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### C O N T E N T S

<b>The Art Museum and the American Scene</b>	
	<i>John D. Forbes</i> 3
<b>The Primitive</b>	<i>Irena Piotrowska and Michal Sobeski</i> 12
<b>Creative Experience in Science and Art</b>	<i>Max Schoen</i> 22
<b>The Object of Aesthetics . . . .</b>	<i>Felix M. Gatz</i> 33
<b>The Symbolic Function of Aesthetic Terms</b>	
	<i>Max Rieser</i> 58
<b>Communications . . . . .</b>	73
<b>Bibliography . . . . .</b>	82
<b>Book Reviews . . . . .</b>	88

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# The Art Museum and the American Scene

BY

JOHN D. FORBES

**T**HE American art museum of today is a changed place from the art museum of a decade ago. Perhaps it would be more accurate to qualify this statement and say that the up-and-coming museum is different. It is this very quality of being "up-and-coming" that indicates the nature of the change.

There is the usual talk in large terms about "improving the public taste", but now it is accompanied by an extraordinary amount of activity. The cry is for action and novelty. Handicrafts and hobbies are fostered. The frequency and velocity of minor loan exhibitions has increased. Press-agents have been hired, committees appointed and cocktail parties given.

Classes of instruction for children and adults have been formed at museums. Courses in practical drawing and painting and the vaguer Appreciation of Art are offered on an ambitious scale. The once lowly docent has found himself a devil of a fellow, and even the higher officials of the museum staff are pressed into lecturing to women's clubs and bus-loads of school children.

The Museum of Modern Art has grown up and in a few short years established a sort of factory for the mass-production of art "features", motion-pictures, travelling displays, and quantities of printed matter. Lesser museums in smaller centres have followed the lead of the Museum of Modern Art. Some have even become virtual satellites of the larger body.

The urge to *do* something has been very widespread among

museums, and while this stir and bustle has had its greatest appeal among museums with modest permanent collections, classes in puppeteering are not unknown in the larger institutions.

Underlying all this feverish activity is the idea that the principal job and justification of the museum of art is Education.

Art museums in the United States have traditionally undertaken four principal functions: the selecting of works of art for preservation; the physical care of these objects; the classification and study of art material; the display of works of art.

Until quite recently these duties were taken pretty much for granted. Lately, however, there has been a great deal of soul-searching among thoughtful museum officials. They have asked themselves and, more pointedly, they have been asked by others, "How can the art museum justify its continued existence in a time of economic depression?"

The generally accepted answer has been that the real business of the art museum is to educate. It is conceded that the old functions contribute somewhat to the learning process, but the sudden pressure for justification has led to this rapid expansion of the so-called "educational activities" which are now so much in vogue.

In the midst of all the hubbub someone might still ask two pertinent questions: What is the long-term goal of museum education? Is this end being pursued efficiently?

Since education is not an end in itself, presumably the ultimate purpose in the minds of museum educators is, in hedonistic terms, to create happiness by increasing people's aesthetic awareness and thus their enjoyment of beauty.

Few will question this aim, but it is not to be achieved entirely by formal instruction. Courses in painting and modelling may teach one a specific manual technique. Courses in the history of art may teach one to distinguish between Picasso's blue and his rose period, to recognize a Greco or a Daumier. Real pleasure may be gained from the possession of skills and knowledge. These, however, are matters which can be taught in schools and colleges and in most cases better taught because they are the main business of the school or college and not an afterthought to justify its existence.

The educational function of the museum is one of its chief reasons for being, but it performs this function most efficiently by providing aesthetic experience for the public. Aesthetic perception and judgment can be learned only by experience, by repeated exposure to beauty. It is the museum's job to provide this experience. In the course of giving aesthetic experience to the beginner, the museum provides pure pleasure to the more advanced (i. e., more frequently exposed) visitor in much the way that a symphony orchestra furnishes delights for the appreciative concert-goer. In doing this last the museum performs another function which alone would justify its existence, as it does that of the musician and ensemble.

In pursuing this aspect of the educational function, which is just what they have been doing for years, museums are faced with the question of effectiveness. In order to carry out their purpose they must reach great numbers of people. This has proved difficult in the United States where the prejudices of the frontier against the non-practical and the allegedly effete have been slow to disappear. Nor has this suspicion been allayed by the tendency of museums to play up their society column connections with select pre-views and honorary committees. But perhaps it is concern about the breadth of the museum's appeal which has given museum people misgivings and caused them to look about for new justification.

Various methods have been used to attract visitors to museums. Many galleries offer musical programs. The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston advertises with well-designed placards in subways and trolley-cars. Other institutions have been less dignified in their bids for public attention.

Museum attendance, particularly at loan exhibitions, seems to vary directly with the notoriety of the artist in private life (as casual eavesdropping at the big van Gogh show revealed), the publicized fame of individual works (such as Whistler's mother, Raphael's *Madonna of the Chair*), or the rumored financial value of the objects ("Where's the picture worth a million dollars?" was a familiar question at the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair). This phenomenon introduces a new difficulty in museum education. Even when you get your public to the gallery it is hard to make them drink. People find it extremely difficult to look at objects other than in terms of their own irrelevant preconceptions.

The museum of art exists principally to make it possible for a maximum number of people to enjoy things of beauty. The way to learn to enjoy beauty is through constant practice. But very few bother to come into museums to get the practice. Unfortunately, also, even when they do come in they do not allow themselves to perceive.

This means that the museum has two education problems: to expose people to beauty and to get them to look at beauty when it is put before them.

The answer to the first problem is that the museum, in order to achieve its purpose effectively, must act outside of its own neo-classic colonnades as well as within them. It must take beauty to the public and put it where the public cannot fail to be exposed to it.

The answer to the second is for the museum to treat of beauty as something tangible in common experience. Beauty has too long been associated in the public mind with special categories of objects not essential to everyday living and self-consciously labelled Art.

Both of these solutions can be resolved into a single course of action by linking them with the comprehensive master-art of architecture. To be effective the museum must bring beauty to buildings, their exteriors, their interiors and contents. Put negatively, *it is the job of the art museum to go out and eliminate ugliness from the American scene.*

The first challenge to the museum is urban ugliness. The greatest concentration of ugliness is to be found in city buildings, homes, stores, office buildings and factories. The crying need is for city planning, the development of a central plan, commissions to carry it out, zoning laws with teeth in them, action to promote the wider use of professional architects to replace contractor-builder designed buildings. (The problem of the bad architect is not half so pressing as that of no architect at all).

Obviously, no museum of art is in a position to put through these much needed measures single-handed. But there are groups working separately on various phases of this problem in almost every city in the United States. Associations of architects, manufacturers of various types of building materials, anti-billboard societies, local merchants' groups, civic improvement clubs, cham-

bers of commerce are all interested in urban beautification from different points of view.

The efforts and financial contributions of these groups could be brought to a focus at the museum.

Beauty for beauty's sake is not apt to prove a very potent slogan in inducing the community to approve a comprehensive city plan. The appeal to civic pride may attract a few supporters. The strongest appeal, however, must be made to self-interest. It must be demonstrated and advertised that a good-looking building is a remunerative rent-producing or customer attracting property, that it costs no more to build than an eyesore, and that a town made up of well-architected buildings attracts tourists and residents.

The profitability of good city planning, intelligent landscape architecture and well-designed houses has been amply proved in certain sections of Kansas City, Missouri, and adjoining Kansas areas where Mr. J. C. Nichols, incidentally a Trustee of the W. R. Nelson Gallery of Art, has been exceedingly active in opening new subdivisions. Another case in point is the Palos Verdes Estates project in Southern California.

Private construction will doubtless remain the most important field for concerted pressure, but government building is also to be considered. It is improbable that the present supply of postoffices and federal buildings will soon be exhausted by departmental needs, but the trend is apparently toward publicly built apartment communities and government-financed dwellings. Public building authorities have been sensitive to local opinion and could readily be induced to cooperate with a strong museum-directed program. This does not mean that the museum should propagandize, as some have done, for economically unsound government housing projects. It means that government housing in a given locality should conform to the same master plan as private building.

Another aspect of urban beautification is the reclaiming and preserving from destruction of old buildings of architectural merit, an activity in which certain British architectural groups have been very successful. In American cities there is a rapidly disappearing group of buildings of bygone architectural styles which show excellent mass and proportions. Many of these might be reclaimed for modern living. The museum could buy only very

exceptional buildings of rare architectural and possibly historic importance, but it could act as a clearing house for information and advise possible purchasers, societies, public-minded citizens and others of the existence of such buildings. The Essex Institute of Salem, Massachusetts, for example, is housed in an old private dwelling, and the interest in historic houses of such antiquarians as Mr. Henry Ford is well known. In the case of fine old houses doomed to destruction in the path of "progress" the museum could make measured drawings, complete photographic and other records if desirable, and enlist the support of local architects and architects' societies in the movement.

The pre-Civil War classical revival types of building are particularly worthy of preservation. In this group are the imported English Georgian post-Renaissance of the eighteenth century, the Jefferson-influenced Roman of the New Republic and the Greek inspired houses of the first half of the nineteenth century. Perhaps a reverence for the past will protect these earlier structures unaided, but there are mid-Victorian buildings which show a fine sense of architectural planning and design and have more than just their dignity to recommend them. The "American Gothic," when not overly-decorated and exuberant, and the Napoleon III Renaissance adaptation with its mansard roof produced some handsome buildings. Sometimes even a combination of the two styles achieved a certain charm as in the famous Vaile House in Independence, Missouri.

After tackling the job of eliminating ugliness from the exterior of the city the museum has interiors to consider. To improve the looks of the outsides of buildings you have only to convince a relatively few people of the desirability, or use various inducements, legal, economic, social, etc., to the same end. In effect, you work to present the public with architectural beauty as a *fait accompli* and make them aware of it by advertisement and proximity so that they will want more.

Interiors are a real poser. Unfortunately, you cannot legislate against Chesterfield sets. Progress here will be slower because people must be educated to want the well-designed chair or sofa before they buy it.

Here, however, we are in the field which has become traditional

for the art museum and in which it apparently feels entirely at home. Museums are primarily concerned with the adornment of building interiors whether they are conscious of it or not. This is true of the collections, the researches on the collections, and most of the educational activities. Unfortunately, an arbitrary distinction has been made between the so-called Fine and Decorative arts. In making this distinction museums have lost touch with the great majority of the public who are told, in effect, that while they may look at tapestries as house furnishings they must regard paintings as objects of pure beauty.

Steps have already been taken to restore a proper perspective and relationship among the arts with the installation of "period rooms" complete with family portraits so successfully done in Boston, Philadelphia, Kansas City and at the Metropolitan's "American Wing." When pictures and statues are exhibited, as historically they should be, as objects to be used sparingly as points of focus in private home, church or office, people will begin to look at them in terms of their own experience, and true museum education will be in progress. There is a remoteness from real life in row on row of paintings that contributes to the apathy of the casual museum visitor. He might just as well be looking at cases of stuffed birds or mounted entomological specimens, objects which are of interest to the specialist but outside of everyday experience.

Museums have approached this interior problem by encouraging manufacturers of furniture, glass, ceramics, textiles, hardware, etc. to improve the aesthetic quality of their products by exhibition and purchase of particularly fine examples. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has long followed this policy and recognizes a modern silver bowl by Georg Jensen as partaking of some of the same inspiration as Benvenuto Cellini's Rospigliosi cup. The Museum of Modern Art goes somewhat farther with design competitions and awards for beauty and craftsmanship. This much has been done. It is now standard museum practice to recognize modern examples of the "decorative arts" as objects worthy of exhibition in a building dedicated to the "fine arts."

But what has not been done is to grant that painting and sculpture, the arts that signify Art to the general public, are them-



selves decorative arts and of no more exalted status than dishes and upholstery for being less useful, and should be so regarded and treated in exhibition.

The artificial separation of these arts is a relatively recent development. The painters of the Renaissance, in the days before the "one-man show", worked along with the architects, the tapestry designers, the gold and silversmiths, and the cabinetmakers, frequently working in several of those arts, toward a single end; the beautification of the house. I am merely suggesting a return to the traditional point of view.

Only by thus ceasing to treat of art in a vacuum will the museum increase its *internal* effectiveness in getting people to observe and in inducing them to apply in their homes the aesthetic judgment, call it taste, learned of experience.

Mention has been made of the research function of the art museum. This is an important part of the museum's job which it might be very easy to neglect in the new enthusiasm for spreading art education among the laity. Research makes full use of the education and hard-won knowledge and skill of the curator to expand the historical and technical knowledge of the arts. This knowledge enters into education through publication and formal instruction. Not all museums have the trained personnel, the collections or the equipment to carry on this function, but those which do need not be required to provide a popular justification for their researches.

The museum of art is the only agency in the United States today capable of taking the lead in a practical campaign to beautify American cities. Unguided private enterprise has produced ugliness, the more enlightened private entrepreneurs readily admit the fact but do not know what to do about it. Government has been no better to judge from the rash of pseudo-classical postoffices and Bauhaus-reduced-to-a-formula model tenements which has broken out over the country with relief funds.

The staff and board of the art museum combine almost paradoxically considerable concentrations of sound aesthetic judgment, imagination and practical common sense, energy and suavity. The museum as an institution usually enjoys public confidence in its honest and disinterested pursuit of applied aesthetics. It has access to a favorably-disposed press.

The museum building is the obvious place to exhibit (and "dramatize" as the Museum of Modern Art has so successfully done with its new display techniques) architectural and industrial models and designs. The newsworthy nature of building projects and architectural and industrial design competitions should attract visitors into the galleries for a number of reasons.

The museum has continuity. It will take years to revise the skyline of American cities, still longer to alter American taste in interiors. Continuity is essential to the success of a long-term project of this kind. Committees come and go. The mortality rate of societies is likewise high. Museums persist.

If it is possible in a democratic state like ours for cities to have beauty, it can only be brought about by an agency which is known to have no selfish motives, which is publicity wise with a sense of showmanship and which is really capable of recognizing beauty and fostering its conception.

Two groups will deplore this sortie into the world of affairs: those who from force of habit regard the museum as a genteel morgue, and those who believe that art is the property of the select few. The supporters of the museum as an educational institution will find added significance in their position. The museum will also have justified itself to those who were skeptical of the total validity of its traditional functions.

The success of this entire program of museum education will depend on the ability of the museum to bring about a general realization of the common factor of beauty which can exist among buildings, paintings, sculpture, and the so-called decorative arts of everyday use. The spread of this realization requires an even greater stress on the point that, in the time-worn phrase, "architecture is the mother of the arts."

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# The Primitive

BY

IRENA PIOTROWSKA and MICHAL SOBESKI

*An Analysis of the First Stage of Development in Figurative Arts.*

**I**N all evolutionary development, biological as well as spiritual, the simple forms usually emerge first, only later to be followed by the more complex ones. Consequently, in the elementary phases of all types of primitive art, the simplest forms and the rules governing them possess more easily recognizable characteristics than those found in the forms of art at higher cultural levels. That which is primitive, and thus natural, original, and rudimentary, is to a certain extent indigenous to man and still unchanged by later stages of development. The knowledge of the laws and principles of primitive art, or of the beginnings of art, is of basic and inestimable value in understanding the evolution of forms. The development of forms in the figurative arts and the sequence of various styles in them become comprehensible and logically acceptable when we become acquainted with the very first art products. Just as infancy and youth are not without meaning in shaping the style of an individual artist, so the primitive period may to a great extent determine the character of the art of a nation or even of a whole race. In spite of the similarity between various manifestations of primitive art, there are also differences, and even a great heterogeneity, which explains the wealth of forms in the more developed art manifestations, these being a logical consequence of art's beginnings.

One of the purest manifestations of the primitive is the art of the child. Of course by a young child we mean one who has not yet reached the age of ten, and one who has not been subjected either to the influence of developed art or to the problems of drawing imposed upon him by school or family. The understanding of a child's art is indispensable to the comprehension of all primitive art,

be it prehistoric European, prehistoric American, or that of contemporaneous "savage" tribes.

The child does not draw from a model, but depends exclusively upon his memory and imagination; he draws that which arouses his intellectual curiosity and that which represents his knowledge of an object. With the aid of his drawings the child speaks about himself and the world he lives in; consequently his drawings have nothing in common with realistic illusion. They are not faithful copies of the *seen* reality, but rather an intellectual symbolization of a *known* reality. The child knows that a person does not become shorter as he recedes from us; that is why, without the introduction of perspective, the boy at a distance is given the same height as the boy standing nearby. The young artist also knows that coins are to be found in a purse, and that his sister has legs, even though they may partly be covered by a skirt; that is the reason why the coins are portrayed as if they were viewed through an X-ray machine, and why the legs and body show through the skirt. The child conveys his knowledge of reality to the paper in a schematic and simplified manner, because within his imagination there is a rather incomplete picture of reality. Also, straight lines are by their very nature easier to draw than the more complex ones. All the exceedingly complicated contour of the head, for instance, is reduced by the child to a simple circle, and the arm with the hand is represented by a long line with several short ones.

Even though mistakes naturally predominate in his drawings, the child can achieve considerable success in following this ideoplastic path. We shall mention here a few of the most common deviations from reality in children's art, those that are characteristic of primitive art in general and that are sometimes repeated even at higher grades of art development, or are used by individuals who purposely imitate the primitive style.

Human figures drawn by younger children have heads and extremities disproportionately large and often entirely lack a trunk (fig. 1). Generally the most difficult part to render proves to be the abdomen. Also human images carved by contemporary Negroes of Africa or by the aborigines of Oceania, and even archaic Greek statues, in which the extremities are exceptionally well represented while the abdominal parts are obviously neglected, confirm this. In the development of the child's ability to draw, the

representation of immobility precedes the rendering of movement. Then, arms and legs in motion come before the movement of the torso. The motion of the whole body generally appears only in the drawings of older children. Similar development can, for instance, be traced in the art of Egypt, Western Asia, and again in archaic Greece. One of the main causes of a child's deviations from reality is his avoidance of super-imposition, or covering one object by another. An effort is made by the child to make all the parts of a given figure as well as all figures and objects in space simultaneously visible. This, let us note, belongs to the most characteristic traits of all primitive art, but it also appears with particular emphasis in Egyptian and in early Chinese bas-reliefs.

Similarly, the already mentioned X-ray-like drawings are not restricted to the art of the child. A Paleolithic drawing of a mammoth with a clearly defined heart was discovered in the Pindal cave in Spain (provided, of course, that this interpretation of the drawing is correct). Such X-ray-like drawings frequently overcome the bounds of the actual primitive and may, for instance, be encountered in Egyptian bas-reliefs where the human bodies can be seen through the clothing. This X-ray method is being introduced also by some of the 20th-century tendencies which are intentionally primitive, such as negroism, cubism, infantilism, expressionism, or surrealism, where more than one feature of primordial art is knowingly accepted. Thus Marc Chagall represents a mare with foal by picturing the unborn animal within its mother. The "Sacred Heart of Jesus" pictures showing Christ with his heart centered in his breast may also be mentioned here. This last type of picture appeared for the first time during the 18th century. Its general spread, however, has begun only recently, hundreds of those pious paintings being created by third- and fourth-rate artists, that is artists who no doubt stand on the borderline of the primitive.

The exaggeration of the size of persons who are important or formidable is also a deviation from reality; that which has a special meaning and which has created a great impression on the one drawing the picture is enlarged. Here both the child and the primitive artist go to the greatest extremes. They unscrupulously exaggerate even the sizes of parts of the human body

which seem to them more important. Thus they distort and deform the human figure at will. To a lesser degree is exaggeration also characteristic of more developed art. We find, for instance, the rulers of Mesopotamia and the Pharaohs of Egypt, and even the early archaic gods on Greek reliefs always outgrowing their surroundings.

