



THE
EDUCATION
OF THE
UN-ARTIST

ALLAN KAPROW

subjectively
annotated

by *matteo demaria*

The Education of the Un-Artist,
Part I
(1971)
| subjectively annotated |
| (2021) |

Sophistication of consciousness in the arts today (1969) is
so great that it is hard not to assert as matters of fact

**that the LM mooncraft is patently superior to all
contemporary sculptural efforts;**

**that the broadcast verbal exchange between
Houston's Manned Spacecraft Center and the
Apollo 11 astronauts was better than contemporary
poetry;**

**that with their sound distortions, beeps, static, and
communication breaks, such exchanges also sur-
passed the electronic music of the concert halls;**

**that certain remote-control videotapes of the lives
of ghetto families recorded (with their permission)
by anthropologists are more fascinating than the
celebrated slice-of-life underground films;**

**that not a few of those brightly lit plastic and stain-
less-steel gas stations of, say, Las Vegas, are the
most extraordinary architecture to date;**

**that the random trancelike movements of shop-
pers in a supermarket are richer than anything
done in modern dance;**

**that lint under beds and the debris of industrial
dumps are more engaging than the recent rash of
exhibitions of scattered waste matter;**

**that the vapor trails left by rocket tests—motionless,
rainbow-colored, sky-filling scribbles—are un-
equaled by artists exploring gaseous media;
that the Southeast Asian theater of war in Vietnam,
or the trial of the “Chicago Eight,” while indefensi-
ble, is better theater than any play;**

that... etc., etc.,... nonart is more art than Art art.

Members of the Club (Passwords In and Out)

Nonart is whatever has not yet been accepted as art but has caught an artist's attention with that possibility in mind. For those concerned, nonart (password one) exists only fleetingly, like some subatomic particle, or perhaps only as a postulate. Indeed, the moment any such example is offered publicly, it automatically becomes a type of art. Let's say I am impressed by the mechanical clothes conveyors commonly used in dry-cleaning shops. Flash! While they continue to perform their normal work of roller-coastering me my suit in twenty seconds flat, they double as Kinetic Environments, simply because I had the thought and have written it here. By the same process all the examples listed above are conscripts of art. Art is very easy nowadays.

Because art is so easy, there is a growing number of artists who are interested in this paradox and wish to prolong its resolution, if only for a week or two, for the life of nonart is precisely its fluid identity. Art's former "difficulty" in the actual making stages may be transposed in this case to an arena of collective uncertainty over just what to call the critter: sociology, hoax, therapy? A Cubist portrait in 1910, before it was labeled a mental aberration, was self-evidently a *painting*. Blowing up successively closer views of an aerial map (a fairly typical example of 1960s Site art) might more obviously suggest an aerial bombing plan.

Nonart's advocates, according to this description, are those who consistently, or at one time or other, have chosen to operate outside the pale of art establishments—that is, in their heads or in the daily or natural domain. At all times, however, they have informed the art establishment of their activities, to set into motion the uncertainties without which their acts would have no meaning. *I would they?* | The art–non-art dialectic is essential—one of the nice ironies I shall return to several times hereafter.

Among this group, some of whom do not know each other, or if they do, do not like each other, are concept makers such as George Brecht, Ben Vautier, and Joseph Kosuth; found-sound guides such as Max Neuhaus; Earthworkers such as Dennis Oppenheim and Michael Heizer; some of the 1950s Environment builders; and such Happeners as Milan Knaak, Marta Minujin, Kazuo Shiraga, Wolf Vostell, and me.

But sooner or later most of them and their colleagues throughout the world have seen their work absorbed into the cultural institutions against which they initially measured their liberation. Some have wished it this way; it was, to use Paul Brach's expression, like paying their dues to join the union. Others have shrugged it off, continuing the game in new ways. But all have found that password one won't work.

Nonart is often confused with antiart (password two), which in Dada time and even earlier was nonart aggressively (and wittily) intruded into the arts world to jar conventional values and provoke positive esthetic and/or ethical responses. Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, Erik Satie's *Furniture Music*, and Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* are familiar examples. The late Sam Goodman's New York exhibition some years ago of varieties of sculpted dung piles was still another. Nonart has no such intent; and intent is part of both function and feeling in any situation that deliberately blurs its operational context.

Apart from the question whether the historical arts have ever demonstrably caused anybody to become "better," or "worse," and granting that all art has presumed to edify in *some* way (perhaps only to prove that nothing can be proven), such avowedly moralistic programs appear naive today in light of the far greater and more effective value changes brought about by political, military, economic, technological, educational, and advertising pressures. I and *informational platforms* run through *internet protocols* (ip²), and "social" media... but *what* are the "effective value changes?" can you teach an old dog new tricks?... I The arts, at least up to the present, have been poor lessons, except possibly to artists and their tiny publics. Only these vested interests have ever made any high claims for the arts. The rest of the world couldn't

care less. Antiart, nonart, or other such cultural designations share, after all, the word *art* or its implicit presence and so point to a family argument at best, if they do not reduce utterly to tempests in teapots. And that is true for the bulk of this discussion. I and is still true, i guess... “on the art level, whoever still sees in it a promise of happiness and hopes for the invention of life, only encounters a harmless succession of decorative brackets or colorful merchandise, leaving the general course of uglification intact.” (pierre bazantay, yves hélias (dir), *les cahiers de banalyse*, n°8, 1991, in: *éléments de banalyse*, 2015) |

When Steve Reich suspends a number of microphones above corresponding loudspeakers, sets them swinging like pendulums, and amplifies their sound pickup so that feedback noise is produced—that’s art.

When Andy Warhol publishes the unedited transcript of twenty-four hours of taped conversation—that’s art.

When Walter De Maria fills a room full of dirt—that’s art.

We know they are art because a concert announcement, a title on a book jacket, and an art gallery say so.

If nonart is almost impossible, antiart is virtually inconceivable. Among the knowledgeable (and practically every graduate student should qualify) all gestures, thoughts, and deeds may become art at the whim of the arts world. Even murder, rejected in practice, could be an admissible artistic proposition. Antiart in 1969 is embraced in every case as proart, and therefore, from the standpoint of one of its chief functions, it is nullified. I and i guess this is still the case in 2021... | You cannot be against art when art invites its own “destruction” as a Punch-and-Judy act among the repertory of poses art may take. So in losing the last shred of pretense to moral leadership through moral confrontation, antiart, like all other art philosophies, is simply obliged to answer to ordinary human conduct and also, sadly enough, to the refined

life-style dictated by the cultivated and rich who accept it with open arms.

When Richard Artschwager discreetly pastes little black oblongs on parts of buildings across California and has a few photos to show and stories to tell—that's art.

When George Brecht prints on small cards sent to friends the word "DIRECTION"—that's art.

When Ben Vautier signs his name (or God's) to any airport—that's art.

These acts are obviously art because they are made by persons associated with the arts.

It's to be expected that in spite of the paradoxical awareness referred to at the beginning of this essay, Art art (password three) is the condition, both in the mind and literally, in which every novelty comes to rest. Art art takes art seriously. It presumes, however covertly, a certain spiritual rarity, a superior office. It has faith. It is recognizable by its initiates. It is innovative, of course, but largely in terms of a tradition of professionalistic moves and references: art begets art. Most of all, Art art maintains for its exclusive use certain sacred settings and formats handed down by this tradition: exhibitions, books, recordings, concerts, arenas, shrines, civic monuments, stages, film screenings, and the "culture" columns of the mass media. These grant accreditation the way universities grant degrees.

So long as Art art holds on to these contexts, it can and often does costume itself in nostalgic echoes of antiart, a reference that critics correctly observed in Robert Rauschenberg's earlier shows. It is self-evident in later Pop painting and writing, which make deliberate use of common clichés in content and method. Art art can also assert the features, though not the milieu, of nonart, as in much of the music of John Cage. In fact, Art art in the guise of nonart quickly became high style during the 1968-69 season at the Castelli Gallery warehouse shows of informal dispersions of felt, metal, rope, and other raw matter. Shortly afterward, this quasi-nonart received its virtual apotheosis at the Whitney Museum's presentation

of similar stuff, called Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials. A hint of antiart greeted the viewer in the title, followed by the reassurance of scholarly-analysis; but far from fomenting controversy, the temple of muses certified that all was Cultural. There was no illusion about that.

If commitment to the political and ideological framework of the contemporary arts is implicit in these seemingly raunchy examples, and in those cited at the beginning of this account, it is explicit in the bulk of straightforward productions of Art art: the films of Godard, the concerts of Stockhausen, the dances of Cunningham, the buildings of Louis Kahn, the sculpture of Judd, the paintings of Frank Stella, the novels of William Burroughs, the plays of Grotowski, the mixed-media performances of E.A.T.—to mention a few well-known contemporaries and events of achievement. It is not that some of them are “abstract” and this is their Art or that others have appropriate styles or subjects. It is that they rarely, if ever, play renegade with the profession of art itself. Their achievement, much of it in the recent past and in the present present⁹ 1, is perhaps due to a conscious and poignant stance taken against an erosion of their respective fields by emerging nonartists. Perhaps it was mere innocence, or the narrow-mindedness of their professionalism. In any event, they upheld the silent rule that as a password *in*, Art is the best word of all. 1 “professionalization begins by accepting these categories precisely so competence can be invoked, a competence that at the same time guards its own founding.” (stefano harney, fred moten, *the undercommons*, 2013) 1

It is questionable, however, whether it is worthwhile being *in*. As a human goal and as an idea, Art is dying—not just because it operates within conventions that have ceased to be fertile. 1 is art still “dying?” is it dying since 50 years—at least? is it already dead? if it is already dead, what am i—are we—doing (here)? should we kill art? “resurrect” it as something else? can a leopard change its spots? “the impossible art.” (geoffroy de lagasnerie, *l’art impossible*, 2020) “what is the role of the artist when art is dead?” (“la fin de l’art n’est pas une fin”, in: *éléments de banalyse*) 1 It is dying because it has preserved its conven-

tions and created a growing weariness toward them, out of indifference to what I suspect has become the fine arts' most important, though mostly unconscious, subject matter: the ritual escape from Culture. | let's stop using capital(s) letters... | Nonart as it changes into Art art is at least interesting in the process. But Art art that starts out as such shortcuts the ritual and feels from the very beginning merely cosmetic, a superfluous luxury, even though such qualities do not in fact concern its makers at all.

Art art's greatest challenge, in other words, has come from within its own heritage, from a hyperconsciousness about itself and its everyday surroundings. | "the aesthetic *mise en résonnance* of banality can only be done by a radical use of the categories of aesthetic legitimation; and that until the point where, art appearing everywhere, they come to dissolve themselves. but isn't it also what happens in reality? is this playful gesture of abolition of art something else than the formalization of what takes place? and wouldn't it be at the end of this dissolution, when the aesthetic collapsed as a *separated* universe of forms, that the subject opens to the emotional fluidity proper to this 'free play' that we were able to call art?" (yves hélias, jean-yves laillier, *la départementale 32, ou esthétique d'un paysage moyen*, 1992, in: *éléments de banalyse*) "manifesting 'becoming' as opposed to 'being' (bell 2013)." (brian massumi, *99 thesis on the revaluation of value, a postcapitalist manifesto*, 2018) | Art art has served as an instructional transition to its own elimination by life. Such an acute awareness among artists enables the whole world and its humanity to be experienced as a work of art. | "we are the social sculpture! this is the third sculpture! you are the thinking sculpture!" (ben kinmont, "we are the social sculpture!... i wish to open up our understanding of life", in: *i am for you, ich bin für sie archive*, 1990) | With ordinary reality so brightly lit, those who choose to engage in showcase creativity invite (from this view) hopeless comparisons between what they do and supervivid counterparts in the environment.

| "we then go to the gatekeeper's house to pay special attention to the private museum located in the enclosed area adjoining the building. a collection of everyday ob-

jects sheds new light on the accuracy of the plastic perspectives recognized by marcel duchamp. / the notion of 'ready-made' encompasses here a much wider field than what its creator perceived. in addition to the bidets, kinds of unintentional references to the master, drums of washing machines, carcasses of metal chairs, wheels of 2 cv citroën cohabit for the greatest profit of an ensemble very characteristic of the 'zone' style, an aesthetic school progressively developed since the middle of the twentieth century." (hélias, laillier, 1992) |

Exemption from this larger ballpark is impossible. Art artists, in spite of declarations that their work is not to be compared with life, will invariably be compared with nonartists. And, since nonart derives its fragile inspiration from everything except art, i.e., from "life," the comparison between Art art and life will be made anyway. It then could be shown that, willingly or not, there has been an active exchange between Art art and nonart, and in some cases between Art art and the big wide world (in more than the translational way all art has utilized "real" experience). Relocated by our minds in a global setting rather than in a museum or library or onstage, Art, no matter how it is arrived at, fares very badly indeed. | "when in a museum, you can always say no to the piece and just move on; but in life if you ignore it you die." (participant in: ben kinmont, *moveable type no documenta*, 2011) |

For example, La Monte Young, whose performances of complex drone sounds interest me as Art art, tells of his boyhood in the Northwest when he used to lean his ear against the high-tension electric towers that stretched across the fields; he would enjoy feeling the hum of the wires through his body. I did that as a boy, too, and prefer it to the concerts of Young's music. It was more impressive visually and less hackneyed in the vastness of its environment than it is in a loft space or a performance hall.

Dennis Oppenheim describes another example of nonart: in Canada he ran across a muddy lot, made plaster casts of his footprints (in the manner of a crime investigator), and then exhibited stacks of the casts at a gallery. The activity was great; the exhibition part of it was corny.

The casts could have been left at the local police station without identification. Or thrown away.

