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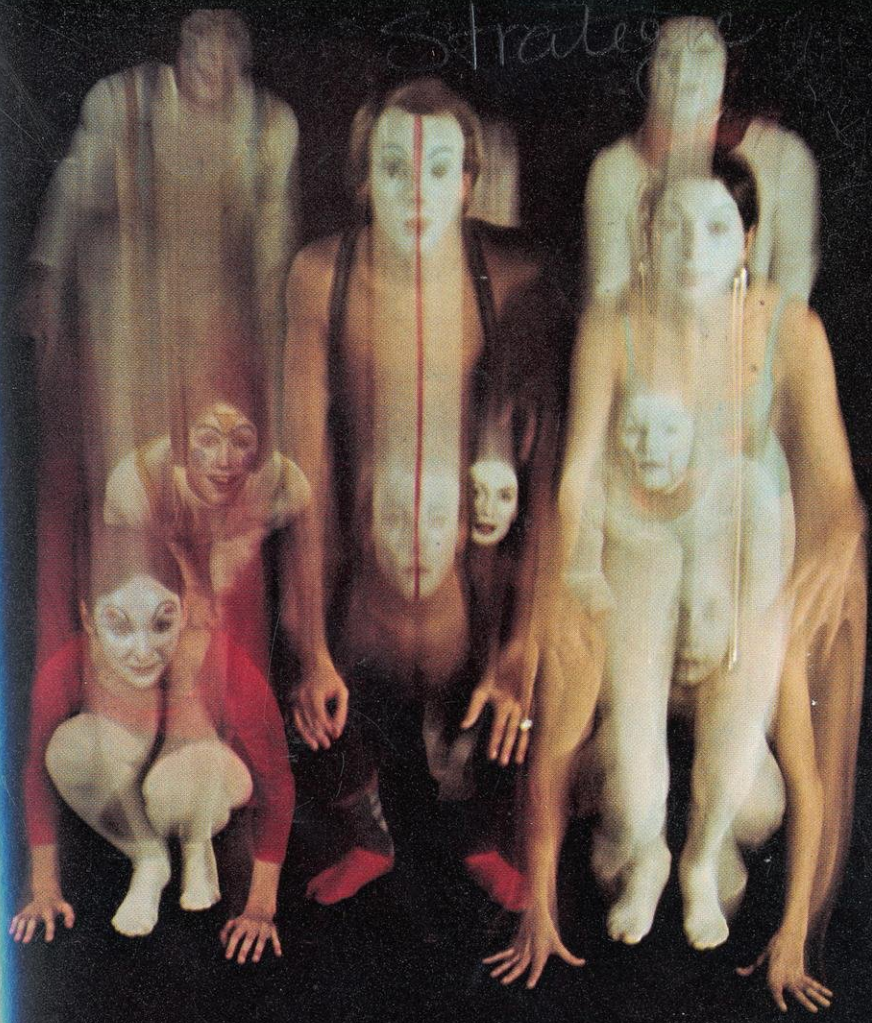
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the arts in the post-industrial society

Strategie



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# arts in society





## ARTS IN SOCIETY

Published by Research and Statewide Programs in the Arts University of Wisconsin-Extension

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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 the professional and the lay public. *Arts in Society* exists to discuss, interpret, and illustrate the various functions of the arts in contemporary civilization. Its purpose is to present the insights of experience, research and theory in support of educational and organizational efforts to enhance the position of the arts in America. In general, four areas are dealt with: the teaching and learning of the arts; aesthetics and philosophy; social analysis; and significant examples of creative expression in a medium which may be served by the printing process.

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

**Manuscripts** should be sent to: Edward Kamarck, Editor, *Arts in Society*, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 610 Langdon Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706. Address review copies of books, recordings, tapes and films to the same address.

We regret that due to our large stock of poetry and limited staff time, we are not reviewing or soliciting poetry.

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The designer of this issue, Neil Sandstad, is a freelance graphic artist and college professor. He lives presently in Madison, Wisconsin.

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# a prefatory note

This issue highlights the remarkably terse and comprehensive report\* of the UNESCO conference on Cultural Innovation in Technological and Post-Industrial Societies, held in Tampa at the University of Southern Florida on October 28-31, 1973. On a number of counts I found this to be an intriguing meeting. For one, it had the broadest scope of any conference that I have ever attended—mind you, *all* of American (and at points, by implication, most of the world's) culture fell within its purview. While it was not at all this meeting's intention to come up with anything so ambitious as a definitive statement, but rather as Max Kaplan indicates in his "Overview of the Conference" with a "plan for a plan," a tentative scenario, really, for a projected series of conferences, nevertheless the discussion at times generated impressive substance, authority, and sweep. Which is not to imply that there was no thinness whatsoever in the dialectic. Given the largeness of the frame and the challenge of encompassing it in only a two day meeting, certainly some (and even considerable) limitation was to be expected. What I found particularly striking is how close it all came to being usefully definitive, that even in its tentativeness of assertion the conference's report projects more *wholeness of vision* about where the arts are moving in contemporary America than I have run across in a long time.

In the light of the occasionally heartening but largely pell-mell expansion of arts resources across the nation, isn't the development of such a vision now in fact an imperative for decision-making in all spheres? We have long been a fragmented culture and our understanding of what is and what could be has been not only tragically insular but almost

entirely devoid of a sense of the close inter-relatedness of the arts to the magnitude and consequence of emerging social realities. At a symposium at UCLA several years ago, June Wayne graphically voiced these very concerns:

*What the arts need most right now is a long term national plan—a map of the relationships of the arts to the society, so that some predictable intentions within a long term context can be brought to the guidance of present problem solving. In short, there is need to do for the arts what is routinely done for every business sector—long term prediction and planning within which crisis management can be understood and made useful. Such a master plan and its prediction capability would help arts institutions to see themselves in more comprehensible dimensions. (From Arts in Society, Vol. 10, No. 3)*

Of course, in the instance of the UNESCO project, the planners have a far larger objective in mind, namely, to eventually outline a cultural "map" that would be global in its dimensions, and that would serve as a useful guide for governments everywhere. But, happily, our needs and UNESCO's purposes significantly coalesce, for the United States in being most nearly the exemplar of a post-industrial society\*\*, a condition toward which presumably many nations are now rapidly moving, it is on us that much of their close scrutiny will be directed. Accordingly one hopes with Max Kaplan that one or more major American foundations will respond to the urgency and importance of this challenge.

As the UNESCO report amply emphasizes, our



advanced technologized circumstance has implied intense change for all aspects of our culture—perhaps more accurately, a state of permanent crisis, for both opportunities and hazards seem to grow daily in moment. In effect, we are in a time which fairly cries out for a clarity and largeness of understanding about what is happening to us and what we might do to shape our destiny. In this respect, the chief strength of this report might be said to lie in its roughing out of the dynamic linkages and interrelationships, eliciting in its most successful portions a highly suggestive setting for the delineation of the scope and shape of the newly-developing problems and themes. While these are dealt with cursorily in themselves, they have been pencilled in for the projected conferences, providing an enterprising agenda for research, investigation, and demonstration.

In addition to the UNESCO report, this issue of *Arts in Society* includes a number of articles which we specifically selected (and in a few instances commissioned) in order both to amplify its observations regarding the changing roles of the artist and of creativity in our time, and also to introduce a new compelling theme which the Tampa meeting in October had small cause for anticipating: namely, the fact of our shrinking energy resources (or are we now to think of gas shortage as but a vanished winter fantasy?). In representing the intensity of individual vision in contrast to the collective vision of the conference, the articles also serve to provide a kind of leavening for the discussion.

It is interesting to note that by and large the conference vision tends to be more sanguine with respect to our prospects. Not just

chance, I think. The challenge of forging an inclusive agenda for leadership, even a provisional one, cannot but bring with it an attendant sense of possibility. ELK

---

*\*The report itself starts on page 382. It is preceded by a brief essay, "Overview of the Conference," prepared especially for Arts in Society by Max Kaplan, which summarizes the history, objectives, and accomplishments of the conference. We are grateful to Dr. Kaplan for making this material available to us.*

*\*\*The phrase "post-industrial society" is not only credited to the sociologist Daniel Bell but his recent book, The Coming of Post-Industrial Society, has established him as the leading expositor of the concept. Mortimer Adler in the Sept. 2, 1973, newsletter of the Institute for Philosophical Research (distributed by the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies) offers the following aptly brief definition: "Dr. Bell first presented his conception of the next stage in societal development at a symposium on technology and social change in 1962; since then the phrase 'post-industrial society' has gained wide currency. To prevent anyone from misunderstanding that phrase to mean a society in which the industrial production of commodities diminishes or one in which technological society plays a less important role, I cite Dr. Bell's precise specification of what the term means: (1) the change from a goods-producing to a service economy; (2) the preeminence of the professional and technical class; (3) the centrality of theoretical knowledge as the source of innovation and of policy formulation for society; (4) the control of technology and technological assessment; (5) the creation of a new 'intellectual technology.'"*

report of the unesco conference:  
cultural innovation  
in technological and  
post-industrial societies



**Report of the UNESCO Conference  
CULTURAL INNOVATION IN  
TECHNOLOGICAL AND  
POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES**

**October 28-31, 1973  
University of South Florida  
Tampa, Florida**

**Co-Sponsors:  
UNESCO Division of Cultural Studies  
U.S. National Commission for UNESCO  
Leisure Studies Program, University of  
South Florida (Coordinator)**

**Overview of the Conference**

**by Max Kaplan**

*Dr. Kaplan was the Conference Chairman. As the Director of the Leisure Studies Program\* at the University of Southern Florida, which was the official coordinator of the Conference, he shared this leadership role with Phillip Bosserman and Nelson Butler, both staff associates in the Program.*

*\*The Leisure Studies Program is an integral unit within the College of Social and Behavioral Studies at the University of Southern Florida. The Program presents seminars; its members have lectured in many parts of the U.S.A. and abroad, and have visited with scholars in eastern and western European countries; research is an on-going aspect for students and faculty; international conferences were held in 1969 and 1971, the former resulting in the volume, Technology, Human Values and Leisure (Abingdon Press, 1972). Staff members of the Program have served as consultants for private and public agencies, government units, and industry.*

*The Program represents this country on an 8-NATION International Sociological Association commission and edits its official quarterly newsletter.*

*The Program serves as headquarters for and was instrumental in the formation of the International Program for Films on Leisure.*



The development of the UNESCO Conference on Cultural Innovation in Technological and Post-Industrial Societies took altogether eighteen months from first contact with the United States National Commission for UNESCO. This was the occasion when the Senior Program Officer of the Commission, Richard Nobbe, asked the Leisure Studies Program to lend a hand with UNESCO project #3155.

Project #3155 is described as follows in the UNESCO *Draft Programme and Budget for 1973-1974*:

*A study will be started in 1973 on present movements searching for new cultural values and a better quality of life in technological and post-industrial societies. The programme will consider a series of themes successively, the first involving a study of the socio-cultural significance of current artistic movements. To begin with, the focus will be on the United States of America, but the project will also consider similar trends in other countries and thus stress cultural interactions. The first biennium will be devoted to planning and launching the project as a whole. Research will be conducted over two biennia and publications will begin to appear in 1975.*

The chief architect of this UNESCO project was D. N. Bammate, Director of its Cultural Studies Division, and a former professor of Roman Law from Afghanistan. The original

impetus for the investigation came from the underdeveloped countries; they had a fairly clear idea of what happens technically and even socially when power is harnessed, and when computers and TV come in, but their larger concern was with what happens to cultural values, to a new relationship of modernity, to tradition. A logical place to look at is a highly developed society—the United States; a logical extension and comparison can then be made with other societies in Europe and Asia that have histories of technology; a logical time frame is at its best eight to ten years; a logical area for intensive inquiry would be the arts, always a social test of old/new; a logical period of two years could be devoted to articulating and defining issues and potential methods.

Although this overall plan had been formulated, it had received no formal action until our Leisure Studies Program presented itself and accepted the invitation to prepare an introductory conference with the purpose of raising issues and proposing a “plan for a plan.” With as general a formulation as the one at hand, ours was the unique opportunity to submit a theoretical conceptualization as a basis for organizing the Conference. This conceptualization appears in the body of the Working Paper,\* enlarged in the ensuing Supplementary Report on the Conference.

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\*An abbreviated version of the Working Paper is presented on page 508 of this issue of Arts in Society.





## Conference Organization

The conceptualization, selection of participants and structuring of the Tampa Conference were all closely interrelated. The key is found in the fourfold conception of the arts—when seen in their totality as an integral part of the society—as a dynamic synthesis of four components: creativity, diffusion, reception, and education; or stated by respective social roles:

- Creators:** (painters, composers, choreographers, dramatists, etc.)
- Distributors:** (librarians, publishers, union officials, etc.)
- Publics:** (at concerts, lectures; critics; etc.)

This classification, simple as it appears to be, nevertheless subsumes many issues that could constitute a conference in themselves on the “sociology of art,” i.e., where do performers (dancers, musicians, actors) fall within the creative process? Are critics “educators” in their essential roles? Fortunately, participants in the Tampa Conference refrained (probably from politeness) from raising such issues, and also accepted the decision (made previously in a Paris meeting with the coordinators) to combine the above last two components of “reception” and “education.”

Thus, the three-component schema lent itself naturally to the selection of participants.\*\* They were generally assigned to a committee which dealt with areas of their professional involvement, i.e., a painter or dancer to Committee I (creativity); a museum director or TV administrator to II (diffusion); a teacher to III (reception), with scholars (sociologists, historians, etc.) distributed across the committees.

Each committee had a total of only nine hours to become acquainted with ideas and perspectives of each member, to weave in and out of issues, and to end up with a substantive written report consisting of (a) descriptive concepts—rationale, background, analyses; (b) proposed subjects for continued research initiation and exploration; (c) long-range recommendations and approaches for operational activities by UNESCO. The reader’s understanding of the frustration inherent in such a time schedule for dealing with a difficult problem is respectfully implored. It must also be stated that the reports which follow cannot entirely do justice to the oral exchanges that took place in the discussions.

## The Reports

The full reports prepared by the committees comprise the official statement to UNESCO, to be distributed from Paris. Their purposes were: (1) to suggest an ongoing structure, a proposal also hinted at in the Working Paper prepared for participants, and (2) to extend the theoretical model as a preparation for a content analysis of the reports.

Three general themes that seemed to run through much of the discussion, overlapping the committee divisions, may be identified:

1. “Innovation—for what” led to the persistent issue of goals for the post-industrial society. Should the UNESCO study not concern itself directly with goals as a basis for evaluations as well as for programs of action?
2. Frequent references to ethnic traditions and sources of art led to the familiar—but still the crucial issue—of cultural pluralism. Should the UNESCO investigation not deal

with the relation of cultural innovations to the issue of group identity through the arts as well as to cultural homogeneity?

3. Leisure is a new major factor in affecting the conditions within which art and other cultural innovations find meaning and institutional organization. Should the UNESCO program for #3155 not pay particular attention to this social-technological factor, examining the arts for the total population as one leisure manifestation in the post-industrial society?

The ensuing Supplementary Report, which was submitted to UNESCO by the coordinators for whatever use deemed valuable, consists of two parts:

- A. Proposals for a minimal national committee to provide some machinery for the evaluation and distribution of proposals from any source for the first biennium of #3155.
- B. Analysis of the committee proposals and their classification within the proposed general theoretical structure, culminating in a listing of thirty-three themes and thirty-four operational methods that emerged from the conference as a whole.

### **Immediate Prospects**

A second conference is planned for late winter of 1975 at Boston University, taking off from the 1973 meeting but leading to concrete plans for the next several years. Succeeding meetings may be held on the West Coast. However, the ultimate success of the project will come primarily from initiative taken by American researchers. We will be pleased to correspond with interested groups, and will route proposals or questions to appropriate persons. Drs. Harley and Fishwick agree to continue informally as spokesmen for their groups; Herbert Shore and Herbert Blau will do so jointly for the first committee. Assuming a proposal were judged favorably by them within the parameters of the UNESCO project, and especially if the UNESCO officials subsequently lent their support, one could assume that a government or foundation grant would be more likely. □

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*\*\*The full list of participants is listed on page 514.*

Committee 1\* chose to delineate "potentially affirmative" and "potentially negative" effects of the new technology on culture of the United States, without attempting to weigh any of the five items in each category. Twelve subjects are suggested for further research, followed by four long-range recommendations.

**A. Descriptive Concepts—Rationale, Background, Analyses**

The new technology has a number of effects on culture in the United States, some which are seen as potentially affirmative, and some which are viewed as potentially negative.

The committee would include the following areas as potentially positive or affirmative:

—New means and techniques to spur new insights; new working materials for the artist; the presence of the electronic media to gain a potentially wider and more diversified audience for creative work.

—The provision of leisure time for experimentation, by artists and amateurs alike; for innovation; and for the learning of a craft, either through formal training or through self-discovery.

—The infinite expansion, as well as diversification, of potential audiences for the arts through television (mainly public or non-commercial) and radio; electronic distribution via video-tape, cable systems, hand-held cameras, etc.; and through duplication machines (Xerox, hand-presses, etc.) which account for mass diffusion of words and visual images.

—The expansion of one of the United States' most important innovations: the fusion of many arts into one whole, with the interlocking of the arts forming a creative entity. For example, our musical theatre, which combines dance, words, visual arts and music. Another example: new concepts of dance, which combine lights, movements, and sounds.

—The construction of architecture on an unprecedented scale for both practical and aesthetic purposes; and innovations in building methods which permit more flexibility on any scale, small or large, for new housing, communities, etc., which add to the greater choice of life-styles for human beings.

*\* Chairperson of Committee 1 was Marya Mannes, and Recorder was Gladys Kashdin. Participants were: Jacques Abram, Herbert Blau, Phillip Bosserman. Gordon Dahl, Elizabeth Grimes, Stella Moore, Riva Poor, Herbert Shore, and Yen Lu Wong.*





The committee would list the following areas as potentially negative:

—Increased means to produce “instant culture” with minimal effort, for mass consumption and commercial profit.

—The blunting of audience perception by the profusion of fads, trends, commercial pressures, sales pitches, etc., culminating in the confusion between the genuine and the false, the authentic talent and the saleable one.

—The possibility of innovation for the sake of innovation—what is *truly* innovation and what is fad?

—Preoccupation with the “new” may cripple the creative artist. (For his unimpeded work, a degree of isolation from input and freedom from continual commercial pressure may be essential.)

—Excessive input through mass communication, not only on the potential public for culture, but on the artist himself. This involves, among others, the denigration of language and the breakdown of genuine communication versus media communications.

—Technology can be the refuge of the untalented—for example, instant art, electronic or visual doodling, largely for the purpose of self-indulgence or “self-expression,” whether or not the “self” is worth expressing.

—Amplification for its own sake—the danger of injury to true sound and to the human ear, as well as a blunting of the senses through sheer volume and size.

—In the visual arts, especially painting and sculpture, a preoccupation with size of canvas and size of sculpture—either through self-advertisement or simply because of technical feasibility.

## B. Proposed Subjects for Continued Research Initiative and Exploration

—Deeper exploration into the meaning of “innovation.”

—Deeper exploration into definitions of culture, as meaning “artistic production” and as “quality of life or life styles.”

—Exploration into the question of cultural identity in relation to cultural innovation and technological development. An example would be the importance of minority ethnic contributions to the mainstream of American culture, and their relation to the meaning and development of post-industrial societies.

—A study of predictive possibilities of artistic innovation—where might they lead, where might they take us?

—A continuing structure of the Tampa Conference on an international level in order to keep its basic goals in sight and lead toward positive action. This would be accomplished (at least in part) by comparative studies of different countries and cultures in order to gain an international perspective.

—Request for the assistance of the “eye” of consultants from developing nations to aid in examining the United States as a post-industrial/technological society (a sort of mirror view.)

—A seminar or conference to explore the Asian components of American culture in the last two decades and the effects of Asian philosophy on our arts and life styles. (This must, of course, be pursued with Asians participating.)

—An investigation of the impact of American cultural innovations, performances in other countries, etc., on their cultures—whether the reactions are negative or affirmative.

—An exploration of the role of religious institutions, including native American religions and the imported versions of non-Western religious movements, in the development and diffusion of cultural expression and human values in post-industrial American society.

—The gathering of people in certain fields who can work together experimentally (that is, practicing artists who can share ideas and techniques.)

—The bringing of foreign artists to the United States, not simply to perform in conventional surroundings, but also to make contact with artists in the United States in a working environment.

—Exploration of the whole question of satellite broadcasting—to whom, by whom, about what?—in short, the likelihood and possible effects of cross-cultural shock.

## C. Long-Range Recommendations and Approaches for Operational Activities (UNESCO)

—In all developing nations, the establishment of a nationally-funded agency (modeled on the U.S. Council for the Arts and Humanities) which is free from governmental control and is directed at giving separate communities the means to allocate resources to cultural projects and institutions of their own choosing, and to control their own use and direction.

—In all developing nations, the immediate establishment of a public television and radio system which is (one hopes) free from both commercial and governmental pressures, and which is based upon cultural needs and accomplishments as well as on information and entertainment.

—The establishment of courses in schools and colleges on the quality of life, the needs of man, and the use of time. (This would include all aspects of the human and cultural environment.)

—The development of centers for the voluntary isolation of creative artists needing a release from the enormous pressures of mass input and technological processing—an environment of peace in which to work without constant interruption or interference, over an extended period of time (an example of such a center would be the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire.) □



Committee 2\* undertook to identify characteristics of the post-industrial society, to enumerate "social institutions of cultural dissemination," and to identify "ramifications of a techno-capitalistic society on a cultural diffusion," and to pinpoint areas and vehicles of "cultural diffusion." Its eight research proposals are divided into "domestic" and "comparative" studies. Three more specific operational proposals conclude the report.

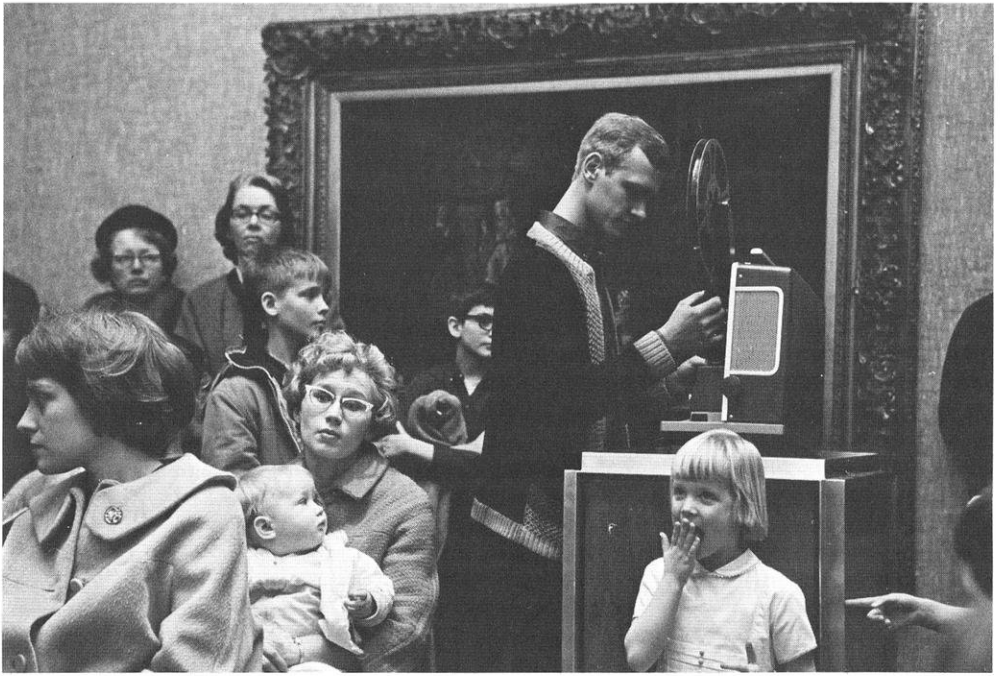
### A. Descriptive Concepts—Rationale, Background, Analyses

As suggested, we assumed a starting point immediately following World War II in attempting to arrive at a conceptual analysis of the characteristics of a post-industrial society, specifically the United States. We particularly looked at the impacts and effects of the mass media and other social institutions of cultural dissemination and the specific ramifications of a largely capitalistic and highly technological society on the arts.

The United States, the first post-industrial (service economy) society in the world, has a number of characteristics which appear, so far, to be peculiar to this country. Among these are: increased pace of production, distribution, and consumption, with a corresponding decrease in cycle time; a transience and impermanence with respect to these phenomena ("planned obsolescence.") There is, too, the factor of sheer scope and size of the country geographically, as well as the enormous scale of the communication and distribution systems.

The committee attempted to enumerate social institutions of cultural dissemination. Although the list is by no means exhaustive, it would include: the mass media, both print and non-print (electronic and other), with characteristics of large-scale, low-cost production; near-universal availability; a general increase in the quality of reproduction; the fact that a mass medium may in itself be an art form as well as a vehicle of dissemination. Other equally significant vehicles include: public and private schools at all levels; libraries, bookmobiles, museums; arts councils, community centers, service clubs; religious institutions; civic and municipal projects, such as summer music festivals; touring exhibits and productions; arts and crafts fairs and festivals;

*\*Chairperson of Committee 2 was William G. Harley and Recorder was Judith M. Costello. Participants were: Dorothy Amarandos, Harold Arberg, David W. Bartlett, Claire Cressman, Harriet H. Deer, Louis W. Kutcher, Richard L. Loveless, Raymond C. Mesler, Tom M. Messer, Clark Mitze, Richard K. Nobbe, Harold Spivacke, David Surek, Stanley VanDerBeek, Kyle Walls, David Manning White.*



the traditional cultural institutions, such as civic or philharmonic orchestras, and traditional cultural education institutions, such as colleges of fine arts and conservatories; artist-in-residence programs; the commercial marketplace; and finally, the family as a reinforcer, for good or ill, of the values transmitted through other vehicles.

As a committee, we attempted to identify some of the ramifications of a techno-capitalistic society on cultural diffusion. We noted here a shift in the patronage of the arts and a rather complex texture to such patronage. A few examples are: federal, state and local governments; universities and other institutions of higher learning; philanthropic foundations; various United Arts Funds; large corporations, with their ability to provide risk capital permitting innovation; and, of course, individual members of the public, who buy tickets to events and purchase recordings and artifacts. Another ramification noted by the committee is a peculiar duality of effects (which by no means implies that they are mutually exclusive). A few of these are: fragmentation/standardization; media as art forms/media as vehicles; passive-experiential involvement/active-creative participation; and diffusion of cultures to audiences/diffusion of audiences to culture (largely as a result of

rapid transportation and increased optional time.) A final ramification involves certain controls and limitations on cultural diffusion, including those imposed by political and financial considerations, as well as an individual's personal definition of his own needs and wants in his cultural and leisure activities.

In conclusion, we felt that a society such as the United States'—that is, a technological, leisure-oriented society—exhibits a number of characteristics in its areas of cultural diffusion, and vehicles for disseminating such culture. For instance, we note a huge increase in specialized publications, both in number and kind, as well as more specialized radio programs, institutions of higher learning, special-interest groups, etc. There appears to be a concomitant disappearance of general vehicles of this sort. At the same time, there is a growing standardization and uniformity in many aspects of the national media, particularly electronic, which affects everything from knowledge of events to speech patterns and language, through simultaneous and instantaneous dissemination of information.

The improved quality of print and sound reproduction and their necessary tools of transmission have made possible to a majority of people an availability and access to cultural

forms which were previously available only to a tiny, elite part of the population. Increased income and leisure time provide greater access to materials, which in turn are produced in great quantity and often at low cost. In addition, many technological innovations have provided new opportunities for individuals to become creators. Recording, photo- and cinematographic equipment, video cassettes, multi-channel cable systems, and crafts materials (even in pre-packaged kits) allow traditionally consuming publics to involve themselves actively in the creation and manipulation of art forms. It is important to note that these new tools and techniques provide greater access to the arts by social (racial and economic) minorities—for instance, black-owned and -operated radio stations and magazines. This is an area in which, in a very real sense, control of the arts has shifted from an elite external group to the individual. The increase in income and available time, combined with standardized forms resulting from mass production and distribution and low unit cost, essentially means that almost anyone can consume and almost anyone can participate.

Some traditional areas of cultural diffusion appear to have developed a number of peculiarly American aspects. Libraries, for example, have been around for centuries as repositories, but the *public* function of the library, with circulation of virtually anything (not just books) seems to have originated in this country, exemplifying American libraries as living entities rather than as merely repositories. Another example of American innovation in this area, library reference services, utilize computerized or other highly mechanized means of retrieval. Parallels can be drawn as well with museums, churches and schools.

As a committee, we hesitated to pass value judgments on our findings; yet we all seemed to feel that standardization, though it may carry implications of faceless punch cards, is not altogether a negative facet of technology. To cite television syndication as an example—few, if any, local stations could afford to produce regularly a continuing situation comedy, let alone a series like "Masterpiece Theatre." Yet these and scores of other programs become available to nearly everyone through centralized distribution networks.

We also felt it important to emphasize the diversity we noted in many areas of cultural diffusion. Diversity is presumably a consequence of a pluralistic society, and exists in such widely varying areas as taste, forms of communication, ways of experiencing aesthetics, and means of achieving cultural expression. However, although we mainly felt that it was important to preserve diversity, we also noted that the real problem here is *not* to pass judgment as to whether it is good or bad—it is, simply, a reality—but rather how to cope with and take advantage of areas of diversity.

Members of the committee noted other phenomena which, so far, seem to be peculiarly American. One is a certain didactic approach to the arts, reflecting our desire to teach and explain (educational departments in museums, for instance). Another is the approach to fund-raising for monies channeled toward support of the arts—for instance, public auctions, lotteries, etc.

All of the above imply potential areas of imitation on the part of nations and societies which will join the United States as post-industrial societies. One major question remains which has numerous third-world implications, and to which we feel priority should be accorded. This is an examination of the effect of program content (transmitted through the mass media or other institutions) which was designed for one audience and then made available to another with a different cultural orientation. (This can occur either within one country of a pluralistic character, or among various countries.) Technological innovation, especially the speed and flexibility of communication, tends to heighten the significance of this question.

Finally, we see no virtue in the stratification of culture. Rather, we see culture as a total human experience into which different kinds of people interact, at different levels, at different times, and for different purposes and motives.





## **B. Proposed Subjects for Continued Research Initiative and Exploration**

In the domestic area, we recommend:

—A study directed toward a better understanding of the functioning of the diverse systems that American ingenuity has created for the diffusion and support of culture (for example, commercial distribution systems, schools, libraries, lotteries, auctions, state legislatures, arts councils, the publishing industry, and radio-television networks.)

—A study directed toward qualitative judgment of better or new alternative systems for fostering inter-connections between the creator and the consumer.

—A study on the role of the American family as a primary agent for stimulating creative involvement in the arts in a post-industrial society.

—In-depth sociological studies on the individual psychology of the decision-maker in the dissemination and support of American culture, and the interaction of these individuals within their institutionalized structures (for example, government, private foundations, educational institutions, the Congress, and state legislatures.)

—A study of individual behavior responses that account for favorable/unfavorable reaction to stimuli that may or may not have been intentionally devised to arouse arts participation, spectatorship, evaluation or thought, directed toward the problem of determining which processes succeed in causing favorable involvement in the arts.

—A study of the effects and influences, both negative and beneficial, of technological (including mass media) hardware, software assumptions, techniques and goals upon the cultural life of the individual in a post-industrial society.

In the area of comparative/international studies, we recommend:

—The compilation of an omnibus bibliography on the arts, leisure, and post-industrial society (both national and international, print and non-print) as reflected in research studies,

books, documents and reports as well as artifacts.

—An historical analysis of the diffusion of the arts in the American post-industrial society.

As a committee, however, we wish to append the following observations to our recommendations: underlying many of the proposed research projects is one major assumption which should be examined. Most writers on post-industrial society agree that one of its most striking features is the sense of isolation and alienation from groups felt by its members, in sharp contrast to the belief of industrial societies that one finds fulfillment, at least in part, through allegiance to a group, and that group membership is at least partially helpful in establishing some sense of identity. Unfortunately, many of the investigative and analytical models currently used by social scientists assume the validity of looking at people as members of social groups. However, if Americans are increasingly rejecting the concept of social groups, it raises the question of whether our investigative models are valid, and whether the projects proposed may be wide of the mark because they are designed for kinds of group relationships which are rapidly going out of existence.

We respectfully suggest that before indulging in a flurry of proposals and projects, people should be aware of the possible need for new models, both for investigation and communication. We should, at the very least, try to find out what structures are replacing the group-conceived structures of industrial society. Until we do that, we may be merely engaged in idle and expensive speculation.

### C. Long-Range Recommendations and Approaches for Operational Activities (UNESCO)

—The provision of arrangements for scholars concerned with leisure time-budget studies in a number of countries to meet for discussion of their methodology and concepts, and for a comparison of their results.

—The articulation of a bicentennial exhibition illuminating, through the language of art, aspects of cultural innovation in a post-industrial society.

—The examination of pilot projects for experimenting with the uses of technology for neighborhood and community groups. For example: the proposed Tampa Governmental/ Arts Center and all of Hillsborough County, Florida, might become a pilot project where "new" and "traditional" artists, experimental and continuing arts, and supportive and creative technologies, combine to establish an opening 1976 festival. This would possibly be followed by an ongoing community-wide program of arts involvement/participation/spectatorship/thought for all citizens at a professional center connected (by people, public media, and philosophy) to neighborhood satellites, demonstrating the links between creative/critical originators, the disseminating/media processes, and the public/educators. This would capsulize in miniature the cultural values and quality of life in technological and post-industrial societies. □



Committee 3\* divided itself into four sub-groups, which individually focussed on: education, participation, institutions, and community—comprising a pertinent whole, EPIC. Thus, issues and recommendations pertinent to the committee's assigned topic of "The Public and Educators" are found within the following reports of each of these sub-groups. Lack of time provided in the conference structure prevented a synthesis of these proposals by the committee as a whole.

#### A. Descriptive Concepts—Rationale, Background, Analyses

Leisure, which now has become so extensive in the post-industrial age, makes possible more attention to the arts, and increases the responsibility of education to develop attitudes and skills for exploring the present and future facets of artistic expression for individuals and groups of all ages. The present goal of education in the arts in America should lead toward self-actualization. Education in the arts should provide the students with attitudes, perspectives and breadth of thinking which will make self-actualization possible.

Education in the arts is in the process of becoming more sensitive to the other arts. Artists have become involved in the total education in the arts; families have not, leaving it to the institutions.

American education in the arts is unique in that it is exploring multi-ethnic components of its culture. Through the support of the community, industry, foundations, government agencies, and private enterprises, a total involvement of the various aspects of American society in education in the arts is taking place. Significant advances in dance, theatre, poetry, literature, painting and sculpture have been attained, both for the masses and the elite. One of the unique American qualities in education and the arts is its availability for the masses, particularly aided by technological developments, such as radio and television (commercial and non-commercial), audio-visual aids (communication arts) and professional organizations.

*\*Chairperson of Committee 3 was Marshall Fishwick, and Recorder was Barbara Kaplan. Participants were: George Bogusch, Marcella Boyle, Troy Collier, Robert H. Cowden, Irving Deer, Tom Dilkes, Judy Gessner, Hans Juergensen, Edward Kamarck, Rolf Meyersohn, Cristina Nobbe, Louis Norris, Jules Pagano, Johannes Riedel, Rose Marie Spivacke, Charles Weingartner, Henry Winthrop.*

## B. Proposed Subjects for Continued Research Initiative and Exploration

—Efforts should be made to further the capacity of each individual to relate meaningfully to his environment in such a way as to cultivate the resourcefulness so threatened by the mobility characteristic of the population of this country. Population density and housing developments inhibit certain aspects of our creativity, such as the practicing of musical instruments.

—Steps should be taken to deal with the problem of literacy in its new form, whereby non-verbal communication (such as music, posters, commercials) are considered legitimate and sufficient. Non-verbal communication may be used as an end in itself, depending on individual experience and age levels. Furthermore, stress should be placed on the study of foreign and minority languages to forestall cultural isolation and to enrich cultural developments and understanding.

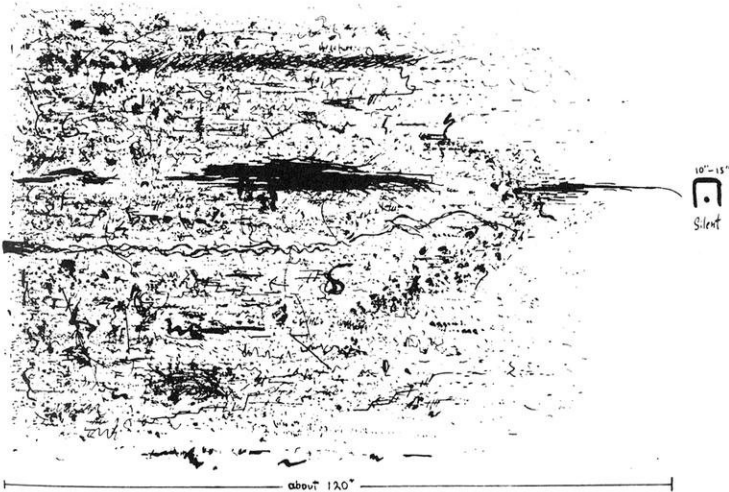
—Care should be taken that the natural and human resources of artistic experiences and endeavors not be neglected. All natural and human resources should be utilized from the highly sophisticated instruments and media to the most popular.

## C. Long-Range Recommendations and Approaches for Operational Activities (UNESCO)

Because of the unequal distribution of opportunities for education in the arts, the following publications sponsored by UNESCO could prove very helpful:

—A summarization of possible creative use of electronic media for institutions with limited budgets in the fields of art, music, dance, painting, theatre, and other arts.

—Learning modules dealing with the culture and the artistic activities of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. These might include films, filmstrip, slides and tape recordings for use in seminars and institutes.



Sketch for Sound Block One  
from "Music of Mountains"  
1969  
Walter Mays



## SUB-GROUP ON PARTICIPATION

### A. Descriptive Concepts—Rationale, Background, Analyses

We attempted to identify uniquely American arts—on all cultural levels—and to discover the manner in which these reveal the intensity of current concerns in America, the problems of *participation* (both individually and collectively.)

The sub-group examined the state of the arts as well as their meaning, and their effects on both the individual and the community. There exists a diversity of attitudes towards participation, due to American pluralism. Current problems, some long in the making, can be identified:

—Extreme technological changes, leading to “future shock.”

—An intense awareness of the breakdown of traditional structures, institutions, and values, coupled with the failure to cope with growing complexities of society and lack of adaptation to new conditions.

—The refusal by various minorities to accept exclusion from economic and political processes.

