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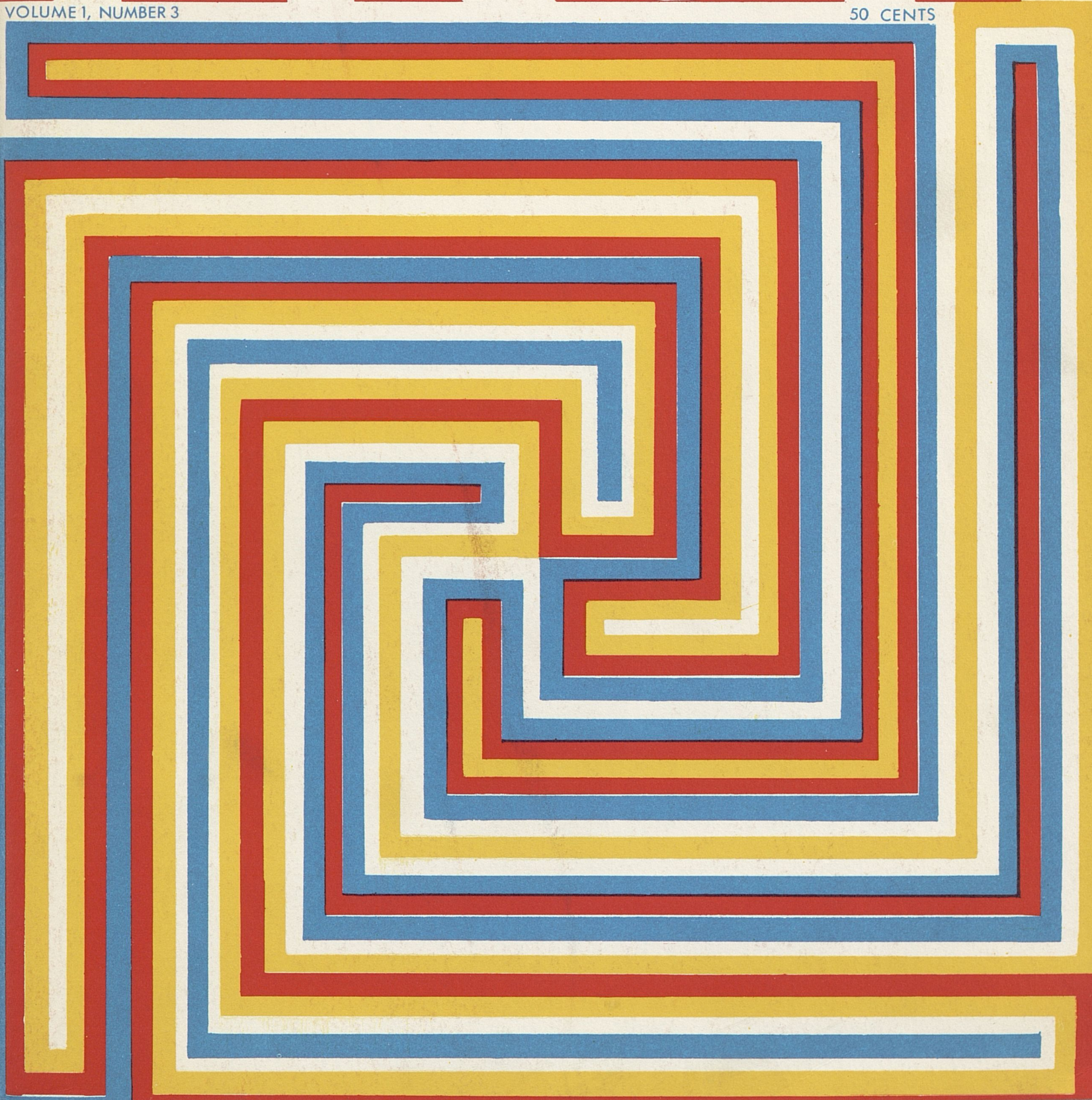
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A POET LOOKS AT CUBA · ALLEN KREBS "O" AND OURSELVES



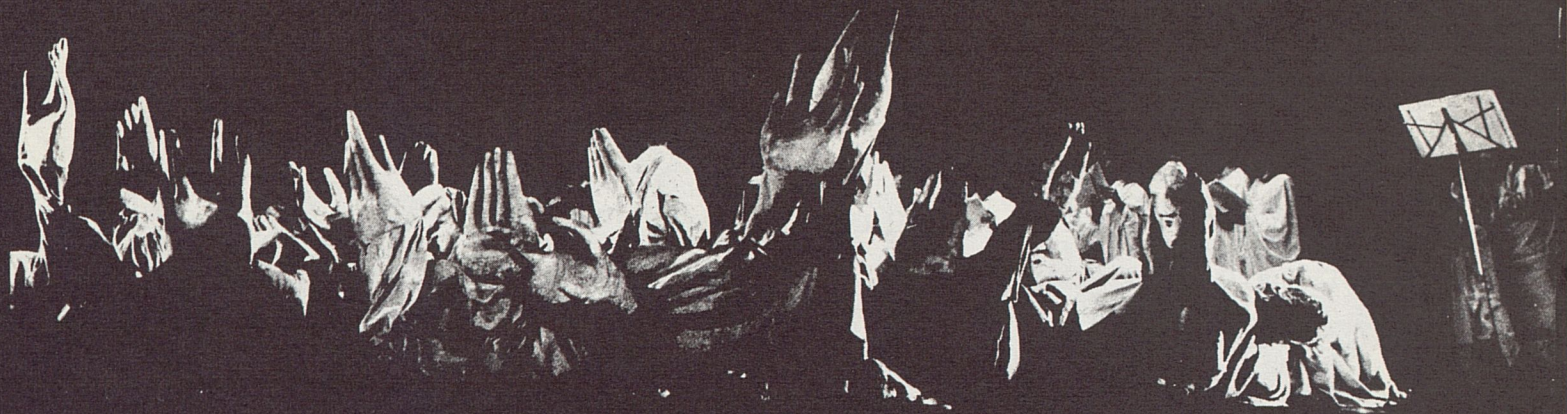
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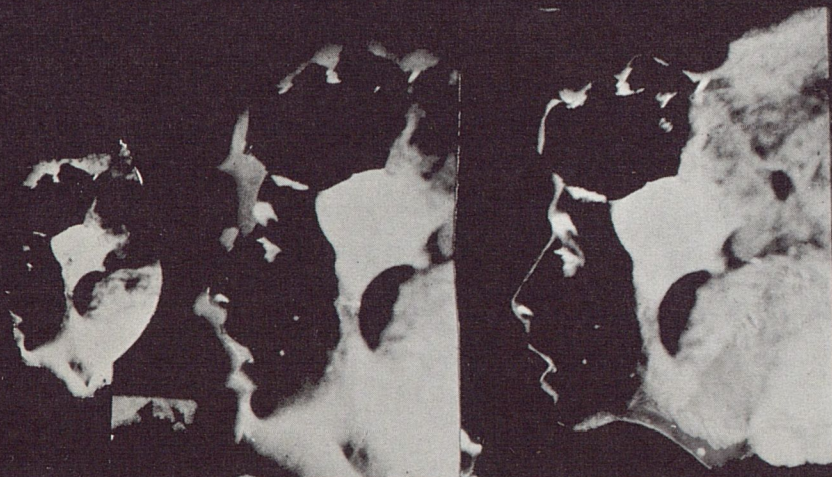
BREAD AND PUPPET THEATRE

HAROLD HERBSTMAN

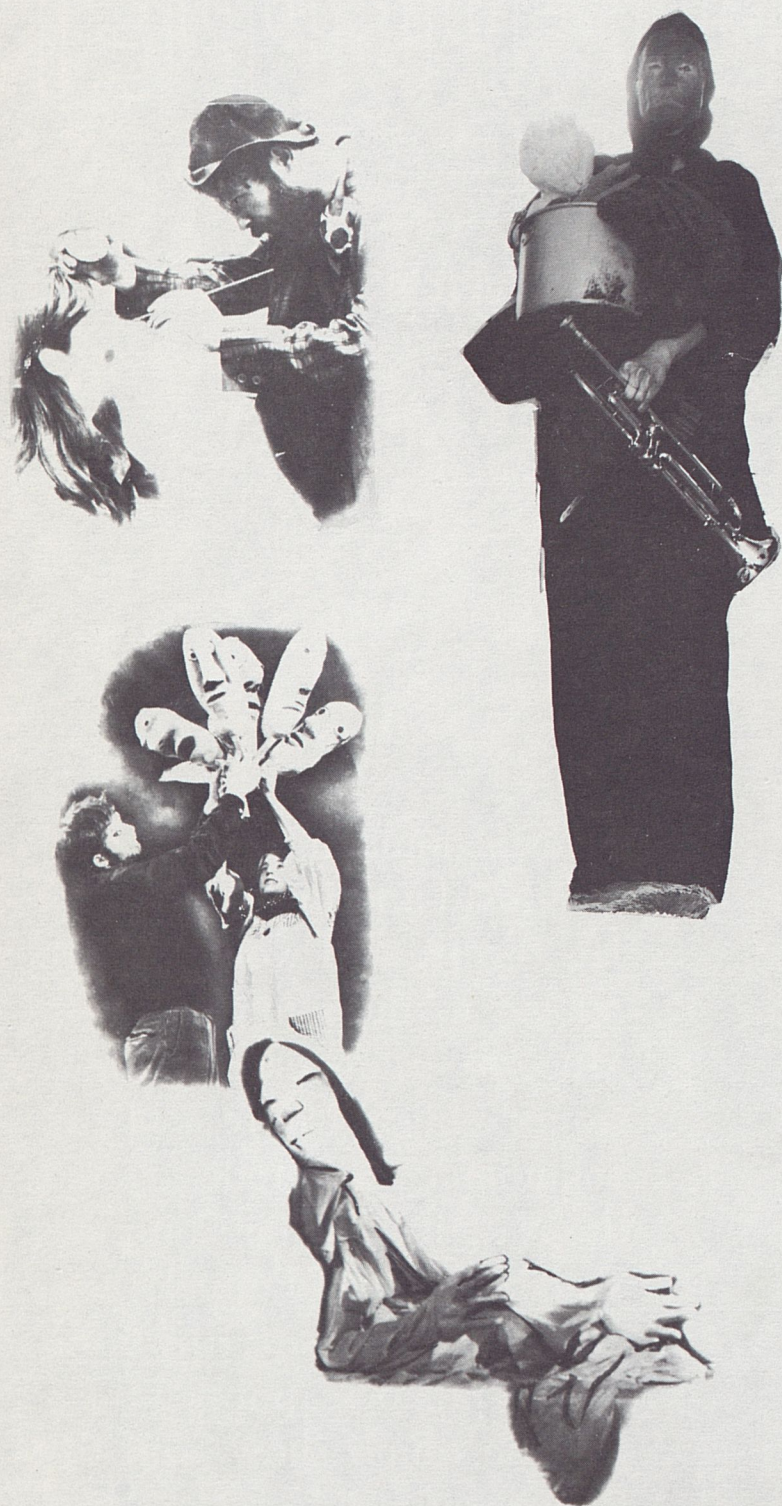
Peter Schumann is producer, script writer, actor, dancer, singer, orchestra leader. He also plays the violin and puts out a weekly newspaper. Peter Schumann invented the staging, settings and costumes, it is his philosophy and administration that guides the Bread and Puppet Theatre. However, the theatre is also a communal effort depending on the energy and devotion of many people.



Peter Schumann invented the Bread and Puppet theatre. His theatre and workshop are related to the morality plays. Much of his material is drawn from Biblical sources. Peter Schumann has rediscovered the Nativity and Passion play. The Bread and Puppet theatre of protest uses the form of the Japanese puppet theatre, the dumb show, and the Procession.



The puppets are several inches or twenty feet. The large puppets are manipulated by actors who clothed in the guise of puppets control the movements with poles.



A great deal of attention is given to the total visual presentation. Peter Schumann's puppets usually don't speak. The narrative line is maintained through caption signs, a narrator, mixed noises, various instruments and well paced silences.



The workshop and children's theatre is in the Shakespeare Theatre on Lafayette Street where all the construction equipment, tools, costumes, and props are stored. When a show is to be done, the group works on the set and props and the same members go out and give the performance.

Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet theatre presents good and evil and the joy from good and the pain from evil, and we watch and participate and choose.





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**BREAD AND PUPPET THEATRE, ANGRY
ARTS, GRACE PALEY PHOTOS BY
KARL BISSINGER**

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Charles Williams in "The Greater Trumps" describes a game in which the central piece is static or at least seems so. The secret of the game is in this piece. However, if one gets close enough and has enough understanding he realizes that the piece is, in fact, not static at all, but is moving so fast in relationship to the other pieces that it gives the illusion of standing still. That piece is, in fact, manipulating the other pieces.

This story holds the key to an understanding of the relationship of the artist to his environment, of the relationship of any thinking, feeling person to the events that occur around him. A man is never standing still and true stillness implies the ability to move so fast that motion no longer exists. Anyone who has ever sung or danced or painted a picture or written a poem knows this—that it means to throw all your energies for that given moment into one focus—to hold everything as one.

To leave the "established" society in an authentic sense is not to "drop out" it is to come back into a new community which establishes communication between human beings instead of automatons. When a man stops believing that he is responsible for every other individual, he begins to believe in murder as an ethical possibility. When a man ignores the actions of a community engaged in murder, he condones that murder. He becomes a pawn to be moved rather than a force that moves.

The fundamental decision of how a man should live his life is up to him. No one should be allowed to be the deified and unexamined spokesman of any community. We have had enough of such spokesmen. We speak for ourselves.

MARGARET RANDELL: A POET LOOKS AT CUBA EIGHT YEARS AFTER THE TRIUMPH OF THE REVOLUTION

Margaret Randell and her husband, Sergio Mondragon, edit El Corno Emplumado, a bi-lingual magazine from Mexico. The next issue of the magazine will be devoted to new art from Cuba.

Eight years from the triumph of her revolution, Cuba finds herself today in her most dynamic period. There is no turning back, in spite of the vain hopes of thousands of exiles in the United States and elsewhere. Seven million Cubans are at one with their government; most of them are fully armed. They have gone through literal hell and given up a great deal for the dignity and autonomy they now have, and they are willing to give up more and go through more hell if necessary. Socialism (in its efficient way to a new Communism) is firmly planted in our hemisphere, and the results imply neither the high, cold, impersonal industrialization of the Soviet Union and other European Socialist countries nor the bread lines irresponsibly advertised by the "guzanos" (counterrevolutionaries in exile).

The particular circumstance of the Cuban Revolution—geographically, historically and politically—, the strong U.S. influ-

tradition of that character itself), and the actual and threatened aggression on the part of the United States since the inception of the revolution—all these things have joined in making the Cuba of today a unique combination of diverse, at times seemingly contradictory forces.

I went to Cuba in January-February of this year to attend the "Encuentro con Ruben Dario", Cuba's homage to the great poet and founder of Modernism whose centennial we celebrate this year. Similar gatherings took place in the poet's birthplace (Nicaragua) as well as in Los Angeles, Bloomington and Caracas. How would the Cuban event compare with the others? In Cuba those present agreed that the meetings in the United States would undoubtedly carry the laurels insofar as important contributions and investigation of the poet's work—there money and impetus have never been lacking for literary research. The Nicaraguan affair, stained by the blood of recent and continuous revolt under the threat of the new Somosa, claimed only heartache from the poets present. The Cuban gathering had much to offer:

Poets, critics and intellectuals of such stature as Julio Cortazar and Noe Jitrik (Argentina), Gianni Toti (Italy), Mario Benedetti and Angel Rama (Uruguay), Lumir Cvirny (Checkoslovaquia), Carlos Pellicer (Mexico), Manuel Pedro Gonzalez (The United States),—among the more than fifty





Gonzalez (The United States),—among the more than fifty who converged on Habana—arrived for the meeting. Because of the economic blockade, these men and women had to travel half-way around the world to arrive at their destination; the Cuban government paid for these long-way-around routes and the visitors trusted themselves to old planes and other inconveniences in order to make the trip. Argentinians came by way of Prague, Peruvians by way of Mexico, etc.

The setting for the week-long meeting was the narrow peninsula beach of Varadero, in the province of Matanzas some two hours by car from Habana. Before the revolution this was the site of the Dupont mansion. The great house itself is now a restaurant and served us meals as well as providing a large seaside hall in which the daily sessions were held. The smaller but equally luxurious summer homes lining the beach—once belonging to the whole American colony at the feet of Dupont—housed us during these eight days. We touched hands with fellow poets we had previously known only through letters or their works, we swam and sunned, we read and listened to others read their verse, we heard papers on Dario. The founder of Modernism, never a political prophet, was judged nevertheless for his literary merit; the poets present found it significant that Cuba, in the midst of her revolutionary dynamism, should have the time, money and desire to salute poet as poet.

After the week at Varadero, we were on our own. I must say, before going any further, that the visitor to Cuba has *complete freedom* to go where he pleases and do and see what interests him, alone or in the company of a guide. There are no restrictions whatsoever. I have never experienced a hospitality greater than that offered us in Cuba, yet this was never forced upon us. There was a great sensitivity to the fact that one gets tired at times of going with a group, one often wants to get away from a guide, one has particular interests apart from one's friends. We were given lovely rooms in Habana's Hotel Nacional, encouraged to stay on the island as long as we wished, and while trips and tours were always available—all expenses paid—our time was our own.

I often took advantage of these group excursions, thereby visiting many schools, hospitals, museums, housing projects, fishermen's cooperatives, farms, cane fields and other sites of interest. I joined seven fellow-poets on a week-long trip to the province of Oriente, entering the great Sierra Maestra in search of the roots of the revolution. In this way I visited Moncada, Baracoa, Monzanillo, Guantanamo, Minas de Frio. But I also walked the streets of Habana daily and alone. I became ill and therefore experienced the inside of one of the large city hospital's emergency rooms, and later made daily visits to a neighborhood clinic where I received the treatment prescribed after ample analysis and X-ray by the doctor who treated me. At these places I waited in line with the rest of Cuba, talked to many men and women also waiting their turn. In the streets, too, conversations were frequent, Cubans are generally friendly and open. And I visited many friends who live in Habana—both Cuban and American—, participating, if only briefly, in their lives.

I was startled by the whole political/social/economic situation—so different from that to which we are accustomed—and asked many questions. These were freely and completely answered by *companeros* everywhere. (Everyone is *companero* or *companera* in Cuba, an immediate breakdown and common

denominator, from prime minister to farmer). Economists and political scientists have written at length on the Cuban situation, however, and I am well aware they are better capacitated to do so than I. My contribution, as a poet, must be on another level: Aside from the tremendous advances in these realms, and perhaps largely because of them, there is another side to the Cuban revolution, and this is the aspect which most interested and impressed me. The Cuban has changed *inside*; he is a different kind of human being. That, of course, is the most difficult observation to translate into words, but, somehow, in these pages of impressions that is what I will try to do. Perhaps if I relate facts, incidents, the sense of this new man will come through as it hit me by seeing, experiencing these things in Cuba.

The economic blockade has created a situation in which a nation that eight years ago produced only sugar, rum, tobacco and coffee (and these in U.S.-regulated, less than capacity quantities) now is one of the largest manufacturers of cement in Latin America. There are still occasional huts in the country but these are rapidly being replaced by new housing for all. In the cities there is no longer such a thing as "slums" or the "misery belt" we know strung about all our large centers of urban living.

At the moment there are one and a half cows for every person in Cuba, yet meat is rationed since beef sold to Italy and other European markets brings in needed dollars. Rationing, itself, is a relative term, however, since all Cubans agree: "This is abundance! You should have been here in sixty-two, sixty-three!"

That, perhaps, is the single most positive factor meeting the eye, and one sees it and senses it everywhere in Cuba: the government, the people, the communication and working situation between the two, shows a constant progression towards a better life, in every sense of the word. Material abundance is not the only goal; a new human being is being created in Cuba and this new man, restored to the natural dignity with which he was born, not only *understands* shortage and progress (and their relation, one to another) but *participates* in his government in a way no longer even possible to "fake" in the democratic nations.