Those wishing to be called artists, in order to have some or all of their acts and ideas considered art, only have to drop an artistic thought around them, announce the fact and persuade others to believe it. That's advertising. As Marshall McLuhan once wrote, "Art is what you can get away with." I and sometimes get paid for, but not very often... could we maybe "use" art to "get away with" a big stack of cash and start everything over somewhere else in other ways?—I don't really like "cash," but it happens to be quite useful *here* and *now*, and opportunity makes a thief after all...—would it be some kind of "ritual escape from 'culture?'" |

Art. There's the catch. At this stage of consciousness, the sociology of Culture emerges as an in-group "dumb-show." Its sole audience is a roster of the creative and performing professions watching itself, as if in a mirror, enact a struggle between self-appointed priests and a cadre of self-appointed commandos, jokers, guttersnipes, and triple agents who seem to be attempting to destroy the priests' church. But everybody knows how it all ends: in church, of course, with the whole club bowing their heads and muttering prayers. They pray for themselves and for their religion. | there is also "extra-cultural" actors who play a role in this church, as the (not so) old *mécène* did. (laurent cauwet, *la domestication de l'art, politique et mécénat*, 2017) they essentially play the other players (who might be conscious or not) into "praying" for their religion. this is also all about "triple agents who seem to be attempting to destroy the priests' church" who end up in "bowing heads"—or maybe some wished it that way all along... capital and culture (especially with capital c's) might have more than just letters in common (¢)... the clothes don't make the wo-man... |

Artists cannot profitably worship what is moribund | some do, and it works for them... some do, and it doesn't work for them—most, i guess... it's a foolish sheep that makes the wolf its confessor |; nor can they war against such bowing and scraping when only moments later they enshrine their destructions and acts as cult objects in the same institution they were bent on destroying. This is a

patent sham. A plain case of management takeover. | “neoliberal capitalism builds itself on what systematically escapes it. for every quantum of autonomous creative advance, for every quantum of primary surplus-value of life released, a corresponding quantum of capitalist surplus-value is prone to be captured for the system in the form of human capital. [...] *capture and rewild go processually hand in hand.* (massumi, 2018) |

But if artists are reminded that nobody but themselves | and “the (not so) old *mécène*?” | gives a damn about this, or about whether all agree with the judgment here, then the entropy of the whole scene may begin to appear very funny.

Seeing the situation as low comedy is a way out of the bind. I would propose that the first practical step toward laughter is to *un-art* ourselves, avoid all esthetic roles, give up all references to being artists of any kind whatever. | “[to] have a chance not to issue the call for order” (harney, moten, 2013) | In becoming un-artists (password four) we may exist only as fleetingly as the nonartist, for when the profession of art is discarded, the art category is meaningless, or at least antique. An un-artist is one who is engaged in changing jobs | in not working ? |, in | un ? | modernizing.

The new job does not entail becoming a naïf by beating a quick retreat back to childhood and yesterday. On the contrary, it requires even more sophistication than the un-artist already has. | playful consciousness and/or conscious playfulness? | Instead of the serious tone that has usually accompanied the search for innocence and truth, un-artisting will probably emerge as humor. This is where the old-fashioned saint in the desert and the newfangled player of the jetways part company. The job | “job” | implies fun, never gravity or tragedy.

Of course, starting from the arts means that the *idea* of art cannot easily be gotten rid of (even if one wisely never utters the word). But it is possible to slyly shift the whole un-artistic operation away from where the arts customarily congregate, to become, for instance, an account executive, an ecologist, a stunt rider, a politician | (raivo puusemp, *beyond art, the dissolution of rosendale, ny*, 1980) |, a beach bum. In these different capacities, the sev-

eral kinds of art discussed would operate indirectly as a stored code | “process seeds [...] meant to *disseminate*.” (massumi, 2018) | that, instead of programming a specific course of behavior, would facilitate an attitude of deliberate playfulness toward all professionalizing activities well beyond art. | we could become the “un-professionals...” (harney, moten, 2013) “play is an operative tendency connoting a processual openness. events ‘play out’ as their constitutive tendencies unfold. systems have ‘play’ as they test their limits. techniques of play-relation are a serious domain for the exploration of alter-unfoldings. these may be staged in such a way as to carry an *exemplary force* for export to extra-play contexts, introducing a margin of play into them that allows them to test their limits tentorial limits. don’t make political platforms. make play political [or ‘social’].” (massumi, 2018) | Signal scrambling, perhaps. Something like those venerable baseball aficionados in the vaudeville act that began, “Who’s on first?” “No, Watt’s on first; Hugh’s on second...”

When someone anonymous called our attention recently to his or her slight transformation of a tenement stairway, and someone else directed us to examine an unaltered part of New York’s Park Avenue, these were art, too. Whoever the persons were, they got the message to us (artists). We did the rest in our heads.

Safe Bets for Your Money

It can be pretty well predicted that the various forms of mixed media or assemblage arts will increase, both in the highbrow sense and in mass-audience applications such as light shows, space-age demonstrations at world’s fairs, teaching aids, sales displays, toys, and political campaigns. And these may be the means by which all the arts are phased out. | i guess that in 2021 we are in an inter/trans/multi/pluri/etc...-disciplinary practice era... maybe we should evacuate the “disciplinary” wor(l)d... anyway, “art,” at least as a wor(l)d, still exist in 2021, though one could argue that it is quite “phased-out” and fully absorbed and/or regurgitated through the cultural enter-

tainment industries... “art in its period of dissolution—a movement of negation striving for its own transcendence within a historical society where history is not yet directly lived—is at once an art of change and the purest expression of the impossibility of change. the more grandiose its pretensions, the further from its grasp is its true fulfillment. this art is necessarily *avant-garde*, and at the same time *it does not actually exist*. its vanguard is its own disappearance.” (guy debord, *the society of the spectacle*, 1967) ... it’s good to hope, it’s the waiting that spoils it... |

Although public opinion accepts mixed media as additions to the pantheon, or as new occupants around the outer edges of the expanding universe of each traditional medium, they are more likely rituals of escape from the traditions. | or “new” traditions taking shape, or the same old traditions “newly” shaped... again, dogs and leopards... | Given the historical trend of the modern arts toward specialism or “purity”—pure painting, pure poetry, pure music, pure dance—any admixtures have had to be viewed as contaminants. And in this context, deliberate contamination can | could | now be interpreted as a rite of passage. (It is noteworthy in this context that even at this late date | 1971 | there are no journals devoted to mixed media.)

Among the artists involved in mixed means during the past decade, a few became interested in taking advantage of the arts’ blurry boundaries by going the next step toward blurring art as a whole into a number of nonarts. Dick Higgins, in his book *foew&ombwhnw*, gives instructive examples of vanguardists’ taking positions between theater and painting, poetry and sculpture, music and philosophy and between various intermedia (his term) and game theory, sports, and politics.

Abbie Hoffman applied the intermedium of Happenings (via the Provos) to a philosophical and political goal two or three summers ago. With a group of friends, he went to the observation balcony of the New York Stock Exchange. At a signal he and his friends tossed handfuls of dollar bills onto the floor below, where trading was at its height. According to his report, brokers cheered, diving for the bills; the tickertape stopped; the market was probably affected; and the press reported the arrival of

the cops. Later that night the event appeared nationally on televised news coverage: a medium sermon “for the hell of it,” as Hoffman might say.

It makes no difference whether what Hoffman did is called activism, criticism, pranksterism, self-advertisement, or art. The term *intermedia* implies fluidity and simultaneity of roles. When art is only one of several possible functions a situation may have, it loses its privileged status and becomes, so to speak, a lowercase attribute. The intermedial response can be applied to anything—say, an old glass. The glass can serve the geometer to explain ellipses; for the historian it can be an index of the technology of a past age; for a painter it can become part of a still life, and the gourmet can use it to drink his Chateau Latour 1953. We are not used to thinking like this, all at once, or nonhierarchically, but the intermedialist does it naturally. Context rather than category. Flow rather than work of art.

It follows that the conventions of painting, music, architecture, dance, poetry, theater, and so on may survive in a marginal capacity as academic researches, like the study of Latin. Aside from these analytic and curatorial uses, every sign points to their obsolescence. By the same token, galleries and museums, bookshops and libraries, concert halls, stages, arenas, and places of worship will be limited to the conservation of antiquities; that is, to what was done in the name of art up to about 1960. | we are not there yet, i guess... |

Agencies for the spread of information via the mass media and for the instigation of social activities will become the new channels of insight and communication, not substituting for the classic “art experience” (however many things that may have been) but offering former artists compelling ways of participating in structured processes that can reveal new values, including the value of fun. | mass media, now coupled with “social” media, have definitely become the “channels of insight and communication,” but since they are essentially profit-driven, i am not sure if this is going towards the “revealing [of] new values, including the value of fun.” btw: fun \approx entertainment (and its industry). the “new” (surplus-)value of the entertainment industry have been quite much in-

tegrated in the attention economy though... a plan that cannot be changed is a bad one... |

In this respect, the technological pursuits of today's nonartists and un-artists will multiply as industry, government, and education provide their resources. | lol | "Systems" technology involving the interfacing of personal and group experiences, instead of "product" technology, will dominate the trend. Software, in other words. But it will be a systems approach that favors an openness toward outcome | open source, in other words?, research-creation processes? (erin manning, brian massumi, *thought in the act*, 2014) black study? (harney, moten, 2013) |, in contrast to the literal and goal-oriented uses now employed by most systems specialists. | i guess that "specialist" are still out there... technologies of the kind mentioned actually do "dominate the trend" in 2021, but since no significant change has taken place in the profit-drivenness, "personal and group experiences" are mostly interfaced *as* "products..." "on the internet [...] consumers become informal producers, limitlessly contributing their life-time and vital activity, not to mention their donations of fixed capital in the form of data-minable devices." (massumi, 2018)... the more things change, the more they stay the same... | As in the childhood pastime "Telephone" (in which friends in a circle whisper a few words into one ear after the other only to hear them come out delightfully different when the last person says them aloud), the feedback loop is the model. | the "feedback loop" we live with nowadays, is one that allows little or no room for "chance." through the sophistication of *algorithms*—which we feed with our personal data—, we are fed back with what we want—what the algorithm architects—"specialists"—presume we want—, in terms of ideas and products. "we live in information silos now. the individual is insulated from outside forces and surrounded by people who think and believe the same things he or she thinks and believes." (simon blackburn, in: sean illing, "a philosopher explains america's 'post-truth' problem", *vox*, august 14, 2018)... if you close one eye, you will not hear everything... | Playfulness and the playful use of technology | could? | suggest a positive in-

terest in acts of continuous discovery. Playfulness can become in the near future a social and psychological benefit.

A global network of simultaneously transmitting and receiving “TV Arcades.” Open to the public twenty-four hours a day, like any washerette. An arcade in every big city of the world. Each equipped with a hundred or more monitors of different sizes from a few inches to wall-scale, in planar and irregular surfaces. A dozen automatically moving cameras (like those secreted in banks and airports, but now prominently displayed) will pan and fix anyone or anything that happens to come along or be in view. Including cameras or monitors if no one is present. People will be free to do whatever they want and will see themselves on the monitors in different ways. A crowd of people may multiply their images into a throng.

But the cameras will send the same images to all other arcades, at the same time or after a programmed delay. Thus what happens in one arcade may be happening in a thousand, generated a thousand times. But the built-in program for distributing the signals, visible and audible, random and fixed, could also be manually altered at any arcade. A woman might want to make electronic love to a particular man she saw on a monitor. Controls would permit her to localize (freeze) the communication within a few TV tubes. Other visitors to the same arcade may feel free to enjoy and even enhance the mad and surprising scramble by turning their dials accordingly. The world could make up its own social relations as it went along. Everybody in and out of touch all at once!

P.S. This is obviously not art, is it some kind of *chatroulette*? I since by the time it was realized, nobody would remember that I wrote it here, thank goodness. I were you afraid, alan? anyway, i guess that you could not imagine how much social relations, in 2021, would be mediated through screens... btw: we are actively looking for other propositions to develop more autonomous and self-organized social relations... “freedom means that human beings organise their social relations on their own without the intervention and mediation of an alienated apparatus.” (krisis-group, *manifesto against labour*, 1999) I

And what about art criticism? What happens to those keen interpreters who are even rarer than good artists? The answer is that in the light of the preceding, critics will be as irrelevant as the artists. Loss of one's vocation,

however, may be only partial, since there is much to be done in connoisseurship and related scholarly endeavors in the universities and archives. And nearly all critics hold teaching posts anyway. Their work may simply shift more toward historical investigation and away from the ongoing scene. | should past and present be opposed that much? all the past died yesterday; the future is born today... |

But some critics may be willing to un-art themselves along with their artist colleagues (who just as often are professors and double as writers themselves). In this case, all their esthetic assumptions will have to be systematically uncovered and dumped, together with all the historically loaded art terminology. Practitioners and commentators—the two occupations will probably merge, one person performing interchangeably—will need an updated language to refer to what is going on. And the best source of this, as usual, is street talk, news shorthand, and technical jargon. | even though the word *technocracy* is considered to have been invented in 1919, and that there was a *technocracy movement* that flourished during the '30s in the u.s.a., i guess that the '70s people did not feel as overwhelmed as we might feel by so-called “apolitical” *technicalities* and “technical jargon.”... only a monkey understands a monkey... |

For example, Al Brunelle, a few years back, wrote of the hallucinogenic surfaces of certain contemporary paintings as “skin freak.” Even though the pop drug scene has changed since, and new words are necessary, and even though this essay is not concerned with paintings, Brunelle’s phrase is much more informative than such older words as *tâche* or *track*, which also refer to a painting’s surface. Skin freaking brought to picture making an intensely vibrating eroticism that was particularly revealing for the time. That the experience is fading into the past simply suggests that good commentary can be as disposable as artifacts in our culture. Immortal words are appropriate only to immortal dreams. | let’s speak *in translation*—we won’t get lost. (camille de toledo, “ce qui est réel, ce qui est matériel...”, in: *les potentiels du temps*, manuela éditions, 2016) |

Jack Burnham, in his *Beyond Modern Sculpture* [New York: Braziller, 1968] is conscious of this need for accurate terms and attempts to replace vitalist, formalist, and mechanistic metaphors with labels from science and technology like *cybernetics*, “responsive systems,” *field*, *automata*, and so forth. Yet these are compromised because the reference is still sculpture and art. To be thorough, such pietistic categories would have to be rejected totally. | aren’t scientific categories a bit “pietistic” too? |

In the long run, criticism and commentary as we know them may be unnecessary. During the recent “age of analysis” when human activity was seen as a symbolic smoke screen that had to be dispelled, explanations and interpretations were in order. But nowadays the modern arts themselves have become commentaries and may forecast the postartistic age. They comment on their respective pasts, in which, for instance, the medium of television comments on the film; a live sound played alongside its taped version comments on which is “real”; one artist comments on another’s latest moves; some artists comment on the state of their health or of the world; others comment on not commenting (while critics comment on all commentaries as I’m commenting here | “as i’m commenting here” |). This may be sufficient.