The most rudimentary distribution of objects in drawings consists in spreading them over the surface of the paper with more or less regularity. Also the placing of objects in one or several rows above each other appears very early. Opposed in principle to this method of placing objects in rows is their distribution in a purely topographic manner, analogous to the way of representing localities, roads, and mountains on a geographic map. It is noteworthy that only in the paintings or engravings of prehistoric and contemporary primitive peoples do we find the free distribution of figures and objects on the flat surface of the material being at their disposal. On the other hand, the arrangement in rows is still common in the next stage of development, that is, during the period of "early flowering". Generally speaking, however, these two kinds of spatial arrangements here described are rarely encountered in children's drawings in a pure form; we rather find a mixture of them, with a predilection for one or the other. At times, in more mature productions, the two methods combine into the bird's-eye-view perspective and its closely allied perspective with the high horizon (fig. 2). In such instances children draw as if they observed the plane of the country-side from a very high point. In this way, while the horizon appears near the upper border of the drawing, no object obscures the other. At other times, the space between the rows drawn by the child begins to transform itself into fore-, middle-, and background. But the intentional arrangement of a picture into the different perspective sections already belongs to higher levels of evolution. It first appears in a clear form in mature Greek art. The scientific conception of a systematic spatial arrangement founded on linear perspective was primarily the work of Italians from the 15th century on. On the other hand, landscapes using perspective with a high horizon are frequently encountered

in the paintings of the Low Countries, where, however, because of Italian influence, this type of perspective had not been fully developed. It was the Chinese and Japanese who brought the perspective with the high horizon to its full perfection.

Since the child draws the known rather than the seen reality, since he uses affectional exaggerations and introduces distortions and deformations of the human body for the sake of expression; and because he avoids covering of one object by another so as not to obscure anything he wants to say, we call his art "expressional". Only the inner content is expressed consciously in his art, directing and dominating it. "Form" is employed only to the extent necessary to produce a drawing or a painting. The child does not think about the form. He is exclusively concerned with the thoughts and feelings which he desires to express and with the incident which he intends to describe. Form is completely subordinated to this purpose. At this point it is necessary to distinguish clearly between the inner content and the subject-matter. The last indicates only the theme represented in a work of art; in subject, the portrait differs from a landscape or from a historical painting. The inner content on the other hand represents the emotional and intellectual substance of a work of art. In content, the portrait of a laughing boy differs from that of an old woman praying, or a sunny landscape from a storm at sea. The subject by itself is, therefore, a far less important aesthetic factor of a work of art than the inner content.

It cannot be denied that certain decorative values are at times encountered in the work of children. To a large extent they are due to the rhythmical automatism of the child's hand movements. Even a child three or four years of age can produce rhythmic scrawls which possess undoubted decorative qualities, and which result from the automatic movements of the hand and from its natural tendency toward repetition and rhythm. Furthermore, the nature of the material which the child utilizes also plays a certain role in endowing his productions with decorative formal elements. Thus the two-dimensional plane of the paper on which the child traces his ideograms enforces its two-dimensionality upon the child, compelling him to re-shape the third dimension, with which he can-

not cope, into a two-dimensional spatial organization. The things which are supposed to be placed directly behind each other are placed by the child above each other. Hence, the more or less uniform distribution of figures on the surface of the paper or their arrangement in rows. That this decorative activity of the child is unconscious and is produced mechanically by rhythmic muscular action, also forced upon him by the character of the material employed, is best shown by the fact that decoration as such, separated from his ideograms, is rarely practiced by a child. It is seldom that a child interests himself in the ornamentation of objects, and usually only when encouraged by adults.

Both the prehistoric art of Europe and other parts of the world, and the art of contemporary primordial tribes who live far from the influences of European or other civilizations, belong to the purest manifestations of the primitive. But even though the art of prehistoric and contemporary primitive tribes, by its very nature, possesses characteristics in common with the art of the child, yet at the same time it is different in many respects. The "expressional" art of prehistoric and contemporary primitive races creates more techniques than does the art of the child, and its inner content is much more varied. The mental life of an adult, even though he may be primitive, is without question richer than the mental life of a child. The further enrichment of the art of a primitive man, as compared with that of the child, depends upon the fact that the former creates a completely new branch of art. In his art the child does not go beyond expressing himself or representing his relationship to the surrounding world. In the primitive productions of adults, on the other hand, we find still another kind of art, one which is entirely independent of their expressive creations—the useful and ornamental art. Here belong the so-called industrial arts and the decorative arts, also the primitive home-building. The rise of this type of art has been influenced by need and necessity, as well as by vanity and a desire to be different, leading thus to the ornamentation of useful objects. The beginnings of decoration are found in the tattooing of the body and in its ornamentation with beads and other objects. The custom of painting the body or decorating it with bulgy



scars and tattoo marks is universal on the lowest cultural levels; so also is the decoration of the body with small objects, such as shells, teeth of animals, etc. The transition from ornamentation of the body to ornamentation of objects of every day use is easily understandable. The designs used on the body are carried over to the objects of everyday use.

In the most decidedly primitive artistic productions we meet with a marked division between the meaningful expressional art and the useful ornamental one. The more primitive the art and the less experience and tradition it has behind it—the more definite the division. In expressional art only the inner content is consciously rendered, while in the useful arts only the formal decorative values are represented. We do not as yet encounter the allusive, spirit bearing values and the formal values combined in one work as we do in products of more advanced art. Inner content and form do not occur together, but separately. Soon, however, do they gradually unite, at first very crudely, but with the lapse of time tending toward a more and more complete merging. In works of art of mature periods there is a definite attempt to present the inner content through adequate form—through fully suitable draftsmanship, as well as compositional and coloristic values. Only there do the two heterogeneous elements of primitive art combine to form a harmonious whole.

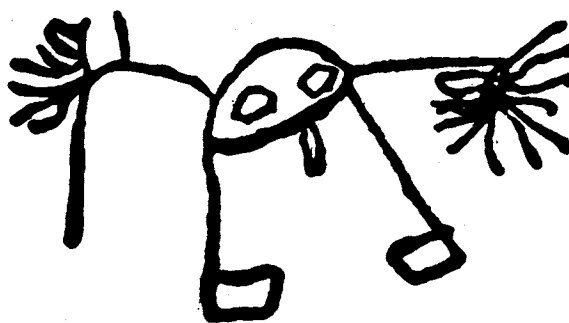
The forms of applied art have a much greater importance in primitive art than they possess in the art of later evolutionary periods. Among the primitives who indulge in the creation of industrial arts, all their technical abilities and all their understanding of artistic form are concentrated in ornamental art, while at higher grades of development the triumphs of form are associated with the so-called "high arts"—architecture, sculpture, and painting. The industrial arts become only a reflex of them. Besides, among the primitive races there is no monumental architecture; although home-building at times attains artistic significance because of its decorative values.

The art of the child and that of a primordial tribe can each in its own sphere attain to a considerable degree of perfection. Upon this first and lowest plane it frequently reaches the highest

peak of its evolution, but, when favorable conditions change, it withers and dies away. Among the primitive races some are artistically more talented than others, also some preferably develop expressional art, pregnant with meaning, while others develop ornamental art. Thus, for example, while in European prehistoric art the Paleolithic age created almost exclusively expressional art, the Neolithic age, artistically absolutely independent of the other and based upon entirely different cultural foundations—originated an ornamental and useful art. In both cases the style of the absolutely primitive art conception revealed itself in a most complete manner. To the most typical varieties of primitive art which form within themselves complete evolutionary entities also belong the art manifestations of the native tribes of Africa, Australia, and Oceania, as well as those of the American contemporary Indians and the Eskimos. All these peoples produce expressional and useful ornamental art side by side, with the exception of their more mature products, without merging them. Yet, in history of art the primitive period does not always appear with an equal clearness and does not always possess equal importance. Early foreign influences frequently prevent its free and full growth. In such a case primitive art either becomes absorbed by the invading culture, or it subjugates the foreign elements, but simultaneously it loses its primitive distinctive features, because it elevates itself on a somewhat higher level of art development.

An analogous situation exists in the field of the art of the child. Not many children belonging to highly civilized nations are nowadays allowed to develop freely their expressional qualities. But those who are given by modern educational methods every opportunity to do so, at times create true, although primitive masterpieces.

After the tenth year of age, however, even the sincere child-artist becomes affected by the surrounding art products of adults. Slowly he becomes aware of realistic forms. But faced with them, the child loses his self-confidence and self-reliance, and after a time, discouraged, stops to draw entirely. Only a small number of individuals endure this critical period, and from these individuals grow adult artists, if they still successfully surmount other difficulties and obstacles.



**Fig. 1.** *Drawing by a four-year-old girl.*

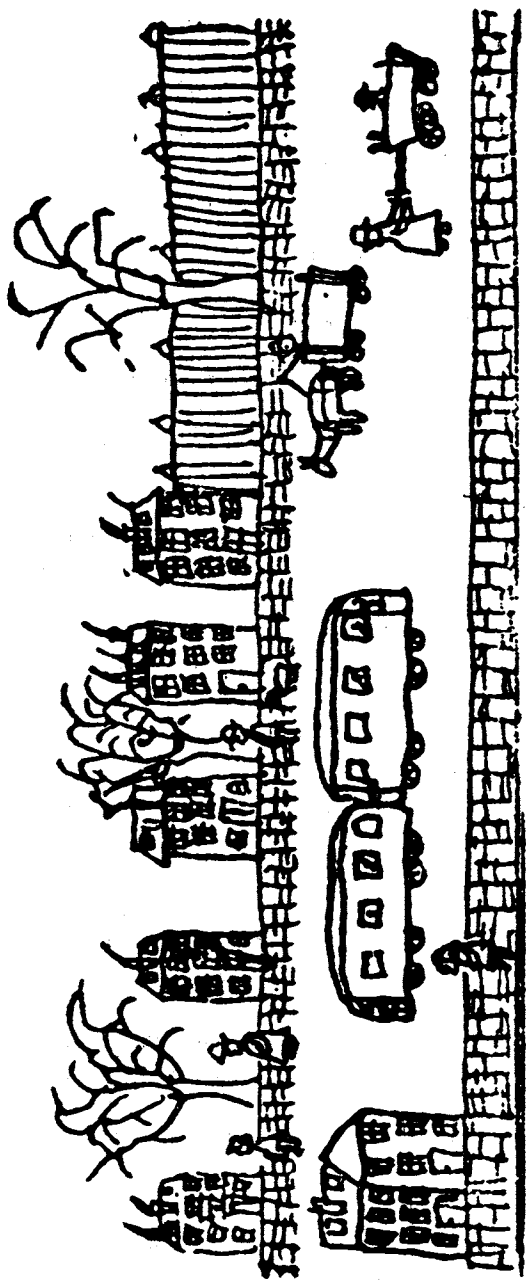


Fig. 2. Drawing by an eleven-year-old girl.

# Creative Experience in Science and Art

BY

MAX SCHOEN

## *The Nature of Creative Experience*

**C**ONSCIOUS experience is meaningful either as form or as content. Form is the stuff of experience, that which the experience is experience of, the objective presence or reality, the impersonal in experience. Content is what the form signifies as action, the name it bears, the subjective reality, the personal in experience. This means that experiences are of two sorts: they are imaginative when they are experiences of form, and they are perceptual when they are experiences of content. That such is the case will become clear if we examine the growth of experience and see the relationship that exists between the perceptual and the imaginative realms.

All experience begins with forms, with organized wholes, which are at first vague and shadowy outlines because their component details are as yet undiscernible. They are like a woodland which is but a blotch on the horizon until the traveler comes close enough to see the individual trees. When this happens the woodland is still a form, but a specific form which can be named. So forms grow in definiteness as the details of their features grow in clarity on repeated contact with them. It is thus that we learn by experience what to do or not to do. For, as a form becomes more and more the form of this or that particular thing, it also becomes more and more a stimulus for this or that sort of particular act. To put this differently, since life is adjustment to situations, it follows that the more definitely a situation is experienced, the more definite will be the response to it.

This is the first step in the growth of experience, the step in which vague forms become definite forms, and selective activity dis-

places random movement. But in one sense it is also the last step in the growth of experience. This is in the biological sense of survival. In this sense perceptual experience is the last step, for once a situation has become a stimulus for a definite response the adjustment is complete and the problem of survival in that situation is solved.

So the perceptual begins with form, with objective reality, and proceeds to build it up, step by step, into a structure in which form is submerged in content, where objective reality has no existence, no meaning, excepting as subjective reality. That which the experience is experience *of* is lost in that which the experience is experience *about*. In other words, as a form comes more and more to the foreground as a particular thing, it is at the same time being pushed into the background by what it means as behavior. Substance is thus turned into shadow, and shadow becomes substance.

It is at this point that the imaginative comes to the rescue of objective reality, by reconstructing experience. It does this by stripping form of its content, of the garments imposed upon it by the perceptual, and revealing it anew in its own pure and therefore true being. Form is abstract for the obvious reason that it is the product of the process of abstracting. And it is imaginative since the abstracting process is an imaginative act, an act that occurs only mentally, not physically. Form, abstract, imagination are thus one and the same: form being the product of the imaginative process of abstraction. It is not the form that is imaginative. The form is the objective existence. What is imaginative is the process by which the form is restored to itself, and exists in its own right. The imaginative form is therefore no more than the perceptual form cleansed of everything that is not of its own essence.

The perceptual and the imaginative each renders a distinctive and vital service to life. The perceptual is the realm of biological necessity. In order to survive the organism must get to know its environment so it knows what to do about it. The strange is a potential menace, for it means hazardous action. So the perceptual is a process from the strange to the familiar, from the unsafe to the safe. But whereas it may or may not be true that familiarity breeds contempt, it is always true that familiarity does breed indifference. The more we are familiar with a situation the more we can afford to ignore it, to take it for granted, to act habitually in its presence.

So we have the paradox that as we learn to adjust ourselves to the world in order to live in it, we are at the same time also becoming dead to it. And as we become dead to the world, we become dead to ourselves. So the service of the perceptual includes a disservice. The price we have to pay for keeping alive is the decreased consciousness of being alive.

The imaginative comes to the rescue of life by reversing the perceptual process. It takes the familiar, the old product of perception, and regenerates it by stripping it of the accouterments that give it the aspect of familiarity. The old is thus reborn, and we are reborn with it. It is the imaginative that will not let the perceptual die, that keeps our world and also us, constantly fresh, alive, and full of promise for more and more life through an increased consciousness of being alive.

### *The Role of Science as Creative Experience*

Science and art belong to the life of imagination, since the interest of both is in experience as form. Both are abstract activities. But since the meaning of form as form can be either intellectual or affective, that is, as something to be understood or as something to be felt, there arise two concerns with form. The former is science, the latter is art.

Science is warrantable or verifiable knowledge, because it arises from experimentally ascertained fact. Therefore, the business of science with form is to investigate it, to inquire into its nature. All the characteristics of science as knowledge and as method arise from its interest in form as something to be understood.

First of all, since science begins with an abstraction, the knowledge it attains is abstract knowledge. And this in two senses. To begin with, it is abstract because it is knowledge for the sake of knowing and not for the sake of doing. Science is not interested in practical application, in how its knowledge can be used. That it is useable is incidental. A scientific idea is not true because it works, but rather it works because it is true, intrinsically true, or true in terms of the experimentally determined facts. It is only knowledge obtained by the investigation of objective reality that can be truly useful because it is factually true. The other sense in which scientific knowledge is abstract is that it is general knowledge, knowl-

edge that consists of principles. It is an abstraction of a number of particular abstractions, a general form of specific forms, revealing the common core of their being, their fundamental belonging-togetherness.

Another characteristic of science is its unnaturalness. This lies in its deliberately planned attitude and in its artificial results. Science intentionally, with a sort of malice aforethought, sets itself off from nature to question her about her private affairs. It is not satisfied with what nature gives freely and openly, but must pry into her secrets and ferret out her very soul. And in order to reach its goal, science has to treat nature in a manner that leaves her torn to shreds and gasping for breath. It breaks a whole into its parts, an endless process, at each point of which that which was is no more, and that which is, is no longer what it was. It thus brings about an artificial universe, a universe made by man, versus that presented by nature. And it does more than that. It causes each form to lose its uniqueness, *its particularity*, its own individuality, by seeking for the common thread that runs through a number of particulars, at the end of which the particular is but a shadow, a reflection, a single and transitory manifestation of the general. The very nature of a principle dismisses matter, for so long as there is a bit of matter that is not resolved, there is no principle but a tentatively workable formulation. This is the reason why the test of a scientific principle is mathematical presentation, mathematics being the language of abstract thought.

Science is thus a falsification of nature as experienced in perception, which means as naturally experienced. Natural experience is of wholes, and the ideas that arise of the wholes are particular ideas. Even where the perceptual whole is questioned perceptually the answer is in terms of the whole itself, because the questioning always concerns itself with the problem of what to do with or about the whole. So it appears like a paradox that the truth of the imagination should lie precisely in its falsification of the perceptual, for science denies that the whole of perception is the real whole and that the idea of perception is the true idea. But this paradox disappears once it is remembered that the fact that the real and the true of science work out in the real and true of perception, is purely incidental or accidental. It works out simply because science begins where perception begins. But the practical fruits of science are none



of its concern. Nor does its real value lie therein. This lies in what science means as human mental activity; namely, that it is the one predominantly human mode of inquiry and knowledge.

Perceptual experience is on the level of animal existence. There is nothing peculiarly human in it, excepting that human learning can be more extensive, more effective and more expeditious than is possible for sub-human creatures. All that this means, however, is that a human being is better in that which he holds in common with the rest of the system of animate nature. Even perceptual thinking is not an exclusively human ability, for a good many animals can and do engage in mental manipulation of concrete situations within their range of experience. That man can do so in situations that are beyond the power of the animal does not make him a human being, but only a superior animal being. It is then only in the realm of the abstract that man comes into his own as man. In other words, man attains human stature only when he is engaged in activities that are above and beyond the realm of biological necessity. This is the service that science renders man in the sphere of the intellectual. He could operate without science, as do other animals, and he could do so more effectively. But without science he could not function as a human being, for it is in and through science that he finds relief from the business of survival and reveals himself to himself. The necessity of science lies therefore precisely in the fact that it is not an animal necessity. By transforming the intellectually perceptual into the intellectually abstract, science creates man the human being out of man the animal being. Science is man's human adjustment to his human world as an intelligible, understandable world.

### *The Role of Art as Creative Experience*

The fruit of science is an idea, that of art is an object. But just as there is no science *in* nature, only science *of* nature, so there is no art *in* nature, but only *of* nature. A tree standing in a field is not an art work; on a canvas it may be such. A product is art only when it is something made by the hands of man. But, again, not every man-made product is an art work. Nor is it sufficient that the product be artistically, that is, skilfully made. Skill is not the cause of art, but an effect. That is, unless a product is felt to be

perfectly done, it will not be accepted as an art work; but neither will it be called an art work just because it is perfectly done. The masterly manipulation of tools and materials is a condition for art, not a cause of art.

A man-made product is a work of art only when and if it is felt to be a thing of beauty, a thing that arouses the aesthetic experience. The quality of art in an art work is the experience of beauty, and it is an examination of the nature of this experience and what it is experience *of* that tells the story of creative experience in art versus creative experience in science.

Beauty is an interest in an object of such intensity that the experient becomes identified with the object of experience. The person is carried away from himself into that which is experienced, becomes one with it and reposes in it. The aesthetic state is thus a condition of repose in tension, the tension being due to the intense interest, and the repose to the person dwelling in the object which is reposeful because it is perfect. It is this repose in tension that makes for the uniqueness of the aesthetic experience. Ordinarily tension and repose are exclusive of each other, for tension is restlessness and repose is relaxation. So ordinarily tension rules out repose as restlessness rules out relaxation. Where there is interest there is tension, where there is relaxation there is no interest. What the aesthetic experience generates is not relaxation, but exhilaration, a heightening of consciousness without the usual cost of exhaustion. This is the uniqueness of the aesthetic which makes for its high value.

