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Arts in Society

The Social Uses of Art

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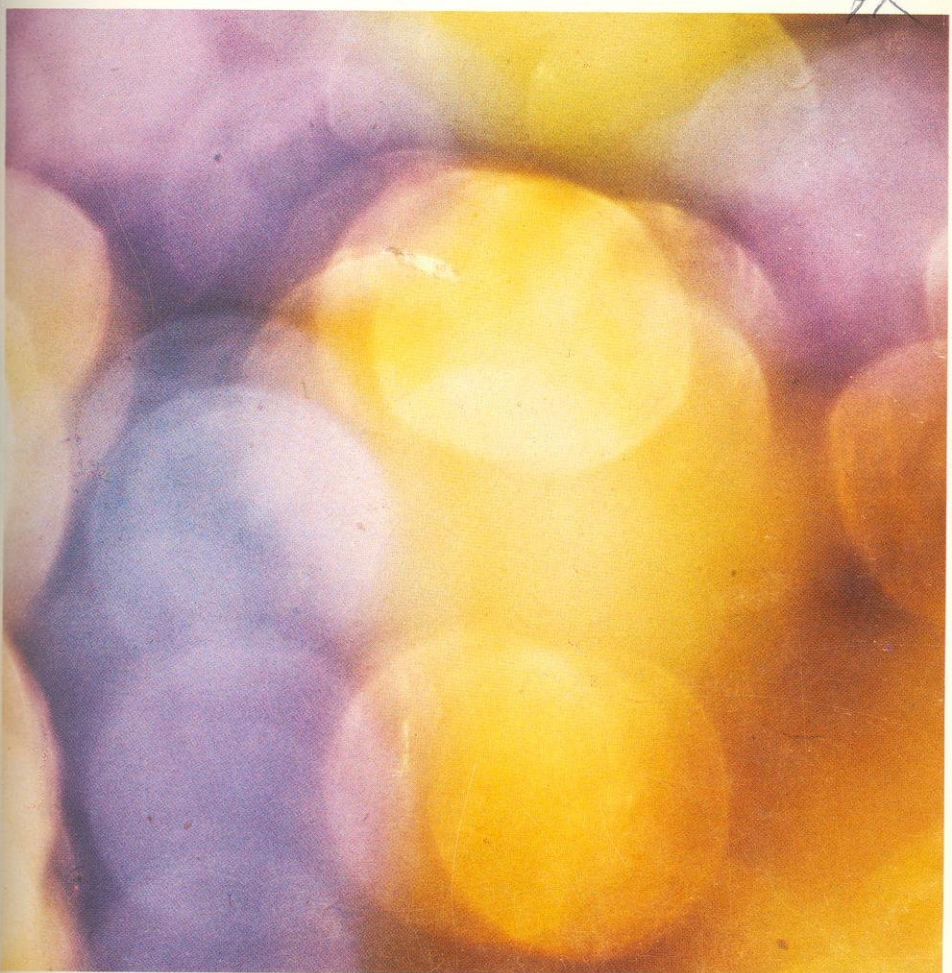

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Arts in Society

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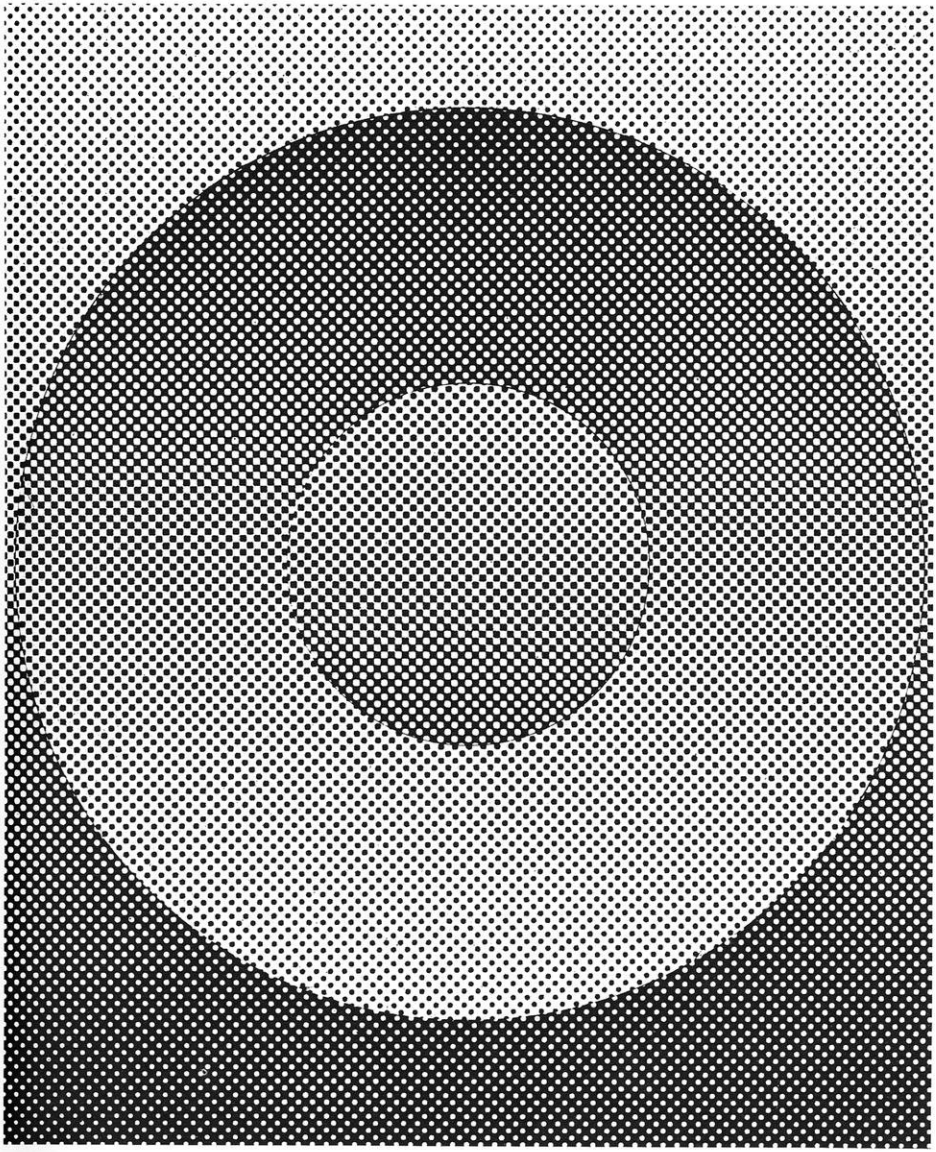


The "Lotus Bowl" is Subversive

(editorial)

The arts can and ideally should have many social uses. But the single most important one springs from the attributes which are deeply inherent in their creativity. It is as *vision* that the arts have their greatest social utility.

The vision in art can vary infinitely in kind, directness, and impact, ranging from the quiet, internalized empathies evoked by the sheer beauty of form of the "Lotus

Bowl" from the long-ago Chinese Sung Dynasty to the immediacy of militantly politicalized feelings aroused by a recent LeRoi Jones play. Howsoever experienced, all visions in art which are creatively valid speak eloquently for man, denoting his larger possibilities, extending the horizons of his consciousness and understanding, challenging the systems of doctrine and dogma which narrow and constrict human aspiration. In an important sense, the "Lotus Bowl" can be considered as much of a social statement as LeRoi Jones's *The Dutchman.*

One must grant, of course, that although the immanent energy of great art spans the centuries, that the urgency and valuation of its eloquence must depend finally upon the particular human context in which it is experienced. To wit, against the measure of their bleak technological environment and the intense spiritual hungers of the age, few segments of our population are likely to see much compelling *necessity* in the "Lotus Bowl." Its message is too subtle and too muted, its resonances too distant from the temper and tenor of these times. Thus, it is evident that the burden of the case for the social utility of art's vision must always be borne by the vitality and pertinence of contemporary expression.

And here we face a dilemma. There is a great deal wrong with how artistic vision operates today in the American experience. In fact, almost everything is wrong. The very marginality of the arts in the society—the widespread evidence of neglect, irrelevance, inutility(!)—strongly belies any case one might try to make. In this connection, many spokesmen and supporters of art make the mistake of speaking far too exhortatively and piously on behalf of what is, while neglecting to acknowledge all that is perverse and askew. Since *what is* is not really terribly impressive nor of much valid social utility, the temptation is too strong to answer: "If *this* is all the arts are about, why even bother!" And in the main, despite considerable infusions of money and energy, that has been the substance of society's response.

No, the case for the social utility of art's vision must be made in a more complex and difficult way. While offering some evidence from the present, and a great deal from the past, the stress must be on the potential, on what might be achieved if society only had the will and wisdom to undertake the proper kind of building. By and large, that is the approach of this issue of *Arts in Society.*

In the lead piece, "Social Uses of the Notion of Art," Vytautas Kavolis asserts the primacy of a generalized notion of art among the populace at large as a vital prerequisite for the flowering of creative expression. He stresses the considerable challenge of achieving such a condition in an advanced industrial society.

Eugene Kaelin and Leslie Hedley take issue with our patterns of institutionalizing the arts. The former in "The Social Uses of Art: A Plea for the Institution" rationalizes the need for more adequate institutionalization and describes the conditions on which it should be ideally predicated. In a slashing polemic, "Art Versus Society?", the latter seeks to lay bare the corruptions and exploitative patterns of the institutional complex purveying contemporary artistic expression, most of which Hedley views as being disgracefully shoddy, shallow, and dishonest.

Lee Baxandall, in "Old Arts, New Integrations," is concerned with the institutions of art, too, but from the standpoint of the possibility of their reform in order to achieve what he feels to be a desired integration between the energies and motivations of the counter-culture and the old arts. He suggests that in striving for vivid political statement, the counter-culture had perhaps been too prone to abandon many of those qualities of art which give it the power of eloquence.

This vexing question of how to reconcile the need for the larger view of the nature of reality and truth associated with great artistic vision with the pressing need for social commitment and relevance will no doubt bedevil the culture to the end of time. But it is perhaps now apparent, at least to our time, that political dogma, as

an oversimplified view of reality, represents one major hazard, and the removal of too many barriers between art and life, another. The former hobbles the freedom of the spirit, and the latter the freedom of the imagination. This is not to suggest that the artist should remove himself from the passions of his time. Quite the contrary. As Donald Egbert wrote, "An artist's social commitment can furnish him with an incentive to produce art while also influencing his choice of subject matter." Recall Bertolt Brecht's poem:

> Within me there is a conflict between
> The delight of a blooming apple tree
> And the horror of a Hitler speech;
> But only the latter forces me to my desk.

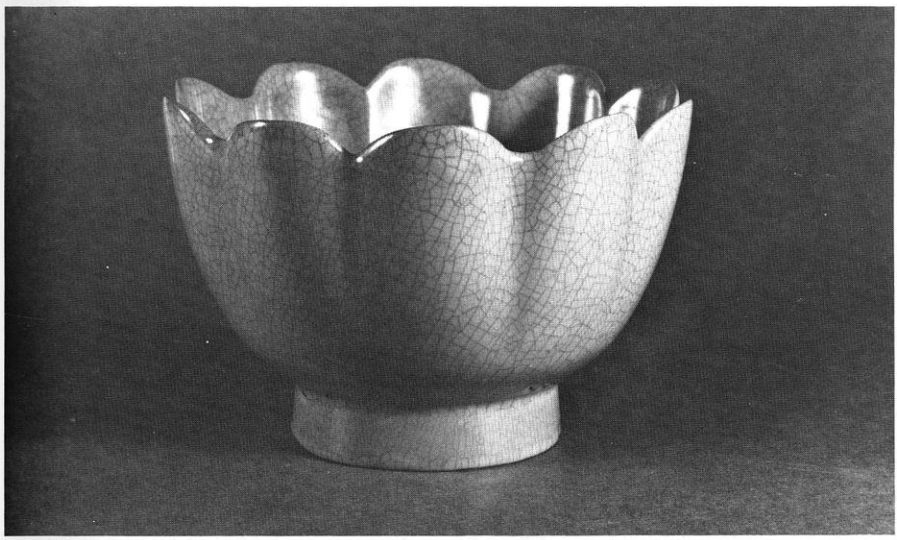
Art can and does have an important political role, but above ideology. It is in this light that William Reichert's "Art, Nature, and Revolution" views the arts as being not only essential to the health of society but serving as the chief causative factor in significant social change. For Reichert—a political scientist, by the way—the artist historically has been the true revolutionary, benignly employing symbol and aesthetic form to lead people to accept the outline of a new and better kind of world.

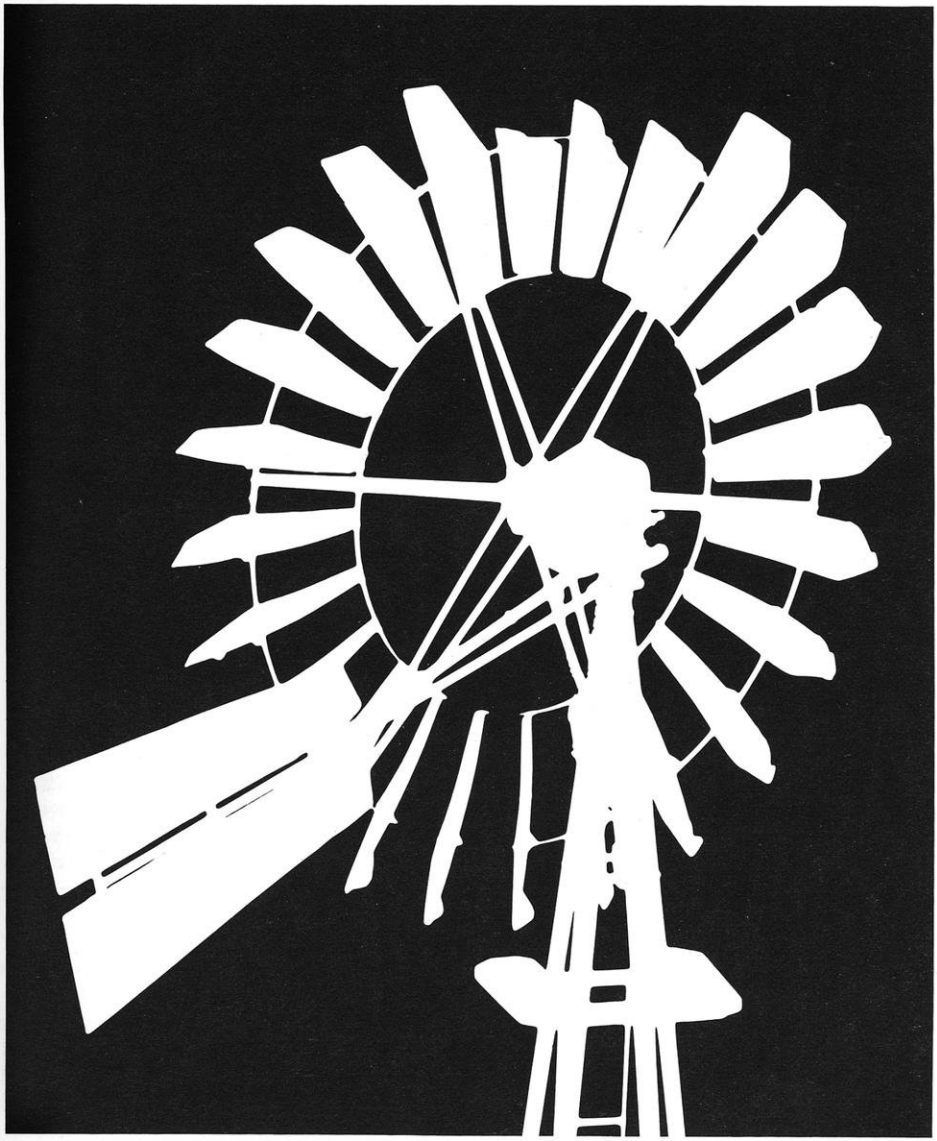
But while Reichert's words may give cheer to many flagging spokesmen for art, it remains poignantly true that today's artist in America leads no one anywhere. The stern imperative of Vytautas Kavolis, noted earlier—the necessity of a prevailing generalized notion of art—must remind us that we have much building to do among the great mass of the people. In this effort, Lloyd New's "The Role of Art in the Education of the American Indian," and Martha Gilmore's "Twenty Shades of Blue" seem to offer substantial and optimistic clues. The former effectively highlights the potential of the arts in general education as a tool for achieving personal integration, a most fruitful notion that we are just beginning to explore in this country. The latter describes how in one community of considerable deprivation, the black inner city of Washington, D.C., the arts are being used as a tool for communal integration. In both efforts the arts become a key for finding identity and asserting a sense of worth.

Isn't this what the arts are really all about? And aren't these exactly the places that we have to start our building process—in the school, and in the community?

Edward L. Kamarck

Lotus Bowl *Sung Dynasty (A.D. 1107-1127)*
The National Palace Museum,
Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China





Social Uses of the Notion of Art

Vytautas Kavolis

Professor and Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Dickinson College. He is the author of *Artistic Expression: A Sociological Analysis* and *History on Art's Side: Social Dynamics in Artistic Efflorescences.*

1

Art, we might assume, is created because people are interested in it. But why are people interested in art? Or, conversely,

why are they uninterested in art, even when it is being created and exists in their environment in a greater profusion of forms and impressions than ever before?

A good argument could be made for the view that interest in art arises from the generalized notion of art and is much less likely to develop where such a notion either does not exist or is preserved in some vestigial form, unable to regenerate itself from the daily flow of experience (e.g., in the urban working class as contrasted to the traditional peasantry)—or where the notion of art has ceased to be plausible.

The basic (historically evolved and cross-culturally validated) notion of art contains five defining elements:

1. It is *man-* (or woman-) made, an artifact not provided by nature.

2. It is *well*-made, an object or performance of outstandingly skillful execution, a criterion that initially selects "art" from a mass of "artifacts."

3. The goodness of its making *transcends* the functional utility (if any) of the object or performance, the social purposes for which it was originally intended or subsequently used, and the aesthetic framework (if any) within which it has been conceived by its author. It is this kind of "transcendence" that makes the aesthetic quality of works of art recognizable beyond any particular sociohistorical setting.

4. This quality does not originate in the attitudes of any group of art perceivers or in the stylistic idiom or the contents of the work of art, but is inherent in the *order* that has emerged in the process of working it out and whose demands on its creator the latter has so adequately recognized, in concrete detail, that the result remains admirable even to those to whom both the elements and the totality of this particular order are culturally and psychologically alien. (In its purest case, artistic value can be defined as formal compellingness of substantively alien perceptions.) What is admired, in the purest case of aesthetic appreciation, by the perceiver of a work of art, is the perfection of the working out of the specific discipline that a particular act of creation requires of its author; the sense of adequacy to what can only be called "the nature of a created order."

5. This order is, however, of such character that the working out of it, and only an adequate working out of it, gives a kind of sensuous pleasure, an *emotional resonance* that enhances one's sense of existence, to its maker and others, in his (her) own society and elsewhere, whether its maker has intended to give such pleasure or not. Whatever the experience of the maker in producing it, a work of art exists only if it is capable of giving this kind of emotionally enhancing sensuous pleasure to others than those immediately involved in its production.

The dynamic paradox underlying the generalized notion of art as a human accomplishment is twofold: man recognizes the claims that his works make upon him, and he acquires and gives a gratifying emotional resonance through the working out of a discipline. By refusing to honor the claims of his own works, he destroys or diminishes them, and by refusing to work out a discipline appropriate to their character he reduces the pleasure that originates from his actions.

This is what the notion of art, more or less clearly, has always implied, even in preliterate societies, where this notion was not consciously recognized. (Generalized notions of this kind may be most effective precisely where their operations are not reified, and distorted, into ideologies.)

2

Conceived in this manner, the notion of art may well be the single most potent invention in the whole history, and prehistory, of human imagination, far more potent than any specific works embodying it. (And more enduring, since the notion of art can be continuously retained even in a society that does not preserve a single one of its products embodying this notion, e.g., where body decoration is the prevailing art.)

What is "powerful" about the generalized notion of art is the postulation it implies that:

1. Humans can, by their actions, produce emotionally gratifying orders, physical or symbolic (although not all orders they produce are emotionally enhancing; indeed some objects labelled "art," today perhaps more than ever, are emotionally constricting, or depleting, in their effects).

2. Humans can recognize and, in a disciplined way, accept the demands of the orders they are producing—i.e., the responsibilities imposed upon them by their own works (although they do not always fully understand or have the capacity to fulfill these responsibilities).

3. An order in which gratification is achieved by fulfilling the demands of one's own creative work is recognizable to at least some people other than its producer—particularly to people also skilled in producing artistic objects or performances. Moreover, if such orders are capable of being preserved in an objectified form or in memory, they can withstand the critical judgment of people in times and places other than that in which they have been produced (although only comparatively few works of art do in fact survive such tests).

What this means is the morally—and ontologically—important conclusion that when humans grasp, and adequately articulate, the demands of what they are working on, their works are not arbitrary, not limited to being their own ego (or ethnocentric) trips of no general significance or validity. It is the thorough understanding and perfect fulfillment of the demands of the "nature" of one's own creations that endure, embodied in them, as the closest approximation to "eternal" and "common human" values. Values arise from the perfection of the grasp of what one is doing.

These are notions without which significant art is inconceivable. But they are also notions which, nurtured by art, suggest a general metaphor for comprehending the manner in which significance—or validity, or poignancy—is generated anywhere in human existence. It is, moreover, not only an analytical framework, but also a criterion for evaluative judgment—of both societies (to what degree do they permit human beings to generate significance?) and of individual humans (to what degree do they act, within the limits of the possible, in such ways as to generate significance?). Thus the quality of life—or even "health"—of both societies and individual personalities can be evaluated by the degree to which they approach the generalized notion of "art" (a criterion empirically superior, in dealing with human realities, to any generalized notion of an obligatory "nature," and containing more precise diagnostic criteria than such notions as "faith").

The generalized notion of art is indeed the universal paradigm for a critical analysis of all human ways of life, in all civilizations and historical epochs, considered not in terms of a particular type of their effects (e.g., productivity level, suicide rate etc.), but in terms of comprehensive relationships between human works and the understanding, or lack of it, by their makers, of what their works require of them; and between the disciplines accepted, or not accepted, in the production of these works and the gratifications arising, or not arising, from their execution. As a paradigm for judgment, the generalized notion of art is disturbing by the critical light it throws on any existing reality, but it also provides an orientation for overcoming its deficiencies.

3

If the generalized notion of art is socially useful, why is it being abandoned by so many contemporary artists? Why does it seem to be losing its plausibility precisely for the people who have been generating and regenerating it for ages? Is this a part of the wholesale repudiation by avant-garde artists of everything utilitarian?

The notion of art, forged in the practice of generations of imaginative workers, is undermined by the experience of masses of industrial and bureaucratic workers. It seems that, in advanced industrial societies, only in personal relations and in certain kinds of ideological politics—but

nowhere in the sphere of economic production, including the production of works of art—is the generalized notion of art still easily at home. (But if mechanistic modes of production and administration eliminate the *experience* of art, they increase the sense of *need* for it. The notion of art may yet be recreated from this need.)

Beyond this, the generalized notion of art can lose its credibility for two fundamental sociopsychological reasons: (a) such contentment with existing social arrangements that no symbolic designs to transcend them are felt to be needed, or (b) such despair with existing social arrangements and their possible changes that any symbolic designs worked out by human beings for transcending them must be regarded as mere self-deception. The logical response to the first attitude is to be artists in a manner governed wholly by habit rather than to work at producing socially transcendant, emotionally resonant orders of art. The logical response to the second attitude is to debunk the "illusion" of art by committing acts of artistic self-destruction (or to abandon the making of art altogether and go off into mysticism).

These are general sociopsychological attitudes, to which both artists and nonartists (to varying degrees at different times) are subject. Both attitudes are operating, to a high degree and in most complex interpenetrations, in the contemporary artistic avant garde.

The modern artistic enterprise has, furthermore, generated two, at their inception, specifically artistic ideologies that tend to undermine the generalized notion of art: (a) the romanticism of self-expression, individual or by now more frequently collective (e.g., in the "participation" arts), an ideology implying that everything in the "self," or in what the "self" perceives or experiments with, is equally worth expressing, and whatever is expressed is "art"; and (b) the romanticism (or surrealism) of the artistic role, the belief that everything done while occupying the social role of the artist, or claiming such a role, or trying to subvert it, is "art." These ideologies have had a much needed liberating effect on the flow of modern art, but they are not by themselves sufficient as foundations for its creation.

More recently, two other artistic ideologies have emerged, (c) surrender to the technological thrust (e.g., electronic art), and (d) the self-sufficiency of conceptual construction (art works arising solely as analyses of formal concepts implied in other art works, or intended to be sufficient solely as analyses of contemporary civilization, or existing only as statements of the principles for their making). These two ideologies articulate some artists' sense of being overwhelmed by the imaginative qualities exhibited by the contemporary scientific-technological civilization, far more impressive than those of which they themselves, as artists, seem to be capable.

All four of these ideologies are destructive of the generalized notion of art—the first two because, at least in theory, they reject the responsibility of working out well-made objects or performances, and the latter two, because they refuse, as a matter of principle, to give an emotional resonance or indeed, in many cases, any sort of sensuous pleasure.

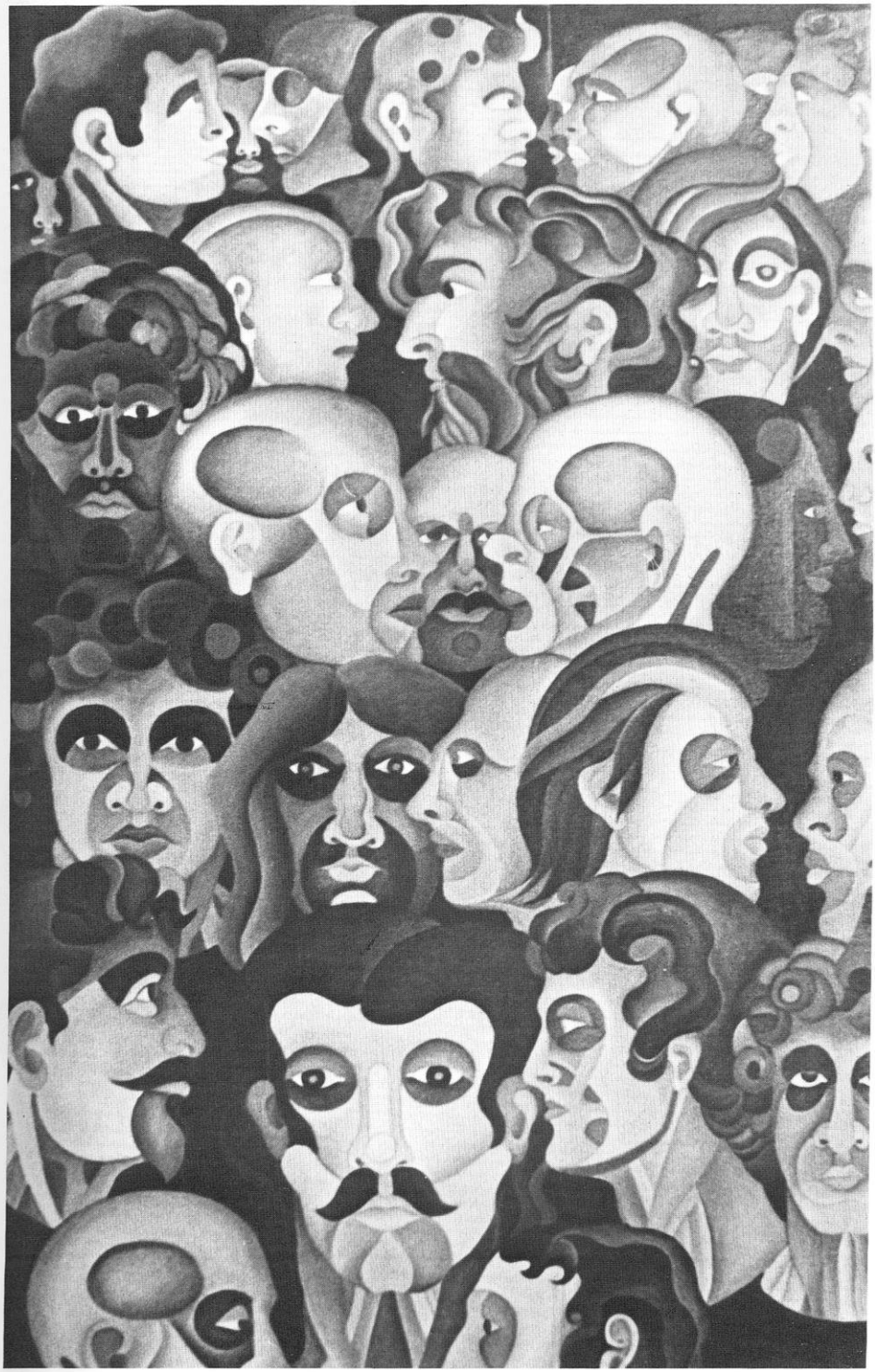
Propagandistic—or "consciousness-raising"—conceptions of art undermine the possibility of art by holding it down to the social purposes for which it is intended and, if successful, by eliminating its "transcendence"—i.e., its ability to communicate beyond the socio-aesthetic framework within which it has been produced. But strangely enough, this conception, while quite incapable of generating significant works of art, does not seem to destroy the generalized notion of art. It preserves the promise which it cannot itself meet.

4

What happens when (or where) the generalized notion of art loses its plausibility?

One would assume that the impact on society would be a reduced trust in the

Richard Karwosky
The Barn
oil 1971



potential worthwhileness of human efforts, in the human ability to distinguish between what is worthwhile and what is not, in the relative durability of the best of human achievements (=values), and in the capacity of people to conceive of more emotionally gratifying designs for their existence and to progress effectively, in concrete detail, toward their realization. In short, the discreditation of the generalized notion of art, in part by the artists themselves, is one source of *anomie*. (To ward off the opposite danger, an exaggerated and ultimately self-destructive confidence in the power of art, a continuous social criticism of art would have been sufficient.)

For art, I would expect the following consequences of a decline in the generalized notion of art:

1. Whatever art is intended to express, it increasingly expresses its own impossibility.

2. Since such art ceases to be ontologically and morally significant, spontaneous interest in art declines (or is invested in

Jacob Landau
from CHARADES
Portfolio of Ten Original Lithographs

Robert Gwathmey
Tin of Lard
Photo by Walter Rosenblum


Gwathmey

the art of other times and places, perceived as more significant)—and has to be stimulated by increasingly artificial means.

3. As the magnitude of this task increases, so much imagination is invested in the artificial means of stimulating an interest in art that the means become more challenging than the art that they are intended to stimulate an interest in.

4. Art creation is absorbed into aesthetic education.

5. Art history is transformed into the history of art interpretation, illustrated by reproductions interesting mainly as points of reference for more genuinely rewarding *texts.*

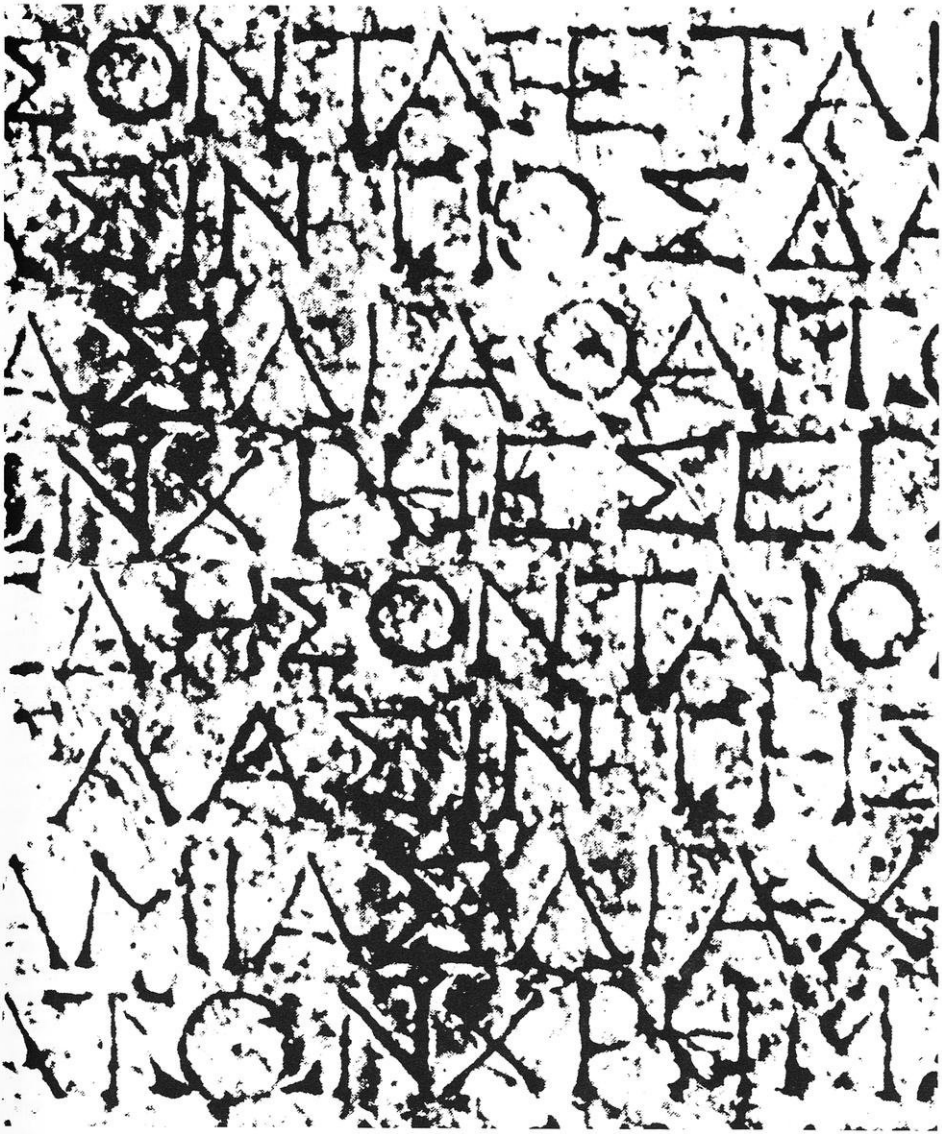
6. The only remaining art becomes the art of interpretation, and then of interpretation of interpretations.

5

It is in the short-run interest of art interpreters to promote artistic ideologies which render their own work more exciting than that of the artists whose products they interpret. The spread of "anti-artistic" ideologies among contemporary artists, perhaps especially among those educated in the universities, represents, to a high degree, the increasing domination of art interpreters over the artists, an effort (whether intended or not) to transform the latter into a means for enhancing the cultural significance of the former (an exact analogy to the use of artists by the merchants of culture as a means for enriching themselves). Art interpreters, by the logic of the operation of their profession, are bound to place themselves among the destroyers of the generalized notion of art (just as culture merchants, in a mass market, do)—unless they have an ethical commitment to its preservation.

6

Is it *impossible* today to achieve what the generalized notion of art postulates, or merely *incredible,* in spite of occasional evidence to the contrary, that such things could be done by artists—or by anyone—in an advanced industrial society?



The Social Uses of Art: A Plea for the Institution

Eugene Kaelin

Aesthetician, writer on the arts, and Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University.

In his encyclopedic *Art and Freedom,* which is advertised as "A Historical and Biographical Interpretation of the Relations between the Ideas of Beauty, Use and

Freedom in Western Civilization from the Greeks to the Present Day,"[1] Horace Kallen attributed the growth of art as an independent institution to two principal reasons. The first is economic; and the second, aesthetico-ideological.

The economic argument runs as follows. In the wake of the industrial revolution, the older patronage system was on the way out along with the landed aristocracy, and the rising bourgeoisie had other interests, most of which were incompatible with the creation and appreciation of art. So artists were forced to scrounge for a living. At the same time the loss of a fixed market was depressing their economic prospects, however, they were relieved of any external demands by a client on the nature of the object to be produced. In strict libertarian fashion, they lost their security, but in the process became more free. As Kallen puts it,

> *Writers and image-makers detach from the patronage on which they had depended for support and become enterprisers on their own, through the medium of their own symbols, and not for a patron ordering in advance but for an open and unknown market.*[2]

If the market was truly open, it was still unknown; and the most enterprising of the struggling artists were those who developed the kind of symbols capable of creating an aesthetic demand.

In our own day, the patronage of the arts is performed by the great universities of America—not as consumers of the aesthetic product, to be sure, but as employers of the otherwise economically unsuccessful artistic entrepreneurs, and tastes are literally made by the policies of large philanthropic organizations whose contributions are regulated by panels of "experts," nominated in the first place by the museums and galleries that profit by the support doled out in this manner with the best of intentions. The museum directors are, for the most part, trained in art history, in which judgments of value are continuously traded off against judgments of fact, the values of today and tomorrow against those of yesterday and beyond.

Privately run galleries are another matter. Forward looking, enterprising directors have become the new middle men in the art Establishment. Like lawyers in a case of equity, they settle for thirty-three and one-third percent of the take on each purchase—just to cover their overhead. But much in the same way as the expert panels of judges who legislate what is to be supported by foundations, the gallery director finds himself in a new position of power to make taste: simply by demanding from his stable of artists, still scrounging for a living, what will sell on the active market. The search for bread is not one of the changing conditions in our changing world. Only the institutions surrounding the arts change character.

To view the relationship between the aesthetic impulse and institutional involvement as necessarily an exploitation, however, would be a primary case of cultural myopia. That modern industrial society should look upon artists and their works as useless (by philistines) or frivolous (by puritans) or as sinful (by moralists) is only interpreted (by dilettantes) as proof of the unholy alliance which binds together the power structure determining the major values operative in the art world today. We know, for example, that at earlier moments in the history of taste, the aesthetic institution was bound to activities other than the enjoyment of an experience for the sake of that experience, which is still the only meaningful interpretation of the old aesthetic slogan, art for the sake of art. For the sake of what else, besides this, the only truly free aesthetic motive could art be pursued? Herbert Read sought an answer to this query in his *Art and Society*.[3]

Read has shown that art was used as a magic rite by the paleolithic cave painters to secure luck in the hunt; already, then, art was economic, with payment in kind rather than specie. And the arts in the Australian and African bush exhibited a new tendency, supported by a new philosophical belief, animism. Since every living thing was believed to be animated by a controlling spirit, it was thought that one could control the spirit by manipulating the form of the thing. Artists then began to

exploit the likeness of a representation with the thing represented in such a way as to influence that thing by controlling the representation. While it could be said that the same function may be found in cave art, it should be noted that the cave paintings represented animals as killed or trapped as the hunters hoped later to find them; but they are still physical and organic things. Art did not become religious until the represented object or event was interpreted as a spiritual occurrence. Serving an economic function magically to provide food for cavemen, art became transmuted by bushmen into a ritual whose function was to placate marauding spirits,[4] and the magic of the cave became supplemented by the mysticism of the bush. Our own medieval art was still religious, with a change in belief only. It allowed for the mediation of the two worlds that haunted the everyday existence of the members of the Church militant, nature and supernature.[5] Icons became the means for contemplating the supernatural on the face of nature itself.

Read's arguments are convincing because he documents his points richly with reproductions of the art discussed. The religious and the aesthetic motive are both visible on every religious icon of authentic date. But for us to be able to read the supernatural on the face of nature, the work of art must represent a natural object infused with the supernatural light. Artists who could do this were the real priests of Christian mysticism, the hierophants of the new religion that had rejected the Mosaic ban on image-making. Later the iconoclasts would smash the idols because the uninitiate tended, like the earlier Hebrews, to mistake the natural for the supernatural object; and Renaissance artists, in the mode of the ancient Greeks whose love of nature always was stronger than their love of the gods, forsook the supernatural altogether, celebrating the beauty of the natural object as it reveals itself to our inquisitive eye. Love can be either sacred or profane, and each has its charms, to be appreciated for what it is. It was this thoroughly secularized art that produced the confrontation of Botticelli and Savonarola, of the Medici Popes and the growing demands of the faithful, who protested this faithless display of sensuosity and demanded a return to the simple needs of the human spirit in search of the divine.

That this move, too, should fail was attested by the ironic development of baroque music, the most beautiful of which was written by Bach for performance in the vain protestant's Sunday service. But then, music was relatively safe; for it had no external subject, the religious feeling of music being the configuration in a sensuous stream of sound. Adequate, at one time in the history of humanity, to permit the expression of the aesthetic impulses of men, religion, like economics before and since, has not been big enough, nor elastic enough, to contain it.

Read's own account of the changing uses of art in society is an attempt to explain this failure of non-aesthetic institutions to liberate the aesthetic consciousness of men. In the separation of the secular from the religious motives in the pursuit of art, man was led to discover something else, like Oedipus seeking the reason for Thebes' misfortune only to find himself. Some mysteries are better left unsolved: art became utterly, vaingloriously, romantic.

Herbert Read, searching into the "grass roots" of the matter,[6] discovered Freud, not unlike the manner in which Freud himself had discovered Oedipus at the foundations of the human psyche. Artists, sons and lovers all, draw their strength from the springs of creativity in the unconscious drives of an expanding libido. Where Freud had uncovered an "Id," Nietzsche discerned a "will to power"; but neither of these peerless psychologists could deny the effect of the conscious selection of materials, nor of the conscious arrangement of forms, to express this irrepressible drive. In their explanations, art became symbolic of a particular frustrated human desire—an Appolonian image throwing light upon the dark Dionysian drives of the image-makers themselves. For better or for worse, the art product was interpreted as a feeling embodied in a clear, sensuous form.

Depth psychology and German high romanticism thus revealed a specific content for

the philosophical analysis of art. Freed from all other restraining motives, aesthetic expression became in romanticism the aesthetico-ideological determinant of the artist's cultural freedom. As Kallen read the paradigm case of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,[7] romanticism taught artists they had only to express themselves, sincerely and fully and intensely. In this way they could achieve the highest of human values, the *individuum ineffabile.* So where classical art was no longer marketable, the artist himself was.