The most important short-range prediction that can be made has been implied over and over again in the foregoing; that the actual, probably global, environment will engage us in an increasingly participational way. | if constantly scrolling and clicking/touching is considered participation, then yes, we participate more every day—in the above-mentioned *attention economy*. how can we “evade” from *the appearance of participation*? (debord, 1967) how to *really* participate, be active, in the making of the realities *we* wish for?... “think about the already-existing enrichment of being, the already-social quality of time and space.” (hartney, moten, 2013) | The environment will not be the Environments we are familiar with already: the constructed fun house, spook show, window display, store front, and obstacle course. These have been sponsored by art galleries and discotheques. Instead, we’ll act in response to the given natural and urban environments such as the sky, the ocean floor, winter resorts, mo-

tels, the movements of cars, public services, and the communications media...

Preview of a 2001-Visual-of-the-USA-Landscape-Via-Supersonic-Jet. Every seat on the jet is equipped with monitors showing the earth below as the plane speeds over it. Choice of pictures in infrared, straight color, black-and-white; singly or in combination on various parts of the screen. Plus zoom lens and stop-action controls.

Scenes from other trips are retrievable for flashback cuts and contrasts. Past comments on present. Selector lists: Hawaiian Volcanos, The Pentagon, A Harvard Riot Seen When Approaching Boston, Sunbathing on a Skyscraper.

Audio hookup offers nine channels of prerecorded criticism of the American scene: two channels of light criticism, one of pop criticism, and six channels of heavy criticism. There is also a channel for recording one's own criticism on a take-home video cassette documenting the entire trip.

P.S. This, also, is not art, because it will be available to too many people.

I dear alan, i must had some *post scriptums* to this...

p.s. 2 this is not available to too many people since travelling by plane remains expansive for a lot of people;

p.s. 3 we now know how the "environment" reacts to the "supersonic-jet," and it is not pleased;

p.s. 4 couldn't we travel by bike and/or foot?

p.s. 5 "connecting" places ≠ "*connecting*" people—pun un-intended. btw: the *nokia* slogan is quite symptomatic of a certain way—merely esthetical? of considering social relations... after all they took the image from a michelangelo's painting...

p.s. 6 "do something else" (robert filliou, *teaching and learning as performing arts*, 1970) |

Artists of the world, drop out! You | we | have nothing to lose but your | our | professions!

| "no longer call ourselves 'artists,' we now know what the title is worth." (michel guet, "l'artisme considéré comme un des beaux arts sinon le tout", in: *inter* n°87, 2004) |

The Education of the Un-Artist, Part II (1972)

| subjectively annotated |
| (2021) |

Catbirds Mew, Copycats Fly

What can the un-artist do when art is left behind? Imitate life as before. Jump right in. Show others how. | “an inalienable involvement in the world (another world is only possible by virtue of changing this world and not as a castle in the clouds) and [...] the necessity of a self-change, which opens up new fields of possibility (the former ‘creatures’ become themselves potential ‘creators’, specifically and not least of all—and not only among dandies—as creators of themselves).” (stefan nowotny, “immanent effects: notes on cre-activity”, in: gerald rauning, gene ray, ulf wuggenig (eds), *critique of creativity*, 2011) |

The nonart mentioned in part I is an art of resemblance. It is *lifelike*, and “like” points to similarities. Conceptual Art reflects the forms of language and epistemological method; Earthworks duplicate ploughing and excavating techniques or patterns of wind on the sand; Activities replay the operations of organized labor—say, how a highway is made; noise music electronically reproduces the sound of radio static; videotaped examples of Bodyworks look like close-ups of underarm-deodorant commercials.

Ready-made versions of the same genre, identified and usually claimed by artists as their own, are imitations in the sense that the condition “art,” assigned to what has not been art, creates a new something that closely fits the old something. More accurately, it has been *re-created* in

thought without performing or making a physical duplicate. For instance, washing a car.

The entire thing or situation is then transported to the gallery, stage, or hall; or documents and accounts of it are published; or we are taken to it by the artist acting as guide. The conservative practitioner extends Duchamp's gesture of displacing the object or action to the art context, which brackets it as art, whereas the sophisticate needs only art-conscious allies who carry the art bracket ready-made in their heads for instant application anywhere. These moves identify the transaction between model and replica.

Afterward, whatever resembles the Readymade is automatically another Readymade. The circle closes: as art is bent on imitating life, life imitates art. All snow shovels in hardware stores imitate Duchamp's in a museum.

This re-creation in art of philosophical and personal inquiry, the forces of nature, our transformation of the environment, and the tactile and auditory experience of the "electric | digital? | age" does not arise, as could be supposed, out of renewed interest in the theory of art as mimesis. Whether we are talking about close copies, approximations, or analogues, such imitating has no basis in esthetics at all—and that must be its point. But neither is it based on an apprenticeship to fields unfamiliar to art, after which it will be indistinct from politics, manufacturing, or biology. Because nonartists may be attracted intuitively to mimetic behavior already present in these fields and in nature as well, their activity parallels aspects of culture and reality as a whole. | "their activity" is an "aspect of culture and reality as a whole" |

For instance, a small town, like a nation, is an amplified nuclear family. God and the pope (papa) are adult projections of a child's feelings about the divinity of its father. The governance of the church and of heaven and hell in the Middle Ages echoed the workings of secular governments of the time.

The plan of a city is like the human circulatory system, with a heart and major roads called arteries. A computer alludes to a rudimentary brain. A Victorian armchair was shaped like a woman with a bustle, and it actually wore a dress.

Not everything is anthropomorphic. Machines imitate animal and insect forms: airplanes are birds, submarines are fish, Volkswagens are beetles. They also imitate each other. Auto design, in the streamlining of the thirties and the tailfins of the fifties, had the airplane in mind. Kitchen appliances have control panels that look like those in a recording studio. Lipstick containers resemble bullets. Staplers that shoot nails and movie cameras that shoot people and scenes have triggers and are shaped like guns.

Then the rhythms of life and death: we speak of a stock market or a civilization growing and declining, as if each were a living organism. We imagine family history as a tree and trace our ancestors on its limbs. By extension, the grandfather theory of Western history proposes that each generation reacts to its immediate past as a son reacts to his father. Since the past reacted to its past, too, every other generation is alike (Meyer Schapiro, "Nature of Abstract Art," *Marxist Quarterly*, January–March 1937).

The nonhuman world also seems to imitate: fetuses of different species look similar at early stages of development, whereas some butterflies of different species are dissimilar when young but look the same in maturity. Certain fish, insects, and animals are camouflaged to blend with their surroundings. The mockingbird mimics the voices of other birds. The roots of a plant reflect its branches. An atom is a tiny planetary system. Such matchings continue without apparent end, differing only in detail and degree.

The inference that our role may be that of copycat rather than master of nature is no secret to scientists. Quentin Fiore and Marshall McLuhan (in *War and Peace in the Global Village* [New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, 1968], p. 56) quote Ludwig von Bertalanffy on this: "With few exceptions... nature's technology surpasses that of man—to the extent that the traditional relationship between biology and technology was recently reversed: while mechanistic biology tried to explain organic functions in terms of man-made machines, the young science of bionics tries to imitate natural inventions." | the "[even younger] science" of permaculture tries to *walk* with "natural inven-

tions.” “*permaculture*: a system of principles of agricultural, social, political and economical conception which philosophy is to work with, not against, nature [...] as nature usually maintains itself on its own, permaculture is founded on the usage of the smallest negative-entropy to obtain the best results.” (cristian ureña, “permaculture”, in: patricio gil flood (dir), *école du non-travail, notes pour un glossaire*, 2021) |

Imitation of this sort in science or art is a thoughtful affair. Even its frequent wit is profound, sometimes approaching existential trials and proofs. But when it is clear that the most modern of the arts are engaged in imitations of a world continuously imitating itself, art can be taken as no more than an instance of the greater scheme, not as a primary source. The obsolescence of that instance doesn’t discredit the mimetic impulse but spotlights art’s historic role as an isolating discipline at a moment when participation is called for. | “is it the habit that makes an artist keep his language within the bounds of art? or discipline? is it possible that once language is not called art (or literature, whatever that is), it is no longer significant? is it significant as art primarily because of its isolation as art, its separation from life, makes people aware of language in an unexpected and therefore more powerful context? [...] or is it all a synthetic dualism, a synthetic dilemma leading back simply to the problems of one’s intentions to affect the world or not? or how?” (lucy r. lippard, new york, 25 september 1970, in: david lamelas, *publication*, september 1970, in: lucy r. lippard (ed), *six years*, 1972); “if we can see art as about the creation of meaning, why do we have [exhibitions?] isn’t it happening already, always, in and around [us?] but then, perhaps, the exhibition is simply an apparatus for our attention, a means to see and listen, and is there as a necessary support due to our own weaknesses in paying attention in life. perhaps the second part of my project’s title, ‘no [exhibition],’ was about an ideal to life.” (kinmont, 2011) | Leaving the arts is not enough to overcome this obstacle; the task, for oneself and for others, is to restore participation in the natural design through conscious emulation of its nonartistic features. The feeling that one is part of the world would be quite an accom-

plishment in itself, but there's an added payoff: the feedback loop is never exact. As I have said, something new comes out in the process—knowledge, well-being, surprise, or, as in the case of bionics, useful technology. | a definition of “useful” would be definitely useful. Sometimes there is a fine line between “useful technology” and “comfort-technology-not-necessarily-necessary”, or “gadget”... to change and to improve are two different things... |

Everywhere as Playground

When the un-artist copies what's going on outside of art, or copies a less visible “nature in her manner of operation” (Coomaraswamy), it doesn't have to be a somber business. That would be too much like work. It's to be done with gusto, wit, fun; it's to be play.

Play is a dirty word. Used in the common sense of frolic, make-believe, and an attitude free of care for moral or practical utility, it connotes for Americans and many Europeans idleness, immaturity, and the absence of seriousness and substance. It is perhaps even harder to swallow than *imitation*, with its challenge to our tradition of the new and original. But (as if to compound the indiscretion) scholars since the time of Plato have noted a vital link between the idea of play and that of imitation. Besides its sophisticated role in ritual, instinctive imitation in young animals and humans takes the form of play. Among themselves, the young mimic their parents' movements, sounds, and social patterns. | “art” as a collection of proposals for “movements, sounds, and social patterns?”—“process seeds [...] meant to *disseminate* [...] an open, dissipative system.” (massumi, 2018) p.s.: “the young” are not the only who “mimic [...] social patterns...” | We know with some certainty that they | we? | do this to grow and survive. But they | we? | play without that conscious intention, apparently, and their | our? | only evident reason is | might be? | the pleasure it gives them | us? |. Thus they | we? | feel close to, and become part of, the grown-up community | or just “*the* community?” |.

For adults in the past, imitative ceremony was play that brought them closer to reality in its more felt or transcendent aspect. Johan Huizinga writes in the first chapter of his valuable book *Homo Ludens* [Boston: Beacon, 1951] that the

“ritual act” represents a cosmic happening, an event in the natural process. The word “represents,” however, does not cover the exact meaning of the act, at least not in its looser, modern connotation; for here “representation” is really *identification* of the event. The rite produces the effect which is then not so much *shown figuratively* as actually *reproduced* in the action. The function of the rite, therefore, is far from being merely imitative; it causes the worshippers to participate in the sacred happening itself.

In the same chapter he says:

As Leo Frobenius puts it, archaic man *plays* the order of nature as imprinted on his consciousness. In the remote past, so Frobenius thinks, man first assimilated the phenomena of vegetation and animal life and then conceived an idea of time and space, of months and seasons, of the course of the sun and the moon. And now he plays this great processional order of existence in a sacred play, in and through which he actualizes anew, or “recreates” the events represented and thus helps maintain the cosmic order. Frobenius draws even more far-reaching conclusions from this “playing at nature.” He deems it the starting point of all social order and social institutions, too. | what about the “social order and social institutions” that comes from “playing at nature,” when “nature” is a (male-white-cis-het-)human-made historical construct? “we speak of a *stock market* or a *civilization* growing and declining, *as if each were a living organism...*” especially since the *renaissance*, which thoughts about “nature” are crystallized in the *discourse on method* written by descartes in 1637, “nature” is considered as a “resource” for humans to model through “culture.” this rhetoric is used to legitimate mentalities in which “natural” ressources—including humans—are open for exploitation and alienation. (claude calame, “pour dépasser l’opposition nature/culture: une perspec-

tive anthropologique et altermondialiste”, in: *les possibles* n°3, spring 2014) what sort of “social order and social institutions” can possibly come from “playing at [white-cis-het-human-made-and-exploited-and-alienated-concept-of] nature?” for example: “speaking about ‘the economy’ *as if it were a self-sufficient system* with set ‘needs’ that must dictate life, and must be given precedence in governmental reasoning, is to ignore its status as an apparatus of capture [...]” (massumi, 2018)... the taller the “tree” the harder the fall... |

Representational play is thus as instrumental, or ecological, as it is sacred. Huizinga, shortly after commenting on Frobenius, quotes Plato’s *Laws*:

“God alone is worthy of supreme seriousness, but man is God’s play-thing and that is the best part of him. Therefore, every man and woman should live life accordingly, and play the noblest games and be of another mind from what they are at present.” [Plato condemns war and continues] “Life must be lived at play, playing certain games, making certain sacrifices, singing and dancing, and then a man will be able to propitiate the gods and defend himself against his enemies and win the contest.” | do we really need this injunctive rhetoric of hierarchy, subordination, militarism, sacrifice and agonism to talk about “play?” let’s talk how we (want to) eat... “the invention of an anarcho-communist alter-economy would not only have to *eschew the market* as an organizing principle but conscientiously build in mechanisms to *actively ward away* the return of its constitutive tendencies.” (massumi, 2018)... and this also valid for any alter-oppressive proposition, i guess... |

Huizinga goes on to ask: “How far [do] such sacred activities as proceed within the forms of play [i.e., mimetic forms] also proceed in the attitudes and mood of play?”

