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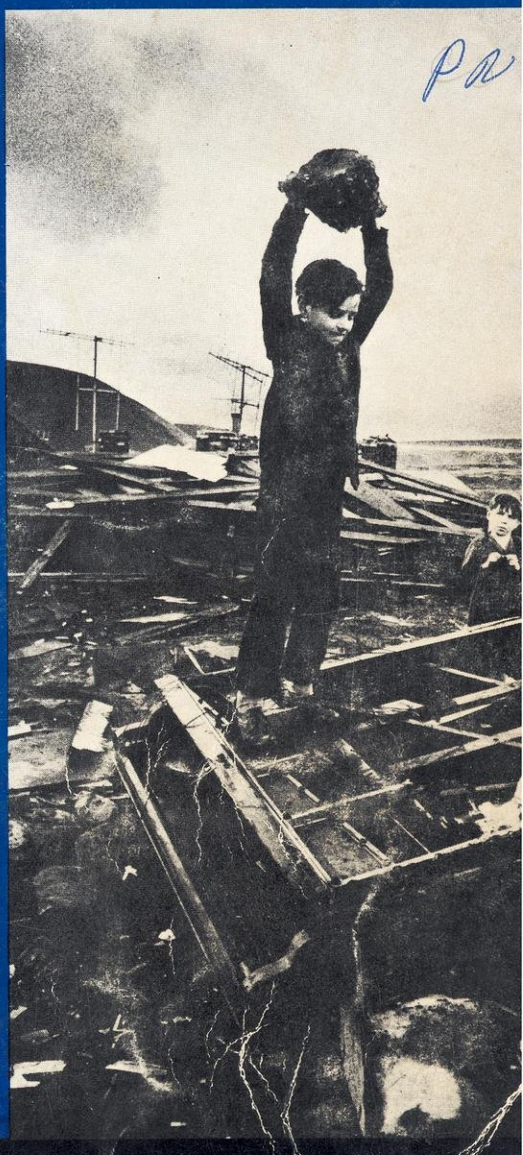

ARTS IN SOCIETY

THE AVANT-GARDE TODAY

Philip Griffiths, England, **Children in a South Wales Village,** 1962

(From the **Photography 63** exhibition sponsored by the George Eastman House. A portfolio of photographs from this exhibition is reproduced on pages 228-234 of this issue.)

ARTS IN SOCIETY

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

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

Manuscripts should be sent to Edward L. Kamarck, Editor, ARTS IN SOCIETY, The University of Wisconsin, Extension Building, Madison, Wisconsin 53706. Books for review should be directed to the same address.

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The Avant-Garde Today

Book Reviews

Notes and Discussion

The past is prologue—a backward glance at the culture capers of the Twenties

LOVE AND LAUGHTER: SURREALISM REAPPRAISED*

by roger shattuck

I

After the Great Peace in Europe, nearly half a century of it, the Great War laid bare the purblind self-interest lodged at the core of Western civilization. The twin institutions of capitalism and the nation state had divided the continent against itself in the tricky game of alliances, and finally marched everybody off singing into the bloodiest conflict in history. No one believed it possible; yet there was no alternative. (We have not yet buried that reasoning.) Then, after the Great War came the Great Shock—a profound organic reaction that convulsed the entire system with vomiting, manic attacks, and semi-collapse. The situation was so serious that the powerful serum of prosperity had to be administered to revive the patient. In such cases one does not talk of cure.

One of the major symptoms of that Great Shock was the enlargement and partial extrusion of an already existing growth called the *avant-garde.* For a time, while Paris newspapers tried to maintain a conspiracy of silence toward the young upstarts, the growth was believed to be malignant; in the Twenties and Thirties one encounters scattered attempts to remove the tumor by public reproof and prison sentences. Our common assumption today that the formation was benign after all and has been reabsorbed into the organism still needs to be examined and justified. Did the culture capers of the Twenties have the healthy effect of catharsis? Have we sublimated those urges into new art forms and social expressions? Or were they merely ineffectual and harmless? A new round of histories, studies, editions, and exhibits of Dada and Surrealist works all over the world makes it not easier but harder than ever to find a straight answer.

The currently accepted usage of "Surrealist" to designate something crazy, dreamlike, and funny, strikes surprisingly close to the truth. The public carries the vague image of a widespread artistic hoax that embraced truly depraved mental tendencies and went on to shout and swagger its way into a successful snob cult. In recent years, we have been more troubled than amused to see the whole bag of tricks spill over easily into the advertising culture and to watch the aging participants stand up and call each other's bluff. In stricter and safer usage, Surrealism refers to literary-artistic activity that centered in Paris in the Twenties and profoundly affected two generations of poets and painters in Europe. Beyond this point, any concurrence of opinion on the nature and significance of Surrealism goes to pieces. Ex-members and competent critics cannot agree even whether the movement was essentially pessimistic or optimistic in the face of decaying values; whether it represented a brilliantly planned fraud designed

*This essay is adapted from Mr. Shattuck's introduction to the first English edition of Maurice Nadeau's *Histoire du Surréalisme,* which the Macmillan Company will publish in August 1965 under the title *The History of Surrealism.*

to promote the interests of its leaders or a courageous attempt to reach a higher level of sincerity on which to start living all over again; and whether it deserves a significant place in modern intellectual history or should dwindle into a mere blip on the graph of literary currents. I happen to believe that real importance attaches to the estimate we now make of Surrealism. Like progressive education and pacifism, it lies close to the center of our immediate heritage; we ignore those matters at our own peril. To form any sound opinion of Surrealism, we must pick our way through a thick haze of theory, social campaigning, and cultural propaganda (much of it fascinating) before reaching its lasting contribution to the arts.

The membership likes to represent the founding of the movement as a galactic event similar to those cited to explain the formation of solar systems. From Switzerland, from Germany, from New York, from Spain, from the near and distant spaces of literary history, a collection of supercharged particles converged at high speed on Paris around 1920. There they fused and spun and split in an intense period of some five years until the explosion moved powerfully outward again, scattering its energies in all directions and imposing a new arrangement upon everything that lay in the path of its shock waves. Of course, no such cosmic event ever took place outside the minds of a few zealots. But it is true that Surrealism reverberated more deeply and widely than any movement since Symbolism. The question is: why?

In its sixty-year international exposition of the arts since *la belle époque,* Paris has welcomed Impressionism, Symbolism, Fauvism, Futurism, Cubism, Dada, Surrealism, Expressionism, Existentialism, and many more. Yet it is high time we perceive the remarkably clear line that connects the impish figure of Jarry in 1896, calmly saying *merdre* (shite) to bourgeois culture, with Camus, the impassioned humanist who wanted to bring all the black sheep back into the fold. In Europe a fierce debate still smolders about who started it all. Were the Dada activities of 1916 in Zurich, New York, and Barcelona the origins of postwar protest and subversion? Had Jarry and Apollinaire and the Futurists set it all in motion many years earlier? It would be nice to know, but these discussions should not distract us from observing what is slowly coming into sight: a sustained artistic adventure extending from 1885 to 1939 and reaching a paroxysm of public demonstration in the Twenties. The name, "Age of Surrealism," has already been proposed for the years between wars, and there is some basis for picking Surrealism as the epitome of the artistic schools. It lasted longer than the others, attracted (and repelled) a great variety of talent, pounded its drums loud and long, and spread its roots into philosophy, science, and social action.

In a book called *The Banquet Years,* I examined the origins of the *avant-garde* in France in the light of several central characteristics: the cult of childhood, humor as a major discipline, direct use of unconscious and dream materials, acknowledgment of the essential ambiguity of experience, and the unpolished style of juxtaposition that suited those preoccupations. In order to see the modernist movement whole, as a development reaching at least up to Existentialism and possibly as far as the *nouveau roman,* three items at least should be added. The ancient problem of identity and nonbeing comes more and more to the fore in Surrealist prospecting of the unconscious and in Sartre's circular self of the *pour-soi.* The problem of the artist's social commitment has reasserted itself with a vengeance after the 19th-century partial retreat to art for art's sake. And, following long official banishment, pure chance has won its way back into the repertory of compositional techniques. I think we can regard the past

eighty or so years in the arts, particularly in France, not as a series of islands with names ending in *ism,* but as forming a still little-explored continent whose jagged coastline we have begun to leave astern without knowing whether the land is habitable. In particular, we have never established the topography and resources of the promontory called Surrealism around which we were sailing for so many years.

II

> *Surrealism was not a literary school. It was above all a common ground and meeting place for young petit-bourgeois intellectuals particularly aware of the futility of every activity expected of them by their background and their era.*
>
> (Roger Vailland, *Le Surrealisme contre la revolution*)

Vailland's observations are accurate, except the first sentence. Surrealism was one of the most highly disciplined and tightly organized artistic schools that ever existed. The first tremors occurred in the form of a series of encounters between individual writers and painters during the first World War: Breton and Vaché in a mental hospital in Nantes; Duchamp and Picabia in New York; Tzara and Huelsenbeck and Arp in Zurich. When they all reached Paris around 1919, the superinduced yet effective high jinks of Dada opened with the blessings of established writers like Valéry and Gide and Jacques Riviére. The easiest way to follow the splintered course of Dada into Surrealism and its vagaries is in the published reviews and in the manifestos with which they punctuated their progress from time to time. The wildest gestures never shake free of troublesome self-consciousness, for both groups were highly aware of not wanting to crash literary history as just another school, and of being engaged in activities that would carry them to exactly that civilized fate. For better or for worse, almost every curse and obscenity was recorded. The review *Littérature* founded by Aragon, Breton, and Soupault in March, 1919, remained a sober and even distinguished publication for some six months before it began to feel its oats. From 1920 to 1922 the "construction of the ruins" by Dada demolition teams existed side by side with an increasingly ambitious attempt to find new channels for the creative mind in dream states. The celebrated disputes and polemics of 1921 over the proposed "International Congress for the Determination of the Directives and the Defense of the Modern Spirit" widened the split in the Dada group. Three years later Surrealism found its name, declared its intentions in the First Manifesto, founded a "Surrealist Research Bureau," and set out under shared leadership, with Breton rapidly taking moral and executive control. (Before long he had earned the unofficial title of Pope of Surrealism.)

The external and internal history of Surrealism from here on throws up a series of personal quarrels, experiments, fruitful collaborations, corporate decisions, posturings, mutual backscratching, and incidents of minor gangsterism, of which the written accounts give only a muted version. All this is nothing new in the history of French artistic movements. But the constant cross fire should not obscure the fact that the

Surrealists formed the first important group of artists since the Romantics to attempt political action in order to improve society. Here lies the basic cause of many disputes from about 1925, when the first temptation was felt to join the Communist party, until the early Thirties, when Breton carried a slightly dwindled group out of reach of the party. The years between had put the Surrealists in the curious position of entering the party at the moment of its greatest intellectual slackness. The cream of its membership had just defected as Trotskyites, and not until the early Thirties under Thorez did the Communists again display real concern with culture and the intellectuals. The uneasy period of "collaboration" between 1927 and 1935, in which the Surrealists yielded little of their independence of action and proved unassimilable in any local cell, was also the period of their most active literary and artistic production. They wished to "change life" as Rimbaud had declared, but they could not stop producing literary works as well. The highly successful international Surrealist exhibition in 1938, instead of preparing a new departure for the group and significant political association with Trotskyism, now appears to mark the end of the movement proper. Granted, the aftermath has been singularly lively. But since 1939 it is the shadow of Surrealism that has been lengthening, not its stature.

Not because anyone can at last set the record straight, but rather because certain events, even in seriously conflicting versions, divulge a good deal about the integrity and audacity of Surrealism, I should like to examine two *causes célèbres* that involve leaders of the group. Around 1920 when the future Surrealists were still demonstrating happily with the Dada group, they gathered frequently in a café called the Certá near the Opéra. Toward the end of one meeting, they discovered that the waiter had forgotten his wallet, containing the day's tips, on a bench close by. As was inevitable in that era of gratuitous acts and against-the-grain behavior, they filched the wallet, carried it off to another café, and argued violently over whether they could practice their liberated morality at the expense of a poor hard-working waiter. Principles were at stake. Finally Eluard was appointed to keep the wallet until a final decision could be reached the following day. On his own initiative, Eluard returned it anonymously to the waiter. At the next meeting everyone attacked him bitterly for having acted without a collective decision and for having turned his back on the new morality. At least so Ribémont-Dessaignes tells it. But the first appearance of his version (*Nouvelle Revue Française,* July 1931) provoked four excoriating replies: from Aragon (who signed *"salutations communistes"*), Guiseppe Ungaretti (who added the expletive "fascist" after his signature), Tzara (who rejected the entire article as a distortion), and Eluard. He maintained that the facts were completely different: he had originally stolen the wallet from a priest, brought his booty to the Certá so that the group could consider his action, and following the discussion presented the priest's wallet to the waiter as a deserving beneficiary. Many later accounts quote the Ribémont-Dessaignes version as accurate and show no knowledge of Eluard's rebuttal. It does not require too much courage to call Claudel and the Prefect of Police and the French army foul names in print; stealing a trivial sum from a waiter in one's habitual café tests a more sensitive set of reflexes and scruples. Such a gratuitous act surely does violence to our selves and our souls. Yet should we believe Eluard and see the incident as a charitable prank in the tradition of Robin Hood and his merry men? As soon as one pursues some of these anecdotes beyond the accepted version, one touches troubled individuals vacillating before decisions they have forced upon themselves. Matthew Josephson, in his lively book of gossip,

Life Among the Surrealists, makes a good number of revelations between the lines about the way the Surrealists sustained their honor. They seemed to put themselves on a perpetual dare. Yet Josephson concludes a few pages describing "dapper dans" like Aragon and Soupault by exclaiming over their simple humanity. "Sometimes we even played tennis!"

A far more publicized event concerns the prolonged gymnastics that finally carried Aragon, one of its staunchest spirits, out of the Surrealist group. In 1930 he traveled to Moscow and there signed documents and made statements that clearly compromised his former views on morality and psychoanalysis. Aragon also composed *Red Front,* a shrill polemic poem attacking the bourgeois regime in France and calling for assassination as the proper response to repression. On returning to Paris he turned his coat once again, reaffirmed his Surrealist convictions, and accepted the loyal support of Breton who was circulating a petition in defense of *Red Front.* The government finally dropped its charge of incitement to assassination against Aragon. Then, within a few months, he did a third about-face and joined the Communists to stay. Nadeau's straightforward account of "the Aragon affair" leaves many things unexplained. In his volume of *Interviews,* Breton takes a surprisingly magnanimous position by suggesting that the two prime motives for Aragon's trip to Russia were not really political. He had just fallen under the spell of the Russian woman who was to become his wife, Elsa Triolet, Miakovsky's sister-in-law. Furthermore, Breton points out, a fellow Surrealist, Georges Sadoul, anxious to flee the country so as to escape a three-year prison sentence for sedition, urged Aragon to accept Elsa Triolet's suggestion that the three of them go to Russia. Roger Garaudy, Aragon's semi-official biographer, approaches the same events by speaking of "the contradiction he carried within him"—namely between dialectic materialism and Surrealist idealism. The ensuing events, with their unaccountable zigzags from one side of the street to the other, convince Garaudy of the profound moral crisis Aragon was undergoing at the time. In referring to the affair in one of his essays, Sartre lights on Breton's defense of *Red Front* as the most revealing aspect of the whole story. (Breton's petition declares Aragon not personally answerable to the penal code, because a poet is merely the "objective interpreter" of the struggle around him. Sartre dismisses that defense of what he considers a probably inflammatory work written by a responsible person.) So we wade into the events with little certainty of what truly happened and having to pick our significances with the utmost care. And we wonder if we will ever strike a clear principle or theme that guided the movement through twenty years of complex evolution.

III

For a long time I have felt the need to distinguish two contrasting ways of grasping experience. On the one hand, a deep-seated continuity appears to link all things and all events and to lend them a significance that provokes our wonder. Whether this continuity is seen as material or ideal, magical or rational, it fills us with a sense of being able to reckon with life; we shall always be able finally to relate one segment to another if we possess the patience and the insight and the energy to enter fully into the world within our reach. On the other hand, we frequently reach the point at which the routine, falsity, and injustice of life inflict on us a feeling of sense-

lessness; things happen without any evident explanation beyond unceasing temporal sequence. In this vision of the world no meaning attaches to events and things, and any effort at insight or sympathy ends in despair. To fill the void we may assign arbitrary meanings to familiar objects and actions, but such meanings shrivel up and die under our very eyes. Life never holds its savor. In the first view, everything has significance; the world is filled and its parts held in place by connections. (Leonardo said he could literally see them, "Lines crossing and interweaving.") In the second view, nothing has structure or significance; the world barely holds its own against collapse.

Radical as this distinction may appear, it will be very hard to keep it in sight. A few examples will first still, then trouble the waters. In their very massiveness, the fully fleshed-out universes of Dickens and Balzac represent the first vision of life; even a vast conspiracy of opposing forces gives substance and excitement to the hero's struggle to establish himself. The word I would plant here as incorporating this attitude toward life is *destiny:* a sense of personal fulfillment (or failure) in an arena of events where one earns one's place. Now consider the vastly different medium of, say, Céline's *Voyage to the End of Night* or Camus' *Stranger* or Kafka's *The Trial.* They narrate (though it may not at first appear so) just as great a quantity of occurrences, but with no sense of their accumulating into a personal destiny, a meaningful life. The word that belongs here is *chance:* blind accident working as the minimal propulsive force between one instant and the next but never bestowing meaning on happenings thus touched off. But too clean a discrimination here unsettles us. I should contend that our current usage of the word *fate* (with its quirks, its ironies, and its justice) retains both these meanings. We usually leave the ambiguity undisturbed because we sense that it belongs.*

The precariousness of my original distinction is by now evident. Either one of these attitudes remains in danger of flipping over into its opposite. In fact, a plausible definition of art consists in saying that it is an extraction of one out of the other: Baudelaire distilling flowers from evil, Dostoevsky finding despair in the deepest impulses of charity and love. Nevertheless, we would do well to hold onto the distinction as forming something like the grain of experience. Most of us are disposed to regard one of these two directions as the true one, just as in any reciprocal action, like that of a piston or eyes reading a page or a comb arranging hair, one movement does the work and the return movement prepares a new stroke. Thus we usually assimilate and store experience so that it shows a grain and a direction pointing toward meaningful destiny or empty accident. The genius of artists we call classic, like Homer and Shakespeare, is to have worked so deep into the fabric of life as to expose both directions. They make us feel blind chance dogging conscious effort at every turn.

It is in this perspective, I believe, that we can make some sense of Surrealism without distorting it. For one of the few values that remained at the center of Surrealist thinking was "objective chance," or more loosely, coincidence. Poets have always lingered over accidents, chance occurrences, whims, and hunches, moments that appear

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*We also use the word *lot* in this sense. "My lot in life" implies a destiny determined by a game of chance. A few hours after writing the above lines I stumbled across this sentence in Henry Miller's *The Wisdom of the Heart:* "I mention this only as an example of the strange fatality by which two men of kindred spirit are brought together."

to break the pattern of events. Their anomalous randomness deprives them of meaning, yet their singularity fills them with heightened significance and even ominousness.

You are driving slowly at night up the ramp of an elevated highway in a Texas town, recalling with amusement a letter in which a friend inquired how local customs have survived in the "Wild West." A huge luminous shape materializes against the black sky and suddenly looms up right next to the car. A harsh scraping noise reaches you from all directions at once. The moving mass of colors comes into focus as a giant cowboy in full regalia; he whirls, draws, and fires a rapid burst from his pistol point blank at the car—and disappears. A child in the back of the car screams and hides its head; an older child observes calmly, "Let's park right here and watch the rest of it." And as you swing onto the thruway, the screen shows a wide arid plain in the middle of which two horsemen are raising plumes of dust as they whip their horses into a seemingly motionless and silent chase.

You start up from a catnap in your chair with a sentence etched in your mind. A hairspring of motivation leads you to note it down before it fades: "Laughing incidentals of hoarhound drops plumped for the king."

> The opening night of Apollinaire's *Couleur du Temps,* at the Conservatoire Reneé Maubel, while I was talking in the balcony with Picasso, a young man came up to me, mumbled a few words, and finally blurted out that he had taken me for one of his friends reported killed in the action. Naturally, we let it go at that. A while later, through Jean Paulhan, I began corresponding with Paul Eluard without our having the slightest idea of one another's physical appearance. He came to see me during one of his furloughs: he is the person who approached me during Apollinaire's play.
>
> (André Breton, *Nadja*)

What significance, if any, should we attach to such occasions? Normally we dismiss them, laugh them off, or at most mention them to a friend as a curiosity and then forget them. The tiny epiphany of involuntary memory around which Proust spun out the three thousand pages of his novel bears a considerable resemblance to these occurrences. The difference is, he did not dismiss it but faced around and entered it like a secret opening in the fabric of ordinary experience. The Surrealists went even further. Driven by extreme inquisitiveness and self-imposed daring, they dropped everything else and affirmed these moments as the only true reality, as expressive of both the randomness and the hidden order that surrounds us.

Thus *Surreality.* In his book of *Interviews,* Breton states flatly that objective chance ("which is nothing else than the geometric locus of these coincidences" and whose importance he tracks down in Engels' writing) constitutes "the problem of problems" because it embodies the relationship of necessity and freedom. To create a life entirely made up of such startling coincidences would be to attain Surreality. And that appears to be exactly what Philippe Soupault was attempting in his behavior during the early days: to induce coincidences. He asked people at random in the street where Philippe Soupault lived, proposed that everybody switch drinks in the cafés he entered, opened his umbrella on sunny days and offered to escort the first attractive woman that came along. In an era of the long hangover, there remains something not only courageous but even touching in this effort to draw out objective chance,

the most reticent of creatures. Most Surrealist narratives like *Le Paysan de Paris* and *Nadja* (often mistermed "novels") simply relate a quest for reality and freedom in coincidence without any effort to transpose the quotidian into fiction. Apollinaire's mysterious wanderings into neglected quarters of Paris set a precedent for this "automatic life." Any illumination of de Chirico's or Magritte's painting must begin in this realm of casual fatality.

Unfortunately, most accounts of Surrealism have accepted as authoritative Breton's grandiloquent pronouncement that opens the Second Manifesto; it gives a far more transcendental ring to Surreality than what I have described or than the handy "definitions" released in the First Manifesto. The Surrealists, Breton states in the later document, strive to attain a "mental vantage point (*point de l'esprit*) from which life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, communicable and incommunicable, high and low, will no longer be perceived as contradictories." The Pope, even speaking *ex cathedra,* can be wrong. What finally comes clear, when one examines both the extended antics of the outward movement and the significant works of poetry and painting, is that the contradictions have been accepted and exploited, much as in contemporary music previously forbidden intervals have emerged as the basis of a new harmony. The excitement of the Surrealist object or work is its attempt, not to obliterate or climb higher than the big contradictions, but to stand firmly upon them as the surest ground. "Reality," writes Aragon at the close of *Le Paysan de Paris,* "is the apparent absence of contradiction. The marvelous is the eruption of contradiction within the real." He is not writing gibberish, nor has he dressed things up for a manifesto. He and his friends were indeed trying to juggle chance and destiny, passive automatism and active revolution, optimistic faith in man's future and pessimistic doubt over the disasters of civilization, the conviction that "life lies right here" and the conviction that "life lies elsewhere," the marvelous and the absurd. The experiment was keeping them all in the air, not scaling the heights to reach a master synthesis of all such values; our misunderstanding has prevented us from absorbing the true lesson of Surrealism and from moving beyond it. Little wonder that it has become one of the hardest lessons to present in the institutionalized arena of higher education in the United States. Because of an imposing terminology and a certain high seriousness, Existentialism has already been coupled to the other coaches of intellectual history, whereas Surrealism has been left behind, waving its arms frantically at the disappearing train. Yet we cannot afford this mistake. Surrealism, inheriting a long tradition of underground thought, embodies an insight into the impossibility of life as we have created it for ourselves and the beginnings of a worthwhile criticism of that life.

Three favorite Surrealist metaphors are particularly apt as expressions of the disequilibrium and latent pressure with which we increasingly live. All three belong to physics: *interference,* the reinforcement and cancelling out that results from crossing different wavelengths; the *short circuit,* the dangerous and dramatic breaching of a current of energy; and *communicating vessels,* that registering of barely visible or magnified responses among tenuously connected containers. In other words, the ingredients and forces of life intermingle in more ways than we know, and here Freud is the prophet not only with *The Interpretation of Dreams* but equally with *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious.*

The Surrealists emphatically did not achieve any "mental vantage point" or syn-

thesis to dissolve the contradictions they wallowed in; their accomplishment took another direction. They found a middle term, or rather two middle terms. In contemporary science, as profoundly challenged as Surrealism by the conflict between chance and determinism in the universe, the magic wand of probability has held things together. Without the statistical formulations of wave mechanics, quantum physicists would have to maintain two legal domiciles supporting indeterminate particles and lawful waves. Camus' famous consignment of Surrealism to the trash can in *The Rebel* implies that the movement went to pieces because of a similar dilemma: "Breton wanted both love and revolution at the same time; but they are incompatible." Camus has picked his terms injudiciously, however, for the opposition lies off to one side. The Surrealists did set out in search of both revolution and dream, social action and the unconscious, and indeed these goals come close to being incompatible. But *love,* most perennial of myths, and with it *humor,* the anti-myth, formed a middle ground from which they produced their most genuine and imaginative works. Any major painting by Max Ernst bears witness.

Now, a few public pronouncements and gestures linking sexual freedom with social revolution, plus juicy titles like Aragon's *Le Libertinage* and Breton's *L'Amour fou,* could lead to the conclusion that "love" in the Surrealist vocabulary refers to a fleeting and not a lasting union between two individuals. But any responsible generalization would have to affirm the opposite view. Those two books, for example, explore a realm quite remote from uninterrupted erotic adventure. Both alternate between semi-philosophical reflection and everyday actions that seek to transcend the casual encounter. Breton reached the point of quoting both Engels and Freud in support of the institution of monogamy as the form in which love will make its truest contribution to "moral as well as cultural progress." (In *Arcane 17* he eloquently defended his own advocacy of "love in the form of an exclusive passion.") Aragon went on to celebrate a single woman, his wife Elsa; for years Eluard identified poetic inspiration with his wife, Gala.

> She is standing on my eyelids
> Her hair mingles with mine
> She has the contour of my fingers
> She has the color of my eyes
> She sinks into my shadow
> Like a pebble against the sky
>
> *(Capitale de la Douleur)*

Against the background of misogyny, homosexuality, Don Juanism, and masculine confraternalism that formed part of the heritage from Decadence and Symbolism, the Surrealist group takes on the status of modern troubadors. Their love poetry earns the comparison. Yet it is worth remembering that they reached this personal conviction while at the same time advocating a total sexual liberation. For they defended Charlie Chaplin's loves, gave serious attention to Sade as critic of human behavior, and published in Surrealist reviews outspoken opinions and documents on all aspects of sex. The point is this, however. Much more than in any "mental vantage point," they found in passionate devotion to a single woman over a long period of time the surest means of liberating desire. And for "desire" read "imagination." They wished to release the imagination as completely as Lautréamont had done in conceiving the still unsurpassed Surrealist image applied to his Englishman hero: "He is as handsome . . . as the fortuitous encounter on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella." Amazingly

enough, that kind of imagination, kindled in the house of love, brought back to poetry the long lost figure of woman as embodiment of magic powers, creature of grace and promise, always close in her sensibility and behavior to the two sacred worlds of childhood and madness. The cult of the mythical woman, foreign as it may be to some contemporary readers, lies at the heart of the Surrealist credo. Not inappropriately Benjamin Péret, one of the most aggressive and unwavering Surrealists, had edited an *Anthology of Sublime Love.*

Lautréamont's same violent image stakes out the other middle ground cleared and actively cultivated by nearly all the Surrealists. "Laughter," wrote Jarry, "is born out of the discovery of the contradictory." Behind their growls and screams, the devotees of Dada were laughing; that saved them.* In the work of Soupault, Max Ernst, Desnos, Picabia, Duchamp, Péret, Prévert, and Dali, the contradictions and incompatibilities of experience lead straight toward laughter. Even the gentle Eluard composed "proverbs" with Péret: "Beat your mother while she's still young." "One good mistress deserves another." No Surrealist wrote a tragedy; the suicides of Vaché, Rigaud, and Crevel should be seen as attempted affirmations. It is the massive, stentorian style of Breton that has deflected attention from the delight these poets and painters took in the bizarre inconsistencies of life. Years later Breton ponderously redeemed his own ponderousness by compiling the *Anthology of Black Humor,* a remarkable attempt to establish a new canon of literary greatness. (Without the Surrealists, the reputations of Rimbaud, Lautréamont, and Jarry would be considerably dimmer than they are today.) Since it is often sardonic or fleeting, Surrealist laughter tends to escape us and we remember only the catcalls that accompanied the theatrics. But particularly in painting and experimental collaborations, a spirit of delight keeps breaking through the pretense.

The two domains, then, to which Surrealism made a lasting contribution are love and laughter: let us not try to live without them. Other activities of the group look less important now. The lengthy flirtation with the Communist party makes an absorbing story for anyone concerned with the temptations and delusions of the literary species. My own opinion is that the Surrealists, both as individuals and as a group, came off fairly well in their ultimately abortive attempt to keep their freedom of action and at the same time to participate in a centrally organized revolutionary party answerable to Moscow. For Breton, Communism remained an ideological step he argued himself into taking and which immediately led into a dead end; he scrambled out as fast as he could. Aragon I cannot fully understand—whether he became Communist out of opportunism, in an attempt to mock all his friends and enemies, or under the spell of Elsa Triolet. Eluard slithered about in many directions and allowed himself to be used, but politics rarely tainted the inspiration of his poetry. "The time has come," he says in the first sentence of *Poetic Evidence,* "when poets have the right and duty to maintain that they are deeply involved in other lives, in the common life." Yet his poetry remains intimate and often private. Outside a few manifestos and inflammatory public letters, the political turmoil and conscience-searching has lost its urgency for us.

I am inclined to think that the techniques of composition tried out or refurbished by the Surrealists served a reasonable purpose, though not the one they put forward.

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*Jacques Vaché, experimental dandy and patron saint of both Dada and Surrealism, stammered out a bleak definition of "umor" (sic): "I believe it's a feeling—I almost said sense—and that too—of the theatrical uselessness (and no joy there) of everything. *When you know." (Lettres de Guerre)*

Automatic writing, collaborations, experiments with random assemblages, simulations of paranoid states, dream journals, party games—all these means shoveled out into the open a vast quantity of raw material that is still being picked over. It was a useful mistake to believe that these materials were worth publishing or exhibiting *tel quel.* Without them Surrealism could never have commanded so much attention, but most of those unretouched works relied on a shock of surprise that perished in monotony or obscure topicality. I wonder if in our age automatic writing and similar techniques do not fill the role of the great public contests in declaiming improvised verse, which in earlier eras associated artistic creation with physical prowess and produced a trickle of good literature on the side.

Something of a problem presents itself in the form of books like Breton's *Nadja* and Aragon's *Paysan de Paris.* Both are direct personal accounts of a short period spent in pursuit of "Surreality," plus lengthy reflections on the very meager events reported. Their frankness and the occasional power of the prose make up for the desultory form and the unblinking egoism of every page. But they fall about halfway between purely experimental writing and exposition. *Nadja* particularly begs for thorough interpretation and analysis. The narrative has been authenticated as the story of Breton's chance encounter with a strangely alluring and unpredictable young woman who drew him into a long exploration of her identity and his own. Together they brave a series of coincidences, or "traps," or "reference points" *(repères),* or "signals," that alert Breton to the heavy significance of their friendship. In a remarkable piece of Surrealist legerdemain masked under shifty syntax, Breton implies that he discovers in Nadja his familiar spirit, an intercessor with whom he finally identifies himself at the moment she vacates her personality to enter an asylum. The scene in which Nadja looks up at an unknown window and predicts, correctly, that in a moment it will light up, illustrates the mystery-story element in such an oblique account of existence. Despite an overextended and ungainly opening, *Nadja* offers one of the most accessible entries into the Surrealist state of mind.

The most acute criticism of that state of mind has come from a not unexpected quarter. In a dozen pages toward the end of *What Is Literature?* and also in a lengthy footnote answering the controversy stirred up when that text appeared in *Les Temps Modernes,* Sartre slashes swiftly through to the evident dilemma of Surrealism. If one establishes the supreme authority of automatism and reduces the individual consciousness to (in Breton's words) "a modest recording device" for unconscious or collective experiences, the mind has then lost its integrity and merely yields to forces outside itself. Sartre refers to the "Surrealist quietism" that obliterates all categories of opposition and choice which render individual action possible. Yet the Surrealists passionately asserted their individuality, social responsibility, and revolutionary activism. Sartre goes on to attack this "confusion" by describing the Surrealist position as a foundered synthesis, a "flickering" or "flitting" between these opposed points of view, with "objective chance" providing a "magic unity" that leaves mind undefined. The passage displays Sartre's muscular grasp of a debate and his remarkable powers of deflation. But let us not be too quickly put off by his polemical vocabulary. "Flickering" is not at all a bad word to describe the behavior of a mind intent on registering a wide range of experience, a mind seeking both to be itself and to put itself, in communication with other

minds or forces.* In fact when Sartre falls back on words like "surpass" in these pages, the Surrealist concept of mind begins to sound a good deal like the writhings of Sartre's own *pour-soi* to achieve consciousness of being what it no longer is. The great difference—and Sartre leads us away in an entirely different direction as if he did not want us to notice—is that Surrealism holds at all costs to the possibility of communion between minds, between persons, with forces outside us. Love thus claims its central role. Sartre, on the other hand, seems to force himself to portray the illusory or destructive nature of all relationships. His criticism of Surrealism is partly neutralized by his acknowledgment that it represents "the *only* poetic movement during the first half of the twentieth century." Still, he has revealed that much of the fluttering we associate with the *avant-garde* between the wars arose from the desire simultaneously to affirm the individual mind as active consciousness carving out experience and to abdicate the individual mind in "automatic" behavior. All right. The Surrealist "revolution" failed to alter either the human psyche it claimed to have plumbed or the society and culture which tolerated it so sniffily—yet tolerated nevertheless. But those artists and writers succeeded in holding open for love and for laughter a wide space in our lives that might otherwise have closed over or have been filled with the hatred that began seeping across Europe in the same period. Yes, Hitler too appealed to the irrational, but so far as I know no Surrealist (except perhaps Dali) was duped.

IV

Surrealism in the United States was from the start a mongrel in which native and foreign strains never blended completely. No one will ever have to write a systematic history of it here as has been done for Dada and Surrealism in Europe, where literary polemics have gone a long way toward supplanting duels. But it may be of some help to distinguish three periods in development of surrealism (with a small *s*) in this country.

Between 1913 and 1916, the Armory Show and the war together brought to New York three great loners in the art of protest: Arthur Cravan, ex-prizefighter and self-proclaimed nephew of Oscar Wilde; Francis Picabia, the cosmopolitan Spanish painter who started a rowdy new magazine of the arts wherever he went; and Marcel Duchamp, the sensitive French chess player and wit, graduate of Futurism and Cubism, whose sceptical intelligence colors a whole forgotten side of the era. Inevitably they met—each other and with others—in Stieglitz' gallery and in Brentwood, New Jersey, a resort visited by Man Ray, Alfred Kreymborg, William Carlos Williams, Mina Loy (who later married Cravan), and others from Greenwich Village. The Europeans issued the review *291* from Stieglitz' gallery, and Kreymborg put out from Brentwood two

*An even richer term, turbulence, has been appropriated by William Arrowsmith to describe how classic Greek Theatre incorporated in its characters, structure, action, morality, and ideas "the actual disorder of experience." (See *Tulane Drama Review,* March 1959 and *Arion,* Autumn 1963.) The Surrealists were nobody's Greeks, but "turbulence" describes the medium in which they lived and created. The fact that these writers produced no important stage works testifies, not to their lack of theatre sense, but to the theatrical nature of the entire movement. Surrealism has long since begun to look like a twenty-year mock-heroic morality play whose structure and detail convey the turbulence we increasingly churn up about us.

important poetry magazines, one after the other: *Glebe* and *Others*. This was pre-Dada and pre-Surrealism in New York, a meeting of minds and talents free of doctrine, thrown together as much by general cultural unrest as by the catalyzing action of the Armory Show that ironically gave two hundred thousand people in three cities of the United States the opportunity to see a more exciting collection of modern art than had been assembled in Europe to date. The terrain was better prepared than anyone knew.

The next stage forms around the little magazines of the Twenties, published often in Europe and thus staying very close to Dada and Surrealist goings-on. By 1921 *The Little Review* had published Aragon, Picabia, and Soupault, and went on to give steady attention to the Surrealists between 1924 and 1926. Kreymborg's *Broom* and Munson's *Secession* both drew heavily on Surrealist material, and Jolas' *transition* was long associated as closely with Surrealism as with Joyce's work in progress. Texts by Hart Crane and Cummings and Wallace Stevens and Gertrude Stein alternated with those of the French poets and polemicists; there was far more mixing in the pages of reviews than in the cafés and studios of Paris. For a moment, when the exiles began straggling back to New York about 1923, there were even a few incidents that sounded like Paris. The supporters of both *Broom* and *Secession,* tired of squabbling and squeezed by censorship, met to compose their differences and plan a Dada-style performance of protest and scandal in a New York theater. Instead, the meeting broke up in a row and led to a celebrated near-comic fistfight in Woodstock between Munson and Matthew Josephson. A surprising attempt at unity among American writers was made the following year in response to a derisive article by Ernest Boyd, "Aesthete, Model 1924," that appeared in the first number of Mencken's *The American Mercury*. The putative victims assembled in a New York hotel for a twenty-four-hour binge and writing session, and out of it came a prickly little pamphlet called *Aesthete, 1925,* to throw back at the *Mercury*. The editorial, declaring "Every article contained in this issue of *Aesthete, 1925* is guaranteed to be in strictly bad taste," was followed by parodies, poems, a story, expostulations, and "advertising," composed by Allen Tate, Kenneth Burke, Malcolm Cowley, John Wheelwright, Hart Crane, Matthew Josephson, and William Carlos Williams. Such demonstrations of solidarity are rare in American literary history.

Through the Twenties and Thirties, magazines little and big kept readers aware of what was going on in Paris under facetious titles that ended up under the entry "Superrealism" in the *Reader's Guide*. Then another eruption of history brought on the third stage of Surrealism in the United States. The war drove to New York Breton, Max Ernst, and Dali a few months after the publication in *New Directions 1940* of two hundred pages of Surrealist texts in translation, still the best selection in English, plus two trenchant essays by Herbert J. Muller and Kenneth Burke. (Two other anthologies edited by Herbert Read and Julien Levy had appeared in English in 1936.) When Breton arrived, he proceeded to found the magazine *VVV* and assembled a group of painters and writers about him. In 1942 he gave a moving talk in defense of freedom at Yale University. Some of us will also remember the occasion for the students' and New Haven ladies' confused reaction when he alluded poetically to his wife's private parts—she was sitting in the front row. (As I recall it, he read "Free Union.") By this time Surrealist painting had reached most of the alert art galleries and museums, and in college classrooms across the country the movement was already being fitted into its waiting place in literary history. Today, twenty years later, we are beginning

to have access to the memoirs of participants like Man Ray and Matthew Josephson. Both men fall into the trap of being patronizing about their youthful follies.

Now the United States has an important tradition of cranky eccentricity in the arts which includes contrasting figures like Poe, Ambrose Bierce, Charles Fort, and Gertrude Stein in literature, Ryder in painting, and Charles Ives in music. But with the exception of Gertrude Stein, the recluse strain was very strong in all of them; their hopes and hoaxes remained very individual affairs. We will not find a native Surrealist strain in this direction. However, one can put together an impressive array of exchanges between European Surrealists and Americans. On leaving Russia in 1931, E. E. Cummings translated Aragon's *Red Front* as a gesture of friendship toward the author. William Carlos Williams served as the American correspondent for Ribémont-Dessaignes' *Bifur* in 1930, and Gertrude Stein carried on a lively correspondence with René Crevel. In 1921 and 1922 Ezra Pound became embroiled in some of the Dada demonstrations and counterdemonstrations, to the point of signing a letter along with Picabia, Satie, and Guillermo de Torre. It was Duchamp who in 1932 suggested to Calder the name for his new free-swinging sculpture: Mobiles. But every one of these items stands for little more than a fleeting engagement in the course of a full career. The only Americans absorbed into the European stream of Surrealism were Man Ray, whose temperament clung to the Dada spirit of deflation, and Eugene Jolas, who soon abandoned Surrealist politics in favor of Jungian collective myths. When, in 1945, Wallace Stevens contributed a poem to the neo-Surrealist New York magazine, *View,* the situation had in a sense come full circle and matched the moment in 1919 when Valéry was contributing to *Littérature.*

It is practically impossible in the case of profoundly American writers like Cummings, Henry Miller, Gertrude Stein, and William Carlos Williams to detect any evidence of more than minor Surrealist influence. They had found their voice before coming upon the theory and practice of the Paris schools. The author whose near-automatic writing appears to be most closely related to the Surrealists is Gertrude Stein; yet her preoccupation with her own genius and style made her practically impervious to influence except from painting. Insofar as one can trace effects of Surrealism on the other arts in this country, they crop up along the trajectory that carried abstract-expressionist painting into action painting and more recently into pop art. Many of the tenets of Dada and Surrealism return almost unchanged, but not love, alas, which must be languishing at the bottom of the Atlantic. The reasons for this response of the arts to Surrealist background noise when literature has merely cocked an ear can be attributed to the advanced centralization of artistic production and training in New York and to the immediate importance for painting and sculpture of innovations in materials and technique. Writing, because of its format and utilitarian conventions, has had a far more difficult time responding to such crucial esthetic contributions as photography (Breton uses photographs instead of descriptions in *Nadja* and numbers them in the text), *montage* (film has the most serious claim), and *objets trouvés.*

A fascinating and amusing development has occurred in the past few years during which objective chance has lain down with the computer in delighted experiments by linguist-poets. The random permutations so produced (and lengthily discussed in recent special numbers of the *Times Literary Supplement* on "The Changing Guard") display what we might have surmised: that the computer can, for speed and surprise, come close to matching the unconscious. Quaint or savage programmed texts can now be turned

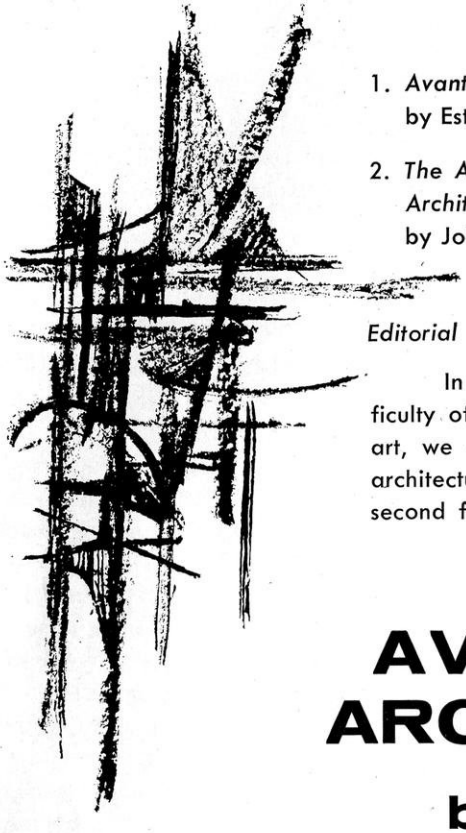
on in centers all over the world and confront us with the same problem as automatic writing: what do you with the results? For they usually present the same aspect of monotony and irrelevance.

* * *

The more carefully we define it, the more the very term Surrealism tends to thicken into a screen hiding from us the particulars we seek. The old passwords "automatism" and "revolution" will not guide us any further. Love and laughter, I repeat, are the areas in which Surrealism left its mark most deeply on the evolution of the *avant-garde* in this century.

We had best be attentive to this great catharsis-sublimation of the Twenties and Thirties. More urgently than ever our children face the challenge of liberating their desire, and here for their scrutiny lies one of the great corporate case histories of that search. By listening carefully we may hear the dark mutterings with which René Crevel ended *Les Pieds dans le Plat* (Putting your foot in it): "And anyway . . . etc. . . . etc. . . . (to be continued after the next war)."

ARCHITECTURE



1. *Avant-Garde Architecture*
   by Esther McCoy
2. *The Avant-Garde in Architecture Today*
   by John M. Johansen

Editorial Note:

In order to show the considerable difficulty of defining the growing edge of any art, we are presenting two statements on architecture—the first from a critic and the second from a practicing architect.

AVANT-GARDE ARCHITECTURE

by esther mcCoy

The Fifties belonged to Mies van der Rohe as the Sixties belong to Louis I. Kahn. Mies' universal spaces have yielded to servant-and-served spaces, the latter growing out of the application of Kahn's theory concerning the isolation of services (heating, cooling, lighting, air intake and exhaust, elevators, stairways, etc.) into separate towers or in hollow columns.

Architecture each year becomes more and more a problem of how to house the ever-increasing bulk of mechanical equipment, which is handled in the curtain wall building by turning over every tenth or so floor to services. Kahn makes an architectural statement of the services in allowing the enclosing spaces to rise vertically rather than stratifying them. In his Richards Medical Research Laboratories (1961) on the University of Pennsylvania campus,* the services soar above the served to create a jagged profile. This has, with justice, been compared to the towers of San Gimignano. And, compared to the classical rhythms of Mies' noble buildings, the Richards Laboratories presents a brilliant cacophony.

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*See Photograph #3, page 175.

The continuity of line of the International style, which first came to flower in Walter Gropius' Fagus Factory in 1910, is now replaced with the broken line; and cohesion is based on separation rather than fluidity. There is an explosion of the whole into parts. Mies is somewhat responsible for the decline of the International style; you can say that he has almost refined it out of existence. His 1955 Crown Hall for the campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology was, through its perfection, a threat, and the Seagram Building was the *coup de grace.*

The most important influence of the day is that of Louis Kahn, but he is not one of the new generation. He was sixty years old when Richards Labs, his first wholly great work, was completed. Before that he was known more as a poetic philosopher of architecture and as an inspired teacher. His office in Philadelphia (the city in which he grew up) is staffed with young men, and I can believe him when he says that he takes as much from them as he gives; more unusual is the ability of the young men who leave his office to walk out on their own feet. Kahn's philosophy that "Schools began with a man under a tree who did not know he was a teacher discussing his realization with a few who did not know they were students," prevails in his office, and because of this his young draftsmen and designers leave him not to copy him but to express their own ideas.

The architects who reached maturity in the Forties and Fifties were deeply indebted to Mies, whose Barcelona pavilion of 1929 was one of the half dozen great influences of the century. But there was a growing uneasiness toward his pristine geometry. For one thing, the long book-burning period of modern architecture came to a close after the end of World War II, having been hastened by the unprecedented amount of travel of the young. While with the wartime or peacetime armies in Europe, the young men caught up on the history that had been missing from their studies. (Even when history was present it was de-emphasized.)

In Sicily alone they saw Greek temples, ruins of Roman villas, Byzantine churches and Renaissance palaces, and the magnificent Baroque town planning and churches. One young man of nineteen with the peacetime army used a twenty-four-hour pass to travel from Germany to Italy to spend four hours looking at the floor plan of the Pompeii house and to stand at dusk in Paestum when the falling sun warms the great Greek temples to a gold-orange; and he planned to "see Greece" on his first seventy-two-hour pass.

Fulbright fellows followed after the war, and self-appointed fellows on motor scooters swarmed over Europe. A Rhodes scholar took deck passage from Naples to Alexandria to work his way up the Nile to Aswan. This is the most traveled and the most history-hungry generation of architects we have known.

