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The ugly in aesthetics

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THE UGLY IN AESTHETICS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Philosophy

by

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University of Richmond

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PREFACE

This thesis has been undertaken in the belief that it treats a comparatively unacknowledged problem of aesthetics. The definition of aesthetic ugliness and the place of the ugly in art have been largely relative to taste and convention throughout the ages and have received little specific emphasis in even the greatest aesthetic treatises. Much of the material included in this discussion, therefore, is arrived at through a process of inference. My aim has been to give a fairly comprehensive chronological survey of the topic from the time of the ancient Greeks through the most recent philosophers, and to point out the need for including the problem as a positive part of aesthetic theory rather than treating it negatively, or not at all, as the case has been so often.

I wish to express extreme gratitude to Dr. B. C. Holtzclaw for many excellent hours in his classes, and for his indispensable help in the preparation of this thesis.

F. G. W.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY AESTHETIC SPECULATION

1. Socrates and Plato

"Do you not know", Socrates queries, "that with reference to the same objects all things are both beautiful and good?"¹

And when Aristippus asks, "Do you say, then, that the same things may be both beautiful and ugly?", Socrates' reply is, "Yes, undoubtedly for whatever is good is also beautiful, in regard to purposes for which it is well adapted, and whatever is bad is the reverse of beautiful, in regard to purposes for which it is ill adapted."²

Pythagoras has given the oldest definition of beauty, reflected as recently as Croce, as "the reduction of many to one";³

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1. Xenophon, Memorabilia, translated by Rev. J. S. Watson, in Plato and Xenophon, Socratic Discourses, II, viii, New York, 1940, Dutton, Everyman, p. 95.
 2. Ibid., p. 95.
 3. Lockie Parker, Art and People, New York, 1934, John Day, p. 70.

but until Socrates, there is no significant mention of ugliness, either as a real fact or as an artistic phenomenon. His doctrine of utility holds some importance for art; in the Banquet of Xenophon, something may be inferred from the very amusing scene with Critobulus,⁴ because the judgment of a "handsome sword" or a "fine shield"⁵ is made with respect only to the utility of these art objects. Although the aesthetic point of view is destroyed by Socrates' denial that beauty can exist apart from utility, insofar as his theory is significant, it can be easily inferred that ugliness in art occurs at the point of non-adaptation or mal-adaptation of the art-object to its peculiar end.

In Plato we find, on the one hand, a concept of beauty, which is idealistic. And on the other hand, there is his concept of art, which in being thrice removed from reality, is in itself an inferior thing. There are three main sources from which Plato's aesthetics is derived: The Republic, the Phaedrus, and the Philebus. From what is given merely in The Republic it may be said that the ugly definitely has no place in art. Plato writes:

"Let our artists rather be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful; then will our youth dwell in a

4. Xenophon, The Banquet, translated by James Welwood, Everyman, op. cit., pp. 187-189.
 5. Ibid., p. 187.

land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason." 6

Art, at best, is merely a representation of reality; and since the artist turns his attention to representation, it is taken for granted that his attention ought to be turned to imitating what seems best. "And still he will go on imitating without knowing what makes a thing good or bad, and may be expected therefore to imitate only that which appears to be good to the ignorant multitude?" 7

In the Republic, the young are to be trained in literature, both true and false; but all fiction is to be placed under a strict censorship for manifold reasons given throughout The Republic. 8 In the first place, Homer and Hesiod are tellers of lies, giving false representations of the gods. 9 The same is true of certain poets who make misstatements concerning men. 10 Some mythological tales are also bad, because people will tend to excuse their own vices if they read that such are perpetrated even by the gods. 11 All of this has, in some degree, to be censored or else forbidden in Plato's State;

6. Plato, The Republic, translated by B. Jowett, New York, 1941, Random House, Modern Library, III, p. 105.

7. Ibid., X, p. 371.

8. Ibid., II, pp. 71-72.

9. Ibid., II, pp. 72-73.

10. Ibid., III, p. 91.

11. Ibid., III, p. 90.

and this confusion and inability to recognize art, qua art, apart from morals, is obvious in the following passage:

"And we must beg Homer and the other poets not to be angry if we strike out these and similar passages, not because they are unpoetical, or unattractive to the popular ear, but because the greater the poetical charm of them, the less are they meet for the ears of boys and men . . ." 12

13

Tragedy and comedy, being imitative arts, must be watched with particular care; some imitations are to be encouraged and others prohibited, in the latter case the reason being often that they recall sorrows and represent behavior that ought to be avoided in real life. 14 Indeed Plato lays great stress on the capacity of the arts directly to affect and condition human behavior. 15

From the second source, the Phaedrus, the notion of organization as a prerequisite to good art may be found:

"But I think you will allow, that every speech ought to be put together like a living creature, with a body of its own, lacking neither head nor foot, but having both a middle and extremities in perfect keeping with one another and the whole." 16

Here we get the idea of organic unity; but the approach to the problem of ugliness is quite different in the

12. Ibid., III, p. 83.

13. Ibid., III, p. 94.

14. Ibid., III, pp. 97-98.

15. Ibid., X, pp. 376-377.

16. Plato, Phaedrus, translated by J. Wright in Plato, Five Dialogues, New York, 1938, Dutton, Everyman, p. 266.

Philebus, where Plato's discussion of comedy is found. We are told that comedy is a mixed pleasure and pain of the soul's feelings.¹⁷

"Then our argument declares that when we laugh at the ridiculous qualities of our friends, we mix pleasure with pain, since we mix it with envy; for we have agreed all along that envy is a pain of the soul, and that laughter is a pleasure, yet these two are present at the same time on such occasions." 18

From this argument, Plato goes into his discussion of unmixed or true pleasure, from which arises his theory of the purely formal and absolute beauty in circles, straight lines, planes, and so forth, whose absence is painless and whose presence is pure pleasure.¹⁹

His general tendency towards the complete identification of beauty with goodness, which definition of beauty necessarily excludes ugliness in any manifestation, is summed up in the Philebus: "So now the power of the good has taken refuge in the nature of the beautiful: for measure and proportion are everywhere identified with beauty and virtue."²⁰

From what has been given of a more positive sort from the three main sources, the nature of the ugly comes fairly clear. In other words, from Plato's concepts of beauty, it seems that ugliness would abide, primarily, in five instances:

17. Plato, Philebus, translated by H. N. Fowler, in Plato: with an English Translation, London, 1925, William Heinemann, Loeb. p. 331.
 18. Ibid., p. 339.
 19. Ibid., pp. 343-345.
 20. Ibid., p. 389.

in an untruth; in immorality, or the depiction of it; in the ungraceful; in the unorganized; and in that which is too complex.

2. Aristotle

The problem of ugliness develops and becomes better defined with Aristotle. Comedy and tragedy are not ugly for the same reasons as Plato gave, and both command a far more respectful treatment than at Plato's hands. Aristotle's closest aesthetic link with Plato is his notion of catharsis, which intimates a justification of art from a moral basis. The origins of the art impulse Aristotle gives as impulses to rhythm and imitation. The problem of ugliness is more directly concerned with the latter.

In the Poetics, he observes frequently with reference to imitative art, that the imitation is often agreeable whereas the thing copied is disagreeable, and that we may take legitimate pleasure in seeing carefully executed pictures of things we do not like in reality. This seeming contradiction is possible "by our enjoyment of the intellectual act and achievement involved in simply recognising the object portrayed."²¹

21. Bernard Bosanquet, A History of Aesthetic, London, 1922, George Allen and Unwin, p. 58.

With regard to comedy, Aristotle's position is, as suggested, quite different from that of Plato. Imitation is still the principle, but the basis of the distinction between tragedy and comedy is the representation of higher and lower types; tragedy represents men as better, and comedy, as worse than they are in actual life.²²

"Comedy is, as we have said, an imitation of characters of a lower type, - not, however, in the full sense of the word bad, the Ludicrous being merely a subdivision of the ugly. It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. To take an obvious example, the comic mask is ugly and distorted, but does not imply pain."²³

There is then, paradoxically, a place for the ugly; for the above paragraph places comedy within the ugly and Aristotle has already spoken of comedy as falling within the realm of fine art whose essential attribute is beauty.²⁴ Further on in the Poetics, Aristotle says that it is just to censure the introduction of irrationality and depravity of character when there is no inner necessity for them.²⁵ Such a loophole shows him far more liberal than a majority of later critics. Following this, he says that things are censured (with reference to the histrionic): as impossible, as irrational, as morally hurtful, as contradictory, and as contrary to artistic

22. Aristotle, The Poetics of Aristotle, edited with critical notes and translation by S. H. Butcher, London, 1925, Macmillan, II, p. 13.

23. Ibid., V, p. 21.

24. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 57.

25. Aristotle, op.cit., XXVI, p. 107.

26
 correctness, a list which can also be applied as explanation for various popular judgments of "ugly".

Of Aristotle, Bosanquet says:

" . . . It is clear that the fascination of ugliness in representative art was a newly observed phenomenon in contradiction with the simple assumption that the representation affects us as does the corresponding reality. Not the content of the likeness, but something, whatever it might be, involved in the fact of its being a likeness at all, was thus suggested to be the secret of its attraction." 27

3. Plutarch

Throughout this early period, there is apparent a confusion between excellence in art and in morality, a lack of any real distinction between aesthetics and ethics. This confusion, evident not only in Socrates and Plato, but also in Plutarch, Plotinus, and the Scholastics, is reflected in the sentiment of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius:

"Begin the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet with the busybody, the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil. But I . . . have seen the nature of the good that it is beautiful, and of the bad that it is ugly . . . 28

26. Ibid., XXVI, pp. 107, 109.

27. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 59.

28. Marcus Aurelius Antonius, Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antonius, translated by George Long, New York, n.d., Crowell, p. 99.

Despite the want of a definite line drawn between the morally and aesthetically ugly, Plutarch brings the matter to more of a head by asking, "Can what is ugly in itself be beautiful in art? If Yes, can the art-representation be suitable to and consistent with its original? If No, how does it happen that we admire such art-representations?"²⁹ The answer lies in his Moralia, where he says that the poets may fabricate things intentionally; and they may also try to make us share their own delusions by imparting things in false colors, things they do not fabricate but really believe. In view of this, the young should be instructed that poetry is not greatly concerned with truth.³⁰ He continues:

"For by its essential nature the ugly cannot become beautiful; but the imitation, be it concerned with what is base or with what is good, if only it attain to the likeness, is commended. If, on the other hand, it produces a beautiful picture of an ugly body, it fails to give what propriety and probability requires."³¹

The action depicted is not what we admire, but the art. Since poetry often gives wicked experiences, youth should not accept them as true, or admire the actions therein, but should commend them "as fitting and proper to the character in hand."³²

29. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 107.

30. Plutarch, Moralia, translated by F. C. Babbitt, New York, 1927, Putnam, Loeb, Vol. I, pp. 87, 91.

31. Ibid., p. 93.

32. Ibid., p. 93.

"For it is not the same thing at all to imitate something beautiful and something beautifully, since 'beautifully' means 'fittingly and properly' and ugly things are 'fitting and proper' for the ugly." 33

So Plutarch emphasized the problem barely touched upon in the Poetics, making an advance over Aristotle only in the importance which a definite question of ugliness held for him and in the numerous illustrations which he gave.³⁴ To summarize his contribution, it may be said that there is some place for the ugly in art, - though it cannot become beautiful - because there is, as in Aristotle, a legitimate pleasure attached to recognition, and admiration for the artist's cunning.

Of such a position, Bosanquet concludes:

" . . . To recognize a legitimate pleasure in the skill that copies what is ugly, is the germ of a recognition that what is apparently ugly, but admirable in art, has something in it which the trained perception can appreciate as beautiful." 35

Whether or not Bosanquet means to assert this as Plutarch's own implication is not clear; however, such an inference would hardly be warranted.

33. Ibid., p. 95.

34. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 108.

35. Ibid., p. 108

4. Longinus

Longinus, in writing on the sublime in the first century A.D., implies many manifestations of bad or ugly art. He distinguishes, at the outset, the sublime and the "high-flown", giving examples of what he calls "turbid in expression and confused in imagery rather than the product of intensity." Such art sinks "little by little from the terrible into the contemptible"; and such expression even in tragedy, which is stately and prone to bombast, is unpardonable in its tasteless tumidity.³⁶

So we may take the first criterion of bad art to be tumidity. The second is puerility or frigidity, the "direct antithesis of elevation, for it is utterly low and mean and in real truth the most ignoble vice of style." To these criteria we may add "unreasonable and empty passion, where no passion is required, or immoderate, where moderation is needed."³⁷

"All these ugly and parasitical growths arise in literature from a single cause, that pursuit of novelty in the expression of ideas which may be regarded as the fashionable craze of the day. Our defects usually spring, for the most part, from the same sources as our good points. Hence, while beauties of expression and touches of sublimity, and charming

36. Cassius Longinus, Longinus on the Sublime, the Greek text edited after the Paris manuscript by W. Rhys Roberts, Cambridge University Press, 1907, p. 47.

37. Ibid., p. 49.

elegances withal, are favourable to effective composition, yet these very things are the elements and foundation, not only of success, but also of the contrary." 38

Longinus gives the principle sources of elegant language: the power of forming great concepts, vehement and inspired passion, formation of figures of thought and expression, noble diction, and dignified and elevated composition.³⁹ From these positive principles, it is easy to derive what would be conducive to inelegance in the writing arts. "The cunning use of figures", he continues, "is peculiarly subject to suspicion, and produces an impression of ambush, plot, fallacy . . . Wherefore a figure is at its best when the very fact that it is a figure escapes attention."⁴⁰

Sublimity in speech is equivalent to a "collocation of members, a single one of which . . . severed from another possesses in itself nothing remarkable, but all united together make a full and perfect organism."⁴¹ He continues:

"There is nothing in the sphere of the sublime, that is so lowering as a broken and agitated movement of language . . . For all over-rhythmical writing is at once felt to be affected and finical and wholly lacking in passion⁴² owing to the monotony of its superficial polish."

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38. Ibid., p. 53.
 39. Ibid., pp. 57, 59.
 40. Ibid., p. 95.
 41. Ibid., pp. 145, 147.
 42. Ibid., p. 149.

That inference concerning the ugly is warranted is denoted by Longinus himself who says, "For since we have previously indicated those qualities which render style noble and lofty, it is evident that their opposites will for the most part make it low and base."⁴³

5. Plotinus

In the third century A.D., the philosopher Plotinus extends the recognized province of beauty. His position on ugliness, too, can be gleaned, to some extent, from the following paragraph of his Enneads:

"What, then is the primary beauty of bodies? There is such a beauty and it is perceived at first sight, and the soul, as being ware of it, calls it by name and, recognizing it, welcomes it and is wedded to it. But if the soul meet with the ugly, it shrinks from it and refuses and rejects it, not consenting with it For everything that is formless, though its nature admits of form and essential character, so long as it is devoid of rationality and essential character is ugly and excluded from the divine and rational. That is the absolutely ugly. But a thing can also be ugly if it be not completely mastered by form and rationality, because its matter does not admit of being completely formed in accordance with an essential character." 44

Bosanquet, writing in terms of Hegelian idealism

43. Ibid., p. 155.

44. Plotinus, Enneads, quoted in E. F. Carritt, Philosophies of Beauty from Socrates to Robert Bridges: Being the Sources of Aesthetic Theory, Oxford University Press, 1931, p. 45.

and pantheism, suggests the criticism--that if we regard it as defective to say that nothing is ugly, we may likewise regard Plotinus' aesthetics as defective. This is so because, according to what Bosanquet calls modern views of nature, there is nothing which does not symbolize reason in some way and to some extent. On the other hand, the critic maintains, if real ugliness can be asserted, then the idea that all is beautiful which symbolizes reason must be modified.⁴⁵ Plotinus has confused the bare negative with the contrary, for "it is not absence of form, but false form - confusion of the forms appropriate to different things and meanings - in which, if anywhere,⁴⁶ we must look for real ugliness."

Though it is not clear whether Plotinus is referring to artistic as well as natural beauty, it would seem that he falls logically in line with the formalists and intellectualists in aesthetic theory. Most probably ugliness in an art-object would be that instance in which intelligibility and form are lacking.

6. Augustine. The Middle Ages and St. Thomas

In the following century, St. Augustine, believing

45. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 115.

46. Ibid., p. 116.

in the existence of a universal and Divine order, held that there is no absolute ugliness. "Ugliness is only comparative deformity."⁴⁷

Probably he did not refer to aesthetics but his statements can be applied to art; and ugliness for the most part will be found to reside in the fact that some things are relatively unorganized and also in the fact that the eye of the beholder is untrained; for "the mutual fitness and harmony of things cannot be perceived by souls which are not attuned to it."⁴⁸ In any case, there is no ugliness in the nature of things. It is possible that a thing, not harmoniously perceived in the first place, might make for aesthetic ugliness in a representation - this on the part of the artist, himself. Or, on the other hand, it might be that the spectator's senses, in art as in nature, are limited in some way, and thus might cause the judgment "ugly" to what is really aesthetically beautiful.

With the development of the Middle Ages, the first purpose of art is, again, that of usefulness. This leads to an emphasis on the building arts, and figurative art is concerned largely with illustrations of moral doctrine and

47. Katherine Everett Gilbert and Helmut Kuhn, A History of Esthetics, New York, 1939, Macmillan, p. 137.

48. Ibid., pp. 137-138.

49

sacred history. The abhorrence of art by the medieval ascetics is a familiar thing; and Chambers in his History of Taste says, "The rebirth of the aesthetic consciousness was the first symptom of medieval decadence."⁵⁰

However, in this period, St. Thomas Aquinas, echoing Aristotle, sees the intellectual value of the arts. In his works, we can find something on ugliness and something on the arts, but just what is the relation between the two is not easy to determine. There is, nevertheless, one statement which gives enough of his general position to be fairly conclusive: "An image", he writes, "is said to be beautiful if it perfectly represents even an ugly thing."⁵¹

This indicates an awareness of the distinction between natural and aesthetic beauty. Further, he says, "For beauty includes three conditions, integrity or perfection, since those things which are impaired are by the very fact ugly; due proportion or harmony; and lastly brightness, or clarity, whence things are called beautiful which have a bright color"⁵²

49. Frank P. Chambers, The History of Taste: An Account of the Revolutions of Art Criticism and Theory in Europe, New York, 1932, Columbia University Press, p. 10.

