamara was much taken with the poetry of Yeats. I'm reasonably sure, moreover, that others of "the best and the brightest" who were piling up corpses long-distance in those years had tastes in painting that Mr. Schwartz might certify as Humanist. But they were able to separate out whatever urgently human impulse they received from art which nourished them after hours; by day, they continued their murdering.

On the other side, there were deep currents of Humanist art in the music that became a common consciousness among the young during those years. Humanist though he is, Schwartz seems to have an elitist view of what he describes as "so-called popular culture." But there was much serious, and seriously playful humanism, in the work of the Beatles and the Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead as well as in the astonishingly energizing comic drawing of Robert Crumb. That generation was much more suffused with what I call Humanist art than, I expect, any preceding American generation. And yet its resistance to the war went slack toward the end, and many within it retreated to various forms of privatism. They may awaken again, in part because of the sounds and words of the art that once was so integral a part of their ardent

faith in, as Schwartz writes, "the priority of human life, the necessity of change and their willingness to contribute to the possibility."

Many may again awaken to possibility; maybe only a few will. Some have remained awake. What I call Humanist art had something to do with what they had become when the country seemed to be "greening," but I do not know whether subsequent forces of Humanist art can bring them to where Schwartz —and I—would like them to be.

My own view about the kind of proselytization (*What Art Should Be*) which Schwartz's essay represents is that while it may be therapeutic for the proselytizer, it's not going to affect many artists. And furthermore, I am an agnostic with regard to whether the most Humanist of artists can realistically be charged with a mandate to help bring about "fundamental change" in the society in which they create. Certainly art can, and has, played a central role "within the human situation." And art can, and has, postulated the brutality and fragility of existing structures (Schwartz's term); but how much of a threat art can be to those structures I don't know.

It's worth trying. Dickens had an effect, as did Thomas Nast (whom I consider to have been an artist). And not only concentration commanders were reached by "The Eroica" and the Ninth Symphony. And there was *Guernica*. In my own life, jazz has been a profound force of Humanist art.

It's worth trying, but advocacy in this case is useless. There are artists who cannot be anything but Humanist. And others will choose other directions, even committing what Schwartz considers the great Clive Bell heresy: "Why should artists bother about the fate of humanity?"

Essentially, I think Schwartz misunderstands the fundamental intractability of any serious artist when it comes to being told what he ought to do. Even by Humanist Schwartz. Alberto Moravia once tried to explain why he had to write; and in so far as one can generalize about all artists, what Moravia said applies to the way all artists create: "We live in order to know why we live. That is why I write a novel, in order to know why I write a novel. We live for continual discovery. It is rather entertaining."

Yes, it is. Even artists locked into a state of "perpetual antagonism with reality" find pleasure in the pain of creating, and surely they create in order to continually discover. That's the base of art. Some include in that base their need to try to humanize their contemporaries — and hopefully generations beyond—through their art. Others have rather different goals. Céline, for instance. What would Schwartz do with that misanthropic fascist? Blackball him from the club of artists?

I think this symposium is a footless endeavor. When I start a novel, I do not prepare myself by reading a series of analyses of what my responsibility as a writer is to humanity. I write a novel because I want to find out what happens to me, and what I learn, as I write it. Also, admittedly, because I am a humanist, the novel would pass Schwartz's ethical, if not necessarily aesthetic, criteria. But other people write novels with no desire to "deal with society" at all. They quite hungrily, and with no guilt, commit another heresy-according - to - Schwartz: they retreat "into freedom in isolation."

What are you going to do with them? Excommunicate them? They have already excommunicated themselves. And again, what-

I try to paint people as I see them and show the way they feel about life, other people and the world around them.
—Robert Broderson

Peter Dean. *Circus Family*, 1969, oil on canvas, 8 x 6½'. Courtesy of the artist.

ever *their* intent in their work, you may well become more strongly girded for the struggle against "technological medievalism" out here by reading what they've written. Schwartz himself says, as T. S. Eliot said before him, that "though the artist may or may not create with (the) 'other' in mind, once the work is completed it belongs as much to the 'other' as it does to the artist."

As I expect is by now evident, I have small patience with setting up manifestoes for artists, including such relatively qualified manifestoes as Mr. Schwartz's (His penultimate paragraph, for instance). Nor do I pay much attention to manifestoes promulgated by artists themselves. What changes me, or does not change me, is each individual work. Work of art, I mean, not a statement of moral or any other kind of intention.

The only grand statement about What Art Can Do for Man that makes much sense to me is Solzhenitsyn's in that undelivered Nobel speech:

> *From man to man, filling up his brief time on earth, art communicates the whole burden of the long life experience of another being with all its hardships, colors, juices, recreating the experience endured by another human in the flesh—permitting it to be absorbed as one's own.*
>
> *. . . We have been given a miraculous faculty: Despite the differences of language, customs and social structure we are able to communicate life experience from one whole nation to another, to communicate a difficult national experience many decades long which the second of the two has never experienced. And in the most favorable case, this may save a whole nation from a path which is dangerous or mistaken or destructive. And thus the twists and turns of human history are shortened.*

I don't know about that "most favorable case." Solzhenitsyn sounds somewhat like Schwartz in that line. He hopes for literal miracles from art. But the first part I accept. We learn more about ourselves and about each other, and about the dead, from art. And in some of us art also quickens a need to engage in some kind of humanistic "creative resistance" where we are. But when art does not quicken that need, has it failed?

We do live, as Schwartz says, "with social fragmentation, polarization, poverty, racism, sexism, violence and spiritual death." And so I too wish for more Humanist art, both for its own sake (the regenerating of a sense of possibility) and also in the hope that such art can accomplish at least some of what Schwartz expects of it. (My own doubts about the social efficacy of art notwithstanding.) But I don't want all art to be Humanist. What a beneficent desert that would be. This can't happen, however, humanity being as diverse (unto anti-human artists) as it is.

So what *are* we talking about? Whom are we talking to? Imagine, after this issue is out, how many artists will have this set of essays by their easels, how many writers by their desks.

The editor of *Arts in Society* suggested I might want to base my piece on Mr. Schwartz's statement. I did, and I have. The editor also told me that Mr. Schwartz's statement "is a bold one." Yes, I suppose it is. But it has nothing to do with the creating of art. It does relate to the way some people write about art, and I would agree that it would be a boon to have more Humanists among critics. But the artist has only one way to go—his own, Humanist or not. □

I am bored with the art-as-decoration scene. I feel that the artist's hand and heart must be exposed in a work of art. I am involved with both the fantasy and reality of my life and times.

—Peter Dean

Against the Claw (Some Notes on the Art of Being Human)

by Walter Lowenfels
Author of Land of Roseberries *and* To an Imaginary Daughter.

Humanity doesn't need artists to "inspire" it — it will find its way ahead via inexorable laws. Meanwhile, art is one effort today, along with all our others, to defend the integrity and dignity of human personality against the world's statistical claw.

Whitman (and I think Williams, too) thought that one could change society by poems — an extension perhaps of Schopenhauer's concept that man is doomed to disappointment and frustration, and the only thing he can do is to find some solace through the arts.

My own feeling is that only through human activity are you going to change society; it's not going to be through art—not even through the greatest poets in the world. Poems are a part of human activity, not a substitute for it.

A friend of mine expressed this recently. He's a novelist, also a trade unionist and trade-union organizer. I asked him, "How can you relate your work as a writer to your work as trade unionist?" His response: "I am not trying to organize people with my writing; I am trying to put them in the state of mind where they *can* be organized."

I thought this was an insight into what we can do. We can influence people a little and put them in a state of mind where they are more receptive, maybe, or we can make them more aware of the values we consider important. But it's only over a long period of time that they are going to change.

The total accumulation of human culture acts on all of us. That you can't avoid; you may hate poetry, you may hate the Bible, you may never have heard of Whitman, you may even hate Beethoven and jazz. It makes no difference what your attitude is; you are being battered by the total accumulation of human culture

wherever you go. In the long run, this has an effect.

In the United States, we white invaders have a thin accumulation of culture — not the kind of roots in the soil that our native Americans share. We are planted on this continent very close to the surface. Cultures that are not white or in the Anglo-Roman-Graeco lineage are rejected by most white people.

Blacks were brought here from Africa and developed their own traditions—in music, dancing, language (Black English) — and in many arts. Most whites disown that. I think it's part of our United States tradition; so is the culture of Native Americans (Indians, Chicanos, Eskimos).

We could cover many ethnic groups and languages each with a cultural tradition that goes back thousands of years: The Pueblo civilization in the Southwest, the Algonquin civilization in the Northeast, etc. Most white Americans don't know this or they disown it —they have no relation to it.

* * *

Today, right outside Mexico City, you can unearth little statues (cabezitas) that were made centuries ago. The present art of Mexico is full of its own past and is part of the people who live there now. You don't even have to go down to the caves as they do in France to the cave paintings, where they find ancestors, great artists; and the same is true of Spain. But when someone stumbles on an Indian arrowhead in Central Park, New York, it's as foreign to us as if a meteor had dropped it from outer space.

I have learned much from the Mexican mural artists on the relation between art and humanity. Siqueiros said that art is made not only by its creator but by the interchange between the artist and his audience.

In Mexico you find participation in common historical experience, ranging from the struggles against the Conquistadores to the 1912 Revolution to contemporary handicrafts. (The saying goes, "Every Mexican is an artist.")

When the day happens that mankind hates the sun, then the Aztec Temple to the Sun will no longer speak on the plains of Mexico to anyone — no matter how "exquisite" the carvings of the Plumed Serpent.

Science in all its aspects—social and technological — continually does away with past mythology. The sun itself becomes a concrete source of productive energy that mankind learns to harness. So the elaborate technical devices to translate the energy of the sun become the equivalent of temples to the sun. And a "new art" emerges. In quotes, because it is really our lives that are being represented in their contemporary aspects.

This continually evolving art of living, in which we participate one way or another, keeps the universal art of previous generations alive — though the specific forms are never twice the same.

You don't have to be a Chilean and know the name of Calvarino to behold the bleeding stumps of his upraised, fighting arms mutilated by the Spaniards in the Siqueiros mural at Chillan ("Death to the Invader"). Doesn't Stalingrad and Vietnam link the humanity of our epoch with the Indian resisters of 1642?

It is this participation and interchange that Siqueiros was referring to when he said, "Art is an interchange." Our human goal is to make being alive in all its productive and social relationships a

In time [future artists] will realize that a big idea or a poetic idea expressed graphically is nothing to be ashamed of.
—Philip Evergood

conscious art. We are heading toward a time when false distinctions between art and living will "wither away." But not by themselves — only through the most intense struggle.

* * *

As to my own discipline—poems: the tensions of being alive in the age of opposites such as apartheid and national liberation, atomic warheads and peace have given the language orbit a new dimension. Thus, vast outpourings of new poems everywhere, new triumphs against human disaster. Of course, poets reflect the horrors as well as the hopes — how could they be artists and not? Both are part of the way mankind rises to a new level. When the miasma of the world market no longer poisons the earth, unexpected gradations of being in love with living will emerge.

The possibilities in new language, in new human relations, are enormous, and with all our poetry upsurge we are barely touching the fringe of what we should be able to write. We are sometimes so drowned out by the atomic noise that surrounds us we find it hard to get the real drift of the universe.

We are entering an unknown world — science fiction is child's play compared to the future we face. We cannot imagine what the people of tomorrow will be but without a sense of the human future we are dead to what is most alive today. Artists who have been there in their verbal spasms or jazz improvisations have left the scene different from what it was.

The minute glimpses of the future make today bearable. That is what Leonardo told us long before Marx worked it out in scientific terms; Aeschylus and Aristophanes have been saying it through the centuries: the artist is the first politician. That, naturally, is the way the whole story starts — not once, but over and over again. "In the beginning is the word." All we have to do is to record the facts, arrange them so that they make sense.

None of this will by itself save the world, and all our kisses, from being blown to hell. What we are talking about is the enormous value of that instant of being alive that the poem seizes for us, and thus in its way helps us to fight for life whenever and wherever we can. Remembering that not to know and love the tragedy of your own life is not to know the joy of being here at all.

We are on the threshold of new discoveries in verse, precisely because we are on the threshold of a new humanity. Our poets have to embrace as much of their tomorrows as they can today. For what is most beautiful is the future.

I suppose the last poem we can see ahead is the rhythm of producing and distributing—from the grass on the fields to the milk from the cow to the human bloodstream—all synchronized in a living dance where action and belief are one and people are reunited to natural things, but on a different hypotenuse. That, of course, is what we are living for, and what we are talking about.

* * *

Perhaps the most one can say of poems or any art at any time is that we mounted above the rocks, made something astonishingly fragile that any mountain upthrust destroys without a quiver, and yet . . . without its poems the Whole Story doesn't say a word, remains a formless lava that oozes its cosmic residue out of the cracks of the universe. □

"Against the Claw" will be included in The Revolution is to be Human, *a book to be published soon by International Publishers.*

Nathan Cabot Hale. *The Abduction*, 1971, welded bronze, 21" h. Courtesy: Midtown Galleries, N.Y. Photographer: O. E. Nelson. (opposite page)

Seeking a Humanist Level

Interview with John A. Williams

John A. Williams
Author. His works include Sons of Darkness *and* The Men Who Cried I Am.

Interviewer: John O'Brien
Professor in the English Department at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb.

O'BRIEN: Many black writers in this country seem to be experiencing a certain crisis because of dual commitments both to political ideologies and their art. Someone like Imamu Amiri Baraka seems to have given up most of his creative writing in favor of politics. Do you feel any such tension?

WILLIAMS: Well, since I'm a little bit older than most of the writers, I feel the tension less. But I feel it. And if I were a young man I probably would be in a great deal of trouble trying to decide which I wanted to do. As it stands now, with my family and things I want to do for myself, I'm not so easily swayed and pressured into one thing or another. As a matter of fact, I think that I do better with writing books than I could possibly do with running around the country and shouting "Right On!" Now in terms of art—it's kind of peculiar. I don't think that there are too many black writers who are worrying about writing as an art. My own feeling about art in America is that it really doesn't exist. Like everything else that is produced here, it's a commodity and is sold as such. Black writers to my knowledge, at least the ones that I'm in touch with, are not that concerned with art as art. It's just the realization that art has always been a political weapon, and they use their writing as such.

O'BRIEN: Do you see two distinct strains in American black writers, one tending toward social reform and propaganda, and the other being more concerned with writing as an art form? The first group might be represented by someone like Richard Wright and the second by Jean Toomer and Claude McKay.

WILLIAMS: In the first place I wouldn't agree with you about Toomer and McKay. But there were some people in that particu-

lar school who were enamored of art, of being accepted as artists. Now the kinds of reformist or propagandistic writing, if you want to call it that, among black writers really began a hell of a lot earlier, in 1853 with William Wells Brown. It's not so much a question of the writing being political; it's a question of its seeking some humanist level on the basis of clearing the air in terms of oppression and what it does and what would happen if there were no oppression. I don't really know where I place myself; I've probably become good at mixing both. That is, dealing quite openly with universal problems while achieving some small degree of craftsmanship. And I think, after all, that that's perhaps the best mix. I don't think anyone can say that he's going to be a pure artist; I don't think there is such a thing. I think that any man who is so good in his craft as Ellison, that he's doing the same thing as William Wells Brown, Delaney, and others who have been doing it. Perhaps in a more subtle and remote fashion he's dealing with it.

O'BRIEN: What special problems does the black writer face in the publishing world?

WILLIAMS: They face the same problems that the people in the Harlem Renaissance faced, and that is, when is the door going to close on them in terms of this

Ellen York. Portrait of Williams.

Art is now being sold like soap powder, it's cleaner than clean, brighter than bright, soapier than soap. Each artist is now reviewed in terms of soap powder —he has punch, kick, brilliance, clean color power and so as each Madison Avenue product is glorified in commercial terms as it appears on T.V. so the critics and curators went to work on the artists and it is thanks to them that we have today an art without values and plenty of confusion.

—Jonah Kinigstein

comparative acceptance into publishing and literary circles, even within well defined and limited areas? That's a primary concern, because if art is a commodity, then of course there's a time when phosphates are in and detergents are out.

O'BRIEN: Does the audience pose a problem for black writers?

WILLIAMS: Well, no, not for myself. The novel I'm coming out with in the spring, the King book, *Sons of Darkness,* and *The Man Who Cried I Am* were written specifically for black audiences, which I agree are small. You can't help but have most of this spill over into white audiences; this is the nature of your reading public. Most people, whether they're black or white, don't read anyway. But I want to get back to the idea of doing a book for myself. If it happens to attract people along the way, good. For a writer to sit down and ponder what kind of audience it's for is to have lost the ballgame before it's even started.

O'BRIEN: The observation has been made that American literature is steeped in metaphysical problems and themes. Black writers generally don't seem as concerned with these things.

WILLIAMS: I think it's easier to worry about large, even insoluble problems than it is to get down to the nitty gritty about how come this black or Puerto Rican family isn't eating down the block. I think you're right about that.

O'BRIEN: What will black writers deal with when racism is no longer a problem?

WILLIAMS: I don't really foresee that myself. But I suppose if it were a reality, black writers would start writing . . . but it's not a question of "starting." Their works would then be accepted with the same equanimity as those of other writers. And one of the things we've always insisted on is that we can be dealing with black characters and families but this in no way means that we're not dealing with the whole of humanity. This is something the critics very often deny us as a matter of fact.

O'BRIEN: There are many blacks who argue that white critics have no business criticizing black writers. Have you been involved in this debate?