Kallen refers to this double liberation of the creative artist—freedom from the economic controls of the patronage system and a simultaneous freedom to express one's own inner drive toward artistic excellence—as a "new spirit":

> *It immensely transformed the Greek inheritance by putting it to a different use. It assimilated the ancient Greek to the American primitive, and assimilated both into the ideal of the natural man with liberty as his natural right.*[8]

Yet the politico-ideological base which was to support this new found freedom is open to continual change. If industrialism and romanticism succeeded in isolating the phenomenon of freedom to create through the art of being oneself, a new science was needed to investigate all the phenomena associated with it. It became clear that depth psychology must be buttressed by social psychology and social psychology by sociology for one to grasp the anthropological significance of human creation. The unit of social significance in this new science, which I prefer to call "aesthetics proper," is neither the individual nor the group, but the institution, which has both a structure of its own and a function in the lives of individuals living together in a single social body.[9]

The first expression of this idea may be found in Kallen's *Art and Freedom:*

> *The arts are now an institution on their own account with a philosophy of their own and an autonomous doctrine and discipline. Their institutional coming-of-age was signalized by the appearance of 'aesthetics' as a separate and distinct branch of philosophy, a 'normative science' the peer of the ethics from which it had formerly been undivided, and of logic and metaphysics.*[10]

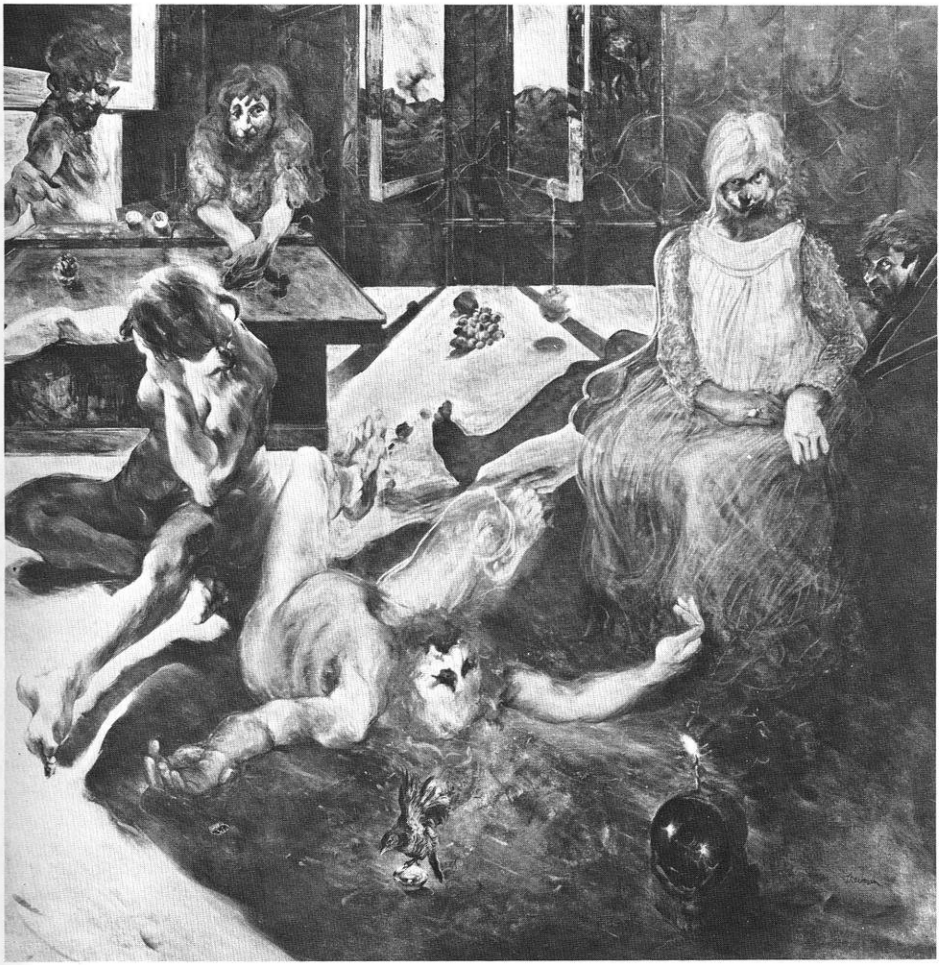
Unfortunately, however, little use has been made of this basic conception since Kallen's own encyclopedic work. And the reason is not difficult to state. Contemporary philosophers, who have succeeded in putting everything back together again in a single meta-disciplinary concern—ethics with aesthetics and logic and metaphysics —where the only problems are methodological, concern themselves principally with the stipulation of criteria for the validity of judgments and avoid all possibility of error by avoiding first-order critical judgments. But if the philosophy of art is to become an aesthetics proper, the older notion of the normative science of aesthetic judgment must be taken into account. This means that we must not only make judgments but also give our reasons for them. If the judgment is on the validity of expression in a particular work of art, so much the better. We approach the proper way of performing philosophical analysis by criticizing the criticisms of ourselves and others. In the end our inquiry shall always be phenomenological since our reasons for judgment must be couched in terms themselves possessing empirical adequacy, describing the object as it appears to our perceptive faculties. And although it is no practical virtue to have done so, theoretically it must be possible for us to make an error. Our first-order judgments engage us—or a part of our freedoms—in the social process of aesthetic communication.

A communication between free individuals, the art process has a direct influence on the nature of the society in which the communication takes place.[11] A science interested in all the phenomena of art cannot ignore this influence, nor all the external pressures brought to bear on artistic communication from the other institutions of the general society. If the art critic is charged with the description of the values he has perceived and thus provides at least one check on the free expression of artists, the social critic is concerned with the perception of social health, that partic-

ular balance of institutions within the body politic which itself guarantees the maximum expression of individual drives to achieve personal significance. And since sociologists, even more so than philosophers, tend at the present stage of their profession to avoid the risk of judging the value of a particular state of affairs, practitioners of aesthetics proper will have to extend their interests to include an even wider range of normative concern.

The guiding principle for such judgments can be expressed in the following generalization, *Art ought to remain a free and autonomous institution;* for, if it does not, both individuals and society stand to become impoverished: the creative individuals for having one primary source of their individuality removed, and their audience for having a rich source of immediately significant experiences curtailed; and without the community arising from their communication, society itself—as a nexus of communicating systems—is correspondingly reduced. Moreover, with the suppression of such experiences, it is easy for tyrannical governments to substitute some other, non-aesthetic, ideological message. But our aesthetic training has long since protected us against these meretricious

Joyce Treimain
Happy Birthday 1965-66
oil



substitutions: long before McLuhan we were already aware of the fact, that the medium is the message; that the continuous development of the various media reduces the distances between peoples of the earth—if not to make a single tribe of them all; and that, in a word of Read, the organization of art for an extraneous social purpose always suffers from "the irrelevancy of realism."[12]

II

The doctrine of the irrelevancy of realism in aesthetic expression has been argued in many forms. As for Clive Bell[13] and Roger Fry,[14] it may mean that content may be ignored in our determination of the significant form of works of art; or, as for Herbert Read,[15] it may mean only that artistic enjoyment is not to be considered subservient to the didactic and moralistic intent of some artists. Indeed, the name of the doctrine has been taken from Read's discussion of Tolstoy's moralistic aesthetic. Nowhere, outside of some formalistic music criticism, has it been argued that content or subject matter is *per se* a negative value in artistic expression. True, at one point in its development, some painters, sculptors, choreographers and poets thought it a positive asset to avoid subject matter; but this was a calculated decision not to avail oneself of one of the tools for achieving significance in expression. Anti-formalist critics, not all of whom are commissars of peoples' republics, have failed to note that Bell and Fry were very astute judges of the worth of highly realistic paintings.

Even some contemporary Marxian critics have admitted that aesthetic expressions take place within context, that a context to be analyzable must contain functional elements, and that the significance of the context is destroyed when these functional elements are separated into disfunctional, unrelated categories. As a case in point, consider Professor Lee Baxandall's [of the Free University of New York] statement of Plekhanov's social realist account of aesthetic judgment:

> *The Marxian will refuse to speak exclusively of form while analyzing aesthetic structure. How can one describe only form, while not describing* what *is formed? An aesthetic structure is an indissoluble unity of form and content.*[16]

Quite obviously, if content and form are indissolubly united, they can be so united only in context; and if it makes no sense to separate form from content, it likewise makes no sense to separate content from form. This opposite side of the coin has often gone unnoticed in Marxian criticism. But, to his credit, the same cannot be said of Professor Baxandall.

The difficulty we are faced with in Baxandall's account is to understand why he continues to speak of "content" and "form" at all. He maintains that we must continue to isolate one from the other for the purpose of making an aesthetic judgment:

> *. . . the critic may and must isolate the form and content, although artificially, in the analytic procedure. The artwork does not exist while form and content are isolated; yet, when they are not isolated, the aesthetic structure defies analysis. Form is content and content form in a single structure.*[17]

But this is a debatable issue. Surely to identify the two concepts is to deny their relevance as descriptions of aesthetic structure. And just as surely there is no ground to assume that all aesthetic categories suffer the same fate. And, if another set of categories may be found to work in context, aesthetic structure cannot be said to defy analysis where content and form are not isolated.

Moreover, Baxandall's initial question, "*What* is formed?" may be answered in various ways. He seems to have been misled by the subject-predicate grammatical structure of the English language to conclude that anything achieving a determinate form must be a substance or subject. He fails to distinguish between subject matter and content, and vacillates between his interpretation of the former in strictly economic-materialistic terms and that of the latter as an "idea." This vacillation allows him to make Plekhanov

appear more idealistic than the Marxian "materialistic" critics would find comfortable.

In his defense of Plekhanov's theory of judgment based upon the distinction of "true" from "false" aesthetic ideas, Baxandall is careful to reject the vagueness of the Russian's definitions of the true and the false, whereby "Truth in art would be created and defined 'in the context of historical relationships.' "[18] And falsity itself, for the greatest of the social realists, became recognizable in context by a disruption of the unity of the expression: ". . . when a work of art is founded upon a false idea, this produces so many internal inconsistencies that its aesthetic value inevitably suffers."[19]

But there is obviously a double criterion here, one subjective and the other objective. A 'true' aesthetic idea "reflects" the proper social conditions, and a 'false' one is improperly embodied. It would be easy, owing to the duality of the criterion, to maintain that a true aesthetic idea is one that has achieved successful artistic expression, and that a false one is any that "reflects" any form of nature at all. All ideas are subjective and become objectified by the determinacy of the form attained in their expression.

Yet the truth of the idea is said by Plekhanov to be "founded on accurate awareness of social relationships and consciousness,"[20] and for this reason he could make those silly prouncements (*sic*) that "No modern artist can be inspired by true ideas if he is seeking to defend the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the proletariat."[21] But the equally silly pronouncement, that "Rooted in historical specificity, this 'concrete idea' draws its measure and coherence from the dynamic proportions of reality so it 'encompasses the entire subject and not only some favored side,' "[22] goes unnoted by Baxandall, who is led to admit the silliness of the last pronouncement in spite of himself. His own aesthetic instincts are the cause.

In explanation, consider a second irony in his account of the transformation of subject matter via aesthetic expression. It is given a purely formal treatment, and brings the realist Plekhanov back into the methodological camp of the formalist Fry (Cf. *Transformations*):

> *What was subject matter will have vanished, although critics may try weakly to reduce the artwork to some phrase. Where has subject matter gone? Schiller is correct: it was annihilated by the imagination's work. Yet the determinate idea will have turned up transformed, concretized, and deepened in the artwork; its correlative will be that 'unity of thought' which corresponds to the 'unity of form.'*[23]

This newer notion of form—the embodied idea, where its embodiment is equivalent to its determinacy—is not an element abstractible from the context, not even as a principle of organization, such as the "rhythms and proportions and balance" mentioned by Professor Baxandall.[24]

All such merely formal principles are nothing more than framing devices, and, as such, counters within a context; they may be exhibited either on the sensuous surface or in the experiential depth of an artwork's structure. No matter where they occur, the significance of each of the counters is determined by the context of relations established between them and all other counters of the context in question. Aesthetic form is a concrete, significant gestalt, and the significance of the gestalt is felt by the appreciator attending to the manner in which the counters fund into concreteness. What is formed, therefore, is neither content, nor subject matter, nor idea: it is the experience of the aesthetic beholder. To isolate "substance" from "form" and "matter" from "manner" is in consequence not even a useful critical device. These distinctions are not aesthetic, but metaphysical; and tend within aesthetic analysis to confuse, rather than enlighten, aesthetic judgment.

The Marxians are right, however, for pointing out that the creative imaginations of artists are not all-powerful; they cannot work in a vacuum. The social conditions under which an artist lives may well pose one of the limits to an artist's ability to


MUTUAL TRUST

"transform" his ideas. But there are other limiting factors equally as powerful as these. The facticity of any situation always poses limits and obstacles which are transformed through talent and activity into means of expression. On the other side of aesthetic communication, the appreciator likewise experiences limitations of his capacity to respond. We may call them 'lapses in empathy,'[25] if we like; but neither are all empathic lapses caused by social conditions. "Bourgeois stupidity," "educational disadvantage of the proletariat," or "sheer imperceptiveness" are so many ways to explain the failure of aesthetic communication. As a corrective to such failure, we shall be forgiven for appealing to such procedural devices as "letting oneself open" (existential openness), engaging in "a willing suspension of disbelief," or practicing "the phenomenological epoché," all of which are various names for one way of overcoming our failures to communicate for not having perceived the working of the work. Our decision for openness may be nothing more than a bourgeois prejudice, but at least it prevents our making a metaphysical assumption which falsifies all, including the most realistic of our aesthetic experiences.

The last and most significant account of the irrelevancy of realism is taken as axiomatic in contextual-phenomenological criticism: no single counter, no isolated set of counters of the aesthetic context bears an absolute significance. But this holds true for both surface and depth expressions. In practice, to guarantee communication it is sufficient to liberate the aesthetic institution from all external demands: that a work of art, to be judged successful, express this, that or the other, be they the social struggle, the essence of spiritual salvation, or merely a rousing good show.

The pertinent aesthetic questions of modern industrial society are not the necessity to represent the social struggles of exploiters and exploited, but the ways and means to improve industrial products. Without retreating to the handicraft age, as William Morris suggested in the nineteenth century,[26] we must tame the machine in order not to become like unto a machine.[27] And as no solution may be found to aesthetic problems which is not a better aesthetic product, the solution to this problem will be given in aesthetic terms alone: by improved design, of the machines, of their products, and of the civic terrain in which we live. Where the industrial revolution created the modern "ghetto," improved industrial and civic design may succeed in obliterating it. If the thought sounds utopian, it is more practical, and in the long run less costly, than the nihilism of flying bricks and molotov cocktails.

Elias Friedensohn
Mutual Trust Co. I
1971

III

Social realism was another, and most probably not the last, of a long line of attempts to foist an alien use-value on the workings of the aesthetic institution. Like the magic of the cavemen, the superstition of the Bushman, and the religion of the Middle Ages, the social and political propaganda of the Marxian profession represents just one more way an artist may be forced by circumstances beyond his control to act as something other than a creative artist. The recent attempts of the governments of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were merely cruder forms of the enslavement of individuals in favor of the ultimate welfare of the State;[28] and the crudity of this attempt to control artistic production may be attributed, at least in part, to the lack of aestheticians serving in official capacity such as those employed by the Russians, following the revolution, to organize artists as a political force within the state. Plekhanov and others still believed that art was for the people, and that it could be used, in spite of the formal requirements of aesthetic excellence, to unite the people in support of a single political aim. It was a simple move from the first truism to ultimate political tyranny: what was not easily understood by the people was not good art, and what was not good art was not permitted. For an explanation of the complete debasement of public taste, we need only point out the confusion of the intrinsic sense of "good" as applied to an aesthetic product

and the extrinsic sense indicating a degree of social utility. The cultural commissar and the aesthetic *Gauleiter* are twin demonstrations of a single phenomenon.

All totalitarian regimes have found it both necessary and desirable to tell the people what is good for them, not only as a means for social solidarity, but incidentally, as well, the kinds of aesthetic experience one may be permitted to enjoy as an intrinsic value. No greater tyranny is conceivable; for when the ukase is issued, obedience is prudence itself. But artists individually and as a class have never been known for their prudence. A more troublesome lot it would be hard to find. Driven to create, i.e. to change their environment in accordance with their own desires and will to mastery, they have always and most probably shall always scorn the official value in favor of creating their own. Indeed, it could be argued that this refusal to accept dictation, either by nature or by political agency, of the kind of world in which to live is the one supreme value to be institutionalized in art considered as a communicative process. If the history of art teaches anything, it is the fact that the free institution of art has outlived every attempt to enslave it to a foreign need. Savonarola is remembered, but Botticelli is revered; the music of Prokofiev and Shostakovitch is still heard and loved when the names of their accusers have never really been known; and the genius of Eisenstein never survived the artificial restrictions of a single expressive formula, the socialist realism he himself was influenced to adopt.

In the "liberal" West, where the industrial revolution had freed the artist from his economic dependence upon the patron, the lesson of handmaidenship had already been learned; we could agonize over the stifled Russian genius. But when our own arts, united under the banner of romanticism, became the blind pursuit of the cult of the self, we had grounds for agonizing over our own plight. Having learned one lesson, the Western cultural elite ignored the other, which the organization of the arts in socialist republics have made abundantly clear: that art may be a profession, and its practitioners remunerated to the degree in which their services fulfill a legitimate social need. All we had to do was to introduce autonomy into the profession. Why in the liberal West cannot one organize a new profession dedicated to the creation and dissemination of aesthetic values, allowing its members the freedom to establish their own code of ethics, along with recognizable standards of excellence? Either no one has understood, or no one has really tried.

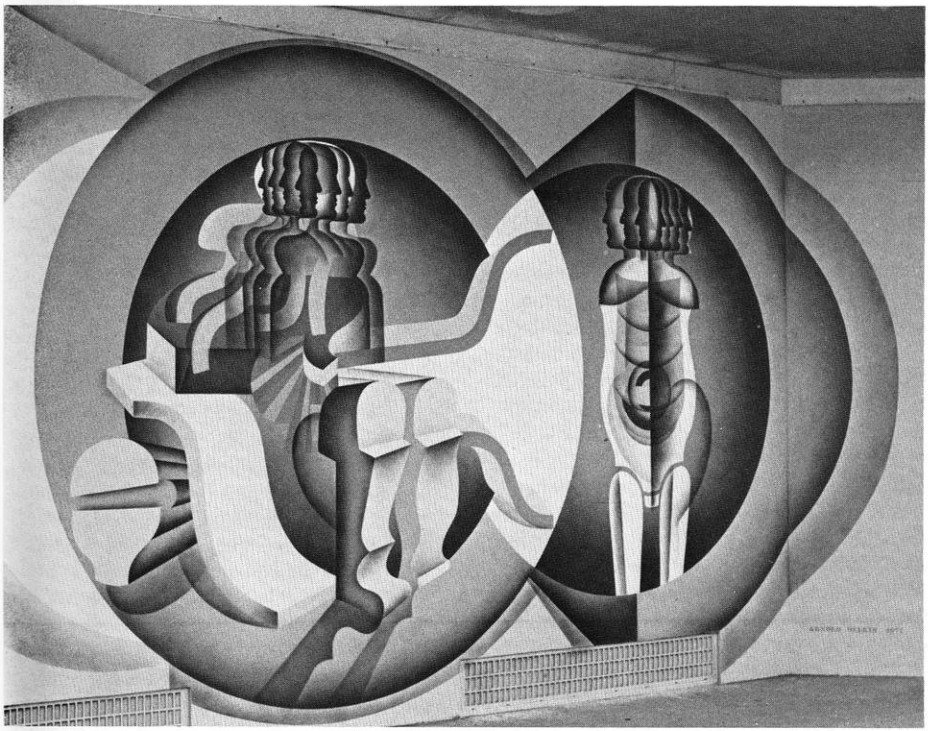
If doctors, lawyers and teachers are allowed this freedom, the reasons are clear: the value each of these professions is organized to promote is a readily understood social good; they possess standards of competence, gained after a long period of specialized training; in word at least, they are dedicated to public service rather than to economic profit; and they are forced to assume a broad personal responsibility for judgments made and acts performed within the scope of their professional autonomy. Of all these characteristics of a functional profession, that least understood by both artists and their society is the social service performed by the practicing artist. And one way of perpetuating the misunderstanding of this potential service—indeed, institutionalizing it—is to impose a non-aesthetic value on the artist's product.[29] But for this misunderstanding, the socialists might have solved the problem of integrating the artist within society through professionalization. Plato, who conceived of aesthetics as a single science embracing all the manifestations of beauty, would have been proud to perform this trick; instead, he panicked before the freedom of the artist.

The obstacles to a proper understanding of the unique social value of art are legion. It need not be the negative observation that freedom for artists is dangerous to a smooth running State.[30] Wherever the supreme political value is placed upon the solidarity of the State, rather than on the welfare of the individuals, we shall run into potent arguments for censorship on individual expression. But where the political values are reversed, as they should be in our own government, Plato's timidity cannot even be understood. We do not lack the daring; only the understanding. Instead of building our institution on its

essential social values, we misinterpret aesthetic experiences as entertainment,[31] and so squander the rich aesthetic potential of the movies and television which could produce the "spiritual" and "cultural" values Professor Gotshalk found to be proportionate to the fineness of the fine arts.[32] But that is not all: blessed with a degree of automation which bids well to reduce the populace to the status of specialized consumers of industrial products, our people are virtually threatened with leisure, once thought of and desired as indispensable to contemplation, the pursuit of intellectual activity of any sort, and the enjoyment of any kind of good life at all. So art in our own time threatens to become a means to while away the listless hours of physical and psychic inactivity.[33] Art likewise relaxes, so we may become a nation of dilettantes and dabblers. Quite obviously, no society will be willing to institutionalize any of these "social services."

What we must do to overcome these misconceptions of the social role of art is to rethink the process of aesthetic communication in such a way as to show that the aesthetic values created and enjoyed are essentially social in character, having natural social consequences (Otherwise there should be no need to place legal restrictions upon it.); that art, even when pursued for its own sake and in the most "decadent" of its forms, is already a social institution working toward the fulfillment of the lives of individuals engaged therein; and moreover that the communication of aesthetic values serves a unique function, in that no other social institution is capable of fulfilling the same need (the ever present need for the renewal of emotional significance) in the same way. The social value of art is the community it creates. If the violence of our sexual natures can be tamed in one social institution, which is left free from outside determination, and our need to overcome ignorance, in another, the violence of our creative instincts may yet be canalized legitimately in socially approved modes of expression.

Arnold Belkin
Mural on facade of Humanities Building, Lock Haven State College Pa. 1971



To this end, I have proposed a reformulation of the traditional task of philosophical aesthetics.[34] We can no longer interpret aesthetics as the science of the beautiful because the achievement of beauty in expression is no longer the primary aim of our artists, and as philosophers of art we have learned to observe what the artists have created and to describe what we have observed. Although many of us are still overly worried about the "essence" of artworks which would be inherent in any given work, our attention to the language of criticism and the study of criteria by which aesthetic judgments are actually made have relieved us of this metaphysical chore. We have become convinced that our task is descriptive, to define the context in which aesthetic judgments are made; and that the aesthetic categories we apply to the description of artworks are valid or not depending upon their empirical adequacy to illuminate our conception of the value of the particular work as it is experienced in a vivid act of perception. In short, there is considerable agreement on the range of the philosopher's interest in art: primarily in the description of works of art and our response to them.

To broaden this interest for the purposes of understanding the social nature of art, we must include descriptions of the various ways in which aesthetic objects are created. When as philosophers we view the total communicative act—creation, object and appreciation—we have the beginning of an understanding of the range of social values inherent in the art process. Let the social scientists generalize their results either by statistical calculations of the similarities in the backgrounds of creative artists or by framing a composite picture of "the creative personality."[35] We as philosophers know that such generalizations tend to falsify the particular case; and as aestheticians, that only an act of communication between ourselves and the artist through a mutual experience of his creative work will allow us to know the artistic aspect of his personality, because before the artist has created his world he has himself no way of knowing that the precise values embodied in his work are his own. Artistic values do not exist outside the context of expression in which they occur.

All this was known by Kant quite some time ago. He was the first to show that logical and aesthetic judgments are quite different in nature, that there are no rules for the latter, and that each successful work of art is the personal discovery of the artist. His contention that beauty was the symbol of morality was elaborated by Professor Gotshalk in *Art and the Social Order,* where we find the explanation of this symbolism in the attitudes of the Greeks:

> *The Greeks saw a suggestive analogy between the construction of a work of art and the ruling of a state. The true ruler or statesman, they held, was concerned with the good of the whole state and sought to treat each class and member in such a way as to allow them that individual fulfillment which was compatible with a comparable fulfillment of the other classes and members. The true ruler sought a maximum of immanent values within a harmonious whole. And something of this aim the Greeks saw already vividly realized in great art.*[36]

Once understood, symbols may motivate conduct, as they present us with the clearest form of a realized ideal.

Currently, then, we have only to act in order to achieve that kingdom of ends, where each free individual gives himself a law at the same time he controls the responses of his fellows. Until now only the method has been lacking. But the same phenomenological method which permits the description of the development of the human personality—or transcendence—by an observation of its activity may be applied to the creation of works of art, to the context of significance they generate, and to the critical interpretations by which this significance is more widely disseminated in the texture of society itself.[37]

If we can be persuaded to pursue the aesthetic ideal to the hilt, nothing will be the same; neither the forms of our industrial products, nor the machines that produce them, nor the very structure of the cities in which we live. One condition seems necessary: artists must be allowed

the freedom to discover themselves in their creations. Creating is their way of being in the world, accepting what they cannot change and changing what they can to embody their vision of what is good in itself; not for themselves alone, but for others with whom they share a common world. Being there together, directed to a new and better world of maximum immanent value, artist and audience may achieve the highest fulfillment of their human transcendence within and through the aesthetic institution.

IV

The aesthetic institution has always existed. It did not have to wait upon the creation of a new philosophical discipline called "aesthetics" to make itself known. It was created by cavemen who misunderstood its true function; it continues to flourish in primitive societies whose belief systems falsify its functions. It has withstood the tyranny of Church and State, together and in their ideal state of separation. It continues to function in the lives of men, those possessing imagination and talent communicating with others possessing perception and taste. All they ask is the recognition of the values they experience and propose to the enjoyment of the rest of their fellows. If aesthetics proper has done its job, it should provide for the establishment of a program of activity to maximize the influence of the aesthetic institution within the general society.

As Herbert Read has done,[38] we may begin with the re-organization of aesthetic education. Where institutions are free, responsibility must be assumed by the individuals engaged in the institutionalized activity. Artists must be made responsive to an aesthetic demand placed upon their creations, and audiences must be trained to appreciate the actual values embodied therein. Communication between the two may take place only when both succeed in viewing the work of art for what it is, and not for another thing. Phenomenological philosophy has suggested a method for the education of both artist and audience; but so far, only the latter has had any widespread influence in educational circles. It is a relatively easy matter to describe the structures of an aesthetic object, provided one has forged the categories necessary for its interpretation. This has been the traditional function of philosophical aesthetics in the educational scheme.

When, on the other hand, we turn to the general educational function of the fine arts, we find less agreement, and no method for determining answers to society's questions: Who or what is educated in aesthetic education? and for what purposes? How is the educationist specializing in the arts and humanities to justify the time and energies spent on the humanistic curriculum? Parents and school boards want answers, as do the tax-payers who must foot the bill. They will not continue to believe us, if our only justification is that such things are "nice" to have. A method is necessary for the eradication of this kind of mysticism. Who is the whole child? or what? and how is he made whole by the inclusion of aesthetic materials in his school curriculum? What is "culture," and how is it to be attained? What effects do cultured individuals have on society as a whole? Any failure to answer questions such as these will understandably reduce any popular support for the continued inclusion of aesthetic materials in the public school curriculum. If parents could be led under the proper circumstances to accept set theory in the "new math," they may very well be led to do the same for any new system which promises answers to their questions concerning the social utility of aesthetic experiences.

As for the training of artists, we must re-examine our notions about their being born and not made. If this is true, we must admit defeat and give up the attempt to produce students capable of becoming proficient artists. The successful attempts of colleges, universities and institutes of art to produce artists belie the old adage, and indicate that here too more progress depends upon our being able to erect a method for the codification of results and the stipulation of procedures to be followed. The condition assumed at the present stage of development to be sufficient for an art teacher—that he be a successful artist himself—may turn out to be only

necessary, if to teach successfully means to be able to explain the worth of an aesthetic object produced; or, if the art teacher does have this ability and the openness to respond to the creative impulses of his students, it may not even be found necessary at all. The successful artists who in their teaching are seeking replicas of themselves are too numerous for comfort; as teachers they have discovered another form of human tyranny, another way of interfering with the autonomous functioning of the aesthetic institution.

The check on such pedagogical malfeasance is a theory of aesthetic judgment in which "good" is an open concept, to be determined by the way in which the student artist succeeds in ordering his own qualitative ideas in such a way as to maximize their significance in the context of his own construction. We do dispute tastes, and sometimes for good reasons; being able to tell when a reason is good is therefore an absolutely indispensable condition for the improvement of aesthetic education.

Moreover, since the American universities have become the chief source of education in the arts, both for artists and for their audiences, some thought must be given to the re-organization of their institutional programs. And beyond their primary function to produce young artists and cultured audiences, they may even some day be allowed to fulfill their secondary role as art centers to provide adequate aesthetic fare to the general communities they are intended to serve. This too is an educational function, but will not be served well until the programs of traditional artworks are complemented liberally by experimental works capable of widening the horizons of the citizens of our cities and states. We must be led to an understanding of the full import of Kant's momentous discovery, that an aesthetical idea is itself the discovery of an artist. All we can do to aid in this latter type of discovery is to supply the materials, and to criticize the results of their manipulation.

There are no universally valid rules either for the production of successful artworks, or for our judgments of them. Certainly no examination of content alone will justify an aesthetic judgment. Marxists have admitted this in theory only to deny it in practice. Only the individual's openness to new experiences, and a successful method for interpreting them, will produce the results desired—an open society of communicating individuals who find their highest expression in the communion of ideals. If our conservative arts programs are dictated out of economic necessity, because the general public will attend performances only of what it already knows, then some other form of public support must be brought to bear for maximizing the effect of our aesthetic institution. The tax supported institutions of higher learning are ideally suited to fulfill such a function; and when they do, they may even earn the name they claim, of being true centers of "higher" learning.

Lastly, when the aesthetic institution has been allowed to grow and to function freely, it should become apparent that there is no need for a superintending public censorship, no laws artificially restricting what an artist may or may not express. If his own professionalized conscience does not suffice to produce restraint, which, as in all expression of human impulses, is effectuated through the form of the expression itself, then an informed citizenry may exercise its judgment by rejecting the product on purely aesthetic grounds. Too many of our decisions to adjudicate the conflict of aesthetic and moral values in the past have been taken on the basis of a prejudice for one or the other of our value interests—a situation which will remain as long as there is no effective inquiry into aesthetics proper aimed at the total functioning of the aesthetic institution.

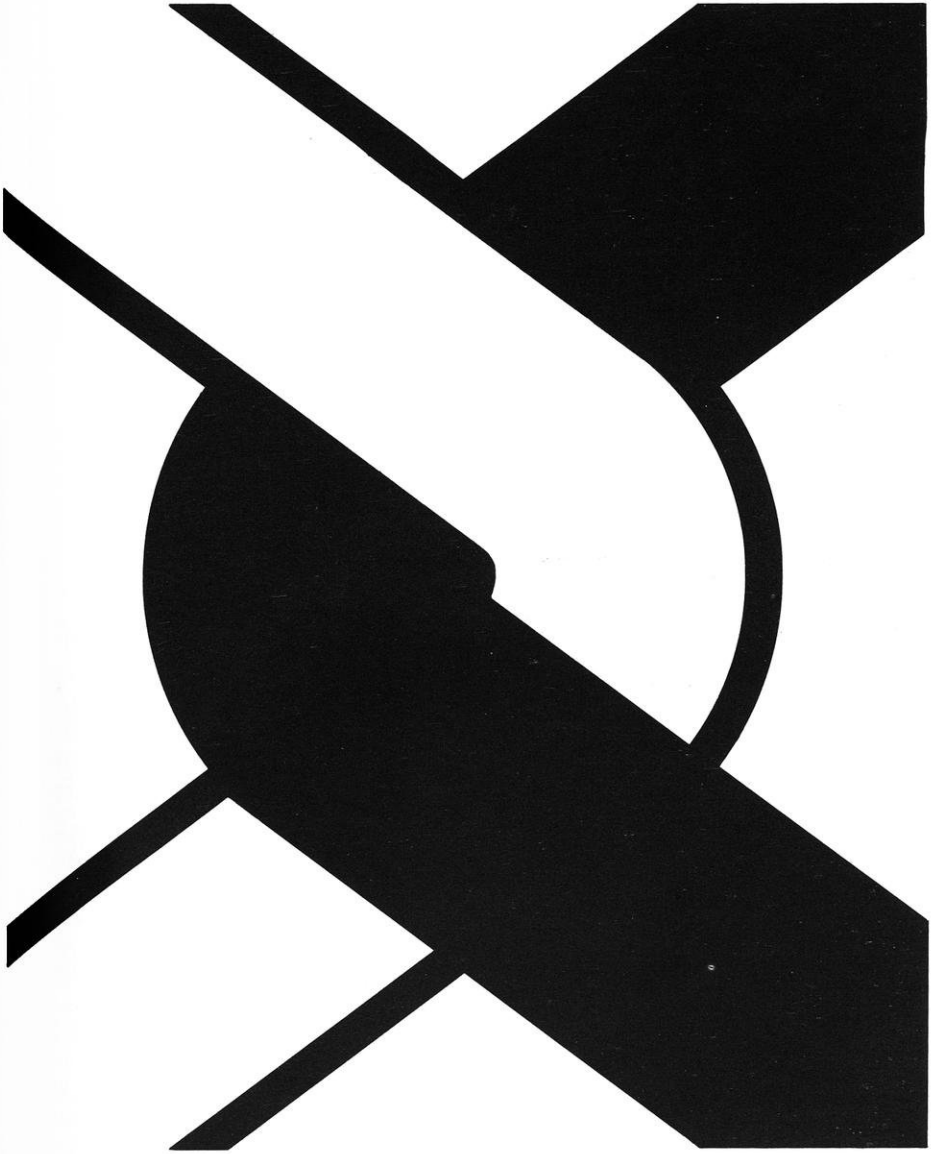
Professor Kallen was undoubtedly right, the founding of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline helped produce the understanding of the independence of the

Peter Lipsitt
Figure
1969

aesthetic institution; but as he understood it, the new normative science could do nothing but fulminate against social injustice. It is time for philosophy to do better things: we should stop contemplating injustice and start improving the conditions for achieving at least a modicum of social justice. This was Marx's advice to philosophers; but by a slight twist in his thought, it might also have been Emerson's. For if institutions are but the lengthened shadow of a single great man, it would appear that the only way to have an effect on society is to create a new institution. We may start by modifying the one which already exists.

Reference Notes:

[1] New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942. 2 vols.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[3] New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-33; 36-73.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 80-87.
[6] Read, *The Grass Roots of Art* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1961), pp. 17-34. His argument is more explicit in *Art and Society,* pp. 187-206.
[7] *Art and Freedom,* pp. 215 ff.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[9] This thesis is comparable to that of D. W. Gotshalk, *Art and the Social Order* Second edition; (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962). The difference between this latter work and my own is primarily one of emphasis: my own notion of "an aesthetic institution" is a formalization of his doctrine of the various social functions of the arts.
[10] *Op. cit.,* p. 22.
[11] Cf. the thesis of Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1966). Original by McGraw Hill, 1964.
[12] Herbert Read, *The Grass Roots of Art,* pp. 80-99.
[13] See his, *Art* (New York: Capricorn Books, *1958), pp. 15-34.*
[14] See his, *Transformations* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956). pp. 1-57.
[15] *The Grass Roots of Art,* pp. 80-99.
[16] Lee Baxandall, "Marxism and Aesthetics: A Critique of the Contribution of George Plekhanov," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* XXV (1967), 277.
[17] *Ibid.,* pp. 277-8.
[18] *Ibid.,* p. 276.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.,* p. 277.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.,* p. 278.
[25] As does Baxandall, *op. cit.,* p. 273.
[26] In *Art and Socialism* (London: Reeves, 1884). The lecture was delivered on 23 January 1884, before the Secular Society of Leicester.
[27] Cf. Lewis Mumford's notion the "aesthetic assimilation of the machine," *Art and Technics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952); also Herbert Read, *Art and Industry* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1934).
[28] See Kallen, *Art and Freedom,* pp. 861-81. His association of Croce with Fascism, via an influence on Gentile, is a regrettable mistake.
[29] Professor Gotshalk's thesis *(op. cit.)* is weakened by his inclusion of "non-aesthetic functions" in the determination of the social value of art.
[30] See Plato, *Republic,* Book X.
[31] For a criticism of the consideration of art as entertainment, see R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (New York: Oxford University Press Galaxy Book, 1958), pp. 78-104.
[32] *Op. cit.,* p. 211.
[33] See Max Kaplan, *Leisure in America, A Social Inquiry* (New York: The John Wiley Co., 1960).
[34] See my *An Existentialist Aesthetic* (Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962).
[35] See Bernard Rosenberg and Norris Fliegel, *The Vanguard Artist* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965); and my review entitled "Who's Out Front? What? No, What's Behind," *Arts in Society,* III (1966), pp. 608-12.
[36] *Op. cit., p. 216.*
[37] *The best known treatment of social* phenomena in strict phenomenological manner is to be found in the work of Alfred Schultz. See his *Collected Papers* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962), 3 vols.
[38] In *Art and Industry,* pp. 175-85.



Art vs Society?

by Leslie Woolf Hedley

Was critic-at-large for the international monthly, *The Minority of One.*

Art has direct and indirect social uses. Art's impact on society and society's impact on art are always visible, always changing. As man changes, his environment changes. This is a complex

dialectical process. But these oscillations may be extrinsic or intrinsic. Movement —RPM—doesn't always indicate uphill momentum. Much depends on who's driving and who owns the vehicle. Today the cultural scenario is easily steered, therefore easily manipulated. That's why the gap between New York art bureaucrats and intrinsic needs of American society is beyond measurement. Our socio-cultural enemies are mainly those art authoritarians manipulating from New York.

Therefore I define the problem differently than most. To define is to find. Myth, politics, pragmatism, pathology have all tried to disguise themselves into a socio-esthetics. "Thou Shalt Not Create Art Which Depicts Authority As Less Than Perfect," and "Thou Shalt Create Art Which Depicts The Perfection Of Authority" say the same with contrasting rhetoric. The socio-aesthetics of a Richard Nixon and a Herbert Marcuse indicate the same uses of art, that is, *an art which serves.* Whom does it serve? It serves authority. What is authority? Authority is whatever it says it is. Unfortunately people seem to equate the fame of authority with wisdom. Authority is the toll master on that flimsy narrow bridge linking the artist with society. And as Kafka warned, there's a hangman concealed in every bureaucrat.

It isn't just who one serves but how one serves. Several great artists served King Louis XIV. Michelangelo served a Pope.

Cartoon by Franco Giacomini, Torino, Italy

Bach served lumpish burgomeisters. Haydn served Prince Esterhazy. Goya served Spanish aristocrats. Stravinsky once served Diaghilev. For some years Brecht served the Communist Party. In the long run society benefited—not because of servitude, but because this talent could rise above it. Those who witnessed the Peking Ballet recently can have no doubts that art was used, but used about the same level as dancing commercials on our TV screens. Unlike Chinese food, an hour after viewing that propaganda ballet I was still glutted.

Plato and Tolstoy, hardly similar, outlined social uses of art to contribute to human well-being, education, spiritual and civic virtues. But watch out for those hidden Catch-22's! To serve is often to become a servant. Ruling principles always over-rule art. Plato exiled certain artists from his hypothetical republic. Tolstoy would have ousted Beethoven along with Shakespeare, Van Gogh, Joyce, Kafka, Bartok, Lorca, Sartre, Solzhenitsyn, etc, etc. None of these artists served in the manner Plato and Tolstoy (conservative and radical) proscribed. In this country, as in the Soviet Union, authority silences native Solzhenitsyns. Authority doesn't want society to use that iconoclastic kind of perception and analysis. If bureaucracy wants a paprika of criticism (to prove how sweetly democratic they are), it hires Alan Watts, Charles Reich, Theodore Roszak, Marshall McLuhan, Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal—those boys have respect for a buck. Om, Om, Om.

The issue sits upon the ticking timebomb of social conditions in which the artist lives and his relationship with those conditions. Robinson Crusoe, who directly related his creative productivity to his social existence, can't be revived. (Mimic communards exist today on a lily pad dreamily afloat a polluted ocean, scribbling poems to dying birds. They grow old orbiting a meaningless innocence.) The umbilical cord between artist and society isn't a love nexus but a cash nexus. The artist needs to create independent of society, but his livelihood is dependent on society. *Quid pro quo.* The artist is used, but often badly. Society is used, but often

badly. The paradox is obvious. An artist's freedom from his own society is therefore tentative. The fist of authority casts its shadow. Only certain kinds of art at certain times are given this tentative freedom. These arts must be geared to the simplest common denominator and must be profitable in terms defined by authority. Authority, then, in the form of a museum director, publisher, manager of mass media, theatrical impresario, isn't a patron in the obsolete traditional sense, but a master.

Is this paradox clear to the public? I was taught that society cares about art. It's my present view that society cares little for art and sees it as absurd luxury. Given choice, society much prefers Mario Puzo to Dostoyevsky, Grateful Dead to Bartok's quartets, Barbra Streisand to Stich-Randall, Al Capp to Kollwitz, Pepsi to vintage Margaux. Society, like the artist, is manipulated.

Society gets the art it's willing to support and therefore deserves. The American people, naive cherubs, thought they were protected from junk art by some ethereal Better Business Bureau or Marine Corps. Our society, engaged in criminal Asian wars during most of my life, got exactly the kind of artists it deserved: Clifford Irving, Jacqueline Susann, Ginsberg, Mailer, Warhol, John Cage, Harold Robbins, Bob Dylan, Oldenburg, Ad Reinhardt, Irving Wallace, LeRoi Jones. This isn't accidental but a pattern of national malady. We're a society *in extremis.* George Orwell hit the mark when he spoke of the writer who "runs shrieking into the arms of the capitalist publishers with a couple of horror comics which bring him fame and fortune." This was before Roy Liechtenstein.

Because in our kind of society *kitsch* is king. *Kitsch* education and *kitsch* politics bred *kitsch* illusions, *kitsch* solutions, *kitsch* culture. *Kitsch* art is devoured by *kitsch* crowds like hot buttered popcorn. The artist dances with his public to *kitsch* anti-music in a *kitsch* ballroom to raise funds for a *kitsch* rebellion organized by merchants of *kitsch.* What's good for business is good for art. Today *kitsch,* tomorrow super-*kitsch*! Neither artist nor society yet realize they've been victimized. Neither artist nor society yet fathom that *kitsch* has made them irrelevant to history. Our arts, like kleenex, are disposable. How more utilitarian can you get? Today only the merchant is relevant because he uses without being used.

None of this deviates from the question, but rather focuses on the key problem: *At this period in this country can contemporary art have beneficial social use?*

For those who still believe American democracy works, the answer is Yes.

For those who no longer believe American democracy works, the answer is No.

I'm not one to suggest Americans have a monopoly of weakness, wickedness and anti-democratic tendencies. No society on earth is psychologically prepared to practice democracy. All those pretty words about equality of opportunity, cultural progress, humanity, brotherhood, et al, are dandruff on the heads of authority. Our leading indistinguishable artists represent the seborrhea of that authority. Art is another kind of patent medicine for the ulcerated psyche. *Kitsch* kills instead of cures. Consequently it's inconceivable that the arts currently at full sail in this country

Cartoon by Franco Giacomini, Torino, Italy

can be of any useful benefit beyond singing commercials, advertising, packaging, slickly designed toasters, sportscars, gimmick architecture, interior decorating, Encounter-type novels, plays of a teenager-in-rebellion-against-an-adult-world-he-can-neither-understand-nor-cope-with, films of sexually cloying ennui (doesn't anyone fornicate in private?), plus other trendy manifestations of new art conformity. These profitable tactics of despair are often trips into technomysticism: color, lights, gadgets and ghosts, vampires, monsters. But the on-stage orgasm didn't fertilize our arts any more than the electronic orgasm fertilized society. Could anyone really believe Columbia or Capitol records, *Rolling Stone* or the Los Angeles *Free Press* and their collective graphics were going to inspire and lead society toward a world any different than Macy's toyland on Christmas Eve? Are these socially beneficial uses of art? I don't think so. Stockholders think so.

Now I realize the mention of stockholders is considered a far worse breach of literary etiquette than nose picking, but in our pre-civilization it's impossible to separate economics from the content and uses of art. I paraphrase Baudelaire: If an artist asked the state for permission to keep a few merchants in his stable everyone would be greatly astonished. But if a merchant asked for some roast artists, it would be considered perfectly natural.

