

to sprout in. We've had the "oughts" on our mind for only ten or fifteen years. In ten or fifteen more we will begin to know if colleges trained a fair share of this generation of artists and we will have to ask again—with a good look at the documentation and a blunt testing of the philosophy—if these artists were lucky to have gone to their colleges or had special stamina to withstand all we did for them.

STUDENT, TEACHER, ARTIST

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The point of view and sympathies expressed in this writing are no more those of an artist than of a teacher or a student. My observations are based on not only my memories but on the very common and continuing discussions by people in all three roles. I hardly touch on the standard question of the academy, or on curriculum or on education theory. Instead, I have thought of the school situation in terms of the people who make it up. There are students, teachers and artists. They have differences in their beliefs, motives and activities; therefore, they differ in their relation to school and to art.

Almost everyone believes, conveniently, that there is an "art-world." It is peopled by artists, designers, critics, curators, art teachers and so on. Various roles are played out in the arena of museums, galleries, magazines, academies and studios. The protagonists are more or less responsible for the affairs of art, for the furthering and hindering of values.

A good student's motive is clear. He would like to participate in the art-world, while he feels that it is as yet beyond his reach. His actions are guided by his being a disciple or a learner, and are limited by his belief in his teachers. Actually he is free to be an artist only during the moments when he is without this faith.

The teacher distinguishes himself from the student by the authority with which he acts as a part of the art-world. He accepts the student's trust. He shows how to do art, or else he explains whatever he thinks is relevant to the art-world. Among the motives of the teacher are gaining security and playing a social role. It is respectable and profoundly human to want to be a family provider and to function as a part of society in helping the young to learn.

The artist wants more than economic security or social respect. Even if art is basically social and human its appreciation by society and humans is long in coming; the rewards for an artist are hardly "practical." The artist's

acts as an artist are confined to his studio and he is out of place in outside engagements. The more mature the artist the less acceptable to him is any given idea of an art-world. An artist believes in art and he believes in a world but he wants to make his own combination of one with the other.

In short, students and teachers believe in an art-world; artists don't. It is supposed that artists and teachers are active in this art-world. Students aren't. Students and artists are motivated by desire; teachers may enjoy the rewards of their profession.

These distinctions are not so simple in life. It is commonplace to think that a student may be a good artist, that an artist is the best teacher, or that a teacher is always a student. But no matter how these roles may be overlapped, ideally or as a practical adjustment, their basic differences create difficulties which alter the relation of student, teacher and artist to school and to art. For example, either the system imposes a relation between student and teacher in which the artist as teacher would be a charlatan, or the teacher as coach must sit on the sidelines while his amateurs become pros. These roles are further separated by the school as institution.

It ought to be mentioned parenthetically that it is not the institution which educates the individual. The goal of artistry, like liberal education, requires self-development. Justification for an institution of learning is that the student can take individual advantage of it. Ideally an advanced school or university is a free and sophisticated society with facilities for work. But the authority and standards required by "instituting" result in appointed teachers and grading systems. Here the individual is caught. The good student is always aware of having to satisfy the requirements and the curriculum. He is then forced to struggle for his rights and the fulfillment of his own goals. Higher education heightens this conflict.

Students go to school for their own reasons, not the school's. Yet in entering school they suffer from a confusion between faith in themselves and the notion of an external art-world. The more the individual motive the less the need for formal training. There are only two special activities of artistry—looking at art and doing it. The more the artist sees, the less primitive his work; the more he does, the more he can discard. When the would-be artist enters art school it means that, aside from intentions such as living on the G.I. Bill or getting a degree in order to teach, he needs help or approval in order to be an artist. Art school offers both. There teachers demonstrate how they participate in the art world, or discuss how others do so. It is also a kind of practice stage where the student finds a critical but interested group where he can test his own work. Both of these encourage students who

have motives clear enough to come to school, though not clear enough to avoid it.

Of course bohemianism is not an alternative; it is only a way of life for those who like to sleep late. There is no way to get around the obligations of seeing and doing. Art students are those who regard school as an instrument.