WILLIAMS: I think that until white critics are capable of objectively reviewing black works without racism, overt or otherwise, then perhaps they ought to give way. That's my real feeling. Bob Cromie is one exception. Thorpe Henn of the *Kansas City Star* another. The situation in New York is that the business is too heavily involved with money to get rid of some of the guys who are reviewing now. Let me see if I can give you an example of the kind of reverse racism that goes on. Within the past ten years on only two occasions the *New York Times* daily reviewers have done two-part reviews on a single book. The first was Styron's *Confessions of Nat Turner.* The second was a two-part review on Malamud's book, *The Tenants.* Now it's kind of strange I think that both these times, both these books, involved black characters as portrayed by white authors. I'm sure that this resulted in part because of their reputations. On the other hand, you couldn't get a two-part review of a book by James Baldwin or Ralph Ellison, or John Killens or Richard Wright, if he were alive. And certainly not Chester Himes who is anathema to just about every critical reviewer I've ever known. I think that there is this kind of racism that they're not even aware of, but it exists and makes it so damn difficult for most white reviewers to deal with a black work. Most people are not aware of it but in recent months there has been an underground

battle between the powers of the *New York Times* book review and black writers throughout the country. One of John Lennard's recent columns was in part directed to this underground struggle. The consensus of Lennard and some of the other people at the *Times* is that they have done a great deal for black writers by reviewing their books, despite where the review might be placed in the paper. Just by printing reviews of their books. One gets the feeling that the people at the *Times* think that blacks ought to be more grateful for all that's been done for them.

O'BRIEN: Would it be possible for a white writer to write an honest novel about blacks?

WILLIAMS: Chester Himes said Shane Stevens is "the blackest writer I know," but I think Chester was being kind of cute. But to answer your question. Do you know a book called *The Horn* by John Clellon Holmes? It was a fantastic book about the lives of black musicians. It's modeled on Lester Young. That is the one case I can now recall where it was beautifully done. A white writer got a group of black characters in a situation where the language is so esoteric that most people would not understand it, catching all the nuances of what a glance means, or a shrug of a shoulder, or a certain note on a

Cliff Joseph. *Separatists*, 1966, oil on canvas, 16 x 20". Courtesy of the artist. Photographer: Charles Anderson, N.Y.

horn. So, I can't say that white writers should not write about blacks, if they can approach their subjects with as much talent and concern and humanism as Holmes did. It came out in the middle Fifties and it just sort of vanished. It would be smarter not to reissue it now because I'm sure there would be all kinds of black criticism. But I think it's a very beautiful book. So there is that exception.

O'BRIEN: Do you think that our government has such a plan as the "King Alfred" plot which you describe in *The Man Who Cried I Am*? Or is it merely an attitude which persists about how blacks should be treated?

WILLIAMS: Well, you're talking about two things. You're talking about the White Alliance, which if you know anything about European-African history, has been in existence since the days of Rome, though we only have records since 1888 when the Europeans went over to Africa and sliced it up. The slave trade . . . the whole bit. You can call it anything you want to but the fact is that just because white nations were working together, it created a White Alliance. Now in terms of the King Alfred plan in the United States. Just take newsreel clippings of American history up to the present. You stop at one point: massacre of the Indians. Or even the massacre of white

James Strombotne. *Welcome Byron Crowd*, 1967, oil, 44 x 48". Courtesy Jodi Scully Gallery, Los Angeles. Photographer: Thomas J. Crowe.

groups — the American soldiers who deserted the American army in the Mexican War, who went to fight with the Mexican forces. Wiped out. You see the Japanese American camps. You go to World War II: two companies of black troops wiped out by Americans in Italy. Click. You put it all together and there's no room left for doubt as to what's going on. And it doesn't really matter whether it's conscious, subconscious, or unconscious. The end is the same. All these people have been dispossessed and oppressed.

O'BRIEN: American involvement in Viet Nam had the effect of taking a large number of blacks out of this country during the time of major riots in the Sixties.

WILLIAMS: Yes, but what do you do when all of these guys come back to the ghettos with all of their training? Those who survive Viet Nam?

O'BRIEN: Who said the government had much foresight?

WILLIAMS: In its haste to get rid of the blacks in the first place . . . yes. Do you know Sam Yette's book, *The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America?* He's the correspondent for *Newsweek's* Washington Bureau. The book came out last year. A very quiet book. Being on the Washington scene Yette's been able to document certain things that senators and congressmen are into, as well as the administration. Vis-à-vis, the possibility of some kind of genocide, which they practiced very well in Viet Nam. The legislators who come from the rice cup states in the South work hand-in-hand with the Air Force to defoliate not only the trees in Viet Nam but the rice fields. Indo-China was the first producer of rice in the world until we started defoliating so we could see the enemy, which was always a crock of shit. But now the Vietnamese people have to import rice from us. They can't grow it anywhere. It's well documented.

O'BRIEN: And, of course, it has been suggested that narcotics have always been used to keep a certain part of the population, usually the poor and the black, in the same economic situation. There were few well financed government programs to fight drugs until they reached the white middle class.

WILLIAMS: I think that one of the things that has been evident since Attica, but it his always been evident in American history, is that although all classes of white people have been raised and trained to stand apart from blacks or Chicanos or other groups of that sort, there are vast numbers of white people who are as expendable as these other groups. We've known that since the pioneer days. And of course, in Attica, they just went in there and started shooting up everybody, black as well as white. And people never seem to mind it. It's the one big, unlearned lesson in this country.

O'BRIEN: How do you relate to radical groups such as the Panthers? Do they have a greater effect on blacks in changing social conditions than do black writers?

WILLIAMS: I don't think the job should rest with any single group. Both have functions. Certainly the Panthers have done marvelous things in terms of creating a lot of backbone in the black community that was not there before. Around the country I think that cops are not going around and kicking in doors in black neighborhoods the way they were. And I'm told now that around Berkeley and Oakland they even say "Sir" when they stop somebody. And that's important. The Panthers do their thing and the black writers do theirs. □

Notes on the Guidance System of the Cinematic Time Machine

by Clarence Robins
Research Assistant for The Human Communications and Territoriality Project at Bronx State Hospital, Bronx, New York.

In this post-Einsteinian world, man discovers a cybernetic universe, and his connection with it is seen as part of a lawful process. As difficult as it may be to understand, even man's consciousness is ultimately governed by the same laws which control the vast and surging movements of the galaxies. To understand these relationships man must at once distinguish between a system's content and its context. Content has no meaning without context and vice-versa. The milky way, our galaxy, is context for our solar system's content. Our planet is content to our solar system's context. Man is content to the planet earth's context and so forth. These bodies have little meaning individually but have a great deal of meaning where their connectedness is part of the larger system of the universe.

In this same sense the film industry has no meaning in isolation from other institutions with which it is connected in our social system. It is these inter-relationships which determine the nature of a film industry.

In all societies there are formal and informal rules, called laws or customs which operate as the means of social control. These rules appear most often within the corpus of a culture's mythologies, and eventually become transformed into a rationale for the society's moral posture. In the United States a good deal of the synthesis of modern day myths is located in Hollywood. As culture

bearer to the millions the film industry is extremely influential as a context for shaping the attitudes and beliefs of the film-going public. This complex delivery system's interconnections touch on all aspects of American institutional life. First, at the media content level and secondly, at the contextual level of the political-economic structure. Simultaneously, American movies reveal, obscure, reflect and are a reflection of the complex process within which it functions as a guidance system to the culture, where the essential operation is the epistemological defense of the boundaries of western idealism and its political-economic systems.

This important communicational institution does not and could not be allowed to exist in an uncontrolled vacuum doing its own thing. Film exerts powerful influences over prevailing social attitudes, and the laws which they influence. Those who control any part of film making's institutional inter-connections feel compelled to carefully monitor all of the industry's products. The information (film is information) flow is monitored within the society by the application of censorship, through review boards, obscenity laws, rating systems, film classification and license regulations. These techniques for controlling a society's myths is part of a long historical process going back to the time of the ancient Greeks.

Since the days of Socrates most establishments have understood how myths are mechanisms for social control or change. Socrates was accused of importing foreign myths and had to be eliminated by his own establishment. Therefore, a fundamental task of bureaucracies is the maintenance of correct social attitudes (boundaries) with regard to the laws and customs of society. Seldom is this accomplished by direct physical confrontation, but it is most often achieved through the manipulation of the myth system. The American film industry is essentially a subsystem of larger bureaucratic systems which maintain power no differently, when it comes to the crunch, than that of ancient Greece.

The coercive relationship of the movie industry to other social institutions is pervasive and fundamentally schizophrenic. Pervasive in that the film, as metaphor, is software to society's hardware of laws and customs, thereby offering alternative realities. Schizophrenic, in that as feedback it can be manipulated to replicate, distort, reconfigure and dissolve the past, present or future of any social reality. When unambiguous, film can be a creative tool of immense power; an oracular time machine whose limits have not been reached. The tragedy of American film making has been the limits imposed on the subjects which can be shown to an audience in their local theater through various types of censorship. Unfortunately, controlling film in this way has not prevented discrepancies between what society says it is all about, and what, for example, minorities have always known it was not. During the last decade we have experienced the most violent social changes, with regard to social equality, since the Civil War, yet the film industry has characteristically ignored these events as they wrenched and ripped the fabric of our nation.

The film industry has not brought to bear, on these issues, its fantastic potential for exploring and illuminating the serious concerns affecting the real rot of our culture. For example, the destruction of the planet's ecology, the manipulation of human and natural resources, the political economy of scarcity in the presence of plenty, the business of war and the 'future shock' of uncontrolled technology are some examples of the contextual priorities which need attention where film can be

Politicians recur in my work—that group of men upon whose supposed wisdom, good will, and intelligent behavior our very lives depend. It is the subtle relationship between these men and the goals and methods they use in politics that interest me.

—Sidney Chafetz

influential. It is this potential for influencing change that is crucial to understanding the gaps in the record where movie making is concerned because it represents a real failure of will. In order to see the picture, we would have had to see the pictures, so to speak. In other words we have to see the whole thing.

Unfortunately, social scientists, amongst other critics, tend to cite specific films, or situations, as the villain in the piece. We must avoid this approach because our judgments, like theirs, then become the repositories of aesthetic and moral positions which reduce the world of events to a set of prior causes . . . . like original sin. These critics tend never to indict the industry of film as part of a system of inter-connected institutions whose existence, in combination with the banks, judiciary, theaters, unions and so forth are a greater organism than one film company in isolation. To criticize an industry for not upholding the moral fabric of society would tend to violate the idealism, inherent in the spirit of liberalism, by removing the basis of the blame system from the individual to that of the institutional collective. Thus, these critics are double-bound by the old epistemology which allows them to have a sense of moral outrage, yet prevents them from correctly perceiving the source of their discomfort. Many are unable to understand or have the courage to admit that if they were effective in criticizing the film industry they would probably lose their jobs. Liberalism fails to alleviate the dilemma between the individual conscience and the one created by society, standing in for the state. It becomes clear that the way one is expected to perceive his relationships to the rest of society is a question of the utmost strategic importance. The control mechanism for film is the same for the rest of society. The epistemological conception is carefully maintained in a reductionistic framework so that its hidden connections are never dealt with. That is, all phenomena are handled in isolation to the rest of the ecology, social and otherwise.

If the reasons for censorship or film classification are to be more clearly understood as mechanisms of social control we must avoid reductionist analysis. We must learn that a regular pattern of rules are tautological structures within a system of events and that culture provides the context for the modification of the above. Thus, the film classification system raises the profoundest questions as to the nature of relationships between the present epistemological matrix of laws, social customs, commercial endeavors and those who are affected by it. The function of this classificatory rating system is that of a homeostatic device for maintaining a moral redundancy pattern.

The use of this mechanism for controlling information flow, which might tend to alter the current orthodoxy, generates a false consciousness because ultimately the epistemological structure slips out of phase with reality. Critics attempt, inappropriately, to manipulate human behavior through legal and other means, by controlling the myth-making apparatus while apparently ignoring the time bounded quality of their endeavors.

This misplaced concreteness ignores Marx's famous insight . . . . as to the origin of a society's morality. The industrial infrastructure gives rise to the ideological superstructure. So long as the myth-making apparatus supports the establishment epistemology the bourgeois critic thinks pornography, as such, endangers the state.

This perception of hedonism as the enemy of the social order is a reductionistic trap which prevents him from observing obscen-

Hiram Williams. *Running Man*, 1962, acrylic, 88 x 72". Courtesy Lee Nordness Galleries, N.Y.

ity in film as reflective and symptomatic of deeper conflicts within an on-going process. These critics have continuously ignored a fundamental dialectical problem of change and stability, as it relates to law: that as society changes continuously, laws tend to remain static giving rise to all manner of social contradictions within this type of social paradigm. Societies which maintain the blame system have a functional belief that bad thoughts cause people to do bad things. This, according to Dr. Albert E. Scheflen, a psychiatrist at Bronx State Hospital, is the basis of controlling an individual through the programming of guilt. This belief is apparently applied to the subject material of motion pictures which might show people committing socially proscribed acts. The media itself is then accused of having the power to affect the minds of those who view it with bad thoughts. For at least one thousand years Judeo-Christian civilization has located the source of original sin within the boundaries of the human body, not within the surrounding social context. The struggle as to whether blame is to be placed on the shoulders of the individual, or that of society, constitutes the politics of competing epistemologies. As long as the individual can be blamed and scapegoated he can be controlled. All advanced societies believe that they have the right, through the democratic process of elected representatives, to determine how the bodies of their citizens are to be exploited. Yet, simultaneously, these social systems contradict themselves by suggesting that the individual is responsible for all of his actions within those systems. This is the essence of western idealism's morality.

Whenever films depict sexual behaviors, which violate a moral code, the information, which is inadvertently revealed, is that of human beings exercising control over their own bodies. Film has often pulled the covers off of the control mechanism called original sin, forcing the state to invoke restraint as the social corrective.

The notion of original sin can only be maintained through the careful programming of guilt. Control over one's own body, where guilt is not manipulated externally by the state, is dangerous to all establishments. In this instance, the paradoxical nature of law turns out to be a producer of conflict. Law, in this sense, no longer serves the society as a means of regulating the affairs of men. As outmoded laws and traditions with support end up fighting a rear guard action in which the cry often becomes "Law and Order," law is revealed as restrictive and repressive, providing no feedback to society as to how it too must change with the times. The only other source of information which lends itself to providing directions for change, in an explosive world, is art. Art ideally plays the role of providing feedback to the society through its aesthetic truth.

To deny the film-maker and his audience the art of film as a functional system is to replay the ancient passion play of moral scapegoating, which we have had entirely too much of for too long. All film classification systems are inherently repressive. To rate "Sweet Sweetback and His Baaadaass Song" as an 'X' film is to deny the truth of Melvin Van Pebbles' autobiographical and aesthetic vision, no matter how horrendous a truth is depicted. □

Nick Sperakis. *Throttle Within the Empire*, 1972, woodcut. The editors heartily thank Mr. Sperakis for this woodcut done especially for this issue. (opposite page)

Note: Readers of Arts in Society *have a special opportunity to order an original print of the Sperakis woodcut shown on the opposite page. The prints are 6" x 9", hand-pressed onto fine quality rice paper, unmounted, and from a limited edition of 200. This woodcut was done by Mr. Sperakis specifically for this issue. The editors thank him for his generosity in making possible this offer to* Arts in Society *readers. Prints may be obtained for $6.00 each by filling in the form on page 151.*

Dance is a Human Art

by Marcia B. Siegel
New York dance correspondent, The Boston Globe.
A collection of her reviews, At the Vanishing Point, *was published in September 1972 by Saturday Review Press.*

I am not a philosopher. Neither is anyone else I know who makes dance or comments on dance. The term humanism intrigues me, because it sounds as if it might be very important to dance. I even used the term once myself, when I was just beginning to review dance and was trying to group things under impressive labels.

But I suspect the philosopher's humanism is a lot more complicated than what I had in mind that time. A lot more remote and less real than what I still see as the quality that ties dance most profoundly to contemporary life. But for the sake of getting something said about dance in a learned volume, let me go on as if I did understand what Mr. Schwartz means by humanism, and let me propose flatly that dance is the most humanistic of all the arts.

Dance is a people art. It's at its best when it focuses on people, and it can reflect the life of people with a depth no other art permits. Dance requires human beings for its existence — people make it with their bodies and people must be present as witness for it to occur. After that instant of creation/acceptance, it ceases to exist — all attempts to plan it, preserve it, determine its politics or locate its status in history only diminish its essential identity. (You can play a recording or hum a tune, you still have music. A painting can hang on the wall indefinitely whether it's looked at or not. What a playwright writes down can be filmed or read on the radio, it's still the same play. But the only way to have a dance is to do it or to see it.)

Nothing else about dance really seems so important to me. It can be any style, any period, it can be held in a loft or Lincoln Center, paid for by millionaires or contributed by poor people. Increasingly, I see dance as something intimately related to me. About me in fact. No other art, no matter how much I may appreciate it, does that.

America's first professional dance critic, John Martin, attempted several times in the early 1930s to explain the phenomenon of dance, and especially modern dance, which was then very new. Martin spoke of the kinesthetic response and metakinesis, two related processes by which the audience identifies with the dancer. Everything

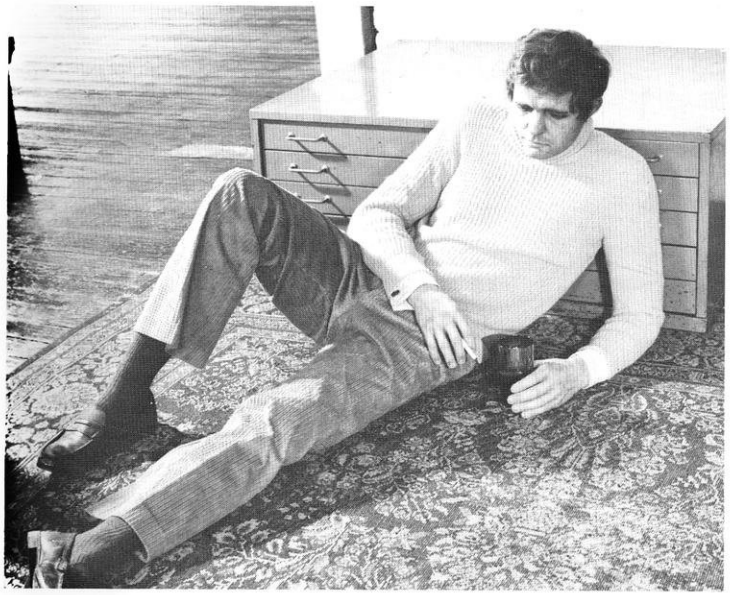
a dancer does is a reflection or a stylization of movement we all do, and, watching dance, we feel answering vibrations in our own muscles and emotions. This is the least understood and the most threatening facet of dance, and I think the source of dance's appeal even when it is least recognized as such.

