VOLUME XVI, NO. 42
OCTOBER 16, 1963

THE USES OF CRISES

[The material for this discussion by Hallock Hoffman was first used in a Pacifica Foundation broadcast heard over KPFK (listener-sponsored radio in Los Angeles) on Nov. 25, 1962.]

THE fact of human suffering is real. Most of us suffer now and then, and some of us, by reason of circumstance or extra sensitivity, suffer deeply. But most of us in the United States, I guess, experience infrequently or not at all the depths of dread that many people, elsewhere in this world, must regularly abide.

Our suffering, when it comes, is chiefly personal. It descends from accidents or thoughtlessness. One of our machines injures us, or one of our close relationships breaks; these events throw our personal order out of joint.

There is little in our everyday lives to realize the massive, desperate sufferings of which we hear. Who can conceive the murder of six million Jews? Who can feel the death of 20 million Russians? Who can apprehend, even with the help of eye-witness accounts, the instant catastrophe of Hiroshima or Nagasaki beneath primitive atom bombs?

Death and pain are personal, perhaps always; the suffering of others may be imagined, but not shared. Like other lessons, the lesson of distress is learned by doing, not by talking. This is one human fact, I suspect, that makes the work for peace so difficult.

Suffering is personal and individual, and the technology of war has translated death into mass impersonal terms. The early improvements in organized killing, when bows and arrows took the place of stones, and gunpowder moved death a few yards further from the killer, scarcely foreshadowed the marvelous achievements of the modern era.

It is tempting to try to substitute drama for realization. If the nature of modern war should ever penetrate our minds, we might engage our imaginations to our problems. The trouble is the escalations of warfare outrun our wildest playwrights; even motion picture scenarios cannot contain the dreadful magnificence of our technological miracles. The enormity of our inhumanity eludes us. Perhaps we will never personalize sufficiently what our machines and bureaucracies are doing to turn away from our fatal courses.

The figures do not move us. A while ago Algeria was the scene of a rebellion. The statistics appeared each morning in our newspapers. Yet the Algerian war seemed tiny and distant; it made no difference to our world. Algerians, Arab and European, were terrorizing and slaying each other to gain freedom. In a single week the Algerian war of independence killed as many men and women as we killed in the four years of our American war of independence.

The tiny bomb we dropped on Hiroshima killed about 200,000 people. That toy of the nuclear age equalled in explosive power all the bombs Allied aircraft dropped on Germany in the whole of World War II. The little Hiroshima bomb is now known as a tactical weapon—something to be used on the battlefield, not for massive deterrence. One of them rightly placed could wipe out the whole of Denmark; two or three could finish off the Netherlands. We have gone on to greater glories.

What can be made of the fact that the nuclear arsenals (a tidy phrase) contain the equivalent of 10 tons of TNT for every man, woman and child on the planet? Does that fact make war personal? What use is the information that we have an over-kill capacity ten times greater than we need to annihilate the Soviet Union? My friend Jim Real, who tries to make these figures live, says *overkill* means pouring gasoline on a baby that is already burning nicely.

The human problem of push-button wars is that they are begun by pushing buttons. W. H. Ferry has an invention to personalize the push-buttons.

Ferry's scheme is simple. It involves exchanging among potential enemies fifty children—preferably quite young children, bright and lively and healthy. Let's take the United States and Russia.

The Soviet Union would pick fifty children to send to Washington; we would pick fifty to send to Moscow. The Russian children would be housed in the White House, where they would be fed and pampered and schooled and otherwise treated as guests of the President. The American children would have similar accommodations in the Kremlin. The children could be recruited for this service on an annual basis, to return to their families each New Year's day when they were replaced by the next contingent.

The operating requirement would be a solemn pact between our President and the Russian head of state. Whenever, for whatever reason, the President or Premier felt obliged to launch a nuclear attack, he would have promised, under the pact, first to round up the fifty children and shoot them, personally, with his own hand. Then—after he had done himself what he was causing to have done in the enemy country by machines, he could push the button. Mr. Ferry's idea is that it is harder to kill children when you can watch them die than it is to kill them at long distance by remote control. He has offered several magazines the opportunity to publish his plea, but they say it is too "stark." I suppose they mean that it is unpleasant to think about.

Mr. Ferry's invention is intended to personalize the act of initiating a mechanized war. We need inventions for spreading the personality of war beyond the White House and the Kremlin. I suspect the civil defense program turned out inadvertently to be such an invention—it fell to pieces because it reminded everyone war could happen to him, in his own backyard. The effect was reversed when the Cuban crisis was in full swing. Then, the power of Presidents and Premiers to create an instant nuclear danger became clear and present. All of us discovered that a war with missiles and other gadgets could be launched without our leaders bothering even to stir us up in preparation for the crisis, let alone asking us whether we wanted to die. Since we had no way to stop our leaders, it suddenly became urgent to find a place to hide from them. Just as suddenly, the crisis past, we wanted to return the extra canned food we had bought in our frenzy for personal security.

