Hallock:

It is midnight and I am sitting here with my notes, enough of them to make two books and a half and a volume of posthumous fragments, trying to make some smaller sense of them than the grand maniacal design I have in my mind. I don't know where to begin. Once, travelling in summer across the country with a friend from Hollywood and my young son in a battered green Porsche, I stopped for lunch somewhere in Kansas on a Sunday morning. As we walked into the restaurant, bearded, wearing dark glasses and strange hats and followed by my longhaired boy, one Kansas matron bent toward another and whispered: I bet those two men have kidnapped that little girl. I took a deep breath and started to speak, but I did not know where to begin or how to explain just how many ways she was mistaken. Tonight, Hallock, thinking about education and adolescence for you, I feel the same way.

For that reason I have chosen an eccentric method of composition, one that may seem fragmentary, jumpy and broken. This paper is more like a letter, and the letter itself is an accumulation of impressions and ideas, a sampling of thoughts at once disconnected but related. There is a method to it that may disappear in its mild madness, but I do not know at this juncture how else to proceed. Shuffling through my notes I feel like an archaeologist with a mass of uncataloged shards. There is a pattern to all this, a coherence

of thought, but all I can do here is assemble the bits and pieces and lay them out for you and hope that you can sense how I get from one place to another. An entire system is hiding behind this, just beginning to take form, and these notes are like a drawing, a preliminary sketch. I feel comfortable with that notion, more comfortable than with the idea of forcing them together, cutting and pasting, to make a more traditional paper. I can percieve in myself at this moment what I also see in the young: I am reluctant to deal in sequence with my ideas and experience, I am impatient with transition, the habitual ways of getting "from here to there." I think restlessly; my mind, like the minds of my students, works in flashes, in sudden perceptions and brief extended clusters of intuition and abstraction--and I have stuck stobbornly to that method of composition. There is still in me the ghost of an apocalyptic adolescent, and I am trying with these pages to move it a few steps toward the future and the shade of William Blake.

One theme, as you will see, runs through what I have written or thought: we must rethink entirely our ideas of childhood and schooling. We must dismantle them and start again from scratch. Nothing else will do. Our visions of adolescence and education, like walls, confine us to habit, rule perception out. We make do at the moment with a set of ideas inherited from the nineteenth century, from an industrial, relatively puritanical, repressive and "localized" culture; we try to gum them like labels to

new kinds of experience. But that won't do. Everything has changed. The notions with which I began my job at Pacific have been discarded one by one. They make no sense. What emerges through these children as the psyche of this culture is post-industrial, relatively unrepressed, less literate and local: a new combination of elements, almost a new strain. Adolescents are, literally--each one of them--an arena in which the culture transforms itself or is torn between contrary impulses; they are the victims of a culture raging within itself like man and wife, a schizoid culture--and these children are the unfinished and grotesque products of that schism.

They are grotesque because we give them no help. They are forced to make among themselves adjsutments to a tension that must be unbearable. They do the best they can, trying, in increasingly eccentric fashions, to make sense of things. But we seem--the adults, I mean--to have withdrawn in defeat from that same struggle, to have given up. We are enamored, fascinated and deluded by adolescence precisely because it is the last life left to us; only in the young do the energies of men seem to rebel against media, machines, the press of history itself. The elders seem to have no options, no sense of alternative or growth. Adult existence is bled of life and we turn in that vacuum toward children with the mixed repulsion and desire of wanton Puritans toward life itself.

Has there ever been a community of adults so conscious and envious of children--and so fearful of growth! We seem mired in guilt. The family, each adult life, which might at best be like a vessel, an adventure, is instead a fort established on a hostile plain--and the child is its natural enemy, for he brings to it all the energy (that wind of chaos) that threatens it with change. Say the same for schools. Say the same for each of us. Instead of preceding children, leading them, we shove them forward like shields, like bodyguards. They seem to me at times like a wave of shocktroops sent against barbed wire in the war. They throw themselves against it so that the next wave can pass over it unhindered. Or is that too dramatic? Anyone who has known them intimately can sense in these children their combined strength and fragility, a recurrent brittleness that stems from what is paradoxically an excessive exposure to culture and a dearth of participation. They lack resonance--I am forced back to subjectivity, to aesthetics. But no other word applies. They lack the resonance of cultural continuity or connection. Neither family, school, tribe nor a useable past supports them. Instead, they define themselves and seem to pass among us like buffalo, like alien beasts: the reverse image of ourselves, strange weddings of the elements bred out of our lives and returned to haunt us with the precise irony of Greek tragedy.

As for myself, Hallock, I think of myself tonight as an observer at a tribal war--an anthropologist, a combi-

nation of Gulliver and a correspondent sending home news by mule and boat. By the time you hear of it, things will have changed. And that isn't enough, is it, not enough at all. Somebody must step past them, must move into his own psyche or two steps past his own limits into the absolute landscape of potential and fear these children inhabit. That is where I am headed. So these ideas, in effect, are something like a last message tacked to a tree in a thicket or tucked under a stone. I mean: we cannot <u>follow</u> the children any longer, we have to step ahead of them. Somebody, Hallock, has to mark a trail.

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Adolescence:
a few preliminary fragments

(from my student, V)

yr whole body moves in a trained way & you know that youve moved this way b/fore & it contains all (what youve been taught) its all rusty & slow something is pushing under that rusted mesh but STILL YOU CANNOT MOVE you are caught between 2 doors & the old one w/ all that fuck is much closer & you can grab it all the time but the other door it disappears that door you cant even scratch & kick (like the early settlers were stung by the new land) but this new land doesnt even touch you & you wonder if youre doing the right thing to get in

(from Kafka)

He feels imprisoned on this earth, he feels constricted; the melancholy, the impotence, the sicknesses, the feverish fancies of the captive aflict him; no comfort can comfort him, since it is merely comfort, gentle headsplitting comfort glozing the brutal fact of imprisonment. <u>But if he is asked what he wants he cannot reply</u>.... <u>He has no conception of freedom</u>

(from tapes recorded in Pacific Palisades, 1966, several boys and girls aged 12-14)

--Things are getting younger and younger. Girls twelve will do it now. One guy said I fuck a girl every Friday night. What sexual pleasure do you get out of this (he's very immature you know) and he would say, I don't know I'm just going to fuck

or

--How old are you?

--Twelve.

--Will you tell us your first experience with drugs, how you got into it?

--Well, the people I hung around with were big acidheads. So one day my friend asked me

if I wanted to get stoned and I said yes. That was about five months ago and I've been getting on it ever since. Started taking LSD about one month ago and started smoking hashish and plan to take peyote soon.

--Can you remember what happened on your first acid-trip?

--I enjoyed it. First time I took it was at school and walking home from school I was alone. Got home and looked in the mirror and said about 100 times, "I look horrible." I started talking to my brother. He says the craziest things. So I left.... Went out to the Palisades and then my peak dropped and I was just in a good mood for the rest of the night.... I enjoyed it. Took it eleven times in one month. I consider it a good thing. For getting high, smoking grass is better, or hashish. It's about six times stronger than marijuana...

(from Paul Radin: Primitive Man As Philosopher)

It is concievably demanding too much of a man to whom the pleasures of life are largely bound up with the life of contemplation and to whom analysis and introspection are the self-understood prerequisites for a proper understanding of the world, that he appreciate...expressions which are largely non-intellectual--where life seems, predominatingly, a discharge of physical vitality, a simple and naive release of emotions or an enjoyment of sensations for their own sake. Yet...it is just such an absorption in a life of sensations that is the outward characteristic of primitive peoples.

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Hallock:

Can you see where my thought leads me? It is precisely at this point, adolescence, when the rush of energies, that sea-sex, gravitation, the thrust of the ego up through layers of childhood, makes itself felt, that the person is once more like an infant, is swept once more by energies that are tidal, unfamiliar and unyeilding. He is in a sense born again, a fresh identity beset inside and out by the rush of new experience. It is at this point, too, when we seem compelled by a persistent lunacy to isolate him, that what is growing within the adolescent demands expression, requires it, and must, in addition, be recieved by the world and given form--or it will

wither or turn to rage. Adolescence is a second infancy and it is now a man desires solitude and at the same time contact with the vivid world, must test within social reality the new power within himself, needs above all to discover for the first time himself as,a bridge between inner and outer, a maker of value, a vehicle through which culture perceives and transforms itself. It is now, ideally, that he begin to understand the complex and delicate nature of the ego itself as a thin skin between living worlds, a synaptic jump, the self-conscious point at which nature and culture combine.

In this condition, with these needs, the adolescent is like a primitive man, an apocalyptic primitive; he exists for the moment in that stage of single vision in which myth is still the raw stuff of being, he knows at firsthand through his own energies the possibilities of life--but he knows these in muddled, sporadic, contradictory ways. The rush of his pubescent and raw energy seems at odds with public behavior, the order of things, the tenor of life around him, especially in a culture just emerging--as is ours--from a tradition of repression. The contradictions in the culture intensify his frustration. The development of ego and energy is complicated now, perhaps changed radically, by earlier sexuality, a complex relation to media, and the effects of drugs. These three experiences, like previews from a coming culture, are permissive and unrepressive. But if the compelling effects, profound and complex, shift with a flash or slow sea-change the direction or depth of his feeling, and as a kind of

self-defense against the pressure of his own energies, the adolescent tries to change, to move more freely, feeling his own power, it is then he begins to feel locked in the idea of culture, for his gestures are evaded or denied. He is tolerated, at best, but his gestures clearly lack the authenticity of actions individually begun and collectively supported. He is thrust back upon himself and the insistent natural thrust within him toward becoming a "maker" of value, turning impulse to gesture, is met perpetually by unbudging resistence. Schools, rooted as they are in a Victorian century and suspicious of childhood itself, are his natural enemies. They don't help, as they might, to make that bridge between his private and the social worlds; they insist, instead upon their separation. [illegible] Indeed, family, community and school combine to isolate and "protect" the young--especially in suburbs--from the adventure, risk and participation he needs; the same energies that relate him at this crucial point to nature result in a kind of exile from the social environment.

Thus the young, in that vivid confrontation with the thrust of nature unfolding in themselves, are denied adult assistance. I once wrote that education through its limits denied the gods, and that they would return in the young in one form or another to haunt us. That is happening now. You can sense it as the students mass, with their simplistic moral certainty, at the gates of the universities. It is almost as if the young were once more

once more possessed by the Bacchanalian gods, were once again inhabited by divinities the homage to whom we have neglected. Those energies! What disturbs me most about them is that we lack rituals for their use, balance, and that the young--and perhaps ourselves--now seem at their mercy. The young have moved--bag and baggage--into areas where adults cannot help them, and it is a scary landscape they face, it is crowded with strange forms and faces, and if they return from it raddled, without balance and pitched toward excess, who can pretend to be surprised--or blameless?