For the most part, they were blissfully unaware of the fact that they stood on the shoulders of the pioneers of modern architecture in order to get a look at history, for the pioneers had had to break down a rigidly codified system of architecture to find a clearing in which to express the needs of contemporary life. Walter Gropius might have included the young architect with the public when he wrote, "The public treats the architect as if he were an expendable luxury-member of society."

But many of the new developments in architecture came out of the travels. One was a love of great spaces, which can never be conveyed in photographs. They experienced firsthand everything from the hard Romanesque spaces to the flexible Baroque

spaces. They have never in their work forgotten the piazzas: Piazza San Marco, Piazza Navona, and most of all the shell-shaped piazza in Siena. They learned to appreciate the surprise element in city planning, for they never forgot the delight of turning a corner of an Italian street and coming unexpectedly upon a fountain, a courtyard or an exciting perspective.

There is always something of the memory of space transferred to their designs; there is always some memory of surprise. Spaces had been impoverished during the years of the International style, and certainty rather than the unexpected was *de rigeur.*

Not only space burst upon the young architect, but light. It was not the light that enters through glass walls whose size increased with the ability of the glass industry to produce sheets in larger dimensions, but the mystery and magic of light as it enters a building, often through an unexpected source. Out of the interest in light came the discovery that light can mold spaces. It could also define dark, as Kahn pointed out when he said, "Even a space intended to be dark should have just enough light from some mysterious opening to tell us how dark it really is."

They rejected most of Le Corbusier* except his fine use of concrete, and they approved heartily of his treating the impressions of the form work as a decorative element. The young went to look at his Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles and rejoiced in the thrusting concrete columns and the sculptural touches in concrete on the roof garden—and then they were off to the Romanesque churches in the South of France, or to see the cave paintings.

But Le Corbusier was to win back many of them when in 1955 he finished the Ronchamp Chapel. He was hastily decanonized and made the target for great praise and criticism. The chapel was, as the Italian critic Carlo Ragghianti observed, a "deliberate return to the Druidic dolmen, to the prehistoric cave with the inpouring of luminous rays."

At about the same time Frank Lloyd Wright, who had long before entered the bloodstream of architecture, and indeed *was* architecture for many years, was transformed into a mortal when the design for his Guggenheim Museum was completed. "The man who hated abstract art produced the most abstract building of our time," wrote Frederick Kiesler, designer of the "Endless House."

In spite of the lack of sympathy of most of the young for what they called box architecture, they made a forced peace with it because it had virtue from the standpoint of the client of economy as well as familiarity. But they applauded the thin concrete shell structures of Felix Candela in Mexico, and the stadia and other work of Pier Luigi Nervi of Italy in precast concrete units. To architectural students of the Fifties the rich concrete drapery of Candela (in his hyperbolic parabolic surfaces) and the star-studded vaults of Nervi (produced by the intersections of the structural frame) were fingers pointing in the direction of New Architecture. Beautiful and poetic as were the works of both men, they had less application in a country where the ratio of cost of labor to cost of materials was reversed. But before this hard fact was borne in there was a rush of shells on every student's drawing board; and young architects, without assistance from the cement industry, struggled to develop low-cost precast sections.

***See Photograph #2, page 174.**

Eero Saarinen was the most noted of the architects of the postwar generation. He was not easy to classify: his 1950 General Motors Building was purely Miesian, while his 1958 Yale Hockey Rink and the T.W.A. Terminal of the same period were sculptural in form. After the T.W.A. Terminal came in for much criticism, he was given a second chance, and in his Dulles Airport for Washington, D.C. he vindicated himself wholly. Again he broke with rectangular forms to give an upswept roof to the Dulles Airport, which reminds one superficially of the Rome Railway Station. In his men's dormitories for Yale, Saarinen takes on a medieval aspect; one must pick his way through the snail-like ground plan, where exterior walls are used to create large or intimate courts, as one does in the old section of Siena. But in two of his posthumous buildings—one for Deere and one for CBS—the Miesian principle is again apparent.

Others who matured at the same time were Philip Johnson, Minoru Yamasaki, Edward Larabee Barnes, and Paul Rudolph, to name but a few. Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building* for the Yale campus gathers up many of the precepts of the younger architects within its walls: the weaving of space in and out of vertical exterior walls and interior floor levels; the introduction of light from unexpected sources; the creation of a sense of leisure in the various courts; and the muscular use of concrete. One thing of great importance that he has done is to join town and gown by placing the building in the path where the public walks, and although the striated concrete bristles, the building as a whole invites the community. It reaches out to the town as buildings on few campuses have ever done; that this is the result of a constricted site is beside the point.

Among the talented men whose work is just beginning to be known are Robert Venturi, Thomas Vreeland, Rimaldo Giurgola (of Mitchell and Giurgola), Martin Price, Stanley Tigerman, Gunnar Birkerts, Evans Woollen, and Moore, Turnbull, Lyndon and Whitaker. These are but a few.

Venturi and Vreeland have both worked in Kahn's office, and although they differ greatly, they both have an intellectual approach to architecture. Venturi is the bolder, Vreeland is the greater geometrist. Venturi likes to play with planar surfaces, and it sometimes seems that he has pulled the elements of a building apart to put them back together again in a series of dissonances that are strange and fascinating. Vreeland takes a less exposed position but it is in the tradition of the new voice. Giurgola, more experienced than the other two, has a fine ability to combine feeling with correctness, typical of Italy, his native country.

Moore, Turnbull, Lyndon and Whitaker of Berkeley, California go further in the fragmenting of the whole, sometimes enveloping a central core with a ring of casual rooms—a placenta around the inner life. Their exterior walls often bulge with protuberances like a Queen Anne cottage. But this tendency to take the box and push out the walls and the roof is now so prevalent that it has a name—the architecture of the bulge. The work of R. M. Schindler in the Forties, in which he manipulated spaces to create the illusion of depth, was a prediction of the breakage of planes that is happening today.

Gunnar Birkerts of Detroit has reached great maturity through a few buildings. He makes few of the mistakes that the young architect is supposed to, but just enough to learn by. Oddly, mistakes on paper never serve to mature the architect as do his

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*See Photograph #5, page 177.

three-dimensional ones; the gun must be loaded. Birkerts demonstrates in his Lutheran church in Ann Arbor that he learned his lesson in concrete from Le Corbusier, but has forgotten enough of it to be himself. He bathes his hard Romanesque interior space with tender light, which is a surprise after one experiences the barbed beauty of the unsurfaced concrete of the exterior. He is a master at bringing light into a building, and reminds one of a young Alvar Aalto whose starting point is the tensions of the 1960's.

Two other young men showing great precociousness are Stanley Tigerman and Martin Price, Tigerman expressing in redevelopment housing an urbanity that is based on both a sensitivity to tradition and an audacity in breaking with it. How a young architect comes to grips with the realities is the measure of his worth, and Tigerman has won in his first encounter by compromising only in the nonessentials. Martin Price, who worked with Harry Weese of Chicago and now with the Bartos firm in New York as designer, is on the brink of an impressive career. In his own projects (unbuilt) he has also proved himself able to disassemble structure and reassemble it, always for the purpose of admitting light without disturbing privacy; and, like Rudolph in his Art and Architecture Building, he does not hesitate to change floor levels at will to create great interior spaces. Evans Woollen of Indianapolis reveals his talent best in his new auditorium for Butler University, and at the same time shows up some of the weaknesses of Yamasaki, whose library is a hundred yards away. While Woollen breaks up the box form, Yamasaki decorates it.

All of these young men might be called *avant-garde,* but the word, after all, was invented by critics to describe a phenomenon that is fairly well established but has yet to become popular. And the American architect is too often considered *avant-garde* right up to the time when his work passes into public domain and he is ready for medals and oblivion.

THE AVANT-GARDE IN ARCHITECTURE TODAY

by john m. johansen

All development in architecture is, in part, due to advances in building techniques; but because architecture is also an art, dealing with a philosophical and artistic interpretation of the human condition, the most significant changes have an aesthetic basis. Like other artists, the architect is often a rebel—arrogant, disruptive, exciting, disrespectful of the established, transgressing the laws of the academy. Often, too, like other artists he is compelled to engage in the lonely and agonizing search for new realms of expression, in order to interpret for himself and his society the life of his time.

In this century there have been a number of movements away from traditional forms and modes. The most disruptive, of course, was the overthrow of the Beaux Art school by the moderns led by Sullivan and Wright, who were followed by Gropius, Le Corbusier, Aalto, Breuer, Mies and others of the "first" generation, most of whom are still very active today. Within this broad revolution there were also such separate

movements as Frank Lloyd Wright's organic "Architecture in the American Grain," built on the writings of Walt Whitman and Jeffersonian "agrarian democracy." In the Bauhaus School in Germany, headed by Walter Gropius, rationalism and logic in building technique may be said to have paralleled the philosophy of Bertrand Russell. In the 1920's Le Corbusier romanticized the machine. Mies van der Rohe introduced a stern morality in steel construction which reached perfection in the Seagram Building in New York City. Although a number of these directions were codified in a most influential book by Hichcock and Johnson called *The International Style,* each architect indicated an individual search, as well as a reaction, sympathetic or antagonistic, to the others.

But a reaction to the austerity of the Bauhaus School also developed. The young Paul Rudolph, speaking to his elders at the A.I.A. Convention in 1954, urged them toward an enrichment of architectural expression, a much welcomed change of attitude which encouraged a revived interest in, and borrowings from, historic monuments. Architects rushed to Europe and the East to claim personal discovery of buildings and public squares known and loved for centuries, but which they had been taught, since the fall of the Beaux Arts, to ignore. Philip Johnson, the most scholarly of the group, moved from the influence of Mies to that of Roman, Renaissance, and Baroque models. Saarinen went to Neo-Neo-Gothic in his Yale dormitories. Yamasaki is still facing his buildings, even high rise offices, with Venetian Gothic decoration in precast concrete, while the popularly acclaimed Edward Durell Stone is so completely lost in decadent neoclassic and Gothic revival—an "architecture of nostalgia"—that one wonders whether an aesthetic revolution ever took place.

The United States State Department has sponsored a series of embassies abroad: an "architecture of diplomacy." An "architecture of imagery" came with Saarinen's concrete bird at TWA Airport, New York City. The *avant-garde* in architecture today is forced to rebel against an economic and cultural climate in the United States in which architects are not only generally inclined to trade in clichés and symbols, mannerisms and popular fashion to a degree dangerously approaching eclecticism, but in which they are further corrupted by a building boom supported by gullible and undiscriminating clients with much money to spend and fairly vulgar taste. There seems to be little hope of improvement. The gross national product of the United States is expected to double in fifteen years, but the development of public sensitivity to finer values seems doubtful. Even government-sponsored buildings and exceptional private cultural ventures like Lincoln Center, though lavishly decorated, are prudent, emasculate, neoclassic, and have been disrespectfully, though not inaccurately, called "Mussolini Modern."

Very often in the past, architecture has renewed and purged itself, because of events or circumstantial pressure, economic, technical or social. One example is the movement started in England with the "Brutalist School," headed by the architects A. & P. Smithson, Stirling & Gowan, and the sculptor Paolozzi. The members of this school were not only in aesthetic revolt against the architectural establishment, but they seized upon the very conditions (lack of money and poverty of materials in a war-weary England) that thwarted them, and out of this poverty developed a strong, direct, and brutal romanticism. Slums and old warehouses were studied to find forms which had evolved unself-consciously—"anti-architecture." The best recent examples are Gowan's

Leicester Laboratory (1),* Stirling's design for the Cambridge Library, and Sandy Wilson's Harvey Court, also at Cambridge. Elsewhere, Le Corbusier continues to be a very strong influence with his highly expressive sculptural style in *le concrete brut,* as at Chandigarh, India, and *La Tourette* (2) in France. Nervi, the Italian engineer, found bold new forms without presuming they were architectural. In Finland, this general expression is exemplified by Aalto's Seinagoki Civic Center; in Germany, by Scharoun's Berlin Music Hall; in Italy, by the recent work of Gardella and Jiggano; and in Japan by Tange.

In our affluent country, it seems, however, that a valuable contribution could only be made by an architect either free from the corruptions of success or able to resist the distractions of the maddening professional pace. Such an architect is Louis Kahn. He has not only achieved a personal vernacular of architectural forms, but has developed it from a personal philosophy governing the nature of buildings, their functional order, and the hierarchy of forms which enclose them. He speaks of his buildings as having an existence and will of their own—Animism. His laboratory at University of Pennsylvania (3) serves as an example. Aldo Guirgola, a student of Kahn's and a man of great force and originality, is perhaps the most promising young architect in the United States. His best work may be the design for the Boston City Hall Competition (4). Paul Rudolph, the most productive of this age group, attempts a great strength of form, though sometimes overdesigned as in the Fine Arts Building at Yale (5). Frederick Kiesler and Paolo Soleri, who have almost nothing of their design built, have been valuable influences for their "architecture of concepts." These architects may be said to represent the *avant-garde* today, though others might be named. Each is making a serious, deeply personal search for an expression of his own: to restate architecture in his own terms and to find his own inspirations, sources, derivations, and determinants. However, as I see it, there is much agreement among them in certain attitudes and directions.

I speak as a member of this *avant-garde* when I note a general disillusionment with the established forces which govern today's collectivist society. Mass production has not fully served human needs, and has served the psyche not at all. Commercialism has stifled other values. Governed in their appearance by repeated production methods, buildings of various purpose and use in various regions display a disappointing uniformity. We oppose prefabrication when it dominates our lives with its relentless modularity, standardization and precision. We are against its dehumanizing and depersonalizing effects, against modular architecture for what may soon be modular man; against drop-card architectural schemes for a bewildered drop-card citizenry; and against designs dominated by planners or efficiency experts. The architect's touch, mark and control must be seen or felt in a building, not those of the machine. In fact, some designs are consciously "anti-machine." In general, designs of this *avant-garde* are more personal, more carefully sculpted, more individual works.

These attitudes are accompanied by a strong distaste for lavish use of decoration and a rich variety of materials. The client's budget will be used, if not exceeded, on a richness of spaces and forms rather than in refinement of finish and detail. In addition, there is an abhorrence of eclecticism and imitation of the kind mentioned above. A respect for the historic example remains; inspiration is taken from the spirit, organi-

*The numerals in this article designate the numbered photographs in the portfolio that follows.

zation, or principle of the earlier example, but not from superficial imitation.

I personally believe in "formative art" rather than "fine art." By this I mean art which avoids the pretense of meeting the sophisticated standards of an established academy in a civilized society, but which feels more closely related to primitive or folk art, to the art of the archaic period, the period of search or development rather than that of achievement and perfection. I am interested, then, in processes rather than finality; improvisation rather than predetermination; human imperfection rather than idealism; and the significant rather than the beautiful. Beauty should be neither worshipped nor sought, but should be a result of other qualities, an aspect of character rather than a physical appeal. The building is beautiful, as is a person, because it has found its true nature; it is sincere, honest, accommodating, direct, and strong.

Our world today is also characterized by fast-moving change and unpredictable events. And the pace is being accelerated. This country has lost political initiative in world affairs because "old school diplomacy" has been altogether ineffective. Psychological warfare has been almost continual. There is skepticism about institutionalized religion, disillusionment with our society, disengagement and disenchantment among our youth. These experiences are a permanent part of contemporary life, and it is most natural that the arts should express them. Improvisation is found in current painting, sculpture, theatre, and music. Is architecture not to have an interpretative role? The incomplete, the fragmentary, the loose, tentative assembly of elements perhaps best express the contemporary condition. My Baltimore Theatre (6) suggests a building in the process of completion; we are shown the methods and sequences of construction.

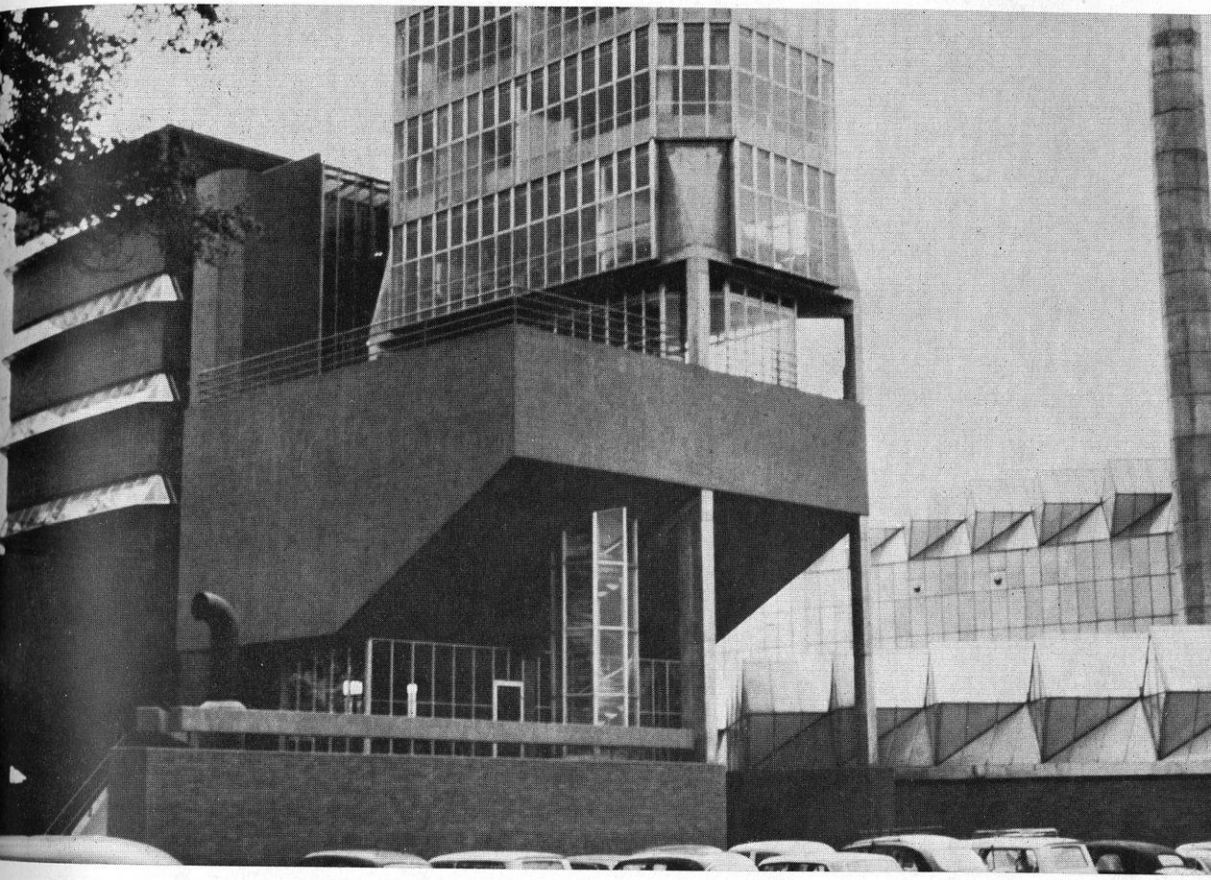
Because it is difficult today to anticipate the future uses of a building, producing precious and exquisite designs is folly. The idea of growth should not only be a part of planning, but a part of the aesthetic as well. An additive relationship among architectural elements is a device which can express this aesthetic sense of growth.

In science, the theory of relativity has shattered the myth of a static, finite universe. Heisenberg introduced the principle of indeterminacy; Sir James Jeans speaks of a "margin of error" in laws of nature, says that "nature abhors precision," and that the law of strict causality no longer applies. No wonder we feel more attuned to an architecture which is imprecise and less rational, which incorporates the element of change, of chance, of the unpredictable, the imperfect or the inconsistent.

In the *avant-garde* process of design, the architect is willing to put his faith in an emerging conception for building, rather than in a preconceived idea. He is willing to allow the half-designed building to assert its own young will, make known its new identity, as Kahn says, and dictate how it will allow itself to be completed. The biological terms "concretion" and "accretion" apply well, I think. Elements of a kind, or elements unlike, grow together, accumulate, build up by natural process. The loosely composed elements of such an architecture—rooms, stair towers, struts, shafts—suggest that they were assembled by helicopter, that they were hung literally in space, then supported by piers, leaving spaces between for clarity and rich sculptural effect. Almost invariably this *avant-garde* has found concrete to be the appropriate material; usually crudely poured; left unfinished by surfacing materials; and used for all portions of the building, inside and out, to give an impressive monolithic strength. Glass areas are sometimes deeply recessed, improvised in odd shapes between the freely poised forms to hold out the weather, as in Guirgolas' City Hall design, or audaciously used for the major forms of the building as by Stirling at Leicester. Forms themselves are functional

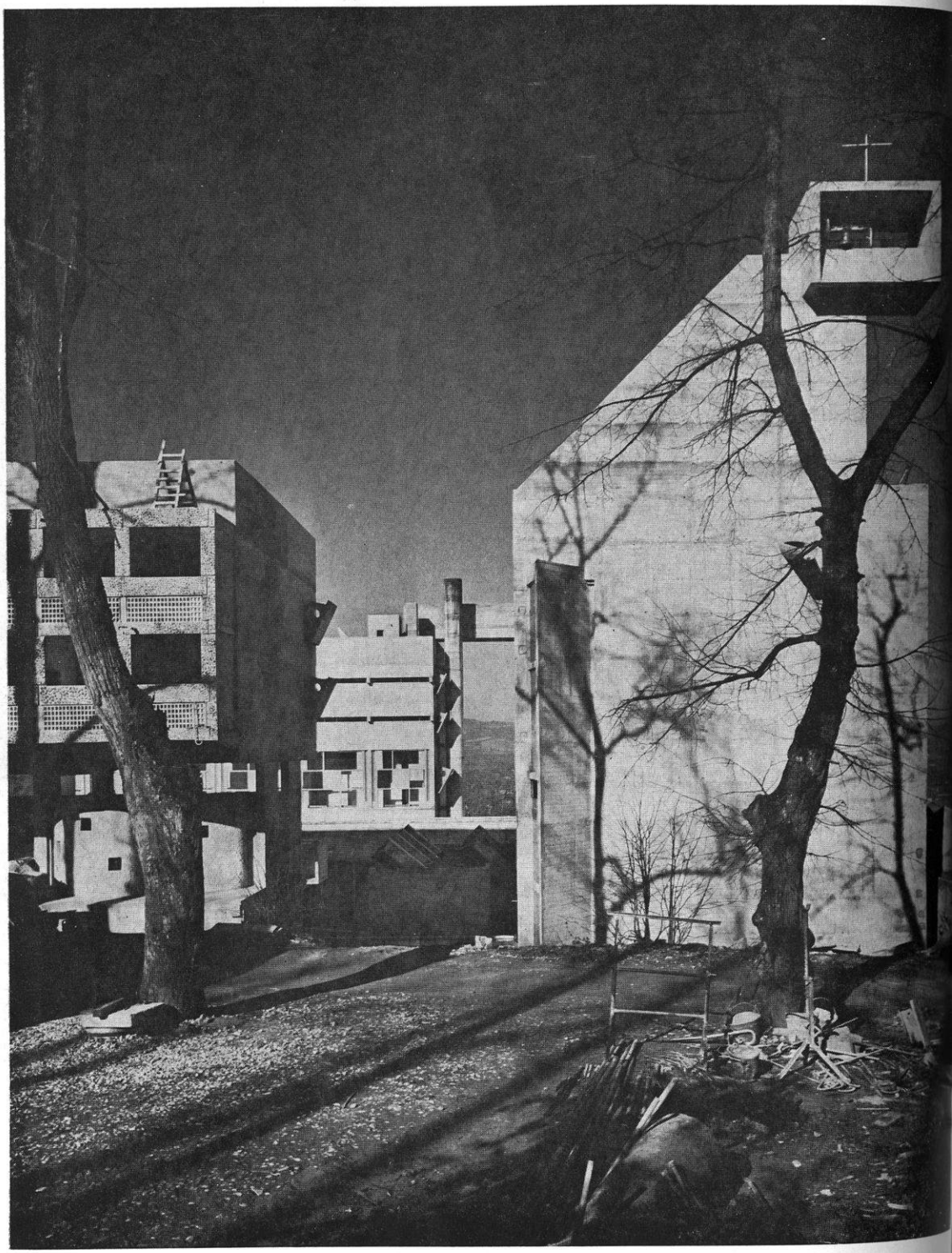
enclosures, boxes for rooms, tubes for corridors, towers for stairs. Pieces of mechanical equipment, like vents, and exhaust housing tunnels, etc., which represent one-third the total cost of a building today, have become an expressive part of the composition. Vincent Scully has gone so far as to describe such elements in biomorphic terms. Most noticeable of all, a new force has been achieved in stern, hatchet cleft angles given to roof elements and shaping of theatre forms.

It is impossible to write on a matter such as architecture without full illustration. The best that can be done, if write we must, is to deal not with the visual characteristics, but rather with attitudes, interests and guiding principles. As I see it, there appear quite clearly a sequence and interplay of influences leading to our present position. It appears equally clear that despite personal peculiarities of expression, the architects of the *avant-garde* have found common ground, and we will continue our search, not merely because we are professionally committed, but because we are, like all artists and scientists and adventurers, somehow compelled.

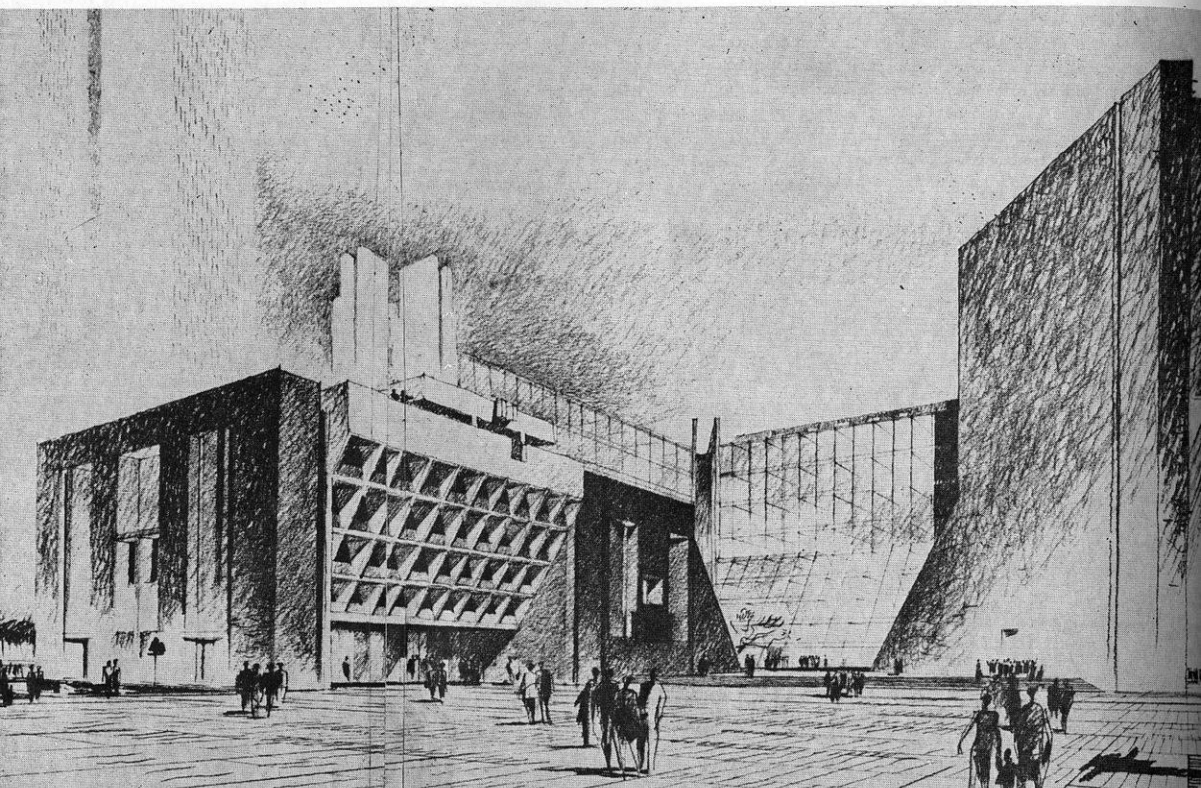


#1—Name—Leicester Laboratories
Architect—Gowan
Location—Leicester, England
Completion Date—1964
Purpose—Engineering instruction
Construction—Concrete frame; tile wall finishes inside and out; aluminum glass frames by greenhouse construction company for glass skylights
Architectural Idea—Suggests its intended purpose as a direct solution to problem of a search for a character all its own. It does not try to be architecturally "tasteful."

#2—Name—"La Tourette" (Couvent d'Etudes)
Architect—Le Corbusier
Location—Eveaux Sur Arbresle, near Lyon, France
Completion Date—1960
Purpose—Dominican Monastery
Construction—Completely concrete
Architectural Idea—A vivid expression of community life, poverty, seriousness and austerity with crude monolithic construction. The strong forms express clearly the separate parts and uses.

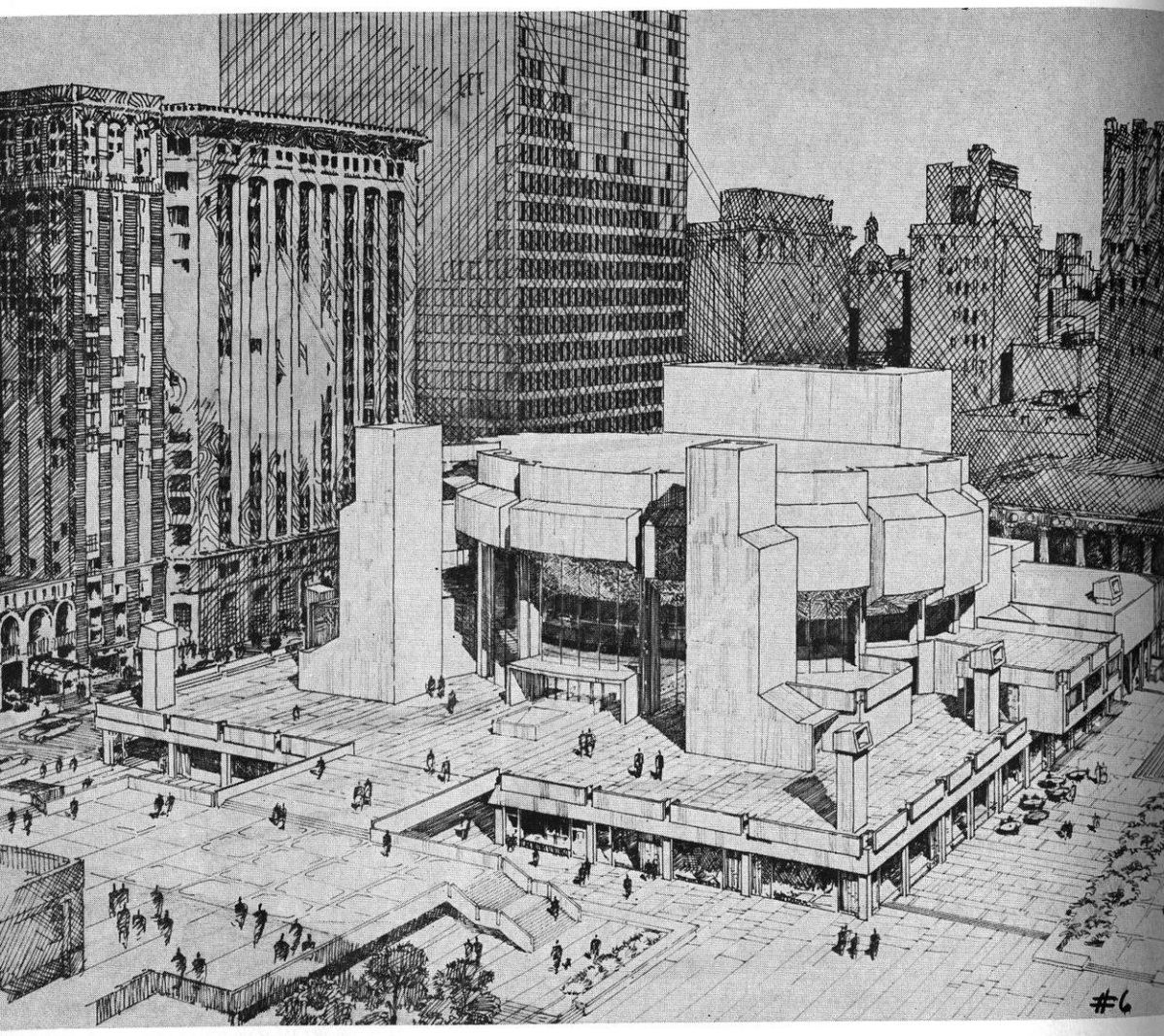


#3—Name—Richards Laboratories
Architect—Louis Kahn
Location—University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Completion Date—1960, addition 1964
Construction—Precast reinforced concrete skeleton with brick and glass infill
Architectural Idea—A clear organization of "master spaces" and "servant spaces" which suggest organic growth and continuity.



#4—Name—Boston City Hall
Architect—Aldo Guirgola
Location—Boston, Massachusetts
Completion Date—Competition project
Construction—Reinforced concrete with brick sheathing; glass areas, protected by outer walls
Architectural Idea—The three high office structures and a lower council chamber on a stepped granite plaza have a simple and bold organization, with huge forms brutally cleft at 45 and 90 degree angles.

#5—Name—Arts & Architecture Building
Architect—Paul Rudolph
Location—Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
Completion Date—1963
Purpose—Houses the library, lecture halls, shops and drafting rooms of the departments of art and architecture.
Construction—Completely concrete
Architectural Idea—Concrete trays supported by monumental concrete piers feature a romantic use of space and light, with emphasis on bulky, crude, unprocessed materials.



#6—Name—Charles Center Theatre Building
Architect—John Johansen
Location—Baltimore, Maryland
Completion Date—December 1965
Purpose—A new legitimate theater for Baltimore which has flexibility for future experimental staging. The total project includes two levels of parking below grade, shops on street level and restaurants.
Construction—Completely concrete; interiors will have cloth covered walls and carpeting
Architectural Idea—This is a richly sculpted building made vivid by expression of the elements of enclosure which serve its uses (stair towers, ramps, bridges, seating boxes).

THE AVANT-GARDE IN DANCE

by walter terry

The *avant-garde* in dance? So much depends upon the when and the where. Last August, for example, the final performances of the American Dance Festival at Connecticut College in New London featured revivals of four major modern dance works. Two of these were Martha Graham's, "Primitive Mysteries," a group work, and the solo, "Frontier." Thirty years before, they were topics of controversy, for they were then *avant-garde*. Indeed, a national magazine referred to "Frontier" as a "surrealist fence act." Today, "Frontier" emerges as a contemporary classic. It's movement idiom no longer seems "ugly" (the word so often used about modern dance in the late 1920's and 1930's) nor obscure. To the contrary, as danced by Ethel Winter in the solo Graham herself created, its strong, free and shining testament to the pioneer spirit is as clear and as forthright as a poem by Robert Frost.

Once, "Frontier" was not so clear. Where were the Indians? the cowboys? the log cabins? the tepees? True, there was a fence but only a segment of a fence which could hardly keep in the herd or outline the boundary. But "Frontier" had never been a "western." It had always been a distillation of what the word *frontier* itself stood for. If it was a pioneer woman standing on the geographical threshold of a new land, it was also the woman standing at the frontier of marriage or motherhood or a career. In fact, it was not woman alone who was standing there, moving there. It was man himself of any time and of all time as he faced the present and prepared to venture into the tomorrow.

In the 1930's, as far as the general public was concerned, "Frontier" should have been a literal exposition of what the title suggested. If not that, at least it should have been pretty—it was not, it was rugged. Today, its symbolism, its meanings are not only clear, they are acceptable, for the movements in "Frontier" and other Graham creations of that period have long since influenced ballet and have even found their way into the popular theatre, into musical comedy. Graham herself, in developing her new language of motion, has gone far beyond the vocabulary she used in "Frontier." Once it was wildly *avant-garde;* today, it is beautifully "now."

But is Martha Graham, once in the vanguard of the *avant-garde,* still considered *avant-garde*? She is, inarguably, America's most famous dancer-choreographer-teacher in modern dance (she herself prefers the word "contemporary" to "modern"), but to many of her juniors in the field of modern dance and to their collaborators in music and design, she is not *avant-garde* at all. But in almost any other country in the world, she would be viewed as an advanced experimentalist. The "where," then, has much to do with the definition of *avant-garde*.

In the Soviet Union, for example, not only would Graham be characterized as extremely *avant-garde* but much of our American ballet would

fall in that category also. When the Bolshoi Ballet from Moscow first visited the United States, its members attended a dress rehearsal of the New York City Ballet and they were shocked. They were shocked, oddly enough, by the work of one who had been trained in their own land, George Balanchine, product of the Imperial and, later, State Ballet School in Leningrad (formerly the famed Maryinsky Theatre and now the Kirov).

It is safe to say that most of the Bolshoi artists, stunned by Balanchine's "Agon," with its score by Stravinsky, probably hated this ballet. Oh yes, it stemmed from the traditional vocabulary of the classical ballet—there were arabesques and pirouettes and jetés—but there were also movements which were extensions of ballet, sometimes through distortion, into a new area of action. The unexpected occurred. But, somehow, the unexpected was perfectly logical, just as the dry and witty Stravinsky score burst forth with surprises which were pertinent.

The Bolshoi dancers rebelled against it. During intermission, translators perspired over arguments between Russian and American performers. One of the Soviet stars murmured, "I don't understand it, but we need it." In a subsequent visit to America, the Bolshoi recognized the need to the degree that the near-legendary and powerful ballerina, Galina Ulanova (now retired) recommended that an experimental ballet theatre be established in Moscow. By exposure to American ballet, she, a supreme classicist, must have recognized that ballet in Russia was still living at the turn of the century.

The Russian artists—and make no mistake, many of them are superb in that area of traditional ballet which they have nurtured from the days of the czars to the present—define as *avant-garde* aspects of dance which we, in America, would find quite unsurprising.

A Bolshoi star, in promising an unusual experience at a new ballet, noted that she would not dance on "pointe." To her, this was an innovation, an *avant-garde* action, which might be subject to controversy. A ballerina without toe shoes? Daring! She did not realize that no modern dancer ever used toe shoes (or even shoes) and she had not seen, say, Sir Frederick Ashton's "Illuminations," created especially for the New York City Ballet, in which the figure of Profane Love had one foot shod in a toe shoe and the other bare.

Kirov dancers, before a first New York showing of their "Siege of Leningrad" ballet, warned that we would be shocked by innovations, by the inclusion of movements not learned in ballet classrooms. They were quite genuine in their belief that what we were about to see would be too *avant-garde* for us. What we finally saw was a very inferior ballet in which the nonballetic movements employed were old-fashioned, by our standards, recalling dance of at least thirty, and possibly forty, years ago.

The *avant-garde*, clearly, exists in and is governed by place as well as by time, by the where as well as by the when.

The current characteristics of America's *avant-garde* dance are quite different from those that prevailed when modern dance made its bow in the late 1920's. Graham probably described it best when she said that her dance purpose was "to give substance to things felt." In today's *avant-garde* dance, or in much of it, feeling, or the expression of feeling, is anathema. In certain instances, the use of chance in choreography has replaced the search for pertinent movement and form.

Graham had also said that the purpose of her dance was "to reveal the inner man." Thus it was that in such works as "Letter to the World," based on the figure of Emily Dickinson, she gave us two aspects of the

Martha Graham in *Clytemnestra*

poetess on stage: one the well-bred New England lady that the townsfolk could see and the other, the wild, free, passionate creature—the inner self—which had actually written the poetry.

Graham's colleagues, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman (all three were alumni of the Denishawn Dancers, founded and headed by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, both of them, along with Isadora Duncan, the leaders of the *avant-garde* of a still earlier era), Helen Tamiris and Hanya Holm (the latter, a product of the German modern dance revolution led by Mary Wigman), were all deeply concerned with bringing substance, profound feeling, content (of contemporary urgency) and comment to dance in America.

These modern dance leaders were individualists with techniques which differed one from the other—Humphrey exploited the dramatic potential of gravity through her fall-and-recovery movement principle while Graham's motor responses were based upon muscular contraction and release—but they were complementary to one another and together they represented the *avant-garde* for their period, including that subperiod when the dance of social comment was going full force. Indeed, Tamiris' "How Long, Brethren!" anticipated the Negro rights problems of the 1960's thirty years before!

Not only do the major works of these major moderns continue to bring prestige and luster to the American dance theatre—Graham herself continues as the most important creative force in modern dance—but all of them have disciples who, while forging their own paths, stem from the pioneers. José Limón, the senior of the lot (a product of Humphrey-Weidman), cannot be said to belong to today's *avant-garde*, although he is quite probably the best known of America's men dancers-choreographers in the modern field. Pearl Lang, trained by Graham, is both modern and highly inventive, but her tenets are close to those of Graham. The same may be said of the young, highly imaginative Norman Walker. And

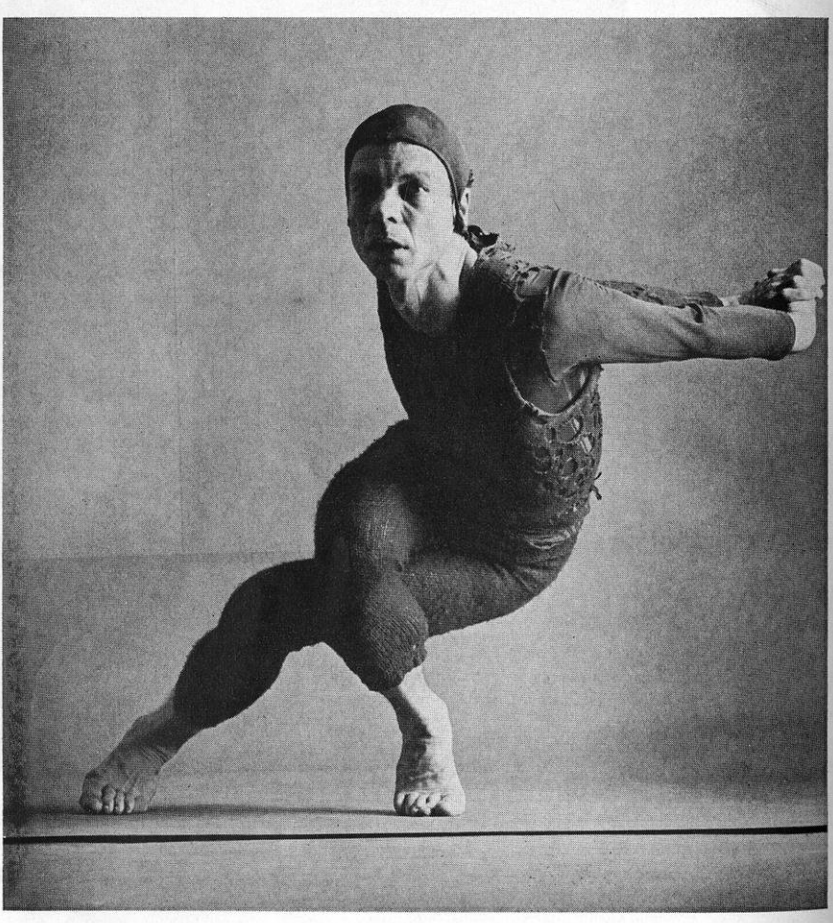
there are still others who believe in giving "substance to things felt" and in revealing the "inner man."

Those who oppose these and related concepts of dance are today's leaders of the *avant-garde*. Merce Cunningham, early in his career a leading soloist in the Graham company, is one of America's most brilliant dancers and a pioneer in today's *avant-garde*. Working in close collaboration with the *avant-garde* composer, John Cage, and with such painters of the *avant-garde* school as Robert Rauschenberg, he has introduced works which have excited, outraged, stirred, angered, amused, and illuminated audiences around the world.

Cunningham has experimented with the chance theory in form and design. That is, he has permitted the accidental patterns of Chinese sticks, which have been tossed and fall as they might, to determine his dance patterns. The Cage scores, some of them based on an overall time span but not upon a determined note by a given instrument at a particular time, have obviously affected his choreographic approach. In some of his creations, the sequences can vary from performance to performance.

Often, in a Cunningham creation, the choreography and the score appear to have no relationship at all. They exist together but they are not interrelated. Cunningham, who has been an independent artist for twenty years, works in an area which Cage has described thusly:

Merce Cunningham



It is assumed that dance supports itself and does not need support from music. The two arts take place in a common place and time, but each art expresses this Space-Time in its own way. The result is an activity of interpenetrations in time and space, not counterpoints, nor controlled relationships, but flexibilities as are known from the mobiles of Alexander Calder. By not relying on psychology, this "modern" dance is freed from the concerns of most such dancing. . . . Where other music and dance generally attempt to "say" something, this theatre is one that "presents" activity. This can be said to affirm life; to introduce an audience, not to a specialized world of art, but to the open, unpredictably changing, world of everyday living.

The titles of Cunningham creations do not necessarily suggest the *avant-garde*. An early work, such as "Root of an Unfocus" may do so, but many have quite ordinary names such as "Septet," "Nocturnes," "Suite for Five" or simply, "Story." A piece called "Antic Meet" does indeed promise quite fairly what is about to happen, for it is an antic display in which the choreographer satirizes various aspects of behavior, both in society itself and in styles of dance. For example, in classical ballet, the ballerina frequently requires the support of a partner in turns or lifts; for his comment on this, Mr. Cunningham has a chair strapped to his back, the seat facing outwards so that the female dancer may avail herself of this kind of support.

In "Summerspace," the costumes and the decor, conceived in pointillist effect by Robert Rauschenberg, are so planned that the dancers blend in with the backdrop when they are motionless and take on their own detached identity only when they move.

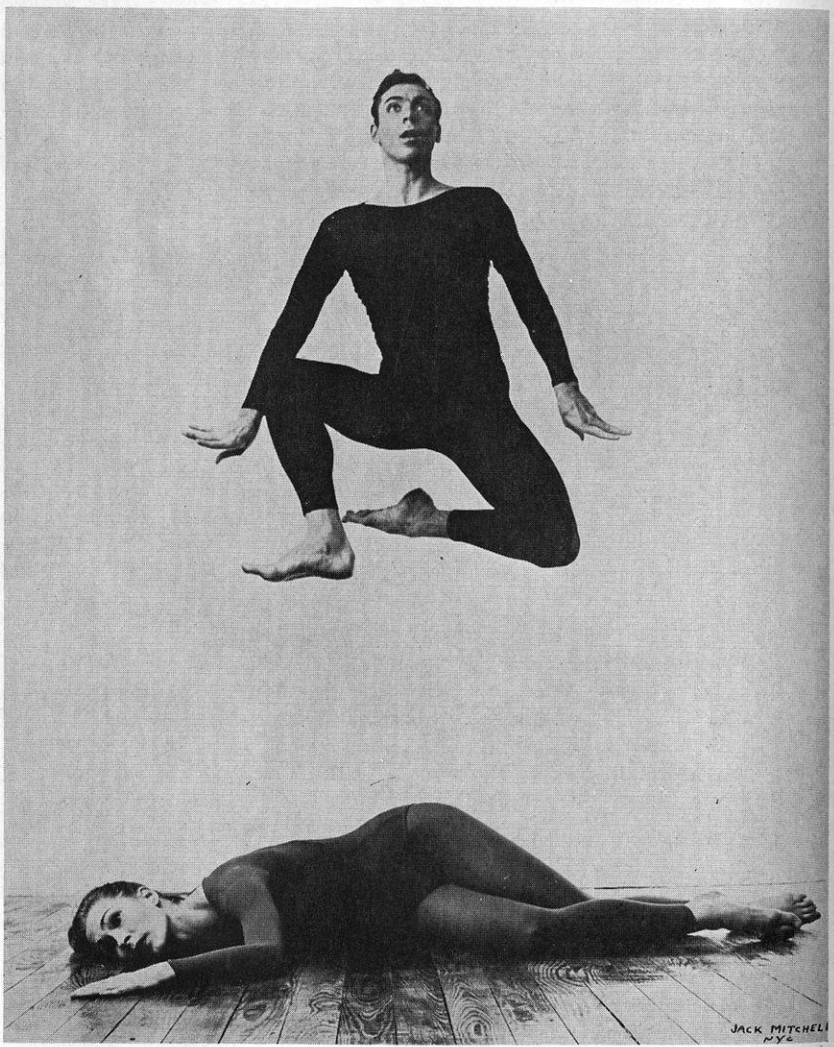
Motionless dancers, incidentally, are by no means unknown to the *avant-garde*. Paul Taylor, one of the most brilliant of the *avant-garde* dancers and choreographers, in one of his earliest independent efforts presented a duet in which the curtain rose on a man (Taylor) and a girl. They never moved and, eventually, the curtain fell. On the same program, Taylor appeared in a piece called "Epic." There was a minimum of movement to the long, long first part and the accompaniment was the voice one hears over the telephone when dialing for the correct time: "When you hear the tone the time will be. . . ." This was repeated at the usual intervals, as seconds and minutes passed and were remorselessly recorded, throughout the entire dance.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. Taylor went off on a new direction of experimentation, one which exploited his remarkable physical prowess (as well as the skills of his assisting dancers) and his delicately barbed sense of humor. His "Epitaphs," for example, in which black-clad ghouls perform, is not ghoulish in its effect upon an audience; to the contrary, it evokes a kind of antic gaiety in cemetery atmosphere.

