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arts in society

WINTER ISSUE

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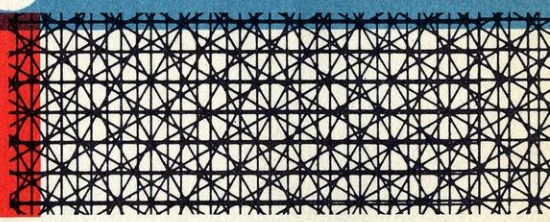
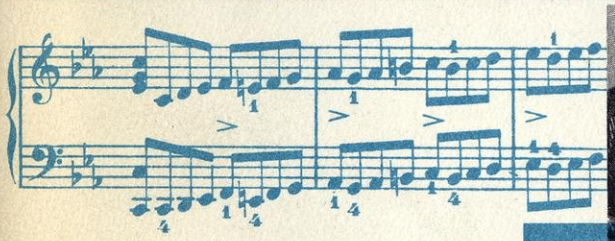




in this issue . . .

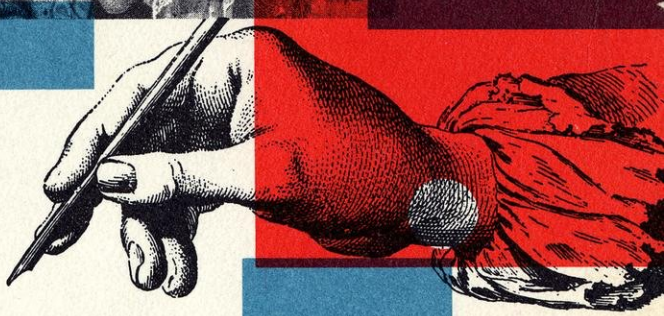
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

SIR HERBERT READ

JACQUES BARZUN

PETER YATES

. . . and others



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arts in society

A Journal of the Arts in Adult Education

contents

on launching *arts in society*

by L. H. Adolfson

The University of Wisconsin Extension Division proudly introduces this new publication, *Arts in Society*, in the field of adult education. Its purpose is to provide a vehicle for the discussion, interpretation, and illustration of the role of the arts in modern society. *Arts in Society* grows naturally out of the scholarship and resources which The University of Wisconsin has used for many years in the stimulation of creative endeavor throughout the state.

We believe that the cultural arts are assuming increased importance in the lives of Americans, an importance marked both by heightened sophistication and broader participation. This activity in the arts flows from a variety of factors: constantly higher levels of public education, economic security on a relatively high and stable basis, a generally shorter work week and increased leisure for more people, a longer life span for the average person, and greater emphasis at all levels in the schools on artistic expression.

The great universities of America are playing a significant role in this development of the arts. This role is expressed in such diverse activities as expanded teaching programs in the artistic disciplines; extracurricular student activities, in many cases on a level that is virtually professional; the appointment of artists-in-residence; and efforts to extend programs in the arts to widespread adult constituencies. In recent years the extension activity in the arts has grown with particular rapidity. Many universities, especially the state universities, now provide a considerable range of programs for the people of their states in the fields of drama, music, and the literary and visual arts.

It is in this spirit that we believe this publication will provide an avenue of discussion and expression for people everywhere interested in the arts. To this end we invite contributions on philosophy of the arts, on the total cultural scene, on the arts and adult education problems, as well as creative material illustrating significant trends and experimentation in the arts. We hope that *Arts in Society* may provide, so far as the printed work can do so, a meeting ground for all the arts.

To these ends we of Extension at Wisconsin dedicate our energy and talents.

Dr. L. H. Adolfson, Director of The University of Wisconsin Extension Division, is on leave of absence until June 30, 1958, on a government-sponsored mission to Turkey. He is acting as chief of the International Cooperation Administration Project in public administration which is operated by New York University at the University of Ankara for the Turkish government.

from the editors . . .

a comment on our goals:

We who have shaped *Arts In Society* are proud as its first issue comes off the press. But because the first issue of any publication inevitably sets the tone and direction of future issues, our pride is, quite frankly, tinged with a measure of anxiety. Our goals are ambitious. We have sought to bring into being a journal which would at once set a high standard for arts-and-education, while at the same time stimulating a widespread development of all levels of education in the arts. In substance, our publication attempts to focus discussion and creative action at the junction of art, education, philosophy, and social analysis. Few if any periodic publications have, to our knowledge, undertaken quite this same task. This effort is both our challenge and our promise. If we succeed we shall have opened up limitless possibilities.

Arts In Society is, first of all, a University of Wisconsin publication and as such cannot but be primarily educational in its approach. It will also be a place where creativity in the arts will find a most receptive audience. But in whatever way we view the role of this journal, it must be something that will engage the bold and experimental spirit. And, indeed, in the range of our contributors to this first issue we have singularly succeeded in this aim:

Frank Lloyd Wright, with the characteristic vigor of his genius, protests any education that ignores man's spiritual needs. Sir Herbert Read notes the scale of our problem in adult education in a superb analysis of art in the industrial age. Peter Yates punctures the pretensions of intellectualism in an era of conformity. Jacques Barzun takes the measure of that new kind of

massman, the "amateur" in the arts. Don Martindale throws up dozens of brittle problems in the sociology of aesthetics. And dynamic trends in the arts are discussed in R. W. Stallman's paper, Aaron Bohrod's comment on his role and work, Robert Gard's view of the future of community theatre, and in an interview with Milwaukee's Miller Theatre staff.

This is the kind of thinking that can help us break the hold of ingenuous platitudes on American education. They can help loosen the grip of pagan materialism which blasphemes the potential of American art. And, finally, they help assure us a future lying beyond the researched tattle that too easily becomes the measure of the academic mind.

Arts In Society goes to our readers with the sincerest faith in the increasingly vital role of the arts in our society.

—Bernard J. James, Edward L. Kamarck, Donald White

education and art in behalf of life[1]

"Man is a phase of Nature and only as he is related to Nature does he really matter, is he of any account whatever, above the dust."

by Frank Lloyd Wright

What is education without enlightenment? It's a mere conditioning. And what is mere conditioning but maintaining mass ignorance, the poisonous and poisoning end of what we call *civilization*? There is nothing more dreadful, more dangerous, nothing to be more feared in this world, than plain or fancy ignorance. We can see this today in the drift toward conformity. We can see it in the education of modern mass-society.

You can blame education for much of this because education has not seen what we have needed as a "free" people. It has not provided *enlightenment.* It has provided *conditioning* instead. Conditioning by way of books, by way of what "has been"—the past—by all habituations of the species to date. American education has not taken into account the views of men of vision capable of looking beyond today. But only such enlightened individuals can save the mass from itself.

If our education (called conservative) is ever going to do anything for us it has to provide enlightenment by means of art, religion, and science. But until art, religion, and science stop disregarding each other, until they realize their interest is one and the source of their inspiration is one, and realize that they

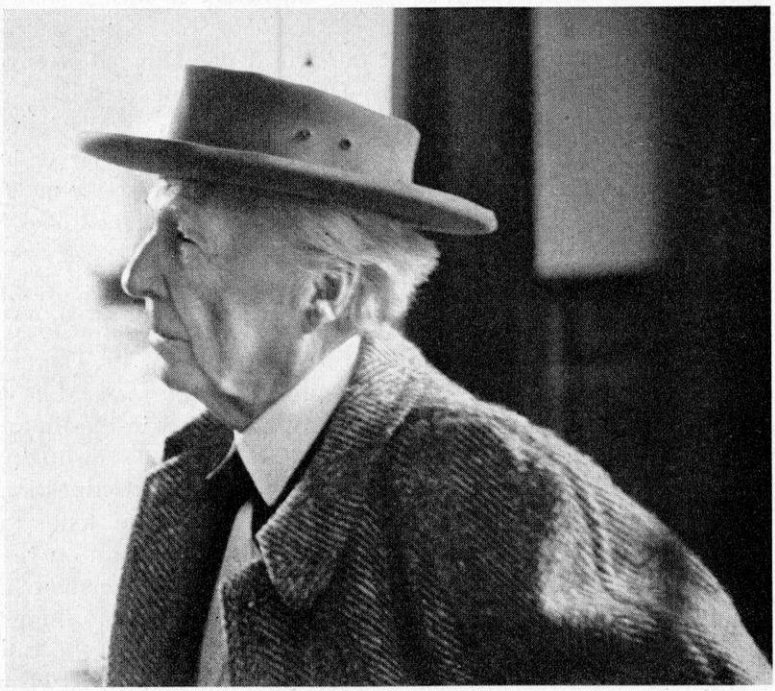
[1] From tape-recorded comments to the editors of *Arts in Society* at Taliesin, Spring Green, Wisconsin, June 18, 1957.

can't live apart, that union will not be possible. We teachers must teach men to seek enlightenment by means of the poetic principles of art, religion, and science. We must manifest these to them as spiritual guideposts, as true measures of understanding. That is what these youngsters thronging our campuses, teenagers going from pillar to post, need to know.

Now, what does *university* mean? Our state University is chiefly a trade school. You go down there for some specialized training. You are there just in line to learn to make a living. You don't go to the University to learn about the verities of Nature, the truths of the Universal for which *university* is the name. True education is a matter of seeing *in*, not merely seeing *at*. Seeing *in* means seeing Nature. Now when popular education uses the word *nature*, it means just the out-of-doors; it may mean the elements; it may mean animal life; it means pretty much from the waist down—whereas Nature with a capital *N* (I am talking about the inner meaning of the word *Nature*) is all the body of God we're ever going to see. It is practically the body of God for us. By studying *that* Nature we learn who we are, what we are, and how we are to be.

I walked out of the University three months before I would have graduated as an engineer. I got nothing. I studied all the things that were necessary (or so they thought) for an engineer to know. But through all my years, none of that has been worth a dime. And education today is still very like that.

My mother wanted an architect for a son; so, naturally, I wanted to be an architect. Never thought of being anything else. Never had to "choose." My mother—she was a very wonderful woman—used to send me as a boy up here to help Uncle James on his farm. Her favorite brother was Uncle James. (You see, my grandfather came here when the Indians were still around, and my uncles and aunts owned practically this whole region.) I learned a lot out there in the pasture with the cows. I never would put on a pair of shoes (except Sundays) from the middle



The first issue of *Arts in Society* salutes Frank Lloyd Wright, Wisconsin's first citizen in the arts.—Photo by Cameron Macauley.

of April until about the middle of September. And I used to really work hard on the farm. That's where I learned most from age eleven to eighteen: on the farm, from the poets, and Louis Sullivan.

I believe now there is no school worth its existence except as it is a form of nature study—true *Nature* study—dedicated to that first, foremost, and all the time. Man is a phase of Nature, and only as he is related to Nature does he really matter, is he of any account whatever, above the dust. Otherwise he is offensive, vulgar. He may stink.

It's about two thousand years now since Jesus said that the Kingdom of God (He meant the kingdom of Nature's apprehension and application) was at hand. He meant it was in man's capacity to know this Kingdom of God. He was a prophet, a real poet, the greatest one. But our world got Him all wrong, doesn't preach *Him*, doesn't take His teaching—never did. The Christian religions got Him all balled up by way of disciples. And we are no nearer to His Kingdom today than we were in His own time, are we? We go to war, we kill, we steal, we make a profession of all those things and other wholly artificial ones.

The real body of our universe is spiritualities—the real body of the real life we live. From the waist up we're spiritual at least. Our true humanity begins from the belt up, doesn't it? Therein comes the difference between the animal and the man. Man is chiefly animal until he makes something of himself in the life of the Spirit so that he becomes spiritually inspired—spiritually *aware*. Until then he is not creative. He can't be. But education doesn't better him in that connection. It confuses him, tends to make him more of a thing than he really is, keeps him on the level of a thing instead of permitting him to become more a divinity. What makes man a divinity rather than a mere thing? Not only his intelligence, but his apprehension of what we call truth, and passion in his soul to serve it. That passion is what the universities should cultivate—culture of that sort instead of education. Isn't that it?

To enlighten the young, education must at least teach philosophy. Without a true philosophy there is no understanding of anything. Without your own philosophic resolution and analysis of pretended knowledge, as applied to life, what and where are you? Philosophy is the only realm wherein you can find understanding. Religion and the arts are all part of philosophy. There has never been a creative artist or poet, for instance, who wasn't deeply religious. Walt Whitman, the only poet we have who gave us anything in the way of poetry fit for the sovereignty of the individual—the theory of our democracy—was a deeply religious man. He believed, as Jesus said, that "the Kingdom of God is within *you.*" Jesus was a poet-philosopher. Every great creative artist who ever lived was a poet and a philosopher. What there is good about me, and may remain, is my philosophy. My work is only great insofar as its philosophy is sound, and if my philosophy is unsound my work will not endure. The fact that it has endured, and now has a chance to continue beyond any lifetime, is simply due to the fact that the philosophy behind it all was a sound one. If that philosophy didn't inspire my work it wouldn't exist very long.

Lao-tse is the great philosopher [born 604 B. C.]. He revealed the reality of the Nature and life of a building. Lao-tse declared that the reality of a building consists in the space within—the space to be lived in—not in the walls and the roof. I think you can see this truth by holding up a drinking glass. What is the real glass? What is the reality of the drinking glass? It's the space within in which you can put something, isn't it? Space which you use. That's the *real* thing about the glass, its "reality." That is also the secret strength of organic architecture and where I come in as an architect. My philosophy concerning a building is that of Lao-tse. The same principles apply to you, as to me, in everything. Just as a building is a space within to be lived in, so a man is a space within, in which a philosophy lives.

What is really lacking in man today? He lacks the certainty that comes of a creative life. He plays no creative role in life but by way of art, religion, and science. Lacking that inner cer-

tainty of life, he feels insecure. We all walk and talk in insecurity. The condition of freedom is insecurity. Yet no man is free who is afraid. Only a creative life can make man really free. If the man is a man, in the sense of a good philosophy of Nature, he is inevitably creative; he can't exist unless he is. But then his inspiration is not only for him. It has been to him a gift to be realized and exercised in behalf of life itself. He is absolutely an apostle of life because he sees Nature for life. If an artist is thus for life, he is for the individual, and if he is for the individual, he is not alone and never will be. His work will then be of consequence. He will be for democracy, and democracy will be for him.

Frank Lloyd Wright, Wisconsin's renowned architect, is currently active with projects in California, New York, Baghdad, and elsewhere.

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Contrary to what is usually thought, it is the man of excellence, and not the common man who lives in essential servitude. Life has no savour for him unless he makes it consist in service to something transcendental.

—Ortega y Gasset
in *Revolt of the Masses*

adult education and the arts[1]

". . . our first task is to reanimate dead nerves, to reopen the doors of perception."

by Sir Herbert Read

I shall begin with the assumption that there are special problems denoted by the word "adult." I have in the past written and spoken often enough about the place of the arts in education, and all I have said has been based on the assumption that we are concerned with a growing shoot that will respond as it grows to external influences and disciplinary activities. It seems to me that I am approaching an entirely different problem if growth has come to an end and the object of our attention is no longer tender and labile, but tough and settled in its ways, an adult who has already found his place in the world. It may be that in such circumstances education itself is no longer the appropriate term: what we must effect may well be a transformation.

Our efforts will be vain unless we adapt our methods to the kind of civilisation we must inevitably live in, which means in effect teaching a subject from a central core of interest. We must not assume that a technological humanism, if that is our aim, is a product of machines only; the writing of English is also a technique, based on principles no less scientific than those involved in the manufacture of iceboxes or automobiles. If we are to teach adults to write good English, the core of interest must be right

[1] From an address to the Scottish Institute of Adult Education, 1957.

there, in the writing of good English. Good English is good technology—good technology functions through good English.

It is an unconscious assumption of almost all who discuss this subject that while in the course of this century we have entered into a new type of civilisation—a technological civilisation that has nothing in common with preceding civilisation—our cultural values have meanwhile remained static. Changes, which are obvious, are described as decadent if in the sphere of morals; and as degenerate or schizophrenic if in the sphere of the arts. I am not concerned with morals in this address, though my general assumption would be that however much moral habits may have changed, human nature is basically as good or as bad as it ever was. But in the arts—in our whole conception of the purpose and scope of the arts—a revolution has taken place in the past fifty years which is just as fundamental as the technological revolution and which, if accepted, would make our task of integrating the arts into an era of technological humanism much simpler, much more effective. For the new conception of art is at the core of any technological method of production: it is the element of value in any formative process.

The new conception of art is sometimes called *formalism*, usually by those who wish to denigrate it. Personally I have no objection to the term, which is closely descriptive, and which contrasts perfectly with the opposed conception of art, which is *humanistic*.

The revolt against an exclusively humanistic conception of art has been long in gestation, but it first comes into visible existence in the painting of Cézanne, and Cézanne's fundamental importance in the history of this revolution is due precisely to the fact that he for the first time dared to assert that the purpose of art is not to express an ideal, whether religious or moral or humanistic, but simply to be humble before nature and to render the forms which close observation could disentangle from vague visual impressions. The consequences of this peculiar kind of

honesty were hardly such as Cézanne himself would have expected. First came Cubism, and then a gradual purification of form which reached its logical conclusion in the abstract or non-figurative art of Piet Mondriaan or Ben Nicholson. This formalist type of art is now widespread among artists in every medium, and whether you like it or not, like technology it has come to stay.

It is not my present purpose to explain or defend a formalist conception of art, but I would like to emphasize the universality of the phenomenon. It is not merely a movement in painting: it is a philosophical attitude which finds expression not only in painting and sculpture, but also most obviously in the basic principles of modern architecture and in those branches of technology such as aircraft production which have not had their "standards of taste" bedevilled by irrelevant humanistic considerations. So far from technology being the enemy of art, I would rather go to the other extreme and say that it has shown itself capable of producing works which in absolute aesthetic value rival the Greek temple or the Gothic cathedral. Some of these works are as anonymous as the Gothic cathedral, but where we can name a designer, such as Sir Geoffrey de Havilland, I do not hesitate to put him in the same class as the architects of our great cathedrals.

Before we jump to the conclusion that our purpose in adult education would be served if we could organise our classes on a vocational basis so that they tended to satisfy aesthetic requirements by giving birth to designers of the de Havilland standard, there are one or two qualifications to be made. In the first place, although a formalist art has been evoked by the needs, and in the spirit of a technological age, we have not thereby dehumanized art. We must not make the mistake of assuming that form, however abstract or absolute, is necessarily inhuman. Form can be organic, and we have noted that Cézanne assiduously searched for form in nature, even in the human figure. Ruskin once observed that "all beautiful lines are drawn under mathematical laws organically transgressed." Form, we can therefore

say, need not be mathematical, in the strict sense of the word. Indeed, the form of a de Havilland aircraft is neither inorganic nor even geometrical. It embodies forms similar to those which have been organically evolved by birds and fishes: forms that have been moulded by vital energies seeking structures adapted to a fluid medium like air or water. Man, in evolving his machines, is seeking analogous structures. An emphasis on form, therefore, although it may be antihumanistic in the conventional sense of post-Renaissance Humanism, is not an emphasis on faculties outside human experience, human perception, human emotion. On the contrary, we may argue that the perception of the form beneath appearance is one of the highest functions of the human mind.

The other qualification I have to make is more serious. We speak of a technological civilisation, and we are apt to visualise it in the terms of concrete productions. But productive workers, such as engineers or chemists, represent but a small proportion of a technological society. Apart from the managerial and bureaucratic grades, there is a rank and file of unskilled labour that never has the chance to produce anything tangible—that is occupied in shifting things about, removing debris, and generally acting as intermediaries between those who produce and those who consume. This amorphous proletariat is our main concern, and it would be as well if we would bear them in mind as we proceed with our discussion. We cannot avoid what is one of the central problems of our civilisation and perhaps the prime source of its cultural weakness: the alienation of at least half the community from any practical skills, from concrete, formative activities of any kind.

Our task, therefore, is twofold: to develop the aesthetic factors in technological education, and to provide an aesthetic education for those who are not pursuing a technological vocation. Different methods of teaching will be necessary, though they have a common end in view, which is to establish the foundations of a new culture.

In both cases there is the special problem represented by the word "adult"—a problem special to the teaching of the arts to adults—so let us consider this first.

Let us begin by recalling the specific function of art in human life. It is a primary activity concerned with *giving expression*—and by expression we mean a form that we can perceive and apprehend—to *feeling*. It is the elemental language of communication, articulating the formless flux of raw experience. It is what Coleridge called "the shaping spirit of imagination." Croce said that works of art are passions brought to expressive shape. There is always this notion of a shaping of a formless flux of feeling, and this shaping of feeling is an activity which must take place before the other specific functions of the mind—reason, desire, or will—can proceed.

This artistic activity belongs essentially to the formative stages of a civilisation, but a civilisation is renewed and revitalised by the continuance of the process, by the recurrent injection into the language and imagination of the race of new visual images and new forms of expression. Such is the basic biological and social function of art, and it is a function that is vitally necessary at the formative stages of a new civilisation.

This process of renewal in an already established civilisation is performed by the artists, and that is why the vitality of a civilisation always depends on the free functioning of the aesthetic process. That is why a civilisation without art perishes, and why a technological civilisation will perish unless it can provide an outlet, or rather an inlet, for the shaping spirit of the imagination.

The inlet is situated in the mind of the individual, and we may say that at birth and throughout childhood it is wide open. But it gradually silts up with the dust of our practical activities and the verbal mucus excreted from the rationalising mind until, long before the individual becomes an adult, he is deaf and

blind to all sensitive experiences, incapable of bringing new passions to expressive shape. We begin our task, therefore, with an individual whose aesthetic faculty is already atrophied, and our first task is to reanimate dead nerves, to reopen the doors of perception.

Of necessity this kind of "brain washing" must be the prelude to any kind of art education for adults, but it is a stage of education that presents enormous difficulties and for which very little experimental work has been done. But the little that has been done is very significant, so I will give some account of it.