50. Ibid., p. 17.

51. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, quoted in Melvin M. Rader, A Modern Book of Aesthetics: An Anthology, New York, 1935, Columbia University Press, p. 209.

52. Ibid., pp. 208-209.

When treating the supreme modes of being, St. Thomas does not specifically treat beauty, the gist being, evidently, that beauty is not distinct from the other transcendentals but falls under the category of the good.⁵³ And so, the answer to ugliness, as to error, is deprivation or absence of what ought to be. There is nothing positive in the nature of ugliness, no principle of evil, and therefore, nothing which is wholly evil or ugly. These things have no meaning apart from reference to goodness and beauty, and they are caused by them.⁵⁴ This is all written without any emphasis on artistic beauty; but we may infer that, to a certain extent, such beauty fails without the above given requirements of clarity, integrity, and harmony. In any case, with Plotinus, ugliness in art, for Aquinas would be negative, a lack rather than any positive quality.

This long period of aesthetics, represented first by Augustine and then by Aquinas nine centuries later, shows the logical development of a system influenced by early Christianity. Before this period, the most important criterion of ugliness will be found to be connected with imitation, as emphasized, particularly, in Aristotle. At first, in Socrates, ugliness was linked with the non-useful, and then with the

53. M. C. D'Arcy, Thomas Aquinas, Boston, 1930, Little, Brown, p. 140.

54. Ibid., p. 142.

morally evil; but, with Aristotle, we have ugliness justified for realistic reasons in the representative arts; even the morally evil justified in tragedy; and finally, ugliness legitimized in comedy. After Aristotle, then, ugliness of topic was generally regarded as within aesthetic rights, and the additional problem of formal ugliness began to receive especial emphasis with Longinus. To summarize, we find that these thinkers have left us with four justifications of ugliness: realism; comedy, and the morally ugly, perhaps, in tragedy; the organic notion as in Plotinus; and the idea that the ugly is legitimate if it successfully heightens the beautiful. St. Thomas can be seen as a synthesis of Aristotle, Plotinus, and Augustine, uniting realism and enlightenment.

After Aquinas in the fourteenth century A.D., there is a surprising dearth of aesthetic material, and there is practically no reference to ugliness in what is extant until Hogarth and Burke and Kames in the eighteenth century. It is a period of artistic activity which took the form of creation rather than criticism and theory. It is hoped that no significant omissions will be found; and the very general trend of the art schools during these centuries will be taken up briefly in the concluding summary.

CHAPTER II

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY THINKERS

1. Burke

In 1756, Edmund Burke published his book called A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. His discussion of ugliness is virtually inextricable from his notion of the sublime. That which excites the strongest possible emotion is the sublime, he says; and it includes pain, because pain is a stronger emotion than pleasure.¹ Already, we get a hint of romanticism. On the nature of the experience of sublimity, he writes:

"The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature . . . is astonishment or that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with the object, that it cannot entertain any other . . ."

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1. Edmund Burke, "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful", quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 88.
 2. Ibid., p. 89.

The sublime is outside the beautiful and is more closely connected with ugliness.³ Since Burke treats ugliness as the exact opposite of beauty,⁴ it is well to indicate first his position on beauty. He rejects the identification of beauty with customary or natural proportion, with utility,⁵ and with perfection; and, connecting it with relaxation,⁶ suggests that it is distinguished merely by sensible qualities. To be beautiful a thing must: (1) be small; (2) be smooth; (3) have "variety in the direction of the parts"; (4) have parts, not angular, but "melted as it were into each other"; (5) be delicate and not, apparently, very strong; (6) have clear and bright color, which is not too strong; or if the color is glaring (7) must "have it diversified with others."⁷

Returning more specifically to the problem of the sublime and ugly, Burke points out that we take a certain degree of delight in the real misfortunes and pains of others, that terror is a pleasant passion if it is not too intimately connected with ourselves.⁸ Finally, he writes:

"It may, perhaps, appear like a sort of repetition of what we have before said to insist here upon the nature of ugliness, as I

3. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 203.

4. Ibid., p. 204.

5. Burke, op.cit., quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 92.

6. Ibid., pp. 93-94.

7. Ibid., p. 92.

8. Ibid., p. 89.

imagine it to be in all respects the opposite of those qualities which we have laid down for the constituents of beauty. But, though ugliness be the opposite of beauty, it is not the opposite to proportion and fitness; for it is possible that a thing may be very ugly with any proportions, and with a perfect fitness to any uses. Ugliness I imagine likewise to be consistent enough with an idea of the sublime; but I would by no means insinuate that ugliness, of itself, is a sublime idea, unless united with such qualities as excite a strong terror." 9

It almost seems that, in Burke, we have a new type of ugliness. Are we to infer from his discussion that ugliness is redeemed by a pleasurable condition of the passions - passions, in a stronger sense than has before been the connotation? At any rate, this connection of ugliness with the stimulation of the passions seems to foreshadow the Dionysian aesthetics of Nietzsche.

2. Baumgarten

About mid-eighteenth century, the German rationalist, A. G. Baumgarten, sought to establish an independent science for the theory of the imagination,¹⁰ applied the Leibnizian tradition to it,¹¹ and called it "aesthetics."

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9. Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, New York, 1860, Harpers, p. 150.
 10. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 290.
 11. Carritt, op.cit., p. 81.

Beyond this nominal contribution, his work is of slight importance.

He places the fine arts in the realm of lower apprehension, that realm of vivid but confused imagery.¹² "Clear or vivid ideas", he writes, "are more poetical than obscure or faint ones."¹³ But, he continues, it is only confused (sensuous) but vivid ideas which are poetical since distinct ideas are not sensuous, and therefore not poetical. Although this, at first, has the appearance of being contradictory, the paradox may be removed by Baumgarten's distinction between clear and distinct, though it is not certain at all what this distinction is.

"Passions are notable degrees of pleasure or pain; consequently such feelings are presented, to the man who is apprehending something, as confused or sensuous ideas of good and evil. Consequently they afford poetical ideas - and it is poetical to arouse passions." 14

Without much originality, he gives art the function of imitating nature, adding that it must not combine contradictory elements.¹⁵ The unity of art, as he speaks of it, means a "function of the togetherness of emotional and pictured units."¹⁶ Since beauty is for him a formal principle of unity in variety, that which opposes the perfection of the variety

12. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 292.

13. Baumgarten, Philosophical thoughts on matters connected with Poetry, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 82.

14. Ibid., p. 82.

15. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 293.

16. Ibid., p. 295.

of parts within a sensuously perceived whole, is ugly. 17

"The defect of sensuous knowledge, to be avoided, is ugliness." 18

Among his writings, there are several pertinent statements:

"The appearance of perfection, or perfection obvious to taste in the wide sense, is beauty; the corresponding imperfection is ugliness. Hence beauty, as such, delights the observer; ugliness, as such, is disgusting." 19

"Ugly things, as such, may be thought of in a beautiful way, and more beautiful things in an ugly way." 20

Although this last sentence seems to indicate a possible opening for ugliness in art, his aesthetics do not add up to give any clear statement of his position on that matter. Does his "thought of in a beautiful way" give a clue? Possibly, it may mean a certain way in which the imagination and emotions are stimulated. The most that can be said positively is that aesthetic ugliness would result from an imitative combining of contradictory elements of nature, and from the destruction of the aforesaid formal principle. It seems that, insofar as the form of the art-object is concerned, there is no excuse for ugliness; but with regard to subject matter, there remains an open question. At least, Baumgarten seems to be beginning to emphasize the imagination and the necessary

17. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 185.

18. Baumgarten, Aesthetics, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 84.

19. Baumgarten, Metaphysics, quoted ibid., p. 84.

20. Baumgarten, Aesthetics, quoted ibid., p. 84.

capacity of art to stimulate it. However indefinite his theory is, it is a definite departure from the classical and medieval traditions.

3. Kant

The properties of pure beauty, we learn from Kant, concern design, disinterested and universal pleasure, harmonious interplay of reason and sense, and non-purposive purpose. Kant's entire aesthetics, which is influenced noticeably by Burke, is too long to be of much use in this more strictly defined problem. However, below are several citations which, in indicating a rather relativistic stand, may intimate something of his attitude towards the ugly:

"So there can be no rule by which anybody can be compelled to recognize anything as beautiful." 21

" . . . (B)eauty, apart from relation to our feeling, is itself nothing . . . " 22

"There can be no objective rule of taste to determine by conceptions what is to be beautiful . . . " 23

The only claim to universality of agreement in judging beauty is that the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good. ²⁴

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21. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgement, quoted ibid., p. 112.
 22. Ibid., p. 113.
 23. Ibid., p. 117.
 24. Ibid., p. 123.

His attitude towards the sublime is particularly interesting and can be traced directly back to Burke. What are here the very chaotic qualities of feeling in experiencing the sublime, have been, in other aesthetic theories, qualities sometimes attached to judgments of ugliness. In the sublime, Kant says, we may have a form which is badly fitted to judgment, unsuited to our perceptual powers, and even violent to our imagination.²⁵

More definitely with regard to the problem of ugliness in art is the following citation, quoted in full because it seems to summarize rather completely Kant's position.

"Where fine art evidences its superiority is in the beautiful descriptions it gives of things that in nature would be ugly or displeasing. The Furies, diseases, devastations of war, and the like, can (as evils) be very beautifully described, nay even represented in pictures. One kind of ugliness alone is incapable of being represented conformably to nature without destroying all aesthetic delight, and consequently artistic beauty, namely, that which excites disgust. For, as in this strange sensation, which depends purely on the imagination, the object is represented as insisting, as it were, upon our enjoying it, while we still set our face against it, the artificial representation of the object is no longer distinguishable from the nature of the object itself in our sensation, and so it cannot possibly be regarded as beautiful. The art of sculpture, again, since in its products art is almost confused with nature, has excluded from its creations the direct representation of ugly objects, and instead only sanctions, for example, the representation of death (in a beautiful genius), or of the warlike spirit (in Mars), by means of an allegory, or attributes

25. Ibid., p. 118.

which wear a pleasant guise, and so only indirectly, through an interpretation on the part of reason, and not for the pure aesthetic judgement." 26

Kant represents an advance in that we have an even wider and more definite inclusion - ugliness is legitimate so far as it stimulates the imagination except in the case of disgust.

4. Schiller

Friedrich Schiller is best known for his doctrines of aesthetic semblance and the play-impulse. Called the link between Kant and Goethe, he was, aesthetically speaking, less subjective than Kant, and more absolutist concerning the beautiful.

In that period of his aesthetic theory which may be regarded as pre-Kantian, he was a moralist. Perfection depended upon harmony and proportion; wrong action was discord and imperfection; in short, like the ancients, he identified truth, goodness, and beauty.²⁷

After this pre-Kantian stage, he asserted that the aim of art was not morality but "free pleasure";²⁸ and that

26. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, translated by James C. Meredith, Oxford, 1911, Clarendon Press, pp. 173-174.
27. Calvin Thomas, The Life and Works of Friedrich Schiller, New York, 1906, Henry Holt, p. 265.
28. Ibid., p. 266.

art's only moral value was that it stood on neutral territory.²⁹
That is bad art which influences a course of action.

"The unique secret of art . . . is to sublimate the matter by the form", he wrote.³⁰ The beautiful is composed of two elements: "first the sensuous pleasure caused by the play of personality, and secondly the rational gratification caused by the idea of adaptation to an end . . ." ³¹ In art, the object must be "idealized"; but this process does not mean beautified, - rather it means truthfully portrayed. For, ³² finally, true human nature is never anything except noble.

In his aesthetics, Schiller devoted a good deal of space to the question of the pleasure felt over painful representations, from which discussions a possible clue to ugliness may be derived.

"All pleasure . . . comes from the perception of . . . the quality of being adapted to the furtherance of an end. Since man is meant to be happy and naturally seeks happiness, human suffering affects us primarily as a 'maladaptation', and so gives us pain. But in this very pain our reason recognizes a higher 'adaptation', since we are incited by it to activity. We know that it is good for us and for society; and so we take pleasure in our own pain. The total effect of tragedy depends upon the proportion in ³³ which this higher sense of adaptation is present."

29. Ibid., p. 282.

30. Schiller, Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 127.

31. Thomas, op.cit., p. 276.

32. Ibid., p. 287.

33. Ibid., p. 267.

But "beauty," he says, "can tolerate nothing abrupt or violent."³⁴ It is possible to infer from his writings what else would be bad art, or probably ugly. Passionate art is bad, as is any art which is "didactic or edifying."³⁵ With regard to subject matter, it seems correct to say that so long as "idealized", or truthfully portrayed, anything is beautiful and nothing ugly.

Although it is possible to indicate a rather direct line in the general theoretical positions of Baumgarten, Burke, and Kant with their emphasis on the imagination and their consequent tendency towards romanticism, Schiller is not easily placed in this line. In the above respects, he does not make any advance nor does he even stay with those thinkers in their advances when he says that passionate art is not good although he does leave room for tragedy. Perhaps his position is to mark the beginnings of aesthetic idealism so prominent in the German thinkers of the next century.

34. Henry Rutgers Marshall, The Beautiful, London, 1924, Macmillan, p. 192.

35. Schiller, op.cit., quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 127.

CHAPTER III

GERMAN IDEALISM OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1. Schelling and Hegel

Schelling was younger than Hegel, but he was well known before Hegel began to come into prominence; and it is to Schelling that Hegel's aesthetics owes a fundamental debt. In his Aesthetics, Hegel says that with Schelling " . . . the actual notion of art and its place in scientific theory were discovered."¹

Schelling is important to our particular problem only indirectly, for he had little to say concerning the ugly in definite terms. One reference can be found in which he speaks of the old view of art. This old conception of imitating nature, he writes, gives no explanation of how the beautiful, which is to be imitated, differs from the ugly, which is not. The trouble lies "in regarding Nature as a lifeless aggregate of objects";² and the problem of imitation can be

1. Hegel, Aesthetics, quoted in Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 136.
 2. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 327.

overcome if nature is regarded as a whole, as an expression of rational power. In art, given form must be transcended and restored as intuited.³ "Hence the sculptor or the painter who represents nature has to undo in his own mind the separation effected by human consciousness. He reverts to a sub-conscious stratum where man and nature are one."⁴

Schelling, himself, writes concerning this:

"The artist must strive to emulate that real spirit of Nature which speaks from within things, and uses their shape and form as its mere sensuous symbols . . . Definition of form in nature is never merely negative or formal, it always has positive character."⁵

Here he catches up Plotinus a little, only for Schelling anything is beautiful from the standpoint of the whole, where, for Plotinus, there remained some things which could not be mastered by form and rationality.

Schelling also emphasized the "characteristic", and after him Schlegel, Schasler, and Hartmann; but Schelling's definitions and use of the term has some inconsistency.

The most direct reference to our problem is found in the following statement:

"Now the infinite represented in finite form is Beauty. The fundamental character of every work of art, which comprehends in it the two former characters . . . is therefore Beauty, and without beauty there is no work of art."⁶

3. Ibid., p. 328.

4. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 433.

5. Schelling, The Relation of the Arts of Form to Nature, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 136.

6. Schelling, System of Transcendental Idealism, quoted in Bosanquet, op. cit., pp. 319-320.

" . . . Art", wrote Hegel, "has the function of revealing truth in the form of sensuous artistic shapes and of presenting to us the reconciliation of the contradiction (between sense and reason, between what is and what ought to be, between desire and duty)."⁷

For Hegel, art transcends the useful and seeks the beautiful, the degree of beauty attached to a thing depending upon the degree to which it is symptomatic of the presence of spirit. There is no systematic treatment of ugliness; but in his discussion of the beauty and ugliness of animals, Hegel seems to admit a relativistic position by saying that certain creatures seem ugly to us because their forms are opposed to what we have been trained to consider adequate expressions of life. This may be taken to imply that below man and art, ugliness is not absolute.⁸ However, ugliness (in art?) always seems to involve a distortion. "False characterisation seems then to be the essence of ugliness . . ."⁹

Although, as mentioned, Hegel never treats the ugly as a distinct and definite problem, there are several references in his philosophy from which it is possible to derive some idea of his stand. Kidney, reproducing his Aesthetics in simplified form, writes:

7. Hegel, Aesthetics, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., pp. 163-164.

8. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 338.

9. Ibid., p. 355.

"The grand motive principles in Art are the principles of religion and morality; of the family, the state, the Church; of glory, friendship, etc.; and particularly in Romantic Art, of honor and love. These principles differ, without doubt, in the degree of their moral worth, but all participate in rationality. There are, indeed, other potencies which are opposed to these legitimate ones, the potencies of evil or the negative principle; but that which is purely negative cannot appear in the ideal representation of action as the essential cause of the reaction. The end of evil is something null, and the contradiction of this, as an originating principle, does not allow of a beauty pure in its form. Cruelty, wretchedness, violence, are allowable in a representation only when they are alleviated by the grandeur of the character, and the end he has in view. Perversity, envy, baseness, are only repulsive . . ."

"(Art can only make wicked characters interesting by letting be seen in them the evidence or the possibility of something good, thus an inward collision . . .)" 10

Unlike the earlier aestheticians, truth in art, for Hegel, does not necessarily imply a faithful imitation of nature; rather, art flatters nature. Works of art should be immediately enjoyed, causing no bewilderment and demanding no erudition on the part of the spectator. It is unsound for the artist to go out of his way after the bizarre and startling, or to try too hard to attain humor.

The following paragraph seems rather significant:

10. John Steinfort Kidney, Hegel's Aesthetics: A Critical Exposition, Chicago, 1885, S. C. Griggs, p. 69.

11. Ibid., p. 54.

12. Ibid., p. 94.

13. Ibid., p. 113.

" . . . (I)f in an artistic performance anything is borrowed from the ideal of the ultimate perfection, it may be, if adequately rendered, said to belong to High Art. If it deals with what has no permanence, or intrinsic worth, it is low in its aim, and can only be rescued from speedy neglect by its success in dealing with the mystery of Color or of Sound, or appealing to some transient sympathy." ¹⁴

In his discussion of styles, Hegel lists the severe, the ideal, and the graceful. With the latter, he remarks, architecture, painting, and sculpture are often not content, unless they cover up simple and grand masses with much detail - i.e. "style for effect", which includes shocking and severe and striking contrasts. ¹⁵

There seems a possible place for ugliness in the fine arts with regard to the aspect of characterization. For the demand, here, is not so much for physical perfection as for moral consciousness shown through even ugly figures. "The painter may, by the inner beauty of the soul, glorify the ungainly body." ¹⁶ So, in portraiture, the emphasis is always upon the inner character.