At times they seem almost shellshocked, survivors of a holecaust in which the past was destroyed and all bridges to it bombed. I cannot describe with any certainty what occurs in their minds, but I do know that most adults must seem to them like viscious clinicians speaking in an alien language about the Greek drama occuring in their minds. The words we use, our dress, our tones of voice, the styles of our lives--all of these are so foreign to that dramatic crisis that as we approach them we seem to increase the distance we are trying to cross. Even our attention drives them further away--as if adolescents percieved that adults, coming closer, diminished in size.

The inner events in an adolescent--apocalyptic as they are--demand from what surrounds him life on a large scale, in a grand style. It is no accident that adolescents have turned inward toward what they call "inner space." The landscape around them must seem crowded, must thwart and diminish them--bled as it is of drama and life. In some

way, like all apocalyptic or primitive men, youth must dream of a golden city, a Jerusalem that corresponds point for point with the thrust of life in themselves (that is why I come back again and again to Blake). It is as if that mythical city were the physical simalucrum of a landscape forming in themselve at puberty: a city of pure potential waiting just out of reach. It is that city and those energies that Rousseau had in mind when he spoke of the golden age which is neither behind nor ahead of us but in us.

It is in adolescents, Hallock, and close to the surface, first calling and then raging for release. But adults must seem to them to stand between them and their dream, for we have occupied those cities and the continent, have closed the gates to them, despoiled it, have built, instead of Jerusalem, Pittsburgh and Chicago--and we have resigned ourselves, it seems, to what is here. That is what seems to turn youth toward rage, that sense of another city beyond, beneath this confusion, another place somewhere, somewhere...but where? Perhaps, they believe, we can tear all this down, can burn it, and that other hidden city, within, set free, will magically emerge...

That is the impulse to apocalypse in the young, as if they were in exile from a nation that does not exist--and yet they can sense it, they know it is there--if only because belief itself demands it. Their demand is absolute, unanswerable--but it is there and we seem unable at this point in time to suppress or evade it. For one reason or

another, massive shifts in cultural balances, the lessening of repression for whatever reasons--economic, industrial (see Marcuse about this)--these energies like ancient gods set free by a sudden trembling of the earth, have appeared among us again. But what can we make of them? The simple problem is that our institutions are geared to another century, another set of social necessities, and cannot change quickly enough to contain, recieve or direct them--and as we suppress or refuse them they turn to rage.

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Primitive cultures dealt with this problem, I think, through their initiation rites, the rites of passage: they legitimatized and accepted these energies and turned them toward collective aims; they were merged with the life of the tribe and in the way acknowledged, honored and domesticated--but not destroyed. In most initiation rites the particpant is led through the mythical or sacred world (or a symbolic version) and is then returned, transformed, to the secular one--as a new person, with a new role. He is introduced through the rites to a dramatic reality coexistent with the visible or social one and at its root; he is put in direct touch with the sources of energy, the divinities of the tribe. In many cultures the symbolic figures in the rites are unmasked at the end--as if to reveal to the initiate the interpenetration of

the secular and sacred worlds. Occasionally the initiate is asked at some point to don the ritual mask himself--joining, as he does, one world with another and assuming the responsibility for their connection. This shift in status, in relation, seems to me the heart of the rite: a ritualized merging of the individual with shared sources of power.

Do you see what I am driving at? The rites are in a sense a social contract, a binding up; one occuring specifically, profoundly, on a deep psychic level. The individual is redefined in the culture by his new relation to its mysteries, its gods, to one form or another of nature. His experience of that hidden and omnipotent mythical world is the basis for his relation to the culture and his fellows, each of whom has a similar bond--deep, personal and unique, but somehow, invisibly but deeply, shared. These ritualized relationships of each man to the shared gods bind the group together; they form the substance of culture: an invisible landscape that is real and felt, commonly held--a landscape which resides in each man and in which, in turn, each man resides.

I hope that makes sense. That is the same kaliedescopic turning to culture that Blake makes in "The Crystal Cabinet," and it makes sense here too, in America, in relation to adolescents. What fascinates me is that our public schools, designed for adolescents--who seem, as apocalyptic men, to demand that kind of drama, release and support,--educate and "socialize" their students by depriving them

of everything the rites bestow. They manipulate them through the repression of energies; they isolate them and close off most parts of the community; they categorically refuse to make use of the individual's private experience. The direction of all these tendencies is toward a cultural "schizophrenia" in which the student is forced to choose between his own relation to reality or the one demanded by the institution. The schools are organized to weaken the student so that he is forced, in the absence of his own energies, to accept the values and demands of the institution. To this end we deprive the student of mobility and experience; through law and custom we make the only legal place for him the school--and then, to make sure he remains dependent, manipulable, we empty the school of all vivid life.

We seem to have forgotten in our schools what every primitive tribe with its functional psychology knows: allegiance to the tribe can be forged only at the deepest levels of the psyche and in extreme circumstance demanding endurance, daring and awe; that the participant must be given direct access to the sources of cultural continuity--by and in himself; and that only a place in a coherent community can be exchanged for a man's allegience.

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I believe, Hallock, that it is precisely this world that drugs replace: adolescents provide for themselves what we

deny them: a confrontation with some kind of power within an unfamiliar landscape involving sensation and risk. It is there, I suppose, that they hope to find by some hurried magic, a new way of seeing, a new relation to things, to discard one identity and assume another. They mean to find through their adventures, the ground of reality, the resonance of life we deny them--as if they might come upon their golden city and return still inside it: at home. You can see the real veterans sometimes on the street in strange costumes they have stolen from dreams: American versions of the Tupi of Brazil, who travelled thousands of miles each year in search of the land where death and evil do not exist. Theirs is a world totally alien to the one we discuss in schools; it is dramatic, it enchants them: its existence forms a strange brotherhood among them and they cling to it--as if they alone had been to a fierce land and back. It is that which draws them together and makes of them a loose tribe. It is, after all, some sort of shared experience, some kind of foray into the risky dark; it is the best that they can do.

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End of Part 1

Dear Hallock:

When you begin to think about adolescence in this way, what sense can you make of our schools? None of the proposed changes make sense to me; revision of curriculum, teaching machines, smaller classes, encounter groups, redistributions of power--all of these are stopgap measures, desperate attempts to keep the young in schools that are hopelessly outdated. The changes that are being suggested and debated don't go deeply enough; they don't question or change enough. For what needs changing are not the methods of the school-system but its aims, and what is troubling the young and forcing upon their teachers an intolerable burden is the idea of childhood itself: the ways we think about adolescents, their place in the culture itself. More and more one comes to see that changes in the schools won't be enough; the crisis of the young cuts across the culture in all its areas and includes the family and the community. The young are displaced; there seems no other word for it. They are trapped in a prolonged childhood that seems to be almost unique. In no other culture that I know of have persons of fifteen or eighteen been so isolated (in terms of participation in the real life of the community) or so unnecessary (in their elders' eyes) or so limited by law. As adults we "see" the young in a very special way and we have developed our schooling along lines which follow logically from that vision. Our laws too, our ideas of responsibility, our parental feelings of anxiety, blame and guilt--all of these follow from that vision and, in turn, concretize it,

they legitimize it so that we are no longer even conscious of the ways we see childhood, how we feel about it and the strain those hidden feelings put upon us. That is what needs changing: the idea of childhood and the place of the young in the community, the definitions we make socially and legally of the role of the young. They are trapped in the ways we see them, and the school is simply one function, one aspect, of the whole problem. What makes real change so difficult in the schools is only in part their natural unwieldliness; it is more often the difficulty we have in escaping our preconceptions about things.

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In the last year I have spoken with graduate students of education at places like Berkeley, Stanford and Santa Cruz. I always found that their discussions began too close to the surface. Neither they nor their teachers were asking what seem to me the right questions, the basic troubling ones. I suppose they could not afford to ask them, for asking those questions involves by its nature a recognition of a new way of seeing persons and of seeing oneself. That is what I am driving at when I talk about the miniature "Reformation" taking place. The school-system we have inherited seems to me based upon three particular things:

(1) A puritanical vision of human nature in which children are percieved as sinners or "savages" and in which human impulse or desire is not to be trusted and must therefore be constrained or "trained." Paul Goodman calls this the idea of

"natural depravity."

(2) The necessity during the mid-nineteenth century of "Americanizing" masses of immigrant children from diverse backgrounds and creating, through the schools, a common experience and charactor.

(3) The need in an industrialized state for energy and labor to run the machines. The state needs workers and educates persons to be technically capable but relatively dependent and responsive to authority so that their energies will be available when needed.

These elements combine with others (ie, the labor-laws which make childhood a "legal" state, a population explosion that relieves the pressure for labor and makes it necessary now to keep adolescents off both the labor-market and the idle street) and "freeze" into a school-system that resists change even as the culture itself and its needs shift radically. But teachers can't usually see that, for they themselves have been educated in this system and are committed to hidden ideas that they have never seen clearly. Time and again, speaking to teachers, one hears the same questions and anguish:

"But what will happen to the students if they don't go to school? How will they learn? What will they do without adults?"

What teachers don't realize, of course, is that those questions are, in reality, statements. Even while asking them teachers are revealing, without knowing it, the atti-

tudes I am talking about. Teachers can no longer imagine what children will do "outside" of schools. They seem to see them as monsters who will, if released from compulsory schooling, disrupt the order of things. What's more, adults no longer seem capable of imagining "learning" or child-adult relationships outside of school. But mass-schooling is a recent innovation in the education of the young. Most of the learning--especially the process of "socialization" or "acculturation" has gone on outside of schools, more naturally, in the fabric of the culture. In most cultures the passage from childhood to maturity occurs because of social necessity--the need for responsible adults--and is marked by clear changes in role and often by rites of passage. Children in the past seem to have learned the ways of the community or tribe through constant contact and interchange with adults, and it was taken for granted that the young "learned" continually through their place close to the heart of the community.