There is first of all the large-scale experiment that was conducted at Weimar and Dessau in Germany between 1919 and 1928. Gropius's Bauhaus was essentially an experiment in adult education: the students were from seventeen to forty years old, most of them in their early twenties; half of them were ex-servicemen from the first world war. In establishing this experimental school, Gropius's first step was to seek the cooperation of Johannes Itten, a teacher he had met in Vienna in 1918, whose theory of education had greatly impressed him. Itten had elaborated certain basic principles of teaching design, the purpose of which was to release the creative powers of the student. He began from the assumption that these powers were latent—either suppressed or atrophied—so the student was required in the first place to make a detailed study of materials, of the *nature* of materials, their physical structure, their colours and contrasted textures. Drawing from nature proceeded at the same time, to teach the pupil the principles of organic growth and configuration. Then, with a sensuous grasp of the nature of materials, and a knowledge of the functional forms evolved by nature, the student could begin to create his own significant forms. To quote Gropius's description of this preliminary course: "Concentration on any particular stylistic movement is studiously avoided. Observation and representation—with the intention of showing the desired identity of form and content—define the limits of the preliminary course. Its chief function is to liberate the individual by breaking down conventional patterns of

thought in order to make way for personal experiences and discoveries which will enable him to see his own potentialities and limitations. For this reason collective work is not essential in the preliminary course. Both subjective and objective observation will be cultivated: both the system of abstract laws and the interpretation of objective matter.

"Above all else, the discovery and proper valuation of the individual's means of expression shall be sought out."[2]

The detailed history of that experiment has been written by Gropius himself and by others, and there is perhaps only one other aspect of it that I need emphasise now: it was a workshop education. That is to say, it began with a full recognition of the technological basis of our civilisation. The Bauhaus sought to end the disastrous separation of arts and crafts, and students were taught independently by a master who was a craftsman and by a master who was an artist. By this double training, this coordinated instruction, it was intended to bring into existence a new type of creative worker who would be a functional unit in our technological civilisation. It was recognised that out of this system of training a minority would emerge who would undertake independent research and experiment. These would be the artists of a new age, the few exceptionally gifted ones "who will suffer no limits to their activity."

The Bauhaus still remains the prototype of art education in a technological civilisation, and it is only a fundamentally stupid conservatism that has retarded the development of the idea in this country [Britain], with disastrous effects on the international status of our industrial design and technological efficiency. I will not lose my temper about that situation now, but will return to the strictly educational aspects of the problem, more particularly to the special problems of the adult.

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[2] *Bauhaus 1919–1928,* edited by Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius (New York, 1939), p. 26.

California, has described a series of experiments in art education which he carried out between 1939 and 1943 with four groups of people. The first was a group of mental defectives in a public institution, of both sexes, their ages ranging from eleven to thirty-five. The second experiment was with a group of delinquent youths, ages from seventeen to twenty-two. These two groups do not concern us directly, though the evidence is generally relevant. The third experiment was with a small group of refugees, of various occupations, their ages ranging from twelve to forty-three; one was a physiotherapist of thirty. The fourth experiment was with a group of business people, their ages ranging from twenty-seven to fifty-four.

The detailed account of each case history is fascinating, but I have time only to recount Professor Schaeffer–Simmern's general conclusions, as they relate to normal adults. I might say, incidentally, that the conclusions as they relate to abnormal individuals, mental defectives, and delinquents are of the greatest educational and therapeutic interest.

The normal business and professional people in these groups began by being embarrassed because their first efforts were so "poor." "Discussions," Professor Schaeffer–Simmern tells us, "threw light upon the fact that what they had just produced looked childish because their creative ability had never developed beyond the stages of childhood. But insofar as the first results truly reflected their genuine stage of artistic conceiving—primitive though it appeared—a natural foundation was laid from which development could take place." Then, with their increasing power of visual discrimination, the students revealed a growing ability to produce creative configuration. With growing maturity in their pictorial results—that is, with the attainment of a more complex visual order—greater concentration of all forces was required and the working processes inevitably slackened. It soon became obvious how creative work, adequately suited to the mental stage of its producer, can call forth unexpected powers: "To these 'laymen' life seemed vitally enriched. They experienced the rare pleasures of creation."

I have said that the adult presents a special problem because his sensibility, which is the aspect of his personality that has to be trained in art education, is so often atrophied. When I use the word "atrophied," I imply that the sensibility of the adult was once alive; and fundamental to all I have to say on this subject is the belief, based on the evidence of the activities of children and primitive peoples, that "every healthy man has a deep capacity for bringing to development the creative energies found in his nature, if he is deeply interested in his work." I use the words of Moholy–Nagy, one of the great teachers thrown up by the Bauhaus, who went on to say:

> Everyone is equipped by nature to receive and assimilate sensory experiences. Everyone is sensitive to tones and colours, has sure touch and space reactions, etc. This means that by nature everyone is able to participate in all the pleasures of sensory experiences, that any healthy man can also become a musician, painter, sculptor, architect, just as when he speaks he is a "speaker." That is, he can give form to his reactions in any material. The truth of this statement is evidenced in actual life: in a perilous situation or in moments of inspiration, conventions and inhibitions of the daily routine are broken through, and the individual often reaches a plane of achievement otherwise not expected.[3]

I once gave as an example of this spontaneous outbreak of artistic achievement the noble speech which Vanzetti, a poor ignorant cobbler, made when condemned to death for a crime he had not committed. But we all know that such spontaneous utterances, of great beauty and nobility, exceptional as they may be in the life of the individual, are frequent but exceptional occurrences in human life. This formative and expressive energy lies dormant in every human psyche; it is that energy which has to be released and geared to the functional activities of a technological civilisation. That is the task of education, and in particular of adult education.

Now let me pass to some further experiments in the art education of adults. In a remarkable book which should be "required reading" for everyone interested in the problems of art education, Professor Henry Schaeffer–Simmern, of the University of

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[3] *The New Vision* (New York, 1939), p. 15.

Professor Schaeffer–Simmern also relates that these adults gradually became conscious, as they frequently stated, "of a unique cultivation of disciplined feeling and thinking, of an intimate coordination of mind, eye, and hand, as well as manual skill. They felt the formative effect which genuine artistic activity had upon them as assisting towards a more harmonised, more balanced personality." And, more importantly, "the spontaneous critical judgment which mainly caused the organic development of these students' artistic abilities was gradually applied, also, to observation of their environment. They became seriously aware of the fact that the greater part of their surrounding world did not possess that basic visual order which was the decisive quality of their own achievements. The deformed shapes of buildings, the utterly incoherent architectural planning of streets and squares, previously ignored by most of them, attracted their attention more and more. Simultaneously, they also became sensitive to the formless objects, the cheap as well as the expensive, displayed in shop windows. Instead of giving them visual satisfaction, such as they derived from the outcome of their own well-organized artistic works, the misshapen objects aroused in them feelings of irritation.[4]

Professor Schaeffer–Simmern's experiments did not extend to the individual arts, but the relevance of the experiments to our technological civilisation is obvious: the demonstration justifies the assumption that a form of visual cognition exists in man and can be concretely realized in the work of art. Further, these experiments show that from the beginning artistic activity is autonomous, that is to say, independent of conceptual calculation and abstract thinking, a sensuous creation or "visual thinking," the elements of which are relationships of form.

One has to follow the experiments through, stage by stage, as described and illustrated in Professor Schaeffer–Simmern's book, to appreciate the revolution that occurred in the minds

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[4] *The Unfolding of Artistic Activity* (University of California Press, 1950), pp. 194–7.

and lives of these people. Just as the drawings and paintings evolved from crude incompetent scribbles to skilful and expressive works of art, so life itself gradually became richer—richer in observation and experience, in satisfaction and self-confidence. In the words of one of these adults: "As I developed a richer inner world I became critically aware of the outer world. Difficult as it is to describe the effect of this double enrichment on my personality, I can definitely say I am more fully awake to my surroundings, more fully alive. Multiply this effect on one average individual by only a small fraction of the population, and the social implications of artistic activity seem clearly self-evident."[5]

There is one further experiment I must refer to, this time more accessible to you, for the full account of it appears in a volume in the Heinemann Education Series—a book entitled *On Not Being Able to Paint*, by Joanna Field (London, 1950). This pen name covers the identity of a practising psychoanalyst, and the experiment she conducted was on herself. Since childhood she had been interested in learning how to paint, but her efforts had always tended to peter out "in a maze of uncertainties about what a painter is really trying to do." She began her experiment without any definite purpose in mind. In fact, she discovered the important truth that activity creates purpose and that the secret of the creative process in the arts is a free interplay of differences. She found that the artist, "by embodying the experience of illusion, provides the essential basis for realising, making real, for feeling as well as for knowing, the external world." The work of art, she discovered, is essentially a fusion of an external reality, based on perception, and an internal reality, experienced as feeling. The work of art is an intuitive image that acts as a bridge between lived experience and logical thought, and as such has wide implications for education.

Joanna Field does not describe these implications in any detail, for that is not the purpose of her book. Its significance,

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 175.

from our present point of view, is that it offers a solution to the problem of the atrophy of sensibility which is the main difficulty in teaching art to adults—"the kind of problem that the over-introverted child is struggling with; and also, incidentally, what the over-introverted child is running away from." If this problem is not dealt with in the education of the child, we are left with an adult who has virtually to be psychoanalysed before he can take part in creative activities of any kind. Luckily, as Joanna Field demonstrates, the pursuit of the activities of art is in itself a process of self-analysis: "The material which the artist in us is trying to create is basically the raw stuff of human impulses." To conclude with another quotation from her book: "The artist is not only one who refuses to deny his inner reality, but also and because of this, is potentially capable of seeing more of the external reality than other people, or at least, more of the particular bit he is interested in." In fact, "Art creates nature, including human nature."

The experiments that I have been describing may seem to you to be too personal, and only indirectly concerned with the practical problems of adult education in an age of technology. An emphasis on personal education, such as we get in the colleges and the arts faculties of universities, is not consistent with the present state of Western society. I am inclined to agree with this point of view, and I am a little disturbed when Professor Schaeffer–Simmern, for example, sees in artistic activities a compensation for the inadequacies of "the present highly industrialized and mechanized civilisation, in which, he says, "more than ever, man needs an equalizing force for the development of his whole being." If Professor Schaeffer–Simmern, or anyone else, and the same point of view is often expressed elsewhere—if this point of view implies that an artistic culture is in some sense divorced from the economic processes by means of which we live our modern life, then I venture to repeat a phrase which I used as a title to a tract some years ago: To hell with such a culture! A society, a civilisation, must be integral. This does not mean that we must abolish the distinction between the craftsman and the artist, but it does mean that they should work side

by side, in close cooperation. This was indeed the most significant feature of the Bauhaus teaching.

There are two opposed dangers in our approach to art education at the adult stage. One is represented by the word *amateurism*, the other by the word *professionalism*. A state of war may be said to exist between the extreme factions. The professional painter, for example, has nothing but contempt for the amateur painter, the Sunday painter, the man who makes painting a spare-time recreation. On the other hand, there is a widespread contempt, among people who consider themselves cultured, for the technologist, the specialist in scientific research or industrial production. That this social division should have come about, and should threaten the security of our civilisation, is entirely the fault of a false system of education. The seeds of this division are sown at an early age, when it is ordained that a scientist need have no grammar, and a grammarian no science. So long as that monstrous dichotomy exists at the heart of our educational system, so long one of the primary tasks of adult education will be to heal the divided heart. In the end culture is neither technological nor academic; it is simply human. The task is not to confer values on the automatic factory; the automatic factory is inhuman, and we must never accept its inhumanity as a value. If we introduced human values into the factory, it would no longer be automatic. Let us rather exclude the human element from automatic processes (by developing "automation"). Let human values be expressed in human (i.e., spontaneous) activities.

That great soul, Simone Weil, worked for a whole year in an automatic factory, lived the life of a worker on the production line. What she found there was a universal degradation of the human spirit. The workers in an automatic factory, she says, are denied even the last resources of a slave—stoicism. The work they live by, with its unvarying succession of mechanical movements and rapid rhythm, allows them only the stimulus of fear and the pay-packet. To indulge in a sentiment like stoicism would put them off their stroke. It is simpler, and involves the

least suffering, to conform to the mechanical rhythm. What kind of adult education shall we offer such people? For such people technology has no values, has no standards of excellence and taste. For such people technology is slavery.

"Education," said Simone Weil (and she wrote this after her experience in the Renault factory), "whether its object be children or adults, individuals or an entire people, or even oneself, consists in creating motives. To show what is beneficial, what is obligatory, what is good—that is the task of education. Education concerns itself with the motives for effective action. For no action is ever carried out in the absence of motives capable of supplying the indispensable amount of energy for its execution."[6]

This seems to me to be the essential truth about education, but apart from the question of means which Simone Weil proceeds to discuss, there is involved a choice of motives. Simone Weil was a mystic. Physical labour, she said, is a daily death; and like death itself a thing of necessity, not of choice. "The world only gives itself to Man in the form of food and warmth if Man gives himself to the world in the form of labour." Consent to this law which makes work indispensable for conserving life represents the most perfect act of obedience which it is given to Man to accomplish and, therefore, concludes Simone Weil, physical labour should be the spiritual core in a well-ordered social life.

But this is hardly a motive that would inspire the Adult Education movement, and it is a little difficult to see how such a spiritual attitude differs from the stoicism which elsewhere Simone Weil has found incompatible with work in an automatic factory. Our task is neither to reconcile the worker to a daily death, nor to provide the consolations of literature and art from a cultural past that is completely outside the experience of a

[6] *The Need for Roots,* trans. by Arthur Wills (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), pp. 181–182.

technological age. Our task—our limited task—is to introduce values and motives into the daily life and activities of ordinary people, values and motives that will serve as a necessary stimulus to their spiritual and social development.

Art is a principle of natural growth, an unfolding of inherent abilities to order perceptual experience, to cope with this experience cognitively by giving it unity of form. If we can concentrate on those inherent mental powers, cultivate them as we cultivate our powers of conceptual reasoning, then taste is no problem. We would then habitually handle all productive processes with a sure instinct for form. Further, this shaping spirit of imagination gives spiritual satisfaction, creates harmony in the soul as well as in the factory and in the products of the factory.

I think we have learned, in the earlier stages of education, that it is a vital mistake to separate education from play. In the same way, at the adult stage, I think it is a vital mistake to separate education from work. I could not conceive such a separation in my own case, but then I am an intellectual: my work is my education. But if this can be true of things created with words, or colours, or sounds, can it not also be true of everything that man creates, not only with his hands, but with machines? The real evil of the factory system is that the worker has no interest in the form and function of the component he is producing. Automation may relieve him of that boredom, but he will be bored with life itself unless he can discover some creative purpose in all his work. To restore to work a sense of creative purpose would be to give work the spiritual core it now lacks. Might not this be the chief aim of adult education?

Sir Herbert Read is a leading art critic and art educator of Britain. He is author of Education Through Art, The Philosophy of Modern Art, *and numerous other volumes.*

death house

by Leonard Casper

While parts of him, spread-eagle in soma, slept,
his beaten eyes were crouched behind their lids
(*walls are inquisition*) watching through the leafy veins
minute departures of the night-lights;
now leap at day.

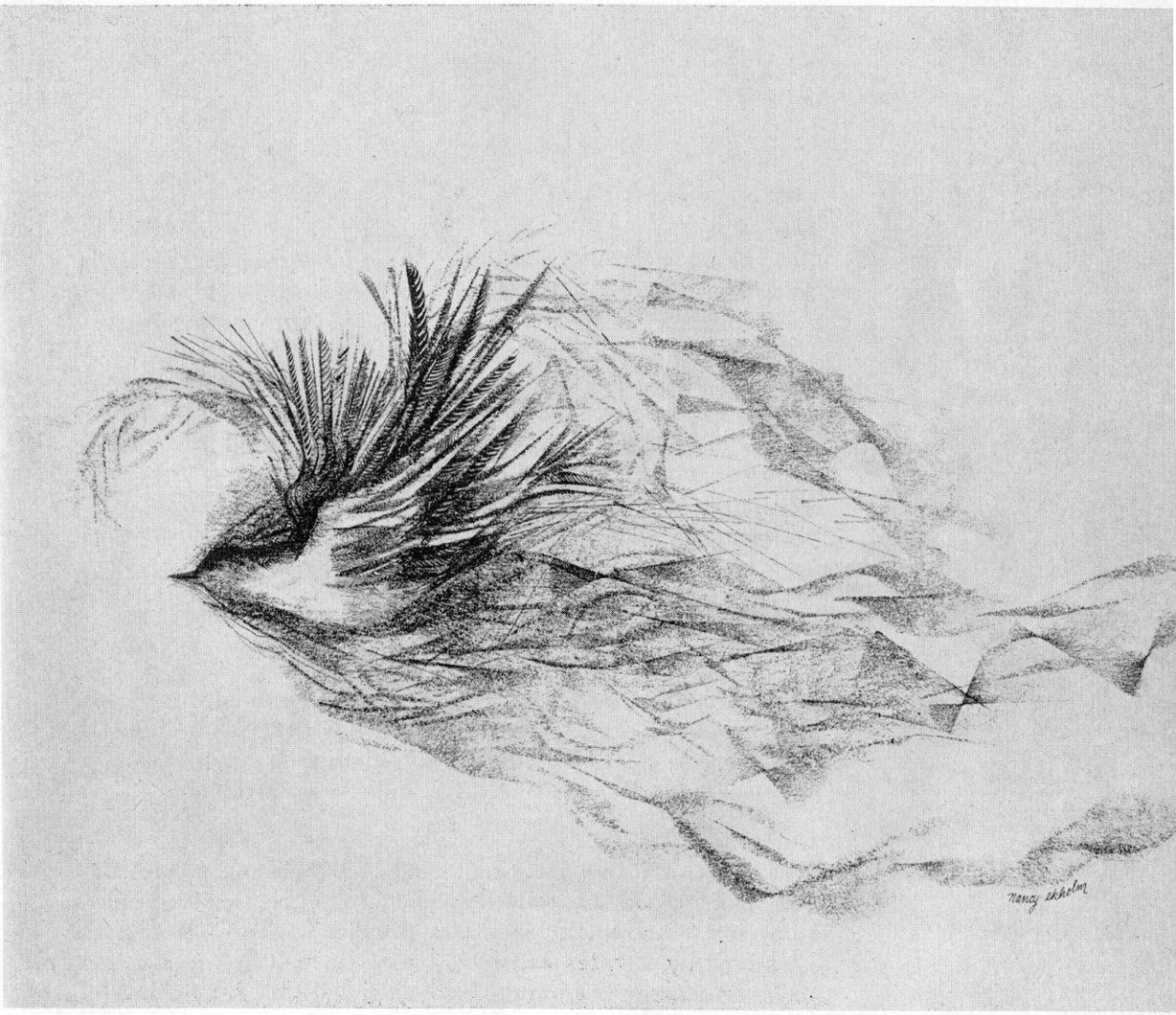
Time to be shriven, and clean-shaven, says amoebic
mouth; begins to crawl again across his face, free but
iron-filing hairs polarize around his head,
corralled the will to escape

from barred voices, questions: "Do you want a confessor?"

One door closes, another opens
one door closes another

No longer capable of an act
of attrition, yes, he says, but shakes his head no-no;
crying yes, yes, but knowing
he does not know anything to confess,
not even that,
but wants to,
wants to, yes, belch ground glass shivering through his quota
skin.

Bird in Flight—Nancy Ekholm



regional professional theatre, the public -and survival

"The majority of the public would rather come and see Jeffrey Lynn live than Clark Gable in a can."

The Fred Miller Theatre in Milwaukee is one of the nation's few regional (non-Broadway) professional repertory theatres. A 346-seat arena playhouse, technically well-equipped and notably tasteful in decor, the Miller Theatre represents a bold, affirmative stroke on behalf of live theatre. Now in its fourth year of production, its battle for survival has significance beyond its own four walls: such locally directed professional enterprises are the key to the long-awaited development of a flourishing national theatre. The following is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted by Edward L. Kamarck, Director of the UW Wisconsin Idea Theatre with Mrs. Mary John, founder and director of the Fred Miller Theatre, and Miss Thelma Boalbey, who supervises public relations for the organization.

MR. KAMARCK: The relationship of your professional theatre to the community of Milwaukee is what we want to focus on first. Actually, you began to put roots into the community even during your initial fund-raising drive, didn't you, Mrs. John?

MRS. JOHN: We raised the funds out of the community. About 700 volunteer workers collected money from about 5,500 people to make a grand total of $116,000. In other words, we were not sponsored by, say, ten or twelve businessmen. This was a community project right from the beginning, and we have continued

this with the Fred Miller Theatre League. The League is made up of about 125 volunteer women, many of whom became interested during the fund campaign, enjoyed the sense of participation, and have continued to help us in many ways since.

MR. KAMARCK: Through your Governing Board and your Advisory Council you also have strong roots into the community. Isn't that so?

MRS. JOHN: Yes, that's true. The Board of Trustees is made up of people such as Norman Klug, president of the Miller Brewery, Anthony Von Wening, Chairman of the Board of the Froedtert Corporation, and Jack Puelicher, executive vice-president of the Marshall and Ilsley Bank—to name a few. On the Advisory Council we have people like Dr. Johnson, president of Milwaukee–Downer College, Dr. Klotsche, provost of The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and Reverend Stimpson. We try to maintain representation from the business, educational, and religious interests.

MR. KAMARCK: With these very strong ties do you feel that people have accepted the theatre as part of their community?

MISS BOALBEY: Yes, I think they've accepted it, and I think they trust the whole project because many of the top civic leaders are serving as advisors and counselors. I do feel, however, that though we can entice audiences to the doors in the spirit of community support, once they sit in the theatre seat the proof of the pudding is still what we have to offer on the stage.

