

JOURNAL OF AESTHETICS AND ART CRITICISM

Special Issue

Art
in a
Post War World



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JOURNAL OF AESTHETICS AND ART CRITICISM

A Quarterly Devoted to the Advancement of Aesthetics and the Arts

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

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Editorial

THE advance in civilization might well be described as the increasing self-consciousness of the human race. Self criticism is a *sine qua non* of genuine progress, both in individual and societal development. To assay the past and look to the future with increasing effort toward accomplishment of the better is an essential condition of progressive growth in the arts. Few individuals and still fewer societies have been able to maintain this type of self-consciousness—which is another way of saying that personal and cultural history have been characterized by unevenly spaced periods of real achievement toward the better, relapse into contentment with lesser values, and stagnation. There has been no continuous progress in human value seeking because self-consciousness has waxed and waned.

A guarantee of unbroken advance toward the better in human living would be a steady and unflagging alertness to real values achieved and an impartial perspective on the values established in the past but no longer so important in the contemporary frame of reference. It is our purpose in this special issue of the *Journal* to stimulate such alertness to an evaluation of past and present aesthetic values as is necessary now to formulate the future values of progressively evolving arts. To achieve that purpose we have invited persons competent in the various arts to evaluate recent developments in their fields and to suggest the probable future of man's artistic activities. That there will be disagreement with many of the ideas expressed here is a foregone but inconsequential conclusion. Our task has not been to dogmatize but to provoke and heighten self-consciousness among those vitally concerned with the role of the arts and the artist in recent times and in the future.

Borne of the conviction, then, that what happens to the arts and artists of our times is a fitting subject for critical awareness and conscious concern we offer this symposium to our readers with the hope that they will find it of some assistance in their own reflexions upon the problems involved.

—H.G.S.

The Visual Arts and Postwar Society

ROBERT L. LEPPER

A PART from the conduct of the war itself there is perhaps no subject of greater interest to thoughtful people at this time than the probable shape of the postwar world. Discussions are marked by overtones of foreboding fear that we can be easily engulfed by the enormity of the economic and political problems to be faced. It seems to be felt generally that we must prepare ourselves with some prevision of a future which will prove the present agony worthwhile. The history of another postwar era, the twenties and thirties, still fresh in the memory and on the conscience, leaves many doubts as to our collective faith in ourselves.

The realms of the full stomach and of orderly relations with one's neighbors, economics and politics, have been and probably will remain of most immediate concern. However, whether we will have the sense to recognize healthy directions in these fields for the future will depend entirely on the national temper at the end of hostilities. That temper is likely to be touchy, irritable, impatient, suspicious; possibly will show many of the characteristics of a neurotic child. Such a state of mind will have great need for some sense of meanings and purpose which will be beyond the scope of economics and politics to provide. The visual arts, as one of the languages for expressing, extending and preserving human thought, have a great potential for shaping as well as for reflecting these meanings.

The field of commercial propaganda and publishing is likely to remain an outlet for pictorial artists. Architects and designers should have a tremendous opportunity in the absorption of technological progress into construction and manufactured goods. While architects, painters and sculptors may face a decline in private patronage the latter may be replaced by industry and the public museum. Collectively these outlets represent a great volume of influential opinion, for men are influenced as much by what they see as by what they read or hear.

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The dominant character of this opinion can contribute either to restoring equilibrium of the national temper or to feeding its maladjustment. If this character is thoughtlessly a la mode or planned only for the purposes of the moment it is likely to express only the confusions of the moment. Artists, too, as well as economists and politicians, might give a little thought to provisions of a future which will prove the present agony worthwhile. Whatever the shape of the future they will have contributed to its shape either by design or default. They are in a strategic position.

If the conceptive capacity of most artists is operating in the area of the subconscious (aided or pressed by agents or over-zealous salesmen) we can expect a flood of escape and irresponsible stimulation. There will be a large market for these, some of it from our most respectable citizens. If the market is overwhelmingly in this direction we will be in the process of feeding our neuroses instead of attempting to adjust them. Unfortunately, more substantial values are not made to order, must be sought for. It is in seeking these that the arts can contribute to the healthy national state of mind which is essential to reasonable attitudes toward postwar problems.

There are plenty of reasons for an unpredictable national temper. While employment is basic to stability the most shrewdly managed reemployment mechanisms to be devised by industry and government are not likely to create internal stability within the minds of ten million demobilized soldiers and fifty million industrial workers. Employment alone is not likely to satisfy the need for explanations of the conflict and its aftermath. The postwar world will be different from our present image of it and we will go through much emotional conflict in trying to understand what we find. We will quarrel over whether it was worth the price. We can expect a period of enraged frustration and a search for scapegoats during which we will expose our inefficiencies, blunderings and profiteering both real and fancied. We will suspect our allies of having out-manuevered us and we will be strongly tempted to withdraw and play the injured innocent. We may expect these feelings to be whetted by journalistic and political enterprise.

Release from restrictions to freedom of action will make us ripe for violent emotional orgies. Experiences of both military and civilian life, confinement and boredom; discipline and submission to authority;

THE VISUAL ARTS AND POSTWAR SOCIETY

rationing, shortages and regulation; excitement, widespread travel, new and varied companionships, new skills are all heady stimuli. Political and economic answers will not stabilize their ferment over night. These experiences, difficult as they may have been to undertake, were acceptable as a part of the terrible urgency and the tangible objectives of war. The latter provide a clarity which will fade with the end of hostilities. The picture of post-war America rocking itself on its front porch snapping its galluses in contemplation of its way of life secured by victory may be an appealing thought but it is neither convincing nor likely.

A highly stimulated population will probably find itself attempting to adjust itself to two seemingly irreconcilable pressures, a rarin'-to-go spirit and a desire to revert to the security of a past which seems rosy in retrospect. Examples of the latter urge crop up in the press. *Life* magazine, certainly not inactive in its interest in the shape of the postwar world, drops a tender note in a documentary essay on "An American Block." A caption summarizes: "But otherwise the block hasn't changed much and doesn't expect to change. It will be the same when the boys come home. Probably this is just the way the boys will want it." A newspaper advertisement promoting a trade journal for the construction industry tells us that the "Thirty Billion Dollar Miracle Home" of postwar America is ready now. It will have every technological advance ". . . however, one looked-for change. . . will not take place. That is, *Change in Appearance.*"

This emotional conflict between the rarin-to-go spirit and the urge to security will shape in part the forms of things made and sold, the bases upon which goods or services are advertised for sale, the buildings built and the ideas expressed in painting and sculpture. This shaping process need be a one-way street, however, only if artists and designers are content to let it. A flood of sentimental or jingoistic advertising and easel painting, a flood of sentimental architecture or gaudy manufactured goods can undermine us quite as much as a succession of alcoholic or gastronomic excesses, and much more insidiously. These floods can come as much through innocence as through cynicism. Artists and designers, the men who turn out the stuff, have some responsibility for considering its effects. Let them not be too quick to shift that responsibility to "the spirit of their time."

Contemporary Painting

LESTER D. LONGMAN

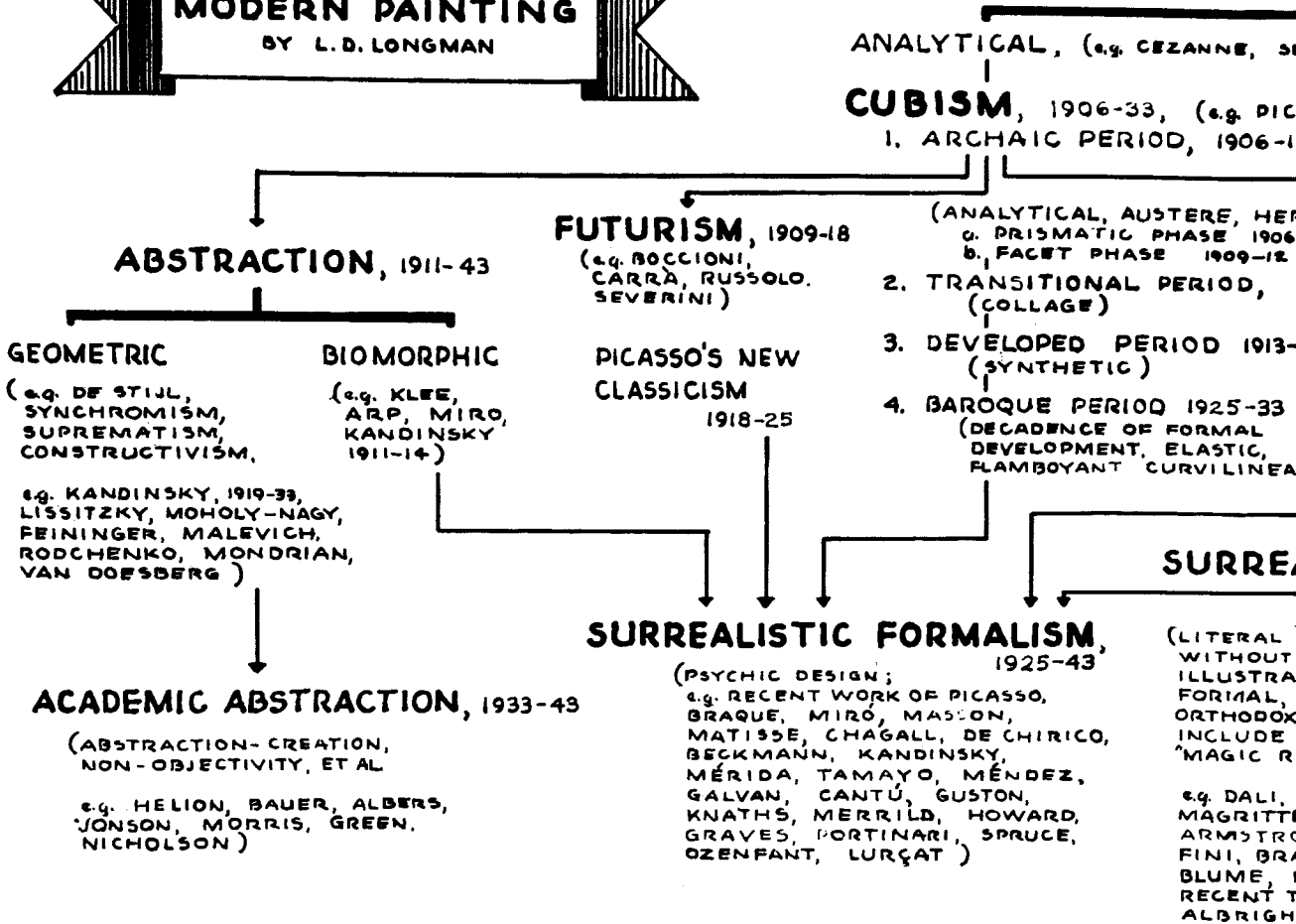
IN 1944 most Americans are analyzing the political, economic, social, and cultural forces at work in the world. They are anxious to dispel the fog of disillusion and despair which characterized the period between the wars; they know that victory will bring relief from the threat of fascist domination of the world, which so oppressively sapped their confidence in the years before Pearl Harbor; and they trust the power of reason to provide a lasting peace, bring prosperity, establish social justice, and stimulate a renaissance of the arts. Disagreement or reservations are expressed by pessimists, who take pride in a "realistic" appraisal of the facts, or are aesthetically charmed by a state of permanent disillusion, but these "realists" have no constructive program to offer by way of alternative. The programmatic reactionaries, the cultural and political isolationists and nationalists, are a dwindling and ineffective minority. It is reasonable to suppose that this is a trend which may last a decade or more.

Although the majority of thoughtful Americans would likely agree to the foregoing observations, they are offered here simply as reasonable assumptions. Since the art of free men holds a mirror up to society, one must start with certain social premises in analyzing the state of painting today or venturing to predict its future.

The accompanying chart is an outline of the immediate history of painting. The chronology, the interinfluences of the several movements and selections of representative artists are included; and those still extant and capable of growth or reproduction are apparent. An interpretation and elaboration of this chart should make clear the formal and expressive problems which face the painter today, from the points of view both of the internal evolution of his art and of the ideological forces to which he is subjected.

The most characteristic movement of the first quarter of the present century was Cubism, to which abstract painting may be con-

**OUTLINE OF
MODERN PAINTING**
BY L. D. LONGMAN



POST-IMPRESSIONISM, 1885-1905
(SUBJECTIVE EXPRESSION)

(e.g. VAN GOGH, GAUGUIN, LAUTREC, MUNCH)

(e.g. PICASSO, BRAQUE, LEGER)
1906-12

EXPRESSIONISTIC,

(e.g. VAN GOGH, GAUGUIN, LAUTREC, MUNCH)

(e.g. PICASSO, BRAQUE, LEGER)
1906-12

PROTO-SURREALISM,
BEFORE 1924

(e.g. ROUSSEAU 1900-10
DE CHIRICO 1910-19
CHAGALL 1912-24
KLEE 1913-24
PICASSO, SOME ASPECTS 1906-24)

**GERMAN
EXPRESSIONISM,**
1905-33

(e.g. DIE BRÜCKE,
DER BLAUE REITER,
DIE NEUE SACHLICHKEIT)

**FRENCH
EXPRESSIONISM,**
1905-30

(FAUVISM, e.g. MATISSE,
DUFY, MODIGLIANI,
ROUAULT, LAURENCIN,
VLAMINCK)

1913-25

1925-33
FORMAL
ABSTRACT,
NON-LINEAR)

DADAISM, 1916-21

(AUTOMATIC TECHNIQUE; SUBVERSIVE;
COLLAGE; e.g. ERNST, ARP)

SURREALISM, 1924-43

(e.g. DALI, ERNST, TANGUY,
MAGRITTE, DELVAUX,
ARMSTRONG, HUGO, CORNELL,
NI, BRAUNER, CASTELLÓN,
LUME, ROY, WADSWORTH,
BERNARD TCHÉLITCHÉW,
L. BRIGHT, ZSISLY)

EXPRESSIONISM, 1930-43

(SOCIAL REALISM; USUALLY
"SOCIALLY-CONSCIOUS" BUT
MAY BE INDIVIDUALISTIC,

e.g. OROZCO, SIQUEIROS,
RIVERA, CASTELLANOS,
SIDORIN, JULES, GROPPER,
HIRSCH, EVERGOOD,
LEVINE, BLOOM, SHAHN,
KANTOR, F. CHAPIN,
WEBER, ROUAULT, SEGONZAC,
SOUTINE, GROSZ)

NEO-ROMANTICISM
(EMOTIVE FRAGMENTS)

EXPERIMENTAL

(e.g. BERMAN, BÉRARD,
EARLY TCHÉLITCHÉW,
LÉONIDE, VLAMINCK,
AUSTIN, PRIÈRE, LÉVI,
KUNIYOSHI, BREININ,
ZERBE, CARROLL,
SCHARY)

CONSERVATIVE

(e.g. BUR
MARTIN
KARFID
BOHRO
BLANC
MANGR)

**ACADEMIC NEO-CLASSICISM,
ILLUSTRATIONAL ROMANTICISM,
NATURALISM, LATE 19TH C**

(... MUNCH)

ISM,
-30
ATISSE,
NI,
ENGIN;

PICASSO'S BLUE AND
ROSE PERIODS, 1901-05

PROGRAMMATIC REACTIONISM 1930-43
(IDEOLOGICAL; NATIONALISTIC; STYLISTIC REACTION)

ITICISM, 1930-43
(...
MENTS)

ONSERVATIVE
(e.g. BURCHFIELD,
MARTIN, PITTMAN,
KARFIOL, MATTSON,
BOHROD, MARSH,
BLANCH,
MANGRAVITE)

**"AMERICAN
SCENE", 1930-43**

(POPULAR ROMANTIC
ILLUSTRATION,
e.g. SAMPLE, NICHOLS,
HOPPER

INCLUDED: SUBSIDIARY PHASE
OF REGIONALISM, 1930-41,
- ISOLATIONIST, TRIBALISTIC,
CHAUVINISTIC ILLUSTRATION,
e.g. BENTON, CURRY, WOOD)

**AMERICAN
"SANITY IN ART",
1935-43**

(19TH C ACADEMIC
STYLES AND
PHOTOGRAPHIC
ILLUSTRATION)

**NAZI
ART,
1930-43**

(PROPAGANDA
ILLUSTRATION,
ACADEMIC,
NATURALISTIC,
REGIONALISTIC,
"POPULAR
ROMANTIC")

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sidered a subsidiary. The terminology used in the accompanying chart of the development of the style is offered as one more lucid and comprehensive than the customary simple division into "analytical" and "synthetic" phases. Not only is it the familiar pattern into which the history of Greek sculpture or Italian Renaissance art is cast, but it more clearly illustrates the evolutionary character of the movement. A study of the chronological sequence of the paintings of Picasso or Braque in any book of illustrations of their work will demonstrate its applicability. The designation of the movement as "Cubism" is too well established to be changed, even if there were a more becoming name, but its accuracy is limited to the first phase of the Archaic Period, which I have called Prismatic, for only then was nature geometrized in cubes and prisms and polyhedrons. The Facet phase of the Archaic Period is even more uncompromisingly and heroically analytical. But it reduced the study to the faces and the sections of the prism and to the manipulation of these overlapping planes and facets, sometimes by the principle of simultaneity, to create a two-dimensional design of novel beauty.

The transition from the Archaic to the Developed Cubist style through the instrumentality of the *collage* took place in 1912 and 1913. The discovery of bizarre effects in pictorial designs of pasted paper and objects of a textural appeal restored an interest in things, in tactile values, in space and color, mass and texture, and introduced a new iconographic repertoire. The resulting style is ordinarily labelled the 'synthetic', since the painter forms an artistic synthesis of his materials within a shallow cube of space. The term is more suggestive than definitive, however, since every work of art must be a synthesis as well as an analysis. The relaxation of archaic austerity which begins in 1913, and the new appreciation of rich color and of other formal and material values, mark the full control and confident exploitation of the style—the florescence and maturity of complete mastery. This, then, is properly the Developed Period or "Golden Age" of Cubism.

Since 1925, however, the leaders have been unable to retain its faultless purity and charm. As a basic educational discipline in the modern school of art, it is still quite indispensable, but the metabolism of decadence in the formal development of the style could not be long detained. After 1925 Cubism becomes baroque, expansive, elastic, often

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curvilinear or biomorphic. Its principles are assimilated into the main stream of contemporary art, the Surrealist Movement, and it becomes both an instrument of the irrational and a moderator of psychic convulsion and disorder.

Meanwhile Facet Cubism was astonishingly prolific. In a few brief years it formulated an entirely new and revolutionary concept of decorative design, and this is one of the most difficult of accomplishments. Soon every art became excited by its enchanting spell. Architecture and sculpture, literature and the dance and the varieties of industrial arts were soon transformed. At the same time it spawned abortive Futurism, Italy's lone creation, and fathered a world-wide ardor for near-abstract and non-objective painting which has not yet run its course.

The dominant form of abstract painting has been the Geometric, which is the more similar to Facet Cubism. Its creative period lasted from 1911 till 1933, when Hitler closed the *Bauhaus*. Some years before, the Russian School had been suppressed for reasons of political expedience, and in Holland *De Stijl* and Neo-Plasticism had lost their fire and been transferred to Paris in a more diluted form and christened *Abstraction-Création*. The liquidated *Bauhaus* artists and the Dutch spread their enthusiasm to England and the United States, but those still living have continued to geometrize in much the same old way, and their faithful followers seem unable to discover further possibilities in the style. They constitute today a talented, and articulate and didactic clan of calculating and redundant painters, working within their conventional and stereotyped traditions. Hence, I have described their dogma as Academic Abstraction, which the reader will observe is the first of six divisions in the outline of contemporary painting. Thus, the movement is not dead, but is dormant and awaiting a regeneration. The arrival of some one genius might well signal a revival when the war is over, since the intimate relationship of the geometry of design to the mechanistic aspects of our society is readily apparent. But the discovery of new forms of abstract art is a Herculean task.

Another type of abstract painting, indirectly affiliated with Archaic Cubism, is often classed as 'Biomorphic'. Not much of this variety was created for the sake of decorative design, however, and that which was more aptly may be termed 'amorphous'. It is usually symbolic, surrealist, or Dada, and only secondarily abstract. After about 1925

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the 'biomorphic' artists normally are merged in the more lively Surrealist Movement.

Orthodox Surrealism, which is not to be confused with the Surrealist Movement, inherited something of the nihilism, the disillusionment and and systematized confusion of its Dada ancestry, and frequently adopted similar techniques of automatic painting. The artists discovered plastic models of nostalgia and enigma in the paintings of a group I have called the Proto-Surrealists,—including Chagall, the early *chirico* ("Chirico City" and *Pittura Metafisica*), the jungle dreams of Rousseau, and the miraculous ideographs of Klee. Their chief extra-pictorial source was Freudian psychoanalytic literature.

This movement has been the most influential of the six varieties of contemporary painting. Such men as Dali, Ernst, Tanguy, and Breton were by no means negligible during the despondent 1930's. They more than any others by their painting and cinema, their poetry and manifestoes founded a movement of major proportions, turned Cubism into a baroque art and inspired a new Romanticism. But it has not produced the most significant works of art. Its contribution was chiefly theoretical, while orthodox paintings have been deliberately unaesthetic. The artists hold that the quality of their painting resides in the evocative character of the image *qua* image, and that although an image may be altered by the use of reason it is never improved thereby, for the successful work of art must arise fully formed out of the subconscious, like Athena from the head of Zeus. As a result, their most representative productions are illustrations, "hand-made photographs of splendid and delirious images of concrete irrationality" to use Dali's definitive language. This doctrine of spontaneous generation and literal transcription obviously eliminates all formal values inherent in expressive or in decorative design, to the conspicuous detriment of the final product.

If our original assumptions are destined to be proved correct the decline of surrealist illustration is at hand. The Surrealist Brotherhood is already less important than the more liberal Surrealist Movement, and even now the virtuosos of the dream bear the stamp of academic dogmatism. The illusionistic painters have discovered no original pictorial form, but in theory and literature were always stimulating. Their communistic allegiance was rightly thought suspect in Russia, and at best it was external. Philosophically and spiritually their dogma is

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mere cultural and political anarchy in proportion to its orthodoxy. This will not be popular among nations devoted to the reasonable solution of their political, social, and cultural problems. We cannot systematically cultivate the irrational and anarchistic in the arts at a time when we are in the mood to establish international responsibility, harmony, and order in the world of everyday life.

What I have called Surrealistic Formalism, or Psychic Design, largely retains the aesthetic appeal of plastic orchestration. The willingness to submit evocative psychic content to this rational and formal discipline distinguishes the Surrealist Movement from the illustrative style. In its formation it has drawn upon a wide variety of sources, upon the founders of Surrealism for theory and for a content of disturbing psychic tension, upon Proto-Surrealism for the concepts of the enigma, of nostalgia and dream fantasy, and for prototypes of rational design of this occult substance, upon Biomorphing Abstraction for weird and evocative shapes suggesting microscopic animal life, and above all upon Baroque Cubism for its essential formal discipline and its refinement of aesthetic taste.

Paintings done during the past ten to fifteen years by Picasso, Braque, Léger, Kandinsky, Matisse, Chagall, Miro, and Masson, all of which, like early Chirico, are surrealistic in the larger sense, illustrate this delicate balance between dynamism and formal order and control, this fertile union of the Dionysiac and Apollonian. There is still nothing more significant in modern painting, and one can find examples in every country where artists are still free, including those of our good neighbors in South America.

But if the assumptions made at the beginning of this article are accepted, it is evident that a new equilibrium somewhat less haptic and irrational, perhaps another variety of Classicism growing out of this style, may be on the post-war horizon. Perhaps Picasso himself, who has often been something of a seer, is already devising the stable forms of another period of monumental serenity. He anticipated the last war in proto-Dada *collages* and foretold the present holocaust in the hectic and flamboyant art of his Baroque Period—the “bone”, the “stained glass”, and the “Guernica-style” pictures. In contrast he followed the armistice of 1918 with a “New Classicism” of seven years duration, of which the origins extended back into the last years of the war. At least

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we may look upon Surrealistic Formalism as a promising area and should anticipate again prophetic leadership from Picasso.

Expressionism has had a long and fertile history and still thrives vigorously in Mexico and the United States. In the sense that this term designates a dominantly subjective art, that is to say an art expressive of the author's state of mind or his interpretation of underlying structural or spiritual truth (as opposed to an objective, impersonal, and descriptive art) all truly 'modern' painting for fifty years has been expressionistic; and barring a fascist victory, no evidence exists that it will cease to be so in the future. This does not mean, of course, that all painting by contemporary artists is expressionistic.

The term may be used, however, in a more specific sense to designate the explosive statements of psychological excitement seen in the painting of van Gogh or in early pictures by Kokoshka. The analytical studies of pictorial design in semi-abstract or non-objective terms, as in Cézanne, the Cubists, in Malevich or Mondrian, is obviously quite a different thing. This dichotomy, already apparent in Post-Impressionism, was intensified in the following generation, as the Fauves and German Expressionists set Cubism in more bold relief. After a generation of amazing productivity the seductive power of French Expressionism gradually dissolved, though many American artists such as Francis Chapin are still loyal to its principles of mild and decorative, yet spontaneous self-expression. A few French representatives of the old guard like Dufy and the more vigorous Rouault and Segonzac are still productive, and Matisse has not been completely transformed by the weird power of Surrealism.

The psychic dynamism, the Medieval Nordic vitality, of German Expressionism was choked off abruptly in the arts with the advent of Hitler; or more properly, it was transferred to the realm of politics, while the arts were not allowed to take their natural course. But its influence survives today in Mexican and American Expressionism. As in Germany before 1933 the majority of the painters are inspired by an ardent social-consciousness, and militantly portray scenes of hypocrisy and social injustice, the horrors of war, or the havoc of the depression in the lives of men. The term "Social Realism" has sometimes been used to describe their rugged style. Often the artists are communistic or at least class-conscious; but a few remain emotional and introspective

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individualists and some have been appreciably infected by Surrealism. Today's Expressionism is not much different from that of twenty years ago, but it has not lost its vigor. Its prominence when the war is won depends upon the continued productivity of such great artists as Orozco and Siqueiros, and upon whether we have cause for social unrest or revolution.

Next to Surrealistic Formalism, the most youthful and enticing contemporary trend is Neo-Romanticism, a revival of the search for exotic values in emotive fragments of reality. Certain French artists, like Utrillo and Vlaminck, have produced romantic pictures for many years, and a large proportion of American artists have always experienced a temperamental affinity for the romantic. But during the past fifteen years the quantity of romantic painting has greatly increased, particularly in America. The artists easily fall in one of two categories, which may be designated the Experimental and Conservative. Under the impact of Proto-Surrealism, Surrealism, Picasso's Blue and Rose Periods, and Expressionism, the Experimentalists accent the weird, the fanciful, the enigmatic and imaginative more insistently than do the Conservatives, though the latter must be considered genuine painters rather than "Popular-Romantic" illustrators, even when they are influenced by the "American Scene" movement. Berman, Bérard, Tchelitchew, and Léonide led the movement in Paris a decade ago, while in America, where most of the experimental artists now reside, it is becoming increasingly persuasive through the work of such artists as are listed on the chart.

At the present time Neo-Romanticism lacks the theoretical basis and the coherence of more original movements, but it may achieve more systematic consolidation after the war, and it has the stability of a broad and firm foundation in the American character. At least Americans take to it more sympathetically than to Abstraction, Surrealism, Surrealistic Formalism, or Expressionism.

All defunct movements in art since the French Revolution have left in their wake shipwrecked souls who seek salvation in the old faiths, who calmly row their succoring lifeboats down the same course the mother ship had taken long before and refuse the challenge and adventure of striking out boldly in new directions. Most Americans junk old automobiles and radios and are elated with new models;

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old movies seem quaint and unsatisfying as compared to recent products. The evolution of taste in music and architecture is slower, but most sluggish of all is the phlegmatic course of art appreciation, for painting and sculpture today are the most grievously misunderstood of all media. Hence, we still have artists who are old-fashioned Neo-Classicists, "Popular-Romanticists", Naturalists, Victorians, imitators of Whistler or Corot, Impressionists.

As relics of the past these artists would be harmless were it not a major cause of contemporary social and cultural chaos that people breathing today are actually living in all ages of the past, and, with the most diverse frames of reference, are attempting to communicate and to cooperate with one another. This constitutes not only a social and semantic problem of aggravating proportions, but is a prime source of confusion in the arts. And it is surely the explanation of the recent "Sanity in Art" campaign radiating throughout the country from its Chicago headquarters. With didactic literature, newspaper publicity, and censored exhibitions, it sought to restore the popular styles of the nineteenth century in the dynamic world of the twentieth, as though the arts had nothing to do with the inner convictions of man or with the *Zeitgeist* of an age, but were a mere luxury and adornment suitable for hours of physical and mental relaxation.

This "Sanity in Art" program constituted no grave danger to the arts so long as its exponents had little political power. The danger has been that they might acquire this power and enforce their reactionism upon us all. A perfect and contemporary model existed in Hitler's Germany, where Nazi Art was of the same genre and was inflicted upon all Germany in 1933. As the doctrine of American isolationism acquired startling strength through the depression years the seriousness of the danger became apparent. Moreover, "Sanity in Art" received support from the Programmatic Reactionism of the Regionalist movement, a most compatible bedfellow with a flair for sensational advertising in the public press and popular journals. In tune with political and cultural isolationism, rampant nationalism, and stylistic and ideological reaction, it could not survive our entrance into the war and the frank recognition of our international obligations in the post-war world.