We seem to have lost all sense of that. The school is expected to do what the community cannot--and that seems to me impossible. For one reason and another--I am thinking here of the fact that the family can now be called "atomistic" and that children are no longer really needed for work or communal safety--we have isolated them in schools, impaired their natural relation to the community, and try in vain to perfect an educational system which, by its very nature, cannot do what we expect. In the end we will have to change far more than the schools if we expect to create a new coherence between the experience of the child and the needs

of the community. I think in the end we will have to redefine legally and socially the meaning of "childhood"; we will begin to grant greater freedom and responsibility to the young; more learning will take place in the grade school and the compulsory-schooling age will be dropped to fourteen, perhaps less; we will take for granted the "independence" of adolescents and provide them with the chance to live alone, away from their parents and with peers, will make it easier for them to travel; we will discover the jobs that they can do in the community as well as the adults: anything from mail-delivery to the teaching of smaller children and the counseling of other adolescents; at some point, perhaps, we will even find that the community itself--in return for a minimum of work or continued schooling--will provide a minimal income to younger people (fifteen, eighteen) that will enable them to live independently, assume the responsibility for their own lives at an earlier age--and learn the ways of the community outside the school; finally, having lowered the level of compulsory schooling, we will find it necessary to provide different kinds of schools, a wider choice, so that students will be will to voluntarily continue their schooling as it suits their needs.

All of these changes, of course, are aimed at two things: (1) the restoration of the child's "natural" place in the community and (2) lowering the age at which a person is considered an independent and responsible member of the community so that his "role" more easily makes room for his capacities. Some of those changes can, of course, take place

in the schools, but my sense of things, after having talked to teachers and visited the schools, is that trying to make the changes in schools alone will not be enough.

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One problem, Hallock, is that in every school I visit--public or private, traditional or "innovational"--the students seem still to have only two choices: to "drop out" (either physically or mentally) or to make themselves smaller and smaller until they can at least "act" in the ways that their elders expect. One of my students has picked up a phrase I once used, "the larger and smaller worlds." The schools we visit together, he says, are always the "smaller" world: smaller than his imagination, smaller than the potential of the students. They all seem designed for someone else, the clidren, perhaps, that teachers imagine or would like to see; they never seem really connected to the students there, at that moment, in that moment of history with their own specific experiences and needs. The students are asked to put aside the best things about themselves--their own needs, impulses and ideas--in order to "adjust" to an environment constructed for children who existed one hundred years ago--if at all. I wonder sometimes if this condition is simply the result of "poor" schooling; I am more inclined to believe that it is the inevitable result of mass compulsory schooling and the fabrication of an artifical environment by one class (the adults) for another (the children).

Is it possible for adults to understand what children need and to change their institutions fast enough to keep up with changes in culture and experience? Is it possible for children to grow to their full "size," to feel their full strength, if they are deprived of individual volition all along the line and forced to school? I don't know. I know only that during the middle-ages they sometimes "created" jesters by putting young children in boxes and force-feeding them so that, as they grew, their bones would warp in unusual shapes--and that is often how the schools seem to me. When I talk with teachers I have the feeling that students are trapped in the boxes of adult ideas; I am tempted to say to teachers again and again: more, more, you must go further, create more space in the schools, must go deeper in thought, create more resonance, a different feeling in the schools, a different vision, a different and more human, more daring, style.

I remember addressing the students of Berkeley's graduate-intern program one weekend at Asilomar. I had spent a day with the students, talking with them and watching and that evening, when I addressed them about students and drugs, I could say to them only that had I been an adolescent I would long ago have left to get stoned. What I wanted to say, Hallock, was that the styles they had chosen, their concerns, the vision of uman nature that seemed implicit inwhat they said or did--all seemed to me, in my own projected adolescence, as limitations, a definition of being itself made too easily, too soon, too smugly. It is difficult to say precisely what I mean, though I think adolescents would understand it easily. That

afternoon I had spent some time with a vaguely delinquent and precocious black high-school student and watched her reaction to the teachers. "A shuck," she kept saying again and again, "a shuck, a shuck" and, discounting her own resentments, I knew what she meant: it was their ideas which stood in her way, their unconscious motives, no matter how benevolent they thought themselves. I was reminded as she spoke of a close friend and his bouts with schizophrenia and how, as I spoke to him resonably, carefully, he would look at me from the center of his private drama and disordered truths and repeat: "true lies, true lies."

When I spoke to the teachers later, recalling that hour, I could suggest little to them in the way of specific "strategies" for dealing with drugs. I could only apologize for my arrogance and suggest haltingly that they must change the schools themselves and that, to do that, they would have to change their own lives, their own ideas--and open the schools to the natural life and variety which is the normal condition of children. They were, understandably, insulted, puzzled and angered. I can understand why, and yet what I said was true: only the expansion of their own lives to deal in one way or another with apocalyptic drama would make them of any use to the troubled young. I described to them the many ways I could imagine teaching: ways of opening things up, creating choice, a sense of space and volition, power; they responded by telling me they'd be fired. In that case, I suggested, let the students do it themselves. If you can't create "space" within the schools then change the laws and let the students out in-

to the community to discover for themselves both potency and space. But in suggesting that I was also asking them to relinquish their power and the roles they had defined for themselves and worked so hard to establish. They were unwilling to consider it. They could not imagine the young surviving without themselves--and it was that rationale they always put forward to defend compulsory schooling. They were incapable of believing that the young could learn or thrive without their forced benevolence.

I sympathize in a way with that worried altruism--but I have usually seen it pursued at the expense of the young. Adult intentions--rarely questioned--and their unconscious vision of human nature and the laws about schooling all combined to trap the young. That is what frightens me, for I believe, as you know, that even the teachers with the best intensions are doing immeasurable damage to their students while they work through the public-school system. For that system is, in the end, designed to produce what we sometimes call "good citizens" but what more often than not turn out to be "good" unthinking soldiers; it is through the schools of the state, after all, that we produce our armies. I remember how struck I was while teaching at the state college by the number of male students who wanted to oppose the draft but lacked the courage or potency to simply say: no. They were trapped; they had always been taught, had always tried to be "good." Now they wanted to refuse to go but they could not, for they weren't sure they could bear the consequences they'd been taught would follow such a refusal:

jail, social disgrace, loss of jobs, parental disapproval... They could not believe in institutions but they could not trust themselves and they were caught in their own impotence: depressed, resentful, frustrated and full of self-hatred and a sense of shame.

That seems to me a condition bred in the schools. In one way or another our methods (intentional or accidental--leave that aside) produce in the young a condition of pain that seems very close to a mass--neurosis: a lack of faith in oneself, a vaccuum of spirit into which authority or institutions can move, a dependency they feed on. In our schools students are encouraged to relinquish their own wills, the freedom of volition, <u>choice</u> itself; they are taught to depend on their teachers for direction, measurement and the assessment of value. Indeed, they are asked in most ways to put aside their own world-views and accept instead those of their teachers. The system of competition and grades tends to isolate one individual from another; students are discouraged from banding together for strength and are instead encouraged to rely on their relationship to the <u>institution</u> for satisfaction and reward. They are taught in addition that value and culture reside "outside" oneself and must be acquired from the institution, and, finally, almost everything in their eduaction is designed to discourage them from activity, from the wedding of idea and act. It is almost as if we hoped to discourage them from thought by making ideas so lifeless, so hopeless, that their despair itself would be enough to make students manipulable and

obedient. The system as it exists seems to me to breed obedience, frustration, dependence, fear and a gentle violence that is turned usually against oneself and is sorrowful, full of guilt, remorse but that is there nonetheless, and one realizes that the schools may well do to persons in the same thoughtful way what we have done to the Indians or are doing in Vietnam now. That is: we don't teach hate in the schools, or murder, but we do isolate the individual, we do teach him a deep distrust of himself and a reliance on institutions; and, by emptying him of life, by ignoring or supressing his impulses toward life, we breed in him a lack of respect for it, a loss of <u>love</u>--and thus we produce gently "good" men who will kill when asked or reasoned with--for he has little sense, in himself, of the vividness of life being lost.

I suppose, Hallock, that sounds fanciful and romantic. I am tempted to take out that part, to be more reasonable, but I believe this to be true. It was what really frightens me about the schools. What is in question is the hidden motive in every one of us, the impulse to quash life when we see it. For most of us, most teachers, have been trained in neat systems of order and are exposed through the hierarchy of schools to an awful pressure from parents and adminstrators. Any real signs of life in the classroom that threaten disorder trouble us in two ways: they challenge our own learned sense of what is "proper" and they also jeopardize our jobs. In some strange fashion--it is the way the system works, of course--the ways we do our jobs as teachers just to keep them tend to deprive the students of the life which is rightfully theirs. That is

hard to swallow but seems to me true. Our very assumptions about adolescents, how they need us (they do need us, but not in ways we ordinarily think), what they should learn and how learning must take place in schools...all of these ideas, unless transcended, make it likely that we will do damage to the young at the very moment we are trying so hard to do good.

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These limited ideas, this limited vision, is the "smallness" I mentioned earlier. It is something intangible, in the air, but there nevertheless. Visiting public high schools after my past year at Pacific I have felt it often, for I have seen what students can do when given the room: how they can act volitionally, responsibly and create for themselves at the same time a sense of intensity and freedom. The lack of that feeling is what strikes one about the high-schools, and the act of learning to live with that feeling, of being forced to accept it day in and out, may be incredibly destructive to a student. I think here about my own son, Joshua, who is seven now. He has finished the second-grade and is tired of schooling. He seems to have discovered that from now on each succeeding grade will be--in "form," in terms of activity if not content--a repetition of the past. He wants no part of it. I ask him why he no longer writes his answers in his book--as he is supposed to do. Because, he says, he can do it in his

head. "I know all that stuff," he answers--and he does. He wants now to move on to something else. He wants to learn, of course, but he wants no more of school. But what is one to do? There are ways to keep children out of school, of course, and we will probably choose one of them. But how many parents can or will? And how many children are forced from the age of seven onward--or earlier perhaps or later--to go through years of schooling without really learning, years of a dulled, automatic activity with is nothing more than a kind of tithe in time that is paid to the state. It doesn't matter what is taught or learned or done; that act in itself--of years of meaningless activity--is what dulls the person and deprives him of will, of his sense of choice or himself. It is a process of dpersonalization in which a youth is separated from his own will, desire and energy. One can indeed see schools as Marx saw labor, as a process of alienation in which the disposal, direction and product of a man's labor have nothing to do with his own needs or satisfactions but are determined by something outside himself.

My son fears the dreariness, day after day, of repetitive schooling; to ask him to accept it without wanting it, to require it, makes him smaller, squeezes and stunts him. That is what most students know and fear: that smallness, that prolongation of childhood and the pstponment, past all reason, of their own rights to choice. They are much like animals learning to reduce their desires to the size of a cage (the school) and if they succeed, if they can sit

still, they are released to the world--no longer a threat. But we are not animals, of course, for we remember our lost freedom, all that life, and it must pain us to remember it or to see it return, in the form of the young, to haunt us. Nothing else can explain the defensive "forgetfulness" I find in most teachers: the refusal to accept in the young the life that has been bled from themselves. We must exile or diminish that energy in order to protect our own order and ideas, and our rationale is always morality or history or "order" or benevolence; we make and enforce our rules on that basis, and we construct in relation to children a mass ethic and institution supposedly for their own good that I have never been able to distinguish from paranoia.

