

DIARY:
HOW TO IMPROVE THE
WORLD (YOU
WILL ONLY MAKE
MATTERS WORSE)
CONTINUED
PART THREE (1967)

by JOHN CAGE



1967
A GREAT BEAR PAMPHLET

LXI. U.S. citizens are six per cent of world's population consuming sixty per cent of world's resources. Had Americans been born pigs rather than men, it would not have been different. Finding one of them acceptable, people say, "You're not like an American."

She said people she talked to about the global services (and the notion services'd bring about global living without war) said: Yes, of course, that's right. But how is it going to happen? Deep drilling: a slight angle and without meaning to you're taking oil from under someone else's property. Erik Satie's Venetian gold-merchant: He hugs the bag of gold, takes some pieces out, kisses them, carefully putting them back. **After other** financial-erotic acts, not being able to resist, he gets into the bag himself. Coming out of it somewhat later, he discovers he has a backache. **LXII. We** open our eyes and ears seeing life each day excellent as it is. This realization no longer needs art though without art it would have been difficult (yoga, zazen, etc.) to come by. Having this realization, we gather energies, ours and the ones of nature, in order to make this intolerable world endurable. **Robots.** Ivan Sutherland: "...it is not enough for a computer to print an answer. The answer is useful only when it leads to new human understanding.... Widespread use of graphic inputs and outputs with computers will bring about a major increase in scientific, engineering, and educational productivity." **LXIII. We** talked about Gaudi. Mies van der Rohe admired the Gaudi buildings in and near

Barcelona and the Park Güell. Laura said that driving to the apartment from the office Mies was **misanthropic. He had said that there are too few good people in the world. (Duchamp talking about the human mind pointed out how poorly it works.)** Isolate aspect of human nature which brought it about no one (not even those devoted to his work) knows how many pieces of Satie's Furniture Music were written or where they are. Call it collective thoughtlessness. There exist, we're told, unused areas of the brain. They should be put to work. **LXIV. Days** spent hunting for non-synthetic foods. At sunset becoming artists in the kitchen. **Other days spent making something inedible (painting, theatre, etc. and the sciences).** paying attention to thing already made (classics, history, humanities). Plastics. Waddington: "... the richness of individual life depends to a major extent on constructive enterprises... which are on such a large scale that only society as a whole can undertake them." Effortless speed (seven hundred and fifty miles per hour): people blown through tunnels downhill from Boston to New York. Effortless slowing down: tunnel goes uphill. Asked about religion he said he never said anything against it: "It's the only thing that keeps people in line." What about art? Is art, formerly religion's servant, now, without our realizing it, a kind of policing activity? We need a purely secular morality. **LXV. Pia Gilbert,** born in southern Germany, got in a taxicab in New York City. The driver said, "I'm a Black Muslim." She replied, "I'm sorry to hear it." "You don't believe in the truth?" "That isn't the truth." "You don't like Negroes?" "What makes you think I'm not a Negro?" What it is is a field. Looks like we'll have networks in that field. Lines crisscrossing on a

Rich, we become richer. No way once it begins to impede accumulation.

Universe. They've put the cart before the horse: they're better about publicity than they are about what they publicize. LXXV. Sometimes the truth gets out: years ago the double-spread in a New York newspaper showing the faces of the forty or so men

(industrialists) who rule the world.

All of her children were male, twelve of them. "She should be studied," Duchamp said. "She is the solution of a

problem." A suite for two. Instead of transformation into other forms (reincarnation) regeneration of each individual. Precedent: constant remaking of Shinto temples in Japan. (With his thumbnail Tudor kept the bass-string in vibration.) Include changes in design: invention applied to a living body. (Electronics: reincarnation without hiatus of

death.) **Rembrandt**. We have everything we used to have. The Mona Lisa's still with us, for instance. On top of which we have the Mona Lisa with a mustache.

We have, so to speak, more than we need. LXXVI. *Electric clothing*. The program was changed. We need news. Not just bad

news: good news and news that's neither good nor bad. Heads of state lecturing on war (knowing they are speaking to people all over the world) will not be able to promote national objectives.

We were impatient. So, we telephoned to find out whether the bus was coming, even though the appointed hour had not yet struck. **Figuéras**. Looking for corduroy

suit, noticed chamber pots, each with eye and inscription at the base of the bowl, the eye primitively painted with brilliant colors. The Catalan inscription was black: I see thee. LXXVII. He refuses to give up. When he walks across the room, you wonder whether he's going to make it (a strange orientation of

the upper body in relation to the legs, an original way of putting one foot in front of the other). Out of Illinois into Sweden. (How will it happen? Will we do it or will it be done to us? **Unemployment**.) Climate control. Stravinsky's objection to Schoenberg's music: it isn't modern (too much like, though more interesting than, Brahms'). Absence of modernity's effect of Schoenberg's accepting tradition, hook, line and sinker.