Fidel, Raul Castro, President Dorticos, the whole Central Committee which makes up the nation's leaders, are literally a government in a jeep. Most of these men and women fought in the mountains, made the revolution with their hands. Many of their brothers, sisters and friends made it with their lives. Dressed almost continually in combat fatigues, they are more often "on the job" than "in the office." Government officials pay traffic fines like any citizen, are subject to the same laws, the same rationing, the same sorrows and joys. The current cry is "Down with Bureaucracy!" and Fidel has gone so far as to threaten disbanding the ministries and converting them in functioning agencies unless they fully conform to the revolutionary attitude. The whole structure of leadership is sustained by the integrity of the revolutionary leaders; even their detractors have not been able to successfully accuse them of dishonesty or crimes against their people.

Together with this obvious cleanliness and morality, goes youth. The abundance of young men in important offices is extraordinary. The average age of Cuban ambassadors abroad is thirty. Teachers, after a tough five-year teachers' training

program, average eighteen years. The director of the impressive first year teacher training program at Minas de Frio is twenty-three. Fidel himself, twenty-five when he initiated the revolution with the attack on Moncada barracks in 1953, is now just forty. One of the spoken aims of the revolution is to arrive at the point where *all* those in responsible positions are completely formed and educated within the revolution itself. Already, in some of the grade schools we visited, we spoke with children who say "I remember my parents talking about what it was like under Batista . . .".

Back to "facts." The rationing, what is it, how does it work today? Defense committees on every block or several blocks attend to such jobs as deciding who should be next on the lists for new housing, seeing that all children go to school and are given vaccinations and inoculations, organize the people's militia, and, too, distribute the ration booklets. There are booklets for food and others for clothing, and children, the aged, pregnant women and nursing mothers are issued special booklets in accordance with their special needs. In 1962, just after the blockade went into effect, people were eating rice and spaghetti in spite of aid from the Soviet Union. But tremendous will and energy, coupled with relatively few mistakes in planning, provoked something of an "industrial revolution" within the political one.

Now every Cuban is entitled to three-quarters of a pound of beef a week (and parents of school aged children may eat their children's share as well since these children receive meat daily in their hot lunch where they study). Every adult and child receives a chicken a week (not bad, in a family of four!) and eggs and fish are unrationed and plentiful. Daily recipes published in the newspapers teach people how to make the most of what they have; a great campaign is still going on to develop a taste in the Cuban for fish and seafood, which, needless to say, is abundant. Every child gets a quart of milk a day; every adult is restricted to two cans of evaporated milk (just enough for the morning coffee) every two weeks. Fruit, vegetables and most grains are unrestricted and available in generous supply.

This kind of rationing, rather than any kind of real suffering, simply implies the following: there is little if any waste such as goes on constantly in our surplus-oriented societies, a person will generally invite you to dinner in a restaurant rather than in his home, and, most important of all, *every Cuban is entitled to the same diet* as opposed to the situation under Batista (and in most of our countries) in which the rich and upper middle class eat freely while the great majority of a nation survives on beans and some form of corn wafer.

The aforementioned applies only to buying for, and use in, the homes. Restaurant eating is absolutely unrestricted and the food in all types of restaurants is varied and within the price-range of even the "poorest" Cuban. The minimum wage is \$85 (Cuban pesos, on the par with U.S. dollars) a month. With rent being 10% of the supporter's salary in the great majority of the cases, education and medical attention free, and the scarcity of luxury items available, there is a relatively high percentage of "idle money". Some Cubans save; many overflow in the restaurants, ice-cream parlours, night clubs, theatres and other places of recreation.

In the middle of Habana there is an enormous modern ice-cream parlour seating and serving 1,000 people at one time, the Copelia. Fifty-cents for a double-scoop plate; sixty to a dollar



for a super-duper special! Filet mignon in the best restaurant in Habana: \$5.00. Spaghetti (excellent) in a more modest restaurant in the center of the city: \$1.00. The great beaches outside the city, previously open only to whites (and whites who could afford to hold membership in exclusive and expensive clubs) are now open to everyone; the daily rental of a beach "cabana" is twenty cents!

Clothing is also rationed: three white shirts per male adult per year, two pair of shoes per adult, yard goods and certain dresses available in limited quantity for the women. Children's clothing is more readily available—the child and his well being are emphasized in all sorts of ways in the revolution—and generally also is of better quality. Cubans dress decently, *all of them* (I never saw a bare foot, even in the most remote areas of the country) but without luxury or excess. The lack of excess may well be one clue to the change in internal character resultant from the exterior political/social change. The second car, the extra television set, the newest gadget—these do not figure in the Cuban's idea of what life should be. Desire for material possession is reduced. As Haydee Santamaria (one of the country's great revolutionary fighters, now director of the official cultural organization, La Casa de las Americas) said "Money loses its sentimental value a bit more every day in Cuba."

I do not mean to imply by this that individuality and/or personal incentive are reduced to "the common effort." This has long been the cry of those on the anti-communist bandwagon, and I found in Cuba the opposite to be true. The realization that one is working for the good of everyone *adds* something rather than detracts from the individual. In Cuba, as nowhere else, there is a completely realistic outlook in regard to what must be done for the good of everyone and what pertains to the realm of the individual. Professors, intellectuals, artists, people from every walk of life go to cut sugar cane in the fields; it is brutally hard work and participation is completely voluntary. Yet every Cuban may own up to three houses and most intellectuals have at least two (one in the city and one on the beach). A great effort is made so that people's talents and tastes are best utilized in jobs compatible with what they are most happy doing. In spite of the tremendous need for technicians and professional men (when before the revolution Cuban doctors didn't meet the AMA standards, with its triumph many of them were suddenly lured away by large salaries to the United States) the emphasis on culture is extraordinary. Much of a suffering national budget is put aside for publishing, cultural exchange, scholarships and all forms of education.

Education has been extraordinarily well-developed through the revolution, beginning with the gigantic war on illiteracy through which—in one year, 1961—the 23% of the country's population previously illiterate learned to read and write. The "circuitos infantiles" are cheerful and pedagogically advanced nurseries in every city neighborhood and all over the country. The city variety was proclaimed free for every child in January of this year. The country variety, which has always been free, accepts children from one month of age, thus permitting the mothers to work with their husbands in the fields. In many abandoned areas in the country full board and clothing are included in the educational programs. The child goes home only on weekends. All primary, secondary and specialized education is free; all books and supplies are included. Many schools are converted barracks; with the peoples' militia the need for a "professional" army is less, and what more fitting

conversion than that the building that once housed Batista's soldiers—so feared by the people—should become a school in benefit of all the people.

Miramar, one of the largest of the tremendously elegant bourgeois neighborhoods, stretches for miles on the outskirts of Habana. Every homeowner left with the triumph in January, 1959. Almost all left furniture, automobiles and even personal possessions—undoubtedly they expected to return very soon. The contents of these, and similar homes all over the island, are classified, priced and sold inexpensively to the citizenry. The houses in Miramar are exclusively given over to the "becarios", the scholarship students who have come from the provinces to study at one or another of the specialized schools in this area. There are language and technical schools, the fabulous Cubanacan (art school where painting, music, dance, drama, sculpture, printmaking and ceramics are taught in the specially designed buildings covering an immense area), and ordinary preparatory schools of all kinds. Driving through this area one evening at six, we saw the thousands of students spilling out of their houses, all ages, all colors, from every part of the island. The sense of joy is indescribable.

The new man emerges amidst apparent contradictions—perhaps they are contradictions to us, with our traditional way of thinking. To the Cubans they form the logical pattern of life. Rationing in the home, abundance in the restaurant. Every facility for the intellectual whose conscience, not his government, tells him he must cut cane two weeks a year. The unanimous and merited adoration of Fidel, yet—by his own decree—not a statue of him anywhere, not a street or public square named for him, nor a postage stamp with his image (I think of General Franco, in all colors, on every letter from Spain!). Shortage of cloth for a certain kind of dress, but silver and gold jewelry in profusion from China. A traditional Latin American puritanism beneath a frankly sensual surface (the very air in Cuba,—the sea, the palm trees, the heat—is dilated with sex while the government is careful to separate male and female students at the boarding schools, etc.). New electrical plants lighting up even the most abandoned sections of the country while the common automobile—model 1959—barely staggers along any street.

The serious problem of the American car without possibility of replacement of parts has caused almost every Cuban owning one to become something of a mechanic. Taxi-drivers take over-emphatic care of their vehicles. The government is solving the transportation problem in the cities by the importation of English and Spanish busses. The government, in the form of the people and/or their leaders, are solving all the problems: that's just the point.

It all seems too simple. One is animated to speak in superlatives. It is the very simplicity with which many problems are solved that astounds at times. In the province of Oriente, in a previously isolated city called Baracoa, I walked around a housing project in the process of being finished. The men laboring under the watchful eye and hand of architects, overseers, etc. were the peasants who would eventually inhabit these houses. The premise: A man who puts in his own plumbing will better know how to care for that plumbing. A house which would be home to a couple with six children consisted of livingroom, kitchen, bath, three bedrooms and terrace. Materials, as far as I could tell: excellent. Design: far

from the bleak, regimented projects so common in both Socialist and Capitalist countries.

This same Baracoa (the oldest city on the island, founded in 1510) had been virtually cut off from the rest of Cuba before the triumph of the revolution. Separated from Guantanamo by the Cristal Mountain range, lack of an adequate road made access impossible most of the year. Neither was there drinking water in sufficient quantity. The water problem for the whole area was solved when the pipe line to the American base at Guantanamo was cut; the Cubans cared more than their American "neighbors" about whether or not their native population had water to drink. The problem of the road was more difficult. During Batista the money had been "raised" eighteen times; eighteen times it was "spent", and no road. Since the revolution a virtual shelf of cement has been hung off these mountains and now the highway connecting Guantanamo on the southern coast and Baracoa on the north can compete with any highway anywhere in the world.

Raising production in all areas and on all levels is a prime motivation of the revolution. Everyone works. Women join in all but the heaviest labor. The people—down to the most isolated peasants—are aware of what the situation was before the triumph of the revolution. They remember the international scene of gambling and prostitution which was the "basis" of their economy, and understand that their sugar fields responded to a fixed U.S. market rather than the full production which might have benefited their country. I saw a hundred women shouting complaint at seven p.m. one evening because the bus that was to take them to plant onions had broken down! These were peasant women who had worked their eight-hour day in the fields; they had earned their wage and their hair was already in curlers previous to a night of relaxation. But they screamed their discontent at not being able to volunteer several hours more. To plant at night by strings of electric light bulbs dimly outlining a field. Why? Well, the onions needed to be planted. Soon it would be past season.

Against every possible obstacle—blockade, subversion, the cyclone in '63, the fact that the revolution is still young—Cuba advances at such a rate that one is forced to admit that the complete correlation between people and government, between work and reward, is at least in great part responsible. What is rationed one day will be off the ration books the next, as that article is produced in the country or able to be imported with dollars from another. What is unobtainable will be "invented"—ingenuity runs high.

We saw steel ships being built as works of hand-craft (lack of the proper tools!) Typewriter ribbons were short among the intellectuals in Habana at the time we were there; so the writers calmly re-inked their old ones! When we asked if we could send goods—at least for specific friends—from our overstocked countries, almost no one was willing to ask for anything. Of course the busy Cuban citizen realizes that you have a car back home and he must wait—perhaps years—before doctors and official agencies are taken care of on the waiting list for importation of Japanese models. His wife may admire your "hep mesh stockings". But they have something you find yourself envying much more intensely: pride, complete identification with country, the chance to grow in a world where materialism is not the stuff of life.

Mock Risk Games

henry flynt

Suppose you stand in front of a swinging door with a nail sticking out of it pointing at your face; and suppose you are prepared to jump back if the door suddenly opens in your face. You are deliberately taking a risk on the assumption that you can protect yourself. Let us call such a situation a "risk game." Then a mock risk game is a risk game such that the misfortune which you risk is contrary to the course of nature, a freak misfortune; and thus your preparation to evade, it is correspondingly superficial.

If the direction of gravity reverses and you fall on the ceiling, that is a freak misfortune. If you don't want to risk this misfortune, then you will anchor yourself to the floor in some way. But if you stand free so that you can fall, and yet try to prepare so that if you do fall, you will fall in such a way that you won't be hurt, then that is a mock risk game. If technicians could actually effect or simulate gravity reversal in the room, then the risk game would be a real one. But I am not concerned with real risk games. I am interested in dealing with gravity reversal in an everyday environment, where everything tells you it can't possibly happen. Your "preparation" for the fall is thus superficial, because you still have the involuntary conviction that it can't possibly happen.

Mock risk games constitute a new area of human behavior, because they aren't something people have done before, you don't know what they will be like until you try them, and it took a very special effort to devise them. They have a tremendous advantage over other activities of comparable significance, because they can be produced in the privacy of your own room without special equipment. Let us explore this new psychological effect; and let us not ask what use it has until we are more familiar with it.

Instructions for a variety of mock risk games follow. (I have played each game many times in developing it, to ensure that the experience of playing it will be compelling.) For each game, there is a physical action to be performed in a physical setting. Then there is a list of freak misfortunes which you risk by performing the action, and which you must be prepared to evade. The point is not to hallucinate the misfortunes, or even to fear them, but rather to be prepared to evade them. First you work with each misfortune separately. For example, you walk across a room, prepared to react self-protectingly if you are suddenly upside down, resting on the top of your head on the floor. In preparing for this risk, you should clear the path of objects that might hurt you if you fall on them; you should wear clothes suitable for falling; and you should try standing on your head, taking your hands off the floor and falling, to get a feeling for how to fall without getting hurt. After you have mastered the preparation for each misfortune separately, you perform the action prepared to evade the first misfortune and the second (but not both at once). You must prepare to determine instantly which of the two misfortunes befalls you, and to react appropriately. After you have mastered pairs of misfortunes, you go on to triples of misfortunes, and so forth.

The principal games are for a large room with no animals or distracting sounds present.

A. Walk across the lighted room from one corner to the

diagonally opposite one, breathing normally, with your eyes open.

1. You are suddenly upside down, resting on the top of your head on the floor. You must get down without breaking your neck.

2. Although the floor looks unbroken and solid, beyond a certain point nothing is there. If you step onto that area, you will take a fatal fall. Thus, as you walk, you must not shift your weight to your forward foot until you are sure it will hold. Put the ball of the forward foot down before the heel.

3. Something happens to the cohesive forces in your neck so that if your head tips in any direction, it will come right off your body, killing you immediately. Otherwise everything remains normal. Thus, as you walk, you must "balance" your head on your neck. When you reach the other side of the room, your neck will be restored to normal. (Prepare beforehand by walking with a book balanced on your head.)

4. Invisible conical weights fall around you with their points down, each whistling as it falls. You must evade them by ear in order not to be stabbed. Walk softly and fast.

5. The room is suddenly filled with water. You have to control your lungs and swim to the top. Wear clothes suitable for swimming.

A'. Play game A while on a long walk on an uncrowded street. The floor is replaced by the sidewalk. The fifth misfortune becomes for space suddenly to be filled with water to a height of fifteen feet above the street.

B. Lie on your back on a pallet in the dimly lit room, hands at your sides, with a pillow on your face so that it is slightly difficult to breathe, for thirty seconds at a time.

1. The pillow suddenly hardens and becomes hundreds of pounds heavier. It remains suspended on your face for a split second and then "falls," bears down with full weight. You must jerk your head out from under it in that split second.

2. The pillow adheres to your skin with a force greater than your skin's cohesion, and begins to rise. You must rise with it in such a way that your skin is not torn.

C. Lie on your back on the pallet in the dimly lit room.

1. Gravity suddenly disappears completely, so that nothing is held down by it; and the ceiling becomes red-hot. You must avoid drifting up against the ceiling.

2. The surface you are lying on becomes a vast lighted open plane. From the distance, giant steel spheres come rolling in your direction. You must evade them.

3. Your body is split in half just above the waist by an indefinitely long, rather high, foot-thick wall. Your legs and lower torso are on one side, and your upper torso, arms, and head are on the other side. Matter normally exchanged between the two halves of your body continues to be exchanged through the walls by telekinesis. It is as if you are a foot longer above the waist. In order to reunite your body, you must first roll over and get up, bent way forward. There are depressions in the wall on the same side as your feet. You have to climb the wall, putting your feet in the depressions and balancing yourself. You will be reunited when you reach the top and your waist passes above the wall.

D. Sit in a plain, small, straight chair, on the edge of the seat, hands hanging at the sides of the seat, feet together in

front of the chair, in the lighted room, for about thirty seconds at a time.

1. The chair is suddenly out from under you and sitting on you with its legs straddling your lap and legs. You have to get your weight over your feet so you won't take a hard fall.
2. The direction of gravity reverses and the chair remains anchored to the floor. You have to grab the seat and hold on in order not to fall on the ceiling.
3. You are suddenly in a contra-terrene universe, in which the atmosphere is unbreathable and prolonged contact with either the atmosphere or the ground will disintegrate you. The seat and back of the chair become a penetrable hyperspatial sheet between the alien universe and your own. As soon as you feel the alien atmosphere, you must jerk your feet off the ground and deliberately sink or plunge through the seat and back of the chair in the best way that you can. You will end up on the floor under the chair in your universe.
4. You are suddenly in dark empty space in a three-dimensional lattice of gleaming wires. Segments of the lattice alternately burst into flame and cool off. You adhere to the chair as if it were part of you. With your hands holding onto the seat, you can move yourself and the chair forward by pushing the seat forward with your hands; you can move backward by pulling backward; you can move up by pulling up on the seat; and so on. The lattice is formed in such a way that in order to move from one cell to the next, you always have to turn to some extent. Flames immediately spring up next to you, and you have to maneuver yourself through the lattice to escape them.

D'. Play Game D in situations where you have to sit and wait.

Note: The original version of "Mock Risk Games" was entitled "Exercise Awareness-States." It was written during April-July, 1961; and read at the AG Gallery in New York on July 15, 1961. I subsequently turned against amusement compositions, and around July 25, 1962 I sent the only copy of "Exercise Awareness-States" to the young musician Tom Constanten, at 1650 Michael Way in Las Vegas. I later wrote Constanten asking him to return the MS, but I never heard from him. The present revival analyses the activity better than the original version did. I am unable, though, to remember some of the most elegant misfortunes for the original games (A, B, C.); and it seems that they are permanently lost.

In developing the original games—and the present games—I had two objectives in mind. First, the experience of *playing* the games (as opposed to reading or analyzing them) must involve or compel you, must be vivid and immediate. Second the misfortunes must be elegant, undreamed-of "explosions" of the natural order. These objectives, though, do not constitute a use for the games. The games can have many uses, beginning with amusement; and it remains to be seen what the most significant will be.

Intrusions

A noise in an adjacent room may *intrude* on a person playing a mock risk game, and affect his experience or state of being in a variety of ways. Let us consider the effects of such "intrusions" on the player's state. There are several kinds of intrusions. "Distractions" are perceived by the player to be unrelated to the game, and tend simply to take his mind off it. "Bogies" are surprises which so fit in with the game that the player momentarily thinks a freak misfortune has really begun; they tend to frighten the player and halt the game. "Modulations" are changes in the player's state or mood which may enhance the game; they are typically induced with drugs.

The player himself can turn the radio on, bring in a cat, or otherwise create distractions for himself. Here the object of

study is how compelling the game is. Through how much distraction can the game hold the player's attention? Turning to modulations, the player can also produce them for himself.

More elaborate investigations require an experimenter outside a room where the subject is playing mock risk games. The experimenter needs a one-way window and an intercom to observe and talk with the subject. Here the effects of bogies can be studied. (The experimenter has a problem, though, in that after he frightens the subject, the subject will forget about the game and just watch out for the bogies.) Here are some sample bogies, for game A. 1. Trip the subject with an invisible thread. 2. Cause the floor to shift. 3. Throw a ping-pong ball at the subject from the side. 4. Squirt water on him from behind. The mechanics of the experiments can readily be worked out by anyone interested in them. After an intrusion, the experimenter should question the subject about his reaction if it is appropriate.

Mock Risk Games for Couples (Duo Games)

In order for these games to be successful, each of you has to have confidence that the other is actually playing. If you lack this confidence, you forget the game and just watch out for intrusions created by the other.

AA. Face each other at a distance and walk toward each other.