—The imperfectly-understood need for re-directing the energy (until recently, employed to “open new frontiers”) by rechanneling it along economic, political, social and artistic lines.

Traditional American ideals of participation are revealed by those indigenous artistic developments which spread across the entire cultural spectrum, resulting in a significant number of innovative, sometimes entirely new, art forms. Examples are: jazz, film, dance, poetry (the Beats), popular song and musical comedy, art movements, advertising, country music, rock 'n' roll, summer stock, art workshops, and adult education.

### B. and C. Proposed Subjects for Continued Research Initiative and Exploration; Long-Range Recommendations and Approaches for Operational Activities (UNESCO)

We recommend the following areas of research to be undertaken in order to understand the positive and negative aspects of “Participation in the Arts” and to identify further problems for UNESCO:

—The effects of increasing affluence on both participation in and appreciation of the arts. Will this unparalleled affluence result in a Malthusian effect upon leisure and the arts?

—Present and future media systems should be designed and utilized to facilitate wider cultural participation, e.g., experimental television programs addressing themselves to vital issues of our times.

—Basic statistical studies and surveys that determine the breadth and depth of cultural participation in the U.S., which might also be designed to measure and evaluate the effects of various types of cultural participation.

—An investigation into the diverse types of participation, and the articulation of practical criteria through which these can be accurately determined. One promising research methodology to obtain such information is embodied in the “uses and gratification” approach currently employed by mass communication researchers. This helps them to understand how audiences participate mentally and emotionally in the cultural context of the mass media.

**D. Addendum by Dr. Henry Winthrop**  
**(This was unanimously accepted by**  
**members of the sub-group.)**

—Are most of the significant problems and issues with which social scientists are concerned, reflected in the arts—particularly literature and drama? Research should be undertaken on the degree to which the pressing social problems of American civilization are reflected or dealt with in the arts, or, if neglected, why.

—The British philosopher, Joad, in his volume, *Decadence*, has stressed the degree to which the arts reflect individual morbidity and social pathology. Sociologists like Sorokin have taken the same position. Research should be undertaken on the degree to which these charges are true.

—Research should be undertaken on the extent to which the arts in America reflect a growing “sensate culture” and, in addition, research should be undertaken on the social consequences of the sensate *leitmotif*, if it should be found to be increasing.

—Research should be undertaken on the extent to which the arts in America are reflecting a “growing retreat from reason.” This is particularly needed in the area of the “expanded arts.”

—Research should be undertaken on the extent to which pre-occupation with the arts on the part of the younger generation indicates alienation from the classics in each art field. Furthermore, if substantial alienation of this type is found, research should be undertaken with respect to its causes, meaning and consequences.

—Research should be undertaken into the extent to which practitioners in the arts—writers, playwrights, painters, sculptors, composers, film personnel, etc.—exhibit an anti-technology bias. Research should be undertaken into the causes, meaning and consequences of that bias.

—Research should be undertaken into the extent to which pornography and obscenity exist in the arts—in Robert Graves' sense of these terms. Research should be undertaken into how widespread in the arts is the “no-holds barred” attitude, concerning sexual behavior, the genesis of this attitude, its implications for sexuality of every type, and its likely consequences in the future.

—Research should also be undertaken, as a corollary, as to how widespread some of Rimmer's ideas on new forms of marriage may be in various arts—marriage forms such as group marriage, notational polyandry, etc.



## SUB-GROUP ON INSTITUTIONS

### A. Descriptive Concepts—Rationale, Background, Analyses

Definition of "institutions": those dealing with the creation, production, support and dissemination of the arts—both public (government) and private (museums, theaters, performing arts groups, etc.), and universities.

During this period of intense and accelerating cultural change, institutions of art are, by and large, in a crisis state in America. There is infinite paradox in this situation.

On the one hand, in relatively few centers (those largely on the East and West coasts) the large established institutions—which are still wedded to somewhat anachronistic nineteenth-century and European-derived concepts of objective, aspiration, leadership, patterns of support, and audience-relatedness—are not only finding it difficult to respond to the challenge of cultural innovation, but almost without exception are verging on financial bankruptcy. They are often characterized by dwindling, rather than expanding, audiences, having failed to find the key to winning a broader populist base of support, interest and participation. A considerable portion of available foundation resource, both governmental and private, is being expended to keep these institutions alive and functioning, and the recognition is growing that this may be a losing game. Though it is increasingly acknowledged that these institutions may be socially and culturally dysfunctional, it is still felt that because they do serve to preserve the cultural heritage, ways must be found to make them more viable; they must be thoroughly invested with the winds of change.

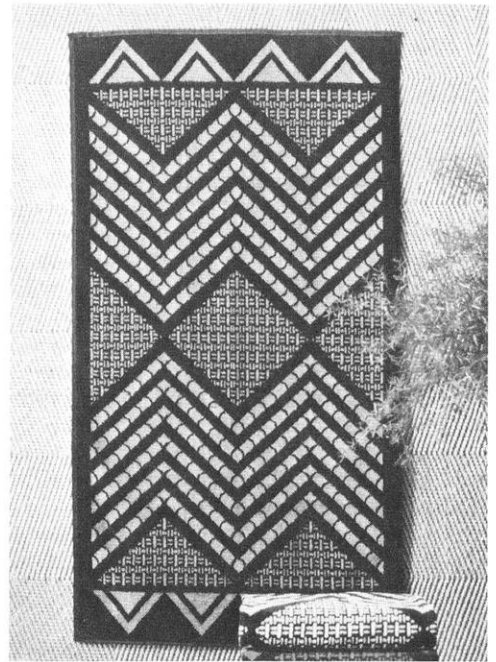
On the other hand, there seems to be an impressively growing interest in the arts in many areas of the country and among many sections of the population, which as yet lack the proper kinds of models for institutionalization to give this interest sufficient support, direction, encouragement and educational enrichment. In many respects, this burgeoning interest represents new kinds of motivations and ambitions in the arts, much less concerned with preservation and tradition and much more so with vital social urgencies—

with the need to find and assert identity, to expand the quality of life, and to define the possible realities of a more humanistic vision for America. The counter-culture of our youth and the creatively vigorous art expression of our ethnic minorities are dramatic examples, but many other sectors of our population are similarly caught up with the need to tie to the eloquence, acuity and intensity of artistic expression; though at times existing in a seemingly more political than cultural context, the motivation is finally richly cultural in potential.

Thus, the prospect is by no means bleak. Energies, interest, talent, and potential are everywhere growing. Increasingly, the elitist established institutions are being pressed toward reformation, though it is by no means clear whether new, vigorous models can emerge without a virtually total restructuring of the institutions. But some effects have shown hopeful possibilities, and these need to be studied closely.

There are, too, around the country at large, new emerging forms of institutionalization which do consciously seek to respond to the needs of a more populist base and objective. The development of state arts councils; the community arts councils; the national programs of the National Endowment for the Arts, particularly within its Arts Expansion endeavor; the emergence of community arts centers; the concerted efforts to build professional performing arts groups on a regional basis; the increasing recognition by universities of the need to exercise cultural leadership within their regional orbits—all these are hopeful signs. But their impact as yet is not a stunning one. Clearly all the efforts need an enormous expansion of governmental support at all levels. The WPA arts project of the 1930's, mounted in a period when the potential of cultural growth in this country was nowhere as rich, still remind us what the impact of an effort of real magnitude can be. In a few short years, that bold and magnificent experiment at cultural enrichment yielded a harvest of talent so abundant that in every area of the arts America's pre-eminence first began to be markedly established in that period.

We have recognized that institutions which support the arts are in a period of crisis—



both financially, and in terms of their abilities to respond to new public needs in the arts. It has become increasingly clear that new forms of art—from “pop culture” to rock music to the celebration of the enormous variety of ethnic heritages in this country—are legitimate forms of art. But before we can speak of any failings or shortcomings on the part of these institutions in responding to these new forms, it is necessary to have some kind of evidence to illustrate the dimensions of the problem. The studies which we propose in Parts B and C are designed to provide that data, by showing the extent of relationships between variables which we consider to be indicative of trends in these areas.

Having provided, then, an examination of existing institutions, it will be necessary to explore ways in which these institutions can bridge the gap (if one exists) between what they are doing now and what they need to be doing to respond effectively.

The prime shortcoming embodied in these institutions is their inability to lobby effectively for their share of public support. Unless there is some “grass roots” support for the arts, these institutions will continually be frustrated in their attempts to gain public funding, because government is continually

hard-pressed to meet its expenses in providing other vital public services such as welfare, health, etc. The constituency represented by the arts is not organized beyond the level of institutional management and its employees. The audience—the largest constituency of the arts, and the most important when speaking of public funding—should be active in the request for funding. It is the responsibility of institutional management to educate and organize its public in becoming spokesmen for the arts.

Beyond this, institutions need to address themselves to the following issues:

—Should conventional institutions be encouraged to experiment with innovative artistic forms, or should they continue as is?

Implicit in this question is the notion of adapting in order to survive. Is there such a concept as “institutional Darwinism” which we should allow to operate?

—Should racial, ethnic and generational expressions be separately institutionalized in order to maintain their cultural purity, or should they coexist under the same frameworks in order to provide maximum exposure and understanding between groups?



## B. Proposed Subjects for Continued Research Initiative and Exploration

A central problem of the arts in the United States is the way in which traditional funding and governing institutions reply to the increasingly mass market, populist and ethnic aspirations, and the quest for innovation. Actually, we know very little about the management, problems and value conglomerates of these institutions. We do not have the information to answer such questions as: What makes one institution respond more successfully to innovation than others? What value conflicts emerge as these institutions confront the new mass market? What new forms of organization might these institutions adopt to meet these problems in a way to include greater participation? In order to gain a better understanding of these problems, the following research proposal is offered: That a study of the procedures, management, and value assumptions of major public and private institutions be made in order to understand their ideological and functional characteristics. The following techniques might be used:

—Demographic in-depth study of the management and patrons of these organizations. The model would be along lines of those used by the historians, Sir Lewis Namier and J. Hexter.

—Study of the value assumptions of their procedures.

—Study of their self-images and their definitions of the arts and their role in the arts.

—Examination of the inter-institutional relations and rivalries within a given area.

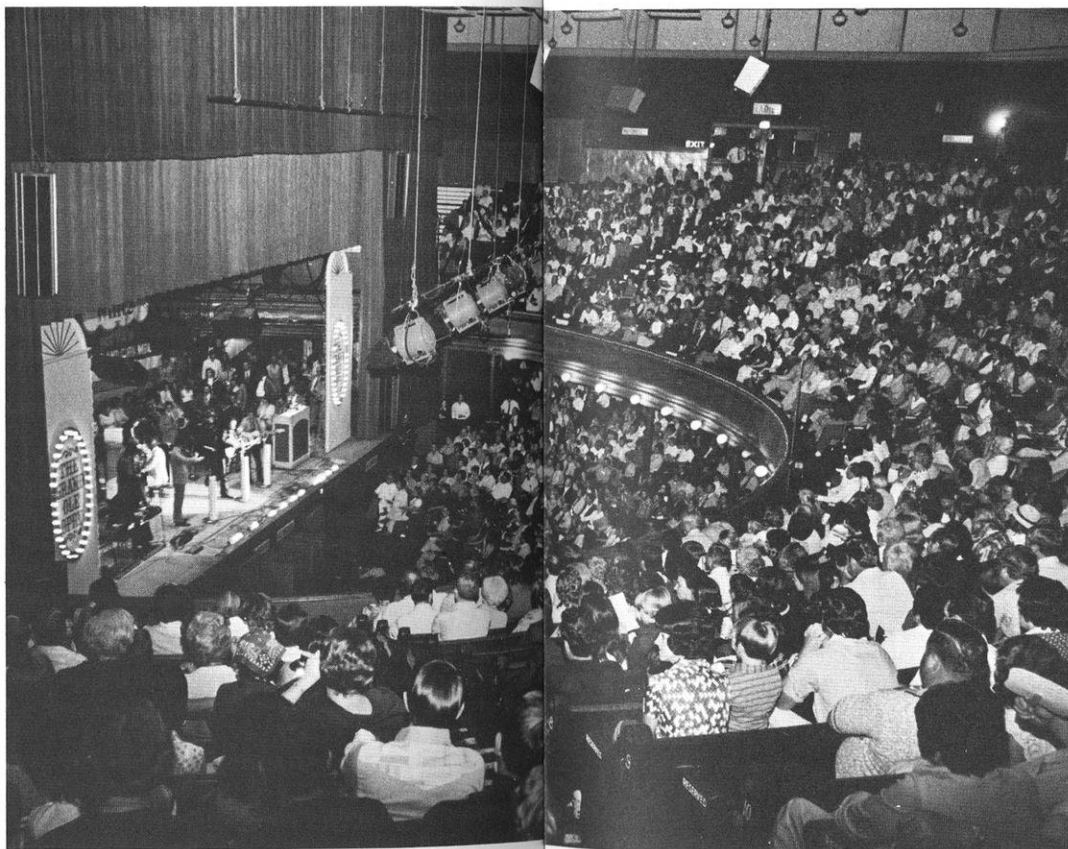
—A study of the degree of their openness to innovation, and the degree to which they acknowledge common problems.

## C. Long-Range Recommendations and Approaches for Operational Activities (UNESCO)

—As a practical first step, we recommend that influence be brought to bear on the U.S. Bureau of the Census, to include sections on culture in all future population surveys (participation, expectation, realization.)

—Further, we recommend that a series of nationwide seminars and conferences be organized to educate the media regarding the expanding cultural needs and aspirations of an increasingly affluent society. We are concerned that the media provide the options and fulfill their responsibility to further diversity within today's and tomorrow's society.

—Finally, we strongly recommend investigation into the ways and means for the business and industrial complex to cooperate in fulfilling the diverse cultural expectations and needs of our society.



## SUB-GROUP ON COMMUNITY

### A. Descriptive Concepts—Rationale, Background, Analyses

The concept "community" is used in the geographic sense and in the sense of a community of interests. Such communities range from the interests of photographers or bird-watchers to art colonies, practitioners of Kodály or Suzuki techniques in music education, or participants in a rock-music festival. The community emerges as an organic entity in its development through stages:

—Individual passion of interest.

—Formation of a community of like interests.

—Desire to maintain the community.

—Dissemination of standards and education essential to preserve the community.

Important current cultural manifestations of artistic communities in the United States include:

—The Nashville country music scene and the Grand Ole Opry which has a faithful, dedicated and growing public as well as a developing group of participants.

—The resurgence of ethnicity in America: Latvian, Yiddish, Italian, Black, Chicano; and the increased sense of alienation and the security of community artistic expressions.

—The retirement community and the question of artistic evidences as a symptom of community vitality.

—Long-term experiments with non-theatre-trained young people in improvisational expressions of culture.

—The guitar and the dinner theatre as an example of the faddishness of culture; environments that are developed for these communities of interest.

—The festival: Woodstock, Newport, street fairs and street theatre.

It is important also to examine social and economic factors which affect the formation and direction of artistic communities—in particular:

—The commercial community as patrons: their criteria applied to art compared to criteria applied to business ventures; subsidization of art by industry; financial gain as motivation in artistic enterprise; merchandising of art; their judgments as they affect the artistic community.

—The formation of a community around a particular artistic involvement: the American attempt to institutionalize artistic interest; examples in community music schools, theatre groups, memorial museums and galleries.



LOS ANGELES  
FESTIVAL  
OF THE  
PERFORMING  
ARTS

ART POETRY  
AS THE DRAMA  
TOOL FOR JAZZ  
SOCIAL DANCE  
CHANGE

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**B and C. Proposed Subjects for Continued Research Initiative and Exploration; Long-Range Recommendations and Approaches for Operational Activities (UNESCO)**

—The formation of an interest community based upon artistic endeavor in a particular geographic community—Exemplary group: Nashville and the Grand Old Opry.

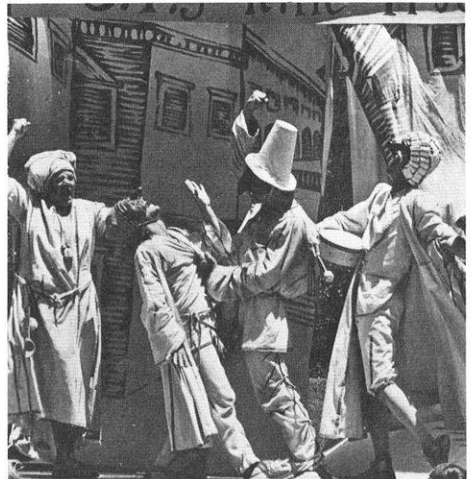
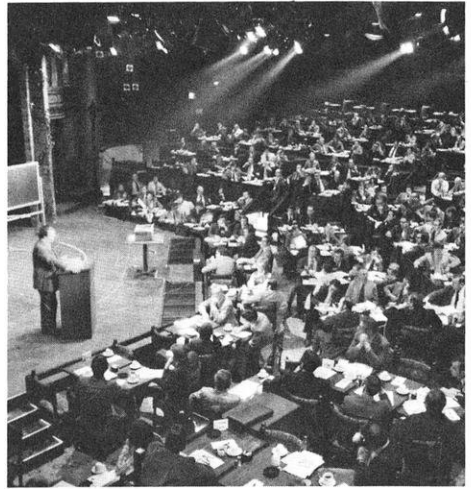
Facets for exploration would include: The creative and participating artists; participation of the greater community; absorption of technological innovation into an art form; commercial aspects of the community; development of an expanded environment for the community.

Possible questions to pursue would include: What is the interaction between art and community? What factors contribute to the increased interest in country music; expansion of the community and involvement of larger numbers of people; the survival of the music? What effects have progressive technological innovations had on these factors? To what extent is this an ethnic phenomenon? What kinds of community involvement continue to develop from this nucleus?

—Studies of the development of constituencies for an art form in the United States—Exemplary form: Three types of theatre and the development of the cultural environments in which they flourish.

Facets of exploration would include: (a) Paul Sills' improvisational theatre group in Chicago. It was originally conceived as a theatre for workers, but developed its own community of intelligentsia as it evolved into the Second City group. (b) The phenomenon of the dinner theatre: its fast growth; its specific constituency; the importance of location; Chanhassen, Minnesota as exemplary, with simultaneous long-run major productions. (c) Street theatre: informal; specific communities of followers fanatic in devotion; examples in San Francisco Mime Troupe, Bread and Puppet Theatre, and El Teatro Campesino.

Possible questions to pursue would include: What kinds of environments allow the creation of theatre audience communities? What



aspects of form and content of presentations relate to audience communities? What aspects of social class relate to community?

—A study of the development of a sub-culture centered around a high-technology cultural innovation—Exemplary form: Moog Synthesizer and other electronic music.

Facets for exploration would include: (a) The new forms of music in relation to the new forms of social organizations which have been created, such as groups of composers, musicians, engineers, hi-fi buffs and artists who have developed styles and systems of communication with one another and with varieties of audiences. (b) Examination of one geographic community in which such social organizations are flourishing, e.g., New York City. (c) Comparison with developments in other geographic and/or social areas. (d) The ways in which the innovation has developed in comparison to the innovations in social forms which have emerged. Of particular interest is the application of the concepts of *community of interest* (or Interest Community) in terms of mapping the participants in this phenomenon as they derive from various fields. It is particularly interesting and important for discussions of cultural innovation because the participants come from such varied intellectual, cultural and professional backgrounds. They constitute the first generation of a new field.

Possible questions to pursue would include: What are the forms of interaction among

participants? What are the forms of recruitment of new members for the community? What determines the cultural values which this development represents?

—Study of the uses of artistic expression made by communities—Exemplary ethnic communities would include: American Jewish, American Italian, American Polish, American Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican; exemplary social community: First Unitarian Church of Miami.

Facets of the exploration would include: Proliferation of subculture communities; shift of purpose within culturally based artistic expression; the relationship of cultural and individual alienation to artistic expression as a cohesive force.

Possible questions to pursue would include: (a) To what uses are artistic forms put by communities, e.g., to reaffirm ethnic identity, to stress separateness, to make didactic points, to create solidarity, to recruit, to educate? (b) What modes of artistic expression seem most suitable to these communities? (c) Do some communities use art forms more extensively than others? What factors contribute to this? (d) How does a community progress from a social basis to an artistic basis (e.g., Unitarian Church of Miami)?

(All specific operational approaches suggested by the Sub-Committee on Community are for research endeavors incorporated in the above section.) □



## SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON UNESCO PROJECT #3155

*The final report represents the work of the Conference. The present observations go beyond the deliberations of the committees, and represent the Coordinators' views about 1) procedures and organization for the next stage and 2) substantive possibilities and theoretical dimensions for the next stage. By the "next stage" is meant the first two years of Project #3155, or the period 1974-75.*

### PROCEDURES AND ORGANIZATION

One "penalty" that UNESCO may anticipate in the choice of the U.S.A. for the first phase of #3155 may be frankly noted: its reality is already evident upon the close of the Tampa conference. Indeed, what we are about to note is in itself a comment on the very success of the conference. We refer to the pragmatism and pace of life—even academic life—in this culture. With greatest respect for the purposes, programs and achievements of UNESCO, we are aware that an organization that was established as an instrument for over one hundred nations must act with care and proper balance of interests. Even though these nations were themselves responsible for the selection of the U.S.A. as the first "case study" in a subsequent international endeavor, UNESCO officers must remain conscious of the broadest scope and range of interests, so that what is planned and developed in the one society remains consonant with the largest hopes for the project. We are, therefore, entirely sympathetic to a time period of several years to crystallize the directions for subsequent study.

On the other hand, we suggest that there can be a machinery established that can help

1) to direct this discussion and planning period, 2) to develop some authoritative yet flexible structure whereby ideas have some place to go for consideration or even for implementation; in addition, to a degree desirable to UNESCO, such a minimal machinery might also serve as an information center for #3155.

The Introductory Working Paper provided two elements of a preliminary structure 1) a coordinating agency or person "to serve as the liaison between all studies," and 2) a set of "planning committees." Some responsibilities for each were proposed. The conference itself did not have time to take up the matter of subsequent action or structure. The points that emerged clearly in the plenary discussions were: a) that a final report would be submitted in the name of the conference, b) that the report would be distributed widely for general responses, c) that UNESCO might develop a parallel conference, perhaps on the West Coast, and d) that the chairmen of the three committees would have an opportunity to provide appendices or additions to their respective reports.

The coordinators respectfully propose the following minimal structure:

**A. The informal appointment of a coordinating person or agency, with no legal, financial, or official status, and without a designated period of service.** The functions of this coordinator(s) would be to:

—answer inquiries about the conference that ask primarily for information, including reporters, etc., or refer such inquiries to other persons as needed.

—serve as a consultant or guide to those who have constructive proposals, referring them as needed to committee chairman (below), to the U.S. National Commission or to Paris.

—serve as consultant to UNESCO and to the Commission in a consideration of subsequent plans in any capacity called upon.

The Leisure Studies Program of the University of South Florida would agree, if called upon, to serve in this capacity. In that case, however, it would request the privilege of seeking funds—governmental, foundations, etc.—outside of either UNESCO or of this University to provide for costs of transportation or other expenses.

**B. The appointment of three committees, headed by chairmen or others who participated in the Tampa conference, with no legal, financial, or official status, and without a designated period of service.** The functions of these committees would be:

—to answer inquiries about the Tampa conference which relate to matters of direct concern to respective committees,

—to entertain proposals for study, research, films, etc., which relate to their special interests and determine, through informal consultation with the coordinators as to the disposition of the proposal; in no case would either the coordinators or the committees, separately or in union, be entitled to authorize the use of the UNESCO name or the Tampa conference as sponsors of any proposals toward execution or fund-raising. They would, however, have the authority to lend informal support for specific projects to funding agencies.

—to be available as consultants to UNESCO or the U.S. National Commission as called upon.

**C. The formal recognition of the United States National Commission for UNESCO as the official Advisory Board to UNESCO for the American phase of #3155, or for sub-groups with the 100-member Commission created to deal with specific aspects of the study.** The functions of the Advisory Board would be:

—to act as official spokesman for the full U.S. National Commission whenever needed, in its normal powers and relationships *vis-à-vis* UNESCO in Paris.

—to lend ongoing consultation, guidance or financial support to #3155 studies as they refer to the United States.

—to serve as official spokesman, wherever essential or advisable, with other national bodies within the U.S.A. whether governmental, private, or professional.

—to provide consultants or other services to the special needs of either the coordinators, the committees, or both.

—to assist UNESCO in developing studies through such resources as it has available with governmental, educational, or other agencies, not only for #3155, but other programs related to it directly or indirectly.

These tools of organization, notably A and B above, can be replaced, enlarged, or modified as the program moves along. Special consideration should be given later to the transition from an American based study to one involving other nations. Tentatively, we pass along several observations:

—Mr. David Bartlett of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, who attended the conference, should be consulted on this point; indeed, Canada might be one of the nations which is brought into the total study.

—Since the original request for the type of study articulated in #3155 seems to have come from underdeveloped countries, the "case studies" selected for detailed study might include them as well as Japan and western European nations. If the coordinators may submit a recommendation on the regions that might be considered for parallel study,



based on their direct knowledge (of leisure trends), these would be:

- 1) America
- 2) Orient (especially Japan)
- 3) Western Europe
- 4) Eastern Europe
- 5) Underdeveloped cultures

A word is in order on the eastern European countries: personal visits by our staff have convinced us that some of these nations are presently making decisions about their cultural life that seek a balance (as seen within their goals) between innovations related to trends in the world and traditions that represent indigenous history and values. Thus, the process of official decision-making in those nations is observable and valuable for others.

—The selection of nations to be studied for purposes of #3155 is surely a complex matter, but we take the liberty of proposing that neither the number of nations nor the spacing of selection needs be influenced by the financial situation *within* UNESCO. There is no doubt an error in viewing other nations through the American situation, yet our considered judgment is a) that one or several large foundations may become interested in funding an international program, and b) that within the countries there may be found resources—public or private—that can relieve UNESCO's financial concerns for #3155. As to the first, we call attention to the Ford Foundation's program to analyze educational programs in many western European nations relative to urban problems in underdeveloped nations,\* or to the recent establishment of the Marshall Plan Fund in West Germany. As to b) above, there are resources within many nations that will contribute to studies of cultural change within their own borders. The mere knowledge of UNESCO's direct sponsorship or cooperative interest in such projects is sufficient prestige to facilitate fund-raising.

However, the selection of nations, the time of such selections, and the over-all structure of the project can best proceed, we submit, within the framework of a theoretical model or "total systems" plan. Otherwise, the real possibility exists for many disjointed, even if important, projects. We turn, therefore, to this conceptualization.

\*An *International Urbanization Survey Report to the Ford Foundation, 1971.*

## SUBSTANTIVE POSSIBILITIES AND THEORETICAL DIMENSIONS

The development of a theoretical outline for purposes of #3155 has several purposes:

- to help crystallize issues
- to suggest projects
- to assist in seeing relationships between projects
- to provide a systematic method for the allocation of proposals or projects to committees, institutions, or even to specific scholars.

Thus, the framework has both *substantive* and *organization* usefulness. There can be little doubt that a framework or model will be altered, and flexibility should always prevail in a program of this dimension. Yet—altered *from what*, flexible in terms of *what*? There must be a beginning, even to evoke more appropriate methods.

The theoretical framework of the conference itself was a beginning. Originally, in one of the Paris planning sessions, a four-point outline was suggested:

- A. Creativity
- B. Distribution
- C. Consumption
- D. Education

The decision was made then to combine C and D; three committees were, therefore, created. We propose now that the original proposal be revived: that there is a sufficient difference to distinguish between issues about the many publics and about education. Further, the remainder of the model is constructed in fourfold sets of components, thus providing a more manageable method.

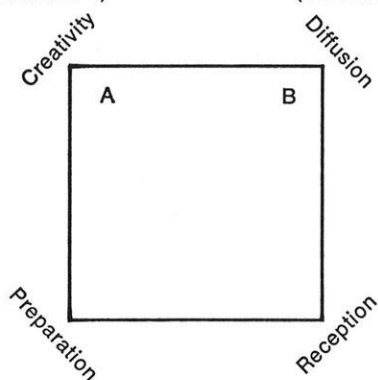
The following comments will 1) restate the model construction advocated in the Introductory Paper for the Tampa conference, and 2) examine the committee reports in relation to the model, providing a "content analysis."

### The Model

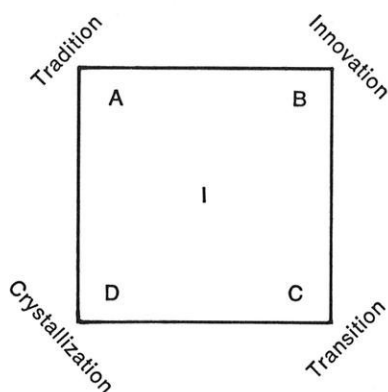
The Introductory Paper provided for three committees:

(Committee I)

(Committee II)



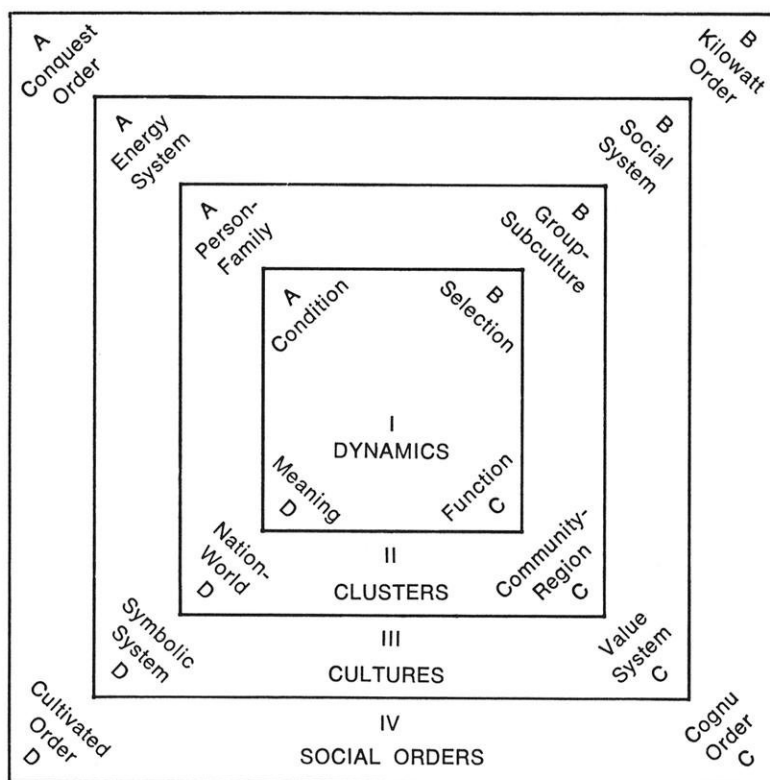
Treated as  
Committee III



An additional model can be suggested to place "innovation" into a dynamic relationship with other elements, as follows:

Each of these, in turn, can be set within a far more complex model, originally developed for our studies of leisure, as substitutes for the components of leisure, below in I:\*

### LEISURE CONCEPTUAL MODEL



\*An explanation of each item is provided in a forthcoming volume, M. Kaplan, *The Mastery of Leisure: Theory, Policy, Time and Self*, 1973, unpublished; the model, together with

60 propositions derived from it, appeared in *Society and Leisure*, Summer, 1972, European Center for Leisure and Education, Jilska 1, Prague.

The content analysis of the Tampa conference is based on the twofold construction above, referring to the arts and to innovations. We have gone no further here for theoretical purposes. It would be possible to take each of the themes presented and relate them to the "social system," "sub-cultures," etc., of the total model to arrive at somewhat precise observations and hypotheses.

### ANALYSIS OF CONFERENCE REPORTS

As noted above, the conference reports are analyzed in cross-reference to the "arts" and "innovation" models, as follows:

ARTS MODEL

	Tradition	Innovation	Transition	Crystallization
Committee 1				
Committee 2				
Committee 3				

(Research and Study Projects)

Approximately thirty-three themes for study were proposed by the committees, averaging eleven for each, and about the same number of proposed methods. The word "approximately" is used to suggest that others might come to different analyses of the same reports.

### THEMES

#### Creativity (Committee 1)

- A. Tradition
  1. Meaning of "culture for artistic production"
  2. Role of religious institutions
- B. Innovation
  1. Deeper exploration into meaning of innovation
  2. Asian sources of innovation
  3. Effects of "satellite" broadcasting
- C. Transition
  1. Problems of cultural identity and minority-ethnic contributions
- D. Crystallization
  1. Predictive possibilities of artistic innovation

#### Diffusion (Committee 2)

- A. Tradition
  1. Understanding of diverse systems of distribution in U.S.A.
  2. American family as agent for creative involvement
- B. Innovation
  1. Evaluation of inter-connections between creator and consumer
  2. Decision-makers in the arts
  3. Individual responses to the arts

## Public-Educators (Committee 3)

- A. Tradition
  - 1. Preoccupation with arts as "alienation from the classics in each art field"
  - 2. Relation of arts to new marriage forms
  - 3. Backgrounds of publics and participants
  - 4. Various types of community in relation to art
  - 5. Commercial versus artistic-interest community
- B. Innovation
  - 1. Anti-technology bias of creators in arts
  - 2. Presence of obscenity in arts and likely consequences
  - 3. Relations of publics to decision-makers
  - 4. New environments developed for community of interests
- C. Transition
  - 1. Development of a "sensate" culture
  - 2. "Institutional Darwinism": How do institutions adapt?
  - 3. Should racial, generational, and ethnic expressions be institutionalized?
  - 4. Education of the mass media itself
  - 5. Resurgence of ethnicity
- D. Crystallization
  - 1. Effect of increased affluence on publics
  - 2. Arts as reflection of social and individual problems
  - 3. Arts as retreat from "reason"
  - 4. Impact on retirement communities; on other "interest" communities
  - 5. Special constituencies to innovations
  - 6. Artistic sub-cultures

## METHODS

### Creativity (Committee 1)

- 1. Ongoing comparative studies
- 2. Use of consultants from developing nations to examine U.S.A.
- 3. Conference on Asian components in American culture
- 4. Measure impact of American performances on other cultures
- 5. Bring foreign artists to U.S.A. in a working environment
- 6. Bring experimental artists together
- 7. Establish public TV and radio in all developing nations
- 8. Courses in schools on quality of life
- 9. Centers for voluntary isolation by creative artists

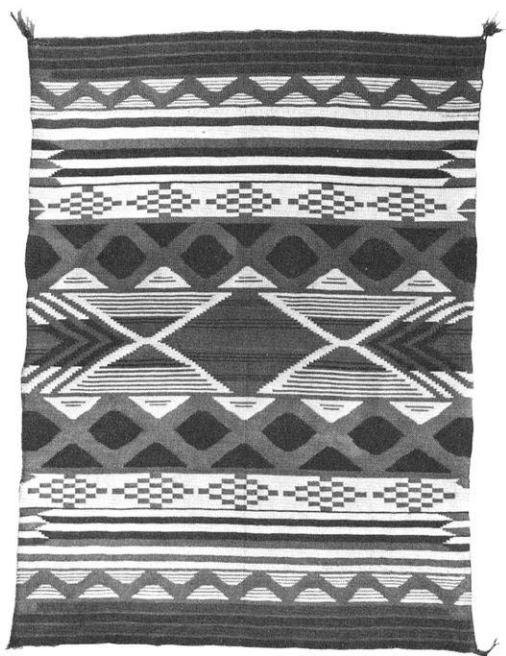
### Diffusion (Committee 2)

- 10. Sociological study of decision-makers
- 11. Study of behavioral responses to arts
- 12. Study of positive and negative effects of technological means and goals on individuals
- 13. Omnibus bibliography on arts and leisure
- 14. Historical analysis of art diffusion
- 15. International review of leisure studies
- 16. A bi-centennial exhibition of innovations
- 17. Experimental studies of uses of technology

### Public-Educators (Committee 3)

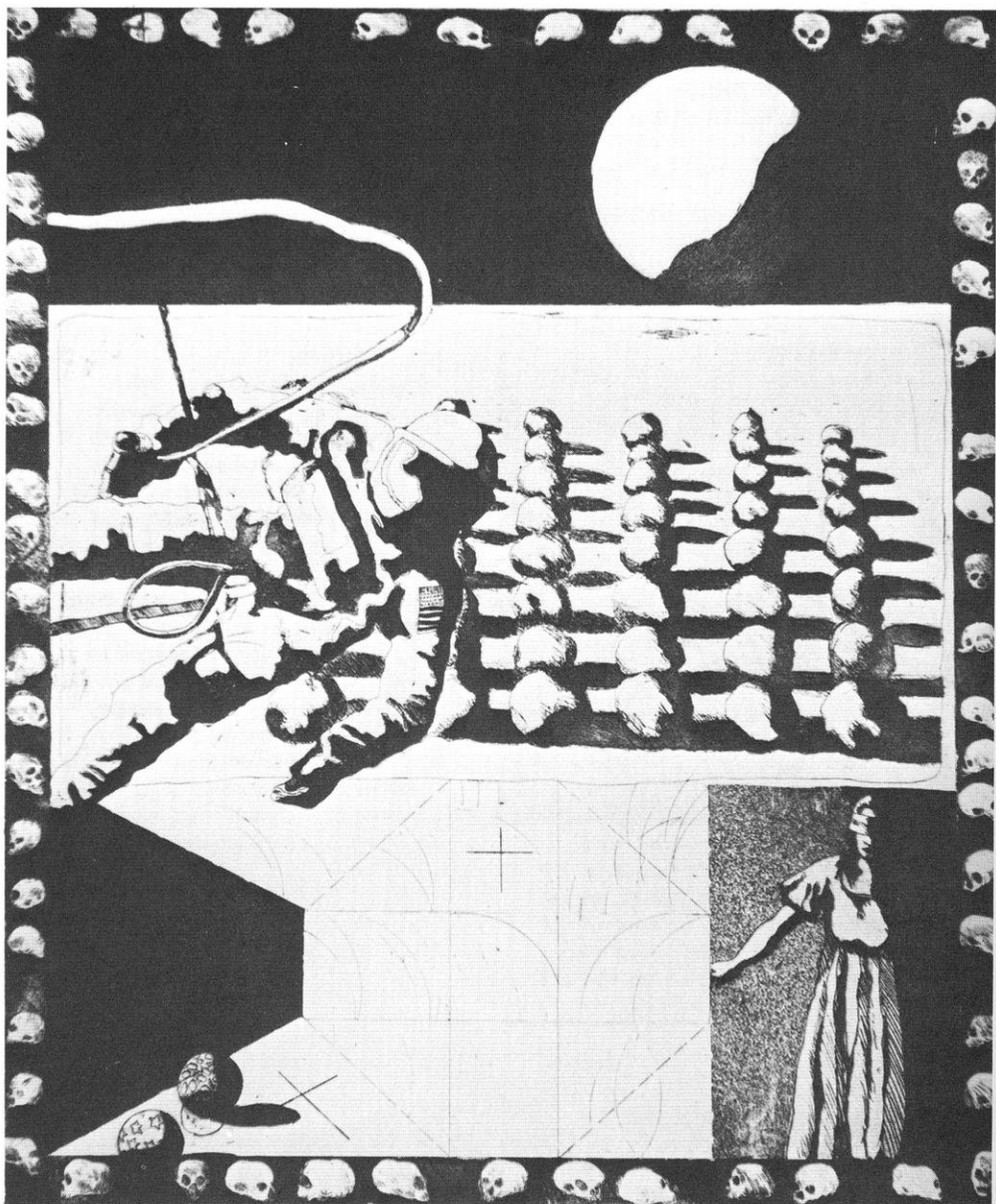
- 18. Summarize use of electronic media
- 19. Develop modules of artistic activity of ethnic groups
- 20. Experimental TV programs for wider participation
- 21. "Uses of gratification" measures by mass communications research
- 22. Historical models (Namier and Hexter) for studies of managers
- 23. Encourage U.S. Census to include data on arts
- 24. Special study of Business-Industrial complex

This report, supplemental to the official conference reports, will refrain from further observations on any of the sixty-seven themes and methods that emerged from the Tampa conference. Obviously, almost another document, of equal or greater length, would be required to evaluate these proposals, suggest priorities, and amplify their implications or extend the details of methods. That is what the first biennium of UNESCO's #3155 has been set up to do. Although anyone could, from his own perspective, find room for changes and additions, everyone can agree that the reports bring together a wide range of proposals for the initiation of the UNESCO program on Cultural Innovation in Technological and Post-Industrial Societies. □



Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Serape Style 1840-60,  
Southwest Museum, Los Angeles.





