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SCHOLAR, POET, PROPHET

> The great heresy of the modern world is that it ceased to worship the Lords of Life, who made the rivers flow, caused the animals to mate, and brought forth the yearly miracle of vegetation. . . . It prostrated itself, on the contrary, before the dwarfs, with their mechanical ingenuity, and the giants, with their imbecile power. Today our lives are perpetually menaced by these "busy people"; we are surrounded by their machines and for worship, we turn their prayer wheels of red tape.
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> —LEWIS MUMFORD, *Sticks and Stones*

IT is a bit more than forty years now since Lewis Mumford began his impassioned philippics against the technological obsessions of Western man. The quotation above, taken from an early Mumford study of American architecture and civilization, dates from 1924 Since that youthful effort Mumford's scope has broadened—from American architecture to world culture generally—and his vision has grown more complex and more somber. But the issue under discussion has always remained the same: how are we to insure that human values remain at all points paramount to the technical capers of the dwarfs and the giants? For Mumford, the only legitimate function of a machine, a building, a city, a social system is that it should facilitate the expansion of the total personality, body, mind, and soul. The question he has committed himself to posing ever more forcefully is never "how much, how fast, how big?"; but rather "how conducive to the good life?"—a question which, he insists, takes us beyond economic necessity into the province of art, philosophy, and religion.

Insofar as his studies of technology have fronted on issues of social justice, Mumford can be set down as a man of the Left. But his critique of the perversions of capitalist industrialism has always gone deeper than conventional left-wing analysis, exploring realms where socialist doctrine tends to become fogbound, if not downright doltish. At the root of Mumford's thought lies, not sociology, but a profoundly æsthetic sensitivity for the psycho-biology of man and his works. So where traditional left-wing criticism leads us, inevitably, stolidly, to the finality of class interest, Mumford will press the analysis further—into those layers of life that undercut ideologies and institutional forms: to anthropology for the nuances of a mythic or ritual motif, into psychoanalysis for the libidinal drive or the controlling archetype, into art and literature for a hint of what he has called "the superorganic." This is the mind of an artist, perhaps more so than the mind of a scholar: it loiters over form and symbol and deals in the affairs of man with that sense of the divine which has become an impossible embarrassment for our grimly secularized intelligentsia. Behind Mumford there stands, not Marx, but Emerson, Freud, Jung, Kropotkin—and perhaps most significantly the English biologist and city planner Patrick Geddes, the mentor who was responsible for radically reformulating the young Mumford's understanding of technology. Mumford has never failed to pay homage to Geddes in every one of his books—and, indeed, it was after Geddes that he named the son he was to lose in World War II. (The moving book *Green Memories* [1947] tells the brief story of Geddes Mumford's life.)

Critics tend to make much of the fact that Mumford identifies himself as a "generalist" (though he could justifiably identify himself as at least three different kinds of specialist)—usually with the niggling intention of denigrating his judgment in one or another of the so-called "fields of study" his thinking tends to range across. True enough: a Mumford book—and *The Myth of the Machine* is no exception—will ordinarily draw freely upon anthropology, psychology, biology, literature, history, art criticism, politics,

philosophy . . . No doubt, for the sake of professional convention, Mumford could conjure up the label of a specialization that corralled this body of material: say, the Human Ecology of Industrial Society . . .? (He himself describes his intellectual purpose in *Technics and Civilization* [1934] as that of placing "technical development within the setting of a more general social ecology." But, in fact, the allegation of amateurish trespassing such critics raise is illegitimate. Deep minds don't study "fields" or "disciplines"; they study problems—and they follow wherever the problems lead. Disciplinary lines of demarcation are, after all, more a matter of academic politics than intellectual reality.

The problem Mumford has been pursuing for the past generation is the Frankensteinian dilemma: how does it come about that man has created, out of his own cunning and aspiration, a culture that now bids fair to crush him out of existence?

The answer Mumford offers us in *The Myth of the Machine* (Harcourt, 1967, $8.95) is that man has been victimized by a misconception of his own nature as that nature is revealed by human history. And the misconception, Mumford wisely discerns, is shared in common by most of the collectivist and capitalist ideologies who now vie for domination of the technological process. But the "history" that must be scrutinized in order to reveal this tragic falsification turns out to be, most crucially, "pre-history." More than one half of Mumford's book deals with the paleolithic and neolithic periods. This, along with the chapters on the Bronze Age empires, is the meat of the book, the final chapters, which cover the medieval and early modern period, becoming, I feel, too diffuse and hasty.

