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SPRING-SUMMER 1962

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ARTS IN SOCIETY is dedicated to the augmenting of the arts in society, and to the advancement of education in the arts, particularly in the field of adult education. These publications are to be of interest, therefore, both to professionals and the lay public. ARTS IN SOCIETY discusses, interprets, and illustrates the various roles of the arts in contemporary society. It seeks to integrate insights, research, experience, and aspiration in terms of the widespread organizational effort to promote the arts in this country. 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 media which may be served by the printing process.

With this issue we establish for the first time a regularity of publication. In the immediate future ARTS IN SOCIETY will be issued twice a year; ultimately we hope to move to regular quarterly publication.

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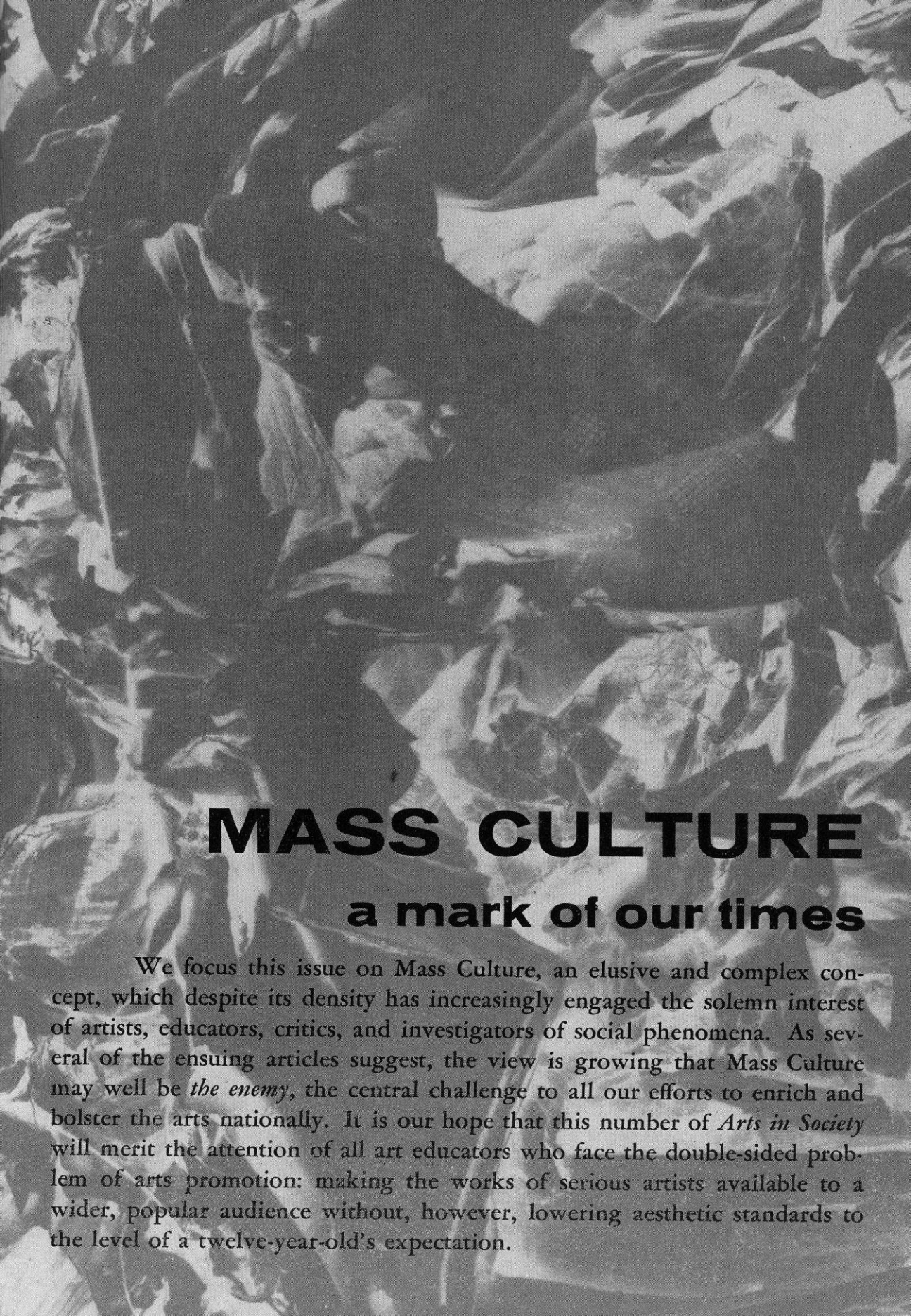
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MASS CULTURE

a mark of our times

We focus this issue on Mass Culture, an elusive and complex concept, which despite its density has increasingly engaged the solemn interest of artists, educators, critics, and investigators of social phenomena. As several of the ensuing articles suggest, the view is growing that Mass Culture may well be *the enemy*, the central challenge to all our efforts to enrich and bolster the arts nationally. It is our hope that this number of *Arts in Society* will merit the attention of all art educators who face the double-sided problem of arts promotion: making the works of serious artists available to a wider, popular audience without, however, lowering aesthetic standards to the level of a twelve-year-old's expectation.

Although there are wide areas of disagreement concerning the nature, origin, role and destiny of Mass Culture, no one who has taken the time to consider the matter seems to approve of its present effects. Literature on the subject reflects varied shades of the social, political and aesthetic spectra and may, by virtue of its bewildering diversity in premises, viewpoints, and biases, simply cast a shadow over what has always been apparent to practitioners in the arts, that to be effective art must be creative. For the majority of artists, critics, intellectuals and educators in our society the very term "mass culture" harbors a fearsome contradiction in social ideals: the cultivation versus the "massification" of individuals. Learned journals within the last two decades have shown a strong concern over the baleful impact of the mass media on the aesthetic sensibility, the values of contemporary art, and ultimately on the quality of American life itself.

But, as has been shown, the problem is not indigenous to democratic countries, and, among totalitarian states, Nazi Germany was as imbued with "Kitsch" as is Soviet Russia today. The phenomenon is peculiar to modern times, and seems to stem from the social revolution initiated by the great movement toward industrialization in the 19th and 20th centuries. Opposed alike to High Culture and to Folk Culture—the one the creative efforts of a highly trained elite; and the other, of a people spontaneously expressing their own traditions—Mass Culture is manufactured, and superimposed upon its hapless victims. Designed by skilled technicians and mass-produced by the efficient techniques of a machine civilization for effortless consumption by an anonymous mass market, Mass Culture at once mimics and undermines the values of true cultural expressions, whether of individual or folk genius. It has been characterized as standardized, faceless, dehumanizing, and deadening; as an irresponsible vulgarization of the creative heart of a society through the extensive substitution of sentimentality for sensibility, expertise for imagination, and cliché for expression. Its effect is to produce narcotic dreams in lieu of a lasting contact with reality. In short, Mass Culture is the sum total of the slick, sensational, tasteless, superficial non-art that most of the contemporary civilized world is now seeing on television, hearing on radio and the jukebox, and reading in popular fiction. No contemporary art medium is without its influence; it appears in salons of modern art as well as in the more generally agreed areas of "pop" culture.

Pessimists stretch the term even further to include almost the entirety of contemporary artistic culture, noting that even the sophisticated *New Yorker* magazine has found its nemesis in the formula which replaces inspiration. For them, the "gigantic ooze" that is Mass Culture will finally engulf and level

all evidences of High and Folk Cultures to produce what might be called "homogenized culture."¹ And to some, apparently, any struggle against the massification of culture is well-nigh futile:

My own feeling is that, as in the case of the alleged responsibility of the German (or Russian people) for the horrors of Nazism (or Soviet Communism), it is unjust to blame social groups for this result. Human beings have been caught up in the inexorable workings of a mechanism that forces them, with a pressure only heroes can resist (and one cannot *demand* that anybody be a hero, though one can *hope* for it), into its own pattern. I see Mass Culture as a reciprocating engine, and who is to say, once it has been set in motion, whether the stroke or the counterstroke is 'responsible' for its continued action?²

All that could be done in such a situation is to cut off the machine's source of power.

The very existence of a journal such as *Arts in Society* is tacit evidence that its editors take a less dour view than that expressed above. *Arts in Society* has developed from an increasing interest in active participation in the arts. The professional standards of art are being taught on a wider scale than ever before. There is a rising tide of amateur and semiprofessional art activity across America. And in none of these need aesthetic ideals be subject to "homogenization." In addition to education and participation in the arts, promotion comes from varied forces in society, each partisan of artistic excellence: the universities, foundations, industry, labor, government, the churches, the national amateur and educational art organizations, and numberless, smaller regional and community-level agencies devoted to fund-raising and other "good works" on behalf of *local* arts. To counter Mr. Macdonald's "reciprocating engine" there is a creative dynamism astir whose genius is inherently opposed to the passivity, regimentation, and total levelling of taste in a Mass Culture. Hopefully, there may yet be work for something less than heroes.

In keeping with this hope, the editors of *Arts in Society* have assembled the contents of this issue. Quite obviously, one of the most potent institutions which may work toward the espousal of our double ideal—making art available to more people, without losing sight of the aesthetic notion of excellence—is the national government. The Honorable Abraham Ribicoff, as Secre-

¹ Dwight Macdonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," *Mass Culture*, ed. Rosenberg and White. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957, p. 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

tary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, puts forward the position of the New Frontier in fostering aesthetic activity among the citizens; and Eric Salmon, playwright, director and drama teacher, explains the role of the British government in the formation of the British Arts Council. There follows a portfolio of graphic art produced under the sponsorship of the British Arts Council.

John Reich and Rod Serling, active in different media, explain some of the pressures confronting the creative artist in contemporary society. Mr. Reich bemoans the lack of professionalism in the promotion and presentation of staged plays, while Mr. Serling indicates some of the dilemmas facing the writer who writes for commercial television. Both come to their tasks well fortified with firsthand experience under the kinds of pressure they describe. Next, historian Carl Bode shows that "Kitsch" was not unknown in the middle decades of the nineteenth century; his exposé of the "taste of the times" bears an apt title, "Marble Men and Brazen Ladies," but to explain the ironies contained in the title here would be to remove the pleasure of reading this delightful chapter from the history of American taste.

Faced with Mass Cultural tastes, the artist has two ways out: a movement forward with the *avant-garde*, or a retreat backward to the solid traditions of the past. Both positions are explained: by librarian Felix Pollak, in his analysis of the role little magazines play in giving an audience to the experimentations of the avant-gardists, and by potter Bernard Pyron, in his description of the role of tradition in the pottery of Bernard Leach.

The last group of writers concern themselves with aesthetic problems of varying generality. Professor Feldman, an art educator, states his belief in the unique role played by art in the lives of those dedicated to producing and "consuming" it. Theologian Halverson argues strongly that the church and the arts must be brought into closer cooperation, and sociologist Kaplan tackles the problem of bringing the proper audience into contact with serious music. Finally, Professor Ernest Rose completes his analysis of the documentary film as one means of achieving aesthetic quality in films which never lose sight of reality, and—one might add—as an antidote to the "Kitsch" of the commercialized "photoplay."

The issue is rounded out by a series of notes which, as usual, are dedicated to the provocation of discussion, the spreading of information concerning art activities in America, and the indication of sources for further study and research.

THE
THEATER
AS
TEACHER

THE THEATER AS TEACHER*

by

The Honorable Abraham Ribicoff



It is legend at The Players Club that the god of all the arts once whispered into the ear of young Edwin Booth, and this is what he said:

"I shall give you hunger, and pain, and sleepless nights. Also beauty and satisfactions known to few and glimpses of the heavenly life. None of these you shall have continually and of their coming and going you shall not be foretold."

You whose lifework is the theater—and the introduction of young people to the theater—you have known the sleepless nights, as well as the satisfactions and "glimpses of the heavenly life" your art offers.

You will appreciate the answer one of my favorite critics gave me the other day when I asked him why he prefers the theater to the rest of his amusement-page beat.

"That's simple," he said. "In television, the people are diminished. They are thumbsized. In the movies, the people are enlarged. They're bigger than I am. But in the theater, the people are just my size. When I watch them, I can even forget where I am."

How right he is! Other art forms can be wonderful indeed. But the theater mirrors life in scale. In the theater, you lean forward for fear you will miss something, you are drawn ahead, you are carried out of your seat by the live people on the stage.

There is an immediacy about a good play that is irresistible. It is an extension, an illumination of our experience. It satisfies our appetites for further experience, for fascinating language, for the chance to meet interesting people. This is true of plays that truly entertain and truly enlighten.

The best plays are more than diversions; they are great teachers. They convince us that what is happening on the stage, however far removed in time or in geography, is not very different from what is happening in our hearts and in our everyday lives. And so we learn from them.

You members of the American Educational Theater Association know the effect such plays have on an audience. You know too the hunger that audiences have for the theater—the theater that delights the eye and ear and enriches the mind and heart.

If anyone doubted this hunger for a minute—and we in public life frequently hear the excuse that the public isn't ready for or doesn't appreciate this or that fine art—such doubts should have been erased by the long queues that formed this summer to see "Much Ado About Nothing" in Central Park.

You know these things. For a quarter of a century they have been your concern and your vocation.

On this, your Silver Jubilee celebration, you have chosen as your theme "The Theater and the Human Bond." "A group of strangers," you say, "becomes one living unit in the darkened house when the curtain opens—all over the world, at all times, and at all ages."

On this, your Silver Jubilee, then, I think it is appropriate to ask how you teachers of the theater can help strengthen this human bond.

* Address before the American Educational Theater Association, the Waldorf Astoria, New York, New York, Tuesday, August 29, 1961.

Yours is a tremendous opportunity. More of our youngsters are enjoying college and university education than ever before. In the next years their numbers will, we all hope, increase even further. Community theater and children's theater groups mushroom across the land. This means that out of all the people in the theater, you members of the American Educational Theater Association are the ones who have the chance to touch young—and not so young—minds.

Your first challenge is to teach so creatively, so imaginatively, that you will convey the best of our dramatic heritage, experience, and taste to a new generation, and to adults as well, that you will strengthen the ties that bind our civilization to the great civilizations of the past.

There is no greater opportunity than the teacher's, and our national tragedy is that we have not made full use of it.

Asked what the theater had given him, the actor Howard Lindsay answered:

"It has been my education. Where else could I have traveled so far? I have been in the streets of Corinth when Jason and Medea were throwing harsh words at each other. I was at Aulis when the Greek fleet sailed to Troy. I was in Mycenae when Orestes came back to kill his mother Clytemnestra. I have been in the drawing rooms of Lady and Lord Windermere of London. And I shouldn't forget to say, I have ridden into western towns with the James brothers! Where else could I have done things like that?"

Where else indeed?

Can you teachers of the theater take your students to these and further places? Can you give them the sense of continuity, the depth and breadth of vision that a deep knowledge of your art conveys?

Can you give them something more? Many of our young people have lost the satisfaction of the craftsmen of old, the satisfaction of doing a job carefully and lovingly, the fulfillment of work well done. They go to school, they graduate, they get jobs to support themselves and their families.

You can help them find this satisfaction. For the theater is a place where people share responsibility, where they labor hard together, where they have such fun that they even forget they are learning and working. If you give this experience to youngsters and to amateur community players, you will truly have taught well, you will have strengthened the ties that bind human beings, one with another.

You have a further responsibility, a further challenge. It lies waiting to be seized.

There are only, I am told, about 70,000 commercial theater seats available to the public in the United States. Some 30,000 of these are in New York City, and their number is diminishing. There are many reasons for this. You are all aware of the problems; I will not get into it today.

But Americans *want* to go to the theater! They flock to see great plays. When stripped of its social pretensions—what Professor Eric Bentley calls its "amazingly upper-class mores and extraordinarily inconvenient prices and schedules"—the theater is a tremendously popular attraction.

Bentley speaks of the "social apparatus" that used to stand between the public and the enjoyment of good music. "Opera and symphony," he says, "were addressed to dowagers. The working man didn't have the right clothes for the occasion, or the right accent, or the right kind of chit-chat. Invited to a concert he could hardly be expected not to feel a pariah. Much the same is true of theater."

He goes on to point out that in the cultural revolution that is underway all over the world, the theater could play a leading part because it is "more accessible to the new untrained audiences than perhaps any other high art whatsoever." . . . And this fact "gives it a certain responsibility."

This is the responsibility you theater educators shoulder today. This is your challenge: to strengthen the bond between the theater and diverse communities throughout the land.

The word "educate" comes from the Latin verb "lead out." This is what you can do—lead people out of themselves and into the common meeting place where they can share their art with others. Your theater groups do not fulfill their purpose if they confine themselves to a series of exercises, if they do not reach all the audiences that are anxious to be reached.

Some of your members have of course served their communities with notable success. They have done so in their own cities, and they have traveled abroad in many lands, delighting their audiences and creating great good will and friendship for our country.

They have truly given of themselves to strengthen the bond between human beings throughout the world. They have set a standard for us all.

Will you join them?

I think—I know—you will.

Just as it plays a role in bridging the gap between different segments and groups and countries in our society, the theater can play an important role in bridging the gap between what C. P. Snow has called "The Two Cultures." We are all concerned about the wall that divides the humanities from the ever-expanding physical sciences. We are all anxious to do what we can to further our scientific achievements. We are not "antiscientists," who deplore the discoveries of science in favor of the beauties of art. Far from it. We know there is great beauty as well as hope in the giant revolution which has taken place in man's knowledge of himself and of the world.

But we know that if we are to act constructively, we must tap our magnificent artistic resources imaginatively and diligently. A broad and deep awareness of the arts enriches the scientist as well as the nonscientist and is indispensable to the full life of all mankind.

We live today in one of the crucial eras of world history. The impact of man's new power upon man himself is the stuff of real drama, and through drama, as well as other arts, could man better understand his place in the new world that he is creating.

There has never been a time when interest in the arts at the seat of government has been so high. The Kennedy administration would like to see the establish-

ment of a National Advisory Council on the Arts—a group of eminent citizens from the arts whose duty it would be to cultivate and encourage our artistic resources and heritage.

The bill setting up the Council has been favorably acted upon by the House Committee on Education and Labor and is now awaiting House action. I have urged the Congress to enact this bill. Under it, the Council would recommend ways to maintain and increase the cultural resources of the United States; propose methods to encourage private initiative in the arts; cooperate with local, State, and Federal departments and agencies to foster artistic and cultural endeavors and the use of the arts in the best interests of the Nation; and strive to stimulate greater appreciation of the arts by our citizens.

Further, it could act as a coordinating group between private and governmental activities in the arts, pointing out where it believes official encouragement might be helpful, yet always sensitive to the need for the fullest possible freedom of creativity.

For in fostering and encouraging the arts, we must have it strictly understood that the Government cannot and does not wish to speak through the arts. The arts must be free and not an official mouthpiece. A play is not a state paper. The only test for an actor or a director or a painter or a musician should be the excellence of his endeavor before the judgment of his peers.

In this crucial moment when the currents of history are swift and changing, we who bear the responsibility of government seek to build. We know that the old ways alone will not do, that we must seek new ways and find new means.

And all segments of American society are responding. Each is examining its role and its potential. Each is dedicating itself to constructive action for the common good.

You whose lifework is the arts, you whose lifework is education, you too are examining your role and your potential.

I ask you only to do your best, to achieve the high levels that you yourselves value, and to inspire in your students an appreciation of the enduring and the beautiful.

I ask you to strive to reflect the times in which we live—to understand them—to teach from them—to improve upon them. We must work to make our arts so rich, so exciting, so inventive that they mirror our life together as did the arts of the Greeks and of the Elizabethan Age.

Then we will have met our challenge. Then we will have done our part to strengthen the human bond.



THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

State Subsidy for the Arts in England

BY ERIC SALMON

It is a well-tried cliché, but nonetheless a true one, that he who pays the piper calls the tune. And if the caller is the State, which in practice means a group of politicians, will the tune necessarily be a political one? And if the tune we are talking about is a country's arts, do the arts then become a political football kicked back and forth between the parties? In particular, do the literary arts of necessity fall into the trap of becoming official mouthpieces, vehicles for different propagandas, depending on which party is in power at the time?

It *could* happen, of course, and one knows of unhappy instances where it does happen: the Ministries of Fine Arts and the promotion of *l'Art Officiel*; the seducing of art by power. When the Arts Council of Great Britain was incorporated by Royal Charter in August, 1946, there were those who said that this is the way England was going: a socialist government newly come to power with an overwhelming majority in the House, nationalization of industry, "socialized medicine" and now the arts officially "adopted" by the government. What next? It would fail, they said, just as "socialized medicine" (in quotes because the term is, of course, unknown in England) was bound to fail. Now, fifteen years later, the plain fact is that neither has failed, or ever looked like failing. Both are established not only as a normal part of the social structure, but also as two of the props on which the postwar structure actually rests. Yet it is, in England, still a very new idea that it should be a proper governmental responsibility to ensure that the voice of the artist should constantly be heard, without any "safeguards" as to what the voice should be heard saying. The way in which, in actual practice, governmental help for the arts, through the channel of the Arts Council, has managed to achieve the highly desirable advantage without at least the obvious disadvantage is a really notable achievement.

It is, of course, necessary to accept as a premise that some form of patronage is still necessary for the arts, as it has always been; and also that this necessity is in no way a reflection upon the strength or validity of the arts themselves. It seems to be fatuous to argue that there is something wrong about an artistic activity which cannot financially support itself. Indeed, almost by definition it follows that the most significant art of any age will be the least saleable, since the function of the artist is to speak for what he feels and sees about the world, and at his most significant he will feel and see beyond the perceptions of his fellows. They, therefore, will in large part doubt him, disbelieve him, reject him; most of them will not wish to pay him for his work. This fact does not make the work less necessary; it makes it more necessary. It makes it the medicine of the sickly weal, as vital to humanity's health as rhubarb or the surgeon's knife.

It would be a mistake to give the impression that the British Government is now expending vast sums on artistic ventures and is paying the whole bill for the country's arts; this is far from being the case. But it is nevertheless true to say that it is Arts Council money which keeps many brave projects going (notably symphony orchestras and repertory theatres), and it is the *regular* help, year by year, which the Council can give which is so important. Considering what is provided, the bill is not large: in the 1959-1960 Annual Report, the total expenditure was £1,225,460 (\$3,431,288). Of this, £852,883 was for music, £84,660 for drama, £33,936 for the visual arts, £2,712 for poetry and £4,694 for Arts Festivals and miscellaneous activities. But though three and a half million dollars per year seem modest enough for the sustaining of a country's arts, it is a large sum when compared with the \$70,000 which was the original grant given by the Government to the Arts Council (or rather to its predecessor, the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts—C.E.M.A. for short) when it was first set up. And that was only sixteen years ago.

C.E.M.A. started in a curious way and at a curious time. It was, in fact, in December, 1939—three months into the new war and London “blacked out” in common with the rest of Great Britain. Dr. Thomas Jones, who was the Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust, recorded C.E.M.A.’s origin thus:

It began on the telephone. Lord de la Warr, the President of the Board of Education, rang up the Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust to sound him about an ‘idea’ and a possible grant; nothing very much, £5,000 perhaps. A familiar experience. The ‘idea’ sounded promising on a first hearing and it was arranged that the President of the Board should meet, without prejudice, the Chairman of the Trust, Lord Macmillan, then Minister of Information. They met in the latter’s room at the University of London at noon on December 14, 1939. I was present. Lord de la Warr was enthusiastic. He had Venetian visions of a postwar Lord Mayor’s Show on the Thames in which the Board of Education led the arts in triumph from Whitehall to Greenwich in magnificent barges and gorgeous gondolas; orchestras, madrigal singers, Shakespeare from the Old Vic, ballet from Sadler’s Wells, shining canvases from the Royal Academy, folk dancers from village greens—in fact Merrie England. Lord Macmillan’s grave judicial calm collapsed suddenly and completely. At the moment he was responsible for the national morale, and in the President’s dream he saw employment for actors, singers and painters and refreshment for the multitude of war workers for the duration. Supply and Demand kissed. Would £25,000 be any use? The Secretary blushed and fell off his stool!

C.E.M.A.’s first committee consisted of seven people—Dr. Thomas Jones; Sir Walford Davies, composer and teacher of music, passionately interested in popular education in music; Sir Kenneth Clark, at that time the Director of the National Gallery; W. E. Williams, chief editor of Penguin Books; Miss Thelma Cazalet, M.P., who was nominated by the Board of Education; Dr. L. du Garde Peach, a pioneer of amateur theatre; and Lord Macmillan, the Chairman. The composition of this committee is an interesting one. It reflects in the interests and activities of its members the way in which the work of the new body was conceived in terms of education, operating through the informal channels which had been established in the thirties by university extra-mural departments, the Workers’ Education Association, and similar bodies. It reflects also the sturdy belief in the worth of the enthusiasm of the enlightened amateur (it is significant, for example, that no representative of the professional theatre was on this committee, nor of any of the big professional orchestras). This question of the proper relationship of professional and amateur artist was one that was to exercise the Arts Council a good deal a little later in its career; but at present, in the early stages, its connection with the world of the amateur was much closer than it is now, and the concept that its main function was constantly to preserve the highest possible *standards* in all arts by supporting the best professional practitioners of them had not yet developed. For the moment, the committee’s chief function was conceived as the actual provision of concerts, exhibitions and theatre to as wide a segment of the population as possible. That is not to say that standards were ignored and professional performers flouted.

Far from it. But the emphasis was on getting art of a reasonable standard into as many lives as possible, especially into the lives of people not touched by the live artist before. Before the end of its first year, C.E.M.A. was supplying, under its own management, over four hundred concerts per month, and by March, 1943, it had sixteen touring theatre companies operating in different parts of the country, as well as four opera and two ballet companies.

The other factor about C.E.M.A.'s beginning which merits comment is that it started at the beginning of a long, furious and bloody war, a war in which for the first time the whole country was actively involved and in danger—civilian and soldier alike. In one way, this seems remarkable and paradoxical; in another, one can see that risks and experiments by farsighted people in the field of the arts were probably more likely to be tolerated and to succeed in that time of tension and unrest than they may have been in the peacetime atmosphere of cautious "national" debate and parsimonious materialism. However, though it may well be an example of time taken brilliantly by the forelock, it was nevertheless a bold, adventurous and brave step, and its real triumph was to come at the end of the war. By this time it had demonstrated not only that it had fulfilled its original terms of reference, but also that there was a tremendous and worthy function to be carried out in way of taking the arts to the people, both as a desperate wartime measure and as a permanent function.

C.E.M.A. had begun, then, as a purely voluntary body financed by the £25,000 which Lord Macmillan had offered as Chairman of the Pilgrim Trust, to Lord de la Warr. Within four months of its inception, however, the British Government, through the Board of Education, had undertaken to match these private funds pound for pound up to £50,000. By March, 1942, the success of C.E.M.A. was so obvious that the Pilgrim Trust was able to withdraw and leave the whole financial burden to be willingly borne by the Board of Education. The Pilgrim Trust had given £62,500 (\$175,000) to the scheme.

During the war, exhibitions, concerts and plays were presented by C.E.M.A. in the local town halls, school rooms, air raid shelters, factory canteens, on barrage balloon sites, as well as in the more conventional surroundings of art galleries, concert halls, and theatres. Even allowing for the tension of the times, which made the release provided by the arts all the more welcome, and allowing, too, for the prevalence of captive and semicaptive audiences in camps and factories, it was still obvious that the potential audience for the serious artist of every sort was far larger than had ever before been imagined. When the war ended, this potential and the need to foster and cultivate it were given recognition: on June 12, 1945, only a month after the VE ("Victory in Europe") celebrations, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Anderson, announced in the House of Commons that C.E.M.A. would be replaced by a permanent body, to be called The Arts Council of Great Britain, incorporated and maintained by the Government. Unlike its predecessor, the Arts Council would henceforth be responsible directly to the Treasury and not to the Board of Education. The Government's grant for the year 1945-1946 was £175,000

(\$490,000), compared with £25,000 (\$70,000) in 1939-1940. Since that time, the grant has risen steadily:

1946-1947	£350,000	1952-1953	£675,000
1947-1948	£428,000	1953-1954	£785,000
1949-1950	£600,000	1956-1957	£885,000
1950-1951	£675,000	1957-1958	£985,000
1958-1959			£1,100,000

In its original incorporation, the brief which was given to the Arts Council was "to develop a greater knowledge, understanding and practice of the fine arts exclusively, and in particular to increase the accessibility of the fine arts to the public throughout Our Realm, to improve the standard of execution of the fine arts, and to advise and cooperate with Our Government Departments, local authorities and other bodies on any matters concerned directly or indirectly with these objects."

As has already been seen during the war, what had largely been done to further these objectives was for the Council to involve itself in direct management, assembling and sending out into the country opera, theatre and ballet companies, organizing concert tours and exhibitions of the graphic arts. The conditions which obtained in wartime Britain gave special opportunity for this sort of work, but with the return of peace and the re-establishment of more normal forms within the organization of the professional arts themselves, it quickly became apparent to the Arts Council that the rather *ad hoc* inspiration-of-the-moment method needed to be replaced by a firmer and longer-term policy.

With the reopening of London theatres and the return to the capital of all the great professional organizations (the Old Vic, for example, had spent the early years of the war performing in unlikely places like Rochdale), the highest standards of performance in all the arts were naturally to be found there. The Arts Council, conscious of the fact that it was spending public money, wanted to try to guarantee that the best and the most permanent results should be obtained with that money. It would have been very easy at that stage for the whole of the Arts Council's revenue to be diverted into London, where demonstrably the best work usually was. This was so obvious to the Council and to everybody else at the time that a very firm policy, deliberately designed to avoid this step, was built up. While it was obviously necessary to support the best in the arts in London, it was equally necessary to ensure that the practice and appreciation of the arts was disseminated as widely through the whole country and community as was possible. To this end separate committees of the Council were set up to promote the work in Scotland and in Wales, and regional offices of the main London body were opened in principal provincial cities such as Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Nottingham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. As well as helping to bring into their regions good professional work (usually from London), the regional offices interested themselves in local activities such as the formation of local arts committees and clubs, the organizing of local festivals, and so on.

From that point on, a tug of war developed between the regions on the one hand and London on the other, and to some extent between the support of amateur work as opposed to professional. This tug of war was often misunderstood by the

public, who seemed to overlook what was, in fact, the basic consideration in the matter—the amount of money available. Any council or committee, setting out to give money literally to *any* activity of an artistic nature which, at the time of the application, seemed worthy (and in the arts, even more than elsewhere, how on earth can anybody tell what lies in the future of a given activity?), would need, in the exact literal sense of the words, unlimited funds. Moreover, the period immediately following the war was one of great energy and emotional release, and there was an enormous and very laudable increase of artistic activity of every sort. How could the Arts Council or anybody else possibly tell at any particular moment in those few years which activities were the really significant ones? Closer definitions of policy were clearly needed, and these gradually emerged from the actual practice of the Council. Gradually three guiding principles grew up.

The first of these was the gradual withdrawal of the Arts Council itself from direct management, and this has developed to the point where now, although much greater sums are spent on all the arts than in 1945, the Council spends less than £3,000 per year on the direct provision of concerts, and less than £1,500 on the direct provision of theatre performances. It has found that its direct provision of art exhibitions is the most efficient and economical way of bringing original art of superlative quality to large numbers of people, and the figure in the last published budget for the provision of such exhibitions was £28,000. (During the last five or six years, some of the most interesting of these traveling exhibitions have been displays of modern British sculpture in outdoor settings.)

The second general principle which has now been established is that, by and large, the Arts Council will give no financial assistance to purely amateur activity, no matter how laudable or of what high standard. This concept provoked, as can be imagined, a good deal of disappointment when it was first articulated, but the Council has argued, and, I think, rightly, that since unlimited funds are not available, they must use their money to ensure that, both in execution and in appreciation by the public at large, the highest possible standards of performance must be secured. In other words, the Arts Council becomes a sort of repository for and guardian of the best that British art can produce, and the highest quality of the arts of any country that British people can assimilate and appreciate. This is no reflection on the activities of the amateur artist, but is merely a facing of the reality that those who earn their livings by the arts are presumably—the odd and obvious accident apart—the most proficient, and also that they have more time to develop their skills. It is not that one wishes an artist to be so much of a specialist that he is entirely divorced from the ordinary activities of everyday life. Indeed, if he were he would at that point cease to be an artist. But if it has been reasonably established that he has those special insights and sensitivities which make his function in the world primarily those of an artist (a seer, one who sees, one with the special eyesight that is capable of seeing through the brick wall of the apparent surface of things), then it should be possible to put him in the position of being able to spend the major part of his time on the practice of his art, and, having put him in that position, he will probably become the best example current at that time of that particular art. He is, in other words, a professional artist, and the support given to him by society is

ultimately not for his benefit but for society's. It is worth noting, too, in the argument between support for the amateur and support for the professional, that, in England, several other bodies such as the Carnegie Trust and Local Education Authorities were already giving considerable assistance to amateur art, and for the Arts Council to become more deeply involved in that field would be to some extent to have indulged in a dangerous duplication.

The third general line which the Council developed was the withdrawal of the regional officers from provincial English cities (though the Welsh and Scottish committees remained and were strengthened). This meant that the whole business of the Council was conducted from London, and this also produced something of a storm at the time. The objectors protested that London already had an enormous preponderance of the country's artistic wealth, and why should the Arts Council, which was presumably set up to minister to the needs of the whole country, concentrate its attention exclusively on London?

There are two cogent replies to this criticism. The first is that the move was an administrative one and did not necessarily imply an exclusive concentration of the arts themselves on London. The Arts Council was immediately able to point to increased assistance for provincial orchestras and theatres as evidence of the fact that they were not neglecting the rest of the country. What they were doing, in fact, was saving administration expenses so that they could spend the additional money on actual artistic work, and the argument that the closure of the regional offices would mean that the Arts Council was out of touch with local needs and developments has proved, in practice, to have little basis.

Secondly, the Council could well argue (and on occasion has had to argue) that while it intended to give the greatest possible assistance to the arts in the provinces, it could not ignore the fact that there was an overwhelming case for some increase in the concentration on London. It was obvious, for example, that opera, the most expensive of all the arts, could not possibly flourish at the highest conceivable level in a dozen different British cities at once, and it would simply be a dog-in-the-manger argument to say that if Manchester couldn't have a great national opera company permanently housed within the city, it was unfair that London should have one. There happened to be in the Covent Garden Opera Company what was potentially the basis for a great national opera, and it seemed only sensible for the Arts Council to try to ensure that this company at least should be preserved. As a matter of fact, through increasing the grant to Covent Garden systematically throughout the years of the Arts Council's existence, this has been virtually ensured, and the Arts Council has been able to support opera at Sadler's Wells and at Glyndebourne, as well as providing *some* opera in the rest of the country.

This same debate of quantity versus quality arose also over the assistance which the Arts Council began to develop for provincial "repertory" theatres. It should be explained that although the term is almost universal in Great Britain, these theatres are not in any true sense repertory theatres—they do not carry a repertory of plays from which they select performances. They are, in fact, permanent stock companies who produce one play at a time for a set period, and rehearse another while this one is playing. In the case of the better examples of this kind of theatre, the work

is often very good, exciting and stimulating. Theatres like the Bristol Old Vic, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the Oxford Playhouse, the Manchester Library Theatre, the Nottingham Playhouse and so on present each play for three weeks or a month. This means that each play has three or four weeks' rehearsal, and this, in turn, means that the standard of performance can be and often is very high. The programmes of such theatres include a sensible mixture of standard works and the better and more thoughtful new plays. Of the theatres listed, for example, none would dream of repeating the frivolous banalities of West End stereotyped comedy. However, many provincial British theatres which are technically in this same group of "repertory" theatres are compelled by the smallness of the population of the centres in which they are working to change their playbill every week, and even then feel obliged to try to estimate and cater to a theatrical taste so debased and uninformed that a long succession of brash comedies and so-called "thrillers" seem to be their only chance of survival. Quite apart from the question of the quality of the play itself, it is manifestly impossible to produce *any* play well on one week's rehearsal, and not only impossible but downright ludicrous to try to do this week after week all the year round. Against howls of anguish and accusations of stony-heartedness, the Arts Council has maintained a refusal to assist "weekly rep," though in the year 1959-1960 its total grants to provincial repertory theatres of the better sort amounted to £83,000.

This, then, is the general pattern which has now emerged in Arts Council procedures: it assists usually by making annual grants to permanent bodies such as repertory theatres and symphony orchestras, or by guaranteeing particular performances or events against loss up to a specified amount; it gives special assistance to certain local festivals (nine such were assisted in 1959-1960, including a grant of £12,000 to the Edinburgh Festival); it assists a few local arts clubs and societies chosen for their specially distinguished work; it provides travelling exhibitions of the visual arts.