# notes on post-industrial culture

by Vytautas Kavolis

*Mr. Kavolis is Professor of Sociology at Dickinson College. He recently authored "The Social and Economic Aspects of the Arts," an article appearing in the 1974 edition of The Encyclopedia Britannica.*

After centuries of operating on the assumption that nature and everything else, including forms of social organization and our own personalities, is raw material to be transformed according to our (or someone else's) specifications, we are discovering that "things" and the systems of their interdependence resist and, if we do not in our behavior toward them respect their "true natures," break down.

Carried far enough, the symbolic design of the factory as the basic framework for understanding our world and our actions within it, leads us back, partly, to the rediscovery of the symbolic design of nature—that which "resists" being transformed to our specifications. We are in the process of shifting the symbolic designs of our civilization from the basic framework of the factory a little closer to the basic framework of nature. In this sense, and in this sense only, am I willing to accept the notion of the "post-industrial" society.

The secular nature toward which we are reorienting some of the implicit frameworks of our thought and perception proves to be both (a) indeterminate enough in its theoretical structure, so that it does not give us either ultimate comprehension or definitive moral guidance (as the sacred natures postulated by various religious traditions did), and (b) very specifically limited in the supply of resources wanted by us that it will provide, so that nature can no longer be perceived as

an inexhaustible reservoir available to be exploited—or, in the language of political-modernization theorists, "mobilized"—at will, without limits to exploitation (or mobilization.) Only the factory, including the human being conceived as a factory, implies limitlessness (and total understanding.) Wherever there is nature, there are limits (and limits to intelligibility as well).

We are moving toward a notion of the uncertain, but limited universe (both external and internal): uncertain as to what it *demands* of us, limited in what it will *provide* for us—an almost exact reversal of the Judeo-Christian image of the universe and its secular derivatives which have furnished the ideological underpinnings of the process of modernization so far. (Even the Romantics have located themselves, though frequently with acute discomfort, within the image of the certain and unlimited universe; at least their aspirations have implied this structure of consciousness.)

What challenges for the arts might be posed by these civilizational transformations?

(1) The reorientation of basic civilizational designs from the paradigm of the factory to the paradigm of secular nature implies that experimentation with the "raw materials" of artistic expression would be perceived increasingly as less important than more focused efforts to identify the "true nature" of the various objects of concern to artists—the "norms" of the nature of these objects (or experiences) which can be disregarded only at the cost of their destruction or breakdown.

In this sense, I expect the most fruitful forms of artistic expression in the advanced industrial civilization to center on investigations into the issue of what in the "nature" of man,

of societies, and of nonhuman environments, —and of art itself,—must be respected.

(2) The ultimate theoretical incomprehensibility of nature—which the “de-mythologized” sciences are helping us to perceive—implies the continued, and increasing, necessity for the arts, as well as for other cultural systems, to employ complex, multiple, and hypothetical or even wholly artificial constructs in the effort to *state* what the “true nature” of objects and events and of our relations to these objects and events (including our own selves) is.

While we are developing the generalized attitude of “respect for true nature,” the ultimate character of nature (which we must respect) is such that we can come close to it only by artificial means, in the form of a series of “fictions,” which are not necessarily consistent with each other, which do not add up to a “higher-order reconciliation,” but complexly supplement each other in a multi-perspectival logic (cf. the complementarity principle in physics.)

The potentially incoherent diversity of constructs is held together only by unity of purpose (if we have a purpose): to identify what, in nature (and in our own natures, both individual and societal), must be respected unless we perish.

(3) The discovery of limits, of the exhaustibility of nature, and of human and societal “nature” as well, generally calls not for the logic of “trade-offs” beloved by those who would return from the nineteenth-century factory to the eighteenth-century market place as the basic metaphor of human existence, but for the construction of devices that minimize the use of exhaustible “resources” to satisfy the maximum of justifiable “needs” (not necessarily of “wants,” which do not require to be justified.)

The idea of such a device, whether a material object or a mode of living or a symbolic design, implies such perfection of a form that it endures, functioning effectively in the ways in which it is needed, for very long periods of time; and, furthermore, performs a variety of services, intended and unintended, without either using up a great many resources for

its production or occupying a great deal of space as a finished product or generating a great deal of “noise” in performing these services. (Space and quiet having moved into the category of the exhaustible resources of nature.)

Applied to the arts (and perhaps other cultural systems), these requirements of the post-modern civilization imply what might be called the “principles” of miniaturization of major contents, of non-reductive simplification, and of convergence of diversities.

By *non-reductive simplification* I refer to the incorporation of complex systems of meaning into a relatively simple formal design (e.g., the sequence of a play or a ritual) in such a way that the systems could be deduced from the design without losing anything essential to them. By the *convergence of diversities* I am referring to a symbolic design which accommodates, not too uncomfortably, in its structure and simultaneously projects different, even contradictory models and constructs for the comprehension of whatever it is, manifestly or latently, concerned with.

The art object or performance in which non-reductive simplification and convergence of diversities coincide has succeeded in the *miniaturization of major contents*: it is compact, commodious, “ecologically adequate.” It fits into the complex, but limited life-space of a post-modern without cluttering it with the essentials of self-indulgence and rhetoric or wasting the exhaustible resources of his external environment and inner self (including the internal resources of affection and concern). Its perfection consists in the development of a formal design in which a multiplicity of cognitive models is contained in a sensuously gratifying overall pattern requiring modest resources to sustain it.

It is this ecologically appropriate kind of art, whether traditional or modern, that can locate the “stable,” “orderly,” and “natural” within the “miraculous” (or vice versa)—a linkage the disruption of which, by the “factory,” the avant garde has traditionally celebrated. (In regard to the ‘disenchantment of the world,’ the factory has been an advance over the market: the latter had, and still has, its mysteries, not only those of the “invisible hand” of Adam Smith.)

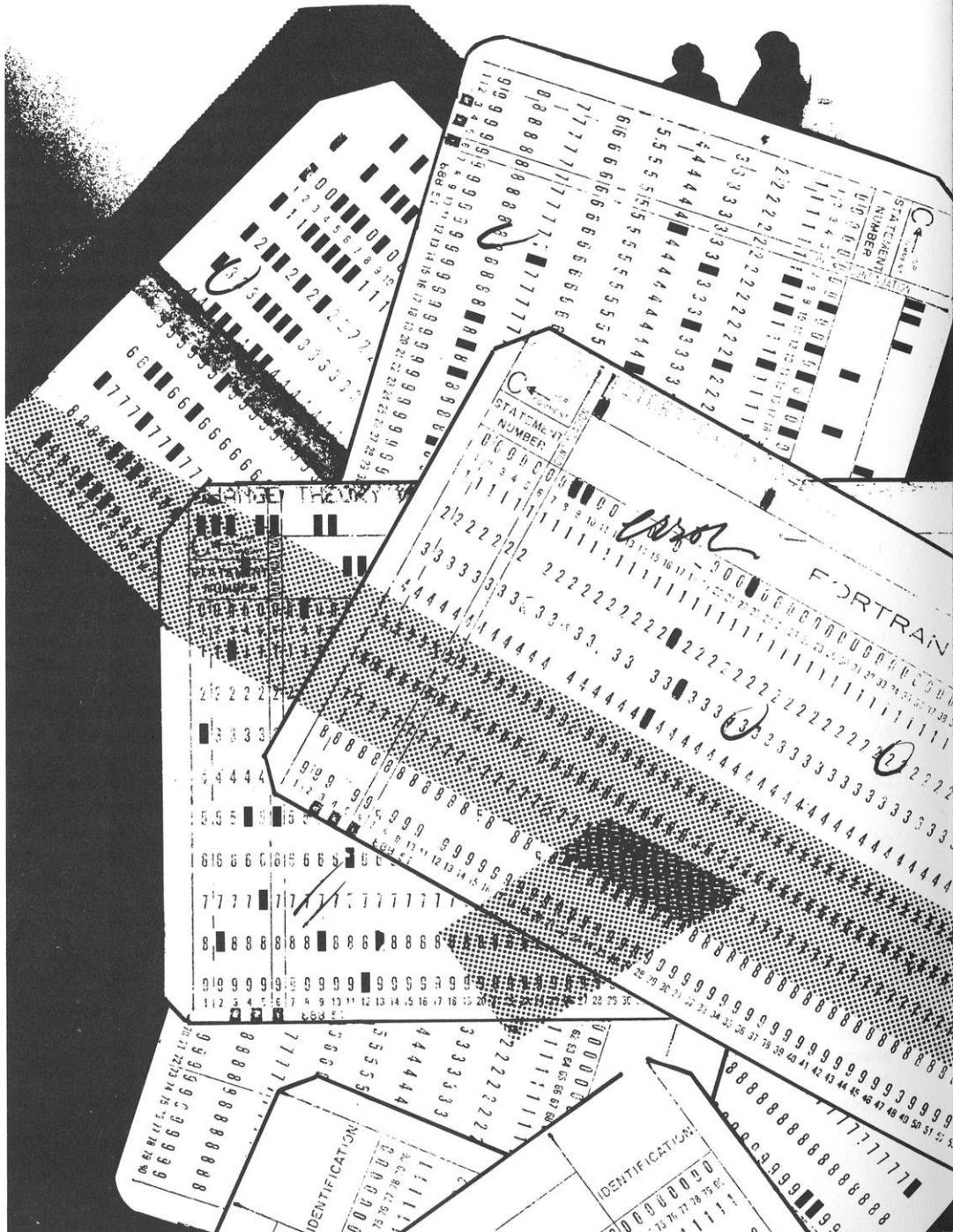
In the possible post-modern civilization of the future, an economic steady state will be dissimilar from that of the traditional peasant society, though both types of societies will share a widespread recognition of limits to the supply of the “good things”—material, social, psychological, perhaps even “spiritual”—and therefore a need to treasure and protect them from destruction.

In the post-modern civilization, this sense for the “limited good” will be experienced in conjunction with immense intellectual complexity, widespread consciousness of worldwide interdependence (of societies or individuals acting in accordance with different canons of choice and self-perception), a “participatory” mode of social organization (implying an accountability of the “elites,” including the artistic “elites,” to the people at large), a high degree of various kinds of “rationalization” (accompanied by modes of repudiation of each), and continuous processes of internal reorganization of societies within the limits set by exhaustible nature.

Human energies are likely to be redirected, to some degree, from the exploitative “mastery” of nature (including human nature) toward a “perfective” elaboration of modes of existence and their symbolic expression—with the notion of “adequacy to one’s nature” replacing the goal of unlimited increase in “transformative power” and with the criterion of “sufficient completion” replacing the seventeenth-century aspiration of “infinite perfectibility.” (It is only from the point of view of the permanent factory that human beings are infinitely perfectible raw materials, forever deprived of the dignity of sufficient completion.)

Given a steady-state economy, social action, too, should be increasingly governed by the three “principles” of construction of ecologically appropriate works of art: non-reductive simplification, convergence of diversities, and miniaturization of major contents. It is by establishing the appeal to the imagination of these principles that art may help provide models for the reorientation of the basic structures of consciousness, on which the possibility of emergence of a humanly adequate post-modern civilization depends. □

# the processed culture: wasting sensibility in post-industrial society





by Kingsley Widmer

*Kingsley Widmer is the author of The Art of Perversity: D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, The Ways of Nihilism: Melville's Short Novels, The Literary Rebel, and The End of Culture: Essays on Sensibility in Contemporary Society, among other literary and social criticism. He is Professor of Literature at San Diego State University.*

"Will this changed experience," asks Daniel Bell of our sense of our technocratic social order, "create a change in consciousness and sensibility?" Surely it is a pertinent question and the answer is a considerable yes, for the increasing dominance of bureaucratic-technological processes alters the arts and the cultural ambience. Bell's writings drop some clues to the change though he refuses to show us the victim. In the prevailing sociological mode, we have the banal leading the blind. As I interpret such evidence as Bell's, we witness the rise of an incoherent and destructive "service society" with its "bureaucratization of intellectual work" and the strapping of sensibility within the boxes of a "functional rationalism" without authentic style and humane purpose. The almost certain result, I think, is the rapid extension of the already evident manipulated and mediocre and corrupt and wasteful Processed Culture.

But before examining this a bit further, we might note some of the skittishly tendentious ways in which Bell in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (and related writings) raises the issue. He uses the transitional label "post-industrial" in disguise of his ideological commitment to what might more properly be called "technocracy," the doctrine of social-political control by elitist technologists. Though partly given in the social-science style of indiscriminate, non-qualitative description, Bell's vision of late-industrial social ordering, with its self-sanctioning proliferation of synthetic-electronic goods and controls by way of "service" institutions dedicated to their "norms of functional rationality," is far from aesthetically and morally neutral. This comes out in his fantastically euphemistic jargon. He labels as "knowledge work" by a "new intellectual class" much of our grotesquely wasteful and gratuitous administration, manipulation, indoctrination and technological

proliferation, without discrimination as to what part of it might be useful and admirable and what part exploitative and ugly. Any reasonable and responsive skeptic (and certainly the better social scientists in the two generations since Max Weber) would put considerable emphasis on our technological bureaucracies spirit-mashing and other negative effects. Bell does not. If we assume that, say, our eighty million cars, endless legions of the custodially controlled, multi-tons of deodorant, tens of thousands of nuclear bombs, mountain ranges of deadening paper, dozens of electronic gadgets per capita, billions of tranquilizers, millions of organizational lies, rocketing lunacies, centuries of flatulent conferences, multi-millions of psychiatric cases, and other unique maximization of garbage, are symptoms of functional order and signs of a larger rationality, there is little need to disagree with Bell's rhetorical cover for post-industrial society.

Bell may, however, be correct that at some watershed point, perhaps now reached, the quantitative development of this processing becomes a qualitative change in the society. What was once understood as production, agriculture, marketing, etc., and the traditional descriptions (bourgeois enterprise, industrial socialism, and the like) no longer adequately fit our realities, nor do traditional conceptions of education, art and vocation. On the whole, Bell accepts the changes as sensible and inevitable, taking the massively bureaucratized technology and its pseudo-meritocracy and rationale in ways which make him a representative apologist.

As Christopher Lasch rightly noted, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* is less sociological description than "a technocrat's reply to radical criticism," an elite-academic's defense of established institutions and injustices and processed sensibilities. The obsessive bent of much of Bell's argumentation is against libertarian and egalitarian views of education (Jencks), of culture (Illich), of ethics (Rawls), and of other critical views of our conditions, and strikingly ignores alternate institutional orderings, the balanced possibilities of what E. F. Schumacher calls "intermediate technology," and all antithetical ways of development and living. Bell's *au courant* social scientizing is itself a useful symptom of cultural fashion mongering as well

as of ideological mystification. Sometimes his apologetics for present privileged and controlling elites is done with rhetorical sneers ("populist" is repeatedly applied without historical justification) for those opposed to his hierarchies of experts. Sometimes the tendentiousness hides under indiscriminate categories (so, apparently, prostitutes, hairdressers and cops become part of his "intellectual class" doing "knowledge" work.) And sometimes the statistics are false. My favorite small but representative case: To help show that current university training-indoctrination is not only the way of the future (the university will take over from the corporation as "the central institution of the next hundred years") but socially just, Bell contrasts traditional monarchist (!) and corporate inequalities with our present academic differentials of reward and announces that as 5:1. As an employee of one of the world's largest bureaucracies of hired learning, I can authoritatively inform him that the differences in compensation run closer to 20:1, and are increasing, and that it is widely acknowledged that the discriminations are so arbitrary, so unrelated to knowledge, skill and most similar qualities, as to be not only irrational but bureaucratically dysfunctional, unless real function be absurd proliferation and maximization of mediocrity. Yet Bell may be right that such "knowledge" hierarchy, and its mis-description and justification by social science, is the way of the future.

Contemporary sociological apologists for dominant institutions (including those repeatedly cited by Bell: Lipset, Glaser, Kristol, Moynihan, *et al*) seem incapable of realizing that what passes for institutional rationality technologizes, bureaucratizes, social-scientizes and otherwise rationalizes not only a considerably gratuitous order but the violently irrational, as with the Vietnam War, the pathological expansion of production and waste (cultural as well as material), and the replacement of vocation and intelligence and moral competence in institutional life with systematized mediocrity and arbitrary certification and ornate sycophancy and corruption gilded with technical methodologies. Recently reflecting on such a social structure, Richard Goodwin in his book, *The American Condition*, concluded: "Our humanity is being consumed by the structure itself: by the ruling constituents—the institutions, the relationships,

the consciousness, the ideology—of the process that contains modern America." The processing becomes all, its internal "rationality" and aggrandizement, its dominant purposes, destroying communal and other humane values.

Still, I would not suggest that Bell's conservative defense of our institutional structures of privilege and their extrapolation into the total-processed future is only self-serving. When he repeatedly claims that "knowledge" and "hard work and skill" are the basis of institutional and professional success in America, I see him as comically obtuse within one of the oldest American mythologies of opportunity. His "methodology" of taking a thin slice of structural reality on an "axial principle," like a plot-summary for a poem or a plumbing diagram for a building, encourages ignorance of institutional reality. A third-rate novelist or journalist would necessarily report more of the social and cultural actuality of our manipulative technocrats and of the frequently rationalized dysfunctionality of, say, our celebrities and lawyers and accountants, our engineers and social scientists and colonels, our salesmen and editors and administrators, and the other privileged racketeers who make up his "intellectual class" (perhaps more properly, pseudo-meritocratic castes). When Bell's argument for a "just meritocracy" finally becomes explicit in the later section of *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, he fervently defends our increase of "earned status" (when it comes to justice, a question begging description which better fits, say, basketball players, con-men and bandits than corporate administrators, college professors and government decision makers). According to Bell, contemporary success and power in America come by "competence" in technological "innovation and knowledge," largely by certification of the university and similar institutions, though he never examines the irrationality and fraudulence and self-serving irrelevance of such institutions. His definition of "unjust meritocracy" is that which is "invidious" and otherwise bad-mannered. If we can only give a clear way for our technologists' domination, plus a veneer of the right sort of mannerly culture, it should be a reasonable and just society.

Apparently, it should be a pale academized

culture which costumes the hierarchs of our coming technocracy—arts and sensibilities which will not interfere with their arbitrary cost accounting and worship of technological innovation, their electronic spying and nuclear blackmail, and other functional rationality applied to mad ends. That would correct what disturbs Bell about contemporary America, our major “disjunction of culture and social structure,” as he repeatedly asserts. If our economy and other dominant social controls be viewed as “rational” and “functional,” then disjunction would have to be with our expressive arts which he finds are almost entirely “anti-institutional and antinomian.” Bell hardly qualifies these social and cultural descriptions but they are considerably wrong. The “modernist culture” which he repeatedly condemns for its radicalness was in fact often conservative in its social-political cast. But he wants to find his antagonists outside the sensible social order, and so in the arts of the past century “culture has achieved autonomy in Western society,” so much so that it opposes the social order and “the tensions between the adversary culture and the eroded Protestant ethic have caused a remarkable contradiction in the value system of American society.” However, there is a better explanation of this value conflict. If the work-efficiency-submission values of our official socio-economic activity are really dedicated to compulsion-waste-hedonism, as much commonsensical evidence (and Bell’s cultural comments) suggests, then the contradiction is not between the culture and the social structure but within the social ethos itself, and evidence for both is also reflected in the culture.

Furthermore, the “adversary” role of modernist arts tells us less of their autonomy than of their reactive desperation, *retardaire* as well as vanguardist, as they sought aesthetic and moral and communal values around the destructive order of industrialism. Trilling’s definition of “adversary culture,” which Bell uncritically borrows, applied to a partial and peculiar stratum of earlier bourgeois-anti-bourgeois art, as with the novel from Stendahl to Mann, poetry from Baudelaire to Eliot, painting from the Romantics to the Surrealists. The notion did not include all oppositional culture, and could not properly support arguments for cultural disjunction since the adversary role was a critical stance within the

bourgeois social structure. Historically, of course, many of the adversary qualities carry back to the Enlightenment, including the assertion of selfhood institutionalized by the bourgeois order. But the contemporary sociologist can hardly intend to totally define culture as the contumacious tradition from, say, Diderot to D. H. Lawrence. Perusing the essays he cites in justification of his culture-society disjunctions (mostly his own pieces on the sociology of culture), we find a rather different emphasis. A major point: “American society is woven together precisely through the mass media” (“Modernity and Mass Society,” *Paths of American Thought*). And I doubt if even Bell would ring his charges of anti-institutionalism and perversity against that culture, which is all too subject to cost accounting, technological innovation, bureaucratic-elite domination, and the rest of the functional rationalities of social control which it sanctifies. Our technocracy, then, does have its culture, though much of it appropriately a manipulation of debased sensibility.

Bell is not a well-informed or insightful cultural sociologist. For example, he cites anti-theoretical specializations to explain why in our culture it is “difficult to find common symbols of meaning” (“The Disjunction of Culture and Social Structure,” *Science and Culture*), when the condition has repeatedly appeared in syncretistic cultural periods, as in the Roman and Chinese empires, without any necessary relation to modern technology. Here, and in more recent essays (“Sensibility in the Sixties” and “The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism”), Bell, with gross lack of discrimination, argues that all “bourgeois culture has been shattered” (in culture the bourgeoisie has always been more aggrandizingly co-optive than originating—“functional rationality” has not and could not produce much art and ritual and thought—and its heroic assimilation of humanist traditions should not be confused with all middle-class entertainment, edification and camouflage). Bell also holds “modernism” in the arts to blame for all that has happened since: “all the new sensibility had done is to carry out the premises of modernism to their logical conclusion.” But the “counter-culture,” which provides most of his examples, is probably not that dominant, and in any case must often be understood as reacting *against* modernism’s individualism and complexity as well as

against technocracy (see my discussion in "The Electric Aesthetic and the Short-Circuit Ethic," *Mass Culture Revisited*, ed. D. M. White and B. Rosenberg).

Bell's cultural views are amusingly but unintentionally parallel to the recent Herbert Marcuse (*Counter-revolution and Revolt*), who takes Flaubert to Brecht and Beethoven to Schönberg and modern painting ending with the Surrealists as the one culture after the original classics. Political ideologists with quite different bias find themselves incapable of responding with other than exasperation to contemporary arts. Both sneeringly hold that contemporary visual, theatrical and mixed arts have lost what the philosophers of art used to call "aesthetic distance" ("intransitive attention," "psychic space"), as if this were not exactly what, in their insistence on immediacy and participation to counter technocratic destruction of community and sensibility, they were seeking. Bell condemns the counter-culture as regressive, the more general fusion of art with life-styles as a "democratization of Dionysius" in mad rejection of functional rationality (Euripides had King Pentheus making the same mistake 2,500 years ago), and, all too broadly, contemporary arts as in a state of fragmentation and collapse that ends in a "dissolution of the self." When it comes to culture, the functional rationalizer becomes as apocalyptic as his *bête noires* in social thought.

Inconsistently, *Post-Industrial Society* also holds that modernism and post-modernism in the arts aim at the "fulfillment and enhancement of the self." Apparently anything to do with the self violates the technocratic social structure. It may be less significant that such technologue-bellwethers try to have it both ways than that they quite fail to relate either dissolution of art and self or enhancement of art and self to the conditions created by technocracy. Our increasing bureaucratization of culture and our wasting technological ways and our arbitrary pseudo-meritocratic structures just might have something to do with what Bell claims to be "the crisis of the culture." That so many insist on violating the ancient functions of art as meditation and icon, breaking down aesthetic and psychic and social distance, might be a choice of desperation since technocracy not only produces no art but tends to debase and destroy the sensibility that could. Our artistic

Technical  
Intelligence  
"Nihilistic"  
"service oriented"  
waste culture  
Garbage  
Plentitude  
PSEUDO  
meritocracy  
Self Destruct  
aesthetic  
talk  
- the final  
waste art  
will be  
no waste by  
wastefully  
creation  
nothing

sensationalism, like our religious cultism, is predicated in cultural despair over the world we live in.

And no matter how one defines and evaluates our culture, its language and images, its materials and forms, however manipulated or oppositional, are in and of this society. The arts, I agree to a point, may be out of synchronization with social forms, behind and ahead in their fears and yearnings and fantasies and gestures, but no student of contemporary poetry and painting, much less of popular entertainment and architecture, could sensibly deny their polymorphous relations to our social ethos and their control by the same or parallel institutions. In these large senses, Bell's disjunction of culture and social structure is nonsense. We can, of course, agree with Bell (rather than with his neo-Marxist critics) that there is much current evidence that both society and culture are increasingly dominated by technologized bureaucracies and functional-institutional processing and the mediocre values of pseudo-meritocracy. But according to *Post-Industrial Society*, the disjunctive crisis of consciousness derives from "the deep and growing split between the technical intelligentsia who are committed to functional rationality and technocratic modes of operation and the literary intellectuals, who have become increasingly apocalyptic, hedonistic and nihilistic." This is a weak revival of the "two cultures" argument which ignores the considerable evidence that functional rationality in social control has also thoroughly revealed itself to be militarily apocalyptic, consumer-hedonistic and ecologically nihilistic.

Modernist culture may have been over-concerned with responding to social realities. Pound's "Wastage as never before" may have been one of the great epitaphs of the Western Industrial Age, represented not least in its twentieth century one hundred million people murdered in technological-institutional war. (Bell, with typical blandness, agrees that in industrial society "waste runs high.") Our arts have been deeply, self-destructively, responsive to the waste ethos of modern social ordering. As Susan Sontag recently noted, "The true modernism is . . . a kind of garbage plenitude . . ." Transitional post-industrial society neither ceases to be industrial nor wasteful but processes it into a

meta-ethos, extending the realm of waste from things and people to total consciousness.

So, too, with the "service-oriented" social structure, where the intermediary process takes over, which also happens with the culture. Agents, dealers, editors, collectors, universities and other institutions, and promotion, in the guise of servicing the arts master them. Literature and art-styles are prescribed, chosen, peddled, promoted, and controlled by the processors deeply committed to the values of the technocratic order. Probably the cultural processing is more corrupt than the economic processing because the cost accounting, efficiency and technical function are less clear with the arts. Certainly the training-indoctrination enlarges disproportionately. For example, thousands of courses in "Creative Writing" provide dubious training in a pseudo-vocation but produce little creative writing, and not even much of an audience for art and intelligence since we seem to have more would-be writers than actual serious readers. Surely Creative Writing has a social-service function, including institutionalized sinecures for teacher-writers and disguised therapeutics for hundreds of thousands of students as well as a pleasant form of diversion and cultural wastage. In post-culture as in post-industrialism, the service sector takes over the productive sector, including a speciously certified meritocracy without much discriminating quality.

Perhaps partly in revenge, waste comes to dominate art-forms and styles. Our arts play with waste, as material and manner and icon, producing the dominant aesthetic decorum of our time. In visual art modes, we have paradoxical fusions with wastage: the self-destruct museum show-machine, and recently, even the self-destruct artist; the pop-permanentizing of the fatuously impermanent, which soon slides back into its unnatural origins; and the brilliant waste-economy of some Minimal and Conceptual art which declines to actually artifice anything. As with so many of our pretended services in post-industrial society—administration, hired learning, international statesmanship, consultants of consultants—non-service becomes the ultimate quality. The final waste-art will create no waste by wastefully creating nothing.



Word-culture has greater difficulties in reaching the waste-finesse and absolute technocratic gesture of the visual arts. (Music has come close to the meta-aesthetic of waste in both literally deafening popular and literally silent vanguardist "music.") But literature does try in the "nonsense" orientation of much modern poetics (and in quite various ways in Stevens and Roethke and Olson and "Concretism"). We also have the "absurdist" contradicting out of meaning and the self-mocking trivialization of forms, with exact technocratic parallels, not to mention the cruder examples of cut-up (Burroughs), clichéd-down (Brautigan), and trashed-out (Barthelme), anti-literature. When all seems waste, wasting is the art of it all.

Our current cultural manias for collecting primitive and historic and near-contemporary art-junk and sub-literatures, from discarded stone chips and accidental decorations to comic books and last season's wrappings, and the detritus-atavistic pathos of current art markets goes beyond commodity compulsions and inflationary economics to the desperate sanctification of waste in a waste civilization. Post-industrial society may logically encourage post-art culture, with similar imperatives to endlessly replace, turning old waste into new values and new waste into old ones. Exactly similar to other technocratic processing, we find frenzied "innovation" in the range of what can pass for artistic artifact and cultural commodity. The revengeful rubble-izing of the meaningless socio-economic production is, shockingly, often not satiric but pure mimesis. Objects and feelings caught in the technocratic processing and its denatured sequences seem demeaning in themselves and so must be heightened by sequence reversals and exaggerations. Thus we find the art of instant aging, and then, with synthetic nostalgia, art-revival: oldies but goodies (last year's!) fantasy history, the decade rather than the century antique, the abbreviating of what Ortega called a "cultural generation" into a mere season. All waste can be framed, mumbled, exhibited, collected as art, and, with standard consumer processing, quickly reverts back into waste as yesterday's fashion, the arbitrariness and proliferation and contempt remaining the only endurance and substance.

We approach a cultural condition of instantaneous spiritualization and de-spiritualization.

The "model change" and "new organization" and other self-generating technocratic process has taken over sensibility, too. We aestheticize and de-aestheticize images and slogans and lyrics and styles (and anti-styles) with maniacal productivity and servicing as surrogate for stays against temporal dissolution—a flip sanctity. In the processing culture's parallels to the processing society, the replicable manners and recyclable responses and techno-hip ecstasies and disgusts may be glued and unglued from the temporary artistic object and moment. In culture, as with our appliances and other process-leavings, the late stage of commodity fetishism floats free, so self-exploiting as to hardly be specifically exploitative anymore, which makes the processors race to take it over. The "museum without walls" and the pulp-library and the quick-circuit sensation resulting from technical-service modes spread culture into contradictory disposability. The multiplication and distribution processes become indifferently detached from any specific quality of words and images. Aesthetic sensibility becomes a properly calibrated sieve. Purely uncrafted "creativity" and "conceptual" art and enigmatic-parodistic literature try to escape the de-aestheticism of mere processed artifact, madly rubble-izing distinction and distinguishing rubble. The ambitious artist might (and some really do) figure that his odds would be better in producing rubbish which could be perceived as art than in producing art which would most likely quickly turn into rubbish.

I merely insist on the obvious: Waste Culture for a Waste Society. But let me conclude by practicing a couple of brief examples of what Bell calls "forecasting," applied to the cultural development probable with technocracy. Here is a "scenario," as these futurists like to say, for achieving functional rationality with book culture. Of the thirty-odd thousand books, in their millions of copies, published each year in America, we could randomly enshrine every thousandth book. It then becomes canonical, thus giving us cultural consensus without disjunctive standards and the perverse discriminations of literary intellectuals. Textual technicians (replacing literary scholars) can annotate its typographical errors with anal glee; explicatory indoc-trinators (once called teachers) can weave its contradictions into profound paradoxes; the biographers and historians can accumulate

npact  
anr  
discap  
now  
pta  
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aft  
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new  
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mgm  
af-cjo  
for  
ffa  
aoc  
uaw  
at&t  
vfw

one million (neither more nor less allowed) trivial details around it; and other technicians can turn it into a thousand-rubic indexed computer print-out. Ten million American college students can be machine-tested on the computer material, with the top-scoring ten percent certificated as professional Culture Bearers and given double-pay for life, in true meritocratic fashion. The author can be raised to the status of celebrity S. L. U. T. (Superior Literary United Technologue) and collect royalties on a super-anti-intellectual spray named after him (one squirt obliterates all substantive words on a page, a refinement of the IBM spray patented in 1974 that blocked all print-copying indiscriminately). He will also be properly institutionalized as Secretary of Culture for Technicians. The agent who lyingly prescribed and sold the book, the editor who arrogantly miswrote it, the promoter who misleadingly sold it, the currying reviewer who best mis-discussed it, and all the other big processers will be appointed Under-Secretaries of Culture. A certain number of months after publication, to be determined exactly by a board of officially bored sociologists' interpretation of the Sigmoid Curve of Cultural Saturation, all copies of the book, all studies around it, all records of it, and the author, will be ceremoniously burned. Our technocracy will have achieved a rationally controlled and functionally masterful ritual art form appropriate to our socio-economic structures: symmetrically pure waste.

Visual art, too, will have its place of technocratic merit, not ignoring complex values of tribal icon, communal style and theonomous form. At midnight on the last day of the year, an electronic population matrix will divide the nation into cultural communions of one million, computers will name them (alphaxxon, betaxxon, etc.—after all, ancient and modern traditions have their place in the arts) and a randomly selected one-meter circle of rubbish will be ordained as the U. P. A. S. S. (Ultimate Project Art of the Super-System). Every one will get a life-size glossy print of the same meter of rubbish (cultural universalism) but for each million it will have the synthetic group name (cultural particularism). The original artifact will be placed in a one-year self-destruct capsule on an altar atop Mount Nix (formerly McKinley), a place of fatal pilgrimage for the more adventurous mystics always cropping up in the cultural activities of

degenerating societies. A laser-projected image, mirror-reversing and color-changing, of the national icon will be superimposed upon the moon for those who demand an element of perplexity as well as cosmic proportions to art. All major universities will provide courses in appreciation and interpretation and Chairs of Rubbishology (with seventy-seven levels of merit increase) for those who win the theoretical design competition of R. I. P. O. F. F. (Rubbish Icon Projection Of Functional Form). The rules for innovative and technical use would require such pure artistic function as window screen designs for the hermetically sealed apertures of the hundred story Condominiums of Functional Rationality where reside the entire "new intellectual class" (familarly known as "bunk-rats," from slang back-formation of "func-rat," viz. functional-rationalists). All badges of rank-social-merit will carry the A. S. S. (Annual Super-Symbol) as rewarded by L. I. C. K. (Lottery of Impeccable Competent Knowledge). All other artistic activity will be treated as regressive and its devotees confined, after technological non-certification, to permanent custodial "schools" (called "win-bins," though the name is also applied to psychiatric wards for senile technologists). Thus culture will have come back into full relation with the social structure, and the arts fully display their accord with the socio-

economic ethos of United Technocracy.

My dystopian projections of the arts in post-industrial society, I admit, are just mild caricatures of some present cultural conditions. But this agrees essentially with the methodology of *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, and even with the tenor of its conclusion, which insists that we not be so presumptuous as to go beyond "realism." My "axial" terms are just less euphemistic than Professor Bell's: Technocracy, Processing, Waste. Granted, my cultural fantasizing, like Bell's sociological fantasizing, is conventionally optimistic and ignores the probable neo-Dark Age of society and culture (Heilbroner and others) if we manage to avoid total apocalypse. But my art suggestions stick very close to the conditions given by Bell, including his admissions that post-industrial society will be increasingly marked by "collective regulation" and "a greater degree of coercion," which we may assume will also be applied to the arts. But in the meantime, some art, like some people, will hopefully continue to resist the processed culture of pseudo-meritocratic technologized bureaucracies and even defiantly demand a radically different art and society. The best contemporary imperative of our arts may be to take revenge on the processing technocracy by perceiving much of it as waste. □



# art and the energy crisis

by James Wines

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*Art will no longer aspire to account for everything; it will have left forever the ambiguous sphere of transcendency for the scattered, humble, everyday universe of the relative.*

—Pierre Restany

It has become the almost unanimous opinion of scientists and economists that the energy crisis is not a speculative contingency, but a grim reality that is here to stay. What is particularly terrifying about the omnipresent threat is an implicit forecast of doom for the Western World if it continues on its course of profligate consumption. The problem goes considerably beyond the consequences of deficient fuel supplies and material waste by embracing moral and ethical questions of awesome dimensions. The fundamental issue involves the sharing of resources in a world community. In even the most elementary assessment of the situation, it becomes painfully obvious that a country like the United States, occupying only 1/20 of the earth's inhabitable surface, cannot continue to consume 1/3 of its available resources in perpetuity. The "forfeit now, or lose everything" moral axiom is no longer a cautionary hyperbole; it is an imperative option for survival. Conspicuous consumption and flamboyant waste are not the inalienable rights of the "Free World."

With respect to the arts these moral issues cannot be ignored. If art is the chronicler of the human condition and its system of values it must address an "energy awareness" (since art cannot solve the pragmatic dilemmas of fossil fuel shortages, coal gasification, harnessing solar energy, recycling, and reducing survival irritants such as regional shortages and inequitable distribution of resources). The influence of art is negligible in all areas except those of perception and philosophy and it is indeed more likely that the energy crisis will determine the nature of art before art will ever have a measurable effect on energy. Conclusively, if there is no energy there will be no art. As scientist Billy Kluver has observed, "There is no direct relationship between art and the energy crisis unless a community has to choose between, say, heating a school or buying a large piece of art for a public space." But there is a dimension beyond this simplistic priority system which will undoubtedly defer such primary choices for some time to come. The energy awareness, although a direct spin-off of shortages, is more complex and pervasive in its implications. Within the American social system any new awareness is often a signal for an instant reversal of popular and/or political sentiments. For example, whereas our national policy toward the Arab states had been tentative for twelve years, the guidelines for national opinion in the future became consolidated when President Nixon injected into a recent speech, "in ten years we hope to no longer depend upon our enemies for fuel resources." The designation "enemies," so casually introduced, created an instantaneous awareness of a distinct adversary—a hostile foe to replace an ambiguous annoyance. The American brand of awareness is a peculiar blend of patriotism, sacrifice, gamesmanship, political gripe, suspicion, and the acknowledgement of a menace from which deliverance may be sought in church every Sunday. Energy awareness will unquestionably include



all of the above ingredients, plus an inherent romanticism linking the aware constituent to the entire destiny of Western civilization. The energy crisis and its threat of economic collapse are frightening omens which make all art seem superfluous. Energy awareness, on the other hand, is elusive and abstract and suggests ideological dimensions considerably more challenging than the dreary rhetoric of fuel conservation.