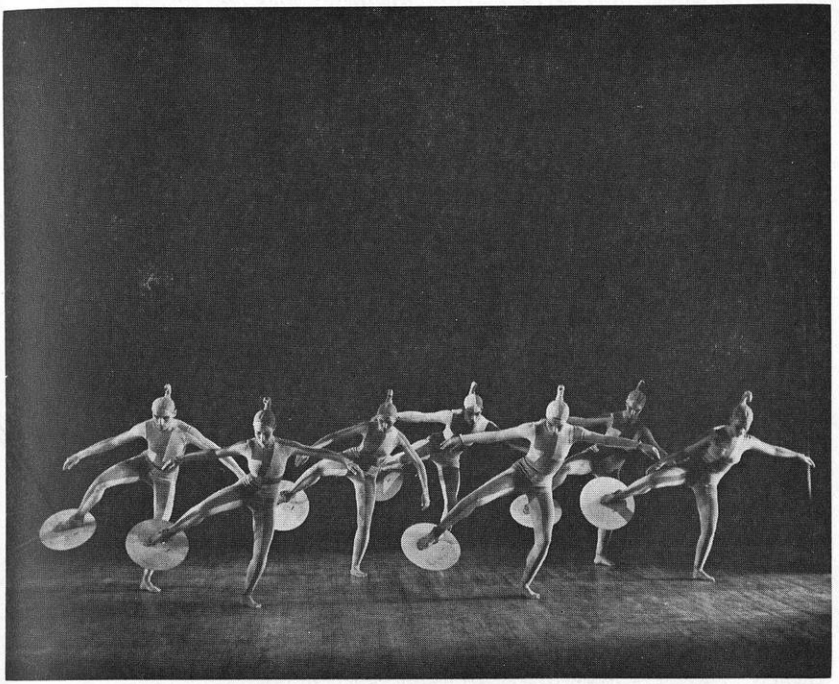
Taylor, as all *avant-gardists* should be, is unpredictable. He employs *avant-garde* decor and musical accompaniments on certain occasions; but then again, he will use as musical backgrounds the compositions of the master classicists of earlier centuries. Often, his own costume is a pure white (or a solid color) uniform of tights which cover him, and mold him, from neck to ankles. This gives accent to the contours and musculature of a handsome body which moves with a sense of sinuosity and with mercurial speed.

Both Cunningham and Taylor in their experiments challenge and disturb the viewer; and this is as it should be, for an art which is merely diverting is just barely an art. To stimulate the mind, to illumine the spirit (or the conscience) are major functions of any great art. The *avant-gardist,* because of the very nature of his testings, may not always be illuminating but he can be healthily disturbing. Occasionally, it is possible to carry the disturbing element too far. In a work such as "Aeon," Cunningham literally clobbers an audience, not so much through his choreography (which is stretched, as the title omens, to such unforgivable length that it becomes boring) as through the John Cage score ("Atlas Eclipticalis" with "Winter Music" in an electronic version) which is so cruelly amplified that it is torture—approaching sadism—to the ears. When members of an audience must press their fingers in their ears or leave an auditorium in terror of what seems to augur broken eardrums, the *avant-garde* has departed from sense and responsibility and has become simply arrogant.

Alwin Nikolais, director and chief choreographer of the Henry Street



Paul Taylor and Bettie de Jong in *Scudorama*



The Alwin Nikolais Dance Company in *Kaleidoscope*

Playhouse Dance Company, is a major figure in America's *avant-garde* dance. He never compromises with his principles, which stress dehumanization of the dancer, but, on the other hand, he never offends an audience. He does challenge and he does disturb, but he is intensely theatrical as he pursues creatively his concept of the equality of motion, color, sound, shape and form in this theatre.

Nikolais, who designs his lighting and creates his own scores as well as choreographing his productions, employs the dehumanized dance figure because he believes that, in this age of space and speed, man has not yet found his role, that he is an indeterminate figure, at least for the present. Therefore his dancers often wear fantastic costumes which obscure their humanness and suggest either creatures from unknown worlds or, simply, forms which move and make patterns. Even when he presents a body unencumbered by costume or prop, it is the contour of the body as it is defined, in action or repose, in space with which he is concerned.

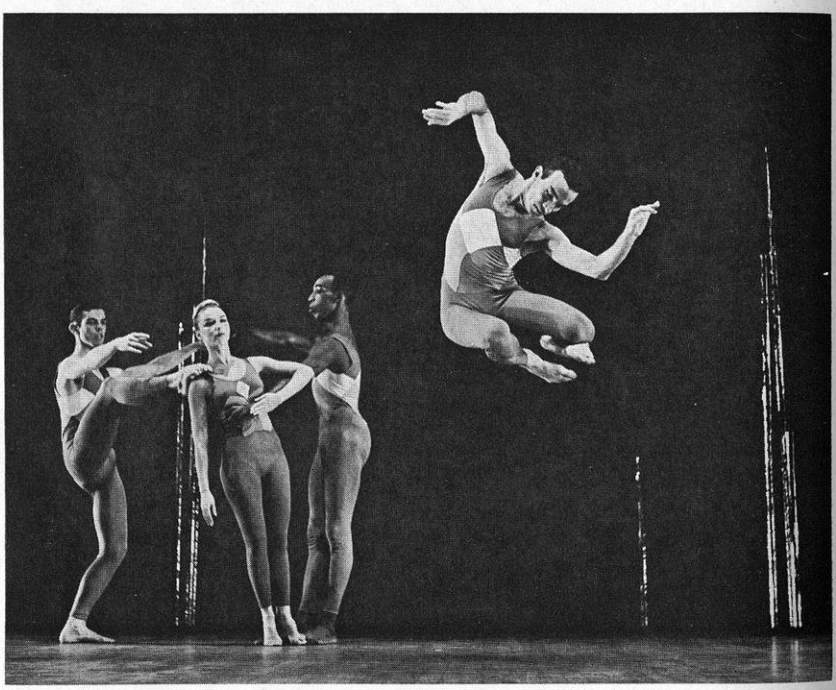
Such is the visual impact of his *avant-garde* creations that he has been able to bridge the gap between the *avant-garde* theatre and the popular medium of television. His company does not appear regularly on TV but when it does, the Nikolais dances work because, abstract or not, they exploit brilliantly the visual in dance linked with the aural in melody, rhythm, music, or simply pertinent sound effect.

Murray Louis, a Nikolais disciple, is also an *avant-gardist*. A superb dance technician, he does not copy Nikolais as a choreographer. He works and moves and creates within the Nikolais spectrum but he does so on his own terms. Others of his associates at the Henry Street Playhouse also choreograph and present their own programs and they too are *avant-gardists*, touched by the Nikolais concepts of theatre but experimentalists themselves.

Perhaps the most "way-out" of the *avant-garde* dancers and choreographers in the New York City area are those associated with the Judson Dance Theatre. (The name, oddly enough, comes from the Judson Memorial

Church in which they have found performing facilities, although they do dance elsewhere in off-Broadway theatres, studios, galleries.) The membership is not set, since new faces appear while others depart for personal projects, only to return. The point is that most of those associated with the Judson group, consistently or loosely, are constant and important members of the *avant-garde* in dance. Almost all of them are of the dead-pan school of performing; they permit painters to choreograph for them; they use the auditorium of a theatre as well as the stage for their actions (so also did the madcap comedy team of Olsen and Johnson); and words, noises, grunts, screams, silences are all a part of their experiments.

In a group dance created by Yvonne Rainer, the onstage activity includes an exchange of word associations between two girls. It is something like a psychology laboratory test for college freshmen, but it has been controlled so that it emerges as a witty bit of verbal exchange. While this is going on, a small ensemble of men (sometimes augmented by a girl) races down two aisles (or if the theatre has only a single aisle, one will do), vaults to the stage, penetrates the stage figurations and departs immediately, only to repeat the pattern again and again. It is not possible to provide a literal explanation of the action, but the bodies



Murray Louis and guest artists, Roger Rowell, Phyllis Lamhut and Bill Frank in *Interims*

coursing down the aisles, with their rhythmically pounding feet, infiltrating the stage plan and dispersing are rather like the onrushing tide invading a shore and bringing with each roll new elements and new conditions.

Another of this group's creations involved a reclining nude. And yet another, choreographed by a painter, called for a dancer, with flashlight strapped to leg, to roll around a darkened stage permitting the light to splash its own patterns on backdrop, floor, side panels or just space itself. The result, however, would be more closely allied to ephemerally conceived (with chance as a vital element) painting with light experiment than with dance.

Certain of the *avant-garde* dancers, such as James Waring or Aileen Passloff, introduce elements of ballet into their works just as Balanchine in his *avant-garde* ballet "Episodes" (to music of Webern) or sections of his "Ivesiana" (to music of Ives) introduces movement distortions into his basic ballet forms.

Eric Hawkins, once a leading dancer in Martha Graham's company (and before that a ballet dancer and choreographer), is chiefly concerned choreographically with abstractions or distillations of forms or ideas. He also is mainly of the dehumanized school, that is, as far as facial expression or emotional gestures are concerned, but he does choose to display the natural contours of the human body and his dance designs almost always invite the eye to regard the beauty of the body in motion or rest, albeit coolly.

Important to Hawkins' current experimentations is the work of his composer, Lucia Dlugoszewski, whose scores require "prepared" pianos or new instruments, mainly percussive, of her own devising. Sometimes she is actually on stage as she performs and thus becomes a part of the choreography.

The overall pattern of *avant-garde* experimentation in dance is, oddly enough, a very familiar one, a recurrent one, for in each period, the "interpenetrations" of time and space of which John Cage speaks are present, though their usages differ from generation to generation. This means that *avant-garde* dancers seek association with others of their kind, *avant-garde* composers, *avant-garde* painters. This has almost always been true of any *avant-garde* movement. One may say that Isadora Duncan danced to the established musical classics. So she did, but her heresy, her *avant garde* approach, was that she dared to dance to them, that she discovered dance in music not originally written for dance.

It is now almost impossible for us to realize that Tchaikovsky's score for the ballet "Swan Lake" was once considered "too symphonic" for dancing purposes. In the first blazing years of Diaghileff's Ballets Russes, the West saw ballet which was *avant-garde* to it. Nijinsky, in some of his choreographic experimentations, forsook the traditional turnout of the feet to achieve a hieratic effect and caused a scandal. Bakst and Benois and later Picasso, Matisse, Chagall and other *avant-garde* painters together with, say, the young and rebellious Stravinsky, joined the equally *avant-garde* Nijinsky and his sister, Nijinska, or the youthful Massine or the great rebel of the early part of this century, Fokine, to bring a daring, explosive, tradition-rocking new theatre of ballet to the world. Today, the best of their collaborations have become classics; the lesser essays have been forgotten or relegated to warehouses.

True, America's first experiments in modern dance evaded decor, even by *avant-garde* artists, probably because there had been over-abundant decor in Denishawn; and some choreographers attempted movement without music. But in the end, the age-old collaboration prevails as the *avant-garde* artist of one medium seeks the collaboration—and, I suspect, the sympathy—of a searching colleague in another medium.

The *avant-garde* in dance? It is always with us and always has been. It's function is to discover and to renew, to shake complacency, to irritate and to lead. Too frequently it is used to obscure, as it often does today, a paucity of talent and a minimum of discipline—what sins are committed in the name of the *avant-garde!*—but at its best, it is the herald of a vital dance of tomorrow.

THE QUESTION OF AVANT-GARDE IN MODERN FICTION

by frederick j. hoffman

I

The term *avant-garde* is a borrowed metaphor, taken from the military usage of the French Revolution. Obviously, those who are *"avant-garde,"* whether in revolutionary or in literary tactics, assume a special and a distinguished role "in advance of" those who will or will not follow. There is, of course, a change from time to time in the relationship of *avant-garde* to the rest of society; and there are, also, great differences between one period and another concerning the regard the "leaders" have for each other and for those who are not "with them."

No phrase could change its meaning so radically and so quickly. Yesterday's *avant-garde* celebrity is today's name for high school or apartment (as, for example, the "Picasso Arms"[1]). It is true that the principal figures of literary experiment of the 1920's are now accepted, and even dignified subjects of scholarly biographies and editing.

We have only to assume that "what is new" is "in advance of" what is accepted. But, then, attitudes also change; so that, in our postwar civilization, it is not so much an *experiment* in the form of an art as it is a point of view (more firmly held, more extreme, more boldly defended, than others) that seems *avant-gardiste.* Such a statement as this one of Allen Ginsberg is perhaps typical of our present state:

> *The individual soul is under attack and for that reason a "beat" generation existed and will continue to exist under whatever name Rosey generation lost or as Kerouac once prophecied [sic] Found until it is found. The soul that is. And a social place for the soul to exist manifested in* this *world. . . .*[2]

In short, the *avant-garde* (this *avant-garde,* at least) is really responding principally to the "terror and the shame of the war, the bomb, and the prospects of something worse." It features magazines with titles like *Journal for the Welfare of All Beings, The Panic Button,* and some others with (in a few cases) unprintable titles. There is a strange mixture of horror and anger on the one side with "beatitudes" (also the name of a little magazine) on the other. These latter take on the conviction that individualism, the love of and the assertion of "life," sexual competence and grace, will in some way or other counter the menace of "the bomb." As Norman Mailer has put it, to live with the menace of death is to defy death:

> *. . . if the fate of twentieth-century man is to live with death from adolescence to premature senescence, why then the only life-giving answer is to accept the terms of death, to live with death as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society, to exist without roots, to set out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self . . . .*[3]

II

Taking them all together, the novels of our contemporary time *do* reflect these attitudes in various ways, but not nearly so effectively as contemporary plays, or even poetry. The contemporary novel has become a center of *meditation,* or the dramatistic equivalent of the sermon or editorial. I do not mean that they are sheer exhortation, but simply that there is less "experiment" than one usually finds in *avant-garde* literature. If we concentrate upon the French "nouveau roman," we shall find much (in Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, Michel Butor, others) of what we've become accustomed to in *avant-garde* literature. The point-of-view here *does* yield a special style and an unusual line of structure, in which the action is assumed, muted, or derived from the scene, and the objects (the scene without the persons, what the persons sense or see) are the important center of attention. As Mme. Sarraute has said, this reduction to objects is a striking response to external circumstance:

> *. . . Like the surgeon who eyes the exact spot on which his greatest effort is to be concentrated, isolating it from the rest of the sleeping body, [the reader] has been led to center all his attention and curiosity on some new psychological state, forgetting meanwhile the motionless character, who serves as its chance prop. He has seen time cease to be the swift stream that carried the plot forward, and become a stagnant pool at the bottom of which a slow, subtle decomposition is in progress; he has seen our actions lose their usual motives and accepted meanings, he has witnessed the appearance of hitherto unknown sentiments that were most familiar change both in aspect and name.*[4]

In fact, each national fiction after World War II shows a peculiar dependence: in France, upon the stationary character taking in the sight and arrangement of objects (the *reflecting* self fixing his attention upon the scene and deriving himself from it); in England, upon dialogue (at least in part), or upon Jane Austen without her parsonages and town houses; in Germany, upon the strange, almost Kafkaesque figure, whose reflections upon himself and upon his history constitute the *donnée* of the novel.

The situation is not so simple in the United States. Here, the novel has gone a number of ways. There have been "breakthroughs" in the sense that an easy, fluid style (half autobiographical, half derivative) is accepted—in the case of Jack Kerouac and his contemporaries—as a legitimate form. Kerouac's is not a "picaresque novel"; that phrase (at least in the history of the novel) is much too firmly defined to suit much of Kerouac's work. His novels are expressions of celebration: of the free individual, of the "adventures" of sheer travel (across the Continent, across its boundaries), of other adventures (jazz, sex, the delights of unconventional, "unsquare" living).

In short, Kerouac, like his poet-counterpart, Kenneth Patchen, says "Hurrah for Anything."[5] Kerouac's introduction to *Lonesome Traveler* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1960) will give you some idea of the scope of his free-ranging subject matter:

> *Railroad work, sea work, mysticism, mountain work, lasciviousness, solepsism [sic], self-indulgence, bullfights, drugs, churches, art museums, streets of cities, a mishmosh [sic] of life as lived by an independent educated penniless rake going anywhere.*

"Going anywhere!" And Kerouac is doing just that. He is *On the Road* (1957); he exists within an urban world of simple rules, responding to the "bop ecstasies" it offers (*The Subterraneans,* 1958); he accepts easily the "lessons" of Zen Buddhism in the High Sierras (*The Dharma Bums,* 1958). The style is equally versatile, free of the plot necessities imposed on the traditional novel, like jazz improvisation following a kind of "free association" line. In other words, Kerouac "experiments" with form only as he departs from the artificially structured novel, which means that character itself, or scene, doesn't matter so much as characters and scenes on a line taken in a form of free action.

In fact, this is a key to the literature normally (and inaccurately) labeled "Beat." Kerouac is a comparatively superficial example of the breed. Mailer's more recent (1959) experiments with experience, as well as William Burroughs' descents into the harsh, drug-filled unconscious of his world, are much less "happy," much more strenuous assertions of "separation from the world of the squares." *Naked Lunch* (New York, Grove, 1959) and *The Soft Machine* (Paris, Olympia, 1961) are direct, violent reactions to the world that, having produced the war, is now proceeding to several refinements of it. The excesses of Burroughs' novels are both stylistic and attitudinal. They are the very opposite of the novels of the transplanted Irishman, Samuel Beckett (who, in France, writes novels about Irishmen), which tend to become desperate meditations on the validity and veracity of being. Beckett's heroes disintegrate slowly as they glumly watch the spectacle of their deterioration; Burroughs' characters force their decline, experiment with all possible versions of it. In short, in this corner of the contemporary world, novelists invite every conceivable way of forcing experience and every perversion of it. This is not an "experimental" *avant-garde* at all, though it has the suggestion of stylistic freedom and manipulation. It is essentially an *avant-garde* point of view; in terms of it, the "marginal man," standing at the periphery of society, makes of the very lack of convention a convention itself.[6]

III

If one wishes to be extremely narrow in his search for definitions, what I have described is the *avant-garde* in fiction; that is, if one were to add it to the hundreds of little magazines, which are at present trying to make new paths to the formal expression of contemporary life. What these magazines may do eventually (that is, in the next ten years) to the *form* of the art is not at the moment quite predictable—as is, for example, their effect on poetry and in the drama.

Meanwhile, several conditions are acting to stabilize the present and prevailing manners in the novel. One of them is in the form itself. Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939) is the furthest *formal* extension the genre can have. Except in minor details,

Finnegans Wake is inimitable. Another circumstance acting—at the time, at least—to slow down "experiment" in the form is the basic need of post-Hiroshima times for kinds of reflection and dramatic action that will yield moral suggestions in this world. This is a very different postwar world from that of the 1920's. In the shadows of the twin horrors of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, the question of moral guilt becomes an important, even a "strikingly new" issue.

Along with the clearly obvious protests of beatniks, hipsters, and other marginal societies, the more conventional worlds—societies which themselves were marginal or have had histories of marginality—have slowly come into a great moral inheritance. To call these writers *avant-garde* would be a kind of intrinsic mistake, since their intellectual and moral substances have roots in centuries of characteristic behavior. Yet their work does have a modern stamp on it, that is above all postwar in the special sense that World War II demands. There are the Jews and the Negroes, marginal societies for centuries, each of them with claims on their American white and gentile contemporaries, each of them with a resource for "showing" and demonstrating the peculiar human condition of our times.

The Jewish is perhaps the most nearly and clearly applicable. The works of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Norman Fruchter, and Philip Roth have a specificity of meaning to us that seems on the edge of becoming the most illustrative of contemporary texts. Throughout, there is the figure of the "aggressive victim," the *schlemiehl* in the act of serving his own role as *schlimazl*.[7] The entire record of the last two decades of American society is an "excuse me, ma'am" history, in which aggressor is deeply disturbed by his role, by his being in it, and by the need to define it to himself. Saul Bellow's men—in various guises and forms, of course—are in the phenomenal world (trapped by orders from Uncle Sam, box scores, stockmarket quotes, by their own narrowly confined delicatessen existences); they are also questioning beings. In the sense of one of them, Henderson, they want to know about "this noumenal business" (*Henderson, the Rain King,* New York, Viking, 1959). But, mainly, they wish to define themselves in terms of guilt and victimization. Who is the aggressor, who the victim, in an act that involves race, status, human history, and accidental economic advantages? This question, as well as its many implications, is asked again and again in Bellow's *The Victim* (New York, Vanguard, 1947), one of the most exacting moral exercises in modern fiction.

Questions like it are asked—and the several possible answers dramatized—in Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* (New York, Viking, 1953) and *Herzog* (New York, Viking, 1964). Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant* (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1957) has its own way of treating them. Morris Buber is a kind of Jewish "saint of misfortune," the *schlimazl* of all time, to whose "aid" and undoing the Catholic Frankie Alpine comes. *The Assistant* is a working out before the reader's eyes of the aggressor almost literally becoming his victim, taking on the urgencies of guilt and misfortune when his one-time victim dies from one too many frantic and futile exertions. Philip Roth's *Letting Go* (New York, Random House, 1962) is in many ways a culmination of the Jewish "novel of manners," which involves several kinds of basic problems: the family center, the issue of how much "affection" one can be responsible for accepting, the moral dilemma of the academic "loner," the awkward impasses caused by both generosity and refusal, the *physical* and *social* dis-

advantages of "shacking in" (as distinguished from the conventional moral complications arising from such a situation).

In other words, the contemporary Jewish novel takes all familiar and even simple issues, and applies an entirely new set of insights to them. Socially, these approaches to the issues have been familiar to us for a long time through Jewish humor (the great Jewish vaudevillian, the Yiddish Chaplin, has long ago suggested what lay beneath ethnic slapstick). But, as a basis of our fiction, it is only in recent years that the full implications of the Jewish manners and morality have been exploited.

The Jewish literary history is, of course, a history of an oppressed and a deprived people. Yet, as every cultural historian of any consequence has pointed out, it is only in the last three (at the most, four) decades that Jews have become persons to whose wisdom (born mostly of suffering) we have listened with sincere interest and without discomfort. We *have* become so accustomed to the Jewishness of our contemporaries' wisdom and sincerity, that (except in very isolated extremist groups) they have become a part of our own culture. Our relationship to the Negro is less sure, less easy. The work of James Baldwin (who, surely, replaces Richard Wright as the race's spokesman in literature) has caused so sudden an impact in such a short time, that its truth is sometimes lost in the astonishment which characterizes our reception of it.

Baldwin is an inspired intellectual leader; he is neither a political nor a personal leader, nor does he fit the NAACP or the CORE patterns. He is a sensitive human speaking both bitterly and sagely out of an incredibly unpleasant past (South, Harlem, etc.), and lecturing the white mind and intelligence in a way no other Negro has ever before succeeded in using. Ralph Ellison is perhaps the better artist; I say "perhaps," because in his case it is a long time between novels (his second is still in the process of becoming, though it is also almost existent, since we've known for some time what it *will* be). But Baldwin is at present the most eloquent artist of the urgencies that affect us all, liberal and Birchist, in the 1960's.

IV

These are our *avant-garde* novelists, if you insist. It is a curious time, not in any way so comfortably easy to classify and describe as the 1920's—when both literary and philosophic questions were being answered on both sides of the Atlantic in pretty much the same language. In such circumstances, experiment in form and in intellectual manners could perhaps be unified under a single pair of eyes. If there *is* a "unifying" ideology now, it is Existentialism, which took over from Marxism about 1938 or 1939, when Franco won over the romantic leftists, and Jean-Paul Sartre began what turned out to be an explanation of why Franco should win, and (chiefly) why the dilemma of individual life and the choice of individual death could not be explained by a great, all-inclusive, impersonal ideology.

The burden of our *avant-garde* now is to consider the consequences of the "unseating" of the ideological rider. The "Beats" and the "Hipsters" (they *were* differentiated by Mailer in "The White Negro," but not convincingly) shout their protests against circumstances that have caused the terror of our times. The Jewish novelists apply their own uncertainties and their own very complex *gauchéries* to the questions of survival as human beings and sustaining relatively simple human manners

in the face of rather terrible prospects. We are not sure in 1965 that the audacity of style or the arrogance of superior intellectuality or "sensibility" (the word suggests the great shibboleth of the 1920's) can overcome all and restore the artist to his rightful role. He is now modestly introspective, using the various heritages of his race, disposition, or nature, to provide a language for the expression of his approach to human proprieties.

FOOTNOTES:

[1]As suggested in Harry Levin, "What Was Modernism?" *The Massachusetts Review,* 1 (Summer, 1960), p. 609.

[2]"Back to the Wall," in The (London) *Times Literary Supplement,* August 6, 1964, p. 678. This is a special issue called "The Changing Guard," and it contains many other valuable pieces on the subject under discussion. In fact, an *LTS* issue with (almost) upside-down poetry and shouts by Allen Ginsberg is in itself a strange sign of the *Times!*

[3]"The White Negro," in *Advertisements for Myself* (New York, G. P. Putnam's, 1959), p. 339. Originally published in *Dissent,* Summer 1957.

[4]*The Age of Suspicion,* tr. Maria Jolas (New York, George Braziller, 1963), p. 62. Originally published as *L'Ere du Soupoon,* in 1956.

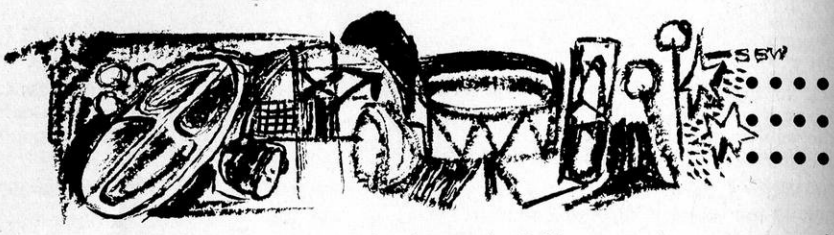
[5]The title of a volume of poems and drawings, published by the Jargon Press (Highlands, North Carolina, 1957).

[6]See my introduction to the book, *Marginal Manners: The Variants of Bohemia* (Evanston, Illinois, Row, Peterson, 1962), pp. 1-13, for an extension of these remarks. The story of recent little magazines (and earlier ones) is being prepared by Professor Felix Pollak and myself.

[7]See Gerald Jay Goldbert, in *Critique,* 3 (Summer, 1963), p. 20, for a discussion of these two terms. The *schlimazl* is, in a sense, the customer in a restaurant, down whose back the *schlemiehl* as waiter spills the hot soup. Both are involved in an accident: one is the victim, the other the clumsy "aggressor."

MUSIC 1965: THE ADVANCE GUARD

by allen sapp



My house is being painted white. As I listen to the scrapers and grinders and see the propane torches melting away the rotten dead skin of this neglected building, I am reminded again of the surgical force of new music. It has, above all, to cleanse and to lay bare so that grafts will take, and strong healthy tissue shall once more invite us.

The newest music, the part of the musical scene where battle is made, is predictably of two main opposing types: a loftily personal, free, and lyrical side, and an elegant, controlled, and number-oriented side. One dares not say *romantic* and *classic,* for these terms are neither modish nor informative. The principal foes seem to be academic music, perfunctory audiences, humorless critics, and fools. The arenas are smaller concert halls, a few periodicals (most notably *Perspectives of New Music*), certain festivals such as the Darmstadt or an early September "do" in New York under the aegis of John Cage, and a few universities which subsidize performances or composition through symposia or research projects or "Centers." The newest music has, from Richard Wagner's time on, always relied on a propaganda apparatus; without the outraged review, the denunciatory polemic, the irate letters to editors, the brilliant if impenetrable program note (supplied by the composer), much of the battle would be a bloodless matter indeed. Words are, and usually have been, a large part of the *avant-garde* movement, and the "objectification" of ideas or words is a feature of most new music concerts. At the same time that one sector is attacking conventional forms and sounds, relying on shock or violation, a second sector is using powerful methods of literary criticism and analysis to formulate an advanced musical style related to numbers and their manipulations.

At the very moment at which there was serious talk (by Karl Heinz Stockhausen) of the end of the performer in the musical scene and his replacement by loudspeakers and tapes, a strong return of the performer to a central position has taken place. Electronic music studios, ranging from the complete and unequalled Columbia-Princeton Center revolving around the RCA Synthesizer to more modest arrangements at the University

of Illinois, Brandeis, Toronto, and Yale, are progressing from an experimental, tentative stage as composers begin to sense the limitations as well as the vast resources of the medium. The extraordinary beauty of Milton Babbitt's latest work, especially *Philomel,* is an indication that composition rather than experimentation is the fact. Vladimir Ussachevsky remarks that the real problem now in electronic music composition is the speeding up of the process, still painfully slow. There is a widespread feeling by composers who have worked in studios that electronic composition will be more useful as an adjunct, an added resource, than as a totally new way of bypassing the performer. The fact that Stockhausen has begun to speak of various methods rather than *the* method, and that his recent music, *Momente* and *Originale,* shows explorations other than electronic, is suggestive of a relaxation of the rather dogmatic position of 1957. New freedom for the performer, or perhaps, more realistically, a dual role for the performer, is an equally strong part of new music. Solo improvisation and group improvisation depend on the development of an instrumentalist-composer species of musician; the results are, so far, inconclusive. The idea of group improvisation has been valuable, particularly as it has been elaborated by Lukas Foss, if only because it marks a return to a traditional kind of musical performance which the rise of the professional recitalist and the major symphony orchestra had caused to lapse. How significant the parallel to jazz improvisation is remains a controversial matter. In the writing and composition of Gunther Schuller there are many explicit absorptions of jazz improvisational practices. On the other hand, it seems more likely that improvisation will become an adjunct or occasional feature of musical composition rather than a distinct new species. The sections of Xenakis' *Pithoprakta* or of Foss' *Echoi* involving group improvisation for short periods seem more fruitful.

Aleatoric or chance music is curiously supported by the more abstract wing who relate it to the chance events of atomic disintegration or to Markov chains and such, as well as by the improvising wing who have explored new methods of notation, symbolic of complexes of musical events rather than specifically denotational, in order to make each rendition of a work a new one. The classic work remains Stockhausen's *Klavierstuck XI* in which sections of the work are printed on a large single sheet. By following a set of directions which relate to speed, dynamics and "route," a performer can perform the piece in a more or less random way, skipping from fragment to fragment. The general notion that a work of music can have a number of simultaneous lives is not so strange if one but compares half a dozen performances of any major work; that it can be structured after the manner of kaleidoscopes is somewhat more ingenious. Aleatoric composition ranges from variability in which the taste, discretion, imagination, and mood of the performer literally create something new each time. The inherent problems of this kind of artistic license are pretty obvious; such music demands the highest order of sympathetic performers. Imagine a jigsaw puzzle, a map of Africa. Its hundreds of finely cut pieces have a disturbing habit of changing shape each time you try to put the puzzle

together. And what is even more trying, the dimensions of the whole map change so that the comfortable solution of Monday on the card table must yield on Thursday to the entire living room floor.

It has been true always that the newest music asks much more of players and their instruments or singers and their voices. Our time is no exception. There is not much easy music—although some of it is harder on paper because the system of setting it down does not fit any more. The bright young pianists like Paul Jacobs and David Tudor have a command of dense patterns, convoluted figurations, and immensely difficult time sequences which remain even after repeated demonstration. The players of Boulez' *Le Marteau sans Maitre* must have a sense of synchronous gestures at once automatic and again acutely conscious of those fulcrums upon which the structure is balanced. All this is to suggest that chamber music or music for miscellaneous, special, *ad hoc* ensembles is the rule of new music. Special cadres of players are developing in response to the technical problems—the students of Gazelloni, Rehfuss, and Scherchen in Europe and the superb new ensembles at the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts in Buffalo, the Columbia New Music Group, the University of Chicago group under Ralph Shapey, and the San Francisco Tape Center under Morton Subotnick. It is quite interesting to see the degree of university support for advanced music. In terms of regional development outside the New York or Los Angeles area—and such development is essential to the national music scene—this measure of university support is doubly welcome.

The classic problems of audience acceptance remain much the same as they were when Schoenberg gave up and established the Society for Private Performances in Vienna two generations ago. The opportunities for advanced music to affect a large segment of the traditional symphony or opera audience are rare. The leading orchestras are getting around to performances of the "tough" 20th-century classics like the Schoenberg *Variations,* the Bartok *Music for Strings Percussion and Celesta,* or Berg's *Der Wein.* However, the audiences of the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony and the Cleveland Orchestra seem to be willing to accept a surprising amount of new music, some of it of uncompromising character. However, it is to the educational centers such as the Berkshire Music Center with its broad and excellent pattern of promoting young composers that one looks for the significant effort to change public interest in new music. In any case, there are many audiences; to attempt to capture them all or to reach them all is absurd. It would be fair to say that, given a reasonably sympathetic audience, reactions range from bewilderment to anxiety, dismay, or disgust. An inevitable progress from restlessness to hysteria (marked by uncontrollable giggling) to sullen apathy or rejection by leaving the hall is quite characteristic of audience response to the new music program.

For many times the question is being asked at these concerts: *What is music?* Such questioning is felt to be improper at best and downright churlish at worst by many well-disposed listeners. Music of chance, electronic music, computer-produced scores, compositions based on mathematical for-

mulae, or analogs to physical phenomena—all these are clearly, if not always profoundly, musical. There is a growing interest in creating a musico-dramatic occasion involving mime or *events* of some order, music surrounding or being associated with visual events. Often there is a conscious effort at *not* relating the music and action. It is concurrent and simultaneous but not coordinate. Luciano Berio and Maurizio Kagel are exploring these varieties of *music plus* or *action-music,* to borrow Harold Rosenberg's term. The most highly refined style so far has come about through the association of Robert Rauschenberg, Merce Cunningham, John Cage and David Tudor, who have evolved together a medium neither dance nor mime nor masque but a kind of federated bond of movement and sound. To say that there is a true *music of the absurd* is stretching things, but such "concerts" as the attack on a piano with an electric saw, the "recital" consisting of piano plus performer plus walk on and walk off plus silence for quite a number of minutes, or an endless day-long repetition of one work of Satie (the fee diminishing in proportion to the time spent in the hall) are close enough.

Attacks on institutions, the establishment, society, tradition, conventional *mores* are fundamental to music of the *avant-garde.* When Michael von Biel reaches inside a piano to strain at the innards until a string snaps or a cry of anguish at the stylized rape occurs, or when he flogs a cello with a bow until every bit of hair is shredded off, he is interested above all in the quality of the gesture. There is also a glint of the mad humor of a Harpo Marx in such music as Morton Feldman's. Feldman peers out at the world with very old-fashioned spectacles, using a Babylonian clock and a lovely sense of the fringes of the impossible. He is a satirist and parodist, not of the *New Yorker* variety, but of *Simplicissimus,* or *Krokodil* at its best. His favorite resources are an exasperating, slowly eroding monotony made more irritating by an occasional owlish look as if to say, "Why don't you sit back and have a good laugh!"

From a technical view the new music has loosened up instruments and caused the young clarinetist to acquire "white tones" and flutter-tonguing, the young pianist to become agile at leaping up so that he can pluck the strings or hammer them with mallets, the flute to increase its agility and become from time to time a kind of percussion instrument, the harp to take on a thoroughly masculine role in central percussion far away from the creamy glissandos of a Maurice Ravel, and the whole percussion section to become the *animus* of the music, alive with rhythmic interconnections and hues. The tapestry of sound is more Byzantine than pointillistic, richer than it was in the classical Webern works like the *Symphony* and *Concerto.* In fact there is a fleshy tone to much new work, sensuous and ripe. The high point of totally organized music reached in Boulez' *Structures* of ten years ago has been unsurpassed as composers try for the massive (Stockhausen, *Gruppen*), the ecstatic (Messiaen, *Oiseaux Exotiques*), the serene (Penderecki, *Psalms*). This recent concern with richness bespeaks the more pliable, less abstract uses of the serial technique, which has become the normal procedural mode of most composers. As soon as composers discover the elasticity of serial writing, its virtually inexhaustible opportunities if

applied to notions of line, sonority, and structure, they have embraced it (along with more elegant mathematical treatments) as a convenience rather than a dogma.

One contribution of a vigorous *avant-garde* is its role as a point of reference. It is a kind of outer limit in the frame of expressive possibilities with coordinates in the axis of time. To composers of the middle and quite possibly far more significant range such as Elliot Carter, Leon Kirchner, and Andrew Imbrie, the functioning of this outer limit has uses, more or less personal. Equally valuable is the sense of strong antagonism which David Diamond feels about the aesthetic of the *avant-garde.* In his case the reaction is almost totally negative. He has publicly denounced what he considers the excesses and failures, the "amusicality" of the Darmstadt-New York group (who themselves have their quota of internal disagreement). Whatever one's own concept of the role of a composer or artist, a healthy (and this matter of health seems a preoccupation of most critics) outer fringe makes it easier to define. There is always at least as much social effect as musical product in the affairs of *avant-gardistes.* It is their very concern for society which gives them privilege. They rasp at solemnities and ridicule pomposities; they do not generally have the masterwork syndrome.

What of value do they compose? Ah, this is the sticky question and might best be ruled out of order by Queen's counsel (that is to say, Alice's Queen). The distressing thought that an enduring work might come from this movement bothers even the most casual charter member. *Ionisation* of Varese is presently enshrined (and properly so) as a grandly original work of power, substance, and memorability—a work of the *avant-garde* of forty years ago. What is beyond question today is the extraordinary musicianship and musicality of the performers and composers who appear regularly at new music concerts. The credentials of Frederick Rzewski, for example, are impeccable; his Bach is as refined as his Nilsson. His own music with its immense anger and passion is testimony enough and his playing confirms his professionalism. The weakest possible attack on the *avant-garde* is amateurishness. There are always amateurs about on the borders, malcontents and *musiciens manqués,* and there is a streak of charlatanism which crops up occasionally; but by and large the impressive thing about the 1965 scene is the deployment of well-trained and well-rounded musicians.

My house is now white. It already is showing the first sprinklings of industrial fallout. In a year it will be streaked and smudgy. Sooner or later the bubbles and blisters will appear and at last the abrasives will have to be summoned in again. In the music world the *avant-garde* is fighting gray-suitism in composers, foundation impersonality, the whole vague system of bureaucratic clasps which menace individual comment, pretentiousness by means of the therapy of ridicule, and the concept of music as an independent means of communication. These are not windmills nor are the joustings in vain or purposeless. They are not usually dignified—but then, combat seldom is.

THE AVANT-GARDE AND THE INCREDIBLE SEEING MACHINE

by richard byrne

On December 28, 1895, Louis Lumière suspended a sheet in the Grand Café in Paris. When he lowered the lights and turned a crank on his curious "Cinématographe," Parisians saw something new. In a marvelous flutter of light and shadow a train pulled into a station, a brick wall crashed to the ground, baby Lumière ate breakfast. A seeing machine had captured and preserved real life events.

In the Grand Café that historic evening sat Georges Méliès, a magician, machinist, and visionary. During the following decade his perceptive eye and camera trickery were to produce dreams, mysteries, a land of enchantment. Again audiences were to see something new: a mandarin changing instantly into a worm, a dancer whose arms and legs fly away in a wild and impossible dance of their own, genies, ghosts, miracles.

The work of Lumière and Méliès in the early years of the cinema defined two contradictory impulses of the medium. The motion picture tends to embrace physical reality, showing the surfaces of things; yet its technical characteristics equip it to create new worlds of time and space. Those film-makers known as the "*avant-garde*" have historically felt the attraction of both fact and fancy, the real and the magical. However, both urges have a common basis: the desire to sharpen the razor of vision, to force the spectator to *see* with new clarity.

Some *avant-garde* film-makers focussed on the commonplace in an attempt to bring the world alive visually. The Russian school of dialectical montage led by Lev Kuleshov, Sergei Eisenstein, and Vsevelod Pudovkin constructed events from strips of celluloid showing bits of reality in such a way that the attention of the spectator was constantly controlled to achieve a desired thematic effect.

Other *avant-gardists* probed the realm of the dream, the subconscious, the fanciful. German Expressionism sported fantastic quasi-cubistic painted settings, mad Caligaris, and assorted necrophagous tyrants. Dadaism produced absurdly gay and iconoclastic "mechanical ballets." Surrealism relied on "automatic writing," a stream-of-consciousness flow of dream images, and spontaneous symbols called "exquisite corpses."

The abstract or "Pure" film was a result of interest in formal relationships of objects at rest and in motion. Oskar Fischinger, Walter Ruttman, Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling, Len Lye, Norman McLaren and others created "nonobjective" films containing no recognizable objects. They consisted simply of geometric forms which shifted and blended in kaleidoscopic patterns.

These movements toward the Real, the Dream, and the Abstract had

in common the desire to refocus human vision and to show something other than the artificial "reality" of the fictional feature film. Current *avant-garde* film movements are again exploring both real and fanciful materials in an attempt to increase the expressive potential of the motion picture medium.

CINÉMA VÉRITÉ

One group of experimentalists, commonly but uncomfortably lumped under the title *cinéma vérité,* demonstrates the urge toward documentary realism. Richard Leacock *(Crisis, On the Pole, Primary, The Chair),* Al and David Maysles *(The Showman),* Dan Drasin *(Sunday),* Chris Marker *(Le Joli Mai),* Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin *(Chronique D'Un Été)* and Jean Herman *(Bon Pour La Vie Civile)* try to catch the elusive feel of present experience, to convey the sense of "being there."

The style of "cinema truth" has been greatly influenced by a technological revolution in camera equipment. Cameras, sound recorders, and lighting instruments are being transistorized and miniaturized. The 500 to 1000 pounds of 35 millimeter equipment required for filming a simple on-location sound sequence have been reduced to portable packs which can be carried by a crew of two. Instead of being chained to the earth by tripods and ponderous equipment, the cameraman is free to roam widely and rapidly. The disciples of *cinéma vérité* frequently work holding the camera in hand, which results in an apparent lack of technical perfection, but also provides a sense of spontaneity, immediacy, and truth. John Fuller notes that *cinéma vérité* produces "great footage rather than good photography," capturing the fascinating rather than the merely attractive.

In addition to emphasizing the mobility of the camera, *cinéma vérité* has shown particular adaptability to themes and subject matter of social and political significance. The best of *cinéma vérité* has examined social institutions and public events and revealed them in new perspective.

THE NEW AMERICAN CINEMA

If cinéma Vérité represents the Lumière tradition, the spiritual descendants of Méliès are probably to be found in a lively and sometimes puzzling movement known as the New American Cinema, or the Underground Cinema. The founder, polemicist, and high priest of the Underground Cinema is Jonas Mekas, soft-spoken author of the "Movie Journal" column in *The Village Voice* and editor of *Film Culture* magazine, the house organ for New American Cinema. Mekas has devoted himself to encouraging the *avant-garde* and disparaging the mainstream of current filmmaking.

The birth of the New American Cinema as a movement came, Mekas says, after the appearance of such experimental films as John Cassavetes' improvised *Shadows;* Robert Frank's *Pull My Daisy* with Beat prophets Greg Corso, Allen Ginsberg, and Peter Orlovsky miming gay and whimsical nonsense to an improvised commentary by Jack Kerouac; and the documentary treatment of life *On the Bowery* by Lionel Rogosin. These films seemed to characterize a reaction against "official cinema," the traditional mode of feature film-making which Mekas charged was "morally corrupt, esthetically obsolete, thematically superficial, temperamentally boring."

The New American Cinema Group purported to seek a new art of the cinema, guided by the beliefs that (1) cinema is an art of personal expression, (2) censorship should be rejected, (3) new sources of financing for low budget films should be found, (4) a cooperative distribution agency should be formed to share expenses and establish a fund for completion of

N.A.C. films. All of this is directed toward creation of a new, startling, rough, and alive motion picture art.

Mekas admits that the N.A.C. is as "disorganized, unsophisticated, anarchistic," as the Bleeker Street Cinema charged when dropping a series of N.A.C. films. Although a few of the film-makers are wealthy, notably millionaire Lionel Rogosin and Pop artist Andy Warhol, most are angry, rebellious, and apparently hungry, a self-styled *salon des refuses*. The films of the Underground Cinema are distributed by Film-makers' Cooperative, an agency organized and directed by Mekas. Profits from the Cooperative and from Monday night screenings at the Gramercy Arts Theatre (average nightly profit: $80) are placed in a fund for purchase of film stock and equipment for deserving Undergrounders. Some stock is acquired free, such as the out-of-date government surplus machine gun film upon which Ron Rice's *Flower Thief* was shot.

A leading light of the N.A.C. is Stan Brakhage, a young man who for almost a decade has experimented with semi-abstract dream films. Brakhage regards film as an intensely personal art form. He films himself (struggling up a mountain in *Dog Star Man),* his wife's nude body *(Wedlock House: An Intercourse),* the birth of his child *(Window Water Baby Moving),* his dog decaying "in four interrelated dreamlike sequences" *(Sirius Remembered).* These grim and raw personal recollections, generally only half recognizable images because of a moving camera, spit on the lens, out-of-focus footage or rapid cutting, are interspersed with abstract images of moving colored lights, scratches on the film or simply blank leader which allows a blinding light to blast the screen and the eye of the viewer.

Brakhage claims to be influenced by Gertrude Stein and is seeking a language of visual metaphor. Mekas calls Brakhage's short, disjunctive, abstract blurts of imagery "film sentences" and equates them to the ideogram principle of Eisenstein. Greg Markopoulos advocates a smiliar system of "film phrases" in an essay on a "new narrative form" in motion pictures. Certainly the notion of metaphoric expression in film is valid, as is the desire to create aesthetically pleasing abstract patterns and rhythms which are analogous to musical composition. But these visual forms only create a "composition" when they are organically related and woven into a structural complex which can be detected by the spectator.

The film which has gained the greatest notoriety for the Underground Cinema is *Flaming Creatures,* directed by Jack Smith *(Scotch Tape, The Great Pasty Triumph, Blonde Cobra). Flaming Creatures* is a bizarre work praised by *Film Culture* as striking us with "the glory, the pageantry of Transylvestia and the magic of Fairyland." Arthur Knight labeled it a "faggoty stag reel." In New York the film was declared to be obscene, a print was seized by detectives from the district attorney's office, and Mekas and three others were arrested for screening it. This event and the ensuing dispute over censorship brought New American Cinema dramatically into the public eye.

