JOURNAL of AESTHETICS and ART CRITICISM

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JOURNAL OF AESTHETICS AND ART CRITICISM

A Quarterly Devoted to the Advancement of Aesthetics and the Arts

The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism deals with the fundamental principles and problems of aesthetics and art criticism. It will concern itself also with developments in the arts, in art history, and with the relations of the artist and the arts to society. It affords a common ground for interchange of views between aestheticians, art critics, art historians, art educators, museum workers, and all who are by profession or avocation interested in the progressive development of aesthetics and the arts. It aims at constructive and critical thinking and appeals to all, professionals and laymen, who desire to keep abreast of the significant movements in aesthetics and the arts.

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EDITORIAL

THIS issue of the Journal marks both an ending and a beginning. It is at once the last issue of the Journal's first two years of publication and the first issue to appear under the direction of the recently reorganized editorial staff.

This issue is marked by numerous changes, changes which we hope will be to the liking of our readers. Whatever your impressions of this issue, we would appreciate hearing from you on the matter.

Future issues will include new sections which are already in preparation. An early issue will be a symposium dealing with recent trends in the arts and the role of the arts in the post-war world.

In the future, this editorial page will be devoted to comments pertinent to the contents of each current issue, remarks on suggestions from readers, reflections upon the trends of events in the realms of aesthetic theory, art criticism, and the arts. In this, its first appearance, we are content merely to introduce to you this new page in the Journal.

Form in the Arts

AN OUTLINE FOR DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

THOMAS MUNRO

I. The Problem of Objective Description and Classification in Studies of Art

THROUGH studying art from a psychological and sociological standpoint, we hope to learn more about its genesis, nature and functions—what factors in the individual artist and in social conditions tend to produce various types of art; how various types of art affect various types of appreciator; what other uses they have in society; and how they can be further controlled for human welfare. To do this, it is necessary to observe and describe particular works of art in a fairly objective way, and to distinguish various types of art, in order to study in detail their interactions with other psychological and social factors.

The attempt to analyze, describe, and classify works of art in a scientific way may be called "aesthetic morphology",[1] and itself classified as one branch of aesthetics. It is not directly concerned with the nature of beauty or the evaluation of art, or with the psychology of creation or appreciation. It is needed for the theoretical progress of aesthetics at the present time as the work of Linnaeus and Cuvier was needed for the progress of scientific biology.

The chief difficulty in describing works of art is to find ways of doing so without, at the same time, expressing debatable personal views about them. It is not objective to "describe" a work of art as beautiful or ugly, pleasant or unpleasant, well or badly drawn. On the other hand, it is not enough to describe art in terms of its size and physical structure, for these fail to bring out the differences in form, style, and expression which are important in determining its psychological and social functions. No way of describing art or anything else can be purely objective, for all involve human responses of perception and thinking. But we can try to leave out the more emotional and evaluative terms for the time being, and to emphasize those characteristics which are capable of dispassionate observation by other investigators.

[1] "Morphology" must, however, be understood as including the dynamic aspects of form; the physiology as well as the anatomy of art.

There are many descriptive concepts available for this purpose, which have arisen through years of philosophical, historical, and critical discussion. Most of them are vague and ambiguous, however, and loaded with controversial associations. They are in great need of clear, consistent definition and systematic interrelation. This is a task of aesthetic theory. Psychology can assist substantially, but its present concepts are not sufficient, and must be augmented by others derived from a direct study of art.

The problem of definition arises in regard to the word "art" itself. In a broad sense, "art" is taken to include all the arts and crafts, music and literature as well as painting and sculpture. More narrowly, it is used to cover the visual arts only, as in speaking of "art, music, and literature." College catalogs sometimes refer to departments of "fine arts." But music and poetry can also be considered as fine arts. "Fine art" is usually opposed to "useful" or "industrial" art. But literature and even music have industrial and other useful functions. So does painting, as in making an advertising poster. Architecture, usually classed as a fine art, has industrial and other uses. "Fine" seems to imply that non-useful arts are somehow superior; an assumption which has no objective basis and is much disputed at present.

There is no single, satisfactory basis for naming and classifying the arts. All involve overlappings and misleading suggestions. One basis is in terms of material or medium, as in speaking of the arts of painting, woodcarving, metalry, ceramics, enamelling, and stained glass. But to consider all the arts from this standpoint would be cumbersome. Architecture and sculpture use many different materials. Moreover, it conceals the important fact that a picture is a picture, whether made in oil, mosaic, or tapestry. For some purposes it is necessary to group together all kinds of pictorial representation regardless of material; all kinds of statue in another group, and all kinds of building in another. To speak in terms of material or medium only tends to restrict one to the standpoint of the artist, who thinks largely in terms of handling a certain medium. To the public, this is often less important than the final appearance or function of the object.

When we think in such terms as city planning, public and domestic architecture, we are adopting a rather sociological point of view, and distinguishing types of art on a basis of how they function in civic and social life. "Art in industry," "art in commerce," "art in clothing," "art in printing and publishing,"—these also refer to how the product is used, rather than to its materials or techniques. Yet sometimes we wish to distinguish on a basis of technique, as in considering "handicrafts" apart from machine production,

whatever their materials or uses. "Photography" and "motion pictures" also refer primarily to techniques of production and presentation. "Theater arts" include many kinds of art which are presented in a certain kind of building, such as acting, the ballet, costume, scene design, lighting, and even motion pictures. They may be taken to include the literary as well as the visual phases of drama.

Again, the arts have been classified into "space arts" and "time arts." This cuts across several other classifications, and it is difficult to include any whole art in either category. Music and literature unfold in time, but can suggest images of space. Motion pictures and other theatre arts are organized in both space and time. Furthermore, it takes time to perceive a picture or a cathedral, even though it is relatively static. Certain kinds of picture, such as Chinese landscape scrolls, are to be seen in temporal order. In short, any single way of classifying the arts involves theoretical difficulties, and may lead to mistaken generalizations. In a comprehensive survey of art, one is usually forced to adopt several different modes of classification, each to bring out certain distinctions and groupings which seem important from various points of view.

It is hard to generalize about any art as a whole; that is, about any art in the sense of a single medium or technique. For each of the principal arts has been used to produce a tremendous variety of forms. Certain general types of form occur in many arts. It is often enlightening to put less emphasis on the particular art or medium, and more on the principal types of form. For example, it is questionable to divide the arts into "representative arts" and "decorative arts" or "arts of design" for the reason that all arts contain some decoration and design as well as some representation. Painting and sculpture involve both. Sometimes they tend to stress decorative design, and sometimes realistic representation. In the same way, many arts contain a utilitarian or functional, practical element, which makes them to some extent "useful arts." Architecture often combines utility with elements of design and decoration. It may also include representation, as in the sculpture and glass of a cathedral. In other words, representation, decoration, and utility refer to types of form or factors in form, which occur in many arts.

II. Presented and Suggested Factors in Aesthetic Form

What is *form* in art? In Webster's definition, form is "Orderly arrangement or method of arrangement; as: order or method of presenting ideas; manner of coordinating the elements of an artistic production or course of

reasoning." In brief, the form of a work of art is the way in which its details are organized.[2] Aesthetic form occurs not only in art but in all types of object, natural or artificial. A flower and a machine have aesthetic form; so does a city or a sunset. It is not the same as physical form (molecular and atomic structure), but consists rather in the structure which a scene or other object appears to have, as an object of aesthetic apperception. The physical form of a painting consists of certain arrangements of atoms and molecules; but this is less important in psychology than the way it functions as a stimulus to perception and understanding.

In terms of the psychology of perception, a work of art consists of certain stimuli to sensory experience, and also to association and interpretation on the basis of memory and past experience. A painting stimulates visual experiences such as those of shape, color, lightness and darkness. It *presents* visual images directly to the eyes. In addition, it has the power to *suggest* other images and concepts to a brain which has been conditioned through experience and education. Thus a painting can be analyzed into certain presented factors (the shapes and colors which are directly visible) and certain suggested factors (the other objects and events such as trees, persons, battles, which it tends to call up in imagination; and also, in some cases, more abstract conceptions such as moral ideals and religious doctrines).

No two persons will see exactly the same thing in a picture, for each is led by his nature and habits to select slightly different aspects for special notice. No two will imagine or understand exactly the same things, because of differences in mental constitution, habits and education. But presented factors are comparatively easy to verify and agree upon. One can point out that certain lines are straight or curved; certain areas light or dark, blue or yellow; and all persons of normal vision will agree substantially upon their presence.

As to suggested factors, there is often more disagreement on exactly what is meant or represented. Various modes of suggestion are employed by visual art. One is imitation or *mimesis,* as in a picture of a tree. One is arbitrary *symbolism,* as in the use of a cross to suggest Christianity. In addition, certain visual qualities often derive suggestive power from *common association* in experience. Thus reds and yellows may suggest warmth, blues

[2]The word "form" is also used in a sense equivalent to "shape" or "solid shape", as in speaking of the elements of visual art as "line, form and color". This is a misleading sense, which makes it hard to compare the arts. The definition adopted here is applicable to all arts, as in speaking of musical or literary form.

and greens coolness; horizontal lines rest or stability, and diagonal, wavy or zigzag lines may suggest disbalance, movement, or agitation.

Sometimes the associations suggested in one or more of these ways are so vague, conflicting or fragmentary as to arouse different interpretations. A picture may look somewhat like a tree, but not exactly. A symbol like the swastika may have different meanings. Thus it is often impossible to say objectively just what the suggestive content of a work of art is. However, there is usually a nucleus of comparatively obvious meanings upon which most observers will agree. Within a particular cultural environment, common usage tends to attach fairly definite meanings to particular images and groups of images. Artists come to use certain images with a definite intention, and observers to understand them in the same way, by tradition and convention. Authoritative reference works, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and books on the iconography of art, confirm a number of these symbol-meaning relations. On a basis of social custom, then, it becomes possible to say with some objective authority that a certain picture has certain definite meanings, whether uneducated or disputatious persons understand it so or not.

In addition to these established meanings, the same work of art may have others which are less cogent, more subject to personal interpretation. These can hardly be classed as objective parts of the form. Likewise, affective responses of liking and disliking, enjoyment and displeasure which are made to a work of art, are not parts of its aesthetic form in a strict sense. They are too individual and variable. But the form of the work of art as a whole, from a standpoint of aesthetic apperception, does include not only the directly presented images but also that portion of its suggestive content which is most definitely demonstrable on a basis of cultural usage. There is no sharp boundary; the established suggestive form shades off into extraneous associations, and it is often doubtful whether a certain alleged meaning should be included as part of the form.

The distinction becomes clearer if we compare a picture with a literary form, such as a poem. Here the directly presented factors may be auditory images (the sounds of spoken words) or visual images (printed words on a page). Whichever is used, the form of the poem evidently includes something more than these presented images. It includes also an arrangement of meanings; of other images and concepts which the words suggest. Words, written or spoken, are arbitrary symbols endowed with more or less definite suggestive powers through cultural usage. In the case of printing, the visible shape and color of the letters makes little essential difference to the form

of the poem; it can even be conveyed through Braille type for the blind. Of course, the sound of the words is important, as in rhyme and rhythm. But that can be either presented (if spoken aloud) or suggested (if read silently). When read silently, as it now is to a great extent, literary form is largely suggestive. The suggestive factor then includes word-sound patterns as well as arrangements of other images and concepts. Music, on the other hand, is still presented aurally, as a rule, although some experts can understand a printed score without hearing it played. Musical form is thus largely presentative, but it also includes suggested images and emotions, especially in romantic "program" music.

In visual art, the presented factors tend to make up a conspicuous part of the total form, and to be regarded as essential to it. Sometimes, as in abstract decoration, they make up almost the whole form, and there is little definite meaning. (There is always some, for all sense data call up some associations, individual and cultural.) At other times, as in story illustration, the suggestive content may bulk larger in the whole. In the case of useful art, such as a cup or sword, part of the suggestive content consists of associations derived from use. To tell what the object means, one must then tell how it was used, or for what functions it was adapted.

On the basis of their usual modes of presentation, it is possible to distinguish works of art, and arts in general, as being presentatively specialized or diversified ("mixed arts"). Painting and sculpture are visual arts in that they specialize on visual presentation, even though a statue can be experienced tactually, and even though both may convey non-visual suggestions. Music is an auditory art, and literature is primarily so, even though it can be experienced visually. An opera is diversified in addressing both eyes and ears. An illustrated book is mainly visual (aside from its tactile qualities); but it is diversified as to mode of suggestion—partly mimetic (in the pictures) and partly symbolic (in the printed words).

When two or more arts or media are thus combined, the form produced in one usually acts as framework, and the others fit in as accessories. Thus, in a stage play, the literary text is usually taken as the basic framework, and a number of accessory arts (stage design, costume, lighting, incidental music, etc.) may fit into it.

Some types of aesthetic form are addressed principally to one of the lower senses, such as perfume and cookery. Opinions differ as to whether they are to be classed as arts. The forms which they present are usually simpler, though not necessarily less pleasant or valuable, than those addressed

to the so-called higher senses. Lower-sense stimuli may fit into a higher-sense form: e.g., incense (olfactory) into a religious ritual (visual and auditory).

III. The Components of Aesthetic Form

We have not described the form of a work of art by merely dividing it into presented and suggested factors. It is necessary to observe what specific *ingredients* are presented, what ones suggested, and how they are organized. Psychology helps us considerably in describing them. For they are the same as in all conscious experience. The materials of art, from a standpoint of aesthetic apperception, are not chemical pigments, bronze and marble, but visible shapes and colors, joys and sorrows, desires, beliefs, and actions.

To classify the materials of art, we must look to psychology for a classification of the modes of human experience and behavior, and so far there has been no adequate one. The traditional way is under such headings as sensation, emotion, conation (will or volition), reasoning, and so on. This is open to objection as suggesting the old faculty psychology, but has its uses at the present early stage in the psychology of art. However, any approach to general psychology is also, by implication, an approach to describing the materials of art. For art merely selects and rearranges details from life experience into concrete form.

Inadequate as they are, the traditional psychological categories are useful in analyzing a work of art. "Sensation" includes vision and other senses. In visual art, by definition, we are concerned only with forms whose main presented ingredients are visual rather than auditory. There are certain concepts by which we compare and describe visual objects: especially shape and color. Under "visual" come linear shape or line, surface shape, and solid shape (sometimes called mass or volume). Under "color" come hue; lightness and darkness (often called "value" in art, and in physics often called "brilliance"); and saturation (often called chroma or intensity). These are the principal visual attributes, but many others can be added. In talking of shape, it is often important to note the shape of voids or empty spaces. In talking of colors, it is often important to notice their luminosity, as in colored electric lights. Effects of texture are produced by many small variations in color, shape, or both. Auditory sense-images are analyzed into pitch, timbre, rhythm, consonance and dissonance, loudness, etc.

These attributes function as elementary *components* in aesthetic form. They are concepts devised by the human mind for describing objects perceptually, and do not refer to independent realities. No such attribute ever

occurs alone; line is always the linear shape of some colored area or solid. Under the heading of each attribute or component, common usage recognizes a multitude of names for specific *traits* and *types* of quality. Under hue, for example, come red, green, and violet; under lightness or value, the various shades and tints from very dark to very light. Under linear shape come the various geometric types such as straight line, arc, angle, and the free-flowing or "biomorphic" irregular wavy line. Under solid shape come the geometric types such as cubical, spherical, pyramidal; and others more irregular, such as cloud-shaped or mushroom-shaped. Countless words are in use to describe the specific visual qualities of things. They occur in art as *component traits.* Any work of art may be analyzed as to its visual ingredients in terms of a peculiar set of such component traits.

It is important to realize that the psychological content of a work of visual art is not restricted to visual qualities. "Visual" refers only to its mode of presentation to the observer; to its presented content. A work of visual art may suggest visual images which it does not directly present, as of solid shape and deep space in a painting. In addition, it can suggest a much wider range of sensory images. It can suggest tactile and kinesthetic images, sounds, and even tastes and odors, as in a picture of flowers, food and wine. Its suggestive content can extend beyond the sensory: to emotions, desires, and rational inferences.

In each case, if one asks what sorts of thing are suggested, the answer will be in terms of general *components* of experience such as emotion, and of specific *traits* or *types* under each.[3] Among the specific emotions which art may suggest are joy, grief, and anger. Desire, aversion, indifference, and many more specific types of attitude come under the general heading of conation or volition. Art may suggest abstract concepts, religious beliefs, logical arguments, overt actions—in short, examples of any mode of experience or behavior. Music, though an auditory art in presentation, can suggest visual images and other types of experience.

Any work of art can be described as to its suggested as well as its presented ingredients, in terms of a peculiar set of specific types of emotion, conation and so on. Some works of art are more diversified than others in terms of the different kinds of experience which they present or suggest. Rembrandt's works are usually restricted in range of presented hues and

[3]Affective responses (emotions, desires, etc.), which are suggested in and by a form are not the same as affective responses to the form by some observer. One may recognize that a pictured face expresses sadness without being moved to sadness by it.

saturations, but highly varied in light and dark. Dante's Divine Comedy suggests a wide range of human emotions and desires; a Shakespeare sonnet is more limited in range. A Cézanne still life is more specialized in suggestive content than Tintoretto's Paradise or Michelangelo's Last Judgment. A Persian rug is often more diversified in its presented shapes and colors than in its suggested meanings.

Strictly speaking, the ingredients of a work of art are not really "in" the object (e.g., a painting) as a physical thing, but largely in the behavior of humans toward it. People respond to a given type of art in a more or less similar way, because of similarities in their innate equipment and cultural conditioning, and tend to project these responses upon the object which arouses them, as if they were attributes of the object itself. Metaphysically, this raises difficult problems of distinguishing the real from the apparent; but they need not all be raised in aesthetics. To aesthetics, the "real" in a metaphysical or physical sense is less important than the way things appear to human experience. And from a psychological standpoint, "appearing" is a fact in itself; a psychological phenomenon to be explained. To explain it fully, one would have to consider not only the nature of the outside object but that of the individual responding; the mental structure which makes it appear to him in a certain way. Here we are interested in the description of aesthetic forms as they appear to human beings in a cultural environment, including not only the sensory but the meaningful aspects of these forms.

IV. Organization in Space and Time

The organization of aesthetic forms can be described in various ways. In other words, a work of art is usually organized in various ways at the same time. (Likewise, an animal organism can be described in terms of its nervous, muscular, circulatory, and other modes of organization.)

One way in which a work of art is organized is in certain dimensions of space and time. Various types of art can be contrasted as to their mode of *spatio-temporal* organization. For example, an oil painting is presented to the eyes as essentially a flat, two-dimensional area. (The actual thickness of paint and canvas is usually not emphasized.) But as a suggestive form, it can be three-dimensional; that is, represent a scene in deep space. It presents no moving images; its presentation is not developed in time. But it can suggest movement and temporal sequence, as in the early Italian paintings which show successive stages in the ascent to Calvary. A carved relief, a statue or a chair is directly presented to the observer as three-dimensional, even though

the third dimension is inferred from images on the retina of the eye. It presents different aspects as one views it from different positions. A relief, as in the Ghiberti doors, can also suggest further three-dimensional development, in deep space. Most rug designs are presented in two dimensions, and have little or no suggestive development in a third, although they occasionally suggest a rounded flower or animal. Raised embroidery or cut velvet involves a slight three-dimensional presentation. Tapestry pictures are often highly developed in the suggestion of deep space. A building, a town, a formal garden, and a flower arrangement on a tray, are all presented in three dimensions of space, but with different degrees of development. The garden is usually less elaborately developed in its vertical than in its other dimensions. It presents movement, when wind and weather move the flowers and trees, but this movement is not definitely determined or regulated by the artist. There is determinate change in the garden when flowers are placed so as to bloom in a definite sequence. A shadow play or motion picture is presented in two dimensions on a flat screen, but with a determinate sequence of images in time. It also suggests three-dimensional space and movement; the motion picture much more definitely than the shadow play of silhouettes. A marionette show, a stage play and a ballet are presented in three dimensions of space and in time, and more or less definitely determined in these four dimensions. In dramatic action, there is usually litle development in the vertical dimension, but there may be if action takes place on various levels of the stage, as through ramps, platforms, and balconies. The dancer's movements are developed and presented in all four dimensions.

In music, the presented form is developed in definite temporal order; but the spatial arrangements of the sounds (where they are to come from) is indeterminate except in rare examples. Literary form is likewise developed mainly in time, the order of words being essential. When presented visually on a page, the two-dimensional space arrangement of letters is important; but it is not directly essential to literary form, since this can be presented aurally with no definite spatial images at all. Literature, of course, can develop suggested images of two or three spatial dimensions, as in describing a cathedral interior.

The relative complexity of a work of art depends in part on the degree to which it is definitely developed in these various dimensions. It may be highly complex in two-dimensional presentation and very simple or undeveloped in others, as in the case of a Persian rug design. Complexity, in one or in several dimensions, consists of differentiation and integration

among parts. It differs from simple unity, as in a stone pyramid; and from disordered multiplicity, as in the wreckage of a bombed house.

Another way of interrelating the images presented and suggested by a work of art is *causal organization.* This occurs in literature, as in the plot of a narrative which shows the effect of one action or character on another. It also occurs in pictures which represent a dramatic situation, as in Leonardo's Last Supper, where the effect of Christ's words on the various disciples is shown. It is highly developed in drama and cinema. The observer must interpret and organize the successive images, not only in terms of before and after, but in terms of one causing or influencing the other. Here again, the organization can be vague or definite, simple or complex, realistic or fantastic.

As art forms become more complex, it often becomes necessary to deal with them in terms of components more complex than line, light, and color. For example, motion picture producers and critics discuss a film in terms of continuity, montage, photography, setting, animation, and so on. Dramatists and novelists speak of plot, dialogue, and characterization. These are *developed components* in form, conceived as more or less complex combinations of several elementary components. In music, the elementary component *pitch* is developed into melody and harmony. That is, melody and harmony consist of the organized interrelation of tones, mainly on a basis of differences in pitch. In painting, we speak of drawing, modeling, tonality, color-harmony, perspective, and so on—all involving complex developments of visual shape and color. There is no brief, final list of the developed components in art. New conceptions of them appear in the course of development of a vital art, as means whereby artists plan and organize their works, and critics analyze them.

V. Modes of Composition in Art

Compositional organization is another way of interrelating the details in a work of art. There are four principal *modes of composition*: utilitarian, expository, representative, and decorative or thematic. All the modes of composition are used in all the arts, though to a different extent at different periods. (This is one basis for distinguishing styles.) A single work of art may involve all four modes; many are organized in two or more modes at the same time.

(1). *Utilitarian* composition consists in arranging details in such a way as to be instrumental (or at least apparently or intentionally instrumental) to some active use or end. "Active" refers here to overt bodily action and

movement, or direct preparation for it; and in general to all the ordinary business of life as distinguished from aesthetic and intellectual contemplation, dreams and reveries. Utility is fitness for some use over and above being looked at, listened to, understood, or thought about. Utilitarian form is sometimes called "functional." But from a psychological standpoint, art has a function if it serves only as a stimulus to aesthetic perception and enjoyment. Here we are thinking of additional functions in the world of practical behavior.

In so far as a thing is organized in a utilitarian way, its form can be described in terms of fitness for some practical use; of means to an end. We can say this of the blade and handle of a sword; of the legs and seat of a chair; of the walls, roof and openings of a house; and of each moving part in a machine. (This is not enough to describe the thing in full; for it often involves decorative arrangements also, which may or may not coincide with the utilitarian.)

Literature can be utilitarian, as in advertising, propaganda, guide-books or exhortations aimed at influencing or directing action; explaining how to do something or why one should do something. Music is also utilitarian at times, as in bugle calls, marches and work songs, adapted for directing or coordinating action.

Even if the form is ineffective for the end sought, it can still be called utilitarian. Sometimes people seek to gain their ends by supernatural means: by magic or by pleasing the gods; at other times by natural means. Each gives rise to its own type of utilitarian forms, such as magic rattles, charms and rituals on the one hand, and on the other tools, garments, houses, weapons, furniture and vehicles. Naturalistic technology is often mixed with supernaturalistic, especially at the prescientific stage.

(2). *Representative* composition is arrangement of details in such a way as to suggest to the imagination a concrete object, person, scene, or group of them, in space. Some representation goes further, and suggests a series of events in time. It tends to arouse a specific concrete phantasy in the mind of a suitably trained and compliant observer.

There are two main types of representation: mimetic and symbolic. In *mimetic* or imitative representation, the presented set of images (lines, colors, etc.) resembles to some extent the set of images which it calls up in imagination. It may be comparatively realistic, or much altered, simplified or "stylized," so that its meaning is vague or general. Music can thus represent (rather abstractly, as a rule) a brook, a storm, or bird-songs in a forest. In the *symbolic* type, especially literature, the presented images are words or other

conventional signs, and usually do not resemble the images which they suggest. Literary representation includes description and narration: the latter represents a series of events in time. Description may suggest the thoughts and character of a person, as well as his appearance. In visual art, representation is usually mimetic, as in a painted landscape or portrait.

Some varieties are *static;* that is, motionless or presenting no determinate order of movements. These include most pictorial and sculptural representation; also the tableau vivant in pantomime, and other less common types. Oriental flower and garden art sometimes involves representation, as of a small tray arrangement to suggest a landscape, or a garden mound to suggest Fujiyama. Other varieties are *mobile;* presenting images in a determined order. Mobile pictorial representation includes the cinema in its story-telling phases, whether in photographs or animated drawings; also the Chinese shadow-play. Mobile sculptural representation includes marionettes and puppets. Dramatic representation is developed visually through gesture, dance, costume, and scenery; verbally through the spoken text.

(3). Some composition is *expository,* in that it arranges details so as to set forth general relationships, as of causal or logical connection; abstract meanings, pervasive qualities, common or underlying principles. This mode of composition is more highly developed today in literature than in visual art; but it has visual examples. Much religious art, such as the Dancing Siva in Hindu sculpture, undertakes to convey theological, metaphysical, and moral ideas through visual images. Sometimes their meaning is cryptic and obscure; sometimes explicit. A great deal of medieval and Renaissance painting expresses Christian belief through symbolism. A single symbolic image is not enough to constitute exposition; the later implies systematic development, involving a number of related meanings. Hieroglyphics and other types of pictography are used, not only to suggest concrete descriptions and narrations, but to express abstract principles and arguments. A coat of arms involves expository composition, in that it undertakes to convey general facts about the owner's rank and privileges in feudal society, and perhaps about his ideals and the accomplishments of his family. The essay and treatise are literary types emphasizing exposition; but many others, such as the novel and meditative lyric, often contain expository passages. Music sometimes tries to set forth abstract ideas (religious, moral, etc.), but does not do so very explicitly without the aid of words.