This leaves a few interesting minor items of assistance to be discussed—minor, that is, in the sense of the amount of money spent on them at the present time.

Help is given, for example, to British poetry in various ways, usually by supporting local festivals of spoken poetry or by giving grants in aid to the publishers of poetry magazines, such as *Delta* and *Listen*. Funds have also been made available from time to time for the recording of spoken poetry.

In theatre, emphasis has in recent years been placed on new drama, and the Arts Council have two interesting schemes which they now apply every year in this field. One of these is the award of bursaries to unknown and usually young playwrights whose work has been noticed and deemed promising by the Council. Arnold Wesker, John Arden, and Bernard Kops have been recipients of this award. The bursaries are quite modest, but do enable people who are not yet sure whether they are really playwrights or not, to spend some time trying and finding out.

The second scheme is one to assist managements (usually provincial managements) who have the courage—or the temerity—to produce new and unknown plays. The assistance always takes the form of a guarantee against loss up to a certain specified amount, the limit usually being £300 or £400. The assistance is given to the

theatre management and not to the author, and the script of the new play in question has to be submitted in advance to the Arts Council for approval. This may appear to be dangerous, and indeed could be if the scheme were not applied with generosity and foresight. However, the Council has amply demonstrated that it is interested only in the promise which the script shows, and not in selecting scripts with particular biases or opinions in their subject matter. Two years ago the New Plays Scheme was extended also to include the *second* production of a new play, assuming that the play had not in the meantime had a London showing. This is particularly important since it is, in point of fact, more difficult for a young and unknown author to get his play performed for a second time than for a first time, unless the first time created something of a furore, and it must be remembered that a play is not necessarily negligible because it does not create a furore at its first production.

The Arts Council also gives small grants from time to time to promising young theatre directors to enable them to travel abroad to see foreign theatre and to increase their experience.

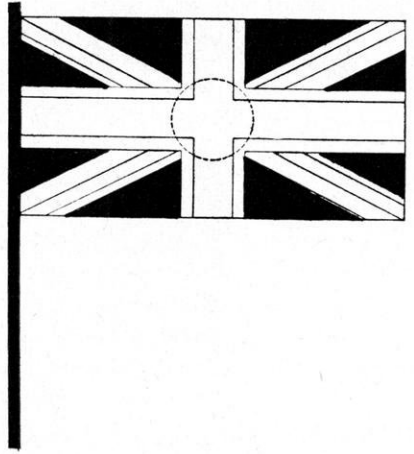
While talking of assistance to the theatre, it should be pointed out that in spite of what was said earlier concerning the preponderance of assistance to the arts in London, very little of Arts Council money goes into the London theatre. For one thing, the Arts Council will never assist, either in London or the provinces, a purely commercial management. Assistance can be given only to a body incorporated on a nonprofit basis so that funds accumulated are not distributed to private investors but ploughed back into the work of the theatre itself. Quite apart from that, however, the size of Arts Council grants would be so small in relation to the revenues and expenditures of London theatres that they would hardly serve to make any difference. During the current year, for example, the London theatres to be assisted by the Arts Council are the English Stage Company at the Royal Court, which receives £5,000 per year; the Old Vic, which receives £20,000; and Theatre Workshop, which receives £1,000. It is true to say, therefore, that in the matter of theatre, the Arts Council's devotion to the provinces is almost entire.

When grants are made to properly incorporated bodies running theatres or festivals either in London or the provinces, the Arts Council has the right to appoint one of its members or officials to act as assessor and to sit in at all the committee meetings of the body in question. This assessor has no vote in the committee's proceedings, but is there to receive full information about the committee's activities and the finances of the concern, and to give advice on behalf of the Arts Council. Apart from this, the Arts Council exercises no control over the body to which assistance is given.

In determining who should be assisted and how the Arts Council money in the various departments should be spent, the Council is helped in its work by a Music Panel, a Drama Panel, and a Poetry Panel, consisting of acknowledged experts in the respective fields, annually appointed by the Council. The members of the Panels and the members of the Council itself receive no remuneration for their services. According to the terms of its Charter, the Council consists of not more than sixteen members who are appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, after consultation with the Secretary of State for Scotland. These members hold office for a period of

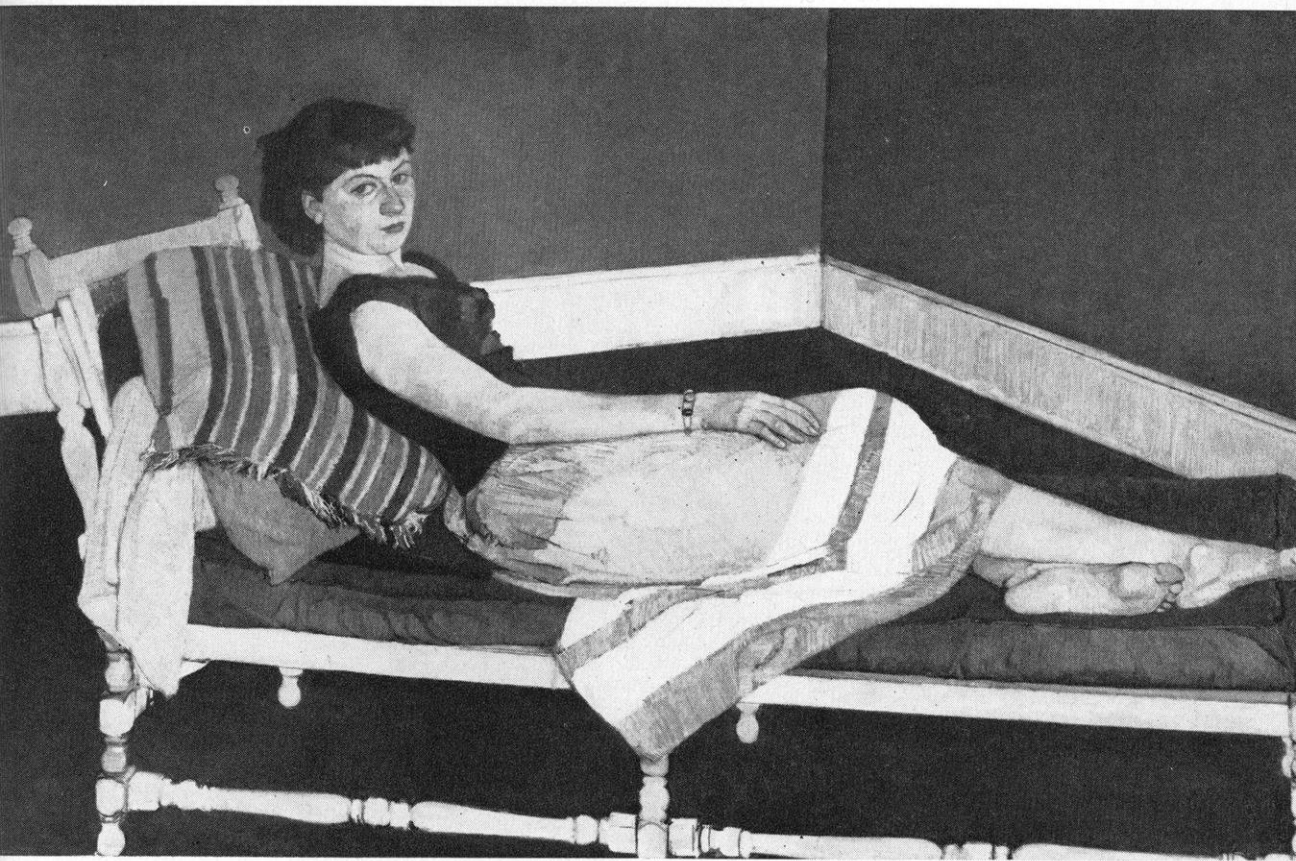
not more than five years, and retire in rotation. They are chosen as individuals, not as representatives of art organizations or of professional bodies. To assist them, they employ an administrative staff at a total cost of £100,000 per annum. This, in fact, is a healthily modest proportion of the Arts Council's total expenditure.

It would be quite impossible, by way of summary, to assess the extent of the Arts Council's influence, not only on the practice of the arts in Great Britain but also on the growing appreciation of them among the general public. There is still more ignorance than knowledge about both the true function of the arts and the particular details of any specified artist's work, but this was always the case. The significant thing is that there is a little less ignorance than there was twenty years ago. It is still true, in Great Britain as elsewhere, that the vast majority of people prefer the bad programmes on their television sets to the good ones, and that entertainment for the majority consists of bad escapist cinema rather than anything which is aesthetically stimulating or refreshing. But again, the striking thing is that this is less true than it has ever been before, and its lessening, no matter how minimal, is enormously encouraging to see. This is due in no small part to the work of the Arts Council, not only in its special events, but more so in the year-round ministration to the needs of those organizations devoted to the maintenance and perpetuating of the arts.

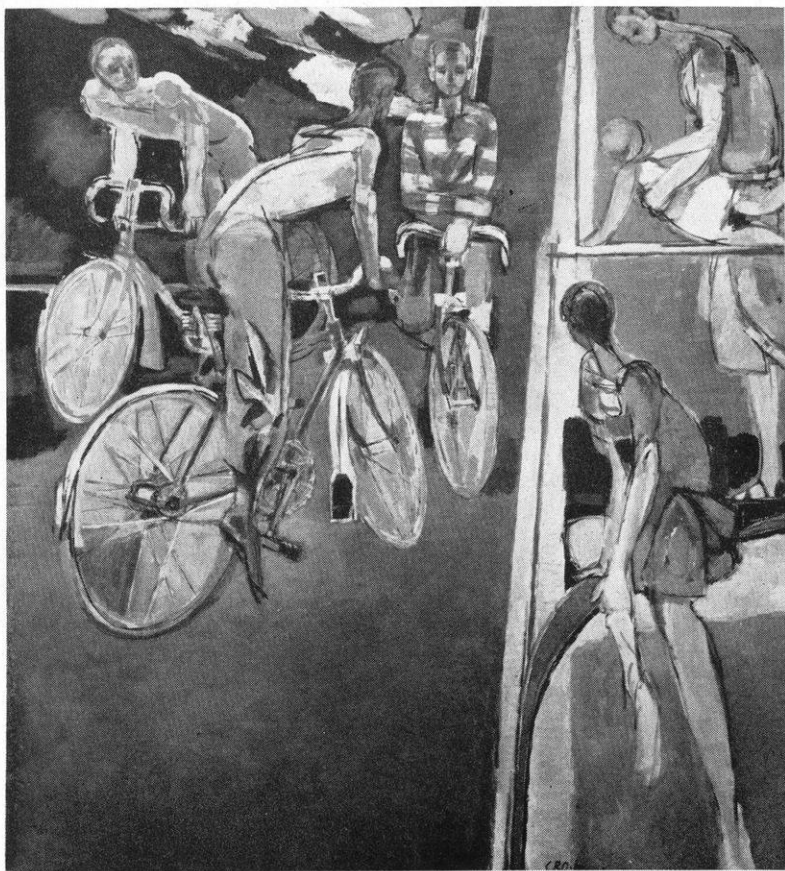


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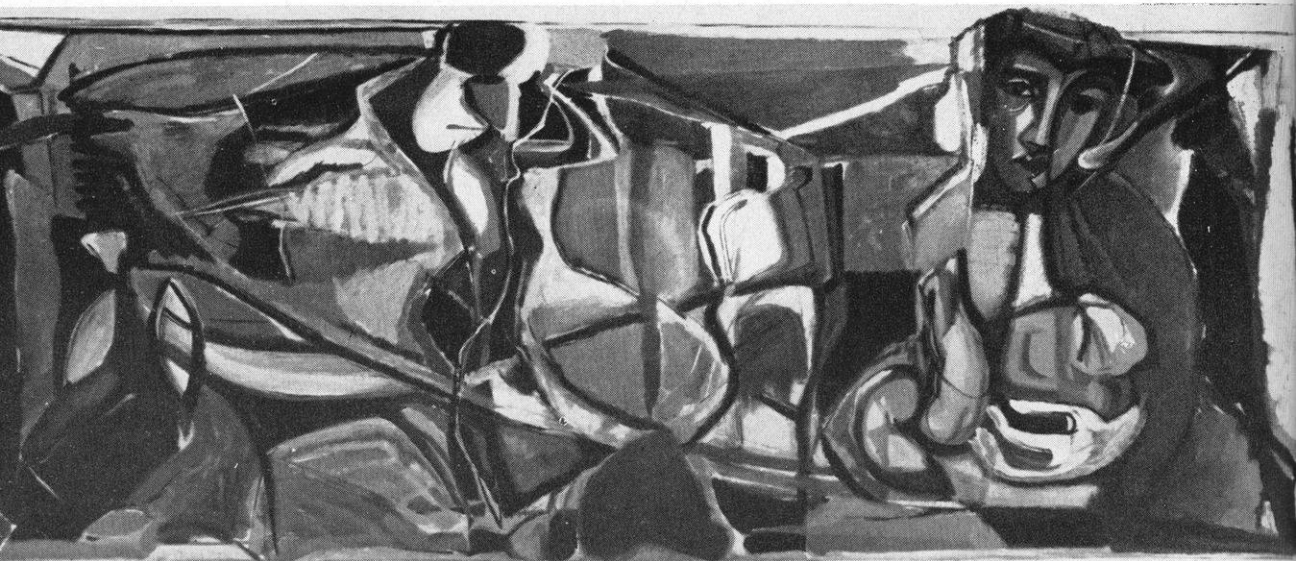
"Miss Lynn," by Claude Rogers



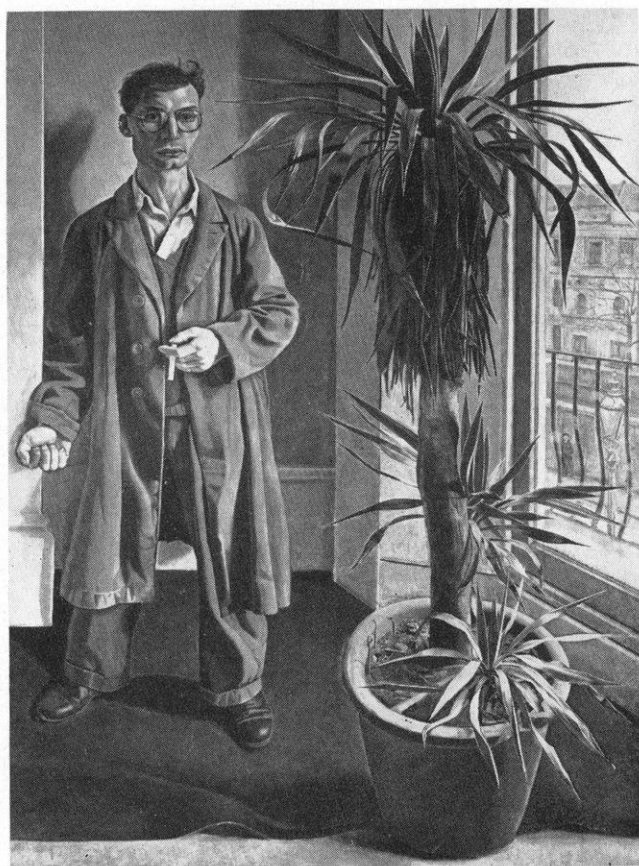
"Bicyclists Against a Blue Background," by Robert Medley



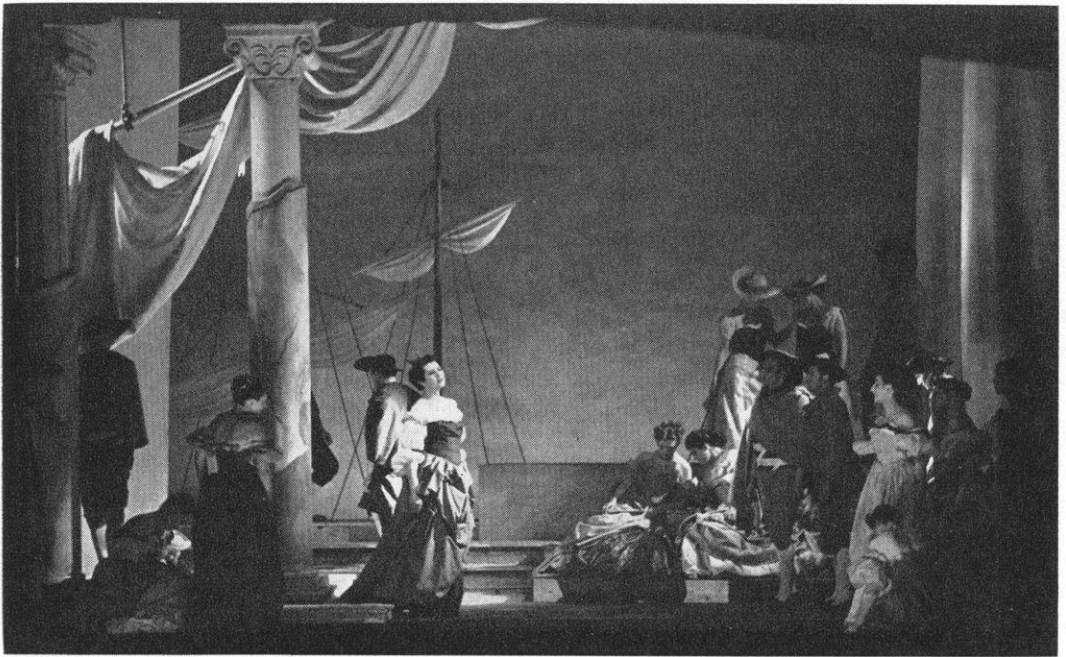
"Autumn Landscape," by William Gear



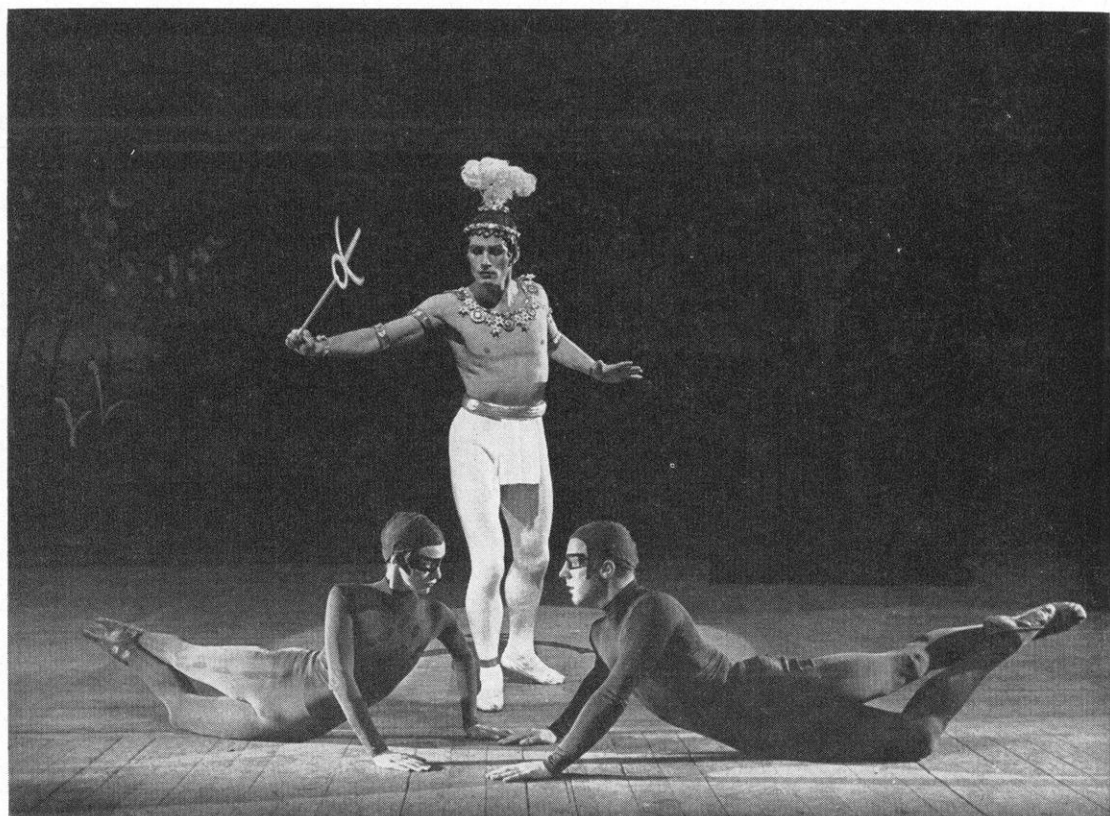
"Agrarian Nativity—Child of This Age," by Ivon Hitchens



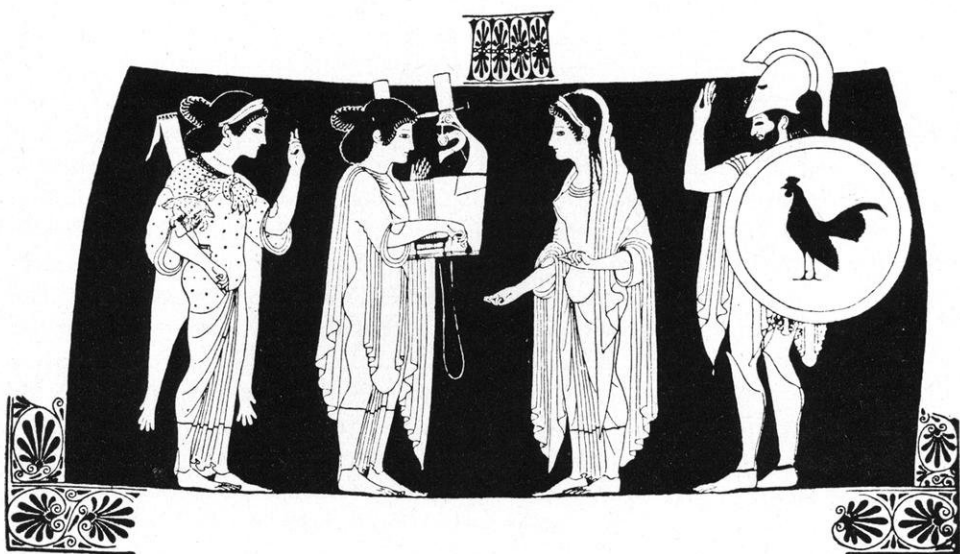
"Interior Near Paddington," by Lucian Freud



English Opera Group's production of "Dido and Aeneas"



Sadler's Wells Ballet, "Tiresias"



PROFESSIONALS FOR AMATEURS*

BY JOHN REICH

About 15 years ago the highly regarded stage and screen actor Charles Coburn—then considered, as he was until his recent death, the dean of American performers—gave a speech in upstate New York, one of the pioneer areas in the college and community theatre movement. That speech attracted a great deal of attention and was discussed in several leading newspapers and magazines. Its graphic title: "Amateurs Teach Amateurs—But Nothing." At the risk of making myself unpopular at the outset, I venture to say that while a number of college and community theatres have since improved in the quality of management and production, Mr. Coburn's statement is still largely true. It points to a problem which plagues the whole fabric of the theatre: leadership.

There's an old saying that people have the government they deserve, but in Europe, where unfortunately this is not always true, they say that the people have the theatre they deserve. If we start right in with the plant, there is general agreement among men and women of the theatre anywhere that a producing group should have its own building. But few community theatres are big or affluent enough to own a theatre, and therefore they have to perform in borrowed space, on borrowed time—in a high school auditorium, in a masonic temple, or a community hall. But who is responsible for the unplayable stages in public buildings, even those of recent origin? The citizens who had to decide where, how, and by whom these architectural and theatrical monstrosities ought to be built. I submit that most auditoria and so-called theatres in colleges and high schools in the Middle West, regardless of whether they were built fifty years or fifty weeks ago, are as impractical and obsolete as the commercial theatres on Broadway. What makes matters worse is that the experienced high-powered professionals on Broadway can overcome the physical handicaps of such playing spaces, while nonprofessionals or even young beginning professionals are victimized by them. Most so-called theatres in which college or community actors are forced to play are too large, the stage too shallow, the sidelines faulty and the whole space too inflexible for different types of plays. The lighting facilities are either below the simplest standards or, in some of the newest buildings, so complex that no one knows how to handle them. Scenery either covers a vast and financially ruinous acreage of canvas or else there's not enough room for two doors and a window. Scene changes cannot be effected quickly and noiselessly, and often a play with three sets becomes an unbearable strain on the patience of the audience. Responsible people have failed to grasp the unpleasant fact that if an auditorium provides a successful locale for a school principal to harangue 2000 students, it may be the last place in the world in which to act a play well.

When it comes to repertoire in the college and community theatre, I am often reminded of the time I was a director of dramatic programs for CBS in the pioneering days of TV. The CBS studios were in New York's Grand Central Station, and some of our producers who lived in the country commuted right from the station. On the main stairway of the grand concourse is a huge book and stationery store and one of my colleagues, rushing to catch his train after work and without looking at the enormous stacks of reading material, would invariably pick up a cheap maga-

* Adapted from a talk before the Wisconsin Idea Theatre Conference, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, October 23, 1960.

zine or pocket book. The next morning he would insist that his find be made into a television show in the firm belief that he was blessed with the accidental discovery of masterpieces. His faith in blind fate instead of work stopped only together with his employment. Whether a theatre be run by a single person or by a committee, few people seem to face the fact that in the professional theatre, or, for that matter, in the amateur theatres of Great Britain, perhaps 100 to 150 plays are being read and discussed for production until it is decided to play *one* of them.

Few people seem aware of the fact that a theatre, any theatre, must have a "face" of its own, a face that is largely shaped by the judicious selection of its presentations. People seem astonished when told that only very few plays are right for a certain company in a certain place at a certain time, while the majority of scripts would be inappropriate. There are almost scientific considerations by which a play should be selected by and for a producing group and for a certain audience; the selection of a program of plays to form a season cannot be arrived at in the manner of the producer in Spevack's Hollywood satire *BOY MEETS GIRL*, who casually weighs the script and says: "This—oh! This won't do."

There are still many engaged in "dramatics" who associate the word "amateur" with sloppy, muddled, and utterly careless activity. They are wrong, no matter what their excuses. The word "amateur" means "one who cultivates a particular pursuit or study from taste," and the word itself is derived from Latin "amare" which means to love. In every other field but the theatre, a person would be expected to do rather well what he loves. It's to the disgrace of the amateur that the Webster dictionary in its recent editions lists the secondary meaning of "amateur" as "a dabbler."

While a season's program of plays may well be read, proposed, and discussed by a committee, the parliamentary system applied to the management of any theatre is nothing short of disastrous. It has even brought the famed *Comédie Française* and the other French state theatres to the brink of ruin from which Mr. De Gaulle is now trying to rescue them. Everyone doing theatre work had better face the fact that guiding the political destinies of a great democracy is one problem, while managing a theatre—any sort of theatre—is another. Football players are amateurs as well as patriots, yet I haven't heard of one football team appointing committees, passing motions, and waiting for the majority to cast a vote on what to do with the ball. A football team has a coach and the more professional he is the better. He may get fired at the end of the season, but at least he is allowed to show what he can do. Max Reinhardt, one of the great innovators of the modern theatre, used to say rather wistfully, "There are two organizations in which the parliamentary system doesn't seem to work—a bunch of gangsters and a bunch of actors." When he was asked whether he meant amateur actors as well as professionals he queried, "Don't you think amateur gangsters need leadership even more than professionals?"

From time immemorial people seem to have felt that most of the problems arising in any kind of theatre focus in the performer, the actor, or as Reinhardt used to call him, "the hunter on the hairline border between reality and dream." Scenery, costumes, direction, indeed the play itself may temporarily seem unimportant when the magic, the true miracle of acting occurs; many recently found out

that truth when John Gielgud relived great scenes from Shakespeare. There is in acting a true mystery which has to do with the transmission of emotional vibrations from one *heart* to many. Yet what is the spectacle presented by hundreds of university, college, and community theatre productions? Men and women ill at ease, stumbling about a platform, laboriously and in grey monotone mumbling words which they thought they had memorized; slaughtering rather than *drawing* the playwright's characters; killing the laugh lines in comedy while gathering laughs in tragedy. Many, cast only because "they looked the part," interested more in their own pretty legs or muscular torsos than in the play, pathologically shy or ridiculously overconfident, creep or strut around banging into furniture and each other, taking advantage of the angelic patience which is a national characteristic of the American public. If amateur musicians performed the way many amateur actors act, the resulting notices would quickly empty recital halls. If amateur tennis players played like most of our community and college theatre hams, the spectators would flee from the stands. If athletes carried on as carelessly they would drown, collapse, and kill each other or their fans. Even an amateur magician has to know a few professional tricks, and a card player must have a little dexterity before anyone will watch him; yet so many students and adults throughout the length and breadth of the land bestride stages, blithely unaware that there is a technique of acting which real actors often study for fifty years and of which an amateur should at least know a few fundamentals before he takes advantage of the time and comfort of his captive audience.

Another astonishing phenomenon seems to be that in this country, which leads the world in the field of promotion and publicity, so many college and community theatre organizations hand their audiences illegible programs dotted with errors, send out badly written and misspelled press releases and production photographs looking like shots from great grandmother's 19th-century family albums! Perhaps one of the principal reasons for the impossible stages, the unimaginative play selection, the incompetent acting and careless promotion may be found in the constantly repeated defense: "This is only an amateur theatre; we are not professional; we are only doing this to have fun ourselves, and besides we think playacting is good for shy people or as a means to integrate outsiders into society. Moreover, it's a good way to raise money for charity while we are trying to while away some time away from home. And we aren't getting plays from Broadway so we have to present our own." All of those excuses bring to mind Ibsen's statement that if an untruth is repeated often enough it's likely to become a truth for most people. If we want to do right by ourselves, by our communities, and by the theatre which we must use and not abuse, we had better face these facts: basketball, football and tennis players, athletes, Olympic and otherwise, the 2000 musicians who crowd into Interlochen, Michigan, each summer, the countless husbands who spend their weekends building a game room or an attic for their families are all *amateurs*; but they love what they are doing enough to study and learn the rudiments of their craft, and often much more than the rudiments. If they didn't, porches and attics would collapse in the autumn breeze. If certain amateur actors who chop up lines instead of wood just want to have fun, then they ought to read a play together aloud like chamber musi-

cians often do, but without imposing upon an audience—any audience. If play acting is good for shy people then so is ballroom dancing and partying and visiting a psychoanalyst, and all this can be done without boring others and stealing time from the lives of helpless victims. If the theatre is a good way of raising money for charity, then so is a dinner dance or a fashion show from which the spectators can learn something informative and useful with no offense to the work and stature of a playwright who appears to be the chief victim of rape in so many theatres. Theatre at its best should be high art; at its worst, a solid craft, but still a craft, like building a coffee table. Nobody bakes cookies for sale at a charity bazaar unless she knows something about cooking and is reasonably certain that her customers will not come down with stomach cramps—which is exactly what so many amateur actors *would* produce in their audiences, if these audiences knew or cared more about the drama, instead of being immunized by patience and ignorance.

As for the final excuse of the incompetent amateur, "we are not getting plays from Broadway so we have to play them ourselves"—at no time in the history of the drama have so many important and well-acted plays been available for free as you can find on the home screen today if you look for them. Last season, with 45 plays on Broadway, no less than 110 important plays were broadcast live or on film so that the best acting standards were available for study even in remote communities—and there are many more this season. There is also an increase in the number of national touring companies of the finest actors New York and Hollywood can find, many of them now beginning to play smaller cities. People in these parts don't think much of driving 300 to 400 miles for a week end. Within that radius fine professional performances have been and will be increasingly available. Yet with ever-increasing standards in the craft of acting before their very eyes, few indeed are the community and college theatres who have profited by watching, and whose knowledge of the fundamentals of acting and directing matches the craftsmanship displayed by the average do-it-yourselfer in his home. As a result, thousands of young people grow up and live with the idea—unfortunately often nourished by Hollywood—that there is not much to the art and craft of the theatre, since just anybody can act or direct if he wants to. A whole nation may thus be threatened with lack or loss of its appreciation of the drama while, at the same time, everybody admiringly realizes how special and difficult is the art of ballet or of figure skating. The work of the great playwrights past and present cannot be enjoyed or even guessed at from the many misinterpretations that we see. One might even argue that unless the college and community theatres drastically change their practices, it would be better for the cause of theatre if these theatres had never come into being, just as in Germany where they never have existed. On the other hand, we must not forget the *tremendous* potential of the college and community theatre for spreading good drama in a country as vast as ours, with resulting stimulation of the intellect and satisfaction of the heart.

These observations should not be interpreted as baiting the amateur theatre, for they spring from a passionate concern with the future of the theatre in this country. Maybe the point will be made more clearly by reporting Stanislavsky's puzzled question to the American designer and writer, Norris Houghton: "You

mean to say, that you in America are sometimes interested in bad plays with bad actors?"

What is it then that the college and community theatres should do to serve the public better and to further the cause of the theatre? There is much they can do; there are some good beginnings in various parts of the country, but much of the work of catching up with the recent developments of the crafts and technique of the stage remains to be done.

Concerning the physical plant, recent developments have made it plain that the aim of every community should be to have a playhouse of its own, while the immediate step ought to be a firm refusal to play in the standard misconceived and misconstrued high school and college auditorium, even if it is well-heated and has plush chairs. The three principal conditions for theatre buildings which have clearly evolved in the last ten years are small size, devices allowing close contact between performers and audiences, and easy convertibility. The seating capacity ought to be between 150 and 500, according to the size of the community. Among the many advantages of such size are full houses and longer runs of the same production, both conditions conducive to better acting because not even the finest professional actors do well before half-empty houses and often only begin to do full justice to the play after the fifth or sixth performance, or just when most college and community theatres unwisely close the production. Considerable savings in building and painting materials and electricity are effected when the stage is small. Sale of tickets and promotion are easier to handle over a longer period of time, giving each show a chance to catch on by word of mouth, which still is the best publicity.

As for the proportions of the theatre, it is not just a matter of small seating capacity; all good theatre architects now endeavor to build theatres without galleries, without obstruction of any sort, to give the entire audience a full view of the stage and easy listening, with no patron physically too remote from the performers. Since by and large only experienced professionals are able to communicate their thoughts, emotions, and words easily to the people in the last row, small seating capacity and as few rows of seats as possible allow amateur actors to be heard and understood with ease. The fixed proscenium arch which almost all theatres and auditoria—even the newer ones—still cherish is definitely dead and gone. Practically all good new theatre buildings, finished or in the planning stage, feature fast and easy convertibility from a stage with an indicated proscenium arch for drawing room comedy, to an arena type theatre for classical plays, and on to a multiplatform theatre for Shakespearean or expressionist productions. This scheme is not only inexpensive if properly planned from the start, but saves money for traditional scenery which is to be used only in the proscenium type of play. These new theatres are designed ranch house style, are simple in decor and make use of inexpensive modern materials—and their easy convertibility enables the community to use them for a variety of purposes when necessary.

A community theatre which cannot as yet think of building its own home should nevertheless get out of a borrowed standard auditorium and begin with the pattern pioneered in the West by the University of Washington in Seattle, and in the East, by José Quintero's Circle in the Square, where a simple, small playing

space is surrounded on three sides by no more than six rows of seats. Not every play lends itself to such intimacy between performer and spectator, but it certainly relieves the actor of his most difficult task of projecting and invites the audience to live with him inside the play—the right move at a time like ours when it has been discovered that participation is the key to sustained interest. A few do-it-yourselfers can easily build collapsible platforms three or four steps high to frame the playing space on three sides, and so a temporary but serviceable theatre can be set up indoors or outdoors in any space conducive to intimacy. That improvised theatre-in-the-round should only be considered a temporary solution. The theatre-minded must keep their eyes fixed on the goal of having their own home and in planning for it, and should avoid local architects who build conventional structures; instead they ought to ask the advice of the leaders of the profession who have spent their lives designing better theatres. This attitude is not a question of cost but of care, not of expense but of conscientiousness.

Many up-to-date theatre solutions have been found, some built, others planned, a large number published and that information is quite accessible. ANTA has printed checklists for builders of every type of theatre. The advice of the foremost architects is available from conference records, discussion and lecture programs. Some of the leading figures in the field, such as the members of the Yale faculty, have given free advice when properly approached and courteously asked. In short, there is no excuse for turning the initial planning job over to the local builder who all his life has built the same gym, the same assembly hall, the same auditorium, and who has no idea that a theatre is something vastly different: a place where a half dozen performers in action should easily be seen and heard while communicating with 400 people in repose.