Flaming Creatures treats intricate variations of sexual perversion in graphic detail, including fellatio, cunnilingus, transvestitism and fetishism, interspersed with startling closeups of genitalia of both sexes. The decor is weirdly oriental, which relates it to the current cult of "Campiness" in the New York *avant-garde.*

The notion of "Camp," as discussed by Susan Sontag in the *Partisan Review* and illustrated in some N.A.C. films, celebrates the contrast between silly or extravagant content and rich form. Miss Sontag notes the homosexual affinities of Camp, and suggests that the connoisseur of Camp

finds his pleasure in the culture of the masses. Camp is derived from such ornate art forms as 18th-century Chinoiserie, 19th-century Art Nouveau, and the mock-Oriental settings of Maria Montez movies. Smith, director of *Creatures,* has written an article for *Film Culture* entitled "The Perfect Filmic Appositeness of Maria Montez." In this article Smith demonstrates the anti-aesthetic bias of the Underground by extolling films disregarded by High Culture, such as Judy Canova comedies, Zombie films, and all musicals with Rio de Janeiro production numbers. Smith yearns for "Montezland," a *terra exotica* of rouged and bejeweled transvestite lovers, the home of *Flaming Creatures.*

Andy Warhol, the present darling of Pop art, has carried one theme almost to its limit. In his graphic and plastic art Warhol chooses a commonplace object and asks in effect, "Have you ever really SEEN a can of tomato soup?" Painting of tomato soup can by Andy Warhol: $1,500. Actual can of tomato soup with signature of Andy Warhol: $6. Granting expression to his urge to look closely at things and to re-present them unformed or unaltered by any aesthetic consideration, Warhol has produced films such as *Eat* (a closeup of Pop artist Robert Indiana chewing a mushroom), *Sleep* (a six-hour film showing a man sleeping, opening with a 45-minute shot of his abdomen rising and falling rhythmically), and *Empire* (a single, unchanging shot of the Empire State Building taken from the 41st floor of the Time-Life building, which runs all night). His films are generally silent, but were presented in the Lincoln Center during the 2nd New York Film Festival with an electronic score "composed" by Lamont Young, consisting of a single continuous note of 400 cycles per second.

A final school of experimentalists are abstractionists and animators called "cine-plasts" by Mekas. These film-makers show a more appreciable sense of form than their "film poet" colleagues and create handsome and well-organized graphic effects. Stan Vanderbeek *(Science Friction, Summitry, A La Mode)* and Carmen D'Avino *(Pianissimo, The Big O, The Stone Sonata)* are experimenting with the collage technique of animation. They use the hard edge and clean line of popular advertising materials and produce films of unusual charm, wit, and satirical insight. In their way these animators are making devastating social comments as valid and pertinent as those of *cinéma vérité,* and formally far more satisfying than the work of the "film poets."

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

As equipment changes the capabilities of the medium change. Technological advances and experimentation may result in innovations which will stimulate even more *avant-garde* efforts. The effect of miniaturization on *cinéma vérité* has already been noted. Demonstrations at the New York World's Fair of techniques of multiple-screen projection, although only an advanced form of the forty-year-old triptych screen of Abel Gance, may again alter the conception of what a motion picture is. Research with the 360° panoramic screen and the hemispheric dome screen will obviously alter the traditional concepts of cinematic empathy and aesthetic distance.

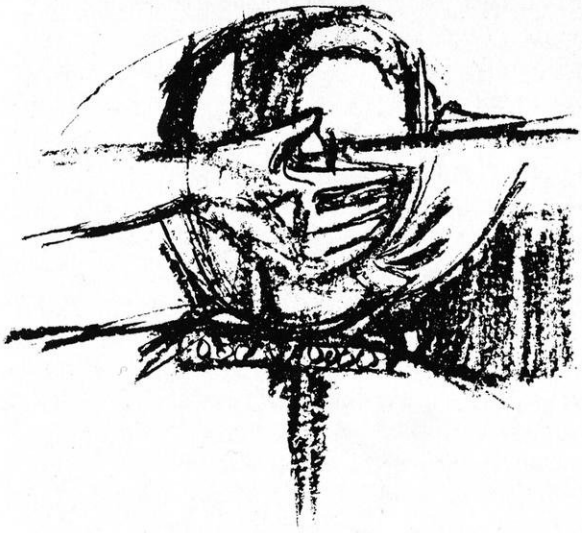
Development of high-quality equipment of substandard sizes, especially 8 millimeter, may transform the commercial nature of the *avant-garde* art film. A portable home projector, built like a television set and accepting magazines of 8 millimeter film, is now on the market. This may create a market for motion pictures as privately owned art works, like paintings, to be viewed repeatedly at leisure in the home.

The art of the motion picture needs to be shaken periodically, to be refreshed and invigorated with new ideas, new personalities, new

visions. *Cinéma vérité*, by freeing the camera and whisking it about the natural world in pursuit of compelling and interesting events related to socially and politically significant issues, is making a contribution to the expansion of film art.

The New American Cinema, while articulating just concern about the mechanical nature of technically perfect films produced by the industrial complex of Hollywood, has relied at times upon a specious form of rebelliousness. By inverting Hollywood production values, N.A.C. has accepted an antistandard which is no standard at all. A shaking camera, over- or underexposure, spit on the lens, long stretches of blank or black leader tell nothing about the state of man and little about the art of film. "Our art is a mess because the world is a mess." Nonsense. Shakiness is not spontaneity. Sloppiness is not honesty. Mere rebellion is not artistic statement.

By scorning the interest of the public and relying on cloying self-indulgence in themes comprehensible only to Camp-followers, the New American Cinema may become solipsistic and hopelessly obscurantist. The seeing machine is most miraculous when it discovers, shows previously unperceived beauties and relationships between event and meaning, and shows these in cogent aesthetic form. The camera can help us to see life more clearly, or even show us wisps of personal dreams which are, to the dreamer, truer than everyday life.



HISTORICISM, AVANT-GARDE-ISM, AND OTHER PAINTERLY AFFLICTIONS

by edmund burke feldman

Painting can be regarded as an art of reconciling the mischievous requirements of variously shaped and colored areas of pigment as they rest or struggle on a flat surface. It may be conceived as the creation or assembly or re-presentation of images in new contexts which *themselves* constitute new images. The art can be thought of as a form of linguistic; or stated otherwise, as symbolic chatter about people and places and pictures and artists and styles. At different times, the art of painting corresponds to one or another of these "definitions" or to all of them at once, which makes for great confusion in our discourse about art while adding immensely to the fund of entertainment available to the public addicted to aesthetic fun and games. But certainly one of the not inconsiderable satisfactions derivable from a modest acquaintance with painting lies in the opportunity it grants us to traffic with inside dope about the currently touted *dernier cri* in the image-making business.

These remarks are meant to constitute a gentle indictment of that easy learning and sophistication which has induced in so many otherwise educated persons a vulgar appreciation of Hegel and the laws of historical change. For them, the spectacle of art is an illustration of the progressive unfolding or dialectical processes in history, the operation of the processes being infinitely more fascinating than the rubble called art. It has ever been thus in the world of fashion. Likewise in the realm of finance, security analysts, with whom the art world is not entirely unacquainted, practice augury and divination, using perhaps the very signs and portents employed by critics, artists and assorted hangers-on who would know the pecuniary significance of them entrails laid out in MOMA. But the art objects, *das ding an sich,* receive scant attention these days as the ultimate and quintessential vehicle of aesthetic value, as the ontic entity of art, because ours is an era afflicted by historicism. Our locus of value reposes, not in the object, nor in discriminating perceptions of it, but rather in those *antecedent* artistic events which make it inevitable that a uniquely ascendant style manifestation seize the imaginations and checkbooks of the art-collecting elite.

Since western man is a creature almost neurotically obsessed with temporal flow, his concern with "what's next" in painterly fashion is understandable as an expression of his gnawing curiosity about how everything will turn out. And this sort of curiosity (which is only a secondary infection) may find a scholarly and intellectual expression unsullied by any mercenary motive. It is only when scholarship and criticism are infected by the tertiary stage of the Hegelian virus, that is, when they teach, guide and organize our perceptions in light of the *progressive evolution of style,* that the aesthetic wells

are poisoned. It is too easy to make the fatuous error of equating evolution of style with the displacement of meretricious art work whose excellence has been ratified through the very processes of history. Historicism begs the serious questions of art criticism since it does not subject works of art to the *sensibility* of critics, but subjects the sensibility of critics to tests of historical alertness.

Hence, what is an *avant-garde?* It is a group of people who are historically alert—not sensitive—alert! It is Reisman's other-directed bunch, whose radar is supported by the finest technology for feeling or possibly stimulating the public's aesthetic pulse. How embarrassing to be obliged to notice that the painterly *avant-garde,* at any given moment, is engaged in a collective pulse-feeling maneuver whose artistic outcome has so often the quality of homogenized obscenity! This is to characterize the antics of the *avant-garde* as a conformity of the influential few. But is there not an authentically creative and genuinely useful *avant-garde* in art, one which serves to innovate, to disseminate new aesthetic discoveries, to apprehend new modes of consciousness, and to prepare certain sectors of the public for impending assaults upon their susceptibilities?

Unfortunately, such an idea is readily acceptable because it is schematically simple. But it relies too heavily on the Marxist notion of the epiphenomenal character of art—another type of Hegelianism. All of us have been taught that art is a *reflection* of social, cultural and historical conditions, whatever they are. This writer abjectly confesses that he has been guilty of uttering such claptrap within the sacred confines of college catalogues and thus has contributed grievously to the miseducation of the young. But art is no such thing! The stuff that "reflects social, cultural, etc. conditions" is the stuff *avant-gardes* produce *after* they have done with public pulse-feeling. Such produce perfectly fits the definitions of art which Hegelians, professors and assorted other defectives have written in bad textbooks. Actually, if we take the expression *avant-garde* seriously, we realize that it cannot exist. It is only what a coterie calls itself.

But there *are* artists—some of them painters—who do original work in the lovely loneliness which always characterizes creative gestation. God knows how they do it, what with all the posturing and trumpeting and puffing and strutting of the *avant-garde.* The original work they do is not at all a "reflection" of their times: it is the very substance, the bone and marrow of their times. *Afterward,* Hegelians and such-like, perceiving the similarity of pervasive forms of feeling and expression to the work of such artists, conclude that the work has merit since it seems to epitomize the *zeitgeist.* Alas, they do not know that art teaches us to conceive, feel and behold. These professors, with their scrupulous respect for facts and reluctance to jump to conclusions . . . they have merely confused a cause with an effect!

Let us examine some contemporary developments in painting with a view to judging how they manifest the *zeitgeist,* without assuming that the *zeitgeist* was there before it got manifested. Pop art, of course, pre-empts the field of vision, and has already given birth to more than its quota of modern masters. Peter Selz has most accurately and succinctly assessed the movement in a short article in *Partisan Review,* subsequently reprinted in this journal. ("The Flaccid Art," *Partisan Review,* Summer, 1963. Reprinted in *Arts in Society,* Vol. 3, No. 1.) One of his remarks anent Pop deserves notice in the present context: "Eager collectors, shrewd dealers, clever publicists, and jazzy museum curators, fearful of being left with the *rear guard* (italics mine), have introduced the great American device of obsolescence into the art world."

And this writer has expressed a qualified judgment about Pop as follows: "From a critical standpoint, it is distressing that Pop art seems itself to have been manufactured for a commercial market and that its perceptions and insights are neither new, subtle, nor artistically interesting. Nevertheless, Pop art demonstrates that even mediocre artists can raise significant questions." ("Works of Art as Humanistic Inquiries," *The School Review,* Vol. 72, No. 3, p. 310.) Quite clearly, Mr. Selz' references to "rear guard" and to "obsolescence" in the art world acknowledge the role which historicism has come to play in the creation, display and collection of art. The fear of being left behind has come to dominate many of the impulses connected with creating or collecting paintings.

A good historicist case can be made to the effect that the emergence of Pop was "inevitable" at this particular moment. The competitiveness of the gallery and museum worlds required that painters create or discover images which were potent enough to overwhelm other works so fortunate as to be contiguously represented on the same wall. Happily, advertising design had performed much of the behaviorist research into the problem of devising images which could arrest the notice of speeding motorists with short attention spans. How logical, then, to borrow the imagery, technique, and scale of poster design. After the success and apparent public surfeit with "action" painting, what style could fill the emotional vacuum left by those delicious, splashy passages of pigment, while at the same time unveiling a new "look"? Rauschenberg tried to retain the best of both worlds in his "combine paintings," as Selz observes, "by fusing them (ordinary objects) provocatively with abstract expressionism." (*op. cit.*) That is, he retained the drip and splatter while also throwing in some paste-ups and three-dimensional stuff to break the picture plane. Thus he could combine the *angst* and familiar agitated brush work of expressionism with words and letters and hard-edge imagery, plus quasi-sculptural objects which presumably are there to raise questions about the dimensional identity of the painted forms and pasted-up reproductions. Whatever the aesthetic consequences of this performance, its merchandising appeal is obvious. Thus, to the historicist question, "What *had* to succeed abstract expressionism?" the ineluctable answer was, "Rauschenberg."

But there was another theme, as old as the Venue of Willendorf. Willem de Kooning had developed it in his post-menopausal *Women,* but it came to occupy the imaginations of the younger men first in the innocent eroticism of Marilyn Monroe, whose tragic demise set in motion a lugubrious national cult of barely concealed necrophilia, one such as had not been witnessed since the death crash of James Dean. Andy Warhol, with that instinct which characterizes the canny manufacturers of medallions bearing the image of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, capitalized on the Monroe legend, employing a sense of timing and visual invention which could find its literary analogues only in Dorothy Kilgallen and Clare Booth Luce.

Everyone knew that Hollywood and Madison Avenue were selling things with more-or-less antiseptic eroticism. But Tom Wesselmann, by suppressing the healthy, outdoor sexuality of the Coca-Cola ads and retaining their undercurrent of insinuation, developed an imagery of genuinely original, pornographic possibility. Indeed he anticipated Terry Sothern's *Candy;* and it became apparent that they were both mining the same vein of the *zeitgeist.* Richard Lindner arrived at a distinctively gross yet immaculate adumbration of the female by combining in her form the mechanized shapes of Leger and Duchamp's devotion to plumbing. To this he added a capacity for post-

cubist rendering of undergarments such as might be gained from assiduous attention to the dry-goods advertisements in the Sunday *Times Magazine.* The result, if shown to a sufficient number of ambivalent male adolescents, might deal effectively with the problems caused by excessive human fertility.

One should not neglect the independent development of the hard-edge school, which managed to exist symbiotically with action painting and Pop alike. Indeed, Robert Indiana represents their *synthesis,* to use the dialectically correct word. The poster format is prominent in Indiana; the iconological origins are clearly assembled from roadside eateries, street signs, pinball machines, and the like. Does it sound hopelessly rear guard to say that the late Stuart Davis carried this material off with infinitely more wit and artistry? (How much metaphysical mileage can the art journalists get out of the observation that Indiana painstakingly re-creates the authentic stenciled lettering of gifted shipping clerks? Or that Roy Lichtenstein meticulously reproduces the Benday tonal effects of comic strips?) The important point is that Indiana's hard edge has nothing to do with the contribution of cubism. Much as it would please our art historical heart to mark the debt to suprematism, vorticism, Malevitch, Albers or Glarner, candor compels us to assert that it is mainly very lovely sign-painting, which, by the way, is not easy. If the viewer is inclined to award extra credit to the artist for sensitive and ironic literary selection, that is the viewer's prerogative.

Let Vasarely stand for a number of hard-edge painters who practice optical slight-of-hand with the heritage of long-departed Pythagoras, employing perspective devices and the old gestalt figure-ground routine. One can say in his favor that he is not literary. In Albers and his acolytes, optical mastery is carried out with color, the hard edge being only a device for reducing the variables in the transaction between picture and viewer. If one is inclined to draw analogies between painting and music, and if one can acquiesce in an art of painting which affords "kicks" by managing the chemistry of the rods and cones in one's eye, then Albers is an original master. Otherwise, his *oeuvre* constitutes convincing evidence of persistent and fruitful research, his considerable importance as a teacher, and an explanation of the regrettable inability of some Yale graduates to perceive the humanistic mainstream (as we Hegelians like to say) and get "with" it.

The reference to research suggests the peculiar, even weird meaning this word has acquired in a painterly context. Those of us in the universities know the sort of semantic fudging we have engaged in to convince our betters that aesthetic "experimentation" is akin to research and thus deserving of similar awards, status and encomiums. But if we did commit such sins, they were venial sins, and designed to confound the Philistine. Artists should be candid, at least with each other, and the notion of art as research betrays either lack of candor or a tragic loss of contact with one's own sensibility. As a mode of activity, painting is just not to be identified with the systematic search for verifiable knowledge according to the model of scientific inquiry. For one thing, artistic failures retain some modicum of aesthetic value, while the research endeavor which leads to a dead end is just that. Perhaps it will be argued that the *structure* of research exhibits aesthetic form, but that is another matter, and, in the poorly qualified judgment of the writer, unlikely.

Obviously research is appropriate to the technology of art and is a useful tool of art education. However, employment of the word with its concomitant mystique as a synonym for the process and product of art is misleading. One can explain the

idea of art as research quite adequately, however, as an invasion of the painter's studio by historicism: each work can be seen as an instance of the progressive unfolding of truth, or beauty or style or whatever. Notice how readily the targets of Kenneth Noland, the superimposed squares of Albers, and the repeated geometries of Vasarely are subsumed under the category of "systematic investigation." These are not to be confused with an artist's infatuation with an unchanging theme and his own changing consciousness, as in Maillol's devotion to the nude. Homage to squares, concentric circles, or triangles is not really devotion to, or veneration of, those squares and circles; it is devotion to what can be found out about optical sensation by employing squares, etc. as avenues to knowledge. Admirable? Yes. Aesthetically relevant? Maybe.

Let us conclude this sour disquisition by revealing part of the critical bias which underlies our irreverence. We are immensely entertained by contemporary painting and would rather watch Pop than the Flintstones. We readily grant that painting has almost succeeded in closing the distance between its power to fascinate and the prepotent attractions of the mass media. However, owing to an unfortunate childhood diet of the masters, from which it is difficult to be weaned, we persist in expecting, now and then, comparable nourishment. Not the same form and content, mind you, but the same high seriousness, the same sense of commitment to art as *something which makes a difference.* This statement may strike one as a particularly inelegant sort of critical touchstone. But the reader will see the relation of the phrase to our fumbling effort to indict the current historicist heresy. The art of painting has been able to give form to popular striving and prizing and imagining. By painting, one means something comprehensive enough to include what Leonardo understood as *desegno.* Painting or *desegno* represents the point where imagination begins to work on the world. It is an agent in history, not merely the product of excess energy and wealth. The works of masters shape sensibility and are only incidentally commodities, subject to fluctuations of the Bourse. Perhaps the malady from which the writer suffers is merely the reverse of the historicist disease. Instead of asking, "What painterly expression must emerge from the existence or operation of certain factors, conditions, changes, developments in the culture?" we insist on asking, "What factors, conditions, changes, developments in the culture will be *affected* by any particular instance of painting?" In other words, "What difference will it make?"

DISCONNECTED NOTES OF A SOMEWHERE-GUARD PLAYWRIGHT

by albert bermel

These are not extracts from a journal. I don't keep such an item. Used to at one time, but it was never worth re-reading. Why "disconnected notes," then? A lame reason: they seem like the sort of thing a playwright puts on paper at reflective moments. A prose version of dialogue. Conversations with oneself. Ionesco has done it with jerky charm and some success. Bolts of inspiration directly from Thalia, Melpomene, Jove himself.

A more cogent reason: I intend to write about the *avant-garde* but haven't managed to worry my odd flashes of thought into a conclusive thesis.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Much of today's *avant-garde* drama, so-called, appears disconnected too. It's said to be choppy, to reflect the hazards and freakishness of civilization in the 1960's, to be absurd. (Will anyone who read the recent account of the trial of Josip Brodsky in Leningrad still dare to call Beckett or Ionesco absurd?) So much has been misunderstood. Not by the good critics—Bentley, Esslin, Brustein, Simon, Abel—but by the pipsqueak explicators (no names, no enemies), associate profs who teach comparative lit, have read theatre reviews and a history of existentialism, and feel qualified to pronounce on the drama. They don't look at plays as whole works but as nuggets of philosophy. Not dramatic literature but metaphysics. For them, plays pose "problems."

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That word "problem." I've developed a pathological hatred for it. Try to find a review, an article, a measly letter to the editor in which the word doesn't crop up. And every problem demands its "solution," as though we could divide life or art up into closed packages and mail them, one at a time, to posterity. "Problem," the most overused and least useful word in the language. We have a "problem" problem with our vocabulary. Beckett writes a play in which the characters appear to have no hope; after explication and overall confusion he is generally thought to be "solving the problem of despair." Or even touting despair like some new drug concocted to offset hardship. Remember all those obsessive efforts to elucidate Godot? Did it mean God? Or fate? Or earthly authority?

What if it did mean one (or all) of these (or other) concepts? Did that explain anything? Godot was for Beckett a convenient catch-all expression that was intended to be not-quite-explicable.

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The French *avant-garde* playwrights of the late 40's and 50's, as their work makes clear, were not out to propagate Miss Lonelyhearts. Their plays came as a reaction to the sub-Freudian drama of character. They avoided character studies, went to great trouble *not* to present simple, stable identities—and they were praised for formulating "universal prototypes." They revived plot as an important element in the drama, not in the shape of the old, fully hatched, self-contained, artificially motivated story, but as an unpredictably developing situation—and they were praised for writing plotless plays. They purged their work of overt meaning—and they were hailed, either for uncovering cosmic meanings (they had created worlds or anti-worlds of their own) or else for emphasizing the validity of non-meaning or, better yet, for inventing double, triple, or multiple meanings.

I hope that the playwrights themselves haven't come to believe that they constructed worlds or anti-worlds. (What is an anti-world? Can you see it, apprehend it, anti-live in it? Is this an anti-essay?) Any Broadway hack can conjure up "a world" (anti or pro) on a stage; the men who write the books and lyrics for musicals do it all the time. It takes hard thought and rare gifts to conjure up a situation that *isn't* a world, contains no characters in the pre-Freudian, Freudian, neo-Freudian, or Doré Scharyan sense, offers no meanings (though it may well have some point), and yet has the narrative power or hidden continuity or what-you-will to keep an audience hooked.

Any skeptical reader is hereby challenged to try his hand at it. He may get as far as producing a stream of non sequiturs in conversational form, much as the Dadaists did. But by the time it comes to forging that continuity *without* summing everything up, *without* implanting meanings, *without* using hackneyed devices to stoke up the suspense, he'll have more of a regard for the skills called for in the writing of an *avant-garde* play—the literary and dramatic skills.

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By now the *avant-garde* theatre has reached the end of its first cycle, though it may not yet have run its course. Adamov and Ionesco have turned to social drama, though it's true they've taken the flavor of their early plays into their later ones. Beckett's work gets shorter, less spare in its language: His situations have stiffened into attitudes, almost into patterns of stasis. Ghelderode is dead. Genet, on the evidence of *The Screens,* has grown prolix.

Strictly speaking, Genet and Ghelderode are loners, anyway. They are often counted in with Beckett and the others, but more because they're approximate contemporaries (or seem like contemporaries: Ghelderode belongs to an earlier school of *avant-garde*) than because of writing affinities. Genet is both more

ceremonial and less abstract than Beckett. More rebellious as a man, a rejecter, and less radical with words. I mean that. He's very fancy with language but so was Giraudoux. For interior decoration of the verbal kind, *Siegfried* outclasses *The Balcony* any day.

But if I had to find an ancestor for Genet (and there's no reason to) I'd pick not Giraudoux but Claudel and his rhetoric of poetry, except that with Genet sex takes the pervasive place of Claudel's religion. That is, if Claudel's billboard displays a head impaled on a cross, Genet's displays a male organ balanced on a tuning fork.

I don't see Dürrenmatt, Frisch, Albee, Gelber, or Kopit as charter members of the *avant-garde*. They may have acquired some *avant-garde* mannerisms, but their drama isn't revolutionary in intent, whatever its other accomplishments. What might be called the second wave of the *avant-garde* hasn't yet become familiar in this country. It includes Robert Pinget (Swiss), Armand Gatti (French), Peter Weiss and Günter Grass the novelist (both German). If we could see more of their work, we might have a sharper idea of which way (or ways) the *avant-garde* is likely to go. Or whether it's fading out altogether.

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The theatre could be on the threshold of a period of consolidation. Playwrights have a lot to digest, if not codify. Behind the new manifestations of *avant-garde* lie others, reaching back for seventy or eighty years. Strindberg, the innovator of innovators. Shaw, Pirandello, Wedekind, Sartre, Brecht—though Brecht may ultimately be of more service to directors than to playwrights, because his production ideas are frequently more interesting than his plays. (The plays illustrate the production ideas.) Dramatists are now spoiled children bewildered by too many toys. (The scientist refers to his instruments as tools, not toys. But then dramatists are grave people who call their work "plays," whereas scientists, according to Auden, are practical jokers who call their play "research.")

We hear a lot of gossip to the effect that there's too much novelty these days for the sake of novelty. Retort: there's very little in the way of real novelty at all. It may have been written but it isn't finding its way onto stages. (I'll come back to this.) Some playwrights are getting up to typographical tricks in the name of blank verse. Novelty? These devices came and went forty years ago. Other playwrights have discovered automatic writing—introduced by Strindberg around 1890. (So was automatic painting and automatic musical composition: "Every listener," said Strindberg, "can hear in it whatever he wishes.")

In America the signs mostly point to a new classicism. Will this be a lull or a ferment? That depends on one's prejudices. Certain playwrights will prescribe limitations for themselves, unofficial rules at first, later degenerating, but probably never growing as rigid as the French unities in the 17th and 18th centuries.

This group will form the basis for an academy of sorts. I hope I'm never a member, if I live that long, but I do see some advantages in the arrangement. It will be an *intellectual* academy and that's a couple of notches higher than our present fiscal academy, New York's Main Stem, presided over by semiliterate P. T. Barnums.

An academy, by narrowing the width of possibilities, can force growth in one direction. A plant compelled to grow thin may grow tall. The drama in America needs to start afresh, from

higher standards. (They will probably be imported standards.) The academy to come may not witness the rise of another Racine. But out of the opposition to it might spring something like a Molière. It will, at all events, be an institution worth struggling against, an opponent that a new writer can respect.

Eventually its constrictions will render it bloodless. It will then be cracked open by disagreement among its members or superseded by another academy.

In Britain there is already an incipient academy. It is founded on the notion of a theatre concerned with "ordinary people." Ibsen *redivivus*. A consequence of the coming-of-age of equality in that monarchy. Beginning in provincial playhouses, the academy collected and gathered strength at the Royal Court Theatre in London, and now has firm bases in the West End. The academicians are Arnold Wesker, Bernard Kops, Alun Owen, Joe Orton, Henry Livings. Rebels at first, they went on to capture enough of the citadel to give themselves room to operate freely. They haven't altogether displaced the British tea-cup comedies, but they have done something more valuable. They've stimulated a reaction to themselves. Giles Cooper, David Rudkin, and James Saunders have taken the "ordinary people," and tossed them into extraordinary events, and produced a new style in fantasy. (John Osborne and Harold Pinter hop in and out of the academy and the fantasy from play to play.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Before the new classicism arrives, won't another burst of experiment intervene? It conceivably could. But where are the indications of it or the stimulus for it? Lincoln Center? (Hope.) The brand new, frightening, mechanized, sumptuous emporia on our campuses? (Bitter, ugly smile.) Off Broadway? (In London a critic told me that he receives regular visits from an off-Broadway producer who asks him: "Any American scripts over here worth taking back?")

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Dicta: 1. There is almost nobody in this country willing to produce an unusual play that hasn't been tested in Europe. 2. There is nobody at all who could produce an unusual play and do it justice—that is, with the right cast and director, and allowing it a sufficient run for it to catch on. (Saul Bellow's *The Last Analysis* was closed in two and a half weeks, Jack Richardson's *Lorenzo* in four nights.) 3. With rare exceptions (Tyrone Guthrie, William Ball), we even botch the classics.

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It can't be that we lack good plays. A country that has so many first-rate novelists, painters, poets, film-makers can hardly be devoid of able playwrights. There has been no plague that killed off playwrights only.

Besides, all those playwriting departments (let's forget about the correspondence courses) must be turning up something other than imitation Albee, witless variations on Paddy Chayefsky (like *The Subject Was Roses*) and would-be television scripts.

Task: Find the plays. How? Most of all, we need intelligent producers who employ educated, open-minded readers. Also, critics who can judge a play in its entirety, not merely as putative philosophy, a message or a nexus of problems. In England the more discerning critics had an instrumental part in fashioning the new theatre order. Not only have they shown sympathy for new plays of

merit. They've encouraged producers to try more of them by pummeling the worthless plays unmercifully.

Consolation, if not cause for encouragement: The latest *avant-garde* movement did leak into the United States, however slowly and fragmentarily, despite all the handicaps. Let me close these notes by paying tribute to it. I don't want to sum it up when it has itself refused to posit solutions or to draw comfort from paradoxes. (Ionesco again: "In the ultimate depths of my being, what I find is darkness—or rather, a blinding light.") But it's safe to predict that the future theatre will never revert to the pre-1945 theatre, thanks to the collective and individual traces these *avant-garde* playwrights have left on it.

Those of Beckett, the operative figure, will probably prove the most enduring. There is much for other playwrights to learn from his economy with words and emotions, his distilled thoughts, his elegiac poetry, his extraordinary humor. But you can't pursue Beckett wholeheartedly unless you're a kind of Beckett yourself.

The plays of Ionesco and Adamov are less drastically personal than Beckett's. The first two volumes of Adamov's *Théâtre* (eight plays) are rich with originality. But from *Ping-Pong* onward the playwright became too explicit for his own good: he was fishing for a clear, hard bite from audiences. Those early plays, uncanny reproductions of nightmares, will also serve as a fascinating way station back to Strindberg and to Büchner's masterpieces. Adamov's *All Against All* represents a peak of achievement for the modern theatre: an intact, unforced allegory.

Similarly, Ionesco's first plays—*The Bald Soprano, The Chairs, Jack,* and so on—made no compromises. They took Surrealism to the end of its line, but it was a live end. As a playwright, I cherish most Ionesco's mocking tone, his refusal to talk about the world (or himself) with a straight face.

Contrast this tone with the smugness of our Broadway grain merchants. One of them writes a bedroom romp. Before rehearsals begin, he tells the press: "My new drama with satirical elements deals with man's loneliness and insecurity in the face of environmental pressures. In his quest for redemption, the hero pleads for tolerance and unconformity . . .," etc. This statement will form the play's epigraph when Random House publishes it.

Whatever the juvenile explicators may say, the *avant-garde* playwrights have never promoted this brand of uplift. On the contrary, they introduced a new impudence into comedy. This is bound to be applied to future purposes. And not only because comedy is the type of theatre that audiences seem ready to take most seriously.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I wish there were fewer contradictions and more connections in these disconnected notes.

THE NEW POETRY

by mark linenthal

During an interview shortly before his death, Theodore Roethke remarked that he began as a writer of verse and hoped that poetry "would come." Poetry represents a hope; the "craft or sullen art" of verse is a means, perhaps ideally a search, whereby this hope may, with enough luck or talent, be realized. Verse, this search, seems to go in either of two directions, lyric or dramatic, each corresponding to a major direction of the human soul. The lyric attends to the intractable details of experience but only to transcend them, to move from stony fact to air and music—as Wallace Stevens put it, "from substance to subtlety." Its values are what we ordinarily think of as romantic, expansive. It celebrates the self. It denies that the limits of the self are indicated by a man's outer skin; with certain existentialist thinkers the lyric writer asserts that the human self extends through the whole area of its concern: "The thing I hum appears to be/The rhythm of this celestial pantomime." The lyric writer subjectivizes the object. The dramatic writer, in my sense of the term, would assert that even in an impersonal world the *agon* of self matters; he bodies it forth in a conflictual or dramatic structure and in terms as firm and palpable as possible. Taking precise account of human limits, he traces the difficult means whereby human identity may be achieved. He objectivizes the subject, giving us, in the words of Yvor Winters, "the taste of air becoming body."

The "modern poetry" which developed a great reputation for difficulty and in which a generation of readers was schooled by the New Criticism was usually of the dramatic variety. It could range from John Crowe Ransom's elegant exercises in tone to the powerful work of his student Robert Lowell; whereas Ransom treated "sentimental" subjects, moving gradually to an exquisitely civilized equilibrium of attitudes toward them, Lowell exploited his own religious difficulties in a ferocious mannerism. In any case this work inhabited a realm of difficult reconciliation where our desires were never to be confused with the data of our experience. Its catchwords were "irony," "paradox," "tension." It shunned "rhetoric" and "easy" feelings and appealed to the reader's awareness of "the complexities and contradictions of experience." The phrase was Robert Penn Warren's in a famous essay in defense of difficulty; there Warren went so far as to compare the poet to the jiujitsu expert who "wins by utilizing the resistance of his opponent." Although he insisted that poetic statement ought to "carry something of the context of its own creation," the context was assumed to be conflictual; Warren located the poetry of the poem in no single element but in overall structure, in organized dramatic interplay of details.

Such a complex art of contradiction could easily decline to a learned and airless manner, a structuring of words without much expressive force standing, as it were, with their backs to the audience and engaged in conversation interesting only to themselves. The most vital tendency of the last decade has been a lyric or romantic revival, a rejection of the dramatic in the interests of more candid personal expression. By 1957, Robert Lowell, the virtuoso of the old style, was embarking upon a new one; the old had begun to seem "distant, symbol-ridden and willfully difficult," and "something like the prose of Chekhov or Flaubert" appeared to be "the best style for poetry." His old poems, he began to feel, "hid what they were really about." The new Lowell manner was writ large in his frankly autobiographical *Life Studies* (1959):

> **These are the tranquillized *Fifties*,**
> **and I am forty. Ought I to regret my seedtime?**
> **I was a fire-breathing Catholic C.O.,**
> **and made my manic statement,**
> **telling off the state and president, and then**
> **sat waiting sentence in the bull pen**
> **beside a Negro boy with curlicues**
> **of marijuana in his hair.**

Theodore Roethke had already abandoned iambic restraint for irregular patterns which caught the movement of the mind in its actual shift and flow, his influences more Whitman and D. H. Lawrence than members of the American establishment. And in 1959 Allen Ginsberg's exclamatory *Howl* revived for many, and in a single stroke, the possibility of the public, rhapsodic voice.

Many other instances from the recent past could be cited to substantiate the notion that American poetry has been changing. Increasingly the dramatic poetry of the 30's and 40's seems to have been the practical application of an embattled critical theory, one which undertook the whole defense of poetry against positivist denial; as the barbarous rigors of positivism lost authority as a guide to warm human life, it no longer seemed important to fight that battle. The new atmosphere can be felt everywhere. The sense that a poem must somehow be an authentic personal expression rather than a detachable aesthetic object which lends itself to academic analysis characterizes the moment. But the *avant-garde* is little agreed as to the means to be employed if the new hope for poetry is to be realized. Verse practice varies widely; criticism, either programmatic or happily impressionistic again, varies even more. Although it is impossible to predict which manner or attitude, if any, will actually dominate American writing during the next decade, major tendencies of the moment can be discerned.

The most modern-looking work is Robert Creeley's *For Love* (1963). Creeley takes a stand in the existential open where he gestures without visible means of support in an exquisitely colloquial, wry, truncated, diffident, intensely self-conscious style. His rhythms and diction owe a good deal to William Carlos Williams' natural speech but are heightened by the near-

perversity of modern jazz. That this art of "making do" may suggest the subterranean language of Samuel Beckett's discards indicates Creeley's troubled relation to any tradition of thought and feeling, his aura of enormous loss:

> **As I sd to my**
> **friend, because I am**
> **always talking,—John, I**
> **sd, which was not his**
> **name, the darkness sur-**
> **rounds us, what**
> **can we do against**
> **it, or else, shall we &**
> **why not, buy a goddam big car,**
> **drive, he sd, for**
> **christ's sake, look**
> **out where yr going.**

Creeley's effects, deliberately slight, reflect his distrust of a "conclusive concluding," his belief that "nothing is competent nothing is/all there is." Commenting on the work of his contemporaries, he rejects any rhetoric which would take precedence over its subject and create more of an occasion than the subject warrants. What he wants is the subject which "remains volatile, free in its own term."

If Creeley represents the cool side of the beat coin where little, if anything, can be honestly affirmed, and that only provisionally, Ginsberg represents the hot, his long oracular lines an open invitation to some powerful metaphoric associations, strong feeling, desperate humor, melodrama, and dull writing. In the endless effort to adjust occasion to subject, they employ opposite and extreme methods, Creeley risking triviality in the interests of purity and Ginsberg bombast in the interests of power. Most practitioners of the new lyric mode pursue paths somewhere between the two extremes. At the moment the most interesting and accomplished of these writers seem to be James Wright, James Dickey, John Logan, and William Stafford.

James Wright is associated with the little Minnesota magazine, *The Sixties,* and is the leading exemplar of the antirhetorical bias of its poet-editor Robert Bly. Wright has abandoned his early rhetorical expertise; unlike Creeley he has taken the imagistic direction of the Surrealists and other Continental and South American writers:

> **This time, I have left my body behind me, crying**
> **In its dark thorns.**
> **Still,**
> **There are good things in this world.**
> **It is dusk.**
> **It is the good darkness**
> **Of women's hands that touch loaves.**
> **The spirit of a tree begins to move.**
> **I touch leaves.**
> **I close my eyes, and think of water.**

Wright depends generally upon the delicacy of individual images and of

juxtapositions which are not logically determined. At its best his innocent, look-no-hands manner can be very attractive:

> In a pine tree,
> A few yards away from my window sill,
> A brilliant blue jay is springing up and down, up and down,
> On a branch.
> I laugh, as I see him abandon himself
> To entire delight, for he knows as well as I do
> That the branch will not break.

But this lightness can decline to the merely precious, a parade of sensibility with little or no subject. What Wright lacks, perhaps, is the intellectual obsession of a Wallace Stevens which could substantiate and invigorate a series of purely personal responses.

James Dickey avoids the pitfalls of the purely personal by keeping his discerning eye relentlessly fixed upon the subject. The opening lines of "The Salt Marsh" are characteristic:

> Once you have let the first blade
> Spring back behind you
> To the way it has always been,
> You no longer know where you are.
> All you can see are the tall
> Stalks of sawgrass, not sawing,
> But each of them holding its tip
> Exactly at the level where your hair
> Begins to grow from your forehead.
> Wherever you come to is
> The same as before,
> With the same blades of oversized grass,
> And wherever you stop, the one
> Blade just in front of you leans,
> That one only, and touches you
> At the place where your hair begins
> To grow . . .

Although Dickey's subject is always personal, sometimes even strangely so, his brilliant reports can make it vivid and credible. Since he seems more interested in the actual experiences of enlarged perception than in the poems which are its result, his language is particularly effective; he is unusually free of literary mannerism. At his best it is as though his own mute source were speaking:

> Put on the river
> Like a fleeting coat,
> A garment of motion,
> Tremendous, immortal.
> Find a still root
> To hold you in it.
> Let flowing create
> A new, inner being:
> As the source in the mountain
> Gives water in pulses,
> These can be felt at
> The heart of the current.

And here it is only
One wandering step
Forth, to the sea.

Dickey's chosen area is a ceremonial or mystical extreme which poetry ought always to include but to which it neither can nor should limit itself. John Logan ranges more widely. In one of his dominant moods Logan can render the profound and strange below the surface of everyday experience and without straining the subject beyond believable limits:

It is the wish
for some genuine change other than our death
that lets us feel (with the fingers of mind)
how much the foot desires to be a hand.

The foot is more secret, more obscene,
its beauty more difficultly won—
is thick with skin and
so is more ashamed than the hand.

One nestled in the arched back of the other
is like a lover
trying to learn to love.

In another grander and perhaps more memorable mood he can make powerful poetry of exploratory talk as he allows the rich feelings released by thought to well up and flow, sexual and religious at once. His "Lines on his Birthday" begins as follows:

I was born on a street named Joy
of which I remember nothing,
but since I was a boy
I've looked for its lost turning.
Still I seem to hear my mother's cry
echo in the street of joy.
She was sick as Ruth for home
when I was born. My birth
took away my father's wife
and left me half
my life.

And later:

I know her milk like ivory blood
still runs in my thick veins
and leaves in me an almost
lickerish taste for ghosts:
my mother's wan face,
full brown hair, the mammoth breast
death cuts off at the bone—
to which she draws her bow
again, brazen Amazon,
and aiming deadly as a saint
shoots her barb
of guilt into my game heart.

Logan's work has been likened to Crashaw's; it is above all his readiness to feel fully and freely, to risk sentimentality, which puts Logan among the leaders of the lyric revival. He believes in

The magic of the mouth that can melt to tears the rock
of hearts. I mean the wand of tongues that charms the
exile
of listeners into a bond of brothers, breaking
down the lines of lead that separate a man from a
man, and the husbands from their wives, in these old,
burned glass
panels of our lives.

The work of William Stafford presents a typically American spectacle: the lonely man, sensitive to locale, thinking meanings amid a vast and shifting universe. The prevailing tone is a gentle pathos, expression of the human need for meaning denied by an almost puritanical sense of the vanity of the demand. When Stafford keeps taut this tension between reality and desire, or when he settles for a limited gain on the facts, he is at his best. In "Traveling through the Dark," for example, he finds a dead doe on the edge of a canyon:

her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,
alive, still, never to be born.
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;
under the hood purred the steady engine.
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;
around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—,
then pushed her over the edge into the river.

But he is likely to turn coyly familiar, thereby entitling himself unfairly to his visions:

Quiet in the earth a drop of water came,
and the little seed spoke: "Sequoia is my name."

In a single poem Stafford can move from a first trivializing, domesticating figure to a real grandeur:

A storm that needed a mountain
met it where we were:
we woke up in a gale
that was reasoning with our tent,
and all the persuaded snow
streaked along, guessing the ground.

We turned from that curtain, down.
But sometime we will turn
back to the curtain and go
by plan through an unplanned storm,
disappearing into the cold,
meanings in search of a world.

With varying success and in their various ways all four of these writers attempt to make personal experience matter, to raise it to the level of the public and impersonal while keeping fresh its special personal stamp. If this chosen aim of our leading writers does not seem remarkable, we ought to remember T. S. Eliot's widely respected dictum of some years ago: the poet's job is to escape personality. But we may ask whether there

is anything really new in this renewed celebration of the self. In his introduction to the Penguin anthology *Contemporary American Poetry,* Donald Hall singles out a quality which is so new that he cannot readily define it. Hall is right, I think, in singling out the quality he does; since it provides what is already most valuable in the new work, it would seem to indicate the most promising direction for the immediate future. But it is surely not quite so new as Hall believes. "This new imagination," he says, "reveals through images a subjective life which is *general,* and which corresponds to an old objective life of shared experience and knowledge."

That the life of shared experience and knowledge was ever really "objective" we must question, insisting that experience could be shared because people believed that it rested upon objective knowledge. But the troublesome word aside, Hall's statement applies with remarkable accuracy to both the aim and achievement of Wallace Stevens. As his reputation grows, Stevens seems less precious, less the exquisite, and more the one man of his generation whose work really could "take the place/Of empty heaven and its hymns." He showed that our prose could "wear a poem's guise at last." Although Stevens' imagination was marvelously shy and idiosyncratic, it was invigorated by a strong generalizing tendency which makes it possible for us all to experience our experience more keenly by virtue of his special gift. When the woman in "Sunday Morning" thinks of her death and

> **feels the dark**
> **Encroachment of that old catastrophe,**
> **As a calm darkens among water-lights**

her intense subjectivity is there for any literate reader to share.

Stevens is the great ancestor who can provide example and encouragement for the new exploration of lyrical possibilities. In the closing stanza of a little-known comic poem, Theodore Roethke declared his generation's indebtedness to Stevens:

> **Roar 'em, whore 'em, cockalorum,**
> **The Muses, they must all adore him,**
> **Wallace Stevens—are we *for* him?**
> **Brother, he's our father!**

For years Roethke was generally recognized to be our leading lyrist. Though he was rarely linked with Stevens, it is now clear that Roethke promises to serve the new American verse in the same way, for he was able to make his abundant capacity for heightened response available to everyone. His range was enormous. Like Yeats he believed that "a poet should show as many parts of his nature as he can, in all decency, reveal." He could bare the primal layers of his own troubled psyche yet reach beyond himself to the level of pure spirit, and all in an open, robust singing voice. Roethke died suddenly in 1963. Surely his beautiful posthumous collection, *The Far Field,* a major achievement in American literature, will strengthen the lyrist's difficult faith in the intensity of personal life:

Now I adore my life
With the Bird, the abiding Leaf,
With the Fish, the questing Snail,
And the Eye altering all;
And I dance with William Blake
For love, for Love's sake;

And everything comes to One,
As we dance on, dance on, dance on.

while running thru the valley they come upon a body

by dale mindell

They stop and arrange themselves, mute
that they might not be noted
By the rude merchant and
Written off.

No one wishes to haggle damaged goods
Or fight the daily bread war. In
This place an amen silence
Goes forth to merge with duty
And all the guests raise cups
To God's will.

In the front row remnants remain. Heirs
Orphaned of hope have just exchanged
Love never delivered for
The one excuse time won't wear,
Death. Witnesses
Add pity to the bargain.

May her name be for a blessing and
The Rabbi releases a room full of breaths.

THOU KENNETH A COLLAGE

THE POETIC UNDERGROUND

terms

This is a composition indeterminate of its performance. Material is provided, by the use of which the performer himself makes his own part. The material may be read in any position.

visions

The season has turned over many a new leaf
Where flowers have issued the documents of spring. . .
Sweet idiot voice! Whose song, a plural music,
Sung for itself and doubled in its fellows,
Has meaning only in its comrade's ears. . .

proofs

. . . he said to him, "Ah! ah! ah! thou must give thyself to me," and repeated these words three times. The third time he breathed on Brother Masseo, who to his great surprise was raised above the earth and fell at some distance. . .

doubts

Outdoors, for business, they wear clericals; indoors they put on their brown, hooded mantles. The symbol of poverty and business as usual.

burdens

Upon his shoulders
he places boulders,
upon his eye
the high wide sky.

prophecies

At one time, news was transmitted very "inefficiently" by bards, who shaped their statement by all sorts of subtle tests (*saying* only what could be *sung,* for instance). This imaginative procedure has now been bureaucratized with the most astonishing efficiency—and as a by-product there have arisen wholly new criteria of purpose and procedure. These have become the "norm," so that our "bards" now shape their work by the tests of "headline thinking," literature becoming a mere offshoot of journalism plus the one-man enterprise.

revelations

SKY
BREAKS
FLAME
RAKES
EARTH
QUAKES

It behooves us to behave well to each other.

foundations

. . . look to the creative development of individual talent, stimulate artists at crucial stages in their careers, give where the giving would have an effect far beyond the circle of those persons. . .

IS IN AMERICA NOT ALWAYS WHERE ANYONE IS LOOKING

differences

. . . clarify and sharpen the issues not only for all those responsible. . .

The Bandmaster told of a man who, living nearer the variations, insisted that they were the main music, and it was more beautiful to hear the hymn come sifting through them than the other way around. Others walking around the square were surprised at the different. . . effects they got as they changed position.

humanities

All of us are at the window, looking out of this strange room; men. . . whose skins on one side are black, are yellow, are brown, are white, are red—standing close together in this bewildering house.

It is to sound
such unknown men
I write—
albeit this act but
jostles in the Modern Street

a rude distraction

eternities

O bluebell my brother! Tiger! sparrow! moon! and snowflake too! O great brothers! One little one of us looks out of me—but O how many, many of me are looking out of you, dear brothers!

qualifications

. . . Our dynamic society finds itself with increasing amounts of leisure time as modern technology has reduced the effort. . . It is our aim that larger numbers of our citizens may find enjoyment and fulfillment through a broadening. . .