We are not going to make peace unless we understand what war will do to us, personally; and even then, I suspect, the danger to ourselves will have to be urgent and obvious before we will turn aside from our daily affairs. The problem here for peace-mongers is that panic and thought are separated by hope, and unless we can make the threat of war real without scaring people into panic, we will produce the wrong results.

There is another human trait that slows the turn toward peace. It is our quickness in getting used to our conditions. People, we like to remind each other, can live under the most varied circumstances. Men who never walked two miles or fired a gun become foot-soldiers in a few weeks. Delicate and aristocratic ladies survive long ordeals in lifeboats. Refugees, just out of concentration camps, start demanding higher salaries and fringe benefits within six weeks.

We are very used to war. We have always had it; we have put up with it as a normal part of our lives, though it has become more and more remote from our individual activities. We Americans have been going to war on the average of every twenty-three years since the country overthrew its king.

War is familiar. Starvation is familiar in India. Death is familiar on the battlefield. The nuclear deterrent is familiar, along with the bases in Turkey and Italy and England. It is only when something changes that we notice it; it is only when the regular course of our lives is interrupted that we are open to the possibility of rearranging it. It is only a crisis, like Cuba, that gives us, for a little while, the chance of moving the world a little further from—or closer to—the outbreak of war.

Suffering ceases to be suffering when it persists; what is new is noticed; what is constant is ignored. By easy and acceptable increments we have added to our dangers and our powers, until both are beyond comprehension or control.

If these allegations about human behavior are valid, they argue for the self-conscious use of crisis. A crisis, in human terms, is an occasion when events are felt to be getting out of control. It is the perception of their uncontrollability that brings the events to our attention; the anxiety brought on by loss of control leads to a willingness to reassess our wants and needs. Without that reassessment, there is no hope of change. But with anxiety, the chances of reasonable change are diminished, because fear as often leads to foolishness as to intelligence.

I have been helped in my understanding of these problems of national emotions and human learning by a recent letter from a northern California listener, William Mathes. Mr. Mathes said that the best way, the humane and liberating way, to achieve peace is to relieve the anxieties that feed the terrifying national programs of weapons and supporting armies. We can relieve these anxieties by transforming them into anxieties-with-an-object, demonstrating what in fact makes us fearful as individuals and as a society. He says that we are anxious both because of really fearsome things and events; and also from imaginary and irrational causes. "Neither a society nor an individual will 'see' the objects of anxiety unless they are supported by some idea of love, a hint that love is a real possibility for them." But, he adds, "The fact that real love is a very rare emotion does not encourage hopes for rapid sights and changes."

Having doubted that individual insight and development can proceed quickly enough, Mr. Mathes then writes a startling paragraph. I quote it at length:

> There may be another way, a complementary way. If not by love, then perhaps we will come to "see" by "the reality of lesser threats." This seems to me to be in operation now more than changes supported by love. Simply, this is a coming into awareness that desensitization (our ability to ignore the facts about our weapons and our dangers) is a greater threat than the things we fear . . . This is a "cold turkey" confrontation, but if the mass and individual nervous systems are strong enough, the terror will, this way, work for us. I think that there are important primordial mechanisms in individuals that "take over" when a threat to survival is clear and obvious. When psychological threats become as clear as the threat of a charging mastodon, when nuclear bombs are as clearly deadly as a leaping sabre-toothed tiger; then man is liberated from many inhibitions and acts to survive. The trick is to make new threats obvious to old nervous systems . . .

"The single most important thing anyone can do," says Mr. Mathes, "is to point out, shout, illustrate, define, underline the rational and irrational threats manipulating mankind. Nuclear war must be seen as the same thing as personal annihilation. We will have to see that now for the first time: war = death. We will have to see the mastodon charging."

I believe William Mathes is correct. Our marvelous capacities to adapt ourselves quickly to our environments will now kill us rather than preserve us. Our ability to suppress facts that make us uncomfortable to know, to deny attention to information that upsets us, will keep us from the work our present danger demands. If this analysis is correct, those of us who want to move the world toward peace must accomplish two difficult tasks at once: we have to keep the crises boiling, and show the promise of relief. We have to make clear the reality of the threats, and the hope of safety. We have to fly the banners of love and danger from the same staff, for danger gets us moving, and love shows us the way.

HALLOCK HOFFMAN

Santa Barbara, Calif.

REVIEW
LAMPOONING ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGY

IRREPRESSIBLE publisher Lyle Stuart continues to support fun-making at the expense of professional presumption by issuing *The Third Eye of America*, by Boyd Boylan and Rex Lode (1963). Boylan and Lode are zany satirists who, from the eminence of an imaginary sociological institution, show the reader how to say nothing in a great many words. The "Acknowledgements" portion of the preface declares:

> We must give thanks to the 18,000 social scientists now at work at the Furstlowe Institute in Cincinnati for the totality of their contribution to the American scene. Unfortunately their numbers preclude individual acknowledgement. We can only re-express our concern for the grand work being carried out there and pay homage to Furstlowe founder Dr. Herbert Furstlowe, the father of the social sciences in America, who tragically passed on in 1916.