This rare experience can come either from an object of nature or a product of man. The relationship between the two is that art always begins with nature. Every art product is something in or of nature reproduced by man. But this reproduction is also a transformation, nature appearing in a new light, a re-created creature, nature in the form of beauty. It is for this reason that a man-made product is an art work only when it is beautiful, for without beauty it is no more than nature in her common garb. The art work is, then, the result of a piece of nature experienced aesthetically and presented as an aesthetic object. The presentation must be artistically done, must be perfect, since imperfection causes restlessness, which is the death of the aesthetic. The art work can then be defined as aesthetic experience artistically presented, or perfect experience

perfectly recorded. He who possesses the power to make an aesthetic object is a creative artist. He who can experience it for what it is, is the art appreciator.

But what is nature aesthetically experienced? What is aesthetic experience the experience *of*? We can answer this question by a process of elimination.

Since the aesthetic condition is one of complete immersion in the object of experience, the condition is not one of thinking, but of feeling. Thought is not *in* the object, but *about* the object. The thinker is preoccupied with the object, he is not of it. He is engrossed not in the object, but in himself for the sake of the object. The more that the thinker thinks about his object of thought, the more detached he becomes from it. In fact, detachment is the very life of thought, the one indispensable condition if the thought process is to operate. So the aesthetic belongs to the life of feeling, as the scientific belongs to the life of the intellect.

Further, being a condition of complete immersion in the object of experience, the aesthetic can not be a feeling for the content of experience. In the first place, a feeling for content is a feeling for oneself in relation to the object, since content is the subjective phase of experience. It is being carried into oneself, not out of oneself. In the second place, feeling for content results in desire to act, a state of restlessness, not one of repose. The ordinary meaning of a situation, its content, is the behavior it provokes. So practical experience rules out aesthetic experience.

The exclusion of thought and content from the aesthetic leaves the conclusion that aesthetic experience is feeling for form. And form being abstract, so is the feeling. In other words, the aesthetic is not some one specific feeling, as in the case of the practical, but a pure feeling state. Aesthetic experience is the feeling value of form as form. It is for this reason that artistic activity is a concern with form, that the struggle of the creative artist is to present an object of perfect structure. Since the stimulus for the activity is a feeling for form as form, the goal of the activity can be no other than the erection of a form for the sake of form. The activity is abstract because it is prompted by a feeling for the abstract. By its very nature, then, the value of the art work is intrinsic. It lies in what it is, not in what it implies or can be made to imply. To its maker its significance lies in its being an expression of

beauty; to the layman it has a significance as art only when it is a source of beauty.

The service that art renders man is twofold. By purging objective reality of subjective impositions upon it, the world of form comes to life by being experienced for its own sake. Art thus holds up the mirror to nature by revealing her to herself as in herself she really is. It is the creative value of art that Browning had in mind when his painter, Fra Lippo Lippi, after speaking of "the beauty and the wonder and the power, the shape of things, their colours, lights and shades, changes, surprises" — exclaims:

“. . . What is it all about?  
 To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,  
 Wondered at? Oh, this last of course! — you say.  
 But why not do as well as say — paint these  
 Just as they are, careless what comes of it?  
 God's works — paint any one, and count it crime  
 To let a truth slip. Don't object, 'His works  
 Are here already — nature is complete:  
 Suppose you reproduce her — (which you can't)  
 There's no advantage!' You must beat her, then.  
 For, don't you mark, we're made so that we love  
 First when we see them painted, things we have passed  
 Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;  
 And so they are better, painted — better to us,  
 Which is the same thing. Art was given for that.  
 God uses us to help each other so,  
 Lending our minds out.”

But art not only brings nature to life by resurrecting form, it also performs this service to man by giving him a moment of respite from the struggle to live. Beauty, the feeling for form, creates, in the language of Wordsworth,

“That blessed mood  
 In which the burthen of the mystery,  
 In which the heavy and the weary weight  
 Of all this unintelligible world,  
 Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,  
 In which the affections gently lead us on —  
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
 And even the motion of our human blood

Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul:  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy  
We see into the life of things."

Wordsworth might have better said that in beauty we see into our own life by experiencing a moment of the fulfillment of life.

So art is the only way of human feeling and doing, as science is the only way of human knowing. There is nothing distinctively human in feeling as the driving power to action. Concrete, specific feeling belongs to the life of practical existence, and as such prevails in sub-human as well as in human life. It is animal feeling. Likewise, the doing that is a response to the content of experience is animal doing. All animals work, but not artistically. They labor to live. It is only man who can work for the sake of the form of the product to result from it, and thus not only live by his work, but also live in his work. So man is human only when he feels aesthetically and works artistically, as he is human only when he thinks scientifically.

### *The Common Ground of Science and Art*

The foregoing discussion concerned itself with the special provinces of science and art: that the sphere of science is abstract knowledge, and that of art is abstract feeling. The special field of operation of each arises from the fact that the intrinsic meaning of form can be either its feeling value or its nature. But whereas each goes its own way because of the goal it seeks to attain, they also meet at several points due to their common interest in form as form.

One of the common grounds on which science and art meet is that it takes the two of them together to present a complete picture of the realm of the imaginative. This realm is not only intellectual, but also feelingful: not only something to be understood, but also something to be loved. Furthermore, it is not only general, but also individual. So art corrects and also supplements science. It corrects science by presenting a particular form in all its particularity, which science destroys first by breaking it up into fragments, and second by its interest in the individual only for

the sake of the general. And art supplements science by providing the feeling value of form which science must ignore if it is to be true to its mission. The charges against science that it is cold and heartless, and that it destroys the truly real, are valid only when the world of science is divorced from the world of art. But when the two are recognized as two clearly discernible aspects of the same reality, they are also seen as fulfilling each other and therefore as inseparable from each other.

Science and art also meet on the common ground of verification. The perceptual thinker thinks in order to gratify his habits. The creative thinker does so to verify his experience. The interest of the scientist in idea as idea compels him to ascertain its soundness, and the concern of the artist with feeling as feeling drives him to make sure of its substance. Neither scientist nor artist seek anything for themselves through their activities. Both are disinterested because their interest lies in what is beyond the personal. Only the fruit of scientific disinterestedness, being an idea, is public, while that of artistic disinterestedness, as a feeling, is private. But this privacy of art is a universal privacy, like the public idea of science is a general idea. All that this means is that in art the individual becomes universalized, whereas in science it becomes generalized. In other words, science and art begin at the same place, but do not end at the same place. Art begins with the individual of perceptual experience and ends with the individual of imaginative experience. And since form is the universal of experience, because no experience is possible without form, the fruit of art is the individual presented in its universality. Science also begins with the individual of perception, but ends with that individual as a member of a class, and having meaning and value only as a single manifestation of the general. Science thus classifies the individual; art universalizes it.

Finally, both science and art belong to the life of play versus the life of necessity. In them life attains its supreme worth, where its manifestations as intelligence, feeling, and behavior function for their own sake, so that life discovers itself to itself and savors of itself. They are the expressions of life finding joy in the living of it. For this reason the scientific and artistic activities are justly held to be the capstone of the citadel of life in general and of hu-

man life in particular. Science and art are not removed from life, they are the fulfillment of life. The desire to know for the sake of knowing which is science, is an enlargement of the need to know in the interest of doing. And the desire to feel for the sake of feeling which is art, is an extension of the necessity to feel in the interest of acting. Where and when science is also doing, or art is also acting, the doing and the acting are on the same high level of life as are the knowing and the feeling by which they were prompted.

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# The Object of Aesthetics

BY

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PART II.

## *THE PLACE OF BEAUTY AND ART IN AESTHETICS*

**A**LL sciences develop in one of two possible ways, either by a definite premeditated plan — in which case the name exists before the thing — or by various unrelated or loosely related beginnings which are later united into one discipline and given a name. Aesthetics developed in the latter way.

As early as Plato beauty and art were taken as subjects of philosophical inquiry. Aristotle, although less concerned with beauty than with art, developed the principle *Unity in the Variety* which is applicable to both beauty and art. He also inaugurated separate investigations of the different branches of art by his special inquiry into poetry. From the time of these ancient beginnings beauty and art continued to be the object of man's thoughtful reflection, but the results of these reflections were not coordinated into a discipline treating beauty, art in general, and the arts with systematic coherence until the middle of the 18th century. It was then that Alexander Baumgarten created a science which he named Aesthetics.

The contribution of Baumgarten has often been misunderstood by students of the 19th and 20th century. Some have thought that his desire to systematize the investigations of beauty and art sprang from a soul drunk with beauty and enthusiasm for art, or from so great a theoretical interest in these objects that he could not bring himself to treat them within the frame of other sciences. That is not correct. It is erroneous to consider Plato, Aristotle, Plotin, Shaftesbury, DuBos, Hogarth, Batteux, or Schiller, A. W. Schlegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Her-



bart, and Zimmerman (to name some thinkers before and after Baumgarten) as co-thinkers in that discipline which Baumgarten founded as "Aesthetics". Not only were the motives which led Baumgarten to the investigation of beauty and art completely different from those of the other named thinkers; the very character of his science, being colored and determined by his peculiar motives, is different. That is not to say that Baumgarten's Aesthetics has nothing in common with that which we now call Aesthetics. It means rather that of the two streams mingled in Baumgarten's work only one springs from Plato's treatment of beauty and art. The other stream has its origin in Baumgarten's own set of problems — problems which in themselves have very little to do with beauty and art as such.

Baumgarten's starting point is the assumption of the polarity of the higher and lower faculties of knowledge, i.e. of conceptual thinking and sensation (aisthesis). In earlier rationalism only conceptual thinking was respected as a knowledge factor. Sensation was not accredited until Leibnitz propounded the idea that there is a transition from unconscious to conscious thinking, from sensation to concept.<sup>1</sup> In the thesis "*Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensibus*", Leibnitz recognized the importance of sensation and placed it side by side with conceptual thinking as a knowledge faculty of almost equal rank. Although the continuation of his sentence, "*nisi intellectus ipse*", unbalances the partnership and again subordinates sensation to conceptual thinking, the result of Leibnitz' inquiry was that sensation became an object for the serious attention and study of rationalistic philosophy. In consequence of this development, Baumgarten — whose entire philosophy is rooted in rationalism — simply thought it a systematic necessity to supplement Logic, the science of Logos or conceptual thinking, by a science of aisthesis or sensation. Thus he founded a new science which he quite understandably named "Aesthetics". Obviously this new science was just a "later-born sister of Logic" and is entirely different from what we now understand by the term Aesthetics.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of developing this discipline, which was begun as a branch of Logic or Epistemology, Baumgarten's investigation took the interesting turn which earned for him lasting mention in the history of our science: The perfection of conceptual think-

ing is truth; the perfection of sensation is beauty. — Having arrived at a concept of beauty as something to be grasped by the senses (which places him in the second group of theorists on beauty as described in Part I) Baumgarten proceeded to deal with the phenomenon art which has always been believed to have some relation to beauty. Thus, the discipline founded by Baumgarten under the name “Aesthetics”, though conceived by him as a supplement to Logic, ultimately flowed into that old and wide stream of thought on beauty and art which until the advent of his work had neither been given a name nor elevated to the status of an independent science.

Baumgarten himself had neither love, understanding, nor interest in beauty and art as such. In fact, his attitude toward them was rather deprecatory. Due to this lack of sensitivity the “founder” of Aesthetics was not only less an aesthetician in our sense than many beauty and art contemplators before him, but he was also a poorer aesthetician than they.

Credit for developing Aesthetics into a discipline of beauty and art quite distinct and different from Logic and Epistemology belongs to Baumgarten’s successors who adopted his term but eliminated the epistemological viewpoint from their inquiries. Nevertheless, Baumgarten’s contribution is not to be taken lightly, for it advanced the science of Aesthetics by a great and important step: The third member of the revered trinity *Truth, Goodness, and Beauty* was conceded the right to a philosophical discipline of its own.

The appropriateness of the name Aesthetics for the science of beauty and art was disputed by Hegel because it contains no allusion to those objects. It may indeed be said that if beauty alone were the object of Aesthetics it would be better named Callistics, if art were its sole object, Musology or Philosophy of Art would be better names; if both beauty and art were its objects, a name of still wider scope should be given. Unquestionably, it is desirable to have the object of a science alluded to in its name as it is in the case of Logic, Ethics, Physics, Sociology, etc. And it is also true that the name Aesthetics is misleading — especially for those who know the meaning of the word aisthesis. It was correct from Baumgarten’s standpoint only. However, the question of the name is not of ultimate importance. The real

problem concerns the proper objects of the science and their relation to each other.

### THEORIES OF THE PAST

Theories on the object of Aesthetics fall into two groups. One group maintains that the science has two or more objects, the other that it is concerned with but one object.

#### A.—AESTHETICS AS A SCIENCE OF MORE THAN ONE OBJECT

The majority of aestheticians believe that Aesthetics has more than one object. Within this class, however, there are three different groups.

1.) The first group holds that beauty and art, although different phenomena, are nevertheless objects of one and the same science called Aesthetics. In other words, Aesthetics is a science of two objects, beauty and art.

As soon as it is assumed that beauty and art are related as objects of one science, the question of their rank in value inevitably arises; and since the rank given the phenomena automatically dictates the rank of the corresponding parts in the science of Aesthetics, it is well to present them together. There are three possibilities:

a) Beauty is more important than art. — Aesthetics of Beauty is the chief part of Aesthetics, and Aesthetics of Art is merely an appendix to it, an “applied” Aesthetics of Beauty.

b) Beauty and art are of equal rank. — Aesthetics of Beauty and Aesthetics of Art are coordinates.

It may be pointed out that although the two parts are here seen as coordinate, there is nothing to prevent a thinker from confining his inquiry to one of the two parts for reasons of personal inclination and talent, lack of time, or inability to take into consideration the wealth of material on both parts.

c) Art is more important than beauty in that it is either a particularly valuable realization or the only realization of the principle of beauty. — Aesthetics of Art is the chief part and

Aesthetics of Beauty merely an upbeat or general introduction to it.

Naturally, in this case less space will be devoted to the investigation of Beauty. But a philosopher who confines himself to beauty will nevertheless belong to this group if he looks upon his inquiry as an introduction to the "main" part of Aesthetics, i.e. to Aesthetics of Art. Likewise, an aesthetician who deals only with art belongs to this group if he openly or obscurely bases the concept of art upon the concept of beauty. Schelling, for instance, is representative of this latter type. In his "System of Transcendental Idealism" he regards beauty as "the infinite finitely presented" (*das Unendliche endlich dargestellt*) and calls beauty the archetype (*Urbild*) of art, saying that "art intuitively the arch-beautiful" (*Kunst schaut das Ur-Schoene an*). In as much as he considers beauty the basis and substance of art, Aesthetics for him has two objects — beauty and art.

2.) The second group of this class maintains that Aesthetics has three objects — beauty, nature ("Aesthetic" nature or natural beauty), and art.

The ranking order of the phenomena beauty, natural beauty, and art can be determined in different ways; and since here again the rank given the three parts of Aesthetics naturally corresponds to the rank given the phenomena themselves, the two may be presented together. Three of the possible cases are:

a) Beauty realizes itself more fully in nature than in art — although even nature is an imperfect realization of beauty. — Aesthetics of Beauty is more important than Aesthetics of Nature, and Aesthetics of Nature more important than Aesthetics of Art.

Plato is representative of this type in that he considers nature merely an image of the Ideas and Art merely an image of nature. In other words, he looks upon art as an image of an image of IDEAS in general and of the IDEA of Beauty in particular.

b) Natural beauty and art are equally valuable realizations of beauty. — Aesthetics of Nature and Aesthetics of Art are coordinate parts of Aesthetics. Whether they are coordinate or subordinate to Aesthetics of Beauty depends upon whether or not beauty is thought to be adequately realized in nature and art.

c) Art is a higher realization of beauty than is nature. Art is also higher than the principle or Idea of beauty itself, for the Idea of beauty needs realization and is not complete until it has penetrated into reality in the form of Art. — Aesthetics of Art is the most important of the three parts of Aesthetics.

Hegel is one of the great representatives of this last type (c) of group 2. It is erroneous to think that his Aesthetics is only an Aesthetics of Art; it merely culminates therein. What he really means when he says that the object of Aesthetics is the "wide realm of beauty" is indicated by the three section-headings in the first chapter of his *Lectures on Aesthetics*: Beauty, Natural Beauty, and Art Beauty. His remark in the Introduction to the effect that he is concerned with a philosophy of art alone and that natural beauty is outside the scope of his inquiry is indeed misleading. Natural beauty is certainly not art beauty. To Hegel it is even a much lesser form of beauty than art. Nevertheless, natural beauty is one of the three fundamental objects of his Aesthetics, one to which he expressly devoted a proper section of the first chapter. The fact that his Aesthetics is not confined to art alone would be obvious even if he had not devoted one special section to the IDEA of beauty and another to natural beauty; for Hegel, like Schelling, did not consider art a phenomenon which stands for itself, but rather one which is anchored in the phenomenon beauty through which alone it can be understood. To Hegel, IDEA is the only true reality. Beauty is "the IDEA shining through the sensual" (das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee). Nature, a detour between IDEA and SPIRIT, contains IDEA and can also take in Beauty, i.e. IDEA in the form of beauty — but in an imperfect fashion only. Art, on the other hand, grows directly out of IDEA — not, as popularly supposed, out of nature — and it contains both IDEA and beauty in an infinitely greater degree than does nature. Art is beauty perfected. But beauty and art, although united, are not identical; they have different being and meaning and are ultimately different phenomena. On that point Hegel's Aesthetics is very clear. But his theory on the ranking order of beauty and art is ambiguous in that it has two sides: 1.) Art attains its cosmic value only by virtue of being the fulfillment of beauty; 2.) Beauty fulfills itself in art alone. It is due to my belief that the latter is more characteristic of Hegel's

Aesthetics that his Aesthetics is here classified under (c) rather than with Plato under (a). If so viewed, it may be said (with reference to the ideas contained in Part I of this essay) that Hegel's theory is on the way to the contention that beauty is art-likeness, while for Plato art is beauty-likeness and even that only in a minor degree.

3.) The third group of this class (A) maintains, like the first, that Aesthetics has but two objects. However, the two objects here recognized are nature and art — not beauty and art. The theory is arrived at by considering beauty a concept abstracted from the phenomena natural beauty and art beauty, putting the accent on nature and art as the two possible *carriers* of beauty. — Thus, Aesthetics is again divided into two parts, this time into Aesthetics of Nature and Aesthetics of Art. There are again three possibilities as to the ranking order of the phenomena nature and art and of the corresponding two parts of Aesthetics.

#### B.—AESTHETICS AS A SCIENCE OF ONE OBJECT

In contrast to the previously surveyed class of theorists who take both beauty *and* art (or nature and art) to be objects of Aesthetics, the aestheticians of a second class hold beauty and art to be so entirely different that they cannot be taken as objects of one science. These thinkers believe that the discipline of beauty and the discipline of art should and must be considered completely separate and independent sciences. Two of the great representatives of this class are Max Dessoir and Conrad Fiedler.

*MAX DESSOIR* (Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, 1906)

Dessoir contends: The moment nature and natural beauty enter the sphere of art they are greatly transformed. For instance: in painting, spatial objects are projected on a plane; in poetry, happenings are transformed into words. Natural beauty thus acquires a new and quite un-natural character as soon as it invades the realm of art. Hence, natural beauty as such is entirely different from art in respect to quality and object. The two phenomena also differ widely in respect to the subjective impressions they evoke. Fragrance belongs to the aesthetic impression of the forest and great heat to that of tropical vegetation. The

beauty of a living body appeals to all our senses and frequently sets sexual impulse in motion. Such participation of the lower senses disappears, however, in the impressions made by art. The marble statue of a nude figure does not even prompt us to question whether it is man or woman, for in sculpture even the most attractive body is enjoyed as a sexless image, comparable to a painted landscape or melody. Thus, objects in art and the impressions they produce are very different from that phenomenon which in life is popularly called "beauty".