The purpose Mumford sets himself in reviewing the culture of early man is to offset the cautious tendency of many specialists to reduce the examination of precivilized life to its material artifacts. "Modern man," he tells us, "has formed a curiously distorted picture of himself by interpreting his early history in terms of his present interests in making machines and conquering nature." Such a restricted focus inevitably warps our image of man by turning him, essentially, into *homo faber,* an incipient technician wholly absorbed with the tasks of bare physical survival. Moreover, it influences us to interpret the advent of civilization as merely a quantitative elaboration of material technique. And, since *homo faber* has achieved greater scope for his technical, especially his machine-making, skill within civilized societies, we are led to regard civilization as a progressive development away from barbarian backwardness. Thus, the "myth of the machine" is that vision of man which sees him primarily as tool-maker and which then describes human development by way of an optimistically ascending line connecting eolith to computer, in this fashion subtly prejudicing us in favor of all those cultural and social forms that support unrestricted technological elaboration.

Undoubtedly this "myth" *is* the vulgar stereotype of man's development that prevails in the advanced industrial societies: it figures critically in the metaphysical undergirding of their technologically obsessed public policy. It is undeniable, too, that a great many anthropologists and archaeologists have contributed to our technocratic folklore by their austere refusal to "speculate" beyond the material evidence of their discipline. A good recent example of such professional purism would be Stuart Piggott's *Ancient Europe from the Beginnings of Agriculture to Classical Antiquity* (1967), which systematically refuses to probe for the mind behind the surviving archaeological matter. At the same time, Mumford might have made it clearer that within the last generation there has grown up a "new anthropology" (as Eric R. Wolf of the University of Michigan has called it) which has significantly challenged such narrow-gauged conservatism. Only last year the English prehistorian Grahame Clark, speaking before the American Philosophical Association, called it a "common error" to suppose "that because

archaeologists are concerned with material data, they are limited to the material aspects of culture"—though he avoided saying how "common" that error still is among his professional colleagues. In his desire to push beyond the material remnants of early man, Mumford is not without allies among the specialists—and he might have been a bit more generous in recognizing their existence.

In countering the "myth," Mumforcl asserts the thesis that

> at every stage man's inventions and transformations were less for the purpose of increasing the food supply or controlling nature than for utilizing his own immense organic resources and expressing his latest potentialities, in order to fulfill more adequately his superorganic demands and aspirations. . . . To consider man, then, as primarily a tool-using animal, is to overlook the main chapters of human history. Opposed to this petrified notion, I shall develop the view that man is preeminently a mind-making, self-mastering, and self-designing animal; and the primary locus of all his activities lies first in his own organism, and in the social organization through which it finds fuller expression.

Mumford's effort to prove this thesis is a *tour de force* of learned speculation. It is a joy to accompany him on this imaginative adventure in search of the origins of human consciousness, language, magic, ritual, art—for such are the activities of the spirit which Mumford would have us believe preoccupied early man's distinctly human energies through the more than four hundred thousand years of his evolution during which his material technology was little more than a few sticks and stones and the ability to control fire.

But how to prove this hypothesis? There seem to be five sources on which Mumford draws for support in his "disciplined speculation":

1. Imaginative reconstructions of the mental processes that may have underlain the inventions and the use of material artifacts we have recovered. This is a style of speculation at which Mumford is the undisputed master. Take, for example, his shrewd recognition of the fact that the chief neolithic crafts—weaving, modelling, pottery-making—are precisely those that modern psychiatry has hit upon as forms of "occupational therapy" especially capable of restoring emotional balance. This is the sort of insight that illuminates the emotional basis of an entire cultural epoch.

2. Extrapolations from the practice of contemporary primitives.

3. The identification of presumably prehistoric traits that one can still discover surviving into the historical period.

4. Psychoanalytical insights, often of a Jungian provenance. One might mention here that it has been one of Mumford's special projects over the past decade to raise the dream to a status of anthropological significance. This line of thought began to assume major dimensions in Mumford's *Transformations of Man* (1956).

5. Intuitive probes that are generated from Mumford's personal vision of man. That is: a good deal of Mumford's reasoning flows from the premise that there is within man's nature an irresistible need for moral purpose and aesthetic expression.

Mumford is honest enough to admit that his imaginative quest can become a "hazardous business." While he devotes an entire chapter to justifying (I think quite cogently) his use of some of these sources, I suspect he will have little luck in breaking down the inveterate skepticism of hard-nosed professionals like Professor Piggott.

The fact remains, however, that Mumford's speculation goes out toward matters that are supremely *worth* speculating about. He has his eye steadily on the important issue—which is the capacity of pre-history to reshape and enrich our conception of human nature. Those professionals who reject such "hazardous business" in favor of restricted certainties are quite simply foregoing the humanist project and reducing themselves to irrelevant technicians. The crux here is emphatically not one of methodological respectability; it is rather a philosophical and

moral choice which depends ultimately, I think, on our emotional make-up. What *is* knowledge *for?* Do we settle for an academic precision which is conveniently within our grasp—or do we, despite difficulties, reach out for an image of man which can serve as a guide for life?