Strictly speaking, Regionalism was a subsidiary branch of "Ameri-

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can Scene" painting, which itself had no other theoretical basis than the doctrine that the artist should paint what he sees around him rather than esoteric abstracts, studio nudes and still-life, or Freudian dream images. Hence, like the Regionalists, artists who might be willing to be spoken of as painters of the "American Scene" would, on examination, be found to have nothing important in common except the dearth of formal expressive originality. The most representative ordinarily depict "Popular Romantic" illustrations of old Victorian houses and bric-a-brac, Mississippi steamboats, farmhouses, or back yards. Artists working in exactly the same styles may be found not only among the Nazis, but among the minor painters and the aggressive reactionaries of all countries. Hence as a movement it is as international as Surrealism or Abstraction rather than peculiarly American, except of course for the subject matter illustrated. Most of the artists are negligible, and the value in the doctrine (if we may speak of the determination to paint certain subjects rather than others as a doctrine) has largely been exhausted by this time. Nor is it a concept of sufficient dimensions or profundity to intrigue the spirit of progressive internationalism which is destined to prevail upon the close of the war.

Thus we are left with the conclusion that the promising movements in the world of painting today are Surrealistic Formalism with its baroque energy and spiritual excitement, Experimental Neo-Romanticism, whose roots in America go deepest, and "Socially-conscious" Expressionism. We cannot foresee whether order or adventure will most captivate the next generation. The possibility of a new Classicism, aggressive, constructive, orderly and dignified, is reasonable, although this should not be taken to mean that paintings will resemble Greek art or Raphael, Puvis de Chavannes or Picasso's Classicism following the last war. On the other hand a somewhat more monumental Romanticism would be a sensible forecast. Both developments may, of course, occur simultaneously. The term "Classicism" and "Romanticism" are here used in a generic, not a historic sense. As such they are perhaps not precise enough to be illuminating, but one who knows how to be more specific had better paint the pictures.

In either case the paintings of disillusionment, anguish, and dejection so appealing in the recent past will likely seem *passé* as they already do to many. Perhaps we shall look to Giotto, Masaccio, and Piero della

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Francesco not merely as paragons of good form, but as prototypes of the virile and justified optimism and positive conviction which we hope will mark affairs of state, the condition of commerce, and international social justice.

I have not said that this is what art ought to be like, or taken the position of an advocate. Art will be what it will be. If sensitive artists feel driven to melancholy and dejection, to spiritual anguish or bitter social protest, no amount of exhortation and homily by more complacent gentlemen will suffice to produce an art of sweet reasonableness. The roots of artistic expression lie deep in the fabric of society. When humanism was alive and meaningful in the world, art was humanistic; when men were firm in religious faith, art became the sufficient vehicle of their spiritual convictions. A false optimism and the demeanor of a preacher are as futile in a critic as they are sterile in an artist.

We must recognize, therefore, that no peace will alter the basic structure of belief. In religion we will continue in the main agnostic, in theology unconcerned. In philosophy we will remain predominantly instrumentalist or positivist. Politically we will put our firmest faith in power as usual, in spite of a sincere determination to cooperate internationally, and will view the social and economic struggle as a manifestation of the will to power. Consequently we cannot expect art to be serene and rational in the sense the Greeks were so, though it may become more orderly in recognition of the new confidence we shall place in the pragmatic validity of the reason to establish social and political harmony.

Since in the realm of metaphysics, many are persuaded either that no statement is even meaningful or that reality is essentially irrational, we shall continue to be interested in the dynamic activity of the psyche. Consequently a leaven of volitional energy and haptic ecstasy is sure to qualify the most ardent efforts to achieve a classic form in painting, or to discipline romantic individualism in the interests of monumentality and the establishment of a new tradition.

These facts also lead us to suppose that the arts will continue to be cultivated with increasing momentum as in the immediate past. When men have little faith in religion and less and less confidence in the reason to reveal the transcendental or absolute truth, inevitably the aesthetic

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response gains proportionately in strength. For it is then within the province of art alone to put meaning in a universe at heart non-rational or uncompromisingly irrational. If science is but a tool and religious knowledge a snare and a delusion, how much more confidence must we have in aesthetic intuition to provide that wisdom we covet so insatiably!

It is becoming a truism to say that since the advent of Hitler the United States has become the guardian of the creative arts and curator of their destiny in the twentieth century. We are crowded with exiled talent from a host of unhappy countries. There will have to be a period of assimilation and in the meantime, if we have the good sense to spend fortunes in the aesthetic education of a public spiritually apathetic toward the arts, and if we have the wisdom to give moral and material encouragement to the most adventurous artists, an American style in painting and even an "American Renaissance" would be the logical result.

Theatre Today

Symptoms and Surmises

GEORGE BEISWANGER

TO WRITE intelligibly on the state of theatre art in the United States today, it is necessary to begin with the economic picture.

Roughly speaking, theatre is vended in two types of market: the commercial and the subsidized. In the former, theatrical production—from plays and musicals to single turns in the cheapest tavern or dive—is financed by private risk capital in the hope that all costs (including property investment, rent, overhead, etc.) will eventually be met and a profit be obtained from the consumer public. In the latter, much of the cost of production (building, equipment, salaries, production expense, etc.) is borne, without expectation of reimbursement or profit, by community or state institutions or private associations, whether school system, college, university, civic centre, trade union, etc.

This distinction between the commercial and the subsidized stage parallels others of a more aesthetic nature which are not so precise. The commercial stage is often labelled 'professional', the subsidized 'amateur'. But many productions of the latter surpass in quality all but the very best in the 'professional' theatre. Furthermore, the salaried workers in the subsidized theatres consider themselves professionals and rightly so, for theatre is their profession—they make a living at it. The subsidized theatre started as the 'little theatre' movement, but it is no longer little nor is it non-commercial. Substantial admissions are usually charged. Regular advertising channels and the methods of commercial publicity are frequently employed. And the worth of its program of training and production is often justified by citing the players, designers, directors and playwrights it has sent on to Broadway or Hollywood.

For the commercial stage, Broadway is still the most useful barometer. It continues to set the pattern. It remains the most important centre of production and the ultimate Mecca and judgment seat. The best in the commercial theatre either originates in the Times Square

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area or eventually gravitates there. And the 'road', the touring commercial theatre, supplies products which have won, or will finally seek, the Broadway cachet. Taking Broadway, then, and its satellite road companies as the barometer, the commercial stage is enjoying its most prosperous season in years, thanks to the war boom. Given the money and the opportunity, there is clearly an immense audience still left for 'live' or 'round' entertainment, despite the competition of film and radio. And it is precisely that 'people's audience' which the 'little theatres' originally hoped to attract within its doors but which the subsidized theatre has so largely failed to capture.

As for the quality of commercial theatre today, it is necessary to read not one Broadway barometer but two. The season has been lacklustre so far as drama—the 'straight play'—is concerned. With the exception of John Van Druten, whose *Voice of the Turtle* is an enchanting play in his own special vein, the established playwrights have marked time, lost ground or been altogether absent. No new playwright of importance or even promise has put in an appearance. As usual, drama's past is represented by a couple of plays, *Othello* and *The Cherry Orchard*, in productions that are honest or well-meaning but lack anything superior in quality. Here and there, one runs across samples of good acting but none that can rightly be called great. Over the season hangs a thick cloud of mediocrity and downright bad theatre. And behind it all lurks what many are calling a failure of nerve. It is the viewpoint recently expressed by Stark Young in the pages of *The New Republic*:

'Here we have a situation in which actors who are at the top, such as it is, on our stage, are afraid to take a chance, to do a young fresh drama, to enlarge the horizon of dramatic writing, et cetera. They sink into playing trash and hope it goes over, though they have the prestige, funds and financial backing to risk other considerations. They do very little for the theatre and nothing for the drama as such. . . . for most of our leading Broadway lights—for all the leading ones, in fact—I would say that they would not willingly, even in an endowed theatre where no money could be lost, take a chance on any drama they could not believe would be a hit, if need be a hit in the raw, as it were.'

The musical stage presents on the whole a much brighter picture. Whatever one may think of the values of the musical play, musical comedy and revue, it did move a significant notch forward last season

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with the production of *Oklahoma!* This season's *Carmen Jones* is a genuine, if by no means altogether successful or valid, effort to assimilate material more serious, in both the dramatic and the musical sense, than the expert contrivers of Broadway musical shows have attempted to handle heretofore. Neither play is 'experimental' in the customary sense of the term; it didn't have to be. *Oklahoma!* and *Carmen Jones* are logical, almost predictable dilations of an American tradition of theatre-making which is deeply rooted, vigorously healthy and theatrically sound. Add to them a marked advance in the quality of production at the Metropolitan Opera House, a ballet season not without fresh merit and some new stirrings in the modern dance, and one gets an impression of well-being in the musical theatre far different from the lethargy that has settled over straight drama.

The subsidized theatre is another matter. To it the war has brought considerable financial stringency and some curtailment of program. Plans for expanding its capital foundations have had to be postponed. Whether it has gained or lost in audience is difficult to say, but there is little or no evidence that it is sharing commensurately with the commercial theatre in the boom in theatre attendance. Yet the subsidized theatre is better fixed on the whole to withstand the rigors of war, if and when they arise. It has a new and magnificent plant, some 50,000 theatre buildings erected within the past twenty-five years, which is more than can be said of the commercial theatre even in New York City. Its professional workers have been depleted by the war but theirs is the security of the yearly salary, and they face few of the problems which confront anyone who attempts to produce a play on Broadway today.

The college, university and civic theatres continue to give their audiences a fairly regular look at the dramatic repertory. Where there is a vital and well-planned theatre program, any student can expect in four years to see more Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Shaw, etc., than he will see in ten years on the commercial stage. And he will have the opportunity to make up his mind about playwrights who haven't a ghost of a chance around Times Square. The subsidized theatre has dug itself in and become a notable part of the cultural life of the institutions and associations which support it. But there is a darker side to the picture. The subsidized theatre may roll up a total record throughout the country

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of some 400,000 performances a year,¹ but with few exceptions it does not as yet operate on a true sensational basis. From about six to ten productions are spaced throughout a season, with an average of perhaps three performances apiece. There isn't the base for a more extended or continuous schedule nor the audience to justify it. Furthermore, the subsidized theatre has come to lean more and more upon the commercial theatre, reproducing its hit shows, channeling much of its repertory *via* the Broadway bottleneck. Drama departments and community playhouses here and there still maintain the fervor of experimental faith that set the 'little theatre' movement going. There are still some vigorous centers of regional playwriting. But in general the academic and the calculating have tended to triumph. One gets the impression of a failure of nerve here, too.

So much for the overall picture, hastily and roughly sketched in. What does it mean? Here I can only venture some tentative and admittedly partial conclusions and, on their base, a few surmises as to the future. They may not prove correct, but they may encourage thought in some fruitful directions.

Since the last war, the American theatre has passed through a decisive period of reconstruction. The history is much too long to recount or even to summarize here. It is sufficient for the moment to recall that the reconstruction took place in company with (or as a result of?) a revolution in the theory of theatre practice. The chief principles of this theory may be stated as follows: 1. The conception of play production as an art in itself; 2. The vision of a theatre integrating all the elements of story, dialogue, acting, pantomime, decor, music, dance and so on; 3. The conviction that theatre should give expression and meaning to life's seriousness, lifting the troubled soul into the illumined realm of the freed imagination; 4. A belief in theatre as a communal art and its need of a regional, grassroots base.

These principles were formulated as weapons of revolt. The star system of theatre production was to be broken, with its contempt for

¹ See 'The Dying American Theatre' in *The Hawthorne Tree* by Paul Green, University of North Carolina Press, 1943. The essay is a concise, comprehensive and forceful review of theatre in the United States today. I have drawn upon it for facts and judgments, though the author would disagree with much of my argument.

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the playwright, its exploitation of the rhetoric of acting, its disregard of the values of ensemble playing, its insistence upon realism. The pieces of theatre art were to be reunited as they were in the classic ages of Greek and Elizabethan drama. The artist and the architect were to be brought back into the theatre, not to decorate but to fuse his talents with those of playwrights, actor, director, musician and dancewright in order to produce what Richard Wagner called 'the total art work'. Theatre was no longer to be trivial, its sole function to entertain. It was to free itself of the chains of commercial gambling and business monopoly which had killed the 'road' and made Broadway a scandal. The commercial theatre was to be left to its fate, doomed by the films which could perform the task of mass entertainment more efficiently and with greater cash profit. Theatre was to be restored to its rightful audience, the people, as a serious, ennobling art.

Now a revolution may know what it wants, but it seldom knows wherein and why it succeeds, what the forces behind its success really are, and what the ultimate consequences are to be. During a period of twenty-five years the American theatre was reconstructed, it did give America its first adult drama and stage, it did bring the other arts onto the scene, it did remake the art of stage production, and it did spread itself out over the country in many regional centres. But Broadway and its system of commercial production is still with us, the promise of a great drama has worn thin and is petering out, and the serious theatre has not won a people's audience. To look at theatre today is to realize that the principles of twenty-five years ago must be re-examined, the pattern they laid down be re-evaluated, and a new faith won.

1. Before the twentieth century, play production was an anonymous craft. The name of a director did not appear on the playbill because the director as such did not exist. Plays were whipped into shape by the actors, usually in collaboration with the playwright who was a theatre man himself and frequently assumed one of the roles in his own play. The emergence of the director as the key figure, even the dictator, is a recent phenomenon and demands careful explanation. When he first consciously appeared on the horizon in the early years of the century, it was as the exponent of a new art, the art of play production. With him came the designer, the costumer, the dance choreographer,

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the composer, even the carpenter and the expert producer, all as 'new' artistic functionaries in the making of theatre.

As a matter of fact, none of these functions were new in the theatre. Plays have been directed, designed, costumed, carpentered, produced from the beginning of theatre history. What was new was a theatre which had fallen apart under the impact of modern industrial civilization. Its crafts had been splintered into operations—special and often minute skills. In the division of labor, each cell, beginning with the actor, fought for status, power and protection. As the fissures multiplied in number and increased in width, the need for the coordinator arose, and for a coordinator of coordinators. The director was not as much a discovery as an invention, mothered by necessity. And his art became the substitute for the unity theatre production had lost in the process of tearing itself apart.

Ironical as it may seem, it is no surprise, therefore, to discover that the new art of play production won its greatest victories on the very stage it hoped to supplant, the Broadway boards. During the twenties the artisans of the New York theatre were cracking apart and freezing along rigid union lines. With the disappearance of stock, there no longer existed an apprentice system for the young worker in the theatre, whether actor, playwright, designer or anyone else. Increasingly the stage had to recruit from the almost totally inexperienced; the art of acting, for example, notably declined, and to hide and rationalize that decline, there developed the conversational or natural theory of acting—in short, no acting at all. It is not altogether unfair to point out that the rise of drama departments in the universities and colleges occurred just at the time when some frantic substitute had to be found for the only natural and proper training ground theatre has, the theatre itself. In the same way, it can be said that the art of play production and the director as its king pin came into being to save theatre from falling completely apart. What it saved, for the time being at least, was Broadway.

The result was a 'made' theatre of extraordinary technical skill. I doubt if there has ever been as knowledgeable, as expert, as handy a set of theatre craftsman as those now operating on Broadway and in our first-class subsidized theatres. The craft of theatre today is at its peak. If skill in the special arts of theatre could save theatre, drama

should be at its healthiest today. Are we not forced to surmise that what seemed twenty-five years ago like a great creative discovery was merely a device to stave off disaster?

2. The vision of a 'total theatre', one in which all the theatre arts would join hands richly to fill the stage, was a noble and valid one. Designers such as Robert Edmond Jones and Norman Bel Geddes had in mind the great ritual dramas of ancient Greece. They dreamed of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* or even Dante's *Divine Comedy*, done with every resource of eye and voice, of light and sound. But they brought that dream to an age and a people unready to create the kind of serious and elevating drama which the designers had in mind as the necessary core of full theatre. Here again, the Broadway theatre did take over the tricks and the trappings. Many of the plays of the twenties and thirties attempted to carry the panoply of a rich dressing, but the firm body was missing beneath. Even when it came to Shakespeare, the endeavour for fullness and completeness of effect merely served to conceal, when it did not reveal, the lack of an engine underneath the hood. The end result has been the Shakespearean productions of Maurice Evans and Margaret Webster, which use all the chemicals of theatre magic to extract from the Bard something less than Shakespeare and even not Shakespeare at all, which the American audience can 'understand'. In its variety of stops pulled out, no theatre has ever been so full, so total, as that of the super-colossal Hollywood film, nor so empty, so null.

Actually, the ideal of a complete integration of the theatre arts did find its fulfilment during these twenty-five years but in a direction which the leaders of the new theatre movement hardly envisaged and for the most part either disregarded or despised. There is one stage today on which all the theatres arts unite in happy combination to produce theatre that is sheer, ample and without inner tension or quarrel. I refer again to the musical stage, to such natural triumphs of the American theatre imagination as *Lady in the Dark* and *Oklahoma!* Grant that these are not Shakespeare nor Euripides nor Dante. But they come close to being Aristophanes or Molière. Increasingly they approach opera. And they are our own, genuine outpourings of the American temperament, honest mirrorings of what we are. An age can not fight itself. It has to make what theatre it can, to find fullness

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where fullness for it lies. It is no fault that we love to dance, to make music, to joke and to cultivate the sensual. The future will not think the less of us if our theatre history leads from vaudeville and burlesque to musical play and eventually opera.

3. There can be no quarrel with the principle that drama *should* give expression and meaning to the central problems and the serious ideals of contemporary life. But there is a hidden premise here, an implication that cannot be taken for granted. Suppose that the impulse to make drama is thin and feeble. Suppose that for some reason or other playwriting is not a natural and comfortable medium in which a given age or people may work, so that it fails to attract and challenge the greater talents. These are the considerations that force themselves to the fore as one surveys the past twenty-five years of American playwriting in its more serious aspects.

That period brought forth one great and, I'm afraid, badly thwarted genius, Eugene O'Neill. It is a genuine question whether he might not have done better on the whole in some other medium, the novel, for example. It produced one natural and happy form of play, the farce-comedy: *The Man Who Came to Dinner* and *Arsenic and Old Lace* will do as examples. But of the host of psychological and social and political studies *dramatized* for the stage, not half a dozen seem to me to have any chance of surviving long after their day. The attempts at revival are conclusive here, as is the very indifference the stage feels towards their resurrection.

There is something radically wrong here, something which I think can not be blamed on the mechanics of theatre production, defeating as they are. It is all right to say that the theatre refuses to take risks, that it gives the young playwright no chance. But I have read, or heard from trusted critics of, the plays which enter the lists of play contests. Say what you will, it is a fact that the American imagination is not at home in the medium of the drama. Plays are written yearly by the thousands—why, only God knows. My guess is that for twenty-five years or more Americans have been playstruck, hypnotized by a formal tradition or myth of play-making, persuaded that the stage was a confessional to which they might bring their troubles. It is perfectly conceivable that there may be a widespread desire to *dramatize* an experience or a problem without any native urge towards drama or feeling

for the medium. It does not surprise me at all that at least one of our foremost playwrights has confessed in public print that he didn't want to write plays, that he never thought he had any particular genius for it, that he was successful merely because he had learned the tricks of the trade, and that he continued because he could make money at it. A reprehensible confession, I suppose, and it could furnish the point for departure for an indictment of our entire civilization. But the indictment would be false. For it is just as reprehensible and spiritually more dangerous to have thousands of talents trying to force themselves against the temper of their age into a medium that will not yield itself to any forcing at all.

Serious drama, I surmise, is not an American art. It has never been. We have no tradition of playwriting on the deeper things of life. We have no soundly established system of repertory by which the American imagination might feed on the literature of drama. And the demand for a repertory theatre of this sort comes only from that exceedingly small segment of America's 130,000,000 people who have known Europe's theatre at first hand or have gone to college and been caught up in the drama departments. To expect great, living playwriting on this base is to ask the impossible. We shall have to wait, I think, until we get a couple generations of play-going comparable to the half-century of attendance on great music which is just now beginning to produce serious composing by an American generation ready for it.

4. This brings me at last to the effort to decentralize the theatre which has produced our present subsidized stage. The effort may best be described as a limited success. Theatres have been set up in communities all over the land. They have found a reasonably large and stable audience within definitely circumscribed boundaries. For they have not taken theatre into the population at large as, for example, music-making and dance-making has been spread throughout the entire generation of the young by the jazz band. With all its professionalism, the subsidized theatre remains for the most part an academic pursuit. Its regionalism, and especially its playwriting, continues to smack of research into local color, the conscious effort to *dramatize* interesting material. It *seeks* stories to dramatize. But if the playwriting impulse were natural and not induced, if it really grew from the soil, if the age genuinely demanded it, the playwright would not have to look for stories for his plays.

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Shakespeare was not conscious of playing playwright to his age, or any region or class thereof.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the subsidized theatre, much against its own professed convictions and creed, has had to rely upon Broadway for the plays which, on the whole, keep it going. Nor is it surprising that it has added so little of creative worth to the American stream of theatre. If it has neglected the musical theatre, it is because it honestly had no idea how to handle it, no point of contact or genuine interest in that vulgar theatre from which all great dramatic literature has sprung. What its future is to be, other than conserving the institution it has so successfully set up, I am unable to prophesy.

The central thesis of this paper has been that the American energy for imaginative and artistic creation has pretty well by-passed the serious drama. In support of this thesis, one final line of evidence may be suggested. The students of aesthetics in the United States have added some by no means inconsiderable contributions to the body of aesthetic doctrine. But this contribution has been made with an almost entire disregard of the drama. Only an examination of the literature itself can show how little American writers in aesthetics know of the theatre or how unaware they are of that limitation. Part of the indifference can, I suppose, be attributed to a general tendency to neglect the auditory or time arts for the visual and spatial arts. The latter are more accessible to continuous study, or were until the invention of the phonograph, the radio and the sound track. And, with the art of the written page, they are easier to analyze. But beyond that, the neglect demonstrates the insignificant position which drama actually occupies in our present American culture. The professors of aesthetics do know that the film exists and they are taking it into account. But, aside from an occasional reference to Shakespeare or Molière or Ibsen, and the necessity of taking Aristotle's *Poetics* into account, the drama might as well not be, or have been, at all. Even aestheticians study what is important for the age to be studied. Or am I mistaken?

In conclusion, the war may make a difference. Through the efforts of the professional theatre, that portion of the population which is in the armed forces is discovering the existence and the pull of "live" theatre. They like it. Whether they come to like it enough to demand it when they return is another question. The soldiers also write plays, and enter

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them in contests. The plays, however, are just as bad as one might expect, so hope thins out again. For all one can see now, America's musical theatre has a rich and expanding future ahead of it. But drama will remain a subsidiary, thin and relatively unimportant art.

The Role of Architecture In Future Civilization

PAUL ZUCKER

I

THE function of architecture as an element of any future comprehensive civilization will be determined to a much greater degree by the attitude of those who look at and walk through the buildings than by that of those who design and construct them. In other words, the relationship between the "producer" and the "consumer" of architectural values will be defined rather by the consumer than by the producer. The consumer, the general public, will decide precisely what it is going to consume, whether for them the architectural values are primarily of a technical, an aesthetic, or a social character.

It is the decisive difference between painting and sculpture on the one hand and architecture on the other, that the first two can be approached only aesthetically while works of architecture can be evaluated also from the technical and social point of view.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the general approach to architecture was primarily an aesthetic one, even though we may not appreciate today the artistic principles, direction, and taste of those generations. During the twentieth century, until the outbreak of World War II, the approach was primarily a technical one, mainly directed at first by the interest in construction, later by attempts to find a combination of technical and aesthetic aspects under the heading of "functionalism." It may be expected that in the decades to come the social point of view will advance farther into the foreground and that the problem of *what* to build will supersede the problem of *how* to build.

The fact that these three different approaches are possible, and

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that architecture since the beginning of the twentieth century has been without any doubt inseparably interwoven with engineering, does not alter the basic fact that architecture is and will remain a branch of the plastic arts. The main problem in educating the creative architect, and even more the public, seems to lie in making them aware of this place of architecture in civilization. This does not, of course, mean that the technical and social presuppositions of architecture and their influence upon the individual work of art can be forgotten. Thus, in the humanistic conception, architecture occupies a place between the fine arts and the liberal arts.

Any prognosis on the rôle of architecture in post-war society must take into consideration its development in this country during the past hundred years. A brief survey will show how different American eclecticism between 1830 and 1880 was from European eclecticism during the corresponding period. In Europe, the classical period was followed by a Gothic revival, which, in all its nationally differentiated nuances, was brought about by the influence of the Romantic movement in literature and philosophy. The succeeding period of Renaissance imitation, supplanted after about 1890 by a recapitulation of Baroque forms, was not stimulated by any general literary or intellectual movement. It was based on a rather arbitrary change of visual taste, supported by the continuous tradition of the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

In this country, the Greek revival lasted much longer¹, up to the Civil War and even, with some modifications, into the twentieth century. The Gothic influence was confined to very specific tasks, principally religious and educational buildings, in which it has maintained itself down to the present. Even some commercial buildings were erected in Gothic forms, as late as the first two decades of the twentieth century.

II

While in Europe the various recapitulations of earlier periods relieved each other successively in this country the styles of the past, in more or less modified form, were used concurrently. The break-through around 1890 of a definitely modern American architecture, advanced

¹ Talbot Hamilton, *Greek Revival Architecture in America*, New York, 1944

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by the so-called Chicago school under the leadership of Louis Sullivan² and his pupil, Frank Lloyd Wright,³ was not enough to eliminate the eclectic tendencies. Although the great commercial buildings in Chicago by Louis Sullivan, Adler and Sullivan, Burnham and Root (Monadnock Block) and some buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright already showed clear traces of the developing functional school, Chicago's World's Fair of 1893 unfortunately swept a new vogue of eclecticism into the focus of popular interest.

The "Imperial Façade," as it was later called by Lewis Mumford, attempted to reach in its structures, different as their functions may have been, a compromise between Roman architecture in Parisian coloring (Ecole des Beaux Arts) and the practical needs of a growing economy.¹ It was a compromise made almost entirely at the cost of the latter. A standardized style of pseudo-monumental architecture developed, used variously for railroad stations, court houses, state capitols, libraries, and private residences.² Objectively it must be stated that from the point of view of these "period architects" the elementary architectural feeling for space and detail (at least that of McKim) was a subtle one. The preference for this "representative" borrowed style was so general that the movement initiated by Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright died quietly away. Today it is considered the beginning of modern functionalism, although it was actually more a

² Louis H. Sullivan, *What is Architecture?*, The Craftsman, 1906

Louis H. Sullivan, *Autobiography of an Idea*, New York, 1924

³ Frank Lloyd Wright, *Modern Architecture*, Princeton, 1931

Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*, New York, 1932

¹ Paul Starret, *Changing the Skyline*, New York, 1938, shows clearly the practical, economic approach of the business world which bestowed the commissions.

² To mention a few examples: the Public Library, Detroit, Mich.; the Customs House, New York City; and the Supreme Court Building, Washington, D. C. (Cass Gilbert 1859-1934); State Capitol, Madison, Wis. (George B. Post, 1838-1913); Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D. C. (Henry Bacon, 1866-1924); the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, the General Post Office, the Morgan Library and Columbia University in New York City (Charles F. McKim, 1847-1909); Museum of Art, Baltimore, Md.; and Jefferson Memorial, Washington, D. C. (John Russell Pope).

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kind of purifying materialism,¹ primitive in its way, but a necessary step toward overcoming the eclectic historicism of this generation.

Even Dankmar Adler (1844-1900), generally a faithful follower of his partner, Louis Sullivan, admitted, however, that the materialistic architecture built upon Sullivan's credo "form follows function," was somewhat more scientific, but as trite and as devoid of creative impulse as the architecture founded on the principle "form follows historical precedent," as practiced by McKim and his school.²

It was only after the First World War that a start was made toward overcoming the schism between architecture and technology.³ Stimulated on the one hand by works of Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright and on the other by the functionalistic schools of Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany,⁴ something very like a revolutionary elemental trend came into existence.

This trend approached architectural problems from an angle very different from that of Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. It expressed itself first and most forcefully not in monumental structures and elegant private estates, which had long been considered the main task of architecture, but in entirely different realms. It was engineering that gave the new movement its strongest stimulus, since in that field functionalism was a matter of course. Thus industrial architecture—(Albert Kahn's long series of industrial plants for Henry Ford and various corporations); bridges (George Washington Bridge and Whitestone Bridge, New York City; Golden Gate and Oakland Bay Bridges, San Francisco, Calif., and many others); dams (Tennessee Valley Authority structures, Boulder Dam, etc.)—was the first document of a new architecture which immediately evoked public appreciation. Here the revived principles of Louis Sullivan and Frank Wright found an actual artistic expression which went far beyond mere materialistic functionalism.

The influence of these predominantly technical structures was so strong that in other fields, too, which by tradition had long played with borrowed eclectic forms, the new style gradually developed. Having

¹ Alan Mather, *Functionalism and Naive Materialism in American Architecture*. *Partisan Review*, 1941

² Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, New York, 1934

³ Henry Russel Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture*, New York, 1929

⁴ N. Pevsner, *The Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, London, 1939

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learned from the engineer the condensed expression of practical needs, shorn of all superfluous decoration, the architects now went beyond the expression of mere technical consistency to achieve something entirely new.¹

The stylistic development of the tall office building, the skyscraper, kept close step with the artistic achievements of the predominantly technical structures—small wonder, since here, too, technical considerations played a major rôle. However, it was some time before the pseudo-Gothic business cathedrals, of the Woolworth building type (1913), were replaced by clear-cut, plastically articulated masses such as the Daily News (1930), the McGraw Hill (1931) buildings and Rockefeller Center (1930) in New York City; the Philadelphia Savings Bank (1933), etc.

In comparison with these structures, other types of buildings only gradually found a corresponding architectural articulation. During the 1930's individual examples of schools (such as those designed by William Lescaze and Richard J. Neutra), hospitals, reformatories, administration buildings, and post offices began to demonstrate a definitely new style based on functional principles, but going beyond that, expressed a new spatial feeling. Even the private house, though reluctantly, followed the new trend, as numerous homes in California by Wurster and other Western architects prove. Adaptation to the natural environment, and simplification of domestic life by an efficient layout, created wonderful solutions (Bear Run House, near Pittsburgh, Pa., by Frank Lloyd Wright; Crystal House, Chicago, Ill., by Fred. Keck, etc.).