. . . since the value of pure mathematics is now regarded as aesthetic rather than cognitive, why not try to make up aesthetic theorems, without considering whether they are true. . .

evidences

2nd DANCE - SEEING LINES - 6 February 1964

She seems to come by wing,
&, keeping present being in front,
she reasons regularly.

Then—making her stomach let itself
down,
& giving a bit or doing something
elastic,
& making herself comfortable,
she lets complex impulses make
something.

She disgusts everyone.

She does a little penning,
& then she fingers a door.

Later she wheels awhile,
while either transporting a star or letting
go of a street.

The actions of the 40 dances . . .
were drawn by a systematic "chance"
method. . . from a pack of 56
filing cards, on each of which
are typed one to five actions,
denoted by gerunds or gerundial phrases . . . "jumping,"
"having a letter over one eye," &
"giving the neck a knifing or
coming to give a parallel meal,
beautiful & shocking," etc
etc etc etc etc etc . . . etc

etc

. . . all emotions allowable, even boredom.

MAY BE TREE BENDING OVER GRASSES

The future is really disclosed *by finding out what people can sing about.*

laments

Mourn

dead Bird
on the Dead Road
beyond Verona

Who blew great horn
En route to
Shadesville?

I got my horn,
man

Weird red Bird eyes lay
halcyon in the honey head

Verona heard
sound

Bird's, like
Dirge

clarifications

He is able either through the repetition of a single sound or through the continued performance of a single sound for a period like twenty minutes, to bring it about that after, say, five minutes, I discover that what I have all along been thinking was the same thing is not the same thing after all, but full of variety. I find his work remarkable almost in the same sense that the change in experience of seeing is when you look through a microscope. You see that there is something other than what you thought there was.

Composition 1961 No. 14, June 19

Draw a straight line and follow it.

kennings

. . . I've never understood why I'm a member of the avant garde. I write more or less like Allen Tate *thinks* he writes—like the great Greeks and Romans and the Chinese, and so forth. I try to say, as simply as I can, the simplest and most profound experiences of my life, which I think will be of significance to others on a similar level—that is, which will touch them in sort of significant regions of their experience. And, I suppose that my whole attitude toward poetry—toward my own poetry—is to keep always before myself an objective of clarity and depth, and hope that out of this you'll get exultation.

transparencies

There it is:

within us

but
like an empty glass
into which
at any moment
anything
may be poured

illuminations

This investigation then concerns the forms of light,
And love, to which the need is requisite,
Becomes the inclusive action, neither early nor late

But timely, in the balance of giving and taking
Real, and the heart has no making
Except the precious object of its seeking.

He is a business-executive commuter who writes verse on the train coming home nights.

frustrations

. . . It is a lonely occupation and does not excite the money-men as do theatre, music, art galleries, or politics. Though it can produce prestige, it has very little publicity value.

defeats

COASTLINES
21/22
Vol. 6, Nos. 1 & 2 1964
FINAL
ISSUE
Published 222 contributors, 15 cover artists.

AMONG WHICH CRITIC CURIOUSLY SEEKS

criticisms

It is the *people* who are unstable, and the artist and thinker who are trying to stabilize things.

We spent a year and a half trying to raise the funds.

reversals

We failed.

drawkcab erutuf eht retne ew yaw siht ni si tI

The only informed review in print of Bucky Fuller's Untitled Epic Poem on the History of Industrialization in over a year has been by Peter Yates in Arts & Architecture: "A composite Einstein and Ben Franklin, he is not less."

Over 170 copies mailed to big and little magazines.

HAVE YOU READ? WILL YOU BUY? A LIFE-TIME LOOK

But as hath bin sayd, any thing that belongs to Humanity may be in some sort represented. . . If the figure were deckt with feathers, and all the gay colours or rich habits that could be contrived, they would be despised as worthless things.

revolutions

The revolution has come—
set on fire from the top.
Let it burn swiftly.
Neither the branches, trunk, nor roots will be endangered;
only last year's leaves and
the parasite bearded moss and orchids
will not be there
when the next Spring brings forth fresh growth
and free standing flowers.

affirmations

Our forefathers were stronger men than can be represented by "triads" only—these are too easy sounding

lives chiefly in Macon County, North Carolina, where he continues to think of both his writing and publishing as perfectly natural and inevitable functions. He compares his labors to those of a farmer neighbor: "We both have a market that often does not exist . . . And yet it would not occur to him *not* to grow vegetables."

TO THESE MEN ALL OF US OWE MUCH, THOUGH THEY ARE SELDOM

IN OUR CRITICAL CREDENTIALS
THEY EMBARRASS

rewards

. . . The homage you offer me
is so sincere and warm, that I am really elated
by it. Thank you very much for this rare gift.
You will understand that it makes me proud that
my music exerts such effects, and it fulfills me
with great joy that there exist people who are
accessible for such effects.

negations

a knot
a negative not
a not not knotted
not a knotted knot
a knot negative
a not knot
knot a not
to KENNETH
BURKE

admirations

: the end of poetry is the beginning of reason
PATCHEN

I HAVE NOT SAID WHAT POETRY IS NOT*

advertisements

**Complete sonnet in 14 lines of rhyming iambic pentameter and send with 6 Arts in Society back covers to Arts in Society, University Extension Division, Madison, Wisconsin. We will mail you in return one transparent drinking glass to look through. The art of the sonnet is not dead.*

acknowledgements

COLLAGEANS, IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE
BUT NOT REAPPEARANCE

John Cage, Thomas McGrath, the Little Flowers of St. Francis, Robert Creeley, Kenneth Burke, Melissa Blake, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Charles Ives, Kenneth Patchen, Jonathan Williams, Rockefeller Foundation, Henry Flynt, Jackson McLow, G. Brecht, La Monte Young, Kenneth Rexroth, Peyton Houston, Alexandra Garrett, Roger North, Buckminster Fuller, Arnold Schoenberg.

WE CELEBRATE THEM IN OUR CATACOMBS

Peter Yates

A PORTFOLIO OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY

selected by nathan lyons

A Preliminary Note:

As in the other arts, the trend of the *avant-garde* in photography is toward a greater interest in the medium's expressive potential. The nature of this striving can perhaps be best delineated by reference to two exhibitions recently sponsored by the George Eastman House in Rochester.

In 1959, *Photography at Mid-Century* brought together the largest cross section of contemporary photography in some forty years. Invitations were sent to photographers throughout the world, of *known* reputation (only a small percentage of the 253 participants were admitted under an open section). In the introduction to the exhibition's catalogue, Beaumont Newhall stated:

> All four stylistic trends which dominate photography at mid-century in America and Europe appear to be rooted in tradition:
>
> (1) The "straight approach," first explored by Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, Edward Weston, Ansel Adams and others, in which the ability of the camera to record exact images with rich texture and great detail is used to interpret nature and man, never losing contact with reality. The approach is classical, and the fine print is presented as an experience in itself.
>
> (2) The "experimental," a heritage of the restless experimentation of the 1920's, characterized especially by Man Ray and the teachings of L. Moholy-Nagy, in which certain phenomena of the photographic process are exploited, such as the deliberate narrowing of tonal scale, solarization of the image, the negative as an end, exaggeration of perspective.
>
> (3) The photo-journalistic, essentially a desire to communicate, to tell about people, to record without intrusion the moment that has been called by Henri Cartier-Bresson "decisive," typified by the use of the miniature camera, wide-aperture lenses and high-speed film.
>
> (4) The development of the theory of the "equivalent" as first explored by Alfred Stieglitz, in which the photograph becomes, not only the interpretation of a given place, not only an image to be appreciated for its own challenging beauty, not only a journalistic report of a given moment of time, but also an evocative release, a symbol—even at times, a trigger to a stream of consciousness.

As implied above, *Photography at Mid-Century* had one major shortcoming, namely, its neglect of the works of younger photographers. By and large the exhibit illustrated aesthetic philosophies and approaches which had been in existence since the turn of the century.

A more contemporary assessment was projected by *Photography 63,* which the George Eastman House cosponsored with the New York State Exposition in 1962. In this exhibit the emphasis was put entirely on youth, and a nominating committee of noted photographers, editors, critics, teachers, museum curators, and directors of photography were invited to submit the names of photographers under the age of forty, who were making or had made a significant contribution to the medium. In all, 148 photographers participated.

Photography 63 affirmed the continued influence of the established traditions, though European and Japanese photographers appeared to be more experimental than the Americans.

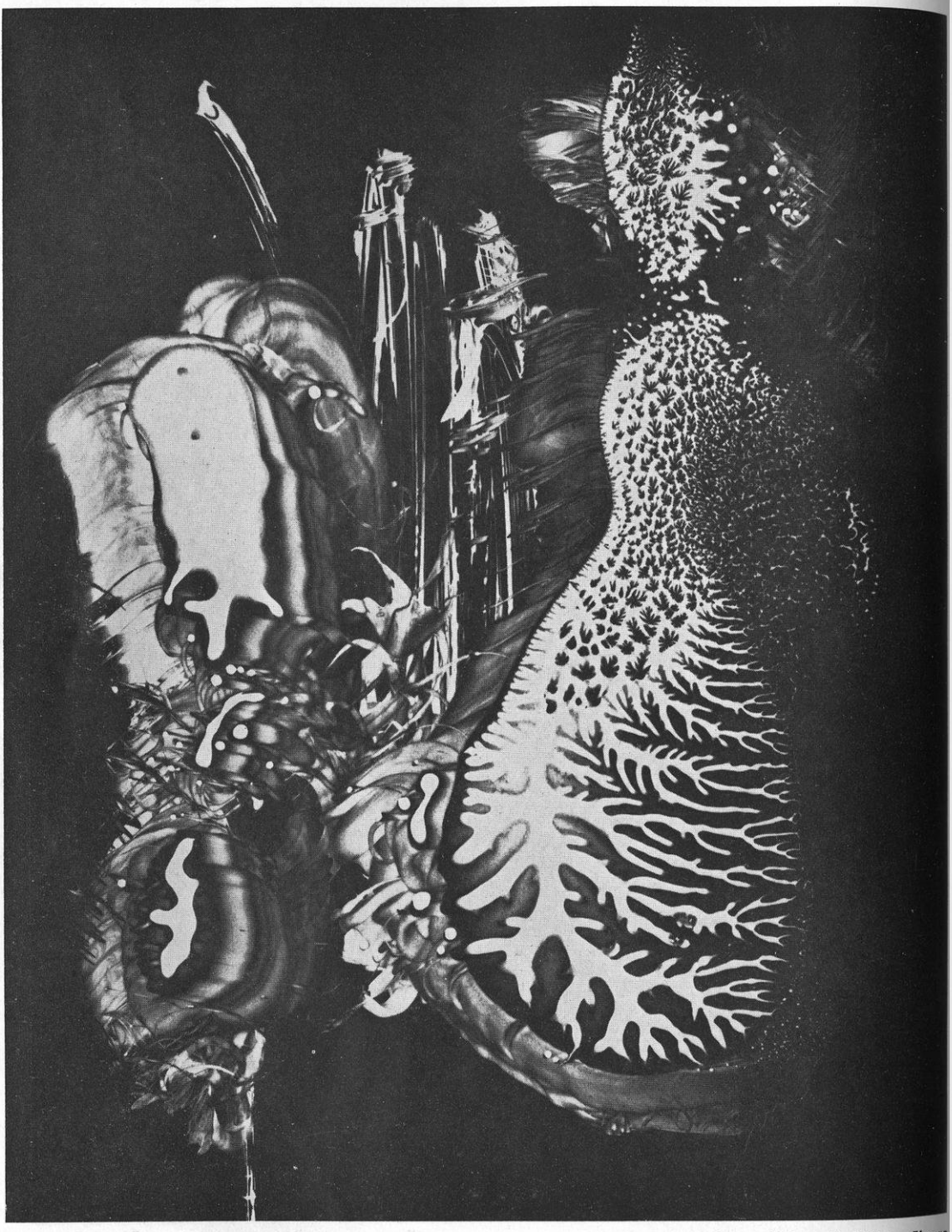
The photographers in the following portfolio were selected from this exhibit.

As can be noted, the apparent trend in this country is the continued interest in photojournalism, an essentially documentary form, which these days is employed *depictively* as a form of social commentary, most usually stressing the theme of spiritual deprivation.

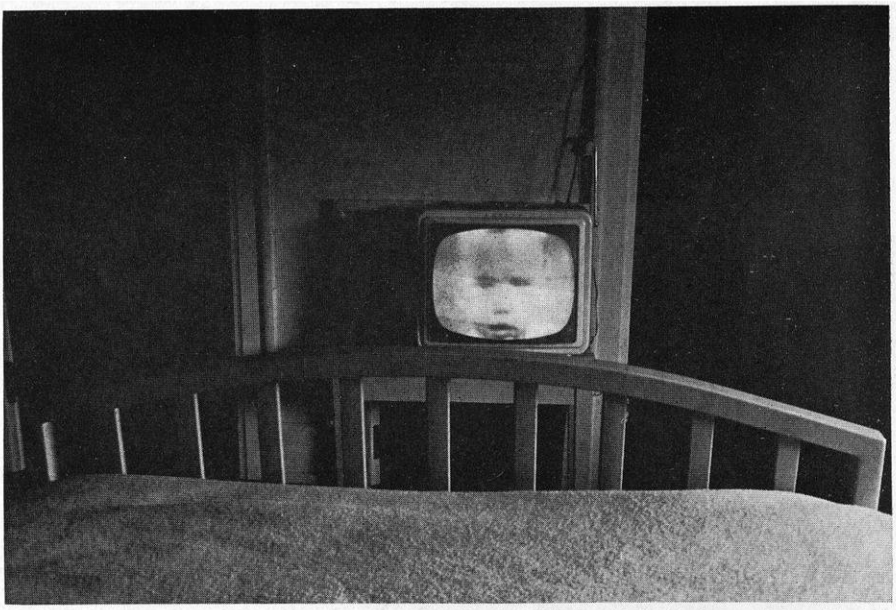
Of note also is an increased interest in exploring the above-described concept of the "equivalent." In the new work there is perhaps a greater emphasis on and intensification of the imagery.

Mario Giacomelli, Italy, Scanno

Don Worth, U.S.A., *Trees and Fog, San Francisco*



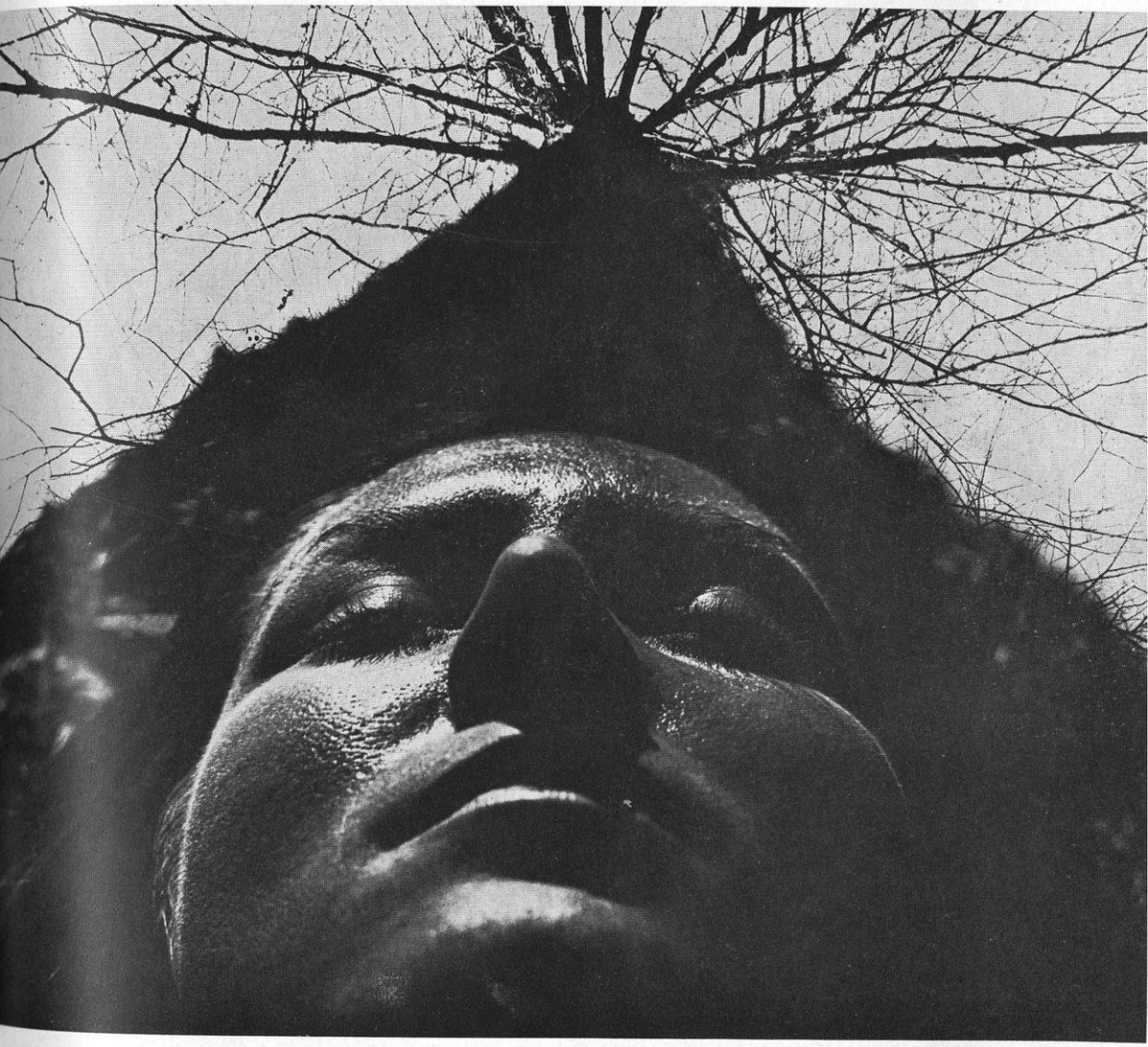
James Hilbrandt, U.S.A., *Figure*
A direct print-making approach. No use of the camera involved.



Lee Friedlander, U.S.A., *TV Set in Room, Galex, Virginia*

Ralph Meatyard, U.S.A., *Romance from Ambrose Bierce, No. 3*

William Klein, U.S.A., Mo



Jerry Uelsmann, U.S.A., *Myth of the Tree*

Eikok Hosoe, Japan, Untitled from "Killed by Roses

THE NEW SCULPTURE

by hilton kramer

Some of the most interesting, if not always the most accomplished, new sculpture of the past few years—say, for convenience, the sculpture of the Sixties—may be summed up in two words: *color* and *construction*. The question that remains in doubt is whether these words need to be hyphenated; whether, that is, they point to a significant new sculptural synthesis, or must be left to designate a sculptural dialectic whose discrepancies are more apparent than its realizations.

The question is not to be answered entirely in terms of new talents, however. Perhaps this is one of the things that distinguishes what is "new" on the current scene from *avant-garde* developments in the past. If so, it is only one of several reasons why I would hesitate to use the term *avant-garde* to describe what is now going on in sculpture—or, indeed, in any of the arts in the 1960's. For myself, the very idea of an *avant-garde* has become historical. It stands for the peculiar and extremely fecund disequilibrium which art suffered at the hands of the bourgeoisie in the course of the century (more or less) that began with Courbet and ended with Surrealism. That very troubled, very great period has been succeeded by an era of eclecticism in the arts and accommodation in bourgeois social dynamics. All that one can say about the sort of sculpture I am discussing here is that it represents the kind of stylistic development which, given the entirely different conditions of earlier times, might have enjoyed *avant-garde* status.

It will be useful, I think, to see this new sculpture in relation to its stylistic antecedents, for in at least one respect it clearly carries on a sculptural tradition already boasting some remarkable achievements: the tradition of Constructivism. The crux of the Constructivist idea was twofold: it conceived of space, so-called "empty" space, as a form of mass; and it brought a new syntactical principle into use, namely, that of *joinery* or the *putting together* of discrete sculptural elements, for the purpose of delineating such mass. Naum Gabo, in his published lectures *Of Divers Arts* (Bollingen Series, 1962), gave us a succinct definition of the first part of this double intention when he wrote: ". . . in a constructive sculpture, space is not a part of the universal space surrounding the object; it is a material by itself, a structural part of the object—so much so that it has the faculty of conveying a volume as does any other rigid material."

The point that needs underscoring in the present context is that the second aspect of the Constructivist idea—the use of joinery as a principle of sculptural syntax—very soon separated itself from the functions of the first. It rapidly acquired expressive meanings, and opened up expressive possibilities, quite independent of the business of creating volumes out of sheer space. And the particular means employed in utilizing this structural principle, whether welding, nailing, or gluing, etc., came more and more to ally itself with an order of sculptural image-making that stood at some distance from the original Constructivist program.

Thus, what might be called the "technology" of Constructivism was divorced from its "metaphysics." This technology continues, with certain modifications, to dominate the new sculpture, but the metaphysics—the

reality it aspires to convey—is quite different. For *color* now occupies the place which *space* formerly held in the Constructivist imagination, and the problem of making something authentically sculptural out of color—of making something structurally as well as visually essential out of an element hitherto confined to mainly decorative uses—is what is now taxing some of our liveliest sculptural minds.

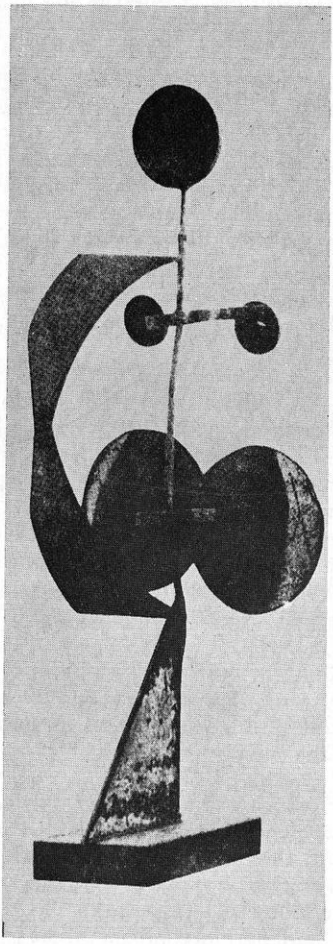
The size of the problem may be gauged from the fact that the sculptor who, in my opinion, continues to overshadow all others on the current scene by virtue of his superior gifts, his voluminous achievement, and his willingness to venture new and untried ideas—David Smith—has addressed himself to it repeatedly without overcoming its inherent difficulties. In the 1961-62 Carnegie International, Smith showed a group of very large painted-metal constructions which were among the most ambitious works of his entire career. Around the same time he showed some smaller, similar sculptures at the Gerson Gallery in New York. Everything that Smith does compels interest, but in the case of these painted-metal constructions—painted in such a way as to disengage their colored forms from the actual, technical construction of their respective sculptural matrixes, and thus conferring on broad areas of color an autonomous visual reality—the interest was that of an ambitious idea which had misfired. Smith is, perhaps, too powerful a constructor ever to yield to chromatic "illusion" a sculptural role so crucial, and so very much at odds with his commitment to expressive syntax. His work in this vein offered not a solution to the problem but a statement of it.

The problem itself has lately been given some rather more oblique attention by another accomplished artist of the older generation, Alexander Calder. The immense painted-metal stabiles which Calder has shown over the past few years represent one of the most successful uses of color to *articulate* the given structure of a welded-metal sculpture to be seen anywhere in modern art. But the fact that Calder employs color (usually lobster red or mat black) to accentuate the profile of his metal construction, and by so doing forfeits all possibility of granting color either a structural role or an autonomous expressive function in his sculpture, places his work in, at best, the prehistory of the development I am discussing. It was precisely Smith's effort to elevate color to a higher and more essential place in the expressive hierarchy which gave the works shown at the Carnegie a relevance Calder's lack, notwithstanding the latter's complete success in their own terms.

Undoubtedly the most audacious attack to date has been that of the English sculptor, Anthony Caro. Deriving directly from Smith, whose example prompted Caro to abandon the slightly retrograde figure-sculpture he had practiced in the early Fifties and turn his attention entirely to the problem of painted-metal construction, the work which this tough-minded artist has produced since around 1960 locates more clearly than anything else I have seen the particular issues that are inherent in the color-construction idea.

Caro's very large, sprawling constructions, composed of girder-like steel units, are at times almost clumsy in their imagery and too broad in their physical reach to take in at a single glance. The appropriation of Smith's factory-oriented technology as well as his particular kind of anti-bourgeois taste is clear and unmistakable, but Caro adopts Smith's precedents in order to create something strikingly new: a kind of three-dimensional labyrinth of pure color. His sculptures *ought* to resemble Calder's stabiles in everything but their profiles, for, like Calder's, they are each painted a single color; and yet in their actual visual effect they

are quite the opposite. Whereas Calder paints the surface of his stabiles as a way of articulating their structure, Caro seems to have conceived and constructed his sculptures entirely for the purpose of articulating their color. He thus uses his metal structure more or less the way certain painters use canvas—as a "conductor" of color; and the conception remains sculptural insofar as this union with color is indispensable to our visual grasp of its three-dimensional dynamics.



Voltri Bolton V
(Steel, height 86 1/16 inches)
DAVID SMITH

Caro's work strikes one as original, forthright, and operating on its own intellectual energies. The same cannot be said of some other recent attempts to "crack" the color-construction barrier. I think particularly of the large painted constructions of George Sugarman and David Weinrib, who work respectively in wood and metal and whose *oeuvres* have lately come to the fore because of their inclusion in the 1963 Bienal in Sao Paulo. Though these two sculptors differ from each other, they are alike in their limitations, and together define what the color-construction idea is *not*: it is not a conventional welded or assembled modern sculpture colored to resemble an abstract painting and spilling out into a room in helter-skelter disarray. True, Smith and Caro also derive in some respects from painting, and from an ambition to project sculpture physically in a more imposing manner—to turn it into something the spectator confronts rather than walks around. But interest in their work turns on precisely what is

lacking in both Sugarman and Weinrib: the ability to create new syntactical means for effecting this ambition. The latter are superficially more dazzling—visually, more "fun"—but their ideas are, in more than one sense, all a matter of surfaces and do not really penetrate the basic problem.

There remain two other artists—Elsworth Kelly and Donald Judd—whose work stands in an interesting relation to the color-construction idea but whose accomplishments to date seem to stand outside it, waiting, as it were, for a way in. Kelly is, of course, well known for his lean but expressively vibrant "hard-edge" abstract painting. His sculpture is simply the physical projection of one or another of his "hard-edge" forms into three dimensional space. It is as if the figure in a painting had stepped out of its frame and abandoned the negative space in which it was conceived; only in Kelly's case the "figure" is an incisive abstract form defined by a single color. Though woefully incomplete as a sculptural idea and remote from Constructive practice, Kelly's work in this vein has a visual presence too compelling to be ignored. It has, I think, already influenced Smith in some ways, and will influence others in the future. It does not promise a solution to the color-construction problem, but will probably contribute to future solutions of it.

Kelly's vision—for, in sculptural terms, it is more of a vision than a completely worked-out method—may already have influenced the other artist, Donald Judd. Working in wood, which is painted a uniform bright red and is sometimes combined with metal "passages," Judd employs deliberately simple forms and motifs—boxes, ladders, etc. His characteristic strategy is to construct one of these stark works in such a way that an opening, an edge, or one element in a series of visual repetitions acts as an expressive center for the whole; an otherwise inert colored mass is thus animated, and given a sculptural inflection by means of this single expressive device. Besides Kelly, there is something of Louise Nevelson in Judd's work—and something of Barnett Newman, too, in its obsession with "less." Judd is in many ways the crudest and least developed of the artists mentioned here, and yet his work leaves an emphatic, if discomforting, sculptural image in the memory.

If one turns away from an examination of particular artists and asks, instead, what the development of the color-construction idea signifies for art at the present moment, I think an answer can be given without hesitation. This development is part of a general tendency to lighten the burden of artistic expression—to allow art to engage the surface of experience rather than the depths, and to glory in the expressive licence which an allowance on this order makes possible. For I believe that it is one of the odd facts of current aesthetic phenomena that as the organization of contemporary life grows more complex, as experience becomes more baffling and menacing, the visual arts tend to reach out for styles and ideas that permit a greater simplification of both method and image. This has made our art—and perhaps especially the kind of sculpture I have been discussing above—more sociable, accessible, and agreeable; but it also places a clear, and perhaps radical, limit on the amount of experience that one can any longer expect to see reflected in art. Within that limit, however, the sculptural development of color-construction represents an immensely interesting chapter in the history of a movement which has often before been more concerned with the internal dynamics of art than with the external vicissitudes of experience at large. And it is a development of which we have only seen the beginning.

In a note to the editor, Mr. McLuhan said of this article: "It is a real step beyond my *Understanding Media* volume. What I have been describing for ten years in the phrase 'The medium is the message' is better explained here. The fact that a new medium is environmental at once describes why it is the 'message' and why it is mostly unconscious."

NEW MEDIA AND THE ARTS

by marshall mcLuhan

New media, new technologies, new extensions of human powers, tend to be environmental. Tools, script, as much as wheel, or photograph, or Telstar, create a new environment, a new matrix for the existing technologies. The older technologies, the older environment, become the content of the new environmental technology. Technologies, as they tend to create total environmental change, could plausibly be regarded as archetypal. Telstar creates a new environment for our planet, even as the planet itself becomes the content of Telstar. Whatever becomes the content of a new environment tends to become processed and patterned into an art form. Indeed, it becomes *clichéd* and conventionalized, needing the encounter with other forms and environments in order to awaken its potential. The history of the arts and sciences could be written in terms of the continuing process by which new technologies create new environments for old technologies. The old technology, as the content of the new, quickly becomes tidied up into an art form, such as is now happening to film since it has become the content of TV.

The invention of script provided a technology that created extensive new environments. The content of script was at first the oral tradition of poetry and wisdom. Just how the content of script was affected by the new medium of writing is a story that has been told by Albert Lord in his *Singer of Tales* and by Eric Havelock in his *Preface to Plato*. The new technology, in creating new environment for the old technology, maximizes change. Yet the environmental is also the unnoticeable. We seem to be least conscious of the most archetypal technologies. Nature had been environmental for a good while before it became the content of the new industrial environment of the 18th and 19th centuries. As content of the mechanical technology, Nature became an art form. With the advent of electric technology as a new archetypal environment, the mechanical technology, in its turn, became content and art form. The futurists, the cubists, the Vorticists, and others accepted the mechanical as an art form. Today, Pop art, derived from the old environment of advertising technology, appears as an art form. Advertising had become an environmental and archetypal form with the aid of photography and radio. When this whole advertising complex suddenly

became included in the new TV environment, the usual unconscious process began. Advertising began to get tidied up into an art form, much to its own surprise. Telstar, in turn, creates a new environmental technology for which the planet itself is the content, as it were. The entire human environment of the planet now moves increasingly towards the status of an artefact. For some time now, the problems of revising the educational establishment, as well as the problems of reshaping the nature of Work, have presented the necessity of dealing with the environmental as if it too were artefact. Perhaps this is another way of confronting the existential, because to deal with the environmental as artefact is to move that which has long been unconscious onto the plane of knowing.

For centuries our artists have offered us artefacts as a means of creating new vision and new awareness. The artefact, as much as the content of our curricula, has provided us with a means of correcting the defects of perception that have been engendered by specialized technological environments. Electric technology offers, perhaps for the first time, a means of dealing with the environment itself as a direct instrument of vision and knowing.

New media are new archetypes, at first disguised as degradations of older media. This degradation happens when new media inevitably use older ones as content. Using the older ones as content hastens the tidying-up process by which a medium becomes an art form. For example, film has become the content of TV. When film was new, it used the novel and the drama as content. When film seemed to be most itself, most *avant-garde,* as in the documentary, it was in effect using the newspaper as content. Dickens anticipated the form of film when he was most documentary in his novels. In *David Copperfield,* he experimented with the eyes of a child as if they were a camera turned on the adult world. To see the adult world as a live process unfolding mysteriously to the child awareness was a notable degree of anticipation of film form and camera eye. D. W. Griffiths recognized this and habitually carried a volume of Dickens with him on location. He would sit down and open his Dickens in the midst of shooting a film in order to discover new ways of solving his problems.

A glance back to the beginnings of print will show this strange process at work whereby the new form swallows, as it were, an older form. Rabelais, in his *Gargantua,* seems to mime this process whereby one medium swallows another. The older medieval forms of fable and narrative, when they enter the new medium of print, seem to be small creatures inside a whale or a monster. This scale of the small thing being encompassed by the larger thing seems to recur, as in Swift's *Gulliver* and in Cecil B. DeMille's epics which swallowed the book, as it were.

In the medium of painting, Hieronymus Bosch performed the same task as Rabelais. He used the new pictorial space of perspective then—that is, a space uniform, continuous and connected—as a new container or environment for the old, iconic, medieval space. Iconic space is discontinuous, and nonuniform, and nonconnected. It is a space in which objects create their own environment. By using the new visual space as container for the old iconic or tactual space, Bosch created the same kind of fantasy

as Rabelais. Today it is the iconic world that has become the container for the old visual space, creating not dissimilar nightmarishness in our world.

The gigantism of Rabelais in the presence of the first onset of typography was reported by Cervantes in *Don Quixote.* When the new form swallows the older form, there is a natural confusion of scales and images during the process of translating the old into the new. During this process, the culture seems to enter a phase of fantasy and unreality. Marlowe and Shakespeare used the new p.a. system of blank verse as means of taking over and magnifying the world of medieval chronicle and anecdote. Edmund Spenser's *Fairie Queen* used the world of print to enshrine the fantasy and imagery of the preceding age. Milton did the same for the sermon and the theological tract, though he admitted the very strong appeal that the medieval image still offered as possible content for his new pictorial space created by the printed world.

Swift's *Tale of A Tub* used the new world of print to enclose the preceding world of the sermon and theological exegesis. Swift is aware of the conflict of forms somewhat in the manner of *Mad Magazine* today. Bunyan, using Swift's themes and components, takes them far more literally and seriously. His tales use the sermon and the theological tract with all the sobriety of our "sage and serious Spenser."

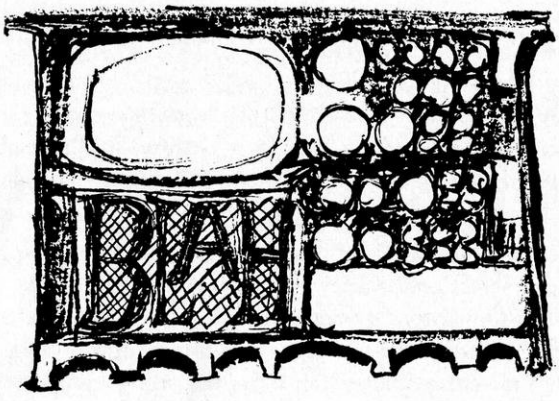
A notable feature of Swift's *Gulliver* is that his story line is tied to the hand rather than to the foot. It is this that gives his work its bond with traditional art forms. *Gulliver* is an extraordinarily tactual world in which we encounter objects and situations in a many-sided way of multisensuous involvement. What happens with Fielding and Smollett is that the eye is suddenly linked to the foot rather than to the hand, and begins to move with all the freedom and *tracking* curiosity of the movie camera. This meant a progressive specialization of the sensory life in the arts with mounting stress upon the eye in isolation from the other senses. With Sterne and Jane Austen there is a very qualified acceptance of this development. Sterne preferred as content the older forms of the sermon and the tract, as did Swift. Jane Austen also used as content the livelier forms of the moral essays of the 18th century.

Scott and Byron take over into their camera-eye world the new pictorial perspectives developed by the 18th century. With Scott and Byron the camera eye has become so tightly tied to the foot that they offer experience of the travelogue as much as any film today.

Dickens, by contrast, ties the camera to the minute inspection of the newspaper documentation. Somewhat earlier, George Crabbe had experimented with this dimension. Dickens, by using the newspaper as the content of the older novel form, created a new hybrid of great power. As usual, when the new medium swallowed an older one, conventional taste protested that vulgarization had occurred. Paradoxically, Dickens, by pushing the camera eye to a point of high fidelity, broke out of the domain of perspective and moved back into the highly tactual and iconic world of surrealism and modern art.

TV took over the film world as its lawful prey, or content. Since the TV image is a kind of braille that prefers flat space and stark contours, its preference for the out-of-doors is a way of announcing that its natural space is one that is unenclosed and therefore nonperspective and nonpictorial. The TV camera unites the eye and the hand as much as the movie camera had united the eye and the foot. The TV camera has no shutter. It does not deal with aspects or facets of objects in high resolution. It is a means of direct *pick-up* by the electric groping over surfaces. Since the space of active touch is discontinuous, one of the natural results of TV pressure on the film is in the development of polyvision, or multiple screen projection. As long as the camera was tied to the foot rather than to the hand, it tended to prefer the uniform, continuous and connected space of the visual sense. No such preference characterizes the TV camera.

To sum this up, it can be enunciated as a principle that all new media or technologies, whatever, create new environments, psychic and social, that assume as their natural content the earlier technologies. Moreover, the content of these new environments undergoes a progressive reshaping so that what had appeared earlier as dishevelled and degraded becomes conventionalized into an artistic genre. TV, as the latest archetypal environment or technology, is very much in this dishevelled phase. The movie remained in such a dishevelled phase for decades. Whether Telstar is already a new archetypal environment that assumes the present TV form as its content will appear fairly soon. The principle of new technology as an archetypal environment that moulds new art forms out of the antecedent technologies is a principle that applies to all the arts and sciences, to architecture as much as to music, or mathematics. This principle affords a means of swift insight into the most complex phases of the life of cultural forms.



priest of passage
(for william golding)
by lewis turco

A mouse:

I lie here in the root of this week, grey
as the rest of the night. I hear the sharp
points of the stars spearing the undergrowth.
The nails of my hands grasp thistle and moss
as I listen, my cold eyes glistening.

An owl:

He is down there, waiting. He will not hear
my wings until they are beating his sides,
until my talons have wound his life in
spools of flight and the earth diminishes
as his world grows smaller, washes at last
into the wells of his sight. Let him wait
as I circle in a white storm of stars.

The mouse:

I think I hear him, but I do not hear
him. I only think. What I do hear is
the hoofsong of the nightwind rearing like
a stallion among boles and cones. Branches
beat against branches—a flock of beaks sharp
as this blade of sawgrass against my ear.

The owl:

It will be soon now. All I need do is
circle, draw the spiral rune once more on
the slate of silence. I am priest of his
passage, a monk who dwells in his bowels.
I finish the figure thus; the tip of
my wing lances the moon with this gesture.

The mouse:

Stars, and a tide of wind.

The owl:

Up. We are one.

ARTISTIC CREATIVITY AND ALIENATION: THE JAZZ MUSICIAN VS. HIS AUDIENCE

by richard a. peterson

Commentators commonly deplore the alienation of the artist from contemporary society. Some propose means of reabsorbing these lost souls into the flock. It is my purpose here to show that such efforts are futile because alienation and artistic creativity are closely interconnected. I offer evidence in support of this contention drawn from the world of jazz.

Some will say that jazz is not art. The critic-written literature on the point is as dreary as it is vast. For our purposes, it is not important whether jazz is or is not art, but rather whether jazzmen work in a world like that of creative artists. This they clearly do in a number of important regards. Each art form, of course, has unique problems deriving from its traditions, contemporary institutional arrangements, and constraints inherent in its "medium." However, jazzmen share with all artists several occupational problems which induce alienation from the larger society—problems which are not experienced by doctors, artisans, and civil service workers, for example.

Artists differ from other professionals in the way they relate to the *consumers* of their occupational services. Most other established occupations have developed strong occupational associations of one sort or another which narrowly circumscribe the demands which the clientele can make on the practitioner. The creative artist's claim to competence is not buttressed by the trappings of a professional organization, the titles of an established bureaucracy, or the elaborate regulations of the craftman's guild. Though artists do form professional associations, guilds, and labor unions, these organizations provide little protection for the creative artist. Historically, when such associations have become strong enough to aid the artist they have at the same time tried to shape artistic activity themselves. The classic case is, of course, the academies which were established in 16th- and 17th-century Europe, but the problem is the same for artists today. Over the past several years, the pages of this journal have voiced the fears of control by government, industry and academia.

Unlike other occupations whose jobs revolve around set routines, the distinguishing element of artistic work is its dependence on *creative genius* and *self-imposed* standards which overturn prior modes, forms, and routines. This point has been made by artists as different as William Faulkner and Miles Davis. "Mine is the standard which must be met," says Faulkner. "Let the writer take up surgery or bricklaying if he is interested in technique. There is no mechanical way to get the writing done, no short cut. The young writer would be a fool to follow a theory." Jazz trumpeter Davis concurs: "I don't

pay no attention to what the critics say about me, the good or the bad. The toughest critic I got, and the only one I worry about, is myself .... I am too vain to play anything I think is bad."

This freedom of the artist, so rare among contemporary occupations, is idealized by prominent jazz critic Nat Hentoff. "Jazz is one of the few vocations that allows a man to be himself, to say in his work who he is and what he feels." However, the picture is not so idyllic. Free of control by an organization of peers, the jazz artist must stand up to his audience alone. The audience can be held in contempt, but it cannot be ignored entirely. Musicians are performers, and performers are not paid to entertain each other. The old adage still holds true: "He who pays the piper calls the tune."

In order to make a living, the musician is often asked to play what he considers the antithesis of jazz—commercial, popular, corny, sweet, square's music. Jimmy McPartland recalls an incident with a recording company executive in which Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, and Tommy Dorsey were also involved:

> *After the {recording} session was just about over, we started kidding around and playing corny.*
>
> *Out comes the recording manager from his booth, and he says, "That's it! That's what we want, just what you're playing there."*
>
> *We were playing as corny as possible. As a matter of fact, Tommy Dorsey had come up and was standing listening to us, and he picked up a trombone and started playing, kidding around, too.*
>
> *The manager said, "You gotta do that." That is what he wanted. So we sort of used the* St. Louis *chord progressions and blew all this cod Dixie, and we called the number* Shirt Tail Stomp. *It sold more than any of the others; or I should say that it sold the rest of the sides because it was corny. It shows the taste of people; still the same, I guess, the world over.*

A performer can pander to the tastes of his audience or he can ignore them. He can try to educate the audience to raise its standards, or he can reject audience standards altogether. Jazz musicians have tried out all these possibilities at one time or another, as they search for an attitude toward the audience that can preserve their self-image as creative artists without putting themselves permanently on the unemployed list. However, as we shall see, none of these strategies provides a final resolution of the audience "problem."

A complete acceptance of audience standards can produce a Lawrence Welk, whose musical philosophy is "to play music not so much what we enjoy as what people in general enjoy." Welk, of course, does not really have the jazzman's problem. He sees himself as an entertainer rather than as an artist, and is content to have it so. Jazz musicians feel that complete surrender to audience taste will destroy their creative abilities. They recount, with horror, stories about those of their fellows who have "gone commercial." As *Down Beat* magazine tells the story, one performer, Conte Candoli "... has become a symbol of what can happen to a fine young jazzman when he is in a creatively stultifying atmosphere for a period of years. ... [He] plays blandly and impersonally." In a more general vein the magazine continues, "... this important art form, [jazz, should be] presented with taste, dignity, and devotion to the principles

of beauty which in the past have too often been sacrificed for commercial reasons." Those musicians who do not "go commercial" or leave the field entirely are fated to some form of battle with the audience. The weapons of this battle vary from one art form to another, but the general strategies of defense against the audience are quite similar among the arts.

"THE FOURTH WALL"

In nightclubs and dance halls where jazz is most often played, the artist's contact with the public is quite intimate. Here jazz musicians feel they must defend themselves and their music from the audience's corrupting taste. They try to ignore the audience by constructing what Kenny Dorham, a trumpet player, calls ". . . 'the fourth wall.' . . . you're aware of the audience and yet you have to preserve a sense of detachment so you can create a piece of music or a role internally." They develop a system of communication through the music which is shared among the musicians ". . . like an inside joke." They "put down" the audience in innumerable ways, in the music, through jokes and antics, and through not honoring "requests" from the audience.

Each of the performing arts must deal with a "live audience." The usual techniques involve an announced program printed in advance and minimized social contacts with the audience. This is accomplished through a highly formalized style of presentation and exclusion of the audience from backstage areas. It has been difficult for jazzmen to use these practices for several reasons. A printed program is unusual in jazz performances because it goes against the ideas of spontaneity and improvisation which are central to jazz. Also, musicians working in clubs are expected to mingle with the customers between sets. The plastic arts are not immune from this sort of close audience contact. Among painters the portraitist has a particularly intimate and protracted contact with the client. Social skills are as important as artistic talent to obtain a steady income from such work, and many great painters knew great privation because of their unwillingness or inability to entertain patrons sitting for their portraits.

EDUCATION

Musicians have employed several strategies to cope with the audience. One possibility is to educate the audience to want to hear good jazz and to respect the jazz artist. This education can be open, working through the schools as Stan Kenton and representatives of the musicians' union have advocated. Alternatively, it can be disguised education, jazz smuggled into dance or commercial music. This is the strategy most often advocated by practicing musicians and also the one which is most readily available to them. The late Jack Teagarden put it most simply. "You just can't go out there and play every number fast to show off your technique. You've got to play some numbers for the dancers . . . . play four tunes for the public and one for yourself." "Commercialized jazz" has been excused by some critics as whetting the appetite or preparing the audience for true jazz. *Down Beat* states, "Due to the sad state of popular music, performers such as Henry Mancini, Jonah Jones, George Shearing, and Peggy Lee should be encouraged instead of criticized for their work. I have found that many people can progress from listening to so-called pop jazz to the more demanding. In using these performers as stepping stones, a person can eventually listen to Miles Davis, John

Coltrane, Theolonious Monk, and Charlie Parker with real honesty."

The basic problem inherent in diluting creativity to educate the audience is that jazz is ever changing. As with any art, today's excitingly creative jazz is tomorrow's commercial pap. Thus, inevitably, the audience is being educated to *yesterday's* jazz. The forty-year-old lady who knows enough to yell for "Saints" doesn't know that this tune and the style which it represents had been thoroughly explored as an art form before she left grammar school. The half-educated audience asks the artist to produce again and again the things that have made him famous. This can have a devastating impact on the artist's career. As Andre Hodeir, French jazz historian, tells the story, ". . . the history of both jazz and jazzmen is that of creative purity gradually corrupted by success . . . . First, the young musician expresses himself freely, breaks the rules, disconcerting and even shocking his listeners; then the public adopts him, he attracts disciples and becomes a star. He thinks he is free, but he has become a prisoner." Benny Goodman is one jazz "star" who is painfully aware of the audience-built prison he inhabits. "A lot of guys today, they don't know what they want, do they? Maybe I don't either. But something happens when you find out that what you're doing is no longer music—that it's become entertainment. It's a subtle thing and affects what you're playing. Your whole attitude changes."

NUT JAZZ

Rather than diluting the jazz elements, the music may be made palatable to the audience by occasional gimmicks. In the 1920's this strategy was given the name "nut" jazz. Here jazz virtuosity is exaggerated out of all proportions and built into a routine. While some jazz historians have claimed that the "gimmicks" of Cab Calloway and the "personality" of Louis Armstrong sustained jazz through the 1930's, such exhibitionism is strongly resented by race-conscious artists today. Art Blakey, jazz drummer, compares the plight of the would-be jazz artist in overcoming the stereotype of "nut jazz" with that of the Negro in gaining acceptance in American society. "We had to evolve through the same thing as, let's say, the Negro had. He had to grin, scratch his head, do anything to get along."