A chapter purporting to discuss the relationship of philosophy to the industrial revolution concludes:

> The staff of the Furstlowe Institute, constantly attuned, as it were, to the social milieu, launched an exhaustive study of the plight of the white-collar worker. A committee was set up with a grant of $200,000 from the Buns R. Robertshaw Foundation and Dr. Rhomber Fitch was called in to head up its operations. Polls and questionnaires were circulated; field surveys and personal interviews were held; and work was begun on a socially oriented chronology and topology of the entire labor picture.
>
> That the Committee's work was taking a unique direction soon became apparent with the publication of Dr. Fitch's first monograph in 1953. Fitch took a new slant; for him the problem was not so much centered on the work week itself, but upon the nonwork portion of the week—this Fitch called "free time," an element which was to become increasingly important in the dynamics of our society. Fitch made a brilliant theoretical contribution in extending Xanthate's earlier notion that the basic unit of life is the day. To Fitch the primary unit of the life/time axis was the *week.* He implemented his thesis with the statement that "the week as a whole, with its massive and complex activities in continuous flux, might be looked upon as a period of great energy transformation." He summed up the Committee's findings with the observation that most white collar workers considered their work week a total waste. By applying Gurney's Choice to this data, he saw that a condition of negative energy flow was in effect. Since such a state cannot long be tolerated on a total societal level, Fitch concluded that this negative characteristic must be reversed. Not only on theoretical grounds was this necessary; humanitarian and eugenic considerations made it imperative to restore the interior dynamics of our society to a positive polarity.
>
> It was Dr. Rasper Papsjon who pointed the way to a solution. In his book *Some reflections on the Backwaters of Civilization,* Papsjon examined the concept of laziness. He defined laziness as a generative functional capacity and went on to say: "There are no longer any great lazy people. *Concomitantly there are no longer any great people."*
>
> Dr. Fitch concluded that societal value judgments on the quality of laziness must be revised and offered the following principles :'
>
> 1. Man must make better use of his time.
> 2. Man must learn and apply the philosophy of laziness.
> 3. Achievement of these goals will deliver us from our crisis.

Particularly effective is a parody on numerous representations of "intelligence" and "personality" tests. Addendum No. 3 in *The Third Eye* presents research sponsored by the "Furstlowe Institute," and describes something called the "Missouri Intelligence Test, 50-Question—Yes-No—12-Minute." Following are questions representative of the "depth perception" of the MIT research team:

1. Are you influenced by your mate at night?
2. Are you still troubled with your behavior in the morning?
3. Do you know what you are saying?
4. Do you think you are someone?
5. Do you sometimes think you are someone else?
6. Would you rather be a furry animal?
7. Are you influenced by your feet?
8. Are you still being followed?

9. Do thoughts still bother you?

10. Do you still practice lip throwing in front of a mirror?

11. Do you purposely sit on your hands?

12. Do you have blank storms?

13. Have you ever sworn while arranging flowers in your hair?

14. Do you have difficulty in getting along with running water?

15. Do you still have trouble noticing your ears?

16. Do you bite yourself while arranging flowers in your hair?

17. Are you honest when you get dressed in the closet?

18. Do you feel all right now?

The value of such questions should be at once apparent, but for the sake of men and women who do *not* work for the Furstlowe Institute, the authors explain:

> This test, devised in 1843 by Drs. Charnley McPremminger and Vold Stuckey (who also pioneered the Stuckey Stick Measurement Theorems), remains today the most outstanding 12-minute personality examination in the entire field of psychological evaluation. Although the nature and wording of 65 per cent of the questions are somewhat diffuse, the intent and careful couching of the questions make the test all the more imposing. The test, when completed, is put through the ingenious "Stuckey Spectrograph," a machine that can detect the slightest nuances and shades of personality traits and arrive at a psychic portrait that is fully accurate. This test and over 150 like it (some take as long as five days to complete) have been developed with great success by the people in Missouri. Today, 88 per cent of America's major corporations employ the MIT as the initial grounds for accepting or rejecting a prospective job applicant. Student counselors, employment agencies, personnel managers, and university proctors throughout the nation would be at a loss without their MIT—indeed it is America's most verified and widely used Intelligence Test.

The Third Eye of America does not always rise to brilliance in its humor, but it is funny enough.