In contrast to these individual solutions, the greater number of housing projects still relied, for the individual house-unit, mainly on pseudo-Romantic colonial village imitations, masterfully laid out though they were from the social, hygienic, and technical point of view.² Although some projects after 1935 marked a step in the new direction, administrative bodies on the whole were not ready to believe that the public could appreciate the simpler forms of the new architectural development.

¹ Paul Zucker, *The Humanistic Approach to Modern Architecture*. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1942

² Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing*, 1934

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So much for what has been done! Now, what of the possibilities of future development and the integration of architecture into the general pattern of future civilization?

III

Architecture in its broadest sense does not mirror a period by specific aesthetic means alone, but by its very physical existence and practical function, is itself a part of the epoch which it reflects artistically. Today, the very topic of architecture is changing and we must investigate, as said above, not only the "how" but even the "what." Structures for traffic (airports, bus terminals, highways, bridges, etc.), industrial architecture (dams, power stations, plants of all kinds), and housing projects will dominate building construction after the war. These structures certainly do not represent what former generations associated with the idea of architectural values from the aesthetic point of view. In their conception, the problems of engineering and technique would have completely overshadowed artistic considerations. Due to the experience of the functionalistic period of the last thirty years, we now take the synthesis of practical needs and artistic values as a matter of course. However, even the most artistically minded architect, the most constructively minded engineer, must now begin to conceive of his task not only in terms of form or in terms of construction but also in terms of social function.

"Social functionalism" in architecture means the consideration of social needs and social relationships, as technical functionalism takes into consideration practical needs and mechanical necessities. Both must find an architecturally truthful expression by the honest realization of their social as well as of their structural background.

Without any doubt, social changes will develop after the war. We do not yet know either their intensity, or their direction. In any case, the human element will play a much greater part than before the war. Whether we cite the Beveridge Plan in England or the various social bills now under discussion in this country, relationships—e.g. mother and child, employer and employee, working age and old age, the healthy and the sick—will become a problem the solution of which will immediately demand architectural expression. There will be new types of hospitals, of reformatories, of day nurseries, of recreation facilities,

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of shopping facilities, of old age homes, of sanitariums for the working classes, etc. These buildings will show a new architectural form, shaped by a new human conception. In other words, neither the long-ruling ambitions of monumentalization and representation, nor the newer ones of mere technical expediency, will be the decisive factors, but the articulation of human life in its social relations.

Are the social planners ahead of the architects, or do they lag behind? Will the industrialization of the building process (prefabrication) mechanize architectural forms? Or will specific spatial feelings, subconsciously existent in a generation, express themselves in using these new techniques and materials? Will the changing pattern of society create a primarily collective type of shelter? Will there be, in the future world, room for individual creative inventiveness? Immediately the interdependence of all these problems with the more complex topic of general city and regional planning becomes obvious.

In a great and ever increasing segment of industry, *planning* has been a matter of course throughout the last thirty years. There the stimulus for planning, however, was competition and an economic attempt to regulate production, distribution, and consumption. Here the primary impulse is a social one, with the technical and aesthetic betterment as secondary results, byproducts. This difference in the primary motive may perhaps explain the resistance of the so-called "realists" to applying a method used so widely in other realms of production to the business of providing shelter, working space, recreation and spiritual uplift.

It is necessary here to protest energetically against one method of evading the issue, fostered by so many articles in popular magazines today, about the "house of to-morrow," the "city of to-morrow." There are very powerful vested interests more concerned in marketing a particular commodity than in promoting a really essential change. It is not the improvement of hundreds of small gadgets for kitchen, bathroom and garage, not the reduction in price of electrical home equipment and wall papers, indirectly made possible through the technical development of war industries, that will create the new form and the new standard of living. However enjoyable these non-essentials may be, however much they may ornament the daily routine, they can never change the integrated texture of life. Not the *facts* but the *values* must

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be enriched and improved, the technical means being solely instrumental, in our very life as well as in our architecture.

The new style, as the history of the last three decades proves, will not be found through mere functionalism. Although this functionalism eliminated the worst mistakes of a feeble, oscillating eclectic "taste," it completely lacked emotional warmth. Architectural expression indeed assimilated the new technical possibilities of construction and material, but in doing so, succeeded aesthetically only where function was the sole content of the artistic task, as in industrial architecture. It failed where the content was primarily a human one, as in the private house, the settlement, the public building. Here only the expression of human feelings can create convincing forms which in their oneness carry style beyond functional truthfulness. Art does not merely state facts, it ennobles them! So does architecture. Thus the banal consistency of the monotonous, run-of-the-mill "modernistic style," the so-called "new tradition" is no better and no worse than any fashion of eclecticism of the nineteenth century, and must be overcome by the emotional impact of creative individuality.

It would be utterly ridiculous to prophesy the kind of architecture that will be created. We may only assume that it will not indulge in any formal details, but will be much more concerned with the articulation of large spatial organisms, of which the single building-unit will be just one element. Functional solution of all practical needs being taken for granted, the aesthetic problem will be primarily the organization of space and volume, the adaptation of forms to the perception of quick moving masses, and the expression of social integration of the respective communities. This may sound very general. But it would be premature to base a more definite prognosis on any architectural solution already in existence. In speaking of creative individuality, however, we are fully aware that this individuality will never be entirely independent. The organization of the highly integrated complex of technical, social and artistic problems which a modern building or group of buildings necessarily represents, can be achieved only by teamwork.

No single personality, not even one specific group of people, either of architects, of contractors, of engineers, of administrators, or of big business heads, will be able to create independently the prototype of any future architecture. It is teamwork that is essential, less self-expression

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and more interest in the life we live together and in the work we do together. Social orientation must balance functional expression.

The anonymous evolution of society need not be merely expressed, but can even be influenced, by architectural city and regional planning. This may sound like a truism, but it is not, since cause and effect are continuously confused in this realm. Genuine spiritual support can be given to a vigorous and dynamic community whose size and scale are defined by the growth and direction of human needs. But there is one condition: the job of building that lies before us must become widely recognized and tangible as a *combination* of technical, social, and truly spiritual tasks. The avalanche composed of technical cause and social effect, of social effect and spiritual influence, of spiritual influence and creative expression, will, when it begins to move, develop an attraction and momentum of its own. The threefold objective of all building will be realized when we grasp the influential educational power of the environment we create; in the words of Winston Churchill, "We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."

The Art of the Movies in American Life

MILTON S. FOX

AN appraisal of recent significant developments in the art of the movies, and a statement of the implications of these developments, as requested by the editors of this Journal, offer some difficulties which are not present where the more traditional arts are concerned. As compared with these older arts—painting, architecture, music and so on—one can hardly speak of recent developments, for the whole craft of movie-making is comparatively new; and there is still some question with many whether we may properly call it an art, rather than the portent of an art.

The difficulty, in any serious discussion of the movies, arises mainly from the fact that the field has grown so vast, and certain obtrusive complications make it almost impossible to localize clearly the aspects which will come under discussion. Ordinarily, generalizations about the films rest on what is seen at random at the corner theatre. Yet even so, these generalizations fail to distinguish between what is valid for the photoplay, and what for the drawn film or the occasional "abstract" film; they fail to recognize that another set of generalizations is required for the newsreel and other forms of "informational" pictures. Some generalizations, again, may be apropos with regards to adult criteria, but inadequate in relation to children.

However that may be, it should be evident that the movies cannot be shrugged off by students of society or of the arts. The familiar easy patronage, the smug and snobbish indulgence, have become boring (a vestige of the ancient Menckonian contempt for the "boobocracy"); and far from revealing a cultural or intellectual superiority, may show merely a basic stupidity or a regrettable ignorance. For, to put it briefly, the motion picture is one of the greatest of social actualities today, and an artistic promise whose greatness and scope are at present only glimpsed. Self-righteous contempt may be regarded as knowledgeable in some quarters, but more often it is only a comic and dated affectation.

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The motion pictures are a form of artistic expression, say what you will; they are "big business", in every sense of that term; they are a powerful educational force, despite their avowed function of entertainment; they mold public thought and form behavior patterns; and they are the happy land for millions upon millions. More directly and immediately than the other forms of artistic expression, the movies are a social phenomenon, closely reflecting, and conditioned by, the events, whims, and particularities of everyday living. Their origin is purely mercenary, their function almost purely distraction, their character determined by mass approval.

While sometimes details or whole sequences are of an artistic excellence so great as to be breath-taking, it is no news to anybody (except some zealots within the industry) that a major proportion of movies turn out to be pretty simple-minded, when considered as artistic totalities. With a perversity that smacks of genius the machines turn out trivialities, no matter how glorious the material, or how great the talent, which is fed into the hoppers.

Nevertheless, easy categorical judgments are not warranted. The Hollywood movie industry has an enormously important function in the American scene, and this function, all things considered, it performs creditably. If fault is to be found, it lies not with any one isolated component of the American economy, such as the movie industry, but with our civilization itself; Hollywood films cannot be discussed outside that context. Evidently these films minister to a great need in our people; for that matter, the common man everywhere. Millions go to see pictures every week, not merely because they have nothing else to do, but because the movies satisfy, in many ways, needs and yearnings which appear to border on the obsessional. If our time induced other needs, or offered other satisfactions to present needs, it is possible that people would not swarm to the box-offices; or, at the very least, they would demand other kinds of movie attraction.

The movie industry consistently maintains that its major function is to entertain; it prides itself especially upon the fact that it supplies, and has supplied, what it calls "dreams", to millions.* However contemptuous sophisticates may be, millions the world over apparently

* See Will H. Hays, *See and Hear*, 1929; and his annual reports.

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crave these "dreams"; and we can hardly quarrel with this, for these "dreams" are exactly those which are the stuff of countless legends, fables, fairy-tales, and much folk-lore: the cinderella story, the innumerable homilies dealing with honesty and personal integrity, the story of the little man pitted against towering forces, and the prince who wins his true love; as in these, virtue and wit always triumph (though the way is often rocky), evil always (or almost always) gets it in the neck and the poor but honest son of toil reaps his rewards, here as well as, presumably, elsewhere. In this day, materialistic and opportunistic as it is, brutal under the contradictions caused by great knowledge and small ambitions—in this day, of all times, we should not expect that "dreams" should have lost their fascination. Where else can the little man find respite from the scepticism of our age, from all the frustration, pettiness, demagoguery, to which he is subjected?

The movies must be understood as an important commodity of everyday life, satisfying a clearly defined need. They are supplied by enormous manufacturing establishments in much the same way as any other commodity: we speak of "the motion picture industry". It was inevitable in the 20th century pattern of civilization that the movies should have become big business; and since great financial risks are taken, they must be made to pay off handsomely. Each picture, therefore, must prove attractive to millions, with something for young and old, for the fool and for the not-so-foolish, funny at times and then consummately heart-breaking, never difficult or obscure, and ranging the full gamut of vicarious gratification.

Whenever a need is sensed, a product is developed which will meet that need; "educational" campaigns will be launched to create an almost neurotic desire for the newest variety of the product; and the product will be "improved" from time to time, so that complete satiation is never had. Thus the various manufacturers of movies have the same basic intentions and the same surrounding circumstances. Like all established and "reputable" manufacturers, they supply as good a product as they can (within certain judicious limits), constantly seeking for improvements of the sort which make their product seem more desirable than that of their competitors, yet seldom venturing out of the well-worn grooves of public cognizance. But primarily, the product must yield profits.

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Another consequence which follows relates to distribution and exhibition. The big studios, through ownership of vast chains of theatres, film-booking arrangements, ownership of patents, and interests in the manufacture of the raw materials of the craft, have made it extremely difficult for small unaffiliated producers to achieve the slick standards of the industry's movies, to which we have grown accustomed, and all but impossible to exhibit their films commercially. Venturesome spirits who dare these realities are usually sadder, if not always wiser, after the encounter. And the situation may very well become even tighter after the war, for giant combines are now under discussion to produce for "the markets of the world"; and the film industry is said to be planning "its own diplomatic representation" in foreign capitals.*

The implications of all this emerge when the production of movies is compared with production in the other arts. The creators of painting, poetry, and music, generally speaking, regard their art as the outward manifestation of the impulses of their own intuitions and imaginations, and the interplay of these with a greater or lesser degree of intellectual discipline, and the discipline of the materials which they use. Architects and dramatists are perhaps less exclusively motivated by inner promptings: they are more subject to the requirements of patron, materials, codes, and regulations. Nevertheless, in the traditional arts (one assumes) the artistic eye is not cocked primarily on the jackpot. The artist creates something, and hopes, consciously or unconsciously, that approbation in some form will be forthcoming from some quarter at some time. Whether he would create or not if he were certain that nobody would ever see or hear his efforts is a question; possibly he would not. But it is probable that the original conscious impulsion to create works of art in our time is not solely, or primarily, to be found in the awareness that a given work will be seen, or heard. The artist seems tacitly to assume that some of his works will be seen—somehow, by somebody—but this is not ordinarily the immediate or foremost reason, in his consideration of the work, for having produced it.

In the movies, however, the primary determining circumstance is the market. Does the thing have possibilities? Which means, can we make a presentable picture—which will show a nice profit? What will

* The Hollywood Reporter, March 2, 1944.

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the public want to see some months hence (since a good deal of time necessarily elapses between the decision to make a picture, and its appearance on the screens of the nation)? Will the thing suit the stars, writers, directors, technicians under contract? What will censorship, headline-hunting congressmen, and various hawk-eyed pressure groups have to say? And so on.* All further activity rests on the answer to these questions.

There is no need to be ungenerous: some producers have been genuinely concerned with bringing socially desirable messages to the screen, or works of unquestionable artistic merit, or in providing entertainment on something like an adult level. Still, common sense dictates that investments running into hundreds of thousands of dollars be safeguarded; whatever else the producer has in mind, he must show a profit, and he must not put the welfare of the industry in jeopardy. These considerations have undisputed primacy. No other art suffers such throttling restrictions. This is the situation from which arises the over-all similarity in the product of the Hollywood studios.

In the art of painting, by contrast, there are thousands of individual producers, their work "slanted" towards highly selective audiences; and while they readily fall into certain groupings due to psychological, aesthetic, ideological, environmental, or other circumstances, there is not a comparable over-all uniformity of product. But in the movies, for all that a director like Hitchcock differs from some obscure director of quickies, and the productions of MGM from some fly-by-night adventurer, there is less fundamental difference between their final productions on the screen than there is, say, between surrealist and abstract painters, or, in poetry, between E. E. Cummings and Edgar Guest.

The movies are not, in the sense that the other arts are, a "free" art; any discussion of them which fails to take this into account is unsound. Other patronage and other circumstances of production

* Albert Lewin, who brought to the screen "The Guardsman", "Mutiny on the Bounty", "Moon and Sixpence" and now directing "The Picture of Dorian Gray", entertainingly details the woes of the producer in his article, "Peccavi: The True Confessions of a Movie Producer", in *Theatre Arts Magazine*, September, 1941. See also Leo Rosten's burlesque in *Hollywood: The Movie Makers, The Movie Colony*, Harcourt, Brace, 1941.

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would yield other types of movies. Or, put in another way: the present familiar form and character of the movies must be seen as only provisional.

Now, most adult Americans have seen only Hollywood films. They have seen relatively few films which have radically different artistic intentions than the familiar commercial movie (e.g., documentaries, educational, avant-garde, or experimental films), or at least have seen them so infrequently that they seem mere novelties; and they have seen few films of any sort, of non-Hollywood origin. *The movies* means Hollywood's popular commercial product; for years—ever since our very first experiences with films—our notions of what movies are have been formed by the movie fare upon which we have been nourished. There is no question here, at the moment, of better or worse than something else, but merely an emphasis upon the fact that our knowledge of the film—and therefore our judgments of film value—spring in the main from the only sort of films most of us have ever known. We forget, or (never having seen any) ignore, that there are other kinds of movies, and other possibilities.

The main stream of movie-making is, of course, the Hollywood tradition. To be realistic we must speak primarily of it; we speak of what actually happens in a great majority of cases; then of what happens occasionally, or of what happens outside the main stream; and then of what might happen.

The motion picture is the only vehicle for artistic expression developed by our age. Its short history has been frantic, tawdry, and fitful. At first the mere fact of animated images, true to the life, was so fascinating that the camera was pointed at anything and everything, as though to affirm that the miracle was really here to stay. The spirit of the peep-show and the penny arcade prevailed, and at the very outset this earned for the moving picture the contempt of all save those who were satisfied to find their recreation in the carnival.

But while the camera was tastelessly yielding up this modern book of wonders, there were a few who began to exploit the potentialities of the craft. Edwin Porter and others began to develop planned activities; George Méliés, in France, and Robert W. Paul, in England, experimented (and how brilliantly) with fantastic goings-on in fantastic settings; D. W. Griffith worked out some crucial techniques; and count-

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less films appeared which were built around some newly discovered technical peculiarity or quirk.

The early days—say, before the end of the World War I—may be regarded as mainly exploratory: what is the craft capable of? Purely, and excessively, physical action was the major type of motion picture subject matter, and many an otherwise stupid picture was a fascinating play of almost pure (in the sense of unadulterated by “meaning”) movement, in much the same way as the cubists, sometimes the futurists, and later the neo-plasticist and constructivist painters presented us with canvases ostensibly stripped of all “meaning” save that conveyed by the rapport of shapes and the play of colors and textures. They were, in short, completely visual arrangements; accordingly, action was entirely pantomime.

But soon enough the narrational function of the new craft predominated all else, partly because the movies came to be regarded as the rival of the legitimate stage, but mainly because everybody craves fictions of some sort. The movies became primarily a new way of telling stories, and it is with the stage and the novel that the popular commercial film has come to have its greatest affinities, in its essential aims. The *per se* value, as pictorial imagery, is only incidental. The pictures must never leave in doubt what is happening on the screen (save in those instances where a suspension of clarity is willingly granted in order to heighten the mystery of a plot). But it is nevertheless a development of plot in terms which can be—with some loss, to be sure—transposed into the field of writing. This point may be sharpened by reference to a new book, “20 Best Film Plays”, edited by John Gassner and Dudley Nichols. In his introductory essay, Mr. Gassner frankly states that only those scripts which could be read as literature were amongst the candidates for inclusion in the book, and that consideration of documentaries was necessarily limited because the scripts were unsatisfactory reading; similarly, the animated and other pictures were eliminated altogether, since they existed only visually, and would not make even a good hodge-podge in words.

The fact is that this new art-form is completely *sui generis*. And yet it may be regarded as fitting nicely into the long history of image-making. Other times and other places have given predominance to the dance, the spectacle, the fetish; to pictography, continuous narrative

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images, or the single still picture; to stone, stained glass, mosaic, fresco, oil painting, as principal medium. The motion picture, in this view, is merely the most recent stage of, and newest technique for, imparting information, inducing states of feeling, or beguiling the eye, through the use of images and visual symbols. One root goes back to the basis of all communication, where gestures, movements, and objects, directly confronted, were used to convey meaning or to induce states of feeling; and another goes straight back to the beginnings of writing and the pictorial arts—to pictography and ideography.

Though visual-arts-in-time have existed before, they have been most rudimentary as compared with the movies; and indeed, offer no genuine parallel. Amongst them may be mentioned oriental scroll painting, continuous narrative frescoes and bas-relief, shadow plays, colored puppets of the East, and assorted novelties; related in various ways are the dance, stage and spectacle, the music-drama. But it remained for modern technology to provide the vehicle for this new art-form; and for the first time in history a true and full-bodied visual-art-in-time is possible. Moreover, the work is recorded in such a way that identical repetitions of the artist's intentions may be had at any time.

At the risk of oversimplifying, it may be said that the crux of the art of the motion picture lies in the unprecedented flexibility of the movie camera as a graphic instrument, and in the potentialities inherent in the juxtaposition of strips of images. From these two factors—the nature of the drawn or photographed images (their identity, lighting, action, composition, position relative to the camera, and so on), and their assemblage in series, arises the artistic form of the movies. Through these the motion picture takes its place as one of the greatest and most sensitive of mediums for artistic expression.

Hollywood has pioneered in many of the developments of technique which make it possible to speak of a motion picture art. The industry has supplied us with the close-up, the various transitional devices—fade, wipe, dissolve, etc., and with an amazing development in the drawn film (often exemplifying the purest of movie form in the unadulterated synchronization of sound and image patterns), and many others. On the mechanical side, the improvements and innovations are sheer genius. In the realms of trick photography (which has an ancient lineage in

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the annals of the movie), and of so-called special effects—both categories inherent in movie technique—the industry has been inventive to an astonishing degree.

However, as has already been pointed out, this arsenal of artistic means finds only a partial and circumscribed use. We have the paradox of a great art in search of the artist. Again, let me emphasize that there is no intention here to belittle the Hollywood output. Of necessity it is directed to the audience which finds satisfaction in the literature appearing in our weekly magazines and pulps. And so the movies employ all the wily arts of that other agency of appeal to the mass-mind, advertising: the same slick but artistically valueless lighting; the chic and “allure”; the glib and smart-alec manners; the monotonous prettiness; color that is strident and relentless; and (especially in the cartoon film) an abortive “cuteness”; above all, the notion that entertainment means a constant din and frantic fidgeting about in the belief that this constitutes action, and that without physical action there is only monotony. “The films”, said Alfred Hitchcock, “suffer from their own power of appealing to millions. They could often be subtler than they are, but their popularity won't let them . . . on the whole nowadays I try to tell a story in the simplest possible way, so that I can feel sure it will hold the attention of any audience and won't puzzle them.”

Yet it can hardly be denied that the better-than-average Hollywood film is much better than the type of literature just mentioned. As a matter of fact, the industry's output compares very favorably with the production in any of the arts in recent years, if one excludes the top artists. This may sound like a careless statement; yet one has but to recall the acres of routine and uninspired canvases we see in exhibitions, the dreary symphonic compositions, the hackneyed yarns, and the fatuous plays.

If the form of the average commercial film is determined by strictly narrational needs alone, developing the story only within the limits of obvious physical action, amply reinforced expository dialogue; if it follows too often the manner of a stage presentation; it has also exploited many a uniquely cinematic procedure. Hollywood has evolved a polished syntax, smoothly carrying us along from sequence to sequence; a direct frontal attack which moves speedily forward to the final resolution—a kiss, a shot of hero and heroine against the sky, or some

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sanctimonious situation, complete with celestial chorus. The fast cutting on action keeps us on the *qui vive* throughout the picture. Just to make sure, the momentum of the picture is periodically interrupted to present fashion shows, specialty acts, Tschaikovsky's music, ladies undressing, and yet other wonders.

One laments the infrequency of great images or image-sequences, arising from great use of a magnificent artistic vehicle: great use of camera, lighting, composition, to make of the shot a veritable ideograph; apt and expressive image-material, no matter what its identity; a feeling for development of screen pattern in time; dialogue, music, and sound closely integrated with the image patterns; color expressive, determined primarily by the needs of the film rather than by pedestrian actualities. There have been many patches of greatness in Hollywood photoplays, moments when fulness of medium and greatness of conception coalesce. But it has been more often in certain European films, in some independently produced and experimental films, in numerous documentaries, and in the cartoon film occasionally, that we get something of the real stature of the movies.

One looks for the maturation of this art in the works of smaller producers who somehow will escape the thrall to big business. There is a growing movement in Hollywood itself toward independent production: the producer makes only a few pictures a year, perhaps one or two, and chooses only such stories as interest him;* his films are released through the larger companies. He recruits his staff and workers from the field, and since he has not a tremendous overhead in the form of plant, contracts with stars, and so on, he is not constrained to keep the wheels turning merely to exploit his costly properties. But beyond this, it seems certain that in the early post-war period we will see the emergence of small producers completely independent of Hollywood and the industry.

In recent years, there has been an increasing demand for pictures on an adult level. While the industry has tried to offer something for everybody, too often our expectations have been bitterly frustrated: stories are bowdlerized, characters cheapened and softened, tinsel

* The "Voice in the Wind", by Arthur Ripley and Rudolph Monter, announced for early release as this goes to press, is an example.

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bits of business are introduced, plots "jazzed up", and the potentialities of the medium ignored.

But a growing section of the film-going public is asking for better films, and in this way, for further development of the art. The present movies themselves are obliquely responsible, in part, for this. When Hollywood films a literary classic, libraries all over the country are swamped with requests for the original. The movies thus serve to stimulate good reading (which is exactly the opposite of what its detractors assert); at the same time it cannot be lost upon all readers how far short the film has fallen (as they unfortunately persist in doing) of the true spirit and meaning of the books. Reports indicate that many of our soldiers in far places have become fed up with Hollywood's renderings of the problems of life. There is a growing attendance at showings of historic films, of films of unusual quality or style, and of films showing a fresh approach to familiar material. But perhaps the best sign is the growing body of craftsmen and technicians within the industry itself, who feel that their capabilities and enthusiasm are deliberately spurned in favor of the easy and the proven.*

Many of the foremost workers in the field have received a pretty free hand from the Government and the armed services in the making of films for training, indoctrination, and propaganda. They have had totally new problems and aims; they are having valuable experience with new techniques and methods. There can be little question that this will lead to great enrichment of their work in the post-war period, and to dissatisfaction with routine picture-making. At the same time, plans are now being made in various quarters for what might be described as a "little theatre movement" for films: a chain of small houses which will offer select programs of films old and new, but primarily of new films, designed for a mature audience. We will probably see further specialization in other respects: the time seems to have arrived when films especially for children will be made, perhaps for two or three broad age-groupings. Distribution of these may be made through existing theatres, on special children's programs; but more likely we shall see their use in schools, churches, libraries, museums, and in the home.

* For example, see Rosten, *op. cit.*

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There cannot be much doubt that facilities for sound movie projection—embodied perhaps in a unit which will serve also for radio, television, and phonograph—will be a common feature in the home of the not-too-distant future. When this materializes, a new opportunity will have arisen for the movie-artist, for then he will have a mass market for his work. Another cause for optimism in this respect lies in the fact that a few public library systems have begun to collect films for lending purposes, and public school systems are doing likewise; we may expect that soon it will be as easy to borrow films as it now is to borrow books.

We may expect other developments: the short film, akin to the one-act play or the short story, has been long overdue. The vapid type of newsreel material which hounds us will have to make room for interpretive film essays (the "March of Time" may be cited as one example). We may expect also some remarkable technical developments, in color photography, and in stereoscopic cinematography. Color, as we know, is still far from luminous, and it constantly tends towards the chromo; we are told that great advances in fidelity have been made, but that they are still "military secrets". The stereoscopic film, when it materializes, may completely revolutionize our conception of the movies, the method of projection, and even the design of movie auditoriums. And, of course, comparable changes in sound will result.

Other favorable trends may be noted: We are witnessing the emergence of the screen play as another form of literature. Books on art and aesthetics now include references to, and sections on, the movies; there is a gradually growing body of critical speculation on the nature of the art; and recently, several books on the history of the movies have enjoyed a good sale. Courses in movie appreciation are now being given in many schools and colleges, and after the war we will surely see many full-fledged and independent motion picture departments in our universities. Art and craft schools will offer courses in their various departments, related to the needs of the film. On its side, the movie industry is making increasing use of outstanding artists in all fields; it already is one of the greatest patrons of the arts.

There will unquestionably be a much greater use of film in educa-

* Gassner and Nichols' book has already been mentioned.

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tion generally. The armed services have demonstrated with complete finality the tremendous efficacy of the film as a means of instruction. It has long been known that moving pictures are very effective in the classroom, but we have never had so broad an application on so vast a scale. Perhaps the advocates of the movies as an educational means tend to confuse the passive taking-on of information with learning through reasoning and judging; nevertheless, there can be no question any longer of the efficacy of the film for imparting information, or for purposes of demonstration.* On the younger age-levels, the motion picture seems an ideal core around which to assemble study units: the production of a film involves research in the particular field which will be treated; it involves the epitomizing of the material in writing, organizing its presentation in a logical manner, and the further writing of dialogue or commentary; it demands an ability to visualize, and hence stimulates developments of visual perception; art-work is necessary in the design of sets or props, or in the planning of the shooting on location; there is the photography itself, and all its ramifications in chemistry, optics, and other fields; perhaps music is to be chosen or written; and so on, bringing to a focus, in a finished and tangible shape which has its own independent value as a creation, many talents and interests. It is an ideal collaborative sort of project.

However, I feel that the use of Hollywood films, or of excerpts from them, for teaching, is a questionable procedure (except for the study of movie methods, or, judiciously, for costumes, decor, and the like). Reasons for this point of view have already been given: the values, judgments, interpretations, given by the commercial screen are in general falsely romanticized, cheaply chauvinistic, loaded with

* As this is being written, the December issue of the "Motion Picture Letter" comes to hand, quoting a Mr. T. Y. Lo, president of the China Motion Picture Corporation, of Chungking. He says, in part, "As an international medium of education the motion picture has a wider appeal than literature, a more emotional appeal than radio, and provides the easiest and speediest method of instructing the masses." Because films have great power, they will be ". . . a great factor in shaping the future . . ."; they will be used in imparting general scientific knowledge, for visual education and training purposes, and to ". . . acquaint 450 millions of [Chinese] people with the political, economic, cultural, and social affairs of the rest of the world".

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questionable social attitudes, in order not to offend any large pressure group, no matter how spurious or flatulent its doctrines.

Indeed, the very effectiveness of the screen in conveying information and shaping attitudes makes it an ideal medium for misinformation and questionable attitudes, as well as for the reverse. We have ample evidence of the ill effects which our films have had on the international scene. American pictures have been used to show that we ridicule other nationalities, that we mock our minorities, that we are addleheaded and puerile in our conception of life. The Japanese have been using our movies in the Far East to demonstrate the degeneration of democracies and the vulgarity of our ideas of what is desirable in life.