MR. KAMARCK: Fundamentally, you have to prove your worth every time the curtain goes up?

MISS BOALBEY: Positively. But I think we have an edge, compared, say, to the Broadway market. On Broadway when you put your dollar down at the box office counter and the play is

horrible, you may deliberately avoid that particular producing outfit in the future. But in our operation if audiences see a show they don't like (and when you're trying to please a whole community with a variety of tastes, you occasionally miss with certain people), they still give us another chance. They don't feel that we hoodwinked them into coming. They believe, I think very sincerely, that we just missed the boat on that production. But they don't desert us, because we *are community-rooted.*

MR. KAMARCK: Have you ever considered the possibility of also relating your theatre to the whole state of Wisconsin?

MISS BOALBEY: But definitely. We have theatre parties that come in from all over. Every Wednesday and Saturday matinee we'll have groups from Madison and from Green Bay, for instance. They come in by bus and have lunch next door. They get a tour of the theatre and a fifteen-minute talk, usually from Mrs. John, about how the theatre got started. We're spreading the word. And we are excited to find the distance that groups have come to our theatre from all over the state.

MR. KAMARCK: You mentioned the variety of tastes in Milwaukee. What effect does this have in determining your playbill?

MISS BOALBEY: When you have a community like Milwaukee, which is pretty large, you're catering to an enormous variety of tastes just as you do in New York. In other words, we aren't a town of 10,000; we are a very large community of a million or more. This makes for a problem. Compare our situation to the Braves [professional baseball team in Milwaukee]. They have it easy. There's nobody who will say, "Well, I prefer a base hit to a home run." Everybody wants a grand-slam homer. Now, everybody doesn't want Ibsen, everybody doesn't want Shaw. In baseball we all know the ground rules, and we all feel that the umpire is wrong when he decides against us. So, you don't have the problem of multiple taste. People only have to like baseball. But we have to try to cater to some people who want

only comedies, some people who want more of something else. In a way, we have to guess at what will sell. We have to be smart to stay in business. A lot of people say: "Isn't it too bad you have to be so commercial and cater to people's taste?" I don't think it's so bad. We've got to sell out our theatre. I hold the opinion that if all the people want to see a little comedy like *Bell, Book, and Candle,* then maybe it's our function to give them *Bell, Book, and Candle.* You see, I somehow disagree with the crusaders. And the reason is that I think we have a public here who will occasionally support a more serious play if we give them a chance to see it well done. *Member of the Wedding,* a very different kind of play, sold out here. And *The Corn is Green* and *The Little Foxes,* neither of them comedies, were our two top grossers last year. So we don't have to get worried that all they will ever tolerate are little comedies.

MR. KAMARCK: To what degree do you feel that over the years—this, of course, has to be thought of as a long-term thing—you can gradually educate your public's tastes?

MISS BOALBEY: Well, I do know that along that line we want to do what we did this year, and that is present a play like *Ghosts* by Ibsen. And I think we can continue to do them even though we know there are few people who want to see them. I've heard many people say, "We want to go to the theatre to be entertained, we want to laugh." Now maybe if they've seen enough good plays, ten years from now they might be willing to come and cry. I do feel that we should have the courage to be able to present a play like *Ghosts* on a very serious theme.

MRS. JOHN: Regarding whether or not we should do classics, I think that the artist's point of view should be considered. When we include some worthy plays in our season, we attract a better group of artists. And I mean not necessarily stars. I also mean companywise and directorily. Our company and staff like to work in an atmosphere which can be creatively satisfying to them. And I feel that to fulfill our richest obligation to our community, we must always have satisfied, happy artists. In order to do that I feel we must include fine plays.

MISS BOALBEY: Can I add a point there, though? There was nothing sadder in the world than our entire crew as they looked at the empty houses during *Ghosts*. No matter how great their artistic satisfaction, I have never known a stage manager, or a director, or a star like Eva Le Gallienne that didn't say, "How's the house tonight?" That's the most frequent question I'm ever asked. And with *Ghosts* the company was absolutely confident that it had an artistic triumph. *Ghosts* was artistically, I think, impeccable in its production, direction, and acting. But still that haunting question and those sad long faces of our entire professional staff because the public didn't respond.

MRS. JOHN: Yes, that's true. I think there is something else that should be brought out, though. There are great differences among the classics. Some classics may go better than other classics. Another thing that must be recognized—one of our problems here—concerns the availability and interest of stars in doing certain plays. Now we definitely wanted Miss Le Gallienne, but the only Ibsen play that she was willing to do at this time was *Ghosts*—which didn't give us much choice. When we're relying on stars (and we're relying on many), and on schedules, and on agents, it makes a definite difference in some of the things we come up with.

MR. KAMARCK: You feel that it's important to have stars for each of your productions?

MRS. JOHN: I feel most decidedly it is. And this was one of the decisions that was made before we even had a penny in the bank. And it resulted partly from an evaluation of the community and discussions with many people. When I talked with businessmen, I know that as soon as I mentioned stars their interest was far greater. But when I talked about a resident company, they didn't know what that meant. They wanted to know, particularly, what an arena theatre was. I had to sell that first. And when I tried to explain a resident company, this just didn't make sense at all to them. It sounded too much like some

of the community theatres we have in Milwaukee (and we have some fine ones). But the difference wasn't apparent enough. They didn't know what *we* would have to offer beyond that which was here already.

MR. KAMARCK: The concept of professionalism for the public seems to be associated with stars?

MRS. JOHN: Exactly.

MR. KAMARACK: Do you find that the more well known the star, the greater impact he has on your box office?

MISS BOALBEY: No question! Particularly if you back them up with the vehicle! A perfect example is Eva Le Gallienne in *The Corn is Green.* I think the first season Miss Le Gallienne sold because of her big name in theatre. People recognized it, and they felt they were privileged to come and see her. And she hadn't appeared in Milwaukee for quite a while. On the other hand, we take that same name potential and put her in a marginal play like *Ghosts,* and they didn't come. But I say, give the star an even break with the vehicle, and the public will come out. I think we could have put Ethel Waters in almost anything and had a tremendous box office. We spent many, many hours evaluating "how big is a name," to the point where I will actually stand down on the street corner and say, "Have you ever heard of Chester Morris?"

MR. KAMARCK: In other words, a star that is well known in theatre circles may not necessarily be well known as far as the public is concerned?

MISS BOALBEY: We had, for instance, a question about one of the hottest names in the trade—Geraldine Page. She is probably one of the most highly respected actors' actresses—as we say musicians' musician—and our big question, naturally, was: is

she known to the man on the street? And the big thrill to us was that she was. Fortunately for us she had had enormous publicity just before she appeared—a life story printed nationally and articles about her fast rise to stardom. Also she had made a movie with John Wayne called *Hondo* which I had never heard of, but this made her familiar to a lot of people "out in the sticks," which is where we are. There's no question that she's a big draw in New York to the trade. We gambled on whether she would also be well known out here. We gambled and won.

MR. KAMARCK: Many people regard John Gielgud as the greatest actor in the English language. Would the public in Milwaukee know about him?

MISS BOALBEY: Oh, unquestionably! I would consider John Gielgud a top-drawer name. Now, whether or not we could find a vehicle for Mr. Gielgud would be our problem, but not whether or not we could sell him. I'd love the chance.

MR. KAMARCK: You mentioned that we're "in the sticks" here in Milwaukee. How would you evaluate tastes in Milwaukee as compared to New York?

MISS BOALBEY: Well, I'm a New Yorker. I think there's no doubt that artistic tastes here are much less cosmopolitan. It's all a question of opportunity. Naturally you have an educated public for good theatre in New York. The exposure has been greater. Just as I think Milwaukee has a somewhat higher taste now because it has been exposed to a professional theatre for three years. I know for a fact that there are Milwaukeeans who have been in this theatre who had never seen a live play before.

MRS. JOHN: I don't feel that we are "out in the sticks," but I do personally think that there has been a great cultural dearth in Milwaukee, and I think part of it is because truly dedicated

cultural leaders were absent from the community. No artistic project can exist without a leader. Studies that I made showed that we apparently had very strong leaders in our fields of health and other community-betterment programs, but leaders in cultural life were virtually nonexistent. As a result cultural projects have had trouble getting off the ground here, and Milwaukee has suffered for it.

MR. KAMARCK: Of course, these days it is said that mass media like television tend to equalize cultural opportunity. What kind of impact do you feel that the fine plays that television has presented, and the many outstanding actors and actresses that television has exposed to the whole country, are having on people in terms of their tastes and understanding?

MISS BOALBEY: I think it has made a more selective public, in the same way that any exposure makes people more selective. Of course, television is constantly trying to top itself, and this could be the death of it. You show people an hour and a half of the world's most expensive artists in one television evening, and then the next night you try to go it one better. Eventually what are you going to have left to show people? This reflects on us in our operation. In a way, audiences expect us to get bigger and more selective. I think television makes for a real challenge to the producers of live entertainment.

MR. KAMARCK: Do you feel that television could ruin people's interest in live theatre?

MRS. JOHN: I don't think so. People know when they're in a live theatre, and there is still that magic of seeing actors in person and seeing them close and hearing their real voices. People seem to understand some of our problems and don't say to us, "Why haven't you got Marilyn Monroe?" A few do, but the majority of the public would rather come and see Jeffrey Lynn live than Clark Gable in a can.

MR. KAMARCK: Apparently you must be right, since live theatre is still flourishing. A number of theatre critics would have us believe that television is actually increasing people's interest in live theatre. And some critics actually go so far as to state that television has caused a very real renaissance in theatre—particularly professional theatre. Do you feel this is true?

MISS BOALBEY: Not on Broadway. Quite the opposite. The only renaissance that is going on in New York is off Broadway, and they were forced off Broadway because Broadway's too expensive. So they go to a little filthy, broken-down firetrap because they're dying for a creative outlet. And they stay open two or three months, and it's eventually closed by a fire commissioner because it had been condemned twenty years earlier. That, to me, is not any upsurge of creative artistry. It's a squeezing out of that same talent which would have been on Broadway if Broadway producing prices had been reasonable. This is not a renaissance. It's a shift in location of where the plays are being produced.

MRS. JOHN: Absolutely! I've gone up to some of these rooftop theatres, and that is the name of one of them: The Rooftop Theatre. You take an elevator that you think will never get there, and once you get up there you're sure you'll never get out. It's fantastic. And there is no question but what the commercialism that has invaded Broadway is almost putting the artists out of business. That's why we're so lucky out here, because we can try to be an amalgamation of the Broadway commercialism and the off-Broadway artistry.

MR. KAMARCK: There's no doubt that historically you represent a very significant kind of development. People have been talking for years about decentralizing the professional theatre, bringing it out into the country among the people. And you are a top-level professional theatre doing exactly that, and apparently making a go of it. But there is one factor that we cannot neglect here, and that is that Broadway theatre for all its unhealthy as-

pects is still the creative heart and at the very forefront of experimentation in American theatre. And for you to really fulfill your destiny here, you've got to move gradually into this creative role, too. You've got to experiment, do new plays; figuratively put yourself on the firing line.

MISS BOALBEY: I agree wholeheartedly that our ultimate objective should be to strive toward something that is uniquely creative, in addition to just having the doors open. But the important point is that first we've got to become financially solvent. That is so important. Dozens of groups such as ours have failed because they've started doing ten new plays, ten classics, and then the money ran out. They didn't keep the doors open long enough to get anything significantly creative done. Now, actually, all we've been attempting to do so far is to get financially established.

MR. KAMARCK: You're taking first things first. You're getting yourself solidly organized first and gradually you plan to raise your sights.

MISS. BOALBEY: That's right.

MRS. JOHN: And maybe our public will move in that direction with us, but we want to give them the feeling of security, of knowing that we're going to be here next year. And we do that by pleasing some of their tastes right now, and then if they come along with us and keep us financially solid, we can afford to become more experimental.

the new man in the arts[1]

"There is abroad in the world a passion for participation."

by Jacques Barzun

The most salient fact in the artistic culture of this country since 1930 is the rise of the amateur. This may well be part of a broad change of habit and outlook throughout Western society, but I am at the moment solely concerned with the American scene. Our reality is symbolized by the fact that we have a President who paints and who followed in office an amateur pianist. Their predecessor, who came to the White House in 1933, belonged culturally to the old order of things: he only collected postage stamps.

Painting and music are, almost of necessity, the chief arts in which the new amateur flourishes. There is in the first place a tradition connecting leisure with the practice of these particular arts. This tradition, in turn, is implied in their forms of being: in both arts the activity and the thing to show for it are easily manageable and domesticated. One can play or paint for oneself and for friends. It is hard to imagine amateur writing, for instance, ever becoming similarly acceptable. Rather few people enjoy the act of literary composition for itself alone, and almost none can endure the reading of manuscripts. It is notorious that editors and publishers have to be paid to stand it. For other obvious reasons architecture is not a satisfactory avocation; and sculpture and the dance, though possible, are beset with more

[1] Reprinted with permission of the author from *The American Scholar* (Autumn, 1956), pp. 437–444.

practical difficulties for the unassuming citizen than music and painting.

We thus have hordes of amateur musicians, quantities of amateur painters, whose principal recreation has already had the effect of changing America's attitude toward art in general. What is notable about the last two Presidents' toying with the muses is not so much the fact itself as the casualness with which it is universally received. Art is seen to be compatible with manliness, on the one hand, and with serious business—indeed with affairs of state—on the other. The fine arts are acquiring the respectability of fishing and golf.

It may, of course, be argued that most of the amateur work in music and painting is the merest dabbling and is to be called "art" only by courtesy; and resemblance is fortuitous and would seem to be purely external. But the disparity between the various degrees of amateurism and "true art" must not be overdone. There are many disciplined amateurs. And that the new addiction to music and painting is not all make-believe is shown by the tremendous increase in the sales of good music on discs and in the attendance at museums. The same people, it is reasonable to suppose, paint and see exhibitions, or play and listen to recorded performers.

These facts bear witness to the development of what we may call a "taste"—if we use the word in its neutral sense—a habit of contemplation having for its object masterpieces in a great variety of styles. For by now, the long-playing record has expanded musical choice to very nearly the limits of the conceivable repertory; and the public museums are hospitable to nearly every type of artifact from primitive to contemporary. With reproductions added to the stock, the new connoisseur can satisfy his craving or curiosity like a housewife in a supermarket.

This is not to say that every amateur possesses an encyclopedic appetite—far from it. The tendency is rather toward specialty

and voluntary limitation in individual tastes; but these taken together give the spectacle of a large popular audience choosing at will from the available riches of the world in two eloquent and abundant arts.

At this point it is necessary to forestall the confusion that might arise from the term "popular audience." It does not mean the same thing as "mass audience"; and the mass audience itself is not, as we tend to imagine, equivalent to the whole of the adult population. When we speak of the movies as a mass medium, we mean that its products reach perhaps one-third of the people in any one week, and figures tell us further that the majority of these viewers are children and adolescents. Again, when we say that a periodical has a mass circulation, we have regard to its being printed in five or six million copies, which family use may bring before the eyes of some twenty million readers. These numbers all represent modest fractions of the whole, at the same time as they record only the probability of spiritual contact between the given object and the indicated citizen. Not every child or adult of the fifty million sees any one movie; not every one in the family circle reads any given articles in *Life* or *Look*. In other words, the figures by which we estimate the mass audience for either praise or blame are subtly deceiving: the reality eludes us, as always in statistics. We would be nearer the living truth if we visualized our movie-goers and our readers of magazines and comic books as broken up into diversified cliques, not to say elites.

The point of this digression into numbers is that the new vogue of high art in America need not be universal and ubiquitous to qualify as popular. Nothing is in fact ubiquitous; every taste, high and low, falls far short of the universal. What makes music and painting popular avocations today is that they are not the appanage of a group, class, or profession. It is true that the devotees of these arts tend to concentrate in large cities and near academic institutions. But other things converge there too for social reasons which underlie the fabric of our lives, not merely

the avocations that interest us. To put the same thing differently, there is no way of predicting which American one meets will turn out to be an amateur musician or painter, which of them a collector of records or art books. But that in any gathering there will be more than one is likely.

Thirty years ago the chance of such an encounter was rare. A sudden flush of pleasure greeted the discovery that Mr. X, a business or professional man, was "keen about art." It meant, usually, that he bought original paintings or was on the board of the orchestral society. He was a patron, and hence a rich man, who consorted mainly with his fellow buyers and storers of foreign art. Now the breed has been democratized, largely by technological means: discs are excellent and cheap and so are reproductions of works of art. It is no more surprising to run into a stranger well supplied with both, despite his modest means, than it was surprising thirty years ago to find a man owning a collection of books. It is the bookish man who may in the future become the rare surprise if music and painting continue their inroads. But at this moment, with the vogue of paperbacks still high, it has ceased to be true (as it was for Matthew Arnold) that the United States is "the most common-schooled but least cultivated" nation on earth.

The new amateur, then, is very much a product of industry and social equality. But he is also moved by more obscure forces. Why, with the world's great artists mechanically at his beck and call, does he want to paint or play, as we say, personally? Why do communities increasingly prefer to be entertained by unprofessional talent nearby and even entrust their bare walls, private or public, to the perilous brush of the modern primitive in their midst?

The clearest answer to this last question only removes the difficulty a little way: it is that one feels on all sides a growing community spirit which relishes what is local and of the group. Further causes are speculative: the family unit has perhaps been

replaced by this larger aggregate. Again, the greater leisure and the desire to supplement the life of livelihood with the life of self-cultivation impel people into community enterprises. And what once might have been a religious endeavor is now secularized, taking the form of art, which for a century and a half has been the religion of the intellectual.

There is, finally, a strong economic inducement. With the wide extension of the living wage and the union rule, the price of professional services has become unapproachable for all but corporations. The patron who formerly gave himself or his principality the luxury of a permanent orchestra could, today, barely afford an occasional flute solo. And in addition to the expense is the trouble in a crowded world of arranging anything at a distance. It is easier to paint one's own murals than to ascertain and commission the best man for the money available. It would be simpler for a group of laymen to reproduce the Sistine ceiling from memory than to secure, insure, house, hand, open, and ship back a loan exhibit. "Let's do it all ourselves" is the spontaneous answer to the "problem of communication." And doing it ourselves, together, assuages at the same time the anguish of isolation that many people feel in modern life. Thus do we return, after centuries of straining individualism, to self-sufficiency in common on the village green.

But none of this touches the first of the two questions: What impels a person who is absolutely free of pretensions about art and of illusions about himself to perform as a solitary amateur? Here individualism undoubtedly survives, but in a democratic guise. The earlier, competitive individualism said: Careers are open to talent; let genius disclose itself. The modern kind says: Each man has some slight ability worth exercising; let him develop it for his own limited joy. I have elsewhere tried to give an idea of the many forms which contemporary musical talent takes in this country and tried to relate the new amateur in music to the conditions of trade and training which encouraged his activities.[2] The determining cause seems to be that there is

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[2] *Music in American Life* (New York, Doubleday and Company, 1956).

more genuine talent than disposition to support, or even to witness it in the old way. With the passing of the class system there also went something of the mild subordination needed for being a spectator. There is abroad in the world a passion for participation. This is so true that we have made the noun an absolute term, applicable to the demands of the kindergarten, the crown colony, or the self-taught timpanist.

The new pride, at any rate, is not in being or becoming a great artist, or even in passing for an artist in any sense; it is the pride and the right of taking part in the general, anonymous, collective life of the spirit through art. "I, too, am a painter," was said by Correggio in emulation of Raphael; it could be said by John Doe in emulation of his President, and it would be a corollary to their common citizenship. This does not prevent the more perceptive and disciplined of the amateurs from "participating" in another sense, through an ever more intimate knowledge of the thoughts and emotions they encounter in the works of the masters. As a less-than-literate dentist who was a remarkable viola player said to me after doing his part in Beethoven's Opus 127: "When I play I feel I'm cosharing the mind of the composer."

Also present in the amateur's zeal is an impatience with the ready-made in its commercial aspect, with technique in the wholly modern sense of slickness. It is, of course, a sound artistic instinct to prefer spontaneity to routine and strong intent to mindlessness. For many years now, competition in all the artistic trades has enforced a professionalism of detail at the expense of idea. To succeed, everybody has had to exhibit the standard virtuoso tricks, rather than the virtuosity which may at times be a relevant effect. But the penalty of tricks is that by repetition they tire the beholder even when he is too ignorant to know in what they consist. The amateur certainly is unable to reproduce them, but he knows that he wants freshness, and he knows where to obtain it, of the most artless kind.

The upshot of these motives is indeed an artless art, and a use of past art that is also artless. I refer to the great greedy consumption of the good things of the past, which I cannot help seeing also as a kind of dissipation of their meaning. We have so often been told, and quite rightly, that art is for use, that we use it up. This appears not alone in our careless dealings with profusion, nor in the rapid succession of vogues, nor in the diminished attention to any one thing which necessarily follows, but in our heedless mixing of one purpose with another. When masterpieces of painting advertise canned goods or when the excellences of music preside over the opening of a soda fountain, the objectionable part is not that greatness is degraded by the commonplace; it is that a symbol of life has been reduced to a trivial sign: the "Mona Lisa" stands for "quality," regardless of the object; the Mendelssohn "Midsummer Night" music means only that a thoughtful management has provided pleasant noise for the ear as well as pleasant color for the eye. The degradation is not in the use but in the nonuse. The use would be to stop and look, to sit and listen, whether or not the occasion was noble.

