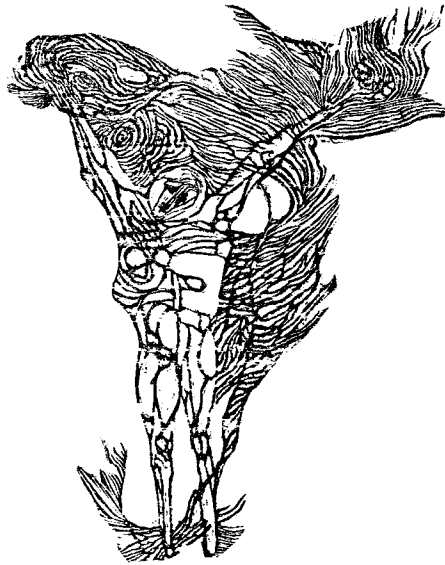


[About this issue]



As the reader thumbs through this issue he will be struck by something unique in Ramparts' history: all of the artwork, including the cover, was done by one artist—Jacob Landau.

This is not to herald a new format nor is it likely to be repeated, simply because the scope, power and extraordinary relevance of Mr. Landau's work is not likely to be found elsewhere.

These paintings were not commissioned by Ramparts to illustrate specific articles. Rather they are recent major statements by a literate and concerned artist which parallel in a special way the contents of this magazine.

[WALTER KAUFMANN ON JACOB LANDAU]

HERE IS ART that is unmistakably modern and at the same time in the tradition of Goya and Blake. One is immediately struck by the immense, highly personal power and urgency that set Landau's work apart; also by the magnificent colors and unusual color combinations in the large watercolors. Even before one begins to study the pictures more closely, one is convinced that the artist has something to communicate; that he is not merely out to contrive novel effects but driven by visions of his own. He is extremely versatile, equally at home in prints, drawings, and watercolors, in myth, social criticism, and apocalypses. But whatever he does, he does with his whole heart, mind, and might; and hence there is a striking unity—derived not from any manner but from the man.

The titles of these works are often

enormously illuminating and provide at the very least an initial focus. "He Who Laughs . . .", for example, makes a point; but none of these pictures merely make a point. They also celebrate the joys of rhythm and design, of assured craftsmanship, and bear witness of the torments and the turmoil of the modern world. They do not suggest that things used to be better; in fact, they suggest nothing simple at all. Instead of falling in with one or another fashion of the day, Landau's art is aimed against clichés. He refuses to cry, "peace, peace," when there is no peace; but he finds life in a world without peace still worth living; and terror, a challenge.

[JACOB LANDAU ON ART, ETC.]

NO, MARSHALL, we don't prefer the bad news to the good; drowned in the bad, the No, we can perhaps be forgiven if we seek the good, the Yes, the God, the happy-ending-acid-smack-junk-plastic-paroxysmal-Tech paradise. Technology is God, art is its prophet; shaped, molded, assembled, motorized, polarized, environmentized, electrified, kinetized, plasticized, metallized, boxed, baled, dehydrated, freeze-dried, slicked-out art acts to boom-bust artists and zap publics. Craving more and bigger fixes, we consume words, sensations, images with our daily violence at a numbing pace. Jacques Ellul writes: "When man himself becomes a machine, he attains to the marvellous freedom of unconsciousness, the freedom of the machine itself . . . man feels himself to be re-

sponsible but he is not. He does not feel himself an object, but he is." Where does all the swallowed anger, the consumed violence go when the distance between actor and acted upon, dreamer and dream widens? Where does all the love go when narrowed to a point of flesh at a point in time? Only the freedom to hate and kill the alien outsider or the equally alien self remains. And, beyond it, the unacknowledged hunger for oblivion, apocalypse?

Tech art, like Tech progress, is the poor man's mythology, a medium without a message, exploration swallowed by exploitation, the politics of the possible. The artist who embraces the myth of permanent revolution, the changing of the avant-garde, displays only this year's models in the game of show and sell. The art of confrontation with the real, the art of tragic love, of passionate outrage, is both possible, and necessary. It may be found in folk, in rock, theater, cinema, and yes, even in painting. It cries, with Burroughs, "show your cards all players. Pay it all pay it all pay it all back"; it asks with The Doors, "What have they done to the earth?/What have they done to our fair sister?/Ravaged and plundered/and ripped her and bit her/stuck her with knives/in the side of the dawn . . ."; or it constructs a mosaic of abrasive images in the hope of vivifying the narcotized, saying "neither a pusher nor a pushover be," expressing hope and love in the face of terror, declaring, again with Burroughs, "with your help we can occupy the reality studio."