Actually, ridiculing the closed-circuit jargon often employed in academic specialties is a blow for freedom. John Chamberland seems to be of the same mind. He recently noted with pleasure the appearance of a magazine, *Interaction: Social Science and the Community*, the purpose of which is "to translate the heavily jargonized stuff put out by sociologists, educationists and other practitioners of academic 'disciplines' into plain English." Chamberland writes:

> Dr. Schwartz hasn't yet told us anything about his hopes for his magazine, but before he really goes ahead with the project he should consult the experience of the late Columbia University sociologist, C. Wright Mills. Undertaking to translate the books written by his colleagues, Dr. Mills found that it usually took a single sentence to sum up 25 pages of average sociological prose, or "soc-speak." And the single sentence invariably turned out to be a cliché.
>
> Unless Dr. Schwartz can produce a miracle we can predict a vast imbalance in his magazine. The papers he picks for "translation" will be impenetrable to the normal intelligence. Presumably they will occupy nine-tenths of the available editorial space. . . .
>
> What will Dr. Schwartz be able to make of the sort of stuff that gets accepted for Ph.D. dissertations in the education departments of American universities? James Koerner, who undertook a study of teacher education for the Relm Foundation of Ann Arbor, Mich., prints a list of these dissertations in his recent *The Miseducation of American Teachers*, published by Houghton Mifflin of Boston. Here are some of his titles:
>
> "The Relative Effect of Mental Practice and Physical Practice on Learning the Tennis Forehand and Backhand Drives."
>
> "An Experimental Study of the Effect of Soothing Background Music on Observed Behavior Indicating Tension of Third Grade Pupils."
>
> "The Relationship Between Personality Traits and Basic Skill in Typewriting."
>
> "A Study of Little League Baseball and its Educational Implications."

COMMENTARY
THE CAPACITY TO SEE

WE have a twofold purpose in publishing this week's lead article by Hallock Hoffman. The excellence of the material is sufficient reason, of course, for giving "The Uses of Crisis" further circulation. The other reason is that a writer who has lately become a regular MANAS contributor—and a review editor "at large"—first called our attention to this broadcast by quoting it in his second MANAS article, "To See or Not To See?" (MANAS, Aug. 7, 1963). Later contributions by Mr. Mathes ("Are We All Hibakusha?", Sept. 11, and "Whosoever Shall Lose his Life," Oct. 9) are in some sense continuations of the same inquiry, having to do with the impact of death; and what it may mean for both the dead and the living.

It is natural for those who are made aghast by the prospect of nuclear war to be drawn to questions about death. With all this killing to be reckoned with, death becomes an important subject. And while it may be said that the pollyanna aspects of Western optimism have led men to ignore death as something "unpleasant," it is even more to the point to notice that the logistic approach to nuclear killing by the million establishes another sort of indifference, making it inevitable that perceptive members of our society should cry out, *Do you realize what you may do?* To say, with Lewis Mumford, *Gentlemen, You Are Mad!*

"We are not," says Mr. Hoffman, "going to make peace unless we understand what war will do to us, personally; and even then, I suspect, the danger to ourselves will have to be urgent and obvious."

Which is a way of saying, or asking, "Do you really taste the depths of this evil, now almost casually contemplated in intellectual terms?"

But why, someone on the sidelines may wonder, does this insensibility to evil seem so widespread? Why are there not more Lewis Mumfords? Why are the men demanding that there be no war so few?

The answer comes: Because there is an equal insensibility to good. Men cannot understand or measure this evil without a realizing sense of what they themselves may become by making war. What do the statisticians of nuclear hazard talk about when they examine the prospects of recovery from nuclear destruction? They talk about the restoration of the Gross National Product. They talk about the *economic* measures of the Good Life.

Knowing little of good, these men are not affrighted by evil. So, when we talk of preventing war, of turning away from war and death, we need also to look at the question of life and meaning from a higher ground.

Unquestionably, the men who argue and stand out for peace do so from a higher ground. How else can they be differentiated from the rest? Yet the articulation of this stance seldom appears in more than intuitive hints. Let us have more explicit accounts of the rich life which sees and recognizes evil by its appalling contrast with the good—the good whose substance and texture is itself a full and sufficient indictment of the evil of war.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
COUNSEL FROM A COLLEGE PSYCHIATRIST

ROBERT E. NIXON'S *The Art of Growing* (Random House, 1962) applies the concept of "psychological age" to transitions between childhood and adulthood. Dr. Nixon has served as psychiatrist and psychological counselor at Vassar College for eleven years, and it is from this vantage point that he looks at the problems of emotional growth. In his introduction, Dr. Nixon distinguishes between chronological age and psychic age:

> Psychological maturity is a way of living one's life. Possession of a clear, objective, and undistorted view of oneself is necessary to psychological maturity, but by itself it is not enough. Possession of an equally clear, objective, and undistorted view of the world one lives in is also necessary, but by itself it is not enough, either; and the two together, moreover, are still not sufficient to constitute psychological maturity. A life lived meaningfully in the presence of, and with reference to, these two views is what constitutes psychological maturity. More words have been written in description of what psychological maturity is *not* than in definition of what it *is*. All authorities agree, however, at least by implication, on these three elements: knowledge of self, knowledge of one's setting, and some sort of active living that makes sense in the framework provided by that knowledge.