(4). *Decorative* or *thematic* composition is a kind of aesthetic form which is aimed at, or apparently suitable for, stimulating direct perceptual

experience in the beholder, especially through the nature and arrangement of visual qualities. It differs from utilitarian in that it does not need to be suited for any use in the world of action, or for any use except to provide an object for sense-perception. The decorative aspects of an object may or may not have utilitarian functions also. As contrasted with representative form, the decorative does not need to look like anything else, or suggest anything else to the imagination. It may do so, as in a decorative picture, but that is not essential. As contrasted with expository form, the decorative does not need to mean anything in particular; to convey any information, to express any attitudes or concepts, or suggest any relationships over and above those directly observable in the sensory details themselves. A decorative object may happen to do so, as in a coat of arms; but that is not essential to its nature as decoration.

When developed with some complexity, a decorative composition is called a *design.* Design is usually only one factor in the total form of a work of art. It can be described in terms of thematic[4] relations: the repetition and variation of certain component traits such as blue areas and curving lines; and perhaps their contrast with markedly different traits such as red areas and angular lines. In architecture, designs are built from solid masses and interior spaces, as well as from lines, surfaces, and textures. Design also involves the integration of such thematic relations by subordinating details to a comprehensive pattern or a climax.

Design and thematic relations occur in music and literature (especially poetry) as well as in visual art, but the term "decorative" is not usually applied there. In music, designs are built by repeating, varying, and contrasting themes through the use of melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumental timbre, and other components. Literary design consists partly in word-sound patterns (involving such components as rhythm, rhyme, and assonance); partly in thematic organization of meanings—i.e., the systematic repetition, variation and contrast of suggested images and concepts. Design can be developed to any degree of complexity desired, by differentiating parts and including small pattern-units within larger ones.

A given set of component traits can be arranged according to any of these modes of composition, or according to two or more at once. Some types of art are comparatively *specialized,* from a compositional standpoint, in

[4]Thematic repetition is sometimes called "rhythm", but that word tends to confuse it with rhythm in a narrower sense, as an auditory component.

that they involve development in only one mode. These are sometimes called "pure decoration," "purely utilitarian," and so on. But it is impossible for a work of art to be completely restricted to one mode. Even if a tool, chair or house is bare and unadorned, and intended only for utilitarian purposes, it is sure to involve some aspects of a decorative nature. In the chair, for example, the four legs will constitute a series of repeated cylindrical masses, which fit together as a thematic arrangement. However, the decorative development of the chair may proceed much farther than this, as through the addition of incised grooves and ridges, or the coloring of surfaces. These additions may or may not fit into the utilitarian scheme (i.e., be useful in themselves). They may or may not be integrated with the utilitarian scheme from a decorative standpoint, as through making the added lines repeat the contours of the legs, seat, and back. Furthermore, the chair may be developed along representative lines, as in a king's throne ornamented with carved animals in relief. Finally, these details may have expository significance if they fit together into a coat of arms. A Gothic cathedral is highly developed in all four modes of composition, through its functional basis, its decorative treatment of masses and surfaces, its sculptural and stained glass representations, and its theological and moral symbolism. A Dancing Siva contains sculptural representation of a dancing figure, a design of masses, lines and surfaces, and a complex religious and philosophic exposition. It also has utility for purposes of worship. Such works of art are highly *diversified* as to modes of composition.

From the standpoint of form analysis, the modes of composition operate as *factors* in a particular work of art. In other words, a work of art can be described as to the various modes of composition which are involved in it; their relative emphasis and degree of development, and their interrelations in that particular object. For example, we speak of the "design element" or the "decorative element" in a painting; of the relation between decorative and functional elements in a building.

It becomes important then to notice, not only how each compositional factor is developed in itself, but also how and how thoroughly they are *integrated.* In a painting, we may ask how the design is related to the representative factor or "subject matter." Sometimes the design is conspicuous and clearly organized, while the represented objects are vague and distorted. Then we may say that representation is partly sacrificed to design. Sometimes there is a highly realistic portrait or landscape with little or no definite design. However, there is always some decorative element, if only from the

simple lines and colors necessary for representation. Sometimes the design seems clearly integrated with the representation, so that neither can be easily distinguished from the other; the representative form provides a basic structure for the design itself. Sometimes, on the contrary, the decorative factor in a picture or a building is superficial and separate. Such distinctions are used as a basis for standards of value in art criticism; but the descriptive study of form is content to note them as facts.

One way of discovering whether compositional factors are integrated is to look at a number of individual details, and find out whether each is functioning as an element in more than one mode of composition. Does each decorative detail of a building also have a utilitarian function, and does each visible part of the utilitarian scheme contribute to the design? In a picture, a given spot of red may function as part of a represented flower, and also as part of a design of lines and colors.

Whatever compositional factors are present in a work of art, one of them usually acts as a basic *framework* for the whole; the others being *accessories.* For example, in the decorated chair utility is the framework mode of composition, determining the basic structure. But it does not follow that the framework mode is necesarily the most important from a historical or evaluative standpoint. The utilitarian structure of the chair may be quite conventional, like a thousand others. Its decorative factor, though accessory, may be the only one elaborately developed, and the only one which is distinctive and original. The representation of a scene gives a basic framework to most pictures; but accessory effects of decorative color may give to a certain picture its most distinctive characteristic. Decorative composition may provide the general framework for an abstract design, whose representative factor is confined to occasional repetitions of a flower or animal motif. Thus many permutations are possible in the various arts, as to the relative status of compositional factors. Theoretically, any one may provide the framework, and one or more others enter as accessories. But actually, in certain arts, certain factors are most often used as frameworks: e.g., representation in sculpture, and design in music.

The relation betwen modes of composition has important historical aspects, which can be only briefly touched upon in this article. They concern the *evolution of art forms,* and their relation to science. Important primitive and archaic forms are often undifferentiated as to modes of composition, combining several. As historians have pointed out, there is no such thing as pure decoration, art for art's sake, or fine as opposed to useful art, in

early society. There is little if any in oriental or medieval culture. The tendency to differentiate sharply betwen beauty and use, the aesthetic and the practical, the decorative and the functional or significant, is largely a sophisticated modern trend. A phase of dissociation along these lines followed the Industrial Revolution. It was manifested in many bleak utilitarian products, and on the other hand in an efflorescence of superficial, nonfunctional decoration. Recent years have seen a conscious effort to reintegrate the two, as in artistically designed industrial products. However, there is always a certain pressure toward specialization for the sake of intensive, undistracted progress along one chosen path.

The intensive, specialized development of utilitarian form has led to applied science or technology; that on expository form to pure science and philosophy. The cultural ancestors of modern machines and technical processes, of modern scientific textbooks, are the undifferentiated forms of early practical and religious art, including philosophic poetry, myth, and folklore. Representation has a scientific development, in exact photographs, maps, models, and diagrams. But other types of representation remain within the accepted province of fine art. Decoration alone has shown no strong tendency to pass from an artistic to a scientific stage. Visual design reached a high intensive development in Islamic textiles (partly because of a taboo against visual representation) and in certain other periods. Auditory design has been intensively developed in modern classical music.

After periods of specialization on one or another mode, there is usually a reaction toward diversity, as in the recent effort to combine design with representation in painting and sculpture; with utility in furniture and architecture. Another example of such reaction is seen in the development of pictorial art for educational purposes, as in illustrations for children's textbooks. Like much ancient art, they include not only representation and decoration, but an expository element: the conveying of information and abstract ideas through concrete illustration. Advertising and propagandist art are similar in this respect.

VI. Types and Styles of Art

The description of a particular work of art is best accomplished by classifying it in terms of various *types.* In zoölogy, a newly found animal or fossil is thus described by classifying it under various types in various respects. It belongs to one type as to its bony structure; another as to its skin covering; another as to its mode of locomotion; another as to its mode of respiration;

another as to its mode of reproduction, and so on. Thus the whole is described as a peculiar combination of various characteristics. In art, one may describe the Statue of Liberty in New York as the figure of a goddess from from the standpoint of representation, and as a lighthouse from that of utility. One should also indicate how it *differs* from usual cases of each type. For example, its colossal size distinguishes it from most statues.

In the paragraphs above, we have noted a number of artistic types. Some works of art are visual and some auditory in respect to principal mode of presentation. Some are diversified and some specialized in range of presented ingredients; some in range of suggested ingredients. Some are specialized on one mode of composition; some on another; some combine several. Some have complex presentative development in three dimensions of space; some in only two. Some are developed in time as well as in three dimensions of space. These are but a few examples of numerous types available for use as terms of description.

The traditional names for aesthetic types and categories are often confusing because of their evaluative implications. For example, to call an object "beautiful", "ugly", "sublime", or "pretty", not only helps to describe it but in part evaluates it—praises or condemns it. At the same time, there is an objective element in the difference between sublimity and prettiness, which can be expressed in terms of observable characteristics without reference to value. Other aesthetic types such as "romantic" and "tragic" have a still larger element of objective meaning, and hence can be applied in describing art with less danger of confusion. Some of the so-called "art principles", or alleged rules and standards of good art, also refer to certain objective types of art, and can be so considered apart from questions of value. Whether or not all art should be "balanced" (and many will deny that it should), at least some works of art possess more balance than others. Some works of art contain more "rhythm" than others do; some have more "dominance and subordination" than others have. If defined as purely descriptive terms, these words are useful in comparative analysis. All of them are highly ambiguous. There is no reason for assuming that any one of the current meanings of a certain term is the correct one; but confusion can be avoided by explicitly selecting one definition and holding to it.

Sometimes objects can be compared in a way approximating *quantitative* estimate, though rarely with numerical exactness. For example, one can say that a certain Persian rug is more complex in its visual design than a certain Chinese bowl; or that a Rubens battle scene contains more represented move-

ment that a Chardin still life. These are obvious and will arouse litle dispute; but quantitative estimates are often more difficult. At present, measurement can go but a little way in the description of aesthetic form. But much description in other sciences also lacks quantitative exactness.

The description of historic *styles* of art presents an important and difficult task of aesthetics. A style is a distinctive or characteristic mode of presentation, construction, execution or expression in art. Historians attempt to define styles characteristic of certain nations, periods, schools, and persons, as the Greek, medieval, impressionist, or Raphaelesque style. As a rule, the broader the scope thus taken in, the more difficult it is to define the style satisfactorily, for the reason that more varieties of form are encountered. If one defines the style too specifically, one must add that many exceptions to it exist in the historical period included. Even a single artist, such as Raphael, is likely to have painted in several different ways during his life; so distinctions are sometimes made as to the early, middle, and late styles of the artist. It is a perennial problem to define such terms as Gothic, classic, and romantic in brief yet adequate terms.

A historic style is in some ways analogous to a biological species, as a complex type which persists through many successive individuals. (Even a personal style like the Raphaelesque can be followed by many artists.) It is to be described or defined, not in terms of any single type or characteristic, but as a combination of several, such as the usual shape of doors and windows, height of vaults, thickness of walls, type of ornamentation, and so on. However one specifies in these respects, one is likely to find examples which conform in some ways and deviate in others. Artistic styles are much more variable than biological species. They change more rapidly, and merge imperceptibly into other styles. For this reason, it is well to think of styles as dynamic, complex trends, rather than as fixed and definite.

Concepts of historic styles are potentially very useful in describing individual works of art. It saves a great deal of detail if we can classify a building as typically Romanesque, or a piece of music as "Gregorian". By further describing, in terms of specific varieties, or a combination of different trends and traits of style, we can quickly give a rough idea of the nature of the work of art and its place in history. However, much depends on the accuracy with which our style-names are defined and applied; often they are vague and inconsistent. Also, one should not overlook the unique characteristics of a work of art, which differentiate it from other examples of its style. By classifying

an object under more and more types and styles at once, we approach a description of its individual character.

Some of the difficulty arises from confusion in applying the names of styles both to abstract types and to particular historic periods or nations. If one thinks of the Baroque period as equivalent to the seventeenth century in Europe, then the Baroque will include many different types of art. If one thinks of it as an abstract type involving large, sweeping curves, oblique and eccentric patterns, emotional excitement and so on, then examples of the Baroque style will be found in other centuries, and even in other civilizations such as that of India. It is important for the study of cultural history to recognize such resemblances among the arts of remote peoples and places; but to do so we need clearer definitions of various styles as abstract complex types. Many terms used as names of abstract types are also used in the other sense. For example, "classic" refers to the art of Greece and Rome, and also to an abstract type involving comparative regularity, balance, symmetrical proportion, smoothness, gently flowing curves, rationality and cool serenity of expression. "Romantic" refers to European art in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and also to an abstract type involving a tendency to irregularity, rough textures, sentiment, primitive impulse and passion.

Of course, the terms "classic" and "romantic" as so defined do not characterize all the art of any one period or nationality; for every age contains divergence. If such terms are to be used as names of abstract types, they should be clearly defined as such apart from special historical associations; but it is hard to exclude the latter. Even when abstractly defined, their application to particular cases is troublesome. Cases will appear which embody some but not all characteristics of the type as so defined. For example, Delacroix, Beethoven and Keats are romantic in some but not all the traits just mentioned; and their individual works vary considerably. However styles are defined, examples will be found which conform to none exactly; which are intermediate or transitional, embodying characteristics of more than one. Such examples are found in biology also, but plants and animals are more "true to type" than works of art.

Some styles and trends involve several or all the arts of a period, and their analysis provides a useful way of comparing and inter-relating different arts. For example, how is the romantic movement manifested in painting, music, and poetry; in the picturesque garden, the novel, and the opera—even in philosophic, political and economic theory? But we must be careful not to assume that all contemporary works (e.g., of the romantic period) share the

same style. Works produced at the same time and place are sometimes at opposite poles as to style. Usually a style-trend occurs in certain arts considerably before it does in others.

The causal explanation of the genesis of styles, and of their relation to other cultural factors, is not a problem of form-analysis alone, since it requires much supplementary information. But it can not be effectively pursued without clear description and classification of the forms of art themselves.

VII. Comparative Analysis

In spite of the confusing ambiguity of aesthetic terms, they contain enough definite meaning to provide a basis for descriptive study. They are gradually being refined through the aid of dictionary-makers, and through theoretical analysis in the light of concrete examples. It would be a mistake to wait until they are defined to everyone's satisfaction before going on with research. In fact, endless argument over the definitions of beauty, sublimity, the classic, and similar terms has too long delayed inductive inquiry.

In learning to analyze art, students usually go through several stages. The first stage, that of an untrained observer, is to notice only a few fragmentary aspects in a work of art. In painting and sculpture, beginners tend to notice an occasional conspicuous detail: a facial expression, gesture, or unusual garment; and to ignore the structure of the whole. Through practice and instruction, they can be led to notice many other types of detail and relation, including those of design, and to identify examples of the chief historic styles. At this second stage, the task of analyzing a single work of art in words is apt to seem endless. There are so many things to be said about it; so many details and relations to be noted in each case, that a single description could run into volumes.

The third stage is reached only by further comparative study in the light of historical knowledge. It is one of abbreviation; of singling out the few most important things to say of each particular case. This will of course vary considerably according to the interest or problem one has in mind. But in general, one acquires speed in observation and in finding the proper word to describe each characteristic observed. One learns to select the distinctive traits in each particular case, which set it off from all others. For example, one may immediately recognize a painting as impressionist, and probably a work by Monet. Having said that it is a typical Monet in most respects, one can take a great many details for granted as covered by this classification. The next step is to notice how it differs from many other Monets, and from the usual im-

pressionist picture. This may be through an exceptional emphasis on definite perspective or linear design. A brief explanation may serve to bring out the principal ways in which this example is distinctive, and original in relation to previous accomplishments.

It does not follow that an appreciator should notice only these distinctive traits, but they are important for brief scientific reporting. Even in appreciation, as one encounters more and more works of art, most of them saying only what has been said many times before, one tends to look at each for its distinctive qualities, if any. The training needed here is in perception and understanding, involving sensory and intellectual elements in close cooperation. The emotional and evaluative elements in appreciation are not directly concerned. But the central ability to perceive and understand art often tends to increase enjoyment and discrimination also. In science and education, it can lead to further investigation of the genesis and functions of art in society, and thus to increased control of art as a means to human welfare.

Max Eastman and the Aesthetic Response

GEORGE KIMMELMAN

IT is no secret at this late date that Max Eastman has always been and still continues to be (as the recent articles about him by Edmund Wilson and Angelica Balabanoff testify) what the typical book reviewers call a "stimulating" "challenging" or "provocative" thinker.

While such descriptive adjectives may be the usual blurbing that passes in our time for critical acumen, they are employed (and accurately so) by even those serious critics who recognize in Eastman a talent that is refreshing if for no other reason than that it expresses so charmingly intellectual heresies ranging in such various fields as science, literature, philosophy, and political science.

Although there has been a great deal of material written about Eastman, especially in the field of politics, there is one phase of his writings which, to my knowledge, has been completely neglected. I am referring to those portions of his works which deal with the purely psychological aspects of human behavior. It is true that there has been polemical literature dealing with his psychological views as they relate to philosophy and politics (Trotsky, Hook, Brameld, Burnham, Braun, *et al*) but none to speak of as they relate to the field of psychology in general and to a specific phase of that field, namely, the concept of consciousness. This concept has been developed by him at length (*The Literary Mind*) since it is fundamental to a thorough analysis of the aesthetic response which, in turn, aids him in explaining his theory of poetry.

More important for consideration than his historically debatable presentation of contemporary literature's ineffectivenes in the face of scientific achievements, more essential for analysis than his questionable prognostication concerning the future novel's precarious position in the presence of a rapidly developing scientific technique and ideology, and more germane to one of the most important problems of aesthetics than his baldly overstated critique of Richards' position in contemporary criticism, is Eastman's concept of consciousness and its place in aesthetic theory.

I consider it of more importance for two reasons: First, the other topics that Eastman discusses are, for the most part purely controversial, while the experimental psychology for the past thirty-five or forty years. Secondly, the study of consciousness has a definite basis in the development of genetic and former topics have behind them a tradition of discussion and discourse that dates back over a hundred years, while the latter study, on the other hand, as it relates to aesthetic problems in general and to the psychology of poetry in particular has only just begun to be developed. Furthermore, since his study purports to base its validity upon the achievements of scientific psychology, it must be very carefully checked.

Max Eastman's concept, in brief, is this: We become consious of anything whenever there is elicited from us a response which does not pass over into action but which is impeded or blocked. Something in our environment initiates a responsive action in us which does not become conscious unless that action is obstructed. We can dress, for example, "without once perceiving a limb or a garment, provided the garments are in their proper place, and the limbs too, and all goes well. But if something obstructs the process—if an arm will not pass through the sleeve of a coat—then that situation automatically swims into our ken." We are conscious of a situation. The dilemma is solved by our recognition of—"torn lining," our identifying an unfamiliar experience with a familiar one for purpose of action. As soon as this identification is accomplished and action resumed, consciousness lapses. "Consciousness is, arises out of, or depends upon, two things—a blockage of action, and an identification of one experience with another so that action may be resumed." Since the basic characteristic of the aesthetic response is a heightened consciousness, poetry, as one of the arts, achieves its basic effect by employing a metaphoric technique whose essential function is to suggest not practical (as in the "torn lining" instance) but impractical identifications. Metonymy and metaphor do not "explain like maps or illustrations, but rather obscure the meaning of the sentence" . . . "Impractical identification," continues Eastman, "is the essence of an attentive consciousness. It is mind on the brink of action." To continue, not only poetry but all the arts heighten our consciousness by effecting an impediment or "stasis in the nervous system, a condition of tension involving a delay or failure of the appropriate (normal) reaction."

Now, it seems to me rather unfortunate that Eastman has not gone somewhat deeper not only into the psychological problem itself but into some of the physiological, biological, and philosophic problems definitely related

to and implied in his position. For no person, I should think, is better equipped than he to cope with these questions. As his essays stand today, however, they are so elementary in content and so over-simplified in presentation that he has failed completely to do what he set out to: explain the psychological and biological foundations of art and aesthetics. Furthermore, the whole concept of the "heightened consciousness" is treated just as well from the purely literary standpoint by such people as Edith Sitwell, Perry, Graves, Drinkwater, and Hart Crane. I can see no justification, in other words, for a substituted, scientific technique in a problem which has been treated adequately by another field of study unless it either substantiates that problem scientifically or provides additional, illuminating comment upon it. Eastman, in my estimation, has succeeded in doing neither of these two things. I hope, in this essay, both to indicate certain very significant problems which Eastman has slighted and to detail a little more fully other problems which he has hardly touched upon. The names which I have inserted parenthetically should not be construed as a suggested bibliography or a presumptuousness that is not warranted by an article of such limited proportions. They are included here mainly for the purpose of indicating to the reader of Eastman's papers and of these comments representative scientific authorities whose views are either diametrically opposed to those suggested by Eastman or whose views represent various interpretations of his problems and prove that there is a great deal more to be said on the subject than what he states in his comment of surprising finality: "That is about all that psychology has to say about the interior causes of consciousness. And even that cannot be said of course with a great and dogmatic certainty." (In fairness to Eastman it should be noted that his analysis is based on *phases* of the works of such men as Washburn, Montague, MacDougall, Allport, Jennings, and Münsterberg.)

To begin with, nowhere in Eastman's essays does he differentiate between the practical or scientific and the aesthetic consciousness. Neither does he show the relationship between the aesthetic object, its creator and the appreciator. Nowhere does he define mind, trace the genetic problems involved in its definition and indicate its place in nature. We are not told whether mind and consciousness are synonymous, whether mind precedes consciousness or vice versa. Eastman may answer on this point that such problems with all their associated, voluminous literature fall outside the scope of his essays or, as he says somewhere in his work on Marx, that a scientist may admit that his principle and technique imply certain philosophic positions though he admits them tentatively and with great reluctance. I

maintain, however, that not only are the problems suggested above basic ones for consideration by anyone who would attempt Eastman's task, but that such problems are definitely scientific and not philosophic ones. (cf. Baldwin, Ribot, Paulhan, MacDougall, Cohen, Spencer, Broad, Downey, Santayana.)

At one point in his essay, Eastman implies that consciousness and attention are synonymous. Such a position, however, can neither be defended nor attacked since neither term is defined. It hardly seems possible that a student like Eastman who is undoubtedly acquainted with the wealth of material that has been collected on the subject of "attention" in psychology should permit such a casual reference to go unqualified. Passive and active attention in the fields of both the practical and the aesthetic consciousness are not differentiated by him at all.

It is very easy, for example, to show, if we consider merely the level of passive attention in any practical act, how inadequate is Eastman's concept of consciousness. I can be pushing my arm into the torn sleeve of my coat (to use Eastman's own illustration) and yet not be experiencing any consciousness of the act (in spite of the basic neuro-muscular stasis and blockage of action which is supposed to be the cause of consciousness, according to Eastman) because my attention is passively arrested by something fleeting either in my environment or in my own mind, or it is feasting itself on some recalled imagery (where no stasis or blockage is involved). Blockage, on the basis of even passive attention in the practical consciousness, does not tell the whole story. Eastman fails to differentiate the various levels of primitive alertness, animal awareness, anticipatory attention, awareness with attention and interest, cognitional and conational levels, etc. (cf. Titchener, Köhler, James, Stout, Baldwin, MacDougall, Briffault, Pieron.)

On the level of active attention there are, from Eastman's position, fresh difficulties. How are we to account for all the higher cognitional activities entailed here such as reasoning, judgment, valuation, etc., characteristic expressions of active attention. Furthermore, if a "heightened consciousness" depends upon blockage and stasis, or the solving of a confronted difficulty, how are we to differentiate the aesthetic consciousness from one engaged in solving, let us say, a mathematical problem?

Another interesting angle of the attention problem presents itself: Eastman's position does not become more intelligible if we say that attention is an *element* in consciousness. Such an interpretation commits us to a structural reading of mental life and forces us to define "element" (if it is not to be taken as a fragment of rudimentary substance along with basic

sensation, etc.) as one of the components constituting the whole complex that we refer to as consciousness. This position, in turn, is fraught with psychological difficulties since it leads us into the mosaic view of mental life, and compels us to regard that life as constructed by the nature and number of the elements that are put together through the laws of association.

To present a different phase of the problem, the phenomena of passive and active attention in the aesthetic response present a problem which has engaged aestheticians from Plotinus to Ellis. The most fruitful contributions to theoretical and experimental aesthetics have come from those who. like Lipps, Groos, and Urban, have recognized the perfectly synthesized character of passive-active attention in the aesthetic response. The method, on the other hand, of men like Müller-Freienfels in dividing the aesthetic consciousness into *Zuschauer* and *Mitspieler* may be a useful methodological technique, but it scarcely does justice to the almost simultaneous process of both the passive and empathetic consciousness in aesthetic reaction and adaptation.

Nor is anything gained from following the method of some aesthetic theorists who, like Eastman, speak of a focused attention and the aesthetic response as synonymous, or who, like Richards limit the problem by treating only the direct causal relations between aesthetic object and beholder, listener or reader. Ducasse has with great acuteness and clarity revealed the inadequacy of these two positions. In the former case, he has shown how the aesthetic consciousness implies and presupposes attention but is not synonymous with it; in the latter he has analyzed the various epistemological levels of the problem: causes, reasons, objects, evidence and symbols of the aesthetic consciousness. (Eastman does not lay down any psychological principles for a study of the aesthetic objects as distinct from the aesthetic experience.)