Dance is always more or less tactfully relegated to the back shelf when the arts are being discussed by intellectuals. It doesn't follow the rules set up by a verbal culture for what constitutes a meaningful experience. If conceptualizing is always equated with verbalizing—if an art work cannot be validated until its emotional and sensory impact wears off and the critic explains it to an otherwise uncomprehending public — if a work of art must bring forth a repeatable and increasingly organized set of responses—then dance falls short of aesthetic good form.

But isn't it possible that these measuring sticks have been devised entirely by people on the outside of art, as a means of gaining access to art without being participants? Does any nonliterary artist really have clearly thought-out intentions when he starts to make a picture or a song? Does the artist really care what occurs in the audience's mind after the performance? Critics and professors can concern themselves with these things. I think certainly the choreographer does not.

But that doesn't make his work any less "relevant." It doesn't mean he "thinks" less about his society, or isn't "exploring" or "investigating" or "commenting" on what is going on in his world. Our society has attached a verbal component to all these activities. If we can account verbally for our "exploration," then we have accomplished something positive for society; if we can't see any verbal result, we assume exploration hasn't occurred, or it has occurred on only the most ephemeral, disorderly level and doesn't count—certainly it can't be called art. Maybe "media" at best.

Dance suggests a possibility that threatens this whole verbal monolith—that thinking and doing can



Duane Hanson. *Reclining Man Drinking*, 1972, full size, polyester/fiberglas polychromed. Coll: Mr. and Mrs. Morton Neumann, Chicago. Courtesy O. K. Harris Works of Art, N.Y. Photographer: Eric Pollitzer.

If one of the things we look for—and I do—in art is vitality —not only a statement but the very presence of human striving, thinking, feeling, a paradigm of what it means to live—then art which is based on formula, "marinated," is art's opposite.

—May Stevens

be the same thing — that something can be "said" without formulation into words — and I'm not surprised that the verbal-intellectual establishment has discounted the whole art form as a serious activity.

We are so used to having dance talked about in the more acceptable phrases of theater or musicology, or having it shunted off into some corner beneath the intellectuals' notice, that the actual dance event seldom gets discussed. The event is shrouded in mystery—people think they aren't supposed to understand it. I constantly meet people who are new to the dance audience and eager to "get it," who ask me whether something was good or not, who think they don't understand dance because they don't understand every single movement. As if every gesture a dancer makes is like a word that can be looked up in a dictionary!

The current popularity of dance is usually diagnosed as an entertainment success. People are attracted by its glamour, its novelty, its virtuosity, its theatricality. More and more we are being encouraged to watch dance without having to face its movement implications—to watch it as a show, a circus, a game, a tract, anything but a document of ourselves. Because we live in a verbal culture, many of the people who are interpreting dance to the public deal with it only in its verbal aspects, as if it were always describing something or standing for something. The entertainment brokers would have us believe that the purely kinetic aspect of dance is merely a matter of good breeding and fine technique.

It seems to me, though, that rather than a personification of kings and princesses, swans, Greek heroes or folk figures, rather than a vehicle for history, rite or revolution, dance needs to be seen as its own metaphor. Suppose the language of dance is dance, and suppose its constituents are space, time, weight, energy, the body. What a different perceptual apparatus we'd have to put into operation.

I'm not advising that we ignore the Romantic messages of "Swan Lake" or the Freudian symbols in Martha Graham, but that we stop wallowing in them and look at the movement — for confirmation, or even denial, of whatever other stuff is being laid on.

"Swan Lake" doesn't impress me on an ethereal/theatrical level. As a matter of fact I have no patience for its long-winded style, don't like big showy ballets, am bored usually by the acting, and think the story is silly. Then one day last spring I was watching Deanne Bergsma of the Royal Ballet make an exit, and suddenly I saw that she *was* flying away. I didn't see her as a Swan. I couldn't have cared whether she was wearing a white tutu or a smock. I didn't even expect her to leave the ground. But at that moment the choreography and this dancer's understanding of it combined to create the metaphor—weight suspended, she wheels through space, expanding into her own buoyancy, lifting and going, all at the same time. As I write this I fill my ribcage with air and feel my weight lifting and circling, to help myself recall how it was.

What the performer has created and what the viewer has perceived are in their raw state not that different. I can partake in her feeling because I'm in touch with my own movement equipment, which is the same as hers. I don't minimize her accomplishment by identifying with it; on the contrary, I can appreciate even more the immense acuity and strength with which she constructs these designs to be filled with meaning, and the particular intelligence and commitment she brings to some-

thing I've often seen as a mere technical feat.

I have a feeling that this three-way partnership, in which choreographer, dancer and audience create the dance together, is what Merce Cunningham is after in his work. To achieve it he has thrown out all the traditional props and distractions: plot, persona, music and moral. He even seems to have given away much of his own responsibility by using chance methods and indeterminacy to put together his dances, instead of his "creative instinct" or his "artistic intention." Can this be art, an earnest young critic wonders. Random like that. The choreographer doesn't even know what's going to happen from one performance to the next. He denies it "means" anything.

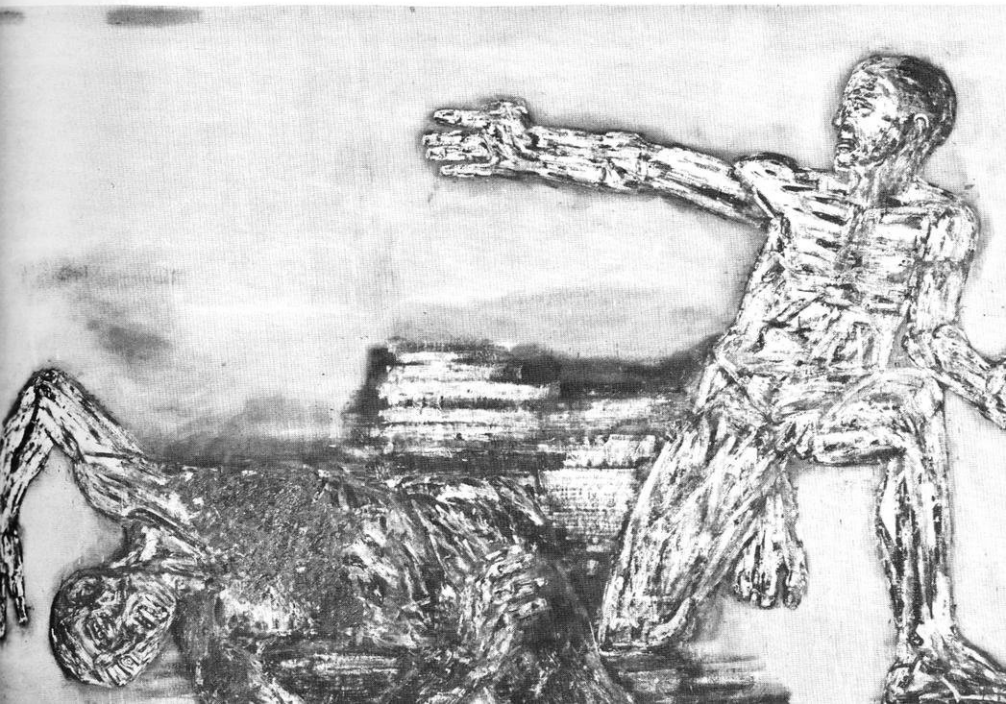
But only look at Cunningham's dance, invest something in it. The opening duet of "RainForest". No clues here, or at least, none that are consistent. Against a black background silver, helium-filled pillows float about, some in the air, some skidding gently along the ground. The light is warm and subdued. The sound an electronic buzz. A man and a woman are seated on the floor, dressed in torn beige leotards. She crawls, close to his body, behind him to his other side. He reaches around and pulls her back. She rests a minute, then slinks around again. Slowly, without passion or emphasis, they repeat the phrase several times.

What is this? A Dadaistic exercise carried out according to the numbers shown on some dice? A re-interpretation of the Sisyphus image? A love duet? The viewer is free to decide. He may even decide it's nothing more than two people with different, mutually defeating intentions. He can certainly *see* it's that, anyway. And that truth isn't any less cosmic than some programmed simulation of truth that only bounces off the top layer of our reflexes.

The dance metaphor is stronger the less it relies on overtly metaphorical devices. When a choreographer wants to make a political statement or a comment on

The painter is always about one thing: he is busy creating a world which, while acting as a mirror to man's experience in the real world, also behaves as an autonomous world of form.

—Hiram Williams



Leon Golub. *Napalm* (1), 1969, acrylic on canvas, 114 x 192". Courtesy Galerie Darathea Speyer, Paris.

To say something in art is to risk today.
—Paul Georges

society, he most often adopts the "social realism" approach of the thirties. This is particularly true of many black choreographers. Using stereotyped characters, themes from the catechism of black pride and white oppression, pantomime, soul music, Afro designs, they bid for the audience's approval, or its shamed silence.

But when I look at Eleo Pomare's choreography, I don't see these symbols he has adopted. I see energy dominated by a clenched fury and body-shapes that never complete or confront anything because they are borrowed from the oblique, half-closed vocabulary of Martha Graham. Maurice Bejart's spectacles of love, peace and revolution are similarly empty on the movement level; his dancers are painted puppets, jerking from one illustrative posture to another.

The most provocative political dances, to me, are the least representational ones. In his loft piece, "To Love Us Is To Pay Us", performed only five times for a capacity audience of about thirty, William Dunas crisscrossed the space with slow, deliberately unemotional walks, sometimes circling his arms above and behind his head, sometimes flexing them muscle-man fashion, then pulling them in towards his body. He would spread his body into an X and pivot sideways, or he would hop on one foot in a circle quite fast, sometimes smiling.

A dark-haired, saturnine man sat in a chair like a host introducing a TV drama. He told parts of a story about some men and some horses, a search, a blind cow, a killing. Another man perched on a high stool and strummed a guitar.

This is all that happened for the dance's thirty-minute duration. Dunas did his dispassionate, repetitious phrases. Eventually you could notice small changes in his actions. They became slightly more intense. He might have been overtaxing himself but he gave no sign. That pulling in of his flexed arms turned into a slashing or a stabbing gesture when the narrator referred to the piercing of the blind cow's eye. Sometimes Dunas gazed into the distance, but usually his focus was inward. Sometimes his calm face would twist into a satisfied snarl of exertion. When the tale was done, he covered his eyes.

I found in this piece a tremendous indictment of the American frontier mystique: the equation of violence with virility, the impassive killings, the worship of wide-open, clean-cut, all-forgiving, Marlboro Country spaces. I suspect it is also politically significant that the New York Times pronounced the dance "surrealistic" and "quietly enjoyable."

It's not just that Dunas' message is less literal than Pomare's, or that it probes deeper into the rotted flesh of our society. In order to see Dunas' dance, the audience has to participate more dangerously. There's no way to watch this dance from far away. Dunas hasn't got an especially gorgeous body, he doesn't do great technical displays. He doesn't tell stories and he doesn't reminisce you back to some bygone period. Looking at him superficially, you'll probably be bored, or you might charitably dump him into that great grab-bag of the inconsequential that official critics call surrealism.

Dance is not only *about* reality, it *is real.* It is a real thing happening to a real person. Society pressures the artist to be less real, to act out the safest prototypes and pave the escape routes with modish dissent. If the artist cops out, it's with our collusion. If he reveals himself, he does it because we have made contact with ourselves. Nothing could be more human than that. □

NEEDED: A Hard-Earned and Tough-Minded Humanism

by James Rosenberg
Professor of Drama in the Theatre Department at Carnegie-Mellon University.

I remember, when I was taking my doctoral orals some twenty years ago, identifying myself (in answer to God knows what kind of question) as a "humanist," whereupon one of my faculty tormentors, a lean, cool devil with flashing eyeglasses, gazed at me patronizingly and purred: "Ah, yes, Irving Babbitt and all that, eh?" I felt stingingly put down, meditated on dark thoughts of revenge, and now feel indeed that Time has brought it to me in full measure with the repudiation over the years of the whole New Critical-T. S. Eliot-T. E. Hulme mystique.

Why, then, am I so loath today to shout "Hurrah!" to Barry Schwartz's cry for a return to "humanism" and "content" in the arts?

One reason, I think, is simply that same passage of Time, bringing with it an increment of either wisdom or senility (depending on which side you're rooting for, I guess). The two terms are closer than most of us are willing to admit, and there is a sort of I-Ching-ish area where they more or less overlap, if the truth were told.

In any event, I find a number of problems in Mr. Schwartz's essay. One of them is the fact that he is writing from the perspective of a critic of the visual arts; I am in the field of theatre and literature. And, while there are certainly ways in which artistic activities can be roughly differentiated from, say, technological ones, I am not at all satisfied that there is such a topic as "art," any more than I am that there is such a topic as "humanity." Or "truth." Let us try to follow Dr. Johnson's advice

The whole excruciating effort of the artist is to express in form the content of personal existence.
—John Fenton

to Boswell, "Clear your mind of cant, Sir," which means, I take it, sharpen up your phraseology and clarify your definitions.

And, speaking of definitions, what exactly is it that Mr. Schwartz means (what do I mean? what does anybody mean?) by the word, "humanism"? At one point he says: "The metaphysical Humanist creates work that is active symbolically; he engages the viewer in the interpretation of the work. The existential Humanist creates images which confront the viewer by provoking a response." I am at a loss to think of any "formalist" — or, indeed, any serious artist of any size, shape, or form —to whom these statements would not apply admirably. Perhaps the question is: Who would Mr. Schwartz identify as "anti-humanists" or "formalists"? Klee? Pollock? Mondrian? But surely it is clear that their paintings are the products of all-too-human hands and brains and eyes, and—though they may have no identifiable "story" content or representational humanoid forms — surely we respond to them with all the traditional weaponry of human response: emotion, thought, prejudice, feeling, and even a little of that awe which lies at the heart of mystery. Is Samuel Beckett a "formalist" playwright? In what way is *Waiting for Godot* less "humanistic" than, say Goethe's *Egmont?* For that matter, is Samuel Beckett an "absurdist" playwright? I wish I could be sure. Mr. Schwartz evidently feels he is, and he also evidently feels he knows what "absurdism" is and can identify it (he refers to it several times and says it depends on a "repulsion-curiosity mechanism," which sounds bad). But Martin Esslin, in the classic book on the movement, includes Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, Adamov, Pinter, N. F. Simpson, Günter Grass, and Max Frisch among the "absurdists," which leads me to suspect he has no more idea than anybody else what "absurdism" really means. (Certainly anybody who puts Genet and Ionesco in the same box is suffering from *some* kind of confusion!)

But all these are relatively minor quibbles.

I suppose my major criticism of the Schwartz essay is the consistent attempt in it to separate form and content as two discrete entities. Frankly, I had thought this aesthetic battle had been fought and won many years ago. But evidently not. It's not just that I get a kind of Sovietized squeamy twinge in my belly when I hear a critic attack an artist on the grounds of "formalism;" it is that, very frankly, I find no sense or intellectual validity in this kind of criticism. As I said earlier, it may be a little different in the visual arts, but I can think of no work of literature — play, poem, story — about which I could meaningfully discuss "form" as separate from "content." Even in the field of the visual arts, I would like to have Mr. Schwartz explain to me the success of the "form" as against the failure of the "content" — or vice versa—in something like Picasso's "Guernica."

And, while there are damned few things I feel absolutely sure of, one of them is that something like, say, an Elizabethan sonnet, is not just an exercise in meter and rhyme-scheme and formal structure; it is also a way of seeing (and a way of saying), and that—if you will—is its "content." So is the "form" of *Moby Dick.*

But, having come this far in a generally negative and critical vein, I must say, in all fairness, I find much in Mr. Schwartz's essay with which I am in sympathy (although I *do* wish he were less fond of non-statements like "The Humanist artist is concerned with life as it is experienced"; so what else is new?) I would guess that any call for a revival of Humanism would be greeted warmly today,

if only because the word itself has gravitated back to its earlier position as a generally honorific term. I think, too, that most of us are haunted by a nagging sense that something is wrong with art (and life) nowadays, and that this has something to do with mechanization, loss of feeling, technology, and dehumanization (although definitions of the latter term may vary, from that of Ortega y Gasset to that of Barry Schwartz to that of me, or my corner grocer). But I suspect that saying what's wrong with modern art is, in effect, too much "formalism" and not enough "humanism" is not only a staggering oversimplification but is just simply not so.

To identify the "humanist" artist as someone who wants to change the world seems to me not very helpful. "The Humanist," Mr. Schwartz says, "insists on social change and participates in the creation of a system that offers greater sanity, humanity and justice." As opposed to the "formalist," who is against all these good things? By these standards, Brecht is one of the foremost "humanists" of our time (although the Soviets found him far too "formalistic" for their taste), overtly dedicated to "changing the world." But are we to assume that that noted "absurdist" and "formalist," Samuel Beckett, is satisfied with the world as it is, and "art for art's sake"? Might we not say, in fact, that the necessary change implicit in Beckett's universe strikes far deeper than Brecht's tinkering with politics, involving,

I am concerned with man, his mental landscape, his inner structure, his vision, his dehumanization, and with the affirmation of his persona.