Since our movies will undoubtedly have an even greater world market after this war than ever, and since we know how influential they are in the formation of attitudes, it seems to follow that either the industry will have to exert elaborate self-regulation in this regard, or the Government will have to do so. And there we are again in the realm of censorship which, in principle, is so repugnant to most of us. Still, the right to speak for an entire nation cannot be taken lightly. Fortunately, when films are made for distribution in many nations, their makers will have to be mindful of where they tread, else they will step right on the box-office.

Business has learned the value of the film for purposes of exploitation, and from activities now being planned, we may expect to be bludgeoned into accepting all kinds of prejudiced viewpoints, and into craving more of the "amenities" than we will know how to handle. The prospect becomes the more dismaying when we dwell on the marriage of movies and television, which certainly will not be long in coming.

The motion pictures will pervade our life as never before. Its wonders make it a medium with infinite possibilities in employment, and for artistic purposes. A great flowering cannot be far away.

Music and Social Crisis

ERNST KRENEK

IN maintaining that the evolution of music is very little, or not at all, affected by social crises I do not imply that the art is dwelling in a world entirely of its own, aloof from the struggles and problems of mankind. On the contrary, art has always been highly expressive of the ideas and emotions prevailing in various phases of history, of the hopes and disappointments, the attainments and failures of man in his attempts to cope with the problems of this life. War—especially in its more recent forms—is such an all-embracing phenomenon that many conclude that it must exert an inescapable immediate impact upon so sensitive a medium of expression as art. However, the conspicuous physical violence displayed in war is not indicative of a proportional intensity of movement in the intellectual and emotional fields. It seems rather that war is a climactic discharge of tensions accumulated long before in the realm of ideas and emotions.

Looking for historical analogies, we may conveniently refer to the Napoleonic wars, a conflict in scope, size, duration and significance similar to the present one and not too far remote in time to prevent reasonable comparison of the general cultural conditions of that period with our own. The works of the greatest composer of the Napoleonic era, Beethoven, do not show any traces of the warlike events which Beethoven experienced personally, for instance during the French assaults on Vienna in 1809. Inspection of the compositions which he wrote or conceived during that turbulent period would hardly lead us to infer the existence of such experiences. It is characteristic that the one or two works to which Beethoven was ostensibly inspired by current events belong to the very few of the master's compositions that have fallen into almost complete oblivion. On the other hand, interpreting not only the general spirit of Beethoven's music, but even its intrinsic qualities, the character of the structural and technical innovations for which the evolution of our music is indebted to him, as expressive of

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the great ideological movements touched off by the French and American revolutions has become a commonly accepted notion.

Similarly, it would seem difficult to delineate the effects of World War I on the evolution of music. Superficial observers have tried to explain the bewilderment caused by certain contemporary compositions among the general public with the fact that the alleged disorderliness and confusion of this music reflects the troubled state of mind of its makers, this in turn being explained as a result of the chaotic conditions of our world. However, several of those expositions that have most strongly shocked their audiences, such as some earlier works by Schoenberg and Strawinsky, were written before 1914. It is not unlikely that some of Beethoven's contemporaries who were disturbed by his music tried a simliar explanation (although in his particular case his deafness offered a still handier means for rationalizing the shock). Just as we today do not feel any need for explaining the "chaos" in Beethoven's music by external circumstances,—for the simple reason that we do not find his music chaotic any longer—so it is entirely possible that those features in modern music which today seem to invite reference to the calamities of mankind as factors disturbing the minds of the composers may appear to later observers in no need of such explanation. Again, it is conceivable that certain general and special characteristics of our present music will be interpreted as symbols of the ideas underlying the protracted struggle in which we now are engaged. This will not come to pass, however, until sufficient time has elapsed for the issue of the struggle to become historical.

The nature of such interpretation *ex post facto* will greatly depend on the perspective in which later observers will be inclined to visualize present events, and this in turn will be a function of the set of philosophical, ethical (including political) and aesthetic values which those observers will have chosen as their frame of reference. To some extent, and particularly if not too far distant a future is taken into consideration, the selection of such normative values will be conditioned by the outcome of the present struggle. Historical experience ought to teach us extreme caution in venturing any guesses in that respect. We have become used to regarding the downfall of the old Roman empire as an event of so outstanding magnitude that we are wont to evaluate the cultural accomplishments of that period in the light of our present knowledge

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of, and attitude towards, the great military and political upheaval of the times. Had no barbarians appeared intent upon overthrowing the Roman empire, or had it withstood their onslaught, in short, had history taken a different course, our attitude would certainly be different and we would interpret the significance of late antique art in a different way than we usually do. Thus if the results of the present struggle prompt future observers to view it as the downfall of some political system or other, they will, according to the sympathies which they derive from their own grievances and aspirations with respect to either the victorious or the vanquished system, work out a suitable interpretation of the meaning of present day's art.

Truly great art, then, seems to cut across such interpretive delineation as it retains a significance over and above that alleged by historical associations. It is quite probable that Beethoven's music would exert its power of appeal over us even if Napoleon's political system had not collapsed in 1815. Hence the reason for that appeal must be found in a quality inherent in the music rather than in the circumstances attendant to its creation. This inherent quality is known as artistic perfection. It is precisely this artistic excellence that causes people to search for the significance of great music with respect to historical circumstances, and not this significance that makes the music great. The very fact that Beethoven is being ideologically claimed as a prophet by both the fighters for democracy as well as their adversaries makes it rather plain that his greatness—which obviously makes claiming him as a witness worth anybody's while—is a primary factor independent from the meaning which may be ascribed to his music in regard to any kind of particulars. Such identification falls short of its objective, for great art—its greatness being demonstrable in terms of artistic excellence—aims at universals, that is, at those intellectual and emotional concepts which are common to all human beings, no matter through what particular experience these concepts are brought out at a given historical moment.

While the effects of war on the evolution of musical creation in general may appear of secondary importance only, its ephemeral effects on musical life are undoubtedly considerable in certain respects. The position of music in public life during war time is mainly determined by two contradictory claims. On the one hand musical activities as

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a whole are considered as not immediately contributing to the war effort, which causes various more or less substantial curtailments of financial appropriations for concerts, operatic enterprises, music schools and the like. The absorption of personnel into the armed forces and into those services productive of the necessities of war acts with the same effect. On the other hand, it is claimed that music is an important factor for the maintenance of such emotional conditions as would enable those engaged in the war effort to perform their exacting assignments more smoothly and efficiently. The promotion resulting from this doctrine goes almost entirely to the various branches of entertainment music, since the great majority of those in charge of the morale-building program are—whether correctly or not is here beside the point—of the opinion that only conventional and easily assimilable types of music will exercise the desired function. More highly organized art music occasionally benefits from such a situation if composers choose to write pieces which through titles or other descriptive features allow for associations with current history; e.g., Shostakovitch's Seventh Symphony or the series of orchestral compositions now being sponsored by the League of Composers and performed by the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra. The publicity value on account of which such works are chiefly promoted is necessarily a fleeting one, for in the long run the reactions of audiences to musical compositions are conditioned by the appeal emanating from the musical substance, regardless of ever so vivid momentary connotations of subject matter. For the rest, in the practice of art music, too, a trend toward the conventional and even the cheap can be observed as a result of war, not so much because the public actually shows an increased predilection for the unproblematical, but rather because the administrators of public performances in view of their various difficulties want to reduce their risks to the unavoidable minimum and assume that it would be wise not to expect more than a fairly low level of receptive capacity on the part of their audiences. In all the respects discussed here the war has not brought about any changes of basic attitudes, but rather has emphasized and strengthened the tendencies prevailing in musical life during the last ten or fifteen years.

Somewhat different conditions have been described in reports from England to the effect that at least during the period of the worst air

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attacks public interest in art music had increased in an unexpected and spectacular manner. The explanation most frequently given for this phenomenon was that people under the impact of constant danger of life were liable to turn their minds to substantial spiritual values rather than to superficial entertainment. It is obvious that an equally good explanation could have been furnished if the opposite phenomenon has occurred; viz., a frenzy for frivolous entertainment music. It is hardly possible to draw any general conclusion from such reports without knowing more specifically what kind of people showed the reaction described and what their cultural backgrounds and traditions were. At any rate it would signify a more healthful relationship of art and public life if interest in serious art had not to be referred to as induced by mortal danger.

It is hard to predict anything about the role of music in the post-war world, and not only for the reason that we know very little about the probable nature of that world. Postwar conditions of life in general may or may not be noticeably different from those before the war. In the latter case there is, of course, little reason for assuming that the position of art will be essentially different from what it has been lately. If considerable changes in political and social conditions are to be visualized, it is indicated to examine what happened to art in those countries that experienced major changes after World War I. The main example in this respect is Russia. Accounts of tremendous changes in the musical set-up of that country have been profusely broadcast during the last twenty years, with particular emphasis on the fact that the number of recipients of music has increased fabulously and that music now reaches strata of the population who had never before been in contact with the art. With respect to the further evolution of music the only thing that counts is whether and how these new conditions have affected the creation of new music in the territory of the USSR. Inspection of the available examples of new Russian music makes it appear more than probable that present-day Soviet composers would write in approximately the same style as they actually do if no revolution had occurred. It could even be ventured that they might have made more significant contributions than they did, had they not been more or less cut off from permanent contact with their colleagues abroad and had not had to comply with varying tenets.

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In the countries of Central Europe the previously governing powers which were largely held responsible for the loss of the war had, at least ostensibly and for some time, fallen into disrepute. Thus the atmosphere was generally favorable for the development of progressive attitudes in the arts, public opinion being ready to acclaim anything that was different from the past. It is well known that this state of affairs did not last very long, but was after little more than ten years replaced by the most vicious forms of reaction. Again it may be said that in the final analysis the truly significant accomplishments of Central European composers during that period hardly show anything essential that they presumably would not have shown without war and revolution; the basic pattern of their evolution is traceable to the important changes in musical styles during the first decade of the century.

Past experience indicates that active interest in the arts usually increases in postwar periods, perhaps as a reaction against the stress laid on manual work, practical science and low grade entertainment during the war. In nations with highly developed cultural traditions this trend is observable even if living standards are drastically reduced as a result of war; in fact the trend may well be enhanced by such circumstances..

If the chief tenet of this discussion seems to be that by and large music develops independently from the vicissitudes of war, it does not imply that the musician is not affected by the tragic events which he witnesses. Looking back over the vast expanse of the history of his art, however, he sees himself as a link of a chain whose continuity was never broken by any of the numerous crises that mankind had to undergo. He is more sensitive to the sufferings of his fellowmen than those who administer the frightful ordeal, and his work constantly gives voice to the emotions aroused by the exasperating pain as well as to the immortal hope that one day the pain may end. Yet, the immediate and transitory causes of the undying pain can hardly trouble his equanimity as an artist, for he knows that, ultimately, nothing short of forcible extinction of his physical self and total destruction of his written work can obliterate his imprint upon the history of his art.

Poetry Today and Tomorrow

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

THERE has been a more profound change in the nature of poetry in our half of a century than ever took place in so short a time in the long history of poetry before. Not even the Romantic period can show such a revolution in this major and ancient art. The Romantic movement in Europe was a movement away from the outer to the inner man, from the urban to the wild scene, from the language of politeness to the language of zealotry, from the ideal of acceptance of an idea of progress to the ideal of revolution, politically and spiritually, from the *mores* of success. Yet with all its tremendous upheavals, the Romantic revolution fell far short of accomplishing what, more quietly and unobtrusively, poets today have done to make poetry the basic language of a changed and changing humanity, an art postulating and proving the brotherliness of men.

It amounts, this change in poetry, almost to the annihilation of the idea of poetry as a special privilege, exercised by specially endowed and dedicated, to the establishment of poetry as a universal human will and right to belief. Poetry began as a priestly function, a wardenship over human aspiration, among the Egyptians and Hebrews and Chaldeans. It continued on as the tool of the king or the hero, in *Homer* and *Beowulf*. It became the song for knights and ladies in the medieval European state, or the mysticism by subtraction in the medieval church. In the Renaissance, it became the tongue of the ambitious and newly released and richly learned ones; it built itself up out of the greatest books and song of plans for the utopian magnificence of man, of middle-class citizens, in Florence or Stratford, who were to take over the attributes and myths of the ancient conquerors and kings. In the era of the Romantic awakening, poetry preached isolationism, of the spirit and of the sense of the beautiful; Wordsworth and Coleridge and Schiller, Goethe and Byron, Shelley and Keats and Heine, proposed to save man from the politicians by the elevation of them-

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selves to a rebellious and splendid loneliness in which they could direct the plain and natural man from on high, and as from a pillar of flame. But the milder men who have made the major poetry of our time are men who have taken this old art at last out of the hands of the priest, the reformer, and even the especially cultivated man, and made it an art even the commonest citizen of the coming world of good neighbors can understand and live by.

The greatest changes in poetry have come since the beginning of our troubles as a world in World War I, in 1914, and on through the armistice which settled nothing but bridged the time till World War II. But these great changes anticipated, many of them, our present political and economic and social confusions. Kalends of change were in the air nearly a hundred years ago. There was a poet singing strongly ninety years ago and declaring, "a morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books." But few people, save Emerson and some of the Pre-Raphaelites, listened to Whitman. There was also that isolated phenomenon of a woman singing to herself, in a small New England garden, about tremendous new immediacies of truth furnished by common honey-bees and trees. But her time and her Amherst were not interested in the immediate. Poetry, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was still concerned with the aloof and the reserved and the privileged concepts of the beautiful.

It was left for the years in which the majority of us living men have lived to furnish the gentle Apocalypse which has opened our eyes to the new possibilities of poetry as an art central to common life. Good poems now are good poems because they are different from the poems of the past both in the shape they have and in the sound they make. And this change in the shape and sound of the poem is always in the direction of immediacy.

It is no wonder the Victorian poems especially seem almost archaeological to us today. They seem too long and too well worked out. They sound too poetic. The Victorian poem tells too much. The Victorian poem sings too much. It insists too emphatically upon the moral or the point. It reads like a passage from the *Psalms*. The poet of our grandfather's day does all the act of poetry; he leaves nothing for us to do. He finds all the figures and the correspondences.

Today, the poem is shaped like a blade, shaped like a bullet.

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Everything is cut down to the minimum of symmetry. It is trimmed, sinewy, spare. It is naked and stripped—what Whitman would call “athletic.” Everything is native, unenriched. There is a minimum of emotion. Today’s poem, in the shape of its idea, implies, or suggests; it is brief; and it leaves most of the singing to the reader. Much more is expected of the intelligent reader of poetry now than ever was expected of him a hundred years ago. He must do a good deal of the act of poetry himself. He must often supply the whole structure of the absolute, if he any longer demands the absolute of a poem. Unless his mind kindles, the poem will seem but sparks and no fire. Robert Frost is brief and particular. He avoids the absolute as he would preaching. You must yourself supply the universals behind his shrewd and kind commentaries on axe-helves and stiff-legged calves. He reports only stenographically upon the government of the universe. At times he takes pleasure in seeming to be against the government, like the good New England citizen at the March town-meeting. Robinson merely suggests the mighty magnificence of the Arthurian background against which he writes so eloquently and so often. The reader must remember Tennyson if he wishes to see the details of that rich tapestry. Hardy and Housman do little more than call the tune to their brief and skeptic modern psalms of life.

And if a poem now is most immediate in the shape of its idea, it is even more immediate in the sound it makes. One of the most noteworthy, if indeed not the most universal, characteristic of most good modern poetry is this: it uses the words and the rhythms of speech. It is not superior in its words to the common talker. Our poetry picks its words warm off the lips of men. Current words, speech idioms and turns of phrase. The lively, talkative preposition—the livest word in germanic languages—often insists on coming at the end of the sentence, to keep the sentence alive. Frost and Robinson talk as they think; talk to themselves, to silence or to the weather. The tongue shapes what they are thinking. Their idiom is current and local idiom common men use in common moments. Yeats grew away from the Romantic language of his youth into a crystal-clear, timeless language any man, anywhere, at any time, might speak at his best moments in loving or dying. It is an anthology of all best language. There is nothing Keatsian or precious about it, as there was about Yeats’ earlier words. A. E. Housman

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picks his clean words off men's lips, too, though it happens that the lips he chooses are the lips of four-score generations of men, speaking steadily for a thousand years such an enduring folk-language as you find in the old ballads. Housman got the life of his words, which are more inevitable than the words of Keats, from long-persisting yeomanry, exactly where he got the tough and amazingly alive events in his songs. It is the only way one can account for the paradox of this recluse's writing the most human and easy and universal songs in our language, or in any language, today. He certainly did not get his life from Manilius! Or a Cambridge common-room. Or from any other poets. He got his poems where poems grow—on the lips of venomous and turbulent and generous people. That is why his poems seem to happen without the singer's volition. Folk-talk is the talk of the twentieth-century knight, Miniver Cheevy, and of the twentieth-century Homer men, Isaac and Archibald, in Edwin Arlington Robinson. Our poems are speech, the most immediate of language forms, as poems never were till now. In that fact rests, in a great measure, their astonishing immediacy.

Some of the changes in the shape and sound of poems of our time were very conscious and deliberate changes, even more so than was the case in 1800. Many poets deliberately broke with all the traditions of the past, the good with the bad, to accomplish the immediate. Some experimented for the sake of revolution itself, for mere experiment's sake. Some tried to say only the new things about our new ways of life. No great poetry can afford to do only that. Amy Lowell and her Imagists tried to reverse the relationship of idea and image and exalt the image at the expense of the idea. The result was lovely fragments. Fragments of objects of art are eloquent; but the fragmentation must be natural and accidental; it cannot be manufactured. Pound and the younger Eliot introduced cleverness, unfaith, and disintegration as basic facts of poetry. Their arrogance alone should have warned critics not to believe too quickly in what they were doing. Pound's eventual denial of his culture and his country is a severely logical conclusion to his act of denial of the very roots which nourish the poetic art. Eliot's turning his back on his mid-American heritage is all of one piece with his process of deliberate destruction of trust in life at large. The School of Eliot went farther than their master

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into the waste land of derision or despair. They scorned readers and sharers in their ideas; they scorned and rejected the very people they professed to pity for economic principle's sake. The intellect alone was often left as the whole concern of the poet. The academic people, who should have known better than trust merely to the academic canons in poetry, aided and cheered this defection of the poet from the principles of his own being. Belief, in the colleges founded upon belief, was out of date in the period between our great wars. That many of these innovators were sincere men and often men eaten by honest doubt, does not at all lift their poems to the level of good art. In spite of what some of our most intellectual critics say today, doubt has never yet produced a major poetry. Robinson Jeffers is an eloquent example. With an imagery and a sense for detail richer than any other poet this side of the Elizabethans, with a line that is as sonorous at times as some parts of the *Book of Job*, Jeffers, because he believes only in death, has written a dead poetry. Edwin Arlington Robinson was eaten by doubts and indecisions, too, he suffered intensely; yet he believed intensely in man and in the artist; and because that was so, he produced poetry that is alive. Many of the younger poets among the worshippers of Mr. Eliot were misled by the agonies of our times of social upheaval into becoming propagandists for the particular social or political panacea. But having Mr. Eliot's notorious lack of pity for Spenser or Shakespeare or the underprivileged proletariat, they wrote of the coming of a kingdom of particularly unpitiful laboring men. Frost is a much warmer proletarian, in the proper sense of that word, the untechnical, root sense.

Many of our most gifted and brightest-minded contemporary poets were thus lost up one or another of the three blind alleys of our day: the blind alley of intellectualism for its own sake, the blind alley of explicit social propaganda, or the blind alley of a reality exclusively determined by the ephemeral, minute-to-minute phenomena as measured and magnified by radical modern psychology. In the poetry of all these men, the head was trusted more than the old-fashioned heart. And in the long process of the centuries, the heart, we know, outwears and outlasts that house of bone that harbors the difference between men and not their common humanity.

Yet no one can deny that great good came out of these often brilliant experiments in disquiet and denial. They gave eloquent if

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negative testimony to the fact that disintegration, dejection, anticlimax, and despair cannot produce the permanently beautiful. They emphasized, by denial and failure, what Robinson and Frost were asserting in their more revolutionary and greater poems: that, though the areas and the poetic ought to be made wider and more catholic than ever before, and the failures and the merely average lives ought to be brought into the sun, though the sound a poem makes must be a new sound, the fact of a poem remains, substantially, what it has been always—an abbreviation of experience, a pointing-up of phenomena, an improvement upon haphazard life. The beautiful thing called a poem endures. It is an act of beautiful words in beautiful arrangement, for the end of improving and glorifying existence. It is art, in brief, and art is an act of faith more precious than the breath in us is. It is the escape of a bright phoenix-bird from the ashes of time-space reality.

The one moral that does not go out of date, the moral of design, remains. Selection and arrangement must add up to something precious for man to cling to. So the new imagery of Frost grows from the pith of his poems outward, as does the more formalized imagery of Homer. The twine-strings with morning-glory vines wound on them become the only harp a plain farmer's wife will ever have, and she plays tenderly with her fingers upon that harp when moved by the tragedy of a hired-man's creeping home to a poor home to die. And that is a hymn, though it is homemade—a modern one among our great hymns. The vitality and functionality of metaphor endure and enrich the plainer modern poetry. The pure and simple and clear language men use when men are most moved remains the best language for poems still. Housman and Sappho are cousins, as Heine and Herrick are.

There is enough that is new to make poetry today terribly and beautifully alive. The chances of finding poems in the most ordinary of places are enormously increased. No area of life is left without its possibility of poetry. No man or woman is too humble. The body and soul can still debate, with new arguments on both sides which Plato never dreamt of, as Robinson has proved. Frost and Robinson have made blank verse into something entirely new under the sun, and it can bear the flow of psychological waves. There is a new kind of mysticism, stemming from Walt Whitman, who tried to put his loving arms around the whole universe; it is a mysticism of multiplication, rather than the

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old medieval mysticism by subtraction; it is a mysticism in which a thousand as common things as dandelions and birch trees, common blades of grass and plain human kindness can somehow amount to a kind of new proof that something like a heart is holding the universe together. For another bright thing, our time has seen the emergence of the lightning-fast mind of woman into a major place in the new poetry. Millay and Wylie have added new light to the old light of a man's mind. It seems that women can be finer Cavaliers than the old Cavaliers whom they inspired in the seventeenth century. For still another thing, the sons of Walt Whitman, the poets he called to over the heads of his contemporaries, have come into being as he swore they would, and they have created the new myths of democratic man's splendor which Whitman demanded of them. Lindsay and Sandburg and Stephen Benét have written Walt's American poems for him. And last, but not least, the modern poet has discovered humor as a central and serious artistic pattern to point up "the still, sad music of humanity" and prove the sweet worthiness of life. The lonely old drunkard, Mr. Flood, has established the lovely principle of friendship.

These wider poems, these poems of ours so close to the way we speak and the way we live in our commonest moments are very prophetic, I think, of greater poems to come. No one needs, even in these sad times of world-wide war, to despair for the future. Poetry will last, as it lasted through the eclipse of the Mediterranean culture and the fall of feudal Europe.

The poems of the future will come more and more from basic foliations of human courage, endurance, and will to believe. They will come, if we can trust our poems now, from commoner experiences than ever poems came from in the past; they will spring from usual places, from barns, from backyards and back-gardens. The stones rejected by the privileged poets of the past will become the cornerstones of finer buildings than we have yet known. The future poetry will be consequently more international and humanitarian. It will point up and set to proper words and rhythms the natural goodness and the arrangements of ardor in the lives of those whom Gray termed the mute, inglorious Miltons. It will use more of the milk of human kindness. It will use more of man's indestructible humor. It will be, in the real

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sense—not the ephemeral political one—proletarian poetry. Its common denominator will be common man. It will be a neighborhood poetry for the coming world-neighborhood. If the Romantic love-star of Byron has gone below the horizon, there will be other stars rising as bright. The poetry to come will be a wider love-poetry than that which consecrated itself to the ennobling and transforming beauty of a woman. For other worshipful creatures there are, small, bright insects in the grass, the trembling deer in the thicket, the moth at the window, the hawk circling the hill. There will be enough ennobling love left still. The poet will spread his affection over a wider arc of the earth and the sky. The underprivileged birds and beasts, insects and fish and stones will enter more and more into a symphony of the cousinship of all created kind. Science will aid and abet the process of poetry, as Darwinian evolution has done today, by making us more believers in the oneness and wholeness, preciousness, indestructibility, and necessity of all life.

See, here is the kind of poem the future poem will be: It is the poem of a lamb just dropped, still damp with his mother, getting on his four feet at once, and going straight for the place where milk is, milk his lips have never tasted, knowing exquisitely, exactly, how to use his forehead to make the milk come down, and drinking it with his tail horizontal in eagerness and shaking as if it were in a fever. Here is a future poem, too: A small brown boy of hot Java puts his hand at once into the hand of a little boy his own age from cold Canada, and feels good to have his hand there and walk with the boy who cannot say a word to him, and knows it is good to do that, too, and knows the other boy feels good about it also. Here is one more poem for the future: The doubled rhythm of the farmer's two hands, working alternatively and harmoniously at the milking, delights the cow more than the single rhythm of her own sucking young when he feeds; and the cow, for the pleasure, creates more milk in the tissues of her udder because of that finer music of the motion of the two hands there.

Poetry tomorrow will avoid the particular propagandas of communism or of democracy. For democracy and communism, surely, will not last, any more than the trolley-car of my boyhood lasted; and poetry is an old art, and it must not tie itself to any ephemeral thing.

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Newer and better means of human association than democracy or communism will inevitably be worked out, just as finer vehicles than our motor-cars and airplanes will be. For poetry will take, still, the long view, and will avoid obsession with the mere mechanics of existence. Tomorrow's poetry will use words closer and closer to life, the words men speak, the wonderful words of life. Poetry will still erect myths to explain the often astounding lack of mechanicality in the events that build up a free-will creature like a man, as though that older poet had guessed right and there were a divinity shaping him. Above all, the poem of the future, if we can trust the only poetry we know well, the poetry of the past and the poetry of the present, will exalt belief over all statistics, however vital those statistics may appear at any given moment to be. Poetry, I think, will keep the heart as its center, not the head.

Problems and Prospects of Civic Planning

THERON I. CAIN

THE improvement of the aesthetic effect of a community is a problem which involves more than the construction of some imposing public buildings, the erection of a war memorial in front of the city hall, or the planting of trees along some of the streets. Helpful though such projects may be, it is possible that the situation calls for additional and more fundamental treatment. The question needs to be asked whether the town is actually in sound condition, or are these embellishments merely serving as cosmetics to give a semblance of health to a diseased body?

Many of our cities are in far from healthy condition. Crowded transit lines strain the patience of commuters. Crowded sidewalks annoy pedestrians. Crowded highways delay traffic and kill large numbers of people. Crowded, ugly buildings shut off light and air from each other's occupants, who must go long distances for a glimpse of a tree, a flower, or even a blade of grass. Crowded, filthy slums are hot-beds of all kinds of unwholesomeness.

Probably such evils are partly responsible for the population trends shown in the 1940 Census, which revealed that of the 140 metropolitan districts in the United States the central cities made a gain over the 1930 populations of only 6.1% while the suburban areas around these cities gained 16.9%. We have no means of knowing exactly how many people are moving from the central cities out into the suburbs, but it seems probable that a large part of the difference between these two percentages is due to such migration.

Industries are moving from large cities into satellite or rural communities, partly to escape high taxation, partly in order to have room for expansion, unhampered by the rigid gridiron pattern of streets which characterizes so many of our American cities. This adds to the stimulation of the outward movement of population, since many of their employees follow them in order to live near their work, as well

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as in order to enjoy more pleasant and healthful home surroundings.

Will this trend continue? After the war we may be sure that the thousands of young veterans who have become accustomed to flying will not be content to stay on the ground and drive automobiles tediously through traffic jams. Furthermore, the huge aircraft production facilities built up to fill wartime demands will be ready, after only a brief period of readjustment, to provide swarms of air vehicles for civilian use. Will this new aerial transportation be likely to increase or to diminish the decentralization tendency?

Prophecy is unreliable, especially in a situation containing so many new elements; but let us examine the precedents that are available. A study of population curves in relation to transportation seems to indicate that the advent of the steam railroad probably contributed substantially to the marked growth of cities which took place at that time, while the electric car and the automobile apparently had decentralizing effects. We may be justified in surmising that this was due in considerable measure to the fact that steam trains could profitably stop only at widely separated stations, which tended to become centers of population, while the electric cars and automobiles could readily stop anywhere, and so tended to disperse the people. The airplane, developing ever larger and faster types, and requiring more and more spacious and elaborate airports, seems likely to be increasingly depended upon for swift, long-distance public transportation between important cities, and would by itself probably have a centralizing effect, like the steam train. On the other hand, if the helicopter comes into successful general use at a low price its maneuverability and small size will probably make it popular as a means of speedy individual commuting and as a local "feeder" and distributor of travellers to and from the large central airports. Thus the centralizing effect of the airplane will probably be nullified by the helicopter, and the net result will be a stronger trend than ever toward decentralization.

Hence there is considerable justification for the concern felt by many over the future of the city. If large proportions of the best of both its industrial and residential properties are removed, will what is left be financially sufficient to maintain its expensive public services? Is the city threatened with anemia, in addition to its other ills?

Let us try to visualize a typical metropolitan area as it seems

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likely to be after the new air age has become well established, assuming that matters are allowed to take their course with little or no civic planning.

Most of the larger industries will have moved out of town, except some which are dependent upon special conditions such as nearness to shipping terminals or water power which may be available only within the city. Industries producing articles of comparatively small bulk and weight in proportion to their value will undoubtedly use airplanes for speedy shipment. The largest companies may have their own airfields; the smaller ones will tend to locate within short trucking distance of public airports, hence the latter will probably become the centers of clusters of new industrial communities. The proximity of large tracts of fairly clear, level land suitable for airport construction may have far more influence upon the location of future industries and industrial towns than nearness to railroad or harbor facilities.