Coming to the nature of concsiousness itself as it may possibly be interpreted from Eastman's presentation, we have three choices, each of which has presented in the history of psychology confused abstractions at worst, and precarious makeshifts at best. I refer to psycho-physical parallelism, mind-body interactionism, and epiphenomenalism. Consideration of these positions is not within the intended scope of this essay. A word, however, must be said about epiphenomenalism because that position, I think, most accurately describes Eastman's thesis. For what we have here is, as is well known, a conception which makes of consciousness a luxury, an accidental, phosphorescent by-product of neuro-muscular and cortical processes. We are required to regard consciousness as some propitious spark which occurs at crucial moments (blockage) in the activities of "something" that both is not and

does not imply consciousness. In this "something" consciousness flares up and serves as a temporary illuminant when the activity gets into some entanglement, and when this is unraveled consciousness lapses and things go on uninterruptedly as before. I suppose that we have to interpret this undefined order as objective nature, the world of physical phenomena. The relation of consciousness to objective nature on the basis of such an interpretation is quite superfluous since it can do nothing about the entanglement which occurs in and must remain a problem for nature herself. Consciousness is then, as has been suggested, a mere luxury which is indulged in only at such moments when things are in a particularly uncomfortable condition. (Blockage of action, confronted difficulties and subsequent nerve stasis, etc.) We are not told quite clearly what it is that does the blocking, what it is that is blocked, nor where the blocking takes place. If in answer to the last question as to where the blockage takes place the reply is, in consciousness, the question of the origin of consciousness is begged; we start with what we set out to find. The other two questions cannot be answered until we clarify the ambiguity of the term consciousness itself. It seems to be taken as some unique sort of detached entity which somehow is there, a datum or given fact, but existing in a realm from which actuality is excluded: nature on one side, and human nature or mind, on the other.

Eastman's theory of blockage becomes intelligible only when we consider it from two approaches: the genetic, which he has neglected, and the purely neurological, which he has only suggested. Both these angles, however, present inconsistencies. First of all, from the genetic standpoint (and space permits only the suggestion of related problems) we can offer the reasoned belief that such divergence of nature and consciousness as our above analysis has led us to is only a very late development in the history of mind. Genetic psychology traces the important stages in which that divergent evolution has taken place, and describes the factors and motives which have led to the results that are charactertistic of each stage (sensation, perception, apperception, memory, imagination, thought, etc.).

If into some such scheme we bring the theory of blockage, two factors are present which enable us to give it a reasonable statement. For example, we may say that in our endeavor to comprehend the world about us at the levels of perception, memory, thought, science, etc., two factors are present which may be distinguished as material or object, and intent or motive. The former is to be dealt with and controlled, and the latter directs the course of our activities in relation to the former. Two questions arise: will the

object prove amenable to the handling and control which the operating intent initiates, and will the motive find its satisfactory realization in and through the amenability of that material on which it operates? If neither of these questions yields an affirmative answer, we have, in the one case, object blocking intent; in the other, intent blocking object. And theoretically at first and then in actuality later, both object and intent are characteristics of consciousness or experience. But this important fact is to be noted: when what is to be solved or resolved is accomplished, things do not stop; they continue on and flow more rapidly, smoothly, and richly, and we are approaching more advanced and complex levels, or the conditions are present which make this possible. In other words, the "heightened consciousness" in its fullest sense—i.e., its quantitative and qualitative characteristics as revealed in artistic, aesthetic, scientific, or philosophic expression—is not elicited by stasis, but effected by complete release through ultimate realization. This brings us to the second approach to Eastman's theory of blockage, the neurological.

Coming to his neurological position; we are, according to him, never conscious of automatic movements because in them nerve impulses meet with either very little or no resistance. Consciousness, on the contrary, depends on the blockage encountered by these impulses. It gains in intensity and vividness in proportion as the resistance at the nerve synapses increases and—if we carry this idea to its ultimate conclusion—we reach the peak of consciousness where there is complete inhibition at the synaptic juncture and consequent immobility of body. We are most conscious, in other words, of that toward which our neuro-muscular organism does *not* react! Now, this position which was suggested in another connection by Wundt and later developed by MacDougall has not fared particularly well, not only from the standpoint of sheer logic but in the development of experimental psychology and neurology. Or, to put it less strongly, there is a great deal more to be said on the subject on nerve-current blockage as a basis of consciousness. The reader is referred to the neurological work which has been performed by Sherrington and Head, to the psychological works of Paton, Holt, Marston, King, and Davies, and to the studies of abnormal psychology of Prince, Hart, etc., where sufficient neurological, physiological, and psychological material is gathered to form a basis for a conception of consciousness that is diametrically opposed to the one suggested by Eastman.

It seems to me that there is a further inconsistency lurking in his statement that "almost anything which happens along with a quality sharp enough

to arouse consciousness is likely to be greeted by a robust organism with the positive reaction. The organism is 'interested,' that is to say, in experience as such. I suspect that most of what has been entered under the head of 'instinct of curiosity' is in no wise a desire to investigate and know, but a desire to taste of and live through—a 'love of trying it,' as the Russian word for curiosity more wisely says . . . any rubber ball can react, but it requires life to act. And life does act. It seeks experience." Such an attitude toward life contradicts any conception of blockage of action as was shown, I think, in the foregoing analysis, and furthermore, if the organism is constantly reaching out, tasting, trying, and acting it must be more or less *actively* conscious to begin with, and it heightens its state of consciousness by constant adaptation to its environment (art included). Consciousness depends upon the *response* and not the blockage of the nervous system, and its quantitative and qualitative character depend upon the *kind and variety of nerve paths involved.*

It is for such fundamental reasons (genetic and neurological), therefore, as well as for the absence of a clear definition of the term "action," that when Eastman attempts to apply his theory to the aesthetic response, it leads to complete confusion. On one hand we are told that to make a person more conscious, we are to create more blockage in his nervous system, since consciousness is equated with activity in overcoming resistance. The artist, then, whose primary function is to heighten consciousness must follow the same plan: he must produce a stasis in the beholder. But we are told on the other hand and in the same breath that the aesthetic attitude involves "the mind held on the brink of action." Now, a mind on the *brink* of action is still a mind that is not active, one that is not struggling to overcome obstacles. And yet, we have just been informed from Eastman's statement that it is a mind which is about to, but is not yet in a position to act. We cannot have it both ways. For either the aesthetic consciousness is struggling with obstacles to overcome or it is one in which no such struggle is involved.

To continue, Eastman does not, as has been previously noted, take into sufficient account the differences between the practical and the aesthetic consciousness as well as the qualitative range of the latter. We are not told, for example, whether the artist in creating his work is subjected to a nerve stasis or not. Surely his is a heightened consciousness. But is it the result of his overcoming the resistances of his medium, or is he free from impediment? Eastman, in order to be consistent, would have to admit that the artist does have a heightened consiousness as a result of neuro-muscular

blockage. Where, however, is the qualitative, differentiating factor between the consciousness of a blacksmith and that of a poet, let us say? If, for example, the resistance met with by the former in the adjustment of one piece of working material to another is equal in amount to that of the latter in formulating his metaphorical conceptions, the blacksmith's consciousness is as aesthetic as the latter. For, according to Eastman, consciousness is consciousness, and one differs from another only in the fact that there is sometimes more and sometimes less of it, depending upon whether the obstacles to be overcome are more or less difficult. Incidentally, there does not seem to be any room for the blockage theory when we examine the field of creative imagination: its spontaneity, its unimpeded richness and pattern-weaving complications, as revealed to us both in the autobiographic details of great artists, as well as in the psychological analyses of the creative imagination by such people as Ribot, Downey, Mitchell, etc.

As far as the aesthetic appreciator is concerned, Eastman does not tell us very much about the genesis, characteristics, and complexities of his response and how they are related to the neuro-stasis of the creative artist or to the aesthetic object. Now, the aesthetic consciousness has always had certain definite characteristics associated with it by traditional aesthetic theorists; the ultimate reconciliation and fulfillment of conflicting impulses met in every other type of experience; the organized, patterned, imaginative and idealized development of life's activities; the completeness and self-sustaining absoluteness of its created world, etc. The question may be raised whether or not, in the light of such a reading of the aesthetic consciousness, we are permitted to accept Eastman's following statements that it is "mind on the brink of action," that whereas the practical consciousness is the result of "a blockage of action, and an identification of one experience with another so that *action may be resumed,*" the aesthetic consciousness (in poetry, for example) is the result of blockage and the "impractical identification for the purpose of *cultivating consciousness for its own sake.*" (Italics mine.)

I think such an acceptance untenable for the following reasons: (1) it gives a very restricted interpretation of the term "action," since it is made to apply to only overt manifestations; (2) it denies to the aesthetic consciousness its very active and varied life not only on neuro-physiological levels but on the higher cognitional planes as well; (3) it overlooks the very active empathetic and participatory characteristics of the aesthetic response; (4) it completely divorces art from its exhilarating, stimulating, and inspirational effects upon other life activities.

In passing, a word should be said concerning Eastman's so-called psychology of poetry as developed in his essay, "What Poetry Is." To recapitulate briefly: poetry, as one of the arts, effects a heightened consciousness by utilizing a technique of metaphor and metonymy (obscuring "the meaning of the sentence in which they occur") which suggests impractical identifications, and which consequently preserves or prolongs that consciousness (nerve stasis and blockage of action). The other two additional and essential elements of poetry are rhythm and emotion (whose relative quality and position in his psycho-neurological scheme of blockage Eastman does not detail). The metaphoric consciousness is the basic one, however, for the psychology of poetry, since it is "the essence of an attentive consciousness."

First of all, it would seem from such a definition that since it does not stress the interrelated factors of aptness, connotation and clarity in metaphor, but on the contrary, explains the achievement of the metaphoric consciousness on the basis of "obscuring the meaning of the sentence," it places a premium upon incongruity; for would not the most effective means of heightening consciousness be, then, the juxtaposition of the most *un*related images. Secondly, to anyone who has enjoyed a wide and full reading of poetry or who has read just a few of the innumerable analyses of prosody, of poetic technique and of language, etc., and of aesthetics in general, Eastman's concept will undoubtedly appear as very limited and elementary. Finally, he does not differentiate between the practical metaphor of our daily slang and general locutions, the scientific metaphor as described by such men as Vaihinger or Ellis, or Cohen, and the poetic metaphor which has been analyzed in the experimental studies of Downey, Groos, Sterzinger, etc.

I should like to conclude, as a footnote to my remarks in this essay, by calling the reader's attention to the fact that Mr. Eastman is up to his old irreverences, and therefore the subject of heated discussion once more. This time various representatives of the Marxist movement have become very much annoyed with him for his articles in *The Reader's Digest* and in *The New Leader.* In attempting to explain the contemporary failures of the revolutionary movement, he accuses its leadership, from Marx and Engels down to our own day, of disastrous ignorance concerning the psychology of human behavior. How correct Mr. Eastman is in his reevaluation does not concern us here but since he has stepped forth to do battle once more as a psychologist (and this time, it seems, as a defender of a revived "instinctivism"), my comments may have some relevance because they attempt to throw light on his competency in that capacity.

The Theoretical Backgrounds of Surrealism

CHARLES E. GAUSS

SURREALISM has now led an uninhibited and boisterous adolescence among us for twenty years. As the exploration of a particular point of view which is in revolt against the accepted traditional standards of art and criticism, surrealist art has faced the general snobbism of aesthetician and critic. Yet, because it is a phenomenon whose rise and importance in inter-war culture is both interesting and astonishing, this new movement demands sympathetic study. Though Surrealism, being of such a vexing and anti-rationalistic nature, seems recalcitrant to analysis, its proponents have issued numerous manifestoes and theoretical expositions of its point of view which the aesthetician would do well to regard more closely than he has heretofore. The study of these would reveal the complex of intellectual antecedents which the surrealist has drawn together in his point of view thereby giving the critic a better perspective of judgment, and would also place before the aesthetician certain questions on the nature of his science which he should candidly face if his science is to be of any value. It is with these ends in view that I intend to inspect briefly the scriptural texts of the two leading surrealists, André Breton and Salvator Dali, to extract the fundamental propositions of their theory.

The fundamental turn of thought distinctive of Surrealism is first described by André Breton in his *Manifeste du Surréalisme* of 1924. Here he contrasts the "realist attitude" and the "materialist attitude." By the first he means an absolute rationalism which has the fixed limits of discursive reason, is always in agreement with common sense, and hence confines itself to the tautological possibilities of traditional logic. It is inspired by the tradition of Positivism from St. Thomas to Anatole France and as such is hostile to flights of the imagination.[1] Its error is that "under color of civilization, under pretext of progress, all that rightly or wrongly may be regarded as

[1] Cf. A. Breton, *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, pp. 15-16.

fantasy or superstitution has been banished from the mind, all uncustomary searching after truth has been proscribed."[2] Contrasted with this is the materialist attitude, ruled by the true logic which attempts to burst out of "immediate utility" and to realize unrestricted ends. Its pathway for the discovery of truth is that of the imagination. The domain of the imagination is identified with the psychic life itself as distinguished from the reality of ordinary appearance which is the raw material for the action of our rationalization. The analysis of Freud is recognized as a great step in the opening up of this vaster field and his contention that "the depths of our minds harbor strange forces capable of increasing those on the surface, or of successfully contending with them"[3] is accepted by the surrealists. The world of the imagination is identified with the subconsciousness and is most easily apprehended in the dream stage. Since the stage itself "is continuous and carries traces of organization" and the waking state is only "a phenomenon of interference" obeying the suggestions which come to it from our unconscious depths,[4] a methodological examination of the first should yield the explanation for both. Thus we are brought to the central thesis of Surrealism which M. Breton expresses: "I believe in the future transmutation of those two seemingly contradictory states, dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, or surreality, so to speak."[5] The logic of Surrealism is the logic of Hegelianism; the two contradictory states are synthesized into a new conception which contains them both. The mental world of veridical data and the world of the imagination, of dreams and illusions, are both absorbed by a deeper mental realm named the surreal. Such is the philosophical position of Surrealism. The things of the outer world, though real in the sense that they have their own independent existence, lose this reality in our thoughts and enter into new relationships which are psychical, not physical. To the surrealist "a tomato is also a child's balloon" and in this relationship the word "like" is "suppressed."[6] Certainly by such a program our suspicions of the world of the marvelous and the strange are put in disrepute, and the world known by common sense and reason is "surclassé."

Having found a point of reference between the conscious and the un-

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21; translation by David Gascoyne in *What is Surrealism?* (Criterion Miscellany No. 43), London, 1936, hereinafter referred to as *CM*.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 22, tr. *CM*.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25 and 26.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 27; tr. *CM*.

[6] A. Breton, "Exhibition X.....Y.....," *CM*, p. 25.

conscious which defines the nature of their relationship to each other, Surrealism is next faced with the problem of how one reaches the surreal, how does he discover it. It is the problem of knowledge applied to a special context. Surrealism as a philosophical position now gives way to Surrealism as an activity. The important thing is to get rid of any semblance of rational control over our activity, for how can we get to the surreal which is beyond the rational if we cannot free ourselves from the rational? Breton describes the first method of activity freed from rational control, that of psychic automatism. This is the attempt to record the stream of uninhibited verbal imagery for oneself as a psychoanalyst would that of a patient. One places himself in as passive a state as possible and writes down rapidly his irrational flow of thought. The method is easily transferred to a form of drawing, where it becomes "doodling." The chance pasting of collage pieces or the fortuitous creation of a surrealist object or of an exquisite corpse are simply extensions of this method. The place of the artist as an impartial investigator of the surreal is thus assured in Surrealism. Truth and reality are open not alone to the scientist and the experimenter. The Romantic notion of the artist as seer is continued by these latter-day Romantics but with a strange and ironic twist. Since the surrealist point of view and surrealist activity are possible in all fields, paintings, poetry, and experiment merge and the essential differences between the various arts ceases to be of any consequence. Surrealist works are not important as poems, as pictures, as objects, but as being the residue left when we have stript down our souls to the bare framework of the unconscious which is beneath all our selves and from which we never escape.

The problem of expression, as M. Breton says in his second manifesto of 1930, is the principal problem of Surrealism.[7] It can only be through expression (freed of the controls of reason) that one can pierce to the depths of surreality. Yet, since one must look within for this surreality, it becomes clear that it is a psychic, hidden "real" self, a Freudian "id." It is a synthesis that exists within our own spirits.[8] Down in this inner psychic life of each one of us we come to the human crucible itself which is an overindividual state. Here is not only the man himself but mankind. By surrealist activity we get "a key to go on opening indefinitely that box of never ending drawers which is called man."[9] Here is the foundation upon which we must build our morals,

[7] A. Breton, *Second Manifeste du Surréalisme*, p. 42, also pp. 26-27.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

our art, our ways of thought, our life of actions, here exists not only the surreality we seek but the sur-truth and the sur-beauty, the new reclassified values, that are opened to our gaze. If the foundation is shifting sands instead of rock all the values by which we judge the house we build will be different from what we have held before.

In *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture* of 1928, M. Breton presents the purposes and problems of surrealist activity as expressed in the plastic arts. In art the realist attitude becomes academicism and naturalism. It is the art of exact narration, of photographic external appearances, stemming from the belief that artists "are only capable of reproducing more or less fortunately the image of that which moves them. . . . The mistake lies in thinking that the model can only be taken from the exterior world . . . The plastic work of art, in order to respond to the undisputed necessity of thoroughly revising all values, will either refer to a *purely interior model* or cease to exist."[10] Such is the full statement of the surrealist philosophy of art. All art other than surrealist is an art of imitation of some thing which exists in the real world and which does not need the work of art to insure its existence. A work of art should not be a mere substitute for a thing, but should be the vehicle by which the artist and spectator are brought before a sign which is the thing itself, that is, up against the center of the world where thought and things meet. A work of art derives its value not from its language symbols but from the surreal which is behind them. The model for the work is in the psychic life of the artist himself. A complete reversal of critical values is thus entailed. The value of a work of art does not lie in biographical detail or formal elements, but in the fact of its being an object in which the surreal comes to light. The surreal object demands the surrealists activity if we are to be brought face to face with it.

The beauty of surrealist art will be "convulsive," it will produce in the spectator "a state of physical disturbance characterized by the sensation of a wind brushing across my forehead and capable of causing me really to shiver."[11]

Surrealist artistic activity is no different from other surrealist activity in its purpose. Its aim is to probe the depths of man, to find the Freudian "id." This is the realm of the erotic and the marvelous which has occasionally escaped into our daily life through dreams, and through actions performed when we refuse the restrictions of rational reflection. Surrealist art

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[10] A. Breton, *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture,* pp. 12-13.

[11] A. Breton, "Beauty will be Convulsive" *CM,* p. 37.

investigates this realm and sets up a pathway which will connect it as directly as possible (by a short circuit) with the world of daily life.

For Salvator Dali the whole ambition of the artist is to "materialize the images of concrete irrationality." [12] He must record the interior model as faithfully and as clearly as any realist or academic painter would copy his exterior model. If the artist at the moment he paints his pictures does not understand them it is not because they have no meaning, "on the contrary, their meaning is so profound . . . that it escapes the most simple analysis of logical intuition." [13] One cannot analyze the language of the unconscious. Dali says:

> "The subconscious has a symbolic language that is truly a universal language, for it . . . speaks with the vocabulary of the great vital constants, sexual instinct, feeling of death, physical notion of the enigma of space—these vital constants are universally echoed in every human. To understand an *aesthetic* picture, training in appreciation is necessary, cultural and intellectual preparation. For Surrealism the only requisite is a receptive and intuitive human being."[14]

This passage, more clearly than any other, shows the great shift in values presupposed by Surrealism, and declares the overindividual content of the surreal.

He also points out another kind of surrealist activity to add to the original one of psychic automatism of André Breton. This he calls "paranoiac-critical activity."[15] The images of reality are susceptible of false interpretations in terms of some mental delusion. A picture of a horse may be seen as that of a woman also, or even further as a lion. Which of these it may be, or how many such images an individual may see depends upon his degree of paranoiac capacity. The images of reality depend upon this capacity as well,[16] for reality may be as easily dissociated and put in question as illusion. As Breton has said, "a tomato is a child's balloon" and in this relationship the word "like" is "suppressed." Such a world is ego-centered, and however much one may claim the objective and the subjective are telescoped, it is the subjective element which is in the ascendancy. The rational is brought into line with the irrational, the world of common sense with that of illusion.

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[12] S. Dali, *The Conquest of the Irrational,* cf. pp. 12-13.

[13] *Idem.*

[14] S. Dali, Address delivered at M. M. A., N. Y., 1934. J. Levy, *Surrealism,* p. 7.

[15] S. Dali, *The Conquest of the Irrational,* pp. 17-18.

[16] S. Dali, "The Stinking Ass," *This Quarter,* Sept. 1932, pp. 49-50.

When a work of art is a paranoiac phenomenon it is no longer the aesthetic object of the older beauty but is purely a psychiatrical index of one's unconscious activity.

The theoretical backgrounds of the philosophical position of Surrealism lie in the principle of dialectic, and of surrealist activity in psychoanalytic method. By an indiscriminate confusion of metaphysics, a dubious logical method, and a radical psychological position, Surrealism becomes a structure of serious and homicidal nonsense creating for itself a position of artificial respectability.

The principle of dialectic is applied to synthesizing the opposition between the real state and the dream state; it is a search for the surreality in which the two are joined. But this is not the dialectic of Hegel. Reality and rationality do not logically generate their antithesis. There is no necessary movement from a given thesis to its opposite, and given both of them there seems no reason for supposing that there is possible any synthesis between them. The synthesis is one in name only, it is the giving of a new label for the antithesis of reality and rationality. Though in surreality the rational and the irrational, the mental and the material are identified, all supposedly *aufgehoben* by the magic of a name, all that we can find there are the irrational, the marvelous, the illogical, the unreal. Though the whole theoretical polemic of Surrealism debunks the intelligence and discursive reason, it fails to distinguish on the other hand between surreality and the irrational. If the surreal were a true dialectical synthesis it would not be coextensive with the antithesis from which it proceeded. "Liquidating" the rational is not "dialectizing." Furthermore, surreality is always assumed to be something which inheres in mental life and consequently cannot be the bridge between the mental and the actual worlds. The surrealist activity by which one tries to reach the surreal is always a psychical probing.

An examination of surrealist activity would seem to be the best approach to offer us some enlightenment as to the nature of surreality. Here the theoretical background is entirely in psychological theory, for the activities are altogether psychical. These activities may eventuate in material objects, pictures, poems, etc., but the existence of these as material objects is always disregarded by the surrealists. They are reinterpreted as signs of the mental. In 1924 M. Breton had admitted his interest in Freudian psychology, and Surrealism is indebted to the influence of the Viennese physician for its fundamental viewpoint, that the center of mental life is the surreal, which is identical with the unconscious of the psychoanalysts and which includes

the conscious. The method of psychic automatism for the exploration of the psychic life is common to both theories. Surrealist freedom in artistic expression is the removal of the censorship which prevents unconscious thoughts from rising into consciousness. Both play variations on the theme that ordinary life in its errors and dreams is not so very different except in degree from the symptoms that one meets in psychosis and neurosis.[17] The general correlation between these symptoms in civilized life and in pagan and primitive practices might conceivably suggest the surrealist's supposition that the unconscious surreal is a center common to all men.[18] This theory of the surreal as the superindividual, however, is more closely akin to that of the "collective unconscious" put forth by C. G. Jung and the Zurich school of psychoanalysis, who maintain that the important characteristic of the unconscious is that it contains the heritage of all races.[19] The surrealist distinction between rational thought and irrational surrealist activity is found exactly in Dr. Jung's distinction between "directed thinking" and "phantasy thinking," as well as the theory of the dependence of the rational upon an irrational foundation.[20]

Now when the surrealist says that unless one can see the tomato as a balloon he is a cretin, or that one's paranoiac capacity accounts for the number of multiple images he may find in a picture, he has not removed the balloon or the image from the private world of the spectator, and he has just as much on the other hand left the tomato and the picture as public property. The tomato has become a balloon for the individual who sees it as such, and that individual is not concerned whether the object is a tomato or a balloon to anyone else. It is a balloon in his imagination. The rational world is denied *as far as he is concerned* and his own mental constructions are put in its place. The surrealist artist may conceive of his tomato as a balloon; a spectator may conceive the same tomato as something very different. Each is within his own imaginative world and the two are independent of each other. If the unconscious were the source of what is common to man, and if surrealist activity explores that unconscious, it is difficult to understand how so individual an activity as that by which a tomato becomes a balloon to one who looks at it, can open up to him the overindividual depth of his nature. If the spectator

[17] Cf. S. Freud, *Psychopathology in Everyday Life,* and A. Breton, "Surrealism and Madness", *This Quarter,* Sept., 1932.

[18] Cf. S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo.*

[19] C. G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious,* tr. B. Hinkle, pp. 200-201.

[20] *Ibid.,* pp. 13-37.

ever feels any kinship with others before a work of art it is insofar as he can rationally interpret that work.

Non-logical phantasy thinking is another name for the process we usually attribute to the imagination, and for the surrealist the important part of this thinking is that undetermined amount which is unconscious, that is, irrational, for it is here one meets the psychic fictions to which discursive reason never brings us. Truly Surrealism is the "prehensile tail" of Romanticism.

But most important of all about Surrealism is the fact that it rejects all the old values and norms of aesthetics and morals. Its truth, beauty, and goodness have the qualities of utter confusion, unmotivated action, and disjunct relationships. The surrealist takes Nietzsche's revaluation of values as his practical program and makes his own values by his irrational activity. Hence surrealist art, stripped of much of the theoretical claptrap which it calls upon to support itself becomes nothing more than an art of nonsense.

The aesthetician and the art critic, to say nothing of the moralist and the philosopher, are presented with a problem by this strange and heterogeneous theory which comes into their field with its destructive doctrines and perplexing works of art. They may scoff at it and deny its entrance into their world, turning it over to the psychiatrist as a case of mental abnormality. Or they may accept its artistic activity, its works of art, and its theory as phenomena to be absorbed within a more general aesthetic. It seems that the important place which Surrealism occupies in the world today and the influence which it has had on traditional forms of art and on many artists who do not accept its principles, justify its consideration at least as a special case within a general theory of aesthetic and philosophy of art. It is the business of the aesthetician to systematize or explain as far as he can the material which is presented to him by artistic activity and not to prejudge this material on principles drawn up *a priori* or in the light of selected material. Wild data must be admitted in aesthetics as much as in epistemology. If it does nothing else for the aesthetician, surrealism should make him look to the grounds of his science.

Freedom in Art

JOHN R. TUTTLE

IMPLICIT in most contemporary movements in art are the notions of self-expression and freedom. While the word freedom has been used in many senses, we may distinguish very roughly, in the field of art, between two meanings of the term — one narrower, one broader. Let us start with the narrower conception.