Art is a metaphor of reality. To cripple that metaphoric vision, to tie it to one segment of ideology or color, to distort it for sake of pragmatic expediency, is to mask the total relationship between art and society. We need less masks. The onus, as always, falls on the artist. He or she doesn't have to play the willing puppet, whore, or become a public fool. It's one thing to make a hero out of a *schlemiel* (Wozzeck, Schweik) because we know him to have limited resources of survival. It's quite another thing when the artist becomes the *schlemiel.*

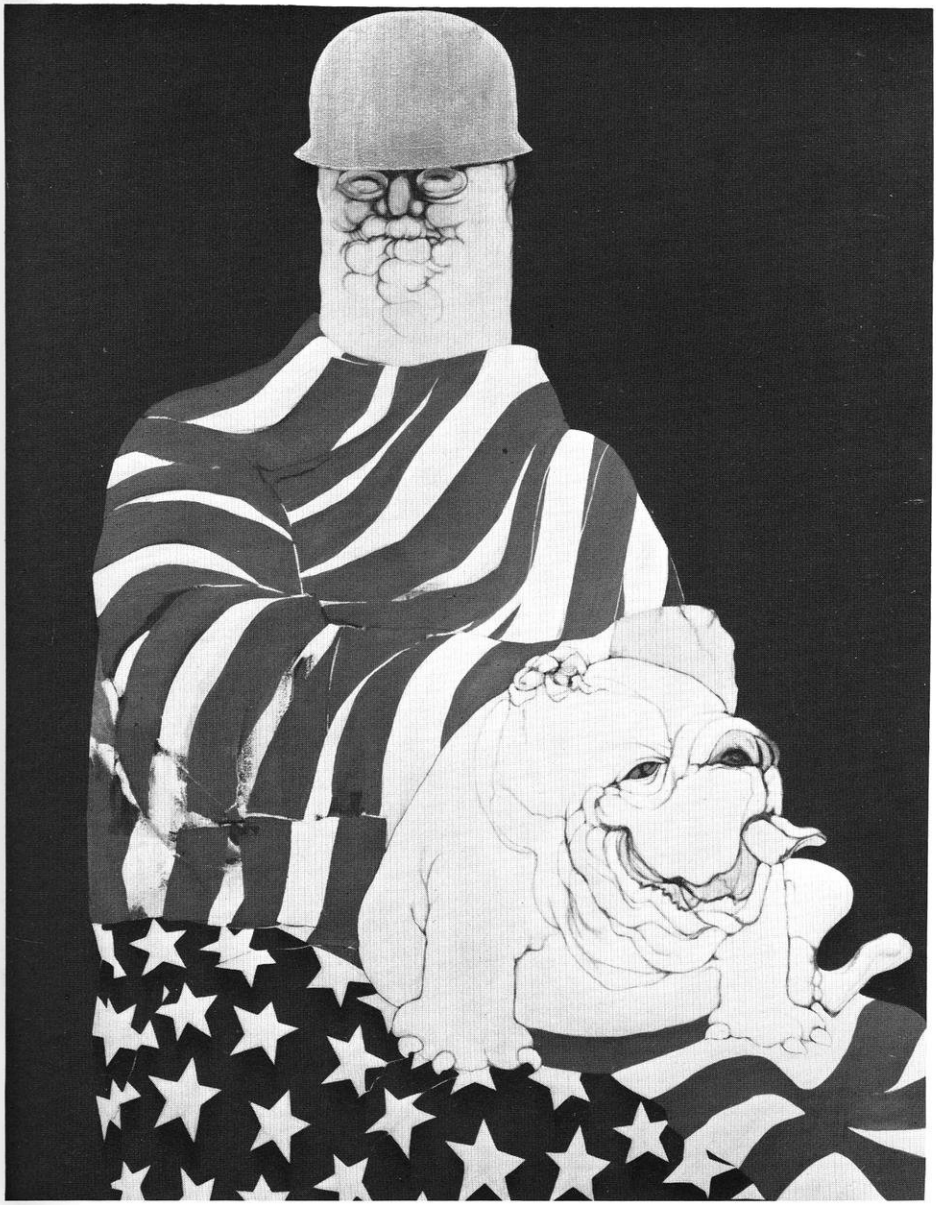
True, there's no heavy proof that art leads society to goodness or wickedness. But art, added to multiple contributing factors, causes impressions, signals which somehow register upon society. The major harm that sham art does to society is that it deprives genuine art of its audience. Then the lie becomes a very real power and society suffers ill-effects. And in art it's easy to tell lies because art is a theater of imagination. Lies seem abstract, harmless. But when lies as art are employed by society they become alive and monstrous. How many thousands of human wrecks are there who believed the newer mendacity (*the sacred printed word*!) that drugs expand the mind? Om, Om, Om.

Art in our times has told many lies and not too many artists challenged the lies because they feared the merchants. In essence, merchants told society what art to use, what lies were good. But the art choice society faces isn't between millionaire Walt Disney or millionaire Pablo Picasso. There's a varied spectrum of creativity which society is barely allowed to know. Alternative arts do exist. The exacerbating fact about humans is that sometimes we're splendidly different, that all artists don't wear beards, that every young musician doesn't play rock, that every novelist isn't rewriting de Sade-Proust-Roth-Updike-Segal, that every radical intelligence doesn't smoke pot. . . . I don't mean to shock, but it happens to be true. The creative life isn't a commitment owned exclusively by any single ideology or sect of artists. If we ever reconcile ourselves to that democracy we may then also rid ourselves of such archaic nonce-words as Left and Right. With money you can be both at the same time.

Alternative arts do exist. While it was brave enough for some artists to protest a war thousands of miles away, the same artists were mute when it came to a war against reason waged under their workroom windows. Why? Because generally American artists have been in the merchant's stable, enjoying being roasted and stuffed and basted with rich gravy. It's impossible to argue against dollars. *Artists since World War II failed in their responsibility toward society.* The "different drummer" was drowned out by an electric guitar. Alternative arts do exist, but few artists are willing to defend and elaborate that independence.

Then how should society, awkward and possibly ignorant regarding art, use such art as they're being offered? What can society conclude of literature when a New York prostitute gets a $100,000 advance for her autobiography, a black racist earns nearly $500,000 for a book he didn't actually write, a convicted murderer of eight becomes a literary folk hero, and when $650,000 is exchanged between fool and fraud in the precious name of our book industry? Doesn't all this tell society that our artists are little different from supermarket managers? When Claes Oldenburg dug a hole in the backyard of a museum

May Stevens
Big Daddy Draped 1971
Photo by Walter Rosenblum



and called it art, did society view this as useful socio-aesthetic relationship? Would the expiring twentieth century truly miss ever hearing another electronic "note" from Stockhausen, Babbitt, Wuorinen, Xenakis? (New medium doesn't automatically make new genius.) Can anyone evolving through a long line of musical heritage find Cage's "HPSCHD" of useful musical "sgnfcnc"? What further significance can develop in the plastic arts since Malevitch's painting "White On White" was followed by Reinhardt's "Black On Black" and then Villaincourt's outdoor sculpture "Fountain" (pre-cast concrete squares linked together), unless it's architect Pereira's new San Francisco office building in the shape of a pyramid? The RPM equation of such arts sputters like this:

What can society make of such data input? *What credibility can society have toward its artists?* How long should society defer its negative response? You don't have to pay your money to take a choice which isn't yours. (Ralph Nader the arts need you!)

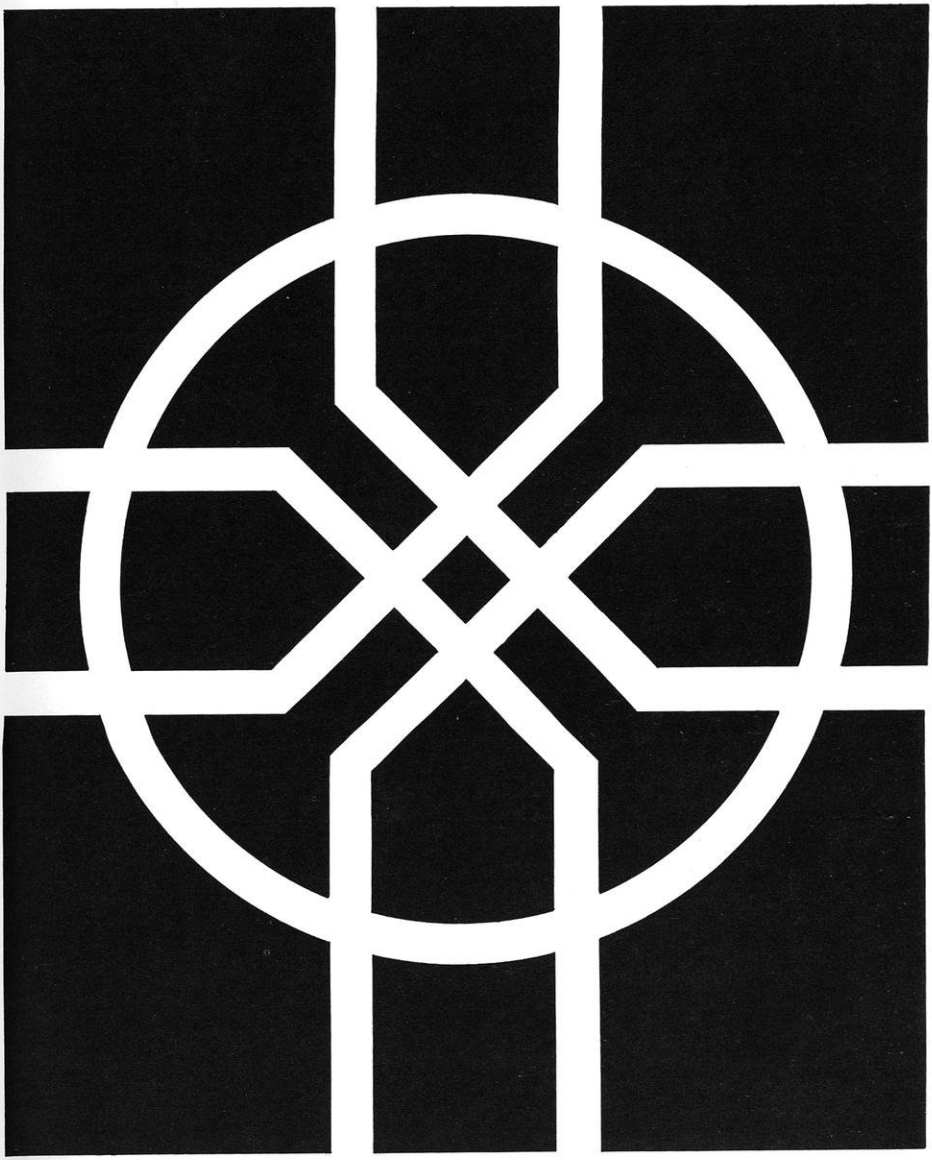
Nathan Hale
Wheel of Life, 1968
Courtesy: Midtown Galleries, New York
Photo by O. E. Nelson

Yet it's not up to society (or any number of "perfect solutions") to free the artist from his own lies. Art can only free itself. The artist can begin to regain his freedom by regaining his self-respect, and he can't do either until he respects the entire human community. This means that artists shouldn't consider their audience as mere consumers. When society is in moral decline, the arts usually suffer a similar fate. Until artists recognize and correct their own condition, our arts offer little of lasting value to society.

Can it be otherwise at this time? The question curves back at us. What can be genuine in a society where almost nothing is genuine? Lies have always been more fascinating than truths. Truth is the one thing no one on earth will ever forgive you for telling. But a variety of truths must be faced by the artist in order to make any genuine contribution. In this society people cheat because everyone's expected to cheat. Temptations are great. The artist cheated society with shoddy goods and society cheated the artist with anti-intellectual scorn. The merchant cheated artist and society by out-smarting and exploiting both. Now we're in the glorious rigor mortis stages of a crypto-revolution which is cheating the future. (A San Francisco newspaper editor told me the revolution was here because he was now wearing striped colored shirts. In one sense he was illustrating art's influence upon society, but in a deeper sense he revealed the thin synthetic content of his revolution. His editorials are no less simplistic.)

It's not the worst thing to observe that this society and its present artists have declined comfortably into a smug, satisfied, arrogant hipness of the too rich. For them our peculiar democracy works admirably and no one should envy their success. *What is far worse is that at this moment there's no hope for a progressive change.*

The artist and society live in mutual contempt.



Old Arts, New Integrations

Lee Baxandall

Recently published two books — *Radical Perspectives in the Arts* and *Wilhelm Reich, Sex-Pol: Essays 1929-34.*

No doubt a reliable and substantial way to get into an essay on the social instrumentality of the arts would be to detail those social "uses" of literature, drama, archi-

tecture, etc., which are recurrent and widespread. Thus:

Art informs; it illustrates life and ideas about life and life ideals; it communicates values; it distills and perpetuates emotions; it purges illicit wishes, also justified fears and anxieties; its possibly most important social function is to afford a unique experience of aesthetic values which many would characterize as owed to complexity and intensity and formal harmony, discerned in coherent structures of specific sensory qualities which generate an internal autonomy relative to other generic and particular values and data. (I'll shortly explain why I think the intrinsic aesthetic effect is at the same time the most important social instrumentality.)

Art does bring off these results — and I had grown disenchanted with much that is in the arts, not more than a few years ago, while a New Left and a Counter Culture started in to transform the character of what we know as life activity.

The uses of art diminished in importance as one saw that the social and political structures out of the past — those which had guided, sheltered, smothered and oppressed my early youth, in upstate Wisconsin — began to display their true frailty, and as, too, one saw the chances appearing for some degree of liberation through new structure formation.

The old structures of art seemed too compromised through their long sustenance at the breast of the old structures of social hegemony. If they were paramount while the vital new culture gasped for its birth-cry breath, why should they have more right to survive and be honored than their patrons and protectors?

What is the preservation of the Chartres Cathedral, as compared with the saving of a single human life? That was the question posed by Sartre. Its radical humanism was appealing. Humanism as centered on even the smallest (the least-privileged, the most-exploited) human being; not as reified in a dead-horse "Cultchah." *Human*-ism. Without euphuistic hypocritical hidden elitist meaning. We didn't have to read Sartre — or Brecht, or Allen Ginsberg, slightly our senior — to have that feeling about the old high humanistic structures of culture.

Beethoven quartets played in the exercise yard at Auschwitz. The cast of *1776* (eclipsed blazing radicals, many of them) singing their sentiments out at the White House while the body-count from Viet Nam was phoned in. *Social uses of the arts?*

What, we wondered, was so useful about them if we had the chance instead to work directly upon society?

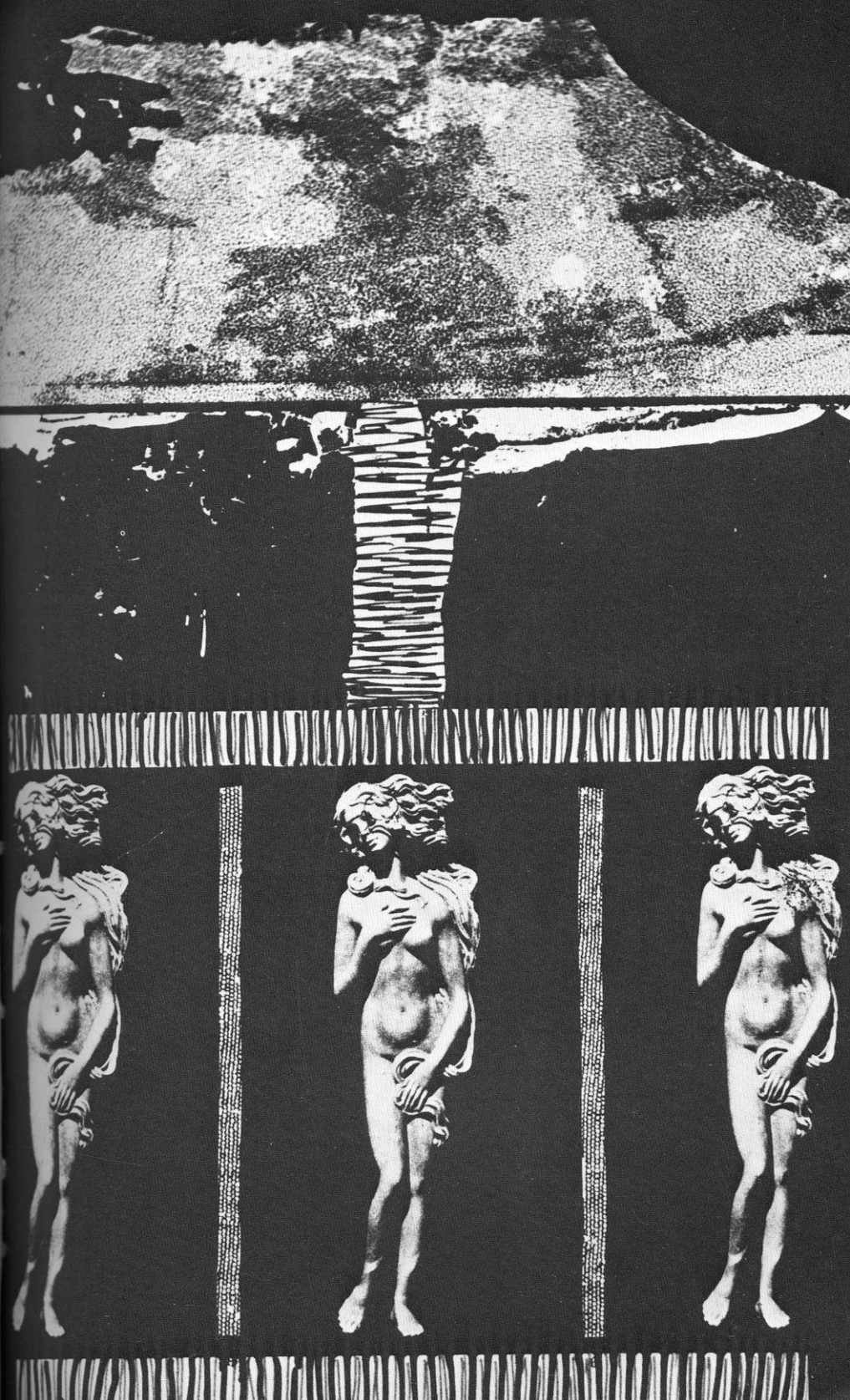
With marches and organizing and posters, with writing and speaking and various unorthodox actions, it seemed possible to materially relieve, even with some speed, the anxieties and crimes and boredom and sense of possibilities which plagued us.

Nor were we wrong, I will add. Nor have we been defeated or stopped. Though the progress often may seem to some small, even nowhere.

One more addition: to the activist aims, I, like some others, attached the proviso that a sharp division between aesthetic value and practical value was not a given, was not a fact of early peoples nor was it likely to be true of a future, and more fully humanized, humanity. The split between man and the arts he generated was rather a reflection of the alienated condition of society as I hated and despised it, and therefore, I would join, insofar as I might, the effort for structural social change into a tandem with the artistic values which I knew and had embraced but which had come for me to verge upon irrelevance.

This intention to join the supposedly separated values and fields of action into a "dramaturgy of radical activity" has been a preoccupation. In elaborating the elements of the project in scenarios and analysis, I was concretely led away from the old arts. Meanwhile the traditional arts were for their part also moving . . . but in

Photographic visual by Donald J. Cyr



the other direction from that in which many whom I knew were inclined. It seemed a typical experience — however crushing — when my first-written play, *Potsy,* was taken by the Living Theatre, and then, just as the Becks moved it into the rehearsal phase, the Federal tax agents closed down the Becks and left their theatre no alternative but to seek a foreign exile from America. No production; and that just seemed where matters stood generally if one tried to exert different and excellent standards within the framework of the traditional arts, given the lethargy and often the corruption of the old and the marginality of the new.

Photographic visual by Donald J. Cyr

Happenings and Action Theatre sprang up as a live alternative to the crisis of a consumptive theatre. In the visual arts the poster began to have its day. In film, the agitprop of Godard and Newsreel. In various and numerous combinations, political opportunity and pressing need and aesthetic value were brought together, or at least into the same space.

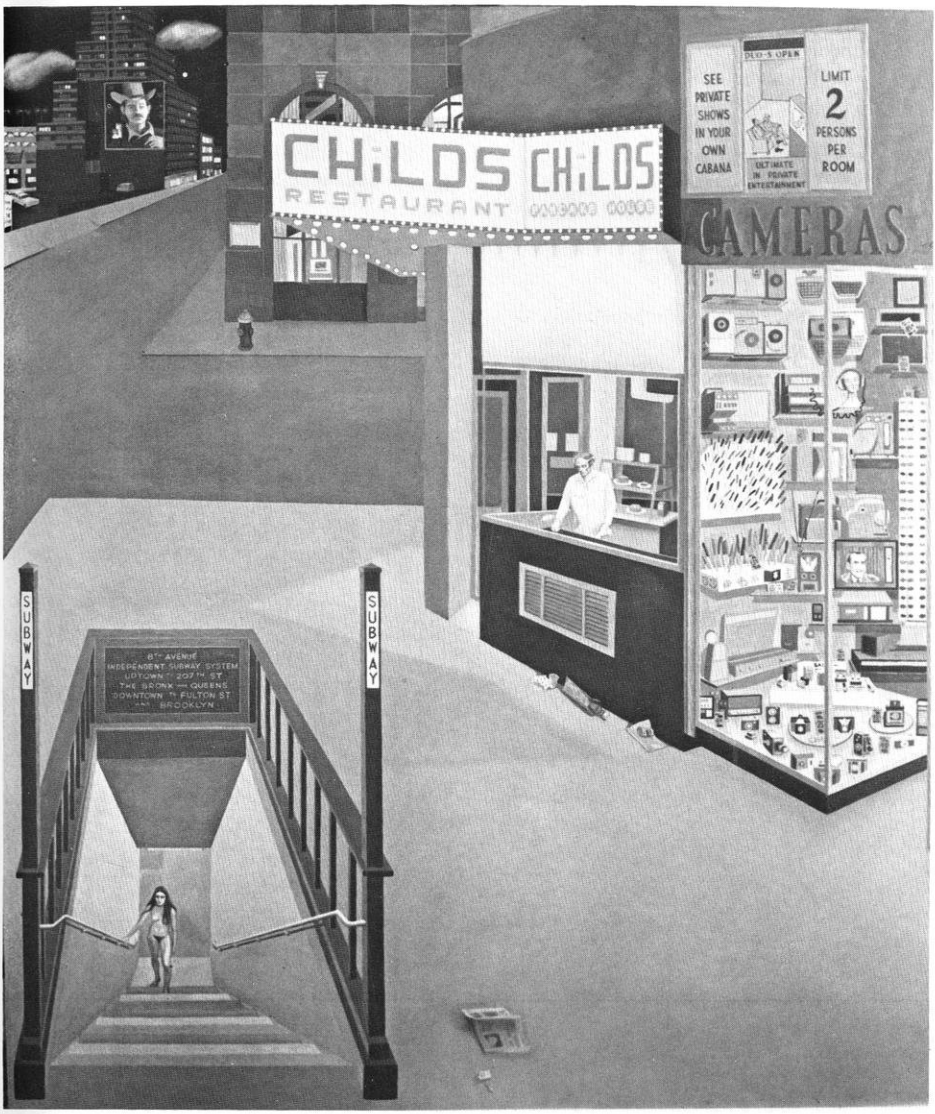
De-emphasized were the more contemplative, leisurely, expansive, highly-structured, absorbing tendencies of art. These qualities, as I said, had lost importance. Beckoning were the possibilities of what seemed a more lively or contemporary or practical art or an actual dramaturgy of politics.

And where are we now?

If the possibilities of social change are by no means blunted — as they do not seem to be — nonetheless those very aesthetic values which almost yesterday seemed more and more irrelevant, today are asserting a fresh lease on survival.

Myron Heise
42nd Street,
1970-71

Look around for the street theatres of yesterday. Where have they gone, with the unique exception of the Bread and Puppet Theatre? In place of their agitprop, we find more elaborate playscripts, we find fully produced plays. Which is not to say that the activated intelligence of these last years is suffocated. It isn't; it already shows somewhat in the newer scripts. (Which isn't to suggest that the commercial theatre will today be more receptive than it was to the awakening of consciousness.)



In place of the posters, in place of more hortatory art, there emerges a more reflective art. One which experiments with the difficulties of how we *see prior* to action.

In place of narrowly political cinema (its lessons weren't transferrable from the original event), a more dialectical cinema exploring American alienation in depth.

And so on. In what is hopefully a long march through the institutions of culture. For it today appears that the personnel on whom the institutions of American commercial and non-commercial culture must depend, will not stand still for much that they themselves helped shovel out, just short years ago. It's a situation that could make one want to speak of a comparison with the art and thought of the French Enlightenment epoch. Everyone knows what *that* paved the way for.

It seems to me, then, that the time has arrived for *new integrations.* The pressure among those involved with the arts and with social change won't allow for much else to happen.

I have cited some activist arts. For every person who has been involved with them, how many more simply felt too bewildered, or too paralyzed in these past years, to be able to drop the traditional art practices? Or even to participate at all in the roundabout and diffuse activity which is art? And where is the energy of these people to go now? I cannot believe it will be wasted or contained.

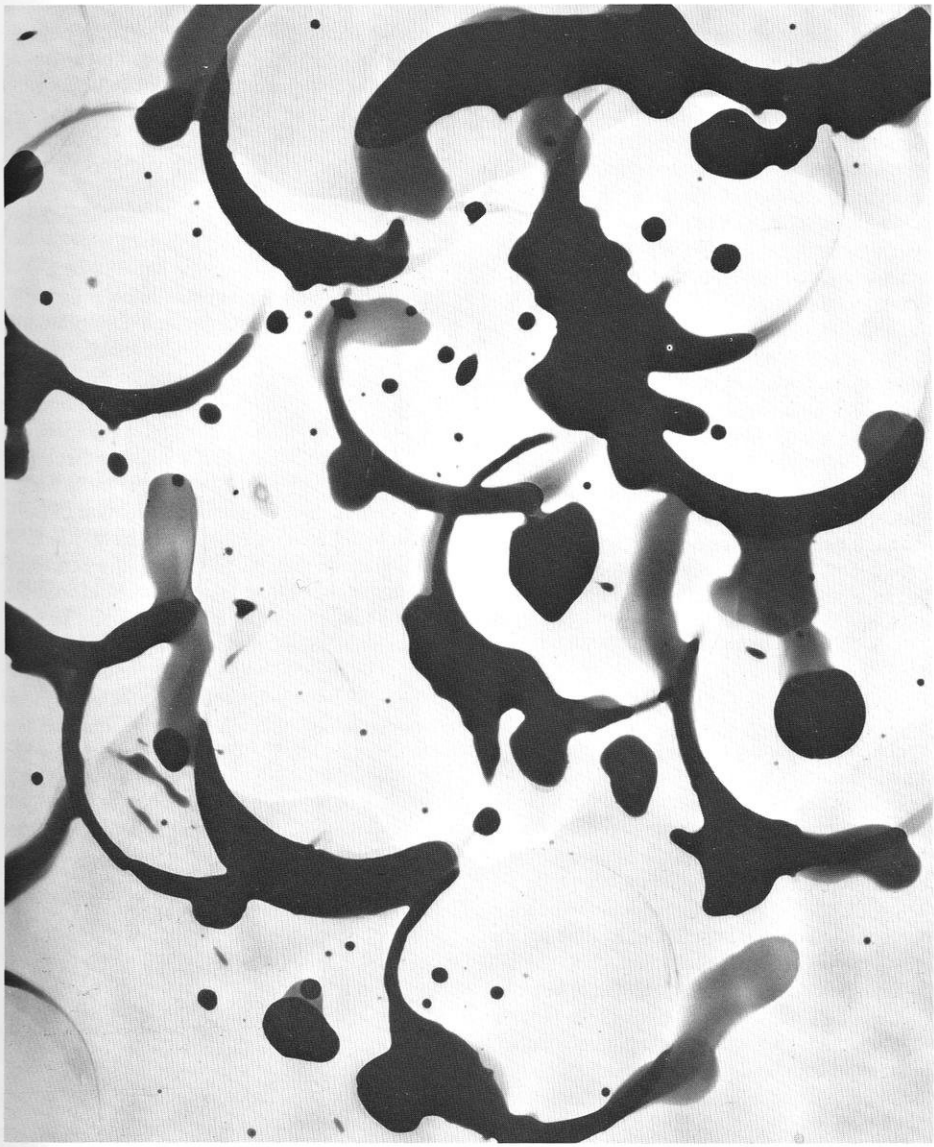
The arts, having always been socially influential, are to be infused with new perceptions and with new intentions. The "long march" goes through their subdued lobbies and training and working and performing facilities leaving clear if sometimes still-crude directional markers.

And why, we may ask, do old settled aesthetic values still have this kind of role and this appeal? Because, we may answer, art intensifies feeling and meaning; it intimates an harmonious coherence. It has represented in a number of ways the closest approach which many could hope to make to the achievement and the gratification yielded potentially by those same specific aesthetic values in ordinary life activity.

Yet a mistake would be made were we to judge that the long march through the institutions (including those of culture) can be made without also redefining the institutions worth creating as well as those worth preserving. The dramaturgy of ordinary life activity isn't yet an institution, even in the loose understanding of institutions; nor is its comprehension well worked out as yet, much less popularized.

Even so, the opening, the propensity, the opportunity is evident. And the enduring achievement to which the greatest artworks of the past and present eventually may be applied, is just this "institution" of the aesthetic values anchored in daily consciousness and daily interactions. That is, at least, how the oncoming era of disalienation starts to look.

Meanwhile — and as an integral part of these processes of disalienation — there will be new integrations of the old arts.



Art, Nature, and Revolution

by William O. Reichert

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Revolutionary change is generally considered to be the special province of ideologists who place themselves in positions of power which they wield on behalf of "the people." When we think of revolu-

tion the names of Lenin, Robespierre, and Che Guevara leap to mind and hold our attention as the movements of the prima ballerina in the spotlight holds our attention at the ballet. The revolutionary all too often impresses us as the epitome of masculine force and heroic endeavor and hence it is to the political type that the world turns its attention when social change becomes imperative to its continued health and sanity. Social progress, it would thus appear, is dependent upon the strength and courage of the political leader and it is the ideologist to whom we seem to be beholden for the brave new world of tomorrow. But this is a drastic error in judgment on the world's part, for it is the artist rather than the revolutionary leader who is the real architect of basic social and cultural change.

In proclaiming art rather than politics the true revolutionary force in society, we do not in any way accept the argument of elitists who insist that only the noble few have the power to direct life intelligently. With Benedetto Croce we must come to see that "the aesthetic fact is not something exceptional, produced by exceptionally gifted men, but a ceaseless activity of man as such; for man possesses the world, so far as he does possess it, only in the form of representation-expressions, and only knows in so far as he creates."[1] We are artists all, to paraphrase a well-known expression, and the consequences of our art is inevitably a better and more just world. But we do not consciously work toward this end, nor do we submit to any ideological design in terms of organizing ourselves and our activity. Life itself is our only blueprint and the methodology we discipline ourselves by is the spontaneity that is fundamental to human character. At best, as Croce points out, there is a mere quantitative difference separating the ordinary man from the great artist, for the source of energy for both is their common human nature. Were the average man totally lacking in imagination and aesthetic sense, no artist could talk beyond himself. "The cult of the genius with all its attendant superstitions has arisen from this quantitative difference having been taken as a difference in quality," Croce points out. "It has been forgotten that genius is not something that has fallen from heaven, but humanity itself."[2] To look toward political leadership for the initiative for real social change, therefore, is to be turned in the exact opposite direction toward which we should be pointed.

Strange as it may appear to some, one of the most faithful champions of the aesthetic as a guide to freedom is the anarchist. Anarchism has been much maligned over the years and it is difficult to discuss the idea without conjuring up all kinds of misconceptions about it. At present, however, the anarchist idea is once again being taken seriously, as witnessed by the large number of books and scholarly articles being published about it. It will be contended here that the revival of interest in the idea of anarchism is due to the widespread realization that anarchism is much more than a political doctrine. As more and more people are coming to see, anarchist thought makes an important contribution in the realm of aesthetics. My purpose here will be to establish the close relationship that exists between anarchism and art and to suggest some ways in which anarchist thought might be put to theoretical use in the area of social reconstruction.

II

Since Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was the first to call himself an anarchist, it is not improper that we start with his attitude toward art and the artist. Central to all of Proudhon's social thought is the idea that social progress stems from the activity of man's creative spirit. If we would build a sound society in the future, Proudhon maintained, we must somehow free man from the fetters which presently restrict his imagination and keep him in servitude to the political state and other instruments of repression. Human progress depends, according to Proudhon, not upon the reform of political institutions but upon the education of mankind in the ways of its own social nature, for man is basically a creative being who has been robbed of his natural social propensities by the crushing weight of the political restrictions he has imposed upon himself over the centuries. To the extent that man derives insight into the content and meaning of his own basic

nature, he becomes capable of perfecting himself and living in freedom and social unity with his fellowman.

Displaying a genuine commitment to science in the very best sense of the term, Proudhon refused to confine his thinking within the rigid boundaries of any intellectual discipline, and hence he acknowledged poetry and art as being at least as important as sociology, economics, or political economy. In Proudhon's view of things, social progress takes place as the human race becomes reeducated in the ways of its own social nature. According to Proudhon, this is essentially a collective rather than an individual process. Yet Proudhon saw clearly in his own mind that it is the individual rather than the mass upon whom progress really depends. Mass society has no form apart from the individual. It follows from this that social progress can only take place to the extent that the individual differentiates himself from the mass. But, Proudhon insisted, the individual's redemptive progress cannot proceed faster than the general pace of social advance made by society as a whole, and hence it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the individual and the collective.

Central to Proudhon's contention that social progress stems from the activity of man's creative spirit is the correlative principle that art and the artist are essential to the health of society, for the dialectical surge toward human perfection wends its way from one plateau of beauty to another. Truth, to Proudhon, was nothing less than the continuous progress of mind from poetry to prose.[3] This is why Proudhon, like Plato before him, insisted that the poet must never allow himself to become a partisan to a cause, whether that cause be social, political, or religious. For "every society declines the moment it falls into the hands of the ideologists," Proudhon proclaimed.[4]

It is no doubt true, as Benedetto Croce points out, that Proudhon was greatly preoccupied with morals, and that his anarchism, for that very reason, had a distinctively religious ring to it.[5] Croce is much too severe, however, when he argues that Proudhon viewed art merely as a means to social reform. Art, for Proudhon, had the same basic function that it had for Shelley or any other artist. But like Shelley, Proudhon felt the need for social reform so deeply that the subject was rarely off his mind, and thus it was impossible for him to discuss the one without at least an oblique reference to the other. What is really fundamental in Proudhon's thought is his libertarian idealism which led him to hope that man might in the future realize the social strengths he is capable of by nature. "Man is by nature a sinner, — that is, — not essentially *ill-doing,* but rather *ill-done,* — and it is his destiny to perpetually re-create his ideal in himself," Proudhon wrote.[6] This is what Raphael, the "greatest of all painters," meant when he maintained that the function of the artist is not to portray man and things as nature made them but rather as they should be made, Proudhon continued. In the final analysis it is the artist—painter, writer, poet, philosopher—who must give society crucial insight into its own nature. Where they fail to provide such guidance, society must flounder in its efforts to establish a real social order.

Peter Kropotkin, adapting anarchist theory to the nineteenth century notion of social evolution, followed Proudhon in maintaining that mankind is inevitably progressing toward social perfection. It is still not widely understood, however, that Kropotkin's fascination with the idea of nature was not so much scientific as it was aesthetic.[7] If there is any lesson to be learned from the study of evolution, Kropotkin held, it is the conclusion that the principle of solidarity characterizes every facet of the animal world. But unfortunately, man, being human, does not always recognize the essential character of his own moral nature, Kropotkin complained. The social problem, then, is to give form and shape to the vague feeling of social solidarity man feels within himself. And here, according to Kropotkin, we are dependent upon the artist to transpose the truths of nature into effective social convictions. If the great naturalists of the nineteenth century such as Byron, Lermontov, Goethe, and Shelley were capable of extracting from nature the inspiration for good and beautiful lives,

Kropotkin wrote, why should today's poet fail to do the same?

> *And when the poet has found the proper expression for his sense of communion with the Cosmos and his unity with his fellow-man, he becomes capable of inspiring millions of men with his higher enthusiasm. He makes them feel what is best in them, and awakens their desire to become better still. He produces in them those ecstasies which were formerly considered as belonging to the province of religion.*[8]

It was for this purpose that Kropotkin called upon the poets, painters, sculptors, and musicians to come join the ranks of the great social revolution. For the principal mission of the artist is to demonstrate to the people the ugliness of existing society and the "absurdities of the present social order."[9]

But again like Proudhon, Kropotkin is nowhere guilty of the superficial thinking which characterizes the outlook of the elitist, nor was he foolish enough to suppose that the purpose of art is purely didactic. The general effect of art is to inspire mankind as to what is true and beautiful, and in this task the artist is essential. But Kropotkin had no more use for the aristocratic principle in art than he did in politics. It is the people who produce great art, he maintained, and not the few. This is the reason for anarchism's total rejection of political power as a possible means of effecting social order. For it is only when the people are uninhibited by law and formal political authority that the creative energies of human nature may rise to the surface of human

Ralph W. Borge
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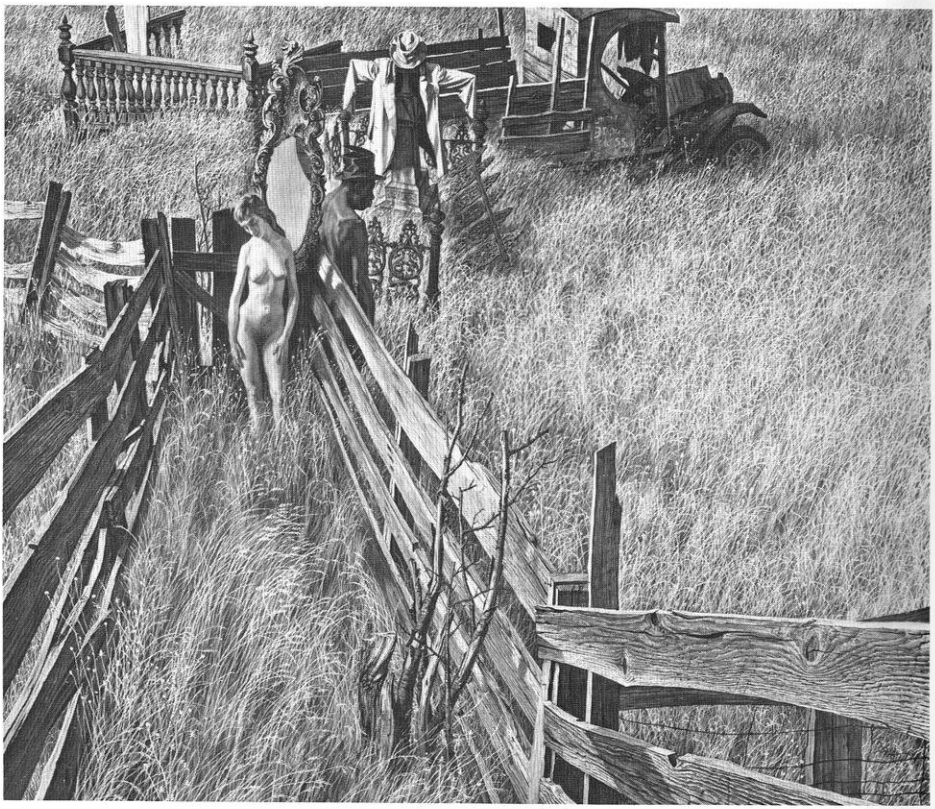

society and display themselves.

Kropotkin gives expression to his deep interest in aesthetics in *Mutual Aid,* one of his most important works. The breathtaking beauty and grandeur of medieval architecture was not so much due to the skill of the medieval craftsman, according to Kropotkin, as it was to the magnificence and profundity of the medieval conception of life. Medieval art "was grand because it was born out of a grand idea."[10] The wellspring of medieval art, as with Greek art before it, was the brotherhood and social unity the craftsman daily experienced in his community. The exhilarating vigor which springs forth from his craftsmanship was a reflection of the vigor of the medieval idea. Medieval architecture was magnificent, Kropotkin held, because the souls of those who created it were nurtured on an ethic of cooperation and mutual trust. If the present age is to duplicate the artistic accomplishments of the medieval period, it must first construct a social order which will allow men to develop healthy social personalities. It was the artist in Kropotkin as much as the social reformer that caused him to write: "Art, in order to develop, must be bound up with industry by a thousand intermediate degrees, blended, so to say, as Ruskin and the great Socialist Morris have proved so often and so well. Everything that surrounds man, in the street, in the interior and exterior of public monuments, must be of a pure artistic form."[11] Ultimately, Kropotkin's advocacy of communism was based less on the moral stance that he took than on his conviction that only in a society where all men and women enjoy not only leisure and comfort but beauty as well can the better aspects of human nature rise to the surface. In an anarchistic society constructed along communistic lines, Kropotkin held, a diversity of art associations will spring up, thereby supplying the culture with abundant sources of energy for its aesthetic development.

The essential key to a correct understanding of anarchist thought lies in its conception of nature as it relates to the aesthetic. Nowhere is this more succinctly expressed than in the writings of Bartolemeo Vanzetti as he languished in prison awaiting execution for a crime that he had not committed. Exhibiting an intuitive feel for beauty and the poetic temperament that is so characteristic of Italians, Vanzetti revealed the profound depths of his soul when he wrote to a sympathetic admirer in China, "Nature has gave us unphantomed treasures for the security and elevation of life, it breath in our heart an unquenchable long of freedom, and it gifts us of such faculties which, if free and cultivated, would make a wonder of us."[12] Since Vanzetti was not permitted to live long enough to develop his thought to its logical end, we can only surmise what he had in mind when he suggested that the key to social order and progress lies in nature. But one thing is perfectly clear and that is that the profound regard for nature as the wellspring of all that is social in life is fundamental to the thinking of all anarchists and is therefore central to an understanding of the anarchist idea itself.

III

Solid philosophical foundations for the anarchist's attitude toward nature is to be found in the writings of a number of highly reputed philosophers and aesthetic theorists, all of whom directly or indirectly share in the general outlook of a social psychology derived from the Enlightenment. "It cannot be stressed enough that the key to a fundamental understanding, not only of man, but of the world as well, is to be sought in the relation between creativity and symbolic reality," Erich Neumann writes.[13] Drawing a close analogy between the human unconscious and nature, Neumann points out that the source of all human creativity is the unconscious level of human existence rather than the conscious. On the conscious level of existence, men succumb to the symbolic truths that their common everyday experience imposes upon them, and hence it is that they accept such brutal institutional arrangements as capital punishment and war and prisons as real. On the unconscious level of existence, on the other hand, man makes contact with what is real and fundamental in human nature, finding there the clue to his true

identity. This is not to suggest that human nature consists of any set pattern of traits or instincts, or that all men are identical with respect to their essential natures. It is rather to argue that human reality is not a concrete mass of atoms and molecules but a shifting kaleidoscope which changes continuously as man becomes conscious of the meaning of the symbols he has imposed upon himself. To discover his true social identity, man must somehow uncover the multitudinous levels of myth which the mind has embraced from the very beginning of human history. But to do this, he must first become aware of the precise way in which symbols turn into myths to hold him captive to the past.

It is in this area that the writings of Ernst Cassirer and Susan Langer are indispensable. As Cassirer points out, the world we inhabit has no form or substance from the social point of view apart from the design men have impressed upon it through the medium of language. In the beginning the world was mere chaos or at best a void, given as it was to the growth of biological species that reacted to the forces of nature on the basis of pure chance and environmental circumstance. The beginning of human social consciousness starts with the development of language, for not until men can communicate with one another can they derive any meaning from experience. ". . . all the concepts of theoretical knowledge constitute merely an upper stratum of logic which is founded upon a lower stratum, that of the logic of language," Cassirer writes.[14] The human mind remains blank so far as cognition and understanding are concerned until it has developed a series of names by which its experiences can be classified and labeled. It is important to recognize here that it is not the experience or the thing itself that contains meaning but the names that we apply to them. Cassirer sums up the foundations of this view of things when he writes, "Sweet and bitter tastes, as well as color and tone, exist only by convention: in reality there is nothing but atoms and empty space. All the sensuous attributes which we customarily impute to a body, all the smells, tastes, and colors, are, in relation to the object in which we conceive of them as inhering, nothing but words, by which we designate not the nature of the object itself but only its action on us, on the sentient organism."[15]

There is both a positive and negative side to this process whereby man establishes the meaning and significance of his experiences by tagging them with names. On the one hand, it leads to the development of language, the vital medium by which men join hands and create that society within which their lives are immeasurably enriched by communication and interaction. Man's greatest achievement is just this ability to develop ideas whereby he has brought collective order and meaning to the experience he has felt as an individual. "The power of conception—of 'having ideas'—is man's peculiar asset, and awareness of this power is an exciting sense of human strength," Susan Langer writes.[16] However, while language helps man conceptualize his experiences and develop advanced systems of communication, it also acts negatively upon society to the extent that it leads men to accept symbolic truths as the bedrock of reality. Once any particular idea or conceptualization has become widely accepted as real or true, it is extremely difficult for people to give it up and to replace it with a new conceptualization more adequate to the new circumstances that time inevitably brings. This no doubt is why institutional arrangements inevitably lag a century or more behind the advanced social thought of any society.