Part I

The Black Moochie

A Novella by Eldridge Cleaver

While incarcerated in State Prison in 1966, Eldridge Cleaver wrote the following notes for an autobiography, novel or whatever, on his experiences while growing up in Los Angeles. On my recent visit with him in Algeria, I was shown the manuscript and felt that it should be published. It provides an insight into an important part of Cleaver's early life and further evidence of his immense power as a writer. The names have been changed for legal reasons. Part II will appear in the November issue.

Upon returning from Algeria, I was promptly subpoenaed to appear before the Federal Grand Jury meeting in San Francisco, and ordered to turn over all records of activities performed on behalf of Eldridge Cleaver's legal defense. The State and Justice Departments have evoked a series of regulations making contact with Cleaver illegal; this subpoena is part of the general pattern of harassment. We regard these regulations as unconstitutional and intend to challenge them.

Cleaver has agreed to be the International Editor of this magazine and reports by him will appear regularly.—ROBERT SCHEER

THEY CALLED ME "THE BLACK MOOCHIE," because I ran with the Mexicans. It started early; the word "Mexican" burned into my brain in Arkansas, where there were none. Mother told me that we would see Mexicans in Arizona. All the way on the train I kept asking her to show me a Mexican. I expected to see something beyond human, something beyond imagination. I don't remember the first Mexican I saw. It may have been a whole crowd of them. What I remember is pressing my face to the plate glass window of the Tortilletta in Phoenix, trying to see the Mexicans inside mixing masa with their feet, as it was said they did. I don't remember seeing them do that, but I remember being outraged at the idea of them doing it. It was unbelievable that people could put their dirty feet in food and still eat it. Worse, sell it to others to eat. Worse yet, others buying it knowing it was mixed by foot. My image of feet was of stinky feet, like my brother James' feet. James had real funky feet. What if a Mexican had feet like James and stuck them in the masa? It would be a violation of the Pure Food and Drug Act, for sure. Then we moved to Los Angeles, to Rose Hill, and I went to school with Mexicans. These were the first human Mexicans I knew. In Rose Hill, they detached themselves from shadows in my mind and became for real. Chicanos.

Arnaldo Martinez, Roberto Areaga, Nanny Goat and me, we were natural buddies—perhaps because we were of the same pitch of insanity. We called Arnaldo "Junior," and Roberto we called "Jap," "Honorable Jap," and I don't even know Nanny's real name. They called me "Sapo." Negroes called me the "black moochie," with overtones of derision, because I put them down and ran with the Mexicans. Why did I dig the Mexicans more? I liked the way they did things. And then my family chose to

move to Rose Hill instead of Watts or the East Side where all the Negroes lived, because there were some very phony Negro families in Rose Hill. The ones with boys my age had long since turned them into sissies by keeping them under the family thumb—like Charlie and Floyd Grant. Floyd was exactly my age, but he had no backbone. If his father told him to come home early and we wanted to stay out late, Floyd went home to his father and spoiled everything. Charlie was even more sissified than Floyd. The only other Negroes my age were Bobby Hooper and Donald, who was just a little younger. We ran together for a while, until the first time we went to Juvenile Hall. When we got out, Bobby became almost a saint. That left only the Mexicans. They were like me—wild, crazy, didn't give a damn. We were happy together.

I envied the way Junior's shoes would shine. Mine never would shine like that. I'd rub mine all night long, but they just wouldn't shine like Junior's. Junior used to come to school with his shiny shoes on and I'd get mad. Everybody dug the way his shoes held a shine. Junior would play the part, as if he didn't know what it was all about. But he knew, and he would stick his shoes out for everyone to see. Once I stepped on his shine on purpose, on the sly.

"Meet me after school, *mayate*," Junior said.

After school, everybody was there. Junior was over-matched, but what he taught me that day was that even though he was a little cat compared to me and even though he knew in advance that he would get whipped, there was a pride in fighting back when someone tried to bully you. We drew each other's blood, but in the years to come we never fought again and were the best of friends.

Mrs. Brick was my teacher and she looked like Betty Grable. All the cats were in love with her. We'd rub up against her and try to peep under her dress. We'd dream about her at night. She had a fine ass and big tits. She dressed sexy. I used to get a hard-on just looking at her. She knew that we wanted to fuck her, to suck her tits. One day when we were returning from the music room, Mrs. Brick marched the whole class up the stairs. I liked Michele Ortaga then. She was the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen. Her skin was white as milk and she had long black hair. She was very delicate, very feminine—even at that titless, shapeless age. What I liked about her was that whenever I looked at her she would blush, turn red from her neck up. Her ears would glow. I was the only boy who could make her change colors. While we were waiting at the top of the stairs that day, I found myself opposite Michele. I had been conscious of her beauty all afternoon. During music period I'd been staring at her, making her blush, and while we stood at the top of the stairs I was staring at her. I said to her: "I love you, Michele."

Her neck caught fire, the red flames lit up her ears. "I hate you!" Michele hissed at me. We traded words back and forth.