The clowning of "nut" jazz has come to be associated with debasing Negro stereotypes, and the aloof stage manner of the "cool" jazz musician was a deliberate attempt to repudiate this association. As the paragon of the cool manner, Miles Davis says, "All I am is a trumpet player. I only can do one thing—play my horn—and that's what's at the bottom of the whole mess. I ain't no entertainer, and I ain't trying to be one. I am one thing, a musician." Later Davis adds sarcastically, "My trouble started when I learned to play the trumpet and hadn't learned to dance."

For all this, the problem of "nut jazz" is hardly less serious today than a generation ago. As jazz progresses there is a push to experiment with new techniques, styles, and instruments. It becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between genuine artistic innovation and mere gimmickry. No apes have yet won jazz awards, but the day may not be far off. Roland Kirk, Don Ellis, and Ornette Coleman have all recently risen to prominence in part through their use of odd instruments and even odder behavior.

THE JAZZ COMMUNITY

Attempts to bring the art of jazz to the audience—either by diluting it or putting it in an amusing package—result in a stifling of creative artistry. There is one alternative remaining, total rejection of the audience and its standards. It's a very short jump for most jazz musicians from the rejection of lay evaluations of music to the development of a special jazz community which rejects the standards of society in the rest of life as well. The constraints of night work and transient engagements help to isolate the jazzman from the usual round of activities of the larger society. The jazz musician begins to see all the world outside the jazz community as essentially hostile and cuts himself adrift from the rest of society. Distinctive styles of clothing, language, and behavior develop. While these help in solidifying the artist community, they help to widen the gap between the musician and his audience. The music may be rejected out of hand simply because the performer looks, acts or talks strangely. Even more important, the dress, language, and mannerisms—the externals—rather than musical ability often come to be viewed as central to jazz. The audience may come to revere a musician simply because he is "hot," "cool," "hip," "funkey," "gear," or whatever the current mode may be. As Roy Haynes, solid jazz drummer, complains, "I bet if I were some kind of nut or something, you know, weird or a junkie or something, I'd get a lot of notice. But there doesn't seem to be too much attention paid to guys who make a normal scene. I mean who make all their gigs and raise families. It's a wild thing."

The demands of the jazz image may affect not only the reputation of a performer, they may affect his very health. In this isolated community the cult of creative genius and the fierce competitiveness of jazz artistry have led to the use of all sorts of artificial means (alcohol, drugs, magical devices, and the like) to heighten creative sensitivity and to dull the consciousness of an alien audience. Thus, jazz *community* demands may bring the musician to destroy himself. Fabled cases of self-destruction for the sake of art are those of Bix Biederbecke and Charlie Parker.

THE TAME BOHEMIAN

The final irony in attempting to get free of audience demands through Bohemianism is that the audience comes to expect and demand *outré* behavior. Miles Davis is egged on to be insulting. Fans wait impatiently for Theolonious Monk to "pull" one of his "weird bits." The would-be-audience-alienator is asked to go on with his "show." What is intended as a rejection of conventions is converted into a new brand of entertainment, a new style, reminiscent of nut jazz. A recent note in *Down Beat* magazine concerning one of the most innovative modern jazz artists nicely illustrates this final dilemma:

> *Charles Mingus, often discussed as a petulant stormy petrel, is often more victim of the news-conscious than he is really two-gun notorious. Witness his last engagement at New York's Village Gate. Co-owner Joe Tremini called Mingus' manager to demand some action. "What's going on?" asked the manager. "Mingus has been here for a week now; no trouble; no telling the customers off. Talk to Mingus, will you? It is bad for business."*

THE ART OF ENCOUNTER

by john f. a. taylor

In the cruel heat of the Second World War, whenever the armies of one or other of the embattled powers had, as one suspected, been soundly whopped, announcements were invariably forthcoming through the head bandages of the beaten side that its forces had entered upon a "strategic retreat." The idea of a strategic retreat was in those days, if not a heroic, at all events a very useful concept. It preserved appearances, and at times, in those bleak precarious hours, appearances were all one had for show. Especially on the home front, the idea of a strategic retreat demonstrated its utility. It enabled an embarrassment to be got over, smoothed off, or, as the phrase then was, "interpreted," without injuring the feelings, naming the fault or tarnishing the brass of sulky field generals, who were then, as always, in terribly short supply. The idea had, besides, this recommendation, that there was no misadventure for which it was not a sufficient defense. By means of it every loss could be accounted a gain, and every backward step a positive evidence of superior dash and cunning. Bruised, battered, bewildered and desperate, men on the numbed backward march knew better: their blood stank in the nostril, they walked harassed in a blind and dumb fatigue, and their chaos accused all plan. It was only on the home front that the dignity of soldiering was perfectly believed in. There, people knew only what it was convenient to have them believe. Therefore on this front the manifest utility of the idea of a strategic retreat was unassailable. You may measure its power by its success in Germany. In Germany, honest men discovered in consternation and sudden abasement that the war was lost, though defeat had been admitted in no single battle.

It is, I think, regrettable that we preserve in the ruinous aftermath only this negative use of the idea of a strategic retreat. Some retreats have been after all, in fact as well as in profession, *strategic,* and the idea of this kind of move has profoundly interesting applications in describing what has actually taken place in some of the most creative and original passages of human history. For the idea defines the basic pattern of all deliberated cultural advance, a pattern which identically recurs wherever an authentically radical criticism has been turned upon human institutions or partisanships or forms or manners or styles of mind.

For my own part I find this pattern indispensable in any attempt to state the larger significance of the contemporary movement in the arts. The power of the contemporary movement is essentially critical, accusative, reformatory. Its partisans represent it as a brilliant advance upon a new frontier. It is on the contrary, as I conceive, in the majority of its passages a critical retreat, a regathering of elemental forces and a reconstitution of artistic aims. That is why it so baffles us. We look for the achievement of a new content; it appears to have given us none. It appears to have given us only its heroic refusals, its honest rejections of inherited dignity and fake beatitude.

It is a prime symptom of the inanition of contemporary criticism that we content

ourselves with the empty notion of an *avant-garde*. Timid heroes may be depended on to preserve martial metaphors: peace would make them ashamed. The identifying mark of the hero of the *avant-garde* is precisely that he cannot afford to win. The job forbids it. His heroism depends upon the presence of an enemy and will evaporate if the enemy should ever do him the ultimate disservice of becoming his friend. I strongly suspect that the real challenge to the artist in our day is to learn to move with the host which harbors him and confers upon him the duties as well as the immunities of his office. Nothing is so clear a sign of the academic character of the *avant-garde* in our world as that it defends its rebellion, and declares its independence, in terms which were appropriate to a revolution of almost a century ago.

Advance guards are, of course, as everyone admits, necessary. They are necessary even on a strategic retreat. But on such an occasion, when the main body is in retreat, the idea of an advance guard becomes extremely ambiguous. For it is no longer clear whether the advance guard is the part of the forces which leads the retreat or the part which, having once led, now takes up the rear. At such a time the only useful concept is the concept of guardianship itself, the concept of guarding the main force, of tending it and caring for it and ministering to it, in one word, of exercising a trust for its sake, wherever—at the front or at the rear or on the undefended flank—the need may fall. Guardianship requires, as being advanced does not, a critical decision concerning where the real stakes lie. It requires that a distinction be drawn between what is accidental and may therefore be relinquished and what is essential and must therefore at all costs be preserved. Marianne Moore once wrote: "There never was a war which was not inward." That is the prime revelation of all art. And that is why the *avant-garde* always learns that it has gone looking for its adversary in the wrong quarter.

I therefore prefer to view the modern movement under the idea of a strategic retreat. The French express the idea in the picturesque phrase, *reculer pour mieux sauter,* which means, literally, "to back up in order to make a better jump." In France, as a strategy of the intellect, that device has a long and honorable tradition behind it. René Descartes fathered the whole movement of modern philosophy in the 17th century by requiring of the mind a critical retreat upon its own premises. The retreat signified for him a critical method, the method of doubt, as it was called, whereby he sought to resurrect philosophy, strengthened and purified, from the ashes of dogma and old error.

Suppose a man were to attempt, by way of a philosophical experiment, to doubt all of the beliefs which formerly he had held, all of the constructions which the mind has erected on the evidences of sense-experience or reason or memory or the authority of others. In short, suppose a universal doubt to be turned upon all beliefs whatever without regard to their seriousness or sanctity or presumed necessity in the structures of intellect. The first demand of philosophy is, for once in the world, to make a clean sweep of the mind, to rid it of every belief about which there is the least complexion of obscurity or uncertainty. The question is, whether in such an experiment there could be found any belief whatever which was so steadfast and indisputable that the worst shock of doubt could not displace it. If such a belief could be found, then—so Descartes thought—upon it as upon a sure foundation a new science could be resurrected, the permanent conquest of a truth impregnable, no longer subject to the variations of human temperament but capable of setting men free, since it yielded up the vision of all vast nature's open secret.

Such was the significance of that strange affirmation, "I think, therefore I am,"

which appears at the beginning of modern philosophy. It was the one proposition which in the birth of the modern mind survived its mighty shaking of the foundations.

The method of doubt was a strategic retreat of the intellect, and upon it was grounded the first great intellectual revolution of modern times. No modern has ever succeeded in forgetting Descartes' example. It is impossible to believe as a modern without confronting that annihilating doubt which he took to be the threshold of all philosophy. For we have learned that in the pursuit of truth only the mind which will risk losing the world shall ever gain it.

The artistic revolution at the beginning of the 20th century was, I think, a phenomenon of the same absolute radicalness. The matter at stake was sensibility, not intellect; taste, not belief. But of the radicalness of its rejections in the interest of resurrecting a strengthened and purified art, there can be no question. Its object has been everywhere to extrude accident, everywhere methodically to eliminate from art all that is extraneous or inessential, adventitious or irrelevant. What then is essential? If the passive inheritance and the borrowed dignity are forbidden in art's austere enterprise, what is required? Not the image of nature or the image of history, but the image of our own encounter.

The revolution at the beginning of the 20th century is not the first revolution in the arts of visual design. But it has this remarkable singularity which distinguishes it from ordinary revolutions, that its initial path is forbidden to be its permanent path. A revolution which proceeds by strategic retreat must at some stage reach a critical turning point at which a new direction is declared. The 20th century finds itself in so many connections—in art, in philosophy, in politics, in economy—at such a turning point. It finds itself obliged in the dignity of free choice to assume its own posture, to establish its own positive identity, not by denouncing what it rejects but by electing what it affirms. Those who applaud contemporary art as if the revolution were accomplished speak sentimentally and prematurely; those who despair of it as if the revolution were a barbarism, a desecration of all that is reverable and sacrosanct in the visual inheritance of mankind, speak ignorantly.

For the positive task has not merely to be done; it has still to be confronted. The sense of this demand was implicit in what men saw, now two generations ago, in Mondrian. His negative achievement was extraordinary; his positive achievement (though it was not then, and is not now, fashionable to say it) was very narrow indeed. The question even then was, though we did not know to ask it, What must be thought of this most uncompromising reformer when there has come to be a universal priesthood of believers? Mondrian now appears to us the most academic, because the most doctrinaire, of all the painters of his generation. To become academic is the condemnation of all such art whose main significance is the negative one of freeing others for a useful work. But the contemporary artist's problem is no longer freedom. His problem is to recover a standard of what is useful.

In the Chicago Art Institute there hangs a very modest little painting, a portrait of the artist's wife, by Paul Cézanne. It must be considered rather a representative than a distinguished work. There are at all events superior Cézannes, some of them in the Institute itself. I nevertheless regard this simple canvas as a manifest statement of almost everything that is germinal and original in the art of our contemporaries. It is the quiet confession of a principle which animates the modern movement wherever the modern

movement is most keenly aware of the peculiar commission it has given to itself. It illustrates the meaning of what I describe as *an art of encounter.*

The ordinary viewer is not, according to my observation, predisposed to pause very long before this image of Madame Cézanne. The work is mercilessly severe, innocent of every sensuous or personal appeal. If it excites sentiment at all, the sentiment is demonstrably the viewer's accident, not the artist's intention. Sympathy, either ours or his own, is alien to Cézanne's enterprise. The artist is too relentlessly absorbed with the task of constructing a picture of his subject either to command sympathy or to be

Madame Cézanne in a Yellow Armchair, by Paul Cézanne. Photograph courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Wilson L. Mead fund.

concerned with it in her behalf. Therefore he makes of her an object. And that, though it may perhaps be thought the picture's merit, explains the response which all women without exception give to this portrait. I have never met a woman who, if given the opportunity of being made immortal in the art of a master, would choose Cézanne for her magnification; I have known many who would rather die or lose their virtue than to go swimming with his bathers. Nor, I think, are they merely prejudiced by vanity in this opinion. A woman will suffer without protest the most scandalous diminution of her mental powers; she will endure in meekness any deprivation of legal or social or political estate. But women are too nearly identified with the *élan vital* to tolerate any nonsense or obfuscation on the matter of their sex, and they universally apprehend a clear and present danger if anyone should dare to slight it. Cézanne does not slight it. He has evidently, alas, forgotten it altogether. Madame Cézanne is so far from being an apotheosis of the feminine that she bears a most remarkable resemblance to a rock quarry.

This, then, a rock quarry, is his conception of the character of his sitter? No, this melancholy transformation of Madame Cézanne is in fact unpremeditated. It is the product, the inevitable effect, of the artist's mode of encounter. The mode of encounter is not what he finds in Madame Cézanne; it is what he Cézanne brings to her in the ultimate gift and homage of his office. It is after all essentially what one means by Cézanne, not the man who died and was buried but this mode of encounter which his art holds permanent, this mode of encounter which ranges persons and things—woman, leaf and mountain range—all together as of a kind, all equal except as art dignifies them in the face of common nature. This extraordinary artist turns upon this woman not the sympathetic vision of a husband or a lover who sees in her another Eve, but the professionally detached attention of a surgeon who sees in her the temporary occasion of his labors. He sees her not as a person, the *thou* opposite to him, but as a neutral *motif,* a thing in the web of things, which must be viewed without sympathy or sentiment or passion if it would be viewed rightly or, in the making of a picture, be rightly served. We are apt to regard this mode of viewing Madame Cézanne as the unintended effect of Cézanne's laboriousness, the consequence of his external style. But on the contrary the style is but the outward effect of it, the mute echo of the soul. One need only imagine what Renoir or Van Gogh would have done in representing Madame Cézanne in order to realize the measure of disinterested detachment which Cézanne has required of himself. Renoir would have rendered his appreciation of the femininity which was hers; Van Gogh the turbulent infinite earnestness in her presence which was his. Each would apprehend her according to his own idiom. But both would preserve in art the sense of a person, of a *thou,* whose dignity challenges respect. With Cézanne it is not so. That neutralizing vision is so absolute in its accounting, so impassively superior even to moral distinctions, that it confronts all things—woman, landscape and still life—with the same serene dispassionateness and reserve. The inviolableness of his mode of encounter, even in the presence of this woman, implies the austerity of his commission, not the negligibleness of his sitter,

Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

This neutrality is Cézanne's distinctive achievement as an artist. It is the most conclusive demonstration of the independence of art and nature which the art of painting has known.

When a Dutch painter of still life opens his eyes upon the world, he discovers the same fascination in things which you and I experience in looking through a microscope. The microscope discloses the objective wonders which lie unsuspected and unimagined beneath the threshold of things ordinarily seen. So, for the Dutch painter, even above this threshold, in the still domain of old and familiar things there is new world enough, if eye is alert enough to see it, and craft subtle enough to hold it, and art modest enough not to trifle with it. The infinite variety of things challenges his exploration, and he explores it with the rapture of a lover on his wedding night. The poise of the composition may belong to art; the measureless interest of the things composed belongs to nature. Nature has not waited for the offices of art to array itself in these incredible riches which the eye surprises—the reverberation of the lights in a piece of pewter, the curled peel of a lemon, the shell of an opened nut, the texture of bread, the bead of water on the skin of a grape, and in the mirroring surface of a Dutch wineglass the dim and strangely misshapen reflection of the artist himself at his work! His painting is a celebration of all these things; but he the votary has only to mirror the world in order to celebrate it, since anything clearly seen will celebrate itself. The artist has only the obstetrical office of seizing it, of delivering it from its transiency, long enough for the less initiated to see it too.

That is, of course, an illusion. It is the engaging illusion of innocence which belongs to the art of *genre* in all of its seasons. So intoxicated is the artist with his world that he forgets his own part in the constitution of his world. That illusion of innocence is exactly what you will not find in the art of our contemporaries. Contemporary art is an art grown self-aware. In the pictorial tradition to which we are used the subject tends always to be manifest, the construction always to be latent. Cubism is the deliberate inversion of that ordering. It is an art which refuses to conceal its own artifice: the construction is openly confessed, the subject hides. This awareness of the artist's constructive act is, as I believe, the great promise of the new art; but it is also, as the poor egotism of our contemporary expressionists has shown, its presiding liability. Hillel used to say: "If I do not love myself, who shall love me? But if I love only myself, what am I?"

There is in Cézanne not the slightest remaining trace of the Dutch artist's interest in objects for their own sake. Objects interest him only as the occasion of his own constructions. Not their forms, but the transformations which he brings to them alone concern him. For in the consistency of these transformations is found the one indestructible part of him and them—not the eye which sees, not the things which are seen, but the mode of encounter, the style of mind which he sovereign has instituted in the face of nature. The things borrowed from nature are artistically indifferent; only the arrangement can count artistically, since it alone is subject to the government of his art. Therefore, for Cézanne, the landscape or the objects of still life are as powerful an occasion for the highest art as a human person.

Why, then, if the subject is, as the saying goes, indifferent, do we not have done with nature entirely? Shall not art be purer, shall it not acquire a new accession of power, by excluding all objective references whatever? It shall not. It shall simply have denied to itself Cézanne's resources of expression in declaring the freedom of the human spirit in the face of nature. Upon the ability of the modern artist to think his way clear of that issue depends, as I believe, the whole future of the modern movement,

its capacity to realize the full range of possibilities of an art of encounter grown self-aware. Michelangelo held that the human form was the end and object of all art. The modern artist does not believe that. But if apples and mountains and even the human form are matters of indifference, it does not follow that our neutrality before them, or our love of them, or our sufferance in confronting them, is a matter of indifference. And it may very well be that the objects of nature, which are themselves indifferent, are nevertheless essential to an art which sets out to realize an art of pure encounter. It is no more the business of art to turn its back on nature than to follow nature, and it is one of the perplexing paradoxes of the modern movement that an art which has long since established its independence should suppose itself compromised by putting its freedom to use.

POP AVANT-GARDE

BY GEORGE AMBERG

More people feel competent and confident to make aesthetic judgments than ever before in history. Such candid self-confidence reflects the pervasive influence of mass publication and audio-visual media on public opinion and popular attitudes. The atmosphere is saturated with cultural fallout whose effect, though neither predictable nor measurable, is noticeable everywhere. There is no escaping the cumulative effect of permanent exposure, however passively endured. Only time can tell whether it is the blessing or the curse of technological progress to make information on virtually everything accessible to virtually everybody. In the meantime, however, with every kind of information available on the printed page or the movie screen or the picture tube, fragments of aesthetic import are picked up here and there. Unfortunately, this process of haphazard cultural assimilation has passed beyond control; it has also passed beyond the question whether it is desirable or deplorable, as it is plainly inevitable. Contemporary society, on every cultural level, is permanently affected. Only two decades ago, Ortega y Gasset predicted that "a time must come in which society reorganizes itself into two orders or ranks: the illustrious and the vulgar." His prophetic vision did not come true because he did not count on the levelling force of mass culture.

In defense of either extreme, it is frequently argued that there is "high" culture for the elite as well as "low" culture for the masses, with the inference that there is need and room for both. While it seems fair and reasonable in principle, experience confirms in practice that this state of peaceful coexistence yields all the advantages to the purveyors of popular low culture. The movie industry used to thrive on it, as television does today. Perhaps we must concede that mass art represents accurately the taste of the massive majority, conspicuous only because of the enormous spread of mass communication. Perhaps one has to resign oneself to the fact that vulgarization is the dear price to pay for the popularization of culture. The real cause for apprehension, however, is not that inferior art is mass distributed, but creative work of merit and distinction as well, for indiscriminate popularization perpetuates the fallacy that something is available for nothing, for instance, culture without effort.

Whenever cultural values or problems are publicly aired, the suspicion prevails that there is probably as much complacency and prejudice on the one side as on the other, the elite being accused of arrogance and the masses of ignorance. And in both charges is more than a grain of truth. Neither group is unified in itself; they become collectively aware of each other at the point of collision. The overwhelming prevalence of middle-class standards and box office criteria in the popular arts is no sufficient reason to capitu-

late, nor are a Klee reproduction or an Eames chair in the living rooms of countless people a reason to rejoice. However distasteful the admission may be to those professionally or commercially responsible for the dissemination of news, knowledge, and entertainment, high culture is still the prerogative as well as the responsibility of a select minority. But such is the irony of the situation that, while the ignorant feel no need to justify or remedy their ignorance, the elite find themselves in a peculiarly vulnerable position. What they have to fear most from the anonymous majority is not resistance but acceptance, not alienation but fraternization.

Majority and anonymity are protecting the mass audience, collectively as well as individually, in the desultory pursuit of culture, accepting no challenge and allowing for no argument. The *avant-garde*, by definition, is unprotected and deliberately exposed —although it has never been exposed before the eyes and ears of millions until it encountered the electronic world. Three or four decades ago, belligerent groups, such as the Dadaists and Surrealists, would surely have made enthusiastic use of the telecommunication media had they existed at the time; they would have delighted in spreading their local scandals beyond the narrow confines of the Café Voltaire, the Galérie Surrealiste, the Athénée movie theatre and the limited coverage of small-circulation periodicals and pamphlets; they would have greatly enjoyed to "épater le bourgeois," multiplied into a potential audience of hundreds of thousands, possibly millions.

However, as we see it today, the exciting prospect of being able to cover an ever-expanding public through mass distribution soon reaches the point of no return. For proportionately with the increase of the audience diminishes the value of its aesthetic appreciation. There are, simply, not enough discriminating people to provide solid and sustained support for advanced creative endeavor and experimentation. Ever since the changing social structure forced the artists to make a living on a competitive market, like everybody else in a trade or profession, their creative work has been subjected to the vagaries of supply and demand. This is not the place to consider the complexities and absurdities of the contemporary art market. It is the proper place, however, to defend the ill-reputed snob, the inevitable, indeed the indispensable, companion of the *avant-garde*. The snob is a collector of "firsts." For whatever doubtful reasons he may adopt a cause, he can be counted on to support it without caution or reservation. Although his commitment is always to the latest and newest, rather than necessarily to the worthiest, creative endeavor, although the duration of his loyalty is usually limited by the novelty and exclusivity of an artistic event, his enthusiasm is instantaneous, vocal and contagious. What would Diaghilev have done without the snobs? How could many art galleries, modern dancers, composers and playwrights, little magazines and film experiments get launched without them?

The strength of any *avant-garde* thrust resides in single-mindedness of purpose, cohesion, concentration, whereas the cultural environment in which the contemporary front line is compelled to advance is vast, amorphous and diffuse. Its forces become rapidly dispersed, absorbed, diluted. Even scandals, possibly scandals particularly, need inspiration and preparation and, most of all, they need people apt to be shocked and scandalized. During the past

few decades, the fighting *avant-garde* has been deprived of one of its most potent weapons, the shock effects of sadism and sex, in which especially the Surrealists excelled, because the contemporary audience is not easily scandalized, although quite capable of being angered and disgusted. "Society can absorb almost anything that purports to attack it," observed Kenneth Rexroth. This is probably not so much a peculiar masochistic tendency, for which there is no reason, than a defensive device, for which there is. The arts charitably objectify what would otherwise be unbearable to the simple appreciator, or they distort it so violently that it no longer requires identification. This explains why *An American Dream* entertains, why *The Blacks* are applauded, why Mallory's sculptures are tolerated, why *Viridiana* is admired by audiences that should be outraged.

■ Nobody can presume that the general public has radically changed overnight, becoming more tolerant and more understanding of unconventional creative effort by mere exposure. More likely, it has become habituated or conditioned, in much the same way in which it accepts poverty, adultery and drug addiction as uncurable evils of modern civilization. On the other hand, the increasing sales of sophisticated books and records, the growing attendance at concerts and art galleries, the spread of art movie theatres, the sizeable crowds interested in the theatre of the absurd indicate that considerably more people participate actively in cultural advances than before. It would be most revealing to ascertain how much genuine aesthetic pleasure this new audience derives from such cultural pursuit, how large a percentage participates for reasons of honest personal desire or for the sake of intellectual status? They begin to appreciate, however, that it requires as much conviction and courage to reject as to accept the latest novelty. Therefore, many of the new mass-produced intellectuals tend to be too lenient to an aspirant of today for fear of missing the possible winner of tomorrow or else too severe with a current celebrity for fear he might go out of fashion the coming week.

■ Mass dissemination, in whatever form and guise, threatens the *avant-garde* in two equally deadly ways: either by rendering it obsolete as news before it has had the time to mature, or by making it popular as fashion before it has had time to define its unique identity. And either way it tends to paralyze the creative impetus. Thus the contemporary *avant-garde* artist feels acutely the pressure of precious time on one hand and the pressure of precarious prestige on the other. He must be prepared to decide whether the advantages of popularity are worth sacrificing the privileges of privacy and exclusivity as he may find himself caught between two evils: either to be ignored or to be adored by the multitude. The option, however, is rarely his. It would have been far better if Arp's free forms or Noguchi's sculptured shapes had never been discovered by the furniture industry; if the manufacturers of rugs and fabrics had never heard of Mondrian and Mirò; if Calder had never unwittingly inspired the production of do-it-yourself mobile kits; if any number of experimental film makers had never seen Buñuel's surrealist motion pictures.

■ *Avant-garde* is both an attitude and a social phenomenon. One single individual can be as unequivocally "avant-garde" in his daring as another one can be unmistakably "mass" in his caution.

But the usual connotation of the term is that of a group of creative pioneers, united in the exploration of unknown and uncertain territory. In spite of incessant internecine fights and splits, no other *avant-garde* movements have presented so unified a front against bourgeois complacency as the Dadaists or maintained as tightly organized a group of radical rebels and experimenters as the Surrealists. Thus they established, paradoxically, a prototype of nonconformity that has been much copied. As they demonstrated, to be *avant-garde* it is not enough to be dedicated and affiliated, but it is a full-time occupation, a way of life, a "state of mind," as Tristan Tzara defined it. It needs adversaries as much as adherents; it requires an objective to fight for as much as an establishment to attack; it derives its energies as much from discontentment as from aspiration. An *avant-garde* cause can therefore survive its defeats, but not a decisive victory.

There exists presently a Neo-Dada movement whose *avant-garde* pretensions are hardly new, in fact are harking back to the original Dadaists, the "angry young men of the 1920's," as Philippe Soupault aptly calls them. The parallels between the two groups are striking, at once in the spirit that animates and motivates them and in the actual work they produce. These connections become visible in the work of a good many contemporary painters and sculptors, extending far into pop art; they show in characteristic aspects of the "theatre of the absurd," in cabaret seances and happenings; they are recognizable in the use of collage, assemblage, and mixed media, in the rediscovery of "ready-mades" and *objets trouvés,* in "junk" art and mobile constructions; they are manifest in nihilistic despair and cold cynicism and black humor, in irreverence and protest, in violence, profanity, and deliberate provocation.

No criticism is implied in these observations. Some recent reputations may be inflated, while others may be unduly delayed, but there is presumably as much genuine talent active now as at any other time in our century. However, they are all, to a certain extent, the victims of instantaneous mass diffusion. For instance, no sooner had Jean Tinguely displayed his self-destructing sculpture in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art, than the mass media seized upon the event—not because of any interest in its artistic significance but because of its weirdness. What happened to him, through no fault of his, is what happens to many artists, writers and composers: becoming known too fast too soon, and not necessarily for the right reasons. Celebrity or, often with identical meaning, notoriety, catches up with them, even outdistances them. Newsworthiness is even more ephemeral than fame. The news media and their readers, viewers and listeners impose upon the creator by sheer omnipresence, making it increasingly difficult for him to meet the demands of the novelty consumers—a complete reversal of the normal and reasonable order.

Of all the front-line movements, Surrealism comes closest to the status of an *avant-garde* movement for the masses, in the guise of both an empty, derivative, counterfeit-surrealism and the resurgence of a genuine creative spirit nourished from the same sources as the original founders. In either form it has reached a point where it is almost impossible to avoid. Posters and book jackets by a host of designers; stage sets and window displays by Dali and many less notorious personalities; photographs and fashion designs in pro-

fusion; commercial as well as experimental films in quantity, have repeated and multiplied, abused and corrupted, surrealist characteristics to the limit of boredom and triviality. Hitchcock in *Spellbound*, Bergman in *Wild Strawberries*, Laughton in *Night of the Hunter*, Buñuel in *Robinson Crusoe* have rather gratuitously inserted surrealist sequences in their films that have been viewed by innumerable unwary spectators who took them in their stride. For the movie crowd is a captive audience, probably the most docile, tolerant and uncritical audience conceivable. Unfortunately, box office figures and similar statistics merely tell us how many people paid admission in order to submit to a particular film; they do not allow us to estimate the extension, penetration, and duration of the emotional and aesthetic impact it had on the viewer.

It is a fair assumption that the general public has become acquainted with more *avant-garde* spirit and daring experimentation through the cinema than through any other mass medium. Although only a limited number of people had the opportunity to see some important early *avant-garde* films, such as Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poéte* or Buñuel's and Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* and their still extraordinary *L'Age d'Or*, anybody within the range of an art theatre, has had a chance to appreciate Cocteau's poetic vision in *Orphée* or to experience Buñuel's relentless drive in *Viridiana*. Antonioni's *L'Avventura* and Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* confront the viewer with more penetrating, artistically inspired insights into contemporary life than any pseudo-documentary film claiming to be "realistic." Truffaut's brilliant handling of the absurd in *Shoot the Piano Player* easily matches, if not surpasses, most contemporary "absurd" theatre. Finally, *Last Year at Marienbad*, the rare combination of two congenial artists—the director Alain Resnais and the novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet—represents a virtuoso cinematic realization, demonstrating that the motion picture is uniquely able to reconcile the exigencies of a creative medium with the conventional demands of a popular mass medium. The cinema, and at present the cinema only, offers the creative personality a legitimate and secure position in the vast realm of the mass media—the only art form that need not deny or disguise its technological origin. The cinema is true Pop art, at times at its worst and at other times at its very best.

Pleasant though it would be to conclude on this optimistic note, it is too early to make predictions without reservations about mass production and distribution of any kind and form of art. The unprecedented attendance figures at cultural events, to say nothing of radio and television, are as much cause for gratification as for misgivings, the primary question being whether mere aesthetic exposure is likely to awaken latent sensibilities that would otherwise be lost. Undirected and uncontrolled aesthetic education is a doubtful cultural gain, if any. The cult of Grandma Moses would illustrate the point. On the cultural mass market, it supposedly represents progress that *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Tropic of Cancer* and *Lolita* are readily available. But their proximity to other "unexpurgated" literature, from O'Hara all the way down to blatant pornography, makes it less than probable that the right book will reach the right reader, except by sheer accident. Likewise, the admirable choice of unusual music, recorded for the connoisseur, is hopelessly outweighed by popular compositions and

hit tunes of unqualified triviality and vulgarity, edited for the millions.

There is no reason to assume that our contemporaries are either more or less creative, either more or less aesthetically aware and willing, either more or less sensitive to cultural values than previous generations. But the mass media threaten to create an imbalance between artistic supply and demand that can only be stabilized by increasing production at the expense of quality. It should not be forgotten, however, that such a temporary expedient should never harden into a permanent solution. Mass art and exclusive art can meet, they cannot and should not merge. For exclusivity is just as valid and precious as popular art. Art is, ideally, for the people, but not all art for all the people.

BOOK REVIEWS

IN SEARCH OF A GREAT THEATRE CRITIC

by james I. rosenberg

Robert Brustein, *The Theatre of Revolt: An Approach to the Modern Drama.* Little, Brown Co., 1964. $7.50.

George E. Wellwarth, *The Theatre of Protest and Paradox: Developments in the Avant-Garde Drama.* New York University Press, 1964. $6.00.

The history of an art-form is often to be read in its critics, and it is surely one of the more significant aspects of the whole tawdry history of modern theatre in America that it has produced at best a mere handful of serious and knowledgeable critics—critics, that is, as opposed to the journalistic first-night reviewers for the New York press, who quite consciously (and, for the most part, quite correctly) regard themselves as newspaper reporters describing newsworthy events rather than as critics performing meaningful acts of judgment. Bentley, Fergusson, Stark Young—who else is there? The list, at best, is scarcely an extensive one, particularly when one places it alongside a similar list of modern American critics of literature—T. S. Eliot, Yvor Winters, Van Wyck Brooks, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Kenneth Burke, Cleanth Brooks, Edmund Wilson (to name only a handful from the older generation and to overlook a sizeable army of younger men, such as Paul Goodman, Murray Krieger, Leslie Fiedler, Norman Podhoretz, Alfred Kazin, etc., etc.).

It is therefore quite true that anyone who sees Theatre as something more than a sort of fancy-pants variation upon the great American Science of Hucksterism must greet with applause the simultaneous appearance of two new books of theatre criticism by two undeniably bright and gifted young men. Mr. Brustein and Mr. Wellwarth are both quite clearly very knowledgeable and very intelligent, and the theatre—now, as always—can use all the brains it can get. So much, then, for the credit side of the ledger. Having said this much, however,

it becomes my sad duty to advance the discussion a step further by pointing out that neither of these two books is really satisfactory and that neither one stacks up very well when measured against any one of the major works of literary criticism of the past ten or twenty years.

To take first things first, a large part of the trouble with these two books is to be seen in their titles, with their powerful programmatic overtones. It may, indeed, be that the modern theatre is a theatre of "revolt" and of "protest" (these terms, to be sure, probably characterize all of modern life—in a sense so broad and general as to be almost meaningless); by the same token, one could describe the 17th-century French theatre as a theatre of "decorum" or the Greek theatre as a theatre of "formality," but just how much such a scientific categorization would contribute toward an understanding of those theatres is certainly debatable. Actually, the real problem with such pigeonholing approaches, their bases firmly built upon critical dogma (Marxist, Freudian, Christian, or what have you), lies in the principle of exclusion which they embody. Even if it is true that the main drive of the theatre of the past half century or so has been toward "revolt" and "protest," there are still a number of theatre artists who are doing important and influential work well within the traditional framework, and to simply ignore their existence can scarcely be regarded as either sound criticism or honest history. A critic, even more than most writers, reveals himself by what he leaves out.

Mr. Brustein, following a less tangential path than Mr. Wellwarth (the subtitle of the Brustein book is "Studies in Modern Drama from Ibsen to Genet," while the subtitle of Mr. Wellwarth's work is "Developments in the Avant-Garde Drama"), includes chapters on Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Shaw, Brecht, Pirandello, O'Neill, and Artaud and Genet (treated as a team). It may strike you, as it does me, that, for a book purporting to chronicle the evolution of modern drama since Ibsen, there are some notable absentees here. The thought has struck Mr. Brustein, too—to the extent that he makes a very brief defense of his principles of selection and exclusion; his comments are, I think, highly interesting and probably a bit more revelatory than he intended. O'Casey is dismissed as having written "two or three competent Naturalist plays," the rest of his work consisting of "a lot of ideological bloat and embarrassing bombast." So much for *that* overrated writer! Giraudoux and Anouilh are, he admits, "widely regarded," but adds, with engaging humility, that it is "no doubt a fault in me that I have never been able to respond very strongly to either." *De gustibus non est disputandem.* At least not in *this* book. Camus and Sartre are "stimulating minds but indifferent dramatists." Wilder, Miller and Williams all, he concedes, have "enthusiastic partisans: I am not among them." Next? Beckett, Ionesco and Duerrenmatt are "very interesting," but "none has yet completed a sufficiently various body of writing to be included in this volume." "Variety" is a new critical standard smuggled in here (how "various" is the work, say, of Artaud?), but in any event there is certainly a case to be made for the fact that all three of the banished—Beckett, Ionesco and Duerrenmatt—have, by way of plays, novels, short stories, critical essays, etc., produced not only more numerous but more varied writing than either Chekhov or Genet, on whom Mr. Brustein bestows his critical approval. Finally, he blushingly confesses that he excluded such minor figures as Synge, Lorca and Yeats, not on any grounds of principle, but for sheer "lack of space"—and I hope I may be forgiven for regarding this as a somewhat disingenuous disclaimer, since he somehow seemed able to find space for those he wanted to include.

Mr. Wellwarth's exclusions are even more striking than are Mr. Brustein's. Choosing the "avant-garde drama" (whatever *that* means!) since World War II as his subject matter, he shares only one playwright with Brustein—Genet—although it is quite clear that both critics see Artaud as the source and fountainhead of all really serious modern drama, with Genet as his true prophet (a view,

I might suggest in passing, so peculiar and so crippling in its limitations as to deserve more comment than I can give it here). Mr. Wellwarth, unlike Mr. Brustein, has the courage of his imperceptions and doesn't even deign to explain away his principles of selectivity. They speak for themselves—in the language of Babel. He divides his book geographically, starting with France, whose representative modern dramatists are, according to his table of contents, Alfred Jarry, Antonin Artaud, Arthur Adamov, Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, Jacques Audiberti, Jean Tardieu, Michel de Ghelderode, and Jean Genet—in that order. The section on the French drama is the longest in the book, and 27 pages of it—almost one-fourth—is devoted to Jarry and Artaud (who, between them, produced one real play!). By comparison, Brendan Behan gets 3 pages, John Osborne 12, Beckett 14, Edward Albee 9. And what of Anouilh, Giraudoux, Sartre, Camus, Montherlant, Claudel, Schehade, Pichette? As far as Mr. Wellwarth and his readers are concerned they simply do not exist; by an act of oblivion, they have become nonpersons, so that it is not even necessary to explain away their absence on grounds of whim or personal taste. The German drama, in Mr. Wellwarth's view, is represented by three playwrights: Duerrenmatt, Frisch, and Fritz Hochwälder. There can be little quarrel with the choice of Duerrenmatt and Frisch—who do represent postwar German drama—but why Hochwälder, of all people, as the third man in the setup? Hasn't Mr. Wellwarth heard that Günter Grass writes plays as well as novels? And can it be that he is totally ignorant of the existence of such exciting new playwrights as Dorst, Hey, Walser, Ahlsen, and Asmodi (all of them far more *avant-garde* than Hochwälder)? As for American drama, it consists of four writers—Albee, Richardson, Kopit and Gelber—all of them pretty bad. But it is in the British drama that Mr. Wellwarth most glaringly reveals the fatal gaps in his *materia critica.* There are more British playwrights represented than any other national group—eleven—and they are in turn divided into two subdivisions: the "experimentalists" and the "traditionalists." There are exactly two of the former—Pinter and N. F. Simpson—while among the "traditionalists" are such people as John Osborne, Shelagh Delaney, Brendan Behan and John Arden. But here, too, the absentees make up an even more impressive and interesting list than do the happy few who have been included. Not mentioned as contributing to the modern English drama are such names as John Whiting, Peter Shaffer, Henry Livings, Ann Jellicoe, Alun Owen, and Robert Bolt! Indeed, I think it is quite fair to say that Mr. Wellwarth's book reaches its apogee of badness in his section on the British drama, where he reveals not only an extraordinary incomprehension of what has been going on in British drama since the war, along with, in some instances, plain ignorance of fact. He informs us that Arden's three published plays "all read like muzzily thought-out first drafts"; he concedes that *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance "looks* like a good drama at first glance," but "as far as the ideas [in the play] are concerned, the kindest term that can be applied . . . is the overworked term of psychological jargon, 'confused.' " As for Arden's reputation generally, it is "high but certainly not just." As for John Osborne, the "self-conscious orations" of his Jimmy Porter are the "veritablest piffle." (This, I suppose, represents a sort of critical "hat trick"—destroying a reputation and inventing a word in one fell swoop!) And Mr. Wellwarth concludes the annihilation of Osborne by noting that "it is doubtful that anything significant can be expected from John Osborne after *Plays for England.* He has become a victim of his own critical success. Left alone, he might have developed into a modestly talented writer of competently constructed, slightly acidulous hack plays." To be as fair as possible to Mr. Wellwarth (not an easy task, admittedly), he does seem to perceive that Harold Pinter is the most important of the young British playwrights, although he also seems to feel that Pinter's importance is to be measured solely in terms of his adherence to the Absurdist orthodoxies. ("He seems to have read all of the secondary sources," Mr. Wellwarth complains tes-

tily, "—Beckett, Genêt, and Ionesco, particularly—but not the all-important primary source, Antonin Artaud.") I am not quite clear whether one is to bow, genuflect, uncover, or perhaps do all three, at the mention of that "all-important" name.

Even on ground where he is clearly more at home than he is with the English drama, Mr. Wellwarth is not a critic to inspire confidence in his judgments. He praises both Duerrenmatt and Frisch, but on page 176 of his book quotes a line from *The Chinese Wall* which simply does not exist in the Suhrkamp edition of the play (1962) and—far more curious and damaging—discusses Frisch's novel *Stiller* and its influence on his dramatic work but seems totally unaware of the existence of Frisch's even finer and much more influential novel, *Homo Faber.* As for Duerrenmatt, in the course of a curiously spotty and inconsistent account of his career, he omits any mention whatever of one of the most interesting of his early plays, *The Blind Man.* One can't help observing that, for an expert on the modern *avant-garde* drama, Mr. Wellwarth seems, at times, either badly out of touch or capriciously forgetful—in any event, neither quality is inclined to fortify the reader's confidence in his book, which, written to fit into the Procrustean bed of a dissertation-type thesis, emerges as a strange mish-mash of omissions, accidents, misinformation and bias, out of which the occasional gleams of critical insight and valid judgment must be plucked with the finest of tweezers. The $64,000 question for the reader is, I suppose, "Is it worth it?"

The Brustein book is, by comparison, a model of solid scholarship— partly, at least, by virtue of its more traditional orientation, partly because it is more carefully limited in scope. The fact remains, however, that it too suffers from its rigid adherence to a doctrine—a highly synthetic doctrine, at that—for, in the light of the specific plays themselves, *The Theatre of Revolt,* as a title, makes no more sense than would, say, the Theatre of Relativity or the Theatre of Experimentation or the Theatre of Anxiety or (as an earlier playwright of revolt might have put it) what you will.

Mr. Brustein attempts to institutionalize his thesis by differentiating between and describing three kinds of revolt: messianic, social and existential. But after he has gotten through anatomizing revolt in this fashion (and having the Devil's own time, too, since "messianic" and "existential" revolt seem to overlap, and the latter apparently subsumes all other revolutionary impulses), he is forced to the lame admission that neither Chekhov nor Pirandello fit very comfortably under the rubric of Theatre of Revolt. "Since Anton Chekhov," he says, "is the gentlest, the subtlest, and the most dispassionate of all the great modern dramatists, it is open to argument whether he properly belongs in this discussion at all." (It is, indeed, and one can only wish that Mr. Brustein had engaged in the argument.) Of Pirandello he concedes: "One tends to think of him as an experimental dramatist, but only his theatre trilogy can be called a formal breakthrough. The rest of his forty-four plays are relatively conventional in their use of dramatic materials." (A most unenterprising revolutionary!)

Nevertheless, despite the fallacies inherent in his thesis and the rather pompous qualities of his tone and style, Brustein has written a better and more usable book than has Wellwarth. One would think that there is scarcely anything left to be said about such well-worked modern classics as Ibsen and Strindberg and Chekhov, but Brustein manages the not-inconsiderable feat of making all three sound fairly fresh. (I am still hopeful of someday coming across a discussion of Strindberg which does not subject him to the kind of quasi-Freudian lay analysis which he undergoes in this book, but those hopes are fading with the years.) The chapter on Ibsen is, in many ways, the best in the book—just as that on Brecht is very probably the worst. (For one thing, Brustein concentrates heavily on the Brecht of the early expressionistic plays, since it is *this* Brecht—not the ambiguous moralist of *The Chalk Circle, The Good Woman, Galileo,* and *Puntila,* the latter

play not even mentioned—who fits most neatly into Brustein's preconceived thesis. However, Brustein does at least include him. Wellwarth omits him completely, either on the grounds that he is not a post-World War II writer—but Jarry and Artaud are?—or that he is not *avant-garde!*)

While the Brustein book is, all things considered, a far more solid achievement than the Wellwarth volume, I cannot refrain from pointing out that it is far and away the more clumsily written of the two. In fact, it is shot through with so many mistakes of spelling, grammar, and usage that one suspects if it were submitted as a graduate dissertation it would be sent back for rewriting. To mention only a few of the more glaring howlers: Northrop Frye is referred to repeatedly, both in the body of the book and in the bibliography, as "Northrup Frye"; Brecht's *Kalendergeschichten* is misspelled *Kalendergeschicten;* Pirandello's philosophy is referred to as being "different than" Shaw's; on at least two occasions reference is made to Strindberg's "revulsion to" dirt and physical processes; Chekhov's *Platonov* is spelled Platinov; the Swedish dramatist, Bjornson, is misspelled "Bjornsen"; the critic, Ruby Cohn, is called Ruby Cohen.

In fact, the book is so rich in bloopers of this nature—some large, some small—that Brustein's traditional note of acknowledgment for manuscript assistance reads like one of the classic "dirty digs" of our time. Certainly somebody—either Mr. Brustein or his editors at Little, Brown—deserves a rap on the knuckles for turning out such a badly proofread volume.

Possibly the most interesting point of all concerning these two works, however, has to do with their mutual interest in that strangest of all figures in the history of modern drama—Antonin Artaud. Brustein's book concludes with a chapter on Artaud and Genet; Wellwarth's opens with chapters on Jarry and Artaud. Brustein likens Artaud to a "prophetic Aristotle, writing the *Poetics* of an imaginary theatre which Jean Genet, his posthumous Sophocles, will not begin to execute until after his death." (I must say that comparing Artaud to Aristotle and Genet to Sophocles strikes me as a new high, or low, in sheer pretentious silliness—a little like comparing Norman Mailer to Tolstoy—and the garbling of history which places Aristotle ahead of Sophocles is, I suppose, an example of Absurdist techniques in action! In any case, it is surely time to call for a moratorium on pompous critical analyses of such minor demi-charlatans as Jarry and Tristan Tzara, analyses which treat them with great solemnity as modern versions of Aeschylus or Shakespeare.) Wellwarth, of course, is an even more abject worshipper at the shrine, regarding Artaud as "all-important" and describing Jarry as "having changed the whole course of the future dramatic continuum" with "that incredibly simple yet explosively destructive word" which opens *Ubu Roi.* (I am happy, incidentally, to take this opportunity of nominating the foregoing as the Silliest and Most Ostentatious Critical Overstatement of 1964—although, to be sure, the competition is a lively one.)