To deal with the question of how the energy awareness will affect the arts it is necessary to address the immediate situation and the eventual possibilities as separate speculations. It seems inevitable that the short-range view must remain somewhat myopic in order to sustain the structured machinery of art economics as currently practiced and to preserve aesthetic investment as manifested in such on-going persuasions as process, conceptual, performance, video art, etc. The most expeditious way to achieve this accommodation is to develop a rationale for guilt-free art activity based upon low-energy consumption. Leading into this kind of moral exoneration, the arts periodical *Changes* conducted a rather superficial questionnaire asking artists to respond to the energy crisis and how it would affect the arts. With the exception of Rudi Stern who felt that ". . . the real energy crisis is on the spiritual front," most of the answers defended current activity (particularly software) or dismissed the question as irrelevant altogether. Video artist Nam June Paik concluded, "Electronics use much less energy and produce more direct pleasure than automobiles, airplanes, or anything else that uses fuel or electricity. More people can watch one T.V. set in the same room, so energy can be conserved in the other rooms. . . . Video will replace the automobile as the machine for communication." Within the immediate cause-effect ratio his contentions are probably true. However, in the over-all picture, they deal only with the issues closest to the surface. Although video is a form of low energy technology, the industrial fuel consumption used to make the equipment in the first place is excessive enough to cancel out any altruistic claims for conservation. In point, the processing of steel, plastics, rubber, etc., in terms of fossil fuel demands makes the annual gasoline consumption of the private automobile seem modest by comparison.

Bearing in mind the shortcomings described

above, the following list is a speculative outline of how the energy awareness might influence the arts in the immediate future.

1. Any serious shortages of raw materials and technical services may consolidate art as concept (rather than crafted object) even more affirmatively. The physical dematerialization of art has been a steadily increasing phenomenon for the past ten years, resulting in our present wide-spread acceptance of cerebral notations as valid evidence of the creative process. Indeed, this reduction of the art "product" requires very few of the traditional manufacturing techniques and what portable testimony of art remains can be reproduced and distributed with a minimum use of energy. Also, language art, concept art, mail art, etc. are predicated on an information interchange central to the development of a world community.
2. Another possibility proposed by the French critic Pierre Restany calls for a reconsideration of "poor art" wherein the fundamental enterprise, sociological equity, and ecological resourcefulness of poverty indicate a direction for new ecumenical iconography. Mr. Restany observes, "The rich world is discovering with amazement the experience of the poor world, its basic philosophy geared to the economy of exertion, to the rational sharing of energy supplies." He continues, "The energy crisis has peremptorily opened the way to an urgent prospective research. A super-technology of poverty based upon a return to the natural elements, air, earth, sun, sea, wind, fire, light, water." His views sustain an unqualified optimism in the future of art without detailing the nature and availability of patronage. In fact, he compounds the question by asking, "Does poor art correspond to the poor world? No, insofar as poor art is a guerilla art against the rich world." Inevitably art requires some form of elitist support system for experimental process, or at least an avenue of sustenance while a new imagery is being developed. In the short-range situation it may be too much to ask that the prevailing patronage will respond to an art concept predicated upon destroying its standards of value. If poor art was both the product and the property of the disenfranchised



masses, his contentions might be more realistic. As a subversive idea gleaned from a detached observation of poverty behavior, it may be some time before poor art strikes a responsive chord in the rich world. However, as a theory of genuine merit, Mr. Restany's concept must be seriously considered.

3. The utilization of human energy resources is also the message of the German process artist Joseph Beuys. Although his international reputation was gained through a series of procedural and performance works projecting an apocalyptic vision using such anti-art raw materials as grease, dead animals, and his own body under conditions of bondage, his recent interests have shifted to an art of political position and social responsibility. In a public dialogue at the New School in New York he explained:

*I feel that it's now necessary to establish a new kind of art, able to show the problems of the whole society, of every living being—a new discipline which I call social sculpture. . . . Here my idea is to declare that art is the only possibility for evolution, the only possibility to change the situation in the world. But then you have to enlarge the idea of art to include the whole creativity. . . . Art is the only power to free humankind from all repression.*

Beuys' ideas and physical presence are his art and, although related to body and performance work, add the unquestionably important dimensions of political enlightenment.

The human energy factor will probably become central to all of the energy-aware arts, which, in turn, will increase the

hybrid forms suspended between the traditional roles of visual art and the theatrical event. Beuys' intent is political, but the methodology is consistent with a great deal of current activity. Performance works in the non-proscenium circumstance (particularly the street, park, and other public spaces) will proliferate. So-called "body art" has been with us since the late 1960's. The new developments in this area will surely follow the general direction of Beuys' work, if not the special political concerns. The introverted and self-indulgent characteristics associated with body art of the past will be forfeited in order to encompass a broad sociological spectrum. This art of event, or the call to assembly, may become increasingly an affirmation of Restany's "poor" methodology using vernacular movements and dispensing with the elaborate technical paraphernalia of theatre. The conservation ethic will predominate in both technique and message.

4. In architecture the energy awareness may be met with more resistance. It will suggest a total reappraisal of priorities and the elimination of the heroic gestures and wasteful technology that has gone unrestrained for the past fifty years. Biologist René Dubos has warned, "To a large extent planners have now become independent of such (regional) constraints. They can practically ignore the intensity of the sun, the coldness of winters, the impact of snow and rain on buildings. . . . instead of being concerned with local conditions, architects and planners put their trust in the use of more and more energy." The reevaluations implicit in this assessment are staggering to consider. The commitment to highrise structures and their omnivorous fuel requirements has been almost universal, (and irreversible if one considers the magnitude of the investment). Without doubt—and, again, as confirmation of the poor world theory—the architecture profession must reexamine the fundamental processes of those past civilizations who built their dwellings as organic extensions of the earth's regional provisions. The U.S. urban centers have been constructed with a demolitionist's prerogatives. This "blast out a hole and build" mentality is on a direct collision course with an ecologically

sane future. The alternative "inclusionist" program is a topical issue, but rendered totally impotent by the greed of real estate exploitation.

Aside from the conservation virtues of inclusionism, there is an aesthetic responsibility that can be restored to architecture—one that has been lost to the conformity of buildings constructed without regard for regional influences. If indeed architecture becomes sensitive to context in the fullest meaning of the word, we may expect to see configurations of form totally determined by terrain and the other forces of nature. These variables, so admired in civilizations of the past, may have counterparts in the architectural vocabulary of the future. It is difficult to predict what innovations will develop, but certainly the potentials for underground, undersea, and energy-field architecture offer challenging possibilities. All three are predicated on a conservation of precious land surface and each may be serviced by the innovative use of solar and nuclear energy.

5. Modern urban planning has also been the product of an intransigent vision. An obsessive faith in the future of the private automobile has left few, if any, options for alternative mobility. The highway, in particular, is a one-purpose directional with virtually no conversion options. In the past, for example, the *piazza* was a dominant factor in the urban plan which retained its relevance under conditions of both sociological and technological change. Albeit the great walking spaces converted awkwardly to the automobile, but at least the transformation has not been impossible. In the event that the private car becomes obsolete by reasons of fuel costs, air pollution, or eclipse by other means of transportation (i.e., hovercraft, helicopters, or an unforeseen invention), the highway has no modification potential. The highway as *piazza*? A grim possibility when considering a typical California interchange. The super highway, in particular, may yet prove to be one of civilization's most colossal monuments to myopia.

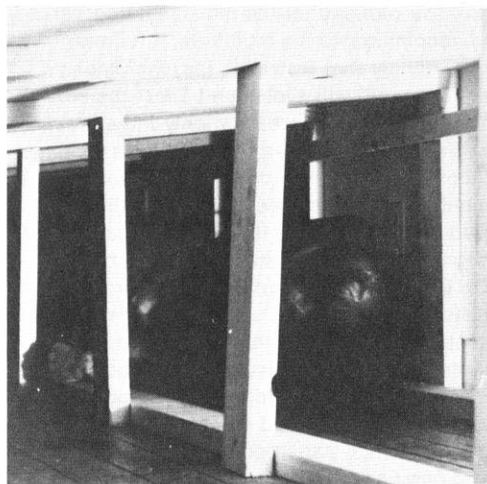
For the average citizen of our contemporary Western world to be forced to sacrifice the conveniences of the private

automobile would create a trauma of major proportions. Depriving the urban dweller of his car is to leave him a victim of total anonymity. The city today is built for service and the collective mass of this functional objective has reduced man to insect dimensions and has left no alternative for security other than the protective interior of his mobile microcosm. The automobile is an inhabitable womb wherein the unfettered ego can expand—the essence of status, protection, and self-assertion in a detached environment. If the private car goes, given a choice of mass transit or immobility, the average motorist would probably choose staying at home. This eventuality will surely bring more emphasis to electronic communications systems (confirming Nam June Paik's claims for video and T.V.), but it will also establish a new relevance for the concept of "neighborhood." Communities will be destined to become more personalized, more humanized, and probably more responsive to the regional adaptations imperative in architecture. This visual and practical reality will be welcome; yet it may also lead to new developments in social isolationism. As neighborhoods consolidate they may revert even more to the ethnic, religious, and political exclusionism that our pluralist society advocates have spent so long trying to discourage.



expedience, beyond the token legislation and fuel rationing which have become the symbolic inconveniences of the crisis. In a broad sociological sense, if energy awareness is to have any meaningful effect it must become synonymous with a global humanitarianism and the equitable apportioning of all resources. For Americans this utopian environment would mean a revision of the Bill of Rights to limit personal freedoms in favor of international responsibility (a program not likely to sit well with the labor leaders and the captains of industry—to say nothing of emergent minorities just gaining their rights). In the East, particularly China, the concept of the individual answerable to the needs of the community at large would be philosophically acceptable—so long as the communities included did not threaten Maoist theories. In many respects the American obsession with freedom is quite comparable to the Chinese devotion to service, even though ideologically they seem to be in a state of head-on collision. In both cases the rituals of principle are easily interpreted and reinterpreted to adjust to circumstances and used by the respective governments as the rationale to justify any shift in national policies. Freedom and service are interchangeable abstractions. Therefore, if it became internationally acknowledged that the only route to mankind's survival is contingent upon the sharing of resources, these seemingly divergent philosophies might become one and the same, and hence, the necessary psychological bridge between East and West that would have to precede any mutually beneficial energy policies.

The above discussion has centered on the short-range possibilities of energy awareness in the arts (with the inclusion of some long-range indications). The assumptions have been based upon a minimum sacrifice of our priorities in terms of political system and aspirations for economic growth. Speculations on the far-flung future are more interesting, but also more sinister if we face the possibility of multi-level forfeitures. All evidence indicates that if our nation persists in blindly wasteful technology its fate will be determined by global war and/or extinction by reason of totally uninhabitable environment. Imperialism, industrial greed, air and water pollution, and genocide are no longer just immoral, they are suicidal. If this course is pursued, then any consideration of art is absurd. In fact, art will be the first thing to go. On the other hand, an optimistic (and probably unrealistic) prophesy may include energy awareness that goes beyond mere



Viewed superficially, the arts of China and the U.S. seem to express a completely unbridgeable philosophical dichotomy. The West prides itself on an art of diversity and self-revelation, whereas the East considers this to be evidence of decadent indulgence, and values only those arts in the service of political ideology. Albeit the declared intent of their respective arts is different, but, upon closer inspection there are similarities in both ritual and methodology. For example, a comparison between the recently televised *Ballad of the White Haired Girl* from Red China and—to purposely choose a rather extreme illustration of our avant-garde—a performance piece by body artist Vito Acconci might seem to be a far-fetched juxtaposition. The Chinese ideological ballet is purposefully dedicated to propaganda and communicated through a vernacular symbology. Acconci's art is a kind of introverted psycho-drama and consciously esoteric. But the ritualistic similarities are intriguing and may suggest a more compatible bond between East and West than the usual perfunctory judgements have thus far admitted. Comparing *The White Haired Girl* and Acconci's 1971 piece at Sonnabend Gallery entitled *Seedbed* reveal some interesting analogies. The *Girl* is a rhetorical musical theatre work proclaiming Red Doctrine through a series of patriotic songs, slogans, and dances. The Acconci work consists primarily of the artist masturbating at regular intervals while lying hidden from view under a wooden ramp in the gallery. In both events the individuality of the performers is concealed (the Chinese theatre's standardized uniforms, face paint, and masks versus

Acconci's floorboards). The performance accessories are sexist-aggressive (rifle-penis). The choreographic movements are static (marches-massage). The libretti are redundant (mottos-moans). And the conclusion of each drama is both spasmodic and obvious (the demise of the political enemy versus ejaculation). The differences between *Girl* and *Seedbed* are really limited to affirmative versus experimental objectives. Otherwise, the terms of physicality, ritual behavior, the projection of ideas over craft, and the condition of sociological meaning, are inherent in both performances. It is actually the employment of human energy (almost synonymous with energy awareness) that brings these diverse art concepts into close proximity. Also, both expressions are morality plays directing their offensives at the values of the rich (imperialist) world. One proclaims emancipation by action, the other by withdrawal. One is assertive, the other neurotic.

Energy awareness, and its ultimate message of shared resources, may become the principal motivating factor behind an East-West fusion of art ideas. As indicated above, the prevailing assumptions concerning insurmountable cultural gaps may be more myth than reality. In the past, aesthetic influences have been borrowed from country to country on a basis of gradual assimilation. In the case of future East-West arts, this osmotic process would probably have evolved slowly through organized cultural exchange. However, what is implied by the energy issue and its crisis of survival is a not-too-distant moment of instantaneous world art. It is,



therefore, somewhat reassuring to know that fundamental parallels in the arts already exist to help modify this impending culture shock.

The question often asked is how Peking will react to the first concert by the Rolling Stones. Conversely, we must ask how the West will react to a heavy dose of ideological theatre. In both cases the reactions may be more indifferent than hostile or enthusiastic. What may become increasingly apparent as the world is united by an international energy policy is the irrelevant provincialism of any regional art form. A new ecumenical art would be the only appropriate development.

It is, of course, impossible to predict the actual configurations this global art might assume. General speculations include an increased emphasis on the use of information interchange and performance. Aesthetic esoterica will probably give way to imagery more accessible to the new merging cultures. Architecture and urban space will be the primary vehicles of communication by providing conditions for assembly and propaganda so essential to a philosophy of world unity. Human energy may ultimately be valued over technology and could lead to an art of reportage and social realism reminiscent of the W.P.A. or Stalinist period. In any event, for the Western artist accustomed to hedonistic personal and aesthetic liberties, the future may seem bleak indeed. As material benefits

must be reduced for the individual in order to accommodate the multitude, it follows accordingly that restraints (psychological, if not imposed) will evolve and affect the arts. The situation is depressing only if the West, or East, insists on perpetuating value systems inconsistent with the concept of a world community. If art becomes bland or institutionalized in order to meet these standards, it must be considered the partial price of survival. On the more optimistic side, if we examine history, there is really very little evidence to support a contention that art is necessarily better under any particular form of government or social condition. Art has flourished under autocracies and democracies, under god-kings and parish priests, under despots and humanitarians. And it may flourish readily under a world community. Only one fact is sure. Without the world community, nothing will flourish. □

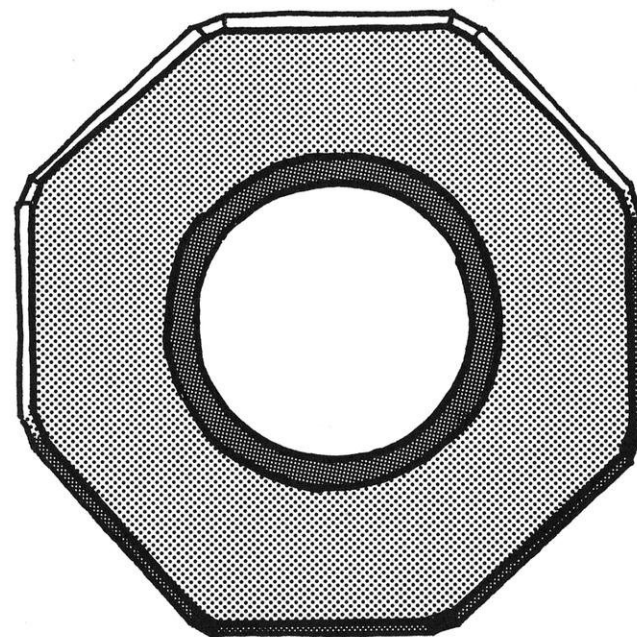
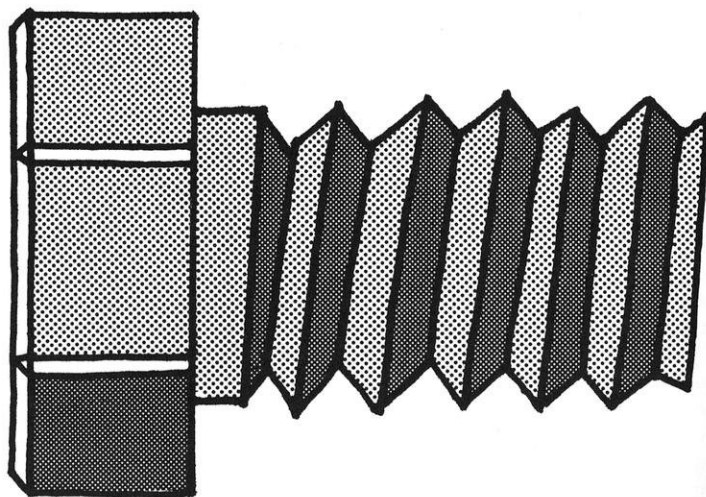
Quotation sources:

Rudi Stern, Nam June Paik—*Changes*, Issue No. 86, 1974.

Pierre Restany—"Poor Art, Poor World," *Domus*, No. 532, March 1974.

Joseph Beuys—Public Dialogue at the New School, New York, Jan 11, 1974—text printed in *Avalanche Newspaper*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1974.

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# the minimal era

by **Wilhelmina Van Ness**

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Minimal Art was a composite name that has been applied to the scattering of bland, bleak, non-objective fine arts painting and sculpture forms that proliferated slightly mysteriously in the middle 1960's as Pop Art began to decline. In the middle sixties two tentative movements, Op Art and Kinetic Art, were promoted as the reasonable, proper heirs to the succession of contemporary American art movements; but both, despite their Pop and psychedelic commercial applications and success, were fractional expressions of the driving themes of the art movements.

Optical Art was the first "movement" to appear in the wake of Pop Art; its creators and sponsors playfully dropped the "P" from "Pop" to create a name that implied aesthetic and commercial continuity. Op works were dazzling and dizzying, but also tedious and bland, recitals of optical patterns, exercises, and tricks. Many Op works were abstract, non-objective expressions of a Pop-like banality, and like many Pop works, many Op projects and experiments were intrinsically ugly and tasteless works of art.

The Kinetic artists followed and produced motorized Assemblage and Op sculpture, and experimented hesitantly with light and with simple electronic relays. Op and Kinetic art were intermediate expressions of relaxation and withdrawal from the hectic Pop salon environment and they signaled a revival of interest by artists in the literal uses of science

and technology in art to create still-elusive, powerful, relevant, wholly-contemporary art forms. Pop artists had realistically "killed" this dream, and when the Minimal artists formally accepted and intensified the basic premises of Pop realism, they established themselves as the rightful inheritors of the succession of contemporary American art movements. As Minimal artists began to exhibit and display models of their works with greater frequency, Op and Kinetic devices and styles merged into the more generalized mixed-media and Happenings-environmental forms.

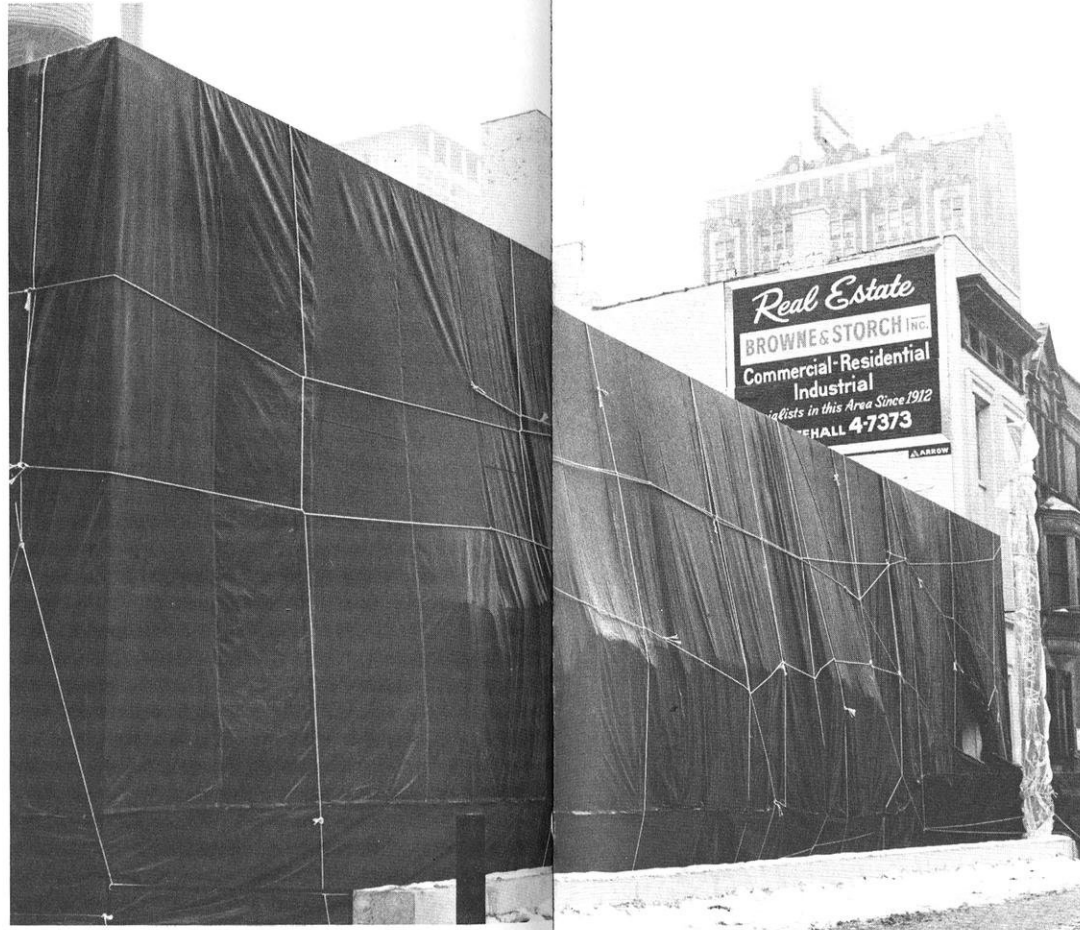
Minimal Art was a powerful, non-objective expression of the Assemblage-Happenings-Pop themes of environment, manipulation, realism, destruction, sex and death. Claes Oldenburg's and other Pop artists' "monuments" had been "put-on" projects—proposed ironic and satirical monstrosities—that were intended to both characterize and ridicule the *real* environment they transformed and symbolized. Pop artists intended their monuments to shock, bait and shame somnambulist, over-confident Americans into recognizing that they lived in an environment of unprecedented vulgarity and menace.

Early Minimal artists tried, like Pop artists, to create contentless works—bland, but jarring, combinations of plastics, fibres and metals, and mixtures of undefined materials. Some early Minimal sculpture was "streamlined" in an oblique Pop parody of modern mechanical and decorator elegance. The structural Minimalists created manipulative environments of individual works and "serial" or "systems" sculpture based on "primary," "conceptual," or forthright (banal) structural devices—variations on the themes of symbolic logic and set theory, and literal reproductions of elementary geometrical solids, post and lintel constructions, "T" joints and cantilever beams.

Gigantic Minimal structural projects were “proposed” as models in gallery exhibitions, and were occasionally manufactured in reality under the auspices of corporate or government patrons. A huge, red, gray and blue, coolly handsome playblock balanced on one of its corner points—a piece that expressed perfectly a kind of corporate image that proliferated in the 1960’s—was installed in the plaza of the corporate headquarters of the Marine Midland Grace Trust Company in lower Manhattan. A rotating black cube at Astor Place, and several building walls with Minimal paintings of geometrical patterns on them, are permanent souvenirs of a period of minimal municipal art in the middle 1960’s in New York City when the city government was persuaded to sympathize with and respond to the ambitious environmental dreams and theories of Minimal and Happenings artists. Professional Minimal and Happenings artists and an assortment of amateur, poorly-executed neighborhood social art projects were subsidized during this period as part of an extensive municipal campaign to beautify and humanize New York City, and to help retard its environmental decay.

The 1960’s were rife with unnerving uses and reprises of early twentieth century European social and aesthetic styles. In the late 1960’s, the New York City government became an American municipal equivalent to the Weimar Republic: The City celebrated and subsidized the unlikely cultural fact that a pre-Hitler Berlin-type art world had been reborn in the middle of Manhattan Island.

The Parks and other City departments at this time commissioned artists, whose works and lives were professional expressions, symptoms and residues of cultural and environmental decay, to somehow magically help to arrest the conditions their lives and works expressed and exploited. The rationalized and sometimes menacing tastelessness of Minimal Art forms was massively introduced into City parks and squares: Hulking, black geometric sculptural forms (derived from crushed cigarette butts) lumbered across Bryant Park; three fur- and plastic artillery pieces were installed and destroyed over a single weekend in Central Park—torn pieces of fur littered the lake on the Monday following the installation; forty huge, garish yellow steel panels were hung from trees along Fifth Avenue—some



people complained that they frightened the birds; a mocking, bland “arrow sculpture” (huge, silver-colored), composed from the literal forms of two upright arrows, was temporarily installed on an “island” at a Park Avenue intersection. The above-mentioned Astor Place black playblock served its neighborhood faithfully for many years as a surreal public urinal, graffiti showplace and psychedelia poster wall. These and other municipal Minimal Art projects, and a rash of social art Happenings that were perpetrated by well-intentioned amateurs on several New York City slum neighborhoods, superimposed decorative aesthetic forms of alienation and environmental distortion and destruction over conditions of real decay and disintegration.

In the late 1960’s New York City’s major art museums elected spontaneously and fashionably to “self-destruct” themselves physically and metaphysically—to become temporary, appropriate barren exhibition environments for Minimal Art works and to be, themselves, institutional expressions of Minimal aesthetic ideologies. During a period of elaborate building renovation and expansion, the Metropolitan Museum of Art stripped its European painting galleries of their treasures and displayed, in a Minimal exhibitions style, a vast inconsequential retrospective exhibition of works by artists of “The New York School.” The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney, the Guggenheim and, for a brief interval, the Jewish Museum—all gave themselves over, lemming-fashion, to suspect (corrupt) uses and upheavals of their reputations and exhibitions spaces—to exhibitions of “retrospectives” of doubtful necessity or value of works by Pop and Minimal artists.

Minimal Art was an overtly manipulative fine art form. Minimal works combined the conditioning effects of environmental gigantism with the debilitating impact of a Pop-like tastelessness. Minimal artists manipulated viewers’ responses like the Happenings-environmental artists with the scale of their works and frightened viewers with the emptiness of Minimal forms. The implied absolute vacancy of Minimal forms was a source of the movement’s power and an intentional side-product of many of the movement’s artists.

The movement was a further intensified proof of a quarter-century of Museum of Modern





Art ideology, that content was irrelevant to the forms of Modern Art. A few Minimal artists refined the Modern Museum ideology further by concealing invisible forms within their works and/or they proposed that jewels be imbedded in cement and precious objects be hidden under mountains as realistic demonstrations of the minimal proposition that, for all practical purposes, *if you don't know about it, it doesn't exist.*

In the late 1960's, artists in an Earthworks-Abstract Geology wing of the Minimal movement created elaborate *natural* exploitations of variations on the themes of gigantism and emptiness. Artists made expensive, well-publicized and photographed trips to exotic landscapes—the Salt Flats of Utah, the Mohave and Arabian deserts, and to Central America—to create spectacle works of art with the cooperation of meteorological and geologic processes: a “drawing” of two half-mile long lines, twelve feet apart, in the desert; a series of “mirror displacements” in scenic parts of the Yucatan.

Minimal Works became heavier as well as larger and one Minimal sculpture, built in a steel foundry, was publicized as being too heavy for the floor of any gallery or museum in the world. Several Minimal artists proposed forms of gothic vandalism (filling the Grand Canyon with cement) and in a few instances they were permitted to realize their projects in reality. An artist “wrapped” the facade of the Chicago Museum in canvas tarpaulins and a stretch of Australian beach in burlap, and hung a curtain across the Rockies.

In the late 1960's, a selection of Buckminster Fuller's futurist architectural proposals were widely publicized in a Pop-Minimal context—one among them a tetrahedron design for an architectural solution to the space and housing problems of New York City. Mr. Fuller proposed that a pyramid capable of housing one million inhabitants be floated in the middle of Long Island Sound. The surface area that is available in proportion to the interior volume of any pyramid is obviously limited, and Mr. Fuller was asked who would be allowed on the surface and who would be put into the interior. His assurance that everyone would live on the outside, and that offices and harbor facilities would be located in the fully-conditioned interior,\* raised the spectre of a future-city on the disagreeable order of the setting for the 1926 German silent movie, *Metropolis*—a science fiction-style city of the future in which the workers and their jobs were relegated to the interior by the privileged capitalist occupants of the outer surface space. Similar problems of humanist taste and proportion arise in regard to Paolo Soleri's proposal that cities in the future be compacted into immense, tower-like structures—designs that would allegedly save energy and environmental resources.

Superficially, a great deal of 1960's Minimal sculpture looked at first like an odd form of mortuary art—like individual or “serial” tombs to an unknown corpse. Many Minimal artists made outright, deliberate connections with

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\*Mr. Fuller's response to a Letter to the Editor, *The Saturday Review*, April 1, 1967, p. 16.



death and memorial art on a variety of levels, and Minimal Art obliquely reflected and characterized the unrelieved, obsessional concentration of Americans during the 1960's on spectacles of public death, public funerals, and burial and memorial imagery in general.

The Kennedy funerals spectacularly demonstrated the latent power of the usually empty television form—by simply filling it with an appropriate social and aesthetic content. The television-induced environments of national tragedy, nightmare, state pageantry and public catharsis of the two Kennedy funerals were real, total, minimal environments. They exceeded all environmental and total theatre concepts proposed or implemented by American or European artists in the twentieth century modern or contemporary movements.

Tens of millions of viewers in America and throughout the world watched the two catastrophes from beginning to end, were “involved” and enveloped by them, and were connected to each other in a mysterious and remarkable human network through them. The televised real, minimal detail of the murders and funerals of the assassinated Kennedy brothers absolutely pre-empted concentration on, or consciousness of, every usual public and private concern while they unfolded. Both funerals were carried on the national television networks with no editing, no commercial diversions, and with a minimum of art—in their real, elapsed detail and time—in a memorial style of static realism and singlemindedness of intent and effect that Andy Warhol's late 1960's Pop-Minimal movie-making techniques perversely approached, but could not equal or exceed.

The hours and days of coverage of the television funerals were like infinitely lengthened, taut elastic bands. Both events were recorded as minimal, linear assemblages of incremental instants of horror and monotony in the literal order and time that they happened; or stop-motion replays and clarifications froze and isolated the participants unnaturally like spastic ghosts in perpetual, one-dimensional spreading time-spaces. People and things were transformed into indistinguishable anonymous quantities of moving objects that crisscrossed endlessly past cameras stationed to passively document arrivals and departures at points along distances, at predetermined

intervals in time. Aerial television cameras photographed the solemn, measured progress of both ceremonial cortèges winding along broad Washington, D. C. avenues: the endless wavering, marching service regiments of the presidential cortèges; the moving necklace of limousines that escorted the president's brother's body to Arlington cemetery. A static telephoto lens “watched” pairs of headlights monotonously negotiate the cemetery hill to the Robert Kennedy gravesite for what seemed, subjectively, to be an eternity of elapsed time. “One thousand” of the fabled “beautiful people,” the power and glamor establishment of the 1960's, rode the Robert Kennedy funeral train to Washington, to detrain like a ragged, flowing mass of anonymous suburban commuters.

In a serenely engrossing epilogue to the four-day television environment of murder and pageantry of the presidential assassination, television cameras and commentators unobtrusively circulated at an informal post-funeral coffee and cocktail wake given for visiting heads of foreign governments and prestigious VIP domestic government personnel in the interior of the State Department Building. For hours, *nothing* happened except the rarest event to occur in any public discipline or profession during the 1960's: an inconceivably engrossing, absolutely unstaged “happening.” Tens of millions of television viewers watched hundreds of the most powerful people in the world *relax* in the intimate setting of a private party.

Television network coverage of the two assassinations demonstrated that minimal forms, pacing and style are engrossing and powerful when they *naturally* accompany real memorial and gothic content. The coverage was also a spectacular demonstration of the power of the television form to equalize, minimize and *democratize* every content it touches upon or conveys. The “beautiful” celebrities and the prestigious heads of foreign states received “equal time” with the murderers; on the television screen, they were as anonymous and “mass” as the hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens who filed past the presidential bier during the assassination weekend; they were neither more nor less distinguished or distinguishable than the crowds of people who gathered on railroad platforms and embankments to see the Robert

Kennedy funeral train pass on its way to Washington.

In the specialized chronology of the contemporary American art movements, Minimal Art was a post-Pop phenomenon; Minimal artists were the literal gravediggers who closed in the earth over the corpses of culture, proportion and history that Pop artists had "killed." Minimal "tombs" often certified disproportionate, gothic judgments in the same extravagant tastelessness of real funeral monuments and rituals. The "tombs" and "memorials" of Minimal artists suggested a train of fascinating correspondences between the tastelessness underlying Pop and Minimal extravagance and the extravagances that characterize artifacts and monuments of tremendous size like the Taj Mahal or the pyramids. Pop and Minimal monumentalism strongly suggested that all disproportionately large monuments express similar cultural attitudes towards proportion and reasonableness, and that they all possibly betray a Pop-Minimal mentality. The "monuments" inferred that Pop-Minimalism may be a commonplace part of the rationalizing process that underlies many forms of religious inspiration and concentration.\*

As an aesthetic phenomenon, a great deal of Minimal Art lies near the bottom of art critic John Canaday's *Culture Gulch*; the movement was composed of many pompous mini-movements and redundant, fractional aesthetic

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*\*There are suggestions in Henri Frankfort's Ancient Egyptian Religion, New York, Columbia University Press, 1948, that the high spirituality, that at least partially inspired the building of the pyramids, may have been a set of cultural obsessions loosely on par with the mentality that operates and patronizes the famous Hollywood memorial park, Forest Lawn. Frankfort's Egyptians were practical, clear-headed business people and farmers at the beginning of their cultural history, and not excessively concerned with spiritual matters or the next world. However, as afflictions struck them down, and as they grew older by thousands of years, they drifted into extravagant forms of religiosity. At the height of their spiritual development, they were apparently burying every creature they could lay hands on, great and small, in boxes and specially reserved plots. Frankfort suggested that this proliferation of creature cemeteries became an embarrassment to archeologists and Egyptologists.*



systems. Works were produced and displayed in monumental forms and dimensions, or in extreme, or gothic, psychological or aesthetic contexts. Original works of Minimal Art, as distinguished from their reproduced forms and the publicity surrounding them, tended to be bland, menacing, fatiguing and/or fatally boring to all but the very small percentage of artists and their sponsors who were personally involved in producing and publicizing them. The proliferation of the movement's influence throughout the museum and gallery system further degraded the already-damaged credibility of many of these institutions' policies and intentions. Funk Art, Eccentric Art, Street Art, Normal Art, Conceptual Art, the Earthworks—each of these was given physical exhibition space and publicity in galleries and museums vastly in excess of its intrinsic worth. The paradoxes of Pop-Minimal aestheticism were ingeniously and successfully exploited, but lasting returns for many enthusiasts have probably been minimal.

During the 1960's, *minimalism* became a widespread and influential generalized American cultural phenomenon. It affected high and low culture, politics, law, government, science and technology, and it significantly altered the public and private forms of these disciplines. In its simplest, broadest form, minimalism was an intense, realistic preference for the absolute minimum of every form. Paradoxically, the absolute minimum could be, and sometimes was, an infinite maximum—an inconceivably maximal excess. Minimal objects, acts and thoughts were stripped of all excess baggage: of decoration, of art and imagination in any traditional sense, of fore- and after-thoughts, of emotion and meaning.

In the art movements, Minimal forms implied ultimate, usually gothic triumphs of emptiness over fullness, of form over content, of *nothing* over everything. At the start of the contemporary American art movements, Abstract Expressionist painters and theorists had solemnly created, endlessly discussed, and applauded visions "that grew steadily larger, less specific . . . of everything rather than nothing,"\* but they were for the most part unaware (or seemed not to care) that "everything" in this kind of context is practically indistinguishable from *nothing*. The Assemblage-Happenings artists in the late 1950's and early 1960's had more knowingly

created images of nihilism and death, but they stopped short as a rule of the Pop artists' literal, intentional murder of culture and history. Pop artists prepared the cultural landscape for the tombs and monuments of the put-on projects, and the huge, ambivalent works of Minimal artists that celebrated and memorialized *nothing* with abject, poetic seriousness.

The logical end of this line of aesthetic thought and activity is a declaration that there is only *nothing* in the most profound sense: it is the silence of Rimbaud, and of very few others. Modern artists and poets have consistently found themselves balancing on the edge of a future-less, history-less abyss—confronted with the dilemma of whether or not to continue. Most have chosen to continue in a salon or game-playing context. Marcel Duchamp renounced painting, but not the art world; he mischievously continued to create works and thoughts for the entertainment of an international salon audience. The salon emphasis on the creation of banal, conversation pieces is, in its own way, as minimal and banal an activity as the pursuit of gothic, ultimate abominations and banality.

Minimalism was probably first introduced formally into American politics and government via the Kennedy administration. John F. Kennedy was the first American president to somewhat consciously preside over and participate in the accelerating nightmare that contemporary American public culture and life was becoming—the nightmare that contemporary American art forms in the 1960's generally reflected and mimicked.