When it comes to the selection of a season's plays, a decent community or college theatre must first of all avoid the sameness which is so general that one can usually predict which plays most college and community theatres will present during the coming season. Theatre managers should face the fact that worthwhile plays, plays which will be really living on stage at any given time number maybe 1000; therefore, the advice of scholars and teachers of English and literature who may be expected to know large numbers of plays ought to be sought. It's logical to assume that tastes vary; therefore a season's program should demonstrate variety, yet a certain unity of purpose within that variety. Humorous and serious plays ought to balance, and the idea that all plays must be amusing and hilarious in order to succeed should be discarded once and for all, for that idea has always been a falsehood which too many people have repeated too long. Foreign plays should counterbalance American plays, since after all "foreigners" have been writing playable plays for about 1400 years and Americans only for about 150. Current or recent Broadway fare should balance but never overbalance the plays written for previous seasons and earlier generations. People so unimaginative that they simply repeat the Broadway playbills of the commercial theatre should be making TV films in Hollywood, instead of giving the community and college theatre a bad name. Foreign plays should be done only in the finest and most playable new adaptations and acting versions rather than in literal and professional translations, for good theatre is good trans-

mission of emotion, not good philology. It takes work to put together a good bill of plays. But experts in literature, studying, and reading committees, discussing and rereading plays aloud at home can help the community effort a great deal. The problem is neatly summed up in the Prologue to Goethe's *Faust*: "He who offers a variety of things will offer something to everybody."

In amateur sports professional leadership is long accepted and widely practiced. Every high school coach has to have professional training and considerable experience. Isn't it logical then that the first thing that ought to be done in a community or college theatre worth its name is to acquire a truly professional person as a producer-director? People's first reaction to this statement is always: But we cannot afford it. Well, neither can we in America afford shoddy and incompetent amateur productions which harm the cause of theatre which the rest of the civilized world upholds. If the members of a small organization think they cannot afford a professionally trained director, let them borrow the money and in eighteen months they will have earned it back by growth of membership and increased attendance. Some people who argue against coaches, against professional leadership, underestimate their own amateur actors who want to improve themselves, to learn more about their avocation, just as the do-it-yourselfer keenly watches the professional carpenters for a few tricks of the trade. There is a powerful subconscious mechanism in human beings urging them to do everything they choose to do just a little better! All professional leadership must of course be exercised with tact and diplomacy, which are integral parts of the theatre. Few people realize how complex stage work really is, taxing as it does the mind, the emotions, and the body all at the same time. Only through total dedication to it by at least one full-time person can reasonable progress be expected.

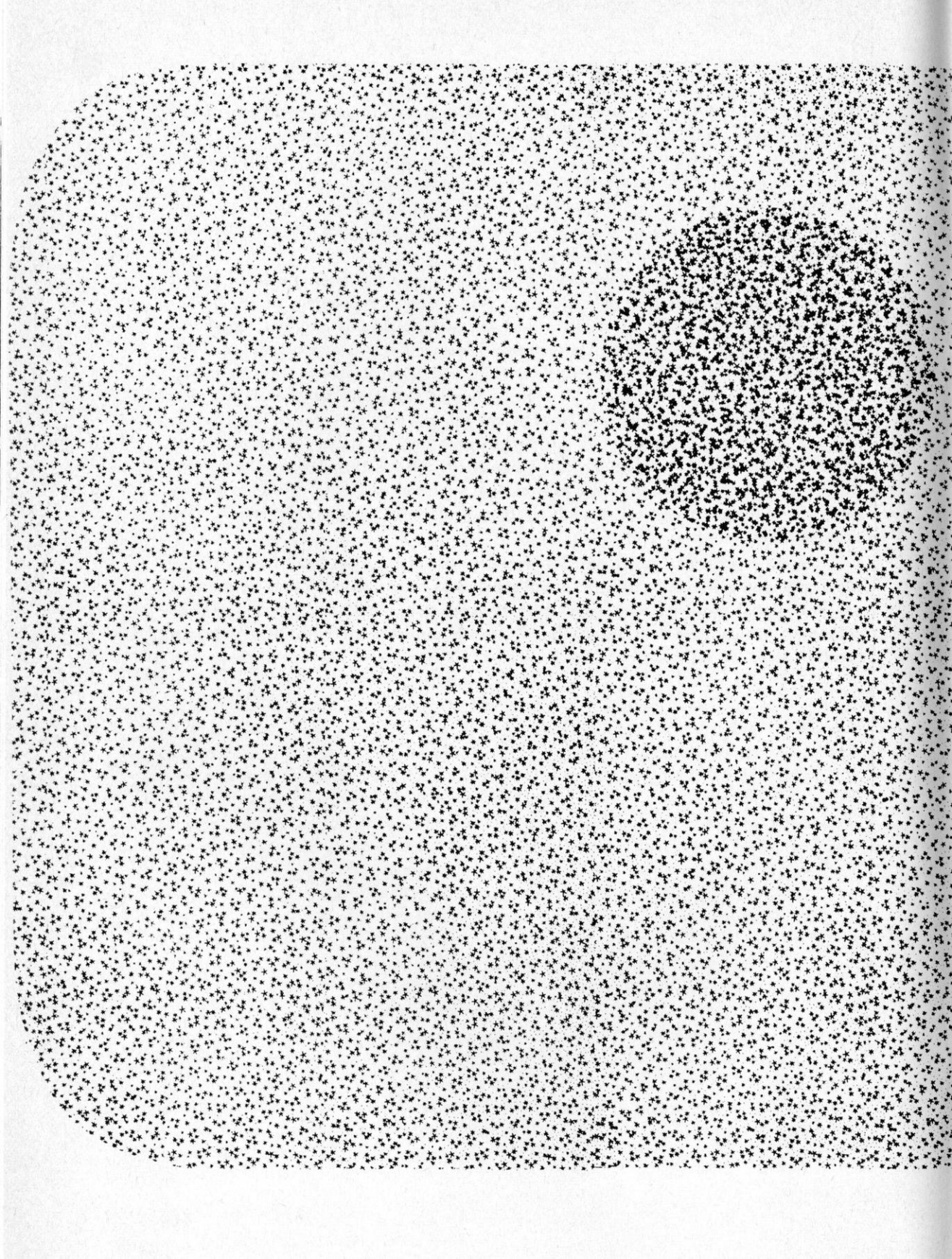
But where may such leadership be found? There is in New York a growing body of young professionals who are tired of waiting for their one chance on Broadway and are aware of the needs of the country at large. These professionals want to serve the theatre for little money but they don't know where and how. It's not hard to find such people and to evoke their loyalty to the community and its theatre by showing them that they will be treated as friends, that respectable homes will be open to them, and that many in the community wish to do something honest about the situation of the theatre in their area. Then, too, a few top professional schools and universities turn out a small but select number of young directors who have roots in the country and can resist the lure of Broadway in order to serve the theatre where such service is most needed. The understanding of the necessity for professional leadership is growing apace in the most progressive communities as well as in many individual minds.

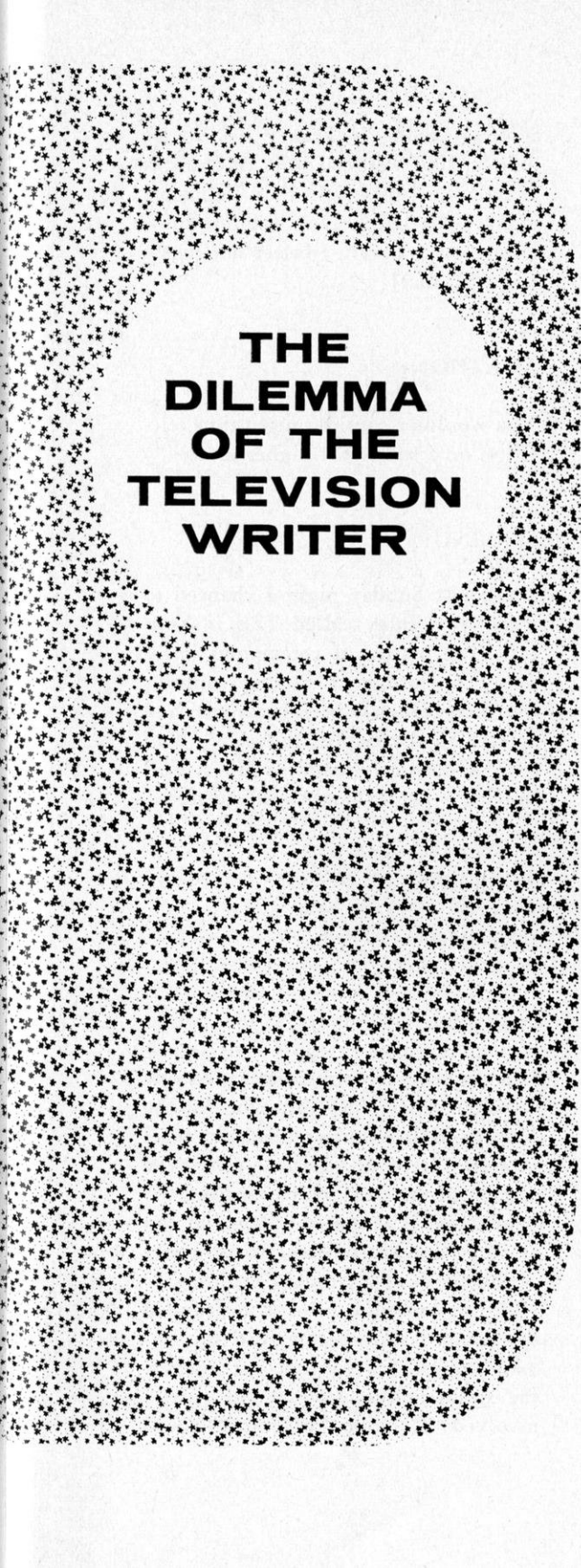
As far as poor and insufficient promotion is concerned, professional theatres are often little better than amateur theatres. If promotion were uniformly good on Broadway, *Variety* would not refer to David Merrick as the one producer who can successfully *sell* any of his shows to the public. The problem here, as in many other instances, seems to be lack of communication between the leaders of various professions such as the *fraternal* organizations succeed in bringing together. If people in other professions are asked to contribute their knowledge and advice to a theatre,

they are often highly flattered, offer their services free, and get a thrill out of discovering a new and unexpected way of applying their own knowledge and experience. There is no reason why promotion and press representation should not be taken over by two or three of the best professionals in those fields in or near the community. It just takes a little faith in people, a conscientious search, and a lot of asking. People would do well to ponder in many situations the words of the Master Teacher: "Ask and it shall be given you."

In the field of acting technique decisive progress has been made in recent years through the introduction, adaptation, and constant refinement of the Stanislavsky method. But most of the practical adjustments of his original "method," which such men as Strassberg, Clurman and Meisner have successfully worked out for the American actor, have been blithely neglected by most college and community theatres in spite of the fact that all true leaders of the American theatre are now with rare unanimity working on a *blend* of the theories and practices of Stanislavsky and the traditional techniques of the French and English stage. The Stanislavsky technique can hardly be learned out of books though his theories may be studied there—it has to be practiced under professional supervision—and it works especially well for adults, as several superb Italian films using mostly amateurs have demonstrated.

The true spirit of theatre and its standard to which all leaders of the college, university, and community theatre should repair was recently exemplified by a group of professional students who gave their director for a birthday gift a symbolic rocket on which they had inscribed, "Forward and upward with the American theatre."





THE DILEMMA OF THE TELEVISION WRITER

a dialogue with rod serling*

* The "dialogue" was reconstructed from remarks by Mr. Serling at a recent meeting of the Milwaukee County Radio and Television Council.

AGATHON (Spokesman for the Audience): At the outset, do you have a general comment on the present state of the television industry?

SERLING: Well, the facets of this massive industry are so myriad, so diverse, that it's difficult to find a starting point. Perhaps the best thing I could do would be to describe my reactions to some recent daytime television viewing. Now, normally daytime for most professional writers is a working period, and for this reason I was quite unfamiliar with the kind of programming the networks have in their daytime hours. I was rather amazed and mystified by what I saw. I'll give you a brief run-down. The first enlightening and stimulating program that I faced was called *Queen for a Day*. This show is a real revealing baby. It's a paradigm of human misery in front of a ghoulishly interested audience, with the contestants vying for the distinction of having the most incurable disease, the most insoluble economic problem,

or the most horrendous family concern. The contestants themselves were incredible. One woman was seeking the honor of being *Queen for a Day* because she was in charge of a handicapped Boy Scout troop. The master of ceremonies kept asking laughingly: "Are they in wheel chairs? Are they really in wheel chairs?" And finally the contestant is chosen. She is adorned with a ratty cape, and amidst a vast giggling idiocy is led to a podium where she is literally drenched with all kinds of gifts.

I took that about eleven minutes, and then I switched over to another stimulating opus called *The Mortal Storm* or *Life Can be Rainy*, or something like that. The opening gambit is for the announcer to come right out and say (and this is almost a verbatim quote): "Does Louise know what John said to Doctor Paul when Anthony couldn't come to see his cousin, Louise? And does Jean realize what Paul is going to do when Smithson knows that . . .?" And so on with mention of perhaps twenty names. The actors seemed ill at ease hoping to cope with the idiotic dialogue. Sample: A young executive, having just been told he's received an advancement—"Gee, think of it! Me, the head of a Division!"

Mind you, this is the way this man's promotion is announced! But it seems he couldn't go to the Philippines where they wanted him to go, because his wife was a buyer in a very special department store and didn't want to leave her position, and their child fell out of a tree on purpose to get attention, or got a disease. I forgot which. You know the disease you find on these daytime soap operas is never the

common cold. It always has to be unique, like a special kind of amnesia or mononucleosis—this show happened to have the latter. Now the last show I watched . . . well, I better not regale you with that!

AGATHON:

You wouldn't consider night-time television on a somewhat higher level?

SERLING:

Well, last Sunday night I chanced to listen to a show called *This is Your Life*. The master of ceremonies introduced an ordained Baptist minister who had formerly been a convict, and he said to the Baptist minister: "You were a convict, weren't you? A real convict?" Amid laughs and gusto.

AGATHON:

Incredible!

SERLING:

I remember I saw this program on one occasion when they brought in the Mayor of Hiroshima and had him meet face to face—for the first time—the captain of the B-29 which dropped the bomb. This is supposed to come to you as entertainment: the mayor of a city of 80,000 dead is brought face to face with the American pilot who dropped the bomb. I suppose they call this human interest, but you can just imagine the strain and tension of the parties involved. The pilot, of course, could

say nothing, and the mayor looked away in absolute embarrassment, and the master of ceremonies gave it to them both like an Ohio State cheerleader, "Rah, rah!"

AGATHON:

That's beyond comment. Well, fortunately, not *all* television is quite that low in taste, at least not yet?

SERLING:

No, it isn't. And I don't throw out these examples as being representative of all television. But sadly enough their like is too much with us, and they are typical of a disproportionately high number of hours of television viewing. Increasingly there seems to be little concern for the taste of the intelligent segment of the audience that must number at least fifteen to twenty million people. These are the people who would probably rather see *Play of the Week* or *Playhouse 90* or *Armstrong Playhouse* or *The United States Steel Hour*, to mention the very few good drama shows that have been currently available; but these people have to settle for things like *Adventures in Paradise*, *My Little Margie*, *The Aquanauts* or *Surfside Six* or any of dozens of westerns, private eyes, and adventure series.

AGATHON:

And the situation comedies!

SERLING:

Yes, they're the worst of all! You know, Richard Rovere in a recent article in *Esquire* describes the situation comedy as a sham battle between the sexes, in which the male is always portrayed as an idiot and the female as an overly cute but terribly winning personality. He capped the article by referring to the form as diluted or no-Cal Aristophanes—which I thought was a lovely line.

AGATHON:

Television has, of course, become a popular whipping boy for its mediocrity, and the view generally is that the shoddiness and bad taste are largely the result of trying to please too many people for too many hours. Is this your opinion?

SERLING:

Oh, yes, and the assumption that the largest audience can only be secured by appealing to the lowest common denominator of taste and intelligence. It is part of the pressure of a primarily *commercial* medium. I don't think that, at the rate we're going, television will ever be truly and literally an art form. So long as you have to try to please a bulk audience of fifty-five million people, so long as you have to assume that a program is a failure if it only reaches seventeen million while its competitor reaches twenty, so long as the iron law of economics is what governs rather than the law of theatre, then I think we're doomed.

AGATHON:

Television is, of course, still an infant industry. Do you think the present patterns are likely to be permanent?

SERLING:

I think that what we're watching now are certain roots being stuck in the ground, certain precedents established, certain attitudes formulated and made concrete, and that it is going to be very difficult to change any of them. I believe that current programming is going to be representative of pretty much the bulk of television programming for some time to come. No one seems to have the guts or the foresight to think a new thought, take a different step, reach for something a little more novel and imaginative. This is what stifles us and sticks us in the closet.

AGATHON:

And is the sponsor always the main villain?

SERLING:

I don't knock the sponsors unduly. I am conscious of some of the limitations we work under. I think of some of the wondrous hours of exciting, brilliant entertaining that television has offered us. But because I work backstage, so to speak, I also know some of the awful things that are going on. I tell you when I knock the sponsors: I knock them when they are particularly obtruding in an art form, or what purports to be an art form.

Now I don't want to be told what is the motivation of a character by a man who sells soap. I don't want to be told what is or is not valid in a dramatic program by a man who has never taken a course in drama, who knows nothing about drama. Granted these men sustain the existence of the shows. . . .

AGATHON:

This does not give them the prerogative to infringe on the precincts of art. . . .

SERLING:

Would the sponsor of a baseball program have the gall to tell a manager how to run a team? Now, drama has a tradition that goes back five thousand years, and this tradition implies high standards of excellence, which you simply cannot compromise at will because a particular play may hurt the feelings of a housewife in Mississippi.

AGATHON:

You're often forced into script changes because of pressure groups the sponsor may feel timorous about?

SERLING:

Script changes and vitiating concepts. On many occasions! I recall once we were doing a *Playhouse 90* called "The Dark Side of the Earth." It was a Hungarian revolt story, the very first

to be done on this theme. On the fifth or sixth day of rehearsal the sponsor's representative—the advertising agency men—came to listen to the actors run through the show. As was their wont, they sat in the back of the rehearsal hall prepared to take notes with big heavy No. 2 pencils on reams of foolscap; each time the pencil hits paper you know a scene has been vitiated or diluted, a concept destroyed, lines cut out, something irreparable perpetrated. But on this particular day we ran through 72 minutes of drama and not one man touched pencil to paper, and as I noted this I said to myself, "Here for the first time is real fulfillment; they've actually watched the show as a piece of drama rather than a display case for their product." But then as is the ritual of these men, they got into a backfield huddle to confer; shortly they would send one fellow, the "T" quarterback, as it were, to read off what was the sense of the reactions of the entire group. But I knew they had not taken a single note, so I confidently said to the producer (Martin Manlius), "Boy, for the first time we're going on the air totally undiluted, unassaulted; we'll be 'pure' when we walk into the arena!" And then the agency man approached. "Marty," he said, "this is our feeling: don't have too many Russian officers smoking cigarettes!" That was the entire value judgment after having watched 72 minutes of drama: "*Don't have too many Russian officers smoking cigarettes!*" So I told Marty that the way to fix these guys was to bring on a big, bullnecked Soviet tank officer at the end of the show, and have him say: "You gedda lod to like in a Mardl-boro."

AGATHON:

On *The Twilight Zone* you function as both writer and producer; so in a sense you're doubly vulnerable to sponsor pressure. What has, in fact, been your experience on this program?

SERLING:

Well, strangely enough, with all my haranguing and yelling and chipping at them, I've had rather a good working relationship with my sponsors on *The Twilight Zone*. I wouldn't call it an *idyllic* relationship, but it is one in which we have a mutual respect. I know what their problem is; they've got to sell Instant Coffee. And they know what my problem is; I've got to do a qualitative job in 24 minutes and 30 seconds: to tell a good story, establish people, and create interest. We've worked pretty well at a slight distance. This is not a hand-holding friendship by any means because our interests, our tastes are different. But, as I say, they have not interfered terribly much. The point that should be made here, of course, is that all television writers, in a sense, precensor themselves. They know specifically what will not be permitted on the air, and consequently they will never touch thematically the so-called controversial areas. I won't do a show, for example, which could conceivably be considered a vehicle of criticism, social criticism. I won't do it because I know it will never get on the air. Inside this area of self-censorship I find I can operate—granted with limits—and still produce a show that is reasonably qualitative.

AGATHON:

This kind of censorship in the mass media has frightening implications for its long range impact. If we continue to restrict the mass media to a one-dimensional role. . . .

SERLING:

I think, if the trend toward censorship continues, we will eventually get a new citizenry in this country, individuals who will be very selective in terms of their cereals and automobiles, but will have forgotten how to read a book, make a decision, and probably in the long run even to think. Look at this spoon feeding of violence after violence after violence in prime time every night of the week. The citizenry that must eventually evolve from this kind of exposure will have a tremendously over-simplified view of good and evil, and maybe with it, a predilection for violence.

AGATHON:

Well, what can we do? What directions can we explore to improve television? Surely the situation is not entirely irremediable?

SERLING:

I think that there are three areas that might offer hope. Number one is pay television. Perhaps with pay television you would be in a position to do programming that would appeal to a minority and still be economically feasible. You know, a Broadway play that's seen by 300,000 people is considered a smashing success, whereas a commercial television play that's seen by twelve million is judged a dismal fail-

ure. Pay television might scale down the pressures. Well, that's one area.

Number two is educational television. To me this is the least realized and potentially the most exciting concept in television.

And number three, let's hear from groups on our side. Let's not limit letter writing to pressure groups with a big axe to grind. I'd like to see some literate, analytical and intelligent post cards written by people who have seen a play and *like* it—a new and significant kind of "audience participation." You'd be amazed at how little mail pull there is of a positive nature. There are many, many, many sackfuls of critical letters, but go look for a hundred letters after an exciting *Playhouse 90* that say their writers love the show. I would say the intelligent people should become pressure groups on behalf of their own interests.

The whole problem is to somehow change our approach from a quantitative one to a qualitative one. If we could somehow reach the point—and I have to look in the mirror when I say this—where we no longer worry about ratings; where we could consider whether a show is valid, and honest, and right; not did it get a good Nielsen or A.R.B., or some other kind of mathematical count. On a given Friday night I begin to feel terribly self-conscious, battered, bruised, and defeated when my show loses out to its competition. This is the big problem with creative people in the industry. We lose sight of what should be the proper relationship between an audience and artist. We succumb. We bow down before this strange shrine, this temple of mathematics. And we are seeing the results on our T.V. screens today. Tomorrow, who knows!

THE WORLD OF LITTLE MAGAZINES



THE WORLD OF THE LITTLE MAGAZINES

By Felix Pollak

The essence of the little magazines is neither physical size, nor limited circulation, nor noncommercialism, nor specific topical concerns. All these are characteristic features of the "littles," but they are not their essence. Their essence is an elusive substance which I would call *the little magazine spirit*.

It is a spirit of wide-openness and receptivity to new ideas, theories, movements, and experiments; a stubborn refusal to conform to conventions and *mores*; an air of independence, a fervid antagonism against fetters and trammels and chains and strings of any kind; a stance of active resistance against the theory and practice of censorship and taboo. It is, in other words, the spirit of individualism, lacking in any of the established and respectable publications—lacking not by coincidence but by their very nature. Bound to advertising interests and circulation figures, the commercial magazines cannot afford the attitude of rebellion. The little magazine spirit, on the other hand, is free and gay and irreverent and deadly earnest and intense, pugnacious and ebullient, often irresponsible, always irrepressible. Little mags may die after a short span of publication, but the *esprit* that gave them birth lives on and begets forever new titles that take their places. Both a large death rate and a large birth rate are characteristics of the genre, but particularly in the last decade the birth rate has far surpassed the death rate. The *Publishers' Weekly* of January 1961 contains an article on the "Growing Distribution for Little Magazines," which says in part:

In the past few years, this specialized area of publishing has grown not only in numbers but in distribution and, perhaps, in influence. Last summer, a *Wall Street Journal* survey estimated that there are about 250 'little' magazines currently in operation, compared to about 180 as recently as 1955 and only about 60 in the 1920's.

These figures are food for thought. I have, for instance, an uneasy suspicion that the flourishing of little magazines stands in inverse ratio to the literacy of a given society. The little mags of Europe seem to differ not only in numbers but also in kind from the little mags of this country: there appeared to be (at least in the first half of this century) less need for them because many of the bigger European literary journals habitually took up specific little magazine concerns and were much more hospitable than ours to the new and experimental writers of this or that avant-garde. Could it be that the littles flourish best in a fundamentally illiterate and commonplace society where people may read more than ever in quantity and less than ever in quality? Our civilized but uncultured society may well be drowning in the upsurge of competent triviality propagated through the advertising media of best-seller lists, books-into-movies, and predigested book club selections. Wherever the stratum of truly literate, sensitive, and venturesome minds is thin and dispersed, the little magazines will fulfill their basic function of providing catacombs for minority tastes and values: they are the fallout shelters against mass-minded vulgarity.

This is nothing new. True art has always been a conspiracy, an underground movement operating out of caves (sometimes disguised as attics), forever imposing

the *status nascendi* of various media upon the *status quo* of society. The expression "subversive art" is a tautology. Which accounts for the bewildered resentments of the philistine who, as the guardian of the *status quo ante* (and as such fulfilling in the larger scheme of things an also necessary balancing function), is usually half a century behind in catching up to the art of the present. It has been remarked that one century's anthology authors are the preceding century's "unpublishables," and Bernard Shaw has said, "The masterpiece begins by fighting for its life against unpopularity, by which I do not mean mere indifference but positive hatred and furious renunciation of it as an instrument of torture." It is the historic mission of the little magazines to have at all times offered themselves up as the sacrificial lambs on critical slaughter-banks. They were—to change the metaphor—the vials and test tubes of experimentation toward the potential masterpiece. That many experiments ended in failure, shattering the test tubes and creating merely ill-smelling fumes, is in the nature of the thing. But such failures do not invalidate the motive behind the effort, and one success in the alchemical laboratories of art—take James Joyce's *Ulysses*—is worth a hundred splinters of glass and huge clouds of empty smoke.

However, having said this, I must say also that I am not singing the praises of experimentalism for its own sake and rejecting traditionalism *per se*. Intelligent, informed, purposeful experimentation is not based on an ignorant contempt for tradition. On the contrary, only those who lack the true esteem for the achievements of the old masters can have the temerity of trying to duplicate those achievements and of recommending this procedure to others. It is, among other things, presumptuous to attempt today to write a Shakespearean drama or a Keatsian ode. Genuine appreciation is aware of the fact that the past cannot be held, repeated, reproduced; that it can only be utilized for the development of one's own contemporary style, craft, idiom. One's tools must be attuned to the changes of modern reality, climate, temper, tempo. Keats, if he lived today, would not and could not write as he wrote 150 years ago; and the faceless, emotionless, efficient, anonymous horror of the Nazi concentration camps or of the A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima needs a different language, rhythm, and style of expression from the violence depicted in, say, "Othello." Only the *theme* of violence remains the same, in life and thus in literature, as do the themes of love and joy and courage and grief and loss and death, unendingly rehearsed as literary motifs, but just as unendingly varied in mode and tone and costume throughout man's cultural history.

The contemporary writer, then, will adapt his techniques of direct or—like Kafka—oblique communication to the type of direct or oblique and sometimes obscure events, experiences, emotions, and cause-and-effect relations he aims to convey. The much decried obscurity of modern literature, particularly of modern poetry, is thus often the deficiency of the receiver, not of the creator, and an "obscure poet" is frequently simply a poet who has run into a dense reader. Algebra, musical and chess notations, etc. are also obscure to the uninitiated; but since literature and poetry employ as their tools the same words which constitute the small change of intercourse in Everyman's supermarket, Everyman cannot grasp the idea that these words, too, might in some respects and contexts be parts of a foreign language

that needs to be studied in order to be understood. "Works of great originality, the result of long labor on the part of a superior mind, are not grasped in a moment by hasty, lesser folk," says Eugene Jolas in the first issue of *transition*. I have a strong suspicion that the people who constantly complain about modern poetry are the same people who don't read poetry of *any* kind.

Some of this may seem to go far afield, yet it goes straight to the heart of the matter—little magazine literature, its writers and readers. Inevitably, there is much phoniness and pretense and poor artistry in the littles, and much that is not merely obscure but truly opaque—that is to say, ununderstandable for anyone, not just for those who are ignorant of the code. Many little magazine pages are populated by holy and unholy barbarians who mistake the raw materials of art for the finished product and sneer at tradition, only to end up by producing poor imitations of what they don't even know existed—and for that very reason, in fact. But by the same token, the littles never cease their fruitful attempts at creating *new* traditions (avant-gardists becoming the natural guardians of past advances, as the game goes on), impelled by the instinctive knowledge that the changes essential to life and art are really developments rather than breaks of continuity, and that the appropriate symbol is the stream, not the earthquake. Indeed, in the long run even volcanic eruptions and disruptions—advances, regressions, or digressions—are part of the stream, and change proves to be the prerequisite of continuity.

II

A complex of questions, one question evolving from the other, is frequently asked: "Did many of our famous authors start out in the little magazines? And which ones did, which ones didn't? And, in either case, why?" The answer to the first question is "yes." About 80 per cent of the serious writers in the first three decades of this century—the little magazine history begins around 1900, at least as far as America is concerned—were first published in the littles. Why this is so is implicit in my comments on the little magazine spirit as opposed to the mentality of the mass-oriented journals: the absence of editorial restrictions, the editorial receptivity to new names and methods, the basic attitude of "nihil obstat." These were naturally attractive to young, unknown, groping artists eager to find kindred spirits likewise attuned to the untried and daring in writing, painting, sculpturing and composing, likewise alert for the new ideas, slogans, movements, and experiments germinating in the fertile 1920's from the attics and cellars and salons of Paris, London, Vienna, Zurich, Munich, and Berlin.

However, there are two fallacies inherent in the question itself. The first fallacy is the idea that the famous-to-be authors merely "started out" in the little mags but soon "graduated," as it were, into the respectable big and slick publications that paid well—or paid at all. This presupposes that the "arrived" artists forgot and forsook the littles that had served them as stepping stones, as mere springboards into the "big time." This happened, but it was the exception rather than the rule. The little magazines are—and always were considered by the best of their

contributors—ends in themselves rather than mere means to an end. They are not the kindergartens of literature, and the genuine avant-garde writers, particularly those who continued to grow and venture, kept appearing in them long after they had gained renown and even fame.

The second fallacy is the assumption that the renowned writers were actually "made" by the little magazines and would never have succeeded without them. This is an exaggeration the other way around; while the stepping-stone theory underestimates the little mags, the discovery-and-launching theory overestimates their role. Surely, writers like James Joyce, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Thornton Wilder, William Faulkner, Gertrude Stein, and Ernest Hemingway, to name but a few, would eventually have succeeded in convincing some editor or publisher of their talents, and the small minority of the alert reading public and perceptive critics would have taken it from there. And eventually the celebrities would have become just as celebrated as they are now. But the key word is: eventually. It would have been harder and taken longer, there is no doubt about that. And their direction might have changed in the process of frustration. At best, the aspiring artists would have "arrived" later; at worst, they would have arrived also embittered and warped by that most warping force of all—disinterest and neglect, public apathy, the indifferent shrug of the cold shoulder. But arrived they would have, for I doubt that any of them would have given up fighting. The ability to overcome obstacles and passive as well as active hostility is an essential part of the makeup of genius. It is actually a part of the artist's talent, as fundamental as its twin, self-criticism, and as the ability to write, paint, or compose music. And just as a tree must grow leaves or cease to live, so the genuine writer must keep writing and imposing himself onto the consciousness of his contemporaries. This is virtually a physical law. The little magazine claim of having "made" great writers is therefore unrealistic, without some modifications; but the little magazine claim of having *helped* their development and *speeded* their rise is thoroughly justified.

A study of modern literature is unthinkable without a study of the little magazines. Practically all modern movements—symbolism, cubism, imagism, expressionism, surrealism, etc.—originated in their pages and were carried by them, like seeds, across borders and continents. They are the source materials, the matrixes. There are many great writers who attained their literary statures independent of them, but practically all of these worked in conventional media. To say this is not to belittle them. Figures like Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Thomas Wolfe, and Willa Cather cannot easily be belittled. But it is true that they were not pathfinders and innovators. Nor can novelists in general expect to find a platform in little magazines, notwithstanding some exceptions—notably that of Joyce, whose *Ulysses* was first published in instalments in *The Little Review*. The littles will, by their nature, be most hospitable to poets, short story writers, essayists, aphorists, perhaps pamphleteers. Even dramatists like O'Neill had to fight their way without the help of the little mags, though dramatists had a similar support in torch-bearing little theatres—the Provincetown Players in O'Neill's case—which are in several respects the little magazines' close relatives. The small private presses also belong to the family but are, like the little theatres, a separate chapter.



A few words about the little magazine collection under my care in the Memorial Library of The University of Wisconsin. This collection, known as the Marvin Sukov Collection of Little Magazines, was bought in 1958 from a Minnesota psychiatrist who had spent a quarter of a century assembling it. Dr. Sukov's collection is in size, inclusiveness of titles, completeness of runs, and excellence of condition one of the finest in the country. It contained, when it came to the University, roughly 720 titles and 10,600 issues, and we have since added numerous new titles, filled old gaps, and entered subscriptions of magazines already represented to keep the collection up to date.

How does one go about ordering little mags? How does one know about them, to begin with, since they obviously aren't available at the newsstands and in most bookstores? And what uses are made of such a collection in a university library? Let us take these questions one by one, if not necessarily in order.

There is actually much more to the subject than meets the eye. It is a little world, even a little industry, in itself. Fly-by-nights, as the littles appear to be to the average reader reared on the predigested digests of the bigs, slicks, and pulps, they yet have their own reference tools and a quite respectable descriptive and critical literature. The two most useful directories are *Trace*, a "chronicle of living literature" edited by James Boyer May in Hollywood, and its recent offspring, *The International Guide*, a yearly compilation by Mary Carol Bird of Los Angeles, which contains titles, addresses, frequency of appearance (a sore point with most littles which has caused at least one exasperated contributor to rename them "Little Lagazines"), the prices of single issues and subscriptions, information on the type of material wanted, payment (if any), short sketches of editorial policies, and a code indicating whether the magazine is printed by letterpress, or is photo-offset or mimeographed, and whether it contains art work; listed also are the names of the primary editors. *Trace*, appearing four times a year, lists "addenda"—i.e. newcomers to the field, cessations, mergers, and other news and gossip concerning the mags and the people connected with them. Another useful tool, particularly for libraries, is the annual *Index to Little Magazines*, compiled by Sheehy and Lohf, two reference librarians at Columbia University Library, and published by the indefatigable Alan Swallow of Denver. This undertaking, begun in 1948, is continuing, with the 1960–1961 volume in preparation; and just recently a graduate student in English, together with a young faculty member of The University of Wisconsin, made arrangements to begin indexing the years previous to 1948, going back in two-year intervals probably to 1900. They will utilize the Sukov Collection for the purpose and foresee only a very occasional need to go outside Madison for their material. The list of the magazines indexed is of course selective, with the aim of including everything lively and qualitatively important and of avoiding amateur productions of the deadwood and sewing-circle type, as well as periodicals already indexed in such general sources as *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* and *International Index to Periodicals*.

There are other projects, either in progress or contemplated, that use this big collection of littles for their home base. It needs not much imagination to perceive in this wealth of material the seeds for articles, bibliographies, doctoral disserta-

tions, and books. Students in Cultural History have shown as much interest—from ideological, historical, sociological, and psychological viewpoints—as have students in Contemporary Literature; and a young lady in Art History has begun a systematic examination of *The Masses* for the political cartoon work (particularly Art Young's) that magazine featured. An up-to-date revision of the basic work in the field, Hoffman, Allen and Ulrich's *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton, 1946–1947) might advantageously be based on this assemblage of original sources, and I have had consultations with a doctoral candidate about his plans for writing an interpretative history of a single significant journal, such as *The Southern Review*, to investigate its role and influence over the years, its political and artistic change of character, and the causes and consequences of those changes. And, following the anthologistic trend of our time, the idea of culling the best from the great little mags of the past and present, and presenting it in book form, is certainly tempting, though not altogether new.