Judging from the above, it would seem that Dessoir has a heteronomous concept of beauty and an autonomous concept of art. If anything, he tends toward the very reverse. His allusions to that which is called beauty in life (for instance to the beauty of a living body which man is not accustomed to enjoy contemplatively) seem to be mere attempts made in the Introduction to descend to the viewpoint of the layman. Dessoir knows full well that one whose sexual impulses are quickened by the living body has grasped its charm but not its "beauty". He also knows that the aesthetic attitude is purely contemplative — regardless of the object to which it is directed. Consequently, he believes that every object in nature, even a living body of the opposite sex, can be viewed as autonomous sensual appearance. There can be no doubt, then, that Dessoir maintains the complete autonomy of beauty.

For the most part he also maintains the autonomy of art, but there are phrases like these: "Every true artwork is extremely complex with regard to cause and effect. It neither merely springs from aesthetic playfulness nor strives toward aesthetic pleasure alone. The needs and forces in which art is rooted by no means consist of the quiet pleasure which traditionally characterizes the aesthetic object and aesthetic pleasure." Even more significant is the phrase: "The aesthetic by no means expounds the content and *purpose* of the man-created realm which we call art." In as much as Dessoir means beauty conceived as autonomous when he speaks of "the aesthetic", the phrase seems well within the frame of heteronomy aesthetics. In reality, however, it does not place any restriction on the autonomy of art; for, as will be shown later, the reflection concerns a problem which has no bearing upon the very structure of art. Nevertheless, the contention

that art is not merely "aesthetic" together with the contention that artistic beauty and natural beauty are different, constitute Dessoir's first reason for maintaining that the discipline of beauty and the discipline of art are independent sciences.

Dessoir's second reason for this separation is that beauty and art give rise to difficult problems. Because natural beauty is the work of nature and comes into existence without any activity of man, the discipline of beauty need only characterize the phenomenon beauty itself and man's apperception and appreciation of it. Art, however, is man-created. Consequently, the discipline of art must go beyond the characterization of the phenomenon art itself and of man's apperception and appreciation of it, i.e. must deal with man's art-creating activity, with the problem of the origin of art as seen from the psychological and historical-ethnographical standpoints. In as far as the artwork springs from the transformation of nature and natural beauty, the discipline of art must also characterize the transforming changes worked by art upon natural beauty. Finally, this discipline must deal with the comparison of the various branches of art and with the place and function of art in the system of cultural activities. Obviously there is no analogon in the discipline of beauty for any of these problems.

On the basis of these differences in the essence of beauty and art as he sees them, and in the problems they present, Dessoir concludes that beauty and art cannot be considered two objects of one discipline but must be taken as objects of two separate and independent sciences. In harmony with this conclusion he wishes to overthrow the name Aesthetics as used since the time of Baumgarten for investigations of both beauty and art in favor of having the object of the two disciplines distinctly indicated in their respective titles. He does not think it sufficient to simply use the terms Aesthetics of Beauty and Aesthetics of Art, for those titles still give rise to the idea that they are merely two *parts* of one discipline. In his attempt to give each of the disciplines an individual, unmistakable name, Dessoir confines the old term *Aesthetics* to the philosophical science of beauty, and calls the philosophical science of art *General Science of Art*. So it was that he gave the title *Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* to his main work (published in 1906) and to the world's



first Journal of Aesthetics which he founded and edited for thirty-three years. He also gave the name "Congress for Aesthetics and General Science of Art" to the historically significant congresses founded in 1913 and presided over in masterly fashion by Dessoir himself. Ranking French aestheticians, adopting Dessoir's terms, gave to the Second International Congress for Aesthetics (Paris, 1937) the name "Congrès d'Esthétique et de Science de l'Art" — dropping only the word *General*. — — —

For the lifework of Max Dessoir and for the magnificent stimuli he provided for the development of the science of beauty and art I have a profound respect. And I have a deep admiration for the man Dessoir, the only living German aesthetician of international stature, who together with Georg Simmel was my master and teacher before the last World War. Ten years ago, in devoted recognition of his great store of aesthetic thought, I dedicated to him a book on Aesthetics of Music. Yet I cannot but disagree with his separation of the Aesthetics of Beauty and Art into two distinct disciplines.

Obviously the crux of this problem lies in the degree of commensurability — or incommensurability — attributed to beauty and art, for the fact that the two phenomena present different problems is no real reason for making them objects of two separate sciences. Now incommensurability would exist if beauty were completely autonomous and art completely heteronomous, and certainly such incommensurability would justify making the two phenomena objects of independent sciences. But does Dessoir assume such incommensurability?

Dessoir holds beauty to be autonomous and when dealing with the structure of art and with its various branches he also maintains the autonomy of art. However, he seems to question the autonomy of art when he contemplates it in connection with non-artistic phenomena like culture and the ethical — especially when he reflects on the problem of the extra-artistic, ethical *purpose* of art.

According to his general philosophy and to his concept of the ethical, Dessoir believes that all human activities can not only be contemplated under the ethical viewpoint, but that they should actually serve the ethical, i.e. that they have or should have an ethical purpose. Thus far his reasoning is correct. But Dessoir

seems to believe that such relatedness to the ethical automatically destroys or diminishes the autonomous character of things with the result that ultimately there is no place for the autonomy of things in a world in which the ethical is the ultimate purpose of everything. This is a mistake.

Since this idea seems to be the main cause for the weakening of Dessoir's conviction of art's otherwise recognized autonomy, it is necessary to prove that art's autonomy is not necessarily affected by the demand that it serve the ethical. Let us therefore consider the problem from the three pertinent sides: a) Types of structure possible in art, b) Types of purposes in general; c) Relations between the possible kinds of purpose and the possible kinds of structure in art.

a) *On Structure*

If the form of art is dependent upon and related to an extra-artistic subject-matter, art has no self-significance and is heteronomous. If art has only self-significant form, or if it has self-significant form in addition to extra-artistic subject matter, it is autonomous.

b) *On Purposes*

1). If the purpose which a thing is expected to fulfill, or is said to "have", is such that it can be fulfilled through the mere display of the thing's inherent structure, the purpose and the structure *coincide*. In such a case the thing is not a means to an end but is an end in itself; it has *auto-telia*; it is *auto-telic*.

2). If the given purpose of a thing does not coincide with its structure, i.e. if the purpose can also be fulfilled by other and different phenomena, the nature of the thing's structure and the nature of its purpose can nevertheless be so homogeneous that the purpose can be fulfilled by the mere display of the thing's inherent structural qualities. In this case the structure and the purpose do not coincide, but they are *compatible*. The purpose here is not foreign to the thing, and therefore the thing can still be said to have *auto-telia*, to be *auto-telic*. In this instance, one may speak of *relative auto-telia* in contrast to absolute *auto-telia* as seen in the former (1) example. It may be noted that some thinkers see things in the light of *hetero-telia* if the purpose is

merely compatible and not coincident with the phenomenon's structure. But in as much as the purpose is here fulfilled by the display of the thing's inherent structure, auto-telia seems to be the more apt concept.

3). If the structure of a thing and the nature of its purpose are so different that the purpose cannot be fulfilled by the mere display of the thing's inherent structure, if the thing must change its intrinsic qualities and assume opposite ones in order to fulfill its purpose, then the purpose is really foreign to the thing. In this case the thing obviously has *hetero-telia*; it is *hetero-telic*.

c) *Relation between Heteronomy-Autonomy and Heterotelia-Autotelia*

In as much as absolute autotelia (1) occurs whenever the purpose of a thing coincides with its structure, autotelia is theoretically possible regardless of whether art is autonomous or heteronomous. — Thus, autotelia is compatible with both heteronomy and autonomy. Theoretically, this applies of course to the instance in which an ethical purpose is given to art, provided, that is, that the nature of the ethical purpose coincides with the structure of art — which in reality it does not.

Relative autotelia (2) could also be combined with heteronomous or autonomous art-structure. If the purpose of art is assumed to be the ethical, relative autotelia could occur only if the nature of the ethical is compatible with that of art's structure. In other words: if art is given an ethical purpose, relative autotelia can exist only on the basis of that concept of the ethical according to which the realization and display of art's inherent structure is itself something ethical. This concept, which is akin to Aristotle's idea of the "dianoetic virtues," is Dessoir's underlying concept of the ethical. Now if the purpose of art is ethical in this sense, it can be combined with art as autonomous as well as with art as heteronomous.<sup>8</sup> — Thus, relative autotelia may be combined with either heteronomy or autonomy.

Heterotelia (3) appears when the assumed art-purpose is so foreign to art's structure that it cannot be fulfilled satisfactorily. Such extreme heterotelia could also appear with either autonomy or heteronomy.

Special attention may now be given to a particular combination of heterotelia and autonomy. There are those who are aware that art is autonomous in structure, i.e. that artworks can and do have autonomous form, and that the subject matter is so irrelevant to art, viewed from its own standpoint, that a great artwork may have a poor or utterly insignificant subject matter, or, as in the abstract arts, may have no subject matter at all. On the other hand, they consider art heterotelic, attributing to it an ethical purpose which it can only fulfill by presenting life-significant subject matter. They insist that art fulfill this purpose at all cost — even at the cost of weakening, diminishing or doing away with its autonomy of form. This leads to the demand that artists concentrate first of all on giving art a significant subject matter — regardless of autonomous form — and that the contemplator give primary consideration to that subject matter. In other words, they demand that the autonomous structure of art be supplanted by subject matter accentuated heteronomy.

At this point the important question arises: Supposing the task were accomplished and art were to *become* heteronomous, would this not force the admission of a connection between art's heterotelia and heteronomy? No, it would not; for apart from the impossibility of realizing such an idea in the abstract arts, there remains the fact that if art were to become heteronomous it would cease to be *art*. (See Part I of this article). Provided that art is autonomous, it will remain so and can never become heteronomous. The thesis that heterotelia has no influence upon the structure of art remains valid. — This idea, which was treated here because of its bearing upon the question of the relation between heterotelia and autonomy, is by no means one of Dessoir's. On the contrary, Dessoir's concepts of the ethical and of the ethical purpose of art are such that art can fulfill its ethical purpose, can serve the ethical, by merely displaying its inherent structural quality — which he recognizes as autonomous.

In the light of these explanations it is clear that the assumption that art's heterotelia necessarily implies its heteronomy and excludes or restricts its assumed autonomy is as false as the assumption that art's autonomy implies autotelia and excludes

heterotelia. Whether art is autonomous or heteronomous is a question to be decided by an analysis of artworks. Whether it is autotelic or heterotelic can be ascertained only by an inquiry into the tendencies, aims, and purposes of human society and into the true meaning of the ethical. But regardless of the ideas resulting from these inquiries, they are ideas pertaining to entirely different, uninterchangeable spheres. There can be no interrelation between Heteronomy-Autonomy and Heterotelia-Autotelia. Therefore: if art is heteronomous, autotelia will not affect its heteronomy. If art is autonomous (as Dessoir believes), heterotelia can make no restriction on its autonomy.

Thus there is no legitimate reason for Dessoir to question the autonomy of art, and thus his main argument for placing the theory of beauty and the theory of art in separate, independent sciences becomes untenable.

Happily, it is only in those sections of his work in which he reflects on the purpose of art that Dessoir entertains any real doubt as to the structural autonomy of art. If one considers the major part of his book, disregarding the above reflections and the remarks in the Introduction, if one takes his work as a whole and supplements it by his most significant Congress lectures, there can be no doubt that ultimately he upholds the autonomy of both beauty and art. His theoretical separation of the aesthetic theories of beauty and art is therefore superfluous, even from his own standpoint.

It may be noted that in practise Dessoir deviates from his own theoretical suggestion: the word *and* connecting "Aesthetics *and* "General Science of Art", and the fact that he makes beauty and art the topic of one work are most symptomatic. Investigations of entirely different sciences can, of course, be treated in one and the same volume. But Dessoir's work is not of this type. Here the would-be-different sciences are presented not only in masterly fashion but with true *systematic* coherence. This can be taken as an indication that Dessoir intuitively felt — despite his theory — that the sciences of beauty and art belong together and form one unit. And though he persists in upholding his theory, his work still stands as a proof that beauty and art are really objects of one and the same discipline.

*CONRAD FIEDLER* (Schriften zur Kunst, 1913)<sup>4</sup>

Fiedler, like Dessoir, separated Aesthetics of Beauty from "Aesthetics" of Art entirely. Like Dessoir, he also reserved the term Aesthetics for the philosophical science of beauty; the philosophical science of art he christened *Theory of Art*. Here again the matter of mere terminology is of minor importance. That which is really important is to learn what Fiedler meant by the terms beauty and art and to determine if his motives for separating the investigations of these phenomena were based upon correct concepts.

Fiedler adopted unconditionally the Kantian concept according to which beauty is characterized firstly by the quality of autonomy and secondly by a constitutive reference to the phenomena pleasantness and taste. By holding the second of these qualities to be the more essential to Kant's concept and to the right concept of beauty, and by thus rooting beauty in pleasantness and feeling, Fiedler comes to the conclusion that beauty is something subjective and emotional. This very Kantian idea of the subjectivity of beauty had earlier been a thorn in the flesh for Schiller who tried to dislodge it by directing Kant's concept of beauty into more objective channels. The more Kant-credulous Fiedler chose to simply ignore the path taken by Schiller and later by Herbart and Zimmerman in the effort to free the concept of beauty from the bonds of emotion and pleasantness. He accepted Kant's beauty-concept unconditionally.

Fiedler is aware, however, that there is no bridge from the Kantian concept of beauty — correct as he believes it to be — to the true concept of art. While accepting the Kantian idea that pleasantness, taste, or the judgment of taste are essential to beauty, he denies that they have any essential bearing upon art. Fiedler says that only one who has grown accustomed to disregarding the judgment of taste when looking at and evaluating an artwork can render justice to the work as art. But he does not deny that art pleases too. He even agrees that if art pleases in the disinterested way Kant described, it is "beautiful" in contrast to "agreeable" or "good". Nevertheless, he contends that art has as little to do with beauty and pleasure, even disinter-

ested pleasure, as has science — which the scientist certainly finds pleasing too.

Although Fiedler does deal with art in general, the major part of his work consists of the investigation of the art of painting. He reasons thus: that which is usually called "seeing" is not really seeing at all, for usually we look at things only long enough to form a concept and to incorporate that concept in the system of concepts we already have. As soon as the object has been entered in our conceptual files, we lose interest in its aspect. The extremely imperfect and superficial kind of looking sufficient for this purpose is characteristic of the use we make of our eyes in practical and daily life. Nor is the function of the eye grossly different in science — not even when we observe things under the microscope. But in art the activity of the eye is quite different. The artist does not look at things with concern for their place in our system of concepts or in the system of reality. Nor does he view them from the standpoint of their beauty (which for Fiedler is identical with their pleasantness). The artist is concerned with the object's *visuality* only. That is not to say that the artist has a keener eye with which he can see qualities visible to the layman only by the aid of a magnifying glass. Nor does it mean that the artist does or should study visual things in the minute detail of scientific examination. It means rather that the artist is distinguished from the scientist by his ability to see the visual with the eye alone, i.e. without the intervention of conceptual thought and classification. He eliminates everything he knows about the seen; he sees it intensely — without prejudices or pre-conceived concepts. — In reading this characterization one involuntarily thinks of the Impressionistic painter. There is no doubt that the Impressionist is completely unbiased in his seeing; he is not hampered by any knowledge or prejudice in yielding himself up to the mere aspect of the thing. But the Impressionist leans toward the momentary impression, towards a brief, though intense, viewing of things. Fiedler refers to a kind of intense seeing which demands the long-dwelling of the eye on the object. — Yet even for the artist there is danger in this prolonged surrender to the mere aspect — the danger that such seeing may evolve into dreaming or conceptual thinking of the presented object. However, if the artist is able to hold to pure and

unconceptual seeing, and if he then transposes what he sees to a plane, the resulting picture is an example and a lesson for the layman in the recognition and contemplation of the visible as such. Art, then, is not a means to pleasure and enjoyment in objects also experienced in life. It is rather the presentation of something which is entirely unknown outside the realm of art, namely the visual as purely visual, and is simultaneously the true cognition of the visible world. —

With such ideas Fiedler leads the concept of art entirely away from the phenomena enjoyment and pleasure — even from disinterested pleasure, and from feeling, taste, and the judgment of taste which he considers essential to “beauty.” On the other hand, by considering art a kind of knowledge, Fiedler brings it into the vicinity of science — which does not imply that he neglects the basic difference prevailing between science and art in spite of the cognitive character of both. On the contrary, scarcely anyone has realized and emphasized the difference between artistic and scientific knowledge as clearly as Fiedler has. —

According to Fiedler it is easier to accrue conceptual knowledge of reality than to acquire artistic knowledge of it. The former is obtained by transforming sensation into concepts, the latter by retaining sensations as sensations. Paradoxically, nothing is more a matter of course for man in our stage of civilization than going beyond the visible side of things to the point where concepts are formed. Therefore, the acquisition of knowledge on the visual as merely visual is possible only if we make a complete break with the kind of perception habitually practised in life and science and employ in its stead a most unusual kind of concentrated perception. This artistic perception of reality, although unique, remains cognitive in character; it is never emotional or pleasure-bound. Contrary to the layman’s belief, art is “neither produced nor grasped through emotion.” It is this cognitive element which makes art one of the supreme achievements of human nature and which places the value of art on a level with that of science and philosophy.

The uniqueness of art lies in the fact that it accomplishes what science, in order to be science, must neglect. In other words, it fills the gap left open by science and philosophy. But it would be a mistake to consider art in the light of a mere stop-gap, be-



lieving that the more important tasks belong to science. With the same right one can say that science fills a gap left open by art in that art, too, must omit something important in order to be art. In as much then as both convey cognition of something otherwise unknown, science and art are equal in rank. —

Care must be taken to avoid confusing Fiedler's idea of the cognitive character of art with the popular idea that art conveys a kind of knowledge which differs from scientific knowledge only because it is presented so "beautifully" and simply that through it even the scholastically untrained may learn something about the natural or moral world. Such was the primitive art concept of 18th century rationalism. Fiedler's idea differs with it radically. From the popular standpoint art, philosophy, science, and popular cognition are principally concerned with the same object. On the contrary, Fiedler maintains that art is cognition of something which as such can exist or reveal itself in art alone. This rejection of the popular idea that conceptual and artistic cognition have an identical object is not the only point on which Fiedler differs. His very concept of cognition is different. While popular Epistemology and Aesthetics holds cognition to be a copy or image of reality, Fiedler contends (with Idealistic Epistemology) that cognition in this sense does not exist at all — neither in art nor in conceptual thinking. In scientific cognition sense impressions are transformed into concepts which are in turn incorporated in a system of concepts derived either from experience or from aprioristic conditions of experience. It follows, then, that our system of concepts does not by any matter of means coincide with reality as such. The only possible meeting point of reality and cognition lies in the final *result* of the cognitive process — and even there the relation can at the utmost be a certain correspondence — not a coincidence. Nevertheless, science is of necessity related and referable to reality which exists prior to being thought of by man, and the results of science need and demand verification through reality. — Such relatedness to reality is alien to art. The visual aspect which the painter grasps and transposes to a plane needs no verification. In fact, such verification is scarcely imaginable. The pure visibility of nature does not exist as such in nature or reality independent of the eye and mind; it is merely a result of cooperation between

reality and the eye and exists only within the mind concentrated upon the exclusive activity of the eye applied to reality. Pure visibility is obviously something to be created by and within the very process of cognition. Art, therefore, is cognition of something which exists in man's cognition-process alone. If so, one may say that the idea of Idealistic Epistemology (from Fichte and Hegel to Herman Cohen), "the object of cognition is the cognition of the object," is applicable to art rather more than to reality when taken as the object of conceptual thinking in pre-scientific experience, science, and philosophy.