In the first place, this conception is subjective in character. The individual artist is at liberty to do anything or express anything that happens to come into his head. A kind of finality seems to attach to the spontaneous promptings of the inner consciousness. One is not permitted to object that such and such an idea does not seem worth expressing. It is held to be a conclusive answer to say, "This painting (or statue or musical composition) expresses what I feel and that is an end of the matter."

This narrower view of freedom is frequently, though by no means invariably, accompanied by a definite espousal of irrationalism. Reason is felt to imply order and discipline. The free soul will not try to be consistent. Consistency is for slavish, traditional spirits. Probably the Dada movement represented the extreme of this tendency, although in the case of Surrealism conscious irrationalism is hardly less in evidence. One of the books on Surrealism on my shelves illustrates this fact in a rather amusing way. The single word "Surrealism" on the cover is printed in eight different styles of type of varying sizes. The first pages of the book are printed on white paper; then there is an arbitrary change to green, then to pink, then back to green, then to yellow, and so on throughout the whole book. The general format of the whole book is as preversely irrational as is this choice bit of Surrealistic prose which is quoted in all seriousness on p. 95 of the work in question: "A giraffe is gorging himself on your lace garters a Parisian doll is washing herself in my tall glass of gin fizz while I insist on their electrocution on the grounds of indecency."[1]

[1] Julien Levy, *Surrealism,* The Black Sun Press, 1936. The lack of punctuation is one more manifestation of deliberate irrationalism.

Let us ask the question as to the status of imagination in this subjective view of freedom. An artist representing this view turns within the mind to subjective fancy—often to the distorted, the macabre, the freakish. One is reminded of Berkeley's phrase, "irregular fancy, the unnatural parent of monsters."[2] The dream state or the trance or almost any pathological state is held to be more productive of artistic inspiration than is any clearly conscious, rational guidance of the creative process. In the book, *Art of Our Time,* the following comment appears under the reproduction of a picture by André Masson, entitled "Battle of Fishes": "Masson . . . uses a Surrealist technique, letting his hand move freely like that of a man absentmindedly scribbling "doodles'; but Masson is an artist, so that the result is a work of art as well as material for psychoanalysis."[3] Whether this is the best method of generating significant or enduring works of art will be discussed at a later point in this paper.

Naturally, whatever is traditional or historical will have very little meaning for those who adopt this subjective conception of freedom and of self-expression. Let each artist express his inner nature to his heart's content and not be bound or hampered by traditional ideas, traditional subjects, traditional forms, even traditional media.[4]

This narrower idea of freedom may be considered in relation to the concept of discipline. If the important thing in art is self-expression and if one impulse is as much worth expressing as any other, the necessity of long-continued training and self-discipline would seem to fade away. It may be freely granted that the ablest representatives of radical modern tendencies in art have subjected themselves to much self-discipline, but the general implications of the doctrine of subjective freedom and of spontaneous self-expression are, on the whole, opposed to discipline rather than favorable to it.

A typical manifestation of the conception of free individual expression is primitivism. In revolting from academicism, tradition, and the arduous discipline imposed by the past, it is only natural that artists turn to the spontaneous art of the child, the work of simple, untaught artists of the present or of earlier periods, and the art of so-called archaic periods, also that of primi-

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[2] *The New Alciphron,* 1932. Quoted in E. F. Carritt, *Philosophies of Beauty,* Oxford University Press, 1931, p. 78.

[3] Museum of Modern Art, 1939. See Illustration No. 194.

[4] Witness "collages," "constructions," and the like.

tive men, both prehistoric and contemporary.[5] Here, it is felt, art shines forth more purely, without the encrustations of individual and racial training and without the damaging influence which the mind is considered to exert on the free, untrammeled expression of artistic impulses.

It is probably true that comparatively few artists illustrate in their work all of the points which have been made in our brief sketch of the implications of the narrower conception of free self-expression. Again, it does not fall within the plan of this paper to consider the many special arguments which have been, or which might be, employed to justify the views and practices which have been touched upon in the foregoing portion of this discussion. Our purpose has been, rather, to indicate the general drift of the doctrine of free individual self-expression and to throw into relief various implications of this doctrine which afford a contrast to the broader conception to which we now pass.

In connection with the whole notion of self-expression it is pertinent to raise the question, What kind of a self are you going to express? Is there not a difference, radical in kind, between the self of a Dante, a Shakespeare, or a Goethe, and that, of say, the "Sweet Singer of Michigan," quoted by Robert Morris Ogden?[6] The idea that there is a sacred inner self, always ready to yield up something significant or valuable for expression in art is a fiction, a piece of ungrounded mysticism. We shall not, at this point, go into the whole complex matter of genius. Let it be freely granted that certain human beings are born with superior native gifts or potentialities of an artistic character. What we wish to assert is that an individual, whether or not in the possession of superior native endowment, achieves a self of creative artistic power only through work, through training, through breadth and richness of experience, as well as through the digestion and assimilation of that experience, and

[5] Most of these aspects of primitivism are abundantly illustrated in the book, *Art of Our Time,* to which reference has been made above.

[6] *The Psychology of Art,* Scribner's, 1938, p. 15. Ogden says: "The 'Sweet Singer of Michigan' was no doubt sincere when she wrote of Byron in the following strain:

> The character of Lord Byron
> Was of a low degree,
> Caused by his reckless conduct
> And bad company.
> He sprung from an ancient house
> Noble but poor in deed.
> His career on earth was marred
> By his own misdeeds.'

through cultivating an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the surrounding world of nature and man. We get the living water from the well that has been nourished by the springs, rather than from the well that has not been fed. It is not, then, the raw, unformed self, but the expanded, the transformed—one might almost say, the universalized—self that is of the greater significance in art. In the event that the individual artist has achieved the broader, more inclusive, more nearly universal self, we need have no quarrel with the doctrine of self-expression in art. We have now to do, not with the whimsies and vagaries of the narrowly individual mind, but with a broadened and deepened vision which, like the old Chinese landscape painting, mirrors the universe. From the point of view of this broadened conception of the self, freedom does not consist in giving utterance to every idea or impulse that comes to mind, but rather in being in possession of such accumulated resources that one can draw upon them to produce works of art which reflect the richness of these resources. The synthetic, creative mind of a Dante brings into the compass of his art the ancient classics, the Bible and the Fathers, the ancient and medieval philosophy, the science of the classical and medieval periods, the available geography and history, and other elements as well. Milton and Shakespeare are similarly wide-ranging, similarly comprehensive, equally broadly based in their imaginative creations. Are not these the true exemplars of the meaning of artistic freedom as the ability to combine, in new and significant ways, a host of elements drawn from the rich stores of the cultural heritage of man?

Let us turn to the relation between freedom and technique. Let us consider the following contrast. On the one hand, think of a Toscanini, with his profound knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of each instrument in the symphony orchestra, a mastery of intricate scores so assured that it is no longer necessary to have the printed pages before the eyes, and a penetrating insight into the meaning[7] of the musical composition as a totality as well as of the nuances demanded in a truly sympathetic performance. On the other hand, let us take the case of some undistinguished saxophone or trombone player in a "swing band" who plays "ad lib" so far as possible. Which of the two is the more free? In music or any other art, is the free person the one who sidesteps the traditional techniques peculiar to his craft? Is he not, rather, the person who has incorporated into himself, through long training and sensitive as-

[7] It is of course the genuinely *musical* meaning to which reference is made. See Max Schoen, *Art and Beauty,* The Macmillan Company, 1932, pp. 167-168, especially the passages quoted from Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music.*

similation, whatever is best in traditional techniques, so that he is an assured master of the expressive resources of that particular art?

As for the question of irrationalism in art, there are so many recent and contemporary movements which exhibit this tendency that it becomes wholly impossible, in a brief paper like the present, to deal with the problem systematically. Unquestionably, there is such a thing as over-intellectualism in art. Whole periods of art history come to mind as illustrations of the fact. And yet, does the best answer to over-intellectualism lie in going to the other extreme and in repudiating, wholly or almost wholly, the rational and responsible control exercised by the intellect? To put our cerebrum for the time being in the checkroom, as one would check a hat, and to let the "subconscious" or "unconscious" dictate our artistic expression, is not to become free but to abandon oneself to mechanical determinism. Here, in very truth, a president gives way to a dictator. It seems to some of us that a higher and more significant freedom is achieved in and through such beautifully well ordered and harmonious structures as the Parthenon or the Taj Mahal than in Marcel Duchamp's "The King and Queen crossed rapidly by Nudes,"[8] Max Ernst's "Two Children menaced by a Nightingale,"[9] or Meret Oppenheim's "Cup, Saucer, and Spoon of Fur."[10]

Let us consider briefly the bearing of the broader conception of freedom on the play of imagination in art. Unquestionably, imagination occupies a central place in art.[11] The almost universal recognition of this fact is no doubt the chief reason why imitative naturalism, with its confinement of art to the perceptual level and its consequent tendency to exclude the factor of imagination, meets with so little encouragement in contemporary theory and practice. Yet there are two principal paths which we may follow in getting away from a meticulously imitative art. One is to take refuge in the inner subjective consciousness. The nature of this path has already been briefly indicated. The other is, not to escape from the real, but to re-combine its elements and to transmute it in terms of personal vision. Medieval artists and craftsmen, in building and embellishing a cathedral, employed imagination in a peculiarly rich manner, but they used this play of imagination in the service of the tra-

[8] Herbert Read *et al, Surrealism,* Harcourt, Brace, and Company, n.d., Illustration No. 27.

[9] *Ibid.,* Illustration No. 30.

[10] *Ibid.,* Illustration No. 69.

[11] See, for example, DeWitt H. Parker, *The Analysis of Art,* Yale University Press, 1926.

ditional religion of a whole people. The imagination of a William Blake produced drawings the symbolism of which is intelligible to those who share his spiritual heritage. To many of us, such drawings are more artistically satisfying than the works of Picasso, Braque, or Dali where the imagination is subjective in the narrowly personal sense. In the literary arts, the great contributors to our tradition—Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton, Goethe, Shakespeare, to cite only a few—utilized imagination to reveal a deeper and broader meaning in the common world of mankind. Imagination, in the hands of a great painter, sculptor, or poet, serves to enrich our experience and to give additional clarity to the meaning of the world of nature and of human life. Imaginative freedom, then, does not necessarily imply the construction of an inner world, the nature of which is almost incommunicable, but may just as well imply the intensification of the values implicit in the world of nature and of human experience. It would seem that the latter procedure results in utilizing the broader, rather than the narrower, possibilities of imagination.

It is worth noting, by the way, that, when we view exhibitions of modern art of a radical type, where each artist has supposedly drawn upon his own inner resources of imagination, and where one might expect *a priori* the most refreshing diversity, we sometimes have, on the contrary, an impression of sameness or monotony, whereas in the presence of the work of an authentic originator who has preserved rapport between his vision and the broad world of human experience, we do not fail to receive an impression of the originality of his insight.

What is the relation of the broader conception of freedom to the problem of the place of, and the value of, tradition in art? The foregoing discussion has already indicated the general lines of an answer. The sympathetic student of comparative art and of the history of art gradually acquires a conviction—too deeply and broadly based to be a mere individual whim or prejudice—that the rich accumulated tradition is of vastly more significance than is the individual contribution of any one person. The view that artistic freedom consists in cutting loose from this rich tradition is equivalent to acting as though art had no history, or as though its history were unreservedly bad and dangerous. On this view, each movement which rejects tradition might well expect that it, itself, is doomed to fall presently into the limbo of discarded tradition—unless it holds to the naive belief that, of all possible forms of art, it alone embodies that which is true and permanent.

It is an interesting fact that certain artists, after denying the value of tradition, have become almost slavish imitators of some artist or school. Tradition

is shown out of the front door only to slip in again by the rear entrance. Would it not be better to recognize, from the beginning, the value of the traditional side of art and to exhibit originality, not in the denial of the past, but in the sensitive, intelligent, discriminating appropriation of its priceless resources toward the creation of works which add something to, while not repudiating, the achievements of the past?

To be free in art does not mean to be free from tradition, but to be free in the use of the vast resources yielded by tradition. A wood carver does not become freer by throwing away his tools. He exhibits his freedom in his intelligent, selective, appreciative, resourceful use of them. The wisest attitude of the artist toward tradition would thus seem to be, not to repudiate it, and not by any means to become a slave to it, but to understand it—intellectually, imaginatively, emotionally—and to utilize it to the full in adding his bit to what the past has already contributed.

The revolt against discipline on the part of some contemporary artists was touched upon earlier in this discussion. What is the relation of freedom to discipline? Our remarks on the relation of freedom to technique suggest an answer. To revert to the example of Maestro Toscanini, is not his mastery of the resources of the musical art, acquired through the most exacting self-discipline, a pre-condition of the superior degree of freedom which he possesses? Was it not Dante's study of such masters as Guido Guinicelli and his tireless devotion to the problems of poetic craftsmanship manifested in the *Vita Nuova,* the *Canzonieri,* and the *Convivio,* which rendered possible the writing of that timeless masterpiece, the *Divina Commedia?* It is not necessary to multiply illustrations. The only freedom that is really worth having, in the field of artistic creation, is an achievement rather than a free gift, an achievement won only at the cost of an arduous and long-continued discipline. Freedom, then, does not consist in the avoidance of discipline, but in acquiring, in and through discipline, a competent and assured mastery of the wealth of resources of the art in question.

Let us revert to the question of primitivism, the manifestations of which seem to so many to be a particularly good illustration of freedom in art. Something may surely be gained by the modern artist from African Negro sculpture and from many other types of primitive expression. Yet no modern artist becomes free through adopting the methods and conceptions of the primitive artist. Is not the larger freedom manifested, rather, in using the wider resources of the artistic heritage of the race? Moreover, primitivism

really turns out to be a special form of traditionalism, although the emphasis is, in this case, solely upon the earlier stage of a tradition.

Before summarizing our results, it may be helpful to adapt the familiar Hegelian use of the terms "abstract" and "concrete" to the present problem.[12] The subjective view of the self is thoroughly abstract in that it considers the self to be intelligible as a separate unit existing along with other self-contained, almost atomically conceived, units. A more concrete conception of the self recognizes that, for civilized and cultured humanity, the very idea of a sharply individual self can be obtained only by a violently artificial effort of abstraction. The self of the civilized or cultivated man is a social self, given form and definition by the social institutions in which he participates and in which his distinctively social nature is expressed. The very process of liberal education in the individual is one in which man passes from a particular self to a broadly social self, summing up in his own spirit the heritage of the past and the best contributions of his contemporaries.

Just as the subjective conception of the self is abstract, so also is the narrower conception of freedom which was discussed earlier in this paper. Such freedom is irresponsible, reflecting, not an appreciation of the broader nature of the world and of society, but the whims and caprices of the inner self.

The more concrete notion of the self recognizes some responsibility to the system of truth implicit in the natural world and in the historical development which has generated our institutions and which has produced the art of the past. This conception of a self which has attained, relatively speaking, to a plane of universality, is not consonant with the repudiation of rationality. Rather, reason is recognized as the very principle of system and order immanent in the world of nature and man and manifested in the progressive formulations of philosophy, the sciences, and human culture generally. For this broader view, imagination in art is no escape into the private inner world of

[12] The reader who happens not to be familiar with philosophical literature may be referred to a clear and succinct statement in James Edwin Creighton's *An Introductory Logic,* The Macmillan Company, 1898 (4th ed., 1920), pp. 53-55. It may be helpful to quote the most essential part of the passage: "Again, the word 'abstract' is applied to any object which is treated apart from the whole to which it belongs. . . . In this sense of the word . . . 'abstract' applies to what is taken out of its proper setting, broken off, and considered apart from the things to which it is organically related. 'Concrete,' on the other hand, means what is whole and complete, a system of things which mutually support and explain one another."

the capricious, but rather the capacity to range, sympathetically and penetratingly over the world of nature and the realm of human experience, thereby enriching the vision of the artist and enlarging his possibilities of expression. Again, this more concrete conception of the self recognizes that the artist cannot cut himself off from tradition, for the past has entered into his very flesh and blood. In so far as he is not a mere animal but a human being, he *is* tradition.[13] And finally, the broader view of the self recognizes the inevitability and the indispensability of the discipline in and through which the essence of the tradition is communicated to the artist.

Freedom, then, does not find its broadest meaning in art as implying merely subjective impulse, irrationality, an introverted and esoteric imagination, the repudiation of tradition and discipline, or a recourse to primitivism. It implies, on the contrary, a perception of the potential universality of the human spirit; a responsibility to artistic truth; a use of the whole mind—including intelligence, imagination, emotion, and more—in the service of artistic creation; an imaginative activity which is not turned primarily inward, but which looks out on the broad world of nature and humanity; a recognition that tradition can no more be denied than can the parents from whom one has sprung or the ground on which one stands; and a realization that training and discipline are indispensable to genuinely significant creation in art.

[13] We have stated the point rather too baldly, for the sake of emphasis. There is, of course, something unique about each artist. This uniqueness, however, does not show itself best in the repudiation of tradition.

Music and its Audiences Two Hundred Years Ago

CHARLES W. HUGHES

THOSE who write of the response of the human organism to music are inclined to draw their materials from introspection or from a study of the reactions of a group of contemporary subjects. The historical record has been little studied from this point of view, and naturally so, since most musical records concern themselves with matters of more immediate practical interest than the question of how people listen to music. Nevertheless such writers as Romain Rolland and Michel Brenet have written shrewd and penetrating essays which throw much light on the focal point of the whole elaborate apparatus of music making, the moment of impact when organized musical sounds meet the receptive sensibility of the listener.[1]

Needless to say the historical record must be studied with the utmost caution. These are witnesses whose testimony cannot be cross-examined, whose words, like those of our own contemporaries, are subject to a thousand distorting influences. But the glimpses they afford throw such a vivid and revealing light on the musical sensitivity of a whole period that the record, fragmentary and distorted though it may be, is well worth consulting.

In turning to Italy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the central fact that is revealed is the intense, almost overpowering response to music, a response so complete as to seem abnormal, even monstrous when we compare it to the decorously restrained response of the average concert-goer of the present day who smiles and strikes one palm gently against the other.

A priest of Genoa wrote of the singer Adriana Basile, "While she leaves us with our bodies on earth she wafts us to heaven with our sense of hearing." We are likely to dismiss the phrase as a piece of florid rhetoric and to assume that the writer was more interested in turning a phrase than in producing an accurate record. Less versimilitude and even greater indulgence in rhetoric

[1] See for example Rolland, *Musical Tour Through the Land of the Past* and Brenet (pseudonym for Marie Bobillier), *Histoire du Concert en France.*

appear in the words of Ridolphi who wrote of another singer, Baldassare Ferri, that "he had the spheres for his rivals and reduced himself to ecstasy and idleness."

If we turn, however, to the testimony of a few of the many foreigners who visited Italy, our impression of the extravagance of the emotions which music aroused in contemporary listeners is increased rather than diminished. The French Abbé Morellet wrote, "The people were swooning. One heard groans of: O benedetto, o che gusto, piacer di morir!" An Englishman who visited Italy somewhat more than twenty years later wrote, "The public remained with folded hands and eyes half closed, holding its breath: A young girl began to cry out from the middle of the parterra: O Dio! dove sono? Il piacere mi fa morire." Both of these visitors record explicitly traits which will reappear in our study,—the identification of musical experience with fainting or even with death, the involuntary exclamation of pleasure, the intense absorption in the one faculty of hearing. So far our witnesses have dealt with operatic singing. Similar effects were recorded of church music which indeed, hardly differed from the music of the opera house at this period. We read that the performance of the great singer Vittori in the choir of Urban VIII so moved the congregation that auditors were compelled to loosen their clothes to keep from fainting. Those who could not gain entrance stood outside, hoping that they might at least hear some notes of the performance.

Finally we summon our most professional witness, the music historian Burney, who wrote, "When the Italians admire a thing they seem on the point of dying of a pleasure too great for their senses." Here again is the same emphasis, the same traits observed and set down with the matter of factness of a professional critic.

The performer is the focal point of this strange world of music, and the most admired performers are the skilled singers, the fabulous virtuosi of that day. It was the interpreter and her power to sway and move an audience that was applauded. The worship of these virtuosi did not end with the applause of the audience, however. The satirist Adinari waxes indignant over the extravagance of the tribute rendered these singers. "Towns raise pompous trophies and fill the streets with flowers. A chain is drawn across the street so that no coach may disturb her sleep. Great ladies caress and kiss her." Yet even Adinari ends with a passage that seems less criticism than another contribution to the hymn of praise. "She makes her quivering notes vibrate, now joyous, now sad, and to her sweet voice she weds looks and gestures no

less sweet, so that her whole body seems alive with music and her very hair, her cheeks, and her bosom seem to be singing like her lips."[2]

Although it was the singer who enthralled the audience, the music of the period also bears the stamp of that smoldering and sinister passion which appears again and again in the music written for these empresses of song, in the dramatic recitative, in the arias, suave and lyric, glittering with fiorituri, or passionate and melancholy, portray the woes of Dido deserted by Aeneas, of Ariadne abandoned by Theseus. It was the lament, music of deprivation and anguish, which best typified the expressive power of this music. Whoever has heard and felt the power of Monteverdi's "Lasciatemi morire" realizes the power of a composer who could conceive a melody so sombrely alive and so tragic in its emotion. It was a moment of inspiration which crystallized into a formula, a type from which later composers were nevertheless able to develop moving scenes.

A measure of the difference betwen French and Italian music is the shock to which French ears were subjected when Italian music was introduced into France. The shock was long and painful, and a prolonged period of adjustment and of controversy, often of an extremely acrimonious sort, accompanied the acclimatization of Italian music.

Michel de Marolles, for example, writes (1657), "French music is indeed the equal of Italian music although it is not so noisy and though it has far more sweetness; but it seems that those are not qualities which make it worse." Similarly we find Rebel's "French sweetness" contrasted with the "frightful and monstrous leaps" of the Italians. Thus it is easy to see that precisely the qualities of dramatic fire and of passionate musical speech, the characteristic qualities of Italian music, were repugnant to French taste. They seemed noisy, extravagant, lacking in balance and in good taste.

The French ideal was complex, as was the Italian, but its function was quite different. Nevertheless, it shared with Italian music the power of completely enthralling its listeners if we may credit the quaint account of René Francois, so vivid in its study of the attitudes and physiognomy of the attentive listener.

"He (the lute player) puts everyone in a transport and charms them with a gay melancholy, so that one lets his chin drop on his chest, another on his hand, one stretches out lazily at full length as if pulled by the ear, another has his eyes wide open or his mouth open as if his spirit were nailed

[2] Adinari, *Contre le donne.*

to the strings. You would say that all are without consciousness save the sense of hearing, as if the spirit had abandoned all the other senses to retire to the tips of the ears to enjoy more at its ease this powerful harmony: But if, changing his style, he rouses his strings, he instantly calls back to life all the audience and, restoring to their bodies their spirits and faculties, reanimates them and thus does what he wills with men."[3]

The sudden transformation of the audience at a change in the mood of music suggests the marvels so often told of the Greek musicians. The description of the attentive audience of the lutenist is, however, obviously drawn from nature, and is at once vividly descriptive and highly amusing. Here again the emphasis is on the complete absorption of the audience in the sound of the lute. Nevertheless, though French ears shared this intense delight in music and the ability to lose themselves in it with the Italians, there were great differences in the music which moved them. These differences reflected the demands of French society on the musician. To appreciate these differences we shall again call up contemporary witnesses. French music of this period was of course of various kinds and was calculated to serve various purposes. This was also true of Italian music, but the concentration of interest on opera (and on its satellite forms, the aria and the cantata) was so intense that most contemporary accounts deal with them. In France we have the delightful chamber music for harpsichord of Chambonnières, of Couperin, of Rameau; the little songs which enlivened the leisure hours of the ladies and gentlemen of the court, drinking songs, pastorals, dance songs, and more serious airs. With Lully and with his predecessors the musical tragedy, which was the musical counterpart of the spoken drama of Corneille and Racine, appeared more spectacular (and sometimes less dramatic) by the incorporation of elements from the ballet de cour.

One of the abiding characteristics of French instrumental music is a certain reluctance to accept absolute instrumental music. "Sonate que veux tu de moi?" is far from being merely a witty quip at the expense of the serious composer. It represents a point of view which has remained relatively constant from Couperin to Ravel. Only two French symphonies have obtained worldwide success, the César Franck Symphony in D Minor[4] and the Symphony in C Minor of Camille Saint-Saens. The list of symphonic poems and of operas is long indeed. The same preference for poetic delineation in music

[3] René François, *Essai des Merveilles de Nature,* Rouen, 1621.

[4] This symphony is after all Franco-Belgian.

appears in the picturesque titles given to pieces for the harpsichord: "The Little Windmills," "The Amorous Nightingale," etc. Were they picturesque adornments to add external attractiveness to the composer's work, or was it the composer's intention actually to convey the images suggested by the title? The present bias toward absolute music would suggest the former solution, the available contemporary evidence the latter. In judging the aptness of a prospective pupil the clavinists of the period laid much stress on the manner in which he responded to the expressive intentions of the music. Saint Lambert is speaking to this point when he says, "They (the teachers) see whether, when they (the prospective pupils) hear fine music, they enter into all the moods (mouvements) which it attempts to inspire, whether they are moved by the tender passages, and rouse themselves at the gay passages." The ability to apply the suitable and fitting title to a composition was considered a proof of musical understanding. Michel Brenet gives an interesting example. When the violinist, Westhoff, played a solo before Louis XIV, that monarch gave a proof of his musical understanding by immediately christening it "La Guerre."

The little songs of the period were designed as a pleasant social recreation. But where the Italian fiercely embraced the emotions roused by the singer and claimed them as his own, the French demanded restraint, moderation, elegance. Each emotion must be kept within the limits of what was pleasurable. If one notes the qualities for which the Italian Doni praises French singers, one has a clear measure of the difference between the ideals of the countries.

"Where do they sing with so much charm and delicacy, and where does one hear every day so many new and agreeable songs even in the mouths of those who, without any artifice or study, make apparent both the beauty of their voices and the cultivation of their spirits: to a point where it seems that in other countries musicians are made only by study but that in France they become so by nature."