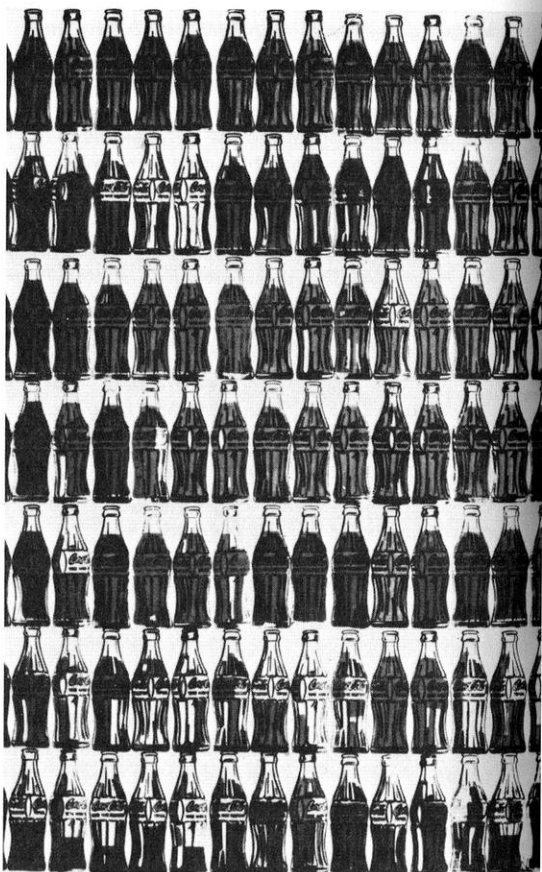
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\**One of the many transcendental phrases used to describe the paintings of J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851), in a brochure prepared by the Museum of Modern Art that accompanied the Museum's 1966 retrospective exhibition of Turner's works. The educational thrust of the Museum booklet was to document the affinities between Turner's approach to painting and the gestures and trends of contemporary American abstract painting. The booklet is an indirect, but almost perfect, fossil catalogue of aesthetic and painting theories and goals that were widely believed in and practiced during the Abstract Expressionist period.*

The Kennedy administration was pledged to revive and subsidize many "Enlightenment" historical and cultural values, but its ambitions were thwarted by the realities of the flourishing Pop-camp art and intellectual cultural environment of the early 1960's. Pop artists and intellectuals, moreover, had a field day peeling away the thin veneer of administration cultural ambitions to reveal a Pop fusion of government power, Hollywood star-calibre glamor, and incipient gothicism. Pop artists and commentators correctly observed and mocked prominent administration personalities' obsessions with history and power.

Both Kennedy brothers and many prominent administration officials were irrepressible romantics, and their ambitions tended towards expansionist and manipulative forms. They were attracted to *total* forms and postures, and to selected aspects of political totalitarianism. They were awed, and sometimes passionately inspired, by "unthinkable," excessive, disproportionate phenomena, and every major administration crisis became an "instant" gothic phenomenon that was valued by the president and his advisers as a personalized initiation rite. The Cuban missile crisis was the administration's *darkest night* and a rite of passage: the administration threatened ultimate, unlimited nuclear violence and succeeded in forcing the limited Russian compliance that it demanded. A less intensely romanticized leadership might have responded with fewer heroic extravagances and provocations to the series of crises that preceded the missile showdown—and evaded the later gothic necessity for leading the world to the edge of the abyss, and back.

The Kennedy years did not revive the Enlightenment and they became instead a valley of the shadow of death. The brothers' romantic political adventure ended by becoming a family passion, and the official Kennedy style was not further leavened by the "Minimal" rationalizations for policies that pervaded it. The penchant and preference of administration personnel for "thinking the unthinkable" (and for doing it wherever possible) directly paralleled the gothic preoccupations and behavior of the American movement artists during the 1960's; and administration personnel very literally anticipated the kinds of moral and ethical postures Minimal artists adopted in the closing years of the decade.

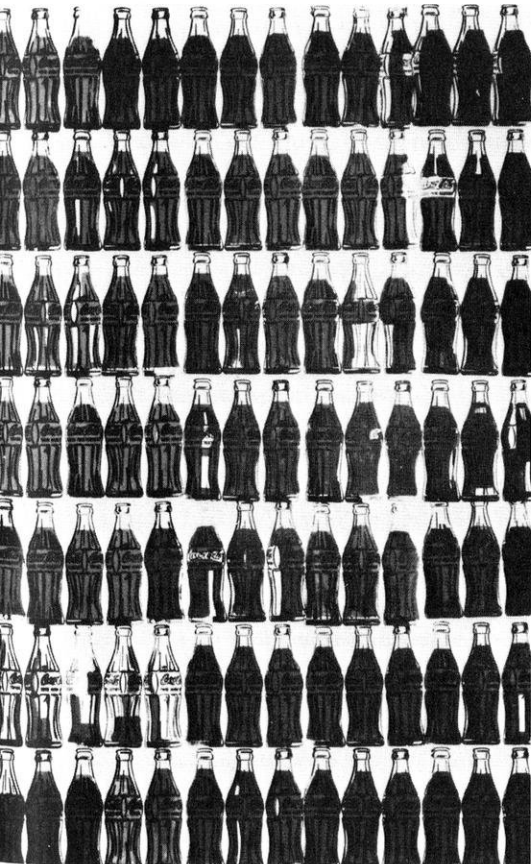


The administration fetish of documentation and “history” also exceeded many reasonable proportions, but this was perhaps an innocent sin of enthusiasm while the president lived.

After the president’s death, promotional pseudo-history and memorial imagery were unscrupulously linked and exploited for years by the administration’s chroniclers. The “eternal flame” that was installed hastily at the president’s gravesite was an essentially private gesture that imposed public values on the man and the grave before these values were real, enduring expressions of public honor and trust. The “flame”—a profoundly disproportionate gesture at the time of its installation—anticipated the style of memorial exploitation of the slain president’s image that was sustained for years after his death. Minimal Art evolved in the wake of the Kennedy murders and funerals, during a period when tomb-building and funereal forms of monotony were absurdly relevant artists’ styles.

The full flowering of minimalism and the Johnson era coincided exactly. The Johnson presidency was magnificently flawed by a weakness for *gigantism*: the administration sponsored the grandiose vision of the Great Society—a fabulous, hugely ambitious, generous (gluttonous?) dream of transforming America into a TVA-style Garden of Eden in which all Americans would equally share educational opportunities and unprecedented economic abundance.

The dream was handcuffed awkwardly to propagandist means and ends, and to the Vietnam War—which escalated rapidly during the Johnson years into a disproportionate presidential military response to civil war conditions throughout Indochina. In the final year of the Johnson presidency, the United States—the most powerful nation in the world—wreaked daily maximal violence and destruction on the countryside and populations of several of the world’s smallest countries. By 1967 the war had become an “unthinkably” magnified and computerized version of the kind of gangsterism that characterized Mussolini’s 1935-36 conquest of Ethiopia. The Vietnam War became a classic, *real* minimal phenomenon—one of the most inglorious and least proportional military adventures of all time.





Other essentially inconceivable *real* minimal objects and phenomena of the Johnson era were created in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration moon and space exploration program. An unintentionally archetypical minimal reason John Kennedy had given during his presidency for going to the moon ("because it is there") was transformed during the Johnson era into mammoth NASA rocket-launching installations in Texas and Florida and into millions of tons of "space hardware."

NASA shows from space were maximal crises of proportion in terms of "traditional" art and entertainment forms, and "normal" human sensibilities. The moon missions were the most spectacular technical and show business feats in the history of the world, and they are possibly a profoundly new stage of human evolution. They were also, however, artless, disproportionate and intrinsically monotonous events. In the first live telecast from the moon, two bulky, indistinct ectoplasmic forms cavorted ecstatically for hours—and gathered fifty pounds of rocks. On subsequent missions television picture quality was astonishingly improved and the incredible event was demonstrated to be a relatively safe and even repeatable phenomenon. NASA missions were performed in a calculated public relations communications environment by Air Force and Naval career officers who uniformly exuded a cool, capable American friendliness. They (and other technicians in the program who have spoken publicly) have consistently taken *minimal* notice of the tremendous discrepancies between means and ends that the program frequently expressed.

In the arts and elsewhere, *minimalism* was a way to confront and accept (survive) contemporary facts like the space program; it was a way to metaphysically join the "enemy," to deviously and parasitically admire him, and the style was flexible enough to include the huge, obviously hostile imitations of contemporary phenomena that many Minimal artists produced.

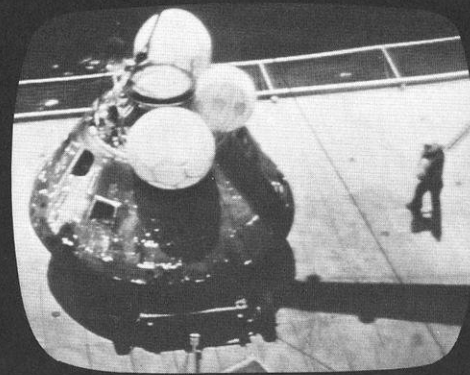
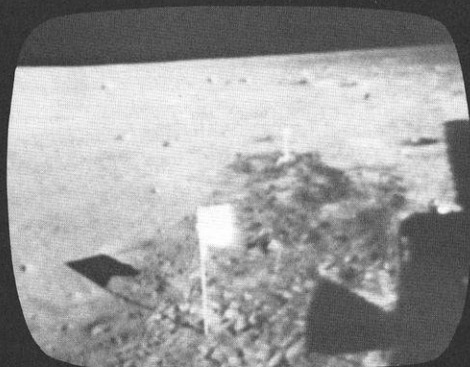
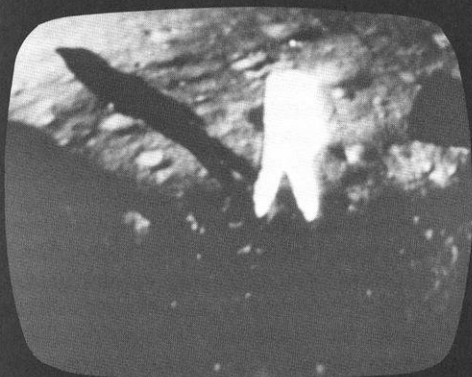
The Johnson era was, moreover, *afflicted* with a superfluity of ominous political and judicial departures away from reasonableness and proportion: The Goldwater presidential candidacy was a pop-minimal phenomenon of the first order and the 1964 electoral contest, so

one-sided as to threaten the integrity of the electoral process—and a surprising series of anomalies occurred in the *courts*.

John Kennedy's appointment of his brother, Robert Kennedy, to the post of Attorney General was perhaps the first, direct, formal indication that an overtly politicized (nepotized) Department of Justice was not "unthinkable"—that the court system in general could, and possibly should, be used as an official political and personal arm of the president and/or of the executive branch of the federal government. The next notable, bizarre introduction of personalism and obvious breach of propriety of this character was the Johnson appointment of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Earl Warren, to head the extra-legal commission charged with investigating the Kennedy assassination controversy. The Chief Justice was appointed to be the moral arbiter of evidence in what had become a hysterical national murder mystery melodrama. Justice Warren very improbably and inappropriately undertook investigative functions for the commission; he interviewed witnesses personally and on one occasion he "walked through" the movements of the alleged assassin in a reconstruction of the murder that was staged in the Dallas textbook warehouse. That the Chief Justice of the United States performed any of these acts, was a spectacular indication that the Image and function of the Supreme Court had become extremely confused and was being perhaps radically degraded.

The only precedent that is remotely comparable to the hysterical distortions and abuses of legal procedures and proceedings that occurred during the 1960's following the Kennedy assassination, is the fabulously degraded legal show of the Reichstag Fire Trial. The German trial was tried before the Supreme Court of Germany in 1933; the trial revealed unexpectedly degraded (minimal) conditions of German government, law and science—conditions and forms that Hitler in some degree inherited—that he used to consolidate Nazi party power.

The German trial lasted two months and was a chaos of competing political and mythological explanations of the crime. The Nazis and Communists traded furious charges and countercharges of "conspiracy" while a



liberal London Commission of Enquiry strove to moderate responsibly between what may have been, in retrospect, nothing more than a cross fire of competing propaganda fantasies.\* The daily judicial conduct of everyone concerned in the trial—the Nazis, the Communists, the press, the witnesses, the judges, and the officers of the court—was outrageous and farcial. Batteries of “scientific experts” were assembled on both sides. In retrospect, the “experts” seem to have parsed the simple act of arson by an enigmatic, possibly feeble-minded Dutch political activist who spoke no German—into an infinite number of conspiratorial possibilities.

In the absence of any reasonable evidence to support anyone’s conspiratorial charges, the court acquitted the Communist “show” defendants and delivered a verdict based on of the least luminous absurdities to be advanced in the testimony of the “scientific experts”—that the defendant had fired the Reichstag alone with a “self-igniting liquid.” The tragic, enigmatic Dutchman complained repeatedly during the trial of the time wasted on “symbolism” by everyone and asked the court to declare him guilty, sentence him and end the trial. The court finally acceded to his desires. After the trial, he was executed in a secret place.

The Kennedy assassination inquiries and the epidemic of political show trials that afflicted the late 1960’s produced no capital victims,

but they were bizarre, lurid phenomena. They brought out the farcial and paranoid worst in everyone who participated in them. Federal prosecutors, the FBI, armies of amateur investigators, the defendants, their attorneys, the judges and media commentators—all engaged in antics, procedural irregularities and referrals to bogus popularized science that matched and exceeded the absurdities of the German trial. The American trials—the assassination inquiry, the Garrison trial of the assassination evidence, the Naval hearing into the fate of the intelligence ship *Pueblo*, the Chicago conspiracy trial, the trials of Black Panther leaders in several cities, and the Berrigan brothers’ and other trials arising out of anti-Vietnam War activity—all of these

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*\*The murderous and conspiratorial uses to which the Nazis put the fire trial are not disputed by anyone to my knowledge, but the evidence that they physically fired the Reichstag themselves is inconclusive and has been disputed. The primary source of this summary is The Burning of the Reichstag by Douglas Reed, Special Correspondent of The Times at the Leipzig Trial, London, V. Gollancz Ltd., 1934. The account infers that a “lone arsonist” theory is the only possible way to resolve the incredibly bizarre contradictions of the trial. Fritz Tobias, A German “revisionist” Fire scholar, reached the same conclusion in his account, The Reichstag Fire, New York, Putnam [1964, c. 1963].*



took place in, and were part of, the 1960's nightmare continuum of political killings, burning cities, counter-cultural hysteria and random terrorist violence against the war. The conspiracy trials were elaborate, statist vendettas and/or shadowy public relations justifications of bizarre (sordid) "establishment" politics and activities (e.g. the *Pueblo* hearing). The trials were depressing evidence that key federal agencies and departments were being outlandishly politicized and corrupted.

The 1960's trials were hysterical expressions and exploitations of many gothic public fears and suspicions liberated in the wake of the Kennedy assassination; they were blatant show trials of evidence and persons—more metaphysical than legal in form. They occurred in the vacuum created by many failed forms of public consensus and reconciliation, in a minimal public environment where popular trust and good will no longer obtained or functioned in any normal degree.

During the 1960's government-by-lawsuit became the norm rather than the exception. The federal courts became last-resort repositories and bastions of integrity and legitimacy. For the most part, the courts rejected the fantastically corrupt indictments and evidence submitted to them by the federal prosecutors of the show trials—and the courts are probably the primary reason legitimate, constitutional government survives today (1973) in America; but government-by-lawsuit is the literal, minimal last-defense. If the courts fail, there is no other recourse.

The 1960's trials and times were rife with the same kinds of disproportionate, fatiguing, degraded social and political phenomena that provoked German artists in the late 1920's to withdraw into the New Objectivity—the Minimal Art of their period.

Minimalism is a complex and ambivalent phenomenon whenever and wherever it occurs. In the 1960's, American Minimal artists repeatedly demonstrated that *all* rationalized systems for accepting and/or justifying degradation and absurdity are minimal in some degree—that all minimal conditions, means, and ends are similar and related phenomena. It was significant that Minimal artists used the same bland forms and

rationed emotional styles of the aggressive paradoxes to *also* create mystical, other-worldly environments. Minimal artists participated perfectly consistently in the 1960's mystical ferment for reform and dissipation; they accurately cited their concerns, Neo-Platonism, Pythagorean number theory, the transfinite mathematics of Georg Cantor, and the subtle vacancies and paradoxes of eastern religious thought as rationalizations of a common tradition. They were *purists* and their works were frequently drab, pessimistic rationalizations of purity that equated entropy and the involuntary effects of conformity and propaganda conditioning with the rewards and certainties of traditional forms of mystical enlightenment.

The twentieth century has been a fabulous watershed of quantitative changes in standards of value and behavior everywhere in the world. Mass media, mass culture, mass production and mass war have changed and distorted everyone's perception of reasonableness and proportion, and created conditions in which tremendous corruptions and distortions of means and ends are commonplace. American Minimal artists expressed this and the culmination and aftermath of twenty-five years of American national and cultural thrusting towards the future. The Minimal style accurately portrayed the vast, directionless delights and terrors that American and twentieth century cultures both created and became.

In the specialized context of the American art movements, Minimalism was the last phase of a quarter century-long infatuation of the American art establishment with an ideology of art-as-success. Minimal Art was the final contemporary American art movement; no fabulously disruptive next form or further stage of the avant-garde process has followed it. The movement dissipated, almost mechanically, into fractional aesthetic and mystical systems, and deadpan frivolities. The competition has been slight and redundant in a minimal way, and has lacked the power of the dominant Minimal movement. Mixed media forms were tremendous, temporary successes, but they were eclectic and diffuse, and their influence was assimilated rapidly. *Figurative* art styles have been either professional-calibre Pop-Minimal events, or they have tended to be amateurishly inept and/or repellent. (Contemporary artists in

Europe and America long ago *tragically* lost the art of rendering art about living, breathing creation; their works have expressed a fatalistic disinterest in the subject for nearly a half-century.) Minimal Art inspired second-rate historical correspondences with American nineteenth century propaganda and spectacle painting styles; it sparked a brief flare-up of interest in Symbolism and Rosicrucianism.

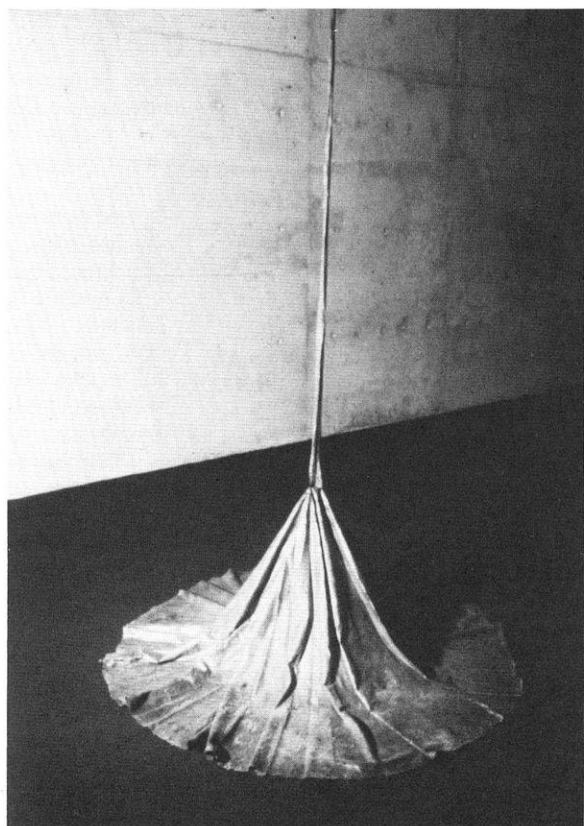
At the peak of their popularity and power in the late 1960's, American Minimal art forms were uncompromising carriers of huge, ugly, gothic messages and inferences about the end of art, America and the world. Minimal works expressed tremendous aesthetic and social voids and imbalances. Artists competed feverishly to rival and neutralize the impact of dreadful daily news events.

Since the 1960's the contemporary minimal mentality of artists and politicians has become an integrated fact of American and twentieth century culture generally. There is no longer any need for anyone to strive to establish it. The mentality is in place and power, in the Soho artists' district in New York City and in the white house in Washington, D. C. The mentality has the whole perfected array of twentieth century dehumanizing forces and tendencies behind it—computerization, mammoth private and governmental institutions, conglomerate communications and entertainment industries—and it has both the conceptual and literal images of the whole earth before it to manipulate or destroy.

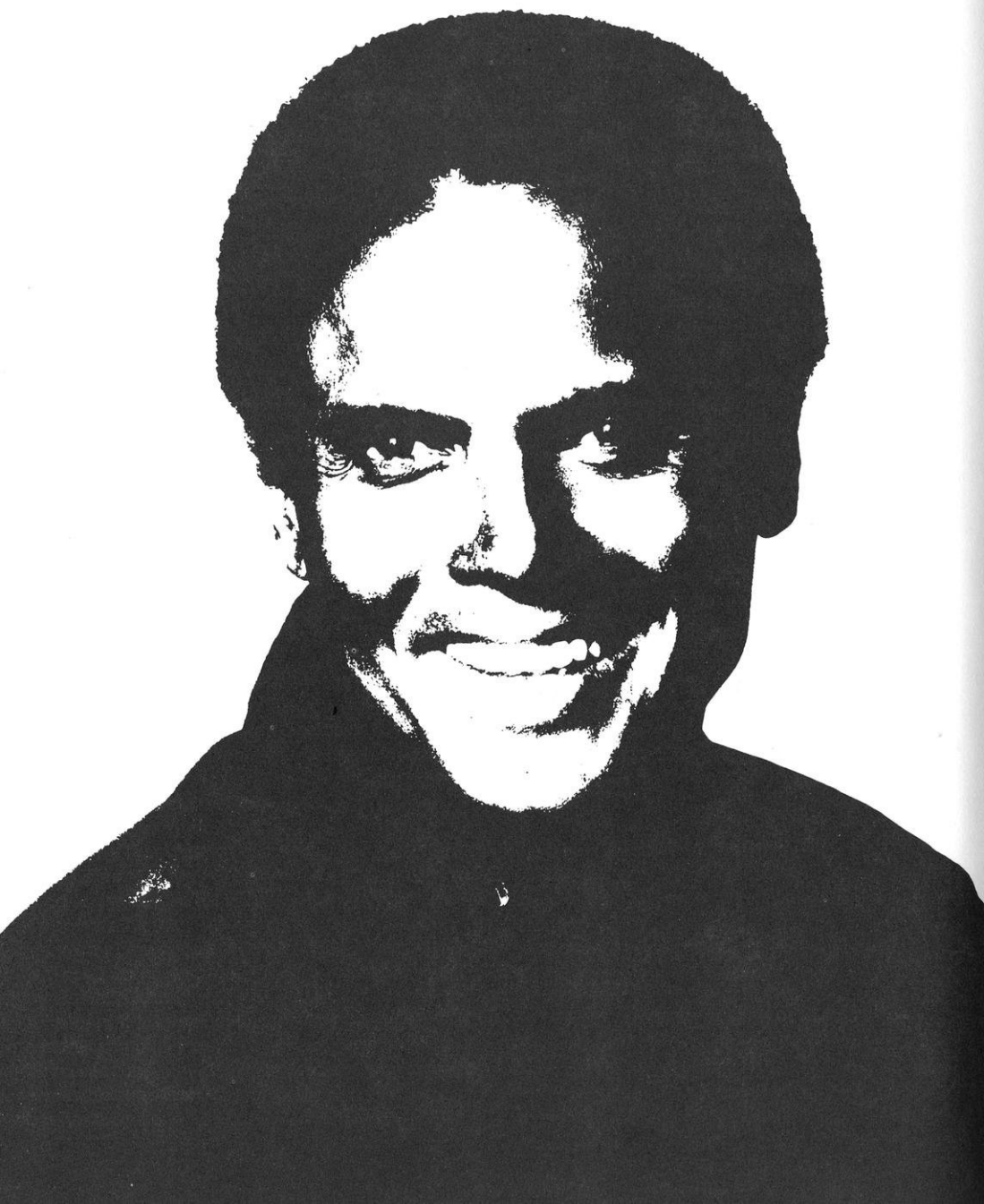
The principle of the unlimited is traditionally enormously tempting to anyone who is receptive to it and potentially able to take the advantage. Our romantic period in art, politics, industry and communications has, in large measure, been founded on a belief in the reality of the ego and in the legitimacy and desirability of responding to its demands for essentially unlimited, imaginary power.

It is rudimentary theology that the unlimited is the false and evil principle and that limits are good and also natural facts. Minimalism is a truthful contemporary phenomenon because it is both the culminating form of this century's and this country's romantic excesses in art, technology, politics, business, communications and entertainment, and the natural entropic limit to their further physical and metaphysical expansion. □





concerns and outlooks:  
a performing artist views  
the contours of contemporary  
american culture



by Harry Belafonte

*Mr. Belafonte is a highly acclaimed singer-actor, who has for several decades been a star performer on the Broadway stage, on television, in the movies, and on concert tour throughout the United States. He is the recipient of a number of distinguished awards for his achievements as a performing artist. This article is an edited version of a talk delivered by Mr. Belafonte to the National Press Club luncheon on September 24, 1973.*

Something that has always burned very deeply in my conscience is the fact that a nation as powerful as this one should be so terribly delinquent in its responsibility to its institutions of culture—in making available to them those necessary resources which could bring great rewards to the community. I have often heard whenever I talk about subsidy of the arts that if it had to come in any large extent from the government that this would not be to the best interests of a free society and a free culture because governmental bodies would perhaps impose all kinds of restrictions on the creative forces. I always point out that in the 1930's, at a time when this country was devastated by the Great Depression, that it was in fact government subsidy that gave the United States of America a renaissance the like of which it has yet to see again. It was in the WPA projects that Orson Welles came to the forefront; it was in the WPA projects that Katherine Dunham created her dance company and brought this nation some most vibrant and meaningful dance experiences. Out of these projects also came a number of musicians and symphonic institutions. As a result, from the 1930's until I'd say the early '50's much of this nation thrived on all that came out of those rich experiences. They gave a foundation to the development of such playwrights as Clifford Odets. Langston Hughes, an important black poet, was able to receive sufficient subsidies and grants to permit him to pursue very freely his interests as a writer.

Since that time the nation has grown. Television became a very important vehicle in the daily lives of people, and although one can make many excuses for television, in some instances no excuses are needed at all because I think the media has perfected itself

when it comes to things like sports and the dissemination of news and the development of other documentary forms. Nevertheless, it has still been an institution which has not been able to measure up to making available those gifts and those platforms, out of which truly creative work can grow. I once again make a plea on behalf of subsidy for the arts.

A while ago when I was visiting in Madison, Wisconsin, which is a beautiful university town, I picked up a paper and I saw that a bill was on the floor of the Congress that had to do with subsidy of the arts and it was very hard for me to get information about that bill from any of the newspapers that I called in the area, so I called one of my many Congressmen (I say many because I have worked through the years to assist some individuals whom I thought worthy of a position in Congress. I have worked to help get them elected). And in this instance it was Andrew Young, my congressman from Georgia, and I was grateful to him for having his staff send me the Congressional Record, which I read with great interest. I found that the Congress was taking great pride in the fact that it had, through the guidance and help of President Nixon, almost doubled the gifts that were being given to the nation at large for subsidy to the arts. The previous year it had been eighty million, and it was now a hundred and forty million, because the bill had been approved by both houses of Congress. As I read the statements made by the various Congressmen, I was fascinated by how much noise could be made about so little. In this connection I was told by a member of the press that perhaps my attitude was a bit harsh, because when I first started on my own personal campaign for subsidy there was nothing and now we see that there's a hundred and forty million dollars available to the arts and the humanities. Since it is equally divided between the two that meant actually only seventy million for the arts, which roughly amounts to a commitment of about thirty-two cents per citizen in this country. Of all the nations that subsidize the arts, West Germany has perhaps the most intense commitment in that it gives a little better than \$2.50 per citizen; and I think that England and France also fall in that category. And here we are in the United States the lowest on the list of the larger nations in the Western bloc.

Even those who are not familiar with the problems that many of us in the arts face would have to look on this as something meaningful. What disturbs me deeply, you see, is that the amount of money appropriated by the Congress for assistance in the arts would really be just enough for instance, to make the cultural capital of the world, New York City, perhaps a little more self-sufficient than it is today. I walk through the streets of my home city and I do so with great anxiety and great apprehension not just because as a citizen I am caught up by the waves of fear and anxiety and intimidation which are present in all of our cities, but I see very ominous things taking place. I find the theatre there in a death struggle because of the inability of audiences to come, to lend their assistance, to intensify their commitment to theatre-going. A great deal can be said about the fact that the theatre sometimes is its own worst enemy. Our prices are outrageous. The fees that many of us receive for our services are outrageous. As one who receives large fees for his services, I believe they are outrageous. I will continue to participate in that outrageousness until I find that I can become part of a better scheme of ideas and plans that are executed to bring relief to the need for stronger forces of creativity in the theatre and give me a greater sense of longevity about my career as an artist. Much of the money I make goes in taxes. A lot of it I save to insure a comfortable retirement and to provide for my family needs, and also those of my children. No matter what happens to me, my children already know that they will not be left large sums of money, because I don't believe in that. They will be helped to the degree that they can get through advanced institutions of learning and then go out and make it on their own. The rest of what I'm funded goes into assisting the social causes that I have great interest in. I'm very heavily involved in giving to cultural institutions and setting up scholarships for students who come from all over the world to further their interest in the arts.

What does concern me, you see, is that costs in the theatres have spiraled, and in the spiraling people have begun to play it very safe, and as a consequence there is little adventure in the theatre. There's very little experimenting going on. In the days of the WPA artists were not paid much, just enough to sustain themselves; yet those men and women

brought great gifts to the theatre, not only as writers but also as performers. What happened that makes all of this not visible, when we are in fact richer than we have ever been and are capable of doing more than we have ever been capable of doing before? The question puzzles me. I think part of the answer can be found in the national personality; we are more and more driven by greed and profit. For when a young writer gives evidence of having a great gift, he's then taken off to Hollywood or other places and is threatened and seduced by the fact that he will receive large sums of money for turning out absolute mediocrity. The national image suffers. The national expression suffers.

When I look at television, even those programs that sometimes venture to be a bit better than pedestrian and to bring new ideas and new gifts to the community, I see them consistently at the end of each season winning awards and great statements are made about the kind of contribution that they have made. At the same time they are almost invariably cut off from further expression on the networks and sent into oblivion.

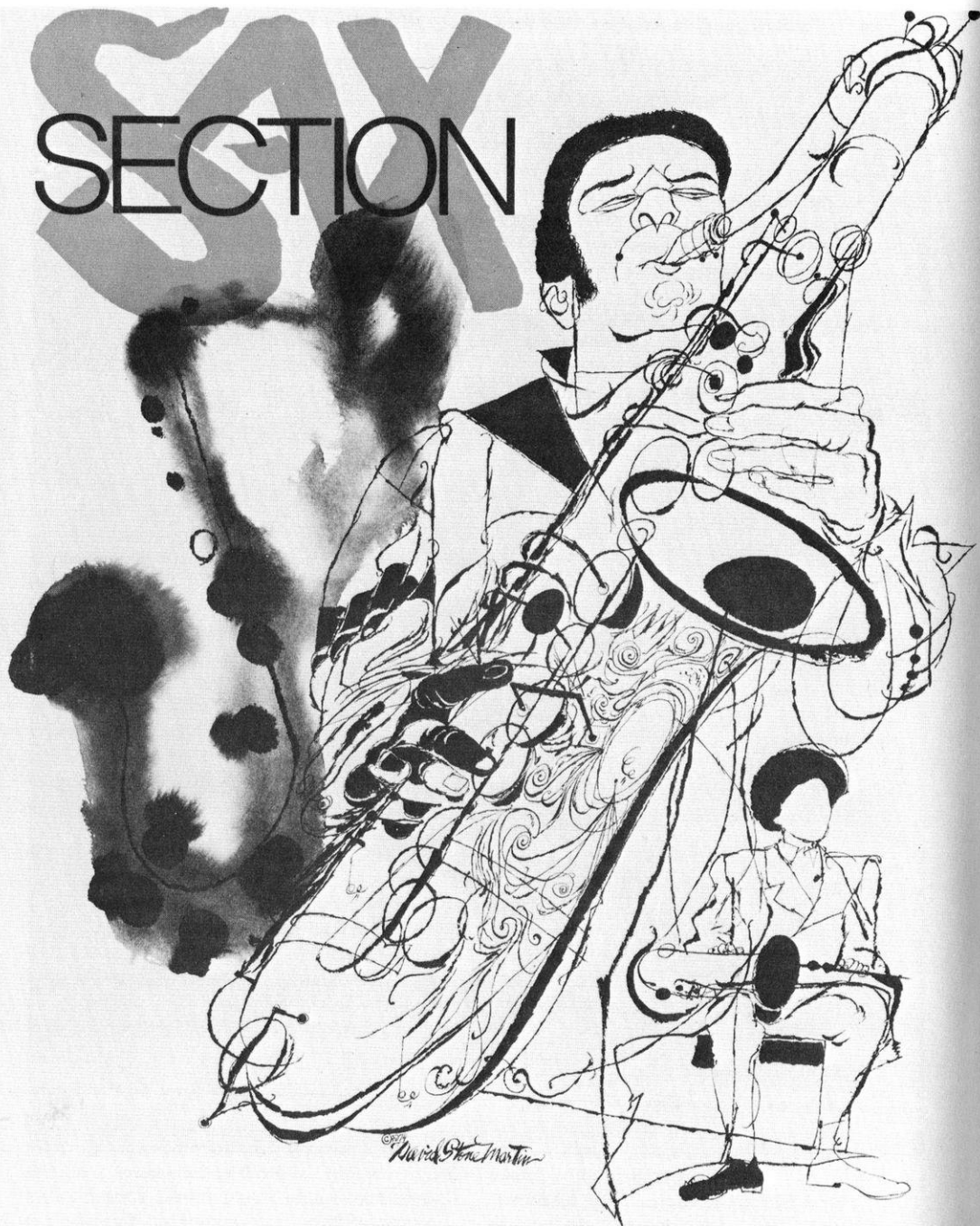
I have never felt that my position as a successful artist in America was going to be an ongoing affair, that it was not going to be at one point or another threatened or begin to lose its impetus or its power. I don't think any artist can continue indefinitely, especially if you are in the performing arts. Of course, a painter or a composer or a writer can go on and on and on. But if you are a singer, who has been cursed as I have been, to have cut a certain figure when you are young, you find when you are approaching the age of seventy that you are expected to look the way you did when you were twenty-two. That's very hard, and it's very difficult to make the transition from the image of youth and a certain kind of vitality to that of old age and a certain kind of statesmanship.

In the last couple of years I have become concerned that perhaps I had come to that time in life when my role as an artist was becoming obsolete because I found the audiences dwindling in the major cities that I had been traditionally touring. And then I discovered a very curious thing, that what plagued me was not just an individual problem, for this was also the experience of other performers. When I go to Boston, when I go





# SAX SECTION



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NY Jazz Museum 125 W 55, N.Y.C., March 19 - June 30 '74

to Chicago, when I go to Philadelphia, I find the streets in the downtown area absolutely barren, I find that no one walks the streets. It's even hard to see trucks at night, which usually did a great deal of work in the cities—I don't even see them. It's almost as if some holocaust had hit and that there was absolutely no life left in these cities at all.

Theatre is an art that is practiced at night. We can start the performances at 7:00 or we can start them at 8:30, and many superficial efforts have been made to entice people to come to the theatres at night. They don't. New York City suffers terribly. It is the center of much that goes on in our life culturally. The theatres are desperate. Costs keep spiraling, the work keeps getting less and less, the unemployment rates in the ranks of our unions are higher than seventy-five percent. In recent testimony before a Senatorial committee one union representative pointed out that a preponderant majority of its membership lived below the poverty standards because they averaged \$2500 or less a year as artists.

During the day I do see the cities filled with people and this makes me conclude that the city is just an instrument of commerce. You are in at nine and great flurries of activity take place, and then by five or six you leave—and the city is abandoned. What caused me to feel a little more secure about my position as an artist was that I found that when I went to the new communities in the suburban areas which are now wholly self-contained—they have their own schools there now, they have their own hospitals, they have their own theatres and legitimate centers for the performing arts—the audiences are there, they still turn out. What in essence has taken place is that they just refuse to come back into the cities at night because of fear and intimidation. On the weekends I find that the cities are in fact quite crowded and they are primarily filled with blacks and Puerto Ricans and people of ethnic origins other than white. I even find in some instances that even the black members of the society who are affluent are now becoming part of the suburban group; they too have deserted the city. That means that if we are to make a livelihood as artists that we must pursue our audiences because we are incapable of bringing our audiences into our traditional institutions. If we abandon the theatres in the areas where they have

traditionally been, then they will have to be turned into warehouses or office space because they have no more proper role. So that subsidy of the arts to the tune of a mere seventy million is wholly inadequate. It means very little.

To take a somewhat more positive note, it is true that if one or two playwrights, or a great musician, comes out of this subsidy, we would have to say that it did after all have some value. But, will it really bring another Duke Ellington into the world? Will it help bring another Lorraine Hansberry? Will it help find another Arthur Miller or Paddy Chayefsky? Will it help find another Leonard Bernstein, another Katherine Dunham, another Jerry Robins? I think we as a nation have to pay very close attention to what is happening to us culturally.

The motion picture industry is in the worst position it has ever been. It doesn't seem to be able to do anything right at all. There was a time when they spent vast amounts of money to make pictures and they found that that was non-productive in terms of audience response. Now they spend infinitely less and they find out that audiences still do not respond. I dare say that much of that is due to the level of the material that is being disseminated.

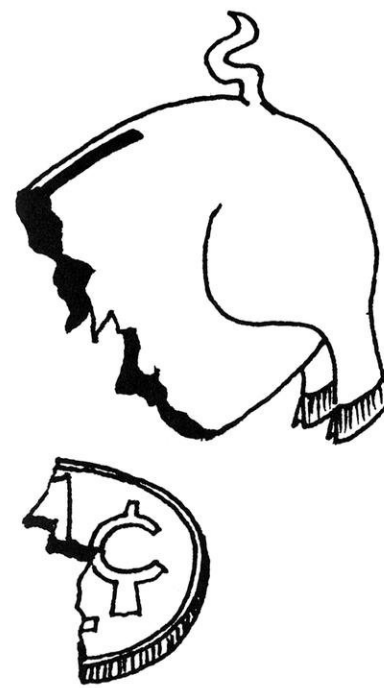
But almost all of our performing arts institutions seem incapable of calling upon the services of artists without trapping and intimidating them by the profit motive. When I'm in England, for instance, I look with envy at Sir Laurence Olivier and at Albert Finney, friends of mine who are masters of the performing arts, because these men can go and be seen in a very bad play and not have their careers suffer for it. They may be seen in maybe two or three bad plays in a row but nothing happens to their image as an artist, because it is accepted that they have already established themselves, that they are great performers, that they in fact possess genius. Every time they appear the community does not make a new judgment on them as artists. Here in America if I were to be in two or three failures in a row I would have to say that much of my career would be literally over. Because if I cannot produce the proper box office results, the institutions that ask for my services will no longer want them. So I feel

trapped. I feel trapped because it is difficult for me to go and experiment. I would pay too high a price should I fail. Yet, if there were institutions that were available for me to do just that, to experiment, I tell you the truth I would be willing for very little money, if any at all, to go and spend many weeks involving myself in the personality of these institutions because such an experience would feed me. I am talking about the capacity to be able to go in and to be thought absolutely wrong in what I do as an artist, because in the wrongness I might be making a greater effort at something that would bring new dimensions to our life and to our culture.