A table suggesting the various stages and phases of human growth makes the following divisions: psychical, first two years; emotional, third to sixth year; social, sixth to twelfth; sexual, twelfth through fourteenth years; cognitive, fifteenth through eighteenth years. It is the cognitive phase with which Dr. Nixon is primarily concerned:

> Just what constitutes the psychological design of youth? Thanks again to the college students I have worked with during these years, I have come to believe that the psychological capability characteristic of the years of youth is the *cognitive* capacity—the capacity for knowing oneself and one's setting in an objective and detached fashion. This capacity appears to reach its maturity two or three years after puberty—at, say, fourteen to sixteen. Once it has developed, the young person is able to "see" or know himself and his world. The youth who attempts to utilize only that aspect of it which has to do with knowing his setting, is either a conformer or a rebel. The first is normal, even though he belongs to a minority, and the others are less-than-normal, despite their inclusion in the majority.
>
> Some confusion may attend my use of two interlocking classifications: normal versus less-than-normal, growers versus rebels and conformers. I feel bound to introduce both classifications, since each plays its own specific and important part in my thesis. The first tells us where we stand in theoretical terms, and allows for optimism concerning the progress of young people toward the normal: and the second suggests the nature of the main identifying characteristics that occur in "real" life. In using the second classification I do not mean to imply that if the label fits, its possessor is stuck with it. Quite the contrary: I am discussing the achievement of psychological normality, a goal I hold to be attainable, and any starting place is a good one. Rebels and conformers can become growers. Neither need remain static.

Dr. Nixon obviously identifies with the point of view of A. H. Maslow, who has said that we must develop a radically different conception of "psychological normality": "We have come closer to identifying it [the normal] with the highest excellence of which we are capable. . . . This ideal is not an unattainable goal set out far ahead of us; rather it is actually within us, existent but hidden, as potentiality rather than as actuality." Dr. Nixon is also at one with the "self psychologists"—Rogers, Moustakas, Maslow, etc.—in insisting that what a human being is growing from is far less important than what he is growing toward:

> The test of youth will be in what *they* teach their children. This revolution is not only with us, it gives every indication of gaining more and more momentum, and its end is not yet in sight. We may well be facing many generations each of which will find it extremely difficult to communicate with its predecessors and its progeny. Perhaps this is the time to begin learning to live with such a radically new development.

It is his parents' fault that the youth is the way he is, but it is *his* fault if he stays that way. As he rectifies the teaching offered by his parents he will learn something about himself. If he learns enough about man in general he will come to know his own needs, his capacities, his limitations, his relationship to his changing world. In searching for his own identity he prepares himself for a mature life, and at the same time he carries forward the technological-intellectual-moral revolution that is the hallmark of his own moment in history. At one and the same time, his quest for the self is his own intimate personal affair and his destiny in fate.

A chapter on "The Cultural Matrix" indicates the author's conviction that freedom is a prerequisite for growth:

The child cannot be protected from the effort of his growth and the result of attempting to protect him is, in effect, to pass on to him the errors and the misconceptions of his father and his father's father. Society, holding to the Protestant ethic, provides a laboratory for its young experimenters, a laboratory with certain rules and regulations arising from, and dependent upon, that ethic. The more closely they are adhered to, the less the ethic changes with changing times, the more the ethic becomes self-perpetuating. It is commonly said that the family "holds up" society: in this sense, it would perhaps be more accurate to say that the family "holds *back"* society. The cost of such perpetuation is best measured in terms of forsaken opportunity, of inhibited freedom, of unachieved growth. But when a young person enters the cognitive stage, he has it in his own hands to grow as he will, to undo what has inadvertently been done *to* him in the past in the mistaken impression that it was being done *for* him.

The key to the failings of the Protestant ethic, in Nixon's opinion, lies in its reliance upon guilt-feelings:

As a technique for controlling the growing child the use of guilt is probably unsurpassed. Once the sense of guilt has been internalized it works efficiently, automatically, and economically, even in the absence of the authorities who established the definitions of right and wrong. And the convenience to the child of such a mode of control should not be overlooked. It allows him to learn, relatively quickly, those areas in which he will not be able to spend much of his time or energy, it tends to minimize his having to go through a lengthy period of repeating the same error and being punished for it, and it protects his time for investment in other growth activities.

But despite its obvious efficacy, guilt as a controlling mechanism is subject to two grave faults. First, we know how to teach it to the child who is dependent enough upon adult judgment to need it, but we do not know as much about how to help the no longer so dependent youth to unlearn it or to utilize it for growth. The parental or societal concept of right and wrong is generally good enough for the growing child; but it is not usually good enough for the newly-arrived adult who has it within his own powers to establish a new order of right and wrong, fitting more precisely the conditions of the world of his adulthood. Particularly during times of rapid change, the inability of the new generation to loosen its grip upon the world view of the old makes for a rapidly growing cultural lag between world view and reality. It is at least conceivable that a society in which this happened could find itself overwhelmed by an external reality it simply failed to see. Secondly, guilt as a controlling mechanism is dependent upon the ability of the authorities who define right and wrong to sense reality.