1. The other's head flies off and hurtles at you like a cannonball. It can swerve up or down, so that you will be hit unless you jump aside. The time you have to jump is about the same no matter what your distance from the other is, because the head accelerates rapidly.

2. Just as the other is putting his foot down to make a step, he suddenly becomes so large that his foot is descending right over your head. At the same time, the mental commands of each of you to your muscles begin to be transmitted to the other's muscles rather than your own, and to be executed by his muscles rather than by yours. Thus, you must jerk "your"/"his" foot back, rather than complete the step, in order not to "step on your own head." *The two of you should walk in step, right foot with right and left with left.* Watch the other's feet and also watch above yourself—using your vertical peripheral vision to do so. In short, if you suddenly see a giant foot coming down on you, jerk "your" forward foot back.

3. (This misfortune is exceptionally complex, but there are good reasons for the complexity, and it will repay study.) The consciousness of each of you suddenly becomes located in the other's body and becomes hooked into the other's receptors and muscles. At the same time, your body, which is now "outside you" and which is under the other's control, becomes surrounded by slowly moving beams of tissue-destroying radiation coming from the sides of the room. The radiation is invisible, but the eyes you are seeing through become sensitive to it. *At the same time, the other mind loses its knowledge of language.* In order to save your body, under the other's blind control, from blundering into a radiation beam, you have to communicate pre-verbally to the other mind by every means from vocal cries to pantomime, and get your-body/his-mind out of range of the radiation. When the body is out, you will both be restored to normal. (The first thing to anticipate is the basic shift in viewpoint by which you will be looking at your own body from the other's position. There is no point in tensing your muscles in preparation for the misfortune,

because if it occurs, you will be working with a strange set of muscles anyway. The next thing to prepare to do is to spot the radiation beams; and then to yell, gesture, or whatever—anything to get the “other” to avoid the radiation. Note finally that neither player prepares for the possibility that *he* will be surrounded by radiation. Each player prepares for the *same* role in an asymmetrical *pas de deux*.)

Asymmetry: The two of you play a given duo game, but each prepares to evade a different misfortune.

AB. Stay awake with eyes closed for an agreed upon time between one and fifteen minutes. Use a timer with an alarm.

1. Each suddenly has the other’s entire present consciousness in addition to his own, from perceptions to memories, ideologies, ambitions, and everything else—threatening both with psychological shock.

The couple must take up positions such that their memory perceptions are as nearly identical as possible. Beforehand, each must discuss with the other the aspects of the other’s attitude to the world which each fears having imposed on his consciousness. During the game, each must think about these aspects and try to prepare for them.

2. Each suddenly relives the other’s most intense *past* feelings of depression and suicidal impulses. In other words, if five years ago the other attempted suicide because he *failed* out of college, you suddenly have the consciousness that “you” have just failed out of college, are totally worthless, and should destroy yourself. Presumably the other has since learned to live with his past disasters, but you do not have the defenses he has built up. You are overwhelmed with a despair which the other felt *in the past*, and which is incongruous with the rest of your consciousness. In summary, both of you risk shock and suicidal impulses. Beforehand, of course, each must tell the other of his worst *past* suicidal or depressed episode; and discuss anything else that may minimize the risk of shock.

Intrusions in Duo Games

As before, distractions and alterations can be openly studied by consent of the players. As for bogies, it is possible in duo games for one player to create a bogey without warning, in effect acting as a saboteur. As soon as a game is sabotaged, though, confidence is lost, and each player just watches out for the other’s bogies. Here are some sample intrusions:

GAME	DISTRACTION	BOGY	ALTERATION
AA. 1.	cough	shout in other’s face	each take a different drug
2.	talk and laugh get out of step →	stamp hard	
3.	spin around →		
AB. 1.	cough talk and laugh	gasp silently pass palm back & forth in front of other’s face	
2.	”	”	

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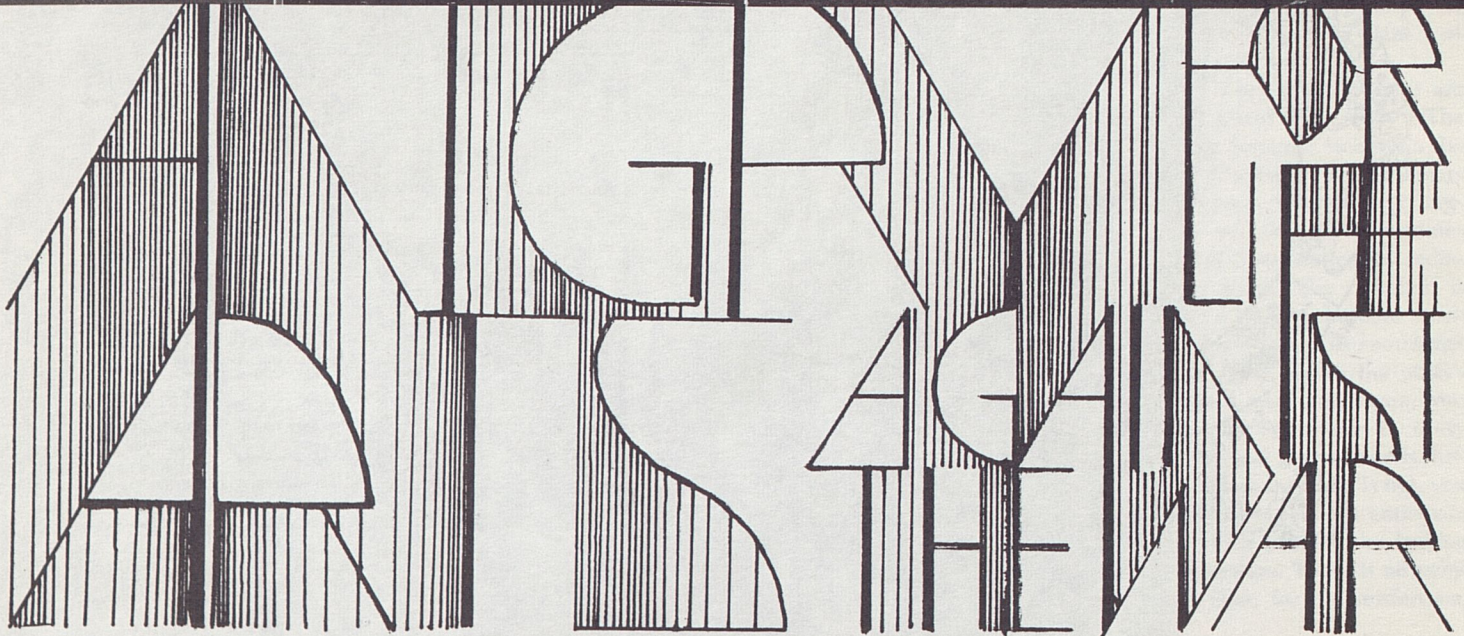
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PANTHEON
25th Anniversary Year



The Week of the Angry Arts started from a few human centers of pain, hopelessness, anger, despair, fury . . . and became 500 artists who presented 40 events to about 65,000 people. It took some risky and foolish directions along the way—like any work of art there was no sure notion of what it would become.

A couple of stubborn people met from Artists Protest and the Greenwich Village Peace Center met, involved other artists, worked with certain conventional ideas for awhile, but in large opinionated meetings they soon saw that it was important to be wide open—to say *yes*. If an artist wanted to take responsibility for his idea and act on it, he became something like a committee. He called on others and if they too were looking for a way to speak through their own work about their loathing for the war in Vietnam, then he and they were the ones in charge of the shape of the Week.

There were no lists of great persons drawn up to send out sponsored calls to action. There was no administration that could do this or interest in doing it—all the energy went to the work itself. With a few early exceptions, well known artists were drawn later, to rumors of new and interesting forms of protest. For instance, the organization of the Napalm Poetry Reading happened after dozens of poets had experimented with street caravans, reading off a flatbed truck on city street corners—distributing tens of thousands of poem booklets, “Is This What You Were Born For?!” Something like the Vietnamese Life Project had never been done before. Thirty or forty poets, dancers, actors . . . many of them the same people who had worked on the trucks, helped develop this seven hour investigation into Vietnamese Life which

showed *The People’s Wounds*, a Vietnamese Wedding, *The Guerrillas*, *Night, Faces, Bicycles*, *Children in Cities*, *The Forest* . . . that is, the whole life of the people we’re killing.

The Week of the Angry Arts was not a “Famous Name Performance” to enhance the peace movement but an open opportunity for any artist to speak in his own language. Musicians have signed ads and petitions before, but a pianist played a Bach Partita in a Harlem church service and dedicated it to the Vietnamese people. He was saying, “This work is my signature. It is my demonstration before the people and the government.”

These were the events of the week:

11 Music programs including unusual events like Schubert’s opera, *Lysistrata* last performed 100 years ago, a midnight concert in Town Hall, a conductorless orchestra (“to symbolize individual responsibility . . .”), *Wachet Auf* by the Judson Ensemble and the Bread and Puppet Theatre . . . also 2 avante-garde programs, jazz and folk rock.

Dancers: Two programs at Hunter College.

Theatre: Six Off-Broadway plays, 1 Broadway Dissents and “The Last Word”, a variety show, 2 childrens’ shows—all crowded. The Napalm Poetry Reading, Vietnamese Life, The Poets Caravan, 3 panel discussions (two on the war and the artist and one on “Architects and Vietnam”). Also the Vietnam-Life Happening at Lincoln Center in which 200 people participated. And “The Collage of Indignation”—the work of 100 artists on a 100 foot length canvas which was visited by over 20,000 people at Loeb Center. All of these were coordinated and booked into

churches, theatres, community centers by a coordinator and lot of artist volunteers. The labor was enormous and quantity and quality worked hard together.

Once the week was over and its achievement known, it seemed absolutely clear to some of the artists that the name had to be changed to Angry Arts FOR LIFE and Against the War in Vietnam. Many of the artists had been pained from the beginning by the omission of those two words and of course the meaning of the Film Committee had been—specifically—a film collage called “For Life and Against the War.” Others couldn’t care less and only wanted to continue and extend their anti-war activity.

The Poets Caravan did go on and visited college campuses throughout the city and were brave in Queens and the Bronx. The film collage, the slide and tape show, some of the “Collage of Indignation”, the Napalm Poetry Reading and parts of Vietnamese Life were exported to the Angry Arts Weeks of other cities—and to universities all over the country. Requests for the use of this material continue and there is an invitation to bring some of it to Montreal in August.

In May, a group of young poets met with Andrei Voznesensky who had been spending most of his time in New York with the uptown literary establishment. After some discussion, he proposed a poetry reading along with the poets in order to make quite clear his position on the war. He wanted also to identify himself with younger American poets as he has with the younger generation of Russian poets. Four days after the first announcements, he recited his poems and fifteen American poets and one Englishman read their poems in a program that included Philip Corner and the Fugs—

an evening called “3-Penny Poetry Reading for Life and Against the War in Vietnam.” For which the admission was 3¢.

The Future: Street Fairs will be co-sponsored with community organizations, particularly in low income communities not reached by middle class peace organizations. An effort will be made to link local issues with the war if community groups agree. The P E A C E / A R T S C E N T E R which is being set up now will make the experience and the artists of Angry Arts available to the peace movement. Theatre pieces, poets, films, tapes, slides, musicians, singers will help provide the anti-war organizations with different ideas and new possibilities of communication. The artists themselves will have a platform and the continuous opportunity to act and experiment.

Much to the surprise of people who had had furious disagreements on everything but opposition to the war, a community of artists does exist. An interested and demanding audience exists. The American artist has never expected to be taken seriously. The serious attention of those crowded auditoriums and theatres, the statistical accomplishment of so many performances and programs cannot help but change him and his work. Whatever Angry Arts undertakes, however, there is a determination to keep the organizational end of it as unstructured and flexible as possible. Indeed, this is the real challenge of Angry Arts.

Anyone wishing further information about Angry Arts or who wishes to actively participate in some manner is invited to write Angry Arts, 36 E. 10 St. New York City, or to call the office at 777-9585.

The

SCHIZOPHRENIC CINERPHONICS

Experience R.D. Laing

Dr. Laing is a Fellow of the Foundations Fund for Research in Psychiatry. Since 1961 he has been working with the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London.

JONES (*laughs loudly, then pauses*): I'm McDougal myself. (*This actually is not his name.*)

SMITH: What do you do for a living, little fellow? Work on a ranch or something?

J: No, I'm a civilian seaman. Supposed to be high mucka-muck society.

s: A singing recording machine, huh? I guess a recording machine sings sometimes. If they're adjusted right. Mm-hm. I thought that was it. My towel, mm-hm. We'll be going back to sea in about — eight or nine months though. Soon as we get our — destroyed parts repaired. (*Pause*)

J: I've got lovesickness, secret love.

s: Secret love, huh? (*Laughs*)

J: Yeah.

s: I ain't got any secret love.

J: I fell in love, but I don't feed any woo — that sits over — looks something like me — walking around over there.

s: My, oh, my only one, my only love is the shark. Keep out of the way of him.

J: You know what I think of work. I'm thirty-three in June, do you mind?

s: June?

J: Thirty-three years old in June. This stuff goes out the window after I live this, uh — leave this hospital. So I lay off cigarettes, I'm a spatial condition, from outer space myself, no shit.

s: (*laughs*): I'm a real space ship from across.

J: A lot of people talk, uh — that way, like crazy, but Believe It or Not by Ripley, take it or leave it — alone it's in the *Examiner*, it's in the comic section, Believe it or Not by Ripley, Robert E. Ripley, Believe It or Not, but we don't have to believe anything, unless I feel like it. (*Pause*) Every little rosette — too much alone. (*Pause*)

s: Could be possible. (*Phrase inaudible because of aeroplane noise*)

J: I'm a civilian seaman.

s: Could be possible. (*Sighs.*) I take my bath in the ocean.

J: Bathing stinks. You know why? Cause you can't quit when you feel like it. You're in the service.

s: I can quit whenever I feel like quitting. I can get out when I feel like getting out.

s: (*talking at the same time*): Take me. I'm a civilian, I can quit.

s: Civilian?

J: Go my — my way.

s: I guess we have, in port, civilian. (*Long pause*)

J: What do they want with us?

s: Hm?

J: What do they want with you and me?

s: What do they want with you and me? How do I know what they want with you? I know what they want with me.

16 I broke the law, so I have to pay for it. (*Silence*)¹

This is a conversation between two persons diagnosed as schizophrenic. What does this diagnosis mean?

To regard the gambits of Smith and Jones as due *primarily* to some psychological deficit is rather like supposing a man doing a handstand on a bicycle on a tightrope 100 feet up with no safety net is suffering from an inability to stand on his own two feet. We may well ask why these people have to be, often brilliantly, so devious, so elusive, so adept at making themselves unremittently incomprehensible.

In the last decade, a radical shift of outlook has been occurring in psychiatry. This has entailed the questioning of old assumptions, based on the attempts of nineteenth-century psychiatrists to bring the frame of clinical medicine to bear on their observations. Thus the subject matter of psychiatry was thought of as mental illness; one thought of mental physiology and mental pathology, one looked for signs and symptoms, made one's diagnosis, assessed prognosis and prescribed treatment. According to one's philosophical bias, one looked for the aetiology of these mental illnesses in the mind, in the body, in the environment, or in inherited propensities.

The term 'schizophrenia' was coined by a Swiss psychiatrist, Bleuler, who worked within this frame of reference. In using the term schizophrenia, I am not referring to any condition that I suppose to be mental rather than physical, or to an illness, like pneumonia, but to a label that some people pin on other people under certain social circumstances. The 'cause' of 'schizophrenia' is to be found by the examination, not of the prospective diagnosee alone, but of the whole social context in which the psychiatric ceremonial is being conducted.²

Once demystified, it is clear, at least, that some people come to behave and to experience themselves and others in ways that are strange and incomprehensible to most people, including themselves. If this behaviour and experience falls into certain broad categories, they are liable to be diagnosed as subject to a condition called schizophrenia. By present calculation almost one in every 100 children born will fall into this category at some time or other before the age of forty-five, and in the U.K. at the moment there are roughly 60,000 men and women in mental hospitals, and many more outside hospital, who are termed schizophrenic.

A child born today in the U.K. stands a ten times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than to a university, and about one fifth of mental hospital admissions are diagnosed schizophrenic. This can be taken as an indication that we are driving our children mad more effectively than we are genuinely educating them. Perhaps it is our very way of educating them that is driving them mad.

Most but not all psychiatrists still think that people they call schizophrenic suffer from an inherited predisposition to act in predominantly incomprehensible ways, that some as yet undetermined genetic factor (possibly a genetic morphism) transacts with a more or less ordinary environment to induce biochemical-endocrinological changes which in turn generate what we observe as the behavioural signs of a subtle underlying organic process.

But it is wrong to impute to someone a hypothetical disease of unknown aetiology and undiscovered pathology unless *he* can prove otherwise.³

⁴The schizophrenic is someone who has queer experiences and/or is acting in a queer way, from the point of view usually of his relatives and of ourselves. . . .

That the diagnosed patient is suffering from a pathological process is either a fact, or an hypothesis, an assumption, or a judgement.

To regard it as fact is unequivocally false. To regard it as an hypothesis is legitimate. It is unnecessary either to make the assumption or to pass judgement.⁴

The psychiatrist, adopting his clinical stance in the presence

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of the pre-diagnosed person, whom he is already looking at and listening to as a patient, has tended to come to believe that he is in the presence of the 'fact' of schizophrenia. He acts as if its existence were an established fact. He then has to discover its cause or multiple aetiological factors, to assess its prognosis, and to treat its course. The heart of the illness then resides outside the agency of the person. That is, the illness is taken to be a process that the person is subject to or undergoes, whether genetic, constitutional, endogenous, exogenous, organic or psychological, or some mixture of them all.⁴

Many psychiatrists are now becoming much more cautious about adopting this starting point. But what might take its place?

In understanding the new viewpoint on schizophrenia, we might remind ourselves of the six blind men and the elephant: one touched its body and said it was a wall, another touched an ear and said it was a fan, another a leg and thought it was a pillar, and so on. The problem is sampling, and the error is incautious extrapolation.

The old way of sampling the behaviour of schizophrenics was by the method of clinical examination. The following is an example of the type of examination conducted at the turn of the century. The account is given by the German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin in his own words.

Gentlemen, the cases that I have to place before you today are peculiar. First of all, you see a servant-girl, aged twenty-four, upon whose features and frame traces of great emaciation can be plainly seen. In spite of this, the patient is in continual movement, going a few steps forward, then back again; she plaits her hair, only to unloose it the next minute. *On attempting to stop her movement*, we meet with unexpected strong resistance; *if I place myself in front of her with my arms spread out* in order to stop her, if she cannot push me on one side, she suddenly turns and slips through under my arms, so as to continue her way. *If one takes firm hold* of her, she distorts her usually rigid, expressionless features with deplorable weeping, that only ceases so soon as one lets her have her own way. We notice besides that she holds a crushed piece of bread spasmodically clasped in the fingers of the left hand, which she absolutely *will not allow to be forced from her*. The patient does not trouble in the least about her surroundings so long as you leave her alone. *If you prick her in the forehead with a needle*, she scarcely winces or turns away, and leaves the needle quietly sticking there without letting it disturb her restless, beast-of-prey-like wandering backwards and forwards. *To questions* she answers almost nothing, at the most shaking her head. But from time to time she wails: 'O dear God! O dear God! O dear mother! O dear mother!', always repeating uniformly the same phrases.⁵

Here are a man and a young girl. If we see the situation purely in terms of Kraepelin's point of view, it all immediately falls into place. He is sane, she is insane: he is rational, she is irrational. This entails looking at the patient's actions out of the context of the situation as she experienced it. But if we take Kraepelin's actions (in italics) — he tries to stop her movements, stands in front of her with arms outspread, tries to force a piece of bread out of her hand, sticks a needle in her forehead, and so on — out of the context of the situation as experienced and defined by him, how extraordinary *they* are!

A feature of the interplay between psychiatrist and patient is that if the patient's part is taken out of context, as is done in the clinical description, it might seem very odd. The psychiatrist's part, however, is taken as the very touchstone for our common-sense view of normality. The psychiatrist, as *ipso*

facto sane, shows that the patient is out of contact with him. The fact that he is out of contact with the patient shows that there is something wrong with the patient, but not with the psychiatrist.