He answers: “Genuine and spontaneous play can also be profoundly serious... The joy inextricably bound up with playing can turn not only into tension, but into elation. Frivolity and ecstasy are the twin poles between which play moves.”

Sports, feasts, and parties on holidays (holy days) are no less sacred for being enjoyable.

It's been observed often enough that nowadays we have no sacred rituals left that have even the remotest representational, and therefore propitiative, function that anyone can observe, much less feel. Only in such sports as surfing, motorcycle racing, and sky diving; in social protests such as sit-ins; and in gambles against the unknown such as moon landings do we approximate them unofficially. I but couldn't we "gamble" on the end of anthropo-occidentalo-centered-neoliberal-authoritarian-patriarcal-heteronormative-racist-(post/neo?)colonial-extr-activist-capitalism? it would still be a "gamble against the unknown," as far as i know... btw: i might have forgotten some epithets... s:he who does not know one thing knows another... I And for most of us these experiences are acquired indirectly, through television I and all sort of screens I. We participate alone, immobilized.

The imitative activity of modern adults outlined earlier is probably instinctive, like children's. Like children's, it also ranges from being unconscious, as I would guess the feminizing of furniture was in the Victorian era, to being deliberate and conscious in the case of certain artists and scientists today. But in general it is haphazard and occasional, a specialized function of professions concerned with other matters. The designer of an atomic submarine doesn't think he's Jonah making a whale for himself, even though he may know that predecessors studied whales and fish and their aquadynamics. The maker of an Apollo rocket may be familiar with popular Freudian symbolism, but he isn't mainly out to create an erect penis. Neither is he out mainly to have fun. I though the penis shape of bezos' rocket was sarcastically/depressingly fun to watch... I

"Serious" practicalities, competition, money, and other sobering considerations get in the way. Such discontinuity and specialization produce a sense of separation from the whole of life and also veil the imitative activity along with the enjoyment that might be had from it. The result is not play; it is work.

Work, Work, Work

Epworth, England (UPI)—Minutes after a gang of workmen had placed a new layer of tar on the main street of this small Midlands town, another gang of workmen appeared and began digging it up. “It’s just a coincidence that both gangs were working at the same time,” a local official said. “Both jobs had to be done.”

—New York Times, *circa December 1970*

Runner

St. Louis, Missouri, Washington University—(1st day) A mile of tar-paper is unrolled along the shoulder of a road. Concrete blocks are placed on the paper every twenty feet. (2nd day) Procedure is repeated in reverse, second layer of tarpaper laid over first. Again repeated in opposition direction. (3rd day) Tarpaper and concrete blocks removed.

—*Activity, A.K., February 9-11, 1968*

Imitation as practiced by nonart artists may be a way of approaching play on a modern yet transcendent plane, which, because it is intellectual—or better, *intelligent* | *way better* |—can be enjoyed by adults afraid of being childish. Just as children’s imitative play may be a survival ritual, this could be a stratagem for the survival of society. In the passage from art to un-art the artist’s talent | ? | for revealing the interchangeability of things could be made available to “civilization and its discontents”—in other words, could be used for bringing together what has been taken apart.

But if all the secular world’s a potential playground, the one taboo against playing in it is our addiction to the idea of work. Work cannot be banished by fiat; it must be replaced by something better | *something else?* |. To guess at how that may be done requires an examination of the meaning of work in our society—even if with minimal expertise. One thing is clear: the concept of work is incompatible with that of play, childlike or holy.

Home Work

Western Europe and the United States, in the course of industrialization, developed a practical life-style of self-sacrifice for the purpose of growing and fattening machines. Perhaps evolved initially as a middle-class “con job” on laborers, it soon conned the con men. Work and pain were internalized as truths on high; they were right for the soul, if not exactly for the body (since that passed into the machine). | capitalism—with all previously mentioned epithets, and also those forgotten—is a “machine.” we all are “fattening” this “machine.” and this “machine” is starving us—souls and bodies... when i say “us,” i don’t mean to include all of the (not)human-(not)beings, since some of them—apparently circa 1% or so of the total humans—actually eat quite good meals... and, now that i’ve written this, i am thinking that most likely, no “humans actually eating quite good meals” will ever read this... “the imperatives of production are the imperatives of survival; from now on, people want to live, not just to survive” (raoul vaneigem, *the revolution of everyday life*, 1967) ... people still “want to live,” i guess... |

But the picture has changed. | as it? | Industrialization has accomplished its purpose, and we live in the “global village” of communicational contact, with all the new insights and problems this entails. | for example, the problem of *the appearance* of “contact?” is this the “purpose” accomplished? | The issue now is not production but distribution; it is not even simple distribution but the quality and organic effects of distribution. And what matters is the quality and distribution, not of goods alone, but also of services. | of everything... |

Farming, mining, and manufacturing in this country, largely mechanized, each year require fewer additional workers to implement steadily rising levels of output. It is probable that the work force will level off and then drop sharply with increasing automation. | rather than “largely mechanized”—or “largely” automatized—those process are “largely” externalized to lesser visible parts of the world and/or the society... out of sight, out of mind... couldn’t we “just” lower the levels of both “input” and “output?”... out of mind, i guess... | In contrast, the ex-

panding service industries, consisting mainly of people | so-called “*human ressources*,” or “*human capital*” (massumi, 2018) | rather than goods and equipment, now represent about 50 percent of the nation’s employed and are expected to increase to 70 percent of the total work force in the next few decades (*Fortune*, March 1970, p. 87). | between 1991 and 2019 the percentage of people employed in “services” has passed from 72 to 78 of total employed people in the usa, and from 34 to 54 at world scale. (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.SRV.EMPL.ZS>). here we are! btw: “*human ressources*” are still part of the “work force...” “immaterial workers are [...] alienated strangers connected by digital technologies until they make it otherwise. the instructions they receive should inform them that part of their work is to create more work, create their work, even though there is already a surplus of labor itself.” (bureau for open culture, *a manual for the immaterial worker*, 2011), since “an individual is human capital to the extent that it manages to locally embody the overall movement of capital.” (massumi, 2018)... |

But services—they include local and federal government, transportation, utilities, and communications as well as trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and the professions—services are themselves changing. | always never changing... | Menial and domestic workers and other routine service workers such as mail carriers, mechanics, maids, clerks, bus drivers, and insurance agents hold jobs with little growth potential; none have significant social status, all pay rather poorly, and there is little or no inherent interest in them as vocations. In a period of large-scale mobility, physical and social, they appear to be dead ends, vaguely implying that those performing such jobs are themselves dead. | “vaguely imply that those performing such jobs are” *killed* by those jobs? “the duty to produce alientates the passion for creation.” (vaneigem, 1967) |

All the while billboards, magazines, and television sets beckon everyone to the good life of adventurous travel, sex, and eternal youth; the U.S. president himself dedicates his government to improving the “quality of life.” Labor unions strike not only for higher wages but

also for better conditions and fringe benefits, shorter hours and longer paid vacations. Enjoyment and renewal for everyone. Given these pressures, it is probable that many of the drudgery occupations will eventually be automated along with industry, while others will simply disappear as workers abandon them. | leaving alone the so-called “automatization,” i guess that it is difficult for “workers” to “abandon” what they might need—which is more often *money* than *work*... and “tomorrow they will deck out their five hours of necessary wear and tear with a time of ‘creativity’ which will grow just as fast as they can fill it with the impossibility of creating anything (the famous ‘leisure explosion’).” (vanegheim, 1967)... “a combination of the technology, the social and the physical collide into a totality that makes the life of the immaterial worker fully consumed by work. the baggage is light for this worker. they can work anywhere because their production line tools are the screen, the phone, the keyboard and of course the mind, don’t forget the ideas. the work they do, however, is intangible and the production line continual, unchanging without any real evidence of the time that has ticked away from morning, afternoon, evening, to night and dawn again. all that is solid melts into air.” (bureau for open culture, 2011) “the potential of the economy is ultimately life potential. [...] capital has its invisible hand on the pulse of life.” (massumi, 2018) ... |

The more modern services, however, such as corporate management, scientific and technologic research, environmental improvement, communications, planning consultation, social dynamics, the wide field of mass education, and international, outer-space, and undersea law, are growing at an exponential rate. They are vital occupations with seemingly unlimited possibilities for development (therefore for personal development); they offer global travel and fresh experiences; they pay well and their status is considerable. | they certainly grew, especially when driven by “corporate management” and fed with corporate food. corporate food, and it’s administrators/managers, aims to make people shit money while decomposing the vital organs inside of them. the administrators/managers than take the shit—money—and

feed back to the people a very little bit of it, so that they can maintain the illusion that we need them—it, *money*, “corporate food...” they are so kind to us... thanks... but no thanks—no banks?... “money is not just a social relation. it is the operator of a power relation that is a constitutive factor of society—but more than that, of life. money arrogates life powers to itself. (cooper 2008)” (massumi, 2018) i would also add that we know now that “personal development” is a quite poetical metaphor for acknowledging that one is a “*human ressource/capital*” that needs to be developped in order to extract a whole lot of cash from it, all the while one feels s/he is fullfilled—filled with good thoughts, just like the road to hell’s paving... “we all want to believe that we are free from the products of capital. yet the instability of the immaterial worker’s presence, of their daily relation to time, makes the necessity for material things crucial to the ownership and control of the everyday.” (bureau for open culture, 2011)... |

Whereas routine services are merely necessary, the new services are important. Routine services steadily require less of a worker’s total time, thanks to machines and legislation; although the new services actually take up more time, they function in more flexible and, in a sense, “growing” time. Time that is merely filled is debasing, but time that is flexible and personalized is released time. | “*flexibility*: a term associated with neoliberalism, or that has rather been stolen by neoliberalism. we wished [still do] to have the possibility of choosing when and where to do our activities and how to use our time. the problem is that the legal framing takes the decisional power from the people, and puts it in the hands of bosses who exploit our time in favour of the accumulation of capital.” (patricio gil flood, “flexibilitisation”, in: patricio gil flood (dir), 2021)... in their book *the new spirit of capitalism*, luc boltanski and ève chiapello analyze how the corpo/managerial ideology has “learned” from counter-discourses and integrated the notions of “autonomy” and “flexibility”—“theoretically” raised from an “artistical” critique of capitalism—into a “new spirit of capitalism...” what does not kill it makes it stronger? | The ability to move, in space, hours, and mind, is | supposed to be | a measure of liberation. As more young peo-

ple demand and receive extensive educations, the ranks of the modern services will swell, the public appetite to consume what they offer will increase, and the world will continue to change—while quite possibly its moral base will remain rooted in the past: work. | ah... that's where we at, definitely... do "consume" and "work" go together? btw: "work" can "consume" one's mind and body, i guess... "consume, work, and shut-your-mouth" (french shouting sang during protests by probably-anti-capitalist-minded people)... though i don't really like the affirmative tone of this chanting, as all we wanted to do was "shut-our-mouth," "consume," and "work..." |

Work ? For nearly everyone, the work-week has been reduced to five days. Workdays are shortened regularly, holiday periods lengthened. The four-day week is being increasingly tried out, and a three-day week has been predicted. | maybe i—we?—missed it? | Even if this last prediction is a bit utopian | ah! |, the psychological expectation is popular and affects performance on the job. | shouldn't we rather dis-affect "performance?" | As a result, the meaning of work is becoming | could become? | unclear since steady pressure is felt to eliminate it or falsify it if it can't be eliminated.