The Art of Growing is addressed particularly to self-searching university students, their teachers, counselors, and parents. The philosophical dimensions of Dr. Nixon's thought are illustrated by the following:

Psychological maturity begins when a person knows who and what he *really* is, as opposed to what he is "supposed" to be. The external maturer is still trying to puzzle out his own identity at sixty-five; the conformer is satisfied to act out what he is supposed to be, and the rebel to refute it. But the psychologically mature person knows who he is at twenty-five, he knows who he is at forty-five, and he still knows who he is at seventy-five. He has a sense of sameness, of continuity, of basic identity, which remains constant despite the passage of time, the variety of experience, the growing accumulation of wisdom. The perennial maturer has, for his central core, the eternal question, "Who am I?" and his life is dedicated to a never-finished search for the answer.

FRONTIERS

Undiscovered Country

ART is a phenomenon of self-consciousness. It is the means by which an intelligence which is aware of its existence in a world filled with other intelligences speaks to itself about the multi-faceted reality of the experience of being. Art is not life, but a superimposed recording of human awareness of life; yet from the fact of being recorded, this awareness adds another universe to the universe of life—the universe of consciousness, which now has its own space, time, and causality. By this means, art becomes as diverse as the possibilities of consciousness. That is, whatever of conscious experience can be in some manner objectified in a record, can be the subject of art.

Consciousness is first private and individual, but through communication it becomes public and social. As a result, it is possible to speak of the consciousness of an "age" or a particular culture. And so we have, in this awareness of the common fruits of awareness, such expressions as the "history of art." Changes in attitude concerning what is important to record about ourselves, the world, and our modes of awareness produce changes in the form and content of the arts. Ortega y Gasset has a useful passage on this point:

> A traditional painter painting a portrait claims to have got hold of the real person when, in truth and at best, he has set down on the canvas a schematic selection, arbitrarily decided on by his mind, from the innumerable traits that make a living person. What if the painter changed his mind and decided to paint not the real person but his own idea, his pattern, of the person? Indeed, in that case the portrait would be the truth and nothing but the truth, and failure would no longer be inevitable. In foregoing reality the painting becomes what it authentically is: an image, an unreality.
>
> Expressionism, cubism, etc., are—in varying degree—attempts at executing this decision. From painting things, the painter has turned to painting ideas. He shuts his eyes to the outer world and concentrates upon the subjective images in his own mind.

How shall we distinguish a work of art from other works which originate in the self-consciousness of a man? A work of art is an end in itself. It is not a step in a calculated series of acts leading to some other end. The techniques and means of art are endlessly employed in works which are not artistic statements—the modern painter, Mondrian, for example, is said to have had an immeasurable influence on advertising layout and on landscape architecture—and such facts complicate the subject enormously, since a kind of experience of art results from the assimilation by technology of certain artistic insights, but this is really another question, part of the sociology of art.

Ortega says that the traditional painter sought to give the viewer of his work some sense of the "lived" reality of what is portrayed:

> The primal aspect of an apple is that in which I see it when I am about to eat it. All its other possible forms—when it appears, for instance, in a Baroque ornament, or on a still life of Cézanne's, or in the eternal metaphor of a girl's apple cheeks—preserve more or less that original aspect. . . . That is to say, in the scale of realities "lived" reality holds a peculiar primacy which compels us to regard it as "the" reality. Instead of "lived" reality we may say "human" reality. . . . In other words, the human point of view is that in which we "live" situations, persons, things. And, vice versa, realities—a woman, a countryside, an event—are human when they present the aspect in which they are usually "lived."

Turning to ideas as a class of the realities in human experience, Ortega continues:

> We use our ideas in a "human" way when we employ them for thinking things. Thinking of Napoleon, for example, we are normally concerned with the great man of that name. A psychologist, on the other hand, adopts an unusual, "inhuman', attitude when he forgets about Napoleon and, prying into his own mind, tries to analyze his idea of Napoleon as such idea. His perspective is the opposite of that prevailing in spontaneous life. The idea, instead of functioning as the means to think an object with, is itself made the object and the aim of thinking. . . . Perception of "lived" reality and perception of artistic form . . . are essentially

incompatible because they call for a different adjustment of our perceptive apparatus.

A little later in this essay *(The Dehumanization of Art* and *Notes* on *the Novel*, Princeton University Press, 1948), Ortega sets the major problem:

> It is not an exaggeration to assert that modern paintings and sculptures betray a real loathing of living forms or forms of living beings. The phenomenon becomes particularly clear if the art of these last years is compared with that sublime hour when painting and sculpture emerge from Gothic discipline as from a nightmare and bring forth the abundant, world-wide harvest of the Renaissance. Brush and chisel delight in rendering the exuberant forms of the model—man, animal, or plant. All bodies are welcome, if only life with its dynamic power is felt to throb in them. And from paintings and sculptures organic form flows over into ornament. It is the epoch of the cornucopias whose torrential fecundity threatens to flood all space with round, ripe fruits.
>
> Why is it that the round and soft forms of living bodies are repulsive to the present-day artist? Why does he replace them with geometric patterns? For with all the blunders and all the sleights of hand of cubism, the fact remains that for some time we have been well pleased with a language of pure Euclidian patterns.
>
> The phenomenon becomes more complex when we remember that crazes of this kind have periodically recurred in history. Even in the evolution of prehistoric art we observe that artistic sensibility begins with seeking the living form and then drops it, as though affrighted and nauseated, and resorts to abstract signs, the last residues of cosmic or animal forms. The serpent is stylized into the meander, the sun into the swastica. At times, this disgust at living forms flares up and produces public conflicts. The revolt against the images of Oriental Christianism, the Semitic law forbidding representation of animals—an attitude opposite to the instinct of those people who decorated the cave of Altamira—doubtless originate not only in a religious feeling but also in an aesthetic sensibility whose subsequent influence on Byzantine art is clearly discernible.
>
> A thorough investigation of such eruptions of iconoclasm in religion and art would be of high interest. Modern art is obviously actuated by one of these curious iconoclastic urges.

It is some comfort to realize that the departure of art from the familiar images of "lived" reality has happened before, and that it represents, not simply a stubborn aberration on the part of one generation of artists, but the response of artistic self-consciousness to a deep and somewhat sudden alteration in human feelings about "reality."

What were the origins of this alteration? An obvious factor was the sense of confinement felt by artists in conventional ideas of "art." If a man who feels the urge to report on his impressions of experience discovers that many of his contemporaries are more interested in doing "what is expected" of them than in reacting to the world as they really see it, he tends to revolt. He wants, not to reassure, but to discover. He wants to speak with a living voice, not with the hollow resonance of echoes. A moral element affects his revolt when it becomes apparent that, as a social force, conformity is more powerful than originality, romance more pleasing than reality. And what is now "reality"? For him, it is the disclosure of the immediate impact of the world about him, unfiltered by academic restrictions, uncompromised by preconceptions. These obstacles stir in him a raw determination.

Added to this personal reaction may be the artist's diagnostic sense of the sickness of his culture and his world. He may say to himself, "What pleases these people cannot please me. What they see or claim to see as real, cannot be reality or truth." And so he decides to go back to the heart of things in immediate perception. He will paint not this man or that man, but *Man.* Or, since man is everywhere vile, the artist will seek regeneration in the hidden rhythms of the natural world, or in those abstractions of universal being which represent the pulse of a trans-human reality and good. He will seek these things in himself, in the spontaneous responses of his psychic organization, or, following some theory of which

he approves, according to a cipher which reports on the meaning behind appearances.

In epochs when there is available a generally accepted vocabulary of meaning, such as was created by the Buddhist reform in Eastern religion, the artist finds little difficulty in communicating with others. In effect, he says, "There is a reality not yet widely 'lived' by man, but which ought to be sought." He becomes a kind of preacher who makes visual declarations of the way unseen reality works. He paints or sings or sculpts within a common outlook and enriches its vocabulary until, finally, the life of personal discovery is gone from these images and they turn into galleries of hearsay, icons of orthodoxy. It is then that great works of art of the past become enigmatic mysteries, respected, but no longer understood.

In our age, however, there is no common vocabulary. We have had the revolt, but not the regeneration to some new high noon of cultural sharing in the reborn truth. Our art is as yet the diversely embodied symptom of search.

One might say also, perhaps in extenuation, that the modern artist senses in the deeps of his being that the truth formally embodied in a familiar vocabulary, however rich in versatile idioms, is at the outset marked by the indicia of mortality. He feels pressed by the ultimate revolution against *any* limiting symbolism, as though a submission to even the best conventions will snuff out the candle of individual sight. He sets himself an impossible task, yet will be satisfied with nothing less.

There are compromises, of course. A painter may throw pigment at canvas from across the room, or drop it from a ladder ten feet high. Perhaps, he thinks, a divine accident will do what I can never accomplish. He may wait for the genie to jog his elbow or the wind to spatter color as nature in that instant happens to intend. Through him, the universe paints itself.

Will there be "traditional painters" ever again? Some day, perhaps, there will be an intuitive consensus among artists, but it is difficult to imagine any serious return to a common convention. Individuality and the riches of the inner life are becoming substances in the real being of the artist. The world of consciousness has a prior reality, now. What is needed is rather a broadening of the flow of this awareness, so that what the modern artist is trying to do may become better understood. This, of course, requires a more general participation in the arts. Not by reading and thinking, but by drawing and painting, will the people who are puzzled by "modern art" come to recognize what the artists of today are about. Something of this idea is expressed by Lawren Harris, a Canadian painter, in reflections recently reprinted in a catalog issued by the National Gallery of Canada. After a trip to the Canadian arctic, Harris wrote:

> Through our own creative experience we came to know that the real tradition in art is not housed only in museums and art galleries and in great works of art; it is innate in us and can be galvanized into activity by the power of creative endeavor in our own day, and in our own country, by our own creative individuals in the arts. We also came to realize that we in Canada cannot truly understand the great cultures of the past and of other peoples until we ourselves commence our own creative life in the arts. Until we do so we are looking at these from the outside. When, however, we begin to adjust and to focus our own seeing through our own creative activity and conviction, we are working from the inside, with the creative spirit itself; then the arts of the past and of other peoples become immediate, alive, and luminous to us.