When I go to France and I sit with Yves Montand, or to Italy to visit with Marcello Mastroianni, or I go to certain countries in Latin America (which happen oddly enough to be dictatorships), I find that even there the artists fare better, because the whole community response to these artists and what they do is qualitatively different. It is different because the artists are not motivated by just the profit motive, they express themselves very fully and very freely. Although I live in a free country, or relatively free, and I have the right to express myself as I would want to as an artist, I find that there are very few institutions that will support my need to experiment.

If you examine developments carefully, you will find that as a consequence of the abandonment of our cities that very little of the money appropriated by Congress for the arts goes to the fulfillment of the hopes and the desires of those very people to whom the cities have been left—meaning the blacks and the people of color from other ethnic groups. First of all, the black community has never had a tradition of theatre-going. We've always as a people had a great tradition of performance in the theatre because we have given; we have brought great gifts to the theatre and the theatre has rewarded many of us with prominence in the community (more so today than in the past, although even in the past we could boast of men and women of great account). So that when I find myself in the cities, I discern that the black community, which has had no tradition of going to the theatre, must first of all gain that experience. But you must realize that the black community simply does not have the economic wherewithal to be able to afford prices as

high as \$12.00 and sometimes \$15.00 a ticket. (And until this season I have refused to charge more than \$7.50). I find that I'm going to have to make a drastic reappraisal of what I'm doing in the theatre, because there is just no way to ask the community to pay that kind of money to come to see me. The citizens just cannot do it. They are too preoccupied with the economy; they are too preoccupied with things that demoralize the nation at large like Watergate and what else. The nation is gripped with a certain kind of fear, not fear that is visible or quite tangible as much as it is a deep apprehension about what's happening to our moral structure as a nation. So that although I applaud the fact that Congress has passed a bill that gives us a bit more than we have had in the past, as a citizen who comes from a life style which is replete with black experiences (and the Congress and other institutions have boasted of what they have done for the black community), I must say that if you took a survey in the black community itself you would find that for their needs the subsidy is wholly inadequate. And the inadequacy expresses itself by the very fact that most of our white brothers and sisters find it impossible to live in those communities with us, because they cannot participate on the level at which we are forced to live. And we are saying that we would like to be able to participate with them, and at



the level that they can afford to live. I say that we cannot be glib and superficial about those things that concern our culture, because it is in fact our mainstream. Our art is our mainstream. The most that is remembered about any great society is reflected in the statues that are left behind, in the music that is left behind, and in the literature that is left behind. As a performer, I'm not looking for immortality, I'm just looking to be able to the best of my ability to fulfill my life with those things that interest me as a committed citizen.

Those individuals who are critics need to be a little more astute about what plagues us as artists, and not just sit there and smugly rip us off (knowing that they in fact will never be reproached in any way that's really meaningful by those of us who are defenseless). It's very hard to fight a critic, especially if he comes from the sports page. I guess that they mean well but many who criticize what I do musically do not even know the scales of music. We have to face that sometimes. And the reason I make such a point about the role of critics is that often they upbraid us for supposed shortcomings that are totally beyond our control (not totally, nothing is totally beyond anyone's control), but which actually represent failures in vision of those who control the institutions of culture and communication.

I think the artists, too, have to exercise a greater sense of responsibility about how they are being used, for they cannot continually diminish their own sense of integrity and their own values to pursue nothing but the almighty dollar. I think we have to say no to many things. I think that the black community in particular is charged with a unique cultural responsibility. As cruel as it may sound, I very strongly believe that, because the black community at this time is expressing itself very vigorously about its expressive needs in the fields of theatre and motion picture. Particularly in regard to motion pictures the black community has made itself felt very powerfully in how it uses its dollars to support those things which are relevant to it as a community. But I'm wholly appalled at the fact that most of my peers, and some who are much younger than I, do not have a greater sense of nobility about what they are doing as artists. I think *Super Fly* and a host of like rip-off flicks are not to the best interests of the black community, nor do they project the best interests of the artists who make them. I do not mean to suggest that these films should not be permitted to be made, for I believe in free cultural institutions. I believe that the nation can withstand anything that is done in the arts as long as it is done honestly and there is a fair balance about what it sees.

I remember in my youth I had the example of Joe Louis, I had Paul Robeson, I had Canada Lee, but I also had a host of lesser black images that came primarily through film. And I chose the ones which I would emulate. Those who would criticize me say, "Well, you have made your fortune, it is easy for you to speak." But in making my fortune I had to opt which way to go. Was I prepared to do Uncle Tom roles, was I prepared to participate on a low level in media just to become economically solvent, or did I say "no" to them? Well, I think many of us (Sidney Portier included, because he and I shared many of the same experiences) said "no." I don't suggest by that that we've done all the things that are best and most worthy of us as artists, but we have never moved without a sense of integrity, without a sense of community responsibility. And I think that many of the young black artists who are doing the *Super Fly*s and making the rip-off have to realize that they have an infinitely greater responsibility to what they are serving

—a responsibility not just to the black community in terms of its own identity, but also to what is being said to the white community about what truly exists. So I applaud a film, for instance, like *Sounder*. I think *Sounder* is a beautiful film. It's quite mature and it brings a gift of humanity and sensitivity about a certain experience within a black family. I think that's important. I just don't think that there are enough of them. I think that although one may have reservations about what *Buck and the Preacher*, a western that I made with Sidney Portier, reflects artistically, that one can still look back at it with a great sense of achievement. Certainly Sidney and I do, because of what we tried to impart about black history in this country in the middle of the nineteenth century.

I don't mean to simplify any of this. I don't mean to suggest that the problem is not vast and complicated but I think that if we care about the United States and its potential to bring greatness and great gifts to the world, if we care about what will happen to us as a nation, if we care about ending the polarization, if we care about really fulfilling the mandate that we unlike any other nation possess, then I think we all have the responsibility to make sure that our arts express themselves more fully and with a greater sense of commitment.

I close with a quote from Gorky, the Russian writer, that I've always used as a guideline for my own work as an artist. In a debate with Tolstoy he once said:

*The artist has a responsibility to reflect the community as it is and its experiences as they are, but he also has a larger responsibility and that is to reflect the life of the community as it should be.*

And I would like to be able to do that. But I need the assistance of my government and I need the assistance of the citizens of this country. □









# an interview with michael s. harper

by Abraham Chapman

*Mr. Chapman teaches American literature and ethnic literature at the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point. He has edited three collections of Afro-American writing and has recently completed a comprehensive anthology of Jewish—American literature which will be published in December.*

With five books of poems published between 1970 and 1973 and poetry readings in colleges and universities from coast to coast, Michael S. Harper has achieved wide recognition as a significant contemporary American poet and a distinctive Black poet of the seventies. His books, in the order of their publication, are: *Dear John, Dear Coltrane* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970); *History Is Your Own Heartbeat* (University of Illinois Press, 1971); *Photographs: Negatives: History as Apple Tree* (Scarab Press, 1972); *Song: I Want A Witness* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972); and *Debridement* (Doubleday, 1973). His sixth collection of poems, *Nightmare Begins Responsibility*, will be published by the University of Illinois Press in the fall, 1974.

History appears in two of his book titles: first both very intimately and as a simple statement of fact "history is your own heartbeat" and then in an organic nature simile "as apple tree." This is one of the clues to his poetic world: his todayness is indissolubly linked with a living awareness of man's long past, human and literary, with Black life and literature, with American life and literature, with world literature.

Gwendolyn Brooks has said of his work: "Michael Harper's poetry is vigorous as well as brilliant. It has an unafraid strength. Although technically dextrous, it differs magnificently from the customary methodical product of today, which is so often without fire, without tense pulse, without rich guts. Here is obvious blood-stuffed life. Here is illumination, black-based and other."

The American Academy of Arts and Letters and National Institute of Arts and Letters have awarded Harper the following citation: "To Michael S. Harper, born in Brooklyn in 1938, whose grave, blunt poems deal with human and black experience simultaneously, welcoming white Americans into their music as far as our imaginations and hearts permit and our history entitles us to go."

*History Is Your Own Heartbeat*, his second book, was honored by the Black Academy of Arts and Letters with its Poetry Award for 1971.

Harper has been poet-in-residence at Lewis and Clark College and visiting lecturer in literature at Reed College (both in Portland, Oregon), associate professor of English and consultant in Black studies at California State College at Hayward, and was a Fellow at The Center for Advanced Study of the University of Illinois for the academic year 1970-71. He is now Professor of English and Director of Writing Program at Brown University and lives in Rhode Island with his wife and three children.

The following interview took place in May 1973 in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

**Chapman:** Let me start by asking you a question which may be a little big. Why do you write?

**Harper:** Well, I must. I think I write because I must. That's probably the simplest answer. One's life either atrophies or one accepts the cudgel, or the baton, and carries it in the line of tradition, out of one's forebears, out of one's cultural contributions, connections. One takes it as far as he can.

**Chapman:** Do you feel the past?

**Harper:** Very deeply. Out of the past come the present and the future and there's a kind of balance between past and future. I would

say there is a continuum and I'm only one aspect of a very large continuum.

**Chapman:** How big?

**Harper:** As long as the world exists and as long as it has existed.

**Chapman:** Why do you write poetry?

**Harper:** I write poetry because I think poetry is the most mysterious of the Arts. It has a magical quality. I'm an intuitive, mystery-oriented person. A poet has the task of distilling information into metaphor, into landscape, into images, which are integrated, which are internalized through the individual into the culture. A poet has the most difficult task: to be functional in the long line of tradition, the long line of the continuum of human culture. It is *through* the poet that the spirit flows. I suspect that one does not choose to be a poet, one finds out that one is. It's not his conscious choice, one does not will oneself to be a poet, but finds that one is and therefore tries to live up to one's duties and responsibilities, dictates that come to one through one's sensory antennae. One finds one can't be anything else. You have a job to do, a function, and you must live up to that function, and that has to do with *servng*, with making yourself available, so that you can do the kinds of cosmic duties, human relationships, that are in the cards that you do; and you'd better do them.

**Chapman:** With all your stress on mystery, magic and intuition, you're a thinking poet and what is your conception of poetry?

**Harper:** I don't believe in schisms. I don't believe in either/or, I believe in *both/and*. I'm not a Cartesian poet, I'm not a cerebral poet. There has to be a balance between "seen" and "unseen" and that balance has to do with concepts, with integrity, with being able to speak to the very important questions, human questions and one's relationship with the cosmos. Poets have to be concerned with things that are man-made, that man constructs, as well as with that of which he is a part but has not made. Man has a predisposition to know, and there's a balance between that aspect of man's being that does want to know and that aspect of man's being that doesn't want to know. And there is a

tremendous tension between these two areas and there are times when the balance tends to lean in one direction or the other. The emphasis should always be on unity in diversity, always unity in diversity to fight against tunnel vision, to get the widest possible spectrum, because the metaphor of the poet is the horizon: it is the process of being, always the process of essential balance. Poetry is about process. It's not a static reality, it is a vibrant living continuum.

**Chapman:** But it's only a moment in the process.

**Harper:** It's only a moment in cosmic terms, but every moment is not only a summary of the parts but an extension of the whole, whatever it is. There is in the moment a microcosm of the cosmos, and everything depends on scale. Language is the magical device whereby the microcosm and the cosmos are united; speech is sacred. Speech can also be contaminated, it can be co-opted: therefore one must be responsible to it because it is the sole aspect of man's creation in this large picture, you know, man's province. The language, speech, is man's province, and man is the caretaker. He can be an idolator also, he can contaminate, and of course he does, in many ways. But the business of thinking and of thought has to do with being responsible to one's environment.

Man has the capacity to be responsible to his environment and one can only be responsible to his environment by being responsible first of all to human beings. A man is not an abstraction, "a man is another man's face," I said that in a poem once, "A man is another man's face." You see yourself in the eyes of someone else. You never see yourself as Narcissus looking in the mirror: *self-preoccupation is a bad mirror*. Poetry is other-directed, as well as interior, and the relationship strives for balance. The poet is the intermediary between the inner and outer reality, between the internal and external world. The poet speaks about that delicate balance, that transition between the two; you need both, of course, to be energized and to be sustained, to be vibrant and to create: poets always emphasize *that people do— that people create themselves*.

**Chapman:** More specifically, what are you trying to do in your own poems?

**Harper:** In my own poems, I'm trying to retrieve and connect tradition and the history of my own people and therefore the history of the world. We in America suffer from a tremendous amnesia. Some call it "Manifest Destiny." What does it mean to move, to be constantly moving away from one's responsibilities, annihilating the environment, using the environment, trying to overcome the environment, but not trying to be responsible to it, moving on in this incredible westward expansion across the ocean and then to the moon and wherever, to feed the moon? There's the very tenuous "business" of operating on one's historical legacies. One does not build in a vacuum, one builds on the insights and the accomplishments, the strengths, the terrors, the pain of one's people. The individual connection one has with the history of one's people is only an aspect in a much larger connection with all people. There is always a relationship between the particular experience and the more generalized application to mankind. I'm writing about human relationships and *humane values*. My own concern has to do with creating an accurate image, a perceptual image, about how Black people humanized this country, brought a special kind of vitality to this country, not in a "manifest" vacuum—but in relation to historical forces, with cosmology, with new scientific research, with expansion: the African slave trade and international markets, the search for new land, and variant conceptions of conflicting world-views. To speak about time and place and my own people as a kind of metaphor can be extended and applied to everybody, because I think everybody has a kind of kinship tie with everybody else, if one can only find the keys, *and there are keys*.

**Chapman:** In what you said, there's almost an implicit or inherent answer to my next question but I'll ask it anyway. Do you see any contradiction between being a Black poet and an American poet?

**Harper:** None at all. They are two aspects of the same story, two ways of telling the same story. I'm both/and, not either/or. We've got to work against compartmentalizing knowledge, experience, and perceptions. I share a

world; I share perceptual parameters, felt emotions. We share the earth and we share the same *requirements* for human living. The task of the Black poet is to redeem, to rejuvenate, to restore and to relate to this continuum. That is my function: speak truth to the people, no matter what, speak as beautifully, as truthfully, as one can. Poetry is about beauty, about truth, about reality. A poet has a responsibility to his people. And when I say people, I mean all people; in unity there is diversity—in diversity there is unity, so I don't find any kind of contradiction.

**Chapman:** Do you think there's any special kind of music that you bring to American poetry, as a Black poet?

**Harper:** Well, I think that there are aspects to my own particular music, my own particular frequency—my word is *modality*; my own particular modality, which I think speaks to the special nature of the Black man and his condition and his contributions.

**Chapman:** Can I stop you for a minute?

**Harper:** Sure.

**Chapman:** That's a big word, *modality*, and for most American ears, it's a very unclear word. Maybe we can not only get a word definition but hear a piece of modality, musically.

**Harper:** Okay. Well, Charlie Parker or John Coltrane. Modality is irreducible. Let me give you some parameters, let's not define it in one single sentence, let's attribute some parameters to it. Modes are forces; the primary forces for men are life forces. Modality is always about relationships; modality is also about energy, energy irreducible and true only unto itself. What that means is that the Cartesian analogical way of looking at the world will not do for modality. A mode is true only unto itself and can only be understood inside the modality, so that when one gets into a heavily schizophrenic method of analysis, the Western orientation of division between denotative/connotative, body/mind, life/spirit, soul/body, mind/heart, that is a way of misunderstanding what modality is: *modality is always about unity*. It speaks the truth of that particular experience unto itself—you don't begin to talk about the mode of Black people in America by talking about

Chinese art or by talking about anything which doesn't have to do with the intrinsic values operating within the mode. Modes are energy sources, and they rejuvenate; they are spiritual, and what they tend to bring out are tensions resolved through a morality worked out between people. There is no objectification of a mode. A mode's application depends on human investment and human enterprises. A mode is always revealed.\*

**Chapman:** Perhaps then, let's listen to Coltrane to hear what you're saying. What shall I play?

**Harper:** Well, why don't you play John Coltrane's "Alabama" on a record, *Coltrane Live at Birdland*, issued in 1964.

(music)

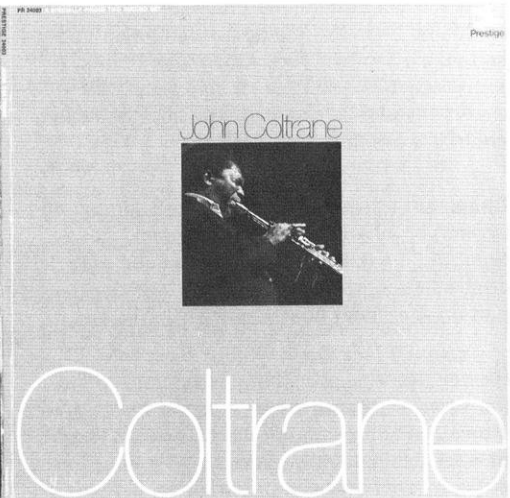
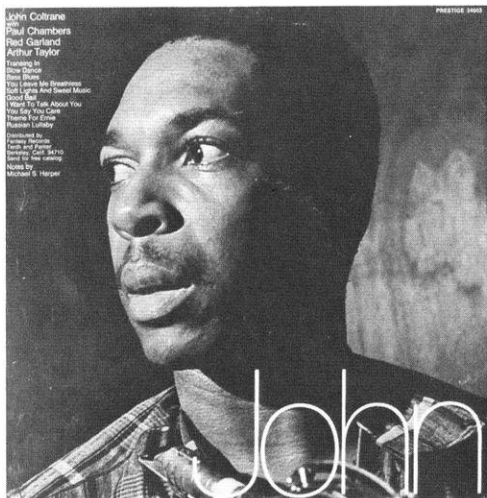
**Chapman:** There are a lot of Americans who can listen to this, but not hear it. What do you hear in it and what do you hear in it that evokes the word modality?

**Harper:** Well, first of all, the background story of this particular composition is important and I'd like to quickly tell you about it. Coltrane was riding on a train from New York to

Philadelphia reading a newspaper account of Martin Luther King's eulogy of four Black girls blown up in a Birmingham church in 1963. Out of the rhythms of that eulogy Coltrane created this melody, "Alabama." And the recontextualization of that kind of experience into music is *essentially* the most humanizing element of what artistry is all about in America: that particular historical moment was important musically to Coltrane. And the only way he could express the modality of Black people in all their various attitudes and aspects was to translate this particular prose rhythm into a kind of musical dirge, a eulogy. One can hear that in the energy of the sounds played because the last moments in "Alabama" are *essentially* the simulation of a human cry, the word revealed. I've written a poem which deals with this recontextualization in poetic terms, in terms of my own family, and in terms of the tradition. It's called "Here Where Coltrane Is" and it's about living in a place, Portland, Oregon, and talking about Coltrane's music. The detail of Coltrane riding on the train is, in fact, inclusive in this poem. I'd like to follow it up with a eulogy of my own for Coltrane called "Dear John, Dear Coltrane" which uses the technique of personal and historical experience fused into an aesthetic of speech and music.

\*Note: for a commentary on Coltrane's music see Coltrane, two-album Prestige re-release, liner notes by Michael S. Harper, where poems

are used to comment on Coltrane's music, on modality and the high mode.





*a love supreme, a love supreme*  
*a love supreme, a love supreme*

Sex fingers toes  
 in the marketplace  
 near your father's church  
 in Hamlet, North Carolina—  
 witness to this love  
 in this calm fallow  
 of these minds,  
 there is no substitute for pain:  
 genitals gone or going,  
 seed burned out,  
 you tuck the roots in the earth,  
 turn back, and move  
 by river through the swamps,  
 singing: *a love supreme, a love supreme;*  
 what does it all mean?  
 Loss, so great each black  
 woman expects your failure  
 in mute change, the seed gone.  
 You plod up into the electric city—  
 your song now crystal and  
 the blues. You pick up the horn  
 with some will and blow  
 into the freezing night:  
*a love supreme, a love supreme—*

Dawn comes and you cook  
 up the thick sin 'tween  
 impotence and death, fuel  
 the tenor sax cannibal  
 heart, genitals and sweat  
 that makes you clean—  
*a love supreme, a love supreme—*

*Why you so black?*  
*cause I am*  
*why you so funky?*  
*cause I am*  
*why you so black?*  
*cause I am*  
*why you so sweet?*  
*cause I am*  
*why you so black?*  
*cause I am*  
*a love supreme, a love supreme:*

So sick  
 you couldn't play *Naima*,  
 so flat we ached  
 for song you'd concealed  
 with your own blood,  
 your diseased liver gave  
 out its purity,  
 the inflated heart  
 pumps out, the tenor kiss,  
 tenor love:  
*a love supreme, a love supreme—*  
*a love supreme, a love supreme—*

Michael S. Harper\*

**Chapman:** If I understand you then, perhaps your use of the word modality is something like the ancient Chinese Taoist view, that everything has its own nature and everything is part of a universal order. The thingness of the thing, the birdness of a bird, the roseness of a rose, the fishness of a fish, and yet each of these distinct things has its own nature, as part of the universal order which holds together all of these different things.

**Harper:** Well, a mode reveals its own truth on its own terms: a mode is only true unto itself. Of course, what I'm concerned about is the artistic arrangement of human essentials into the kind of complement whereby certain qualities can be dramatized, certain attributes can be connected to one another which do not in themselves seem to have relationships, which they in fact do have in a cosmic hierarchy. The transference of energy, Coltrane's end in biological form, by no means means that he does not exist. He's internalized into other conventions. He's internalized into my life; he's internalized in the promise of the lives of my children and in the universe. He is part of our tradition; my function is to carry that particular tradition, and his placement in it, into the human fabric, the fabric of humane relations, to make his music part of a living reality, seen and unseen.

**Chapman:** Of course, Coltrane is Coltrane and Harper is Harper, but do you think it's necessary to hear what Coltrane is doing musically to be able to hear what Harper is doing poetically?

**Harper:** Well, let's say that I don't compromise the integrity of one particular convention by assuming that I can speak for it. I think it speaks for itself. Music and poetry are complementary. There are common qualities, there is relationship, there is an energy relationship, but the music of Coltrane is true unto itself and should not be compared to my own poetry. But there is a relationship, and Coltrane's music does energize me. It makes me *do* in my context, to create images of power and transformation, in my particular form and in the conventions which I think are only aspects of the same tradition. It makes me perform my particular functions because we're also talking about technique as a means of expressing the high mode. In jazz musicians, as in poets who really know their discipline, technique is only in service to the

articulate function and continuation of tradition as revealed truth, as testimony to the highest law. The assumption is not that because an individual plays in a particular way, that he is not aware of the techniques, but that technique can only be ascertained through the function. A musician who doesn't have his technical components down cannot carry the music, he cannot make the spirit flow. The prerequisite for playing music, as Coltrane did, was to learn one's instrument, to get one's technique down.

That same is applicable in my case. I've studied Black and American poetic traditions and selected, chosen, connected myself with those I think are best able to express what I want to do, what I am. There is a responsibility and a connection between my own technique and my own poetic traditions—what I come out of and what is *essentially* an assortment of Black idioms and Black traditional motifs which fit into a much larger picture. That larger picture has to do with American institutions, the American lexicon, the American landscape—how an individual comes to ascertain what is the province of one's thought and feeling and one's expression. And I think I have responsibilities to heroic traditions which are not only connected with one's idiom, one's own ethnic province, but also with the larger concern of the American landscape, both in terms of its artistic achievements and its historical parameters and demands. And the business about demands has to do with finding out what one's relationship should be to an environment which calls for a totally new aesthetic, a totally new world-view—to come in contact with a place which was never conceived before. These are new demands, and what is needed is the creation of a new humanism, not the American manifest in something called the American Dream—an American Nightmare!

The American Dream is based on some simple-minded premises: 1) life will be painless, 2) one can get to happiness through objects, 3) relationships can be ascertained through commodities as opposed to relationships with other human beings. The American Nightmare has to do with not being responsible to very complicated bloodlines that have gone into the making of America. And the making of America begins, I suspect, with

brutality. It begins with a conflict of world-views and it begins with the recontextualization of what I call the *essentialist* vision. The essentialist vision has to do with man being irreducible in all of his components. William Carlos Williams wrote in *In the American Grain*, "History for us begins with murder and enslavement, not with discovery." Americans are enslaved in euphemism: the eloquent diction of the democratic Promise has to do not only with language but with action, and the melding of the two. America's genius—great men, great promise, great deeds! Americans must keep themselves alive spiritually. The Declaration of Independence was a document written for a handful of men to protect their interests and commodities: the Declaration of Independence should have been about human relationships, duties and responsibilities, not freedom and privilege. The Promise is the only way Americans can go: I think that's our task and I want to exact myself to it: to unity and value and high ideals.

**Chapman:** I think you've made your vision of America clear and I think you've made your sense of history clear even in the title of your book—*History is Your Own Heartbeat*. But Coltrane is a very complex artist and the question is, is it necessary to be able to hear and comprehend what Coltrane is doing musically to appreciate how you express your vision in your poetry?

**Harper:** My answer is a qualified yes, The New Criticism notwithstanding (because Black artists are not seen in their proper context). There's an interrelation between Coltrane and myself both in terms of historical-aesthetic vision, and in terms of technique. Coltrane was a musician who began playing the tenor saxophone after listening to Lester Young. He said after hearing Lester Young play, *he* had to play. He knew he had to play; it was an irrevocable decision when he was seventeen years old. Coltrane spent the next fifteen years of his life in tutelage to the various masters. He played with Earl Bostic, with Miles Davis, with Thelonious Monk, with Miles Davis again, with many artists. He *essentially* mastered all the various components of a tradition of which he was a part. His expression enlivened an ongoing tradition, a lifeline of a continuum. Contrary to the development of many poets, my basic influence has been musical. The architectonic

structure, the orchestration, the modal approach to things, the musicality, the cadences, the idioms, are primarily musical.

Part of this has to do with the first heroism of Black people in this country established in an assortment of musical idioms, *the only explicit expressive device open to them while they were enslaved*. I am connected to Coltrane, to Charlie Parker, to Billie Holiday, to Bessie Smith, to Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and to all the master musicians who operate in our tradition, to expand it, carry it on, refine it, enliven it, and make it consistent with the aspirations, the human aspirations, of the people in the particular context in which they live, where the music is a vibrant kind of exponential factor directed toward their desires, toward their dreams, their visions of themselves as irreducible spirits. I would say also that there's a tremendous amount of history, metaphor, cultural information, and detail, in the music of Black Americans: particularly the history of man confronting the elements—"My House Fell Down," and "I Can't Live There No More" (Bessie Smith), or Coltrane picking up out of his own name "Coal-train" a slang term which has lots of overtones—his nickname was Trane.

"Train" has metaphoric value as an institutional device, as a metaphor of movement, a metaphor of escape, the possibility of transference of energies from one particular place to another, as a cultural artifact, as mechanical manifestation humanized. The train is the central metaphor in the poetic and musical lexicon of Black Americans, and of music in general, and has a great deal of force, a great deal of value in itself because of the opportunity to humanize the machine. In my own case, *History is Your Own Heartbeat* means one must claim one's history, one's past, one must find out what one's place is in the relationship between locality and self, a sense of reality. One must locate oneself in time and space and landscape so as to approximate what it is that one's tasks are, what one's responsibilities are to one's people, one's traditions, one's private and historical landscape, to get one's bearings rather than to free-float and to serve according to highest law, cosmic law. To get one's bearings one realizes what one has to do, what traditions energize his own thought, his own actions, his own music.

Coltrane does not operate in a vacuum; there are many other great musicians who have influenced him, and he in turn has influenced other musicians, but Coltrane is seminal in that the task he sets himself is of *great difficulty*, of great effort, (and ultimately) of transcendence; not only plugging into the tradition, but of carrying the tradition into a dimension of expression, into an area of possibility never taken before, for extension and overextension is a device of our aesthetic vision: to go someplace, someplace which has to do with musical (as well as spiritual) traditions, is the process by which one connects with the highest mode. I call that the modal process, the process of modality. It is life force, it is spirituality, it is the relationship between the individual and one's collective history, the place in which one is forced to operate and the means that one has at his disposal in articulating this particular vision. I think that Coltrane articulated beautifully.

The title poem in the first collection *Dear John, Dear Coltrane* was written before John Coltrane died. And that's an omen for me in my own writing and in my own life. And he played an album called "A Love Supreme." It came to pass that John Coltrane's life expired, at least in its biological form, but I suspect that one of the reasons why it expired had something to do with the kind of fragmentation that this society produces, particularly among Black people, and that the kind of community he was crying for, that urgency of which his playing was a symbol, was not about to come about at this time.

**Chapman:** How do you see the line or process of your own poetic development from your first book *Dear John, Dear Coltrane* to your fifth book published this year, *Debridement*?

**Harper:** *Dear John, Dear Coltrane* was a compilation of poems written over ten years: they were struggles with maintaining a kind of hold on discipline and on one's stylistic controls with voice, with idiom, with line, with imagery, with the consistency of diction. I got a hold on that and I found out where my centers were, and, what my strengths were and what I had to do. "Dear John, Dear Coltrane" is one poem in a collection of poems which, in a kind of rough scheme, makes up a continuum of my own artistic development. The title poem is a eulogy for a musician that I loved greatly.

The second book, *History is Your Own Heart-beat*, is arranged around three sections. The first "Ruth's Blues," about my mother-in-law, her personal suffering, her own medical history, and her connection as metaphor in an orchestrated historical picture. The second part, "History is Personality," is devoted primarily to people I've known whom I owe in various ways, who stimulated me to grow, to make artistic comment on things of real substance. The last part, "High Modes," begins with Charlie Parker and ends with a ritual section about Coltrane and Billie Holiday, and finally rejuvenation. It has a refrain line, "Black Man go back to the old country." Essentially it's about going back to one's origins, trying to excavate what one comes out of, both in literal and in cultural and cosmological terms, so as to try to recontextualize and put together a clearer picture of one's responsibilities in terms of the continuum and artistic traditional heritage.

The book comments on the collective amnesia from which we all suffer; my mother-in-law's grievous medical history was symptomatic of a much larger question: how people internalize (are schizophrenic about) their own cultural influences; what goes into making them, what they make of themselves, what are the essential ingredients in their environment, in their psychic and emotional lives. I suffer from a feeling of loss (with my fellow Americans) in terms of point of view and perspective, with the widest, the broadest concerns, the close focus on particulars. I work with clinical imagery to draw attention, to shock my reader with a detailed, medical closeness and approximation.

My next book was a limited edition, *History as Appletree*, written for my wife on the birth of my daughter, Rachel. It's a book in nine parts and speaks to some of the false mythology of New England, Roger Williams and John Winthrop, the Massachusetts Bay colony, with a very autistic, authoritarian vision, reductively Puritanical—not the Puritanism of John Milton but the Puritanism of Winthrop—one-dimensional, authoritarian vision of the world. And I spoke about a set of myths which had been set into action, the appropriation of the land, the fact that I lived on a burial ground and didn't know it until very late in the year, living on sixteen acres in Massachusetts, and the fact that I had

known this psychically for some time, of Black men escaping slavery into Indian tribes; my own circumstance on Indian territory, on Indian burial ground, my connection with my ancestors, the fact that my children were growing in essentially ancestral relationships, the kind of continuum of human enterprise and the larger environment, with Appletree the metaphor.

I then went to a book, *Song: I Want A Witness*, the title poem. The second section is called "Homage to the New World," a poem I wrote in Urbana, Illinois after a year at the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Illinois. It had been a painful year for me but also a very meaningful one—one that I grew about. In that section are poems about my daughter, poems about my wife, poems about Bessie Smith, poems about musicians, poems about where I've been and where I'm going. And then there's another section, a critique of William Faulkner's artistic vision expressed in *The Bear*; I chose different sets of details but the assault is basically on language, the convention of language and rhetoric, and rhetoric here assaulted because it is used as a cloak to obfuscate meaning and reality and complexity, the section called "Love Letters: The Caribou Hills, The Moose Trail," a dialogue of forms of expression, ethical, moral and rhetorical and the affirmation and denial of the *Word* as revealed moral law. The last section is about living in New England.

The newest book, *Debridement*, is in three parts; it begins with John Brown. The second part is about Richard Wright and the construction of an artifice out of conflicting world-views, both the Marxist economic explanation of the world, and the retrieval of the folkway and of folk traditions in American terms; the final section is about a mythical hero that I constructed out of a series of events, a man who won the Congressional Medal of Honor in Vietnam and was brought back into society—there were attempts made to rehabilitate him—he couldn't get a job—he was finally awarded the Medal of Honor; he was made a recruiter, was given a Thunderbird from Ford Motor Company, was given the task of recruiting young Black manpower from the great manpower pool of Detroit high schools to fight that particular war. So he was both a victim and an executioner; his life is a kind of paradigm, a commentary on history, of the

psychic nature of Black people in service to other people's dreams, and other people's nightmares; of being victimized at the same time and never being able to fight their own battles on their own terms. In this case, *Debridement* is a very special term, a clinical term; it means the tearing away of torn or gangrenous flesh from a wound to prevent infection. At the conceptual level it is an assault upon the Cartesian mode, the separation between mind/body, the business of "I think therefore I am." The poem is written in alternating subject-object sections in two different voices, one a very clinical voice which always begins, "subject"; the other voice is the voice of the man who is the ultimate victim. The balance in this poem is the reintegration of the Cartesian view of man into the modal view of man, to make a split schizophrenic man, a whole man. And the responsibility is collective; the responsibility goes to the culture. It begins with John Brown, because the book is about heroism, and heroism is about assaulting one's pre-fabricated and preconceived notions about manhood and about complexity, and about historical and cosmic *necessity*. It's also about being able to envision someone outside of one's experience and outside of one's cultural circumstances, and at the same time give him, by assumption, the same human meaning as one would ascribe to oneself, very difficult in the American context. *Debridement* is a transitional book.

I'm working on a book on DuBois—a narrative poem which deals with the complexity of DuBois: I'm working on a very private book about my family: *Nightmare Begins Responsibility*. The relationship between the public and private landscape is not mutually exclusive; opposition-unity: tension created. My province is the province of the human spirit, all of its parameters, perspectives, complexities. My job is to make connections, speak through the body, through the human body which is not a meretricious kind of technocratic invention, but something which is wholistic, irreducible, spiritual in its corporality, and in its greatness of endurance and beauty. □





# science, progress, and man: an unofficial soviet viewpoint

by Irina H. Corten

*Irina Corten was born in the U.S.S.R. and educated in the U.S. She holds a Ph.D. in Russian literature from the University of California—Berkeley and is a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas. She is bilingual in English and Russian, and visits the U.S.S.R. frequently.*

In the summer of 1965 I was visiting Moscow. One day I happened to walk into a children's bookstore and noticed a portly, balding man of distinctly intellectual mien standing by the window engrossed in reading. The book he held in his hands had a brightly illustrated cover which indicated a children's publishing house. Immediately my curiosity was aroused. I was familiar enough with the Soviet literary scene to know that children's publications, less strictly inspected by the censors than adults', sometimes served as a cover-up for writers who did not toe the party line.

I approached the gentleman and inquired about the book. He looked at me excitedly through his spectacles. "*Monday Begins on Saturday* by the Strugatskii brothers," he said. "Buy it, you won't be sorry."

The names of Arkadii and Boris Strugatskii were familiar to me. I had read their stories about space exploration in various Soviet literary periodicals, and their two science fiction novels. One novel, entitled *Predatory Things of the Century*, depicts a prosperous decadent society. Its citizens consider science a handy tool for satisfying the need for material comfort. Says one protagonist:

*Several more decades, or maybe just a few years, and we shall reach a state of self-perpetuating abundance. We shall then discard science as a healed man discards his crutches, and humanity will become a huge, happy, childlike family.*

Contrary to these thoughtlessly optimistic

words, the novel ends as the country stands on the brink of political chaos, mass violence and drug addiction.

The other novel, *Hard to Be a God*, tackles the idea of man as the master of the universe. The protagonists live in a society which has attained a very high level of scientific and cultural development. They go on a revolutionary mission to another planet with a more primitive civilization. But eventually, through trial and error, they discover that interference is futile. Their attempt to play God fails because the alien society cannot accept their values. It has its own history and must develop according to its own evolutionary laws. The supermen go back to Earth frustrated and crestfallen.

*Hard to Be a God* had caused some consternation among official Soviet critics because the authors failed to portray the triumph of communism. The Strugatskiis' philosophy was vilified by derogatory labels such as "excessive relativism," "historical fatalism," and "flabby thinking." Did the new book have some more controversy in store?

I read *Monday Begins on Saturday* from cover to cover without putting it down. It turned out to be a delightfully witty science fiction fantasy about a group of scholars working at NIICHAVO—deciphered as Scientific Research Institute of Wizardry and Magic, and also a play on the Russian word "nichego"—nothing.

The Strugatskiis portray dedicated and sincere young scientists but, at the same time, they tease the sacred cow of the Soviet scientific establishment by depicting other characters of dubious moral virtue. Such, for example, is Mr. Christobal Junta, head of the Department of the Meaning of Life and in his previous incarnations a member of the Spanish Inquisition and an SS officer, and Professor Vybegallo, an unscrupulous opportunist and publicity hound whose experiment nearly destroys the Institute.

Since *Monday Begins on Saturday* had presumably been written for adolescents, it did not attract undue attention of the Soviet press. However, I do remember reading one review which accused the Strugatskiis of amorality because they showed Soviet scientists engaging in witchcraft.

During subsequent visits to the Soviet Union I heard a great deal of talk among Russian intellectuals about the Strugatskiis. There were rumors of new works and manuscripts circulating through *samizdat*—an underground system for spreading dissident literature. The excitement generated by these authors was hardly surprising for, from the beginnings of Soviet history, dissident writers resorted to science fiction as a vehicle for expressing their ideas in most sweeping and outspoken form.

The first work of this type was Evgenii Zamiatin's *We* (1920)—a brilliant anti-utopian and anti-communist novel which was banned in the Soviet Union and published abroad. It served as a model for George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Mikhail Bulgakov, known in the West for his novel *The Master and Margarita*, wrote some satirical science fiction stories which have not been reprinted in the Soviet Union since the 1920s. More recently, there were anti-establishment science fiction stories by the well-known dissidents Yulii Daniel and Andrei Siniavskii, and in 1960 Solzhenitsyn wrote a play, *Candle in the Wind*, which anathemized science and its power over man and society.