According to Fiedler, then, art is the creation and presentation of a unique sphere comparable to nothing but itself; art is autonomous. The phenomena pleasure, pleasantness and taste, which constitute the phenomenon and concept of beauty are as inessential to art as they are to science and theoretical cognition. Fiedler places beauty with pleasantness, taste, and the judgment of taste on one level, science and art as forms of cognition on quite another.

Fiedler's concept of art has frequently received the not unwarranted criticism that it places too little emphasis on the creative element in art. In fairness it must be said that Fiedler recognizes the creative factor more than most in maintaining that nature is not something to be simply copied but rather something to be actively realized by the artist. Yet one cannot overlook the fact that he seems to take it for granted that the painter does and should start from the aspect of nature and that enough has been done if the work of seeing and transferring the seen to the picture plane is accomplished without the fatal intervention of conceptual thinking. From the standpoint of pictorial autonomy that is not enough, for the concept of pure visuality does not alone take in the entire essence of the creativeness in painting. Within the sphere of pure visuality there are, for instance, appreciable differences between *Unity in the Variety* and lack thereof. To say it in the terminology of painting: there is a difference between good and bad compositional qualities in nature. The artist's task is not confined to the presentation of pure visuality; he must also present these visible phenomena in good composition. Fiedler's treatment of this compositional factor is indeed inadequate. He quite neglected to stress the fact that the artist can and may change

the natural forms and colors of objects for the sake of achieving better composition, i.e. greater unity in the variety. Instances of such stylized modifications are particularly obvious in the great masterworks of the middle ages and of El Greco, to say nothing of the Post-Impressionists. Fiedler's failure to emphasize this activity of the painter in deviating from the actually seen, changing and modifying it for the sake of composition, is indeed a regrettable omission. Still more regrettable is his seeming ignorance of the fact that as often as not the painter — particularly one concentrated on pure visuality — starts from a creative "vision" of shapes and forms which later, in the process of elaboration, he concretizes by approaching the forms and colors of objects as we might see them in reality.<sup>5</sup> In such cases the created vision obviously was and is the sole model of the picture. Instances of this procedure are not peculiar to the moderns, for medieval painters and El Greco used it too. It is true, however, that the "method" was not fully recognized and accredited by art-theorists until the advent of the Post-Impressionists. In the light of contemporary Aesthetics of pictorial autonomy it must be admitted, then, that Fiedler lacked complete understanding of the supreme creative qualities possible in the art of painting. In the terminology of Part I of this article: Fiedler had the utmost understanding for autonomy self-significance — which is the first and basic requisite of art, but he did not fully realize the principle of self-sufficiency, totality. It is an interesting question if this might not have been different had he been privileged to develop his concept of art not only under the spell of his friend, the truly great painter Hans von Marées, but of the greater Cézanne. —

Let us now return to that aspect of Fiedler's Aesthetics which necessitates its being dealt with here, to his contention that the discipline of art must be separated from the discipline of beauty. The basis for his maintenance is: 1). his belief in the exclusive correctness of Kant's concept of beauty according to which the phenomenon beauty is rooted in the art-foreign, subjective, and emotional phenomena pleasantness, pleasure, and judgment of taste; 2). his belief in the autonomy of art to which pleasantness and taste are inessential.

In the section on Dessoir, I maintained that the separation of the discipline of beauty and that of art would be justified only if

art and beauty were incommensurable. To this was added the statement that beauty and art would be incommensurable if beauty were heteronomous and art autonomous or vice versa. The latter must now be supplemented by the idea that beauty and art would also be incommensurable if beauty were pleasantness and art the presentation of something new. This is all the more notable in that there are two kinds of pleasure, one of which — the disinterested, intrinsic pleasure characterized by Kant — is autonomous in character. But even autonomous pleasure is incommensurable with the autonomy of a thing so super-psychological as art is. Consequently, *if* beauty were autonomy of pleasure (as Fiedler assumes with Kant) and art were cognition, or better the presentation of something otherwise unknown and basically new, the separation of the disciplines of beauty and art would be justified. Fiedler's separation of the disciplines is therefore consistent from his standpoint — beauty and art being incommensurable as he conceives them. But the conclusion is nevertheless wrong because it is based upon a wrong concept of beauty. Such a concept of beauty is the outcome of confusing beauty with the pleasure in beauty, i.e. of confusing beauty itself with the reaction to beauty. Even if one believes that beauty, having no extramental reality, is something purely "psychological", as is the pleasure in beauty, the difference between beauty as the object of pleasure and the pleasure in that object remains. According to the right concept of beauty and the right concepts of art, the two phenomena are commensurable and there is no justification for making them objects of two separate disciplines.

### A NEW THEORY

Since all my reflections presented in Part I and Part II of this essay contribute directly or indirectly to the determination of the essence of beauty and art and their relation to each other as well as to the relation between the disciplines of beauty and art as I see them, my own theory on the Object of Aesthetics can now be presented within the space of a few pages.

Obviously the determination of the object of Aesthetics and the determination of the relationship between inquiries into beauty and art depends entirely upon the concepts of beauty and art in-

volved. I maintained in Part I that the concept of beauty can be determined only through reference to the concept Art and that beauty is the art-likeness of objects which belong to nature or other forms of reality. In contrast to art which is man-created autonomy of sensual appearance, beauty is autonomy of sensual appearance perceived and apperceived but not really created by man. Beauty comes into being only when sensually perceivable reality is contemplated under the viewpoint of art; it is art-likeness — only art-likeness. The concept of beauty is contained in and is a part or element of the concept of art. Thus, art and beauty are not two independent phenomena. Properly speaking, they are not two phenomena at all. Art is the one basic phenomenon and beauty is merely the application of the concept or category of art to reality existing outside art.

It follows that beauty and art cannot be considered the objects of two separate sciences; they cannot even be considered objects of two really independent parts of the same science. Thus Aesthetics, since Baumgarten believed to be the philosophical science of both beauty and art, has but one object — ART; and the systematic place for the investigation of beauty and its impressions is within the frame of the philosophical science of Art. Therein lies the difference between my standpoint and that of traditional Aesthetics as well as that of Dessoir and Fiedler.

Traditional Aesthetics considers beauty and art as two objects assigned to one science. I agree that they are to be dealt with by the same science; but I deny that they are really two phenomena since the concept of beauty is absorbed, bracketed, or embraced by that of art. Amongst the great art aesthetic theories of the past, Plato's was the most remote from this idea and Hegel's the closest to it. Ultimately, however, Hegel's Aesthetics also rates beauty and art as two different phenomena and it is therefore a science of more than one basic object.

Still greater is the gap between my theory on the object of Aesthetics and that of Dessoir and Fiedler. At first sight it may seem that my standpoint has at least a formalistic kinship to theirs in that they too attribute only one object to Aesthetics. However, they make Aesthetics a science of one object merely by confining it to beauty and declaring art the object of another science. Thus their theory and mine have nothing in common. Be-

cause Dessoir and Fiedler fully accept the traditional assumption that beauty and art are two different basic phenomena, their theory has a greater affinity to the standpoint of Traditional Aesthetics than to mine. In fact the error of Traditional Aesthetics assumes even greater dimensions in the Theory of Dessoir and Fiedler who over-emphasize the independence of beauty and art to a point where they cannot even be dealt with by the same science.

There are only two standpoints from which Aesthetics can really be seen as a science of one object: 1.) If beauty is declared to be the substance of art in such a way that art is fully absorbed by the phenomenon beauty; 2.) If beauty is dispossessed of all semblance of independence from art. The latter I have assumed in declaring beauty to be art-likeness.

Thus, the maintenance that the concept of beauty and the phenomenon itself is completely dependent upon, embraced or bracketed by, the concept and phenomenon art, that beauty has as little independence from art as has a shadow from the object which casts it, radically segregates my theory on the object of Aesthetics from that of both Traditional Aesthetics and of Dessoir and Fiedler.

I would be greatly misunderstood if it were assumed that I deny the existence of all *problems* concerning beauty, of problems, the treatment of which fills innumerable volumes in the aesthetical literature of the past. The very contrary is true. I regard the concept and even the mere word beauty as much more problematic and riddle-loaded than do most aestheticians. I freely admit that the concept of beauty gives us serious, concrete problems; but I believe that these problems are ultimately problems of the phenomenon art, and the systematic place for their treatment is therefore in the Aesthetics of Art. To illustrate my point I refer to the two problems traditionally considered as the main problems of Aesthetics of beauty: 1.) The structure of beauty itself; 2.) The impressions and effects of beauty.

1.) Beauty is art-likeness. Therefore, if the objects of reality believed to be beautiful belong to the visual sphere, their beauty must be treated in reference to and in connection with the arts of Painting or Sculpture. Thus, the chapter treating natural beauty or aesthetic nature would be, so to speak, an appendix to the chap-

ter on Painting and Sculpture and might be called Applied Aesthetics of Painting and Sculpture. This chapter would also be the systematic place for those innumerable reflections which heretofore have been made under the heading "Nature and Art."

2.) The problem of the impressions and effects of beauty is obviously a psychological one — as is the problem of the impressions and effects of art. In a System of Aesthetics a separate section should be devoted to Psychology of Art (in contrast to the section on the Structure of Art and the Arts). This section would then also be the systematic place for treatment of the psychological problems of beauty; Psychology of Beauty would be an appendix to Psychology of Art and might be called Applied Psychology of Art.

Obviously the concept of beauty here proposed by no means excludes the recognition and treatment of the problems heretofore considered specific problems of beauty conceived as a phenomenon not only distinguishable but even more or less distinct from the phenomenon art. Many contributions made by former Aesthetics to these problems retain their value when applied to my concept of beauty. As examples I cite the theory of the contemplative character of the impression of beauty upheld by Kant, Schiller, and Schopenhauer, and the characterization of beauty "itself" by Schiller, Herbart, and Zimmerman.

Aesthetics, then, is a science which has but one true object — Art. In substance, Aesthetics is Aesthetics of Art. The idea that the very essence of art — of which beauty is a likeness — is self-significance, autonomy which culminates in self-sufficiency, autarkia, is constantly gaining ground among art-minded aestheticians and aesthetics-conscious artists. So it is that I may conclude these fragmentary reflections — taken from a recently completed work entitled "Prolegomena to a System of Aesthetics" — with a thesis on the active forces and the spirit of our science, a thesis the validity of which has long been a happy certainty for me: The History of Aesthetics is the growing consciousness of the Autonomy of Art.

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#### NOTES

1. We still feel effects of the psychological and epistemological application of Leibnitz' general principle, called the "loi de continuité," in Hegel and Bergson.

2. The term Aesthetics was still used in the epistemological sense in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Transcendental Aesthetics) but was used in the modern sense in his *Critique of Judgment*.
3. This is true even if one here terms art "heterotelic" because the phenomenon ethical itself is only compatible and non-coincident with art's structure.
4. Although Fiedler died in 1895, his writings on the problem in question here did not appear until 1913 — seven years after the appearance of Dessoir's book. For this reason his work is being dealt with after Dessoir's.
5. As the French painter, R. T. Bosshard, has said: "In my case the freest play of lines and color planes always ends by resembling an object."



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## The Symbolic Function of Aesthetic Terms\*

BY

MAX RIESER

### *Levels of Awareness*

**I**S the statement that a thing is beautiful or ugly qualitatively on the same level as the assertion that a thing is hot or cold, sour or sweet? Is aesthetic response a sensuous response as it may readily seem, or is it an epiphenomenon involving thought processes? It is clear why a man is pleasurablely affected by coolness or the prospect of a profit, but it is less clear why a certain arrangement of trees or the color of leaves should influence anybody's actions or move him to sacrifices. While the pleasurable effect of a cool wind is sensual and unmediated by thought, the pleasure of an anticipated profit is obviously so mediated, yet the outcome may be a feeling of joy. But the latter arises on another, a higher level of awareness than the pleasure of warm or cool. A similar problem confronts us with respect to aesthetic pleasure. Is the latter on the same level of awareness as our sensuous pleasures? Is it perceptual and immediate or conceptual, mediated by thoughts? Assuming that the aesthetic response to a certain shape or color or object is due to the material fact of its being square or round, pink or white, we shall be confronted necessarily by the additional question: What ground of emotion lies in the mere fact of squareness or roundness? Where is the emotional link between the perception of roundness or squareness and our sensibility as to cause an emotional response? Darwin attributes a sense of beauty to birds which are supposed to appreciate the glowing colors and the elaborate patterns of their plumage. Why do they not appreciate a row of columns or the rosette of a church facade? Are they able to grasp a pattern?

\*This paper was read at the 41st annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association at Vassar College, December 30th, 1941.

its meaning? The assertion that animals are moved by music proceeds along the same lines of reasoning, namely the tacit assumption that aesthetic response is of perceptual not of conceptual origin. It is furthermore implicitly based on a theory that aesthetic response arises not on a higher, but on the same level of awareness as our pleasure derived from the affection of vision by a luminous source. In my opinion this is a confusion of levels. Do we think nothing when we assert that a thing is beautiful or ugly? Is it not really a conclusion based, as it were, on an investigation? a critical examination of a whole range of relations during which we seem to apply some preconceived standard? If it is mere perceptual pleasure, then we could derive it best from shapes in a manual of geometry, or from color samples on a color card. But these elements are only in a slight degree productive of aesthetic response. The latter's intensity increases incomparably when we contemplate objects, edifices, flowers, men within contexts; in other words very complicated and meaningful structures. Mere perceptual elements like circles or patches of color are comparatively poor in meaning and in aesthetic response. We enjoy rather a "white rose" than "white", a "smooth hand" rather than "smoothness" and reject a smooth (bald) head. If the pleasure described as aesthetic is of perceptual origin, why don't we enjoy bald heads and hairy hands? If we exclude meaning from this complex, then whiteness and roundness might be enjoyed as such, and in consequence round backs would be as good as round faces or yellow faces as good as yellow flowers. But this is not so. We seem to know *ab ovo* how faces "ought" to look or backs to be built and judge accordingly. Even if such knowledge were founded on an illusion, it would still be "knowledge", not perception.

### *Acts of Interpretation.*

The whole aspect changes if we assume that we like not the form, but what it represents and means, or is supposed to represent. Then form is not a dead writ, an inexplicable stimulus to vision or hearing, but a receptacle of some meaning, its outer shell. The aesthetic emotion would thus be linked to an act of interpretation, namely an additional interpretation grafted, as it were,

on the general interpretation we are making whenever confronted with an object. The form of a man for instance, is to us not a mere congeries of eyes, ears, etc., we interpret it instantly as a shell of a spiritual content, namely of a being akin to ourselves. We do not take things at their face values but as representation. But when plunged into the aesthetic mood, we discern in these forms something additional; the form speaks then its own language and tells that a given thing is well made, that a good order obtains within its bounds and that it is desirable—or the form shows the opposite of all this. Mere vision, however, will never account for the fact that a Chinese will classify a white man as an ugly pale devil, while a European is outfaced by outlandish features. But supposing that they mutually consider strange features unvoluntarily as something unhealthy morbid because they associate with these forms in their surrounding such meanings, then the principle of valuation would be quite rational.

### *Concepts of Life*

Aesthetic response exhibits capriciousness despite a certain stability. It changes within the course of history, oscillates within the lifetime of the same person, varies within the same society, fluctuates according to sex and even age. The confusing ways of "taste" cannot be explained by perceptual facts; as an intellectual epiphenomenon however they would be quite comprehensible. Why should pink cheeks be beautiful and not pink hands? Is it a principle of perception that orders faces to be pink and hands pale? But when we state that red cheeks seem nice because red is in that context a symbol of health and youth which are desirable and that the white hands of a woman were a social ideal since time immemorial, the question of such aesthetic values is resolved. They would be functions of a concept of life. When we are aesthetically affected, we judge whole contexts of meaning, not single perceptual elements. If we cover a face under a mask so that the most beautiful detail, a regular nose, brilliant eyes, remains uncovered, this detail will be unimpressive. A beautiful head, seen from behind, inversely, may look monstrous.

We have to solve the question of stability, of variations and of

preferences. Schopenhauer prefers an English garden to a Roman because the former is more natural. But this naturalness is evidently a question of degrees, since English gardens do not resemble primeval forests. Different styles of garden architecture manifest a different attitude towards nature which is the effect of another concept of life. It may likewise reflect a different *Weltanschauung* whether a man prefers a palace to a cottage or vice versa. The European landscape is highly artificial, a work of men, and it may produce aesthetic response just as a primeval forest, the reason will be different and of spiritual character. The preference will depend on our conviction of the desirability of such different types of countryside owing to a certain state of mind, to an attitude. Goethe loves Gothic cathedrals in his youth and classic structures in his later years. When we say that a man does not understand medieval paintings, we really mean that he does not understand the spirit, the concept of life which has originated them. A thick long mane is beautiful on a lion, but not in a man walking down a modern street. The perceptual fact of long hair is immaterial for the aesthetic valuation. In the Middle Ages long hair was the hair-do of the free and deemed beautiful, but in a banker sitting today at his desk it will be improper. However, in a prophet it will be fitting owing to the traditional image of prophets. He who would change the traditional figure of Christ will meet with violent objections. When the French began to dislike the "artificiality" of Rococo life, they turned to Nature and discovered its value. This aesthetic revulsion was concomitant of intellectual processes. The peasants of the time did not share it. Reason will never tell whether an Empire salon is more or less beautiful than the Jungfrau mountain peak. Nor will perception yield the secret of such valuations. But if we inject the factor of meaning, then we may see that the mountain is deemed as something mighty, sublime, pure, in other words as a symbol of something we may love or desire, briefly as a meaningful structure. The poets develop in their works the reasons of the aesthetic response derived from objects. Thus Byron tells us in the "Hours of Idleness" in "Lachin y Gair":

England! thy beauties are tame and domestic

To one who has roved o'er the mountains afar:

Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic,

The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr!

This description is symbolic and animistic. The author loves the mountain as the symbol of wildness and majesty, as a congenial being contrasted with the tame and domestic surroundings. But even an ancient, less articulate poet like Horace puts it thus: (Carminum liber I.V1111)

Vides ut alta stet nive candidum

Soracte . . .

He admires the purity, the highness of the mount Soracte as opposed to the dirt of his city of Rome and its motley crowd which he despises: *odi profanum vulgus et arceo?* (Carminium III.1). Thus Soracte is a symbol for Horace.

Thus meaning is the decisive factor within the world of aesthetic response. "Green" may be agreeable to the vision, but is in itself not an aesthetic experience. The aesthetic green is not a simple green but a green within a context of meaning, and that is why a man may prefer it to other colors. It is not as easy to understand a Beethoven symphony as the miauling of a cat. If pleasurable arrangement of sounds constituted music, then it would be inexplicable why an African does not understand such a symphony. If we describe the music of desert Bedawins as melancholy, we imply that the authors were not concerned with making pleasant noises but meaningful compositions. The pleasurable character of the tunes cannot be the reason of their being aesthetically enjoyed. The whole history of music as an art would be incomprehensible if music were not regarded as a system of meaningful structures, meaningful within the framework of the ideas of an epoch and of individuals. Pleasurable tunes produced by a child with a toy were never considered as music. Differences in styles and even fashions become significant only as adjuncts of a spiritual evolution.

Always having in mind differences in intensity, we may say that a natural object, a work of art, a figure, even a color, a line are potentially possible sources of aesthetic response. But more important still, even an idea may form such a source, and that disproves the assumption of the perceptual character of this emotion. We do not need material shapes or sounds to produce aesthetic response. "Courage", everything heroic is aesthet-

ically a positive value. The idea of St. George killing the dragon is aesthetically beautiful, the story of a deed of a courageous soldier. Do we mean the face of the soldier? No, his courage, his action. The story of David killing the giant Goliath has aesthetic value. Within the realm of ideas we think that a soldier is more beautiful than a merchant and a blacksmith (aesthetically) better than a tailor. But if ideas are aesthetically productive, how can it be assumed that aesthetic response is sensuous and concomitant of perceptions, of shapes or colors?