Industries producing bulky or heavy products will continue to use ships, railroads and motor trucks for transportation—especially the latter, since they are independent of wharves and tracks. The increasing use of electric power also makes for freedom in choice of location. So we may expect future industries to be considerably more decentralized than those of the present.

No doubt a large percentage of the industrial employees will wish to live near their factories, and unless the growth of the resulting towns is well planned and controlled by the public there will be many repetitions of the speculative building and slum developments with which we are only too familiar.

After many of the major industries and their workers have moved out of the central city, what will remain? No doubt many of the vacated industrial buildings will be occupied by less prosperous industries with considerable depreciation of property values. Some will be used as warehouses. Many others will be torn down to save taxes, and the sites will be vacant or occupied with forlorn shacks. Many tenements will be deserted and finally demolished after a slatternly period of decay.

On the other hand, while the new airports will undoubtedly have many warehouses near them (with low uniform height, the flat roofs serving as supplementary landing stages for helicopters) there will still be need for many wholesale storage buildings in the central city,

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closely related to the older shipping facilities still in use for heavy and bulky products.

Also it is likely that main business, financial and governmental offices will still be grouped downtown, since nearness to each other will continue to be mutually advantageous. Likewise, although there will be many decentralized local shopping centers, there will doubtless be demand for central areas for various kinds of retail trade and for theatres. Libraries, museums and other organizations providing cultural opportunities will need to be not too far away. Unless some good planning is done, the congestion of people moving into and out of these central areas will be well-nigh unendurable. Traffic jams of automobiles are bad enough, and often result in dented fenders, but a traffic jam among helicopters hovering over a business district while seeking space for landing, accompanied by collisions of their revolving blades, will be far more serious in consequences.

This picture of a possible unplanned future is somewhat gloomy. The writer has no desire to claim a gift of prophecy and admits that he may be quite wrong in many of his surmises; but there is enough possibility of their truth to make worth while a consideration of ways by which the worst features of these developments may be prevented.

First let us decide what would be ideal physical conditions for human activity, then see what practical measures may be taken to approach as near as possible to this goal. How firmly are these tendencies rooted in fundamental human needs?

While it is true that most human activities are best carried on in fairly close proximity, there are some where nearness is especially important. Business men inspecting samples, discussing prices, and negotiating intricate agreements, shoppers, any people whose work involves much consultation with others or use of public records—all these are types of individuals whose vocations require concentration in space and a central location.

On the other hand, although it is desirable that there be a minimum of space and time lost between the various stages in the manufacture of an article from raw material to finished product, in practice it is seldom feasible to locate related but separate industries in an assembly-line pattern. Many products are composed of a variety of material coming from widely separated sources. Many kinds of production by

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their inherent nature obviously demand large amounts of space.

We are probably justified then in concluding that, in general, *commercial, financial and governmental activities tend to be centralized while industrial activities tend to be decentralized in space.*

No such general statement can be made regarding people's homes and leisure-time activities, however. Here personal preferences range from the isolated independence of the pioneer to the congested dependence of the apartment dweller. The tastes, health and circumstances of individuals vary so greatly that it is clearly desirable that a great variety of housing arrangements be available, with the proviso that all should be conducive to healthful living. This last, however, implies a great deal more space, sunshine and beauty—especially nature beauty—than is in the environment of great numbers of city dwellers at present. It also calls for adequate protection against danger and disease, and for readily accessible opportunities for purchase of household supplies and for education, cultural advancement, religion, and both outdoor and indoor recreation. Finally, the ideal home is located near enough to the working-place of the bread-winner of the family so that the daily journey to and fro is a source of healthful exercise and relaxation rather than annoyance and fatigue.

Now let us consider what barriers stand in the way of our attaining these desirable ends and what can be done to remove or surmount the obstacles.

The most serious problems of our modern cities probably are those arising from congestion. How can the centralization needed, as we have seen, for commercial activities, be obtained without undue crowding of buildings and traffic? There is a vicious circle involved: the congestion makes central space extremely valuable, but this high valuation at the same time makes relief of the congestion through public purchase of land so expensive as to be very difficult.

The coming of the air age seems likely to have important effects upon building regulations as well as upon many other aspects of our communities. If the helicopter becomes as common in the future as the automobile is now as a means of local passenger transportation, there may be need for the roofs of office buildings to be brought by law to a uniform level within each block, and for chimneys, ventilators and other projections to be grouped so as to produce maximum safety

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conditions for landing. Air travel may put a stop to further construction of extremely lofty skyscrapers the set-back tower of slab type, and stimulate an architectural emphasis on long, horizontal lines at more moderate heights.

It seems probable, however, that limitations of space will require that the majority of people using down-town buildings in the large cities will continue to arrive by subway, elevated, or some form of surface public transportation, perhaps in many cases after flying from their homes to an airport on the periphery of the city. It is doubtful if considerations of expense will permit the building of multiple-level streets on an extensive scale, but two-level sidewalks with pedestrian bridges at street intersections are much more feasible. Some measure of street widening at practicable cost could be achieved by greatly narrowing the street-level sidewalks, so that their use would be confined mainly to people alighting from or waiting for busses and taxicabs. Frequent stairways and occasional Escalators would invite most pedestrians to use the amply broad walks and bridges at the second story level, above the confusion and danger of the motor traffic which, since all crossing of streets on foot would be strictly forbidden, could move with substantial increase of freedom and speed.

City areas vacated by industries should not be allowed to become badly depreciated. If there is need for the spaces for vigorous commercial purposes, of course they should be so utilized, but if only feeble use is likely to be made of them the sites should be procured, by the public or some quasi-public authority if necessary, and developed for residential and park purposes. Slums and other blighted districts should also be cleared and so developed.

In many cases this, to be done well, should involve the replanning of the minor streets within the area at considerable advantage in the use of space. For example, the Chicago Plan Commission in a recent report¹ says of one such project which has already been executed in that city, "The replanning not only has resulted in a more attractive layout of streets but has effected economies by saving 764 lineal feet of street improvements. Moreover, it has created a three-acre playground which has been dedicated to the public in exchange for excess

¹ Chicago Plan Commission: *Building New Neighborhoods*, 1943.

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street area.”

Many zoning ordinances should be much more stringent in their requirement of minimum spaces around dwellings. With all the empty areas and all the marvellous new mechanisms for transportation and communication that are now available there is no excuse for the congestion that is so characteristic of our cities. As Le Corbusier² and others have shown, the same number of people per acre can be accommodated in skyscraper apartment buildings set in the midst of spacious landscaped grounds as can be housed in districts where most of the land is covered with low houses; and incidentally, as Sert³ has pointed out, the former arrangement is less vulnerable to bombing than the latter. There is some question, however, as to whether a lower density of population would not be both desirable and feasible with modern transit facilities.

Residential districts in either the city or its suburbs should be divided into “neighborhood units”, each of such size as can be served by one elementary school, which, together with other near-by buildings and a local playground and park, should provide facilities for all important phases of community life, provisions for recreation, social and civic activities of people of all ages, as well as education. The streets in such a unit should be so planned that no one would be obliged to cross a busy thoroughfare to go to the local shopping or social centers. Such neighborhood planning might stimulate a revival of some of that valuable community spirit which has characterized many country towns but which often is lost with the impersonality and enormous complexity of the modern city.

With the decentralizing of industries come opportunities for the good planning of their new surroundings. The garden cities of England furnish excellent precedents for the design of industrial towns. Strips of park should insulate factories from the home district of their workers and should be woven in among the homes themselves; and wide “green belts” of park, forest or agricultural land should separate each community from the next. Perhaps experience with “victory gardening”

² M. LeCorbusier: *Urbanisme*, Paris, 1924; trans. *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning*, Payson & Clarke, N. Y., 1929.

³ J. L. Sert and C.I.A.N.: *Can Our Cities Survive?*, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1942.

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will stimulate a greater use in the United States of allotment gardens—more familiar to Europeans—with much benefit to the health and incomes of our people.

The preservation of green belts from encroachment by buildings calls for further developments in our zoning laws establishing zones exclusively limited to agriculture, forestry or other such uses. Many city planners are coming to feel that our present zoning practise regarding non-conforming uses is too lenient, permitting them to continue indefinitely and enjoy something of monopoly privileges, while the law should require their liquidation within a reasonable time. It would also be desirable that dwellings in certain types of industrial zones be considered non-conforming uses and ultimately be eliminated.

The helicopter may extend the commuting area around a city to a radius of perhaps 100 miles. This probably implies that population will be more evenly distributed than at present, that city, suburban and rural districts will be less distinguishable, that a larger proportion of our people will enjoy the cultural and health-giving advantages of both city and country, with great benefit to our civilization.

It may cause fundamental changes in government and public finance also. If ever-increasing numbers of the people who work in a city find it possible to commute comfortably to country homes, and if ever-larger quantities of industries move outside the old city limits, it may be necessary to devise some new arrangements whereby the financial support and the governmental control of the city is spread over a wider area. The metropolitan region has long been an economic reality, and in some degree—with regard especially to sewer, water supply, park and highway planning and financing—a governmental reality in many cases. Perhaps the time will come when all city political functions will be put on a regional basis.

In fact, much would be gained if all political boundaries could be more closely related to natural geographic boundaries, neighborhood units being the principal determinants for precinct or ward lines, metropolitan regions for city lines, and drainage basin regions, like the Tennessee Valley Region, or other large tracts of homogeneous character, for county, state, province or national lines. This is unlikely to be done extensively, however, because of deeply embedded political and social habits and prejudices.

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Regional planning will undoubtedly be done, by variously constituted agencies, on an ever-larger scale. The National Resources Planning Board was recently abolished by Congress, but an equivalent body must take its place. Resources planning is more indispensable than ever, now that war has consumed our reserves so enormously. The organization set up by the United Nations for post-war relief and rehabilitation contains the beginning of an international planning board.

The range of subject-matter of planning is speedily growing with its geographical scope. The recent depression taught us that the timing of the execution of public works can be utilized as a moderately effective instrument for the control of the hitherto incorrigible business cycle. This marks the substantial beginning of economic planning. Its relationship to general civic planning is obviously so close that the distinction between them is rapidly fading.

Planning of both types is much on people's minds now. Leaders of all political persuasions are agreeing that plans must be made without delay for the transition to peace-time conditions, to provide adequate employment, and so to prevent another depression far worse than the last one. There are many problems involved, such as the change in production from war supplies to those of peace, with consequent shut-downs of factories and temporary unemployment, the finding of jobs for returning uninjured veterans, the care of the wounded and the training of them for future employment when possible. To what extent will technological progress, stimulated by war-time research and labor shortages, diminish employment? Some of the emergency housing erected for war workers is of such flimsy construction that its permanent value is very doubtful. Can it be prevented from producing slum areas? Some of it will no longer be needed when the war industries which occasioned it are stopped. How shall it be disposed of? In Europe an important question is whether public opinion will permit bombed areas to be rebuilt according to improved plans, or will the opportunity be lost, as when Wren's plan for a better London was ignored after the Great Fire?

Part of the explanation of this general acceptance of planning for the post-war world lies in the amount of it which has been done recently. In spite of the enormous expense, the results of planned production of war materials are very impressive. In spite of the blunders and

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annoyances connected with rationing and other emergency controls, most people realize the necessity of planning if chaos is to be averted. When peace comes there will naturally follow a desire to return as far as possible toward "normalcy" and a *laissez-faire* policy, but there will be so many shortages and dislocations that considerable public economic regulation will need to continue.

Most of us feel uneasy at the prospect of centralized political control of business being maintained long after the war. Distasteful thoughts of "socialism" and "bureaucratic red tape" come to mind. On the other hand, we also dislike the alternative of permitting powerful trusts, cartels or other private business combinations to fatten their bank accounts unreasonably at our expense.

Perhaps a third, middle-of-the-road, method of planning may develop through consumer coöperative organizations. These democratically owned and operated businesses are going into production on a rapidly expanding scale⁴. Since this production is closely controlled from below by the users of the goods, it is accomplished with a minimum of economic waste, and planning it is a relatively simple problem. Insofar as this system extends throughout the world—and in 1939 there were 73,000,000 members representing 39 countries—probably never entirely supplanting private business, but supplementing it and providing a yardstick for guarding against exorbitant profits, economic planning will be considerably decentralized and simplified.

Moreover, the protection thus provided against profiteering and the savings effected from the wastes of old-fashioned competition will help greatly in diminishing poverty, the source of so many evils. Here at last we may have a fundamental remedy for slums, which have been perhaps the worst problem of civic planning.

There are enough material resources available to make the physical basis for a reasonably happy world for us all if we would only learn to use them wisely. Even after the colossal destruction of this war, recovery can be surprisingly rapid if we take full advantage of the technological developments of science. Modern planning is the application of the scientific method to the task of providing for human needs.

⁴ Lawrence M. Hughes: "2,500,000 Co-op Members Launch Centennial Expansion Campaign", *Sales Management*, Vol. 52, No. 21, October 15, 1943.

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It is motivated by warm humanitarianism and by a desire to create beauty, but it tries to be objective, impersonal and unprejudiced in its approach, taking great pains to learn the exact facts of a problem before it attempts a solution. In this it is to be contrasted with the subjective approach typical of older political methods, based so largely on personal and partisan loyalties and prejudices.

The scientific method has given us marvels beyond the dreams of our fathers in the realms of physics and chemistry. Let us see what it can do for us in the field of human affairs.

The Arts and Social Reconstruction

ALFRED NEUMEYER

WHATEVER the outcome of the war will be, the arts will have to contribute to the rebuilding of men or else their function will degrade to an ornament in a degrading society. The destruction of men, land, and material, the exhaustion of finances, the suddenly stopped wheels of the war machine will stare at us with the grimace of the Gorgo. Only by a planned effort can the catastrophic aftermath be avoided or weakened. But more than that: only by a religious zeal for the rehabilitation of mankind can the lost ground in the evolutionary process toward reasoned existence be regained. Yet the builders by profession, the makers and creators of things beautiful may eventually stand apart at such a crucial moment—lacking, even as today, context with our society, lacking organization due to the character of their work. And yet, it is just such a moment of moral and practical reconstruction in which the arts could claim readmittance to an organic place within society which has been lost since the days of the French Revolution. Their task will be not to embellish our lives—a Victorian connotation of the arts which we must reject—but to serve the human community by a threefold effort: in executing adequately what is needed for replacing destroyed goods, implements, and dwellings; in interpreting the situation of men and their attitude toward life and nature; and in creating symbols for the self-understanding of men by a visible language. These functions are identical with the eternal contribution of the arts: to create objects animated by form, to record and to interpret the inner and outer reality of our kind, and, in doing so, to establish universal symbols for men's understanding of themselves and each other.

Just because we desire to see the arts return to the totality of Life with which they have lost contact, it is needed first to examine the present situation of the arts in their different aspects and to compare them with their own potentialities.

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The artisan, the man who provides society with useful or purposeful articles in adequate form—which makes for “functional” beauty—has in our society an improved standing as compared with the last century. The seeds of William Morris, of Henry Thoreau and Henry Van de Velde have germinated and severe damage, threatening in the Victorian era, has been restored. The revival of handicrafts may be called a romantic effort in the machine age. Yet it is not more romantic than the preservation of the creative instincts in general which are challenged by mechanical processes in every field of our life. Not to compete with the machine and its products shall the crafts take their place, but to preserve an area in which the natural instincts of man, the maker, can find their expression. The loom, the potter’s wheel, and the mallet are not more obsolete than the entire instinctive life of men. They are the instruments by which the early and the primitive people have lifted themselves from the animal state to humanity long before the religious experiences have sublimated fear into free worship. We have given back their implements to the Indians, but in returning them to ourselves, we may “colonize” the devastated provinces of our own creativity and set ourselves in harmony with basic trends of human nature.

Millions of men have never “made” anything in their lives; they have been thrown into reproductive professions in which the spirit of specialization is killing off slowly the trinity of eye, hand, and mind which should determine the human being. There can be no doubt that the crafts we use today increasingly for “mental therapy” and “social rehabilitation” are but the rediscovered energies implicit with the therapy of man shrunk by the processes of machine civilization. Is a man throwing a pot on the turning wheel perhaps not a less comical figure than a man throwing his hat at a football game? When our soldiers will have returned, when our war factories will stand still, then the moment will have come to open our schools, workshops, and homes for the training of released manpower. A planned policy of rural and urban communities on that line can be achieved easier than the transformation of peace in war production. Such a policy will help to lead the fighter back to organized self-activity, to home and contemplative peace (which is therapy), but it will at the same time supplement the not yet functioning mechanical output by the handmade

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object in certain areas of production (which is its social-economic contribution). This will never diminish the importance and the ingenuity of the electric saw and the mechanical loom for our society, but it will allow for a productive exchange within the individual and within the community between the mechanical and the organic crafts, as is desirable for a sound society. The refrigerator and radio civilization may be looked upon one day as the barbaric dawn of the epoch of scientific man. Overwhelmed by our own inventions, defeated by our own mechanics, we still have at any time the choice to return to that completeness of Life which stands before us as long as we can react to the message of creation.

Architecture has taken a leading position among the fine arts. Its closeness to the purposes of modern life, its midway place between mechanics and design, its application of machine-made devices have imbued it with active energy. The new tasks of industrial construction and large-scale housing have given it a width of scope in which it happily surpasses all its sister arts. It is the only field in which the twentieth century equals previous periods in creative genius and in which symbolically modern man has found expression of his altered situation. We take it here for granted, and therefore leave it undiscussed, that even an increase of rationality would act to the advantage of architecture. More comprehensive city planning, more strictly applied policing by city and rural authorities of the aesthetic and social aspects of new constructions, more basic thinking and less "beaux arts" in the professional schools—all this is preliminary to a large-scale application of such types of building as our advanced architects have outlined for us. In our context, we wish to discuss another aspect of the theme: in its enthusiasm for plain statements of fact, in its justified horror of the past period of style imitation and jumbled interiors, architecture has rejected the cooperation of the sister arts. The material aspects have been ingeniously satisfied: ice box, washing machine, and radio spend electric amenities; nature is admitted to the house and subtle transitions connect the inside with the outside. Yet there is still a need for lending to constructional truth the beauty of imaginative Life and warmth. Wall space for paintings, garden space for sculpture should invite the contemporary and the past artist and artisan for his contribution to the dwelling of men. The blank wall in so many of our modern

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residences looks like an admission of helplessness. The beauty of architectural proportions may thus be undisturbed, but the margin of life is unduly narrowed. True, the risk for aesthetic failure might increase and the expenses of the proprietor might rise. But at length our civilization would gain as a whole if painting, sculpture, the decorative arts, and architecture could function in unison. It would improve the economic situation of the arts; it would enhance its shrunk participation in modern life; but most of all, it would help to transform a certain bareness of our "living machines" into a more complex and therefore a higher organism.

As to our public buildings, another thought must here be introduced. The communal or governmental tasks of a public building endow it with an additional value besides its required practicality. Belonging to all of the people or their representatives or functionaries, being planned on a larger scale physically and ideologically, it is the adequate material for the architect to express in it the "monumental" function of architecture. "Monumental" does not mean building with Greek porticos and pediments; it means embodiment of concepts on a large scale. Such architectural concepts are rhythm, mass, weight or weightlessness, transparency, light, color, subordination, etc. In giving them language by means of architectonic form, the builder contributes to the ideological strengthening of the institution for which he is acting. This is the deeper meaning of the word "monumental". In this sense, the pyramids, the Parthenon, the medieval cathedrals, the Renaissance palaces, and Rockefeller Center are "monumental". Yet, while the institutions which have ordered these structures may fade from history, their architectural representatives carry on to maintain the embodied concepts in aesthetic transformation. Architecture in this sense is a symbol. This symbolic quality it shares with the other arts. Since in form and content it stands for what it is (its function) but also for something that has not been before. Art as an aesthetic value rests on the congruity between form and content; art as symbol points toward something beyond its appearance. If rightly understood and justly applied to the field of private and monumental architecture, it means that the builder can be more than a designer of functional skeletons or the imitator of past concepts. He can be the planner for a fuller life of the reasoned and the imaginative abilities of the dwellers. He can be the creator

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of monumental symbols of his civilization.

No other living architect has had more vitality in such a comprehensive architectural language than Frank Lloyd Wright. If occasionally he has failed harder, it is because he has climbed higher. As a builder of houses, he has given expression to the creative energies of the designer and the contemplative pleasures of the dweller. Sculpture, painting and decoration have been invited and can live and breathe in a rich architectonic organism. His fancy has the color of inspiration, and inspiration has the courage to admit even the superfluous. His work is partially superseded by new developments, but in its complexity of approach and ingenuity of solution, it will remain an inexhaustible inspiration for architecture.

Architecture will take a leading part in the postwar period. The rebuilding of the destroyed city sections of England, Central Europe, and the Orient will be one of the greatest challenges ever given to the city planner and architect. The reconstruction of deteriorated property will provide an additional task on a large scale. A thoughtless copy of destroyed buildings would undoubtedly result in a pitiable failure and exceed besides the funds available. Recently published designs for the rebuilding of London surpass our worst expectations. In contemporary language, yet with an understanding of the underlying historical and ethnical data, architecture will have to contribute to the reconstruction of the devastated areas. Simplicity, as the world's poverty will demand it, can then become a virtue if it is based on a full understanding of the sociological, ethical, and symbolic meanings of living. The training of scores of architects and workmen in schools more comprehensive than many of our present architectural departments and polytechnical institutions will at that moment be required, and creative thinking will have to imbue the designers for "better living" in the reorganization of the universe.

The present situation of *painting* must be considered first from the European point of view because it is from there that American art has received directions and a constant influx of new talents. Without such an analysis of the European situation, a clear insight into the character and the future of American painting hardly could be gained.

The trend toward collectivism has changed to some extent the place of painting in our society. But until recently, painting has been

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for more than one hundred years the stepchild of modern civilization. Since the days of the French Revolution, its former sponsors are gone: church, court, and aristocracy. Since then, the emancipated artist has painted for the exposition and the unknown buyer. Means and manners lost, cut off from the top soil of our civilization, painting has also foregone, to some degree, defined content and subject matter. In being deprived of its former sponsors, painting changed from the variation of given "themes" to the rendering of "impressions" and "expressions". A new blow came with the invention of the photographic camera: the seemingly inexhaustible task of recording reality became challenged by the optical lens and the light-sensitive film which printed reality by means of light. Once more, technique had advanced but had left men emptier than before. Because the recording of reality no longer was a substantial task of painting as it had been since the days of the Renaissance, the interpretation of the world according to the visions and moods of the artist began to replace it. With van Gogh and Gauguin, the accent shifted from the objectivity to the subjective, from the spiritualized *material* to the materialized *spiritual*, from a harmonized relationship between world and men to a dramatized tension between the two. The natural order of reality became intentionally distorted in order to enhance its expressive significance or to speak of the agony of modern man in his relationship with the world. To such an extent has distortion replaced nature's organic unity that rendition of organically correct forms looks today like falsification. From another angle, the former task of recording reality (seen through a temperament, as Zola added) became challenged by Cézanne and his followers: the master of Aix returned structure to the canvas. Depth and plane became balanced, roundness the function of color, design a definition for ordered relationship. Reality grew transparent that it might show the mechanism of form. The great grammarian's orderliness frowned already on Nature's chance-like whims. Yet Cézanne's followers cut loose the flesh of nature through which had shone the skeleton of form in Cézanne's paintings in order to enjoy form "a priori". Abstract art was born. For thirty years, circles and squares, dots and triangles have been "composed" on flat surfaces, and there seems no limit to the kaleidoscopic pleasures of formal combinations with emotional associations. Undeniable are the possibilities for subtlety, for immaterial

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intelligence, for textural richness, and for spatial discoveries in abstract art—but all this for its own sake. Yet, has the interplay of form not been the veiled mechanism of the arts since the early days of men but used as the vehicle for conveying a message to fellowmen? Today, this modern watchmaker is staring hypnotized at the assembly of wheels, balances, and pistons. He takes them apart and rearranges them according to his own aesthetic and emotional pleasures. Only one thing has he forgotten: that the watch originally was meant to indicate time. In the same sense, abstract art has made abstracted form its own content and thus has lost fullness of resonance. Art has risen and risen to more and more immaterial zones until Kant's statement has actually become applicable to it:

“The light dove, while diving in free flight through the air of which she feels the resistance, might conceive that she could succeed still better in *airless* space.” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, Introduction, III)

Expressionist and abstract art have been superseded by new ways of expression. “Surrealism” has introduced the associative play of the subconscious by means of unrelated fragments of reality. It has returned with its realistic minuteness of rendition yet applied to the sur-reality (or better, sub-reality) of the “stream of consciousness”. Images emerge, associate with others, form slowly a paludal turf of contexts, are thrown into infinite space, and the surrealist scenery is born. Organic unity of life is still more deeply denied by this interplay of non-sensical with half-sensical meanings and relations depicted with the detached objectivity of the camera. The mirage of a pseudo-reality rises from the depth of our cultural drought. Along the empty horizon of nothingness, Dali's man with the crutch and the man with the bulbous brain, the ant-eaten rubber time-teller, and the heart-emptied drawer woman tell their macabre story. The Alexandrian mood of our civilization registers and stores the artifacts of its own decomposition.

Abstract art, and surrealism,—they both indicate an escape of the modern artist into subjectivity. They lure modern men to leave the sense and reason experienced reality for pure abstraction, for dream and mirage. They may do so admirably; they may surpass their naturalistic fellow artists in intelligence and creativity (as they often do).

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The *cultural* phenomenon remains a negative one. *Negative* we call it because it bespeaks a situation in which the arts do not radiate from a center of beliefs and of social order which the artist and his fellowmen may have in common, but in which, to the contrary, painting has taken its place on the very outskirts of the human settlement. The greatest of artists perhaps have never settled close to the hearthstone of men, have been lonely in time and space, premature or over-aged. Yet they always have expressed a relationship with the "world" and with men. As a rule, they were strong lovers and haters of their own time. They were concerned primarily with the "themes" handed out to them by their civilization and its tradition. Only by transforming the content and spirit of their own time and cultural heritage could their art become a language. Only in having a content could their art be symbolic. Only in having living symbols, and in creating new symbols, can a civilization survive.

But how does it happen that art can become a language? It can happen only if artist and audience do have a world in common. Thus the Mexican people and their painters live in a historical constellation which provides them with a common ground: they have in common their "revolution". The European artist of the last hundred years has not been blessed with such a favorable historical condition; he has worked isolated and has explored mind and form to such remote but charming whims as the psychographs of a Paul Klee.

The situation for the American artist has, for a number of years before the outbreak of the war, not been unfavorable. To the contrary: from a cultural as well as an economic point of view, the Federal Art Project of the Roosevelt administration will be counted in all future time as an indication of resourcefulness and feeling of cultural responsibility, with the result of preserving and improving the artistic standards of the country. However, most important of all, in handing over public buildings to the artist, it helped to create a more vital relation between community, citizen and artist.

Besides this social-cultural aspect, it is to the greatest advantage of the artist to have handed out "themes" by his society. It provides him with "motives" which are shared by his community and, in returning them transformed to his community, he contributes actively to the "language" of the people. He shall not be disturbed by the complaints

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of the average onlooker that, contrary to the painter's depiction, John Brown's gun had a double barrel, since this naive literalism has forever interfered with the artist's recordings. More important than the obstacle is the encouragement which is derived from the given theme. The penetration of the "motive" in regard to meaning and formal possibilities, and the consideration of a definite architectural situation appear as a stimulus to the organizing sensibilities of the true artist. Without such pressure from without, the world might never have seen a Sistine ceiling of unwilling Michelangelo.

American art especially, growing from a democratic life, has a tendency toward realism and naturalism. Eakins and Grant Wood, although influenced by European trends, have a strong American quality of their own and Rivera, Orozco, and Picasso have shown to the young the meaning of monumental form, from now on added to the characteristics of American realism.

Yet after having pleaded for a communicative art, based on given "motives" and expressing a collective-minded age, one must include another consideration for a so-called socially unrelated art. Even such a strongly social-minded writer as Lewis Mumford has clearly faced the problem and expressed it:

"It is this freedom from the contemporary and the contiguous that gives the arts their great part in the economy of personality: for the artist not merely bears the stamp of his environment; he also has a means of reacting upon it and giving it, in one degree or another, a different stamp."

(Lewis Mumford, *The Arts, Whither Mankind*, edited by Charles Beard, p. 299. New York, 1929.)

Art in this sense always has been something that did not exist before and that points toward something that might be. It is in a deeper sense related to history and society than can be recognized on the surface. As Oscar Wilde so well has put it: "Art never expresses anything but itself." Its mission is to act as "lighthouse" (Baudelaire). for the direction of our cultural movements and our individual progress. While Europe in the last hundred years has perhaps looked too much upon art as "the quest for the useless" (Flaubert), America is in danger of underrating the lonely mission of the "non-integrated" artist.

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The search for meaning, truth, and beauty proceeds slowly from the monologue of the creator to the dialogue between the artist and his society. A civilization of strength not only will produce such "lighthouses" but also will recognize their profound necessity within its own organism.

Out of the tension between social consciousness and lonely creativity, the art work of the postwar world will originate. "Abstract art" will be recognized as too narrow a concept, just as "actualism" will be looked upon as missing the specific function of the language of forms. "American realism" will return reality to us, made significant by form and compassion. In this sense, Thomas Wolfe and Clemente Orozco have been, each in his own field, way-leading creators.

And yet a step beyond can be imagined for our civilization.

