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Madison, Wisconsin: Research studies and development in the arts; University Extension, the University of Wisconsin, [1969?]

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arts in society

Tenth Anniversary Issue

\$2.00

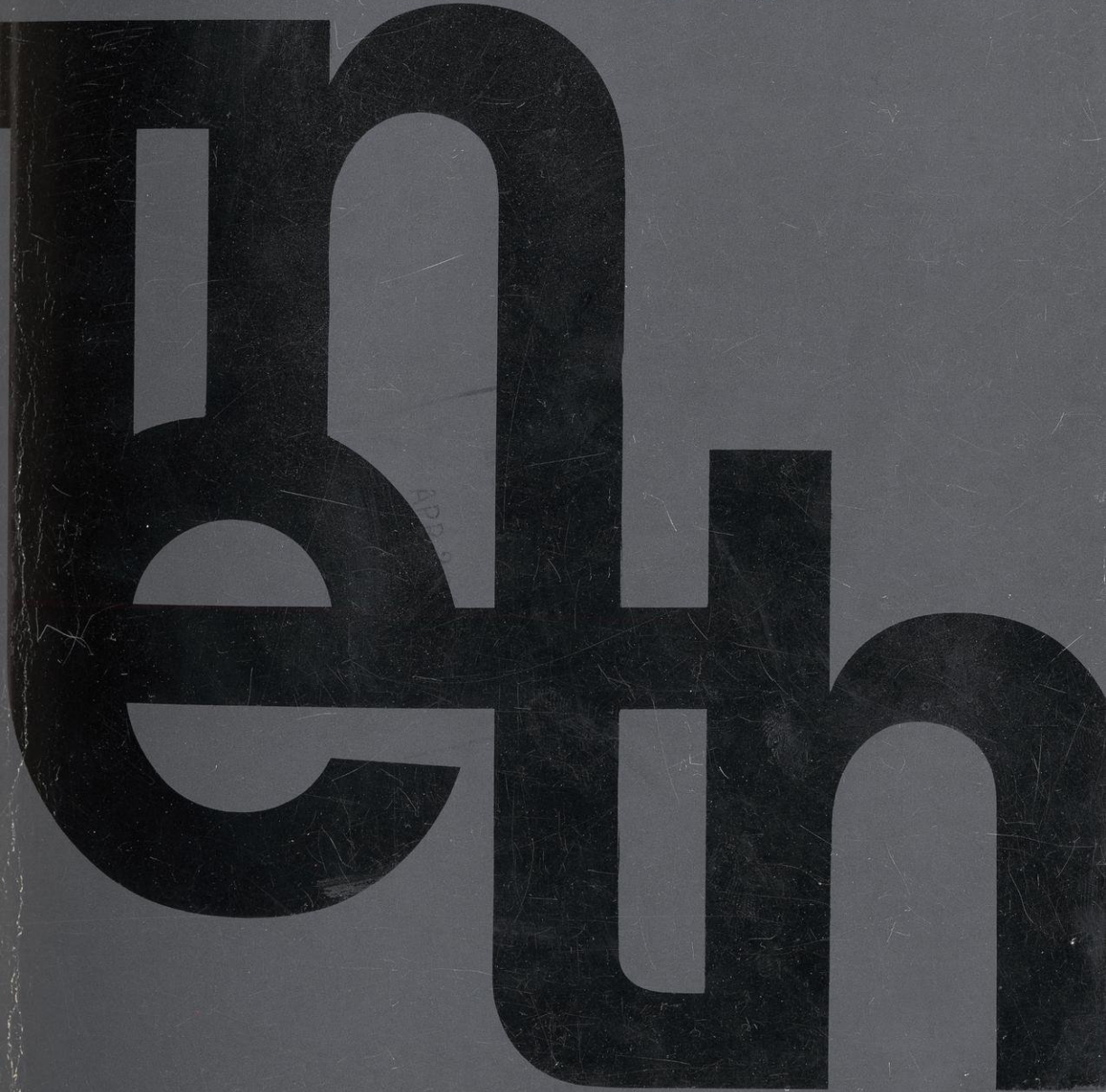
Unfulfilled Opportunities in the Arts

W. McNeil Lowry, Norman Lloyd,
Stanley Kauffmann, Louis Kampf,
Melvin Tumin, Ralph Burgard,
Eric Salzman, and Richard Schickel

Kenneth Rexroth

Gilbert Chase

Peter Yates



En

arts in society

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

Arts in Society is currently issued three times a year.

The yearly subscription rate is \$5.50. The subscription rate for two years is \$10.00, and the rate for three years is \$14.50.

Additional copies of this issue may be purchased at \$2.00 per copy. Special professional and student discounts are available for bulk rates.

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

Manuscripts should be sent to Edward L. Kamarck, Editor, **Arts in Society**, University Extension, The University of Wisconsin, 606 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

Poetry should be sent to Morgan Gibson, Poetry Editor, **Arts in Society**, 310 Garland Hall, The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201.

National Distribution to the retail trade:
B. DeBoer
188 High Street
Nutley, New Jersey 07110

Distribution to England:
Robert G. McBride
McBride and Broadley
Wood Cottage-Nash Road
Great Horwood
Nr. Bletchley, Bucks.
England

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Published by Research Studies and
Development in the Arts, University
Extension, The University of Wisconsin

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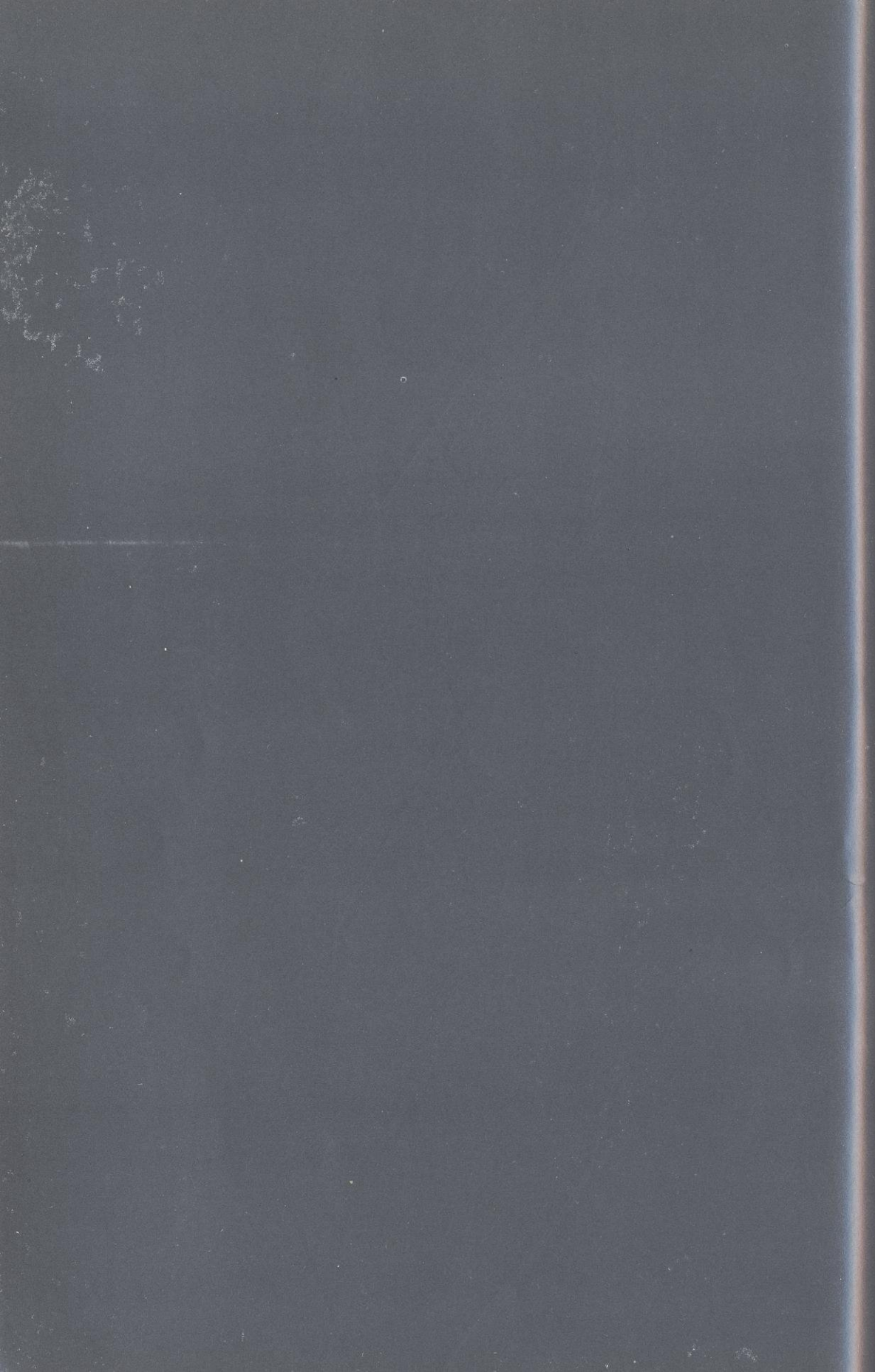
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Travelers

We are Ten Years Old

Edward L. Kamarck
Bernard James
Eugene Kaelin
Warren Bower
Peter Yates
Albert Bermel
Norman Rice

. . . beat generation, cultural explosion, Jackson Pollock, Waiting for Godot, August Heckscher, alienation, the San Francisco Actor's Workshop, Jackie Kennedy, existentialism, the Ford Foundation, Dwight Macdonald, zen, Allen Ginsberg, arts councils, the Theatre Group at UCLA, The Fire Next Time, artists-in-residence, The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Merce Cunningham, Marshall McLuhan, pop and op, The Once Group, Naked Lunch, John Cage, happenings, schools of fine arts, Watts, The Housewife's Handbook of Selective Promiscuity, Andy Warhol, The Rockefeller Panel Report on the Performing Arts, LSD, off off Broadway, The National Endowment on the Arts, hippies and yippies, Black Power, pot, U. S. Office of Education, funk and junk, concrete poetry, Vietnam, confrontation, "soul," Hair . . .

The ten years which witnessed the founding of **Arts in Society** and its subsequent struggles toward growth and permanence have been among the most turbulent in the history of art. The ever sharper contradistinction of ambivalences — progress and disintegration, clarity and dilemma, energy and impotence, responsibility and anarchy, idealism and corruption — increasingly mirrors the cataclysmic upheavals in the society, and suggests that the journal's mission may be far more valid today than at the time of its inception. While the vital questions in art, whether of aesthetics, creativity, criticism, education, or institution-building, have always been inextricably linked to societal change, at no other time has it seemed so important that we strive to comprehend the nature, range, and intensity of this dynamic relationship. For beyond our age of revolution and chaos lie the infinite possibilities of new values, new forms, new roles, new directions, and even more challenging, the potential of a coherent, viable community for art with the will and vision to create a mature and responsible culture.

A journal's role and influence are, of course, circumscribed by its resources. **Arts in Society's** resources have been typically very scant in most areas of its operation. For example, there has never been adequate

staff —⁶ until fairly recently the editing of the journal has been largely a labor of love, performed after hours and in the interstices between full-time University responsibilities, by a two and occasionally three man staff. Although University support faltered at the outset — there were several year-long periods when no copies of the journal appeared — on the whole it has been quite remarkable, and it is unlikely that we could have come this far in any educational setting lacking the vitality, perceptive leadership, and strong tradition of service to society characterizing the University of Wisconsin in recent years.

But as it should be, our most significant resource is the continually expanding community of contributors and editorial advisors, who in representing a wide diversity of fields, disciplines, and art interests, perhaps best bespeak the journal's genius and special strength. In that light, it seems fitting that this commemorative editorial be a composite creation of a few of *Arts in Society's* closest friends and associates.

Edward Kamarck

a testimony

by Bernard James

Mr. James was one of the three editors collaborating in the publication of the first issue of Arts in Society. Subsequently he became a member of the advisory board. He is now a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Director of the Center for Advanced Study in Organizational Science in University Extension.

In those days, of course, giants walked the earth at the University of Wisconsin and the struggle to mount a great adventure — such as only a little magazine can be — fairly shook buildings down. Naturally a committee was formed. It had its giants and other curious mutant types as well. The giants wanted a quality journal and promptly set about twisting the tail of the budgeteers to get a subsidy for early issues. There were others on the committee who rumbled about the cost of it all

and they came out foursquare for something inexpensive, something that might be run off on a mimeograph machine for instance. Then there were several fierce trumpet charges and not a few broken lances for a journal that "would be close to the people," meaning something aimed at the twelve-year old mentality, condescendingly like TV, though no one put it quite that cleanly. There were others on the committee, furtive fellows, but well-meaning and likeable, hobbit-like chaps who scarcely got in the way at all. And we were grateful for their smiles.

In the end, need I say, the giants won. The populists charged off on other errands to the cry of "the People, Yes!" The hobbit-like fellows went back to their burrows. The rest of us set to working like hell or just looked at the floor whenever the Dean came by muttering about the subsidy.

What a long way *Arts in Society* has come. It is now a fine, fat journal, half an inch thick each issue, with first rate writers, top-notch illustrations, fold-outs, here and there the flicker of a sumptuous nude, in color, muted to be sure. But I can recall how Ed Kamarck, Don White and I got the first, the keystone article, from Frank Lloyd Wright. We went to Taliesin and interviewed him. I personally was afraid of the man — though Ed and Don insisted they weren't. But I saved the tape and I can prove how falteringly we put our questions, as if Jehovah would strike us down if we weren't careful of what we said. Wright was his usual salty self, and began by greeting us as "three fine school boys, from the university I understand?" But as we talked, Wright warmed to us and we ended staying half a day. It was a delightful encounter. True, he hogged the conversation, even after we got used to him. And every question we asked was answered by a speech on something splendidly unrelated.

We took the tape back to the campus and worked and reworked and reworked it to get a suitable article out. Each time we sent it to him for approval he would reinsert some of that strange out-of-joint counterpoint so characteristic of his writing. Some of it didn't altogether make sense. But Wright was presenting an outlook, not arguing a point. So we got a good paper from a very great man and

dedicated the first issue of **Arts in Society** to him "our first citizen in the arts," as we put it. We wanted to make clear that he was from Wisconsin.

I shall never quite forget one line from the article, a comment which says that just as a building is a space within, to be lived in, a man was a space within, in which a philosophy must live. The "space within" image was beautifully mystic and reflected Wright's abiding commitment to some of Lao Tse's ideas.

I think we might say that something similar is true of the journal as it stands. It is a space within which an unrepentant philosophy of excellence in the arts should live. That philosophy cannot be something neat and articulate, like the constitution of a civil servant's association. But it should be a spirit that breathes itself onto every page, an attitude that insinuates itself every time a question of quality comes up, a presence that haunts each issue. To a great extent that is what has happened, and we can all be very proud.

a better mousetrap

by Eugene Kaelin

*Mr. Kaelin was an associate editor of Arts in Society for six years, 1959-65, and is now a contributing editor. He is a writer on aesthetics and the arts (author of the book, *An Existentialist Aesthetic*), and is currently Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University.*

The vision has concretized in the years of the struggle, and today it is the quality of the product that makes both contributors and subscribers beat a path to the door. And if the institution is to continue to grow, only the maintenance of that quality will keep them coming back for more. What started out as an attempt to create a field of interdisciplinary inquiry into the social phenomena of the arts, uniting the work and writings of artists, administrators, social scientists and philosophers, may today lay claim to having succeeded.

Arts in Society lost its resident philosopher in 1965, when the present author accepted

the invitation to build a graduate program in aesthetics at the Florida State University. The grass is greener here, true; but upon my arrival I was a bit surprised, and greatly pleased, to learn that my extradepartmental colleagues had thought of me not as a philosopher of the arts, but as a former associate editor of **Arts in Society**. One of them who had read every issue of the magazine, and continues to do so, added a further laurel. "I couldn't teach my classes any more," she claimed, "if there were no **Arts in Society**." We knew that it was going to be hazardous, but such tributes as these make better mousetrap building a rewarding task to perform.

a testimonial

by Warren Bower

Mr. Bower has been a member of the advisory board of Arts in Society from inception and has contributed a number of pieces. He is a prominent literary critic, Professor of English at New York University, and Consulting Editor at Funk and Wagnalls.

I have watched closely the development of **Arts in Society** from its very first issue ten years ago. It had a measure of distinction even then as a University-based magazine reporting on the ferment and experimentation in the arts finding expression on campuses around the country. Those who directed it were alert to the signs which came back to them that they had staked out a significant area for discussion and probing of what the University's involvement in the arts might be at a time when youth felt itself ready to take responsibility for new attitudes, new ideas, and boldly fresh responses to problems.

That process of finding its voice and its audience has continued until now **Arts in Society** has a firm standing among the serious magazines of the country concerned primarily with the arts. It has won particular distinction for its advanced design, and for its reaching out toward creative expression through new resources in typography, illustration, and color

printing. It is not the voice of a narrow intellectualism, but a survey of what is moving and shaking the whole field of the arts. It is still University-based; but in that association it finds its stabilization, its soundness, which enable it to make its distinctive contribution to the continuing discussion of the art of our time.

a valentine out of season

by Peter Yates

Mr. Yates has been a long-time member of the advisory board and is now a contributing editor. One of our most prolific writers — poetry, book reviews, and articles — he has appeared in almost every issue. He is the author of An Amateur at the Keyboard, and Twentieth Century Music, and is widely held to be one of America's most perceptive critics of contemporary music. He was recently appointed chairman of the music department at Buffalo college of the State University of New York.

I quarrel with editors but seldom with the editor of **Arts in Society**.

Too many editors believe that their responsibility extends to telling their contributors what they wish and how it should be said. The editor becomes a censor and the magazine his personal vehicle. We see the result all around us, topical subjects with a current slant set forth in journalese; even worse are the academic outpourings in jargon.

A good editor finds and trusts writers; he doesn't interfere with or instruct them. He may point out non-sequiturs and redundancies and, tactfully, improve syntax or grammar. He distinguishes between competent idiosyncrasy and flabbiness. He will know how, when necessary, to bring the author back to the shaping of his point. He seeks not material — so much by the word — but individuality, ideas. He is fertile in seeding and seeds wisely where the soil is fertile. He does not fear risk. He makes policy but does not inflict it; the fruit of his seeking freshens in unexpected places. A good editor is not a censor but a liberator.

The steady growing of **Arts in Society**, both in size and pertinence, proves the sure decision, gumption, courage, and independence of its editor and editorial staff.

a birthday greeting

by Albert Bermel

Mr. Bermel is a contributing editor and has written many articles for us on various aspects of the performing arts. He is the theatre critic of The New Leader, lecturer in dramatic arts at Columbia University, and the author of a number of professionally produced plays.

During a criminal trial, that most eloquent British lawyer, F. E. Smith, began to illustrate a minor point of law with a wealth of precedents and subtle examples. The presiding judge, who had asked Smith to elaborate in the first place, fidgeted through the recital and finally tried to brush it aside: "Mr. Smith, after all that technical explanation, the court is no wiser."

"No wiser, my lord," said Smith, "but better informed."

Arts in Society does not, it seems to me, presume to enhance the wisdom of its audience — a futile task, anyway. Rather it aims to illuminate unfamiliar corners of our citizenship as providers and consumers of art. As a reader, I delight in its frankness, informality, variety, social concerns and its elegant design, issue by issue, but most of all perhaps in the quality and generosity of its information. As a contributor, I respect the editors as warmly as they clearly respect their readers. Which is to say that I welcome every chance to write for this magazine and wish us both everlasting life.

a projection

by Norman Rice

Mr. Rice is an advisory editor and has contributed several pieces on the problems

of education in the arts. The editors will always be grateful to Mr. Rice for his deft chairmanship of the Wingspread National Conference on the Arts, which the University of Wisconsin sponsored in 1962 in collaboration with a number of foundations. That conference notably broadened the journal's perspectives and invigorated its sense of mission at a rather unsettled stage in its early development. Mr. Rice is Dean of the School of Fine Arts at Carnegie-Mellon University, and was one of the founders and first chairman of the National Council of the Arts in Education.

The projection of the arts in all their complexity against the patterns of our variegated society is an exercise in 'op' to dazzle the mind's eye. In making its projection, **Arts in Society** manages to avoid predictability, to sidestep complacency, to achieve clarity and to refresh the scene by knowing where to look for the action. If by some chance **Arts in Society** doesn't live ten thousand years it will be because it has lost what it now has — the wit to identify the moods and issues of our time, an energy born of an urge to understand, the will to perceive — and to publish.

Opportunities

Unfulfilled Opportunities in the Arts: A Symposium

McNeil Lowry
Norman Lloyd
Stanley Kauffmann
Louis Kampf
Melvin Tumin
Ralph Burgard
Eric Salzman
Richard Schickel

America and Americans have available to them the resources, both of the mind and matter, to build and support the finest culture the world has ever known; up until now many of these resources have been spent in foolish and sometimes ugly ways; the resources nevertheless keep growing, and the chance remains.

Melvin Tumin



Statement¹ by W. McNeil Lowry,
Vice President, The Ford Foundation.

Looking back on ten years of intimate activity in philanthropic work in the arts, I find two great causes for concern, and they are not unimportant either to the quality of American life or to the questions of public policy to which the Congress addressed itself in 1965.

The first is the steady deterioration of personal vitality on the part of those

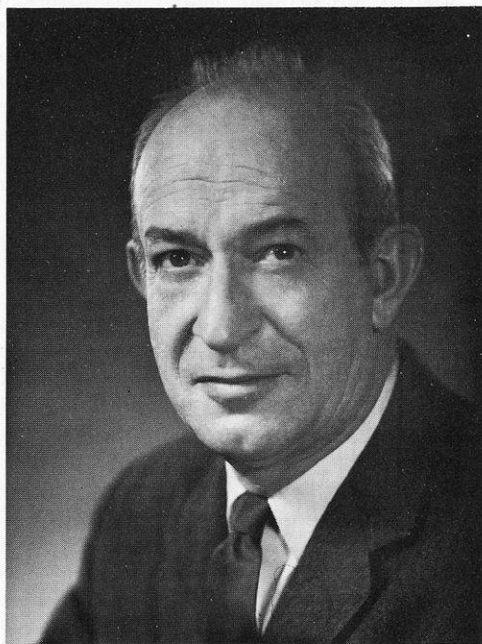
¹Mr. Lowry's statement in this symposium has been abstracted by him from a public statement he issued on July 12, 1967.

artists and artistic directors who are responsible for those very few institutions and companies on which a professional standard depends. Ten years ago by and large most of these leaders, spurred by their own compulsive natures, struggled to maintain standards with minimal budgets in activities that were actually subsidized by the artists themselves, through economic and social abnegations that made it almost impossible even to sort out a decent personal life for themselves. Today a few of these groups have more financial resources with which to work and they have largely overcome the problem of attracting audiences. But in making these achievements they have stretched themselves even more, and the continued stretching and the unceasing inflation of needs and costs have sapped their energies and often impaired their sense of commitment. As a national resource, which in absolute numbers is already inadequate to maintain the art at decent levels, they risk being overwhelmed. Suspicious as they are by nature of what value their government puts upon them, they fend off the amateur with one hand with the other outstretched to tax-supported agencies as the only final hope for adequate underpinning of what they do.

The other great cause for concern is the steady erosion of standards of craft. In 1900 the United States, except for a few unusual individual manifestations, was not thought of as a model of artistic standards or even of artistic activity. Yet some of the crafts in the creative and performing arts which Americans brought into this century may have been greatly eroded by the time the century closes. On the one hand these standards have been generalized and popularized by a long period of amateur activity accepted by the public without much discrimination. On the other hand, the speedup of communication and the rise of a mass culture has allowed many to take the easy way and substitute for artistic craft mere novelty or some new sensation. It is not a question of avant-garde or experimental repertoire or creative artifacts. The question is not whether an artifact or a new work is experimental but of how it is done and by what standards of craft that can perpetuate the development of the art itself. Even our colleges and universities, which by and

large have had more funds at their disposal in the cultural field, have in many ways contributed to a steady amateurization and popularization in standards of craft.

Money will not by itself cure either of these problems. But without increased financial resources in this inflationary period the artist, the group, the training institution has little chance of electing the steady, timeless pursuit of craft and of excellence. Were the United States in an ideal situation in terms of great problems pressing on the federal budget, this would be the time to put vast resources into the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities. But even in the current threatening situation, some greater flexibility and some larger expression of hope needs to be given to the human imagination and to the intellectual and artistic resources that have so much to do with the quality of our experience.



**Statement by Norman Lloyd, Director,
Arts Program, The Rockefeller Foundation.**

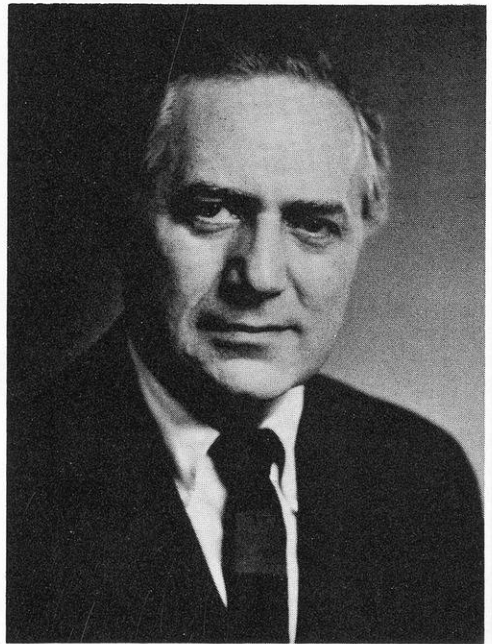
The greatest unfulfilled opportunity in the arts is that of making the arts closer to the center of our daily living. We have set the arts apart from us, making them

something highly special — which they are, but denying that they are also basic to our very existence. Because of this denial we find unfulfilled opportunities for the arts in every geographical section of the country, on every economic level, and in every area of involvement in the arts — from that of the creator and maker to that of the audience member.

Obviously there is a need for greater access to performances and exhibits of the arts of the highest quality — but even more needed are opportunities for creation, participation, and learning. We need to establish community and neighborhood arts centers where those, of any age, who have common interests can come together to paint, sculpt, sing and play music, dance, and take part in theatrical readings or productions. Such centers should have trained, professional staff members, just as libraries have trained librarians. They would allow people to be creative participants in the arts in their adult years as well as during their youth. (We provide stimulating experiences in the arts in our schools — but after high school or college we seem to offer people only passive participation as audience members.) Active arts centers need not be housed in million dollar structures. We need to develop a type of building which is inexpensive to build, yet inviting to work in. We have recreational parks to take care of our need to release our physical energies and to keep our bodies in shape; why shouldn't we have similar opportunities for us to release our emotional energies and keep our souls in shape?

We also need to develop centers where creative persons can come together to work as individuals as well as collaborators. Such creative centers and institutions have already been established for the scientists, the military establishment, and, to some extent, the humanists. Perhaps there is a way to set up a series of regional Macdowell Colonies, where the artist has a chance to work on his own but also, in return, accepts certain civic and social responsibilities. As part of such colonies there should be technical facilities that would allow a creative person to experiment with new technologies and in various media combinations.

Good education in the arts — an education that leads to an understanding and appreciation of the creative process — should be available to everyone, regardless of where he lives or what his family's income is. There is something wrong with our present teaching of the arts when, in spite of the millions of dollars we spend each year for arts instruction in our schools, we end up with so many uninformed adults who look on the arts as "frills." With a more arts-minded electorate we might have more arts-minded legislators who would not be as likely, as they are today, to ignore the role of the arts in society. We might also understand those things that our artists are telling us about ourselves and our society and eventually start making a society in which we would understand and enjoy man as a human being and reject one-dimensional man, the computer-carded animal who lives and works in the blighted slum or glass and concrete slab.



Statement by Stanley Kauffmann, theatre and film critic, writer and lecturer on the arts.

A standard opening for symposiasts is to quarrel with the title of the symposium. At the risk of orthodoxy, I follow suit. My

quarrel isn't finicky, it's genuinely semantic. This symposium's title seems one more attempt to harden an analogy between the arts and other American areas of unfulfillment, like urban development and transportation. In this era, when at last this country is becoming dimly aware of its responsibilities to all its citizens in every way, it is also formulating a simplistic one-to-one analogy. Privileged people had habitable houses; now everyone must have habitable houses. Privileged people enjoyed the arts; now everyone must enjoy the arts. I think this is nonsense. Pace Harold Taylor and others, I do not think that art is an obligation of democracy to its citizens. **Education** is an obligation of democracy. The **opportunity** for art — as maker or appreciator — is democracy's obligation to its citizens. But when every child, youth, and adult has been given that opportunity to the fullest, that is where democracy's function in art ends.

It is **not** incumbent on democracy to spread culture to everyone, as it is to vaccinate everyone. It is **not** the object of democracy to make everybody go to museums or read good books. Nor is it democracy's function to make anyone feel out of the swim if he does not buy a local symphony subscription.

It is not the function of the artist to reach as many people as possible. It is his function to be as good as possible, and take his chances on the rest. If he does not find enough response to provide him with a living, then there is something else that society can do (discussed below) other than force him down uninterested throats as proof that America is Coming of Age.

All the above may seem truisms, unless one has made even the quickest survey of the decade's Cultural Explosion.

As against the title of the symposium, I like the title of this magazine very much. To me art is a social function, using the adjective without any sociological or political color. A society always controls and surrounds an artist; there is no such thing as a purely artistic problem, whether it is a matter of philosophic alienation or of brushwork. The troubles of art always follow the troubles of society — not eventually so but very shortly so. The idea

that problems of art can, in any whole sense, be discussed in isolation from social context seems to me silly. For example, what would be the sense of pointing out that no great tragedy has ever been written in this country? A sufficiently talented dramatist — even one we might conceive of, abstractly, as having the ability to write a great tragedy (if such an abstraction is possible) — might well find it impossible to write that tragedy today, in this society. The most withdrawn poet is still a social product. Robinson Jeffers' world-rejecting poetry is as much a product of his times as Allen Ginsberg's world-embracing poetry.

Then is there nothing that society — in this case, an entity called America — can do for the artist? A good deal. But it is all in support, it is all at Stage Two. Stage One is the artist himself. Stage Two (hinted at above) is society's opportunity to free him from pleasing it. In the case of an individual artist like the novelist or painter, the help is relatively easy. In the case of collaborative artists like theatre people and filmmakers, help is more difficult and much more expensive. Society can, however, find ways to help all of them, and must do so with no expectation that the majority will be pleased with the result.