From the foregoing we may summarize to the effect that ugliness in nature may be relative, that art is bad where it is too esoteric or didactic or startling, that ugliness has a place in art only as somehow connected with beauty,

14. Ibid., p. 177.

15. Ibid., p. 184.

16. Ibid., p. 242.

and that superficial physical ugliness can indeed be artistically alleviated by the presence of spiritual beauty. In short, real ugliness is false characterization; what is commonly called ugly can be redeemed and, if it is, is aesthetically legitimate.

2. Schopenhauer

It would seem that, where in his pessimistic philosophy Schopenhauer regards pleasure, not as positive, but a suspense of pain,¹⁷ that beauty might be only a negative suspense of ugliness. However, such is not the case at all; for, surprisingly enough, there is no real ugliness for him, as there was none for Schelling.

"When we say that a thing is beautiful, we thereby assert that it is an object of our aesthetic contemplation . . ." 18

"Since, on the one hand, every given thing may be observed in a purely objective manner and apart from all relations; and since, on the other hand, the will manifests itself in everything at some grade of its objectivity, so that everything is the expression of an Idea; it follows that everything is also beautiful . . ." 19

The only difference between art and nature is that,

17. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 466.

18. Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Idea, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 144.

19. Ibid., p. 145.

in the former, we have the artist's eyes to look through.²⁰
 In his discussion of the separate arts, we learn that music
 is set aside as a copy of the will itself and that imitative
 music is entirely to be rejected.²¹ As to types and modifica-
 tions of beauty:

"The sublime is the same as the beautiful, except that it presupposes a hostile relation between the objects contemplated and the individual will, which hostility, being overcome by an effort, gives rise to a spiritual exaltation of the subject in attaining, by this special effort, the pure contemplation of the idea in the hostile object."²²

From Schopenhauer we can only find that ugliness is not absolute but entirely relative, that it is merely a defective manifestation or incomplete objectification of the will,²³ and that the fact of its being an objectification of the will always is what saves a thing from being ugly.

3. Schlegel

Friedrich Schlegel's main contribution to the significance of the ugly is, circuitously, through the emphasis²⁴ which he places upon the "characteristic" as art's principle.

20. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 365.

21. Ibid., p. 367.

22. Ibid., p. 366.

23. Ibid., p. 366.

24. Benedetto Croce, Aesthetic As Science of Expression and General Linguistic, translated by Douglas Ainslie, London, 1922, Macmillan, p. 347.

He began with an antithesis of beauty and ugliness. Intending to keep ugliness entirely outside the province of the beautiful, he finds that it inevitably pushes its way in.²⁵ He may be considered important, in a nominal way such as Baumgarten, for giving the first mention in aesthetical history of a "theory of ugliness."²⁶ Beauty is defined as "the pleasant manifestation of the good"; and ugliness, as "the unpleasant manifestation of the bad."²⁷ Are we to suppose from this, asks Bosanquet, that an unpleasant manifestation of the good and a pleasant manifestation of the bad are impossible? Bosanquet points out that Schlegel, regarding ugliness as the embodied negation of beauty, finds his concept difficult to handle and eventually realizes and admits that the most intense, positive ugliness will always contain elements of beauty.²⁸

Croce, in his Aesthetic, discusses (and rejects) two doctrines which were in development during this period of German aesthetics. The first, the "sympathetic" doctrine, sought to set the problem of giving a place to the ugly. "This problem", Croce writes, "is without meaning for us, who do not recognize any ugliness save the anti-aesthetic or inexpressive, which can never form part of the aesthetic

25. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 394.

26. Ibid., p. 301.

27. Schlegel, quoted in Bosanquet, p. 301.

28. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 301.

fact, being, on the contrary, its antithesis." ²⁹ He goes on to say that this school of thought asserts that the ugly or "antipathetic" is admissable in artistic representation only when it can be overcome. It excludes from art invincible ugliness such as the disgusting and nauseating. The duty of such ugliness as is admitted to art is to heighten the beautiful by contrast. "Thus the ugly in art was looked upon as adapted for the service of the beautiful, a stimulant and condiment of aesthetic pleasure." ³⁰ This Overcoming of the Ugly School thinks of the comic, sublime, tragic, and such types, as conflicts between ugliness and beauty, where beauty wins and, because of its struggle, arises the loftier and the greater for it. ³¹

This theory, presupposing that of Schlegel, already outlined, and the second doctrine (of the passage of beauty from the abstract, particularized in the comic, tragic, and so forth, to the concrete), is seen in certain minor aestheticians - Solger, Weisse, and Ruge. ³²

4. Solger and Ruge

For Solger, tragedy and comedy lie within the

29. Croce, op.cit., p. 88.

30. Ibid., p. 88.

31. Ibid., p. 346

32. Ibid., pp. 346-347.

beautiful. "Tragedy is the 'idea' as emphasized by annihilation of it . . . "; and "Comedy is the idea recognized as asserting itself throughout even the most commonplace existence."³³ If comedy ceases to be recognized in the realm of common life, we have one of two results: either the prosaic view of life not connected with aesthetic feeling; or else, we have ugliness rising "when the human mind finds in the commonplace phenomenon . . . something essential, wherein the phenomenon, divorced from the idea, has independent reality."³⁴

Solger's rather extreme position is given in the citations below:

"If anything is to be recognized as the opposite of the beautiful, the same thing must be looked for in it that is looked for in the beautiful, and the opposite found. If the idea is really lacking, and the mere phenomenon gives itself out for the essence, then the ugly makes its appearance. The ugly is a rebellion against the beautiful, as the evil against the good . . . Natural imperfections are not ugly, except in so far as in this complication of external forces something is taken to reveal itself which aims at concentrating these mere forces as essential in themselves . . . Just so, a disposition which opposes itself to the beautiful by concentrating the commonplace into a single point, and acquiescing therein, is an ugly disposition. Mere contingency and maladaptation, therefore, are not enough to constitute ugliness; it is necessary in addition that in the things which

33. Solger, Vorlesungen über Aesthetik, quoted in Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 395.

34. Ibid., p. 396.

are thus self-contradictory there shall be a unity, which (really) could only be the idea, but is sought for in purely phenomenal existence . . .

"The ugly is therefore positively opposed to the beautiful, and we can only regard them as absolutely exclusive of each other." 35

The conclusion is that the ugly, qua ugly, cannot enter art; and yet beauty in its progress from the sublime to the comic comes close to ugliness and is saved only by the strong ideal which generates true comedy.³⁶ Art that is not deep is ugly. The superficial, the "purely phenomenal" are ugly; art must, as with Hegel at the beginning of this idealistic strain, reveal a profound spiritual meaning.

Arnold Ruge's aesthetics also focuses on the idea of the comic.³⁷ It is well to note that in all these German thinkers, subsequent to Hegel, the use of the Idea is a prominent feature of aesthetic theory. In Ruge, for instance:

"(T)he effort to achieve the Idea, or the Idea searching for itself, generates the sublime; when the Idea loses instead of discovering itself, ugliness is produced; when the Idea re-discovers itself and rises out of ugliness to new life, the comic." 38

5. Weisse, Schasler, Hartmann

Where the foregoing thinkers have been skeptical

35. Ibid., pp. 396-397.

36. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 397.

37. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 454.

38. Croce, op.cit., p. 347.

in varying degrees about the place of ugliness in art, Weisse, Schasler, and Hartmann assign it a legitimate place and regard an independent existence of ugliness as an aesthetic possibility.

For Weisse, ugliness is "the immediate existence of beauty" which is overcome in the sublime and the comic.³⁹ He not only insists in claiming a place for the ugly in aesthetic theory; but he also insists that positive ugliness, as differentiated from defective beauty, can claim a place for itself in art and has a power not unlike that of the beautiful. He brings the ugly, according to the theories discussed, into the progress of beauty from sublimity to comedy, through the self-conflicts of beauty.⁴⁰

Though Schasler recognizes an invincible ugliness, he also regards the type of ugliness which Weisse calls "positive" as legitimate aesthetic material. Further, he says that ugliness is an essential element of all beauty and "is the active element or dialectic negation by which aesthetic interest is impelled to the creation of definite or characteristic beauty, in its various forms."⁴¹ So it is evident that, like Schlegel, Schasler gives the "characteristic" a central place in art.⁴²

39. *Ibid.*, p. 346.

40. *Bosanquet, op.cit.*, pp. 398-399.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 417.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 418.

He disagrees with those who hold that ugliness, entering art, must remain ugly. He seems always to keep in mind masculine and feminine beauty and "points out that the characteristic qualities or features of either sex, if transferred as primary characteristics to the other sex, would at once become ugly." ⁴³

"The beauty of art passes over into ugliness either by a confusion between two phases of beauty such as the sublime and the graceful, or by the intensification of some characteristic till it destroys the harmony of the system to which it belongs and becomes caricature. Thus the monstrous or horrible is the false sublime, and so on. Such are the points at which the latent ugliness within art passes into actual and invincible ugliness outside art." ⁴⁴

Eduard von Hartmann is like Schasler in two respects; he emphasizes the characteristic and he says that ugliness is always an element in beauty. All ugliness is relative in that it is "apparent." ⁴⁵ There is real ugliness in nature, he says, ⁴⁶ for nature does not always aim at beauty; and we may certainly infer that whatever ugliness there is in nature is mixed with beauty. But as for art:

"Ugliness is just so far aesthetically justified as it is a vehicle of the concretion of the beautiful."

43. Ibid., pp. 417-418.

44. Ibid., pp. 418-419.

45. Ibid., p. 432.

46. Ibid., pp. 429-430.

"The more characteristic any beauty is upon its own level, the more serious are the forfeitures which it imposes on the beauty of lower levels; that is, within every grade the formal ugliness which is aesthetically indispensable is the greater as the beauty is more characteristic." 47

6. Rosenkranz

Karl Rosenkranz "brought into relief the esthetic relevance of the ugly as the 'self-destruction of the beautiful.'⁴⁸ Though he is not chronologically last in this group of German thinkers, he is left here until last, because his is the most concrete language we have yet heard concerning the ugly in art. In 1853, he published a volume called The Aesthetic of the Ugly, in which he posits ugliness midway between the beautiful and the comic. He opposes the idea of ugliness as a foil to beauty in art.

"(He) justifies its introduction by the necessity for art to represent the entire appearance of the Idea; on the other hand he admits that the ugly is not on the same level as the beautiful, for, if the beautiful can stand by itself alone, the other cannot do so and must always be reflected by and in the beautiful." 49

Though Bosanquet doubts that ugliness as a positive negation of beauty can be idealized without being undone qua

47. Hartmann, Aesthetics, quoted in Bosanquet, p. 432.

48. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 454.

49. Croce, op.cit., pp. 347-348.

ugly and given as beauty, this is precisely what Rosenkranz proposes. In art, ugliness must not be beautiful for this would add "fraud to rebellion." The process of idealization, in which ugliness is subjected to the laws of beauty, will not, Rosenkranz thinks contrary to Bosanquet, hide its ugliness, but will accent its "characteristic lineaments" and at the same time do away with unessential and unpleasant detail.⁵⁰

Ugliness is a distinct "object-matter" outside the beautiful and does deserve separate treatment. Ugliness, as such, is the negation of beauty; that is, it is a perversion of that which gives rise to beauty. Since, therefore, beauty and ugliness contain the same factors, ugliness can be subordinated to beauty in an aesthetic experience of a complex type such as comedy, which will not be a species of the beautiful but a "continuation of its principle in a new shape, after the rebellion of the ugly has been overcome."⁵¹

Because Rosenkranz was the first to recognize seriously and devote an entire volume to the problem of the ugly, an important paragraph from his work is quoted in full:

"If art is not to represent the idea in a merely onesided way, it cannot dispense with the ugly. The pure ideals exhibit to

50. Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 405.

51. Ibid., p. 401.

us no doubt the most important, that is, the positive element of the beautiful; but if mind and nature are to be admitted to presentation in their full dramatic depth, then the ugly of nature, and the evil and diabolic, must not be omitted. The Greeks, however much they lived in the ideal, had nevertheless their Hekatoncheires, Cyclopes, Satyrs, Graiae, Empusae, Harpies, Chimacras; they had a lame god, and represented in their tragedies the most horrible crimes (e.g. in the Oedipus and the Oresteia), madness (in the Ajax), nauseating diseases (in the Philoctetes), and in their comedy, vices and infamies of all kinds. Moreover, along with the Christian religion, as that which teaches men to know evil in its root and overcome it fundamentally, the ugly is finally and in principle introduced into the world of art. For this reason therefore, in order to depict the concrete manifestation of the idea in its totality, art cannot omit the portrayal of the ugly. Its apprehension of the idea would be superficial if it tried to limit itself to simple beauty." 52

Rosenkranz' final position seems to be that, despite the admission that simple beauty is not adequate to art, ugliness still cannot have an independent existence there; for if beauty does not need a foil, the ugly does. 53

Before venturing a summary of the period of German aesthetics, it might be well to mention one French philosopher, whose writing has some bearing on the matter. Victor Cousin, in his Lectures on the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, says that the only way of escaping the absurd relativism in beauty

52. Rosenkranz, Aesthetik des Hässlichen, quoted in Bosanquet, op.cit., p. 404.

53. Bosanquet. op.cit., p. 404.

and ugliness is to recognize judgment of the beautiful as an absolute judgment entirely different from sensations of

agreeableness. ⁵⁴ For, he writes:

"Without doubt, beauty is almost always agreeable to the senses, or at least it must not wound them." ⁵⁵

"The agreeable is not, then, the measure of the beautiful, since in certain cases it effaces it and makes us forget it; it is not, then, the beautiful, since it is found, and in the highest degree, where the beautiful is not." ⁵⁶

A thing, Cousin continues, can be at once hideous and sublime. For example, he suggests the face of Socrates after the hemlock; the expression of death is hideous showing "decomposition of the matter that no longer retains the spirit . . ." and sublime, "when it awakens in us the idea of eternity." ⁵⁷

By means of physical beauty, art attains its end which is the expression of moral beauty; ⁵⁸ for art's business is to ennoble life, lifting it to where ugliness is not admitted. ⁵⁹

"The true artist feels and profoundly admires nature; but every thing in nature is not equally admirable. As we have just said, it has something by which it infinitely surpasses art - its life. Besides that, art can, in its turn, surpass nature, on

54. Victor Cousin, Lectures on the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, translated by O. W. Wright, New York, 1879, D. Appleton, pp. 128-129.

55. Ibid., p. 126

56. Ibid., p. 127.

57. Ibid., p. 148.

58. Ibid., p. 157.

59. Ibid., p. 160.

the condition of not wishing to imitate it too closely. Every natural object, however beautiful, is defective on some side. Every thing that is real is imperfect. Here, the horrible and the hideous are united to the sublime; there, elegance and grace are separated from grandeur and force. The traits of beauty are scattered and diverse. To reunite them arbitrarily . . . without any rule . . . (that) directs these borrowings, is to compose monsters; to admit a rule, is already to admit an ideal different from all individuals. It is this ideal that the true artist forms to himself in studying nature. Without nature, he never would have conceived this ideal; but with this ideal, he judges nature herself, (and) rectifies her . . . " 60

The question will arise, finally, as to exactly what advances these idealistic German aestheticians have made over the state of the problem as it was left with the early thinkers and the romantic tendencies in Burke, Kant, and Baumgarten. For one thing, we have for the first time, in Schelling and Schopenhauer, the dogmatic denial of the existence of any real ugliness; and also, the concept of the ugly as the antithesis in the full revelation of the Idea. Not completely original but more pronounced is the accentuation of the "characteristic" by Schelling, Schlegel, Schasler, and Hartmann particularly; and the connection of ugliness with the comic in Solger, Ruge, and Weisse. Most important, of course, is that tendency which is an outgrowth of the very body of idealistic and pantheistic philosophy - the emphasis

on the ideal, the seeking for an inner spiritual reality which does not reveal itself in the merely superficial aspects of things. For this reason, art at best, is profound; superficiality is ugly, a tenet brought out most directly in the aesthetics of Solger.

CHAPTER IV

MODERN THINKERS: THE APPROACH THROUGH A PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM

1. Nietzsche

"Art", writes Nietzsche, the romantic par excellence, "is the alleviation of the sufferer -- as the way to states in which pain is willed, is transfigured, is deified, where suffering is a form of great ecstasy." ¹ In him, we get a new standard of value. Art is not to be judged as good or bad, true or false, not even beautiful or ugly, as absolutes -- everything is to be judged according to the degree of value ² it affords the development of the Superman. Nietzsche opposes the traditional aesthetics, charging it with otherworldliness, a quality it should not possess because art is really the "affirmation, benediction, deification of existence." ³ Similarly, he repudiates the cult of originality and the lax romantic ⁴ ideal of spontaneous creativity.

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1. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, quoted in Rader, op.cit., p. 67.
 2. George Burman Foster, Friedrich Nietzsche, New York, 1931, Macmillan, p. 138.
 3. Nietzsche, op.cit., quoted in Rader, op.cit., p. 61.
 4. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 519.

Nietzsche's view of art, and in particular of ugliness, is rather overwhelming, but it is not so startling when we recall Burke. Not only art for art's sake but art for life's sake is his creed; and life, itself, is a work of art.⁵ The judgment of beauty does not concern reality.⁶ Indeed, the judgment "beautiful" is given in direct proportion to the strength and power of the judge, in whom impotence would cause a judgment of disvalue in powerful art-objects. "(A) taste for pretty and charming trifles is characteristic of the weak and the delicate."⁷ It is the artists of decadence who seek refuge in formal beauty.⁸

"The depth of the tragic artist consists in the fact that his esthetic instinct surveys the more remote results, that he does not halt shortsightedly at the thing that is nearest, that he says Yea to the whole cosmic economy, which justifies the terrible, the evil, and the questionable; which more than justifies it."⁹

The highest condition of "yea-saying" is not one where the greatest pain is excluded. This highest state is, in fact, the tragico-Dionysian state.¹⁰ In this Dionysian enchantment, we pass beyond the usual bonds of existence; and horror and joy merge "in the eternal flux of things,

5. Foster, op.cit., p. 137.
6. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 520.
7. Nietzsche, op.cit., quoted in Rader, op.cit., p. 64.
8. Ibid., p. 65.
9. Ibid., pp. 65-66.
10. Ibid., p. 68.

carrying both creation and destruction."¹¹

Then, so far as some things are judged ugly, it is a weakness and impotence in the spectator. And with regard to these same things, the artist is also weak if he avoids them. They are the terrible, the evil, the questionable; and they are not ugly for Nietzsche as they would be for us. But there are some things ugly for Nietzsche; and according to his previously set standard, they are those things which do not afford value to, or which are detrimental to, the Superman. They are to be, therefore, excluded from the realm of aesthetics.