If we are so much at ease that we cannot be brought to attend, excepting only when we have our little amateur ax to grind, the chances are that our role is other than we conceive it to be. Possibly we are unconscious agents in a necessary task of annihilation, pounding to bits and scattering the elements of our entire artistic heritage since the Renaissance. I am more and more coming to think this a prerequisite to any future greatness we shall achieve in art. It may, of course, be that we shall grind our treasure into dust and starve our talents in one and the same operation. More probably, the new democratic amateur is disseminating the feel and taste of artistic experience while emptying art itself of its overwhelming substance. The result should in time be a generation of young men broken in to a vocabulary but unhampered by a message. In recent years, lacking the salutary breaks in tradition which catastrophes brought about in less historical-minded times, it has been the weight of meaning and symbolic force of five centuries of art that have paralyzed the newcomers.

The present situation is in any case thrilling by its ambiguity—much culture and much ado about it, a democratic carelessness lavishing a cornucopia of artistic products and proficiencies upon indiscriminate uses, and no proportionate means of sustaining creation. As chief nobility, there is the amateur with his Friday-night violin case or Sunday box of paints. And to one side is the other eloquent art, the literary, squeezed in the crowd of visual and mechanical competitors and beginning to suspect that words no longer penetrate, yet seeing year by year the number of poets —young and difficult—multiply. There, too, attrition by numbers is at work; the professional is hard to distinguish from the sanguine amateur, both doing their share of termite's work, clearing the ground for the future—a disaster first and then a boon.

America has been awaiting her great artists for a long while. They have had a way, so far, of turning up suddenly in our past, having remained incognito in our present and inconceivable in our future. Forty years ago G. K. Chesterton, speaking of an American who waited for a compatriot Shakespeare, called the expectancy "a hobby more patient than angling." Today the hope can no longer be for one supreme specimen to arise in the normal way. It must be for a whole generation of men once more fired with greatness in diverse degrees and able to embody it freely because little or nothing shall then stand in their way. I am no prophet and would decline the office if tendered, but I venture to name without comment three things whose lack seems to me still to hinder the production of great art in our society. Their presence would not be enough by itself, but these I think we must have:

One, better talk about art—that is, less small talk among amateurs, and less pedantry among "men of ideas"; a more flexible, richer, stronger vocabulary of criticism; and a truce to self-consciousness about likes, dislikes, "positions," and philosophies.

Two, a freer atmosphere for the outgoing affections—from admiration to sexual love. This means less, far less, regimentation—

not only by society but by cliques and by "ideas"—of whatever belongs to the erotic sphere. If we were easy on this score there would not be so much low- and high-grade pornography. Pruriency is a vice of cold blood, a form of negation. Now the freedom of dissent must always be defended, but there is another freedom, that of the generous passions, which needs protection inside ourselves. Perhaps the way to put it is that everyone should care less so as to enable everyone to care more.

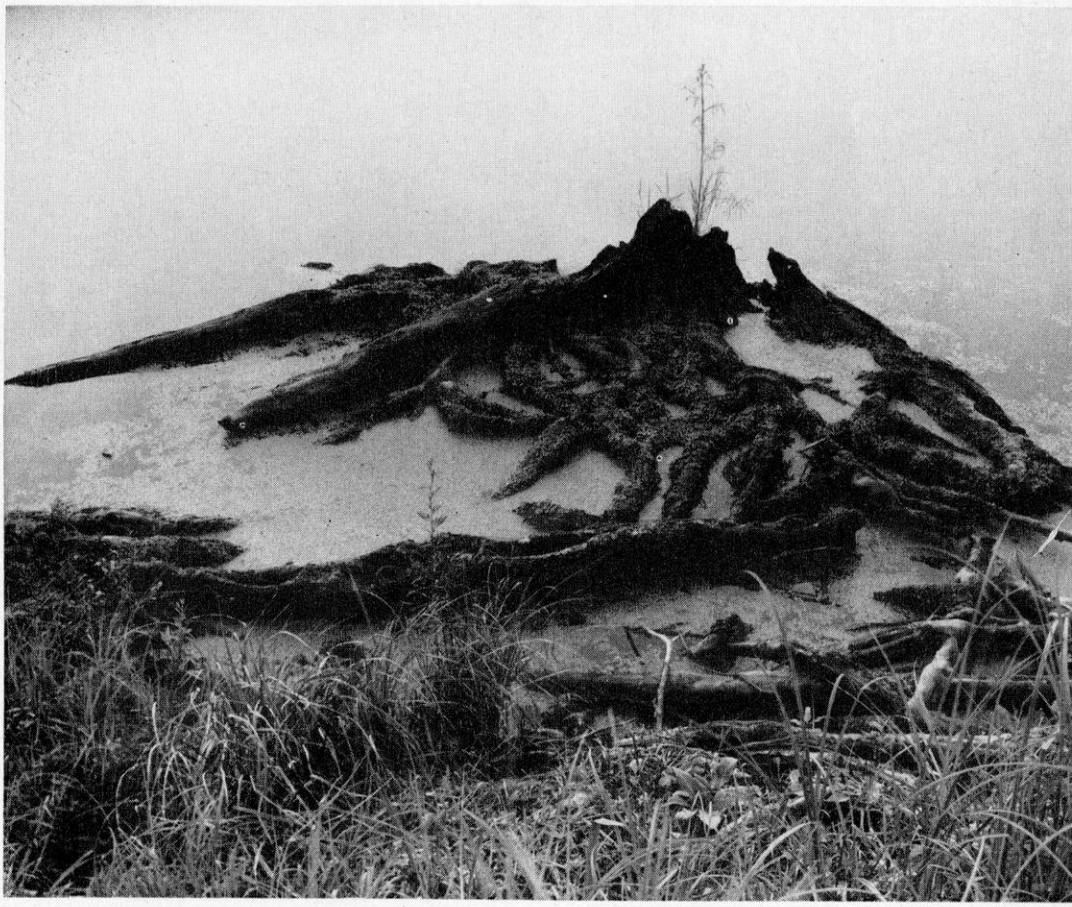
Three, bigger houses. The average American family house—three bedrooms and two baths—contents itself with twelve hundred square feet of space. No sense of scale, abstract or concrete, can develop in such a cubicle. You disbelieve this at your peril, for skepticism here breeds loss of perception. Read in Mill's *Autobiography* the effect on his spirit of first going into a large and noble dwelling after a youth spent in a puritan, almost an American, suburb.

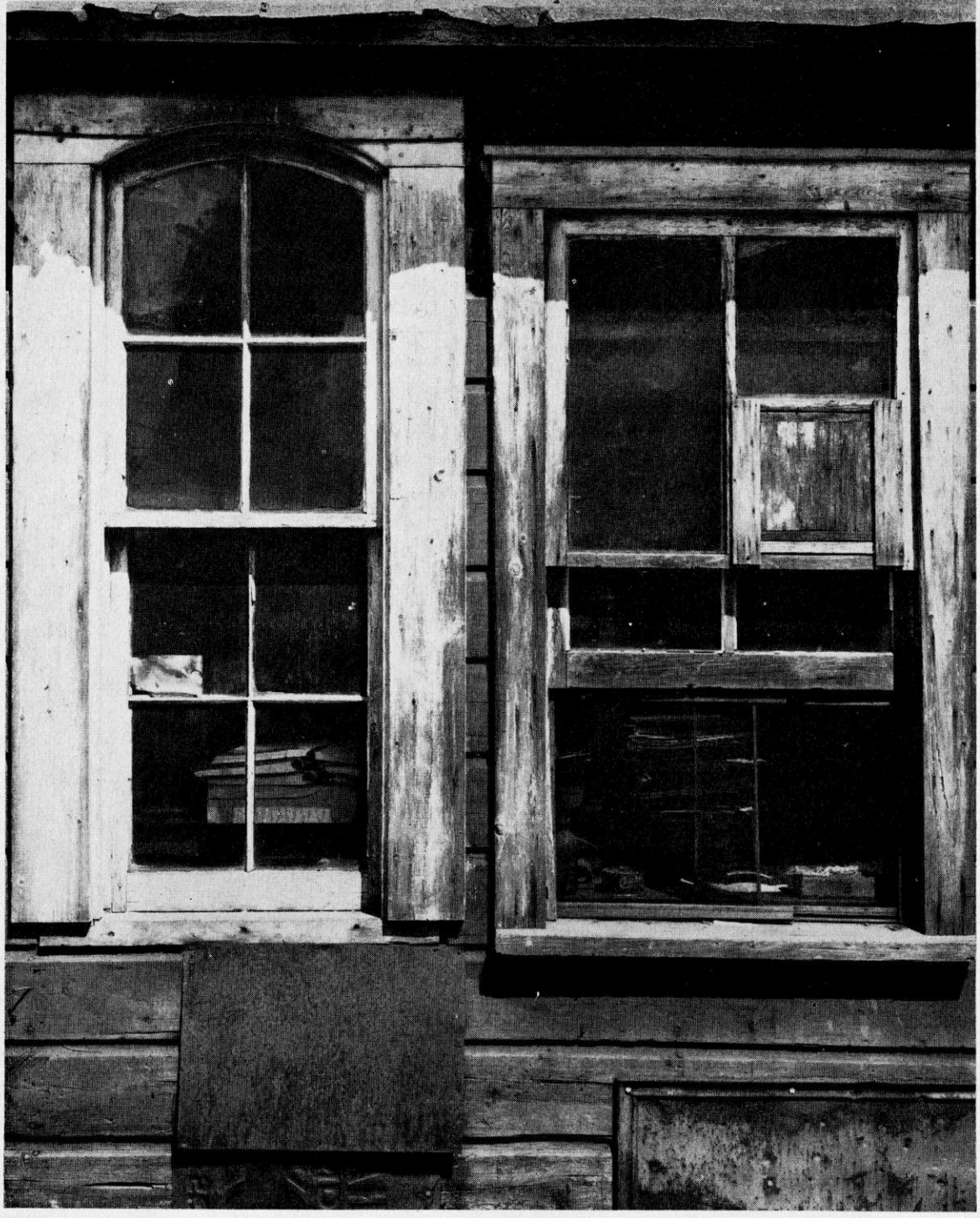
In every age what the House of Art has most needed is many mansions.

Jacques Barzun, Dean of the Graduate Faculties of Columbia University, is author of The Teacher in America, Romanticism and the Modern Ego, *and other books in cultural history and education. He is on the editorial boards of* The Magazine of Art *and* The American Scholar.

a portfolio of photographs

by Cameron Macauley





the whistler[1]

by R. W. Stallman

My dear, go ring that curtain down,
For I must play the whistling clown.

Your mask wears thin. Your other face
Shows beneath the clown's grimace.

Why damn the clown for doubleness?
All men wear motley more or less,
Because what matters is what shows.
We mask because we can't disclose.

A whistler with a double air,
It's my whistling yours echoes there!

Your trick's to whistle there unseen.
Go whistle from behind that screen!

What if I screamed the secret out?
Could you outwhistle all my screams?

Whistling isn't what it seems.
That's what my whistling's all about.

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[1] Reprinted from *Botteghe Oscure,* Vol. VIII (1951).

sociology and aesthetics

by Don Martindale

Then the first thing will be to establish a censorship of the writers of fiction, and let the censors receive any tale of fiction which is good, and reject the bad; and we will desire mothers and nurses to tell their children the authorized ones only. Let them fashion the mind with such tales, even more fondly than they would the body with their hands; but most of those which are now in use must be discarded.[1]

This passage from *The Republic* raises issues that lend significance to the kind of analysis we designate as the "sociology of art." It was Plato's view that art and society bear a most intimate relation to one another. He viewed art as an "instrument" of education, something which could "transform" society. He believed that art has the obligation of portraying the "good," that it has what we now call a "truth function." In much the same spirit he labeled many works of art "dangerous" even though they were considered invaluable by the society of his day. He urged that all musical instruments be banned other than the lyre, the flute, and the shepherd's pipe.[2] Only simple music should be permitted, music which cultivates simplicity and nobility of the soul.[3] Tragedy and comedy, being mere "imitations," should be excluded.[4] And as for the actor:

When any one of these pantomimic gentlemen, who are so clever that they can imitate anything, comes to us and makes a proposal to exhibit himself

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[1] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by B. Jowett (New York: Modern Library, n.d.) pp. 72–73.

[2] *Ibid., op. cit.*, p. 102.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

and his poetry, we will fall down and worship him as a sweet and holy and wonderful being; but we must also inform him that in our State such as he are not permitted to exist; the law will not allow them.[5]

Many religions of the world, while at times fostering certain forms of art, like Plato, have viewed the artist with suspicion and his product with ambivalence. A few familiar examples from our religious history illustrate this. In the fundamental sections of ancient Hebraic law we find the prescription:

You shall not carve any idols for yourselves, the shape of anything in heaven above or on the earth below or in the sea; you shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I the Eternal, your God, am a jealous God.[6]

Granting that this prescription was aimed primarily at the cultic objects of competitive religions, the attitude expressed included all plastic and pictorial representations whatsoever. This injunction severely restricted the development of plastic and pictorial art forms in ancient Palestine. This constituted, furthermore, a heritage not only for Judaism but for Islam and Christianity as well. The church itself was never completely indiscriminate in its reception of the arts, and during periods of intense religiosity it was swept with radical conoclasm and ascetic renunciation of worldly temptations of art. Suspicion of the arts on the part of the Protestant sects is well known and requires no reiteration here. At times they have even forbidden multicolored clothing. Fundamentalist religious groups still retain a strong suspicion of aesthetic experience. It is often considered "sensuous" and sinful, and the artist himself is viewed as the epitomy of Godlessness.

Nor is this peculiar to the "religious attitude." There are echoes of Plato in the suspicions of art held by totalitarians of today.

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[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

[6] *Exodus* 20:4 (Moffatt translation, New York: Harper, 1935).

The Nazis violently condemned what they called "decadent Jewish art" and encouraged, as an element of state policy, a "truly German," "truly Aryan" art. Similarly, Russia has developed its own definitions of permissable art. "True" Russian art is distinguished from "decadent capitalist" and "decadent democratic" art. The aesthetic is viewed in both the German and Russian situations as a social force, potentially dangerous, but a potent instrument in the hands of the state.

The problems raised by Plato have significance beyond the reach of political or religious institutions. Are the movies and other popular arts morally degenerative influences? Is training in the classical arts a morally elevating influence? Are developments in modern painting socially destructive? Is the artist a moral pervert, a political radical? These and similar questions indicate that the Platonic formulations are by no means out-of-date.

The Aesthetic and the Social

The more or less continuous discussion from the days of classical Greece to the present, of the relation of art to the social order is, clearly, eminently worthy of study. It is not in any way a purely "academic" issue. The artist has been alternately praised and damned, lavished with the highest honors and rewards of society, persecuted and ostracized. Fortunes have been made from the works of artists who died in poverty and disgrace.

In the very act of posing the problem we acknowledge a difference between "aesthetic" phenomena and those we call "social." When we speak of the tension that may develop between what is customary and what is artistic, between art and religion, or between art and political institutions, we indicate that "aesthetic" phenomena must be in some way unique. In fact, all arguments as to the dangers of art presuppose that the aesthetic experience is not a purely secondary or derivative phenomenon.

Let us refer, provisionally, to the "social" as the collective, interactional life of men. By social behavior we mean what men do in response to each other.[7] Social behavior is not simply "sociable" behavior, however, for it includes all things men do with respect to one another. It includes fighting and making love, working together for common ends, or competing for the same prize.[8] And human social behavior is made immeasurably more subtle, plastic, and complex than animal behavior, of course, by the presence of language.[9] Aesthetic behavior is a subcategory of what we have called social behavior.

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, behavior has been analyzed into four or five elements which, taken together, constitute its "structure." Behavior—action relating one individual to another (or to a thing)—is analyzable into four elements: (1) the

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[7] Of course, social behavior includes more than human social behavior. Social behavior may be defined generally as the interbehavior of creatures of the same type, or in mutual stimulus and response to one another, whether it be dogs or men or insects. Since we are not concerned with the technical problem involved, we may accept Mead's definition: "A social act may be defined as one in which the occasion or stimulus which sets free an impulse is found in the character or conduct of a living form that belongs to the proper environment of the living form whose impulse it is." George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 7

[8] When we say that they interact as men, we intend simply to exclude behavior toward another individual as a mere object, for example, jostling in a crowd, which may have reciprocal social significance. On the other hand, social meaning may be extended to nature, as when one curses the hammer that smashes a finger. Mead states, "The physical object is an abstraction which we make from the social response to nature. We talk to nature; we address the clouds, the sea, the tree; we carry over a thinking process into nature, we are making nature rational. It acts as it is expected to act." *Ibid.*, p. 184. Weber urges: "Action is social, insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course." Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 88.

[9] Here we take language to mean simply an ordered system of signs, making possible mutual orientation of action. See Mead for one account.

disposition of the creature to act—a purpose, impulse, motive, instinct, etc.; (2) a means—the instrument of action; (3) an end, or value; and sometimes, (4) its consequences—which may or may not represent achievement of the value involved. Let us examine each of these.

For a time, social scientists envisioned the possibility of identifying the aesthetic as a "disposition to act" based on emotions such as hate, love, ambition, greed, and generosity. Had they succeeded in classifying behavior in terms of a fixed set of such instincts, attitudes or wishes, we would, indeed, have an invaluable method for analysis of the aesthetic. It would be an "impulse" of some sort or a secondary consequence of a primary impulse in action.[10]

But is there something which may be designated an "aesthetic" impulse or an "aesthetic need"? Presumably, there are two methods of answering this question. The first is experimental analysis of individuals displaying such an impulse,[11] while the alternative method is to make a comparative analysis to demonstrate

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[10] Lester Ward, among others, postulated an aesthetic impulse. Ward suggests that it is traceable in the animal organism at least as far back as the protozoa. It develops through three stages: the receptive, the imaginative, and the creative. Primitive art is conventionalized because of the incompetence and lack of imagination. Lester F. Ward, *Dynamic Sociology*, Vol. I (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1910), pp. 431–432, 434. Thomas and Znaniecki try to account for it among their four wishes as the wish for new experience. See W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Boston: Richard G. Gadger, Gorham Press, 1918), introductory notes to Vols. I, III. These, of course, are merely two representative sociological attempts to account for the aesthetic experience in this fashion.

[11] The experimental aesthetics of G. T. Fechner, expressed in *Vorschule der Aesthetick*, however, take a different tack. Fechner searches not for an aesthetic impulse but treats the aesthetic as a branch of the study of pleasure and pain. By having subjects make choices of forms, by getting them to draw geometrical figures, and by measuring the proportions of things in everyday use, Fechner demonstrates that very long rectangles and perfect squares are displeasing. Most pleasing are rectangles constructed in the proportion he describes as the *golden section.*

the general presence of some "aesthetic" tendency. So far, however, evidence has been inconclusive. Everywhere, among all peoples, as soon as conditions of life have risen above the survival level, artistic embellishment and decorations of elements of daily life have appeared. However, there is no automatic or instinctive choice of a particular "aesthetic" evaluation, and one people's judgement may be wholly disagreeable to another.

The attempt to account for the aesthetic in terms of the "consequences" of behavior does not take us any further towards solution than the attempt to explain it in terms of some peculiar "impulse." Perhaps the most famous representation of this kind of the "aesthetic" is the identification, in Greek classical times, of the beautiful and the good. This approach often assumes that the aesthetic and the pleasant are identical and suggests that the pleasant is also the good. The difficulty inherent in all such views is apparent when the aesthetic is forced into a propagandistic role. Under such circumstances the aesthetic evaporates because neither the beautiful and good, nor the beautiful and the pleasant, can be satisfactorily equated with one another.

More rewarding than either of the above approaches to the aesthetic are attempts to account for it in terms of "means" and "ends." An extreme form of the attempt to define the aesthetic in terms of "means" is the interpretation of art as technique. That this by itself is unsatisfactory, however, is clear from the fact that mechanical perfection of technique itself is not enough. The technician is clearly not always aesthetically superior to the artist. Furthermore, the aesthetic cannot be exclusively conceived in terms of ends peculiar to it, even though some objects —poetry, musical compositions, painting and the like—are specifically produced for aesthetic purposes. The utilitarian object, spoon, vase, garment, or building may have significance in both aesthetic and nonaesthetic contexts. Nevertheless, interpretation of the aesthetic in terms of means and ends (or both) remains one of the more satisfactory analyses of the problem.

There are, however, aesthetic pleasures that lie beyond simple "means." A workman often takes pride in his skill, and spectators will gather to watch the rhythmic grace of a proletarian virtuoso in the execution of his tasks. The mechanical shovel tearing up the earth, a bulldozer leveling a hill, the erection of a steel skeleton for a new building, each attract and hold our interest. We take interest in the drama of a crisis or an accident. We respond to sunsets, springtime, rainbows, and ocean surf. In all of these we see, not something different from the arts, but the essence of the arts themselves. For art is the elevation and refinement of these very kinds of experience. The aesthetic represents a range of phenomena extending over a wide range of human experience and includes both natural and artificial objects. It includes the delight in the trill of a frog and the appreciation of a Bach fugue. It may include incidental delight in the affairs of everyday life, as well as the pleasure in contemplating an artistic masterpiece representing half a lifetime of labor.

The Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic

Our general understanding of the problem of the aesthetic can be advanced by turning aside for a moment to some related distinctions. How is the aesthetic to be differentiated from what we call "good," "useful," "pleasurable," or "true"?

The "good" is a conception we apply to certain orders of preference found in human behavior. Theories concerning an absolute good are based on the assumption that there is one such order of preference. Relativistic theories of good, on the other hand, assume that there are multiple and alternative orders of preference.[12] Theories of good which claim to rest on a theological basis, or those based on intuition (direct apprehension of the good) are attempts to legitimize one or another such system of

[12] If it be argued that we are equating good and preference, hence constructing a mere tautology, the answer is simply that "preference" is a less emotive term. Judgements of good occur in situations in the form of "I prefer," "I ought to prefer," and the like.

preferences. Although a system of preferences may include the true, the pleasant, the useful, in its hierarchy, the useful, pleasant, and true are not always considered "good." This indicates that they are in some measure quite distinct.[13]

It is useful to distinguish the "customary good" (systems of preference traditionally transmitted) from the "ideal good" (systems of good which serve to modify practice even though never fully realized). But our present aim is merely to distinguish the good from the aesthetic. This is important in view of the argument we frequently encounter which says that the good is beautiful, and the beautiful is good.