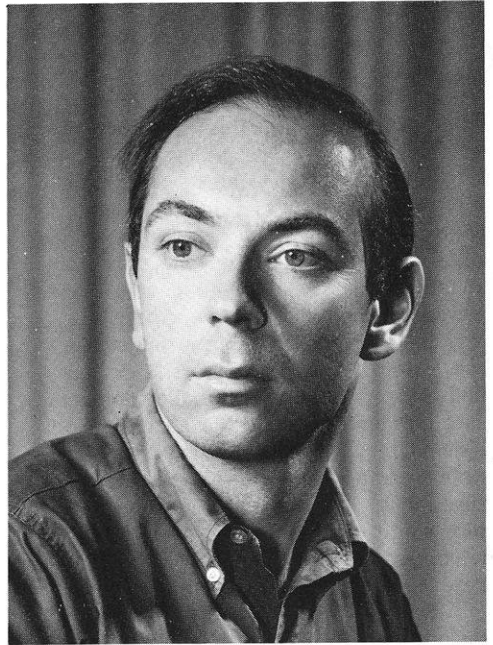
If that seems utopian at the present time, then patrons would do better to concentrate on supporting the safe, like the corporations that get awards from *Esquire* for sponsoring productions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Nutcracker*. More time will have to pass, the education that is a democratic function will have to improve and spread, before our society is able to help artists sensibly even at Stage Two. Perhaps that education will in time help us to understand that art is made by discontented men, who want to disturb us, not soothe us; that, though it is imperative that Shakespeare and Russian ballet be available, we can support them for centuries and yet not necessarily do anything to develop or deepen an American culture.

I do not equate commercial failure and artistic merit. Too many examples contravene that equation. But for at least a couple of hundred years the best Western artists have tended to work in

doubt, in opposition, in movement away from accepted centers of all kinds, not in affirmation of the status quo of any kind. Some of them have made money, many of them have not, and almost all of them could have used help along the way.

All the programmatic stuff — at Stage Two — should be designed to give help and then go away. Certain useful programs have been initiated, by the National Foundation for the Arts, the American Film Institute, and other groups and foundations. The surface has barely been scratched, as the best of these people know. But the best of these people also know that they are not filling unfulfilled opportunities in the arts by sending out mobile libraries, traveling art exhibits, or good films to communities with no “art” theatres. All of this and more is (or can be) wonderful educational activity, possibly conducive to raising taste, increasing a genuine audience, and even sparking incipient artists. But that is all that arts councilors and art educators can do in this way. If they have sufficient funds, they can also give unentangled subsidy to artists. They must not flatter themselves that, in any root sense, they can do anything at first hand about those unfulfilled artistic opportunities in the symposium title.

I am quarreling quite seriously with that title as the product of several decades of fuzzy, melioristic, analagous thinking. Opportunities in the arts can be fulfilled only by artists. They can be **seen** only by artists. Anyway, only those opportunities that are seen by artists are going to be fulfilled. The rest of us can operate at Stage Two, facilitating their work and educating their audience.



**Statement by Louis Kampf, author of
“On Modernism: the Prospects for
Literature and Freedom.”**

There are no “Unfulfilled Opportunities in the Arts in America.” A country gets the arts it deserves. And we have what we deserve. Surely the current chaos in our arts, the cannibalistic competition for fame, for institutional recognition and for the dollar, the unabashed cynicism leading to destructiveness — surely all these best embody our national aspirations. Given the bureaucratic impulse of industrial capitalism, our most visible artistic efforts tend to take the form either of heroic individual (and therefore erratic) endeavors or of abject institutional productions.

To begin with the latter. Institutional America is rich. Government bureaus, foundations, corporations, the universities are handing out billions every year. Not unreasonably, many had assumed that these instruments of a benevolent capitalism would become the Medici of our time; their generous patronage would create a modern Renaissance worthy of our national power. Such assumptions not only reveal a childish naivete about the cultural objectives of our major institutions, they also reveal a failure of historical

understanding. The public and commercial role of the arts has changed drastically since the Renaissance. The relationship of aristocratic patron and traditional institution to individual artist has been transformed by the longing for democratization and individual freedom: the arts can no longer be the playthings of a chosen few, nor can they be the natural monuments to an accepted institutional authority. What artist with his eyes open and his mind intact could accept such authority today?

What "opportunities," then, have our institutions actually created? The universities have most often subsidized the arts not to deepen the creative impulses of their students or to enrich the general culture, but to maintain their academic standing. If Wesleyan can boast of Richard Wilbur, then Harvard must at least get Robert Lowell. And so with our large corporations. Their offices must display the latest goods from the New York art market: there is an image to be maintained; besides, a fifty foot mural makes a good investment. What of the building opportunities created by the federal government? Even allowing that our planners and congressmen had impeccable taste, what would our major architectural firms provide them with? How can one develop an official architecture related to a common national experience when our government only serves to alienate the sovereignty of most of its people?

Such conditions leave room for little more than abstract monumentality or the play of private fancies. Or consider the role some government agencies have played in the performing arts. For years the travel of orchestras, ballet and theatre companies has been subsidized to show that we are at least as civilized as the Russians. The C.I.A. has a division of culture, the state department its advisors on the arts: all have learned that in the Cold War artists can be engineers (to use Lenin's phrase) of the soul. Finally, think of that monument to the civic concern for the arts, Lincoln Center. Think of the money, the real estate deals, the tons of concrete, the personnel negotiations, the public relations that went into its making. Staggering. What "opportunities" has it created for the arts? None. Worse, since it is an official monument it helps to strangle the

creative impulses of those who become entrapped by its glamour and affluence. What relationship to the life of New York or America can this testimonial to corporate investment have?

A Utopian proposal: Why not give sizeable handouts to painters, writers, filmmakers, and so forth, and let them go off and create? After all, individualism is the child of capitalism, we have been told. Therefore, what could be more fitting for us than an individualist art? I could have called them grants instead of handouts. But handouts they are; and handouts are degrading. Perhaps my proposal is not so Utopian, after all. Indeed, it would almost surely result in the further isolation of artists; it would keep them in that prison of the ego which the traditional notion of the artist as demigod has helped to create. We raise plutocratic palaces of the arts like Lincoln Center, and pay artists to bury themselves in mausoleums of their own idiosyncracies. Every payoff has its price: communal irrelevance and harmlessness seem a generous enough return for apparent economic security.

Spreading grants amongst a few hundred officially tagged geniuses is an irrelevance at this moment in the history of the arts. The idea of democracy is very real; and democracy means participation. There are millions who seek to discover a small part of their humanity through the arts; others are attempting to make exhibitions, concerts, and educational programs a part of the life of their community. They do not get grants. If they did, it would most likely be the end of any communal participation: a community gallery run from downtown has little to do with the community. As for our geniuses, they will take care of themselves, or be taken care of: we hardly need to create "opportunities" for them.

A nation that needs to **make** "opportunities" for its arts is diseased. And it is the disease which must be gotten at if we — never mind our arts — are to survive. The patronage of the government and other centers of power will only help to perpetuate the disease. The main purpose of institutions exerting social control is, after all, to maintain and strengthen themselves. No, the real "opportunities" for our arts will come in new social

contexts, when poets develop honest communal roles, when painters do not produce for the gallery market. Real "opportunities" can be created only by counter-institutions trying to subvert those which now hold power. These new communities are fitfully — and with small knowledge of the future — trying to create the film, drama, music, literature and dance which will help to fulfill their vision of a decent life.



'Statement by Melvin Tumin, Professor of Sociology at Princeton University

Although art may try to be pristine and divorced from any political context, the fact of the matter is that art, like any other human activity, functions in a context of other human activities and interests. Public support for art activity is indispensable to the continuity of that activity. In that sense, art is always politically involved, even though in its own internal dynamics it may be apolitical. This distinction between the internal qualities of the art activity and the external context within which such activity takes place is crucial to those concerned with the welfare of art. Careful attention to the "politics" of Art is indispensable to any

effort that seeks to maximize the utility of art. For if art is to have any utility at all, it must be engaged in, and its utilities are naturally likely to multiply in proportion to the number of people so engaged.

The point of these remarks about the political context in which art takes place is that some effective way must be found in which to test out the claims of art. It is not enough to proclaim them. Evidence must be brought to bear that will be persuasive. It may very well be, indeed, that because of the peculiar situation of art in our culture, somewhat akin to that of a minority group, the claims of art to social importance and significance will have to be demonstrated far more rigorously and persuasively than the claims of other disciplines, such as mathematics, about which there is a standard widespread assumption that its utility is not to be doubted, even though the evidence in support of this claim is not *per se* any more persuasive than that which exists for art.

If it proves to be the case that art will have to prove its case twice over, it will be the better part of wisdom to take this special requirement into account and deal with it effectively, however much we may properly resent this extra burden. Proof of the case for art must be sought with special vigor and dedication because the Philistines cannot be dismissed as inconsequential, however much they may be seen as men of little faith and less mind.

Nor will it do to insist that the utilities of art cannot be demonstrated effectively by the same kinds of means that are used to demonstrate the utilities of other disciplines, such as mathematics or language instruction. Those who make this claim are wont to take the "specialness" of art experience as meaning that these experiences are beyond analysis and evaluation. They sometimes insist that one can't talk of these matters, but rather one has to "live" them or experience them to know them.

'Mr. Tumin has abstracted his statement from the final evaluation delivered by him at the conclusion of the Seminar on the Role of the Arts in Meeting the Social and Educational Needs of the Disadvantaged. See Final Report, Project No. 7-0254. U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

But this posture is self-defeating. For many of those who sit in the most powerful seats of judgment regarding the support of the arts are least likely and able to expose themselves meaningfully to the range of experiences which artists feel are self-proving and self-commending. These remarks are especially pertinent with regard to the place given to art in the curriculum of our elementary and secondary schools, where, after a few years of benign toleration of dabbling of small children in finger paints, art is relegated to the status of "frill," and room is found for art experiences for the students only if and when virtually everything else, not excluding driver training and such other "core curriculum" subjects have been given their due. More often than not, there is nothing left over for art, except if one calls the occasional demand for posters and signs to advertise school bake sales "art experience."

By contrast, the subjects deemed important and part of the core of the curriculum are assigned highest priorities of budget, teacher ability, space, student schedule, school recognition, and school-counselor emphasis. If one asks why these subjects are considered central and important to the learning and development of the school children, one is given vague and indecisive, yet firmly asserted, responses regarding the multiple utilities of these disciplines. Claims are made that experience in these "core" subjects is the *sine qua non* of all other types of learning and experience. These claims, let it be said, are just as rash and undemonstrable in the forms usually offered, as those made on behalf of art. But the critical difference is that tradition is solidly behind the claims of these other disciplines and not at all behind, indeed quite resistant to, the claims of art. So, art must prove its case, or continue to remain inconsequential and tangential to the mainstream of experiences to which our school children and, of course, our adult populations will be exposed.

The path toward such "proving" is precisely that which has been taken thus far, by psychometricians and other specialists in educational testing, with regard to the so-called cognitive skills or domains. In effect, what has been done is rather simple, however difficult it has

proven to do it. Certain very limited portions of cognitive functioning — such as the capacity to distinguish similarities and differences in appearances and in statements, or to see common general principles in a series of particular statements — have been selected out as of prime interest, and rather simple tests have been devised to test for their presence or absence in school children at various grade levels.

With such "standard" tests, children and schools presumably can be compared on the extent to which educational goals have been reached. Of course, it is not often remembered that the only educational goal that is tested in these tests is the ability to achieve on these tests. What else by way of human development is implicated or suggested by these test-abilities is hard to say. But most people assume that something significant and basic has been achieved when skillful handling of these tests is mastered.

Now, the very same steps can be taken with regard to the claims for art, if those concerned are willing to focus narrowly on very limited portions of the range of "results" they claim art can achieve in children. For with precisely the same effort and intelligence that tests have been devised for the cognitive domain, tests can also be constructed for the arts or the affective domain in general. There is no magic about these matters. It is all quite within the reach of existing intelligence and imagination, so long as it is recognized that in testing for results in the art or affective domain, the same kind of very selective choosing of very limited portions of the total domain will define the contents of the tests to be constructed.

There is still one crucial difference, however. The art or affective "outcomes" one might choose to test are not themselves widely accepted as valuable, or if they are considered abstractly valuable, they aren't considered concretely worth spending money and time on. Thus, assent will be given to the abstract importance of "creativity" as part of the child's perspective on self and on life, but concrete room for expressing concern for creativity will be provided only if and when the "hard" subjects e.g., numbers and letters, have been mastered.

I am suggesting that even if and when tests were developed that could show the extent to which certain "art-engendered" outcomes had been achieved through art experiences, those concerned with the arts and their utilities would still find themselves having to "prove" that the utilities were worth working toward in the first place.

To establish and secure widespread acceptance of the worthiness of those utilities is therefore the first item on the agenda of everyone who cares about art experiences and the things they claim are engendered by these experiences. That is why it is important, in any art enterprise to set aside some portion of the budget of time, money, and personnel to evaluation of the enterprise — rigorous evaluation, following the most advanced canons of methodological procedure. If this is not done the "society" of arts will find itself in the same position as other "underdeveloped societies" which, upon being given fresh infusions of capital and resources with which to develop, consume all the capital in their enthusiasm for gratifications which they have long awaited. Once these gratifications are momentarily achieved, they end, and there are no capital resources on which to build for the future. In the United States today, art may be thought of as an underdeveloped social and cultural segment. If now the federal government and other powerful agencies are willing to extend "aid" in the form of basic capital investment heretofore never granted the arts, much of that capital had better be used as much for strengthening the foundations of the claims of art as for the provision of art experiences, or else there will be only shortlived enjoyment for a few and then nothing.



Statement by Ralph Burgard', Executive Director, Associated Councils of the Arts.

By tradition, the arts are an urban phenomenon. Our museums, symphonies, theaters, and operas thrive at the center of population clusters where a concentration of potential audiences and funds will support their program. However, the character of this urban matrix has been changing with incredible speed. The riots this past year only accentuate some long-festered problems created in part when an automobile-dominated technology destroyed the intimate scale of urban life, driving the middle class to suburbia while sucking in masses of unskilled immigrants and relegating them to poverty-stricken slums. Almost every major city faces the prospect of becoming a dwelling-place for either the very rich or the very poor in the next 15 years.

How will these changes affect the arts?
It is now economically and technologically

*'Mr. Burgard's statement has been excerpted by him from his book, *Arts in the City: Organizing and Programming Community Arts Councils*, published by the Associated Councils of the Arts, 1564 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10036. 1968. 150 pp. \$4.00.*

feasible to rebuild cities with a sense of style and beauty rivaling Athens itself. Arts organizations at all levels have the potential to improve the quality of city life and, as stated by George Fuermann of the Houston Arts Commission, ". . . to act for all the people in those matters which are coming more and more to cause the mind and spirit to flag but which the people are helpless to oppose as individuals." Concern, not money, is the essential ingredient if cities are to survive as one of mankind's achievements rather than as a monument to technological pollution. In short, the challenges facing the cities and the arts are inextricably entwined.

The Planning Processes

The significant population growth today is in suburbia, not the core city. This rapid expansion outside the corporate limits has left few arts organizations adequately prepared to serve an audience that, as a rule, is reluctant to journey downtown for a performance or exhibit. Evidence of suburban independence can be found in the growth of small suburban arts centers in storefronts or converted mansions producing a potpourri of arts classes, lectures, films, and recitals. The interrelation of exurbia, suburbia, and the core city, however, cannot be ignored. Any arts council or other arts organization undertaking comprehensive planning must include the metropolitan area as well as the core city in its surveys to assess available talents, physical facilities, and potential audiences and to determine needs in arts education and adult programming. The influx of public monies into the arts puts even more emphasis on planning. Over eighty Federal programs for the states in fields such as social welfare and urban renewal require the submission of a master plan before the state is eligible for a grant. This policy is likely to be extended into the arts fields in the future.

Before any arts programs may be undertaken, however, a thorough cultural survey of the community must be made to determine the areas where new programs are needed. In its simplest form, this study may be done by the arts council director himself working closely with local arts institutions and helped by a modest budget for printing and consultants. If local conditions require a

study of more substance, a grant should be obtained from a local foundation, corporation, or individual.

Arts in the Schools

With a few outstanding exceptions, the quality of arts education in our elementary and secondary schools is deplorable. Although music is required in many elementary schools, visual-art instruction is minimal and drama and dance virtually nonexistent. In high school, the pressure of college entrance requirements legislates against the arts by failing to grant full credit for most art and music courses. This forces the arts into extracurricular periods, if any are available, and to the bottom of the priority list when school budgets are prepared. Furthermore, few of the teachers who give instruction in the arts are sufficiently qualified to communicate to young people either a thorough knowledge of the art or even an enthusiasm for its basic values. Elementary-grade teachers are usually graduates of state teachers' colleges where arts instruction suffers the same neglect it does in high schools. And so the cycle of indifference perpetuates itself.

Local arts institutions are hardly more enterprising. During any given year the cultural fare they offer to school children is likely to be, at best, haphazard. If any presentations at all are made, a gallery tour one month, a symphony concert four months later, and a theater matinee once a year is the maximum to be expected. No correlation between these experiences is offered, and the classroom preparation for each depends almost entirely on the interests of the individual teacher, who often considers it an imposition.

Community arts councils can utilize their power as a united public voice for the arts to improve this situation. For example, the Metropolitan Arts Council of Indianapolis, Indiana, has formed a committee to revise the arts curriculum in Indianapolis public schools by working closely with school authorities. In Phoenix, Arizona, the arts council published and distributed a folder showing how poorly Phoenix compared with the national average in the number of music teachers employed in its schools and the total instruction-time and budget allotments for music.

Of even greater importance, however, are the opportunities offered by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This act provides unprecedented means for the arts to become an integral part of the education process. Title III of the act makes possible for all school children supplementary education experiences in the arts that would not be available in the normal curriculum. Title I makes possible similar programs for so-called "disadvantaged" children in low-income areas. Community arts councils can and should take an active role in implementing the programs made possible by this act. Both the Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences in Binghamton, New York, and the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis planned Title III programs for their local school systems. These comprehensive programs allow young people to hear and see concerts, plays, and exhibits presented by both local and imported professional talent.

Arts Councils need not depend entirely on Federal grants to inaugurate sweeping reforms in arts education in the schools. Working closely with school authorities, they may evolve master plans to provide interrelated exhibits, performances, and lecture-demonstrations on a step-by-step basis from grade 1 through grade 12. Such a project could include programs for small groups of selected students as well as events involving a whole class or group of classes. Financing could come from a combination of funds from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, local foundations, individuals, corporations, labor organizations, city and county governments, and the state arts council. The Community Arts Council of Vancouver, British Columbia, for instance, sponsored for several years a program of "Artists for Schools" through which painters, musicians, craftsmen, and actors presented lecture-demonstrations to thousands of school children. The council raised funds from private sources and administered the program itself.

Arts Criticism

Very few arts organizations use the public media — newspapers, radio, and television — to their best advantage. Two aspects in particular of this area deserve far more attention than they have received: arts criticism and educational television.

Competent arts criticism in daily newspapers is almost nonexistent in this country. An increasing tendency toward monopoly ownership of the morning and evening newspapers often leaves a city with only one published critical opinion for every arts event. Also, the typical critic is called upon to review every music event, play, dance performance, and art exhibit and, at the same time, write the regular arts news and features. And all this with a probable background in court reporting!

Public Television

The Carnegie Corporation report on public, or educational, television published early in 1967 dramatically emphasized the vital cultural role that this medium is destined to play in American life. The report recommended, in part, that all educational stations be connected for network programming and partially subsidized by a tax on the sale of television sets. It also suggested that all such stations should receive up to \$3000 weekly to produce a one-hour program of local interest and that twenty of the more prominent stations might receive larger sums for network productions. This report, coupled with the Ford Foundations' long-standing involvement in the field and prospective congressional action, should produce some major developments by 1970. Already, Congress passed a bill in late 1967, but failed to act on the appropriations, authorizing the establishment of a nonprofit corporation to be incorporated in the District of Columbia. This Public Television Corporation would help in the development of educational broadcasting, assist network broadcasting, provide financial support for local stations and, by that means, increase their freedom, and encourage the development of new stations.

The potential of both educational and commercial television as a medium for cultural programming has never been fully developed by arts institutions. Production costs have been high and technical problems difficult to surmount, leaving only the occasional "spectacular" to fill the cultural void. However, new sources of funds, combined with a new philosophy of public service, should make the arts a significant part of educational television programming. It remains to be seen if commercial stations will compete in this area or leave the cultural field

entirely. Arts organizations should work closely with educational television stations to provide material for programs and to coordinate the schedules of local arts institutions for a series of productions. They may also raise special funds to hire an arts consultant in television programming to aid the local educational station.

Urban Design

Modern technology has made it theoretically possible to recreate our cities as art forms in themselves. This cannot be done successfully, however, without the humanistic values and aesthetic insights of the artist. Arts Councils or other arts organizations may make a significant contribution to the urban planning process by bringing together in various combinations city planners, architects, painters, museum directors, urban designers, theater professionals, university professors, sculptors, public officials, musicians, and craftsmen to cope with the challenges inherent in urban life. They could also encourage the formation of private citizens' organizations or public art commissions to assume specific responsibilities in this area.

The Community Arts Council of Vancouver, British Columbia, has without question made the most significant contributions in this field. Over the years, this council has campaigned vigorously for civic improvements and in many cases has been successful in its efforts. Acting as a united public voice, it dissuaded the city from turning a defunct golf course located within the city limits into a mediocre residential subdivision. It was also instrumental in persuading authorities to construct the Queen Elizabeth Theater, one of the finest public auditoriums in Canada.

The council's Civic Arts Committee often initiates these excursions into public affairs. An example of the committee's method is worth noting. They obtained a copy of a film called **Magdalen Street — Norwich** that graphically portrayed the efforts of city planners and architects to rehabilitate a deteriorating street of small shops in an English town. The resultant face-lifting materially increased business in the street and restored much community pride. The Vancouver arts council committee invited members of the city council to a cocktail party and private

showing of the film. Only one member of the council appeared, but he was so impressed by the film and beguiled by the hospitality that the next day he persuaded his fellow members in the council to see a repeat showing of the film. Authoritative observers in Vancouver credit this film with providing the inspiration for some of the major revisions in the building codes that were later enacted. The same committee commissioned the design for a better-looking trash receptacle in the downtown area and presented the design to city officials. It was promptly laid to one side, but at a later date the officials approved another design. Much to the delight of the citizens of Vancouver, the new receptacle was soon standing on every downtown street corner.

Communication between Universities and Local Arts Institutions

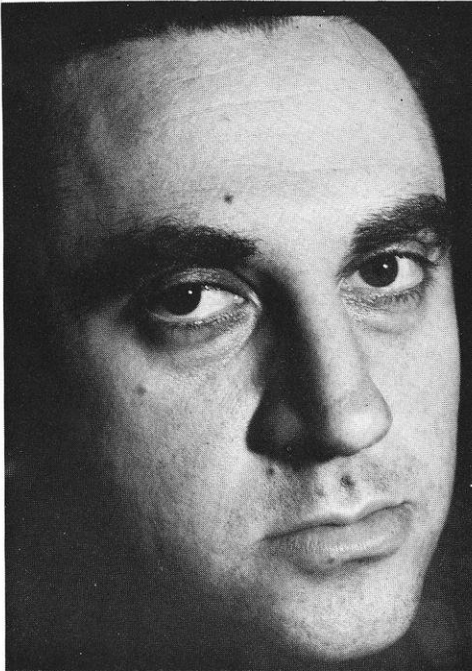
At present there is little communication between universities and colleges and local arts institutions. Yet the growing involvement of institutions of higher learning in the arts makes it essential that a close liaison be established for the benefit of both sides. A community arts council is a natural candidate for the role of establishing such a liaison. Leaders of the Fort Wayne (Indiana) Fine Arts Foundation, for example, are working with arts department chairmen of the University of Indiana and of Purdue University, both having branch campuses in Fort Wayne, to develop a plan whereby faculty members and professional artists in the community are used interchangeably to serve both students and townspeople. Both the universities and the community will enjoy higher standards of programs in the arts than would be possible if each pursued a separate course. The foundation's new arts center, designed by Louis Kahn, will also serve the universities as well as the community.

Title I of the Higher Education Act provides funds for universities and colleges to strengthen their "community service programs." Using a Title I grant, four colleges in Maine, working with the Portland Symphony orchestra, were able to sponsor regular appearances on their campuses of the Southwestern Main String Quartet, organized specifically for this project.

A growing number of colleges and universities — notably Dartmouth College, the University of Wisconsin, and the State University of New York — have formed their own arts councils or arts committees to coordinate the various arts programs either on campus or throughout the state university systems. Cooperation and the exchange of programs and ideas between these university councils and community arts councils could lead to considerable advantages for both.

Conclusion

Our American passion for orderliness tends to compress the arts into a few major institutional packages — **the** symphony, **the** museum, **the** theater — leaving everything else to gather the dust of community neglect. We must ultimately be concerned with the confrontation of **art** and people, not art **institutions** and people. People in low-income areas may need music but not symphony concerts, art but not exhibitions of Rembrandts.



Statement by Eric Salzman, composer, formerly also a music critic.

In 1953, after more than thirty years of fruitless search — in the richest and most technologically advanced country in the world — for the means to record, mix and synthesize new sound, Edgard Varèse was given a tape recorder by “an anonymous admirer.” The admirer was his wife.

Every year private individuals, foundations, and increasingly, local, state and federal government agencies pour millions into culture, culture centers and glamour music institutions. They succeed in creating monuments but not a vital, living musical culture. Monument-institutions resist new ideas and new music; they are essentially museum activities.

In the last two or three years, I have been told by half a dozen distinguished literary editors as they rejected an article on new music, “This isn’t really for us. But you write very well. Do you write on anything else besides music?”

We send our orchestras around the world to play Brahms and Tchaikovsky under the direction of some exotic maestro — as examples of American culture! Our friends (and enemies) abroad laugh up their sleeve and go back to their Rock, jazz or John Cage.

Deluded young musicians, imbued with the idea of career, of “making it,” spend incredible sums of money every year to hire New York concert halls in the Hollywood-nurtured hope of taking the musical world by storm. More than half of all New York musical programs are vanity concerts of one sort or another. It is all vanity in vain; things happen that way nowadays only in the movies — but no one ever seems to be discouraged.

Conservatories and schools of music prepare thousands of talented students for careers that simply do not exist. Dozens of composers write hundreds of worthy works for no possible audience and no meaningful purpose. In a certain sense, our official musical “culture” is a vast deception with an elegant, respectable but thin and artificially supported veneer of live classical culture at the top, a huge industry of education, culture centers, managers and publicity agents at the bottom and the bitter “real” world of pop and

show biz in between. New musical ideas, the real source of vitality in any musical culture, remains in a curious limbo — despised by the critics, ignored by the intelligentsia and misguidedly supported in their weakest aspects by the foundations and academia, raided for ideas by pop groups, jazzmen and background-music composers, surviving in an underground subculture and through recordings.

No one seems to have noticed, but the nature, the “quality” of musical experience has changed. Nearly all of the traditional European views about musical life seem obsolete. The “musical public,” brought up on bottled, imported, vintage stuff, will not drink new wine from old bottles. Perhaps they are right; the institutions they support were created in another age for other kinds of art.

That new institutions for new art must come and are coming into being there can be no doubt. But who’s noticed, who cares, who’s looking and listening, who’ll help? Technology changes the whole nature of musical culture and musical communication. Young people — passionately involved in music and musically the most informed and with-it generation in the history of the human race — are alienated from the artificialities of Establishment musical life. Rock is their living musical art. Otherwise they stay at home and listen to records.

Musical culture today is transmitted, not through concert or operatic performance but through recordings. Recorded sound filters into every part of our lives and profoundly affects even the performance of all kinds of live music. Technology brings music into every corner of our lives and it makes every aural corner of the universe raw material for music!

The revolution in the common shared experience in less than two decades has been overwhelming. The Beatles, electronic music, Ravi Shankar, Monteverdi, John Cage, the New York Pro Musica, gagaku, Varèse, Vivaldi, the Mother of Invention, Ives, African drumming, old jazz and new — all these musical experiences and many others have become familiar parts of our everyday lives. Music, once limited to a few traditional and popular styles is suddenly, astonishingly,

manifold. Suddenly, in McLuhan’s language, our nervous systems have been extended around the world and we are receiving impulses from all corners of the global village. The entire musical expression of the human race — as it has been handed on to us and as it continues to develop — is available to us along with all the known and unknown sounds of the visible and invisible worlds.

Can music be the same again?
Can we ever be the same again?

No one can be entirely unmoved and unaffected by this. **Yet no one seems to have noticed.** Not the critics, not the conservatories, not the culture centers, not the mass media nor the journals of the intelligentsia, not the scholarly publications nor the weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies, not the symphony orchestras and opera companies, not the foundations or arts councils, not the managements nor the university music departments, not the music magazines nor the New York Times, not the “world of music” nor the artistic community nor the intellectuals. Nobody in fact but just us folks.

Yet a whole new generation knows it. The new audience — like the new music — does not necessarily reject traditional modes and media of musical expression; but it is open to an immensely wider field of action that technology has opened up. **Technology makes the entire universe of sound available as raw material for new art.**

This is a revolution of unprecedented proportions. It is a revolution that is taking place, not in the traditional concert or operatic platform, but in a kind of sub-culture which flourishes across the country. In a wider sense, this sub-culture embraces every aspect of musical experience outside the concert-opera hall and interacts with the other arts and the other senses as well. There is no doubt that this whole development is only in the infancy, that it remains to re-create the entire cultural situation in which a vital new music can flourish. There is no formula for “great art” here; only an attempt to understand the conditions under which relevant new musical art can come into being and flourish. This new music and its larger cultural situation will be,

not abstract or escapist, but of size and scope and relevant to contemporary life. So far we have managed to ignore even the very existence of the problem. Yet it is the crucial issue. Without an awareness of the huge confrontation that is taking place between traditional musical institutions and their "culture centers" descendants on the one hand and technology and creative developments on the other, without any knowledge of the current state of the new musics, pop and "avant-garde," and otherwise, and without some understanding of the cultural forms which gave them birth, which currently house them and which will have to be created, every opportunity to achieve a vital and living musical culture will be lost.