But if one ceases to identify with the clinical posture, and looks at the psychiatrist-patient couple without such presuppositions, then it is difficult to sustain this naïve view of the situation.

Psychiatrists have paid very little attention to the *experience* of the patient. Even in psychoanalysis there is an abiding tendency to suppose that the schizophrenic's experiences are somehow unreal or invalid; one can make sense out of them only by interpreting them; without truth-giving interpretations the patient is enmeshed in a world of delusions and self-deception. Kaplan, an American psychologist, in an introduction to an excellent collection of self-reports on the experience of being psychotic, says very justly:

With all virtue on his side, he (the psychiatrist or psychoanalyst) reaches through the subterfuges and distortions of the patient and exposes them to the light of reason and insight. In this encounter between the psychiatrist and patient, the efforts of the former are linked with science and medicine, with understanding and care. What the patient experiences is tied to illness and irreality, to perverseness and distortion. The process of psychotherapy consists in large part of the patient's abandoning his false subjective perspectives for the therapist's objective ones. But the essence of this conception is that the psychiatrist understands what is going on, and the patient does not.⁶

H. S. Sullivan used to say to young psychiatrists when they came to work with him, 'I want you to remember that in the present state of our society, the patient is right, and you are wrong.' This is an outrageous simplification. I mention it to loosen any fixed ideas that are no less outrageous, that the psychiatrist is right, and the patient wrong. I think however, that schizophrenics have more to teach psychiatrists about the inner world than psychiatrists their patients.

A different picture begins to develop if the interaction between patients themselves is studied without presuppositions. One of the best accounts here is by the American sociologist, Erving Goffman.

Goffman spent a year as an assistant physical therapist in a large mental hospital of some 7,000 beds, near Washington. His lowly staff status enabled him to fraternize with the patients in a way that upper echelons of the staff were unable to do. One of his conclusions is:

There is an old saw that no clearcut line can be drawn between normal people and mental patients: rather there is a continuum with the well-adjusted citizen at one end and the full-fledged psychotic at the other. I must argue that after a period of acclimatization in a mental hospital the notion of a continuum seems very presumptuous. A community is a community. Just as it is bizarre to those not in it, so it is natural, even if unwanted, to those who live it from within. The system of dealings that patients have with one another does not fall at one end of anything, but rather provides one example of human association, to be avoided, no doubt, but also to be filed by the student in a circular cabinet along with all the other examples of association that he can collect.⁷

A large part of his study is devoted to a detailed documentation of how it comes about that a person, in being put in the role of patient, tends to become defined as a non-agent, as a non-responsible object, to be treated accordingly, and even comes to regard himself in this light.

Goffman shows also that by shifting one's focus from seeing the person out of context, to seeing him in his context, behaviour that might seem quite unintelligible, at best to be explained as some intra-psychic regression or organic deterioration, can make quite ordinary human sense. He does not just describe such behaviour 'in' mental hospital patients, he describes it within the context of personal interaction and the system in which it takes place.

. . . there is a vicious circle process at work. Persons who are lodged on 'bad' wards find that very little equipment of any kind is given them — clothes may be taken away from them each night, recreational materials may be withheld, and only heavy wooden chairs and benches provided for furniture. Acts of hostility against the institution have to rely on limited, ill-designed devices, such as banging a chair against the floor or striking a sheet of newspaper sharply so as to make an annoying explosive sound. And the more inadequate this equipment is to convey rejection of the hospital, the more the act appears as a psychotic symptom, and the more likely it is that management feels justified in assigning the patient to a bad ward. When a patient finds himself in seclusion, naked and without visible means of expression, he may have to rely on tearing up his mattress, if he can, or writing with faeces on the wall — actions management takes to be in keeping with the kind of person who warrants seclusion.^a

It is on account of their behaviour outside hospital, however, that people get diagnosed as schizophrenic and admitted to hospital in the first place.

There have been many studies of social factors in relation to schizophrenia. These include attempts to discover whether schizophrenia occurs more or less frequently in one or other ethnic group, social class, sex, ordinal position in the family, and so on. The conclusion from such studies has often been that social factors do not play a significant role in the 'aetiology of schizophrenia'. This begs the question, and moreover such studies do not get close enough to the relevant situation. If the police wish to determine whether a man has died of natural causes or has committed suicide, or been murdered, they do not look up prevalence or incidence figures. They investigate the circumstances attendant upon each single case in turn. Each investigation is an original research project, and it comes to an end when enough evidence has been gathered to answer the relevant questions.

It is only in the last ten years that the immediate interpersonal environment of 'schizophrenics' has come to be studied in its interstices. This work was prompted, in the first place, by psychotherapists who formed the impression that, if their patients were *disturbed*, their families were often very *disturbing*. Psychotherapists, however, remained committed by their technique not to study the families directly. At first the focus was mainly on the mothers (who are always the first to get the blame for everything), and a 'schizophrenic' mother was postulated, who was supposed to generate disturbance in her child.

Next, attention was paid to the husbands of these undoubtedly unhappy women, then to the parental and parent-child interactions (rather than to each person in the family separately), then to the nuclear family group of parents and children, and finally to the whole relevant network of people in and around the family, including the grandparents of patients. By the time our own researches started, this methodological breakthrough had been made and, in addition, a major theoretical advance had been achieved.

This was the 'double-bind' hypothesis, whose chief architect was the anthropologist Gregory Bateson. This theory⁸, first

published in 1956, represented a theoretical advance of the first order. The germ of the idea developed in Bateson's mind in studying New Guinea in the 1930s. In New Guinea the culture had, as all cultures have, built-in techniques for maintaining its own inner balance. One technique, for example, that served to neutralize dangerous rivalry, was sexual transvestism. However, missionaries and the occidental government tended to object to such practices. The culture was therefore caught between the risk of external extermination or internal disruption.

Together with research workers in California, Bateson brought this paradigm of an insoluble 'can't win' situation, specifically destructive of self-identity, to bear on the internal family pattern of communication of diagnosed schizophrenics.

The studies of the families of schizophrenics conducted at Palo Alto, California, Yale University, the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, and at the National Institute of Mental Health, among other places, have all shown that the person who gets diagnosed is part of a wider network of extremely disturbed and disturbing patterns of communication. In all these places, to the best of my knowledge, no schizophrenic has been studied whose disturbed pattern of communication has not been shown to be a reflection of, and reaction to, the disturbed and disturbing pattern characterizing his or her family of origin. This is matched in our own researches.⁹

In over 100 cases where we¹⁰ have studied the actual circumstances around the social event when one person comes to be regarded as schizophrenic, it seems to us that *without exception* the experience and behaviour that gets labelled schizophrenic is a *special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation*. In his life situation the person has come to feel he is in an untenable position. He cannot make a move, or make no move, without being beset by contradictory and paradoxical pressures and demands, pushes and pulls, both internally, from himself, and externally, from those around him. He is, as it were, in a position of checkmate.

This state of affairs may not be perceived as such by any of the people in it. The man at the bottom of the heap may be being crushed and suffocated to death without anyone noticing, much less intending it. The situation here described is impossible to see by studying the different people in it singly. The social system, not single individuals extrapolated from it, must be the object of study.

We know that the biochemistry of the person is highly sensitive to social circumstance. That a checkmate situation occasions a biochemical response which, in turn, facilitates or inhibits certain types of experience and behaviour is plausible *a priori*.

The behaviour of the diagnosed patient is part of a much larger network of disturbed behaviour. The contradictions and confusions 'internalized' by the individual must be looked at in their larger social contexts.

Something is wrong somewhere, but it can no longer be seen exclusively or even primarily 'in' the diagnosed patient.

Nor is it a matter of laying the blame at anyone's door. The untenable position, the 'can't win' double-bind, the situation of checkmate, is by definition *not obvious* to the protagonists. Very seldom is it a question of contrived, deliberate, cynical lies or a ruthless intention to drive someone crazy, although this occurs more commonly than is usually supposed. We have had parents tell us that they would rather their child was mad than that he or she realize the truth. Though even here, it is because they say that 'it is a mercy' that the person is 'out of his mind'. A checkmate position cannot be described in a few words. The whole situation has to be grasped before it can be seen that no move is possible, and making no move is equally unlivable.

With these reservations, the following is an example of an interaction given in *The Self and Others*¹¹ between a father, mother, and son of twenty recovering from a schizophrenic episode.

In this session the patient was maintaining that he was selfish, while his parents were telling him that he was not. The psychiatrist asked the patient to give an example of what he meant by 'selfish'.

SON: Well, when my mother sometimes makes me a big meal and I won't eat it if I don't feel like it.

FATHER: But he wasn't always like that, you know. He's always been a good boy.

MOTHER: That's his illness, isn't it, doctor? He was never ungrateful. He was always most polite and well brought up. We've done our best by him.

SON: No, I've always been selfish and ungrateful. I've no self-respect.

FATHER: But you have.

SON: I could have, if you respected me. No one respects me. Everyone laughs at me. I'm the joke of the world. I'm the joker all right.

FATHER: But, son, I respect you, because I respect a man who respects himself.

It is hardly surprising that the person in his terror may stand in curious postures in an attempt to control the irresolvably contradictory social 'forces' that are controlling him, that he projects the inner on to the outer, introjects the outer on to the inner, that he tries in short to protect himself from destruction by every means that he has, by projection, introjection, splitting, denial and so on.

Gregory Bateson, in a brilliant introduction to a nineteenth-century autobiographical account of schizophrenia, has said this:

It would appear that once precipitated into psychosis the patient has a course to run. He is, as it were, embarked upon a voyage of discovery which is only completed by his return to the normal world, to which he comes back with insights different from those of the inhabitants who never embarked on such a voyage. Once begun, a schizophrenic episode would appear to have as definite a course as an initiation ceremony — a death and rebirth — into which the novice may have been precipitated by his family life or by adventitious circumstances, but which in its course is largely steered by endogenous process.

In terms of this picture, spontaneous remission is no problem. This is only the final and natural outcome of the total process. What needs to be explained is the failure of many who embark upon this voyage to return from it. *Do these encounter circumstances either in family life or in institutional care so grossly maladaptive that even the richest and best organized hallucinatory experience cannot save them?*¹²

I am in substantial agreement with this view.

A revolution is currently going on in relation to sanity and madness, both inside and outside psychiatry. The clinical point of view is giving way before a point of view that is both existential and social.

From an ideal vantage point on the ground, a formation of planes may be observed in the air. One plane may be out of formation. But the whole formation may be off course. The plane that is 'out of formation' may be abnormal, bad or 'mad' from the point of view of the formation. But the formation itself may be bad or mad from the point of view of the ideal observer. The plane that is out of formation may be also more or less off course than the formation itself is.

The 'out of formation' criterion is the clinical positivist criterion.

The 'off course' criterion is the ontological. One requires to make two judgements along these different parameters. In particular, it is of fundamental importance not to confuse the person who may be 'out of formation' by telling him he is 'off course' if he is not. It is of fundamental importance not to make the positivist mistake of assuming that, because a group are 'in formation', this means they are necessarily 'on course'. This is the Gadarene swine fallacy. Nor is it necessarily the case that the person who is 'out of formation' is more 'on course' than the formation. There is no need to idealize someone just because he is labelled 'out of formation'. There is also no need to persuade the person who is 'out of formation' that cure consists in getting back into formation. The person who is 'out of formation' is often full of hatred of the formation and fears about being the odd man out.

If the formation is itself off course, then the man who is really to get 'on course' must leave the formation. But it is possible to do so, if one desires, without screeches and screams, and without terrorizing the already terrified formation that one has to leave.

In the diagnostic category of schizophrenic are many different types of sheep and goats.

'Schizophrenia' is a diagnosis, a label applied by some people to others. This does not prove that the labelled person is subject to an essentially pathological process, of unknown nature and origin, going on *in* his or her body. It does mean that the process is, primarily or secondarily, a *psycho*-pathological one, going on *in* the *psyche* of the person. But it does establish as a social fact that the person labelled is one of Them. It is easy to forget that the process is a hypothesis, to assume that it is a fact, then to pass the judgement that it is biologically maladaptive and, as such, pathological. But social adaptation to a dysfunctional society may be very dangerous. The perfectly adjusted bomber pilot may be a greater threat to species survival than the hospitalized schizophrenic deluded that the Bomb is inside him. Our society may itself have become biologically dysfunctional, and some forms of schizophrenic alienation from the alienation of society may have a sociobiological function that we have not recognized. This holds even if a genetic factor predisposes to some kinds of schizophrenic behaviour. Recent critiques of the work on genetics¹³ and the most recent empirical genetic studies, leave this matter open.

Jung suggested some years ago that it would be an interesting experiment to study whether the syndrome of psychiatry runs in families. A pathological process called 'psychiatrosis' may well be found, by the same methods, to be a delineable entity, with somatic correlates and psychic mechanisms, with an inherited or at least constitutional basis, a natural history, and a doubtful prognosis.

The most profound recent development in psychiatry has been to redefine the basic categories and assumptions of psychiatry itself. We are now in a transitional stage, where we still to some extent continue to use old bottles for new wine. We have to decide whether to use old terms in a new way, or abandon them to the dustbin of history.

There is no such 'condition' as 'schizophrenia', but the label is a social fact and the social fact a *political event*.¹⁴ This political event, occurring in the civic order of society, imposes definitions and consequences on the labelled person. It is a social prescription that rationalizes a set of social actions whereby the labelled person is annexed by others, who are legally sanctioned, medically empowered, and morally obliged, to become responsible for the person labelled. The person labelled is inaugurated not only into a role, but into a career

of patient, by the concerted action of a coalition (a 'conspiracy') of family; G.P., mental health officer, psychiatrists, nurses, psychiatric social workers, and often fellow patients. The 'committed' person labelled as patient, and specifically as 'schizophrenic', is degraded from full existential and legal status as human agent and responsible person, no longer in possession of his own definition of himself, unable to retain his own possessions, precluded from the exercise of his discretion as to whom he meets, what he does. His time is no longer his own and the space he occupies is no longer of his choosing. After being subjected to a degradation ceremonial¹⁵ known as psychiatric examination he is bereft of his civil liberties in being imprisoned in a total institution¹⁶ known as a 'mental' hospital. More completely, more radically than anywhere else in our society, he is invalidated as a human being. In the mental hospital he must remain, until the label is rescinded or qualified by such terms as 'remitted' or 'readjusted'. Once a 'schizophrenic' there is a tendency to be regarded as always a 'schizophrenic'.

Now why and how does this happen? And what functions does this procedure serve for the maintenance of the civic order? These questions are only just beginning to be asked, much less answered. Questions and answers have so far been focused on the family as a social sub-system. Socially, this work must now move to further understanding, not only of the internal disturbed and disturbing patterns of communication within families, of the double-binding procedures, the pseudo-mutuality, of what I have called the mystifications and the untenable positions, but also to the meaning of all this within the larger context of the civic order of society – that is, of the *political* order, of the ways persons exercise control and power over one another.

Some people labelled schizophrenic (not all, and not necessarily) manifest behaviour in words, gestures, actions (linguistically, paralinguistically and kinetically) that is unusual. Sometimes (not always and not necessarily) this unusual behaviour (manifested to us, the others, as I have said, by sight and sound) expresses, wittingly or unwittingly, unusual experiences that the person is undergoing. Sometimes (not always and not necessarily) these unusual experiences that are expressed by unusual behaviour appear to be part of a potentially orderly, natural sequence of experiences.

This sequence is very seldom allowed to occur because we are so busy 'treating' the patient, whether by chemotherapy, shock therapy, *milieu* therapy, group therapy, psychotherapy, family therapy – sometimes now, in the very best, most advanced places, by the lot.

What we see sometimes in *some* people whom we label and 'treat' as schizophrenics are the behavioural expressions of an experiential drama. But we see this drama in a distorted form that our therapeutic efforts tend to distort further. The outcome of this unfortunate dialectic is a *forme frustrée* of a potentially *natural* process, that we do not allow to happen.

In characterizing this sequence in general terms, I shall write *entirely* about a sequence of experience. I shall therefore have to use the language of experience. So many people feel they have to translate 'subjective' events into 'objective' terms in order to be scientific. To be genuinely scientific means having valid knowledge of a chosen domain of reality. So in the following I shall use the language of experience to describe the events of experience. Also, I shall not so much be describing a series of different discrete events but describing a unitary sequence, from different points of view, and using a variety of idioms to do so. I suggest that this natural process, which our labelling and well-intentioned therapeutic efforts distorts and arrests, is as follows.

We start again from the split of our experience into what seems to be two worlds, inner and outer.

The normal state of affairs is that we know little of either and are alienated from both, but that we know perhaps a little more of the outer than the inner. However, the very fact that it is necessary to speak of outer and inner at all implies that an historically-conditioned split has occurred, so that the inner is already as bereft of substance as the outer is bereft of meaning.

We need not be unaware of the 'inner' world. We do not realize its existence most of the time. But many people enter it – unfortunately without guides, confusing outer with inner realities, and inner with outer – and generally lose their capacity to function competently in ordinary relations.

This need not be so. The process of entering into *the other* world from this world, and returning to *this* world from the other world, is as natural as death and giving birth or being born. But in our present world, that is both so terrified and so unconscious of the other world, it is not surprising that when 'reality', the fabric of this world, bursts, and a person enters the other world, he is completely lost and terrified, and meets only incomprehension in others.

Some people wittingly, some people unwittingly, enter or are thrown into more or less total inner space and time. We are socially conditioned to regard total immersion in outer space and time as normal and healthy. Immersion in inner space and time tends to be regarded as anti-social withdrawal, a deviancy, invalid, pathological *per se*, in some sense discreditable.

Sometimes, having gone through the looking glass, through the eye of the needle, the territory is recognized as one's lost home, but most people now in inner space and time are, to begin with, in unfamiliar territory and are frightened and confused. They are lost. They have forgotten that they have been there before. They clutch at chimeras. They try to retain their bearings by compounding their confusion, by projection (putting the inner on to the outer), and introjection (importing outer categories into the inner). They do not know what is happening, and no one is likely to enlighten them.

We defend ourselves violently even from the full range of our egoically limited experience. How much more are we likely to react with terror, confusion and 'defences' against ego-loss experience. There is nothing intrinsically pathological in the experience of ego-loss, but it may be very difficult to find a living context for the journey one may be embarked upon.

The person who has entered this inner realm (if only he is allowed to experience this) will find himself going, or being conducted – one cannot clearly distinguish active from passive here – on a journey.

This journey is experienced as going further 'in', as going back through one's personal life, in and back and through and beyond into the experience of all mankind, of the primal man, of Adam and perhaps even further into the being of animals, vegetables and minerals.

In this journey there are many occasions to lose one's way, for confusion, partial failure, even final shipwreck: many terrors, spirits, demons to be encountered, that may or may not be overcome.

We do not regard it as pathologically deviant to explore a jungle, or to climb Mount Everest. We feel that Columbus was entitled to be mistaken in his construction of what he discovered when he came to the New World. We are far more out of touch with even the nearest approaches of the infinite reaches of inner space than we now are with the reaches of outer space. We respect the voyager, the explorer, the climber, the space man. It makes far more sense to me as a valid project – indeed, as a desperately urgently required project for our time, to explore the inner space and time of

consciousness. Perhaps this is one of the few things that still make sense in our historical context. We are so out of touch with this realm that many people can now argue seriously that it does not exist. It is very small wonder that it is perilous indeed to explore such a lost realm. The situation I am suggesting is precisely as though we all had almost total lack of any knowledge whatever of what we call the outer world. What would happen if some of us then started to see, hear, touch, smell, taste things? We would hardly be more confused than the person who first has vague intimations of, and then moves into, inner space and time. This is where the person sitting in a chair labelled catatonic has often gone. He is not at all here: he is all there. He is frequently very mistaken about what he is experiencing, and he probably does not want to experience it. He may indeed be lost. There are very few of us who know the territory in which he is lost, who know how to reach him, and how to find the way back.