It is instructive in this regard to analyze carefully the details of the process whereby ideas and concepts become enshrined. As Ernst Cassirer points out, "Mythology is inevitable, it is natural, it is an inherent necessity of language, if we recognize in language the outward form and manifestation of thought. . . ."[17] In their efforts to acquire new knowledge of the world, men seek to translate their fleeting reactions to their environment into more permanent form by giving them names and classifying them into categories. In itself, as we have already noted, this process is essentially positive in that it advances mankind's understanding of the universe, permitting the growth and refinement of culture. But as Cassirer warns, "Any sense impression,

Jacob Landau
I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier
Collection: Dr. & Mrs. David Raskin, Philadelphia

no matter how vague, if it be fixed and held in language, may thus become a starting point for the conception and denotation of a god."[18] When this happens, man suffers the most horrendous of fates—his enslavement not to any foreign power or sovereign but to himself.

It is precisely here that the anarchist provides us with helpful insight into the general problem imposed upon society when man erects myths. All anarchists, however they may be classified as to their economic or philosophic beliefs, agree on the fundamental proposition that human slavery starts and ends with myth. Man as a political animal is the product of countless generations of development wherein he has progressively enslaved himself by fettering his reason with the chains of superstition born of fear. The anarchist holds that the precise point at which man lost his freedom cannot be determined but we can be relatively certain that the cause of his enslavement stemmed from his forebears' readiness to grovel in the dust at the feet of the gods he erected to protect him from the things he could not understand or control. Man's greatest enemy in this regard has been himself. Unable to attain that solidarity that is essential for real community, mankind has from the earliest of times taken refuge in myth in a futile effort to find the security that is so necessary to collective life. Mankind, to be sure, was never conscious of the fact that it was in the process of enslaving itself to the stultifying grip of a collective tyranny from which it might never escape again, for as Ernst Cassirer has observed, men who live under the sway of myth are never conscious of the fact that their lives are dominated by images and symbols which took form and shape in the dim recesses of the past.[19] The impulses that surge through man as he performs his rites of magic and religious atonement are deep-seated, unconscious relics of the past over which he has absolutely no control. If he were conscious of their existence, he would no longer be under their power. If we would escape from the chains which antiquity has fastened upon us in the forms of mythical thought, we must adopt a method adequate to the task to be accomplished.

Although Michael Bakunin, the notorious anarchist, may have been given to fanaticism and intemperance in his personal behavior during life, he has left us with a great deal of wisdom concerning the problem of overcoming mythical thought. To this day, Bakunin strikes those who dare to read his writings as someone to be feared because of the apparent irreverance with which he denounces the idea of god. When Bakunin argued that it is necessary to abolish the idea of god from our minds if we would be free, however, he was not so much sacrilegious as he was iconoclastic; he was opposed to the idea of god not because he favored the bad over the good but because it is before the god idea considered as supreme power that mankind has prostrated itself throughout history until today men are almost totally lacking in the strength to live in social order with one another. If we would again become free, we must abolish the very thought of god, i.e., myth, from our minds, for it is only thus that we have any hope of reclaiming the pristine social qualities of our human nature, Bakunin held.

Although Bakunin, like most everyone else who lived in the nineteenth century, was greatly affected by the philosophy of Hegel, he departed radically from the Hegelian conception of world order when he postulated the novel idea that history "is the revolutionary negation of the past."[20] Man, essentially an animal, according to Bakunin, has behind him his primitive beginnings during which he erected a social structure built upon a foundation of language and thought. Rejecting his heritage as grossly inadequate, Bakunin called upon men to look forward to the development of their humanity in the future. In urging us to look forward to the future rather than back to the past, Bakunin puts himself squarely within the Enlightenment view of human progress. According to Bakunin, "The only thing that can warm and enlighten us, the only thing that can emancipate us, give us dignity, freedom, and happiness, and realize fraternity among us, is never at the beginning, . . . but always at the end of history."[21] What we must do if we would become whole again, which is to say free, is to reject the mythical patterns of thought the human

mind became steeped in during the primitive era of history and replace them with rational patterns of behavior drawn from life.

In Bakunin's view of things, life and nature are not two separate and distinct entities but one and the same thing, and the primary quality that identifies them both is the power of human creativity which is synonymous with rationality. Outspokenly critical of those of his contemporaries who interpreted the eye-catching achievements of nineteenth century science as an indication that the scientist is the true savior of humanity, Bakunin issued a severe warning against this type of elitist thinking. "Life alone spontaneously creates real things and beings," he postulated. "Science creates nothing; it establishes and recognizes only the creations of life."[22] And again he urged: "The sole mission of science is to light the road. Only life, delivered from all its governmental and doctrinaire barriers, and given full liberty of action, can create."[23] When anarchists argue for spontaneity of thought and action over a rigid adherence to formal rules and form imposed by authority, the basis of their preference is to be found in the aesthetic inclinations expressed by

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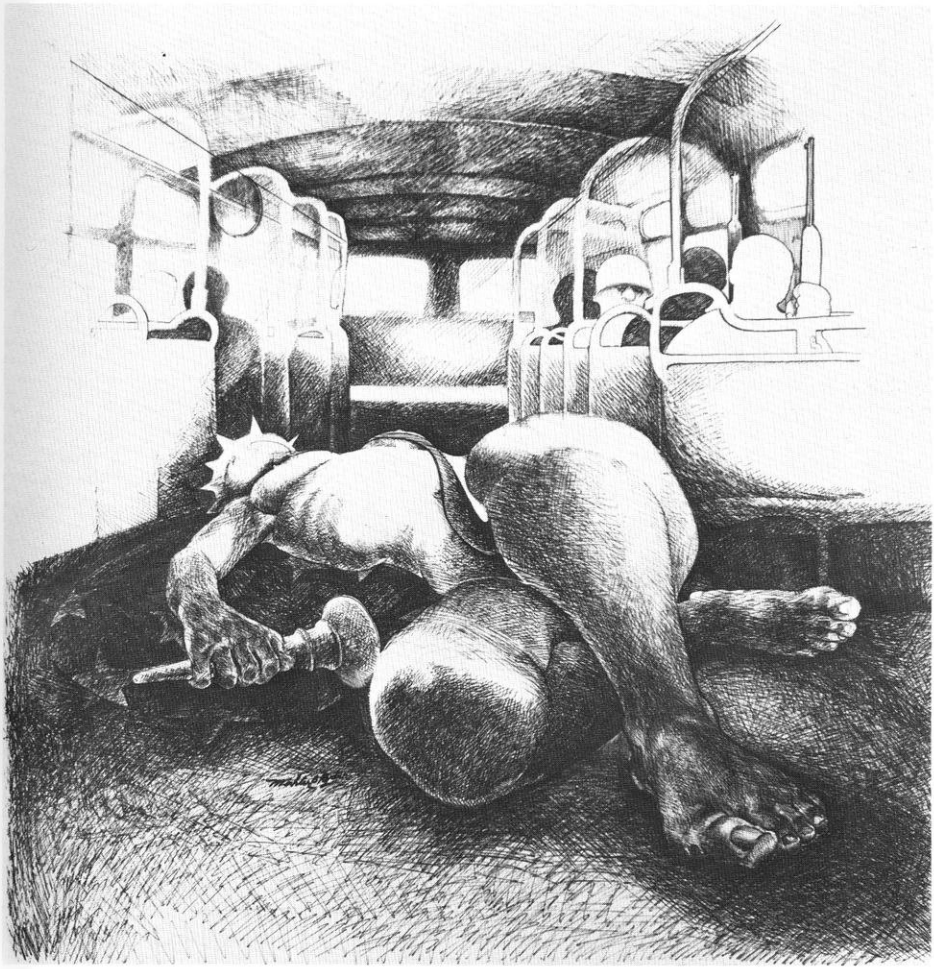
Photo by Morgan Rockhill



Michael Bakunin and others who describe life as being synonymous with nature.

The striking similarity between the way that Michael Bakunin viewed nature and the view of nature posited by Ernst Cassirer permit us to claim that anarchism, considered as an aesthetic theory rather than a political one, has much to offer those who would reform society without resort to force in the hands of officialdom. Drawing upon the writings of Shaftsbury, Cassirer points out that "the nature and value of beauty do not lie in the mere emotional effect they produce upon man, but in the fact that they reveal the realm of form."[24] Modern science, given as it is to the observation of empirical phenomena, tends to overlook the degree to which things are teleological in nature, and this is especially true of behaviorly oriented social scientists who have of late become obsessed with mathematics and quantification. For Cassirer as for Bakunin, nature is not primarily the full range of the varieties of created things but the "creative power from which the form and order of the universe are derived." There is a basic design in nature, that is to say, that portends the ultimate form and shape of all things according to the perfection that any particular species might look forward to attaining under ideal conditions. Or to put it another way, "Nature is nothing but a force implanted in things and the law by which all entities proceed along their proper paths."[25] Working from this set of basic assumptions, Cassirer has no difficulty in pronouncing the individual human being who puts himself in tune with nature perfectly capable of voluntarily leading a fully social existence with his fellowmen, and thus for him, as for the anarchist, the state becomes superfluous if not a pernicious force.

Where revolution proceeds along the lines of the aesthetic paradigm, as the anarchist argues it must, human freedom becomes a distinct possibility rather than the mere rhetorical phrase it is on the lips of the politician and revolutionary. Far from ruling over the world through formal methods of social and political control, the artist considered as revolutionary persuades only via the means of rational influence. Where the political revolutionary utilizes power and charisma, the artist employs symbol and aesthetic form to lead people to accept the outline of a new and better kind of world. For as Professor Ralph Ross points out, art "brings immediate conversion, or acceptance of the artist's meaning, as self-evident propositions are accepted as soon as they are understood; there is no need for the persuasion, the argument, the evidence, which accompanies empirical statement."[26] To the extent that art and nature are synonymous, anarchism presents itself as a highly useful guide to human freedom and we would do well to take a fresh look at it.

Jacob Landau
Armored Man

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[1] *Aesthetic,* translated by Douglass Ainslie (New York, 1953), p. 416.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 15.
[3] *System of Economical Contradictions,* translated by Benjamin R. Tucker (Boston, 1888), p. 448.
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 115.
[5] *Aesthetic,* p. 339.
[6] The religious undertones of nineteenth century anarchism are described in my article, "Proudhon and Kropotkin on Church and State," *A Journal of Church and State,* IX (Winter, 1967), 87-100.
[7] Kropotkin, as Emma Goldman points out, was something of an artist in his own right. During his lifetime she found that some of his proudest accomplishments had been in the things that he made with his own hands—tables, chairs, and other articles of household furnishings. And in music, too, he displayed extraordinary interest and talent, so that this might have been his vocation had events led in that direction. After Kropotkin's death, Emma, as executor of his estate, found that he also possessed great potential talent for painting and drawing. *Living My Life* (New York, 1934), p. 866.
[8] *Ethics; Origin and Development* (New York, 1924), p. 125.
[9] *An Appeal to the Young,* translated by H. M. Hyndman (New York, 1948), p. 11.
[10] *Mutual Aid* (Boston, 1955), p. 211.

[11] *The Conquest of Bread* (New York, 1906), p. 139.
[12] "An Unpublished Letter," *Resistance* VII (July-August, 1948), 3.
[13] *Art and the Creative Unconscious* (New York, 1959), p. 170.
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[17] *Language and Myth,* p. 5.
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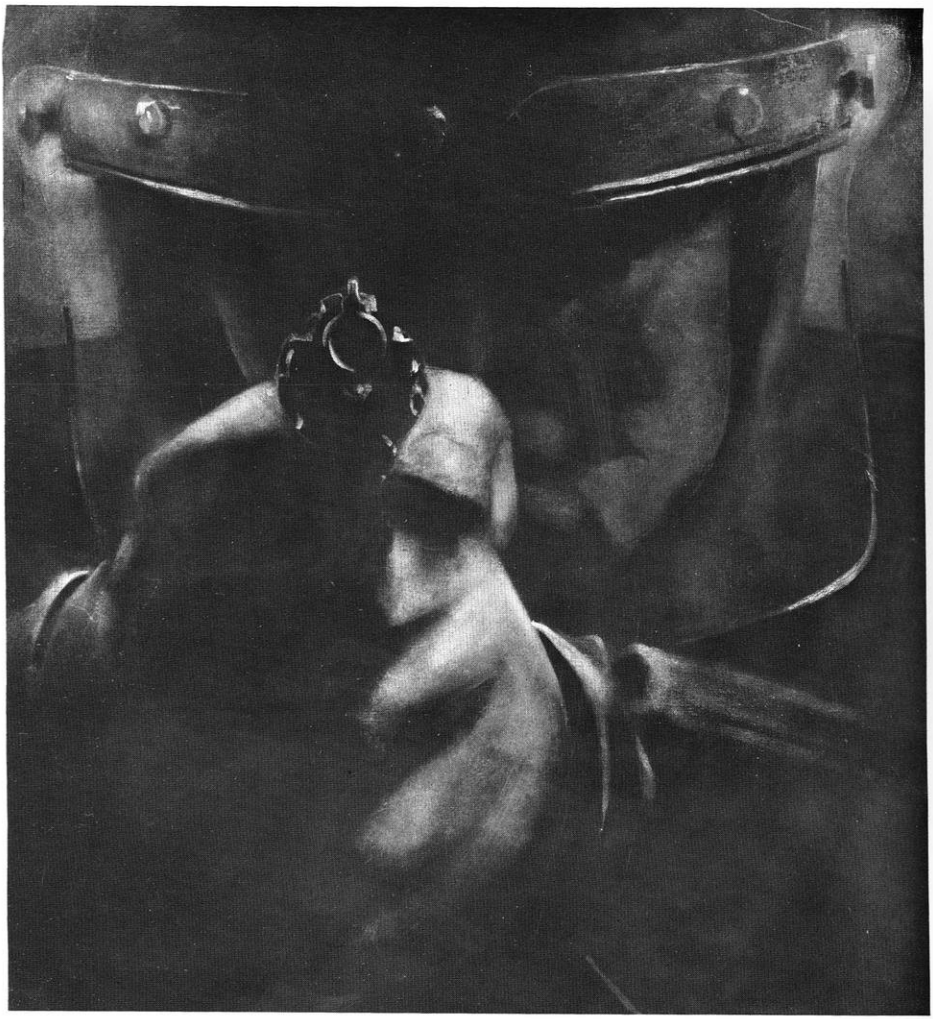
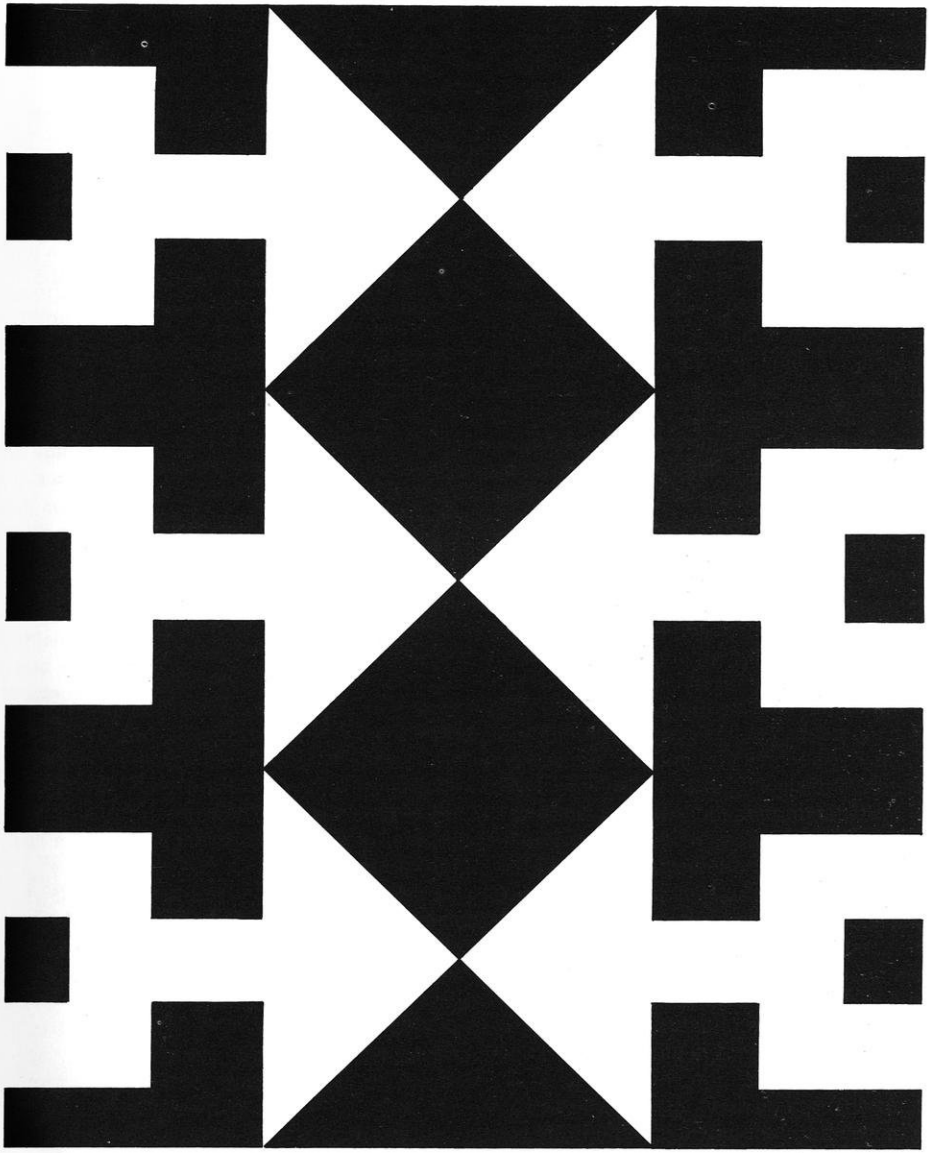
[20] *The Political Writings of Michael Bakunin,* edited by G. P. Maximoff (Glencoe, 1953), p. 173.
[21] *Ibid.,* p. 174.
[22] *Ibid.,* p. 70.
[23] *Ibid.,* p. 76.
[24] *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment,* translated by Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton, 1951), p. 326.
[25] *Ibid.,* p. 44.
[26] *Symbols and Civilization* (New York, 1962), p. 230.

John Dobbs
Deodand #2, 1969
Photo by Geoffrey Clements





The Role of Art in the Education of the American Indian

by Lloyd H. New

Director, Institute of American Indian Arts

Each passing year of tenure in the field of education reinforces my conviction that art education is sine qua non for *all children*—if what we aspire to is a world environment healthily saturated with the quality of creativeness required to evolve and sustain

a saner world than we presently face. However long range and broad such a goal may be, the beginning of its achievement narrows to present time, here and now, with sharp focus on many different kinds of individuals, each requiring to be nourished by whatever means and substance will foster creative productivity to the highest level of his capabilities. The rote learning that presently pervades our classrooms affords the individual neither the opportunity nor the incentive for the exploration and experimentation required to achieve self discovery and self-fulfillment. If it is difficult under these circumstances for the average middle-class white child to establish a meaningful identity, it is well-nigh impossible for the child of a minority culture to do so. The difference between the two is that while the white child in a white school is apt to gain at least some useful information, the nonwhite child is crippled by the same information which often is not only irrelevant to his cultural background but, more important, is at odds with it.

What effect does the question, "Who Discovered America?" have on an American Indian child? Shall he repeat the lie, or fail? What happens to a Navajo-speaking child who enters a school where all verbal communication is effected in a foreign language? What does an American Indian child feel when he is forced to participate in one way or another, in the religious celebrations peculiar to the White World while his own religious calendar is treated as nonexistent? How quickly should he be expected to learn the symbol TELEPHONE, when there is no electricity in his home? If to a child, water means a bucket plus a stream plus pure physical heft, how does he reconcile his experiences with the scientific explanation of H_2O from a water tap? History portrays the Indian as a cruel obstacle to progress and he views himself on film and on the printed page as a bloodthirsty savage. If in the course of his educational life he is fortunate enough to be exposed to a survey of world art, he learns about the wondrous accomplishments of the Egyptians and Greeks, with nary a word in reference to the Mayans or the Aztecs. Rarely is the Indian child made aware of the fact that his people constructed great pyramids, produced distinctive architecture, planned and built great cities, and developed high social orders in religion and government. That his ancestors were eloquent in speech and accomplished in music and dance, are facts never heralded in any textbook. And somehow the Indian child grows up believing that the Egyptians and the Greeks produced enviable works of arts, while the Indians produced artifacts.

In general, the typical European-based educational experience imposed on a Native American child serves only to force him into the role of a non-achiever. By implication he learns that his language and his life-style hold no importance in the world and, by inference, he concludes that his entire cultural heritage—perhaps thirty thousand years of it—is empty, meaningless, and somehow totally unfitting. The net result of his exposure to "education" is that he cannot function as a White; neither can he function as an Indian; he has been *taught* to be a nonentity. And, as such, lacking any functional frame of reference, it is hardly surprising that he has little appetite for knowledge of any kind, or learning, at any level.

A gala field trip, "A" for effort, and a neatly inscribed diploma are unintelligible goals to a person suffering such trauma. And no amount of prodding will do more than push him over the edge—completely out of the educational system. There is no intellectual approach that will interrupt the cycle of defeat when the individual has come to accept defeat and all its consequences as a life-style. He may, in fact, find some pleasure in flaunting his condition by engaging in the kind of overt negative behavior that marks the defeated.

At the Institute we interrupt the cycle first by recognizing the cultural ways of each student and showing respect for them; and then by diligently seeking out an art medium at which the student can succeed. We have learned through experience that the child who is steered to success in one area will seek success in other areas. And further, we have found that this approach is workable through the arts even when it may be quite impossible through academic subjects.

The Institute of American Indian Arts is a national school founded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1962 for the express purpose of creating an environment that would be conducive to the emergence and development of young Indian artists. Embraced in the philosophical approach was a strong belief that young Indian people would gain a stronger and quicker sense of self realization if they were given opportunities to develop within their own cultural framework. The results of this approach to date have proven that under proper auspices young Indian people are not only capable of producing quality art in unusual quantity but that, in the process, they make unusual gains in general life-skills as well.

While the Institute does not label itself a psycho-therapy center it does, nevertheless, core its program around the special psychological position of the individual and his identification with his Indian culture. The basic task of the school is to develop specialized techniques for assisting heretofore neglected young people to enter contemporary society with poise and confidence.

The Institute believes that cultural differences are precious. It operates on the premise that, by linking the best in Indian culture to contemporary life, young people can find new levels of pride and achievement emanating from their own heritage.

The Institute's primary goal is to give the student a basis for genuine pride and self-acceptance. At the outset and at a very personal level, he is made aware of the fact that we know, in general, what his problems are, and that we are on hand to discuss them with him and look into what can be done to help in his particular circumstances; he is made aware of the fact that we respect him both as an individual and as an Indian, and that we cherish his cultural traditions. The school operates in a general aura of honor and appreciation for the Indian parent and the world he represents.

Woven mountain goat hair blanket, with design of a killer whale.
Chilkat Tlingit, Alaska
Photo Courtesy: Museum of American Art, Heye Foundation

All students at the Institute are oriented in the history and aesthetics of Indian accomplishments in the arts. They view exhibitions of the choicest collections of fine Indian art pieces, listen to lectures with slides and films covering the archaeology and ethnology of Indian cultures, and take field trips into the present-day cultural areas of the Southwest groups. They are encouraged to identify with their total heritage, harkening back to the classic periods of South and Central American cultures — heydays of artistic prowess in the New World. And they are exposed to the arts of the world, to give them a basis for evaluating and appreciating the artistic merits of the contributions made by their ancestors. Each student is led to investigate the legends, dances, materials, and activities pertaining to the history of his own particular tribe.

In a curriculum unusually rich in art courses, a student, who may have become dulled to the excitement of personal accomplishment as a result of unsatisfactory experiences with academic subjects in his early years, can be revitalized through the experience of creative action. He may have an undiscovered aptitude for music, dancing, or drama; a natural sense of color and design, a sensitivity for three-dimensional form, or a way with words. All students at the Institute elect studio art courses. Sooner or later, with a great deal of sensitive cooperation on the part of the faculty, a field is found in which a student can "discover" himself. His first successful fabric design, ceramic bowl, piece of sculpture, or performance on stage may be his very first experience with the joy of personal accomplishment. His reaction is one of justifiable pride, and sometimes a shade of disbelief, at having produced something of worth, and he equates it with his own personal worth. For him, this is a great personal discovery. It is, also, a most potent form of motivation toward personal growth.

Carl Cannon (Oneida)
Untitled
Photo Courtesy: Institute of American Indian Art

It should be made clear that the Institute does not ram anyone's culture down his throat. It does, in an atmosphere of appreciation, acquaint each Indian student with his own traditions and encourage his using these as a springboard for personal creative action. The injunction is never "Go back" to outmoded tradition. Rather, it is the purpose of the Institute to help students take a firm, realistic stance from which they can step out in creative action that may lead into new traditions. The Institute assumes that the future of Indian art lies in the Indian artist's ability to adapt to the demands of the present, not to remanipulate the past.

A look at students' responses to date happily vindicates these premises and ideals. Art critics of stature are excited by the quantity and quality of work coming from all studios of the Institute, even in these beginning years of the school's development. Design and craftsmanship reflect classic standards in sculpture, painting, and the various crafts. Poetry and prose reveal new sources for richness and beauty in the written arts. Early achievements in drama and music promise entirely fresh developments in Indian performing arts.

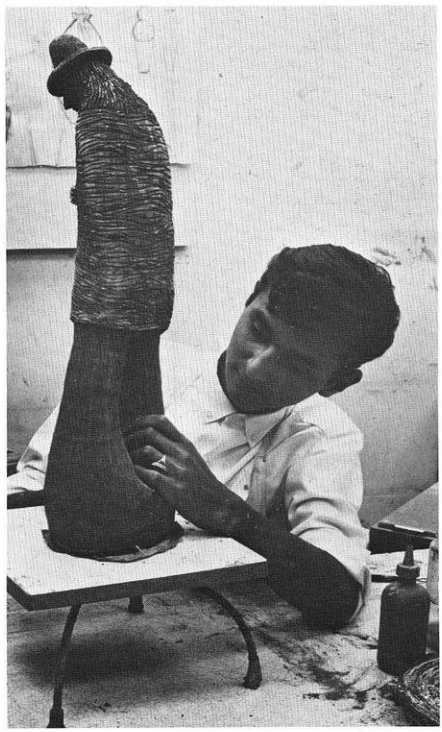
Exhibits of student work have been featured internationally at the Edinburgh Festival and the Alaska Centennial; in Turkey, Argentina, and Chile; and in the Cultural Division of the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. Students in the Performing Arts Department have appeared in two major productions in Washington, D.C., and in a program of traditional dances at the Mexico City Olympics. Student work in creative writing has been published for text book use and a full scale novel has been published by the University of Oklahoma Press. Doubleday and Co. has just issued an anthology of poetry by students, *Whispering Winds.* Student works invariably win a disproportionately large number of awards in local and regional art exhibitions wherever they are entered.

Impressive as these results are in terms of the level of artistic accomplishments, the real value of the program lies in the personal growth of the student himself, and in his recognition of the fact that such growth has taken place.

The student body is made up of youths ranging in age from 15-22, most of whom arrive feeling insecure about their place in a bi-cultural world. They are beset with misunderstandings regarding color and race, and are stung by memories of discrimination. Many feel trapped at a low socio-economic level. Caught in a maelstrom of cultural and social conflict, they are lost in a labyrinth of identity search.

Among these arriving students are the revolutionists, the nonconformists, and the academically disoriented. They have always found themselves disassociated from the common goals set for them in the typical school program. In common with

Pete Jones (Onandoga)
Photo Courtesy: Institute of American Indian Art



all creative people, they have a need for seeking out new ways of saying and doing. They must explore personal and creative approaches to problem solving. They, by nature, reject and are rejected by the typically programmed school, primarily bent to the production of scientists and tradesmen.

While the college route to personal Utopia is being questioned even by the general student population today, it remains that members of minority cultures suffer from undereducation at all institutional levels and face the necessity to become as well educated as possible if they are to compete successfully in a world that does not cater to culturally different origins.

Statistics covering Institute graduates over the years show a drop-out rate of approxi-

Patty Harjo (Seneca-Seminole)
Blouse & Belt
Photo Courtesy: Institute of American Indian Art

Spirit mask representing human face with frog coming out of the mouth. Over the forehead is the head of a land otter, on one side of the face are three frog figurines, and on the other side three mountain goat figurines
Auk tribes of the Tlingit Point Lena, Alaska

mately 20%, compared to a general drop-out rate quoted variously in a range of 40 to 50% for the general Indian student population. Approximately 75% of the students completing the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth grade at the Institute this year (1972) are slated to continue their education in institutions of higher learning. In short, our students show a better rate of accomplishment in these respects than the average Indian student outside the Institute, despite the fact that our incoming students also suffer sorely from all the typical social and psychological problems peculiar to Indian youth, plus the fact they do not completely overcome the notorious sub-standard academic performance levels common to most Indian students. It is postulated that this on-going tendency of our students stems from the fact that they have found additional sources of self-power not always attainable through other programs.

In addition to its school programs, the Institute has other special assignments and long range goals. These include: the responsibility for giving exposure to the cultural accomplishments of the Indian population in general, in the fields of theater, dance, literature, and music; the organization of advanced courses in museum techniques and technological production and business training especially designed to meet the needs of non-college oriented students; the establishment of a broad-service Culture Research Center for the benefit of all interested scholars and the general public. The Institute's charter spells out special responsibilities pertaining to in-service training programs and work to be done in connection with other institutions that might benefit through knowledge of our methods.

Due to limitations in funding, only token advances have been made in these special programs.

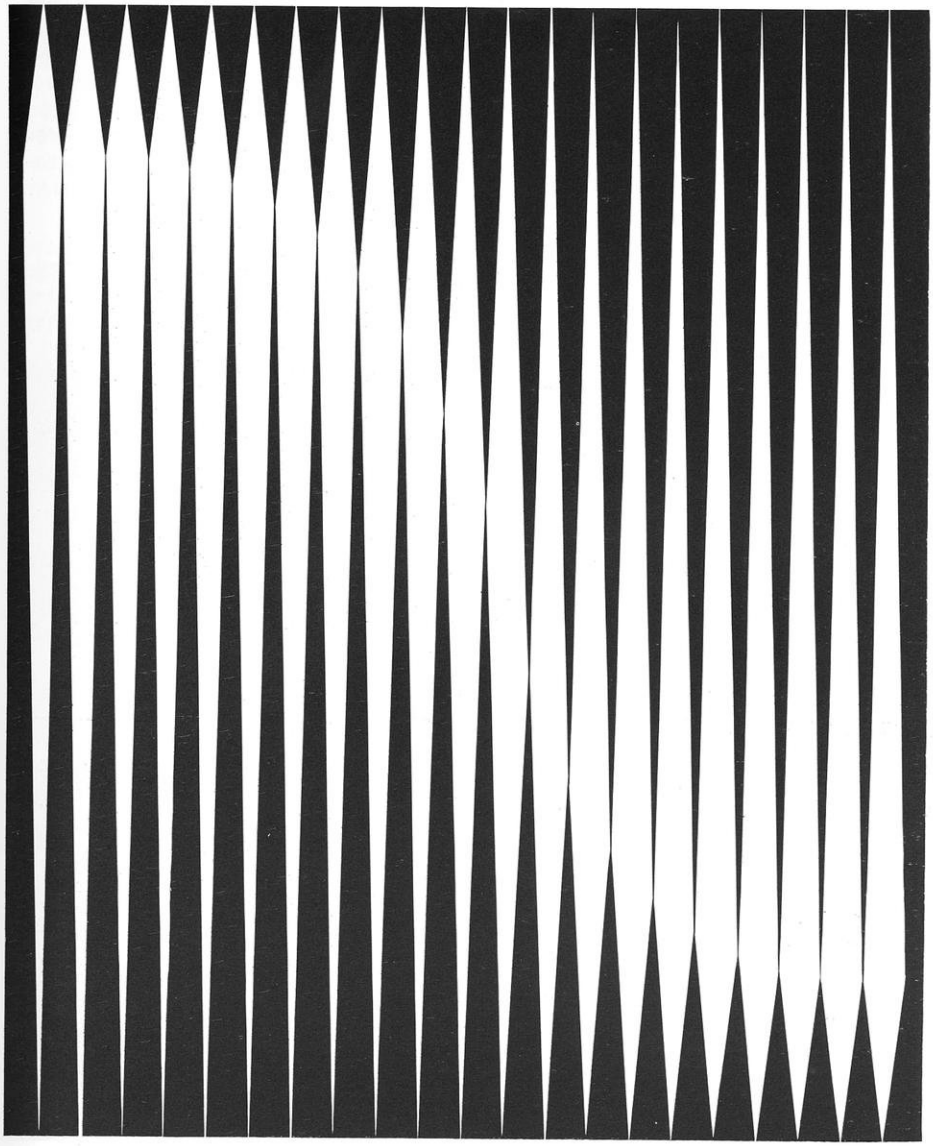
The overall goal of the Institute is that it become a truly effective educational institution and a cultural institute serving not only the needs of youth but also serving to enhance the image of the Indian people at large and to stimulate pride in their accomplishments.

The Institute believes that the American Indian has a tremendously rich heritage in terms of viable philosophies regarding man's relationship to the cosmos. A wealth of archeological evidence attests to the high level of his past accomplishments. Failure to use this cultural richness as an educational bridge amounts to ill-conceived social engineering. If this omission is the result of ignorance in the field of human relations, it is barely excusable; if it is the result of apathy or obstinancy, it is immoral.

We, at the Institute, are proud of our achievements which, in large part, were made possible through the special and indeed preferential support received from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Interior. We enjoy unusual autonomy and freedom that allows for innovation. The effectiveness of our approach lies in offering the student a very wide range of work-areas from which to choose and then, through skillful follow-up, seeing to it that he finds an area in which he can work with some degree of self-satisfaction and success. Through the special emphasis placed on his own cultural base, we imbue him with self-pride so that his tendency to view himself as a second-class citizen is nullified. Out of a new position of personal security comes a new personality with new capabilities.

Needless to say, none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the presence of a dedicated, skillful, creative, and innovative staff.

In summary, the Institute of American Indian Arts is embarked upon an exploratory program, with many steps yet to be taken. Early outcomes are indicative of significant discoveries in education. The Indian student is being inspired to new personal strengths in dimensions heretofore unrealized. Oriented to his own cultural background, he is not forced to sacrifice his Indian nature and heritage on the altars of either withdrawal or assimilation. He is enabled to function wholly and happily, making a proud, personal contribution to his time and his world.



Twenty two Shades of Blue

by Martha Sanders Gilmore

Jazz and Blues Columnist
for *Audio Magazine*.

What more appropriate place in these United States to focus in on an expression of the cultural and spiritual pride that is rightfully every black man's privilege and ultimate salvation than Washington, D.C. —

the Nation's Capitol and seventy-six per cent black Capitol of America? More specifically, hunt out the New Thing Art and Architecture Center, located in a converted dance studio deep in that city's heart, an institution which bends its energies toward black expression in such art forms as movie making, photography, African dance, creative writing, and jazz.

Boldly at the mast of the New Thing is a kind of guru to the blacks, an intense man of philosophic bent, who is a veritable powerhouse of a leader, having earned two degrees in architecture from Yale University and spending as much time out of Washington lecturing as he does in. Topper Carew, who makes it all happen and plans to expand his efforts to further the black community Stateside, remarks: "We don't believe in art for art's sake; that is an essentially Western concept. We believe that art is a means to make people more aware of their presence in the world, more aware of their historical origins and the vitality of their own culture."

Thus, through the encouragement of black arts and "to teach kids something other than baseball," this organization hopes to unite the predominantly black community of Washington, D.C. in a sense of pride and awareness of its cultural heritage. And what better way than through the blues?

On a windy three-day weekend in the fall an important example of the blacks' struggle for emergence and power manifested itself on the campus of Howard University. Here, Carew and his New Thing crew staged the first blues festival to be sponsored by blacks and to be held at a black university.

In the art form that is the blues, so basic to our music of today, lies the foundation for jazz, soul, rock, country music, folk, and many of our more traditional song forms. Blues reflect sadly but accurately the Negro plight and experience in America after receiving that cordial invitation to cross the Atlantic so many years ago.

The subjects of poverty, loneliness, love, sex, the numbers game, and overall hard times are evoked by bluesmen in vividly imaginative anecdotes, sometimes with humor, sometimes with pathos. They sing songs of everyday life, recounting modes of travel as exemplified by "61 Highway," "Freight Train," "80 Highway," and "John Henry."

Unfortunately, the task The New Thing undertook was ignored, misinterpreted, and virtually unsupported by the Greater Washington black community. Maybe, too, it was mismanaged by The New Thing. Black man creates the blues, white man buys them and supports them seemed the case at this well attended fete featuring some twenty-two blues acts.

A young, white, hippie audience comprised nearly three-fourths of the audience, fully enjoying the music, clapping, participating, and moving down front at the finish. They were remarkably undaunted by a rather hostile atmosphere provoked by black members of the management and a black emcee who made racial comments about "making this thing blacker next year." Fortunately, no blows were struck, just words and phrases tossed about as frequent inuendos of racism planted themselves firmly in and about the rows.

All this was in striking contrast to the gentlemanliness, warmth, and manners of the musicians themselves who spanned some three generations if one counts the forty-strong Howard University Choir, many of whom are in their late teens. The bulk of the bluesmen were in their sixties and seventies, retaining the attitudes of their own day, but tempered with a keen awareness of the present. They may be said to symbolize the fate of the black man and perhaps connote the subservience, but primarily they reflect the charm and wisdom derived from experience. The young would do well to listen to them, to learn from them, and to try to assimilate some of their genuineness into their own frantically paced mobile lives.

There is a sense of tragic dichotomy in the contrasting attitudes held, on the one hand, by blacks who have actually endured the penury springing out of hard times

such as the Depression which blues singers describe in their movingly personal art, and on the other hand, by blacks who have only heard about these struggles, are understandably angry and bitter, and consequently want to change their status and upgrade their image.

Myron Heise
Willie & Friend
1971

Blues have had a migratory history, stemming in rhythmic form from the African motherland, born on the work farms and cotton fields of the rural South, nurtured by the gospel of the church, and polished and assuming more complexity and urbanity in a migration northward to the City where they can still be heard today.

Says Howlin' Wolf, the "Tail Dragger," a 250-pound giant of the blues, "The blues is

how you been treated, good or bad," as he crawls about the floor, stalks wildly around the stage, acting out his lyrics. Sunny Boy Slim comments in his dressing room that he used to work for 50¢ a week. Libba Cotton, from Chapel Hill, N.C., tells the story of how she once swept the floor for 75¢ a month to save enough money for her first "gee-tar" which cost $3.75.

The blues, regional in derivation, brought together singers from areas of the Deep South as far as Razos County, Texas, in the person of acoustic guitarist Mance Lipscomb; from the blues center of Greenwood, Mississippi, Furry Lewis with his false leg; from Brownsville, Tennessee, blind Sleepy John Estes; and from Rappahannock County, Virginia, John Jackson, a gravedigger, whose intricacy of style, charm of delivery, and beauty on acoustic guitar always earns for him an enthusiastic reception.

In their musical migration, a large majority of blues singers chose the windy city of Chicago to settle, living on Chicago's South and West sides. At the Washington festival, one could find the electric, amplified sound of B. B. King, the "King of the Blues"; famed bottleneck guitarist Muddy Waters; the youthful electricity of Luther Allison whose blues reflect rock overtones; the slide technique of J. B. Hutto who travelled from Georgia to Chicago to work in the steel mills; and the contemporary professionalism of the bluesteam of Buddy Guy and Junior Wells who portray the electric urbanity and polish of a modern city environment superimposed over the traditional twelve-bar blues structure.

In spite of a subtle unfriendly setting and a crackling air of tension, the festival, a misnomer in this case, was a miraculously happy occasion for these blues artists who congregated together as if they were at a family reunion and for the blues fans who came to listen to them.

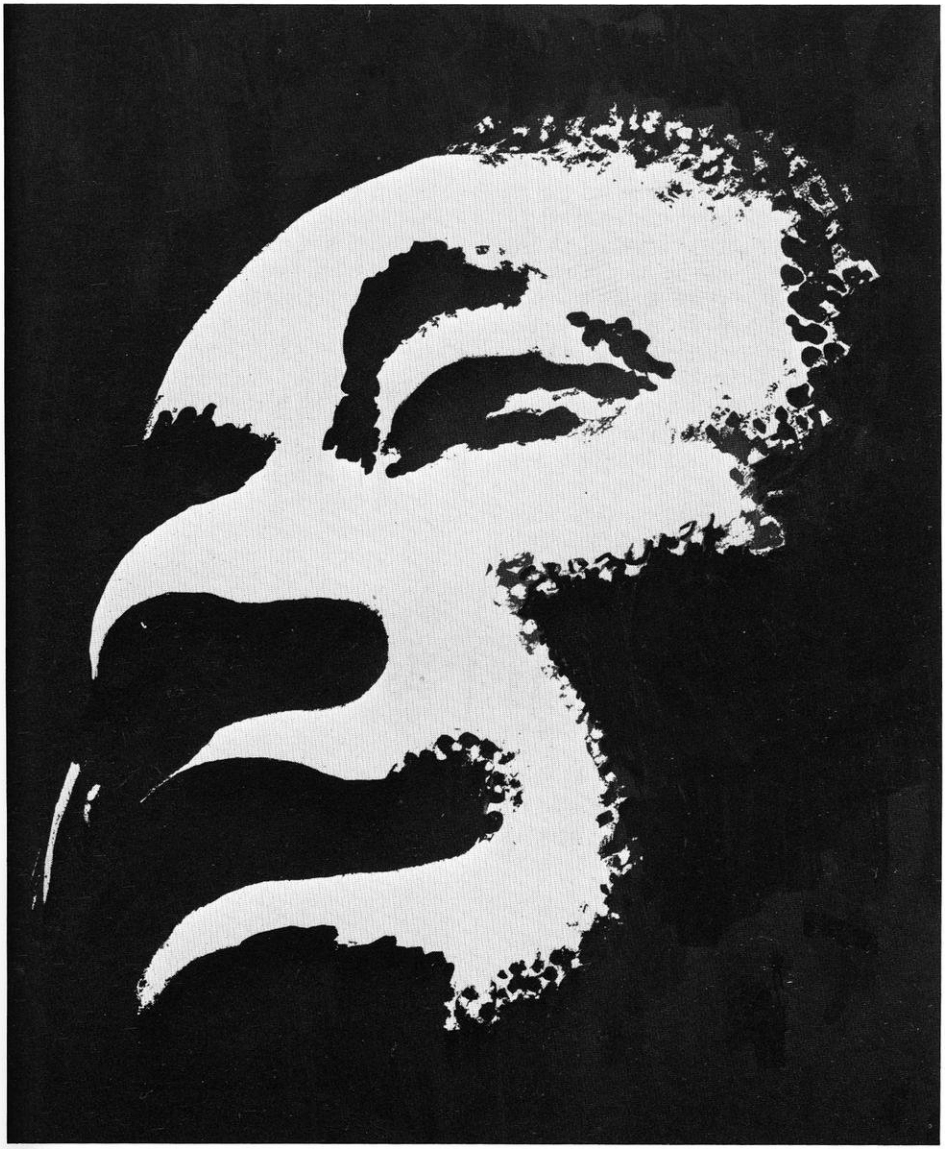
This large contingent of blues artists, so infinite in variety and scope, fully appreciated the historical significance of the occasion for black people and the sociological meaning of their participation. B. B. King, a high-school dropout, graciously stated, "This is the closest I have ever come to college," going on to encourage students to learn all they can. The musicians performed warmly and personably, seemingly oblivious to racial discrimination and unbalance within the rapt crowd.

An occasion such as this indicates quite clearly the change that has occurred in the black point of view in America and the growing pride that blacks are gaining in their own race and cultural background. Perhaps this new generation does not want to be reminded now of the hardships their parents and grandparents endured and of which the blues sing, as illustrated by the small percentage of blacks at this single event. And maybe the tawdriness of the soul genre has its slick hooks in the new blacks.