"To represent terrible and questionable things is, in itself, the sign of an instinct of power and magnificence in the artist; he doesn't fear them There is no such thing as a pessimistic art Art affirms. Job affirms. But Zola? and the Goncourts? - The things they show us are ugly; their reason, however, for showing them to us is their love of ugliness" 12

The reason why Zola and the Goncourts and the work of similar artists are to be excluded is given in the following paragraph which also gives the gist of Nietzsche's entire notion:

"Nothing is ugly except degenerating man; - the domain of esthetic judgment is thereby limited. - Re-examined physiologically, all that is ugly weakens and afflicts man. It reminds him of deterioration, of danger, and

11. Gilbert and Kuhn, op.cit., p. 520.

12. Nietzsche, op.cit., quoted in Rader, op.cit., pp. 61-62.

of impotence; he actually suffers loss of power by it. The effect of ugliness can be measured by the dynamometer. Whenever man is depressed, he has a sense of the proximity of something ugly. His sense of power, his will to power, his courage, his pride - they decrease with the ugly, they increase with the beautiful. In both cases we draw an inference, the premises of which are accumulated in enormous fulness of instinct. The ugly is understood as a sign and symptom of degeneration; that which reminds us in the remotest manner of degeneracy prompts us to pronounce the verdict, 'ugly'. Every indication of exhaustion, gravity, age, or lassitude; every kind of constraint, such as cramp or paralysis; and above all the odour, the colour, and the likeness of decomposition or putrefaction, be it utterly attenuated even to a symbol:- all these things call forth a similar reaction, the evaluation 'ugly.' A hatred is there excited: whom does man hate there? There can be no doubt: the decline of his type. The hatred is inspired by the most profound instinct of the species; there is horror, foresight, and far-reaching vision in it - it is the profoundest of all hatreds. On account of it, art is profound." 13

2. Bosanquet

So long as persons exist, writes Bosanquet, there must be two uses of the word, "beauty" - a narrower and a wider meaning. ¹⁴ "Beautiful" is the only word we can find ¹⁵ for the property of aesthetic excellence. We also need a

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13. F. Nietzsche, quoted in John Hemming Fry, The Revolt Against Beauty: The Source and Genesis of Modernistic Art, New York, 1934, Putnam, pp. 16-17.
14. Bernard Bosanquet, Three Lectures on the Aesthetic, London, 1931, Macmillan, p. 83.
15. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

word for the aesthetically pleasant, and the word "beautiful" will never be abandoned here.¹⁶

"So then, we may say that beauty in the wider sense, which is also the more correct sense, and the sense come to by education, and that preferred I think by persons endowed with much aesthetic insight - beauty in this wider sense is the same as what is aesthetically excellent. But by a justified usage, this wider sense of beauty which equals aesthetically excellent must be taken as containing two classes, that of easy beauty and that of difficult beauty . . ." 17

It is these concepts, of easy and difficult beauty, which are particularly noteworthy as bearing on our topic and also as having influenced many subsequent thinkers. Easy beauty is that which is almost universally pleasant, straightforward and simple.¹⁸ He continues:

"The difficulty, amounting for some persons to repulsion, which belongs to such beauty as makes the rarer appeal, may take different forms. I suggest three. I do not say that they cover all the cases. I will call them: (a) Intricacy; (b) Tension; (c) Width." 19

Bosanquet feels there is a tendency to revulsion against insoluble difficulties such as those possibly occasioned by a high degree of "intricacy."²⁰ "The difficult beauty simply gives you too much, at one moment, of what you are perfectly prepared to enjoy if only you could take it all in."²¹ This

16. Ibid., p. 84.
 17. Ibid., pp. 84-85.
 18. Ibid., p. 85.
 19. Ibid., p. 87.
 20. Ibid., p. 88.
 21. Ibid., p. 89.

is likewise the case with high "tension" of feeling, which²² requires too great an effort on the part of the spectator. Another defect on the part of the spectator is illustrated where "width" is concerned. This is the most difficult to understand of the three concepts. By it Bosanquet seems to mean the presence of a "wide range of forms, all of them distinguished by an attitude taken up towards the conventional attitude."²³

The differentiations of easy and difficult beauty are made in order to extend the term to cover the aesthetically excellent, and to lead the way to a discussion of ugliness. The author hopes that, by the previous distinctions, the tendency to make ugliness the antithesis of beauty will be somewhat removed, since "intricacy", "tension", and "width" will explain many judgments of ugliness in what is really²⁴ (difficult) beauty.

Then, so-called ugliness is a defect in the spectator. But what of true ugliness, which would mean an unconquerable ugliness which no amount of aesthetic insight could pronounce beautiful?²⁵ This problem involves a paradox: if a thing has no expressive form, it is not of the aesthetic realm; but, if it has, it is beautiful, since beauty is feeling made plastic

22. Ibid., p. 89.

23. Ibid., p. 94.

24. Ibid., pp. 94-95.

25. Ibid., p. 97.

or expressive.²⁶ In other words, an ugliness that is expressive is, ipso facto, a beauty. So-called ugliness, although the spectator is at fault, must be treated and explained with as much seriousness as invincible ugliness.²⁷ But "ugliness cannot be merely the expression of what will not go into definite form. Even in the revulsion against difficult beauty, it has a positive quality of discordancy, though perhaps one which we ought to be able to overcome."²⁸ A medley of beautiful things combined so that, in contradicting each other, the total result is of ugliness, can only half-heartedly be called ugly.²⁹ In tracking down invincible ugliness, Bosanquet writes (recalling Solger):

"If there is a truly ugly which is aesthetically judged, and which is not merely a failure of our imagination, it must be an appearance which is both expressive and inexpressive at once, aesthetically judged, yet unaesthetic."

So that region wherein would abide absolute ugliness, if it existed, would be the region of art which is insincere and affected.³¹ There is an almost Socratic strain here, as Bosanquet speaks of the beauty of useful objects, and the positive ugliness resulting from "any attempt to confer upon them mere decorative beauty inconsistent with their purpose . . ."³²

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26. Ibid., pp. 97-98.
 27. Ibid., pp. 99-100.
 28. Ibid., p. 101.
 29. Ibid., pp. 101-102.
 30. Ibid., p. 103.
 31. Ibid., p. 106.
 32. Ibid., p. 108.

Bosanquet's tendency to disbelief in the existence of any possible unconquerable ugliness is one of many indications of the Hegelian and idealistic strain running throughout his philosophy. But he tells us in what phase of art it would be found, should it exist:

"Therefore what we have to dread as ugliness insuperable either by healthy perception or by the 'characteristic' of art, is not the narrow, the rude, the terrible, the grotesque, or even the vicious when frankly and forcibly revealed for what it is; as plainly represented in their apparent ugliness, these elements become modifications of the beautiful. We must look for insuperable ugliness in its highest degree in the falsely beautiful produced by the confusion of aims and feelings in conscious representation, i.e. in art. We shall find it in the sentimental presented as touching, the effeminate as tender, in the feeble taken to be delicate, the tawdry taken to be brilliant, and the monstrous taken to be strong." 33

Bosanquet must be given credit for his excellent distinction (between beauty in the wide sense and in the narrow sense), which has done a great deal to clarify the problem of so-called ugliness. However, there is a matter of confusion in his theory/^{which} comes to mind. He seems to be equating easy beauty with the strictly beautiful, an equation which aesthetic fact and experience will not warrant; for, by his definition of easy beauty, it seems to be that of easiest reception, the simply pretty, the charming - whereas the strictly beautiful obviously possesses a great deal more

profundity. The strictly beautiful is, in other words, not necessarily a beauty of easy reception; in fact, one of its criteria should be depth.

3. Dewey

John Dewey well illustrates the deduction of aesthetics from a philosophical system, for the instrumentalist strain colors markedly the small amount of material he gives relating to the present problem.

"The only basic distinction is that between bad art and good art, and this distinction, between things that meet the requirements of art and those that do not, applies equally to things of use and of beauty. Capacity to offer to perception meaning in which fruition and efficacy interpenetrate is met by different products in various degrees of fullness; it may be missed altogether by pans and poems alike. The difference between the ugliness of a mechanically conceived and executed utensil and of a meretricious and pretentious painting is one only of content or material; in form, both are articles, and bad articles" 34

Fine art, he continues, is instrumental, existing
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 for educational purposes, to train modes of perception. He echoes a not very original excuse for ugliness in art, that it contributes to the aesthetic effect of the larger whole. What may as elements be judged ugly - discord, clashing color,

34. John Dewey, Experience and Nature, quoted in Rader, op.cit., p. 463.

35. Ibid., p. 465.

cacophonies - may become a part of beauty according to the way they are related. Values may be concealed because they are habitual. "Ordinary prepossession must be broken through if the degree of energy required for an esthetic experience is to be evoked."³⁶

There is much redundancy in the slight occasions where Dewey does speak of ugliness; and knowing that he is not interested in the arts as ends in themselves, we see why, consequently, he has little theoretical contribution to offer. The following quotation may afford an adequate summary:

"The moot problem of the place of the ugly in works of art seems to me to receive its solution when its terms are seen in this context. That to which the word 'ugly' is applied is the object in its customary associations, those which have come to appear an inherent part of some object. It does not apply to what is present in the picture or drama. There is transformation because of emergence in an object having its own expressiveness: exactly as in the case of Rencir's nudes. Something which was ugly under other conditions, the usual ones, is extracted from the conditions in which it was repulsive and is transfigured in quality as it becomes a part of an expressive whole. In its new setting, the very contrast with a former ugliness adds piquancy, animation, and, in serious matters, increases depth of meaning in an almost incredible way." 37

36. John Dewey, Art as Experience, New York, 1934, Minton, Balch, p. 173.

37. Ibid., pp. 95-96.

4. Bergson

An inclusion of Henri Bergson's theory of the comic may seem an unnecessary digression. But we have seen how, since the old Greeks, the notion of the comic has been in various ways related to ugliness in or out of the aesthetic realm; and since this has been the case, there follow here a few of the most pertinent ideas of Bergson.

In the first place, he says, the comic does not exist beyond what is human.³⁸ The laughable element may consist of various things: a mechanical inelasticity,³⁹ an independent rigidifying vice,⁴⁰ a deformity that a normal person could copy well,⁴¹ always rigidity rather than pure ugliness.⁴² In movement or gesture, the comic may abide in what seems essentially mechanical,⁴³ in an incident which directs attention to the physical when the moral is primarily concerned,⁴⁴ and other such actions. With regard to comic words, the law may be stated generally: "In a comic repetition of words we generally find two terms: a repressed feeling which goes off like a spring, and an idea that delights in repressing the feeling anew."⁴⁵

38. Henri Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic, translated by Brereton and Rothwell, New York, 1921, Macmillan, p. 3.

39. Ibid., p. 10.

40. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

41. Ibid., p. 23.

42. Ibid., p. 29.

43. Ibid., p. 29.

44. Ibid., p. 51.

45. Ibid., p. 73.

Tragic art, writes Bergson, is always directed at what is individual.⁴⁶ Comedy, on the other hand, is essentially concerned with generalities and similarities.⁴⁷ These two forms also differ in the kind of observation which generates their characters.⁴⁸ Comedy, he concludes, lies midway between life and art, being not so disinterested as genuine art.⁴⁹

On the nature of the comic, he writes:

"Laughter is, above all, a corrective. Being intended to humiliate, it must make a painful impression on the person against whom it is directed. By laughter, society avenges itself for the liberties taken with it. It would fail in its object if it bore the stamp of sympathy or kindness." 50

And what is the bearing of this discussion on the topic of ugliness? Aside from the fact that comedy has been, in general theoretical terms, linked with the ugly, we can also find, more particularly, that some of the characteristic comic effects are those elements which we may judge ugly - especially when they do not occur in a total comical field. Bergson's general thesis of comedy takes its departure from the notion of "something mechanical encrusted on the living."⁵¹ Aside from this, have we not called ugly, in other

46. Ibid., p. 161.

47. Ibid., p. 163.

48. Ibid., pp. 165-169.

49. Ibid., p. 170.

50. Ibid., p. 197.

51. Ibid., p. 37.

contexts, that which is rigid, mechanical, vicious in certain ways - all things which are essentially comic.

What Bergson seems to have said is simply that in life one thing is really ugly, - the occasion of some living thing's becoming mechanical. Whether this natural and real ugliness can be aesthetically treated is our old problem; and Bergson's answer is Yes - in comedy.

5. Alexander

Alexander begins by pointing out that the opposite of beauty should be the "aesthetically disapproved or indifferent" since beauty has been defined as the "aesthetically approved."⁵² Ugliness, in common parlance, generally denotes that which is displeasing. "But 'beautiful' is used and perhaps oftenest in a special sense, and 'ugly' may also be so used, and in that special sense both the beautiful and the ugly are departments of the beautiful in its sense of the aesthetically approved."⁵³

He contrasts real ugliness with the ugliness which is a kind of beauty, agreeing with Bosanquet's concept of difficult beauty, and further explaining such beauty to be like discords in music and horrors of tragedy which are transmuted

52. Samuel Alexander, Beauty and Other Forms of Value, London, 1933, Macmillan, p. 163.

53. Ibid., p. 163.

in becoming a part of beauty. Contrast, he asks, the reputed treatment of Walter Savage Landor by his daughter with the behavior of Regan and Goneril, and you have the distinction between real ugliness and that which is difficult beauty. ⁵⁴

"Thus nothing is beautiful, whether in itself unattractive or attractive, save so far as it is aesthetically good; and accordingly the ugly and the beautiful as kinds of beauty owe their beauty to their treatment (whether in nature or art) and the distinction of the beautiful and the ugly is seen to be one of subject matter." ⁵⁵

6. Santayana

As a prelude to interpreting Santayana's aesthetics of ugliness, it is well to point out that art, in his opinion, is, or should be, subject to moral censorship; ⁵⁶ because, since art is a part of life, its criticism is a part of morals. ⁵⁷ The precedence of morals over aesthetics thus limits the aesthetic field:

"Our sense of practical benefit not only determines the moral value of beauty, but sometimes even its existence as an aesthetic good. Especially in the right selection of effects, these considerations have weight. Forms in themselves pleasing may become

54. Ibid., p. 164.

55. Ibid., p. 165.

56. George Santayana, The Life of Reason or the Phases of Human Progress. Reason in Art, New York, 1921, Scribner's, p. 166.

57. Ibid., p. 178.

disagreeable when the practical interests then uppermost in the mind cannot, without violence, yield a place to them." 58

In other words, nothing is ugly in itself; but things are ugly because of a demand for something else - so, must the arts "stand modestly aside."⁵⁹

The ugly is no exception to the rule that aesthetic values are positive. It is no real cause of pain, but one of amusement. If, however, it becomes vitally repulsive, it is a real evil; and we judge it from a moral standpoint.⁶⁰

Let us go, for a moment, to the nature of beauty, which Santayana defines as "pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing,"⁶¹ "pleasure objectified."⁶² Beauty is, as we have said, a positive value, the presence of something good, as ugliness is the absence of something good. But it is never, as above, a negative value or the presence of a positive evil.⁶³ "When the ugly ceases to be amusing or merely uninteresting and becomes disgusting", he repeats, "it becomes indeed a positive evil: but a moral and practical, not an aesthetic one."⁶⁴

It is more to the point to discuss within what limits

58. George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty: Being the Outlines of Aesthetic Theory, New York, Chicago, and Boston, 1896, Scribner's, p. 219.

59. Ibid., p. 220.

60. Ibid., p. 25.

61. Ibid., p. 49.

62. Ibid., p. 52.

63. Ibid., p. 49.

64. Ibid., p. 50.

ugliness can enter art. Santayana says that beauty of the first term, i.e. "beauty of sound, rhythm, and image", can make any thing artistic, whereas without this beauty nothing can be so. The value of such immediate beauty often excuses the presence of painful and terrible objects in art; ⁶⁵ it softens their violence. ⁶⁶ Art does not choose ugliness, we may infer, but life itself imposes it upon the attention; ⁶⁷ it is inevitable. Therefore, "truth is thus the excuse ⁶⁸ which ugliness has for being."