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Alright.

I will risk being repetitive and proceed with the pieces of this despite the shrill note, the note of insistence that seems to creep in.

Where are we?

Schools deprive students of choice, experience and any chance of transforming the environment--as if by accepting those conditions they prove themselves "mature." From first to twelfth grade the major effect of schools and their implicit function is to teach students habits of silence, stillness and an impotent self-negating acceptance of an environment that must seem to them absurd. We acclimi-

tize them to a fundamental deadness and teach them to restrain themselves for the sake of "order." The net result is a kind of pervasive cultural "schizophrenia" in which they are asked to separate at the most profound levels their own experience from institutional reality, self from "society," objective from subjective, energy from order-- though these various polarities are precisely those that must be joined and made coherent during adolescence.

I remember an exchange I had with a college student.

"You know what I love to do," he said, "I love to go into the woods and run among the trees."

"Very nice," I said.

"But it worries me. We shouldn't do it," he added.

"Why not," I said.

"Because we get excited. It isn't orderly," he said.

"Not orderly?"

"Not orderly."

"Do you run into the trees," I asked.

"Of course not."

"Then its orderly," I said.

In a small way that exchange indicate the pervasive distinctions that seem to me encouraged in the schools: the mistaking of rigidity and stillness for order, of order as the absence of life. You can't create order by destroying all energy and passion no matter how hard you try, and yet that is what we attempt in the schools. We try to create

and preserve an order that depends upon the destruction of life both inside and out and which all life, when expressed, must necessarily threaten or weaken.

The natural process of learning seems to move naturally from experience through perception to abstraction--in a fluid, continuous process that cannot be clearly divided into stages. It is in that process that energy is somehow articulated in coherent and meaningful form--as an act or thought or a made object. The end of learning, its aim, seems to me "wisdom" and wisdom to me, falling back as I do on a Jewish tradition, is at its simplest "intelligent acitivity" or, more complicatedly, the suffusion of activity with knowledge, a wedding of the two. For the Hassidic Jews every gesture was potentially holy, a form of prayer, when it was made with a reverence for God. It seems to me that in the same way a gesture is always a form of wisdom--an act is wisdom--when it is suffused with knowledge, made with a reverence for the truth.

Does that sound rhetorical? I suppose it does. But I mean it. The end of education is intelligent activity, wisdom, and that demands a merging of opposites, a sense of process. We seem instead to produce the opposite: immobility, insecurity, an inability to act without institutional blessing or direction or--at the opposite pole--a headlong rush toward motion without balance or thought. We cut into the natural movement of learning and try to force upon the students the end product, abstraction, while eliminating experience and ignoring his perception. It seems to me inescapably true that the beginning of thought and wisdom is in the experience through one's

self of a particular environment--school, community, culture, etc. When this is ignored, as it is in schools, the natural relation of self and knowledge is broken, the parts of the process become polar opposities, antitheses, and the young are forced to choose between them: "objectivity, order and obedience" as against "subjectivity, chaos and energy." It doesn't really matter which they choose; so long as the two sets seem irreconcilable their learning remains incomplete. Caught between the two, they suffer the intellectual "schizophrenia" I mentioned until it occupies them too. They wait. They sit. They listen. They learn to "behave" at the expense of themselves. Or else--and you can see it happening now--they turn against it and their "masters" with a vengeance that is not surprising. They may shout, as they did at Columbia, "Kill All Adults!" They have allied themselves with raw energy against reason and balance--our delicate, hardwon virtues--and we should not be surprised, for we set up the choices ourselves and it is simply that they have chosen the wrong side.

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In their rebellion, Hallock, the students seem to me much like a colonial people turned against their masters. The coalition of students and black power advocates is a striking and natural one. Schools can be seen as a colonial institution in which we occupy a certain territory--the attention, time and energy of the young--and then use it for

our own ends, producing from those resources the very goods--activities and products--which we attempt to get them to accept. That is in a sense what Marcuse talks about in Eros and Civilization when he describes the need of an industrial state for the energies of its young.

There is, in addition, something Puritanical, something fanatical and inescapably "Western" and Faustian in our attempts to colonialize or control the energies of students. It is as if we wanted to deprive them of the life we have always exploited or evaded. They must sense that in some way, must sense that we are doing to the young what we did in other ways to the Indians or the buffalo or the landscape itself; we could not "understand" those things, could not see them for what they were, but saw them all as alien and threatening, strange, unlike ourselves and "savage," perhaps the Devil's work, and had to destroy them, for we must forever destroy what we cannot exploit, control or understand.

I am making wild generalizations here, I know, sweeping statements, and yet this is my sense of things. It is the same sense of things you will find in our writers--Melville, Hawthorne, Miller, Whitman, Williams and Lawrence (our best critic): the sense of constriction, the destructiveness, as if we built our institutions and lives on such a narrow base--oulawing certain styles and energies--that we are forced continually to destroy or suppress all the things that threaten them. It is a spiral. We exile parts of ourselves and the world to the dark side of things, to "the devil" or evil or, with the young, to "irresponsibility"

and "immaturity," bad "conduct," and those exiled parts of the self become our enemies, they threaten what we have built in their absence and we are forced to deny them more forcefully. The more we deny them the more they threaten us, the more they threaten us the more we deny them... The cycle continues, tightening like a spring, until we become aware of what we call the "apocalypse": the release of the tension, the return of those exiled selves. It is that too we see in the young, it is that energy we project upon them, it is what we so wrongfully fear in them: energy run wild, unrestricted desire, savagery.

I am always amazed at the fantasies adults maintain about adolescents. They seem to think that without restraint they will run wild, killing and maiming, throwing overboard all caution, restraint and self-protection; they seem to see in them excess, a slant toward orgy, a destructiveness that has little to do with the children I know. Most of the students I have seen are as cautious as their parents, as inhibited; they have inherited from them a mistaken sense of their own fragility and have difficulty in living through even their best impulses; they get in trouble when they do because of stupidity not daring; and their senses of restraint, respect and gentleness seem far better developed generally than those of their parents'. Yet I have seen Pacific parents argue at great length with their children over the freedom of the young. While the children tried as best they could, some in tears, to describe to their parents their own frustration, inhibitions and fears the parents could respond only with their own fantasies of

childhood, telling the children how much more free they were than their parents.

"How we envy you," the parents said. "How we envy you the freedom of your activities and your guiltlessness."

And ths students tried very hard to explain their own problems and limitations. But the parents could not hear, for they seemed to see the children through a haze of fantasy--as free and unruly creatures, wild and uncivilized, who had the virtues of the "noble savage" but who had, at times, to be contained for their own good. My own experience with adolescents teaches me they need more daring and strength and freedom, not less; they need less restraint, constriction and caution, not more. But who else has a chance to see that? I have discovered it at Pacific, where we give the students enough to space to rveal what they really are or need or do. But that is impossible in the ordinary school for it means risking the neat "order" of the institution, and teachers are left with a peculiar vision of students that will never be dispelled--for they will never see the students acting naturally.

That is what disturbs me about the schools: they are self-fulfilling prophecies in the sense that there is very little chance for raw experience to correct the preconceptions teachers have about children; the myth of the savage child remains intact because it seems built into the institution itself and few teachers will risk changing things around in order to discover the truth; their fear of the children is too great.

One evening I spoke to a group of University professors

about education as "an open field." I had talked about the need for a wedding of opposites, energy and order, as Blake describes it in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell."

A philosophy professor from Los Angeles angrily raised his hand.

"So you believe," he said, "in self-expression!"

"Of course," I said.

"Well," he said (triumphantly) "so did Hitler!"

By which he meant, of course, The Devil. For we are Puritans still. We see the young as Indians and witches (they even dress themselves that way!), destructive and fascinating, and they strike within us an echo, they appeal to what we percieve in ourselves as disorder and threaten the order outside. We are forced to keep them constrained in what seems to me at this moment almost a symbolic act: as if they were the lost parts of ourselves that must be rejected if we are to remain what we are. That too is the function of schools: to keep ourselves intact. Perhaps that is why they are so destructive to the young.

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I will repeat my point again:

Adolescents seem closest among classes of men to those energies we fear. They come to represent in our adult minds some kind of chaos and disorder; we project upon children a set of values and feelings and a character in much the same way that we projected identities upon the Indian or black

man. Childhood itself and the schools can also be seen as a kind of "reservation" in which the young person, like the Indian, is isolated. In other words, we define children in certainways and confine them to forms of our definition--and we deprive them of the experiences which might enable them to escape childhood or prove themselves mature or form more adult relationships to the community. The central device in this deprivation is the school itself and a system of laws which demands that the child and adolescent attend school and at the same time make it impossible for him to do anything else. Adolescents cannot work, they cannot travel, they cannot live alone; there are laws against their presence on the streets early in the day or late at night. In San Jose I have seen sixteen year-olds charged with "idle and dissolute behavior"--as if they were back in seventeenth-century New England.

It is a viscious circle. We trap them in childhood by making it difficult for them to be men and women; we deny them responsibility and then rail against them for their lack of it, for their immaturity; and then, because we define them as immature, we confine them to the schools and deprive them once again of any real life in the community. The ambiguities in our approach to them is startling. I remember talking to one of my students the day after we had held a parent-student meeting:

"My father liked it," he said, "but there was one thing he didn't like."

"And what was that?"

"You kept calling us children. He didn't like that. He says we're to big to be children."

"He may be right," I said. "What do we think?"

"I don't know. I kept telling him we were children in a way."

"And then?"

"And then he got more and more angry, and then he began to shout, and finally he yelled: you aren't children--and now go to your room!"

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Do you see my point?

I thought at one time that changes in schooling would be enough, that the school itself could become at least a "microcosm" of the community outside, a kind of half-way house, a preparatory arena in which students, in semi-protective surroundings, would develop not only the skill but the character too that would be needed "in the world."