Mumford, then, presents the essential task of early man as being that of exploring his own humanness. It was the non-material culture of dreams, language, ritual, and myth which occupied man in his predominant search for self-understanding At every point, it was meaning which prevailed over material prowess. Man explored his own organism (Mumford calls the process "biotechnics") and carried on an investigative love affair with his environment long before he gave more than minimal attention to tool-making. Mumford is especially sharp at drawing out how very much mesolithic and neolithic man was able to achieve in the way of physical well-being by observing closely and then working with the grain of the natural forces he perceived. This is the deeply personalist and ecological mode of existence that Mumford wants to pose as the humanly normal; this is what man grows more and more apart from as he goes about subordinating himself to the demands of machine technology.

At what point did this tragic alienation set in? Ironically, Mumford identifies the advent of highly touted civilization as the turning point. And here I think he has safely passed beyond risky speculation. For it is all too clear that the river valley kingdoms of Mesopotamia and Egypt introduced a radically different vision of life from that found among primitive men. Cosmic power-lust, compulsive regimentation under a privileged echelon of divine despots, terror, exploitation: these were the hallmarks of "civilization"—a term which Mumford insists on placing between cynical quotation marks.

How are we to account for this critical transition from neolithic statelessness to civilized authoritarianism? Mumford seems to come as close as anyone to working out this classic conundrum by emphasizing, sociologically, the predatory relationship of hunters to early agricultural communities (one is reminded of Jack's role in *The Lord of the Flies)* and, psychologically, the manipulation of our human weakness for magic by primordial priest-kings, like the rainmaker chieftains of neolithic Egypt.

> This essential coalition between royal military power and often dubious supernatural authority [he reminds us] anticipated a similar alliance between scientists and mathematical games theorists with the higher agents of government today; and was subject to similar corruptions, miscalculations, and hallucinations.

The proposition is a gloomier one than Mumford seems to realize. For if even "science" is so easily converted into a species of mumbo-jumbo, does this not suggest that men are haunted by an irrepressible need to be mystified and so cursed with an incurable vulnerability? Diderot was certain that "Enlightenment" (meaning the scientific worldview) would strangle the last king with the guts of the last priest. But kingly power seems only to have democratized its style and nationalized its rhetoric and at last to have co-opted the scientists as an improved breed of court magician. And here is Mumford, 200 years after Diderot, finally confessing that it "will always be one of the puzzles of history . . . why this 'civilized' technical complex should be regarded as an unqualified triumph."

Seen as Mumford presents it, in the total context of human development, our latest 5,000 years of history stands as a block: on balance, one continuous, only intermittently interrupted experiment in the building of ever better engineered "megamachines." Mumford's insight here is brilliant, for there is really nothing so apt as his comparison of despotic pyramid-building in the Old Kingdom with our own thermonuclear defense establishments and their space exploration adjuncts: the same mindless waste, the same grinding regimentation, the same political prestidigitation, the same suppression of human

vitality. No one who has grasped the obscene implications of a megamechanical perversion like the Rand Corporation's elaborate plans for civil defense—a vast underground pyramid to sequester all our miserable carcasses from inevitable death—can miss the parallel.

We catch the full meaning of "machine" as Mumford uses the word here in our revealing employment of terms like "political machine" or "war machine." This is "machine" in the same sense that Marx used the term when he observed in 1852 that "the effect of all revolutions has been merely to improve the government machine, not to smash it." Ultimately, the megamachine is that which usurps humane purposes and reduces men to mere "manpower units" for the sake of furthering the irrational pursuit of dominance and destruction. Five thousand years after Sargon and Menes, it is still the dealing out of genocidal death which absorbs the bulk of "civilized" society's brains, energy, and treasure.

> These colossal miscarriages of a dehumanized powercentered culture monotonously soil the pages of history from the rape of Sumer to the blasting of Warsaw and Rotterdam, Tokyo and Hiroshima. Sooner or later, this analysis suggests, we must have the courage to ask ourselves: Is this association of inordinate power and productivity with equally inordinate violence and destruction a purely accidental one?

And later Mumford quotes from the Egyptian Sixth Dynasty:

> The army returned in safety
> After it had hacked up the land of the Sand Dwellers
> After it had thrown down its enclosures
> After it had cut down its fig trees and vines
> After it had cast fire into all its dwellings
> After it had killed troops in it by many-thousand,

and comments,

> That sums up the course of Empire everywhere: . . . from the earliest Egyptian palette to the latest American newspaper with its reports, at the moment I write, of the mass atrocities coldbloodedly perpetrated with the aid of napalm bombs and defoliating poisons, by the military forces of the United States on the helpless peasant populations of Vietnam: an innocent people, uprooted, terrorized, poisoned and roasted alive in a futile attempt to make the power fantasies of the American military-industrial-scientific elite "credible."

