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from **THROUGH THE CIRCLE**

**the argument stripped down and put into order**

1. institutions are shaped according to the principles on which society is structured
2. the structure is authoritarian and works against the interests and fulfilment of ordinary people
3. institutions are run by professionals whose job it is to proselytise the ideas and instructions of authority and thereby keep the people unfulfilled
4. professionals can help the coming of a more equitable society only by switching their responsibilities and allegiances from authority to the people
5. their function then becomes to help release (not repress) the creative spirit of the people because only the creative spirit can reach out for (and make sense of) genuine freedom

6. people cannot be expected to understand others (the door to freedom) unless they can first understand themselves
7. the first step must be the creative realisation by people of themselves
8. (poetry is the symbol of the first step)
9. the second step must be the re-establishment of creative relationships with other people
10. (drama is the symbol of the second step)
11. through these a fresh social structure may be released
12. a structure embodying equality and liberty will flower diversely
13. institutions will probably fade in the night and society be metamorphosed

i do not regard the re-emergence of the spirit  
 as a church affair  
 or as a come-back for god  
 but as a desperate humanitarian need

*(by faith I mean  
 the absolute assumptions at the core of a society  
 by structure I mean  
 the form that accrues around those spiritual  
 assumptions)*

*no one's imagination is free  
 if it is unfree in others  
 freedom is indivisible  
 free for all or for none*

*liberty and equality are conducive to diversity  
 inequality and illiberty are conducive to uniformity  
 (genuine equality cannot create uniformity)*

*free imagination is ordinary  
 and its products are diverse  
 when the ordinary is free  
 it is bound to express itself diversely  
 only when it is unfree (mediocre)  
 does it accept uniformity*

*to teach is to deny  
 to create is to affirm*

## **the shakes**

*now pay attention  
(said the teacher)  
and look up here*

*the children looked up*

*this is william shakespeare*

*four centuries up  
on a pedestal  
was shakespeare's head*

*he was what we call  
a great man*

*the children got sore necks  
looking up  
and some began to look down*

*no no  
you mustn't look down  
(said the teacher)  
apart from winston churchill  
shakespeare was the greatest  
englishman who ever lived*

*the children's eyes  
drained to their feet  
and their minds  
played around with  
their private parts*

*shakespeare was once  
a schoolteacher who  
had a second best bed  
and he happened to write  
thirty six plays*

*and sonnets and things  
he has a noble brow  
as you can see*

*the children stared*

*from a dusty old head  
and a mothridden beard  
two sour eyes  
glared down*

*from being a bit bored  
then very bored  
the children began to have  
explosions going off  
in many parts of their*

*bodies*

*mutters came  
out of their mouths  
and then anger  
followed by flames*

*shakespeare  
is a chauvinist pig  
(they screamed)*

*why don't you piss off  
(they shrieked at the teacher)  
and take him with you*

*now now children  
(said the teacher)  
shakespeare's language  
was always as noble  
as his brow  
he will be shocked  
to hear such words*

*some of the class jumped  
on the teacher  
(as the young are inclined  
to nowadays)  
and  
the rest began to rock  
shakespeare's pedestal*

*no  
please no children  
(cried the teacher)*

*you know not what you do  
do you want to destroy  
all that is good  
in the world*

*the rocking went on  
like an earthquake  
and slowly  
up four  
centuries of stone  
shakespeare's head  
began to wobble  
and all of a sudden  
it seemed to  
jump from its pedestal  
and drop  
shaking itself  
free of dust and  
a beardful of moths*

*vandals desecrators  
(raged the teacher)*

*wetting himself  
no doubt*

*watch out  
(laughed the children)  
catch*

*and the head  
fell safely into  
their outstretched hands*

*the teacher shrank away  
(wet wet)  
terrified to be so close  
to the greatest but one  
of the greats*

*the children flocked round  
curious to find  
what greatness was*

*shakespeare blew his nose  
cleared his throat  
(the last of the dust)  
and said*

*hello kids  
i'm famished  
what's to eat  
tell me about yourselves  
(and things like that)*

*he had a real face  
and he spoke english  
with a kind of  
birmingham accent  
and he didn't seem to know  
much more than they did*

*he was always pissing around  
(he told them)  
when he was their age*

*the teacher gradually  
came back  
very surprised  
and (when he dared to look  
at himself) obviously  
very relieved*

*he went away and began  
reading the plays  
and (discovering  
where he'd gone wrong)*

*got out of teaching*

*if you want children's language to live  
show them how to lift it out  
of the coffin*

*it is necessary first to break the form*

*if you want children's ideas to be  
themselves  
help them shake off their respectable  
chains*

*it is necessary first to break the form*

*if you want them to take root in their  
own images  
as natural to them as the air in their  
lungs*

*it is necessary first to break the form*

*to fracture the system*

*it is necessary for people to realise  
that the world they carry inside themselves  
(which the system belittles)*

*is more important than the world outside  
(which the system controls)*

***language is the precisest tool people possess  
for probing their human (local) condition***

*there is no experience in the whole of the human race  
that is not suffered wholly or in part  
(largely or minutely)  
by each member of it*

*the universe has seeded itself in each one of us  
and each one of us is seeded throughout the universe*

*to embrace the sun first kiss your own feet*

*all free people are creators  
creating first to understand themselves  
then (luckily) being listened to by other people  
(but that isn't what compels them to create)*

*it's what people say to themselves  
that determines whether they have lived their life  
well  
whether what they show to others is a mask  
or a mountain spring*

*only in my fulfilment can i tolerate yours  
if i am sick i shall envy you your health  
if i am bent i shall envy you your straightness  
if i am denied i shall hate you for what you receive*