But I have my doubts about that now. Those doubts are intensified when I talk with teachers, for they seem deadset on keeping the schools basically the same. When I talk to them about "schizophrenia" and the anxiety of the schools that weaken students they respond by pointing out that anxiety is necessary to creation or production, and the demands of the schools ready children for the demands of the community. I wish that were true. But it is not. For we must distinguish

between different kinds of anxiety, consequence and stress. There is the kind of consequence that follows naturally in activity, kinds of anxiety more natural to one's existence in the world that seem entwined with all the problems of being a man. But the anxieties we produce in schools are of another sort entirely, for what we do in schools is set up a series of "artificial" consequences--punishments, rewards, which don't follow naturally from the act, but are attatched to it by adults. Do you see what I mean? The structure of the schools and the systems of act and consequence that we set up are, by their nature, "models" of reality. But upon examination they turn out to have little to do with the world outside schools, where the demands a man meets in his own growth are nothing at all like the demands established in schools.

It is difficult for teachers to see this, for they have set up in the schools systems of consequence that are disguised systems of morality, and they are unconsciously attached more to "what ought to be" than "what is." The worlds for which children are prepared no longer exist--if ever they did, and the more I see of the schools the more I despair of their doing the jobs we want them to do: achieving a wedding between the young and their culture so that they understand its habitation of themselves as they reside within it. More and more, as I have said, it seems to me impossible to do that job in a setting as isolated and restrictive as our schools. Students don't seem to me to need the "artificial" models of schools;

they respond more fully, more intelligently, when they make direct contact with the community and are allowed to assume roles that are either meaningful to the community or to themselves. What is at stake here is the freedom of volition, for this is the basic condition with which people must learn to deal--and the sooner they achieve within that condition wit, daring and responsibility the stronger they will be. It seems to me absurd to postpone the assumption of that condition as long as we do. In most other cultures and even in our own--in the past--fifteen year-olds have taken upon themselves the responsibility of adults and have dealt with it as successfully as most "adults" do now. The students I have seen at Pacific can do that too--when given the chance. What a strain it must be to have that capacity, to sense in one's self a talent for adventure or growth or meaning, and have that sense continually stifled or undercut by the role one is supposed to play.

I suppose the problem began in the late nineteenth century when we began to develop the child-labor laws that were obviously necessary to protect children from exploitation. Those laws and the dvelopment of mass compulsory schooling seem to have combined to make "childhood" a special legal category and to mark off, completely artifically, various stages of development. What began as a legal distinction was soon a social one and "childhood" became a curious category of being that extended from birth through one's eighteenth year. Now we are faced with a different problem. We do not need the labor of children as many cultures did or do, nor

do we need to protect them, because of that need, from exploitation. The opposite is true. We have little industrial need for their raw power; we could not use it if it were available. The job-market, economy, etc. make their energies a surplus commodity and dangerous to social balance, and we keep them in schools now for our own good, unable to imagine another place for them in the society. They seem to me kept from the community simply because there is no real place or use for them; it has nothing to do with their own capacities.

What I am suggesting is that this will have to change. It is clear that there exists little distinction these days between adult and "child" in terms of experience; early sexuality, birth-control pills, the availability of drugs, television and an increased mobility make available to the ordinary adolescent of every class the same experiences available to his parents. The "input" of experience and stimulation is enormous; what is lacking is the chance to "express" that experience, to make sense or meaning of it in relation to a larger community. The distinction between adults and children is breaking down too in terms of dependence or capacity for thoughtful and vivid behavior. Many people I know of fifteen, sixteen or eighteen are as capable of living independently as are most adults I know and would make no more of a mess of it. There doesn't seem to be any reason to class them as "children" in that respect. The one distinction that holds up seems to be between those who work and those who don't, those who support themselves and those who depend on others. But that distinction too is weakening. Many adolescents are willing to work; they

want independence and would be willing to earn it if necessary, but the laws won't permit it. And, more important still, we seem to be moving into an age when work won't be necessary for all adults and we will see many older persons live off others or the state without earning their way. As that protestant and capitalistic ethic collapses, the major distinction between adult and adolescent will give way, and one can imagine adolescents moving more freely into the community at an earlier age without having to work to "earn" that right.

Of course I believe that that time is upon us now and that we must find some "real" place, a place in the community with volition and/or responsibility for adolescents right now. They are certainly ready for it--even if we aren't. That is what we have seen at Pacific in our "experimental" setting. Adolescents seem to need at least some sense of risk and gain "out there" in the World: an existential sense of themselves that is vivid to the extent that the dangers faced are "real." Pacific's students seem strongest and most alive when they are in the mountains of Mexico or the Oakland ghetto or out in the desert or simply hitch-hiking or riding freights "to see what's happening." They thrive on distance and motion--and the right to solitude when they want it. Many of them want jobs; they themselves arrange to be teachers in day-care centers, political canvassers, tutors, poolroom attendants, actors, governesses, gardeners. They returned from these experiences immeasurably brightened and more sure of themselves, more willing--in that new assurance--to learn many of the abstract ideas we had been straining to teach them.

It was not simply the experience in itself that brought this about. It was also the _feeling_ of freedom they had, the sense that they could come and go at will and make any choice they wanted--no matter how absurd--if they were willing to suffer what real consequences followed. Many wanted to work and travel and others did not; they wanted merely to sit and think or read or live alone or swim or, as a student has scrawled on my office wall, "ball and goof." What they finally came to understand, of course, was that the school made no pretense at limiting _or_ judging their activities; we considered them "free agents" and limited our own activities to advice, what "teaching" they requested and support when they needed it when facing community, parents or law.

What we were after at Pacific was a _feeling_ to the place: a sense of intensity and space. We discarded the idea of the "microcosm" or model and replaced it an increased openness and access to the larger community. The campus itself became a "hub," a place to come back to for rest or discussion or thought; but we truned things inside-out to the extent that we began to assume that "learning" took place more naturally elsewhere, in all of the activties that our students chose, and that the "school" was in actuality _wherever they were_, _whatever they did_. What students learned at the school was simply the "feel" of things; the sense of themselves as _makers_ of value; the relaization that the environment is at best an extension of men and that it can be transformed by them into what they need.

I hope that doesn't sound rhetorical but I am afraid it

does. What we tried to create was a "flexible environment," what a designer I know has called permissive space. It was meant to be in a sense a model, a metaphor, for the condition in which men find themselves: a flux, a confusion, in which the responsibility of a man was to make connections, value and sense. We tried to create what I will call elsewhere an "open field" by eliminating from the school all preconceptions about what was proper, best or useful; we gave up rules and penalties; we refused at all levels to resort to coercive "force" and students were free to come and go at will, to do anything. We were after what one might call a "free" environment, one that was guilt-free and in which the students might become or discover what they were without having to worry about acting out adult images of themselves.

Of course it took us a long time to come close to that and I can't go into the details here. What we learned to do in every instance was to give up all our ideas about education that didn't work. When something didn't work we refused to blame the students for it--or ourselves; we simply went on to the next thing, feeling our way, trying to get some sense of what was needed. That too is what I mean by "guilt-free."

What we found in that setting was that our students seemed to need, most of all, relief from their own "childhood"--what was expected of them. Is that clear? Some of them needed merely to rest, to withdraw from the strange

grid of adult expectation and demand for lengthy periods of introspection in which they seemed to grow mysteriously--almost like plants. But an even greater number seemed to need independent commerce with the Great World outside the school: a new sort of "social" existences. Nothing could replace that. Early in the school year we had found ourselves going to great lengths to provide vivid experiences within the school: encounter groups, psychodrama, team-teaching, independent study, curricular changes, less traditional content--all of the innovational devices of contemporary pedagogy. Some worked better than others but none worked as well, in general, as direct social experience. The simple fact seemed to be that our students grew when they were allowed to move freely into and around the adult community; when they were not, they languished.

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But I must offer a brief disclaimer here.

When I begin to talk about learning at Pacific and what we found I am usually answered by anguished cries from parents and teachers.

"But what about learning," they insist.

"What about books and math and good spelling? What about college?"

"What about our knowledge and traditions? How will students discover the past?"

"How will they learn responsibility without rules?"

Of course I understand these concerns. I worry about them too. I hope that is clear elsewhere.

But it seems to me that they distract us from what may be the real existential crises of adolescents. Everything I have seen indicates to me that their real needs and problems with learning can't be solved in the traditional ways; indeed, those ways exacerbate the problems.

I accept without question the role of man as a maker of value; clearly his resoponsibilities include the intelligent habitation of nature, the development of his culture and the motion toward some sort of ultimate understanding--if such an end is possible.

But I also think that the psychic violence we do to the young to make them "accept" these burdens is what bleeds them, finally, of value or appeal.

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It seems to me that the period of adolescence is for many students precisely the wrong period for literary experience or abstract knowledge. It is hard to be certain. Certainly the "bookish" students at Pacific moved naturally in that direction and didn't really need the school to discipline them. But while at the school itself they--with the other students--seemed to thirst for different things.

What we quickly realized at Pacific was that small changes didn't work because they were all predicated on the basic and hidden assumption that children had to go to school. When

that coercion was removed we found that their interests--given that new freedom--rarely followed the patterns they had when subject to rules and punishments. We found (1) that when coercion is removed most students don't want much to do with schools--even "good" ones--if they have meaningful alternatives. Small changes within the school failed to produce the sudden shifts in character, the growth, that followed release from school; (2) that most students in a "free" environment would rather learn through direct social experience than from books, but that they do learn that way. They seem to want and need immediate adventure--choice, space and change--and they thrive on it.

We came to see that learning is natural, yes, but it is natural to most things adolescents do. By associating learning with one particular form of analytic intellection and insisting upon that in school at all levels we make a grave error. When students shy away from that kind of intellection it doesn't mean they are turning away forever from learning or abstractions; it means simply that they are seeking another kind of learning momentarily more natural to themselves. That may be anything from physical adventure or experimental community work to withdrawn introspection and an exploration of their fantasies and dreams. The forms seem endless.

Indeed, it is hard for them to do anything without some kind of learning--but that may be what we secretely fear; that those other forms of learning will make them less manageable or like ourselves. That, after all, may be one reason we use all those books. Levi-Strauss insists somewhere on the relation of increased literacy and the power

of the state over the individual. It may well be that dependence on print and abstraction is one of the devices we use to make students manipulable--as if we meant to teach them that ideas exist in talk or on the page--but rarely in activity. We tried to avoid that at Pacific. When we did, when we permitted students the freedom of choice and gave them easy access to the community, we found (naturally enough) that ideas acquired weight and value as students were allowed to try them out in action. It was in practical and social situation, "real" situations, that abstractions began to mean something for them. As they emerged intact from those situations their own strength increased, and the merging of the two--strengthened self and tested knowledge--moved them more quickly toward maturity than any other "methods" I have seen.

One might make a formula of it: to the extent that students had freedom of volition and access to experience knowledge became important. But volition and access were of absolute value; they took precedence over books or parental anxiety; without them, nothing worked. So we had to trust the students to make their own choices--no matter what we thought of them. We ended by accepting those choices as their absolute right, no matter where they led them or how worried we became. In short, we learned to take their risks with them--and to survive. In that sense we became equals, and that equality may in the end be more "educational" for students than anything else.