In any case, The New Thing promises additional black happenings and an annual festival, meriting coverage of this event from the Canadian, French, and German Broadcast Systems as well as United Press International. This widespread interest underlines the festival's importance as a major manifestation and voice of a black ethnic culture transplanted to America.

The blues are living and will transcend time and experience as philosophical comments on the trials and tribulations of the present day. They speak about survival, sing 'out' about it! Note the historical import of their message.

White America can gain something in understanding and pleasure by sharing in the blues experience and, since art is the great unifier, find a way to avoid the polarities that have too often given rise to violence in recent years.



Dutchman, Or the Black Stranger in America

Albert Bermel

Playwright and translator; teacher of dramatic criticism at C.U.N.Y. and Juilliard.

When *Dutchman* was first staged in New York in 1964 white critics took it for an assault on white illiberalism, a promise — fiercer than any earlier ones — of fire, bloodshed, and unassuageable hatred.

The effect grew out of a production that created a lot of noise and vehemence as part of the then-fashionable habit of provoking the audience. Today we can see that LeRoi Jones (Imamu Amiri Baraka) wrote this, like his subsequent plays, for black consumption. I would guess that he did not particularly care what white spectators made of it. Since they were likely to be in the majority at an off-Broadway playhouse (the Cherry Lane), the more of them it rattled, the better. But that purpose was secondary. The primary purpose was to present blacks with an alternative to racial warfare. *Dutchman* marks an early stage in the process of what is now referred to as raising black consciousness. As such, whatever its author intended, its social implication is of capital importance to whites, although they seem, like the critics, to have consistently misapprehended the play.

Clay Williams is riding the subway on a broiling summer day before the Metropolitan Transportation Authority introduced its air-conditioned coaches and its fans designed to promote sneezing jags. Twenty years old, conformably dressed, and black, Clay stares over the top of his magazine as the train roars through the hot darkness. Then at one stop he

> *looks idly up, until he sees a woman's face staring at him through the window; when it realizes that the man has noticed the face, it begins very premeditatedly to smile.*

The face belongs to Lula. As the train pulls away she

> *enters from the rear of the car in bright, skimpy summer clothes and sandals. . . . Lula is a tall, slender, beautiful woman with long red hair hanging straight down her back, wearing only loud lipstick in somebody's good taste. She is eating an apple, very daintily. Coming down the car toward Clay.*

Lula is about thirty. She waits for Clay to notice her, sits, and accuses him of "staring through the window at me . . . down in the vicinity of my ass and legs." She pushes conversation at him, bright chitchat. He takes it all as flirtation, a come-on. The scene appears to be another of those casual, one-act encounters between a fast girl and a naif. But instead of treating Clay as a likely bed-partner, Lula goes out of her way to rile him:

> LULA. You think I want to pick you up, get you to take me somewhere and screw me, huh?
>
> CLAY. Is that the way I look?
>
> LULA. You look like you been trying to grow a beard. . . . You look like you live in New Jersey with your parents and are trying to grow a beard. That's what. You look like you've been reading Chinese poetry and drinking lukewarm sugarless tea.

On target? Some of it. Clay wonders what to make of her. He tries to appear suave, amused. He tries to be as flippant as she is, even when she sweeps her hand from his "knee up to the thigh's hinge," and gives him one of her apples, or tells him he is "a well-known type" of black, an imitator of whites.

Somehow she divines that he is going to a party, and asks him to take her, adding a special plea by grabbing his thigh again "up near the crotch." But when he does formally ask her to the party she turns sullen, bored, and "strangely irritated." Then she reverts to insulting his "type," only more nastily:

> LULA. . . . Why're you wearing a jacket and tie like that? Did your people ever burn witches or start revolutions over the price of tea? Boy, those narrow-shoulder clothes come from a tradition you ought to feel oppressed by. A three-button suit. What right do you have to be wearing a three-button suit and striped tie? Your grandfather was a slave, he didn't go to Harvard.
>
> CLAY. My grandfather was a night watchman.
>
> LULA. And you went to a colored college where everybody thought they were Averell Harriman.

CLAY. All except me.

LULA. And who did you think you were? Who do you think you are now?

CLAY. [*Laughs as if to make light of the whole trend of the conversation*] Well, in college I thought I was Baudelaire. But I've slowed down since.

LULA. I bet you never once thought you were a black nigger.

[*Mock serious, then she howls with laughter. Clay is stunned but after initial reaction, he quickly tries to appreciate the humor. Lula almost shrieks*]

A black Baudelaire. . . . Boy, are you corney. . . .

Lula tells him she lives in a tenement; that she is an actress; and that her mother was a Communist ("the only person in my family ever to amount to anything"). But she also says she tells lies all the time. For instance, she is not an actress. Clay gets the impression that she has given away next to nothing of herself; she is a tease who enjoys anticipating him, "reading" him, putting him on guard.

Unexpectedly her teasing takes on a hortatory passion:

May the people accept you as a ghost of the future. And love you, that you might not kill them when you can. . . . You're a murderer, Clay, and you know it.

And then:

We'll pretend the people cannot see you. That is, the citizens. And that you are free of your own history. And I am free of my history. . . .

Shortly after, a scene break is announced with the single word "Black."

In the second scene other riders come aboard the car, though they take little part in the action. They form the onstage audience who will observe Clay's humiliations at Lula's hands. (Her hands get mentioned conspicuously often in the text.) Some time has elapsed. Lula and Clay are more intimate than before. She "is hugging his arm"; he kisses her neck and fingers while she wisecracks about the party they are going to. After the party she will take him home with her, when "the real fun begins."

LULA. . . . I lead you in, holding your wet hand gently in my hand . . .

CLAY. Which is not wet?

LULA. Which is dry as ashes. . . . Into my dark living room. Where we'll sit and talk endlessly, endlessly.

CLAY. About what?

LULA. About what? About your manhood, what do you think? What do you think we've been talking about all this time?

His manhood? This is news to Clay. He can see that she is getting enraged about something, but he is not sure what. Her sour comedy keeps pouring out in wisecracks, yet between them she talks cryptically about "change": "Our whole story . . . nothing but change." What does she mean by "our" story? Whose? And she says:

But you change. [*Blankly.*] And things work on till you hate them.

At some point she loses control of her cool cynicism, tries to show him up in front of the other subway riders, draw attention to herself-with-him. She takes things out of her bag and flings them in the aisle of the car. She stands up and dances, bumps into people, swears at them, wants to pull Clay to his feet. And she means to be heard:

You middle-class black bastard. Forget your social-working mother for a few seconds and let's knock stomachs. Clay, you liver-lipped white man. You would-be Christian. You ain't no nigger, you're just a dirty white man. . . .

She also calls him "Uncle Thomas Woolly-head" and "Uncle Tom Big Lip," and tells him, "You're afraid of white

people. And your father was." She urges him to

> get up and scream at these people. Like scream meaningless shit in these hopeless faces.
>
> [*She screams at people in train, still dancing*]
>
> Red trains cough Jewish underwear for keeps! Expanding smells of silence. Gravy snot whistling like sea birds. Clay. Clay, you got to break out. Don't sit there dying the way they want you to die. Get up.

He hauls her back to her seat. A drunk tries to assist her; Clay clubs him to the floor. He slaps Lula across the mouth: "Now shut up and let me talk." He is exploding, as she meant him to:

> I sit here, in this buttoned-up suit, to keep myself from cutting all your throats. I mean wantonly. You great liberated whore! You fuck some black man and right away you're an expert on black people. What a lotta shit that is. The only thing you know is that you come if he bangs you hard enough. . . . You wanted to do the belly rub? Shit, you don't even know how. . . .
>
> Belly rub hates you. Old bald-headed four-eye ofays popping their fingers . . . and don't yet know what they're doing. They say, "I love Bessie Smith." And don't even understand that Bessie Smith is saying, "Kiss my ass, kiss my black unruly ass."

From Bessie Smith to Charlie Parker:

> All the hip white boys scream for Bird. And Bird saying, "Up your ass, feeble-minded ofay! Up your ass." And they sit there talking about the tortured genius of Charlie Parker. Bird would've played not a note of music if he just walked up to East Sixty-seventh Street and killed the first ten white people he saw. Not a note!

The black musician's art — the music of Bessie Smith and Charlie Parker — comes out of defiance and contempt.* But more: this art is possible only because the black artist represses the murder in his heart. Clay speaks as an artist; he is a poet. Right now he could kill Lula with "a simple knife thrust." But then an impulse would be lost and with it "one poem vanished." This is a chilling claim, that the black man's art has been a sublimation not for a personal gratification like sex, but for murder. Murder of whites could serve as a release. And what of the blacks who are not artists, who lack the outlets of art? For them, Clay suggests, the price of avoiding murder has been their psychological mutilation:

> A whole people of neurotics, struggling to keep from being sane. And the only thing that would cure the neurosis would be your murder. . . . Just murder! Would make us all sane.

He turns "suddenly weary." He does not want to kill her or anybody.

> I'd rather be a fool. Insane. Safe with my words, and no deaths, and clean, hard thoughts, urging me to new conquests. My people's madness. Hah! That's a laugh. My people. They don't need me to claim them. They got legs and arms of their own. Personal insanities. They don't need all those words. They don't need any defense.

But he warns her "not to preach so much rationalism and cold logic to these niggers," or one day

> the great missionary heart will have triumphed, and all of those ex-coons will be stand-up Western men, with eyes for clean hard useful lives, sober, pious

---

**In his book* Black Drama *(New York: 1967) the playwright Loften Mitchell describes how the history of the black man's music arises from defiance of the overseer in the cottonfields. The ballads and hymns sung by slaves were "signifying songs," concealed messages that spoke of a day of escape and freedom. Stealing away to Jesus or crossing the Jordan were euphemisms for breaking out, getting away.*

and sane, and they'll murder you. They'll murder you, and have very rational explanations. Very much like your own.

At this point we half-expect Clay, despite his weariness, to surrender his poetry by killing Lula and going on a rampage among the other passengers. He has been fighting himself to keep the violence down, but has he succeeded? It seems so. He has said his piece. He goes to pick up his things from the seat. As he bends across Lula she stabs him, twice. And calmly she orders the other passengers to throw his body off the train and to leave the car at the next stop. They do.

When the car is empty another black of Clay's age boards the train:

> *He sits a few seats in back of Lula. When he is seated she turns and gives him a long slow look. He looks up from his book and drops the book on his lap.*

Lula waits for the conductor to pass through. She is alone with the boy. Is he another poet? Then: Curtain. "Black."

The action of *Dutchman,* taken literally, shows us a white woman who tempts a black man out of his bursting silence by playing the ultra-liberal. She "Uncle Toms" him. She mocks him for being a coward and not saying what he feels, but when he does speak up she will punish him for it. He is damned for being black and damned for trying to play white. He has become a neurotic, but his neurosis reflects hers, is even caused by it. Under provocation, he opens up and gives her back more than she bargained for (reveals his "real" self). She slaughters him for his insolence. From the appearance of the second young man we gather that this is a continuous or cyclical situation, like the murders by the Professor of his young pupils in Ionesco's *The Lesson.* "Speak up," the white says in effect, "but you'd better not tell me what I don't want to hear." The white will not be reminded that the black is a suffering being, a living reproach. He will not listen to him.* But the title, the stage directions, the dialogue, and above all, the characterization of Lula tell us that the action of *Dutchman* adds up to more than an impassioned plea for civil rights. A number of critics have noticed that Clay is a "flying Dutchman." But why? Possibly because he travels through the bowels of the city that used to be New Amsterdam. The first stage direction locates the play

> *in the flying underbelly of the city. . . . Underground. The subway heaped in modern myth.*

The decor is not necessarily literal:

> *Dim lights and darkness whistling by against the glass. (Or paste the lights, as admitted props, right on the subway windows. Have them move, even dim and flicker. But give the sense of speed. . . .)*

The sense of speed. Clay rushes through life. Toward what?

Wagner's *fliegende Holländer* Vanderdecken, cursed by the Devil to float the oceans for seven years on a ship that has "blood-red sails and black mast," sings his baritone despair and combs the world for a soprano who will redeem him. A whistling wind, contralto most likely, follows his vessel like the darkness that goes "whistling" by Clay's subway car. Off the coast of Norway the Dutchman swaps his plunder for a night's shelter ashore. There he meets the lovely Senta. A blonde, a soprano. Who is prepared to give up her fiancé, brave Erik, and die for the Dutchman. At the end of the opera, as the Dutchman sails away, Senta leaps off a cliff

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**A number of black writers in the early 60s dealt with, or touched on, the theme of the black man's attempt to speak to the white. The white man hands out verbal sedatives. He knows what the black man should or should not do to make his life easier; principally he should not incense whites for fear of invoking the backlash. In Ronald Milner's* Who's Got His Own *the hero Tim describes how he got tired of swapping ugly reminiscences with other blacks and tried for once to talk to a white friend. The friend did not pay attention. Tim lost his temper, went for the friend, and almost killed him.*

roughly in his direction, giving out a gorgeous soprano note before she hits the sea. The curse is lifted. The souls of Senta and Vanderdecken rise visibly, and in unison, from out of the water.

Whether Jones intends Lula to be interpreted as a desentimentalized, un-Scandinavian Senta — Clay's misleading salvation — or as a Eurydice in the underworld — Clay's Orphic doom — she offers a conglomerate of allures, most of what a temptress in the subway would need. They include red hair (the warning), a slender body, versatile hands, availability, stimulating talk, and ten years' seniority — to a youngster like Clay she is that most desired of conquests, the older woman, Berenice to his Titus. She dances and sings for him. She carries a stock of apples, the origin of temptation and the fall. She knows the "in" talk, some of it. She hums snatches of rhythm and blues. She "understands" blackness.

Yet despite her wit and vivacity Lula remains impersonal. Her fits of pique, her lies and self-contradictions, her disconcerting switches from slang to formality make her seem "unrealistic" as a character. From her familiarity with Clay's life we infer something supernatural, oracular about her, as we do from the first description of her face as an "it" ("it realizes . . .it begins to smile"), and also from her final role as an unappeasable fury, a Nemesis with an avenging hand as "dry as ashes." If Lula is no more than a white killer for kicks with a glittering vocabulary, a K.K.K. initiate in drag, a number of her lines must be written off as pure mysticism or opacity. Lines such as:

> I lie a lot. [*Smiling*] It helps me control the world.
>
> I'm nothing, honey, and don't you ever forget it. . . .
>
> May the people accept you as a ghost of the future. And love you, that you might not kill them when you can. . . .
>
> You're a murderer, Clay, and you know it. [*Her voice darkening with significance*] You know goddam well what I mean. . . .
>
> We'll pretend. . . . that you are free of your own history. And I am free of my history.
>
> We'll go down the street, late night, eating apples and winding very deliberately toward my house. . . .

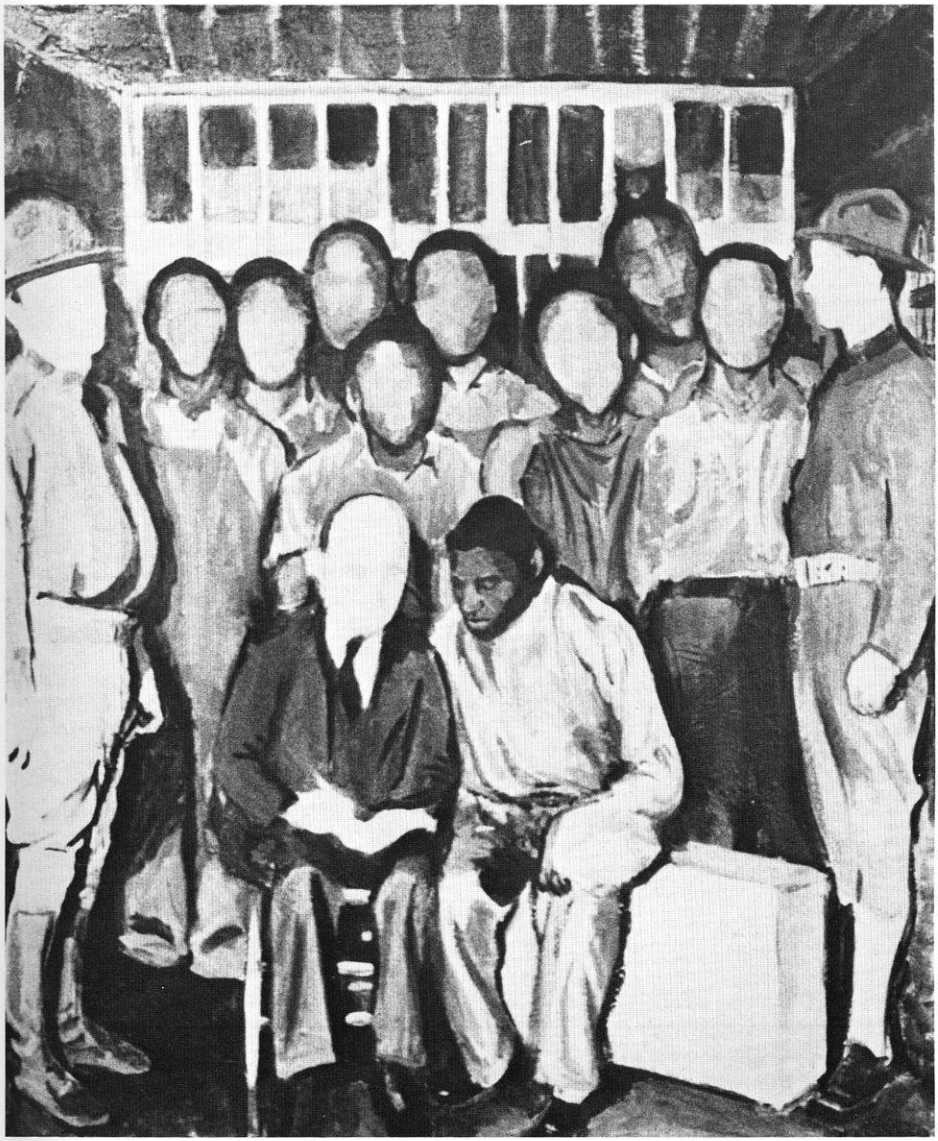
The author is "winding very deliberately"

Art Coppedge
Sketches on a Train

toward a parable. In it Lula plays one side in a confrontation between Clay *and himself.* As in most of Ibsen's plays, if not all of them, a secondary character embodies a disturbance in the soul of the main character. Gerd the wild girl and Ejnar the poet and Agnes perform this role in *Brand*; so does Dr. Rank in *A Doll's House.*

Reginald Gammon
Scottsboro Boys & Lawyer in Jail
1969

Such a secondary character represents excessive ambition or vanity, a fear, a doubt, a source of indecision. The clash in the play then not only becomes social and interpersonal but it also exposes a conflict in the hero or heroine. The secondary character is an allegorical figure like the ones in a morality, but the author has decked him out with a personality of his own, and can claim the dramatic dividends of a social play *and* of a soul-struggle. As a dramatic poem of this kind *Dutchman* has



more richness than when it is seen as a contest between black and white or male and female.

Clay Williams is traveling fast, or so he thinks, although he is really standing still or marking time. He has reached his twenty-first year, the year of manhood, of decision. He has taken up a pose in a three-button suit and middle-class manners, that he may hold fast to the frustration, the "insanity" of being black in a white man's world. That he may preserve the poet in himself. On the subway — below the surface — where all men are equal if they can afford the fare, in the city's "flying underbelly" or "entrails," Clay is equal to a white man. (In the first long stage direction of the play the author repeatedly refers to him as "the man.")

But there, during a dreamlike passage through darkness, in the speed and flashing lights, he meets up with his conscience. He courts it, argues, wrestles with it, hears it scream at him, and screams back. What will he *do*? His conscience has told him, "But you change. And things work on till you hate them." This conscience takes the form of an attractive white woman. The very form of the "whiteness," the seductive conformity that resides in him. His conscience challenges him to change. To cast out the "whiteness" and become his own man. To get rid of his false ambition to succeed in the white world at the cost of his sanity. Clay does not take up the challenge:

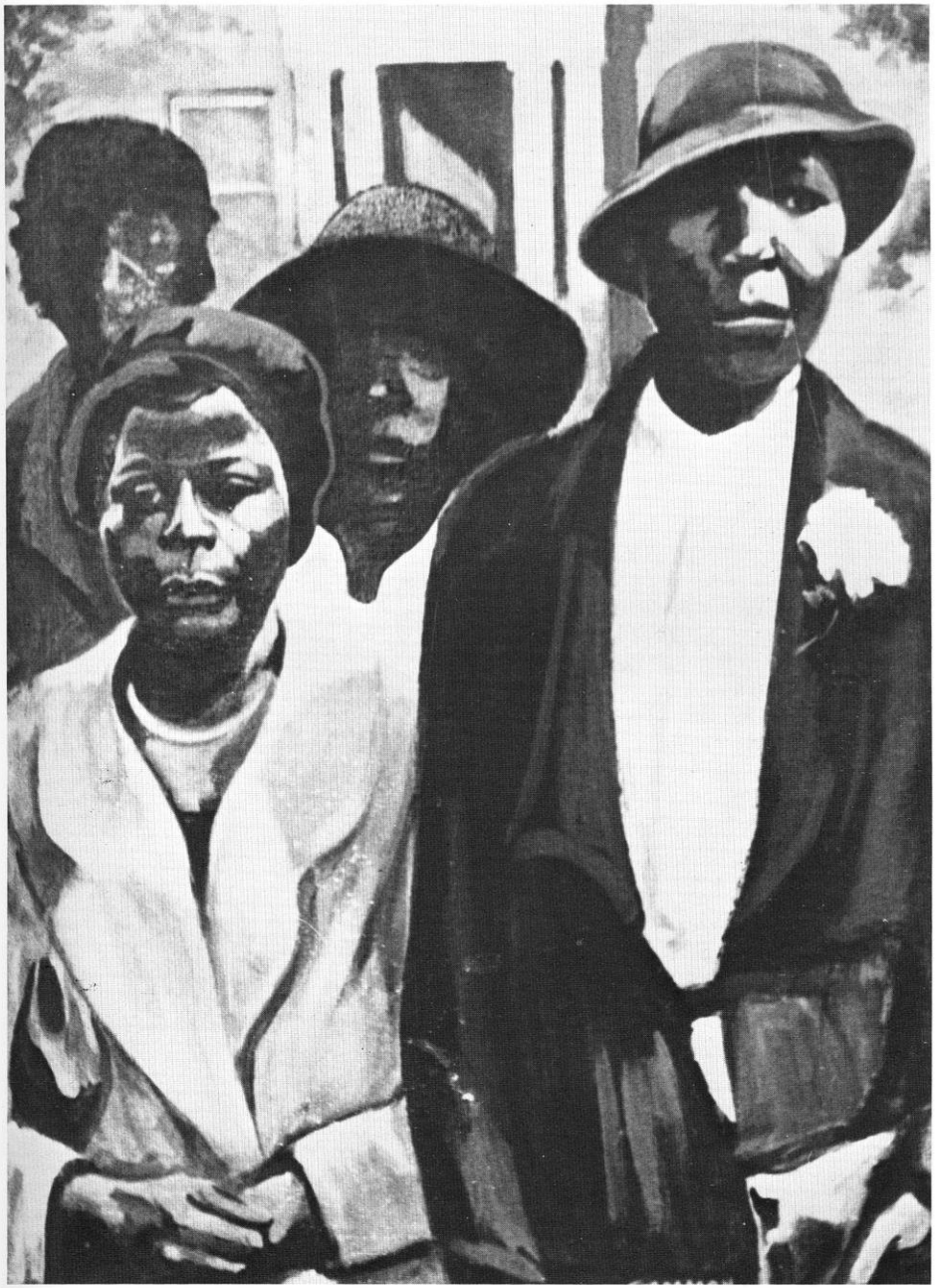
> My people. They don't need me to claim them. They got legs and arms of their own. Personal insanities. Mirrors. They don't need all those words. They don't need any defense.

He would sooner be "safe" by keeping the words to himself, "and no deaths, and *clean, hard thoughts, urging me to new* conquests." But his conscience speaks to him as a muse, a spirit of poetry, like the Poor Old Woman in Yeats' *Cathleen ni Houlihan.* The old woman personifies the spirit of a free Ireland. She takes a bridegroom-to-be away from his wedding to die for her sake. The bridegroom submits to the call and goes off willingly. In *Dutchman* Clay "refuses the call," to borrow a term from Joseph Campbell; he spurns the invitation to go out into the world and live for his people. Lula has told him not to "sit there dying the way they want you to die." He has to "break out" as runaway slaves once had to. There is no future for him as an imitation white poet. His thoughts are barren; the words he owns, useless. He needs a new vocabulary:

> Get up and scream at these people. Like scream meaningless shit in these hopeless faces. . . .

He stands up, has his say in front of her and the other "passengers." She hears him out. Then "her voice takes on a different, more businesslike quality." And before she stabs him to death she says, "I've heard enough."

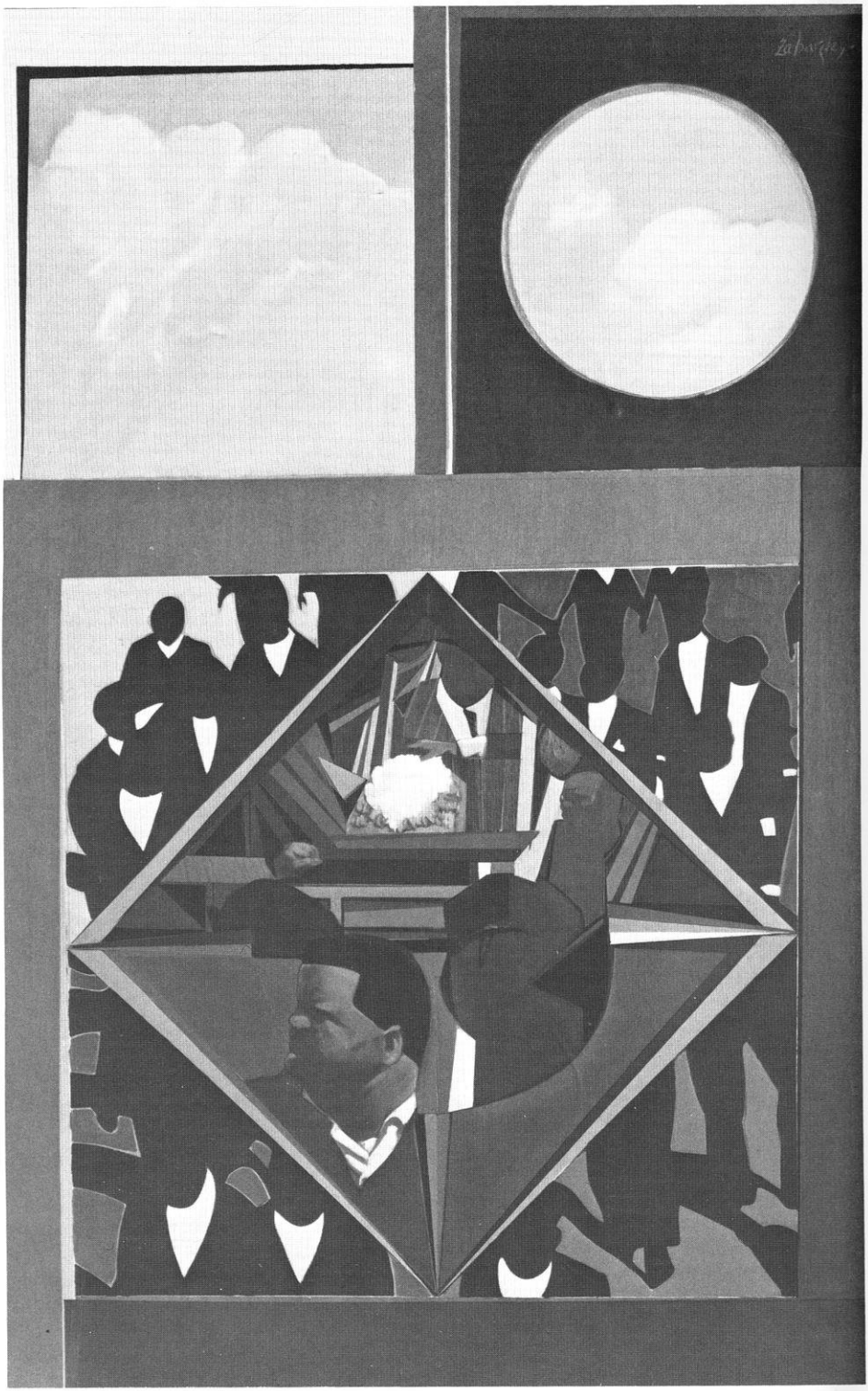
She talked to him about his manhood; he replied by clinging to his old poetry. He is still intent on becoming a modest version of "a black Baudelaire." He will not be his own man, as he has admitted, but a reflection of a poet, and therefore a bad poet. Clay has been tested for life, and rejected. He shot off his mouth, and subsided; he relieved his feelings and put the fear of God into his white listeners, but he changed nothing. Lula "heard enough" to know that he now accepts his anomalous plight. The contained murderous impulses have finally turned inward. Clay heeds his conscience and, symbolically, as in a nightmarish allegory, kills *himself.* Seen in this light the play becomes a death-wish or self-induced tragedy. The contradictions and mysteries in Lula's story of herself mark her as being a character who cannot be taken as a face-value portrait but rather as the fears and doubts that torment Clay. As the two figures on stage hammer out the mixed feelings of a poet *with white ambitions and a black conscience* (a character reversal) Clay comes to learn that he lied to himself. In this moment of crisis the poet's soul contends with itself, even rends itself. He balances his desire to be a black-but-fairly-white artist against his actual fate as a black "Dutchman" — and finds himself wanting, deserving of death. Is he a "special



Reginald Gammon
Scottsboro Mothers
1970

case?" Not quite, because his successor, the next boy in the subway car, will be haunted by the same conscience.

Here we approach Jones' social statement. Being a black poet and half-wanting to be a white poet, while nevertheless hating the white man, means that Clay is supressing, even betraying, his blackness, and so failing to realize himself as a human being. In a subsequent play *The Slave* Jones'



protagonist, the poet Walker Vessels, has put the making of poetry behind him in order to lead a black revolution. He despises a former white friend, a genteel poet named Louis Rino who "hated people who wanted to change the world" — Rino's world, that is. Before Rino died, says Vessels, he was writing "tired elliptical little descriptions of what he could see out the window." For Vessels all the modern white artist has to offer as the culmination of western culture is a decaying moan, an ornamental sigh, a declining murmur. This might have been Clay's fate, too, had he lived. However, he could have saved himself by moulding his reluctant "clay" into useful "vessels" (if I am not straining the names too hard).

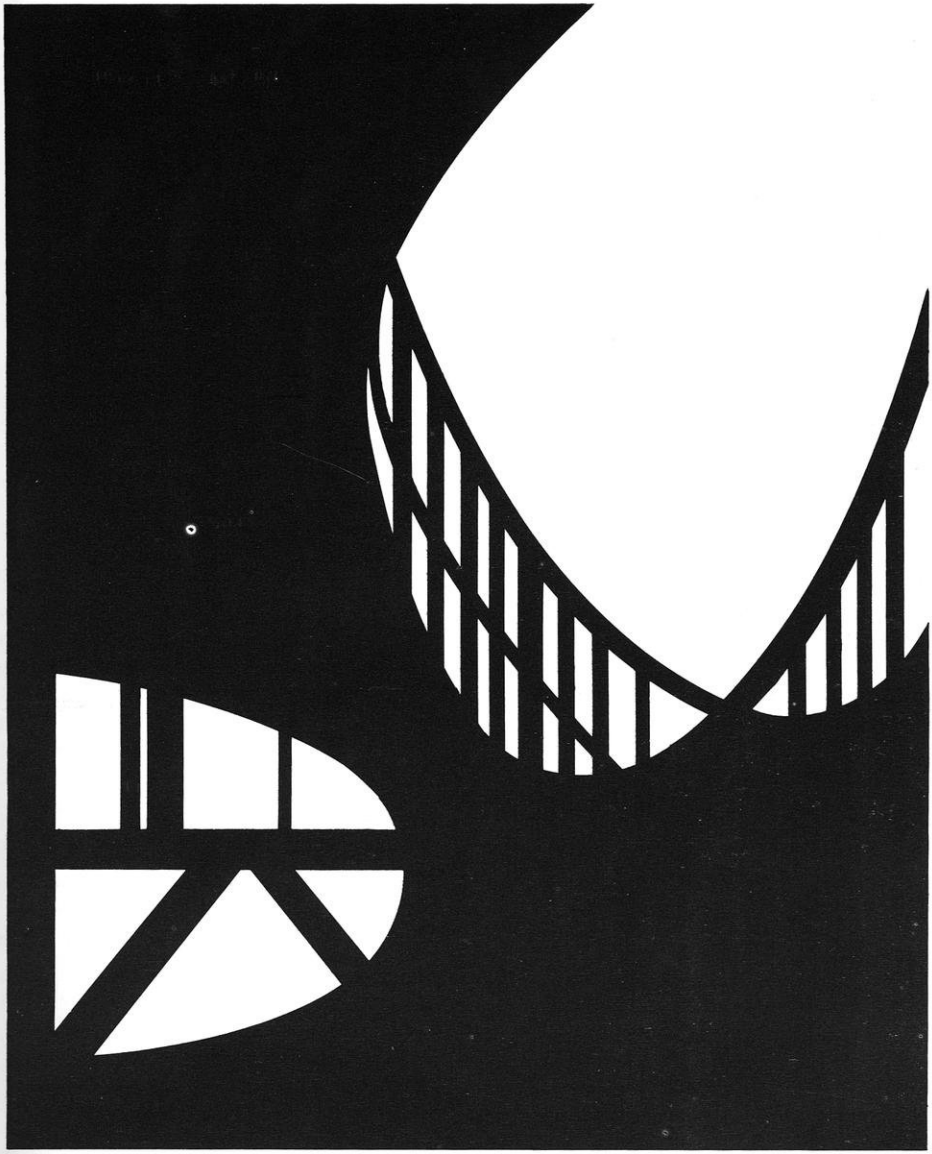
Dutchman is a play which, like so many others, deals with a self-examination, a critical look at one's "identity" or "self." It asks what a black man or woman in a white society can do about remaking that self. Hatred proves self-defeating. Art can supply an emotional outlet of sorts, but it is at best a consolation for one's oppressive condition; it does not improve that condition. The answer provided by these eight or nine subsequent years and by Jones' own activities seems to be: fervent self-affirmation. Soon after *Dutchman* first appeared the slogan "black is beautiful" took hold. Blacks not merely refused to accept an inferior status for themselves; they scorned whites and their achievements. Jones himself evidently felt that being a poet and nothing more meant being a solipsist. Black poetry and drama had to justify themselves by assisting black people in their self-rediscovery. What form or forms would this new identity take? The past decade has thrown up an array of possibilities, from revolution to separatism. Black radicals of differing persuasions have come and gone. Malcolm X had hardly broken with the Black Muslims when he was murdered. Would he have tried to start a new Islamic movement? A religion? Or would he have taken some new tack? The Black Panthers were dismembered; even if the FBI and our local police forces had not gone out of their way to kill off the party, the disputes between its leaders might have cracked it open. The most articulate of those leaders, Eldridge Cleaver, is — where? Algeria? What has happened to Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, George Jackson? H. Rap Brown was recently spirited out of a Brooklyn jail to stand trial on a four-year-old charge in Louisiana: what with one thing and another he has now been imprisoned for over five years. Stokely Carmichael has slipped out of public view; he is said to be living in the Caribbean.

Jones persisted. As Imamu Baraka he has gone from being America's foremost black poet to its foremost black leader, and is probably more influential today than Kenneth Gibson, Shirley Chisholm, and Julian Bond put together. He dominated the black people's Chicago convention in 1972; he was instrumental in unifying various groups and in formulating a nationwide black policy. How that policy will turn out may be conjectured from the New-Ark program he has put into practice in New Jersey's largest, most slum-ridden city. There he has recruited young men and women to drill black children in movement, speech, and behavior. He has gone beyond Afro-American theory and planning and into training. The children's rhythmic chanting of slogans and their coordinated steps and gestures are reminiscent of the stringent discipline of the Muslims, but the children speak their slogans in Swahili as well as English, and their movements have something of the quality of African tribal ceremonies. Baraka and his associates are inculcating in these children a devotion to their African origins that will never be satisfied by the dreams of black/white equality held by the late Martin Luther King, Jr. and Whitney Young, by Roy Wilkins and other so-called "moderates." Baraka is seeking a life apart for black Americans. If he succeeds, they may well form an independent nation of their own — within these borders or without. He still talks publicly about the acquisition of political power, starting with the election of more black representatives to the Con-

M. Zabarsky
Atlanta Cortege, 1968-69
Collection: Addison Gallery of American Art

gress and to local posts, but it may be the power to opt out of the Union. As I write this, Democratic contenders for the Presidency — Muskie, Humphrey, and McGovern among them — are praising the invalided George Wallace as a patriot who appreciates the feelings of the "little man." They clearly hope to siphon off some of Wallace's supporters — as though those supporters were not attracted to Wallace because they believed he would keep blacks "in their place"; as though Americans had learned nothing from these two decades since the Supreme Court decision of 1954 nor from the long history before; as though this country could afford to ignore the warnings in recent black art, and supremely in *Dutchman,* and thereby risk losing its black population.

Blacks got the statement of this play and are beginning to act upon it; whites recoiled, misinterpreted it, and remain as far as ever from having understood its prophetic, possibly mistaken, but very persuasive cry: That the only future for American blacks is to remake themselves in a positive image taken from their distant history, and then to break away from the rest of us.



Some Meditations on the Social Significance of Recent Architecture

by Hugh Fox

Specialist in Latin American Studies who teaches at Michigan State University. He has published several volumes of essays and poetry.

1. When I begin researching out the social uses of recent architecture one thing constantly keeps coming back into my

mind: monkeys and substitute fuzzy, furry mothers, surrogate mothers. Researchers find that maternal (or substitute maternal) physical contact is essential for normal infant development. Contact-withdrawal is crippling and distorting. Only what's the connection between primate surrogate mothers and ARCHITECTURE? For a change instead of dismissing this connection I listen to my head and it tells me that my chair, my bed, my room, my house, even my town, in a sense are all surrogate mothers. Then something else comes in, not just the physical contact, but the importance of positive maternal feedback, the child's using the mother as a kind of psychological home-base from which to take off for any active exploration of the world around him. My chair, bed, room, house, town as surrogate mothers must give me positive feedback.

2. The "how's" of Point 1. Cold, stick surrogate mothers don't do the trick. Furriness is essential: furriness, warmth, softness. The surface of the surrogate mother object (chair, bed, room, house, town) must be soft. Which is a strong argument in favor of "treated" surfaces. Hard inflexible objects, walls, streets, produce surrogate-mother withdrawal symptoms: introversion, fear, lassitude, disinterest in exploration, lack of self-identity and purpose. Small hard people are produced by large hard environments. Carpeted floors and fabric-covered walls in my room are extended to the outside by grass and trees. When possible the dead treeless and leafless outside world in winter is eliminated by enclosing spaces to create a semi-greenhouse feeling throughout the year: the shopping mall, for example, Fuller's St. Louis climate-control dome. What *is* positive feedback in architecture, domestic or urban? A sense of softness, contact with soft surfaces, a sense of enclosure, continuity. I notice my dog when she lies down always lies with her body against my leg or foot. I notice puppies always sleeping lumped together. Positive environmental feedback is a continuing sense of soft contact.

3. Space can either be a bridge or a barrier—either too much *or* too little. The "shape" of space can either converge or diverge the plasma of human continuity, the fluid of human unity. If I walk into a huge room with straight lines of chairs filled with people, the people-mass turns off. I reduce the *number* of people, break the straight line, converge and round the aggregate people-shape and contact begins to flow between individuals; individuals are slowly turned into a "society," even if they exist as a "society" for only one hour. If I condense the people-mass even more the individuals interiorize, they become discreet, barrier-surrounded particles no longer part of any larger "fluid."

4. Space can be either too hot or cold. I am comfortable at 70 degrees, low humidity, and my office, my living room, are comfortable . . . but I am isolated in a comfort-unit much of the year, surrounded by huge outdoor spaces of discomfort. My business and familial dealings are carried on within the confines of these small, reduced comfort-units, but only when I go to the theatre or a shopping mall can I exist in a communal, community-extended comfort-unit. Bucky Fuller points out that there's an inverse proportion between the amount of heat needed to heat one of his domes and the size: the larger the dome, the less the heat needed. City as fortress in the Atom (post-despair) Age can be ignored. The "enemy"—given man's need and penchant to live out of his *natural* tropical habitat—becomes WEATHER, the capricious OUTSIDE.

5. The paradox of Man the Primate, the Abstract Animal. If I go out to the local wildlife preserve on a cold cloudy day the prairie dogs are all inside their burrows. On a pleasant day they're outside. Mountain gorillas or chimps (in the wild) sit in the rain and look miserable. Man modifies and changes his immediate "personal" environment but then cancels out his immediate skin-environment equilibrium by living in his head. Caracas with its almost-perfect climate becomes a focal point of political terrorism. Sanity in a sense means recognizing that 70 degrees, low humidity is comfortable and living in the 70 degree, low humidity HERE AND NOW. Which is what the mynah bird in Aldous Huxley's *Island* keeps calling out:

"Here and Now! Here and Now!" and *Island* is a book about sanity.

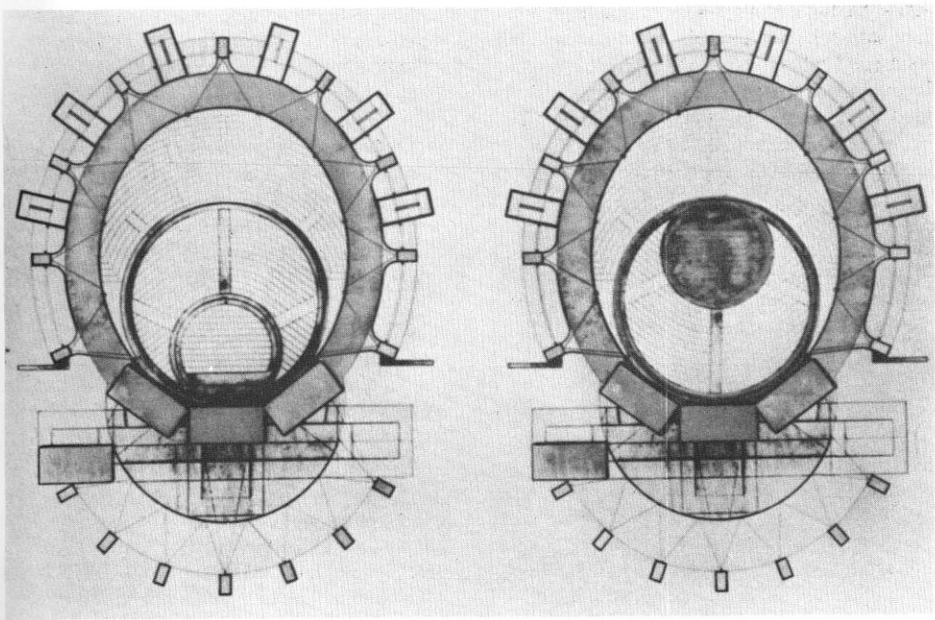
6. The perfect external environment, then, *can* be abstractly cancelled out—which means that (B. F. Skinner) Utopia must be a harmonious coupling of the Inner and Outer (environmental) Man. In order for the environment to BE a functional surrogate mother, the first mother-child relationship has to have been RIGHT.

7. The one work of Walter Gropius that stands out amid the linear, pre-fab industrial housing-project mystique that still creates heated boxes set down in a hostile environment is his TOTAL THEATRE—*"unité de l'acteur et du spectateur."* If this concept of actor-spectator unity is extended . . . we move toward a unity of the I and the Other, the Communal Unit. Interestingly enough the plans and models are all spirally, egg-shaped, forcing a converging of attention-energies in on themselves, disallowing the mind any lineal escape-routes out of the staked-out performance-territory.