It is possible on the basis of the knowledge of the character of a man to predict with a certain amount of correctness what books or what landscapes or what furniture or what sort of human faces he will like or dislike. Such a prediction is difficult but may be quite consistent. What elements of judgment are at our disposal in such a case? We must be conversant with the general ideas of this man, his conceptions of life. Not with his aesthetic ideas. These are the unknown things we are going to find on the basis of his whole *Weltanschauung* which furnishes the known elements of the equation.

#### *Archaism of Aesthetic Values.*

The scale of aesthetic values within the realm of ideas is not identical with the ethical, and this is a significant fact, not something fortuitous. It is ethically indifferent whether a man is an engineer, a merchant or a soldier, a tailor or a blacksmith. Aesthetically it is not so. To lie is both ethically evil and aesthetically ugly. To kill is ethically inferior to deceiving. But aesthetically it is worse to deceive than to kill. A heroic action is always aesthetically beautiful, but from a moral standpoint a heroic action may sometimes be condemned. Non-resistance to evil may be ethically defensible; on the aesthetic scale the value of resisting and fighting ranges higher. If, however, sacrifice or suffering assumes heroic proportions, it becomes aesthetically positive. There seems to be more goodness than beauty in saintliness, and more beauty than goodness in heroism.

It seems to me that the discrepancies between the ethical and aesthetical scales of valuation may be explained by the fact that the aesthetical scale is more archaic. As such it is also aristo-

cratic, it exalts strength, health and fighting virtues in men, and all such virtues in women which are commonly described as desirable. Thus the scale is not arbitrary, but determined by an archaic concept of existence. To be aware of these differences, *standards of valuation* may be important since sometimes a confusion of scales occurs. Thus it seems to me that Nietzsche mistook the aesthetic scale for the ethical. A man may recognize the aesthetic scale despite himself, such is the power of this ancient value. He will admire a certain body which is deemed to express desirable qualities, although his realistic knowledge proves to him that he is the subject of an illusion. However, the force of the formal interpretation of the body bequeathed by dead generations is stronger than his real knowledge. Thus a conflict may arise often described as conflict between "heart" and "mind", although "heart" is in this complex only the mind of generations past. As a matter of fact, the aesthetic scales of values as far as life values are concerned exercise a great power; every romantic movement will be inclined to fall back upon these values in all walks of life. How important emotional connotations are when human bodies are concerned seems to me obvious. I don't believe that an asexual being would have the same aesthetic ideal of a human body as we actually have, and by the same token all other aesthetic responses would change because meanings arisen from our specific valuation of the human body influence valuations of other forms. If we ask ourselves why round contours are believed positive in a woman and square lines rather in a man, we shall find the answer in the world of meanings, not in the realm of perceptions. Modern man unlike his own ancestors and the Oriental today prefers slender figures, which is a clear corollary of a change in ideology.

#### *Growth of Aesthetic Vision.*

The young child who "sees" some day just well as we do, has scarcely any aesthetic ideals, the comprehension of such things as music, painting, or architecture is very slow in developing and goes along the lines of general intellectual development. The general images of men, women and surroundings are

basically fixed by habit. However, a man will understand the meaning of a face, differentiate between faces as means of expression, associate some thought with such faces in order to pass aesthetic judgment. Otherwise they have as little meaning for him as for a child, and lie around as a heap of letters of a dead alphabet. The wisdom of ancestors transmitted by word of mouth or books or living customs bestows on all things their proper colors and their meaning; they acquire a living face and in the course of life are being associated with joyous or sorrowful experiences, and thus they may get a symbolic meaning, express something. The possibility of aesthetic response is growing according to all these experiences. The possibilities of interpretation increase since all these things are entangled in countless relations. A greater wealth of aesthetic experiences will gratify the modern man than a barbarian, and Byron will command a more complex system of aesthetic expression than an ancient. The system of aesthetic valuation will undergo great changes owing to the Christian system of thought in the Middle Ages. Within the strata of the same society aesthetic response will be different even if there is some common ground. Almost everybody will grasp the beauty of the duel between David and Goliath, while it may be necessary in order to appreciate a painting by Gauguin to comprehend the disillusion and yearnings of modern men. Out of its intellectual context it may seem baffling.

#### *Transformation of Aesthetic Ideals.*

The aesthetic ideal of the common man may be archaic as to its ideal content, but it undergoes changes owing to transformations of ideology. Then incrustations are formed around the core. Christianity and Chivalry will effect a change in the old ideal of woman, but some of these changes may disappear and give way to new changes. A pessimist in the mood of *fin de siècle* will appreciate different features of femininity than the average. He may dislike health and prefer artificiality and that will entail consequences of valuation. While in a certain frame of mind a man will appreciate good proportions or harmoniousness, another will reject them as dull. Still another may object to any orna-



ment or flourish as improper in the earnest business of life. He will exalt functionalism owing to an ideal of simplicity. But all these kinds of "taste" are consequences of a mental attitude. If we make allowance for some principle of order which I shall discuss later, all these transformations prove that things speak by means of harmoniousness, simplicity, ornamentation, a more material language, but that all these elements — harmony, simplicity, circularity — are nothing in themselves but terms of a language which is used in order to express something else. It is a rather circumstantial, heavy language, a language by innuendo, this language of forms, but we grasp its meaning. It is not so definite as verbal language, but it is easier, not exacting. It may be also deceptive because it discloses values by formalism of shapes, and this formalism is also archaic. It is as if it were a runic language of things super-added to their realistic meaning. In poetry it is even possible to arrange words in such a way as to express such added meaning by means of this arrangement alone, and thus we gain a second material symbolic language beyond the pure ideational rational language. Beyond the rational meaning it is possible to glean an additional meaning from the mere form of things. And if this language is material and archaic, the meaning it conveys and the values it presents may sometimes be also archaic in character. We must listen to this additional language of shapes accompanying the realistic significance of the things that confront us. If we do, we are plunged in a dreamy mood being half way in reality and halfway in a landscape created by those implications stirred up by the symbolic language of these shapes. If we contemplate a mountain, a lake, a wood, we are aware of something arising on the borderline of this eternal snow or of the line of the ridge. This is precisely the atmosphere created by the symbolic implications of forms. The artist's special task is to arrange his materials as to let this second language speak, and it may be that this causes the belief, a mystical belief, that the artist has a more true or a deeper knowledge of the world than the thinker. Schopenhauer as well as Bergson will affirm that the artist presents a fuller and more immediate picture of the universe. And such ideas existed even in antiquity when it was assumed that the artist is possessed by a sort of divine folly which is called intuition in later epochs. This

illusion may be reducible to the existence of the mysterious unclearly felt second language of forms which in my opinion is more archaic and primitive than pure realistic thought.

*Principles of Order as Syntactical Manifestations.* 1.) *the orderly,*  
2.) *the customary average.*

Aesthetic structures erected by men (works of art) exhibit a certain order. There is something "symmetric" even in the "asymmetric" and if something be a structure, it cannot be wholly "asymmetric". It sometimes seems as if that order reflected somehow the order also exhibited by organic living structures, for instance, bodies. A certain order within a structure is a premiss of aesthetic valuation. Only if the materials are ordered, are we able to "read" it as we read a face. This order seems to be an aesthetic syntax owing to which the composing materials acquire the property of aesthetic terms. Once faced by such manifestation of order, we are warned that we have to read and "decipher" in a double way, not only realistically, but also by listening to the accompanying runic language of forms. It is a memento, a clear indication to wit that a given structure is not merely a dwelling, but a dwelling so arranged as to express something by that arrangement. The order is beyond that meaningful, it furnishes by itself additional information. We are warned to scan the Latin stanza, in doing so we shall acquire immediately new knowledge from the rhythmic emphasis, knowledge for instance as to what is important, noticeable, etc. But we should separate these two facts: the fact of being an order, an organized thing, and the fact that this order may in addition mean something, i. e., be a representation. Grasping the order we see a phrase before us, not a logical, a telluric phrase; its syntax is more material, it organizes the very materials of the work, i. e., matter in a spatial or temporal way. It is indicated by the word "composition". The condition of order is basal, the whole structure rests on it but there is no saying how the order should be realized. Music exhibits this order "temporally", architecture "spatially". In these arts order is most clearly discernable, and it sometimes may seem that the mere property of being ordered ex-

hausts the whole meaning of architecture, but this is an illusion. The architectural order has besides its function as order also a symbolic function. There is no abstract order but always a certain specific order, and this individual specificity and definiteness is meaningful, expressive of a mental attitude, it explains for instance the difference of "styles". The order may be called sometimes rhythm, sometimes, rhyme, sometimes it is the order of Doric columns. It may be more horizontal in Greek architecture, and assume vertical lines in Gothic, Indian, or modern American structures, it may be an arrangement of windows or a metre. A Greek temple and a Gothic cathedral are different, they attest different ideals of life and thought. The aesthetic order is obviously more primitive in being not an order of logical contents, but of materials; it is nevertheless based on the same intellectual principle as an archaic manifestation of the latter.—The importance of order was always strongly felt. There is magic in order. Prophecies, incantations were rhythmically ordered; it is as if the row of columns were also a magic incantation, an appeal by means of rhythm. Representative i. e., symbolical value was always attributed to order.

Thus we see that "harmoniousness" may be the embodiment of order, yet it is only an aesthetic term just as disharmony, namely a tool of expression of some idea. It has been affirmed that "purposefulness", teleology, realized in an object causes the latter to be positively aesthetic. This would be a logical, rationalistic principle, but such rationalization does not seem correct. When seeing a handsome athlete, do we make an analysis of the usefulness of his body? I doubt it. We may discover that he has ugly ears. We are not concerned with the problem whether it is good to hear with such ears. We feel that they lack certain proportions and are keenly disappointed. We say that the "eye" revolts. But why should it? Is it "easier" to see perfect than long ears? Our attention will be fixed on such a blot persistently, but this psychic strain has nothing to do with vision nor with the realistic purposefulness of the ears for the business of hearing. However very early in our lives we attribute to shapes a functional meaning. We know for instance chilblains or swellings and attribute them to morbidity or ill health and value them simultaneously as ugly.

Even a small boy may raise objections to a person's features saying: "these are funny ears" or "too great a head". Thus he seems to have a definite idea about the right proportions of the human body. If he chooses and rejects forms, he does so hardly on the basis of a realistic analysis. Will, however, the boy brought up in Belgian Congo have the same sensation of liking and repulsion as another boy in Stockholm? Certainly not. It is more reasonable to assume that the boy developed on the basis of his experiences some image of an average head in good healthy condition. In the realm of logical thinking we likewise acquire after a certain time a sort of idea what a "book" or a "table" is. This is the virtual definition of the object. We may assume that in the language of aesthetics this average image of the "right" head is a structure corresponding to the logical structure of concepts. Such a right head is the desirable thing to have. The aesthetic response would thus relate to the desirable content which the shape represents. This would explain how we can value aesthetically immaterial things like courage, since we always value the more or less desirable content of the form, i. e., the form as function not as substance, we may then after removal of the shell, the shape, still pass judgment upon the desirability of a content on the basis of a scale called aesthetic. Having always valued qualities which those shapes were supposed to represent, we may now value the qualities as such.

### *Elements of Aesthetic Analysis.*

What reasons of preference will a man advance if confronted by a dog-rose and a rose. The majority is likely to prefer the (garden) rose, not the (wild) dog-rose. It will be said, for instance that the rose is more developed, fuller, richer, etc. These reasons mark a spiritual attitude, they evince the love of the rose as expression of richness, fullness, etc. The same reasons may be advanced for the preference of a "mature" beauty as opposed to a young girl, or a Corinthian capital as opposed to a Doric, or a late Renaissance painting as contrasted with the "primitives". And if one prefers slim birches to sturdy oaks, the mere adjectives show what is meant by that: slimness or

sturdiness as objectivized by the thing.

But roses also have their implications created by history, by reading, by one's life; and this sphere of meanings, of buried emotions will vibrate whenever we see the rose. Its roundness is pregnant with implications: it resembles a chalice or some other object, and the arrangement of its petals realizes a principle of order. If we cut the flower into two, the beauty will be destroyed, we shall feel what the boy feels when he says "funny ears" or "big head".

If I see a piano and assert that it is beautiful I do not think of playing. What I have in mind is its shape, and I try to find the meaning of that shape; I follow the lines looking after the principle of order, etc. I do not consider the mechanical fitness of the instrument, but another more primitive fitness expressed by the shape. The primitive automobiles looked like buggies without horses and seemed just unfinished, "funny" like the irregular ears. Their form raised the expectation of a horse, but when this expectation was thwarted we were rather grieved. The modern automobile looks more like a finished being not dependent on horses.

### *The Composite and the Simple*

Our long-haired man labelled "banker" was aesthetically bad, as "prophet" he might have been satisfactory. Let us remove the label and consider the man irrespective of any occupation. We shall be unable to extricate him from all relations, we shall still relate him to something and combine, all of which will affect our judgment. He may be old and then his long hair may be more proper than in a young man. If we identify his face as probably that of a soldier, we shall certainly resent the long hair. However, the removal of labels will gradually extenuate the aesthetic response; in restricting the range of meanings, we reduce the intensity of enjoyment. Certainly even the hair alone can be subjected to valuation, but this process of narrowing down the context has its limit, a hair-do may still signify something aesthetically, but scarcely a single lock. This hair may be fair or dark, silky or coarse. If fair, it may depend upon our upbringing, our race, the hair of our parents, our ideas about fairness and darkness, whether we shall like the fair hair. All these implications will influence our choice. Silky hair may be preferred because we like shiny things, soft hair because it is more

agreeable when touched, etc. All these considerations will be of importance in forming our judgment and the response.

We may see a facade of red marble bearing the inscription "Funeral Chapel" and find it "atrocious". It will be "lacking in dignity", inconsistent with the "majesty of death", etc. These are purely spiritual terms. They are due to our idea as to what colors are or should be associated with death. Let us tear down our inscription and write on the facade "Night Club". Now it may be felt as excellent. We may remove all tags and contemplate the facade in itself. Then we shall consider the principles of order, the lines, whether round or square, but even that will have a meaning, and so will have the material (quality and color of stone) since even this material is symbolically significant. The mere examination of the cathedral of Milan which is mainly in Gothic style but of white marble shows the symbolic significance of the material. The impression is totally different from that caused by any other edifice. It does not seem to reflect those religious moods which have had their bearing on a "real" Gothic edifice. Similarly nobody will make earrings of iron but of gold or silver. Thus structures are interpretable and our cities are avenues of symbols exhibiting the terms of the language of forms.

### *Aesthesis and Artistic Creation.*

I would call aesthesis the act of grasping the symbolic function of a thing. The response will be positive or negative, dependent on whether we assume that its form or perceptual aspect is a symptom of a desirable or not desirable content. If the form assume such a meaning, we grasp it as an aesthetic term. The desirability embodied in the form is measured basally on a more ancient scale of values. That explains how an idea may become an aesthetic term and why it may be at variance with the ethical scale. What is positive as aesthetic term must not be so as perception. For instance, dazzling light may be disagreeable for our sense of sight and sublime from the aesthetic point of view owing to our metaphysical and kindred ideas about light. Every object may become an aesthetic term insofar as it assumes a symbolic function: if I see in the birch the embodiment of slimness or of something else I value or dislike, the birch

becomes an aesthetic term. This symbolic function creates the emotional link between me and the object transforming the latter into such a term. Artistic ability is the specific intellectual ability of arranging materials in such a way as to make their symbolic function suggestive. By his arrangement the artist exhibits in suggestive concentration and with significant emphasis what I must rather seek in the world of things. The lyrical poet shows the symbolic function of the objects of nature. Therefore in his attitude which is anthropomorphic the things become animistic. If we would not interpret the things as meaningful embodiments, then they would be so indifferent to our self as sheets of paper on a desk. There is no preference in the mind of a naturalist for a volcano as opposed to a mole-hill. But in aesthesis we envision the former symbolically and say: wrath, power, height.

#### *Emotional Attitude*

The attitude towards the good and the beautiful is emotionally different. Beautiful things, whether persons, forests or paintings, are desirable also in a literal sense. He who sees them, covets them. This is an attitude of self-assertion. However we would rather offer ourselves to the good. This is the position of sacrifice. The amplitude of this "giving" may range from a mere doing to dying.

#### *New York City*

## COMMUNICATIONS

November 26, 1941.

To the Editor  
The Journal of Aesthetics

Dear Sir:

The American Society for Aesthetics, founded in 1939, announces the *Second American Congress for Aesthetics* which will be held in Washington, D. C., under the auspices of The Catholic University of America, on April 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 1942.

The idea of having congresses for aesthetics in America, similar to those held in Europe for many years was conceived by Dr. Felix M. Gatz, while attending the Second International Congress for Aesthetics (Paris, 1937) as an American delegate, reading a paper on the subject "American Aesthetics". The Congress Committee (Dr. Victor Basch, Dr. Chas. Lalo, Dr. Raymond Bayer) expressed by letter its recognition of Dr. Gatz's services to American Aesthetics in familiarizing the Congress with the aesthetical works of American scholars and appointed him American member of the Permanent International Committee for Congresses for Aesthetics which was established at the close of the Congress.

In 1939, Dr. Gatz with the able assistance of Dr. Max Schoen and Prof. Alexander Kostellow organized the First American Congress for Aesthetics which was held in Scranton, Pa., under the auspices of the University of Scranton, on April 13th, 14th, 15th, 1939. The first of the three days was devoted to "The Meaning of the Verbal Arts," the second to "The Meaning of the Visual Arts", the third to "The Meaning of Music". Speakers of the first day: Dr. Van Meter Ames, University of Cincinnati; Padraic Colum, Columbia University; Dr. Max Schoen, Carnegie Institute of Technology. Speakers of the second day: Dr. George Boas, John Hopkins University; Miss Martha Graham, Professor Alexander Kostellow, Pratt Institute; Matlack Price, Pratt Institute. Speakers of the third day: Dr. Felix M. Gatz, University of Scranton; Dr. Glen Haydon, University of North Carolina; Dr. Otto Ortman, Director, Peabody Conservatory; Oscar Thompson, New York music critic and author.

At the close of the Congress, the American Society for Aesthetics was founded. It has been decided that the Society should have Congresses for Aesthetics not less frequently than once every three years. The presiding officers of the Congress—Dr. Gatz, president; Dr. Schoen, vice-president; Mr. Kostellow, secretary—were unanimously elected to hold the same offices in the American Society for Aesthetics. All of the above mentioned speakers of the Congress and the professors John R. Tuttle of Elmira College and Sidney Walls of Washington & Lee University were elected members of the Board.

The Society also has an Honorary Board, the members of which are: Dean Harold L. Butler, Syracuse University; Dr. Lee Bowers, Boston College; Dr. Emmanuel Chapman, Fordham University; Mr. Sheldon Cheney, Dr. DeWitt Parker; University of Michigan; Dr. Will Earhart, author; Dr. Donald Ferguson, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Katherine Everett



Gilbert, Duke University; Dr. Howard Hanson, Director, Eastman School of Music; Dr. Charles Hart, The Catholic University of America, Prof. Robert Hillyer, Harvard University; Dr. Ernest Hutcheson, President, Juilliard School of Music; Prof. Ernst Krenek, Vassar College; Dr. Philip A. McMahon, New York University; Dr. Jacques Maritain, Columbia University; Mme. Raissa Maritain; Dr. Thomas Munro, The Cleveland Museum of Art; Dr. Carroll C. Pratt, Rutgers University; Dr. Paul R. Radosavljevich, New York University; Dr. Dagobert D. Runes, Editor, *The Journal of Aesthetics*; Dr. Lionello Venturi, University of California; Professor Roy D. Welch, Princeton University.

Many of the above listed scholars and artists, members of both the Active and the Honorary Board, will participate in the Coming Congress. A complete list of speakers and topics will be announced in the April issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics*.