It is charm and delicacy which are praised, not vivid and passionate expression. Naturally the audience reacts in a more restrained fashion than these Italians who faint and call out in ecstasy. The French are titivated and pleasantly stirred. Thus Françion in the "Berger extravagant," by Sorel, "Then musicians came who sang many new airs, joining the sound of their lutes and their viols to that of the voices. 'Ah,' said Françion, resting his head against Laurette's breast, 'next to the sight of a beautiful woman there is no pleasure which enchants me like music. My heart bounds with each accent, I am no

longer master of myself, my heart trembles delightfully with the trills of the voice.' "

La Pouplinière, a wealthy music lover of the period of Rameau, in a pregnant comparison showed both his love for music and that touch of grossness which was as characteristic of one side of the period as were the affected and dainty ardors of the précieuses of another. He had been travelling without being able to hear a note of music. Finally he reached a city and was able to hear several sonatas. They roused and comforted his spirits, said he, as a good consommé satisfies and comforts the stomach.

The desire to please, the will to charm had its appropriate expression in the music of the period, witty, dainty, elegant. With the great composers of the period the imposed limits do not prevent them from writing music which conforms to the narrow limits of form and the canons of good taste and moderation but at the same time possesses true grandeur of line. This is the exception. Most of the chamber music of the time provokes a pleased half smile. It charms as was its intention. With the weaker composers the desire to please led to an avoidance of the unusual which sometimes resulted in a deplorable weakness and monotony of style. Nowhere, I think, is this so amusingly confessed as in some prefatory remarks by Perrin. "I have always chosen my subjects from the tender passions and I have banished all serious reasoning and the darker passions—I have limited myself to the marvellous, to the amorous and the spirited—."

In the music of Lully's operas, however, the music of gallantry had to enlarge its scope to include the "darker passions." Yet the performance of a French opera had the dignity of a state function. The heroine suffered, but in the grand manner, much as the queen of France might be expected to behave in a similar situation. In spite of the pathos, the grandeur, and the truly moving quality of the best pages of Lully, the cold formalism of court etiquette and the ceremonial proprieties, which sometimes penetrate to the wrong side of the footlights, dull the sharp edge of tragedy and prevent the keen sense of the comic, the buffo spirit which is so evident in Lully's earlier work, from making its appearance.

In place of the raptures of the Italian audience interrupted by periods of noisy conversation, we find the musical abbés and the more studious music lovers conning their libretti by the light of the little wax tapers. The melodies of Lully diffused themselves, were played on every conceivable instrument, were sung not only with their original texts but to endless parodies and adaptations. But they aroused rapture less than admiration. His serious airs

stirred but did not overwhelm the auditors. This was due in part to the character of the music, perhaps in even greater measure to the superior expressive magic of the Italian virtuoso.

The same pompous ceremonial air characterized French church music of this period. La Fontaine emphasizes in a truly amusing fashion the pomp (and the noise) of the new concerted motets of Lalande for voices and orchestra which praised the glory and pomp of the French court quite as much as the glory of God.

> "Great in everything, he (Louis XIV) wishes to express
> everything with grandeur
> War is his joy and his strongest passion
> His pleasures all have a warlike aspect
> His concerts of instruments have the noise of thunder
> And his vocal concerts are like the turmoil
> That the cries of soldiers make on the day of battle."

It is Mersenne, however, who has written the sentence which best sums up the French attitude towards music. "One must first assume that music, and as a result, that melodies are especially and chiefly composed to charm the mind and the ear, and to help us to pass our lives with a little pleasure among the misfortunes which one encounters. . . . I would not deny that certain skillfully composed airs, well adjusted to the text, move one to pity, to compassion, to regret, and to the other passions, but only that this is not their chief end, but rather to rejoice or even to fill a cultivated audience with admiration."

We are not to suppose that Italian and French ears were different, but rather that they were molded to environments which were still sufficiently isolated to present marked differences. These were differences which were to diminish as the invading army of Italian singers, composers and librettists gradually extended their domination to England and over all of Europe. Composers in Italy as in France developed in a musical climate which moulded them and which limited and directed their development. The dukes and the princes of Italy, passionately devoted to singularly childish and inordinately expensive display in music as in all other forms of exterior pomp, passionate, unrestrained and uncontrolled themselves responded freely to the fiery ardors of their singers. Partly because music was ardently cultivated in so many centers, partly because it would appear that the crumbs from these musical banquets were more freely scattered to the crowd in Italy than in France, the

whole nation acquired a natural disposition and a taste for music which was remarked by Burney as well as by many other travellers.

In France, on the other hand, we have a highly centralized musical bureaucracy. Never, perhaps, has one man so minutely and so completely regulated and controlled the musical life of a period as did Louis XIV. Musicians expressed not their own emotions but those of the king. His approval meant success, loss of his favor closed every door to advancement. Thus it was inevitable that the twin moods of elegant diversion and of pomp and ceremony should dominate in the music of the French court.

The Meaning of Mondrian

CHARMION WIEGAND

THE presence of Mondrian in America closes an epoch in European art. "The solution of Mondrian is the last accomplishment in the development of Western painting," the Constructivist painter, Lissitzky prophetically declared long ago. Today over seventy, Mondrian is considered by many critics to be the greatest living master of abstract art, and the one painter who has most completely fulfilled the Cubist revolution begun in France in the first decade of our century.

While it is doubtful if all the European art expressions recently transplanted to our shores can survive when confronted by the robust virility of America, the art of Mondrian offers a new beginning. Between his work and the environment of our great cities there exists an unconscious but spontaneous affinity. Thus, long before his coming, his influence was felt, for the most part anonymously, in our modern architecture, decoration, typography, industrial and applied design. Because his work marks the end of traditional painting as we know it, and at the same time, creates the elements for a new art more consonant with modern life, it is so important for the fuure of art in the United States and for the reconstruction that must of necessity follow this war.

At first sight, Mondrian's rectilinear compositions appear like severe designs adaptable to architecture or decoration, but completely outside of the tradition of painting. But to look at them merely as design is to recognize only one of their aspects and the most external one. For in intensity of feeling and in completely unified plastic expression, they belong to painting as much as any art of the past. Dynamic and overpowering in their energy, their precision and sensibility has been conditioned by the fertile scientific inventions of modern life, which has created new needs and new sensibilities in man. Moreover, on closer inspection, they reveal a sensuousness as rich as the sensuousness in the painting of natural forms. Devoid of any biological, organic or literary connotations, their passionate living is expressed solely through pure plastic means. This is their mystery.

Although Mondrian has broken with the past more than any other con-

temporary painter, he actually continues its true meaning. Today, for example, we no longer look at a canvas by Cezanne as his contemporaries did. They saw in it merely an aberration, while to us, it appears now as a logical step in development and an integral part of the great tradition. In the same way, Mondrian's work may eventually become accepted as the most logical solution for painting after Cubism.

In Europe, shortly before the first World War, there arose out of Cubism, three abstract movements in art, headed respectively by Malevich in Russia, Kandinsky in Germany, and Mondrian in Holland. Abstract art, born of this basic mutation in the tradition of Western painting, dehumanized and destroyed the image in its natural appearance, and thereby liberated painting from the necessity of reproducing the *visual* appearance of the world. By carrying painting off the canvas into life, it also definitively transformed our plastic environment.

Malevich, first of the pioneers, was too far ahead of the primitive traditions from whence he derived, to attain complete fruition in his work, which was followed by a complete reaction to academic formulas in the U.S.S.R., where unknown and forgotten he died in 1935. Kandinsky, another Russian credited with making the first pure abstract painting, grafted the color discoveries of the Fauves on to the German tradition, which has always been too broken and diffused to offer a real continuity of development. He was never able to revive his first spontaneous creative advances after he moved to Paris, where he was still living at the age of seventy-five when Hitler overran France. It was Mondrian's fortune to be sustained by two of the richest plastic traditions in Europe, that of Holland and France. He was thus enabled to weld the Latin and the Northern traditions into a new kind of art, in which all local and national characteristics were dissolved in a style that belongs preeminently to the twentieth century.

Despite his enormous influence on modern architecture and design, Mondrian was among the last of the modern painters to achieve recognition. Living in Paris over a quarter of a century, his effect in the field of painting was slight and confined to esoteric circles until in the thirties, when a new revival of abstract art spread his fame abroad. In every way, his life and his work offer a complete antithesis to that of Picasso, who has held the leading position in painting for over forty years. Unlike the Spaniard's versatile pictorial genius, fertile in invention and ever-changing in style, Mondrian developed slowly without any erratic excursions in style in one consistent line of progression. The severity and austerity of his straight lines and primary

color planes on white canvas appear like the visual symbol of the categorical imperative of duty. Yet there is no living painter whose mastery of the plastic laws is so complete.

If Picasso may be said to express the sensuous genius of the Mediterranean culture in modern painting, then Mondrian expresses the spiritual aspirations of Northern Europe. For while painting in the twentieth century may be considered one unity, yet within this new tradition, it is possible to discern the local sources of the past from whence it derived its inspiration. In this sense, it is not fantastic to trace Mondrian's lineage as far back as the Gothic age—in the line that moves from the Cathedrals to Van Eyck and from Breughel to Van Gogh—a tradition at once more realistic and more spiritual than the plastic corporeal art of the Latin peoples.

In the painstaking care and perfection of his detail and in the infinite patience of his production, Mondrian is tied to his tradition. Born in Amersfoort, Holland in 1872, the year of the first Impressionist Exhibition in Paris, he began as a realistic painter, and he maintains that even today he is a realist. He grew up in a conservative atmosphere surrounded by painters either pedantically naturalistic or under the influence of a northern mysticism arising in a painter like Jan Toorup.

Mondrian's father, a high school principal and an amateur painter, gave him his first lessons. Later his studied with an uncle, who worked in the style of William Maris. Destined by his family to be a drawing teacher, Mondrian was sent to the Amsterdam Art Academy, where he was graduated after three years of study. In his earliest canvases, he delighted to depict the flat pasture lands of Holland, its wide skies and dunes, its prim Dutch houses with the slanting planes of their roofs. Even before the Van Gogh legend, following on his tragic death, had permeated into Holland and broken a bondage to a stagnant tradition, Mondrian had begun to evoke a deeper significance from the hackneyed motifs of Dutch painting. His early landscapes are alive with an intense and tragic contemplation of nature. A few of these early works still existed in Dutch collections prior to Hitler's coming.

Mondrian succeeded in bringing with him to the United States a few of his flower compositions and sketches painted between 1906 and 1908. They reveal him as a naturalistic painter moving toward Impressionism. While he fully realized the color and texture of flowers, even at this time, he was more intent on the structure of their form, scoring the single petals with dark markings to indicate their *function*. Already he had begun the quest for what was later to become his exclusive interest. It was the thing behind the apparition

of the object that intrigued him; it was the bones stripped bare that fascinated him—the eternal and unchanging structure of reality.

Mondrian's early development in Holland was the result of his own isolated efforts. When he finally came into contact with the work of Van Gogh and the Fauves, he was immensely stimulated to find that he had been moving in their direction. Shortly after this, he decided to go to Paris at the very moment when a great change was coming over all of modern painting. He was thirty-eight years old and already a mature painter working in the Divisionist manner, when he arrived there in 1910. Along with a whole generation of painters, he submitted to the Cubist discipline.

Between 1910 and 1913, Heroic Cubism, following in the path of Cezanne's last work, produced an actual mutation in the tradition of art. In seeking to break down the three dimensional depth illusion, the Cubists dissected the object into its component parts and thus came suddenly upon a new reality in painting: *the surface plane of the picture.* It was the early works of Picasso and Leger that inspired Mondrian and under their direct influence, he executed his Cubist works.

Taking as his theme the facades of Paris buildings with their many windows and their walls plastered with colored bill posters, he drew the heavy masonry of their stone courses flatly but still in three dimensional view. But within the large cubes, which thoroughly realize the volume and solidity of stone, tiny lines like electric filaments, break up the natural forms. The opposition of the massive volumes, conditioned by the severe frontality of the facades, to the delicate but destroying lines within their internal structure visibly dramatizes the whole decomposition of natural form that was taking place in the work of all the Cubists. But Mondrian's drawings are at once more realistic and more logical. In their grasp of factual truth and in the delicacy of their feeling, they belong to another order of expression than that of the French Cubists.

It is the dynamic rhythm of destruction that gives the Paris facades their energizing power, a power as great as Picasso's in his simultaneous destruction of the human form. Nor was the process merely destructive, for with the rapid and daring annihilation of the appearance of the natural world, there occurred a constructive parallel movement in the emergence of the hidden structure into the physical field of vision. This whole series seems like a cinematographic record of a momentous discovery: that only the mind of man directed toward the phenomena of nature can illumine and uncover the inner meaning of the sensory world, whose multiple forms are like a darkness obscur-

ing its true reality. While never mentioned in the official books on Cubism and never exhibited in Paris, due to the outbreak of the war, these paintings and drawings exemplify Heroic Cubism in its most classic expression.

In the summer of 1914, Mondrian returned home to Holland on a visit. Two weeks later the First World War broke out and he was forced to remain there. The next four years were to be decisive for the whole subsequent development of pure abstract art. His Paris work had erected an insurmountable barrier between him and the Dutch painters of his youth. At the same time, he was already severing his links with Cubism, which even before the war had begun the retreat from its own discoveries. For while Cubism had substituted a conceptional reality for a visual one, its style remained transitional and partially naturalistic. In this respect, Picasso may be said to be the last of the painters at the end of the road, which Giotto opened up in the fourteenth century.

Toward the end of his Cubist period, Mondrian, however, was approaching an entirely new conception of art. Alone and isolated, he was now moved to take the final steps that broke with the whole plastic tradition of the Renaissance. By successive steps, he completed the abstraction of natural form. He excluded the third dimension, making use only of the surface of the canvas. He renounced natural color for primary color and he adopted the right angle as the most constant and universal means of expression. At this time, he was employing occasional curves and his point of departure was still the natural object, although abstracted beyond recognition.

The results may be observed in the "Pier and Ocean" series of drawings and paintings begun in 1914. Inspired by the long piers and the seacoast of Holland, these monochrome works are, for the most part, enclosed in oval compositions reminiscent of Cubist practice. Within the picture, however, all curves are gradually eliminated or "brought to their greatest tension: the straight line." The solid volumes disappear and the central axis of the composition is hinged on a long vertical line—the pier in its simplest outline—while short verticals and horizontals indicate the waves breaking on the beach, and crosses at the top define the starry sky. "Here I was trying to express the vastness of nature, its rest, its expansion and its unity," Mondrian wrote years later.

In the first drawings of this series, done in black ink and washed with white, although the natural object is now reduced to a cipher, there remains something impressionistic and lyrical in the expression. But we are no longer dealing with the visual appearance of the corporeal world but with its poten-

tialities as *function* and *energy.* Faced with the visible results of a more abstract conception of reality, Mondrian came to terms with it. The new elements become suddenly coordinated into a severe unity of organization that assumes the precision of exact mathematical formulae. The static balance is forsaken for an equilibrium of unequal but equivalent oppositions of line. In the painting "Pier and Ocean" and in the magnificent drawing "Ocean", both done in 1915, we are in the presence of an entirely new aesthetic.

Inexplicable as these works must have seemed at the time they were made, today we recognize in them the first efforts toward the creation of a style form of the twentieth century. They offer a remarkable prevision of the order of many mechanical forms of our present day environment, such as the flight of airplane squadrons, the organization of mechanized armies, the movement of traffic on modern highways, or airplane photography. In the conceptual world, they represent what Spengler has called "the mechanizing of the organic concept of the deed."

But even the last vestiges of the natural object disappeared as Mondrian carried out the Cubist revolution to its final conclusion: the *total abolition of the form,* not only as pictorial representation but as abstraction. He had now reached a point where he saw all of reality as space, even the forms within space. Seeking to find an equivalence of the two in his work and conceiving of space as mathematically composed of endless horizontals and verticals, he joined his crosses, and rectangles appeared. While he was never concerned with the rectangles in themselves but only with their *relationships.* He was now able to establish unity by means of the surface of the canvas itself. In the first rectilinear compositions of 1916, the rectangles appear detached from the background like the floating squares of Malevich. But they were soon bound together in what to the layman looks like Dutch tile patterns, but in which the principle of assymmetric balance has been established.

In these years, painting abandoned the depiction of particular objects just as modern science relinquished isolated sense phenomena as its most valid field of investigation. But no basic mutation in a tradition is the work of one man. Thus unknown to Mondrian certain progressive Dutch artists, apart from Cubism, had been moving toward this same result. About this time, he met Van der Leck, who painted stylized human figures against pure color planes. Their friendship resulted in Van der Leck abstracting his forms and Mondrian employing pure color planes.

Shortly after this, Mondrian made the acquaintance of Theo Van Doesburg, a painter and theorist, who was making similar researches. From their

collaboration, as important in its way as that of Picasso and Braque in Cubism, there developed the De Stijl movement. Founded in Leyden in 1917, the magazine "De Stijl" enlisted the participation of painters, sculptors, architects, and designers. De Stijl ideas profoundly effected architecture and design in Holland, Germany, France and even reached Russia, coinciding there with Malevich's Suprematist movement.

De Stijl took as its dictum that painting must be *a painting within the plane.* This elevation of the plane to the highest ideal of art was an integral part of the whole revolt against the oppression of nature that occurred in all the progressive art movements at the beginning of the century. The great art of the past that had made use of the plane, for example, Egyptian, Byzantine, and to some extent, Medieval art, has been motivated by an urge to find spiritual absolute values for religious feeling. But never before in the history had the plane—purified of all figuration, subject matter, and symbolism—been raised to the sole plastic means of expression. This repudiation of the physio-plastic image for an ideo-plastic image had not happened in Europe since the Middle Ages. It represented a complete turning away from the materialistic atomic theories of reality that reached their climax in the nineteenth century and had, as their consequence, in art, extreme naturalistic representation. Upon the ruins of that tradition, the De Stijl painters led by Mondrian, inaugurated a new purely abstract art of pure relationships of color, line and form.

Shortly after the war ended, Mondrian returned to Paris. In 1920 he published a famous pamphlet called "Neo-Plasticism", setting forth his theory of art. Art in our time, he wrote, could no longer merely imitate the everyday, external appearance of life, but had to find a deeper plastic expression of reality. While the content of all art, both past and present, had always been this reality, it was now possible for art to express it more directly and exactly. To do this it was necessary to find the constant laws which govern the unchanging structure of reality and, by means of them, to create a dynamic movement in equilibrium through unequal but equivalent oppositions of line and color. All human culture, including art, he held, was a means toward finding freedom, and eventually art would disappear as life became more complete and artistic capacity would be integrated in the creation of a more truly human environment. Among the plastic arts he included not only painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also music and literature.

The following year there appeared the first composition of the type we now associate with his name. Impelled by the rigor of his convictions, he stripped the canvas of its illusionistic veil of pigment, revealing it in the stark

nakedness of white. While Cezanne in his efforts to "realize" a composition had often allowed the untouched surface to remain in spots, it was left for Mondrian to restore the pristine purity and true materiality of the surface. After centuries of treating the canvas to all kinds of coverings from the elaborate under-painting of the past to the piled-up pigment of the modernists, the bare appearance of the white canvas rectangle was bound to assert an optical magnetism on modern eyes.

Against the unified, restored material surface, assymmetric relationships were established by means of black lines and primary color planes. Every effort was made to eliminate the brush stroke with its personal handwriting in order to achieve a more objective approach. The carefully tinted white background, treated with consummate delicacy and conscientious equality, assumed a translucent vibration, against which the color planes, divested of all literary and tactile associations, became directly apprehensible as pure energy.

In the decade between 1920 and 1930, living in Paris in quiet retirement, Mondrian was occupied with perfecting this new art of pure relationships. While he had broken with the whole western tradition of art, his work represented not only a revolution of the plastic means, but a logical evolution out of the past. This may be seen quite clearly in the development of his painting, which within the given means, experienced a constant change and growth. In 1921, his compositions have the structural organization of the seventeenth century Dutch masters, but gradually he abandoned the square compositions of solid color planes for more vertical ones, composed sometimes of not more than four or five lines with one small color plane. Nothing so austere had hitherto been created in modern art. This simplicity was not derived merely from reducing art to its essential elements, but sprang from an intensification and integration of these elements into a new plastic unity.

In these post-war yeárs, the reaction that swept Europe after war and revolutionary upheaval, had its repercussions in the field of art. New and backward looking movement arose in painting and abstract art suffered a temporary eclipse. Many artists returned to naturalistic representation and Mondrian was left more or less in isolation. After 1924, the Surrealists restored the object in painting, and while freeing it from the logic of the old system and re-arranging it in novel relationships, they added little or nothing to the plastic structure of painting. Toward the end of the decade, however, new small groups of abstract artists continued their experiments and in 1932, a new revival of interest in abstract art led to the formation of the Abstraction-Creation Group in Paris. This was followed by the formation of a movement

in England in collaboration with some of the former Russian Constructivists, and in 1935, the first American Abstract artists' group was organized. It now became apparent that in the interim of obscurity, the followers of abstract art had grown from a mere handful of pioneers to hundreds. For all these new movements there came a renewed appreciation of the work of Mondrian.

In 1938, alarmed by the growing Nazi menace, Mondrian moved to London, where he joined forces with the English movement and remained there through the first year of the war. During these crucial years, he was seeking to find a new equilibrium more expressive of our modern life and his style underwent further changes. He returned to more square composition, in which the lines become more delicate, the rhythms more complex and flexible. From these compositions there emanates a mathematical harmony that has the delicacy of precision instruments, the sensitivity of radio activity, and the power of Diesel engines.

Mondrian arrived in the United States in the fall of 1940 and settled in New York City. Here in America his art experienced a new flowering. Something of the intense color of the American environment and the precise, clear outlines of our cities entered his work and changed its color and rhythms. Rarely in Europe had he used more than two color planes in one composition, but in the very first canvas made here and named "New York City", he eliminated all the black lines, formerly so characteristic of him, and substituted red, blue and yellow lines. While he met the problem of giving the colored lines the same intensity as the black lines, a tendency toward verticality gave the composition a certain rigidity.

Shortly after this he began the large canvas "Boogie Woogie", which took him almost a year to complete. In it he began to break the colored lines into a new rhythm through inset sections of opposing colors. It was as if he were wrestling with the modern rhythm of this country, a rhythm opposed entirely to Europe and the classic tradition, a rhythm that as yet finds no expression in our own art except perhaps in our popular music. The result is by far the most luminous and joyous work he has ever produced. For now he comes to a new mastery, the enrichment of the surface by pure plastic means alone, through pure color and line. In its subtle organization and in the delicate coordination of its unity, the structure of this picture is new and never seen before. If his last austere work in Europe had seemed like the reduction of the art in painting to its final limitation, the new work now opens a road of infinite possibilities of experiment for the future.

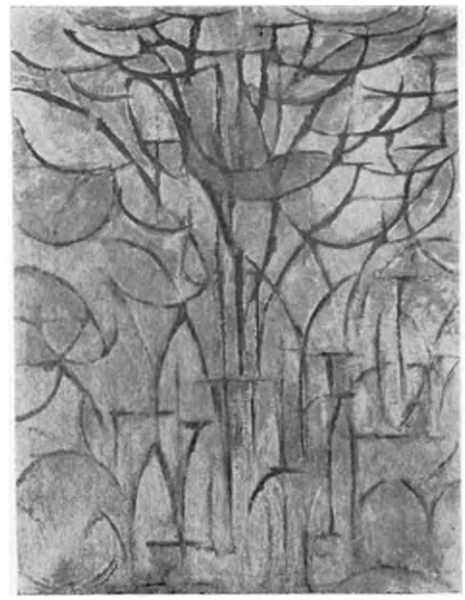

FIG. 1. The Tree—1910.
Nierendorf Gallery
Phot. Schiff

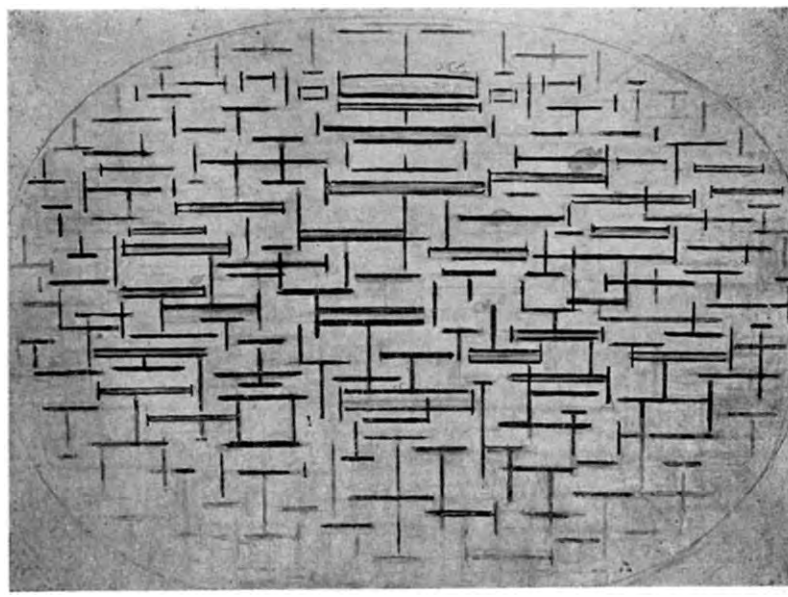

FIG. 2. Ocean—1915.
"Art of this Century" Collection, Peggy Guggenheim.
Phot. Colten

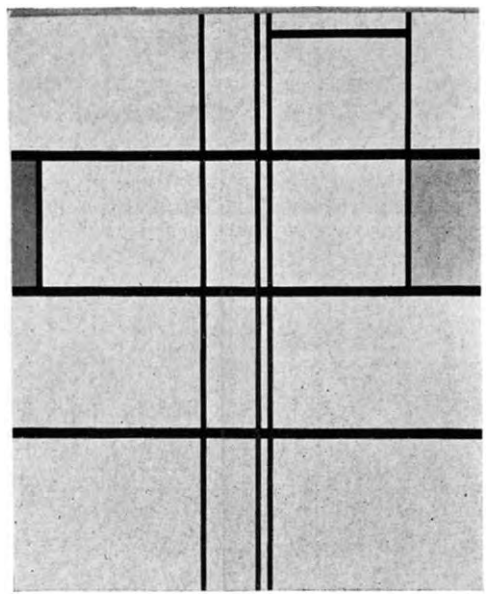

FIG. 3.—1936.
Private Collection, Switzerland.
Courtesy Valentine Galleries

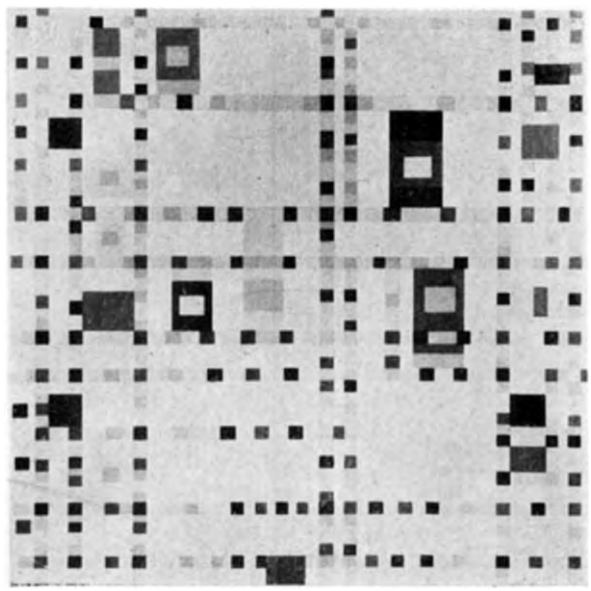

FIG. 4. Boogie Woogie—1942-3.
Valentine Galleries. Purchased by Museum of Modern Art.
Phot. Arni

Gestalt and Art

RUDOLF ARNHEIM

THERE are styles in science just as in art. The gestalt theory is such a new style of science. It came about, negatively, as a protest against what is now called the atomistic approach: the method of explaining things by adding up local effects, qualities, and functions of isolated elements. It came about, positively, as the scientific expression of a new wave of *naturphilosophie* and romanticism in Germany, which revived in a strongly emotional way the feeling of the wonderful secrets of the organism, the creative powers of natural forces as opposed to the detrimental effects of a rationalism which praised the emancipation of the brain from vitality and from the elementary tasks of life as the highest achievement of culture. Gestalt theory has a kinship to certain poets and thinkers of the past, the nearest in time being Goethe.