That may be the most important thing we learned at Pacific. I have certainly repeated it often enough in

these pages: the ways we defined "childhood" or "student" were in the end what influenced behavior and change more than anything else. New ways in seeing them were more effective than changes in curriculum--and without them nothing made much difference.

But we must understand too that the old way of seeing things--the traditional idea of childhood--is in some way baked into the whole public-school system at almost every level and also hidden in most teaching-theory. It is very much entangled with the idea of compulsory schooling. For without real choice students will remain locked in childhood in their schools away from whatever vivid or meaningful life is left.

The problem is that real choice includes dominion over one's own time and energies and the right to come and go on the basis of what has actual importance--and I wonder if we will ever get round, given all our fears, to granting that privelege to students.

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Dear Hallock:

One thing alone of all I have read has made recent sense to me concerning adolescents. That is the implicit suggestion in Erikson's Young Man Luther that every sensitive man experiences in himself the conflicts and contradictions of his age. The "great" man, he suggests, is the man who articulates and resolves this conflicts in a way that has meaning for his time; that is, he is himself--as was Luther--a victim of his time and its vehicle and, finally, a kind of resolution. It seems to me that every man, not only the great, has in some measure the capacity to experience in himself what is happening in the culture around him. I am talking here about what is really shared among the members of a particular culture: a condition, a kind of internal "landscape": the psychic "shape" that a particular time-and-place assumes within a man as the extent and limit of his perceptions, dreams and pleasure and pain.

If there is such a shared condition it seems to me a crucial point, for it means that there is never any real distance between a man and his culture, no real "isolation" or "alienation" from society. It means that adolescents are not in their untutored state cut off from culture nor "outside" it. It means instead that each adolescent is an arena in which the contradictions and currents sweeping through the culture must somehow be resolved, must be resolved by the person himself--and that those individual resolutions are, ideally, the means by which the culture advances itself.

Do you see what I am driving at? I am straining here to get

past the idea of the adolescent as an isolate and deviant creature who must be joined--as if glued and clamped--to the culture. For we ordinarily think of schools, not quite consciously, as the "culture" itself, little models of society. We try to fit the student into that model, believing that if he will adjust to it he will in some way have been "civilized." That approach is connected, as I wrote earlier, to the needs of the early century, when the schools were the means by which the children of immigrant parents were acculturated and moved from the European values of their parents toward more prevalent "American" ones. But all of that has changed now. The children in our schools--all of them--are little fragments of this culture; they no longer need to be "socialized" in the same ways. The specific experiences of every adolescent--his fears, his family crises, his dreams and hallucinations, his habits, his esxuality--all of these are points at which the general culture reveals itself in some way--however individualized--and there is no longer any real question of getting the adolescemt to "adjust" to things.

No. The problem is a different one: how do you get him to discover and accept what is already within him, to articulate it and percieve the extent to which it is shared with others--and, finally, to learn to change it within and outside himself? For that is what I mean when I call the adolescent a "maker of value" and a vehicle through which the culture transforms itself. He is, I suppose, a trustee, but a trustee of a world which already exists in some form within himself--and we must both learn--the adolescent and his

teachers--to respect it.

There are, of course, adjustments to be made. I don't want to be trapped here into defending mere impulse or mindlessness or irresponsibility. Adolescents must always be exposed to the mores of the tribe and the delicate balance of responsibility and privelege that is the social contract at the heart of any culture. He must be conscious of what is shared. But the point I am making is that what is shared is not the school itself; that is "frozen" history, an anochronism. What is actually shared is that inner landscape within each man, and education--to make any sense at all--must begin with its acknowledgement: with the acceptance of the internal life of each participant. It is from that central point--one's own existential condition--and the discovery that the condition with others is shared, that it forms a natural "community," that other concerns begin.

In a sense, then, I am calling for a reversal of most educational thought. It is the individual who is central, who is, in the deepest sense, the culture--not the institution. It is in him that culture rsides--in experience and memory--and what is needed is an education in which (as in some initiation rites) the wedding between private experience and communal responsibility has at its base the sanctity of the individual's experience and leaves it intact.

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In the last few years, Hallock, a crisis has developed:

a contest involving, in some general way, the control of an individual's senses and energies. You can see it happening now as the methods of social manipulation change. Macluan, of course, has pointed all of this out--but he seems much less frightened than I am. Thirty years ago students were still manipulated "socially," through family and group relationships--and some thought it possible (Dewey earlier and, later, Neil) to "resocialize" persons in schools by setting up new group configurations that demanded by their very structure new and sometimes liberating relationships. But these days students are being manipulated in far more complicated and subtle ways: through the media, through mass-movements, through the environment itself--and the increase in this sort of manipulation seems coupled to the growing isolation of the adolescent from large families or real community--from human contact.

That is why one worries even more about the schools. At the same time the adolescent is subjected to the barrage of the media--predigested versions of reality--we deprive him through school and law of most chances to articulate his own experience or share it. Students denied a sense of their own value or potency are being trained in a way to become "recievers" rather than "senders" and are asked to depend more and more on external manmade messages. I suppose the man who understand this best is William Burroughs. One would hope that all the people so excited by Understanding Media would also read Burroughs' Naked Lunch for the other, more frightened side of the same vision.

The problem can be put simply.

We are becoming increasingly conscious of the effectiveness of biochemical or electronic or environmental forms of manipulation. More and more our versions of things are shaped less by the immediate "locale" and more by the media. Thus, if any sort of self-determination and choice is to remain, individuals must become increasingly sensitive to the effects upon themselves of very subtle manipulative devices; they must learn to evaluate <u>for themselves</u> which ones they prefer--and even why. But such an ability presupposes an ability to feel both deeply and precisely and an awareness and trust of one's own internal condition: of the state, at any given moment, of one's own consciousness or "being." But that capacity, now such a necessary one, is the one which schools--<u>perhaps</u> without knowing--discourage.

The function of any humanistic education, I suppose, is the creation at least of the <u>possibility</u> of freedom by bringing the student to the point where he is capable of intelligent choice. In the past this has meant the capacity to make ehtical or moral or political distinctions and choices. It has depended upon an awareness of the possible alternatives, a sense of history and the ability to foresee consequence. But such choices in the future will be of a different and more complicated nature. Alternatives will be presented in different and less obvious ways, for they will involve, I imagine, <u>different states of consciousness</u>, almost different "realities." In a sense, such choices are already being made available to children of twelve through the avilability of

of drugs. But upon what bases can they make a choice?

If direct manipulation of the nervous system is to continue--an it will--and education is going to continue to create for students an ultimate freedom of choice, students in or out of schools must be exposed to a variety of conditions and styles, different perceptual states; they must learn to distinguish between various acts and choices on the basis of the ways they make them and their fellows feel. Only that sort of deep involvement with subtle conditions will work. If the students are forced, as they are now, to deaden their sense of themselves in order to remain in school and free of pain, then they are being readied for precisely the kind of manipulation that is going to flourish in the next few years.

Do you see what I have done, Hallock? I have suggested something that the schools can do for students that cannot be done elsewhere. Books--as crucial as they are--will always be available; students who want them will seek them out. What may be more important at the moment is this need for an education of the consciousness, of awareness. But at the same time one recognizes this as a possibility for the schools one must also ask: are they likely to do it? I don't know. I know that we probably "mean well" in our schools or at least think we do. But you can also argue, with Levi-Strauss, that "the struggle against illiteracy is indistinguishable at times from the increased powers exerted over the individual by the central authority." Perhaps decreases in personal freedom and compulsory, mass education must always go hand in hand; that worries me. Perhaps the implicit (though unconscious) purpose of the schools

have always been to make persons manipulable! This, I suppose, is a mildly schizophrenic perception, a conspiratorial view of history--and yet I am drawn to it. Our institutions may be designed to destroy us: that would be Artaud's way of understanding Freud's ideas in Civilization and Its Discontents--but it is also Blake's and Burroughs' and it stays with me too, even during such calm days as these.

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I wonder if such fear is justified.

I know that MacLuan and others face the same future with a kind of glad unblinking acceptance. I am not so relaxed. I think that in some strange way MacLuan and his enthusiasts have mistaken the machine for nature itself: as if, through his relation to it, it somehow brought a man closer to some kind of truth. But I think that is wrong. The individual in relation to the media is more like a Burroughs character, a kind of addict. That is, cut off from the media and its intense stimulation he feel himself empty, a hollowness waiting to be filled by the next wave of sound. What I fear in all that, in its acceptance, is the loss of a primary truth: that a man's being is in itself his primary connection to nature, that both nature and culture reside and meet within himself--and that much of his attention, his senses, must be directed toward that landscape rather than machines.

Does that make sense? What disturbs me about the unques-

tioning acceptance of an electronic utopia is that we seem so ready to accept or celebrate media precisely because we have forgotten this truth. To distract the individual from his inner connections by forcing upon his consciousness external messages and breeding in him automatic and unchosen responses is to deprive him of his basic connections with nature itself--and real choice. I have often seen my own students animated at first by electronic music and then numbed by it, engulfed and--at its end--left high and dry, without life of their own, puppets with lax strings. It is then that one begins to fear the combined influence of the media and poor schooling--and the gradual loss of feeling in ourselves.

One's real relations to things take place in peculiar and highly complicated ways--often in silence and solitude. The unfolding of individual personality is slow and delicate and it is through the richness of that personality that one knows, first-hand, the resonance of other things. It is that, of course, must be protected in schools--if they are to be worth anything at all. But how careful we must be! For we are in danger of making the same mistakes with machines in this century that we did with "logical" thought in the last. That is: what cannot be programmed or conveyed or assimilated by machines may cease to be a part of "objective" reality. It is in that way that they may make the world smaller for us rather than larger and leave us impoverished.

*

Dear Hallock:

I don't know where all this wandering has led us. I come to the close of this paper still wondering to myself if schools are worth all the trouble. Can they be saved or changed? I no longer know. The more I visit and talk the more I believe in the necessity of change--and the less faith I have. I am not sure, after all this time, that I believe in schools at all.