Nowadays, schools hold with reservations the idea of training artists. They accept the responsibility of developing skills useful to the commercial and applied arts. They stand behind the education they offer as relevant to art history, art appreciation and the cultivated man. They produce art teachers and patrons. But the popular Master of Fine Arts degree reflects a dilemma. Since art escapes the formulation of standards and methods, a degree describes no more nor less than the particular and datable idea of an art-world as modeled by the school that gives it.

The most advanced schools have vestiges of paternalism. School is at first necessary as a place for growing up, for growing out of home and family security and approval. Later, as a cloister it has both the advantage of seclusion and a terrible unreality. Alma mater is not the world; the most cleverly designed schools suffer from their contrivance.

School success on the part of the student counts for less in art than in any other field. School gives memorable and valuable atmosphere and comradeship for the activity of painting. At the same time it is common to hear artists discount their school training as if the approval of one style and conception has been replaced by another with upsetting consequences for them. The student can transcend the approvals of his faculty and discover his influence over his fellows. The good schools can and often do graduate painters acceptable to 57th Street because the art-world can be understood and taught as a subject. Schools can teach all about art in the way that parents can teach all about life. Yet life is not lived at home; art matches neither preparation nor expectation.

Artists find in art neither the lore which it is to the art historian, nor the indulged caprice of the gifted. Art is a process in which the artist is directly involved. He is committed to his work and is responsible in it for the possibilities of its extension. His is in some sense a pragmatic function, even when his pioneering isolates him. Finally, the artist creates not only events but their place. His work comes to be the reference for new schools and for the art-world as changed. This is by virtue of his work rather than by his teaching or promoting. Schools are often burdened by the presence of teachers who used to be artists.

The teacher is split between alternative strategies or attitudes of teach-

ing; one of these is more consonant with the school as an institution. For some teachers art is a field of knowledge that can be exhibited and discussed, in which the student can be given an education to make use of or be trained to look for his own values. But for artist-teachers, there are only master, disciple, and atelier. In a personal studio the teacher plays the role of the artist, demonstrating his own command of the art-world. He is seductive and inspiring. The former strategy allows the teacher to be more scholarly, more social and less immediately involved with the hope and promise of the student. The latter allows the teacher to behave more as an "artist" without being constrained by institutional conventions. It is interesting that liberal schools of the recent past have sought and favored the artist-teacher.

This hyphenation of artist-teacher, like art-world, has a limited and sometimes deceptively convenient usage. Schools hope to fix their relation with the artist, as if that would be sure to bring art into the classroom. Artists, for their part, usually feel a need to function outside as well as inside the studio. Unfortunately, the sympathy between artist and school tends to degenerate. The art-world idea, as taken for granted in schools, inflates the value of the artist as a figure. It must be fatuous and embarrassing to the visiting artist whose mere presence without teaching duties is expected to spice local culture. Such a patronized role can be played only by the man who rests on his laurels. Acceptance of art-world appraisal has nothing to do with his activities as an artist, quite the contrary.

The only graceful relation between an artist and a school is one of service. The artist can help students to the extent that he gives form to his ideas either by talking or demonstrating. This is qualified by his enthusiasm and skill. But the more the artist teaches the less energy is left for his own work or paradoxically, for his teaching.

While it is obvious that schools are not ideal, not everyone is aware that improvements would not depend on arranging the curriculum and discussing theory of education. The course content which proves to be useful training to the artist could not have been so certified when it was presented to him as a student. Nor is course content a kind of knowledge that can be systematically elaborated for the duration of the academic year, or repeated in another class or year. Learning in art centers on more of an event than a subject, and occurs through the flexible, unscheduled and often inverted exchanges between students, teachers and artists. Art schools are an embodiment of these people's differences in faiths and motives, as follows from their acceptance or rejection of their roles in school and art. The inherent contradictions in the working situation of schools ought to be welcomed as natural, though disorganized.