Gestalt theory, created mainly by three men, Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, and Kurt Koffka, uses as its method in psychology, physics, biology, sociology, etc., the description of the structural features, the whole-qualities of "systems", i.e., of those natural things or happenings in which the character and function of any part is determined by the total situation. The method, however, must be understood as deriving from a more basic attitude which respects the simple, strong, and spontaneous reactions of children, primitive people, and animals, as something which, on any level of mental and cultural development, the human being should preserve; an attitude which refuses to reserve the capacity of synthesis to the higher faculties of the human mind, but emphasizes the formative powers and, if I may say so, the "intelligence" of the peripheral sensory processes, vision, hearing, touch, etc., which had been reduced by traditional theory to the task of carrying the bricks of experience to the architect in the inner sanctuary of mind. From this attitude results a strong sympathy with, and an intimate understanding of, the artist. For through his eyes and ears, the artist directly grasps the full meaning of nature's creations, and, by organizing sensory facts according to the laws of "prägnanz", unity, segregation, and balance, he reveals harmony and order, or stigmatizes discord and disorder. It is not accidental that a product of art, a melody, was used as

the first example of a whole, whose structure can be explained neither by the qualities of its single elements, nor by the relations between these elements. Moreover, whoever has made experiments with the gestalt method knows that, in order to create conditions which will bring about certain crucial effects, a sensitivity akin to the artist's must operate with respect to the conditions under which the structural features of, say, visual figures come out clearly, are maintained or changed. One has to "see" the phenomenon long before one can formulate it scientifically. Whether it is true of science in general or not, the productive gestalt scientist has to be something of an artist. And "blindness" (as opposed to such insight) is one of the favorite terms of the gestalt vocabulary.

Let me now discuss an example of the application of gestalt theory to the psychology of art. It seems that, with a more adequate approach to the psychology of perception, it is possible to deal more successfully with an intricate, but basic problem of artistic representation. If we assume, as it used to be, that perception is based on a sum of sensations produced by the millions of punctiform receptors in the retinae of the eyes, a puzzling paradox arises. It would then be logical to expect that, the more elementary the psychological level of a human being, the more closely his drawings ought to stick to what would correspond psychologically to the image projected on the retinae by the eye-lenses; and, on the other hand, only from people more developed mentally would one expect elaboration and transformation. On the contrary, we find in fact that children and primitives tend to draw in simple patterns; realism appears only as the late product of a long cultural evolution. The fact cannot be explained by manual inability, because even though a child is unable to trace a perfect circle, we can show that he meant to draw a circle. The child's drawing is essentially different from what we would get, if we asked a skilled draftsman to draw a realistic picture of a nude not with his hand, but with his foot. The current theory is that a child "draws what he knows rather than what he sees". This theory implies the paradox that the more undeveloped creatures elaborate their sensations through higher mental processes. Furthermore, any attempt to explain the origin of such "knowledge" faces again the problems which the theory was meant to solve: how can the simple shapes of children's drawings be derived from the complex and everchanging pattern of a human head or body as projected on the retinae? By abstraction? If we remember that in logic abstraction is defined as the setting aside of some elements of particular phenomena, and retaining others, we realize that no elimination of parts can ever lead from the "projective picture" to those simple shapes.

A more adequate approach is possible if we understand that the content of perception is not identical with the sum of qualities corresponding to the projective picture. Rather it seems that productive perception—in the sense of an activity which allows to understand, identify, remember, and recognize things—is a grasping of basic structural features, which characterize things and distinguish them from others. There is a tendency in the organism to produce simple shapes wherever circumstances allow it to do so. Optical experiments have shown that when the influence of external stimuli is subdued, for instance by reducing the size of the stimulus, the intensity of lighting, or the time of exposure, the subjects report that they see things of a more simple, more regular, sometimes more symmetrical shape than those really exposed to them. But even when the precision of the stimulus does not permit such manifest modification perception consists in organizing the sensory material under the patterns of simple, "good" gestalten.

The artist may think here of the saying attributed to Cézanne, that nature can be seen as cubes, spheres, cones, etc. The philosopher may be reminded of Kant's epistemological "categories". With respect to Kant there is, however, one important difference. Gestalt theory does not hold that the senses carry amorphous material on which order is imposed by a receiving mind. It emphasizes instead that "good shape" is a quality of nature in general, inorganic as well as organic, and that the processes of organization active in perception somehow do justice to the organization outside in the physical world. Wolfgang Köhler, in his early book on the physical gestalten—which he calls "eine naturphilosophische untersuchung"—has shown that a tendency toward the production of simple forms can be observed in many physical systems or fields, because the interacting forces do their best to create a state of balance. A case in which balance leads to complete symmetry is observed when a drop of oil falls into a glass of water. Mechanical forces become active, pushing and pulling, until the oil is collected in a circular shape in the middle of the water surface. They will do so not because of a longing for beauty, but because only under these conditions will all the forces involved balance each other in such a way that a state of rest is obtained. Similar processes are likely to occur in the physiological field of vision when stimuli interfere with its balance. Areas stimulated by light of different amplitude and wave length are adjusted, as to their shape, contours, color, etc., to the most stable organization possible under the given circumstances.

The discovery of this elementary relationship between perception and balance should be welcome to the theory of art. Balance was generally consid-

ered as something added by the artist to the image of the objects. Why he does so was not quite clear. Balance arouses pleasure, but justifying balance only as a source of pleasure seemed somewhat distasteful and humiliating to many. By describing the tendency towards balance as a basic effort of the organism to assimilate stimuli to its own organization and by showing that balance is, quite in general, a state sought for by physical forces wherever they interact in a field, the artist's striving for balance is revealed as just one aspect of a universal tendency in nature. From this point of view, pleasure appears as a psychological correlate of balance, not as its cause.

The extreme case of the oil drop should not induce us to think of balance only in connection with closed systems at rest. One would have a hard time to find in art corresponding cases of total symmetry, which would express a state of complete inactivity. Without activity there is no life and therefore no art. What I mean by balance based on activity will become clearer if I use as an example the human body which is at balance with its surroundings as to temperature when the amount of heat constantly drained off from the body by the colder environment just equals the constant surplus of heat production in the body. More than simply an analogy is intended when we assert that something similar happens, for instance, in a painting where the eccentric position and irregular shape of masses express the dynamical situation of the subject represented as well as of the artist's soul, but are distributed in such a way that the active masses balance each other.

This leads me to a second topic, which seems to promise a particularly fruitful application of gestalt principles. The theory of expression, in its traditional form, does not seem to do justice to what happens when we look at or listen to a work of art. If expression were nothing but an empirical connection between what we see, say, in a person's face and what we know about our own state of mind at the time when our own face displays a similar pattern, then no inner kinship would exist between the two correlated features; i.e., physical pattern and psychological state. The relationship between a doleful face and a sad mood is then at best explained as a causal relationship. Wertheimer has drawn attention to the fact that neither past experience nor logical conclusions are necessary for an understanding of the elementary features of expression. Their meaning is perceived as least as directly and spontaneously as the shape and color of an object, by means of what has been termed the "tertiary qualities" of sensory phenomena. Kindliness or aggression, straightshooting determination or hesitation, are expressed in the curves of the physical movements (or traces of movements) which accompany such

mental attitudes. A geometry of expressive features is anticipated which would describe their characteristics with as much scientific precision as our present geometry is able to describe the difference between a straight line and a circular curve. The underlying idea is that the dynamical characteristics of, say, timidity are identical whether we trace, e.g., as to time and direction, the walking curve of the timid man who approaches the private office of his boss or whether we translate into a graph the succession of his psychological impulses, inhibitive and propulsive, with respect to his aim. This theory of isomorphism (identity of form) between psychological and physical processes scientifically corroborates the common observation that we call the movements of a dancer mournful not because we have often seen sad persons behave in a similar manner but because the dynamical features of mourning are physically present in these movements and can be directly perceived. Therefore the theory of expression in art must not necessarily start from the attitudes of the human body and explain the flaming excitement of Van Gough's trees or El Greco's clouds through some sort of anthropomorphic projection, but should rather proceed from the expressive qualities of curves and shapes and show how by representing any subject-matter through such curves and shapes expression is conveyed to human bodies, trees, clouds, buildings, vessels, or whatever other things. What science is trying here to assert and to prove against the opposition of well-established traditional theories may sound familiar to many a good painter or sculptor who does his job with some consciousness. This, however, as far as I see, does not tell against gestalt theory, but in favor of it.

Art as Communication

CORNELIA GEER LEBOUTILLIER

THERE are three main stems to the broad highway that is aesthetic theory. One stem is essentially abstruse, leading out toward the formulation of a philosophy of art that might take its place logically in a wider systematic philosophy. Another is much more pedestrian, concerning itself with art appreciation and the values to be sought in any true artistic work. A third stem leads the aesthetic theorist, with deep psychic shudders, away from life and away from art and off into the silences, returning him with flashing eyes and floating hair and a burning message for the artist about how to paint or what to paint or compose or write or what you will.

This paper does not aspire to philosophy of art. It does take a look at the aesthetic of art appreciation, and a look askance at the third type of aesthetic which we might call here the apotheosis of art.

I am writing about plastic art, whether it be represented on a two-dimensional surface as drawing or painting, or wrought in three-dimensional space as sculpture. But I believe much that I say will apply to music and poetry as well, perhaps even to the dance. The arts, one in motive but various in expression, are further proven one in this, that what is said about any of them has in the others its repercussions, its reflexes, its application.

Picasso is quoted by Alfred H. Barr, Jr.[1] as making this statement: "People who try to explain pictures are usually barking up the wrong tree." Something is accomplished, no doubt, by persons of discrimination who try to explain a work of art. But it is a question whether their accomplishment has value further than to implement individuals of little discrimination, little sensibility, with the current jargon of art. It bears better fruit to offer an exposition of a trend in art, using illustrations from the work of artists to illustrate one's points. This at least supplies a frame of reference out of wider study than many a neophyte could make. As, then, such a neophyte might find himself coming under the spell, or partially under the spell, of an artistic work, he has this certain frame within which to examine and evaluate the spell he is under.

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[1] Alfred H. Barr, Jr. *Picasso Forty Years of His Art*, p. 18.

But unless the observer does feel the spell, it is of no use to try to innoculate him with it or indoctrinate him with any handy criterion "before the fact."

Many things that the extreme type of aesthetic theorist says to his public about art in general, and about specific works of art, are bathos. But the worst bathos of all is that this theorist often does not stop with telling the public, but presses on to tell the artist, instructing him what mood he should induce in himself and what techniques he should employ and what he should say about it afterwards if it is to be "great art." Perhaps the most egregious of these theorists is Louis Danz, who in such books as *Zarathustra Jr. Speaks of Art,* and *The Psychologist Looks at Art* sets forth a kind of *Prolegomena for All Future Artists if They Wish to Be Great.* Aesthetic theory is all *ex post facto,* always remote from creativity, and it should be. But if it does not recognize itself as such, fancying itself, rather, a kind of artistic gland extract which, if taken as directed, will make for richer productivity in the would-be great,—why then indeed it is less of a waste and more of a poison than would at first appear.

What an artist does about his art is altogether divorced from what may be said about it, whether by another or by himself, whether before or after his deed. Not only this. But artistic performance is so different in essence from artistic comment of any kind whatever that artistic comment, of any kind whatever, can never mold it. A pompous, inflated aesthetic, if it noisily impinge upon a weak, self-conscious urge towards creativity, might conceivably inhibit or misdirect it. But beyond this its power over a creative artist cannot go.

That Danz does not understand this appears very clearly in what he says about Leonardo da Vinci.[2] An artist's genius may be appraised according to a number of different criteria. But surely Leonardo's instructions in cold blood on how to paint have nothing to say about the value of what he actually did paint. Yet in such instances as this Danz shows that he is attempting to judge the painter's work by the painter's words. "Probably no painter ever lived" Danz says, "who attained to such exalted position and still had so little imaginative power as Leonardo . . . In the whole of Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting* there is not one word about organization."[3]

But artists and aesthetic theorists are poles apart even when the same skin includes both. Leonardo's theory is by no means his genius. Simply, his mind was so versatile, so many-sided, that he had his fling along with other things; at a dogmatic treatise on how to draw and how to paint. But that, if it be

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[2] *The Psychologist Looks at Art,* pp. 93.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 107 and 108.

inept, does not make his painting inept. The truth is that Leonardo is not trying to elaborate on aesthetic theory, but to tell other artists how to paint as he painted. It is improbable that Leonardo, when the creative mood was in abeyance, knew how he painted when the creative mood was in command. Detached from it, he could not recapture the mood as he tried to analyze it.

Definitely, aesthetic criticism, aesthetic theory, has its limitations; but it has a rôle to play, an important and very enjoyable function. Appreciation of art is an experience of beauty which, if it be nascent or unsure, gains immeasurably by being guided. Gautama's enlightenment under the bodi tree was more spiritual, immediate and profound, no doubt; but I wonder if it was more rich, upholding, and rewarding, than gradual enlightenment in the understanding of great art.

There is many such a bodi tree in the field of music, the field of poetry, the field of plastic. There are teachers, prophets, seers in art, who can direct and unlimber and certify the judgment of those who desire growth in the experience of beauty. This is the only satisfaction which can be maximized through a long life, the hunger growing as the way of satisfaction is more fully learned, the satisfaction itself continuously deepening and widening and brightening.

I mention just one of many such bodi trees, and it happens to be in the field of plastic: a book by Albert C. Barnes, *The Art in Painting.* Here is a true and virile aesthetic: not an abstruse philosophy of art, not a high-sounding apotheosis of art, but plastic art brought down to earth in form and fashion to be understood and valued by all. Enlightenment as growth in beauty is the enlightenment of developing artistic taste. This is made possible where the teacher of sound comprehension and appreciation of art explains—not pictures, by Picasso deplored as barking up the wrong tree,—but the principles discernible in plastic which have made art great, so great that the experience of beauty becomes a spring of water rising up within one, cool and fresh and revivifying, it would seem to all eternity.

Here is the province of what I have called sound, pedestrian aesthetic.

One of the ill results of unsound aesthetic is the brood of censorious rejoinders it begets, all of them exhibiting in greater or less degree the faults of the sire. For it is hardly more audacious to set forth a technique, or as one might put it, a *mystique* for artists, than it is to announce that a suggested technique or *mystique* have gone beyond their proper limits. The latter, however, is my purpose and my purport here, because words have been uttered which cry aloud for rebuttal. I do not wish to dignify them and emphasize

them by giving them space here. But in order to show what I mean, I will repeat one of the very many imperatives which Louis Danz addresses to the artist.

"Paint for me a solid or a volume, a weight, a direction, a tempo. Paint for me cohesion, adhesion, attraction, antipathy, elasticity, gravity, rhythm." Do not paint anything so inept as surfaces, he says, nor so banal as objects, nor so futile as things. Abstract from these shapes the disembodied principles that actuate them, formless, ultimate. If you would win the accolade of the ages, paint principles, not bodies; paint movement, not static; paint electrons and their motion, not mass and its forms. Here is the enticement to abstract art. It is the enticement to attempt to express in plastic what has been called the phantasmal 'ultimate truth' of present day surrealists, to show not the form of any object nor of the manifold of objects, but rather the dynamic motion that science tells us is constitutive. Paint the physics of things, not things themselves.

There are two extremes in the message of plastic art. One extreme is the immediate thing, the luminous surface of the world we see and want to touch, flooded by light, sensuous and disturbing and beautiful, but free of implication and comment, free of any meaning beyond the colored shapes that make it up. The other extreme in the message of plastic is the remote and intellectual internal harmony that constitutes the natural world and its things: the "ultimate truth," as I have called it, of the abstractionists.

When I have said intellectual, I have pointed to the great gulf that lies between these two extremes, the one of the senses, the other of the mind. Surrealist interest goes beyond the object, beyond the shape: it penetrates the light-enfolded surface to a cosmic motion below the sensuous, to an inner speed and rhythm, forces which it wants to reveal in plastic, and cannot. For these forces, these principles, are constructs and deductions only. As such they are of the mind. They can be visually expressed only in symbols, and such symbols as are used will be more comprehensible, more convincing, if they do not attempt to intrigue the eye. The deep sub-surface forces themselves can never be successfully revealed, that is, in a medium which is competent only to concern itself with lighted surfaces. The message of plastic, for such an attempt, becomes bifurcated and self-contradictory, divergent from itself.

Of course, there are patterns. There are designs, and very artistic designs, which have no "things" to offer, but which fill a canvas to delight or to

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[4] *Ibid,* p. 44.

repel or artistically to combine repulsion with delight. These are to be taken at their face value, at their surface value, not as objects, nor yet surrealistically as revealing to vision what can never to vision be revealed. They may indeed, by their interplay of swirl and static, excite a kind of kinaesthetic reaction in the observer so that he will have a sense of motion, of dynamic activity. But I have tried to suggest by using the word kinaesthetic, that the motion excited is in the observer and is not a revelation of constitutive motion. To illustrate this with appeal to another sense: fruit in still life may excite a sensation of quenched thirst; but this is sensuous and is in the observer. Why it is perfectly respectable artistically for a painting to satisfy one's kinaesthetic sense, and just a little indecent, artistically at least, for it to satisfy one's sense of desire, is too subtle, either too ridiculous or too sublime, for our present scope. But the fact stands out that these stirrings and these satisfactions are all sensuous in the observer, not sub-sensuous in the object. It is important that this sensuous intent be understood as the motive force of pattern.

The truest authentic inspiration for plastic art, I dare assert, lies not in the attempt to abstract, and not in the attempt to ignore the speeds and rhythms, the interplay, which our minds know indeed do flash beneath the surface, giving the lie to surface, in fact, and giving the lie to form. The truest inspiration is the seized identity of the surreal and the sensuous. Great artists have been inspired by precisely this intuition, however they got it, long before the electron had been heard of. The ultimate and the immediate are one, they knew; there is no sound distinguishing the one from the other in plastic. They know this by the deepest intuition that comes to the artist, and by the power of their art they present it in a significant mustering, an organization, if you will, of objects. For objects, bodies, are intermediate between these two extremes in plastic: they *are* the world of nature in which there is this singing, on which there shines this light. They are the artists original and closest and inescapable métier.

Let the artist abstract from the world of sense the harmonic principles revealed by mind and attempt to present them in some non-sensuous reference, and he has destroyed the very thing he sought to present. The thread from a woven fabric is abstracted. But in abstraction it is no more what it was in the fabric than a word by itself is what it was in the sentence or a letter by itself what it was in the word. Or than "a direction, a tempo, . . . a cohesion, a rhythm" could ever be in abstraction what they are in a grouping of bodies; the sense-grasped world of light.

Actually there is something didactic in the surrealist's abstractions. He

seems, though this is the very opposite of his intention, to ascend the lecture platform, flash upon an unsuspecting public the spirals and dynamics of his art, and shout, "Look about you! You'll see these in bodies, too!" An artist's work is predetermined to be mechanical if he intellectualize it. All that he shows forth of ultimate, if it be convincing, is immediate, too, and implicit in the object of sense.

If the artist turn to nature seeking to find there what his mind has told him is there for the seeking, he will find it, never fear. He will show it forth somehow on canvas or in stone. But he will be missing the point of natural beauty and rhythm which is natural beauty and rhythm not in the depths only, but on the surface too. By the intellectual wrench of abstraction he loses the supple aliveness all unsuspected in the world of body: the ultimate in the immediate; the universal, as Aristotle saw it, in the static object of sense.

Intellect knows that every object of sense is what physics calls a "field of force", a vortex of dynamic activity: knows it and recognizes it. This dynamic life is actually the universal principle in forms, as universal as forms are. But whereas intellect discriminates between immediate static form and ultimate dynamic truth, it is the province of plastic art, it has been the artist's truest rôle, and always will be, not to discriminate here, not to distinguish, but spiritually to grasp and plastically to reveal that these two things are essentially one thing. All great plastic art has this for its basic message: the ultimate and the immediate are one. For the artist this arrival at the ultimate is not a feat of intellect but of intuition. The artist does not first discriminate then merge these two. He sees them as one, when his vision is profound; he expresses them as one, when he expresses himself fully.

The surrealist, interested primarily perhaps to abstract motion from the depths, to trace it, and express it in plastic, is interested also in superficial movement of bodies. He wants to represent not only motion in the sub-sensuous, but also what Aristotle calls "change of place", which I shall call here movement. There is no reason why the same artist might not concern himself with both kinds of motion. But it is an arresting fact that their value for art is altogether different. To represent on canvas sub-sensuous motion is a definite venture in abstraction. To represent movement is calling memory in, *par excellence,* to effect linkages between a series of positions which sense delivers as static. Memory is inseparably involved in our apprehension of movement as the eye takes note of it.

Memory is of the mind, not of the senses. So in both these attempted representations the artist, in order to conceive them, turns from the sensuous

order to the mental order. In abstract art he turns away as completely as he can from sense. In attempting to portray movement on the other hand, or to suggest it, he turns away and turns back innumerable times. His only chance here is to depict a series of static sense impressions and somehow on his canvas to symbolize memory which in his direct awareness of movement is actively effecting the necessary links. That is why it is even more hopeless to show forth movement in plastic than abstract sub-sensuous motion. Distortion and broken line does it, perhaps, to a very moderate, indeed incipient degree, but only as a stunt. Duchamp's "Nude Descending the Stairs", is a series of distorted shapes nearly superimposed the one under the other. Picasso's "Portrait of Kahnweiler" is similar in technique. Balla's "Moving Dog on a Leash" is more crude, less mature, almost childish indeed. Duchamp certainly had great fun in representing his nude. Picasso enjoyed himself thoroughly in his portrait, which is replete with artistic values not discussed here: pattern, depth, and gaiety. But Balla takes himself and his dog so seriously, so studiedly, that it is doubtful that any pleasure has ever come out of it anywhere; certainly no movement has.

Movement evades portrayal, just as change does, or growth. Motion (in the depths) is as elusive for plastic as thought is, or cruelty. Surfaces can be shown decked out with symbols and repetitions which may suggest to the sophisticate that one or the other is intended: so Picasso's *The Dancer.* Or a thinker may be shown engrossed in his thinking, or a villian plotting bloody deeds. There is no law against experiment and no deterrent upon it. But these surrealistic devices to show what cannot be shown are all of them attempts to externalize an intellectual concept rather than to find tempo in what appears to the senses to be static. They will always be perversions, not fraught with harmful repercussions, to be sure, but bearing no favorable prognosis. Not motion in the depths nor movement at large are objects of vision. They are objects of mind and can never, except by the use of symbols, be shown as three dimensional, or even two.

The unconscious is of inestimable import for art, knowing better than analysis does the speed and rhythm and unceasing motion that matter is. As I said before, it did not take news of the electron to tell the artist of the ultimate; nor did it take aesthetic to tell him that the immediate and the ultimate are one. Nor did it take abstraction to enable him to state it in his art. Where the artist's concern for this is conscious and studied, it is sterile and inept. Where it is unconscious,—fresh, unheralded intuition,—it provides a new dynamic and a direct creative art. Successful distortion in modern art or in the

art of the past is always unconscious at the moment of its execution. Conscious abstraction and analysis to be valid come later, when this, that was unthought at the time of its doing, is appraised and seen to be good.

I have followed the work of a young artist who made his first and only notable success with the painting of a model in his studio. Bizarre, flowing, sensitive, clear in color, one cannot look at this work and miss the fact that the artist was under a tyrannous inspiration here which blotted out everything except the model, the worker and his tools. The painting tells nothing except the scene, the form depicted—yet it tells without a peradventure, too, that there was nothing else to be told. Here was no aesthetic theory, no studied attempt to reveal anything sub-sensuous, no conscious abstraction, no surrealism aware of itself. Here was only vision, feeling, and creative skill. The painting was proclaimed, widely shown and discussed, taken apart by the critics for detailed eulogy. Abstract values were found in it, which certainly were there, but which had come to be there without the artist's conscious taking thought; Hogarth's "line of beauty", the newspaper said; prescient distortion; vertical lines to express exaltation, horizontal to express repose, curves to express plenty and contentment; diagonals for tension and distress.