The ordering of current little magazines presents problems that are apt to baffle the staff of Serials Acquisitions Departments. The streamlined business methods to which they are accustomed fail to work in the domain of unbusinesslike and usually impecunious individualists. Ordering through agents is practically out of the question; subscriptions need to be placed directly with the one-man (as a rule) trinity of publisher-editor-distributor—a trinity that is likely to go “on the road” without further notice, or change its editorial address at the spur of the moment from Brooklyn to San Francisco. Most of those editors have very decided ideas about the poetry of William Carlos Williams and Wallace Stevens but are extremely hazy on the merits and purposes of invoices in triplicate. Nor are they unduly bothered by the implications of terms like “quarterly”: unexpected hitches and delays are always expected in this un-business, and a double issue is an accepted way of skipping an issue and yet giving the subscribers their money's worth, causing never a murmur of discontent among them but many a groan out of a university library's serials checker. In the cases of the more affluent littles that are distributed by DeBoer's “Selected Outlets,” the situation is somewhat less irregular.

Acquiring back issues to fill existing gaps is a perennial task that can be met through purchases from private collectors and the few dealers, mostly on the East and West coasts, who specialize in little magazines and avant-garde literature in general; or through exchanges with libraries and individuals; and sometimes through gifts and public auctions. Vigilance and the spreading of the word about one's interests and lacks can yield happily surprising results. (One of the Sukov collection's needs, for instance, is a run of *The Double Dealer*, an important journal published from 1921 to 1926 in New Orleans.) “Desiderata lists” are periodically sent to likely sources, and as a last resort one can reproduce missing issues by “xeroxing” or other photocopying methods, if one can locate the original issues and get the consent of the owner. A bibliography giving the holdings of six participating libraries is the *Union List of Little Magazines*, published by the Midwest Inter-Library Center in Chicago in 1956—a useful tool for locating copies. And the excellent annotated bibliography in the back of the Hoffman-Allen-Ulrich work is of inestimable value in checking on the completeness of one's holdings and in establishing *desiderata* files.

Believing that a selective chronological sequence of little magazine manifestoes would result in a very intimate and instructive little magazine history—one which a John Gunther of the genre would have every right to call “Inside the Little Magazines”—I should like to cite a few of them, just to give the idea. These ardent editorial *credos* were usually presented in the first issue of the first volume and convey far better than any paraphrase can do the very atmosphere in which an individual little mag and the people working on it lived and breathed. Here, as I indicated, lies a whole area of fruitful research, but within the frame of this paper I shall confine myself to the following excerpts from a few significant editorial declarations of each of the first five decades of American little magazine history.

The Little Review (published by Margaret C. Anderson and Jane Heap from 1914–1929 in Chicago, New York, and Paris) describes itself as “a magazine that believes in Life for Art’s sake . . . whose philosophy is Applied Anarchism, whose policy is a Will to Splendor of Life.”

. . . . Finally, since *The Little Review*, which is neither directly nor indirectly connected in any way with any organization, society, company, cult or movement, is the personal enterprise of the editor, it shall enjoy that untrammelled liberty which is the life of Art.

And now that we’ve made our formal bow we may say confidently that we take a certain joyous pride in confessing our youth, our perfectly inexpressible enthusiasm, and our courage in the face of a serious undertaking; for those qualities mean freshness, reverence, and victory! At least we have got to the age when we realize that all beautiful things make a place for themselves sooner or later in the world. And we *hope* to be very beautiful! . . .

The founding of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* (1912 to date, edited originally by Harriet Monroe in Chicago) was surely a landmark of the decade, and beyond that of literature in this country. Under the title “The Motive of the Magazine,” Miss Monroe sets forth her views:

In the huge democracy of our age no interest is too slight to have an organ. Every sport, every little industry requires its own corner, its own voice, that it may find its friends, greet them, welcome them. . . . Poetry alone, of all the fine arts, has been left to shift for herself in a world unaware of its immediate and desperate need of her, a world whose great deeds, whose triumphs over matter, over the wilderness, over racial enmities and distances, require her ever-living voice to give them glory and glamour. Poetry has been left to herself and blamed for inefficiency, a process as unreasonable as blaming the desert for barrenness. This art, like every other, is not a miracle of direct creation, but a reciprocal relation between the artist and his public.

The present venture is a modest effort to give to poetry her own place, her own voice. The popular magazines can afford her but scant courtesy—a Cinderella corner in the ashes—because they seek a large public which

is not hers, a public which buys them not for their verse but for their stories, pictures, journalism, rarely for their literature, even in prose. Most magazine editors say that there is no public for poetry in America; one of them wrote to a young poet that the verse his monthly accepted 'must appeal to the barber's wife of the Middle West,' and others prove their distrust by printing less verse from year to year, and that rarely beyond page-end length and importance.

We believe that there is a public for poetry, that it will grow, and that as it becomes more numerous and appreciative the work produced in this art will grow in power, in beauty, in significance. . . .

transition (1927-1938, a monthly, published in Paris and The Hague under the editorship of Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul) states in an introduction:

Of all the values conceived by the mind of man throughout the ages, the artistic have proven the most enduring. . . . Perhaps, because America is young, from the white man's standpoint, and has been constantly adapting itself to changing conditions, without a single tranquil decade, it has been less affected by literature, music or painting than any other land. Surely it is the only country, in recent centuries, which has accepted ready-made cultures from other peoples before having developed one characteristically its own. . . . Lately, Americans have shown unmistakeable signs of artistic awakening. Poets and novelists have come forward with work of unquestionable genuineness and originality. More important, still, a small group of intelligent readers has developed.

transition wishes to offer American writers an opportunity to express themselves freely, to experiment, if they are so minded, and to avail themselves of a ready, alert and critical audience. . . . Contributions will be welcomed from all sources and the fact that an author's name is unknown will assure his manuscript a more favorable examination. . . . No rigid artistic formulae will be applied in selecting the contents of *transition*. If the inspiration is genuine, the conception clear and the result artistically organized, in the judgment of the editors, a contribution will be accepted. Originality will be its best recommendation. Neither violence nor subtlety will repel us.

Whatever tendencies appear, we want them to be reflected in *transition* if they have real artistic value. The bulk of the space will be devoted to stories, plays, sketches, or poems. Critical articles will be subjected to the same tests as other kinds of creative work. . . .

The Fugitive (a bimonthly edited out of Nashville, from 1922 to 1925, by a group of Southern writers, among whom were Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, John Crow Ransom, and Robert Penn Warren) begins with this careful Foreword:

The Fugitive is of very limited circulation, and is supported by subscriptions at the rate of one dollar per subscriber. It will appear at intervals of one month or more, till three to five numbers have been issued.

Beyond that point the editors, aware of the common mortality, do not venture to publish any hopes they may entertain for the infant as to a further tenure of this precarious existence.

But when Donald Davidson states the magazine's aim, his tone becomes self-assured and militant:

We are foes to sentimentalism in all forms, whether it be the conventional sob-stuff that used to mark Southern literature, or the more pretentious kind that is peddled out in Harriet Monroe's magazine. Literature is a serious business to us. We are for no compromise in the arts, and desire to publish in the magazine only what we consider the best poetry, without reference (or with as little reference as possible) to the demands of popular taste. We do not care to appeal to the many, and do not think we can, but we wish to reach, and are reaching, the intelligent few everywhere in whom lies the real hope of American literature.

Front (another bimonthly published in English, French, and German at The Hague under the editorship of Sonja Prins, 1930-1931) sounds the clarion call of the decade:

The first four issues have provided a field of operations for many literary forces; henceforth, we will only concern ourselves with literature as an art when it arms the workers against the bourgeoisie.

Partisan Review—A Bi-Monthly of Revolutionary Literature (published by the John Reed Club of New York, under changing publishers and editors from 1934 to date) starts out in the same vein:

We propose to concentrate on creative and critical literature, but we shall maintain a definite viewpoint—that of the revolutionary working class. Through our specific literary medium we shall participate in the struggle of the workers and sincere intellectuals against imperialist war, fascism, national and racial oppression, and for the abolition of the system which breeds these evils. The defense of the Soviet Union is one of our principal tasks. . . .

We take this opportunity to greet the various magazines of revolutionary literature already in the field, especially the *New Masses* whose appearance as a weekly, like the present issuance of *Partisan Review*, is evidence of the growth of the new within the old.

From 1920-1923, William Carlos Williams and Robert McAlmon had edited *Contact*. In 1932, Williams, McAlmon, and Nathanael West revived the magazine, but only three issues of the new *Contact* appeared. They were nevertheless of great importance in the history of American avant-gardism and, presenting a viewpoint very different from that of the *Partisan Review*, presaged to some degree the stand taken by many magazines in the 1940's:

Put to its full use, writing has nothing to convey, either pungently or crassly; it is neither stream-of-consciousness or bare-bitter-truth, has nothing to do with truth but is, true or not, as the case may be, a pleasure of the

imagination. But the moment we are cheated by an impost, "literature" among the rest, we sense it and our pleasure falls.

. . . There's no sense in slobbering at the mouth over humanity and writing that way. We die every day, cheated—and with written promises of great good in our hands. To plead a social cause, to split a theory, to cry out at the evil which we all partake of—gladly: that's not writing.

The words themselves must stand and fall as men. A writer has no use for theories or propaganda, he has use for but one thing, the word that is possessing him at the moment he writes. Into that focus he must pour all he feels and has to say, as a writer, regardless of anything that may come of it. By word after word his meaning will then have been made clear.

A magazine without opinions or criteria other than words moulded by the impacts of experience . . . such a magazine would be timely to a period such as this. It can never be a question of its being read by a million or by anybody, in fact. Value for value our minds are justified when we can place over against those who are enjoying or failing beside us, words—that cannot be eaten or made into cloth or built into a roof to shelter them, but which have been nevertheless subject to the same rigors which they suffer and the same joys which they were born out of their mothers' bellies to share.

Good writing stands by humanity in its joys and sorrows because under all it is—and just because it is—so many words.

But foreshadowed also is the opposition to the decade of criticism—New Criticism at that—that was just around the corner when Archibald McLeish wrote a letter on page 1 of volume 1, issue 1 of *Furioso* (edited from 1939–1953 by Reed Whittemore and James and Carmen Angleton)—a manifesto of sorts:

A magazine of poetry is a place where poetry gets published. It is not, however, a place where poetry gets read. There are exceptions. *Poetry* is one. But by and large a magazine of poetry is a magazine in which poets read their own poems and sometimes each other's. . . . The poets take in each other's poetry. The critics criticize each other's criticisms. The critics, because they have no other expression, and often no other life, live on the expression of the poets. The poets, because they have no other audience, write for an audience of critics.

The result is what we see—a poetic futility which had driven into prose many and many a man who might have been a poet had he had the kind of audience any artist must have if he is to continue his art. . . . A poet with an audience of critics only—even with an audience of critics who are also poets like Eliot and Tate—even with an audience of critics as marvelously understanding as Mrs. Colum—is a dead poet and one who know's he's dead. . . . When the critic comes first . . . art is dead.

Yet *The Southern Review* (appearing from 1935–1942 at Louisiana State University, with Charles W. Pipkin, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren as editors) is an example of the academic quarterly at its nonacademic best. It demonstrates

that criticism need not always come first and dominate the creative writer but can very well advance his recognition and further his cause. Faulkner, for one, found his first serious and understanding consideration in the *Southern Review*—one of the many cases where a little magazine exerted a profound influence on a writer's career, even though his work, as primarily that of a novelist, did not appear in its pages—or to any extent in other littles. Echoing the motto on the masthead of *The Little Review*: *MAKING NO COMPROMISE WITH THE PUBLIC TASTE*, Allen Tate summarized the function of a critical quarterly which *The Southern Review* fulfilled so well:

The ideal task of the critical quarterly is not to give the public what it wants, or what it thinks it wants, but what—through the medium of its most intelligent members—it ought to have.

Typical for the difference between the fervent partisanship and axe-grinding zeal of the magazines of the 1920's and 1930's and the dispassionate objectivity, eclecticism and catholicity prevalent in the littles of the 1940's is the editorial announcement of the *Quarterly Review of Literature* (edited by Warren Carrier and T. Weiss at Chapel Hill, 1943 to date):

We belong to no school, advocate no trend, preach no credo. We like ideas that are original and interesting, execution that is appropriate and fresh.

Although many little-mag editors and critics hold to those principles also today and see in them the embodiment of the true function of the littles, the tone changes in the 1950's, as a considerable number of journals with very definite biases and predilections come to the fore. Leslie Woolf Hedley's *Inferno* (San Francisco, 1950–1956) is one of them:

In these times, as the Age of Darkness grows around us, as generals and diplomats hog the front pages of our lives, as the snob-litterateurs and poseurs try desperately to foist a comic book culture on us, as would-be Grand Inquisitors romp over the freedom of our thinking, poetry too, must be defended. *Inferno* will do this by publishing the most serious and important poetry which comes its way. We will try to be the poetic voice of this betrayed generation.

The Beloit Poetry Journal (published from 1950 to date in Beloit, Wisconsin, edited by Chad Walsh and Robert H. Glauber) stresses individualism and subjectivity, the reasons for its policy of occasional guest editorship.

We feel that the Guest Editor policy serves an important threefold purpose. In the first place, it allows for an occasional and vitalizing shift in the editorial outlook of the magazine. Though the often-stated policy of the *Journal* is to favor no particular school or technique of poetry, to publish the best available in all fields, a certain unity—a monotony if you will—is bound to arise from the unavoidable prejudices of the regular editors. . . .

In the second place, it enables the magazine to tap a source of poetry not often available for inclusion in its pages—the college classroom and writing seminar. Both the current Guest Editor and the previous one . . . teach and were able to include the work of some of their most promising students in their selections. . . .

But perhaps more important than either of these is the third aspect of this policy: the fact that it is designed as a safeguard against stagnation. It is woefully easy for a little magazine to fall into the comfortable rut of middle-of-the-road modernism. . . . The *Journal* strives to cast as wide a net as possible. This is a good policy, we feel, but it can backfire. Catholicity can become characterlessness. The individual point of view of a Guest Editor . . . tends to reshape and sharpen the point of view of the entire magazine. . . . The transfusion of new blood must be a continuing process. If it is not, the publication will soon become moribund.

The first issue of the new (1958) *Contact* (San Francisco, editors: G. Dorsey, C. Kentfield, W. H. Ryan) is dedicated to William Carlos Williams, in the hope "to regenerate in these pages some of the vital spirit that he instilled into the old *Contact*. . . ." In issue #1, the editors state:

First of all, *Contact*, in its newest incarnation, is not a San Francisco magazine except that it is published here. We expect to publish work by anybody from anywhere as long as it meets our standards and is written approximately in the English language.

Also, *Contact* does not intend to take sides—not literary sides, not political sides, not moral sides—except that we are on the side of Humanity, whatever that means. Presumably, however, we would publish an inhuman author should he present us with a magnificent work of inhumanity. We will publish fiction, articles, poems, plays, photographs, drawings, cartoons—anything, anything that makes contact with the ugly, agonizing, beautiful, satisfying world we're caught in. That world extends from the remotest chamber of the human spirit to outer space; so we shouldn't find ourselves fettered with limitations.

Contact, we say, is edited for the Uncommon Man—a catchy term meant to define the man (and the woman, too) who has taste and a sense of humor, who is concerned with the fate of Man, who has the courage—or simply the desire—to close his eyes to any idea that no longer illuminates reality and open them on the one that does. Or better yet, the man who will start with fresh realities themselves, and compound his own ideas. We hope to bring as many such illuminating ideas and as much fresh reality as we can into *Contact*.

William Duffy and Robert Bly, the editors of *The Fifties* (published since 1958 in Pine Island, Minnesota, and becoming *The Sixties* in the second year of its existence) pronounce in the best tradition of the little-mag manifesto, "The editors of this magazine think that most of the poetry published in America today is too old-

fashioned." In a brochure inserted in #1, they add that "*The Fifties* is dedicated to the work of the younger generation of American poets," then go on to explain part of their program of publishing (1) the work of the new generation, (2) translations of foreign poets, (3) studies of the work of younger poets, and (4) *insults*—the latter directed against anybody with a "name," one gathers.

One of the last little mags to appear in the 1950's is *Beatitude* (1959) which may be pronounced with the accent on the beatific or the beat—I've never discovered what the official preference is, if there is any. The original *Beatitude* magazine was conceived by Allen Ginsberg, Bob Kaufman and John Kelly "or someone at Cassandra's coffee house in May 1959." It was a "weekly miscellany of poetry and other jazz"

designed to extol beauty and promote the beatific life among the various mendicants, neo-existentialists, christs, poets, painters, musicians and other inhabitants and observers of North Beach, San Francisco, California, United States of America . . . edited on a kick or miss basis by a few hardy types who sneak out of alleys near Grant Avenue—the only responsible party being John Kelly, publisher—offices at 14 Bannam Alley (until tomorrow) . . .

"Tomorrow" (explains the literary executor of the group, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the owner of San Francisco's City Lights bookstore, himself a poet of the beat generation, and the editor of a *Beatitude Anthology*)—"tomorrow arrived sometime around issue #8 when *Beatitude* moved like a floating crap-game to Pierre Delatre's Bread and Wine Mission. By issue #16 the Mission was dead and most of the early contributors had made off to faraway scenes and could not be found even to receive their share of the bread produced by the sale of this anthology. (They are urged to creep to City Lights and collect.)"

Beginning with Issue #17 *Beatitude* will issue spasmodically from the underground caves of City Lights bookstore through whose subterranean passages some of the original *Beatitude* editors may still be reached, but **MANUSCRIPTS WILL NOT BE RETURNED** even if accompanied by the usual return postage. (The stamps will be unlicked and used for evil purposes.)

In a way, those little magazine manifestoes are literary cardiograms. The heart-beats changed with time, as they must in every organism, and if a journal lived long enough, some of its original ideas and aims were likely to become modified, or lost. New editors could be counted on to make new pronouncements, proclaim new values and trends. Often the actual contents of a magazine did not live up to its initial program, particularly if its sights had been set very high. But then, this is not limited to little-mag publishing and editing, but is part of the human condition, bespeaking merely the age-old chasm between our aspirations and our achievements.

**MARBLE
MEN**

&

**BRAZEN
LADIES**



"The Greek Slave" by Hiram Powers—more people stared at it than any other American statue. (Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C.)

The best time—almost the only time—to be a sculptor in America, whether native-born or foreign, was a hundred years ago. The two decades before the Civil War saw public interest at its peak. Never before and never afterward would the people of the United States see, talk about, and in fact buy as many statues, statuettes, or busts.

The art-conscious American tourist who happened to be staying in Florence at the opening of the 1840's could count himself fortunate. To him was given the chance to see, in process, the two most discussed statues of the mid-nineteenth century in America. They would become major landmarks of our sculpture. One, first shown in the United States in the spring of 1842, would reveal national taste by the scorn and hostility it aroused. The other, shown in England in 1845 and then exhibited in America from 1847 on, would through its various and searching appeals to American psychology become the most popular statue of its generation. The first was Horatio Greenough's "George Washington," the second Hiram Powers' "The Greek Slave."

The man who created the "Washington" looked the spitting image of a rustic Yankee stonecutter—lanky, sharp-featured, taciturn—and so he dubbed himself. Actually, however, Greenough was a Harvard graduate of the class of 1825, drawn to sculpture from his early youth. In Massachusetts he received encouragement as ample as he would have received anywhere in the United States. The doors of the austere Boston Athenaeum, the private library of the city's men of means and letters, opened easily for him, and he was allowed to copy the plaster casts of classical sculpture which the Athenaeum owned. He trained his fingers by cutting the copies from chalk, first being careful to put a patch of carpet (provided by the Athenaeum) before him so that the polished floor would not be soiled. Harvard was merely an interlude, and soon after graduation he went to Italy, the home of sculpture for all the western world. He worked with ardor but contracted malaria, and he had to come back to the United States for rest. He recovered quickly and by the winter of 1828 was making a bust of President John Quincy Adams in Washington. Though other commissions followed, he longed to return to Italy. Arriving there with relief in 1829, he took up his work again.

MARBLE MEN & BRAZEN LADIES*

BY CARL BODE

In 1832, when only twenty-seven, he received a commission that any sculptor could have counted the crowning recognition of his art. Mainly through the efforts of his long-time sponsor, the kindly littérateur Washington Allston, Greenough was chosen to prepare what had every possibility of becoming the nation's outstanding sculptural monument. Congress itself directed him to carve a statue of the nation's greatest hero, to be set in the rotunda of the Capitol. Greenough's elation is easy to imagine.

He could not foresee the mischances lying in wait for him. At first he worked uneventfully enough throughout the pleasant days and evenings in his Florentine studio; and the small clay model took shape. But he soon encountered the problem, not a small one to him, of finding the right chair for his seated Washington. Also, he wanted to model the head after the French sculptor Houdon's noble creation but had trouble in securing a cast of the Houdon "Washington" to copy. And the workmen he hired to help with the routine of his sculpture proved to be ignorant or dishonest almost beyond belief. Nevertheless, the work went on. He made a full-scale copy in clay of the model and then the plaster cast. Finally the marble copy was carved. The finished monument arrived in the United States in 1841 and by the end of May 1842, resting uneasily on the overburdened rotunda floor, it was unveiled to the curious public.

"What will be its reception as a work of art I know not," Greenough had confessed before the completed statue arrived. Once the American public saw it, however, his doubts were swiftly and bitterly resolved. A tumult of indignation arose. Here was a matter about which people found themselves united. The tobacco-chewing congressman from Tennessee guffawed in contempt at this half-undressed Washington and so did his drawling colleague from Maine. The senators from the North concurred with the senators from the South. The statue outraged the rich citizen as well as the poor one. The opinionated patrician Philip Hone, for example, wrote scornfully, "It looks like a great Herculean, warrior-like *Venus of the bath*; . . . undressed, with a huge napkin lying in his lap and covering his lower extremities, and he, preparing to perform his ablutions, is in the act of consigning his sword to the care of the attendant." The man in the street was equally waspish.

Greenough thereafter met scorn with scorn, complaint with complaint. What he failed to comprehend was that a revolution in American taste was taking place within his own lifetime, indeed since his chalk-cutting boyhood. It was a revolution aimed at the stylized, pompous imitations of the old Greco-Roman statuary. Typically, it began from below. It began when the legislators—municipal, state, and national—and the most vocal of their constituents became the arbiters of national taste, thereby replacing the occasional gentleman patron. Moved by patriotism, law-making bodies throughout the young nation started to commission statues or busts of many a military or political hero and thus became the best if not the only customers of the ambitious sculptor. Many a state capitol is still decorated with the elaborately detailed, stone-cold result. A new, democratic tradition was being established. The older, aristocratic one it demolished was substantially different.

Thomas Jefferson summed up the tenets of that earlier classical taste in a letter of 1816. It was addressed to a North Carolina legislator but the fact is incidental: the standards Jefferson sets are aristocratic, not popular. Asked for counsel about

a statue of Washington to be commissioned for the state capitol, he numbers the parts of his answer in orderly fashion. First, to the query, could the statue be made in the United States, he replies firmly, "Certainly it cannot." He explains that we have neither the men nor the marble. Second, who should do it? The answer is, the prince of European sculptors, the Italian Antonio Canova. Third, size and style? Larger than life and Roman rather than realistic ("Our boots and regimentals have a very puny effect"). And from what model? The finest of antiquity.

But Jefferson's was the voice of the eighteenth not the nineteenth century. And the legislators—it can be inferred—felt that they had to be practical men. After all, the money they must appropriate was not unlimited. Though they might realize the superior reputation of a European sculptor, they were ready to compromise on an American stonecutter. Though they might wish expensive Carrara marble, they would accept American stone. And about design and technique they were practical too. They were not buying types of antique Rome either for themselves or for the voters.

They all seemed to want, and enjoy, a nearly photographic realism. Even Greenough's "Washington" had touches of it with its carefully cut hands, every finger nail carved, and its minutely modeled chair. But the people, through their elected representatives, obviously asked for more. They wished a realism of wrinkles, lines, boots and regimental clothing. They cared little for togas and nothing at all for nudity; and even a half-clothed hero, such as Washington, annoyed them. Congress recognized a mandate when it saw one. Greenough's massive statue was moved laboriously from the inside of the Capitol to the outside, to a place where it would attract little attention. Today it sits dust-stained and fly-specked in a far corner of the Smithsonian Institution.

In testimony to the triumph of the people's taste a statuary of fully-dressed heroes on horseback obediently appeared. Perhaps the most admired of such equestrian statues was unveiled a decade after Greenough's thankless work. Only a few blocks from the neglected "Washington," Clark Mills' statue of General Andrew Jackson can still be seen in Lafayette Square, surrounded by streams of motor traffic. Born in 1810, Mills started out as a common laborer. He developed in the tradition of the shrewd mechanic who is unusually good with his hands. After he had picked up the elements of carving and casting, he received a variety of portrait commissions. His leap to fame occurred when he submitted the best design for an equestrian statue of Jackson to the Jackson monument committee in Washington. The committee accepted the bronze model with enthusiasm and paid him \$12,000 to do the statue itself. Overcoming a good many vexing problems, he finally finished his work in 1852 and the public found it good.

He made the statue everything that Congress—and the electorate—could have wished. The grim-lipped old general sits nearly bolt upright in the saddle, his cocked hat raised politely and his sword hanging down beside him. Every line in his wrinkled face is shown, and every seam and frog of his uniform. This is the hero of New Orleans as the people wished to view him. Even more impressive and remarkable than the general—we know from contemporary accounts—was the posture of his horse. Most other creators of equestrian statues had at best allowed the horse to raise one foot. But General Jackson's mount, through a triumph of Mills'

ingenuity, reared high in the air with both forefeet off the ground. To bring this about, Mills had cleverly balanced the statue's mass with internal weights. The effect in the eyes of the public was spirited indeed.

The popularity of Mills' "Jackson" was great. Yet it could never compare with the renown of Powers' "Greek Slave." That had every appeal the "Washington" lacked.

Luck and planning combined to create the tremendous popularity of this shapely nude. A remarkable public-relations job was done for the statue, through Powers' business agent Miner Kellogg, before it was presented to the American gaze. Powers himself, more acute in his knowledge of the American character than Greenough, realized that the prime obstacle to his statue's acceptance was its nudity. Therefore he elaborately explained that it was "not her person but her spirit" that stood exposed. When the first marble replica of the statue was shown in London—two years before another of several replicas was shipped to America—he found with delight that English critics and English clergymen agreed with him and said so. Thus it was with the added cachet of foreign approval that the "Slave" reached the United States. Upon its arrival many more clergymen and critics saw it and were likewise impressed. As one minister was moved to remark (taking Powers' explanation a step further), she was not unclothed, she was clothed in holiness.

With the proprieties satisfied, the curious came by thousands and tens of thousands to eye her. She was shown in New York, in Cincinnati, in Boston, in New Orleans. What the crowds saw was a life-size marble figure of a supposedly Greek maiden. Her "slippery and boneless body," to use Oliver Larkin's phrase, rests its weight on the left foot. The right foot is slightly bent, to balance the left arm, which is placed slightly across her body. Her hands are chained, and the right one rests on a post over which her clothing is draped. Her head is turned down and away, in the classic pose of modesty and shame. Her face and form are idealized but the clothing—the tasseled robe, the embroidered Greek cap resting on it, as well as the manacles and the prominently displayed Christian cross and locket—is realistically wrought down to the smallest detail.

The many thousands were impressed by what they saw. Perhaps Mrs. Caroline Kirkland, then well known as the author of frontier sketches, best described the proper reaction on beholding the statue. "Men take off their hats," she wrote, "ladies seat themselves silently, and almost unconsciously; and usually it is minutes before a word is uttered. All conversation is carried on in a hushed tone, and everybody looks serious on departing." For many no doubt she was right: the impact of beauty on the beholder is at times almost a religious one. But for many more among the thousands there was surely something besides that.

As a matter of fact, it was a curious mingling of social and psychological reasons that accounted for the nearly universal popularity of "The Greek Slave." To begin with, the subject was still topical. The Greek struggle against the heathen Turk for independence was only ten years past when the statue was unveiled. The image of Lord Byron dying for the cause, the crusade-like nature of the struggle between Christian and infidel, the feeling that this had been the "right" kind of revolution—all that aided in the statue's acceptance. And how fortunate the choice

of revolutions was can be seen at a glance if we compare the Grecian with the French one. To a substantial segment of the middle- and upper-class mind the French Revolution stood for atheism, bloody excesses, and mob rule; whatever the actuality, the Greek Rebellion connoted none of these. Furthermore, it was reported that the Turks, when temporarily triumphant, had sold Greek women into slavery. Here was an additional tie with reality for a generation that esteemed it: this could have happened to the model for the statue and—it was assumed—doubtless did.

A certain sanction for the nudity was afforded because cultured people knew—and the uncultured ones were likely to be at least dimly aware—that ancient Greek and Roman sculpture often showed the human figure more or less undraped. In that sculpture, nudity was acceptable both because it was ancient and because it was Art. Labeling the statue Greek made the most of this.

Beneath such a sanction were more fundamental and physical reasons for seeing the statue. Those reasons cannot be proved but may be suggested. First of all, at the most basic level, here was a handsome girl with nothing on. To overlook this attraction to men would be less than realistic. To women, it afforded a chance to display themselves, by projection, without any social stigma. Certainly the slave is unclothed—her garments are draped over the post she leans on. But it is not her fault. True Christian that she is (and the viewers saw the conspicuous cross hanging over her clothing), the Turks made her disrobe. The psychological result of seeing the clothing was certainly more powerful than if none had been shown at all. This was not the nudity of an antique Age of Innocence; this was the nakedness of being undressed here and now.

Particularly for the male part of the audience there were other titillations. The graceful Greek they viewed was a slave. That meant that she was at the mercy of anyone who bought her. As a somber background to this, there was the realization that Negro slave women in the United States were at times as much at the mercy of their owners. Here again the statue revealed a tie with reality. And, lastly, over and above sexual possession by the male, the statue stood as the marble image of the domination of woman by man. To men this domination provided a primitive satisfaction hard to exhaust. To some women, perhaps to most women who saw the statue, it represented their wish to be helpless, to be possessed.

The satisfactions from seeing "The Greek Slave" were, therefore, many-sided. The official reasons for prizing the statue were not. In fact, they sum up in two: the statue conveyed a moral message (as Powers himself had asserted) and it presented an artistic picture to the beholder. In that connection, the same Philip Hone who sneered at Greenough's "Washington" found himself so moved by "The Greek Slave" that he compared Powers favorably with Praxiteles. "I certainly never saw anything more lovely," Hone added about the statue with emphasis. Right up to and past the Civil War, "The Greek Slave" stood for the height of artistry in sculpture to the American people.

The vogue of "The Greek Slave" on the one hand and Mills' "Jackson" on the other can give us one perspective on pre-Civil War sculpture in its relation to the American people. The swift rise and remarkable success of two art societies can give us another. For in sculpture, as in painting, much of the burst of interest that

marked the 'forties and 'fifties could be traced—directly or indirectly—to the American Art-Union and its principal successor, the Cosmopolitan Art Association. They brought sculpture, of the private, domestic kind, before the public for the first time. They wrote about it in their bulletins and journals, reproducing examples of it in their pages. They purchased it both from native and from European artists. They included it among the awards at the annual lotteries. Yet because it was both expensive and hard to ship, sculpture never became the favorite of the art unions that painting and engraving did. The engravings that every member received offered no trouble either in reproduction or in mailing. Even the original paintings did not prove too great a problem to send across the country. But statues and busts were notoriously heavy and clumsy to crate.

Notwithstanding, during the late 1850's the Cosmopolitan Art Association gave sculpture the widest circulation it has ever had in the United States. This is not to say that the practical difficulties, which had hampered sculpture in the art unions, did not continue. They did, and so paintings and engravings maintained their priority. But the degree of attention paid to sculpture grew much greater than before.

The first year's Cosmopolitan lottery illustrates the fact well. A replica of "The Greek Slave" became the most prominent prize, and in addition five other statues and fifteen fine statuettes were awarded, along with about a hundred and fifty paintings. Throughout the rest of the decade pieces of sculpture continued to be offered as prizes.

The Cosmopolitan's distribution of original art in January 1858 shows the trends in taste for the last years before the Civil War. The prize of prizes was the same replica of "The Greek Slave"; the shrewd managers of the Cosmopolitan had bought it back after their first winner, a Mrs. Kate Gillespie, had decided to sell it. They paid her \$6,000 for it. (The replicas originally cost about \$4,000.) Along with "The Greek Slave" there were four more statues of the same general sort—topical or pseudoclassical in subject, smooth and generalized in treatment, and sentimentalized in tone.

The statue of Psyche, for instance, by the Florentine Eumone Baratta (most of this year's sculpture, and a good deal to come, was now the work of Italians) shows her seated and thoughtful, with draperies laid across her lap. "The pose," said the catalogue, "the air of repose, the voluptuous beauty of figure, all are in keeping with the Greek conception of the goddess." Just as "Psyche" illustrated the classical subject, Baratta's "Fidelity" illustrated the modern subject given a pseudoclassical treatment. "Fidelity" is a marble group of a little boy and his dog gazing at each other in great devotion—a subject beloved of Americans and used again and again in painting and poetry. But the treatment is not American. The boy is nude, his head is crowned with Grecian curls, he has a pair of wings attached to his stocky little body, and both his face and figure are idealized.

Three intelligently chosen bronze portrait busts were included in the list of sculptural offerings of the year. Instead of a single original in each case, the Cosmopolitan had fifty-one duplicates cast and thereby stood ready to distribute a total of over 150 bronze busts among its prizes. That meant that sculpture bulked large in the number of prize offerings, for the catalogue listed in all only 345 pieces of art

as prizes. As faithful to life in their style as they could be, and clothed realistically as well, these busts forecast the increased interest in realistic as opposed to pseudoclassical sculpture on the private as well as the public level.

The Cosmopolitan knew public taste and demonstrated this in its selection of subjects for the busts: Shakespeare, Byron, and Scott. The regard for Shakespeare mounted throughout the middle decades of the nineteenth century until he became the one universally esteemed literary figure. Many a middle- and upper-class home, in addition to practically every academy and public school, would contain a likeness of his smooth, graceful features. Byron too appealed to the lovers of literature but to a narrower range among them. To compensate for this, however, there was his lingering fame as a symbol. By the middle of the century Byronism as a personal cult had pretty well died out but the renown—and the notoriety—of its source lived on. He stood for the elegant, wicked, reckless yet somehow dedicated spirit, in opposition to the smug Victorian Age. And the appeal of doughty Sir Walter Scott was still wide, though strongest in the South.

The last year or two before the Civil War saw a lessened emphasis on sculpture in the Cosmopolitan prizes. Yet, as the prizes for 1860 show, the interest was diverted rather than dead. Although only three marble statues were listed, thirty-eight pressings of a pair of copper medallions of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster were offered in the lottery. So were seventy-five photographs of two sets of basso relievos by the famous Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. Taking advantage of this new technique of reproduction, photography, the managers of the Cosmopolitan had the reliefs photographed, reduced to one-third their original size, and then attractively mounted. One set was called "The Seasons," the other "Night and Morning." The catalogue descriptions suggest the treatment as well as giving the subjects. "*Night* is represented by the messenger-angel bearing away a child to sleep. An owl, as typical of darkness, floats in the ether. *Morning* is the angel bearing in the child, in whose hand is the torch of day, and joy upon its features."

Similarly, the titles of the three statues, "Maternal Affection," "Repose of Innocence," and "The Truant," throw light on how their subjects were handled. Each statue is thoroughly sentimental but the sentiment still has a pseudoclassical touch to it. It is a sentiment with Grecian folds draped across its modest nudity.

That kind of topic and treatment would always have some hold on the American public. But the new trend toward domestic realism could also be detected at least briefly in other prize offerings of the Cosmopolitan. The group of bronze statuettes awarded in January 1859, a year before the medallions, provide a good example. Of the eight pieces, four are specimens of the pseudoclassical, two are realistic in subject but partly classical in treatment, and the remaining two are realistic in both. Among the first four, the pieces entitled "History" and "Poetry" are companions. Each is an image of a pained-looking woman amply attired in the usual Attic costume. The other two pseudoclassical works are Roman in dress and feeling. One is "The Roman Senator" ("the dignity of the office is clearly written in the embodiment"); the other is "Fabius" ("the great Roman in his thoughtful mood before the hour of battle"). "The Fisherman" and "The Hunter" represent the compromise, for they are somewhat classical in drapery and posture but their

accouterments are not. The fisherman has a net. The hunter has a wolf's scalp for a crown on his head and carries a bird and rabbit thrown over his shoulder. Lastly, the two pieces called "The Reaper" and "Returning from the Vines" represent the artistic innovation, for they are realistic. The pose of both figures is free, informal. The woman vintager balances the basket of grapes on her head and curves her body almost into an S to do it. One hand steadies the basket, the other is placed naturally on her out-thrust hip. The reaper, with the full sheaves of grain over his shoulder, appears equally lithe. The hair of both figures is modeled in realistically untidy detail; the facial expressions look natural. But the clothing is not yet everyday American, seeming instead to be continental European, perhaps of the Renaissance period. Probably the Cosmopolitan's managers thought that the American public was not ready to go any further toward contemporary realism at the moment.