The development of white men since the days of the Renaissance and the Reformation is characterized by a continuous diminution of the power of symbols. Analytical reason applied to an understanding of nature and men, and expressed in the law of causality, replaced mythology. Mythological concepts are conveyed by means of images and similes. In identifying the underlying concept with the image, the latter is transformed by us into a symbol. Symbols (in contrast to intellectually conceived allegories) are created out of actual happenings—isolated from their original context, yet standing for this context in all future. Thus is the origin of the cross, the chalice, the national flag. Symbols derive from life and destiny, and continuously absorb more of life and destiny. In having originated in history, the symbol receives dynamic power from history and acts upon history. This is what Julian Huxley calls "the accumulative power in symbols". In being a visible image, the symbol stands for the concreteness of ideas; in being actual, it beholds past and present in one. This potential presence of an idea in the symbol explains the "magic" power of such symbols in religion and history. Yet analytical thinking and experimental analysis have extinguished the claim for the identity of idea and material form. This has been done to the advantage of the intellectual progress of men but to the detriment of the culture of men. In isolating matter from idea, our civilization became, on the one hand, more strictly material; on the other hand, more intellectual, abstract, and theoretical. Formerly, the wholeness of concept in the symbolic language set men constantly

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in contact with the spiritual; while in our modern civilization, the spiritual becomes identical with the intellectual, and thus the privilege of only a small group of professionalists.

The totalitarian countries and their leaders have recognized the life-spending and life-unifying energy of symbols which the democratic state, as a true child of the era of reason, has neglected. The cult of the "Fuehrer" and the self-worship of the nation in elaborate festivals and cults has replaced the religion of God by the religion of the nation and race. Yet the means are the same: by way of symbols, the identity of idea and life, the identity of past and present wrought with the promise of the future, are placed visibly before the eyes of the people. Everyone recognizes himself in the symbol, and the symbol seems to recognize everyone.

We people of the democratic world are, in such times of a new paganism, at a marked disadvantage following the great and tragic command, "Thou shalt not make an image." We can see that it has been man's natural desire in history to make "images", to receive spiritual and material power from them, and to succumb to them. Out of such insight, in the value of symbols in the culture of men, yet with insistence on the only relative and substitutional significance of them, can we assign to the arts their highest and most specific task. It is to provide man with significant and signifying images expressing his place in the community of men, in the flux of life, in the wholeness of nature and in the infinite of the universe. Social and national symbolism, symbolism of sex, symbolism of time and space, symbolism of reason and religion—all are waiting to be embodied again in an art of painting and sculpture more comprehensive and more constructive than is our present art. Symbolic art, free from purpose, is the mirror which man is holding up to see himself clearly and without the dimness of chance. Symbolic art, making the "real" significant by intellectual analysis and emotional synthesis and expressing it by means of form, bestows upon appearance a wholeness and lastingness which we experience under the name of "beauty". In this sense, the creator can transform ugly subject matter and negative meaning into "beauty" just as much as he can express the so-called "beautiful" and the positive meanings.

When the war is over, we will look with horror at the deeds of men to themselves and to one another. The final victory gained, we

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will be able to lessen the feeling of despair by saying that we have acted in defense of our freedom and against the all-devouring misconception of a "master race" destined for rulership. Yet the full impact of actual ruin and starvation will hit us at the same moment. This is the time when the powers of creation are called forth: utilitarian creation—but also, and even more so, spiritual creation. This is the time when the artist must hold up the mirror to man and show him his image in all truthfulness. It will include horror, pain, misery, and despair. It will not be afraid of moralism and cynicism. Yet more important: it will have to place in front of men the organic continuity of the universe as expressed in uncorrupted nature and in the human body as the foremost symbol of animated form. It may even find language for biological evolution and for "life" as it speaks to us through the experiences of sex and death.

The reaction of such comprehensive symbolism will be the foremost task of the arts, unless our society deteriorates, and with it the realm of beauty and form.

Art, Aesthetics, and Liberal Education

THOMAS MUNRO

IT is fairly well recognized in theory that a liberal education should include some attention to the arts, on every grade and age level.

"The arts," in this connection, include the visual arts, music, and literature, the so-called fine arts, and also the useful and practical, such as city planning and industrial design. Every student should have an opportunity to experiment actively in the use of many mediums of construction and expression: extensively at first, then with narrowing intensity as he discovers his own special aptitude. Even more extensively, he should become acquainted with the great traditions and products of art, past and present, through historical and critical studies leading to their understanding and appreciation. So far as possible such studies should be continuous from one grade to the next (e.g., from elementary school to secondary, and from secondary school to college), so that each grade can assume certain prerequisites, and not have to begin at the beginning. So far as possible, they should be coordinated and unified on each grade, not in one way but in many: e.g., through general surveys of cultural history and contemporary civilization; through practical projects involving a combination of arts (as in the theatre), and through aesthetic and critical theory in the higher grades.

While giving lip-service to this ideal, we still go on pretending to give liberal courses in colleges and secondary schools without requiring—sometimes without even offering—courses in any art except a little English literature. Thousands of students receive the degree of "Bachelor of Arts" without the most rudimentary acquaintance with great painting, architecture, and music of the past or present.

It is a truism to say that the arts cover a major phase of the world's cultural heritage, without which no man or woman can be said to be broadly and deeply educated. As compared with past productions in scientific, political, and many other modes of thinking, past produc-

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tions in art contain a larger proportion of material which is accepted as valuable today; worth looking at, reading, or listening to; not outgrown or obsolete. The history of the visual arts alone provides the most extensive and concrete of all frameworks for the history of civilization. It provides the most tangible and sometimes the only surviving data from which an ancient culture can be reconstructed. It provides a revealing expression of modern culture in all its periods, and in its leading racial, national and local manifestations.

From a psychological point of view, study of the arts is a means of developing through exercise a set of human functions and abilities which tend to be neglected in our excessively verbal, intellectual approach to liberal education—especially those of perception, imagination, emotion, and the skilled coordination of nerves and muscles in carrying out a planned enterprise. It is easily adapted to cooperative projects, in which students can learn how to work with each other. Through continuous study and practice of the arts, we can help to keep alive the child's vivid sensory and imaginative life, and other phases of an all-round, well-balanced personality. By this and similar means, including the right kinds of sport and recreation, we can oppose the tendency of modern life to arrest and atrophy many potential lines of development, and to produce a mutilated, over-specialized adult personality, prone to fatigue and neurosis.

The systematic study of these phases of liberal education is not being carried on by any particular subject or group of scholars. It could well be undertaken by aesthetics, which is presumably in a position to approach it with the requisite philosophical breadth and scientific information. I would like to outline several ways in which aesthetics could thus assist in improving the quality of liberal education after the war.

One way is through helping to *select and organize the artistic elements in the world's cultural heritage*, for transmission to youth. As the world shrinks in size through faster communication and travel, the cultural heritage of each nation, each racial and religious group, is made available to all the others. Innumerable local cultures are being poured into one human civilization, through translations of literature, phonograph records of music, photographs, films, and reproductions of visual art, interpretive books, articles, and lectures. This process of

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cultural fusion, which has been going on slowly for centuries, has been greatly accelerated in the last few decades. It has placed a tremendous burden on the educational system of every country which tries to be broadly humanitarian and cosmopolitan in its outlook. The recent influx of cultural products in this country has been so vast, so diversified, so chaotic and piecemeal in its order of arrival on our mental shores, that our schools and colleges have not begun to digest it for educational use. Some of it is great, some trivial; some easily understandable and usable, some utterly remote and foreign to our point of view. Schools that try to absorb it are apt to find their curricula so overcrowded with new "units" and "projects" on this or that nationality or part of the world, that basic subjects are slighted and children's minds confused. Other schools frankly turn their backs on world culture and on the problem of liberal education, concentrating instead on locally demanded vocational skills and information.

Exotic imports in the cultural realm are apt to offend conservatives at home, and arouse isolationist hatred. Culturally, fascist nationalism represents a stubborn effort by some countries, and some groups in every country, to exclude the flood of foreign traditions, and react to their provincial isolation. A bigoted nationalism, aided by unhealthy social conditions, can build strong dikes against world culture. It is over a hundred years since Goethe preached world culture to the Germans. But these cultural dikes cannot be maintained much longer, in any part of the world. The future civilization of every national group will no doubt be increasingly international, while at the same time each group rightly tries to keep alive, and make available to others, its own most cherished traditions.

There is now a concerted effort to make our youth more aware of the cultures of Latin America and of China and India—a vast undertaking, which we have hardly begun. Unfortunately, such efforts are often impelled and prejudiced by political events, military and commercial alignments. When it is expedient to make friends with Latin America, there is pressure to advertise and perhaps to exaggerate its cultural achievements. When Germany and Japan become our enemies, there is pressure to ignore or disparage their whole cultural contribution for centuries past. As against this, recently arrived German *émigré* scholars enrich our culture with a flood of books in English, emphasizing

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past German accomplishments and ways of thinking. Thus fluctuating currents in political and social life affect the process of cultural assimilation, with results which eventually sift down into school textbooks and popular journalism. In a democracy, the process of cultural importation is comparatively free and haphazard, as distinguished from the rigorously planned governmental control of dictatorship.

Without sacrificing any of this freedom—in fact, with the utmost free trade in matters cultural—it should be possible to make the process a little less haphazard; a little more intelligently thought out. To be sure, no individual and no group can be entrusted with the whole task of selecting what is best in the cultural heritage. That is a never-ending process, which each generation must undertake anew in the light of its own best judgment. There are no definite, accepted standards; for the standards themselves are part of the cultural heritage, and conflict fundamentally with each other. Those of us who accept a relativistic, naturalistic philosophy of value in aesthetics will not assume to evaluate art and artists in any final or absolute way, for we realize our limitations. But that does not justify us in evading the task of evaluation entirely, and assuming a mask of neutral objectivity. Even those scholars who make the greatest pretense at pure, objective fact-finding do evaluate, though perhaps unconsciously and without acknowledging their assumptions. They do so in the very act of including some artists, some types and examples of art in their books or courses, and omitting or minimizing others. Such inclusion and emphasis are tantamount to saying, "These are the important things, most worthy of attention." The praises and preferences of the expert are followed in innumerable textbooks and classrooms. Such cultural evaluation is important enough to be performed explicitly, systematically, in concrete detail, by the best experts available, and with full defense of each judgment so far as reasons can be given. The student has a right to such reasons, and should not be put off with pontifical dogmatism to the effect that "One just feels these things; they can't be put into words."

The task of selection for educational purposes is not one of saying, in a general way, "This is good; that is bad. This is great; that is trivial." The transmission of culture to the next generation has to be adapted to different age levels, from nursery school to graduate school.

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One must ask not only what is best from an adult standpoint, but what is best for children in each grade of school. What can they grasp and assimilate? What will interest them, and stimulate them to further growth and effort? What will follow naturally after what has gone before, and prepare them for the advanced studies they may undertake later on? What will have the desired effects upon them, emotionally and volitionally as well as intellectually, toward making them the kinds of person we want to produce? (Different religious and other groups disagree considerably on these issues.) Differences in sex and intelligence, in special aptitude and type of personality, must also be considered if we expect to plan the curriculum wisely. In the upper grades of elementary school and after, vocational considerations enter with increasing force, making us subordinate the values of liberal education to the practical needs of making a living or running a home. To what extent can both sets of values be combined?

Each of these questions bristles with theoretical difficulties. Little or no research has been done on most of them in relation to the arts. Few expert opinions are available, for the scholars in art have not often considered them. The school administrator cannot postpone a decision, however. He must determine the curriculum as best he can, with his limited knowledge of each field of learning. He must order textbooks written and purchased in quantity; allot so many hours in the schedule for each unit of study. Often subjected to selfish and irrational pressures, uncertain of his ground, he must live up to his educational ideals as best he can.

It is no simple task to provide him with expert aid in his gigantic problem of adapting the cultural heritage to all the countless varieties of student mind and interest in the schools. It is a task for generations to build up the mechanism of research and experiment, of cooperative thinking, which will transform our present attempts at liberal education into something more worthy of the name. But something will have been accomplished if the need for such study is recognized, and if a few individuals, qualified in both psychology and art, are induced to enter the field of educational planning.

Besides evaluation, there is need for summary and condensation; for brief descriptive interpretations of each important realm of world culture, that the high spots can be touched upon in the brief span allotted

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to each in a crowded curriculum. Scholars are apt to look condescendingly upon the task of "popularizing" or "vulgarizing" culture, and to speak loftily of "Cook's tours" through learning. But a brief introduction, when there is time for no more, is better than nothing. And there is room for great wisdom and skill in boiling down vast masses of material; distilling their essential values in a few simple words, a few pictures, an album of phonograph records. When undertaken by a first-class mind, such summaries can help to clarify the thinking of scholars, as well as to inform the public. The schools need expert help in summarizing the latest discoveries about each great historic period in civilization. They must disregard its minor works, and emphasize its outstanding examples—its Parthenons and Mahabharatas—so that hurried students will not be overwhelmed in minor details. It is for the experts to build a bridge of understanding between the modern student and each remote culture, by interpretation and comparison, pointing out the motives behind each type of art; the religious, moral, and social viewpoints needed for its appreciation.

In particular, they can try to show the student what is living or worth bringing to life in these ancient and exotic cultures, as distinct from what is thoroughly and deservedly dead. This is no place for pedantic scholarship—for reviving a thoroughly trivial artist, with many footnote references, merely because no one has recently mentioned him. The modern student, especially in the United States, is justifiably skeptical about ancient history—and this means everything before World War II. He has seen all too clearly the downfall of old-world cultures, including some which prided themselves on a high state of civilization. He is thrilled by the power of modern technology, and impressed by the difficulty of learning it; of finding a place for himself in the postwar world. He has little time for mere antiquarian browsing. If asked to spend time in studying an ancient product, belief, or custom, he is impatient and prejudiced in advance. He wants to be shown exactly how it can be used today; what he can learn from it that can be applied in modern life. The most narrow-minded will accept only what can be used to make money, in their future jobs. But there are many who will go a good deal farther, and look respectfully at the ancient or exotic if shown how it can be somehow applied in our own culture—perhaps as material for decorative ornament, or as a setting for some

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play or film. A deeper understanding of how old wisdom and beauty can be used today comes only after long study, long comparison of old and new, in which we gradually learn, for instance, how Plato expressed some ideas better—more concisely and penetratingly—than any subsequent writer has done; how there are important values in Bach, in Sung Chinese painting, in Persian rugs, which can be found nowhere else. We may or may not regard them as better than modern art; fortunately, the choice is not necessary. But they are worth while experiencing for their own sake, in addition to modern art. Moreover, they can help the student understand modern art, by showing him the stylistic traditions, including exotic and primitive revivals, on which it is based.

It must not be implied that the cultural heritage is exclusively ancient and exotic, or that the artistic content of a liberal education should emphasize the far away and long ago. It is well to do so at times in our thinking, for they are all too liable to be pruned away entirely in these impatient, practical days. But what happened yesterday, the latest product of a contemporary artist, is as much a part of our cultural heritage as the pyramids of Egypt. It is part of the aesthetician's task to appraise and select the best in contemporary culture, so far as he is able; and the task of the cultural historian does not cease when he has told the story up to twenty years ago.

Nor is the cultural heritage entirely composed of finished works of art, to be passively admired and investigated. It also includes a vast repertory of skills and techniques; of instruments and processes, many of them in the field of art. For the present-day student who can apply them to advantage, they are hints for active use. Most old techniques and materials have been surpassed by modern ones, in art as elsewhere; but there are notable exceptions, and the modern artist often profits by reviving an old device. As a rule, the ancient artist's best gift to the modern one is no secret of technique or material, but one of form and design, or one of meaning and spiritual value in the work of art. Many such values are lost in each generation as it rushes on into new, alluring paths. In the next, discerning leaders look back again, and try to recapture what has been lost; perhaps to combine it with recent achievements. Of such action and reaction new developments in art are made.

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The huge task of selection and summary is not waiting for aestheticians to undertake it, but is being done by countless writers and teachers in each special field of art and education. To a large extent it must be done by specialists. To the authority on sixteenth century Italian music we listen with especial respect in selecting the greatest works and composers of that period. Each art and period has its own authoritative scholars. But when the question arises of what relative emphasis shall be placed on one period, one art, one national culture as compared with another, we must turn to those who have surveyed and appraised more extensively. Moreover, who is to piece together all the scattered articles and books by specialists, into some brief, coherent form which teachers can use?

Here American scholars, on the whole, have been over-cautious, over-timid about generalizing. They have accepted too completely the assumption that one cannot be a sound scholar without specializing intensively, on some minute spatial and temporal division of history. They have failed to realize that one can, paradoxically, specialize on generalizing; that to do so is the essence of the philosophical attitude. This type of scholarship, if aware of its limitations and willing to make use of the findings of specialists, can be as sound and rigorous as the narrower type. A map of the world, or of world culture, can be as scientific as one of a small region, though less precise in detail. Specialization, if pursued exclusively, achieves only a heaped-up mass of unorganized details. To bring out its full significance and usefulness, it must be constantly supplemented by the synthetic, extensive phase of thinking. German scholarship in the arts as in the other fields, while at times minutely intensive, has been less timid about philosophical generalizing, and its scholars have been on the whole more broadly trained. The recent influx of German scholars should have a salutary effect on us in this respect. We may not accept all their theories or judgments of value, but can well afford to emulate their courage and ambition in attempting large-scale systematic summaries of human culture.

Some of these should be technical and erudite, for the advanced student; others simple and popular. If informed and careful scholars will not write the latter, someone else will, for the public now demands it. Most schools can make a place for a small unit on oriental civiliza-

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tion, and no more. If the best authorities will not boil it down into tabloid form, some hack writer will do so, and will thus help to determine what shall be the cultural heritage. While the specialist hesitates, and inveighs against "mere smatterings," the book markets are flooded with outlines of this and that: short cuts to knowledge and appreciation; world histories of music, the theatre, painting, architecture, gardens, textiles; surveys of Greek, oriental, and medieval culture in their intricate complexity. Reviewers find mistakes; pundits grieve at omissions and dubious generalities. But, more and more, competent scholars are writing these surveys and doing better jobs of it, using secondary sources where they lack direct knowledge, or employing collaborators to cover some area on which they feel too little informed. The major gulf at present is between the occidental and the oriental inheritance. Few writers feel competent to survey and appraise them both in a single work; to show their interrelations in a single world history of civilization. Sometimes one finds the orient touched on in a single, unrelated chapter, to satisfy the new demand. Eventually, more balanced, integrated accounts will be given.

There are many ways of organizing and presenting the cultural heritage. One of them is basically chronological and genetic, and leads to the subject known as cultural history, or history of civilization. It should include not only the history of all the arts, but that of the social, economic, religious, intellectual, and other factors which have interacted with them and helped to determine their nature. If we try to cover world history, eastern and western, it becomes almost impossible to proceed in continuous chronological order. One must skip around: follow Roman history for a time, then go back and pick up the Chinese or Indian story for a time, and so on. But chronological order can dominate on the whole. Writers who prefer a somewhat smaller field can mark one off on the basis of a single art or group of arts, or of a single division of history. For example, they can write on a subject like *Music in Western Civilization*, as Paul H. Láng has recently done. Even a relatively limited field such as this is extensive and involved enough to require considerable philosophic scope.

Another mode of procedure is that of comparative aesthetics and critical theory. It attempts rather a morphological basis of arrangement than a chronological: one based on recurrent types and principles

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of structure in art. It brings out the main factors in artistic form, such as representation, decoration, and symbolism; color and line in painting, melody and rhythm in music. It analyzes and classifies works from all periods in terms of types and styles, showing recurrent and distinctive features in different arts, periods, and cultural stages. This approach is more difficult for the student to follow than the chronological, and is much less popular. It is not new in the United States, however. During the nineties, for example, George Lansing Raymond of Princeton published a monumental series of books beginning with *Art in Theory: an Introduction to the Study of Comparative Aesthetics*¹. Though dated in many respects, it deserves more careful study than it has received of late. Santayana's *Reason in Art*, and many another book on aesthetic theory since that time, are too abstract and general, too lacking in reference to particular works of art, to fill the present need.

From the educational standpoint, something more is needed than books and articles *about* art. Books are needed which can give the reader at least a second-hand experience of the works of art themselves, by photographic reproduction, detailed analysis, and guidance in finding original examples elsewhere. In addition to books, however well illustrated, there is need for more, better, and less expensive color-print reproductions, colored lantern slides, phonograph records, films, and anthologies of world literature in translation. This need is a real one in schools and colleges throughout the country which are making a serious attempt to teach world culture. Commercial agencies have been supplying them as well as possible under depression and war conditions, sometimes with qualified advice and sometimes without. What is needed from the experts in this connection is, first, advice in selection; and, second, a simple but adequate conceptual framework, both historical and theoretical. Without going into exhaustive detail, it should help the student find quickly the distinctive and important features of each work of art, and their mutual relations in the whole fabric of world

¹ Putnam's, New York, 1894. Others are *The Representative Significance of Form*; *Poetry as a Representative Art*; *Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture as Representative Arts*; *The Genesis of Art Form*; *Rhythm and Harmony in Poetry and Music*; *Music as a Representative Art*; *Proportion and Harmony of Line and Color in Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture*.

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civilization. Books to be read independently will be of less direct value here than museum guide-books, concert program notes, and pamphlets like the admirable series which Curt Sachs has written for his phonograph record albums, *l'Anthologie Sonore* and *2000 Years of Music*.

No sharp distinction is possible or desirable between the historical and theoretical approaches. To an increasing extent they are being combined, and the difference is one of degree, as to which mode of organization dominates. Raymond S. Stites's extensive survey, *The Arts and Man*,² is historical in its approach, but makes constant reference to aesthetic concepts, standards of value in different periods, types of form, etc. Louis W. Flaccus's *The Spirit and Substance of Art*³ is organized as aesthetic theory, but makes frequent historical reference. Of the two, there is perhaps more need at present for the theoretical approach, for it has lagged far behind the historical. There is a great need of clarifying and systematizing our concepts of form and style in art, both for teaching purposes and for historians themselves. Many of these show their weakness in general theory by using descriptive and critical terms loosely, and making unsupported evaluative assumptions.

More important than the distinction between history and theory is that between specialized and philosophical, intensive and extensive. History can be either, and theory can be either. Historians have not been alone in leaning too far toward specialization in recent years. Aesthetics has done the same, and so has philosophy itself; both forgetting their traditional function of helping to coordinate knowledge and thinking in all other fields. Too many aestheticians have withdrawn into empty and artificial hair-splitting about the meaning of beauty, value, the aesthetic object, etc., leaving the world of art and of human beings who make and use art, far behind. Aestheticians of this type can never take a leading role in liberal education or in cultural progress. They must come out of their comfortable little departmental libraries, and take the trouble to observe and study more extensively in all the arts.

Aesthetics, thus revitalized, should be given a more strategic place in the curriculum of the liberal college in future—not off by itself in

² Whittlesey House, New York, 1940.

³ Crofts, N. Y., 1926.

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an inaccessible side-alley, reserved for the few who specialize in philosophy, but at the heart of a coordinated program in the history, theory, and (for some students) the practice of the various arts. Detailed courses in the visual arts, literature, and music should be linked together chronologically by courses in general cultural history, and theoretically by courses in comparative aesthetics. The students who take such a coordinated course in the arts should also take basic courses in philosophy and science, including logic, psychology, and social science.

As a definite subject, aesthetics will probably be studied mainly in the higher grades, in college and graduate school. To study it in a systematic, technical way requires many previous courses in the subjects just mentioned. At the same time, steps in that direction can be taken all along the line. Even young children in the primary grades are now led to compare works of art, and discuss their preferences. Older ones take courses in art and music appreciation, which help to draw together their studies in various fields, without introducing more technical terms than they are capable of handling. A great deal more can be done on each grade of a liberal education, toward organizing with as much theory as necessary the various detailed studies of the arts and their cultural backgrounds. The lower down we go on the ladder of grades and age levels, the less we find the evils of departmental specialization. The first few grades present their share of the cultural heritage in a much more unified way, without the artificial division into subjects and isolated fields. From junior high school onward, the student needs ever more urgently the help which comparative aesthetics might give, in reintegrating what man has put asunder.

Any realistic discussion of liberal education should take note of the fact that it has just been dealt a staggering blow by the war. In men's colleges it has been almost abolished for the duration by the draft of able-bodied students and the turning over of the curriculum to technical, military instruction. In high schools the expectation of military service and the attraction of jobs in war industry have placed a handicap on liberal subjects.

To be sure, there is reason to hope and expect a revival of interest in the humanities after the war. But we must not assume that it will be automatic and unresisted. On the contrary, it will need active and determined leadership. Long before the war, and even before the

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depression, liberal education was fighting for its life in many American colleges and universities, against the growing demand for vocational, pre-professional courses. There were notable exceptions, but the trend was widespread. I can remember my surprise, in a large state university, at first hearing students discuss which "cultural course" they would take that year. I had supposed that all courses, at least in the curriculum for an A. B. degree, were "cultural" in the sense in which that word was being used. But no; all but one or two courses each year had to be definitely instrumental to a legal, medical, engineering, business, or other technical career, for the majority of students. Scientific and technological courses were rigorously pruned of the philosophic import they might have had, in explaining the nature of the universe and the road ahead for human progress. There was time only for specifically needed facts and methods. Thus English, *or* philosophy, *or* history, had to bear almost the whole burden of sustaining the liberal part of a curriculum which was all supposed to be liberal.

The depression enormously strengthened this trend toward the practical, through making the struggle for jobs and existence keener. The specialized requirements of technical professions are becoming steadily greater, and the student's margin of time and energy for merely "cultural" courses smaller. After the war, the task of rebuilding economic and social reconstruction will continue to make heavy demands on practical training; and many young men will be impatient to make up for lost time in getting ahead financially. Even in subjects once regarded as inherently "cultural," there will be continued pressure to emphasize a practical approach. English and foreign language departments, for example, are constantly being urged to minimize literary courses and stress the basic ability to read and write a language, often as a service to technical studies in some other field.

It is true that the so-called cultural or liberal subjects have often erred in being too remote from life; too content with the ivory tower and the aristocratic tradition in higher learning. Some pressure toward an acceptance of social functions is wholesome for them, and may in the end be the means of their survival in the college curriculum. The humanities, moreover, should not be too quick to accept the label of "useless" and "impractical." A good case can be made for their contribution to the success of a technical career, through giving wider

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vision, mental adaptability, resources for leisure activity, and so on—at least, if they are significantly and vigorously taught. All of them have potential functions in what may be termed humanistic technology—in the understanding and control of human nature for its own welfare, through psychology, sociology, philosophy, and the arts. I have, in a previous article, urged the acceptance of some of these functions by the subject of aesthetics⁴. However, there is no doubt of a difference in degree between those studies which have immediate, tangible uses and those whose values are long-deferred, intangible, intellectual, and aesthetic. Defenders of the humanities would be unwise to stake their case entirely on supposed practical values, however broadly this concept is defined. It will be more convincing in the long run to insist on the value of a liberal education as a means to the good life; to good citizenship and a more satisfying existence. A frank appeal on these grounds, on behalf of the arts, is often convincing to the most practical-minded. The modern father of a college student, the modern employer of technical experts, wants vocational education to be thorough and intensive. He is rightly suspicious of the time-wasting, country-club dabbling which has often passed for liberal education in the American college. But he can be made to see the value of a general education, including non-vocational subjects, if assured that it will be properly streamlined and efficient in its own field. It is for the advocates of postwar liberal education to undertake this modernizing process, and make sure that the liberal subjects are as concise, as clearly planned for definite values, as the technological ones.

Within the ranks of these advocates, there are fundamental differences in approach. For many decades now, the ruling tendency in humanistic studies on the higher level has been toward ever-narrower specialization, along nationalistic and chronological lines. There have been mild jokes about the urge to “know more and more about less and less,” but these have had little effect. The recent movement toward broader “orientation courses” for college freshmen has shown no promise of extending a philosophical, synthetic approach into more advanced studies. Indeed, it has been dropped in many universities, partly because of

⁴ “Knowledge and Control in the Field of Aesthetics,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring, 1941.

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the difficulty in securing instructors who are adequately trained for such an approach to liberal education. One cannot weld ten narrow specialists into a broad-minded faculty, by simply appointing them as a committee to draw up a coordinated course. Each one continues to speak his own little piece to the students, and the latter still get little help in fitting together the pieces of an artificially dismembered civilization. The synthetic, coordinating approach to liberal education must somewhere be carried on up through college and graduate school, to produce a group of teachers capable of passing it on to others. So far the vicious circle has continued to prevent this.

As Dean Christian Gauss of Princeton has pointed out⁵, "In the past seventy-five years at an ever-accelerating rate we have been substituting the historical and the nationalistic standpoint for what may properly be called the humanistic, or philosophical . . . Of the courses in the 'cultural subjects' the immense majority are now presented not from a philosophical or humanistic but from an historical and nationalistic standpoint. Today, we teach courses in Italian literature of the fourteenth century, French literature of the sixteenth, German literature of the eighteenth, and American literature of the Colonial period. The same is true of courses in philosophy or in innumerable nationalistic cultures. No common human denominator is assumed to exist. We have sought to find the essential meaning of life not as our forefathers did, in those elements which unite men, but in those which divide them. Much may be gained from historical analysis properly applied, but unless it is counterbalanced by the application of unifying principles it will remain what it has become in our colleges—the most powerful dissolvent of those humanistic convictions which gave us the Spirit of 1776." Our "over-historicized educational system," Dean Gauss continues, has made our scholars timid about evaluation: "Higher education must consider whether the most serious single cause for the weakening of the liberal tradition does not lie precisely in the fact that humanists and historians, cowed by the success of scientists, have developed an inferiority complex and have become afraid to pronounce moral and esthetic judgments."

⁵ "Can We Educate for Democracy?" in *The American Scholar*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Summer, 1942.