—Arnold Belkin

Miriam Beerman. *Bloody Heads*, 1969, oil and paper collage, 26 x 36". Courtesy of the artist. Photographer: Anthony J. Bruder, N.Y.

as it does, a change in man's soul, not his body (politic or otherwise). The things that are wrong in Beckett's world cannot be made right by working in an election campaign or voting a minority party into office.

And yet, unless you assume Beckett to be suffering from a despair so paralyzing as to disqualify him from writing *any*thing, you must credit him, it seems to me, with wanting to "change the world" with his plays. What artist, in fact, ever created anything without the intention of its making some kind of a dent in the society around him?

So okay, Barry Schwartz, let's look into the possibilities of more "humanism" being brought to bear both on and in modern art. (After all, who can knock it?) But let's make sure it's a hard-earned and tough-minded "humanism," not the sentimentalized nineteenth-century variety that originally earned the whole movement a rather mushy name. To be a "humanist" may be rather an attractive thing to be, but it in no way guarantees that you are going to produce great, or even good, art. In fact, frequently — depressingly so—the evidence (Norman Rockwell, Edgar A. Guest, the artists of "Soviet realism") would seem to suggest that you are not.

All of which brings me (by faint clews and indirections) back to my starting point: I suspect that the real issue has little or nothing to do with "humanism" or "formalism" or any other "isms." ("Isms" make me feel itchy.) What difference does it make whether a man is a "surrealist" or a "symbolist"? And who can tell the difference?

What we need in modern art (what we have always needed in the field of art) is not more or less "formalism" or "humanism," but simply better work. More and better art, produced by men of whatever philosophical cast of mind.

Now you may argue that men should be more "humane" in order to produce better art, but that's a different argument and a virtually impossible one to prove. And I must also say, I find it intellectually indefensible.

Am I to make aesthetic judgments on Proust's work based on the fact that he lived in isolation from society? Or on Brecht's, based on the fact that he was (or was he?) a Communist?

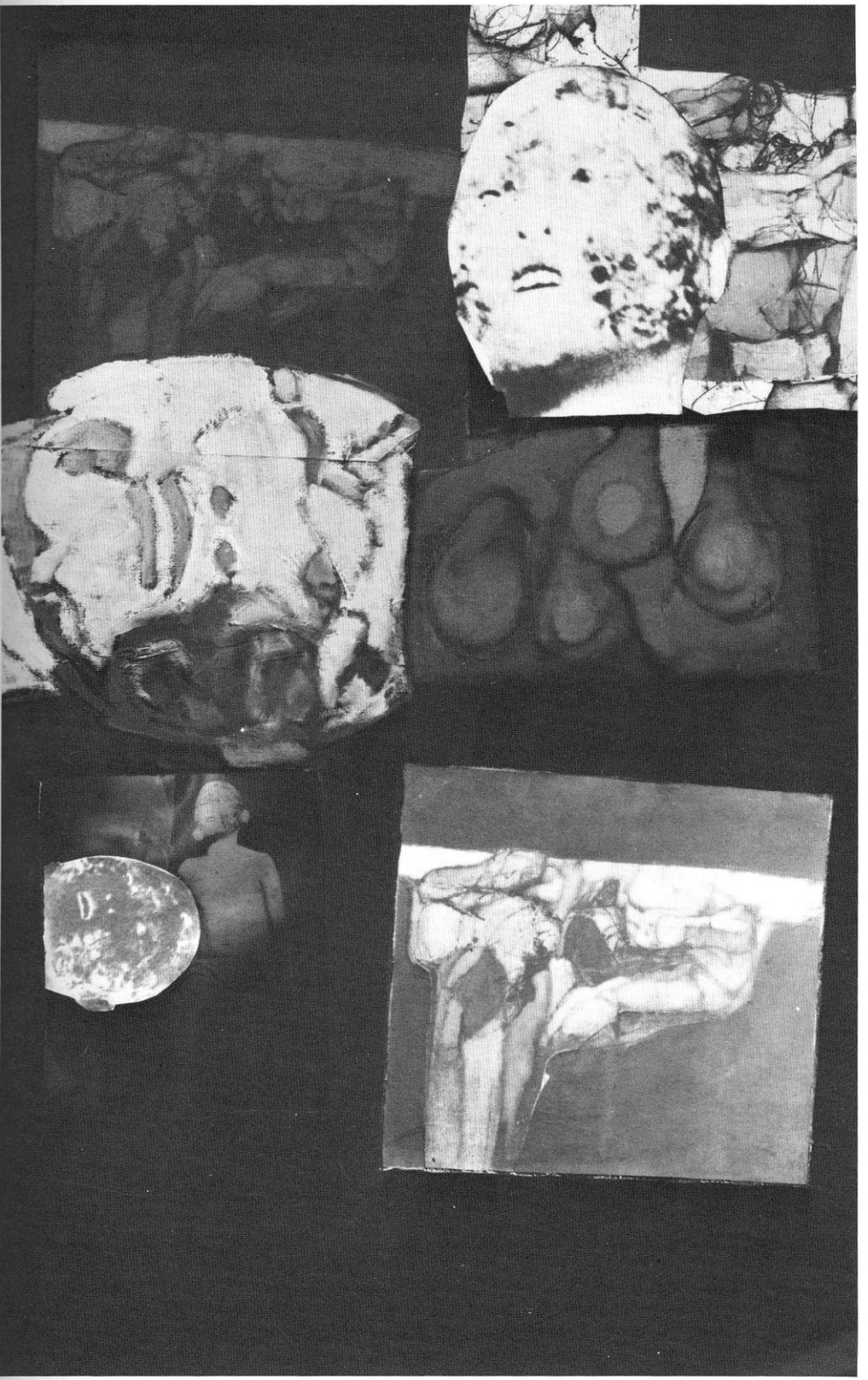
Let us leave that kind of an argument to the Soviet aestheticians and the theologians of the far right. Let us by all means investigate the implications of "humanism" for artists of the late 20th Century, but let us not delude ourselves that "humanism" in art is a touchstone.

Surely the great thing about art is that it has always defied that kind of moral measurement—and, hopefully, always will.

But, having said all this, is there anything positive or optimistic to be said about applying the values and insights of "humanism" to that particular art form in which I live and move and have my marginal being—the theatre?

One would hope so. In fact, the question, put thus, is a rather odd one, for it would seem that, of all the forms of art, theatre — being the most societal—should be (and has traditionally been) the most "humanistic" of them all. Yet it is also clear, as I suggested earlier, theatre people suffer just as much as other artists from the nagging sense that something "dehumanizing" has happened to their art in the past 50 years or so. Mostly in the name of returning the theatre to the people, ironically enough. I recently sat through a performance by a troupe suffering under the heavy hand of Jerzy Grotowski, and, after an evening of watching young people in jockey shorts posturing grotesquely, uttering groans and screeches,

Rudolf Baranik *Napalm Elegy*, mixed media. Courtesy Lerner-Heller Gallery, N.Y. (opposite page)



and banging pieces of metal together, I could almost yearn for a return to Clifford Odets.

It is ironic and paradoxical, I think, that the new gropey-feeley school of audience participation has turned out to be more alienating and more truly dehumanizing than the old-fashioned, box-set type of drawing-room melodrama. But there is something profoundly significant about these experiments in having actors invade the auditorium to assault or massage the spectators, for they represent a desperate and, indeed, virtually psychotic attempt to break through what is clearly felt to be an alienating and inhuman barrier of non-communication and non-caring. Yet clearly mere physical touching is not altogether the crux of the matter.

If, then, we say that neither the Living Theatre nor Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing!* offer viable answers to our problem, what does? I'm not sure that I know, but I do feel certain there is a lot of room for exploration between those two poles (no Grotowski pun intended). One answer may be — as I have suggested in an earlier essay in this journal — to investigate the virtues of theatrical smallness: small auditoriums, limited and intimate audiences, modesty of means in acting and production. The world may well have become too big to be assimilated in the vast sweep of a Goethean *Faust* (maybe it always was); confronted with titanic nineteenth century panoramas of Morality and History, we lose sight of man.

But I think another, and even more fruitful, answer may lie in ridding our minds of the inherited Romantic tradition of seeing Science, Machinery and Technology as Evil, and Birds, Flowers, Streams and Rustic Folk as Good. As long as we cling to this way of thinking, our art and literature and theatre can produce little more than nostalgic odes to an Arcadian past which none of us ever lived in. Granted, there is much ugliness in machinery, and the effects of technology and science have seemed somehow to be profoundly dehumanizing. But as compared to what? The effect of the Church on the lives of people in the Middle Ages? And when we condemn automobiles, airplanes, factories, and highways as ugly and inhuman (all of them, after all, made by men, in answer to human needs) are we not copping out on the first, and perhaps only, duty of the artist: to see things with a fresh eye?

A visitor from another century or another planet would, I suspect, find a night-time ride in an airplane a trip more wildly and weirdly beautiful and terrifying than anything Odysseus ever dreamed of. And any artist worth his salt should be able to see automobiles, for example, as aesthetic objects of a power and beauty and sheer savage *strangeness,* beyond the stone heads of the Easter Islanders in their power to touch the imagination.

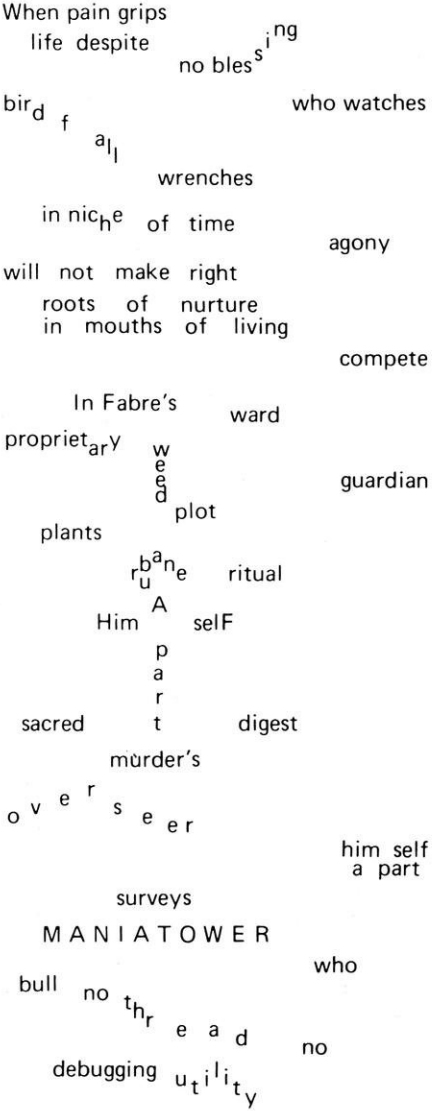
If "humanism" means anything, it should have something to do with exploring the nature of Man now —not in the Renaissance—and in coming to terms with the conditions of life he has created for himself, out of whatever perverse wellsprings of need. This is what every healthy body of art has always done: to find the beauty in the nuts and bolts and junk we live with now, not in the dream-like and idealized forms of a vanished and illusory Golden Age.

I would think that the main task for humanist artists in the theatre would be to forge a new definition of "humanism," which means, not driving the machines and the scientists out of the Temple, but finding some way of incorporating them into our poetry.

Until that is done, the rest is rhetoric. □

LYRIC

by Peter Yates



The Opportunities and Constraints for the University in the Arts*

by Margaret Mahoney
Vice President, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

As any American knows, we are experiencing change in this country. While change is a natural process — a part of living — the speed of the process has accelerated beyond most adults' imagination. We are aloft, like the passengers in a 747, who are told by their pilot, "Ladies and gentlemen, we are in mid-flight, and I have both good and bad news for you. The good news is that we are proceeding at maximum speed. The bad news is that we are hopelessly lost."

The process of change which personifies our society is so rapid that anyone at any age today feels giddy at best, and lost at worst. Each of us seeks stability, and I should like to propose a formula for establishing what I consider a necessity for the future, namely steps toward a stable society.

We must seek new values, replacing the worn-out ones that have brought us to the point where technology has outstripped itself and we are left with a code of living that does not suit any of us. We must find a way to make the ownership of goods of secondary importance, and the love of life of first importance. To do this, requires replacing the love of material objects — the two cars in every garage philosophy — with a love and appreciation of mankind, and thus of living.

Our society needs to be refueled. The arts I believe can play an important part in this refueling. We need to connect art with daily life. It has been a commodity, and available only to those who could purchase it. With this limit in access, it has had limited appeal. The question that I pose for you is this: What can we do to make people believe that art is relevant to their lives?

I should like to sketch out for you the conditions that I think demand an answer to this question.

**Talk before the South Eastern College Art Conference, New Orleans, April 26, 1972.*

1. Leisure time is being redefined. For example, the old are retiring from full-time work at earlier stages; the unions are providing for sabbatical leaves in collective bargaining contracts; the young believe leisure and work should be synonymous, because people should do what they want to do.

2. Nonetheless, leisure time is something new in the U. S. The mass of Americans—the working public — has had no leisure time in the past to develop taste and refine interests. Public schools have not helped them in this task, and the consequence is that the mass of people has low expectations about what to expect from society or how to get the most out of living. The new leisure could be used for learning how.

3. Children copy adults, and at an early age are aware of adult standards. If art is not in the adult's life, it does not get included in the child's sense of values.

4. All people are potential learners, at any point in the spectrum of life.

Couple these four points with the earlier one I have made about the need for stability, as the process of change in our society accelerates, and I suggest that we have a rationale for developing a place for the arts in our living, and a rationale for the university developing a two-fold interest — in the *community* and in the *arts,* coupling the two for the betterment of society.

The real issue today is the quality of life. Communities that seek to improve the quality of life cannot do the job alone. Community leaders need the help of schools, universities, churches, old and new institutions—and the help of people in these institutions — in working toward the common goal of improving the way of life. This is a developmental or building job, and the university is one of the important institutions in this developmental work.

The job to be done is to humanize society, and our educational institutions have a significant role in this. I would propose that the humanities and the arts lie at the root of humanizing the curriculum and thus society, and that they must be a forceful part of education if we are to encourage young people to have respect for human life and thought, to express their concern for human distress, and to carry forward their innate desire for social justice and fair play. Far too long in this country we have divorced the head and the heart in teaching and learning. To quote Ewald Nyquist, Commissioner of Education for the State of New York, "If we are to develop a humanistic society, which I think is another way of expressing the goal of developing a stable society, the educational system must teach feeling (values) as well as facts (information)."

History tells the student the generalized story of what man has done, his achievements and his failures. Art tells the student a highly personalized story about a man or a group of people, in the world he or the group inhabits. Looking closely at what an artist has created is therefore one way of looking at the world concretely —a perspective.

While science and technology offer students the capability to alter society, history and art offer students the knowledge of what needs to be changed or improved in society—again, a perspective.

The over-emphasis on the accumulation of facts by students has overloaded the faculty and saturated the students. What students need now is a different kind of expertise in order to cope with the technological world. There are far too many facts and too much information to expect students to absorb it all. What they

I do feel that the art thing is essential to my nature and my being, but that the life is far greater than the art.

—Joseph Raffael

There is a profound lack of personal investigation in art today.

—Philip Sherrod

Philip Sherrod. *The Holy Dumbbell*, 1970, oil on canvas, 56 x 50". Courtesy of the artist. Photographer: Bevan Davies.

need to know is: 1) What information exists? 2) How do I get it when I need it? 3) How can I best use it when I get it?

Good scholarship gives students some of this capability. The stress in true scholarship is not on factual information for its own sake, but on the acquisition and integration of knowledge for the precise purpose of expressing points of view and transmitting content.

Complementary tools for helping students integrate knowledge can be found in the arts. The arts provide the best tools that man has developed to communicate, and if they are properly introduced to students can become a critical tool in the students' life. Now is the crucial moment in time, in my opinion, to employ them. We must teach to learn, to train the emotions to respond, to attempt to inculcate perceptual awareness, to teach people to appreciate their knowledge, and to provide the means for them to express it creatively.

I am proposing that universities become artistic enterprises, professional in the true sense, pulling together the rich resources in faculty and facilities, and offering them in a new style to their community of students, indeed to the community that surrounds the university. I am *not* suggesting that all people should be trained to be practicing artists, but I am suggesting that all people should be helped to be creative about how they live their lives and how they go about the process of learning and living.

The time has also come to recognize that there are alternatives to research as a route to academic success and individual satisfaction. Students are aware of the need for alternatives, but faculty and administrators do not seem to understand. Again, I am *not* proposing that research be forsaken or made of secondary importance, but that other ways of learning, other tracks in the educational system, other educational styles, be developed, and that the humanities and the arts have a special place in this proposed system of opening up education at the university level.

Education at all levels and in all fields must direct itself toward the process of becoming aware, as an end in itself. Our society needs a new goal in life: living.

Now, to be practical about the problem, where do the arts fit exactly into this concept of education?

I would not like to divorce history of art from the practice of art. I should like to see faculties link facilities, so that students can move easily back and forth between historical references and the studio. History gives us the story of what man has done—the real story. This is what students are interested to know.

And the *arts?* The artist shapes consciousness, or to put it another way, gives shape to ideas. This is what students need to be introduced to, to see objects not as objects of material worth but as embodiments of ideas.