His opinion seems to be that tragedy and comedy, which are impure, please in spite of, rather than because of, themselves. They are useless unless they are instrumental to some moral or practical purposes. Ugliness can attract attention and vulgar admiration; but such admiration, if prolonged, is non-aesthetic; it is due to a dulled sense of beauty. ⁶⁹ "To purge away these impurities . . . nothing is needed but a quickened intelligence, a keener spiritual flame." ⁷⁰

Finally, he writes, and his entire theory gives little that is original or helpful:

"Nothing but the good of life enters into the texture of the beautiful. What charms us in the comic, what stirs us in the sublime and

65. Ibid., p. 205.

66. Ibid., p. 221.

67. Ibid., p. 221.

68. Ibid., p. 231.

69. Ibid., p. 259.

70. Santayana, Life of Reason. Reason in Art, p. 198.

touches us in the pathetic, is a glimpse of some good; imperfection has value only as an incipient perfection. Could the labours and sufferings of life be reduced, and a better harmony between man and nature be established, nothing would be lost to the arts; for the pure and ultimate value of the comic is discovery, of the pathetic, love, of the sublime, exaltation; and these would still subsist." 71

7. Whitehead

"Beauty", writes Whitehead, "is the mutual adaptation of the several factors in an occasion of experience." 72
 And, "art is purposeful adaptation of appearance to Reality." 73
 His theory concerns self-expression in which "beauty emerges out of a process as individuality"; and the process "issues into determinate beauties; on less fortunate occasions, where there is frustration and inhibition, it issues into ugliness." 74

Whitehead, also, has the notion of perfection of subjective form, which means that none of the component feelings of an artistic experience are mutually inhibitive. The notion of inhibition has two meanings: first, one which is not concerned with perfection at all, but is "anaesthesia"; 75

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71. Santayana, Sense of Beauty, pp. 260-261.
 72. Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, New York, 1933, Macmillan, p. 324.
 73. Ibid., p. 344.
 74. Bertram Morris, "The Art-Process and the Aesthetic Fact in Whitehead's Philosophy" in Paul A. Schilpp (ed.), The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, Chicago, 1941, Northwestern University Press, p. 477.
 75. Whitehead, op.cit., p. 329.

the other, which "involves the truer active presence of both component feelings " and a third element of mutual destructiveness, so that one of these component feelings does not rise to the proper strength. This is, contrary to the first meaning of inhibition, the factor of "aesthetic destruction."⁷⁶ The experience of this aesthetic destruction is an experience of discord.⁷⁷

Here we come to his distinction between discord and dissonance. Discord, which we have linked with aesthetic destruction, is a positive fact of evil. But dissonance is something else. Art thrives in that dissonance which is resolved, eventually, into consonance.⁷⁸ Yet even discord has some value, (note the Hegelian tendency):

"On further consideration we shall find that always there are imperfect occasions better than occasions which realize some given type of perfection. There are in fact higher and lower perfections; and an imperfection aiming at a higher type stands above lower perfection. The most material and the most sensuous enjoyments are yet types of Beauty. Progress is founded upon the experience of discordant feelings. The social value of liberty lies in its production of discords. There are perfections beyond perfections. All realization is finite, and there is no perfection which is the infinitude of all perfections. Perfections of diverse types are among themselves discordant. Thus the contribution to Beauty which can be supplied by Discord - in itself destructive and evil - is the positive

76. *Ibid.*, pp. 329-330.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 330.

78. Morris, *op.cit.*, p. 474.

feeling of a quick shift of aim from the tameness of outworn perfection to some other ideal with its freshness still upon it. Thus the value of Discord is⁷⁹tribute to the merits of Imperfection." 79

Discord is preferable to anaesthesia or the aesthetic tameness which goes before it. A higher Imperfection is better than a lower Perfection, in short.⁸⁰

We can infer from Whitehead's philosophy that ugliness is the inhibition of higher values that might have been attained;⁸¹ but that ugliness is artistically admissable if it enhances the total object or if it saves the object from degenerating into something capable of affording no aesthetic experience.

Art, Whitehead describes as "a psychopathic reaction by the race to the stresses of its existence."⁸² "Decay, Transition, Loss, Displacement belong to the essence of the Creative Advance."⁸³ And in the long run for Whitehead, as for Santayana, there is little essential difference between moral and aesthetic values.⁸⁴

8. Croce and Gentile

Before Croce will tell what art is, he tells what

79. Whitehead, op.cit., pp. 330-331.

80. Ibid., p. 339.

81. Morris, op.cit., p. 475.

82. Whitehead, op.cit., p. 350.

83. Ibid., pp. 368-369.

84. Morris, op.cit., p. 456.

it is not. Among other things, art is not a physical fact,⁸⁵
 not a utilitarian fact,⁸⁶ not a moral act,⁸⁷ and not a con-
 ceptual knowledge.⁸⁸ Art, insofar as we can put it briefly,
 is lyrical intuition;⁸⁹ and "intuitive knowledge is expres-
 sive knowledge."⁹⁰

"What we admire in genuine works of art is the perfect fanciful form which a state of the soul assumes; and we call this life, unity, solidity of the work of art. What displeases us in the false and imperfect forms is the struggle of several different states of the soul not yet unified, their stratification, or mixture, their vacillating method, which obtains apparent unity from the will of the author, who for this purpose avails himself of an abstract plan or idea, or of extra-esthetic, passionate emotion." 91

And so, returning to Pythagoras, ugliness is identified with multiplicity. The beautiful does not admit degrees; but ugliness does, varying from the almost beautiful to the intensely ugly. Still, if it possessed no element of beauty, it would not be ugly, "because it would be without the contradiction in which is the reason of its existence. The disvalue would become non-value; activity would give place to passivity, with which it is not at war, save when activity is really present to oppose it."⁹²

85. Benedetto Croce, A Breviary of Aesthetic, quoted in Rader, op.cit., p. 159.

86. Ibid., p. 161.

87. Ibid., p. 163.

88. Ibid., pp. 165-166.

89. Ibid., p. 173.

90. Ibid., p. 177.

91. Ibid., pp. 171-172.

92. Croce, Aesthetic, p. 79.

Connected with the judgment of ugliness which may be made in the presence of certain art works, it is interesting how Croce differentiates true aesthetic feeling from certain concomitant affective experiences. He says that aesthetic pleasure may be reinforced by the pleasure coming from "extraneous facts."⁹³ This principle quite easily and logically applies to aesthetic displeasure.

Ugliness is finally reduced simply to unsuccessful expression.⁹⁴ Croce writes:

"Somebody who has nothing definite to express may try to conceal his internal emptiness in a flood of words, in sounding verse, in deafening polyphony, in painting that dazzles the eye, or by heaping together great architectural masses which arrest and astonish us without conveying anything whatever. Ugliness, then, is the capricious, the charlatanesque; and, in reality, if practical caprice did not intervene in the theoretic function, there might be absence of beauty, but never the real presence of something deserving the adjective 'ugly'." 95

This constitutes a theoretical return to Baumgarten and the romantic notion of the imagination. Finally, for Croce, that which is a unified, adequate expression of the artist's intuition is, ipso facto, beauty.

Croce's opinion is similar to that of Giovanni Gentile who says, "The ugly can be nothing but the expression

93. Ibid., p. 80.

94. Ibid., p. 79.

95. Ibid., p. 98.

of feelings into which a man has not put the whole of himself; that is to say, superficial feelings not profoundly felt." ⁹⁶

To summarize this period, it should first be pointed out that Nietzsche, though the genesis of his theory can be traced to Burke and the romantic tendencies, almost gives us a new standard of judgment. Aesthetic ugliness, not legitimate in art, is that which is symptomatic of weakness and degeneracy; while so-called ugliness, as we have known it in the terrible and the evil, is unquestionably legitimate artistic material of the best quality if it stimulates the development of the Superman. Hegelian idealism and pantheism are reflected in Bosanquet, Whitehead, Croce, and Gentile with their tendencies either toward a dialectical position or a denial of absolute ugliness. Croce, in particular, is important for his concept of ugliness as unsuccessful aesthetic expression, or of superficiality, as seen in the minor German aestheticians who followed Hegel. Bosanquet's importance has been shown to be largely his distinction between beauty in the wide and narrow senses, though some difficulty is discovered in his apparent equating of easy beauty with the strictly beautiful. It is well to note, through this chapter with Gentile and Croce as the culmination, that the theories are pointing more and more towards liberalism and relativism,

96. Giovanni Gentile, Philosophy of Art, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 330.

a fact which will be brought out more prominently in the modern aestheticians discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

MODERN THINKERS: APPROACH THROUGH A STUDY OF CONCRETE ART

These modern thinkers have been separated from those of the preceding chapter for the reason indicated by the above title - that their contributions, by and large, tend to be for aesthetics, qua aesthetics, rather than via a philosophical system. Four general positions can be indicated: first, ugliness as connected with painful art; second, ugliness admitted into art under certain qualified conditions; third, ugliness admitted under more liberal conditions; and finally, closely allied with the foregoing group, a subjective position, in which ugliness is almost purely relative.

1. Painful Art: De Witt Parker

In DeWitt Parker's book, The Analysis of Art, there is a chapter on "Art and Pain", which may be of particular significance if we remember that the judgment of ugliness may sometimes arise from an occasion of "painful" art. The present

writer does not mean to identify aesthetic ugliness with aesthetic pain, but only to point out Parker's chapter as having a probable pertinence to our problem.

Parker says that since works of art are by men and for men, they must give pleasure; and he asks, in view of this, why pain should voluntarily be introduced into art. Painful art, he continues, is too large a part of the whole to be dismissed as "morbid, decadent, disguised ugliness."¹ Then why? For one thing, - an obvious answer - since art is imaginative, the representation of painful objects is less painful than the real experiences; and consequently, our emotions are not so strong.² There is also given the reason that pain is mitigated by the "sensuous charm and beauty of the design of the medium", which view Parker rejects.³

His own theory involves a division of painful art into three categories. The first, Dionysian, gives imaginative satisfaction to the primitive elements in man, and to the conflicts within his dual nature.⁴ The second, satirical or realistic art, has its genesis in the same dualism; but is an idealistic restraint upon the animal nature since it inspires disgust at the evils represented. This type of art also satisfied a

1. DeWitt H. Parker, The Analysis of Art, New Haven, 1926, Yale University Press, pp. 102-103.

2. Ibid., p. 104.

3. Ibid., p. 106.

4. Ibid., pp. 107, 108, 110.

desire for knowledge; provides some sort of emotional release for anger, fear, terror, and the like; and includes the comic, by which man's pride is fed.⁵ The third category of painful art covers the mystical, religious, and tragic, which are preoccupied with suffering.⁶ Of this, Parker says, "Thus not only is religious art akin to realistic art in its preoccupation with evil, but also in its fundamental motive of effecting an adjustment to life as a whole."⁷

The desire for a total adjustment to life is the final reason he gives for the portrayal of evil (pain):

"To use again the language and the ideas of Goethe, man has the pressing need to come to some certain understanding with himself concerning life as a whole, and particularly concerning the most baffling element of it, evil. Man must face the facts, all the facts, and find a way of living at peace with them and with himself. It is essentially this purpose, so it seems to me, that is fulfilled in the more reflective representations of evil . . ."⁸

2. Ugliness under Certain Qualified Conditions: Raymond and Carpenter

This position which admits little ugliness may, conceivably, present itself by denying or excusing away the fact of ugliness; but such theory will generally fall into the

5. Ibid., pp. 107, 111, 114, 115, 118, 120.

6. Ibid., pp. 107, 125.

7. Ibid., p. 126.

8. Ibid., p. 122.

category of relativistic thinkers. The truth is that few modern thinkers exclude, dogmatically, the possibility of aesthetic ugliness.

Confusion in art, says G. L. Raymond, is sometimes⁹ legitimate because there is confusion in nature. He writes:

"The truth seems to be that ugliness, simply because it is repulsive, is not legitimate in art except so far as, by way of contrast, as in the case of shadows which throw that which they surround into brighter relief, the ugliness enhances the beauty to which it is kept in manifest subordination." 10

In other words, he is employing the ancient "foil" theory, and insofar as ugliness, qua ugliness, is obviously not considered legitimate, the classification of Raymond here is justified.

It is somewhat the same with Rhys Carpenter, who is rather liberal, except that ugliness, as any perversion of natural fact, cannot enter art. His energetic disavowal of ugliness is largely directed at contemporary art:

"Extreme painters - the Outragists, if I may so dub them - often depart very widely from Nature. I must confess that to me distortions and malformations of decent human anatomy invariably introduce a strong element of displeasure and a revulsion away from all sympathetic contemplation, so that my final emotion is strongly modified by these unfavorable elements. Now it is a matter of experience that wherever dislike

9. George Lansing Raymond, The Genesis of Art-Form: An Essay in Comparative Aesthetics, New York, 1893, Putnam, p. 36.
10. George Lansing Raymond, The Representative Significance of Form: An Essay in Comparative Aesthetics, New York, 1900, Putnam, p. 206.

and repulsion are markedly present as components, the resultant esthetic emotion is not likely to be of much value." 11

These Outragists, as he calls them, are inclined to sever too greatly art and nature, expecting the potency of abstract value to replace our old affective alliances with the sensuous world.¹² He says that the suppression either of pure form or of representational fidelity, by the other,¹³ is artistically wrong; but the tone of his writing indicates that he balances the scales in favor of representational fidelity. From his doing so, we may see that ugliness is hardly excusable, even as contributing to a larger whole, if it means that natural fact is distorted. We may infer that, as subject matter, it is admissible; but, formally, also as in Raymond, it must be subordinated almost entirely.

3. A More Liberal View: A. C. Bradley, Marshall, Veron, Parkhurst, Mather, Guérard, Listowel

With particular regard to the subject matter of art, the following words of A. C. Bradley may be interesting:

"Again, it is surely true that we cannot determine beforehand what subjects are fit for Art, or name any subject on which a good poem might not possibly be written. To divide

11. Rhys Carpenter, The Esthetic Basis of Greek Art of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C., Bryn Mawr College, 1921, p. 47.

12. Ibid., p. 48.

13. Ibid., p. 51.

subjects into two groups, the beautiful or elevating, and the ugly or vicious, and to judge poems according as their subjects belong to one of these groups or the other, is to fall into the same pit, to confuse with our pre-conceptions the meaning of the poet. What the thing is in the poem he is to be judged by, not by the thing as it was before he touched it; and how can we venture to say beforehand that he cannot make a true poem out of something which to us was merely alluring or dull or revolting?" 14

Similarly, Eugene Véron's emotionalist theory quite logically holds that "art may depict evil and ugliness as opposed to beauty and goodness." ¹⁵ The worth of a work of art, he writes, is derived from the worth of the artist. The beauty of an art-object is strictly a human creation; and it may be derived from imitation, as in the representative arts, or not, as in music for instance. This human-created beauty is of such a kind that it may exist in ugliness insofar as the imitation of an ugly object is a work of art, -- beautiful, "by the ensemble of qualities which the composition of it may prove are possessed by its author." ¹⁶

In short, for Bradley and Véron, it is the intervention of a personal equation between the object and its representation that gives a work of art its degree of value.

14. Andrew Cecil Bradley, Poetry for Poetry's Sake, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 215.

15. Rader, op.cit., p. 83.

16. Eugene Véron, L'Esthétique, quoted ibid., p. 89.

H. R. Marshall writes, "Ugliness is relatively stable, or real, disagreeableness. Any disagreeable element may become part of the field that is relatively stable. We call an object ugly which seems always to yield disagreeableness in impression, or contemplative revival."¹⁷

The gist of his theory is that the judgment of beauty refers to a "field" which is on the whole pleasant, meaning not that it is composed of all pleasant elements, but that it is dominated by them.¹⁸ Works of art, he explains, are not devoid of ugliness; ugliness is found in the greatest masters;¹⁹ the artist may use elements that are called "ugly",²⁰ if, by the use of them, his work benefits in added pleasure. In the greatest of literature and in symphonic music, we find many minor uglinesses which contribute to, rather than detract²¹ from, the total beauty of the works.

We take this discussion to imply that ugliness of topic is not necessarily forbidden and that small, independent uglinesses are not only legitimate but sometimes extremely beneficial, since the beauty of a work of art is to be judged with reference to a total impression. Here, again, however, ugliness can have no independent existence in art, but must be harmonized into the configuration.

17. Henry Rutgers Marshall, op.cit., p. 79.

18. Ibid., p. 101.

19. Ibid., p. 100.

20. Ibid., pp. 101-102.

21. Ibid., p. 102.

With Parkhurst, it is because the natural world and humanity are full of many unbeautiful and ugly things, that the artist may concern himself with using them "for effects of grandeur, of pathos, of irony, or for the evoking of beauties concealed under unpropitious exteriors."²²

The seemingly pedantic distinction between "unbeautiful" and "ugly" in the foregoing sentence is emphasized by F. J. Mather, who points out that the opposite of beauty is decidedly not the ugly but the unbeautiful, "the ununified, unharmonized, or merely neutral."²³ He cites and agrees with Stace that the aesthetically ugly may be an exceptional type of beauty, artificially judged "ugly" because it is unfamiliar.²⁴ Ugliness, Mather feels, is a moral rather than an aesthetic category, abiding in associations and minds rather than in things themselves. "This", he writes, "is the realm of the ugly in esthetics. It means simply that something is being presented to us as beautiful which we think could not or ought not to be so presented."²⁵ In fact, he continues, the morally ugly is not necessarily excluded from the realm of aesthetic topics, but is, in fact, often made beautiful by art. Generally, ugliness in an aesthetic judgment, is a result of unfamiliarity

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22. Helen Huss Parkhurst, Beauty: An Interpretation of Art and the Imaginative Life, London, 1931, Noel Douglas, pp. 78-80.
 23. Frank Jewett Mather, Concerning Beauty, Princeton University Press, 1935, p. 255.
 24. Ibid., p. 256.
 25. Ibid., p. 256.

or want of understanding; and the clearing up of these causes will remove the judgment of disvalue. He points out, with reference to this, that the Latin word, novus, not only means "new", but also "unlikely" and "repellant".²⁶

No one, he says, can draw the line where beauty ends and ugliness begins:

"On the positive side, the ugly is what seems monstrous or intolerable to anyone. There is little uniformity in such judgements, and progress in esthetic experience normally consists in reclaiming for beauty much that one has earlier excluded therefrom. The ugly then is merely what sticks painfully in our esthetic crop. We may oug^h it up or get it down. If we get it down, it will surprisingly often turn out to have as good nutritive quality as any better accredited beauty. The category of ugliness would be an excellent basis for an unintelligence test in esthetics. In the length and character of a list of things and subjects written down as inherently ugly, one would have a singularly accurate measure of the writer's Philistinism." 27

In a statement not unlike one of Eugene Veron's, Albert Guérard writes, "Art deals with the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, and likewise with the reverse of all three."²⁸ In these days, a touch of various types of ugliness is the only means we have of distinguishing fine art from "commercial dross".²⁹ Although Guérard seems to sense, and not without

26. Ibid., p. 256.

27. Ibid., p. 257.

28. Albert Guérard, Art for Art's Sake, Boston and New York, 1936, Lothrop, Leo, and Shephard, p. 335.

29. Ibid., p. 336.

some bitterness, the modern artist's flight from beauty, he justifies his classification as liberal by the words: "(Art) is the venture beyond organized truth, beyond acknowledged virtue, beyond recognized beauty . . . Whoever looks primarily to the true, the good, or the beautiful, is turning his back on art."³⁰

The Earl of Listowel, like Mather, begins by righting a wrong assumption, insisting that the opposite of beauty, in the wide sense, is not ugliness, but the aesthetically in-³¹different.³² For the ugly is really a species of the beautiful. He goes farther than most by saying, in black and white, that the ugly in itself is a prominent factor of the aesthetic experience and does not fail, as the aesthetically indifferent³³ would, in moving and attracting us. The blending of the pain that is provoked by the perception of ugliness, with satisfaction, into a mixed feeling, he calls a product of the modern³⁴ spirit. In the following quotation, we find him harking back to a very familiar strain:

"(The ugly object usually portrays) . . . the oddities, the eccentricities, the foibles, the whims, that are the unmistakable mark of individuality, the physical deformities, the moral failings, the mental peculiarities, that distinguish so clearly one person from another; it expresses, not the ideal generic type, but, in a word, the characteristic."³⁵

30. Ibid., p. 338.

31. The Earl of Listowel, A Critical History of Modern Aesthetics, London, 1933, George Allen and Unwin, p. 270.

32. Ibid., p. 108

33. Ibid., p. 270.

34. Ibid., p. 271.

35. Ibid., p. 271.

4. Relativists on the Ugly: Symons, Collingwood, Ducasse, Torossian, Boas, Ross, Furst, Reid

The word "relativists" may seem to the reader somewhat ambiguous. It is, granted, a rather arbitrary term; and its meaning in this case is simply that, in the opinion of these authors, ugliness is never absolute and is admissible in art, being merely a judgment relative to something else. The following quotation from Symon's Studies in Seven Arts may serve as a prologue to the discussion:

"What is ugliness in a picture? Manet's pictures used to be called ugly; a woman in a tub, drawn by Degas, used to be called ugly, because the woman was naked, and not 'nude'. Goya would certainly be called ugly if he were not Spanish - and dead. Every well-bred lady still thinks Daumier ugly." 36

Here, in these very possible instances, we have ugliness relative to morals, convention, nationality - even relative to death! With Collingwood, ugliness is relative, in a sense, to the imagination; with Boas, Ross, and Ducasse, to the spectator; with Furst, to rhythm and unity.