As for Genet, are we not long overdue for a truly serious and balanced criticism of his work, one which will see him, not as the high priest of some modern cult—a sort of aesthetic equivalent of the John Birch Society—or as a reincarnation of Sophocles, but rather as a modern version of such minor grotesques as Christopher Smart and Thomas Lovell Beddoes? Genet is, of course, an interesting phenomenon in his own right, and anyone who is concerned with the modern drama should know his work, but to try to place him at the center of the tradition is just as capricious and wrong-headed as was the recent attempt to place Senator Goldwater at the center of the political tradition—and for much the same reason. Genet's view of life is, by definition, a "sick" one—i.e., a partial one—and, while there is, to be sure, nothing inherently wrong in an author's being "sick" (although I wish I could feel a little less queasy about the publicity-consciousness Genet displays in making public capital out of

his peculiar brand of "sickness"), one cannot help agreeing, in the final analysis, with Goethe, who pointed out over a century ago that the fundamental and normal condition of life is health, not sickness. The smirking homosexuality and perversion and inversion and transvestitism and oral eroticism and elaborately phony ritualism which run through Genet's plays are certainly "interesting" —even when clad in a language of such sophomoric pretentiousness that it invites comparison with the worst of the "purple" passages in O'Neill at his most "poetical"—but, when Genet and his hierophants tell me that his plays (unlike all the rest of modern drama) present at last a True Picture of the Condition of Man in the Modern World, then I must respectfully ask to see the credentials which entitle him to make such a claim. Certainly Genet's world is not one which I recognize as having any very immediate relationship to my own—nor, I suspect, do 99 per cent of the people who see or read his plays—and, while *The Balcony* may be regarded as a striking metaphor for our world, I do not see that it has any more or less validity as a metaphor than, for example, Mr. Wilder's Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, or Mr. Duerrenmatt's Gullen, or Mr. Frisch's Andorra, or Mr. Williams' plantation Old South. In short, why doesn't some "serious" critic finally muster the courage to buck the current (it is not at the moment intellectually chic to rap any Absurdist) and take note of the fact that Genet is simply a very minor talent and, by any standard, is a bush-leaguer compared to any of the foregoing playwrights on the very simple and practical grounds that: (a) he has really only one dramatic idea—and that scarcely a very original one; (b) he writes consistently with all the strained and pompous "lyricism" of a high school class poet; and (c) there is not a one of his plays which, after the first ten or fifteen minutes, does not become a terrible drag (no pun intended) and a bore.

As for Artaud, much the same holds true. Certainly he is a striking and historically important figure. Like Jarry and Lautreamont and Tzara and others, he asked some challenging questions at a time when there was a real need for somebody to raise his hand and ask questions. But, also like the Pata-physicians and Futurists and Dadaists and all the rest, Artaud failed to come up with a single rational or viable answer. To see him as the fountainhead of the modern drama is a little like seeing Man Ray as the Father of Modern Cinema. There is surely some virtue in occasionally rocking the boat and jettisoning some of the dead wood aboard the ship, but in the long pull of history the serious and lasting work is done by the great captains and navigators, not by the auto-hysterical and half-looney mutineers who do nothing but make waves and row in circles.

All of which brings me back, I'm afraid, to my melancholy opening observations about the "tawdry history" of the theatre, which has always irresistibly called unto itself the intellectually flimsy, the phony, the superficial, so much so that even its finest and most serious critics are not beyond corruption. (This is not just a modern phenomenon. Shaw, one of the best theatre critics of all time, regarded Eugene Brieux as at least the equal of Ibsen. Dryden saw little or nothing to choose between Beaumont and Fletcher and Shakespeare.)

As for Mr. Brustein and Mr. Wellwarth, it is, as I suggested earlier, cause for celebration that they are even interested in writing about the theatre; a generation ago such serious-minded bright young men would have been enlisting under the banner of the New Criticism to write about poetry and fiction.

But that Great Theatre Critic, with his solid core of taste and common sense, the man who will restore sleep to our beds, meat to our tables, and rationality to our discourses, this paragon is still, I'm afraid, somewhere over the horizon, "slouching towards Bethlehem to be born."

THE AMERICAN ADAM AT BAY

by paul l. wiley

Howard Mumford Jones, *O Strange New World: American Culture: The Formative Years.* The Viking Press, 1964. $8.50.

This study of American culture beginning with a letter by Columbus in 1493 and carrying on down to the 1840's in the United States (a second volume from there to the present is to come) by Howard Mumford Jones, Lowell Professor of the Humanities Emeritus at Harvard, seems to me so exceptional that I might recommend a nonlinear method of reading. Probably, unawares, one will be doing this in any case; for as the author discloses at the end of the book, "this study comes full circle, returning upon the land itself." My trite suggestion is merely that if the reader commence anywhere outside the body of the text, he may take hold more quickly from the Afterword than through the Preface. Whereas the Preface is an experienced holding of fire, the Afterword, though it summarizes, echoes the ground tone and rhythm of the ten main chapters. But more than this, it contains a statement vital to the controlling argument: "We are Europe at one remove or two, but we are part of Europe still. Once a remote outpost of the later Middle Ages, we have become the bulwark of the Western World." While capping the main thesis—that American culture arises from the interplay of two great sets of forces, the Old World and the New—these sentences also mark a perspective on cultural history which, while sighting towards the present, ranges back over the United States to the whole of America and thence to the limits of vision where the New World existed both as image and anti-image in the mind of Europe. With this decided shedding of provincialism, American cultural history acquires a global outlook and an air of stateliness. The book's sophistication in method and manner is never in doubt for a moment.

Approached with the Afterword in mind, the Preface reveals more than at first sight. Taken literally, scholar's modesty sounds forced when the author says that his only claim to originality "is, I fear, the originality of synthesis." As the Reference Notes show, and they are only a top layer of sources consulted, Professor Jones's learning is voluminous; and one may be sure that originality as well as sheer fortitude governed the sifting of the mass of monographs and special studies underlying the results as we have them. In a task of this kind, especially when intended to reach the difficult level of interest that satisfies both specialist and general reader, the act of synthesis must be original for synthesis to occur at all. But as so often, the scholar's humility turns out half ironical; and a good part of the significance of the book, or at least its masked gestures in the line of rebuttal, depends upon the shaft flying true. The target is visible—that enterprising school of critics who, under the banner of "myth," have advanced upon American studies equipped with theories featuring the American Adam, paradisal quest, and lost innocence and whose chief resource has been exactly that originality which Professor Jones so unemphatically disclaims. His strategy in meeting these contenders determines in some degree his proceedings through-

out the book. It is not attack, since myth alone is hardly attackable, but rather something like an encircling movement aimed at outdistancing the opposition in time and by the same maneuver matching their short supply of mythical patterns with the counterweight of brilliant and flexible erudition to give superiority in striking power. This may well be an encounter that a good many readers have been waiting for, since the issue has been fairly long pending. In this instance the outcome is surprising in that by fidelity to evidence Professor Jones often arrives at conclusions or idea clusters more provocative than many speculations so far put forward by adherents to the mythical position. The head title of his study, voicing a paradox by Lowell in *The Biglow Papers,* is distinctly appropriate.

To myth used competently Professor Jones grants recognizable virtues. The weaker terms of incompetents he appears prepared to relegate to the atmosphere of the back stoop. On occasion he resorts to the familiar practice of factual refutation. When records show, for example, that criminals settling in the Virginia plantations in the seventeenth century tended to become models of reform, it seems reasonable to argue that the hypothesis of an American Adam coming to the New World and losing his innocence might be reversed so as to demonstrate a logic of virtue restored. By this approach it is relatively easy, with a nod towards ignored cultural data, to suggest that certain mythical assumptions are at best partial; consequently Professor Jones employs this weapon only sparingly. Its thrust does not get quite to the root of the matter which, as the author obviously perceives, is the necessity to confront one kind of magic with another more potent. He has no occasion, therefore, to enquire into the operating principles of the mythical party. He can do well enough off his own bat; and after a casual and conventional wave at the names of Freud and Jung, he leaves the other side in nominal possession of its own quarter of the cultural field. His own stand, meanwhile, is not narrowly confined to historical ground; for, acknowledging the work already done by experts in religious and political history, he tends to place historical findings on the strong flank of his own operations. How these will develop he intimates in the first sentence of the Preface: "The essential matter of history, says Maitland, is not what happened but what people thought or said about it." On this principle much of the life of the book consists in passage after passage of what people did think or say, the effect resembling a chorus sounding out above the muteness of archetype. In this manner, Professor Jones brings to his aid an alliance with time, a figure rivalling myth in the contemporary imagination.

The issue thus joined looks cleanly defined; for if the proponents of myth lay claim to the benefits of timeless order, they gain this advantage at what appears a sacrifice of a normally imperative time sense. Professor Jones would, instead, have things the other way round with a body of cultural images taking form within a time scheme which can be accepted as given and therefore uninvolved with questions relating to subjectivity or similar matters. The variety and distinction of the images so produced amply justify his procedure. To institute this plan, he recognizes America as older and vaster, since both continents are to be reckoned with, than one may have been careful to remember in ordinary use of the word; and since in this long view the United States recedes and falls into scale on the cultural map, mythical theories penned within United States borders tend to present a somewhat homegrown look. "O strange New World, thet yit wast never young," wrote Lowell; and subtly exploiting this paradox, Professor Jones from the beginning insinuates the note of strangeness and longevity. Difficult it is, indeed, to contract the idea of an America conceived as the concrete image of a Golden Age in the mind of Europe well before the period of exploration that sent out Columbus and, already in a fifteenth century infected by weariness, pictured distinctly in the utopian vision of More, the romance of Spenser, and the painting of Jan Mostaert. The reports of the navigators, however eagerly scanned, provided

mainly fresh detail for the New World idyl infused with Renaissance mythology which could be represented in such illustrations as those for Thevet's *Cosmographie Universelle* of 1575:

Thus a plate showing how the wives of the savages brew their drink exhibits four women kneeling before, or bending over, a huge tub or vat. They are all graceful, and the kneeling figures have their musculature carefully worked out. Behind them two Indians stand in poses suggesting Apollo, and other figures, we sometimes feel, recall the Renaissance treatment of Bacchus. The tangle of nudes in the cut showing an Indian burial service has the circularity one associates with Michelangelo's "Battle of Cascina."

From this confluence, centuries ago, of Old World urbanity and New World inspiration rises an image of America, visible in works of art, that disturbs current assumptions regarding an American corner on blackness or lost innocence. In a notable fashion, from the inventions of Renaissance artists to the nineteenth century panoramas of the Hudson River School and the western landscapes of Bierstadt, the book draws evidence repeatedly from the fine or useful arts. While this is to be expected in cultural history, the accumulation of variegated illustrative material is impressive.

Although one might be tempted to the notion, it would probably be wrong to assume that Professor Jones intends constructing the groundwork for a full scale American cultural iconology as a modish effort at outweighing the resources of myth. This supposition could build on the fact that each chapter in the book falls together as a fairly self-consistent unit concerned with some critical phase in the course of American life and with the cultural images, whether always admirable or not, engendered by currents of taste peculiar to the stage in question—such images being expressed through literature, painting, sculpture, music, coinage or any other medium down to pamphleteering which has left some kind of mark. The first chapter, alluded to above, on the appearance of New World motifs in Renaissance art offers an initial example of this organization. Another section, wherein the natural coherence of the material is obvious, is Chapter VII, "Roman Virtue," dealing with the classical legacy descending chiefly from the eighteenth century or linked with the European classicism carrying through the French Revolution. Here the images are boldly profiled: the Greenough statue of Washington in Roman dress and stripped to the waist (looking to one humorist as though the Father of his Country "preparing to perform his ablutions is in the act of conveying his sword to the care of the bath attendant"), the national Capitol, the buildings for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. One item from this collection, though less familiar than the foregoing specimens, has an odd pictorial clarity which may be due to its air of artifice. On his route from Mount Vernon to New York, Washington

crossed the Schuylkill on a floating bridge decorated with laurel and greenery, all designed by Rembrandt Peale. At either end was a magnificent arch of laurel, emblematic of the triumphal arch of a Roman conqueror, on each side of the bridge was a laurel shrubbery, and as Washington passed over, a lad ornamented with sprigs of laurel, with the assistance of a piece of machinery, let drop a civic crown upon the hero's head.

By this structural plan, the book leaves the reader with an after-image in some ways overriding the actual matter of the chapters, rich as that certainly is. For motives deeper than the mere need for close joinery, the study appears to head up almost in a symbol of "America" which manages to embrace disparate elements all the way from the art of the Renaissance to that of the Hudson River group. If this sound not too irrelevant, the method recalls Joyce more than, say, Dreiser; for revelation comes through the heightening illumination of depth in a subject everywhere implicit. No doubt this effect follows in part from the harnessing of America with Europe in alternations of attraction and repulsion which is fundamental to the author's thesis. But it also accompanies the reader's aware-

ness that the chapters as rounded entities stand on a level rather than in an ascending order. They are, to be sure, threaded on a strand of historical progression reaching from the fifteenth century to the 1840's to remind one that time remains a factor in the cultural equation; but since development receives no stress, the impression remains of a cultural storehouse lasting through change. In this the insight of Professor Jones seems correct; for as a result of his examination of the cultural landscape not only in its literary but also in its physical manifestations, he makes evident how firm a hold, despite innovation, various entrenched landmarks have upon the perhaps essentially staid American imagination. Over against international modes, the Spanish revival shows its face in buildings of California and elsewhere, French Renaissance has associations with Newport, and the classical still manages to awe beholders of the national Capitol; and the impulse to restore or better understand the importance of carelessly lost or damaged products from the past, as evidenced particularly with reference to art of the nineteenth century, remains active.

At times, and even while remembering that this is cultural history, the reader may find himself adjusting a little slowly to the author's balanced chapter system, in which, for example, the section on "Republican Culture," despite the latter's nearness to the Revolution and its varying demands for independent institutions, takes no precedence over that devoted to American landscape (Chapter X) and considerations largely aesthetic; yet this arrangement quite properly sets the exercise of cultural judgment in the foreground. Should he feel historically inclined, the reader must turn to the exercise of cross-referencing from chapter to chapter and so forget temporarily the purpose of the book as a whole. Met fairly on his own ground, Professor Jones demonstrates how stimulating his method can be in suddenly lighting up some frequently undervalued cultural phenomenon and its milieu; and a certain amount of short-circuiting with topics explored at length in specialized studies probably helps add to the liveliness everywhere present in the discussion. On this account a good deal of pre-nineteenth-century verse, like that in the form of political satire, loses its aura of dullness when exposed to a swift focusing on what it was really all about. Where his exhibits come closer, as one may think, to general contemporary interests, the author repeatedly and with most economical strokes throws open whole areas to fresh examination. James Whitcomb Riley, the barefoot boy, and other proofs of the nineteenth-century cult of the village as seat of the virtues has not of late, as Professor Jones understates it, caused excitement among sophisticated critics; yet ignorance of a tradition of considerable breadth may explain some neglect of this theme. When one understands this seemingly provincial reverence for farm and farmer in all its connections with a tense Old World background of post-French Revolution conscription and with even more widespread European nostalgia for a return to the land, as evinced in Wordsworth and Goethe, then the praise of rural innocence running through Bryant, Whittier, Longfellow and other poets of the age makes not only mature sense but also eminently strong sense. On these lines Professor Jones's method of viewing the New World in context with the Old indicates a broadening vista for American studies.

Turning to another quarter, the reader learns that, although treatment of the conception of the gentleman has flourished, no one as yet has undertaken a definitive study of the vogue of Machiavelli in North America, in spite of the fact that administrators and colonists in the Americas were likely to have been acquainted with Machiavelli's writings on power and leadership and that one may cite examples of Machiavellian behavior and policy from Cortés on down through the buccaneers, the South Carolina aristocracy and the New York manorial elite, to whatever on to the present one may care to notice. Occasionally, the reader may feel, this trail of Machiavellianism looks in some danger of swerving away from its true source and of becoming confused with ordinary notions of Machiavelli as a synonym for common fraud

and treachery. Still it is refreshing to wonder, with Professor Jones, whether Frank Norris had read Machiavelli in addition to his supposedly naturalistic and Darwinian sources before describing the unscrupulous tricks of the Pacific and Southwestern Railroad in *The Octopus* and also how the concept of force used in the novel is to be distinguished from Machiavelli's concept of power. Seekers for thesis topics might turn an ear.

A sampling of illustrations of this kind makes plain how compelling is Professor Jones's treatment in depth, his vitalizing of cultural phenomena by leading back to the European currents behind them. After a little acquaintance with the results, the reader begins to feel reconciled to the prospect of calling himself a "North American," as one is likely to do at a South American party, or of referring henceforth to "United States" art or literature, as this ampler approach to America would appear to demand. Yet in spite of the full inclusion of the Latin and, less prominently, Canadian elements in the expansive American image, the book, after all, has most to do with the United States, especially after the first two or three chapters on discovery and settlement; for no matter whether in cultural affairs the New World has interacted with the Old by a process of attraction and repulsion, the attracting and repelling have come from the side of the New. For this reason, the reader, at points where his interest is thoroughly engaged, may wish that a longitudinal as well as a transverse view had been possible in matters particularly germane to culture in the United States, though quite likely the initiated student will see lines of connection better than the lay reader. In his task as set, the author need not undertake to push his argument beyond the place where any one New-Old World synapse is completed, so that a reader must fall back upon some cross-chapter tracking on his own account if he is curious to spy out the forward course of some cultural datum without resorting to aids listed in the Notes. Occasionally this effort runs aground either because connections cannot be traced with certainty—and the author is wary of loose speculation—or because they have already been revealed by scholarship located in the reservoir of source materials. At other times, however, the Notes indicate sparsity in works of extended analysis on a given topic; and here it becomes apparent that Professor Jones has been pioneering in the direction of further synthesis. These are often cases where the reader is most alert to pursue the leads furnished him directly within the text.

One rather prominent example of this kind, as I felt, relates to a protracted American engagement with ideas bearing upon character or conduct. If I interpret him correctly, the author in one place or another calls attention to a considerable body of evidence to prove a long-standing attempt to come to grips with the problem of the shaping of the individual; and if the issue remains unsettled today, one has only to turn to a bulky file of fiction and drama after, say, James's *The American* or earlier to recognize its hold upon the thought of the recent past. After random reflection between chapters of the Jones study, one might wonder whether—at least until not too long ago and possibly up through *Death of a Salesman*—this perplexity did not center in two main conflicting notions of character: the one named by the author, with a wry note, "the useful and the good"; the other, susceptible to greater fluctuations, the idea of the gentleman. The fact that the first of these suffered the steepest decline into intellectual shabbiness of any of the cultural items examined by Professor Jones did little harm to its popularity or its capacity to survive. Furthermore, although its origins are Protestant, it is difficult to find its European background other than amorphous. Still theologically respectable with Cotton Mather, who warned the accumulator of worldly goods to acknowledge "*Dependence* on the Glorious God, for thy *Thriving* in the World," the idea that the man who reaches prosperity in attending to his calling in life has reason to expect divine sanction grew secularized with Franklin, after Mather the second of its principal champions, and then sloped to outright vulgarization at the end of the nineteenth century with Orison Swett Marden, who preached success, put Jesus as an

enthusiast beside S. F. B. Morse, and sold books by the millions of copies. In Teddy Roosevelt, Mather's Calvinism and its finer distinctions fell away into Muscular Christianity as Roosevelt urged his countrymen to uphold righteousness but to employ practical methods; and this was merely another turning in a path defined by the belief that material success somehow exemplifies providential blessing which Carnegie, Vanderbilt and Rockefeller had travelled on very comfortably. The keystone of this gospel was the rule of duty to one's calling, already formulated in the time of Luther and Calvin; and backed by the powerful influence of Franklin and his counsels of prudent self-regard, this simple but dissonant ideal appears to have lighted the way for great numbers of Americans for all of the ridicule cast by novelists upon false ethics or hypocrisy in business enterprise. Its cultural significance, however negative, Professor Jones admits by assigning to it a separate and rather gritty chapter.

The contrasting ideal may have similarly distant origins, if *The Courtier* of Castiglione be regarded as a Renaissance source; yet it appears, for the United States, to have flourished chiefly in academic surroundings, contrary to its application in the past to active life in the code of soldier, lover, scholar and statesman adopted by such gallants as Cortés or Captain John Smith. This original model of the gentleman, as Professor Jones suggests, probably softened down to an Arnold-inspired conception of gentlemanly culture and then turned into the genteel tradition of the cultured gentleman as an aim of liberal education in the days of Lowell, Wilson, and Norton. Here the reader halts to face a lasting cultural puzzle connected with the American notion of the "all-around man," the problem being whether this owes anything to Castiglione or instead to a national fervor for republican virtue and the duties of the citizen. In posing this question the author adheres to his New-Old World pattern, in which context the puzzle undoubtedly shapes up in the way stated. But referred not solely to origins but to its later course as a factor peculiar to culture in the United States, the problem of the fading out of the all-around man version of the gentlemanly ideal would seem worth closer examination for its own sake. It is not easy to agree altogther with Professor Jones's belief that something of this code still hovers about—not, at least, as one considers the curtailing of individual versatility since the last world war. In the end, the idea of importance of calling may have come through rather better; but, it would seem, at the expense of any large hope of all-roundness and probably minus the confidence in providential sanction. Possibly neither of these alternatives for conduct was respectable or adaptable enough to provide a central tradition open to approval from perceptive minds. In any event, the reader, by piecing together segments of information from different parts of the book, has quite enough at his disposal to form a basis for further enquiry.

The pursuit of origins for the gentleman does, however, appear to carry one back to the Renaissance; and, to quote Professor Jones, "Few Americans realize how large a portion of American history lies in the sunlight or shadow of that great age." Several chapters abundantly verify this statement; yet here again the reader moved to calculations of his own stands to gain by continued cross-referencing from one section to another. A possible query might be how long the Renaissance endured as an attracting cultural image by contrast with its weight as background to single phenomena. For the United States, direct contact with Renaissance culture seems to have slackened relatively early; and when Professor Jones speaks of the broad shadow cast by this great age, he has in mind chiefly the influence of Spain—brought in and affirmed by Catholic colonial culture—rather than that of England. That the Renaissance from the Spanish quarter had lively associations with North America from Admiral Drake to Admiral Dewey the author ably proves; and the record of literary stimulus from this direction during the nineteenth century includes Irving—notably with his *The Conquest of Granada* and *The Alhambra* —and the historians Bancroft, Motley, and Prescott. Second to the appeal of

Spain was that of Italy, this latter almost entirely a nineteenth-century fashion coming about through the attraction of the Mediterranean and its romantic allurements for people of means and, mainly after the 1850's, through the collections of Renaissance art masterpieces formed by captains of industry. But in the important period of the rising American republic, active concern with the Renaissance diminished and by the Revolution virtually disappeared. Granting a correct estimate of facts, what strikes one as memorable in this picture is American remoteness from the high culture of Renaissance England. As one would expect, Elizabethan and Jacobean writing crossed the sea, after the founding of Jamestown, to enter the libraries of British colonists in New England and Virginia; but partly because of the gap in time, the literature of the seventeenth century rather than that of the sixteenth formed taste in Puritan New England, which thus had little appreciation of such rarities of Elizabethan drama as *The Tempest:*

The New England mind simply did not work this way. Its new world was for the saints, not for lovers, and it failed to find most of mankind beauteous. Because New England came in the lag of the Renaissance, not in its noon, this view of the universe was more like that of John Donne than it was like that of Francis Bacon—always with particular exceptions. Moreover, though copies of Spenser, Milton, Quarles, and others appeared in American libraries in the seventeenth century, New Englanders were cut off from the stage—the great glory of the English Renaissance—so that Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and the rest were not real forces in their cul ure.

When one thinks of the significance of New England in the literary culture of the United States, the above statement seems most conducive to reflection. Indeed it is incredible, as Professor Jones observes, to learn that although Shakespeare was eagerly read outside of class, standard Shakespeare instruction in both American schools and universities did not begin until the middle of the nineteenth century; and one might risk a guess that for a sizable number of undergraduates of fairly recent date the English Renaissance meant Shakespeare, and not a little of the rest of English literature—until Joyce, who was Irish—signified John Donne perhaps as a forerunner of Mr. Eliot, American. At this point, but for the example of scholarly prudence set by Professor Jones, one might edge towards a speculative jump from New England to some decisive moments in the literary history of the present age. The evidence does, however, seem to make warrantable a contrast between the steadier continuance, across the threshold of this century, of the Renaissance tradition in England itself and the fainter or more irregular line of descent to be perceived in the United States. To ask whether this contrast lay in the background of the dispute, angry some fifty years ago and still ready to simmer on provocation, over English traditionalism and American innovation in poetry would lead one into a problem outside the bounds of what Professor Jones has undertaken in this volume. But he does give the reader much to anticipate.

Despite, then, the advance of Renaissance scholarship in this country during the twentieth century and its support by institutions like the Huntington, Morgan, and Folger libraries and by the Renaissance Society of America, the evidence for close literary rapprochement before this time, even with a common base in language, looks fairly sparse. Renaissance architecture to the contrary—especially through the championship of this style by the firm of McKim, Mead and White—enjoyed a popular boom, a good deal of it connected with the housing tastes of the nineteenth-century rich; and painting likewise, though strongly represented by collections and gallery holdings, came to the front, as has been noted. But in view of the slacker literary bonds that the facts appear to show, one might suppose that the agitation for a separate national language actively promoted by Noah Webster, with Franklin behind him, which accompanied the upsurge of republican culture could be regarded more seriously than Professor Jones seems to imply it should. One has

to agree that many of the language proposals (including a rather entertaining suggestion that a compound of Indian tongues be substituted for English) were crackbrained and merely indicative of cultural adolescence in need of ripening. Certainly, on the face of it, the epigraph from Mirabeau prefixed to Webster's reader, "Begin with the Infant in his Cradle: Let the first Word he Lisps be Washington," is absurd enough; yet assume that the cradle is Whitman's and the lisping comes from an infant ready to yawp. In his study so far, Professor Jones has given Whitman little more than passing mention, since the volume stops, of course, on the brink of the 1850's with republican culture still on the way to ultimate maturity.

Should one care to go on linking up literary clues, it is interesting to infer that certain forms of medievalism gained as tenacious a hold upon the American imagination as anything to be attributed to the Renaissance, though, as the author warns, both of these terms have become attenuated in meaning. Whereas the medieval inheritance seems to have entered along with Renaissance currents, Professor Jones observes that, shadowy or not, it has left its mark in several fields and that the invocation at public high school commencements or presidential inaugurations proceeds today on lines that Saint Augustine or Saint Thomas Aquinas could quite well have accepted. In American scholarship, the author cites particularly the impressive record of medievalism brought forward by historians, early among them Henry Adams with his work in the 1870's on Anglo-Saxon law. When one turns to literature, the record is equally solid, especially as regards the academic admiration for Dante which produced substantial results in a steady flow during the second half of the nineteenth century. Whether or not familiar knowledge, it is worth recalling that two versions of the *Divine Comedy,* those of Longfellow and Norton, were published in 1867 and in 1892-93, and also that the poet was being read methodically by the Cambridge Dante circle and interpreted by scholars so influential as Lowell, Santayana, and Grandgent—a concentration of effort seeming the more formidable when set in balance with the belated acceptance of Shakespeare for standard school instruction occurring likewise after the middle 1800's.

Again, Professor Jones encourages the impulse to speculate. For whatever variety of reasons, Dante is often a guiding presence at the shoulder of Pound, Eliot, Hart Crane, and other more recent American poets. Although this, once more, would be to run ahead of the limits drawn for this book, a reader might be impelled to query whether the foregoing fact may be traced to a larger background of native American Dante enthusiasm and whether this strain in poets of the United States crossed in any dominant fashion with the eddies of Dante acclaim moving somewhat concurrently in English or Irish writing. One does, in any event, come near to the conviction that American literary and intellectual tastes at a certain sophisticated level reveal signs of positive or even exclusive attraction to medieval and seventeenth-century literary culture.

So well does Professor Jones's study combine appreciation of art with trained respect for fact that it should prove valuable to both artist and scholar without forfeiting the attention of the nonspecialized reader. This interplay of the imaginative and the factual is nowhere better displayed than in the concluding chapter, "American Landscape," which attains eloquence in the best sense as it recapitulates fundamental themes. Here the unifying subject is the work of the Hudson River School of painters and the extension of their concern with landscape to artists like Bierstadt and Moran, who turned their eyes to the vast and melancholy prospects of the western wilderness. But the note of the panoramic distinguishing this manner of painting has a cultural reach still broader, since it is detectable in literary description—Cooper's eminently—which apparently owes its creation to the writing of Jefferson, whose set pieces in *Notes on Virginia* are painterly in the style of this scene depicting the confluence of the Shenandoah and the Potomac:

The piles of rock on each hand, parti-

cularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of their disrupture and avulsion from their beds by the most powerful agents of nature, corroborate the impression. But the distant finishing which nature has given to the picture, is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremendous. For the mountain being cloven asunder, she presents to your eye, through the cleft, a small catch of smooth blue horizon, at an infini'e distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate of the calm below.

Related as such passages are to the theme of panorama manifested aesthetically, they are also, one feels, serving as a means—enhanced by the registering of what people thought or said—of closing the author's circle, which swings at the last through landscape to connect the earth with those images of a new land in the mind and art of the Old World at the time of Columbus and the voyagers. With this process, evidence, free of any charge of pedantry, comes into its own as a convincing force, since the final chapter connects the idea of man and earth with the theme of land itself which runs throughout American literature and, in the opinion of Professor Jones, offsets critical insistence on Freudianism and frustration in American writing. In a parting gesture, the author seems to offer the proponents of myth a master symbol derived from rich soil in the concluding panorama of the land—a symbol of space evoking associations with the characteristically American sense of westwardness and freedom of movement. Structurally, then, the book stands complete, designed to be read for its own sake and for the opportunity of a thorough reconsideration of the earlier and not always most popular phase in American cultural history.

In a work like this, scholarship demonstrates to the full its potential in technical finesse and masterly statement. Such an accomplishment is no less important today than the value of the whole study as a contribution to a field of commanding interest very much in need of ordering for the sake of public comprehension and valid opinion. In the view that he has adopted, Professor Jones has moved a considerable step beyond those attempts, common earlier in the century and still not without sympathizers, to bind culture to local roots and to shield American inspiration from European taint. Besides being inevitable, this approach should clear away whatever unease such notions as expatriation or confusion of nationality may happen to engender. Nothing in this stand leads to an impression that cultural phenomena are derivative; rather they gain vitality through a sound analysis of their rationale. Yet the present book, in presenting questions which appear capable of further development, does suggest a work in progress; and judgment necessarily hesitates until the picture now revealed obtains its companion piece in the study of all that lies between the 1850's and the contemporary scene. Then it may be possible to see, in this longer range, which among the attracting forces have proved most culturally durable. Readers should await impatiently the arrival of the second volume.

A SOVIET MEMOIR

by alfred erich senn

Ilya Ehrenburg, *Memoirs: 1921-1941*. World Publishing Company, 1964. $6.95.

A colleague of mine in American history once asked me, "Who wrote Stalin's speeches?" In this question, which I could not answer, was embodied all the frustration which the historian of Soviet Russia faces. The techniques of the Kremlinologists, with their careful analyses of attendance at ballet performances, are well enough known to the knowledgeable Western reader, but probably few are truly aware of the real differences in writing Soviet political history as opposed, say, to writing American history. An account of FDR's twelve years in the Presidency, based only on his own speeches and writings, together with newspapers and the records of the Congress, but lacking any testimony by his opposition, would be, of course, unthinkable. Yet such is the case with Stalin's Russia. What's more, in addition to the silencing of the opposition in Soviet Russia, we have only the most limited information on even the victors. There are no open funds of the unpublished papers of Lenin or Stalin, or Malenkov, when he was in favor. Historians can only dream of what they could do with Beria's private papers. Khrushchev did much to liberalize Russia; he opened the candid, but certainly cautious, discussion of Stalin's cult of personality. Yet even he, now in forced retirement, will probably never have the opportunity to write of his "six great crises." The nature and rules of evidence in Soviet historiography have a character all their own.

Besides the restrictions on public and private papers, the major gap in our study of Soviet history lies in memoirs. Of the leaders of Soviet Russia, Trotsky, a loser, alone has left his reminiscences for posterity. Correspondingly, Trotsky's views—as well as his papers, now held by Harvard University—play perhaps too important a role in Western historiography of Soviet Russia. We are, after all, limited by our sources.

In recent years, however, the picture has changed a bit. Some political figures, such as Ivan Maisky, former Soviet ambassador in London, have published their memoirs, not just of isolated incidents, but actually systematic accounts of their lives and activities. These accounts, however, cannot free themselves of political considerations, and at times, even in Khrushchev's Russia, they have aroused scandals. Such is the case with Ilya Ehrenburg's memoirs as published serially in the Moscow journal *Novy Mir* (New World). When Part V, covering the years of World War II, was appearing at the beginning of 1963, Khrushchev himself protested the freedom which Soviet writers were assuming, and Western observers speculated that the series would be discontinued. The installments continued, but Ehrenburg's commentary suddenly appeared more restrained.

Ehrenburg's case would necessarily arouse particular interest, for this man, who lived in the period of emigration between the World Wars, was known to be a favorite of Stalin's. Yet it was he who named the post-Stalin "thaw" in Soviet literature. Among other questions, just how would he describe the years of Stalin's ascendancy?

The first volume of Ehrenburg's memoirs appeared in English in 1962, over the Knopf imprint, with the title, "People and Life, 1891-1921." As might be expected, it received both good and bad reviews. Among the "raves," Harrison Salisbury hailed Ehrenburg as "restoring to human life and dignity, to cultural appreciation and full-dimensional personality, the martyred men and women of Russia." The *Christian Science Monitor* praised the "sketches and portraits nothing short of brilliant." On the other

hand, one critical reviewer characterized the volume as "a collection of Leonard Lyons' columns, oppressively concerned with the small 'human' details in the lives of 'bit' people," and another criticized Ehrenburg's failure even to mention Trotsky in his discussion of the Russian Civil War.

Perhaps the most balanced reviewer of the first volume was Irving Howe, who declared that Ehrenburg showed to the Russian reader the pleasures of knowing Western culture, but that he necessarily limited his account to "anecdote and intimation." Ehrenburg wrote what was possible. This same judgment can be applied to the second volume now at hand.

When the first half of the second volume, Part III of the memoirs as a whole, appeared in 1963 in England under the title of *The Truce, 1921-1933,* it met with reserved reviews. One commentator complained that the memoirs were dull and speculated that Ehrenburg was in fact more interesting than he allowed himself to appear. Others, however, were more sympathetic, praising Ehrenburg's courage in discussing persons long unmentionable in Soviet literature.

The first American reviews of the second volume, published here in October, 1964, have also been mixed. Writing in the *New York Times Book Review* of November 1, 1964, Marc Slonim noted that the memoirs left something to be desired for a Western reader, but he emphasized the impact which they must have had on the Soviet reader: "This is not a simple effort to rehabilitate his old friends but a conscious attempt to correct the distortions of truth and rearrangement of the past which falsified Soviet literary history and the roles played in it by those who died in camps or in front of an execution squad. What he had accomplished is a useful and instructive performance, explaining and praising what Communist critics dubbed 'the decadent, perverted and corrupt artistic *avant-garde.*'" On November 13, 1964, *Time,* on the other hand, emphasized Ehrenburg's silences and asserted that "Ehrenburg is at his best when he is simply reporting what he saw," as in the Spanish Civil War.

Little remains to be added to these views so far as a general characterization of the memoirs is concerned. If one considers that Ehrenburg wrote them for a Russian audience, and under Russian conditions, then one must recognize their outspoken qualities. If, however, one seeks an explanation of Ehrenburg's own personality and career, then he will be sadly disappointed.

Ehrenburg's style, as already indicated, consists in presenting a series of vignettes, devoting sections of ten to twelve pages to one figure, one city, or one idea. His discussions of individuals usually center on the man's personality rather than his ideas. (His strange concern for Andre Gide is an exception.) He claims Hemingway and Isaac Babel as his two favorite figures, calling them the men with the greatest influence on him. (He met Hemingway for the first time during the Spanish Civil War.)

Ehrenburg presents himself as such a citizen of the world in the 1920's and 1930's, that the reader learns little about either him or Russia. In the 1920's Ehrenburg was a free spirit, criticizing both Communists and anti-Communists. In 1932, after Stalin had established his personal control in Moscow, Ehrenburg became a foreign correspondent of *Izvestiia* and thus joined the official establishment. The reasons for this change are not given. Ehrenburg continually pleads naiveté when he describes the Russia of the 1930's, but the reader cannot grant this. If one, for instance, has read Victor Serge's recently published *Memoirs of a Revolutionist,* which denounces Ehrenburg as one of Stalin's literary satraps, Ehrenburg's own description of his activities in the 1930's sounds hollow. The memoirs shed little light on Ehrenburg's career.

The main theme of this volume is, of course, the struggle against Fascism, with a certain undercurrent of anti-German feeling. From the very opening pages, which discuss Berlin in 1921, the reader is led to distrust the Germans as a nation. Ehrenburg says that Fascism seemed to permeate the culture, and

makes much of the fact that he saw German workers who were Nazis. (Such was not the case in his description of Fascist demonstrators in France, a country for which he has an obvious affection.) Ehrenburg's observations, in this respect, seem to buttress current Soviet attitudes toward the German question.

Ehrenburg's writing at times is powerful. His personal descriptions of the Spanish Civil War are touching, even though he fails to present any systematic analysis of the politics of that conflict. (The Soviet reader, of course, would bring his own interpretation to the book, and Ehrenburg's account would do nothing to change his mind.) Far more original is Ehrenburg's dissatisfaction with the Russo-German rapprochement of 1939, beginning with Molotov's replacement of Litvinov as Commissar of Foreign Affairs. Yet even here, Ehrenburg's account is the opinion of one disgruntled man. He makes no effort to go into all the ramifications of this particular turn in Soviet policy. Early in the volume he indicates that a Pole in 1940 might well hate a Soviet Russian, but he never discusses Russia's part in the fall of Poland as such.

In another vein, the Soviet reader must surely be impressed by Ehrenburg's picture of the Russian intellectuals of the emigration of the 1920's. In discussing figures such as Bunin and Nabokov, Ehrenburg presents Russian culture as a single whole, including writers both within and without Russia. Considering this account, I was reminded of a conversation a few years ago in the Soviet Union. A Soviet citizen declared that he was sure, no matter what the Soviet population had had to live through, the people who had gone into the emigration had found no happiness. Such is the tone of Ehrenburg's narrative: the Russian writers abroad obviously suffer from being cut off from their native roots, and the sympathetic Soviet reader might well feel sorry for them.

In discussing his friends among the European intellectuals, Ehrenburg seeks sympathy for them by emphasizing their unhappiness and pointing to the great number of suicides among them, both Russian and non-Russian. On this score, he rather undermines his own argument, because only a few pages earlier he has almost gleefully related a number of stories about suicides among the great capitalist barons of Europe. He draws no parallel between these two social groups, but even the least sensitive reader must be led to make some sort of comparison.

Ehrenburg's account, of course, barely scratches the surface of what he could tell. An intriguing hint that he would in fact have wished to tell more is to be found in his passing reference to Jurgis Baltrusaitis, who does not even appear in the index. Baltrusaitis, before 1914 known as a Russian poet, was Lithuanian Minister in Moscow after 1920 and as such he reputedly aided his friends among the intellectuals of Russia. Ehrenburg makes no mention of any such activity, but his seemingly gratuitous mention simply of Baltrusaitis's name may have had some hidden motive.

It is impossible to say just what Ehrenburg might have written had he been free to express himself as he wished. He obviously has to work under restraint, and yet he himself admits that there is much in his own life which he does not care to discuss. As it is, the memoirs must have been a minor revelation in Russia, but they are a pale shadow of what a Western audience would expect from a Western writer of similar stature.

Nevertheless, for all its shortcomings, Ehrenburg's work will become a standard reference for Western historians on at least three points. His account of his travels through rural Russia in 1932 offers an unusual view of problems of agriculture in the last year of Russia's first Five Year Plan. Furthermore, his picture of the intellectual community in Moscow at the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1938 is unique as testimony by a survivor. Finally, his complaints about the pro-German stance of his government in 1940 and 1941, while highly provocative, probably will never receive proper consideration in Soviet historiography even though Western historians will undoubtedly cite them again and again.

INTO THE SUNSET

by david r. stevenson

Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography.* Simon and Schuster, 1964. $6.95.

As one for whom Charlie Chaplin is a historical figure flickering through an old, old movie, instead of a living memory evoking passion and controversy, reading his autobiography makes me wonder what all the trouble was about. He writes in a straightforward, unpretentious style. Short factual sentences are livened by occasional dialogue. In the first part of the book he tells of his Dickensian childhood and traces his ascent to success and glory. In the remainder, the larger portion, he name-drops the famous people he has encountered in his life. There is little introspection and no real self-searching, but neither is there passionate testimonial self-justification. He deprecates as "cliché philosophizing" any of his occasional efforts to discover or articulate any deep meaning to his career and experience. Here, then, is a book which recounts the facts of the life of a human being who had a difficult childhood and later met many famous people. If this human being had not been Charlie Chaplin, his book would not be a best seller, and it may still find its way to the 35¢ shelf in the old, old book stores.

Perhaps the review should stop here. But the figure is Charlie Chaplin, and it is worth the effort to dig for the man in order to illumine the historical figure. There is no question of his importance both as a creator of the American movie and as an expatriate critic of the American way of life.

The most interesting part of the Chaplin autobiography is the account of his early life. Born in a theatre family, Chaplin barely knew his father, an alcoholic vaudevillian who died when Charlie was five; and he and his half-brother Sydney watched their mother, a music hall soubrette who lost her voice, become progressively more insane. Escaping from the orphanages and workhouses by way of the stage, Charlie had no choice but to work up through the English vaudeville groups. To be sure, he felt no other pull and was devoted to the theatrical world. Chaplin traces for us his coming to America; his progress in the Mack Sennett movies; his creation of the famous Tramp; and his subsequent emergence as script writer, director, even musician, and finally entrepreneur. When the blurb reviewers call this book "fascinating," they are referring to this often-stirring Algeresque tale. Chaplin's touch for practical details of camera work, film editing, cost accounting, etc., mark him as the consummate professional. While he does not permit his narrative to bog down into technical discussion, he does have awkward transitions from the cutting floor to the banquet table. But he speaks with authority and assurance, especially when he describes the inexorable triumph of the Tramp pictures over the earlier Keystone Cops routines. Personality clashes and policy disputes are mentioned, but Chaplin takes his victories for granted.

But this tone of assurance fades when the real troubles begin. The facts continue to come forth in simple narrative style, but the tone becomes lofty and less than candid. Here and there, Chaplin seems to interview himself, asking superficial questions and giving banal answers. In other places he becomes judicial: bare facts which bare nothing are presented to the reader. Concerning his marital problems, Chaplin is distant toward wives number one and three (Mildred Harris and Paulette Goddard), ignores completely number two (Lita Gray—not even

listed in the index!), and envelops in a cloak of privacy his fourth, and successful, marriage with Oona, Eugene O'Neill's daughter. Concerning the sensational paternity suit revolving around the girl he did not marry (Joan Barry), Chaplin views all with a distant "What's done is done!" attitude, and quibbles only a bit with his lawyer (Jerry Giesler) who refused to inject politics into the trial when some of Chaplin's friends wished to link the Barry forces with right-wing hate groups.

Similarly with politics, Chaplin tries to tell the story without stirring up the embers. Hardly bothering to cite the postwar evidence justifying his stand against Hitler, he soft pedals his support of the Russian comrades and the call for the Second Front. Not that he repudiates a single sentiment or statement, for he does affirm that he would have deleted the trifling humor in the *Great Dictator* if he had known of the ghastly concentration camps, and he does emphasize that he was a substitute speaker (for Joseph E. Davies, ex-Ambassador to Russia) at the American Committee for Russian War Relief meeting in which he made his infamous appeal for aid to Communist comrades and Russian war mothers. But he treats the issue as settled in his favor and does not argue the point further.

As the narrative proceeds, Chaplin breaks the flow more and more to inject anecdotes about the famous people he encounters, and who encounter him. Although he decries the enforced shallowness of the interchange between famous personalities, his account of the Caruso-Chaplin exchange being wonderfully illustrative, he still tells the stories and strives to include a "quotable quote" from each personage, reminding one of the gossip columnists to whom he owes so much of his grief. But more than this, he never really changed much from the urchin who ogled the great ones who occasionally passed through his neighborhood. Even as he realizes that he himself is famous and fawned upon, he experiences this awe of great or famous people, and his sharpest insight is his wry appreciation of the irony here.

We have arrived at the core of the autobiography. Chaplin desires privacy and is afflicted with fame. One of the richest veins of humor and pathos in the Chaplin canon is the struggle of the Tramp to find seclusion against the omnipresent bully, policeman, employer, clergyman, and sometimes woman. His protest against totalitarianism and mechanization is that they meddle in and intrude upon the privacy of a man, and of a man and his wife. Throughout the book Chaplin reiterates the theme that he hates publicity. From the surprise parties arranged by press agents on his early triumphal trip across the United States to the harsh glare of photographic floodlights in the law court investigating his sex life and the House Committee investigating his political beliefs, he desperately hated the penalties of fame. The psychological root of Chaplin's intense dislike of the United States, the personal emotional revulsion rather than the intellectualized hostility, is probably this hatred of the voyeuristic mentality which probes the "anatomy" (in the fullest sense of this now popular word) of public figures. Certainly the distant, if not altogether placid, objectivity of the later portions of his autobiography reflects the cherished privacy as well as the connubial contentment achieved with Oona O'Neill Chaplin. He does not proclaim or analyze his present happiness because he cherishes his privacy.

Why, then, did he publish an autobiography? Because he is an actor. Charlie Chaplin is still a man of the theater who wants a public life as well as a private one. He wants to project himself to the world and to keep to himself, to have his cake and eat it too.

We have arrived at the contradiction inherent in the Chaplin movie: an actor in the dimension of the stage portraying a real life man who seeks anonymity and privacy. Chaplin's career is the theatre, the place where people play parts. He says at one point that he preferred an actor without a strong real life personality because he could be molded into dramatic roles more easily. He tells us that he was amazed that the world took an avid interest in him, a clown.

As an actor he came to personify the individual's need for privacy and his yearning for humane treatment. But he did not ask to become an authority on politics and human relations. His autobiography reveals that he is sensitive to, but not capable of grasping, the philosophical subtleties of the hard reality that "All the world's a stage." The interwoven strands of reality and dramatic posturing, which became an entangling net for Charlie Chaplin, are continually displayed and discussed in Western culture in such works as Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and Anouilh's *The Rehearsal.*

But Chaplin does not express his genius in words. Pantomime is his medium. He grew up in vaudeville and prospered there. His greatest film creation, *Modern Times,* was a daring reactionary enterprise against the new wave of talkies. Here and through his earlier movies he won the hearts of an anxiously confident America tasting prosperity. But the technology against which he inveighed, and which America fundamentally welcomed, turned against him. Chaplin's misunderstanding with the world, i.e., the American audience created by Hollywood, stems from the world's demand that he verbalize his message. The talkies demanded scripts instead of subtitles. The radio-oriented people listened anxiously for words, from FDR to Will Rogers, for ideological pronouncements and folksy good humor to calm their fears. The Tramp and his creator were compelled to talk.

Chaplin does not reveal the inner turmoil that accompanied his eventual yielding to the pressure exerted by technology and American public opinion, for he did make talkie movies. However, he could not conceal the conviction which directed his answer to the world's call for ideological commitment. When Hollywood's America rejected the serious Chaplin, he responded with bitterness.

The tragedy of Charlie Chaplin is far more profound than his autobiography would have us believe. It is a tragedy, of course, in spite of the happy ending of contentment provided by his idyllic last marriage. We can simply assert that Chaplin became a nuisance to America because a democratically indulged press exploiting an emergent snooper-technology intruded upon his private life. This seems to be the level plumbed by the autobiography, and perhaps we should stop the review at this point. But the Chaplin problem beneath this book, which gives it its significance, is not simply a variation of the Lindbergh story of a man ruined by the baby monster of publicity. Lindbergh was totally unprepared to cope with fame, while Chaplin grew up with it. The tragedy of Charlie Chaplin exposes something very unpleasant in the American way of life.

Chaplin the comedian turned social critic. Chaplin, having won the attention of Americans, turned to criticize America, and Americans are raw tender toward criticism of basic institutions. They laugh loud at many things, and in reaction to Puritan solemnity they make a hearty sense of humor into a social requirement. But unlike Britain's imperturbability, Catholic Europe's virulent anti-clericalism, France's post-Revolution and Russia's pre-Revolution masochistic irreverence toward lawful authority, the United States idolizes its basic institutions. The American Constitution and the American way of life, both sanctified by success, are taken very seriously and are not to be laughed at. Among the bourgeoisie and *nouveau riche,* and counting the hopeful aspirants as well as the *arrivistes* that include practically everybody, the basic American institutions and values are sacred. Although a Twain, Ingersoll, Darrow, Lewis, or Mencken might chip away at the most exposed shibboleths, the mass mind eagerly absorbing the latest wonders from Hollywood even today remains untouched by intellectual self-criticism. Chaplin had the personal misfortune to assault this idolatry, and the idol worshippers turned upon him with all their might.