A general outline for an approach to learning and teaching has been proposed by Ken Lash, poet and philosopher, currently head of the University of Northern Iowa's department of art. I should like to explore with you this curriculum in the arts, organized in three parts but designed to be integrated:

1) Art as a way of extending the senses, encouraging discovery by affect. Photography would be a major tool, helping students deal with such questions as: What do I see? How do I see? Am I sure? What effect does the look of things around me have? What happens when I look at things? Do I

I believe in painting that is by a human being, directly painted by him, by an individual. Painting that is about the human condition and his environment, and that in some way rejoices in this life we have. . . .

—John Bratby

"learn"? Does anything else happen? Why do people decorate things? What happens when you like the look of something? What's "beautiful"? What's "ugly"?

2) Art as discovery, a demonstration of creativity. Actual experience in translating awareness into creativity — whether in theatre production, playing out a part, painting on canvas, working a potter's wheel — is needed by students. In the course of the experience they should be encouraged to inquire about the world of non-verbal communication: How does it operate? Does it have laws (concepts)? Is it orderly (customs)? Is it a world of surfaces? How can one describe something and not see it, even paint something and not really see it? What's a visual cliché? What's the *essential* difference between look and see? What are the connections between awareness and creativity? Where is the creative process in day-to-day life? What is "art" used for?

3) Art in use, the history of the uses of art in society. This is study, integrating what is learned through perceptual and creative experience, with an appreciation of man and of his achievements, an essential step in helping students assess themselves and to weigh the value of knowledge.

To develop such a three-prong approach will require a re-definition of the teacher-faculty member. Now, the teacher is the "knower," responsible for transferring the "known" to the student, the "learner." In such a process, the teacher becomes untrained as a learner himself, and his separateness from the student is complete. Moreover, the teacher loses tolerance for uncertainty or for dealing with the unknown because the teacher is responsible only for a set amount of factual information, and is not expected "to know" more.

Those teachers who are teaching in the universities have a special responsibility for guarding against this accident of fate, brought on by the kind of educational system we have developed. The responsibility is particularly crucial since they are training many of the teachers who teach the younger generations in the schools — the place where lasting values are instilled.

Artists as teachers should be seen as processors and providers of information. They can teach people how to get information, to know when they need it, and to learn how to use it. They as artists have been taught — or teach themselves — how to get information and how to use it, and to avoid storing facts beyond the most needed ones.

Historians can teach their techniques — how to question, how to recognize important facts, how to gather facts. Thus, going back to my earlier point about the need of contemporary students for information on how to get information, as against information for its own sake, the artist and historian can each be an unusual teacher in this process of learning about the storage and use of information. They can also engender respect for facts, and coupling this with teaching the actual practice of art, the artist as teacher can engender two needed ingredients in the lives of people: awareness and respect.

Environment affects learning, both positively and negatively. This is a value judgment but essential to my argument that the arts and the history of art can help to develop better environments for learning in our society, and in the long run better environments in society as a whole.

To help achieve the goal of a stable society the university of the future will have to encompass the arts in a new way. There will have to be a university within a university as a place for the study

and the practice of creativity, open to undergraduates, graduate students, and people from the community. I believe it will happen. This will be another approach to the "open university," linking the total university to the community through a variety of services. Scholarship will continue at a high level, as will the practice of art. The individuals engaged at such high levels of activity will reside in the general setting, on view so to speak to generate understanding and respect for their work among the great variety of students, but allowed to pursue their individual pursuits for given periods of time. Thus for faculty, the year can be broken into a precise time for teaching and working with students, and a precise time for individual work. There will be times for off-campus work also, in order to refuel teachers, as a principal means of refueling the society. Talented teachers can not continue to give out month after month, year after year, without depleting their own creative capability. If they are to remain good teachers, they must be given the opportunity to refresh themselves.

About forty years ago, the creative and performing arts began to work their way into the university curriculum—they were not warmly welcomed. They came in by two routes: the training of professionals, and the development of appreciation courses. I believe this routing led in some cases to a permanent rift between the history faculty and the creative faculty, in others to an uneasy relationship. We now need to reexamine the necessity for these two groups of teachers or learners to work more closely together in a joint relationship—for the sake of students. Administrative mechanisms must be developed beyond the standard school of fine arts or department of art. The university administration must make tough decisions about how to develop a mechanism that will encourage artistic endeavor at several levels, simultaneously: 1) in general education, available to all ages, and to resident and non-resident students, the latter to deepen the community ties; and 2) in professional education. Universities may choose, for reasons of budgets and reasoning, not to train in all of the professional sectors of the arts—independent art schools may do a better job—but I do not see how they can ignore the general education role. *But,* money is never the real issue. It can be found, and new dollars may not be needed if reallocation of money is possible. Making new priorities is the real issue. The university has to see the importance of the arts. It does *not.*

What are the constraints that prevent the university from moving toward a new perspective on the humanities and the arts—beyond funding? Faculty commitments to certain forms of teaching is one constraint. Space, another. But, above all, resistance is probably basically a question of inertia. We have done things one way for a long time, and calling for a change when we are in fact combating change in general in society disturbs what we honor so much these days, namely, tranquility. Nonetheless, change must occur within the educational institutions, precisely to keep up with the inevitability of change in the total society.

The constraints are real, but so are the opportunities open to universities. I see these opportunities ahead: Campuses becoming cultural centers for communities, enlarging the student and faculty community to encompass residents of the surrounding area; universities through the humanities and the arts enlarging the *educational* community, providing opportunities for the young and the old to learn and to practice the arts, at home and on the campuses; artists becoming true members of the university faculty, not

adjuncts or visiting fellows; historians becoming central figures in making the arts relevant to today's society.

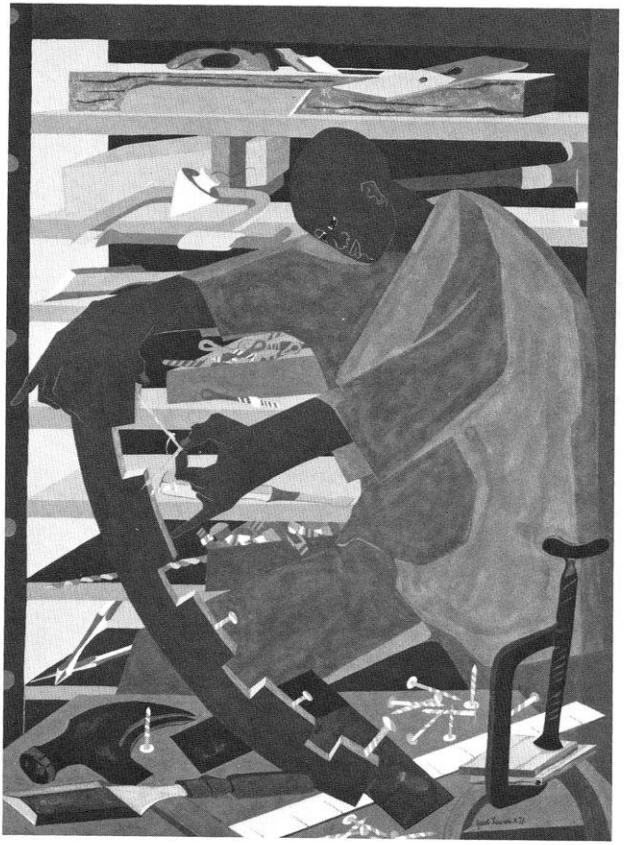
If all this occurs, the university will be a vital community institution, it will become desirable for people to live in a university locale, and the university will welcome the residents in its surrounding community because they give stability to the area — they stay, young students come and go.

I am not engaging in prophecy. I am reporting what is beginning to happen in some university domains. However, what is going on is a movement in a general direction without a set of clear goals. Sometimes it is a movement of expediency, and the level of activity is not high enough to convince me that the commitment, or the understanding, is there. The danger in the present mood is that the arts and humanities will be used for *non-educational objectives,* and thus as commodities.

The future campuses will have tangible and visible links to the arts. Artists will create art for the campus and the total community. Architects will develop new approaches to buildings by careful study of new approaches in education, and the emphasis on the arts in the total community structure will help to dictate the design of better buildings. Universities will provide assurances for creative people, whether scholars or artists, to carry out their own work at agreed intervals of time, on university payrolls.

In the April 14 issue of *Science* Magazine, there is an article by Dr. Leon Eisenberg of Harvard. Dr. Eisenberg, a psychiatrist and scholar, has made these observations:

> *Understanding the nature of man and his works has become a precondition for the survival of our species, as well as for the enhancement of the flowering of human individuality. The search for that understanding is the central purpose of the university and the source of its relevance to society . . .*
>
> *If we have listened to what our students are telling us, learning for personal embellishment or for the acquisition of virtuosity no longer satisfies a generation intensely aware of injustice and impermanence. Learning must become a social enterprise, informed by concern for others . . .*
>
> *Members of the university community carry a heavy measure of responsibility for the privilege accorded them; that responsibility is to pledge themselves to the service of man if knowledge is to be transformed into wisdom.* □



Jacob Lawrence. *Builders #1,* 1971, gouache on paper, 30 x 22". Coll: Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama. Courtesy Terry Dintenfass, Inc. Photographer: Walter Rosenblum.

Finding Community Through the Arts: Spotlight on Cultural Pluralism in Los Angeles*

by John Blaine and Decia Baker
John Blaine was formerly Administrative Director of the Los Angeles Arts Alliance. He is presently Director of the Seattle Arts Commission.

Decia Baker was past Conference Director, Los Angeles Arts Alliance.

Because established cultural institutions in the United States almost all look to Europe for validation, it has become increasingly difficult for them to orient their values to the rising cultural needs here at home. They have grown a little too structured, too narrow, and too closed for the majority of people to be able to relate readily to them. Since minority citizens have traditionally been denied access to these institutions, they are now creating their own, which are uniquely rooted in their own cultural experiences.

This impulse toward what could be described as community arts expression by ethnic minorities is burgeoning throughout the entire country, but nowhere has this development been as striking as in Los Angeles. The community arts

The American Council for the Arts in Education recently chose Los Angeles as the site for a national conference on community arts. Held June 19-23, 1972, and entitled "Community Arts and Community Survival," this was a landmark event, whose extensive documentation is richly suggestive of the scope and importance of this movement. The authors who were involved in the local planning committee for the conference drew much of the material for this article from the preliminary research conducted by the Los Angeles Community Arts Alliance. For information about the availability of the documentation of the 1972 Los Angeles Conference, write: Allen Sapp, Executive Director, American Council for the Arts in Education, 638 Lincoln Building, 60 East 42nd Street, New York, New York 10017.

It is the commonplace world which I have depicted, not in the petty details of daily existence but in its essence. . . .
—Jose Luis Cuevas

groups and organizations that have emerged there in the last several years are deeply centered in social urgencies. These run the full gamut, from food to nuance, from jobs to work space for artists. The vitality of these new emerging institutions gives proof to the belief that culture must be considered an important ingredient in the dynamism of all social groupings.

Because Los Angeles has a rich admixture of races and cultures, the rush to cultural pluralism and community arts started here years ago and long before the glaring headlines focused national attention on its Inner City. Community arts groups in Los Angeles have often operated in a vacuum, off in a corner, not aware of a similar operation or program only a few blocks away. At times this was necessary because it was all so new; no one knew who was for real and who was shamming. (But it seemed especially necessary after the Watts Riots because government money seemed to flow for a couple of years, and the "vultures" were thick.)

To thoroughly understand community arts in Los Angeles, one would have to go into each organization in each community, since above all in this city the concept relates directly to cultural pluralism. The following five groups are suggestive of the considerable range, and logically the approach of each of them is different. For this reason each group must be viewed and understood in the light of its own social context and unique resources.

* * *

ST. ELMO'S VILLAGE

Rozzell and Roderick Sykes are the founders of the St. Elmo's Village art center and workshop on St. Elmo Drive in the Crenshaw district of Los Angeles. The Crenshaw district is black for the most part with distinct lines between the rich and the poor. St. Elmo Drive is not where wealthy people live.

It is a pleasant enough street. There are a few trees, and lawns, a few overused wood apartments among the houses. The Village is a group of frame-houses and garages that surround a courtyard filled with trees and painted walkways. Birds seem to like it there. On Saturdays and Sundays, Rozzell and Roderick hang dozens of their paintings everywhere around the courtyard, and people come and sip tea and coffee and kids play. Local children who have painted in the Sykes' workshop classes display their paintings on the sidewalk out front, and charge fees for their work.

Dialogue: Founders: Roderick Sykes, Rozzell Sykes. Interviewers: Eugene Greenland, Elvie Moore Whitney.

Roderick Sykes: There was a time when you would walk out and you would see someone and say hello, and they would look at you like you are crazy, call you a freak, a a beatnik, a hippie and whatnot. But from our consistent brightening up here, they have discovered we're people, too. And now people are saying hello to each other up and down that street.

So this is truly our seed, just for people to say hello and be proud of that hello, instead of waiting and feeling that, "I can't say hello to him until I get that suit of clothes or that big car," that you're a person from birth.

Greenland: How do you support this place financially?

Roderick Sykes: From our efforts, our paintings, and you see, this too is our seed, not waiting for that grant or that large sum of money or for someone to pass a

bill saying, "This is needed." *We* feel it's needed, so we will find a way. This is how we've been here for the last seven years. Without waiting, we've done those things, made those ways.

Greenland: Have you ever received a grant?

Roderick Sykes: No. This is basically people, and the efforts of people.

Greenland: What about future plans?

Roderick Sykes: We plan to grow as far as we can grow, stretch out all around the world, say hello to whoever we can say hello to.

Whitney: I want to know how you set all this up.

Rozzell Sykes: We happen to live here and we happen to be painters and we happen to enjoy what we are doing, and we happen to love people. It is through people that we have survived to this point. And, hopefully, it is through meeting other people that we will continue to survive, for we need to. The children here need to, also. This is how we support our work with the children, through people. For if we do not meet people and happen to sell a painting, or if someone does not happen to drop something in that jug, then we cannot survive.

Whitney: How does the community relate to this? Do they come and actually support you?

Roderick Sykes: The neighbors have seen from our truth, from our

St. Elmo Village; Roderick Sykes hanging a painting. Photo by John Bright.

doing. There was a time when there weren't any green lawns, but from us taking care of where we lived and showing what can be done, and from the children's involvement, they have begun to take care of their lawns, they have begun to paint their houses, they have begun to take care and be proud of their person. And this is the involvement of the community. There is an atmosphere of sharing in our neighborhood, not money, but feeling and expression and truth. This is our growth.

Rozzell Sykes: You see, there is an insecurity that has been hovering over us for five hundred years. And our people don't think they have time for creativity, not knowing that it's creativity that feeds many of your hungers and despairs. There is a myth unfortunately in our society, that says that you need this thing or that thing to be a person. But we know that you are born a person, and all of the rest is an additive. And you ask about our relations between this place and our community? I say, we are winning.

Whitney: I see the children are really responding. They're coming in; they're painting. Seems like they've taken it over—that it's their thing. So we know that they will have a different feeling toward the artist, toward their community as they grow. But what about their parents? Are they still into the Cadillacs, the "striving mentality?"

Rozzell Sykes: Yes, but slowly they are beginning to lift their eyes to see for themselves, raise their hands to feel for themselves. As I said, this has taken time. Remember, we are here for people. So little by little they are coming out. Over there are a few of the parents. Little by little, they are coming out, realizing that all you need is your hello; all you need is your heartbeat.

* * *

STUDIO WATTS WORKSHOP

Studio Watts Workshop started out as a storefront art center in 1964. Local artists had a place to work and exhibit; a master/apprentice training program was started. The space was left untouched during the riots.

Jim Woods, its founder, kept the studio open for three years on the strength of his part-time job, contributions from friends and supporters, and his growing awareness of the potential for such an organization.

In 1967, he moved the administrative office to Echo Park. He shared his space with some other people, and got down to the business of articulating the use and value of community arts. He has since moved into larger offices nearby on Sunset Boulevard and has created a reputation for program building and fund-raising.

The Studio itself is gone, a victim of Urban Renewal, but Woods' genius is turning what seem like unfortunate events into launching pads. Studio Watts Workshop is now a network of operations that include: the Watts Media Center; the Environmental Pre-School; the Annual Watts Chalk-In and Los Angeles Festival of the Performing Arts; a two-year old documentation program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts; a Museum Program, called "Contemporary Folk Art"; and the Studio Watts Endowment Fund, a new corporation devoted to raising capital for the purpose of supporting innovative programs of Studio Watts Workshop and other community arts groups. It also includes a housing development program that so far has waited three years for funding, and may wait for a while to come.

Dialogue: Founder: Jim Woods. Interviewer: John Blaine.

Blaine: I was reading a New York

Times article about Studio Watts Workshop that came out a couple of weeks ago, and it mentions a lot of different programs, but the major emphasis is given to the housing program. How do the arts, or a community arts institution, relate to housing?

Woods: We started Studio Watts Workshop in a storefront in Watts. We were displaced by the Community Redevelopment Agency. We decided we would not come back into the area in the same way that we had been there; that we would take the responsibility of linking into the priorities of the community. The main priority of the community is housing. So therefore, our responsibility was to make sure that we build housing for the community. Since we are a community arts school, then we were primarily concerned with building housing for artists. But we realized that we could not isolate the artist from other members of the community.

I have always felt that if a commitment cannot be linked into a need in the community, then there is no need for that commitment. It gets lost. And that's what has happened in community arts in this country today, is that they have not primarily linked their commitment into community development. And that's what Studio Watts Workshop is all about.

We view art as community development, not art as the improvement of entertainment, not art as the bringing forth of aesthetic qualities, but art as the structure that causes community development.

Blaine: What happens to the artist in the Watts community who really isn't into community development, but who is into poetry or painting or . . . ?

Woods: Well, that's simply what happens to them. They begin to compete in the arena for the improvement of entertainment. That's what happens to them.

Blaine: Do they get any support from Studio Watts Workshop?

Woods: They get support from Studio Watts Workshop if they are willing to re-think their concept which means considering themselves, the artist, as a resource for community development.