Walter Gropius
Total Theater —
1927
Courtesy MIT Press

8. Mies van der Rohe's glass walls looking out on and/or suspended above grass and trees (I'm thinking of the Bacardi Administration Building in Mexico City) *seem* to break the membrane between Man Inside and Man Outside, but in a sense the fleshy individual enclosed in a rigid steel structure, encircled by a rigid glass wall is even more psychologically barricaded against any continuity with his total environment because his fleshiness, his smallness inside of large areas of rigid space, is emphasized. He SEES the outside without being part of it. The outside is seen through a store-window environment—but he is not allowed to go inside (outside) and buy it, bring it 'home' with him.

9. Much of the early work of Eero Saarinen hearkens back—as does most 20th century architecture—to Gropius and the Bauhaus, but in 1956, hearkening back to another rounded, soft, more organic tradition (Naum Gabo's Project for the Palace of the Soviets, 1931, or *most* of the early work of Gaudi), Saarinen in the Ingalls Hockey Rink at Yale and the TWA Terminal at JFK Airport moves into an atmosphere of expanded bubble-space. The interior has been "functionally linealized" but after sitting there 12 hours letting the building soak in, I felt it worked in the same way



that Saarinen's U. of Michigan North Campus (I'm thinking especially of the music library) works . . . in a congruency of interior and exterior "moods."

10. Neutra begins to think in terms of large enclosed spaces in an overall terrestrial-cosmic setting. The Los Angeles Archives Building (1962) moves to adjust to outside light. Forty meter high louvers are electronically controlled to open and close to maintain a uniform light/shade inside. Neutral schoolroom architecture is full of superficially deceptive traditionalism (pleasing the customer), but given a chance, like in the Lincoln Memorial, Gettysburg, space becomes circular, sheltered, protected, becalmed, not separated from setting but AWARE of it. In the Casa Tuia in Ascona (Switzerland) inside you are outside, outside you are inside. The schools like the San Mateo Junior College (San Francisco) or San Fernando State College (Los Angeles), the neighborhood plans for Madrid, Seville and Zaragoza, the comprehensive plan for Guam, the structural dome sphere of the Dayton Planetarium, etc. Neutra was always moving toward large comprehensive designs that encompass not merely the structure of one building in relation to its immediate site, but a series of multi-functional buildings in relation to an organic communal function. Functions are not isolated in individual buildings unrelated to other buildings and functions, but building-groups become volvex building/function clusters which combine with other clusters to become functionally self-enclosed, self-supporting organic WHOLES.

11. Of course the New Organic Architecture must think in terms of space age materials and structural/stress dynamics. The ideal city has, in a sense, always been conceived of as a self-contained circular or almost circular structure: Vitruvius' Town Plan (Roman), Alberti's Fortress City (Renaissance), the Baroque pleasure-administration city of Versailles, the nineteenth century Utopian Socialist dream-plans of Owen and Fourier. But the idea of Earth as a Space Ship (Fuller), the whole idea of a self-contained space-ship that can function for whole generations (indefinitely) has its feedback on the concept of a city-unit as a self-contained immobile space-ship, an independent life-colony. Mega-tonnage in bombs, Mega-horsepower in rockets, Mega-populations, Mega-pollution, Mega-race-conflicts all converge on the development of MEGA-ARCHITECTURE.

12. Architectural "mega-ness" is already extremely visible on the scene in sports structures like the Ligini-Ortensi-Ricci Olympic Cycle Track in Rome (1958-60), the Frei Otto German Pavillion at Expo 67 in Montreal, Dyckerhoff and Widmann's Parcel-Post Handling Shed in Munich (1966-68), Schneider-Wessling's "Wohnberg" project, the Minor Sports Palace in Rome (1957, Vitellozzi and Nervi), the Nervi-Labor Palace at Turin (1960-61), even Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles (1948-52). The important thing that these "experiments," and in fact the whole triumphant pushiness of the American skyscraper, have proven is that mega-architecture is technically "easy."

13. The slow "decentralization" of American cities in the last fifty years has not merely maintained caste separations but exaggerated them. Racial masses increase their separateness. Urban and Sub-Urban spell out Black and White. De-centralization necessitates the attenuating of all communication supply lines. My classes at Michigan State are *primarily* black-white rap-sessions where sub-urbanites confront urbanites OFTEN FOR THE FIRST TIME. The first weeks are explosive, hate-filled, ugly . . . as the confrontation mellows tensions decrease, the membrane between urban and sub-urban life has been removed, all the ions mix, we move toward uniformity.

14. Multi-functional, self-contained mega-architectural stationary space-ship cities are CENTRALIZING experience-producers. I go back to my old neighborhood in Chicago—it is 100% black, not 25%, 50%, 75% but 100%. Physical de-centralization means psychological de-centralization, the breaking down into separate psycho-social units. The city instead of serving as a scene of CONFRONTATION now serves as a scene of ISOLATION—not to mention

the brute inefficiency of ANY decentralized mechanism. When I lived in Los Angeles I spent 40 hours a month on the road, I *worked* an extra week every month just moving myself from Point A to Point B. Now in my life Point A and Point B are practically congruent—time is released for the Family-Social Unit and not devoured by the Highway-Car Unit.

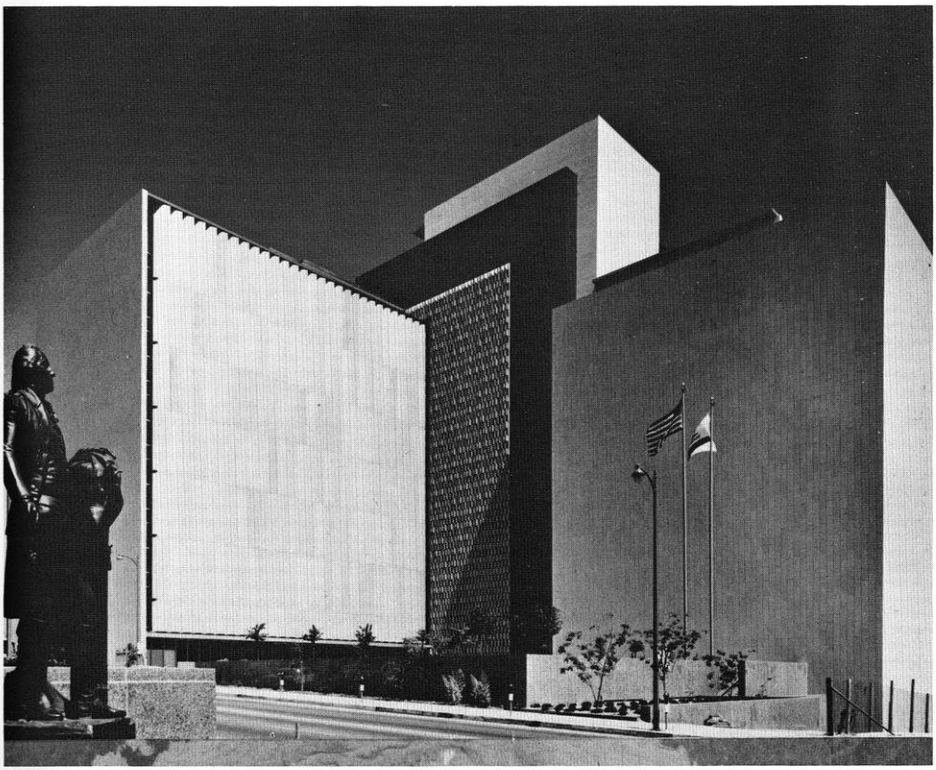
15. The two most impressive minds I've met in the last ten years—Paolo Soleri and Buckminister Fuller—both think in terms of COMPREHENSIVE STRUCTURES. For them man is not an insect in a glass box but MAN-PLASMA, a SOCIAL PLASMA

In a letter to the editors, Dion Neutra commented on our use of the photograph of the Los Angeles County Hall of Records Building. He stated:

It is interesting that you should choose this project to illustrate "social uses of art." To me it illustrates a creative tendency which should be studied more closely in the future, namely, the employment of a sculptor who worked with the architects in developing special forms of transparent or translucent screens, a custom designed drinking fountain, and other elements of the actual building itself as opposed to "imposing" or "placing" in relation *to a completed building an "object" of art such as so often done because of the arbitrary split between the "art budget" and the "building budget."*

While the allocation of a certain number of dollars out of every budget for "art" is a way of forcing some semblance of concern for this matter on the project, would it not be more meaningful to allow this money to be spent to the best advantage of the building as a whole and perhaps demonstrate that at least the required percentage of funds was spent on something which could be demonstrated as above the strict "utilitarian"?

Richard Neutra: Architect
Los Angeles County Hall of Records



moulding and moulded by environment.

16. Any real grasp of Soleri begins with a study of his "Asteromo"—self-contained space cities: *"There is . . . a profitable ground for learning about the cities of today by reflecting on the hypothetical and as-yet-unreal city-asteroid."* The asteroid-city graphically points up the emerging consciousness of the Mass "Human-plasm," the basic theme in the work of Teilhard de Chardin: humanity is a psycho-biological unit surrounded by if not hostile then at least indifferent SPACE. Resources are not unlimited. Given the contemporary potential for destruction, warfare cannot be total (unlimited). Ecosystems are mutually dependent. The Earth is a master ecosystem: individual continents, countries, cities, families are all mutually-related ecosystems that can be either hostile or complementary to each other.

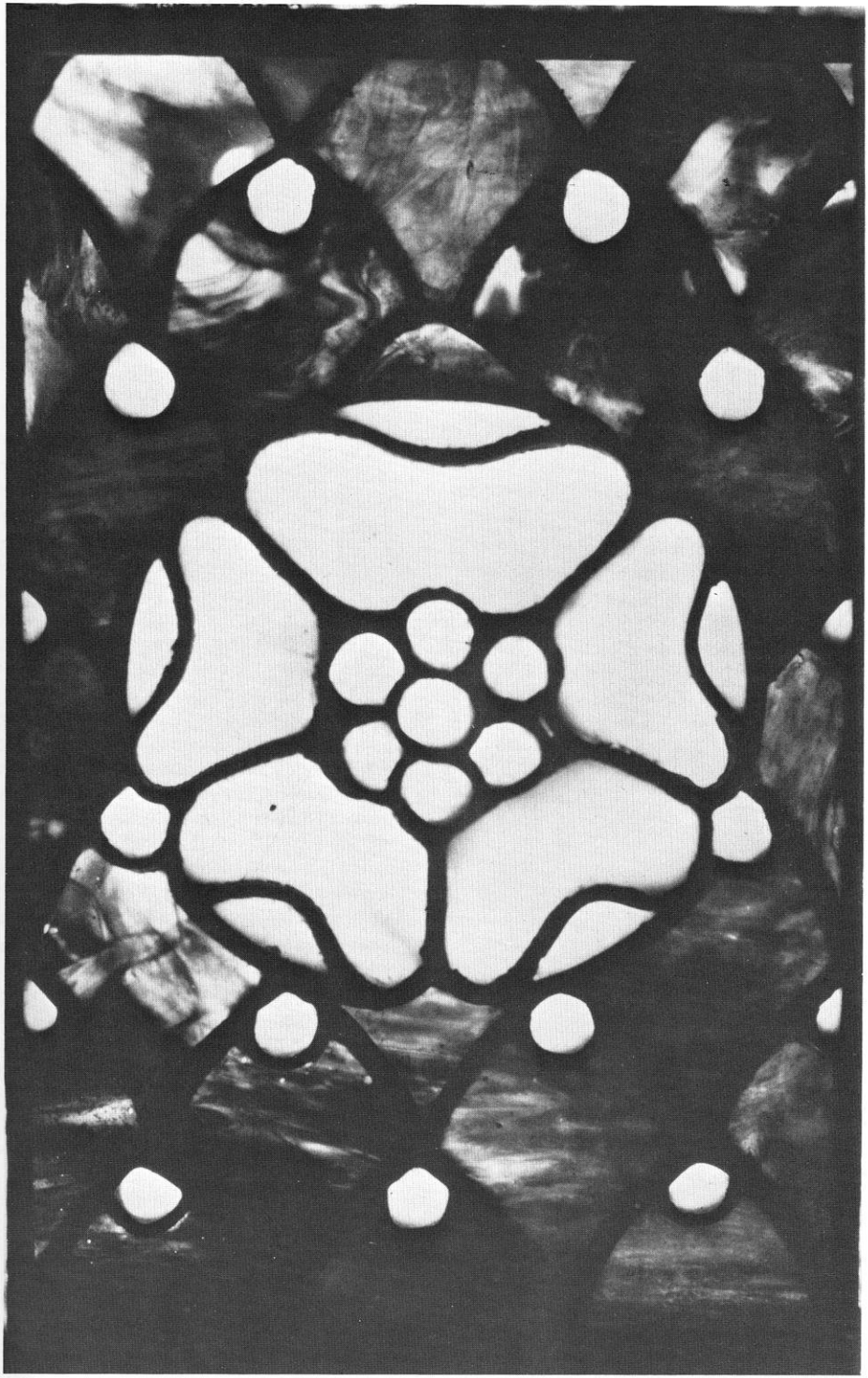
17. Busing represents the ultimate admission of the failure of decentralization. Integration (perhaps the U.S.'s biggest social problem) is to a large extent solely solveable in terms of architectural-arcological dynamics. The classroom is the primary focal point of social unity. Teacher-student and student-student bonds break down the barriers of people-people isolation. You can be totally alone in a city surrounded by people, but you cannot be a totally alone teacher and/or student in a city surrounded by your (or fellow) students. Just as family unity begins in the home, social unity begins in the school, and (as the South and South Africa so well know and fear) a common school experience transfers the Unknown into the Known. The nature of the classroom experience is give-and-take, banter, permeability, open-ness, QUESTIONING.

18. School is part of a set of integrating social-unifying rites and rituals. Isolation from an integrating rite/ritual experience results in isolation from the Social Whole. This isolation in turn initiates a whole series of death/destruction trajectories in the individual psyche—death of Self, death of the Other. So-called Black Violence (Black against Self, Black against Black, Black against White) is generated by apathy, emptiness, alienation. The Black, outside the Initiation-Development Rites of White America, seeks the obliteration of consciousness (drug scene) because consciousness in a sense is conterminous with the conscious awareness of his having been stranded by the world around him. White America, withdrawing to the suburbs, has said: YOU ARE THE MONSTER . . . and outside the integrative processes of White American Society, being screamed at that he is a monster, the Black Man begins to believe he *is* a monster, acts out the role and/or attempts to escape from his consciousness of his "monsterness."

19. Moving back from school to the pre-school, we move into fundamental sets of attitudes toward THE OTHER. If the family unit is Open, Convergent, Other-Centered, Reassuring, Positive, Warm, a whole trajectory of Other-Centeredness is initiated, affectiveness passes from the Mother-Father primary affection-unit to sibling and supporting family affection structures. The school then becomes an extended family, post-school Other contacts become a Societal Family. The line of expansion or contraction is Mother-Father, Familial Surrogate Mother-Father, Societal Surrogate Mother-Father. The function of architecture/"environment" is to function as a supportive inorganic surrogate buoyant "pool."

20. Environment can be either "convergent" or "divergent." I remember talking to Ray Bradbury one day in the office he uses to write in on Wilshire Boulevard in the heart of the Beverly Hills (Calif.) banking district. "We're essentially in a mediterranean environment," he said, "I'm an essentially mediterranean person . . . but here I am stuck in a world of impersonal concrete. No sidewalk cafes and, for god's sake, no piazzas. . . ."

Piazzas, plazas, squares are converging structures. But you fly over U.S. cities by helicopter, over Baltimore's Federal Hill district, over the Hollywood Hills, over the Salton Sea real estate developments, over Chicago, Kansas City, Boston, New York,



over the huge Los Angeles sprawl . . . and it is all ARROW ARCHITECTURE, the movement is all away from and to, there are no STOPPING, PEOPLE CONFRONTATION PLACES.

I think of the Forum Cafeteria in downtown L.A. where the Los Angeles old congregate and inter-relate. What a pitiful chance, improvised meeting-place for what should be built-in converging structures. Piazzas, plazas, squares. I never once walked down the Giron de la Union in Lima, Peru with my first wife without her meeting someone out of her past. She'd been in the U.S. for 16 years, but could return to Lima, walk down a street and her past was still out walking. This kind of continuity is permanent.

21. The white suburban exodus, flight away from the blacks, not only aggravates the black-white almost total division in U.S. culture, but: 1. Gives the blacks the Power Centers of U.S. culture (traditionally the City), and 2. Displaces the whites from any viable participation in the advantages of City Life. Sub-urban spells out ISOLATION. If "Western cities are dying . . . not from too many automobiles or too few housing projects, but because of too little urbanity and too little opportunity for participation" (S. Moholy-Nagy, *Matrix of Man,* p. 137), then the suburban white man (woman and child) is doomed to non-participatory sub-urbanity, the malaise of cultural truncation. In a sense the agricultural Southern black-man since the Civil War has displaced the technological-urban white-man, taken his power-area and retired the white man to a semi-agricultural suburb . . . agricultural without agriculture. The agony of the black man is the agony of a group psychological industrial revolution, still imperfect, but progressing, while the Hippie-Yippie spaced-out suburban offspring of power-driven industry and power-centered parents revert back to Hindu and American-Indian pre-industry.

22. In his notes for Babelnoah, Soleri speaks of "the need for harmony, for the hyper-structuration of our environment, "ecological" thinking; convergence must supersede scattering." (*The City in the Image of Man,* p. 46). And ideally the new cities should be like Soleri's Babelnoah, Arcoforte, Babel II A, Logology, Babel II B, Babel IIC, Arcanyon, etc. Or like Konwizrz's design for the Alsterzentrum (Hamburg), or Quaroni's plans for St. Giuliano (Mestre), Merete Mattern's design for Ratingen West (near Düsseldorf) . . . all concentrated, curvilinear, gathering-together new towns. Only in the real world of economics, individual initiative and very little central planning, the actual trend seems to be the conversion of suburbs into new urban-centers centered primarily in restaurants and new mini-movie theaters. On weekends and even during the week the malls are converted into "street-fairs," filled with handicraft exhibits, coin exhibits, exhibits of new cars, sidewalk sales, etc. The black-white interface, though, still remains impermeable here . . . permeability seems to be occurring primarily through education, job-placement, then homogenous absorption into the U.S. work-force. Neighborhood permeability seems to be taking place in lower-class and very upper-class neighborhoods, where the black and white workers and elite classes merge much more readily than among the bourgeoise.

23. Working with existing structures/situations, the key to the immediate future seems to be a manipulative re-designing of "divergent" structures and converting them to "convergent" structures, redesigning SPACE around people—rather than commercial—and industrial-needs: a. Black lower-class housing areas can be "renewed" a la Advocacy Planning style, i.e. really re-newing the old instead of levelling it and re-locating the inhabitants. Model: OUR WAY project (Pittsburg). Projection: a white exodus from the suburbs back to the Central City. b. Conversion of older buildings to new shopping and cultural centers, re-concentrating people-energy into areas of "historical" significance, softening, revitalizing the past, establishing historical continuity. Model: Joseph Esherick's conversion of The Cannery in San Francisco from an old factory into a complex of restaurants, cafes, stores, etc. Projection: addition of art galleries, theaters, game-rooms, benches, etc. in—perhaps—domed get-together areas. I think of sidewalk cafes in Caracas and

Buenos Aires, or Venice, California where the city has built recreation centers, put benches along the beach, turned the oceanfront into a social center mainly for old people. In Cambridge, Massachusetts whole streets have been blocked off to traffic creating "walk-areas" that push people together. I was standing on a corner in Cambridge last month and three people talked to me within an hour. Of course Cambridge is a university town, but the principle of throwing people together by giving them walking-space free from cars, is universal.

c. Gradual metamorphosis of sub-urban areas into new urban-centers. I live in a university town two hours from Detroit, but one night I see Hedda Gabler, the next night Multiple Maniacs, then Joan Sutherland, Soleri, Fuller on film . . . which can be essentially the same for any sub-urb. TV is paradoxically both an isolating *and* socializing media, confining us to our homes or (at its worst) to our individual rooms, at the same time bringing the world in up against our sensibilities. Large screen TV "auditoriums" could be doubly socializing experiences (contact plus the screen's own 'expansiveness'). Projection: slow integration of upper-class blacks and whites, same schools, neighborhoods, same common experience.

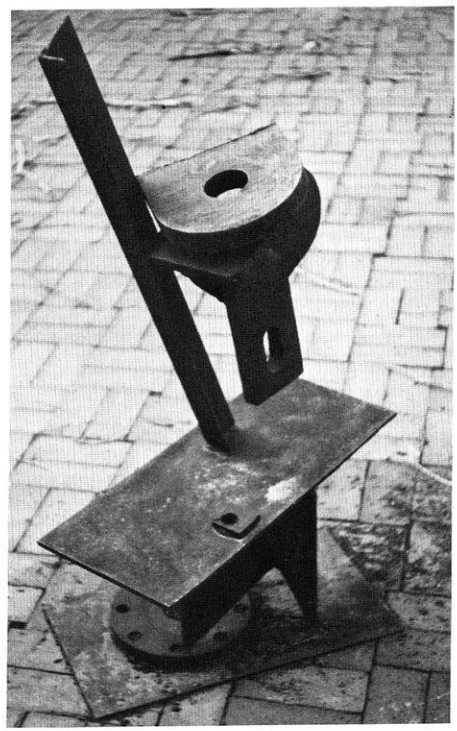
d. Conversion of shopping centers into cultural centers. Similar to b., only in new, as yet untried areas.

24. Visualize "man" surrounded by a series of concentric circles: the first circle is Mother-Father, then the rest of the Family, then Friends, Neighborhood, City, World. The full functioning of the individual means a harmonious progression out from the center through the other circles, 'success' in the outer circles more or less depends on success in the inner circles. Although nothing can really replace the affective base given by the early familiar life-circles, environment can enhance or clot the whole outward growth-pattern of the individual.

The movement from the Micro—(individual) to the macro—(societal) scale can be either harmonious or jarring. The U.S. city grew up around industry, for industry, nurtured by industry. The whole history of the U.S. in the last 100 years has been the subordination of the "masses" to the factory mystique. Slavery was based on a pre-industrial cotton-field factory. Mass immigration to the U.S. was fostered by the need for industrial semi-slaves. The immigration of blacks to the north (the creation of the northern ghettos) was based on a hunger of the factories that could not be satisfied by merely consuming the immigrants from abroad.

Now the factories are built, the production-consumption schema has stabilized, we look around and see a compartmentalized country subsisting in an industrially-destroyed landscape. Our re-designing, rehabilitating, designing for the future, must be organic in the sense that it creates for one people, not multiple peoples, in an

Peter Lipsitt
American Roulette
1968



ecologically-balanced environment, not multiple-environments invading and conflicting with each other.

Arcology in the U.S. perhaps must be "Romanesque," a new whole spliced and pieced together from the tumbledown world around us. We had our chance to build everything fresh in the nineteenth century, and a chance like that doesn't come twice.

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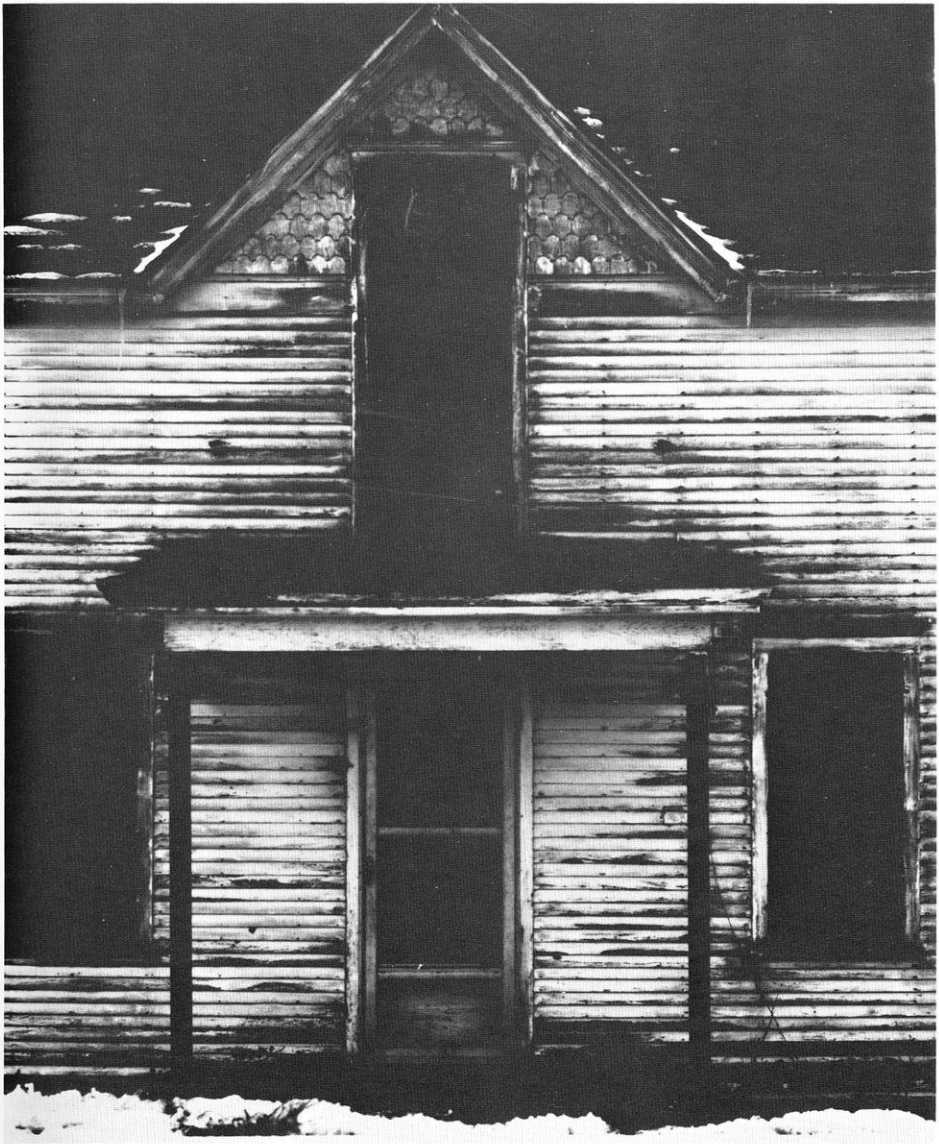

The Film Today: Towards a Socially Conscious Cinema

by Joan Mellen

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Films of the late 1960's have been characterized by an increasing preoccupation with the social and political tensions at

work in contemporary society, reflecting a radical anti-war movement of international scope historically unprecendented in size. In the early 1960s the serious film was dominated first by Ingmar Bergman and then by Fellini and Antonioni, whose films depicted the ennui and self-titillation preoccupying bored individuals of the aristocracy. This self-indulgence was both admired and sanctioned by the director. Fellini's fascination with the body of Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita* plumbed the scale of values he brought to his art.

In the last few years the plethora of these films has given way to works concerned with the fate of societies, social movements and classes. Filmmakers have moved beyond fascination with an individual's search for sensual or emotional gratification, as in the cases of Fellini and Antonioni. They have begun to transcend the quest of characters for a unique self-knowledge that marks them as "individuals," the dominant theme in the films of Ingmar Bergman, and most fully realized in his *Persona.*

Conflicting social forces have become the current theme in commercial as well as consciously aesthetic films. Reflecting the emergent consciousness of its audience, the American film too concerns itself with latent class antagonisms — workers against hippies, lumpen youth and tired upper middle-class businessmen. The bourgeois portrayed recognizes that he must at moments placate the radical young, but beneath this facade of patronage fear and revulsion can be discerned. Several films have attempted to reconcile a mode of life affording individual fulfillment with the necessities of social struggle. The personal hostages given in the form of family, employment and station to a repressive or destructive social order are pitted against the moral obligation to oppose.

The director who confines himself solely to the mode of the "personal" appears increasingly inconsequential. Fellini's recent film, *Satyricon,* for all its visual splendor, is a parody of *La Dolce Vita.* Fellini inexhaustibly catalogues modes of sensual gratification. He ranges from mild sexual contact to whipping and bestiality — all in the apocalyptic setting of imperial Rome, with gyrating naked bodies in panavision and technicolor. The film as a whole is boring. At this point in time homosexual infatuation as a cinematic theme has lost its novelty. It has been done before — and in the freshness of first discovery. It now appears tedious because it is incomplete. And it can be made interesting only when seen as one symptom of an entire psychological and social configuration, as in the association of fascist impulses with anxious homosexuality in *Il Conformista, The Damned, Z,* and *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion.*

The prescient director today strives to bring to his films a developed social critique. He assumes the role of seer and prophet pointing to the social ills themselves and to the means by which they may be overcome. The results vary considerably. Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* attempts a panoramic study of what is wrong with America. What he discovers is painfully inadequate. Locating the malaise of American society and the disaffection of its youth in billboards and commercialism, it offers little insight into American life. As a social critique *Zabriskie Point* supplies only the facile impressions of a foreigner come to America for the first time and obsessed with the transparent — the surface manifestations of American capitalism.

Yet, Antonioni himself, recognizing that new demands are being made of the film, at least in *Zabriskie Point,* has abandoned his use of audience-attracting stars like Marcello Mastroianni, Monica Vitti and Jeanne Moreau, the personalities he explored *ad infinitum* in earlier films. He recognizes that the film as an art form has entered a stage in which it can no longer concern itself solely with the individual. For his principal characters in *Zabriskie Point* Antonioni chose non-professionals, bland, callow, if pretty, teenagers. As individuals they emerge as non-entities, lacking the experience and the personality to carry the film. But for his theme he takes the first cracks in the smooth surface of the capitalist order — the first, if

tentative indicators of its demise as a viable social system. This represents a substantial shift from *L'Aventura, La Notte, L'Eclisse, Red Desert* and even *Blow-Up* with their perpetual discontents of the dissolute personality.

The socially conscious or political cinema is, of course, far from new. It began as early as the film itself. In the United States it was through D. W. Griffiths' naturalistic depictions of lower middle class life and life on the streets, and in his great epic of the repressiveness of feudal and totalitarian society in *Intolerance.* The social film reached its apogee in the Soviet Union in its earliest days, when Lenin and Lunacharsky looked on the film as the art form most capable of fulfilling revolutionary aspirations. The nineteen-twenties in the Soviet Union saw the emergence of the revolutionary documentary. Eisenstein made films in which masses of men and women, and not professional actors, were the "hero." Social processes formed both the formal and the conceptual principle of the film.

After the Second World War the politically aware film had a resurgence in the neo-realist masterpieces of Rossellini, Visconti, De Sica and others, depicting in excruciating physical detail the agonies of civilians caught in the mesh of newly burgeoning corruption in a society so recently devastated by war. In Japan the film has been social-minded from its inception, acutely aware of class structure in society and how it limits and distorts individual aspirations. The two great masters of the Japanese social film, Mizoguchi and Kurosawa, both use class relationships as their primary means of characterization. The British "working class" film of the early sixties was another, if less artistically significant, precedent for the social film of today.

And throughout the history of the film individual directors have often chosen to go beyond the description of the search for personal happiness to attack the values of a given society or to comment on how profoundly people are circumscribed and controlled by the quality of their environment. In the United States John Ford has attempted for decades to trace the social and moral evolution of American society. The major influence on Kurosawa, he uses the western, the epic of past days of supposed glory, to expose the decayed values of the present. If his films of the late thirties, like *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) were not apologies for the existing order as his later works became (for example, *Cheyenne Autumn),* the subject of his work has remained the nature of American society. From *Los Olvidados* (1950) on, Luis Buñuel has consistently been devoted to portraying how social institutions paralyze and deform individuals. He locates the origin of perversion not solely in the individual psyche, but in its interaction with a decaying and corrupt social order. His successful works, *Nazarin, Viridiana* and his recent and in many ways best film, *Tristana,* explore with real distinction the same theme. Buñuel pursues the parallel and dialectical relationship between personal defeats of individuals and the co-existing repressive social order which dominates and permeates their lives. In the history of the film there are many single examples of films which are masterpieces of social realism depicting the texture of a degenerating society. John Huston's *The Treasure of the Sierra Madré* is only one instance. Films like Jean Renoir's *La Grand Illusion* and René Clair's *A Nous La Liberté* are masterpieces of the social film.

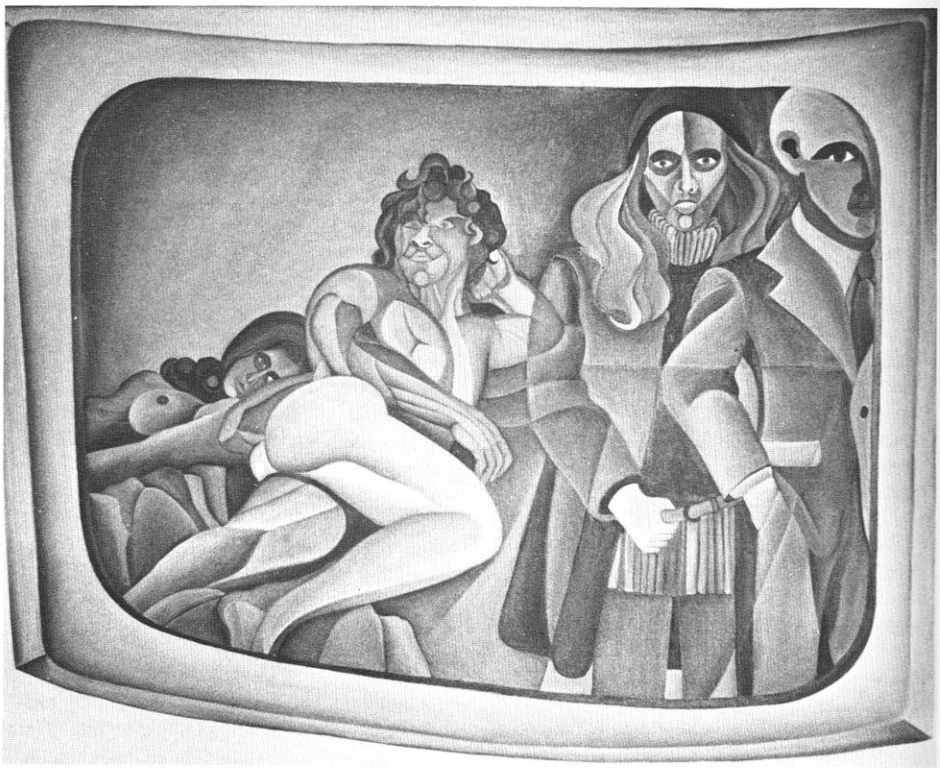
Yet something new and different is happening in the film today. For although there were always films which dealt with social and political themes, the film is now in the process of becoming primarily a socially and politically conscious medium — the only art form at present consistently engaged in forging answers to the important political questions preoccupying people today. These films, like the social novels of Balzac, Stendhal and Dostoevsky, make their strongest appeal to those who are aroused by the disintegration of the established order. These are audiences which challenge both the premises and practices of the ruling regime, yet are puzzled about how to give their dissent an effective outlet.

Almost universally, directors — those who

wish seriously to deal with current political questions, and those whose motives are less pure — are finding it necessary, and in many cases profitable, to include in their films some parable which contains a moral or political message. Those whose primary motivation is financial, for example, the people who produced travesties like *RPM* and *Getting Straight,* use the medium to appeal to the fantasies of the young — their desire to escape the repressiveness of contemporary society — only to condemn them. *Easy Rider* seems to glorify life on the road, free of commitment and dedicated only to the quest for pleasure and "freedom." At the same time, the film implicitly urges non-political modes of rejecting the existing order, thus seeking to channel the dissent of the young into socially acceptable dissident models of behavior. This would certainly apply to the film versions of the rock concert, such as *Monterey Pop, Woodstock* and the morally dishonest *Gimme Shelter. Gimme Shelter* attempts to exonerate Mick Jagger and the Stones of their role in the murder and unrestrained brutality commited at their Altamont concert. These films pretend to offer a sociological panorama of the "youth culture." The implication is that the youth are all integrated within a life of drugs and sexual hysteria. Interestingly, certain political figures like Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin and Rennie Davis have tried to promote this myth as well, looking around desperately for some political constituency in the face of indifference on the part of the adult world — from worker to intellectual.

In reality, the majority of worker youths, middle class and university youths are outside the drug and hippie world of dissociated hysteria. Perhaps one half of one per cent could be so described. The vast commercial effort to portray the young as drug culturalists is designed to abort the profound radicalization which is spreading. Above all, it serves and is

Richard Karwosky
T.V. Screen
1970



Intended to serve as a means of dividing the youth from the working class. The culture capitalists, especially in the world of film, are well aware that ordinary people with jobs and the burden of economic pressures, are offended by the personal indulgence and the middle class indifference to financial stress and obligation shown by the "drop-out" drug sceners. This is why radicalism in the young is presented as interchangeable with Woodstock and Altamont. The new political cinema in America has thus been mobilized by forces of reaction. It suggests that there are no legitimate social tensions gripping America today, except the whining of spoiled, self-indulgent youths of permissive parents. Even the films which purport to speak for the growing anti-war sentiment make an equation between political radicalism and individual narcissism in the young, thus closing off the general population from a radical critique.

Films like *Joe,* in the name of realism, attempt insidiously to develop vicious and degrading stereotypes of both workers and radical youths. *Joe* tries to appeal to the young and to the working class at the same time by denigrating each in terms presumed to attract the other. The film's unstated premise is "a plague on both your houses." It portrays the worker as a grotesque, an ape and a slob who talks with his mouth full of "Ritz" crackers and beer. The hippies whom he hates are shown with filthy feet and dirt-caked clothes. They are unkempt, and universally — junkies. *Joe* thus equates the anti-war youth with drug addicts and with total dissolution. This easily invalidates their cause. It attempts to polarize the differences between two groups whose real political and economic needs and whose disaffection with the system might in other terms readily coalesce. In its ideology it differs from John Wayne's *The Green Berets* only in the dubious distinction of being less open and honest about its motives.

This point emerges most forcefully through a comparison of *Joe* with films which are unabashedly commercial and crass. In Roy Boulting's *There's A Girl In My Soup,* the youth are shown in identical settings and terms as in *Joe* and in the road films. In fact, the hip drummer of *Soup* looks, dresses and sounds like the junkie of *Joe.* His quarters are vile, laden with filth and garbage. They are also adorned with revolutionary posters of Che Guevara and African guerrillas. The worker doorman in *Soup* is a clod, also, like Joe, half-ape. He has a gross, nagging wife (played by Diana Dors with middle-aged spread), lusts after nubile girls whom he despises, and fawns on the rich stylish TV gourmet, Peter Sellers. The counterpoint to *Joe* is complete. Women are feckless sex objects. Rebellious youth are diseased derelicts. Working people are mindless automata on the verge of psychotic violence born of envy. The suave ad man of *Joe* and the debonair rake of *Soup* are both threatened by the repulsive youth (the drummer's band in *Soup* is called the "Neanderthals"). The bourgeois figure is so menaced that he is reduced to making common cause with the slobocracy which he holds in disdain. It is a temporary alliance designed to annihilate the young, since their opposition to the system is only a mask for perversity and total license. *There's A Girl In My Soup,* as do all the straight moneymakers from Britain and the United States, presents without dissembling the precise values and social relations of the films which seem to celebrate the youth culture they invent by making it utterly indefensible.

Another example in the *genre* of the spurious social critique is *Little Fauss and Big Halsy* which panders to the discomfort of the ordinary man with the motorcycle riding youths who do not work, who make whores of their women, and who seem not to have to pay for their pleasures. The working man's contempt for these youths is in fact justified. While he is steeped in responsibilities made almost impossible by inflation, amoral youths are denigrating the minimal comfort and economic security for which he slaves at drudgery tasks for forty years. Significantly, Big Halsey's girlfriend, Rita, returns home to her upper middle class parents whom she locates at a country club when the going gets too rough, when she is no longer getting her kicks out of the scene. The object of these

films is clearly to make the working man who sees them into "Joes," hating "niggers" and junkies ("The white kids," says Joe, "are worse than the niggers"). Joe who has to sweat all day in front of a furnace for $4.00 an hour is in a sense rightly infuriated by hippies who laugh at him and snicker that he looks so square that he must be a truck driver.

The directors of all these films seem almost to have been consciously mobilized to invalidate dissent with ad hominem arguments. By presenting the youths as irresponsible pleasure seekers, they at the same time condemn their ideas. Yet these films are important because they almost inadvertently point up the major political and social tensions of the day. While attempting to arrest them and to suggest that there are no problems beyond boredom, they often expose an issue in all its starkness. Invariably, they reveal the symptoms of a situation in which people have become alienated from those to whom they would ordinarily turn for guidance.

Yet despite the flood of facile films whose surreptitious purpose is to deny the existence of political problems, some intellectually serious political films can be found. These films study historical origins of conflict, tracing the maturation of social crises. Thus they comprehend social conflict in context. They connect with twentieth century history and they relate the present to earlier defeat and default. They are most often made not in the United States, but in Europe.

The work of Costa-Gavras takes this history as its subject. His latest film, *The Confession,* looks at Czechoslovakia from the period of the Slansky trials in 1950-51 to the Soviet invasion in 1968. Using the autobiography of Artur London as a vehicle, it touches the history of the East European communist movement from the Moscow trials of the thirties. The operations of the international brigades in Spain in the late thirties and the anti-fascist resistance are related, if inadequately, to the crisis of the bureaucracy in the fifties and sixties.

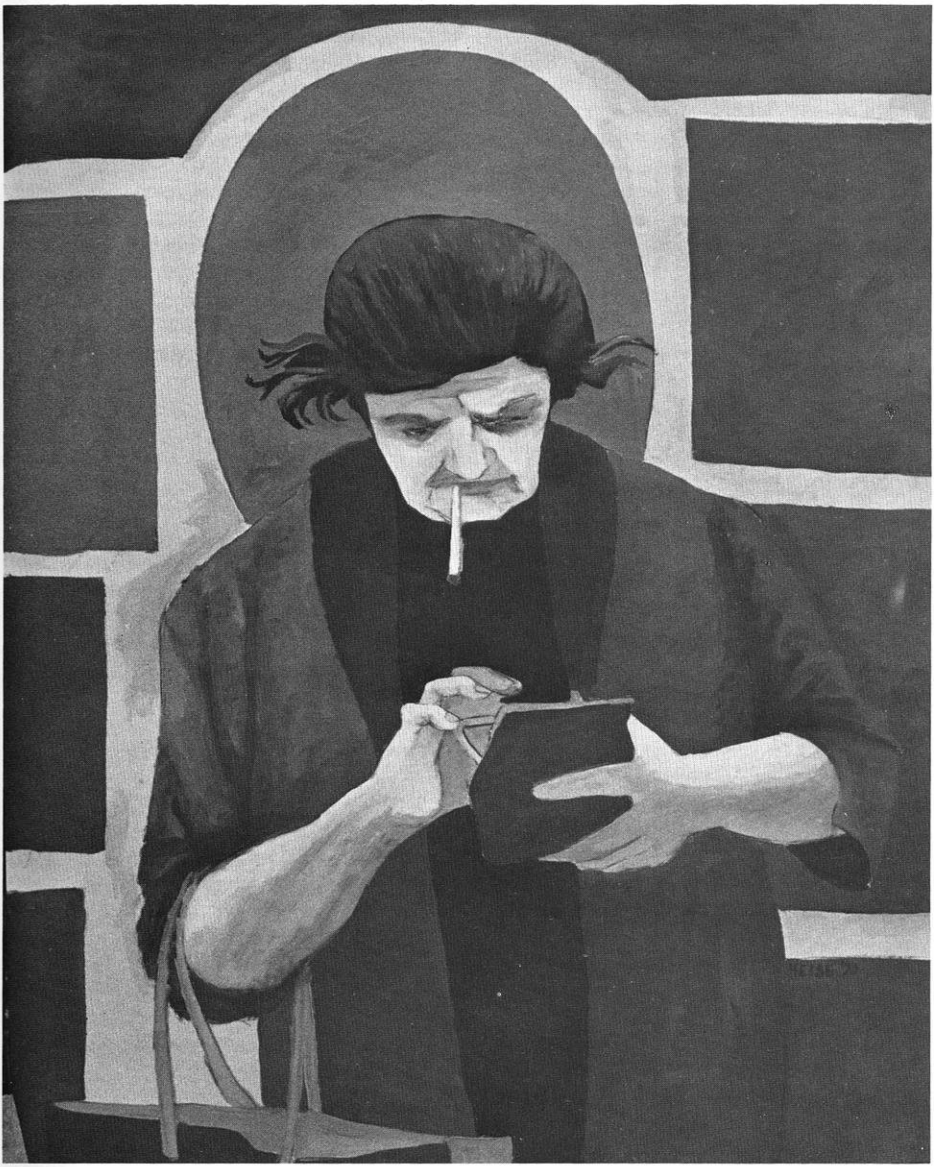
These films often take place in the recent past, seeking an examination of what life was like, for example, in the thirties, as a means of making contemporary life comprehensible. The rediscovery of alienation preceded studies of the rise of political fascism, a dominant theme in the new film. Young political directors feel the similarities of atmosphere between the historical period of Italian and German fascism and our own. Locating their films in the twenties and thirties, they explore the process whereby repressiveness develops in men and in groups. Personal and social disintegration begin to have an organic relation which the psychologically philistine, pseudo-Freudian films of the fifties and sixties from *Psycho* to *David and Lisa* did not have.