*give me the space to be myself  
and i shall allow you the space to be you  
if you let me be different from you  
i shall let you be different from me*

## **the significance of form**

*the physical lay-out  
being an exact representation  
of the spiritual assumption  
in its turn  
preconditions the spiritual possibility*

*theatre-form  
the bulk of the meaning of a play  
is established before the play starts  
by the nature of  
the juxtaposition of actor to audience*

*education-form  
the limits to the relationships  
between teacher and child  
and between child and child  
(that is the limits to the educational process)  
are established by the room's lay-out*

*social-form  
the assumptions  
that limit the way people sit at  
meetings  
are the assumptions  
upon which the system is built*

***the professional serves the people  
by being their master***

***and serves the authority  
by being its slave***

*counter-authority groups  
who organise in authority forms  
become authority-tools*

*now children here is a body of knowledge  
and i in the name of free drama  
am going to let you do as you like  
and use your ideas in such a way  
that you will want to go into that body of knowledge  
and find out what i happen to think is good for you to find out  
(no - i'm not tricking you  
look i have nothing  
up my sleeve or behind my back)*

*and if what we find happens to make you  
wiser people and better citizens  
so much the better eh*

*and i shall tell any visitor who asks  
yes it is the children's own work*

*remember children it is all your own work  
don't keep looking at me while you're doing it*

*audience-participation  
is a political act wherever it is tried  
in schools as much as in factories  
in theatres as much as in universities  
it is about giving power to the people*

*it is not participation  
if the people are not involved  
of their own free will  
nor if the leaders  
move in amongst the people  
and use them like objects  
nor if the involvement  
amounts to no more than  
asking questions and receiving answers*

*it is not participation  
if the people are allowed to take part  
only according to the authority's rules  
and in a direction  
already laid down  
(and strictly controlled  
throughout by the authority)*

*participation  
must contain the power to decide  
the end  
must be conditional  
on the decisions (freely taken)  
of the people*



*any play the theatre puts on  
the theatre form has (per)formed it already  
the play can speak only through the form*

*backs can't be protected in the round  
they have to take part in the acting*

*even in a truly creative society  
(where the understanding  
of the need for the imagination  
is paramount  
and no one is prevented  
from developing theirs to the full  
in the way that they need to)  
artists in all forms  
will be required to go more deeply  
into the rituals sustaining human-kind*

*the personal statement of the poet  
and the collective statement of actors  
will be among the diversity of springs  
to which people will go  
to refresh their own spirits*

*but if the poet's poem  
doesn't grow in its own way  
out of the poem of the people  
if the rituals of actors  
don't have their beginnings  
in the people's genuine control  
of their lives' directions  
then the poem and the play  
are in danger of being  
no more than offerings  
at dead shrines*

*they are authority-things  
they nourish nothing  
and they quickly begin to smell*

*there is no way  
that the people can begin  
to recognise the artists  
unless their own springs  
are first given water*

*when the atom was split  
the overall cross in the cry  
was splintered to millions*

*when the one god exploded  
each heart collected*

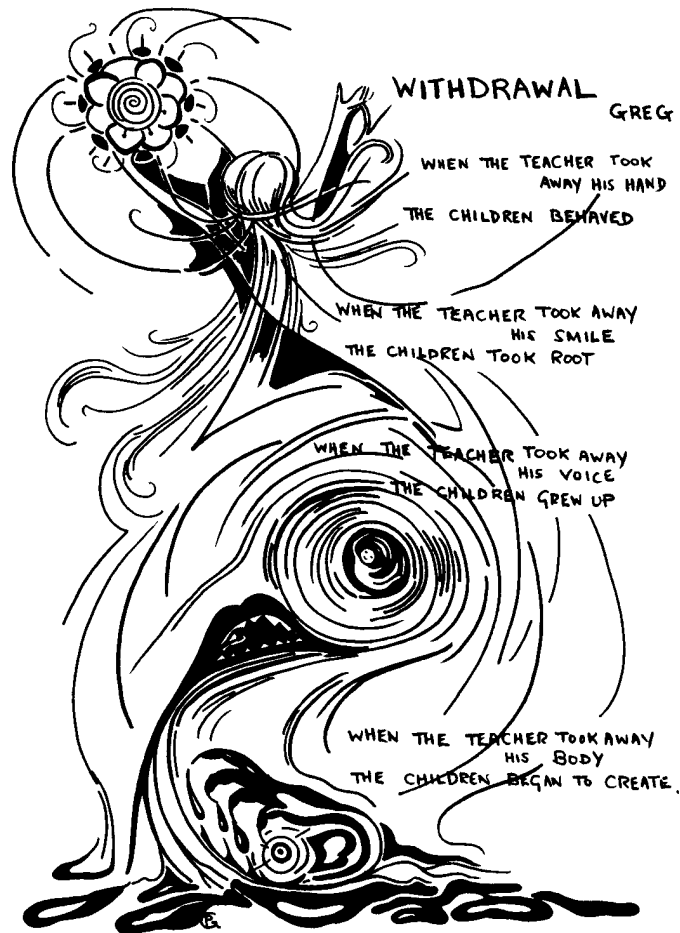
*its shard of stained glass*

*when capital was sucked into cloud  
blood spattered the hills  
and springs were reborn*

*when parliament was shattered  
each village found the nerve  
to sing for its freedom*

*when school was gutted  
inmates ran off with the bricks  
and spread their own learning*

*when centre theatre slumped  
drama had to beg for its bread  
round the edge of the circle*



[drawings by Pat Gregory - Bournemouth]

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