Here is a clue for the restoration of the arts in our time, and for the restoration of art in the life of every individual. Understanding of art is for those who practice it. Tolstoy and Blake were utopian prophets, not critics to be condemned for a "narrow" view.

Meanwhile, we may borrow from Mr. Harris a helpful account of the several directions of development of abstract or non-representational art. His *Disquisition on Abstract Painting* (Toronto: Rous & Mann, 1954) has the following explanation:

There are four main kinds of abstract painting. The first is when the painting is abstracted from nature. That has been going on in part for a long time. Most of the great artists of the past had looked beyond the appearance and "abstracted"—that is, they extricated from the surface plenitude of nature its essential forms in order to give their works a basic aesthetic underpinning, and thus a greater coherence and unified force of expression. They were at the same time, however, dedicated to a recognizeable representation of the world we see. Modern abstract artists, however, take a motive from nature and convert it into an expressive organization which may be far removed from the actual scene. It may emphasize the drama, the spirit of the scene or not, depending upon whether the scene suggests this or suggests an aesthetic essay in fine and moving relationships alone. They have largely abandoned descriptive representation, not because they cannot do it, but because they wish to be free of its limitations in order to create a more suggestive and evocative art in its own right. This is just as natural a procedure to them as it was for the old masters to find the essential forms in nature and use these as the structural basis of their paintings.

The second kind of abstract painting is non-objective in that it has no relation to anything seen in nature. It does, however, contain an idea, a meaning, a message. This meaning, idea or message dictates the form, the colors, the aesthetic structure and all the relationships in the painting, the purpose being to embody the idea as a living experience in a vital, plastic creation.

The third kind of abstract painting is simply a fine organization of lines, colors, forms and spaces independent of anything seen in nature and independent of any specific idea or message. . . .

The fourth and most recent kind of abstract painting is called abstract expressionism and today engages the creative attention of many modern artists. It has increased the range of possible subjects in art beyond anything known before. This came about by a process of creative evolution such as has occurred in every development in the arts. First Cézanne in his paintings and the cubists gave glimpses of the way into the realm of abstract art. Then followed the semi-geometrical and non-objective painters whose work achieved a much wider vision of the new possibilities. Today the vision of the creative artists has expanded into the inexhaustible experiences of the new visual realm.

The creative artist in every age has always made the style or styles of art of his day and place. Every style of course is a limitation. But the recent expansion of abstract painting into the realm of abstract expressionism has inevitably led the artists to employ many different styles and invent new ones to accommodate the great increase in expressive and vital visual ideas. In other words, abstract expressionism is not a style like impressionism, cubism, magic realism or geometrical abstract painting. It is a new realm in which the imagination is released into an illimitable range of new subjects and new visions of old subjects and has already created a number of new styles and will create many more.

The paintings of the abstract expressionists are not paintings abstracted from nature, though many of them are derived from nature. They are completely new creations of experiences of nature, of ideas given life by pictorial means, of a range of subtle perceptions and new emotional structures created and clarified by visual means. Most of these were unknown to us a few decades ago, but will become increasingly familiar and welcome to wide-awake individuals aware that the art of painting has entered a new realm of the human imagination as significant as any in the past.

"Abstract painting," according to Mr. Harris, "is a creative interplay between the conscious and unconscious with the conscious mind making all the final decisions and in control throughout." This is a statement which recalls a posthumously published declaration by Carl Jung: "Day after day, we live far beyond the bounds of our consciousness; without our knowledge, the life of the unconscious is also going on within us. . . . the more of the unconscious and the more of myth we are capable of making conscious, the more of life we integrate."

It seems clear that the subjective explorations of modern art and the determined introspection of the new psychology are closely allied trends in the present development of man. Not politics, but psychology and the arts may become the means of recovering human individuality. For art, as W. H. Auden has said, "is concerned with *singular persons,"* and the self-study of introspection brings *individual* realization. The realities

uncovered by these means are not likely to be washed away by slogans used to determine the conduct of human herds. This is not to overlook the fact that the inner being of most of us is still undiscovered country, and that along with the inspirations of self-knowledge come the froth of emotional enthusiasm and an inordinate amount of cultist nonsense. The psyche is not only a source of contact with the rhythms of universal life and nature; it too has its slum areas, its side-shows and its Luna Parks.

These hazards, however, are always with us, and while we shall have to make our way in these regions without the familiar norms of convention and tradition, there remain to guide all such investigators the deep and positive hungers of the heart. The present may be an age of extreme confusion, but it is also an age of spiritual longing. Not only desperation and disillusionment and downright boredom are behind the revolution in the arts and in psychology. There is also the renewed will to know, to enter into life and to understand. This motive is its own true guide, giving a protection not vouchsafed to poorer purposes.