The psychology of the individual in these films emerges as a correlative and a function of the political system, a part of the history of the culture as well as the history of a particular sensibility. In Bertolucci's *Il Conformista,* Visconti's *The Damned* and Petri's *Investigation Of A Citizen Above Suspicion*, sadistic homosexuality is associated with the politics of gratuitous violence. It is not that these directors are saying that it is the homosexuals who become the fascists, but that repressed homosexuality and fascism are often co-existing tendencies in both the individual and the culture, at a given period in history. By showing the fascist heroes of these films as masochists as well, the directors illustrate how the culture expresses and reinforces neuroses, determining how its citizens respond to the economic and political crises of a particular historical epoch. In these films as well, the relationships between men and women are colored by the political milieu in which they move. The personal relationships are never formed or defined in a cultural vacuum.

At the heart of these films is the struggle to find a means of defense for keeping personality intact while staying alive in a repressive system. Each, like *Z,* explores the means by which fascism systematically defeats its enemies. *Z* and *The Damned* illustrate the impotence of liberal efforts to use exhortation and appeals to moral

codes as a response to the brutal power of fascism. *Z* has grossed six million dollars in the United States, and part of its appeal here is the displacement of oppression to Greece. If it were America portrayed, there would perhaps be greater obligation to choose resistance. Feeling impotent to challenge the existing political system themselves, repressed by the overpowering presence of a bureaucracy from which they have been alienated and to which they have no recourse, the American audiences of *Z* feel as if Costa-Gavras speaks for them in his denunciation of political assassination. While the director has denied the importance of the analogy, the similarity between the con-

Myron Heise
Cashier for 42nd Street Movie Going Home
1971



spiracy of the colonels and the Greek police to murder Gregory Lambrakis and the assassination of John F. Kennedy has been widely noticed.

The films which address themselves to relevant political and moral problems differ from the art cinema of the early sixties and from such current throwbacks as *I Am Curious, Yellow,* despite its tacked-on scenes of "relevant" sociological interest. They treat the individual, not in the nihilistic vacuum of his own sensibility, but as an actor in the social and political crises of his time. In *I Am Curious* Lena's polltaking about the current state of the union in Sweden comes across as a personal preoccupation. The psychology of character in the fully developed political film does not emerge by an act of will, as in the films of Ingmar Bergman. Bergman's films occur in a landscape which happens to be Sweden, but could just as easily have been Mars or Venus. Personality in the political film receives concreteness through its interaction with the dominant social issues of the day.

Films about the process of political revolution are beginning to be made, heralded by a resurgence of the fiction film as documentary. Foremost in this category is Gillo Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers,* whose focus is the endurance of the Algerian people in the struggle for independence against the French. The action of the film is a hymn to the real actions of the Algerians. In the United States the "Newsreel" group, closely allied to the SDS and the Weathermen in their ideology as well as their personal and cinematic style, make a film called *Ice* which projects into the future how the revolution will develop within the United States. It casts lumpen youths and hip radicals as the only makers of the revolution. It plagiarizes *Battle of Algiers* and confuses its revolutionary setting with the United States, resulting in pathetic fantasy. In *The Confession* Costa-Gavras made a film partially about how a socialist revolution failed. The fiction film which recreates the revolutionary situation with psychological depth thus replaces the documentary as the most successful mode of dramatizing political revolution.

The politically aware film is unsuccessful when the director-scriptwriter loses his nerve and fails to take to their conclusion the issues he has evoked. *Adalen 31* is a film about working class struggle, but when the worker-hero is murdered by the police, the stress is on sorrow for him as kind father and loving husband. These emotions are not out of place, but of themselves they are inadequate for the social drama which is unfolding simultaneously with the personal. We do not see in his death the defeat of a cause larger than himself. Widerberg, the director, has not placed at the center of his film the conceptions for which his character was fighting.

In the same sense *Z* purports to be about the assassination of Gregory Lambrakis, yet we are never told in the film what Lambrakis' conception of society was, what social forces he represented or what ideas he stood for other than the abstraction of "peace." The EDA, for which Lambrakis was a member of parliament, represented the left which was sympathetic to the banned Communist Party. But the Communist Party in Greece had long supported liberal programs and politicians. Never advancing a socialist program or political ideas explicitly antagonistic to the Greek oligarchy, the EDA was not a threat to Greek reaction. Thus Lambrakis could participate in the organized political life of the country.

When a mass march was organized by a broad anti-government youth movement, it was banned. Lambrakis used his parliamentary immunity to march from Marathon to Athens alone. It was this commitment to mass mobilizations outside of parliament which marked Lambrakis as a leader of a national resistance to fascism and hence for murder at the hands of the regime. Costa-Gavras suppresses the true drama of Lambrakis — his decision to align himself with an insurgent movement. When Lambrakis was murdered, one and one-half million people attended his funeral, coming on foot to Athens from all parts of Greece within twenty-four hours. The government fell. Political prisoners were freed. Incredibly, none of this emerges in *Z*. Abstract melodrama replaces the

study of a complex social reality. The undercovering of the conspiracy between the police and the organization of lumpen crypto-fascists is so engrossing that the issues at stake are virtually lost. Only the suave good looks of Yves Montand, who plays Lambrakis, and the brilliance of Costa-Gavras' techniques, testify to the rightness of Lambrakis' stand and his importance to the left opposition in Greece.

The Confession, like *Z* and *Adalen 31,* has the same tendency to abstract from the concrete particulars of the events described. As with Lambrakis, we are made to sympathize with Artur London (again Montand) because he had been brutally tortured for nearly two years by the Czechoslovak and Soviet secret police, not because we agree with or are clear about what he believed. Artur London, finally freed and "rehabilitated," never reviews the history of the Communist movement. Thus, the film never reveals that the imprisonment of the Slansky defendants was not an accident or a mistake. It does not see the event it examines as a step consistent with the policies of the Soviet Communist Party since the mid-twenties, the very period of London's political formation.

Particularly in the American social film there is little attempt to ferret out specific social ills which have caused the situation described. What are the social forces which have transformed the Italian indigent, beggar, pimp, would-be-con man, Rico, into what he is in *Midnight Cowboy?* It almost appears as if he were born that way. What do he and the midnight cowboy have in common as America's forgotten victims? Because the film fails to probe these questions, sentimentality replaces insight or possible catharsis as the film's ultimate effect.

The same problem is more overt in the two successful anti-war satires of the past years, *Catch-22* and *Mash. Catch-22* tells us little about the war being fought, for all its seeming social causticness and exposure of the Pentagon's private capitalism. Conveniently, this capitalist chicanery is practised lucratively on the black, instead of the more costly world market. Having failed to underline the class nature of the war and army life, *Catch-22* can find no alternative to suggest to the hero short of his running away. Yosarian's setting out for Sweden in a little boat like a contemporary soldier A.W.O.L. is a ludicrous ending to the film, imputing to World War Two a consequence of the Vietnamese War a quarter of a century later. The film tells very little about the oppression it purports to be attacking.

Just as *Catch-22* is vaguely against bloodshed, so is *Mash.* Medics practice butchery on wounded, faceless victims. But the absurdity of the army as a bureaucratic machine replaces understanding of this particular army, this society and the reasons for this war. For the upper echelons in both films the war is a lark, a chance for sexual and economic freedoms unattainable in peacetime under more morally confined circumstances. Neither film is concerned with the causes or forces at war, and in both films the men are made to seem and behave like mindless puppets of forces they will never understand. The male chauvinism of the collegiate-adolescent hero of *Mash,* played by Donald Sutherland, of which the film is decidedly uncritical, is a mark of the decadence of the film itself. Labelling itself as social criticism, "anti-war," *Mash* exploits the military milieu for commercial purposes alone.

To date no widely-distributed film has been made in the United States which treats sympathetically the protest against the imperialism of the American government or its systematic destruction of the Vietnamese land and people. *Mash* deals safely with Korea, although given the abstract quality of the setting, it might as well have been Timbuktu. *Mash* fails utterly to consider the nature of the Korean war. The official name of the United States' invasion of Korea was "Operation Killer." General Emmett O'Donnell, head of the Bomber Command of the Far East once said that "the entire, almost the entire Korean peninsula is just a terrible mess. Everything is destroyed. There is nothing standing worthy of the name. Just before the Chinese came in we were grounded. There were no more targets in Korea." If Korea

was a genocidal war of design, no inkling of this emerges in *Mash.* The occasion of Korea has no place in the film except as scenery. *Catch-22* even more comfortably resurrects the tired, because cliché-ridden, theme of the Second World War.
The Year of the Pig, a newsreel panache by Emile de Antonio, shown only in art houses and to college audiences is against the Vietnamese War, but is utterly confused about its causes. It places the blame, sophomorically, on a series of unsavoury individuals from LBJ to his equivalents in the Pentagon on back to Allen Dulles. History becomes the madness of obsessed men and very little effort is placed on understanding the economic motives and influence upon international relations which made the Vietnam War a calculated effort of men whose retention of power was tied up with America's holding Indochina.

The other extreme in the socially conscious cinema is equally productive of poor films. Ideas without the flesh of dramatic form, psychological ambivalence and nuance are much harder to take in a visual medium. Placed didactically in a film without context or evolution, they succeed in convincing no one of their validity. The films of Jean-Luc Godard since his political conversion to Maoism (parts of *Weekend, Sympathy For The Devil, See You At Mao*—also called *British Sounds—, Pravda, Wind From The East),* are stillborn as works as art because Godard is equating the film with a lecture podium where unassimilated injunctions are intoned. The rapid succession of discordant images in his films serve only to suggest the irrationality of the ideas preached—the opposite of the effect Godard seeks. His choice of adolescents as his spokesmen for revolutionary ideas is equally ill-conceived. In their costumes and frivolity, in their very images, they cannot be taken seriously. Godard's newest films reintroduce and validate the tired cliché of literary criticism that fiction, in fact that all art, should "show" rather than "tell." One hopes for a mediation between the "old" Godard for whom experience was its own justification (as in *Breathless* and *Vivre Sa Vie*) with the new political Godard. His primary aim, he states, is not to create "masterpieces" of film art. Rather, it appears, it is to promulgate the thought of Mao-Tse-tung.

One invariably looks in the new political cinema for a figure in control of his destiny whose revolt against the existing order is a planned and total commitment. Films which both reveal the structure of the society the hero opposes and which at the same time intimate the kind of society he would substitute, have yet to appear. Unlike the portrayals of Diego in *La Guerre Est Finie,* of Lambrakis in *Z,* and of Artur London in *The Confession* (all conceived by Jorgé Semprun, screenwriter for the three films), one looks for a socially conscious hero in possession of his past and the history of his society. Pasolini's subject in *Accatone* could not be the paradigmatic protagonist of the new resurgent political film because he is too much the complete social victim to be conscious of exploitation. This does not necessarily make *Accatone* any less a work of art, although it does comment on one limitation in Pasolini's conception. Given the intellectual dishonesty of the films which base their appeal on the caricature of youth culture, such a hero should appear as an adult with an experience of responsibilities which he has found difficult or impossible to fulfill. Unlike Diego of *La Guerre Est Finie,* who doubts the point of continuing with so few forces to struggle against the Franco regime, the new hero should perhaps believe more convincingly in the historical role which he has chosen to play. Yet unlike the heroes of the Soviet film since the Second World War, he should be aware of the contradictions and sacrifices necessary for social commitment; he should not be made a victim of blind hope and mindless optimism.

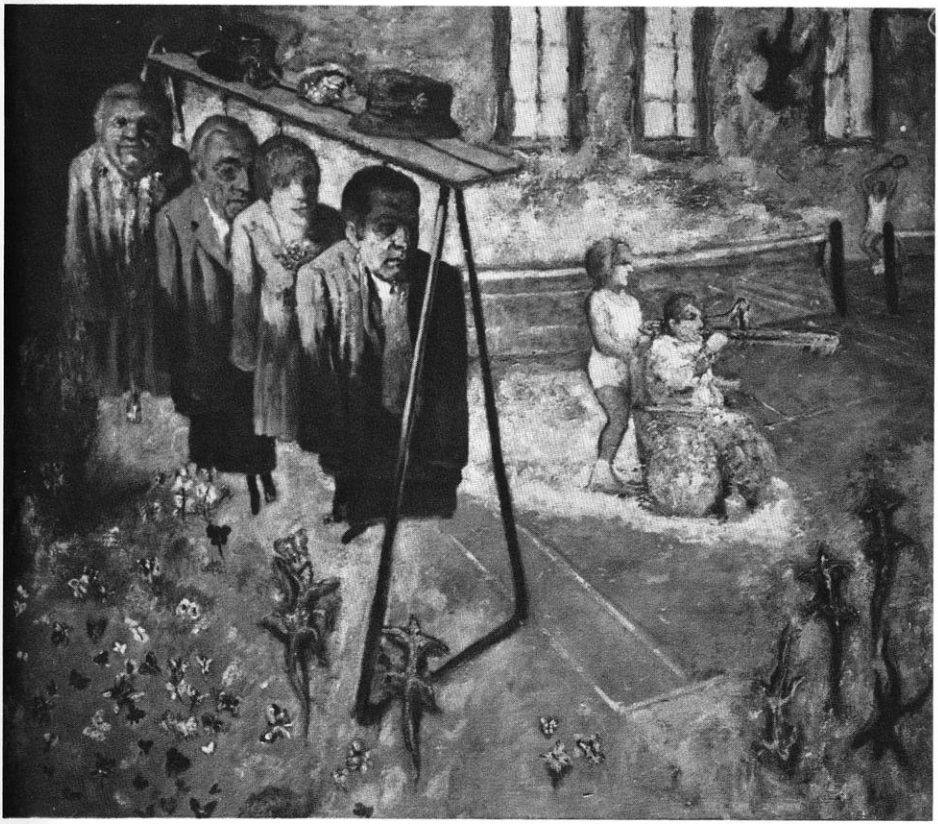
The revolutionary heroes of *La Guerre Est Finie, Z* and *The Confession* are all presented as men of the bourgeoisie. It remains for the practitioners of the new political cinema to portray protagonists whose energies derive from a life-long struggle to survive, energies awaiting in life as in art the role of leadership. The *Battle of Algiers* chooses no single "hero" because it wishes to place at the center of the film the spirit of the Algerian people. But the leader of the people, Marquez, in Pontecorvo's latest film, *Burn,* is presented

as naive and elitist, no better really than the neo-colonials, led by Marlon Brando, who come to exploit his people. Film-makers to date have not yet explored the inventiveness and energies of men and women whose creativity has been either dammed up, denied, perverted into a destructive force, or, most often, simply internalized. The explosion of awakening social consciousness has not yet, with the exception of *Battle of Algiers,* been made the subject of a serious film. Nor has any film had as its protagonist a man in the process of awakening from the long sleep of unconscious acceptance of the forces in control of his life. Since *Potemkin,* no study in depth of the awakening of people to advanced social consciousness has been undertaken. *Adalen 31,* drawing as it does sharp and irrevocable distinction between workers and owners, takes only the barest first step in this direction.

It is possible in the film, as it is in the novel, to place at its center groups instead of individuals, particularly when the theme is the regeneration of a society. It is often dramatically useful however to focus a film around the struggles of one man, for his life in microcosm can reflect the inner life of a society as a whole. Such a hero has not yet emerged in the political cinema of the present. His absence is the logical correlative of the failure of most social films to take on the issues they themselves propose and evoke.

The realistic evocation of social milieu becomes a predominant feature of the new cinema, of importance equal to that of the character or of plot. The nightlife of the lumpen elements of Times Square, New York is as much the theme of *Midnight*

Seymour Rosofsky
The Club
1971



Cowboy as the relationship between the two main characters. The danger of the returned focus on natural setting, exacerbated by the now almost universal use of color in major films, is that the representation of setting becomes a substitute for the analysis of the social problems the director raises.

The presentation of dusty roads studded by billboards and relieved by mountains does not offer an analysis of America by itself, although the directors of *Zabriskie Point, Little Fauss and Big Halsy* and *Easy Rider* seem to think it does. But neither does the director any longer feel able to develop his themes without illustrating the background against which they occur. The representation of the visit of the Bolshoi ballet to Salonika at the time of the assassination of Gregory Lambrakis in *Z* makes a political statement about the surreptitious collaboration of the Soviet Union with oppression in capitalist countries. The comment is made by the repeated shots of generals and police chiefs at the Bolshoi performance. Their presence alone suffices and Costa-Gavras has no need to make further didactic or explicit statements. In *Battle of Algiers* the justification for the terrorist tactics of the Algerians appears in part in the images of the squalor and misery in which the people are forced to live, in the poverty and degradation of the native quarter and the indiscriminate violence of the French army. *Ice,* modelled in its ideology upon *Battle of Algiers,* is a much weaker rendition of the revolutionary theme, and in part this is true because the director, Robert Kramer, has not felt the need to locate his characters in a milieu which, in its physical transparency, cries out for revolutionary upheaval. Films which effectively unite character and setting frequently utilize techniques developed by the Italian neo-realist cinema in films like *Shoeshine, Bicycle Thief, Open City* and *Paisan,* although this is not always the case. Buñuel effectively illustrates the decadence of poverty-stricken Spain, its aristocracy parasitically maintaining old feudal codes, by employing a non-naturalistic realism. Buñuel selects only details of the environment necessary to demonstrate his themes. In *Tristana* interior shots predominate, yet one scene of a narrow street in which a crowd of workers is pursued by armed civil police, while reinforcements on horseback appear, effectively conveys the point that protest is brutally suppressed in Spain.

The masterpieces of the political novel have been few: Dostoevsky's *The Possessed,* Stendhal's *The Charterhouse of Parma,* Malraux's *Man's Fate,* Conrad's *Nostromo,* Zola's *Germinal.* Unlike the novel which at least in the United States seems only able to repeat itself endlessly, the film is enjoying a renaissance. Directors are confident enough of the vitality of their medium to feel that no theme is too large to encompass. For a considerable period novelists in America, like Thomas Wolfe and Theodore Dreiser, aspired to write the one novel imaginative enough to encompass a national experience. Filmmakers too now aspire to achieve through the film a work which can embrace the fate of social systems and the crisis of values attendant upon an era of violent transition. They would break down the false barriers separating study of individual human behavior and the perception of men rooted in political and social groupings. *Potemkin* and *October* expressed the hope and the promise of the Russian revolution. We have not yet produced a revolution which can vindicate such hope, but the political film shows evidence of groping toward a conception large enough to play a leading role in its discovery. Many of the younger directors have begun by rediscovering their society and its origins as the subject of their art.

Notes and Discussion

An Interview with Romain Weingarten

by Bettina L. Knapp

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Interviewer's Note:
"Weingarten's truth is the truth of the nightmare, a profound and living truth; the universe revealed in his work is authentic . . . naive and complete . . . it is the universe of that rare . . . lucid being, the poet . . ." so wrote one of Weingarten's most fervent admirers, Eugene Ionesco.

Weingarten's first play *Akara* (1948) was performed by the Jeunes Compagnies in Paris and acclaimed by the avant-garde. It revealed a totally new theatrical language based on a series of concrete images woven about in fascinating patterns on stage. Its themes, which emanated directly from the unconscious, attempted to make a mockery of man's hypocritical relationships. *The Nurses* (1960) and *Summer* (1966) were equally well received. Here too audiences were introduced to a Surrealistic climate; a realm in which Men and Women Cats invaded the stage with their anguish, violence and acidulous humor. *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens* was performed with great success this winter in Paris. Weingarten's linguistic virtuosity, the sensitivity of the acting techniques used in the production, made for a delightfully absurd evening in the theatre.

There is nothing "realistic" in Weingarten's theatre. It is composed of a medley of "nonsens" and takes its viewers or readers on a trip to that strange and fascinating land where imagination becomes an ever fructifying force.

Q. What was your background?

A. My father was Polish and my mother, French. I studied philosophy at the Sorbonne . . .

Q. How did you choose the theatre as a career?

A. I composed only verse. Then, suddenly, I wrote my first play, *Akara.* I discovered the theatre through Roger Vitrac's *Victor or Children Assume Power* and also through Antonin Artaud. You recall that both Artaud and Vitrac were friends and had founded a theatre together. In fact, Artaud produced *Victor:* a play in which the adult world was satirized and considered stupid, inane, hypocritical; whereas the children's world thought to be fantastic at times, was astonishingly real and sincere. I was profoundly impressed by this work.

Then I wrote *Akara.*

One enters the theatre as one does religion: completely and totally. Some people have labeled my theatre "Surrealistic." Yet, my plays are frequently in direct opposition to the "literary" and "scientific" aspects of Surrealism as explicated by both André Breton, the founder of Surrealism, and Antonin Artaud, one of its chief proponents.

Q. Can you tell us something about *Akara?* It's a play in which your world of fantasy or "madness" comes to life. It features a Man-Cat and his guests.

A. *Akara* was the first post-war *avant-garde* play. I don't believe that this first production—because of its timing perhaps—ever had any equivalent. *Akara* is a type of nightmare; one which includes murder, bewitchment, a type of "delayed" evocation of the horrors which I experienced unconsciously during World War II. When Ionesco first read this play, he spoke of it so frequently that people have associated me with the "theatre of the absurd" group. But the theatre of the

absurd dramatizes the liquidation of dead people, not the murder of the living; the non-hope, not despair.

I played the part of the Man-Cat, the lawyer, in *Akara.* Many of my colleagues—and I too—consider the *metier* of the dramatist to be a "global" affair; that is, that the author must take part in his production; he must make it possible to create a "finished product." The theatrical object must be his work—from beginning to end.

Q. You not only wrote and acted but you also directed your own play this winter, *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens.* The play tells the story of Alice, a little girl, who is neither loved nor understood by her mother. She defends herself by becoming mute and enunciating a series of onomotopoeias. Her unconscious, revealed to the audiences, conjures up her mother in a variety of ruthless and monstrous creatures. Alice is finally liberated, crosses the Luxembourg Gardens only to revert once again to her former slave position. Could you tell us something about your concept of the *mise-en-scène* in general; then in terms of *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens.*

A. Essentially, there are three types of *mises-en-scène:*

1. spacial (which refers to the images)
2. time-concept (which revolves around rhythms)
3. action (directing the actors)

These are frequently referred to as the famous classical rules: unity of time, place and action.

My theatre, however, is an imaginary theatre. Alice is imaginary. I mean by imaginary: one which deals with an *inner reality.* It follows, therefore, that what is performed on stage is the world *within;* whereas the occult (the story of the lovers in my play *The Summer,* for example) becomes the external, logical realm, the event or the psychological situation. It is very difficult to train actors to see the world in this manner: in reverse, so to speak. Paradoxically, it becomes a necessity to have them confront reality—their reality—constantly.

A scene, when analyzed by my actors, becomes a succession of elementary situations viewed in ultra rapid sequences. These sequences must not be linked together logically, that is, rationally. Moreover, they must be endowed with greater or lesser intensity; they must be capable of arousing sensations not necessarily indicated or fostered by "what is said."

To create a *mise-en-scène* or to direct a play implies a permanent *process:* the reaching of a state of extreme and the breaking up of this state.

Extremes imply a systematic exaggeration of motivations; the breaking up of these extremes indicates a no less systematic contention of such an atmosphere. These are, briefly, the mechanics of the process and the means by which a "psychic" reality may be attained; not to be confused with its opposite, "a psychological" reality.

Q. Who are your ancestors in the theatre? Who were the dramatists who most influenced you?

A. Artaud. Vitrac. I also admire Shakespeare, Kleist, Claudel. The poets of the theatre are those who fascinate me. Lewis Carroll.

Q. Is your theatre politically oriented? philosophically? Could you explain some themes or intriguing aspects of your play *Akara?*

A. My theatre is not politically oriented. It's poetry that interests me. The thought which emerges from the poetic flights. My theatre is realistic in that it faithfully follows the explorations into the imaginary world; it therefore becomes a quest for *reality.* I do not mean the type of reality one confronts in the workaday world, but

rather that inner reality about which we spoke before.

Akara is the story of a murder; of black magic; written under the guise of a farce or a type of short story. The hero is a Man-Cat who is confronted by a series of monstrous people: by a society of victims and executioners, consumers and consumed. This cat is a lawyer, and though he is different morally speaking, from the rest of society, though he is an aesthete, he is, nonetheless "Alice," has a cat's personality and is a cat. But this information must be kept secret. It must not be spoken. During the course of an evening reception at his home the Man-Cat's mistress denounces him, or rather she "confesses" that he is a cat. This takes place at a "card party" a perfectly absurd game, a kind of fantasy a la Lewis Carroll. This interlude consists of a series of veiled interrogations, secret questions asked of the Man-Cat's mistress. Finally she can no longer parry the questions. She gives in and tells the truth. The cat escapes, but is caught and is killed at the end.

Another aspect to this play (also symbolic) is the role enacted by the woman. She is the *femme fatale* type; a mediatrix of death, until she herself becomes its victim.

Q. The domain of the dream is most important in your theatre. Can you explain the manner in which the dream insinuates itself in your plays?

A. Yes. My theatre emanates first from the domain of the dream: dream-images, that is, a revelation of a personal situation experienced collectively.

When I spoke of imagination before I meant by this that organ of perception which paves the way for experiencing an inner reality. The dream is a kind of *screen* or *gateway* through which a rapport between an inner and an external reality may be made known, so that *Reality* may be perceived.

It is absolutely not a question of a dialectically conceived theatre in the classical sense; that is, the imaginary or the real-dreamed or, in other words, the real-non-real.

Despite the eruption of Oriental doctrines or the revelation of psychological depths, the concept I have just outlined is difficult to understand, even more difficult to experience.

I first dream my plays, in the manner which I have just outlined. I dream them most persistently when going through the writing process; the very medium stimulates my unconscious. I identify completely with my characters, my creations. These exist in that inner area where first, as amorphous and nebulous powers, they slowly begin to act and take form and appear later on in the theatrical arena—in another domain of *Reality.*

Q. Does the absurd, as far as you are concerned, possess its own type of logic?

A. No. The Absurd, in the theatrical sense of the word, has no logic; or rather it is *logic in flight;* or the acceptance of the absurdity of logic. Its logic, however, is entirely different: it is analogical, homological and symbolistic. It possesses its own language, its own images.

The very strangeness of this language stems from the fact that it possesses its own natural, innate language which is, at the same time, foreign to the one with which we usually come into contact in the workaday world.

It's evident that these two forms which the absurd has taken: the flight from the logical (rational) and the logic of the dream *per se,* blend constantly in contemporary theatre.

Q. Your language is not only poetic; it is hypnotic. It has a way of imposing itself upon the reader, of mesmerizing him. Do you have a special writing technique? What is your method? How do you go about creating a play?

A. As soon as this strange or foreign language which I just mentioned is experienced effectively or on an emotional level—a personal level—it ceases to be absurd. In fact, once it has been triggered off certain emotions, the question "What does this or that mean?" is no longer posed. It is experienced. The emotion is the channel through which the answer is given; that is, it is the transforming agent. When writing I try to follow, as closely as possible of course, that secret curve which the emotion takes. It acts as a kind of barometer or method of punctuating "what is taking place" in silence.

Total theatre consists of an empty stage. I try to reduce everything to this state of silence, immobility, obscurity—linguistically speaking. Then if I succeed in this task—of living through the emotion or experiencing it as an entity unto itself, as a protagonist—then I am happy with what I have written. If I laugh, if I am moved, if I cry, then I have a feeling that what I have put down on paper is good.

When I write in general, my work consists in either adding to or deleting from that first spark of inspiration which constitutes really a kind of shaping of brute matter. I try to order, musically speaking, the movements on stage and the rhythms of the spoken words according to a variety of tempi: rapidly or slowly paced lines, those spoken in counterpoint, in unison, alone, etc.

It goes without saying that what I have just outlined for you is my *vision* of the theatre. I try, as best I can, to come as close to it as possible.

Q. What are your reactions to the theatre of Arrabal, Dubillard; to the work of such directors as Grotowski? Savary? Lavelli?

A. My career parallels Roland Dubillard's so to speak. We are the same age; we have had the same difficulties; we are both actors, dramatists, etc. I really appreciate his poetic theatre.

As for Fernando Arrabal, I do have some reservations concerning the facility of his theatre, also in the domain of the dream—and this, despite his talent as a dramatist. The directors, you mentioned . . . I must say that I do not trust directors in general. I find that Grotowski, without realizing it perhaps, and without wanting to, is working toward a type of expressionism which is completely foreign to me. I think that the only great *mise-en-scène* I have ever seen is Peter Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* I would have liked to have done it.

Q. You frequently use several theatrical techniques in your plays at the same time: satire, irony, etc. Can you tell us how you use these?

A. I love to make people laugh. I use satire and irony to this end. Most so-called "normal" people appear in my plays in the form of animals, monsters or machines. The amount of laughter which results depends upon the degree of fear audiences experience . . .

Q. Do you use sound effects and lights as protagonists? As Artraud had looked upon them?

A. Yes. They should be *actors* in a play.

Q. What role does the decor play in *Alice,* for example.

A. In the Parisian production of *Alice,* the decor I had envisioned failed completely, but only for material reasons.

I think that decor should be a kind of apparition; it should be capable of modifying, not through mechanical means, but through a play of lights, the entire atmosphere. Decor is very nearly always a kind of death knoll for scenic endeavor: it has a static quality about it. It should be a drama in itself; project its dynamism into space, illuminate the heart of the play.

Q. What are your plans for the future?

A. To finish my play *La Mandore*. Note the pun!

Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens . . . Structurally Speaking!!

Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens by Romain Weingarten was produced at the Théâtre des Mathurins in Paris in 1971. It earned accolades from both press and public. A startling bit of theatrical entertainment, *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens* possesses all the qualities (suspense, pathos, violence, wit, etc.) intrinsic to a first rate play, as well as the acerbity, fantasy and prankishness inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland.*

Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens is more than mere diversion. It is the dramatization of a modern myth — the relating in Weingarten's terms of those philosophical and cosmogonous concepts deepest within him. On a personal level, Weingarten's play deals with Alice's unhappy relationship with her parents and her inability to face the outside world. On a transcendental plane, *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens* enacts the eternal and universal drama of creation, that of the individual creating himself, of the adolescent breaking away from parental shackles, of the artist writing his *magnum opus* after destroying the tried and proven literary ways.

Divided into two acts, *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens* represents two warring parts of a whole or, in psychological terms, a personality in opposition with itself. To stress the notion of duality, Weingarten actually splits each of the three protagonists into two beings: the real Mother and the dream Mother, the non-existent real Father and the existent dream Father (Dodu); the real Alice hidden under a blanket (Act I) and the dream Alice (Act II) enacting her visions. By juxtaposing the characters, their attitudes and their relationships in a series of imaginative situations, Weingarten universalizes Alice's original experience, thereby creating a myth.

I

Act I takes place in Alice's bedroom. It is night. Alice is in bed reading the *Outline of a General Theory of the Universe.* She remains silent throughout the act. Her Mother, young, pretty, elegant, enters dressed for an evening party. Before leaving, she tells her daughter to tidy up her room and to go to sleep at ten o'clock. The Mother returns seconds later. It is two in the morning. Alice is still up. Scoldings. Recriminations. The Mother exits. The room is dark. The door lights up violently. Shadows appear on the walls. The door opens. Alice's Mother re-enters. She is now wearing a blue apron. Her makeup is applied in a vulgar manner. This second Mother (Alice's vision of her real Mother) reprimands her, then runs the gamut of emotions: rage, pity, guilt, possessiveness, etc. She is pained because her daughter does not love her sufficiently; she is annoyed with herself for having been too permissive, too close to her daughter, etc. The dream Mother leaves and returns at seven in the morning. When she tries to rouse Alice, her daughter throws a banket over her Mother and strangles her.

Act II takes place in the Luxembourg Gardens. Alice sees an egg, center stage, about the size of a man. Dodu steps out from within the egg. Alice is frightened and tries to run away but cannot budge — a sensation frequently felt by dreamers. Dodu and Alice begin to converse. Their conversation, which revolves around names, newspapers, combs, war, stocks, death, etc. seems disconnected as though each protagonist were talking to the other on different levels. Dodu and Alice begin to insult each other. Alice threatens to destroy Dodu's egg. When he screams at her Alice leaves. The garden gates close. Dodu is alone and sad. He did love her after all.

II

Let us examine *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens* from a structuralist point of view. The ideational contents will first be outlined and then examined each section in turn.

Mythic elements
Father: presumed and unborn author of *Outline of a General Theory of the Universe*
Garden
Egg
Time Sequence
Linear
Non-linear (dream)
Motion
Dance vs immobility
Respiration
Action
Destructive: Alice strangles her Mother
" threatens to destroy the Egg
" leaves, destroying Dodu's happiness
Psychology of Characters
Split: 2 Mothers (real and dream)
2 Fathers (real but unknown; dream and known)
2 Alices (real but passive; dream and active)

Mythic Elements

The mythical aspects of Weingarten's drama are first apparent in the title of the book Alice is reading in Act I: *Outline of a General Theory of the Universe;* secondly, in the Garden decor of Act II; and, finally, in Dodu's residence, an egg.

The "presumed yet unborn author" of the *Outline of a General Theory of the Universe* is Alice's "unknown father," declares Weingarten in his preface. Such a statement seems paradoxical at the outset and, on the surface, it is. If a volume has been written, then the author must have been born. When examining Weingarten's seemingly "irrational" statement, one is struck by its plausibility if analyzed from a mystical point of view. Many books are said to be of mysterious origin — the product of revelation or of some divine knowledge. The Bible, the Koran, the Bhagavad-Gita, Saints' writings such as those of Dionysus the Areopagite, St. Hildegarde, St. Bernard, St. Theresa are among them. If time is considered from a mystical point of view, man lives in an *eternal present,* divested, therefore, of such artificial notions as past, present and future. Alice's book then could have been written by an "unborn author" in some fluid time. As for its mysterious contents, certainly they fascinate her to the point of being willing to incur her mother's wrath by continuing to read the volume despite orders to the contrary.

The fact that the word "universe" is included in the volume's title indicates the vast or mythical proportions of the subject considered. Because the book describes a general theory of the universe, one may deduce that the topic considered deals with its origin or creation. Creation occurs, according to many cosmogonies, as a result of cosmic sacrifice. The notion of cosmic sacrifice implies that form and matter can come into being only by transforming or re-forming primordial energy. The *status quo,* therefore, must be destroyed if creation is to occur. Examples of transmutation of energy in terms of primitive or proto-historic man, as well as modern man, are visible in the countless tales and visual representations of mutilations, struggles and blood sacrifices implicit in all world religions. In Babylonia, for example, the original mother Tiamat (the dragon) was killed and from her body was made heaven and earth. Christ's crucifixion led to the birth of a new religious attitude. Creation then cannot occur without sacrifice. Life cannot come into being without death.

Alice, unlike her antecedents Adam and Eve, wanders into the Luxembourg Gardents (her Garden of Eden) after having committed her destructive act, and not before. It is in the garden atmosphere, a paradisiac locale, that she will undergo a new experience and a surprising confrontation. Gardens usually symbolize nature in its ordered, subdued and enclosed aspects. The Luxembourg Gardens, which feature a bench, a man-size egg standing on a pedestal, and a small mat in front of it, is no exception to the rule. It is Alice's presence which brings chaos to this serene spot, paving the way for the creation of her new self.

The man-size egg, we learn, is the abode of Alice's "unknown father," Dodu. According to Egyptian legend, an egg represents "the seed of generation, the

mystery of life." It may also be considered as a "container," a "repository" for thought and matter — a symbol of the universe. The God Ra, for example, was frequently depicted as a glorious figure in his egg. One may also recall that life emerges from the egg, that within its walls the invisible and inactive are transmuted into visible and viable entitites. The egg in Weingarten's play comes to represent a world in transition — potentiality.

Weingarten informs his viewers that the "world is an egg," a microcosm. For Alice, the egg represents mystery and a land of infinite riches with both positive and negative implications. From within its shell emerge heteroclite objects: radio equipment, telephone, cooking odors, newspapers, etc. Yet Alice, try as she may, never succeeds in entering the egg. Her only rapport with the egg is via Dodu and his pseudo lucubrations which are beyond her comprehension most of the time. Because Dodu prevents her from penetrating the egg, she cannot understand or assess its real value or function. Her relationship with the egg is unproductive and highly distasteful. Her frustrations are so potent that she threatens to destroy the egg (the world she knows through Dodu). Her aggressive act, however, is never consummated. Instead, she withdraws from the garden, the implication here being that her father and what he represented in terms of her life was not so terrifying nor so strong a force as her mother. The courage or anger necessary to commit murder, therefore, was never aroused. When Alice leaves the Luxembourg Gardens, the gates close behind her. No longer the victim of a virago-like Mother and a non-existent father, Alice will confront the outer world independently, as she sees fit. No one will bar her entrance or dominate her henceforth. Alice's was a traumatic experience which all adolescents must live through if they are to create their own lives.

Time Sequence

Weingarten's use of a dual time concept (linear and non-linear) as a dramatic vehicle is equally fascinating in *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens.*

Linear or clock-time was created originally by rational man in order to regulate and order life's events. It is an artificial concept which implies a past, present and future and hence a categorizing of man's existence. Linear time is explicitly expressed by Weingarten in Act I (e.g. when Alice's mother says: "You shut the lights at ten o'clock. Ten on the dot . . ."; when she re-enters at exactly two in the morning). Because the Mother's following two entrances (at two and at seven in the morning) occur in a non-linear or dream time sequence, Weingarten is able to juxtapose the two concepts, thereby disorienting the viewer who may now believe the dream episode to have actually occurred. He is in a quandary.

Non-linear or dream time is comparable to the Orientals' or to the mystics' notion. Time for them is a concept devoid of meaning. It is a figment of the mind and certainly not divisible into three distinct parts. The only concrete reality for the Oriental and for the mystic is the *moment* or *actuality.* Time is not tangible. Continuity and duration do not exist. Life is not a whole but a series of agglomerations.

By so adroitly contrasting linear and non-linear time via Alice's Mother's entrances, Weingarten arouses emotional conflicts within the viewers. They empathize with Alice's angry mood and are annoyed by the constant going and coming, the continuous references made to linear time and conformity. Tired of living within the routine, rigid and circumscribed world of the adult, as exemplified by the Mother's constant harping on time, Alice dips into the *Outline of a General Theory of the Universe,* where a non-linear or dream time is represented in terms of the universe's *pleroma.* In this fantasy realm, Alice's imagination can roam free; constraints are non-existent. Her desire to escape from her constricting situation is attested to by her silence and her refusal to show herself. By hiding under the blanket, she cuts herself off from the parental domain and lives, ostensibly, within her remote timeless and spaceless area.

Weingarten goes one step further. He opposes the dual time concepts in terms of

stage directions. "What characterizes a dream," he writes, "is exactly that strong feeling of reality which emerges from it . . ." A dream which is a vehicle or instrument enabling the unconscious to express itself derives its power from its reality. The more striking and believable the dream, the greater is the impact upon the dreamer. Weingarten makes it clear in his stage directions that when non-linear time is to be expressed, no artificially conceived dream decor should be used. The sets for Act I should be simple and stark. These should include a bed, a chair and a door, no more no less. When the dream Mother enters, the walls of Alice's room should become luminous, giving off a kind of fluid effect; green lights should be focused on the door making it seem larger and more important than it would under normal circumstances. A "black shadow" should be visible around the door's frame — like a black halo resembling the draperies around funeral parlors in France. Many directors, according to Weingarten, defeat their own purposes when attempting to create very special dream sets.

Linear and non-linear time also serve to underscore Alice's split personality and her intense conflict. Because she can penetrate into two worlds (reality and dream), she acts and reacts in both domains, according to her own logic. In Act I, for example, she experiences her Mother in two distinct ways: passively (she is mute and hides) when living out her linear time existence; and actively (she murders) in a non-linear domain. In Act II, linear time is injected into the stage happenings when the Church bells of St. Sulpice ring out and when night turns into day.

Contrasts in time techniques are also expressed in terms of historical events. When Dodu reads her a newspaper dating from 1939 and which describes the war, Alice informs him that the war has long since passed. He does not believe her. In fact, he keeps quoting stock prices which have gone down and keeps repeating troubling events as though they were actually occurring. The implication in this instance is the following: though a specific event might have been experienced in terms of linear time, it encompasses non-linear time because its ramifications are eternal. The particular then becomes universal; the rigid is transformed into the fluid.

Weingarten has created a system whereby non-linear time heightens antagonisms: when characters are unable to relate to each other. Alice grows more and more disconcerted and uncomfortable when listening to Dodu who says he does not know her and yet describes one of her characteristics.

> Alice. — Yes, yes, that's it. (To herself.) I must go.
>
> Dodu. — Usually you're not in such a hurry.
>
> Alice. — Usually?

Alice is frightened and wants to leave. Then Dodu questions.

> Dodu. — Who are you?

In a timeless and non-linear realm the foregoing conversation is plausible. Because Dodu is functionless, that is, he plays no role in Alice's real (linear) life, he is non-existent for his daughter. Alice, nevertheless, feels a deep need for a father image and for this reason conjures one up, in the form of Dodu in her dream. On the other hand, since Alice's father pays no heed to her in every day existence, his recognition of his daughter is experienced on the most superficial of levels. He can, therefore, without compunction state: "Usually you're not in such a hurry." As for Alice, she does not look upon him as an individual, but only as Dodu, a flabby, roly-poly, spineless being, as his name implies.

None or little communication between Alice and Dodu is possible. They have no common denominator. Each lives in his own limited realm, chattering away in disconnected sentences. As Alice's dream is lived out, she grows increasingly aware of her situation. Awareness may at times engender activity. It does in Alice's case. She begins to react to Dodu's mechanical and affectionless ways. She calls him

"imbecile, liar, an old monkey! an old frog." She threatens to destory his egg. The more aggressive Alice becomes the more terrorized is Dodu. Indeed, he turns ashen; begs her forgiveness. "Forgive me, forgive me . . ." he states. Alice's cruelty toward her "old" father arouses his tears. He sobs, creating a highly poignant situation.

Were Alice's plight to be dramatized in terms of linear or rational time sequences and her antics to occur in a well ordered universe, the banality of her situation would be striking. Emerging as it does from both conscious and unconscious realms and in a series of unrelated, droll and surprisingly incisive repartees — all enveloped in a dual time technique — Alice's pathetic world becomes shockingly real.

Motion

The manner in which motion (dance and respiration) and immobility (rigidity and death) are handled in *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens* adds an outer-worldly atmosphere to the entire drama.

Weingarten looks upon his play as a dance: "the gravitating of one person in motion around another, who is immobile." To view theatre in this manner brings to mind the classical Japanese Noh drama where mobility and immobility play a primordial role. The latter represents divine and cosmic forces, a state in which time is eternal; the former, a lesser entity in the cosmic hierarchy, represents man who is motivated by matter and whose values are earthbound.

Dance is the most elemental way man has of expressing feeling. It is a visual exteriorization of amorphous or spiritual notions. Considered in this manner, the dance may be looked upon as a series of sound or light waves, a "skein of vibrations" transformed into active matter, pulled and repelled by some higher magnetic force or consciousness. In Hindu cosmogony, the dance denotes the notion of becoming and the passage of time. When Shiva, for example, performed his cosmic Dance, he united space and time within the process of becoming and in so doing became the creator of the world. Motion (active matter), then, is an energetic process which may play an important role in human relationships, creating friends and enemies.