Aesthetic experiences, like ethical experiences, form systems of preference. If they did not, no meaning could be assigned to such concepts as "taste," "discrimination," and "judgement." It is precisely such terminology that invariably appears in aesthetic discussions. Moreover, it would be meaningless to award prizes in an art if there were no aesthetic "better" or "worse." Some such ordered arrangement of aesthetic value is implied in the very notion of "preference" itself.

A preference system, then, by its very nature, consists of an ordered arrangement of "better," "worse," "more," or "less." The core of the aesthetic lies in such comparative judgements. And such an ordered arrangement of our judgements presupposes principles or laws which form the basis for judgement, standards of taste, principles of a criticism, and the like. In a general way, we may say with respect to the values to which we apply these standards, that in a purely external fashion the "best" is that value which we will surrender last if we are forced to make a choice. The same general propositions hold for ethical as for aesthetic systems. We establish systems of reward and punishment as hierarchies of ethical preference, e.g., murder by "degrees."

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[13] *Valuation,* for us, means "placing in a system of preference."

Ethical and aesthetic systems are different types of preference systems. They differ in both the kind of values involved and in the principles for their realization. Most ethical systems fall into two general groups: those forming a hierarchy of "community" values, and those constituting a hierarchy of "individual" values. "Community" and "individual" are correlative concepts although they differ a great deal, as we readily see if we examine ethical systems which subordinate the individual to the community. On the other hand, aesthetic systems are hierarchies of values which are enjoyed for themselves. While the same event may involve both moral and aesthetic considerations, they are by no means identical. A beautiful woman, need we say, is not necessarily a good one. An immoral painting may be aesthetically far superior to one with a moral message. The attempt to subordinate the aesthetic to the moral arises from moral rather than aesthetic interests. Not infrequently does it lead to a degeneration of the aesthetic. Even though the moral activity of a community may produce phenomena upon which the aesthetic judgement operates, this in no way guarantees superior aesthetic character.

Elevation of the "practical" to primary significance does not in any way simplify the problem of the ethical and aesthetic. For the "practical" presupposes some system of values itself. They are simply taken for granted. In a simply homogeneous folk community, for instance, a system of ends is usually accepted without question by everyone. The "ethical" problem in such a situation is simply how to attain them practically. But where alternative ends appear, as in a complex society such as our own, "practicality" no longer provides a foolproof criterion for choice between them. In all complex communities, customary evaluations are constantly in conflict. For example, to anyone who accepts individual salvation as an ultimate aspiration, nothing is more "practical" than the organization of life around that goal. But to someone who does not accept individual salvation as a final value, nothing could be less "practical." In short, we cannot eliminate the problem of alternative ethics by ignoring it.

Should we, on the other hand, reject questions of the useful and the practical as merely secondary issues to the "good"? While the problem of "good" (either ethical or aesthetic) concerns primarily the ends of action, and the ordering of such ends in systems, the problem of "practicality" applies primarily to the means of action. Judgements of practicality may be made both with respect to moral and aesthetic values. Granted that a given aesthetic or moral value is capable of realization, there is a very real question as to the most expedient technical manner of achieving it.

However, the significance of technical considerations is more complex than this. The development of new technical procedures and instruments may make possible the realization of values previously impossible to attain. In the history of the human race technical invention has played a decisive role. Perhaps the most amazing illustration is language itself. Without it, organized social life is scarcely possible. Now the structure of modern life is inseparable from the complex technical procedures we call science. But it is a confusion of the moral and technical to conclude that science can be "responsible" for anything. To hold science at fault for its abuses, as some anti-scientific viewpoints do, is like holding plumbing responsible for leaky faucets. Of course, the development of science can be controlled, or directed in the interests of social groups or pressures, and there are types of social milieu which are more favorable to its development than others. But science, itself, is a pure instrument. It is the highest development of the "practical" thus far on our planet.

The practical and useful, including science, are instrumental values. They are essential to the realization of various aesthetic and ethical values. But the practical and useful, however closely related to given ends, derive their significance from the ends to which they are instrumental.

The relation between the aesthetic and the practical is easier to grasp than the relation between the aesthetic and the "pleasant,"

both of which are sometimes considered modalities. When "pleasantness" is conceived to be a primary value, it gives rise to a number of social and psychological problems. Only two of these, however, are of immediate concern here. If happiness is the essence of value, it would seem reasonable to assume that such happiness is that of an individual person. But the question then becomes: Is the happiness of the individual an absolute criterion of value even though it may involve the unhappiness of others? The utilitarians sought to reply to this question by their formula which said that the greatest happiness of the greatest number ought to be the absolute criterion of value. Unfortunately, when the individual person pursues his own happiness, the greatest happiness of the greatest number does not automatically ensue, and the issue is decided by the interests of the stronger.

The value of hedonism, another important view, presumably lies in the fact that it gives a firm psychological (or physiological) basis to the problem of value. Fundamental difficulties crop up here, too, however, when the specific conditions under which pleasure occurs are analyzed. How is one to weigh the pleasure of a good meal against the pleasure of a good book? An attempt to supply formulas which quantify the amount of pleasure either by its time or intensity, are meaningless unless such questions can be answered. Furthermore, the intensity of pleasure afforded by a given experience is often related, paradoxically, to the amount of pain that preceded it. The most exquisitely prepared meal can be distinctly unappealing when one has just eaten. And, roughly, the hungrier one is the more intense the pleasure of eating. So, presumably, the appreciation of pleasures is best achieved by the systematic cultivation of obstacles, difficulties, and even pain of various sorts.

When even so simple a delight as that offered by a steak will vary in the amount of pleasure it makes possible, pleasure is, clearly, a rather shaky foundation upon which to build the claims of ethics or aesthetics. Indeed, there is a view which we might mention, too, that pleasure is not a primary value at all

but a secondary and derived phenomenon. Pleasure, according to this view, emerges with the successful achievement of a goal.

All this, of course, does not say that aesthetic activities are not a source of enduring forms of happiness and satisfaction. An argument can be made for the position that the "highest" and most subtle of all satisfactions are aesthetic. But it is also clear that intense pleasure is at times found in immoral and unaesthetic experiences. That, of course, is why moralists have frequently looked upon all pleasure with suspicion.

While we are not concerned with the technical problems in the concept of "truth," two views of it are relevant. The pragmatist sees truth in terms of the solution of human problems. Truth from this standpoint is identical with the overcoming of a difficulty. And since there are degrees of success, the highest degree of truth is the best solution. This notion is most compatible with the idea that the "true" and the aesthetic are one and the same. The construction of an art object is considered a solution to a problem. The aesthetic appreciation of a natural object is seen as a construction of a suitable "solution" from the materials of experience. Perception of a sunset, for instance, represents a selection of perceptual data so that it is "seen" as a whole.

The other point of view which is related to "truth" is the idea that "truth" is a quality of propositions rather than experiences. In this analysis, widely used by modern philosophical analysts, the term "truth" is applied to the logical consistency of propositions within a set of propositions. It contrasts with empirical "truth" which is considered the relation of propositions to actual events. A map, for example, contains symbols such as hatcher marks or contour lines to represent geographical features such as elevation or bodies of water. Such a map is "true" if it corresponds to actual natural conditions. The "truth" of the map is tested by such verifying procedures as surveying, to confirm the height of a mountain indicated on the map. Such empirical truths are, of course, hazardous assertions about events which,

strictly speaking, cannot be proven in advance. They are always subject to correction. They are, in short, probably statements about the real world.

What, then, is the relation between "truth" and the "aesthetic"? In the first place, the problem of truth is crucial to any representational theory of aesthetics. The beauty of a sunset is "true" in that its perception corresponds to the real sunset which exists apart from the perceiver. The "truth" of art, therefore, lies in the fact that it is a correct portrayal of reality. In all such cases the aesthetic becomes a sort of inferior science. For a scientific description is of much greater value than the experience of the "beauty" of the sunset. We might, then, be glad we can replace art with representational photography. The arts of music and dance are in analogous positions. An advanced psychology would, then, provide a more adequate account of man's emotional life than art. Needless to say, few of us will accept a fully representational theory of aesthetics.

An empirical approach to aesthetics does not rule out the possibility of a logic of the aesthetic. If we grant that an art involves some sort of structure, various principles for its production and appreciation, and that it is not completely accidental, certain rules might be applied to its consistency or inconsistency. We might so judge the logic of aesthetic production. Even though the application of such rules were wholly unconscious and automatic in us, they could constitute a logic of aesthetics. In literary arts, the lyric, the poem, the narrative relies on the grammatical structure imposed by the language. Variations in their use may take place (poetic license is often considerable), but they still operate within relatively narrow limitations. Even though we can come at the problem of "truth" and aesthetics from all these various positions, it remains clear that the two are quite distinct.

We may summarize the previous discussion. We approached the aesthetic from two standpoints. First, we approached it from the standpoint of the elements into which human behavior may be

analyzed: impulses, means, values, consequences of action, etc. Secondly, we drew distinctions between the aesthetic and other areas of experience often confused with it. Although the two overlap, we noted that the aesthetic cannot be reduced to impulse or simple need. We observed, too, that it is distinct from the moral, the pleasant, the useful, and the true. We established the fact that the aesthetic may be viewed as a sphere of experience consisting of things "enjoyed for themselves" and that this sphere may be analyzed in terms of means and ends. We likewise noted that aesthetics involve preference systems, and that these preference systems are hierarchies of values.

The Unity of the Aesthetic

Is there a single aesthetic preference system? This question is, of course, thoroughly empirical in nature. It can be answered only in terms of an examination of aesthetic phenomena themselves. Certainly, on the basis of general experience the answer appears to be that there are multiple aesthetic systems: between societies, between groups, within a given social group, and within the experience of an individual.

The aesthetic of one society, or of one group in it, may be quite repugnant to another. And no method has yet been devised to bring the possible differences of the aesthetic within the experience of a single individual into an inclusive system. How is one to compare, for instance, the song of a thrush and a Beethoven sonata? Or, if one were to isolate "spring sounds" as an aesthetic category, how is one to estimate the value of the croak of a frog compared to the scream of a loon or the drumming of a bittern? Or, how are we to compare a Buddhist Tori and a painting by Van Gogh? The aesthetic experiences of the individual form a multiple system of preferences which is only partially organized.

As we move from group to group and from society to society, the attempt to view aesthetic preferences within an inclusive

system becomes more untenable still. How is one to estimate the relation between oriental and occidental music, even though they both are treated as "music"? What is the relation between the realistic wall painting in paleolithic caves and the geometrical painting on rawhide boxes of the American Plains Indians? Can a single scheme be used to examine impressionist, expressionist, or Dadaist painting of the last half-century?

The cautious thing to do is to take the position that aesthetic systems are multiple, alternative, and often only partially ordered. If all aesthetic forms do, in fact, constitute a grand harmony, it is something yet to be proven. So obvious, in fact, is the diversity of aesthetic phenomena that some theoreticians conclude that there is no such thing as an aesthetic order. In fact, some conclude that between different aesthetic orders there can be no rational grounds of choice: "In matters of taste there can be no dispute." But this position seems as extreme and unwarranted as one which says that there is one and only one system of preference in aesthetics.

One of the appealing features of the aesthetic "impulse" theory is that it gives a naturalistic basis to an activity which, from some standpoints, is devoid of "practical" value. The search for a psychological or physicological basis for the aesthetic is at times carried back into the animal world. A "proto-aesthetic" is seen at times, for example, in the love call of a bird or the resplendent coloring of a baboon's posterior. Even insects, often bright as sparks and lustrous as gems, seem more colorful than required for protective coloration. Among the activities in the animal world that seem to preview the aesthetic are the love dances of the salamander and certain snakes, and the pirouetting of courting fish and birds. Rats and magpies, too, are known to hoard bright objects like marbles and silverware. The penguin collects bright and unusual stones for his nest. Indeed, Steffanson found that stones painted red were stolen back and forth from nest to nest. Chimpanzees have been observed to drape themselves with colored scraps of cloth and strut about in crude slue-footed dances.

The frequent relation of such phenomena with sex has led some to view the aesthetic as a by-product of sexual behavior. But the difficulty with efforts such as this to locate the exact basis of the aesthetic is that they break down precisely when we need them most. If the aesthetic were instinctive, we would expect its display to be the same everywhere. It would at least take the same general form under the same conditions. Although there may be some variations in it, the song of a robin is much the same in New York or the Dakotas. As far as humans are concerned, however, there is no guarantee that the arts developed in New York will resemble those of the Dakotas. Nor is there any guarantee that standards of taste will be at all similar.

But there is not the slightest doubt that the aesthetic rests upon aspects of our biological and physical nature. We take our values from the world around us, and the techniques we press into the service of the aesthetic are products of areas of our lives which have nothing to do with the arts. We find subject matter in people, the natural world, human misery and degradation, aspiration and sacrifice. A precondition of the aesthetic is the human capacity for enjoyment and the ingenuity it takes to transform the material world around us. But a vital characteristic of the aesthetic is its variety, range, diversity, and plasticity.

The basis for the aesthetic, in the fully human sense, is social. It is human cultivation; it is largely learned. We learn to appreciate nature, to value classical music, Renaissance portraiture, Gothic architecture, and Greek sculpture. Learning may be largely unconscious, a continuous process of conditioning within a society, but the fruits of the aesthetic are the product of effort and long experience. Whatever the biological preconditions of the aesthetic, the forms of most concern to us are products of human association.

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a scene from *luther*

...an experiment in dialogue for poetic drama

by Ruth Herschberger

THE POPE

On his respect for me we can build,
Tetzel, and fasten him into the Church
Once more, brave and obedient as he is,
A good preacher, a wise man, a tender heart.

TETZEL

You must talk to him, Pope Leo!

THE POPE

I will, when he comes down through the Alps
And inhabits Rome, briefly; I will see
That he receives every honor a priest can,
A visiting monk, and we will talk.
We will talk, he will confess,
And soon his anger at our indulgence
Will vanish!

TETZEL

It should; I am but a fellow German,
A poor priest of Juterbogk,
And our native cities
Almost rub elbows, there
In the north of Germany.

THE POPE

Here, let me give you, then, the Bull,
The Bull of Indulgence on which my seal
Is impressed, which forgives—if there be penance—
All sins of him who gives
To the erection of St. Peters,
To our war against the Turks, the heathen
Threatening Rome from the East.

And another Bull I give you, Tetzel,
Against Luther, should his views
Bother you in Wittenberg, nail this up
On the Church, and let the populace read
The denunciation that their Pontiff seals.

TETZEL

Good, you are wise, Leo, to forestall the wreck
Of our campaign through that critic.
Being an eloquent preacher, though in the Alps,
His townsmen may remember his views,
And rattle them at me from the crowd;
And spoil through riot
Our attempt to evangelize, and to collect.

(Taking Bulls)

Ah how our procession glitters.
This, the Bull, on the scarlet-gold velvet,
Carried before, then the red cross
With your banner, the papal flag, bellying forth,

And I, in my white, with my arms spread,
And then to invoke heaven from the pulpit,
And then to impress sinners with their dread.

(Hans Fugger Enters Left)

Ah, Fugger, you are here at last.

FUGGER

I am late.
Good afternoon, Your Holiness.

THE POPE

You are late, Fugger, and our meeting's done.
Have you made preparations to depart?

FUGGER

Everything is arranged. In fact,
Is waiting here, Tetzel.
Why are there two Bulls in your hand?

TETZEL

One for the forgiveness of sins,
And one for the unforgiveness of heretics.

THE POPE

Don't exaggerate, Tetzel.
Keep the thing on an even keel.

TETZEL

No, truthfully, Fugger–Hans–
If Luther does not retract
His views, he will be excommunicate
In sixty days from this.

FUGGER

I would prefer we had a bodyguard.
As a banker, I distrust
The rattling of paper.

THE POPE

You will have that help too.
Well, gentlemen, goodbye and good luck.

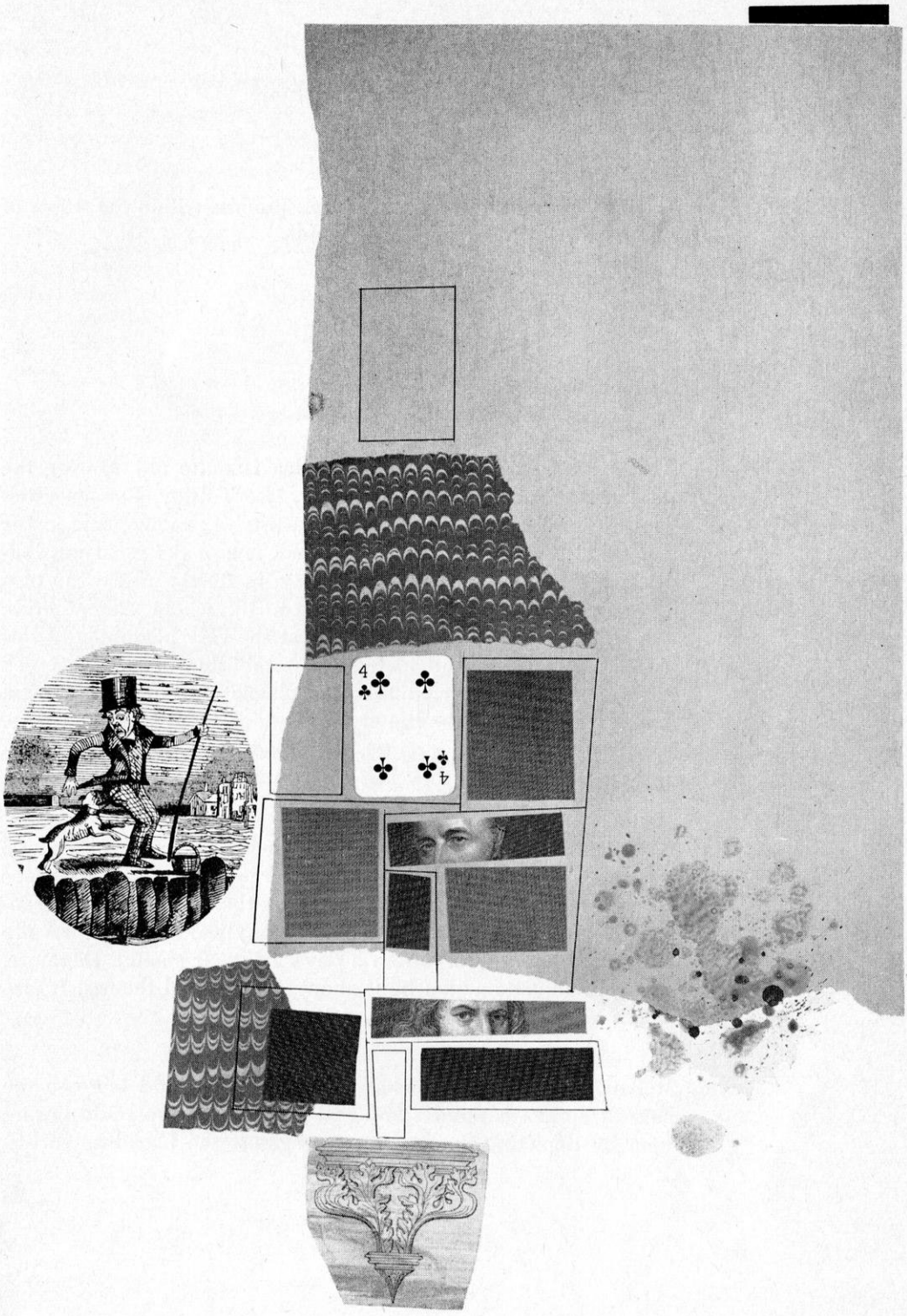
TETZEL

Goodbye, Pope Leo,
Deal gently with Luther,
He loves you as a father.

Come on, Hans Fugger, to our German mission,
You the worldly, and I the spiritual master,
We will collect great monies
And all to pay God glory!

(As Tetzel and Fugger Leave Rear, Blackout)

Ruth Herschberger is a poet, dramatist, essayist, and short-story writer. She has appeared in Harper's Bazaar, Best American Short Stories, Botteghe Oscure, Kenyon Review, New World Writing, *and in seven current anthologies of modern poetry. Her book on psychology,* Adam's Rib, *received wide attention both here and abroad. For two years she was playwright-in-residence with the Wisconsin Idea Theatre.*



Collage #3333–*1*—Don Grover

community theatre

". . . there are islands of magnificent promise within the whole of the movement."

by Robert E. Gard

In theatre arts the "community" idea is quite old. During the middle and late nineteenth century, Leo Tolstoy, Romaine Rolland, as well as other writers and artists of renown, saw in the emerging communal drama movement one of the great possibilities of the arts of their time. Tolstoy, in Russia, urged the participation and enjoyment of theatre by whole communities; while in France, Romaine Rolland, at the very beginning of this century, anxiously anticipated the establishment of a people's theatre. Rolland realized that the classic and romantic drama had lost touch with the life of the times and had become a bore. The so-called "social dramas," too, had come to use such far-fetched themes that they lost their audiences.

Although Rolland castigated the French theatre, he also made constructive suggestions on theatre organization and its place in community life. To him the people's theatre had to be essentially recreational. It had to provide a physical and moral respite to the workman weary from a day's labor. It should, therefore, involve energetic action built about inspirational themes. It also might act as a guide to human intelligence.

Rolland believed that melodramatic theatre could increase the sum of human happiness and that pageant theatre could inspire men by depicting national heroes against the backdrop of his-

tory. He believed that carefully chosen themes relating to social reform could cultivate and stimulate thought. Above all, he believed that a new, vital theatre had to foster folk- and legend-drama, pantomime, and rural music.