Statement by Richard Schickel, film critic, Life Magazine.

"What are the prime unfulfilled opportunities in the arts in America and what ought to be done about them and by whom?"

The short answer is that the opportunities are unknown and unknowable until the artists themselves discover them through the unpredictable processes of creation. It is, of course, a waste of time trying to

outguess them; it is much more profitable to study their current productions to see what they are already trying to tell us about the shape of our common future.

I take it, however, that what we are really asked to discuss are matters that are peripheral and, in my opinion, irrelevant to the central issues of artistic style and content. Actually, I have nothing against the discussion of the economic setting for art; indeed, it has the advantage of being much more approachable for the ordinary man than art itself. I merely point out that, for me at least, the economics of the fine arts, as opposed to those of the popular arts, do not seem nearly as crucial as they do to many other commentators.

Let me explain: There is an implicit assumption in the question as it is posed above that the idea of progress is applicable to art. Somehow it is imagined that if the citizenry gets behind art, applying to it some blend of new enthusiasms and new technologies and new monies from government, the foundations, the corporations and so on, it will "improve." I think this idea is absurd. Art is created in the privacy of the artist's mind and, to him, the social context in which he works scarcely matters at all. Total tyranny, of course, totally destroys art, but total freedom is not a prerequisite for it. Given just the smallest, even illusory, measure of freedom it will out, as it did in Augustan Rome, Goya's Spain, even 20th Century Russia after de-Stalinization. Maintaining this margin of freedom does not seem to be a very serious problem in contemporary America and since that is all art really must have from the state there is nothing more I would ask of government at this time.

Others, of course, have been asking a great deal more. The Rockefeller Panel report on the performing arts seems to ask government and other quasi-public bodies to enlist themselves on the side of building a larger audience for art, on the grounds that an artistically enlightened populace is not only useful to the artist but a measure of our civilization as well. I would answer that the artist must, of course, have an audience, but that its size is less important to him than its knowledgeability

and that the creation of a large audience genuinely comfortable with the conventions and traditions of the high culture, capable of responding to it *en masse* with the sensitivity and the nuanced enthusiasm that would be satisfying to the artist is quite beyond the reach of any conceivable social engineering we might undertake.

In short, I do not believe in massive doses of education aimed at increasing "art appreciation" among the masses. Not everyone can, or should be, dragooned into the great audience. In any case, one comes to art because, accidentally at some point it stimulates an emotional or intellectual response and it seems to me that it is presently widely enough available so that these accidents will occur with close to the maximum possible frequency. We are very close now to the point of diminishing returns on the effort to enlarge the audience.

Ideally I suppose what is wanted by people who habitually speak of "the arts" instead of "art" (note the subtle diminution in the former term, a diminution that renders the subject less frightening) is a new outlet for civic boosterism, a new way to engage the vast energies of a people who do love projects, especially if they somehow involve the improvement of real estate. Hence the proliferation of cultural centers in this country and the large expenditures (now tapering off) by some foundations to upgrade the contents thereof. The idea was, naturally, the creation of an instant renaissance and I think it can safely be said that it did not come off. Let me take as an example the dismal record of Lincoln Center in New York. After many years of effort and the expenditure of something like \$200 million what have we to show for it? Architecturally the thing is a disaster, ranging from the chilling sterility of Philharmonic Hall to the Nouveau Las Vegas of the Metropolitan Opera building. Housed in these graceless concrete lumps there has been no improvement, and perhaps a slight decline in the quality of work done by most of the producing organizations; the edge has even been taken off the one glory of New York's artistic life, the City Center Ballet. Only the City Center's Opera company seems to have measurably profited by its new

environment. As for the original contribution of the new center, they range from the ludicrous (the repertory theater) to the redundant (Richard Rodgers' light opera company) to the irrelevant (Andre Kostelanitz's prom concerts). In short, the thing was scarcely worth the cost and it seems to me that the removal of the producing organizations from their former locations in the heart of the city and their segregation in a ghetto masquerading as a park is a disaster. The traffic problem, the eating problem, the difficulty posed by the simple matter of picking up tickets in this out of the way corner of the city conspire to make art less rather than more approachable for the average citizen. So far there is no evidence whatever that Lincoln Center has attracted a new audience to its environs. Quite the contrary, marble is cold to the touch and the whole thing is out of human scale, which tends to put people off.

A similarly depressing effect seems to have been created — to take a typical example of foundation activity in art — by the huge Ford grants aimed at upgrading symphony orchestras around the country. They had to be matched and in matching them communities have drained funds away from other art organizations without, it would seem, enormously improving their orchestras. Again, the combination of good will and bad thinking has, on balance, hurt art at least as much as it has helped it.

What I am saying is that we have been tinkering with the artistic structure of the nation with sledgehammers instead of the jeweler's tools that are needed. What would I do about it? First of all, I would leave the traditional arts pretty much alone. I don't think it possible or wise to try to create a mass audience for them. The inevitable effect of such an effort is the dilution of the present small but knowledgeable audience that really cares about opera, the symphony, the theater, etc. In these arts there is a dearth of first-class creative talent and in ideal circumstances I would direct foundation and similar funds away from the performing artists and to the creators in the hopes that, possibly, over a longish term, their efforts might create a new sense of excitement and urgency about these arts and by clearly establishing their relevancy to our common concerns and interests, woo a small new group

to them. The museum-like atmosphere that surrounds these institutions today must be swept away, and the intelligent but presently alienated people I have in mind would contribute to that effort, without lowering audience quality.

The trouble with this idea is that foundations, corporations, the government do not trust the individual artist; they much prefer to place their money in safely institutional hands, where nothing untoward, nothing potentially embarrassing will happen. I believe, however, that this is artistically short-sighted and economically wasteful (you really get more bang for the buck by patronizing the individual artist than you do by patronizing institutions, even given the discouraging — to bureaucrats — fact that most such grants will not work out very well). My point is that you must subsidize an enormous amount of bad and indifferent art in order to get an occasional masterpiece; that one work, will, however, compensate for all the waste effort that will inevitably surround its creation.

I pointed out at the beginning that creation in art is the most unpredictable of all human phenomena. I therefore feel that the efforts of foundation bureaucrats to predict on the basis of past performance the quality of work an artist may produce on a grant from them is a waste of time and money. I think they would do just about as well by basing their grants on a table of random numbers and, at the same time, cut their overhead costs considerably. Art is not a rational enterprise; it is an accident, a mystery, a startlement. As a critic I have discovered that my preconceptions, my predictions as to the quality of work I am about to see are valueless. Artists whose last work delighted me turn out dogs; artists who have consistently failed my expectations suddenly turn out near-masterpieces. I not only live with this enigma, I have come to love it. When our cultural bureaucrats reach a similar conclusion I think we may be ready for an intelligent, random process of artistic patronage in this country. Until they do, I think they will mostly waste their money and our time and, given the pressing problems posed by the intertwined issues of race and urbanization in this country — problems best approached rationally — I would

rather see them direct their money and energy to them and leave art alone for a time. It has survived quite nicely without their aid for a long period — there are very few unborn masterpieces, since masters will always, somehow, get them finished — and it will survive until the would-be commissars of culture are ready, emotionally and psychologically, to approach art in a spirit proper to it. My answer, then, to your basic question is very simple: we should, as a matter of social policy, study art, care about it, worry about it, but basically — except for buying all the tickets we want — leave it alone economically until we are ready for it. It will always be ready for us. It is a tough old bird.

112

Toward a Total Musical Theatre

Gilbert Chase

*We have fallen out of nature
and hang suspended in space.*
Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf* (1927)

Readers of Hermann Hesse's novel will recall that Harry Haller, the "Steppenwolf," wandering through the streets at night, encounters a man carrying a placard with the legend:

**ANARCHIST EVENING ENTERTAINMENT
MAGIC THEATRE
ENTRANCE NOT FOR EVERYBODY**

At once his curiosity is aroused; he becomes eager, excited. "What is this Evening Entertainment?" he asks. "Where is it? When?" It is only much later, however, and after various "humanizing" adventures, that he is brought to the Magic Theatre by the jazz musician Pablo. There he finds a round corridor with innumerable doors, each bearing an alluring inscription. He chooses the one that says:

**GUIDANCE IN THE BUILDING-UP OF THE
PERSONALITY. SUCCESS GUARANTEED**

We may take this as a parable of the Musical Establishment and the Standard Repertory, in which training, performance, and production are designed to guarantee success in terms of a personality-cult centering around the conductor, the virtuoso "interpreter," the prima donna, the **Heldentenor**, and even the impresario who works hard at projecting his own "image." The dead composers are idolized; the living ones treated rather shabbily. They have personality problems. For nearly 125 years — since W. H. Fry's "Leonora" in 1845 — American composers have striven for "success" in grand opera; but none has really ever made it, in spite of cash prizes, foundation grants, and some lavish productions at the "Met." Years ago I took the naive view that if American composers continued to try hard and long enough, they would eventually make it. Now I conclude that there is nothing to make, creatively speaking. Opera is obsolete except as a vehicle for personality build-ups. We should seek something else.

Let us return to the Magic Theatre. In it there is another door with this inscription:

COMPENDIUM OF ART
TRANSFORMATION FROM TIME INTO SPACE
BY MEANS OF MUSIC

We shall enter that door: it is literally a door into the future.

First of all, it does not lead to a room, an enclosure, but to an immeasurable space. In the foreground is a sign in large letters: RADIAL ENERGY I, by John Mizelle, and beneath it these words: "Tangential energy tends to link an element to other elements on the same level of organization. . . . Radial energy tends to draw an element forward into structures of ever greater complexity" — Pierre Teilhard.¹

Projected on large, wide-vision screens are seven charts or tablatures, five of them with diagrams consisting of solid black circles of various sizes asymmetrically arranged and connected by straight lines. Some diagrams have arrows and broken lines pointing toward open space. Two of the tablatures, with disconnected geometrical diagrams, indicate "the movement of sound in space and dynamic changes within events."

Over a loudspeaker the composer — a young man under thirty — is giving instructions to the performers. These, very numerous, are of all ages, colors, and sexes, dressed in every possible variety of costume except white tie and tails, and are preparing to perform on every type of instrument known to mankind. The voice of the composer is heard:

The piece is capable of being performed by any number of people acting upon any number of sound sources . . . Following the initial performance of arbitrary total duration, a six-year silence period begins; the second performance is played when the silence period is finished and lasts twice the length of the first performance duration . . . The determination of the performance durations after the first two performances is based on an additive process consisting of the sum of the two previous performance durations . . . The piece may be concluded at the end of any sine-wave phase, continued into infinity . . . or continued until it becomes so short that the total duration is inaudible or so long that it exhausts the total silence period between performances . . . If the latter

happens, and all of time is transformed into sound at one point in space, the piece continues in that location while a new phase of the waveform is begun in another location . . . The piece may also be infinitely extended in space as each new location is transformed into sound. As it becomes feasible, the piece may be extended to other planets, galaxies, etc. When all of time and space are transformed into sound, the piece (and the universe) ends.

A musical time-space extravaganza? And why not — in an age when men are preparing to travel to the moon? One thinks of Charles Ives expressing the hope "that music may always be a transcendental language in the most extravagant sense." If music, and particularly the musical theatre, is to make the transition from closed to open form, then perhaps we could do worse than to think of it as a time-space extravaganza — a synthesis of the theater of the absurd, the theatre of cruelty (as defined by Artaud), the theatre of happenings, of events, of activities, of environments — the "total theatre" of intermedia, crossing all boundaries, transcending all categories.²

Among the hundreds of operas by American composers, a few have broken new ground and one or two have actually got off the ground. Among these, priority belongs to "Four Saints in Three Acts" (1928), music by Virgil Thomson, libretto by Gertrude Stein — the first American opera to break completely from the European operatic tradition.³ It discarded plot, conventional characterization, realism, discursive speech, temporal sequence, and linear development, in favor of a truly **theatrical** presentation as defined by Antonin Artaud, with "the **mise en scène** considered as a language in space and in movement." The fact that Stein's text is evocative but non-logical, symbolic rather than syntactic, enabled the director "to make metaphysics out of language, gestures, attitudes, sets, and music **from a theatrical point of view . . .** to consider them in relation to all the ways they can have of making contact with time and with movement" (Artaud; italics added).⁴ The language in this opera takes the form of **Incantation**, as demanded by Artaud, and hence enables us "to recover the religious and mystic preference of which our theatre has completely lost the sense."

The quality of Incantation is also found in the musical theatre works of Harry Partch — *Oedipus: Dance-Drama* (1951), *The Bewitched: A Dance Satire* (1955), *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* (1960; based on Euripides' *The Bacchae*), and *Delusion of the Fury: A Ritual of Dream and Delusion* (1967) — but in a vastly more complex musical situation, since they are scored almost entirely for unique instruments invented or adapted by Partch to perform music based on a system that he also invented, characterized by the use of microtonal intervals (forty-three acoustic tones to the octave).⁵ Partch was the first American composer to envisage and to create a total musical theatre, in which, according to Artaud's canon, "the *mise en scène* is the theatre much more than the written and spoken play." Even the musical instruments and their performers are part of the *mise en scène*: they are not in the pit but on stage, contributing to the *mise en scène* visually, plastically, dynamically, symbolically, as well as sonorously. For example, in the prologue of *The Bewitched*:⁶

The forms of strange instruments are seen on stage. One of the musicians gives a low beat, and others swing in, one at a time. They are primitives in their unspoken acceptance of magic as real, unconsciously reclaiming an all-but-lost value for the exploitation of their perception. The lost musicians momentarily find a direction; the direction becomes a power, and the power a vision: an ancient Witch, a prehistoric seer untouched by popular malevolence, and with that wonderful power to make others see . . . The lost musicians are quite without malice. On wings of love they demolish three undergraduate egos temporarily away from their jukeboxes . . .

In Scene 10 of *The Bewitched*, "The Cognoscenti are Plunged into a Demonic Descent while at Cocktails." The dialogue is minimal: "'Bah!' says the Chorus, and that one word makes up in violent delivery what it lacks in intellectual sparkle. 'How extraordinary!' say the cognoscenti, propelled by a chorus of dragons in backward somersaults in the middle of limbo. . . . 'Rrrrrr-ee-eh!' says the Witch . . ."

Minimal dialogue, like non-syntactical

speech, is one of the means for demolishing the literary basis of theatre in favor of what Artaud calls the "concrete language" of the stage, which "is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of the spoken language." Artaud also predicted the theatrical role of Musical Instruments: "They will be treated as objects and as part of the set." Furthermore:

The need to act directly and profoundly upon the sensibility through the organs invites research, from the point of view of sound, into qualities and vibrations of absolutely new sounds, qualities which require the revival of ancient and forgotten instruments or the invention of new ones.

Those words were written around 1930. Could anyone be more prophetic? At about the same time Harry Partch was formulating his microtonal system and beginning to compose his first piece for voice and instruments out of which his magical musical theatre eventually emerged. By 1955 he had designed and built and used in performance a whole array of new musical instruments, of a flexibility, subtlety, beauty, and variety hitherto unknown in Western music. I am not supposing that Partch was acquainted with the writings of Artaud, a prophetic figure, the first musician not only to foresee, but to actually anticipate in practice, the total musical theatre based on the supremacy of the *mise en scène* as "the truly and specifically theatrical part of the spectacle."

Partch, through his own vision, his rejection of all accepted musico-theatrical conventions, his affinity for primitive values, his reliance on the power of incantation, was able, in the words of Artaud, "to create a kind of passionate equation between Man, Society, Nature, and Objects." Direct influences are not important; what matters is the spiritual affinity of a prophetic climate in which gifted visionaries prepare the future, unknown to one another.

The influence of John Cage in everything that pertains to the theory and the praxis of the new music and musical theatre is so far-reaching, and so widely acknowledged that it scarcely needs reiteration here. His most immediate impact has been on the

dance, through his association with Merce Cunningham. His **Theatre Piece** (1960), for 1 to 8 performers (musicians, dancers, singers, et al.), is a paradigm of the musical theatre of chance; i.e., "a composition indeterminate of its performance." The performers choose their actions from a gamut of 20 nouns and/or verbs, and this gamut changes at given points, "so that each part involves a performer in a maximum of 50 to 100 different actions." The minimizing of speech and maximizing of action, and the negation of any "development" through pre-planned indeterminacy, are probably the most significant contributions of this piece.

Cage's writings and lectures contain surprisingly little on the theatre. But from his general statements one gleans much that is pertinent.

For example: "Dealing with language (while waiting for something else than syntax) as though it's a sound source that can be transformed into gibberish."⁷ Actually, language as a sound source without syntax has been effectively exploited by such composers as Pauline Oliveiros ("Sound Patterns"), Robert Ashley ("She Was a Visitor"), Alvin Lucier ("North American Time Capsule 1967," using encoded speech sounds modified by the Sylvania Electronic Systems Vocoder), and by Cage himself in "Solos for Voice 2," which is organized as follows:

Each singer is asked to make his own realization of the piece, using material, including transparent plastic, provided by the composer. By superimposing certain sheets on the others, the singer determines several aspects of his vocal part, including vowel and consonant sounds, dynamics, approximate pitch areas and time decisions . . . The singers' sounds are picked up by several types of throat, lip and cup microphones, are fed into a complex configuration of electronic equipment and are then processed in real time during the performance.⁸

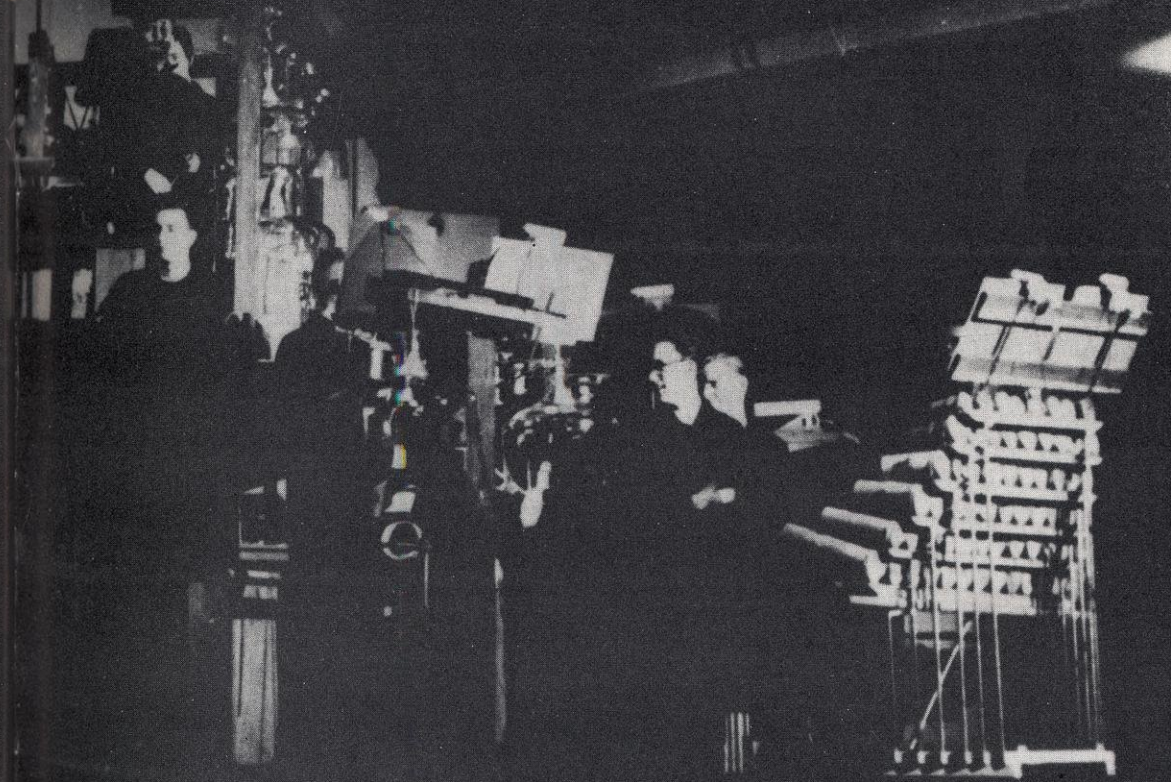
The use of speech as an infinitely variable sound-source and as a means of direct expression independent of syntax, is one of the characteristic resources for a musical theatre of open forms. This does not imply elimination of syntactical speech but rather an extension of the available spectrum of speech sounds.

Now I would like to mention briefly several American composers who are doing what I regard as particularly significant work in the musical theatre today. To begin with, Richard Maxfield and Dick Higgins, whose electronic opera "Stacked Deck," when produced in New York in April 1960, was hailed in the **Times** as "One of the most extraordinary theatre pieces ever created under the heading of opera," and as containing "the makings of a compelling stage work."⁹ Although Higgins is himself a composer, he appears in this work as librettist; the music (recorded on tape from electronic sources) is by Maxfield. The duration of the "opera" is about twenty-two minutes.

The characters in "Stacked Deck" are: The Anonymous Man, The Burly Man, The Exelegant Man, The Man With a Brief Case, The Sandwich Board Man, The Seer, The Urgent Man, The Blue Woman, The Hungry Woman, The Skeletal Woman, The Smiling Woman, The Woman in Green, The Bird. To speak of Higgins merely as the "librettist" is misleading: his script provides for actions to be done, cues to be taken, gestures to be made, words to be sung or spoken, lights to be projected (these serve as cues), and complete instructions to the performers — in short, for virtually the entire **mise en scène**. The work is elaborately unstructured; i.e., there is a high degree of indeterminacy made available through multiple options. These are signalled by lighting or musical cues, or by situations and time-lapses. For example, The Burly Man:

II. If the light is red or orange for ten seconds, he approaches the nearest lady and looks over her shoulder, grinning, and sends out a puff of smoke. If the light has not changed yet, and the lady has not reacted unfavorably, he may pick her up, set her on his shoulder, turn his head and kiss her leg, grin, set her down gently, and motion offstage. If she slaps him, he sings "Palas aron azinomas" and pinches her behind, then dodges away from her, his head drawn into his shoulders, chortling, and hides behind the nearest character. If she wants to go offstage, they go.

Thus, each successive action is determined at the moment by the actor's reaction to the preceding action. Each situation develops from the principle of what is known



as "games theory." The general tone is profoundly farcical.

Although Lejaren Hiller is known mainly as an authority on electronics and experimental music, he is a versatile composer who has long been attracted to the theatre. At college he played clarinet and alto saxophone in a dance band and wound up with a Ph.D. in chemistry. In 1952 he went to the University of Illinois, where he set up an electronic studio and experimental laboratory, while at the same time writing incidental music for the University Theatre. His most important independent stage-work thus far is "A Triptych for Hieronymous," for Actors, Dancers, Acrobats, Projections, Tape and Antiphonal Instrumental Groups (1966) — which unfortunately I've not had an opportunity to hear (or see — both are equally necessary). I have, however, heard a taperecording of Hiller's most recent theatre piece, "An Avalanche" for Prima Donna, Pitchman, Player Piano, Percussionist, and Pre-recorded Voices (1968). The piece, with a script by Frank Parman, lasts eleven minutes and is in three scenes: I, "Getting Ready for It;" II, "The Avalanche," III, "Cleaning Up the Mess."

The score carries a quotation from John D. Rockefeller II on the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York, from an article by Percival Goodman, "Lincoln Center, Emporium of the Arts," in **Dissent** (Summer 1961). This must be quoted in its entirety, since it tells what the piece is all about:

Lincoln Center is a story in the American tradition of voluntary private initiative and of what it means in service to the public. . . . It can be one means of helping to meet a paramount need of our time: the need of modern man for creative fulfillment — his striving for self-expression and the emotional and aesthetic satisfactions that set him above the animal. . . . The task ahead (raising money) can be accomplished only with the interest, understanding and cooperation of all the segments of our society who have a stake in Lincoln Center — Government, business, labor, philanthropy and above all, the individual American citizen.

I would describe "An Avalanche" as a satiric commentary on "Cultural Center" culture in the U.S.A. In the main part (II)

of the piece, in addition to the player-piano music (electronically modified) and the traps played by the percussionist, there are three types of vocal events going on simultaneously most of the time: (1) the Pitchman's spiel, (2) the Prima Donna's "concert" (a parody of the standard repertory ranging from "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Santa Lucia" to "La Donna è mobile" and "Toreador Song"), (3) pre-recorded voices intoning quotations from Henry Miller, Frank Lloyd Wright, Frank Parman, John Cage, Louis Aragon (Dada Manifesto), and Lenin (in German).

"The Pitchman could be a civic-minded autosalesman, or a motorcycle-riding poet with blue sunglasses — or both salesman and poet — or a turn-of-the-century snake-oil salesman." As for the Prima Donna, "She is dressed initially in a long 'formal' gown, perhaps with a cheap and large-brimmed hat as if she had been singing at a businessman's luncheon club" (she has many "props" for costume changes). Gestures are important and are minutely prescribed in the script. This is what makes it a theatre piece and not a speech piece.

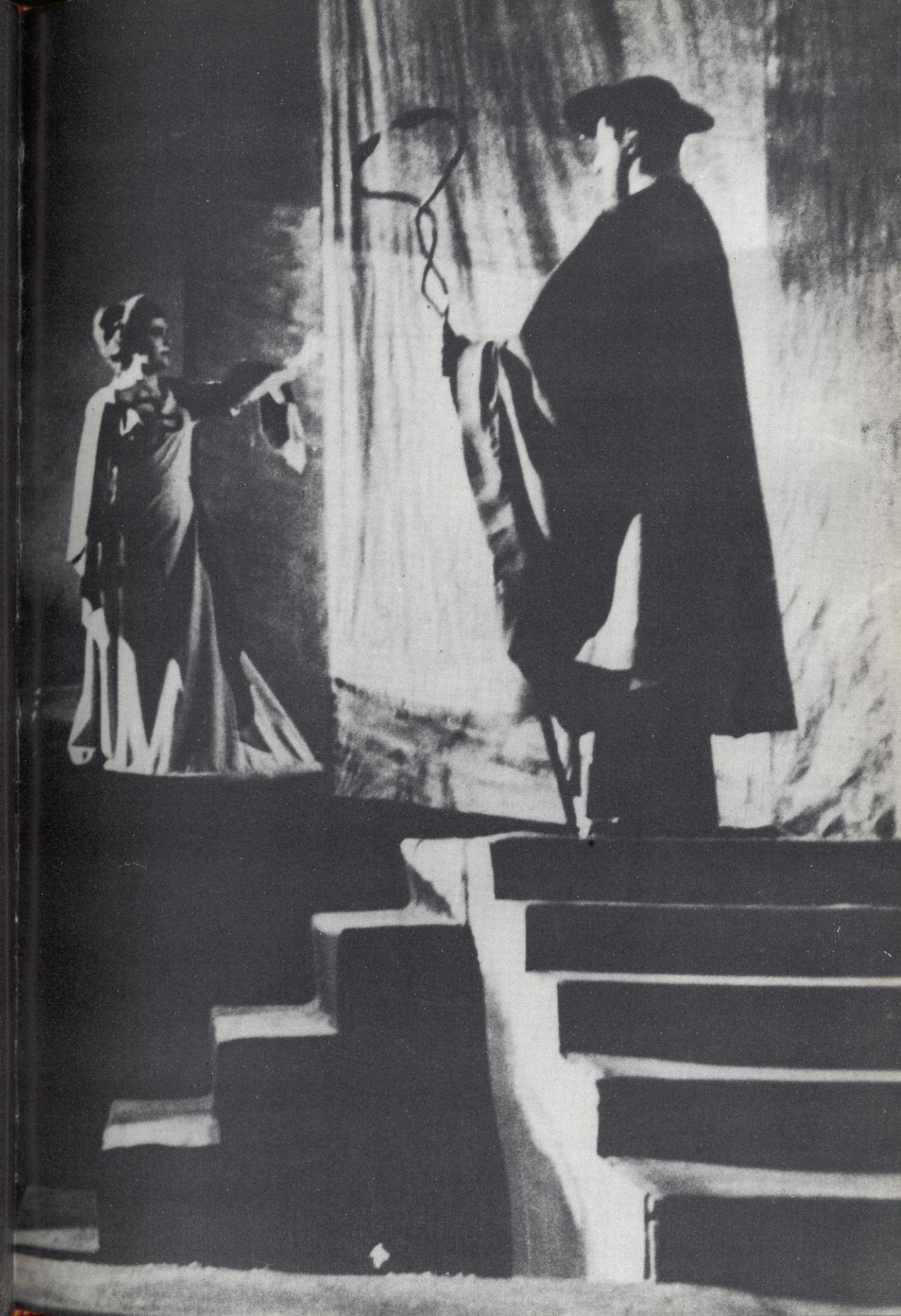
Hiller combines exceptional skill in the techniques of electronic manipulation with an explosive sense of humor, a wonderful sense of timing, a remarkable feeling for the vernacular, a devastating satirical force, and an awareness of what is intrinsically theatrical and not merely literary-musico-dramatic. Needless to say, none of his theatre pieces has been performed at any "Cultural Center" in the U.S.A. He is not really a cultural type.

Larry Austin is a West Coast musician — composer, performer, dynamic editor of **SOURCE: Music of the Avant-Garde** — whose special bag is "open style." In 1966 he composed "The Maze: a theatre piece in open style for three percussionists, dancer, tapes, machines, projections." The composer writes: "The Maze should envelop the audience and performers in sound, light and movement. Though essentially conceived as an abstract theater piece, the work can take on associational elements judged appropriate and effective. The director may, for instance, choose to fashion the dancer's role — essentially free — as a sort of communication between the piece and the audience,

between reality and unreality."¹⁰ The piece, which lasts 31' 20", has a score based on time-space coordinates and includes directions for the performers such as, "Pour bag of steel pipes into steel barrel" and "Wade through mud' to **Wd 3** by 7,50" (i.e., to a certain place by a certain elapsed time). The composer states that "Film loops and specially prepared movie sequences may be used." Speech is not excluded: the dancer "may also speak, but with discretion." A multi-media work, "The Maze" is structured but "open" to the extent that it allows for certain options in performance (e.g., the dancer may either dance or mime, speak or be silent, and his movements are "free").