When Weingarten speaks of his play as a dance he intimates that relationships, activities and events are the product of some fortuitous energetic force. When Alice's Mother enters her daughter's room she seems to glide in, like a phantasmagoria, intent upon fitting her daughter into some kind of routine. She may be in fact the plaything of some unknown series of sound waves, compelling her to act as she does, forcing her to gravitate around her daughter. Her emotional frame of mind is transmuted into her dance-like gestures in this instance. When she is annoyed, her movements and steps are rapid; incisive; when she is moved, they are tremulous and halting. Alice musters up her energy, also in the form of a dance, in an attempt to remain under the blanket so as not to confront her Mother. The energy which piles up within her can no longer be stifled. It escapes and she loses her immobility. She moves about under the blanket, expressing her feelings through the dance or bodily movements, until she commits the ritual act of murder.

Alice's dialogue with her "unkown" father is a rhythmic or pantomimic representation of her metamorphosis, from the unhappy and unrelated child she was at the outset of the play, to her liberation at the end. Alice's emotions are frequently expressed by her foot-work; her hurried or slowly-paced steps, her leaps, her rigid stances. Dodu's gestures and demeanor are equally decisive and revealing. He twirls and twists, runs and jumps, bubbles over with energy, turns ashen with shock and fatigue. Emotions are rendered visible by bodily motions or the lack of them.

The fact that Weingarten asks actors to discover the proper "breath" for the words they pronounce and the right gestures and emotions to express their feelings, implies a distinct interest in the outer-worldly domain. The Egyptians used to speak of discovering the proper breath for reading

sacred texts. To accomplish this they required a special breathing technique, that is, an imitation of the rhythms of the universe. According to Antonin Artaud, breath indicates an assimilation of air (spiritual power) which is looked upon as a positive act since the individual is absorbing the world. Exhaling is considered as negative, as rejecting the body's waste matter, once the substance of life has turned into a poisonous entity. Because breathing is connected with the circulation of blood it also implies the process of involution and evolution. When an individual is confronted with difficulties in breathing (spasmodic, coughing, halting), some kind of blockage is indicated.

Weingarten wants his actors, then, to discover the right breath to describe the proper emotion. "Emotions, meanings are faithfully transcribed within the diagram of a breath." To succeed in this endeavor requires a turning inward — an introversion — so that the actor can experience the feeling he wants to portray. According to Antonin Artaud the discovery of the emotion in question through breathing is a creative act. An actor, he wrote, can create a being (his double, that is, the character he seeks to personify), an image or a mood, by means of breathing. By taking in breath, the actor may succeed in communing with the forces of nature, aligning the disparate parts of his own body by localizing the points where his muscles are affected by the emotion he seeks to portray: anger, grief, guilt.

Dodu's rhythmic respiration throughout the play is exciting to witness and certainly adds to the dramatic process. When angered, his breath is emitted in rapid sweeps, causing his eyes to dilate and literally pop out of his head. When attempting to discover Alice's identity and his own, he begins to cough. Rather than calm his spasms, he encourages them by sucking on a candy especially designed to cause coughing. In other words, he fosters his quixotic breathing, interrupting and even partially cutting off life's forces or breath. To act in this manner implies a lack of rapport with himself and the world about him. His function in life is unclear. He is forever shifting his point of view.

Dodu becomes highly emotional and he exteriorizes his turmoil in a variety of ways in rapid succession — laugher, tears, hysterics, calm — introducing thereby different rhythmic breathing sequences. Such extreme activity represents a frenetic attitude, a desire to escape from his wordly domain because of his inability and unwillingness to cope with whatever seems to bother him.

Breathing and motion in general are subjective ways of experiencing the rhythms of the universe. They are also an exteriorization of emotional situations. Dodu's quixotic breathing and his turmoil, spasms and vacillating rhythmic processes, indicate a fearful and painful relationship with the world in the persons of his wife and daughter. Alice's Mother's forceful, exact and virile motility symbolizes her dogmatic and domineering ways. As for Alice — a charming trickster, a murderous, a delightfully cruel young girl — within her cohabit all emotions, undifferentiated at the outset of the play and underlining her immaturity; differentiated at the end of the drama, when she goes her own way.

ACTION AND PSYCHOLOGY OF CHARACTERS

The play's action is simple. It consists of the strangulation of the Mother, the threatened demolition of Dodu's egg and Alice's cruelty upon leaving him.

The fact that bonds are severed in Weingarten's drama indicates the necessity of changing the characters' attitudes and course in life. The vicious, negative and possessive demeanor of Alice's Mother merits hostility and revenge from her daughter. The fact that Alice reacts violently indicates a certain awareness on her part of her situation, her identity and her role in life. She refuses passivity and identification with her mother. Alice is determined to act on her own.

The Mother's dialogue, replete with onomotopeias, creates a mood of vindictiveness, guilt and pathos. The repetitious nature of her speeches reinforces the droning and negative relationship she has with her daughter. The fact that Alice

never once responds verbally (indicating her presence only by means of her kicking, heaving, moving, jostling under her blanket) gives the impression of complete submission. Throttled by an over-powering mother, she represents passivity par excellence.

Dodu is as ego-centric, callous and vindictive as Alice's Mother. He is unaware of his daughter's needs and desires. Furthermore he is an essentially weak individual, non-existent in his home environment, ineffective in dealing with both wife and daughter.

Alice expresses the need of a father in the Garden episode when she conjures him forth in her vision. She sees her father as a man ill at ease, disconnected, stuttering and essentially irrational. Such character traits are discernible in the clothes he wears: the sleeves of his jacket are too short and he is constantly tugging at them, pulling them down, trying to adjust them in some way or another. Later on he wears a Chinese robe with sleeves that are far too long. In these two instances the outer covering, which represents his actions and relationships, is not in harmony with the thoughts and feelings of the inner man.

The fact that he is forever stuttering, stammering and irritable implies a lack of security and understanding of himself. His conversation is disjointed and certainly beyond Alice's comprehension. Indeed, he is poles apart from his daughter who not only does not recognize her father but does not even understand the significance of the egg. She thinks it is a telephone booth. Dodu reacts instantly. He is furious at her limited knowledge, her inability to comprehend such things. When Alice fails to understand the meaning of the Latin lettering on his home (Anno . . . M . . . C . . . O . . . V) Dodu is again aroused. Not once, however, does he take the trouble to illuminate her, to explain, to kindle some kind of fire between them. Only annoyance is expressed. Such is the unfruitful relationship parents have with their children.

Dodu is so unsure of himself, so aware of his own failings and weaknesses, that he fears his own daughter. He senses Alice's desire to harm him, to "eat him." He even looks upon her as a lioness. She denies such carnal instincts. When he asks her to prove she is a woman by getting undressed, Alice is angered. He retreats into his egg, then emerges with a hammer and nails and hangs a sign which reads "Absent because of death." Alice threatens to take the hammer and smash the egg. Dodu is so terrified that he confesses he is sick and that if she destroys his egg, he will surely die. In an interesting rhythmic inter-change, Alice assumes the stance and attitude her mother had in Act I. She becomes a termagent, threatening Dodu and waving the hammer before his eyes. He is in such a state of nerves that he begins to sob. She informs him of her departure and he murmurs "If you leave, I shall kill myself." He attempts to bribe her with all sorts of material possessions: a toy speaker, a piece of cord, an old transistor, candy, camera, a pencil, an armful of old boxes, cans, old shoes and half a cucumber. Nothing satisfies Alice because Dodu is forever trying to equate the material with the spiritual. It is not by heaping wealth upon a human being that love is born or that hostility vanishes.

When a series of pictures are projected onto the egg (a plaid design, Mickey Mouse) and then colors (white, green, blue, red) are flashed onto Dodu's abode, the meaning of this visual activity becomes clear: the heralding of cataclysmic events. Emanating from within the egg are sounds of war, planes in flight, screams and killing. This aural transposition of infernal sounds is not only an allusion to holocausts in general, but an exteriorization of Alice's inner chaos — the turmoil she has in part sown and a pre-view of her departure.

Alice exits and Dodu remains, sad and lonely. Like Lewis Carroll's Humpty-Dumpty, Dodu pays the penalty for his lack of comprehension, his spineless ways, his belligerent attitude toward his daughter and the world at large. As for Weingarten's Alice, she realizes finally, as had Carroll's, that "of all the unsatisfactory people" she had ever met, Dodu is the prize.

The pain of growing up, of severing relations, either overtly or covertly, with the past, is over. Alice has left the Luxembourg Gardens — a 20th century rendition of the Garden of Eden — to create her own existence, her own life in a still undefined world.

Structurally speaking . . . *Alice in the Luxembourg Gardens* is a remarkable drama.

Cartoon by Franco Giacomini, Torino, Italy

From *A Moscow Diary* **by Jean Blot**

Jean Blot was born in Moscow in 1923 and educated in France and England. Critic, translator of Russian poetry, and the author of five novels, he visited Moscow in 1958, 1964, and 1965. His meeting with Anna Akhmatova took place in 1965.

Translated from the French
by Edouard Roditi
Poet and Critic

Out of silence, into a hubbub. In the crowd of Moscow intellectuals that I've happened to join, everyone is deep in discussion, a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, a glass of tea in his hand. As everywhere else in such circles, they're all questioning everything. Right now, they're discussing the New Economic Policy (NEP), which has recently become a popular topic here. According to legend, Lenin said, when he decreed his New Economic Policy: "This set up must last for a long, long while."

Now a stern-faced professor, with colorless eyes behind his glasses and long, delicate hands, appears to be questioning himself aloud: "It's perhaps there that we should seek the objective cause of Stalinism. Maybe we should have stuck to the N.E.P. Maybe we should now turn back to it."

Go back to N.E.P.? The faces of his listeners bear a worried expression. A plump little man, a movie-script writer unless I'm mistaken, is quite outraged:

"Do you really mean that we should open shops and buy things to sell them again and then sell them to buy more? I mean, to make money and profits . . ."

He pulls a wry face. In the silence that ensues, everyone suddenly bursts out laughing . . .

Anna Akhmatova is Moscow's queen. With affection and humor, she's generally known as *Karalieva,* the Queen. But she's a secret queen and it's difficult to reach her. On our way to her home, our cab seems to dissolve into the night and the mist. Far away, through a curtain of snow, the domes of the Kremlin shine as if they were still young and innocent, like freshly burgeoning buds of some bell-shaped golden flowers. At the foot of the Kremlin's red walls and embracing its towers, the snow spreads itself out.

Akhmatova's house is dark and one enters it through an archway. There we find a stagnant pond of melted snow that must somehow be navigated before reaching the staircase. The green paint is peeling off the woodwork, but, as soon as her door is opened, the atmosphere changes to become animated and cheerful. There's a crowd of young people, boys and girls who greet you or turn demurely away. The next room resounds with laughter and people are playing cards in yet another room.

A dog barks, a cat disappears in flight. The phone rings, a young man answers it and soon becomes involved in a long conversation that he interrupts only to open the door when new visitors ring. Someone leads me to the aging lioness, superb and massive as she lies there on her divan, bearing her head as if it were a precious jewel. Her huge clear eyes seem almost to communicate surprise and a kind of joyful abandonment. Their expression reveals that she no longer really knows who she is: a sick old woman, a proud beauty, a great lyrical poet or a free-thinking Voltairian sceptic?

"Well, what's new in this wide, wide world?"

"You, as far as I'm concerned!"

For the first time in my life, I feel that I now have before me a human being who is assured of immortality in the eyes of posterity. As long as Russia and poetry still exist, this woman's name must continue to live. This quiet assurance of survival indeed gives her every gesture a regal grace and charm. She's as naturally

legend and history as she's also intelligent and witty.

History first appears in her life in February 1917. That day, a gala performance was scheduled at the Alexandriski Theater. Shots could be heard in the streets. Two cab-drivers refused to take her to the theater. They were family men. The third, however, was a bachelor, with nothing much to lose, and accepted to drive the poetess at a brisk pace to the gala performance. It was Lermontov's *Mascarade* and the drama's whole dialogue was punctuated by firing in the city's streets. Then came the October Revolution: the bridges across the Neva are lifted in broad daylight and the city's traffic thus becomes jammed. In the crowd, Akhmatova stands out, tall and slim, as she watches the silent battleship pass by. On its decks no officers can be seen, only the whole crew. It's the *Aurora,* sailing up the river towards the Winter Palace.

Akhmatova is legend too:

"No, no, young man, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I never had any kind of love-affair with the poet Alexander Blok. He was a real iceberg of a man. He never looked into your eyes, only at your forehead." . . . "Your Paris of Russian emigres seems to be peopled with little old ladies who tell anyone who crosses their path that they once had a great love-affair with my first husband, the poet Goumiler! God bless them all! But they also claim that I was wildly jealous, which is perfect nonsense!"

Her whole being is shaken by peals of hearty laughter and her eyes wrinkle with her sense of fun: "Still, my whole life has been one long martyrdom." She heaves a deep sigh that seems to raise her huge body and, for a moment, she really looks like an old lady who has already had two strokes. But she's already leaning towards me with a playful look in her eyes and lips that can barely contain her laughter.

"Why worry? I used to have a public and I was even beginning to bore it a bit, just as it was also beginning to bore me. We were all perfectly nice people and remained polite, however much we found fault with each other. But now, I receive letters from Siberia or the Caucasus, from people I've never met, men and women who can't even spell correctly. . . ."

She begins to recite some of her poetry for us. Her body becomes full of life, like a tree supplying sap to her deep voice that rumbles or sings or chants. Suddenly, she has become a Sybil, an Oracle. Her head rises, her eyes gaze far away. She tells us the misfortunes of her people. She has shared them all and has the right to sing of them, the right and the power too. The tranquil magic of the word is within her. She knows that she's the bard of a nation's sorrows.

"But I'm boring you, young man. Come and admire my Modigliani drawing."

It's a beautiful drawing, very tender in its feeling. She once owned fifteen others, but they disappeared together with all her personal papers, which were burned during the Reign of Terror or lost during the Siege of Leningrad, her evacuation from the city and the war.

"Modigliani was a delightful boy. We used to go together to the Luxembourg. He hadn't yet become a drunk. Later, it was his work that made him an alcoholic. See how much he painted in those few brief years!" Anna Akhmatova seems to know everything. If she refers to an event, she mentions the day and the year; if she refers to a book, she quotes its publication date.

"Have you noticed, young man, that I'm a living encyclopaedia?"

Whenever Anna Andrievna is in a teasing mood, she warns you by a habit of lowering her face towards you and also by the sparkle in her eyes, which are very close to you.

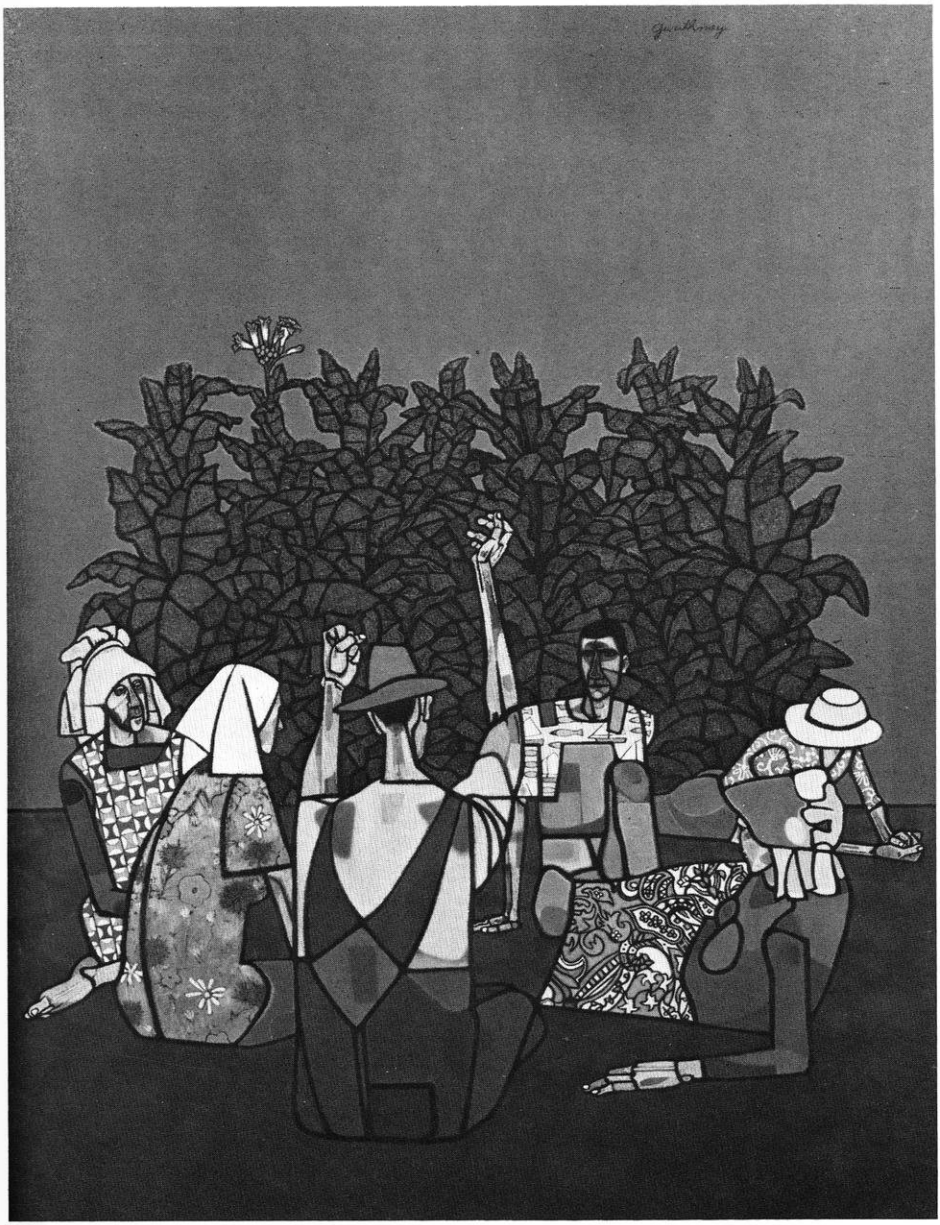
The Western World? To her, it means Proust, Kafka, Joyce. She has read *Ulysses* eight times. During the Reign of Terror, she was even denounced as a "Joycist." But she was then living, very fortunately, in a provincial area where nobody knew what it means to be a Joycist.

No, she doesn't want to talk politics. After the Twentieth Party Congress, what more can be said? Stalin? A persecutor with persecution mania, and she can imitate his heavy Georgian accent very wittily.

Robert Gwathmey
Dialogue

Kroutschev? He is the liberator. "I pray to God that I may die before Nikita Sergueitch." Anna Akhmatova is unwilling to speak of the future:

"Our young people, well, they're wonderful. We have young poets of great talent and some day you'll hear about them."



Still, the memory of the Reign of Terror returns to haunt our minds. Anna Andrievna comments to me:

"Fear is something unique and never loses its bloom! You can experience as much on the last day as on the first, as much over a full twenty years as on the first day."

She suddenly begins to speak of Pasternak: a great friend and a great poet. When he used to give public readings, he knew how to weave, with the very first lines that he recited, a thousand invisible ties that would bind his listeners to him. But Blok imprisoned himself in his own icy solitude. Still, the greatest poet of the century was Mandelstam:

"I have no fear for his reputation. It's only just beginning to spread, but it will last for a long, long while."

Anna Andrievna did not enjoy reading *Doctor Zhivago*: "It was all about us, about our friends, yet I failed to recognize a single character. Besides, that Nobel Prize did us all a lot of harm."

Pasternak wanted it badly, and that was wrong. Anna Akhmatova rises, her eyes gazing afar, her profile tense with pride. "A real poet? Nothing can be taken away from him or even given to him."

At the bottom of the curtain, one still sees the stylized sea-gull which Stanislavsky had adopted as his symbol or his mascot after the huge success of his production of Tchekhov's play. But when the curtain rises, I can scarcely believe my eyes or my ears. In a fine setting, a play is developed, of such preposterous stupidity that one suspects it at first of being an anti-sovietic satire. No: the author is sincere, with that very odd sincerity that one now finds everywhere is Moscow.

The play is set in the age of the New Economic Policy. The bourgeois middle class is raising its head again. An attractive middle class girl manages to seduce a tender-hearted secret police agent whose sister is a perfect hospital nurse, one who wears low-heeled shoes. Another secret police agent is secretly in love with this sister; and he is in every respect admirable, a close friend of Lenin. But he dares not declare his love to the nurse because he isn't educated enough. He can't spell correctly, though he knows how to handle a submachine gun. Then the tender-hearted secret service agent gets involved in some nonsense and the other one wants to shoot him. Between love and duty, he cannot hesitate. The perfect nurse is brokenhearted. She adores her brother. So she hastens to implore Lenin's mercy. Lenin then develops a political argument that convinces her; he's not only a great mind, however, but also a great heart. Though it's against all his principles, he grants a pardon. The curtain then falls on a blissful world where the little secret agent, the big one, the nurse and all the other characters of the play are happy.

I might have died of boredom or left the theater long before the end had I not been accompanied by a literary critic and historian who had involved me in this and was seated beside me. A man already in his thirties, he's generally not at all a conformist, but was now making very odd comments on the nonsense that was being uttered on the stage. His main criticism of this unforgivable hamming was that it was full of absurdities. Yes, the New Economic Policy was indeed fashionable. Besides, it had been conceived by Lenin. But this play only revealed its dangers. This was wrong.

On the other hand, my friend expressed sincere admiration for a particularly stupid scene where Lenin was seen visiting a factory. There he noticed a painting representing a worker depicted in Cubist style. Lenin had the painting removed because he said it was wrong to represent a man as if his eyes were made of wood. My friend then checked the date of the play; it had been published a few days before Kroutschev had denounced abstract art. How had the author been able to detect which way the wind was about to blow? Perhaps he had added this scene at the last moment. Still, it was clever, very clever.

These comments were all the more surprising in the light of the very knowledgeable remarks that the same critic had made, the previous day, when I had chanced to hear him discuss Joyce and Kafka, Hemingway and even Salinger. But that was all an entirely different subject, in an entirely different field.

The intellectuals here form a class that is both privileged and threatened. More exposed than others, since their function is to express themselves publicly, they are subjected to imperatives which are all the more dangerous and categorical for their being constantly changed, often vague or not even formulated. To have any talent, even the mediocre talent that consists in knowing how to concoct a drama while obeying all these imperatives and without boring one's audience to death, thus remains a very rare gift indeed. The authorities are ready to pay a high price for this rare gift and the general public, in Soviet Russia, has a great appetite for entertainment. But the authorities want something in addition to mere entertainment: they seek an expression of the society which they have created. Until relatively recently, this could be achieved only in the form of propaganda, which is no longer true today. The desire to see great works produced is now sincere. The Soviet Empire thus awaits the birth of its own *Aeneid* and the authorities experience real disappointment and exasperation when they feel that their artists refuse to produce such a great work or are incapable of creating it. The government is ready to grant all possible privileges to the artist. Successful Soviet writers thus reap material benefits that can be compared only to those that movie stars or pop singers enjoy in the West.

But these writers are threatened by dangers that arise from the same cause as their success. Soviet intellectuals pay a high price for their recognition and importance; at the same time, they are unwilling to play the part imposed on them. After fifty years of lies, they feel that they must reinvent their language, rediscover the simplest words, reinvest them with their own true meanings and values. They feel that it is now their duty to speak of the misery that so many official lies have covered up.

These same tensions exist elsewhere, however, in all sectors of Soviet life. There they assume the form of a struggle for credits, when the authorities must be made to feel the interest and the urgency of financing development in a particular sector. The individual's official importance in Soviet life, his economic and social status, will all depend on his ability to convince his superiors of the importance of his task. In such a shifting society, a set of priorities established by the national plan thus determines all social hierarchies, which remain transitory and constantly change.

She leans towards me to say: "What has changed, in our world . . ." She stops, glances to the left, then to the right, before adding in a low voice: "is that we no longer need fear anything."

Still, why did she lower her voice? She wouldn't be able to explain it. Is she afraid of admitting that she knew fear in the past, is she afraid of still having to fear, or merely of tempting fate? One never knows. The fear of the Stalinist era has yielded to anxiety. One no longer really knows what is allowed, what isn't, what one can say, what one must do, what one may forget, what one must remember.

Stalin has vanished. One scarcely even mentions his name. People prefer to stroke their upper lip with their forefinger and to say: "You know . . . whiskers!"

But people feel the need to speak of the Reign of Terror that he imposed and he's still at the back of their minds, suggested in the thoughts, gestures and acts of all who are over thirty and who have lived under his regime. They hesitate, they wish to speak of the great new buildings, of the Congress Palace, but they can't resist the temptation and then all the horror stories come out. A Soviet speaker can go on forever on that theme.

Nevertheless, in Moscow people will still say to you: "When the Old Man was alive, the Russian people was still good. Now, they are rotten to the core!"

Even Stalin's victims repeat this constantly, even those who now return from the prison camps. A foreigner remains dumbfounded when he hears his Russian friends suddenly speak of the Reign of Terror as if those had been the good old days. However surprised or indignant, you must then try to understand. This nostalgia is of the kind that people are often surprised to feel for the hardest times of their own past, for the German Occupation, for instance, and the years of resistance in France. In times of war, there exists indeed a sense of brotherhood; one experiences it also under a reign of terror. The latter, besides, had made the Russians turn, as it were, to stone. One was then surprised, even delighted, to discover in Moscow, as a foreigner, "the eternal Russia." But this eternal Russia has now vanished and Soviet Russia is today an industrial society that is managed by a gigantic bureaucracy. "The people is rotten to the core!" No, it is simply disappearing. . . .

At the back of the entrance-lobby of the *Ukraine Hotel*, you find a cafeteria that remains open until two in the morning. Neon lighting casts a livid coloring on everything there and you have to stand in line to obtain a cup of undrinkable coffee, Pilsen beer from Tcheco-slovakia, Georgian champagne, sandwiches and cigarettes. After which, you all sit on plastic chairs around a plastic table, ten or twenty of you at each table. Under this neon lighting and in a cloud of tobacco smoke, Germans and Ghanaians, Ukrainians and Vietnamese, Poles and Chinese assemble. Sad-eyed Cubans, wearing berets like those of British paratroopers, look bored and talk in their harsh Spanish that is loud as a dog's barking. Girls here are very few and the men vie for their company. If a quarrel arises, it is soon settled. Then one's attention is caught by wild cries. A stocky Chinese, presumably very drunk, is screaming in a tantrum in front of the elevator, where he has been waiting some ten minutes and has lost his temper. He speaks Russian but his anger and his accent make his words incomprehensible. At last, the elevator comes down. The Chinese disappears into it. Some Africans are trying to entice a girl away from a group of young Russians who put up a brave defense.

At all the tables, in all possible languages, there are discussions or quarrels. A disillusioned young Russian is complaining about the Africans: he says that they don't know how to treat women. His neighbor accuses him of racial prejudice. At another table, a German is trying to explain, in halting Russian, what he thinks of the Chinese. Elsewhere, a script-writer wearing glasses with heavy tortoise-shell frames is speaking of Fellini.

"That's how it is in our country. . . ."

"In our country, things should be different. . . ."

"The Chinese, the Cubans, the Germans. . . ."

Everyone is drunk and it's now a free-for-all.

Outside, the snow is still falling gently, like a kind of lullaby, on the golden domes of the Kremlin, on those too of the deserted churches that need to be regilded, and on the low-cost housing projects of the city. Tremulous lights shine weakly through the curtain of falling snow-flakes.

Six years ago, when I was last there, everything was silent. Today, it's a hubbub, in fact, it's alive.

Book Reviews

Technique and Structuralism: The Decline of Art as Language and the Rise of the New Art History

by James M. Dennis

Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Burnham, Jack, and Harper, Charles, *The Structure of Art.* New York, Braziller. 1970. $8.95

Two major criticisms of Jack Burnham's earlier book, *Beyond Modern Sculpture,* are closely interrelated. First, he wrote of modern sculpture as if it were a progressive evolution from Rodin to Donald Judd with a teleological force of predestiny. Such Hegelian historicism is then applied to the second part, "Sculpture as System," in which he traces out chronologically what he sees as the inevitable, utopian condition of aesthetic experience. Through cybernetics, an increasingly biological fusion of the viewer and the electronic process will replace the work of art as object. The second criticism follows the first, in that a given work of art among the many illustrated in *Beyond Modern Sculpture* is only discussed as a means of demonstrating a specific point of evolutionary reference. A work is seen merely as a projection into the future, otherwise it is untouched.

Now in his latest published book, Burnham comes ashore from the technologist's mainstream of the future in order to analyze and evaluate a selection of works dating from the past eighty years to the present. Even with dry land and firm footing, however, he still must have an esoteric system to rely upon in confronting a work of art. The system he comes up with rests on a division of terms derived from the structural anthropology of Claude-Levi-Strauss and the semiology, or study of sign systems, of Roland Barthes. After a discursive attempt to comprehend the basics of both, Burnham concludes that before making it the subject of structural analysis, art can indeed serve the same mediating function as myth even in a diochronic society, that is one with a sense of history. Consequently, the division of natural and cultural terms used by Levi-Strauss to explain mythic forms are to be applied to art in designating a work's signifiers," its physical properties, as distinguished from its "signifieds," its aesthetic ideals. Out of this treatment each work is to be blessed with a balance of equivalents between its empirical and aesthetic elements as Burnham detects and judges them.

His development of what he hopes is "structuralist thinking in a coherent approach to art" is parallel, he claims, to Levi-Strauss's provision of a logical scheme for mythic institutions. For example, Levi-Strauss maintains that religion consists of a humanization of natural laws while magic lies in a naturalization of human actions and that the two are therefore inseparable. On the basis of this Burnham's system is stated as follows:

> *Art is simply another case of the conjunction of religion and magic, a language expressing the effects of both through its own internal logic. In Levi-Strauss's definition of magic, the* naturalization of human actions *could be expressed as "naturalization of the cultural";* humanization of natural laws *is the "culturalization of the natural." It becomes evident in the course of the following analyses that all successful art integrates both effects as equally and fully as possible. The reason for such analyses, therefore, is to determine where and how this is done in each case. Whereas all signs are divided into cultural or natural terms, cultural terms culturalize their natural counterparts and natural terms naturalize the cultural. Where either does not clearly occur, the art may be culturalized or naturalized on the ideological plane, or its*

structure may remain ambiguous, or it may not function as art at all.

The last sentence of Burnham's statement seems to promise a system of evaluation which would judge a work successful or a failure. However, as he designs his structural analysis around each work, he merely divides his information in two columns labeled natural and cultural, the former listing the subject and/or materials of the work plus occasionally citing a statement by the artist or his apologist. The cultural column briefly explains the selections and decisions of the artist in dealing with the materials and presents a capsule interpretation of the work's content. To accompany a small black and white illustration Burnham adds a couple of paragraphs or so of commentary summed up most often with the aforementioned balance of equivalents between the empirical and the aesthetic terms of the work. Wherever possible he inserts the terminology of Levi-Strauss and Barthes but nowhere does he commit himself to a critical judgment. Works of recent process art and object art are ambiguous in contrast to Duchamp's balance of the natural and the cultural in a ready-made. However, that simply enhances the prophetic genius of Duchamp, who like no other innovator of the 20th century, was aware that art is a fragile system of signs and values, "where each 'solution' is in fact a step toward eliminating the chance of subsequent solutions."

In coming to a conclusion about the diminishing terms of art in the 20th century, Burnham dwells on Duchamp's *The Large Glass* in which he sees Duchamp stripping art of her signifying power in contrast, for example, to pre-historic Stonehenge which assumes all the prerequisites of a work of art by clearly delineating cultural and natural elements. In what can pass as the clearest approach to a concluding statement, Burnham seems to agree that modern man is losing his conceptual security with the collapse of mythic structures and totemic systems and what remains is "a random assortment of entities, materials, processes, and synthetic concepts — the 'junk of life' in Duchamp's phraseology."

In the final few pages of his curious book, Burnham rambles onto a hope that new, scientifically oriented myths will arise devoid of the repressiveness associated with present scientific methods. But for now he admits that new modes of technology develop at the expense of surrounding environmental systems, and he makes no mention, let alone a prophecy, that cybernetics and its mysterious complexity of signifiers can embody the functions of religion and magic.

The Critic and the Sounds of the Moment

by Foster Hirsch

Instructor of English at Brooklyn College. He has published articles and reviews in numerous publications including *The Nation, The New York Times* and *Rolling Stone.*

Goldman, Albert, *Freakshow: The Rock-soulbluesjazzsickjewblackhumorsexpop-psych Gig and Other Scenes from the Counter-Culture. New York,* Atheneum. 1971. $10.00

Albert Goldman likes to be where the action is, and his collected essays on popular culture are solid testament to his alert social sense, his ability to define the sounds of the moment. In his opening essay, Goldman offers an excited description of The Electric Circus, New York's "most elaborate discotheque," and he advises his readers to get themselves down there on St. Mark's Place in order to feel the pulse of The Age of Rock. Goldman's invitation indicates clearly his role of social-critic-as-proselytizer; in these pieces, Goldman serves as an articulate link between the hip community and interested, perhaps unknowing, outsiders. Goldman is the very up-to-the-minute master of ceremonies, interposing himself between the nonverbal, nonintellectual world of rock and jazz and his presumably sober, college-bred readers. Goldman invites us in, encouraging us to enjoy the intoxication of the rock culture, cajoling us into overcoming middle-class inhibitions. Goldman, then, is the mediator between the Dionysian musicians and comedians who are the book's dramatis personae and the Apollonian spectators who read *Life, The New York Times, New York,* and *The New Leader,* the journals for which most of these essays were originally written.

Friend of rock stars, down-and-out jazz musicians and Jewish comedians, jazz club entrepreneur, would-be night-club comic, Ivy League professor, Goldman himself is both hip participant and detached raisonneur. He's in there grooving on the music and lights, but he's also out at his desk analyzing, describing — and creating — the myths which feed the counter-culture. Goldman's relationship to that culture is complex and ambivalent:

> *I have recorded the current scene as monstrous and fascinating, bizarre and theatrical, stirring and ridiculous — as, in a word, a freakshow. I like that word. Its ambivalent charge of affection and contempt, its forbidden frankness and disarming familiarity make it a token of this era's queer spirit and the flaming creatures it has hatched.*

For all his conflicting responses, and his schizophrenic background — part New York Jewish intellectual, part New York street-corner-luncheonette Jewish comic — Goldman manages to maintain a consistently fine balance. He writes with a showy blend of the academic (recurrent references to myths and archetypes, conscientious attempts to trace influences and antecedents) and the journalistic (the revved-up, occasionally show-offy prose, the searching for flamboyant simile and metaphor). Goldman's is a wild mix of high and low styles, a racy, soaring, vaudevillian prose that makes up in swirling color whatever it may lack in absolute precision. There is hardly a sentence which isn't all dressed up in loud fancy pants. Goldman is a joy to read, and his energetic verbal embroidery holds up beautifully throughout the 376 pages of his collection.

The book is divided into four units: rock, sick Jew black humor, jazz, and the sex pop psych scene. The longest, and liveliest, section is the first: Goldman is a splendid rock critic, informed, receptive, discriminating. Rock has traditionally encouraged an improvisatory, impressionistic kind of criticism, the impassioned critic hurrying to get down in words the rush and excitement of the music. Goldman beats the younger critics at their

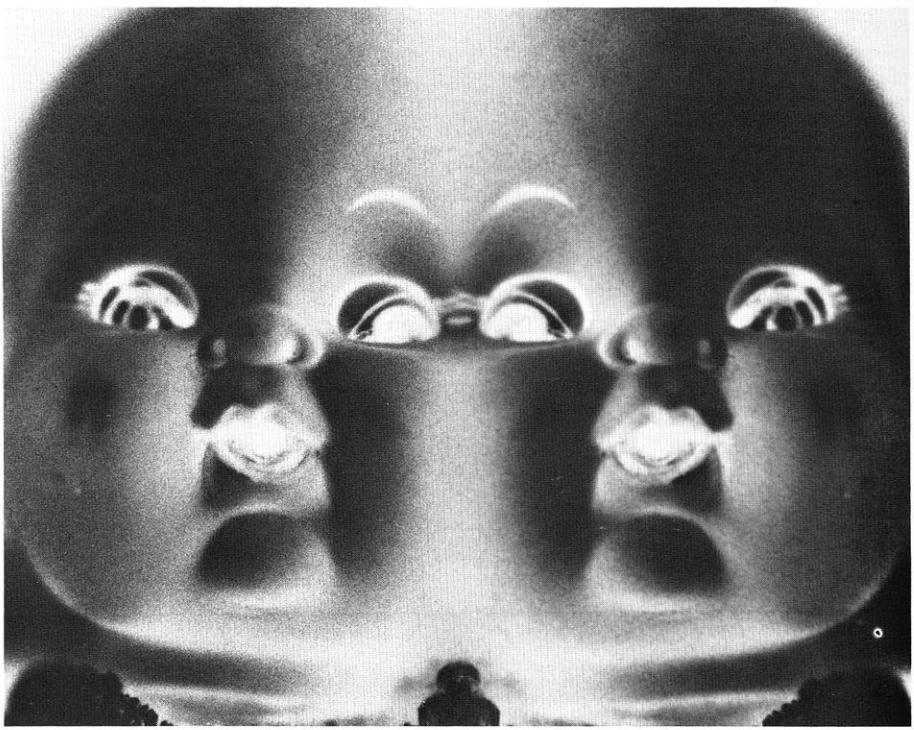
own game of capturing the musical moment. His wide-screen, stereophonic descriptions of performers and performances recreate the essence of rock theatricality:

Out of the murk of a dead stage, the feedback of a wrongly turned knob, the silhouetted scuffle of grips and grabs, into the electric blaze of Leco, Fresnel and Klieg lights, the steely-ringing applause of an ovation and the emotional suction of 2,000 open, gasping, gagging mouths came the Who on the first night of their recent week-long run of Tommy *at the Fillmore East.*

Tall, lean and loose in the West Coast manner, his body sheathed in black vinyl bared at the chest and neck to show off his strong, classically formed head, Morrison is a surf-born Dionysus. With his heavy ash-blond hair curling luxuriantly around his neck and shoulders, his eyes wide and avid, his sensuously curved lips parted in anticipation, he embodies a faunlike sexuality that is both beguiling and menacing.

Goldman's effusions are buttressed by a sturdy musical knowledge. His fingertips on the history of American popular music, Goldman threads his reviews with acknowledgment of rock's heterogeneous ancestry, its eclectic indebtedness to jazz and soul and country and folk and classical and Indian influences.

Goldman is equally responsive to the social implications of rock, to the intimate connection between rock and leftist politics, between rock and drugs, and (especially) between rock and unleashed sex. Rock has become the emblem of a new and liberated social consciousness; but Goldman is ultimately disenchanted with that consciousness just as he transfers his musical loyalties from what he considers the decadent efflorescence of



Photographic visual by Donald J. Cyr

rock to the rigorous purity of jazz. Goldman feels that the total liberation for which the counter-culture aims inhibits rather than releases, forces initiates into artificial poses which imprison rather than liberate. In his final section, Goldman several times underlines his belief that the sexual revolution (so-called) heightens frustration and inhibition.

Goldman's displeasure with the capitalistic and exploitative nature of the rock industry is certainly justified, but his pronouncement of the death of rock and the decadence of rock culture is as facile as it is premature. The music still has great vitality and complexity, and while the culture may not boast the idealism of San Francisco '67, it still has its purity-seeking visions and goals. Goldman does not fully explain his withdrawal from rock, and his increasingly bitter criticism of the music and its enthusiasts casts an unwanted and unneeded gloom over the proceedings.

Goldman's pieces on jazz, written in an earlier, somewhat more subdued manner, are especially noteworthy for their evocation of the nervous looser ambiance of bedraggled, high-strung, self-destructive jazz greats like Bud Powell and Charlie Parker. Goldman's talks with various jazz performers transcend the superficial revelations which are the customary currency of celebrity interviews and become highly personalized testaments. Goldman befriends the jazz performers in a way in which he could never respond to a rock star, and his pieces on jazz have a more intimate, less public entertainer feel. Goldman responds warmly to the exiled black artists, and his accounts of their troubled histories, the smoke-filled, whiskey-laden shadow world through which they move, are a mixture of music criticism and something that goes beyond it, a kind of compassionate, almost pleading, social criticism.

Goldman's essays on Jewish comics and Jewish humor are equally imbedded in social context, but here Goldman is writing as knowing insider rather than sympathetic observer. His analysis of the Jewish comic tradition is linked to the social realities of Jewish paranoia and Jewish matriarchal possessiveness. Goldman was an early defendant of Lenny Bruce, and his detailed, close-up portrait of Bruce as neurotic, iconoclastic challenger of middle class propriety forms a thematic link with the counter-culture heroes of rock and jazz. Mythic figures of underground popular culture like Mick Jagger, Charlie Parker, and Lenny Bruce are all unsettling to middle class insularity and middle class notions of art as something properly distanced, orthodox, safe: It is precisely this kind of social and artistic revolution implied by the great performers of rock and jazz and the unnerving comics like Bruce which attracts Goldman to the field, even if, as in the case of rock, he is finally unsympathetic to the direction of the revolution.

Freakshow represents an academically-trained sensibility turned from traditional academic concerns to the cultural life of the moment: it is a beautiful marriage.

Letters to the Editor

Houston, Texas

Dear Mr. Kamarck:

This may sound like an angry letter, but it's not; it's simply frustrated. I discovered your magazine in the midst of a personal dilemma about what my study of art had to do with the confused, turbulent society in which I lived. Never did my professors admit that art had any social function (heaven forbid!) and only begrudgingly conceded that art and society had anything at *all* to do with each other; they just kind of *happened* at the same time.

So, I buried myself in the library in graduate school, digging up research and making correlations between art and society. I even got a research grant to study the urban effects on taste, and wrote my thesis on *Community Involvement in the Arts: The Contemporary Arts Museum* in Houston. I had really found my niche.

And, then, I finished school.

For jobs, I had a choice of 1) working as a salesgirl in a very commercial gallery; 2) continuing to teach art with the museum or go back to school to get "certified"; 3) join the super-sophisticated "art crowd"; or 4) stay in graduate school and postpone the predicament.

I rationalize by saying, well, down here in Texas we don't get much news (which is true but beside the point), and there may have been hundreds of arts organizations where I could have channeled my energy and convictions. But I didn't know about them.

Since your magazine has been my guiding light, I am asking you now:

DOES ANYTHING PUSHING FOR THE ARTS EXIST OUT THERE? WHAT ARE THEY?

Thanks for any help.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Moser

Green Bay, Wisconsin

Dear Editor Kamarck:

It is a Saturday afternoon here at the Board of Education, a time to let one's mind drift across the sea of possibilities represented to us by today's world. Your recent issue of ARTS IN SOCIETY, "Environment and Culture," required just such a seclusion for proper study.

The assemblage of writers and ideas in this issue were capable of relating their ideas to the reality we face. In a sense, their clear perceptions of environmental concerns make them realists, in juxtaposition with those whose fantasies envisage an older frontier-type economy. This new source of leadership can offer a great deal of relevance to the forthcoming efforts at renewal of our physical environment.

Thank you for the obviously great effort to create a thematic issue, even in gem-like form, for a topic literally cosmic in scope, but sliced to that spectrum of visibility possible for man's field of light.

Sincerely,

John T. Sewell
Director of Federal Programs
Green Bay Public Schools

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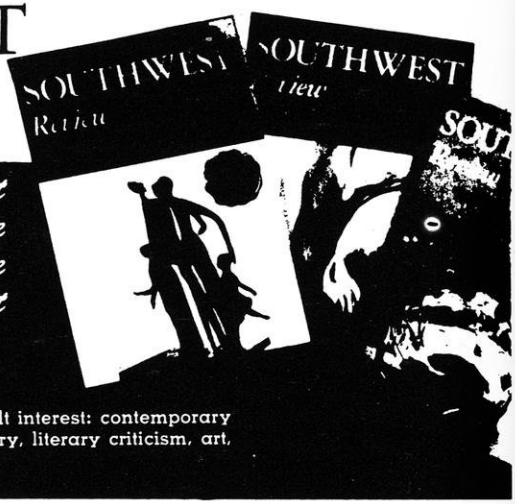

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