Art is imagination, says Collingwood; and it attempts to achieve beauty. Therefore, "the beautiful is neither more nor less than the imagined." ³⁷ Such a beginning would logically

36. Arthur Symons, Studies in Seven Arts, New York, 1925, Dutton, p. 313.

37. R. G. Collingwood, Outlines of a Philosophy of Art, London, 1935, Oxford University Press, p. 19.

lead us to the dubious conclusion that nothing ugly can ever appear to anyone; for it would not be possible to imagine anything not beautiful. This may seem outrageous, the author admits; but it is, nevertheless, true. For nothing is ever purely ugly but always mixed with beauty, whose presence makes ugliness possible. Ugliness is relative because it is all beauty that is somehow frustrated or spoiled. "All ugliness is beauty spoilt, beauty uglified."³⁸

The fact of its extreme relativity he illustrates by an example of music, where the ugliness of a wrong note undeniably depends on the right notes; because the "wrong" note would be right in another key. Ugliness, to repeat, is spoiled beauty; but it presupposes a beauty to be spoiled; "and when (ugliness) has completely destroyed this beauty it ceases to be ugliness and starts fair, so to speak, with a chance of achieving a new beauty of its own."³⁹

Further, Collingwood seems to tie up his position by hinting at a note not unlike that of Croce and Gentile, when he says that ugliness, insofar as it exists, is not that of an object imagined but of one not imagined or half-imagined,⁴⁰ just as error is not absence of thought but confused thinking.

A not unusual sort of relativism is reflected in
Ducasse:

38. Ibid., p. 20.
39. Ibid., p. 20.
40. Ibid., p. 20.

"The most common form of criticism of works of art is criticism in terms of beauty and ugliness. The terms beautiful and ugly, however, have no meaning whatever in terms of the creating artist's point of view, but only in terms of the spectator or 'consumer', whether he be the artist himself later contemplating and evaluating his creation, or some one else. That which is evaluated in terms of beauty and ugliness is therefore not at all the work of art as such, viz. as product of the artist's endeavour to give his feelings embodiment in an object, but only the object itself that the spectator contemplates, and wholly without reference to the question whether that object is a product of art or of nature." 41

42

"Many works of art are ugly", writes Ducasse. By these he means works from which we get more displeasure than pleasure, works such as are generally consciously overlooked. So why call them "works of art"? Because, even though the creator may admit the ugliness of his creation, he may say it was not meant to be beauty but, rather, the expression of something within him. His work may be as seriously undertaken as a thing one would call beautiful - proceeding from the same impulse and presupposing the same skill. 43 Ducasse's general answer is summed up in three statements which he italicizes:

"The artist aims not at beauty but at objective self-expression;" 44
 "The deliberate creating of beauty is not art"; and "If a thing 45
 is a work of art, it remains so. But beauty comes and goes."

41. C. J. Ducasse, The Philosophy of Art, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 313.

42. Curt John Ducasse, The Philosophy of Art, New York, 1929, Dial Press, p. 16.

43. Ibid., p. 17.

44. Ibid., p. 18.

45. Ibid., p. 19.

That the standards of terminal value are located in the individual is also the opinion of Boas.⁴⁶ Taste, he says, can never be wholly aesthetic, being the result of both approval and liking,⁴⁷ and being relative to the circumstances under which the judgment occurs. He is writing with wisdom when he says, "One might lay down as the first principle of the history of taste - moral taste as well as aesthetic and group as well as individual - the necessity of the habitual."⁴⁸

The reasons for disagreement over the judgment of an art-object will fall under four possible conditions, says Ross. One person alone may be right. Or the other alone right, while the first is experiencing some non-aesthetic emotion, or according value or disvalue with reference to convention or someone else's opinion. Or both may be wrong, making mistakes of the first two types. Or both may be right. It is this last circumstance which classifies Ross as a relativist; for he says, in view of how inextricably beauty is connected with sense - perception; and in view of how this, in turn, is dependent upon sense-organs which differ markedly among individuals - in view of these things, the same

46. George Boas, A Primer for Critics, Baltimore, 1937, Johns Hopkins Press, p. 17.

47. Ibid., p. 142.

48. Ibid., p. 142.

object may produce true aesthetic satisfaction or repulsion in different individuals. In such a case, of course, that object is both beautiful and ugly; and this notion can clearly not be excluded as impossible. Here, Ross becomes a little didactic and advises that we revise our notions of beauty and ugliness; because, he says, by the popular use of these terms, we surely mean attributes which cannot belong to the same thing.⁴⁹

It is sufficient to touch upon Furst with a fairly conclusive quotation: "The only aesthetical qualities", he writes, "are rhythm and unity: it does not matter of what unity this rhythm is composed, so long as a unity is achieved. There is, therefore, no style that is beautiful, no style that is ugly, because lacking rhythm and unity, it would not be a style."⁵⁰

Though this does not indicate what is his realm of possibilities for subject matter, we might infer that it would not matter so long as they are conducive to, or amenable to, rhythm and unity. His general tone seems to lay the greatest weight upon the formal aspect of art.

Torossian divides beauty into romantic, realistic,⁵¹ and classic; tragic and comic; and easy and difficult.

49. William David Ross, The Right and the Good, quoted in Carritt, op.cit., p. 319.

50. Herbert Furst, Art Debunked, New York, 1936, Dutton, p. 97.

51. Aram Torossian, A Guide to Aesthetics, California, 1937, Stanford University Press, p. 258.

Following Bosanquet, and not unrelated to Mather, his discussion of difficult beauty brings a good deal of light to bear on aesthetic ugliness. Not only is difficult beauty that which is unusual, shocking, and overtaxing; but it is really a quality of beauty which can give us a deeper aesthetic satisfaction than more facile beauty.⁵² (We are reminded of Mather's "esthetic crop").

Difficult beauty differs from easy beauty in degree and is thus, relative to individual judgment, "the degree of easy or difficult beauty (being) directly proportional to the appreciator's range of perception, experience, and emotional sensitivity."⁵³ The individual, lacking an adequate amount of these qualities to enable his grasping of difficult beauty, calls it ugly, and not because of any inherent aesthetic defect in the art-object.⁵⁴

Our judgment of beautiful or ugly will generally fall into one of three categories. (Note the relation to C. Bradley). Either we are judging, with genuine aesthetic insight, the success of the values perceived and expressed by the creator. Or more probably, we are judging with reference to our own awareness of the values themselves which we perceive a legitimate judgment if identified with the object and not

• Ibid., p. 271.
 • Ibid., p. 271.
 • Ibid., p. 273.

ourselves). Or, with a completely illegitimate use of the word "ugly", we are expressing our own feelings as stimulated by the object perceived.

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Torossian's relativism is well illustrated by the following statement:

"Thus, while beauty, in the ordinary sense, is limited to things which stimulate the pleasant sensations and are easily perceived, the field of aesthetic beauty is almost unlimited. Our survey of difficult beauty has revealed that many aspects of our perceptive world, particularly the painful and the fearful, which are often called ugly, may become intensely beautiful when aesthetically treated. In other words, any subject matter may be the theme of art and will become beautiful to us if we can react to it aesthetically, feeling satisfied with the matter expressed and with the manner of its expression."

56

When we come to Reid, we may note a kinship between his notion and those of Croce and Gentile, especially when Reid says, "Beauty, according to the assumption we have been making, is just perfection of expression; ugliness is some failure or breakdown or obstruction of expression. And as we have seen, there are, in some sense, degrees in these things."

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It is also possible that this expression, though present, may fail to be well organized, or that "one kind of beauty, so far complete in itself, jars with another kind in a larger whole."

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55. Ibid., pp. 27-29.

56. Ibid., p. 274.

57. Louis Arnaud Reid, A Study in Aesthetics, London, 1931, George Allen and Unwin, p. 217.

58. Ibid., p. 220.

Reid's general thesis is that the aesthetic object, a unit of the content and the body in which it appears, may be spoken of as the "embodiment". The character of the "embodiment" may vary according to the nature of its parts, the relative importance of one factor or another, or the thoroughness or lack of thoroughness in the fusion.⁵⁹ How this analysis is important can be seen with reference to Reid's aesthetic concepts of perfection and imperfection. His opinion is that the tendency of contemporary theory is to deny the distinction between beauty and ugliness by saying, "If any body, however hideous it appears to us, can appear expressive to someone else, how have 'beautiful' and 'ugly' any objective meaning?"⁶⁰

In the course of Reid's discussion, a number of questions are raised: May something be intrinsically incapable of appearing expressive to any imagination? Is the burden of expressiveness to rest completely on the "imaginative mind-and-body"? "Can imaginative mind-and-body do anything aesthetically with such things as trashy poems, pictures, tunes, suburban villas?" And, if any body can be expressive, what does finally happen to the distinction between beauty and ugliness?⁶¹ He answers: No, nothing is intrinsically incapable of expressiveness; and Yes, the burden is to be thrown on the "imaginative

59. Ibid., p. 203.

60. Ibid., p. 207.

61. Ibid., p. 209.

mind-and-body." His answer, in part, which gives his reasons, is quoted here:

"Much of course that appears ugly appears so because it is, to begin with at least, too difficult for us, and we wrongly suppose that the artist has failed; whereas it is ourselves. Or perceiving a thing as really expressive, we may condemn it for some non-aesthetic reason, such as that it suggests something unpalatable or unpleasant." 62

Already Reid can be convicted of a vagueness which may eventually render his theory comparatively worthless. He has answered the question that any object can be aesthetically treated; but a more important question he has left unanswered. He has not said directly whether there is any real difference, and what is this difference, between a good painting of an ugly natural object and a poor painting of an ugly natural object. In warning us against non-aesthetic judgment, he has even confused the final values of poems and suburban villas. Croce, whom Reid seems to follow to a certain extent, comes closer to the answer when he says that there are no ugly objects in nature; but that there can be, and are, ugly portrayals of these beautiful objects. Reid goes further than Croce and runs into a very confusing and vague sort of objective relativism.

This is indicated as he speaks of the moot line between beauty and ugliness:

62. Ibid., p. 211.

"The distinction between beauty and ugliness does not disappear because beauty and ugliness depend upon meanings imagined by some particular mind with its particular history and experience, and because, therefore, no perceptual object can aesthetically be condemned absolutely. If Beauty is perfection of expressiveness, and Ugliness is failure in expressiveness, then, if any body really appears to any mind to be perfectly expressive of meaning, then here is real beauty, though there be but one mind in the world which sees it so. The same applies, mutatis mutandis, to ugliness. Beauty and ugliness are real and objective notions, real and objective qualities, distinct from one another and never identical. The fact that the very same 'body' may appear to X as 'ugly', and to Y as 'beautiful', makes no difference whatever to the real existence of real ugliness and real beauty in the one case and in the other." 63

Again, to compare Reid with Croce - Croce has said that there are degrees of ugliness, but not of beauty. Reid says that, considering beauty in the sense of perfection, logically there can be no degrees; and yet there may be degrees of approximation to it. However, since he feels such a tenet too pedantic, he says that we may, popularly speaking, admit degrees of beauty or perfection and of ugliness or imperfection, in the sense that we regard beauty as an ideal. And in this sense, ugliness has no meaning apart from a relation to beauty. It is not an absolute, negative ideal; for, defined in relation to beauty, ugliness cannot be absolute. A concept of absolute ugliness would be beyond the aesthetic realm. ⁶⁴ And ugliness

63. Ibid., p. 212.

64. Ibid., p. 218.

does fall within the aesthetic in that it involves some degree
of expressiveness and some degree of beauty.⁶⁵

Reid is, in a sense, a culmination of the growing relativism in the contemporary period; and this relativism seems to be the only really original contribution of these thinkers; of course, this is original only in the sense that it is more extreme than what we have seen before. As a whole, this group is composed of eclectic people who may be interesting only in that they recall other more important philosophers. We may grant, with the relativists, that there is no distinction between beauty and ugliness in natural objects, but we will not grant the absence of distinction between a beautiful and an ugly poem. This confusion, well illustrated in Reid, seems to render the group rather worthless and, on the whole, less satisfactory than any group that has been discussed before. For after all, if one is a real relativist, he will lack standards for beauty as well as for ugliness.

65. Ibid., p. 219.

CHAPTER VI

ARTISTIC TRENDS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

"Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with", the Mock Turtle replied, "and the different branches of Arithmetic - Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."

1. Trends of the Past

The reasons for including a chapter on contemporary art are two. First, this is a period in which much work of an esoteric nature is being created, work which by the layman is, more often than not, called "ugly". And second, with any theoretical topic, it is always valuable and interesting to see how it pertains to a contemporary period.

Reactions to this period of "abstraction" and "distortion" are varied. Some, naively admitting it is all quite incomprehensible to them, say it is ugly. Others, since it is the "modern" art, affect a taste for it and an understanding. And a minority, which probably includes the artists themselves, find it truly expressive and "beautiful"

in that sense. However, it is not at all a strictly modern problem, but was probably much the same as far back as when Pausanias wrote, "All the works of Daedalus are somewhat odd to look at, but there is a wonderful inspiration about them."¹ And it is no immediate novelty, certainly, for in 1920, Jacques Maritain pointed out the same observation that is used to criticize the artists of 1942 -- that the boldest of contemporary art then was an effort to attain those things which characterized primitive art in respect to "simplicity, candour, and rationality of the means, in the ideographical schematisation of expression."²

A cross section of public opinion is illustrated by the man who said all modern literature was "either erotic, neurotic, or Tommyrotic."³

But before we condemn any phase of art, conclusively and dogmatically, we should at least allow ourselves to experience enough of it with unbiased eyes. There are some critics who, having done so, still condemn it; there are others who enjoy it and attempt to explain it. Despite the fact that we may believe art should be immediately enjoyed,

1. Frank P. Chambers, Cycles of Taste: An Unacknowledged Problem in Ancient Art and Criticism, Cambridge, 1928, Harvard University Press, pp. 42-43.
2. Jacques Maritain, Art and Scholasticism, translated by J. F. Scanlan, New York and London, 1930, p. 217.
3. Daniel Gregory Mason, Artistic Ideals, New York, 1927, Norton, p. 109.

demanding no commentary to achieve its effect, we should, at least, know what is the motive and goal of the contemporary artists - remembering that in past eras, the "modernistic" has usually been called ugly before it became the usual.

"It is interesting to note, (writes John Fry) that the hatred and negation of beauty of the barbarians and Puritans which expressed itself in the mutilation and destruction of Greek and Latin culture, called forth a different manifestation of the same spirit in modern times. With the exception of an explosion in the Reformation, and later in the French Revolution, the negation and hatred of beauty in modern times has taken the form of creating a cult of deformation." 4

So, conscious attempts at ugliness, through the negation of beauty, are found in the ancient world also. The instinct for the grotesque is seen in the medieval cathedrals with their monsters and devils. It is seen in Shakespeare's Falstaff, Bardolph, Pistol, Caliban, in his witches, and others; in Dante's hell; in Dürer. There is what Fry calls real ugliness in Cézanne and Gauguin, because they have eliminated the element of imagination; and "the total destruction of the imagination is a necessary prelude to absolute ugliness." The sadistic impulse which generates so much artistic ugliness abounds in Wilde, Swinburne, d'Annunzio, Baudelaire, Matisse, Zola, Van Gogh, Picasso,

4. John H. Fry, op.cit., p. 25.

5. Ibid., p. 129.

6. Ibid., p. 130.

7. Ibid., p. 131.

and so many others. Fry explains this trend towards ugliness by saying:

"The cosmic evil is incarnate in the volition of the inferior mind. It is ever active and destructive. It has arisen and destroyed all former cultures. The advent of the modernist cult in the arts was a revolt of the inferior mind against the inhibitions and standards set by superior minds in the arts." 8

In the long history of aesthetics, we shall generally find art judgment linked with morality, with a corresponding judgment of ugliness where the art-object touches upon immorality of any kind. A very brief review of this history may serve to locate better our problem for the contemporary period. With the Renaissance, there was a revival of the aesthetic consciousness which had been suppressed or ignored in early Christian and medieval times. 9 Classicism emerged from the Renaissance and became eventually distinguished by a moral principle, a tendency towards idealism, and a legislative principle. The moral principle was embodied in a rebirth of the Socratic "use and beauty" dictum, and in a revival of the Aristotelian notion of "catharsis". Art became, theoretically, a "civilizing and refining agent", 10 concerned only with the noblest of subject matter. 11 In this period, at first, veracity was the standard; myth and fable

8. Ibid., p. 180.

9. F. P. Chambers, History of Taste, pp. 28-29.

10. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

11. Ibid., p. 80.

must point morals; it was a period of exact imitation of only
 good and beautiful things.¹² This led, finally, to a compro-
 mise, from which came the idealization of nature, which was,
 admittedly, defective.¹³ In these times, taste was regarded
 as definable and infallible.¹⁴ There was no relativism about
 either the creation or the enjoyment of art-objects. Indi-
 vidual genius was suppressed.¹⁵ In the period of Romanticism,
 however, the character and temperament and individuality of
 the artist was prized.¹⁶ And, in contrast with the Classi-
 cists, there was an antithesis of reason and imagination;
 for art should be felt and not judged.¹⁷ The Romantic cult
 found morality irrelevant and even at times obstructive to
 their purposes. They loathed the mathematical procedure
 of the Classicists; Romanticism was lawless, independent,
 imaginative, and passionate.¹⁸ But, despite all this, writes
 John Fry:

"The Romantic cult made the chief end and
 aim of their art the expression of passion,
 but with all the license involved in the ex-
 pression of this passion their work never de-
 generated into ugly forms. In the most intense
 and tragic of their pictures the disposition
 of masses and lines was well balanced, harmon-
 ious and virile with plastic power . . ." 19

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12. *Ibid.*, p. 57
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
 14. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
 16. *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 209.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
 19. J. Fry, *op.cit.*, p. 132.