This brief review of the musical theatre in the U.S.A. over the past forty years — spotty and incomplete though it be (making no mention, for instance, of the explosive entry of pop-folk-rock idioms into our musical theatre) — indicates that the "unfulfilled opportunities" are not in the creative work of our composers, writers, performers, and directors, but in the conventional criteria and stultifying standards of our so-called "Cultural Centers," which exist primarily to perpetuate and promote the "consecrated code" of "guaranteed success" — mocking "the need of modern man for creative fulfillment" by offering packaged culture for passive recipients, and expert "Guidance in the Building-Up of the Personality" through conditioned responses to the outworn rituals of a routine repertory.

It is time to open other doors (fanfare of music by The Doors) in the Magic Theatre of Illusion and Reality.



Oedipus by Harry Partch, Mills College, 1952

Oedipus by Harry Partch, outside performance on beach at Sausalito, California



1

Quoted as a headnote to the published score of **RADIAL ENERGY I**, by John Mizelle, in **SOURCE: Music of the Avant Garde** (Issue No. 3, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 1968). For the purpose of my little Magic Theatre fantasy, I have quoted from the composer's performance directions as printed in this issue of **SOURCE** (copyright Composer/Performer Edition, Davis, California).

2

See the excellent article by Paul Epstein on "Intermedia and Theatre" in **Arts in Society**, V. 5: 1 (Spring-Summer 1968).

3

For a description of the elaborate staging of **Four Saints in Three Acts** — which achieved a successful Broadway run after its premiere in Hartford, Conn. — see **Virgil Thomson: His Life and Music**, by Kathleen Hoover and John Cage (New York, 1959), which also contains some good photographs of the production.

4

All the quotations by Artaud are from **The Theater and its Double**, translated from the French by Mary Caroline Richards (New York, 1958), copyright 1958 by Grove Press, Inc.

5

On Partch and his music, see Paul Earls, "Harry Partch: Verses in Preparation for 'Delusion of the Fury,'" in **Yearbook**, Inter-American Institute for Musical Research, Tulane University, Vol. III (New Orleans, 1967); and Arthur Woodbury, "Harry Partch: Corporeality and Monophony," in **SOURCE**, 1, 2 (July 1967), which also contains the score of "And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma" (1966) — the first published score by Partch.

6

Quoted from the program notes to the recording, **Music of Harry Partch** (Composers Recordings, Inc., CRI 193). The complete "Gate 5" recordings of Partch's music are available from **SOURCE** Records, Davis, California.

7

Cage, **A Year from Monday: New Lectures and Writings** (1967), p. 29.

8

Quoted from the liner notes to the recording "Extended Voices" (Odyssey), by Alvin Lucier. The other pieces mentioned in the preceding paragraph are also included in this recording.

9

From an exceptionally perceptive review by Allen Hughes, **The New York Times**, May 2, 1960. Nevertheless, I don't know of any other performance of this "extraordinary theatre piece." It was written in 1958.

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Quoted from the published score in **SOURCE**, Issue Number One, (January 1967). According to an editorial note on Austin, "His fear of a society that fashions itself as a prison for the independent spirit and his concern for freedom of expression lead him to challenge everything, including the 'unassailable' position of sanity itself." This puts him rather close to Artaud.

Artquation

Unfulfilled Opportunities in Art Education

Irving Kaufman

The Looming Context of Culture

The unfulfilled opportunities in art education have to be sensed against the larger failings of liberal education and humanistic learning. They remain unfulfilled not only due to philistinism and materialism, but because of the confusions of a culture which though dynamic is also bereft of sensible values and significant encounters with humanly proportioned experience. The task-oriented technocracy of procedures and machines, designed, deliberately or otherwise, to circumvent direct experience has usurped the earlier humane prerogatives of the classroom. The factors of cultural homogenization and scientific prepossession have preempted private growth in learning and a sense of identity within the processes of acculturation replacing such seemingly outmoded notions with impersonal solutions, behavioral statistics and public resolutions of mass tensions.

An essentially robotizing process, the legacy of an overweening rationality and technological wizardry, such techniques of external perfection have led to distorted and inhibited feelings or to destructive or disengaging tendencies, both in a collective as well as an individual sense. School policies and teaching procedures that stubbornly resist worthwhile intellectual development and a refinement of emotions, the black man's anger and spitefulness, the white man's constipated responses and guilt, a brutal war blindly pursued, the quality of alienation in current living and the materialistic merry-go-round are some of the most disastrous consequences in the social sphere along with a suspicion of the arts as esoteric nonsense and willful paint, sound and word spilling or grist for the great American amusement mill. This modern failing and it is nothing short of that, seemingly cancerous in its spread and effects, has been too well documented and argued to require any extended development in this paper. However, the idea that technology is leading us astray rather than we leading it to satisfy our needs requires frequent repeating. It is particularly relevant to a discussion of education in the arts — an education which has to be based upon existential considerations as these relate to questions of value and virtue, setting the context for whatever opportunities the

arts are afforded in contemporary education.

Specifically, in relationship to art education, some critical evaluations of goals, research methodologies and dissemination of concepts and materials are in order. Otherwise, the opportunities that are being readied will reinforce an already irrelevant situation or like the old amateur hour night practice in the theatre will have to be yanked from stage center by the hook of succeeding savants. It is suspect, no matter where the energies come from, to adopt attitudes, modes of inquiry, and systems deriving from scientific analysis in order to uncover artistic processes or aesthetic relationships. Art in a test tube, aesthetics plotted on validated coordinates. The learned journals are replete with discrete studies, controlled experiments, charts, graphs and tables of numbers and signs, prescribed data evaluation criteria, investigative parameters, and an almost endless host of procedural gimmicks or up tight formulations. These are not only foreign to art or its contemplation but hostile and destructive at many junctures of concern. The rather insensitive appeal to a kind of pedagogical systems engineering, even if at times it is called curriculum development or educational conceptualization, cannot but exacerbate the already culturally debilitating condition of a lack of affective understanding and personal expressiveness. It most certainly deepens the sense of crisis that already grips education, a crisis brought about by the very depersonalization that is being utilized as an instrument of analysis and resolution. Though acting in crisis may have many creative and rewarding results (the group adrenalin is set astir and the verve of battle is upon the protagonists), indeed, most art is created in crisis, the problems may also be buried under sham, irrelevancy, simple wrongheadedness and expediency.

The "Irreducible Vagueness" of Art in Education

Certainly, research is necessary in art education, in fact in all of the arts as they may function creatively in education. However, it would seem that such "research" stems from the internal and particular "logic" of the arts; that it be

informed and fashioned by what art does as it plays upon the human spirit; that the artist and the critic both should be exemplars of insight at least as much as the behavioral scientist or systems specialist; that educational goals remain qualitative, stressing the worth of uniqueness central to artistic understanding, and vital, accepting the human significance of artistic expressiveness even if inconsistency and what Morris Weitz refers to as an "irreducible vagueness" of style concept results. This is especially significant in the current scene as research becomes the sacred cow and as the specific field of art education expands to include aesthetics, art history and art criticism. In an area replete with academicism and intellectual wall building, the educator must tread with caution upon the paths already hacked out of the wilderness and use sparingly any machinery to cut his own way through the unknown for others to follow. Obviously, opportunities for experience in the arts will grow in quantity as the result of any research and curriculum expansion. However, to offer a cliché, it is the quality that counts. Art is a value, an activity, an exchange, not a thing. Valéry wrote most knowingly of this, and to quote him is to offer an opportunity for wise guidance to the art educator and researcher. "All the artist can do is to fashion **something** that will produce a certain effect on someone else's mind. There will never be any accurate way of comparing what has happened in the two minds; and moreover, if what has happened in the one were communicated directly to the other, all art would collapse, all the effects of art would disappear. The whole effect of art, the **effort** the author's work demands of the consumer, would be impossible without the interposition, between the author and his audience, of a new and impenetrable element capable of acting upon other men's being. **A creator is one who makes others create.**"

That impenetrable element cannot be bypassed or subjected to irrelevant factor analysis without making the art education experience look ridiculous, false or artificial. Consequently, investigation in art education must overlay reasoned purpose with passion, submit analysis to expressiveness and merge criticism with creativity. The art educator accepting



Wisconsin Painters and Sculptor Exhibition, 1968, Milwaukee Art Center

emotion along with mind opens up remarkable experiential opportunities for himself as well as for his students. He can accept art, intuitively as well as analytically, as possessed of an internal necessity. He sees art as ordered through its own forces and influences, projecting a quality which motivates the need of its shapes, patterns, symbols and relationships as both correspondences to human feelings and independent meanings that excite sentience and imagination. He may regard art critically and should do so, but the critical act must possess its own expressive qualities. It must reenact the experience of the art object and relate it not only to the self but to its dynamic functioning within an environment. The opportunities then provided are not prescribed or grounded by orthodoxy but partake of the ongoing quality of consciousness and feeling. Experience and growth in art are open qualities, where the personal ordering of creation and criticism is the base freedom upon which an educated expressiveness and response is developed. Since the openness is invested with the singular idiosyncracies and sets of an individual, it remains subject to that irreducible vagueness. This expressive nature is to be respected as an emblem of individuality, though it is subject to cultivation toward more refinement and intensified awareness.

Contingency and Adventure in Imagination.

I do not mean to invest art with a sanctimonious air and an aura of precious mystery, though there is a "magic" in art. Nor would I want to cast art onto a celestial plane that only Olympian beings may dwell upon. Art is rough and tumble as well as sublime, it is as commonplace as Red Grooms wanting it to be like an all day sucker as well as rare as a Sasseta miniature. It has an infinite range of frolicsome and sublime qualities or sensory and symbolic possibilities, but it is not what it is not. I suppose it requires playfulness as well as profoundness, a committed engagement but also a critical decorum. There has to be respect for its constantly forming nature, but with either tongue in cheek or Pan's pipe in the background. However, a seriousness of purpose and a relevant mode of inquiry are indispensable in the development of educational concepts, substance and process.

To educate for artistic creativeness and aesthetic response is to provide imaginative opportunities for significant expression of the self. Though this is accepted as a vital and essential aspect of education, it is also a shifting one, obscured by contemporary generalized considerations of logical explicitness, procedural precision and efficient goals that have already been mentioned. Education in art, to the contrary, is to be ready to sink into the existential and subjective recesses of the individual, to burst out of the ambiguities of experience, to explore the revealing yet elusive qualities of metaphor and to shape symbolically and concretely the endless array of expressiveness. The opportunities that grow out of such involvements promise an expansion of self and an intensification of sentience, both of which lead to the delights and the pain of adventure in imagination.

The opportunities in the arts leading to such adventure can rarely be prescribed in any specific way. They are fashioned out of the active interchange between perception and response, intellect and emotion, and immediacy and judgment, taking on varying forms as the contingencies of time and place exert their own influences. Though some may seek to strike a balance between such oppositions, they are probably more aptly sensed as complementing elements which produce human qualities and values within the polemics of a dialogue, whether it is between person and person about art, or between an art object and its creator or onlooker. This need not rule out any "search for the absolute," or laws of order and stability, if an individual temperament aims for such classic insights. Yet, though the search may remain something which approaches a constant in such instances, it is nevertheless a dynamic and regenerative affair for each person and each generation. Polyclitus provided the Greek Golden era with the ideal measurements of man, establishing precise norms. Mondrian, in his austere modern idiom, was engaged in a parallel pursuit developing patterns of proportion which transcend the transient commonplaces of momentary experience. Both artists acted out of classic temperaments and related philosophies, though the contingencies of time and place exerted a dynamic force which led to far different

forms. Beyond such an obvious illustration of the lack of recognizable absolutes (except loosely as human processes of expressiveness), we should also recognize the twentieth century as the remarkably fertile time that it is, encompassing an amazing and sometimes dizzying range of objects, ideas and events. There is the immense range of style in art, the fact that the century has been the dumping ground for all of the archeological digs, uncovering the forms of the ancients, that its technology provides constant images as well as endlessly multiple images and that it is a time of contending philosophical and social viewpoints which have impinged upon all of the arts to such an extent that the market place of ideas is a booming competitive center. Beneath all of these influences which make for complexities and richness, there is the notion that any transformation of experience into the symbolic forms of art is not precast. It requires the unique perceptions and diverse responses of individuals, singly or within an audience, to complete a quality of aesthetic significance. The factor of contingency operates as a philosophical premise, spreading the sense of open meaning in art, and giving it its sense of adventure as well.

It is essential, then, that the artistic and aesthetic dimensions in education grow out of the recognition that the arts motivate and stimulate a personally eloquent existence. If any of us are to be vitally alive and culture attuned to inherent human needs, it is necessary for each and all of us to be touched by the vital force of art forms. Artistic experiences and the urge to create or aesthetic contemplation and the delight of response become significant and sufficient experiences, imaginative realizations rather than instruments toward yet other ends. Otherwise, ennui and irrelevance take their toll. We become mere, pragmatically functioning, biological machines, yet oblivious to the promise and the pain of our sentience, hardly fit to don Darwin's mantle. Artistic forms are not only expressive and figurative bulwarks against the daily ravaging of the spirit we are heir to, offsetting the doldrums of anomie and distress; they also achieve a life of their own, consummated over and again in the nuance and vividness of perception. Art is shaped out of the

saving grace of man's creativity, establishing a poetry of insight, giving symbolically purposeful form to the mind boggling randomness of the universe as well as the inner turmoil of spirit. The art object becomes the focus of an encounter with existence, essence and experience embodied in perceptible form, helping to create and complete the world at least for the moment, in as much as the senses and the imagination permit. The conditions of art provide an open passage for feelings and intuition, permitting a natural blend of activity with intellect and reason, "the heart within the domain of the head," functioning as an invigorating and revealing source of satisfaction and speculation, understanding and fulfillment. The imaginative adventure of art thus offers almost unlimited opportunities for education, if genuinely encountered.

Humane Literacy

Artistic and aesthetic quality in education, in order to establish relevance insists upon what the critic George Steiner refers to as "humane literacy." Teacher and student alike need to become genuinely engaged with the affects and the effects of art. That is, within a context of existential responsibility and freedom, their feelings and emotions have to be stirred and their minds have to be moved to action and change, if need be. This is as true of the visual arts as it is of literature or any of the other arts. Awareness and sensitivity, expressiveness and critical evaluation are not only educational objectives, they are basic aspects of the artistic and aesthetic processes that have to be stressed if art is to be a fruitful part of education. Just as it may be said that we collectively live the emotions of Shakespeare's words and feel the rhythms of exaltation in Bach's music, we also sense our individuality in Rembrandt's images of himself, or define the anguish and the dilemma of our modern savagery in Picasso's *Guernica*. The artist, in Picasso's words, is "always wide-a-awake in the face of the heart rending bitter or sweet events of the world and wholly fashioning himself according to their image." This latter is no mimesis, no copying of surfaces, but the creation of some new and significant forms which find their generative cues in the conditions of nature, the actions of society, the



milieu of a culture, and the minds and spirits of men. As the forms evolve and finally reveal themselves, they achieve a continuing freshness and vividness which take on a quality of meaning hitherto hidden, shaped by an imaginative expressiveness, intrinsic to art. Something has been made freely, not slavishly reconstituted, some feeling has been genuinely set in symbol, not sentimentalized. It is this transforming element of artistic being which should inform any attempts to order the patterns of education in the arts, so that the student can be encouraged to see and feel the world independently, understand humanistic relevance of art and its counterpoint to living.

The forms of art frequently go beyond the purposes of rendering an imitation of appearances, of establishing didactic and influenceable symbols or providing a perceptible intensification or sensual and intellectual pleasure, satisfying and legitimate as these qualities may be. The work of the artist, both as a searching, formative process and as an expressive concreteness, stands as secular revelation. And the revelation is, largely, of oneself. Another painter, Max Beckmann, states it dramatically, "One of my problems is to find the Self, which has only one form and is immortal — to find it in animals and men, in the Heaven and in the Hell which together form the world in which we live." It is this stress upon knowing oneself, upon the realization of inner voyaging which has become the focal consideration not only in the general sense of art, but in the teaching of art, whether the objective is personally creative participation or critically evaluative appreciation. In either case, the art experience not only mirrors the spirit but moves it to insight and involvement. Art as it touches the individual exists on a variety of levels of understanding and engagement. The most obvious is transposing or imitation of appearances. If we dig a little deeper, we find that some attitude is being expressed about the subject. Beyond that we travel in areas which are aesthetic in that the artist is searching out the inherent relationships that provide us with not only perceptual data like color, size and texture, but expresses these as the symbolic composing of human meaning. Going even further, art may permit us to experience a "pure"

aesthetics, an imaginative reenactment within ourselves of the "thingness" of things, such as the "redness" of red or the "tautness" of a line leading to a fundamental and perhaps a spiritual awareness of ourselves and things interrelating in an environment of feeling and form. The more profound the level, the more intangible is its realization. Perhaps this has frightened off educators who look to academic classification and accountable results. But in being divorced from such engagements with experiences which lie behind appearances in art, they have also severely limited genuine art experiences for students and opportunities for aesthetic and artistic insights.

The consequences have been that art is generally regarded, even now, as a frill and a fad. Its humanistic worth and its significance as a way of seeing the world has been neglected or rejected. The "humane literacy" so basic to what may be construed to be "the good life" or at least a life lived with intensity, vitality and realizable virtue, has been deflected into narrow vocational or materialistic goals. We tend then to regard "the beautiful as having no use and the useful as having no beauty." More important, perhaps, we permit a runaway mechanization to outstrip the emotional and spiritual needs as a sign of progress. The individual, as such, becomes an expendable factor in the inexorable logic of equations, cogs and profit. Values become ready made, are imposed by conformist pressures or are absorbed through a haphazard osmosis. The sense of self becomes lost in a welter of otherness and standardization which has little grace and less humane values. An art education caught up in such contradictions can only reinforce unfulfilled opportunities, missing the vitalizing adventure and magic of its own focus.

The Realization of the Self

The expression of the self is not at all a new goal in art education. It has been a touchstone of general progressive thought and art education theory for several decades. The emphasis, however, until recently, has been upon a personal process of maturation in which the teacher was dissuaded from providing guidelines or directions in the fear that there would be

undue and harmful imposition of ideas and values upon the student. Psychology and art were indiscriminately united to produce the image of the child artist, relying heavily upon exploitation of media. The student actually existed in a relatively undisciplined, laissez-faire setting which was suspiciously sentimentalized. The tonic of self expressiveness did, however, resolve for the individual child the need to shape his feelings and ideas in ways other than the traditional 3 r's.

Thus for several decades art education supported the contention that the genuine realization of the self can best be guided through direct studio activities and unfettered student participation in fashioning his own images. The student's own subjectivity as the source for creative endeavor has had wide and deserved acceptance. This relatively spontaneous and growth oriented direction has established art in the schools on an intrinsically legitimate level, especially in the elementary school. However, there has been a parallel blight of triviality and irrelevance, characterizing a good part of the student's experiences. We may be able to trace this failure to sustain a high level of classroom quality in art to a number of sources: poor, unknowing or even philistine teaching, an unknowingness of what the studio activities can be, a regard for art as an amusing but peripheral experience, a disaffection of the school from artists and the art world and a misreading of its direction, a doctrinaire concentration on the child centered curriculum concept and finally the lack of even loosely structured content beyond a dependence upon psychological guidelines and "free" activities. These so-called "creative" but isolated and arbitrary art activities have come to be recognized as leaving little impact upon students despite pat psychological propositions.

More recently, the conceptual framework fashioned around self expression has been elaborated and strengthened. New theoretical elements have been added which complement and expand upon, rather than negate, the developmental considerations. These additional factors are largely discerned in two related categories. The first puts the teacher at the head of the class once again and stresses the need to place the art activities within a

cultural setting which is germane to both the student and the content. It stresses the nurturing aspects of education. The teacher, like it or not, becomes a sponsor of values and an arbiter of attitudes. He or she introduces the environment into the classroom as a condition to be examined, an environment exerting a strong influence upon the creative tendencies, the artistic intelligence and the expressive thrust of students whether they know it or not. The second category establishes a different organization of material. It deepens and extends the content of art education, adding deliberate analysis and evaluation to the art process where mainly the immediacy of personal productiveness had existed earlier. A new emphasis is put upon the art object and the logic of its aesthetic judgments. These latter judgments are seen not only as emotional opinion and individual taste, but as the critical reflection upon the experience of making expressive forms. Consequently, a new need is recognized that requires at least an open structuring of art content so that it may be presented along with analytic, cognitive skills and with an affectiveness that goes beyond amusement and catharsis, providing a base for a progressive sophistication yet a personal realization in aesthetic understanding.

The sense of self is given not only the boost of personal creative expressiveness, but there is added the rigor of intellectual exercise in art to shore up the supposed softness of emotional projection. It is assumed that aesthetic pleasure, implied morality and the rising level of taste will enter into the pattern as a humanistic check against abstract systematization. Before there is comment upon such a check and balance equation, it is necessary to develop some further insights into the looming presence of culture.

The Events of the World

There is an obvious need for an open, continuing and value conscious appraisal of the culture, a judicious look at "the heart rending bitter or sweet events of the world." Some relevant ties to the actual dynamics that take place in the outside world have to be established in the classroom. Educational bridges should be constructed which offer a reciprocal thoroughfare between the mass media and

Johnny's reading of the signs or his symbolic transformation of them, between the phenomenon of manufactured popular culture and Mary's drawing of her latest popular movie ideal or comic book character. The teacher in her role as mentor and guide has to come to terms with a cultural presence that has a vested interest in the happenings of the classroom and sways the minds and spirits of students. This becomes apparent in the current agonizing over the education of the supposedly culturally disadvantaged child. Obviously, cultural contexts brought to the classroom develop minority conforming characteristics and learning obstacles against which educators must be on guard. They are no less factors in the much larger grouping of aesthetically disadvantaged students who suffer from a poverty of imaginative energy, an abortion of private visions and a lack of provocative, creative incentives. Complex as contemporary culture may be, it can yield to the ordering propensities of man and his intuitive ability to focus upon considerations which have a basic importance to his sense of being and what he proposes to become. Among these propensities is the aesthetic and as a mode of inquiry it can concern itself in a discriminating way with the characteristic patterns of culture and the challenges they pose. The dimensions of the role the teacher plays in all this presupposes the acceptance of art as a mode of action as well as one of inquiry. The teacher has to feel art as a legitimate and vital means of encountering the world and responding to it, a self sufficient way of achieving significant meaning. Only when he feels these personally as they function in his own culture can he honestly pass the feeling on to students. Then both teacher and student develop not only an aesthetic vocabulary but a "humane literacy."

The most prominent patterns and challenges derive from the overwhelming and still expanding technology which distinguishes and impels contemporary culture. Affluence and leisure, alienation and conformity, excitement and search, anxiety and boredom all stem, to a degree more than less, from the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. However, the earlier mechanical elements have been long outgrown; today, technology exerts an awesome and intricate influence as

automation, cybernetics, systems engineering and electronic wizardry take over the tasks of man and sometimes his thinking. These sophisticated and not to be denied forces also impinge upon the aesthetic sensibilities, and in many instances reshape them. Even the artists currently are asking what is art, and the complicating factors of mass media, of mass communication and of mass production do not permit easy or stable responses.

The visual environment of cities can be brutally painful and offensive, the suburbs bleak or bland with the sprawling supermarket as the central image of social and visual aesthetics. The sociologists inform us that the average American family is glued five and one half hours a day to the not too euphemistically named, "boob tube," while other hordes descend upon galleries, museums and concert halls like "culture vultures," picking clean the bones of art because it is there and serves as amusement and titillation. As I have said elsewhere, there is a visual pollution of the surroundings we live and work in just as deadly as the chemical pollution of the air. Though there may be some exaggeration in my fulminations about our aesthetic environment, I feel justified in harping upon these minus considerations in the face of an apparent apathy and ineptness in altering or modifying rather undesirable and stultifying conditions.

As important is the need for teachers to realize the mediocrity which passes for accomplishment in much of society today and the self deception which characterizes a good part of the current life style. This has to be measured against the striving for excellence which is an integral condition of art and aesthetic judgment, placing as it does a premium upon personal integrity and fulfillment. The institutionalization of arbitrary cultural patterns should not be mistaken for the eternal verities nor the procedures of technical efficiency the means of shaping human identity. These become all too readily fixed and almost immutable as cultural practices. The public relations ballyhoo procedures which manufacture fashion, the pseudo images which pass for ideal forms in advertising, the sales manager syndrome which sets conditions for design or the trite and sentimentalized how to do it advice in

homemaking magazines are a few more pragmatic examples. They can appear somewhat ossified against the always unfinished and more natural business of creating one's own life. And in the aesthetic imperative of testing for the genuineness of one's own preceptions and conceptions, the teacher needs to poke, prod and prompt toward a continuing dialogue and interchange with art and life, transformed into expressively new forms of art. With such a scrutinizing and questioning approach to culture, reflecting an indignation to refined sensibilities when necessary, the corner may be turned and a path opened out onto more rewarding vistas. Emptiness can give way to commitment, doctrine to discovery and frills and fads to the delights and insights of art.

However, it is all too contingent and dependent upon vacillating variables and even metaphysical intangibles. The teacher and her class are within the confines of the human condition and need to accept uncertainty and inconsistency as roads toward understanding. The particular cultural expression of this condition we all share, provides the context of our identity and actions, shaping our art and our education, and it is always subject to examination and change. The opportunities in art education thus may offer a rich and fertile range of dialogues and activities which are in dynamic tension vis-à-vis the forces of culture.

The Organization of Content

The recent redirection in art education also set about restructuring the content of art teaching, due to an obvious impoverishment of the materials and processes which relied upon commonplace uncultivated responses and arbitrary relationships. The establishment of a more inherently purposeful direction underscored the need for artistic discipline and sensible guidance in the free wheeling activities of the studio. It also was recognized that there was a parallel need to achieve intelligent personal evaluations of objects of art and a critical observation of the panorama of the visual world. This requires a liberalizing exposure to the many facets and qualities of art and an artistically logical yet felt examination of expressiveness, structure and relationships.

The objectives are a perceptual enrichment, a growing sophistication in the critical ordering and verbal expression of personal response and an affective intensification of feeling leading to an awareness of personal identity and of life styles symbolized in varying art forms. In other words, what is being called for is more imaginative and substantive content in art education and a more viable, vivid and pertinent organization of the material aimed toward strengthened and higher levels of excellence. Thus, a different, and, I think, a salutary frame of reference is now given to art education, at once deepening and expanding the possibilities of art provided the student. It merges the unanchored, psychologically oriented considerations of personal development with artistically sensible and critical patterns of understanding hopefully to establish a sound basis for individual intelligence and sensitivity in artistic and aesthetic matters.

The opportunities which may be afforded within such a framework have to be based upon an imaginative program of visual studies leading to a visual literacy which contains the humane qualities referred to by George Steiner. Very briefly and listing one possible curriculum framework related to the new emphasis upon visual studies could include three major components of interaction, I believe. **First**, there are the elements of content which in broad consideration include a basis for visual literacy, a) the artist (who is he, what has he been, what is he now); b) the art work (the nature of its symbolic structuring, various media, techniques and a more formal analysis of form and style); and creative participation, c) the making of forms (studio activities in all media, skills and personal expressiveness. Related to content are considerations of a) cultural contexts (conformity, crowdedness, racial relationships, urban living, technology, and so on); b) perceptual cues (artificial and natural visual conditions such as the Ames Perceptual materials developed at Princeton, Bauhaus concepts, selected images from industry, cityscape, the wilderness, etc.); c) individual psychological factors (subjective and preconscious imagery, emotional states, moods, fantasy; and d) conceptual or philosophical propositions (aesthetic theories, religious influences, social institutions and so on).

The **second** curriculum development factor welcoming insights gained from the social sciences, but subject to aesthetic ends, would include such considerations as the students' social, physical, emotional and intellectual growth and would act as a mediating aspect between the content elements of the art curriculum and the **third** factor — classroom operations — specifically what teacher and student do. The latter would be made up of two main elements, a) the cognitive which includes the critical activities of description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation; and b) the presentational, including handling of materials, symbolizing of experience or uses of imagination, and expressiveness. Another and defining element of classroom operations would be the subjective — the feeling or emotional involvement of the student. However, there is no appropriate way to isolate or objectively evaluate this rather important factor of the art experience, particularly if we recall Valéry's impenetrable element.

The term visual literacy is used deliberately. Everyone emphasizes acquiring skill and understanding in the use of verbal symbols; achieving literacy in perceiving and responding to visual symbols and environments should also be stressed. Visual "communication" in addition to artistic expressiveness is a major facet of twentieth century life with the increasing use of the mass media, of film and TV and of McLuhan's dictum, "the medium is the message." Ease and confidence born of familiarity and relevant involvement in responding to visual symbols adds a rich, enjoyable and necessary dimension to one's life from a pragmatic point of view. But it also fashions a critical base upon which to see and feel the medium or its message in a sophisticated and responsible way, leading to that expressiveness of self which is a hallmark of maturity. Formal education has to value the visual and intuitive mode of arriving at understanding just as highly as the verbal and logical way. The former is often a more direct and deeper way of knowing, arising as it does out of creative concerns and out of personal feeling and engagement. It offers an articulation of inner states of being, of conditions below the threshold of conscious control and of the inner need for expressiveness which becomes concrete, ordered and on an educative level subject

to critical examination.

At the very least one can talk about art and offer deliberate **but alternative** aesthetic patterns of examination. The order, however, grows out of aesthetic logic, rather than formal logic. It is this aesthetic structure and these objectified elements of expression which require continued study, particularly in a direct exposure to their presentational form. Such study provides the foundations of visual literacy and the opportunities for an expanded and enriched art education.

In addition, a fresh organization of content would accept the notion that art involves multiple levels of understanding and a variety of differing approaches to experiencing and valuing creative expression. There may be no general aesthetic education, except as a base of theory, which must then be translated into specific educational experiences beholden only to the authenticity of immediate dynamics. Nevertheless, there are strong interdisciplinary elements, both within the visual arts and among the sociological, anthropological, psychological and historical considerations of society as these disciplines offer insights into the purposes and functions of art. Aesthetic education in the visual arts today also is compelled to include new cultural and technological forms such as the film, architecture, city planning and popular culture along with the fine arts if it is to provide a legitimate base for student discovery and act either as an ameliorative or as a generative impulse toward visual grace in the environment and inner grace for the student. Similarly, the personal learning experience in the classroom cannot stop at the jargon of aesthetics or the formal ordering of concepts in the intellectual sphere, but has to flesh out the experience with metaphoric intensity as well as with pointed reference to all of the other humanistic studies as the need arises.