No age in the history of humanity has perhaps so lost touch with this natural *healing* process, that implicates *some* of the people whom we label schizophrenic. No age has so devalued it, no age has imposed such prohibitions and deterrents against it, as our own. Instead of the mental hospital, a sort of re-servicing factory for human breakdowns, we need a place where people who have travelled further and, consequently, may be more lost than psychiatrists and other sane people, can find their way *further* into inner space and time, and back again. Instead of the *degradation* ceremonial of psychiatric examination, diagnosis and prognostication, we need, for those who are ready for it (in psychiatric terminology often those who are about to go into a schizophrenic breakdown), an *initiation* ceremonial, through which the person will be guided with full social encouragement and sanction into inner space and time, by people who have been there and back again. Psychiatrically, this would appear as ex-patients helping future patients to go mad.

What is entailed then is:

- (i) a voyage from outer to inner,
- (ii) from life to a kind of death,
- (iii) from going forward to a going back,
- (iv) from temporal movement to temporal standstill,
- (v) from mundane time to aeonic time,
- (vi) from the ego to the self,
- (vii) from being outside (post-birth) back into the womb of all things (pre-birth),

and then subsequently a return voyage from

- (1) inner to outer,
- (2) from death to life,
- (3) from the movement back to a movement once more forward,
- (4) from immortality back to mortality,
- (5) from eternity back to time,
- (6) from self to a new ego,
- (7) from a cosmic foetalization to an existential rebirth.

I shall leave it to those who wish to translate the above elements of this perfectly natural and necessary process into the jargon of psychopathology and clinical psychiatry. This process may be one that all of us need, in one form or another. This process could have a central function in a truly sane society.

I have listed very briefly little more than the headings for an extended study and understanding of a natural sequence of experiential stepping stones that, in some instances, is submerged, concealed, distorted and arrested by the label 'schizophrenia' with its connotations of pathology and consequences of an illness-to-be-cured.

Perhaps we will learn to accord to so-called schizophrenics who have come back to use, perhaps after years, no less respect than the often no less lost explorers of the Renaissance. If the human race survives, future men will, I suspect, look back on our enlightened epoch as a veritable age of Darkness. They will presumably be able to savour the irony of this situation with more amusement than we can extract from it. The laugh's on us. They will see that what we call 'schizophrenia' was one of the forms in which, often through quite ordinary people, the light began to break through the cracks in our all-too-closed minds.

Schizophrenia used to be a new name for dementia praecox — a slow, insidious illness that was supposed to overtake young people in particular, and to be liable to go on to a terminal dementia.

Perhaps we can still retain the now old name, and read into it its etymological meaning: *Schiz* — 'broken'; *Phrenos* — 'soul or heart'.

The schizophrenic in this sense is one who is broken-hearted, and even broken hearts have been known to mend, if we have the heart to let them.

But 'schizophrenia', in this existential sense, has little to do with the clinical examination, diagnosis, prognosis and prescriptions for therapy of 'schizophrenia'.

FOOTNOTES

1 J. Haley, *Strategies of Psychotherapy* (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1963) pages 99-100.

2 See H. Garfinkel, 'Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies', *American Journal of Sociology*, LXI, 1956, pages 420-24; also R. D. Laing, 'Ritualisation in Abnormal Behaviour' in *Ritualisation of Behaviour in Animals and Man* (Royal Society, Philosophical Transactions, Series B (in press)).

3 See T. Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1962).

4 R. D. Laing and A. Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family, Volume I: Families of Schizophrenics* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964; New York: Basic Books, 1965) page 4.

5 E. Kraepelin, *Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry*, edited by T. Johnstone (London: Ballière, Tindall and Cox, 1906) pages 30-31.

6 B. Kaplan (ed.), *The Inner World of Mental Illness* (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1964) page vii.

7 E. Goffman, *Asylums. Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Doubleday-Anchor Books, 1961) page 303.

□ E. Goffman: op. cit., page 306.

8 G. Bateson, D. D. Jackson, J. Haley, J. and J. Weakland, 'Towards a theory of schizophrenia', *Behavioural Science*, Volume I, number 251, 1956.

9 R. D. Laing and A. Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964; New York: Basic Books, 1965).

10 Drs. David Cooper, A. Esterson and myself.

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12 G. Bateson (ed.), *Perceval's Narrative. A Patient's Account of his Psychosis* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961) pages xiii-xiv; italics mine.

13 See for instance: Pekka Tienari, *Psychiatric Illnesses in Identical Twins* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1963).

14 T. Scheff, 'Social Conditions for Rationality: How Urban and Rural Courts Deal with the Mentally Ill,' *Amer. Behav. Sci.*, March, 1964. Also, T. Scheff, 'The Societal Reaction to Deviants: Ascriptive Elements in the Psychiatric Screening of Mental Patients in a Mid-Western State', *Social Problems*, No. 4, Spring, 1964.

15 H. Garfinkel, 'Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies', *American Journal of Sociology*, LXI, 1956.

16 E. Goffman, *Asylums. Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Doubleday-Anchor Books, 1961).

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THE SAD STORY ABOUT THE SIX BOYS ABOUT TO BE DRAFTED IN BROOKLYN



GRACE PALEY

I

There were six boys in Brooklyn and none of them wanted to be drafted.

Only one of them went to college. What could the others do?

One shot off his index finger. He had read about this in a World War I novel.

One wore silk underpants to his physical. His father had done that for World War II.

One went to a psychiatrist for three years starting three years earlier (his mother to save him had thought of it).

One married and had three children.

One enlisted and hoped for immediate preferential treatment. This is what happened next:

II

The boy who enlisted was bravely killed. There was a funeral for him at home. People sat on boxes and wore new sackcloth as it was one of the first of that family's bad griefs. They ate and wept.

Then, accidentally, due to a mistake in the filing system, the married father of three children was drafted. He lived a long time, maybe three months and killed several guerillas, two by strangulation, two by being a crack shot, and one in self defense. Then he was killed as he slept in the underbrush for other people think they ought to act in self defense too.

A couple of years later, the boy who had gone to the psychiatrist for three years and the boy in the silk underpants were reclassified. Because of their instabilities, they had always been against killing. Luckily, they never got further than the middle airplane over the very middle of the Pacific Ocean. There, the mighty jet exploded, perhaps due to sabotage, distributing 133 servicemen in a blistering blaze to their watery graves.

As the war went on and on, the college boy became twenty six years old. He was now in his eighth year in college. He could not remember the name of his high school when he applied for his first job. He could not remember his mother's maiden name which is essential to applications. Nervousness ran in that family and finally reached him. He was taken to rest in a comfortable place in pleasant surroundings where he remained for twelve years. When he was about thirty-eight, he felt better and returned to society.

Now, the man with the shot-off index finger:

III

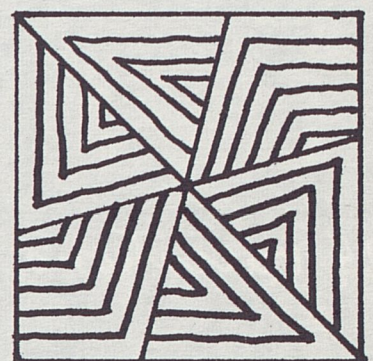
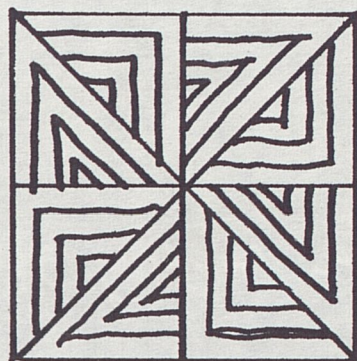
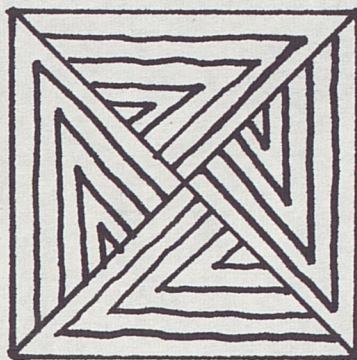
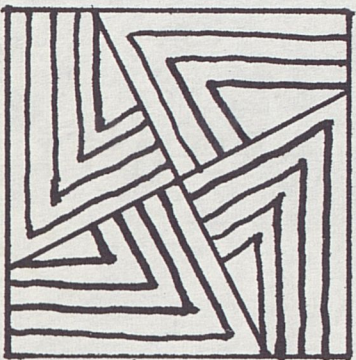
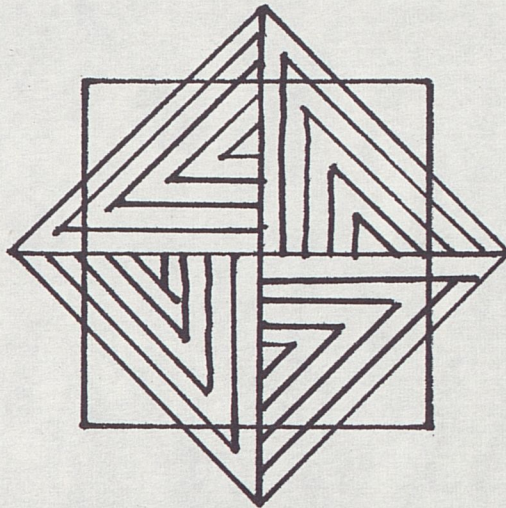
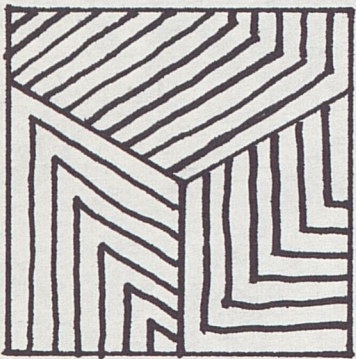
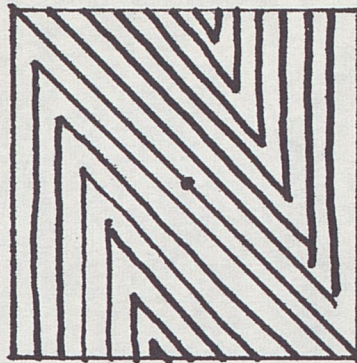
Even after four years, he didn't miss that finger. He had used it to point accusingly at guilty persons, for target shooting, for filing alphabetically. None of these actions concerned him anymore. To help him make general love, he still had his whole hand and for delicate love, his middle finger.

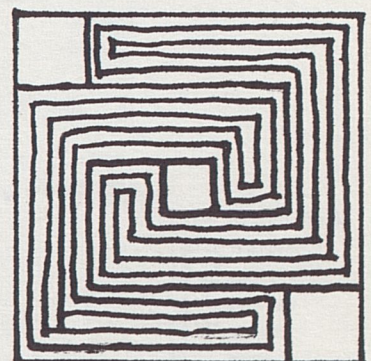
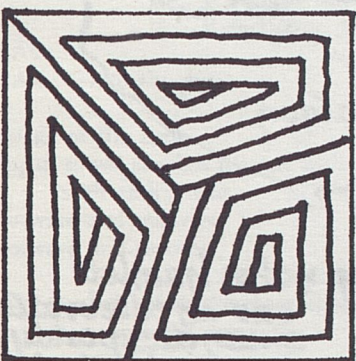
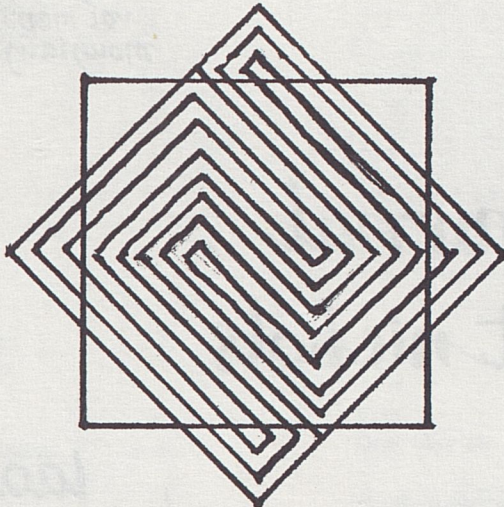
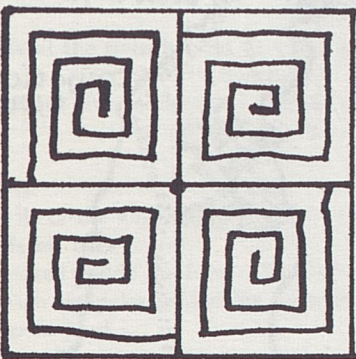
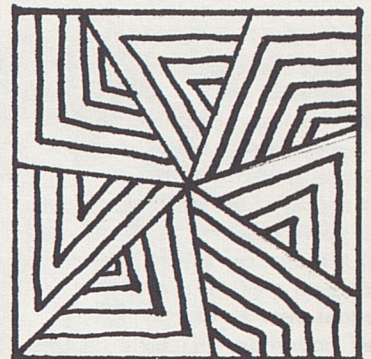
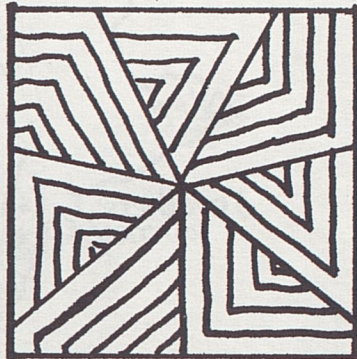
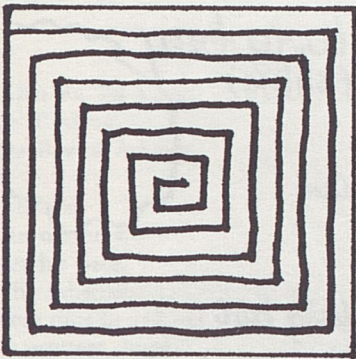
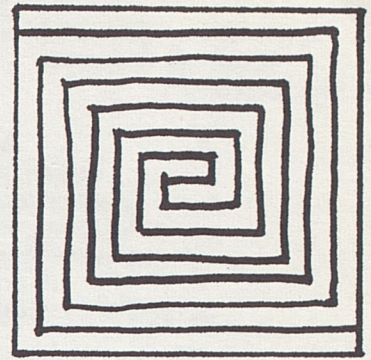
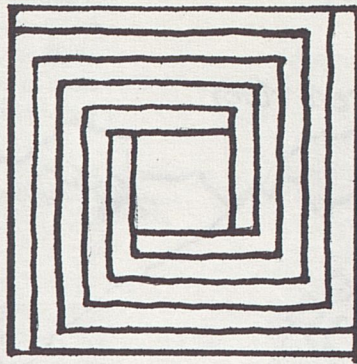
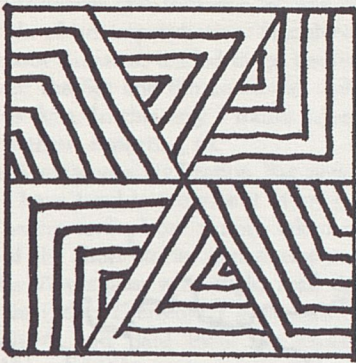
Therefore he joyfully married and fathered several children. All of them had shot-off index fingers, as did their children.

That family became a peaceful race apart. Sickness and famine didn't devastate them. Out of human curiosity they traveled and they were stubborn and tough like the feathery seeds of trees that float over mountain barriers and railroad valleys. In far places the children of the children of the man with the shot-off index finger gathered into settlements and cities and of course, they grew and multiplied.

And that's how at last, if you can believe it, after the dead loss of a million dead generations, on the round, river-streaked face of the earth, war ended.

24 variations on a rotary square E. Dieringer '67





vietnam journal
robert nichols



(Author's note: this section is part of a longer work which goes backwards and forwards in time. It has been written in the style of an improvisation. Somehow the first part, which was about America, tended to go backwards in time to Rome of about the 5th and 6th centuries, and to open out in space towards Asia. In this way I found myself writing about Vietnam, without expecting to.

The Vietnamese civilization has now practically ceased to exist. I have tried to recreate it in my imagination, using fictitious names and places simply taken off the map. I do not know if the short stories and poems are true. If so, I would like the Vietnamese who might read this to recognize themselves in them. Therefore I have written as realistically as I knew how, and paid them the compliment of using the extended present.)

Note: The Bay of Along is just up the coast from Hanoi.

VIETNAM JOURNAL

Quan Dao Fa Tsi Long
La Baie d' Along
the Blue Bay of A-Long

brims the peaks

in the stillness
 an oar creaks
he bends his back
 the fisherman Tra Huu Quan
As the oar dips in and out
 it scatters drops
like spit from the mouth of a water buffalo
 plows
the Bay of A-Long
the blue Bay of A-Long

"my wife at the stern hooked to a big fish"
 (hopefully)
the mackerel dives under the mountain roots
 of the infinitely blue bay

CRR-EAK
the handle of the long sweep into the pivot
he bends his back
in the soaked paddy the farmer thrusts his legs
Trang Tich struggles behind his water buffalo
hip deep in mud

 the rice terraces!
descend
 one by one
 to the Bay
drenched in sweat

CRR-EAK
CRR-EAK into the pivot

at the edge of the deck
the sampan rower steadies himself with each stroke
 with each stroke
leans forward and recovers
leans forward and recovers
 ankles flexed
one foot balanced before the other along the gunwale
 suspended over
 turquoise

"We call the mud red because of the rich silts

collected from the highlands
and the river red
 because of the dragon that sleeps
below its mouth underneath the islands
 with their weird shapes"

The noon whistle!
Nyugen Son Doc stretches
coal grime heavy on his arms
 Smoothing the newspaper
he spreads his lunch out on the jetty
that runs from the Bay
into the coal mining town of Hon Cai
"my brother out there catching fish"

La Baie d' Along

* * *

In Mesopotamia and the Ionian cities of Asia Minor there were irrigation works of marvellous ingenuity on a truly vast scale. Among the world's wonders. It is commonly supposed that these were destroyed in the twelfth century by the Mongols, thus bringing to an end these great empires. On the contrary, they had begun to fail hundreds of years before, because of the lack of a sound water works policy. Over the previous five or six centuries, there had been floods, droughts, the irrigation ditches gradually filling up with silt from the upland pastures, all this due to over-grazing by goats.

How fortunate we are that our people were farmers from a very early date, that is, after rice cultivation had been discovered and brought down into this peninsula. We have always hated goats and shepherds, and have been painstakingly careful in our own land practises always to contour the land and to protect the rice terraces, which are subject to violent rainstorms.

That is why in mid-summer when you go through one of our Vietnamese villages and you hear a drum beating, that is the sign of a real crisis. One of the dykes has broken, probably because of the ratholes. Then you will see the whole village turn out and rush to the trouble source, where they shore up the ruptured earth wall with bamboo poles then fill in the holes, stuffing them with straw and even thatch and pieces of mat from their houses.

(Hydrology Studies I)

* * *

Rain
from May on thru June to end of July
 steadily and solidly
sky plug pulled out sluiceway open
 pouring water
 straight
 down
grey grey
erasing the outline of trees

At the Dong Bang Flood Station
water level at the + 12.80 meter mark
at Yen Tap 12.95 meters
Lenh Kahn 13.25 meters
Yen Bay 14 meters
Doan Hung 13.70 meters
Ngoc Thi 17 meters
(telephoned into this newspaper from the Dong Bang Station
at the junction of the Song Ngan and Song Cai Rivers)

THE RAMPAGING RED RIVER

Rain

life-giving rain touches
the forehead cheeks mouth
into the open mouth
the first drops
of the first rain

then the succeeding rains
regularly every month
soaking the skin

Everywhere:
rain drumming

into the pocked bay
into the rice paddy
into the open pit coal mine

DROUGHT YEAR

beady-eyed gull observes hunger
close-mouth gull surveys the signs the indications
of hunger without comment

Item low water in Song Ngan River
Item almost white sky enormous sun
standing directly overhead

with flick wingtips gull elevates glides past
Tra Huu Quan's boat floats over the dyke
Item to the horizon red hard-baked soil
with cracks in it every few feet

Item a man lies on the ground with his mouth open
a beetle crawling out of it

Thirst during the malaria fever!
Thirst of the cracked soil during the dry months!

Hunger

FARMERS' HOLIDAY

The gong summoned everyone to the Dinh. The Sorcerer had come. He would perform a few tricks then go out with his helpers on all the roads, beating on the orange drum, all of them shouting at the top of their lungs to exorcize the cholera spirit. No harm in it.

At the entrance to the Dinh stood M. Pontebry, the French visitor, in a tropical white suit chatting with the Chief Notable. Yes, wasn't it a nice day? Already the children had crowded into the public section where they were waiting for the show to begin, their eyes bright and munching moon cakes. A band played in the corner. I was standing at the back next to two other laborers, Xuan Da and Kim Dong Bac, who kept scratching himself.