In 1887, Antoine conceived the "little theatre" idea which was to mushroom in the United States during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Antoine's idea was that a "little theatre," freed from the complexities of professionalism, could raise the standards of the stage generally. The "community theatre," as we know it, came into being in America through the impetus of local acting companies during the nineteenth century, the decline of touring stock companies during the period when silent movies became popular, and the "little theatre" idea from France.

The first known civic theatre in the United States was at Northampton, Massachusetts, where the city officially sponsored a theatre group, drawing heavily for inspiration upon Smith College. This experiment was launched in 1892 and was a direct outgrowth of Antoine's Odeon Theatre in Luxembourg.

One of America's very early "community theatres," however, was the Thespis in Salt Lake City, financed by the sale of army supplies during the Civil War. Brigham Young believed that the drama was the best way to bring education and amusement to his people, and the theatre in Salt Lake City had the full sanction of the Mormon Church. The colorful and vocal audience was composed entirely of workmen, farmers, cowboys, and their hardy wives. (There was no leisure class in the Mormon Old West.)

In Wisconsin, Thomas H. Dickinson is said to have started the first "community theatre" in the American Middle West when he established the Wisconsin Dramatic Society in Madison and Milwaukee in 1910. The term "community," applied to arts gen-

erally, is not a very old idea, not at least in America. "Community music," for example, is a term said to have been coined by Peter Dykema of The University of Wisconsin Extension Division in 1913 when he began promoting community participation in that art. The U. W. Agricultural and Extension Service, meanwhile, had published but one bulletin before 1919 devoted to problems of "community." Today, the term "community" is stamped on almost everything it does.

It is very difficult to say exactly where and when the terms "community theatre" was first used, and perhaps that is not important. What is important is the implied responsibility of theatre to the community. For if it is fair to maintain, as it often is maintained, that our nation cannot be held together solely by race, religion, or nationality, a unifying force can be found in artistic expression of a great ideal. The art of the theatre is prepared to give us this. It can represent a community of interest where great and small find expression.

The early workers in American community theatre accepted this idea. They recognized that the joy of play, the joy of cooperation, the whole expression of joy through art, was a unifying force, a common interest, a community concept. They foresaw the theatre as a measure of the people's mind—an achievement of a collective consciousness. These pioneers in dramatic art did not consider theatre a building, a players' group, but something existing in the hearts of men. The founders of community theatre believed that the great reaches of the human spirit could not be attained by solitary men. They felt that a social consciousness which transcended parochial loyalties could be entered through the exercise of community art.

Community theatre depends entirely upon the loyalty of creative people. And, for the most part, it has been in the hands of amateurs. But the loyalty that these people feel is a loyalty for an institution greater than any one of them. Although com-

munity theatre has for its main, immediate goal the production of theatrical works, it is essentially noncommercial and lacks altogether that profit motive. It is an art form of courageous motivations.

The community theatre in America has had such a rapid pell-mell growth that, at the moment, it is big, confused, and self-conscious. It has spread out through the United States and Canada and taken root under such various circumstances that it is hard to say under which conditions it does best. There are probably at least 3,500 active community theatres with year-long season programs in the United States alone. They thrive in small communities such as Delafield, Wisconsin, with a population of 700 souls and in cities like Cleveland, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, and Dallas. If the thousands of plays they produce each year were the whole story, it would be easy to demonstrate that drama in American cultural life is flourishing. But such figures as "15,000 plays produced per year" is not enough. For the whole movement is so complex and confused, its aims are so diverse and muddled, that what might be a tremendous national movement spends its strength in countless directions. Much of it has little bearing on the development of great, indigenous, sincere American community art.

Though I have always been impressed with the great number of persons engaged in community theatre activity—and their limitless enthusiasm is something to see—I have often seen the need for virile imaginative leadership. Outstanding leadership is the key to stability and achievement. Of course, there are hundreds of groups that survive with weak leadership, or with the group attempting to lead itself in that indecisive, timorous way that is sometimes confused with "democratic" processes. But there remains no substitute for strong leadership.

A more serious criticism of American community theatre can be made on the grounds that it is basically noncreative. It is often

infected with the same disease that ravages our college and university theatre: a willingness to conform, to play the popular, to pander, to condescend to new or local playwriting. Sometimes, in fact, community theatre is a mere springboard for the local egoist. But of all these, the most serious is the fear of nonconformity. Community theatre will never become a real force in our cultural life if it remains a vehicle of imported work, a mere duplication of work done elsewhere.

Robert Edmond Jones recently said in a public lecture, "The art of the theatre in this country is very hard to find . . . We have come to be satisfied with a very inferior grade of goods. We miss the qualities that give a noble turn to things. We miss the freshness, the caprice, the splendor, the austerity, the elevation . . . Yet these extravagant qualities are the life blood of the theatre, the sap, the vital fluid." And he said further, "What is called realism is usually a record of life at low ebb viewed in the sunless light of day. Perhaps the most striking symptom of the theatre's failure to keep abreast of the times is the way we mistake efficiency and expertness for true creation . . . Audiences have capacities for feeling that no dramatist has ever touched . . . We should abandon a theatre whose natural condition is fear and move into a theatre whose natural condition is ecstasy."

Expertness and efficiency there are in plenty in the contemporary American community theatre. Productions are often done with an efficiency easily on par with the best college productions, and at times with the professional theatre. What seems to be lacking is the devotion to art that transcends the fear of failure. And this fear is the fear of financial failure, of community censure, of loss of prestige. Absent is the realization that theatre ought to be a necessity in American life, not merely a luxury, to be turned on and off for recreation, or as an exercise in efficiency.

On the other hand, there are islands of magnificent promise within the whole of the movement, and community theatre, in my opinion, is the great idea of American drama. If we can find ways to carry the development of it beyond its recreational outlines, to develop the force that underlies its creative potentiality, it can become the major contribution to American theatre of this century.

Robert E. Gard, Director of the Wisconsin Idea Theatre at The University of Wisconsin, pioneered community theatre development in the state of New York. He is author of Grassroots Theatre *and other volumes on community arts.*

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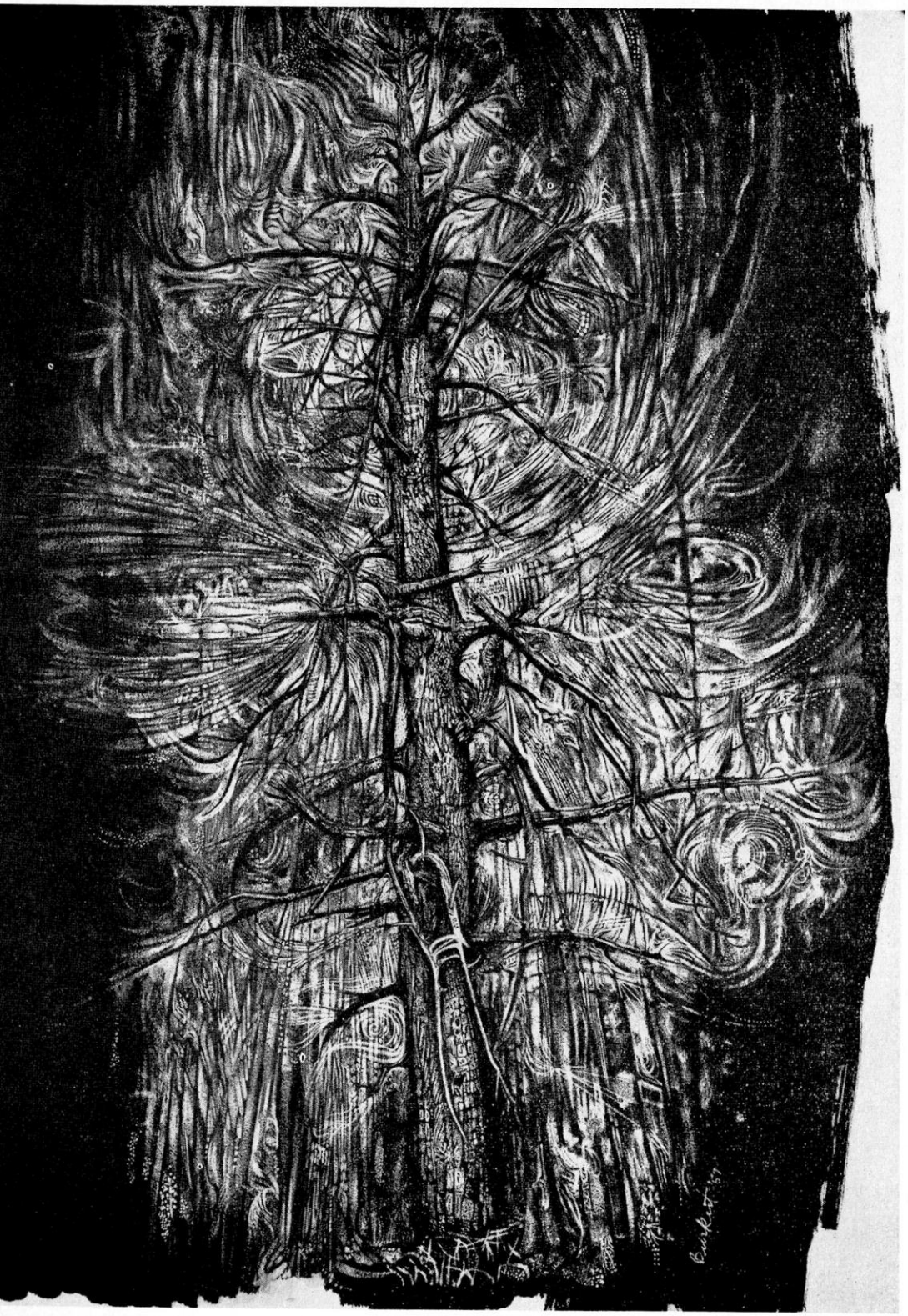
Life on the level of instinct or custom is not necessarily unaesthetic, but it is nonaesthetic. To create or behold beauty a person must be awake to values and not sleepily stumble over them.

—Van Meter Ames
in *Introduction to Beauty*



Dead Pine—Bob Burkert

the position of poetry today[1]

by R. W. Stallman

In his Foreword to Poet W. S. Merwin's *A Mask for Janus,* W. H. Auden remarks: "Silly and tiresome as is that favorite question of reporters, 'What are the trends in poetry today?' it is impossible, if one compares a contemporary issue of any literary magazine with an issue of fifteen years back, not to recognize certain changes in content. Among these the most obvious is the increase of interest shown today, both by poets and critics, in myth, and a corresponding turning away, on the part of the poets at least, from occasional subjects, whether political or private." And in his Introduction to *The Criterion Book of Modern American Verse* (1956) he writes: "The undeniable appearance in the States, during the last fifteen years or so, of a certain literary conformity, of a proper and authorized way to write poetry, is a new and disquieting symptom, which I cannot pretend to be able to explain fully."

Donald Hall, a very young poet of considerable promise and achievement, made a survey of American poetry of the past fifteen years in "The New Poetry," *New World Writing No. 7.* "In the novel, American letters has swung from the bare toughness of the early Hemingway to the ornament and compassion of William Styron; in poetry from the austerity of the *vers librists* to the lyrical elegance of Richard Wilbur." Mr. Hall lists among the Elegant Poets, including Richard Wilbur: Howard Moss, poetry editor of *The New Yorker;* Barbara Howes, who edited an elegant and excellent "Little Magazine," *Chimera,* a decade ago; Anthony Hecht, the "most elegant of all the elegants"; William Jay Smith and James Merrill; W. S. Merwin,

[1] Reprinted here in modified form by permission of the author from *The English Journal* (May, 1957).

"the most celebrated of the very young poets"; Louis Simpson, whose work appeared in *Poets of Today II* (1955); and Cecil Hemley, editor of the *Noonday Press*. To this category belong several other poets, including Robert Fitzgerald. They are all stylists. I think it is John Crowe Ransom's poetry that has set the standard for the younger poets—style rather than mere subject matter.

To the School of Elegance belongs also the later work of Karl Shapiro, whereas his early work—along with that of John Ciardi, John Frederick Nims, and John Malcolm Brinnin—belongs to what Mr. Hall ineptly names the School of the Wurlitzer Wits. "They were all Sons of Wystan; their witty descriptions of contemporary objects and events inside lyrical forms emanate from a side of Auden." What they had in common was their witty rendering of the paraphernalia of ordinary life (*viz.*, "Drug Store," "Penny Arcade," "Dollar Bill"), contemporary events, and objects belonging to the general class of jukeboxes. The sensibilities of these poets "resembled jukeboxes because it seemed possible to drop an impression in a slot and, after a pause for clicking and whirring, hear a poem step out in five-stress lines." Mr. Hall, by his slip into this witticism, spoils an otherwise excellent essay. In criticism, wit is usually misplaced. Randall Jarrell's witty *Poetry and the Age* rather exemplifies my point, for his criticism is (I think) shallow, and his poetry—which is where his wit belongs—is devoid of wit.

Mr. Hall scores Jarrell's poetry for its conscious sentimentality and its conscious carelessness, "a deliberate disregard of the means of control, whether in 'free' or 'regular' verse." His reputation (I agree) is unearned by what poetry he produced to promote it; but then, after all, unearned reputations are legion. They include (from my standpoint) Peter Viereck's, Richard Eberhart's, and William Carlos Williams'. Viereck and Eberhart publish many more bad poems than good ones, and Williams produces volumes of formless imagistic fragments. I agree in the main with Mr. Hall's appraisals; Robert Lowell, it is generally conceded, is the best poet of his generation. Two other impor-

tant poets of the same generation are Theodore Roethke and W. T. Scott (whom Mr. Hall does not mention), and in the same category is the later work of Karl Shapiro. At his best, as in "Portraits I" (in *The Rose of Time,* 1956), Robert Fitzgerald proves himself in technical and thematic resourcefulness quite as much the master as any of them. And on occasion so does Brinnin, as in "Views of the Favorite Colleges" (in *No Arch, No Triumph,* 1945) and "Speech of the Wedding Guest" (in *The Sorrows of Cold Stone,* 1951).[2] They are by no means Wurlitzer poems. Labels and categories are, as Mr. Hall admits, simply convenient ways to organize critical discussion. But the trouble with labels is that they block recognition of exceptions not subsumed by the category; however convenient for the critic's survey, labels tend to be slick. As critic, Mr. Hall knows when to define and when to exemplify, when to compress and when to expand; consequently, he achieves more in the space of his essay than Miss Louise Bogan does in an entire book. Sandwiched between Miss Bogan's catalogue of poets in *Achievement in American Poetry* (1951) are the easy commonplaces and trite labels; with scarcely more than an epithet per poet, Miss Bogan's prose skips on.

In place of Wurlitzer Wits we now have Elegant Poets; what characterizes the trend of modern poetry is, for one thing, a shift to the stylistic graces—a shift from subject matter to style. Mr. Hall's objection to the poetry of the Wurlitzer Wits is that the poems seldom become more serious than their subject matter. Most *New Yorker* verse is of that kind. Walker Gibson, in *The Reckless Spenders* (1954), seldom rises above that level. I must say he's very good at it, and particularly I like "Personalized." If I am correct in assuming that what Mr. Hall labels Wurlitzer poetry amounts to *New Yorker* verse, perhaps that label would suffice. But no matter what the label, schools and

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[2] "Speech of the Wedding Guest" is, by any definition, a metaphysical poem; it is (I think) among the better poems written in that mode during the last fifteen years. For an analysis of the poem, see *Critical Supplement to Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,* edited by R. W. Stallman (February, 1950).

labels tend to overlap. The Elegant Poet writes poems devoid of significance quite as readily as the *New Yorker* or Wurlitzer Wit. Neither elegance nor subject matter provides any guarantee of the poem's success. Nor is elegance new to American poetry (*viz.*, Elinor Wylie, Leonie Adams, or John Crowe Ransom); as for the poetry or mere subject matter, it extends from William Carlos Williams back to Whitman. Rather than divide poets into two camps, the critic should divide the good poems from the poor ones, as every poet has some of each. The best poems transcend their subject matter, both subject and style being exploited to shape a formed meaning with beginning and end.

That "we are seeing a change in poetry" was recently claimed by a poet when interviewed for the *New York Times* (July 15, 1956). He explained: "The social and cooperative virtues are more essential at this stage of history than ever before. The closer community among men will make possible a literature more widely shared. There will be a reaching out. Tenderness will come back into poetry." While I recognize that the social and cooperative virtues are essential for the welfare of mankind, I do not believe it follows that they are essential for the good of poetry. An example of a poem manifesting this sentiment is "Love and Liberation," reprinted from a volume by that title (1913) in Louis Untermeyer's *Modern American Poetry:*

> Lift your arms to the stars
> And give an immortal shout;
> Not all the veils of darkness
> Can put your beauty out!

Mankind, I suppose, is here addressed. But what has mankind at this or at any other stage of his history to shout about? By now his survival, not his immortality, is at stake. As William Faulkner put it, "There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: 'When will I be blown up?' "

As for *tenderness* coming back into modern poetry, such a trend (if, in fact, it exists at all) would return us to the sentimental idealism of the poetry prevailing during the decades preceding the revolutionary T. S. Eliot. They were decades of wastelands-of-tenderness, not only in poetry but also in criticism. In criticism, for instance, George Edward Woodberry had announced a rejection of "the eccentric, the sensational, the abnormal, the brutal, and base," on the theory that "life-experience spiritualized is the formula of all great literature." But *Hamlet* is eccentric, sensational, abnormal; and *Macbeth* is brutal and base. One or another of these attributes reappear in modern poetry beginning with Eliot, and I doubt that we can afford not to take our measure of them in any poetry of the immediate future. Our kinship is with Henry James: "But I have the imagination of disaster, and see life, indeed, as ferocious and sinister."

Like John Hall Wheelock's "Love and Liberation," Sara Teasdale's "Night Song at Amafi" evokes exalted emotion and unearned sentiment; the former is devoid of any literal situation, and the latter proposes a situation that is absurd:

> I asked the heaven of stars
> What I should give my love—
> It answered me with silence,
> Silence above.
>
> I asked the darkened sea
> Down where the fishermen go—
> It answered me with silence,
> Silence below.

"Down where the fishermen go" is irrelevant to the situation, and the ending of this stanza presents but a meretricious echo of the preceding one. To ask "the heaven of stars/What I should give my love" is downright silly. Telephone him and you might get the answer. But don't expect to get it by long-distance communication with the stars; for the hard fact is they can't answer you even "with silence." And neither can the sea. It's poems of this kind that tenderness produces, poems that reach out instead

of in. Tenderness must couple with toughness, in the same bed. "Art should be as hard as nails" was James' phrase; even lyrical poetry should consist of "stony-hearted triumphs of objective form." (in Henry James: *Letters to A. C. Benson.)*

Mr. Peter Viereck advocates "a poetry which is lucid and lofty and calm and ennobling—a clearwater communicative poetry," and in England Mr. Donald Davie proposes the possibility of a modern didactic poetry, a "poetry of urbane and momentous statement" to provide the most likely remedy for the present-day neglect of poetry by the reading public. Modernist poetry in its early years moved further and further away "not merely from the ordinary man but from the educated reader. It was esoteric and private. This tendency has been curbed," wrote Maurice Bowra a decade ago, "and we may ask how far the reaction will go in the other direction. Is it possible for poetry to become simpler, and to be more in touch with common events, without losing the special fineness and quality which it now possesses? Is not this return to older manners and methods a retreat from the high standards which poets of this century have set themselves, and does it not inevitably mean some vulgarization and diminution of power?"[3]

Having accustomed the reading public for more than twenty years to do without poetry, the poet today, "to be considered, must write about contemporary problems, from a contemporary point of view, using a contemporary vocabulary. Why? What weakness have we," asks a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* (August 24, 1951), "that we must fear the influence of the past so much more than any other generation did? . . . It was never a condition of great art that the artist should keep within a convention enforced on him by public opinion."

In Mr. Viereck's opinion, "When I advocate a return to simplicity in poetry, I mean the hardwon simplicity that resolves spiritual tensions and literary complexities." But as Mr. Denis

[3] *New Republic* (December 9, 1946).

Donoghue points out, in "Poetry and the New Conservatism" (*London Magazine,* April, 1956), "Surely poetry that achieves the resolution of spiritual tensions and literary complexities, if it is not deliberately to exclude those tensions from view, must reveal them in the poem; it must show the strains, the sweat, and the scars, and if it does so it cannot be a simple poem in any sense of that adjective." The meaning of a "difficult" poem such as William Empson's "Arachne" cannot be conveyed in a simpler, more accessible way. " 'Arachne' is as simple as its author could make it; if it were simpler, it would be a different poem and a less valuable one." Poems are difficult, difficult not only to write but to read, but the "difficult" poem is not necessarily "obscure." Much of the so-called obscurity in modern poetry exists, I believe, chiefly in critical discussions about it. What Mr. Viereck calls the "current battle of obscurity' vs. 'clarity' " seems to me a bogus battle, not at all current.

In the "obscure" poem, as distinguished from the "difficult" poem, the images are forced to bear an import whose meaning is not justified by any sustaining rational or literal situation. It is because the intended meaning remains unearned that the poem is obscure. Hart Crane is frequently obscure; his symbolism, not being rooted in any liberal situation, exists in a void. I find it ironic that Mr. Viereck should write an obscure poem such as "Like a Sitting Breeze," while he himself attacks "the irresponsible cult of obfuscating for the sake of obfuscating and shocking merely for the sake of shocking."[4] When Mr. Viereck submitted "Like a Sitting Breeze" to *American Scholar,* the editor replied:

> Dear Mr. Viereck: The plain simple truth is I'll be blamed if I know what it means. I have even been able, in the past, to figure out some of the more obscure gents of our time, but study this as I would, I didn't get it. . . .