One fall, I remember, I returned to the State College after several summer months in the mountains of Mexico. I had been quiet there, calm, working and walking with a few good friends and a girl, and I had gotten many things "straight" as they say in my own mind--with a wonderful kind of clarity and calm. That first day in school I felt as I usually did: a sly humor at being there at all--like a kind of comical spy, and a sense at the same time of the heavy pressure of the place--as if the sharp edges of those ugly buildings were actually inside one's own mind. I walked into the classroom and looked at the class I was facing for the first time. I wrote my name on the board--one always does that--and began to talk to them quietly about what I wanted to do. It was all very simple, of course; I never wanted much. They would grade themselves, choose their own books, conduct their own discussion and write papers when they wanted. They were mildly perplexed by the simplicity of things, a little nervous; was all this permissiveness some kind of trick? They began to ask questions, and finally one of them asked--

with real anguish in his voice:

"But what is it you want?"

I had at that moment what Zen students later described to me as a brief and mild moment of satori. I could not understand the question and I was suddenly fixed in a kind of pleasant but inescapable silence. I tried to speak but could not. For there flashed through my mind with a sudden clarity not only the absurdity of that question but the absurdity of the whole situation: the roles we played and the class and classroom and the structures outside and their purposes. It is, of course, difficult to describe. I knew that whatever I answered would be absurd because the weirdness of things was built into the question and our roles as teacher and student--and whatever I said, no matter how I disclaimed that role, would restore it. Had I been any sort of "master," I was told, I would have spontaneously made some sort of gesture that would have revealed, magically, the absurdity of the situation and opened the student's eyes. But I was not, of course, a master. Instead I stood there in silence--like a man who suddenly realizes that what he has taken for reason or "reality" is, in effect, an absurd game with nothing to do with the real relations or needs of men.

I never did answer the question. I managed in a few moments to explain my silence in a muddled way and then I kept quiet for the rest of the period while they talked

among themselves.

Of course I had felt long before that instant that the college was another version of Kafka's castle--and I still *feel* that way. But in that *particular* moment, which I can only hazily recall, I *knew* it with a dazzling certainty that I cannot recapture. Everything had fallen into place and I saw, from that hardwon summer's calm, the grotesque nature of what I was doing.

I am torn between that sense now and the surge of feeling at times that, yes, the schools *can* be saved or changed or put to real use. This evening I seem to be neutral. I am interested now only in getting down all I can about schools before I move on in my own mind to something else. There is more to it, of course, than I have written here. I once thought, while teaching, that there were ways round the problems I have described here. To that end I moved naturally in my classes toward a theory and technique called the "open field" in which we tried to remove from the classroom all regulations and expections and preconceptions about what might or should happen. It was an essentially *aesthetic* idea derived more from John Cage or Charles Olson or the action-painters than from any kind of pedagogy. It was an attempt to create an ideal environment in which every held idea was implicitly questioned by the possibility of a total freedom without external or institutional limit, a sort of *absolute* space that assumed its meaning only through the activity of its inhabitants.

I suppose we have the time to describe it in more detail.

In my notes I find these rhetorical notes for a speech:

> What we ordinarily say in the classroom, implicitly, is not here, not now. What must be said is: Here & Now, I & Thou. Not to sit back from things, watching, taking notes, talking, but to enter into them--and dance. The classroom must always be an event occuring in the present, it must be a kind of holy moment. For participation and experience are the homage we pay to things, to life; they are acts of love--that, I suppose, is what we mean by I & Thou, and it is there, in participation and acknowledgement, in that holy moment, that real knowledge begins...

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What I was after, Hallock, was what we later moved toward at Pacific--with younger students and on a larger scale. I thought, for a start, that such an approach would gradually bring each student to an expression of himself; that the stored experience of each one, as it rested in him as habit and memory, would mke its way to the surface. We could begin to learn from the inside out--on the basis of what we really were. I wanted to eliminate the preconceptions that ring the teacher round and the classroom and thus reveal to the students how the "shape" of culture--the real landscape we share--is not the institution around us but in actuality the form of a man's intelligence and feeling: the "body" of the psyche.

I don't know how to make that really clear. I struggle with the idea and return to it again and again because it seems to me at once complex, vague and crucial--and I don't have the right words. I know only that I could sense in my students the ability to move in certain directions, do certain things,

and that the ways they saw things and reacted, what they could feel and what they could not, the areas in them of vividness or blankness--all of that is what I meant by their internal shape: the "geography" of culture within them as thought, memory and feeling--as possibility. That is Blake's sense of culture, of course; it is what Laing is talking about or someone, a poet, like William Carlos Williams in Paterson: the way a place or time enters a man and becomes him, marks off certain areas of experience as taboo or safe, painful or rewarding.

I suppose we all know about that, but what I wanted then was to get my students to feel it, to sense vividly in themselves how their real limits were internal. I hoped they would discover for themselves is that the most precise way to sense the true nature of a culture--beyond all rhetoric and moralizing--is to go deeply into the self and discover what one is and shares with others.

That seemed to me crucial then--and it does now. What continually weakened the students I saw as a teacher or part-time therapist was not their pain itself nor their problems but their belief that their own pain, their private experiences, was what set them apart from their culture, made them neurotic or freakish. They began with their pain but moved quickly to guilt--as if they were somehow to "blame" for their own experience. How can I make that clear? It was absurd. Precisely those feelings that marked them as Americans, contemporaries, citizens of this "condition" we share, seemed to them to set them

apart from thins, an individual "neurosis," something to be hidden or cured--as if their experience itself were a fall from some hazy kind of grace.

It is this schizophrenic condition, this mild form of self-distrust or hatred to which I find myself returning. It was the one thing that struck me most strongly in colleges; it seemed to me the most prevalent condition there. I used to find myself wanting to shout at them as if that would rouse them in some way. I kept wanting to scream some kind of magical formula at them, a charm, a talisman:

"What a man is, is. What a man is, is. Simply is. Is. Beyond guilt or blame. Is, is. Is the culture itself. What a man is, is..."

But you know that refrain already. I have certainly repeated it often enough here.

It is simply that we understand it well enough as anthropologists and ethnologists but forget it as teachers. In our grand passions for objectivity, detatchment, distance and balance we have somehow convinced students at some very deep level that their private experience has no place in education and must be kept away; that the truth resides somewhere in abstraction and theory rather than activity--and in some collectively accepted and drab version of things: the institution itself.

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But what more can one say? I have run out of words. What moved me in colleges moved me at Pacific and the more I have

seen of things the more I have been convinced of what I began to believe long ago. I suppose this paper has merely served to deliniate my own obsessions, what Sterne would have called my "hobby-horses."

O well.

I have other suggestions, you know, for different kinds of schools and teaching devices and techniques. But these are the ideas and concerns behind them all, and as I review them now there doesn't seem much analysis or objectivity to them. They are states of <u>feeling</u> all, an almost physical response to how schools "feel," a poet's response--but I can't apologize for that. As I said at the start of this paper, I leave them tacked, unfinished as they are, to the bark of a tree. Make use of them if you can. As for myself, I think I will leave schools alone for awhile. It might be a good idea to go back to those Mexican mountains.

It was Huck Finn said something like that: about heading out to the wilderness. I suppose that shows you just about where I am.

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Last item (from a notice tacked to my wall by a student at Pacific):

On Monday when the sun is
Hot,
Sometimes there's school and
Sometimes not,
and when the clouds
come over and the
rains come down,
everyone says fuck it
and goes to
town

Hallock:

What keeps running through my mind as a work on this section is a line I read twelve years ago in a friend's first published story: The Idea in that idea is: there is no one over you. I like that line. I liked it years ago because I thought it then so easy to be free; I like it this evening too but with a sense of irony: it has taken me so long to really believe it, and now I know, in retrospect, how difficult it is--and how rare. Tired tonight, I must feel like one of the fathers I am trying to write about. There is no one over you. Perhaps that signifies the gap between these children and their parents. For the children it is true, they sense it somehow: there is no one over them; authority, believable authority has disappeared, it has been replaced by individual experience. As Altizer says, God is dead; he is experienced now not as someone "above," omnipotent, omniscient or "outside" but inwardly, as conscience or vision or even the unconscious or Tillich's "ground of being." This is all too familiar to bother with here, but his particular generation seems to me a collective dividing point; the parents of these children, the fathers, still believe in that "someone" over them, insist upon it, demand it for and from their children: someone must be over you; but the children cannot believe it, the idea means nothing. It is almost as if they are the first real Americans---suddenly free of Europe and somehow "fatherless," confused, forced back on their

own experience, their own sense of things, even though--at the same time--they are forced to defy their families and schools in order to keep it.

This is a kind of Reformation. Arnold was wrong when he said that art would replace religion; education replaced it. School became Church, the principle vehicle for value, for "culture," and just as men once rebelled against the established Chruch as the mediator between god and man, students now rebel against the public school (and its version of things) as the intermediary between themselves and experience, between themselves and experience and the making of value. Students are expected to reach "reality" (whether of knowledge or society) through their teachers and the school; the institution presumes to know what is best and has monopolized the field of choice and has incorporated that monopoly into law. No one, it is said, can participate in the culture effectively without having at one time passed through their hands, proven his allegience--and been blessed. This is the authority exerted by priests and the Church, and just as men were moved once to shorted the approach to God, they are moved now to do the same thing in relation to learning and entry into the community. For just as God (I believe) was argued to appear within a man--unique, private and yet shared--so culture is, in some way, grounded in the individual, inhabits him, and the schools--like the Church--are ideally the expressions of that habitation, not its sole authority.

It is no accident, then, that Erikson's book about the reformation, Young Man Luther, seems to me so important.

In it he suggests that the crises of a time are not "outside" a man nor resolved by institutions, but that they are present within and resolved by men on a deep inner psychic level. The resolution made by a man of the "culture" in himself, when turned into activity, becomes public property, and in that way a man becomes more than a victim, more than a servant: he is a maker of value, a vehicle for history. That is the "reformative" shift that occured in the Church, that shift from the institutional (the external) to the individual (the internal), and it seems to demand, when it occurs, an agony, an apocalyptic frenzy, a destruction of the past itself. I believe, as you know, that may be happening now. One sees it, feels it everywhere: a fissure, a kind of quake.

I remember, Hallock, one moment in the streets of Oakland during the draft demonstrations. The students had sealed off the street with overturned cars and there were no police; the gutters were empty and the students moved into them from the sidewalks, first walking, then running and finally almost dancing in the street. You could see the idea break on their faces: the street is ours! It was as if a weight had been lifted from them, a fog; there was not at that moment any fury in them, any vengefulness or even politics; rather, a lightness, delight, an exhilaration at the sudden inexplicable sense of being "free." Orwell describes something similar in Homage to Catalonia: that brief period in Barcelona when the anarchists had apparently succeeded and men shared what pwer there was. I don't know how to describe it, except to say

that one's sense of invisible authority (Kafka's "castle" or Burrough's "senders") had vanished: the oppressive father--who is not really there--was gone.