Loud banging on the big drum hanging from the ceiling, measured strokes on the small drums, and a frenzied medley from the other musicians. Everyone stops talking about fertilizer.

The ritual begins under the supervision of Cung Boa Phach, the rites master. First, the Highest and Oldest Venerable scoots in, presents his food offering and kowtows, bending at

the waist and holding out his hands at chest level, his hands trembling and his eyes watering slightly. He is followed by the other High Venerables, who also make offerings and kowtow. Then the Village Notables and the other members of the Cult Committee make their offerings and kowtow, in order of rank and by twos. These are followed again by the Police Agent and by the Village Recording Secretary. The French visitor in his white suit also kowtows. All this is done politely and smoothly.

During the first festival meal I had a nice talk with Cung Bac Phach, the Ritual Master, to whom I owe \$800 VN. He gave me some good advice about planting. Last year the bottom dropped out of the Yellow Grain rice market, but Cung Dao advises me to plant it again this year, there's bound to be some demand for it. He's going to plant a half hectare of Yellow Grain and also 7 hectares of Nanh Dran rice, the best. But that would be too costly for me in fertilizer. He also advised me to plant part of my field in Fox's Fang. A smart fellow.

More ceremonies, the town soccer game against Nho Lam, then the second food serving at five.

We ate it with relish, also drank a good deal of rice alcohol to celebrate the general good feeling. So by the end of it, Xuan Da, Kim Dong and I were feeling a bit potted. We were then stood up and packed up against the wall of the Dinh again, for the night ceremony. The musicians were all in the corner, on the wood bed.

It had been a very nice Cao An—that is for Peace and Prosperity, at the end of the dry season. We hope. By May 1, the seed beds would be prepared; a month after that the fields barrowed and plowed, and the transplanting operations finished. All this with good luck, and enough rain of course. If so, we'd be through the worst danger by the middle of August; by then the plants would be grown and the first sweet smell of the ripe grains in everyone's nostrils.

Soon the Sorcerer and his party would return. For the Spirit Boat Ceremony. The Dinh would vibrate with the shouting and drum beating. The Spirits would be invited to enter the toy boat and eat, just as we had been doing. Then politely but very firmly and deliberately the spirit boat would be escorted down to the stream bank and shoved off. Good-bye, evil spirits! The stem-borers had been terrible the last few years. The pesticides didn't touch them, being only good against the leaf-chewing insects (because of the copper-sulphate solution). Still, it might be a good year in spite of everything. If it were, if the rains came, I was thinking, and everything worked out all right and the market prices held, then I'd be able to pay back Cung Phoa, the money lender. If not, I'd be in even deeper.

Xuan Dao was wedged up next to me as if we were glued, the skin of his arm hot. I whispered to him: "How much do you owe Cung Phao, on next year's crop?"

"I owe him a half," he whispered back.

"And you, how much do you owe him?" I asked Kim Dong. "Three quarters."

Wild drumming, a frenzied explosion from the band members—several of whom had fallen off the bed. The Sorcerer swept in.

The Blue Bay of Along

At the edge
the Delta country lies flat flat
but higher up
where the hills meet irregularly
the rice terraces are shaped like dragon fly wings

In the last twenty years (since the introduction of fertilizer) three things have happened. First, the rice grains have grown larger. Second, there are more bugs. Third, the rice-planting girls have stopped singing their song.

(from: An Old Man Remembers)

* * *

and that poem who was it by?
 about "all the windows going up
 and everybody laughed
 to see an old man coming home drunk
 with flowers in his hair"

Something like that

* * *

HOG FEED PRODUCTION

Last year hog feed production improved measurably, particularly in Lang Son Province where pioneer work in agronomy has been undertaken. However, all provinces surveyed showed net gains over previous periods.

Standard feed used was a mixture of rice bran and banana tree pulp dehydrated (first column) and processed fish supplement (second column). Figures in 1000 gias:

LONG SON PROVINCE	88	320
BAC KAN	68	★
CAO BANG	62	none
THAI NGUYEN	68	240
KAO LAY	★	★
PHU THO	45	★
LAI CHAU	★	★
QUAN YEN	82	200
THAI BINH	74+	none
QUAN BINH	65+	80+
THANK HOA	30+	40+

★ no figures reported for these provinces

+ quotas inadequate; should be revised upwards.

* * *

AN OVERLAND JOURNEY

Some time ago, Tra Huu Quan, Trang Tich and Nuygen Son Doc went on a trip which I shall now describe to you. They left from the Bay of Along in a dry wind. The main road to the south lay on top of the dykes. It was heavily travelled in this district. Hardly ten minutes went by without some truck rumbling past, covering them and their bicycles with dust. When this happened they would stop and all shout as loudly as they could at the driver, brandishing their fists, Trang Tich making an obscene gesture and shooting his tongue out between the gap in his front teeth. Then roaring with laughter the three brothers would beat the dust off each other's clothes and continue on.

After four days travelling in this manner they came to a village at the junction of two rivers. Here a hydro-electric plant was in the process of being built. Everyone in the whole village was at work moving dirt. The women carried loads of earth and sand in two baskets hanging from a yoke slung across their backs. The men transported the heavier gravel, stone rubble and cement sacks in bullock wagons and sledges which were hauled uphill. The dam was going up directly above the town and was not far advanced.

After a supper of fish soup the travellers asked one of the foremen about the construction schedule. They received the

following account: the dam was one of a series that was being planned and that would eventually cover the entire valley with a flood control and power network. There would be additional benefits, such as irrigation, water purification, etc. The community had been at work steadily at this site for ten years. The project had been going along well and last year the dam was almost completed, when it collapsed, wrecking a large portion of the village and burying many people. Although the engineering had been sound (the foreman assured them), the officials in charge of the project had not understood how to mix cement. Now work had been started over again and this time it was going along excellently.

The travellers had now reached the province of Quang Binh, where the road over the mountains begins. Here the bicycles would be no longer serviceable. At Ding Hoi they traded them in at a store, for travelling supplies: sacks of tea and rice, sandals, and padded cloth coats to keep the cold out. Up to this point the brothers had worn only their black shorts and had gone barefoot. Tran and Tra Huu had on the traditional straw hats, but Nuygen Doc insisted on wearing his blue and grey striped miner's cap.

They walked towards the border of Quang Binh and soon found themselves in the forest. The trail kept going up and up. As it did so the air became cooler. The trees were very large and covered with vines spiralling up to the leafy roof through which chinks of sky glistened. But the ground below was fairly open, the trail keeping to the ridges.

Towards late afternoon they stopped by a waterfall and had tea. The noise of the birds and monkeys was almost as deafening as that of the water. The land fell away precipitously. Through an opening in the trees they could see the ocean, which they had left days before.

The next night was spent at a woodcutter's hut. The moon came through the roof. On the following nights they slept with their noses directly to the moon, lying on their padded coats to keep out the dew. For a number of days they walked towards the Annamite plateau. Tra Huu Quan, who was thinnest and tallest, took the longest strides. Tran Tich, the farmer, had the sturdiest legs. Nuygen Doc was in poor shape but he was the youngest. All were cheerful. The path began to descend. Scrambling around a boulder they could see below them a wide clearing which seemed to be ringed with little fires from which smoke billowed. They were approaching a Moi tribal settlement.

The scene was of wild confusion. Immediately they were lost in it. Figures appeared, and disappeared into the smoke smudge and among tree trunks. The savages jumped up and down beating the ground with sticks, shouting at each other across the wide clearing in the middle of which a pile of logs smouldered. The edges of this open space kept expanding outwards, as the flames ate into the underbrush, sometimes climbing up the woody stem of a vine, sometimes where the grass was dry, rushing ahead quickly or exploding in fiery tufts. The villagers were all naked. In the cooled ashes the spring crops would be planted.

The staples of the Moi tribesmen are corn, cotton, barley-maize and dry rice. The fields are traditionally cleared in this way. The soil is fertile from the ashes and if it rains the plants grow very quickly. However, so do the weeds. The next year of course the soil is exhausted and a patch in the jungle has to be cleared somewhere else. Also, they are much troubled by animals. When the shoots are tender and the young corn is sticking up like the nipples of young girls ready to be kissed—then the tribe has to be on guard. Everyone turns to, and they are continually banging sticks, jumping around and hollering like madmen, beating on drums and rattling bamboo in order to neutralize their opponents and frighten the birds, monkeys,

wild boar, snakes and rats slobbering at the edge of the clearing. It's a hard life. The year before, the travellers were told, the fires had stampeded a herd of elephants which had run through the village and flattened it.

The people are very good natured. Some of the men are unbelievably ugly. But they are also passionate, and the Moi lover has a great reputation for bravery and originality.

A MOI LOVE SONG

(the girl sings)

I look out at you between the fronds of the banana tree
I look out at you between the Areka leaves
Out of the deepest shade
 I am always looking at you Boy-boy.
But when you pass me in the sunny clearing
my eyes are down by my heels
inside the corn-grinding pot.

(the man sings)

Pou-ki Pou-ki why don't you notice me?
I know I'm ugly but I want you to feel my pole
I want to lay my fire-beating stick in your reed basket
Little Miss Stuck-up
 If I climbed the highest tree on Voi Map
and brought back a bees' nest in my teeth
would that make any difference?

Soft wind sweet wind

 sifts through the tops of trees.

In her shame

 she would like to hide her head under the pine needles
but after he has penetrated her
 she looks at him with a wife's thanks

(Song translated by Trang Tich)

The weeks spent by the brothers in this hill village passed pleasantly and instructively. Finally they left, after first paying their respects to the Guardian Spirit.

From the jungles of the plateau the road descends to the Coast very quickly, hardly more than a day's walk. Soon the travellers found themselves on the dyke road running between prosperous paddy farms. That evening they were parading down the main street of Hue.

After three days sightseeing in Hue, spent visiting the pagodas and fine University buildings, they went twenty miles down the coast to the ancient city of Tourane. Tourane had been the capital of the Emperor Thieu Tri, during the magnificent and somewhat obsolete Nuygen Dynasty. It was here that the Imperial fleet suffered a humiliation at the hands of the French in March 1858.

On the morning of March 23rd
when the harbor was spotlighted
by the sun coming out from under a cloud
and the harbor-side street was swarming
with whores, customs inspectors and
merchants selling dried squid—
suddenly the Fleet's sails were stripped.
In one moment
the air over the harbor was cluttered
with hundreds of pink, plum, crimson
viridian and chocolate-colored sails . . .
the next
a forest of bare sticks

(Poem written by Tra Quan)

They were standing on the beach outside Tourane. The sea stretched for miles. If it had been night, Tra Quan's eyes would have gleamed in the phosphorescent light. Standing with his ankles in the waves, like a thin crane, the fisherman had grown taller and wirier. A hump had appeared on his back, from the pull of invisible tides.

When the brothers had started out four months ago, there had been a cold dry wind cutting down from the North and the Himalayas. Now it had shifted to a Southwesterly one, coming from the direction of Ceylon and Madagascar, carrying rain from the Indian Ocean. The monsoon wind. Time to return. Time to get back to work.

Tra Huu Quan and Nuygen Doc hiked North along the beach, the ocean at their right hand; on their left, the tree-tangled mountains at first, then the farms. They reached the Bay of A-Long. When they had come to a village on the shore as white as a bone, with the boats pulled up, Tra Quan split. Nuygen Son Doc went a little further on, to the Hon Gai mines. Beside him the open seams of coal shone in the rain, like wet silk.

Trang Tich had decided to visit his wife's uncle's family on their farm on the Ca Mau peninsula. He took the main highway south. After Saigon he took Route 4 over the Delta. Shortly before he arrived at Ca Mau he heard over the radio the town had been evacuated because of a cholera epidemic. When he got there, the uncle's family was missing. He could find no trace of him.

* * *

LETTER FROM NUYGEN SON DOC

Milestone 6 Mine

Hon Gai

15th day 1st Lunar Month

Dear Mother

I want to tell you how happy I am here at the Gam Pha mines. Last week our unit was awarded the Red Banner for the best boring machine team, that is with the highest production rate. It's flying over our boarding house now.

Sorry I can't be back home to-day, for Tet. Give my regards to my two brothers, will you please. And don't worry about me, Mom, they treat us miners great here: we have meat and potatoes every day, and on sundays schnaaps, katoufelpouffer (that's a kind of Chekoslavakian pancake) egg noodles and kippered herring.

I hear the French Fleet has captured Touranne.

Yours fraternally,

Nuygen

* * *

AN OLD MAN REMEMBERS—2

Stumbling up Thung Hiep road
the rain and the sea at my back
half drunk from drinking brandy while fishing
my fingers frozen
I remember how we used to gather salt
in this meadow I am passing
Without paying a tax without paying a tax!
Without paying a tax without paying a tax!
oh rain
soggy old village road in winter
* * *



CATASTROPHES!

Note that they were:

- 1) COLLAPSE OF THE CONCRETE DAM
- 2) FOREST FIRE
- 3) WAR
- 4) FAMINE
- 5) PESTILENCE

the wheel of Buddha

• * *

RITUAL SONG

IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 CARBON IS OXYDIZED
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)
 & THE SEA GIVES UP ITS COLD IONS
 WHICH ARE DISCHARGED AS RAIN
 (gong)
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)
 NITRATES ARE FORMED
 (gong)
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 THE WORM BURROWS
 TO MAKE A PASSAGE & THE WILD CUCUMBER
 APPEARS

(the participants gather. Filling the vessel with water they intone)

THE POND IS CONSTANT
 UNDER MY LORD BUDDHA'S EYE
 (gong)
 IT FILLS & REFILLS
 (gong)
 THE POND REFRESHES ITSELF BY OVERTURNING
 AUTUMN & SPRING
 MORNING & EVENING
 THE FISH DIES
 & IS TRANSFORMED INTO WEEDS
 INTO ROOTS & TUBERS
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)

(the participants fill the vessel with earth & intone to the gong sounds)

THE PRAIRIE STRETCHES ITSELF
 A SINGLE ORGANISM
 UNDER THE YELLOW MOON
 (gong gong)
 IT NOURISHES ITSELF FROM THE DEPTHS

(gong)
 IN THE EYE OF BUDDHA
 THE FLOOR OF THE OCEAN RISES
 TO BECOME BLUEGRASS
 THE DEER THE BUFFALO THE CAT
 GO FROM THE SALT LICK
 (gong)
 & THUS PHOSPHORUS IS DISTRIBUTED
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)
 THE WILD PUMA GOES OUT
 IN THE EYE OF MY LORD BUDDHA

(An egg is placed on top of the vessel of earth and water. The participants join hands & say)

ALL IS MAINTAINED
 ALL IS MAINTAINED
 ALL IS MAINTAINED
 IN AN OPEN STEADY STATE
 IN THE FLEXED ELBOW OF BUDDHA
 (gong)
 HE SHOOTS LIGHT THROUGH THE GASSY ENVELOPE
 (gong)
 WE LIVE IN THE LIMIT BETWEEN TWO BURNS
 OF THE WAVE FREQUENCY
 (gong)
 THE CELL IS A NEGATIVE ENTROPY
 FOR MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)
 FOR MY LORD BUDDHA
 (gong)
 HE REGULATES THE HEAT GRADIENT
 THE PETROLEUM LAKE (gong)
 LIES A FOSSIL (gong)
 OF STORED SUNLIGHT (gong)
 THE WHOLE OF BLUE IS CONTAINED
 IN THE COBALT OF MY LORD BUDDHA
 THE WHOLE OF RED IS CONTAINED
 IN THE MANGANESE OF LORD BUDDHA
 THE WHOLE OF YELLOW IS CONTAINED
 IN THE SULPHUR OF MY LORD BUDDHA

* * *

A FOREST MADE OF RAIN

a forest made of rain
 the eucalyptus—Eucalyptus marginata
 mahogany the teak tree
 made of rain
 made one half of rain

Downpour Rainflood must exceed 3 or 4 feet in a year
 and the wind be not dry but moist
 water-laden the wood-weight

the dense rainforest of the Pacific
 put to-gether drop by drop
 the Northeastern hardwood-hemlock configuration
 In the mist the Tropical rainforest
 rises out of thin air

The soil profile is displaced upwards
 molecules of quartz felspar prised loose
 pulled into the capillaries

stone moving into the atmosphere of rain
 the dead porcupine is raised through the earth layers
 by its own quills
 The leaf streams Sun-engine drives fluttering
 splitting the carbon atom out from the air
 binding it into the water molecule
 fat body

of the Teak Tree
 radiates green green

(Fifth chromopoem)
 THE WHEEL OF BUDDHA

THE AMERICAN SOLDIER'S FUNERAL

A group of farmers were returning to Ap Nohn hamlet along National Highway 1. The road ran alongside Xan Da's field. As they approached they saw the body of an American soldier lying cross the paddy field. The earth was a powdery ochre with the stubble of last summer's rice crop glimmering a faint yellow.

The body was enormous. It stretched from one edge of the field to the other. At the north boundary the fronds of a clump of latania palms had been torn slightly. The feet rested at the south end not far from the water paddle wheel. A hand sprawled across a dyke.

These farmers (and their families) had been away for several weeks, at one of the Government's "New Life" Hamlets. They carried bundles slung over bamboo sticks. It was a crisp day. They examined the corpse carefully walking around it at some length, touching the big pack which was strapped on the soldier's back with their sticks and occasionally prodding the pockets of which there were a great number. Then they sat down to wait under the palm clump. Xuan Da's boy was sent on ahead to the village to inform the Chief Notable. It was around noon.

By the middle of the afternoon the entire village had come out to Xuan Da's field. The villagers walked around the corpse in groups, discussing the fine points. The children cracked nuts. Luckily the middle harvest was in. The ground was dry and had not been dug up. The dykes were packed hard and were undamaged except where the hand had breached a wall next to the irrigation stream. At the bottom of the ditch the water purled softly.

What is the difference between the death of a soldier and the death of an ordinary person? That's a hard question. In the death of an ordinary person the body is washed and dressed ceremonially, the vigil and the burial service have to be performed in exactly the right way, then the spirit will be permitted to take its place directly with the revered ancestors. Even when the family lives far away (as in the case of the Chinese merchants on Cholon) the body is simply shipped back in a box, and the ghost with it, to the ancestral village and there—you can count on it—the right rituals will be performed by the authorized persons. But when a soldier dies, obviously this is a very serious matter.

There is also the matter of size. True, ghosts don't have an actual physical size and shape. Still, they are determined by what they were. This is particularly true of animals. For instance, in the smaller animals—the pig, the dog and the cat—ghosts are considered relatively harmless though sometimes troublesome. These are the "Little Ma" that one stubs one toe on, or stumbles over while crossing a field at night. But the "Big Ma"—that is the large animal ghosts, the ghosts of

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the horse, oxen and water buffalo—can be extremely dangerous. How much more dangerous than the spirit of this huge soldier.

Who would take care of it, so the ghost would not wander? There were no relatives. Who would pray for it? How could it be dressed for the funeral? How could it even be washed properly?

That evening nothing was decided. The Chief Notable arrived soon after supper with the Buddhist Priest. But they could not agree on what to do. Under the Notable's direction the minimum precautionary measures were undertaken and the whole company went back to the hamlet to sleep.

VIGIL DURING THE FIRST NIGHT

Everyone had left Xuan Da's paddy field except three boys who had been assigned to remain behind and scare away the rats. Every so often they ran around the corpse clapping sticks and setting off fire crackers. A ladder led up about 20 feet to the soldier's stomach. On top of this several large bunches of bananas has been placed under the priest's direction. This was to divert the Celestial Dog, so he would not be tempted to gobble up the soldier's entrails.

2ND DAY OCCURRENCES

In the morning a rigging crew arrived from the provincial highway department at Soc Trang. They were accompanied by officials of the Agricultural department. The owner of Xuan Da's land (you remember, he was a tenant farmer) had got wind of it, and had telephoned the administration insisting that the corpse be moved off the paddy onto the asphalt paved highway. Otherwise the soil might be permanently damaged. Although it was now the dry season, rains would begin in a few months and impurities would accumulate.