Nevertheless, the shape of the future could be detected. In the meantime, the young Yankee who would mold it—in his fresh way, as much as Powers had in his traditional manner—was returning discouraged from Europe. Like his most noted predecessors, John Rogers had made the European pilgrimage. He had spent eight months in Florence, Rome, and Paris studying to become a sculptor in the accepted fashion. Now he was back in the United States, in that most American of cities, Chicago. Though he supported himself as a draughtsman, his heart was in the clay figures he constantly modeled. To a charity bazaar held in 1859 he offered one of his first little groups, which he marked "The Checker Players." Success was instant for the work. "All day long admiring crowds surrounded it," his biographers say, "praising the accuracy of the little figures' anatomy and the delightfully simple delineation of their humorous feelings." Unfortunately no picture of this group remains; but we can gain a clear idea of the nature of his achievement through the three groups he next composed.

These were "The Slave Auction" (December 1859), "Checker Players" (1860; a reworking of his first success), and "The Village Schoolmaster" (September 1860). "The Slave Auction" obviously anticipated his famous Civil War groups. Three main figures are set around its central mass, which is an auctioneer's post. The auctioneer himself leans forward over it, smirking. He holds his gavel as he pricks his ears for a bid. A Negro family constitutes the merchandise for sale. The father, a full-blooded black, stands defiantly erect with arms folded across his chest. The mother, a quadroon according to Rogers, stands on the other side of the auctioneer. Her head is bowed in grief and touches the face of the baby she cradles in her arms. Half concealed, another child tries to hide behind her skirt. Every detail is modeled painstakingly although the whole group is only nine inches long and thirteen inches high. In spite of its small size, "The Slave Auction" conveys the feeling of a highly emotional scene on a scale as large as life.

This was the very first of Rogers' so-called published groups. "Publishing" meant that the original became the source of many plaster copies, painted gray, as it happened, and sold commercially. The "Auction" group proved to be timely, and Northern propagandists for abolition helped sell it as an excellent symbol of their cause. Among the works unconnected with the current crisis, "Checker Players" clearly reveals the reasons for their countrywide popularity. Here the two seated

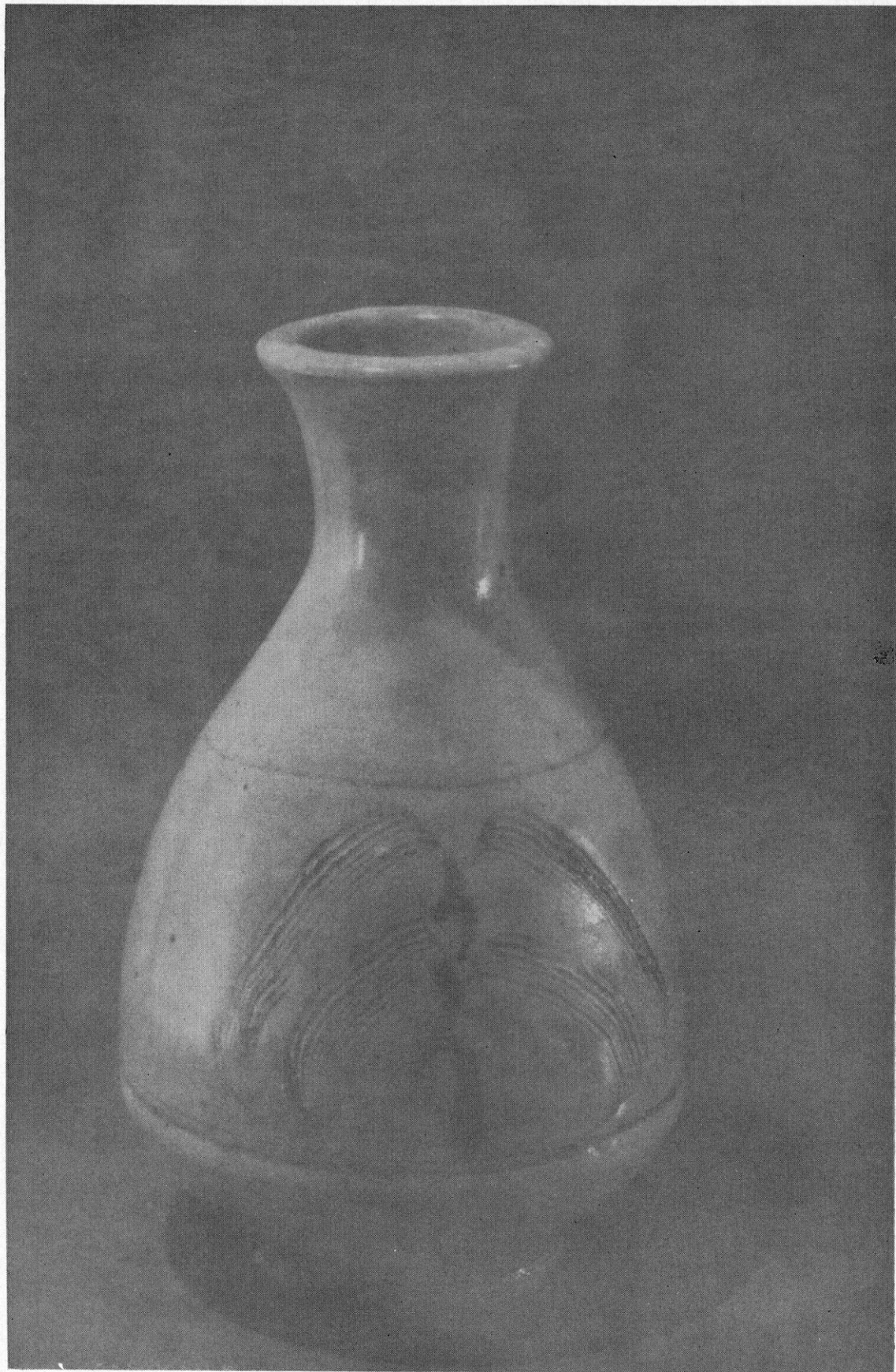
figures, both men, have the board set between them. One leans back in laughing triumph, his body modeled in an easy sprawl. The other leans forward over the board, chin on fist. His body is tight and concentrated. Between them they form a composition with a pronounced, pleasing rhythm. The eye takes a circular path as it follows the structure of the group. Yet the broad, solid mass of the bench where the players sit keeps the composition from becoming uneasily orbital, and its overall effectiveness is attested by the many plaster copies soon sold.

Though Rogers' greatest fame would not arrive until the war's end, the prompt popularity of his earliest efforts showed that the American people liked realistic detail and fidelity to nature as much in private sculpture as in public. Just as they wanted a Clark Mills to carve or cast their presidents for the city square, they wanted a Rogers group for the family circle.

Of professional sculpture other than that already described the country saw little. In every sizable cemetery there were likely to be a few angels and some smoothly cut urns but little more. Washington's Rock Creek cemetery contains a typical angel, having the date 1851 on it. With its heavy features raised to heaven, it looks beyond the beholder, trying no doubt to communicate the hope its commissioner assuaged his grief with. The treatment of the figure is broad and formalized. The carving, barely competent, bespeaks the simple stonecutter more than the sculptor.

Sculpture on the folk level was fairly popular. Demonstrating that a feeling for form and volume was not exclusively the possession of the professional, every so often a workman whittled a little statue out of pine or a housewife bought a cheap chalk-ware figurine. Weather vanes, children's toys, and cigar-store Indians were frequently carved out of wood. All illustrated the primitive love for strong color and simple mass. The best of such products were the ships' figureheads. Ordinarily, those windswept ladies looked far too stiff to divide the breezes coming toward them. Yet they were marked at times by genuine sweep and grace. Perhaps the median in artistic quality could be found in a "Columbia" that was carved from wood and then polychromed in 1858 for a Great Lakes schooner. She stands gracefully enough. The many folds of her drapery are cut with care and her expression is lively, rather pleasant, and alert. Perhaps she represents—as much as any work we have considered—the broad average of American sculpture.

Such, then, was the pattern of popularity for sculpture in the United States during the two decades before the Civil War. Through its irritation at Greenough's "Washington," its enjoyment of Clark Mills' shrewdly contrived "Jackson," and its fascination with Powers' "Greek Slave," the American public marked the bounds of its taste. Through its gradually growing indifference toward the imitations of "The Greek Slave" (if not the "Slave" itself) and its increasing enthusiasm for the more everyday subjects of the kind that John Rogers perfected, the public explicitly defined the major change in its taste. After the war still other changes would come, but the wide interest in sculpture which the 1840's and 1850's showed would never be duplicated. Those were the heydays of the men in marble and the women in bronze.



Bernard Leach Studio Potter

By Bernard Pyron

Like other highly verbal artists of our time, Bernard Leach has led us to see in the useful arts a possibility for artistic communication. Pottery and other crafts are intended primarily for the use of human beings, but in Leach's best pots there is an intense communication of certain attitudes expressed through form, color and pattern which is possible in a purely decorative art. These attitudes are in part peculiar to pottery and are not experienced simply by looking as one does at a painting. To appreciate a Leach pot fully we should pick it up, examine the inside, turn it around and over, and actually use it in our daily life as we would use commercial ware.

Unlike the Japanese who have a highly developed tradition of appreciation of pottery as a useful art, few Westerners have a frame of reference through which they can experience and evaluate pottery made by contemporary English or American studio potters. Apparently many of us still feel that a work of art, a painting for example, should be used for decorative purposes, and that since pottery cannot be "art" it has only utilitarian value. Hence, few realize the artistic and even monetary value of contemporary pottery. A body of literature with concepts appropriate to handmade pottery is largely lacking in the Western world.

Since Leach has, in his writings, provided a frame of reference for evaluation of pottery, some of his ideas about potting should accompany a discussion of his work. Leach starts by asking, "What is a good pot?" In his answer he has been influenced by the ideas and examples of the potters of the Chinese Sung dynasty (960-1279). Indeed, he has adopted the Sung standard as the standard for contemporary pottery. Now, why should an Englishman of the 20th century attempt to revive an ancient ideal of potting? First, because he has lived in the Orient, was born in China in 1887 and spent eleven of his formative years in Japan after receiving an academic art education at the Slade School of Art in England. As an artist, he may have been attracted to the fine brushwork of his master, the sixth Kenzan (the first Kenzan, the brother of the painter Korin, started this pottery tradition as early as 1700).

But more important, the handmade stoneware of the Orient inspired him to see it as an art form in its own right. As an Englishman he may have been sensitized to handmade objects by William Morris' affirmation of craftsmanship. And he may have been in tune with a kind of "Romanticism" which has been characteristic of other 20th century artists, a revolt against the domination of industrialism and the restricting element in the scientific spirit which seemed to be overcoming creative art and over-intellectualizing life in general. He may have been in search of a more primitive, unconscious attitude.

Leach has said a great deal about the unconscious folk tradition of Oriental pottery and feels that most Western pottery is too "self-conscious," but much of his own pottery is more controlled than that of the Sung, and he has been conscious about certain aspects of technique. The kind of "unconsciousness" which Leach values in many primitive and Oriental pottery traditions is not the Freudian unconscious, nor even the collective unconscious of Jung. Not really unconscious, it is more like a nonverbal mood that is shared with others of the past and present, not because of a mystical telepathy, but because of the way the human organism is built, because people experience similar environments and can communicate verbally and nonverbally. This attitude enables the individual potter to absorb by direct contact with the masters of a great pottery tradition an ideal of potting, the perceptual categories which he needs to recognize good pots, and the technique of throwing, glazing, preparing clay, etc., without being too scientific or intellectual about it.

For Leach potting is partly an intuitive process: the potter's hand movements are controlled as much by the condition of his material as by his own preconceived notion of form, and a few slaps by the potter's hand on a rotating ball of clay may even center it well enough to prevent the final shape from becoming extremely asymmetrical; a slight pressure inside or outside the spinning wet clay and the form is created. The potter should not be too conscious about the timing and placement of these deft touches.

Leach saw the beauty of handmade pottery as an Oriental; only later did he fully discover English Medieval slipware and make it an integral part of his background. When he returned to England in 1920 to set up his own pottery at St. Ives in Cornwall, he had acquired an intimate feeling for the pottery of the Sung dynasty and for the later Japanese raku tea ware. Sung stoneware and early raku were both arts rooted in the Taoist and Zen Buddhist framework of belief.

For Leach the pottery of the Sung dynasty, which he saw in the Tokyo Museum, represented the highest attainment in ceramic history. Its beauty was not the product of a single individual, but of the accumulated work of generations of folk potters. The enormous technical skill of these potters was not of a scientific nature at all. It was handed down by vague "rules of thumb" and by example. But the Sung potters had all the essentials of good stoneware technique that we have today. They had feldspar, an important ingredient of high fire glazes, which gives them much of their fat or deep quality, and their wood-burning kilns would fire to 2300 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. They had a wide range of glaze colors, ranging from a warm brown, through cobalt blue, green and copper red, which

is hard to obtain reliably even today. They had discovered and brought under control the process of reduction firing, which adds much to the variety and subtle beauty of pots. Their range of shapes, textures and glaze decorations was also considerable. The beauty of their pots was the result of an ideal of potting, a faith which had much in common with that of other Sung artists, and which had its strongest origin in Taoist and Zen thought. The affirmation of Nature, the acceptance of asymmetry, tentativeness and incompleteness in art, the idea of the domination of the outer by the inner, the idea of space, and the mistrust of the individualized ego, were aspects of a faith which had much vitality at that time.

Leach felt that these Sung pots were "born, not made." They were organic, and had some quality of *life* which can be explained only in part by the ways the potters used their clay and glazes. A Sung pot was made by hand, usually on a potter's wheel, and it expressed this fact. For example, the finger marks of the potters were visible as slight ridges around the pot. The forms of these Sung pots were almost but not completely symmetrical. Their glaze patterns often expressed the way the glazes were put on, usually by dipping the entire pot in a tub of glaze. Since glazes that are high in feldspar tend to run off the pot in thick drops, the potters left the feet of their pots unglazed. The contrast between the smooth, opaque glaze and the clay texture, which was grey or brown, was regarded as pleasant. The designs of the most interesting Sung pots were often, though not always, highly abstract, not copies of Nature. For example, drops of copper red glaze were allowed to run down the side of a celadon bowl (a celadon is often a light blue-green, semitransparent, crackled glaze). The potters did not have full control over these patterns; they were partly products of a natural process, the melting of the ground-rock glaze in the kiln. These splashes of color, both man-made and Nature-made, seem to have an almost universal appeal.

Most Sung pots were made for a particular use. For the Sung potters and for Bernard Leach, a good pot is both useful and beautiful. A good pot must express the fact that it is a pot, meant for some use, a vase to put flowers in or a cup to drink from; it should express the nature of its materials, clay and glaze, the technique of throwing on a wheel, a tradition of potting, and the taste of the individual potter. It must have *life*, existence in its own right.

Although the Chinese T'ang and Sung, as well as Japanese pottery traditions, have had the strongest hold on Leach, he has drawn from many other traditions in addition to that of the Medieval European, which is second in importance to the Oriental. As a potter of the 20th century, with a rather broad artistic outlook, he has been in a position to absorb from the many great periods in world pottery which would be impossible for an uneducated primitive craftsman or present-day country potter. But Leach is not a hopeless eclectic, with many surface roots in many traditions. His roots in the Orient are substantial, and some of his pots are creative integrations of several traditions. Some examples of his work rise above tradition, but are still acceptable to his Sung derived ideal because they have that quiet quality characteristic of handmade stoneware.

Leach produces an enormous variety of shapes and glazes so that the examples of his recent work which follow are not totally representative. There are no

examples of his more abstract, controlled geometrical sgraffito decoration (in sgraffito decoration the potter scratches through one glaze surface to reveal another beneath) which is characteristic of some of his work of recent years. [Figs. 1, 2, 6.] Like his more controlled, geometrical sgraffito work, much of Leach's work is restrained, and is unlike the quick, spontaneous brushwork of the Japanese master potter, Shoji Hamada, Leach's personal friend. As Hamada's glazes are richer and more exciting, his brushwork is freer and more expressive than Leach's. Perhaps Hamada's work comes closest to Leach's ideal of a great pottery tradition working almost unconsciously through a potter's hands. One major criticism of Leach's pottery is that his glazes are often too subdued, too drab, and lacking in exciting color.

As a contemporary artist of the stature of Wright in architecture, Picasso, Braque, and Klee in painting, Leach has been a traditionalist. And in 1952-1954 he visited Japan once more, lived with his Japanese friends of earlier years, visited many country potteries, reabsorbed the philosophy of Oriental art and reaffirmed his faith in the Oriental folk tradition which is still practiced by a few potters. This journey must have reawakened in Leach his life-long faith in Far Eastern folk pottery which was never really weakened. At least some of his work of the winter of 1959-1960 exhibited by the Art Education Department of The University of Wisconsin in May of 1960,* with the possible exception of a pitcher which owes more to English Medieval work, is an affirmation of early Chinese, Japanese and Korean pottery values. Thus, almost all of the ten Leach pots from this exhibition which are shown here are either derivatives of early Oriental work or strongly Oriental in flavor.

But in affirming traditional pottery values, Leach realizes that Western potters cannot go back to the conditions and attitudes of the country folk potter with his limited consciousness and outlook. There is too large a gap between pre-industrial cultures and our own; the Western artist-craftsman is much more aware of himself and of the many influences impinging upon him and cannot forget his individuality, his artistic ego. Leach, however, is against an exaggerated individuality, a premature, restless search for a unique style and the superficial assimilation of so many influences which is characteristic of many Western artist-potters and even hobbyists. This anxious quest for new forms, typical of American potters, sometimes results in experiments which are neither pottery, painting nor sculpture, but something in between. The fact that there are a few American potters who have assimilated traditional pottery values, primarily Far Eastern, and have gone beyond mere imitation of the concrete examples to a style which has in it something of the spirit of Chinese Sung pottery, and are making pots intended for use, may be a sign of the growth of our culture. Almost all of these American potters, many of them relatively young men, owe something to Leach, since he has led the way by providing an ideal of potting, concrete examples, and the needed inspiration to produce pots which are easy to live with.

Good pots are subtle. A pot that catches one's eye with its striking shape, color or decoration at a first glance may not seem beautiful after repeated perceptions.

* Mr. Leach came to Wisconsin under the auspices of the Art Education Department of The University of Wisconsin.

The life of a pot is primarily in its form, and a few deft touches under the control of intuition will produce a slight difference in form, almost in texture, a difference of a fraction of an inch, which will give the form life or kill it. Color and glaze decoration are important, but should be used only to enhance the total effect of the form. Good pots are the result of an attitude, partly that of the unconscious folk craftsman, and partly that of an artist who is more aware of the creative process and of the art of the past and present. These pots are not made in a moment of tremendous creative inspiration; rather their production requires a habit of creativity, years of experience and a standard of beauty. An artist who wishes to exhibit his perceptions, his dreams or values more directly can do so more effectively by use of other artistic mediums. Other artist-craftsmen may see in Leach's example a way of life and may be inspired by him to accept the more "mundane" art of handmade pottery, one of man's most intimate and enduring arts.

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Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Portfolio*

The Artist on His Work:

1. "Technique is a means to an end. It is no end in itself."
2. "The quality which appears to me fundamental in all pots is *life* in one or more of its modes: inner harmony, nobility, purity, strength, breadth and generosity."
3. "A potter on his wheel is doing two things at the same time: he is making hollow ware to stand upon a level surface for the common usage of the home, and he is exploring space."
4. "Between the subtle opposition and interplay of centrifugal and gravitational force, between straight and curve, are hidden all the potter's experience of beauty. Under his hands the clay responds to emotion and thought from a long past, to his own intuition of the lovely and the true, accurately recording the stages of his own inward growth."



Fig. 1. STONEWARE JAR BY BERNARD LEACH
Black tenmoku glaze breaking to brown

Fig. 1

The form of the pot of Fig. 1 appears perfectly symmetrical, but the glaze color, depth and texture is not at all uniform. The tenmoku or sliplike glaze varies from a shiny blue-black color in thick spots to brown in areas that are thinnest. Bands of finger-made lines around the center break the texture of the clay base. The general form was created by the contrast of the handmade gradual convex curve at the shoulder with the sharper break of the tool-trimmed foot which is left unglazed at the very bottom, while the turned-over lip at the apex forms a strong completed mouth which would hold flower stems.



Fig. 2. STONEWARE VASE BY BERNARD LEACH
Black tenmoku glaze

Fig. 2

In Fig. 2, another tenmoku vase, of a more uniform almost blue-black color in strong light, was probably inspired by examples of the Chinese T'ang dynasty (618-906).

Fig. 3

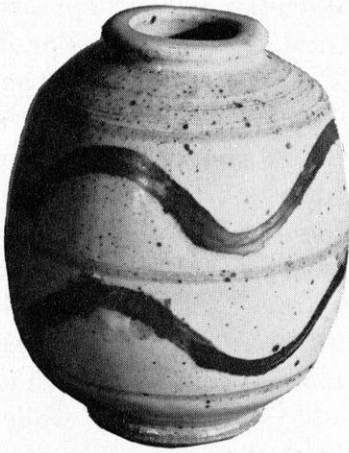


Fig. 3. STONEWARE VASE BY BERNARD LEACH
Warm white with brown decoration

The "imperfections" of the lip on the vase shown in Fig. 3 are not only acceptable, but desirable by traditional Chinese and Japanese pottery standards. Its unevenness may have resulted from the pot's being slightly off center during the rather rapid throwing process, and Leach did not bother to trim it as most Western potters would want to do. It is true to the T'ang and Sung traditions in other ways—in its celadon-type glaze, its form, and the contrast between the naked clay of the foot and the smooth glaze above it. Perhaps the brown waving lines should not run so evenly parallel to each other.

Fig. 4



Fig. 4. STONEWARE BOWL BY BERNARD LEACH
Thin white slip glaze showing warm tan clay body

Like the three vases, the small thin-walled bowl of Fig. 4 is very similar to early Chinese bowls in its small unglazed foot and curve upward. Its subtlety is in its white slip glaze which is so thin and transparent that the warm light brown of the clay beneath contributes to its color. Its form is quite symmetrical and perfect, while the glaze texture is so varied it is almost crude. It is both rustic and elegant at the same time, a state of balance that would hold for much of Leach's work, which avoids the exaggerated rusticity of some Western potters. The fingernail lines on the inside complement the elegantly traditional Sung form.

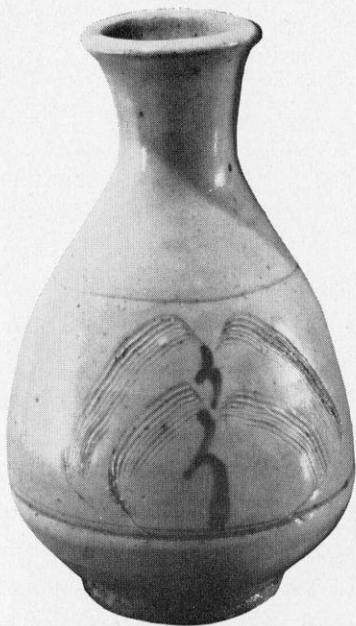


Fig. 5. STONEWARE VASE BY BERNARD LEACH
Light green-grey celadon-type glaze with brushwork
and sgraffito decoration

Fig. 5

The color of the glaze on the vase of Fig. 5 is close to a Sung celadon, but it has a little of the opaque smoothness of dolomite. Its form and decoration are so close to Chinese and Korean vases that it might be simply a demonstration of Leach's intimate feeling for this traditional form and his ability to reproduce it. An Oriental folk potter would not feel that he was abandoning his claim to individuality and originality by copying a traditional form if his copy had the quality of life that he wished, that is, if it were pleasing. Many of the Zen masters felt that copying specific details led to a deadening of the creative spirit, but they affirmed the following of a more abstract "way" or principle.⁷



Fig. 6. STONEWARE VASE BY BERNARD LEACH
Warm blue with lighter blue on the inside
Wax resist decoration showing lighter blue beneath

Fig. 6

Even the delicate blue of the vase of Fig. 6 has a quiet, subdued quality, although it is not as somber as Leach's dark brown or grey glazes. The first coating of lighter blue shows through the darker blue as decorative markings. Before the darker glaze was applied, wax was brushed on quickly which caused the outer glaze to shed when applied. This Leach vase is simply a cylinder, flared at the top, a form that a relatively inexperienced potter might be able to throw.



Fig. 7. STONEWARE PITCHER BY BERNARD LEACH
Uniform black tenmoku glaze

Fig. 7

The form of the pitcher of Fig. 7 is more complex and developed. Since its form is so vigorous, a decorative glaze pattern is not necessary. The uniform, shiny black tenmoku glaze, slightly underfired, seems to fit the character of this massive, but elegant form, inspired by English Medieval slipware pitchers. Notice how the handle grows right out of the body just below the lip and then folds gracefully down in a convex curve to match the concave curve of the body. For Leach a handle is "sprung," as a branch grows from a tree. A Leach handle is made by holding a lump of rather still clay in one hand and "milking" it down and stretching it out to its final shape by the other hand, which is wet with water. Since each shape demands a different handle, it must be made to fit a particular form that was made the day before. Leach's mastery and love for pitcher making may be a response to the challenge and the opportunities for the exploration of form in the making of a pitcher. Form must be perfected for practical use, as in the pouring spout which should be made so that the pitcher does not dribble.



Fig. 8. STONEWARE BOTTLE BY BERNARD LEACH
Rich brown tenmoku glaze



Fig. 9. STONEWARE JAR BY BERNARD LEACH
Brown tenmoku glaze with wax resist decoration

Figs. 8 and 9

Leach is not bound to circular wheel thrown forms. Many of the stoneware bottles of the Sung dynasty and Korean Ri dynasty were flattened, irregular shapes which were made in molds or built up in slabs like the Leach bottle of Fig. 8, or more nearly square shaped like that of Fig. 9. The flat surfaces of these bottles invite brushwork, sgraffito, or wax resist decorations. On the bottle of Fig. 9 the abstract, wax resist design is almost like Oriental calligraphy or some contemporary "action painting."

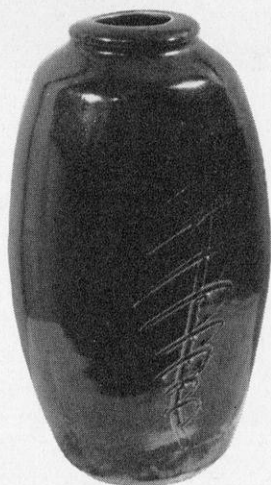
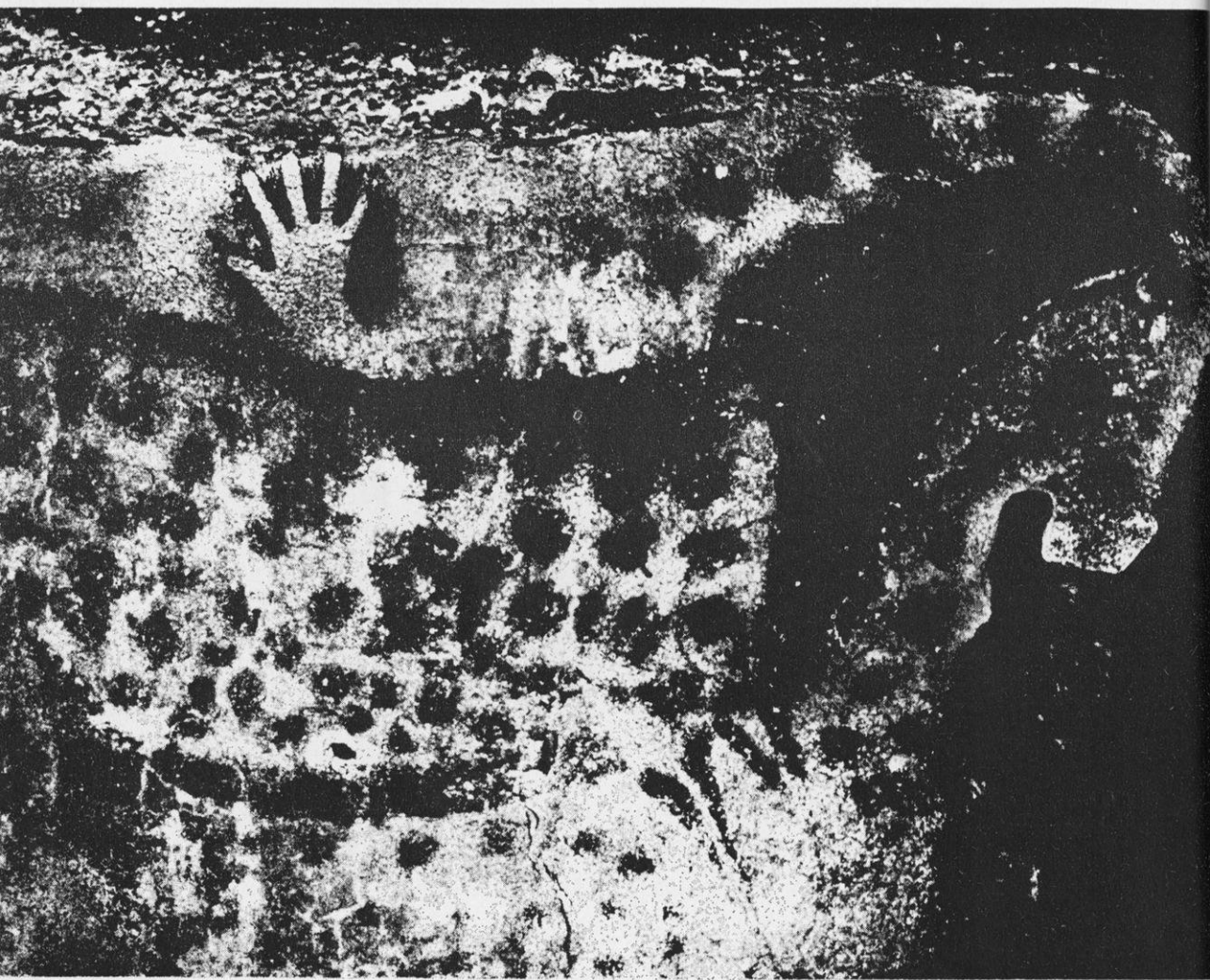
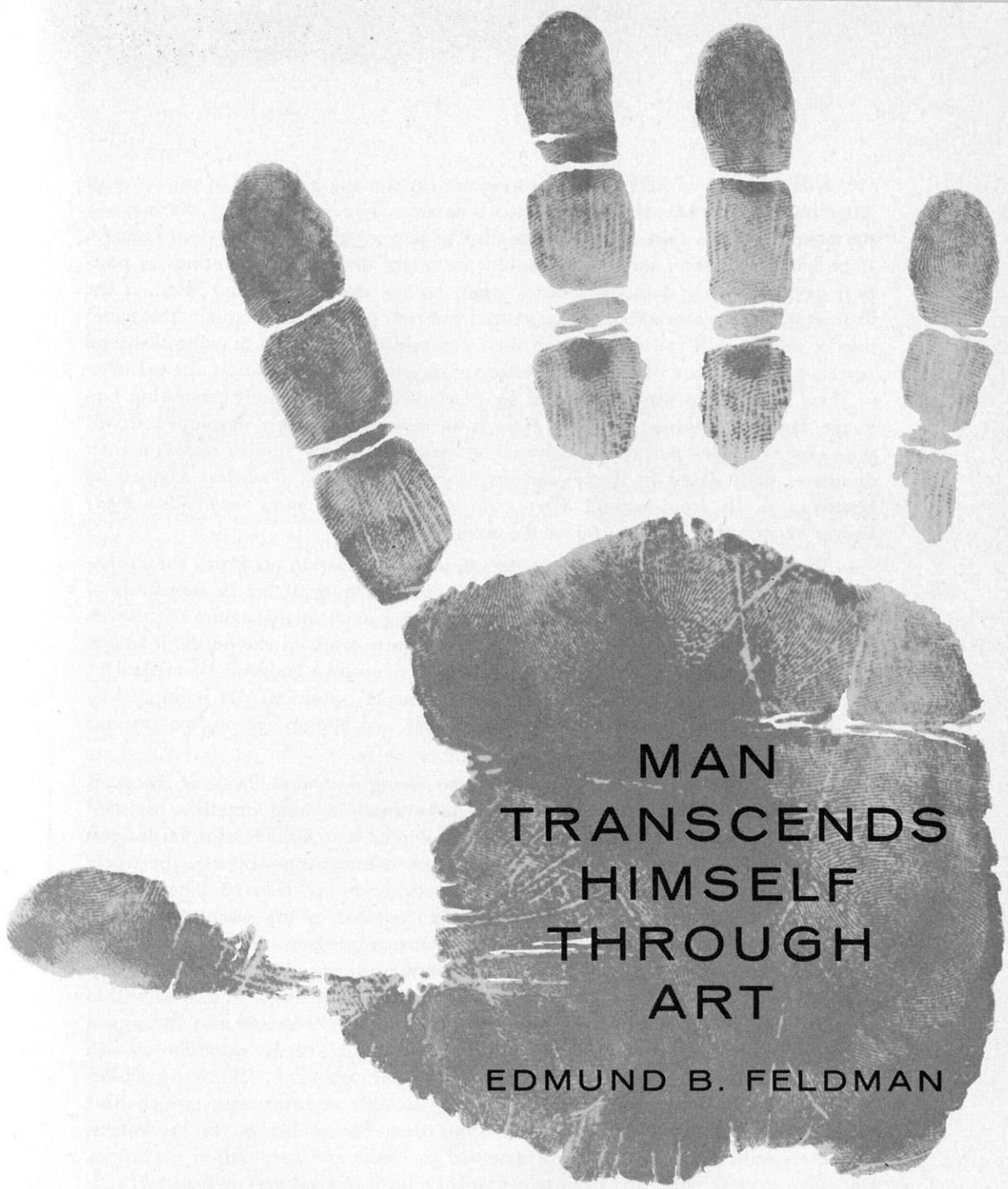


Fig. 10

The vase of Fig. 10 was hand thrown and then flattened slightly, so that it has a subtle asymmetry so characteristic of Japanese pottery.

Fig. 10. STONEWARE BOTTLE BY BERNARD LEACH
Brownish-black tenmoku glaze





MAN TRANSCENDS HIMSELF THROUGH ART

EDMUND B. FELDMAN

I

The longer one studies art, the less one feels able to define it. I was much more certain about the meaning of art when I was younger and knew less. At the present stage of my ignorance, I only know that art is something people have always created. Art takes different forms at different points in time and space, but it always persists as one of the constants of human behavior.

It is amusing to hear college instructors explain the paintings in the caves of Altamira to freshmen. If the instructor is interested in anthropology, he may say the paintings are a type of magic designed to appease the spirits of dead animals. If he has a utilitarian sort of philosophy, he might describe the paintings as practical devices used by hunters to learn where to kill the reindeer and bison. If the instructor has a more specialized pictorial interest, he will not explain the paintings at all; he will call attention to their naturalism, and to the drawing skill and powers of observation of the artist. Whatever the correct interpretation, the existence of these remarkable works, executed by precivilized savages barely possessing language, has to impress us strongly. Here is an instance of highly developed artistic skill—for whatever purpose—cultivated by creatures hardly able to maintain their existence, daily faced by fierce dangers from without and doubtless assailed by numerous devils from within. *They created because they were men. They made images because they had to.* And we are no different.

This is the bedrock principle of Art. It is the foundation on which the profession of Art Education is built. The practice and teaching of art in thousands of schools throughout America goes on because it is rooted in the nature of man. A relatively small group of art educators in this country work to extend the influence of art in human affairs. The efforts of this group continue and will be marked by success because art is a permanent part of the human condition: Art is implied by our hands, our eyes, our thumbs, our binocular vision, our nervous system, our brains, our powers of imagination.