The issue is traditionally fought out by big business (that is, the produce, goods, transportation, and basic service industries) and by labor unions, which still represent the bulk of the country's work force. Let's say business wants to automate and scrap expensive payrolls. That decision may mean a shorter workweek, which in turn may cost thousands their jobs and society more than it can afford in a chain reaction. The results are rarely self-evident. Labor steps in immediately and insists on work crews when one worker or none at all is needed. Management suffers by being prevented from modernizing | they "modernized" quite a lot... 1999: "the new spirit of capitalism;" 2021: "'uber' über alles..." |; labor suffers by doing patently dishonest | bullshit? dead-ended? | work. | "life activity is maximally channeled in keeping with the demands of capitalism's self-driving. life activity becomes maximally subsumed under the capitalist process. the reductive effect is to convert the individual into an embodied *quantum of capital*, living to appropriate its own

punctual profits (predominantly in the form of a yearly salary or an hourly wage). [...] the individual generates private profit as part of a conversion cycle between its activity in the field of life and the system-wide quantification process. [...] the individual life is now a *degree of capitalism* participating in capitalism's systemic power to animate itself (its self-driving dynamisme; its machinistic vitalism)." (massumi, 2018)... | It amounts to this: neither business nor labor is particularly interested in extolling leisure time | or in "building the civilization of free time?" (andré gorz, "bâtir la civilisation du temps libéré", in: *le monde diplomatique*, march 1993) |; they want to make money, and money is a token of work. Labor will accept shorter hours if management pays for them, but when a reduced work-week means forfeiting jobs or hard-won guaranteed overtime pay, labor will oppose the change (as in fact it does; see, e.g., *Newsweek*, August 23, 1971, p. 63). Hence the concept "work," maintained artificially, can only elicit the most cynical responses in society. | cynically enough, one of the responses given—by either (neo)liberals and (neo?)socialists— to this less-work-more-money situation is "universal income." this concept could be traced back to thomas more's *utopia* (1516), and it was deeply studied by (neo)liberal economist and *nobel prize* winner (1976) milton friedman... "we certainly have in front of us the possibility of a sacro-sanct battle for the claiming of income, as the precarious have been doing for at least the last twenty years, and as the more 'enlightened' capitalist elites have been suggesting for some time, *in view of a restart of the production/consumption cycle*, suspended during the years of crisis. having said that, i think that this is not enough [...] what seems to be more appropriate to me, for the current phase, is an equally radical change in the way we look at work." (anna curcio, "lavoro, non lavoro, gratuità", in: *archivio-commonware.org*, 6 november 2017) |

The arts are among the last high-status vestiges of the handicraft and cottage industries. It is curious to note how deeply tied they are to the idea of labor. Artists *work* at their paintings and poems; out of this sweat come *works* of art. Following the Russian revolution, artists everywhere began call-

ing themselves *workers*, no different from those in factories. Today, the political reformist Art Workers Coalition, in its name and some of its rhetoric, continues to appeal to the rallying values of “the people” and “an honest day’s work.” Art, like work, is quaint. | the working “rhetoric” is still present today. for exemple, since 2008, a non-profit organization named “working artists and the greater economy” (w.a.g.e.) draws upon that line of talk. there are other exemples in other countries... i am not quite sure if the word “work” is used as an ideological token... or for lack of a better term... or if it is employed so that decision-makers can understand something, since their language is generally narrow(minded)... he who wants to talk with the dogs must learn to bark... it seems quite sure that the usage of this term recalls of “class struggle,” thus the idealized-aestheticized-ideal of “revolution...” but at the same time, since “work” is related to “alienation” and “exploitation,” by calling artists-ourselves?–“workers,” do we want to become “alienated” and “exploited”–if we aren’t already... talk of the devil and he’ll appear... or maybe: “granting artists the status of workers would overturn the prevalling work ethic, the pre-supposition of the necessity of it, the desirability of work, and would oppose the idea of drudgery and utility as legitimising an income.” (julien marmet, “rémunération”, in: patricio gil flood (dir), 2021) ??? anyways... “our resistances to capital and power today must endeavor to embody embrionically the qualities that will caracterize the post-capitalist future. the immediate task is to craft *temporary autonomous zones* that might release postcapitalist potential into the wild, to proliferate.” (massumi, 2018)... *un-art*, like *un-work*, could be *fun*... |

In contrast to this work ethic, our underlying attitudes toward life goals are shifting, and not in work habits alone. The “fun market”—entertainment, recreation, tourism—according to *Look* magazine (July 29, 1970, p. 25), amounts to about \$150 billion a year and is forecast to reach \$250 billion by 1975, “outrunning all the rest of the economy.” | “fun is a kind of surplus-value of life that is well known to neoliberal capitalism and well-articulated with it, even to the point of fulfilling a regulatory function in the life of human capital (spawning whole industries: the entertainment sector).” (massumi, 2018)... “the u.s. travel and tourism industry generated over \$1.6 trillion in economic output in 2017.” (selectusa.gov)... “the u.s. ‘media and entertainment (m&e) industry’ is the

largest in the world. at \$717 billion, it represent a third of the global m&e industry [...] the u.s. industry is expected to reach more than \$823 billion by 2023.” btw: isn’t it strange that in m&e, “me” is separated? | But to atone for this indulgence, the American public permitted its government in 1970 to spend more than \$73 billion, or 37 percent of its annual budget, on war and armaments (confidently spurred on by a global outlay, in 1969, of some \$200 billion). In fact, according to Senator Vance Hartke in a report to the Senate Finance Committee, our military outlay was about \$79 billion in 1968 and has been rising at a yearly rate of 12 percent since 1964; with this rate of increase, military spending in 1971 will be \$107.4 billion (*Vista*, March—April 1970, p. 52). | “u.s. military spending/defense budget for 2019 was \$731.75b, a 7.22% increase since 2018.” (macrotrends.net) |

The State is our outspoken conscience. Fun, it seems, is not yet fun; it has hardly diverted us from the common “weekend neurosis,” which leaves us anxious to play but unable. | “commodities are not only things or external realities. they are also what occupies us by carrying injunctions relative to our way of spending time. (pierre bazantay, yves hélias, “génèse de la banalyse, ou ceci n’est pas une œuvre”, in: *Éléments de banalyse*) | More atonement for trying. It’s abundantly clear that we don’t want to work but feel we should. | sigh... | So we brood and fight.

Playing really is sinning. Every day hundreds of books, films, lectures, seminars, sensitivity sessions, and articles gravely acknowledge our worries over our incapacity to freely enjoy anything. But such commentaries, when they offer help, offer the wrong kind by reciting the standard formula: *work* at sex, *work* at play. | “i watch american series and virtually transform myself into a passionate worker, i am the detective who doesn’t need a social life, the doctor who lives in the hospital and studies strange cases at night to save a terminal phase patient, i am the boxer who surpasses himself and never stops training; the lawyer with perfect rhetoric who builds irrefutable arguments. i am that focused being, created to do and to be that and only that. a professional. entertainment is a form of work worship. in the language of enter-

tainment, passion, close to obsession, is a good thing if it is focused on work.” (lucas daglio, “divertissement”, in: patricio gil flood (dir), 2021) “power manufactures the dose of fatigue necessary for the passive assimilation of its televised diktats.” (vanergeim, 1967) “life activity is channeled towards modes of existence and manners of relation propitious for the generation of profit. [...] power formations are *apparatuses of capture*.” (massumi, 2018) | To help, they’d have to urge a wholesale revision of our commitment to labor and guilt, which they won’t do. We live by a scarcity mentality in a potentially surplus economy. | “potentially”?! | With time on our hands that we cannot infuse into our personal lives, we damn ourselves, as we’ve been taught, for wasting time. | “to let ourselves stroll randomly, to get lost in a city that we know, to give time to a conversation that endlessly falls apart, to forget an appointment, to prolong insomnia until the morning, to reconcile ourselves for a while with our ghosts - these are so many moments that we tear away from a bonding economy that we would like to regulate as much as our ‘schedule’.” (in: *work less to read more* [...], 2015) |

Basically, our way of life, reflected in our love life as well as in our foreign policy, believes in the way things used to be. As long ago as the writing of the Declaration of Independence, an ambivalence toward pleasure was hinted at in the salute to our right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” The “pursuit” part of it seems to have occupied most of our time, implying that happiness is only a dream... | “ontopower takes processual precedence over biopower, with its intensified powers of production: its power to flush life out, inciting it into taking its own form, boosting it to self-produce as human capital (the word ‘produce’ here takes on similar connotations as carried by the word ‘producer’ in the entertainment industry). human capital, at its intensest, is the most direct mode of capture of the movements of excess fostered by ontopower.” (massumi, 2018)... the future—we—struggles against being mastered... | We struggle not to struggle.

Playing and Gaming

The nation's education system must take much of the responsibility for perpetuating and championing what's wrong with us: our values, the goods and bads, the dos and don'ts. Educators in the twentieth century, we all know, operate in loco parentis. Principals and deans like to say the Latin words reassuringly because they know how nearly impossible it is for mothers and fathers to bring up their children, with all their time consumed in motion on the highways, shopping, vacationing, and working. And, besides, like everyone, parents are specialists at whatever they do. So they depend on other specialists, the educators, to do what they can't and worry that TV is doing a better job than both. I not quite sure if it is doing a "better" job... but the tv "specialists"—plus all the "specialists" of any kind of mass-social-media-that-should-definitely-not-be-called-social—are definitely doing something with bigger impact than "education"—and it may rhyme with *-ation*... since those medias have an impact on our consciousness, they have an impact on our subjectivation process—how we see ourselves in the world we see ourselves in... shouldn't we consider some alternatives? |

Consider what happens to children after the age of five or six. At first, they enjoy school, often beg to go. The teacher appears to like it too. Both the teacher and the children play. But by the first or second grade, Dick and Jane discover that learning and winning a place in the world are not child's play at all but hard, often dreadfully dull work.

That value underscores nearly all educational programs. "Work hard, and you'll get ahead" is a guide not only for students but for educators. "Ahead" means being head man. Authoritarianism closes out play's inviting role and substitutes the competitive game. The threat of failure and dismissal for not being strong hangs over every individual from college president to school superintendent on down.

Students compete for grades, teachers for the well-behaved class, principals for higher budgets. Each performs the ritual of the game according to strict rules, sometimes

artfully, but the fact remains that the many are striving
for what only the few may have: power.

Calendar

planting a square of turf
amid grass like it

planting another
amid grass a little less green

planting four more squares
in places progressively drier

planting a square of dry turf
amid grass like it

planting another
amid grass a little less dry

planting four more squares
in places progressively greener

*—Activity, A.K., California
Institute of the Arts,
November 2, 1971*

In spite of, and perhaps because of, the disclosures of Freud and other psychologists, the games people play are played to win. The forms of sports, chess, and other diversions are symbolically akin | directly related? | to the forms of business, love, and battle. | after all, “what is love? / baby, *don’t hurt me / don’t hurt me*, no more” (had-daway, 1993)... certified gold in the usa with more than 500,000 sales (wikipedia)... “business, love and battle...” | Huizinga’s classic *Homo Ludens*, quoted before, richly documents the pervasiveness of such transferences. As direct play is denied to adults and gradually discouraged in children, the impulse to play emerges not in true games alone, but in unstated ones of power and deception; people find themselves playing less with each other than on or off each other.

A child plays his mother off against his father, using affection as the game’s reward. In the game of interna-

tional diplomacy, a strong nation plays at helping weaker ones to gain their political subordination and to force the hand of competitors. A young executive on the way up plays off one company's offer of advancement against another's. In the same spirit, a large business stimulates and plays on the public's appetites in its advertising campaigns, gambling against the similar tactics of an entire industry. War itself is the play of generals, whose rehearsals are appropriately called war games. As civilization lives to compete and competes to live, it is no accident that education in most parts of the world is deeply involved in games of aggressive struggle. Education plays at ignoring or denying such struggle (substituting the metaphors of democracy | so-called meritocracy |) while perfecting its forms and encouraging participation in it in every classroom exercise (take, for an example, one of its pleasanter diversions, the spelling bee).

Those who plan public instruction programs need first to learn, and then to celebrate, the idea of play—but play as inherently worthwhile, play stripped of game theory, that is, of winners and losers. Huizinga, writing and lecturing in the thirties in an economically depressed and politically unstable Europe, finally publishing his book in Switzerland during World War II, could not easily have imagined the social potentials of play without contest. For Huizinga, play in the form of the agon was a way of discharging and clarifying violence and unreason. Although he and earlier theorists, from Kant and Schiller to Lange and Groos, acknowledged pure play, they did not believe it to be enough by itself; it was “primitive” and needed the “higher” forms of tragic awareness that games (and art seen as a game) provided. Today, the conditions are different, and it is obvious that agonistic games, no matter how ritualized, are testimonials to the forces they would sublimate. Anyone who has seen *Berlin Olympiade*, Leni Riefenstahrs great film on the 1936 Olympic games, needs no persuasion. Through art and sport, it powerfully persuaded viewers that a master race was the prize of perpetual struggle.

Similarly, the real substance and the stimulus of our “fun market,” particularly in entertainment and sportive recreation, are superstars, record sales, popularity ratings,

prizes, getting someplace first, catching the biggest fish,
beating the house at Las Vegas. Some fun!

Charity
buying piles of old clothes

washing them
in all-night laundromats

giving them back
to used-clothing stores

—Activity, A.K.,
Berkeley Unified School District,
March 7, 1969

This critical difference between gaming and playing cannot be ignored. Both involve free fantasy and apparent spontaneity, both may have clear structures, both may (but needn't) require special skills that enhance the playing. Play, however, offers satisfaction, not in some stated practical outcome, some immediate accomplishment, but rather in continuous participation as its own end. | “something that is *lived for its own sake*; something that is *a value in and of itself, in the unexchangeable ‘currency’ of experience.*” (massumi, 2018) | Taking sides, victory, and defeat, all irrelevant in play, are the chief requisites of game. In play one is carefree; in a game one is anxious about winning.

Making the world carefree, converting a work ethic into one of play, would mean giving up our sense of urgency (time is money) and not approaching play as one more political game, for that would contradict what is done. We can't say we game not to game: is exactly what we've been doing with our Judeo-Christian virtues and democratic ideals all along.

Gymnastics, surfing, long-distance running, glider flying are among those sports sometimes practiced apart from competition, and almost approach the condition of play. In each, an ideal is probably internalized and acts in lieu of an opponent; but this motive for developing skills and intense involvement falls considerably short of the combat mentality that most sports, such as football, de-

pend on. Generally, coaches and gym teachers conduct their professions with military zeal and sometimes murderous discipline. But a new breed, more philosophical and pleasure-oriented, could use noncompetitive sports | or activities |, and their resemblances to the movements of animals, fish and airborne seedlings, as departures for the invention by students of fresh activity devoid of win-lose possibility. | “having an improvisational edge is what defines play. play should not be confined to any already-recognized arena conventionally designated as a play space within the existing norms of society.” (massumi, 2018) |

It is not the history of crimes committed in the name of ideas that needs to be noted but the perfectly well meant, sympathetic “good works” of humankind implied by expressions like “good, clean sport,” “a clean bomb,” “a just war,” “fighting spirit,” and “free enterprise.” It is the connivance, bought votes, and wheeler-dealing necessary to pass every enlightened law on civil rights, abortion reform, or job opportunity. This particular mode of deferred gratification, excused as transcendent competition or a necessary evil, has caused us to practice the exact opposite of what we preach.