The artist, historically, has been very well integrated into the social structure. Because of the desire for the artist's end-product, then the artist became a segment of the Gross National Product. But I think of art as the ability of people to come together and to express themselves.

Blaine: What kind of artist are you looking for? What kind of artists can grow out of the structures that you have built?

Woods: I'm not talking about "artists." What kind of person can grow out of the structures that we have developed? I am looking at a kind of person that understands his artistic values within himself; and understands his relationship to his environment. Whether his environment be people, whether his environment be buildings or trees . . . but really understands that relationship.

* * *

Woods, as an articulator of new structures, talks of developing a "cultural democracy." The Sykes are interested in what they can do as individuals to remove some of the fear people feel toward each other, created by institutional and cultural regimentation. In East Los Angeles, another approach to similar goals is being developed by Frank Lopez and the people who are dedicated to the creation of Plaza de la Raza.

PLAZA DE LA RAZA

Lincoln Park is located in the primarily Mexican-American district of East Los Angeles. It is not a large park, but it has a lake and beautiful lawns and trees. People use it for Sunday picnics and birthday parties, family reunions, and club socials. A boathouse is there, boarded up now and dotted with Chicano gang identity symbols, spray-can art. In 1970, the boathouse was set to be demolished or concessionnaired by an outside group. People in the community joined together to stop the demolition or its "takeover." A group of these people came together to discuss how to bring the boathouse back to a relevant existence for the community, and the idea of Plaza de la Raza was born. Plans now involve the building of a $12 million cultural complex which would incorporate the boathouse and would create museum space, performing arts space, workshops, and two plazas on a grand scale. Plaza is an attempt to reclaim and recognize the cultural territory Mexican-Americans have been denied in an "occupied territory."

One of the most difficult things to accomplish in any low-income community is anything to do with joint effort. Poor people who live in the city are conditioned to mistrust most everyone they meet, and cynicism is not limited to the larger issues of the day. The Plaza project, therefore, has a special kind of validity in that it has managed to progress with broad community support in a most ambitious cultural plan for East Los Angeles.

Dialogue: Project Director: Frank Lopez. Interviewer: John Blaine.

Blaine: Where did the idea for Plaza actually come from?

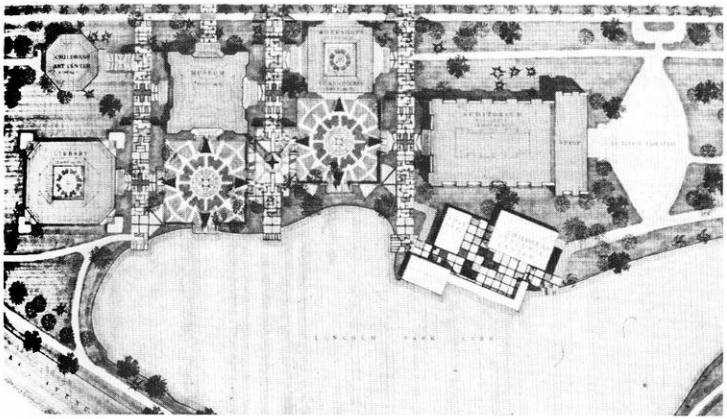
Lopez: Well, this is a very old yearning in our community. There has been no center, no facility that truly describes or identifies our background, our culture, and our yearnings. And what you see here is probably the product of all these yearnings over a long period of time.

Blaine: So far, we've seen pictures of the boathouse, and we've seen pictures of magnificent plans, but I'd like you to have a chance to tell what Plaza has done already in programs, actually working with people.

Lopez: Well, I can describe it best by telling you that in May of 1970, we had $36. And by June of 1971, we had a fund that approximated $300,000. And this was done by neighborhood residents, by people who represent a cross-section of our community, and . . .

Blaine: You mean they raised $300,000?

Lopez: No. They made it possible to get it. Because it was that stubbornness and determination that made it possible. And it came about this way. From the City of Los Angeles, we got $110,000. From the Model Cities program, we got $147,000, of which only $100,000 has been allocated for construction. Altogether, what you see in our first stage represents $210,000 for the construction of buildings and facilities that will cost about a quarter of a million dollars. So we're somewhat short, and we'll accept your check now for the difference. In any event, we will deliver. When I mentioned the community desires and community stubbornness, I'm saying that those people on our Board of Directors include a bishop, a television station manager, a lady who is on relief, a fellow who works in a factory, someone who is an accountant, someone who is a project director of Lincoln Heights NAPP — Ed Bonilla, our president.



Plaza de la Raza; rendering of proposed construction. Photo by John Bright.

This is a cross-section of our community, and it is these people who have had the determination to bring about Plaza de la Raza, because we all share in common the desire to have something that will provide us with a feeling of accomplishment, pride, and achievement.

In July and August of 1971, we launched an experiment with children here in the neighborhood, and over the next ten weeks, we entertained about 200 children every Saturday under the trees out in the open there in Lincoln Park. It's a program that we call Plaza de los Ninos. It included the flavor and direction of the Headstart Program. They were given free milk, cookies, ice cream, fruit, as well as merry-go-round rides. And they had paint and paper and glue and clay and scissors and such as that. And they had a thoroughly good time. But what was beautiful about the program was that it included the entire family participation. The mothers and fathers and older brothers and sisters also came, and as a consequence, this program has been so well received, that there was a demand placed on us to make this a year-round permanent program. And we will be doing exactly this, but at this time we will not do it again on a volunteer basis.

It is true that people who do not feel a sense of hope or any expectation of achievement do not try, except the most stubborn and the most unusual. And this has been what has happened to our people in this area and in the United States because the stereotype has provided that kind of an image to *us,* that said, "Look, you're not worth it; you can't make it. So what's the use."

Plaza will contradict that premise, by showing not only what has been accomplished but what is being accomplished, thereby holding up a goal and demonstrating to the viewer and the participant that he has the capacity to achieve, and he has the capacity to identify with his own culture, something that has been kept from him.

* * *

Community arts probably got its start as a concept in the storefront "neighborhood arts center" approach. A group can get something going without a large outlay of money, can exist for years without foundation or government recognition. The neighborhood arts centers are probably closest in touch with the community because they are right there, where the immediate neighborhood determines the nature of their own involvement.

MECHICANO ART CENTER

Mechicano Art Center is located in a converted storefront in the center of East Los Angeles. The area is isolated and uprooted by four recent major freeway installations, cut up by county and city boundaries with *no* regard for neighborhood settlements. Primarily a group of Chicano artists, the center has created gallery space where Chicano artists exhibit, and workshop space for their silk-screen project and their visual and performing arts programs. They also sponsor a program which puts exhibits of Chicano artists' work into schools and other institutions throughout southern California.

They started there two years ago and existed for a year on dues and grit. They received a small grant a year ago from the Catholic

Mechicano Art Center including murals on front. Photo by John Bright

Church, and another small grant just recently from the Expansion Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts for their silk-screen training program.

Dialogue: Program Director: Leonard Castellanos. Interviewer: John Blaine.

Blaine: One of the main projects that Mechicano is into is its silk-screen process, and how the silk-screen can be used. Let's talk about this poster you designed which you call "Rifa" [a poster depicting Emiliano Zapata. The word "rifa" means literally in Spanish dialect, "someone rules."].

Castellanos: I think "Rifa" is the completion of a statement. For instance, right now in the *movemiento* of the Chicanos, we have a dichotomy between Mexican imagery and that of the Chicano who is trying to emerge from the society with some kind of positive identity. And I think that right now, we're borrowing a lot of things because it's necessary. I think that in designing this poster, the concept behind it was to make it effective enough so that it wouldn't be repeated again. In a sense, it's a complete statement indicating both the past and present, in the sense that "rifa" is a Chicano word. It's not a Mexican word.

Blaine: What does "rifa" mean in this context?

Castellanos: Well, it means like, "he's heavy, he's a heavy dude." Right here we have the silk-screen operation that is producing posters that we get donations for. We give and lend to fiestas and festivals, occasions like Cinco de Mayo, which is being celebrated today. And what we do is, we utilize the expertise and the knowledge of the artists who work here in producing posters at very minimal or no cost. They are made for the people of the community and all of East Los Angeles. In fact, this poster has gone all the way to San Francisco, San Diego, Texas, Arizona. It's a very well-known poster, and we've been producing it now for maybe six months.

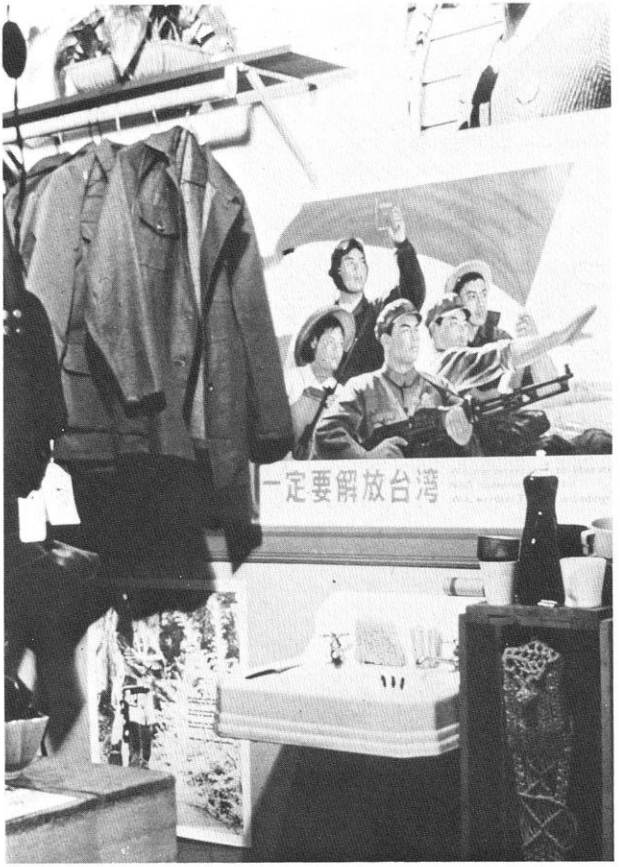
Blaine: I understand that you're going to train here at Mechicano people from Centro Joaquin Murietta, Casa Maravilla, other groups.

Castellanos: Silk-screen operation is a kind of viable communication factor within our community because it affords the possibility of immediate visual presentation in houses, in stores, in buildings, and if it's a good piece of work, it's considered art. It's not just a poster announcing a dance, a special occasion. It's a statement. And for instance, I'm an artist. I want people to become more aware of art. I want them to want me to paint their walls. I want them to want the sidewalks changed. I want them to want their environment to be more in union with their life-style. And I think that the silk-screen poster operation is more than just a poster operation. I think it's a statement we're trying to make to the community, saying, "Look, this is what we want; this is how we want to share our talents and abilities with you, and we will be willing to train children, people, organizations that want posters free, and we'll lend them our facilities." We've done that with, for instance, the Chicanos for Medicine, we've done that with other groups that want support and that don't have any money for posters. If they went to a commercial company they would be charged an enormous fee, for five hundred posters of a three or four-run color is a lot of work.

Blaine: What's the basic idea? You talk about changing the environment and out here in front of Mechicano Art Center, there are some beautiful murals, some of them begun, and some of them completed. I understand that you change the murals in fact, from time to time on the walls that surround us.

Art must relate to people. The most neglected element or level in art now is the human one. Art should in some way make a person more aware, give him insight 'to where he's at' and in some way reflect what it is like to be living in these times and this place.

—Juis Jimenez



Inside Amerasia Bookstore. Photo by John Bright.

Castellanos: Right. We try to keep a revitalization process around here. We have artists who come and artists who go. We have some artists involved in all levels of Mechicano Workshop. Some come here and exhibit; some come here and want to do something; some sweep the floors; some help us paint, and we encourage all artists who want to express themselves on our walls. We feel that's a very important thing. It isn't only a matter of letting somebody paint on the walls. I think that they actually want to share their imagery and their ideas with the community. They're painting here for a reason. They don't get paid for it. It's all free. Some of them, like Antonio Esparza, it took him a good month and a half of hard work to make a collage and a painting.

AMERASIA BOOKSTORE

The Asian American, like the native American Indian, has tended to remain in the background of people's awareness as the establishment has in turn responded to the demands of the black, then the Chicano and Latino, and now to the Anglo drug culture.

An Asian American organization, Amerasia Bookstore, is located in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, where ethnic shops, markets, businesses and restaurants, churches and temples occupy about fifteen square blocks. Since the Asian community is dispersed in pockets throughout Los Angeles, Chinatown and Little Tokyo serve as important meeting places for family and friends.

The bookstore is upstairs in space donated by a local property owner. It serves as a meeting place for several groups and individuals involved in the Asian community.

Amerasia seems to operate on a totally democratic non-board model, that is, decisions are made jointly by all of the participants who are actively engaged in what is going on at any particular time. Meetings are held regularly and business is taken care of. John Ito acts as the titular head or contact person for the group, but he does not consider himself the pacemaker; rather he thinks of himself as one of the group and it is the group that sets the direction, not any single individual.

Dialogue: Staff Members: John Ito; Charlotte Murakami. Interviewer: John Blaine.

Blaine: Do you feel cut off, a bit, from the other minority groups and the Anglo community? Do you want to be cut off? At the meeting a while back, I remember we talked about the notion that a lot of financial support is going into the black community for community organizations.

Ito: Well, I feel that we have been quite isolated and one of the biggest problems that we have faced with the majority community is that they continue to say that Asians, Japanese or Chinese Americans, have no problems, that we are a "successful" minority. This is not true. We have all the problems in this society that other minorities have: a very big identity crisis, drug problems, and all the rest.

We're trying to relate directly to the community and their problems and not just laying a trip on them.

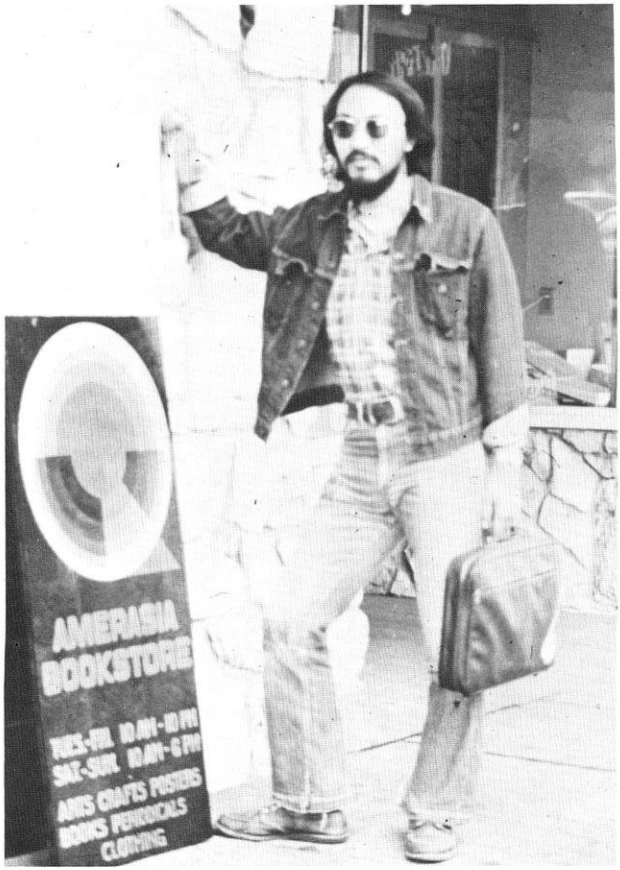
Blaine: How do you find people? For example, how did the young woman who did the silk-screen come into Amerasia?

Ito: Well, she is a student in Long Beach, and she, on her own, organized some workshops in Long Beach. She has a group down there now working on silk-screening workshops. And they are putting something out from the Center at Long Beach State College.

Instead of thinking from a capitalistic point of view, trying to make money, we try to serve the people in the community. That's how we measure our success, on our communication with the community and their participation in our workshops and programs.

Blaine: Do you see art as something separate from what you're doing? Is art like a category within your operation here? I'm relating to the murals on the windows and kites on the ceiling. How do you look at art as being part of your scene?

Murakami: I don't know too much about the definition of what art is. Everybody has their own opinion. Just how you see things, how you express your feelings. By simple drawings or etchings on our window panes, these are just expressions of how these people want to show other people how and what they see. But then, it's really difficult to say if something is professional, or amateur. I'd hate to put a label on it.



John Ito, Amerasia Bookstore. Photo by John Bright.

Ito: How to relate, how to identify, who to identify with. Like, we are not Japanese, per se, nationals. We are Americans, but it's been so long that we have been suppressing this identity that we no longer have our own identity. And I think that's one of the major goals we have. We're trying to instill into young people that they do have an identity and they have an expression of their own, and we want them to start expressing it, their ideas, their feelings, through art, or through any type of creative expression — poetry, writing, film.

Blaine: You see films as part of both your fund-raising and part of your identity-creating vehicle?

Ito: Right.

Blaine: Where do the films come from?

Ito: Well, we're starting a program with student films, Asian-American student films, whose productions have started in several of the colleges in the area. Also, some of the films we present are produced in Japan or China. We show them to our young people to give a cultural background to where their parents or grandparents have come from, where our identity has come from.

* * *

There is a common theme that runs throughout most community arts groups; it has to do with establishing identity. It is difficult to pinpoint one event or even a series of events which reversed the trend toward acculturation and integration into pluralism for non-whites. Perhaps the Martin Luther King protests were the start. The protests pointed up the fact that simply because a law existed, that did not mean the law was just. It became understood that it was the right and duty of each individual to help define "justice" and to bring about those conditions which made for equality. Each day reveals new inequities in city, state, and national policy. Individuals reaffirmed the belief that they did not have to give up their identity in order to become "equal." On the contrary, they began to see evidence that individuals with a sense of their own uniqueness could join together and make some impact on the dominant culture. It was during the 1960's that a new breed of community arts groups arose. The "cultural explosion" of the 50's which had given birth to massive ivory mausoleums for the white culture did not fill the need for cultural expression of those outside the mainstream. The primary driving force for the blossoming of community arts groups was and still is the need to fill this gap, and recognize people's sense of their own identity.