Anyone interested in having particulars earlier kindly address inquiries to the president, Dr. Felix M. Gatz, University of Scranton, Scranton, Pa., or to the chairman of the local Washington Committee, the Rev. Charles Hart, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

This is an open letter to your readers and contributors, to announce the proposed organization of a national society for the study of aesthetics and related subjects. The *American Aesthetics Association* has been suggested as a possible title for such a group. Its general aim will be to stimulate and assist discussion, research, experiment, writing and publication in this field.

A meeting to advance the project of a new or extended organization (whichever may seem advisable) will be held in New York City in April, at a place and time to be decided. On written request, I shall be glad to send further details to those who wish to attend, or to be kept in touch with later developments. Since your office will also be notified, persons in or near New York may find out the details there, after February 1st.

As mentioned in the first and second issues of the *Journal*, several exploratory steps along this line have already been made. A conference was held in New York on December 16, 1940, under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation, to discuss ways and means of advancing research in aesthetics; and similar ones were held on the Pacific coast the following spring. Many letters received since then have confirmed my belief that the time may be ripe, in spite of unfavorable world conditions, for proceeding with some definite step toward organization.

There are, of course, many scholarly and professional associations in existence. Busy people, however keenly interested in aesthetics, may well question the need for another, with its inevitable claim for some slight expenditure of time, energy, and money on the part of members.

Several of the present organizations do touch upon questions of aesthetics, and even hold occasional sectional meetings to discuss them, in their annual conventions. These are, in particular, the American Federation of Arts, the American Philosophical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the Modern Language Association. At meetings of musicologists and teachers of music, dancing, the theatre, and other arts, it is not uncommon to have a paper presented which introduces the viewpoint of general or comparative aesthetics. But in each of these named, aesthetic problems are of secondary concern.

In addition to facilitating discussion and personal acquaintanceship among workers in these related fields, there are several functions which an active aesthetics association could carry on. For example, it could (a) encourage the development of instruction in aesthetics in colleges and in art and music academies; (b) sponsor and help to coordinate research projects; (c) provide bibliographies and information regarding projects completed or in preparation; (d) develop opportunities for publication of technical articles, monographs, and books in the field; (e) sponsor the awarding of scholarships and fellowships for advanced study; (f) arrange lectureships and seminars for visiting scholars; (g) translate and publish outstanding works in foreign languages.

In short, it could give an organized, cooperative impetus to progress in the field, as many scientific and scholarly societies have done in other fields. To be sure, the achievement of such ends on a large scale would require financial resources as well as a large and active membership. But a modest beginning now would serve as a rallying point for potential strength, and as an agency to help administer whatever funds might become available for the tasks undertaken. There is no magic in the mere forming or joining of associations; but they are a useful means of bringing scattered individual efforts to a focus.

The last few years have shown a notable increase of interest in aesthetic problems, as evidenced by the founding of this *Journal* and the immediate response to it from numerous authors and subscribers. It is time to find out whether this interest can now find further expression in some sort of collective activity.

Sincerely yours,  
 THOMAS MUNRO.  
 Curator of Education

The Cleveland Museum of Art  
 Cleveland, Ohio

Mr. Dagobert D. Runes, Editor  
 The Journal of Aesthetics  
 15 East 40th Street  
 New York, N. Y.

Sir:

In the course of an article entitled "The History of Art of the Future" published in the last issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics* (1941, No. 2-3, p. 42 ff.) Mr. Leo Balet pauses in his condemnation of that form of the history of art which, since the publication of his paper, has belonged to the past, to ask us a question. He writes as follows:

An article in "The Art Bulletin" (June, 1941, p. 132 ff.) deals with the Dyon equestrian statue of Louis XIV by Le Hongre. The author reports that on March 18, 1686 the contract with the sculptor was signed. Mansart had to supervise the work. It was completed by December 31, 1690. In May, 1692, the statue was moved to the banks of the Seine and "eventually transported by boat" to Auxerre. The weight of the monument was 19-1/2 tons for the horse and 8-5/8 tons for the rider. The monument came to rest in a barn in the hamlet of La Brosse, "four and a quarter miles along the road to Dyon." "In 1720

Pierre Morin, engraver and inspector of bridges for Burgundy and Bresse, brought the statue to Dyon packed on two huge drays drawn by thirty yoke of oxen"—(the ages of the oxen have not yet been researched). "The wagons arrived on September 19 and 21 respectively . . ." And so it goes on for pages and pages and pages.

Do the editors of "The Art Bulletin" really believe that these details will contribute anything to the understanding of Le Hongre's statue as a work of art?

History of art cannot but degenerate into planless history around art as soon as it loses sight of its only reason for existing.

Mr. Balet apparently intends to place us in the position of the man who was asked whether he had stopped beating his wife. If we say yes, we believe these details do or might contribute something, then we prove ourselves incapable of riding the synthetic wave of the future; if we say no, they can contribute nothing, then we should not have published the article.

In reply to Mr. Balet's question, we wish to say, first of all, that we hold the old-fashioned view that details are not useful for any purpose whatsoever, not even for polemics, unless they are correct. There are no less than five errors in Mr. Balet's short quotation. The thrice repeated "Dyon" should of course be "Dijon." The contract with Le Hongre was signed in May, not March. The statue was not completed by December 31, 1690; the contract stipulates that it was to be completed by that date. Pierre Morin was not an engraver, but an engineer. Clearly Mr. Balet's enthusiasm for "synthesis" is equalled only by his allergy to a fact.

A more serious departure from fact is the statement that this passage on the execution and transportation of the statue "goes on for pages and pages and pages." Properly discounted for hyperbole, this statement evokes an image of at least five more pages devoted to the same subject. There are precisely two sentences, which conclude the one paragraph that deals with these problems. The preceding section of the article contains a discussion of the political reasons for the creation of this and similar statues. In the succeeding pages, political factors are shown likewise to have influenced the design of the pedestal and character of the inscriptions, and finally to have caused the destruction of the work itself. The major part of the article endeavors to make the form and content of the statue more meaningful by comparison with other equestrian groups, by discussion of the connection of prevailing Academic taste with antiquity, by reference to the political realities of the time, and by citation of contemporary opinion. Mr. Balet either did not read the article, or does not recognize a serious attempt to discover what is "between and behind the facts" when he sees it.

But what of the value of the specific remarks quoted by Mr. Balet? Need we defend the publication of a correct summary of a contract for a work of art? Is it not perfectly clear that the artistic effect of this particular statue, made to glorify an absolute monarch, is dependent on its physical size, and that the huge bulk of the work is vividly conveyed by the facts of its enormous weight and the difficulty of moving it? For various reasons knowledge of the date of erection of a monument is valuable, even perhaps for a "synthesist," and the long delay in the

erection of the statue in question was partly due to the technical problems and expense of transporting it.

We agree with Mr. Balet that facts are valuable for art historians in proportion as they contribute to the understanding of works of art. But we disagree with his belief that only those facts should be published which are guaranteed immediate "synthesist" consumption. Study of the history of art is a collective as well as an individual enterprise. Would Mr. Balet object if the original publisher of Vasari in 1550 had suggested to Balet object if the original publisher of Vasari in 1550 had suggested to his genial client that he incorporate (if only in footnotes!) a few of the sible to him, but which seemed to Vasari without immediate interest?

We deplore the relative scarcity of attempts by competent scholars to arrange facts into large patterns of meaning. But can this failure be attributed simply and mechanically to the fact that we are, as Mr. Balet seems to think, glutted with facts? It is absurd to say that the "chief periods have been sufficiently researched" (p. 46). Every attempt to establish a new pattern of meaning calls for new or hitherto ignored facts. Recent interest in the study of social and economic aspects of works of art has stimulated a search for a new body of facts and has found meaning in others that were disregarded for many years. Even our notorious oxen may acquire an unsuspected importance.

We can sympathize with Mr. Balet's pique with facts as possible impediments to generalizations. But, unlike certain groups that are very influential in the world today, we would prefer to modify a synthesis to conform to the facts rather than abandon or distort the facts themselves. Mr. Balet sets down on p. 47 the following blithe pronouncement: ". . . during all the centuries the arts were always changing at the same time that the form of economy, society, politics, philosophy, religion, morals, and sciences, changed, and of course in the same direction." This implies that the history of art, too, always changes at the same time and in the same direction as the other forms of life. A second cardinal principle appears on page 59:

"In the last twenty years life and history of art have lived away from each other. Life lived on, and changed, and changed, recently in a tempo, with which it is hardly possible to keep pace, and in the midst of this general disindividualization, **the form of history of art has remained unalterably the same as that of a century ago.**" (Bold type ours.)

These two basic statements are contradictory. Either this is the logic of the future, or the facts in one or both of the statements are wrong. We suspect the facts.

The Editors of the Art Bulletin.

(After having read the above letter, Professor Balet wrote the following rejoinder).

Sir:

I confess that I have committed the incriminating errors, even those of the linotypist.

However, I do not feel repentant. On the contrary, I am very glad to have made these mistakes, because my negligence proves more than words would ever be able to express, that to me as a historian

of art (in opposition to the historians **around art à la Millard Meiss**) the Le Hongre facts are of the most complete indifference.

And after having taken cognizance of the "explanations" by Mr. Meiss — to which the Editorial Board of the Art Bulletin has given its solemn blessing, in the form of signatures on a blank, I suspect — I am unalterably convinced that the research and the presentation of the Le Hongre facts was **history around art**, in other words, threshing old straw only for the sake and the pleasure of threshing.

Allow me to present a further elucidation of my standpoint, not as an attempt to convince Mr. Meiss — he will not understand these lines, as he has not understood the fundamental thesis of my article on "The History of Art of the Future" — but on behalf of my students and the unexpectedly large number of colleagues, who to my great amazement, have approved of my heretical ideas.

The essence of art is: giving shape to an inner experience (aesthetic, or religious, or social, or sexual, etc.) in such an adequate way that the art receiver will be able to re-experience the artist's experience.

The only reason for the existence of works of art is consequently, for the artist, the mediation of experiences, and for the art consumer, the re-experience of these.

It follows from this that the only reason for the existence of history of art is the direct, or at least the indirect preparation for such re-experience.

The greatest obstacle which the art historian has to surmount in establishing an intimate sensuous-spiritual relation between the art recipient and the art creator is the general belief that art is timeless, something beyond life. This erroneous conception is in most cases nothing but a rationalization of ignorance.

The artist is timebound. He is historically conditioned. He is a passive and active part of the whole of life to which he belongs. Therefore, he himself and his works can never be understood — and fullest understanding is the prerequisite for re-experiencing — as long as we see him and his creations isolated from the whole of life out of which he grew and which his works expressed.

Therefore, the principal task of the history of art is to reconstruct this whole of life and to integrate the works of art into it.

This synthetic reconstruction (which is quite different from the non-synthetic so called "historical background") is of course not an end in itself — as Mr. Meiss lays it at my door — but is only a means to a further end.

The evaluation of the facts, that is to say, the statement of the usefulness or uselessness of each single fact, is consequently not dependent on "synthetic consumption", with which obtuse remark Mr. Meiss tries to disqualify the new form of art history as merely synthesis for the sake of synthesis, in the same way as his own praxis of history of art, or rather, what he considers to be history of art, is specialization for the sake of specialization. No, the evaluation of each single fact depends solely on its contribution or non-contribution to the re-experience of the artist's experience.

Although I have answered herewith all the questions which Mr. Meiss has put in his famous letter, I should like to furnish two of his questions with special glosses.

"Is it not perfectly clear," asks Mr. Meiss, "that the artistic (nota bene artistic) effect of this particular statue, made to glorify an absolute monarch, is dependent on its physical size?" Are these the aesthetic standards which Mr. Meiss uses in his courses on art history at Columbia University? Artistic qualities measured by the pound, by the yard?

"Is it not perfectly clear," he continues, "that the huge bulk of the work is vividly conveyed by the facts of its enormous weight and the difficulty of moving it?" No, that is not perfectly clear. The difficulties of the transport do not prove anything. They may, for instance, have been caused by the poor condition or the steepness of the roads!

In my article on "The History of Art of the Future" I only pointed to a few facts, the superfluity of which was really appalling. And I added then: "So it goes for pages and pages and pages." Pages and pages and pages, says Mr. Meiss, are five pages. I must rectify this sagacious calculation. I really did not mean five pages in this case, but exactly ten pages. In my opinion the whole article on "The Equestrian Statue of Louis XIV in Dijon" is, from the standpoint of history of art, threshing straw, is an utterly silly game of solitaire with facts and dates.

This is proved by the fact that the statue does not exist any more. Ten pages full of facts and no work of art at all! So, why all these facts? Of course only for the sake of themselves. The article on Le Hongre is the most classic example I have ever come across of the execrable fetishization of facts, which was the cause of the growing degeneration of history of art into history around art.

At the end of his letter Mr. Meiss reproaches me with a contradiction. In my article on "The History of Art of the Future" I have made the statement that all manifestations of life, art history of course included, change when life changes. As for the change in art history during the last twenty years I pointed to the gradual transition from a planless specialization to a planned specialization, and from planned specialized history of art to synthetic history of art. A change never takes place all along the line. There are always at the same time progressive and reactionary elements. My remark, "The form of history of art has remained unalterably the same as that of a century ago," read in its **context**, of course only referred to the, let me call it, non progressive Millard Meiss group, which is still bossing the show, — that is to say, the universities and colleges, the university presses, the other editorial firms (where their former students are readers), and the art magazines. Where is the contradiction here?

The most amusing passage of Mr. Meiss' letter is the following: "We hold the old fashioned view that details are not useful for any purpose whatsoever, not even for polemic, unless they are correct."

When I read this, I suddenly remembered the lovely set of blunders — due not to negligence in copying facts but to incompetence — in the article "A Documented Altarpiece by Piero della Francesca" in the March 1941 issue of "The Art Bulletin" . . . by Millard Meiss!

The inscription on the band of the armor of the St. Michael of the National Gallery runs, according to Mr. Meiss: "B (?) ANGELUS PONENTIA DEI LUCHA." When a colleague of mine showed me a

photograph of the picture many years ago, I read an A instead of B, but this is of minor importance. The problem is the word "LUCHA." "The explanation of LUCHA which immediately presents itself," writes Mr. Meiss, "is that it refers to the author, not of the painting but of the phrase ANGELUS POTENTIA DEI which precedes it. This phrase does not, however, appear in the most likely places, the Gospel of St. Luke or Acts." The solution of the problem which Mr. Meiss was unable to solve is "A(RCH)ANGELUS POTENTIA DEI LUC(IFERUM) HA(STAVIT)".

Mr. Meiss' translation of "que est de tabulis compositam" is really fantastic. The m behind "composita" should have warned him that he was burning his fingers. But let me first transcribe the passage of the original text (Document of October 4, 1454, line 56 ff.) in Latin: . . . "consignaverunt dicto magistro Petro dictam tabulam sic pingendam et ornamendam et figurandam que est de tabulis compositam et laboratam de lignamine in dicta sacrestia solutam et factam fieri et fabricari per dictum Angelum . . ." Mr. Meiss overlooked the word "sic," which would have given him the clue to "que" (for "quam") which follows later. He left "sic" out in his translation. Further he did not see the two invisible commas behind "tabulis" and behind "lignamine". Mr. Meiss' combination of parts of **different** sentences which have nothing to do with each other, could not but result in complete nonsense. He translates: "They consigned to the said master Petrus, for painting and ornamentation (he leaves out "figurandam"), the said altarpiece in the said sacristy which is composed of panels and worked in wood and which has been paid for and constructed at the order of the said Angelus." The correct translation is: "They charged to the said Master Peter that the altarpiece (for the highaltar of the Church) was to be painted and decorated and filled with figures, in such a manner as altarpieces used to be done, and that the altarpiece was to be composed and worked out of wood, as it was resolved in the said sacristy (where the meeting took place, cf. line 16 of the document), and ordered (or paid for) **to be done** and **to be constructed** (and not as Mr. Meiss translates "constructed") by the said Angelus."

What a pity that the new work by Piero della Francesca discovered by Mr. Meiss in the sacristy of the church of Borgo only exists in the sacristy of his imagination!

Mr. Meiss translated "fratribus" (line 4) by "monks". The Augustinians were not monks, they were friars.

Mr. Meiss leaves out the words "fratrum heremitarum sancti Augustini" (line 4 ff.), probably because he did not know where these hermits suddenly came from. The Augustinians used to be called Augustinian Hermits or Friars.

The words "et prior loci et capituli et conventus" (line 9) have likewise just completely vanished in the translation.

"Manu dicti Ser Ugucij et subscriptam manu dicti Prioris ac Nannis" (line 27 ff.) does not mean "signed by . . . and countersigned by . . ." but in this case that the document was written by Ugucius and signed by the Prior and Nannes.

Now the passage (line 40 ff.): "unam petiam terre laboratorie in districtu Burgi in contrada Pelani (?) Abbatie Burgi juxta rem dicte Abbatie et vias a duobus et rem dicti Angeli." Mr. Meiss translates:

"a piece of arable land in the district of Borgo and contrada Pelanus ("Abbatie Burgi" he leaves out) next to the property of the said Abbey (why "said", when he has not mentioned the Abbey before?) and the roads from the two and the property of the said Angelus." The passage means: "a piece of arable land in the district of Borgo and leased ("contrada" is the Italian word for contrata, from *conterrata*, in full: *in parte conterrata*) to Pelanus (more probably Pelagius), a man of the Abbey of Borgo, which piece of land was bounded by the property of the said Abbey, and by the roads on both sides ("a duobus lateribus") and by the property of the said Angelus."

I could continue this anthology, but it becomes boring. Besides all these details are of no importance for the history of art of the future. I have only used them to cast the limelight upon the man "with the old-fashioned view that details have to be correct."

LEO BALET.  
Brooklyn College.



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of

AESTHETIC THEORY, CRITICISM, and PSYCHOLOGY of ART

(Compiled by Dr. Edward N. Barnhart, Reed College, with the assistance of Prof. Frank Sullivan, St. Louis University.)

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# Book Reviews

GLEN HAYDON: *Introduction to Musicology*. New York: Prentice-Hall. 1941, 329 pp.

Musicians, music students and all lovers of music who desire to know music not only as an art but also as a science owe Dr. Haydon a vote of thanks for having written this book. It is the work of a scholar who has read widely and thought deeply, and who has acquired the difficult art of direct and clear expression. There is nothing in this book that is beyond the interest or the comprehension of an intelligent musically minded layman, nor is there a single topic that even the scholarly musician will fail to find stimulating and informing.

The musical fare served up by Dr. Haydon is both rich and varied. After an introductory chapter in which he discusses the meaning, scope, problems and methods of musicology, he devotes chapters to acoustics, the theory of music theory, musical pedagogy, comparative musical systems, the philosophy of music history, and problems and methods of historical research in music.

This is a book that needed to be written, and it is most fortunate that it has been written by a man so highly qualified for the task.

—MAX SCHOEN.

*Carnegie Institute of Technology.*

F. O. MATTHIESSEN: *American Renaissance. Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. Oxford University Press. 1941. xxiv 678 pp.

It would do an injustice to Mr. Matthiessen's full and compact volume to point out a single thesis which is its main contribution to American scholarship. For even were there no single thesis, but a variety of illuminating suggestions, it would still be so considerable an achievement, that its author would deserve the gratitude of all his readers. Yet at the risk of doing this injustice, one may say that the focus of Mr. Matthiessen's interest is artistry, and that the periphery of the focus contains such interesting topics as the inter-relations of the various artists' works, the cultural background against which they wrote, their relation to the society in which they lived. Reversing the usual order of reviews, we shall point out what seem to be the weaknesses of our book, and then pass on to its strength.