The rather tentative and brief listing above is merely one approach to "structuring" an art curriculum and there are any number of alternatives which also may be pregnant with possibilities of teaching effectiveness and personal growth. Any curriculum can only serve as a guide in any instance, and any structuring in art is open to an immediate give and take.

Actually, any curriculum is only as effective as that which actually transpires in the classroom; in a sense the curriculum, no matter how developed and detailed it is, is what the teacher is teaching in the classroom. The curriculum requires implementation, in other words, to be efficacious. Especially in art education it should be the means of creating an openness of teacher-student interaction, of stimulating the "event" (as yet uncreated), of the act of teaching.

There may be, of course, a dangerous reining in of the spontaneous and effective attributes of art, but conceivably necessary at this point of educational development. The newly important factors of description, interpretation, analysis, evaluation and of intellectual concern it is hoped will elaborate and intensify the teaching of art. From one viewpoint this burgeoning academic area transcends the province of art education. Aesthetic education rightfully opts for a full commitment to all of the arts and as the established basis for a larger humanistic education. However, for the art educator, aesthetic education can mean a necessary intellectual parallel to the intuitive experience of the studio, and the latter may play a subordinate role at times. Ideally, aesthetic judgment and personal expressiveness can complement one another, existing in an authentic and exciting manner of art teaching.

A Bit of a Poet

Most important, however, is that the new emphasis not take on unnecessarily rigid or self defeating formalistic qualities. It may be just as easy to condemn to rote the so called principles of art as it is in reciting multiplication tables. The dialogue form of teacher-student relationship most suitable for aesthetic response, if it follows narrowly prescriptive patterns, can cancel out the vital nature of the experience both are searching for. Of necessity, attention must be given to the language construction which relates to the perceptions of students and teachers and helps to symbolize concepts. The imaginative element of aesthetic response should not be constrained — mood, intuitive insight and expressiveness are to be encouraged. Emotional qualities need to animate the individual perceptions,

interpretations and subsequent evaluations in a poetic and metaphoric sense. Though there has to be a quality of critical reflection in the judgments made, supported by rational explication, logical argument and recourse to the relationship of intellectual structuring to the sensory symbols of art where necessary, there is also a need to knock Humpty-Dumpty off the wall. For the individual, the Humpty-Dumpty of art may never be put back together again, once he has been dissected by the calculated probes of analysis or the zealous but frequently value free objectivity of judgment. Though categories and systems of aesthetic order may be utilized in art teaching, they serve primarily as catalytic markers along a personal road to discovery. In this sense, the critic-teacher should engage in a poetry of presentation, of tempering the mind with the heart. If the opportunities to be offered by art education are to possess any genuine sense of artistic worth and aesthetic self sufficiency, we need to guard against the educational tyranny of discursive organizations. We need to guard against word systems which formalize the existential nature of art and overly rational conceptualizations which deaden our sense of being. The European critic E. M. Cioran has said, "Overwhelmed by history, sickened by our entrenched habit of thinking of ourselves as products, results — we are now engaged in throwing history off." The larger sense of radical change which is convulsing the world has yet to find its way into the school system.

However, we can no longer trust to an intentional teaching direction which looks upon students as results, and the teacher as prime mover with the curriculum as the intellectual tool which "shows the way." Particularly in art education does teaching have to take on the nature of dialogue, of personal give and take, wherein the openness of both the teacher's and the students' perceptions and insights guarantee the freedom of personal expressiveness. The teacher has to accept an added perception — that of the student's response. With such an initial openness there can conceivably be the joint recognition of a common stimulus to experience, perceived however through the prism of individual senses and singular insights. Then a teacher can offer his

greater understanding and critical modes of inquiry. Yet, even here, the teacher has to be possessed of an understanding of alternative considerations and varying modes of investigation and response. It may be that individual students do not find the teacher's attitudes and avenues of examination hospitable. Consequently, new avenues of insight have to be provided for students; there is a continuity of openness in the teaching of art.

The ordering of content and the development of curriculum in art are thus subject to the crucial nature of the act of teaching. Any art curriculum is efficacious only as a teacher acts as exemplar, as partner in dialogue, as provoker and prompter, as benevolent and critical guide, as a source of understanding and as a confidant wherein the role of teacher and student may be reversed. This can lead to inconsistency and to paradox. Perhaps passionate commitment does not permit the choice of alternative viewpoints, perhaps personal expressiveness impinges upon the students' screen of perception, perhaps the contingencies of existence set up antipathies and oppositions, anxieties and tensions. Then what? Well, it appears to me that these have to be recognized as part of the teaching art, respected and resolved. And it is indeed a liberally educated and vitally functioning individual who has to serve as the teacher of art. In no other way can the unfulfilled opportunities in art education be fulfilled. To paraphrase that eminently perceptive art critic and cultural observer, Harold Rosenberg, "The essence of art teaching or aesthetic education is an imagination, cultivated in metaphor and the ability to express well within such contexts." Indeed, the teacher of art should have a bit of the poet about him.

The Open-Ended Sense of Self

In projecting the expressive nature of the teaching act, we also affirm and should accept a diversity of teaching styles. The freedom of the teacher is underscored, but so is his or her responsibility to act as an artist-teacher. This implies a commitment to an open set of values, searching out the most telling forms with which, not only to communicate, but to engage in dialogue. Such dialogue, especially in art, if it is not beset by adherence to conventional

learning resolutions or constrained by predetermined programs, achieves an existential valuing of each student as an individual person. A person, in the final analysis, who should be recognized as the most important resource in education — the student himself. It is to clearly point up such human existential qualities that the earlier appeal to study the influences of culture was made. The influences which exert an unwitting or arbitrarily defined determinism have to be assessed in as much as they may divest students of the freedom necessary to make personal rather than group or institutional determinations. Similarly, research stemming from the social sciences, particularly as it relates to art, has to get off its hobby horse of asking what is a student as if he were less than a singularly existent being and ask who is the student.

So we return to the idea that not only art but the art in teaching leads to a revelation of self. Art education in stressing the intrinsic nature of the experience which art provides, asserts as well that in the process the creator or the observer is creating his own world. The ultimate responsibility for this act lies within each of us, student and teacher alike. Hopefully, the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of art education especially refine and intensify the feeling as well as the cognitive aspects of the educable nature of the student, establishing significant bases of humane literacy for personal decisions and attitudes. The art teacher in valuing the unique possibilities in each student accepts whatever conditions and qualities with which a particular teaching situation confronts him. These then become the viable elements which have to be expressively ordered, but ordered as both artistic factors and personally humanistic qualities suggest. Genuine and naturally evolving opportunities for art in education may then establish themselves on an open but fertile basis as the teacher of art rides the waves of contingency in an adventurous voyage of the imagination.

alienation

Alienation

Kenneth Rexroth

For years alienation has been the favorite catchword of the American literary establishment, as triangulated by the **Partisan Review, Commentary**, and the **New York Review of Books**. What they mean is that since they lost their jobs in Army Intelligence after the war, the ruling circles of American society have forgotten they exist and no longer ask them out.

On the other hand there has been growing up in Europe of what amounts to a systematic philosophy or sociology of alienation. Several intellectual currents have converged to form what is today a stream of thought which is practically unchallenged. Since the publication of the philosophical notebooks of the young Marx just before the war, people who broke with the Communist Party who remained Marxists have come to emphasize the problem of alienation as fundamental.

From Kierkegaard to Sartre and Merleau-Ponty alienation has been a central concept of the Existentialists. In the tremendous intellectual upsurge in the Catholic church which has followed Pope John's **Aggiornamento**, modern Catholics have pointed out what has been obvious to everyone else for a long time, that anyone who tries to model his life on Christ and his Apostles is by definition alienated from a predatory society.

Today the dialogue between these groups has begun to be overheard even within the ranks of the European Communist parties, most especially the Italian, Czech and Polish. The unorthodox Yugoslavians have, of course, been leaders in the movement for a long time. This whole discussion is certainly where the intellectual life is today in Europe, but it has had little influence in America. Even theoretical Socialist magazines like **Dissent** or Libertarian ones like **Liberation** devote little or no space to it and the middle brow magazines are aggressively unaware of its existence.

Partly this is due to the American theory that general ideas are the exclusive province of college professors, hired to teach them for grades or theses. Partly it is the American and particularly the American labor movement's disinterest in anything but bread and butter issues, and

partly it is due to the fact that in America today even an unfavorable serious discussion of ideas that have any connection with the name of Marx is immediately labelled Communist, and anyone who embarks upon such a discussion is in danger of investigation.

David Herreshoff, in a recent book, **American Disciples of Marx**, comments on Earl Browder's farewell to Marxism, "Through Browder's **Marx and America** runs an implicit identification of the level of wages and the level of well-being of the workers. The Marxist concept of alienation is not once alluded to in this work purportedly concerned with the relevance of Marx to American experience." Browder's book is essentially an attack on the theory of progressive impoverishment. It never occurs to him that Marx gave a symbolic "material" existence to a moral critique of his society and that today his categories are deserting their materialist vestures and returning to their old **etherialization**.

Alas, the same is substantially true of Herreshoff's book itself although Daniel De Leon, to whom Herreshoff gives most space, was acutely aware that human self-alienation was the very reason for being of the revolt against industrial civilization. Behind his unfortunate addiction to mixed metaphors in the William Jennings Bryan fashion which apparently the age demanded, De Leon shows a better understanding of the fundamental problems raised by Marxism, than Lenin, Kautsky, or Plekhanov. Until the Third Congress of the Comintern, Left Communism, which gave priority to this problem, was the only serious theoretical movement in American Marxism. Its very memory has been effectually obliterated.

The present efforts of the American Left to reorganize itself are little influenced by the tremendous Marxist **aggiornamento** which has been sweeping the Iron Curtain countries, the French and Italian Left, and is even beginning to penetrate the sealed minds of the Workers' Fatherland itself. I used the word **aggiornamento** advisedly, because there has been a most remarkable convergence with the development of a new philosophy of man in the Roman Catholic Church. These two movements in fact are

the most significant and exciting in contemporary Europe. In America there is a considerable number of Catholic thinkers who have launched a dialogue with the Marxist **aggiornamento**. As far as any answers have appeared they have come from across the Atlantic or from Japan. Certainly there has been little response from anybody identified with any Marxist party in America. This is curious indeed because the entire movement of what has been called the "psychoanalytic left" is American based and is quoted continuously by Marxist writers trying to develop a contemporary philosophy of man in Yugoslavia, Poland, Japan, or Italy.

There are several reasons for this. American Marxism has been dominated for over a generation by a mindless, vulgar bureaucracy principally distinguished by a militantly execrable taste in all aspects of life and a scorn for thought of any sort. There is no essential difference in values and manners, between the bureaucrats of American Marxism, the House of Representatives and any Board of Alderman. They all represent the American Political Way of Life. It is the system of values known by this name which of course is what makes the alienated alienated.

An American theory of alienation significantly has come from practical clinicians, confronted every day in their practices with patients made profoundly sick by a scale of values which has for its summit the reduction of all things and all men to commodities. It is the treatment of the mentally ill with manifest moral lesions which has shifted the bases of psychoanalysis in America from the Seventh to the Tenth Commandment. The besetting sin of modern society is certainly not adultery — it is covetousness. In modern America it is so besetting that the average educated person encountering the word in the Bible believes it is some ritual violation peculiar to the ancient Hebrews, like eating crayfish.

The runaway pornography of the American entertainment business — including pseudo highbrow publishers who concentrate on dope and homosexual prostitution — is not motivated by sex, but by the reduction of sex to a commodity whose advertising lures must be continuously escalated and which can never be satisfied. This is a

commonplace. Since all critics of our society say this, it is strange that America has not developed what might be called a systematic philosophy of its own morbidity. Working psychiatrists, even of the psychoanalytic left, still function in an atmosphere of pandemic pressure, like traumatic surgeons in an air raid. It's the laity who read the theoreticians — whether Erich Fromm, Leslie Farber or Abraham Maslow.

An important factor in the failure of American socialism to produce any kind of philosophical Marxism is the profoundly uncongenial temper of Hegelianism to the dominant pragmatism and pluralism of American philosophy. There has not been a socially significant important Hegelian thinker in America since Josiah Royce. It is interesting that, behind his soft and well bred prose lurk some extraordinarily revolutionary ideas, precisely those so influential in Europe today, the notion of the Absolute as the Beloved Community, and of course, his doctrine of reification, the idea that the turning of men into things was the essence of alienation-or original sin.

These ideas are central to the leaders of political **aggiornamento** in Yugoslavia or Italy, but in America any mass movement of head-on attack on alienation as such is largely confined to the most intelligent members of the notorious Revolt of Youth. The only trouble with the Revolt of Youth or the New Left is that it has been defenseless against its main enemy. It took only a year for that caricature of Big Business and the Big Business ethic — Organized Vice — to take over the Hippies; and the movement itself, by the pressure of idle youngsters of the upper middle class, was turned into a craze for the conspicuous expenditure of senseless commodities — beads, couch cover serapes, and worn out squirrel skin chubbies. This is also the general tendency of American literature and art. Where Poland produces Gombrowicz staged by Grotowski, and France and Ireland cooperated in producing Beckett, we come up with Andy Warhol, just a messier variety of chic.

Who is alienated from what? The writings of the young Marx which discuss the subject and which have become so influential today are actually ambiguous and

contradictory. At times Marx speaks as Hegel; alienation is the very principle of creativity, the Absolute self-alienates itself in creation. Sometimes he speaks of all work as alienating. Again he speaks of man engaged in what later he would call the commodity production of capitalism as being alienated from his product, from his fellows in work and from the work itself. What he never mentions, but himself perfectly exemplifies, is the alienation of the intellectual, clerical caste from the new ruling class. In this he was only the latest of a long line of **alienés** who began to appear contemporaneously with the rise of that class itself. This is an historically unparalleled phenomenon, characteristic only of Western European civilization since the rise of the middle class.

All important works of art, from the middle of the eighteenth century on, have rejected all the distinguishing values of the civilization which produced them. Rousseau, Blake, Sade, Hölderlin, Baudelaire, Byron, Stendhal, these are only the most conspicuous and extreme **revoltés**. Not even the apostles of the middle class's own revolution — Marat, Robespierre, Saint Just — thought they were waging that revolution for the values of that class. If we project this situation back on the Rome of Virgil, the Greece of Sophocles, or the China of Ssu Ma Ch'ien, its historical peculiarity is of course apparent. Catullus may be angry and neurotic but he is anything but alienated.

The clerical caste had been as important in the Middle Ages as ever they had been in Egypt or Babylon. In a commercial, industrial civilization they became "minions," skilled servants deprived of self determination, even more, of a personal, determinative role in society. It is this sudden loss of power, and alienation from personal autonomy, that has fed the wider concepts of alienation.

It is from literature and art that the alienated personality has spread, first to the technical and professional intelligentsia, the very pets of the society, and from them to an ever deepening stratum of the working class. The shocking exploitation — worse than in its primitive days, which was so well described by Engels and others — did not produce "alienation" in the intellectual sense of the word. The

naked child dragging a coal cart in a narrow tunnel did not become alienated; it became dead. The young Marx — and seventy five years after him, Trotsky, in **Literature and World Revolution** — often speak like William Morris. Creative intellectuals themselves, they imagined that if the work of the industrial worker could be made creative, like that of the artist, he would cease to be alienated.

As a matter of fact, my experience with industrial workers has led me to suspect that most of them do not resent the low level of personal participation in the production process. Charlie Chaplin may have considered a job on the assembly line destructive of the personality. This was not an opinion widely shared in the United Auto Workers Union, and now the assembly line worker himself is disappearing. In a completely automated and computerized system of production, most of the small number of workers required would in fact be able to participate creatively. In the heaviest, and once most onerous, extractive industries that is already becoming true. But in the automated Western world, and equally in the socialized East, personal alienation increases, even amongst the most favored beneficiaries of the new society. Account executives and commissars mimic Baudelaire.

On the other hand, immense numbers of people are becoming physically alienated from productive society altogether. The word here should not be alienated, but redundant. As labor power steadily loses its role as the primary source of economic value, whole races and nations become redundant. Except for the Talented Tenth, the American Negro today is born alienated. His black skin has led him to being sifted down to the bottom of the economic pile where he has nothing to sell but his labor power, and that labor power which once built railroads and picked cotton, finds no buyers. Africa and the rest of the former colonial world has been liberated because the metropolises, the former imperialist nations, have discovered that imperialism is unprofitable.

Where once the current of rejection of the dominant society flowed from the intellectuals down and out into the common people, today the current is reversed. Whether James Baldwin,

LeRoi Jones, Franz Fanon, Charles Mingus, Miles Davis, the most militant spokesmen for the alienated black common people, have themselves enjoyed specially favored upbringing and a plethora of endowments from the "power structure," they participate in modern society far more than most white intellectuals — with a vengeance. At least their vengeance strives to be creative. They are eminently successful and doing creative work. Society has discriminated in their favor. They are black. As black men the current of society's rejection and reciprocal rejection of society flows up from the unwanted black common people. The child coal picker in 1840 England may have died of overwork, but her work was needed. Nobody needs the thousands of thousands of unskilled workers who are now entering a third generation on welfare, housed, or rather economically embalmed, and stowed out of sight, in housing projects and other slums. This is an entirely different kind of alienation than the one Marx diagnosed in the labor process. The conviction that "nobody wants me, nobody needs me, nobody knows I exist" may be the birthright of the ghetto, but it is coming to pervade all levels of modern society, even the most productive and favored.

At the top of the social heap the children of the upper middle class turn on, tune in, and drop out in herds and droves. This is true of the children of factory managers in East Berlin just as much as it is true of the girls from Sweetbriar wrapped in bedspreads and running barefoot in San Francisco's Haight Ashbury.

The most fashionable artists strive desperately to invent some new nihilism and sell it to idle rich women. Andy Warhol and Kenneth Anger are far more fashionable with far richer people than ever was John Singer Sargent. The assumption is that when a rich woman spends \$12,000 for a three foot square of masonite painted an even coat of solid blue or a rusted, pressed automobile body, or an exact ceramic reproduction of human feces and puts the thing in her penthouse, it will destroy her. Unfortunately for the neo-dadaist revolutionary she spends \$12,000 or more a year on a psychoanalyst to keep that from happening and never misses the money for either, dadaist or doctor.

Meanwhile throughout the society millions of mute inglorious people, surfeited with commodities and commodity relationships, become ever more divorced from their work, their fellows, their spouses and children, their lives and themselves.

"Why did you set all those fires?" "Why did you shoot thirty people on the university campus?" "Why did you kill those seven nurses?"

"I didn't know who I was," "I wanted to do something so that I could prove to myself I was really existing."

This goes all the way to the top. "Why are you dropping napalm on children?" "Why are you tempting a mighty nation to drop its hydrogen bombs on you?" Almost certainly the answer is, "I have the titles of power, but I can't tell who I am."

criticism

A Digression around the Subject, Unpopular Criticism is Necessary, or "Don't Stop the World, I'm still on it"

Peter Yates

Every so often the Architectural Panel in Los Angeles, caught short of a monthly lecturer, invites me to fill the gap at the last moment. Since time is short and the announcements must go out at once, I am asked to provide a title for the still nonexistent lecture. This time I gave the title, "Unpopular Criticism Is Necessary." I had thought I understood what I meant; when I sat down to work it out, I couldn't any more get clear what was my subject. Like Kierkegaard, in the Prelude to **Fear and Trembling**, I kept telling myself the same story over and over, and each time it was different.

We think of ourselves as living in a scientific age, but our field of discussion is still, as in the past, Art, Religion, Politics. Which comes first or last is not in question, but religion is central. Without an anatomy of religious conviction, art and politics have no meaning; they are useless, ephemeral, deceptive, destructive. Philosophy and science are explanatory processes. A political act or a work of art is irrevocable: an irrevocable science can survive only as dogmatic superstition or like a work of art; an irrevocable philosophy would be either a dogma or a system of government.

The writing down of the recited epics, **Gilgamesh**, the **Vedas**, **Homer**, the **Hexateuch**, reduced shapeless, dreamlike episodes to somewhat more shapely works of art, definite in style but of no distinct form.¹ The unbounded rivers of narrative were channeled and deepened. Myth and fiction had specific meaning, like the carved capitals of Romanesque churches. The grammars of primitive tribesmen were more complex, because more limited in specific meaning, than our own. We have now reached the condition that neither the meanings of the words we use, nor the grammar with which we try to give words meaning by relation, are to be trusted. A straight line is no longer the shortest distance between two points, except on a plane of certain definition. Reading Wittgenstein we enter into a despair of significance, punctuated by laughter; despair and laughter — despair with laughter, acceptance of the unacceptable, that is, absurdity — are the fashionable characteristics of contemporary art.

One feels in the general run of art today a

conformity with no more than gestures of individuality, a failure of effort and of will, an easy acceptance of an uncritically fashionable market, and a willingness tending to discouragement to go along with what is wanted. The buyers, the audience, and the museums are at one with the **avant garde**.¹ Artists made the audience; the buyers and museums, in the name of the audience, made the **avant garde**. The critics with few exceptions follow the same fashion; to be a successful critic one must keep up. Art is right back where it was in the middle of the 19th century, when the Salon ruled. Today's inverted values — non-art for no sake — are as sentimental.

Our mathematics have foliated in elaboration, but we learn that the simplest addition of two terms is questionable. One Delicious apple plus one Delicious apple equals two Delicious apples. One Delicious apple plus one Gravenstein apple equals two apples, which may or not be equally delicious but will not be of one form, texture, composition, or style of appetite. Such problems of classification have confounded scientists within the last two centuries. Each generation has assumed that it had or was near having the answers, but the problem has instead become more difficult.² Yet on the question of apples Cézanne became so concerned as to change visibly our apprehension of visual space, at which point representation in art became more exacting than exact, broke into dots, dashes, curves, crystals, and spontaneously vanished.

Primitive peoples — the word, "primitive," is no longer applicable: we assume that their cultural habituation was as acceptable to them as ours is to us — primitive peoples assigned a spirit to each tree, rock, river, hill, to the spear and to the hunted animal. (I say, assigned, because the idea of spirit and name did not originate from the spirit or within the tree, though note how in folktale this appears to happen). The Greeks gave names to the Olympians and invented more abstract terms, fire, water, air, atom, to comprehend the incomprehensible. As the Olympians came down from Olympus to generate progeny among mankind — Zeus was constantly getting off the hill to chase the prettiest girls — so the abstract words generated other words still more abstract. We clutter our intelligence with idea-patterns

composed in terms as factual as the beard of Zeus; ontology is the science of trying to explain them. Thus we invent problems.¹⁰

Names and their progeny, abstract words and their progeny, philosophical terms and their progeny accumulated into the great age of Western scholasticism, and then the whole edifice began to come apart, until today the notion of a total chaos is fashionable — an esthetic notion, of dubious validity. Real total chaos would wipe us out in an instant. A limited degree of chaos can be fun, as in John Cage's story of the automatic typewriter which ran wild in the store window. Not so funny when we recall how many manufacturers have recently recalled large numbers of automobiles to correct faults in the steering equipment.

Doubt, which used to be looked down on, has become our scientific criterion of knowledge. So we have the idea of scientific proof, which like Euclidian geometry may prove to be true only of the particular instance, given certain conditions. This leads into statistical demonstration by gathering of instances, resembling the new mode of oracular prophecy which can tell accurately those television shows we like best if we watch television but not those which might induce us to watch television if we don't; which gives the President and chief aspirants to his job a weekly rating so they can know how they're doing;³ a system as accurate as the daily handicapper's figures, the Dow-Jones averages, the presumptive national debt. We live on a daily diet of facts. It is a stimulating environment.⁴

We have a contradictory vague conception of the President (or government) as a computer with a pointer which should respond instantly to the majority consensus, and as an imperial St. Michael who will know to fight for the minority idea because it is right. You might call this the Lone-Ranger-Superman complex, which with its contrary, the super-Manichean conspiracy syndrome, has governed our political thinking for many, many years.

Never before has mankind assembled so vast a store of facts as we have at present, yet our philosophers are incapable of giving to this interrelated assemblage of more or less proved facts any apprehensible

coherence. Between the substances we see and feel and the fluidity we're told of and can summon, in one form, miraculously to our electric light bulbs we have established no philosophical relation. We live amid an environment we can bump into, knowing that another environment exists coherent with it that we can demonstrate but can't bump into. There is still another environment made up of all we are constantly worrying about. Reality is a basket term for these contemporary environments. The environment of worry seems to be going on all the time, but it is in fact non-consecutive, like the tunes of **Muzak**. You seldom know when a worry vanishes or whether with or without resolution. Without premonition there is another worry in its place.

You believe that you are here now in substantial, tangible body at this present moment. You pinch yourself, proving in one gesture choice, motivation, cause and effect, your physical substantiality, the operational efficiency of your nervous system, the ability of your intelligence (whatever that is) freely to scan the whole operation (though you can't explain how it happens) and decide whether at the present moment you exist. If you believe this proof irrefutable, you are wrong. *Cogito ergo sum* is out of fashion. So is Dr. Johnson kicking a stone. It is quite possible that we are prisoners of a mode of explanation, and what happens when we pinch ourselves could be quite unlike what we believe does happen. One scientific speculator on the new evidence from the planet Venus believes that, because of the peculiar atmospheric conditions, a visitor there would see all around the planet to the back of his own head. He would see himself where he was after he had moved, as we see a star millions of years after it may have ceased to exist.⁵ Yet in the midst of these dubious environments we are able to accomplish miracles of healing and creative usefulness. We can also worry our questionable selves into much trouble.

I speak of religion as "an integrating hope growing out of the conviction that all phenomena are comprehensibly ordered." When we lose our conviction of order or of comprehensibility, we lose the hope which integrates our lives as human beings, which makes us members of a community. This hope, we know, can survive in the

most desperate circumstances. Irreligion is not a denial of God; it is the disintegrating denial of hope in a comprehensible order. Without an anatomy of religious conviction all urgencies become meaningless.⁶

The question is not, as it was in the past, whether order can be demonstrated, but that the demonstration itself has become fluid in the expanding revelation of our knowledge, our ability to do with the information we have. The speed of our expanding knowledge differentiates us from primitive tribesmen. Their knowledge does not countenance expansion; ours insists. Our conviction of order depends not on proof but on the expanding revelation of a still unknown universe which we are learning to accept as more meaningful than our former concept of a fixed universe, either that of Ptolemy and Dante or that of Copernicus and Newton. Some churches consider revelation their special privilege, but we learn every day that revelation comes to those who seek it.

So long as revelation depended on belief in a predetermined order, it was helpless before each new onset of information which broke down that order. The crisis came during the 19th century, when the discoveries of geology, of prehistory, of the truth of some form of evolution brought about the disintegration of theologically oriented science, a succession of events which John C. Greene has summarized in a book called **The Death of Adam**. (Until well into the 19th century every cosmic theory had to make room for the seven days of creation and the Garden of Eden). The loser in this breakdown was not religion but the theologically oriented belief that the domain of comprehensible order can be predated. Rather than a breakdown, this was a great step forward, as humanity reaffirmed its ability to expand knowledge toward but no longer restrictively in terms of an order potentially comprehensible. If it were not order that we potentially comprehend, human knowledge, our ability to do with the information we have, could not have managed that step forward.

Going along with that step forward hasn't been easy for most of us. It's as if we had stepped into space and become weightless. Instead of falling, by the law of the universe of Copernicus and Newton,

we hang in space, not knowing up or down. One consequence has been the present century of revolution. All the best that mankind has accomplished until now has ceased to be the special privilege of a small number of better people; news of it has spread suddenly world-wide, and everybody, however immediately qualified, even former jungle tribesmen, wishes and intends to share that privilege. All of us today are caught up in trying to work this out. Despair of being able to do so is not so much irreligious as irrelevant.

I spent an evening with three representatives of the government of Madagascar, now a republic, who were being sent by the former colonial power around the world to obtain information about industry and agriculture for the benefit of their people. They told us that the tribesmen from the interior of the island were coming into the cities demanding immediate employment. These tribesmen would not allow fifty years, or twenty-five years, or ten years for industry and agriculture to develop; they must have the development at once. Were the tribesmen more "underprivileged" than in their former ecological and social balance? Did their coming to the coastal cities "create" underprivilege? Was Lincoln underprivileged by being born in a sod hut? Is underprivilege a measure of despair, or of delay, in achieving potentially available improvement?

Many despair, not realizing that despair is only an impediment. Most of the better people today are not opposed to doing what is wanted; they don't know how it is to be done to best advantage all at once. They direct attention, as the underprivileged do, to the lack and not to the potentiality. So long as the better people disapprove of revolution, revolt will be put down. When the better people are no longer sure of their right to disapprove, revolution sets in, revolution being, as Trotsky wrote, the overcoming of a time-lag. We are now in a time of revolution, to which in several of its manifestations the better people are not opposed; they just don't know how it is to be done or done at once. The "better people" are those who directly or indirectly influence decision, in some countries a small number, in this country a very large number.

We constantly deceive ourselves by acting as though ourselves and our neighbors have the same contemporary language for contemporary events. Among different societies, in spite of books, newspapers, radio, television, conferences, the better people today are as much as centuries apart.¹²

A revolution occurs when a great many persons, who have previously had no say in decision, come to believe that they too can be better people. The people do not know what they want; they have the information to want what they do not know. The operative fact of revolutionary need differs from the proclaimed objectives. Yet as Jan Myrdal reported, in his **Report from a Chinese Village**, a well-directed revolution, even among an illiterate peasant people, can be almost millennially successful. Another example is the independent Republic of Outer Mongolia. One notes in these examples the absence of coercion. The Chinese village leaders will persist with inexhaustible patience in persuasion because they deplore and reject coercion. The Outer Mongolians did not destroy the monasteries but deprived them of political power; the revolution was not iconoclastic.