Mumford's literary mode has always been that of the scholar—and one would have to be perverse to overlook the wealth of evidence he has carefully assembled in all his works to support his arguments. But his style of mind is that of the poet and prophet. Behind the historian of cities and technics, there is the voice of Amos, crying now in the cybernated wilderness, "O hear ye the word of lamentation that I say onto you." And it is indeed a lamentation with which Mumford is in the way of finishing his long and distinguished career. In his first major work, *Technics and Civilization,* his outlook was buoyant. His expectation was that industrial civilization would transcend "this period of indiscriminate mechanical experiment" and proceed to "contract the machine to those areas in which it serves directly as an instrument of human purpose." He was writing then in the first rose-tinted dawn of the Roosevelt New Deal when, in America at least, intellect, conscience, and even artistry seemed at last to be taking charge of a brutally philistine industrialism that had finally run itself aground. In retrospect, of course, the seemingly progressive social reforms of the thirties look like so much fool's gold. And now thirty years later, it is not the industrial future, but nostalgia for the neolithic village, with its "nurture of life, sharing of communal goods, . . . ungrudging cooperation in all the tasks needed to maintain the integrity or the prosperity of the local group" that dominates Mumford's vision. And he asks, with all the pathos of a sensitive heart turned sour by the evils of perverted promise, "in an age whose inordinate scientific triumphs have brought on grave doubts of its own capacity for survival, are we sure that these surviving archaic traditions are mankind's worst curse—or the greatest obstacle to man's continued development?"

THEODORE ROSZAK

London

REVIEW
SARTRE AS SOCRATES

THE obscurity of Jean-Paul Sartre is the obscurity of a man at war with his time, yet compelled by lonely necessity to use the often counterfeit currency of its thought. To understand Sartre one needs to see what is right about him instead of picking away at what seem his mistakes.

Sartre is after the raw, living truth of being human; he will make his balancing corrections, his practical compromises, after the essentials are blocked in. So, to grasp his intentions, you have to go with him. His partisanships are not defensive; his neglects, for him, not crucial.

Sartre has no patience with systems of thought which obtain comfort and apparent certainty by deciding how much of man is subject and how much of him is object; and then, because it is easy to do, go into great detail concerning his static attributes. This, for Sartre, is "bad faith." The Sartrean view is made up of pure metaphysical statements. A man must begin by saying of himself, "I am what I am not and am not what I am." This is a way of showing that man's life is essentially intentional. It is made up of choices, and the necessity to make choices expresses the intrinsic freedom of man's being.

The book we are using for this discussion is *Sartre: A Philosophic Study* (Oxford University Press paperback, 1967, $1.75) by Anthony Manser. It is necessary to know something of Sartre's work before going to Manser, but if one has read *Being and Nothingness* and some of Sartre's novels and plays, this careful effort to see what Sartre is driving at will be of great assistance in understanding the French philosopher.

At issue is Sartre's herculean determination to recover human sovereignty over human life. He will settle for nothing less, and he has the determination, the intellect, and the art to *succeed.* Mr. Manser sees this, and shows it with quiet admiration. After digesting Sartre, there can be no capitulation of the human spirit to outside authority. This is why Sartre is so thrilling to people who may not exactly understand why he attracts them. It is the explanation of his enormous influence on the young. He speaks to the heroic potentialities in human beings.

A man ought never to think of himself as something that has been "made," according to Sartre. By submitting to some external image of his being, he abdicates his humanity. "I was only a simple soldier, I obeyed my superiors' commands," is not an acceptable excuse. As Mr. Manser puts it:

> The fact that human beings live in a temporal dimension and so ate always changing is neglected by those in bad faith Sartre claims. An example of this is the waiter who attempts to *be* an object: "Let us consider this waiter. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid, he leans forward a little too earnestly . . . he gives himself the rapidity and pitiless speed of a thing. He is playing . . . at *being* a café waiter. . . . (From the inside) what he is trying to realise is the being-in-itself of a waiter, as if it were not precisely in his power to reject thc duties and rights of this condition, as if it were not his free choice to get up each morning at five o'clock or to stay in bed, even though it meant getting fired. As if from the fact that he plays this role it does not follow that he also transcends it, he is something *beyond* it. However, it is undoubtedly. true that he is in one sense a waiter—otherwise he could just as well call himself a diplomat or journalist. But if he is such, it is not in the sense of the in-itself. He is a waiter in the sense of *being what he is not*.

Sartre would never allow anyone to say that he is what he is because "the system" will not let him be anything else. A man never really "coincides" with some finite version of himself:

> If a human being could coincide with himself, could *be* a waiter in the same way in which a stone is a stone, then he could never escape from that condition, any more than a stone could escape from being a stone. The waiter would no longer *be* a human being.