That this young painter fell under the curse of *ex post facto* ratiocination and could never again be free of it is proof, I agree, that his impregnation with the art spirit was meagre and his gift not very great. In his later painting he could never forget himself, nor cease to strive for Hogarth's "line of beauty", abstract lines and curves to hang his picture on. As I have said, he never really rang the bell again. I use the story, in pathos second only to The Rake's Progress! to illustrate the point I have tried to make: that any conscious, studied attempt to use distortion or abstraction, any before-the-fact commitment to meretricious traffic with surrealistic techniques, is foredoomed. If the artist does not know at the moment of creation that the immediate and the ultimate are one, and know it *con amore* so that for the time being he knows nothing else, what he does before his canvas or as he thumps his clay is not going to be a matter of any importance. He may do something that will provoke exclamation, a tempest in a teapot. But he will have made no significant contribution to the artistic tradition of his time, except didactically.

The artist is mastered by the creative experience. But in a subordinate capacity he must be master of it. His first commitment, his dignity, his discipline, all put him in a peculiar sense in control. He has something to say, a message to convey. How he will say it is implicit in the spell he is under.

The word "message" is used advisedly, because art is a kind of deeply felt

communication. It is possible and not uncommon for the artist to be communicating only with himself. But "private art" is not really private, since even if the artist is not concerned to do more than tell himself a secret, he would want to tell it in such a way as to tell himself something beyond what he had known before. The public then could hardly be debarred from listening in to filch the secret if they were smart enough or the artist unguarded enough to make this possible. There is a distinction drawn here between "private art", as it were, and what is actually neurotic or even psychopathic art, art which might be likened to the confused, introspective, *sotto voce* mutterings of a person whose mind is not clear. If the artist has nothing communicable to say, he would do better, would he not, to maintain a dignified silence.

Abstraction, unless it be an exercise, a halfway measure preparing itself for final statement, is always laborious and self-conscious and pedantic: a confession of weakness. The layman is not interested to be told by the artist that the object of sense is literally speed and flux and interplay, in tempo scarcely to be distinguished from what surrounds it. Science can tell us this and tell us better. From the artist we look for art. We long to have him reveal to us, in his own medium and his own *genre,* what all great art in a thousand, thousand ways has said with infinite variety. The artist's more sensitive observation pre-eminently can discern this; his discipline can best communicate it. It is this that makes him an artist. The layman, who reads as he runs, if he reads at all, can figure it out for himself, perhaps; but he can never immediately experience the artist's immediate intuition.

The artist knows in a flash of insight what the workaday can only grope for. In the object of sense he knows ultimate truth, and can there make it manifest. Ultimate truth, to be sure, he can know with the mind as well as another. But he knows it best in the sense-grasped world of light where, because he is an artist, he is deliciously at home, and where he finds the story told, and loves to retell it, in intricate profusion.

Book Reviews

CHARLES DE TOLNAY: *The Youth of Michelangelo.* Princeton University Press, 1943, XIII, 299 pp. 292 plates without pagination. $15.00.

This book is a minutely documented and fully illustrated study of the biography of Michelangelo and his art during the first part of his life. Its author lives up to his reputation as one of the most eminent students of the great sculptor and it is unlikely that anyone else will ever have to go over the biographical part of his work again. For every fact is attested by primary sources and no source appears to be unfairly interpreted. One can have nothing but praise for so careful and sober a presentation of an artist's life.

The second part of Mr. de Tolnay's book, *Primordial Visions of Life and Destiny,* is in technique almost entirely subjective. Its persuasiveness, consequently, will vary to the extent that the reader shares the author's vision. Let me cite one or two instances. (1) In comparing the *Battle of Cascina* of Michelangelo to that of Leonardo, Mr. de Tolnay writes, "For Leonardo the physical forces of the universe reveal themselves through the phenomenon of the battle. Michelangelo, on the other hand, grasps that which is eternal in this historical event, the Fatum, and fixes the figures in frozen poses, putting them beyond all time; not man in his dependence on nature, but man and his destiny is the problem." (p. 109) However charitable one may be, such sentences are at best pure rhetoric. (2) "The figure of the St. Matthew expresses a sort of eruption of uncontrolled and deep-seated natural forces in man, which not only determines the position of the members but seems to have produced their very forms . . . He (Michelangelo) subordinates external accuracy to the inward vision of truth which possesses him. In view of this, it is not wholly surprising that Michelangelo did not complete this statue. He could not better express what he wished than in its vague and unfinished forms." (pp. 113 f.) There is no more discussing such statements than there is discussing Pater on the *Mona Lisa.*

It is the more deplorable that Mr. de Tolnay should have felt the necessity of such passages since he has, as everyone knows, a eye which is keener than that of most critics and a gift of spotting interesting pictorial details which is extraordinary. The pages which he devotes to Michelangelo's youthful copies of earlier masters (pp. 66 ff.) are an education in seeing. They contain no pseudo-poetry, no fine writing, no purple; they are factual without being obvious and hence are verifiable. And yet he will allow himself after such clear and precise pages to write, "Michelangelo's Virgin . . . is freed from the *hic et nunc* and spiritually absorbed in austere contemplation of the absolute" (p. 75). What information is conveyed in such sentences lies more in the field of autobiography than in that of criticism and though it is always interesting to know

something about the autobiography of so distinguished a scholar as Mr. de Tolnay, one cannot help wondering whether he himself thinks he is writing about Michelangelo.

The Johns Hopkins University.

—GEORGE BOAS.

JACOB BURCKHARDT: *Force and Freedom. Reflections on history.* Edited by James Hastings Nichols. Pantheon Books. 1943. 382 pages. $3.50.

The publication of the first English translation of Burckhardt's "Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen" under this "modernized" title is an event of importance in the world of the spirit. Or in the words of the writer, "In the realm of thought, it is supremely just and right that all frontiers should be swept away. There is too little of high spiritual value scattered over the earth for any epoch to say: we are utterly self-sufficient; or even: we prefer our own" (p. 89). This quotation may serve as an example of the unusual style of this book: it is the *spoken* word to which we listen in the posthumously published lecture notes. The author is addressing an audience of Basle burghers of the years of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and therefore his notes intentionally have a flexibility of formulation which presupposes amplification by extempore statements or accentuation by oratory means. As soon as the modern reader has realized this peculiar feature of the book and has transformed himself into a listener he will be captivated by the simple beauty and precision of formulation which makes Burckhardt one of the finest prose writers of the German language. The translation has ably and truthfully clung to the spirit of the word and has solved a task of great difficulty.

As to the content of these lectures, they deal with the genesis of state, religion and culture and their mutual interaction. He judges from an "Archimedean point outside events" (p. 84)—that is, from the point of view of a man whose watch tower was in the patrician city of Basle looking out toward Germany *and* France. He spreads out in front of his audience the vastness of European and Oriental history in order to discover certain leading observations which would enable his students to see the present more clearly and even pierce through the darkness of the future. The future which he describes has become our present. The description is today as precise and as actual as if written by a contemporary historian of utmost perspicacity and detachment from wishful thinking. The power of prophecy appears in him as the result of an omnipresence of comparable data of the past while looking at the present. He is the first amongst writers of the German tongue who has had a clear vision of the interaction of "the era of the masses" and its outgrowth—military dictatorship. Guided by a radical distrust in "progress", he appears completely unbribed by any form of imperialism, nationalism or worship of technical achievements which color the historical literature of the 19th century. And yet his language is void of any cynicism or any false ring of prophetic haughtiness. We listen to the conservative individualism of a world citizen of the type of Goethe. Nostalgic worship of Mediterranean beauty blended with an uncompromising

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Protestant attitude toward ethical values, acceptance of life as it is but based on a notion of life as it should be—this is the specific atmosphere of Burckhardt's spirit. The complete realism of a mind which is nevertheless saturated with values, and resulting from it, an analytically presented opposition against the progressive deification of the state and of the material values of money and machine make him one of the most fruitful interpreters of history in our own era.

At a moment when the missionary instincts of American people are called upon to heal the wounds of war torn Europe, it may deepen their responsibility to meet in Burckhardt's historical observation that element of sceptical lucidity which is the guarantee of truly idealistic action.

The editor and translator has preceded the book by an extensive and very understanding introduction which deals with Burckhardt's place within 19th century German historical literature. A special word of thanks should go to the publisher who has raised the standards of printing and binding to a level rare in our days.

Mills College.

—ALFRED NEUMEYER.

KLAUS MANN: *André Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought.* Creative Age Press. 1943. 331 pp.

Klaus Mann has written the first book on André Gide in English. It may be too vivacious, doubtless out of fear that we might not appreciate Gide merely on his merits; a fear well founded, since he has remained practically unknown to us in spite of the consensus of critics that this French novelist and essayist is one of the greatest writers of our time. But Mann has not written in the spirit of bringing refinement to crude America. On the contrary it is pleasant to be told by him how much Gide at the peak of European culture has admired Walt Whitman, and apparently been influenced by him, in love of life and hope in the future; in contrast to Proust and Joyce and other writers of Gide's age and rank who were profoundly discouraged because they identified the good not with human life but with disappearing forms of it.

This study is serious and compelling. Attention to it will establish Gide's importance far better than reading one or two of his books which have been translated into English, for it is evident that beyond the value of any of them, however masterful in itself, his significance consists in the continuity and variety of his work as a whole. The exciting thing about Gide is the way his life and work have lagged behind the crisis of modern thought, then caught up with it and flashed ahead. Klaus Mann is equipped to see this, not only by familiarity with all that Gide has written, and by grasp of his cultural milieu, but by friendship with the man himself.

The main theme of this book is how Gide transcended the egocentric ethics he had as a young Puritan escaping from mundane coarseness into the other-world of religion and the ivory tower of art, and still had when he threw off taboos and became dithy-

Protestant attitude toward ethical values, acceptance of life as it is but based on a notion of life as it should be—this is the specific atmosphere of Burckhardt's spirit. The complete realism of a mind which is nevertheless saturated with values, and resulting from it, an analytically presented opposition against the progressive deification of the state and of the material values of money and machine make him one of the most fruitful interpreters of history in our own era.

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The editor and translator has preceded the book by an extensive and very understanding introduction which deals with Burckhardt's place within 19th century German historical literature. A special word of thanks should go to the publisher who has raised the standards of printing and binding to a level rare in our days.

Mills College.

—ALFRED NEUMEYER.

KLAUS MANN: *André Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought.* Creative Age Press. 1943. 331 pp.

Klaus Mann has written the first book on André Gide in English. It may be too vivacious, doubtless out of fear that we might not appreciate Gide merely on his merits; a fear well founded, since he has remained practically unknown to us in spite of the consensus of critics that this French novelist and essayist is one of the greatest writers of our time. But Mann has not written in the spirit of bringing refinement to crude America. On the contrary it is pleasant to be told by him how much Gide at the peak of European culture has admired Walt Whitman, and apparently been influenced by him, in love of life and hope in the future; in contrast to Proust and Joyce and other writers of Gide's age and rank who were profoundly discouraged because they identified the good not with human life but with disappearing forms of it.

This study is serious and compelling. Attention to it will establish Gide's importance far better than reading one or two of his books which have been translated into English, for it is evident that beyond the value of any of them, however masterful in itself, his significance consists in the continuity and variety of his work as a whole. The exciting thing about Gide is the way his life and work have lagged behind the crisis of modern thought, then caught up with it and flashed ahead. Klaus Mann is equipped to see this, not only by familiarity with all that Gide has written, and by grasp of his cultural milieu, but by friendship with the man himself.

The main theme of this book is how Gide transcended the egocentric ethics he had as a young Puritan escaping from mundane coarseness into the other-world of religion and the ivory tower of art, and still had when he threw off taboos and became dithy-

rambic about the sensuous joy of living. He used his art to escape the world, then to celebrate the world, and finally to remake it. He has not ceased to be an individualist. But Mann points out that after oscillating between asceticism and hedonism Gide has become more interested in the polarity between "unrestricted individualism and an individualism controlled and limited by social responsibilities." Gide sees that this must apply to nations, and Mann emphasizes that he "did whatever he could to promote and deepen the European consciousness of a common heritage and a common future." Obviously Gide would agree with Dewey that civilization is to be made civil through "communication and participation in values of life by means of the imagination."

University of Cincinnati.

—VAN METER AMES.

STEPHEN A. LARRABEE: *English Bards and Grecian Marbles. The relationships between sculpture and poetry especially in the Romantic period.* Columbia University Press. 1943. 312 pp. 5 plates.

This is one of the rare books in which the historian of literature successfully employs his knowledge of the history of art and thus truly contributes to the "reciprocal illumination of the arts" (Oskar Walzel). Excellently written, richly documented and distinctly analyzed, it traces the interpretation of antique statuary from the medieval witch idol to the Romantic concept of the "plastic spirit". A brief glossary and comprehensive bibliography add greatly to the value of the book. The emphasis, however, is on the 18th and 19 century with its evolution from Milton's praise of the spirit of old Greece to Wordsworth's discovery of Greek simplicity in the men of England and to Keats' Romantic tendency to trace

"all forms and substances
straight homeward to their symbol-essences".

The material from which the Baroque and Neo-Classical poet drew his inspiration was, of course, the Hellenistic sculpture of the type of the Venus of Medici, the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoon. But it is interesting to observe how obstinately even a Byron clung to the inherited notions against the "Phidian freaks" of the newly acquired Elgin marbles. The true Greek flavor of the fifth century (discovered previously in Germany by Hoelderlin) appears in England with Keats and Shelley and transforms the poetic language from a descriptive method to intuitive divination. The transformation from Horace's "ut pictura poesis" to its reverse "ut poesis pictura" is the process which took place in the epoch between Blake and Landor.

Mr. Larrabee's book has itself the "plastic" quality of a disciplined and living organism.

Mills College.

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ROBERT FROST: *Come In.* Henry Holt and Company. 1943. 192 pp. $2.50.

This is a collection by Louis Untermeyer of poems from each of the previously published volumes of Robert Frost. The selections are introduced by a short (13 page) biography, which is lively and unpretentiously factual. The poems are illustrated by sketches by John O'Hara Cosgrave, II, who takes as his subjects the subjects of the poems: on the page facing *Mending Wall* is a drawing of a broken stone wall climbing over a hill; above *The Grindstone* is a sketch of an old barn and tree shading a grindstone. Untermeyer prefaces the poems with comments of the same nature as Cosgrave's sketches. Individual remarks accompany each poem, appearing either before a set of several poems or as a separate introduction to each poem. These remarks, therefore, do not in any sense constitute a critical study of Frost; they are more like summaries of each of the poems. Where criticism does appear briefly and incidentally it is sometimes superficial, sometimes wrong: an example of the latter is Untermeyer's observation that *Stopping by Wood on a Snowy Evening* "uses its superb craftsmanship to come to a climax of responsibility,"—as though the line "But I have promises to keep" were more than the poet's gentle sigh—not the moral reprimand—that one cannot, alas, sit the night through outside in the snow.

Indeed it is impossible to find any legitimate object in Untermeyer's comments. Some poets perhaps require a guide to say in general terms what their poems are about placing the reader in the general neighborhood of a poem's unique quality that he may feel his way to it. But to Frost's noon-obvious images and midwestern directness the reader need bring only quiet attention.

Untermeyer's reputation will not gain by this effort. The book somehow reminds one of the *alleged* paper shortage.

Washington, D. C.

—SIDNEY ZINK.

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY: *Hinduism and Buddhism.* Philosophical Library. 1943. 86 pp. $1.75.

Although this little book is divided into two parts, one on Hinduism, the other on Buddhism, the parallelism between the fundamentals is so great that only a single truth, or rather an aspect of The Single Truth, is expressed. This aspect, of course, has to do with metaphysical first principles, with which all of Dr. Coomaraswamy's recent publications have been concerned. It will not be popular both because few will want to read it and because fewer will understand it, for the doctrine is, to quote from the book, "in the Buddha's own words 'hard to be understood by you who are of different views, another tolerance, other tastes, other allegiance and other training' ". The author, however, is of one mind with the Indian tradition, which " is one of the forms of the Philosophia Perennis, and as such, embodies those universal truths to which no one people or age can make exclusive claim". "We shall try now", he says, "to state the fundamentals positively: not, however, as this is usually done in accordance with the

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'historical method' by which the reality is more obscured than illuminated, but from a strictly orthodox point of view, both as to principles and their application; endeavouring to speak with mathematical precision, but never employing words of our own or making any affirmations for which authority could not be cited by chapter and verse; in this way making even our technique characteristically Indian". That the case has not been overstated is proven by the citation of references to Sanskrit, Pali, Platonic, and Christian sources. The failure of previous modern disseminators of Vedic and Buddhist texts is emphasized in a statement concerning the ancient oriental attitude, as follows, "In those days it was not considered that the mere knowledge of languages sufficed to make a man a 'translator' in any serious sense of the word; no one would have undertaken to translate a text who had not studied it for long years at the feet of a traditional and authoritative exponent of its teachings, and much less would any one have thought himself qualified to translate a book in the teachings of which he did not believe".

In making the comparison of Hinduism and Buddhism Dr. Coomaraswamy points out that it is not the historical life of the Buddha that is important, but the "mythical and miraculous features", in which "his personality is completely overshadowed, as he must have wished it should be, by the eternal substance with which he identified himself. In other words, 'the Buddha is only anthropomorphic, not a man' ". Elsewhere he says that "The more superficially one studies Buddhism, the more it seems to differ from the Brahmanism in which it originated; the more profound our study, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish Buddhism from Brahmanism . . . Or if we consider the miraculous life, we shall find that almost every detail . . . can be exactly paralleled—and in saying 'exactly' we mean just that—in the Vedic mythology of Agni and Indra, priest and king *in divinis* . . . We do not mean to deny that the Buddha's defeat of Mara is an allegory of self-conquest, but only to point out that this is a very old story, one that has always and everywhere been told; and that in its Buddhist setting the story is not a new one, but derived immediately from the Vedic tradition".

Aesthetics has no place in this traditional philosophy, wherein "art is a way of life" and anything well made that needed making is an object of art, the "fine arts" of painting and sculpture being primarily for the production of icons or "supports of contemplation". The author, after giving an interesting series of the relationships between the " 'halves' of the originally undivided Unity", observes that "Throughout the series (it) is the noetic principle that sanctions or enjoins what the aesthetic performs or avoids; disorder arising only when the latter is distracted from her rational allegiance by her own ruling passions and identifies this submission with 'liberty' ". Yet the basis of modern art is the freedom of the individual to express himself, that is to say, to subject himself to his "ruling passions", a condition which the traditionalist cannot but view with disdain, since for him "There is, in fact, no more an individual than there is a world soul. What we call our 'consciousness' is nothing but a process; its content changes from day to day and is just as much causally determined as is the content of the body. Our personality is constantly being destroyed and renewed". And further, "Freedom is from one's self, this 'I', and its affections. He only *is* free from virtues and vices and all their fatal consequences who never became anyone; he only *can* be free who is no longer anyone; impossible to be freed from oneself and also to remain

oneself. The liberation from good and evil that seemed impossible and is impossible for the man whom we define by what he does or thinks and who answers to the question. "Who is that?', 'It's me,' is possible only for him who can answer at the Sundoor to the question 'Who art thou?', 'Thyself' ".

Ultimately, such a one gives up all material possessions and attachments and becomes a religious mendicant. "These are those that have denied themselves and left all to 'follow Me'. . . . The Hindu of any caste, or even a barbarian, can become a Nobody: . . . These are already liberated from the chain of fate, to which only the psycho-physical vehicle remains attached until the end comes. Death in *samãdhi* changes nothing essential. Of their condition thereafter little more can be said than that they are. They are certainly not annihilated, for not only is the annihilation of anything real a metaphysical impossibility, but it is explicit that 'Never have I not been, or hast thou not been, or ever shall not be' ".

Continuing with the aesthetic approach, the author says, "Of all the names and forms of God the monogrammatic syllable Om, the totality of all sounds and the music of the spheres chanted by the resonant Sun, is the best. The validity of such an audible symbol is exactly the same as that of a plastic icon, both alike serving as supports of contemplation; such a support is needed because that which is imperceptible to eye or ear cannot be apprehended objectively as it is in itself, but only in a likeness. The symbol must be naturally adequate, and cannot be chosen at random; one infers the unseen in the seen, the unheard in the heard; but these forms are only means by which to approach the formless and must be discarded before we can become it." How different this is from the modern attempts at "self-expression", in which generally all traditional principles are violated and in which the most obvious "symbol" is the female nude, which is just that and nothing more, though it may be something less. "To do well", says Dr. Coomaraswamy, "is to do sacred things, and only to do nothing, or what being done amiss amounts to nothing, is idle and profane. . . . Actions, in other words, are in order or inordinate in precisely the same way that iconography may be correct or incorrect, formal or informal. Error is failure to hit the mark, and is to be expected in all who act instructively, to please themselves. Skill is virtue, whether in doing or in making: a matter needing emphasis only because it has now been generally overlooked that there can be artistic as well as moral sin".

This is a very brief review of a book that is itself rigidly condensed, the author giving notes and references for those who want to look up the sources. There are many signs of careless proof-reading, a fact which is especially unfortunate where there are so many foreign words and where the author makes no statement "for which authority could not be cited by chapter and verse". I have not attempted to "criticize" the theories expressed, as I am far behind the author in linguistic, religious, and metaphysical knowledge, my only qualification for reviewing the book being that I believe in its teachings, which I have studied "for long years". For the benefit of those who are interested, it should be added that "practical advice" is given to those who choose to follow the path.

The Cleveland Museum of Art.

—HOWARD HOLLIS.

JOHN D. GORDON: *Joseph Conrad. The Making of a Novelist.* Harvard University Press. 1940. xiv + 430 pp.

The Publisher's Note to this volume states that "all lovers of Conrad's stories and all students of the art of writing will find this book indispensable." This is no overstatement. Dr. Gordon has provided in this book the most detailed and documented account of the creative labors of a novelist on record up to date. He was able to do so, in the main, because Conrad provided ample material in his letters, prefaces and manuscripts for a complete case history of each of his novels.

Dr. Gordon shows how Conrad labored as few other novelists have, for one thing, because "he depended upon spurts of inspiration; he lacked objective standards." This lack of economy in method he tried to correct by working on several stories at once, a procedure that could only add to his troubles. Then again, he was a perfectionist in his philosophy and practice of writing, but his attitude was emotional rather rational. He would go mad over a sentence because he was extravagantly nervous about details. He wrote "in doubt over every line. I ask myself—Is it right? Is it true? Do I feel it so? Do I express all my feelings? And I ask it in every sentence. I perspire in incertitude over every word!" This over-anxiety led him to feel all too frequently that he had "lost all *sense* of style and yet (was) haunted, mercilessly haunted, by the *necessity* of style." He would "dream for hours, hours! over a sentence and even then (be unable to) put it together so as to satisfy the cravings of *my* soul." Such cravings border on the pathological and obstruct rather than aid work in progress.

Another difficulty experienced by Conrad—and this may also be connected with his excessive emontionality—was lack of privacy and regularity in writing. He was irritated out of all proportion by the slightest inconvenience and disturbance. He worked anywhere the inspiration seized him—in the bathroom, dining room, front porch, out of doors, and did so untidily. For all the difficulties that arose from this unsystematic way of working and his failure to accomplish satisfactory results he blamed his surroundings, without which he could not have endured the strain. When interrupted by a visitor on one occasion he was "stunned and dazed, every nerve quivering with the pain of being uprooted out of one world and flung down into another . . . " Conrad acknowledged to Wells that "As to working regularly in a decent and orderly and industrious manner, I've given that up from sheer impossibility. The damned stuff comes out only by a kind of mental convulsion lasting two, three, or more days—up to a fortnight—which leaves me perfectly limp and not very happy, exhausted emotionally to all appearance, but secretly irritable to the point of savagery."

In this undisciplined procedure may lie the reason why it took Conrad unduly long to finish a story. As Dr. Gordon puts it, "Conrad could write next to nothing, he could write in a torrent but he could never count upon regularity." When to this is added that his method of working out a story was individual and hazardous, it becomes plain why creating was such a strain on his imagination. He counted too much on the inspiration of the moment to supply him with the details of the story he was working on. "You will discover, if you read my books," he remarked to a friend, "how I am writing towards some fixed event or scene I can see, but I do not know how I shall get there." He even began writing without a definite idea of the most important events.

"I don't think Conrad ever conceived his books as wholes before he began to write," declared his wife. This meant writing in a mental fog which consumed needless time and fruitless effort. He was not willing to give his imagination time in which to fill in the first general impression with the requisite details, and by forcing the issue—which he called the inspiration of the moment—he lost the very things he was looking for and needed most.

Conrad also suffered from a strangely dramatic notion regarding creative work. He held that "to move others deeply we must deliberately allow ourselves to be carried away beyond the bounds of our normal sensibility." He told another writer that in order to disclose human hearts and create human souls "you must give yourself up to emotions (no easy task). You must squeeze out of yourself every sensation, every thought, every image,—mercilessly without reserve and without remorse," and that "you must do it so that at the end of your day's work you should feel exhausted, emptied of every sensation and every thought, with a blank mind and an aching heart, with the notion that there is nothing,—nothing left in you."

Obviously, since Conrad set out to exhaust himself he succeeded in doing so, and he attained results in spite of the arbitrary attitude, but at great cost to himself. It seems to be a dangerous business for the creative worker to formulate theories about creative effort, for he is most likely to get off on the wrong track and follow it to his disadvantage. This is one of the lessons, perhaps the most important one, to be gathered from Dr. Gordon's very thorough study of a unique literary artist.

Carnegie Institute of Technology.

—MAX SCHOEN.

NICOLAS CALAS: *Confound the Wise.* Arrow Editions. 1942. 275 pp. $3.00.

One or two well-known writers have damned this book rather viciously, snorting at its spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, confused vocabulary and typographical blunders (*Calcutta* instead of *Calicut, negotiation* instead of *negation, exposing* instead of *expounding,* are but a few out of several hundred such superficial absurdities).