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At the same time, there is ground for optimism in the recent progress of non-scholastic, informal agencies in liberal education. While most of our schools and colleges have been marking time or losing ground along this line, through outside causes and their own lack of vision, these other agencies have been going forward. The years since the first World War have seen a tremendous growth in American art museums, not only in the quality and scope of their collections, but as educational institutions. They cooperate with schools and colleges, providing gallery guidance, reference libraries, lantern slides and circulating exhibits. But much of their work is done for independent visitors, adult groups, and children who come voluntarily on Saturdays and Sundays or after school. Radio and moving pictures, for all their faults, often give fine music, fine plays, travel films, and educational features that have considerable value as liberal education. Public libraries are branching out with all manner of services. Good books on cultural history and modern art are bought by the general reader, even though they rarely see the inside of a classroom. The best popular magazines and newspapers, such as *Life* and the *New York Times*, give excellent pictures and discussions of ancient and modern art, and emphasize world culture by feature stories from every part of the earth. Much as the secular school and college took over the work of education from the church, these non-scholastic agencies now threaten to take over an important part of it from the school and college.

The latter will do well to clean house and modernize their methods after the war. They will still be needed, however. No amount of informal, casual leisure-time education can take the place of systematic study under expert teaching. There will still be room for the quiet, technical scholar and artist. Vigorous leadership from scholars in aesthetics, in and out of college faculties, can play a crucial part in improving liberal education after the war.

Art Ahead

VAN METER AMES

IN mid-career on the road of life, now as in the Middle Ages, men ask of art a vision of their values. What Dante did, with contemporary architects and sculptors, must be done again, especially now that everyone knows we are on the verge of a new world. Before it can take shape the chance to shape it must be won by arms. But victory will be vain unless the future is shadowed forth and rehearsed in imagination, unless what men hate is made plain and what men love is made as undeniable as art can make it. In the serious projection of what men have at heart the artist and critic must rise to the dream and face the reality of the present. The standards by which Shostakovitch, Picasso, Frank Lloyd Wright, Thomas Mann, Malraux and Silone, are being judged, are simply the reasons for fighting fascism, the values upon which depend man's fate and hope.

Mr. Irwin Edman has said: "Aesthetic enjoyment and artistic creation are anticipations in our civilization of what the Good Life would really be" (*The World, the Arts and the Artist*, p. 42). The good life is inconceivable except as extending and securing what has been found good, mitigating and removing what has been found bad. The role of art is to intensify and integrate what is valuable in experience, making through a material medium a tangible as well as imagined example of the ideal. In art the gap is closed between the goal of the practical man and the immediate good he overlooks; while the demand of the moment is expanded by the meanings packed in. There are persisting types and even works of art, though it takes discrimination to sift out what is currently vital. Identified with ideals, art must always move on to what ought to be, by taking account of the situation as it is. The striking thing now is that novelty is so great as to roll up previous times in a vast stretch of sameness lacking modern science and technology. In the past the years brought gradual change, while unbridged distances did not separate one place from

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another as much as the old world is removed from our age of near neighbors taking the first fast turn in destiny.

In looking from a speeding vehicle we see a foreground of rapid change against a background of slower change, while intervening objects interrupt continuity. So from the moving present the near scene streaks by, altering and obscuring the aspect of past and future. Gazing off to remote conditions and consequences reveals a steadier perspective. Science, which accelerates life, also gives a horizon-view relatively at rest. To express the effect of this, its immediate dizziness and far promise, is the opportunity of art now. Through a particular medium and self-contained form art must accommodate the foreground to the background, adjust the meanings of the past to the future. Such an undertaking calls for imagination and thrives on crisis. Art may be momentarily paralyzed or rendered irrelevant in some forms, while some will be shoved aside by men who do not see the importance of the effort. Yet the effort of art is to show what is important and the urgency of trying to attain it. Works of art are smashed, artists are killed and kept from working at their art. But as long as men survive they will begin again and again, with the help of art, to shape the future.

To think that a rebirth of art must wait upon improvement of social conditions is to ignore the role of art in promoting progress. A work of consequence has consequences, transforming import from life into export to life, in a process that is not finished until it is finished with. The obsolescent museum-view of art as articles to be contemplated passively, not only without touching but without using, cuts them off from the artist as well as from the appreciator. Museums are overcoming that view by educational programs to reestablish connection between art and life, especially by enabling children and adults to work at art themselves. Exhibits by living and local artists remind people that every work had a maker who lived in a particular time and place, striving to express the experience he shared with others. Traveling shows of work in different mediums by diverse schools arouse awareness of the approaches and intentions variegating the abstract notion of beauty. Ceramics and textiles, examples of rooms and furniture, modern and of other periods, bring out the roots and uses of art in daily living.

The intimate relation between architecture and actual life never could be ignored, though it has been habitual to assume that the art in a building is something over and above its practical aspect. It has been felt that architecture of past ages communicates in its "aesthetic" features something deeper and more significant than mere function. Thought for which function and purpose seem merely practical, divorced from "higher" values, has a schizophrenic tendency among people whose work and conditions of living make everything lovely and of good report an escape. A heritage of dualism is involved here and invoked to extenuate the situation.

The oneness of art and life among the Pueblo Indians, despite the dust and and poverty of their existence, indicates how much happier we might be if we could "get ourselves together." Some of us are homesick for the Middle Ages on account of the unity of their life as we see it symbolized in a cathedral, despite the fissure between this world and the other. Perhaps we long for the Renaissance when this world was passionately felt to be enough, though it was far from whole, being truncated by repudiation of supernaturalism before a place was found for values in nature. We may dream of the Greeks, shutting our eyes to the alienation from life in some of their cults and philosophies. Or we may find with John Macmurray in the ancient Hebrews a pattern of integrated living that permits indefinite improvement in quality without flying the kite of idealism or dropping the anchor of materialism (*The Clue to History*).

Macmurray does not consider art as the means of attaining and refining that pattern, because for him the essence of art is contemplation. But if with Dewey we think of the aesthetic as making as well as appreciating what is made, art becomes not only the symbol of what life should be but a process by which life is continually reconstructed. Then art is what Mead has called "a creative process that puts things together in such a fashion that we can enjoy them" (*Movements of Thought in the 19th Century*, p. 68). If we cannot fully enjoy things except as we have worked at putting them together, there must be a sense of solidarity between the artist and his audience for his work is to be appreciated, and the work of art is itself the best means of establishing that sense. To enjoy music it is not necessary to be a composer, but it is necessary to be human, imbued with the ups and downs

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of life, the moods and rhythms of disappointment and fulfilment; love, anger, aspiration, and the like, which provide the dynamism of composition.

“Putting things together” is a process of integration, but in the result what is enjoyed is not only the togetherness of things but individual qualities made more appreciable by the way they are arranged. The qualities of an art-work, in their relationship and in their particularity, are enjoyed or suffered or both. Yet it is crude to think of a plus-and-minus affair of pleasure-pain as appreciation, since it should involve response to a great range of individual difference. Whitehead, along with emphasis upon organic interconnection, has been a champion of the variety of values. Achievement of value-variety is the aim of the organism, in his view; and great art for him “is the arrangement of the environment so as to provide for the soul vivid, but transient, values” (quoted from *Science and the Modern World* in Rader’s *Modern Book of Esthetics*, p. 472).

Whitehead calls upon art to right the ills of our civilization by making men aware of values which have been obscured by science, industry, and habits of professionalism. They have slurred values by concentrating on abstractions. The methodology of each profession and of each branch of science must confine itself to selected features of the world, treating the many-sidedness of actual experience as if it were “nothing but” what is amenable to a limited system of ideas and operations. In like manner business and industry must reduce the iridescence of living to the outlook of the economic man, though with yearly modifications. The implied disrespect for persons has made workmen mere hands. Whitehead thinks the way to overcome this evil is to develop aesthetic apprehension, the ability to light up any area of life and see the values involved. This requires the artist’s urge toward the realization and maintenance of individual qualities, and the art-lover’s sensitiveness to them when they are presented, leading in turn to action. Art then is any arrangement of facts whereby values are made vivid. There is the simple case of placing the body in position for a good view of a sunset. But for Whitehead art in this sense “concerns more than sunsets. A factory, with its machinery, its community of operatives, its social service to the general population, its dependence upon organizing and designing genius, its potentialities as

a source of wealth to the holders of its stock is an organism exhibiting a variety of vivid values. What we want to train is the habit of apprehending such an organism in its completeness" (Whitehead in Rader's book, pp. 469, 470).

Such is the vision of the factory in *La Condition Humaine* by Malraux: "The factory, which is so far nothing more than a kind of church of the catacombs, must become what the cathedral was, and men must see there, instead of gods, the force of man struggling against the earth" (p. 395). Whitehead would say that if men see this they will see in it something divine, and it is interesting to compare his appreciation of a factory with his affection for the medieval architecture of his youthful background (Cf. *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*, edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 5). It summed up a civilization, showing what life was and what men once wanted it to be. Art remaining from an age that is gone, except as taken up in the heritage, is often harder to understand than expression of our own time, yet easier to feel in general effect. Abbeys and cathedrals were long a-building, and it may be that when factories are perfected they will manifest as much sensitiveness to conditions and intuition of what men are striving for. Places of worship have long seemed more inspiring than places of work. But the great thing about monuments of the Middle Ages was their fusion of work with the highest worth. They were the places where men did their best and most continuous work. One senses the whole community and whole generations at work in them. By the same token, if and when industrial work has communal wholeness, factories may become great works of art, in which what occurs will be in massive and unconscious fashion transmitted to intention and shared in form. Factories, as places where increasingly human life is being made what it is, should typify as well as anything the thesis of Dewey that all life is a rhythm of doing and undergoing, a movement toward fulfilment through adaptation of energies and materials as means and ends. If art is the refinement and culmination of that movement, art which is indigenious and genuine could have no more likely locus than the factory.

Much as we may admire the art of other cultures and use it sympathetically to symbolize our life, such art remains foreign and imported. Art becomes our own by expressing our own experience

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in our own way. Nor does this condemn us to provincialism, if we develop a culture in touch with common humanity. The suddenness of science and technology has plunged all the world into enough difficulty and unpleasantness to explain nostalgia for former patterns of life and art. But we are learning that wholeness and happiness are impossible unless we can solve our actual problems with contemporary instruments and present imagination. We must face the modern scene. Realistic fiction is an example of doing it. Regionalism in writing and painting makes manifest the need to realize and express every hole and corner, until we know it is fit for art and vital to it, no matter how disagreeable. This realization has drawn into the light of art the depressed levels of society in a way promising to bridge the cleavage dividing humanity against itself.

No doubt the artist would like to praise the world around him. If he cannot celebrate the contemporary scene by and large he will often select something he can treat with pleasure. In a world rendered impersonal by the theoretical and practical use of science, and wracked by social injustice, where institutions and attitudes are crumbling or being reconstructed, it is natural to seize upon whatever is accessible and satisfying. Many artists make the most of immediate experience as it still can be enjoyed. Sex is a frequent theme, since it is as steady a value as any and capable of indefinite vulgarization as well as refinement. Exploitation of feminine charm, disregarding woman's personality, is a facile way of establishing a bond between the man in the street and the artist. But even when the latter sees in woman what a man goes to see in a burlesque show it may be edifying to see how this appears on canvas. Color and line and plastic qualities will be there as well as a form which has held good since the *Song of Solomon*, though the delight of its outdoor youth is sicklied over with tawdry associations.

Instead of delighting in sex or exploiting it the artist may express its depravity, as in Picasso's print called *Minotauromachy* (No. 273 in *Picasso: Forty Years of his Art*, published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1939). The artist does not always pick out what is pleasant, even to the animal in man. In place of enticing fruit may be offered drought, a riot, or the *Echo of a Scream* after the bombing of a city (Cf. No. 147, 149, 152, in *Art In Our Time*, The Museum

of Modern Art, New York, 1939). Unable to find solace in any cheerful things at hand or in the grandeur of nature, even unwilling to comfort himself and others with what could still be enjoyed, the artist has been expressing melancholy, horror, and wrath at what no one could enjoy though it demands appreciation. Consider Roualt's *Head of Christ* or Levine's *Feast of Pure Reason* (*Ibid.*, No. 121 and No. 146).

Eighteenth century realization that the concept of beauty was too refined to cover the aesthetic experience, comes over us with new force. The category of the sublime could supplement beauty until, with Bosanquet, beauty was broadened to include the sublime as difficult over against easy beauty. Volkelt, after finding in the characteristic and individualistic, tragic and comic, room for varieties of aesthetic experience that were not exactly beautiful, was obliged to go beyond his broadest conception of the aesthetic and admit the ugly as aesthetically justified, since only through ugliness could art uphold some important social values. But instead of making this an exceptional case we now must extend the aesthetic to cover the downright ugly, with Ducasse, or deny that great recent art is art. The anger, hatred, horror, in much of it, cannot fit a theory of the willessness of art and complete aloofness from the practical self. The caricatures of Orozco are an attack upon this self, and those of George Grosz it cannot take complacently (*Ibid.*, No. 223). Perhaps it does not matter whether, with Volkelt, we hesitate to call such satire aesthetic while admitting its non-aesthetic quality as a social necessity of the time, or instate it within a broader definition of the aesthetic. In the long run the definition will be decided by the artist and the response to his work rather than by the aesthetician. At any rate, taking a cue from Volkelt, we see that unpleasant associations in art may be justified by association with social goals.

Sometimes the modern breaking up of familiar forms seems to be done in search of novelty, to give a sharp stimulus. Often, however, one cannot help feeling that it is done to smash the world we live in, or to express how it is being smashed. Cubism goes back before 1914, but so does the disintegration which led to 1914. Picasso, called "the most influential artist of our time," is said in one painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger* done in 1906-1907, to have marked, from left to right, "the metamorphosis which was to lead to Cubism and consequently to the worldwide tradition of angular abstract form" (quoted from the account

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of No. 157 in *Art in Our Time*). Seeing the comprehensive exhibition of his work, or the catalogue of it (published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1939), one is amazed, amid all his complexity, eclecticism, and invention, by the oscillation of his style: between a classic simplicity of treatment, with recognizability of subject, and weird distortion. It is as if he were one of his own fusions of profile and full face, a schizophrenic genius averting his gaze yet turning to look at the explosion of his world; still able to express what has been called beauty, but wistfully, as a fleeting vision, while he has to produce haunted shapes with paranoiac eyes, going to the Guernica nightmare. Fierce dislocation has become the means of expressing the frightful truth.

Not only in painting but in drawing, lithographing, etching, also in sculpture, can be seen the metamorphosis from what we still think of as beauty to what is better designated as a terrific power of expression. Art still provides delightful things, and not always derivative. But it is increasingly apparent that artists are not obliged to please. We may be glad when they do, and when they show a gentle humor. But now we know that in exposing ourselves to their work we must be ready to shudder. Hardened as we are by the horror coming to our eyes and ears day by day, though still isolated by our oceans, we almost welcome the capacity of art to make us realize what the world is going through, in a concentration that can burst within us. It becomes insufferably smug to live in a tragic age without a tragic sense.

Continuing to hug the mood of new-world optimism, with hope in science, democracy and education, we would like to dismiss surrealism as crazy play, hallucination, paranoia. But no one can feel the work of Salvador Dali without realizing the fate of Spain and how it spread (Cf. *Salvador Dali* by James Thrall Soby, pub. by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1941). If such a painter is pathological he can persuade us that he has had reason to be. The involuntary cultural allusion in his work cannot possibly be reduced to abstract form or snubbed as irrelevant. Nor can Joan Miro's work be squeezed into more love of color and linear design, though his things might seem preposterously abstract to the casual glance (Cf. *Joan Miro* by James Johnson Sweeney, pub. by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1941).

Artists are sensitive. Only if they were not could they be confined to mere sense data. Artists are aware. Otherwise they might not feel how the relations inherent in their data are continuous with the whole structure of experience. Artists have not merely sensations but perceptions of what is going on. Whatever they find of interest, as artists who are also human beings, their focus on it and their expression of it will be a challenge. And a full response to their art can not disregard its associations or consider them simply as extra-aesthetic, no matter how disagreeably remote from traditional beauty.

Concomitant with the effort to extend the sources and boundaries of art is the ever more conscious urge to have art more widely shared, both in the production and the appreciation of it. As we get over thinking that vast areas of life are unfit for artistic treatment we overcome the prejudice that only a few people are capable of aesthetic experience. Democracy demands this, and the United Nations are fighting for it. The fight will succeed in winning the peace as well as the war only if we have the imagination to see what the hazards are and the stakes. We see that this project cannot stop short at class lines or national borders but must extend to men everywhere. Yet we see too abstractly, with the aid of all our science, if we do not feel as modern art can make us feel.

Men do not want war, for themselves or their children. Men do not want conditions that lead to war. They do not want a peace that may be worse than war. They want food and shelter and work with security, decency, dignity. They want affection and recognition, also adventures and vistas. They want the benefits that science has in store, and they want to be free in religion. How they are to have all they want will have to be worked out cooperatively and gradually, though perhaps more swiftly than anyone dreams who will not see the possibilities. The very obstacles are an incentive to men of energy and imagination, and their art will meet the challenge. Any problematic situation, as a matrix of feeling and thought, is a natural occasion for art. When men are stirred to act, yet thwarted, they become aware, and then if ever they feel and wish, think and project. In the present crisis of civilization they must do it for all they are worth. Looking for cues they will be susceptible to art and will need to forge new art, symbolizing the juncture they confront, making it the springboard for

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advance. They cannot stand still. The momentum of what they have already done and planned, with the impetus of forces beyond their control, will sweep them along, while they try to see and decide. Needing to act they will have to be intuitive, to sum up and seize the contemporary complexity. They will need foresight born of insight that is best available and most suggestive in art, both in the making and the appreciation of it.

The idea is not that men in positions of responsibility will in the midst of a busy day dash off poems, take up an easel, or visit a museum. But they will be influenced by the temper of the people they represent, and this in turn comes to a focus in works of art which not only register what is felt but so express it as to forecast tendencies and intentions. Art is the most reliable poll of popular opinion, because it wells up from the needs and dreams of the masses in various mediums, not in answer to disingenuous questions but in response to what people are feeling. An artist may not be typical. But even before the general repudiation of the art-for-art theory it was impossible for artists by and large not to sense and express what was in the air. Now it would be hard to find a more convincing and moving record of what people face and the grounds of their hope than in painting and writing, music and architecture. There are studies and statistics worked out by scholars and by government committees. There are resolutions by religious bodies, sermons by their leaders. Books, lectures, magazine articles, newspaper editorials and the news itself, radio skits and talks, movies, all verge more or less on art. But it is in works which engage their makers and appreciators intensely, fusing sense and form with human significance, that one finds the growing point of society, where values are reconstructed and projected anew. In retrospect art that seems remote is a record of transitions that once took place. In the present the art which is still fresh, along with that being produced, constitutes a census more detailed and revealing than the most inquisitive government could demand; a forecast of what is coming, as reliable as the power of men to achieve what they want. In art men find out what they finally want. In art they make over their interaction with one another and the environment, not into a copy of what has happened but into a vision of what is happening.

An art-work symbolizes the life of its one or more makers and

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the general situation of which that life is a part, becoming the joint product of an indefinite area of the world and stretch of history. But, more than a graph of passage, art is a process in which something is brought to pass by a welding of wish and intention with circumstance, a marriage of value and fact. It is not necessary to interpret this as a union of nature with a non-natural element. No dualism need be invoked if it is recognized as natural for man to project needs in the form of ideals, and to alter the course things would have if not for his imaginative action. Art is the pivot of man's power to objectify, criticize and recast his situation. No line can be drawn between fine and industrial art, or between art and any creative phase of life.

The distinction of art is in being a process where significant activities and interests are focused so that what appears to be a single thing, made for appreciation of itself, is felt to throb with the future.

The Social Message of Art

MAX SCHOEN

THE message of art to society is contained in the two words *artistic* and *aesthetic*, the former referring to a quality of work and the latter to a quality of feeling. The content of this message is therefore to be discovered in an examination of the nature of artistic work and the nature of aesthetic feeling. The purpose of such an examination is to indicate the sort of society we could have, provided the spirit of art prevailed not only in the artist's work shop, theatre, art gallery and concert hall, but were also to pervade every other human interest and enterprise.

The Human Way of Working: Artistry

A man is working whether he is engaged in a game of chess, climbing a mountain, taking a walk, chopping wood, digging a ditch, solving a scientific problem, delivering a speech or painting a landscape. The opposite of work is not idleness or leisure, but sickness or death. Idleness, unless it is enforced, is working to dodge work, while leisure is time spent working at anything other than one's regular occupation. What, then, is the difference between work as play and work as labor?

Consider a man working on one occasion at a game of chess and on another at hanging window screens. From hours of intense concentration on chess he arises tired but happy and the energy he expends to protect the house against insects is likely to leave him weary and grumpy. The difference between the two occupations does not lie in the work done, but in the reason that prompted it. The screen had to be hung for the sake of comfort and health. The work was motivated by necessity; it was compulsory. But the game of chess was a free choice; it was engaged in for its own sake. It was instigated from within, not compelled from without.

The distinguishing mark between play and labor is that of freedom versus compulsion, which spells the difference between happiness and

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misery. Because play is activity not prompted by the necessity to keep alive, the worker can throw himself into his work with no concern for anything but the joy to be derived from it, in which case he is living while working rather than working in order to be able to go on living. Since joy is invigorating, the worker as player remains alert and energetic, no matter how much effort is demanded by the work, in contrast with the worker as laborer, who works grudgingly because he is enslaved to his task; and it is this depressed emotional condition that exhausts him rather than the work he does. It is also for this reason that a difficulty encountered in play is a welcome challenge, while in labor it is an annoying intrusion. Because play is joyful activity, the more activity it calls for the greater is its exhilarating influence.

It is, then, the factor of compulsion that reduces the natural activity of work into the unnatural chore of labor by robbing the worker of joy in his work. This does not spell a spirit of contrariness or of depravity in human nature, but is rather a fundamental principle of animal life. The animal is an organism, not a mechanism. This means that its activities are prompted and directed by its needs, which it seeks to satisfy through the means provided by the environment. It is an inner-guided, not an outer-driven body; a body that must determine for itself what is or is not to be done at any particular time. Hence, whatever tends to interfere with its freedom of choice violates its nature, and when it is compelled to act under such circumstances, the activity is distasteful and also exhausting and burdensome. Under natural conditions all animals play even when hunting for food. It is only those animals, including human beings themselves, whom man uses to work for him for their bare existence, that labor.

The gist of the nature of work when it happens to be human is contained in the meaning of the word *artistic*. This is the reason why no compliment is more welcome to a worker than to be told that his working procedure is artistic or that the fruit of his work is an art product. It is also the thought behind Ruskin's remark that whereas life without work is a crime, work without art is brutal.

That artistic work and artistic products are not limited to the so-called fine arts is indicated by the fact that everything produced by amateur or professional artists is not invariably art, while a great

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deal done outside the arts is often artistic. Food can be artistically prepared, and a dinner table artistically set. A room can be artistically furnished, and a field artistically ploughed. The barber can be an artist in cutting hair, the housewife in housekeeping, the clerk in attending customers, the secretary in turning out typed sheets, the gardner in making a flower-bed, the tailor in cutting a suit, a surgeon in operating, the butcher in meat-cutting, and even the thief in thieving. Laborers in steel mills, coal mines, or in any other of the more humble occupations, are often more artistic than performers on the concert platform, theatre stage, or occupants of art studios. Parents are to be found who are artists in bringing up children, teachers who are artists in instructing pupils, speakers who are artists in handling audiences, employers who are artists in dealing with employees, and politicians who are artists in deceiving voters. There are those who can wield an axe, prune a tree, pack a suitcase, wrap a package, fold a garment, or perform any other commonplace and routine operation in a manner that can only be described as being artistic or verging on it. If then artistry is not limited to the kind of work that is done, what is it?

We can answer this question by looking into the meaning of the widely current idea that the artist is the person who works for the sake of the work, while the laborer is he who works for his hire. The distinction is quite true. But it tells us nothing as to why it is that one worker is interested in his work, while another worker is interested mostly in getting through with it. The difference lies not in the work but in what the final product of the work means to the worker. Where an interest in the product for itself exists, the worker will spare no effort at excellence, which means that he will seek to grow in skill in the handling of the tools and materials of his trade. Where such an interest in the product itself does not exist, effort is irksome, and work becomes a routine, a mere repetition of movements. So it is not quite true that anyone works for the sake of the work. What is true is that one worker is engrossed in his work because of his interest in the product itself, so that he thinks it, feels it, and lives it. Another worker, lacking an interest in the product, is concerned with getting away from his work. He also thinks and feels, but not his work, rather how soon he can rid himself of it so he can live. It is therefore not the necessity for the exertion of effort that makes work irksome but the absence of

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an incentive that is an end in itself, instead of a means toward an end. The man who will exhaust himself climbing a mountain or playing golf with gusto and vim is sufficient evidence that it is not effort that makes for labor but what it is that sets off the effort. Should the mountain climber or golf player be called upon to engage in these activities for the sake of his health, the effort would become laborious and the laborer unhappy.

In brief, we call an activity artistic when it gives us the feeling that the person engaged in it is careful of the way he is working because of his concern for the product of his work. Artistic effort is the striving to attain successful expression, while an art work is any product in which successful expression has been attained. Therefore work is human only when it is artistically done, for it is only a human being who can produce something the workmanship of which shows that it is the result of a worker who has lived in his work and not only existed by his work.

The Obstructions to the Human Way of Working

There exist several traditional misconceptions about work which must be obliterated from the human mind if human beings are ever to work as they can and should work.

The first and most vicious of these obstructions is that work is a curse pronounced on man for the sin of Adam. This may be so. But if it is true, then life is a curse, for there can be no more miserable person than he whose main occupation is that of running away from being occupied. There are many individuals who exert more effort to dodge exerting effort than they could expend on the most laborious of occupations. The loafer works harder at loafing than he would at working, and his sole reward is misery.

Another traditional misconception about work is the notion that there is work which is nothing but toil and work which is in the main but play. This is a daydream that has reached the status of a social delusion. Any line of activity becomes toil and trouble if permitted to become routinized and mechanized. And there is no work that is inherently routine and mechanical, while any work can become dull and deadening. There are professional men who are miserable in their profession, and there are tradesmen and laborers who find happiness in their occupations. It is the person who is a drudge, and not the

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work that is drudgery. And just as there is no work that does not at times become drudgery, so there are persons who would turn any work into drudgery because their mental attitude is that of drudges. What the drudge needs is not a change in occupation but a change of mind. It is of course true that under present industrial conditions, in which human beings are looked upon as accessories to machines, and in which schools are engaged in training hands rather than in developing personalities, the inevitable result is the reduction of work to routine drudgery. But the fact remains that drudgery is not a state of nature but a man-made condition, and since man made it so he can also unmake it.

Finally, there is the vicious social habit of classifying work into high and low, with its implications of noble and menial, worthy and unworthy, which tends to fix the social status and worth of a human being by his vocation. Because a man is a physician, or a minister, or an engineer, or a professor, he is also supposed to be deserving of more honor and respect than the barber, plumber, street-cleaner or ditch-digger. A plumber may be several times a better plumber than is some physician as a physician, or minister as minister, or professor as professor, nevertheless the poorer physician, minister or professor is considered socially to be a higher creature than the better plumber. One person is thus penalized for doing a good job and another is rewarded for turning out a poor job. This is the reason for the rush to the so-called higher vocations, with the result that many a promising butcher, instead of cutting steaks skillfully, often wields a surgeon's knife fatally; many a promising hair-cutter makes a botch of cutting into the mind of youth in the classroom; and many a promising plumber plumbs clumsily into the human soul from the pulpit. This is a cruel distortion of human values and has unfortunate social consequences. If some barbers would do no better job cutting hair than some preachers and teachers do teaching or preaching, they could not last a month in their trade. Yet the barber is socially accepted as a mere utility, no matter how good a barber he may be, while the minister or professor is honored and respected as a person regardless of how poorly the one may preach or the other teach.

Work of any nature will become human when and if human beings have been brought to a proper realization of the relationship that exists between life and work, and when the conditions of work have

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been sufficiently humanized to enable the worker to exercise what Veblen has so aptly called the "instinct of workmanship." To those who may contend that under present industrial conditions artistic endeavor is ruled out of many pursuits essential to the social order, the answer is that institutions exist for man, not man for institutions, and that since it is man who creates the conditions that enslave him, he can also proceed to get rid of them. We can be human in industry if we are willing to pay the price demanded by caution and foresight. If we continue to pay this price we may find when it might be too late that our indifference and negligence has been costing us more than our industrial structure could stand.

The Human Way of Feeling: Beauty

The relation between beauty and artistry is this: that since artistry is a concern with the form—with the appearance—of a product, the artistic way of working arises from a feeling for form, and this is aesthetic versus practical feeling. Practical feeling is feeling for self in relationship to a thing. It arises from a need pressing for satisfaction and driving the organism to action. In practical feeling things are but utilities. They are valued only as means for restoring the organism to a condition of normal balance. Ordinary feeling is a compulsory, a biological, interest in the environment. The organism comes to, becomes aware of itself, because of an internal pressure which sends it out in quest of relief. As a biological creature, man shares such feelings with the rest of the animal kingdom.

But man is also a creature of aesthetic feeling. The world of things exists for him not only to use but to enjoy, to experience as things, to value for what they are in themselves as appearances. Such valuing of things is beauty. Beauty is a feeling-interest in a thing which identifies the experiencer with the thing experienced. In the experience of beauty a thing is not a *subject* but an *object*. It is a thing which is significant for its individuality, its uniqueness, its very own life and being. Beauty is a sort of understanding of reality: an understanding not in terms of use, or of theory, but of sympathy, of a becoming-one-with.

It is only a human being who can feel intrinsically, and therefore feeling is typically human only when it is at the level of the aesthetic, as work is human only when it attains the stage of the artistic. And

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just as the absence of the human way of working is one source of social disharmony so the lack of beauty in individual and group interrelationships is the cause of another, through the abuse of the human personality.