Most of us agree, in practice if not by creed, that the potentiality of comprehensible order cannot be pre-stated. In this era of scientific and cultural breakthrough that potentiality changes almost day by day, complicating as never before the bases of decision-making.¹¹ Law, however, has to presume an existing, stated finality of order as the basis of morality. Morality is in effect the custom of the people, their habituation to accepted values. Morality is not usually forward-looking or progressive; it is the "right things" that people do. How can the right things change? Ethics is how they justify or condemn what they do. The present war reflects like a cracked mirror our moral and ethical confusion. Each progression in man's knowledge, in his ability to do with the information he has, opens wide flaws in morality and ethics, continually threatening the foundations of law. In our Constitution the firm conservatism of law has been uniquely balanced by an open-minded and sometimes prophetic flexibility of interpretation, to the great benefit of our national growth. At no time, of course, has

the balance been equal — it couldn't be — which distresses many persons.

We are all Americans, members of more than one minority, by race and ancestry, by moral or intellectual commitment, by common or unique or special interest, by church affiliation, by intra-party sub-group loyalty, by the necessity of our job or the need of our community. Patriotism alone could not hold our government together — consider France during the last century and a half — but we do hold together because of the uncommonly flexible suspension of our government. Many believe the suspension is too flexible; it creaks, it sways, it responds slowly, but it has enabled most of us to stay together **over the worst ruts.** Some believe that government should be more immediately responsive, that it should do what they wish now, even if that means suppressing the contrary opinions and the rights of others. In conviction of rightness the liberals are as oppressive as the reactionaries, and the radical left is the most oppressively conformist of all. The majority of us are in the middle, unwilling to be shoved and clinging firmly to the right to disagree.⁸

We moderates of all persuasions are aware that our governmental machinery will not work unless a good many of us function as unpopular critics, against the government and against the crowd, against the social influence and group persuasion of our friends. We need to be able to get angry, and we need to remain able to control ourselves. Nor will our governmental machinery work well when conviction or disagreement become coercive. A revolutionary period is peculiarly a time when antagonistically conforming groups change to impatient and coercive mobs; then the government, sometimes too late and too often with insufficient precaution, calls out the troops.

Most of us have read enough history to know that the virtuousness of the better people does them little good when blood starts spilling, just as the virtue of a revolutionary leader does him little good after the revolution has ended and a new type of leader and a new electorate settle down to lick wounds and enjoy power. The Terror is not the Revolution; the Terror ends the Revolution and begins the

period of repression, when popular criticism is not wanted. The Stalinist Terror wiped out nearly all Old Bolsheviks, artists, writers, and objective theoretical scientists whose work threatened any doubt, however far-fetched, concerning the course of events. Unpopular criticism is not popular; that is a tautology, a truism, and a fact. It takes courage to stand alone apart from the support of any group, to think and speak for oneself, to be called wrong, to appear a fool. That many should do so, without giving up or collapsing into conformity or mob, and to no personal advantage, is the most necessary part of the democratic process. Democracy exists by the balancing of unpopular opinion. Lacking that balance, the 1st and 5th amendments are no more immune to challenge than the chameleon clause, "due process." We know that a few persons, with great courage and under severe pressure in enforced isolation, are still speaking for democracy in South Africa.

It is a basic teaching of our Judeo-Christian heritage that we should love our enemies. The alternatives are conspiracy, feuding, riot, warfare, suppression, every sort of violence. A tooth for a tooth won't work out. Yet gather a crowd of people and get them angry enough, choking their critical independence with half-truth and self-pity, give them belief in their power to strike, and you can lead a mob. Stir up a nation or provoke it from without, and the people will fight, which is usually not to their advantage. Between nonviolence and riot, between purging and oppression, between pacifism and self-defense there is a line of self-discipline as difficult to define in immediate cases as Schweitzer's "Reverence for all life." To find and hold and assert that line of self-discipline is a responsibility of the unpopular critic. It is that sense of a mutually acquired self-discipline which gives strong character to the peasants' stories of their lives in Myrdal's **Report from a Chinese Village.**

In 1942, I think it was, a group of sailors dragged a man in a zoot suit from a motion picture theater in downtown Los Angeles and beat him up, while a crowd and a couple of policemen stood by and did not interfere. I have asked many

persons this question: If you had been there and seen the group of sailors beating the one man, would you have felt called on to risk interfering? This is, by extension, the question an unpopular critic must repeatedly ask himself and face it. Unfriendly group opinion can be as cruel as a beating and lasts longer.

Today we all suffer an uneasy conscience and try to purge ourselves by blaming. I can't recall another time, even from the depths of the Depression, when so many people were accusing so many other people of failure to solve our common problems. If you're going to organize, don't let it be a mob but a work party.

At the reptile house of the Zoo they are trying to change over the diet from white mice to baby chicks: mice cost .20c each, baby chicks four-for-a-cent. This is because hatcheries throw out the male baby chicks and raise only the females; formerly the male chicks were tossed into a box to smother in their fluff, now the snakes eat them. Gandhi asked: What is to be done about the cobra which drops from the thatched roof into someone's bed? A cobra is a powerful, venomous snake, no more willing to love its neighbor than Hitler. A man who for personal or psychopathic reasons has abandoned responsibility for the rights of other people is the most dangerous of all animals, the more so when he is convinced he acts for cause. How can we detect him before he strikes, and what shall we do about him afterwards? What shall we do about the onset of righteous violence in ourselves? That debate is wide open.⁹

I have wondered who was the high-placed psychopath who studied the method of burning in checkerboard patterns which had been developed for burning mesquite along the California foothills and applied that method to creating the firestorms of Hamburg, Dresden, Tokyo. The atomic bomb was merciful by comparison. In the Cathedral at Salzburg one sees along one wall the line of portraits of the successive Prince-Archbishops devoutly kneeling in their robes. Up in the **Hohefestung**, their castle on the rock, one walks through the suite of torture chambers, the 19-foot hole to suspend a man in by his thumbs, the cells to be heated like ovens, the wheel, the boot, the grinning

iron masks, to convert Protestants. The kids who started the canyon fire which destroyed Aldous Huxley's home and all his papers were considerate enough to lead him to safety when they found him wandering blindly on the road.

Some zoo theorists are trying to change the diet of certain animals from the food they are accustomed to eating in the wild, by feeding them less expensive but more nutritious manufactured foods. At the New Orleans Zoo I saw the wolves eating food made of cereal. I was told: "Meat is too rich for them." What will happen to lions, tigers, hyenas, who exercise their jaw and shoulder muscles by tearing flesh and breaking bones, if instead they are fed nutritious pablum? William James was concerned about what effect a cessation of warfare would have on human beings. Some sociologists have observed recently that children brought up in underprivileged surroundings are happier, more self-sufficient, more responsive, and potentially brighter than children brought up in luxury. Only lack of education and opportunity destroys them. We can all observe how an increasing proportion of the most successful athletes has come out of the deprived minorities.

We are unable to agree whether the failure to produce a well-made prefabricated house and a safer automobile should be blamed on the manufacturers or on the buyers. The media experts assure us that the public wishes in entertainment, sex, violence, pornography, and general filth but prefers a happy ending. The experts also assure us that these delights, including the belief that everything should end happily, have no influence on the people who take pleasure in them. At another level, sex, violence, pornography, and filth, regardless of the happy ending, are asserted as symbols of moral, esthetic, and spiritual freedom. Dead-end pornography, David Marcus explains in a fascinating book, **The Other Victorians**, is a fantasy of 19th century invention; of all art forms it is the one with the least variety, the least freedom. Since our choices, at least in art, are not limited to sex, violence, pornography, and filth, we are free to choose otherwise and by so doing assert our freedom.

The responsibility rests with the individual,

in particular with the artist, who except the saint should be the freest of men. If he runs with the prevailing attitude, he believes he has proved himself, though he may achieve nothing, regardless of successful sale. If he goes his own way, trying as best he can to strike to the root of the matter, he may be despised in market or Salon and appear to fail. Or he may have a skill to dramatize his doings and be taken up as his own product, a news object, a personality; the objects he produces being secondary to his public self. He may be a bluffer, an operator, or come to think himself mediocre. These are the choices anyone must face, because all art, however seemingly remote from public consciousness, acts on society, affecting the lives and decisions of fellow human beings. But if I fail, if my work stays unseen, unread, how can I have influence? Cézanne answered that question when he devoted every effort to "realize" apples. Have in mind also the trainer who first made friends with a captured killer whale, dared to enter its tank and at length rode on its back.

NOTES

These Notes were added in the order in which they occurred to me.

1. It's doubtful whether these originals resembled in conception what we think of as art or history, or indeed that the authors wrote them down with the indivisible prophetic assurance which has governed the origin of similar unique religious documents from the **Koran** to **Science and Health**. The history recounted by the Mormon scriptures has a still different religio-esthetic verity. Our theoretical categories, not for pigeonholing but for entering into discussion, are still quite primitive. Academic method dwells on the names and addresses of the villas in which thoughts reside, like a Hollywood guide to the movie stars' homes, seldom seeing or encountering the inhabitants.

2. **Problem**, as in common usage today, is a new term in language: not something thrown forward for solution but an existent which the more we inform ourselves about it becomes the more problematical. It is, to speak of it, the non-thing or open-ended quirk, in whatever it is we're struggling with; the retrogression of meanings and values which increases with increase of information and distinctions. **Problem** is the area of not yet ability beyond any area of knowledge.

3. Having in mind the fate of Croesus: "It is not possible even for a god to escape the decree of destiny. Croesus has been punished for the sin of his fifth ancestor . . . Nor has Croesus any right to complain . . . For when the god told him that, if he attacked the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire, he ought, if he had been wise, to have sent again and inquired which empire was meant, that of Cyrus or his own . . ." Herodotus, **The Persian Wars**, Book I, trans. Rawlinson.

4. Consider the quantity of newspaper, magazine, air space given over daily to "Will Somebody Do What" — not as a question but a proposition — and to elaboration of all possible consequences: which are then often violated by the facts of the case, if indeed it happens.

5. The time-speculations of J. W. Dunne and Borges' delighted further speculations on these and on other speculations concerning the variability and incommensurability of time are now aesthetically validated on every side by such suddenly and miraculously commonplace devices as tape loops and intercontinental television. We know that the voice of one no longer physically present had its origin in his physically present body; it is his voice, not an appearance like a portrait or photograph. A man moving in a motion picture or on a television screen can take on powerfully fictional, dramatic truth. When we stultify this dramatic power, as television stultifies it every quarter-hour and the movies more often than not, we stultify our responses by an increasingly uniform indifference. "Shoot-em-ups" and real death occur in the

same dimension, interrupted by no more than an occasional perception of "real" horror in "true" pathos. The instantaneity which is propoganda has been turned by our own newsgatherers against ourselves, so that we cannot regard our brute power with complacency — this perhaps for the first time in the history of war.

6.

It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.
Hear me out
for I too am concerned
and every man
who wants to die at peace in his bed
besides.

William Carlos Williams
Asphodel, That Greeny Flower

7.

John K. Forrest, **Reality or Preachment, The Moral Crisis of our Time**: "In the world of fact and practice, **whatever** matters are treated as of supreme importance and requiring the strongest obligation are thereby given the actual standing of moral worth — regardless of whether men agree to conceive and speak of them by the name 'moral'." But on the same page he writes: "And it must further be remembered that the real moral issue must therefore be **what** worth is being treated as most crucial and imperative and whether such worth is actually most beneficial and fair with respect to the fulfillment of human needs." The difference between these two statements can bring on a Machiavelli or a cup of hemlock. The skill of moral propoganda is to assign one's own persuasive definition of "worth," so well, however deceptively, as to give it "actual standing." The consequence can be Pharisic or Hitlerian.

8.

It is difficult to make ourselves appreciate the fact that in a democracy one can be right for wrong reasons, wrong for right reasons, and wrong for wrong reasons. Most of us believe we are right for right reasons. Tolerance is a restrained aversion. We need to be able to say, That is wrong. I detest your attitude and arguments, but you have the right to be heard.

And most positively so when hatred rises in us. **Apartheid** as a governmental policy could not long survive, if it did not, in covert fear and sick conscience, suppress free discussion.

9.

We need to be careful, too, of false presumptions, for example, that it's not possible to tame or make friends with a killer whale.

10.

Thus also we invent categories of art. A work of art is not its category. When John Cage first came to our home, at the end of the evening I read him my "Schoenberg sonnet" made of a row of 12 words repeated in changing combinations. He said: "It's not a sonnet." I said that didn't matter.

11.

Consider the almost weekly, new, carefully thought schemes to correct "urban blight."

12.

Neither prosperity nor gangsterism, American style, has substantially altered the simple peasant-feudal pattern of loyalty and treachery, enforced by oath and death, of the **Cosa Nostra** families. They intermingle with our society to their own advantage while remaining quite apart from it, like rats.

13.

Notice how the museums are becoming the concert halls of **avant garde** music. The term, **avant garde**, is objectionable for many reasons. I use it for convenience, not derogation.

WestCoastArt

West Coast Art—Canada

Edouard Roditi

Centered in Vancouver and Victoria, the art world of British Columbia can be viewed both as a Northern extension of our own West coast art world, centered in Los Angeles, San Francisco and now to some extent in Seattle too, and also as a far western extension of the Canadian art world that is centered in Montreal and Toronto. Viewed in their Canadian context, the artists of British Columbia seem to be less influenced by French styles than their colleagues from Montreal or Quebec, where French-Canadian painters like Riopelle are naturally attracted to Paris or in close touch with its shifts of taste, and also less preoccupied with discovering and proving their Canadian identity than some of their colleagues of Eastern Canada, so many of whom are sometimes anxious to avoid being too obviously dominated by the art world of New York. The art of British Columbia is thus more eclectic and more open to a variety of American and European influences than that of Eastern Canada; at the same time, much of it still reveals an awareness of the beauty of local natural scenery and the significance of American Indian themes and styles, characteristics that indeed stamp it at times with a regionalist quality that relates it to some of the "frontier" art of Arizona and New Mexico.

Viewed in a context of West coast art, British Columbia's painters prove to be, on the whole, less urban and sophisticated than those of San Francisco and Los Angeles, or perhaps more provincial, at least when they fail to transcend the limitations imposed on them by distance and their isolation from immediate contact with the main currents of contemporary art. As in other peripheral areas of the contemporary art world, these artists of British Columbia must rely all too often, in their attempts to keep up to date, on reproductions, on art books and on art periodicals rather than on direct knowledge of original works by the masters who create new styles. Significant and objectively informative exhibitions of recent art from New York or Paris reach Vancouver and Victoria all too infrequently. Discussing the art of British Columbia in the June-July 1967 issue of *Artscanada*, Philip Leider stressed its isolation and provincialism.

Most of the artists and gallery owners I met in Vancouver sang the same song, bewailing their isolation and the local public's lack of interest in new and experimental art styles. In such a situation, few people now remember how many truly great artists, even in relatively modern times, have lived and worked in this kind of isolation and have even deliberately sought it: Cézanne, for instance, in Aix, Van Gogh in Provence and in Auvers, Gauguin in Brittany and the South Seas, Nolde on the Baltic Coast of Germany, Morandi in a very withdrawn life in Bologna, even Klee, whether in Munich or elsewhere, in a seclusion in which he seemed anxious to avoid too many contacts with the art world and the art market.

The many pressures of the busy art world of Paris and New York can indeed destroy artists as easily as they can encourage them; in fact, they often destroy them by encouraging them too much or in the wrong way. In the hubbub and flattery of an active art market, many an artist is tempted to become novel rather than profound, fashionable rather than serious, competitive rather than creative. In a metropolis like New York, which now has a market for almost anything that can pass muster as art or that can be publicized for its mere novelty and news value, even advance-guard art can soon develop many of the characteristics of commercial art, becoming dehumanized as an art of presentation and display rather than of self-expression and communication.

The art criticism of Paris and New York, on which many artists seem to thrive, has moreover degenerated, to a great extent, into a form of abstruse flattery, resembling in this respect the gushing panegyrics that flow from the typewriters of correspondents attending the seasonal fashion-shows of the *haute couture*. Minor artists who crave this kind of adulation may well find Vancouver's isolation and lack of interest discouraging, but no major artist need necessarily feel frustrated there, unless he happens to be a megalomaniac, more interested in sales and in flattering publicity than in creating work that might satisfy his own aspirations.

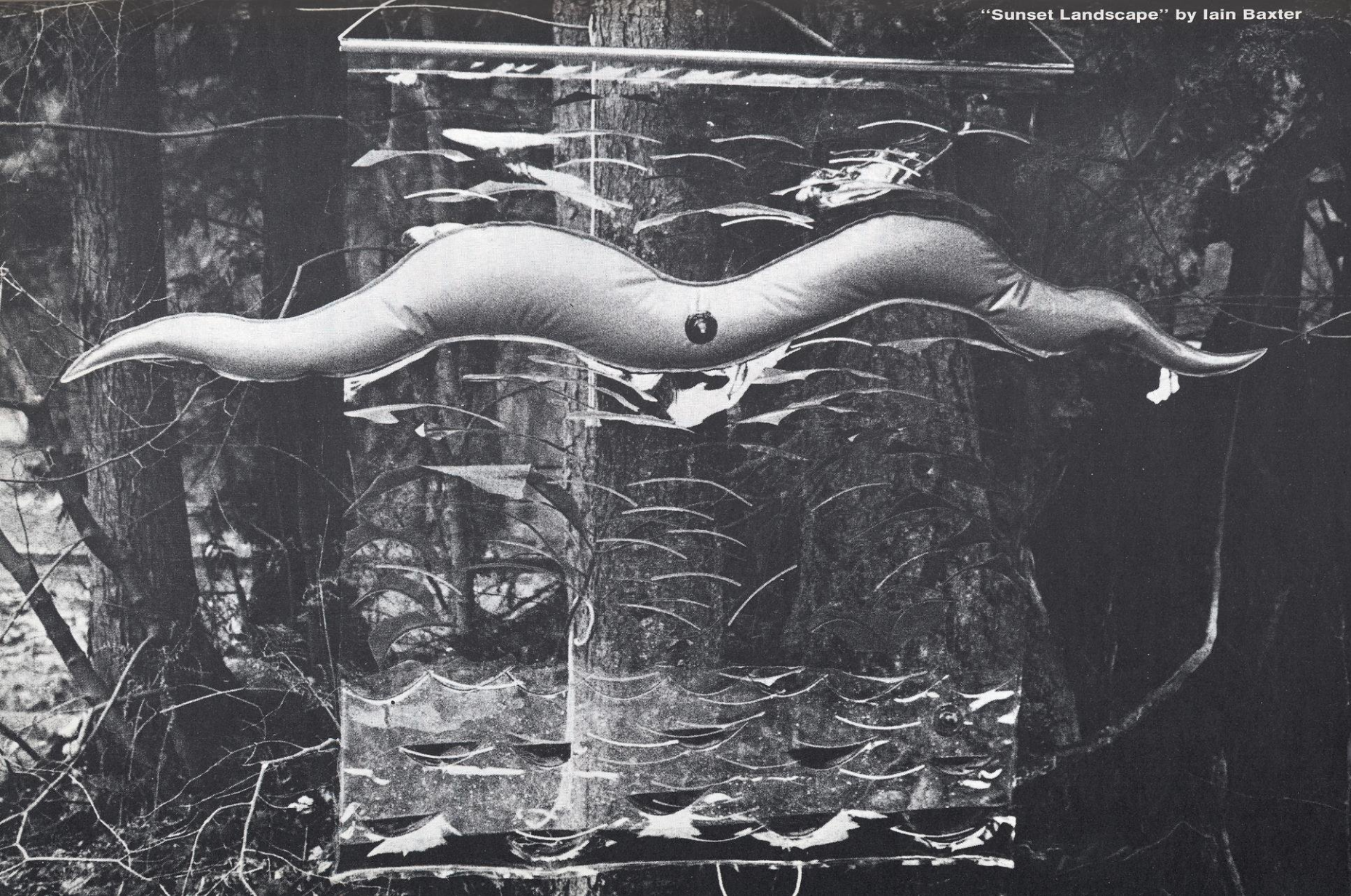
Isolation imposes on the artist, however, the need for a rare gift of self-criticism as soon as he can no longer rely on the

frankly expressed opinions of his own vagaries of taste or of judgement. When Washington Allston returned from Europe to Boston and could no longer associate with artists of the calibre of those who had been his masters, associates and friends among the early Romantics in London, Paris and Italy, he became the victim of a strange and solitary megalomania and worked all too long on an ill-advised project that absorbed and destroyed most of his talent. Provincialism in art can thus be a direct consequence of a lack of sophisticated criteria, whether in the artist's own mind or in the minds of those with whom he is able to discuss his work. However gifted, many of British Columbia's artists remain provincial in this respect, though they happen to be privileged in that they live in the same area as George Woodcock, one of our most perceptive critics of art and literature and, at the University of British Columbia, the editor of **Canadian Literature**, an outstanding quarterly where the problems of Canadian art are also discussed.

The University of British Columbia's involvement in creative or experimental art is moreover very real. For many years, the gallery of its Art Department has been promoting exhibits of a kind that might well attract considerable attention even in New York, though Vancouver's local press has generally tended to ignore them or even to deride them. On the occasion of the 1967 Canadian Centennial of Confederation, the University's Fine Arts Gallery's able curator thus devoted the whole summer to a very cheerful and eclectic show of recent works by younger local artists whose works are generally scattered among a number of small Vancouver and Victoria galleries, such as, in Vancouver, the Douglas Gallery at 1724 Davis Street and the Bau-xi Gallery at 555 Hamilton Street.

Among these artists Iain Baxter, who presides over the destinies of his own A.N. (Any) Thing Company, is one of the very few whose work has so far attracted much attention elsewhere. Early in 1967, he exhibited a hilarious selection of his "things" in Los Angeles, at the deceduous and already defunct Rolf Nelson Gallery, where they caused quite a flutter as mere fun-art in the Los Angeles press, which is

"Sunset Landscape" by Iain Baxter



always avid for anything sensational, whether a new restaurant that serves tuna-fish salad with hot chocolate sauce or a shoe-shine parlor where the customers are serviced by bottomless girls.

Baxter's inventive wit strikes a surprisingly metropolitan note in British Columbia's somewhat provincial and almost rural art world. Though his titles often suggest that he may only be spoofing the sacrosanct masters of New York's Pop art, his *Water for an Oldenburg Soft Toilet*, his *Carrying-case for Andy Warhol's Soft Pillow* and his various other gadgets of this kind can really vie with much that is exhibited in New York by major representatives of a school of instant art that already deserves to be interpreted as a kind of democratization of creativity, since it tends to convince so many laymen that art is but a do-it-yourself hobby which makes every man a potential Leonardo da Vinci. If Baxter limited his activity to this kind of spoofing and created only identical mock packagings for widely-publicized objects created by other artists, he would indeed deserve little attention beyond the frontiers of British Columbia.

But he has also proven himself capable of more ambitious things. Though a virtuoso draftsman whose sketches often suggest a puzzling affinity with those of Morandi, of all people, Baxter has so far distinguished himself mainly as a playful inventor of vinyl "clouds" and other "things" that display a youthful and even poetic quality of original fun or of parody, more light and lyrical than much of the more heavy-handed Funk art of California. In spite of his successes as a nonsense artist who, in an idiom of modern art, spoofs the latter much as Edward Lear, in his nonsense-poetry, spoofed the poetry of Tennyson a hundred years ago, Baxter should nevertheless be warned of the suicidal dangers of confining himself too rigorously within the limited and airtight space of the vinyl "bag" in which he now works almost too exclusively. In the final analysis, the fun of his art is too often derivative and depends too much on the successes of Oldenburg or Warhol. Deprived of their witty titles that deliberately situate them in a context of Pop art, Baxter's vinyl bags

really look like something from a department store's notion department.

Another Vancouver artist whose work manages to transcend the limitations of provincialism is Marianna Schmidt, a Hungarian-born virtuoso of etching and aquatint. Until a couple of years ago, many of her monumental prints still suggested, especially in their population of grotesque homunculi, an influence of the *Art brut* of Dubuffet. But 1966 was the year of her break-through. Since then, every one of her new prints has revealed great originality in composition and an entirely novel range of subject matter, in addition to superb qualities of sheer technique. In a way, Marianna Schmidt's recent work has much in common with that of a few European Neo-surrealists whose work has unfortunately not yet been shown in America, especially with that of Yueksel Arslan, a Turkish artist who works and exhibits in Paris, and that of Piet Morell, a young German who has so far exhibited only in Western Germany. Technically, Marianna Schmidt's work had long been of unusual complexity; it has now become intensely and interestingly personal in its style and subject matter. In her Op art reliefs, on the other hand, Marianna Schmidt allows herself too little freedom and fantasy. Here she seems content to remain a faithful disciple of her Hungarian masters, Moholy-Nagy, Bortnik and Varsarely. It is indeed almost puzzling to see a gifted artist produce, in the medium of prints, such original figurative work, but in another medium, that of reliefs, such strictly impersonal and even conventional compositions.

Among the artists of Vancouver, David Mayrs is the kind of outsider and unabashed provincial who sometimes attracts and deserves more attention than other artists who all too busily follow the latest metropolitan trends. By temperament a born Expressionist, he often suggests naive implications too. He has a rare gift for handling the utterly drab and mediocre aspects of contemporary life as if he were seeing them for the first time, with wonder and awe.

Of all recent styles and movements, Hard Edge and Op art probably offer a provincial artist the best chances of

appearing to be up to date at a small cost of intellectual effort or of imaginative invention. Whether rural or metropolitan, a square is always a square; whether painted in Vancouver, Kalamazoo, New York or Paris, a stripe remains a stripe, and a monochrome by Barnett Newman can look disturbingly like one by John Doe. Most of British Columbia's younger painters of recent years have therefore been, at one time or another, devotees of Op art; a few of them have achieved in it a personal idiom, however limited in its scope, and several have even managed to wean themselves away from it.

Among these devotees of geometrical abstraction, Michael Morris is the most convincing, perhaps because he deliberately avoids solving many of the problems that he sets himself, so that he thus manages to disconcert us by introducing a new element of surprise in a style that no longer surprises us as much as it once did. Bodo Pfeifer, who was born in Germany and, though now living in Western Canada, has faithfully assimilated idioms that seem more native to New York and Paris, illustrates in his recent work the international character of Op art, a style that can indeed be mastered in extension courses, through periodicals and reproductions, at any distance from the major art centres where it has been first formulated and then more widely practiced.

At the Bau-xi Gallery, the work of Claude Breeze, Jack Wise, Brent Gifford and Paul Wong appeared to me to be particularly promising. Born in China, Paul Wong has developed in British Columbia a genuinely Chinese style of "Chinese writing" that might lead him very far. In much of his recent work, broad black brush-strokes fill almost all of his pictorial area, so that his few isolated patches of white achieve paradoxically the effect of signs. Jack White, on the other hand, experiments in a calligraphic style derived from the psychedelic style of San Francisco; at the same time, he reveals an interested affinity with classical Islamic calligraphy. Finally, Glenn Lewis distinguishes himself as one of the very few younger sculptors of British Columbia who have devised a style that is at all personal: his three-dimensional porcelain still-life arrangements are exquisitely useless *objets-de-vertu* for a truly sophisticated collector.

The Museums of British Columbia, whether in Vancouver or Victoria, still have far to go before their attractions can compete with those of our own Pacific Coast. To celebrate Canada's centennial of confederation, the Vancouver Art Gallery, an institution which has already earned respect through its courageous sponsorship of local art in recent years, exhibited throughout the Summer of 1967 a remarkable collection of masterpieces of Indian art from the Northwest coastal region, produced by the Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Bella Coola and Kwakiutl tribes. Many of the finest pieces had been loaned to American museums and collectors, who learned to appreciate this art at a time when Canadians still neglected it and relegated it all too often to the dusty basements of provincial museums.

Most of the work exhibited had been produced in the Nineteenth century, some fine pieces even as late as the first quarter of our own century. The art of the Tlingit, Haida and Kwakiutl tribes, in particular, seems to have been greatly stimulated by early contacts with European and American pioneers and fur-traders. The remarkable Haida slate-carvings, for instance, were produced exclusively for trade with outsiders and not at all for use or decoration within the tribe. The greatest Haida artist whose name is remembered, Charles Edenshaw (1839-1924), worked in his maturity and later years mainly for European and American patrons.

While I was visiting the exhibition in the Art Gallery, I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with a couple of Kwakiutl craftsmen. It was interesting to see that they were discovering there, among the older pieces exhibited, a number of types of masks that are no longer produced or even remembered within the tribe. Later, they accompanied me to the Canadian Cottage Industry store at 750 Robson Street, where they generally dispose of their own work; there they showed me several masks that were exact replicas of some of the less ancient ones exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery. As in other areas of art, it would appear that contemporary demand favors repetitiousness by narrowing down its choice of models to suit the status-requirements of competitive collectors who all want to own and display more or less the same art objects.



**MASK, Bear with three cubs. Tlingit,
The Vancouver Art Gallery**

Canada's Pacific Coast has not yet developed, however, the same kind of status-seeking elite of collectors of modern or primitive art as New York or Los Angeles. Much of Vancouver's wealthier citizenry consists of relatively recent immigrants from Eastern Canada or from Europe who are still anxious to consolidate their positions by investing in income-producing equities. Outdoor sports also enjoy, in this unbelievably beautiful landscape, more prestige than elsewhere, especially winter sports and water sports. Vancouver's middle class therefore tends to display its wealth in yachts and sky cabins rather than in Op or Pop art.

But British Columbia's booming economy may very soon make Vancouver a major West Coast art center, gradually acquiring a character of its own. While the Hippy poster designers of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury are only now discovering the basic designs of Kwakiutl art as a source of inspiration after having exhausted their scant and superficial knowledge of Mucha, Beardsley and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a growing colony of refugees from Californian draftboards is drifting to Vancouver's Fourth Avenue, where the Diggers already look after them, providing pads and feed-ins for the needy, a more practical version of the be-in, the love-in or the sleep-in of San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Vancouver's Hippy colony seems moreover to be less addicted to Timothy Leary's explorations of inner space, more concerned with what Allen Ginsberg has aptly called "kitchen yoga." San Francisco and Vancouver may thus offer us soon, in Hippy terms, a new illustration of the contrary virtues symbolized in the Gospels by Martha and Mary. In a way, dish-washing and kitchen yoga can be expected to provide, for truly creative artists, a richer topsoil than the somewhat restricted inner space to which the readers of San Francisco's **Oracle** limit themselves in their sedentary sessions of meditation and discussion. Much of the Los Angeles Hippy community has already distinguished itself from the San Francisco "bubble-heads" by being more directly concerned with social or intellectual issues, less content with merely shocking or exploiting the week-end tourist who comes from the suburbs to buy beads and collect subjects

of conversation for future parties, or to track down a run-away teen-age daughter. Vancouver's Hippy community seems indeed to be ready to go one step further in the direction of solving immediate material and practical problems in the life of the non-conformist who rejects all the Establishment's present involvements.