The morning passes. Everyone is here, but now the post-hole digger has to arrive. It is the plan of the rigging crew to drive in concrete posts on the far side of the highway. Block and tackle will be attached to these, and the corpse pulled by winch to the asphalt road. The pulling of the body across the dykes will be the tricky part.

P.M. The rigging crew has driven in the concrete stakes. However the priest and the Highest Venerable returned shortly after lunch and insisted that the body not be moved until some time later after it had been washed. None of the villagers volunteered to do this.

2ND NIGHT

My neighbor's son, Nuygen Li, and several other teenage boys, have been assigned as guardians of the field for the 2nd night, also a girl cousin of Nuygen's. Few firecrackers were set off. A thatched hut has been built temporarily in the latania grove, very comfortable. Luckily the body has not begun to smell yet and the air is still fresh, especially in the night breeze. And all the stars are shining.

THE 3RD DAY

A flock of beach plovers and many white cranes have perched on the body. There is danger that the soldier's eyes might be pecked out by the smaller birds, but they are protected by the big bony brows which cast a shadow over the face, and the heavy eyebrows. The cranes rummage among the uniform for fleas. An official plan has now been drawn up. The State Highway Department in cooperation with the Agricultural Administration will winch the body onto the road. The earth dykes must be levelled to accomplish this and the irrigation stream filled in. The canal has to be diverted upstream. A digging crew is already working on this. Boundaries must be changed, at least temporarily, and certain landowners

will have to be compensated. The plan is to lift the corpse up onto two flatcars. It will then be transported to the estuary where it will be set adrift on the flatcars. It is hoped at this stage the body will be picked up by the U.S. 7th Fleet and given the correct burial services.

Everyone ready to get started. However the Fortune Teller arrived from Can Tho. He has told us this week is not auspicious for moving anything (because of the star conjunctions). It might bring very bad luck. But the day after tomorrow will be more auspicious.

5TH DAY

We move down the main road in the direction of Ap Nohn hamlet. Low tide. On either side the streams drain, rivulets of blue in the black mud. Through the paddy flats which stretch endlessly the river loops back and forth, and finally disappears behind the tall clump of palms that mark the village. This is situated on high ground, like an island in the ocean of ricefields. The palms swivel. The cortege is now about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away, strung out along the road. Birds swoop overhead.

THE HAMLET OF AP NOHN

The hamlet of Ap Nohn consists of a small store selling fish sauce and canned goods, and the Dinh where meetings and religious ceremonies are held. Also along the spur road are two primary schools, two cemeteries and the town soccer field. There are about 50 houses scattered at varying intervals depending on river access to the rear: each house has its boat landing where a sampan or pirogue is tied up, under the dense cover of banana trees. Houses and barns are made of wood with tile roofs. As the procession crosses the town line over a bridge, with the planks clattering, we are almost run over by a small boy driving a flock of ducks.

We move down the main street.

Two villagers have been chosen to represent the mother and father of the deceased; also a group to impersonate the rest of the kin, brothers, patrilineal grandparents, the soldier's widow, etc. All these march behind the hearse looking very distraught. The women wear mourning cloth of white gauze very sloppily put on, and the men rough turbans wrapped around their heads. Everyone looks utterly overcome and distracted, as if they had just gotten out of bed or were running from a fire. The male mourners pretending to be part blind, totter on bamboo sticks making tapping noises, while the women and birds shriek.

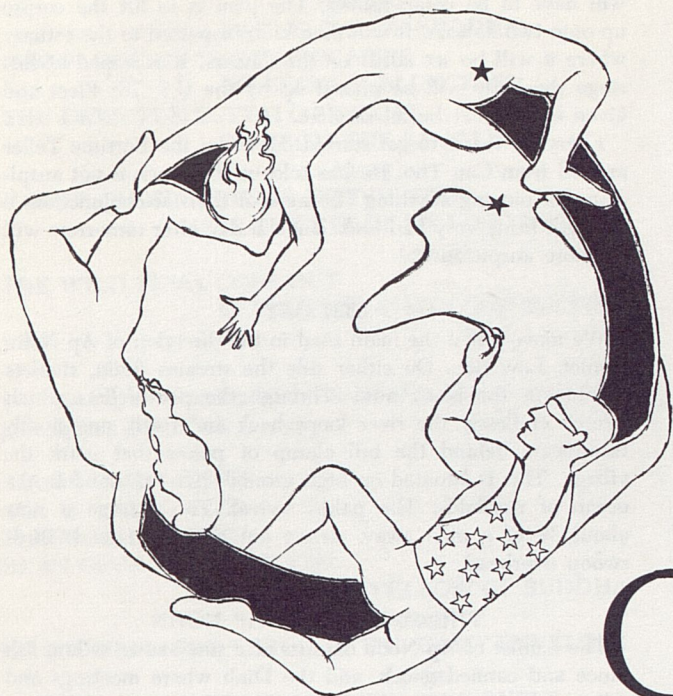
At the head of the procession is the band. Then the priest and the fortune teller supported on hammocks. Then come the paper prayer scrolls and pennants lifted aloft and the lavish displays of ceremonial food held over the heads of the young men, most of whom are drunk on rice wine. Along the sides of the road children, who have recently been burned, give away paper money.

Through the trees at the end of the village street the boat landing can be glimpsed.

We are now passing Cung Bao Phach's, the money-lender's house. Unfortunately the wheels get caught in the sand and the whole hearse tips over, sending the body sprawling against Bao Phach's barn. The impact of the fall has split the corpse open. Birds descend, the beaks of the sandpipers and cranes puncturing the worn fabric and the dry skin. In the pack that the soldier has been wearing strapped to his back, it is discovered that there is another dead soldier. There are also others inside each of the pockets and the other holes everywhere which the birds now proceed to open.

The air is black with them. How many ghosts of the dead—hundreds and hundreds? We will suffer forever. The land will always be damaged by them.

Dr. Krebs is the chairman of the Free School of New York, where he is currently teaching a course on sociology and one on Fascism.



&

OURSELVES

ALAN KREBS

I

Revolutionary vocabularies are useful in providing a highly abstracted skeletal framework which explains why it is that we live in a nightmare. The quality of that nightmare—its vitality and touch—these are characteristics that political terms fail to provide. It is within this context that Pauline Reage's *Story of O* should be approached: a reformulation in another vocabulary of the nature of contemporary experience.

A work by an unknown author using the pseudonym, Pauline Reage's *Story of O* was originally published as *Historie d'O* in Paris in 1954. Its publication was marked first by the awards of the Prix des Deux Magots 1955, and secondly by the apparent imposition of an interdict by the French government (ultimately removed upon the intervention of Andre Malraux, the minister of culture). The book was twice translated into English—initially through the Olympia Press; finally by Sabine d'Estree for the Grove Press edition. The author's identity is still unknown (which doubtless contributes to the novel's notoriety among European intellectuals); knowledge of the book has spread (with extremely mixed reaction) throughout the west. Its arrival in America has been noted—but to the best of my knowledge without any analysis at all.

This is not surprising, for the tale is in essence Marquis de Sade updated and raised to the hundredth power. O, like

Kafka's K, is spirited away one afternoon—but by her lover, not by the Authority. She is not taken to trial before mysterious judges whose powers are impersonal, asexual and arcane, and whose court mysteriously moves about from attic to antechamber; O is simply carried off to a chateau on the outskirts of Paris (after first complying with the request en route that she strip herself naked beneath her dress). The chateau is the outermost limit of a whirlpool within which O will descend to her death—a whirlpool constructed of successive sexual humiliations—all of them intensely personal, highly sensual, precisely imposed, and easily locatable in space. That her first immersion in the process is mediated *by virtue of* her attachment to her lover is made imminently clear—he not only brings her to Roissy (the name of the chateau), he arranges for her subsequent degradations: innumerable rapes, whippings, chainings—and ultimately transfer of ownership to an Englishman, Sir Stephen, who will use O yet more severely. Yet none of this distracts from his stature in O's eyes: until the very point at which she transfers her love to Sir Stephen, her first lover's stature in fact increases with each new development. Love thus gains in cruelty: the more suffering, the more investment, the greater the intensity—reaching its ultimate (in terms of that specific relationship) in ownership exchange under his auspices.

The terms of O's servitude are explicitly clear—they are established at the end of her first day at Roissy by those in charge of the place—

“... this flogging and the chain which when attached to the rings of your collar keeps you more or less closely confined to your bed several hours a day—are intended less to make you suffer, scream, or shed tears than to make you feel, *through* this suffering, that you are not free outside yourself. When you leave here, you will be wearing on your third finger an iron ring, which will identify you. By then you will have learned to obey those who wear the same insignia, and when they see it they will know that beneath your skirt you are constantly naked, however comely or commonplace your clothes may be, and that this nakedness is for them.”

Her journey—in a sense—represents increasingly severe application of the terms of servitude. But she bears these not grimly—rather with joy:

“What surprised them (her fellow workers at the fashion salon at which she was employed as photographer) most (upon her return from Roissy) was how changed she was. At first glance, they found it hard to say exactly what was changed about her, but none the less they felt it, and the more they observed her the more convinced they were. She stood and walked straighter, and her eyes were clearer, but what was especially striking was her perfection when she was in repose, and how measured her gestures were.”

Her further travels would carry O first to the Englishman, then (at the behest of her masters) to a predatory recruitment role toward Jacqueline, an attractive, Slavic fashion model. she would ultimately be beaten and used in a variety of ways by Sir Stephen, transferred for temporary special treatment to the estate of one Ann-Marie (who will arrange for unmerciful beatings, to the installation of iron rings through one of her labia, and the branding of her buttocks with Sir Stephen's initials). Wearing a huge owl's mask, depilated, and led about by a chain attached to her rings, O would ultimately be offered by Sir Stephen to the chief of the entire strange order—a man named The Commander. The novel ends on this note:

In a final chapter, which has been suppressed, O returned to Roissy, where she was abandoned by Sir Stephen.

There exists a second ending to the story of O, according to which O, seeing that Sir Stephen was about to leave her, said she would prefer to die. Sir Stephen gave her his consent.

II

To move a spotlight 45° over an irregular surface is to illuminate elevations and cavities not at first evident. To express in sadomasochistic terms a vision of contemporary social reality arms it with an impact not ordinarily available. O's journey is the voyage of the contemporary westerner—but with the element of love re-emphasized. The current social order specializes in impersonal manipulation, instrumental use, subjugation and the employment of cruelty in an atmosphere of hygienic, asexual sterility; Pauline Reage seeks only to redress the style of the relationship. In his introduction to the *Story of O* in his *Olympia Reader*, Maurice Girodias (the publisher of Olympia Press) comments off-handedly, as an aside, on the nature of his experience with the Paris Police Prefecture:

“I know so well those corridors, those dusty courtrooms, those musty offices. I have sat on all those benches, I have waited in front of many of those forbidding doors. I have been the guest of those cells in the dark subterranean dungeons where bad boys are put away; I have been measured, photographed, weighed, and I have left countless fingerprints on innumerable files; I have been searched minutely, lovingly;

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I have been handcuffed, and promenaded in those labyrinths, without belt, tie, or shoelaces, by attentive guards; I have spent a goodly portion of my life in those surroundings, but now I feel that I have become one of the family, so to speak . . ."

Is this relationship more or less debasing in the Paris Prefecture for the tabu upon sexual cognizance imposed there? Is the relationship more or less debasing in the Tombs or in the Women's House of Detention because rape is considered "examination," and sexual response mutually understood to be impermissible?

And if the Tombs in the Women's House of Detention are commonplace banalities, how might one deal with the phenomena of legal execution—either in the electric chair or in the gas chamber. Or on the part of agent 007? Yet these are appetizers, *Vorspeisen*. What is one supposed to make of Auschwitz or Hiroshima? Whether it be the systematic death of 6,000,000 or 200,000?

These are Betelguse or Alpha Centauri in a sky filled with millions of stars. Cold points of abstraction in a social order within which impersonal hygienic manipulation moves millions toward hygienic *Endlösungen*. And yet man is not without his passions: toward his wife, his children, his dog ("Do you allow *your* dog to eat out of garbage pails as other dogs do?" "If it's your child that's coughing, get him . . .!") "What is the most important gift you can give your family?"). Men are taught—as all men have—to love, to derive sexual experience, to feel passion, to hate.

As the men whose hands rest close to the switches of power in the west manipulate the controls of their consoles where do their passions go? What emotions, what feelings pass through the minds of men who sit nested ten stories underground in the control rooms next to the ICBMs with their hydrogen-bomb warheads?

A society predicated upon exploitation each of the other requires sexual-emotional economies: too much love dare not be extended toward those whom one will figuratively fuck (and what strange contradictions lurk within that term): business, after all, is business and fucking is done at home.

What love might be expected between equals in a social order which defines equality as the prerogative of a superior group to fuck an inferior group (whether the inferiors are aliens or domestics is not really relevant)? And keep in mind that the higher peers must not take public cognizance of their status.

Love in America represents manipulation; sex equals cruelty; power equals debasement. An emasculated political vocabulary will permit the comprehension of none of this—and the terms "fascism" or "imperialism" will barely convey even the skeletal outline of the passion involved. Did the Jews love the Germans? Did the Germans love the Jews? Whose lusts are represented in Vietnam given the refusal of the Vietnamese to accept habitation in America's "Happy Villages?"

Franz Kafka's characters, perpetually ensnarl within the coils of one or another dusty, murderous bureaucracy provide a photographic portrayal of our lives. By going backwards in time, by personalizing and sexualizing—by turning relationships into revelry—Pauline Reage's depiction provides food for far more horror. In the last few moments of Resnais' "Night and Fog" the camera slowly pans the ruins of Auschwitz, it closes in on a particularly grotesque set of tilted concrete slabs while the narration concludes ". . . the last sun shining on the bodies of the unburied dead . . . what fate remains as long as men are deaf to the eternal cry?" The measure provided by Reage in her odyssey of O suggests that deafness alone might not be the problem—rather that we may no longer even have ears.

WAR CRIMES

Inaugural Address by Jean-Paul Sartre to the International War Crimes Tribunal, first session, Stockholm, Sweden, May 2, 1967.

"Our Tribunal was formed on the initiative of Bertrand Russell, with the aim of deciding whether the accusations of 'war crimes' made against the Government of the United States and against the Governments of South Korea, of Australia and of New Zealand, in connection with the war in Vietnam, are justified. On the occasion of this inaugural session, the Tribunal wishes to make known its origins, its functions, its aims and its terms of reference. It intends to make its position quite clear on the question of what has been called its 'legitimacy'.

"In 1945, something occurred which was entirely without historical precedent: the setting up in Nuremberg of the first international Tribunal called on to judge crimes committed by a belligerent power. . . .

. . . It has been criticised as having been nothing but a *diktat* of the conquerors to the conquered and, which amounts to the same thing, as not having been truly international: one group of nations judging another. . . .

"(It's) legitimacy, however, would not have been difficult to establish. It would have been enough if the organ created to judge the Nazis had remained in existence after having carried out that specific task, or if the organization of the United Nations had drawn all the consequences from what had just been done and had, by a vote in its General Assembly, consolidated the body's existence as a permanent Tribunal

empowered to take cognizance of and to judge all charges of war crimes even if the accused should happen to be the government of one of those countries which through the agencies of their judges delivered the Nuremberg verdicts. In this way, the implicit universality of the original intention would have been made clear and explicit. Well, what happened is well-known: hardly had the last German war-criminal been judged than the Tribunal disappeared into thin air, and nobody has heard anything about it since.

"Are we then so innocent? Have there been no further war-crimes since 1945? Since then, has nobody resorted to violence, or to aggression? Has there been no 'genocide'? Has no strong country attempted to break by the use of force the sovereignty of a small nation? Has there been no occasion to denounce, anywhere in the world, Ouradours or Auschwitzes? You know the truth. In the last twenty years, the great historical event has been the struggle of the Third World for its liberation: colonial empires have collapsed and in their place sovereign nations have come into existence, or have recovered a lost traditional independence, destroyed by colonization. All this has taken place in suffering, in sweat, and in blood. A Tribunal such as that of Nuremberg has become a permanent necessity. . . .

"There are, in fact, two sources of power. The first is the State with its institutions. Well, in this time of violence, most governments would be afraid, if they took such an initiative, that it might one day turn against them, and that they might find themselves in the dock. Furthermore, for many of them the United States is a powerful ally: which of them would dare ask for the resurrection of a Tribunal whose first action would obviously be to order an enquiry into the Vietnamese conflict? The other source of power is the people, during revolutionary periods in which it changes its institutions. But, although the struggle remains an implacable one, by what means could the masses, compartmentalized by frontiers as they are, succeed in uniting and in imposing on the various governments an institution which would be a genuine *Court of the People*.

"The Russell Tribunal was born of the recognition of these two, contradictory facts: the Nuremberg verdict has made necessary the existence of an institution for the investigation and, where appropriate, the condemnation of war crimes: but neither governments nor people are, at the present time, capable of creating such an institution. We are entirely conscious of the fact that we have received no mandate from anyone. But if we have taken the initiative of coming together, it is because we knew that nobody *could* give us a mandate. Certainly our Tribunal is not an institution. But it does not claim to replace any established body: on the contrary, it emerged from a void, and in response to an appeal. We have not been recruited and invested with real powers by governments. But then we have just seen that such powers, at Nuremberg, did not suffice to endow the judges with an uncontested legitimacy. Quite the contrary: the fact that the verdicts could be carried out permitted those who had been conquered to challenge their validity; backed up by force,

TRIBUNAL

The editors wish to thank the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation for providing us with the following information. Those wishing to obtain further information about the Foundation and about the War Crimes Tribunal (the first session of which was held in Sweden and has now been completed) are invited to write to The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 342 West 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10024.

those verdicts appeared as the simple expression of the adage "Right is Might". The Russell Tribunal considers, on the contrary, that its legitimacy derives equally from its total powerlessness, and from its universality.

"We are powerless: it is the guarantee of our independence. We receive no aid—except from our support committees which are, like ourselves, associations of private individuals. Representing no government and no party, nobody can give us orders: we will examine the facts 'in our hearts and consciences' one might say or, if you prefer, openly and independently. No one of us can say, today, how the proceedings will go, or if we will reply by a yes or a no to the accusations, or if we will not reply—considering them perhaps well-founded but not conclusively proved.

"What is certain, in any case, is that our powerlessness, even if we are convinced by the evidence presented, makes it impossible for us to pass a sentence. . . . Thus the Russell Tribunal will have no other concern, in its investigations as in its conclusions, than to bring about a general recognition of the need for an international institution for which it has neither the means nor the ambition to be a substitute, whose essential role would be the resuscitation of the *jus contra bellum* which was still-born at Nuremberg—the substitution of ethical and juridical rules for the law of the jungle.

"Precisely because we are simple citizens we have been able, by recruiting our members on a wide international basis, to give our Tribunal a more universal structure than that of Nuremberg. I do not mean merely that a larger number of countries are represented; from that point of view there would be many gaps to fill. But above all, whereas in 1945 the Germans were only present on the dock, or at best on the stand as witnesses for the prosecution, several of the judges here are citizens of the United States, this means that they come from that country whose own policies are under investigation, and that they have, therefore, their own understanding of it and, whatever their opinions, an intimate relationship with it, with its institutions and its traditions—a relationship which will inevitably mark the Tribunal's conclusions.

"However, whatever our desire for impartiality and for universality, we are entirely conscious that this desire does not suffice to legitimise our enterprise. What we want, in fact, is that its legitimisation should be retrospective or, if you prefer, *a posteriori*. For we are not working for ourselves and our own edification, neither do we have any pretensions to imposing our conclusions from on high. What we wish is to maintain, thanks to the collaboration of the Press, a constant contact between ourselves and the masses who in all parts of the world are living and suffering the tragedy of Vietnam. We hope that they will learn as we learn, that they will discover together with us the reports, the documents, the testimony, that they will evaluate them and make up their minds about them day by day, together with us. We want the conclusions, whatever they may be, to be drawn by each individual in his own mind at the same time as we draw them ourselves; even beforehand perhaps. This session is a common enterprise whose final term must be, in the phrase of a philosopher, "une verite devenue". Yes, if the masses ratify our judgement, then it will become truth, and we, at the very moment when we efface ourselves before those masses who will make themselves the guardians and the mighty support for that truth, we will know that we have been legitimised and that the people, by showing us its agreement, is revealing a deeper need: the need for a real "War Crimes Tribunal" to be brought into being as a permanent body—that is to say, the need that it should be possible to denounce and punish such crimes wherever and whenever they may be committed.