But this is Nicolas Calas' first book written in English, after several written in his native Greek, then in French which he adopted as an exile before again seeking refuge in America; and one can easily forgive the rough surface of an author who expresses, in a foreign tongue, thoughts more original and arguments more ingenious than any which our most lauded critics, with the exception perhaps of Kenneth Burke, have yet dared formulate or handle. In a series of essays devoted to imagery in modern poetry, to memory in creative literature, to the problematic originality and luxuriance of Manueline art or Portuguese baroque, to images depicting the Trinity and to the general problem of the emotional relationship of artist to model in portrait-painting, to the problem of the Douanier Rousseau and of "modern primitive" painting, Calas uses a variety of dialectics most skilfully, though this very variety, at times, tends to confuse

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It is therefore to be hoped that Mr. Calas will rapidly improve his style as an American writer so that he will save our better-known critics from losing their tempers over his style when they might more profitably analyze his thought; also, that he will discipline his thought so as to state his principles more directly, which would at the same time impose some order on the luxuriance of their indirect exemplifications. While retaining his unusual gift for new and ingenious insights, so rare in American aesthetics, he might thus offer us many more books to confound those who are only superficially wise, which we need badly.

New York City.

—EDOUARD RODITI.

EDWARD WAGENKNECHT: *Cavalcade of the English Novel.* Henry Holt and Co. 1943. x + 646 pp. $4.00.

This is a chronological survey, and it purports to be critical. Beginning with Elizabethan prose fiction, the author tries to describe and comment on the work of every writer whom he feels to have contributed to the development of the English Novel up to the present time. Important novelists outside the main stream are also considered. Writers too minor to be included in the central text are given brief reviews in an appendix.

The result is a convenient reminder of the contents of many books which students of the novel have read, and probably forgotten. As such, it is useful, although there are other and perhaps better books which perform the same service. Beyond that, it is one of the most superficial attempts at literary criticism which your reviewer has come across recently.

Mr. Wagenknecht remarks in his preface that, although not entirely original, he has made "hundreds of observations . . . which, to the best of my knowledge, have not been made before." He proceeds to make plenty of observations, most of which will delight the amiable gentry of the Saturday Review, but almost none of which could be classed as valid criticism. He is apparently not aware that there is a considerable distinction between "making observations" and performing critical analyses.

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His precise critical standards are nowhere clearly stated, but we may infer something about them from his "observations." Mr. Wagenknecht does not approve of the novel of ideas. (p. 369, " . . . many of the people who pretend to be studying literature

in America today are really not interested in literature at all. They are interested in sociology and economics; they are interested in 'ideas' . . . "). He does not care for naturalism, "stream of consciousness writing," or "materialists . . . [who] find no significance in life" (p. 565).

He prefers the romantic tradition, admiring Scott and Dickens above all others. (Scott "reaches heights of tragic grandeur to which few British novelists have even dreamed of aspiring" (p. 152). The author calls him "the Wizard," and the "greatest English novelist"). He also likes books which convey an uplifting moral message of a nice, transcendental variety, and seems to feel that you can evaluate a novel by listing famous people who have enjoyed it. (Trollope's "Parliamentary novels, . . . were the solace of Grover Cleveland's declining years," p. 299). He is willing to excuse almost anything if novelists succeed in "giving pleasure and refreshment to their readers" (p. 180).

Mr. Wagenknecht is wonderfully inconsistent, because he seems to feel that critic and novelist alike ought to scatter sunshine. Among other things, he has an enormous memory; almost every page mentions another "unforgettable character" created by another easily forgotten novelist. Antagonistic "observations" are always balanced with reminders that there is some good in every author.

It would be amusing to quote Mr. Wagenknecht's observations at length; many are quite quaint in their modern context, and some are completely ridiculous. For example (on p. 378), he says of Stevenson: "Probably no other great writer ever made 'copy' of so much of his experience: . . . been quite so much preoccupied with himself." It can only be argued in his defense that the author may not consider Proust or Gide great writers.

The book makes easy reading, if you do not mind page on page of clichés. Every novelist who fails in his intentions is said to "fall between two stools." (There is an enormous clatter of people performing this identical feat; the bad figure is overworked to absurdity, and there are dozens like it). "Good old" and "immortal" are adjectives applied with charming indiscrimination. The style, in general, is that of a wisecrack inscribed on soggy toast. And some of the "original observations" turn out to be mere bad paraphrase, as when (without crediting the original) Macaulay's clever comment on Miss Aikins historical reading (in the essay on Addison) is cut into two sentences, removed from the particular to the universal, and made to stand as a general condemnation of "modern writers" (p. 165).

If we seem somewhat rough on Mr. Wagenknecht, consider what he says of Edmund Wilson's essay on Dickens in *The Wound and the Bow* (p. 218): " . . . a completely irresponsible piece of criticism." It is unfortunate that so learned and kindly a gentleman should have permitted *himself* to compose so superficial and irresponsible a book.

Cincinnati, Ohio.

—JOHN F. MATTHEWS.

HOXIE NEALE FAIRCHILD: *Religious Trends in English Poetry.* Vol. II: 1740-1780. Columbia University Press. 1942. ix + 406 pp.

Professor Fairchild continues in this volume his studies of religious trends in English poetry. As readers of his first volume will know, Mr. Fairchild's curiosity knows no bounds; he investigates every possible corner of the field, uncovering poets whose names do not even appear in the DNB, reprinting verses which have not found a reader since they first appeared in small anonymous editions. Consequently one can feel certain that he has neglected nothing which might throw some light on his subject.

Just what the value to scholarship of such industry is might puzzle some of us. No one can object to a scholar's studying books whose importance no longer seems clear to his contemporaries. It would be absurd, for instance, to write a history of 19th century English poetry without giving a large place to Tupper, however boring his writings may appear to us. For Tupper was widely read and undoubtedly influenced his readers profoundly. Similar remarks could be made about American literature; a history of prose and poetry in this country, a historian even of ideas, could ill afford to omit so repellent a figure as Elbert Hubbard. But when one comes to writers who (1) wrote books which aesthetically were never of any interest and (2) whom no one read even when they were contemporary, the case is somewhat different. All one can conclude from such investigations is the spread of certain ideas, their popularity, or the pervasiveness of certain styles. That in itself is a great deal, but it ought not to be mistaken for something else.

In the opinion of the writer of this notice, Professor Fairchild's greatest defect as an historian is his obvious dislike of many of the ideas and aesthetic fashions whose history he is writing. In some instances this leads him to fail to think in terms of his period. Thus (p. 282) he speaks of "a greatly diluted Platonic Tradition" which appears in "the cult of an aesthetico-ethical harmony of truth, goodness, and beauty which has been created by a benignly fecund God." But, unless one misunderstands the terms used, this cult is precisely that of Plotinus, the tradition of Neo-platonism which was always mistaken, not only by poets and philosophasters, but also by genuine philosophers for Platonism itself. If you lived in the 18th century in England, with a literary tradition of Platonism going back through Lord Herbury of Cherbury to the Middle Ages, you would have meant this cult when you used the word "Platonism."

Again there are certain dogmatic statements of opinion which are bound to startle the historian of philosophy. Thus (p. 250) we read that Thomas Reid is "the only reputable philosopher" of the Common Sense School. Or we find careless over-simplifications, such as (p. 9), "Empiricism is a highly unstable intellectual position, for the man who says that he will shun theory and live by the solid facts is really saying that he will open his heart to every breeze of feeling that may chance to blow." Or (*Ib.*) the doctrine of the Inner Light weakened the barrier between reason and feeling, as if the sentimentalism which we are accustomed to associate with Rousseau's *Emile* appears as the usual alternative to Cartesian (?) rationalism. (The point of interrogation is inserted, since none of the terms ending in *ism* are univocal.) Or, once more (p. 11) "The philosophy of Berkeley was, of course, antirationalistic." Or finally, (p. 6) "Christianity preaches the redemption of sinful man through Incarnate God; but since

the sentimentalist stands in no need of redemption the entire groundwork of Christianity is cut away, and the Saviour becomes irrelevant." I do not maintain that one cannot so define his terms as to make these deductions reasonably; but it is a question whether when one is writing history, one should set up logically tight deductive systems, which one's subjects ought to have believed—regardless of whether they did or not—or whether one should confine himself to the facts and point out where one's subjects drew the wrong conclusions.

There may finally be some doubt in a reader's mind about whether Professor Fairchild has made a study of "religious trends" in English poetry or whether he has not simply read a tremendous number of English poems and looked for religious sentiments in them. There are whole chapters where by his own avowal nothing of any religious relevance is discovered. One has the impression, to be sure, that the term "religious" for Professor Fairchild is synonymous with "High Church Anglican", but that is only a suspicion. Who shall tell us what a term such as this "really" means? A Deist thought he was being religious, just as a Gnostic thought he was being Christian. The conclusion which most historians of ideals would draw from many of Professor Fairchild's examples is not that his irreligious poets were irreligious, but that they did not share the religious beliefs of the person who chose to write their history.

The Johns Hopkins University.

—GEORGE BOAS.

BERNARD DEVOTO. *Mark Twain At Work.* Harvard University Press. 1942. ix + 114 pp.

This book makes delightful reading, and is a most valuable addition to the meager list of studies on the nature of the creative process as it operates in the production of recognized literary masterpieces. Mr. DeVoto traces the origin and growth of *Tom Sawyer, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* and Mark's last significant work, *The Mysterious Stranger.* Of these three essays the last one is the most exhaustive and significant in the light it throws on the "way of the makers." Mr. DeVoto calls his study of this book "a chapter, hitherto unwritten, in the biography of Mark Twain." It concerns the numerous manuscripts that grew out of the series of disasters that befell Mark in the years 1895 and 1896, when he who had been the darling of the gods suddenly became the target of their most cruel darts. He lost his fortune, his favorite daughter died of meningitis, and his adored wife declined into an invalidism from which she never recovered. From these calamities Mark sought surcease in constant work, and the numerous manuscripts that came out of them enable us to watch him "while he repeatedly tries and fails to make something of experiences that were vitally important to him—and finally we are able to see him fuse and transform them in a work of art."

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work in his subject "do not justify us in saying much about how creative processes may work in other writers." They work the same way in all writers of the creative calibre of Mark Twain, for every creative art work is, as Mr. DeVoto aptly puts it, "the terms of an armistice signed with fate, and the terms one makes are the terms one can make."

Carnegie Institute of Technology.

—MAX SCHOEN.

The Complete Roman Drama (all the extant comedies of Plautus and Terence, and tragedies of Seneca). Edited by GEORGE E. DUCKWORTH. 2 v. Random House.

The Complete Greek Drama (all the extant tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and comedies of Aristophanes and Menander). Edited by WHITNEY J. OATES AND EUGENE O'NEILL, JR. 2 v. Random House.

In these two sets the corpus of extant classical drama is presented as a unit, in excellent form for reading or for study and revaluation. The introductions to the individual plays, and the general prefaces, present the background of theatrical conditions essential for an understanding of the forms that, with Aristotle's examination, set the main pattern for sequent centuries. Even the nonconformists, Calderon, Shakespeare, deviate within the general scheme set by the Greeks and followed by the Romans.

The translations are by various hands, and of different degrees of scholarly or popular intent. Of the Greek plays in particular, there have been sprightlier versions of the comedies of Aristophanes, all but one of which are here anonymously translated. Renderings of other plays by Edith Hamilton were probably, and regrettably, unavailable. The power and often the beauty of the tragedies nonetheless leave their impact on the reader.

Viewing the classical theatre—even that small fragment which remains to us—as a whole, challenges speculation on the many persistent problems of dramatic theory. Thus Whitney J. Oates, in his introduction, finds in all tragedy three basic assumptions: the dignity of man; freedom of the will and its accompanying responsibility; and the existence of a superhuman factor in the universe. He then suggests that the Aristotelian type of tragedy is but a species in a wider class which, on the basis of these assumptions, places man "over against the everlasting and eternally mysterious question of evil." This is but one of many unanswered questions roused again by this concordant presentation of the complete classical drama.

New York City.

—JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY.

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New York City.

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OSKAR HAGEN: *Patterns and Principles of Spanish Art.* A completely rewritten edition. University of Wisconsin Press. 1943. 279 pp. 100 illustrations.

The thesis of this revised edition of a book first published in 1936 is to demonstrate "the uniform structure of art from the days of the Moors to those of Francisco Goya". Consequently its first part is entitled "the Spanish imagination" and discusses the underlying psychological traits of the Spanish character; somatic realism, the mystic strain, la tristeza Espagñola, sosiego, individualism, caballerosidad. The material is chosen from literature as well as from the fine arts. Yet besides these "emotional predispositions" there exist certain "visual patterns" which—according to Hagen—are recurrent in Spanish art: the allover pattern and planarity. Under these headings subdivisions are grouped such as "inflexibility," "variational form", etc. As in the case of Woelfflin's analysis of underlying visual data in the development of national styles, one would like to know in how far these basic patterns can be related to these psychological constitutents. This is indeed a basic problem for all formal analysis. The author is not unaware of this as a remark on page 36 shows in which the geometrical design of the vaulting of the cathedral of Burgos is likened to the hierarchical order in Spain. There are rare examples in art historical literature of the successful interpenetration of the psychological with the formal strata, especially fine in Otto Paecht's essay "Gestaltungsprinzipien der westlichen Malerei des 15. Jahrhunderts" (in *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen* vol. III, Berlin 1933, p. 75). The degradation of form to mere psychological symbolism is as much a danger as aesthetic formalism void of content. The title of Mr. Hagen's book invites such discussion in a journal dedicated to research in the principles of art criticism.

The second part of the book gives a brief and sound history of Spainsh art with an interesting short chapter on "sidelights from the history of music".

Such a book is highly useful as an introduction to the study of Spanish art because it ably connects authoritative relating of facts with a feeling for the formal qualities of art which is likely to develop a feeling for the typical. It is regrettable that the publisher did not provide for better reproductions in many instances. Small cuts such as Greco's "Entombment of Count Orgazcan" can be of value only if printed without excessive blackness. We hope that the next edition of Mr. Hagen's book can remedy these shortcomings.

Mills College.

-ALFRED NEUMEYER.

HARBERT J. MULLER: *Science & Criticism.* Yale University Press. 1943. xiv + 303 pp.

This work is an examination into the various ranges of man's thoughtful activity today, from the assumptions of humanism, with an eye toward their value in or influence upon literary criticism. Aided by a Guggenheim Fellowship, Professor Muller has

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found time to plough fields where the usual critic does no more than bend to cull a few flowers; in *Science & Criticism* he offers us of his harvest.

Physics, biology, psychology—with its offshoots of psychoanalysis and Gestalt psychology—and the social sciences, are all scanned, their weaknesses indicated, their advantages for the critic summed. In lively, frequently balanced or epigrammatic style, Professor Muller leads us along with rounded periods, carrying us at times faster than our thoughts (which would linger, weigh, perhaps protest); he is persuasive and eloquent in the best tradition of the humanism he sustains. And usually, whether he is discussing the literary implications of glucose (70 different compounds with the one molecular formula, $C_6H_{12}O_6$), or the limitations of Lenin's materialism, or the over-optimism of "emergent" biologists, he seems not only well-informed but sound.

In all save two respects, Professor Muller here gives us one of the shrewdest and most searching analyses of the "revolutionary" findings in the natural and the social sciences, as they may be drawn to "the purposes of literary criticism". He builds his pattern of humanism upon the conception of a harmonious synthesis, "supra-personal, supra-partisan, supra-racial", the notion of an ever more embracing oneness of all things; and he esteems all things good in the measure of their movement toward organism, toward this wholeness—without stopping to consider that such a drive is in all fields the desideratum of our day (that it is in essence "totalitarian" as opposed to individual, absolutist as opposed to democratic) and without weighing—or even seeming to recognize—the possibility that his own goal is chosen purely within and because of this contemporary urge. Further, he presents as the exemplar of humanism, "most conspicuously and honorably in literature today"—Thomas Mann; but nowhere (save for two brief touchings upon the *Joseph* story) does he develop a consideration of the works of Mann, that we may see their values. Rather, he uses such phrases as "from Milton to Mann," "almost all the great writers . . . like Mann today"—until we feel that Professor Muller is himself hung where he dangles his fellows: "Contemporaries are likely to be . . . simply awed by the Olympian qualities of Thomas Mann." "It is a little disheartening," he regrets, "to contemplate the actual modern work of art; but in Thomas Mann, at least, one can contemplate the possibilities." In view of the fact that a widely respected critic has recently referred to Mann as "a consecrated stuffed-shirt", Professor Muller should either have chosen a less controversial exemplar, or given body of justification to his choice. In its particular references, however, and especially for its analyses of currently accepted ideas, *Science & Criticism* remains a volume that probes beneath surfaces on which too many critics are content to slide.

New York City.

—JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY.

Shorter Notices

EDGAR ALLAN POE, A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY. By Arthur Hobson Quinn. Appleton-Century.

In the 800 pages of this study, Professor Quinn carries his "exercise in discrimination" with taste and skill through the thorny problems of the poet's life. But it is chiefly in his selection and elucidation of the critic's ideas (as in the defence of Longfellow's unity of ideas) and of the technique of the story writer and the poet, that the contribution of this volume lies. The subtle effect of a "wrenched accent" in *Annabel Lee;* the French associations of the tales: such matters are here more important. While there is (appendix) room for such details as the theatrical career of Poe's parents and other biographical findings, it is less the troubled man that emerges than the thinker and the writer, who knew that mankind is not wiser nor happier today than 6,000 years ago—only more active; and whose own life is a lesson in fruitfulness and frustration.

TWELVE BRONZES by Jacques Lipchitz. Curt Valentin. $2.50.

The sculpture of Jacques Lipchitz is not to be taken in and fully appreciated at a glance. Hence, it has been desirable that something be published to put into the hands of those who wish to make a sustained and attentive study of the works of this sculptor. The present book meets this need. In this collection of sixteen collotype plates there are reproduced the twelve pieces created in America since 1941 and which have been called *Transparents.* The plates are excellent and afford a welcome opportunity to study the naturalism and symbolism of Lipchitz's unorthodox sculptures. The book will prove an invaluable aid in furthering a better understanding of contemporary abstract sculpture.

THE THEATRE OF THE BASOCHE. By Howard Graham Harvey. Harvard University Press (Harvard Studies in Romance Languages, 17) $3.00.

Women and clergy are the most frequent themes of medieval satire and ridicule. Dr. Harvey concludes, from the leniency in the treatment of the legal profession in the comic theatre of the time (morality, sottie, farce) that lawyers themselves (the law clerks of the Basoche) must have had a frequent hand in the creation of such works. Beginning with the most famous "legal play" of the period, the *Farce de Maistre Pierre Pathelin,* he pursues his idea widely and with large measure of conviction, balancing the plays against sermons and non-dramatic satires (Rabelais), building a picture of the law clerks as "crusaders against a decadent social order."

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THE CLASSICAL FIGURE. Edited by Bryan Holme. Studio Publications, Inc. $3.00.

As Bryan Holme points out in his foreword the greatest masterpieces in painting and sculpture are concerned with the human figure. Further, the human figure furnishes "the acid test" subject matter for these arts. Feeling that we have more to gain than lose in closing the gap between "the standards and conditions of the classical past" and the present, Mr. Holme has collected in this book human figure paintings and sculpture ranging in time from IV Dynasty Egypt to the 19th century and in place from the Occident to the Orient. He has omitted examples from the Impressionist School for the simple but sound reason that "They are too easy to copy badly." The result is an excellent comparative study which should prove valuable to art students and aestheticians alike. The latter should especially turn their attention to this book for it offers a convenient tool for testing principles and methods of criticism.

READING POEMS: AN INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL STUDY. By Wright Thomas and Stuart Gerry Brown. Oxford University Press. $3.50.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF LITERARY FORM. By Kenneth Burke. Louisiana State University Press.

These "studies in the nature of symbolic (or linguistic, or literary) action", after a long monograph that gives the book its title, are gathered papers from the 1930's, when the author was bringing his erudite attack to bear upon the non- and the anti- Marxists of the decade. They range from brief reviews ("the jungle theory of laughter") and controversial items, through such pieces as "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle' " and "The Negro's Pattern of Life' (a play review) to a "trial translation" developing the thoughts of the Duke (given 20th century understanding) behind the openings lines of "Twelfth Night", and a discourse on "Semantic and Poetic Meaning." The author is manifestly widely read in current aesthetic theory; he takes his stand clearly and defends it forcefully. You may not always agree with him, but you can be sure of a perservering and well equipped antagonist.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE NATURE OF MAN. By Theodore Spencer. Macmillan. $2.75.

These 1942 Lowell Lectures seek to reinterpret Shakespeare for our generation, from three paths: the intellectual and emotional background of his time; the craft of his plays; and the works themselves in relation to human experience as a whole. This is quite a task for any man to set himself. The author approaches it through a study of the time—a time in which the world was understood as an ordered whole: thus with the destruction of one element, the whole structure collapses. This thought is pressed into the consideration of "Troilus and Cressida", and builds into the final picture of Shakespeare's three periods as symbolic: struggle, death, renewal; in the plays, and in all human movement. Familiarity not only with the plays but with the relevant Shakespearean criticism lends force to the points pressed; there is good use (not the distortion too frequent these days) of the imagery of the plays. The volume richly reveals that the works are ever fraught with fresh beauty and power and wisdom for our workaday world.

THE STAR-CROSSED RENAISSANCE. By Don Cameron Allen. Duke University Press. $3.00.

An age in which every five and ten cent store has its line of astrology books, and the radio prophets read the stars, should be interested in this study of the Renaissance

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These "studies in the nature of symbolic (or linguistic, or literary) action", after a long monograph that gives the book its title, are gathered papers from the 1930's, when the author was bringing his erudite attack to bear upon the non- and the anti- Marxists of the decade. They range from brief reviews ("the jungle theory of laughter") and controversial items, through such pieces as "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle' " and "The Negro's Pattern of Life' (a play review) to a "trial translation" developing the thoughts of the Duke (given 20th century understanding) behind the openings lines of "Twelfth Night", and a discourse on "Semantic and Poetic Meaning." The author is manifestly widely read in current aesthetic theory; he takes his stand clearly and defends it forcefully. You may not always agree with him, but you can be sure of a perservering and well equipped antagonist.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE NATURE OF MAN. By Theodore Spencer. Macmillan. $2.75.

These 1942 Lowell Lectures seek to reinterpret Shakespeare for our generation, from three paths: the intellectual and emotional background of his time; the craft of his plays; and the works themselves in relation to human experience as a whole. This is quite a task for any man to set himself. The author approaches it through a study of the time—a time in which the world was understood as an ordered whole: thus with the destruction of one element, the whole structure collapses. This thought is pressed into the consideration of "Troilus and Cressida", and builds into the final picture of Shakespeare's three periods as symbolic: struggle, death, renewal; in the plays, and in all human movement. Familiarity not only with the plays but with the relevant Shakespearean criticism lends force to the points pressed; there is good use (not the distortion too frequent these days) of the imagery of the plays. The volume richly reveals that the works are ever fraught with fresh beauty and power and wisdom for our workaday world.

THE STAR-CROSSED RENAISSANCE. By Don Cameron Allen. Duke University Press. $3.00.

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ROBERT BRIDGES. By Albert Guérard, Jr. Harvard University Press.

This "study of traditionalism in poetry" will win more attention when Bridges has been restored, after the neglect of social, then war-time, preoccupations, to his proper high place among English poets. Both as craftsman and as creator—as well as student of his craft—Bridges deserves the sensitive and appreciative attention of the present study. Considering in order the lyric poets, the dramatic poetry, and the culminating work "The Testament of Beauty, Dr. Guérard—though perhaps underestimating the preparatory importance of Bridges' studies in prosody from 1900 to 1929—makes clear the growth of the human concern in the poet, as well as his sense of poetic form. Admitting the inequalities of the magnum opus (occasionally slipping into naiveté, as in the remark that the fact that Bridges' philosophy resembles that of George Santayana in no way impairs its value), the author builds a vivid picture of an artist who, working within it, advanced the tradition of poetry.

THE RHETORIC OF ALEXANDER. By Bower Aly. Columbia University Press.

The ubiquity of radio has reawakened our interest in oratory; the study of rhetoric is again coming to the fore. Professor Aly has contributed to the field a brief preliminary consideration of the distinction between rhetoric and poetic, and an analysis of the effectiveness of one orator, Hamilton, at the New York Constitutional Convention in the early summer of 1788. Under the four heads of speaker, occasion, audience, and speeches—following the traditional divisions—he examines the processes of a persuasive mind, and richly suggests the further value of such studies to our age.

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American Society for Aesthetics

The Executive Council of the American Society for Aesthetics met at the Columbia University Faculty Club on May 23rd, and completed the formal organization of the Society by adopting a constitution. Copies of this will be sent to all members. After the Council meeting, about thirty other members living in or near New York assembled to talk over plans for future activities, including an eastern regional division for discussion groups. Publication plans and various privileges for members were outlined.

Two types of membership were established: active and associate. The latter is open without restriction to all who are interested in theoretical studies of the arts and related fields. The former is restricted to persons actively working along these lines, who have demonstrated mature ability and achievement therein. Annual dues for either type are three dollars, and applications for membership or information are to be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer.

The aim of the Society was stated as "promoting study, research, discussion, and publication in aesthetics." "Aesthetics" is understood to include "all studies of art and related types of experience from a philosophical, psychological, scientific, historical, critical, or educational point of view, with emphasis on general aspects and interrelations." The term "art" is to include all the arts—fine and applied; visual, literary, and musical, theater, dance and film, as well as painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Officers and members of the Council are as follows: *President*: Thomas Munro, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, O. *Vice-president*: Van Meter Ames, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, O. *Secretary-treasurer*: Max Schoen, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pa. George Boas, Curt J. Ducasse, Irwin Edman, Katharine Gilbert, Theodore M. Greene, Stephen C. Pepper, Carroll C. Pratt, Ralph B. Winn.

The Pacific Coast division of the American Society for Aesthetics held a meeting in Berkeley, California, on April 24th and 25th. Mr. Helmut Hungerland acted as chairman, and the following program was presented:

SATURDAY, APRIL 24TH:

The Formal Structure of the Aesthetic Object.....Mr. Benbow Ritchie
Signs and Expressiveness.....Miss Isabel Creed
Contemporary Art Criticism.....Mr. Douglas MacAgy
The Concept of Expressiveness in Art History.....Mr. H. Hungerland
A Brief Sample of Interpretation.....Miss Josephine Miles

SUNDAY, APRIL 25TH:

The Essay as a Work of Art.....Mr. Stephen Pepper
The "Principles" of Art.....Mr. Carl Thurston
Canons of Music Criticism.....Mr. Henry P. Eames
Musical Eminence.....Mr. Paul Farnsworth
Aesthetic Values in Certain Technical Devices of Music.....Miss Margaret Prall