1978

Rage Against Iniquity

Weller Emler

"Beardsley, I was defending you last night in the only way in which it is possible to defend you, by saying that all you draw is inspired by rage against iniquity."
— William Butler Yeats in "The Tragic Generation."

I

Matthew Arnold's observation that "poetry is a criticism of life" could as well apply to all works of art, and with special pertinence to those that draw their content from legend and myth.

Of the legends that inspired late nineteenth-century criticisms of life, none, it appears, was culturally more meaningful than the story of St. John the Baptist and Salome. The legend appealed to the creative imagination of Stéphane Mallarmé as early as 1864 in his conception of the verse drama *Hérodiade*. Though Mallarmé worked on the poem over a period of many years, it was never completed; but one of the sections, the longest, entitled "Scène," was published in a magazine in 1869.

The first finished nineteenth-century literary work based on the legend was *Herodias* by Gustave Flaubert, published in 1877. *Herodias* has been much admired by scholars and with good reason. It is a virtuoso performance with all the skill of the writer lavished upon it.

Though Auguste Rodin's sculpture *St. Jean Baptiste* (1879) is a representation of the Baptist preaching rather than a figure of the martyr at the hands of Herod, St. John was a symbol for Rodin and becomes in bronze a statement of the mighty force of faith at the dawn of Christianity. In his essay on Rodin, Rainer Maria Rilke says, "'St. John' steps forth with excited, speaking arms and with the splendid step of one who feels Another follow him."¹

The legend was also an inspiration for painters of the nineteenth century. *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist* (c. 1869) by the French painter Puvis de Chavannes is an impressive pictorial dramatization of the legend. The essence of saintliness is embodied in the figure of St. John kneeling in the moonlit courtyard,

intensely alive at the moment of consummate violence.²

Salome Dancing before Herod (c. 1870) by Gustave Moreau enjoyed a wide reputation in its time, in part as a result of the praise given the painting by Joris Karl Huysmans in his novel, **A Rebours** (1884). In a prose only slightly less hieratic and gorgeous than the painting itself. Huysmans celebrates Moreau's **Salome** as a masterpiece of visual art.³ Gustave Moreau was haunted by the image of Salome, said Arthur Symons, and he painted her "a hundred times, always a rigid flower of evil, always in the midst of sumptuous glooms or barbaric splendours."

Oscar Wilde wrote his play **Salome** ("A Tragedy in One Act") in French in 1891, and although not one of his major works, it had power and meaning enough to inspire drawings by Aubrey Beardsley and an opera by Richard Strauss. Wilde's **Salome** was banned in England by the Lord Chamberlain in 1892, but was published in French in 1893, and in English, in the translation by Lord Alfred Douglas, in 1894, and produced in Paris in 1896. Whatever else may be said of **Salome**, it is a revealing literary document of the attitude of mind of artists and writers of the fin-de siècle.

Beardsley first met Wilde in 1891. Although they grew to dislike one another, at the start of their acquaintance their admiration was mutual. In 1893 Beardsley was commissioned to do the illustrations for the 1894 English translation of **Salome**. Wilde was vexed by some of the drawings, either because they were too flippant for the text or too erotic for Wilde's taste, or both. Though often bizarre, the illustrations are distinctly pictorial. The Victorians had not before known salacity rendered with such highly-wrought suggestiveness. Except for the opera by Richard Strauss, it is Beardsley's **Salome** who has engaged the erotic imagination of the twentieth century more than any other re-creation of the legend.

The opera **Salome** by Richard Strauss is based on the play by Wilde and was first produced at the Royal Opera, Dresden, in December, 1905. It too had a stormy career at the hands of the censors.

After its first performance at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, one critic announced that he was "stung into righteous fury by the moral stench with which Salome fills the nostrils of Humanity." Decidedly a work of musical genius, Strauss's **Salome** has survived the early criticisms and found a permanent place in the opera repertory.

II

Briefly, the legend of St. John the Baptist and Salome is as follows. Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great, king of Judaea at the time when Jesus was born. By the will of his father, who died in 4 B.C., Herod Antipas became Tetrarch of Galilee and was supported in this position by the Romans, especially Vitellius, the Roman governor.

Herod Antipas repudiated his wife and married Herodias, daughter of his half brother Aristobulus and wife of his half brother Herod Philip, whom she divorced to marry Herod Antipas. Salome was the daughter of Herodias and Herod Philip.

At the time of Herodias' marriage to Herod Antipas, John the Baptist, a leader among the people, was preaching in the land of Judaea and calling upon the Jews to repent, for the advent of the Messiah had already taken place, he said, and the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

The Jews were outraged at the incestuous relationship of Herod and Herodias; and John the Baptist condemned Herod for having taken his brother's wife. John was even more critical of Herodias, and in his public preaching accused her of outstanding wickedness and threatened her with the wrath of God. Herodias hated John, and at her insistence Herod imprisoned him in an empty well. But according to the Gospels, Herod knew that John was a holy man, and he feared him and wished him no harm.

Herodias held her daughter apart from court life, preparing to use Salome on some celebrated occasion to seduce Herod into effecting the destruction of John the Baptist. The occasion presented itself when Herod gave a sumptuous feast in honor of his birthday. As entertainment





Illustrations for Oscar Wilde's *Salome* by Aubrey Beardsley

during the evening, Salome danced before Herod a dance so alluring and seductive that Herod, with uncontrollable enthusiasm, promised to reward her with anything she might wish. When she asked for the head of John the Baptist, Herod, overwhelmed at the magnitude of the request, finally granted it, according to the Gospels, only "for his oath's sake." The order was given, and the executioner performed the act, taking the severed head on a salver to Salome, who, again according to Saint Matthew, brought it to her mother. John's disciples "came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." Herod was covered with confusion and remorse; but I do not find that he ordered Salome put to death then or later.

III

We may now proceed to coordinate the various artistic readings of the story of Salome and St. John the Baptist. It is tempting to use a chronological approach, but if we are to understand the use to which the legend was put in the cultural context of the late nineteenth century, we shall have to abandon the historical order in favor of the interplay of the separate themes in the larger design.

In the chapter entitled "The Tragic Generation" in William Butler Yeats' autobiographical *Trembling of the Veil*, the poet records memories of his acquaintance with Aubrey Beardsley. Victimhood, says Yeats, presents itself in many complex forms; and "I ask myself if I cannot so explain the strange, precocious genius of Beardsley."

This was not a literary insight. It was a statement of fact about the life and work of the "decadent" artists of the fin-de-siècle who felt themselves doomed to be victims of a society bent on elevating hypocrisy to a way of life; and anything — drawings, poems, plays, novels — that cried shame by way of being itself "shameful" infuriated the popular mind.

For the artistic sensibility of the time, the legend of St. John and Salome was richly symbolic. The Pharisees of Victorian London were a generation of vipers eager for the heads of any who interfered with their ceremonial self-righteousness.

Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley were convinced that they were preaching in a wilderness, and they identified themselves with the Baptist imprisoned in the cisterns of Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee.

In reading Wilde's letters chronologically, says W. H. Auden in his essay "An Improbable Life," "there is an excitement similar to that of watching a Greek tragedy in which the audience knows what is going to happen while the hero does not." Though Wilde did not know **what** was going to happen, he knew surely that something was; for he was determined, if not destined, to martyrdom. The life of Jesus was of central interest to Wilde, and it may be that he wished consciously to imitate the sufferings of Jesus, His humiliation, and His death. But Wilde was not the new Messiah, whatever illusions he may have had in the years of his pitiful and terrible demise. He was not the Christ of the 1890s, and to suggest that he was would be to confuse matters beyond spiritual endurance. No excuse can be offered for the torment Wilde was forced to undergo at the hands of the social order of his time; but Wilde's was an artistic sensibility, not a spiritual one. His preaching and suffering in, as he saw it, the philistine wilderness of Victorian London corresponds more nearly to the legend of St. John the Baptist than to the life of Christ. For to Wilde, St. John was the victim not so much of religious persecution as of the vices of a brutish and decaying society. In any case, it is significant that Wilde should have chosen to tell the story of John and Salome just prior to the memorable fury visited upon him by an age that must have seen much of itself reflected in his writings.

As we have already noted, the novel *A Rebours* by Joris Karl Huysmans contains an elaborate passage in praise of Gustave Moreau's painting, **Salome Dancing Before Herod**. Des Esseintes, the protagonist of *A Rebours*, sits often in adoration before the painting. "Writers," says Des Esseintes, "have never yet succeeded in rendering the delirious frenzy of the wanton, the subtle grandeur of the murderess." For Des Esseintes, only the painter Moreau had

realized at last the Salome, weird and superhuman, he had dreamed of. No longer

“Salome Dancing Before Herod” (1876) by Gustave Moreau
The Huntington Hartford Collection, Gallery of Modern Art, New York



*was she merely the dancing-girl who extorts a cry of lust and concupiscence from an old man by the lascivious contortions of her body. . . . She was now revealed in a sense as the symbolic incarnation of world-old vice, a monstrous Beast of the Apocalypse, indifferent, irresponsible, insensible, poisoning . . . all who come hear her, all who touch her.**

Huysmans may very well have been thinking of Flaubert's *Herodias* when he said that writers had not succeeded in rendering the "subtle grandeur of the murderess."

Flaubert's *Herodias* is the story of the conflict between the Romans and the Jews at the beginning of the Christian era, and Salome in *Herodias* is only the agent set mechanically to carry out her mother's wishes. For Moreau and for Huysmans and for Wilde, however, Salome is the central figure of the legend, a wily and satanic temptress. In Moreau's painting Salome carries before her in ritualistic fashion a lotus flower, age-old pagan symbol of fertility. The irony is not obscure. The flower of divine birth has become the "flower of concupiscence." With it and with the "unholy charm" of the dance, Salome stalks her victim.

When Wilde wrote *Salome* he intended, I suspect, to show that a writer had at last arrived who could render the "subtle grandeur of the murderess." And it is in Wilde's *Salome* that the full meaning of the legend for his time was portrayed. Salome's longing is the longing of the depraved for innocence and purity. Salome is fanatical in her desire at once to possess innocence and to destroy it. St. John is the victim, just as the saintly Basil Hallward is the victim of the rage and fear of the outwardly handsome, the inwardly corrupt, Dorian Gray. Evil cannot tolerate innocence except as it become innocence itself, which might indeed be its aim. (But I do not know this for a fact.) Salome and her mother Herodias, representing the corrupt society against which St. John preached so eloquently, have strong appetites for blood. Salome's hunger for the lips of her desire is satisfied only when they are innocent and blood-stained, when they are dead, and when the head is held in the hand that ordered its severance.

*A *Rebours*, translated into English with the title *Against the Grain*, Modern Library Paperback, New York.

The drawings Aubrey Beardsley made for Wilde's *Salome* are a measure not only of his genius but of the depth of his feeling of victimage. To use a phrase of Albert Camus from his analysis of "dandyism" in *The Rebel*, Beardsley's illustrations, like the play itself, are a "cry of outraged innocence." When popular indignation over his drawings caused Beardsley to be dismissed from the art editorship of *The Yellow Book*, he became, according to Yeats, "embittered and miserable" and "plunged into dissipation." He was then about twenty-three years old, the victim of the society which he so impudently pictured in his drawings and of the disease of tuberculosis which was to take his life three years later.

By all accounts, however, Beardsley's friends, acquaintances, and fellow artists admired his work and his person. He had considerable charm and "a most delightful smile both for friends and strangers." For Max Beerbohm, "He was always, whenever one saw him, in the highest spirits, full of fun and fresh theories about life and art." Even Whistler, a difficult man to impress, told Beardsley on one occasion (recounted in *The Life of James McNeill Whistler* by Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell), "You are a very great artist," and when, at that, Beardsley burst into tears, "All Whistler could say, when he could say anything, was 'I mean it — I mean it — I mean it.'"

Beardsley's drawings are not mere sensuality as at first sight they might seem to be. When studied, they become intellectual commentaries on the clandestine eroticism of the time. The illustrations for *Salome* were in a sense "fashionable" drawings, intended, like cartoons, to be references to the age. In mood they are brazen and impertinent, and never sentimental; in one ("The Stomach Dance"), the demonic interpreter, the jester-like figure Beardsley so often used to make pictorial comment on the main characters, is sticking out his tongue, either as a challenge to the viewer or a gesture of disgust for the show going on above him, perhaps both.

In the summer of 1892, Beardsley was in Paris, and there he met the painter Puvlis de Chavannes (1824-1898). Puvlis introduced him to his friends as a



**"The Beheading of St. John the Baptist"
by Puvis de Chavannes
National Gallery, London**

promising young English artist; and it is quite possible that during his visit Beardsley saw **The Beheading of St. John the Baptist**, which Puvis had painted in 1869, and he may well have regarded it with respect. When, however, it was Beardsley's turn to illustrate the legend, he placed the emphasis, as Wilde had done, on Salome's necrophilic obsession, whereas for Puvis, the central vision had been the saintliness of St. John.

No two styles could be more unlike than those of Puvis de Chavannes and Aubrey Beardsley; but the bond of the subject is present, and the meaning is perhaps essentially the same, innocence triumphant. Puvis had long been subjected to bitter criticism, and he, too, was sensitive and had been wounded by the attacks upon him and his paintings. Puvis' paintings, in the mural tradition, are tranquil and full of a mystical faith, similar in feeling to the music of his contemporary Cesar Franck (1822-1890). The flow of the pale colors, modulating harmonically, is comparable to the flowing chromaticism of Franck's music and the quiet ecstasy of, for example, passages in the **Symphony in D minor**. Puvis' wall-paintings are tone poems in subdued colors. **The Beheading of St. John the Baptist** pictures St. John at the moment of his martyrdom, the executioner at the left with raised sword ready to strike, Salome on the right poised more in curiosity than lust or horror, and St. John at the center, peaceful, devout, certain in his faith.

It was not ecstasy or faith or mystical feelings that inspired Beardsley when he came to do his illustrations for **Salome** (though as a matter of fact, Beardsley was himself of a deeply religious nature). If the Beardsley people cast a spell, it does not last for long. They are purgatorial ghosts who vanish when they are not being looked at. It is difficult to remember them. They are imprisoned on the paper, as indeed they should be, being ideas, phantoms of the erotic imagination. In **Salome** he expressed Salome depraved, Salome sly and monstrous in her appetite for power over innocence. If Beardsley thought of Salome as representing the society of his time, then (to emend a famous line of Lord Byron) society scorned is, like Salome scorned, the embodiment of Hell's fury. The Beardsley imps, the

Beardsley woman, the lucid Beardsley line are statements, not of faith, but of fact, the fact of social corruption.

One of the drawings for **Salome** is entitled "The Stomach Dance," and it corresponds with interesting similarity to Flaubert's description of Salome's dance in his story **Herodias**:

Her eyes were half-closed; she wriggled her hips, and when she rolled her belly like undulating waves, her breasts would quiver. Her face remained impassive, but her feet did not stop.⁴

In **Herodias**, however, Salome is merely an instrument of the treachery of her mother. As we have noted earlier, it was not Salome who excited Flaubert's creative imagination. Mainly, Flaubert describes the behavior of the decadent life of the court of Herod Antipas. The barbarism of the feast, the lurking savagery in the conflicts between the Jews and Romans, Samaritans and Jews, Pharisees and Sadducees are erudite evocations of a time and place.

It would be rash to suggest that Flaubert had in mind his own age and society when he wrote **Herodias**. There were many differences between what he considered the complacency, coarseness, and banality of his environment and the scenes of oriental sensuality, intrigue, and barbarism in the religious and civil conflicts of Roman history in the near East. Nevertheless, there was something in the legend of Salome and John the Baptist that had enough meaning for Flaubert to incite him to one of his finest literary creations; and it is not impossible that beneath the differences of costume and custom, he saw likenesses of ambition, callousness, and hypocrisy. He, too, had been subjected to harsh criticism at the hands of his detractors, and his writings had been charged with immorality. He, too, was a severe moralist, preaching not in the guise of John the Baptist but of an archaeological scholar.

Richard Strauss based his opera **Salome** on Oscar Wilde's play, translated from the French into German. The opera is a rich musical mosaic of the story, and it is faithful to Wilde's version of the legend. Very possibly Strauss was inspired more by the play's challenge to his musicianship

**"St. John the Baptist Preaching" (1878) by Auguste RODIN
The Museum of Modern Art, New York**



than by the meaning for his time of the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist. "Mysticism was alien to his soul," says Paul Henry Lang, "and he seized upon the actual and visible only." *Salome*, says Lang, is rendered "as a form of observed realism and not as the result of a painful and torturing experience." But the fact of the matter is that Strauss chose Wilde's story instead of the one told in the Gospels, which was, for example, Flaubert's source. (It will be remembered that in the biblical account, Salome is not the sybarite intoxicated with desire for the lips of the Baptist, nor is there any mention of Salome's having been put to death at Herod's order.) In Strauss's opera the accent is on the princess, her sensuality, her perversity, her evil. There is no hint of the commonplace in the music that centers upon Salome; the "Dance of the Seven Veils" is in itself a masterpiece, and the motive of longing for innocence, like the yearning of a purgatorial shade for wholeness, hovers unfinished throughout the opera until it is brought to full expression in the final scene, at once a longing and a fulfillment. One might venture the thought that in the serenity of the motive's consummation, the violence of Salome's passion is transformed into a beatific vision of innocence.

What its detractors failed to see in Strauss's *Salome* is the powerful vision of evil it presents. Though in the mode decadent, the opera is preserved against any taint of morbidity in the unflinching directness with which it gazes upon evil and records what it sees. "Disgusting," the critics said, and "Fascinating," too.

Yeats in his *Autobiography* speaks of the importance to his generation of writing about subjects long forbidden and "to do this not only 'with the highest moral purpose,' but gaily, out of sheer mischief." For Yeats the high moral purpose consisted in recovering the "vision of Evil," obscured out of mind and sight by the complacency of the times, perhaps deliberately repressed by an aimless optimism and a cloak of false innocence. When the artist insisted upon facing the Devil and all his works, the popular mind was disgusted, fascinated, and indignant. But to some artists, like Richard Strauss, how the popular mind reacted made very little difference. He was a realist and a

craftsman. He knew the abyss was there, and he looked into it, very possibly with a "high moral purpose," certainly with irreproachable musicianship.

August Rodin (1840-1917) suffered more than once from the attacks of calumniators, as in the incident of the accusation against him that he had molded his *Age d'airain* (1877) from a living body. This was manifestly untrue, as was later demonstrated. When two years after the false accusation Rodin chose St. John the Baptist as a subject for a piece of sculpture, he was inspired by the power of innocence at the dawn of Christianity. Rodin inclined more to origins and beginnings than to the end of something; and it is the revelation out of the desert, the announcement of great things to come, that he feels rather than the agony of martyrdom. This faith in the vitality of beginnings may indeed have been what sustained Rodin through periods of criticism and gave him the confidence necessary to the creation of his immortal works. It may be recalled that Flaubert built his story around the idea that John the Baptist knew it was his work to announce the Messiah, not to be one. In *Herodias*, John says, "I must decrease that He may increase." And so in *St. Jean Baptiste* the wonder is that Rodin caught so well the features of the precursor, eager in his stride, strong in his faith that a revelation is at hand.

As we know, Stéphane Mallarmé had contemplated a *Hérodiade* (Salome) as early as 1866. Though subsequently each artist and writer was to interpret the legend in his own way, Mallarmé's "Scène," published in a magazine in 1869, serves well as a conclusion, a last act, as it were, suitable to all the various readings and to the fin-de-siècle mood as expressed in both art and life.

Many are the meanings assigned to Mallarmé's *Hérodiade*,⁵ said to be his "most accessible" and by the same critic (Charles Mauron) one of the "most submarine" poems in the French language." But read with reference to what we now know of the legend and the uses to which it was put in the nineteenth century, it seems to me a revealing literary expression of the compelling search for spiritual purity in a markedly impure world. It is not

the victim of evil who is central to Mallarmé's poem, nor the gross vulgarity of a society bent on destroying its victims; it is not evil incarnate in a lascivious dance, not these but the desire of the tormented soul for a gem-like spiritual serenity, the will to wait for renewal, disdainful of life, to wait, as Salome tells the Nurse in the poem, "with eyes lost in Paradise."

When the Nurse discovers her, Salome is in a tower in which she has, apparently, imprisoned herself to "await a thing unknown." The Nurse is surprised to find the princess alive, and seeks to kiss her hand. At that, Salome, in terror, reminds the Nurse that a kiss would kill her (not a kiss of betrayal but the kiss that would transport her on the instant back to the world of the flesh which she has forsaken). Salome explains that even the lions of the dungeon do not touch her, for they have seen her pause by a basin of jetting water, her reverie (which they can read) fixed upon the hope of purification. Even her feet, at which the lions gaze, could at the moment of hope "calm the sea."

The Nurse offers perfumes and Salome is again frightened and commands her to "Leave there the perfumes! Do you not know / that I hate them." Only gold, "forever virgin of aromatics" is compatible with the "sterile coldness" to which she has dedicated herself in her purgatorial loneliness.

Salome is not yet ready for the thing unknown. Often when she looks in the mirror (which is likened to "cold water frozen with ennui") she appears to herself a "far-off shade"; but sometimes in the "severe fount" of the mirror there are dimly outlined ("sparse") dreams of nudity, and she remembers that she was beautiful.

Once again, out of habit, the Nurse, who does not understand Salome's baptismal longings, attempts to replace a lock of unruly hair. "Stop in your crime / Which chills my blood toward its source," Salome cries. What demon is it that urges you to touch me. At this the Nurse becomes aware that Salome is in another world. "You wander, solitary shade," with "a new fierceness . . . precocious with dread." Salome has willed her own purgatory — "a new fierceness." Is it a

god for whom she waits, asks the Nurse. No, Salome replies, it is for herself, for herself in the fulness of purity.

In the last lines of the poem, Salome calls to the moon and says that her "dream will mount" toward her "sister eternal." She knows, now, a "supreme joy." Narcissus-like she has withdrawn into herself and is "alone," in the solitude of angels. When the Nurse asks whether the princess is to die thus, Salome reassures her that she will go to a land where Venus "the eve long, burns in the leafage"; but as the Nurse departs, Salome says to herself, "You lie, naked flower / Of my lips! / I await a thing unknown."

In **Beyond the Pleasure Principle**, Sigmund Freud calls attention to a psychic phenomenon of interest to us here.⁶ "The ego-instincts," he says in Chapter VI, "spring from the vitalising of inanimate matter, and have as their aim the reinstatement of lifelessness." Freud's hypothesis of a death-instinct is well known; what is not so often studied is his development of the theory in **Beyond the Pleasure Principle**. The Libido of sexual instincts is the Eros of poets and philosophers and "holds together all things living." On the other hand, "Our recognition that the ruling tendency of psychic life . . . is the struggle for reduction . . . or removal of the inner stimulus tension . . . is indeed one of our strongest motives for believing in the existence of death-instincts." The primary tendency of the pleasure-principle is to keep the "psychic apparatus as a whole free from any excitation, or to keep the amount of excitation constant or as low as possible." Thus "the function so defined would partake of the most universal tendency of all living matter — to return to the peace of the inorganic world."

Applying Freud's hypothesis to Mallarmé's **Hérodiade**, we may read Salome's ritual of the tower to be an ardent desire for release from the excitations of her guilt. To be reminded of the lusts of the flesh by a touch from the Nurse, to be reminded of perfumes and of memories of her beauty causes deep pain. What Salome seeks in the mirror, substitute for the water of baptism, is evidence of the other half of herself, the sanctified, the

incorruptible. What she awaits — “the thing unknown” — is not the caress of a god but the peace of the inorganic world, the mysterious peace and purity of rare gems hidden in the abysses of the earth; and the parallel to Salome’s spiritual search for the purity of the inorganic world is Mallarmé’s own aesthetic search for perfection in the work of art.

IV

But Salome’s undivided attention to the ritual of her soul’s perfection, like Mallarmé’s life-long devotion to perfection in the art of poetry, is, for the living, not a reality but a metaphor of aspiration. And so in the end, at least the end of the nineteenth century, a number of writers and artists sought, not the peace of the inorganic world, but the peace offered by the Church of Rome. Prodigals, they returned to the fold after many wanderings, and it was ready to receive them with no questions asked. One can only suppose that it was love they were seeking, and especially that love which offers very simply and without ceremony the warm and protective embrace, sanctuary and shelter from not only their sins (often unduly magnified) but from the sins of a harsh and at best an indifferent world.

*Upon the eyes, the lips, the feet,
On all the passages of sense,
The anoning oil is spread with sweet
Renewal of lost innocence.*

— Ernest Dowson, from the poem
“Extreme Unction.”

Whatever may be said of the writers and artists of the fin-de-siècle, that they turned, finally, to the Church for rest and peace of mind, that they begged sweet forgiveness of their mistresses, that they were incautious enough as impudently to denounce the hypocrisy of their times, that they retreated into themselves in search of the precious and the rare, that they were intemperate and perverse, that, victims themselves, they displayed the head of John the Baptist on a silver salver before the horrified eyes of the public — whatever else may be said, their imaginations and their works were devoted to a restoration of the spiritual life. Only a small part of their work, after

all, is art for art’s sake preciosity. But in spite of the eagerness of stride in Rodin’s *St. Jean Baptiste*, the record is not so much of a beginning, a time of revelation, as of the end of something, a waiting for the thing unknown. “After us,” said Yeats, “the Savage God.”

Yeats’ poem “The Second Coming” would serve well as a conclusion to this study. Interestingly, the last sentences of Yeats’ chapter “The Tragic Generation” in *Trembling of the Veil* (1922), though apparently written after “The Second Coming” (1920), are a commentary on the poem and express in themselves the feeling many artists and writers must have had after the century had come to a close. They are:

*After Stéphane Mallarmé, after Paul Verlaine,
after Gustave Moreau, after Puvis de
Chavannes, after our own verse, after all our
subtle colour and nervous rhythm, after the
faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is
possible? After us the Savage God.*

After us, Yeats might have said, the
Twentieth Century.

NOTES

1. *St. Jean Baptiste* is in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.
2. *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist (La Décollation de Saint Jean-Baptiste)* is in the National Gallery, London.
3. *Salome Dancing before Herod* is in the Collection Huntington Hartford, Gallery of Modern Art, New York City.
4. Gustave Flaubert, *Three Tales*, translated by Walter F. Cobb, Foreword by Henri Peyre, New York, 1964.

5.
Stéphane Mallarmé: Poems, translated by Roger Fry, with commentaries by Charles Mauron, New York, 1951. The **Hérodiade** is in three parts: Ouverture Ancienne, Scene, and Cantique de Saint Jean.

6.
Sigmund Freud, **Beyond the Pleasure Principle**, translated by C. J. M. Hubback, London, 1948, pages 64-81.

Kretzschmar

The Kinetic Scope of Cassen and Stern

Barry N. Schwartz

It has been a long time since Thomas Wilfred recognized light as an art medium. One would like to be able to say that a great deal has happened since then, but that's not the case. Light is still explored as an art form, rarely utilized more significantly than as innovation. While the sophistication of new techniques has made possible more satisfying uses of the medium, in general we owe thanks for this more to Kodak than to individual artists.

Two exceptions are Jackie Cassen and Rudi Stern, who have extended the use of light into new areas, demonstrating its validity as an art medium. Attributing the success of these two to their artistic maturation is to state a half-truth. Success has come only with the maturation of their audience. If their early work was received by the young, the turned on, and the hip, it was only because the more sophisticated art audiences were unprepared to accept something which had thus far eluded the charge of the critic brigade. It's a long way from a program on DMT in the East Village to the main gallery of the Architectural League; but it is a route travelled by artists because of audiences.

Jackie Cassen and Rudi Stern are the creators of the techniques that are becoming increasingly familiar: slide projections, moving sculpture used for light effects, total-environment art, and an ambiguous hesitancy between art and design. The Electric Circus may now be **the** place to go, but it is so only because Cassen and Stern created, with the Trips Festival at the same location, and with the visuals for the Cheetah, the techniques which transformed these ballrooms into discotheques. Soaps, bathtubs, and toothpaste are now sold by light projection techniques innovated by Cassen and Stern in their commercial publicity work for Best & Co., and their industrial exhibits for Dutch Masters and Simplicity Patterns, among others, and their promotion of Antonioni's "Blow Up." They have moved light from California to Boston, from Tim Leary's hippie haven to the White House, and they have travelled only where they have been welcomed.