"What a strange Tribunal: a jury and no judge! It is true:

we are only a jury, we have neither the power to condemn, nor the power to acquit anybody. Therefore, no prosecution. There will not even be strictly speaking a prosecution case. Maitre Matarasso, President of the Legal Commission, is going to read you a list of charges which will take the place of a prosecution case. We the jury, at the end of the session, will have to pronounce on these charges: are they well-founded or not? But the judges are everywhere: they are the peoples of the world, and in particular the American people. It is for them that we are working."

1. Has the United States Government (and the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and South Korea) committed acts of aggression according to international law?
2. Has the American Army made use of or experimented with new weapons or weapons forbidden by the laws of war (gas, special chemical products, napalm, etc)?
3. Has there been bombardment of targets of a purely civilian character, for example, hospitals, schools, sanatoria, dams, etc. and on what scale has this occurred?
4. Have Vietnamese prisoners been subjected to inhuman treatment forbidden by the laws of war, and in particular, to torture or mutilation? Have there been unjustified reprisals against the civilian population, in particular, execution of hostages?
5. Have forced labour camps been created, has there been deportation of the population or other acts tending to the extermination of the population and which can be characterised juridically as acts of genocide?

BERTRAND RUSSELL

We do not supplicate for the right to investigate the crimes of war committed by Western governments in Vietnam: we demand it. We do not hesitate about the connection between our knowledge of crimes and the necessity to test this knowledge in public enquiry: we proclaim it. Moral purpose cannot be separated from the concern for truth. The burning children of Vietnam are martyred by the Western world. Their suffering, like that of the gassed Jews of Auschwitz, is a basic feature of the civilization which we have built. There is, however, another part of our culture which has also been built and which has produced our own martyrs over the centuries. This Tribunal is in the tradition of that struggle and of that achievement: our art, our science, our music, our humanity.

It is our culture which is at stake. It is our barbarism which menaces it. It is not possible to organize society for plunder and mass murder without terrifying consequences. Our scientists and engineers, our chemists and researchers, our technology and economic system have been mobilized for murder . . .

The International War Crimes Tribunal is a revolutionary tribunal. We have no armies and no gallows. We lack power, even the power of mass communication. It is overdue that those without power sit in judgment over those who have it. This test we must meet, alone if need be. We are responsible before history . . .

Professor (Dr. Juris) Vladimir Dedijer of Yugoslavia, Lelio Basso, international lawyer, Gunther Anders, the Austrian writer, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre from France, Issac Deutscher, the British historian, Peter Weiss, the Swedish playwright and David Dellinger, pacifist and editor of *Liberation*. Courland Cox of SNCC and Carl Oglesby, past president of Students for a Democratic Society were among those who took part in the first session of the Tribunal. Among the presentations were: 1) a brief on the history of U.S. aggression in Vietnam by Gabriel Kolko, a history professor at the University of Pennsylvania; 2) a report from Dr. Abraham Behar, a French radiologist who was on one of the Tribunal investigation missions; 3) a film of bombed areas made by Roger Pic; 4) a report by Dr. Jean-Pierre Vigier of the Henri Poincare Institute of the University of Paris, describing the various types of "anti-personnel" bombs used by the U.S. in DVR bombardments (in particular the CBU—which

is *designed* specifically to kill people in unprotected areas but is not effective against buildings and other structures—hence its killing civilians cannot be considered "accidental"; 5) a description of civilian bombardment victims by Professor J.B. Neilands, a biochemist from the University of California, also a member of one of the investigating teams; and 6) four wounded Vietnamese witnesses, one a 22 year old school teacher and another a 9 year old boy, both bombing witnesses.

* * *

The first sessions of the Tribunal ended on May 10 finding that the U.S. had committed war crimes by systematic bombardment of civilians and crimes against world peace by aggression and violation of international agreements. Future sessions of the Tribunal will consider the final three questions to which the Tribunal had originally directed its attention: torture of prisoners, experimental weaponry including chemical warfare and genocide.

Will they bow before your face of
an old man on a child
skin bare, pink, purple,
chin braced over
the neck with its hole?

Will they come to weep before you,
scarred, bearded, nose to a side,
seeing from one eye,
the other off towards the cheek?

Will the women shake
holding palms up to the roof of the bus
at the sight of you?
Or thrill at your stripes,
embrace them,
give you what you need
for love or money?

Or will you be kicked
as defeat
as they live
movie proud, world smooth,
with brief case, with cane?

Want to reach out and can't
and can't be touched
because the pain's enduring.

Bandages drop, are removed or rot
and artificial limbs are sent-----
they stop communism that way.
The world turns
the nations roll
Whether they
enshrine you or beat you to death
you are
love
one
flower
In
this heart.

Roberta Gould

1

In Africa the mornings are cool,
but the miners will be filing down into the mines
until the American bankers are exterminated.
Same goes for Spain and Bolivia.

The seed is gushing to the fruit,
the warm rain is falling in the womb,
and the warm fertile unfrightened flesh
is molding to
the shape of the head and the shape of the hand.
Tomorrow there will be a new order.

2

And you could say that the children
carry sunlight in their teeth. In Sicily
where they play in the boulders on the jetty, and
in San Juan behind the tar-paper shacks.
Their future is being prepared.
The guerrillas are gathering in the hills all over the world.

3

At the center of Revolutionary violence is
a tranquil openness, like
the sky over Algeciras on a calm blue day;
it must appear in the eyes of the *fidaines*
while they're sitting in the cafes waiting for zero hour.

REVOLUTIONARY

All so simple.
Who owns the property?
Who makes the laws and the decisions?
Who controls the press, the police and the army?
Who has power?
They're the ones who have to be destroyed,
and when they're destroyed the new society can be built.
Bread, dignity, self-government and peace.
Everyone's needs met.

4

All over the world plans being made, doors
opening, a new humanity being born.
What stands in the way?
We know what stands in the way.

The shimmer is on the river;
the nerves dream deep into the vivid bone, remembering
what can happen when the chains are broken.
Napalm can't hold it back,
burning the rice crop can't hold it back,
even money can't hold it back: it has no price.

Shirtless, hands tied behind his back,
our brother sits in a field of burnt grass
with his three-year-old daughter in his lap;
after awhile he'll be taken away for an interrogation.

Mythical visions of the full bloom—
the vision of man as music, for example—
have no place in the landscape
of total war, nor is there time to regret it.
Ashes, widows and hungry children, one hero captured
and another one killed, never enough medicine.
Fulfillment of responsibility
to our comrades and our Revolution:
nothing else matters once the line is crossed.
The goal of the war is victory.

MARTIN

Sweet are the women and sweet are the men.
Sister mountains, what spices love
your granite lungs in the climate of Armageddon?
Spices never grown before, green and strong.
Death by fire, death by squalor, death of the soul,
all part of the same Death
and all the work of the same murderer.
Reality is defined by those who suffer;
we learned that so long ago, so long ago.

Waiting in bare rooms, leaning on the window sill
while cigarette smoke trails into the twilight,
waiting in the clearings on the hillsides before dawn,
talking softly, checking the maps and ammunition,
waiting in the fields under the hot sun, sweating,
waiting in the ghettos, on the corners and fire-escapes,
waiting in the prisons and the huts and the tenements,
waiting in the mines and mills and factories,
waiting in Vietnam, Paraguay, South Africa, Greece,
India, Brazil, the Congo, Thailand, Guatemala, Angola,
waiting for the signal, attacking, waiting again, attacking . . .

GLASS

THE LANGUAGE OF ART

susan sherman

Susan Sherman, the editor of IKON, has published poetry in Poetry, The Nation, El Corno Emplumado, has had plays produced off-off Broadway at the Hardware Poets Theatre and Cafe La Mama, and has written articles and criticisms for the Village Voice. She recently received her master's degree in philosophy from Hunter College, where she wrote her master's thesis on "The Category of Language in Merleau-Ponty".

. . . verses are not, as people imagine, simply feelings (those one has early enough)—they are experiences. For the sake of a single verse, one must see many cities, men and things . . . And still it is not yet enough to have memories . . . For it is not yet the memories themselves. Not till they have turned to blood within us, to glance and gesture, nameless and no longer to be distinguished from ourselves—not till then can it happen that in a most rare hour the first word of a verse arises in their midst and goes forth from them.

—Rainer Marie Rilke

In studying the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* it is suggested in the preface that the Western reader start from the end of the book and read backwards, that he start from the moment of re-birth, of re-entry into the world, and read backwards toward death. This is a solution suggested again and again in Kabbalistic and related works. If there is a philosophy, a general principle of order, to be discovered which does not apply meaning before the fact but which restores meaning and allows for creative perception perhaps it must be found in this way—by going backwards from the simplest perception to the complex formulations which order our experience.

This is not a new idea, but with the growth of popularity and the subsequent increase in information about contemporary European philosophy, particularly Phenomenology, there occurs the possibility of a bridge between Eastern and Western philosophy, between analytic and dialectical philosophy, between logic and poetry, experience and thought.

The meeting ground between Western Phenomenology and Eastern philosophy is in both instances caused by the emphasis on the importance of two words—*relationship* and *process*. The shift is from "things" to the relationships between things. Function or action become of predominant importance. The emphasis at the same time switches from the use of the word "object" to the use of the word "subject". The experiencing subject, the human being, becomes central. Man

is no longer a machine made up of intricate but calculable mechanisms, he is a complex human being with feeling and emotion.

As a dialectical philosophy, Phenomenology searches for broad general principles of order. It is not built up inductively by generalizing from a series of occurrences, it rests on analogies gained from an understanding of relationship. The emphasis is on an understanding of similarities and differences, rather than on statistics. An image in a poem is built by the surprise which comes when a relationship is perceived between things not ordinarily related. Bacon, in his essays on scientific method, describes the invention of the compass as something that could not have happened through ordinary logical research. Discovery is a flash of insight—a momentary and unique synthesis of two or more seemingly contradictory objects, objects which to logic seem entirely unrelated.

Phenomenology is a philosophy of method. It implies not a throwing aside of data, but a new, a radical means of interpreting historical data in the light of new material. It depends on situation, on context, rather than on an isolated, artificial environment. An object, or subject, becomes a point of focus in a field, rather than an alienated piece of matter. The difference is one of attitude. Unity becomes the underlying base of human existence.

But even a philosophy like Phenomenology is still paralyzed by certain philosophical prejudices, by a reluctance to

admit experience as evidence, as fact, because experience is something that can happen only once, to one individual. It is a unique occurrence, an interpretation. As a new attitude toward the human being has been provided, a new attitude toward science itself must occur. Experience does fulfill the most important scientific criterion—although it is not directly repeatable, it allows prediction. It can never be cut open, examined, pinned on a wall, but it can give meaning by being assimilated, by being gathered up and held.

If the scientist, the philosopher, is to turn to the artist because he realizes finally that any situation, even the most artificial laboratory situation, implies interpretation on the part of the observer, then he should follow his train of thought to its logical conclusion, he should understand what the artist understands. And the artist too must be willing to engage in this dialogue, because it holds for him the ability to understand, to control, to avoid certain problems caused by the confusion so prevalent today.

In the Zohar one reads, "The recitals of the Law are the vestment of the Law. Woe to him who takes that vestment for the Law itself!" The image in the poem, the religious parable, the philosophical search, any *expression* of experience is a representation, to take that expression for experience itself is to commit a grave error. In emphasizing unity, relationship, process, event, there is a danger of going to the opposite extreme and neglecting the fact that a relationship occurs between specific things, people, or objects. The artist cannot forget this because he is forced in his art to deal with certain physical material. He must direct his process of expression through certain physical processes—through paint, through an instrument, through notation, through words. A poet is not dealing with abstract material because he uses words, he must deal with the physical aspects

of words—their rhythm, their tone, their weight or their lightness. The poem itself is not the experience, it is a trigger gaged to set off an experience, an experience that occurs through a relationship—either between the poet and the poem or the reader and the poem. Both experiences are different, but they are also equivalent, because the poet makes a chart, he depicts a landscape, he asks the reader to follow him. He works through analogy, and it is through a combination of these two things that that experience which is the poem is lived.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANALOGY

Merleau-Ponty is a French Phenomenologist who builds a system of philosophy on a theory of language which is the language of art. His method of procedure rests on a system of argument which is not stated explicitly in his work. While he realizes that the method of examination of the "humanistic" sciences must be different from that of the "materialistic" sciences, he is still bound to a causal philosophy based on inductive logic. His own solution can perhaps be termed a logic of analogy. This is to be understood in two ways. The first is in terms of the use of metaphors, similes, and images—in much the same way that the writer, particularly the poet, uses them. The second is to be understood in terms of analogs, such as those commonly used in testing procedures, in which groups of words are compared because of one of a number of possible relationships. This type of procedure is particularly interesting because of its relationship to modern computer technology.

Perhaps the most interesting point in examining Merleau-Ponty's method, however, is that his confusions are as fruitful in terms of study as his positive contributions. As in many of the phenomenologists, there is a basic category confusion between religion and art. Art mirrors

experience, it is not experience itself. When creative expression becomes a model for religious experience, there is a tendency to take concepts literally which should be taken figuratively and assimilation is impossible. A Buddhist parable is taken as a literal occurrence. Symbols relevant to a certain environment are taken out of context and transplanted unassimilated to a completely different context where meaning is applied to them. The danger of this and the reason why it almost never results in art of any value is precisely because there is no assimilation and understanding, therefore there is no real meaning. The conclusions are arrived at before the premises are given. Meaning is applied to an event before the event occurs. Art, moreover, does mirror experience and if this phenomenon occurs in art, it has a basis in existence. Yet no work at all has been done on this problem, only one of the many problems that Merleau-Ponty's category of language is helpful in clarifying.

Merleau-Ponty's primary concern is to find an adequate and precise method of examining perception, that means through which man understands and inhabits his world. To Merleau-Ponty, perception and expression are inseparable—the two functions, though divisible through analysis, are, in reality, one. *To perceive is to express*. The way in which our body is part of the world, inseparably united to it and to us, is comparable in part to a work of art—a work of art can be broken down, analyzed, criticized, but the analysis is never comparable to the original poem or painting, which holds in its particularity or individuality that unique unity or form which makes it a work of art.

Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument, and when we wish to move about we transport it without instruments as if by magic, since

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it is ours and because through it we have direct access to space. For us the body is much more than an instrument or a means; it is our expression in the world, the visible form of our intentions.

In dealing with this problem—a problem of synthesizing and ordering data which are often contradictory and lacking exterior relations—Merleau-Ponty uses categories borrowed from such divergent fields as esthetics, psychology and anthropology. He uses the field theory of Gestalt psychology, grounded upon a category of language which is basically the language of art. The *gestalt*, the field forms the raw material, the background. The subject, man, brings into focus the objects he uses and the other subjects, the other men that he recognizes. All these come into being for him as he expresses himself through the *focus* of his perception. And, at the same time, he is brought into focus by the forces which surround him. In a very real way, man's language is that manner of expression by which he both forms and is formed. To Merleau-Ponty there is no mind-subject as opposed to body-object, there is only the body-subject, that unity which expresses itself as man. All objects in the outside world become an extension of man, or more precisely can only be *described* as an extension of the central subject. On a higher level of complexity, this unique relationship of subject and object transcends the subject-predicate distinction entirely and the transformed subject now becomes describable in terms of *process*. The subject-predicate sentence becomes transformed into a *verbal clause*. "To be" becomes "being". The participle includes all segments of time and action, all objects, all moments, the subject itself and becomes *event*.

To discover the origin of perception, it is therefore necessary to describe without preconceived notions our *act*

of perception. Language is the key, because language is expression. Language is the way by which man, through his body, his *means* of expression, engages in that dialogue which is his own particular manner of existence in the world. "For contemporary psychology and psychopathology the body is no longer merely an *object in the world*, under the purview of a separated spirit. It is on the side of the subject; it is our *point of view on the world*, the place where the spirit takes on a certain physical and historical situation."

Merleau-Ponty uses creative language not as the critic *speaks* of it, but as the artist *uses* it. Man is committed in the use of his language and is *inseparable* from it. The poem teaches us to learn because in experiencing the poem we realize not that we are learning something new, but because, for an instant, our eyes focus and something moves us from the outside. "It is not the object which obtains movements of accommodation and convergence from my eyes. It has been shown that on the contrary I would never see anything clearly, and there would be no object for me, if I did not use my eyes in such a way as to make a view of a single object possible." Art not only focuses our eyes, it teaches us how to see. The language of art is not the seen, it is the seeing, and it is only through "seeing" that other objects exist, that the dialogue between man and man, man and the world, man and himself is possible. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is centered around the *subject* and in order for the subject (man) to gain an objective understanding of the forms of his existence, his inquiry must be a consciousness of the self on a subjective level—it must be a self-consciousness. But it must be a self-consciousness that is open to examination. Art, as an expression of self which is formal and open to inspection best fits this criterion.

Merleau-Ponty's most serious difficulty comes when be-

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cause of the prejudices of the tradition within which he works and the fact that he uses as examples of art 19th century rather than modern work, he is finally forced to construct a hierarchy which places literature above painting, music or any other art form, which places Western above Eastern philosophy. Speech is deceptive because it does not seem overtly to have material connections to the outside world. But this is a fallacious conclusion. Anyone who has dealt with the "word" as an artistic medium knows that it is just as physical a concept as "paint". The point is that the word is *more* than meaning and it is this that Merleau-Ponty does not take into consideration. The word is rhythm. It is sound. It holds a variety of textures and shapes. Style does not arise from meaning, it arises from the attributes that belong to words as physical objects—their length, their weight, their shape. There is more to be taken into consideration here than the dialectic between subject-subject, subject-object in terms of the content of a work of art, there is the medium in which the artist works, whether it be paint or notation.

In his attempt to bring the background into focus, Merleau-Ponty loses the object. Ad it is precisely this that art does not do. But he has introduced a theory by which a vital dialogue might again occur in art. In Merleau-Ponty's philosophy there is a return to a symbolic understanding of experience as the basis of a relevant, *scientific* method. A development which can only occur if assimilation does not become confusion and analogy includes the study of the analog as well

as the metaphor. A study of his philosophy brings up interesting questions when understood in the terms of the creative process, or even more, in terms of creative experience. It is not necessary to prove experience, but it is necessary to understand it. Besides his philosophical works, Merleau-Ponty, as well as other Phenomenologists such as Jean-Paul Sartre realize the necessity of writing about other subjects, of writing as art, as well as taking action on situations which involve them. This is the first step. The second is for the artist himself to realize the importance of such understanding, of such involvement. These are questions that are important, not in an abstract sense, but in a practical sense, by the fact that they surround us in every aspect of our lives. We live in a society that trains us to react to names, it is time we not only learn, but that we experience what those names mean.

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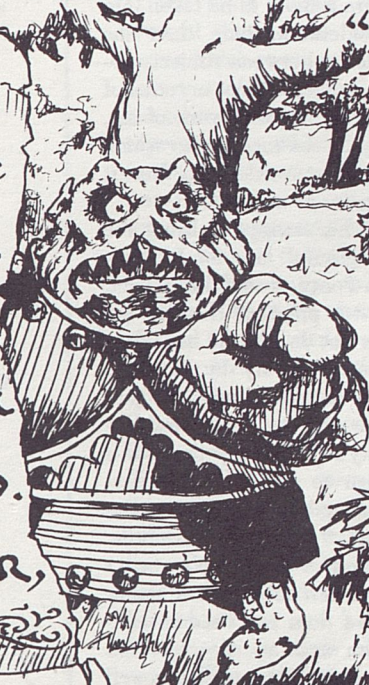
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the Sojourn

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by Bob Vannucci



After receiving the magic stone from the old man, Sebastian was transported to a mysterious land. He was, however, not alone



"Sebastian Pieneugloss, do not fear me because my appearance differs from yours! I am Brezonag, one of the Boronag race. I have come to ask your help. My people are soon to be attacked by the evil Gnomewards and will be destroyed unless you help us build fortifications. I beg you...help us!"





to be continued...



I·KON