The difference between most of these writers and the Strugatskiis is in the attitude to science. Zamiatin, for instance, sees science as an instrument for transforming people into robots subservient to a dictator's will. Solzhenitsyn fears that the growth of science will extinguish the flickering candle of the human spirit. The Strugatskiis, on the other hand, have a more realistic notion of the role of science in modern society. They make no dire predictions about the destruction of the human body and soul by atomic or electronic power. Instead, they carefully examine every aspect of the interrelationship between man and science and, in their quest for ultimate answers, look toward realms which lie outside of science and technology.

In 1968 two obscure Siberian periodicals (*Angara* and *Baikal*) printed two short novels by the Strugatskiis: *A Tale About the Troika* and *A Snail on a Hillside*, part one. Very few issues containing the texts ever reached Moscow and Leningrad, but samizdat got busy and produced several thousand typed and xeroxed copies. Alarmed by the sensation, the censors stopped the publication of the second part of *Snail*. This led to the inevitable result—the manuscript was smuggled out of the country and published in full in West Germany. *A Tale About the Troika* was included in the same edition.

*Troika* is a sequel to *Monday Begins on Saturday*, with the same cast of characters and the same setting. But, while humor and whimsy are the predominant features of *Monday*, *Troika* is a satirical work. Its plot is, briefly, as follows.

The NIICHAVO Institute is an immensely tall building. On the first twelve floors everything is under control, but the territory above that is autonomous because the elevator refuses to go there. The staff of the Institute is worried about the 76th floor which is a warehouse for various remarkable objects and phenomena unexplained by science. This domain is governed by the Troika—a triumvirate of former employees who had gone there some years before in the runaway elevator.

Two forthright young scientists decide to trek up to the 76th floor to see what is going on. They arrive to find a stagnant bureaucratic regime with inane leaders whose only aim in life is to maintain a comfortably high standard of living and perpetuate the political status quo.

At first, the young men attempt to reform things, but soon lose their revolutionary zeal and become stultified and demoralized by the prevailing atmosphere. However, just when they are ready to settle down and live "just like everybody else," their state of mind is telepathically transmitted downstairs, and the fiery Christobal Junta arrives on the scene to rescue them and to purge the Troika.

In *Troika* the Strugatskiis satirize bureaucracy not only as a political institution but as a frame of mind. They interpret bureaucracy as avoidance of responsibility and decisive action

both in public and private life. The members of the Troika live next to a goldmine of scientific data which, if properly studied, could lead to great discoveries and benefit the whole society, themselves included. But they prefer not to touch this goldmine because they are inert, unimaginative and afraid of the unknown. They opt for a life of secure mediocrity, and this attitude is shown to be typically human, for even young and uncorrupted individuals can fall easy prey to it. The Strugatskiis are saying that in any society where bureaucracy prevails as a way of life science cannot be used creatively and constructively.

Man either does not explore the full potential of science or misuses science by turning it into a mechanism for production. Another human mistake based on scientific achievement is the tendency to develop a feeling of superiority and godlike complacency, to consider oneself the king of nature. But, as the Strugatskiis astutely point out, there is the other side of the medal—the fear that ultimate discoveries might shake the foundations of man's security.

In *Troika* there is an episode involving an intelligent creature from outer space. Stranded with his space ship on the 76th floor of NIICHAVO, he goes to the leaders to ask for help and to offer establishing friendly relations with his planet. But they turn him down, afraid that contact with a superior civilization might upset the applecart of human institutions.

Tainted by egotism, prejudice and false values, man is not ready in his present state to receive and assimilate cosmic knowledge. He is trapped in a vicious circle—he already has at his disposal more science than he can wisely handle, yet not enough to attain full and objective understanding of himself and his environment.

The psychological and ideological impasse reached by modern man is described by the Strugatskiis in *A Snail on a Hillside* and in the novel that followed it—*The Ugly Swans*. *Snail* deals with a confrontation between two fundamental forces symbolically described as the Forest and the Management. The Forest represents nature—untamed, vital, full of variety and unpredictable change. It is a

dense jungle teeming with bizarre vegetation and supernatural creatures, constantly regenerating itself, posing a riddle and potential threat to man. The Management stands for organized society. It has money, technology and power, and its function is to control the Forest. Basically it is a neutral apparatus, but it has been subverted and put to bad use by opportunists, bureaucrats and petty dictators.

The central figure in the novel is Perets—an honest though embittered intellectual who comes to the Management compound for a visit. He is outraged by the corruption among the employees and by their attitude to the Forest. Instead of being accepted for what it is and utilized with efficiency and wisdom, the Forest is disliked, distrusted and abused.

Inadvertently, Perets becomes involved in all sorts of intrigues and adventures and finally, by a trick of fate, becomes the Management's director. Faced with the formidable task of reforming the power structure, he feels disoriented and inadequate. Realizing the limitations of science in solving the mysteries of nature, he wonders if there is any point in continuing the work of the Management at all:

*... in their laboratories they pour the Forest from one test tube into another, eye the Forest through a microscope, compute the Forest on adding machines, while the Forest stands all around them, hangs over their heads, grows through the walls of their bedrooms, gathers under their windows in clusters of wandering trees on sultry summer nights and, probably, tries to figure out who they are, what they are doing and why they are here at all.*

*A Snail on a Hillside* presents a devastating criticism of the notion of basing the ideals of communism on a faith in scientific progress and of the naive belief that cultural and spiritual growth will be an automatic by-product of this progress. Here is a dialogue between a Management official and Perets:

**Official:** Everything will be razed to the ground—all these warehouses, cottages. Buildings of dazzling beauty will be constructed out of transparent and semi-transparent materials, stadiums, swimming pools, hanging gardens, restaurants and bars made

of crystal! Stairways leading straight up to the skies! Willowy, supple women with smooth tanned skin! Libraries! Muscles! Laboratories flooded with sunlight! A free work schedule! Automobiles, gliders, dirigibles! Debates, sleep-learning, three-dimensional cinema! After work people will sit in libraries, think, compose melodies, play guitars and other musical instruments, carve wooden figurines, recite poetry to each other!

**Perets:** That's what you think. You will not listen to my poetry and will not compose any yourself. Maybe you'll carve some wooden figurines, but then you'll go out and chase after girls. Or get drunk. I know you. I know all of you. You'll just wander around from a crystal bar to a diamond restaurant. Especially if you have a free work schedule!

The fact that the Strugatskiis criticize communism does not, however, indicate that they favor any Western political system. They feel that conspicuous consumption combined with amorality are the main evils of contemporary Western civilization. The epigraph to *Predatory Things of the Century* (which, incidentally, describes a capitalist society) is the following quote from Saint-Exupery: "There is one problem, the one and only in the world—how to restore to mankind its spiritual substance, spiritual aspirations."

The difficulty of accomplishing the task put forth by Exupery is vividly described in *The Ugly Swans*. This novel was published in West Germany in 1972. The Soviet authorities severely rebuked the Strugatskiis for this act of "disloyalty" to their country, failing to see the irony of the fact that the authors were not allowed to publish at home, which they would have preferred.

*The Ugly Swans* portrays a town which is totalitarian society in mircocosm. All the problems that beset such a society—repression, bureaucracy, brain-washing, cruelty, cynicism and corruption are shown with satirical force and full realistic detail. The town harbors a colony of "lepers"—a group of heretics plagued by a painful and disfigur-

ing chronic illness but endowed with superior intelligence and technological know-how.

The "lepers" are hatching a plot to overthrow the regime, and they find allies among the town's children. These youngsters are precocious and independent. They disrespect their parents for a complacent way of life and despise their teachers for hypocrisy and inhumanity. They flee to the "lepers" compound and help stage the coup. Something akin to an atomic holocaust ensues, with a touch of comic relief—all the vodka in town turns into water. When the dust finally settles down, it turns out that everyone has vanished except the children and a handful of decent adults.

One of the adults is a man named Banev—a gifted writer with liberal views but with a confused and unwholesome personal life. Together with the children he faces a hopeful but uncertain future. They are supposed to build a new world, but how? Science and technology help them clear the ground but are useless beyond that point. The "lepers" are dead, for they knew only how to hate and to destroy. The children are inexperienced and frightened and Banev, the finest representative of the town's intelligentsia, is too accustomed to a comfortable life of eating, drinking and mating to become a spiritual leader.

The problem is left unresolved, but the epigraph to *A Snail on a Hillside* provides a possible guideline. It is an ancient Japanese poem:

*Slowly, slowly crawl, oh snail,  
Along the slope of Mount Fuji,  
Up to the very summit.*

The Strugatskiis believe that, if we want to create a civilized and spiritually sound society, everyone of us ought to become a patient and determined snail. □





reviews

GOD DOES NOT  
EXIST-HI WITHDRAW  
THE FUCK ON  
WIT AND LEAVES THE  
DPS TO KEEP AN EYE  
ON THINGS ARTAUD



# the bars are everywhere: the attica revolt is not forgotten

by Barry Schwartz

*Mr. Schwartz is an author, poet, lecturer on Humanism and Culture, and Director of the Cultural Alternatives Network. His latest books, The New Humanism, with Praeger, and The Voyageur of Our Time, a book of poems with Barlenmir House, will be published this fall.*

Andrews, Benny and Baranik, Rudolf, eds.,  
*The Attica Book*. South Hackensack, N.J.,  
Custom Communications System, Inc.,  
1973. \$6.95

*Imprisonment as it exists today is a worse crime than any of those committed by its victims; for no single criminal can be as powerful for evil, or as unrestrained in its exercise, as an organized nation.*

George Bernard Shaw  
*The Crime of Imprisonment*

Each day thousands of New Yorkers or visitors to fun city truck along the Long Island Expressway, cut into the Grand Central Parkway and finally inch their way into La Guardia Airport. From there they depart to every destination to which a human being can fly. Worlds away, but close to the scene, poised out there in the grey air and attached to the landscape by a single barren bridge sits Riker's Island Penitentiary, where people gather to go nowhere. If an inmate finds it impossible to get out, a visitor finds it nearly as difficult to get in. Seen from on high, the bridge is everybody's cross.

By the time I negotiated clearance at a series of déjà vu guard booths I was already pre-occupied with the images of prison life I had been encouraged to expect. Etched forever were the results of thirty years of programming. This was the pen, the Big House, a dreary world populated with captives whose

savagery was subdued by custodians, priests of the divinity of order, who cajoled, pushed and clubbed their laity into submission. If prisons were brutal, they were French. If they were tough, they were one hundred percent American.

I saw lunchrooms overflowing with men or women, never both, and witnessed the passing of thousands of trays. I could hear the spoons hitting the table in the relentless rhythm of defiance as the loudspeaker located above the clock in the middle of the room argued for sanity *and* a return to the cells.

I knew about the break, the bust out, and watched Broderick Crawford, Mickey Rooney and James Cagney, exercising omnipotent will, leading men to their deaths on fences, at the end of the tunnel, at the car . . .

Of course, the programmed images are a lie; that is why they are offered as programs. No, the prison was . . . well an institution. Like the Motor Vehicle Bureau, the Post Office or IBM. It was calm on the surface and all surface. I met guards, transformed by well-pressed suits into correction officers, who spoke of the overcrowding, of poor conditions, of Freud, and the plight of the people. The warden sat framed by a wall of degrees. He complained about under-funding. The inmates looked like company trainees preparing for a job that would never materialize. The whole of it, this tightly organized one sex community, comprised of so many role differentiations, was dedicated to a single task: killing time.

The horror of the prison is not the violence, which is no more frequent than the occurrences of murder, assault, muggings and rape in so many of our cities. The horror is not the food, which is no more repugnant than that of the average college cafeteria. The horror is not the overcrowding, which is comparable to that of schools, courts, medical clinics and tenement living. No, what is terrifying about a prison is that in most ways it is not unlike what is outside its walls.

All time in prison is programmed with tasks. They are posted each day on a very large board somewhat resembling an altarpiece. Every day awaking prisoners consult the board which provides a definitive schedule for how they will use their time.

Prison is like a home for the prematurely retired who need their lives structured to resemble the lives they led when they were working. But prison is a low status retirement community, lacking funds, and so in place of the sensory stimuli of sculptured lawns, pools and nature trails, it offers card playing, basketball and automotive mechanics.

Like so many of our aged, our youth, and significant proportions of everybody else, the incarcerated are living to kill time, to fill each twenty-four hours, to grow older. Prison is a particular institution in an institutional world. But unlike the outside, where regimentation is often partial or spotty, all action is regulated in the prison. Thus, the prisoner does not have to contend with the ratrace, where programming leads to great insecurity which leads to frantic behavior. Nor is the prisoner concerned with spontaneity, in its most virulent form, sex. Both are discouraged and substituted for by a sedate atmosphere com-

parable to that of a hospital, where people are waiting to get well. The recidivism rate is so high merely because a man has little motivation to work hard to achieve what has already, in the main, been given to him. For me, the shocking revelation of a prison is not that imprisonment is a crime against humanity, but that Americans, devoid of spiritual realities, without a sense of purpose, and too habitually unaware of human value live lives as though they have been sentenced.

Life as killing time is most eloquently expressed by inmates themselves. Ronald G. King 63885 tells it this way:

*... I'm closed in  
from within  
Release me from this captivity  
I want to holler  
but  
to who?  
At times I feel  
I'm going to snap  
I  
must  
hold  
on  
To my conscience  
Freedom won't help . . .*



Another inmate, Michael McLaughlin, cautions us:

*You are expected to justify  
His oppression,  
You are expected to ignore  
His agony,  
You are expected to condemn  
His rebellion,  
You are expected to support  
His confinement,  
And  
You are expected to rejoice  
His Death!!  
Yet; He's not your brother,  
He's You!!*

These writings appear in the *Attica Book*, a compilation of artist's works responding to the Attica revolt and written materials supplied by inmates.

The *Attica Book* has been the subject of considerable controversy. It was published jointly by the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, a New York group that began in protest of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Harlem On My Mind* exhibition, and continued in existence to help overcome the biases of cultural institutions against Black artists, and the Artists and Writers Protest (against the war in Vietnam,) a group of primarily liberal whites who sought to express themselves politically in forms related to the arts they practice.

Immediately upon publication the *Attica Book* drew criticism from feminist groups who charged male chauvinism against the book, which does feature eleven female and thirteen male artists. To create some of their own controversy the publishers insisted that the Museum of Modern Art sell the book in their shop. Predictably the Museum retreated into one of the oldest arts, that of deception, arguing finally that their non-profit bookstore could only handle the publications of commercial corporations, and that the publishers of the *Attica Book*, representing a non-profit organization were thus ineligible to sell their book at MOMA. Prison talk.

By far the most pervasive criticism of the *Attica Book* that could and has been leveled at it is that the publication represents yet another rip off, in this case, that of artists

trying to climb aboard the Attica revolt bandwagon. After all, it is said, what the hell do a bunch of middle class, New York City artists know about the lives and deaths of the imprisoned? It is a helpful question, though usually perceived as hostile, for it points to a number of subtle and important truths expressed by the *Attica Book* itself. However disparate the lives of Attica inmates and those of practicing artists, they have in common the sameness of a dilemma. Both the revolting prisoner and the protesting artist are deviants in a system from which they want to bust out. The prisoner has been removed from the madness they call normalcy because his behavior is asocial, and the artist is denied recognition because his work is social. Thus the prison for the artist is that he is required to become a publicist, to create in a business suit, to realize individuality by denying it to art. As prison tells us about the life outside it, artists have much to tell us about what it is like to be a prisoner.

The *Attica Book* works, and one has little difficulty moving from the graphic images of artists to the writings of the incarcerated, who possess a newly developed stake in literacy. Although Ronald King was speaking for himself when he wrote the publishers: "The only time I've seen my name in printed form for something I've done was on a court calendar," he was, in fact, touching the deepest confessional spot of the artist, who also needs to be seen to be.

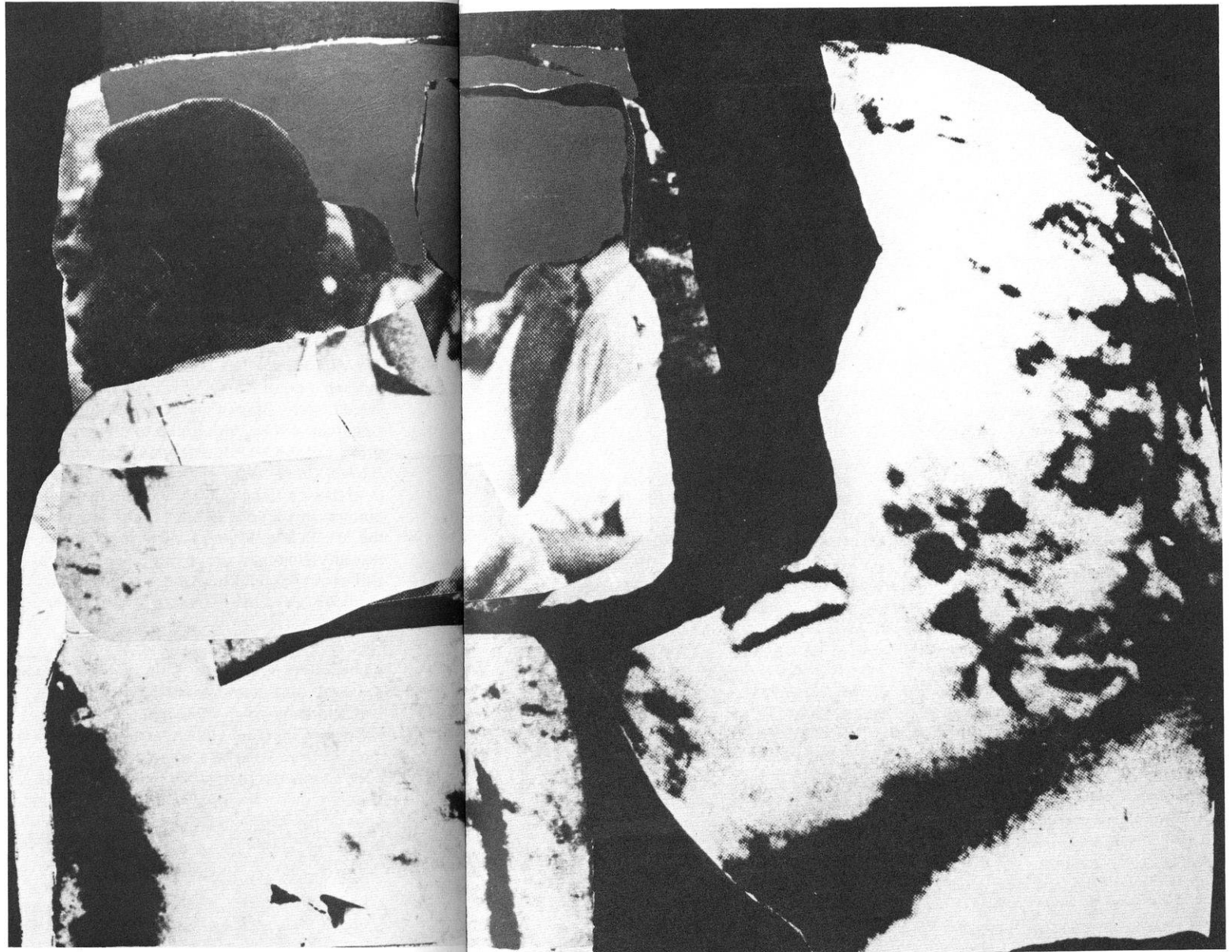
The works in the book are representative of many of the new humanists who have created a presence in New York City. Faith Ringgold's contribution consists of a map of America with a demography of violence. She tells us it is incomplete and wants the viewer to fill in whatever is missing. Strong printmakers like Jacob Landau and Nicholas Sperakis appear. Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche have contributed a neatly typed list of the Attica dead and the causes of their deaths. Benny Andrews, a co-editor of the volume, has presented a powerful image of human dissolution, while Rudolf Baranik, the other co-editor, is represented by his poignant image, from the Vietnam Elegy Series, which serves as an icon of victims and their transcendence of what victimizes them. Illustrated are drawings, prints, collages and sculptures. Although the photography sometimes leaves much to be



desired, the images are stark, involving and only rarely do they not live up to the promise of their expression. A number of artists have contributed works inspired by other content as statements on Attica. While this might, at first, seem spurious, the works do make a statement about Attica, indirectly a demonstration of the consistency of the artists' work.

Most of the artists found here are among those who have incorporated social realities and political consciousness in their work. It is only these artists who could have successfully contributed to the *Attica Book*.

Although the literature put out by the joint publication committee stresses "The *Attica Book* is at once a collection of powerful works by forty-eight leading American artists and a historical manifesto for dignity and freedom.;" it is neither. The works featured in the book are, generally, examples of some of the best practitioners of humanist/social art. The *Attica Book* is one of the several places one can see reproduced examples of their work. They may be "leading" in the sense that they are most bold, but the cultural apparatuses have not been quick to recognize their very special contribution. Nor is the *Attica Book* a manifesto, and it is to the credit of the book itself, that it falls short of what it is claimed to be. Instead, it offers a few glimpses into worlds apart: poems by obscure prisoners, art works by committed artists. By today's standards that is more than enough for one publication. Though the artists with a conscience is not the prisoner who revolts, both are refusing to accept indignity. The *Attica Book* is a testimony to refusal, and for this reason it deserves respect from a distant public. □





# the marxist understanding of popular culture

by Lee Baxandall

Lee Baxandall is the author of several plays and many essays. Most recently he edited the writings of Marx and Engels On Literature and Art. It is the first of a planned twelve-volume Documents on Marxist Aesthetics of which Baxandall is serving as the General Editor.

Sánchez Vázquez, Adolfo, *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973. \$13.50, soft cover, \$3.95

Let me start with two texts that will help us correctly understand this neglected potential of interpretation. From Frederick Engels:

*The Marseillaise of the Peasant War was Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott; conscious of victory as the text and melody of this song are, it cannot and need not be taken in this sense today. . . . the mercenary soldier largely pre-empted our folk poetry even then. . . . There were all sorts of Chartist songs, but they aren't to be had any more. . . . All that has vanished, nor was this poetry worth much. . . . In general, the poetry of past revolutions (the Marseillaise always excepted) rarely has a revolutionary effect for later times because it must also reproduce the mass prejudices of the period in order to affect the masses. Hence the religious nonsense even among the Chartists."*

—Frederick Engels to Hermann Schluter, May 15, 1885, about the latter's aim to gather some popular verse of progressive standpoint for publication.

And the second from Karl Marx:

*It is a well known fact that Greek mythology was not only the arsenal of Greek art but also the very ground from which it had sprung. Is the view of nature and of social relations which shaped Greek imagination*

*and thus Greek [mythology] possible in the age of automatic machinery and railways and locomotives and electric telegraphs? . . . All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature. What becomes of the Goddess Fame side by side with Printing House Square? Greek art presupposes the existence of Greek mythology, i.e., that nature and even the forms of society itself are worked up in the popular imagination in an unconsciously artistic fashion. . . . But the difficulty does not lie in understanding that the Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social development. It rather lies in understanding why they still afford us aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment.*

—Karl Marx, *Introduction to The Critique of Political Economy* (1857).

I have quoted<sup>1</sup> these fragments because they seem central to the fundamental and quite original philosophic and aesthetic thought of Marx and Engels as this applies to the questions of popular culture. I want to interpret the quotations together with that thought, and that thought on popular culture in the context of later developments of art and culture. If the reader is initially skeptical that much can be found relevant in thought formulated a century and more ago in reference to contemporary developments, I can only say this skepticism is healthy. Marx contrasted the ancient goddess and praxis of Fame with the nineteenth century technological and socio-economic equivalent, Printing House Square in London. Today we must add moviedom's Studio City, or the conglomerate empires in television, publishing, radio, recording and cinema which have been put together by corporations such as R.C.A. or *The Los Angeles Times*. The unconsciously artistic activity of the popular imagination has seemed less in evidence in the mid-twentieth century than perhaps ever before. The might of the

corporate opinion-makers, for whom the autonomy of art is anachronistic and profit from merchandizing is foremost, has filled the minds of the consuming-producing masses with reflexive product-recognitions and a diffused state of anxiety which precludes creative activity and experience. Or so many have argued. In any event, great changes have occurred in popular culture since a hundred years ago. It must be proven that the philosophic standpoint on history as developed by Marx applied illuminatingly to the present phenomena. Have not technology, a comparatively high standard of living, an increasing importance of the service rather than the industrial sector of productivity, brought about a "mass society" which (however manipulated by communications media) possibly has eliminated the impact of both a "progressive ideology" with its revolutionary hopes, and the old notions of high art and a spontaneity of social and cultural forms?

An important new book by Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics*, succeeds in centrally raising the questions both of Marxian thought on aesthetic production as an essential activity of humanity, and the contemporary status of that sphere.<sup>2</sup> The author was born in Algeciras, Spain, in 1915. He fought on the Republican side in the Civil War and had to flee when Franco came to power. Having taken his doctorate at the University in Mexico City, he is now professor of aesthetics and contemporary philosophy at that university. Sánchez Vázquez is also the author of *Filosofía de la Praxis, Ética, Rousseau en México, and Estética y Marxismo*. Undoubtedly he is among the most important marxist philosophers at work anywhere today, and only his language, and an absence of translations, has until now severely limited his influence and recognition. The present book was first published in 1965 as *Las ideas estéticas de Marx*. Without detracting from its contribution, one must in part see the work as shaped by the climate both in Soviet-influenced communist and socialist circles, and among European and American (in the broad sense) intellectuals of the immediate Postwar era.

Sánchez Vázquez was stimulated by the philosophical revelations of Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* which had long been a crucial "unknown dimension" for most marxists. He in turn shares with the reader the excitement

stirred by this dimension in the post-1945 era. Serious and probing use is found for the aesthetic reflections of the *1844 Manuscripts*. Particularly in chapters on "Contemporary Marxism and Art" and on "The Ideas of Marx on the Source and Nature of the Aesthetic," Sánchez Vázquez offers one of the best exegeses I know of Marx's conception of aesthetic production as a fundamental socialized capacity of the species and the distinctive, relatively autonomous character of that activity. He likewise does not fail to emphasize that Lukács' well-known insistence on mimesis as a trait of all true art is at variance with Marx's view. This kind of open-ended and solid scholarship permeates the entire part one of *Marxism and Art*, which is subtitled "Returning to the Aesthetic Ideas of Marx."

Where Sánchez Vázquez becomes less definitive in his analysis is the second and last part of the book, which is subtitled "The Fate of Art Under Capitalism." Again he hopes to amplify and explain Marx's ideas on the question. But here the influence of the Postwar era upon his thought was evidently an obstacle he could not properly estimate and overcome. For Sánchez Vázquez condemns the "mass culture," and sees little else in evidence, with a sweepingness of scorn which seems to plainly contradict the premise of part one of his book—namely, that aesthetic capacity is a fundamental and ineradicable component of the evolved human species, however the temporary circumstances may modify this capacity. He writes as though the impingement of capitalist marketing and "public opinion science" on aesthetic response capacity has been absolute. Vance Packard is a key authority for assertions such as: "Under capitalist conditions the utilization of mass means of distribution results in the distribution not of great art, but of inferior, banal, routine art which corresponds to the tastes of the empty, hollow and depersonalized mass man of capitalist society, whom capitalism itself is interested in maintaining in a condition of spiritual hollowness." (pp. 241-242) This is typical of many statements, and it's not an historically-founded judgment. How very limited it was, even in its time, the subsequent vigor of consumerism and the counter-cultural movements should make clear. Personally I remember only too well the horrid, stifling climate of communications and culture in the United States when this book was conceived—yet what at the time should



have informed any marxist discussion of the effects of socio-economic alienation in the mass society was some statement, dialectically conceived and historically justified, of the ongoing potential of the species-being even in a most quiescent phase of oppression and exploitation. The overt evidences of human resilience were not entirely lacking. However, Sánchez Vázquez did not reject the Postwar intellectuals' elitist attitude of despair and capitulation before the fact of mass society—an attitude based on isolation from the actual phenomena of capitalist society, bolstered by the conservative ideas of Ortega y Gasset, and oddly enough found among numerous figures of the left and ex-left, ranging from Soviet intellectuals who issued wholesale denunciations of non-Soviet culture, to the *Partisan Review* mandarins.

It must be stressed that this attitude of extreme rejection stems not from Marxian methodology but from a shallow sociological rationale for moral antipathy to manipulative elements of class society. It is an abstract, rhetorical stance. Even so, if in a one-sided way, this second part of Sánchez Vázquez's book helps make clear what Marx meant by Printing House Square replacing the popular imagination in the creation of culture. None the less, in a full estimate Marx's historicist notion of alienation must be demarcated from the sociologized shudder of contempt for an exploited consumer society and the corporations that prey on the mass public. Sánchez Vázquez does not provide the distinction—but the quotation I earlier introduced should put a light on the transcultural givens that are fundamental to Marx's historicism.

All the same, it should be fairly recognized that popular culture simply was not a question discussed in the nineteenth century by either academics or socialists with the attention and definition that today we increasingly bring to it. Karl Marx himself did not consider directly the culture of "mass society" which during his lifetime was emergent in the novels and careers of Charles Dickens or Victor Hugo (who were media personalities rather like Norman Mailer today), and in the merchandizing of fiction (Mudie's of London was the forerunner of today's Bookmaster outlets), the masses-oriented architecture of the Crystal Palace, the music and theatre of the vaudeville, the popular engravings of the London *Graphic*. He refers to these and other exam-

ples only obliquely, whether to make a point about the more traditional notion of the work of art, or to illustrate a question of history or of approach. The opening citations of this essay are symptomatic. The traditional notion of the arts remained central for him, as it has for many subsequent marxists including Sánchez Vázquez. The understanding of popular culture that we can derive from Marx is greatly enhanced by his commitment to the common heritage of art. But his negligence toward the artifacts of emergent mass society is a limitation.

Within the marxist tradition, an early exception to this inattentiveness was provided by Paul Lafargue, who was Karl Marx's son-in-law. Lafargue, a politician and journalist active mostly in Paris, penned "The Legend of Victor Hugo," a controversial class analysis which described the recently-deceased poet's popularity as meshed with a calculated political opportunism, and fully synchronized with the tastes and the ways of doing business of the flourishing bourgeoisie. Lafargue also completed studies of popular mythology and the living French language under the influence of major events.<sup>3</sup> More sociological than they are fully Marxian, however, Lafargue's texts do not offer a methodological paradigm if compared with Marx's theoretical writings.

Marx's daughter Eleanor worked persistently, often together with Edward Aveling, to help create conditions in England favorable to new political, artistic, and scientific ideas and endeavors. She was on the one hand the first translator of works by Ibsen (*A Doll's House*, *Lady from the Sea*) and Flaubert (*Madame Bovary*). On the other hand she and Aveling reviewed theatre and novels in *Time* and elsewhere with an eye to sampling forces at work on popular tastes. Thus the limitation of the Mudie's pattern of merchandizing of fiction in England was accounted for when Eleanor Marx described the difficulties of finding readers for Flaubert. But again, while sociological in a deft vein, these notices made little lasting contribution to an approach to popular culture on a historical foundation.

The more common response among nineteenth century marxists to what we now identify as popular culture was to ignore it in favor of the traditional or current manifestations of high art. The impact of innovations in architecture and particularly in jazz after 1900, however,



compelled greater scrutiny. Sometimes the marxist response was specific and positive: in New York City, Louis Fraina hoped for development of the energies apparent not only in cubism and futurism, but likewise in the skyscraper and black music. Often it was a disturbed reaction, owing to departures from an earlier standard of art: Maxim Gorky was shocked by jazz and the dances that accompanied it.

Certainly then, a growing familiarity with the accelerated tendency to abandon the old formats of art did not necessarily lead to a greater ability to specify the characteristics of what was emergent. For this reason, when I speak of "the marxist understanding of popular culture," the emphasis ultimately remains on the seminal thought of Marx. His ideal of aesthetic praxis went back to the Greek Golden Age first discerned by Winckelmann—but his thought was decisive.

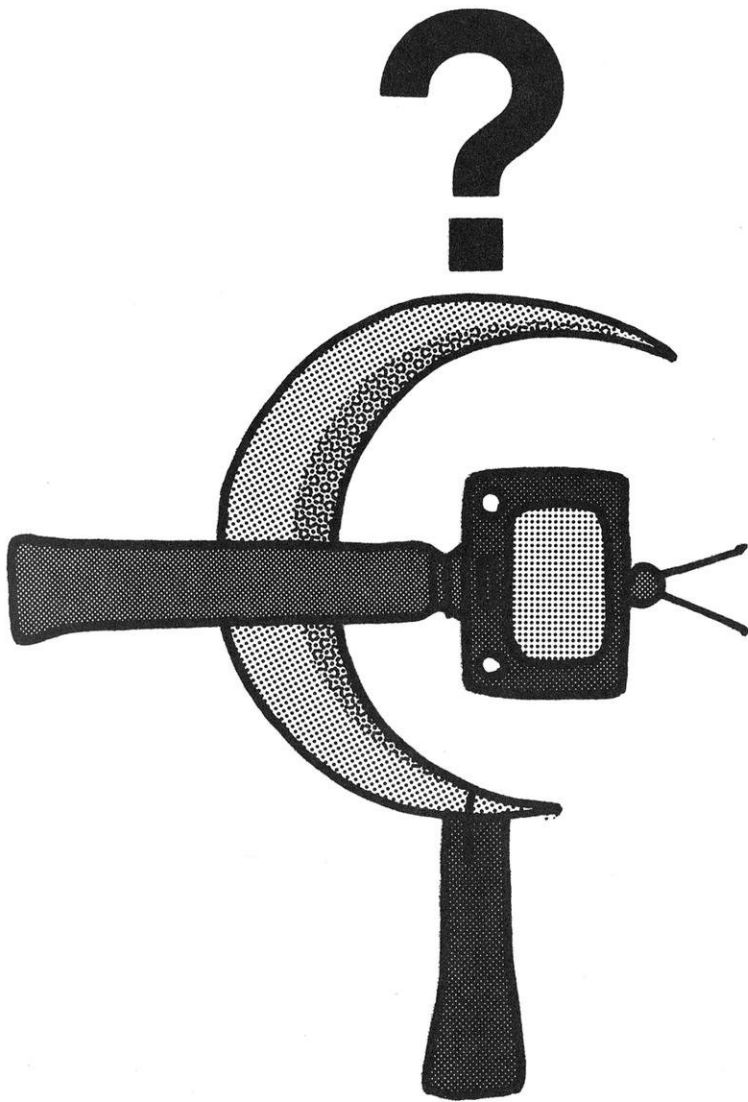
Development in this marxist tradition has none the less occurred. Not only the early attempts of Paul Lafargue, Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling, and Fraina mark it. So also do subsequent practical efforts by Brecht, Eisler, Guillen, Mayakovsky, Asturias, Heartfield, Rivera, Godard, and many other artists to merge revolutionary intentions and principles of high art with the materials of popular culture, and in the theoretical and critical realm, e.g., Leon Trotsky's *Problems of Life* (London, 1924), which sought to infuse ordinary Russian culture with a "revolutionary symbolism," or the recent Henri Lefebvre work *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, or the Situationist analyses and their Paris 1968 graffiti applications. I do not wish to minimize the work relating to popular culture done by such marxists or the substantial achievements in the last decades. But adequate study of this broad, complex question would require a long essay; and meanwhile, using the generally excellent *Art and Society* by Sánchez Vázquez, it has been possible to raise what seems to me the most fundamental questions.

A final issue must appear to marxists wherever they confront popular culture that is dominated or subdued or channelled by the capitalist market institutions. It is the challenge to not merely interpret the culture which is lived by the great majority of harried and exploited producers-consumers, it is the challenge to build on interpretation with some means to

radicalize the content, the character and course of culture in whatever way is feasible, given the individual and collective resources. A passivity in the cultural and socio-economic circumstances seems intolerable. Every person cited above made a transition from understanding to cultural intervention. If it is true that historicism notes a dimension of permanence in human creativity and responsiveness and their institutionalized dialectics, historicism also confirms incessant processes of change that is qualitative. And while the traits of the former dimension must be recognized if thought is to possess realism, the opportunities of transformation must be seized if realism is to possess hope and humanity. Marx, explaining the defeat of the 1848 Revolution in his *18th Brumaire*, well described the political conditions of this cultural challenge:

*The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language. . . . the awakening of the dead in those revolutions served the purpose . . . of magnifying the given task in imagination, not of fleeing from its solution in reality; in finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk about again. . . . [However] the social revolution of the 19th Century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. . . . In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution . . . must let the dead bury their dead. There the phrase went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the phrase.*

Part of the application of this passage lies in our adequate theorization and intervention with regard to popular culture. From the standpoint of contemporary praxis this task is still—is perhaps *always*—at its inception and nearly everything remains to be done. □



<sup>1</sup>For these and other pertinent texts see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Literature and Art*, ed. L. Baxandall and S. Morawski. Telos Press: St. Louis and Milwaukee 1973.

<sup>2</sup>Monthly Review Press; New York, 1973.  
Translated by Maro Riofrancos.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Lafargue, *Critiques littéraires*, especially "Les chansons et les cérémonies populaires du mariage" (1886) and "La langue française avant et après la Révolution." Editions sociales internationales, Paris, 1936.



# solzhenitsyn's guide to gulag

by Alfred Erich Senn

Alfred Erich Senn is Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, specializing in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe. Among his recent publications are *The Russian Revolution in Switzerland, 1914-1917* (Madison, 1971) and *Diplomacy and Revolution: The Soviet Mission to Switzerland, 1918* (Notre Dame, 1974).

Solzhenitsyn, A., *Arkhipelag Gulag, 1918-1956: Opyt Khudozhestvennogo issledovaniia*, Ch. I-II. Paris: YMCA-Press, 1973.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr I., *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, Part I-II. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

The noted Russian bibliographer, Nikolai A. Rubakin, proclaimed as the motto of his life, "Long live the book, a powerful weapon in the struggle for truth and justice." While one can agree with the abstract principle of the book's being a powerful weapon, it is rare that a book at its very appearance arouses such an international furor as did Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* at the beginning of 1974. The work stirred the Soviet government to deport him in February. As the *Times Literary Supplement* of February 15, 1974, commented, "To arrest Solzhenitsyn is to pay an obscene homage, but homage none the less, to the genius of the human word."

Since his deportation, Solzhenitsyn's image in the West has undergone great changes. In earlier times, he was hailed as a heroic champion of the principle of free speech and the free press. After his exile, and particularly after the publication of his *Letter to the Leaders of the Soviet Union*, Solzhenitsyn has drawn more critical comment, although he has still maintained a more or less high standing in the mass media of the West. His political beliefs are not those of a typical "western liberal"—whatever that image might entail. Commentators have begun to speak darkly

of his "irrational egotism" which drove him to seek martyrdom. In 1973 a well-known American writer criticized Solzhenitsyn for not being satisfied to work within the laws of the society in which he resided, whatever they may be; in 1974 others charged that he brought his exile upon himself and they suggested that he was probably fortunate to come off as lightly as he did.