Literary artistry would appear to be largely an affair of linguistic usage, for the author believes that the language in which a book is written is the best index of his "modes of thinking." Thus the borrowing by the Transcendentalists of Coleridge's terminology, of such words as "subjective" and "objective," "psychological," "aesthetic," and others (p. 7) was evidence that they shared his philosophical theories and

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were in revolt against the formulas of eighteenth century rationalism. This would certainly be self-evident if words were deliberately chosen and if literary artistry were a self-conscious process. But, as Mr. Matthiessen himself recognizes, one's language is to a large part inherited or acquired involuntarily, and no matter how careful a writer is in the choice of words, he can never in the very nature of things choose every word which he uses. It is true that the particular writers who are studied in this volume did consider the choice of words as the very heart of their technique, and in some cases—those of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman particularly—held metaphysical theories about the relation of words to "reality", theories which approximated that discussed in Plato's *Cratylus*. But for all that, they were understood by their contemporaries and are on the whole understood to-day, so that the bulk of their vocabulary must have been the speech of their time. If this were not so, their innovations would not have seemed so shocking to their readers.

Mr. Matthiessen would agree with this platitude, but would add that whether the choice of words is deliberate or not is of no importance. Artistry is in part unconscious. The task of the critic is so to understand the total mind of his subject, that he can fathom the psychic roots of his modes of expression. When this task is assumed, a work of art becomes pre-eminently a symbol of its author's personality, and the critic will spend as much time pouring over journals, letters, private conversations, as he will over the work of art itself. Now no one could object to anyone's taking on such a task. Its results are illuminating and make interesting reading. But when one asks whether the importance of a work of art is primarily its revelation of a personality, one is very likely to answer, No.

Such an answer from one who is on record as believing in the multivalence of art may seem a bit dogmatic. It is based on the consideration that the intention of works of art, other than autobiographies, is not essentially autobiographical. In other words, when Emerson writes on *Nature*, he intends to tell us something about nature and not something about himself. In the second place, the normal reader when he goes to Emerson's essay hopes to find in it something about nature and not something about Emerson. He is bound to find both as the author is bound to do both. But when the reader of an essay switches his attention from the subject-matter to the author, he is doing something which is not by any means illegitimate, but at any rate something which shows that the subject matter has ceased to have much importance in itself. The question of whether the great men of the "American Renaissance" still have something to say which is of interest in itself remains unanswered when their works are treated as symptoms of their authors' psychological processes.

Now, as far as the writer of this notice is concerned, Emerson, Thoreau, and parts of Melville and Whitman are still living literature. He still feels that they, to use the cant phrase, "have something to say." But that is the quality they share with essayists like Montaigne or poets like Racine. It is not what they said to their contemporaries by any means, nor could it be expected to be. But their interest for us is not exhausted by their quaintness or, if one prefer, by their historical importance. Mr. Matthiessen can not be blamed for writing about something else, but my point is worth making since the preface

to the *American Renaissance* calls the writings treated "masterpieces" and defines its author's problem as "primarily concerned with *what* these books were as works of art, with evaluating their fusions of form and content." But were they primarily expressions of certain personalities and what standards of evaluation are used in this study?

The great strength of Mr. Matthiessen's book is the powerful and convincing synthesis which he has made of the works of his five authors. He successfully shows how certain traits run through them all—what they were, the reader of this notice is invited to discover in Mr. Matthiessen's volume. And what is more, he shows persuasively how common such strains were in American life during the period under discussion. He quite properly includes references to arts other than literature in fixing the atmosphere of that period. But by confining his attention to the five men he has selected, he fails to show the conflicts which were just as characteristic as the harmonies. Again, though selecting what he believes to be masterpieces and neglecting what he believes to be trash or near-trash, he creates a picture of an age which neglected its most characteristic works of art without explaining why the characteristic was not recognized as such.

The author of this notice is far from being a literary critic, but he is probably the kind of man who would have been reading Emerson's *Essays*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, even *Moby Dick*, had he been alive a hundred years ago. Would he have felt then, as he does now, that the English style of Melville and Hawthorne is frequently so heavy as to be unreadable? Would he have felt that the apparently ineradicable neo-platonism of these men, which caused them always to see everything as something else, was as intolerable as it seems now? Would he have asked why in the world they were not satisfied with their frequently exquisitely precise notations of what they observed and had to add moral lessons to them? At present he cannot see that *Moby Dick* is any the greater book for being an allegory—but in fact a worse one; would he have been more Wordsworthian in those days and insisted that unless a yellow primrose was a moral symbol its importance had not been grasped? If so, a great change has come over us and the books which Mr. Matthiessen is analysing have lost most of their significance. No one any longer is going to read *Moby Dick* for what his beloved Hawthorne called "blasted allegories." And if Hawthorne thought of them as that, at least one of Melville's contemporaries shared my feelings. And if that is true, the passion for symbolism was perhaps not so general as this volume would have us believe. Mr. Matthiessen himself quotes Poe's opinions on the matter (p. 247). (It must be added that the distinction between symbolism and allegory, which is discussed at some length by Mr. Matthiessen, does not appear to me to be valid.)

As far as Mr. Matthiessen's analyses of certain novels and poems are concerned, one can express nothing but admiration. One admires not only the industry and ingenuity which they display but the illuminating results which they attain. One may even dislike *Moby Dick* after reading his analysis of it, but one cannot fail to be interested and to see how much thicker a book it was than one had realized. The same must be said for his treatment of *The Scarlet Letter* and of Whitman's *When Lilacs Last*. The effect intended to be produced by these works of art was in all probability of an emotional rather than intellectual

order, by which I mean that they were supposed to make their effect not through the previous reading of an analytical study of them, but by direct contact. But we are no longer readers of the mid-nineteenth century, and certainly the effect is heightened and the "meaning" clarified by Mr. Matthiessen's comments.

The curious result of such studies as this is the widening of the gulf which already exists between us and the five men under consideration. One can no longer—assuming an acquaintance with *American Renaissance*—read them with innocence as just books. They are bound to become evidence of something beyond themselves, to take no more interest as specimens of literary history than as specimens of literature. Whether this is to be deplored or not is a matter for argument, but no one can deny that a new value has been given them and that it is not the value primarily inherent in works of art. It is a value which will keep them vegetating in class-rooms at any rate and it is quite possible that someone somewhere will read them and discover that they are worth reading not for what they illustrate but for what they are. That is no doubt the equivalent of what the professors calls the judgment of posterity.

—GEORGE BOAS.

*Johns Hopkins University.*

GERTRUDE STEIN: *What Are Masterpieces*. Los Angeles. The Conference Press. 1940. 95 pp. Foreword by Robert Bartlett Haas.

If this review seems several months late, let it be remembered that the book reviewed is itself a good many years late.

Although the lecture from which this collection takes its title was delivered as recently as 1936, the ideas contained herein belong to those distant nineteen-twenties when youth was flaming and Gertrude Stein was a force of sorts in contemporary letters. The book is now chiefly interesting to a social historian, but everyone who has even speculated on Miss Stein's possible purposes in stringing words together in her decidedly imitable style will welcome this opportunity to hear her explain herself — which she does, indirectly at least, in this book.

In the lecture "What Are Masterpieces," Miss Stein does seem to be striving for clarity and, be it said, achieving it after a fashion. This desire to explain is apparent in all three lectures contained in this book, but neither "Composition as Explanation," nor "An American and France" contains the pedagogical solicitude for the reader which Miss Stein offers in "Masterpieces." Once she apologizes (p. 89), "All this is awfully complicated . . ." On the same page she confesses, "I do not know whether I have made any of this very clear . . ." Throughout the book, one is constantly aware of Miss Stein's writing an apology rather than an exposition (" . . . expository writing is so dull . . ." p. 90). Rather than showing *what* masterpieces are, Miss Stein attempts to explain *why* her own compositions *are* masterpieces, and, in so doing, shows us what she has been trying to do ever since her story *Melanetha*.

She has tried to write of a prolonged present, a continuous present, a timeless present. She has tried to write in a sort of nirvana, divorced from her own individuality — from all particularity. Her writing was not meant to be concerned with the people and the things she wrote about. . . . because she tried to be unconscious of these things while she wrote . . .

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because human nature has nothing whatsoever to do with masterpieces. Masterpieces exist in every age in spite of the age and throughout all ages without beginning or ending. For masterpieces, though not contingent or necessary, are like a something that is an end in itself. Therefore Miss Stein has suspended her awareness of the world's recognition of herself. This she calls losing her *identity*. Then knowing she has not *identity*, she has created — masterpieces.

Thus perishes (sadly for me) the interesting theory that Miss Stein was only 'kidding.' Radcliffe folklore stresses the fact that Miss Stein majored in Attracting-Attention during her collegiate career, and for a long time there were those who thought that her compositions were simply post-graduate exercises in her chosen field of concentration. But no one, I think, can read this book without coming to the conclusion that however Miss Stein may have originally considered herself in moments of candid introspection, now she is absolutely certain that, to quote her exactly from page 40, "Toasted susie is my ice-cream."

*St. Louis University.*

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SHIGETSUGU KISHI (Editor): *Lafacdio Hearn's Lectures on Tennyson*. Tokyo. 1941.

The publication of this volume is an act of filial piety. The compiler is, according to the title-page, Hearn's last student in the University of Tokyo; he tells us he took these notes forty years ago, when his hair, now gray, was "raven-black." Fifteen poems are dealt with (and reprinted, their selection depending, so far as one can see, upon the whim of the lecturer; and the comment varying in fullness from glossorial notes on a few words to several pages of connected remarks. The gloss, eked out with many blackboard sketches, here reproduced, of objects familiar to Western readers (e.g., slocket, bay-window), gives one a vivid sense of what is involved in making English poetry intelligible to university freshmen in the Orient. If Hearn was aiming above or beyond this special audience, the evidence has not been preserved within these covers. The existence of the volume proves that Hearn made an impression upon such students; and perhaps no teacher ought to yield to more flattering expectations.

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*University of California.*

GEORGE N. SHUSTER: *The English Ode from Milton to Keats*. Columbia University Press. 1940.

This is the product of an urbane mind and a seasoned, discriminating taste. Although the title suggests narrower limits, the chapters at the beginning and end really extend the scope of the study by nearly two hundred years. So broad and diversified a country is enough to daunt even a very bold tourist. Mr. Shuster has lightened his task by focussing chief attention on odes based directly or indirectly on the model of Pindar or the Psalms of David. Horatian and Anacreontic influences are occasionally noticed, but the first of these is promised fuller consideration elsewhere. The author's purpose is described as three-fold: to trace the history, to consider the relations with music, and to examine the prosodical influence, of the ode.

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The difficulties inherent in the subject, even with these restrictions, are enormous. The ode as practised in English has never been subject to close definition either in form or content. Speaking exactly, one cannot study its evolution because, as a type, it has only a nominal existence. If one were to undertake to follow the evolution of the Joneses, one might learn many interesting things about individuals of that name, but the emergence of JONES *ipsissimus* were a wonder. The historian of the ode faces the dilemma of either (a) tracing the fortunes of a name, or (b) describing a series of individual poems which have in common an arbitrary designation and a fortuitous number of casual resemblances. If Lodge's "Now I see thy looks were feigned," a spite-song in Thomas (*not* — p. 36 — John) Ford's book of ayres, 1607, and Tennyson's spacious poem on the death of Wellington are both odes, can it be truly said that the evolution of a *form* is under scrutiny?

So far, then, as concerns the first part of his three-fold task, Mr. Shuster chooses horn b of the dilemma, and discharges his responsibilities with learning, judgment, and good humor. Balance is well kept, comments on individual poems are interesting and sound. If there are few surprises in store, and fewer reversals of established opinion, one has the more confidence in the author's dependability. A survey more competent, or more engagingly written, will be a long time in appearing. Yet one cannot but wish for a more searching, more exhaustive analysis of the major documents, even at the expense of inclusiveness in the panorama.

As to the other two objectives, one has less assurance. One comes away feeling that very little has been learned about the relations of music and the ode, although the mere fact of a connection is frequently recorded, — and with the impression that the author's musical knowledge is insufficient. (Cf. e.g., on p. 173, the listing of a *basso continuo* as one of the vocal parts.) Again, it would be hard to summarize Mr. Shuster's conclusions about "the effect which ode writing has had upon the prosody of lyric verse." Here the value of the discussion lies once more in the details rather than in generalized deductions.

It may be added that the book is commendably free from misprints, one of the few being the probably inevitable appearance (p. 250) of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode."

—BERTRAND H. BRONSON

*University of California.*

AUGUSTO CENTENO (Ed.): *The Intent of the Artist*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941, 162 pp.

The editor of this small volume is convinced, and argues convincingly in his Introduction, that no one can ever reveal the intimate essence of the art work like the artist himself, and so it is of the artist that we must inquire if we want to know the truth about art. But do artists agree on what this essence is? Professor Centeno claims to have discovered "a unifying basic conception" in the four essays by a novelist, a dramatist, a composer and an architect. This conception is that art is "a symbolic possession of life — and a possession so complete, yet so undisturbing to life's own rhythm, continuity and flux, that it is glorious for man to know that he can do it and that he must do it in order to live in all fullness." Maybe a unifying basic conception is present in the contributions of the four artists, but one wonders how many readers would find it to be the one that



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Professor Centeno discovered or, for that matter, any other single conception.

What the four artists of Professor Centeno's symposium do agree upon, however, is the importance of art as an intrinsic activity of the spirit. The exact nature of this activity, of this craving, may be variously interpreted by each of them, but whatever it is, it belongs to art alone and only art can supply it. Professor Centeno makes this point at the very outset of his Introduction when he insists that "art is a pure and irreducible activity, one that provides its own peculiar intent, supplies its own morality and includes its own meaning," and it is on this self-subsistent nature of art that his contributors agree.

The late Sherwood Anderson discusses the novel under the heading *Man and His Imagination* in his typically rambling, but nevertheless delightful and illuminating manner. The story teller is concerned with human life, but his concern with it is not that of an observer or as critic but as participator, with its attitude of "humbleness before life, a knowledge that, no matter how skilfully you present your characters, there is always the realization that you yourself share in their weaknesses, their absurdities, pretensions." The greatest obligation of the story teller is that the figures of the people that emerge from his creative mood be true imaginary figures, and this obligation, he feels, is often forgotten by our professional writers, whose imagination has been corrupted by the demands of commercialized magazines. The figures of people are artificial, made to order, instead of being imaginative. The writer makes them; he has not lived them.

Nor is the human figure of imagination that of reality. Imagination feeds on the life of reality, but it is not, and cannot be, that life; for art is art, and not life. This does not mean that the life of art is not real. "Being square with your people in the imaginative world does not mean lifting them over into life, into reality." It simply means that the writer has done his job so well that the imaginative has become the real. It is, as Ludwig Lewisohn put it, "more like life than life itself." That which can happen in the imaginative world can happen in the flesh-and-blood world since it is the world of flesh-and-blood that feeds the imagination.

The reality of the imagination versus that of realism is also stressed by Thornton Wilder in his essay on the art of the playwright, but he claims that the drama has an advantage over the novel in this respect which arises from the fact that the novel is past reported in the present, while on the stage it is always now. "A play visibly represents pure existing. A novel is what one mind, claiming to omniscience, asserts to have existed." The absence of the narrator from the drama "constitutes an additional force to the form as well as an additional tax upon the writer's skill." But one wonders why Mr. Wilder should hold that the dramatist is less of a narrator than is the novelist, and why the play should be credited with presenting "pure existing" any more than the novel. All imaginative ideas and characters are "pure existing" and unless the novel is imaginative it is not art but sociology, history, or propaganda. The imaginative truth of the theatre may be more compelling than that of the novel because it is more vividly presented, but it is not, for that reason, a greater truth.

The essay by Roger Sessions on the composer is a masterpiece in form and substance. Here is a composer who has pondered deeply his own musical message and who possesses the rare gift of crystal clear verbal expression. His thesis is that "the basic elements of our musical sense, of

musical expression, hence of music itself, have their source in the most primitive regions of our being." These basic elements are time, melody, rhythm, and harmony. Of these time is the most basic, "the essential medium of music, the basis of its expressive powers and the element which gives it its unique quality among the arts "made living for us through its expressive essence, *movement*." And since movement is the very basis of animate existence, as in breathing, heart beat, etc., our primary musical responses can be traced to the most primitive movements of our being. Our responses to melody and rhythm likewise "derive from more complicated but only slightly less essential movements, which, it has been fairly well demonstrated, are reproduced in miniature by the human nervous system in response to musical impressions." These facts make of music the oldest of the arts in that the basic elements of our musical sense and of musical expression "have their sources in the most primitive regions of our being." Harmony is the one musical element not directly derived from movement, but "has its origins in the nature of musical sound itself rather than in the impulses of the human organism." But harmony, more so than the other elements, "brings to music the possibility of extension, of larger design, by reason of the well-nigh inexhaustible wealth and variety of tonal relationships which it embraces," and these relationships lie in the nature of a musical tone itself.

What, then, is it that music expresses? The essence of musical expression is not a specific feeling, but something deeper. Music penetrates "to the energies which animate our psychic life, and out of these creates a pattern which has an existence, laws, and human significance of its own. It reproduces for us the most intimate essence, the tempo and the energy of our spiritual being; our tranquility and our restlessness, our animation and our discouragement, our vitality and our weakness — all, in fact, of the fine shades of dynamic variation of our inner life. It reproduces these far more directly and more specifically than is possible through any other medium of human communication." The composer lives in the world of sound; he is tonal-minded, and for him a tone or a chord is not a note, "but sensations full of meaning and capable of infinite nuance of modification; and that when he speaks or thinks in terms of them he is using words which, however obscure and dry they may sound to the uninitiated, are for him fraught with dynamic sense."

The last essay on architecture by William Lescaze appears in the form of a dialogue between a layman and an architect on the question whether the architect is also an artist. The architect is an artist when he is creative; when he designs new and better buildings. Art is here defined as "skill resulting from knowledge and practice, and also as an occupation in which skill is employed to gratify taste and produce what is beautiful." Consequently that architecture is art which requires knowledge and practice and which tries to produce what is beautiful, and "the man who has that particular skill is the artist called architect." The dialogue is an elaboration of this thesis, and reaches the conclusion that if the architect is also to be an artist he "must have a great passion for his work, a passionate interest in his fellow man and in his time, that he must master the method: gathering, analyzing, synthesizing facts; that he must have the talent to create out of them the idea of his building; that he must then be the untiring guide until the building is completed, until it stands as a living and perfect embodiment of the idea."

More books of the type of this one are needed. The best, if not the only true, way of finding out the nature of science is to inquire of those who created science, and the way to learn what religion is as a vital human search is to read those to whom it was a way of living and not only a mode of thinking. Likewise, the spirit and substance of art is to be found in those who truly know because they also do.

—MAX SCHOEN.

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DAGOBERT D. RUNES: *The Dictionary of Philosophy*. Philosophical Library and Alliance Book Corp. New York, 1942, 343 pp.

Thanks to the initiative of the editor and the collaboration of the contributors, the first dictionary devoted exclusively to philosophy makes its appearance here — not in a bulky tome, but in a delightful format, compact, well printed and easy to handle. Not only are the philosophical terms defined, briefly as the condensation of a dictionary necessitates, but the various branches, as well as the different schools of philosophy past and present, and some of the outstanding thinkers, are also described. Considering the limitations imposed by the very nature of such a work, the inclusion of Oriental philosophy is all the more impressive. Nor will anyone be able to accuse it of having ignored the contribution of scholastic philosophy and other Christian thinkers.

There are bound to be disagreements with some of the definitions and descriptions, owing to the present state of philosophy. It is not, however, the task of a dictionary of philosophy, but of the philosophers, to remedy this situation. Omission in such an undertaking were inevitable, but as the brief preface indicates, suggestions and criticism are invited so that these may be made up for in future editions. When this will be done the few instances, as on the top of page 233, second column, which show the need for a more careful proof-reading, can also be corrected. More serious are the occasional inaccuracies in content as, for example, under the psychological item, psycho-analysis, "subconscious" and "suppressed" are mistakenly used for unconscious and repressed, and the meaning of some of the freudian terms are not rendered with the proper precision. These and other minor matters should in no way lessen the usefulness of the Dictionary.

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