A typical example of innovative learning in high school is the simulation game. Students in a class studying international politics assume roles as the leaders of certain nations. They act out local news reports, gather “intelligence” from political journals, and spy on one another; they try to work out deals, exert various forms of pressure, use “public forums” such as their own press or their version of the UN; they figure the mathematical odds on every proposed move, attempt trickery and deception—and in general try to win power for the country they represent. The teacher acts as observer-referee and keeps score. Such lifelike education has proved effective, especially for the sons and daughters of white affluent parents | lol :(|. It closely parallels training programs given by industry and government to their most promising elite in top management, the diplomatic corps, and the military.

The issue is obviously an educational one. Education can help change the system, given enough time and money. | time and money are as linked as “time is money”

and “buying time...” curiously enough, “money is time” is not a current expression... how could we “un-link” money from our *open subjectivities* (os)? btw: “in unix-like *operating systems* [os], *unlink* is a system call and a command line utility to delete files.” (thefreedictionary.com)... so let’s *unlink* money... though i guess that we more likely are living in a ios/macOS unix-like system rather than in a gnu/linux one... “in the postcapitalist future, *time is not money*. it is life.” (massumi, 2018) | Neither parents nor neighborhoods nor communes that sentimentalize work in simple, controllable forms of sharing can so measurably affect values. In education are included not only schools but also education’s most persuasive and timely teachers, the mass media—television, radio, film, magazines, billboards—and the leisure industry | and “social”-media |. All that’s needed is their commitment. | or some sort of hack-ternatives... or any other means of counter/alter-subjection... |

But sadly, the media and the leisure industry are unlikely prospects for help | duh... |. They are dominated by quick-profit interests, even while their technologies are developed by men and women of uncommon imagination. At present they offer only token “community services,” forced on them by government and the tax structure. Asking their representatives to commit expensive facilities and choice exposure to the promotion of playfulness would be futile; they would have to be shown that consumerism is the highest kind of play. | maybe they already understood it on their own... after all, to remain in the language of plays, someone wrote in 1971 that “the random trancelike movements of shoppers in a supermarket are richer than anything done in modern dance...” |

The better bet is still the public schools, hidebound in habit, bureaucracy, and janitors as they are. Principals and teachers are more likely than members of the business community to consider implementing changes in human values. Traditionally | ideally? |, they | we? | have viewed their vocation as performing a positive, even innovative, social function. Although eventually schools as we know them may give way to the technology of mass communication and recreation, instruction in play can

begin in kindergarten and teachers college. I for the moment, the most “advanced steps” towards this “giving away to the technology of mass communication” seems to consist in isolating individuals—i.e. *zoom* meetings... and i am not sure if it has a really good impact—except when it comes to lower the logistical charges for “service-providers...” and i am also not sure if “recreation” and “instruction” are really compatible... maybe (re)creating ourselves together would be a good option-without-instruction? let’s not turn fun into mischief... I

To foster play as a foundation of society, long-term experimentation would be essential, say twenty-five years minimum, with assessments every five years. I or without assessments? I The usual, loudly touted, flash-in-the-pan welfare programs, tailored to changing political administrations, would be out of the question. Financing would have to come variously from state education commissions, major public-minded foundations, industry, and private individuals, all utilizing tax programs and allowances as inducements more fully than they presently do. I unfortunately, most “foundations” are not really “public-minded...” though those are generally attracted by the mind of the public—i.e. (art-as-green-as-educational)washing— and by public funds—i.e. “tax programs and allowances...” “public-minded foundations” often come from all sorts of industrious, thus productive, background... everything should be profitable after all... and where profit is, loss is hiding nearby... I

At the same time, the non-artists now populating the globe, who continue to believe they are part of the Old Church of Art, might think about how unfulfilling their position is and how by un-artering, that is, dropping out of the faith, they might direct their gifts toward those who can use them: everyone. Their example would be a model to younger colleagues I “your own ideals seems so out of reach.” (kill your idols, “hardcore circa 2002”, in: *kill your idols*, 2002) I, who could then begin to train for constructive I hack-ternative? I roles in elementary and secondary public education. Those under twenty-five today tend to feel keenly about performing some humanitarian service I (socially) meaningful activity? I, but among vanguard artists the desire is frustrated by a profession lacking in-

herent utility. The proposed alternative not only eliminates this problem but also avoids the disaster of populist solutions that watered down and ruined major talents in Soviet Russia and Europe and in the United States in the thirties.

Not enough has been made of the drawbacks in art's celebrated uselessness. Utopian visions of society aided or run by artists have failed because art itself has failed as a social instrument. Since the Renaissance, art has been a discipline of privacy, the testament of the outsider in the midst of expanding urbanization. I when the "outsider" has not helped, consciously or not, to *outside* others in areas of "expanding urbanization..." (anna francis, "art-washing' gentrification is a problem—but vilifying the artists involved is not the answer", in: *fad magazine*, april 2018)... not "vilifying," but at least questioning... I That the crowd is lonely I isolated? I in its own way does not give the artist an audience or political role, since the crowd does not want to be reminded of the depth of its unhappiness and cannot resolve it I ain't we a bit classist here alan? I, as the artist does, by inventing countless personal cosmologies. I are "artists" necessarily happier? maybe un-artists are? I Nor does the artist-seer, like William Blake, automatically know how to settle wage disputes and pollution problems. The separation has been complete, like that of the soul from the body.

Only when active artists willingly cease to be artists can they convert their abilities, like dollars into yen, into something the world can spend: play. Play as currency. We can best learn to play by example, and un-artists can provide it. In their new job as educators I or without jobs? I, they need simply play as they once did under the banner of art, but among those who do not care about that. Gradually, the pedigree "art" will recede into irrelevance.

I suspect that static words, particularly names, are greater deterrents than social customs to the changes brought about by such nonverbal forces as jet transportation. Adjustment to the new state of affairs is slowed down by keeping an old name, as when, until quite recently, one spoke of embarking on and debarking from a jetliner. Memories of the *Queen Mary* were evoked. Con-

sider how the titles *financier*, *psychiatrist*, *impresario*, or *professor* burden those to whom they are applied with the weight of each profession's accumulated attributes and meanings; each virtually imposes a performance of its known frames of reference. | actually, it seems to me that all the professions named here are quite likely to "impose performances" on others, but maybe that's an imposed imposition... | A professor *acts* like a professor, and sounds like one. An artist obeys certain inherited limits on perception, which govern how reality is acted on and construed. But new names may assist social change. Replacing artist with *player*, as if adopting an alias, is a way of altering a fixed identity. And a changed identity is a principle of mobility, of going from one place to another. | "since the power of the becoming is the power of the continuum, *the mobilization must ultimately be of variety* [...]" (massumi, 2018) |

Art work, a sort of moral paradigm for an exhausted work ethic, is | may be? | converting into play. As a four-letter word in a society given to games, *play* does | could do? | what all dirty words do: it strips bare the myth of culture by its artists, even.

The Education of the Un-Artist,
Part III
(1974)
| subjectively annotated |
| (2021) |

The models for the experimental arts of this generation | the '70s' | have been less the preceding arts than modern | contemporary | society itself, particularly how and what we communicate, what happens to us in the process, and how this may connect us with natural processes beyond society. The following examples—some dating from the early fifties but most of them recent—have been grouped according to five root types found in everyday life, the nonart professions, and nature: *situational* models (commonplace environments, occurrences, and customs, often ready-made), *operational* models (how things and customs work and what they do), *structural* models (nature cycles, ecologies, and the forms of things, places, and human affairs), *self-referring* or *feedback* models (things or events that “talk” about or reflect themselves), and *learning* models (allegories of philosophical inquiry, sensitivity training rituals, and educational demonstrations).

A number of the artworks do not fit neatly into their assigned categories but can belong in two or three at once, depending on where we want to put the emphasis. Baldessari's map piece, placed in the self-referring group, could also belong to the operational one; Beuys's sit-in, besides being situational, could be called operational and learning. And the High Red Center's *Cleaning Happening* could be extended from operational to include both learning and situational models.

Within these large groupings, the works derive from more specific sources. Vostell's and Neuhaus' pieces are

based on the guided tour; Haacke uses a polling device as the political tool it really is; Ruscha employs the format of a police report; Orgel parodies a domestic routine; Harrison's compact ecology system echoes many made in the science lab.

What is essential now, to understand the value of the new activities on any level, is not to pigeonhole exactly but to look regularly for these ties to the "real" world, rather than the art world. | what about expanding "these ties," and breaking the etc-human-culturally-constructed separation between "the 'real' world" and the "art world?" "another way to come at what we love and what's keeping us from what we love." (harney, moten, 2013) |

Situational Models

Richard Wieitzer occupied a small utility room in the basement of a university. He turned it into Meltzer's Clothing Store, where quantities of old clothes were hung or shelved in fixed proportions according to color, size, subject, and, I believe, use. Anyone could take an article as long as it was replaced with something in a similar category, for instance, a violet tie for a sash of the same hue, or a pink sock and a blue one. That way the store retained its compositional integrity. There were dressing areas for men and women. (1962)

Paul Taylor, dressed in a business suit and standing in one spot, assumed simple poses in succession (hand on hip, foot extended, right turn) for the entire length of a dance, while an amplified recording of a telephone operator was heard telling the time every ten seconds. (1956)

For a Steve Paxton dance a group of people simply walked naturally across a stage, one after the other. (1970)

Joseph Beuys conducted a sit-in for one hundred days in a recent international Documenta show at Kassel. He was available for anyone to discuss with him his current interests in political change and the role the arts might have in this change. He was officially on exhibit and, by implication, so was any future action that might ensue from the talks. (1973)

Merce Cunningham accompanied a tape of *Musique Concrète* by arranging a group of seventeen persons—mostly nondancers—to simply “do gestures they did normally.” Chance procedures were applied to these movements regarding time and positions onstage. They were independent of the sounds coming over the loudspeakers. The gestures consisted of such things as “washing one’s hands,” “walking and viewing the country,” “two people carrying a third,” “touching,” “eating,” “falling asleep,” “jitterbug step,” and “running.” (1953)

Allen Ruppersberg obtained the use of a rooming house in Los Angeles. He advertised it as *AI’s Grand Hotel* and offered rooms for rent on six successive weekends. The hotel had a bar, music, continental breakfast, maid service, souvenirs, and price-adjusted rooms with double beds. The rooms contained such things as a large wooden cross (the Jesus Room), a picnic spread on a checkered cloth with *Life* magazine papering the walls (the B Room), and seven framed wedding photos, a three-tier wedding cake, ten wedding presents, plastic ivy, and flowers (the Bridal Suite). As at a popular resort, a catalog offered mementos of one’s stay. (1971)

Sandra Orgel performed a collaborative piece at Woman House in Los Angeles. She appeared washed-out, wore a cheap housedress and floppy slippers, and had her hair in curlers and a cigarette dangling from her mouth. She set up an ironing board and plugged in an iron. When it was hot she spit on it. Its hiss was the only sound. She methodically and silently pressed a bedsheet for about ten minutes, and when it was finished, she folded it and went out. (1972)

Ed Ruscha compiled a picture book of a drama on a desert freeway. An old Royal typewriter was thrown out of a speeding auto. Photo documents with measurements were carefully made of the strewn debris—an “official report” of the scene of the accident. (1967)

Joseph Kosuth arranged three clean-topped tables around the walls of a bare room. Three folding chairs at each table faced the walls. Fixed to the walls were three numbered placards in enlarged type containing extracts from scholarly writings on the subject of models in scientific theory. Placed neatly on the tables before each chair was a notebook of related texts, open for perusal. (1972)

In the Museum of Modern Art, Hans Haacke set up two lucite boxes side by side, with counting devices on each. An overhead sign asked the passerby to consider whether New York Governor Rockefeller's silence on Nixon's Vietnam policy would stand in the way of a vote if Rockefeller should run for reelection. A yes ballot was to go in the left box and a no ballot in the right one. (1970)

Operational Models

Michael Heizer got a bulldozer and driver to hollow out of the desert a large crater. In a television interview afterward the driver judged that he had dug a good hole. (1971?)

Barbara Smith produced a book with a Xerox copier. Beginning with a photo of her young daughter, she made a copy, copied the copy, copied that copy, and so on through a long series. As in biological generations, things changed. Because the Xerox machine automatically reduced each image by about 1/4 inch, the girl's head gradually disappeared into a receding constellation of dots until it seemed a mere point in space. This occurred at the middle of the book. As the pages were turned, the reducing process reversed and soon a face was discernible advancing toward one. But at the end it was a somewhat different photograph of the same little girl! (This second Xerox series was made in the same way as the first, but Smith simply turned around the order when assembling the book.) (1967)

Emmet Williams composed a book called *Sweet-hearts* that is more scanned than read. Each page is made up of spatially arranged permutations of the eleven letters in the title word. The book starts from the back cover and the pages are meant to be flipped with the left thumb so that a blurred but subliminally clear meaning is registered in the mind. This filmic treatment of a text recalls the flip photo and cartoon stories of our childhood in which a staccato sense of images in motion was achieved. (1966)

La Monte Young's composition *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It* took place in a loft. Young and a friend drew on the floor with a piece of chalk (from two points, as I recall, in the manner of surveyors). The process took some hours and every once in a while quiet comments were exchanged. (1950)

In part of an Yvonne Rainer dance a group of men and women carried and stacked about a dozen mattresses, variously tying, diving, and sitting on them. (1965)

George Brecht arranged a sundown event for cars in a parking lot. Each person had twenty-two rearrangeable cards indicating the equipment on his or her car that was to be activated within certain time-counts: radio, lights, wipers, doors, windows, motor, seatbacks, foot brake, glove compartment, trunk-cover, engine-hood, horn, etc. (1960)

As an agit-prop event, Japan's High Red Center group prepared a *Cleaning Happening*. Dressed in immacu-ately white lab suits, mouths covered by sanitary hospital masks, they silently and precisely cleaned a busy street in Tokyo. (1968?)