The role of art in human affairs is always changing and it always is the same. In one sense it always deals with man's fundamental forming impulse—his need and desire to change the shape of things, to impose his own ideas of form upon formless or recalcitrant materials. In another sense, art changes because the world evolves new social and technical challenges to which it must respond. The machine and the electronic computer are examples. In response to the machine, the role of art was to find some way to adjust the human organism and its characteristic modes of forming to the scale and rhythm of mechanical-industrial modes of design and fabrication. But no sooner had art developed a machine aesthetic as well as the new profession of Industrial Design (with all its problems and also its utopian aesthetic possibilities) than the electronic revolution was upon us. Now we can expect the electronic computer to solve many of the problems of boring machine-tending and of dehumanizing toil by men as servants of instruments which have assumed a higher social and economic value than human beings. In the future, computers will make decisions now reserved to clerks and corporation executives, efficiency experts and all manner of management consultants. Financial vice-presidents and accountants will be as easily replaced in industry and government as Bob Cratchit, who kept accounts for Mr. Scrooge. Computers will replace not only semiskilled workmen and middle managers, but also the authors of speeches spoken by politicians, the composers of music for popular records, and the author of daytime radio and television dramas for housewives—those emancipated members of our society who have been freed from domestic toil by the mechanical-industrial revolution. (It often seems that the freedom conferred by the automatic dishwasher,

the vacuum cleaner, the automatic oven, and prepackaged food is a questionable benefit if the beneficiary is obliged to listen to or view "The Right to Happiness," "Young Doctor Malone," and the other lachrymose dramas of prepackaged daytime culture.)

At any rate, when the benefits of the electronic revolution are shortly conferred, perhaps in fifteen or twenty years, a new set of human challenges will emerge and art will have its role in their solution.

It is easy to see some of the more obvious consequences of the electronic revolution: greatly increased leisure, displacement of many kinds of labor, temporary economic distress, and extension of the period of education well up to the Platonic prescription for philosopher-kings. And the problems, some of which we already face, will be the re-education of displaced workers; the serious study and re-organization of recreation; the question Galbraith raises of knowing what to do with our productive capacity; and also the problems of art and of aesthetics, which I insist on regarding as serious. How will the forming impulses of men be spent? How should the products of their imagination and skill be used, shared, exhibited, circulated? How shall we educate artists and art teachers; and how much of artistic education shall we extend throughout society? What influence will artists and designers have over the uses of their skills? To what extent shall aesthetically sensitive persons in our society occupy posts of practical power? Of course, we face many of these problems already. But art will also have to contribute to the solution of problems *indirectly* resulting from the coming electronic revolution. Profound changes in the human condition are imminent, and we may ask how art shall deal with these changes—with man's sense of inadequacy, his feelings of worthlessness and despair, because it is clear that these feelings, pervasive throughout the western world today, are related to man's obsolescence in many areas of activity. Concerning despair, it must be plain that our preoccupation with self-destruction and our competition to dislike our enemies more fiercely is the source of considerable anguish just beneath the surface of national awareness. One of the present functions of art, it seems to me, is to reflect this sense of despair without succumbing to it.

It is to these latter problems that I wish to address my remarks. I shall not discuss art and art education under its aspect as a type of recreation, or as a branch of psychotherapy, or as a means of discovering intelligence which can be redirected by our educational system into the professions supporting a sound "military posture." I want to deal with the day-to-day kinds of forming, imagining, designing, criticizing, and loving which we do in art studios and classrooms throughout this country.

But first we must attempt to understand what it is in modern man or what it is *about* modern man that he himself wishes to transcend. What does he seek through art, through the practice or teaching or collecting of art, to forget or overcome? Paul Goodman recently wrote that much of juvenile delinquency grows out of the feeling among adolescents that there is no work, no heroic or exciting task really worth doing. Adolescents today feel no vocation, no summons to noble action, no place to invest their ardor and capacity for idealism. Other generations of young people could invest their idealism in a just war, or following that, in movements

to end war. The present generation is not significantly involved in either enthusiasm. It is very common to hear professors complain about the apathy of their students, the difficulty of stimulating them or arousing them about anything. Among the young, there is no serious lack of jobs as in the thirties. But they have the feeling, nevertheless, that society provides no work which is worth their emerging manhood. And, in a sense, these adolescents are right. The employment and the careers we offer them usually lack ultimate meaning. A man needs work, and so does a youth—work in which he can invest his being and ground his existence. Indeed the work of grown men is often comfortable and secure in the extreme, but rarely dangerous physically or morally; it is neither emotionally demanding nor imaginatively exacting. As a result, we can invest more of our affective energies in baseball standings or in a domestic drama on television than in our occupations, our wives and husbands, or in our own children. Because of the high degree to which the division of labor has been elaborated, work in our culture has become overrationalized, made too efficient and easy; and because human decision-making capacities are on the verge of becoming obsolete in industry, government, commerce, and education, man feels useless, unnecessary, and worthless.

Let me qualify this statement. Man feels necessary as a consumer and progenitor of consumers; as an audience for mass culture; as a datum in an opinion poll; but he does not feel that the core of his manhood, his power to rise above biology and economics, is vitally necessary. Indeed, if he inspects this core of his being, he may find nothing there. T. S. Eliot's "hollow men" have become in the modern setting, not a poet's symbol, but a reality, a fact which explains the spiritual condition of our time. And from man's awareness of the emptiness within him arises a powerful, only vaguely repressed sense of despair. This is the point where modern man feels himself alone in the universe; he no longer feels that he is a child of God.

Is it strange to have the orderliness, efficiency, and ease of work described as the cause of man's cosmic apathy and despair? I suppose it is, for all of us are trying to preserve the illusion that the way we earn our bread, the things we manufacture and distribute, the opinions we persuade others to hold, the money we make people spend, the energy we cause them to exert, the goals we urge on others and hold for ourselves—that all of these are meaningful and that they endow our lives with purpose and value. But a terrifying reality penetrates this illusion, more for some than for others, and we realize with the poet that we are hollow men and we despair.

About despair, its signs are a frenetic pursuit of pleasure, of activity for its own sake. Do not confuse despair with brooding. Despair is visible in aimless, ever-accelerating movement; gargantuan consumption of goods; mentalities which range widely and disconnectedly over the surfaces of ideas and things. And we must be cautious lest the pursuit of "art activity" also becomes a symptom of despair, the search for a new excitement when enthusiasm for life and work are waning. I shall argue that man transcends himself, overcomes despair through art; but we must not imagine (especially in education) that art is a type of excitement which is more durable *as excitement* than some other type of activity. After all, aesthetic experience relies upon the same mental and organic equipment as the excitement generated by

the most noxious forms of mass culture. The difference between the enthusiasms of art and the debased excitements of Mickey Spillane, let us say, consists in the depth and penetration of the genuine art experience to the core of the person. This penetration in depth can re-order the structure of personality; that is why we are justified in regarding the aesthetic experience as a type of learning. We learn something through art because we are changed through art. But in the excitement engendered by the forms of mass culture, we are not changed; we merely discharge energy. The discharge of accumulated tension in the process of witnessing a public performance, something which Aristotle called catharsis, is not a transcendent experience. Discharge of tension takes place in entertainment and is certainly a necessary part of human culture. Through it, the human animal is made less intractable, more fit to continue his existence in the group with fewer outbursts of violence. But we should never believe that entertainment is art or learning; or conversely, that learning and art can be entertainment or fun. That is why the despair in the heart of modern man cannot be assuaged by *any* amount of entertainment. And if the good things in life—art, love, and learning—are packaged as fun, we shall fall more deeply into the morass from which we want to escape.

Another cause of despair, which is also one of the qualities man does not like about himself, is his proneness to hate—the ease with which his antipathies can be mobilized under one label or another. I shall not dwell on it, but obviously in a civilization by the Judeo-Christian ethic, we have to feel uneasy, even guilty, about the lethal way we solve or threaten to solve problems among societies. And now that the “solution”—the “final solution,” one might say—appears as likely as not, we are deeply troubled. In the face of genuine and complete annihilation it almost appears as if the conceptual and institutional equipment of the past—law and government, education and morals, theology and religion, the family and the community—are outmoded instruments of survival, much less of significant existence. In our century, every one of these institutions has been seriously questioned or nervously discarded or desperately revived. And now, who can say whether our faith in education’s power to avert catastrophe is as strong as our faith in the power of science and technology to inflict catastrophe first?

II

Now I have suggested a few of the reasons why man wishes to get out of himself. And these are reasons man is aware of, at one level of consciousness or another. The case could be documented endlessly, from social science, from philosophy, education, psychiatry, and religion. It is significant that we “know” our situation is desperate, and that we suffer, even during our joys and fulfillments, because we can find no way out. The character of pleasure in a period such as ours is inevitably tinged with remorse and has a somewhat bitter taste because we always have the knowledge of emptiness with us.

However, the knowledge of our inadequacy, foolishness, and pride does not preclude all virtue and may itself be a source of regeneration. Man’s persistent effort, through art and through love, to unite with something more than self represents the hopeful element in a desperate situation which we both inherit and daily create

anew. Anthropologists tell us that biological evolution is not likely to do much to improve the human material we know so well. Hence cultural evolution must attempt to make what changes it can. This means, in the words of Erich Fromm, that we must perfect the *art of loving* to achieve reasonable harmony between individuals and among individuals. And we must make better use of the arts we profess here, the visual arts, to achieve proper and satisfying relationships between men and the world of nature, and the world of things. Let me show how art leads a person into a valuable relationship with the world, a relationship which can be achieved in no other way.

Art is, first of all, Making. A starting observation about artistic making is that the maker does not know what the result will be. He thinks he knows, or knows what he would *like*. But he never gets it, and if he *does* get it, he is no artist. The second observation, since the maker does not get what he wants, is that he must come to terms with what he has made. This "coming to terms" is a very deep-seated inner obligation; it has to do with acknowledging the work of one's own hand. In its extreme form, this tendency is what Isaiah inveighs against when he says:

Every one worshippeth the work of his own hands,
That which his fingers have made. (Isaiah 2:8)

It is in the nature of man to love what he has made. But the relationship between maker and object is complex. The object does not live up to the expectations of the maker. It never does. Hence the need to come to terms with it. So the maker or artist must effect changes in the object or himself.

Both usually. The self must become as plastic as the materials which are being formed. It must hypothesize, judge, feel, reflect, affirm, risk, empathize. An internal dialogue has to begin. With whom must the maker come to terms about the acceptability of what he has wrought? We have said, "With himself." But the self he would please is made up of so many "others"! It is a complicated business. But already the maker has learned this: the impulse or idea inside of him can get out and become matter and meaning. He can change matter to suit himself . . . or someone. Furthermore, the material in its half-formed state can suggest what should be done with it. The material can "speak." For me this is an entirely amazing, utterly miraculous event. The fact that communication between persons takes place is itself a great mystery, but the discourse between artists and inert materials is surely one of the primal mysteries of the universe.

Let me draw some of the conclusions from the observation that an artist "speaks with" and "listens to" what he has made. If there is emptiness and despair in the heart of modern man, it is because he cannot feel "together" with anyone or anything. This alienation arises from the nature of modern work; from the threat of extermination; from the habit of using people as things, and being used as a thing; and from the confusion of love and art with excitement and fun. But the dialogue between the artist and what he is forming revolves around a growing "something" at the center of his being. That is, the condition for communication between materials and an artist is the requirement within the artist that the materials take a certain form. The nothing at the center of his personality gives rise to a something

in the act of forming and responding to materials. And the requirement within the artist, the forming impulse, forces the artist to commit himself, to become involved in an outcome, and to feel the consequences of that outcome. If the product is good, or successful, or pleasing, there is a certain magnification within and a certain change in the tempo of discourse with the material. If the outcome is thought unsuccessful, there is the reality and satisfaction of failure. Failure in art is a privilege because it is a distinctly human possibility. We cannot fail in art unless we have already reached a stage of spiritual development where it is possible to understand what the material is saying. Needless to say, most persons who regard themselves as artistically weak or ungifted, have never really failed because they have never really committed themselves to an outcome.

I shall leave it to others to describe further the conditions surrounding the communication between man the maker, and the common, relatively worthless materials of his art. I know only that I have been holding a steady conversation with chalk and paint since I was seven years old. And these inert materials have expressed to me the richness and complexity of the great world they can symbolize as well as the elaborate language of form which their own substance suggests. I assure you that the language of form and the language of symbol, which we deal with daily in art studios, has given me more joy in the created universe than any spoken language I can understand.

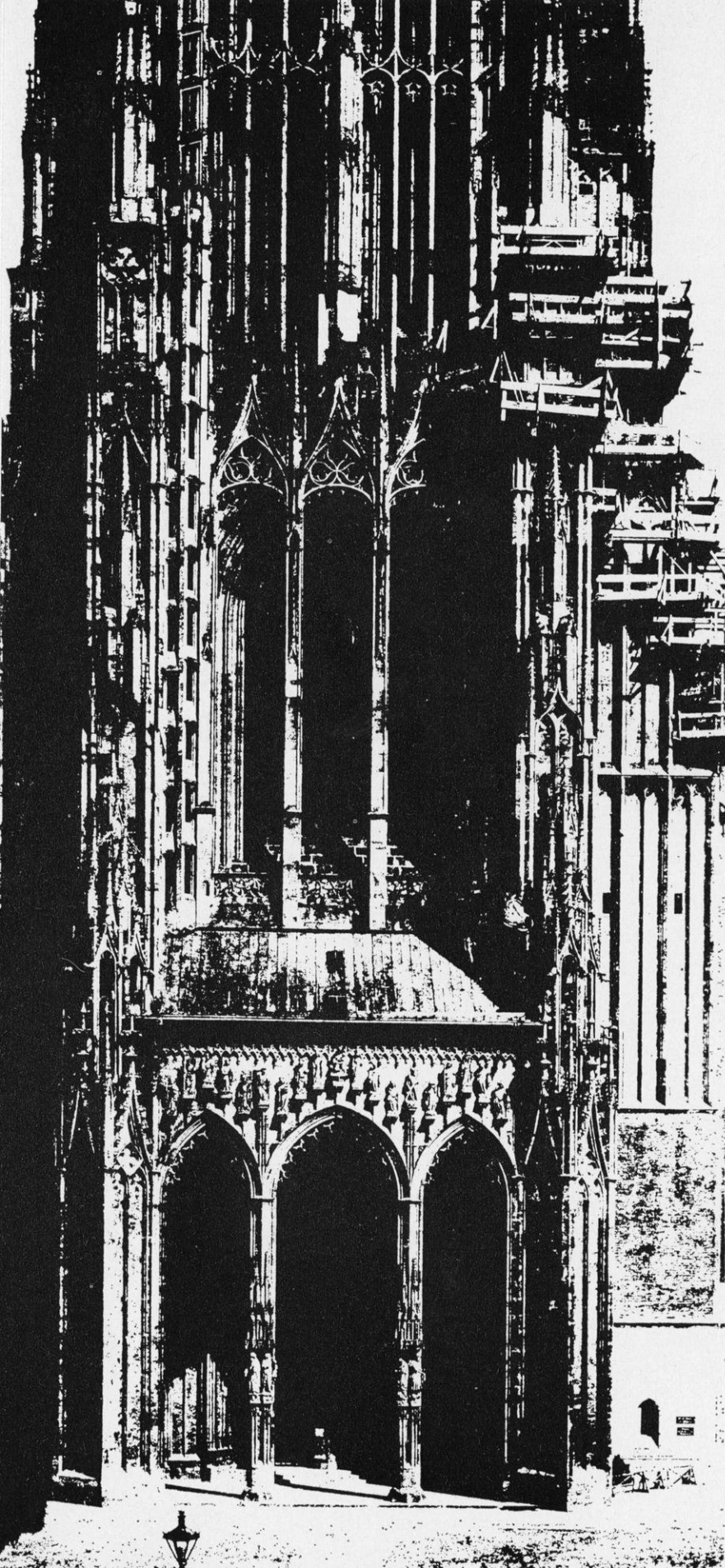
I realize these remarks are not couched in scientific terms and ask you to forgive their personal character. The assertions of an enthusiast have very little status in a world which prides itself on its scrupulous objectivity in matters of knowledge. And here I am in the position of asserting that through art one loses objectivity and becomes united with the substance of nature and the man-made world. One is tempted to say that the loss of the sense of self through art is a unique and rare event. But that is not entirely so. Self-transcendence is very common, especially for children, and is accepted by modern pedagogy under other labels as part of the normal developmental scheme. But alas, our western civilization sets no value by a child's ability to "lose himself" in things. Our whole educational enterprise is intent upon educating this foolishness out of him. Indeed, our dynamic idea of progress, our desire to conquer nature, our wish to enlarge the rational and logical portion of mind at the expense of the irrational and intuitive sector—these efforts of western culture are evidence of our drive to create a world of subjects and objects wherein never the twain shall meet. And it must be admitted that the "success" of western civilization has been purchased at the cost of our being forever at odds with the created universe, of being forever separated from each other—aliens in the world of man and aliens in the world of nature.

The "success" of the western civilization brings us to the present moment in history. We have achieved many of the ambitious goals of the discursive mind, of the rational intellect, and of the scientific method which is the fruit of the two. In the process we have lost our connection with nature, we have lost our ability to create poetry, and we have lost our ability to speak freely with the source of our personal and collective being. But even with these erosions of our former nature, one can yet perceive the grandeur of man in the depth and misery of his alienation and

in the height of his achievement and pride. This two-legged creature of monumental ambition, avarice, and self-esteem, with his grim sense of humor and tragic perception of himself and his chances in the universe, tries yet to live beyond his means. He seeks still to reach a level of existence which his frail physiology and limited experience as a civilized creature will probably preclude. And to do this he uses instruments which he began to fashion long ago from the materials presented by his own human nature and the stuff around him. Very tentatively and with the grossest imprecision do we name one of these instruments Art.

We have only begun to realize the range of possibilities which are contained in the category "Art" for continuing to humanize, educate, and finally to vindicate man. Unlike science, art does not show progress because it does not cast aside its past. For art, the human adventure is whole; its beginning is as good and as valuable as its end. When art changes, it consolidates. Its technical adaptations proceed from a combination of inner necessity and external circumstance, but it is not in the character of art to violate human nature because art is part of human nature. That is why, notwithstanding the tremendous claims of the physical sciences in education, art is the gentle and effective teacher. We can only hope that its role will be enlarged.

**THE
ARTIST
AND
THE
CHURCH**



THE
ARTIST
AND
THE
CHURCH

BY MARVIN P. HALVERSON

The arts today are a new frontier of the churches. One truly may say that the return of the arts to the churches and the rediscovery of religious meanings in art are important events of our time.

After decades and in certain respects centuries of neglect, indifference and downright alienation, the hiatus between the Church and the arts is being overcome. And the growing rapprochement between art and religion bears promise for both realms of life as well as for the well-being of society. In fact the widespread interest in the arts manifested in churches throughout this country constitutes a partial answer to the plea made by Denis de Rougemont shortly after the end of World War II in *The Third Hour*, an obscure journal dedicated to the reunion of the churches and the achievement of a new Christendom. One of the great intellectuals and universal men of our time, de Rougemont, a Swiss Protestant lay-theologian, wrote about the unparalleled opportunity for the churches in our day to influence culture in a positive way. "As a layman belonging to the Church," he said, "and seeing the opportunity for action, I expect that the Church offer a livable cultural relationship; that it dare again to support and head an intellectual vanguard instead of maintaining its former backward position—an attitude which is academic in the liturgical arts as well as in the total living culture thus leaving the culture disoriented. Our theologians should adopt a policy of involvement instead of withdrawal and self-righteous indignation toward new schools or tendencies in the arts which are unprovided with principles of common measure, of spiritual ambition and without devotion to anything avowable." M. de Rougemont went on to say that "All the culture of the West—music, painting, philosophy, literature—came out of the churches and the monasteries, but, alas, it also went out of them! It is time that we struggle to find it again and bring it back!"

The return of the arts to the churches has begun and the restoration of the Church to the role of patron of the arts has commenced. To be sure, all too many of our churches are ill-designed and filled

with barbarous objects or saccharine art; most of our religious bookstores and denominational church goods houses sell nothing but junk to a largely uninformed public; commercially minded music publishers continue to fill our choir stalls with trivial music and recording companies jam the airwaves and stuff the jukeboxes with religiously obscene words and musically preposterous sounds; our children are nurtured on illustrations in Sunday Schools which violate the Gospel and offend art; and our churches find it much simpler to live with the mediocre than attain to the excellent. Nonetheless, the pendulum which swung so drastically and for so long in the direction of mediocrity has commenced to move in the direction of religious integrity and artistic excellence.

Paradoxically, it is about this positive movement in our churches and in our culture that I am concerned. For unless the current interest in the arts among the churches has footing and direction, it is likely to be only another fad. To establish foundations for a responsible relationship of the Church to the total culture is a necessary undertaking which has barely commenced.

"The Church, the Arts, and Contemporary Culture," a study document prepared several years ago by the National Council's Department of Worship and the Arts, sought to initiate thinking along these lines. While it most certainly was not a Protestant encyclical on the arts, it represented the first attempt on the part of American Protestantism to examine the Church's responsibility to the arts and suggest the way in which the arts themselves witness not only *for* the Church but *to* the Church. But apart from the novel character of this message to the churches, the document set forth five tasks for the Church which to me seem fundamental.

The first task of the Church is to know contemporary culture and its expressions and through them to know our time more fully. If the Church is to live responsibly in the world and serve the world in the name of its Lord it must know the world in which it lives and works.

How can we understand man and his world? Just as society has been dominated by the machine and now by technology, so we in the churches all too often have believed that man and his world could be comprehended through measurement and calculation. The central core of life could be surveyed and measured through economics, sociology, biology, chemistry and physics. In such a way of looking at life, the arts tend to be looked upon as an addendum to the hard core of reality and consequently the arts were regarded as decorative, frivolous and irrelevant to life. Now, however, the arts have acquired a new prestige. Their use by politicians as instruments in the cultural sector of the cold war testifies to the power of the arts. More importantly we are beginning to recognize that the arts say more about man than any other expression of his life. For art arises from the seat of imagination and the heart of life.

While there were prophets in the nineteenth century—Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky and Van Gogh to mention but three—who stood out in a lonely and prophetic way against the spirit of the age, it is only in the twentieth century that we have commenced to perceive again the full measure of man, paradoxically as we have recognized largely through the arts the brokenness of man's existence. As Amos Wilder has said, "the most significant art of the twentieth century—Stravinsky, Picasso, Joyce, Kafka, Pound, Eliot—is that which comes of the epochal convulsions of our time, out of full immersion in the condition of man today." Therefore the arts tell us more about ourselves than does science; and the serious artists of our time tell us more than the ostensibly religious representatives. Picasso has more truth about man's predicament than Peale, and Stravinsky opens the channels of revelation more than Sallman.

At the now famous Armory Show in 1913 the first large showing of modern art was presented to the American public. The exhibition was exhilarating to some. It was shocking to most. One visitor looking at the Picassos opined, "There is something wrong with mankind." A year later World War I started so there was some justifica-

tion for this comment. But he implied that it was primarily art that was ailing. The truth is that art is not sick. Society is ill and the times are out of joint. In all periods of man's history art has reflected the fundamental character of the age. It is no less true today. The paintings, the novels, the plays, the poems of the twentieth century expose the disease in our civilization, man at war with himself, alienated from his fellows and his God—torn away from the roots of his being. But art has not only recorded the disruptions and upheavals of our times as in Picasso's *Guernica*. Art has been prophetic in that it has paralleled and often anticipated the new insights of physics and mathematics—cubism, for instance, disclosing the new dimensions of reality described by Einsteinian formulas. Through the lens of art we are enabled to see a wider and deeper range of life than anywhere else.

The second task of the Church is to assess the arts and interpret them in terms of Christian criteria. It is generally agreed, I believe, that all is not well in our streamlined and jet-propelled mass culture. Scan the paperbacks in the nearest drug store. Play the entire run of records on the juke-box in the nearest bar. Spend an entire day watching television (if you can stand it, as a friend of mine who is a top official in one of the networks once put it to me). Tune in the radio on the cowpokes from Brooklyn who sing longingly of the prairie they have never seen or the hillbillies from Manhattan who have seen no hill higher than Murray Hill on Manhattan Island. At the end of this immersion in the muddy stream of American popular culture one is disheartened if not indignant. For despite the remarkable achievements in the arts of high culture and the occasional quality and greatness in popular arts, the level of our national sensibility and aesthetic awareness is shocking.

Increasing efforts are being made to persuade churches and councils of churches to join pressure groups in communities seeking to suppress printed matter, music, art or entertainment which is deemed by these self-appointed arbiters of virtue to be corrosive of society and detrimental to mor-

als. However, before churches and individual Christians undertake the proper and necessary task of assessing the arts in contemporary culture, it is well to recall a lesson from the Reformation. *Judgment begins in the house of the Lord!*

Until the Church's house and worship are in order it is perilous if not presumptuous for the Church to attempt judgment of the arts outside the churches. This does not mean that nothing can be done until the churches have succeeded fully in worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The task of Christian discrimination, which is a continuing effort, begins where we are. It includes the hymns we sing and the tunes we whistle as well as the highest efforts of musical expression in the concert hall and on radio and television. It involves judgment on the pictures in our Sunday Schools even before we attempt to offer strictures on the loss of the image in abstract expressionist painting. But we must begin.

Our problem lies not so much in our will as in our capacities or rather the lack of them. In a certain sense, whether we are Catholic or Protestant, we find ourselves lost in the same fog. But as far as Protestantism is concerned, our inadequacy derives very much from the fact that we have no continuous experience with the full range of the arts. A comprehensive body of theological reflection on the religious nature of art is lacking. We do not grasp the religious meaning of artistic activity and the relationship between the religious and the aesthetic in judging a work of art. The Reformers of the 16th century were preoccupied with the Herculean task of cleaning and repairing the house of God. They were so busy with the urgent and immediate task that they did not provide positive guides for the future. But iconoclasm is never enough. It was not enough to drive the devil of art (they often confused the bad art of the devil with the great art of the spirit) out of the church. We know that soon after the devil was driven out the empty church was invaded by seven devils worse than the first.

We need to develop canons of judgment. But I suspect that we will learn the task of Christian

discrimination in the arts only after we have repossessed the past and gathered up an unclaimed legacy. In the last few years the Moravians have explored their past and reclaimed much of the remarkable music composed and performed in the 18th and 19th centuries in the Moravian settlements of Pennsylvania and North Carolina. What they have done others may emulate. All churches which explore their past will be surprised to discover hidden riches of which they presently are unaware.

The reknowledge of the past cannot be limited to one's own tradition. It must be truly catholic. For only when the work of anonymous Byzantine artists, Giotto and Bosch, for example, as well as Rembrandt, become part of our living present will we be able to comprehend and be grasped by our own time. Only when we have fullness of experience will adequate assessment and judgment come.

In the realm of music, for instance, it is not enough for Protestants to reclaim Bach and claim Hindemith. Our heritage is broader than the compass of religious origin or affiliation. Karl Barth argues delightfully that while the redeemed in heaven may sing Bach, the angels undoubtedly sing Mozart. During the Mozart bicentenary the Christian world was surprised and illumined by this testimony from the greatest Protestant theologian of this century:

"Thanks to the priceless invention of the record player, I have first listened to Mozart's music every morning for years and years. Only after this (not to mention the morning newspapers) have I given attention to my Dogmatics. I must confess: If ever I go to heaven I would first of all inquire about Mozart, and only then about Augustine, Thomas, Luther, Calvin and Schleiermacher."

A third task of the Church is to contribute directly to the health and vitality of the arts and a proper understanding of the vocation of the artist. At one time in Western civilization the Church was the dominant patron of the arts. One important aspect of modern life is the fact that this

is no longer true. In contrast to those centuries when the Church's patronage enabled the work of artists, thereby giving form and substance to the culture, the Church during recent generations has failed to lead. Where in former times it was *avant garde* and set the pace for the entire culture, the Church today more often than not is following the crowd.

What new church buildings during the last fifty years have established norms for all other architecture in society? What new compositions for corporate worship in the last fifty years have made the world aware of new modes of musical expression? What paintings in churches during the last fifty years have given new direction to the world of art? What plays have come from the churches, plays with such dramatic integrity and imagination that the shoddy commercial world of Broadway is given a new standard of measurement?

I do not mean to disparage the renewed efforts of some churches to foster the works of living artists. But lest they be led into paths of disillusionment the churches must be prepared to be patrons. *Great art is possible only as the patron possesses greatness or the potential of greatness.* It is not so much a matter of financial niggardliness, although churches frequently give the impression that art is possible only through romantic poverty. More important than money is freedom. One of the marks of greatness in a patron is recognition of freedom for the artist. Only a patron with inner security can afford to give the artist freedom. I am convinced that only churches secure in their faith, whether it be dogmatic or existential in character, have the courage to venture along fresh lines of artistic expression. A church which does not have such faith necessarily invites the superficial consolations of the sentimental, the mediocre and spurious imitation of the past.

Fortunately here and there across this country one can find examples of that collaboration between Church and artist which makes for greatness. We live in an age in which it is exceedingly difficult to experience and exhibit greatness. But a Saarinen building in Minneapolis, or an early Holt-

kamp organ in LaSalle, Illinois, or a Sowers window in Durham, New Hampshire, testify to the blessing which attends an effort where the Church is willing to be the Church and permits the artist to be the artist, where there is willingness to be honest and simple and employ all the potentialities of the present day.

To recover its ancient role of patron the Church must understand the vocation of the artist. First of all the Church needs to comprehend and accept the obligations and limitations of its own vocation. More church buildings than one could count have been compromised by the Church attempting to do the architect's job. The Church had failed to be the Church and sought to be designer and architect. It is my impression that part of our difficulty arises from the romantic view of the artist held by most churchmen. To them the artist represents a world apart from the world of the grocer, the baker and the assembly line worker. The artist has been detached from the artisan. Art and technology are divorced. At one time the artist was an artisan and he worked in the world that somehow knew that art was doing well that which needed to be done—a building to be designed, an altar to be decorated, a portrait to be painted, a play to be written, a cantata to be composed for a particular purpose. Before the days of romanticism the artist was one who made things, taking the stuff of creation and achieving fresh forms through new relationships of texture, color, shape, mass and line. Denis de Rougemont has pointed out the consequences of the romantic view of the artist in which he is regarded as a creator. But he reminds us that unlike God who creates *ex nihilo*, the artist begins with the fact of creation and works within the structure of nature. The polarity between necessity and freedom, between the given in nature and the artist's imagination, establishes the tension which makes for creativity.

We should not stand in unjustified awe of the man we now call "artist." Ananda Coomaraswamy said "The artist is not a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist." When the Church renounces its unconsciously romantic view

of the artist it will be ready to deal seriously with the artist as a man who can serve both the Church and his art with dedication. For men and women who work as painters, writers, musicians have a unique vocation to penetrate the veil of ultimate reality in extraordinary ways which are given to them. In fulfilling their vocation their vision takes form in such a way that all men may see and hear more fully because of them and better praise God.

A fourth task of the Church is to heal the breach that has arisen between the religious institution and those chiefly identified with the arts in our society. By their very nature it is impossible to divorce religion and art. The breach which we must seek to heal is not between art and religion therefore, but is the breach between the Church and the artist. Largely as a consequence of its infidelity to truth the Church has been on the defensive and in its consequent neurosis has seen an enemy in a friend. Yet one of its strongest allies is in the ranks of the artists. That they are not immediately recognizable as allies is an aspect of the Church's dilemma and task.

One handicap in achieving such an understanding is the continued temptation for churchmen to assess the arts in terms of moral or sentimental categories. When the Church does this, it fails largely because it misses the point of art and the concerns of the best modern artists. For the artist, and in particular the artist today, is more concerned with truth than he is with beauty. Very significantly, the Bible likewise seems more concerned with truth than with beauty. The striking similarity between the preoccupation of the artist and the fundamental note of the Bible offers one point of contact through which the breach can be healed.

In one way or another, most of the significant voices in the arts have evidenced their indebtedness to the Christian tradition. As I have gone about the country and come to know many of our composers, novelists, poets, playwrights, architects and painters, I have been surprised at the frequency with which their roots in a church were acknowledged. And although few were now iden-

tified by any specific church relationship I have been moved by evidence of religious depth. While their alienation from the religious institution is often sharp, their awareness of the religious and the dilemma of the religious life today is profound. When they have found it impossible to use most of the traditional symbols of the Christian faith, they have but recognized earlier what we in the Church are coming to know—namely the lack of a common language for artist and Church alike.

A rapprochement between the artist and the Church is possible if not actually under way. But churchmen will be prepared for this renewing encounter, however, only as they are stripped of false notions of art and religion. It will happen only when we are prepared to meet the artist with readiness to learn in the same manner in which we wait to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. This involves personal acquaintance not only with established personalities but with the potential artists in every community and church. A particular responsibility thus falls on the minister. Little did Wm. E. Barton, when pastor of the First Congregational Church in Oak Park, realize that the boy and youth in his parish named Ernest Hemingway was to be a world-renowned writer whose work reflects the parochialism of moralism masked as religion and reveals the breach between the religious institution and the arts!

A final task is to bear witness to the common ground to which both religion and the arts refer. Worship is the primary activity of the Church. Its primacy is reflected in the structures men have built to house their worship of God and the adornment of praise in music, painting, sculpture and all the other arts associated with the liturgical life of the Church. Worship itself is not an art but as Dom Odo Cassel has asserted, there is an art principle manifested in the liturgy which derives not from beauty but from holiness. Thus liturgy, the structure of the Church's corporate worship, takes on the appearance of an art form when the Church is not concerned primarily with beauty but with truth. The greatest periods of liturgical revival in the Church have been associated with theological

renewal and clarification. At such times it was not simply theology judging liturgy. Rather it was a productive dialogue between theology and liturgy which refined and defined theological language. Recovering coherence and integrity, movement being related to purpose and action being conjoined with word, the liturgy helped give form and content not only to theological language but to other symbols and forms of communication. At such times of liturgical renewal, worship becomes the crucible out of which common symbols arise and take form.

Religion requires symbols to convey the ineffable and it might be said that religion itself is a symbol—a configuration of symbols of that to which all symbols refer. In this understanding both religion and art are symbolic expressions of man's effort to receive and respond to revelations and disclosures of the spirit. From a religious point of view, art and religion are both servants of mystery and ultimate reality, and neither can use each other but only be used by the divine.

Despite its many detractors I believe the arts today disclose order in the midst of our disorder and incarnate wholeness in the face of contemporary brokenness. The artist not only manifests courage to be (even though this is not Kierkegaard's courage to be a Christian) but his work exhibits depth in existence and discloses the transcendent. Insofar as there is confusion of tongues and confusion of face (as the Book of Daniel so arrestingly describes the human situation) in the arts of our day, the confusion begins in the Church and its worship. The responsibility rests with the Church. While the renewal of the Church and its worship cannot occur apart from the totality of life, the primary task of the Church is to subject itself to reformation and the renewing power of the Gospel. When it engages in this undertaking the common ground to which both religion and the arts refer will be perceived and its power will be able to make all things new, transforming culture and renewing both religion and the arts.

THE MUSICAL AUDIENCE

MAX KAPLAN



I

In the past century and a half, the audience has reflected social, economic, and political forces inherent in the transition from feudalism to early capitalism, from agricultural to urban life, from church to secular interests, and from education of an elite to that of the masses. Thus, as Arnold Hauser¹ and others have noted in detail, the middle classes became a major artistic audience in the course of the last century, with consequences for every aspect of art as a social process or institution. These consequences include implications for the creator's roles, his relations to critics, patrons, and audiences; the growth of a new business of buying and selling art in the market place; new directions of taste, and a renewal of the old political argument about how far the large public can be trusted to select the significant, the good, and the beautiful from the *kitsch*, the vulgarized, the easy and the cheap. The last of these issues is familiar under such terms or battle cries as "popular art," "mass art," "mass culture," "the cultural revolution"—phrases and issues to which sociologists have contributed both clarification and obfuscation.²

The import of these developments is that audiences of the arts can be understood and interpreted only as part of a larger analysis of the culture. Audience motivations, rituals, perception of the sound or visual images thrust at them, and their composition in respect to age, sex, education, and other factors—all these constitute one whole process. And depending upon one's orientation and sociological taste, the special elements of this process which are selected for detailed emphasis and the explanations given for the interrelationships of these elements will include such items as cultural values, economic forces, technology, leisure patterns, political controls, etc.³

II

A feudal model prevails as the prototype of audience-performer relationships, even though the basic cultural undergirding has been revolutionized. That is, the ideal construct of the musical audience is that of a physical assemblage with two major spaces and with characteristic or appropriate dress and behavior patterns for listeners as for performers. The important aspect of this is that respective roles and functions are played in the presence of each other, or "live." In our own day, the development of electronics as a science has challenged this construct of audience; it may complete the cycle of the revolution noted earlier by supplementing, if not replacing, the rituals, mannerism, and formality of the feudal period. We know, through demonstrations with audiences gathered in a concert hall, that experienced listeners cannot distinguish between superior stereophonic machine reproduction of a string quartet and the presence of live performers behind a screen. In the case of a full orchestra this seems less probable; yet the point is that the psychological and sociological aspects of concert going, rather than the physiological or aesthetic, emerge as more crucial for our day. These aspects of audience-participation have always been present, of course, but the listener of today is in a position to differentiate

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more clearly and to choose between those elements of concert going and music listening; if he lives in areas away from live concerts, his advantage over his feudal counterparts is decisive in his access to the recorded performance.