* * *

BROCKMAN GALLERY

The founding of the Brockman Gallery is a case in point. Galleries have traditionally been limited to affluent communities, because that's where they have been able to survive. But there are now groups trying to break that tradition by surviving in communities that have not been thought of as arts oriented.

Dialogue: Director/Founder: Dale Davis. Interviewer: Elvie Moore Whitney.

Davis: The fact that one of my brother's professors told him that there weren't any black artists sent him off on a tangent because he was trained to be an artist, and all of a sudden the Man is telling him there aren't any. You know, as if there was no history of it, and almost denying the fact that there was a culture behind the black people. Now maybe the man didn't realize the weight of his statement, but that's essentially what it was. Art has been out of the community, wherever it was and no matter what country. It's been taken away from the masses and put into institutions. It always has been, still is.

Whitney: Do you see any new kind of institution coming forth out of the black community that can save this heritage?

Davis: Well, Brockman Gallery is one institution. It's criticized because it is. But in the real world, we have to have it. You know, we have artists criticize us because, "You guys are in business." I mean, damn! What are you going to do? Show us an alternative.

Whitney: As the black community becomes more affluent, like the black middle class really getting their thing together a little bit financially, and are interested in

decorative pieces for their homes, do they come to you, the legitimate black artist, or do they go to the white gallery? Are they a source of your support?

Davis: OK, affluence and education are at opposite ends a lot of times. And I'm afraid that's a problem with many of the people we deal with. They may be affluent. Everybody points at Baldwin Hills, you know, that's our goat that we point at, our Judas. And they have reasons to do it. I do it. I'm very critical of them, but at the same time, it's not like I'm God and want to help them. I would like to educate them, I'd like them to know what's happening around them. It's not coming out of Baldwin Hills. It's coming out of the people that live below the hill. And unfortunately, a lot of blacks go straight to La Cienega (the established art dealer row).

Whitney: How do white people respond to this type of institution? Do they sustain it financially; do they come down here?

Davis: They sustain it better than blacks. And I can rationalize; I can tell you why they do and why they don't. I can criticize the blacks that don't and criticize the whites that do. The whites do because they're just liberal and figure, "Well, I should be doing something," which is not all bad. And there are those that come in that are very shrewd, that maybe buy out a show, knowing that in three or four years this is like a fantastic investment, like they've got the foresight to see it. So, they can be ripping us off, and in a sense they are, but in another sense, they're supporting the gallery; they're paying the rent, which means that another brother can come in and show. So what do you do? You don't cut off the head to spite the body.

Whitney: I'd like to know why some of these very affluent black businessmen . . .

Davis: They are the worst. They are the worst of all. They have reasons why they are the way they are. They have dealt with going-to-school-for-long-years, being shrewd and slick, and having to deal with the system. And they won, like in a chess game. And that's where they've stayed. Whether or not that's right or wrong, you know, but you can tell the way I'm saying it, I think there's more to it. But that's what business is. It's cold, shrewd, slick. Do it, but be able to jump out of that when you leave the office. And they have an obligation. They are the ones who are making it. They are the ones who should be giving the most support. But they are the least approachable.

Whitney: How can we convince the businessman that it's within his interest?

Davis: You gotta take him out of his office. You gotta take him, take his damn suit off, his shirt off, his tie off, put him in some blue jeans, some tennis shoes. Just give him the feel of it. Doesn't mean he has to be dressed a certain way. And walk him around, put him on a motorcycle, put him in a truck, have him putting spikes in railraod tracks, have him be a plumber, have him do all the things that the people have to do to make his job available. Take him, show him dance, show him little kids fighting in the streetcars, show him all of it, and then after his exposure over a week, of these kinds of things, take him into a cultural center, and relate him to the arts and show him that what those people are doing out there are the same.

We want to be, and are, independent black people and business people and professionals. Now that doesn't mean we're making money, because we're not. We're sustaining what we set up or what we started out, which was a black gallery for black people.

Artists exist as the only element within society which can actually afford to tell the truth about it. Telling is not only in the 'what' but also in the 'way.' Black artists must refer to the black experience for the 'way' if they are to tell the truth as blacks; which is to say, if they are really to be black artists.

—Faith Ringgold

People are my subject, people as a drama in opposites, among them hiding, and showing, cheapness and grandeur, meanness and compassion.
—Chaim Koppelman

POSTLUDE: COMMENT ON CONFERENCE ACCOMPLISHMENT*

Since self-awareness and self-identity have been so elemental a fibre in the week's extraordinarily rich and very human tapestry, I want to summarize my thoughts with a new-found sense of pride, thanks to the events of this past week.

I was born a congenital optimist on May 23, 1933, in Atlanta, Georgia. I am a white, Anglo-Saxon agnostic (if you're seeking an acronym, that's a WASA). This conference has done nothing to diminish my optimism. In fact, it has even made me decide to give up my recurring fantasy of wanting to take off for Tahiti as a second mate on a fishing ketch.

These images of the last few days, all of which comprise the arts — that strong yet simultaneously fragile, exciting magic of human expression — are, as I am sure we have all come to acknowledge through the week if we hadn't known it already, a key, an ineluctable human key by which we can learn to sing, to dance, to laugh—occasionally at ourselves and constantly at our situation. And by doing so, to know ourselves better, and by knowing ourselves better, to like ourselves better, and by liking ourselves better to be proud of who we are and where we came from.

The important, fundamental feature of the arts, particularly in the form we have seen them here in Los Angeles, is their integrity. They have been and must continue to be expressed *on* the terms of the artist, *in* the terms of his and her experience. We know in our bones the value the arts can bring to education, to learning about ourselves not by learning to distinguish between what is allegedly good or bad in the detached manner of a connoisseur, but to learn to hear, to see, to move, to feel, to touch—to develop a literacy and articulation of the senses as well as of the intellect.

There are dangers, lures, traps, and thoroughly enjoyable seductions that constantly threaten to compromise the integrity of the arts. In fact, one of the most lethal baits, particularly for the community arts, will be the one which tries to homogenize them. In the language of *The Godfather,* "The arts will be made offers they cannot afford to resist." But at times we simply *have* to resist them in order to preserve the integrity of the arts—the integrity to say it like it is.

The arts and education (I can never understand why the two are separated although such is very much the case) must come together and lay their mutual distrusts and suspicions to rest. *How to do it?* is the critical question which this conference has — *at least* — asked. The question will be difficult, exasperating, at times seemingly impossible to answer. But I remain that congenital optimist I was born. For the question *will* be answered. It will be answered because all of us here, and everyone we met throughout the week, are committed to finding the answer of how to involve and integrate the arts into the educational fabric not only of society but of our own lives.

This conference has given us — certainly me — a renewed conviction that the arts are the most positive human force in society today. And we must all *combine* our energies and our strength to see that the arts not only survive but flourish because, if they do not, neither will we. □

Editorial Note: One of the panelists at the final session of the Los Angeles Conference was John Hightower, President of the Associated Councils of the Arts. This shortened version of his concluding statement bespeaks the success of the conference and the validation which was accomplished there.

Closing Comments

by Barry Schwartz

When Edward Kamarck, editor of *Arts in Society,* originally suggested this issue he spoke of a symposium. The word passed by me like an advertisement; it was noted but without respect. With the realization of this issue, however, I have a very different feeling for what a symposium can be. I am very grateful to have been able to participate in this one.

Writers who contributed to this issue were asked to respond to a much condensed version of Chapter I of *The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change,* a somewhat general and theoretical rationale for the specific art the book presents and discusses. This edited chapter was to be a springboard, initiating a discussion of Humanism throughout the various arts. Regrettably, this discussion materialized only to a limited degree, and in my closing comments I hope to indicate, directly and by implication, possible accounts for why several of our contributors were woefully unable to arise to the challenge.

A number of the essays require no additional comments. I have responded only where I believe a reply is necessary or where additional commentary elaborates my basic thesis, written almost one year ago. While I hope my comments adequately conclude this issue, I do mean for them to open yet further discussion of Humanism in art, in education, in life. In this I have been much aided by the imagination, commitment and humanism of Ed Kamarck, and those associated with him, Monika Jensen and Linda Heddle.

Of George Morgan's and Michael Gibson's essays I have little to say. I immediately thought of George Morgan for the issue because I believe his *Human Predicament: Wholeness and Dissolution* is one of the most integrated summaries of our present condition among those I have read. While others exhaust themselves generating new information, Morgan has created a philosophic overview into which fall our

I'm trying to paint the track left by human beings—like the slime left by snails. I would like someday to try a moment of life in its full violence, its full beauty. That would be the ultimate painting.

—Frances Bacon

singular dilemmas. His book is least strong in the section on the future. That is how it should be: the future needs us all.

Michael Gibson's essay tells us "There's a war on!" Gibson identifies the battleground of two mentalities, the analogical and the digital, as part of an analysis of new consciousness and old. It is a very insightful contribution. I wish to express my gratitude for it, and my optimism, once more validated, arising from my belief that many people today are coming to a community of thought, feeling and action which pays no dues to national boundaries, which greets cultural difference with excitement rather than hostility, and which finds the Paris editor for *Art in America* feeling many of the same things.

Parker Tyler raises important questions in his essay "What Price Humanism?" One question often considered by Humanist artists is articulated by Tyler: does a work of art expressing outrage at some *realness* become undermined and obscured by its acceptance as a work of art. Tyler recognizes one of the qualities of *some* Humanist art is the artist's insistence, by the stylistic mode of the work, that the art defy conventional criteria for categorization and acceptance. Yes, some of the art discussed does draw attention to unacceptable realities, and it is true that it can not do so if it itself is considered an object of aesthetic beauty. We used to call such art avant-garde, meaning perhaps that the art was so effective we were required to change our criteria for acceptance to avoid dismissing that which is most valuable. It is to Tyler's central question, however, such discussion leads: "I wonder," he writes, "and to me this is the true pathos of the Humanist crisis—if we have to sacrifice the image of human perfection (which is what art as such means) in order to shock humanity to its own true existence!"

Let us hope we have greater options than a simple choice between art and truth! The question, of course, presupposes that if some artists sacrifice (maybe they never had it, and hence could not sacrifice it) the image of human perfection, all artists will, which is foolhardy. Often I argue the injustice of the discrimination practiced against Humanist art only to be met with the counter-argument that the utopian ideal must not be devastated. But it is the critics and the profiteers who require that artists compete. Would the ascendancy of Humanist art spell doom for those artists clearly committed to perfection itself? Does a society assisted by visual artists in the search of its "own true existence" cease to produce art? Such questions sound to me more like block busting than serious concerns. They are *tactical,* not inevitable.

If Humanist art is threatening, it is only because the value system inspiring the art demands consistency. One's work, one's life, one's thought and one's action are no longer divisible. The conventional divorce between privately professed beliefs and professional roles is no longer thought desirable. You are either part of the problem or part of the solution *all of the time.* Thus, when a Humanist asks, "What do you do?" he does not mean "which institution or information-gathering profession do you serve?"

I wish Mr. Tyler had considered his own questions in relation to the media he so well articulates. If there were a wave of Humanist films (can there be such a wave?), would filmmakers interested in visions of utopia be "sacrificed" or as Hentoff put it, "excommunicated"?

But the problem is, of course, with the Humanists, and that is where it must stay. To this end I have asked for permission to publish Clarence Robin's essay on film. Here we ask, "What Price Inhumanism?" Robin's essay is an analysis of the manipulation of the cinematic experience, one that often sacrifices Humanist concerns for the efficacy of cautious politics or the exigencies of the marketplace. To maintain the inhumanity which Hentoff calls "normative brutalizations," it is necessary for all art forms, among them, film, to be sure not to do what a humane society might well encourage.

Because John Berger's comments come closest to the specific area in which I too have been working, I will take this opportunity to clarify several important but hardly profound questions of accuracy. Berger first takes exception to what he feels is my overgeneralized assumption that the technological pattern affected all artists in the same ways. I appreciate the historical differences Mr. Berger explains, but I still affirm my major point. Berger paraphrases my thesis distinguishing between artists who "believe in this technological solution" and those who reject it. The technological promise means very different things to the Constructivists, the Futurists and the De Stijl group. Actually, I never spoke of a technological promise, only of the response to the technological pattern itself and of those who responded to its impact on human life generally. The De Stijl saw mathematical order in metaphysical reality; the Futurists saw a return to the "cult of the individual;" the Constructivists saw the advancement of socially useful tools. Though Berger is certainly correct when he says we should not "ignore such differences or simplify them out of existence," nor should we say that although such differences existed do they make it impossible for us to recognize broad historical patterns.

For example, the characteristics of Impressionism described by Berger are *all* responses to the technological pattern. The Impressionists were concerned with the properties of light, but the Impressionists also painted "suburbs and small towns, seen from the point of view of one-day visitors." And they were one-day visitors because of the railways and the new means of transport. They were not painting from a point of view of community; they painted from the point of view of what they observed there, and for this reason they already reflect an early form of what later became a sophisticated preoccupation with the forms of things, rather than the meaningfulness of content. The divorce between thought and action so prevalent today has as one of its origins the divorce between the eye and the life, the things seen and the see-er; a divorce encouraged by the on-going technological pattern, now so well developed it is almost invisible, hiding as it is within "anonymity," "convention," "objectivity."

Berger's third point is a fundamental one. Here I must take issue with the distinguished British critic. Berger writes out of one perspective, Schwartz another. Berger writes, "Given the present contradictions and conflicts existing in the world, it is premature to talk of man as a species." Schwartz writes, "Given the present contradictions and conflicts existing in the world, it is *imperative* to talk of man as a species." To do less than that is to validate, accept and incorporate the barbarism perpetuated in the name of differences today.

Berger's final statements comprise a moving insistence that we

clearly identify that which oppresses us. For Berger the cause of oppression is capitalism and imperialism, specifically the oppressor is the United States *qua* nation, and the "ruling bureaucratic class in the Soviet Union." His comments evoke a certain nostalgia for the kind of Marxism that becomes reduced to platitudes. Yes, the United States and the Soviet Union (ruling class directed) are playing havoc with the world. But inevitably we ask, as so many have asked, what is to be done? There is no doubt the sooner we have a world socialism, the sooner we will have a secure planet and a human community. There is no question that the economics of Humanism requires economic and social equity among peoples. I obviously do not subscribe to Darwinian or Hobbesian views of the world. There is no humanism in life where there is rich and poor, opulence and destitution, exploited and exploiter. But given our world today, these exclamations hardly constitute an operation manual. The reasons I advocate a post-ideological position is that we are too far gone to take much hope from action that will lead to reversal of the master-slave

Seymour Rosofsky. *The Suburb,* 1970, oil on canvas, 63½ x 51". Coll: Mr. Arthur Paul, Chicago.

relationship. However, a widely accepted, universally implementable value system can void the master-slave relationship altogether by radically altering consciousness enough to undermine its economics. If Berger lived in the United States, what actions would follow from his "truths"? Would he teach in a university and wait for the oppressed to come and dislocate the oppressor? I think not. What other course of action do those of us who are Americans have but to live a life fully involved with a morality and a consciousness which, if widely accepted, would alter the existing structures of society, and which is committed to an enduring struggle to confront all that oppresses us. Such a life is an assertion of the value system of Humanism and specifically the path chosen by the artists of Humanism. An advocacy of Humanism in art is an attempt to amplify the message in the form of the message.

Louis Kampf has another answer to the question, "What is to be done?" Kampf says, "Have a good time — Hustle the government, foundations, schools, corporations for all the money you can—Don't worry too much about what your art says; it doesn't matter; only the institutional way in which your work gets used does."

I am not exactly sure why I recommended Louis Kampf for the issue. Perhaps I wanted to see what the former president of the Modern Language Association, the author of the "Humanities and Inhumanities," would do with the new Humanism I advocated. Perhaps I wanted to gauge what influence the sixties continued to have on those who were drawn into public roles by its passionate recruitment. Perhaps I wondered how tired they were, or if they had come to realize, as many did, that survival itself was the goal. How much did the liberating rhythms of the sixties become incorporated into the life-affirming action of the seventies?

Kampf unfortunately seems ill-prepared to connect to the muscular spirit of Humanism. Thus, his first paragraph is an embarrassing encounter with responsibility. Like Hentoff, the question of Humanism and the writer's relationship to it has touched some sensitive chords. Like Hentoff, Kampf considers the values art *might* create, and is not in touch with the values art is now creating. Either the discrimination against exhibition and discussion of Humanist art is more effective than I thought, or the authors have located themselves far from the arts of protest. It is our loss that the teacher of literature is unable to write about the values literature is creating.

In the December 1972 issue of *Esquire,* Tom Wolfe has written the article I thought Louis Kampf could write best. "A treatise on the varieties of realistic experience," Wolfe's article considers the broad questions of social realism, the novel and the important direction he perceives in some contemporary writing.

In the end Kampf believes art today *is* the "Modern art scene," that formalism and modernist art are the only possibilities, and that literature has meaning only as a private enjoyment. He concludes by suggesting that no serious work can be done while we are all waiting for the end, and then he proceeds to get lost in Thomas Mann and political invectives.

Throughout Kampf's essay is a sense of isolation. I hear the absence of community: the individual orbiting above the milieu, very much alone and with little sense of the organism that continues to grow. While the absence of communal possibility is studied by

A Humanist painter can do great work instinctively, and with passion and energy. He does not have to be able to objectively intellectualize his activities. He might work in a Zeitgeist that encourages him. Take that Zeitgeist away and he is left puzzled and impotent. Former Humanist painters in England (post-war) are like this in the '70's, and have been for years. I need a developed philosophy on which to work.