Bernard Cooper devised a metal mouthpiece (a "Regulator") looking something like an orthodontist's lip retractor. It was balanced on the front lower teeth. From this were hung one to six steel disks, each weighing 5 ounces. The user was instructed to say a word or two and notice what happened to the phonemes as the weights were added and the jaw pulled down. Conversations on the telephone, serious discussions, and public lectures were then recommended for users of the device. (1972)

Max Sense spread sixty-two common words at random on a page, words like *fish, nothing, wall, year, salt, way, night, and stone*. He saw these as a "set of words," as in mathematical set theory. They could be recombined by the reader in almost endless "sets" as object values rather than verbal ones. (1963)

Structural Models

James Tenney programmed a computer to generate analogues to the structural characteristics of the sounds of cars he heard every day while driving through the Lincoln Tunnel in New York City. The tape had the slightly hollow sound of wind around the ears. (1961)

Michael Snow had an apparatus made that automatically swung a continuously running camera around for hours in two variable orbits. The rig was set up in a desolate section of Canada and the camera recorded whatever was in front of its lens: earth and sky. In viewing the film, one heard the

sound of the rig's motors and saw the sun go down and come up in what felt like real time; the circling of the camera was like that of the earth around the sun. (1971)

For Tomas Schmit's *Zyklus* the contents of a full Coke bottle were slowly and carefully poured into an empty one, and vice versa, until (because of slight spillage and evaporation) no liquid remained. The process lasted nearly seven hours. (1966?)

Dieter Rot arranged to exhibit twenty-odd old suitcases filled with a variety of international cheese specialties. The suitcases—all different—were placed close together in the middle of the floor, as you might find them at a Greyhound bus terminal. In a few days the cheeses began to ripen, some started oozing out of the suitcases, all of them grew marvelous molds (which you could examine by opening the lids), and maggots were crawling by the thousands. Naturally, the smell was incredible. (1969)

Newton Harrison recently turned to farming. He made a model shrimp farm of four rectangular tanks of sea water of graduated degrees of salinity. Algae and young shrimp were put into the tanks; the algae were nourished by the sun and the shrimp ate the algae. As the sun evaporated the water, the salinity of the tanks increased, making the water change color, from green in the least salty to bright coral in the most salty. The water level was then kept constant and the shrimp were eventually harvested. (1970)

Self-referring Models

Helen Alm made a videotape of herself trying to relax. it was played back on a monitor, and she sat in front of it and carried on a kidding dialogue with her playback self about the same thing: trying to relax. A tape was made of this doubling of Alm and was then played on the monitor for viewing by her and others. (1972)

John Baldessari selected a map of California. He determined where its printed letters C.A.L.I.F.O.R.N.I.A. would fall on the real space of the state. Traveling to each location on the map, he painted or made of rocks, yam, flower seed, wood, etc. a large corresponding letter on the landscape. Photo documents of these letter sites,

mounted in a row, spelled back to the viewer the word California on the map. (1969)

For a Robert Whitman theater piece, two women performed in front of a projected film of themselves. Another woman, in a full white dress, doubled as a second screen, on whom was projected a film of herself removing her clothes. She exactly matched the movements of her film self until she appeared nude, although everyone could also see her dress. (1955)

Michael Kirby put together a construction of aluminum struts and mounted photographs into a number of its spaces. Spectators who moved around it saw that each photo corresponded to the view of the room or window seen from its own vantage point. The piece functioned as a collection of “eyes,” and when once it was moved to another site, all the photos were naturally retaken. (1966)

In a different piece, the scaffold was eliminated and a rectangle was conceived to lie both inside and outside Kirby’s apartment window. Photographs were taken from the four points on the rectangle, facing in and out, and were then mounted unobtrusively at their sight points as objectified views of their respective surroundings. (1969)

Dieter Rot noted that he was “advertising my typewriter” in the following poem:

o o o o o t o
o l l v e t t l
o l i v e t t i
o v v v e t v
o e e e e t e
o t t v e t t t
o t t v e t t t
o l i v e t t i

The typewriter also misspells... (1958)

Robert Morris made a small gray box. From inside it came barely audible hammering and sawing sounds. It was called Box with Sounds of Its Own Making. (1961)

Learning Models

Robert Rauschenberg made a series of vertically joined blank white canvases. Because there was nothing else on them, viewers became aware of their own shadows on the surface, the bumps in

the fabric, and the flashes of colored light produced by the pulsing of their eyes. (1951, 1953)

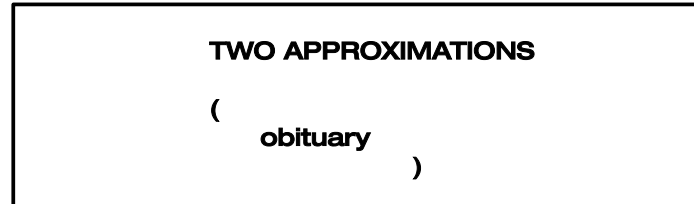
Shortly after, John Cage presented his 4'33. The pianist David Tudor opened the piano keyboard cover and set a stopwatch. Adjusting his stool, he sat there for the prescribed time and played nothing. The sounds of the street, the elevator, air-conditioning, squeaking chairs, coughing, giggling, yawning, etc. became deafening. (1952, 1954)

Wolf Vostell provided a map for a trip on the Petite Ceinture bus line of Paris and advised the traveler to look for torn posters, debris, and ruins and to listen to noises and cries ... (1962)

Some years later, Max Neuhaus took friends on a number of tours of municipal electric generating plants, where they were able to listen to the pervasive whine of the enormous motors and feel the building vibrate through their feet. (1966, 1967)

In one of Ann Halprin's dances, a group of men and women slowly and ceremonially undressed and dressed themselves, all the while examining each other's movements. (1964?)

George Brecht sent small cards to friends, like this one (1960):



Vito Acconci placed himself, blindfolded, on a chair at the bottom of a cellar stair. Armed with a metal pipe, he proceeded to talk himself into a state of intense paranoia about the possibility that someone would attempt to get past him into the cellar. Muttering constantly to build his nerve and slowly swinging his pipe at the imaginary challenger, Acconci punctuated his words with thuds of the pipe on the hard floor. A man in a group watching it all on a remote video monitor upstairs decided to try Acconci out, and a dramatic scuffle ensued. (1971)

These examples mark a turning point in high culture. Although artists have long been more or less consciously concerned with the nature of the physical universe, with ideas and with human issues –i.e., with “life”–their pri-

mary models were life in *translation*, namely other artworks. Life itself was the secondary model; an artist went to art school to study art, not life. Now the procedure seems to be reversing. | or at least, it could | Experimenters are by-passing the defined linguistic modes of poetry, painting, music, and so forth and are going directly to sources outside their professions. Acconci reads scholarly books on social behavior, and his work resembles case histories of abnormality presented as quasi-rites; Bernard Cooper's piece alludes to the familiar experience of trying to respond to a dentist's small talk with one's mouth full of braces and tubes; Barbara Smith discovers a new kind of portraiture by taking advantage of the mechanical peculiarities of a standard of copier; and Cage applies to a concert situation Zen teachings and his acoustic perceptions in a scientifically soundproofed chamber. None of this is to be found raw in prior artwork. Instead, such activity calls for comparison with the models indicated (or causes us to look for them if they aren't immediately apparent in examples not described here). | but, at the risk of sounding repetitive, the "experimenters" are taking this "by-passing" inside of the "art world..." which is what i am doing too, actually... is "art" a *fourre-tout* for things that hardly fits in other categories? do we need categories? what to do with(out) that? | What follows now is a closer look at these nonart models, and at what it has meant for artists to copy them.

Mirrors of the Mirror

Some imitations are made to deceive. Like the phony dollar bill, they are counterfeits—more or less well done. High art's prevailing prejudice against imitation suggests that even when a work is not intended to palm off a copy for an original, it is an unconscious forgery anyway and that at the heart of the matter is an escape into another's identity and the impossibility of self-realization by such a practice. It is too easy to get caught. After more than five hundred years of individualism, society's scrutinizing demand for proofs of uniqueness quickly exposes the copy

as if it were a fake and its artist a criminal. | “certainly, if post-modernism has taught us anything is it not that individual authorship should be viewed with intellectual suspicion?” (gregory sholette, *dark matter*, 2016) “in the end, i don’t think that i can possibly define what’s ‘mine’ and what isn’t.” (kenneth goldsmith, *theory*, 2015) | Faced with this great pressure, only rarely (and perhaps pathologically) will artist apprentices continue in the role of disciples beyond apprenticeship, copying faithfully a master’s vision and style. In the past, devotees may have felt so close to their guide that the efforts of each seemed almost mystically united. They strove for the impression that there was no difference between first and second-hand. But in recent history imitation, no matter how sincere, has appeared to most intellectuals dishonest in its very doubtlessness | even though “in the past [...] the efforts of each seemed almost mystically united,” the names remembered by history are those of the “masters”... maybe it has to do with the social and economic value deeply linked with “authorship” in our western-culture... “redundancies, repetitions and overlaps are often neglected because they complicate the bigger picture and show art to be the much larger social mess that it really is.” (marc fisher, *against competition*, 2014) “an atemporal community of makers connected through their consideration of a given idea.” (ben kinmont, *passing on*, 2011) “certainly, if post-modernism has taught us anything is it not that individual authorship should be viewed with intellectual suspicion?” (sholette, 2016) |, as if, in a pluralistic culture, there were indeed one true way. | maybe “this way [brouwn]?” “i believe that the economy art wants is one of the commons. i define the commons as shared resources that are managed by and for the people who use those resources. the commons involve shared ownership, cooperation, and solidarity — in other words, economic justice.” (carolyne woolard, *art, engagement, economy*, 2021) maybe non/un-art could “imitate” that too? |

Yet a strain of imitation has been allowed and even welcomed in the vanguard arts, in the form of the takeoff or quotation. Presented like a stage whisper between artist and public, the copy was always explicitly different

from the source. It was essential to its meanings that everyone know both instantly; therefore what was copied was usually not fine art but the daily world, its customs and artifacts. I should we really question whether that “what [is] copied” comes from “the ‘real’ world” or from “the art world?” since “the art world” is inside of “the ‘real’ world”... shouldn’t we just copy, imitate, re-make, re-activate, re-actualize, re-whatever feels important and meaningful?... or maybe this just sounds a bit like me trying to justify what i am doing here... whatever... I As an important early example, Alfred Jarry appropriated the style of his play *Ubu Roi* from a schoolboy marionette skit he probably helped write as a youth, a style familiar to anyone who has gone to summer camp or experienced preadolescent entertainments. In his novel *The Exploits and Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician*, the various jargons of popular science, legal and documentary records, “essential reading” lists, and occultism are juxtaposed into an absurd and mock-inflated portrait of the twentieth-century antihero. And in his sci-fi essay “How to Construct a Time Machine,” Jarry uses the how-to form of technical manuals and sets the method for Duchamp’s *Bride Stripped Bare* and notes to the *Green Box*.

The Cubists, for their part, included in their pasteups bits and pieces of real newspaper, wallpaper, oilcloth, and imitation wood graining. Satie scored a typewriter, revolvers, an airplane motor, and a siren in his music for the ballet *Parade*. The Futurist Luigi Russolo built machines for his concerts that would reproduce the noises of the city: “whispers, thunders, bubblings, screeches, grindings...” Blaise Cendrars reportedly copied every line of his book of poems *Kodak* from a series of contemporary pulp novels. The Russians Vladimir Tatlin and Aleksandr Rodehenko carried over into their constructions and monuments the girdered and strutted look of the industrial scene; and from 1918 to 1922 in Petersburg and Baltu there were those famous citywide performances of ship and factory steam whistles designed for apparently appreciative workers. In the same period, the Dadas sprinkled their broadsides and posters with advertising

slogans and reproductions. Picabia's best work was executed in the cryptodiagram manner of hardware catalogs and engineering texts. Most radically, Duchamp's Ready-mades replaced the artist's labor with a standardized object of ordinary use simply by moving it, largely unchanged, into an art context.

Thus the passé but venerable notion of the artist as master illusionist was wryly hinted at, but deadpan, as though it were a slightly vulgar admission among friends. Mass-production techniques, after all, had taken over this role by the last quarter of the nineteenth century (besides chromes, remember those mechanical musk bands and cast-iron classical building facades?), so illusions were more or less lifted from their metropolitan surroundings ready made. They became the artist's cheap imitations of other imitations or multiples, but accomplished by none of the illusionistic skills once expected of a professional!