That men do indeed confine other men by treating them as objects is the ground of Sartre's radical political philosophy, but his "Marxism" is a

very much revised Marxism. He requires of any politics an essentially humanistic evaluation of the individual—as one who, as he becomes aware of how he is being "what he is not," must have the elbowroom to change, and he must be helped to see that it is *his* obligation to make the change. This is a practically impossible specification for a political program which seeks its ends by getting *power*—which relies, that is, on the capacity to manipulate men as objects.

What about the world? The world is something we "see," and what a mar; sees of the world is *his* world. It is the scene in which he lives and frames the dynamics of his life, and which presents him with decisions. Here he plots his becomings. The idea of a total world—as a hypothetical all-knowing being such as "God" might see it—is not a usable conception for a being who has temporal existence at this time in that place. The scientific ideal of a totally impersonal world is of necessity a dehumanized world—a world without any living observers in it. The world is *made* by its observers. It has reality from being observed and lived in. So this vast, hypothetical thing-in-itself world, as the depersonalized sum of all men's observations is an abstraction in which we can do nothing and do nothing about.

What Sartre says about the abstract world of scientific conception recalls Buckminster Fuller's way of defining the "universe" in his "Omnidirectional Halo." Fuller says:

> The age-long fallacial propensity which has frustrated adult man's adequate conceptioning of the universe is that of spontaneously assuming that universe must consist of a simultaneously unit conceptuality—ergo, of simultaneous geometry or shape, *i.e.,* a *simultaneous structure.* What is the shape of the universe? What are its boundaries? These are unitary simultaneous static questions. They have no logical answer for universe *though finite is a nonsimultaneous structure.* Children know this better than their parents through innate conceptioning as yet unspoiled by erroneous logic. . . . Definable thought patterning deals only progressively (by rescanning) with the local event foci of experienced patternings of universe. Definable thought though constituting systematic consideration and orderly reconsideration, which returns omnidirectionally upon itself in local conceptual relationships, is only a subdivision of *finite,* which is universe, which is *inherently inconceivable unitarily.*

Fuller never lets go of his fundamental idea that the universe is a human apprehension. It is not something apart from man. *It is what we see.* So with Sartre. Man's seeing of the world makes him a being who is in the world in a very special way. He is not in it the way an animal or a rock is in it. He is in it but apart from it by being conscious of being in it. As Mr. Manser says:

> For Sartre this difference between man and animal does not depend only on the fact that men can express such feelings in language; rather it is because men are capable of being separated from the world in this kind of manner that they are capable of having a language. . . . "Thus I have reached the first goal of my inquiry: man is the being through whom nothing comes into the world. But this answer immediately gives rise to another: What *is* man in order that he should bring nothing into the world?"
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> The answer that Sartre gives is that in order to do this man must be free. If *L'Etre et le néant* has as its theme human consciousness, then throughout the book freedom is the hallmark of that consciousness; the rest of the work can be seen as concerned with the way in which this freedom or liberty is compromised, ignored, concealed by various types of behavior. It is hardly going too far to say that Sartre's entire *oeuvre* is a discussion of different aspects of freedom, epistemological moral and political. . . . "What I call freedom is thus impossible to distinguish from the *being* of 'human reality.' Man is not *first* a being and free *afterwards;* there is no difference between the being of man and his *'being-free'."*

Existential *anguish* is born of our consciousness of freedom. A creature of mere necessity, having no choices to make, could have no Promethean pain. But man, being free, faces the alternatives of his eternally unfinished nature. Yet the anguish Sartre speaks of is not constant. As Mr. Manser puts it:

> Hence anguish is not a common experience, it only arises when freedom is, so to speak, idling, when it is not being employed in the normal round of

> activities. In the majority of cases when a decision is made it is put into effect; only in rare ones is the possibility of a change of mind brought home in this haunting way.

However, men who accept the mechanistic world-view, who embrace an image of themselves as helpless offprints of their environment, may have a much larger share of anguish than other people. A man who affirms impotence instead of decision resists the one true necessity of being human—to be *free.* Hence he rises in pain in the morning and takes pain to bed with him at night. He has submitted to the world-machine and it will have no mercy on him so long as he denies his own nature, which is now forever idling.

Sartre's strength comes from his essentially Socratic contention that man becomes human by being intentional in all that he does:

> Sartre's ethical views might be said to begin and end in the motto know thyself." To begin with it because unless we are self-aware to some degree there is no possibility of any genuinely human action; to end with it because once the situation is seen early there is no more to be said *on the ethical level.* . . . Hence any analysis of a failure in self-knowledge is bound to be a criticism.

Self-knowledge is not a responsibility that a man can delegate to others. And even if, as Sartre says, there are times when "there may be no solution for the man who wants above all to make certain of his next step, to remain at all times absolutely master of himself," this lack of a solution is no reason for accepting an external master. A man must remain a man. Mr. Manser plainly agrees that there can be no retreat from this position, and the reader is persuaded that he gives you Sartre in his own symmetry, by the author's own conviction as well as by his skill and art.