Do you know what I mean? We have all felt it from time to time, that sense of "being at home," that ease, that feeling of a Paradise that is neither behind us nor deferred but is around us, a natural household. One's attention ceases to turn upward or forward (the Christian directions) but is directed "horizontally" to the landscape and to one's fellows. I have seen the same thing as I watched Stokely Carmichael speaking to a black audience and telling them that they must stop begging the white man, like children, for their rights; for they were, he said, neither children nor slaves, no, they were--and here they chanted, almost cried, in unison--a beautiful people: yes our noses are broad and our lips are thick and our hair is kinky...but we are beautiful, we are beautiful, we are black and beautiful. Watching, you could sense in that released joy an emergence, a "coming up," a refusal to accept shame or the white man over them and a turning instead to one another, to their own implicit value.

But there is a kind of pain in being white and watching that, for there is no one to say the same things to white children; no "fathers" or brothers to give them that sense of manhood or pride. The adolescents I have seen--white, middleclass--are a long way from those words--we are beautiful, we are beautiful--and I cannot imagine how they will reach them, deprived as they are of all individual strength. For it is this, I think, that the schools aim at: just that

deprivation, just that dpendence upon "others" or the institution for any sense of value. Your own worth must be proven again and again by the satisfaction of external requirements with no inherent value or importance; you must satisfy a set of demands handed down from god knows when or whom (Friedenberg talks about "ressentiment"), and there is the continual separation of self and worth and the intrusion of a kind of institutional guilt: failure, not of god but of the system, the nameless "others," the authority that you can never quite see; you see only the adminstrators, the "clerks," the ones who say, with parents, "I didn't make the rules, but that's how it is, everyone must obey them..."

It is this feeling that pervades both high schools and college, this Kafkaesque sense of faceless authority that drives one (see Friedenberg) to rebellion or withdrawal. Kafka's Trial is a perfect image of it, and I can remember my own relief at being "fired" from the State College, for at last I could confront my antagonists, at last--in that endless round of committees and meetings--one had a chance to meet face to face with the men responsible for the nature of the place. We are all of us, for that reason, enchanted by the idea of the Trial, that ancient Socrtaic dream of confrontation and vindication or martyrdom, for it is then, suddenly, that Authority shows its face. I once watched Jack Kerouac in the mid-fifties on a television show and when the interviewer asked him what he wanted he said: to see the face of God. How arrogant and childish and direct! And yet, I suppose, it is what we all want as

children: to have the masks of authority, all its disguises, removed--and to see it plain. I think these days that that is what lies in part behind the riots in the schools. Their specific grievances are incidental, their real purpose is to make God show his face, to have whatever pervasive and oppressive force makes us perpetual children reveal itself, declare itself, commit itself at last. It is Biblical, it is Freudian, it reminds one too of the initiation rites: the need to unmask the gods and assume their power, to become an Equal: a man and peer....

It is all this runs through my head thinking about students and parents and that one line (to come full circle): <u>there is no one over you</u>. The schools seem to me to enforce always the idea (whatever else they do) that there <u>is</u> someone over you--and the methods by which they do it are ritualized, pervasive: the intrusion of guilt, shame, alienation from oneself, dependence, insecurity--all these feelings are not the <u>accidental</u> results of schools; they are <u>intentional</u>, and they are used--I will argue this later--in an attempt to make children manipulable, obedient, "good citizens" we call it, and useful to the state. The systems of authority <u>demand</u> submission; they also they distract the person--in his rebellion--from finding within himself the potency that might make him "free." I suppose this sounds both shrill and political, but I am trying to compress into these few pages what will elsewhere be argued at length. The schools are the means by which we deprive the young of Manhood--that is what I mean to say--and we must not be surprised when they seek that Manhood in ways that must be--of necessity--childish and violent. But that frigh-

tens me, for there is no reason to prefer mindless violence to mindless authority, and I am enough of an academic, an intellectual (just enough) to want to preserve much of what will be lost in the kind of rebellion or apocalypse one can sense approaching. And yet, and yet... The rapidity of events leaves me with no clear idea, no solution, no sense of what will be an adequate change. I am writing this page to the accompaniment of the television commentators as they describe the progress of that black train as it carries Kennedy from New York to Washington through all the small-town stations. It is as if it were not Kennedy alone beingburied but also old America, a whole way of thinking that must now give way. It may be that all of this chaos is a way of breaking with the wold world and that from it some kind of native American will emerge. There is no way of knowing, there no longer seems any way of estimating what is necessary or what will work. I know only that the problem now seems to be--as always--that our response to crisis is to move away or back rather than forward, and that we may well--for the sake of some imagined order--increase in number and pressure the very approaches that seem to me to have brought us to this confusion. I don't know. I believe in "value" of course, I believe that the young must have values, be responsible, care, but I know too that most of the violence I have seen done to the young has been done in the name of value, and that the well-meaning people who have been so deadset on making things right have had a hand in bringing us to where we are now. I can remember visiting with my students at the Center for Nonviolence, where we

spoke with David Harris, Joan Baez and Ira Sandperl. They are good persons all, of course, but they frightened me when they spoke to my students, for they explained to them that there was one way, one way only, to be moral, one right choice--to go to jail--and that the other possibilities were immoral or "not serious." I was disturbed by that: that imposition of absolute value, that assumption of moral superiority; I sensed a lack of air, a constriction, a "binding" of my students, and when I questioned them they said, "o yes, this is the one true way; most absolutes are dangerous, but ours is Good, the only way..." They said it, I swear it, and then David Harris began to talk to my students about sin. Ironic, Jewish, I balked at that and my students did too, for what one felt then was the oppressive weight of an absolute morality, a judgement made blindly about oneself; they felt the "molding" taking place and a loss of equality. There was a part of themselves that was being ignored, even in the name of Goodness, and the loss of that part of oneself, the blind acceptance of value, is what they had been struggling to escape.

The problem, Hallock, is that Ira and Dave and Joan were right: without their values we may well destroy ourselves. And yet the process by which they tried to force the students to accept those values--insistence, manipulation--were the very ones that would make them, if successful, susceptible, at some later date, to other forms of manipulation, to new kinds of dependence that lead inevitably to guilt and an unreasoning judgement (andhatred) of others--and oneself. I haven't the space to make this clear, but the paradox is a deep and troubling one, more complicated, deeper and more

troubling today than a week ago, as that train moves through its stations of the cross; and I no longer know if change can be accomplished--for the young, for any of us--without the apocalyptic frenzy that seems almost upon us. I don't know--given the choice--whether I prefer that frenzy or the repression that well may be the only way to avoid it. Only a few days ago I thought there were ways round that choice, and there is always the small chance that shock may bring us to some kind of sense, but I doubt it today. The young, educational crisis: these probably <u>are</u> symptomatic and perhaps nothing can be done consciously in those areas until the air itself is cleared one way or another.

So I have no easy conclusions, Hallock, no startling synthesis with which to close this section. I have only a change in mood, a softening, a kind of sadness. It may be, given that, that the best thing is simply to close with a fragment of an (unmailed) letter in which I hint at what comes later, the faint hope of an alternative:

> ...I am trying to surround you, I see that, I am trying to make with these words a kind of city so natural, so familiar, that the other world, the one <u>that is</u>, will appear by comparison absurd and flat, limited, unnecessary. What I am after is <u>liberation</u>, not my own, which comes often enough these days in solitude or sex, but yours, and that is arrogant, isn't it, that is presumptious, and yet that is the function all all art, of all art <u>at this moment</u>: to free you, to set you free. It is that too that is the end of education, <u>at this moment</u>, a liberation from childhood and what holds us there, a kind of midwifery, as if the nation itself were in labor (it is)and one wanted to save both the future and the past--for we <u>are</u> both, we are, we are the thin bridge swaying between them, and to tear one from the other means a tearing of curselves, a partial death.
>
> And yet it may be that death is inevitable, useful. It may be. Perhaps, as in the myth, Aphrodite can rise only where Cronos' testicles have fallen into the sea. It may be that way with us. It may. The death of the Father who is

in us, the death of the old authority which is part of us, the death of the past which is also our Death, it may all be necessary: a rending, a purgation, and still one thinks of another way, an alternative, something less (or is it more) apocalyptic in which the past becomes the future in ourselves, in which we become the bridges between: vessels, makers of culture. Unless from us the future takes place, we are Death only, sd Lawrence, meaning what the Chassids do: that the world and Time reside within, not outside, men, there is no distance, no "alienation," only a perpetual wedding to the World. It is that--the presence in oneself of Time--that makes things interesting, is as interesting as guilt; I don't want to lose it, don't want to relinquish that sense in the body of another dimension, a distance, the depth of the body as it extends backward into the past and forward, as it contains and extends, transforms.

What I have learned is that we are history, culture; it gives us resonance, direction. Do you remember Michaelangelo's "Captives" or Rodin's "Hand of God"? We are like that: thrust forward from the past to articulate it as we become ourselves. A wind moves through us (as Lawrence wrote) and we are its cutting edge; we navigate, we sharpen it, it can be changed: focused, understood, revealed. That too is a function of man, of his intelligence; that recognition is the aim--if such a massive blunderbuss can have an aim--of any education...

What I am after, Hallock, is some kind of alternative to a sense of alienation, separation, rage, some kind of connection to things to replace the system of dependence and submission--the loss of the self--that is now giving way, slanting toward violence. Now that Kennedy is dead we have begun to talk again about lawlessness, the need for value, order and obedience. The commentators talk about Bonnie and Clyde and the adulation of violence, the impulse in the young to identify themselves with what is brutal, criminal. But what one of my students points out is also true: it is not mere lawlessness with which the young identify, but with the lawless impotence of Clyde:

that is the essential connection, and what I am trying to articulate is a way of seeing, of _feeling_, that will restore to the young a sense of manhood and potency without--at the same time--destroying the past.

I will develop that point more fully later when I talk about the _classroom_ in general and Pacific itself. But through everything I write there seems to run the same theme: the necessity for each man to experience himself as an extension and a maker of _culture_, to feel the whole force of the world within himself, as his own--not as an enemy.

With a final flourish I will quote myself again:

> ...there is no wedding _to_ the world. A man _is_ the world, he is the world distinguishing itself as _himself_, as "I", and a college, its ideal totality, is the discovery of oneself as the world, of the world as oneself. An act of learning is a meeting, and every meeting is simply the discovery in the world of a part of oneself that had previously been unacknowledged by the self. It is the recovery of the extend of one's being. It is an embrace, an embrace of an eternal but elusive companion, the shadowy "other" in which one truly resides and which blazes, when embraced, like the sun...

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