In our time, such re-presentations, parodies, and quotations have continued in the writings of the Beats and in Pop art; in the noise music of Cage, Neuhaus, and others; in the "task" modes of dancers such as Yvonne Rainer; in the commonplace environments and enactments of Happenings, Bodyworks, and Activities; in the industrial materials, fabrication methods, and shapes of Minimalist sculpture; in schematically conceived paintings; in the electronic apparatus and scientism of Art Tech; in computer-made and Concrete poetry; in the propositional forms of Conceptualism, and so on (I've commented on this kind of copying in parts 1 and 2 of this essay.) The irony here is that the very act that releases the ordinary object, sound, or event from routine indifference counts as novelty. | *nothing new under the sun...* | For the artist is not simply recreating the world but is commenting on the infinite reproducibility of its illusions. | *a-ah...* just like i am commenting on a commentary that comments commentaries... i must be an artist then... |

Harold Rosenberg (in *The Anxious Object* [New York: Horizon, 1964], pp. 61-62) describes how illusionism of this recurrent sort, which appears strident in Pop art and

New Realism of the early 1960s, is due in part to urbanization. “The city dweller’s nature:” he writes,

is a human fabrication—he is surrounded by fields of concrete, forests of posts and wires, etc.; while nature itself, in the form of parks, a snowfall, cats and dogs, is a detail in the stone and steel of his habitat. Given the enormous dissemination of simulated nature through window displays, motion picture and television screens, public and private photography, magazine advertisements, art reproductions, car and bus posters, five-and-ten art, it is plain that in no other period has the visible world been to such an extent both duplicated and anticipated by artifice. Surrounded by artistic copies of presidents, scenes, famous events, we become in the end largely insensitive to the distinction between the natural and the made-up. | what about something “made-up” to look “natural?” |

What Rosenberg says may also be true of the distinction between originals and copies. Do young people with long hair remember, or care, that it was the Beatles who were responsible for reviving a fashion that had endless echoes back into time? Who would insist that the Japanese have no right to a Western technology that allowed them to become a major economic and political power just because they copied it? Replication, modularity, and serialism, aspects of mass production, have become the norms of daily life; they are part of the way we think. | “every decade seems to have a weapon around which mythic narratives are constructed about the state of the world, the legitimacy and illegitimacy of violence, and people’s relationship to security. sometimes these weapons have a referent, and other times they exist only as an idea planted in the mind of the population. usually their material function is not important. what is significant is the capacity of the idea to represent as self-evident vast amounts of dominant, conservative ideology.” (critical art ensemble, *mythic weapons and state propaganda*, 2008)... “replication, modularity and serialism” in contexts like those of open-source and copyleft may be one thing, in “mass-production”—and thus mass-consump-

tion—of beings and thoughts they are definitely something else... |

Only in the fine arts does the quest for originality remain a vestige of individualism and specialization. | not so sure if it is restrained to the arts, as a lot of people want to become individuals with personal beliefs, principles and goals, just like the people on the screens... monkey see, monkey do... | It is the ideological token of the sufficient self. Yet popular acceptance of psychoanalysis makes everyone today an individual, while the phenomenal growth of leisure time in the economy implies that, potentially, anyone (not just artists or eccentrics) can pursue a personal life-style. | “personal?” do “artists” inside of “the art world”—who are just “people” inside of “the ‘real’ world”—pursue a “personal” or a mass-produced “lifestyle?” how can we disassociate “personal” and individualistic?... “the narrative freedom available to the neoliberal individual is to *appropriate* and *customize* a generic narrative, towards its pwn human-capitalist *self-molding*. the individual is tasked with continuously folding itself into an aspirational narrative arc, and its arc into its self. [...] the aspirational exercise of narrative power is misrecognized as a freedom. the individual expresses its ‘freedom’ by *recognizing itself* in its custom-tailored—‘personal’—generic narrative.” (massumi, 2018) | And gradually increasing public and corporate support of pure research, arts education, and the performing arts promises more tangible rewards to the intellectual than isolation in the garret. | depends on the meaning of “tangible rewards” i guess... “immaterial workers are just alienated strangers [...] connected by digital technologies until they make it otherwise.” (bureau for open culture, 2011) “*the individual under neoliberalism is powerfully complicit with capitalism by its very nature, and by the same token, it is in primary resistance to it, also by nature.*” (massumi, 2018) “we owe it to each other to falsify the institution, to make politics incorrect, to give the lie to our own determination. we owe each other the indeterminate. we owe each other everything.” (harney, moten, 2013) | These changing social circumstances have at least

blunted, if not done away with, the special poignancy that once moved artists to struggle to be idiosyncratic.

At any rate, originality as an index of integrity may I should? I be on the wane, expressing itself sometimes as nostalgic pose, more often as a kind of canned or repeatable individualism that only thinly veils the anonymous sources of the new art's vitality. For in fact, artists are noticeably discarding unique handmade qualities in favor of multiples made by machines or teams, ideas conceived by groups, or processes generated in the lab or environment. I dear alan, artists in the 70's were probably going towards that—or you were—, but i guess we deviated a bit from that since... it might have become an empty posture, a new kind of “professionalization...” the profession of “researcher-creator?”—which does not replace the “professionalization” of the artist, as we can see in numerous classes held in fine art schools and institutions... “the [...] policy of the [institutions] completes the neutralization of the old forms of critical avant-gardism under the legitimate sign of ‘culture’ of which the grip has [...] been considerably widened. [all together with the widening of what is phagocytal by capital]” (pierre bazantay, yves hélias, “génèse de la banalyse”)... maybe we should look back to those “positive” aspect of the 70's(/80s) that you—alan— point to—i hope that it is what i am trying to do here and elsewhere—with more self-awareness and auto-critique... i'm not saying that i am a model though... we should maybe “imitate” *attitudes* rather than *forms*?—sorry szeemann... *un*-formal attitudes? “what emerges is a form, out of something we call informality. the informal is not the absence of form. it's the thing that gives form. the informal is not formlessness.” (harney, moten, 2013)... chicken or egg? (un)attitude or (un)form? both? I

Jill Ciment found that for each of the numbers on a touch-tone telephone there is a different sound heard when a person is called. She then push-buttoned the numbers of 185 telephones that were “important during my life,” recording the resulting tones on tape. The faint, thin, drawn-out whistles varied in both pitch and duration because of the stumbling time it took to carry out the process,

while the dynamics remained constant. Ciment thus composed an autobiography and group portrait of her past. (1972)

On January 9, 1969, a clear plastic box measuring 1x1x3/4" was enclosed within a slightly larger cardboard container that was sent by registered mail to an address in Berkeley, California. Upon being returned as 'undeliverable' it was left altogether intact and enclosed within another slightly larger container and sent again as registered mail to Riverton, Utah—and once more returned to the sender as undeliverable.

Similarly another container enclosing all previous containers was sent to Ellsworth, Neb.; similarly to Alpha, Iowa; similarly to Tuscola, Mich.; similarly and finally to Hull, Mass., which accomplished the 'marking' of a line joining the two coasts of the United States (and covering over 10,000 miles of space) during a period of six weeks of time.

That final container, all registered mail receipts, and a map joined with this statement to form the system of documentation that completes this work.

—Douglas Heubler

Of course, original artists can still be applauded. I do they still exist? after all that as been said? I They have the *ideas* and conceive the prototype of their works. But when Andy Warhol's popularity a few years ago was so great that he hired a stand-in to make appearances at universities (until he was fingered by one of the outraged intelligentsia), he left the nagging impression that an artist today might be as easy to replicate as his art. In fact, for some time after the exposé, people wondered at parties if they were talking to the real Andy or another substitute. They seemed to enjoy the uncertainty.

Although some criticism has been leveled at this apparent irreverence, not enough attention has been paid to our current taste for heroes made by, and experienced through, publicity channels. I "*mythic weapons and state propaganda*." (critical art ensemble) I Rosenberg, in the passage quoted from *The Anxious Object* and again recently, has remarked on the way media create realities; as

far as the fine arts are concerned, he has some reservations about the shift away from the created art object to the artist as creation but points out that the phenomenon bears on the issue of illusionism. In the semblance of the artist displayed in magazines and on TV, something particularly gratifying | weird? | happens, as if, in support of McLuhan's view, each of us felt a closer contact with the personality than even a formal handshake could provide, if that were possible, yet shared paradoxically with multitudes. | let's ask the *zoomers*... | It is at once intimate and public. And it is all the more real for its reproducibility. It is obvious that the hero in the flesh cannot be everywhere for everyone. Far better to commune with an immaterial fantasy in print or one served up at the touch of a dial in our living rooms. | "far better" to not have "heroes" who are "icons?"... (kill your idols, *this is just the beginning*, 1998) |

Traditionally, the artist-genius, creator of the masterpiece, was the analogue of God the Father, creator of life. One artist, one original; one God, one existence. But today there are countless artists and reproductions, countless gods and cosmologies. When "the one" is replaced by "the many," reality may be perceived as a menu of illusions, transformable and replenishable according to need (as the electric light turns night into day). | "we want to make something larger than ourselves. [...] you need people to hold you. survival. we feel connected to a shared struggle. we challenge ourselves and others to learn and grow. there is power in solidarity. collective work means shared resources and skills. we are working to create utopian experiential educational structures. it's nourishing to work with others. knowing how to work cooperatively is a basic building block for resisting the state. non-transactional love, emotional work, anti-capitalism. personal growth. support and safety. multiple perspectives enable more nuanced work. we need to address urgent problems together. in order to reflect on yourself, you need to know yourself in the context of others. letting go of our egos. [...] shared voice. sharing privilege and sharing power." (answers to: "why do we work in cooperative, collective, or collaborative ways?", in: kimi

hanauer, lu zhang (eds), *toolkit for cooperative, collective, & collaborative cultural work*, 2020) |

Lifelike That

The West's recurrent dreams of returning to rustic nature or exploring the future in outer space are accomplishable by the technology of the present. | but they are "desirable?" | Besides the technologies of rapid transportation and communication, without which getting to either nature or outer space would be impossible, there are quick medical services along the way in case of illness, guidelines about diverse life-styles and techniques for physical and emotional survival, genetically advanced seedlings developed at major universities for "new primitives" wishing to grow their own food, freeze-dried nourishment for astronauts, and, most critical of all, a cultural upbringing in which options are the birthright of the middle class. | (upper)middle-class dream-world... |

Disney World engineers have on their drawing boards a highly sophisticated planned city to be built in the vicinity of the recreation park. There would be not only completely automated supply and waste systems, underground roads and trainways, and overhead footpath neighborhoods conceived in the expected variety of old-world styles but also a Fuller-type enclosing shell with controlled atmosphere more "naturally" pleasant than the tropical humidity of Florida. As the Disney song goes, "It's a small, small world," and it can be wrapped in cellophane. | (debord, 1967).. |

Airline pilots have been trained for some time by flight simulators that reproduce in a laboratory all the conditions of flying. Sitting at controls that match those of an airliner, they see outside the cockpit window a projected day or night scene that corresponds in detail and scale to one or another major airfield they'll have to land on or take off from. As they manipulate the controls, the scene recedes, enlarges, banks to left or right, and streams below at greater or lesser speed, just as it would in an actual plane. Complete with earphones and vibrations, the

replica is made to be, in effect, real. | (debord, 1967)... again.. |

In a related example, recent televised moon landings of exceptional clarity were interspersed with previously shot footage of simulations made on earth, so that, half-jokingly, some viewers conjectured that the whole business was a mock-up with changes only in caption.

The anthropologist Edmund Carpenter, in his book *They Became What They Beheld* (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey/Dutton, 1970), quotes an account of Robert Kennedy's body arriving in New York from Los Angeles. The writer, "standing with a group of reporters, ... noticed that they almost all watched the event on a specially rigged television screen. The actual coffin was passing behind their back scarcely any farther away than the small-screen version." Similarly, Harold Rosenberg—always a keen observer of such occurrences—points out in one of his *New Yorker* articles (March 17, 1973) that "on television, POW's returning from Hanoi were shown passing the time watching POW's returning from Hanoi on television. | the actual "feedback loop" we were thinking about in the beginning? | A man rows across Main Street to buy a newspaper showing his town flooded..." | a big crowd, but not a human being in sight |

Such examples, by their wide extent, reveal the implications of staple items like creamless sweet cream, meatless meat, synthetic wool, plastic bricks, and AstroTurf. And *Life* magazine, true to its name, devoted one of its issues (October 1, 1965) to new discoveries in genetic code breaking and led readers to speculate that test-tube babies are right around the corner. | we now have had *in vitro* fecondation for quite some time—1977—, which is, i think, a good thing... and even better, we now also have so-called *designer babies* | In this kind of civilization, dreams of nature's way or life on the moon are only different versions of human nature's artifice. Art, which copies society copying itself, is not simply the mirror of life. Both are made up. Nature is an echo system. | given the recent/on-going pandemic, and other various climatic events, i wonder what the "echo system" is echoing at us... maybe

we should take a step back and listen to our ecosystems instead of echoing the eco-system... |

David Antin was asked to give a lecture on art. He talked impromptu and recorded what he said on tape. The tape was transcribed, and all breath stops and phrases were indicated by spaces left in the lines of print. The transcript was published first as an article in an art magazine and subsequently as a poem in a book of his recent works. But when read silently or aloud, it was just like David Antin speaking normally. (1971)

Terry Atkinson wrote an essay on the nature of Conceptual Art and posed the question, "Are works of art theory part of the kit of Conceptual art, and as such, can such a work, when advanced by a Conceptual artist, come up for the count as a work of art?" The question was answered by Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden in another essay on this subject when they stated that their text "counts as an artwork." But when read silently or aloud, both these essays were just like estheticians writing about their subject. (1969, 1970)

For a Happening of Robert McCarn's, four eight-foot-high gray wooden crates were made, like ordinary shipping containers, and were stamped in yellow with the Words "Fragile Works of Art." They were forklifted onto a flatbed truck along with two pallets of sandbags and driven (on prior agreement) some eight hundred miles to two museums and an art school gallery. Bills of lading were specially printed, a trucker's log was kept, and the proper forms and receipts were filled out upon delivery.

Some crates and sandbags were accepted (it was up to the recipient to accept or reject the shipment) and were then exhibited as art; one was accepted as a packing box for other artwork and was used accordingly; two were unloaded, opened (they were of course empty), closed again, and sent back with the driver, McCarn. He and his friends carried out the process exactly the way any trucker might have done it. (1970)

I matteo demaria decided to subjectively annotate "the education of the un-artist", with quotations, thoughts and some proverbs, and he might even present it as art. you may have just finished reading it and might be wondering whether it is art. but when written, or read, it looks just like allan kaprow's text with some subjective annotations. (2021) |

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