COMMENTARY
THE PLACE OF VALUE

TO call Lewis Mumford a champion of Trancendentalist vision, as Theodore Roszak does in this week's lead article, seems exactly right. "Behind Mumford there stands, not Marx, but Emerson. . . ," and, one might add, Thoreau. In *The Machine in the Garden* (Oxford University Press, 1964), Leo Marx makes the parallel unmistakable. Speaking of how Thoreau locates "meaning and value" in *Walden,* he says:

> . . . it does not reside in the natural facts or in social institutions or in anything "out there," but in consciousness. It is a product of imaginative perception, of the analogy-perceiving, metaphor-making, mythopoeic power of the human mind.

And Hawthorne, trying to penetrate the external ugliness brought by "machine power," sought a theme basic enough to comprehend the sense of disaster that oppressed him. He wrote in his notebook in 1844:

> The Unpardonable Sin might consist in a want of love and reverence for the Human Soul; in consequence of which, the investigator pried into its dark depths, not with a hope or purpose of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity,—content that it should be wicked in what ever kind or degree, and only desiring to study it out. Would not this, in other words, be the separation of the intellect from the heart?

What clearer characterization could we have of those whom, in *The Hidden Remnant,* Gerald Sykes called the "boy Fausts"?

There is nerveless, slack-jawed horror in the recognition, slowly coming upon us, that wallows can be disguised with glistening finishes, that brilliances of form may invite to only narcotic delights. What viable births of the human spirit could such a cruelly deceptive environment sustain?

Today the gossamer wings of unborn decencies, of unembodied dignities, beat against the brittle walls of defeat. Hope is only a murmur, courage an incantation, defiance a quixotic gesture that makes people grumble or smirk. Yet a promise grows behind the quivering apprehensions of the age. There are vacuums which bring terror and pain, but also collapse structures of pretense. And there is an audible rhythm in the rising spirit of man that beats an accelerating pace.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
DOES THIS MAKE SENSE?

FROM *Education Through Art,* an informal, slap-dash collection of items given random publication by John Keel of the art department of San Francisco State College, we borrow an extract from a letter to the Palo Alto *Times:*

> Must yet another generation of our youngsters grow up blind, artistic illiterates? A community that wants the arts Must educate itself and its children to receive them. The people of Palo Alto have one art specialist for all their elementary schools. Los Altos has one half of one art specialist. Portola Valley and Woodside have none.
>
> How some intelligentsia would cry waste and frills if each district were to hire an art specialist for each school, as the children need. People still think that art is a fun-and-games activity for Friday afternoon when everybody is too tired to think.
>
> School boards say, "First let us attend to the important subjects like math, science, and foreign languages, before we worry about the development of the creative mind or the teaching of the universal language of vision." They, having never been exposed to it themselves, do not realize that cognitive art education can be the most demanding human discipline—the subject which by its very nature leads to the development of the imagination, inventiveness, ingenuity, resourcefulness for all kinds of problem-solving. Leonardo and Schweitzer confirm that creativity is an attitude which carries over into all areas of thought. It is precisely this type of mind that education should be seeking to develop.
>
> Seventy-five per cent of our total perception is received through our eyes. Yet most children grow up without any specific training and sensitizing in visual perception. Does this make sense?

It might be added that often it does not occur to parents that the best place for deliberate experience of the arts is in the home. Parents who say, almost proudly, "I don't have any artistic ability," or "I was always very poor in 'art'," as a reason for not attempting anything of this sort with their children would probably be horribly ashamed if they couldn't count beyond ten, and were obliged to admit it. Yet the two situations are comparable from any *normal* point of view.

The discovery of creative ability in children seems attended by a wonder that would be more natural on finding a new planet nobody supposed was there, or on coming upon an unexpected oasis in an otherwise barren desert. From "The Creative Child," by Chandler Brossard (*Journal of Nursery Education,* March, 1962), we take the following:

> One hundred and twenty children were tested in a grade school in Bloomington, Minn. The results were astonishing. Ten children were selected as being the most creative of the 120. The two highest-creativity scorers in this select group had the lowest IQs—their academic ratings were mediocre. One boy was James De Schepper . . . eleven. His schoolwork was frequently below average, and his behavior could be described as that of a self-possessed dreamer. Present school curriculums preclude his utilizing his many creative gifts. His marks and his relatively unexciting IQ would very likely keep him out of most "good" colleges, where the "studious," predictable, unquestioning and often not too imaginative youngsters are generally preferred over the thousands of creative applicants. . . .
>
> Fortunately, James De Schepper had understanding teachers. But in the average American classroom, creativity investigators have found, the treatment given the creative child is all too frequently along . . . punitive lines. His questions and answers tend to irritate the rigid type of teacher, who is inclined to feel the child is being difficult, and who retaliates by slapping him down, usually in front of his classmates. If he shows boredom, or can't concentrate, during a particular lesson, a classic teacher reaction is that something is wrong with him rather than with her, or with the lesson, or with the situation in general.