—John Bratby

I think that art, especially prose fiction, is directly connected with culture, with society; that there is no 'art for art's sake' and never was, but only art as a more conscious, formal expression of a human communal need, in which individuals seem to speak individually but are, in reality, only giving voice and form to the intangible that is in the air around them.

—Joyce Carol Oates

scholars, while a significant number of people take to the hills to reestablish an acceptable model of communal life, the contemporary writer has investigated the subtle causes and human consequences of communal breakdown. Much contemporary writing, from the onslaughts of Nikki Giovanni to the absurdity of Donald Barthelome, is a proud engagement with the consciousness that oppresses us. Rather than a private pleasure, literature today may assist many to strengthen their dual perception of reality; a double vision of the world is required if we are to secure our own sanity among the "normative brutalizations" which comprise, for so many, *the* reality.

It is no surprise to me that one of the great statements to recently appear on the question of Humanism is authored by one of our very best contemporary writers, Joyce Carol Oates. In her essay she speaks of "a sudden and startling turn toward optimism," "a transformation of being." She asks, "What will the next phase of human experience be? A simple evolution into a higher humanism." It is this theme one finds so well articulated in the essays by Leviege and Lowenfels, that one finds deep within the entire community arts movements elaborated by Blaine and Baker, that one glimpses in Siegel's and Hassan's essays.

We have passed through a decade where many people were "political," where they uttered the right political statements, signed appropriate protests and occasionally marched for . . . And where are they now? Unfortunately for the seventies, the sixties had too many casualties. Too many were more interested in slogans than in the ways one can continue to make an enduring commitment. How many changed their lives so that living itself became a political act? How many have now fallen into despair, nihilism and lethargy—all because they thought that the world should have been changed in a decade and for them it changed too little?

Humanism is a fundamental social involvement incorporating every aspect of life style—from work to pleasure. It is not an intellectual fad, a burst of momentary energy, a "political" action. The Humanist does not participate in social change and human change based on probabilities of success or based on the pressures of one's peers or contemporary social fashion. One does all one can because it is right to do so, because emotional and psychic survival, if you are white, and emotional, psychic and physical survival if you are not, are seriously in question. The Humanist has the key to dignity and self-respect, and he has cast off the serious doubts of self-worth that characterize most of our society.

We must change the political future, sure. We must have socialism, sure. But now is the time to stop reassuring ourselves of the fact that we are privileged enough to *know* the truth; now we need to *live* the truth.

Though I have only known him through his words, I expected Nat Hentoff would have something to say compatible with my remarks. Instead, his contribution to this issue assumes a posture I perceive as regressive. In response to it I sent Hentoff the following letter. Though it is specifically intended as a communication to Hentoff, I am reprinting it here so as to present a critique of the inadequacies of the professional liberal generally.

* * *

Dear Nat Hentoff,

As part of my arrangement with *Arts in Society,* I am writing clos-

ing statements in response to the various contributions submitted to their symposium on Humanism. Though it was I who suggested that you write for this issue, I now find myself with the unpleasant task of responding to your essay, which was, for me, the most negative and least effective essay in the issue. As the issue is not yet to the printer and as I consider what you have written to constitute a wasted opportunity, I have chosen to respond with this letter and the reminder, there is still time, brother.

What a curious piece you have written. You start off with a laughable pairing of Solzhenitsyn and Schwartz; you speak of my "attempt to lecture artists" and to "go on to moralize at artists." You title your essay "Whom Are We Talking To? Certainly Not to Artists." But the truth is, Nat Hentoff, that it is precisely to artists that I have been talking. For three years now, I have crossed the country in search of a contemporary art that is usually not found in *Art Forum,* not seen often on Madison Avenue, not available for viewing in the latest museum show. In the end, I have found an art that was committed to an alternative vision of experience, one that helped me to survive, one that maintained a dual perception of reality. There is a great body of exciting, meaningful, disturbing, provoking, significant, challenging Humanist art. What you call an "attempt to lecture" is actually an attempt to articulate concretely, and in broad theoretical terms as well, the basis for appreciation and validation

Mahler Ryder. *Great American Subway Rider #2,* 1971, ink on paper, 15 x 30". Courtesy of the artist. Photographer: Morgan Rockhill, R.I.

The art of confrontation with the real, the art of tragic love, of passionate outrage, is both possible and necessary . . . expressing hope and love in the face of terror.

—Jacob Landau

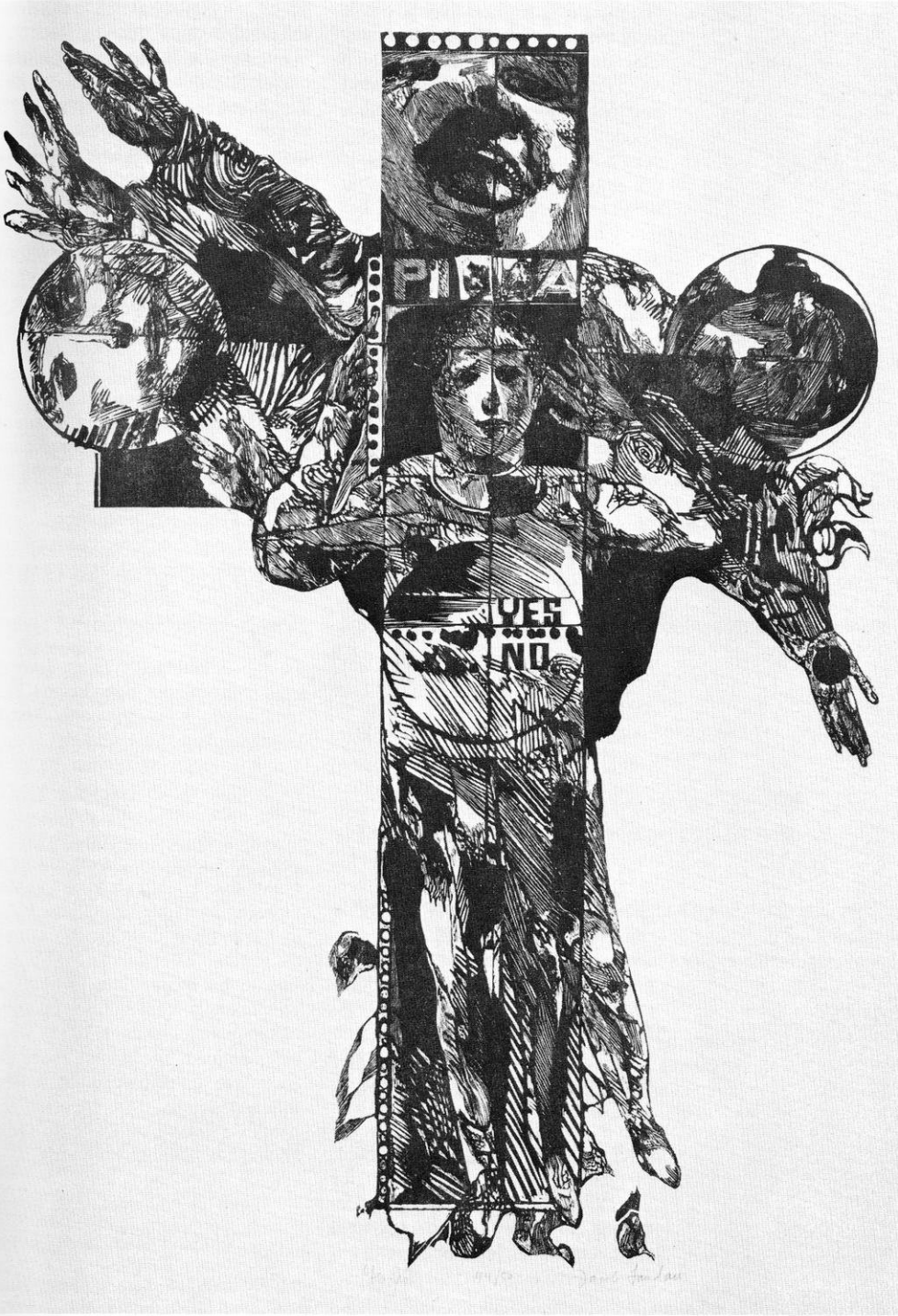
of this art. I have to ask you Nat: who have *you* been listening to? Certainly not to artists.

Your essay seems remarkably uninformed about the plight of artists, about the manipulation of their patronage, about the consequences experienced by an artist who creates images that are not fashionable, that may even be deeply disturbing. You seem to have little understanding about the very limited possibilities for exhibitions of works by a painter, printmaker or sculptor who makes people feel things when they do not wish to feel. Remember back to the days of record covers? Does not the history of jazz, a history you helped articulate, support the view that what is vital and influential in the cultural life of America is often neglected, unrecognized and unsupported? You say that I am scornful of Richard Anuskiewicz. I am scornful of no artist, but I do believe that it is helpful to differentiate between those artists who help us see, and those who help us to see certain realities which, if we are to retain our humanity, must be seen. Your defense of all art, which becomes a rejection of my advocacy of Humanist art, is pure hype. Would you say I was scornful of Judy Collins because I decried the neglect accorded artists like Big Bill Broonzy? If I argued that Dick Gregory pays more dues for being what he is than Woody Allen, would you evoke the virtues of all humor as a means of dismissing my point? Cheap Thrills. Are you surprised that in the visual arts too, America prefers to show the public face of only a part of her total creation?

When, in your essay, you speak of the "normative brutalization that is done in the name of America" why have you chosen to place yourself as an obstacle to an argument that supports visual artists who deal with the brutalization? Like Louis Kampf in another essay, you are quick to recite the inventory of disaster. Do you believe there are no artists expressing the same feelings in visual images? Are you listening to them? Seeing them? And if not, and if I have tried to correct an historical wrong, why have you said this should not be done? Why can Hentoff write of "spiritual mutilation" and "literal mutilation" and not support an attempt to support the work of visual artists who depict the very same realities?

In "The Cold Society," one of two essays authored by you that I chose to anthologize in *Hard Rains: Conflict and Conscience in America,* you write and then quote Tom Hayden as follows: "Radicalism — others might call it humanism — would then 'give itself to, and become part of, the energy that is kept restless and active under the clamps of a paralyzed imperial society.' " Who have you been listening to lately, Nat? Surely art is one of the restless energies, and won't radical-Humanist art meet with highly elaborated forms of resistance? Doesn't an imperial society favor an imperial culture? And if there is a defense and an advocacy of radical-Humanist art why have you wished to impede it with a melodramatic concern that non-Humanists will be excommunicated? Is it not enough to compare this clumsy thirty year old Humanist with Solzhenitsyn; must you also saddle him to the Vatican too? Really, Nat.

Had you read Edward Kamarck's initial letter carefully you would have seen that "Over the course of several years he (Schwartz) interviewed literally hundreds of artists in all parts of the country, collecting in the process a rich storehouse of materials . . . letters, statements, photographs, manifestoes, etc." The primary goal of *The New Humanism: Art in a Time*



Jacob Landau. *Yes-No*, 1966, woodcut, 21 x 15″. Commissioned by Boys' Life Magazine. Courtesy Associated American Artists Gallery, N.Y.

of Change is to present and illustrate the work of 150 of these artists. Most have not been given nearly the attention they deserve and none have been seen within the context that inspires their creation. Among them by the way, is not only Robert Crumb, and other San Francisco cartoonists, but many of the artists who find themselves in the same position Crumb was in several years ago when Hentoff had not heard of Crumb and Crumb was making postcards for Hallmark and wondering. . . . You see, Nat, for artists like Crumb, Steve Wilson, Spain Rodriguez, and Vic Moscosco, etc. to survive they not only had to develop their art but had as well to develop a whole new way of communicating to people, the underground cartoon. Not every artist will be able to develop excellence in his work and a new mode of its exhibition.

Your article disappoints me, Nat. It works by a standard formula for dismantlement, a hack job of straw man argument, easy sentiment, exaggeration and misrepresentation, and all to what end? . . . am I your enemy? Are you really "more 'permissive' " than I? You "Wow!" my phrase "perpetual antagonism with reality." Perpetual antagonism with reality is necessary because of the ease with which we can surrender our perceptions, be misled, fail to comprehend yet another normative brutalization. How can one retain sensitivity to the sick and inhuman when it is normative? You are doing a lot of "Schwartz and I" in your essay, but the impact of your writing is to reduce, put aside, and devalue. Thus for you the advocate of what is becomes, after all, the proselytizer of "what art should be."

You seem in this affair like an old fighter who, when he hears the roar of the crowd and smells the sweat, comes staggering out of the locker room raining punches on countless imagined foes. After the nitpicking here, after you make me the fall guy, after all the Schwartz and I's, after the depreciating and vain sentiment about the value of all art, which takes nothing into account about the problem of social art, I am forced to ask if you are part of the problem or part of the solution? You create a nifty competition between Hentoff and Schwartz . . . Schwartz and I . . . I am a Humanist just like Schwartz . . . but Schwartz he is not really a good Humanist . . . I am more Humanist than thou . . . what the Hell, Humanism is not a club one joins. Are we really going to compete with each other to see whose Humanism is purer. Have you been so long out there alone, dealt with so many deaths, been so often abused, misunderstood and attacked, that you only know the way of those you oppose?

To be a Humanist is to have a first response to give, to give at a time when everyone only knows to take. And the Humanist knows that if he gives all he has, because he is also victimized by a society that kills, he can never give enough. In the name of justice you have clubbed down my argument for an art that expresses outrage at injustice. I am trying to burst forth through the curtain of critical silence, and you find this to be moralizing. Where are you coming from? Give up some of those ego needs, Nat, the world has room for thousands more like us. Give up the formula writing, the suspicions, the coverted territory . . . don't be the cold society you so brilliantly engage.

Love to you, Nat, love to you.
Barry Schwartz

* * *

Just as these closing remarks were to be mailed to *Arts in Society,* I received a note from Hentoff: "If you want a dialogue, best thing is to call." And I did. □

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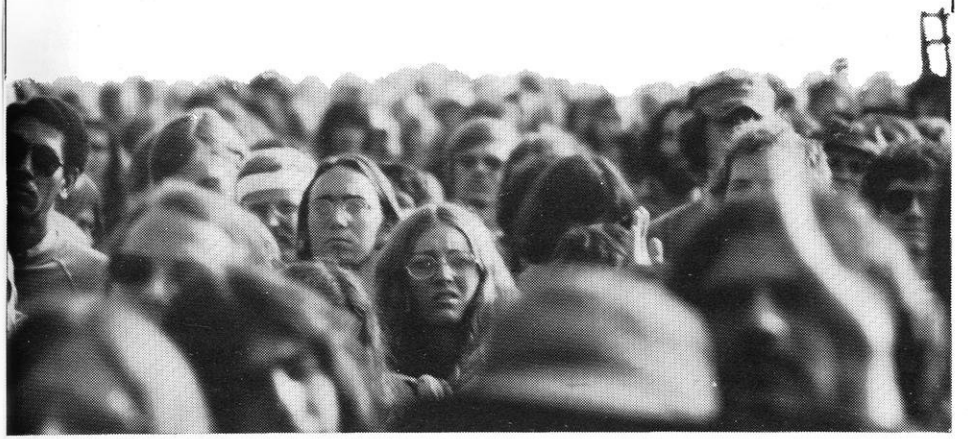

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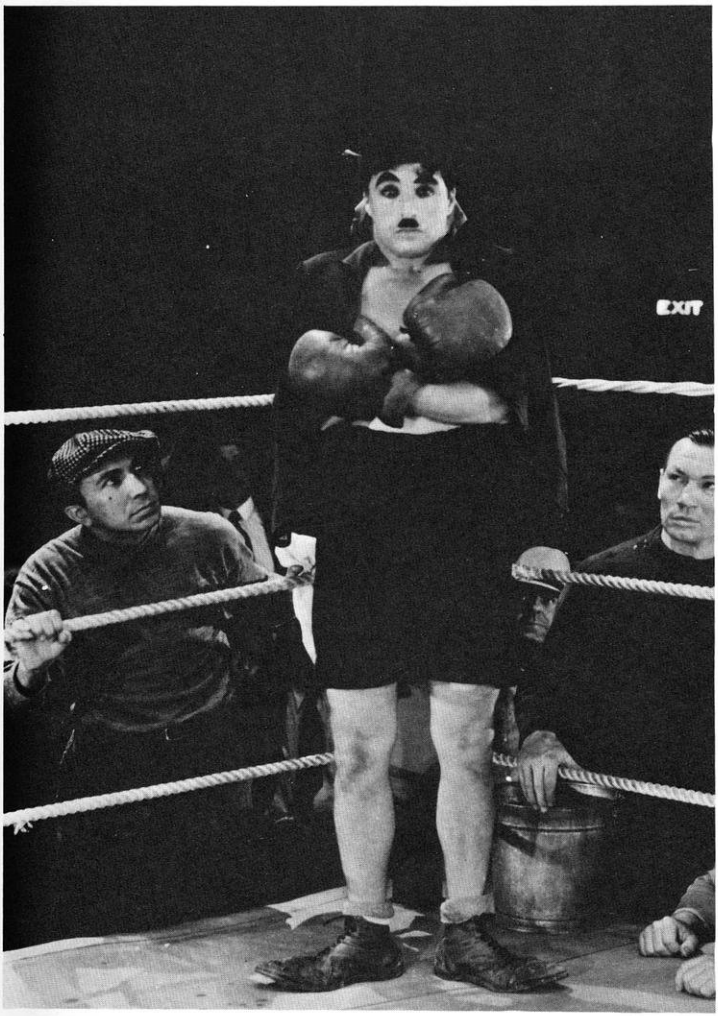

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