III

The emergence of the middle class audience and of electronic reproduction has affected many countries. Several important changes unique to this country may be briefly noted: (a) the growth of a large group of amateur performers with a high level of ability; (b) the spread of music making and listening from a relatively few urban centers to communities throughout the country, and especially, creativity on an unprecedented degree in college campuses; (c) the growth of community orchestras consisting in many cases of amateurs and professionals (now over 1,000 groups); (d) the development of volunteer leadership for artistic enterprises in the American community, often of upper middle-class women; and (e) the important expansion of public school training for both participation and listening.⁴

This configuration of developments unique to our country, plus the part of the mass media and the total middle class emergence found in Europe as well, broaden the scope of issues which the sociologist can raise in a study of the progress of art. Rather than generalize further, I will focus the remainder of this essay on two actual situations in which I have been involved, one as organizer and president of an amateur organization in a Middle Western college community, and two, as consultant to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York.

IV

The amateur group consisted of a project known as Community Arts, which had several hundred members in its constituent units—a community theatre, painting, dance, and choral groups, and a symphony orchestra.⁵ Lincoln Center will house the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, Juilliard School of Music (and perhaps drama), a new dance company, a new repertory theatre, and later, a unique library-museum of the performing arts. As organizer and president of Community Arts in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, I assisted also in raising something like \$1,000 to keep the project alive in a variety of rehearsal and performance settings, from church quarters to school rooms. Lincoln Center has already raised most of its goal of \$102 million to build such quarters as its \$33 million home for the opera. My function there is to serve as consultant to those who are delegated to dispose of the annual interest on \$10 million to be used for educational purposes.

The central concern of the amateur group was to provide a means of expression and creative participation for the performers. Thus their audiences were friends, civic patriots, and, here and there, extrafamilial consumers of art. An audience to a community symphony, even to one which does a very creditable job, adjusts its expectations, and is pleased to get more; they have often been drummed up by members of the orchestra itself. The concern of community promoters is usually short-lived, that is, planning at most for the next season. In contrast, the New York audience to professional art expects nothing less than the best and is displeased to get

less; it is obtained by professional organizers who are businessmen, not relatives; but since artistic enterprise is a deficit operation, they work closely with volunteers quite like those of the smaller community.

In its decision to establish a school program to reach a particular audience, the Lincoln Center project faces a crucial question of finding a philosophy for establishing the relation of professional artistic effort to audiences who will span generations. For instance, what is the difference—and to whom—if balcony seat C-125 is filled by a sixth or twelfth grader, by a student now studying an instrument, by one whose father is a lawyer or a hod-carrier, by a Negro, white, or Puerto Rican? And since a decision on this matter can be supported by adequate financial action, it can be put to a wider use, in future efforts to coordinate various offerings of Lincoln Center so that they may be taken directly to the schools in selected areas or brought to all schools and many homes indirectly over the mass media. Thus we get into the additional problem of the strategy, from an educational-aesthetic view, of determining the best ages at which young people constitute desirable audiences for various musical media such as opera, orchestra, or chamber music. The experiments with the availability of these major groups may alter present thinking among teachers of music. For research purposes it should be understood that the possibility will exist to observe young people in concerts specially performed for them, with a minimum of adults present, as well as concerts for mixed ages.

A further issue, unique in all of man's history, emerges from the fact that we are now raising the very first TV generation. About a year from now, when the Philharmonic moves into its new home, children born in 1946, or Television Anno I, will be just reaching the age of fifteen. These high school sophomores will then be experienced viewers and audience members, although much of this viewing will have been in a living room which Russell Lynes⁶ calls a combination theatre, ball park, fight ring, night club, and symphony hall, and over a medium which Houseman⁷ summarizes as a "radio with eyes . . . press without the travail of printing . . .," a gadget which has had its effect on the innermost core of personal habit. Simultaneously, these fifteen-year olds have been exposed, in many cases, to systematic musical experiences in their previous elementary and junior high school years, and in a direct contact with the making of music which is lacking in European schools. Thus Lincoln Center's education program supplements an already dynamic process in which both live and mass media music have entered in the formative years, and a unique process already familiar in America but highly significant for the future of the arts, whereby the professional groups in the arts work closely and in most harmonious manner with educational agencies.

V

If Community Arts had the problem of *finding* audiences, Lincoln Center has one of selecting audiences. Each presents its own problems to those who would look upon art as a social institution. In the first case, the members of a community who promote the artistic enterprise hope that out of the random *self-selection* of audience there will emerge some pattern in time, so that those who come to concerts this year out of commitment to friends will show up next year out of a new commitment to

music. Those who, like in Lincoln Center, face the task of selecting audiences from a large available public, have the responsibility of developing a continuum of elements so that the selection becomes explicit in its alternatives and objectives.

One familiar classification of audiences is Hollingworth's⁸ division into (1) *pedestrian*, such as a street-corner group listening to a Salvation Army band or speaker; (2) *passive*, such as at concerts or lectures; (3) *selected*, such as a conference group; (4) *concerted*, such as a class of students; and (5) *organized*, such as a military unit. This typology is apparently based on degree of activity, and therefore has become outdated with newer thinking on the psychological and emotional relationship of active to passive attitudes; an illustration of this is the anachronism of assuming that TV watching by children is passive—obviating commitment and activity—and simultaneously that it influences children to carry on destructive acts like crime. For our purpose, Hollingworth's scheme has little relevance, for we are seeking a typology based on knowledge, understanding, and maturity of audience, and one in which age enters as a prominent variable.

Hugh Duncan's scheme offers a typology of relationships between public, critic, and artist. His first type is one in which performer and audience "know each other's reactions almost immediately through reciprocal responses that are clearly understood by everyone because they are using symbols learned in common and upon which they place a common value."⁹ The scheme concludes with a relationship in which strong and reciprocal relations exist between all three elements—critic, public, and artist.

If we use the word "critic" in its broadest sense, as Duncan intended, it refers generally to the cultural controls, judgments, or aesthetic values of which both aesthetic creativity and consumption are a part. In that sense, a Community Arts phenomenon or any amateur activity begins with Duncan's first type, i. e., with lesser stress on aesthetic values and controls and more on rapport between audience and performer. Its *hope*, however, is that an evolution will take place toward the final type in which all elements are strong. The major criticism of amateur activity in some professional quarters is that standards or values can never so emerge from a false start.*

In a Lincoln Center type of activity, the attempt is made *immediately* to start with Duncan's completed paradigm. "Here," says Duncan, "art emerges as an institution in its own right and seeks power on the same level as business, the church, or the school."¹⁰ A homely translation for our purpose might be that the attempt of Lincoln Center's educational program to influence students may depend upon the success with which a twelfth grader transforms his value outlook from (a) attending a concert in school time because he won't have to go to his math class to (b) attending a concert voluntarily in off-school hours and paying for it from earned money because he enjoys music.

There is no need for sociologists to go further than this in creating a continuum of audience commitment, particularly where children are concerned. Public school music educators have long wrestled with this problem, and are in a more advanta-

* Editor's Note: For a discussion of this contention, see Mr. John Reich's "Professionals for Amateurs," in this number of *Arts in Society*.

geous position than social scientists in being able to call into play a set of desirable ends, conclusions on learning theory from the various disciplines, as well as a large variety of observations and applied experiments on their own. These educators are, indeed, friendlier to sociology than might be expected in view of the marked indifference of sociology as a whole to the creative process and the arts. An important principle which Lincoln Center's emerging educational division has already observed is that school and educational authorities on all levels must be brought into the planning stages of its own project.

It is apparent that in both cases, Community Arts and Lincoln Center, two dimensions of concern exist, as in the study of all social institutions: the external and the internal. External concerns are those, such as the nature of audience, which face *all* artistic groups; the internal are those which set the conditions within which these problems can be resolved, given the uniqueness of each in respect to such factors as finances, leadership, community resources, and organizational structure. In both cases at hand, the central internal problem is the relationship between dependence and independence of cooperating units or constituents. It was our failure to resolve this problem which, in part, spelled the doom of Community Arts about five years after its birth. An interesting aspect of the Lincoln Center story is that the educational program of which we have been speaking is the first substantive area of common effort between the several units. It is not unrealistic to assume that the directions in which the \$10 million fund are used will go far to establish, for the Center itself, general policies for other forms of unified effort, and for the public, an image of Lincoln Center as something more than a magnificent set of buildings and the familiar offerings of its several artistic companies. In this sense, therefore, the selection of audiences of students is more than an aesthetic issue; it becomes part of the symbolism which Lincoln Center will represent as the decades go by. To the sociologist who is close to the scene, the delicacy of the situation becomes immediately apparent, for even as consultant coming from several hundred miles away, his presence represents a move toward some necessary degree of centralization. Thus, starting with a concern for a sociology of art, he turns, willy-nilly, to a sociology of organization. But that is another story.

NOTES

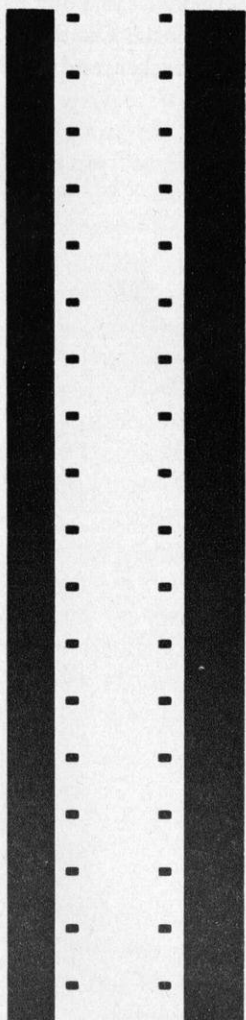
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3. Arnold Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History*, Knopf, 1959, especially Chapter II; Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Function of Art*, Philosophical Library, 1954, especially first three chapters.
4. Max Kaplan, *Art in a Changing America*, Music Educators National Conference, Washington, 1958.
5. M. Kaplan, *Ibid.*, contains a chapter devoted to Community Arts.
6. Russell Lynes, The Pressures of Leisure, *What's New*, 1958, No. 208.
7. John Houseman, Battle Over Television, *Harpers*, No. 1200, May, 1950.
8. H. L. Hollingworth, *The Psychology of the Audience*, American Book Co.
9. Hugh Duncan, Sociology of Art, Literature and Music: Social Contexts of Symbolic Experience, in *Modern Sociological Theory*, H. Becker and Al Boskoff (editors), Dryden Press, 1957, p. 491.
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This is the second half of Mr. Rose's definitive essay on the documentary. The first half was published in issue number five of ARTS IN SOCIETY (Fall, 1960).

DOCUMENTARY

in
search
of



By Ernest D. Rose



"Thursday's Children"

Photo by courtesy of Contemporary Films, Inc.

Part III—COMPARATIVE APPROACHES

It is rare that one finds two films of equally high quality which deal with similar subject matter. It is even harder to find such a combination if one must be a documentary and the other a photoplay. Yet such a happy coincidence exists in the case of "Thursday's Children" and "Crash of Silence."¹⁴ Both treat the problem of deafness in children. To be more specific, both concern the handling of the education of the deaf in special schools. And both were made in England within two years of each other.

"Crash of Silence" was produced at Ealing Studios in July of 1952 under the direction of Alexander Mackendrick (noted for his "Whiskey Galore" among many other fine pictures made both in Britain and the United States). Like most of the best photoplays, it is an adaptation to the screen of a novel, *The Day is Ours* by Hilda Lewis. In keeping with the new-found tradition of going to the actual, much of its school footage was shot on location in Manchester's Royal Residential Schools for the Deaf. In brief, its plot is centered around a six-year-old deaf girl, Mandy,

¹⁴ Released originally under the title "Mandy."

whose parents disagree on the method of bringing her up. The father (Terence Morgan) would coddle and isolate her from the world. The mother (Phyllis Calvert) would try some less defeatist method of helping her face the particular hardships of her life. She would in fact have her taught in a special school for the deaf in the North of England.

Believing such schooling a futile effort in the case of his daughter and not wishing to subject her to further anxiety or false hope, the father refuses to allow the girl to be taken from home (they are all three now living with the husband's parents, having given up their own place in order to pay the cost of a private tutor). This view is supported by Mandy's grandmother who now has a new interest to occupy her time. After Mandy proves herself unable to associate with other children (by attacking a boy who teases her over a game of ball) the parents have a violent disagreement about sending her to the special boarding school, during which the husband strikes the wife in a moment of anger. The wife leaves London and takes Mandy with her to the school, supporting herself by working nearby.

But Mandy is too inhibited to make much progress at the school and when the financial burden of keeping her there becomes too great, she is withdrawn. Feeling sympathy for the child, and a bit more than just sympathy for the mother, the divorced schoolmaster (Jack Hawkins) agrees to coach Mandy evenings at their flat. This results in neighborhood gossip which is exploited by a lawyer on the school's board of governors who is at odds with the schoolmaster over needs for improvement in facilities for the children living there. In spite of being warned of the danger by the founder of the school (a deaf woman herself), the coaching continues and Mandy's first articulate utterance results in an innocent embrace of the mother and schoolmaster which is overseen by a neighbor and reported to the father by the lawyer. The father immediately comes North to claim the child only to find the mother and the schoolmaster celebrating Mandy's achievement over dinner. When he confronts them with the accusation they can't deny, and when the child fails to repeat the feat of speech under such tension as proof of their alibi, he takes Mandy back home to London. In a final plea for the child's welfare, both mother and schoolmaster are rebuffed by the father, but the grandfather hears Mandy utter an audible word and steps in to help the father face up to his unfounded jealousy. Thus the family is reunited, Mandy is on her way toward adapting to the world, and the schoolmaster resumes his gratifying work with the children at his school. There are several minor subplots, including the regeneration of a newly recruited teacher in the school, the conflict between the lawyer and the schoolmaster, the grandmother's efforts to dominate the child's upbringing, and the father's struggle with his conscience after the mother and Mandy leave him.

It is always unfair to judge a film on the basis of its written synopsis alone, since the visual image and the highly human elements are absent. That is particularly true of this film, for under the skilled direction of Mackendrick, the actors turn in a near flawless performance of the characters as written. Mandy in particular (who in real life has no such affliction) carries on the tradition of superb acting by children in British cinema, as evidenced by the belief of many viewers that the part was actually played by a deaf-mute.

There is no doubt in our mind after leaving the theater that "Crash of Silence" has held our attention, even if we cannot apply the terms "amused" or "diverted" too accurately to its effect upon us. It is a penetrating insight into a human problem which may touch any among us who come in contact with children, and we feel that the illusion recreated during 93 minutes in the darkness of the theater has been worth every penny we paid at the box office.

Yet for all its excellence as an illusion, once we have left the make-believe world of the photoplay, it lacks something as a depiction of life under the cold light of analysis. The review in the *Manchester Guardian* has touched at the heart of it in stating, "The trouble with such a story is all that part of it which concerns its adult characters. There must be, as there is in this film, a conflict between them or the story will lack obvious dramatic force; and at the same time, the forces of enlightenment which are needed to produce the dramatic situation are likely to seem unenlightened or wicked to the point of unreality. . . . Yet all that part of the film which copes with teaching of the deaf (particularly with the teaching of young Mandy, herself) is beautifully done. . . . The film could so easily have been a mere 'weepy,' but Mackendrick has made it much more."¹⁵

To carry the analysis a step further into specifics, the role of the unsympathetic father (though well played by the actor) is at times beyond the reasonable limit of credibility. In addition, we are confronted with villainy in varied degrees in the guise of the husband, the grandmother, the lawyer, the new teacher, the lawyer's paid snoop, the gossip neighbor, the teasing child, and at least half a dozen other minor characters as a means of advancing the plot as it unfolds. The element of chance timing is all too accurately coincidental to the needs of the plot, as in the climax when Mandy just happens to utter a word in time for the grandfather to exert his influence on the solution of the marital problem of his son and daughter-in-law, or when the unknowing neighbor just happens to pass by the door (which just happens to be open) in time to observe the innocent embrace of the mother and schoolmaster over Mandy's first word. No such series of happy coincidences, nor such fabricated villains, are needed to enrich the drama of "Thursday's Children."¹⁶

The sole villain in "Thursday's Children" is deafness. The only "actors" are the deaf children themselves; the only setting, the school in which they live. The essence of its theme: that the deaf need not live alone, cut off in silence from the outside world; that with help from others and effort on their own part, many of them can live a meaningful existence.

The picture has no plot in the conventional sense,¹⁷ yet it is every bit as dramatic as the greatest of the photoplays. Unlike the photoplay which parades a series of chronologically related events before us on the screen, there is no such clear-cut continuum involved in this documentary. Screened with the sound turned off, we

¹⁵ "A Film About the Deaf" From Our London Film Critic, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, August 7, 1952.

¹⁶ Written and directed by Guy Brenton and Lindsay Anderson, photographed by Walter Lassally, music by Geoffrey Wright, commentary spoken by Richard Burton, with the children from the Royal School for the Deaf, Margate.

¹⁷ This is not necessarily characteristic of the documentary since some of the finest films such as "On the Bowery" and "The Back of Beyond" utilize the plot structure. More attention is devoted to this form in the section that follows.

sense no logical progression in time involving but a few principal characters. Its appeal is mainly graphic, not expository. Such a picture relies heavily on its sound track to weave the unrelated images together, and like any good film, not merely to describe what we see, but to explain the meaning behind it.

Since there is no plot to develop, it has no need for an ending; no resolution of the conflict in the conventional sense which is so essential a part of every photoplay. We need not go away with the idea that all is well since the problem is solved for us. There is no room here for catharsis by an easy resolution of the issue, no self-absolution from the responsibility it points up. As the producer has placed it before us, we must cope with the problem itself.

It is quite impossible to recount here in detail the method employed by Brenton and Anderson in achieving this goal. In brief, the film is merely the observation of the educational process involved in rehabilitating deaf children. It shows the tedious work of trying to give meaning to words which can only be learned through their feel or their look, not their sound. There is no maudlin sympathy in the narration, no overbearing gloom in the musical score. It is a superb example of the best in cinema which can only be experienced fully by viewing the picture itself. But a few points are worthy of mention in helping us in our comparison with the photoplay.

"Thursday's Children" runs for 20 minutes as compared to 93 minutes for the other film. Yet in it we learn every bit as much or more about deafness and the struggle to relate to the outside world as in the longer film. Both pictures utilize a shorthand peculiar to the film medium: cutting, flash back, the close-up, et cetera. But "Thursday's Children" makes abundant and poignant use of a film shorthand item which is unusually well suited to the documentary method—that of narration. In a single sentence we can learn what ten lines of dialogue may not be able to duplicate. Narration, when effectively used, is a direct pipe line to the soul. We need not wait out an endless exchange of sentences between characters in a dramatic relationship for the meaning to come forth. A single phrase, a well-chosen word can cut right to the heart of the matter in the documentary. Thus, almost without exception, it is possible to treat the same subject matter and cover the same amount of material (often in a more subtle manner) in considerably less time than in the conventional photoplay.

Both films build on a basically similar dramatic structure. They grasp our attention, they build up the problem gradually to a point where we see a solution, only to be set back by a further complication. In "Crash of Silence," the process is repeated and developed till we are bound up in a complex series of intermingling conflicts, advances and setbacks, all of which are resolved satisfactorily in the ending. In "Thursday's Children" the pattern is simpler, with each of the hardships in struggling with the words, each step of achievement toward speech representing an advance in the dramatic structure of the film. But as stated previously, there is no happy ultimate conclusion as in life there is none.

In "Crash of Silence" we sit back and observe the drama much as we would if we saw it on the stage. We are detached from it, as if separated by a cinematic proscenium arch, except for our sympathy or dislike for the characters in the story. In contrast, "Thursday's Children" forces upon each person in the audience an acute

awareness of precisely how hopeless it must feel to be deaf. It does so through a subtle use of the medium which is ideally suited to the documentary.

As the film opens we have no inkling that the lovable, normal-looking children (age 5) at play in the school room have any affliction. Their actions are not unusual. Their expressions and humor captivate us. Only the lines from the poem "Thursday's child has far to go," heard on the sound track in darkness before the picture begins, are an unheeded clue of what lies ahead.

Over scenes of the children leaving their games to be seated for class, the narrator begins, "This is the way we play . . . and this is the way we start our lessons." Use of the first person plural in the narration immediately tends to draw us closer and make us a part of the group. It continues, "Every morning at 9 o'clock we come in and we find our chairs. Our teacher is called Miss Taylor. She looks after us while we are in school and she gives us all our lessons. There are different lessons every day, but every morning starts in the same way."

We see the teacher hang a printed chart of the morning prayer on the blackboard, then she turns to face us. In a large close-up she begins to recite slowly, "Bless . . . us . . . all . . . O . . . Lord . . .," then the volume fades under and we are left in silence for a moment though we can clearly see that Miss Taylor is still talking. After another moment the narrator comments simply, "But we do not hear Miss Taylor. We watch her speaking, but we do not hear anything . . . because we are deaf."

The delivery of these words over a view of the intensely concentrating faces of the children has an effect on the audience which is little short of staggering. We are simultaneously shocked out of our "aren't-they-cute-kids" attitude, and silenced into a feeling of oneness with the children which dominates all else for the balance of the picture.

While the words were written with enormous understanding and a deep sense of human feeling, no small amount of the credit is also due to their delivery in what is certainly one of the most perfect film narratives in the history of the cinema. One finds no oozing sorrow, no professional emotionalism in this voice. We are merely told the meaning of deafness, just as we are left in silence during portions of the picture to experience it ourselves and briefly to struggle with its problems as the deaf child must. In our futile effort to read the lips of the teacher who talks to us, we begin to feel how the four-year-old feels who has never heard the sound of a human voice, and to realize that there can be no understanding of language if we don't even know what a word is. We experience the meaning of the statement, "Without words there can be no thoughts; only feelings with nothing to join them together."

Here is a carefully conceived use of the cinema perfectly adapted to documentary in that such films are known for not having to use synchronous dialogue. When we find none as the children play in the beginning we accept this condition as normal and in keeping with the documentary method. Yet in looking back, we realize that for these children it has never been any other way. Only for them there is no narrative to help explain life, nor any nursery tune theme to lighten their mood in the darkness of a silent world.

As we share with the children each step toward the painful utterance of a sound or the agony of a word, our hopes are slowly lifted only to be brought back to reality by the realization that, for all their effort, only one in three of them can ever hope to achieve real speech. As the narrative tells us in conclusion, "There are many good things in life that these children can never have. They will never hear music or the sound of a voice. They will find that the world outside is often in a hurry and that luckier people, who have hearing, are often impatient with those who have none. But these children will not be unprepared. For there is a spirit in them which will make up for some of the good things they have got to miss. Their world will never be the same as our world, but it can be a good world all the same."

Few films illustrate more clearly the infinite distance that separates the realm of the documentary from that of the photoplay than the two here reviewed. One tries to bring us closer to the problem of deafness itself. The other merely uses it to motivate conflict in the plot, to provide a conventional story with the essential ingredient of drama. While Hollywood (or in this case, Elstree) may now treat subjects and problems which were previously ignored, their approach is merely to use the problem as a setting, a new type of backdrop against which to play out the same old story of boy-meets-girl and right-must-triumph in its many variations. By contrast, documentary works with the effect, the manifest result of the problem, as a means of working back toward an understanding of the source of the problem itself. Herein lies the heart of the difference in the nature of documentary as a form of dramatic expression.

Part IV—THE PLOT-STRUCTURED DRAMA

While most of the qualities which characterize the nonplot documentary (e.g., "Thursday's Children") are to be found in the plot structured documentary as well, additional insight into the difference between the photoplay and the documentary may be gained by an examination of this type of picture also.

In searching for examples of the photoplay and the documentary which utilize the plot structure, we find it more difficult to select two films as similar in content as the examples chosen for the previous chapter. Nonetheless, two pictures that appear to have much in common and which can serve as a basis for a comparative study are "Home of the Brave" and "The Quiet One." While the principal theme in the two pictures is quite different both are set within a psychotherapeutic framework, both were made in America during the postwar period (completed and released in the theaters only two months apart in 1949), and both deal with the problem of the Negro's effort to make some adjustment to a hostile environment in contemporary society.

The primary difference between the two films arises out of the fact that in one case the protagonist is a soldier suffering from shock and paralysis as a result of an incident during the war in the Pacific; in the other the principal character, the quiet one, is a ten-year-old boy from Harlem who has been driven by an absence of love or attention in his broken home to a life of delinquency and subsequent emotional withdrawal from the outer world.

Stanley Kramer's production of "Home of the Brave" was the first to be completed in a postwar cycle of Hollywood films on the Negro problem, although others were already in production at that time. It was based on a Broadway play by Arthur Laurents which dealt with antisemitism during the war. In brief, the film's plot is revealed through a series of flashbacks as an Army psychiatrist at a remote South Pacific field hospital tries to discover the factors which have caused a Negro soldier (substituted for the Jew in the play) to become paralyzed during a reconnaissance mission. Through the use of sodium amytal injections the soldier is made to recount the incidents leading up to his paralysis, climaxed by the experience of seeing his best friend killed in action before his eyes. These narco-synthesis sessions lead us back into the soldier's childhood and the years filled with hatred, ridicule, ostracism and segregation. Under the drug he relives his years at school, and his bitter experiences in a white man's world and a white man's army. During the reconnaissance mission, at the moment he sees his white comrade killed, his long suppressed rage overcomes him and he is momentarily glad to see his friend die.

The surge of guilt that comes over him immediately afterwards is enough to cause his paralysis. Once he understands his own inner feelings, the doctor tricks him into walking again by yelling, "Get up and walk, you dirty nigger." Shorn of his guilt complex and persuaded he is no different from any other human being, except in the accident of his skin color, he regains his health, his tolerance and a new understanding of himself, his people and his fellow human beings.

While this picture comes much closer to dealing with the problem of prejudice than "Crash of Silence" does with the problem of deafness, it somehow fails to accomplish its objective. If we presume, for the sake of discussion, that the film makers in this case wanted to do more than just realize a profit on their investment, that they wanted to change people's biases or induce greater tolerance, then the picture was a failure. Carefully documented psychological studies of the audience reactions to the film¹⁸ reveal that those who were not biased against Negroes to begin with accepted the picture's message as an indictment of prejudice, but the strongly prejudiced audiences in the South liked it also, for they saw in it evidence which reinforced their stereotypes and preconceptions that all Negroes are weaklings and that they harbor resentment and malice toward the white man. The fact that it was permitted to run in theaters in Memphis and Dallas is further evidence of its failure as a propaganda piece.

Whether the film was made with this primary purpose in mind, however, is open to question. Mr. Kramer's own press statements in 1949 reveal that he was aware that several films were soon to be made using a Negro as the central character in the plot, and in an effort to capitalize on this trend he quietly obtained backing (from a private investor, not a bank), shrouded the entire venture in secrecy and, unknown to the rest of Hollywood, rushed through a greatly accelerated shooting schedule in time to beat out his competitors by a period of several weeks.

The bulk of the picture, including all of the jungle scenes, was shot in a well-guarded sound stage where absolute security could be maintained. The only location

¹⁸ Daniel Wilner, *Attitude as a Determinant of Perception in the Mass Media of Communication: Reactions to the Motion Picture "Home of the Brave"* (An unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. University of California at Los Angeles, 1950)

work involved some exterior scenes of the landing on the island which was photographed just two hours from Hollywood on a beach near Santa Barbara. In boasting of his achievement at the time the film was released, Mr. Kramer proudly stated that the entire picture (including the services of writer Carl Foreman, director Mark Robeson, and Dimitri Tiomkin for the music) was completed within a budget of less than a half million dollars.

Said the *TIME Magazine* movie critic, "In spite of its faults, the film has novelty, emotional wallop and the excitement that comes from wrestling with a real problem, rather than fencing with a cooked-up plot. The acting, even against some unconvincing jungle sets, is persuasively lifelike."¹⁹ The lead was played by James Edwards, and while there were no top salaried stars involved, all of the performers were professional actors of considerable skill and experience in the movies.

By contrast, "The Quiet One" employed only two performers,²⁰ both in relatively minor parts, who could claim professional acting experience (gained from work in the American Negro Theater). The central character, Donald Peters, was portrayed by a twelve-year-old who had never before faced a camera.

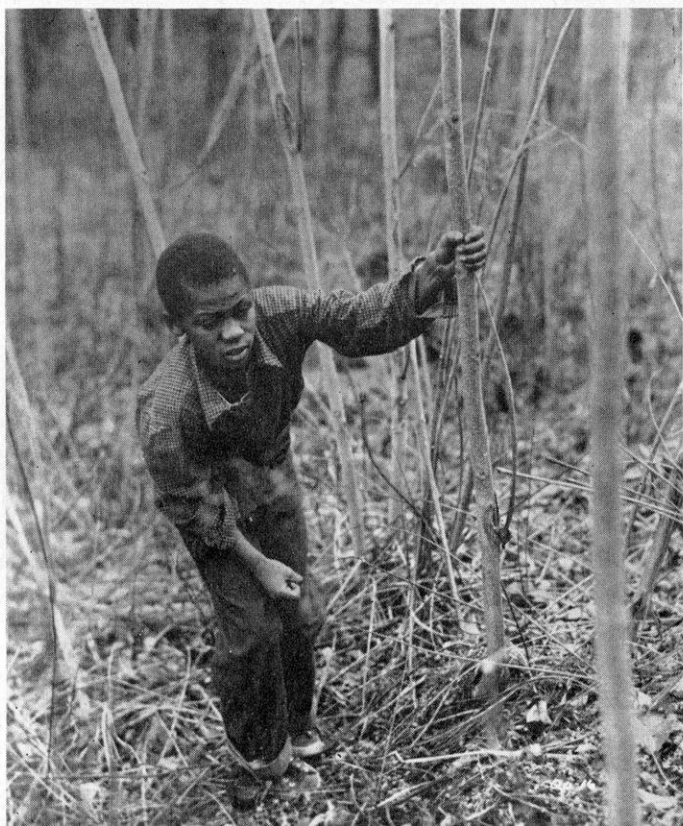
The picture was photographed entirely on location, much of it on the streets or in the flats of East Harlem, and at the Wiltwyck School for Boys near Esopus in upstate New York. The inmates of this school and its staff played important roles in the picture, although the resident psychiatrist who is seen only briefly in a few early shots was acted by Sydney Meyers who directed, co-authored and co-edited the picture together with Janice Loeb and Helen Levitt.

¹⁹ Cinema, *TIME Magazine* (May 9, 1949)

²⁰ Estelle Evans as the boy's mother and Sadie Stockton as the grandmother.

"The Quiet One"

Photo by courtesy of Joseph Burstyn Film Enterprises, Inc.



Except for Mr. Meyers, who had served as chief film editor for the British Information Ministry's New York office and for the U. S. Office of War Information, subsequently becoming director of the O. W. I., none of the principal contributors to "The Quiet One" had ever been involved to any extent in professional motion picture production. This group included photographer-editors Helen Levitt and Janice Loeb,²¹ Miss Levitt's brother William (a former educational director for the United Automobile Workers of America) who functioned as associate producer, film critic James Agee who wrote the commentary and dialogue, and Ulysses Kay, prominent young Negro composer and conductor.

In comparison to "Home of the Brave's" crisp 35mm photography, its well-tailored one hour and 25-minute length, its 18-day shooting schedule and its trim half million dollar budget, "The Quiet One" must admit to an origin on 16mm film, a length of 67 minutes (which one feels at times is somewhat too long), a production schedule that exceeded two years, and a relatively paltry budget of only \$28,000. While Mr. Kramer had the services of Hollywood's Central Casting Office to draw upon, and maintained complete control over all elements in his picture from start to finish, the producers of "The Quiet One" spent weeks on the streets of Harlem observing children at play, talking to them and their parents and trying to win the confidence of people whose homes they hoped to shoot in. It was during a visit to such an apartment that a youngster came home one day with a group of his friends from the neighborhood. Donald Thompson was among them. He was liked and tested immediately, but a dozen tests of other boys were made before Donald was finally selected for the role.

In real life Donald was quite the opposite of the character he would have to portray in the picture. Although he had grown up in a neighborhood not much different from the one depicted in the film, he was among the luckier children who found understanding and strength in his home life. He was an exceptionally bright and responsive boy, a good student in school, and a monitor at P. S. 121. His father insisted that under no circumstances could there be any interruption of his schooling for the purpose of the picture. Consequently the shooting was done after school hours, on week ends and during school vacations.

Some week ends the entire group, now joined by cameraman Richard Bagley,²² would pile into a car and make the trip upstate to Wiltwyck where Donald would join the boys in the corrective school for some of the sequences. But filming could be done only during the free periods. So the company moved up to Wiltwyck and shot there for most of one summer while Donald lived with the inmates and came to understand their deep-seated frustrations and their bitter jealousies.

As might be expected, the Wiltwyck boys were often hard to handle. One day they liked "acting," enjoyed being the center of attention. On the next day, the same kids that had been so cooperative might refuse to participate, run away and sulk, or suddenly make faces at the camera in the middle of a take. All these inconveniences made for slow progress and, on more than one occasion, measured the limits of the film makers' patience.

²¹ Miss Loeb is also credited as producer of the picture.

²² Later to be remembered for his photography of "On the Bowery."

Back in New York, the group rented a cold-water flat in a tenement on First Avenue at 112th Street and spent many cold nights there during the winter of 1947–1948 planning the next day's shooting and editing the rushes. They bundled themselves in ski togs, heavy clothes and blankets and with a kerosene stove to help out, were warmed by the happy thought that the apartment which served as their cutting room, studio, production headquarters and office cost them only \$26 a month. But all the time they worked, an air of quiet prevailed lest their landlord find out what they were up to and put them out.

Harlem cops were inclined to be somewhat less helpful than New York police generally are to visiting companies from Hollywood. Not only would they not rope off traffic, but several times patrol cars stopped to inquire what was going on while street scenes were being shot and instructed the film makers to move on.

On one block where most of the shooting took place, everyone was informed of the nature of the film. This was found to be necessary to obtain cooperation and to keep curious residents from mugging or staring into the camera. This tactic proved effective and the neighborhood cooperated to the utmost. After the film was completed, one of the first places it was shown was at the local school house for the people on that block. Probably never in its history was the film received with such overwhelming delight and enthusiasm.

It was not long after this that "The Quiet One" became the object of one of the most unquiet and persistent whispering campaigns that had hit the New York scene in many a year. While the picture had been conceived as a social welfare film for nontheatrical distribution, Joseph Burstyn, of the firm of Mayer & Burstyn, agreed to blow it up to 35mm in return for the right to distribute it nationally in the mushrooming U. S. art theater circuit. Like most theatrical enterprises, not too much is really known of the exact financial outcome, except that the producers²³ pledged 50 per cent of all profits to the Wiltwyck School for Boys after the cost of the picture had been recouped.

What kind of idea was it that served as the vehicle for this minor success story? The theme of "The Quiet One" is a simple one. It shows how a lack of parental affection can disfigure and maim a youngster's personality. The film is an account of how one such boy lost his way and how, with guidance and help, he at last began to find it again.

We first meet Donald as a resident of the correctional school at Wiltwyck. Unlike the other boys, who clown or play ball or wrestle with each other during recreation hour, Donald sits alone, apart from the rest, aimlessly throwing stones into a stream that runs through the school grounds. The resident psychiatrist, whose voice is heard as narrator²⁴ throughout the film, tells us that in all the months he has been there Donald has made no friends. "We have never seen him smile; he has hardly spoken; he is one of the quiet ones. . . . We learned his story very slowly, by bits and pieces . . . secretly, in his loneliness; in a lost child's bewilderment."

In a flashback that lasts nearly half the length of the picture we retrace the experiences which led to his confinement. We relive the memories he is unable to

²³ For a portrait of them see *Vogue* (March 1, 1949) pp. 154–156.