Soviet officials travelling in the West, when questioned about Solzhenitsyn, have pictured him as a misfit, unable to find a place in Soviet society. They explain that mass meetings by the enraged citizenry of the Soviet Union had demanded action by the government. Solzhenitsyn had violated Soviet law, but the government had demonstrated its benevolent nature by sending him out of the country instead of imprisoning him. Let the West now realize the truth about him, they argue, and these spokesmen have taken an obvious delight in pointing out Solzhenitsyn's criticisms of western politics and society.

The struggle between Solzhenitsyn and the Soviet figures of the 1920's and 1930's; relation which would not have been possible in Stalin's time. Solzhenitsyn has been the bell-weather of Soviet "counter-culture," which has drawn heavily on the experiences of those such as he who returned from prison in the Khrushchev era. In the conclusion to *Cancer Ward*, his hero Kostoglotov was optimistic. Yet, in *Gulag*, Solzhenitsyn seems to see little chance for the system to reform, and he even seems pessimistic about the character of the Russian people. Between these two books lay a decade of struggle as Solzhenitsyn and others sought to develop a debate on Stalin. The Soviet government has tolerated this "counter-culture," but unlike the situation in western countries, the "establishment" in the Soviet Union has no desire to co-opt any part of the "counter-culture." It has tried to keep it hermetically sealed off so as to prevent its growth.

The best known and the most widely read of the dissident Soviet intellectuals, Solzhenitsyn

increasingly exploited his international fame to challenge the government. The government resented this maneuver, but at the same time it manifested great sensitivity to foreign opinion. While Solzhenitsyn was harassed and his friends might be arrested, he nevertheless remained at liberty.

Solzhenitsyn's works have been extremely popular in the West, and as such they have been subjected to literary piracy and abuses in translation. As a result Solzhenitsyn hired a Zurich lawyer several years ago to control the copyright to his work, and this decision undoubtedly played a major role in the Soviet Union's joining the International Copyright Convention in 1973. The Soviet government thereby claimed the authority to control publication abroad of works by any Soviet citizen; the appearance of *Gulag* in Paris challenged this regulation and laid Solzhenitsyn open to further charges. It was the content of *Gulag*, however, which brought about his expulsion, not just the question of Solzhenitsyn's right to publish abroad.

In his exposed position, Solzhenitsyn has been vulnerable to all sorts of misrepresentation and misinterpretation. His Swiss lawyer has attempted to protect him by controlling the translations of his works, but the dispute over the translation of *August 1914* showed that this system too had its problems when faced by publishers' deadlines. The excerpts from *Gulag* published in the *New York Times* at the beginning of January 1974, when only the Russian edition was available, further demonstrate the hazards which Solzhenitsyn has faced in publishing.

The first chapter of *Gulag*, entitled "Arrest," formed the basis of over half of the *Times's* summary, and the *Times* cut and pasted it badly. The excerpts offered a ragtag collection of anecdotes about arrests, emphasizing the sensational detail, and in one glaring example of misrepresentation the *Times* transformed a footnote into the second paragraph of the third installment, thereby making an aside into a major statement of the work. The three installments did not do the book justice, and they laid Solzhenitsyn open to a battery of irrelevant criticism. The first Soviet reviews of *Gulag*, solicited and printed by the *New York Times*, were obviously written by persons who had not even read the book.

Solzhenitsyn subtitled *Gulag*, "An Experiment in Literary Investigation." The name "Gulag" is an acronym for the administrative system running the labor camps in the Soviet Union. Presenting his work as a guide to the "archipelago" of camps stretching across the land and inhabited by "zeks" (a contraction of the Russian word for "prisoner"), he employs at times a heavily sarcastic tone to describe the stages of travel and the initiation rites of the political prisoner in entering this mysterious chain of islands: "Hour by hour planes fly there, ships steer their course there, and trains thunder off to it—but all with nary a mark on them to tell of their destination. And at ticket windows or at travel bureaus for Soviet or foreign tourists the employees would be astounded if you were to ask for a ticket to go there."

In separate chapters, Solzhenitsyn considers the arrest, the interrogation, the investigators, the cells, the court rooms, and then the styles of transit to the labor camps. In between he has interspersed essays on the history of the waves of political arrests and what he calls the "maturing of the legal system" from the first casual days of revolution to the highly developed, albeit still inefficient, system of Stalin's Russia. This volume, the first one of three planned, brings us to the gates of the camps; the internal life of the camps, the world of Ivan Denisovich, obviously forms the stuff of the later volumes.

The work is a passionate indictment of the police system in the Soviet Union of Stalin's time. The basic theme is Solzhenitsyn's conviction that a political police system, once established, becomes concerned with keeping itself in business. It justifies itself by seeking out, even creating, enemies of the regime. Solzhenitsyn does not discuss the criminal police; indeed, he argues that the political police actually are more sympathetic to the routine criminals than to the political prisoners. Beginning on the morrow of the revolution, the political police, Felix Dzerzhinsky's "Cheka," carved for themselves a vital place in the system. Solzhenitsyn wastes no time evaluating the justifications which a revolutionary regime will make for establishing such an authority, and he claims to see a direct descent from the Cheka through the GPU of the 1920s to the NKVD of Stalin's day.

Solzhenitsyn's historical essays are the least successful parts of the book, and they will



arouse extensive criticism even in the West. These essays are rather primitive by our historical standards; the ground has been covered in great detail by a number of western writers, including Zbigniew Brzezinski. Solzhenitsyn does not know this literature. Western commentators, moreover, have tended to be more sympathetic toward certain Soviet figures of the 1920's and 1930's; relatively few, for example, are severely critical of Nikolai Bukharin or Maxim Gorky. Solzhenitsyn will have none of this. He seems determined to destroy all the official icons of the system, and he condemns all of Soviet Russia's leaders, with the one possible exception of N. S. Khrushchev, who receives a rather mixed portrayal.

Solzhenitsyn sets himself apart from most other well known Soviet dissidents by his insistence that Stalinism did not represent a perversion of the idealism of the Bolshevik Revolution. Instead, he argues that Stalin built on the foundations which Lenin laid. Rather than call for a return to Leninist principles, as so many other dissidents advocate, Solzhenitsyn tends to condemn Lenin with Stalin.

At the same time, however, Solzhenitsyn does not necessarily argue that Marxism automatically calls for the type of prison system which he describes. He spends remarkably little time discussing grand ideological questions. He insists that public awareness in a society free of hypocrisy constitutes the key element in limiting a police regime.

When I received my copy of the Russian edition of *Gulag*, enclosed in it was a broadside dated February 12, the day of Solzhenitsyn's arrest, in which he urged people, "Live not by the Lie." Carried out literally, Solzhenitsyn's exhortations could bring a society to a standstill: participate in nothing unless you believe in it *entirely* and *without reservation*. The motif of the necessity of a society's facing up to its problems and discussing them openly without duress underlies much of *Gulag*.

Solzhenitsyn considers himself a child of the revolution. Born in 1918 he grew up with the Soviet regime, and according to his own account, he was a loyal Soviet citizen, an orthodox Marxist, and a devoted officer in the war against the Germans until his arrest in the

spring of 1945 on the eve of the victory over Hitler, because of comments critical of Stalin which he had entrusted in a letter to a friend. He argues that his fate in that moment of victory typified the sad condition to which Stalin had brought Russia: "That tedious prison spring had, to the tune of victory marches, become the spring of reckoning for my whole generation."

Solzhenitsyn, it must be noted, is not alone in singling out this moment as a crucial point in Soviet history. The writer Ilia Ehrenburg lamented in his memoirs, "They say that one should know when to die. Who can tell: had Stalin died in 1945 the war might have obliterated a great deal." In the glow of military victory, Stalin stood as a popular figure; in the succeeding years, his autocratic character became more pronounced, and eventually his heirs, however, briefly, themselves raised the curtain veiling his actions of the 1930s. Solzhenitsyn has remained more determined than most to keep that discussion alive and to develop it.

Solzhenitsyn's concern with his prison "class" of 1945 led to his interest in the Vlasovites, former Soviet soldiers taken prisoner by the Germans who had then taken up arms against the Soviet Union. This has been the point on which Soviet critics have chosen to concentrate in attacking *Gulag*. Solzhenitsyn was well aware of the danger of the topic: "The term 'Vlasovite' in our country has the same force as the word 'sewage.' We feel we are dirtying our mouths merely by pronouncing it, and therefore no one dares utter a sentence with 'Vlasovite' as its subject. But that is no way to write history." Solzhenitsyn here exaggerates a little. Ehrenburg, for example, used "Vlasovite" as the subject of a sentence: "In battle the Vlasov men were unreliable, so the Germans used them mainly for putting down the partisan movement. . . . There are evil men everywhere, regardless of the political regime and of upbringing."

Solzhenitsyn does not regard the Vlasovites as "evil men," but neither does he praise them. They were of his generation, and he blames Stalin for the phenomenon of "treason of the Motherland" which they represented. Solzhenitsyn attempts to understand them, but the Vlasovites are to such a degree anathema in the Soviet Union that to attempt to understand means to sympathize.

Soviet critics, ignoring Solzhenitsyn's military service, have attacked him as a fascist sympathizer.

The bulk of the book, however, concerns neither the waves of purges nor the complex problem of the psychology of the Vlasovites. It is a book about human abuse and degradation in an all-powerful police system, and as such it is relevant to a discussion of any authoritarian society. Solzhenitsyn piles detail upon detail, at times it seems terribly repetitious, but nevertheless the reader is drawn on. In reading *Cancer Ward* the sensitive reader may notice a disturbing array of new symptoms in his own body; so too in perusing this work the reader must put himself to the test: how would he have reacted to this type of interrogation or to that incident? Solzhenitsyn's citing of particular cases is very effective in its crushing impact on the reader.

By the legal precedents and definitions which Solzhenitsyn himself cites, this book falls at least in the category of "ASA," Anti-Soviet Agitation. In contrast to, say, *Cancer Ward*, where readers might well argue that the work is not anti-Soviet, the Soviet government inevitably had to react in hostile fashion to this work. To tolerate Solzhenitsyn any longer would have opened the way for a veritable flood of still more critical works through "samizdat," the twilight publishing world of the dissident Soviet intellectuals. The Soviet government felt that it had to act, and after some debate deportation seemed to be the most expedient course.

The picture of Solzhenitsyn which we get from his various writings is an intriguing one. He is now criticized by some for not being a "western liberal." Had we any right to expect him to be one? In *Gulag* he identifies himself with the generation of Soviet youth who came to maturity under Stalin. He in fact accepts Stalin's claim to be Lenin's heir and he turns this claim on its head: since Stalin was Lenin's natural heir, the system and not just Stalin was at fault for the terrible human destruction of the 1930's and 1940's.

Solzhenitsyn has also been accused of having a Stalinist view of the decay of the West. Considering the circumstances, is that really unexpected?

Solzhenitsyn's understanding of the world outside of Soviet Russia seems limited, but there are many leading American novelists, on the other hand, whose views of the Soviet Union are, to say the least, uninformed. Just as there has been a tendency to credit Solzhenitsyn with being more than he actually was, there is now a danger of criticizing him for not being more than he is able to be.

Solzhenitsyn has been a Russian writer writing for a Russian-speaking audience. His books testify eloquently to his feelings of being a Russian. Various of his works have obviously had universal appeal, others not. His political tracts can have, it would seem, little impact on western thought. He has been called authoritarian because of the views expressed in his *Letter to the Leaders of the Soviet Union*, but this must be balanced by the general appeal which he raises for human dignity in his writings. I cannot believe that Solzhenitsyn dreams of a society in which he would be the master; rather, he seems destined to remain an outcast social conscience. I am, of course, tempted to compare Solzhenitsyn with Tolstoy as so many others have done, but I will refrain. The comparison would have to be too facile, too glib. On the other hand, a comparison with Voltaire has a certain appeal: How would Candide have fared journeying through Gulag. . . .

Through its control of the mass media and through its social organizations, the Soviet government has mobilized Soviet society against Solzhenitsyn. His works can no longer be found in the libraries; even *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* has disappeared from the shelves and the catalogues. Solzhenitsyn's future in official Soviet letters appears dark.

In the West, Solzhenitsyn is unlikely to win great laurels as either a political scientist or a constitutional historian. But as a social historian, a recorder of the human condition, he will undoubtedly have a firm place. □



poetry

**NOCTURNE IN DARKNESS**

Getting up at night  
my fingers trace

pathways of darkness,  
avoiding collisions

and cruel projections,  
my progress easy

as the velvet flight  
of a bat in a cave.

\*

I am disturbed  
by the streetlight

beyond the kitchen  
with its electric flicker

on the dense-blue window.  
It does not belong

to my house,  
to my darkness.

\*

I hear the breathing  
of my son and wife.

My breath joins theirs.  
A small chorale surges

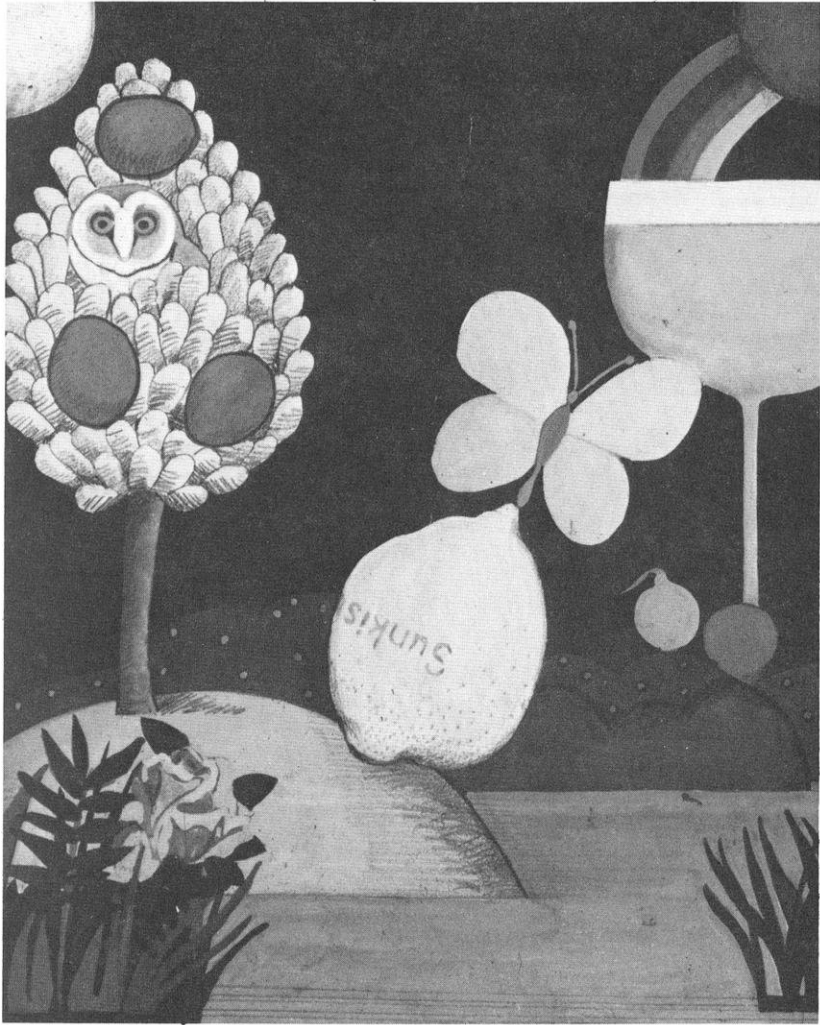
through the silken realm  
of sleep.

\*

A whispering darkness . . .  
Elsewhere

empires collapse —  
but here I slowly die!  
Measuring my dying

breath by blessed breath.





## THE BLUE CANDLE

Lured by the sound of distance:  
sea-waves, moonlight

on backs of sea-birds,  
I too could fly;

but what's in Paris  
and what's in Rome?

Hard times and bad weather!

\*

Let others leap over time-zones  
pursuing a gleam of fancy.

God only knows  
what hidden calamities

I have avoided:  
strangers, crowds,

missed train connections.  
I will stay at home

making evening journeys  
to a bench in my garden.

\*

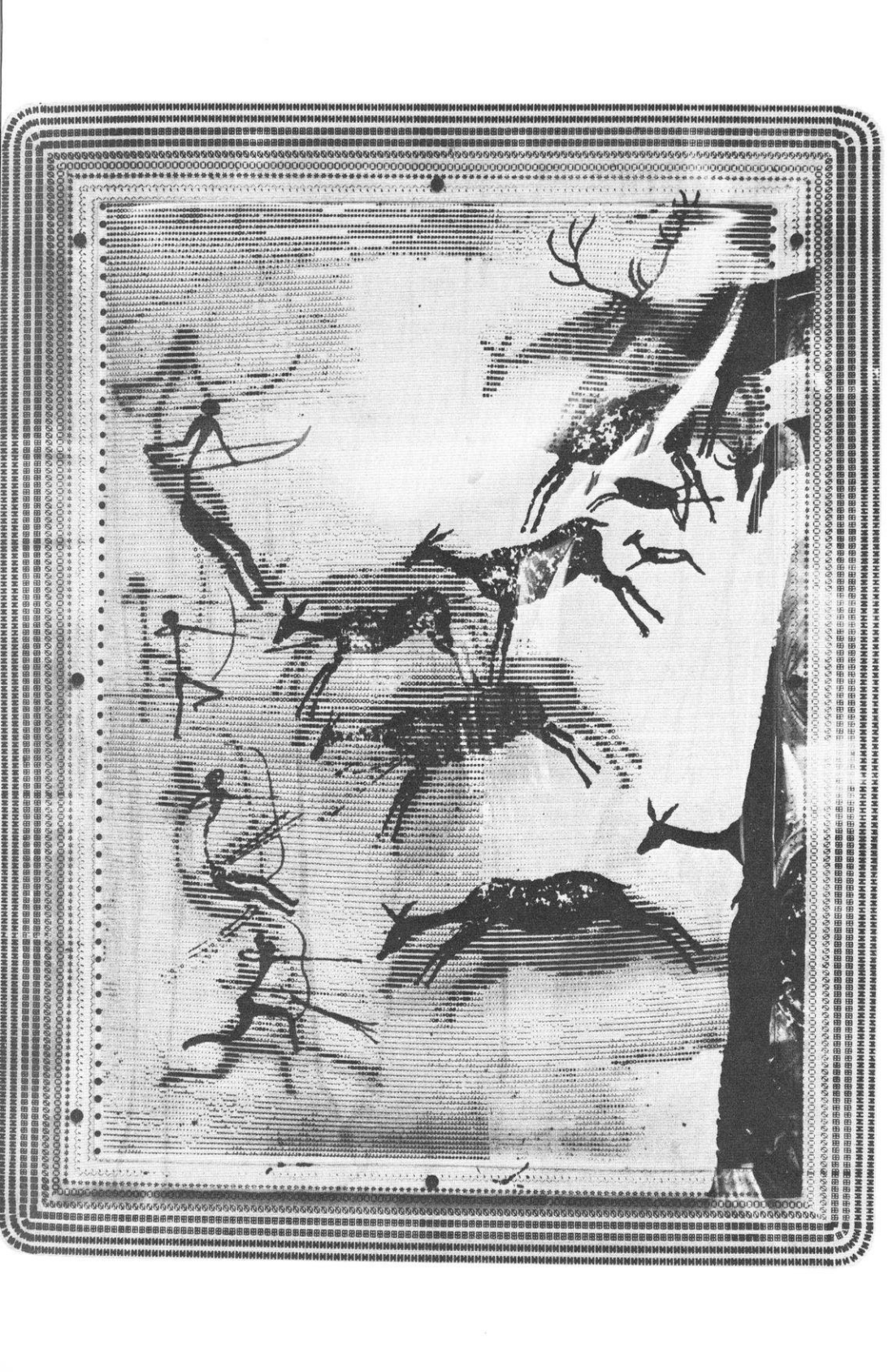
A blue candle is my Zion.  
Its pure light

blesses the silence  
of this sleeping house.

Soon enough something  
will take my hand

and quietly lead me away.

*William Pillin is a Los Angeles poet who deserves greater recognition. New work of his can be seen in such magazines as Kayak and Bachy. He is the author of several books of poems, his most recent being Everything Falling (Foreward by Robert Bly), Kayak, 1971.*



**WALLET SIZE: YEARBOOK PICTURE**

*All men are lunatics, but he who can analyze  
his delusions is called a philosopher.*

Yearbook caption by  
William Nicholas Judson  
(1953-1972)

A few leaves on the vine  
which still grip the wall  
tap you on the shoulder,  
yet there is no wind in the picture,  
no movement.  
Your smile, solid and strong,  
holds against sunlight.  
You have just said something,  
not what the caption says,  
but some smile that  
turned itself in  
to lead us on as if  
by a scent of thyme.  
I smell the strong lines  
of your arm's diagonal,  
fighting the rights of brick  
you put behind you so  
your back could prop itself up.  
There in your loose shoes,  
in your air,  
I mound words for this sculpture.

## ALONG THE POTOMAC

Blossoms fall, and the cherry pit starts to  
ripen into what it always  
ends up being, no matter that Japan  
gave us its first spring breath like  
a Buddhist censer or a wreath  
of perfumed ash  
in periodic dis-  
tension, arching its pendulum, swinging  
through centuries . . . to  
us: it is no  
atoll, pink circumference  
in a sea of faces filling with void,  
the great No;  
though its pale heft  
balances the leek, though its scent  
slants, preeminently  
blushed by foreign or domestic suns,  
as its center softly  
turns stone.

*The first of Mr. Judson's poems will appear in his new book, Ash is the Candle's Wick. He teaches in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and edits the little magazine Northeast. In addition, he is the editor of the University of Wisconsin's Voyages to the Inland Sea series and of Juniper Books.*

## EXORCISM

1.

A mountain climbs out of my pen  
and on to the paper  
followed by a meadow lark  
followed by a doorknob.  
All these things have no place in my poetry.  
I tell them:  
the mountain folds itself abjectly  
down into a prayer  
the meadow lark studies shorthand  
and enters a law firm.  
The doorknob closes the door  
on the poem that might have been.

2.

So here's a fresh start:





## THE WIND

The wind blows the faces off the statues in the park  
and leaves the faces of heroes on custard pies  
in the cafe across the street;  
slowly, removes grains of light and dark  
from photos on cemetery markers  
and buries memory a mote at a time in the sky.

The wind turns the faces of pedestrians  
slightly askew;  
the wind sends the words askew  
and, even inside, messages sneak out the door  
before they reach any ears.

The wind takes the marks of hammers from nails  
and houses forget who made them;  
the wind lifts the memory of flashbulbs from landmarks  
and history forgets that it's famous.

The wind wipes the fingerprints off our hands  
and everything we touch:  
no man, no woman here in the wind owns anything;  
every comfortable spot moves on  
before we can return to it,  
we fall asleep in one bed  
wake up in another,  
false to ourselves  
without the dividends of infidelity.

And now:  
the wind tugs at these words on the paper:  
by the time you read this poem  
it may not be  
here.

### **VIEW FROM SUBURBIA**

A picture window moves through the day,  
a glass tugboat  
towing trees and houses behind it  
hostages held  
in a soap bubble.

*Duane Ackerson, a widely published poet,  
is the editor of Dragonfly and the  
publisher/editor of the one-line anthology,  
But Is It Poetry?*

**IFFLEY TOWPATH**

The one to one correspondence  
of dark trees to dark trees'  
reflection; & one  
insomniac swan; & the white roar  
of black water steady under the weir;

or if the redwood balances  
Magdalen tower, maybe six centuries;  
memory will outlive that, & dances  
with Lord Shiva on the stump; who knows what  
you or I will remember in ten trillion years?

**TAMADA SENSEI**

Two or three hundred  
spiked seedcradles in the leaves—  
of all those blossoms

Basho stood on this same bridge  
and watched these same swans

a male and a female  
grooming in the slow olive water

dragoning and phoenixing and  
wallowing like dogs in dust

they don't once look at each other  
opening ripples cling and cross

**In this dream**

Donald Duck

& his huge eyes crazed like stars  
in a cracked oracular quack  
addressed all the mothers & fathers  
& all the children in the world,  
saying the world was beautiful & loved us  
& should be loved & tended & made much of.  
The children listened attentively,  
I saw their round heads  
silhouetted against the light, watching,  
now, the great ideograms passing like clouds,  
flowers, insects, reptiles, all in pairs  
but no two in a pair alike.  
I couldn't read fast enough,  
they were turning away from me,  
three minutes ago I woke  
suffocated with a joy deep as I am.

*Tim Reynolds has appeared in this magazine  
before. He now lives in England.*



**EXTRACTS\* FROM  
INTRODUCTORY WORKING PAPER FOR  
PARTICIPANTS IN THE UNESCO  
CONFERENCE**

**The problem as amplified on November 24th,  
1972 in a meeting attended by Messrs.  
Baumate, Lacoste, and Nobbe of UNESCO,  
and Bosserman of the University of South  
Florida.**

After having explored the subject matter, there was general agreement that Project No. 3155 should have as its central focus recent cultural expressions and their interactions in advanced industrial societies. It was agreed to begin the study by taking a careful look at the United States. The group selected the U.S. as a point of reference and of comparison because of its size, economic growth rate, and the rapid diffusion of its cultural artifacts and life-styles. Historically, it is the first to illustrate this form of modernity. Moreover, cultural changes and innovations seem to be taking place there at a faster rate and on a wider scale. Hence, to understand contemporary modernity one must come to grips with the U.S. example.

Although the United States is to be considered as the starting point, it is envisaged that other expressions of cultural innovation and modernity be studied in a few, carefully selected European countries and in Japan. This comparative approach will enable the researchers to note similarities and dissimilarities among the societies; whether there are patterns in the development of modernity. Furthermore, they will be able to determine some of the problems of transition; whether there are patterns in diffusion of cultural innovations in general from one society to another. Is there one type of modernity or are there several? At this time it is essential to comprehend the dimensions and basic characteristics of modernity, to measure its

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*\*This abbreviated version presents only those portions of the original Introductory Working Paper which amplify the background of thinking and planning for the conference. Most of the material in the omitted sections deals with objectives and procedures, concerns which are largely covered in Mr. Kaplan's "Overview of the Conference."*

influence, and the way this modernity is received.

This international comparative study serves two other purposes: 1) though scholars in the United States have looked at many aspects of their society, they have not done so in a broad, comparative way. This study will help to deepen their analysis as well as add to it; 2) Europeans and Asians have developed a number of overly simple stereotypes about U.S. society. Such a comparative approach will help to enrich these views and correct their "optics." Furthermore, every advanced industrial society has a stake in what happens in the U.S. Other societies inevitably must ask the following kinds of questions: Will they develop along the same lines as those of the U.S.? Will they encounter the same problems? Can politics be devised to meet the challenge of certain trends? What choices are available?

Several observations seem pertinent:

—The question that is asked by the UNESCO #3155 is no less than a total analysis and interpretation of American culture. This has been attempted many times, on various levels, using varieties of techniques, anticipating many audiences, with varying purposes. The clear criteria of the present study, or sets of studies about the U.S.A. are the soundness of this effort and its usefulness to subsequent analysis of several other highly developed nations.

—As often is the case, the unwritten or negative aspects of a research statement are in need of notation. As to the wording of #3155 above, there is no intention of falling into the assumption that the present characteristics of American culture will necessarily be those that characterize other cultures; regardless of the merits of the theories about "phases" of cultures, familiar in some anthropological circles, the present task cannot begin with this view. However, the elements of "modernity" to be observed in U.S.A. patterns and trends may, indeed, be sought out for clarification by other cultures, so that in some cases the controls available to those cultures may be turned toward prevention.

—The length of the project—tentatively set for a decade, with a two-year planning period—has implications for conceptualization and

methodology. One implication is the possibility of planning longitudinal studies; another is the principle of flexibility in both method and in membership of participants; a third is the importance of careful time schedules as a basic aspect of communications between participants.

—It is not the prerogative of the coordinators to rewrite the original statement, but they should be free to anticipate a broadening of the issue and, with the knowledge of UNESCO, to move into related issues. If additional funds are needed for the establishment of studies that interlock and contribute to #3155, the coordinators, always in communication with UNESCO, should assume the requisite initiative. An example lies in the selection of "four western European and one Asiatic nation" for Phase II. We are aware of considerations of time, funding, and practicality. As noted above, the present coordinators have been active with colleagues in numerous eastern European countries; they have been impressed with their own industrialization and modernization while they are able to study those societies that have had longer experience in these regards. The U.S.A. had no "U.S.A." to study fifty or a hundred years ago, in studies comparable to the present project: Czechoslovakia does—and has, as in the report *Civilization at the Crossroads*, issued in 1970 by teams of its Academy of Science.

An even more striking case is that of "under-developed" countries, for whom contemporary communications and cybernation hold forth dramatic discontinuities. We should be surprised if, in the course of the decade, Project #3155 does not attract the active interest, and perhaps, involvement of such nations.

### **Possible Conference Outcomes**

Looking far ahead in the life of #3155, we may assume that many types of responses will be made to the issues raised in Tampa and along the way. These may well include at least the following types of "reports."

- I. General scholarly essays and interpretations
- II. Hard-core social science research
- III. Surveys, covering special areas
- IV. Films and tapes

- V. Conferences on special topics
- VI. Over-all summations and recommendations

As well as substance, ongoing recommendations for structure and procedure may result from Tampa.

### **General Background**

There exists a long tradition for the examination of the arts in relation to the general culture, social organization, community life, educational institutions, social class, trends in leisure, economic expenditures and governmental policy. A random selection of illustrations could include P. Sorokin's *Cultural and Social Dynamics*, Baumol and Bowen's *The Performing Arts: An Economic Dilemma*, *The Rockefeller Fund Report*, Alvin Toffler's *The Culture Consumers*, August Hecksher's report on the arts for President Kennedy, ongoing issues of *Arts in Society* (University of Wisconsin periodical), numerous reports of the American Symphony Orchestra League, and *The Sociology of Art and Literature*, edited by Albrecht, Barnett and Griff. Graduate schools exist for the preparation of arts "managers," such as at the University of California in Los Angeles; in the U.S.A. there are hundreds of professional associations among composers, artists, theatre and dance groups, many of them joined in a central council which provides systematic information on such matters as federal policy. In 1965, the Congress established the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Arts; the latter segment works closely with Arts Councils in each of the fifty states. In spite of dramatic cuts in numerous federal programs, the seventy-six million dollar appropriation for the Endowment may materially increase for the next several years.

In almost every college and university of the country there are active programs in all performing and plastic arts; teachers for the arts are prepared in many of them; many states have a "consultant" to the arts, within the educational framework. Many foundations, notably Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie, have had or presently maintain an interest in the arts; Ford alone provided \$84 million to symphony orchestras several years ago. Symphony orchestras grew in number from 1,029 in 1955 to 1,441 in 1969; in the same period attendance at paid concerts expanded from 4,900,000 to 8,176,000 and gross expenditures

for orchestra concerts alone rose from less than 14 million to over 51 million dollars. A comparable expansion took place in museum attendance, sales of paintings, and growth in published materials about all the arts.

Beyond all data and the quantity of growth of interest in the arts—stimulated by such factors as rising educational levels, public school and university movements, and the influence of television—there is, first, the perennial issue of quality, “mass culture,” “mid-cult,” etc.; second, the issue of stylistic and avant-garde tendencies in their relation to social change and new values (related, in turn to youth movements, war, technology, etc.); and, third, perhaps the largest of all issues, the place for the aesthetic within a complex and dynamic industrial and technological society.

Yet the American art scene was unprepared for the transformations resulting from civil rights struggles of the 1950's and 60's. Although the hard core of the struggle was for political, educational, economic, and social opportunity, the minorities found identity and expression in the arts as well; and a remarkable chapter in American arts has been evolving in terms of social functions of the arts, manifest in such areas as Harlem or Watts, and developed in new trends in the fields of theatre, painting, literature and music. If tendency implies generalizations for the development of human relationship, minority identity in other cultures may well emerge as a major theme in subsequent phases of UNESCO's #3155.

Altogether, in a consideration of the arts in the U.S.A. and the implications that may emerge for other cultures, there exists a substantive literature, with many professional, academic, and official sources for information.

Nonetheless, the case can be made that very much remains to be done before one can say that clear principles exist which pertain to the arts as a functional or integral part of the society. There are theories to explain specific aspects of art—its styles, for example—through social factors outside of the arts; however, there is no general acceptance of these theories. As Wollheim notes, “—what justifies us in talking not just of Giotto's painting *and* a prosperous upper-middle-class but of Giotto's painting *because* of a prosper-

ous upper-middle-class rule?” That question is relevant to the creative aspects of the arts. On the other hand, if we rely on sociological approaches, then the arts are a social institution with characteristic roles, norms, and values. It should be no more difficult to trace the careers of artists than of other occupational groups; nor are the status symbols associated with audiences to the arts elusive to scholars of symbolism in other contexts.

But the question of “social factors” in relation to the arts takes on a special relevance to the goals of UNESCO's Project #3155. The United States is to be studied for generalizations that may be useful for other “technological and post-industrial societies.” Now, on top of the difficulties of relating the arts to a given society—the U.S.A. in this case—the project calls for applications which, ostensibly, will be made by other nations in the form of policies. Approval to such an issue was illustrated by the Council of Europe in 1971. Its Symposium for Cultural Co-operation convened for four days for its 19-member nations, meeting in Rotterdam. The purpose of the Symposium was to explore the methods for “encouraging the cultural life” through better planning of facilities and equipment. The Council had decided earlier to bring case studies from numerous countries. Eventually one country, England, was selected for a detailed study of such groups as the Inter-Action (theatre) group. One decision of the Symposium was to establish a consulting team representing the Council, available to all member countries.

The English material is roughly comparable to UNESCO's contemplated procedure for #3155; the three working papers\* serve as a sample of reports which may result for UNESCO through 1974 and 1975. The analogy falters here, with UNESCO contemplating eight more years of study in both the U.S.A. and other societies.

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\* *The three working papers were (1) J. Coenen, "Leisure Activities in the Different European Countries; Situation and Trends," (2) A. Trintignse, "Survey of Governmental Policies in the Cultural Field and their Effect on Facilities," (3) A. Wouters and E. Berman, "Innovations in the Field of Socio-Cultural Facilities."*

The UNESCO study must, obviously, develop its own shape and momentum. Its extended time span heightens the need for careful—but flexible—planning.

**Definitions of Terms: Relevant Models**

A basic debate could develop in the Tampa conference on central issues of definition which, indeed, might penetrate the UNESCO's project #3155 to its very end, i.e., definitions of "cultural," of "innovations," and of "post-industrial." While the short discussions below will not serve even to raise the major issues, let alone to contribute to solutions, these visual models are based on an extensive study of leisure recently completed by the conference coordinators.

**Culture:** The UNESCO conceptions of "culture," as equated with the fine arts, is implicit in its reference to "artistic movements" in #3155. It could be plausibly argued that this is too narrow a conception, that it stems from an elitist social position, and that such arts as painting, music, literature, film, theatre, dance, sculpture, or architecture are inevitably tied in with a larger social, psychological and technological fabric which also forms a vital part of a country's "culture." Based on a discussion with UNESCO officials in Paris, the Tampa coordinators nevertheless accepted this familiar view of culture as an operational starting point, proposing to meet the limitation by the selection of participants as well as by placing the concept eventually within a larger framework.

There is a second conception of "culture," described in a document of March 15, 1973 for the Council of Europe by a Swedish governmental committee:

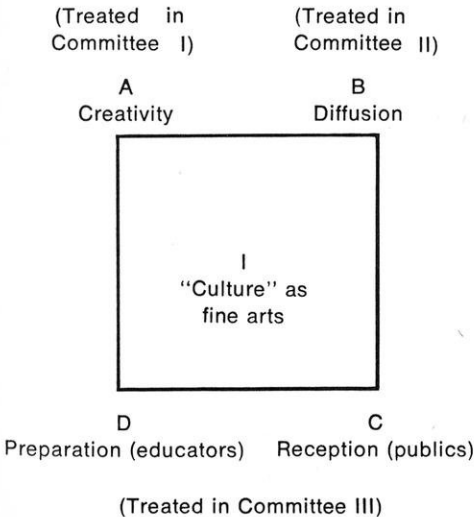
*A cultural policy, which builds upon a wider concept of culture than the traditional bourgeois one, must—according to this new way of thinking developed in Sweden during the last part of the sixties—guarantee each citizen the right to free communication with others. The school was stressed as the most important instrument for building up such a culture; this institution should widen the range of experience of human beings and it should develop their ability to articulate their thinking and feeling. Through demands of this kind the cultural policies became an integrated theme in the general political debate. . .\**

The third, anthropological-sociological usage is to approach "culture" in some variant of the succinct conception by Kluckholm and Kelly, "A culture is an historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designated members of a group.\*\* Variants of this statement are to be found in every social science text.

The second term of UNESCO's #3155—"innovation"—is similarly subject to a broad range of conception and methodology. Innovation in whose terms? at what speed? over how wide a geographical range? All scientific studies of "social change" touch directly on these issues, and indeed, political science deals with innovations in respect to such terms as "movements" and "revolutions." The relation of social change to integration of cultural elements and to discernible patterns will be recalled in the writings of Sorokin, Toynbee, Spengler, and Feibelman. Sorokin, for example, speaks in great detail

\*p. 38, *Herald Swedner, "Experimental Study of the cultural development of European towns," Committee for Out-of-School Education and Cultural Development, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 29827-043, Progress Report.*

\*\*Quoted in *George Homans, The Human Group, p. 125.*



of the arts as a major clue to "ideational" or "sensate" integration.

The sense of UNESCO #3155, apparent in the original statement, is that the U.S.A. is in the midst of significant social changes, that the "post-industrial" condition, whatever that may be, is still ahead of us. This raises many other questions.

The term "post-industrial" was first prominently used by the American sociologist, Daniel Bell. His preliminary articles using the term have now—only several months before the Tampa meeting—been more fully amplified in his volume listed in the bibliography below. Alain Touraine's 1971 volume and a 1969 collective report by the Czechoslovak Academy of Science team (headed by Radovan Richta) are also important additions to the growing literature.

The discussion above is intended primarily to make the point that both in Tampa and more so in the years ahead for Project #3155, matters of conceptualization will become increasingly important. Indeed, the first few hours in Tampa will likely hear, in many forms, the basic question, "What really is the focus of the inquiry? What are we trying to set up?" Neither UNESCO as an organization (with its long experience on the world scene) nor the coordinators (with their own operational techniques) can gainsay the vast literature which exists on these matters, and will be reflected in the input of the conferees. □

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