Sounds everywhere. Our concerts celebrate the fact concerts're no longer necessary. LXXVIII. The rehearsals continued and more concerts were given.

Her playing which had been superb became merely correct. It was necessary to suggest a certain sloppiness, the playing of something that hadn't been written. Computer-made music (synthesized *Blue Moon*) presented same problem. Random elements introduced. Dad's cold remedy (a cure-all combining menthol, thymol in alcohol: Cowell preferred it to whiskey); Dad's inhalor for quick introduction to bloodstream of vitamins, hormones. American Medical Association prevented general marketing of these products. The doctor telephoned to ask whether

Grandfather was still alive. Turned out that instead of analyzing Grandfather's urine he had studied some apple juice that Grandmother had given the hospital messenger when he came to pick up the sample. LXXIX. Get it, she said, so it's unknown which parent conceiving will bear the child.

Responsibility undefined. Circa one hundred and seventy-five kinds of male, sixty, seventy kinds of female. Sterility. He had actually gotten slides showing the passage of the gene from one cell to the next. Destruction.

Reconstitution. (What we want is very

U.S. troops. Armistice November
Eleventh. When's Second World War's
Armistice? Need three hundred and
sixty-three more wars arranged so each
ends on different day, entire year
becoming one Armistice after another.
Wars cold rather than hot. Lectures on
war preferable to war itself. Annual
celebration of ends of lectures, each and
every day. **LXXXIX. Society, not being a
process a king sets in motion, becomes an
impersonal place understood and made
useful so that no matter what each
individual does his actions enliven the
total picture. Anarchy (no laws or
conventions) in a place that works.**
Society's individualized. The doctor
didn't know what the disease was. It
attacked everyone differently, wherever a
person was vulnerable. **Into that world
when it's changed things'll reenter
we'd renounced, e.g., value judgments (cf.
the dominant seventh). They'll not
monopolize nor suggest what happens
next.** (He hit over the head the
mother who'd lost her only child,
saying, "This will give you something
to cry about.") Constant
lamentation. (We cry because anyone's
head was struck.) Tears: a global
enterprise. XC. President Eisenhower
(1953): Let us assume we lost
Indo-China. If Indo-China goes, the
tin and tungsten we so greatly value
would cease coming. We are after the
cheapest way to prevent the occurrence
of something terrible—the loss of
our ability to get what we want from
the riches of the Indo-Chinese
territory and from Southeast Asia. **If
we get through 1972. Fuller says, we've
got it made. 1972 ends the present
critical period. Following present
trends, fifty per cent of the world's
population will then have what they need.
The other fifty per cent will rapidly
join their ranks. Say by the year 2000.**

Note on the Author and this Work

The New York Public Library has produced a superb bibliography of John Cage's earlier writings, and more recent works (including the text of this pamphlet) will be included in **A Year From Monday** (to appear in late Autumn with the Wesleyan University Press, which also published **Silence**, a selection from his earlier writings). Cage's compositions are available from Edition Peters, together with a catalogue of his works and sufficient biographical materials, so what is needed at the moment is not the usual Great Bear short mechanical bibliography and biography that enables one to locate more materials, but a few remarks on the pamphlet you have at hand.

John Cage has for a very long time treated music as being not only about music, but as a language with whatever relevance it was given. So the essay in this pamphlet does not deal specifically with the musical format, but with the world of such possible relevances. Cage has said that his problems are not musical but social, and in this way his music itself has taken on a relevance that purifies both it and its auditors. Therefore we ought not be surprised at the scope of the "diary," or its quality, which is that of a poem. The painter is not, however, accepted as a dramatist (how about Picasso and Oldenburg?) in our society. How about the composer as poet/designer? Cage has been interested in design and typography since his undergraduate days at Pomona College, where his roommate was the fine printer (deceased) Gregg Anderson. For years he designed programs and posters for dance and music concerts, and many of his writings reflect his interest in painting. In the mid-1950's he supported himself as an art director and designer of typography for a textile firm. Some of his design ideas came through in the **Art News Annual** of 1958, which included a gorgeous short essay by him on Satie, juxtaposed with remarks by Satie and superimposed on visual materials by Satie himself. This pamphlet is an attempt to realize another of Cage's ideas as closely as possible to his intention. Dick Higgins, acting as printing technician, described the uses and limitations of the two-color process we have used and suggested feasible potentials, and in effect he provided Cage with an instrument on which to perform a visual realization of his idea. Cage entered into the proposal gladly, employing color-changes which, like the indentations, type-faces and number of words given a single story or idea, are the outcome of chance operations. The first section of the "diaries," which are collections of thoughts that develop out of working and being alive, appeared in the little magazine **Joglars**, issue number three. The second is in the Spring 1967 issue of the **Paris Review**. You have the third. What will the fourth be like?

Notations, edited by John Cage, and including sample works by more than 200 composers, will be published by Something Else Press in the Autumn of 1967.

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