It was with the New Realism in the nineteenth century that the elements of unpleasantness and ugliness become conspicuous, notably in the "eccentric" Baudelaire.²⁰ This tendency is expressed in the words of their own creative artists. Courbet says: "The basis of realism is the negation of the ideal and all that the ideal means. By that negation alone can man attain the full deliverance of his reason, of the individual and at last of democracy."²¹

Rodin says: "The beautiful in art is simply the characteristic; character is the intense truth of any sight or scene of nature; . . . everything in nature is beautiful in the eyes of the true artist."²² Hugo says: "If the poet must choose his subjects, and he ought to choose his subjects, let him not choose the beautiful, but the characteristic."²³

Then, with its beginning in realism, there came the period of the Impressionists, in whom, says Chambers, the subject matter was most often unrecognizable, but when it was, sometimes suggested ugly and revolting associations.²⁴ And in what is known as the post-Impressionistic period, the tendency was towards the pure beauty of form.²⁵

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20. Chambers, History of Taste, p. 201.
 21. Courbet, quoted in ibid., p. 202.
 22. Rodin, quoted in ibid., p. 202.
 23. Hugo, quoted in ibid., p. 202.
 24. Chambers, History of Taste, p. 206.
 25. Ibid., p. 211.

Looking back, we can see the reasons for judging art "ugly" in these different periods; and the judgment will be found not too consistent but will vary with the artistic standards of the time. For instance, Classical standards would pronounce "ugly" any artistic depiction of immorality, perversion of truth, and ugly subject matter. Romanticism would surely call Classicism "ugly", or at least "boring." Intellectual, rational and moral-pointing art would be bad art in their eyes, as it would be excellent for the Classicists. And finally, any tendency to idealize nature or any deliberate choice of beauty, qua beauty, would be scorned by the New Realists. Probably to their public, their works seemed ugly because, in the effort to avoid the conscious use of beauty in the ordinary sense, the New Realists may have appeared to accent the ugly.

2. Contemporary Art: Condemned by Mason and J. Fry

No better sentence than the one below can be found to express the general impressions of the conventional public to the more extreme phases of art today:

"(There is) . . . the insistence that everything should be strikingly different from anything we have seen or heard before: that language should make strange nonsense rather than sense, that visual forms in painting and sculpture should be swollen, dislocated, distorted, that music should sound queer and ugly, that, in short,

everything should be generally upside down, wrong side to, and back side before." 26

With these words, Mason condemns what he calls the pseudo-originality of modern art with its incessant demand, not for beauty at all, but for novelty.

In his book, The Revolt Against Beauty, John Fry has a rather amusing chapter entitled "The Gospel of Ugliness - according to Mephistopheles." In it, he says that Buddhistic asceticism is the first rung in the ladder of negating beauty because beauty is one of the most potent attractions of the material world. ²⁷ Speaking as Mephistopheles, he says that science's reign has been one of his chief means in the negation of beauty. ²⁸ He continues:

"The third form of my triad of Negations is to be found in the peculiar manifestation of the 'modernistic' neurotic cult of art expressed through the medium of sculpture, painting, and poetry. My partiality for this special cult is the proof of my esthetic taste. Its propaganda has steadily developed since the days of my pupil, the Marquis de Sade, who was the prophet of the cult. I have seen it grow in Paris, spread to London, Berlin, and other centers of taste and culture in Europe, and I am encouraged to believe that my cult of degenerate art has now a firm foothold in America." 29

All the devotees of this modernistic cult are united by:

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26. D. G. Mason, op.cit., p. 109.
 27. J. H. Fry, op.cit., p. 195.
 28. Ibid., p. 200.
 29. Ibid., p. 202.

"(a) unanimous consent in a common worship of ugliness. Their test or standard of highest excellence in art is to achieve the intensest possible negation of form and proportion, and the greatest conceivable ugliness, coupled with symbolic suggestions of sexomania in pictures, statuary or alleged poetry. There is a well-defined cabalistic code of sign language employed, whereby initiates can understand and experience the sensations conveyed." 30

Speaking for himself, Fry continues his bitter condemnation of modern art. This negation of the cosmic order and beauty has its genesis in the industrial revolution (the Machine Age and the environment of ugliness), and in democracy, which, with its "Levelling gospel, destructive of creative genius, has brought chaos into the domain of aesthetics." ³¹ He calls the machine a symbol of abstraction, and the development of interest in abstraction is a development in annihilating form. Just how bitter is his aristocratic renunciation of our art may be seen in the impassioned sentences following: "Mass production is the abstraction of the individual in the mass. To mix all the colors of the palette in a mass is to destroy the individual beauty of each individual color; result: abstraction of all colors, mud; ³² this is democracy." And also: "The reign of universal ugliness must react on the passions, the emotions, the impulses and tastes of our people, to reduce them all to an

30. Ibid., pp. 203-204.

31. Ibid., p. 18.

32. Ibid., p. 35.

average dead level of inertia which is the ultimate triumph
of the machine age and its handmaiden Democracy."³³

Having gone this far, it might be interesting to turn back and determine just what Fry means to indicate by aesthetic ugliness. Ugly movements in art, he explains, are sudden and unexpected turns, sharp rectangles, a high degree of indefiniteness, irregularity, disorder, great effort and difficulty, little ease, roughness, antagonism,³⁴ and other rather obscure terms. Also didactic art and that which is made for political and religious propaganda is immediately ugly, as illustrated by Soviet art.³⁵

The processes of negation in the "neurotic cults" of contemporary art lie in a disease manifest in extreme confusion, disbalance, and disorder.³⁶ The decay of beauty,³⁷ he says, is often parallel to "spiritual bankruptcy."

There are four main divisions of American art to-day, Fry points out. There is surface designing such as in advertising, the comic strips, and painting. Secondly, there is the "stage", consisting of legitimate drama, musical comedy, and the movies. Thirdly, there is literature such as, in his words, tabloids and sensational press, art criticism and

33. Ibid., pp. 96-97.

34. Ibid., p. 22.

35. Ibid., pp. 103-104.

36. Ibid., p. 20.

37. Ibid., p. 25.

current fiction. And lastly, there is music and the dance.³⁸
 Of this last, his book (written in 1934) says: "In America
 we have only one dance, the jazz."³⁹ And he continues:

"I do not attack the jazz music and the dance on the grounds of bourgeois immorality. I leave that question for the specialists in morals. My detestation of the jazz music and dance arises from my hatred of ugliness; from my standpoint ugliness is sin; viewed in this way, the jazz dance is immoral. Then, the jazz music and the dance are degrading two of the noblest arts down to the lowest level⁴⁰ of human ignorance, stupidity and obscenity."

There are three prime stimuli which have caused the people to take to these modernistic art forms: the old band-wagon device, by which the majority are attracted to a fad; a rather universal and "irresistible congenital urge⁴¹ of a sadistic instinct for mutilation"; and greed. "The deification of ugliness and obscenity", he writes, "the urge for mutilation, deformation, muddy color and exaggeration, are all symptoms of sadism, indicating a form of psychopathia-⁴²sexualis."

3. Contemporary Art: Explained by Danz and Read

Fry's bitter condemnation should be left to the

38. Ibid., pp. 54-55.

39. Ibid., p. 170.

40. Ibid., p. 176.

41. Ibid., pp. 162-163.

42. Ibid., p. 165.

experts to attack. However, we cannot let such an energetic and depressing account go completely unanswered. Before attempting to remove a few of the rather unnecessary stigmata he has attached to modern art, we shall see how Danz and Read, viewing the same topic, approach it less emotionally and with less disastrous conclusions.

The Surrealists speak of something as being "as beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella."⁴³ Despite this rather outrageous definition of beauty, Louis Danz undertakes to give a fairly sympathetic interpretation of modernistic art, with emphasis on painting. The Surrealist, he says, is a noun painter. He paints only things and is about as interesting as a person who uses only nouns.⁴⁴ Our revulsion at such painting he explains in the words:

"Things arranged in dis-arrangement require foreknowledge or literary explanation to be understood, and, when we are shocked or entertained by a picture in which things are arranged in dis-arrangement, a picture in which things which are usually associated in certain arrangements with other things are irrationalized into dis-arrangement, we are outside the realm of painting art. The picture may be well painted, but the meaning of this kind of picture cannot be expressed through paint. Meaning does not lie in craftsmanship. No matter how well it is done, it

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43. Herbert Read, Art Now: An Introduction to the Theory of Modern Painting and Sculpture, New York, 1933, Harcourt, Brace, pp. 24-95
44. Louis Danz, The Psychologist Looks at Art, New York, 1937, Longmans, Green, pp. 14-15.

would be without painting-art-meanings; but it would have literary-art-meaning - and, at that, unexpressed." 45

It is the Freudian concept of dreams which has given rise to the strange quality of Surrealism.⁴⁶ Psychologically speaking, this art is a form of eidetic imagery, which, visually, means the projection of an image after the initial stimulus is removed or when there has been no stimulus.⁴⁷ Surrealism, he feels, is not chaos and disorder, as it seems, but is merely the absence of one kind of order and the presence of another.⁴⁸ Salvador Dali, well-known exponent of Surrealistic art says, "The new images of Surrealism must come more and more to take the forms and colors of demoralization and confusion",⁴⁹ a statement which would give justification to Fry's condemnation.

Because Surrealistic art is nothing but simple and unadulterated ugliness to most of us, it is well to note Danz's interpretation of different phases of modern art. Art, he says, is really a behavioral world, treating forces,⁵⁰ as opposed to the geographical world, which treats things. Things can be arranged; and arrangement belongs to the geographical world, not to the world of art. And so, this

45. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

46. Ibid., p. 17-18.

47. Ibid., p. 25-26.

48. Ibid., p. 33.

49. Dali, quoted, ibid., p. 31.

50. Ibid., p. 64.

behavioral world has not arrangement but organization. Form,⁵¹ which means, "an expressive organic whole", denotes organization. Form is embodiment of the principle that the whole⁵² is greater than the sum of its parts.

Danz speaks of what he calls "the referential artist", lying between two poles - those of representative art and that art which is pure abstraction and form.⁵³ "The referential artist does not relate one thing to another. He relates one reference to another. His lines, colors, and shapes are organized; they are not arranged representations of thing. Every art act is a structural act."⁵⁴

The art of the subconscious deals with subject matter, representation of things. The art of the unconscious deals with structure. From this level comes the "Form-Art."⁵⁵

"Art is a biological event . . . A work of art is the extension of the artist's neural structure into space-time . . . The artist extends his neural structure into picture, music, architecture."⁵⁶

Perhaps this apparent digression does not seem to pertain directly to our problem. However, it is included in the belief that it does, and in the hopes that we may obtain

51. Ibid., pp. 66-67.

52. Ibid., p. 78.

53. Ibid., p. 153.

54. Ibid., pp. 150-151.

55. Ibid., p. 168.

56. Ibid., p. 184.

some knowledge of the point of departure in the artist who paints what is to us pure ugliness.

Herbert Read, like Danz, relates some of modern art to Freudianism. The confusion which Dali speaks of is brought in again:

"(It is) to be achieved by an imitation of the illogical and unpredictable nature of dream-imagery. The painter, like the literary painter of all times, like Breughel and Bosch, like Van Eyck and Rembrandt, will paint natural objects with great care and verisimilitude; but he will never bring together objects which are normally seen together. He will seek to bring about the most unexpected, the most shocking and awe-inspiring encounters between contrary images . . ." 57

This is spoken, primarily, of painting; but it is
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the same with poetry; and parallels may be found in music, in the atonal music of Schonberg, Alban Berg, Anton Webern, and in literature, such as the interior monologue of Joyce's

Ulysses.
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In whatever departments of art, the effect is achieved by extreme subjectivity; " . . . the artist, in short, becomes a man gifted with the capacity to project
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symbols from his subconscious . . . "

We saw that Jacques Maritain likened modern art to primitive. This genetic approach, in Read, shows us that the direct and positive character of children's art has had

57. Herbert Read, op.cit., p. 94.

58. Ibid.; p. 95.

59. Ibid.; p. 125.

60. Ibid.; p. 133.

a great influence on the contemporary artist. "There has been a deliberate attempt to reach back to the naivety and fresh simplicity of the childlike outlook . . ." ⁶¹ And - provided the children do not belong to us - we are inclined to pronounce their drawings extremely crude and ugly. Matisse has what critics call the "pre-logical vision" of children's art. ⁶² Read writes:

" . . . There is bad symbolism and good symbolism, and though good symbolism will never justify a picture devoid of purely aesthetic values, yet granted these aesthetic values, good symbolism will prolong, deepen, and give significance to the pleasure we derive from a picture. Let us grant, however, that this concrete symbolism of the image-conveying kind is an extremely dangerous language to use; that only the profoundest minds are capable of using it; that nothing is more desperately boring and distasteful than the misuse of it." ⁶³

But there is some beauty in modern art. " . . . We like it as we might like a strange fungus, an orchid, a cloud-formation, a vein in marble." ⁶⁴

4. On the Critics and the Criticized

Perhaps it is expedient to return, for a moment, to Fry. In the first place, the most obvious criticism is that

61. Ibid., p. 45.
 62. Ibid., p. 80.
 63. Ibid., p. 152.
 64. Ibid., p. 129.

he is entirely too emotional, too alarmist, and too strong-spoken. Can anything really be as bad as it seems to him? One almost turns to the defense of the art because of the extreme intensity of the critic.

Granted that there does exist a cult which worships ugliness, qua ugliness, (which we will not grant), it is not correspondingly true that there has been a total destruction of imagination. It might, rather, appear to be the exact opposite. And is there really a common worship of ugliness, is our world universally possessed with sadistic, mutilating impulses? Or, even granted that, can we take what is merely an offshoot of our art to be a thermometer of our general spiritual condition?

What of his divisions of art? Do they not seem to come from a rather bitter and biased pen? And the energetic condemnation of our dance and our music? We will dismiss music by saying that we do have good music, and jazz music is not representative of it. But even if we admit that the jazz dance is the only dance of America, we must note that even the jazz dancers do not call it beautiful or art. It aims at being neither. Perhaps unfortunately in Mr. Fry's eyes, it is our folk dance; the folk dance, when beautiful, is that only accidentally. Always it is characteristic of spontaneous feelings before it is refined and crystallized into fine art.

Finally it seems rather futile and unnecessary to attempt a refutation of Mr. Fry's identification of abstraction, formlessness, and democracy. The reader will hardly need to be offered such a refutation.

But the critics are not alone to blame. For, if what they say is true, the modern painters are guilty of one thing surely - the fallacy of primitivism. To return to primitive art as being best, most essential, and most expressive is not only unfortunate, but fallacious. In this chapter, we have been speaking of phases of art, which by the extremes to which they go, bring themselves to our critical attention. But it is really not such a totally desperate situation as Fry would have it; because the majority of painting today is still preoccupied with line, space, and color in a characteristic presentation of interesting topics. The phases, symbolism, cubism, Surrealism and the like are lumped together by the popular mind into "modernistic" art. These forms we have accented are the work of a minority and exemplify what the present writer would like to think of as a tangent and not a real growth from the body of American art. These artists are, admittedly, too esoteric to fulfill the communicative demands of art; and their art will be neither a people's art nor an excellent art because of this.

Again, if what the critics say is true, we may note

another peculiarity about this tendency. Their schools, cry the modern painters, stem from the findings of Freudian investigation, and are based on the projection of unconnected or curiously connected images and associations. They also say that they are giving us a natural art, a real art, an art that is, above all, expressive. These two claims are hardly consistent. In the first place, if artists had always had a natural urge to project their dreams as such (for surely they had always had dreams), i.e., if this subconscious art were essential and natural, it would never have waited for Freud, nor would it have been so extremely and suddenly precipitated at the same time when every other phase of theory was having a Freudian reaction. This strikes one as merely a rationalization on the part of these painters, and points to the general conclusion that the present writer would like to make - that the extreme art of today is largely an affectation.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Summary

We saw, in Socrates, how the earliest criterion of beauty was utility; and how the triad of goodness, truth, and beauty prevented the isolation of aesthetics as a separate system. Plato's scorn of the arts in general left no room at all for ugliness; and it was Aristotle who first justified it for purposes of realism, and in connection with tragedy and comedy. After Aristotle, then, representative ugliness was conceded a certain aesthetic value; and an additional problem of formal ugliness was emphasized by Plotinus. With St. Thomas as the aesthetic synthesis of Aristotle, Plotinus, and Augustine, the long period of early speculation ends with four possible justifications of ugliness in art: realism, comedy and tragedy, ugliness as a foil to beauty, and the organic notion as in Plotinus.

It was Edmund Burke who foreshadowed Nietzsche's Dionysian aesthetics by his emphasis on the imagination in

relation to the experience of sublimity, which was closely connected with ugliness. Ugliness, he regarded as antithetical to beauty; but there is new justification for it as an artistic possibility in that it may be redeemed by its capacity to stimulate the imagination and the passions. In Baumgarten, there was also a romantic tendency to exalt the imagination. Kant's rather relativistic position showed an even wider and more definite inclusion, in that representative ugliness was legitimate insofar as it did not excite disgust. Along with these three romantic thinkers, we discussed Schiller, for whom didactic and passionate art was bad; in his works, there seemed to be the heralding of German idealism and the emergence of the concept of aesthetic idealization.