Whereupon Mr. Viereck supplied him a précis of the poem, both the poem and the précis appearing in *American Scholar* (Spring, 1951). In explicating his poem Mr. Viereck says: "The

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[4] "Pure Poetry, Impure Politics, and Ezra Pound," *Commentary* (April, 1951).

phrase 'sitting breeze,' repeated in the title, is ironic. Breezes *can't* sit; they must move on." Really now, that's damned clever. Had this ingenious poet phrased it "like sitting bulls," it would lack the intended irony for the simple reason that bulls *can* sit, but not breezes. So he says one thing and means another. But without being tipped off by the author's précis, what reader (other than the local weatherman) could possibly spot the author's intended "irony"? As nothing else in the poem is ironic, so therefore neither is this single item. It remains private, arbitrary, not negotiable. In attempting to explain to the bewildered reader what he means, Mr. Viereck succeeds only in explaining what he intended. Original intentions and achieved intentions are not the same thing; in this instance I think the reader will find considerable discrepancy.[5] What the poet's précis makes clear is his failure to shape a unified whole; but even without the précis we know this much, as the poem itself makes this much clear. A poem must provide its own clues, patterning its intention so that no reading other than the intended one is possible. The best artist is the one who constructs his poem in such a way as to admit of no interpretation but the one intended, the intended meaning being determined within the framework of the work itself.

The poem Mr. Viereck cites as model-poem for the New Conservatism is Frost's "Sand Dunes":

> Sea waves are green and wet,
> But up from where they die,
> Rise other vaster yet,
> And those are brown and dry.
>
> They are the sea made land
> To come at the fisher town,
> And bury in solid sand
> The men she could not drown.

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[5] In *American Scholar,* Vol. 20 (Autumn, 1951), which I checked into after writing the above, Viereck is scorched by Mr. Laban Lacy Rice and ridiculed in a parody ("Like a Flying Tree"); to Mr. Viereck's note appearing in Vol. 21 (Spring, 1952), pp. 105–106, Mr. Rice writes a scathing reply, p. 246.

Mr. Viereck comments: "Its first two stanzas evoke the desperation of man's material feebleness, overwhelmed by nature's brutality. But man's spiritual strength remains free for thought, so that the poem ends hopefully." The mind of man is pitted against the destructive sea, representing nature's onslaught against mankind. But cunning as the sea is—

> She may know cove and cape,
> But she does not know mankind
> If by any change of shape,
> She hopes to cut off mind.
>
> Men left her a ship to sink:
> They can leave her a hut as well;
> And be more free to think
> For the one more cast off shell.

Mr. Viereck approves of "Sand Dunes" because it "openly asserts conclusions drawn from experience," but Mr. Donoghue (in the essay cited above) argues that the conclusions are reached without warrant of the experience enacted within the poem, that the poem is didactic ("embarrassingly explicit") and fails because it has no tension, no sign of struggle. But (I think) the struggle is implied, foreshortened into "Men left her a ship to sink," and the tension between sea and mind seems to me adequate. The whole force of the aggressive sea, Mr. Donoghue complains, is meant to press on to the word "mind," which word "is meant to ring out as a grand challenge to the forces of destruction symbolized by the oncoming waves. But does it? Is the rhetoric successful?" I think the answer is yes, and for this reason: "To come at" is literally true of sea waves and sand dunes; the literal transposes to the thematic sense of "To come at," transposes simultaneously to the allegoric level, wherefore we readily assent to the conceit of the sea as aggressive and defiant. She conquers all but the human mind, the very attribute she does not comprehend. The poem proves its conclusion, namely that the human mind is indestructible, for all the sea can destroy is man's "cast off shell." This final image is prepared for in the opening stanza by the image of sand dunes cast off by the sea waves; they are the sea's cast-off shell. To accept the poem

we have to sidestep the difficulty, according to Mr. Donoghue, of accepting the correspondence in destructiveness between these hills of earth and the mountainous sea waves. The correspondence, it seems to me, is self-justified by the plain fact that at sea men drown and that on land their fishermen's towns are buried in solid sand. The only "men she could not drown" are, presumably, intellectuals or artists whose spiritual strength remains unassailable.

The poem, by my reading, stands cleared then of Mr. Donoghue's charges, none of which scores a critical point. The fault with "Sand Dunes" is not in its structure, but rather in its theme—in what the poem purports to mean. The human mind, as this poem conceives it, is a static concept; only the sea undergoes change. Having cast off its outer shells, the mind is supposedly all the more free to think, but the condition of its existence is in isolation—in a solipsistic shell of its own making. If the mind can so cut itself off from reality, the more free to think, what then is the need of any sea "to cut off mind"? The poem concludes that the mind is indestructible, but is it indestructible if left to itself to feed upon itself? The intellect must feed upon reality, or else what can be its object of contemplation—free to think about what? The proposition that man's mind is free to think when stripped of his materialistic or bodily shell is nonsense; for what sustenance then has the mind or spirit of man when cut off from reality?

In "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep"—just the opposite of "Sand Dunes"—Frost ridicules the intellect. He ridicules the human mind for its absurd metaphysical quests, for its intellectual probings into the unknown, for its dogged determination not to accept known truths or finite things, for its blind persistence in seeking beyond the horizon at the neglect of present realities.

In settling for "Sand Dunes," Mr. Viereck made the mistake of not picking Frost at his best. To listen to Frost read "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep" you'd never guess that it's among his

best; he mumbles it. Nor would you guess on hearing his flat and noncommittal voice that his poem contains the slightest hint at irony. Furthermore, Frost, if pressed to admit its ironic intent, would characteristically deny any hidden meaning. On one occasion, however, he conceded this much: "A writer is entitled to anything the reader can find in him." The unassailable human mind of "Sand Dunes" is mocked in "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep":

> The people along the sand
> All turn and look one way.
> They turn their back on the land.
> They look at the sea gull all day.
>
> As long as it takes to pass
> A ship keeps raising its hull;
> The wetter ground like glass
> Reflects a standing gull.

The ship, a finite thing, marks the limits of man's horizon. Not sinking but always raising its hull, the ship represents man's aspirations. But this image of hope does not suffice to satisfy man's aspirations. His vision transcends the known in quest of the unknown, the sea of infinite possibilities; whereas, in fact, the truth is right at his feet—in the water that comes ashore. But the people look at the sea:

> The land may vary more;
> But wherever the truth may be—
> The water comes ashore
> And the people look at the sea.
>
> They cannot look out far.
> They cannot look in deep.
> But when was that ever a bar
> To any watch they keep?

The human mind does not realize its own limitations. In quest of the unanswerable, it stupidly channels its vision in one direction to "look one way." The people turn their back on the truth represented by the land, the truth of present realities and, though they cannot look out far nor look in deep, they seek in the infi-

nite sea the unfathomable. The truth is in the inbetween wetter ground, neither land nor sea, which "like glass / Reflects a standing gull." His image is thus somewhat blurred, as the truth he represents is also somewhat confused by contrast with the people's fixed idea and faith in the certitude of a distant vision. They reflect, whereas the gull is merely reflected. They reflect stupidly because they do not see themselves as they are, whereas the gull conceivably sees himself in his reflection. He attains at least that certitude ("But wherever the truth may be—"), the certitude of knowing himself for what he is and what his limitations are. He has the prudence of not looking out far nor looking in deep; he looks at the land, turning his back on the sea. Nature reflects not the people, rather it reflects the sensible gull. Their reflection (if I may pun) is mocked by his reflection! The presence of the gull, standing in that *wetter* ground (not the dry land of gullible intellect), intends a mockery of mankind's plight —duped by his own visionary quests.

When is a poem a poem? The example is Ransom or Frost at his best (not The Other Frost). Not that I am advocating imitation, except in the right sense of imitation on principle, but Frost tempts one to imitate him. What *are* worth emulating are the principles informing the construction of Frost's perfections. His poems evince a predilection for a condition of contrast of opposites and for arriving in their thought process at a condition of choice, a choice which in some poems is resolved. The Frost poem is not a fragment; neither is it merely an image, and nothing more. Images in Frost, as in Ransom, become converted to symbols. In "Tree at My Window" Frost manages this conversion in the very first line: "Tree at my window, window tree." The literal tree-image is thus converted to symbol, "window tree" being the mirror or analogy of the poet's plight.

> That day she put our heads together,
> Fate had her imagination about her,
> Your head so much concerned with outer,
> Mine with inner weather.

That is to say, when I first thought of this analogy, I hit upon a potentially rich germ for a poem conditioned by a contrast of opposites, providing me a metaphoric sample. "Poetry is simply made of metaphor. . . . Every poem is a new metaphor inside it, or it is nothing. And there is a sense in which all poems are the same old metaphor always."[6] Poetry is made of comparisons, open or concealed. "Window tree" initiates the central metaphor and promotes what follows—variations on the theme by comparisons and contrasts. "Not all your light tongues talking aloud / Could be profound." But mine are! The tree with its outer weather is the tree with its outer reality, in contrast to my inner reality. It's with outer reality that the poet needs kinship to sustain him in times of darkness, in times of difficulty—"when night comes on; / But let there never be curtain drawn / between you and me." He needs always to be reminded that there are two kinds of weather, not solely his own but that of the outer world; for the poet's imagination is fed by that reality.

"Tree at My Window" contradicts "Sand Dunes" with its concept of the human mind as solipsistic, existing in freedom from cast-off shells. "Sand Dunes" is devoid of irony; in "Tree at My Window" the irony is explicit, in "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep" it is implicit. In all three poems what is first of all presented is a realistic or literal situation, and this is true of all Frost poems and largely accounts for his greatness as technician. His symbolism, unlike Hart Crane's, is rooted in reality. He begins there, with a literal situation, contriving it into a metaphor, or conceit, as soon as it permits conversion; wherefore his poems begin "in delight and end in wisdom." They end not in tenderness, but in wisdom; and this insight, or meaning, is characteristically hard as nails.

Frost, Ransom, the later Yeats, and the early Wallace Stevens achieved a formalistic complexity which the newest generation of our poets has not yet measured up to. The poems of the younger poets tend to be diagrammatically a straight line; they

[6] Frost in his Introduction to the Modern Library *Poems of Robert Frost*, (1946).

take a single direction without the complexity of a metaphoric structure, fusion of opposites, or double vision affording an ironic point of view. One example is W. S. Merwin's delicately phrased, precious, and literary lyrics in his first book, *A Mask for Janus.* Of the poets of this newest generation, I find much to admire, however, in certain poems of Louis Coxe (in *The Second Man and Other Poems,* 1951), Reed Whittemore (*An American Takes a Walk,* 1956), Louis Simpson (*Poets of Today, II,* 1955), Daniel G. Hoffman (*An Armada of Thirty Whales,* 1954), Edgar Bogardus (*Various Jangling Keys,* 1953), and Donald Hall (*Exiles and Marriages,* 1955). The youngest in this group are Hall (born in 1928) and Bogardus (born in 1927), while the oldest are Coxe (1918) and Whittemore (1919). Another very young poet is James Wright ("The Green Wall," in the *Yales Series of Younger Poets,* 1956), who has earned my notice by virtue of some poems appearing in the Winter, 1956, *Sewanee Review.*[7] Better known, and of more established reputation and achievement, is Richard Wilbur (1921), of whom Robert Fitzgerald wrote in the *New Republic*: "Wilbur's immaculate verbal choices, his freshening of the sense of life within a rigid metrical frame, and not only within it but by means of it, recall Frost's writing at its best."

These younger poets work mainly in conventional stanza forms and metres. (An exception is Whittemore, the most original voice of them all.) All of them are careful craftsmen, aiming to render—simply by a turn of cadence, mood, or thought—a designed whole. They aim at common sense, at simplicity, and clarity—not for the sake of making themselves clear to a disinterested public, but rather on principle, to make the poem clear to itself. Not experimentalists, not revolutionists, they are too busy writing poetry to issue polemics about it. As Mr. Hall puts it in a recent letter, his generation is revolting against nothing; even the revulsion against the poetry of familiar objects is no battle

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[7] Still another excellent young poet is Edgar Bowers, and among poets of my generation—not known to me at the time of writing this essay—I would also praise Samuel French Morse.

cry. "But what holds them together, more than their technical virtuosity, is the fact that they are none of them 'system-makes.' They write their poems one at a time, without reference to a metaphysics created or received. Robert Lowell was the last of the 'system-makers.' " (Eberhart's, I might add, is "old hat" worn new.) The nineteenth century Problems of the Almighty no longer seem almighty problems, and in any case poetry—as we see it now—is not the place to solve problems. Politics and psychoanalysis furnished the problems for poets of the 1930's and 1940's, D. H. Lawrence and I. A. Richards exerting a more dominant influence at that time than T. S. Eliot. Concerned more with self-criticism than with social criticism, poets today deal with myth and symbol, nature, history, the realities of everyday existence. Both John Malcolm Brinnin and Howard Nemerov, whose first books were, respectively, *The Garden is Political* and *Images and the Law*, no longer deal with political subjects in their poetry. Mr. Louis Coxe, in an unpublished essay, goes so far as to declare: "If there is to be a genuine resurgence of vitality in American literature, it can come, I believe, only from poets who have been able to isolate themselves from politics or who have moved through and beyond it." The curious thing about this dogma is that it is flung into the face of an age dominated by politics. Return to nature, Mr. Coxe demands of poets, as though nature were the sole wellspring of poetry.

I take a wider view of the range of poetry, as I believe that it embraces everything in the life and world around us—anything being suitable for poetry, providing it suits you to make a poem of it. The poets of the 1930's—notably Auden, MacNeice, and C. Day Lewis—synthesized and communicated the world around them and, like Dryden, made the boundaries of poetry coextensive with the national life. They took their subjects, as Dryden found them, anywhere in the life being lived; few poets have consciously cultivated so many contacts with the world as Dryden. They wrote, with the later Yeats, poems of public speech, not private song. Pound's statement-poetry and the later Eliot and Yeats pointed the way. Insofar as the newest generation of poets bears any kinship with the poets of the 1930's, it exists, I

think, in their concern for subjects outside themselves; or at any rate in a subject which is not merely a subject for their poetry. Even the more esoteric of the younger poets share with the poets of the 1930's the ratiocinative language of Dryden, the meditative, the conversational and direct; a poetry of statement. A poetry of statement, I might add, does not exclude obliquities. Dryden's speech, as Eliot once reminded us, is "a *normal* English speech, a speech valid for both verse and prose, and imposing its laws which greater poetry than Dryden's might violate, but which no poetry since has overthrown," (in *John Dryden*, 1932). As John Donne reformed the language, so Dryden, "in his turn, reformed the minor followers of Donne," (Eliot in *A Garland for John Donne*, 1931). In modernistic poetry the line of Donne coexists with the line of Dryden; both were stylists. It is significant that Hopkins with his tortured language and Eliot with his "free associations" and "dream-jumps" (to quote MacNeice) should both express the same admiration for Dryden's writings, Hopkins claiming "my style tends always more towards Dryden." Our younger poets tend more towards Dryden than to Donne or Frost or Ransom—a Drydenism is in the air.

R. W. Stallman is a Professor of English at the University of Connecticut and a widely published critic, essayist, and poet. He is a specialist on Stephen Crane and author of Stephen Crane's Stories and Tales.

the falling out[1]

by R. W. Stallman

It's land the ocean longs for:
What seawaves seek is shore
To share in the outgoing,
But shore from sea divides.
That's why an undertowing
Stirs these seacove tides.

When shore drew back to bay
It changed the seacoast's face:
Some falling out took place.
Happened when land gave way
Out of the ocean's reach,
Cliffs replaced the beach.

I've known the quest and ache
Of land-tormented lake,
Of shallows closed about
Where once land opened out.
Where water falls the shock
Occurs because of rock.

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[1] Reprinted from *Botteghe Oscure*, Vol. VIII (1951).

the tempest[1]

by R. W. Stallman

i

Said Ariel:
All song's sea-song.

Prospero's art
The sea transforms.
It takes a tempest
To reconcile
The worst and best.
All's changed by storms.

Said Ariel:
Nothing's profound
But change of heart.

ii

One soon discovers
There's something wrong
With every isle.
The trouble is
It's all too strange
Or else too real,
Wanting a sea-change.

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[1] Reprinted from *Botteghe Oscure*, Vol. VIII (1951).

All things contrary
Here compound:
Those absurd lovers
Who never kiss—
Not here, not now!
Lovers, they marry
Unspoiled by sweat—
Not here, not yet!
More than miracle
Should they beget!
One wonders how?

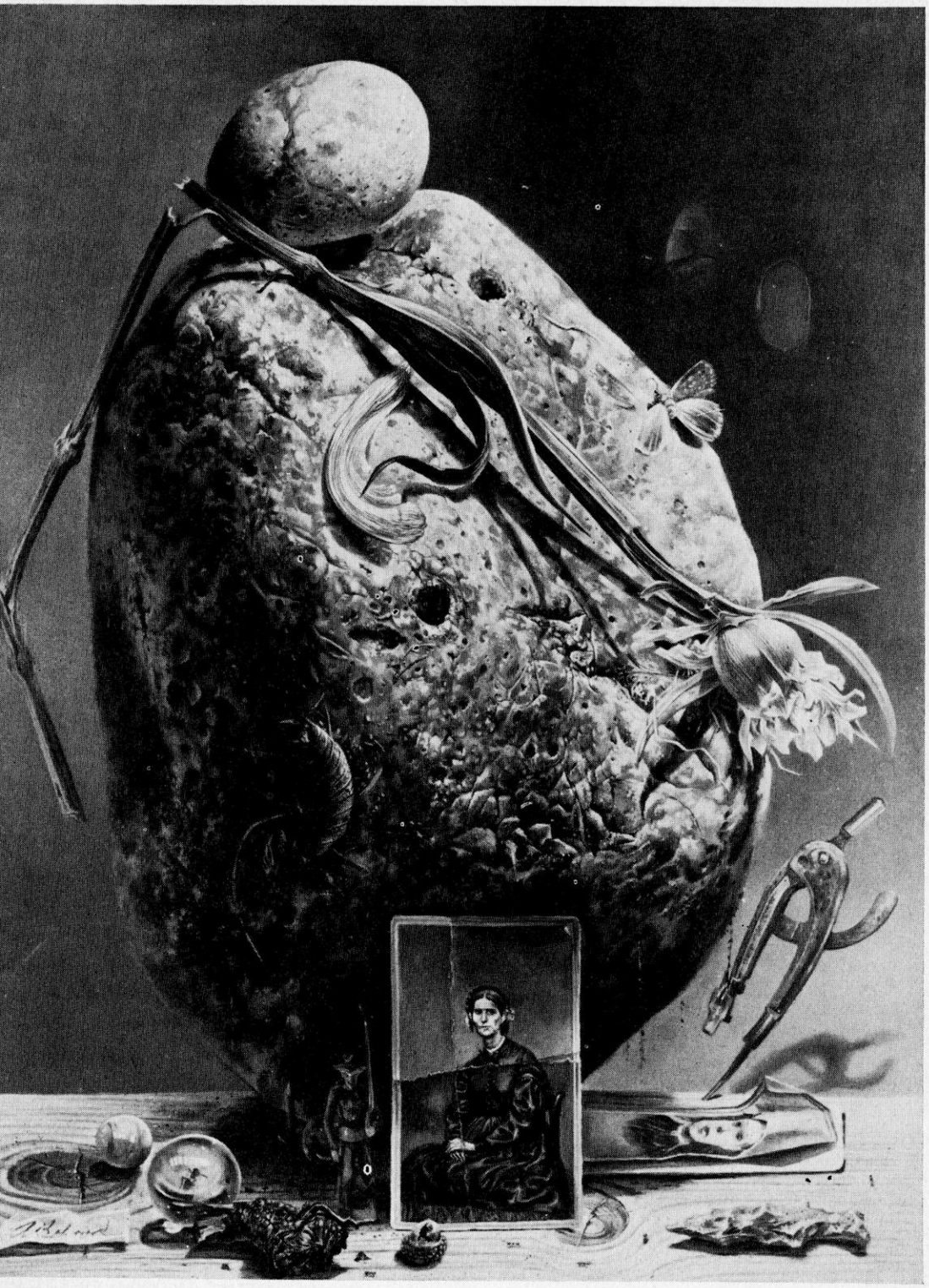
• • •

The virtue of art lies in detachment, in sequestering one object from the embarrassing variety. Until one thing comes out from the connection of things, there can be enjoyment, contemplation, but no thought.