This article ends with the familiar rhetoric that "the future of our civilization—our very survival—depends upon the creative thinking of our next generations." Somehow, we wish Mr. Brossard had wound up on another note. The *"or* else" warning is seldom listened to, and anyway children are more important than "civilization." The argument that if we don't give our children a proper education they won't turn out to be "good

citizens," is a tired cliche. Education is not something *instrurumental to social harmony.*

Actually, you don't have to be a Leonardo to help children find themselves in the arts. It probably helps to be able to draw, but mostly it is important to know what not to do. A teacher at the School in Rose Valley, Shirley Tassencourt, has this to say:

> I don't know what an art program should or shouldn't be just as I don't know how one should draw a tree. . . .When expression is truly individual, there is no cultural precedent, no "imitated" to measure by. Many children (and parents) feel "good" and "bad" have much to do with accurate representation. If in the home there is little knowledge of the abstract visual æsthetic, there is only the art teacher to "hold" the child in valuing, trusting the æsthetic happening. I think one of the most important functions of the art teacher is to verbalize, point to, and exhibit æsthetic dynamics in simple ways. I've seen such strength come to the children's art work when they trust their "full out" expression. In teaching art, as in many activities, the harder you do it, the worse it gets. However, the harder you mean it (really care), the better it gets. As long as the children are moving well by themselves, I stay at the border of the activity. If they begin to stray into paths of non-involvement or picayune art practices, then I start nipping heels.

At about the fourth grade, Mrs. Tassencourt found, children sometimes get infected with "over-control." Maybe technological delusions are already closing in on them. Anyway:

> The hand that flew across the paper tightens, the knuckles blanch, the pencil deeply scores the little corner of the paper where it is being worked. Where formerly with color and proportions a bit askew, the child was able to produce life, now with great determination he creates *une nature morte.*
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> This is where I earn my salary, yea, verily, more than my salary. I don't rush in with "No, No, Never, No, No!", for one of the impulses is sound—*i.e.,* the desire for better communication. . . . I mumble things like, "Today we're going to pose for each other, very quick poses." The answer is, "But I can't draw people." "Perhaps you mean you can't draw them so they look good. Did I ever say you had to draw something so it looks good?" . . . .
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> There are many ways of working on this problem. Sometimes I bully, if it's one kind of child. Sometimes I paint with him, if it's another. With certain children I just stand back and wait. It always takes time—a year or two. I feel good as an art teacher if most of my sixth grade class is "swinging" (translated as direct spontaneity with good content and form).

Well, it makes you want to go back to school.

FRONTIERS
Seven-league Boots?

IF you have for review two carefully prepared books of serious intent, and then find that one seems to cancel out the other—what then becomes the responsibility of the reviewer?

The first of two such books is *Peace Is Possible: A Reader for Laymen,* edited by Elizabeth Jay Hollins (Grossman, 1966, $6.50) . The other is *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking* by Arno J. Mayer (Alfred A. Knopf, 1967, $15), which is the story of "Containment and Counterrevolution" at Versailles during 1918-1919. Dr. Mayer, who teaches history at Princeton, combines extraordinary scholarship with a perceptive grasp of the social and psychological forces that have, until now, kept the nations of the world at war and turned efforts at genuine peacemaking into one long fiasco. The gloom of his analysis is so penetrating that one is compelled to ask a writer who claims that "Peace Is Possible" to tell us how to overcome the failures described by Dr. Mayer. Mrs. Hollins' book, alas, does not do this.

But then, how could it? A book which seriously contemplates putting an end to war would have to ignite worldwide moral revolution. It would have to call upon the resolve of human beings with the passion of a hundred Tolstoys and fortify that resolve with the determination of a dozen Gandhis. It is no criticism of Mrs. Hollins that she has not been able to inflame the world with radical truth. But to hail her work as something more than high hopes would serve no useful purpose. In fact, the jacket inscription of *Peace Is Possible* makes the prospects for peace realistically plain. There, beneath the title, is the following from Kenneth Boulding: "If the human race is to survive it will have to change its ways of thinking more in the next 25 years than in the last 25,000."

It is natural enough, we suppose, if one longs to end war, to put together a book containing the thoughts of men who have devoted much time to the making of peace plans. Yet today, in the streets, in the demonstrations and protests and resistances, the young men who are putting a personal end to war seem moved by invitations more potent than bids to conference tables. The Beatles' new record, *Magical Mystery Tour,* has a song, "I am the Walrus," with these lines:

> I am he
> As you are he
> As you are me
> And we are all together

—and if this sounds like nonsense to the heads of states, it doesn't to a great many of the young.