For Schelling, who greatly influenced Hegel, there was no real ugliness, as there was none for Schopenhauer, whose concept of the ugly was a dialectical antithesis of beauty, necessary for the full revelation of the Idea. Ugliness for Hegel, could be redeemed by beauty; and the emphasis was upon the inner spiritual reality of things. Following the dialectical tendencies of German idealism, two aesthetic doctrines arose: the Overcoming of the Ugly, and the Passage of Beauty from Abstract to Concrete. In the light of these we discussed Schlegel, Schasler, and Hartmann who, with Schelling, emphasized the "characteristic." Ugliness was identified with the comic in Solger, Weisse, Ruge, and again, Hartmann.

Rosenkranz's Aesthetic of the Ugly was pointed out as the most concrete notice of the problem; in that work, the author admitted that ugliness must be aesthetically legitimate because of its existence outside of art. But he insisted that ugliness could never claim any independent existence in art. In general, this period was an important advance because of the emphasis put upon inner spiritual reality, and the consequent notion that superficiality was ugly. Also important is the dialectical use of ugliness with its tendency to deny absolute ugliness, giving it an inevitable transitional place in the progress to beauty.

With Nietzsche, recalling Burke and Kant, we had a new standard. The so-called ugly, in terms of the evil, questionable, and terrible, was really evidence of the best artistic quality and symbolic of power so long as it did not weaken the Superman. The really ugly was that which symptomized degeneration of any kind, that which did not develop the Superman. Bosanquet's real advance lay in his concepts of easy and difficult beauty, and beauty in the wider and the narrower sense. Idealistically, his tendency was to deny any ugliness, naturally or artistically; but he indicated that it would exist, if there was such a thing, in the falsely beautiful, the insincere and affected in art. There was nothing particularly new in Bergson, who said that natural ugliness could be aesthetically treated in comedy; or in Santayana, who returned to a moral identification of beauty.

This was likewise seen in Whitehead, who also returned to a certain extent to the Hegelian dialectical position of ugliness. With Croce and Gentile, we had an original notion of ugliness as unsuccessful expression. These last two thinkers showed the increasing relativism to be seen in a number of more specialized aestheticians of the modern period. These additional thinkers were less satisfying than any group studied because their works were so largely eclectic. This chapter ended by pointing out the current critical tendencies towards extreme relativism as illustrated particularly by Reid

2. Conclusion

It is customary, when seeking a point of departure for a rather unwieldy discussion, to go to the dictionary. Funk and Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary (1938) defines the adjective "ugly" as: displeasing to the esthetic feelings, as from lack of grace, proportion, or adaptation of parts; distasteful in appearance; the reverse of the beautiful. Webster's New International Dictionary (1939) says that ugliness is: a quality of state of being ugly; also, an instance of this. In aesthetics, ugliness is the opposite of beauty. The ugly has, however, been conceded to possess aesthetic value by various writers, either as being true to life and having an intrinsic interest of its own, or as

enhancing beauty by contrast, or as essential to the attainment of unity in variety.

The most immediate reaction to the above definitions is a desire to repudiate the antithetical position of beauty and ugliness. But the statement of such an antithesis does indirectly present a consideration which is important for clarity in this discussion: it is a distinction between the popular judgment and the more objective judgment which is based on a recognition of whatever aesthetic standards may exist. Or in terms which are already familiar to the reader, it is really nothing but a distinction between beauty in the narrow sense and beauty in the wide sense, and closely connected with Bosanquet's conceptions of easy and difficult beauty. For in the popular mind and language, it is true that beauty and ugliness are opposites; subjectively speaking, ugliness is opposed to the strictly beautiful.

Then what is the problem of ugliness in art? Can it all be reduced to cases of difficult beauty or to the category of the aesthetically excellent (beauty in the wide sense)? Can it be true that the problem is entirely nominal, that "ugly" is a convenient, emotional, impetuous response, relative to beauty which is the only existing value in the case? What is the problem? Lockie Parker says that it all boils down to "whether the presentation of objects, scenes, or people that we should not find pleasing in real life can

be justified."¹ The present writer does not find it quite so simple, nor so easily reduced to a single principle. Let us take the problem from a subjective viewpoint. Clearly, there are wide divergencies in the associative capacities and emotional mechanisms of individuals, which divergencies create a number of differences within the judgment "ugly." What is happening when a person, criticizing an art-object, exclaims "How ugly!?" The present writer believes the cause of such a judgment to lie in one or more of the eight following circumstances. Most simply, it may be, in the case of representative art, because of the topic, - that the painter is representing an object that is ugly in nature. It may be a portrait of an ugly person or it may be a slums scene. Secondly, the representation may be judged ugly because it arouses unpleasant or disagreeable associations, consciously or subconsciously effective in causing the judgment "ugly." In the third place, the art-object may give an exaggerated or modified representation of an object to which the spectator is somehow attached -- or similarly, an unrealistic depiction of something the spectator's common sense knows should appear otherwise. The above three cases of judgment obviously are not purely aesthetic; they may be moral. However, more clearly moral is the judgment of aesthetic

1. Lockie Parker, op.cit., p. 75.

ugliness given of an art-object which shows an immoral act or personality or historical event. The fifth possible cause may lie in the fact that the art-object is too unusual, foreign, exotic, i.e., contrary to conventional taste. This may refer to the subject matter, but most probably to its arrangement, or to the total impression. Again, sixth, the total appearance may be too vapid, too neutral, or too intense. This is closely connected with the problem of form; seventh, in which circumstance the work may have an apparent lack of form, may be too intricate, or disproportionate formally. Eighth and finally, the object may be judged ugly because, according to some standard, it is not useful; though it is doubtful that many minds actually work quite so pragmatically.

The problem seems to be only widened by such an analysis, for it still remains to determine which, if any, of these judgments is legitimate, i.e., which would constitute legitimate standards by which all arts could be judged by all persons. Or which of these judgments would remove the art-object into the category of difficult beauty? Or which, if given in equivalent terms, without specific use of the word "ugly" would place the art-object in the category of the aesthetically excellent? For, if we consider, in addition to the strictly beautiful, the characteristic, the expressive, the significant, the dramatic, the comic, and the tragic as types of fine art, then elements of certain so-called ugliness

will inevitably be admitted within beauty of the wider meaning. In short, which of the above eight possible judgments of ugliness must we dismiss as entirely impulsive and personal criticisms, and which can we retain as possessing objectivity to the degree that they may form possible standards of art criticism?

In the first place, most of the eight occasions will be found to fall right away into the category of difficult beauty, which difficulty is caused, as Bosanquet has indicated, by unusual degrees of intricacy, tension, and width. This general position, because it is again now of immediate importance to our discussion, is illustrated by John Martin:

"Because it is the nature of the organism to defend itself against inharmonic adjustments and to invite harmonic adjustments, that material is most easily effective which awakens pleasurable associations. The clear, bright color, the soft tone, the gentle modulation, the curved line, the smooth and ever-flowing movement, invite no resistance whereas the discordant tone combination, the angular line, the irregular rhythm, the abrupt attack, arouse defensive and even avertive reactions and conflicting adjustments. The work of art, therefore, which wins the most widespread popularity is the one which deals in materials of the easiest reception." 2

He adds, however, that those art-objects which are, in the long run, the most momentous and significant are those

2. John Martin, Introduction to the Dance, New York, 1939, Norton, pp. 73-74.

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which require an extension of the receptive consciousness.

The argument for the unusual is reinforced by

Barton:

"The time had come when people began to argue about 'beauty'; and what seemed beautiful in art, to one person, was thought ugly by another. Good painters did not theorise very much in this way. The romantic painter tried to express a feeling, the realistic painter tried to catch a truth; and each, if he succeeded, produced a work that eventually - though it might annoy many people for the time being - came to be accepted as an addition to the catalogue of 'beautiful' pictures." 4

The truth of this situation is pushed even further by Bulley who writes not only that the average person prefers the familiar to the strange but also that, when ugliness is the rule, ugliness will be accepted.⁵

The eventual acceptance of what were first ugly pictures is also expressed by Havelock Ellis, who says that he finds that the value of an artist's work, previously alien to the sensibility, becomes greatly beautiful after years of contemplation or by a sudden intuition comparable to a religious conversion.⁶

We have been discussing the problem from the point of view of the spectator, but any answer will be incomplete

3. Ibid., p. 74.

4. J. E. Barton, Purpose and Admiration: A Lay Study of the Visual Arts, New York, 1933, F. A. Stokes, p. 138.

5. Margaret Bulley, Art and Understanding, London, 1937, B. T. Batsford, p. 80.

6. Havelock Ellis, The Dance of Life, New York, 1929, Random House, Modern Library, p. 314.

unless approached from the artist's standpoint also. What is ugly to the artist? What does he feel should be excluded? Is there ever really a deliberate choice of what the artist believes is ugly? A fascination with ugliness? In general, it will be found that the artist will be the most liberal of judges, perhaps because he knows what to look for in an art-object, and is educated to what is really good and bad art. But the artist is less inclined to explicit judgment than others, if he is at all preoccupied with judging, knowing possibly that he will be judged by the same standards which he imposes upon the work of someone else; and all in all, he is more concerned with the activity of creating than with the passivity of criticizing. The artist may appear to make a deliberate choice of ugliness, because, as Bulley says, he is overconscious of the fact that beauty of art differs widely from natural beauty. He finds (seeks to find?) beauty most clearly in what is ugly to others. And, in doing so, Bulley says, brings as beauty into art ugliness which we only thought existed.⁷

Such a choice of ugliness is clearly not the same thing as a fascination with ugliness. The theoretical problem of the fascination with ugliness would involve more psychology than it is proper to introduce at this point. It is

7. Bulley, op.cit., p. 29.

this writer's belief, however, that such a phenomenon clearly exists; and it is an invincible temptation to include here, in part, the rather allegorical interpretation of such fascination as is described in The Crock of Gold by James Stephens. In this section on ugliness, the Thin Woman of Inis Magrath has come upon three strange men in the woods:

"The third man can scarcely be described. He was neither short nor tall. He was muscled as heavily as the second man. As he sat he looked like a colossal toad squatting with his arms about his knees, and upon these his chin rested. He had no shape nor swiftness, and his head was flattened down and was scarcely wider than his neck. He had a protruding dog-like mouth that twitched occasionally, and from his little eyes there glinted a horrible intelligence. Before this man the soul of the Thin Woman grovelled. She felt herself crawling to him. The last terrible abasement of which humanity is capable came upon her: a fascination which would have drawn her to him in screaming adoration . . ." 8

One of the three men speaks:

"We are the Three Absolutes, the Three Redeemers, the Three Alembics - the Most Beautiful Man, the Strongest Man and the Ugliest Man. In the midst of every strife we go unhurt . . . Beyond us there is no best man . . . for we are the best in beauty, and the best in strength, and the best in ugliness; there is no excellence which is not contained in us three." 9

8. James Stephens, The Crock of Gold, London, 1926, Macmillan, pp. 290-291.
 9. Ibid., pp. 291-293.

From the best in beauty, strength, and ugliness, the Thin Woman chooses:

"Then to the third man the Thin Woman addressed herself in terror, for to that hideous one something cringed within her in an ecstasy of loathing. That repulsion which at its strongest becomes attraction gripped her . . ." 10

As allegorical as the foregoing interpretation is, it is offered as an illustration of the psychological circumstances underlying such a theoretically possible phenomenon as an extreme fascination with ugliness on the part of the artist.

Still further, before approaching the synthesis of the creative and receptive standards in which must finally lie our answer, we must stop to ask what is the artist's aim. Is it beauty? Clearly, the aim of art, generally speaking, is not an esoteric one; and in the long run, art's fundamental goals will have social connections. We may take for granted that at least part of the artist's total aim is the desire to create works which will please men. But is this aim, in whole or in part, an attempt to create beauty?

The artist's task, believes Barnes, is to "shun the conventional idealizations which represent things as they are habitually conceived, and to see things as they

10. Ibid., pp. 295-296.

are in reality."¹¹ If this is so, does the task not already predispose the artist to be judged ugly according to what we have said concerning the weight of the habitual? Barnes contends that such is the case, for although great art has always been realistic, it has always been greeted with the charge of ugliness and misrepresentation.

"Anarchy, falsity, charlatanism and ugliness are the stock terms of abuse applied to every great artist by his own generation, but what these terms really mean is their exact opposite - that the artist has a grasp of things more profoundly ordered and so more beautiful than that current in his day."¹²

That the aim of art should be realism is also the opinion of Eric Gill. "Only in what is real can man be happy", he writes. "The unreal cannot be the true; what is not true cannot be good; the radiance of reality turns out to be the only beauty; safety is valueless except as a means to enjoyment and, ultimately, reality is alone enjoyable."¹³

The gist of his entire book is summed up in the words, "Look after goodness and truth and beauty will take care of herself."¹⁴

That the artist does not, or should not, aim at "beauty" is likewise the opinion of Barker, who suggests

11. Albert C. Barnes, The Art in Painting, New York, 1928, Harcourt, Brace, p. 35.

12. Ibid., p. 35.

13. Eric Gill, Beauty Looks after Herself, London, 1933, Sheed and Ward, p. 209.

14. Ibid., p. 245.

"vitality" in its place. ¹⁵ Art today must take hold of things which are vastly more important than beauty, things which even appear to contradict both the word Beauty and the Beautiful thing itself. ¹⁶ So it seems, finally, that beauty is enviably, but undeniably, a by-product of something more important.

Previously we attempted to show the strength of the usual in aesthetic criticism. Now we indicate that the aim of art, at best, is realistic. These two conditions, though seemingly harmonious, are often not so, because artistic realism is often contrary to habitual conception. Ugliness as justified by realism is, nevertheless, accorded an aesthetic power; and art-objects where such ugliness occurs may be, other things being equal, passed into the realm of beauty in the wide sense of the aesthetically excellent. Therefore representational ugliness must be dismissed as having no possibility of being real ugliness in an antithetical position to beauty.

Then, we are drawing nearer to a final answer when we come to the question of the existence of such real ugliness. Does it exist, and if so, where?

Mrs. Gilbert, in her Studies in Recent Aesthetic,

15. Virgil Barker, "Is Beauty the Right Word?" in The American Magazine of Art, March, 1936, p. 177.

16. Ibid., p. 177.

writes:

"It is now taken as aesthetic innocence to apply the word 'ugly' to the portraits of wrinkled old women, cacophony in poetry, discords in music, angularity in drawing or roughness of dramatic utterance. The shrinking from complex and uningratiating representation, if there is something powerful offered, is imputed to the timidity and intellectual narrowness of the spectator." 17

The tendency, she opines, is to say that nothing is really ugly; and she suggests that perhaps ugliness has been badly defined rather than that it has no existence. Integrity¹⁸ of impression, she feels, is and will remain the apriori law of beauty, but the attainment of this can be subject to no rules. That ugliness still exists as an infraction¹⁹ of beauty in terms of unfused elements, she maintains.

"Any insurmountable or unmotivated dissonance - between pretension and fulfillment, artist and product, or detail²⁰ and totality - seems impossible to justify."

If, because of individual differences among judges, we seem to be driven to a somewhat relativistic position (for there is hardly any art-object that is not beautiful or expressive to someone), we are rescued from utter relativism by the common-sense knowledge that there must be some standards of good and bad, as connected with

17. Katherine Gilbert, Studies in Recent Aesthetic, Chapel Hill, 1927, University of North Carolina Press, p. 162.

18. Ibid., p. 163.

19. Ibid., p. 166.

20. Ibid., p. 167.

beautiful and ugly art. And if we agree with Mrs. Gilbert, we must admit that there remains a very real possibility of ugly art.

So far as the strictly beautiful is concerned (recall that this is not to be equated with easy beauty), so-called ugliness in the form of representative ugliness and distortion of any kind is not admissable. In this sense, the strictly beautiful is opposed to the ugly. But the aesthetic realm is far broader than the strictly beautiful. The remainder of the realm is covered by the aesthetically excellent, or beautiful in the wider sense; and since we will admit no so-called ugliness into the former category, it is this latter in which our answer must finally rest. And the final question seems to be: under what conditions are certain types of ugliness justifiable in this category; and where does real artistic ugliness begin?

First we must admit representative ugliness for purposes of realism, truth, and in connection with the significant, the characteristic and such types. Also, we must admit distortion for purposes of power, emotional strength, logical and organic consistency, and so forth. Possibly the ugly may be admitted to heighten beauty; and certain other forms of the ugly will be admitted artistically so long as comedy and tragedy are called art-forms.

Now, if we return to our eight possible circumstances

under which the judgment ugliness may occur, we will find that, if we admit ugliness in the above respects, only two of our circumstances will retain any legitimacy. These two are the total appearance of an art-object, or its sensuous appeal in general; and that criterion of form, which is concerned with the necessary attributes of organic unity and intelligibility, and with Mrs. Gilbert's problem of "unfused elements." In short, (dismissing the strictly beautiful), so-called ugliness, in terms of topic and certain distortions, is legitimate. That ugliness which is real and not aesthetically legitimate, is in formal terms of unintelligibility and incoherence.

So far, then, as beauty in the wide sense is concerned, the first category of ugliness cannot be antithetical to beauty because it is included in beauty, and is a positive factor of aesthetic enjoyment. What we have judged finally to be real ugliness is, on the other hand, opposed to beauty in that it is negative, a lack of what should exist in good art.

Finally, it will be seen that, if these are the spectator's demands, they will coincide with the aims of the artist. For whether or not the artist aims at beauty, if he is an artist, he will aim at intelligibility of expression. And he will aim at achieving a dynamic quality, a vitality which will give his work immediate sensuous appeal.

The final answer, then, lies close to those of Croce and Mrs. Gilbert. Real aesthetic ugliness exists in the failure of unity of expression, of integrity in impression. This is simply stated by Mrs. Gilbert when she speaks of "unfused elements." Any painting or poem or music, any work of any type of art, which contains an element not justifiable on grounds of logical consistency, organic unity and the other justifications we have indicated, is simply and purely ugly. (Nor should much analysis of the work of art be required in the effort to find justification; such art would be too esoteric). To this extent the qualities of that art which is aesthetically good are absolute enough to be positively formulated and determined in each separate art. Therefore, the problem is not and cannot be entirely relative.

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