The Obstruction to Beauty in Human Relationships

The sources of abuse of the human personality are twofold, and both of them would disappear with the introduction of the spirit of beauty.

The experience of beauty represents the most highly respectful attitude toward its object, for so long as an object is valued intrinsically it will not be abused by being misused. It must follow then that the predominance of conflict in human society arises from the fact that whereas the human personality is recognized to be the supreme social value in theory, it is not respected as such in practice.

In social practice the human being is regarded either as a means to an end or valued more by his group affiliations than for what he is as an individual. Both are a violation of the spirit of beauty and therefore constitute an abuse of personality against which human beings must revolt out of self-respect.

In our society a person is esteemed not so much by *what* he is as a person, by his own personal merits, as by *who* he happens to be by chance or choice: rich or poor, employee or employer, director or directed. The intrinsic counts, of course, but only as an adjunct to the extrinsic. For the church it is primary that an individual be a good member; for the school that he be a good pupil; for industry that he be a good customer or producer. The man is secondary to the institution and meritorious in the main as a supporter of the institution. It is the Sabbath that matters more than the man. The feeling is not for man as man, but for man as an instrumental value. Human beings use each other, whether individually or in groups, as they do inanimate objects, so that at one and the same time each person or group uses others while also being used by them. This practice passes as the virtue of mutual aid whereas it is in truth but the vice of mutual misuse. Employer and employee do not render each other mutual aid when each looks upon the other merely as a source of income; for then each will attempt to obtain much by giving as little as he can. The best service they can render each other is through an identity of interests,

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and this can happen only provided they place their humanity before their income. When two persons maintain a beautiful friendship, all other benefits flow freely and fully. An extrinsic friendship loses the very things it is out to find, for by not giving it fails to receive.

Beauty in human relationships is also obstructed when an individual is esteemed for the group label he bears, more so than for what he is as an individual. This is the case more often than not even for those persons who consider themselves free of prejudice. Labels are conveniences for purpose of classification; but they do not reflect the quality of the product classified. Nevertheless, individuals bearing a particular label attribute to it a quality complimentary to themselves and derogatory to those bearing rival labels. That labels are generalizations, and therefore vague, only multiplies the divisions they create and intensifies the suspicions and conflicts they engender. It is for this reason that those who trade in social labels object to an examination of them lest the destructive operation of these labels be exposed.

"Classes make a gulf across which all the best human flow is lost." So wrote D. H. Lawrence. This evil is not, however, inherent in classes themselves. It would disappear once labels were put in their proper place: that they do not designate what a man is, but only where he belongs. It is of no social significance that a person is a Jew or Christian. But it is of utmost import to society whether he is a good or evil person. And the quality of goodness in a Jew or Christian does not arise from the label he bears; for the quality of a whole is an emergent of the particular qualities of its parts. Hence the label is to be judged by the qualities of those whom it designates rather than the reverse, which is the present common practice. We have the right to ask of a person what sort of a social being he is, for on that depends social well-being. We have no business to inquire whether he is Jew or Christian, for that is his private concern. A man's precepts should guide his practices. The fact is, however, unfortunate as it may be, that it is rather the practices that reveal a man's real precepts, regardless of what precepts he professes publicly. And this divergence between one's professed beliefs and acts is directly attributable to putting labels before persons. If the wealthy man is to be more honored than the poor man just because of his wealth, and the professional man is to deserve more credit than the hired hand just because of his profession, then individuals

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will seek wealth whether by foul means or fair and strive to become professionals regardless of fitness or social conscience.

It is the spirit of beauty that indicates most clearly the absurdity of judging the quality of a particular thing by its class. We have classes in art as in society, and sub-classes in each class. The different arts are its classes while in each art we distinguish between certain types. But it would never occur to a sane mind to judge the quality of a particular art product by the class to which it belongs, nor by its genre. There may be arguments about the relative aesthetic position of the different arts, or the respective merits of pure versus program music, or lyrical versus didactic poetry, or abstract versus representative painting. Nevertheless, when one is actually in contact with a particular art product, it is the product that is at the forefront of attention, and allowed to make its impression in terms of its own inherent properties. It is no more absurd to deride Jews and wind up the tirade with "but some of my best friends are Jews" than to condemn music as an art and then say "but some of my best moments come from listening to music." Art labels are put where they truly belong so that they do not interfere with the best flow of aesthetic experience.

Summary

Since artistry is the typical way of human working, and beauty the characteristic way of human feeling, and since the relationship between the two is that it is the human way of feeling which leads to the human way of working and acting, it follows that the building of a truly human society depends upon our willingness and determination to remove from the social structure those conditions and mental attitudes that have arisen like weeds in what could be the flower garden of mankind. It is no far-fetched analogy to view the social body—the entire human family—as we do the individual body, the health of which as a whole depends upon the healthful functioning of each organ. Individualism is the only true way to universalism. The message of art to society is that peace on earth can come about only through good will among men. And there is no good will among men so long as they continue to abuse each other by using each other as tools towards inhuman ends. Art, by representing the highest and best in man, also points the way to the highest and best humanism. No plans

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for the betterment of man's lot on this earth can have any prospect of success unless artistry and beauty are its guiding lights, for artistry and beauty spell the emancipation of the human spirit from all that which enslaves by failing to put first things first. The tragedy of human history is the conflict between false and true values, in which the false have so far predominated over the true.

Of Democracy and the Arts

H. M. KALLEN

NOT so long ago, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City moved into new quarters built for its functions. The event of the ceremonies celebrating the occasion was a message from the President of the United States. Among other things he said: "The arts cannot thrive except where men are free to be themselves and to be in charge of the discipline of their own energies and ardors. The conditions for democracy and for art are one and the same. What we call liberty in politics results in freedom in the arts . . ." ¹

If these sentences of Mr. Roosevelt's are true, they are not the whole truth. They assume that political liberty and democratic institutions are causes and that the liberty of the artist is a consequence. They assume that the prosperity of art and the well-being of artists depend on societies in which the powers of government derive from the consent of the governed and the function of government is the protection and extension of liberty. Those aware of the long history of the subordination of the person and vocation of the artist to state and church, and of the bitter and lonely struggle of poets, architects, painters, musicians and sculptors "to be themselves and to be in charge of the discipline of their own energies and ardors," will feel impelled to credit these propositions to their author's democratic ardor rather than to the discipline of that ardor by the record. If they agree, emphatically, "that the conditions for art and the conditions for democracy are the same," they will at the same time be disposed to insist that it is not liberty in politics which results in freedom in the arts but freedom in the arts which results in liberty in politics.

Scrutiny of the dynamic relations between artists and institutions suggests that the creative freedom of art initiates the civil liberties of men. Democratic society is any society where these liberties obtain and

¹ See *Art and Freedom*, II, ch. xxxi, § 133.

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grow, and in the long run it would be suicidal if such society failed to protect and prosper that which is at once its root and fruit. I have elsewhere² designated the traits of democratic society and can do no better than to repeat them here:

“Democratic society is a society based on the equal rights of different people freely to live and to grow according to their differences. It is a ‘whole’ which supports no special interest of those composing it, but maintains the equal liberty of all such interests to achieve whatever power and influence they are capable of, not through privilege, not through invidious advantage, but on their merits. It assures them opportunity to try, in fair competition, without fear or favor, to do the same job better than their competitors . . . All of its associations, including the state, must take form as voluntary associations which their individual members join and leave freely on equal terms. Democratic society is composed by the free union of different interests on the foundation of this equality in right. Upon this foundation it conducts its economy as free enterprise, its science as free enquiry and free thought, its religion as free conscience, its art as free expression and communication.

“The culture of such a society is necessarily a pluralistic culture, a confederation and self-orchestration of these variables into a stream of living ever freer and more abundant.

“Democratic government is the arm with which democratic society provides itself to keep the bed of this stream open and secure, to safeguard the equal right of different individuals and associations of individuals. Its task is dual, at once that of a road-builder and that of a traffic-cop. And it is even more to assure fair play, to check unfair competition, to cut off invidious advantage and to prevent the trespass of one interest upon another, than to construct and maintain the open roadways of equal opportunity for all.”

Before men can assemble themselves into such a society, they experience the form and feel of it in imagination, they condense their experience in symbols and utter it in words, pictures, carvings, and music that persuade the mind and move the heart. Words, music and eikons then become concretions of discourse which confirm, as communication seen and heard, the invisible and inaudible union of the faith and feeling which they express, and by expressing, achieve. All these symbolic concretions of faith and feeling count as works of art and derive from the passionate initiative of the artist.

² “Religious Education in Democratic Society,” *Jewish Education*, XIII, 1.

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If, so very, very often, his creation is stillborn and comes neither to this fruition nor any other, it is just as true that no fruition such as this has ever ripened without the artist's prior creation. When a society *has* formed, and established itself in lasting ways, it sets up schools and museums to preserve, recall and repeat for the generations that which the artists have envisioned and pictured, and its ancestors have enacted. For of the many vehicles of a way of life, the most self-conscious one, the one most aware of its task as the torch-bearer to the children and the children's children, and the one therefore most concerned with the symbols, methods and media which are the flame and flow of communication, is education. As Aristotle observed: "that which contributes most to the permanence of constitutions is the adaptation of education to the form of government." In the nature of things the inwardness of such an adaptation would be a doctrine and discipline which placed the freedom of art at the center of the education of free men. And this is what, in the democracies of the world, pioneering educational theory and practice have been tending to do, facilitating communication by unshackling expression.

II

The use of the two words *freedom* and *art* in combination is a commonplace of democratic culture; the idea "liberty of the artist" may be allocated to the common sense of modern democracy. Yet the combination has its undertone of paradox, paradox sufficient for the ancients to have kept *art* and *freedom* forever apart. "All good poets, epic as well as lyric," Plato's Socrates told Ion, "compose their beautiful poems not by art but because they are inspired or possessed." The implication is that "art" is management and control, the conscious contrivance of the good workman, while "inspiration" or "possession" is something outside management or contrivance, thus something ineffable and free. Art thus is repetitive and predictable, while inspiration is original, unique and an issue of chance. Art is a function of knowledge and the "cold dry light of reason;" inspiration is revelation—irrational, hot and blind, an unpredictable flash from the dark. Although the modern mind—and it is the democratic postulate which gives its modernity to the modern mind—recognizes the important part which chance and inspiration play in the life of knowledge or science, it is not disposed altogether

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to lift the ancients' excommunication of inspiration from science. Considering science as first and last not an expression of the personal being of the scientist but a discovery of the independent nature of things, the modern believes that while scientists come and scientists go, the world they explore endures forever. If therefore Gallileo or Newton or Einstein should mistake the world's true nature, somebody else would be sure to find it out. In science there is no inward connection between the findings and the finder; the first are not the unique effect of which the second is the unique cause.

In art, the case is contrariwise. A poem, a picture, a piece of music is not a finding but a making; it is the unique effect of which the artist is the unique cause. Shakespeare's plays, Beethoven's symphonies, Jefferson's letters, Walt Whitman's poems, Rodin's sculptures, Picasso's paintings could not be unless their authors had been. The personal being of the authors is the *sine qua non* of the being of their works. To moderns, the process of this personal being is what the words *inspiration*, *freedom*, in fact denote. This claims, as against state, church, economic establishment, museum and school, the right that Mr. Justice Brandeis in one of his decisions described as "the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men," and the most American—the right to be let alone.

To that claim, however, the artist adds another. He asks not only to be left to search and seek and produce and reject and produce again without let or hindrance. He asks also that society support him while letting him alone; that the democracy not only keep alive the uncalculating impulse of his creative being, but that it afford scope for all the undertakings of his unique spontaneity.

The demand, which the most diverse schools of aesthetics concede, tacitly affirms that freedom is not activity in a void; that godlike as the artist may be, he neither can live on nothing nor create out of nothing. The liberty of the artist cannot feed on itself and grow by what it feeds on. It is, to use a cliché of a currently fashionable school of psychology, a figure in a field. At its nearest, this field consists of the artist's tools and materials and media as they are compenetrated by his knowledge, his skills, his habits and his attitudes. The customary word for this compenetration is *workmanship*, and it is sometimes described as an instinct. A more recent word is *technique*. Workman-

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ship or technique is what the Greeks and the unquestioning carriers of the Greek tradition have always meant by "art". It is the component of the process of the artist's being which his unlearned spontaneity draws into itself from without and which becomes its channel to the without. Some say that spontaneity without art is force without efficacy, blind and futile; art without spontaneity is form without life. uninspired, therefore inert, empty, and as Socrates implied, unbeautiful. Primarily, beauty pertains to freedom, and to art but as the vehicle of freedom. From the shapers of the new symbols and new words of the "dawn of conscience" whose hieroglyphs were carven two thousand years before our era to those with which James Joyce or Pablo Picasso has trod the road which passeth understanding, this seems to have been the case. Art, or the diverse skill and knowledge of the ancestors, compenetrated into a tradition and unified into a discipline, has been the channel of originality and the transport of that parachute-jumper, the creative artist. Given his originality, then the more art, the greater the scope, the variety and the potency of the artist's freedom; for the more various, plastic and obedient are his matters and media to initiation by his imagination and new determination by his spontaneous powers. Workmanship is what shapes creative power into imaginative insight, freedom-from into mastery-over. At once the tool and first field of freedom, it is the inwardness of every mutation of intelligence. As the discipline of freedom, it is the condition of unimpeded innovation.

In the arts as elsewhere, the freedom of innovation is the spring of any economy of abundance the arts may attain to. It thrives not on thrift but on waste. Its course is marked by its rejections. The mastery, the craftsmanship which enables it, is not so much the readiness to preserve matter, medium and method, as the readiness to discard. This readiness is all, and workmanship is this readiness. Recently that virtuoso on the clarinet, Mr. Benny Goodman, told music students at the Julliard School of Music: "everyone needs a solid classical basis before they can embark on jazz;" and he carried passages from both a Mozart and Brahms quintet into trebly exciting and swing forms. Even when the new direction is a tangent of the old ways, mastery of the old may serve to liberate the new, as the unprecedented tools, materials and media of the motion picture, which already has its art, and television, whose art is still hatching, indicate clearly enough. Mr. Santayana

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observed somewhere that those who ignore the past are condemned to repeat it, and his observation holds of the arts. Command of the knowledge and skills of the past is at once the power and the channel to get beyond them, in new directions. If they are workmanship, then workmanship is the soil, the matter and medium of inspiration; if they are science, then science is the occasion of revelation; if they are reason, then they are the opportunity for the irrational, the incommensurable, the unpredictable, that is, the new and the free, to come into being. If you have the creative impulse or inspiration, then the more you know the more you can imagine, the wider and deeper your intelligence, the greater the range and force of your innovation.

III

Be a society free or authoritarian, art as distinguished from inspiration concerns the *how* of expression and communication; inspiration as distinguished from art, concerns the *what*. For reasons already cited it is easy to see why hierarchical societies, churches, states and all sorts of authoritarian communities have consistently feared inspiration and approved art. Plato honored but banished the poets; the early Roman church forbade the painter the *what* of his painting and restricted him to the *how*: St. Basil declaring in the fourth century, "he has his art." And so it remains to this day. Authority fears and would suppress exactly that in the artist which the free modern mind reverences and would release—his innovative vision, his inspiration. The Greek *paideia* was postulated upon the power of this inspiration, so that Homer and Hesiod, Tyrtæus and Theognis and Pindar, Aeschylus and Sophocles and Euripides, Socrates or Aristophanes or Menander were to be allowed or suppressed for the power of their utterance to confirm or to dissipate the influence of authority over men.

The modern mind recognizes this power of transvaluation also in the painter and sculptor and architect and musician. Their innovations of content, form, medium and meaning are recognized as influencing speech, vision, manners, morals, fashions, all the doctrines and disciplines of the common life,³ but the wordman continues to hold his precedence.

³ In his preface to *The Showing Up of Blanco Posnet* G. B. Shaw called himself "a specialist in immoral, heretical plays . . . to force the public to reconsider its morals."

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The power of this inspiration was Walt Whitman's fighting faith.

Of him in whom it lives, the inspired literatus of democracy wrote in 1855:

"In war he is the most deadly force of the war. Who recruits him recruits horse and foot . . . If the time becomes slothful he knows how to arouse it. He can make every word he speaks draw blood . . . The times straying to infidelity he withholds by his steady faith . . . He sees eternity in men and women . . . He does not see men and women as dreams or dots . . . He hardly knows pettiness or triviality. If he breathes into anything that was before thought small, it dilates with the grandeur and life of the universe . . . He is complete in himself . . . The others are as good as he, only he sees it, and they do not . . . His love above all has leisure and expanse . . . He leaves room ahead of himself . . . In him past, present, and future are conjoined . . . He forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is . . .

"He is the the voice and exposition of liberty. He, out of ages, is worthy the grand idea. To him it is confided, and he must sustain it."

Thirteen years later, having lived through the Civil War in hospital with plain people wounded and sick unto death, he wrote down his faith again in *Democratic Vistas*. "The priest departs, the divine literatus comes." He regarded literature, and derivatively, the other arts, as the creating directive vision and immortality of a people's existence; "a single new thought, imagination and abstract principle, even literary style, fit for the times, put in shape by some great literatus and projected among mankind, may duly cause changes, growth, removals greater than the longest and bloodiest war or the most stupendous merely dynastic or commercial overturn. Poets and other artists may be the carriers of the "fervid and tremendous Idea," by which our national character is shaped, giving to each and every individuality, "standing apart from all else . . . sole and untouchable by any canons of authority or any rule derived from precedent, state-safety, the acts of legislatures or even from what is called religion, modesty, or art," "compaction" and "moral identity."

If he be worthy of his inspiration, his grand Idea, his fervid and tremendous Idea, an artist sustains it without compromise, without concession, hearing and considering everything, yielding nothing. Let the Boston Society for the Suppression of Vice take steps against *Leaves of Grass*; let the Toronto police raid the city's bookstores for copies.

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let Rossetti make what omissions and modifications he thought best; Whitman himself would have no part in them. The arguments of friends and foe might be outwardly unanswerable, but they could not touch his faith or corrupt the integrity of his Idea. To certain suggestions of Emerson's Whitman had replied that he had no answer at all, only—"I feel more settled than ever that I must stick to my theory and act on it."

IV

The *what*, as against the *how*, of the artist's utterance, his inspiration or Idea, comes to be as a figure on a field with which it is *not* in configuration; a field in whose configurations indeed, it is an intruder, often a wild, anarchic intruder, a looser of bonds and dissolver of old forms, a violent bringer of new forms.

To keep the Idea the artist's soliloquy, to contain and check the Idea, to prevent it from becoming communication then becomes the concern of every interest which the Idea disturbs or defies, and of government as the agent of some or the police-guard of all such interests. An idea's range is conditioned by number and variety of the instruments of reproduction and transportation available to it, and the control over such instruments.

Our society is distinguished from earlier ones by the potency and abundance of its instruments of communication. Since its invention, the art of printing has not only enabled mass reproduction of the works of poet and prophet, and facilitated an economy of abundance for the printed word; the art, together with that of the camera, has added knowledge and skill in the mass reproduction of the works of the painter and is facilitating an unprecedented economy of abundance in color prints. Concurrently, the post office has developed into the social agency of mass distribution. Communication rests on the interplay of both. Because of them, the printing of books could become the base for the expansion of literacy, and literacy an instrument in achievement of ever greater liberty of thought and conscience and their expression, and thus ever greater potency in the democratization of social institutions. It is by no means unlikely that mass reproduction of pictures will, in the course of the next generation, initiate analogous consequences with respect to the painter's art, and that the present illiteracy of the people

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with regard to drawing and painting will progressively dissipate. The dissipation of illiteracy underlies the improvement of taste, which is the permeation of preferences by knowledge.

Because of the phonograph and radio, this is already happening in music, and in a much lesser degree with respect to the drama and spoken word. But the outstanding instance of mass reproduction and distribution is, of course, the motion picture. More signally even than printing, an art addressed to the multitudes, a movie occasionally repeats, and repeating transforms, books and plays of large currency, and once in a while draws upon Shakespeare or Dickens. Whatever else may be said of the movie, it contributes to democratic cultural abundance, bringing within reach of the multitudinous poor much that formerly had had the scarcity-value which established it as an appurtenance of the rich and privileged.

Of course, printing press, post office, phonograph, camera, radio, are neither monopolies of the democracies nor can they be permitted by democracies to become monopolies. Where they are such, as in authoritarian societies and totalitarian states, they are employed to imposed cultural scarcity: to communicate one not-to-be: varied doctrine and discipline with fixed symbols, meanings and values as alone right, and to prevent all alternatives, all differences, all modifications from being passed on to the neighbors by their inventors or creators. Communication under these circumstances consists in the repetition of the same. The more of it takes place, the greater the cultural scarcity, the surer are the arts and sciences to become routinal, empty and barren, and the spirit of man to be starved. Cultural abundance, like economic abundance, is not achieved through the accumulation of one good, but through the multiplication of many. It cannot exist save as men of art and science are free to express and communicate, each his unique inspiration, without fear or favor, and the peoples they address to look and listen and talk and share without penalties. Freedom is the spring of abundance, as the career of the arts and sciences in the most totalitarian of economies testifies. Authoritarian societies, past and present, which achieve some degree of cultural abundance are societies where the artist has either managed to evade authority or has been let alone by authority, and even protected in his self-isolation. Think of the cultural history of France from Louis XIV to the Revolution; of

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England during the eighteenth century; of Czarist Russia in the nineteenth century. Think of the men and events in poetry and letters, in sculpture and painting, and the relation of these men to one another. Did they not form congregations of personal and spiritual freedom? By comparison with the national establishments within which they are special formations, societies of artists⁴ stand out as free societies, heedless of the prevailing invidious distinctions of caste, cult, race or sect which stratify a national life. Painters, poets, musicians, architects, actors, sculptors, each the voice of his unique inspiration, meet as comrades on common ground of their artistic vocation and its free communication. The event of their association can thus be an initiation of the inward democratic process in the very citadel of tyranny. If tyranny fails to enclose and isolate it, its own contagion, as well as that of the ideas of its members, gives a new turn to the people's vision and the people's ways. Totalitarian societies, hence, forbid the voluntary association of artists and associate them on authority, by prescription which commands not only what they may express and how they may express it but the terms on which they may be together with one another.

Of this practice, communist Russia, fascist Italy and Spain, Nazi Germany are modern instances. But the most illuminating present instance, since it dates from the subsidence of the Baroque, is that of the Roman Catholic establishment. The canon laws—these are prescriptions one may not transgress—of this society command the bishops to safeguard traditional forms; they forbid the approval of images contrary to established church custom; they require that robes, furniture, form and matter must conform to liturgical prescription, ecclesiastical tradition and the law of religious art. When, in November, 1932, the new Pinakothek was inaugurated at the Vatican, Pius XI condemned modern forms as unhealthy and dangerous and demanded conformity of images and architecture to the "venerable tradition." He laid upon Catholic artists the duty to avoid novelty and to repeat *formae a traditione receptae*. He banned modern forms from the altar. And the consequence of this centuries-old attitude toward the freedom of the artist? Hark to a priest who was once a painter.⁵ Artists disregard

⁴ Scientific societies are similarly constituted. But they are later formations in the history of culture.

⁵ Marie Alain Couturier O.P., *Art et Catholicisme*, Ed. de l'Arbre, Montreal.

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the church, nor can they do otherwise; Christian [i.e. Catholic] art is decadent and divorced from life; as is evident in "the mediocrity of almost everything we have built, painted or sculptured in a hundred years." Ecclesiastical authority condemns and scorns what it has never taken the pains to study and does not understand; Catholic opinion sees in modern art only snobbism, follies, "market tricks of dealers and Jewish critics;" . . . the Church which had been in the advance guard of the life of art is now long in retreat from art.

How is it otherwise, with democratic societies, whatever their bond of union! With all their political or clerical deviations into prescription or censorship, with all their post-office persecutions and police suppressions, the arts flourish and multiply. There is a growing disposition to acknowledge as a prime charge upon governmental powers and institutional arrangements the assurance that the societies of artists shall be voluntary societies—Whitman's "institution of the dear love of comrades"—and that the artist shall be secure in his right to be let alone with his ineffable initiative. We are more deeply aware than our forefathers that our variations, inventions, innovations, that all our "inspirations," come first as images or ideas expressed in words, music, drawings, pictures, movies, and other concretions by means of symbols; that these in time modify customs, change fashions, stuffs, tools and human relations, and alter the course of events. We see them, more truly than our forefathers, as *fons et origo* of the transformation of institutions and the transvaluation and multiplication of values. And since this is the case, we recognize that to excommunicate and not cherish the liberty of that initiative is like Pilate's slaughter of the innocents, an undertaking to kill off free society at the source. In the history of culture the liberty of the artist is the avatar of all the liberties of man, subduing all discipline and diversifying all doctrine, never returning the same save as it brings the different. Hence, "where the artist is free, no other man can remain bond." This is why, when power or privilege fights against freedom, it usually begins on the liberty of the artist

V

The strategy of taming and harnessing the artist is as old as art and as various as the structure of political, ecclesiastical and industrial power. Since men of art must earn their livings in order to live their lives, power employs both honoraria and honors to coerce or to

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seduce them to its purposes. Their resistance to both has, in the modern world, no parallel among the followers of other callings, even the vocation of science, even the religious vocation. When inspiration does not of itself utter the ethos of the society in which it occurs, it is to be neither commanded nor conformed. The latter regularly turns out, as is the case with churchly art, an iterative convention, repeating a dead past instead of creating new values out of the living present. The secular arts segregate it as "academic," and artists whose skill and knowledge are impelled by inspiration pass it by. During almost a century, the democratic society in which we have grown up has transposed the traditional Socratic distinction between "inspiration" and "art" into the modern distinction between "art" and "commercial art." Poets, painters, musicians, etc. might, apologetically, earn their livings by the latter, making to measure magazine copy, advertising copy, movie scenarios, soap opera, political murals and monuments as a custom tailor makes cloaks and suits to measure, but reserving their "art" for their Idea and its expression. In their "art" they live their lives.

But if an artist's life is to provide him with his living, then his living is on the lap of the gods of chance and luck. For it must come from the sale of his productions to a customer he has never seen and whose aesthetic wants he cannot know and would not concern himself with. His market, unlike that of a butcher, baker, priest or physician, does not already exist; it has to be created. And since his productions are not a conformation to effective demand but innovative deviations from effective demand, and thus challengers of the vested interests supplying it, the creation of his market carries with it all the insecurities inherent in the struggle to alter vision, modify taste, and reverse judgment. A consequence of this struggle has been the institution of the derivative occupational groups—the dealers, agents, publishers, producers, editors, critics—in short, the middlemen of the arts who, like middlemen in other callings, have come to hold power over their growth and survival. Their power has been enormously compounded by the multiplication of the mechanical reproductive apparatus—the phonographic and photographic recordings, the color prints, etc., etc. They have put the artist in the position of the inventor. They have given the original picture, composition or manuscript a new status and significance, an unprecedented kind of scarcity-value. They have made the problems

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of securing to the creator at least some of the fruits of his creation similar to the problem of securing to the inventor the profits of his invention. Copyright laws, consequently, have come to parallel patent laws. Associations of artists, from the guilds of dramatists and writers, the societies of painters to the unions of actors, vaudevillians or musicians, have come to parallel the craft unions and unions among unskilled workers. The ancestors of such associations were primarily academies, prestige groups, unions of honor, and remain such. Their contemporary variants are mobilized to an economic function. Both the problems these purport to solve and those they present have an extreme exemplification in the American Federation of Musicians. They are enduring problems.

In the United States, supplementary, perhaps alternative solutions of them took shape with the depression. That ironic time in the history of the national establishment brought into public attention the economy of the arts in democratic society. The average earnings of the nation's artists were found to be lower than those of her teachers, of her clergy, and their material standard of living not far removed from that of our unskilled laborers. The "security" of writers, musicians, dancers, painters, actors, was joined to that of the unemployed of other occupations as a concern of government. The much discussed arts projects were the consequence. Their fundamental intent was to preserve to the nation the knowledge and skills of the nation's artists by enabling them to practice their arts as freely as might be, thus preventing atrophy through disuse, and corruption through weak use. "Inspiration," the Idea, of course, could not thus, nor in any other way, be provided for. But its condition and medium could, and the upkeep of those might render more likely the upswing of that. So, by and large, a subsistence wage was provided in return for which the nation's artists were to practice their arts as men "free to be themselves and to be in charge of their discipline of their own energies and ardors."

This undertaking was the background of the President's message to the Museum of Modern Art. It was a satisfaction—under abnormal conditions of enterprise, it is true—of the claim that society owes the artist as artist a living. It supported him, kept alive the uncalculating impulse of his creative being, afforded scope for his undertakings, and—not consistently, but largely—left him alone.

The discussions consequent to this experience have emerged in one

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direction in George Biddle's proposals for a sort of Federal Ministry of Fine Arts⁶ to be constituted by the reorganization of the various arts' projects. Another direction of thought is toward the idea that democratic society has more, not less, reason for subsidizing the freedom of the artist than it has for the conventional subsidies to public education, public health, religious establishments, and the like. The hope of the variant is the safety of democracy, and the creations of the artists are the grass roots of variation. These he produces, not like the competitive craftsman or merchant, as goods on which to make a profit, but as symbols by which to affirm an idea. He contributes to cultural abundance without material return, and thereby to the freedom of the spirit in which democracy inheres. Either he should have a chance quickly to earn his living—some sort of part-time employment perhaps—on condition that he practice his art, or he should have a subsistence wage for practicing his art as his vision requires. For art, even more than science, lives and grows not by system through routine but through freedom. Freedom is both art's going and its goal, and in so far as its ways pervade democratic society, art safeguards the spirit and body of democracy.

⁶ He circulated a *Memorandum on a Post-War Reorganization of the Section of Fine Arts and other Federal Arts Projects* by George Biddle, and latter published a summary of his proposal and the reaction to it in *Harpers Magazine*, October, 1943.

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