It was all an accident really. Chaplin fell into the coils of outraged respectability with the same astonished innocence that his Tramp fell into the machine or aroused the wrath of the system. The guardians of law and order turned on Chaplin with the same mind-

less violence with which the machine wheels ground or the sturdy policeman clubbed the hapless Tramp. Chaplin's fate in the land of the Statue of Liberty and the 4th of July recalls the last scene of Jacques Tati's *M. Hulot's Holiday,* in which the well-meaning, extremely clumsy M. Hulot, an harassed tourist seeking shelter, stumbles into a shed full of fireworks and lights a candle.

Politically, Chaplin's real life experience is parodied cleverly in his own *Modern Times* when the Tramp picks up a red flag fallen from a passing truck. As he runs forward chasing the truck to replace the flag a crowd of anarchists come around the corner. Hailing the Tramp as their new leader they follow him as he races onward wildly waving the red flag. You know the end of this sequence.

Chaplin's real life Pygmalion enterprises appeared even more sinister than his political ones. While three decades have enabled Americans to accept Burton-Taylor, it is doubtful that Henry Higgins could leave Eliza in the gutter (with a million dollar settlement!) without losing the love of all Americans. In the Chaplin movie, the Tramp often found a girl companion; and in real life Chaplin's fate parallels the Tramp's fate in the movie, even down to the contented couple walking arm-in-arm down the road of life into the sunset.

Now, surely, the review must stop. Arm-in-arm in the sunset glow: Chaplin's autobiography makes the best-seller lists in the country he rejected, and which disowned him anyway. Chaplin, the last of the expatriates in spirit, the most bitter of them all, has come home and America has opened her arms to receive his work. His book, that is. Chaplin's movies are still not shown. The last ones, *Limelight* and *The King in New York,* were received with disdain and allowed limited circulation by an America which nostalgically glorifies his early movies. His early works are probably better, but they are not generally available either. The point is that the Chaplin message is still unheard in America. Just as the happy ending softened the edge of the Chaplin movie, so the autobiography softens the impact of the Chaplin life. Americans did not get the point in the early days, and we do not get it now.

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

PATTERN AND INNOVATION

A miscellany of information about university adult education programs in the arts.

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TOP OF THE NEWS

ROUNDUP OF NEWS RANDOMLY ACQUIRED

Among recent events, the most newsworthy are two meetings last spring of a new group of persons concerned with adult art education. As music and art specialists in art extension programs, they were, until quite recently, mainly concerned with providing for the training of elementary and high school art teachers. But in the changing cultural milieu, with art now a more popular concern, their role has been expanding to include a greater involvement in adult and community service. And it is this development that makes these meetings news.

This report of news begins, therefore, with a description of selected aspects of these meetings. Both were called by the Extension Division of The University of Wisconsin, one for music specialists and the other for visual arts specialists. In a second section are brief reports of some items of general interest that have been accumulating over past months.

Actually there wasn't too much to choose from in the files. After putting aside the items on theatre (for a special report in this department next time), the folder of news items of more than routine interest was painfully thin. It is startling how much less art news of any kind there is these days than there was even a year ago. Is the art explosion over? Or is it simply that most of us in adult education have stopped trying to keep up with it?

That second doubt added to the conviction that the Wisconsin arts meetings to which we now turn are well worth our attention.

MEETINGS IN WISCONSIN

The meetings were part of a plan to explore implications of the 1962 National Conference on the Arts at Wingspread sponsored by The University of Wisconsin. Both were called late last Spring to begin a search for new educational directions in their specific subject areas, the visual arts and music. (A third meeting on theatre arts, we are informed, is also contemplated but not yet announced.)

According to the meeting announcements, the Wingspread Conference gave evidence that the university is the responsible social agency today to bring art into the nation's communities. If this responsibility is to be properly implemented, university faculty and administrators need to come to terms with the underlying questions of the field. To place these fundamental issues before the field and to consider some immediate practical problems were the essential purposes of these meetings.

Although the meetings differed in structure (the visual arts meeting was a preliminary meeting of a selected group to help plan and sponsor a conference for a national audience, while the music meeting was a full-scale national symposium), they were both the first meetings for the groups involved, and ended with very similar messages. In light of our purpose here, they can be discussed together.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Most of those present were the extension specialists mentioned earlier—i.e., members of art education departments with responsibility for off-campus programs and centers. Their main task is providing professional training for art teachers—the elementary school generalist and the high school specialist. A second group of participants were deans and directors of evening colleges and of adult division programs. It is probably accurate to say that whereas the first group, the art educators, are *art* specialists who have been given an assignment to administer an extension program, serving nonprofessional adults as part of this assignment, the latter group, the adult program directors, are *administrators* of adult education programs who have been assigned the area of art as part of their total administrative responsibilities. The latter group we know well, but the former, and by far the larger group at this meeting was new to us in adult education, and for the most part,

not known even to each other. This group's concerns and needs dominated the business of both meetings.

They said of themselves that they were without clear professional identity. Art teachers acted as extension administrators, at first quite incidentally, but are now formally acknowledged, and given titles and allotments of time. But even now few have had any training at all in programming for adults. What they know about adults as students, even about what adult education means, they had to pick up on the job. Their professional association is the National Art Education Association (only a very few belong to NUEA or AUEC, the associations of adult educators), a huge organization of specialists from many subject areas, within which they have never really been a defined group recognizing and working on common concerns. They were in fact, as one man said, surprised to find there were others like themselves in the field. Their eagerness for some kind of intercommunication is evident from the enthusiastic response to the invitations to these first-of-their-kind meetings.

THEIR EVOLVING ROLES

Their main job continues to be the training of teachers. In the visual arts, those who do provide for the community (their way of referring to what we think of as adult education) have been holding art fairs and exhibits (especially of children's art) and offering some summer courses in arts and crafts (pottery, jewelry, dress design), and some drawing and painting. A little, but really very little, is provided for adults interested in art appreciation.

In music, a good bit of time is devoted to the teaching of youth. Participants said they conduct summer camps, circulate concerts to high schools—and give lessons to children. Few remember how this last got started, but one long-term practitioner explained that the form was initiated in order to fill a vacuum. Talented children in many communities could find no musicians to teach them. Somehow the practice just continued, until now almost all musicians on a faculty have some individual students scheduled as part of their regular load.

In music, the adult community is served in part by agriculture extension, which provides specialists who help form and present community choruses and bands. General extension specialists also encourage and support the development of community orchestras, string quartets, and other instrumental groups (again often involving children). Concerts by these groups and by touring faculty artists are presented to the total community, including adults.

As summarized by a participant in the art meeting, ideally the function of the extension art divisions is threefold: to extend campus skills and resources to outlying areas; to offer inservice teacher education in extension; to provide for individual self-development (i.e., art education for nonprofessional adults).

THEIR MAIN CONCERN

The current public enthusiasm for art is exerting pressure on all art personnel, not only to increase the regular programs but to do something more for the community than has been done previously. As community demands expand and the number of services increase, art departments grow in importance in extension. Undoubtedly, this is grati-

fying. But it does impose on each educator a new need to choose among alternative demands on his time. Faced with the task of assigning priorities, these art specialists are seeking a proper philosophic base, a concept of essential purpose, to use as a guideline. This is their primary need. A concomitant one, as defined in these meetings, is to achieve a professional identity, to define the role, so that they may know how to find, train, and use new staff. Needless to say, the issues were not resolved at these meetings, but a dialogue was begun that may eventually yield solutions.

CONSEQUENCES AND IMPRESSIONS

The values of these meetings it would seem, are many; but perhaps most significant, as has already been suggested, is the fact that they brought forward and identified for the national scene a group of people concerned about education in the arts, who may be the major educators of adults in the next years. Certainly, they promise to expand the area considerably. As subject area specialists, they are also teachers, and probably have a more direct commitment to art activities than the exten-

sion people who develop and promote art programs incidentally, as a small part of a much larger program concern. (Although the adult educator assigned to arts programs is often an amateur artist or art lover, that fact is incidental; generally, he is not chosen for his job because of his art specialty.) It is possible to question whether this difference matters, but most of us would expect that art specialists are more likely than generalists to retain a commitment especially to the arts in the rough waters of adult education administration.

Also important as an outcome of these meetings were the identification and discussion of basic issues and problems. Questions raised included these for example: What is a proper differentiation of function between extension and internal departments of art? What differentiation of function is possible and profitable between the university and other schools and community agencies concerned with the arts? What kind of professional background and training are appropriate for the staff of the new kind of extension departments needed today?

Finally, some talented individuals were brought forward in these meetings. Their new view of things will help shape the area of adult education in the arts. There was talk of setting up a more permanent association. This seems like a good idea. The dialogue begun at this meeting cannot be permitted to die away.

EVENTS

BRIEF NOTES

Community Arts Council Conference

A conference last June for officers and members of statewide and local arts councils took place in Detroit, sponsored by Community Arts Councils, Inc. The conference was also the annual meeting of CACI. Sessions were held on various arts media—theatre, music, visual arts, dance, and opera; one session was devoted to a discussion of government support and another was a special meeting for representatives of fourteen cities currently conducting fund-raising drives.

The preliminary report (a full account of proceedings is forthcoming) states that the conference revealed the expanding influence of the arts council movement. Since 1945 when the first council was formed, the report said, 85 councils have been set up in the United States and Canada.

National Council on the Arts

As if to underline the optimistic mood of the CACI's report, word came from Washington that Congress had at last passed into law a bill creating a National Council on the Arts with a staff of twenty-five persons. The Council's function, we read, will be to "encourage creative endeavor and to maintain and foster cooperation among federal, state, and local cultural bodies and programs related to a wide variety of the arts—dance, drama, architecture, sculpture, music, letters, painting, design, and folk art."

You will not be surprised to find that some commentators do not see this event as a simple blessing. The notion of the government's getting mixed up in art makes us all a bit uneasy. But (to paraphrase very loosely, Winston Churchill's evaluation of another much debated concept, democracy) it may not be a very good way to give support, but it is the best possibility around right now.

Study of Motion Picture as an Art

What students learn in college about the motion picture as a contemporary art form will be the subject of a special study by the Commission on Academic Affairs of the American Council on Education. The project is supported by a grant from the Motion Picture Association of America.

In its first phase, the study will seek to identify academic courses on the film as well as campus film societies and publications. In addition, professional leaders in the arts, humanities, and social sciences will meet at the Lincoln Center to discuss the subject at a national conference planned by film specialists.

In sponsoring the study, the Commission's director, Lawrence E. Dennis, described the film project (the first of a projected series of studies of the arts) as an expression of the Commission's interest in higher educations programs designed to contribute to more effective use of leisure time. David C. Stewart (formerly of NET), the director of the film study, said that, although it has not been discussed so far, higher *adult* education also "may become a serious matter of inquiry."

The American Council on Education is a voluntary nonprofit organization with a membership of more than 1300 colleges and universities.

Michigan Week 1964

From Michael Church of the University of Michigan there is a clipping telling of one of the many successful events of Michigan Week—an exhibit (oriental wood-block cuts by Paul Jacoulet) held over by "public demand" in a small community "way up north" in the Upper Peninsula.

This clipping is one of several on the same subject, for Michigan Week is a yearly (the eleventh this year) event of grand proportions—a celebration by a whole state of its culture and commerce. The events, sponsored and supported for the most part by citizens and groups from all sections of the state, grow more numerous and more ambitious each year.

As executive secretary of the Cultural Activities Board of Michigan Week (responsible for events featuring the arts), Church is in a position to make sure that almost every art is well represented and nearly every person and institution who is potentially interested is involved. A broad base of support, Church explains, for the production and appreciation of the art events now exists all over the state. For many years, the University of Michigan's art extension programs, which he conducts, have brought teachers and programs of art to near and distant cities and towns. At the same time, they have worked to develop the grass roots resources already there. Today, as one result, there is a network of clubs and organizations as well as individuals with concern for developing and promoting the artistic efforts of the communities.

Michigan Week gives these local agencies a chance to see each other's works, to display their own achievements, and to get some well-deserved recognition.

PROGRAMS

University of California San Francisco

In San Francisco, the new daytime program (a special schedule of courses and events for adults with free time during the day) offers for its second season (1964-65) the same high proportion of art programs that characterized its first calendar last spring. Daytime seminars are offered on literature ("Man Against God" as a theme of novels, poetry, and drama); theatre (seminar and study tour in cooperation with the San Francisco Actor's Workshop); film (The Magic of Bergman), and several others.

On the Riverside campus, a new lecture series deals with the "Development of Creative Abilities."

Wayne State University

The University Center of Adult Education (of Wayne State University, University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University) launched last spring a five-year program of study in the arts in cooperation with the Detroit Art Institute. Entitled "Great Ages of Art," the program is intended to give Detroit citizens a chance to choose a long-term but informal plan of study in the arts. Five great periods in Western culture will be studied, beginning with the Renaissance. A broad and varied range of activities and courses will comprise each year's program.

Brandeis University

At Brandeis University last summer, the adult institutes included several courses in literature taught by writers and critics: Alfred Kazin on American writing, Harold Rosenberg on the "tradition of the new in art today," and Philip Rahy on "continuity and change in American literature."

University of Toledo and Michigan State University

The University of Toledo and Michigan State University both sent notice of fine arts festivals, the fifth annual festival for each.

Western Washington College

Western Washington College (Bellingham), moving ahead steadily with its arts program for adults, began publication of a calendar of events this year, giving notice to the adult population of public as well as university activities in the arts.

New York University

"Man as Creator" is a special offering of courses at New York University. Asserting that ours is as much an "age of hope" as an "age of anxiety," the program series offers a range of subjects revealing man's capacity for invention in all areas—scientific, poetic, and social. Some courses deal with contemporary life, some with subjects important through the ages. Art courses in the series are "The Art of Dance: Contemporary Viewpoint," "Existentialist Views of Literature," "The Culture of Spain," and "Architecture—Contemporary Trends and Historical Influences." In other than art areas, "Man as Creator" is discussed in "Controversial Issues," "Religions of Mankind," "Africa Today," and some others.

PUBLICATIONS

Arts Management

From a friend in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare came several review issues of ARTS MANAGEMENT, self-described as a "national news service for those who manage, finance, and communicate the arts."

AM, we found, keeps subscribers up to date on federal action, arts council activities (for the New York State Arts Council it issues a special newsletter as supplement), fund raising techniques and devices, resources available to local arts managers, as well as suggestions for programs, outlets, and publicity. In addition there are reports of surveys and analyses conducted by AM itself to identify trends and events in the field. In the issues sent here, for instance, there is a report of a spot check on patterns of business aid to art, and an analysis of "the varied publics of a typical institution." A checklist of relevant current articles and news stories is regularly a part of the newsletter.

Subscriptions are not presently available, but AM Editor suggests that interested people should write anyway (Arts Management, 330 East 49th Street, New York City). It is rumored that a new and very liberal subscription policy is being written.

Man Through His Art

War and Peace and *Music* are the first two volumes in a fourteen volume international series entitled *Man Through His Art*. Planned as an aid and stimulus for adult education and other study groups, the series was created in response to an appeal of UNESCO and is sponsored by the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession.

Man Through His Art approaches social history through art history and, through the juxtaposition of various art works, attempts to bring out the unity of man and penetrate into the source of expression.

Other volumes planned include *The Experience of God, The Family, Dreams and Fantasy,* and *Man at Work.*

Man Through His Art is distributed in the United States by the New York Graphic Society, Greenwich, Connecticut.

Art: the Visual Experience

Art: The Visual Experience by Irving Kriesberg (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1964) contains some materials which stem from a course that the author prepared for CSLEA some years ago. It includes many colorful illustrations, and sections on seeing, visual feeling, movement within a painting, structure, the painting as a symbol, and art as a source of awareness.

Although ARTS IN SOCIETY has focused an entire issue (Vol. 2, No. 3) on the university and the creative arts, the topic is such a vital one in today's society that it merits continuing discussion and reappraisal. The following contribution offers some fresh insights to the ongoing dialectic.

NEW LEADERSHIP ROLES FOR THE UNIVERSITY IN THE ARTS

BY GREGORY A. FALLS

Two new university responsibilities in the area of art education are just beginning to loom on the horizon: educating serious, talented artists; and preserving and presenting the work of mature performing artists.

Just as technical or specialized schools in other areas have disappeared and their work has been assumed by the university, so it will be for our conservatories, acting schools and studios. Although I am unable to speak with authority in the other arts, I can say that what professional theatre schools do exist in America are now few in number when compared with thirty years ago, and that they now seldom get the best students. Furthermore, the opportunities for real acting apprenticeships have seriously atrophied with the demise of the resident summer stock in favor of the star package show and the recent slackening in off-Broadway productions.

Now most of our better theatre students elect to get their training at a university, for many social and economic reasons. A look at a Broadway *Playbill* will show how many of our young actors and directors are now university products. This shift of actor education to the university has not always helped the state of theatre art in America. The many European stars now dominating Broadway, especially in plays requiring "style," is an important commentary on the quality of our university education in the theatre arts. The late Eugene O'Neill, in contrasting today's actors with those of thirty or forty years ago, is reported to have said, "The actors of those days would not have understood my play, but they could act it; now they understand it but can't act it."[1]

From his position as Director of the Ford Foundation program in the Humanities and Arts, Mr. McNeil Lowry had perhaps an unparalleled view of both the educational and professional world of the arts. Two years ago in speaking to an assembly of graduate deans he made three points:[2] (1) that the university has largely taken over the functions of professional training in the arts but in the main has sacrificed professional standards in doing so; (2) that the future of professional training in the arts depends upon a radical shift in the university atmosphere surrounding students considered potential artists, and, upon the provision of post-

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[1] Reported by Stark Young in "Eugene O'Neill," *Harpers*, 214, June, 1957, p. 66.

[2] ARTS IN SOCIETY, Vol. 2, No. 3, carried the full text of Mr. Lowry's speech. It was the focal point of a symposium on the university's role in the arts. Mr. Lowry is now Vice President of the Ford Foundation.

graduate opportunities for professional apprenticeship removed from an academic environment; and (3) that this shift in the university environment for the arts will be achieved only under great difficulties.

Lowry's first point, that the university has taken over the obligations of the professional schools, is a thesis reiterated here. That the shift has damaged our artistic standards is a point I would support, since the liberal education now given to majors in various fine arts is not an artist's education but a scholar's. Furthermore, the present craze of many institutions for hiring fine arts professors with the Ph.D. degree "union card" in lieu of professional arts experience has only complicated the problem. However, it is my hope that ultimately some of our larger universities will recognize their present miseducation of the artist and develop new programs of study. This will mean making an objective study of the kind of education the serious artist needs—in terms of the art, and not in terms of strict academic subjects—and developing programs to implement this education. No doubt this will require separation of the professional arts student from the liberal arts, probably into a college of fine arts.

The second development I envision is a strong commitment by some major universities to support and present the work of mature artists. Already our universities support libraries, galleries and museums, and no one questions the efficacy of this kind of subsidy. The presentation of visiting lecturers and touring concert artists is now a regular campus function. And some universities have an occasional artist-in-residence. These do indeed constitute a commitment; but a more complete commitment can be anticipated: permanent artists-in-residence—in number.

Most of these artists-in-residence should be ensemble performers, as contrasted with the solitary writer, composer or painter now at home in a few universities. They should not, however, be full-time classroom teachers first and part-time artists incidentally, as is often the case now. They will justify their presence on the campus by fulfilling the major function of the university—teaching. Some arts will not be "learned" by reading, lectures, or term papers, but only through audience-learning experiences. A deep understanding and love of dance, opera, music, and theatre will only develop out of repeated live experience. Art education is a matter of sophistication in taste, discernment, and standards that can come only through the intensive revelation of the art by real artists to an audience. This is not unlike our insistence that teaching literature must be done with great books, that the study of philosophy for the undergraduate be fundamentally the most influential philosophical writings. Likewise, the study of science not only concerns itself with master concepts but also with direct laboratory experience. Exposure to great ideas is germane to all good education. Since an understanding of many of the fine arts is a result of direct and repeated experience, the permanent artist-in-residence will teach in a direct and pure way.

Students in some universities, primarily in the East, already have access to fine orchestras, ballets, operas, and plays. For these universities the artist-in-residence would add only a certain convenience or economy. But for the vast majority of our college students there are no professional orchestras, dance companies, operas or theatres available for study. And there seems to be little likelihood that they will be available for many decades unless our major universities provide them. Such a step would not only improve art education for the regular, formal student, but it would also fill what is now a scandalous cultural gap in American life.

Except via mechanical media (records, television, and cinema) the great majority of our citizens have little contact with mature artist-performers. The professional, for complex economic reasons, is largely restricted to large metropolitan areas. A recent economic study reported that our citizens are spending more dollars on cultural affairs than sports. Such news should be heartening, but it too often means that the money is spent for amateur or part-time work (at best, second-class art). Since the audience's taste and standards in the arts are conditioned by exposure, it is important that these art experiences be professional.

With mature artist-performers permanently situated at strategically located major universities, a dispersion of art throughout the country would be possible. Performances in many communities within a given geographical area would be economically feasible. On a continuing basis, artists would be frequently available in communities that now have only occasional performances. For a university with a history of developing agricultural and general extension programs, this would not be as radical a change as might at first be supposed. Between twenty and thirty such university "extension" services in the performing arts would be powerfully stimulating to the arts in America.

This program would also harvest some of the hundreds of potentially fine young artists who are lost each year because of limited markets. This increase in opportunities would raise standards by giving the serious young artist an opportunity to develop more fully. In our present boom-or-bust world of arts there is little opportunity for the young performer to properly develop—to mature. Take for example the young actor with college experience and one or two seasons of stock who is suddenly thrust on Broadway because of a casting break. Is he ready to perform with Laurence Olivier or Helen Hayes? In such a situation, he must immediately produce at the highest level or be a failure. Unlike a soloist or a painter, he can only learn his art in ensemble work with other professionals, and many a promising young performer has no choice but to learn at the top. Since those in ensembles-in-residence would be professionals, the younger, less-experienced artists would have an educational opportunity that would be in the highest tradition of our university graduate research in the sciences and humanities.

Our whole educational and governmental history exhibits a pattern of increasing services, subsidy and support to all phases of American life. When railroads were vital to our growth in business and population, subsidies were made. When industry required protection, high tariffs were levied. When the missile gap was apparent, science scholarships were offered. When society has needed many important new services our large universities have provided them. The performing arts now need educational services and dissemination, and the university is the most logical corporate unit to administer it. In most other well-developed countries, theatre, music and dance are now subsidized, for subsidy is a *sine qua non* if arts are to be truly national and healthy. We have adamantly refused federal art subsidy in this country—and perhaps with good reason. But indirect, decentralized subsidies through our great universities could provide the arts with a reasonable economic base and freedom of action. It could also be a major new development for both education and art in America.

The following article further illuminates the questions raised by the last issue of ARTS IN SOCIETY (Vol. 3, No. 1), which examined the relationship between the professional and the amateur in the arts.

ON THE PROFESSION OF POETRY

BY LEWIS TURCO

Where poetry is concerned, what do the words *professional* and *amateur* mean? If we were to apply the rule of thumb that a professional is one who makes his living by means of his profession, we would be too narrow: only Ogden Nash, I believe, would qualify as a professional poet. On the other hand, if we were to say that a professional is one who writes poetry for publication, we would be too broad. Certainly there is a difference between the housewife in Milwaukee who publishes in *The Wisconsin Poetry Magazine* and the man who appears in *The Partisan Review*.

But then, why ask the question at all? What difference does it really make who is and is not a "professional"? On many occasions—and nonoccasions—I've thought about the distinctions possible and how and why such distinctions ought to be made, and the only conclusion I can come to is this: I and many of my lettered acquaintances consider that what we do with our lives—write poetry—is of overriding importance to us. But it is not of overriding importance to the Milwaukee housewife, except insofar as the writing of verse makes her *feel* important.

I think perhaps this is the single criterion to be applied to or self-applied by any artist. "Is my art the most important thing in my life?" If one can answer yes to that question, without qualification, then he is a professional. If the answer is no, then he is something else—not something *less,* just something *other than.*

In a society such as ours (a materialistic democracy), I believe it is important to make the distinction between professional and amateur for the simple reason that any artist must take a basic step if he is ever to produce anything extraordinary: he must transcend the snobbery of the bourgeois, the attitude of the middle class that art is what everybody likes. He must overcome the mental set, of what e. e. cummings called "Mostpeople," that it is somehow ill-bred to aspire to excellence in anything; that it is fanatical to devote oneself completely to values so ephemeral and nonutilitarian as to result in, perhaps, great poetry—"whatever *that* is," mostpeople might well add.

And the distinction is important, too, for the amateur who remains an amateur. In the Spring, 1964, issue of *The Carleton Miscellany,* August Heckscher, writing on "Democracy and the Arts," put it very clearly:

> *I thought that . . . I would say something about the relation between the amateur and professional, because in one sense the amateur represents the ordinary man or woman . . ., and the pro-*

fessional represents the elite which tends to be alienated and on the fringe of a democratic society . . . . We depend in this country very heavily upon the amateur, not only as a spectator but also as a patron . . . . But what we have to be careful of in praising the amateur, is to make sure that he realizes how different he is from the professional artist.

The amateur could well aim to become very much better than he is now . . . . I would like to see those who follow the arts as an avocation become more serious about it, and give more time to it. But at the same time I think it's terribly important that we affirm the difference between the amateur and the professional, and insist that because a person has painted a little he does not necessarily know what great painting is. The idea that "I know what I like, and what I like is art" can degrade a whole culture . . . .

The problem of the amateur is partly that he confounds himself with the professional and partly that the amateur in our society doesn't have the kind of folk art, the tradition of an unchanging and deeply rooted popular art, which he can copy and within which he can work . . . . What the amateur tends to do, therefore, is to copy, and inevitably to debase, the high art of our culture . . . . So you find him copying first the impressionists and then the abstract artists, and inevitably you get to a point where people don't know which thing is better, or even which is the original and which the copy.

The same is true of poetry. On one extreme we have the professional and amateur dogmatists, such as Yvor Winters and J. Donald Adams, who for professionals and amateurs respectively lay down the law about what literature can and cannot be. At the other extreme there are the professional and amateur mass men, such as Karl Shapiro and Hallmark Cards, each in his own way doing what he can to make poetry as accessible and simple as possible for the greatest number of people.

And so we come to the question, "Then what *is* art?" In other ages, in other societies, the query would be absurd. "Art is what the village artist makes" might very well be the answer we'd get. In his article, Mr. Heckscher talks a bit about folk art and its absence in our society. There is no basis, no tradition of craftmanship in this American democracy. We have, instead, as Mr. Heckscher says, "a sort of commonplace art among the mass and an alienated art among the elite. These are among the real problems of a democratic culture."

But the latter is a problem we ought to try to solve, or at least lay to rest. Perhaps the solvent is to be found within the dichotomy itself. In another article in the same issue of the *Miscellany*, "The Difficulty of Difficult Poetry" by Howard Nemerov, there appears the following passage:

If poetry reaches the point which chess has reached, where the decisive, profound and elegant combinations lie within the scope only of masters, and are appreciable only to competent and trained players, that will seem to many people a sorry state of affairs, and to some people a consequence simply of the sinfulness of poets; but it will not in the least mean that poetry is, as they say, dead; *rather the reverse. It is when poetry becomes altogether too easy, too accessible, runs down to a few derivative formulae and caters to low tastes and lazy minds—it is then that the life of the art is in danger.*

We have no folk poetry, no base upon which to build a mass audience of appreciative artisans. What we have, instead, is a sophisticated art, a poetry written by professionals primarily for other professionals and a few good amateurs. All attempts to bring poetry, or any art, to the masses must degenerate to pandering.

What we must settle for, in our democracy, is an audience, which will never be large, made up of our peers and of educated amateurs. That housewife in Milwaukee need not be made to feel that she is inferior merely because she is not professional. On the contrary, if we want our work to be read, enjoyed, and understood, she must be encouraged to learn more about this thing to which we have dedicated ourselves. She must be taught to understand more than the mere rudiments of versification, and she must be exposed to good professional work of our own time.

This, as I see it, is one of the functions of the modern university, and of the university extension. This is the reason for the existence of arts festivals and poetry centers, of the writers' conference and the reading circuit. The amateur is to be encouraged, yes. But more than that, he is to be encouraged to understand the nature of art in the twentieth century, and the difference between total commitment and avocation. We need not apologize for the difficulty of contemporary poetry, its sophistication, its estrangement, nor need we apologize for being artists, for operating a profession which, by the nature of the times and society we live in, must seem marginal to mostpeople. All we must do is maintain our standards and integrity as makers.

And we need to remember our obligations to the society in and for which we operate, though it may often appear that society does not feel it owes a reciprocal obligation of understanding to the artist. We are committed. We must seek to make society at large aware of the nature of our commitment, and of the nature of our art. The medium through which this awareness will be passed on to the public is that man or woman whose commitment is not total, but whose interest may be very great indeed. The amateur is not to be spurned and alienated, but to be exposed to professional poetry, and educated to it.

REPORT ON A SURVEY OF CONCERTGOERS OF THE UTRECHT (NETHERLANDS) SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

A report on a survey of the subscribing concertgoers of the Utrecht Symphony, entitled *Listening to the Audience,* reveals several interesting points about the nature and composition of music audiences. The survey project was carried out by H. DeJager of the Utrecht University Department of Sociology. Utrecht is the fourth largest city (258,000) in the Netherlands, and at the time of the survey the Utrecht Symphony Orchestra had about 4,200 regular subscribers and five groups of concerts, including one popular program series, two of traditional music, one of the works of modern composers, and one open only to members of trade unions.

★ From occupational grouping it was discovered that subscribing to concerts in Utrecht is to a large extent an upper and middle class activity; less than 10 percent could be placed in the lower class category. Even the concerts sponsored by trade unions drew mainly from the white-collar occupations.

The report notes that this finding is supported by similar investigations elsewhere in the Netherlands. In Amsterdam, a survey among the employees of two large firms disclosed marked differences in attendance at performances of the Concertgebouw Orchestra between blue- and white-collar workers. In Rotterdam, attendance by manual laborers at a "Promenade-concert" (low admission, popular program, informal setting) was also reported as very low. An Amsterdam Opera study showed that only 11 percent of the audience consisted of manual workers.

★ Although concert attendance seems to be almost entirely outside the social pattern of the lower class, the Utrecht survey discovered a very considerable upward mobility among patrons. The author suggests that people often tend to encounter musical experiences during the rise to higher social, educational, and/or cultural status.

★ Subscribers in Utrecht were asked how they came to attend their first concert and at what age. The answers were correlated with their father's occupation and it was found that 45 percent of upper class concertgoers had been introduced to the experience by their parents while this was true of only 20 percent of the lower class subscribers. It would appear that attendance at musical performances is largely a result of social conditioning. The Amsterdam Opera study reports that the majority of those questioned testified that they went to the Opera "from early youth." Moreover, the higher the status of the father's occupation, the younger the people usually were when they attended their first concert.

★ The most preferred composers were Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Chopin, and Tschaikovsky. Modern composers were most disliked. In fact, many of those surveyed listed "modern composers" as a category, rather than naming particular contemporary composers. When respondents were explicitly asked about their attitudes toward modern music, "positive" answers, meaning that an individual actually *liked* modern music, were given by a small minority (11 percent of the sample). Most "positive" answers expressed either simply an attitude of tolerance or else a desire to become acquainted with modern music. Negative answers were highest among those who did not play or had never played an instrument.

★ Because the Utrecht study limited itself to the subscribers of the Utrecht Symphony Orchestra, it could not fully investigate the socio-psychological barriers against attending performances, but the smaller degree of participation by the lower status groups is in itself suggestive.

New words referring to suspected cultural barriers have become accepted in both sociological and everyday terminology in the Dutch language. Analogous to the psychological term *agoraphobia,* the word *drempelvrees* (fear to cross the threshold) has been coined. Another new expression is *sfeerschroom* (a feeling of constraint within a social atmosphere). Both refer to the uneasiness felt by people who are not familiar with the role or behavior expected from them in concert halls, theaters, museums, chic restaurants, and bookstores. Mr. DeJager suggests that at such places social control is so intensive that it discourages attendance by most lower status groups, with the exception of those individuals actively seeking to enhance their social prestige. The social importance of knowing proper behavior at concerts was well illustrated by a remark of a union leader who observed that "the members of the audience at the union concerts gradually have become more schooled; they no longer applaud in the middle of a symphony."

★ The socio-psychological blocks apparently can be a much more significant barrier to concert attendance than high admission prices.

★ The author recommends that any effort of diffusion of the fine arts should aim at reducing "the social distance" between individuals and the artistic experience. He notes that the policy of cultural enrichment as pursued by state and local authorities in the Netherlands starts from the premise that fine art is good for all men and that in a democratic society everybody should be able to take part in it.

★ The author concludes: "The Dutch composer Willem Pijper once drew a comparison between musical life and an iceberg: 9/10 is invisible, yet it is the base of both the iceberg and concert life as a social institution." The Utrecht study underscores the necessity of strengthening that invisible base of musical life.

THE ARTS AND THE STATE OF MISSOURI REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR

Submitted by

The Governor's Committee on the Arts and its incorporated counterpart, The Missouri Council on the Arts

BY WILLIAM HOWARD ADAMS, CHAIRMAN

During the course of the Committee's deliberations it has become clear that private resources alone are inadequate to provide the citizens of Missouri with the kind of fully developed cultural life they deserve and want. Even if the splendid and selfless effort of the thousands of Missourians who now give time and money to support our outstanding cultural institutions is maintained at the present level, still it is not enough to provide the creative and performing artist an opportunity to earn a decent living enriching our lives through their productions.

It is also quite clear that the smaller communities of the state want and deserve the opportunity to give their children the same educational and cultural opportunities now enjoyed by citizens living in the larger cities.

The Committee is confident that the program outlined here offers the way to begin to solve these problems. It further provides the means for Missouri to compete on an equal basis with the aggressive developments in other states where the arts, along with educational facilities and natural resources, are being used to attract new economic opportunities for the state. North Carolina, Arkansas, New York State, California, and Florida are among the progressive states now giving dramatic new support to the arts on behalf of all their citizens.

THE BACKGROUND

On December 6, 1962, Governor John M. Dalton appointed the first Governor's Committee on the Arts. In his letter of appointment, he specifically indicated certain areas to be considered as follows:

1. **To establish a continuing conversation among cultural leaders throughout the state, exchanging ideas on mutual problems.**

2. **To assess the scope of Missouri's cultural strength, and to explore ideas for expanding the effectiveness of our institutions.**

3. **To establish an annual or semiannual clearinghouse of events, with a calendar of important cultural activities throughout the state.**

4. **To form a subcommittee for long-range planning, to investigate programs in other states, and to prepare an agenda of subjects for the whole committee.**

Since its first meeting on February 23, 1963, the Committee has followed generally these suggestions. Even though the Committee's composition was relatively small in order that it could remain an effective working group, it has had the intention and desire from the very beginning to establish effective communication links with all the citizens of the state who are concerned with the growth and development of the arts in Missouri. To this end, as part of the Committee's effort to identify the state's cultural leadership and to bring the cultural community together occasionally for discussion and exchanges of ideas,

two conferences have been held. The first was held on November 17 and 18, 1963, at the University of Missouri and the second was held on the campus of Stephens College, October 16 and 17, 1964. At each of these gatherings, more than three hundred people turned out at their own expense to evidence their interest and concern in this vital area. National leaders from both the public as well as the private sectors have participated in these programs. From these gatherings, it is the hope of the Committee that long-range ideas and leadership for the encouragement of the arts will emerge, placing Missouri in the forefront of developments that are already underway in other states.

On June 15, 1964, the Committee was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation so that it could receive gifts and donations adequate to carry it through the initial stages of development. It is not the intention of the Committee or its incorporated successor Council to project any long-range plans requiring substantial funds from private sources, now sorely needed by existing cultural institutions.

In addition to conferences, the Committee has established a temporary office on the campus of Rockhurst College where it has directed the first statewide survey of cultural institutions. The results from this survey will be published separately. In conducting this survey, the Committee received the cooperation of the Department of Extension of the University of Missouri and its Dean, Dr. C. B. Ratchford.

The first report and its recommendations for a minimum annual program of $250,000, though pitifully little, is capable of generating additional monies for the arts, if effectively managed. These recommendations, along with the proposed program, mark a crucial turning point in the future of this or any other statewide effort to enlarge the public's opportunities to enjoy all that the arts have to offer a free society. The next and decisive step will be up to the political leadership and legislature of the state.

For nearly 200 years we have been telling ourselves in this country that as soon as we have subdued the continent and supplied all of our material needs and comforts, only then will we be able to devote our time and energy to the creation and enjoyment of art. That distant future which we have regularly postponed has now arrived. Further, the continued and appalling waste and loss of creative talent that we are willing to educate, but not employ in Missouri, can no longer be tolerated. It is hoped that this report will arouse the citizens of Missouri to demand a change for the better. The hour is late.

THE REPORT

A. Introduction

In submitting its recommendations, the Missouri Council on the Arts makes the following premises:

I. The arts[1] are an essential ingredient and the true gauge of a civilized society.

II. The arts define life in measures of quality rather than in terms of quantity. In any society that can dominate its material requirements, thereby creating greater leisure, the role of the arts in raising the quality of life becomes central.

III. In an age dominated by science, the arts tend to be neglected. It, therefore, becomes imperative that the arts are adequately supported in order to maintain a balance of human values.

IV. A healthy, vigorous life of the arts is in fact the best evidence of an economically strong and growing community. Increasingly, major industries make their decisions to move to the state or community which will afford their personnel a superior cultural life. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that industries which have otherwise found Missouri attractive have gone elsewhere because the cultural opportunities were inadequate.

V. The inevitable concentration of many of the more costly cultural opportunities in the urban centers of the state creates an imbalance and hinders many citizens of Missouri from enjoying all that the arts have to offer. We need both to increase the cultural opportunities in the state and to extend those opportunities throughout the state.

VI. Just as there has developed a national tendency to concentrate scientific research and development on the East and West Coasts, sapping the growth of the Mid-

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[1]**Since the beginning of time, art is one human activity that has defied precise definition. It is used in this Report to mean those spheres of serious, transforming human activity of music, theatre, painting, sculpture, architecture, dance and literature but not limited to these exclusively. The definition must necessarily be kept open in recognition of art's dynamic, creative quality that will not be restrained by conventional labels.**

west, so, too, the widening gap between the Midwest and the two coasts in the opportunities for professional careers in the arts is even more striking and demands corrective action. The initiative for such change must come from the Midwest itself.

VII. The pervasive lack of cultural energy in the Midwest is clearly evidenced by the almost total absence of opportunity for earning a livelihood as a creative and performing artist.[2] Two contradictory myths have prevented serious consideration of the problem on the part of the public, (i) that recognized artists, as well as their patrons, are wealthy and need no help; (ii) and secondly, that all artists are deservedly poor and indeed, prefer their economic and social isolation. Neither of these romantic myths any longer serves the useful thinking of our citizens, nor do they in any way attest to the realities of the situation.

VIII. Just as private and public support exist side by side for libraries, health services, and scientific research, it is appropriate that public support also be available for the arts to enrich the lives of the people of Missouri.

IX. Public funds effectively managed generate several times the appropriated amounts in new private support, as they have done in business, science, and agriculture.

X. We, as members of a free society, have an obligation to make it possible for the arts to flourish.

B. Recommended Action

The Missouri Council on the Arts therefore recommends:

1. That the arts council be given legislative sanction.

2. That an annual appropriation of $250,000 be made to the Missouri Arts Foundation for each of the next two years, a total of $500,000 for the biennium.

C. The First Biennium of Operation

In an introduction to the report of the New York State Council on the Arts, 1960-64, August Heckscher, Director of the Twentieth Century Fund and formerly Special Consultant on the Arts to President Kennedy, has pointed out that State Arts Councils may be said to show three stages of development. The first stage involves a survey and assessment of existing cultural resources. The second emphasizes the means by which these resources can be carried more widely to the people. Up to this point a concern with the well-being of the arts themselves is secondary to a concern for the pleasure of the citizenry. In time, however, Mr. Heckscher points out, these worthy efforts are discovered to be only a part of the problem, and the Council turns to a third stage, that of experimenting in new fields. The Missouri Council has thus far been concerned with the first stage Mr. Heckscher lists and is beginning to move into the second. Its program at this stage, and for the foreseeable future, will have to be exploratory, free-wheeling, as well as pragmatic.

In outlining the basic shape of a program for the first biennium of operation, the Missouri Council on the Arts is not attempting to mount an official "culture" program, nor is it the intent of the Council to impose upon smaller cities what the big cities think. It will be the aim of the Council to encourage communities to participate with matching funds in order to extend the programs to their maximum usefulness.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAM

A. Performing Arts

(1) Assistance for tours of major orchestral groups in the form of aid to extend tours within the state.

(2) Assistance for expanded tour programs for small ensemble groups such as Young Audiences (expanded to utilize the performing resources of the state), small operatic ensembles, and the like to smaller communities or where the auditorium facilities are limited.

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[2]**It is difficult to make this point sufficiently graphic. One way to do so might be to ask the reader to conceive a Missouri in which the following people, all of whom spent some of their formative years in the state (if they were not indeed native), could have profitably remained, to do their life's work: T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, Langston Hughes, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, Mark Twain, Virgil Thomson, Ward Dorrance, Grace Bumbry, Tennessee Williams, James Brooks, Fannie Hurst, W. C. Handy, Helen Traubel. The reader can enlarge the list easily from his own recollections.**

(3) An immediate program to devise plans for the establishment of fully professional, nonacademic resident state repertory theatres in Kansas City and St. Louis. These plans, to be underwritten by the Missouri Council on the Arts, should take into consideration the present theatre programs now developing on the metropolitan college and university campuses. The plans should further boldly envision supplying the professional theatre needs of the state on a permanent, stable and consistent basis along the lofty lines of the successful Tyrone Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, which has established a model of artistic independence yet with the close cooperation of the University of Minnesota. (A special report on the needs of the theatre in Missouri will be issued separately by the Council and will contain further details of this recommendation.)

(4) Assistance to existing professional theatres, including opera in Missouri, in order that they can expand their present programs to audiences particularly in smaller communities of the state.

(5) Enlarge the opportunities of ordinary citizens to enjoy all of the performing arts by transporting them to concerts and theatres where possible, as well as bringing these productions to the people.

(6) Expansion of the use of educational television as a medium for the statewide dissemination of programs.

B. Visual Arts and Museums

(1) To make available to all our citizens the chance to see good art through new educational exhibition programs for communities, using the state's own outstanding resources as well as outside resources such as the travelling exhibit programs offered by the Smithsonian Institution and the American Federation of Art.

(2) Technical assistance to museums, particularly in the smaller communities, to improve their educational services to their local communities.

(3) To help our professional artists, craftsmen and designers to make a decent living practicing their profession.

(4) To encourage the state to insist on the highest standards of designs on all of its building programs, and by encouraging the concept that a fractional percentage of the cost of every building commissioned by the state be devoted to the integrated use of the other arts such as painting, sculpture, mosaic and special architectural qualities not purely required by use of the building.

C. General Education Program

(1) Establishment of programs to increase art understanding in primary and secondary schools. As noted in Sections A and B above, with the cooperation of the state institutions (such as the State Department of Public Instruction, the State Library, and the State Historical Society) students will be exposed directly to the quality art product itself. Specifically, a pilot program in drama, music, ballet and visual arts designed for demonstration and exhibition as a means of augmenting classroom programs will be developed. Such a program would enlarge immeasurably the cultural life of the schools, and with proper adaptation, it could be extended to the adult community during the same tour.

(2) Sponsorship of cooperation in the various fields of the arts among the public and private colleges and universities of the state, particularly where such institutions can effectively increase and improve the cultural life of the communities they serve.

(3) Promotion of appropriate forums for creative writing in the state.

D. Administration

(1) Staff

(2) Office

(3) Travel

(4) Workshops and conferences

(5) Dissemination of information (Clearinghouse and newsletter function)

(6) Assist in the establishment of community art associations and councils where needed.

COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ISSUES

The editors of ARTS IN SOCIETY wish to solicit opinions and counter-opinions on everything they publish. Readers are invited to submit comments of any length on questions and problems raised in this or previous issues.

I should like to thank you and congratulate you on your excellent article on Al Sessler in *Arts in Society*. Your presentation in the form of a retrospective seminar underlined the intimate, genuine, and truly great aspects of the artist and his development. You have given your readers an inspiration to teach and create from the pulse of a dead artist. And it is for this reason that I am greatful to you and your colleagues for the tribute you have paid Mr. Sessler.

Bruce Carter
Assistant Professor
Carnegie Institute of Technology
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The subject [Government and the Arts] of your magazine [Vol. 2, No. 4] is one very close to my heart. I am a painter who, after a long stay in France, returned to New York in 1928 and was deeply disturbed by the apathy and ignorance of people who should have been avid collectors and supporters of art. A number of people asked me for help in understanding. I saw in a small way what could be done, and for several winters took a few friends to exhibitions. Then in 1936 I started some few people on lecture-discussion visits with the purpose of making them love painting, not to gain mere information about it, but to discover the artist's way of looking at it. This winter, twenty-seven years later, several of the original members are still with me. No one may join now who has not been made aware of what it's all about. There is such a wide gap in point of view of newcomers that no one is happy. The Metropolitan Museum asked me to take on their membership years ago, for a series of talks because Francis Taylor was impressed by the interest of my "groups"—(I have always refused to let them be called classes). I have been fortunate in having very outstanding women of wide influence, and they have helped create interest among their friends and children and now grandchildren.

You can see I am an enthusiastic advocate of just what you are doing.

I am interested, not only in the layman, but in the whole structure of art and government, in the economic outlook for artists, their education and adjustments, and very particularly in cultural exchanges as a bond in international understanding. In this latter field, I myself had the good fortune to go on a three-month lecture trip under the auspices of the Specialists Division of the Department of State, to speak on American art in five countries, Switzerland, Belgium, Algeria, France, and Yugoslavia.

I believe thoroughly in the importance of this, but even now it is more than difficult to get sufficient support. The government is slow to understand the value of this potent weapon, but here and there there are encouraging beginnings.

I wish you every success in this important and unusual undertaking.

Mary Turlay Robinson

FUTURE ISSUES

Vol. 3, Number 3—The Institutions of Art

Subsequent issues will be devoted to:

Art and City Planning

The Arts and Religion

Criticism and the Performing Arts

The Arts and Philanthropy

The Arts and the Mass Media

Censorship and the Arts

ARTS IN SOCIETY was founded at The University of Wisconsin in 1958 as a forum for the discussion, interpretation and illustration of the place of art in our times. It is designed for the art leader, scholar, artist, educator, student, and the layman with broad cultural interests.

Each issue of ARTS IN SOCIETY focuses on a particular area of American art experience, which is explored by authorities from a variety of fields and disciplines. Thus, past issues have featured such topics as Art and Government, The Arts in Education, The Regional Arts Center, Mass Culture, The Arts in the Community, and The Relationship between the Amateur and the Professional in the Arts; and among the more well-known contributors represented have been Van Meter Ames, Jacques Barzun, Herbert Blau, Kenneth Burke, Paul Goodman, Howard Hanson, August Heckscher, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Marshall McLuhan, Sir Herbert Read, Kenneth Rexroth, Gilbert Seldes, Karl Shapiro, Wallace Stegner, Harold Taylor, and Peter Yates.

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