—Emerson
in *Essay on Art*

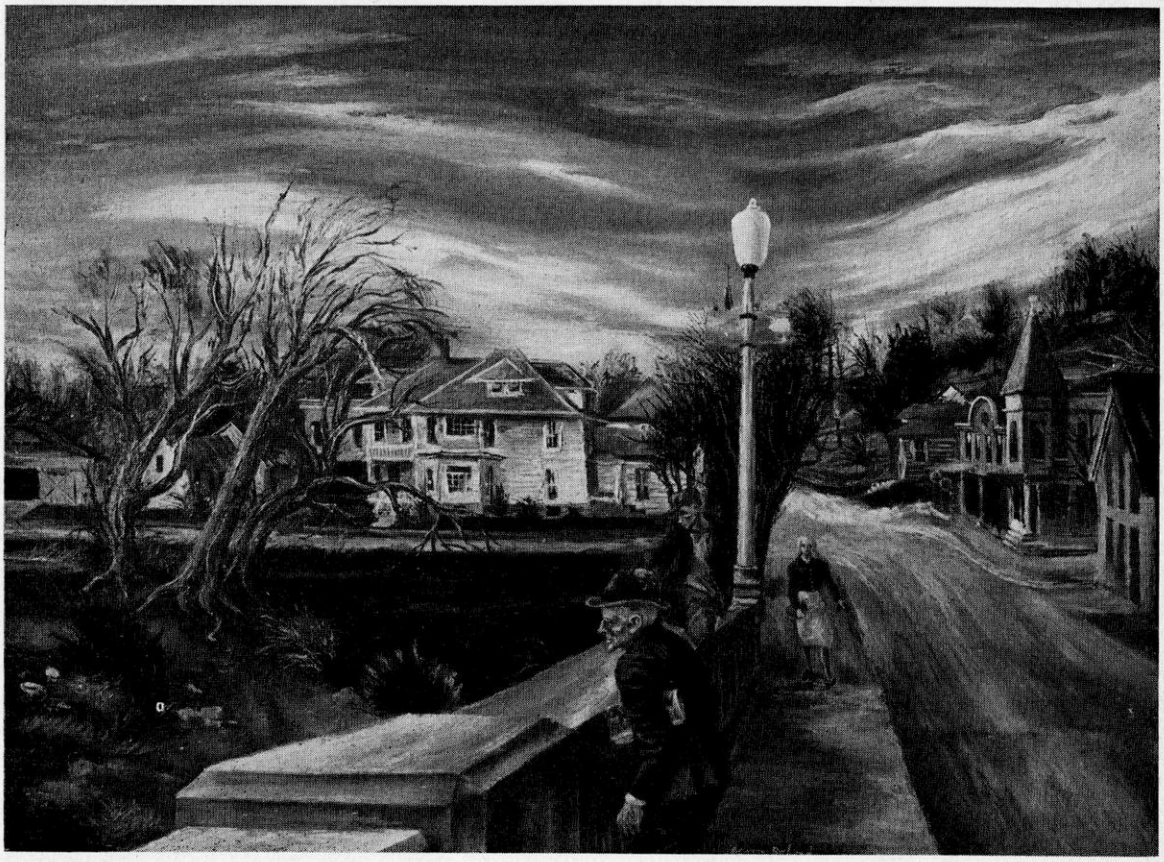
From a pot of wine among the flowers
I drank alone. There was no one with me—
Till, raising my cup, I asked the bright moon
To bring me my shadow and make us three.

—Li Po
from "Drinking Alone With the Moon"



The Rock—Aaron Bohrod

Algonquin, Illinois—Aaron Bohrod



notes by an artist-in-residence

by Aaron Bohrod

When an artist departs from the kind of work for which he has become known, he usually runs an economic risk. A certain time of experimentation is required to give him assurance of direction and an even longer period is often necessary for this new direction to catch on, if it is ever going to do so.

Thus I have the feeling that if I had not found myself in a favored position, it would have been extremely difficult for me to have effected a change from a customary and broad kind of landscape expression to a rather off-beat, intricate, and precise statement of still life. This change, which finds me absorbed in a way of work running counter to officially agreed upon tenets of what painting should be in our time, would have been difficult if not impossible without the kind of support accruing to me as artist-in-residence at The University of Wisconsin. And while the University's support goes only a portion of the way to providing a livelihood, it does go far enough to minimize the chances of falling into severe financial difficulties during certain unresponsive if not unproductive periods.

I will not pretend that I could not or would not have altered my trend of work if I had *not* had this support. Whatever the hazard, the artist must follow his aesthetic impulses. But the going would have been much tougher. Rembrandt might well have benefited from a residency of the kind now current when his work changed from a successful conventional portrait period to

the less popular later work motivated by psychological insight. His life might have been far easier and his production even greater.

The position of artist-in-residence shapes up somewhat differently at the various institutions which maintain such individuals. At the several universities of the country where he may be found, the artist is required to share his knowledge, experience, and talents with any person who may feel benefited through such consultation.

At Wisconsin this works out in a way where classes and groups of students, artist organizations, societies, and interested individuals in the University or from anywhere else in the state, and even from neighboring regions, will come into my studio to examine and discuss my work—or if they, too, are practitioners of the arts, will offer me their own works for examination and discussion. Whether this comes under the heading of "inspiration" I don't know. A polite person or two has described it so.

One unique element of the Wisconsin residency is the connection with the Rural Art Project wherein almost two thousand amateur painters, sculptors, and craftsmen are enrolled in a highly developed state-wide program. It is the privilege of the artist-in-residence to help guide this worthwhile project. These duties bring me in contact with a number of interesting and fresh talents of all ages and many different pursuits in, I think, a mutually advantageous arrangement. For this reason the resident artist is traditionally assigned to the College of Agriculture and to the specific Department of Agricultural and Extension Education.

Altogether the residency situation is one which, from the artist's point of view, has many advantages. While it affords a measure

of financial support and a good climate for aesthetic growth, it also makes him an integral and sometimes even a useful part of the immediate and larger state communities.

Artist-in-residence at The University of Wisconsin since 1948, Bohrod is represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Art Institute, Chicago; and the Boston Museum of Art. His paintings have been reproduced in Time, Life, Holiday, Coronet, *and* Esquire *magazines; he has painted several area studies for cities and states.*

• • •

The wonder of an artist's performance grows with the range of his penetration, with the instinctive sympathy that makes him, in his mortal isolation, considerate of other men's fate and a great diviner of their secret, so that his work speaks to them kindly, with a deeper assurance than they could have spoken to themselves.

—George Santayana
in *Reason in Art*

who are the american intellectuals?

"For the intellectual the false front of intellectual respectability by the American higher educational system is a disaster."

by Peter Yates

The more I learn about the betrayal of the intellectuals, the less am I able to determine who betrayed whom. One reads about the plight of the intellectuals, the alienation of the intellectuals. Which intellectuals? Limit the sad laboratory to those intellectuals we have most nearly under observation. Who are the American intellectuals?

I perceive, for example, that nobody who dashes off a piece about the plight of the intellectuals commits himself to membership in that betrayed, disinherited, alienated faction. It is always "they," not "we." Is our subject, to be more exact, the cowardice of the intellectuals? Is the individual American of intellectual pretensions or capacity afraid of the name, the pretensions, the capacity; or is it that he fears being linked with other intellectuals in a suspect community? Do we fear the suspicions of others or our own suspicions? I assume that intellectuals simply wear, like their familiar clothing, the nonintellectual mask of the society they live in.

Let us admit that nearly all of us who will read this article feel ourselves intellectuals. The subject is "we," not "they." All of us are aware of the societal taboos we unthinkingly accept and consciously, but speaking usually for others, protest against.

I am an intellectual myself. From early years I set out to be one. I did not have that term in mind; indeed it would not have occurred to me, until lately, as a term to describe my aspirations. To be more exact, I set out determined to have my share in the world of art, philosophy, and religion, beginning, as is usual in adolescence, with the last and working in the opposite direction.

I joined the church of my own volition at fourteen. That same year, in a moment of far-reaching religious experience, I entered upon a new management of my life and recorded the experience in my first sonnet. With all deference to Dr. Williams, the sonnet was the medium of the experience; I was not writing poetry as an art form designed to include what Dr. Williams calls "revelation"; the revelation and the form concurred in the experience.

At Princeton I pestered Paul Elmer More and took his course in Origins of Christianity, very nearly flunking the exam because of my determination to answer the final examination questions not according to his precepts but according to my convictions. The immature intellectual is always stumbling over his imperfectly conceived convictions. He is willing to attempt the irrational in place of the approved. Subsequent adventures of a like sort have not worked to my material advantage, but I have not shirked them. A mark of the intellectual is his capacity for ethical, spiritual, theoretical, aesthetic experience. In recent years there has been a tendency among intellectuals to "withdraw," so far as is possible, from experience and, from outside, parody it.

In 1939 I began in Los Angeles the concerts known as "Evenings on the Roof" with a program devoted entirely to music by Bartok, still a relatively little known composer. Music by Busoni, Schoenberg (the composer being present), and Ives followed; the programs went on for fifteen years and still continue, under other direction, as the "Monday Evening Concerts." During the fifteen years while I directed them these concerts adhered strictly to the formula, printed on our first program: "The concerts are for the pleasure of the performers and will be played regardless of audience."

Lately a group of us have begun in similar manner a series of monthly poetry readings, to which we have been drawing the same sort of small, attentive, eager, undependable audience, which in earlier years encouraged the continuation of "Evenings on the Roof."

This brief biography is offered, not as a testimonial to my use of my spare time but as an example of what is being done, has been done and can be done by any intellectual willing to devote himself, outside formal working hours, to the acculturation of eggheads.

Malcolm Cowley, in a recent *New Republic* article, asked, "Who Are the Intellectuals?" He answered himself, in discouraging fashion, by listing a half-dozen eminent names. He defined an intellectual as being, in the lowest or European meaning of the word, a member of the liberal professions, and in the highest sense a speculative thinker. Such a definition would have excluded Walt Whitman, poet.

My own definition would be broader: An intellectual is a person who thinks creatively, with purpose beyond his own immediate use or need. I do not stipulate that he think well or usefully. If he is not successful in realizing his purpose, or does so inadequately, he is nonetheless an intellectual. Goatherds and dictators have been intellectuals, among them John Muir and Napoleon. Some American intellectuals have been, admittedly, hoboes.

My own experience as an intellectual has brought me into communication and collaboration with others like myself, who are also intellectuals, persons of many and many-sided intellectual passions, whose worth as intellectuals in this nation is not attested by their eminence. A large anonymity of Americans, whether or not in intellectual professions, have their being as intellectuals; they are no less worthy or valuable because they are not recognized or famous.

In discussing the intellectual, Americans usually assert the same standard as our universities, that a mind is known by its published works. This exclusive attitude depreciates the intellectual. Like Russell Lynes's famous article, *Highbrow, Middlebrow, Lowbrow*, it is a sophisticated estimate directed to the upper-vulgar, who are able to share their common prejudices but are incapable of making real distinctions. Mr. Cowley's test questions for intellectuals would select only the pretenders who toboggan the currently accepted slants.

In all American intellectual activities, an educational criterion divides the wolves, who know how to work the system and are accredited by their degrees to do so, from the goats who won't or can't. This criterion parallels our cultural experience, except that, in poetry for instance, nearly all the distinguished examples will be with Emily Dickinson on the maverick side. An anthology of nineteenth-century English poetry would add only a few poets to the list of those accepted by their contemporaries. In any anthology of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American poetry, the contemporaneously unrecognized and rejected now crowd out the contemporaneously accepted. This should be a warning to us, but it proves not to be. Genteelism, the vice of the acculturated American, who desires not riches but a car and a house with a yard, chokes up his natural animadversions and leaves him in outward matters a conformist, an Aldrich poet, his slight acceptance measuring his slight impotence.

In music, this country offers more scholarships, money prizes, performing opportunities, and free trips abroad than are available to practitioners of any other art; yet the musical hopefuls so provided for end almost invariably as professors who incidentally compose. The mature American composer is a rarity. It is a question not of how much money but of status. I have heard a young composer curse the day he received another commission, lamenting that he had lost his freedom.

Throughout the cultural field, money in inordinate amounts is spent by foundations to encourage accredited professors in the indulgence of their hobbies, while the intellectual or artist who has no scholastic backing must sweat out his labors in private with no expectation of such help. In literature the schools control the little magazines; their contributors are usually from the faculties of other schools. Philosophy is in the same pickle. I could list exceptions, but the rule prevails. Only in architecture and in painting is there a field for the independent thinker.

In historical research, whatever the field, the emphasis is on documentation, broadly ignoring any relevant matters for which documentation is not available. Our scholars chase about after the wind-blown papers of the past. In scientific activities the demand for immediate results offers such vast reward that there is a danger we may soon wash away the last topsoil of our uncommitted thinking. Consider how many of the most distinctive American scientific achievements have been the work of immigrants or refugees from Russia, Poland, Italy, and lately China.

The theater, on and off Broadway and throughout the country, is closed to dramatists who might emulate the work of Lorca, Pirandello, Brecht. Only this season the attempt of Eric Bentley to present Brecht's *The Good Woman of Szechuan* at the Phoenix Theater in New York was given the deep freeze by the critics. Tennessee Williams admits no shame in publishing the originals of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Baby Doll* alongside the Broadway and motion picture versions prepared at the instruction of Elia Kazan. Does Kazan speak for the American audience, or does the audience speak only to Kazan? Continuing performances of Eugene O'Neill testify to our willingness to be as bored as we are disturbed by our own interminably unresolved problems.

Who are the American intellectuals? They are all around us. You will find them in the magazines, throughout the communication and misinformation media, pushing cultural enterprises

in their own communities, writing, scratching messages on the walls of the novel, teaching, researching, businessmen following the double paths of Charles Ives and Wallace Stevens, composing, poetizing, painting, examining for their own enlightenment, some just sitting thinking. The common mark of their intellectuality is a deep frustration, an awareness that they lack market values, that they must somehow apologize, insofar as they try to go beyond the limits set for them by society and by even the best-intentioned public organs. The disease has been called "alienation." I'm not sure I like the word or trust it; it confers a benison on a sad fact.

The truth goes much deeper: American intellectuals are isolated not only from society but from one another. Those of us who try in our small way to break through this isolation, for others as well as for ourselves, can attest the power of it. We are aware of a profound need; to reach and satisfy that need we must break through a nearly closed maze of editors, professors, cultural entrepreneurs, middlemen, who represent not what the public may conceivably wish to buy but what will sell. Through the blanking influence of this negativing attitude we try to reach our fellow intellectuals.

For the intellectual the false front of intellectual respectability maintained by the American higher educational system is a disaster. We allow some place for protest but none for outright, positive, radical contradiction. Speculation, the glorious work of intelligence in the most creative periods of human history, speculation for which the outcome is the only proof, speculation which lifts the ceiling off our merely informed prejudices, we leave to astronomers, otherwise dismissing it as a survival of the medieval outlook. The educational system looks for results. And even the pragmatic speculations of John Dewey have been obscured by the conflicting rush to devise exclusive practical systems. Experiment has come to signify a search for proof. The major literary work of the past half-century, according to the present estimate, the successive works by James Joyce, are shown by successive demonstrations to be closed, self-proved, no incident, no word

left to chance. The inheritors of Schoenberg and Webern are trying to impose the same self-contained finality on the writing of music. In this view the two free arts, painting and architecture, may be seen as rather romantic than progressive, the painter fleeing the "proof" of representation as the architect flees the tract house.

In the circumstances, American intellectuals have formed a habit of isolation. Those of them who had turned to revolutionary cultures for enlightenment have been repelled by an ideological authoritarianism more unyielding than our own, a culture in which all ideas are taken to have been proved. Our intellectuals may not prefer going it alone; they have lost the practice or capacity to do otherwise. I could list a half-dozen in my own immediate acquaintance who are equipped to make important contributions or communications to other intellectuals but have lost the zest or the desire to do so. They have learned that those who might listen are too busy wrapping themselves in their own predicament.

These are spiritual characteristics of an American intellectual. His conscience is often not in what he is doing, his day's work or his intellectual or aesthetic bread-and-butter, but beyond, in an idealism of indulgence, over which presides a demon of self-criticism. He wants to be bigger and better by some criterion of improvement, more influential, a guide, director, inventor; to be in a visible manner liberated out of his circumstances, freed into his future, his symbol the independent home, however hideous; the nomad automobile, the self-owned boat, the private verse-scheme, however unrewarding; the aesthetic, academic, philosophical individual enterprise. No one is more lonely than the American intellectual: he cultivates or refuses the national gregariousness as he discountenances or surrenders to his vices, considering them rather as bad habits, his pleasure and in some way the price of individually asserted liberty.

For he must pay a price. He knows this; it is at the root of all his actions. He must mug the role, dress down and talk up the

part. He has not sold his soul to the devil: he is convinced that by some obscure bargain the devil, unpersonified, is the price of his soul. Whatever may be his background or sociological or religious ideology, the American intellectual is today a more savage, unregenerate puritan than were ever his stepforefathers. His idealism and corresponding cynicism are practically incapable of satisfaction. He cuts himself off in his private world; whether or not he makes his private cosmos visible, as the artist tries to, he lives in it, judges by it, and by it is himself inwardly, repeatedly, disastrously, and without appeal condemned.

This private world consists in a vision of possibilities, not a celebration; it rejects realities present as unregenerately as it proclaims their inalienable authority over every public movement. Within this solstitial polarity, this hesitation at the extreme of every action, this insistence upon self-reversal, the characters of liberal, reactionary, artist, and demagogue converge: ambition at the public centre, ambition no less relenting at the extremes of hoboism, individuality, isolation; self-deprecation that is not modesty and despair that is refusal of humility in the environment and at each remove of faith; rejection of all authority except that which one chooses, modifying it at wish, and a craving for direction which chaotically pours together an insane cocktail of untested, authoritarian notions; the less credible the more desirable; self-chosen, self-directed eponymity expecting to govern itself in a despair of democracy. Senator Tom Watson was not a less genuine or indigenous American intellectual than Clarence Darrow.

The true intellectual, though he may be conservative in home life or politics, is in his field of intellectual activity always radical. But society, even our intellectual society, having buried the radicals of another era whom it respected, has no appetite for new radicals. It regards them in political distrust and apolitical apathy. While decrying success, it sets up a standard of success; while decrying conformity, it insists on conformity. The American intellectual is a fighter, a radical, and therefore excluded; or he is afraid of his fellows. Fear directs him to conformity. Per-

haps no other country requires of its creative thinkers so constant compromise, if they would be heard. No other society so richly rewards the creative thinker who gives up his independence. For the thinker who will not compromise there is the stigma recently attached to Gertrude Stein by a reviewer in *The Atlantic Monthly*—"Megalomania."

Take for a scripture these lines by Marianne Moore:

> Affronted by 'private lies and public shame,'
> blessed is the author
> who favors what the supercilious do not favor—
> who will not comply. Blessed, the unaccommodating
> man.

Peter Yates is a widely published music critic and author. With his pianist wife, Frances Mullen, he founded "Evenings on the Roof"—chamber music concerts in Los Angeles—and directed them for fifteen years. He is a contributing editor to Arts and Architecture.

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The ideal artist, like the ideal philosopher, has all time and all existence for his virtual theme. Fed by the world he can help to mould it, and his insight is a kind of wisdom, preparing him as science might for using the world well and making it more fruitful.

—George Santayana
in *Reason in Art*

awe

by George Hartung

What if the night should now abruptly end,
The sky erupt in midnight dawn, drowning
The stars in blue oblivion? Birds singing, flowers
Unfolding—the world awake, would we descend
Our stairs in wonder, leaving the door ajar
Behind, and greet the wide-eyed neighbor in the street;
Or turn in terror from the humming clock,
Denying the sun, the world in brightness there?

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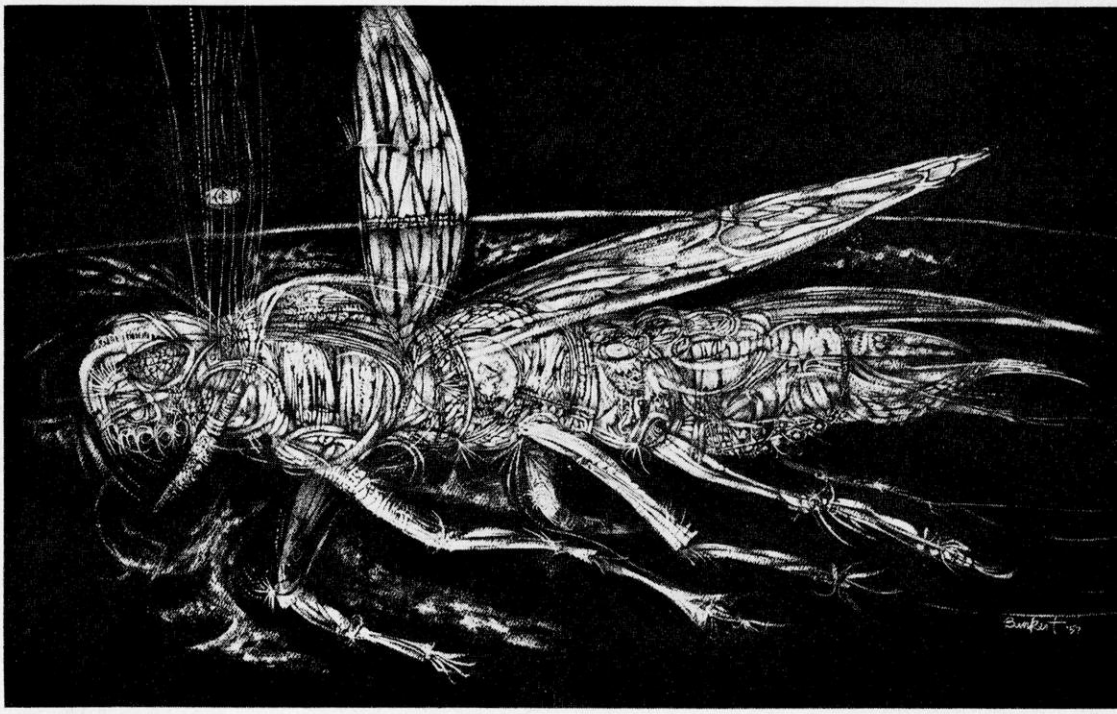
Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man.

—Cardinal Newman
in *Idea of a University*

Emerging Insect—Bob Burkert



new regional developments:

a wisconsin arts foundation and council

In the early summer of 1957, after many informal meetings of a group of persons interested in the arts, the Wisconsin Arts Foundation and Council became a reality. Initial impetus for the unique Foundation-Council came from The University of Wisconsin Extension Division's Arts Committee, from which Robert Schacht was appointed to head an *ad hoc* group composed of leaders from throughout the state.

At its final meeting in May the *ad hoc* group made plans to incorporate the foundation and council. Board members elected were Janice Kee, Free Library Commission; Ellis Burcaw, Green Bay Public Museum; Mary John, Fred Miller Theatre; and Robert Gard, Wisconsin Idea Theatre.

The Wisconsin Arts Foundation and Council is now incorporated and in process of fund raising. A major goal of the foundation is to aid talented individuals as well as worthy community arts programs. The council will develop a state arts center to facilitate cooperation among Wisconsin's many art programs.

—The Editors.