²⁴ Actually spoken by actor Gary Merrill.

blot out no matter how deeply he retreats into his own private world. Memories of a "vanished father whose face he can't even recall. A mother who has no room for him in her life. Grandma, and his home with her; a home he hates so much, that even at night, he seldom comes back."

It is very early in the morning as we see the grandmother out walking the streets of Harlem looking for him . . . "wishing to goodness she'd never in her life have to smack him or scold him or go claim him back at Children's Court or ever look on his mean, mopey, sassy little face again." And thus the day begins, in the same way it always does for Donald. With the same helpless beating when he's brought home by a neighbor; the same rage and fear and pain that is all he has ever known during these hopeless, confusing years with his grandmother.

On her way to work, the grandmother makes sure that Donald goes to school, but no sooner is she out of sight than he sneaks out the door to wander aimlessly through the streets. The narrator tells us, "Of course, the streets of a city *can* be a wonderful school; freedom is wonderful too. But if you're as lonely as Donald is, all you learn is more loneliness. And Donald's kind of freedom is solitary confinement." Everybody else has some place to go, some definite thing to do. Everyone but Donald. After a while he goes back to the empty apartment, but even here he can find no refuge. He searches the drawers and cabinets till he discovers some money his grandmother has hidden in a tea cup and heads for a candy store.

Two older boys appropriate his candy and are about to walk off when they see he has more money. After helping him spend it, they depart, leaving him once again in the solitary loneliness that is only truly felt in the midst of a crowded city. The narration comments, "Children who buy their friends will do almost anything to feel they belong. But Donald doesn't know yet how to keep this kind of friend. He's failed again and the baby in him is desperate to be comforted." He hears a young child calling "Mama, Mama," and as he walks through an underpass he disdainfully mimics the cry which echoes in the hollow darkness of the tunnel.

Donald finds himself walking toward the apartment where his mother now lives with another man. But in this new life, with a new baby of their own, there is no room for Donald. Reluctantly, she asks him in. In the next room he overhears the shiftless father bickering with Donald's mother. They take advantage of the boy's presence to go out together, leaving him to watch the baby. But the screaming infant is more than he can cope with, and finding himself unable to comfort it, he is once again driven into the streets.

Here the pent-up rage against a world that does not want him overcomes him, and he gives it vent by throwing a rock through a plate glass window. But as we hear the shattering glass on the sound track, we are shown instead the image of concentric waves set up by a stone that has been dropped into the quiet waters of a stream. And we are back in the present as Donald sits by the stream at Wiltwyck, wandering aimlessly through his bitter memories.

The narrator continues, "So Donald came to Wiltwyck; and these were the things that made him what he was. Months after he saw the last of his 'people' he was still paralyzed by his memories. There wasn't much we could do for him until he made some move, himself."

Donald's move finally comes one day when he is able to overpower his desperate terror of rejection long enough to help one of his counselors light a cigarette. From then on the story is comprised of a slow series of advances and setbacks experienced by the boy in learning to live with his memories. With the counselor's help he begins to take his place among the other boys. His lapses into the past are still frequent, but now, for the first time in his life, he feels the warmth and confidence that comes from being comforted by a friend.

But a child as desperate for affection as Donald is cannot bear to share it with others. When he sees the counselor allowing one of the other boys to light his cigarette for him, he feels betrayed again by the only friend he has ever had and he runs away from the school.

Rather than go after him immediately, the Director of the school and the psychiatrist agree to give him some time to think things out his own way. As Donald walks along the railroad track while the day grows darker and colder, he begins to see the home he'd broken his heart over for what it really is, and seeing that, accepting it, his own spirit begins to come of age. And he turns back toward the school. . .

The narration concludes, "There is no happy ending to Donald's story. The happiest thing we can say is that the worst of his loneliness, the loneliness that paralyzes and kills, is ended. We can help him now. Now that he has begun to make peace with his past, and begins to feel at home in the present, we can help him to equip himself against the future.

"That's the most we can hope to do, here at Wiltwyck, for any of the boys who lie sleeping here: to clear away some of the great harm they suffered in the difficult world they came from; to make them a little better able to take care of themselves in the difficult world they must return to:

"To keep open a place of healing, courage, and hope, for as many as we can afford to care for, among the thousands of those children who lie sleeping, tonight, in impoverished little rooms, and in poor fugitive, derelict holes, in the rotten depths of the city:

"Whom poverty, bewilderment, hunger, pride, fear and lovelessness may drive into sickness and into crime: and who, in a world which disfigures them, cannot be cared for, and are not wanted."

No person with any feeling or sensitivity who has seen this picture can escape being deeply moved by its message. It was acclaimed by many both here and abroad as the best film of the year and likened to "Shoeshine" of the Italian neorealist tradition. Mr. Agee's literate and lengthy commentary supplies clues to some of the confused thoughts which are hidden in the boy's mind in a manner which no amount of dialogue between patient and doctor in "Home of the Brave" could have equalled. Through the knowing voice of the psychiatrist who narrates the documentary, we are allowed to examine the boy's thoughts as the doctor himself has before us. And as he comments on them, through the flashback, as with Shakespeare's soliloquy, we are made to perceive the mind's confusion at firsthand.

In a delicately balanced pattern of exposition, the narration supplies the cause; the picture and sounds, the effect. While "The Quiet One" also employs dialogue,

like "Thursday's Children," it does so sparingly and then only as a means of drawing us closer into the action and forcing us to experience it as it unfolds before us. The grandmother's angry recriminations, and the mocking exchanges between Donald's mother and stepfather are examples where actual voices of the people involved are heard. Yet, since the entire picture was shot silent, and all sound was post-recorded and added later, these scenes had to be carefully planned to avoid errors in synchronization. While we are never quite conscious of it during the course of the film, we rarely see the speaker since most lines are spoken off camera or are otherwise hidden from our view.

Both "The Quiet One" and "Home of the Brave" make good use of the unique visual qualities of the motion picture medium and utilize the flashback technique as a major dramatic device. In addition each captures a mood in its photography and contrasts it with a different mood within the same picture. In "The Quiet One" the Harlem streets give a feeling of crowded filth and sleaziness which is in sharp contrast to the open freshness of nature and the feeling of hope depicted through the photography of Wiltwyck. Reversing this pattern, "Home of the Brave" presents the therapy setting (the field hospital in the Pacific) as a closed-in environment full of despair and unfriendliness, while the open beach and the jungle are visually less foreboding.

Yet, for all its attributes, dramatically speaking "The Quiet One" tends to ramble rather than build in intensity. Its commentary, while full of compassion and insight, at times draws conclusions for us instead of letting us see them occur for ourselves.

In comparing "Home of the Brave" and "The Quiet One" one major defect stands out as a common weakness in their structure. Namely, both stories suffer most from the quickness with which the basic emotional conflicts are resolved. Why does Donald finally see things in his home life for what they are? What brings about within him this necessary insight and maturity? Why does the Negro soldier now accept prejudice as a fact and adapt himself to it? What causes him to change in this way? The recognition of one's problem in psychotherapeutic treatment is merely the essential first step toward being able to accept it, to live with it or to change it. What is missing from each story is a more thorough explanation of those all-important factors within the protagonists which help them achieve this critical second step in their adjustment to life.

These inner feelings are not often literally translatable into plot action on the screen. At best they can only be hinted at on the sound track, but they are an essential element of the higher thought processes in man and must be logically presented in order to substantiate the meaning of plot action. Here again it would seem that narration (the trade-mark of the documentary approach) can fulfill a vital role more readily than conventional dialogue.

If both films suffer equally from a lack of insight into the deeper aspects of the recovery process of their heroes,²⁵ the conclusions they present after the climax has

²⁵ "The Quiet One" implies that the old-fashioned treatment of love and understanding is the sole cure for all evil. The psychiatrist in "Home of the Brave" advises the patient to keep shouting to himself, "I'm no different from anybody else."

passed are indicative of an important difference in their philosophy. "The Quiet One" makes no claim to a happy ending. Indeed, at the end of the picture it goes out of its way at some length to bring home to us the meaning behind this story. In so doing it places the ultimate responsibility not on the clinic or the doctor, but upon the parents and with society as a whole.

By contrast, the conclusion in "Home of the Brave" appears awfully pat, with the Negro headed happily for the United States accompanied by the sergeant, now his close friend and future business associate. It is somewhat doubtful if the scars of race prejudice (either the Negro's or the white sergeant's) can be healed as neatly or as briskly as the picture would have us believe.

As one observer has noted²⁶ in commenting on the two pictures, under the business man's approach to controversial film subjects, there is always the danger that concessions made in order to insure a greater box office return may distort logical action or weaken solutions to the problems in the plot. For example, in "Home of the Brave" the Negro soldier is not permitted to strike back at a white soldier who has just hit him.²⁷ The action is made to come instead from his friend, another white soldier. The danger of such distortions, minor as they may appear to us at the time, is that they are compounded a hundredfold in the annual output of the motion picture industry. For those whose steady diet consists exclusively of such fare, there is always the possibility that this distorted illusion (lifelike as it appears to us in the theater's darkness) may be confused or mistaken for the realities of life as they confront us in our real world, a world where few supermen exist, where all is not black and white and where the characteristic happy coincidences of timing are rarely experienced.

Repeating the pattern well established by the photoplay on controversial subjects, "Home of the Brave" exploits the sensationalism of its material rather than trying to treat the racial problem itself. In spite of the lofty, self-glorification and camouflage which surrounds the making of such films by Hollywood, there is an air of condescension which cannot be entirely hidden from the viewer upon deeper analysis. Few films are more illustrative of it, or of its subtlety, than "Home of the Brave," as evidenced by the superficiality with which the entire problem is dismissed. The use of the word "Nigger" on the sound track is exploited in the publicity, knowing full well it will be accepted by the nonprejudiced audience because of the context in which it is spoken, and approved by the members of a prejudiced audience as an endorsement of their own conception and viewpoint.

While we have no parallel body of audience research on the latter film, "The Quiet One" shows us the wound without commenting on its color.²⁸ Although "The Quiet One" is a story about a Negro, the word is never heard on the sound track. The Negro is representative of a child in conflict. The story is so basically human, it transcends all barriers of race or class. If the black child had been a white child it would hardly have made any difference. Without a Negro as the soldier in "Home

²⁶ Vinicius DeMoraes, "The Making of A Document; 'The Quiet One' " *HOLLYWOOD QUARTERLY* (Vol. IV, No. 4—Summer 1950) pp. 375-384.

²⁷ A taboo not finally broken until 10 years later in "The Defiant Ones," again produced by Mr. Kramer.

²⁸ DeMoraes, *ibid.*

of the Brave," much of the sensation value would have been lost. As proof of this, one need only question why, for the film, a Negro was substituted for the Jew in Laurent's Broadway version.

If "The Quiet One" proves anything, it proves quite decisively that a nonprofessional actor (or a person playing himself), under thoughtful direction is capable of portraying the most difficult things an actor must do—depict subtle character, inner states, and intangible qualities. After viewing the picture it seems impossible to believe that the boy playing the quiet one was other than himself in the situation in which he was shown. Yet, it also seems impossible that the director should get such a magnificent performance from a nonprofessional, when so much of the action was preconceived, dependent on close-ups, with a mood to be maintained throughout the film.

Why is it that "The Quiet One" may actually modify the attitude of its audience while "Home of the Brave" does little to change anyone's preconceptions? The *Time* reviewer suggests that, "like most photoplays with a weighty message, 'Home of the Brave' pays a heavy price for treating human beings as if they were clearly defined symbols in a propaganda tract."²⁹ To make a character a symbol at the expense of his believability is death in drama. But the ability to make real people symbolically meaningful is the core of the art of the documentary. The people in "The Quiet One" are real people. They arise as significant symbols as well. The "Quiet One" represents that quiet one in all of us; that part of our personality that sometimes makes it difficult for us to fit into the group. It is not merely the story of a Negro, but rather of the many people who, at one time or another, have suffered his pain, regardless of their color, or sex or age. While "Home of the Brave" focuses on a single man's story, the theme of "The Quiet One" uses Donald as a universal symbol and broadens his story to include every one of us.

While "Home of the Brave" on the surface may give one the illusion that it is attacking a social problem, as in "Crash of Silence," the real issues behind the problem are either avoided completely or merely used as a framework on which to hang the plot. As evidence of this we need only examine the issues that are raised and note where the responsibility for them has been placed. If we accept its moral, this picture would have us believe that the blame lies less with those who are bigoted and prejudiced against their fellow human beings than with the victim of the prejudice himself. In the process of psychotherapy, the arguments against discrimination get so badly jumbled up that the end result would have us believe the Negro soldier's own pent up emotional frustration is the really important villain in the picture. Small wonder the picture had something for every customer regardless of his view on the racial problem.

This observation only serves to reinforce the theory that propaganda can do little to create anything new or to counteract any strongly held opinions that already exist in a person's mind. It can only play on the feelings that are already there, utilizing whatever weaknesses or biases are currently in effect. If the content of a film supports his existing view he accepts it and thereby strengthens that attitude;

²⁹ *Time Magazine*, *op. cit.*

if it runs counter to his feelings on a subject, he can only reject it completely or rationalize it in his favor.

Herein lies one of the vital lessons to be learned from the comparison of these two motion pictures. One attempted to deal with the problem directly and only succeeded in reinforcing the existing viewpoints (both positive and negative). The other circumvented any direct contact with the racial issue, revealing instead a penetrating cross section of three generations of a family in conflict, set within a framework of reality. By diverting our attention from the color of the peoples' skins to the universality of the problem which is dramatized, we look upon the images presented on the screen not as symbols of any racial group but as fellow human beings to whom our hearts go out in emotional union. Thus, paradoxically, through the very act of omission, we are drawn closer to the people as Negroes without our being aware of them as anything other than believable, sympathetic human beings of our time.

In concluding this comparison of the plot-structured film, one cannot avoid the fact that "The Quiet One" is neither totally factual nor all contrived drama. It is a blend of actual case histories and rearranged incidents. It uses one boy to play the part of another who never existed. Yet we know that other boys like Donald do exist. We know that the rehabilitation school does exist. And the empty home life does exist, if not for Donald himself, then for the real life boys we know must be out there. Donald is but a symbol of their existence. As such he is one step removed from the reality we are shown in "Thursday's Children" but still miles apart from the fictional world of the photoplay.

The strength of the documentary, regardless of its form, lies in our knowledge of its basis in reality. Anything that causes us to question that image can entirely destroy the impact of its message. While the nonplot documentary is more spontaneous and less rigid at the cutting stage, the plot-structured film affords greater opportunity than the former for character development and for more controlled use of the symbols it employs. That the problem of maintaining credibility in the plot structure is a formidable one, however, is attested to by the relatively small number of such films that have achieved great eminence.

Part V—TOWARD A NEW UNDERSTANDING

Such a humanistic use of the cinema as exemplified by "The Quiet One" and "Thursday's Children" is reflective of documentary's underlying purpose as compared to the photoplay. We cannot help but compare ourselves to the teachers in these films, and seeing their patience and hopes and achievements, ask ourselves if we are doing as much with our own lives. Such pictures are no less human, no less dramatic because they are accurately scientific in their approach. On the contrary, overemotionalizing tends to soften reality, and drama directed exclusively toward the emotions without the support of understanding must inevitably break down in sentimentalism. It is here so often that the real root of the problem becomes lost in the fabricated one.

In its pursuit of a profit, the photoplay plays a chess game with the hidden psychological needs of its audience, with the drive for emotional security, with the reassurance of worth and with ego gratification. Love objects, our creative outlets and our sense of power and immortality are but pawns in a game to be toyed with in seducing our attention. They are the elements which are played upon by the Hollywood dramatist no less than by the Madison Avenue huckster, with little concern for the ultimate effect it may have on the consumer.

In the documentary we are asked to take a different tack than the one to which we have been conditioned. It is often far from the beaten path of conformity, but it comes closer to the true language with which film is capable of speaking. Unfortunately, a great many uninformed people have come to type the documentary exclusively as a "down beat" approach to film making. Such pictures as "The Back of Beyond," "The Titan," "Song of Ceylon," "The Saga of Sachmo," and "The Great Adventure" are but a few of the hundreds of examples to the contrary. What the uninitiated viewer fails to understand is that even in dealing with the most deplorable conditions, with the most hopelessly dismal situations, the documentary film artist is able to find somewhere within his subject something of beauty to pierce this gloom and to contrast that which now exists with what may somehow be attained through dedicated effort or through the searching of the innermost reaches of one's conscience.

It is sometimes claimed by critics of the documentary that their success is merely a matter of being at the right place at the right time with a camera. "Thursday's Children" and "The Quiet One" argue otherwise, each in their own right. For in both of them, every step forward (each school lesson for the deaf; each painfully slow triumph over rejection by Donald) is a calculated drama, and the real artistry is revealed in the painstaking care with which such films are rewritten and remade a hundred times in the cutting room.

If any broad criticism can be leveled at the documentary approach in general, and at "Thursday's Children" in particular, it is one of omission. For a question might be raised about the school itself. It is all well and good for those who are given such encouragement, but what of the others? How many deaf children are there to contend with? How many may never reach the protection and understanding of a school such as the one at Margate? It is here that the real problem lies, but for their own reasons the producers have chosen to stop short of it.

It will be said by some that it is easier to make a good film about a subject which everyone agrees on. No one is against the deaf. We are all sympathetic. Yet if we look further we can find controversy even here. For example, if the Royal School for the Deaf at Margate is a state-supported one, the issue of socialized medicine immediately rears its ugly head. If there are not enough schools for the deaf, someone is to blame. Is it the government? Is it the local community? Is it the taxpayer, reluctant to increase his indebtedness? Is it the parent who has given up hope?

If we search deep enough there is an element of controversy at the root of every human problem. As a problem it is fair game for the documentary film maker. His role is that of propagating viewpoints and shaping attitudes toward controversial

issues. To argue that propagandizing is immoral in a democratic society is no less ridiculous than to claim that free discussion of issues and the right to persuade others to one's own viewpoint is immoral and a dangerous threat to our freedom. But along with the freedom must come a sense of responsibility on the part of the persuader.

In this day and age a clear-cut conception of morality is not always easy to come by, particularly in the international sphere where what is moral or immoral would seem to depend to a great extent upon which side of the fence one is situated at any given moment. To the youth of Germany in 1936 Leni Riefenstahl's "Triumph of the Will" was truth in its essence. To the G. I. in 1942 much of the same footage incorporated into Capra's "Why We Fight" was given a far different meaning.

The threat to democracy today lies not in the expression of conflicting viewpoints, but rather in our tendency to submit to the pressure of conformity without troubling to evaluate the issues. If film helps bring these issues before the public eye then it is sharing in the responsibility of democratic society.

If there is anything certain about the future of documentary it is that it will never stand still. For as Philip Dunne has noted, it is founded on a principle as dynamic as the times in which we live; that "truth is not only stranger, but stronger than fiction."

In searching for the meaning of this elusive and much confused word we have found that the documentary's ultimate purpose is to stimulate a desire for and a widening of human knowledge in all fields. Its method: by appealing to both reason and emotion, to give a sense of participation so that the subject is not only intellectually understood, but felt by the heart. Its subject matter is drawn from all in life that is real. For in the final analysis, as Grierson has stated, the drama truest to the film medium will not be reached by imposing synthetic stories on fake or even real backgrounds, but by drawing out of life the drama that is already there.

NOTES AND DISCUSION

THE
ARCHIVES
OF
AMERICAN
ART



by
Miriam Luckner Lesley

The Archives of American Art were established six years ago in Detroit for the purpose of bringing together in one central location a comprehensive collection of documents relating to American artists in all the fields of the visual arts—painters, sculptors, craftsmen—and to others directly connected with their endeavors, such as critics, historians, dealers, as well as museums and other institutions. We are seeking to stimulate wide interest in the art of our own country and to encourage its study. Documents of all kinds are sought, even informal ones, for we feel that there is much in the daily life of the artist, quite apart from his work, which helps explain what he is and what he is trying to accomplish. Letters and diaries, of course, come first to mind. But it is remarkable to what extent a man's personality, not only as a craftsman, but as an individual, can be read from marginal notes scribbled in a commercial journal or in comments appended to business letters. Sketchbooks, with or without written notes, do much to explain the development of the man behind the picture and to give an idea of his relationship to his times.

Obviously, the creation of such a collection would be impossible if it were dependent solely on the accumulation of original materials, for the greater portion of such materials is already deposited in the libraries of museums, historical societies, and similar organizations. So we have turned to our sister institutions for cooperation in bringing together as many existing collections as possible through the medium of microfilm. This is a slow process, but we have had splendid assistance. In Philadelphia alone, for example, we were able to put on film the art records of seventeen institutions. Miss Frances Lichten and Charles Coleman Sellers combed the holdings of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the American Philosophical Society, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and others for documentary material, with the result that 85,000 frames of microfilm on ninety rolls are now deposited in Detroit. The response to this pilot project was so immediate and enthusiastic that a second project was started in New York under the supervision of Miss Bartlett Cowdrey. Today, after six years' work,

we have accumulated an impressive amount of material from public institutions such as the New York Public Library, as well as from many dealers' galleries and private collections. At the New York Public Library, we have already filmed the collections of the Manuscript Division, the Prints Division and the Art Division and are now working on the entire collection of American art auction catalogues.

Already the results of our efforts are beginning to be felt. Recently, for example, we were able to supply a Midwestern museum director with comprehensive material, for which he would otherwise have had to write to seven different sources. (These included records of the former Macbeth Gallery, the Rehn Gallery, the Vose Gallery, the Kraushaar Galleries, the Downtown Gallery, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the private papers of Abraham Walkowitz and Max Weber.) The saving in time, travel expense, as well as correspondence is readily apparent.

Another example is the single roll of film on which we have recorded the correspondence, sketchbooks, pamphlets and clippings relating to Lyonel Feininger; all these materials have quite literally come from all over the world. One sketchbook and much of the original correspondence are now in our own collection. Several hundred letters were loaned for filming by a boyhood friend of the artist who now lives in Florida, and the remaining letters and sketches were borrowed from yet another friend, over ninety years old, who sent them to us from New South Wales. The records were used by Hans Hess, a German scholar who now lives in England, for his book *Feininger*, published in Stuttgart in 1959.

Microfilm, however, is more than a convenient tool. As Dean Virginia C. Gildersleeve pointed out in a recent article in the *Saturday Review*, we are in imminent danger of becoming the "lost half-century" as far as written records are concerned because of the inferior quality of the paper on which our books, newspapers and other documents are printed. Frequently records of all kinds come to us in such deplorable condition that they must be pasted together like mosaics on plain sheets of paper in order that none of the text be lost. These crumbling specimens are not always the oldest. In fact, our eighteenth and early nineteenth century material is in a far better state of preservation than that which dates from the past century, when wood pulp paper was used extensively. Since the major part of the original holdings in the Archives of American Art belongs to the middle and late nineteenth century, we are faced with a very real problem. Our solution has been to microfilm collections as soon as possible after they are received. In some cases a collection will be big enough to film as a unit, but generally we wait until there is sufficient material for a roll of about a thousand frames, each frame roughly corresponding to one page of printed matter. In this manner we not only preserve valuable material, but we also provide a serviceable working copy that can be readily handled by any number of students without detriment to the original.

Because there are comparatively few books on the subject of American art, the role of ephemeral material in a library or research collection assumes a greater importance than it would perhaps otherwise deserve. These are holdings with no intrinsic value in terms of age or beauty of workmanship and in most cases are of interest solely for the information which they contain. They include pam-

phlets, clippings, business records, photographs, and gallery literature of all types whether from art museums, dealers' galleries, or art societies. Whatever their form, they are filed and catalogued with care.

We build up our files in still another way by including current correspondence. In many cases our total information on an artist or subject may be found in letters of inquiry. Requests are constantly coming to the Archives for information regarding painters about whom no records can be found in published works. Frequently there are accompanying photographs of the artist's work of art. Every scrap of this sort is carefully hoarded because of its possible value in establishing the chronological span and geographical area of a man's artistic career.

In order to encourage scholarly work in the field of American art we are attempting to keep a file of theses in progress in the visual arts of this country on both the master and the doctoral level. Lists of these studies, which are being published regularly in the *Art Quarterly*, are kept in our catalogue with entries made under the name of the scholar and the subject of his work. In this manner we hope to help students to avoid duplication and overlapping of effort. There is a benefit to us as well, for we can keep abreast of the work being done in art history and thus become aware of future sources and authorities in the field.

In addition to recording America's past in the field of art, the Archives are vitally interested in history in the making. Outstanding contemporary artists such as William Zorach, Paul Manship, Edward Hopper, Max Weber and Abraham Walkowitz are interviewed in their studios and tape recordings are made of their responses. The interviews are informal with the intention of evoking opinions, attitudes, and recollections that might not ordinarily find their way into formal biography. Artists have cooperated wholeheartedly, not only giving generously of their time, but many also have allowed us to sort and film their correspondence, sketchbooks and other papers in our endeavor to obtain a well-rounded picture.

All this material is available for study in Detroit, free of charge, to all serious scholars. Under certain circumstances film can be borrowed on the same principle as interlibrary loan books with a nominal charge to cover the costs of postage and handling. In the instances where the material is restricted, we are careful to obtain permission from the institutions or individuals holding the original material before copies are issued. Tape recordings will be available for use in the Detroit headquarters only.

A complete research library is an essential to the scholar, and we are fortunate, indeed, to have our headquarters in the excellent Research Library of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Here we are able to share their basic resources. In exchange, books received as gifts or purchased by the Archives are turned over to the Institute's library for cataloguing and shelving with their collection.

Unlike many organizations of this scope, the Archives of American Art does not have a large subsidy supporting its day-to-day operations. With one significant exception our activities have been largely financed by donations from friends in Detroit and New York.

Recently, however, the Ford Foundation presented us with a grant to undertake a survey of the *Role of the Creative Arts In American Civilization*. Mr.

William E. Woolfenden will be in charge. Dr. E. P. Richardson, Director of the Archives, has said:

The arts are one of the most eloquent and at the same time one of the least understood expressions of the imagination, the emotions and the aspirations of the American people. They form a body of evidence of great importance to historians and sociologists, as well as to students of art, in understanding American civilization. The new program will be a broad investigation of the uses of the arts in the understanding of American civilization, past and present.

Historians of the various arts, general historians, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, journalists, archivists, museum curators, curators of historical collections, special librarians, and practicing artists in all the fields will be involved in the investigation. The Ford Foundation Survey will make possible the holding of conferences on general and specific topics relating to the role of the arts in American life, and the awarding of special research grants for investigation of particular subjects.

It is difficult to overestimate the value of an organization such as ours. Everywhere in this field terrible destruction has gone on in the last hundred years. As Geoffrey Grigson said in the introduction to his *Samuel Palmer*, "If I may end with a plea, it is this: that more care should be taken to preserve all the various documents which show how and why artists lived and painted. . . . The sacrosanctitude which preserves all the letters and diaries of authors does not seem to extend to artists, who are not just creatures with eyes and easels." Grigson was referring specifically to what has happened in England. But the situation is even more pertinent in this country today.

UNIVERSITY ADULT EDUCATION IN THE ARTS

The Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults has recently published a comprehensive descriptive analysis of adult arts programs in American universities entitled *University Adult Education in the Arts* (72 pp. \$1). Written by Freda Goldman of the Center staff, the report is based on a national survey made with cooperation of the arts committee of the National University Extension Association.

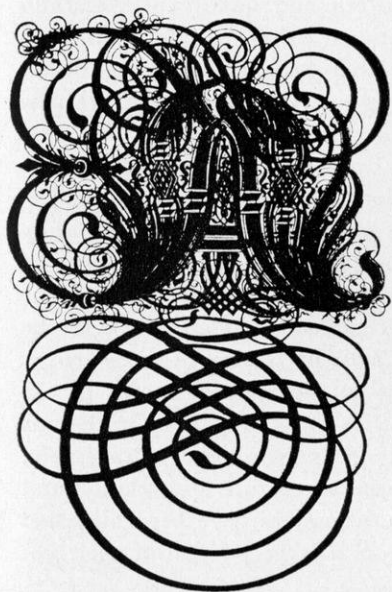
The major portion of the book is devoted to a listing and analysis of program prototypes in the arts. Many of these are singularly imaginative and effective, demonstrating that art education for adults has begun to develop strong roots in our universities.

In her final chapter the author points out, however, that there are some inexplicable blank spots and missed opportunities, underscoring a lack of consistency and thoughtful direction in the field as a whole. She asks some probing questions:

1. Are universities failing to provide adequately for appropriate study in *each* of the art forms?
2. Are universities failing to make the fullest use of the University's own peculiar resources for the enrichment of art programs?
3. Are universities neglecting the rich potential for educational effectiveness in promoting cooperative ventures with the other community agencies engaged in adult art activities?
4. Has the emphasis on reaching a wide audience distracted the universities from the need also to reach those who can become specialists?

Perhaps the most pithy section of the book lies in her delineation of the university's unique resources for a significant role in art stimulation and education: (a) a variety of experts are available on the faculty, including both scholars and practicing artists; (b) only in a university setting are the arts brought together, so that it is possible to call on the different media, across department lines, for help in understanding art; (c) the university can offer programs at specialized levels without violating the democratic principle—it does not have to be a mass educator; (d) with its combination of resources and competence, and its generally accepted position in the society, the university is in a peculiarly favorable position to launch and to train leaders for the field as a whole; (e) the university can be a "patron" of the arts, offering support without too many controls and limitations; and (f) the university can do much needed research on the nature of art education.

There is critical need for discussion, research, and survey in the area of art education for adults. Freda Goldman's book is not only an extremely valuable overview of present-day activity, but also a graphic projection of the challenge and potential.



The University of Wisconsin Extension Division is planning a national arts conference for June 8-10, 1962 at Wingspread, the Frank Lloyd Wright designed conference facility of the Johnson Foundation. Working with the cooperation of a number of agencies, the University hopes to bring together outstanding leaders in the arts for an exploration of the concept of the regional art center, as one putative solution to the ills and tensions besetting the arts.

Since *Arts in Society* will be publishing the papers, talks, summary of discussion and recommendations in issue 7 (Fall, 1962), we thought our readers might be interested in seeing the following Statement of Aims of the Wingspread Conference:

W I N G S P R E A D

C O N F E R E N C E O N T H E A R T S

The extensive proliferation of amateur art activity across America is a unique phenomenon of our decade, and most experts expect an ever-greater acceleration of such interest and participation as increased leisure and the other manifold benefits of an affluent society become more widespread.

It is a time of both opportunity and crisis for the arts in America. With imaginative and vigorous leadership we might well move a long way toward the long-envisioned ideal of a humanistic, mature culture; without it we could easily see a continuing debasement of the arts into mediocrity.

In a free and democratic society men are taught to believe that the fine and beautiful things of life are within the reach of all. The great danger is that they are therefore inclined to believe that what lies within the reach of all is *ipso facto* fine and beautiful.

There is, of course, an increasing awareness of this problem of maintaining standards, and many organizations and agencies in American life are now attempting to enrich and bolster the arts. Working on a variety of levels, with varying goals and out of varying motivations and premises, they represent in the aggregate a massive organizational potential, which through common effort and leadership could conceivably effect fundamental changes in the pattern and quality of American cultural life. At present, however, these organizational efforts are hobbled by a number of factors: insularity, lack of clearly articulated goals, and, to a significant extent, the intense concentration and pooling of high level artistic talent, leadership, and endeavor in a single metropolitan area of this country—New York City and its environs.

While undoubtedly an economic necessity under present patterns of organization, this arts concentration has become one of the prime deterrents to the healthy development of the arts in America. It has bred a host of evils: (a) the wedding of the best artistic talent to highly speculative commercial patterns of exploitation; (b) an intense competition for one relatively small audience while the rest of the country hungers for top-level artistic experience; (c) the narrowing of those artistic expressions available to the more general audience to the machine molds of the mass media; and possibly (d) the creation of a rootless corps of artists. On the one hand, an increasingly art-conscious America strongly lacks the guidance, leadership, and example it desperately needs for the development of mature appreciation and understanding; and on the other hand, the artists themselves have been alienated from the sources of their inspiration, as well as from a large portion of their potential audiences.

One of the significant developments for the administration of the arts in this country is the evolving Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City. In terms of its architectural beauty, its modern, well-equipped plants and schools, its unparalleled resources of talent and subsidy, the Center cannot but serve as a magnificent symbol of the highest aspirations of American art. The ultimate validity of this symbol, however, is inevitably related to the development of dynamic regional ties, for while it is obviously vital to support the very best in the arts, it is equally vital, for the sake of the arts themselves, to insure that their practice and appreciation at the highest possible levels be disseminated widely through the entire country.

With the promise of the Lincoln Center, the concept of the *regional art center* has increasingly engaged the interest of art leaders and spokesmen. Focal point of high-level art activity and art leadership located in strategic places around the country might well provide the necessary influence and example to develop and to maintain the highest standards of art. Further, they might permit a more salutary development of artistic talent, and in addition provide wider opportunity for the nourishment of the arts in terms of the dimension, color, vitality, and spirit of American life.

But what is the basic philosophy on which a regional art center must be predicated? Should such a center be thought of as more than just a building, or an organizational hierarchy, or a collection of artists? Is it actually *a set of conditions* that permit the arts to function at their highest and most effective levels in any given community? If so, what are these conditions? How can they be induced?

There are no fully wrought examples upon which to construct an ideal model. The concept must perhaps always be a projection toward an ideal. We can, however, examine significant art expressions around the country which point the way toward definition and understanding. Some examples are: the Cincinnati Institute of Fine Arts, "the Detroit Adventure," "the Louisville arts renaissance," the Stratford (Ontario) Shakespearean Festival, the Actors' Workshop in San Francisco, the Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa.

Recently in the Midwest we have had the opportunity to become acquainted with the Tyrone Guthrie-Oliver Rea plan for a regional professional repertory theatre for the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Here in Wisconsin efforts have lately been made by the University Extension Division to develop a State of Wisconsin symphony orchestra to be made up of some of the country's outstanding musicians. It is hoped that such an orchestra might be jointly affiliated with both the University at Madison and Milwaukee, and be available for touring the entire region.

The University of Wisconsin Extension Division has a long history of endeavors in developing regional art activity. Many of its programs in art, music, drama, and creative writing have in fact represented pioneering efforts on the part of a major educational institution to contribute directly to the cultural life of its community. It can perhaps be asserted that Wisconsin's unique tradition and experience in this area of adult education offers a wide opportunity for an intensive exploration of the concept of a regional art center.

But such an exploration must first be predicated upon the fullest sense of the problems and tensions now besetting the arts across America, and upon a survey of the resources available for their promotion. It is felt that there would be great value in a national arts conference which would provide an opportunity for a searching inquiry into the methods of developing regional art centers in the United States as a putative solution to these problems.

Toward that end, The University of Wisconsin Extension Division in cooperation with the Johnson Foundation is sponsoring such a Conference June 8-10, 1962 at Wingspread, the conference facility of the Johnson Foundation near Racine, Wisconsin.

Agencies assisting in the planning and implementation of the Conference include the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, the Arts Center of Boston University, the Arts Committee of the National University Extension Association, and the Wisconsin Arts Foundation and Council.

Adult Education in the Visual Arts

A selected bibliography of books and periodicals compiled by the staff of The University of Wisconsin Extension Library.

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THE CONTRIBUTORS

The Honorable Abraham Ribicoff, Secretary of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D. C.

Eric Salmon, producer-director of *Theatre Outlook*, a professional English theatrical company.

John Reich, a theatrical director, playwright, and teacher; Head of the Goodman Memorial Theatre and School, of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Rod Serling, a celebrated television dramatist; currently producer and writer of "The Twilight Zone," a weekly anthology series on television.

Felix Pollak, Curator of Rare Books at The University of Wisconsin Library; in charge of the little magazine collection, and has recently received a research grant to collaborate on a book about the little magazines with Frederick Hoffman, whose article "Little Magazines and the Avant-Garde" appeared in the last issue of *Arts in Society*.

Carl Bode, a member of the Department of English of the University of Maryland; has written widely in the area of cultural history, and is a former cultural attache of the American Embassy to Great Britain.

Bernard Pyron, a graduate student at The University of Wisconsin. He is himself a potter.

Edmund B. Feldman, Chairman of the Division of Art, State University of New York, College at New Paltz. His article, "On the Necessity of Fusing Two Views of Culture," appeared in the Winter, 1959 issue of *Arts in Society*.

Marvin P. Halverson, Executive Director, Department of Worship and the Arts, of the National Council of Churches.

Max Kaplan, director of The Arts Center, of the School of Fine and Applied Arts at Boston University; a nationally known authority on sociology of the arts.

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