Cassen and Stern, with their new perceptions, are no strangers to tradition. Their training is traditional, their degrees



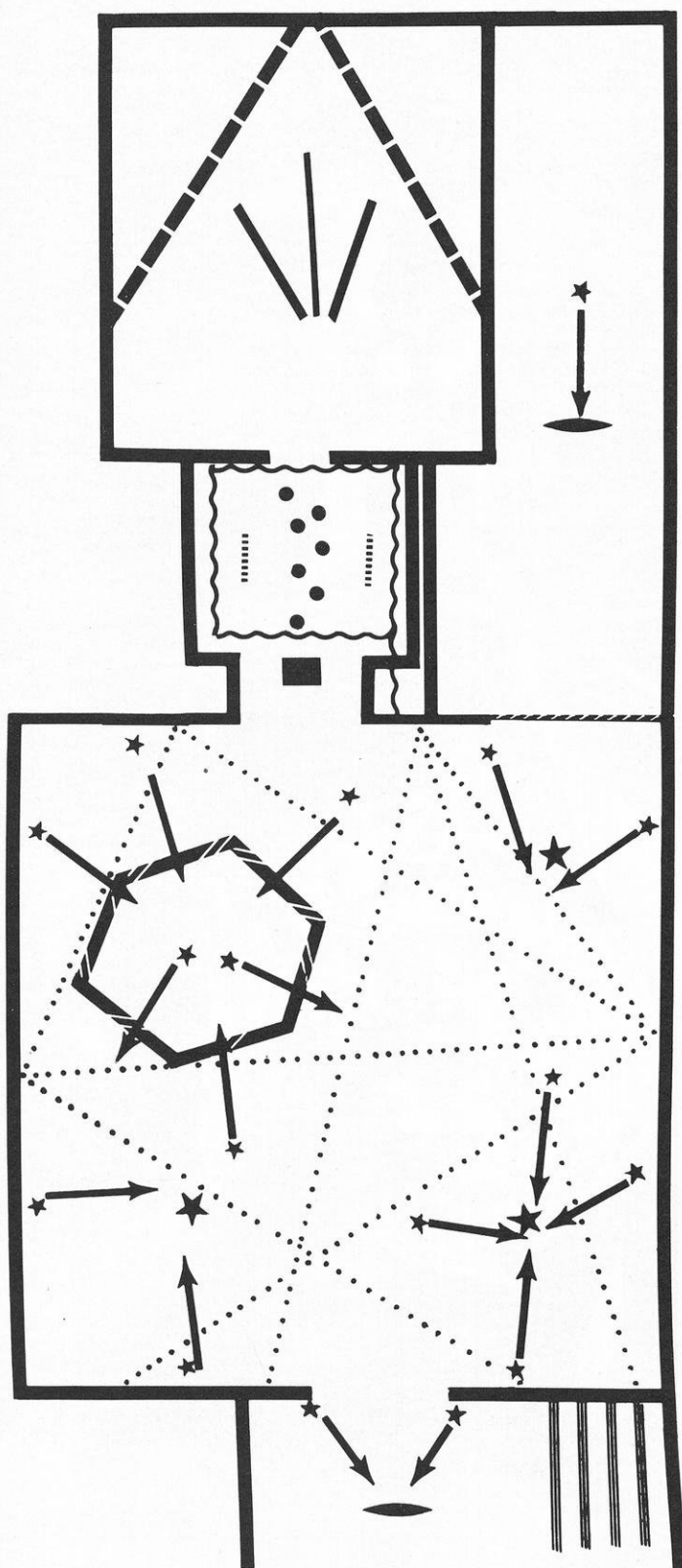
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VIBRATION

JACKIE CASSEN · RUDI STERN

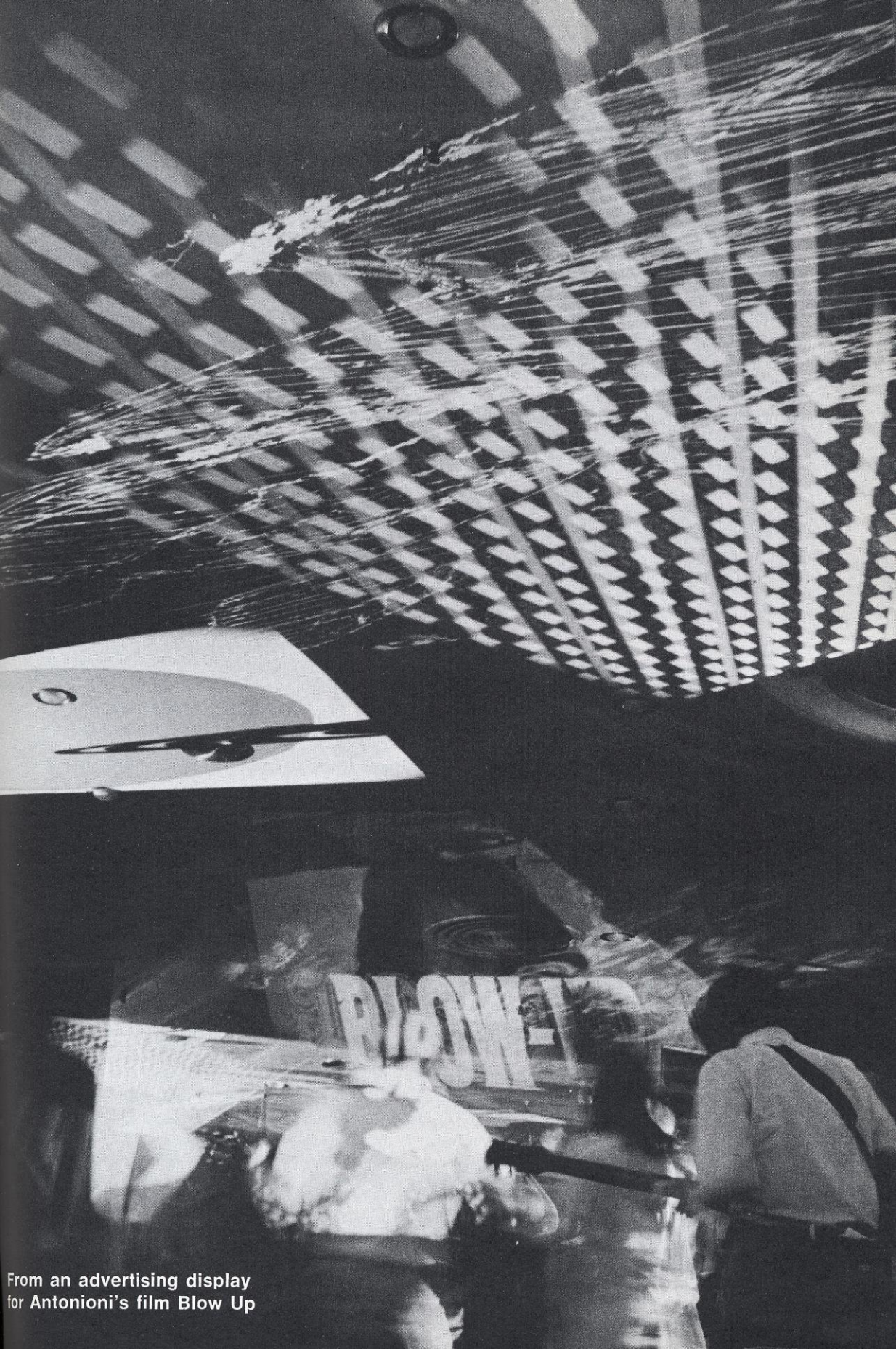
Architectural League of New York
41 East 65 th. st. N.Y.C.

Dec. 14, 1967 · Jan. 11, 1968



- — — — — MIRRORED SURFACE
- ~~~~~ POOL & WATER SOURCE
- FOUNTAINS
- PLEXIGLASS BLOCKS
- ⌌ FIBER OPTICS CONSTRUCTION
- SOURCE OF BLACK LIGHT
- PATH OF LIGHT
- ★ PROJECTOR
- ★ SCULPTURE
- ▨ GEODESIC SPHERE
- ◌ REAR SCREEN
- LIGHT ACTIVATED SOUND PATTERN

Plan for Architectural League Environment. (Vibrations)



From an advertising display
for Antonioni's film *Blow Up*

bona fide, their concepts undisturbingly sensible, and their medium inevitable. All that has happened is that Jackie Cassen, a recognized sculptress, and Rudi Stern, a film maker and painter of note, discovered a synthesis of form, color, movement and space in a new medium, light.

In 1966 The Bridge Theater presented a sound-light program featuring simultaneous front and rear projections combined with shadow dance on a multi-dimensional moving screen. It was on this project that Jackie Cassen and Rudi Stern met and first worked together. Jackie Cassen studied at Georgian Court College and the Art Students League, and had her first one-man show of sculpture eight years ago. In 1961 her fascination with the properties of light prompted her to design a polarization light machine to create chromatically variable visual effects for The Bridge and The Filmmakers Cinematheque. Rudi Stern is a graduate of Bard College and has studied with Hans Hofmann and Oskar Kokoschka, and exhibited his paintings in Munich, Basel, Genoa, and Vienna. His graphics have also been displayed at the Museum of Modern Art, where he taught painting.

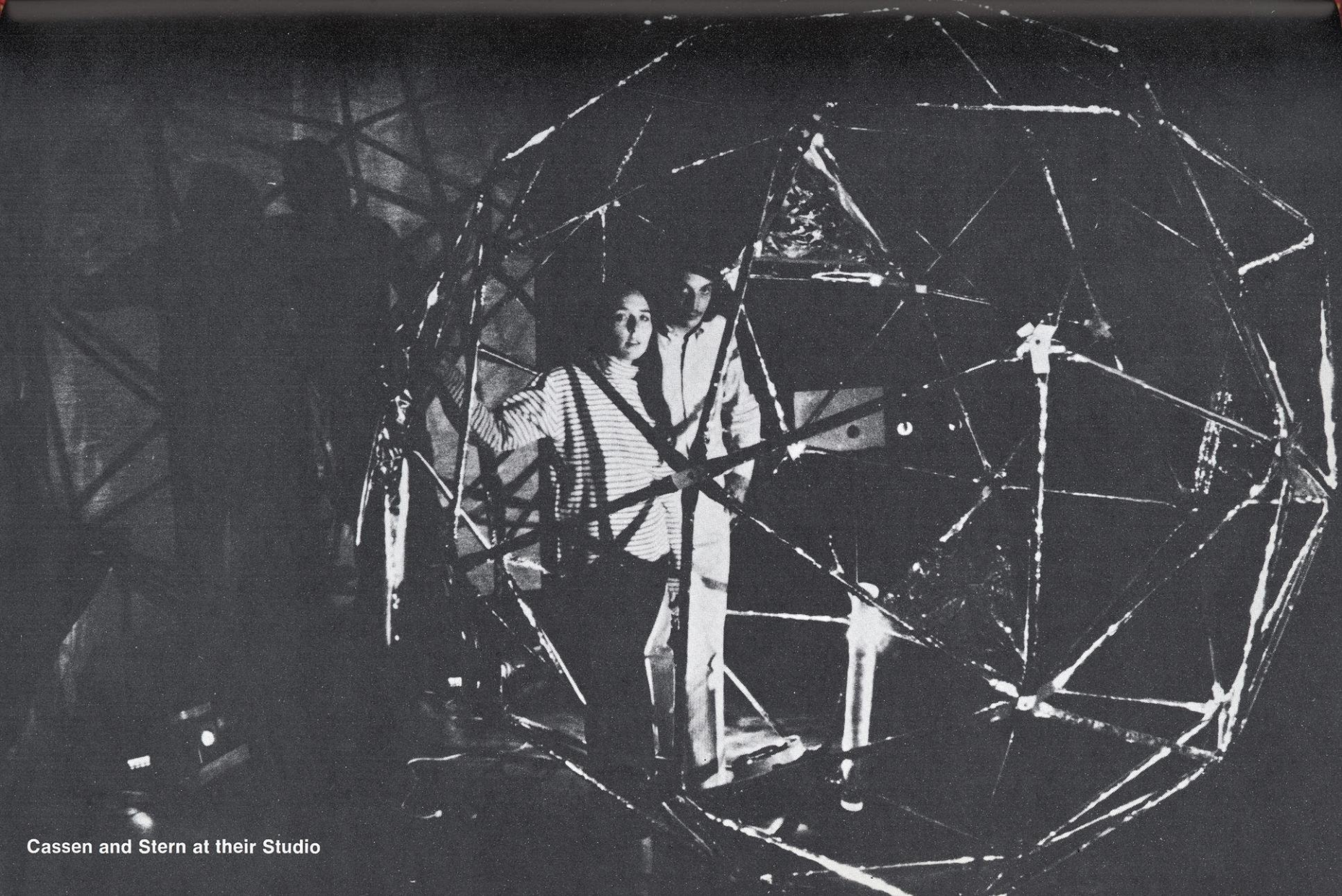
Within our tradition are numerous artists who singled out a particular human experience and concentrated attention on it. Monet concerned himself with the act of seeing, the Expressionists with feeling, Gauguin discovered the pastoral experience as the world was reducing nature to a dream, and the Surrealists discovered the dream. Cassen and Stern found an experience worth exploring artistically in the much discussed series of hallucinogenic drugs we now call psychedelics. The change in perceptions, the acute sensory sensitivity, the awareness of colors, distortions and forms, and the personal significance of these experiences provided the stimuli for Cassen and Stern's art.

In this context it doesn't seem surprising that a sculptor and a painter, both interested in artistically exploring psychedelic experience, would discover light as the appropriate medium. Light is dynamic, ever-changing, capable of creating simultaneous effects, psychologically penetrating, and spatially liberating. They called their concept kinetic light to

distinguish their intention from the often arbitrary use of several media, variously identified as mixed media, multi-media, or inter-media, and to distinguish their work from the static slide show. Kinetic light means just that — ever-changing, always different, but hopefully significant visual experience. Unlike many of their peers, Cassen and Stern do not create light experiences that assault the senses, border on the macabre, or seek to mystify by the presentation of the grotesque. Theirs is what one might call a lyrical light form which strives for beauty, splendid color, and a display which is never excessive, but characterized by unity and balance.

The first really public display of their combined achievements, accrued during months of study and practice at Millbrook, New York, was their work on the Psychedelic Celebrations held at the Village Theater in New York City. At the same time they created a California environment which never officially opened to the general public — closed by police because Leary was scheduled to appear. The critical response to Cassen and Stern's work was quite favorable, although rarely was their art discussed separately from the more controversial context of Mr. Leary and the psychedelic vision then gathering momentum. The inability of audiences to consider their work simply in its own terms still plagues the artists, not entirely undeservedly, up to the present. Few are aware what a branding iron the word "psychedelic" can be.

Cassen and Stern use their techniques in a way that, if one can still speak in these terms, signifies a style. Their projections have become more encompassing, their slides more numerous and diversified. They now program experiences for precise and usually predictable effects. A typical presentation by Cassen and Stern may use as many as 6,000 slides and 25 slide projectors. They have expanded the use of fiberoptics, extensively experimented with new materials, built sculptures designed to be used for multiple light effects, and skillfully developed the potential of strobe light. They have made significant progress in removing the mechanical apparatus from the focus of the experience. They have on the drawing board, and in some cases have



Cassen and Stern at their Studio

built, special machines to widen the possibilities of uninterrupted and unique light projections.

What is still more impressive are the ways they have incorporated light with other art forms: with opera, in Stravinsky's "Rake's Progress" for the Boston Opera Company; with dance, in the ballet "The Seven Deadly Sins" performed in Vancouver's Art Festival; with art therapy, a "theater of light," shadow dance and mime in proposals now under consideration. They have created environments of exceptional quality at Wesleyan University, at Delmonico's, and at Pratt Institute.

To the public eye they have recently surfaced with the Architectural League environment entitled "Vibrations." Though they were invited to provide the visuals for the Voyage to the Moon show given at the White House, though thousands flocked to the Psychedelic Celebrations, though their names have more than once graced the pages of *Time*, the fact is that this show was the first offered solely by them for a major art audience. And it is certain that they do have an audience, with an average of 500 people attending daily.

The environment itself was a complex affair which could only have been created by Cassen and Stern, and in this case, it revealed both their strengths and their weaknesses. While parts were in themselves beautiful and some of the design was brilliant, the whole fell short of overall unity. This is not a damaging criticism because it is self-defeating to measure artists who are leading in environmental design by some abstract standard verging on perfection. The entrance to the environment contained a fountain illuminated by a strobe light from below. The effect was stunning, as each drop of water was frozen in its motion and suspended as pure particle. This visual experience proved to be the overriding motif of the environment, as dynamic spheres of all sizes were the theme. The second room featured a pool — that is, the entire room had become a pool. One walked, seemingly on the water, amid strobes, dayglo, black light, and hung spheres. The last room was a mylar igloo containing a sound mobile activated by light. It appears this was the first time the

colors of light have been used to actuate corresponding sounds. It was the first room that provided the ambiguous experience: elements of beauty, and sculptural crowding; luminous and lovely forms moving across one's vision abruptly interrupted by stark white light, rudely disengaging one's involvement; a neon sculpture, quite fine in its execution, but quite out of place in the exhibit; and walls that were light forms and walls that were walls. The reaction of audience and reviewers was enthusiastic and almost totally favorable. We want this freshness and fun in art, and Cassen and Stern are the ones to provide it.

The presentation was an environment in fact rather than in theory. Cassen and Stern did not surround themselves with the kind of verbal justifications typical of art shows too often erroneously offered as environments. When people came to the Architectural League, they stayed. They took their shoes off and perilously bounced across a foam rubber floor which substituted tactility for stability. They sat for long periods talking, resting, and being in a world of unfamiliar lights and forms. The routine and the mundane lay just a step outside, but most had to be asked to make that trip.

One contemplates the future work of Jackie Cassen and Rudi Stern with excitement and high expectation. The potential of light to transform living space, the implications for interior design, architecture, and the art gallery, are very great. If anyone is capable of realizing this potential, it is Cassen and Stern. In the future of light, their role will be major.

REVISED

Paolo Buzzi—1956

Dora M. Pettinella

Paolo Buzzi was born in Milan, Italy, from an ancient family of Lombardy. His mother Camilla Riva was born of wealthy stock of the Milanese bourgeoisie and married when she was very young. His father, Angelo Buzzi, was at the time a mature widower; and a public official who mingled with men of government and was very active during the Austrian domination of 1848. Paolo Buzzi studied literature and jurisprudence at the University of Pavia. For some time he practised law as an attorney in the Court of Appeals of Milan, Italy.

In 1909 Futurism made headway and new poets began to complain and rebel against the static poetry that had been so much in vogue. They planned to inject new blood to the primitive elements, singing of love and danger, audacity and rebellion, to move with a livelier step, trying the mortal leap, to live feverishly and to abhor sleep. Their aim was to destroy sentimentalism, as decadent; they scorned womanhood, wished to destroy the era of moonlight dreaming and weak romanticism. They were fascinated by life's vigor, glorified war, revolt and desire of freedom, the ideas for which one died, patriotism above all.

The name of Paolo Buzzi gained momentum during this epoch. *IL CANTO DEI RECLUSI* (Song of the Prisoners) a poem he had written was the first of its kind to uplift the morale of the people; to define a motive for the new type of poetry, and Buzzi became the undisputed heir of this emotional movement.

Buzzi's poetry was of classical origin for he had begun his work with translations of the *Eneide* in hendecasyllables; developing a style of writing that had melody, no verbosity, and unique diction. He would put together common and sophisticated words and write free verse with his own personally contrived rules. His verbal experiences soon passed on to his followers and admirers. He knew the poetical myths and how to sing about events surrounding his life. He became a sensational poet full of moods, a genuine artist; weaving exquisite images from memory and putting them down in exceptional forms, with a wealth of words and musical cadences.

Paolo Buzzi was considered one of the founders of Futurism, even by Apollinaire who had words of praise for his style. It was the only real force of his life; it embodied his autonomous soul, his formal audacity. From his poem on Garibaldi down to his calligrammes, when he wrote of the conflagration and human tragedy, of World War One, his ideal of poetry was life moving on gigantic wheels in a vortex invisible to eyes of the world. It contained a unique artistic belief which stretched his musical gamut to the utmost, rendering new ecstasy for a society that moved electrically and mechanically in the spirit of war and sports.

Buzzi was hailed as the new poet of literature with his rhapsodies of Leopardi; later the three volumes of *L'ESILIO* in which he analyzed the spiritual Italian crisis at the beginning of the 19th century. With F. P. Marinetti and Sem Benelli he founded and edited the celebrated International Review called *POESIA*. He was most prolific as a poet and writer. A recent bibliographical volume contains 172 pages listing his works on poetry, prose, theatre, translations, lectures, and a libretto on an opera.

Buzzi received high honors from Brianza, the region he deeply loved, where he never found the glory he anticipated nor the deep affection he had craved, to which however he dedicated a lifetime of study with great labor and devotion. His creative spirit yearned towards futurism in feverish anxiety. He was a futurist who had never buried his past; since it retained a special charm for him, a joy that did not exist for other futurists. His past became part of his personality, his style, in an embrace of conception, images, expressions, words and rhythm. His main obsession had always been the life beyond; he had searched hospitals and cemeteries, anonymous crowds of nameless men in institutions and asylums. He sought the ante-vita and the outre-tomb for an explanation to the enigma of man, of man's existence, of man's fate. It was the noble torment of his entire life.

The ancestral, fantastic negromantic tendency of his dual personality; the attraction of the void, his dominant passion. The electric and the explosive

counterbalanced each other and became a contrast in his psychological feelings, he broke down under the strain, suffered a mental disturbance; where the hero became a criminal and the human a saint. He questioned his past, the soul of his childhood overwhelmed by fear, and continued his intimate endless search without respite.

Basically, Buzzi was imbued with a very deep historical sense, typical of all Italian men of culture. He enjoyed the literature of the diarists, the abundance of the journals that were published during his time. But at sixty, he decided to abandon politics and dedicate himself wholly to poetry. He wrote his first novel: *PANE E POESIA* (Bread and Poetry) a medley of short stories, romantic tales, lyrics, lectures, essays, tragedies, comedies, translations: a work that filled five volumes, covered four generations throughout a period of 80 years.

During the beginning of the 20th century, during the terrible years of war that ruined his country; Italy could count her good poets on the fingers of one hand; poets whose work was of genuine sensibility. Among these was Buzzi; one of his early poems *LA GABBIA* (The Cage) was translated in all the world's languages, a unique event in Italian literature. He wrote this poem when he was a recluse in Palazzo Monforte, surrounded by companions whose aspirations were modest and naturally limited. He called himself "The Seeker of Crystals" the "Sun of Prism" until the Futurist Manifesto broke out into a near scandal, in the year of the general elections. The following year, the futuristic spectacle opened at the International Lyric Theatre of Milan — closing with a poem by Buzzi to General Asinari of Bernezzo, who consequently was forced to retire.

In 1935 Paolo Buzzi was set on resuming his Muse. He returned to the roads of his childhood, visited his old home region, Brianza, the green hills, the clear ponds, the steep cliffs. Brianza had undergone many changes since the war; but he loved the place wrote his stupendous *GIGI DI PURITA'*, probably the most original delicate book ever written about Saint Louis of Gonzaga. Later he traveled to Egypt,

visited Europe, went north and explored the Alps. He lived his last years in retirement, with his memories, his music; writing poetry that contained images, fantasies, dreams, creative works, symphonic and melo-dramatic. This was his "prism" a quiet life lived in meditation.

EVENING HURRICANE

by Paolo Buzzi
from the Italian:
Sera D'uragano

The sky is billowing black smoke choking, raging
like breath of fire . . . Cinders wheel
over the endless plain; whirlpools of ochre and soot
surge and roll.

All things flee as to a dark sea.

Houses on the mountain fade out in spasms,
a thousand eyes visible under half-closed lids.

Flashes of lightning are crimson
like evanescent veins on a ballerina's legs
in her final dance step.

Thunderbolts are like green or violet snakes,
often with blood veins at head or tail. The distant
mountain scene vanishes.

Nearby mountains are remote. Distance is dense.
Everything disappears.

A single dolomite keeps its tall summit clear,
taut, in a black corner.

All waters pour,
in drops, splints, arrows, torches, wild with fire.

Birds flee burning eyes of cats climbing bushes;
cats flee clapping thunderbolts of fire;
tree leaves quiver for the Universe.

I yield
to all dark rivers overflowing in me.

GOETHE'S BIRTHPLACE

by Paolo Buzzi

from the Italian:

Casa Natale di Goethe

The genius of Egmont and Goetz of Berlichingen springs
from the hatchet of the little cardboard theatre.

Backstage, the puppet of Mephistopheles grins.

In the great bourgeois peace of the rooms,

Rome pushes its prints; Venice its mirrors.

But ink stains on the wood

of the poet's desk

bring back to life the storm of Brocken.

The eternal music of the Cosmos seems

to glide and remain

in the aphrodisiac horde of demi-semiquavers . . .

I am thrilled and excited at the pandemonium

of those large and small pinheads,

trying to remember

tunes of my old tragedies and songs . . .

Who am I in this deserted workroom?

I can hear — all the romantic, classical, mystical choruses

of the **TWO FAUSTS** —

as if my ear was fastened to a seashell . . .

I descend the wooden stairway

of Goethe's house, head high:

as if coming down from the sky to a sea

color of storm,

(I, not unworthy cabin boy)

in the wake of the great Keel . . .

CHRISTENING

by Paolo Buzzi

from the Italian:

Il Battesimo

Lustrous marbles.

An infant's shiny cranium.

Others of old folk.

One of a priest.

Sweeping its ritual rhythm
the aspersorium tinkles in air.

A lamp drips blood-like tears.

Adult shadows in unison
mumble a little Latin.

The sexton counts his chairs.

The infant opens its mousy eyes,
his face a vacuum

of mewling sounds. They plunge his nape into a little pool.

A bat, at intervals, comes tumbling from above
as if hurled by that Almighty Christ; thin air of tedium
within the crypt; it flits back and forth as if alive.The church swallows the little creature's cry
and the flight of the tiny beast. A giant candle falls
from the altar

causing attentive heads to turn.

Curtains belly out

from large open windows. God trembles in the burning
flame of the Ostensory. They have finished.The priest, inside the sacristy
shuts closet doors
opening out his wallet.

ACADEMIC THROTTLE OF SILENCE

by Paolo Buzzi

from the Italian:

Strozza Accademica del Silenzio

The heart deluded
 — of today's glory —
 enjoys the closed

World of History . . .
 leaving to others
 honors and conceit,

stomach and jaw.
 Silent, it tightens
 the belt on its snout.

THE CAGE

by Paolo Buzzi

from the Italian:

La Gabbia

Put your ear to the cage!
 You will hear the bustle of little caged poets.
 Make your skull as big as a nut
 and eyes like pellets.
 Gather your thin eager arms
 around the smooth velvet of feathers. Stretch out
 your shins, and grasp the ladder like a plinth of glory.
 And sing, sing of your prisoned grief, O Poet!

If that cage could fly! . . .

Through its thin bars you would see the greatest
atmospheres, the clearest, the designated ones.

You would hear shrieks of falcons,
see horrible faces of grinning eagles.

Your song would die amid echoes of thunder.

The water, in little glasses,
would seem like golden wine and flashes of lightning.

At night, little stars, peering at you,
would shine like the pupils of your eyes,
and the moon would appear like a great spherical cage
filled with sleeping canaries . . .

But to die, probably means to fly beyond the cage;
reaching prodigious sensations
with your singing heart
your cordial song . . . O Poet! . . .

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Michael J. Hoffman

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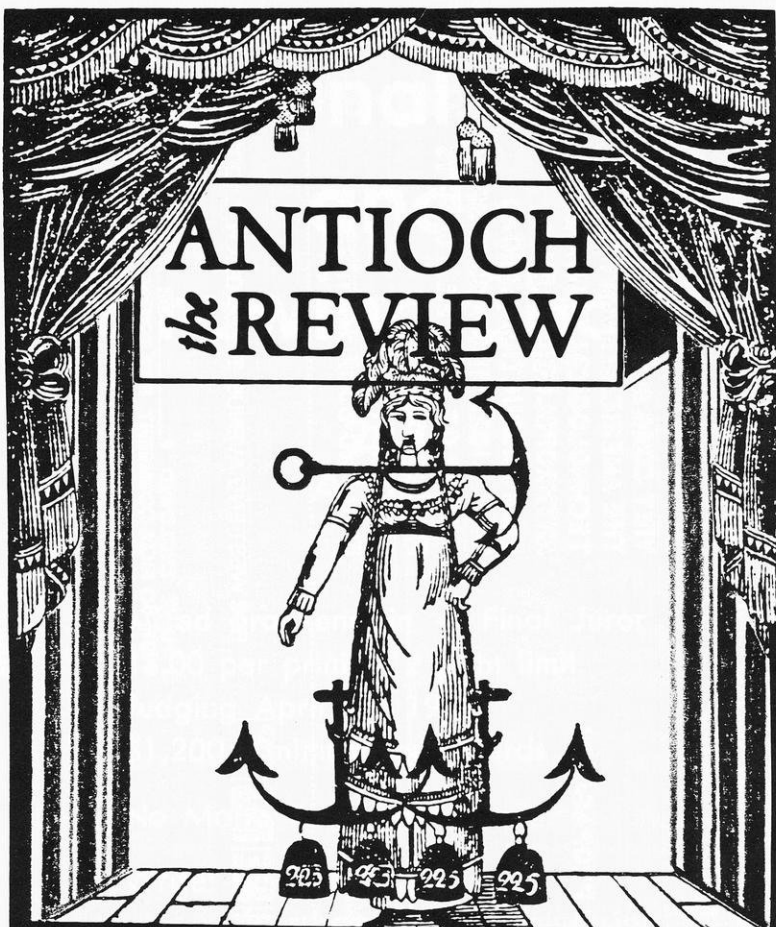
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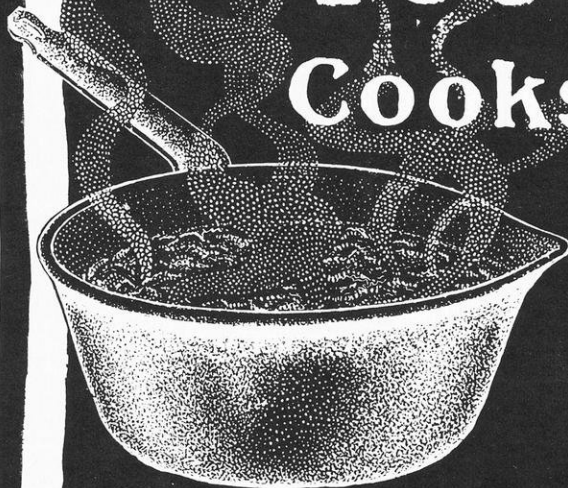


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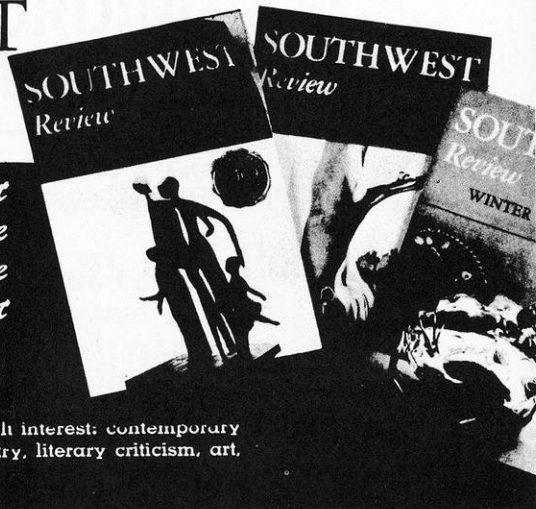
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