The Beatles may not have thought this up themselves—a *Saturday Review* contributor thinks it's a paraphrase of lines from the *Bhagavad-Gita*—but it certainly sums up the feelings in the air. *How,* one wonders, does a world of human beings *really* grow up? Can four young men born on a small island set to music a mutation in the human species and cheer it on its way?

But if you want to understand why these four and many, many other young men around the world—who knows the figures?—feel that it is high time for human beings to stop killing each other wholesale, then it would be a good idea to read Dr. Mayer's book, or even just the Epilogue, which starts on page 875. This conclusion of Dr. Mayer's enormous study is called "Disillusioned Intelligentsia." It is about the people who dream of peace but seldom make it.

The foundations of peace are not obscure. George L. Record told Wilson what to do:

> The only way to meet the menace of socialism, if menace it is, is by offering a better program for the removal of injustice in our industrial and social relations. . . . You should now undertake a job worthy of your great abilities. You should become the real leader of the radical forces of America, and present to the country a constructive program of fundamental reform, which shall be an alternative to the program of the socialists, and the Bolsheviki, and then fight for it. . . . This program would gather about you at once, as if by magic, the forces of intelligent and orderly radicalism who have been looking in vain to you for leadership, and are now in a state of profound discouragement.

We don't quote this to make Wilson a scapegoat—a project completed by experts—but to illustrate the fundamental issue behind peace, which is *justice*. The "explanation" of justice may be an obscure and difficult process, but this is mainly because not enough people *try* to do it. We have no trouble recognizing just men among our friends. They manage to do it. Justice is only *academically* difficult. The confusions and disagreements of the intellectuals about justice are almost as discouraging as the compromises and self-deceptions of politicians. As Henri Barbusse said:

> *Wilson never understood what he said.* He never attributed the complete and splendid meaning to his pronouncements that we did. He never thought about the demolition and reconstruction which the integral implementation of his propositions would require. Instead, he quite sincerely allowed his high moral and social commandments to be translated into half measures which annihilated them openly or on the sly. In truth, was Wilson worthy of the insult which Clemenceau intended him when he spoke of his exalted candor?

Men speak now with the same intensity about peace. But they also speak with the same high capacity for self deception—for not really knowing what their "propositions would require." It does not really help to say we shall have to put on seven-league boots. It is a serious question whether it would not be more important for all the delegates at the United Nations to *go home* in protest against their own ineffectuality. It was Thoreau's idea that if a judge could not do justice under the law, he should climb down from the bench.

Perhaps, instead of more books about peacemaking and the failures of peacemaking, we should read Tolstoy and Gandhi, Jayaprakash Narayan and Danilo Dolci—men who would be as hard to get into a conventional peace conference as a conventional war conference. It will probably be as hard to "legalize" peace as it is to outlaw war. These matters are outside the universe of legality/illegality. First you become peaceful, and *then* you fit the laws around the new condition. How can you get peace without law? Well, you get it the way we got the American Revolution, which was, as John Adams said, accomplished in the hearts and minds of the people before the first shot was fired. You get it, and then you rationalize it with the help of a few bright men. We have plenty of those.

We may have given too limiting an impression of Mrs. Hollins' book. Actually, it is seeded with awareness of the same forces that are emerging in the songs of the Beatles. Rochelle Gatlin, who graduated from San Francisco State in 1965, said in her contribution:

> Stanley Kauffman has expressed the growing irrelevance of liberalism with its optimistic belief in progress by saying that although liberal sentiments are unimpeachable, they are almost irresponsible in the light of existing conditions—the contemporary equivalent of a hundred Hail Marys to avert the Black Plague. . . . But student radicals do not look to bureaucratic, puritanical Russia or to unindustrialized overpopulated, and poverty-ridden China as models. Not Marx, but Gandhi and Thoreau are their mentors. Their goal is to eliminate the divorce between the political and the personal: no definite programs, no slogans, only a direct emotional response to hypocrisy and injustice.

The position of the editor of this volume helps the reader to understand the intensity it acquires. Mrs. Hollins writes in one place:

> The fact is that the society which the supposedly controlling adults represent has become not only death-oriented but morally insufferable. There is a split between what is preached and what is practiced. Lately young people have seen their own country commit, deny and later acknowledge the very actions it has most condemned and sought to punish in others—in Cuba, Vietnam and Santo Domingo. And they are told this hypocrisy is necessary for national security which also is already being invoked to stifle protest. In the values they see in the adult world around them young people see the failure of the American myth (myth in the sense of guiding vision) of freedom, equality, justice, progress—and nothing to replace it.

So the two books do not, after all, cancel out; they supplement each other.